



Self-Consciousness and the Tradition in Aristotle's Psychology

John Edward Russon

Volume 52, numéro 3, octobre 1996

Foi et Raison

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/401023ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/401023ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Faculté de philosophie, Université Laval

ISSN

0023-9054 (imprimé)

1703-8804 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Russon, J. E. (1996). Self-Consciousness and the Tradition in Aristotle's Psychology. *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 52(3), 777-803.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/401023ar>

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE TRADITION IN ARISTOTLE'S PSYCHOLOGY

John Edward RUSSON

RÉSUMÉ : *La méthode historique qu'utilise Aristote à l'égard de ses prédécesseurs trouve sa justification dans sa psychologie et son épistémologie. La définition aristotélicienne de l'âme dans le De Anima implique que toute connaissance est l'unification du sujet et de l'objet et l'animation d'un corps. La notion d'« habitude », dans les Seconds Analytiques II, 19, montre comment cela s'applique à l'intellect. L'animation de l'objet (son corps) par l'esprit dans la compréhension intellectuelle est complète uniquement quand ce qui comprend se reconnaît comme le remplissement exigé par son objet. Ce principe qui justifie Aristote de se considérer comme l'accomplissement de sa tradition rend obligatoire aussi que notre compréhension de sa philosophie soit adéquate à ses textes.*

SUMMARY : *Aristotle's "historical method" in his approach to his predecessors is the one demanded by his psychology and epistemology. Aristotle's definition of soul in De Anima implies that all knowing is a unification of subject and object and is the animating of a body. The notion of habituation in Posterior Analytics II.19 shows how this applies to intellect. The mind's animating of its object (its body) in intellectual comprehension is only complete when the comprehending recognizes itself as the fulfillment for which its object has been asking. This very principle which justifies Aristotle's portrayal of himself as the fulfillment of his tradition requires that our comprehension of Aristotle's philosophy likewise recognize itself as the fulfillment of his texts.*

INTRODUCTION

It is characteristic of Aristotle's method that he begins his analyses by calling a counsel of his philosophical ancestors, and that he only articulates his own position once he has let his study of his tradition provide him with a conceptual matrix within which to situate his own investigations ; the best examples of this approach are found in *Metaphysics A*, and in Book I of the text which will provide the focus for this study, *De Anima*. While it is a commonplace to write off this aspect of Aris-

totle's work as interesting source material, but neither scientific in its own right, nor, indeed, essential to Aristotle's project, I will argue on the contrary both (a) that this canvassing of the tradition is essential to Aristotle's project, and (b) that the form of his approach is not only methodologically sound but, further, that it is the precise method demanded by his psychology and epistemology.

The criticism of Aristotle's treatment of his predecessors is familiar and it is typified by this remark of Burnet :

As a rule, Aristotle's statements about early philosophers are far less historical than Plato's. He nearly always discusses the facts from the point of view of his own system. [...] He is convinced that his own philosophy accomplishes what all previous philosophers had aimed at, and their systems are therefore regarded as "lispering" attempts to formulate it.¹

There are basically two criticisms here, or two stages of one criticism : first, Aristotle appraises the others in his terms, and, second, he views his own system as the consummation of the earlier attempts. In other words, in looking at the other, Aristotle only sees himself, and, indeed this self-cognizance is posited as the very *goal* of the other. The response to this challenge has three parts.

I begin by considering Aristotle's approach to his predecessors in Book I of *De Anima*, and draw two conclusions. First, Aristotle's definition of soul in Book II of *De Anima* appears as simply a unified statement of the claims made by the tradition. Second, the motivation and methodological justification for formulating such a unified statement itself appears as a demand made by the tradition, and Aristotle's action of philosophical retrospection appears in turn as the conclusion of a practical syllogism for which the philosophical tradition itself is the agent. This first section provides the basic form which the answer to our problematic takes, but it also introduces a number of theses which it is the project of the remainder of the paper to defend.

The second part is the main argumentative focus of the paper, and it is an elaborate argument for a unified interpretation of Aristotle's psychology and epistemology. The argument here posits a doctrine of dynamic holism as the logical key to Aristotle physics, and the philosophy of mind and epistemology which it includes.² This begins with an analysis of soul as the principle of identification with otherness, and moves through an account of ἐξίς as development and mediation to an interpretation of νοῦς as self-cognition as the τί ἦν εἶναι of a tradition. Along the way it becomes clear that Aristotle has an animative theory of cognition, according to which knowing is the act of bringing the object to life, as opposed to a representative theory, according to which the mind is a passive theatre.

1. J. BURNET, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 4th ed. (Meridian Books, 1957), p. 31.

2. My argument bears on Aristotle's alleged functionalism : see R. SORABJI, "Body and Soul in Aristotle," *Philosophy*, 49 (1974), revised and reprinted in J. BARNES, R. SORABJI and M. SCHOFIELD, eds, *Articles on Aristotle* in 4 volumes, (Duckworth, 1975-1979), vol. IV, p. 42-64 ; H. ROBINSON, "Mind and Body in Aristotle," *Classical Quarterly*, n.s. 28 (1978) : p. 105-124 ; R. HEINAMEN, "Aristotle and the Mind-Body Problem," *Phronesis*, 35 (1990) : p. 83-102. Compare A. BEN-ZEEV, "Making Mental Properties More Natural," *Monist*, 69 (1968) : p. 434-446.

The third part takes the epistemological conclusions reached in Part Two, and explicitly draws out their implications for the philosophy of history as it relates to Aristotle's method of finding a rationality in his tradition by forcing it to interpret itself, and concludes in a justification of the method of analysis used in this essay.

I. THE EMERGENCE OF THE DEFINITION OF SOUL

Aristotle's ultimate goal is to know the substance of soul as embodied in a definition from which its attributes can be deduced.³ To find this definition requires beginning with the already recognized attributes, and working up from these to the knowledge of the substance. Consequently, Aristotle begins *De Anima* with this remark regarding the immediate method and goal of the inquiry :

[...] when we are able to give an account conformable to experience [κατὰ τὴν φαντασίαν] of all or most of the properties of a substance, we shall be in the most favorable position to say something worth saying [ἔξομεν λέγειν κάλλιστα] about the essential nature of that subject [περὶ τῆς οὐσίας] (I.1.402b22-25, trans. J.A. Smith).

There will be reason later to consider both the phrase "κατὰ τὴν φαντασίαν" and the phrase "ἔξομεν λέγειν κάλλιστα," but for now it is sufficient to see in this remark an expression of the need to begin from the attributes which are "familiar to us" in order to get at the real essence or substance of the matter (οὐσία).

But where are the *explananda* — the attributes — to be found ? For Aristotle, the primary resource is the history of speculation about the soul ; thus, in Chapters 2 through 5 of Book I, Aristotle questions the tradition for his starting points. He begins Chapter 2 by expressing this need to consult his heritage :

It is necessary for us looking on about the soul and being without a way through that through which we need passage, progressing, to take along beside us the opinions of as many of those who came before as showed forth something about it [the soul] so that we may take up what has been justly said, and so that, if something has not been justly said, we may beware of it ; and it is necessary at the beginning of the search to lay down what is especially reputed to belong to it [the soul] by nature, (I.2.403b20-25, my trans.).

To find our way about it is necessary to situate ourselves with respect to the tradition : we must discover the soul's reputation. This reputation is the received starting point indicated in the quotation from Chapter 1 : we are to account for the attributes κατὰ τὴν φαντασίαν, that is, we must align ourselves with what has been "made visible."

Aristotle further characterizes this "making visible" of the attributes of soul by his predecessors :

3. For opposed accounts of Aristotle's notion of demonstrative science, see J. BARNES, "Aristotle's Theory of Demonstration," *Phronesis*, 14 (1969), reprinted in BARNES *et al.*, 1975-1979, vol. I, p. 123-152 ; and R.G. COLLINGWOOD, "Aristotle's Metaphysics," in *An Essay on Metaphysics* (Oxford, 1940), p. 3-10 ; my sympathies lie closer to Collingwood's account. J. OWENS, "Aristotle's Definition of Soul," *Philomathes*, R.B. PALMER and R. HAMERTON-KELLY, eds (Nijhoff, 1971), reprinted in J. CATAN, ed., *Aristotle : The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens* (SUNY, 1981), p. 109-121, considers the definition of soul in terms of the *Posterior Analytics*. See below, nn 26, 32.

Indeed, the ensouled is reputed to differ from the unsouled in two ways in particular : in movement and in sensation ; and we have nearly accepted these two things about the soul from those who have come before us, (I.2.403b25-28, my trans.).⁴

Aristotle proceeds to develop the account of how soul had been viewed in relation to movement, and how in relation to sensation. In both cases, Aristotle contends, there had been a general tendency to treat the soul as itself bodily, and for this reason the earlier investigations into soul were not completely successful.

The soul had been treated as "bodily" to the extent that the assumption had generally been made that cause and the effect are "like" ; thus the cause of movement was assumed to be itself in motion (I.2.403b28-31), and knowing was assumed to be of like by like (I.2.405b15-16). Since, Aristotle argues, movement involves place and place involves bodiliness, the first assumption — that soul is itself in motion — leads to the conclusion that soul is itself a body (I.3.406a15-16, b1-3) ; similarly, since what is known are things composed of material elements, if like knows like, then the soul too is composed of material elements (I.2.404b11-18 ; I.5 *passim*). In both cases, then, the old psychologies imply, perhaps unwittingly, that the soul is a body. Aristotle's position is that, for soul to be the *cause* of motion and sensation of bodies, it cannot itself be a body,⁵ and this recognition of the incorporeality of the soul he again finds in the tradition.

