

Science, Technology and Society

MARANAN, EVA | 1st Semester | 24 - 25

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The Human Person's Flourishing in Terms of Science and Technology.

Flourishing – goes beyond mere happiness; it involves living a meaningful life, achieving personal goals, and experiencing positive relationships.

Human flourishing – refers to the realization of an individual's potential, well-being, and overall fulfillment in life.

- It encompasses **emotional, social, intellectual, and physical** well-being.*

According to PLATO – All human beings naturally desire eudaimonia or human flourishing.

- He believed that to flourish, **one must have moral thoughts and virtuous actions**.

According to plato, a human can develop virtue by:

1. **Examining things and thinking more:**
 - Plato emphasizes the importance of reflection and reasoning. He believed wisdom comes from thinking deeply, and without wisdom, humans cannot flourish.
2. **Masterly using reason:**
 - When we limit our reasoning, negative consequences can arise. By mastering reason, we can control ourselves, act for the common good, and flourish.
3. **Living by the four cardinal virtues:**
 - Plato's virtues — wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice—lead to a harmonious and fulfilling life. Living by these virtues promotes human flourishing.

THE HUMAN PERSON FLOURISHING IN TERMS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Technology's role in human flourishing

- Technology has always been defined as a “means to an end” and “being a human activity.”
 - **as a means to an end** underscores its role in addressing human needs such as inventions that made human life easier and convenient
 - **recognizing it as a human activity** emphasizes our creative and ethical responsibilities.

For Plato and Aristotle, they called flourishing life

EUDAIMONIA – which is equated with **happiness**.

- happiness results from Eudaimonia or (another term of) Human Flourishing.

Eudaimonia or Human Flourishing = **Happiness**

HAPPINESS

- In **psychology**, happiness is a mental or emotional state of well-being
- To **behaviorists**, happiness are emotions we experience when we do something good or positive.
- To **neurologists**, happiness is the experience of a flood of hormones released in the brain as a reward for behavior.
- The **hedonistic view** of well-being is that happiness is the polar opposite of suffering, the presence of happiness indicates the absence of pain.
- **The eudaimonia view** defines happiness by challenging themselves intellectually or by engaging in activities that make them spiritually richer people.

Eudaimonia – Greek word that can be rendered as “**happiness**,” “**well-being**,” or “**flourishing**.”

- combines the Greek words for “**good**” and “**spirit**” to describe the ideology. Eudaimonia defines happiness as the pursuit of becoming a better person.

In Aristotle's ethics, eudaimonia refers to a state of living well, reaching one's potential, and achieving flourishing. It is frequently related with the concept of leading a virtuous life and reaching personal greatness.

Aristotle

- was born 304 B.C.
- philosophy scientist
- contributed so much to the science, technology, political theory, and aesthetics world; followed that knowledge of the world begins by looking and examining that which exists.
- proposed that we should build good character in order for our souls to flourish, a state that goes beyond superficial bliss.
- The concept of Aristotelian virtue ethics is based on the assumption that all men have the capacity for virtue and character excellence.

"good spirited" you are going to be a good person.

Principles of Human Flourishing

- **Dignity of the Human Person** - it demands respect for all people regardless of their social class, wealth, etc.
- **Common Good** - sacrificing self-interest to provide for the basic human needs of everyone so that the whole community will flourish.
- **Preferential Option for the poor** - when a decisions are made by first considering the poor.
- **Subsidiarity** - when all those affected by a decision are involved in making it.
- **Universal Purpose of Goods** - the earth's resources serve every person's needs, regardless of who 'owns' them.

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- **Promotion of peace** - everyone has the duty to respect and collaborate in personal relationships, and at national and global levels.
- **Participation** - everyone has the right and the duty to take part in the life of a society.
- **Global Solidarity** - recognition that we are all interconnected.

