

Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind and Cognition

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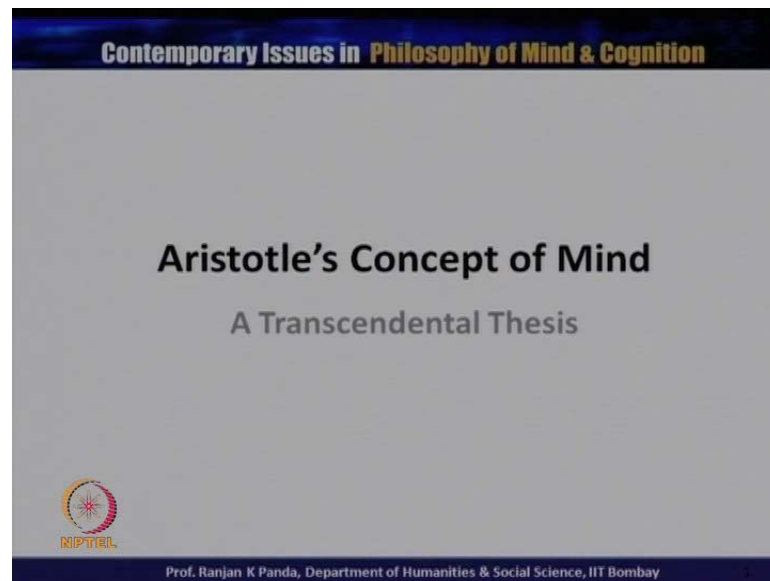
Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Lecture No. # 05

Aristotle's Concept of Mind

Today, we are going to discuss Aristotle's philosophy of mind, as you know Aristotle was contemporary of Plato, and Plato's discussion on this concept of soul is a giving an impression of transcendental theory of mind.

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The soul in Plato is transcendental, because it is not composed by the body. It is the essence of life, it is the essence of notion, it is transcendental, because the soul is responsible for causing various kinds of notions, these notions represent voluntary actions. And as we have seen in the case of Plato, Plato is comparing the soul as a kind of a servitor who is controlling all kinds of actions, who is deciding things, who takes a decision, who makes a choice. So, soul is rational. So, for it is activities are consults.

The Platonic motion of the soul or the mind gives a teleological interpretation, it is not only transcendental, for this motion of transcendence is associated with the motion of Telos, as if there is **there is** a purpose behind this whole activities of the soul or the activities of human existence.

So, the human engagement with the world is not necessarily a kind of a finite historical engagement whether, the being or the **or the** person transcends its historicity and tries to search its destiny. So, there is a divine, there is the sense of dignity associated with the soul. The soul is a spiritual being, it is a spiritual phenomenon that causes all kinds of actions.

With this interpretation of Plato, let us look at what is Aristotelian view and how does Aristotle explain the nature of soul or the nature of mind. The Aristotle's philosophy of mind that I will be going to discuss today, is particularly with reference to **(())** paper which is published in the review of metaphysics 1999, where Miller gives a very novel interpretation to Aristotle theory of mind.

He does not reject the usual interpretation of mind, whether Miller is trying to show that how Aristotle is initiating the debates in philosophy of mind? And these initiations are novel in the sense that Aristotle tries to show a naturalistic thesis on philosophy of mind.


So, if naturalism has come to the forefront today in the discourse of philosophy of mind, Millers attempt is to show how the present naturalistic theory of mind is based on the Aristotelian notion of mind.

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Soul

- Principle of Life
- Soul as the **essence** of life
- Soul is an **actualization**

