

# *Metaphysics* Λ 10

Let there be one sovereign.



# Why is the cosmos good?

- ‘One must also consider in which way the nature of the whole <universe> possesses the good—that is, the best <good>, whether it is something separated and <exists> itself in its own right, or is the arrangement <of the whole universe>. Or is it in both ways, as in an army? For its excellence <consists in> in its order and <is also its> the general—indeed <it is> more this one <than the order>; for he does not exist because of the order, but instead the order exists because of him’ (*Met.* Λ 10, 1075a11-15).
- Ἐπισκεπτέον δὲ καὶ ποτέρως ἔχει ἢ τοῦ ὅλου φύσις τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ ἄριστον, πότερον κεχωρισμένον τι καὶ αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτό, ἢ τὴν τάξιν. ἢ ἀμφοτέρως ὡσπερ στρατεύμα; καὶ γὰρ ἐν τῇ τάξει τὸ εὖ καὶ ὁ στρατηγός, καὶ μᾶλλον οὗτος· οὐ γὰρ οὗτος διὰ τὴν τάξιν ἀλλ’ ἐκείνη διὰ τοῦτόν ἐστιν.



# Two Observations and Two Questions

- Observations:

- We are offered a disjunction between two things we might suppose the good of the whole universe to be, namely (i) its order and (ii) a separated good which exists in its own right.
- We are then advised that this disjunction may be, but need not be, taken inclusively, though we are perhaps nudged in the direction of thinking that it is to be taken inclusively, and then too that we might never the less give priority to one good over the other.

- Questions:

- What is the point of the army analogy?
- Does it in particular give us any reason to think that the universe as a whole ('the nature of the whole <universe>'; *Met.* Λ 10, 1075a11) has (or is) a single unitary good?
  - Two basic approaches:
    - Yes, the unmoved mover is as its final cause the good of the entire universe (Kahn (1985) and Sedley (1991, 2000)).
    - No, lots of parts of the universe, including most notably individual living organisms, have their own non-derived intrinsic end. The unmoved mover is their end neither *cuius* or *cui* (Charles (2012)).
    - N.b. that these approaches are hardly exhaustive. See, for example, ps-Alexander's paraphrase: 'the nature of the things contribute to the nature of the whole.'
      - Cf. Judson (2019) seeks a middle way between them.



# Background to $\Lambda$ 10

- The unmoved mover is a final cause, and initiates motion as being loved.
  - ‘It imparts movement as something beloved, while the others impart movement as things moving.’ (*Met.*  $\Lambda$  7, 1072b3-4; κινεῖ δὴ ὡς ἐρώμενον, κινούμενα δὲ τᾶλλα κινεῖ).
- The unmoved mover transmits motion to the heavenly spheres, perhaps directly, perhaps indirectly via the outermost sphere, and thus it communicates motion to the sublunar realm (at least) indirectly (*Met.*  $\Lambda$  7-8)
- As a final cause, the unmoved mover introduces a kind of causation which is ineliminably normative.



# The Normativity of the Final Cause

- *Metaphysics A 3*, Aristotle states plainly the normative dimension of the final cause, which, in this respect evidently, he regards as 'opposed' to the material cause, as 'that for the sake of which and the good' (*Met.* 983a30-31).
- At the end of his survey, he credits Hermotimus of Clazomenae as an originator and praises his fellow citizen Anaxagoras as an early proponent of the final cause, remarking that these thinkers were responsive to the demands of the truth itself, which makes plain that neither the material elements nor lucky spontaneity could account for 'being well and beauty in both being and coming to be' (τοῦ γὰρ εὖ καὶ καλῶς τὰ μὲν ἔχειν τὰ δὲ γίγνεσθαι τῶν ὄντων; *Met.* 984b10).
- For this, he claims, νοῦς alone can be responsible.



