

Aristotle and Augustine are grand philosophers and known authors. They both talk about the human life and each one has his own idea of what the best human life is and what things are ought to do in order to reach it. To facilitate the understanding of this, it is need to differentiate what is doing something right and do what is wrong in human activity. Therefore, I will explain what are the arguments of each philosopher and what differences can be notice between their thoughts.

Aristotle sees moral weakness as something to be avoided. His main idea about the ability to know what is right and to do what is wrong, and in what he bases humans moral weakness is perfectly resumed in the following words:

Moral weakness does not occur in the presence of knowledge in the strict sense, and it is sensory knowledge, not science, which is dragged about by emotion

The main reason why Aristotle thinks that humans can be morally weak is because we have the conception of universals. A great example that explains is the one that talks about one universal that forbids us to taste sweet things and the other universal, which tells us that everything, sweet is pleasant. Suddenly, appetite is presented to us. Therefore, a dilemma arises, since one opinion will tell us to avoid sweet things and in the other hand appetite (desire), will push us to eat it. From this we can conclude that:

A morally weak man acts under the influence of some kind of reasoning and opinion, an opinion which is not intrinsically but only incidentally opposed to right reason

So, a person knows what is wrong but his/her opinion or desire makes him/her think that they would get something good from that in-moral act. That is what leads a person to moral weakness. Thus, Aristotle thinks that knowledge has to be much stronger than desire or opinion in order to avoid moral weakness.

On the other hand, Augustine thinks in the following way about moral weakness; you can know what is wrong and right, and still do it wrong. Why is this? . It is because God gives us freedom, and the capacity to choose between right or wrong and good or evil. The only possible solution for Augustine in order to act ethically is to put our faith to God.

For Augustine to have faith in God means to live in the light. You have to stay faithful to the light. It is not essay, since there are a lot of desires and pressures that can drive you in some other direction. Something that Augustine mentions as being a good help for staying inside the light is remembering.

A good example of how overcoming moral weakness in Augustine life, is when he met some fellow students coming from dinner and he refused to go with them to this cruel game which he used to love. He wanted to stop watching those fights because he thought they were not morally right, but at the same time he was not able to quit watching them. Until he realized that in order to do the right thing and chose the moral act, he needed God.

As he says, the key factor for the overcoming of your in-moral actions is to believe that God will forgive

everything and that He will bring you grace.

Humans have desires. When choosing between one action (desire) over the other (reason), the probability of making the same choice again increases because of the feeling that you get from it (habituation; which will form your character). This desire, whether it is good or bad adds up.

In Augustine's particular case, sex and power were the two most important things in his life. Those things that you believe most important to you are going to affect directly into the decisions of your actions. The only thing that can change those decisions in a person's life is love. What changed Augustine from his moral weakness was the new path taken. This was the falling in love with God. So, for Augustine all the good things are only possible with God. It is the only way to have a good life, and he gives his life as an example that our only goodness comes from God.

Now that I presented both arguments, I'm going to talk about the differences and similarities in Augustine and Aristotle's theories.

It is important to notice that happiness in both, Aristotle and Augustine, tends to God and that because of him, happiness is possible. Another point in which they agree is in the existence of certain barriers or difficulties that make the activity of reaching the truth much more difficult. Also, they agree that this kind of life (happiness), is the best one and the one to which humans must dedicate and strive to have.

These aspects are as evident as the differences between Aristotle and Augustine's thoughts. Such as, the nature of happiness. For Aristotle, happiness is understood as the imitation of God's life (contemplative life), which is the example to follow. Therefore, humans will reach truth by the approaching of this kind of life, which is focus on the knowing of all things and not on the knowing of God that is basically the approach of Augustine.

Moreover, Augustine finds happiness as a tool in order to reach God, who is considered as the final and most important thing. On the other hand, happiness is the most final and absolute thing for Aristotle.

If we would like to reflect the thoughts of these two authors in a historic context, first, we would have to talk about politics and social aspects of each epoch that are related to the role of religion in a specific moment. Secondly, take into account the thinkers who greatly influenced into their thoughts and finally, go over their personal conditions and real problems that determined their philosophic trajectory. But what is impossible to do is to say that one of them is more right in his thoughts than the other. Aristotle and Augustine had each a different way of thinking and being. They are essential pillars of the human thought over which has been built great and important theories about human activity.

Signed: "Rodi"