CHAPTER - I

ARISTOTLE AND MAN
ARISTOTLE AND MAN

It is a common place, but nonetheless important fact that philosophical problems are not cumulatively and progressively solved unlike perhaps problems in the natural sciences; they have rather an awkward habit of recurring almost indefinitely although perhaps in somewhat different guizes. The problems that I shall be concerned with in this work finds perhaps their first philosophical expression in Aristotle. Hence this starting of the work.

Human being, according to Aristotle is a living being or animate being. Any discussion of the motions and changes that are characteristic of living being will apply to human beings as well. Human being do grow, digest food, reproduce themselves. But, human beings are not merely living beings, they are physical bodies as well. In consequence, as physical bodies, human beings are subject to the various natural and violent motions that pertain to the four elements and their compounds.

Human beings perform all of the lower vital functions, nutrition, growth and reproduction, and on top of these, sensation and locomotion - but in addition, they are capable of a still higher cognitive operation than those of mere sensation, namely, of rational cognition and understanding. In the case of each living substance - plants, animals and men - it is the soul which determines each kind of substance to the performance of the functions or changes appropriate to substances of that kind with
the result that it is the formal, final and efficient causes of those characteristic functions and changes. Thus to consider human soul as being determinate of the various human functions that human beings perform. The distinctive function of men lies in the exercise of rational knowledge and understanding, it is naturally this function that one need to concentrate upon in any study of man as man.

Aristotle wants to insist that it is the soul or form or psyche that informs and animates and orders the human life according to their distinctively human functions in a human being. Moreover, the distinctive character that the human soul or human substantial form gives to the life of the human body lies precisely in the fact that such a being turns out to be a corporeal being that is no less capable of knowledge and understanding. Human beings - as rational beings aim at living intelligently (that is, living in accordance with such knowledge and understanding as they are able to achieve) as their natural end or good, and they deliberately set out to attain them.

Human being, as a rational animal, is one who is consciously aware, often painfully aware of his own lacks and needs which is to say of his own unfulfilled potentialities. A human being's life is not only shot through with desires, drives, and one might even say that the life of a man resembles one long sustained, conscious, deliberate, and get multi-directed effort to fulfill his multifarious needs and potentialities. If one may properly speak of
a man's truly achieving what he aims at, in the sense of a fulfillment or completion or perfection of his life as a human being, then the attainment of such a thing will amount to the actualization of his potentialities, and as such will constitute what is indeed his true satisfaction and happiness.

For Aristotle, man's proper function or activity is not simply one of having intelligence in the sense of certain I.Q. which one can then show off upon occasion, but rather in the sense of actually being intelligent in the living of one's life and of actually using one's intelligence in making the day to day decisions of one's life.

Man's function or man's perfection or full development does indeed consist in no more and in no less than in his living in the manner of someone with knowledge and understanding. Man is by nature a political animal. A human being is not truly human except in a political association.

Man possesses reason, and is therefore, quite distinct from the other beings of nature, he is for Aristotle, like them, a hylomorphic beings (composed of matter and form in union) who is subject to change, and who has arisen as the result of a long process of cosmic evolution. The human soul is bound to its body, and even the power of reason cannot function without the assistance of the corporeal organs of sense. This reason is to
the apprehension of the forms of surrounding bodily things about which it needs to know something in order to survive. Hence, it is only with difficulty and indirectly that the soul can come to understand the nature of itself and to non-physical operations. Our human reason, chained to a body, is the lowest possible type. In spite of its serious limitations, Aristotle held that with the aid of sense, our rational faculty can gain accurate insight concerning physical things, a very broad though confused knowledge of being and its all pervasive structure, and even some understanding of non-physical existence and God, the unmoved mover of nature.

Human intelligence is found to a body and dependent upon sense. It can give us some insight into the composite nature of changing things, but with respect to immaterial beings, like the human soul, its knowledge is indirect and negative. Nevertheless, it is by far the most penetrating of all our intellectual faculties, and is capable of revealing many aspects of being which are totally opaque to sense.

