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# ANCIENT GREEK PSYCHOLOGY

And the Modern  
Mind-Body Debate

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## ABBREVIATIONS

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| AGP        | Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie                         |
| AJP        | American Journal of Philology                                 |
| APQ        | American Philosophical Quarterly                              |
| BACAP      | Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy                  |
| BJHP       | British Journal of the History of Philosophy                  |
| CJP        | Canadian Journal of Philosophy                                |
| CM         | Classica et Mediaevalia                                       |
| CP         | Classical Philology   |
| CQ         | Classical Quarterly   |
| CR         | Classical Review  |
| HPQ        | History of Philosophy Quarterly                               |
| HSCP       | Harvard Studies in Classical Philology                        |
| ICS        | Illinois Classical Studies                                    |
| JAMA       | Journal of the American Medical Association                   |
| JHI        | Journal for the History of Ideas                              |
| JHP        | Journal of the History of Philosophy                          |
| JHS        | Journal of Hellenic Studies                                   |
| JP         | Journal of Philosophy   |
| Kant Stud  | Kant Studien  |
| Neue Hefte | Neue Hefte für Philosophie                                    |
| OSAP       | Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy                          |
| PAS        | Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society                       |
| PASS       | Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, supplementary volume |
| PBA        | Proceedings of the British Academy                            |
| PCPS       | Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society             |
| Phil       | Philosophy  |
| Phron      | Phronesis   |
| PhSt       | Philosophical Studies   |

## ABBREVIATIONS

|      |   |
|------|---|
| PQ   | Philosophical Quarterly                               |
| PR   | Philosophical Review                                  |
| RM   | Review of Metaphysics                                 |
| SAJP | South African Journal of Philosophy                   |
| SJP  | The Southern Journal of Philosophy                    |
| TAPA | Transactions of the American Philological Association |

### Other abbreviations

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| AT        | Ch. Adam and P. Tannery (eds.), <i>Oeuvres de Descartes</i> , Paris 1897-1910 |
| Discourse | Descartes, <i>Discourse on Method</i> (in French 1637)                        |
| Med       | Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> (in Latin 1641)             |
| Princ     | Descartes, <i>Principles of Philosophy</i> (in Latin 1644)                    |
| CDPh      | Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, R. Audi (ed.), Cambridge 1995             |
| Enc Phil  | <i>Encyclopaedia of Philosophy</i> I-VIII, P. Edwards (ed.), NY/London 1967   |
| FMM       | Erik Ostfeld, <i>Forms, Matter and Mind</i> , The Hague 1982                  |

For standard abbreviations of references to the classical Greek literature see Liddell and Scott/Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1958

## PREFACE

*Ancient Greek Psychology and the Modern Mind-Body Debate* was originally published by Aarhus University Press in 1987. It has long been sold out and there seems still to be a demand for it. So I have decided to make it available again, both in print and electronically. It is basically the same book, but it has undergone ‘minor’ corrections and been provided with an extensively updated bibliography and an updating ch. VII: ‘Recent Work on Plato’s and Aristotle’s Psychology’. Also, an entirely new layout has hopefully made it more reader friendly. I should perhaps indicate that the title of this book may mislead potential readers to think that all ancient thinkers will be dealt with. The reason and excuse for keeping the title is that the towering figures of Plato and Aristotle are what the moderns are influenced by and up against in all areas, not least in psychology.

I would like to use this occasion to express my gratitude to Prof. David Hamlyn who originally suggested that I wrote this book. It will appear that it owes a great debt to his work on especially Aristotle’s psychology. Another, different, inspiration derives from my old supervisor in Oxford, Mr. I. M. Crombie of Wadham College. I could not have done without his thoughtful comments on my work on Platonic psychology.

Finally, I should mention another type of necessary condition for the present work: Marianne Gulstad, Publizon.dk, who with great care prepared the layout of this new edition, and, as always, my wife, Gudrun Ostenfeld, who with caring support has made it all possible.

E.O.

Aarhus 2018

## INTRODUCTION

We shall try to answer two questions. First, is Plato's and Aristotle's philosophy of *psyche* and *nous* at all relevant for the modern debate on the notion of mind? Are Plato and Aristotle dealing with the same (or a similar) problem as we are? Or as Descartes was? Second, if the answer to the above is a positive one, do Plato and Aristotle then have something useful to say on the mind-body issue? We can dub the first question the *relevance question* and the second one the *usefulness question*. As for relevance, it has been argued<sup>1</sup> that the Greeks simply failed to see the mind-body problem. In that case, they can hardly have had the same notion of soul (mind) as Descartes.

But in order to evaluate this claim it will be necessary to look first (ch. I) at some criteria of the mental, Cartesian and, more generally, post-Cartesian, i.e. modern. With these in mind we look next (ch. II) at some possibly relevant contrasts drawn in Plato. This should then enable us to answer the question (assuming that

---

1 Cf. Wallace Matson and Wilkes ch. 7. Their glorification of Greek innocence on the mind-body issue should be tempered by consideration of: (1) Orphic-Pythagorean texts, e.g., Pindar's *Second Olympian Ode* and Empedocles' *Katharmoi*. We have here a concept of soul that is quite distinct from the body and a connected moral gulf. (2) The sober-minded dualism of Anaxagoras: *nous* is 'mixed with nothing, but is all alone by itself', and it knows everything about everything and has greatest power (frg. 12). Even if it is not yet conceived of as incorporeal, it transcends the corporeal in its epistemic and teleological motive power. This kind of dualism is refined further in Plato and Aristotle who both see that mind must be a non-bodily or simple substance. Hence, Matson's and Wilkes' monistic conception of not only Aristotle but the Greeks in general is misguided. It might even prove difficult to defend their common assumption that the Greek notion of nature can be understood in physicalistic terms (cf. e.g. Jaeger 195 n. 25, Kahn (1960) 437, Collingwood 111).

Similarly, it has recently been claimed that the Greeks lacked the mental/physical distinction. This cannot be accepted as true, unless specified as the private/public distinction, and even that is not foreign to, e.g., Plato (see ch. II below).



## INTRODUCTION

Plato remained a dualist of some kind): What kind(s) of dualism does Plato espouse or is he committed to (ch. III)? This again prepares the way for a comparison with Descartes (ch. IV) and finally with today's discussion (ch. V). The usefulness question will be dealt with in ch. V. After concluding remarks in ch. VI follows an overview of Platonic-Aristotelian psychology with comments on recent scholarship on selected debated topics.