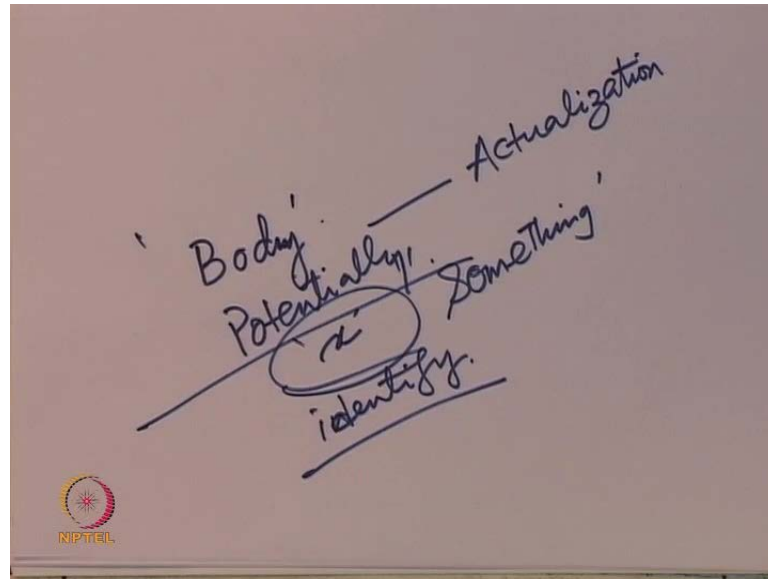
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However, my understanding is that Aristotle proposes a transcendental theory of mind, and I will try to show how Aristotle does it is on way. What is soul? Aristotle says, soul is the essence of life, it is the principle of life according to Aristotle. This soul is principle and acts as a meta physical principle as we have seen in the discourse of a Greek philosophy, particularly the Greek philosophers were concerned with this idea that, there is a fundamental principle understanding which, we can explain the general structure of the reality and this search research for meta physics.

Meta physics become an ultimate source of knowledge, its philosophical explanations are based on some kind of Meta physical presuppositions then, Aristotle's philosophy of mind also presupposes the notion of soul as one of the Meta physical concept, to explain the nature of reality.

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Now, therefore, in this connection Miller tries to reflect on this idea of potentiality and actuality. Aristotle is using this two terms in a very significant way that, the body is potentially something **the body is potentially something** if there is a body then, this body is potentially something.

Let us say x, the moment I say the body is x, I am trying to identify the body. So, I have already some kind of knowledge about the body now, this identification or defining the body is something is what Aristotle calls some kind of a actualization.

So, soul is actualized whereas, the body is a potential, the body represent a case of a potential where soul is something which is an actualization. Why do we talk about the soul is an essence of life of the principle of life? It is just a Meta physical concern of a Aristotle.

Now, as we know, as I have mentioned it that the Greek philosophers where delving into the discourse of philosophy and trying to find out what is the meta physical basis of reality. So, hence this notion of substance, as a fundamental principle is very much debated in the pre Socratic philosophy, as well as by the Socratic philosophers.

Now, Aristotle is bringing this debate, debate which was there in Plato. It is a debate about the dualism, which Plato and encounters with reference to the epistemology and the ontology. According to Plato matter and forms are two separate entities, they have

two levels of existence they exists in two different realism now, this notion as we have seen that is causing some kind of a dualism, where Plato asserts that forms are logically prior than the existence of the particulars, the things in the world.


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Knowledge of the particulars

- **Substance**
- **Matter** and **form** are not distinct phenomena
- Matter is in *itself* not *this*
- *Through Form it is identified as --- 'this'*


- *The substance is composite of matter and form*


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Now, this primacy that is associated with the form is not acceptable to Aristotle, Aristotle argues that matter and form are not distinct phenomena, they are not two distinct phenomena rather they are related, there is some kind of a logical relationship there necessarily connected with each other and that he tries to show in this case.

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MATTER
Stuff
(Process) involves Actualization
Body
Potentially
identify
Something



Now, when we talk about reality there is this reality called some kind of a stuff. Stuff that represents matter **matter** and its pure form is something, but we do not know what exactly it is. So, the matter actualizes in the process.

So, there is a process involved. So, this process, the process of actualization gives identity to the matter. So, that is what is something very significant in Plato and Aristotle. Plato talks about the existence of basic particulars in the form of the copies, that the particulars are the copies of forms or ideas.


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Knowledge of the particulars

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Whereas, Aristotle emphasizes that, they are not the copies rather they carry the form, it is the form which gives them some kind of identity. So, form and matter are not two distinct phenomena they are related with one another and it is through form, it is been identified as this is a necklace made of gold. Here, gold could be a kind of a pure stuff, the way the gold is processed represents the process of actualizations, how the necklace gets its identity, how a particular ornaments gets its identity. So, that is where it acquires the form.

Similarly, that debate about the matter and form can be associated with the body and the mind, the body and the soul. The soul is an actualization of the body, according to Aristotle soul is **is** if something in Platonic schema know, a lazily living in the body therefore, Aristotle tries to show us that no, this kind of teaching is not something very

very logical therefore, Aristotle tries to explicate what is the logical status of the soul and how we can explain it within this relationship that matter and form shares.

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Substance

- Matter is potentiality
- Form is actualization
- Human being is *knower* in the potential sense

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So, the substance which is a Meta physical principle says; substance is composite of both matter and form. The matter as I said is the potentiality and the form and the other hand represents actualization.

