

## The Role of Medical Metaphors in Aristotle's Ontology

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### 1. Aristotle *Cael.* I 2 269b2-6; tr. by J.L. Stocks. *Revised Oxford Translation* (1995).

Further, if, on the one hand, circular movement is *natural* to something, it must surely be some simple and primary body which naturally moves with a circular motion, as fire moves up and earth down.

πρὸς δὲ τούτοις εἰ μὲν ἐστὶν ἡ κύκλις τινὶ φορᾷ κατὰ φύσιν, δῆλον ὡς εἴη ἂν τι σῶμα τῶν ἀπλῶν καὶ πρώτων, ὃ πέφυκεν, ὡσπερ τὸ πῦρ ἄνω καὶ ἡ γῆ κάτω, ἐκεῖνο κύκλις φέρεσθαι κατὰ φύσιν.

### 2. Aristotle *Cael.* I 3 270b19-25.

And so, implying that the primary body is something else beyond earth, fire, air, and water, they [*the Presocratics*] gave the highest place the name of *aether*, derived from the fact that it 'runs always' for an eternity of time.

διόπερ ὡς ἑτέρου τινὸς ὄντος τοῦ πρώτου σώματος παρὰ γῆν καὶ πῦρ καὶ ἀέρα καὶ ὕδωρ, αἰθέρα προσωνόμασαν τὸν ἀνωτάτω τόπον, ἀπὸ τοῦ θεῖν αἰετὸν αἰδῖον χρόνον δέμενοι τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν αὐτῷ.

### 3. Aristotle *Mete.* I 3 339b25-27; tr. by E.M. Webster. *Revised Oxford Translation* (1995).

In the latter point he [*Anaxagoras*] was right; for men seem to have assumed that a body that was eternally in motion was also divine in nature; and, as such a body was different from any of the terrestrial elements, they determined to call it 'ether'.

τοῦτο μὲν ὀρθῶς νομίσας· τὸ γὰρ αἰετὸν σῶμα θεῖον ἅμα καὶ θεῖον τι τὴν φύσιν εἰκόασιν ὑπολαβεῖν, καὶ διώρισαν ὀνομάζειν αἰθέρα τὸ τοῖουτον ὡς ὄν οὐδενὶ τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν τὸ αὐτό.

### 4. Aristotle *Mete.* IV 2 379b 18-21.

Concoction is a process in which the natural and proper heat of an object perfects the corresponding passive qualities, which are the proper matter of any given object. For when concoction has taken place we say that a thing has been perfected and has come to be itself.

πέψις μὲν οὖν ἐστὶν τελείωσις ὑπὸ τοῦ φυσικοῦ καὶ οἰκείου θερμοῦ ἐκ τῶν ἀντικειμένων παθητικῶν· ταῦτα δ' ἐστὶν ἡ οἰκεία ἐκάστω ἕλη. ὅταν γὰρ πεφθῇ, τετελείωται τε καὶ γέγονεν.

### 5. Aristotle *Mete.* 379b 21-25

It is the proper heat of a thing that sets up this perfecting, though external influences may contribute in some degrees to its fulfillment. Baths, for instance, and other things of the kind contribute to the concoction of food, but the primary source is the proper heat of the body.

καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς τελειώσεως ὑπὸ θερμότητος τῆς οἰκείας συμβαίνει, κἂν διὰ τινος τῶν ἐκτὸς βοηθείας συνεπιτελεσθῇ, οἷον ἡ τροφή συμπέττεται καὶ διὰ λούτρων καὶ δι' ἄλλων τοιούτων· ἀλλ' ἡ γὰρ ἀρχὴ ἡ ἐν αὐτῷ θερμότης ἐστίν.

### 6. Hippocrates' *Fleshes*, 13; tr. by P. Potter. Loeb Classical Library (1995).

For when food and drink collect in the stomach and intestines, and are heated, the vessels arising there draw off the finest and moistest part, leaving the thickest part behind, which turns to faeces in the lower intestines.

καὶ γὰρ αἱ φλέβες αἰ ἐκ τῆς νηδύος <καὶ> τῶν ἐντέρων, εἰς ἃ συλλέγεται τὰ σιτία καὶ τὰ ποτά, ἐπειδὴν θερμανθῇ ταῦτα, ἔλκουσι τὸ λεπτότατον καὶ τὸ ὑγρότατον· τὸ δὲ παχύτατον αὐτοῦ καταλείπεται, καὶ γίνεται κόπρος ἐν τοῖσιν ἐντέροισι τοῖσι κάτω.

