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ARISTOTLE

Categories and De Interpretatione

Translated with Notes

by

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alone—opposed affirmations and negations—that always one or the other of them is true or false.

CHAPTER II

13^b36. What is contrary to a good thing is necessarily bad; this is clear by induction from cases—health and sickness, justice and injustice, courage and cowardice, and so on with the rest. But what is contrary to a bad thing is sometimes good but sometimes bad. For excess is contrary to deficiency, which is bad, and is itself bad; yet moderation as well is contrary to both, and it is good. However, though this sort of thing may be seen in a few cases, in most cases what is contrary to a bad thing is always a good.

14^a6. With contraries it is not necessary if one exists for the other to exist too. For if everyone were well health would exist but not sickness, and if everything were white whiteness would exist but not blackness. Further, if Socrates's being well is contrary to Socrates's being sick, and it is not possible for both to hold at the same time of the same person, it would not be possible if one of the contraries existed for the other to exist too; if Socrates's being well existed Socrates's being sick would not.

14^a15. It is clearly the nature of contraries to belong to the same thing (the same either in species or in genus)—sickness and health in an animal's body, but whiteness and blackness in a body simply, and justice and injustice in a soul.

14^a19. All contraries must either be in the same genus or in contrary genera, or be themselves genera. For white and black are in the same genus (since colour is their genus), but justice and injustice are in contrary genera (since the genus of one is virtue, of the other vice), while good and bad are not in a genus but are themselves actually genera of certain things.

CHAPTER I 2

14^a26. One thing is called prior to another in four ways. First and most strictly, in respect of time, as when one thing is called older or more ancient than another; for it is because the time is longer that it is called either older or more ancient. Secondly, what does not reciprocate as to implication of existence. For example, one is prior to two because if there are two it follows at once that there is one whereas if there is one there are not necessarily two, so that the implication of the other's existence does not hold reciprocally from one; and that from which the implication of existence does not hold reciprocally is thought to be prior. Thirdly, a thing is called prior in respect of some order, as with sciences and speeches. For in the demonstrative sciences there is a prior and posterior in order, for the elements are prior in order to the diagrams (and in grammar the sound-elements are prior to the syllables); likewise with speeches, for the introduction is prior in order to the exposition. Further, besides the ways mentioned what is better and more valued is thought to be prior by nature; quite ordinary people are wont to say of those they specially value and love that they 'have priority'. This fourth way is perhaps the least proper.

14^b9. There are, then, this many ways of speaking of the prior. There would seem, however, to be another manner of priority besides those mentioned. For of things which reciprocate as to implication of existence, that which is in some way the cause of the other's existence might reasonably be called prior by nature. And that there are some such cases is clear. For there being a man reciprocates as to implication of existence with the true statement about it: if there is a man, the statement whereby we say that there is a man is true, and reciprocally—since if the

statement whereby we say that there is a man is true, there is a man. And whereas the true statement is in no way the cause of the actual thing's existence, the actual thing does seem in some way the cause of the statement's being true; it is because the actual thing exists or does not that the statement is called true or false. Thus there are five ways in which one thing might be called prior to another.

CHAPTER 13

14^b24. Those things are called *simultaneous* without qualification and most strictly which come into being at the same time; for neither is prior or posterior. These are called simultaneous in respect of time. But those things are called *simultaneous by nature* which reciprocate as to implication of existence, provided that neither is in any way the cause of the other's existence, e.g. the double and the half. These reciprocate, since if there is a double there is a half and if there is a half there is a double, but neither is the cause of the other's existence. Also, co-ordinate species of the same genus are called simultaneous by nature. It is those resulting from the same division that are called co-ordinate, e.g. bird and beast and fish. For these are of the same genus and co-ordinate, since animal is divided into these—into bird and beast and fish—and none of them is prior or posterior; and things of this kind are thought to be simultaneous by nature. Each of these might itself be further divided into species (I mean beast and bird and fish); so there, too, those resulting from the same division of the same genus will be simultaneous by nature. Genera, however, are always prior to species since they do not reciprocate as to implication of existence; e.g. if there is a fish there is an animal, but if there is an animal there is not necessarily a fish. Thus we call simultaneous by nature those things which reciprocate as to implication

of existence provided that neither is in any way the cause of the other's existence; and also co-ordinate species of the same genus. And we call simultaneous without qualification things which come into being at the same time.