Plato had believed that there was universal intelligible entities outside the mind, which simply floated in to be passively received. Aristotle pointed out that all the evidence indicate that everything in nature is concrete and singular. The matter of such entities is opaque to reason. Only form as such is intelligible. Hence, before this structure can be understood, it must be separated
from its material matrix. This means that reason is active, not passive. It grasps the structure, or nature, of a physical thing only by constructive acts of its own.

The human soul is the first animating form of a natural body, and cannot as a whole exist without it, the rational part is separable and immortal. This organized body was prepared by a long process of evolution to receive the essential form of reason which is the differentiating feature of man. It was first of all a physical thing located in a space, and subject to the laws of motion. Then such a body was endowed with a vegetative principle which enabled it to nourish itself and to grow. When this plant life became established, it was then infused with an animal form which was capable of sense and locomotion. Being material, this animal life retained the potency for a still higher form. At a certain stage in its accidental development, it became ready, and received the rational form of man.

This final rational form fused with the other lower patterns to which it was added, and found them all into a higher unity, making this new organized body into a man. This is no mere set of separate properties strung together, for each is combined with a potential matter prepared to unite with a further matter, as the molten gold is able to receive the form of a ring. Thus body and soul are not two separate entities, but two interdependent principles, each of which exists only by virtue of the other.
Without the human body, there would be no soul, and without the soul, no human body. Each is distinct but not separable from the other.

The rational form fuses with the other of lower forms in such a way as to give them a new unity, but in doing this, it also becomes dependent upon them.

The vegetative soul is responsible for the function of intuition, growth and reproduction. Without these, the higher faculties cannot operate or even exist. But at the same time, they are under the general control of reason. Thus, while we have to eat in order to live, we can choose when to eat and what food we shall take. The lower functions are necessary but always potentially open to further determinations from a higher source. Thus hunger and sexual need arise automatically in all men, but they can be controlled in an infinite variety of ways. The animal factor in the human form provides us with faculties of sense and organs of locomotion. The sense organ must receive an actual stimulation from physical pressures, sounds, colours etc. but this is only the beginning, a first necessary condition for sensory feeling. Sense enables us to become aware of physical things around us so far as they possess the special sensible properties.

Language, distinguish man from other animal and nature. Man alone possesses speech. Without the possibility of communication
the individual is not a man, and if he ceases to desire it he must be either a beast or a God. (Pol, 1, 125, 3\textsuperscript{a} 19\textsuperscript{f}). Man can think and reminisce, Beast lacking, the ability to see generalizations which reveal causal structure cannot determine their future actions in terms of a stable concept of the world.

For Aristotle, the universe is a cosmos, or order of changing entities at different levels of being, inorganic things, plants, animal and men. All are dependent on an ultimate first principle which Aristotle held was in perfect act.

Everything in nature is in flux. This is true. But change cannot be reduced to a mere succession of forms in an alien medium. The material principle never exists alone by itself, but always together with some form by which it achieves its potency for other structures. Even in the union with form it still retains its potency for other structures. Change is the actualization of such potency, which always includes the factor of continuity as well as one of formal succession or discontinuity. Natural substances not only suffer change they also have active powers and exercise causal efficacy. Aristotle was deeply concerned with the phenomenon. He distinguished four types of cause, which were implicit in Platonic thought, and analysed each in great detail.

Aristotle arranges all living beings in a scale, according to the complexity of the physical faculties they display, placing man
towards the top of the scale, and this idealistic, and perhaps fanciful view to some extent impedes any attempt at a sober classification of animal.

In the hierarchy of nature, plants are ranked above mere physical bodies. But to say that plants are thus 'above' physical bodies means no more than that plant themselves are, of course, physical bodies, and that all of the laws of motion and change that apply to physical bodies apply also to plants, but at the same time, plants, in addition to obeying the laws of motion of physical bodies, also manifest a type of change or motion of their own - what we have called developmental daze - which mere physical bodies as inanimate things do not manifest at all.

Animals are above plants, in that, in addition to performing the ordinary vital functions associated with mere plant life, animals also perform the functions of sensation and locomotion. With respect to the latter point, Aristotle obviously felt that animals are capable of moving about from place to place under their own power, whereas plants are not.

