

Chapter 5.1 - 5.4 & 2.2.7

Team 3

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§5.1 - *Eudaimonia* and the Good

Eudaimonia Definition: coming from Greek words meaning “good” and “spirit. Sometimes translated as “happiness” → “well-being”

Aristotle’s picture of “the happy man” is the person who excels at the activities and aptitudes that are characteristic of human beings.

What is a good life?

When does X flourish?

Under different conditions, a species can survive. But in what conditions will that species *flourish*?

What is “good for” this relative thing”

What is *good for* a cactus is not *good for* an orchid, what is *good for* a horse is not what is *good for* a lion, and so on indefinitely, including what is *good for* a human being.

“Good”

In English, has different meanings.

“This cake is good” vs. “Aspirin is a good painkiller”

“Is X a good person?” requires us to know what human beings at their distinctive best are like

§5.2 - Human Nature as Rational Animal

What is a good life for a human being?

Aristotle describes a good life as one in which we use our minds to make, and act, and think in the best possible ways

Those shown to lead good lives are:

- Middle aged
- Well educated
- Financially secure
- Socially respected

What is not a good life for a human being?

Aristotle described a deformed or impoverished life as one in which someone is:

- A slave
- Poor
- Ignorant
- Stupid
- Not well rounded

Aristotle's emphasis on "rational" activities does not restrict the good life to academic pursuits.

He emphasizes intelligence in the full range of human activities, including the intelligence used in pottery, politics, parenting, as well as science and philosophy.

Phronesis: practical wisdom

Even highly abstract intellectual inquiry needs to be guided by good sense to be pursued fruitfully.

§5.3 - Ethics, Ethology, and Evolution

Aristotelianism:

- Telos: The natural purpose of something or the potential it will eventually realise.
- An “end at which it naturally aims, and that depending upon the mode of existent of the thing in question, this end will be reached more or less.”
- Conditions matter, they are “a clue to answering normative or evaluative questions about human beings”
- Thought that “facts about right and wrong and good and bad ... are derived from [their] biology”
- Believed that “each natural kind, including humans kind, has a distinctive and discoverable function”

§5.3 - Ethics, Ethology, and Evolution

Modern Biology:

- Focused on function of anatomy rather than the purpose of the organism itself.
- Modern biology, “rather than pointing us towards the study of individual species with a view to discovering their distinctive *function*, points us to the study of microbiological structure that will reveal a distinctive *genome*.”
- Does not solve the ethical and evaluative implications of Aristotelianism.

§5.3 - Ethics, Ethology, and Evolution

Ethology:

- “The study and depiction of character”
- “The study of animal behavior in its natural environment”
- Focused on behavior instead of physiology
- Explores conditions under which an organism thrives or cannot thrive
- “conditions under which ... their natural behavior may undergo destructive and even self-destructive alteration”
- Elephants usually walk between 30 to 50 miles in herds in their natural environment and conditions. However, in a zoo Elephants behave differently, they pace back and forth, which is abnormal and self destructive as these behaviors lead to joint problems and are not seen in Elephants in the wild.

§5.3 - Ethics, Ethology, and Evolution

Sociobiology:

- Combining ethology with evolutionary biology and applying it to human beings
- Aims to combine concepts from “evolutionary theory, genetics, ethology, and sociology in a way that will generate an account of what is the most natural, and hence most successful, mode of existence for human beings.”
- Dutch primatologist Frans de Waal, an advocate of “studying human beings as socially interacting animals with an evolved biology modeled his studies of apes” in the book *Good Natured: the origins of right and wrong in humans and other animals*

§5.4 - Virtue Theory

Virtue-behavior showing high moral standards

- Virtue theory focuses on the kind of person someone is, not just their actions
- Instead of right or wrong, it asks “What traits make a human life go well?”
- Claims that morality has objectivity.

Thin vs Thick moral concepts

Thin Moral Concepts

- Good
- Bad
- Right
- Wrong

Thick Moral Concepts

- Brave
- Generous
- Cowardly
- Prudent

§2.2.7 - *From Becoming to Will*

Duty

Freedom

What is will directed towards?

Pleasure

Power

Will:

“Becoming is not passive as it carries a *will* to become”

Will: “the faculty by which a person decides on and initiates action.”

Will is needed for becoming to happen

The direction of will is to be interpreted

Ibn Sina:

Necessity-in-itself:

- divine essence
- Source of all command and law

Necessity-in-its-cause:

- Things must occur because of their causes
- Fate/Destiny

Possibility-in-itself:

- The will to change
- Operates within divine law