The Pythagoreans move in this direction by holding soul to be not the elements but their harmony.⁶ This account, however, still has body as the primary term (I.4.407b32-408a9),⁷ that is, the harmonious unification is a derivative and dependent incorporeality, whereas what is required is a cause (I.4.407b34-408a1) : what is needed is a governing principle, that is, something which moves body, rather than something made (moved) by body. A rock, a lump of clay, or a random aggregate really does have body as the primary term, for the way the parts happen to be harmonized is simply a function of the material, whereas an axe, for example, is an axe primarily because of its form, and the parts harmonized are really secondary. More significantly, living tissue or an organ does not "happen" following upon a coincidence of material parts, but is, rather, what actively unites the parts over time.⁸ Further, the organ does not hold together any material, but only a certain kind, that is, some other already harmonized unit, just as the axe presupposes an already unified aggregate of metal. Aristotle's point is that there are degrees of unification (as we shall see again with respect to knowing) and certain unities presuppose others. The higher unities presuppose the lesser unifications, and the harmony is not just the derivative epiphenomenon of the bodily coincidence, but is the primary unity which

4. I read δόκεῖ as "it seems to us" or "to men," not "it seems to me" ; hence "is reputed."

5. See *Metaphysics* Z.17.1041b17-28 for this notion that the unifying relation of the parts cannot itself be just another part.

6. I, 4 ; SORABJI, 1974, gives a compatible reading of this doctrine (n. 3 and *passim*).

7. See also PLATO, *Phaedo*, 92a-94e where Socrates criticizes his Pythagorean interlocutors for offering a "harmony" account which makes the soul derivative ; in his treatment of what Anaxagoras *should* have said (97c-99c), he suggests an essentially Aristotelian relation between νοῦς and its "material conditions."

8. See *De Partibus Animalium*, I.1 *passim*.

actually selects which material is appropriate and determines how the material is held together. The incorporeal harmony is thus not a product of the body's coming together, but is the cause. This is what Anaxagoras recognizes in referring to mind as responsible for all things.⁹

Aristotle's completes his study of the reputation of soul in Book II Chapter 2 noting that soul is seen as what essentially distinguishes the living from the non-living.¹⁰ We have thus found in the tradition all the elements of Aristotle's definition of soul in Book II Chapter 1. Aristotle gets from his heritage that soul must be an *incorporeal cause of motion and awareness*.¹¹ It must be substance, since it governs; and while being neither a body nor a derivative of body, it is related to body (namely, as the organizer which gives the body meaning). Finally, to account for the distinction living/non-living, ensouling must presuppose already a certain unification of multiplicity; for not *any* body admits of being ensouled, but only those which are sufficiently developed to be able to perform the necessary functions which define life.¹² Aristotle summarizes this relation of soul to body:

And for this reason those have the right conception who believe that the soul does not exist without a body and yet is not itself a kind of body. For it is not a body, but something which belongs to a body, and for this reason exists in a body, and in a body of such-and-such a kind. Not as our predecessors supposed, when they fitted it to a body without any further determination of what body and of what kind, although it is clear that one chance thing does not receive another. In our way it happens just as reason demands. For the actuality of each thing comes naturally about in that which is already such potentially and in its appropriate matter. From all this it is clear that the soul is a kind of actuality and principle of that which has the potentiality to be such (II.2.414a19ff, trans. D.W. Hamlyn).

Thus soul, then, is not a relation to any body, but to an organized body — a body *capable* of life (II.1.412a27-b1). From the tradition, then, we have the soul as incorporeal, and as the organizing principle of the living body.

Aristotle's contribution to this account of soul is not a further trait, but is the principle or ground by which all the other characteristics are able to be organized into a single whole, and this contribution is precisely his *looking* at the totality in terms of potency and act, and this means looking at both the account of soul and the tradition which produced it in these terms. Yet this way of looking is itself already present in

9. D-K 12 : νοῦς rules (κρατεῖ) "the whole rotation" as well as all things that have life, and νοῦς "arranged (διακόσμησε) all things." Aristotle adopts κρατεῖν at III.4.429a19.

10. I.4.408a24-29 and I.1.402a6-7 suggest the connection of soul with life is a commonplace which is reasonable since in Homer ψυχή is "breath of life": see *Odyssey*, XI, 218-222 and *Iliad*, V, 696-698; C. KAHN, "Sensation and Consciousness in Aristotle's Psychology," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 48 (1966), reprinted in BARNES *et al.*, 1975-1979, vol. IV, p. 1-31, discusses the intimate relation of ψυχή and life (p. 3-4).

11. "Sensation" is given very broad scope by Aristotle in Book I; on αἴσθησις as awareness in general, see KAHN, 1966, p. 22-25, and S. BENARDETE, "Aristotle, *De Anima* III.3-5," *Review of Metaphysics*, 28 (1975): p. 611-622, p. 612.

12. Ψυχή, rather than ὁρμή (*Physics* II.1.192b18, 14) applies when the body under consideration is a *composite* (II.1.412a13-16), that is, when it is not a simple element, but is organized, an *organism*. Only such a body can properly be said to live, for only such a body can die, that is, cease in its act of self-maintenance and decompose into simpler bodies.

the tradition in Platonic method ; once this is established, it will be clear that Aristotle's definition of soul is a unification of the multiple threads present in the tradition, produced by actualizing (that is, actively thinking in their inter-relation) the potentialities present in the philosophical environment (ἔξις) which constitute Aristotle's situation, both with respect to subject-matter *and* method (form). Let us consider this "Platonic" method.

Aristotle's method is primarily *to look to see how the history is rational*, that is, to see how the various characterizations of soul by his predecessors serve a common end ; it involves recognizing what it is that is achieved by his predecessors even if they do not recognize it themselves, and what it is that animates this success.¹³ This animator is the attempt to explain "movement" and "sensation" and when one sees this as what the tradition is trying to do, the tradition makes sense : the multiplicity of different philosophies is seen as united in a single project. This method, then, looks for unity on the expectation that the various accounts are successful, that is, there is truth to be found in them.¹⁴ Finally, the tradition is seen as in general a developing recognition which advances from potency to act, and from attributes to substance, moving from the attributes of movement and sensation through their incorporeal ground to the final recognition of the primacy of the act of the incorporeal uniting. Our question is whether this approach of trying to see unity in the apparent multiplicity of the past is itself grounded in the principles of the tradition. Now, in general, this search for a unifying ground is indeed a guiding theme from Thales on (and much of *Metaphysics* A is precisely devoted to showing a similar development from potency to act in the history of the accounts of the one and the many). There is, however, a more precise connection with a method advocated in the Platonic dialogues ; this method could be called "theodicy" or "dialectic."

In the *Phaedo*, Socrates advocates that method which, he says, is an account of how "mind is the cause of all things."¹⁵ He maintains that one shows mind to be the cause of all things when one shows how all things are for the best : things are shown to be as they should be, that is, rational. This method is again brought into play in the *Timaeus* where Timaeus' account is to show that the world is good.¹⁶ This is already Plato's development of the Anaxagorean tradition, and Aristotle continues in this tradition in showing how the history of psychology has developed rationally to its present state. A second strand of the Platonic method is found in the account of dialectic

13. See the following for useful characterizations of aspects of this method : on predecessors, see *Metaphysics*, B.1.995a24-b4 ; *De Caelo*, I.10.279b6-13, II.13.294a6-13 ; on the φαινόμενα, see *Prior Analytics*, I.30.46a18-22 ; *De Caelo*, I.3.270b1-6, II.13.293a21-30, III.7.306a10-18 ; *De Generatione et Corruptione*, I.2.316a5-14 ; *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.8.1142a18-20, VII.1.1145b2-8 ; for a general statement, *Eudemian Ethics*, VII.2.1235b13-18.

14. This is particularly evident in the consideration of the theories which maintain "like affects like" and those which maintain "unlike affects unlike," where the effort is to see in what sense both can be true insights (II.4.416a21 b9, and cf. *De Generatione et Corruptione*, I.7.323b15-324a9) ; this reconciliation will be considered in Section 2, below.

15. 97c-d ; see especially "mind in producing order sets everything in order and arranges each individual thing in the way that is best for it" (trans. H. Tredennick) ; note also the connection of "mind" with what is "best" in *Metaphysics*, A.7, 9, 10.

16. 29a. Plotinus II.9 is a Platonic attempt to work out what this means.

at the end of the analogy of the divided line in *Republic* VI, and as it is employed throughout the dialogues.¹⁷ In general, dialectic in Plato involves moving from assumed starting points to more fundamental and rational grounds, and it proceeds through a dialogue in which accounts are offered, examined, found wanting, and replaced with new accounts. Again, Aristotle continues in the Platonic tradition in seeing the rational development in the history of psychology as such a process of dialectic.

Of course, Plato's theodical and dialectical method is not usually considered to be an historical method: rather, it is supposedly a method for performing atemporal metaphysics — a method for seeing the one in the many. In Aristotle, however, the method *is* applied to the tradition from which it emerges, and the historical multiplicity of accounts is shown to be a developmental motion from potency to actuality of a unitary account. Thus Aristotle's historical method is a reconciling of stasis and flux over time, just as, in his *De Anima*, a single principle ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) is found to be stabilizing the flux of an individual's development over time. (There will be reason to recall this parallel when Aristotle's historical approach is tested to see if it accords with his explicit account of knowing.)

In sum, then, all the basic elements of Aristotle's definition of soul are derived from his tradition. The method by which this derivation is performed is itself derived from the tradition, namely, from Plato. Thus in Aristotle's psychology one aspect of the tradition in which he exists is brought to bear on other aspects, and the result is his philosophy. In Aristotle's philosophy, then, that is, through Aristotle's activity of synthesis, the tradition in which Aristotle exists *questions itself*. In other words, in claiming to speak for the tradition, Aristotle is presenting his act as the conclusion of a practical syllogism for which Plato provides the subjective premise of desire, and the $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ provide the objective premise.¹⁸ In working out the significance of this claim, it will become clear that the result of this self-questioning of the tradition is that it becomes aware of *itself* as having been present all along.

17. *Republic*, 511a-e and 533c; see also the series of accounts of the slave in the *Meno*, about $\epsilon\pi\omega\varsigma$ in the *Symposium*, of soul in the *Phaedo*, of the one in the *Parmenides*, of the collapse of states in *Republic*, VIII, and so on. I will not pursue whether the method Socrates actually employs in these dialogues properly exemplifies dialectic as articulated in *Republic*.

18. *De Motu Animalium*, 6.700b4-7.701b32. Action is a syllogism with an animating principle of desire providing the "major premise," that is, the general context within which experience can count as valuable, and some form of recognition providing the "minor premise," that is, the knowledge that certain specific conditions are met which respond to the generic imperative of the major premise; when an agent is *really* animated by a desire, and that agent recognizes that the conditions for satisfying that desire are met, the action of trying to fulfill the desire follows as a consequence, according to the regular pattern of a syllogism: "A syllogism is a *logos* in which, when certain things are posited, something other than those things laid down follows necessarily by virtue of the existence of these posited things" (*Prior Analytics*, I.1.24b18-20; *Topics*, I.1.100a25-27). The practical syllogism is the form of an activity that is rational without being aware of its rationality.