# Goodness Causing as Goodness

- That for the sake of which actions and changes and movements take place, they call it a cause in a way, but they do not call it a cause in the way in which it naturally is cause. For some, speaking of *nous* or love, posit these causes as good; they do not speak, however, as if anything among the things that are exists or comes to for sake of these, but say that their motions are from these. In the same way those claiming that the one or the existent is this sort of nature claim that this is the cause of substance, but do not claim that substance either is or comes to be for the sake of this. Therefore it turns out that in a sense they both say and do not say the good is a cause; for they do not call it a cause *qua* good but only coincidentally. (*Met.* A 7, 988b6-16)
- τὸ δ' οὖν ἕνεκα αἰ πράξεις καὶ αἰ μεταβολαὶ καὶ αἰ κινήσεις τρόπον μὲν τινα λέγουσιν αἴτιον, οὕτω δὲ οὐ λέγουσιν οὐδ' ὄνπερ πέφυκεν. οἱ μὲν γὰρ νοῦν λέγοντες ἢ φιλίαν ὡς ἀγαθὸν μὲν ταύτας τὰς αἰτίας τιθέασιν, οὐ μὴν ὡς ἕνεκά γε τούτων ἢ ὄν ἢ γιγνόμενόν τι τῶν ὄντων ἀλλ' ὡς ἀπὸ τούτων τὰς κινήσεις οὔσας λέγουσιν· ὡς δ' αὐτως καὶ ἀπὸ τούτων τὰς κινήσεις οὔσας λέγουσιν· ὡς δ' αὐτως καὶ οἱ τὸ ἐν ἢ τὸ ὄν φάσκοντες εἶναι τὴν τοιαύτην φύσιν τῆς μὲν οὐσίας αἰτιὸν φασιν εἶναι, οὐ μὴν τούτου γε ἕνεκα ἢ εἶναι ἢ γίγνεσθαι, ὥστε λέγειν τε καὶ μὴ λέγειν πως συμβαίνει αὐτοῖς τὰγαθὸν αἴτιον· οὐ γὰρ ἀπλῶς ἀλλὰ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς λέγουσιν.



# So, after all. . .

- The good is a cause:
- ‘And the science uncovering that for the sake of which each thing must be done is the most authoritative of the sciences, and more authoritative than any ancillary science; and this is the good in each class, and generally in the whole of nature the best good. From all that has been said, then, the name being sought falls to the same science; this must be a science able to investigate the first principles and causes; for the good, i.e. that for the sake of which, is one of the causes’ (*Met. A 2, 982b4-10*).
- ἀρχικωτάτη δὲ τῶν ἐπιστημῶν, καὶ μᾶλλον ἀρχικὴ τῆς ὑπηρετούσης, ἢ γνωρίζουσα τίνας ἕνεκέν ἐστι πρακτέον ἕκαστον· τοῦτο δ’ ἐστὶ τὰγαθὸν ἕκαστου, ὅλως δὲ τὸ ἄριστον ἐν τῇ φύσει πάση. ἐξ ἀπάντων οὖν τῶν εἰρημένων ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐπιστήμην πίπτει τὸ ζητούμενον ὄνομα· δεῖ γὰρ ταύτην τῶν πρώτων ἀρχῶν καὶ αἰτιῶν εἶναι θεωρητικὴν· καὶ γὰρ τὰγαθὸν καὶ τὸ οὐ ἕνεκα ἐν τῶν αἰτίων ἐστίν.



# The Basic Structure of $\Lambda$ 10

- *Metaphysics*  $\Lambda$  10 consists contains an extensive review of the difficulties of views of principles, including those of Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Plato, and various unnamed thinkers.
  - How does this fit in?
- One can fairly divide  $\Lambda$  10 into three main sections:
  - 1075a11-25: The character of goodness in the cosmos
  - 1075a26-b34: Inadequacies of our predecessors
  - 1075b34-1076a4: Remarks on the sources of unity



# First Question

- Our first question pertains to the chapter as a whole: is it an episodic hodgepodge or a continuous discussion with an overarching argument.
  - So, does the chapter present a unitary argument? If so, what is it?
- Suárez: 'This is the position which Aristotle intends to assert in this chapter, which he also wants to be the conclusion of the whole work and a kind of peroration worthy of so great a philosopher. But he demonstrates it with an argument as follows. The good of the universe consists in the appropriate order of its parts, in such way that this good is a kind of intrinsic good which inheres in the universe itself. But it cannot have a good of this kind unless there is in it someone supreme who is its Governor, who is at the same time outside it and its ultimate end, from whom it emanates and to whom it tends as the extrinsic good of the universe. Therefore, one supreme Prince and Governor is necessary in the universe.'
  - Basically Suárez treats the chapter as offering a simple syllogism, the minor premiss of which emerges only at its end: (i) The good of the universe consists in the appropriate order of its parts (its τάξις); (ii) the universe manifests this form of goodness only if there is, extrinsic to the universe, a supreme governor as its ultimate end; (iii) therefore, there is a supreme governor as the extrinsic end of the universe.
  - Suárez settles, that is, on the inclusive version of our original disjunction. Is he right?
- We can better answer this question if we settle some smaller questions first.