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MATTER

Stuff

Body

Potentially

Actualization

(Process) involves

Something

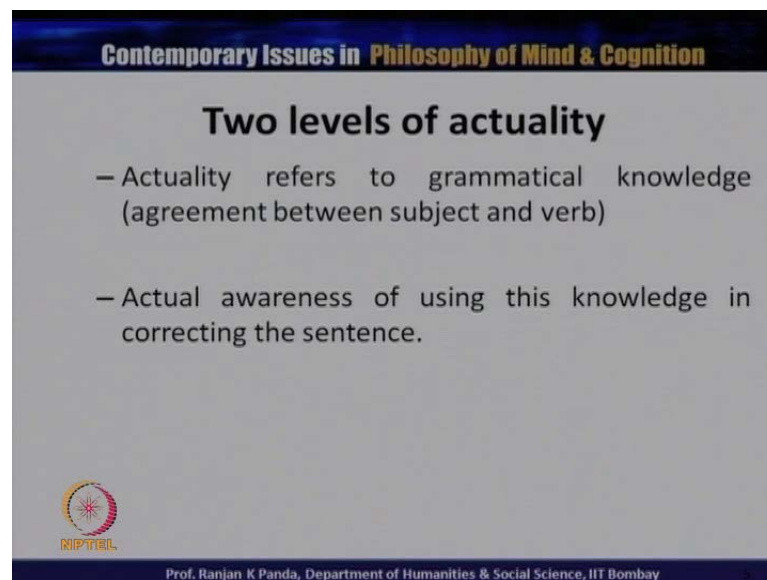
Identify

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So now, one can look at this notion of knower, one can also come to understand this that, if soul is something which is an actualized and this actualization shows that, the soul is aware of what is happening.

So, human being as a knower in a potential sense of the term and in its actual sense is something needs to be discussed. Now, in a potential sense, what kind of presence of the soul we have? In a potential sense what kind of presence the Aristotle is thinking about? And in a actual sense what kind of presence Aristotle is talking about? The two different stage in which the soul manifests. Stage of potentiality and the stage of actualizations are completely different.

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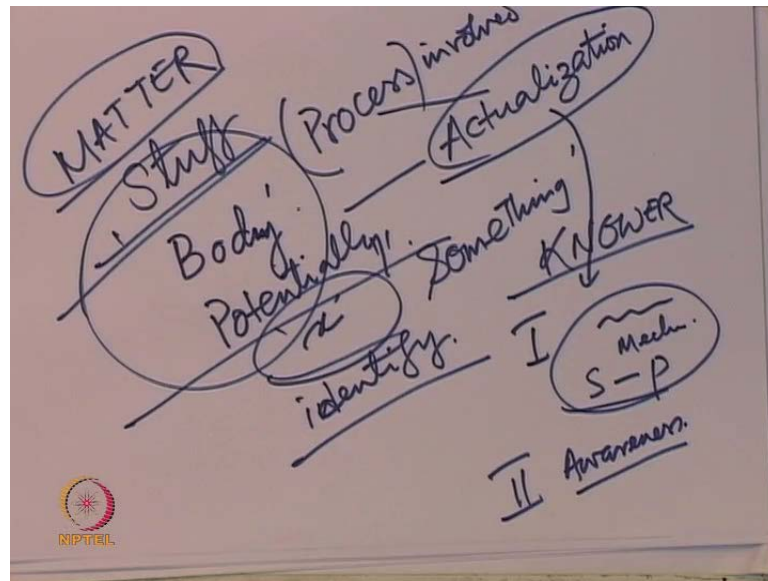


The slide features a dark blue header with the text 'Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition' in yellow. Below the header, the title 'Two levels of actuality' is centered in bold black text. Two bullet points follow: '- Actuality refers to grammatical knowledge (agreement between subject and verb)' and '- Actual awareness of using this knowledge in correcting the sentence.' At the bottom left is the NIPTEL logo, and at the bottom center is the text 'Prof. Ranjan K Panda, Department of Humanities & Social Science, IIT Bombay'.

So, soul is a knower must have two different state of existence and that is what we would like to discuss. There are two levels of actuality Aristotle is pointing to, one is actuality refers to the grammatical knowledge is agreement between subject and the verb, the actual awareness of using knowledge, at a one point when you make a linguistic analysis Miller is trying to make a kind of linguistic analysis of this particular case, of actuality potentiality and actuality.

