

Lecture-04-ENGL133

Notes on assigned readings:

[European Creation Stories: Plato, Aristotle, Genesis, Alan of Lille's Complaint of Nature, and Jean de Meun's Romance of the Rose]:

- Excerpt from *The Timaeus*, a dialogue between philosophers discussing the origins of the cosmos.
- 'Demiurge' is the divine craftsman responsible for creating the forms that govern the world, he is assisted in the process of creation by lesser beings who execute his design.
- The creation of man is carried out in the demiurge's vision yet the gods' implementation.
- Timaeus sees man not as a god, but as a subject with divine origins and elements, capable of being divinely inspired.

[Images of Medieval and Early Modern Nature: Or, How Nature Lost Her Clothes]:

- Nature often portrayed as a elegant woman/queen

[Lecture Notes]

Plato's Timaeus:

- Plato imagines the world as not just animate but as having its own "soul"
- Man is a material house created for the immaterial 'soul'
- Reason in the head, passion in the chest, liver as the messenger between the two
- Order of creation: man, plants, animals (from man)
- Metempsychosis: transmigration of the immortal soul

Platonic View of Natural World:

- Duality of human nature: body vs soul
- Material phenomenal world is less "real" than the immaterial noumenal world
- 2 realms: phenomenal (what we see) and noumenal (invisible spiritual world-the world of universals and forms)

Aristotelian View of Natural World:

- No separate world of forms, "what you see is what you get"
- All nature is change ('physis'), a principle of rest and motion that inheres within things
- Change is not a sign of corruption (as in Plato) but is the usual course of nature
- Inextricable link between matter and form
- Matter provides the potentialities that are actualized by the form
- Humans are a combination of matter and form, body and soul, 'hylomorphism'

Aristotle on Causation and Teleology:

- Causation provides an account of natural change: i) material cause, ii) formal cause, iii) efficient cause, iv) final cause
- Teleology explains how the acorn becomes the oak