# I

## CRITERIA OF THE MENTAL

Ever since Descartes concluded that he was a substance whose whole essence or nature is to think (*penser*<sup>2</sup>), that he was simply a thinking non-extended indivisible being,<sup>3</sup> the understanding of the difference between man and nature has been in terms of consciousness, or if consciousness is not accepted it is used as a point of departure that needs to be explained away. So Descartes set the frame of reference for the modern discussion of the nature of man. The mental/physical dichotomy of the modern debate may, in a way we shall explain, be said to stem from Descartes.

Descartes focused on *mens*, rather than *anima*. The latter term was at the time equivocal between life and thinking and Descartes, regarding the two functions as wholly distinct, concentrated on thinking and narrowed the field of psychology down to the study of the mental. Going with this is a conception of the physical as identical with extension of which shape and mechanical motion are aspects.<sup>4</sup> According to Descartes, *thinking* (a) cannot be explained in physical terms and (b) cannot be conceived not to exist. This sets it out from *extension*, so much so that the two basic properties are considered incompatible (nothing can be both). This finally led Descartes to think that nature contains two basic independent kinds of thing, the mental and the physical. It is notable that the soul/mind is something subjective or private for Descartes (we have direct indubitable access to it). Hence, after

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2 *Discourse IV*. In *Princ.* Part I, IX *cogitatio* is explained as: everything that takes place within ourselves so that we are conscious of it (*nobis consciis*) in so far as it is an object of awareness (*conscientia*). In this way (the mark of) the mental becomes *consciousness*.

3 *Med.* IV.

4 *Princ.* Part I, LIII.

## VII

### RECENT WORK ON PLATO'S AND ARISTOTLE'S PSYCHOLOGY

The strategy of this chapter is to offer an overview of Plato's and Aristotle's psychology as I have come to see it and alongside comment on recent work on relevant topics. This procedure has the unavoidable consequence that I sometimes have to return to certain hotly debated areas already dealt with in earlier chapters.

#### *Plato*

Compared to the industry of papers and books on Aristotle, the output on Plato is relatively limited. Especially on his general view of soul and soul and body.<sup>1</sup>

Sabina Lovibond (1991) comments concisely that 'Plato invented the idea of 'mind' with which modern European languages op-

---

1 The following scholarly work on Plato is a preliminary selection. Of general studies there is a 2nd edition of T.M. Robinson's *Plato's Psychology* (1995) (with a new introduction but unrevised main text and unupdated bibliography). L.P. Gerson, 'Platonic Dualism' (1986), S. Lovibond, 'Plato's Theory of Mind' (1991), A. Silverman, 'Plato: Psychology' (2003), F. Miller, 'The Platonic Soul' (2006), V. Karasmanis, 'Soul and Body in Plato' (2006), H. Lorenz, 'Plato's theories of soul' (2009) (on the *Phaedo* and *Republic* only), G. Carone, 'Mind and Body in late Plato' (2005).

Specific topics discussed are:

Immortality: T.M. Robinson (1971), D. Bostock (1986 and 1999), D. Gallop (1982), D. Frede (1978), E.A. Brown (1997), R. Bett (1986), D. Sedley (2009), and commentaries on the *Phaedo*.

Recollection: D. Scott (1999), C. Kahn (2006).

Tripartition: R. Robinson (1971), B. Williams (1973), Stalley (1975), Bobonich (1994), N.D. Smith (1999), C. Shields (2001 and 2010), G. Anagnostopoulos,

erate' and 'is responsible [ ] for the entrenched tendency to posit 'mind' (or in certain contexts, 'soul') as a substantial component of our nature.' It is important to keep in mind all the time that we are talking here about the broad concept of *psyche* (ψυχή), basically a life principle. For Plato this soul is not only what animates and moves the body, but also what does the thinking. Hence the soul is characterized and differentiated from the body by its *cognitive* and *kinetic* capabilities: it must be abstract to some extent in order to contemplate abstract ideas, and it must have a dynamic-telic nature in order to account for motion and action.

### The Socratic soul

It is reasonable and practical to regard the *Corpus* as being divided into three traditional parts: early, middle and late dialogues. The early so-called Socratic dialogues are marked by an intellectualism, the view that everybody seeks the good and that knowledge is sufficient for the attainment of the good.<sup>2</sup> Failure is due to ignorance, not to weak will or being mastered by passions.<sup>3</sup> The picture of soul as *mind* is dominant. Socrates is skeptical about its survival (*Ap.* 40b-41c, 29a), although one should care for wisdom

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(2006), M. Burnyeat (2006), F. Miller (2006), A. Price (2008), H. Lorenz (2008 and 2009), Barney/Brennan/Brittain (eds.), *Plato and the Divided Self* (2012).

Moral psychology: T. Penner (1971, 2006), A. Price (1995), R. Kamtakar (2017).

Human motivation: J. Cooper (1984).

*Akrasia*: C. Bobonich (1994), G.R. Carone (2001).

Self-motion: R. Demos (1978), F. Miller (2006).

Perception: J. Cooper (1970), M. Burnyeat (1976), A. Silverman (1990), D. Modrak (2006), and commentaries on the *Theaetetus*.

It is also worth mentioning *International Plato Studies* (the Proceedings of the International Plato Society on several dialogues). Here one can also find valuable studies on Platonic psychology. The extensive bibliography of *Plato and the Divided Self*, eds. R. Barney, Tad Brennan and C. Brittain, Cambridge 2012, also contains a variety of studies relevant to Platonic psychology.

<sup>2</sup> Heda Segvic (2000) gives a useful analysis of the concept of intellectualism as traditionally used (the non-rational is not given its due because of an overly rational mindset), and offers her own interpretation (the non-rational is an integral part of the knowledge in which Socrates locates virtue, and every act actually involves an act of reason).

<sup>3</sup> Lorenz (2008) points out that the relevant sense of ἀκρασία is action against actual knowledge of the best course, not being mastered by passion.

## RECENT WORK

and truth (29e) and be as good and wise as possible (36c). As he is obsessed with not wronging anybody and thereby himself (37ab, cf. 29b), he obviously regards morality to be one part of his self. A good man cannot be harmed either in life or in death (41cd, cf. 30cd). The other part is the love of and search for wisdom (philosophy).