CHAPTER 14

15^a13. There are six kinds of change: generation, destruction, increase, diminution, alteration, change of place. That the rest are distinct from one another is obvious (for generation is not destruction, nor yet is increase or diminution,¹ nor is change of place; and similarly with the others too), but there is a question about alteration—whether it is not perhaps necessary for what is altering to be altering in virtue of one of the other changes. However, this is not true. For in pretty well all the affections, or most of them, we undergo alteration without partaking of any of the other changes. For what changes as to an affection does not necessarily increase or diminish—and likewise with the others. Thus alteration would be distinct from the other changes. For if it were the same, a thing altering would, as such, have to be increasing too or diminishing, or one of the other changes would have to follow; but this is not necessary. Equally, a thing increasing—or undergoing some other change—would have to be altering. But there are things that increase without altering, as a square is increased by the addition of a gnomon but is not thereby altered; similarly, too, with other such cases. Hence the changes are distinct from one another.

15^b1. Change in general is contrary to staying the same. As for the particular kinds, destruction is contrary to generation and diminution to increase, while change of place

¹ Read ἡ αὐξήσις <ῆ> μέλισις.

Species of the same genus are called simultaneous by nature. It is those resulting from the same division that are called co-ordinate, e.g. bird and beast and fish. For these are of the same genus and co-ordinate, since animal is divided into these—into bird and beast and fish—and none of them is prior or posterior; and things of this kind are thought to be simultaneous by nature. Each of these might itself be further divided into species (I mean beast and bird and fish); so there, too, those resulting from the same division of the same genus will be simultaneous by nature. Genera, however, are always prior to species since they do not reciprocate as to implication of existence; e.g. if there is a fish there is an animal, but if there is an animal there is not necessarily a fish. Thus we call simultaneous by nature those things which reciprocate as to implication

seems most opposed to staying in the same place—and perhaps to change towards the contrary place (upward change of place, for example, being opposed to downward and downward to upward). As for the other change in our list, it is not easy to state what is contrary to it. There seems to be nothing contrary, unless here too one were to oppose staying the same in qualification or change towards the contrary qualification (just as with change of place we had staying in the same place or change towards the contrary place). For alteration is change in qualification. Thus to change in qualification is opposed staying the same in qualification or change towards the contrary qualification (becoming white, for example, being opposed to becoming black). For a thing alters through the occurrence of change towards contrary qualifications.

CHAPTER 15

15^b17. *Having* is spoken of in a number of ways: having as a state and condition or some other quality (we are said to have knowledge and virtue); or as a quantity, like the height someone may have (he is said to have a height of five feet or six feet); or as things on the body, like a cloak or tunic; or as on a part, like a ring on a hand; or as a part, like a hand or foot; or as in a container, as with the measure of wheat or the jar of wine (for the jar is said to have wine, and the measure wheat, so these are said to have as in a container); or as a possession (for we are said to have a house and a field). One is also said to have a wife, to have a husband, but this seems to be a very strange way of 'having', since by 'having a wife' we signify nothing other than that he is married to her. Some further ways of having might perhaps come to light, but we have made a pretty complete enumeration of those commonly spoken of.

DE INTERPRETATIONE

CHAPTER 1

16^a1. First we must settle what a name is and what a verb is, and then what a negation, an affirmation, a statement and a sentence are.

16^a3. Now spoken sounds are symbols of affections in the soul, and written marks symbols of spoken sounds. And just as written marks are not the same for all men, neither are spoken sounds. But what these are in the first place signs of—affections of the soul—are the same for all; and what these affections are likenesses of—actual things—are also the same. These matters have been discussed in the work on the soul and do not belong to the present subject.