Aristotle's interpretation of all natural processes is frankly teleological, the physical scientist must in his view aim at the discovery and statement of the final cause, as well as the efficient cause and material condition. This mode of explanation, is for obvious reasons, even more prominent in Aristotle's account of living things,
their organs, instincts and mode of life, than it was in his astronomy and physics.

Aristotle is what would be called a vitalist. There is for him a clear division between the movement and qualitative change of lifeless bodies and the processes which appear first in living and growing things, and though he does not seem to argue at length in favour of this position, he holds that there is a prospect of explaining organic change in mechanical or chemical terms. Such change must necessarily be described in terms of psyche, defined as explained in de Anima.

The life of plants is relatively simple, (a) they take nourishment, already prepared for them, from the earth, and (b) they grow and at a fixed season reproduce themselves. The distribution of their organic parts is such as is dictated by these two functions. Aristotle indeed argues that growth or nourishment and the production of offspring are connected (de Anima, II, Ch. 4) and assigns these functions jointly to the most elementary species of psyche. Some beings are of a dubious character, being motionless, but apparently endowed with sensation.

Nature proceeds little by little from things lifeless to animal life in such a way that it is impossible to determine the exact line of demarcation, nor on which side thereof an intermediate form should be. Thus, next after lifeless things comes the plant, and of plants, one will differ from another as to its amount of apparent vitality, and in a word, the whole genus of plants, whilst it is devoid of life as compared with
an animal is endowed with life as compared to with other corporeal entities. So, in the sea, there are certain objects concerning which one would be at a loss to determine whether they be animal or vegetable. For instance, certain of these objects are fairly rooted, and in several cases perish if detached. In regard to sensibility some animals give no indication whatever of it, whilst other indicate it but indistinctly. And so throughout the entire animal scale there is graduated differentiation in amount of vitality and in capacity for motion.1

Whereas the plant draws its nourishment fully prepared from the earth, animals (a) are designed to range about the world in pursuit of nourishment, and must have the instincts and faculties requisite for the purpose, among which sense-perception is evidently the most essential, and this entails the sense of pleasure and some degree of imagination and memory, (b) must concoct or prepare the nutriment for themselves. Nature has therefore built into the animal frame itself an apparatus whereby the body building nutriment is separated, turned into blood and distributed to all parts of the body while the superfluous 'residue' is either discharged altogether or economically devoted to the formation and growth of subordinate parts, such as hairs, nails, horns etc.

Man is unique among the animals and has some primacy among them, he does not, of course, doubt, he alone, of living beings, with which we are acquainted, partakes of the divine or at any rate

partakes of it in a further measure than the rest (de Partifus 11, 656a 8). Elsewhere nature's work is complete when she has given her creatures the sense necessary to their preservation. But in man at least the higher senses (sight and hearing) have something more than the mere 'survival value' they give the information from which, in the course of time, the practical arts, and science, and philosophy will be evolved, and the philosopher's delight in the truth for its own sake is already foreshadowed in the natural man's pleasure in the exercise of his senses. (Metaphysics I, Ch.1). All this can be said without appealing to the additional and supremely important fact that man alone has the use of reason. The lower animals have at least five forms of sense perception, sense of pleasure, desire, power of locomotion, the capacity to restore their energy in some instances and memory which enables habits to be formed.

Man, in addition to all these powers and to the vegetative powers, has the gift of reason, theoretical and practical.

For Aristotle the antithesis between nature and convention or law is a false one (because the truth is itself natural to rational beings) it is also a misleading one, because the word 'nature' has various senses and may denote either the primitive state or the acme of development, but if we insist on applying it to the forms of human association, we are found to say that the state is more natural than the family, because in it alone human nature is developed to its full extent.
So nature according to Aristotle, means (1) the original state of thing, as opposed to its state when modified by culture and education, hence those tendencies in any growing thing which are first displayed as opposed to others not less natural which come out at a later state, and

(2) The acme of development which is reached when every inherent capacity has been brought.

(3) The power of spontaneous movement and change as opposed to movement which is induced from without or by force.

(4) The total aggregate of bodies which display such movement.

