

**PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY:
AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY ON THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN PERSON**

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Class 2: Basic Philosophical Principles

- I. Order and Hierarchy in Creation
 - A. Categories of Knowledge
 1. Theoretical knowledge – knowledge of truth for its own sake.
 2. Practical knowledge – knowledge for the sake of practice, that is, for the sake of practical application in acting and living.
 3. Productive knowledge – knowledge for the sake of making, producing, fixing; this is all about *techné*, or “know-how” (from which we get the word *technology*) – this could also be called the material arts
 - B. Order - There are three kinds of order:
 1. Order discovered by reason (which corresponds to the theoretical knowledge)
 2. Order produced by reason (which corresponds to Practical knowledge)
 - a. Order produced in the soul
 - b. Order produces outside the soul (which corresponds to productive knowledge)
 3. Order revealed to reason (Sacred Theology)
- II. Basic Philosophical Principles – In General
 - A. What is a principle? Principle is thus defined: “1. that from which something in some way follows; a being or truth from which being, change, knowledge or discussion, respectively, starts. 2. Any cause. (For cause is the main type of principle). 3. anything that is in any way first even if it has no connection with later members.”¹ When we speak about the principle of a thing, we are speaking about the basic source, the origin of that thing, that from which it comes into being.
 - B. All natural beings are made up of, are composed, of two principles:
 1. A principle of stability = form
 2. A principle of change and corruption = matter [corruption without a negative connotation]
- III. Form and Matter
 - A. Form:
 1. The stable principle
 2. The determining principle of a physical, material thing that makes it to be the kind of thing that it is
 3. The form gives the thing its basic identity.
 - B. Matter:
 1. The principle of change and of corruption
 - a. Matter changes all of the time, and yet, we do not become a new kind of thing
 2. The receptive principle of a thing; that out of which a thing comes to be; that out of which the thing is made; that out of which a bodily substance is made
 - C. Hylomorphism
 1. Outside of our minds, form only exists as united with matter.
 2. The theory that all things are beings composed of matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*) is called hylomorphism.

¹ A Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy, by Bernard Wuellner, S.J.

3. Thus every real thing is a combination of form (*whatness*, viz., what it is) and matter (*thisness*, viz., this particular thing).

D. Matter *is for* form, not form for matter.

E. External shape is not synonymous with the form. External shape *announces* the form.

IV. The Four Causes

A. All created things can be described, defined, and categorized by one of four questions:

1. What is it made of? [Material cause]
2. What is it made into? What is its essential nature? What *is* it? [Formal cause]
3. What made it or changed it? Where did it come from? [Efficient cause]
4. What is its purpose or end? Where is it going? [Final cause]

B. The answers to these four questions give us the four causes of any (and every) thing.

C. As Dr. Kreeft noted in the reading, *cause* comes from a Greek word which literally means “responsibility for.”

	Definition	Bust of Aristotle	Dinner Table	Socrates	Virtue
Material Cause	The material of which it consists; its matter	marble	wood	Animal body	Habit
Formal Cause	Idea or blueprint of a thing; its form	Aristotle’s face	Table-ness	Rational soul	goodness
Efficient Cause	What brings the thing about; maker, producer, agent	The sculptor	The carpenter	God; Mom & Dad	choice
Final Cause	the end; (purpose of a thing)	To memorialize him	To eat dinner on	To know and love	happiness

V. Teleology

A. For Aristotle, the most important of all the cause is the final cause. In fact, it is called “the cause of causes.”

B. The study of the end, aim, or purpose of things, the study of *why* something exists is called *teleology* from the Greek *telos* which means *end*.

C. End: “the good for the sake of which something exists or for which an agent acts; the objective to which an agent’s intention or a nature’s activity is directed; the reason why an efficient cause exercises its efficacy; the result to be obtained; the purpose” (Wuellner)

D. These four causes are all principles of the thing, that from which a thing is made, the very “ground” of the being. We group them into two categories

1. Intrinsic Principles – they are “from within a thing”
 - a. Matter: the material “stuff” out of which a thing is made
 - b. Form: the identity of that “stuff,” *what* kind of thing it is
2. Extrinsic Principles
 - a. Efficient – it is responsible for bringing the thing into being, so it is ‘extrinsic’ to the thing
 - b. Final – the goal toward which the thing tends, again, it is ‘extrinsic,’ outside the thing, so to speak