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Explanation and teleology in Aristotle's Philosophy of Nature

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This dissertation explores Aristotle's use of teleology as a principle of explanation, especially as it is used in the natural treatises. Its main purposes are, first, to determine the function, structure, and explanatory power of teleological explanations in four of Aristotle's natural treatises, that is, in *Physica* (book II), *De Anima*, *De Partibus Animalium* (including the practice in books II-IV), and *De Caelo* (book II). Its second purpose is to confront these findings about Aristotle's practice in the natural treatises with the theoretical picture of the structure of teleological explanations gained from Aristotle's theory of scientific demonstration. For this purpose a new interpretation of *Analytica Posteriora* II.11 is presented. This study thereby contributes to recent scholarship on the relation between Aristotle's philosophy of science and his philosophy of nature, while at the same time adding to our knowledge of Aristotle's notion of teleology in terms of its explanatory merits and limits.

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