II. KNOWING : Ψυχή and Νοῦς

My main contention is that Aristotle's approach to knowing history is the culmination, and the necessary culmination, of his approach to knowledge in general ; to establish this, Aristotle's theory of knowing must be investigated. I contend further that Aristotle's theory of knowing is itself the necessary culmination of his conception of the relation of soul and body. My argument, then, is that Aristotle's account of the relation of soul and body, when properly understood, *entails a philosophy of history which is such as to justify Aristotle's way of knowing history*. This section will be the real focus of my argument. I will be required to give an account of soul in general and of νοῦς in particular in order to show why it is necessary to know history as that which has been leading up to oneself. I shall argue that cognition of the self as τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι — the Aristotelian rejoinder to the Cartesian *cogito*¹⁹ — is the key to the Aristotelian psychology. Because Aristotle's philosophy sees itself as the τί ἦν εἶναι of its tradition, we will have to consider the notion of self-cognition as the τί ἦν εἶναι of a history ; to see this, we will need to understand νοῦς, and for this we will need to consider the build-up of cognition up to νοῦς.

Analyzing the Aristotelian epistemology will require explicating key sections of *De Anima* and integrating a portion of the *Posterior Analytics* with the *De Anima* in order to deal with the issues of mediation, self-cognition, and the identity of subject and object in knowing. I begin by arguing that the soul is the cause of awareness by being the *principle of the act of unification with the object*.

1. Soul as unification and πρὸς ἑν equivocal

All the functions of the soul (that is, soul as the second ἐντελέχεια, or, what the agent is in practice) are, I will show, essentially actions whereby the self and the other are in some manner identified. This basic principle derives from *De Generatione et Corruptione*, and we can trace it throughout Aristotle's account of the forms of ensoulment to see that and how it applies ; we must see what *kind* of identification is involved, and how the form the identification takes differs with different kinds of soul.

In *De Generatione et Corruptione*, I.7, Aristotle discusses the two rival accounts of change, namely, that unlike affects unlike, and that like affects like. Now it seems that unlike must affect unlike, for, if there is a change, there must be a difference — an unlikeness — involved : for one thing to be affected by another, it literally must be

19. My argument will be at odds with ROBINSON, 1978. Robinson takes his orientation towards the nature of knowledge and of self-consciousness from the assumptions of Early Modern epistemology, whereas I, (like SORABJI, 1974, p. 45-51, among others), propose that Aristotle offers material for a critique of these. Two crucial notions which, I would argue, differentiate Aristotle's position are (i) that self-cognition is an *achievement* which takes the form of the actualization of a potential (*contra* ROBINSON, p. 106-107) and which is only possible in and through cognition of the object, and (ii) that knowledge has the two-fold structure of being a *totalizing* and a unified, systematic *interpreting* of the multiple, determinate ἔξις which forms the potential object of knowledge. This concept of knowing, I contend, is exemplified in the general logic of the ensoulment of a living body, in all the various psychic activities and especially in the comprehensive act of νόησις which is equally the successful self-cognition.

an other which does the affecting, or else the first was not affected at all but simply remained on its own self-same course. Yet, on the other hand, it seems that only like can affect like, for in the absence of an identity of agent and patient there is no medium within which contact is possible.²⁰ Aristotle resolves this dilemma by arguing that each account is inadequate on its own, but that both accounts are right in different senses: for there to be change, the change must take place within a unified context — a self-same situation — but there must be differentiations within this whole, that is, agent and patient must be like in genus and unlike in species.²¹ All change, then, takes place within a common situation, but in a situation which is constituted by essentially differentiated members. Physical change is such change when it is self-motivated, and psychic change is physical change in a composite body. Nutrition — the simple act of self-maintenance of the simplest composite physical body — is the most primitive psychic act and gives the most immediately apparent exemplification of this principle of change as the identification of like and unlike, of self and other, for, unlike the static harmony of Pythagoreanism, the unity of the nutritive subject only comes as a process of assimilating the object to the subject (II.4.416b3ff).

The plant only exists as a relation to an environment: it is only this dynamic nutritive *relationship* which “exists on its own,” and which “has properties but is not itself a property,” in that it is only in relation to this dynamic, self-moving whole that the various members are defined, while outside of this complete relation the members cannot survive and, indeed, reveal their intrinsic dependence on the other elements of the situation.²² For the plant, there is a necessary distinction between its self and its other, which is that upon which it feeds to maintain itself. Plant life is thus a relation of unlikes. Yet, equally, the relation is itself the very process of transformation of the unlike into the like, for it is thus that the plant-self is affected — is fed — and the relation is thus equally that of like to like: it is assimilation as the transformation of unlike to like. Thus nutrition is the relation of the self to an other in which the other is transformed into the self. Thus, even in the lowest ensouling, maintenance of self requires identification with the other.

Nutrition is one form of enacting the identification of self and other, but it is the most primitive form, for the identification is such that the other as such is destroyed. The sameness of genus in this change amounts to the participation of both subject and object in the nutritive relation, and the difference of species is precisely the difference of eating subject and eaten object. The activity of eating actualizes the identity of genus, that is, it makes the one member of the relation a nutritive self, and it makes the other member a nutritive other, but the very activity of actualizing the identity is a relation of this self to its other in which the otherness of the other is

20. I.7.323b1-15.

21. I.7.323b15-324a9, especially 323b29-33.

22. See *Categories*, 5.3a8-9; *Metaphysics*, Δ.8.1017b23-26, for definitions of οὐσία in these terms, and *Physics*, II.1.192b13-16 for the definition of a physical substance as a self-mover; the notion that members only exist in the context of the whole and are thus dependent on the other members is the point of Aristotle's discussion in *De Partibus Animalium*, I.1.640b34-641a7 and *Metaphysics*, Z.16.1040b5-16; cf. *Politics*, I.2.1253a20-27.

overcome, and the completed work of the relation, its ἐνέργεια, is the transformation of the other into the self. It is in this relation to otherness that we find what might most truly be called solipsism, for the nutritive self is the self which encounters only itself when it encounters its other, and does this in a way which undermines any independence to that other ; we shall see that all psychic relations are some form of self encounter — in experiencing the other, the experience of the self is a by-product, a παράγωγον — but it is only in this nutritive solipsism that the independence of the otherness of the other is completely effaced. We will now go on to see that this “identification with the other” which defines “ψυχή” is a πρὸς ἑν equivocal such that ensoulings will become progressively higher in proportion as they are identifications which involve progressively less destruction of one contrary, with νοῦς being the final term of the series in relation to which the lesser forms are defined.²³

Whereas in nutrition the other is destroyed in favor of the self, in sensation this situation is approximately reversed ; in sensation, the sensing must conform to the object, for the sense is supposed to become identical with the object without intrusion. In the case of nutrition, the object provided the fuel for the self-maintenance of the nutritive agent ; in sensation, it is the fulfillment of the object which defines the completion of the relation, and it is the sentient subject which plays the role of fuel :

[...] the power of sense is parallel to what is combustible, for that never ignites itself spontaneously, but requires an agent which has the power of starting ignition (II.5.417a7-8, trans. J.A. Smith).

Thus, in sensing, it is the sentient animal which makes itself available for the completion of the object. In this relation of burning up fuel, however, the destruction of one contrary is not as severe as the fueling of nutrition, for the member of the relationship which functions as fuel — the psychic power of sensing — does not lose its very being. Although αἴσθησις conforms to the αἰσθητά for the duration of the sensing, it still retains its capacity to sense, and to maintain a “mean,” (see II.12.424a32-b3). It is only when the sense conforms *too* thoroughly to the object that it is destroyed, either temporarily or completely, as happens when the αἰσθητά are too intense, (II.12.424a28-31). The metaphysics of αἴσθησις is too complex to articulate here, but we can at least see at a formal level that there is here an identification (III.2.425b25-27), and it is primarily of subject to object inasmuch as sensation is the reception of the form of the other, (II.12.424a17-19).²⁴

23. It is because ψυχή exhibits πρὸς ἑν equivocity that Aristotle remarks that it is not sufficient to give a simple formulaic definition of soul but that one must instead see how ψυχή manifests itself concretely (II.3.414b20-415a13). For homonymous predication πρὸς ἑν, see *Metaphysics*, Γ.2 ; R.G. COLLINGWOOD, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford, 1960), p. 80, glosses this notion as “of [...] various meanings one is the deepest and truest meaning ; the others are approximations to it arising from varying degrees of failure to grasp this deepest meaning.”

24. For the basic account of sense, see III.2, II.5 and II.12 ; see also III.8.431b22-23 for the identity of αἴσθησις and αἰσθητά. For the notion of αἴσθησις as the reception of form without matter, compare the interpretations of T. SLAKEY, “Aristotle on Sense Perception,” *Philosophical Review*, 1961 : p. 470-484, who argues for a strongly materialist reading of Aristotle’s account of sensation ; and F. BRENTANO, *Die Psychologie des Aristoteles* (Mainz, 1867), p. 79-81, who argues for a strongly immaterialist reading of Aristotle’s account ; KAHN, 1966 (p. 1-2) and offers a detailed treatment of the need for an Aristotelian account of sensation to integrate both the material and immaterial sides thus showing each of these separate options

We can therefore see that, both in the case of nutrition and in the case of sensation, the soul is the principle according to which an act of unification of the subject with its relevant other is effected. These two different psychic operations differ fundamentally in the form in which they achieve this unification, however, for the one act (nutrition) is a material transformation in which the very integrity — the form — of one member is destroyed and replaced by that of its contrary, while the other act (sensation) presupposes material relations, but is itself defined by a formal relation in which the identification with the form of the one contrary is precisely the preservation of the form of the other contrary, that is, it is the preservation of its characteristic of receptivity, (see II.5.417b2-5). We can complete our account of nutrition and sensation by seeing how each is an experience of self *ἐν παρέργῳ*. At that point we can understand how the *noetic* relation is the most perfect fulfillment of that relation of which nutrition and sensation are inferior species.