The separable simple substance soul and the embodied tripartite soul

In the middle dialogues, for instance the *Phaedo*, the picture is different. We have two parts: soul and body (79b). Death means the separation of soul and body (64c), and the soul caring for knowledge should strive for separation from the disturbances of the body. The soul is clearly still conceived of as *mind*. Immortality is 'proved' in four much-debated arguments: In the first, cyclical argument, the soul is seen as a bearer of life and death and thus as a substance, a *life-principle*. In the second, from recollection, the soul is shown to have existed before incarnation as a contemplator of Forms, a *cognitive principle*. The third argument, from affinity to the Forms, argues that Forms are constant, simple and invisible, and that the soul to some extent shares not only *invisibility* with the Forms but also constancy, incompositeness and hence indestructibility. Kinship with Forms is also revealed when the soul engages in contemplation (*abstract thought*) and turns away from sense-perception (79de). And its kinship with the divine is seen in that it naturally *rules* while the body is ruled (80a). We conclude that the Form-like and divine soul is here viewed as a *substance*. In an interlude, the harmony theory of soul is disproved by a series of *reductios*: 1) a harmony cannot direct or move its components as we have just seen the soul does, 2) a harmony can (but the soul cannot) have degrees, 3) goodness being a harmony cannot be accommodated within another harmony. Hence if a soul-harmony cannot have degrees (as the soul cannot), then such a soul cannot share in wickedness (disharmony) and all souls would be equally good. This implies that the soul is not a property (harmony), but a *substance* capable of causal efficacy exerted on the body. A psychological conflict is therefore entertained as possible, here between

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the soul and the ensouled body (Odysseus controlling his anger). The final proof operates with a soul substance that is essentially alive and therefore, controversially, cannot die.<sup>4</sup> The soul is not a Form (that would not require a proof of immortality). But because of its special relation to Forms, it is either a special particular essentially alive or alternatively a Form-copy.<sup>5</sup> Even if they are accepted, these arguments deal only with an impersonal soul: there is not much individuality about a pure intellect and a life-principle. Moreover, the arguments are best viewed as dialectical exercises.<sup>6</sup> The weaknesses of these arguments have naturally occupied scholars, but our interest here is the presuppositions and implications for the view of soul. It can be concluded that the soul is both a *cognitive* and a *life-soul*. This has been seen as a problem.<sup>7</sup> How could a life-soul be combined with a reasoning power? Plato would probably see thinking as a privileged life.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the *constant* soul of the affinity argument has been seen as problematic in connection with a *life-soul*.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the constant soul is perfectly compatible with the life-soul of both the cyclical and the final argument,<sup>10</sup> and of course with the contemplative power.

It may be said that the *Symposium* provides the ingredients of an answer in dealing with the development of *Eros*, the great *Daemon*, the drive of love that may be transformed from bodily attraction to increasingly abstract objects ending in contemplation

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4 In a thoughtful article, D. Sedley (2009) defends this as the best argument for immortality in Plato (152). Strato's objection (Damscius, *in Phd.* I 442) that there is no such thing as a dead soul does not show that a soul always exists, is faced with the laws of logic: the soul is essentially alive (151).

5 Cf., e.g., J. Schiller (1967), A. Silverman (2003) 134-136.

6 Plato himself advocates further examination of the premises (107b). But Socrates invests hope in traditional wisdom (63c, e).

7 Gallop (1975) 90-91, D. Bostock (1999) 424, A. Silverman (2003) 136, F.D. Miller (2006) 286.

8 It may of course be said that contemplation is a *different* life, difficult to *combine* with a practical life (cf. Aristotle's problem). The soul is pure intellect by nature, but happens to be embodied with the demands it meets there. Conversely, there is no implication that all life must be intellectual.

9 T.M. Robinson (1995) 114-5.

10 The former is a permanent substance in the cycles, and the latter is a form-like substance.

of beauty itself. It is significant that *Eros* is a philosopher (*Sym.* 203d7). This suggests that we have here the mind (intellect) of the *Phaedo* in new clothes. One may view mind as an intermediate being (a *daemon*), a source of goal-directed energy (life) that may be directed from concrete and personal concerns to abstract and impersonal targets. *Eros*, as a *daemon*, is neither immortal nor mortal (*Sym.* 203d8 f.), but stands for a longing for the good forever, i.e. immortality (*ibid.* 205e-207a). This longing is implemented in procreation in the beautiful (206e5). While mortals seek immortality in the only way possible, by leaving behind something new replacing the old (207d, 208b2-4), *procreation* (γέννησις) is something *immortal* in the mortal being (206c, cf. e f.). It is commonplace to regret the omission of immortality in this dialogue, but there may be more than a hint that there is more to the mortal soul and body, namely the procreative drive, which may end in the vision of Beauty itself.<sup>11</sup> This would bring the *Symposium* into line. But it is also controversial.<sup>12</sup>

The tripartite soul is the new great theme of the *Republic*, and again in the *Phaedrus* and the *Timaeus*. This has been claimed to be ‘Plato’s central contribution to psychology.’<sup>13</sup> It is certainly and primarily a central theme in Plato’s view of the soul. There is a growing realization on his part of the importance of the non-rational. Starting out with the ‘Socratic intellectualism,’ where the soul is reason (mind), he moves on to the *Phaedo*, where ‘bodily’ non-rational desires and emotions are controlled by the mind. Finally, in the *Republic* the non-rational is incorporated in the soul as parts of the soul. There is the well-known fact of mental con-

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11 D. Sedley (2009) partly follows this line of thought, which he calls ‘earned immortality’ (156ff). But it cannot be denied that there is a tension between the neither immortal nor mortal *daemon* and the immortal element. Cf. the following note.

12 It is perhaps relevant to note that the *immortal* (divine) part of the soul in the *Timaeus* (90a, c) is a *daemon*. The reservation ‘achieve immortality as fully as is permitted to human nature’ (90c2-3) concerns ‘human nature’, not the divine part. This fits in with the picture of human souls in the *Phaedrus* (248a-d) striving to follow the gods to gain a vision of the Forms.

13 Lorenz (2008) 243. Originally, Grube, in his fine book (1935) 133, stressed that the concept of *στάσις* is ‘one of the most startlingly modern things in Platonic philosophy.’

