

ARISTOTLE

Biographical sketch

- * Born 384 B.C. in Stagira, Macedonia
- * Becomes student at Plato's Academy at age 17 (367)
- * Begins to collaborate with Plato
- * Leaves Academy after Plato's death (347) & pursues research in biology
- * Becomes tutor of Alexander of Macedonia (future Alexander the Great)
- * Founds Lyceum in Athens, 334
- * Alexander dies 323; Aristotle returns to Stagira & dies in 322
- * Explored entirety of human knowledge
- * Works include: *Categories, Topics, Ethics, Metaphysics, On the Soul, Generation of Animals*, etc.

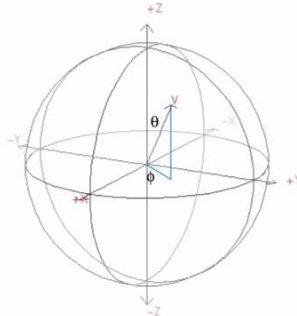


Rembrandt: Aristotle and a bust of Homer

Passages from Aristotle's work*

1. Life belongs to God; for the actuality (*energeia*) of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and God's essential actuality is life most good and eternal. We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this *is* God (*Met. L.7*).
2. Since there are some things that can exist apart (are separable), and others that cannot, the first are substances (*ousiai*). Since without the substances there can be no change or movement, the same things are causes of all things. Then these things will be soul and body, or intellect and desire and body (*Met. L.5*).
3. Substance is thought to belong most obviously to bodies; and so we say that not only animals and plants and their parts are substances, but also natural bodies such as fire and water and earth and everything of the sort, and all things that are either parts of these or composed of these (either of parts or of the whole bodies), e.g. the physical universe and its parts, stars and moon and sun (*Met. Z.2*)
4. If then something common must be said for every soul, it would be "the first actuality (*entelecheia*) of a natural body having organs" (*An. ii.1*).
5. Soul must be substance as form of a natural body having life potentially (*An. ii.1*).

6. Of all things that come to us by nature we first acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the actuality. This is plain in the case of the senses; for it was not by often seeing or often hearing that we got these senses, but on the contrary we had them before we used them, and did not come to have them by using them (EN ii.1).
7. By the matter I mean, for instance, the bronze, by the shape the pattern of its form, and by the compound of these the statue, the concrete whole (Met. Z.3). [Below left: a quantity of bronze scrap. Center: the spherical shape. Right: the bronze sphere composite.]



8. By form I mean the essence of each thing and its primary substance (Met. Z.7).
9. The case of intellect (*nous*) is different; it seems to be an independent substance implanted within the soul and to be incapable of being destroyed (An.i.4).
10. It remains that the intellect alone enters afterwards from without and alone is divine: for in no way does a bodily actuality partake of its actuality (GA 736a27f).
11. How did you dare to come below to Hades' realm, where the dead live on as mindless disembodied ghosts? (Homer, *Od.* xi, 475, E. Rieu, trans.).
12. Justice is the only virtue that seems to be another person's good, because it is related to another; for it does what benefits another (EN 1130a4).
13. If someone makes a profit, we can refer it to no other vice than injustice (EE 1130a32).
14. Of everything which we possess there are two uses: both belong to the thing as such, but not in the same manner, for one is the proper, and the other the improper or secondary use of it. For example, a shoe is used for wear, and is used for exchange; both are uses of the shoe. He who gives a shoe in exchange for money or food to him who wants one, does indeed use the shoe as a shoe, but this is not its proper or primary purpose, for a shoe is not made to be an object of exchange. The same may be said of all possessions, for the art of exchange extends to all of them (Pol. 1157a5-18).
15. The one who is superior believes the proportion [of exchange] should be constructed conversely, so that as he is in proportion to the lesser partner, so the contribution from the lesser to the relationship should be to his contribution--being disposed just as ruler to ruled ... But the one who is inferior, reverses the proportion and combines the terms diagonally [so that the lesser would receive from the superior in proportion to the latter's superiority]. The superior individual would seem to suffer a loss in this way, and the friendship and association would seem to be a burdensome duty. Then, some other thing must balance the relationship and make it proportional. And this is honour, the very thing by nature fitting for the ruler and the god in relation to the ruled. The gain [of the lesser party] must be balanced in relation to honour (EE 1242b15-21).
16. So, too, there are many senses in which a thing is said to be, but all refer to one starting-point; some things are said to be because they are substances, others because they are affections of substance, others because they are a process towards substance, or destructions or privations or qualities of substance, or productive or generative of substance, or of things which are relative to substance, or negations of one of these thing of substance itself (Met. 1003b6-10).