# The Household Analogy

- And all things are co-ordinated in a way, but not in a similar way, even swimming things, winged things, and plants; and they are not in such a way that one thing has no relation to any other, but [they are related] in some way. For all things are co-ordinated in relation to one thing—but as in a household the free persons [20] are least at liberty to act haphazardly, but all or most [of their actions] are ordered, while the slaves and beasts are able to do a little for the common [end] but much of what they do is haphazard; for that is the sort of principle that is the nature of each of them (I mean, for example, that it is necessary for all things to come to be dispersed), and there are thus other things which they all have in common [25] with a view to the whole (*Met.* Λ 10, 1075α16-25)
- πάντα δὲ συντέτακται πως, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁμοίως, καὶ πλωτὰ καὶ πτηνὰ καὶ φυτά: καὶ οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει ὥστε μὴ εἶναι θατέρω πρὸς θάτερον μηδέν, ἀλλ' ἔστι τι. πρὸς μὲν γὰρ ἐν ἅπαντα συντέτακται, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐν οἰκίᾳ τοῖς ἐλευθέροις [20] ἤκιστα ἔξεστιν ὅ τι ἔτυχε ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἢ τὰ πλεῖστα τέτακται, τοῖς δὲ ἀνδραπόδοις καὶ τοῖς θηρίοις μικρὸν τὸ εἰς τὸ κοινόν, τὸ δὲ πολὺ ὅ τι ἔτυχεν: τοιαύτη γὰρ ἐκάστου ἀρχὴ\* αὐτῶν ἢ φύσις ἐστίν. λέγω δ' οἷον εἷς γε τὸ διακριθῆναι ἀνάγκη ἅπασιν ἐλθεῖν, καὶ ἄλλα οὕτως ἔστιν ὧν κοινωνεῖ [25] ἅπαντα εἰς τὸ ὅλον.



# Some Questions about the Household Analogy

- What is the point of the household analogy? In this analogy to what does the distinction between 'free persons' and 'slaves and beasts' correspond in the universe?
- Is the claim that 'all things are co-ordinated in a way, but not in a similar way' borne out by what has gone before in  $\Lambda$ ?
- When Aristotle says 'it is necessary for all things to come to be dispersed', to what does 'all things' refer?
  - Ps.-Alexander: What Aristotle means is that it is necessary for all things come to be from each other.



# Co-ordinating these Analogies

- Do the two analogues—army and household—support the same conclusion about order?
- Do the army and a household possess order in the same way?



# Closing the Chapter

- And those who say that the mathematical number is first and that thus there is always another successive substance and that there are different principles for each [substance], [1075b1] make the substance of the universe episodic (for one substance contributes nothing to the other by existing or not existing) and they posit many principles. But the things that exist do not wish to be governed badly. 'The sovereignty of many is not good; [there is] one sovereign.' (*Met.* Λ 10, 1075b37-1076a4)
- οἱ δὲ λέγοντες τὸν ἀριθμὸν πρῶτον τὸν μαθηματικὸν καὶ οὕτως ἀεὶ ἄλλην ἐχομένην οὐσίαν καὶ ἀρχὰς ἐκάστης ἄλλας, [1076a1] ἐπεισοδιώδη τὴν τοῦ παντὸς οὐσίαν ποιοῦσιν (οὐδὲν γὰρ ἢ ἕτερα τῇ ἕτερα συμβάλλεται οὔσα ἢ μὴ οὔσα) καὶ ἀρχὰς πολλάς: τὰ δὲ ὄντα οὐ βούλεται πολιτεύεσθαι κακῶς. "οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη: εἷς κοίρανος."



# A Question about this Contention

- Has Aristotle provided an adequate basis for the final conclusion that the things that exist have one ruler?
- Even granting that there is one ruler, how sweeping is this ruler's power?
  - Does it extend to the sublunar realm?
- Can the claim that there is only one ruler be reconciled with the thesis of  $\Lambda 8$  that there is a multitude of immovable movers?



# Aquinas's Take

- 2663. But many rulers are not good. For example, it would not be good for different families which shared nothing in common to live in a single home. Hence it follows that the whole universe is like one principality and one kingdom, and must therefore be governed by one ruler. Aristotle's conclusion is that there is one ruler of the whole universe, the first mover, and one first intelligible object, and one first good, whom above he called God (2544), who is blessed for ever and ever. Amen.



# Final Questions

- Is the universe unified rather than episodic?
- If it is unified, is its unity due to an efficient cause or a final cause. . .or is its unity a sheer accident, so to speak, a cosmic coincidence?