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GEO8-ETHICS



COMPREHENSIVE WRITTEN REPORT

TITLE:

“ARISTOTLE AND SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS”

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INTRODUCTION

Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas are key figures in Western philosophy, each making significant contributions to ethics and metaphysics. Aristotle, a 4th-century BCE Greek philosopher, established foundational concepts through his empirical approach and systematic analysis. In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas integrated Aristotle's ideas with Christian theology, seeking to reconcile faith and reason. His influential work, **Summa Theologica**, emphasizes natural law and moral philosophy, shaping Catholic doctrine and ethical discourse. Together, they represent a crucial link between ancient and medieval thought.

A. ARISTOTLE

I. WHO IS ARISTOTLE

Aristotle (384–322 BCE) is one of history's most influential philosophers, exploring a vast array of subjects including metaphysics, politics, the arts, and biology. He was born in Stagira in 384 B.C. and moved to Athens at seventeen to study under Plato. After Plato's death, Aristotle moved to Macedonia to tutor Alexander the Great. Later, he returned to Athens and founded his own school, the Lyceum. Following the death of Alexander in 323 B.C., Aristotle fled Athens due to charges of impiety and died the following year in 322 B.C.

II. PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS

Known as a realist, unlike Plato who focused on abstract forms. Aristotle is called a realist because he believed that we learn about the world by experiencing it through our senses—by seeing, hearing, touching, etc.

III. ARISTOTLE'S NICOMACHEAN ETHICS

One of his most influential works, emphasizing that happiness is the ultimate goal of life, moral virtue is developed through action and habit, and good action requires prudence. Medieval scholars revered Aristotle as "the Philosopher" for these ideas.

B. THREE PARTS OF HUMAN SOUL

I. VEGETATIVE SOUL

This is the most primitive aspect of the soul. It allows organisms to take in nutrients, grow, and reproduce, but it doesn't involve any kind of conscious awareness or sensory perception. In plants, the vegetative soul is the only soul they possess.

II. SENSITIVE SOUL

This part of the soul allows living beings to interact with their environment through the senses. Animals and humans can perceive the world around them (through sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch) and respond to it. They also experience desires and emotions, such as hunger or fear, and have the ability to move voluntarily in response to stimuli. For animals, this is their highest level of soul.

III. RATIONAL SOUL

The rational soul is unique to humans and allows for intellectual thinking, deliberation, and moral judgments. It involves the ability to understand abstract concepts, form knowledge, and engage in logical reasoning. This capacity for rational thought is what separates humans from animals. It also includes the ability to choose virtuous actions based on reasoning, which ties into Aristotle's ethics and the pursuit of eudaimonia (flourishing or well-being).

C. PHILOSOPHICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

I. METAPHYSICS

Aristotle's metaphysics examines the nature of reality through the concepts of substance, form, and matter, and introduces the "Four Causes" to explain existence and change.

D. Ethics

Aristotle's **Golden Mean** is a central concept in his ethical philosophy, representing the idea of achieving balance or moderation in virtues. According to Aristotle, moral virtue is found between two extremes: one of excess and one of deficiency. The Golden Mean is the ideal moderate position between these extremes, where virtuous behavior lies.

A. SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

I. WHO IS SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS?

Saint Thomas Aquinas, a 13th-century philosopher and theologian, combined Christian theology with Aristotelian philosophy in works like **Summa Theologica**, shaping much of Western thought. Born in 1225 in Roccasecca, Kingdom of Sicily, he spent most of his childhood in the Benedictine Monastery at Monte Cassino. After teaching in Paris for three years, he returned to Italy, where he taught in Naples (1259-1261) and Orvieto (1261-1265). During his time in Rome (1265-1268), he began his

magisterial work, **Summa theologiae**. Aquinas later lived in Naples, continuing to teach and write until his death on March 7, 1274, in Fossa Nova.

II. PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS

Thomas Aquinas, hailed as the most influential medieval thinker, integrated Christian theology with Aristotelian philosophy. He believed that divine help is essential for understanding truth, as God moves the intellect to act. According to Aquinas, knowledge arises when the active intellect abstracts concepts from sensory images.

III. THEOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The *Summa Theologica* addresses fundamental theological questions about God, creation, and salvation, and is divided into three main parts: the nature of God, humanity, and Christ's role in salvation.

B. THREE NATURAL INCLINATIONS OF MAN

I. SELF- PRESERVATION

Every human being has a natural inclination to preserve their own life. This includes basic instincts for survival, such as seeking food, shelter, and avoiding harm or danger. Aquinas believed that this inclination is shared with all living beings and forms the basis for laws and moral actions that protect life.

II. SEEKING KNOWLEDGE AND LIVING IN SOCIETY

Aquinas argued that humans are naturally inclined to seek knowledge and truth, particularly about God and the world. Additionally, people are inclined to live in society, forming communities and promoting justice and mutual respect. This social inclination encourages humans to engage in fair dealings with others, fostering harmony and moral relationships.

III, PROPAGATION OF THE SPECIES

Humans are naturally inclined to reproduce and ensure the continuation of the species. This inclination governs behaviors related to sexual relationships and family life. Aquinas emphasized that this is aligned with the natural purpose of sexual organs and procreation, promoting the survival of humanity.

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