16^a9. Just as some thoughts in the soul are neither true nor false while some are necessarily one or the other, so also with spoken sounds. For falsity and truth have to do with combination and separation. Thus names and verbs by themselves—for instance 'man' or 'white' when nothing further is added—are like the thoughts that are without combination and separation; for so far they are neither true nor false. A sign of this is that even 'goat-stag' signifies something but not, as yet, anything true or false—unless 'is' or 'is not' is added (either simply or with reference to time).

CHAPTER 2

16^a19. A *name* is a spoken sound significant by convention, without time, none of whose parts is significant in separation.

12^a26. On privation and possession see, for example, *Metaphysics* Δ 22 and 1046^a31–35.

12^a35. Cp. 6^b11–14 and Plato's *Theaetetus* 156 c. The argument 'Moreover, if . . . ' is not carefully stated; there is a switch from 'being blind' to 'blind'.

'What underlies an affirmation': at *De Interpretatione* 21^b26–32 Aristotle speaks of man and white as the 'subject things' (literally, 'underlying things') of the statement 'man is white'; here, however, it is the whole thing that is asserted (e.g. his sitting, man's being white) that is described as underlying the statement.

12^b26. Aristotle has distinguished above (11^b38–12^a25) between two types of contraries. If *A* and *B* are type 1 contraries and *X* a thing capable of receiving them, *X* must at all times have either *A* or *B*. If *C* and *D* are type 2 contraries and *X* a thing capable of receiving them, *X* need not at any time have either *C* or *D*. Aristotle now introduces an alternative possibility for type 2 contraries: if *C* and *D* are type 2 contraries and *X* a thing capable of receiving them, either (a) *X* need not at any time have either *C* or *D*, or (b) *X* must at all times have definitely *C* or must at all times have definitely *D*. By contrast, if *E* and *F* are possession and privation and *X* a thing capable of receiving them, *X* need not at all times have either *E* or *F* (contrast type 1 contraries) but it must at some time have either *E* or *F* (contrast type 2 contraries, case (a))—though 'not definitely one or the other of these' (contrast type 2 contraries, case (b)). It will be seen that this last addition is really superfluous. Possession and privation are already sufficiently distinguished from cases of type 2 (b) by the fact that a thing capable of receiving a possession or privation may at some time lack both, for this is not true of cases of type 2 (b). The whole analysis can, of course, be made much more perspicuous if expressed in modern logical symbolism.

13^a37. 'Necessary always for one to be true . . .': but see *De Interpretatione* 17^b29–30, 18^a10, 18^a31–33.

In the last sentence Aristotle slides from talking of health, sickness, &c., to talking of 'health', 'sickness', &c. On 'said without combination' see 1^a16, 2^a4–10, *De Interpretatione* 16^a9–18, 17^a17–20.

13^b12. The accusative and infinitive phrase which Aristotle here uses to refer to a statement ('Socrates is well') is later (14^a10) used to refer to a state of affairs (Socrates's being well). The translation makes clear a distinction that was perhaps not so clear to Aristotle.

Does Aristotle maintain that the non-existence of the subject always makes an affirmative statement false and a negative one true, or does he have in mind only singular statements? How, in any case, is this view to be reconciled with the contention at *De Interpretatione* 21^a25–28 that 'Homer is a poet' does not entail 'Homer is'?

'One or the other of them will be true or false': Aristotle clearly means that one will be true and one will be false.

CHAPTER 11

13^b36. 'But what is contrary to a bad thing is sometimes good but sometimes bad': or rather, some bad things have both a good contrary and a bad contrary. The type of case Aristotle has in mind is discussed in *Nicomachean Ethics* II 8.

14^a19. Compare 6^a17, *Topics* 123^b1–124^a9, *Metaphysics* 1018^a25–35, 1055^a3–33. 'Contraries in contrary genera' means 'contraries whose immediate genera are contrary'. If these contrary genera are themselves in one and the same higher genus then the original contraries are also both in the same genus, but not immediately. 'Good and bad are not in a genus': does Aristotle mean that they are not in any ordinary genus (but fall immediately under a category), or that they are not in any one category because 'good' like 'being' occurs in all the categories (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1096^a23–29, *Topics* 107^a3–17)? If the latter is Aristotle's point he does not express it very well by saying that good and bad 'are themselves genera'.