17. Expressions which are in no way composite signify substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, or affection. To sketch my meaning roughly, examples of substance are 'man' or 'the horse', of quantity, such terms as 'two cubits long' or 'three cubits long', of quality, such attributes as 'white', 'grammatical'. 'Double', 'half', 'greater', fall under the category of relation; 'in the market place', 'in the Lyceum', under that of place; 'yesterday', 'last year', under that of time. 'Lying', 'sitting', are terms indicating position, 'shod', 'armed', state; 'to lance', 'to cauterize', action; 'to be lanced', 'to be cauterized', affection (Cat. i.4)
18. The men who introduced this doctrine did not posit Ideas of classes within which they recognized priority and posteriority ... but the term 'good' is used both in the category of substance and in that of quality and in that of relation, and that which is per se, i.e. substance, is prior in nature to the relative (for the latter is like an off shoot and accident of being); so that there could not be a common Idea set over all these goods. Further, since 'good' has as many senses as 'being' (for it is predicated both in the category of substance, as of God and of reason, and in quality, i.e. of the virtues, and in quantity, i.e. of that which is moderate, and in relation, i.e. of the useful, and in time, i.e. of the right opportunity, and in place, i.e. of the right locality and the like), clearly it cannot be something universally present in all cases and single; for then it could not have been predicated in all the categories but in one only (EN i.6).
19. Look also at the classes of the predicates signified by the term, and see if they are the same in all cases. For if they are not the same, then clearly the term is homonymous: e.g. 'good' in the case of food means 'productive of pleasure', and in the case of medicine 'productive of health', whereas as applied to the soul it means to be of a certain quality, e.g. temperate or courageous or just: and likewise also, as applied to 'man'. Sometimes it signifies what happens at a certain time, as (e.g.) the good that happens at the right time: for what happens at the right time is called good. Often it signifies what is of certain quantity, e.g. as applied to the proper amount: for the proper amount too is called good. So then the term 'good' is homonymous (*Top.* i.15.107a3f).
20. Let us again return to the good we are seeking, and ask what it can be. It seems different in different actions and arts; it is different in medicine, in strategy, and in the other arts. What then is the good of each? Surely that for whose sake everything else is done. In medicine this is health, in strategy victory, in architecture a house, in any other sphere something else, and in every action and pursuit the end; for it is for the sake of this that all men do whatever else they do... Since there are evidently more than one end, and we choose some of these... for the sake of something else, clearly not all ends are final ends; but the chief good is evidently something final. Therefore, if there is only one final end, this will be what we are seeking, and if there are more than one, the most final of these will be what we are seeking (EN.i.7).
21. In a household first are the origins and sources of friendship, civil government and right (EE 1242a40).
22. Parents love their children as themselves (for those from them are like other selves in being separated), and children love parents since they have arisen and are by nature from them, and brothers love brothers by having arisen and being by nature from the same parents, for the identity that exists with respect to those things makes them the same for each other, from whence people say 'the same blood and root' and such. Indeed, they are the same thing somehow, divided in parts (EN 1161b28-33).
23. 'Civic friendship is just an extension to a whole city of the kinds of psychological bonds that tie together a family and make possible this immediate participation of each family member in the good of the others' (J. Cooper, 'Political animals and civic friendship' in G. Patzig, ed., *Aristoteles Politik*, Göttingen, 1990).

24. 'Cause' means (1) [the material cause] that from which, as immanent material, a thing comes into being, e.g. the bronze is the cause of the statue and the silver of the saucer, and so are the classes which include these. (2) [the formal cause] The form or pattern, i.e. the definition of the essence, and the classes which include this (e.g. the ratio 2:1 and number in general are causes of the octave), and the parts included in the definition. (3) [the efficient cause] That from which the change or the resting from change first begins; e.g. the adviser is a cause of the action, and the father a cause of the child, and in general the maker a cause of the thing made and the change-producer of the changing. (4) [the final cause] The end, i.e. that for the sake of which a thing is; e.g. health is the cause of walking. For 'Why does one walk?' we say; 'that one may be healthy'; and in speaking thus we think we have given the cause. The same is true of all the means that intervene before the end, when something else has put the process in motion, as e.g. thinning or purging or drugs or instruments intervene before health is reached; for all these are for the sake of the end, though they differ from one another in that some are instruments and others are actions (*Meta D.2*).
25. The act of contemplation is what is most pleasant and best. If, then, God is always in that good state in which we sometimes are, this compels our wonder; and if in a better this compels it yet more. And God is in a better state. And life also belongs to God; for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality (*Met. L.7*).
26. philosophy is dead. Philosophy has not kept up with modern developments in science, particularly physics. Scientists have become the bearers of the torch of discovery in our quest for knowledge (Hawking et al., *Grand Design*, p 1).
27. Because there is a law like gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing ... Spontaneous creation is the reason why there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exist, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going. (Hawking, op. cit. p 180).
28. I suspect that if Aristotle were to read *The Grand Design* he might suggest that Hawking has concentrated on the material and efficient explanations of the cosmos, and simply not fully understood the force of questions about possible formal and final explanations. To say that the law of gravity allows the universe to create itself from nothing won't do: is the law of gravity supposed to be 'nothing'? Why is there a law of gravity and not no law of gravity? Appeals to M-theory will not satisfy either. (Angie Hobbs' Blog).

Sentences exemplifying the Categories

Statement

Category

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1) Sarine has a good mind. | Substance |
| 2) Tarek is conscientious. | Quality |
| 3) Ralph chose a moderate portion. | Quantity |
| 4) The computer was useful for preparing this lecture. | Relation |
| 5) Salim arrived at the opportune time to apply for the job. | Time |
| 6) The green oval is a good place for a picnic. | Place |

* Translations from Barnes & others. *Met.* = Metaphysics; *An* = On the Soul; *EN* = Nicomachean Ethics; *EE* = Eudemian Ethics, *GA* = Generation of Animals, *Ca* = Categories, *Top* = Topics.

For further reading

- J. Barnes, ed., *Complete Works of Aristotle*, Princeton, 1984.
 S. M. Cohen, "Aristotle's Metaphysics," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (online)*
 M.Loux, *Metaphysics: a contemporary introduction*, 2nd ed., London: Routledge, 1998.
 C. Shields, "Aristotle's Psychology," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (online)*