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**HEGEL'S ANSWER TO THE ARISTOTELIAN ΑΠΟΡΙΑ OF THE ΧΩΡΙΣΜΟΣ OF
ΝΟΥΣ IN THE *DE ANIMA* III.4-5 AND *METAPHYSICS* Λ.6-9**

MA Thesis

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ABSTRACT

The author of this thesis is concerned with the χωρισμός (separate) status of νοῦς (Thought) in Aristotle's *De Anima* III.4-5 and *Metaphysics* Λ.6-9, and Hegel's answer to this ἀπορία (*aporia*) in his *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*. For Aristotle, νοῦς is a pure actuality (ἐνέργεια) and final cause that cannot directly influence the wide array of Nature's particular determinations. For Hegel, however, Aristotle's νοῦς is not purely actual, if actuality refers to a static and separate substance, but is a dynamic activity (*Tätigkeit*), in which νοῦς' self-referential nature is extended to include the diverse determinations of the *Scala Naturae*. This absolute character of νοῦς ensures the interrelation of all thought-determinations, since these determinations are the manifestation of the ubiquitous activity of *Denken*'s inner self-differentiation. Only by coalescing final and formal causality in *Denken* can Hegel claim to have overcome the Aristotelian ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of νοῦς.

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For Price and Hannah

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Since the time of Plato and Aristotle, the ineluctable question of the status of Thought¹ has preoccupied philosophers of every generation. The question addresses the primacy of Thought or its subordination to a more actual and ontologically prior principle. Aristotle inexorably argues for the sovereign primacy of νοῦς, which alone assumes this noble status, since it confers intelligibility to the array of determinable substances, both sensible and immaterial, in Nature (φύσις). Thus, νοῦς remains the ultimate and conducive condition for development in Nature; each substance attains its particular end due to the ubiquitous influence of final causality that νοῦς exercises over Nature.

Aristotle's assertion of νοῦς as the primary principle of Nature, however, establishes a fundamental ἀπορία (*aporia*) to his general philosophical project, which is expressed in his *De Anima* and *Metaphysics*. The term ἀπορία is derived from the Greek πόρος, which means a passageway. The addition of the privative alpha suggests a blocked passageway,² or a puzzle that requires a solution or an answer. The Liddel and Scott Greek-English Lexicon defines ἡ ἀπορία as a "difficulty of passing: of things, difficulty, straits: of questions, a difficulty."³ Aristotle's notion

¹ Throughout this thesis, I will primarily refer to Aristotle's generic usage of Thought as νοῦς, whose nature is expressed as the νόησις νοήσεως, thinking thinking itself. With respect to quoted references of Aristotle's νοῦς, I have chosen to maintain the common translated term, 'thought,' but I will capitalize it in order to emphasize its transcendent and pervasive character. Concerning Hegel's notion of Thought, I have chose to maintain the German *Denken*. Occasionally, I refer to Greek and German terms or phrases outside of parentheses for philological purposes. I have maintained the terms ἀπορία (*aporia*) and χωρισμός (separation) outside of parentheses, since they clearly pertain to my thesis. Furthermore, when speaking about Thought independently of Aristotle and Hegel, I will refer to the English generic term "Thought."

² Cf. Joseph P. Lawrence. "The Hidden Aporia in Aristotle's Self-Thinking Thought," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 2 (1988), 158.

³ Liddell & Scott. *Greek-English Lexicon*. Abridged. (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1958.

of ἀπορία, furthermore, is to be explained within the wider context of his notion of dialectic. Aristotle's dialectical method entails the elucidation of his predecessors' arguments and common *opinions* about the general structure of the universe. These common opinions, according to Aristotle, tend to generate puzzles, i.e., ἀπορίαι, due to "the equality of contrary reasonings."⁴ Throughout his corpus, Aristotle demonstrates proficient knowledge of these ἀπορίαι and attempts to provide a solution.⁵ Aristotle's dialectical method, therefore, operates according to a twofold agenda: to highlight the ἀπορίαι of his predecessors, and to provide a solution to them.

