

Essay on human soul for aristotle

[Politics](#), [Civil Rights](#)



According to Aristotle, the human soul is divided in rational (referred to the intellect) and irrational, which is referred to what is external to the intellect (Aristotle, p. 35). The rational soul is divided into “ numerical” (the part of the soul that uses the intellect to make choices) and “ theoretical” (the part of the soul that is responsible for theoretical intellect). The rational soul is connected with the so called “ deontological” virtues. The irrational soul is instead divided in “ nutritive” (the part external to the intellect) and “ appetitive” (responsible for feelings and passions). The irrational part of the soul is connected with ethical virtues. (Aristotle, p. 38)

Ethical virtues find their highest representation in the behavior residing between two extremes: an excess and a defect. Aristotle suggests that one of the most important ethical virtues is decency. This virtue is used by young people in their search for them to follow this virtue to find the behavior residing between the two extremes, because they have an undeveloped intellect unlike old men (Aristotle, p. 42).

According to Aristotle, another relevant ethical virtue is justice (Aristotle, p. 43). The notion of justice has two meanings: the first one refers to the general respect of laws, while the second is meant as the respect of equality. Following the concept of equality, Aristotle divides the justice in “ corrective” and “ distributive”. The first one works in particular in private debates, for example when two individuals are in court and the victim receives an indemnification by the one guilty. In that case, the justice is represented as the middle way between the loss and the gain decided by the judge. The distributive justice works in public debates and overlooks the distribution of services. Identical individuals should receive identical goods. Aristotle

mentions also the concept of “right judge”; the justice itself finds its highest representation in the concept of equality: it is the ability of the judge to interpret and to apply the concept of “right” at the right moment even when State laws cannot be applied. Aristotle points out also several other virtues: temperance which is a middle way between intemperance and insensibility; generosity which is a middle way between greedy and charity and sincerity between irony and vanity. (Aristotle, p. 45)

The deontological virtues, instead, deal with the rational part of the soul and they can be divided in five categories: wisdom (which is the deliberative part of the soul), knowledge (which is referred to the theoretical part of the soul and is considered the most important deontological virtue), science, art and intellect. The last three are referred to the rational soul in general terms.