Lucía Serrano

Jeffrey Dueck

PHI101

February 27th, 2023

Paper 1: Epistemology.

Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC), who was a Greek philosopher, believed that everything in the natural world has a purpose, a goal, this ois the idea of teleology. He explained that though observation, we can reach the understanding of the world. He developed a concept, “golden mean”, which he used to explain the center between two extremes. Moreover, Aristotle stated that the best form of goverment would be a mixed constitution, and he thought that the achivement of happiness had great importance as well as courage and compasion. His philosophy was critizied and praised. It had a significant impact on the way of thinking, especially on Western. However, it was, and still being, critizied not only for its lack of applicability in certain situations but also because of its potential restrictiveness.

Aristotle analyzed the concept of teology. He based his philosophy in this concept which afirms that evering in this world exits because it has a purpose or an end goal. He explained that every living or non-living object has a purpose, or telos, that guides its development and behavior. For example, the telos of an acorn is to become an oak tree and the purpose or telos of a human being is to live a virtuous life.

Aristotles´s view of the world was deeply rooted in his empirical observations. He believed that his theory could be explained by observing and through experience, rather than just through pure reason or speculation. He also emphasized on the importance of casuality, arguing that everything that exists is caused by something else. Aristotle's epistemology is based on the information that we get through the sense and that we transform into knowledge

afterwards. He believed that the mind must organize the information received through perception and make sense of it. He states that knowledge is acquired by experience, and he divides it in two: theorical and practical.

For Aristotle, theorical knowledge, also known as speculative knowledge, was based on the understanding of the nature of things. On the other hand, practical knowledge is concerned with knowing how to do things. He also explained that knowledge is hierarchical, basic knowledge include the understanding of physical and complex knowledge abstract ideas and concepts. He introduce the four causes (the material cause, the formal cause, the efficient cause and, the final cause) which he used to understand the causes of things to reach knowledge. Material causes refer to the physical substance that make up an object, formal causes refer to the form or shape the object has, efficient causes refer to the forces that make the object change or stay the same way, and final causes refer the purpose an object has.

One of Aristotle´s most important contributions to philosophy was his idea of the “golden mean”. It refers to the idea that virtue lies in finding a balance between excess and deficiency in our actions and emotions. According to Aristotle, every virtue represents a midpoint between two extremes - one of excess and the other of deficiency. For example, the virtue of courage lies between the extremes of recklessness (excess) and cowardice (deficiency). Similarly, the virtue of generosity lies between the extremes of wastefulness (excess) and stinginess (deficiency). Aristotle believed that finding this "golden mean" was essential to living a virtuous life. He also believed that the specific midpoint would vary depending on the situation and the individual involved. This means that what constitutes a virtuous act or emotion in one situation may not be the same as in another situation.

He also made great contribution to politics. He believed in the importance of ethics and politics and stated that the purpose or telos of human life was the achivement

eudaimonia. He explained the concept of eudaimonia as happiness that could be reached by living a virtuous life including compassion, courage and honesty in it.

Aristotles philosophy changed the thought and generated great advances although it was also hardly criticized. Aristotle's essentialist theory, which holds that things have fundamental qualities that characterize their essence, is excessively inflexible and does not account for the fluidity of identity that may occur in complex systems. This point of view has the potential to oversimplify and essentialize complex social identities. Moreover, Aristotle's teleology—the notion that everything in nature has a purpose—has come under fire for being unprovable and having the potential to result in a circular argument in which the goal of something is thought to be the goal of the item itself. Aristotle's philosophy, according to some detractors, is overly anthropocentric and places too much emphasis on human issues at the expense of the larger environment or other non-human things. In comparison to present knowledge, Aristotle's philosophy was founded on a limited grasp of science and the natural world, and several of his worldviews have been proven false by new scientific findings. To conclude, he has been attacked for holding prejudices against gender and race, specifically his idea that women and non-Greeks were beneath males and Greeks.

Finally, I find Aristotle´s philosophy to be very compelling and interesting. What really brought my attention is the importance he gives to empirical observation and his focus on politics and ethics. Also, I find really interesting the development of the four causes and the division he made between practical and theorical knowledge. While I think there are valid critiques of his ideas, I believe that his contributions to philosophy have had a lasting impact and are still relevant today.