
ARISTOTELIANISM — An Overview

Inception: Aristotle was born in 384 BCE

Adherents: [EBI Estimate]

Primary Value Proposition: A moral person is one who cultivates certain virtues based on reasoning.

The Word of (about and/or attributed to) God:

- God is the necessary first source of movement who is himself unmoved.
- God is a being with everlasting life, and perfect blessedness, engaged in never-ending contemplation
- God is all actuality, Actus Purus.
- Actuality and potentiality are found in all beings, with the exception of the Supreme Cause, in whom there is no imperfection, and, therefore, no potentiality.
- Only God is simultaneously all that He can be, infinitely real and infinitely perfect.
- His attributes and His operations are identical with His essence, and His essence includes essentially His existence.

Core Beliefs: Aristotle observed that the validity of any argument can be determined by its structure rather than its content. A classic example of a valid argument is his syllogism: All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; therefore, Socrates is mortal. Given the structure of this argument, as long as the premises are true, then the conclusion is also guaranteed to be true.

Aristotle's emphasis on good reasoning combined with his belief in the scientific method forms the backdrop for most of his work. Aristotle identifies the highest good with intellectual virtue; that is, a moral person is one who cultivates certain virtues based on reasoning. Aristotle famously rejected Plato's theory of forms, which states that properties such as beauty are abstract universal entities that exist independent of the objects themselves. Instead, he argued that forms are intrinsic to the objects and cannot exist apart from them, and so must be studied in relation to them.

The Categories of Aristotle include substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, situation, condition, action, and passion. They seem to be arranged according to the order of the questions we would ask in gaining knowledge of an object. For example, we ask, first, what a thing is, then how great it is, next of what kind it is.

Notions when isolated do not in themselves express either truth or falsehood: it is only with the combination of ideas in a proposition that truth and falsity are possible. The truth or falsity of propositions is determined by their agreement or disagreement with the facts they represent. Thus propositions are either affirmative or negative, each of which again may be either universal or particular or undesignated.

Ethics, as viewed by Aristotle, is an attempt to find out our chief end or highest good: an end which he maintains is really final. Though many ends of life are only means to further ends, our aspirations and desires must have some final object or pursuit.