In both nutrition and sensation, it is the psychic subject who provides the context within which the other can count as meaningful, as an other. In nutrition, the subject really does have an other, but it never really gets *that* other, for its very act of getting is the act of destroying that other as other; nutrition forces its other to answer to its (nutrition's) demands, and the relation is entirely conducted on the terms set by the nutritively self-maintaining self. Nutrition, which provides the genus for the relation of both self and food, is defined by that species which is the nutritive self (not the nutritive other), since the very concept of nutrition is the *self*-maintenance of the nutritive subject in relation to its object, and thus in nutrition the self provides the terms of the whole relation, and the experience of the other is thus in terms of the self: as that which provides the context within which the other is meaningful, the nutritive subject is always implicitly dealing with itself in dealing with its other. Yet it remains true that, as in all psychic operations, the nutritive relation is directed outwards, toward an other; thus its direct object is not itself but the other, and it is thus indirectly, or *ἐν παρέργῳ*, that it relates to itself in relating to its other. Indeed, in nutrition "experience of" anything is not the goal at all, but substantial self-maintenance is, so any discussion of the discrimination of objects and the "assertion" or "experience" of self is something *we* can notice going on in the plant, but not something open to it. And even though the self (as what is to be maintained) is the ultimate goal of the whole activity, the direct object remains the food, so, again, this solipsistic experience of self is only an incidental attribute which necessarily accompanies the nutritive relationship and does not define it. Something analogous to this incidental self-perception is true of sensation.

Just as nutrition is the act of making the other answer the question "how can you support my life," sensation also experiences the other, not through a complete abandonment to the other's own terms, but in terms set by the sensing subject. But whereas nutrition went so far as to make itself the very substance of the other, sensa-

to be unacceptable; I am not entirely in agreement with Kahn, partly because of his treatment of the relation between sensation and intellection, but I endorse his general strategy, especially with respect to the doctrine of the unity of the sensitive soul.

tion tolerates the independence of the other, and the self-imposition which sensation effects on its other is limited to its only allowing the other to appear through limited dimensions, and not letting the other appear in its substantiality (which latter will be the form intellection takes). If we consider the various sense powers separately, we can see that each sense dimension — touch, taste, smell, and so on — provides the context which supplies the sameness of genus within which the species “self” and “object” can come into relation ; thus touch demands, for example, that the object appear tactually, even though within this tactile context it is the other’s form, the other’s tangibility, which gives the relation content, that is, even though within the *genus* of the relation which is provided by the sensing subject, it is the *species* “other” which dominates over the *species* “self.” In each case, the other which is experienced is the other defined by the self, and, thus, the self is indirectly experiencing itself as the genus, as that in terms of which the other is defined. To this extent, then, sensation is always self-sensation. A comparable point could be made by considering the sense-faculty as a whole, rather than by focusing on the special senses.²⁵

But in sensation the experience of self is not the *goal* : it is something which happens on the side. Indeed this tacit self-sensing only follows upon the achievement of the real goal of assuming the form of the other, for “self-ignition” does not happen in sensation, that is, it is the activity on the part of the object which directs the transformations in the sense realm (II.5.417a2-9). Now, like nutrition, the activity of sensation is indeed a *self*-actualization, and, unlike nutrition, for sensation “experience of” something really is the goal, but here again the fact that sensation ultimately takes the form of self-experiencing is only incidental to its definitive activity which is identification with the form of the object. So, once again, this psychic operation is an identification of subject and object, and it is one characterized by an experience of self, but an experience of self which happens, so to speak, on the side. We can now turn to νοῦς to see how it too is a form of identification of self and object ; in the case of νοῦς, however, the experience of self is not incidental.

At a formal level these analyses reveal degrees of unification with the object, and the soul, as the principle of these functions is in each case a potential for unity with the world. In what follows we shall seek to understand how it is that that degree of unification which is self-cognizing νοῦς, by being a unity which respects the integrity of both subject and object, is the real standard of knowledge compared to which the other unifications are called knowledge. In intellection, a unity is effected *from which* the two moments of “subject” and “object” *can* be abstracted, but, insofar as νοῦς only *is* in its activity of being one with its object, the *unity* is the truth (III.7.431b16-17 ; III.4.429a22-24 ; see III.7.431a3-4). Here again, then, we shall have a unity of subject with object, but in this case the identity of agent and object makes it impossi-

25. See III.2.426b17-427a14. The common act of sensing is considered in *On Sense and Sensibilia*, 7.448b17-449a20, esp. 449a5-10, and *On Sleep*, 2.455a3-27. KAHN, 1966, addresses issues relevant to this doctrine ; see also BENARDETE, 1975, p. 619-620. It seems to me that J. BARNES, “An Aristotelian Way with Scepticism,” in M. MATTHEN, ed., *Aristotle Today* (Academic Printing and Publishing, 1986), p. 51-76, fails to understand that the animal is the subject of sense, and that Aristotle’s story is not of the gradual build-up of apparent unities from discrete data of discrete senses ; his privileging of αἴσθησις over νόησις as the “criterion” of knowledge (p. 54) also fails to do justice to Aristotle’s position.

ble to consider the experience of self as something incidental to the relation. We shall see that the proper form of νόησις is self-cognition. To understand what this means requires that we first work through the issues of mediation and self-cognition by way of the *Posterior Analytics*.²⁶

2. Habituation and Mediation

Posterior Analytics II.19 describes the development of awareness from (relatively) immediate sensation to universal comprehension. Our immediate awareness makes information available to us, and our ability to remember significant unities within experience allows us to develop skills for coping with our environment ; finally, our participation in intellect allows us to move from being simply "experienced" in dealing with some affairs to coming to understand why our approach has been successful and becoming scientists thereby : νοῦς allows us to move from being experienced to being conscious of the first principles according to which our experience is organized. This last step is crucial, and can be illustrated if we consider, for example, carpentry (even if this is not technically a "science" according to Aristotle).²⁷

Someone who has never become experienced in carpentry can never be a scientist of carpentry, can never comprehend it, for, even if this would-be knower read all the relevant books, the principles would not be rooted in τὰ φαινόμενα, that is, they would be abstract principles which literally explain nothing. On the other hand, someone else might very well have learned from a carpenter how to do carpentry work. This second candidate would be someone who knows the various techniques and knows that "in this case do x," and "in this case do y" ; this second candidate is "experienced," and has developed all the right habits of behavior. While this second candidate has the involvement in the things themselves which the first candidate lacks, this second candidate does not yet have the science of carpentry, for he or she

26. An excellent account of Aristotle's program in the *Posterior Analytics* is given in L.A. KOSMAN, "Understanding, Explanation, and Insight in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*," in *Exegesis and Argument* (Assen, 1973), p. 374-392 ; I take my account of Aristotle's epistemology to accord with this. It seems to me that Barnes, 1969, gives the sort of mathematized view of ἀποδείξεις which Kosman rightly rejects. While I dispute some points made by M. BURNYEAT, "Aristotle on Understanding Knowledge," in E. BERTI, ed., *Aristotle on Science. The Posterior Analytics* (Antenore, 1981), p. 97-139, primarily regarding what "we" consider true (although his contrast of Aristotle's view with "ours" on p. 132-133 is a good account of Aristotle), I agree with the general interpretation ; Section V is especially valuable for understanding Aristotle's conception of knowledge. C. KAHN, "The Role of *Nous* in the Cognition of First Principles in *Posterior Analytics*, II 19," in BERTI, 1981, p. 385-414, tries to unite the discussion in *De Anima* with that in *An Post*, II.19, especially on p. 406 ff. ; I endorse his view that Aristotle's epistemology depends on a more active intellectual role than Lockean empiricism, such that sensibility is the necessary but not the sufficient condition to knowledge ; rather than seeing νοῦς as self-reflection, however, his account pivots on the (Averroistic) argument that the active intellect is an independently existing thinking of all thoughts which exerts a strictly one-way causal influence on our thinking, (see especially p. 411-412 and his conclusion that "the Agent Intellect is in no sense part of us"), in relation to which, see AQUINAS's critique of the Averroists, *ST*, I.76.1 *resp.* I.76.2 *resp.* I.79.5, cf. KAHN, p. 412, n. 28. I sympathize with much of his account, especially the notion of building up a cognitive ἐξις in order to *participate* in νοῦς, but I think he ultimately has too abstract a notion of noetic form, and a misinterpretation of Aristotle's notion of the primacy of act in relation to the moving cause.

27. See *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.3-4, 6 for the distinction between ἐπιστήμη, τέχνη and νοῦς.

does not have his or her experience consciously organized according to the relevant principles. One is fully a carpenter upon coming to see *why* one acts in one way in one situation and in another way in another situation.²⁸ Indeed, the carpenter proper may very well not behave in the fashion that the experienced apprentice would, for an *understanding* of a given situation may reveal that the usual way of behaving is inappropriate. It is only once the experienced practitioner has made the transition to science, to the understanding of the practice from the point of view of its first principles, that he or she is now capable of teaching, for up to this point he or she would only have passed on the recommendation to others that they develop the same good habits that they themselves had developed, without having any knowledge of why these habits are right, or, indeed, any proof that they really are right.²⁹ Notice, too, that it is not simply given that anyone, regardless of situation, can become a carpentry scientist, nor even is it given that anyone who is "experienced" can make the transition to scientist in the relevant field. Even though the proper locution when one of us becomes a scientist is "now *I* understand what I was doing," the power to come to this self-understanding is not automatically in our possession; I, for example, use my ability to try to understand Aristotle's text, and it, as it were, does its best to be understood, but there is no guarantee that the synthesis of my experience of reading into an identification with the first principles which organize the text will happen, and, even though I would later take responsibility for effecting the comprehension if it should happen, it is not simply up to me whether the transition to the self-conscious self-unification of my experience occurs. Let us consider this in terms our previous analysis of the soul.

The movement here described is through progressively more perfect forms of knowing, from simple awareness to practical familiarity to understanding, and there are two sides to this developing knowing: on the one hand, the process is the development of the constitution of the knowing subject, that is, at each stage the subject's education lays the necessary groundwork for the advance to the subsequent stage, but, equally, because, as we have seen, psychic functions are characterized by an identity of the subject and the object, it is a correlative progress in the object of awareness, for we become progressively better able to grasp the reasons responsible for our experience having taking the form it has all along. Now since it is also a progress in "truth," it follows that at the higher stages of its development the known object is "more really" the object than that known at the lower stages, and, similarly, the development of the subject's contribution to knowledge is a development to the proper subjective conditions to let the object be apprehended in its truth.

28. Compare the excellent account of οἱ πρῶτον μαθόντες in BURNYEAT, 1981, p. 129-132. See also KOSMAN, 1973, p. 386, concerning the various routes to νοῦς.

29. My telling the story of *Posterior Analytics*, II.19 in terms of τέχνη, ἐμπειρία, and teaching parallel *Metaphysics*, A.1 (on which, see n. 36, below); for teaching, compare III.4.429b5-9. For comparable relations between teaching, habituation and cognition of first principles in regard to living well in human society see *Nicomachean Ethics*, II.1-4. On the issue of habits which are based on a rule of thumb vs. first principles, see S. BENARDETE, "On Wisdom and Philosophy: the First Two Chapters of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* A," *Review of Metaphysics*, 32 (1978): p. 205-215, p. 207.

Regarding this knowing subject, the development is a development of capacity. From the beginning, "all men by nature desire knowledge," that is to say, one is provoked by one's very nature to be provoked by the object — one is provoked to *look*, to take up a questioning attitude toward one's situation ; the initial subjective capacity, then, is an openness to what is.³⁰ This capacity which provides simple presence to the object, however, is not sufficient to truly receive it : indeed, we have already characterized the presentation of sensation as a reception of the object in which the subject's form of receptivity sets limiting terms, so the subject will have to be properly developed if it is to receive the object in its οὐσία. This development of the subjective constitution comes through the interacting of the original innate openness with what is presented, and it is through the interaction that the subject learns how to properly appreciate the object.³¹

"Subjective conditions," however, are often construed as limitations interfering with the reception of the object which can only give us "things as they appear" and not "things as they are in themselves" ; indeed, Aristotle seems to say as much :

[...] it is necessary then that mind, since it thinks all things, should be uncontaminated, as Anaxagoras says, in order that it may be in control (κράτῃ), that is, that it may know ; for the intrusion of anything foreign hinders and obstructs it. Hence the mind, too, can have no characteristic except its capacity to receive (III.4.429a18-22, trans. W.S. Hett).

Now we will have reason later to question this translation, but it serves to make the point that anything interposed between the pure object and the pure subject — the "intrusion of anything foreign" — appears to preclude the possibility of knowing.

For the Aristotelian epistemology, however, sins of omission are as serious as sins of commission, and, indeed, the failure to develop sufficient capacity for comprehension is more truly limitation than developing an imperfect receptivity, for an absence of perspective is precisely the impossibility of knowledge. To set the ideal of knowledge as knowing the object as it exists independently of its being known is precisely to set the ideal of knowledge as the necessarily unknowable, and to make the project of knowing implicitly self-contradictory, with scepticism the only legitimate stance. But this is not Aristotle's approach. In the passage above, Aristotle refers to knowing as a "commanding," (κράτῃ) : the subjective capacity that needs to be developed is the capacity to rule the object, the capacity for comprehension, for seeing each and all in their totality and interrelatedness, for thoroughgoing identification with the object in its integrity. The real object of knowing will not be the immediate object, but the most fully mediated object, the object situated in its proper context.³²

30. *Metaphysics*, A.1.980a21, and see *Posterior Analytics*, II.19.99b35 : ἔχει γὰρ δύναμιν σύμφυτον κριτικὴν, ἣν καλοῦσιν αἰσθησιν. I take this fundamental stance of questioning to be the crux of Aristotle's account ; I shall argue for an identification of this original act of wondering, of looking for sense, with the νοῦς ποιητικός. See AQUINAS, *ST*, I-II.94.2, *resp.* for an interpretation of these texts which sees being as such as the first object of awareness ; compare BENARDETE, 1975, p. 618.

31. *Posterior Analytics*, II.19.99b35-100a14. Note the claim (100a13-14) that ἐπαγωγή is possible because soul is so constituted as to be able to engage in this experience.

32. Not just the fact, but the fact situated in its rational context ; see, for example, *Posterior Analytics*, II.2 *passim*, especially 89b37-90a1, 90a5-7 and 90a15 ; I.30 *passim* ; I.33.88b30 ff. ; and *Metaphysics*, A.1.981a24-981b6. KOSMAN, 1973, p. 376, 379 gives an excellent treatment of the notion of cause and of

Without an ability to recognize an organic body, for example, it is not possible to recognize a hand *as* a hand. That which one would see without the concept of body would indeed have its “universal” — its truth — as a potential within it, for it is precisely this material which can come to be seen as a hand, but transforming this inadequate perception into the proper recognition of this object as a hand requires, first, seeing it in the context of all the other body parts, and, second, recognizing them *as* an interrelated totality ; one must first assemble the relevant multiplicity and then unify this multiplicity as an organic whole. Aristotle thus describes the development of the more sophisticated psychic situations :

[...] they arise from sense-perception, just as, when a retreat has occurred in battle, if one man halts so does another, and then another, until the original position (ἀρχή) has been restored. [...] As soon as one individual percept has “come to a halt” in the soul, this is the first beginning of the presence there of a universal (*Posterior Analytics*, II.19.100a11-13, 15-16, trans. H. Tredennick).

The object, then, sets up its own terms of completeness, and it is only through developing the ability to organize — to mediate — one’s own experience of the object according to the principle which organizes the thing itself that the truth of the object can be recognized. In the quotation from *De Anima*, III.4, however, “mediation,” as the interposing of a separate entity between knower and known, precluded the command of the object. What is required, then, is a different account of mediation ; if mediation is to be compatible with knowledge, mediation must not be the interposing of some third thing *between* knower and known. This apparent problem is resolved by understanding mediation as the development of a unified situation *within which* knower and known can relate. This is habituation.

On Aristotle’s account, knowing does not appear in a vacuum, but presupposes a knowable object (III.8.432a4-5, 7-9). Actual intellect is not created *ex nihilo*, but *ex potentia*, for thought presupposes an actual existence which is a potential object of thought, and this is equally true for the lesser grades of knowing ; this is the key to Aristotle’s account of habituation and (what I call) the “active empiricism” of ἐπαγωγή, “induction.”³³ For each progressive step in *Posterior Analytics*, II.19, there is presupposed the creation of just such a situation which is potentially the next, that is, *which can be unified in such a way as* to create a new situation. In animals — sentient beings — ensouled so as to be able to retain sense information, repeated sensings give rise to memory ; repeated memories give rise to experience ; repeated experiences can be organized into a scientific comprehension.³⁴ As we have seen in our examples above, and in each case in this overall story, the logic of the relation is the same : a multiplicity of lesser acts of awareness must be achieved in order that the

τὸ μέδον. That Aristotle’s view in general is that it is the condition of the subject which must be developed in order to comprehend the truth is evident in his typical marking of the need to move from what is immediately clearest according to us to what is clearest according to the thing itself.

33. See the discussion by KAHN, 1981, p. 406-407.

34. See 99b35-100a4, 100a4-6, 100a6-9. Concerning these “eidetic” ἔξεις as psychic identifications, and simultaneous actualizations, of subject and object, note the definition of ἔξεις as “an actuality of the haver and of the had,” (*Metaphysics*, Δ.20.1022b4-5).

higher level can be established through the unification of this multiplicity. The key to our awareness is precisely this ability to have our object provoke us to ask, "what are you?" that is, it is precisely our activity of *looking* for rational unity within the determinate multiplicity of our experience which is the key to our being able to develop our cognitive relation to things.³⁵ It is thus through the interaction of the capacity for awareness and its use that the more sophisticated comprehension of the object develops:

Thus these faculties (ἐξέτις) are neither innate *as determinate and fully developed* (ἀφωρισμέναι), nor derived from other developed faculties (ἐξέεων) on a higher plane of knowledge; they *arise from* sense-perception, (*Post An.*, II.19.100a10-11, trans. H. Tredennick, my emphasis).

I have called this a progress of habituation insofar as each step requires that the previous step be "possessed," that is, it must become a ἐξέτις, a "habit." Our act of looking for unity is what makes an object available to us, and this "possessing" lays the basis for a new relation, namely, our focus of the question of unity onto the achieved situation — the ἐξέτις — itself. This habituation is thus progressive, and it is a progressive synthesis, that is, it is a comprehension of what came before as an organized totality and not an abstraction which would find its truth precisely in its independence from particular circumstances.³⁶

The progress, then, is a transformation in which some ἐξέτις — which is a certain psychic relation of individual to world and, therefore, an identification — is, when construed in terms of the subject, a certain δύνάμις for performing a "higher" knowing, and is, when construed in terms of the object, a certain δύνάμις for being known in a higher way.³⁷ The subject-in-situation (that is, already in relation to an object) is a certain capacity for "looking" which is a more developed capacity than that which *produced* the already existent relation to the object. What this subject "looks at" is this situation, this world to which it is related. At each point, the subject is related to a world that has been disclosed to it *in terms of* the way the subject is concerned about it, that is, in terms of those questions it asks within the context of which the object can appear and to which it must conform. "Mediating subjective conditions," then, does not have to mean some third entity interposed between subject and object; rather, it means the development of sufficient sophistication within a would-be cognizer for it to be able to recognize the form of the object when it encounters it, and

35. Cf. BENARDETE, 1975, p. 612-614 on the power of φαντασία.

36. The parallel account of the progress of knowledge in *Metaphysics*, A.1 attests to the "collective" character of the development through its comparison of τέχνη with ἐμπειρία. The τέχνη which is not joined with experience is inferior to experience taken by itself, yet τέχνη is higher than experience in the man who possesses both (981a12-15, 24-30). Similarly, in all the cases Aristotle here considers, τέχνη is in each case superior to ἐμπειρία because it can supply the "reasoned fact"; but it is because it stands on the basis of experience, that is, because it has "commanded" the experience which provides its basic situation, that it is superior (981a3-7, 24-30). On this issue of comprehension versus abstraction, KAHN, 1981, p. 409-410 rightly objects to the attribution of an epistemological theory of abstraction to Aristotle, if abstraction is conceived either on the model of mathematical or empiricistic abstraction; see p. 409, n. 24. BENARDETE, 1978, offers a stimulating reading of *Metaphysics*, A.1-2.

