

Aristotle (summary of main points from Guthrie)

- **Born in Ionia** (Greece – c. 384BC—REMEMBER THE **MILESIAN FOCUS!!!**), supporter of Macedonia – **father was physician to Philip II of Macedon.**
- Begins studies at Plato's Academy at 17. Writes essay with *Phaedo* as model.
- After Plato's death, leaves Greece – supporters of Macedon are not popular there. Moves to Assos (near Lesbos) – **Hermeias is "Philosopher-King" there** (sympathetic to Plato, anyway), but under Persian rule.
 - Aristotle lectures for 3 years of his stay there – biological works, scientific material
 - Hermeias is executed by Persians for treason (= end of philosopher-king...)
- 342BC - Takes post as **tutor to Alexander the Great (age: 15) – educates prince.** Conviction in the superiority of the Hellenes (Greeks (includes Macedonians)) – could rule the world if only politically united (Aristotle, *Politics*).
- When Alexander ascends to throne, moves back to Athens. Starts Lyceum (dedicated to Apollo *Lykeios*) – builds "first library" and facilities for scientific research – specializes in "sciences of observation."
- **Alexander dies 323 – Aristotle leaves Athens:** "to prevent Athens from committing another sin against philosophy."
- Moves to Chalkis in Euboea (dies in 322).

On **Platonic Forms/Ideas = empty words/"poetic metaphors" without content**

Attempts to explain the natural world – robust common sense

Fundamentally, remains on Plato's side, but holds that the true cause or explanation of things is to be found in the END = Teleological view: tries to answer WHY? Not HOW?

Takes over from Plato:

1. **Teleological viewpoint**
2. The conviction that **reality lies in FORM:** including the idea of **function** (*ergon*)

In seeking the **out-of-which** :

- **MATTER** (*hyle*) = **secondary characteristic**
- Must find the **distinguishing characteristics** of a thing: **form (essence)**
 - **Must describe the FORM into-which** it has grown/become
 - **FUNCTION** (*ergon*) is dependent upon form

Thus, like Plato, knowledge is possible and it is **knowledge of FORM, not MATTER.**

However, whereas **Plato** assumed a transcendent world of Forms "above and beyond being" – where the **causality of the Ideas remains unaccounted for**, **Aristotle "rebelled" and focused on the "world" and the phenomena of motion and change – searches for root of causality in the world.**

Aristotle **seeks stability** within the perceived changing reality in the world (**remember Milesians!!!!**).

Two concepts to approach this:

1. Immanent form
2. Potentiality (*dynamis*)

1. IMANENT FORM

Seeks basic principles (**unchanging substances (ousia)**) underlying permanent flux.

- Via analysis of INDIVIDUAL sensible object
 - *this* man, *this* table – define class, analyse structure = inductive analysis
 - form can exist only in concrete objects (physical body)
 - **substance** is compound of form (nature)-matter (indeterminate substratum)
 - given substratum, can distinguish between substance and attributes (allows for **CHANGE OF STATE** of a certain substance without contradiction).

2. POTENTIALITY (DYNAMIS) – ACTUALITY (ENERGEIA)

- all natural creatures progress from potential to actual
- there exists a **TELOS (end/goal)** – a **perfection/GOOD** under whose influence the activity of the natural world takes place – “where there is a better, there is a **BEST (Ariston)**” -- **ABSOLUTE STANDARD** -- “**God (THEOS)** = only **PURE FORM** existing apart from matter.
- In the world of sense, **four types of CAUSATION**:
 - The **material** cause: “that out of which”, e.g., the bronze of a statue.
 - The **formal** cause: “the form”, “the account of what-it-is-to-be”, e.g., the shape of a statue.
 - The **efficient** cause: “the primary source of the change or rest”, e.g., the artisan, the art of bronze-casting the statue, the man who gives advice, the father of the child.
 - The **final** cause: “the end, that for the sake of which a thing is done”, e.g., health is the end of walking, losing weight, purging, drugs, and surgical tools.
- every conceived creature has a **PARENT** = Cause in 2 senses:
 - **efficient cause** – act of begetting
 - **formal-final cause** – example of the specific form into which the creature will grow
 - **in Ethics** – parent will serve as (“Good”) **EXEMPLAR**
 - by nature every living thing strives to realize its own specific form
 - this **form exists eternally**, its existence being guaranteed by the perfection of the pure form: **GOD**.
 - By realizing its specific form as adequately as possible, **everything can be said to imitating the eternal perfection/GOOD of God**. --> this is what is meant by the **NATURE (PHYSIS)** of a natural object

3. Wholehearted acceptance of MOTION and CHANGE (KINESIS)

- All natural objects contain within themselves a principle of motion and rest.
- Change or motion (KINESIS) is a UNIVERSAL LIFE PROCESS of from (dynamis) becoming actual (energeia) -- in which the Form/Cause is eternal and perfect, but the individual instantiations of form-matter change/move – in process of realization...
- Privation of form
 - A human embryo is not a man, but **potentially** (has the privation of form of) a man.
 - An eye, even blind, has the privation of sight.
 - A plant which grows in the dark, with white leaves, has privation of green leaves.

