

Aristotle,
Nicomachean Ethics,
Mullen, hard thinking
about values



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Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Mullen, Hard Thinking About Values Proper Function of Man Aristotle observes that the human body is composed of several distinct parts such as limbs, the other sense organs like eyes, ears, tongue and the head, which carry on some distinct and 'proper function' to render better health. As the action of the different body parts the human being as a whole also shoulders a responsibility of performing a particular function, which should be proper by its very nature. Some human beings think that their basis existence of being a human satisfies the requirement of the phrase 'proper function'. However, to this end Aristotle argues that the action of living, which consists of elements like nourishing and providing nutrition to the body, goes the same as that of other living matters like plants. Again, the skill of perceiving different senses, which the human beings think that they are capable enough, does not also constitute the acts of 'proper function'. It is because as Aristotle argues that even nomadic creatures like animals also possess such skill sets. Aristotle states that apart from the previous two conditions of simple living and the ability to perceive the external world through the sense organs human beings possess the power of rational thinking. This rational thinking links up the individual with a host of different activities. Human beings to sustain themselves must use their rational thinking for performing effectively. Effective performance of an activity by a human being signifies that the person desires to set defined standards in the work done. The individual must optimally use one's own strength in performing the actions with considerable efficiency to maintain the standards previously set. Optimal utilization of one's own strength and knowledge to perform the tasks assigned hold that the performance is accomplished in conformation to one's soul. Thus 'proper action' performed

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by an individual to satisfy the position of standards set must proceed through a definite set of virtues. These set of virtues, which emanate from the soul of the individual help the quality of such actions to be good enough to help in the betterment of the society as a whole. Aristotle further states that the individual must be open to criticisms for the actions committed. Criticism is rendered to an individual for cases where the individual through his rational mindset could have helped in ceasing the bad effects of the action performed. A rationalistic individual is one who justly identifies between the good and bad actions and performs the good ones through full commitment and energy to bring about social good. (Ostwald, 17, 67). Thus, 'proper function' of man entails a rationalistic vision of the individual combined with the individual's sense of virtue to perform the works assigned leading to social betterment. The individual in the course of performing the work must be optimally charged with full energy and must incorporate the voice of the soul to render due virtue to the desire of accomplishing high standards. This would help an individual to become a true human being as distinct from other living flora and fauna. Works Cited 1. Ostwald, Martin. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999.