

Adaption and Environment in Aristotle's Biology

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Summary

Animals are adapted to a *bios* characteristic of their kind, that is, to a certain way to live on certain resources. The animal body is instrumental to that *bios*. To "have life" is, for the animal body, to serve as an instrument the *bios* characteristic of the animal species (Kosman 1987). Bodily parts are instruments adapted to functions that contribute to the relevant *bios*. In order to serve that *bios* as an instrument, the animal body must have its parts appropriately adapted to their functions.

There is no living on resources which are unavailable. The practicability of the *bios* to which an animal species is adapted depends upon certain environmental conditions and appropriate supply. My question in this lecture is: how are the requirements for survival of animal (or plant) species secured according to Aristotle?

Adaption and appropriateness of environmental conditions are fundamentals in Aristotle's biology. Darwinism is usually understood as explaining adaption by natural selection. The interpretation is disputed: survival may count as brute fact; fitness may be just fitness for survival. I will argue that the adaption to a *bios* which is practicable, and hence the survival, of each of the species that actually exists, may count as principles in Aristotle's biology – which, however is just another way of saying that adaption and survival ultimately count as brute fact.