

Contemporary Moral Problems

Chapter: Happiness and Virtue

Amazonlink:

<http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

What I expect to learn:

- To learn Aristotle's definition of happiness and virtue and its relation to morality

Quote:

“...with regard to feelings of fear and confidence, courage is the mean; of the people who exceed, he who exceeds in fearlessness has no name, while the man who exceeds in confidence is rash, and he who exceeds in fear and falls short in confidence is a coward.”

Book Review:

As what I read from Wikipedia, Aristotle considered ethics to be a practical rather than theoretical study, i.e. one aimed at doing good rather than knowing for its own sake. Aristotle taught that virtue has to do with the proper function (ergon) of a thing. An eye is only a good eye in so much as it can see, but because the proper function of an eye is sight. Aristotle reasoned that humans must have a function specific to humans, and that this function must be an activity of the soul in accordance with reason. Aristotle identified such an optimum activity of the soul as the aim of all human deliberate action, eudaimonia, generally translated as “happiness” or sometimes “well being”. To have the potential of ever being happy in this way necessarily requires a good character, often translated as moral virtue.

On this chapter, Aristotle also mentioned about excess and deficiency, which means that we should know our limitation on being happy, that we should not do harm to ourselves and others when we pursue happiness.

What I have learned:

- I learned that happiness is pleasure, honor, or wealth.

- I learned that virtue acts as an intermediate, the mean in relation with excess and deficiency

Integrative Question:

1. What is happiness according to Aristotle?
2. What is virtue according to Aristotle?
3. What is the connection between happiness and virtue?
4. If someone is happy, is he morally correct in everything he does?
5. Why Aristotle sees human beings as beasts not humans?

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle>