Aristotle’s Definition of *Kinêsis*: Physics III.1


1. Aristotle’s definition at 201a10-11 (alternative to Fine-Irwin transl.):

   “Change (motion) is the actuality of that which potentially is, *qua* such.” (*hê tou
dunamei ontos entelecheia hêi toiouton*)

2. Actuality (*entelecheia*) and potentiality (*dunamis*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentiality</th>
<th>Actuality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bricks and stones</td>
<td>a house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td>a statue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed</td>
<td>a tree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The process/product ambiguity: does *entelecheia* mean “actuality” (product sense) or “actualization” (process sense)?

4. The correct account must have these features:
   b. the potentiality is the potentiality to *be* (the product), not to *do* (the process).
   c. the definiens applies to the *process* (not the product).
   d. it has the *qua* clause play an important role in the definition.

5. Deprivative vs. constitutive perfections of an imperfection.

6. Three levels of actuality and potentiality. Cf. *De An.* II.1 (412a21-22) and II.5 (417a21-b2). Change is a **first** actuality (= a **second** potentiality).

7. The process of change is the **being actual of the potentiality** of the product of the change.

8. The concluding lines of III.1, 201b10-15 (translation SMC):

   “For the actuality of the buildable is either housebuilding or a house. But when there
   is a house, the buildable no longer exists — rather the buildable gets built. Therefore
   the actuality [of the buildable] must be the housebuilding. And housebuilding is a
   kind of process. But now the same account will apply to the other processes as well.”