Different Conceptions of Human Flourishing

HUMAN FLOURISHING IN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

- **St. Augustine of Hippo and St. Thomas Aquinas** proposed that eudaimonia or human flourishing requires one to have knowledge of God.
- **John Locke**, who derived fundamental principles of his philosophy from the Bible, stressed that happiness is pursued through prudence.

"Prudence" means maalam o maingat in terms to thought of the future.

Old Testament

- The concept of human flourishing in the Old Testament is best described by the word "**shalom**", which, according to theologians, means peace, harmony, and completeness. It is a sense of wholeness involving an individual's relationship with God and His creations.

New Testament

- The concept of human flourishing is captured in the Bible's New Testament through the Beatitudes. These are the eight blessings preached by Jesus to his followers in Matthew 5:1-12. Each beatitude begins with the Greek word makarios (plural makarioi) meaning "blessed" or "happy."
- The word beatitude comes from the Latin word beatus meaning "blissful", "happy", "fortunate", and "flourishing". From Matthew 5:1-12, it says here "In these verses, Jesus identified attributes that He and His Father possess that lead to true happiness in this life and in the life to come."
- In classical Greek, makar from makarios refers to the state of living a life of happiness without struggles and difficulties. Makarios is commonly used as a synonym for eudaimonia because both connote happiness, peace of mind, joy, and the good life.
- According to the Bible, Jesus preached that human flourishing can be achieved by placing God at the center of one's life.
- Scot McKnight highlighted in his discussion of the Beatitudes that "the entire philosophy of 'the good life' and the late-modern theory of 'happiness' are at work when [Jesus] says, 'Blessed are...' (2013)"

SOCIO PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Science and technology clearly affect the human experience and human understanding of happiness. Advancements in science and technology, having made life easier, greatly influence the way people view what a good life is.

According to Carol Ryff (1995), a psychology professor, studied different models and theories of happiness in different subfields of psychology. She

1. **Personal growth this includes** (learning new skills, embracing changes, overcoming challenges) which all leads to oneself betterment.
2. **Self-acceptance**, it's about acknowledging who you are, our laws and all, and choosing to accept yourself unconditionally.
3. **Autonomy** refers to the ability to make independent decisions and act freely, without undue influence or control from others. Ika nga nila "Just Do you", do what your gut tells you or what makes you happy without depending on what other will think about you.
4. **Environmental mastery** refers to a person's ability to understand, appreciate, and interact effectively with their environment.
5. **Positive relationship** simply means a connection between two or more people in positive mutual respect and understanding.
6. **Purpose in life**, this for sure we all know what is the meaning of "purpose in life". Can anyone explain the meaning of this?

Anthony Bradley (2013), a professor at the King's College in New York, echoed Ryff's idea in his article "The New Legalism" where he wrote:

"An emphasis on human flourishing, ours and others', becomes important because it is characterized by a holistic concern for the spiritual, moral, physical, economic, material, political, psychological, and social context necessary for human beings to live according to their design."

CONSEQUENCES OF HUMAN FLOURISHING

- In order to come up with technological innovations, humanity has taken control of the environment to take advantage of its natural resources. Modernization advances science, technology, and the human future at the cost of nature's degradation.
 - According to Gerd Leonhard, there would be "an avalanche of technological changes that could reshape the very essence of humanity and every aspect of life on our planet (2016, i)."

Scientists like Stephen Hawking, Stuart Russell, Max Tegmark, and Frank Wilczek published an open letter in The Independent in May 2014 stating that the emergence of artificial intelligence poses a great danger to humanity. They pointed out the possibility that such technology can outsmart humans in terms

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of business and research, manipulate human leaders, and develop dangerous and highly advanced weapons.

For that reason, AI's have the potential to outsmart human in terms of:

- Business and Research: Data analysis, automation, and innovation.
- Manipulation: Psychological profiling
- Weapons: Autonomous weapons, bioweapons, and cyberweapons.

While AI offers significant benefits, it also presents significant risks that must be carefully managed.

The impact of rapidly developing technologies such as artificial intelligence goes beyond the present condition. It affects not only humans but also the environment.