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# Aristotle's Demarcation of the Senses of Energeia in Metaphysics IX,6

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Aristotle's Demarcation of Senses of Energeia  
in Metaphysics IX,6

Aristotle's distinction between energeia and kinesis has received renewed interest since Gilbert Ryle employed it in his discussion of perception.(1) Ryle suggested we misunderstand perceptual activities, such as seeing and hearing when we consider them processes or states which have the sorts of causes typical of those. Instead, he proposed we should follow Aristotle and recognize, from attention to grammar, that "the verbs 'see' and 'hear' function like the verb 'win'" or other "verbs of starting and stopping" (for example, 'find,' 'begin,' or 'arrive') rather than like verbs for processes or states. The response to Ryle's utilization of Aristotle's distinction between energeia and kinesis has become a fairly sizable literature.(2) Because there still seems to be some confusion as to how Aristotle is to be understood, and because the distinction between energeia and kinesis plays such a crucial role in many important contexts,(3) a reevaluation of Aristotle's concepts seems warranted.

When interpreters have followed Ryle in viewing Aristotle as distinguishing different sorts of verbs, they have run into problems. Aristotle's indication in Metaphysics IX,6 that in the case of energeiai "we are seeing and have seen, are understanding and have understood, are thinking and have thought," whereas we cannot thus conjoin present and perfect tenses in the case of kineseis, since we use the perfect tense with them only when they are complete and terminated, is taken by John Ackrill as Aristotle's criterion for distinguishing energeiai and kineseis.(4) The problem, then, when the ability to conjoin present and perfect tenses is made the criterion for energeiai, is that many presumed energeiai fail to meet it, though presumed kineseis may. Aristotle seems to want such activities as hearing and enjoying to be energeiai, but if we consider the hearing or enjoying of a symphony, we quickly recognize that it is improper to say I am hearing or enjoying a symphony and I have heard or enjoyed the symphony. The perfect tense seems proper only when the symphony is already through, but subsequent to the symphony, of course, we should not use the present tense about our hearing it or enjoying it. Conversely, when kineseis are considered without reference to their ends, for example, walking or building taken apart from any place to which we walk or any structure arising from the building, then it seems proper at any moment at which we are walking or building to say that we have already walked and built. Hence, these supposed kineseis appear to be energeiai by the linguistic criterion.(5) In order to overcome this difficulty for Aristotle's distinction, some interpreters have proposed that we not view him as depending upon this linguistic criterion, but as having another way to grasp the distinction.(6) What I shall try to contribute to this line of approach is a somewhat closer treatment of Aristotle's discussion in Metaphysics IX,6 than has been previously attempted and a broader reflection upon its significance.

Aristotle clearly indicates in Metaphysics IX,6 that energeia cannot be defined, but that it must be apprehended by induction from analogy (1048a35-7).(7) We must therefore appreciate the possibility that Aristotle aims not so much for a precise formulation of what energeia is, but the supply of hints to facilitate our understanding. In the course of presenting the analogy, Aristotle evidently distinguishes two senses of energeia. He states, "But all things are not said in the same sense to exist actually, but only by analogy--as A is in B or to B, C is in D or to D; for some are as movement (kinesis) to potency, and the others as substance (ousia) to some sort of matter (1048b6-9)." Aristotle offers little discussion here of these two main kinds of energeiai, but we may utilize other sections of Metaphysics IX to fill in the line of thought to prepare us for the subtler distinction he goes on to make between kinesis and energeia.

The first sort of energeia noted in the passage is motion. This most obvious sort of energeia is declared in a previous section to be the prominent type. Aristotle asserts,

The name 'energeia,' which extends all the way to complete reality (πρὸς τὴν ἐντελέχειαν συντιθεμένη), derives, even in other cases, especially from motions; for energeia seems

especially to be motion, on account of which motion is not attributed to things which are not, though some other predications are, for instance things which are not are thinkable and desirable, but are not moving, and this is because not being in actuality they will be in actuality (οὐκ ὄντα ἐνεργεία ἔσονται ἐνεργεία). For of things which are not some are in potentiality, but are not since they are not in complete reality (ἐντελεχεία --1047a30-b2).(8)

We can certainly conclude that Aristotle believes motion to be energeia and even the most evident kind. In this passage he emphasizes the fact that only things that actually are can undergo the further actualization involved in moving. Motion is the actualization of something's potentiality to be in motion. Hence, when in the passage in Metaphysics IX,6 Aristotle says that some energeiai "are as movement to potency (1048b8)," he has in mind motion's correlation with dunamis of the sort he has already claimed to be the "strictest" type (μάλιστα κυρίως --1045b36), that is, "a principle of change in another or as other" (1046a10-1).(9) Motion can be viewed either as the actuality of a mover's potentiality to move something, or even better as the actuality of something's potentiality to be moved by a mover. Thus, we appear to have little difficulty appreciating that motion is an energeia which correlates with the mere potentiality for such motion.