Now, when we talk about actualizations, if soul is an is something that to been actualized by the body then, what are the two different levels of actualizations? At one level we talk about the grammatical relationship in which a sentences actualized, where we talk about subject, predicate or subject and verb connections.

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The **the** other level that somebody is connecting, somebody is aware of what is going on. So, there are **there are** two process, at one you have a process which could be a kind of a mechanical process or which could be a kind of a spontaneous process, where you try to formulate the sentences but, this spontaneity needs to be noticed by some body.

So, self as a knower also notices what is happening, and that he does at the second level of actuality. Miller has many analytical in his interpretations that, where he tries to correct the processes now, this awareness is something very important. One level, the first level we are talking about a process, is going to be a mechanical process without happening without the knowledge of the knower.

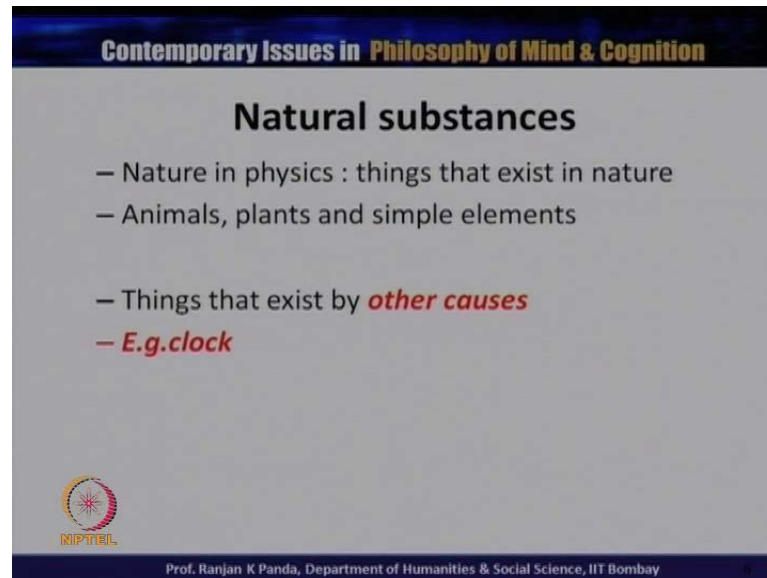
At another level, you have a process which is intentional process in the sense that the knower is aware of this fact that yes, it is happening. Like I am conscious, and I am conscious of the fact that, I am conscious are two levels of consciousness.

Now, when I say I am conscious it is a natural fact that, I am conscious of something but, if I make a claim, a knowledge claim then, I must say that yes, I am conscious of this fact that x is there in the class and listening to my lectures. So, this is a kind of a second level consciousness.

The similar kind of analysis Miller is doing here that, at a one level the subject, the individual is formulating sentences at another level the individual has the power to

correct those sentences, to evaluate whether sentence is a correct one or in correct one. So, that reflective capacity of the person is something very interesting, when you talk about the process of actualizations.

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The slide is titled "Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition" and "Natural substances". It lists three categories of substances:

- Nature in physics : things that exist in nature
- Animals, plants and simple elements
- Things that exist by *other causes*

The last item is further exemplified by: *– E.g. clock*

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Now, then look at this notion of potentiality, what is potentially there? Now, when you talk about natural substances, particularly it represents the natural physics, things that exists in nature the many things existing in nature animals, plants and simple elements. There are also things which are caused by the individuals, the human beings, human beings have created those things.

So, for example: the clock, the television that you are there in the, the computers, the furniture many such things are created by human beings. So, where there are two levels of (()), at one level will find that there are natural positions, things are there in the world like animals, are living beings, human beings or living beings, plants or living beings they have the natural potentiality to create things, they grow and they also decay, they grow and they also and die.

So, growth and decay are part of this biological system. Now, what is important here is to note that, there is a process which is involved in the body, the process which is causing the growth and also causing the decay. And there is also a process which is involved in the in individual, in the human beings where they create new things, they create many


artifacts. So, that is what is trying to show that, there are natural substances and there are certain artifacts, an artifacts are caused by human beings.

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Contemporary Issues in **Philosophy of Mind & Cognition**

Natural Bodies

- **Living**
- Self nutrition, growth and decay
- **Non-living**
- Every natural body which shares life is a substance
- **Body and soul stand to each other as matter and form**

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So, you have living and non living beings. The living beings are have self nutrition growth and decay as I pointed out now, there is also a kind of a every natural body which shares life is a substance, this is the Aristotelian understanding of the substance. That every living being which saves life is a substance, because the Aristotle, you know that soul is the essence or the principle of life. So, that is an essence to this life. So, having this essence Aristotle says that, there is a substance in these living beings.