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flict, which is now analyzed by means of the ‘principle of opposites’: ‘one and the same thing cannot act or be affected in opposite ways at the same time in the same part of it and in relation to the same object’ (*R.* 436b).<sup>14</sup> This ‘hypothesis’ leads to analyzing the soul in three parts: reason, spirit (*thumos*) and appetite. Are they faculties or capacities? Is reason just a Humean capacity to figure out the means of desire, without its own goal? Appetite is seen here as blind good-independent thirst (439a, d). Are there not three drives or motives involved, each with its own goal? We are told that the elements and traits of the state must exist in the individual too: φιλομαθές, θυμοειδές, φιλοχρήματον (435e f). These are all drives (cf. ὀρμήσωμεν 436b2, cf. 604b). The validity of the argument has been questioned: *can* a person have both a pro-attitude and a con-attitude to the same thing?<sup>15</sup> There has also been a debate among scholars about the nature of appetite. To what extent is it ‘rational’? Can it form its own goals, or is it even capable of means-end reasoning?<sup>16</sup> The answer to the latter is probably ‘no’. Understanding the nature of reason has also been controversial<sup>17</sup>: It is true that reason (the understanding element) is explicitly described as almost solely bent on knowing the truth (581b). The reasonable man can go to sleep with a reason that can freely reach out to-

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14 When repeated at 436e9-437a2, it is added that opposite predicates are also excluded: one and the same thing cannot ‘be’ characterized in opposite ways.

15 Burnyeat (2006). Miller (1995), Stalley (1975) and Lorenz (2008) 257 interpret in directional terms and defend Plato. Moreover, as a matter of fact you cannot as a whole move forward and backwards toward the same object. But Plato may envisage more than empirical necessity, cf. previous note. Plato may thus be thinking of the kind of opposite that Aristotle called ἐνάντια (*Cat.*11b38). They cannot both be true, but may both be false, e.g., white and black.

16 Lorenz (2008) 260-263 argues for the first alternative. Annas (1981) 129 f. and Bobonich (2002) 244 take the second alternative. However, when the elements of the soul turn up again in book ix (580d-581b), it is with a view to evaluating the lives of men dominated by different motives or drives. So calling appetite ‘profit seeking’ must be understood in context and cannot be taken to indicate the cognitive resources of that element *per se*. *Rep.* 439a on desire for just drink and *Timaeus* 77b5-6 on the irrationality of appetite seem to decide the case.

17 Ferrari (2007) 191 ff..



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ward awareness of what it does not know (572a). But reason also has to rule the other two parts of the soul (*R.* 439-441). However, this does not imply that reason has two inherent desires, to rule and to understand.<sup>18</sup> Reason has one interest (like the guardians), namely spending its time searching for truth. Ruling is (as for the guardians) a necessity, a consequence of incarnation. It is not that reason just suppresses (606a, c) the other elements to avoid their interference. It needs their assistance in its bodily situation and therefore regulates and trains (604d) them in the best way, being able to reflect about good and evil (*R.* 441b, e, cf. 606d).<sup>19</sup>

The innovation of the *Republic* in psychology thus acknowledges human motives other than pursuance of the good. Honor, pleasure and the avoidance of their opposites must be reckoned with as well. This implies that desire and action may aim at goals which are acknowledged to be bad.<sup>20</sup>

In the *Republic* it is the embodied soul that is tripartite. It is certainly the tripartition of this soul that is analyzed. It is unclear whether the disembodied, immortal soul of bk. X is tripartite: 'it is not easy for something composite of many parts and not beautifully composed to be immortal' (611b5-7). However, its love of wisdom (*philosophia*) points to kinship with the divine. Extrapolating from this, one may get an idea of 'its true nature, whether composite or uniform and how' (612a3-5). The hint that it may be 'beautifully composed' is perhaps confirmed in the *Phaedrus*, where we again find some hesitancy to state the truth about the disembodied soul, which is only *likened* to a charioteer with a pair of horses. The gods, too, have composite but more harmonious souls with two good horses (reason) – in contrast to humans, who have to cope with a good and a bad horse. The implication seems to be that before the 'fall' of the 'human' soul it was divine (reason) too and beautifully composed. If this is correct, it conforms to the view of the *Timaeus*, where only divine reason, a god-given *dai-*

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18 Ferrari (2007), Klosko (1988). Cross/Woozley (1964) and Cooper (1984) for the opposite view.

19 The good/bad in the long run, that is.

20 Lorenz (2008) 264. This break with earlier (Socratic) psychology has been contested by Ferrari (1990), Carone (2001) and Weiss (2006).

## CHAPTER VII

*mon*, is immortal, the other parts being accretions consequent on incarnation as in *Rep.* x.

The embodied tripartite soul has been an inspiration for Freud's tripartite soul and modern psychology, not least because of its definition of mental health as psychic harmony.<sup>21</sup> In bk. x the restraint of reason is associated with internalized social restraint (e.g. 604ab, 606bc), and we are reminded that reason, too, needs training (606a, cf. 441e f.). For Freud a part of the Id develops into the Ego, which later forms the Superego. Plato too, in a way, implies a genetic account in so far as children are full of spirit and only later (if ever) become reasonable (441ab).<sup>22</sup> Reason may then hopefully be trained to observe social norms (604d, 606b). The basis for this seems to be fear and shame (606bc). These feelings are not irrational, but have cognitive content. Blind desire,<sup>23</sup> on the other hand, is shameless (571cd, 572b, cf. *Phdr.* 250e). It is grounded in biology and therefore developmentally basic, like the Id. Spirit has some sense of shame, in that it is not roused when a man feels he is wrong (440c). The Ego has some similarity to Platonic reason, but the latter seems less impotent and shares some traits of the Superego. So there is no 1-1 correspondence. Moreover, the whole project of dividing the soul is in general a matter of debate, and Plato's division in particular has been problematized.

There is an argument for the immortality of the soul in *R.* x, 608c-611a: (1) things have a natural good and evil, (2) they can only be destroyed by that evil (the good and neutral are not destructive), (3) the natural evil of the body is disease, and it destroys it eventually. (4) However, the natural evil of the soul, injustice and vice, cannot destroy it and sever it from the body. (5) It is impossible that something can be destroyed by the evil of something else, unless that evil produces natural evil (e.g. if the body contracts a disease owing to bad food). (6) Similarly, the soul

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21 Ferrari (2007), Lear (1992), Santas (1988) and Price (1990). Kenny (1973) 12-14 has noted similarities between reason and the ego and some similarities and differences between spirit and the superego.

22 *Contra* Ferrari (2007) 177. However, this is empirical psychology, nothing to do with the metaphysical soul.

23 *R.* 439d.

cannot be destroyed by a diseased body, unless that evil produces injustice and vice. (7) Hence, not being destroyed by either its own evil or that of something else, the soul is immortal.