The other sort of energeia indicated in the passage is "as substance to some sort of matter" (1048b9). In order to follow Aristotle's intention we must keep in mind that he presents an analogy. It is not solely substances which are energeiai standing over against the matter, but any being in any of the categories which is energeia as opposed to the substratum in the privative condition. For example, a white surface or the quality whiteness is the energeia in relation to the surface which is potentially white. Aristotle believes that energeia and dunamis cut across all the categories of being; there are actual and potential substances, qualities, quantities, relations, times, places, and so on. This is the very reason energeia resists definition but is grasped through analogy.

Something surprising emerges from the seemingly unprovocative observation that energeia and dunamis cut across all the categories. When we get to the categories of action (ποιεῖν) and passion (πάσχειν), it appears that the actuality and potentiality of these are just the previous sorts of energeiai and dunamis (see Physics 202a22-4). When, for example, someone is actually building or the structure is in process of being built, then there is actual motion, whereas the potentialities to build or be built are the correlated potentialities. The actuality of an action or passion is most often motion, and the potentiality of either of these the dunamis which is the principle of this motion. Reflecting this way upon how energeia and dunamis pertain to the various categories of being helps us avoid too facilely thinking we can easily translate 'energeia' in some contexts as actuality but in others as actualization or activity.(10) Even motion, even becoming, can be viewed in some sense as being. Yet, though the analogy of energeia and dunamis spans the entirety of the categories of being, nonetheless we surely can distinguish becoming from being. Becoming is confined to the categories of action and passion that we have focused upon. All change, being according to Aristotle of four kinds: change in substance, quality, quantity, or place, is a process of becoming which terminates with a new being in one of the categories. The actuality of an instance of the categories of action or passion, therefore, is a process toward another sort of being.(11)

The categorial approach to energeia and dunamis which we especially found suggested by Aristotle's use of analogy thus leads us to recognize that we locate the distinction of two types of energeiai--"as movement to a potency" and "as substance to some sort of matter" (1048b8-9)--within the categories, the latter extending as widely as the categories themselves and the former being restricted to actions or passions. Somewhat crudely, we may say the latter are energeiai in relation to 'being' and the former energeiai in relation to 'becoming.' That something like this path of thought stands behind Aristotle's presentation in the main part of Metaphysics IX,6 seems confirmed by the final portion of the chapter which lays out the crucial distinction between

energeiai and kineseis (1048b18 ff.). This section enters abruptly, unless we allow that when Aristotle starts off distinguishing two kinds of praxeis (in 1048b18) that praxis is here meant to refer to the whole category of action.(12) Then Aristotle is making a subtle distinction within this category. Though many actual actions are motions which terminate in a new actual category of being (for example, the action of building terminates in a house), still others do not seem analogously to be processes. For example, seeing, thinking, choosing, seem definitely to be instances of the category of action, along with building, hitting, heating, but unlike them not to be processes resulting in a being of another category. The thrust of Aristotle's discussion of the distinction of energeia and kinesis is that though the energeiai resemble kineseis categorially, nevertheless they are different in a vital respect from them, thereby resembling the other sort of energeiai. We thus seem to have energeiai straddling the principal division between kinds of energeiai.

Let us trace what Aristotle says in the final section of Metaphysics IX,6 and then explore what he must be thinking. He indicates that some actions have a limit (peras) toward which they proceed, not having their end (telos) prior to reaching this limit, whereas others always have their end in themselves (1048b18-23). It is in clarification of this point that Aristotle introduces the conjunction of present and perfect tenses. He gives examples of actions which we readily acknowledge we simultaneously do and have done, and other cases in which we must deny this. He states, "E.g. at the same time we are seeing and have seen, are understanding and have understood, are thinking and have thought (while it is not true that at the same time we are learning and have learnt, or a being cured and have been cured)" (1048b23-5). The fact that we can conjoin the perfect with the present in some cases means there is completeness throughout the duration of these actions and hence that their end is not an external limit toward which they head, but always within them.(13) It must be emphasized that Aristotle's obvious purpose in referring to the conjunction of present and perfect tenses is to support the view that some actions are always complete, have their end, whereas others are not. Nothing he says suggests he is devising a criterion for identifying cases nor commenting upon peculiar features of the use of language. Rather, his focus is exclusively upon the two kinds of actions under consideration.