Now, this relationship between the substance and the body is not a mechanical relationship, it is a natural relationship and what kind of naturalism Aristotle is advocating, we need to look at that. The other point of which Aristotle is making here, particularly with reference to the relation is that, the body and soul stand to each other as the matter and form stand to each other.

I have already stated about it and that, when I talk about a particular entity or a particular things a chair, I already point it out that yes, that chair. So, or this chair on **on** which I am sitting and talking to you now, this gives some kind of identity to the particular thing.


So, there is a form which gives identity or which brings the identity to the matter is intrinsically related with the matter, cannot really isolate them, put them in the Platonic world of forms.

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Regarding the relation

- “For the body is a subject and matter, and is not an attribute of a subject. Hence, soul is not an attribute of the body. Rather soul is the substance in the sense of the form of natural body which potentially partakes of life.” (Miller 1999: 312)

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So, regarding the relation Aristotle says I would sight this quotation from Miller, Miller writes, for the body is a subject and matter and is not an attribute of the subject hence, soul is not an attribute of the body, either soul is the substance in the sense of the form of natural body which potentially partakes of life (())

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Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition

In the first level of actualization

- Knowledge as actual state
- Being awake corresponds to the exercise of such knowledge
- *Soul is the first level actualization of a natural body which potentially partakes in life.* (Miller 1999: 312)

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Now, this notion of soul as a substance in the sense that it naturally tests the body. So, Aristotle tries to give some kind of natural relationship in which the soul is realizing its know potentiality or the body actualized in a in a particular way just by having soul in it, remember the existence of a soul is nothing but, the essence of life.

So, in the first level of actualizations. So, what you **what you** exactly have is this, some knowledge as an actual state and the second level you are being aware of the fact being awake.

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The slide is titled "Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition" and "Four different levels of soul". It lists four levels: Intellect, Perception, Locomotion and rest, and Nutritive movement, growth and decay. The slide also features the NIPTEL logo and the name of the professor, Prof. Ranjan K Panda, from the Department of Humanities & Social Science, IIT Bombay.

So, the existence as a living being and where existence as a living being, and also being aware of this fact that you are living a something very important. So, soul is the first level of actualization of a natural body, which potentially partakes in life, where one is aware of this fact that, there are no cases the activities which you are aware of you.

So, there are four things or four levels different levels in which we can talk about, the soul, one is the intellect, perception, locomotion and rest, nutritive movement, growth and decay. Now, this is the fourth level where you will find every biological system, organic system, has this capacity, has this power then, little higher than, this will have worth the two that is the locomotion and rest the body can move and control its movement, and self control its movement then, there are organic systems which have perceptive powers, they have senses to receive information, to receive sense data.

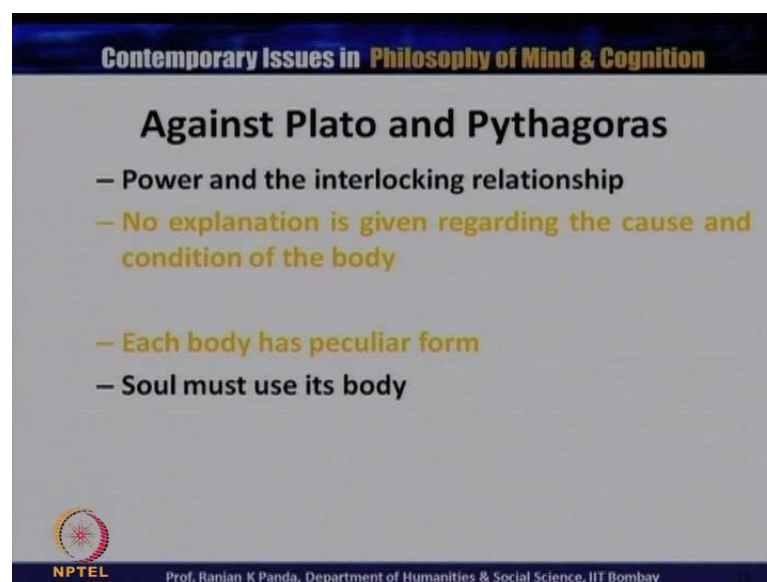
So, the power of sense organs associated with the body, then at the highest level you have the capacity to reason out, capacity to deserve, capacity to identify things, age something that is where you place reason or intellect.

