

Aristotle with his Teleology: A Potential Darwinist

In Aristotle's book *Physics*, he mentioned about how he considered of his teleology. He regards teleology as the basis of *nature*, which is the internal principle of change. In Aristotle's world form exists not merely as a realized state, it also exists as a *striving* toward that state¹. The end, is just a kind of realizing of the form. However, in this case, the end became the movement of a thing, but not only being the result of the movement. For a creation of nature, the end is owned by itself, and it is changed by its own form; as the creation of an artefact, the end is given by the creator. Aristotle need to cite form as final cause in order to make the whole range of developmental activities work.

However, not every (seemingly) connected events are dominated by form (as well the final cause). Aristotle's discussion of spontaneity (*to automaton*) have discussed about this problem:

... e. g. that our teeth should come up of necessity – the front teeth sharp, fitted for tearing, the molars broad and useful for grinding down the food—since they did not arise for this end, but it was merely a coincident result; and so with all other

¹ Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: the desire to understand*, 1988, Cambridge University Press, pp.35

parts in which we suppose that there is purpose? Wherever then all the parts came about (came to be) just what they would have been if they had come to be for an end, such things survived, being organized spontaneously in a fitting way; ...²

Though Aristotle came up with this idea, he rejected it, for the spontaneity is a serious threat to his teleology system. The spontaneity di-struct the primer state of form as the pusher of changes, leaving form as an appendix of the consecutive phenomenon of spontaneity. Aristotle answers:

It is impossible that this should be the true view. For teeth and all other natural things either invariably or for the most part come about in a given way; but of not one of the results of chance or spontaneity is this true ... If then, it is agreed that things are either the result of coincidence or for the sake of something, and these cannot be the result of coincidence or spontaneity, it follows that they must be for the sake of something ... Therefore action for an end is present in things which come to be and are by nature.³

² *Physics*, II.8, 198b23-198b31.

³ *Physics*, II.8, 198b34-199a8.

The main idea of Aristotle's rejection is that there is no chance to be coexistence between the inevitable outcome of spontaneity and the outcome of the final cause. It seems that Aristotle is a totally anti-Darwinist.

In fact, Aristotle was so embarrassed for his outcoming mentioned beyond. He could have been being a Darwinist (being a pioneer), if he correctly realized the coherence between the inevitable outcome of spontaneity and the things made by natural. They are actually the same. The form of a thing is constructed by natural (the potential form) and changed by rare spontaneity. But Aristotle chose another way. He regarded the chance events itself as the events of change. As a matter of fact, chance events provide only the change point but not the whole change process.

Aristotle's procedure of defending proves that, he confused the changing point with the changing line, which leads his odd conclusion. The change of natural thing in the name of Aristotle himself has its meaning of describing a succession of movements of a substance but not *an* event. During the process of a special condition, such as the evolution of species mentioned beyond, the changes are realized just by those rare spontaneities. Thus, Aristotle's theory is just fitted by Darwinist and has its much more profound explanatory power.