The only further point made in this section is closely connected and confirms the line I have taken. Aristotle says, "At the same time we are living well and have lived well, and are happy and have been happy. If not, the process would have had sometime to cease, as the process of making thin ceases: but, as things are, it does not cease; we are living and have lived (1048b25-7)."

The argument here is that if energeiai were not always having their end within them and being complete, then they would have to cease sometime as kineseis generally must.(14) Aristotle expects us to recognize that kineseis do cease when they reach their limit, whereas some sorts of actions, such as living well, never must thus cease, though of course they may cease sometime. Since it is not the case that these energeiai must ever necessarily stop at some determinate moment, they must always have their end in themselves and be complete. Unless these energeiai were always complete, they would be moving toward some limit reaching which they could not continue in the form they had had up until then.

Aristotle feels it adequate for his purposes in this chapter simply to leave it at emphasizing that energeiai have their end within them and are complete, whereas kineseis, having an external limit, are never complete so long as they remain kineseis, but only upon attaining their limit and ceasing the motion. Further clarity about Aristotle's thought depends upon our drawing inferences from the material he succinctly provides us here. Let us proceed to develop this comprehensive understanding of Aristotle's contrast between energeiai and kineseis in order that we may grasp how to conceive the completeness of energeiai and hence overcome any confusion about them.

When we recall that Aristotle began in 1048b18 by referring to actions (praxeis), we may realize that energeiai are

restricted to a certain domain. When we consider the examples he provides of energeiai, we find that that domain is rather narrow.(15) He often presents as energeiai cognitive activities, such as seeing, hearing, thinking, or more generally perception and intellection. He further illustrates energeiai with affective activities, such as enjoying, fearing, desiring. Finally, he looks toward the synthesis of cognition and affectivity in choice (proairesis), action (praxis), living well, and being happy as another sort of energeia. We may hence conclude that energeiai extend only to the actions and passions of animals, and more precisely to their thought, perception, emotion, desire, or choice.(16)

Confirmation of this restriction of energeiai to the cognitive and affective life of animals comes indirectly from a passage in a subsequent chapter. In the midst of showing the priority of actuality to potentiality in IX,8, Aristotle states, Where, then, the result is something apart from the exercise (χρησιν), the actuality (ἐνέργεια) is in the thing that is being made, e.g. the act of building is in the thing that is being built and that of weaving in the thing that is being woven, and similarly in all other cases, and in general the movement (κίνησις) is in the thing that is being moved; but where there is no product (ἔργον) apart from the actuality (ἐνέργειαν), the actuality (ἐνέργεια) is present in the agents, e.g. the act of seeing is in the seeing subject and that of theorizing in the theorizing subject and the life is in the soul (and therefore well-being also; for it is a certain kind of life). (1050a30-b2)

It is clear from this passage not only that the distinction between energeia and kinesis is based principally, as I have emphasized, upon whether the end is external or internal, but also that energeiai are all in the souls of animals, whereas kineseis may be in whatever is being moved by something. If energeiai were to be in what they were somehow effecting, then they could not have their ends in themselves. Only certain psychical actions: of the cognitive, affective, and practical sorts we have been discussing, qualify as energeiai because with them the end is the very action itself.

Once the true range of energeiai has been discerned difficulties surrounding them disappear. Initially, we avoid concern about many verbs that seem to name energeiai when there is thought to be a linguistic criterion for them. If we just consider the possibility of conjoining present and perfect tenses, then verbs such as 'being,' 'living,' 'starting,' 'stopping,' and 'walking' seem to name energeiai. But, having delimited the range of energeiai, we can generally dismiss these. 'Being' fails in many cases to be an action (praxis) at all and so is not in our sense an energeia, though it is perfectly proper to say, for example, it is and has been green. 'Living' only names an energeia when we are speaking of animal life, the life of perception and intellection. Plants live, too, but do not have energeiai in our sense because their life is merely kinesis, such as growth and reproduction. 'Starting' or 'stopping,' when it is a kinesis that is doing so, could hardly be energeia. Finally, 'walking,' whether we are thinking of walking without regard to an intended place or a walk to some definite place or aimless walking (if there is really ever such walking), could never be an energeia.