This proof has been regarded as below Plato's standard.<sup>24</sup> However, the first two premises are part of Plato's metaphysics of functions and optimal or bad states (*R.* 352d-354a), and must be judged in that context.<sup>25</sup> Premise (4) seems weak and questionable, even on Plato's own terms (*Crit.* 47d). Having pointed out the difference between body and soul and mentioned that the destruction of the soul means severance from the body (with implied dualism), Plato turns to a long defense of (2). The obvious objection that what eventually kills the soul is a bodily evil is met by the claim that it has to be done *via* the evil of the soul. This is supported by the general theory of destruction, which again is part of a metaphysics of functions. Everything has a function. The body and its parts and the soul have a function. The specific assumption here is that the soul is essentially a *moral principle* (substance)<sup>26</sup> which is unaffected by whatever happens to the body. They are totally different substances.<sup>27</sup> This is in line with *Ap.* 41cd, cf. 30cd (a good man cannot be harmed)<sup>28</sup>, but not with *Crit.* 47d (that part of us is

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24 Brown (1997) has offered a defense against, e.g., Annas 1981.

25 Brown notes this.

26 Cf. *Rep.* 353d: the soul's function is to care, govern, deliberate and indeed live.

27 Annas is particularly critical of this argument, which is 'question-begging' (1981, 345 f.). But this is a straw man. Plato is not assuming without arguing that the soul is a different kind of thing from the body. This is argued in, e.g., the *Phaedo*, the *Crito* and the *Republic* generally. And the fact that it is unaffected by the body is part of his general theory of functions argued elsewhere. Hence it cannot be claimed that it is assumed at the outset that the soul is indestructible. Annas also wonders why a consequence of the proof is a 'plurality of immortal souls'. But what Plato is telling us is that the *number* of souls is constant (611a): obviously no decrease and also no increase, if at the expense of mortality (assuming a finite world). But again, one should not read a Platonic text in isolation. The background here (for what it is worth) is the cyclical argument of the *Phaedo*.

28 Care of the soul is also important, as wealth does not make the soul excellent, but excellence makes wealth and everything good for men (*Ap.* 30b). Cf. *Charmides* for the holistic thought that the soul is the source of bodily health and disease (156b-157a). Just as eyes are part of the head, and the head

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improved by just actions and destroyed<sup>29</sup> by unjust actions).

Two consequences are then drawn from the immortality of the soul: (1) the number of souls is constant (implied in the cyclical argument at *Phd.* 72b-d), and (2) the soul in its true nature must have some kind of unity. The empirical composite soul with conflicting parts cannot ‘easily’ be immortal (611b). If we extrapolate from the soul’s love of wisdom and its associating with the Forms, we may gather (by reason) its ‘true nature, composite or single or whatever’ (612a). Plato is trading on his proof from affinity in the *Phaedo* here (78b-80b, esp. 79de).

### The self-mover soul

The self-moving soul is encountered in the *Phaedrus*, the *Timaeus* (37b5, 36e3-4, 89a1-3) and the *Laws* (893c-896c). There are implications of it in the *Sophist* (248a ff.) and the *Politicus* (269c-270a). This is a permanent shift in focus, if not a fundamental change in the doctrine of soul.<sup>30</sup> The *Phaedrus* introduces the new view of the soul as a self-mover, both in an argument for immortality (245c-246a) and in the memorable metaphor of a charioteer with a good and bad horse (246ab, 246b-248e). It may be said that the conception of soul as an animating principle in the *Phaedo* in some sense anticipated what has now developed into something which is both more concrete and more general: a principle of motion, and in *Timaeus* and *Laws* a world-soul.

The proof goes like this in the main: the ever-moving is immortal, the self-moving is ever-moving, hence the self-moving is immortal. But the soul is self-moving, hence the soul is immortal.

A closer look shows the details and sub-arguments:

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is part of the body, so the body seems to be part of the soul, which is the *whole*. There is thus an asymmetry in the soul-body interaction, the health of the soul being a necessary condition of the health of the body, but presumably not *vice versa*.

29 *Contra* the *Republic* proof, where injustice does not kill.

30 I follow Brandwood’s chronology (1990 and 1992), which groups *Timaeus*, *Critias*, *Sophist*, *Politicus*, *Philebus* and *Laws* together as the last group, after a group of four: *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus*. See also Young (1994) for an overview. Hence, the *Phaedrus* belongs to another, earlier group than the six late dialogues.

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- (A) The *ever-moving* is immortal.  
Only the *self-moving* can be ever-moving, and as a first principle it moves all other things.
- (B) A first principle cannot come into being (if it did, it would not be a first principle).  
It must also be imperishable (if not, nothing could come to be, and nothing can bring it back as that would require a first principle).
- (C) But the self-mover *is* a first principle of motion (which can neither be destroyed nor come into being. Otherwise the universe would end in immobility and not be brought back).  
So *the self-moving* is immortal.  
But the *soul's essence* is self-motion, for bodies with an external source of motion are soulless, whereas those with internal sources of motion are besouled (animate).  
Therefore: all soul is immortal (unborn and does not die).<sup>31</sup>

The strategy is to identify the ever-moving with the self-mover, which is then interpreted as a principle (*arche*) with the special status of being ungenerated and imperishable. Finally, the self-mover is identified with the soul. One might feel that part (B) about the principle is unnecessary: once the ever-moving had been identified with the self-mover, Plato could move straight on to its identification with the soul. However, arguing *via* the principle enables him to strengthen the argument with two *reductio ad absurdum* arguments against generation and annihilation respectively.

The next question is: What ontological status does this self-moving principle have? The identification with the soul is based on the observation that ensouled bodies are self-moving. This is a *non sequitur*. It is unclear whether it is the organism or a 'part' of it that is the self-mover. However, the first alternative is excluded as the

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31 It is not stated explicitly (but perhaps implicitly) that the reference is to a world-soul (one meaning of  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha$ , 'all soul' 245c5). It should in fairness be noted that  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$  [ ]  $\sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha$  near the end of the argument is used distributively. Similarly, at 246b6-7  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha$  is used distributively, and T.M. Robinson (1995) 115 may be right that it should be translated 'soul in all its forms.'

