

Metaphysics Λ 7

Part I: Efficient into Final Causation

A Striking Claim

- ‘It initiates motion as something beloved, while the others initiate motion as things in motion.’ (*Met.* Λ 7, 1072b3-4).
- κινεῖ δὴ ὡς ἐρώμενον, κινούμενα δὲ τᾶλλα κινεῖ.

Context of this Claim (1)

- In this claim, we have a frank appeal to final causation.
 - Note that this appeal represents a shift in *Metaphysics* Λ . You will recall that our earlier enumeration of the four causes was non-standard, and rather odd, in adding not the final cause to the material, formal, and efficient, but rather privation.
 - So, e.g. the summary of the end of *Metaphysics* Λ 4 does not mention the final cause, suggesting that the causes are three, or, in a way, four, where the fourth is not the final cause, but rather privation.

Context of this Claim (2)

- The claim is also ushered forward by the thought that the phrase ‘that for the sake of which’ (οὐ ἔνεκα) admits of two understandings:
 - ‘That for the sake of which is among the things which are unmoved this distinction makes clear: for [the sake of which] is (a) for something and (b) of something—and the one is moved [*scil.* (a)] and the other (*scil.* (b)) is not’ (*Met.* Λ 7, 1072b1-3; cf. *DA* ii 4, 415b20-21).
 - ὅτι δ’ ἔστι τὸ οὐ ἔνεκα ἐν τοῖς ἀκινήτοις, ἢ διαίρεσις δηλοῖ· ἔστι γὰρ τινὶ τὸ οὐ ἔνεκα <καὶ>τινός, ὧν τὸ μὲν ἔστι τὸ δ’ οὐκ ἔστι.
- Differently understood, but on the standard interpretation, Aristotle means to distinguish the beneficiary (*cui*) and the benefit (*cuius*).
 - So, for instance, we say ‘The doctor prescribes a medicine for the sake of health.’ We might mean:
 - She acts as she does for the sake of the patient, who is benefited (*cui*)—who is, in the process, changed.
 - She acts as she does with health as her aim (*cuius*)—where health itself does not change, at least not in any obvious or intrinsic way.
 - Sometimes the benefit and beneficiary are the same, as when she treats herself. Usually, though, not.
- Query: why does Aristotle introduce this distinction in *Metaphysics* Λ 7?

Brief Primer on Teleological Causation

- Further, [there is a cause] as the end (τέλος). This is that for the sake of which (τὸ οὐ ἔνεκα)—as health is [the end] walking. ‘Why does he walk?’ We say, ‘so that he may be healthy’, and when we have said this, we think we have specified the cause. And [so too for] whatever comes to be between something else moving and the end: slimming, purging, drugs, or [medical] instruments. All these are for the sake of the end, even though they differ from one another in that some are activities and others instruments (*Phys.* ii 3, 194b32–195a3).
- ἔτι ὡς τὸ τέλος· τοῦτο δ’ ἐστὶν τὸ οὐ ἔνεκα, οἷον τοῦ περιπατεῖν ἢ ὑγίεια· διὰ τί γὰρ περιπατεῖ; φασὲν ‘ἵνα ὑγιαίνῃ’, καὶ εἰπόντες οὕτως οἴομεθα ἀποδεδωκέναι τὸ αἴτιον. καὶ ὅσα δὴ κινήσαντος ἄλλου μεταξὺ γίγνεται τοῦ τέλους, οἷον τῆς ὑγείας ἢ ἰσχυασία ἢ ἢ κάθαρσις ἢ τὰ φάρμακα ἢ τὰ ὄργανα· πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα τοῦ τέλους ἔνεκά ἐστιν, διαφέρει δὲ ἀλλήλων ὡς ὄντα τὰ μὲν ἔργα τὰ δ’ ὄργανα.

Natural Teleology

- Further, where there is an end, the earlier and sequential [steps] are done on account of it. As things are in action, then, so they are in nature; and as they are in nature, so they are in action, so long as nothing interferes. But action is for the sake of an end. So, natural things are also for the sake of something. For example, if a house were to come to be by nature, it would come to be as it in fact now comes to be by craft. And if things which come to be by nature came to be not only by nature but also by craft, then they would come to be just as they do by nature—one thing would come to be on account of another. . . . If, then, things coming to be in accordance with a craft are for something, clearly so too are things coming to be in accordance with nature. For later stages are related to earlier among things coming to be in accordance with nature just as they are among things coming to be in accordance with a craft (*Phys.* ii 9, 199a7–20).
- ἔτι ἐν ὅσοις τέλος ἔστι τι, τούτου ἕνεκα πράττεται τὸ πρότερον καὶ τὸ ἐφεξῆς. οὐκοῦν ὡς πράττεται, οὕτω πέφυκε, καὶ ὡς πέφυκεν, οὕτω πράττεται ἕκαστον, ἂν οὕτω πέφυκε, ἂν μή τι ἐμποδίζη. πράττεται δ' ἕνεκά του· καὶ πέφυκεν ἄρα ἕνεκά του. οἷον εἰ οἰκία τῶν φύσει γιγνομένων ἦν, οὕτως ἂν μέγιστον ὡς νῦν ὑπὸ τῆς τέχνης· εἰ δὲ τὰ φύσει μὴ μόνον φύσει ἀλλὰ καὶ τέχνη γίγνοιτο, ὡσαύτως ἂν γίγνοιτο ἢ πέφυκεν. ἕνεκα ἄρα θατέρου θάτερον. . . . εἰ οὖν τὰ κατὰ τέχνην ἕνεκά του, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ τὰ κατὰ φύσιν· ὁμοίως γὰρ ἔχει πρὸς ἄλληλα ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τέχνην καὶ ἐν τοῖς κατὰ φύσιν τὰ ὕστερα πρὸς τὰ πρότερα.