Any remaining uneasiness about Aristotle's distinction between energeia and kinesis can only be alleviated by further reflection upon what is entailed in giving energeiai this narrow range. The outstanding obstacles for Aristotle's distinction are these two. First, kineseis, when we ignore their ends, seem complete throughout the course of their duration. For example, at any moment once we have started to move it seems true to say we have moved, even though we have not reached our ultimate destination. Thus it might appear that motions could have their ends within themselves. Second, when an energeia has for its object not something instantaneous, such as a small color patch or a single note, but an object having temporal duration and even a kinesis, such as a musical performance or a horse race, then it seems no more complete at every moment than its object. Hence an energeia might have its end outside itself. Let us see if we can



remove these obstacles by showing how energeiai, as psychical activities, have a relationship with their ends different from those which kineseis have with their ends.

With regard to the first matter, the completeness of kineseis when we consider them apart from their ends, we may exhibit how different this is from the completeness of an energeia. Every kinesis is a process through time in which we achieve more and more of the end until the process arrives at completion. Until the end is attained there are merely partial realizations. This is stated well in Nicomachean Ethics X,4,1174a19-23,

For every movement (kinesis)(e.g. that of building) takes time and is for the sake of an end, and is complete when it has made what it aims at. It is complete, therefore, only in the whole time or at that final moment. In their parts and during the time they occupy, all movements are incomplete, and are different in kind from the whole movement and from each other. Since kineseis are thus not truly complete except "in the whole time or at that final moment," if we speak of them in the perfect tense while they are still in process it must be merely retrospectively. When we claim, after we start moving, that we have moved, this only means we have accomplished some parts of our process of moving. For example, during the course of a long walk or a project of building we have already walked or built so far or so much as we have walked or built. But when we use the perfect tense in the case of energeiai, psychical activities, we are not using it retrospectively of those parts of the activities which have already been accomplished. Energeiai, not being processes which take time or which could ever be merely partially realized, always have the ends in themselves and are always complete. The perfect tense, in their case, has no reference to the past, it rather refers to the completeness in this very moment of the energeia.(17) Since energeiai are wholly complete in every moment and never only partially complete, at the very first instant of their onset it would be proper to use the perfect tense, whereas with kineseis the perfect might only be used some time after they begin.(18)

Having thus removed the obstacle about kineseis considered apart from their ends by showing their deficient mode of completeness, we must now examine the effects on energeiai of having objects with temporal durations. How, when their objects are in motion or taking time, could energeiai be complete at every moment? Aristotle is evidently unperturbed by the possibility of energeiai with temporally extended objects. He states in Nicomachean Ethics X,4,1174a14-9,

Seeing seems to be at any moment complete, for it does not lack anything which coming into being later will complete its form; and pleasure also seems to be of this nature. For it is a whole, and at no time can one find a pleasure whose form will be completed if the pleasure lasts longer.

Why Aristotle is so confident about energeiai being complete at every moment is that he attributes to them the sort of indivisibility and simplicity of a mathematical point or unit. He declares in Nicomachean Ethics 1174b9-14,

From these considerations it is clear, too, that these thinkers are not right in saying there is a movement or a coming into being of pleasure. For these cannot be ascribed to all things, but only to those that are divisible and not wholes; there is no coming into being of seeing nor of a point nor of a unit, nor is any of these a movement or coming into being; therefore there is no movement or coming into being of pleasure either; for it is a whole.(19)

We need to examine how energeiai are complete in form at every moment and have no coming into being due to their being as indivisible as points or units.

In Metaphysics VII,8 it is argued that in a process of change neither the form nor the matter comes to be, but only the composite of form and matter has genesis. In particular, the form cannot come to be since where there is no divisibility there can be no coming into being (1033b11-9). Now Aristotle has indicated quite clearly that he believes energeiai are as indivisible and complete as units or points and so not involved in any becoming.(20) The foundation of this belief lies in his understanding of cognition. If every energeia is either cognition or closely connected with it, as we have emphasized, and each cognitive act, whether

intellective or perceptive, implies receiving "the form without the matter," then we may allow that energeiai as such immaterial forms are not mixed up with becoming. And we see that this follows from Aristotle's view of cognition. In De Anima III,8, 431b26-432a1 Aristotle declares,

Within the soul the faculties of knowledge and sensation are potentially these objects, the one what is knowable, the other what is sensible. They must be either the things themselves or their forms. The former alternative is of course impossible: it is not the stone which is present in the soul but its form. This means that the perceptive and intellective faculties, when actively cognizing, are the forms of their objects. To be capable of cognition is to have the power to be the form without the matter.(21) As thus being identical with the forms of their objects, psychical acts would not permit any genesis. Even when those objects were themselves motions, the cognitive apprehension of the form of motion does not itself take time. The perception or thought of a motion is not itself a motion; the form of a motion is instantaneously completely cognizable. While the motion, for example a walk, the building of a house, or a symphony, takes time, the cognition of it, being the apprehension of the form, is at every moment complete.

