

## Aristotle

Aristotle is an ancient philosopher that was born in the late 300's BCE. He was a student of Plato and one of the best students at the Academy (which was founded by Plato). Aristotle did not believe in Plato's theory of the forms, but rather believed that the essence of things belonged to the things themselves.

Aristotle believed that there were two kinds of end: 1) Instrumental ends, and 2) Intrinsic ends.

Instrumental ends are described as being ends of which we desire because they allow us to achieve another goal. They are ends that serve a purpose. For example, taking a philosophy class could be considered an instrumental end if you are only taking the class in order to graduate. Another example would be working as a cashier for the purpose of getting a paycheck. It is considered instrumental because you are working there for the sake of getting paid, not because being a cashier is something you love to do.

Intrinsic ends are ends, which we desire for their own sake. For example, taking philosophy class because you enjoy philosophy and you just want to know more about it, for your own sake. You are not taking it just because it is a requirement for graduation, but because you genuinely want to know more about philosophy for your own well-being.

Aristotle believed that happiness was an intrinsic end for humans. He believed that people's lives were filled with instrumental ends in order to achieve the one basic intrinsic end of happiness. In his theory, happiness was achieved when something is good, and what was good was something that fulfilled its function or purpose.

In other words, the word "good" is directly related to the distinctive function of a thing. The definition of good is something that performs well, and the definition of function is something that has a unique trait.

For example, a good pen would be a pen that provides you with the function of being able to write on things. A pen that does not fulfill its function, or a bad pen, is one that does not write at all. Another example could be with a sweater. A good sweater that is fulfilling its function would be one that keeps you warm when it is cold outside. A sweater that does not keep you warm would not be fulfilling its function and therefore would be bad.

Aristotle attempted to define the purpose of man using this theory. He believed that man was essentially a rational animal, and that is was our function to reason and act according to reason. A man that reasons is fulfilling his function and moreover, he will achieve happiness. A man that does not reason is not fulfilling his purpose and will not achieve happiness.

To better explain his theory of the function of a man, Aristotle classified the human soul into 3 types: 1) vegetative, 2) appetitive, and 3) rational.

The vegetative soul has the capacity to take in nutrition and grow, but Aristotle did not deem this as our purpose because taking in nutrition and growing was not unique to humans and therefore could not be our function.

The appetitive type of the soul, or the desiring part of the soul, is our capacity to have sensations and desires. Aristotle also did not classify this as the function of man because he believed that this too was not unique.

The rational type of soul is the part of the soul that includes theoretical reasoning and practical reasoning. Theoretical reasoning would be reasoning used in math and science, and practical reasoning would be the reasoning that determines ethical actions. Aristotle believed that the rational part of the soul is the purpose of man because the ability to reason is unique to man.