

Outline and evaluation of aristotle's epistemological ideas



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Outline and evaluate Aristotle's epistemological ideas. What according to Aristotle, is the highest good, and what does that have to do with his theory of virtue?

This essay will determine what are Aristotle's epistemological ideas and what are his opinions on the highest good and what relates with the theory of virtue. Aristotle's epistemological ideas was that we as an individual know nothing and that all the knowledge that we gain is from experience that we have gathered in our lifetime. Aristotle believed that in order to be able to understand something rationally an individual would have to justify their point this therefore means that he has a nurture point of view. It seems that his argument is well thought with his points being justified. He also believes that every type of information gathered is important in supporting a point or to prove it as being wrong. This is shown in the Encyclopedia Britannica with this quote: ' if the object of that knowledge is something other than that blue is a color. That idea, that knowledge is identical with its object, is dimly reflected in the modern formula for expressing one of the necessary conditions of knowledge: A knows that p only if it is true that p .'

(Encyclopedia Britannica 2019)

As said in the article ' Aristotle and the Highest Good' he believes that ' claims every action is aimed at some good yet these aims vary between individual and context.' This means that with every action that an individual takes he/she should aim to have the most positive outcome. He also believes that the highest good comes with three different parts them being: ' it is desirable for itself, it is not desirable for the sake of some other good, and all other goods are desirable for its sake.' (The Artifice 2016) This shows us that

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Aristotle talked about virtue being about doing the right thing at the right time. It is all about analysing the situation and to conclude with the best outcome for everyone involved. Being happy Virtue theory is all about your characterization rather than a set of rules. He believes that if we concentrate on being good people then positive things are more likely to happen in the future. This seems to be correct as the more good things you do to others then the more likely they are to be nice back to you. However, in the case that you do not respect other people the chances to these becoming unfriendly to you have increased.

Aristotle shows us that as a people we believe information at a faster rate when it comes from our inside world such as our family then when it comes from the outside world. This is why we always seek justification for the answers we are given and way it is important to have a mixture of both internal and external knowledge. This is due that if we only have internal knowledge, we would find it harder to question other people's opinions as we have only gotten information from our internal environment. However, if we have gained knowledge externally, we have the capacity to argue about certain point and we can thus extract more information and gain more knowledge. This is shown in this summary by Spark notes: ' We learn moral virtue primarily through habit and practice rather than through reasoning and instruction.' (Spark notes 2019) This is further proven when you think about situation today when it comes to elections you can clearly see how has been influenced by internal factors due to their lack of understanding about certain topics and you can see who has clearly expanding their knowledge on a certain topic by the way they are justifying their findings. This is what

Aristotle believed that people should do in order to maximise the purpose of their life.

Aristotle explained that virtue theory is also dependent on where and how someone has been living and raised. For example, someone who has been brought up in a low-income family and whom has not been giving much support in their life will have a greater chance of being a so-called bad person. Although on the other hand someone who has been looked after well in their childhood will have a higher chance of being a good person. The problem with this is that for the lower income family it is often not their fault for that situation happening so the solution to change that would be to gain knowledge from the outside world from a Nurture point of view. However, this can often be a difficult thing to do as these people do not often have the time to do this due to financial difficulties. He believes that in order to help these people laws should be put in place in order to ensure that the low-income families have more of a chance to help every individual. He then goes on to explain that every person has the right to have the same chances and that penalising them would be unfair for the people involved.

The highest good is often linked to the theory of virtue as they are both about how you as an individual need to act in a positive manner towards others. The one difference is that the highest good has to be linked to what better us as human beings rather than what makes us richer in terms of assets and wealth. Aristotle claims that 'A life that aims only at satisfying bodily pleasures is not fit for human beings but for cattle' He also believes that our main purpose is to contemplate and to learn new things. In his eyes an individual who does not do that is not living to his/her fullest potential.

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He adds that there are different types of virtue. One of them is called virtue deficiency which can be described as being a coward towards a specific situation. For example, if you see someone falling on the floor and do not come to their aid even though you are fully capable of doing so, that is called virtue deficiency. As Chris Surprenant (who is a professor at the University of New Orleans) explains, if you are going to help the person who has fallen but you know that you will probably not be able to help them effectively, that is what Aristotle called excess virtue. The point that Aristotle makes is that when you have to make a decision, you need to be unsure that you are making the right one and that if that means that in order to help that person you would have to call for help, then that is still making the right decision as you are making sure that the situation is going to be handled by someone who knows what they are doing without the risk of hurting the person in danger.

To conclude, it should be said that the highest good and the theory of virtue do link themselves together as Aristotle talks about being a good person with good values in order to apply these two theories together. Being a good person will enable you to have more positive things happen in your life, this will also encourage you to expand your knowledge. It would be said that Aristotle's epistemological ideas are correct as his argument talks about how as human beings our sole point is to gain knowledge and that without it, we cannot function properly. I would say that this is a correct argument as by expanding our knowledge, whether it is by internal influences (nature) or independently (nurture), it makes us better individuals as we are able to live our lives in the most effective way possible. The fact that he also argues that the way you were raised may impact how you act in the future shows us that

Aristotle's epistemological ideas are well explored. In all we can see that all of the aspects that our in this essay link together as they all have similarities that if put together effectively one will be able to recreate what Aristotle though was the way to live his/her life. The only problem with this would be that even though he does say that laws should be put in place to facilitate everyone's life that is not always the case in some part of the world therefore some people will not be able to gain the knowledge that is required to critically think which is more often than not their fault. Some people might choose to live their lives in other ways rather than focus on studying as they are from a poor background and they are focusing on surviving. Would that mean that their life has no meaning. I would say people should focus on what they think is best for them. Even though I do still agree with Aristotle that gaining knowledge is an important aspect of life I also do believe that everyone is untiled to do what pleases them.

Bibliography

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