Perhaps this Aristotelian position will appear in a compelling light if we consider human choosing. Choice (proairesis) interests us because we here typically have thought and desire directed to some process of making (poiesis--Metaphysics VII,7, esp. 1032b15-7 and IX,2). When we choose to do various things, such as to heal a patient or to build a house or to fight bravely in a battle, our choice can only be realized through many bodily motions. Like all motions, these take time and proceed through partial stages to the completion of the whole. Yet the choice which initiates this motion seems directed toward the process as a whole and to have apprehended the whole form of what is to be made. Hence Aristotle is able to consider choice or action (praxis) good in itself and an end in itself, though many motions may be required ultimately to realize that which has been chosen (see Nic. Ethics 1139b1-4, 1140b6-7, 1144a13-20, 1105a26-33). Similarly, other energeiai that are directed toward motions or processes as their objects should be able to embrace these temporal entities entire such that we may view them as always complete.(22)

In conclusion, we urge that Aristotle in Metaphysics IX,6 has demarcated three most crucial senses of energeia. There is that which pertains to categorial being and then that which pertains to becoming. Finally, there is energeia involved in the cognitive and affective lives of animals. These latter sorts of energeiai resemble the other two kinds in many important features. This is as it must be if Aristotle is to adhere to the general doctrine that we know "like by like." But these cognitive and affective energeiai also have peculiar features of their own that enable them to play their crucial roles. As we have stressed, they have quite different relationships with their ends than motions have. These energeiai grasp the entire form of their objects and hence are complete at every moment. They apprehend this form in such a way that every one of these energeiai is self-aware. When animals perceive, desire, enjoy, and so on, they have awareness of doing so. Also, these energeiai, as gaining "the form without the matter," have no localization as have enmattered things. Consequently, cognition does not duplicate the world, that is, develop a representation in us of a supposed "external" world. Many results of Aristotle's understanding of energeia seem perfectly appropriate to their task. Aristotle's notion of energeia may be important not only for his own reflection but for ours too.

