

Tutorial 2 Aristotle

How do we handle what nature tells us?

GFN1000 In Dialogue with Nature

Content

1. Aristotle's Ontology and Cosmology
2. The Four Causes
3. Aristotelian Teleology
4. Epistemology
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Aristotle's Ontology and Cosmology

- How do Plato and Aristotle understand "form" ① and "change" ② differently?
- How does Aristotle explain terrestrial motion (such as the falling of a rock) ③ and celestial motion ④?
- How do you understand "ours is a world of space, whereas Aristotle's was a world of place"? (p.41, para.31) ⑤

The Four Causes

- Give examples that cannot easily be explained by 1) the formal cause and those that cannot be explained by 2) the material cause ②.
- Give examples that cannot easily be explained by 3) the efficient cause and those that cannot be explained by 4) the final cause. ③④
- Which of the four causes most closely resembles how scientists currently define the "cause"? ⑤①

Aristotelian Teleology

- Give examples that illustrate the teleological explanation for natural phenomena. ③
- Do you think the final cause can be empirically proved or disproved? ④⑤
- What implications do you believe have arisen from the separation of the efficient cause and the final cause? Use examples to illustrate your view. ①②

Epistemology

- What are the differences between Plato and Aristotle regarding their views on sense experience? ④
- Give examples showcasing the significance of sense experience in exploring nature. ⑤
- Give examples demonstrating that sense experience alone is not sufficient for discovering the truth. ①
- Which do you think is more subjective, logical reasoning or observation/measurement? ②③

Methodology

- How does Aristotle view (controlled) experiments? Envision how a modern scientist would argue against him. ⑤①
- Give examples demonstrating the fruitful use of experimentation in history. ②
- Give examples illustrating how human intervention might "prevent the nature of an object from revealing itself" (para.19) in scientific ③ and social-scientific ④ research.