So, human beings are with all the four lesser beings than the human, where Aristotle's called human beings are reasonable, because they can formulate a normative world. There normative world is far more superior than the normative world in which animals live.

Now, this superiority is something to do with complex form of life. Human beings live a very complex form of life. The knowledge systems in which humans live is much more complex than the knowledge systems in which are the normative structure, in which the animals have their own form of life. So, that is the difference.

So, the Aristotelian form of life where human beings are extraordinary capacity of reasonality and intellect is something to do with the description of the soul, of soul is an important category there. So, as I said Aristotle was critical to Plato and Pythagoras.

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Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition

Against Plato and Pythagoras

- Power and the interlocking relationship
- No explanation is given regarding the cause and condition of the body
- Each body has peculiar form
- Soul must use its body

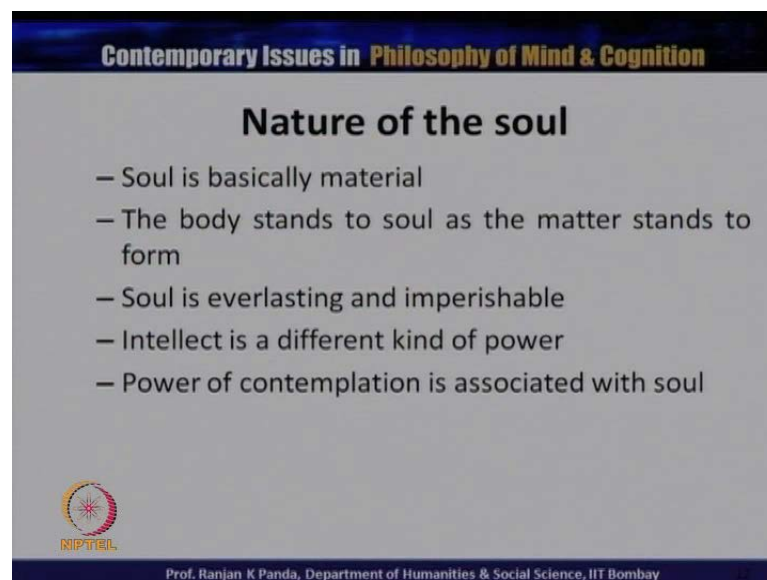
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Now, this criticism is something very significant in the sense that, as I mentioned earlier the Aristotle thinks that soul is alisely categorized, (ref er time: 31:00) alisely put the soul in the body. Where Aristotle the body is constituted of certain organic systems and each system is interlocking and that interlocked in a organic structure. ok

So, systems, sub systems are functioning within the structure of the body. So, this power, and the power of interlocking relationship a something very significant, when you talk about soul and its relationship with the body.

Plato has given no explanation regarding the cause and the condition of the body. So, therefore, Aristotle tries to draw our attention to the fact that, each body have a peculiar form, each body is unique and soul must use its body, in the sense that soul has the power of using its body. Soul must use this body in the sense that soul has the power of using its body. So, that is why soul has to use the body.


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Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition

Nature of the soul

- Soul is basically material
- The body stands to soul as the matter stands to form
- Soul is everlasting and imperishable
- Intellect is a different kind of power
- Power of contemplation is associated with soul

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Now, then let us summarize the nature of the soul, I would summarize like this, the soul is basically material and Aristotle, the body stands to soul as the matter stands the form, soul is everlasting and imperishable. And this is where Aristotle is not totally rejecting Plato that, soul is everlasting and imperishable, what is perishable is the body. The body is an organic system not only shows the symptom of growth, but also shows symptom of decay.

So, this process does not affect the quality of the soul, intellect is different kind of power. So, the intellectual power the (()) power of the soul is not affected much by the decay of the body. What else the soul has? The soul has the power of contemplation, contemplation is associated with soul, the power of reflection is associated with the soul.

Now, when we talk about soul and its relationship with the body, we must also see, you now the Aristotelian explanation of this matter form relations more critically, particularly with reference to Aristotle's (()) explanation.