## NOTES

- (1) G. Ryle, Dilemmas (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1954), 102-6.
- (2) R.J. Hirst early questioned Ryle's understanding of Aristotle in The Problem of Perception (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 126-35. He contended Ryle confuses 'end' in the sense of 'goal' with 'terminus' and consequently falsely saddles Aristotle with limiting energeiai to instants, whereas, in fact, Aristotle insists energeiai are continuable and may last a long time. John Ackrill in "Aristotle's Distinction Between Energeia and Kinesis," in New Essays on Plato and Aristotle, ed. by R. Bambrough (New York: Humanities, 1965), 121-41, accepted Hirst's criticism but went on to find difficulties in Aristotle's own conceptions, which will be discussed below. Ackrill's article has provoked renewed examination of Aristotle. The literature referring to Ackrill's piece includes: I.M. Crombie, review of New Essays on Plato and Aristotle, in Classical Review N.S. 17(1967), 32; W.F.R. Hardie, Aristotle's Ethical Theory (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), 305; M.M. Mulhern, "Types of Process According to Aristotle," Monist 52(1968), 237-51; T. Penner, "Verbs and the Identity of Actions," in Ryle, ed. by O.P. Wood and G. Pitcher (London: Macmillan, 1970), 393-453; P.S. Mamo, "Energeia and Kinesis in Metaphysics  $\Theta.6$ ," Apeiron 4(1970), 24-34; W.M. Hoffman, "Aristotle's Logic of Verb Tenses," Journal of Critical Analysis 6(1976), 89-95; F.R. Pickering, "Aristotle on Walking," Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie 59(1977), 37-43.
- (3) Aristotle's metaphysics, psychology, ethics, and politics depend upon this distinction. See, e.g., De Anima II,5 and III,7; Nic. Ethics VI,4-5 and X,4; Metaphysics XII,9.
- (4) Ackrill follows Ryle in viewing Aristotle as distinguishing classes of verbs. But in making the conjunction of present and perfect tenses the criterion for energeiai, he may take the lead from W.D. Ross, who said, "the test of an energeia as against a kinesis...we that we are doing it and have done it at the same time," in Aristotle's Metaphysics: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary, Vol. II (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1924), 251, n. 1048b8. For the 'tense test' see also: Zeno Vendler, "Verbs and Times," Philosophical Review (1957), 143-60 and Anthony Kenny, Action, Emotion and Will (London: Routledge, 1963), Chapter 8.
- (5) Ackrill, pp. 131-5.
- (6) See, e.g., Mamo, p. 27.
- (7) Ross, p. 251, n. 1048a36, correctly observes that since energeia, like being, unity, and good, applies universally, it does not fit within a single genus and so is not definable by genus and difference.
- (8) Cf. Meta. 1050a21-3. I have used the Oxford translations.
- (9) Cf. A. Peck, "Aristotle on κίνησις," in Essays in Greek Philosophy, ed. by J.P. Anton and G. Kustas (Albany: SUNY Press, 1971), p. 479, and Ross, p. 349, n. 1069a22.
- (10) Chung-Hwan Chen perhaps should not distinguish between "quasi-modal" and "non-modal" senses of energeia and dunamis, in "Different Meanings of the Term Energeia in the Philosophy of Aristotle," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 17(1956-7), 56-65. He says moving or functioning is a non-modal sense of energeia, translatable as 'actualization' or 'actualizing,' whereas cases in which we speak of actuality versus potentiality are quasi-modal, since these are "ways of existence" (Chen, p. 57, refers to 1048a30-2). See on this L.A. Kosman, "Aristotle's Definition of Motion," Phronesis 14(1969), 40-62.
- (11) My categorial approach toward energeia and dunamis seems confirmed by Meta. 1048b9-17 and such a passage as: "Further, matter exists in a potential state, just because it may come to its form; and when it exists actually, then it is in its form. And the same holds good in all cases, even those in which the end is a movement (1050a15-7, my italics)."
- (12) A difficulty might be raised about whether Aristotle would speak of non-animals as engaged in praxeis. Though he normally would not, I believe we must here allow a broad sense to the term. W.D. Ross suggests, "πρᾶξις is first used in a general sense=κίνησις, then in its stricter sense of κίνησις τελεία (p. 253, n. 1048b18-21)."



- (13) Aristotle does not here quite say that energeiai always have their ends, and hence Ackrill has toyed with the possibility that he does not mean the present always to "entail the perfect" (pp. 123 ff.). The context, however, makes it clear we may add the "always." We should note the ὅταν in 1048b28 suggests we are considering actions throughout their duration. I return to this point below.
- (14) Locomotion in a circle is the only exception.
- (15) Only Mamo seems to have noted the extent of energeiai; he says, "It is not, of course, accidental that all the energeiai mentioned by Aristotle are mental processes (p. 32)." Mamo does not push this point as far as he might have.
- (16) That energeiai must link up with perceptive and intellectual life makes it fitting, as we previously noted, that they straddle the main division of energeiai into those pertaining to 'becoming' and those to 'being.' Since cognition is by 'like to like' and it must apprehend all things, it should be like or become like to all.
- (17) Ackrill misunderstands the present perfect tense. He suggests, "the 'has heard' can be taken to refer to a period of time preceding the moment to which the 'hears' refers (p. 126)." This is to confuse 'has been hearing' with 'has heard.' In the case of energeiai, the perfect tense conjoined with the present refers to the completeness in this present moment, but not to a stretch of activity prior to the present, as it does with kineseis. Ryle had a better sense of this than Ackrill. I am indebted here to a paper by Thomas Bartlett.
- (18) This point underlies Nic. Ethics 1174a14-9 and b3-9.
- (19) This likening of cognitive activity to a unit or point is not unique in the corpus. See De Anima 427a10-3 and De Sensu 449a16-20.
- (20) In De Sensu VI, 446b2-4, Aristotle says, "acts of sense-perception do not involve a process of becoming, but have their being none the less without involving such a process."
- (21) For an illuminating discussion of this doctrine, see Joseph Owens' "Form and Cognition in Aristotle," Ancient Philosophy 1(1980), 17-27.
- (22) This may be taken to be the central meaning of the difficult passage De Anima III, 6, 430b14-20. The view that psychical energeiai are directed to the whole matter for thought credits all animals with some of the ability Xenophanes claimed for god when he said: οὐλος ὄρα, οὐλος δὲ νοεῖ, οὐλος δὲ τ' ἀκούει (Fr. 24).