CHAPTER 12

On priority and posteriority see *Metaphysics* Δ 11.

14^a26. 'Reciprocate as to implication of existence': cp. Chapter 13 on 'simultaneous by nature', and 7^b15–8^a12.

'The elements are prior in order to the diagrams': the definitions, postulates and axioms of geometry are prior to the propositions. Many geometrical 'propositions' are in fact solutions to construction-problems (e.g. Euclid I 1, 2, 3); and the construction of appropriate diagrams plays an important role even in the proofs of theorems (e.g. the theorem of Pythagoras, Euclid I 47).

14^b9. On the relation between facts and truth compare *De Interpretatione* 18^a39–^b3, 19^a33–35, and *Metaphysics* 1051^b6–8: 'It is not because we think truly that you are pale, that you are pale; it is because you are pale that we who say this are speaking truly.' It is odd

to call this a reciprocal implication of *existence*: we should not say that the existence of there being a man implies and is implied by the existence of the true statement that there is a man, nor does Aristotle adhere to this way of speaking in his discussion of the example.

'Cause': or 'reason'. Aristotle has one word for both.

CHAPTER 14

15^a13. Aristotle holds that there is change in just four categories: in substance (generation and destruction), in quantity (increase and diminution), in quality (alteration), and in place (motion). See *Physics* 200^b33. At *Physics* 260^a26–b7 he argues that change of place is presupposed by alteration and that alteration is presupposed by increase; but that thesis does not conflict with the claim in the present passage that the six kinds of change are all distinct from one another and that what is undergoing one is not necessarily undergoing any other.

'For generation is not destruction, nor yet . . .': Aristotle here shows, by listing and rejecting possible identifications, that *destruction* is not the same as any of the other kinds of change (that is, any of the other *four*—alteration is to be considered separately). He claims that a similar procedure will establish for each of the other kinds that it too is not identical with any other ('similarly with the others too').

15^b1. Compare *Physics* V 5, 6.

CHAPTER 15

This chapter is not a discussion of the *category* of having but a survey of various uses of the very common verb 'have': cp. *Metaphysics* Δ 23.

DE INTERPRETATIONE

CHAPTER 1

16^a1. This is the programme for Chapters 2–6. Comment on the terminology and on the English renderings chosen will be found in the notes on those chapters.

16^a3. This account of the relation of things in the world, affections in the soul, and spoken and written language is all too brief and far from satisfactory. What precisely are 'affections in the soul'? Later they are called thoughts. Do they include sense-impressions? Are they, or do they involve, images? Aristotle probably calls them likenesses of things because he is thinking of images and it is natural to think of the (visual) image of a cat as a picture or likeness of a cat. But the inadequacy of this as an account or explanation of thought is notorious. Again, what is it for a spoken sound to be a 'symbol' of something in the mind? And are written marks symbols of spoken sounds in the same sense in which these are symbols of thoughts? Is it necessary—or only natural—to regard speech as primary and writing as secondary?

There are grave weaknesses in Aristotle's theory of meaning. Fortunately, the notion that utterances are symbols of affections in the soul and that these are likenesses of things does not have a decisive influence on the rest of the *De Interpretatione*. For example, Aristotle does not often appeal to psychological experiences or facts to explain or support what he says about names, verbs, statements, &c.; most of what he says is independent of the special theory about words, thoughts, and things.

Aristotle's main and official discussion of thinking (to which he—or an editor—here refers us) is in *De Anima* III 3–8.

The present passage is intended as an argument for the view that language is conventional (cp. 16^a19, 16^a26, 16^b33): different people (or peoples) confront the same things and situations, and have the same impressions of them and thoughts about them (likeness is a natural relation); but they use different spoken or written words to express their thoughts (words are conventional symbols). Of course it is not true that all men meet the same things or have the same thoughts.