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an attribute it cannot exist apart from a body. Hence it must be reincarnated to survive. But it seems still to have the status of a substance. Hence a sort of dualism is preserved, but a dualism of mental and corporeal attributes, of teleology and mechanism.<sup>51</sup> Similar to the Aristotelian dualism. To some extent, the picture which was drawn in the first edition (1987) of this volume has been confirmed by subsequent scholarship.<sup>52</sup>

### *Aristotle*

Aristotle was the first to devote a special work, the small treatise *De Anima*, to the subject of the soul ( $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  as the source of life, an explanation of what characterizes living beings). Part of his philosophy of soul is also a much-debated discussion of intellect ( $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ). Aristotle's philosophy of soul and mind has enjoyed much more attention recently than Plato's thoughts on soul, simply because it looks much more relevant to the modern debate. More precisely, his *hylomorphism* has appeared as an alternative to Cartesian dualism on the one hand, and to materialism on the other. This alternative has often been interpreted as attributivism: the soul is an attribute of the body. Much work has then gone into understanding the status of this attribute.<sup>53</sup>

It is important to realize that Aristotle is reacting to his predecessors and especially his teacher, Plato. This clear from *De Ani-*

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51 *FMM* 252 and pp. 78-83 above. Plato and Aristotle share the (to us) hybrid concept of a substantival attribute. The corporeal attributes are here less (or not) substantival.

52 I am thinking of, e.g., H. Granger (1996) chs. 6-7 and C. Shields (2009).

53 See the following selection (cf. also Caston (2006) 318) exhibiting a variety of general treatments of the soul-body relation:

– *Dualism*: D. Hamlyn, 'Aristotle's Cartesianism' (1978), H.M. Robinson, 'Mind and Body in Aristotle' (1978) and 'Aristotelian Dualism' (1983).

– *Materialism* (central-state materialism): e.g., R. Sorabji, 'Body and Soul in Aristotle' (1974), L.A. Kosman, 'Perceiving that We Perceive: *On the Soul* III, 2' (1975), E. Hartman, *Substance, Body and Soul* (1977).

– *Nonreductionist materialism*: J. Ackrill, *Aristotle the Philosopher* (1981), D. Charles, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Action* (1984), M. Frede, 'On Aristotle's

*ma* I. Here we are told what the soul is *not*. The soul has typically and historically been characterized by the production of movement and cognition. Interestingly, the focus is on the *Timaeus*, both in I 2 (on the earlier opinions), where the issue is cognition: the soul is composed of the elements, and in I 3 (critical evaluation of the earlier views), where the self-mover soul is refuted in great detail. The main objection to the *Timaeus* soul is that it is extended (μέγεθος), and that its motion is local, rotation in the case of reason. In other words, and paradoxically, Plato is too materialistic for Aristotle's taste. An important criticism of Plato here is that the relationship with the body is claimed to be contingent, like the Pythagorean transmigration story (407b12-26). Aristotle must be thinking of the individual soul here, as Plato did believe in trans-

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Conception of Soul' (1992).

– *Functionalism*: C. Shields, 'The First Functionalist' (1990), T. Irwin, 'Aristotle's Philosophy of Mind' (1991), M. Nussbaum and H. Putnam, 'Changing Aristotle's Mind' (1992), K.V. Wilkes, '*Psyche* versus the Mind' (1992).

– *Supervenience* (epiphenomenalism): C. Shields, 'Soul and Body in Aristotle' (1988), 'The Soul as Subject in Aristotle's *De Anima*' (1988), R. Heinaman, 'Aristotle and the Mind-Body Problem' (1990), M. Wedin, 'Content and Cause in the Aristotelian Mind' (1992) and 'Aristotle on How to Define a Psychological State' (1996), S. Everson, 'Psychology' (1995), V. Caston, 'Aristotle and Supervenience' (1992), 'Epiphenomenalisms, Ancient and Modern' (1997) and 'Aristotle's Psychology' (2009).

– *Emergence*: J. Ackrill, 'Aristotle's Definitions of *Psyche*' (1972-3), Caston, 'Epiphenomenalisms, Ancient and Modern' (1997).

– *Immaterialist epigenesis*: F. Miller, 'Aristotle's 'Philosophy of Soul' (1999).

– *Sui generis*: R. Sorabji, 'Body and Soul in Aristotle' (1974), E.N. Ostfeld, *Ancient Greek Psychology* (1987<sup>1</sup>), H. Granger, *Aristotle's Idea of the Soul* (1996).

G. Matthews, 'Aristotle: Psychology' (2003) and C. Shields, 'Aristotle's Psychology' (2016) are neutrally informative.

There are of course also specific studies on aspects of Aristotle's psychology (with apologies for not labelling the views as intended by the authors):

– Perception: W.D. Ross (1949<sup>5</sup>), Barnes (1971/2) (weak physicalism), W. Matson (1966), T.J. Slakey (1961), R. Sorabji (1974) (strong physicalism), Solmsen (1961), Burnyeat (1992, 2002) (nonphysical), S. Everson (1997), V. Caston (2005) (supervenience), D. Modrak (1987), A. Marmodoro (2018).

– Desire and action: M. Nussbaum (1978) (functionalism), D. Charles (2009) (non-reductionalist materialism).

M. Nussbaum & A. Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima* (1992) is a rich source of explorations of both specific topics and general analysis of the soul.

migration. Among other things, Plato is faulted because he overlooks the uniqueness of each soul and body and their unique and necessary partnership (κοινωνία). It is notable, however, that there are hints that even for Aristotle νοῦς may be an imperishable and divine substance (408b18-29, cf. 413a6-7). In general, for Aristotle the soul cannot be in motion, and hence it cannot be self-motion (I 4, 408b30-1), nor is it composed of elements (I 5). Plato is wrong on both counts, according to Aristotle. But it should not be overlooked that Aristotle surveyed the earlier opinions with the intention of adopting the sensible ones and warning against the others (403b20-24). So we should not be surprised that many Platonic ideas turn up in Aristotle's own exposition, not least in psychology.

#### The soul as form

Aristotle's own view of *cognition* (perception and thinking) is dealt with in Book II 5-12, and Book III 1-5. The issue of *motion* (motivation) is handled in III 9-11. However, the general view of soul as such is set out in Book II 1-4. In the important first chapter we are told that the category of substance includes matter (in itself not a particular 'a this'), form (giving a thing particularity, according to which 'a this' is said), and the compound, and that matter is potentiality and form actuality. Natural bodies are most clearly substances, and some have life, so a natural living body is a substance and a substance *qua* composite (412a16). Now the soul is not substance as a *composite* living body (which is rather like subject and matter), but substance as 'the *form* of a natural body which potentially has life'; and as this substance is actuality, the soul is the *actuality*, or strictly the first actuality<sup>54</sup>, of such a body (412a11-22). And as such bodies include bodies with organs, the final definition of soul is 'the first actuality of a natural body with organs' (412b5-6). Hence, the soul and the body are *one*, just as imprint and wax are (412b6-8). Being form, the soul is also the definition (λόγος) or the essence (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι) of such a body. An axe and an eye are adduced as illustrations: 'what it is to be an axe' is the essence of an axe, and capacity for sight is the essence of an eye. This choice of