37. At *De Anima*, III.3.428a3-5, it is implied that each of αἴσθησις, δόξα, ἐπιστήμη, and νοῦς is "δύνάμις καὶ ἐξέτις."

the development of this sophistication is also the process of bringing to unity — bringing into actual being — its proper object.

We now have an understanding of the identification of subject and object in psychic activity and of the role of mediating subjective conditions as these appear in the lesser forms of soul and of knowing. At this point we have ourselves developed a sufficient ἔξις to allow us to unify these analyses into an understanding of the nature of νοῦς.

3. *Noûs as self-reflection*

According to our analysis of the grades of knowing studied in *Posterior Analytics*, II.19, in the act of knowing the intelligent-situated-subject thinks about its intelligible situation ; its object is itself, or, rather, its object is whatever-it-was-before now transformed from multiple-immediate-situation to unified-object-for-knowledge. For knowing, then, its subject-matter is always given to it already. The knowing agent is already an-object-in-relation-to-the-subject and it is thinking about itself insofar as its given object is that which has been revealed according to the capacities of the subject and reflects the kinds of questions the subject asked it. This is the ultimate significance of the notion of self-perception ἐν παρέργῳ discussed above, namely, that the knowing soul investigates the φαινόμενα in which it is already involved : it reflects on the relation to the world which it already is. These φαινόμενα, however, are not received as objects of intellection in the same form in which they constituted the ἔξις, but are rather transformed in being known into a new unity.

In actual knowing, knower and known are one (III.7.431a1-2, III.5.430a19-20). Νοῦς only *is* in its acting (III.4.429a17-19, III.5.430a18), and it *is* its content, so determinate knowing only *is* the determinate known. It is not, however, just the multiplicity of known content, but is, rather, this content as unified in the active synthesizing of it into an-object-for-cognition.³⁸ Further, within this act of concrete totalizing knowing there are two sides which can be recognized. There is, first, the “passive νοῦς” which is the determinate content of the new comprehended totality, and, second, there is the “active νοῦς” which is the energizing of this content *into* a single unity : it is the comprehending itself. These are not “two intellects,” but two logically separable features within a single active relating of self to self.³⁹ We must now consider this relation between the activity and passivity of νοῦς — that which

38. Νοῦς functions as “unifier” at III.6.430b5-6.

39. J. OWENS, “The Self in Aristotle,” *Review of Metaphysics*, 41 (1988) : p. 713-722, p. 717, gives distinct “features” rather than HETT’s “elements” for διαφοράς in *De Anima*, III.5.430a13-14. The treatment of active and passive intellect in KAHN, 1981, especially p. 406 - 407, seems to me to treat these two *both* as fully separate faculties (p. 406), and as only logically distinct moments in a single relation (p. 407) ; I am much more sympathetic to his account when he distinguishes these two only as “the active-passive contrast between thinking subject and objects thought,” (p. 407), though our different approaches to epistemology might lead Kahn to mean something more dualistic than I would. D. MODRAK, “The *Nous*-Body Problem in Aristotle,” *Review of Metaphysics*, 44 (1991) : 755-774, p. 764-767, has interesting proposals for how to understand active νοῦς.

only is in its act of being its own object — as a self-reflection, from which point it will be possible to go back and make sense of the path we have so far traveled.⁴⁰

In self-reflection, the reflecting agent is nothing more than the determinate totality of his or her psychic relations (unifications) with the world in the sense of not being another piece added on; from the point of view of content, then, the agent and the object of self-reflection are (by definition) the same individual. Yet this reflection involves a process of self-withdrawal from out of the determinate content which “is” the self: “I” can always *view* my “self,” and “I,” that is, the reflecting one, am not “that,” (the one reflected on), for precisely what I have done in reflecting is *differentiate* (this) myself from (that) myself. The “I” is the active power of withdrawing from “my” determinations, of becoming “not-them,” of becoming related to myself as not-being that self. In this sense, then, self-reflection is the self being related to itself as not-being itself: the two sides are the same, but the self relates to itself by tacitly asserting that *that* (me) is *not* me (this me). The self is related to itself *as* to an other, for, *qua* subject, it is precisely *not* the object. In other words, the individual who supplies both terms of the reflective relation is a unity — a single self — only as a splitting into a duality of viewer and viewed: of the passive self-as-totalized and of active self-as-self-totalizing. This is a crucial point and must be understood.

Before being viewed (reflected upon), “I” was only a *potential* unity, and it is only *in retrospect from the point of view of actual reflection* — from the point of saying “I” — that I realize that I was already one and the same individual me; thus to say “*cogito*” is to identify the “I” as τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, that is, “I” am who I always already was,⁴¹ but (*contra* Descartes) until this act of actualizing recognition, the identity — my identity — was only potential, as I was really a multiplicity of determinate involvements open to organized unification, but not yet unified. The “I” — the self-conscious self as an actual unity — only emerges in the act by which it separates itself from itself as viewer and viewed, and it is only when its content is *for* the “I” that it is explicitly — actually — unified. My reality as “me” is that I am that *for which* myself as object (the totality of my intrinsic otherness) has been waiting, and I achieve my status of selfhood precisely when I recognize my otherness *as* what has been waiting for me to recognize it as myself; indeed it becomes an “it,” a unity, precisely in the act by which I become a unity by recognizing myself as that for which it exists, as the τέλος. The act of self-cognition thus brings the unity of noetic

40. Gregory NAGY has defended the interpretation of νοῦς as self-consciousness in “Homer and Oral Poetics,” presented at St. John’s College, Annapolis, October 1991; compare D. FRAME, *The Myth of Return in Early Greek Epic* (Yale, 1975). OWENS, 1988, p. 713-722, gives a provocative account of an Aristotelian dynamics of self-consciousness. His account of self-cognizance ἐν παρέρῳ (p. 711-713, glossing *Metaphysics*, Λ.9.1074b35-36) accords with my analysis; see especially p. 713, ll. 25-34. His discussion of the applicability of the concept of a “true self” to Aristotle (p. 714 ff.) parallels my themes.

41. J. OWENS, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, 3rd edition (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1978), p. 180-188, studies this Aristotelian phrase and takes the ἦν as an imperfect functioning as a gnomic aorist. Brad INWOOD has suggested this ἦν is the kind of “was” that we use in saying “so that’s what it was” after we suddenly intuit the conclusion from a string of premises; I accept this account but modified to realizing “so that’s what I was doing” as in my carpentry example. On transforming all the proper premises into a syllogistic understanding in the context of cognition, see BURNYEAT, 1981, p. 129-132.

selfhood — its own unity — into being, and the unity achieved is itself only a unity as an act of self-differentiating, only as an act of instituting a subject for which there is an object. Thus what “I am” only becomes “me” in the very move by which “I” distance myself from this “myself” which I have just recognized *as* myself — this “myself” which “I” have made. This, I contend, is the notion of making (ποιεῖν) with which Aristotle deals when he considers νοῦς as ποιητικός : *the νοῦς makes for itself an intelligible world and recognizes this world as itself*. It is this power to say “I” — the power to recognize oneself as a subject with the implications here articulated — which is νοῦς ποιητικός (which ultimately characterizes the highest power in the Aristotelian universe).⁴²

Unlike Descartes, then, the Aristotelian self does not say “*cogito*” from the point of view of the absolute abstraction of universal doubt ; rather, in order to be uttered, it must be the last thing one says, and to say it presupposes an entire history of development of the psyche ; the intellect may seem to be a separate power which self-exists and enters on the scene in utter independence as in Descartes, just as the theory which the carpenter ultimately understands appears as self-contained and independently understandable, but for Aristotle this is not the reality, and whatever independence and separability the active νοῦς has, (namely, the separability from unreconciled otherness),⁴³ it will have to be rooted in a comprehending of its conditions, rather than abstraction from them, for precisely what self-cognition amounts to is the realization that “I” only exist as the recognition and unification of my otherness, of myself as other. Now, finally, the implications of this account of the self-consciousness and self-knowledge of νοῦς for the doctrine of knowledge in general can be summarized, from which point Aristotle’s historical method can be appraised.

4. *The unity of the doctrine of soul*

Since, as we have seen, knower and known are one in knowing, *all* knowing *must* be self-reflection : this is not unique to νοῦς. At each psychic level of knowing, the awareness is in some way a self-awareness. This is because, as argued above, at each point the subject is aware of the object-evaluated-in-terms-of-the-psychic-attitude. The subject, therefore, structures its own knowledge : in each case the subject (the soul) provides *the ground of unity* by asking the unifying question. In nutri-

42. For νοῦς as self-cognition, see III.4.429b5-10, where self-comprehension is seen as a product of understanding the object, and *Metaphysics*, A.7.1072b19, where “intellect cognizes itself by participation in the intelligible object.” At *Metaphysics*, A.9.1074b33-1075a3, Aristotle compares the self-comprehension of νόησις to other forms of awareness which are conscious of themselves only ἐν παρέργῳ (b35-36). See J. OWENS, “A Note on Aristotle *De Anima* 3.4,429b9,” *Phoenix* 30 (1976), reprinted in CATAN, 1981, p. 99-108, for a discussion of the continuity of the doctrine of self-cognition in these texts. See KAHN, 1981, p. 413.

43. III.4.429a24-27, b4-5, (cf. 429a29-b4) argues that mind is separate ; BRENTANO, 1867, p. 115-128, interprets Aristotle to be arguing for why mind must be separate from body. I interpret the argument to mean that mind is not “bodily” in the sense of having a particular organ through which it works, and which sets up a dualism of self and other, but that it is “embodied” in the sense that it *depends on* a bodily situation in that precisely what νοῦς does is make the whole body of its world (νοῦς παθητικός) an act of self-cognition just as, again, carpentry theory is really the organizing of τὰ φαινόμενα of carpentry. On the interpretation of this argument in Aristotle, see also BENARDETE, 1975, 614-619, esp. 615.

tion, "what is" is known, but only in its nutritiveness, that is, *in terms of* the subject's interests. In sense, the world is known, not by its own standards, but in terms of the various modes of its "sensibleness," that is, in terms of the way the sensing soul is capable of apprehending it. So, at these levels, one never knows some "pure object," but only the subject-object relation, that is, the object *as already structured in terms of the subject's prejudice*.