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Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition

Soul as agent

– Four type of causal arguments

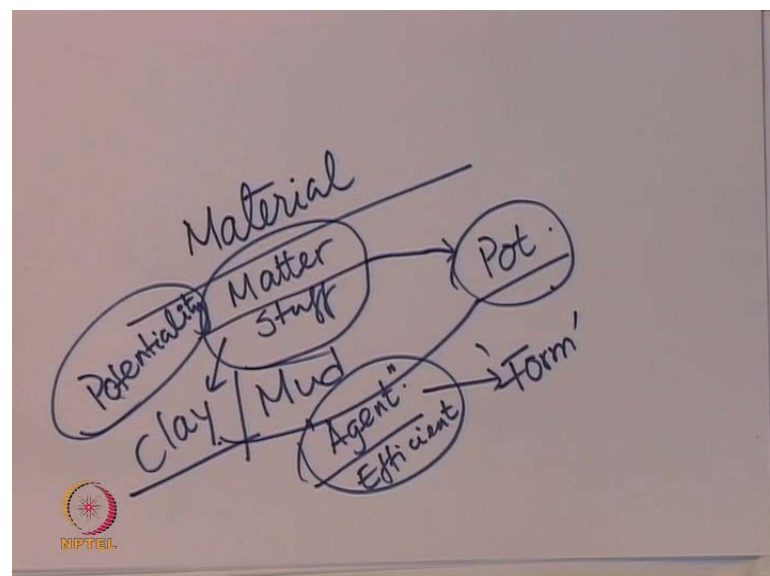
- Material
- Efficient
- Formal
- Final

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Now, Aristotle gives four accounts of causations; one is the material cause, the efficient cause, the formal cause and the final cause. Now, this four types of causal arguments, this four types of causations are important to talk about the major form relationship or the soul form body relationship.

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Now, Aristotle is talking about the material cause, the material cause is part of the matter, it is the basic stuff as I said earlier now, the matter in itself can not being significant change, look at now, Aristotle's famous example of pot and the maker of the pot.

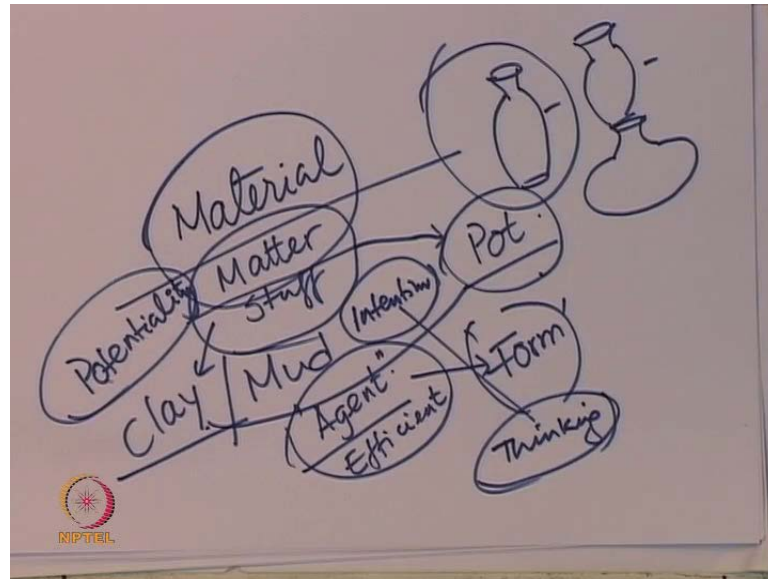
Now, pot has what an identity, and this has identity is derived from identity of mud or clay. So, clay represents the basic stuff now, how do we transform the clay to the pot? And to transform this, to actualize this process we need to talk about an agent now, this agency is what we call the efficient cause. It is the efficient cause in Aristotle. **ok**

It is the agent which making this transformation possible, where the clay acquires its identity that it becomes a pot now, if we say that can a pot we made out of soil? No, precisely no, because the effect must pre exist in the cause, the pre existence in the state of potentiality, the clay must be potentially soul. So, that the pot can be made out of it.

We cannot make pot know from oil. So, that is why we need to also see the other two notion of causation that Aristotle brings it to talk about the process of actualization, they are formal cause and final cause. In the case of formal cause where the agent designs or contemplates on how to make it, what could be its possible form? When x is being designed, what could be its possible form?

So, the logical possibility of making or giving an identity to a particular stuff, and he we talk about its formal cause. And that is why the agent conceptualizes, what would be its formal cause? Conceptualizes existence, the pot is already conceptualized by the agent and then between its conceptualized existence and existence as an identity. **ok**

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In my mind I have conceptualized it, is something like this, in the mind the pot is conceptualized like this, but maybe I would know like to change and make some something different.

So, in reality it can be conceptualized or it may come out it something little different, not may be significantly different, but may be little different. So, there are external conditions in which (()) that similar, the two similar pots are not identical with each other. This may be similarly, designed formed, but they are not two identical objects.