Aristotle sometimes seems to regard nature as designing power which has provided every living being with those faculties which it needs in order to survive. He is never weary of calling attention to the marvellous accuracy and economy of her design. Some passages suggest the view that nature is not merely an immanent forces, but a person having reason and foresight. He certainly criticises other thinkers for trying to explain natural processes in mechanistic terms, and goes to an extreme length in the opposite direction. The fact is that he holds that a process may be purposive, and yet not be the outcome of conscious choice. Aristotle calls attention to the marvellous skill and economy of nature throughout his description of living things and their organs. The movement of the planets is likewise viewed as rational and purposive. In the history of science, there has been no more strenuous defender
of final causes. Yet, nature has no real existent as a personal force. Nature is a kind of unconscious art, situated within the living and growing things, an art which is careless of the individual and aims only at the preservation of the specific type. (Nature is present also in the lifeless elements; but here the tendency of each body to attain its natural situation and remain there until it is forcibly withdrawn, takes the place of the quasi-purposive development of the form). As for the matter which provides the fabric of the bodies of living beings, and the framework of the world in which they move, its changes are certainly governed in general, by causal law, but Aristotle never speaks of an iron nexus of cause and effect and seems to think that it is only in the outer region of the universe, which is most completely dominated by mind, that absolute uniformity of movement, is to be found.

By these views he obtains liberty to interpret the course of nature in terms of purpose, which making as few explicitly metaphysical assumptions as possible, and he probably hopes that the success and coherence of the explanation thus given will be taken as a guarantee which he was chiefly interested, settle down in the end to some such view as his. And a philosophy which pronounces that this exquisitely designed world has existed for an infinite time, and that there is no emergence of new forms in response to a changed environment, is relieved from some task, which would be onerous to modern science. In the end, you can either
succeed in visualising a world which is thoroughly permeated by a rational plan, and yet was never planned, or you cannot. Aristotle is thoroughly convinced by his own picture and goes so far as to claim that it is the very unconsciousness of nature's design that accounts for its superior accuracy when compared with human art. (Ethics II, Ch. 6. § 9)

Nature is the primary immanent element of a thing which is the starting point of its growth and the genesis of growing things. It is the primary matter, shapeless and unchangeable from its own potency, of which any natural object consists or from which it is produced and it is the essence of natural object. Nature consists of primary matter, and the form or essence, and is the end of all becoming.

Every essence in general is called a nature because the nature of a thing is a kind of essence. The primary and proper meaning of nature is the essence of a thing which have in themselves (qua themselves) a principle of motion. The matter is described as nature only because it is susceptible of that principle, generation and growth, because they proceed from it. Nature in this sense is the source of movement of natural object, present in them either potentially or actually.

Aristotle held that the hylomorphic substances of nature have an independent and fully real existence of their own. This led him
to study their complex internal structure more carefully, and also the mysterious processes of change and evolution out of which they come into being through which they endure, and to which they finally return. Change, in fact, was recognized by Aristotle as the most pervasive fact of nature and his categories can be understood only in the light of the role they play in different kinds of change.

There is a factor of indeterminacy or potency, called matter, which is found everywhere in nature. It is nothing, but rather an incomplete mode of being which is not actual. Yet able to become an infinite number of forms. When one such determination is received, however, the matter still remains incomplete. It is able to lose the form and to receive an indefinite variety of others. It is never found alone, but always united with some form. Change is the actualization of the potential.

Spiritual beings have no matter and do not evolve out of anything else. They cannot be understood in the usual way by means of genus and difference. Hence, we cannot grasp them directly as they are. We have to approach them indirectly by comparing them with what they are not. This gives us only an analogous, negative knowledge of them which is expressed when we say they are immaterial. Material substances are however, more accessible to our limited intelligence. They evolve out of preceding substances which are destroyed when the new essential form is received. These new substances are always individual and are capable of enduring
through the three modes of accidental change, locomotion, growth and alteration. Once a species becomes established the individuals reproduce others like themselves.

Aristotle suggested that the lower species of life came first and that from these evolved the later and higher forms. He did not believe, however, that this was working towards some final end, since the cosmos is everlasting in time. Many such evolutions have happened before and have ended in great catastrophe. Many will doubtless happen again after our particular history is finished.