But if Aristotle is not Descartes, he is not Kant either ; the object ultimately sought by knowledge is not some "thing-in-itself" which is defined as the thing outside any relation to a knower.⁴⁴ Rather, the object sought is that with which organisms are involved. The desired object is not the thing seen from no perspective, but the thing seen from the proper (that is, rational and human) perspective. Aristotle makes a parallel point in another context.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle answers the question, "about what do we deliberate ?" :

We ought presumably to call not what a fool or a madman would deliberate about, but what a sensible man would deliberate about, a subject of deliberation [...]. We deliberate about things that are in our power and can be done, (III.3.1112a19-21, 30-31, trans. W.D. Ross).

There are three points to note here : (i) the distinction made between adequate and inadequate approaches to deliberation is made in terms of subjective conditions ; (ii) the true subjective condition is not an absence of perspective, but the proper one ; and (iii) this proper perspective is the human one, that is, it is the world as it is for the kinds of beings we are that is our proper object. This is the spirit in which knowing in general must be considered.

All we have *ever* been aware of, by the very fact of that awareness, are things in which we are involved. Rather than thus making knowledge impossible, however, this fact of involvement is what makes knowledge possible. It is *these* things with which we are involved — τὰ πράγματα — which we seek to understand ; it is the world we knowing animals inhabit that we can know about, and it is the only thing worth knowing about.⁴⁵ In our investigations of the processes of psychic uniting with the world, then, we do not want to say something which has no bearing on our situation ; to recall the quotation with which we started, we want to say "something worth

44. Contra BARNES, 1986, who seems to uncritically accept the sceptic's purported phenomenology of consciousness (p. 51) and criticizes Aristotle on this basis. In defense of Aristotle, Barnes gives a powerful "soteriological" interpretation to Aristotle's teleology and psychology, wherein the posited teleological "fit" of the world to our perceptual apparatus is justified by the fact of our survival (p. 56-57, 63) ; I think this general strategy of starting from the premise of success and then arguing back to the necessary conditions for that success does do justice to Aristotle's thinking, but Barnes backs off from carrying out the implications of this for intellect, claiming that "truth" cannot be treated in this way, and that therefore Aristotle is prey to scepticism (p. 74). But surely it is Barnes' conception of truth which the sceptic must find problematic : what does Barnes mean by truth ? Is truth universal assent ? Is it necessary assent ? I suspect he means something like "the way it actually is," but surely the Aristotelian point is that there are only ways — or there is only a way — it *potentially* is ; being is actual only in relation to νοῦς ; its actuality is the relation to cognition, in which we participate.

45. Note that this does not preclude knowledge of the unmoved mover, and so on, inasmuch as the order of nature and its governing powers and bodies are members of the world as we inhabit it.

saying.” So of course our account must be κατὰ τὴν φαντασίαν : it must be about the φαινόμενα, about the way things have been made visible to us according to our natural interests.

Seen in this light, Aristotle’s attitude that the world is rational, or for consciousness makes clear sense. As we have just seen the only world we are interested in is the world which is, by the very fact of our being involved, necessarily “for” consciousness.⁴⁶ In saying that the world is rational, one is only saying exactly what the sceptic charges, namely, that in reflecting on itself, the self gets to know itself and only itself ; indeed, just as the sceptic demands, the task is for it to properly recognize *as* its own self what really is its own self. The self here, however, is, as we have seen, the involved self, so it is not a self known by introspection ; it is known by getting to know the world which defines the self, for what the self always *is* is an identification with its object. Self-cognition requires, then, a thoroughgoing familiarity with that object. Aristotle does not think that the mind can penetrate to the essence of itself and of things by sitting by the fire in a winter dressing-gown and meditating ; Aristotelian contemplation presupposes an thorough acquaintance with the subject-matter.⁴⁷ One who would know must first go out and look — get involved — for only through getting to know one’s situation can one get to know one’s self. As in *Metaphysics A* the τέχνη which produces the reasoned fact presupposes a possession of the facts.

In the order of time, then, one initially has knowledge of “the other.” Through this other, however, and because the self is the condition of the other, one can come to know oneself, for the other reveals to the self how it (the self) lets things be. The highest recognition of self is the recognition of self as such a condition of the other. All the grades of knowing except νοῦς ποιητικός are overcomings of a pre-existent distance, that is, the division into the two terms which provide the extremes of the relation (self and other) are already fixed ; the acts of such knowings overcome this distance by destroying the integrity of one contrary through making one extreme identical with the other, (nutrition transforming the object, and sensation the subject). Νοῦς, however, is the true unity from which duality is generated. At the lower levels, the object is received on alien terms (in terms defined by its subject). Pure knowledge would be knowledge of the object in terms of itself, where it is not distorted by having to measure up to what is alien to it. This pure knowledge is achieved when the subject *recognizes* that in knowing the object it is knowing itself, that is, the object *is* the subject ; in this case, there is no opposition between the two extremes. Such a

46. I thus agree with J. OWENS, “Forward,” in CATAN, 1981, that “for [Aristotle] all human knowledge is solidly grounded in the things experienced in the course of everyday life. These things are obvious and accessible to all inquirers,” (p. VI, emphasis added), though perhaps not in the exact sense he intends. It is insofar as we seek to know τα φαινόμενα that knowledge is possible ; accessibility is the very way of being of τα φαινόμενα and thus the objects of knowledge are *in principle* knowable by all. In this sense, then, the sceptic who claims to only identify an inability to make sense is misdescribing his or her experience in that the world is always given as *already* making sense such that things *qua* experienced are meaningful and demand of us that we fulfill them by recognizing the intelligibility they offer us.

47. My defense of the logical form of Aristotle’s approach to historical cognition does not mean that any criticism of his account of his predecessors is precluded ; if a criticism is to be made, it must be based on the quality of Aristotle’s familiarity with and use of the evidence.

situation occurs in the self-reflection of the unified νοῦς, which has no contrary because it is its own object (III.6.430b23-26) ; in the order of being, it is the original unity which splits itself, whereas the others unifications are imitations which attempt to regain unity over a pre-established distance.⁴⁸ In lower psychic activities, the soul provides the unifying structure for its "other." In νοῦς the object is the proper object and known on its own terms because the object *is* this unifying ground of things, which is νοῦς itself.⁴⁹ To return, then, to the questionably translated passage from III.4, (429a18-22), νοῦς is pure (ἀμυγής) because in it no otherness remains ultimate ; an alien presence would preclude its complete *self*-possession.⁵⁰

This conception of νοῦς as concrete self-knowledge allows us to see νοῦς as the basis of the whole Aristotelian doctrine of soul, and that in relation to which the concept of ψυχή is unified. We began by showing how Aristotle's epistemology is continuous with his doctrine of soul, which means we showed knowing to be animative, an ensouling, and here we see what that means for full-fledged cognition. If knowing is animative rather than representative, this means that the mind is not a theatre in which the subject's re-presentations of the object are displayed ; rather, knowledge is something the knower does to its object : the object is made subject (ὑποκείμενον) to the ruling (κρατεῖν), to the accusing (κατηγορεῖν), of the knower. Cognition means taking the materials of cognition (νοῦς παθητικός) and activating them, bringing them to life. Real *knowledge* comes when the *method* of animating the object is itself supplied by the object, that is, when the knowing is the object's *self*-animation, and, as in all cognition, this involves the knowing agent *identifying* with the object, in this case, in such a way as to recognize that *the desire for this self-conscious self-cognition is what really characterizes the essence of the object*. Thus formally we can see that the ultimate object must be νοῦς, and, consequently, so too must self-thinking νοῦς be the subject, and his conclusion also follows if we reflect on the content of this doctrine of animative epistemology : knowing wants to know its situation, and what is happening in a situation of knowing is a self-ensouling. And, finally, we can see why understanding must take the form of retrospective compre-

48. A. KOSMAN, "Divine Being and Divine Thinking in *Metaphysics* Lambda," in J. CLEARY, ed., *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. III (University Press of America, 1988), p. 165-188, very nicely articulates a parallel version of the argument I am making : "Thinking is an activity whose object is not outside itself, and it therefore does not depend on the perfection of any external being for it to be complete. Note, however, that the same may be said of all modes of animate awareness. In seeing, for example, sight becomes one with the object seen, and seeing is characteristically invoked by Aristotle as an instance of an *energeia* whose end is contained within itself. But this is not an objection ; it is merely to realize the cogency of ALEXANDER's suggestion that "*nous*" is in fact the paradigm instance and thus the *arche* of the many animate modes of awareness." (p. 184, my emphasis) See also p. 185 : "In one sense, *nous* is our capacity to think, as we say, of things. In another it is the *arche* of [...] *episteme*. But in the most general sense it is capable of being these things because it is the *arche* of awareness in general ; thus Aristotle's hint [...] that animals have a rudimentary form of *nous* in their general capacity to discriminate ; [...] *nous* is only the purest form of that general power of cognitive awareness and discrimination that is increasingly revealed in *scala naturae*."

49. Cf. *Metaphysics*, A.7, 9, esp. 1074b35-1075a5.

50. I translate, "Thus it is necessary, since it comprehends everything, that it be unmixed, just as Anaxagoras says, in order that it may command, that is, in order that it may know ; for something alien appearing on the side will prevent and block." On the translation of the last clause, see HICKS *Aristotle's De Anima* (Cambridge, 1907), note *ad loc.* (429a20).

hension, for to be this agent who thus brings the object (which is one's lived situation) to bear on itself requires, however, a thoroughgoing familiarity with that object, since "the other" is precisely the material out of which the self which is the object of noetic self-cognizance is to be formed.

Now, having moved from the immediately most apparent form of soul (nutrition) to the intrinsically most apparent (self-cognizing νοῦς), we can reverse our gaze and see all the psychology (and indeed all of physics) as an anticipation of the Aristotelian noetic, that is, all psychical (or physical) activity is primitive self-cognition. This point, indeed, allows us to see the continuity of the basic Aristotelian project with the doctrine of the unmoved mover in *Metaphysics* Λ.

