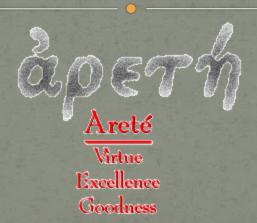
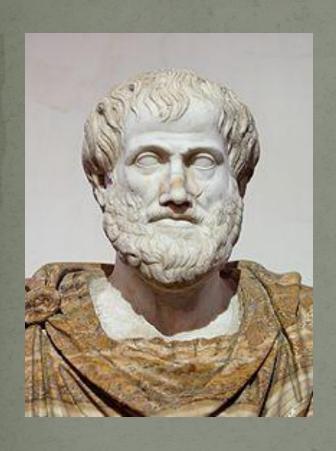
Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics



Εύδαιμονία : The highest aim of humans



Eudaimonia

- Defined as happiness, living well, flourishing
- It is that thing which we desire for itself and not for any other end.
 - It requires a proper balance or sufficient quantity of four things: Honor (having friends), Fortune, Pleasure and Virtue.

Eudaimonia: Honor, Fortune & Pleasure

- Health, wealth, and other such resources—are sought because they promote well-being, not because they are what well-being consists in.
- "Luck loves virtue" (Aristotle quoting someone else could be Hessiod or Euripedes) These elements may be due in a good part to luck but are also closely tied to proper outcomes of consistently virtuous action.
- These elements are necessary only because "someone who is friendless, childless, powerless, weak, and ugly will simply not be able to find many opportunities for virtuous activity over a long period of time, and what little he can accomplish will not be of great merit."

(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Eudaimonia: Virtue and Reason

- Aristotle argues that the highest end of humans consists in "activity of the rational part of the soul in accordance with perfect virtue."
- "...what sets humanity off from other species, giving us the potential to live a better life, is our capacity to guide ourselves by using reason. If we use reason well, we live well as human beings."

(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Virtue (Arete/ άρετή)

Definitions:

- 1. Acting with excellence
- 2. An activity of the rational part of the soul
- 3. Reason excellently applied
- 4. The means between the extremes

Two kinds of virtues:

- Practical or Moral "the result of habit or custom"
- Intellectual which "owes its birth and growth mainly to instruction and so requires time and experience."



Virtue: Reason Excellently Applied

Sophia (σοφία)

- Wisdom
- a combination of *nous* (the intellect) and *episteme* (knowledge).
- Allows one to know what qualities of the character are best

Phronesis (φρόνησις)

- Practical Judgment
- Required for judging things according to the aim of living well overall
- Allows one to apply a given quality of activity in any given context

- The Golden Mean not an arithmetic mean but a relative mean the proper application of a quality in a given context
- Virtue is defined as the mean between the vice of excess and the vice of deficiency too much of a characteristic is as bad as too little
- Each of us must assess our abilities and have a good understanding of the situation or context of our moral decisions.

Vice of Excess	<u>Virtue</u>	Vice of Deficiency
• Foolhardiness	Courage	Cowardice
Unrestrained giving	Liberality	Stinginess
Drunkenness	Temperance	Abstinence
• Bragging	Truthfulness	Mock modesty
• Vanity	Pride	Humility

• Aristotle says that the virtuous person "sees the truth in each case, being as it were a standard and measure of them".... Aristotle thinks of the good person as someone who is good at deliberation, and he describes deliberation as a process of rational inquiry. The intermediate point that the good person tries to find is "determined by *logos* ("reason," "account") and in the way that the person of practical reason would determine it"

(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

• Is Aristotle's doctrine of means the same as, "everything in moderation?" Can one be *too virtuous*?

• NO!

- It is impossible to be too just we can't be too lawful or fair
- It is impossible to be too courageous; as courage is just the right balance between rashness and cowardice – courage is hitting the mark just right

Virtue: Courage

- Aristotle argued the highest kind of courage is exhibited in actions done for their own sake – a kind of beauty
- One who is courageous may feel fear

 as it is rational to do so, but they are
 able to balance that fear with a proper
 confidence





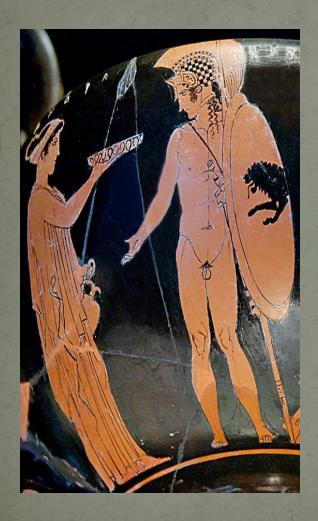
"Woman Wrestled Fresh
Ammo Clip From Tucson
Shooter as He Tried to
Reload: Patricia Maisch
Hailed as One of the
Heroes Who Stopped
Tucson Slaughter"

Virtue: Courage

- "For one swallow does not make a summer, nor does one day; and so too one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed and happy."
- Virtues must become habituated – over time through repeated activity we become courageous.



Virtue: Courage



- There are other kinds of courage, such as that of the Trojan hero Hektor.
- Aristotle says this is largely a result of penalties for cowardice and honors for bravery.
- This is different from true courage because it is not based on voluntary actions aimed at being beautiful in their own right.
- But this is close to the best sort of courage as it is important for soldiers to fight *as if* they were brave.

Virtue: Pride

- The rational assessment of self worth in the context of the *polis*.
- It is **not** the same as arrogance (*hubris*) or vanity
- Aristotle called it the "crowning virtue" as it is fundamental to the inculcation of all the other moral virtues.



Some Objections to Aristotle's Virtue Theory:

- What if what we're good at is not something that is a good thing – problem is that the answer becomes circular – it is bad because it is not good.
- Suppose that the purpose of all things is a myth suppose there is no higher purpose & everything is random and accidental? Then the only sense of purpose is that which individuals assign to things.
- Aristotle asks too much of his moral agent; few if any people can act rationally all the time.
- Why must one assume there is just one purpose for each thing or person – why can't there be many purposes & a multitude of functions?