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<sup>54</sup> It is an actuality of σώματος φυσικοῦ δυνάμει ζῶντων ἔχοντος (412a20-21), meaning that it is an acquired state (ἐξίς), cf. 412b25-26.



an artifact and an organ reveals that the focus is on form as *function*. This reflects Aristotle's teleological outlook, and is similar to Plato's ἔργον philosophy in the *Republic* I 352d-354a. However, there is a difference: Plato is concerned with the function of *soul*, whereas Aristotle explores the function of *man*. This is exactly the difference between a mind-body substantialist dualism and Aristotle's hylomorphic view, which looks monistic (soul and body are one), but whose interpretation is hotly debated. A solution must be found in an understanding of the central metaphysical concepts of substance, form/matter and actuality/potentiality. Substance is briefly introduced (412a6-9, cf. 402a23-25). It may be either matter, form or composite. It appears that it is substance in the sense of composite (τόδε τι) that is the focus.

### Hylomorphism

In other words, Aristotle's great idea is to view the soul/body relation in terms of his form/matter relation. This is what has come to be called the hylomorphic view. Hence much work has gone into understanding the nature of *Aristotelian hylomorphism* (HM). So two questions ought to be posed in this order: What is the status of form in HM? How does the application of HM to the mind-body relation fare? The latter has received much attention since J. Ackrill (1972/3) questioned the logic of the form-matter analogy. The relation between soul and body is necessary, whereas the form and its matter are, it is assumed, only contingently connected.<sup>55</sup> So based on this theory the human body ought to be contingently enformed, but it is also necessarily enformed, because Aristotle holds that when unensouled at death, it is no longer a body.<sup>56</sup> However, the contradiction is, it may be argued, not in HM itself,

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<sup>55</sup> It is not always observed that this is not generally true (cf. *Met.* Z 10-11). More on this below.

<sup>56</sup> Ackrill (1972/3) changed the study of Aristotle's psychology with an article complaining that Aristotle applied his form-matter to the soul-body distinction inconsistently. He assumes that generally the matter of an object must be contingently informed by its form: 'The contrast of form and matter in a composite makes ready sense only where the matter can be picked out in such a way that it could be conceived as existing without that form' (126). So the form-matter contrast, as Ackrill sees it, does not fit the soul-body relation.

but points rather to limits of an analogy with artifacts such as bronze spheres or statues. HM is developed to account for change in general. It works well for a lump of bronze made into a *statue* of Sophocles which loses that shape when it is reshaped. In the case of *man* (a living natural body), the body is already formed and so is not neutral matter like a lump of metal. Hence, this has been seen as a problem with the analogy which scholars have sought to remedy. But perhaps it is better to realize that we have to follow Aristotle in accepting the limits of the analogy with the creation of artifacts, which is of course suggestive as far as it goes. We are, at any rate, invited to think of the soul as ‘substance as a form’ (412a19-21), and the *unity* of soul and body answers some questions about the soul-body relation, such as what is the bearer of mental predicates (DA 403a, 408b). However, the real issue is the *status of form* in HM.

#### Soul as cause

The classic text on causes (*Phys.* II 3, 194b24-33) mentions matter, form, efficient cause and end, and we are told (*Phys.* II 7, 198a24) that the last three may come to the same thing (cf. *APo* II 11). In *DA* II 4 the *soul* is said to be the cause and principle of the living body, and just as these [cause and principle] vary, so the soul is the cause of the body in three ways: (1) it is the *cause of change* (local change, but also qualitative change in sensation and quantitative change in growth and decay), (2) it is the *end* (the body and its parts are ‘for the sake of’ the soul), and (3) it is the *substance (formal cause)* of ensouled bodies (substance is the cause of being, i.e. life) (415b8-28, cf. *Met.* Θ 4, 1044a32-b3).

As a cause of change, the soul also *holds the body together* (411b6-9), an idea derived from Plato. In the specific case of metabolism and growth, fire is a *concurrent cause* (as the materialists hold), but complex natural wholes like men (for instance) have a limit (πέρας) or ratio (λόγος) which determines their size and increase; and limit and ratio are marks of soul, not fire, and belong to formulable essence (λόγος) rather than matter (416a9-18). Aristotle seems here on to talk biologically of our DNA, the genetic code, the vector of genetic information. This is not to explained in simple materialist terms.

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The soul is also the formal cause: substance as form or in accordance with the account of the body, which is ‘what it was to be’ for a natural body *of the right kind*, having *itself* the principle of movement and rest (412b10-17, cf. *Phys.* 193b3-6). The definition of soul then contains reference to the body, and it is through its *partnership* (κοινωνία) with the *body in a certain state* (407b16) that the two interact.

Substance as form is what gives particularity to what it is the substance of (412a8-9). If this substance is separated from a human being, he is no longer a human being. Just as with an axe: if you take away its being an axe (its function, cutting power), it ceases to be a true axe. The same applies in the case of an eye. Hence, the definition of function refers necessarily to the matter. Fulfilment refers necessarily to what it is the fulfilment of. The soul, being an end (τέλος), is the actuality, i.e. the fulfilment or realization of the body, and the body and its organs serve the soul. Hence, both as cause of change, as substance as form and as actuality of the body are the soul and the body necessarily connected.

The soul as form, again

The close relation between form and matter does not hold in the case of a bronze sphere or statue or a wax imprint. Here the form does *not* imply the bronze, metal or wax. But an axe, an eye and the ensouled body are different.<sup>57</sup> These three items have a func-