So, therefore, the final cause is different and also has certain specific explanation then its formal and the material cause. So, material cause represents the basic material out of which a thing is produced. Where is the agent who really makes this transformation make this change possible now the change the notion of change or transformation is due to this fact that agent is intentionally involved, the intention of the agent.

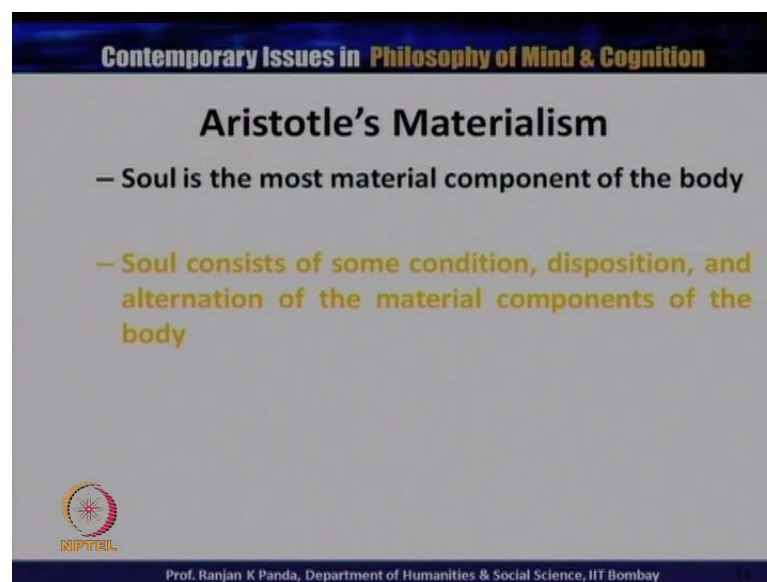
The agent is thinking how to change it? how to to make something possible, that is something which Aristotle is bringing and Aristotle tries to show that, this intervention of the agent in the process of transformation or change is something very significant. And that would explain the relationship between the matter and the form, how does the matter acquires this form? Is there is no soul involved in it? soul as a as a principle of life involved in the matter, then the matter will never transform itself.

The world has transformed, the universal transformed, because the universe is **is** having an unmoved mover in it. So, the universal principle (()) a Aristotle talks about an unmoved mover, the universe is moving, the universe is changing the things in the universe changed, but this change is possible, because there is an unmoved mover. And for Aristotle it is the god represents an unmoved mover, god is the principle of **of** movement, but in itself it is not moved, god causes movement.

So, like the individuals, the human beings cause transformations they create things, to this creation of various artifacts is due to not just having some kind of a principle or substance, which is the principle of life, but this principle is **is** also having intellect, that is which Aristotle calls the power of contemplation. And it is a different kind of power which is not there in the case of ordinary living beings.

So, it is due to this power somebody know is able to make certain things, somebody is able to design certain things, and produce certain things. So, that is what Aristotle's notion of soul is pot, but as i said Aristotle is a father of materialism, what kind of materialism Aristotle is bringing.

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Now, two statements are relevant here and Miller draws your attention to these statements. One soul is the most material component of the body, soul is not alaselv entered into the body, soul is not something which is outside the body and it has

intervened no, soul is ontologically the part of the body and that is what is very significant in Aristotle.

Though it has an independent function that is different, but what Aristotle is trying to show is there are logical relations and where soul is the most material component of the body. Soul consists of some conditions, dispositions and alternation of the material components of the body.

So, these where no, we can say that Aristotle is putting a foundation to materialism. The whole materialistic mind that we are seeing in the case of eliminating materialism, physicalism, functionalism, behaviourism, etcetera, tries to draw the theoretical assumptions from this Aristotelian notion of body mind relationship.

With this I would like to conclude that, Aristotle is not purely the materialistic though he is talking about the soul is part of the body, but still soul has a logical function, function which is independent of the function of the body. And this kind of function is very significant when we talk about voluntary actions, voluntary rational movements that the agent makes.

So, which is different from a pure materialistic understanding of body where body and mind are logically identical, Aristotle does not make this identity, Aristotle does not identify the body and the mind rather he tries to show that the body has the mind, and this position is a kind of a natural position, but does not mean the soul is very simple, soul is something which I would say which is not everlasting, rather soul has some kind of power, and that is the power of thinking, power of rationalizing, power of reflecting, and this is talk about self actualizations, self knowledge that is it, this I conclude the discussion on the Aristotle's notion of soul, thank you.