7. Hippocrates' *Places in Man*, 43; tr. by P. Potter (1995).

From the correct measure of foods the body is nourished equally and the foods are mastered by the body, but when more foods are administered than can, in changing to something different, be mastered, the foods take mastery, and when the body is mastered by the things administered to it, the same things that otherwise make it thrive prevail over the body and produce the opposite effect.

τὸ γὰρ σῶμα ὑπὸ μὲν τῶν σιτίων ἴσως ἴσως τρέφεται, ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ σώματος τὰ σιτία κρατέεται· ἐπὴν δὲ μᾶλλον προσενέγκηται ἢ ἀλλοίως μεταλλάξας κρατέηται, κρατεῖ δὴ τὰ σιτία· καὶ ὅπῃ κρατέηται τὸ σῶμα ὑπὸ τῶν προσοισμάτων, <ἂ> θάλλειν ποιεῖ ταῦτα καὶ κρατεῖ ἅμα τοῦ σώματος τὰ τε ὑπεναντία ποίουσιν.

8. Hippocrates' *Epidemics I*, First Constitution, 2; tr. W.H.S. Jones (1923).

The patients frequently coughed up small, concocted sputa, brought up little by little with difficulty. Those exhibiting the symptoms in their most violent form showed no concoction at all, but continued spitting crude sputa.

ἐβησσαν δὲ σμικρά, πυκνά, πέποινα, κατ' ὀλίγα μόγις ἀνάγοντες. οἷσι δὲ τὰ βιαιότατα συμπίπτει, οὐδ' ἐς ὀλίγον πεπασμὸν ἦει, ἀλλὰ διετέλεον ὡμὰ πτύοντες.

9. Aristotle *Mete.* 379b 25 – 380a 3

In some cases of concoction the end of the process is the nature of the thing – nature, that is, in the sense of the form and essence. In other cases it leads to some latent form which is attained when the moisture has acquired certain properties or a certain magnitude in the process of being broiled or boiled or of putrefying, or however else it is being heated; for then the thing has some use and we say that concoction has taken place. Must is an instance of this, and the matter in boils when it becomes purulent, and tears when they become rheum, and so with the rest. Concoction ensues whenever the matter, the moisture, is mastered. For the matter is what is determined [given definition] by the natural heat in the object, and as long as the ratio between them exists in it a thing maintains its nature. Hence things like the liquid and solid excreta and waste-stuffs in general are signs of health, and concoction is said to have taken place in them; for they show that the proper heat has mastered the indeterminate matter.

τὸ δὲ τέλος τοῖς μὲν ἢ φύσις ἐστίν, φύσις δὲ ἢν λέγομεν ὡς εἶδος καὶ οὐσίαν· τοῖς δὲ εἰς ὑποκειμένην τινα μορφήν τὸ τέλος ἐστὶ τῆς πέψεως, ὅταν τοιονδί γένηται καὶ τοσονδί τὸ ὑγρὸν ἢ ὀπτώμενον ἢ ἐψόμενον ἢ σηπόμενον ἢ ἄλλως πως δερμαίνόμενον· τότε γὰρ χρήσιμον ἐστὶ καὶ πεπέφθαι φαμέν, ὥσπερ τὸ γλεύκος καὶ τὰ ἐν τοῖς φύμασιν συνιστάμενα, ὅταν γένηται πύον, καὶ τὸ δάκρυον, ὅταν γένηται λήμη· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τᾶλλα. συμβαίνει δὲ τοῦτο πάσχειν ἅπασιν, ὅταν κρατηθῇ ἢ ὕλη καὶ ἢ ὑγρότης· αὕτη γὰρ ἐστὶν ἢ ὀριζομένη ὑπὸ τῆς ἐν τῇ φύσει θερμότητος. ἕως γὰρ ἂν ἐν ἢ ἐν αὐτῇ ὁ λόγος, φύσις τοῦτ' ἐστίν. διὸ καὶ ὑγιείας σημεῖα τὰ τοιαῦτα, καὶ οἶρα καὶ ὑποχωρήσεις καὶ ὄλως τὰ περιττώματα. καὶ λέγεται πεπέφθαι, ὅτι θηλοὶ κρατεῖν τὴν θερμότητα τὴν οἰκείαν τοῦ ἀορίστου.

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