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57 It may be suggested that the form of an axe (and a house) is less closely tied to its matter than is the form of an eye. The question is raised in *Met. Z* 10, 1034b20-28: must the definition of a whole contain a definition of the parts? ‘The formula of the circle does *not* include that of the segments, but that of the syllable does include that of the letters.’ Further, ‘the bronze is a part of the concrete statue, but *not* of the statue when this is spoken of in the sense of the *form*’ (1035a6-7). In *Z* 11 we learn that of things found in different materials, as a circle may exist in bronze or stone or wood, the essence does *not* refer to the materials, as it is found apart from them.’ The form of man, by contrast, is always found in flesh and bones and parts of this kind. Still, it is questionable whether they are parts of the formula, but it is obviously impossible to form an abstraction (1036a31-b7). However, eliminating matter is useless, for ‘some things surely are a particular form in a particular matter or particular things in a particular state’. For instance, ‘Socrates’ means ‘this particular soul and this particular body.’ While the circle can exist without the bronze, *man* cannot exist without his parts. An *animal* is something perceptible and cannot be de-

tion, and their matter is ‘for the sake of’ the form, and the form is the fulfilment of the individual thing. This means that the connection between form and matter is *necessary* (perhaps in various degrees). The soul-form contains a reference to the body and its organs, and the organs cannot be understood without reference to the soul. By contrast, the bronze sphere, statue, and wax imprint are only contingently connected with their matter, which may be different. They are not *natural* bodies with a function or artefacts imitating such bodies. The form-matter scheme is introduced in *Physics* I 7 and II 1 and the biological works in connection with an analysis of change, and it also pops up in *Metaphysics* Z 3 and 7-11 in connection with the substance philosophy (‘substance is the indwelling form’ 1037a29). *Here* Aristotle acknowledges that the application of form to animals (and men), a case of a particular form in a particular matter, has the consequence that the form and its definition must refer to motion (and hence to matter), the reason being that animals are perceptible (1036b22-30). So when we are given a definition of the soul as ‘substance as the form of a natural body which potentially has life’ (in *DA* II 1), we realize that Aristotle could argue that this is a *special case* of hylomorphism. Even so, Ackrill (1973) claimed that Aristotle cannot consistently use hylomorphism in this way; and Barnes (1995a) protests that it is ‘so broad a use of ‘form’ and ‘matter’ that their analytical powers are entirely lost’ (98). It seems, however, that the almost universal opinion that Aristotle is wrong here or needs help unfortunately overlooks the fact that Aristotle is perfectly aware that he is putting his schema to a *new use in connection with living nature*. He is not especially trying to explain substantial change (the creation of artefacts such a bronze spheres, houses, etc.) but to analyze an-

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finied ‘without reference to movement nor without reference to the parts being in a certain state’ (1036b22-30). The understanding of this aporetic chapter is helped to some extent by Hamlyn (1985), who has a useful observation on the strict material implications of form in contrast to essence, e.g., snub *versus* curvature. Jiyuan Yu (1997) has produced an interesting article in which he claims that there are two conceptions of hylomorphism in *Met. ZH*Θ: ‘isolated hylomorphism’, where matter does not enter the definition of form (e.g. Z 7-8), and ‘conjoined hylomorphism’, where it does (e.g. HΘ, esp. H 6). Z 10-11 contains both in a confusing way.

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imals and man and their development (*via* the δύναμις/έντελέχεια contrast). Interpreters have focused on the *body* and come up even with a BODY underlying the body,<sup>58</sup> or with two kinds of matter in an animal (the organic body and the elements constituting it).<sup>59</sup> It seems more profitable to concentrate on the *form*, particularly the soul-form.

The status of the soul must then be understood from within the framework of the general form-matter contrast. And within the general substance philosophy. So while the *body* is 'rather' substance as subject (ύποκείμενον) and matter (ύλη), the *soul* is 'substance as the form (εἶδος) of a natural body which potentially has life' (412a17-19). This means that the body is potentiality and the soul actuality. In consequence, soul and body are one, like the oneness of an imprint in wax, and in general like the oneness of form/actuality and matter/potentiality (*DA* 412b6-9).

Nevertheless, soul and body are both substances. Now substance is thought to be 'a this' (τόδε τι) and separable (χωριστόν), and so form and the compound would seem *more of a substance* than matter (*Met.* 1029a27-30). Similarly, form is a *more plausible candidate for being nature* than matter because the potential flesh and bone has not yet gained its own nature, and we refer to a thing as what it actually is at the time, rather than what it then is potentially (*Phys.* II 1, 193a26-b8). The form then is *prior* to the matter and more real (1029a6, cf. *PA* 640b28-9). Hence, we would expect that the soul as form-substance is 'a this' (τόδε τι) and separable. But it is *not* separable,<sup>60</sup> and it is rather what *makes* individual substances 'a this' (τόδε τι) and separable. It is what makes us call something 'a this' (*DA* 412a8-9, cf. *Met.* Z 17, *Phys.* 191a13-4). The 'indwelling form from which and the matter the so-called concrete substance is derived' (*Met.* 1037a28-9). So, paradoxically in view of the focus in the *Metaphysics* on the form as substance, form does not strictly live up to the two above-mentioned (common sense)

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58 B. Williams (1986).

59 E.g. J. Whiting (1992).

60 413a3-5, cf. *Phys.* 193b4-5 'except in definition', conceptually. The body as matter is not 'a this' (*DA* 412a7-8), nor is it separable (412b25-26).

criteria of substance. This is not to say that it is not substance in a more technical sense.

### Sense-perception

One might say that the soul is moved by the objects of perception, *if* it is moved (406b10-11). However, this is no ordinary motion or change. This leads on to the other area of debate: perception. There is a whole industry of scholarly work on what is to be made of (for instance) Aristotle's idea that perception is the *reception of form without matter* (424a17-19, 425b23-24). Sense-perception occupies a large part of *DA* II 5-III 2, II 5 and III 2 in particular. Aristotle follows Presocratic tradition in holding that perception and thinking are a kind of affection (410a25-26) and are very close to each other. The focus must therefore be to identify where he departs from tradition. For Aristotle, sense-perception involves being moved (*κινεῖσθαι*) and affection (*πάσχειν*), and seems to be a *sort of alteration* (*ἀλλοίωσις τις*) (416b33-35). More specifically, it is an *assimilation* of the organ, which is potentially such as the sense-object is actually (417a17-20, 424a1-2). This is part of Aristotle's general idea of change.

Now, there are in fact three stages: two kinds of potentiality and, partly overlapping, two kinds of actuality. This is then illustrated by knowing: man is by nature capable of knowing, but when he has learnt something, he actually knows it but is only potentially contemplating. When he then actually exercises this knowledge, he has left potentiality entirely behind (417a21-417b2). Correspondingly, there are two kinds of affection or alteration: 'destruction by the opposite' or 'change to privative dispositions' on the one hand, and on the other hand 'preservation of *what is in potentiality* by what is in actuality, and of *what is like* what acts on it in the way that a potentiality is like its actuality' (417b2-16). Now, the second transition to full actuality is 'a progression toward the thing itself' and is therefore either not an alteration or another kind of alteration (417b6-7).

Applying this distinction to sense-perception, at birth the sense-organ has a form: sense-capacity. This may then be activated, just as knowledge. In the absence of any better term, this