4. MIND (NOUS) and the Unmoved Mover...

Versus Plato: Plato had defined God (Theos) as Soul (Psyche), and Psyche as Self-mover, Aristotle only allows for God (theos) to be “Unmoved Mover.” Thus, it is denied by Aristotle that other forms of Psyche can move themselves.

- For every act of change (besides “Unmoved Mover”) there must be an External cause!!!
- Aristotle's universe includes FIVE ELEMENTS: Earth, Air, Fire, Water and AETHER (the quintessence – makes up the heavenly spheres – perfect circular trajectory – all others are blend/mixture) – only AETHER is ALIVE and SENTIENT and DIVINE (theos = unmoved mover¹).
- UNMOVED MOVER is pure form, pure actuality (energeia), unchanging, unmoving, eternally active, PURE MIND (NOUS)
 - Essential quality of God is LIFE
 - All of Being takes place in NOUS
 - Kinesis (change/motion) allows to realize Nous = a progress from potentiality – actuality
 - All of LIFE is a process of realizing the ONE – NOUS – the whole realm of TRUE Being
 - Activity consists in ETERNAL THOUGHT (noein/ noēsis)– the activity of Mind (Nous) is LIFE = Eternal SELF-CONTEMPLATION
 - RESULT: All possibility of divine providence (theia moira) is excluded!!!
 - God cannot care for the world – HE is not even aware of it.

¹ Aristotle adopted the geometrical model of Eudoxus of Cnidus, to provide a general explanation of the apparent wandering of the classical planets arising from uniform circular motions of celestial spheres. While the number of spheres in the model itself was subject to change, (47 or 55), Aristotle's account of aether, and of potentiality and actuality, required an individual unmoved mover for each sphere.

Aristotle II (summary of main points from Guthrie)

HUMAN BEINGS

Man has:

- a specific nature (physis) in the world
- proper occupation or function (ergon)

2 parts to discuss:

1. Psychology
2. Ethics

1. Psychology

Equals study of the **psyche** – the element of LIFE in living creatures (from plants to humans)

1. Includes faculties of nutrition and reproduction
2. desires and emotions, the senses
3. REASON

Two criticisms of “materialists” : Empedocles and the Atomists interpretations of psyche

1. They don't grasp the psyche as a UNITY (of various faculties/powers (*dynamis*))
2. Fail to grasp relation to the body (see as separate from the body, fail to see as integrated “biological” whole)

Talking of transmigration of souls is ‘like talking of a transmigration of carpentry into flutes; for just as the craft must employ the right tools, so the soul must employ the right body.’

Psyche (Soul) = principle of life

Pure Mind (NOUS) = eternal manifestation of psyche = **PURE ACTUALITY** (i.e., outside of time)

Living beings are concrete individuals – compound of organic **body** (matter (*hyle*) = substrate/potency) and **soul** (*psyche* = form/actuality) :

- they are **logically distinguishable** – but together they form but one living, active organ and must be studied as such.
- Cannot understand the soul if we neglect the body through which it manifests itself.
- **Psyche (form) is prior to body**, but cannot “exist”(in time - as individual) without a body
- **All individual living beings progress from potency (matter) → actuality (form)**

→ **No personal immortality** (???) A. seems not to have been occupied with this question.

Loophole: **Form and matter are not separable ... EXCEPT IN THOUGHT !!!**

De Anima: “Concerning the mind (Nous), the power of active thought, we have as yet no evidence [of whether it survives the body in the individual]. It appears to be a different genus of soul, and to be capable of separate existence, as the eternal is independent of the perishable. But all other parts of the soul, [...] are incapable of separate existence.”

Generation of Animals: “Reason (Nous) alone enters from without, and is divine (theos)” – because all of the other activities can be shown to be inseparable from the body.

Ethics: the life of pure thought is the exercise of our own highest faculty AND cultivates that part of us which most resembles God (theos). I.e., we share NOUS with God = what separates man from other creatures.

Man (antropos) = “to zoon logon echon” -- the “living being” (zoon) which has language (logos).

Logos here is always in relation to Mythos -- Mythos is like a Source -- contains the possibilities to be given expression by logos & vice versa, logos gives mythos its “content.”

Mythos is the primordial naming of Being in its emerging forth via the Word or logos. “The word is in its essence the letting appear of Being by naming. [... And] mythos is the only appropriate mode of the relation to appearing Being” (Heidegger, Parmenides, 112).

Advantages:

Can draw a distinction on the level of SENSATION between physical and psychical events.

In sensation are 2 orders of events (i.e., when we have the sensation of sight):

1. Physical change (i.e., light falls upon our eye) - affectation
2. Psychical phenomenon (i.e., see something)- sensation

Aristotle claims that we see the form without the matter! = IMAGINATION

The *psyche* works via the *affectation* of the bodily organ, BUT when the bodily organ is materially altered by an external object, then *sensation occurs*.

Aristotle refers to sensation as a JUDGMENT.

SENSIBLE IMAGINATION is what makes the judgment of perception possible.

A similar process occurs in PURE THOUGHT, in the absence of bodily organs (i.e., in math, science) → what separates man from other animals – use of *logos* in *calculative/deliberative imagination*.

Today we refer to the use of logos as REASON... and reason is what separates us from Mythos → NOW we are in the realm of SCIENCE.

!!!SEE HANDOUT!!!