



Explaining an Eclipse: Aristotle's Posterior Analytics 2.1-10

By Owen Goldin

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Explaining an Eclipse: Aristotle's Posterior Analytics 2.1-10 By Owen Goldin

The *Posterior Analytics* is Aristotle's main account of the nature and structure of scientific explanation. Much of its second book is concerned with scientific explanations of the essences of things. In *Explaining an Eclipse*, Owen Goldin presents a close analysis and commentary that form the first book-length study devoted to this text in recent times. He shows how *Posterior Analytics 2.1--10* sheds light on Aristotle's philosophy of science, logic, and metaphysics.

In the standard interpretation of these chapters, Aristotle is chiefly concerned with showing how scientific research moves from a partial understanding of some natural kind to a scientifically adequate understanding of that kind. Goldin argues against this, showing instead that Aristotle's main project is the deepening and elaboration of the theory of scientific explanation that is presented in the first book of the *Posterior Analytics*.

Goldin shows how Aristotle indicates that, among the kinds that are the concern of a given science, there are going to be certain kinds that this science will not consider inherent in any other subject. The sciences consider these kinds to be ultimate subjects: for such kinds there are first principles by which existence and essence are assumed. Goldin argues that those predicates studied by the sciences that are not among these kinds are the "per se incidentals."

Explaining an Eclipse will be of interest to scholars and students of ancient philosophy and classical studies, and philosophers and historians of science.

Owen Goldin is Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Marquette University.

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