Natural Teleology: Illustration

- Advancing bit by bit in this same direction it becomes apparent that even in plants things come about in relation to an end—for instance, leaves [come about] for the sake of shade for the fruit. If then it is both by nature and for an end that the swallow makes its nest and the spider its web, and plants [grow] leaves for the sake of the fruit and their roots fo down rather than up for the sake of nourishment, it is plain that this kind of cause is surely present in things which come to be and are by nature. And since nature is twofold, as matter and as form, this [*scil.* the form] is the end, and since all other things are for the sake of the end, the cause for the sake of which would be this [*scil.* the form] (*Phys.* ii 8, 199a20–32)
- κατὰ μικρὸν δ' οὕτω προϊόντι καὶ ἐν τοῖς φυτοῖς φαίνεται τὰ συμφέροντα γιγνώμενα πρὸς τὸ τέλος, οἷον τὰ φύλλα τῆς τοῦ καρποῦ ἔνεκα σκέπης. ὥστ' εἰ φύσει τε ποιεῖ καὶ ἔνεκά του ἢ χελιδῶν τὴν νεοττιὰν καὶ ὁ ἀράχνης τὸ ἀράχνιον, καὶ τὰ φυτὰ τὰ φύλλα ἔνεκα τῶν καρπῶν καὶ τὰς ῥίζας οὐκ ἄνω ἀλλὰ κάτω τῆς τροφῆς, φανερὸν ὅτι ἔστιν ἡ αἰτία ἢ τοι αὕτη ἐν τοῖς φύσει γιγνομένοις καὶ οὖσιν. καὶ ἐπεὶ ἡ φύσις διττή, ἢ μὲν ὡς ὕλη ἢ δ' ὡς μορφή, τέλος δ' αὕτη, τοῦ τέλους δὲ ἔνεκα τᾶλλα, αὕτη ἂν εἴη ἡ αἰτία, ἢ οὐ ἔνεκα.

Two Preliminary Observations

1. Ends can be inherited by being subordinated: if e_1 is for the sake of e_n , then the activities and implements deployed by e_1 are also for the sake of e_n .
 - So, for instance: ‘Whenever any of these [sciences or crafts] are subordinate to some one art—as, for instance, bridle making and every other [craft or science] producing equipment for horses are subordinate to horsemanship, while this and every action in warfare are in turn subordinate to generalship, and in the same way other [sciences or crafts] are subordinate to further ones—in each of these the ends of the ruling science are more choiceworthy than all the ends subordinate to it, since it is the end for which those ends are also pursued’ (*EN* i 1, 1094a9-16).
2. Natural ends do not require intentional agency or conscious design.
 - Possibly (on this view) molars are for grinding food without its being the case that the great molar maker above designed them for this purpose on her celestial drawing board.

Teleology and Normativity

- In *Physics* ii 3, after introducing the final cause, Aristotle makes a further connection requisite for the understanding of *Metaphysics* Λ 7:
 - ‘. . .In other cases [one thing] is a cause of the others as the end, that is, the good. For that for the sake of which is the best and so is set to be the end of the others (195a23-25)
 - τὰ δ’ ὡς τὸ τέλος καὶ τὰ γαθὸν τῶν ἄλλων· τὸ γὰρ οὕνεκα βέλτιστον καὶ τέλος τῶν ἄλλων ἐθέλει εἶναι

Altogether

- If the unmoved mover is a final cause as something beloved, then we expect its causal efficacy as a final cause:
 - To cause under the aspect of the good
 - To cause as *good for* that which moves towards it
 - To cause as apprehended:
 - So, in this case, it appears intentional.
 - Though, as we have seen, this is not necessary.

