

I. Questions about soul; comparison with Plato

A. See 402a23: read to 402b17

1. Is soul a particular thing and substance (or a universal), or is it a quality or quantity or some other category
2. Is it a potentiality or an actuality
3. Is it divisible into parts
4. Is every soul the same as every other in species or genus (is a tree soul the same as human or cat soul)

B. Debt to Plato: parts. But note that A isn't worried about a spirited part or desires per se. He wonders about functions: intellectual and perception.

II. Soul is life-principle, what makes things living beings. All and only living things have souls. More than pure reason.

III. Soul is form and function of body, which is matter.

A. 412a7; we speak of one thing qua matter, another qua form, a third qua shape and matter. Also see 414a14.

B. Matter is potentiality of a thing, form actuality. Soul is actuality of body, an ex. of this general rule. 412a26.

C. Ex: axe is potentiality, cutting is actuality. Function. eye is pot., sight is actuality. 412b10-23.

D. As eye=sight + pupil, so person (or animal)=body + soul.

E. So: soul= actuality=form=function. Remember that first 3 of 4 causes seem to be the same in things by nature (living things)?

IV. Potentiality & actuality

A. Potentiality is matter, no form or shape.

B. Actuality can be first or second. First comes first and is not yet full.

C. Ex: first is person asleep. Has soul, but not fully actualized or used. Second: person is awake and using K of math.

V. Kinds of souls

A. Nutritive: 312a25; plants nourish themselves and grow. Only kind of soul they have.

B. Perceptive: 412b2; animals have sense perception, therefore desire and pain, pleasure. Have 2 types of soul.

C. Intellect: 413b24; humans have all 3. Different kind, may be separable.

VI. Nichomachean Ethics: The Good Life....the art of living...What is it?

- a. every activity aims at some good
- b. life involves activity(ies), so life aims at some good(s)
- c. one or more than one?
reasons for doing x cannot go on forever
so, there must be a final end to each activity
there must be a chief good for each activity
there must be a chief good for all man's activities, a "chief good for man"
- d. Does Good Life exist by Convention, or by Nature?

II. Ari's Method

- a. only "as much clearness as the subject-matter admits of"
don't accept probable reasoning from mathematician, or a demonstration from a rhetorician (1094b25)
- b. starting-points: what is familiar to us; facts about goods
from there, work our way to first principles (unqualified claims)
- c. rely on the experienced to give us the facts about goods (not the young).

III. Polling the Facts

- a. Happiness seems to be Chief Good
- b. What is it? Answer assoc'd with diff kinds of life:
 1. pleasure (vulgar/slavish life)?
 2. honour (life of politics)?
 3. wealth (life of commerce)?
 4. contemplation (thinker's life)?
 5. is it just "general excellence" in action?
- c. Could Chief Good be Form of Good?
Three arguments against
- d. Could Happiness be the good(s) achievable by action(s)?
 1. must be intrinsic (complete) good
 2. happiness more complete than honor, wealth, pleasure, contemplation don't pursue happiness for some other reason
 3. trivially true/platitude? (happiness=maximal goodness for humans)
 4. How to get substantive acct?
 5. A's idea: look at function of human. Good functioning=happy life. (eye "does well" if it is "seeing well")
 6. Does man have a natural function? A's clue: living is an activity, and since living is natural, living things have a natural function, which is evident in the processes/activities by which they live.
 7. Key: function of creature X is whatever activity is peculiar to it (that sets it off from other creatures).

Tentative answer: man is rational animal (creature with soul that has rational faculty), so

function of man is "activity of soul in accordance with, or not without, rational principle".

If "good"="good functioning", then happiness=excellence in functioning.