We have provided a ground for seeing all psychic activity as primitive identification of self and other and (what really amounts to the same thing) primitive self-cognition, and it is ultimately from the definition of ψυχή as the first ἐντελέχεια of a naturally organized body that we have derived this orientation. But all *physical* substances can certainly be understood, *mutatis mutandis*, in the same fashion, for once again the key to the existence of the physical substance is the intrinsic principle of motion which organizes the relationship of it and its world. Now it is from the point of view of noetic self-cognition that we can understand *what it is* that each of these primitive substantial functionings is, which is to say that, again, what being means in relation to each kind of physical substance is different, but they are all understandable *qua* beings through a focal reference to that primary instance which is the self-thinking thought; it is the perfected achievement of that which each lesser being "lispily" accomplishes through its self-activity in a situation of given otherness.⁵¹ Rather than pursue the implications of this account for the interpretation of the Aristotelian metaphysics and cosmology, however, we must now wrap up our treatment of ψυχή and νοῦς, and return to the issue of Aristotle's historiography.

We have seen that experience of an other seems chronologically primary, and, similarly, within the individual, νοῦς appears as a late development, but that in truth νοῦς is the origin and ground of all.⁵² In keeping with something like the ἀνάμνησις of which Socrates speaks,⁵³ one can say that the history of one's psychic development is the history of working up the appropriate psychic ἔξις which will allow one to ac-

51. I thus cannot agree with D. MODRAK, "Aristotle on Thinking," in J. CLEARY, ed., *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. II (University Press of America, 1987), p. 209-236, who contends (p. 230-233) that the argument for the unmoved mover in *Metaphysics* Λ is a discardable doctrine, present only because Aristotle felt it forced upon him by other aspects of his argument; on the contrary, if Aristotle had not made the argument explicitly, his doctrine of nature would require us to supply it. COLLINGWOOD, 1960, p. 80-92, likewise argues for the consistency of and necessity for the doctrine of the unmoved mover within the Aristotelian philosophy. R. NORMAN, "Aristotle's Philosopher God," *Phronesis*, 14 (1969), reprinted in BARNES *et al.*, 1975-1979, vol. IV, p. 63-74, works at understanding *Metaphysics*, Λ.7 and 9 by comparison with *De Anima*, III.4, but his claim (p. 95) that Aristotle's empiricist error of modeling νοῦς on sense and its givenness of the subject-object distinction seems to me to get Aristotle's doctrine exactly backward; KOSMAN, 1988, on the contrary gives an excellent interpretation of the self-thinking thought in the context of an Aristotelian psychology. See also BENARDETE, 1975, p. 621-622.

52. Cf. III.5.430a20-21 and III.7.431a2-3.

53. See, for example, *Phaedo*, 72e-75d.

tualize one's innate potential to participate in the universal νοῦς.⁵⁴ We can turn now to appraise the implications of this analysis for determining the relation of Aristotle's historical method and his account of knowing.

III. HISTORY AND KNOWING

Burnet's criticism makes two charges against Aristotle. The first is that he appraises his predecessors in his own terms, and the second, that he views his own philosophy as τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι of the tradition. This criticism assumes that Aristotle's position pre-exists his analyses, and that it is by this already established system that he evaluates the others. If Aristotle's account of knowing is correct, however, such a situation is an impossibility. Unlike Athena, ἐπιστήμη does not spring up full-blown *ex nihilo* ; it can only exist on the basis of a ἔξις of the relation of self to world. Aristotle's knowing of the philosophical subject-matter *has to* have arisen from the tradition, with the tradition supplying both the (subjective) method for questioning, and the (objective) material to be thought about. There is required a poietic act of re-appropriation of this ἔξις at a more unified level, but it is only because this ἔξις is the δύναντις of this activity that this appropriation can take place.

What is this act of historical appropriation ? It is not the kind of appropriation one engages in in eating in which the other is forced to conform to a pre-existent self, nor is it a simply sensible appropriating in which one conforms oneself to a pre-existent other ; rather, if the integrity of both subject and object is to be respected, it must be a noetic appropriation. Let us summarize the logic of Aristotle's historical νόησις. First, there is the recognition by Aristotle that there is a phenomenon to be understood. It is this very act of looking for a single essence which provides the ground of unity. Aristotle's *explananda* pre-exist his analysis, but not *as explananda*, and it is only by his distancing himself from his subject-matter and taking it as a single whole, that the past becomes *a* past. This viewing of the situation, furthermore, includes as part of its content the very act of looking which Aristotle is performing, that is, it is only by viewing as a totality the history leading up to *and including* his own viewing that the view is truly a view of the whole. The kind of viewing that is required in order to reveal a rational and complete whole is the method which sees each articulation as itself necessary or "for the best" : this is the Platonic method of theodicy and dialectic. It is necessary, then, for Aristotle to view himself as the culmination of the tradition because his viewing is part of the whole, that is, he must see how his summing up of the tradition is "for the best" ; and he is right to do so for, as we have just seen, his viewing does supply the essential question which allows the rest of the history (including his own act) to *be* united as *an* answer. Real knowledge,

54. KAHN, 1981, p. 410-411, discusses the relation of personal intellect and intellect as such, and the role of education in developing the capacity to participate in cognition ; see especially, "the process of learning develops our potential intellect from a neutral capacity to a trained state : in becoming familiar with the principles of science we acquire the *hexis* of *nous* as an intellectual virtue, 'the *arche* of science by which we know the definitions.' [...] As our personal *nous* becomes actualized in the possession and exercise of the principles of science, nothing happens to the active intellect." (Compare KAHN, 1966, p. 29-30.)

then, only occurs in the viewing which sees itself as having been (potentially) present all along ; indeed the viewing must see its past as compelling it — the viewing — to act as it does. It occurs when the viewing subject recognizes itself as having always been present in the object, recognizes itself as “what it (the νοητόν) always was being,” that is, as τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, as what the situation has been demanding. Aristotle’s philosophy, then, *is* the tradition self-united from a single perspective in an active synthesis : through Aristotle’s act, the traditional corpus ensouls itself.

It is precisely by recognizing itself in the tradition, then, and by viewing the tradition in Aristotelian terms, that Aristotle’s position demonstrates its maturity. To view, on the contrary, Aristotle’s position in terms of the “material” out of which it has grown (that is, the tradition) is the one-sided approach, for it presents the Aristotelian “harmony” of the material as derivative and dependent upon the “body” which it harmonizes, and it ignores the primacy of νοῦς. The priority, then, must be reversed such that the Aristotelian account is, to use a Platonism, the “ὄντως ὄν” which is the true source of the preceding material : the final cause is really the dominant element of which the tradition is the bodily realization. This means, then, that the drive to νόησις τῆς νοήσεως must have been potentially present from the start, (exactly as the drive to be recognized as oneself was potentially present in the object of self-reflection), in order that the Aristotelian synthesis could truly be the defining, governing, and final cause ; Aristotle’s *act* actualizes the potentiality of the past to *have been* anticipating the act.

Of course, *saying* that his philosophy is the last and best does not guarantee that Aristotle’s philosophy is such. Whether it is or not depends on how thoroughly he has appropriated his subject-matter, and how consistent his principles are.⁵⁵ But it is true, at any rate, that, on Aristotle’s principles, the highest philosophy would *have to be* one which claimed itself to be, and which saw itself as, active in its own past. If Burnet or any other, then, wants to criticize Aristotle’s *approach* to his predecessors, he must be prepared to take on the whole Aristotelian psychology with which it is consistent.

CONCLUSION

Like Aristotle, my analysis has “contributed” to the *corpus* under analysis, not by adding a new feature, but by *looking to see how the text is rational*, and this reading too sees itself as τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι of Aristotle’s book precisely because it tries to be a self-justifying reading, that is, *the reading aims to be the one which the text retrospectively shows itself to have always been demanding* : this (way of) reading is what the text itself requires as its own self-conscious completion, found by providing a comprehensive — and inquisitive — space within which the “method” of the text (expressed in the single dynamic definition of soul) can be brought to bear on its own “body” (comprised by the multiple examples of knowing). What we should have

55. COLLINGWOOD, 1960, Part I essentially argues that Aristotle’s claim to have succeeded at bringing about the philosophy for which his predecessors strived is sound.

learned from Aristotle's account of how soul takes up its material conditions is that soul is always the enactment of an interpretive unity, which is an identification of itself with its materiality. This enactment is always constrained with respect to both subject-matter and method, in that it can only energize what is available to it. This means that we can only ever exist as act of animation in which our inherited substance — our "habits" — *must* speak to our concerns. Thus to read Aristotle now, *according to principles of Aristotle's own philosophy*, means that we must find him to be engaged with *our* tradition, just as Aristotle himself demands of his predecessors that they speak to his situation. Thus an Aristotelian reading of Aristotle must show that the concerns about subjectivity which are so much a part of *our* ἔξις are already implicit in Aristotle, and have been awaiting our interpretive act of bringing them to self-consciousness. Thus "self-consciousness," and our philosophical tradition, must already be present in Aristotle's psychology. My reading is thus the attempt to be the fourth of the ensoulments, that is, energizings of ἔξις, that we have considered: the first is the energizing of body by soul (Section I); the second is the energizing of the object of knowledge by which a ἔξις is turned into a cognitive δόναμις (Section II); the third is Aristotle's (self-)energizing of the tradition in his historical (self-)cognition which in turn is his own philosophy (Section III); if my attempt in this essay at energizing Aristotle's text by forcing it to interpret itself has been successful, then it is the fourth.⁵⁶

56. I would like especially to thank Douglas Hutchinson and Father Joseph Owens who led the seminar in which this essay was born. Ken McGovern, Eugene Bertoldi, Gregory Nagy, Jay Lampert, Abe Schoener, Peter Simpson, Patricia Fagan, David Morris, Ken Cheung and Evan Thompson have also offered helpful discourse about Aristotle and Greek philosophy. Versions of this material were presented to the Philosophy Forum at the University of Toronto, the Philosophy Department at Queen's University, the Classics Department at Dalhousie University, and the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association. Roger Shiner's generous editorial remarks on a much earlier draft have helped the paper immensely. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada provided the doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships which supported the research for this paper both at the University of Toronto Department of Philosophy and at the Harvard University Department of the Classics.