FM: Texts

- Aristotle's text (7.1072a26-b1)
- [1] The object of desire and the intelligible object bring about movement in the following way: they bring about movement without being moved. And the first of these objects are the same. For the object of appetite is that which appears noble, but the first object of wish is that which is noble. And we desire things because they seem [noble] rather than believing they are [noble] because we desire them; for the act of thinking is a principle. [2] And the intellect is moved by the intelligible object, and one of the columns is in itself intelligible; and in this column substance is the first, and of substance that which is simple and actual [is first] . . . [3] But then both that which is noble and that which is in itself an object of choice are in the same column, and what is first is always best or analogous to it.
- [1] κινεῖ δὲ ὧδε τὸ ὀρεκτὸν καὶ τὸ νοητὸν· κινεῖ οὐ κινούμενον. τούτων τὰ πρῶτα τὰ αὐτά. ἐπιθυμητὸν μὲν γὰρ τὸ φαινόμεον καλόν, βουλευτὸν δὲ πρῶτον τὸ ὄν καλόν· ὀρεγόμεθα δὲ διότι δοκεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ δοκεῖ διότι ὀρεγόμεθα· ἀρχὴ γὰρ ἡ νοήσις. [2] νοῦς δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ νοήτου κινεῖται, νοητὴ δὲ ἡ ἑτέρα συστοιχία καθ' αὐτήν· καὶ ταύτης ἡ οὐσία πρώτη, καὶ ταύτης ἡ ἀπλή καὶ κατ' ἐνέργειαν . . . [3] ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ δι' αὐτὸ αἰρετὸν ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ συστοιχίᾳ· καὶ ἕσγτιν ἄριστον αἰεὶ ἢ ἀνάλογον τὸ πρῶτον.

FM: Three Steps

- Although somewhat obscure, this opening argument seems to involve three main steps:
 1. The first intelligible object is the same as the first object of desire.
 2. The simple and actual substance is the first intelligible object.
 3. The simple actual and substance is the first object of desire.

FM: Step (1)

- 1072a26-30:
 - The object of desire and the intelligible object bring about movement in the following way: they bring about movement without being moved. And the first of these objects are the same. For the object of appetite is that which appears noble, but the first object of wish is that which is noble. And we desire things because we believe [they are noble] rather than believing they are [noble] because we desire them; for the act of thinking is a principle.

FM: Step (2)

- 1072a30-32:
 - And the intellect is moved by the intelligible object, and one of the columns is in itself intelligible; and in this column substance is the first, and of substance that which is simple and actual [is first] . . .”

FM: Step (3)

- 1072a34-b1:
 - But then both that which is noble and that which is in itself an object of choice are in the same column, and what is first is always best or analogous to it.

A Query

- If the unmoved mover moves as something beloved, it is a final cause.
- If it *moves*—that is, if it initiates motion—it is evidently also an efficient cause.
- How so?

One Natural Thought

- Recall the distinction leading to this claim:
 - ‘That for the sake of which is among the things which are unmoved this distinction makes clear: for [the sake of which] is (a) for something and (b) of something—and the one is moved [*scil.* (a)] and the other (*scil.* (b)) is not’ (*Met.* Λ 7, 1072b1-3; cf. *DA* ii 4, 415b20-21).
 - ὅτι δ’ ἔστι τὸ οὐ ἔνεκα ἐν τοῖς ἀκινήτοις, ἢ διαίρεσις δηλοῖ· ἔστι γὰρ τινὶ τὸ οὐ ἔνεκα <καὶ>τινός, ὧν τὸ μὲν ἔστι τὸ δ’ οὐκ ἔστι.
- One thought: although not itself in motion, and so is not benefited by being beloved, it is good for those who love it

A Fly in the Ointment

- It is the case that what is capable of acting is a cause as a source of motion; but for the sake of which something [takes place] is not capable of acting. That is why health is not capable of acting, except metaphorically (*Gen. et Corr.* i 7, 424b13-15)
- Ἔστι δὲ τὸ ποιητικὸν αἴτιον ὡς ὅθεν ἢ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως. Τὸ δ' οὐ ἔνεκα οὐ ποιητικόν. Διὸ ἢ ὑγίεια οὐ ποιητικόν, εἰ μὴ κατὰ μεταφοράν.

Two Ways Forward?

- We have a precedent in Aristotle for a final cause which is also an efficient cause, namely the soul:
 - ‘The soul is the cause and principle of the living body. As these things are spoken of in many ways, so the soul is spoken of as a cause in the three of the ways delineated: for the soul is a cause as the source of motion, as that for the sake of which, and as the substance of ensouled bodies’ (*DA* ii 4, 415b8-11).
- We may think of the good as such as an efficient cause.
 - Perhaps this is the purport of *Nicomachean Ethics* i 12, where we learn that ‘we hold the source and cause of good things to be something estimable and divine’ (τὴν ἀρχὴν δὲ καὶ τὸ αἴτιον τῶν ἀγαθῶν τίμιόν τι καὶ θεῖον τίθεμεν; 1102a3–4).