The one ἀπορία that Aristotle invests a significant amount of time and energy in resolving is the separate and ineffective nature of Plato's Forms. According to Aristotle, Plato's Forms do not inherently possess the generative power responsible for movement and development in Nature. Aristotle, however, claims to have overcome the Platonic ἀπορία of the separability of the Forms from their particular instantiation in sensible objects by reducing the status of Form to an inherent, unifying principle of matter, operative *within* sensible objects. The Aristotelian notion of Form, therefore, assumes an immanent status, with one exception: νοῦς itself.

In his *De Anima*, Aristotle advances the claim that the passive intellect as a power (ἐξίς) of the soul (ψυχή) presupposes for its activity the nutritive and sensible powers. However, in his discussion of the active intellect (πάντα ποιεῖν), Aristotle introduces a severance of its activity from the preceding powers of the soul – a severance that accords the active intellect with a separate,

⁴ Aristotle. *Topics* VI, 145b17. Trans. W. A. Pickard in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Vol. 1. Ed. J. Barnes. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press), 1984. All Aristotelian citations will henceforth be from this edition, unless otherwise stated. I shall only make reference to the translator.

⁵ Cf., for example, *Physics*. I, 191b30-34, IV, 217b29-218a31; *On Generation and Corruption* I, 321b11; *Metaphysics* B, 995a24-b7; *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 1145b2-7; *Politics* III, 10-11. For a more detailed discussion on the relation between dialectic and ἀπορία, cf. Aristotle. *Selections*. Trans. Terence Irwin and Gail Fine. (Ind.: Hackett Publishing Company), 1995, *Glossary*, p. 577.

self-sufficient status. This, *a fortiori*, applies to νοῦς itself, as presented in the *Meta.* Λ.7 & 9. Both the active intellect and νοῦς itself do *not* presuppose for their operations the activities of preceding powers. Thus, while Aristotle conjures a solution to the Platonic ἀπορία of the χωρισμός (separation) of the Forms, Aristotle equally generates his own ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of the active intellect in the *DA* and νοῦς in the *Meta.* With his exposition of the active intellect and of νοῦς, Aristotle introduces a discontinuity between νοῦς and Nature. The assertion of the separability and transcendence of νοῦς entails a severance between matter and form, the unity of which Aristotle adamantly attempts to preserve in order to overcome the Platonic ἀπορία.

There is a corollary to this Aristotelian ἀπορία. Aristotle attributes an *active* role to the *object* of knowledge as *producing* the form in the human intellect (νοῦς). However, Aristotle's account of the active intellect defies this principle: the active intellect does not *receive* forms from without, as the passive intellect does; rather, the active intellect, it would appear, already inherently possesses forms, i.e., it has immediate apprehension of conceptual content. Thus, Aristotle reverses his principle of the acquisition of knowledge with respect to the active intellect.

In the *DA* III.5, Aristotle compares the active intellect to that of light. As J. R. Catan has demonstrated, the theme of light is a prevalent symbol for ancient Greeks.⁶ While, on the one hand, Aristotle uses the simile of the light to describe the nature of the active intellect and to overcome the Platonic ἀπορία, he, on the other hand, seems to render the active intellect's role akin to Plato's world of Forms. According to Catan,⁷ the background Platonic text to the Aristotelian ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of the active intellect is found in the *Rep.* 508e-509b. Plato writes the following:

⁶ J. R. Catan. "The Aristotelian Aporia Concerning Separate Mind," *The Modern Schoolman* 46 (1968), 49.

⁷ *Ibid.*

This reality, then, that gives their truth to the objects of knowledge and the power of knowing to the knower, you must say is the idea of good, and you must conceive it as being the cause of knowledge, and of truth in so far as known. Yet fair as they both are, knowledge and truth, in supposing it to be something fairer still than these you will think rightly of it. But as for knowledge and truth, even in our illustration it is right to deem light and vision sunlike, but never to think that they are the sun, so here it is right to consider these two their counterparts, as being like the good or boniform, but to think that either of them is the good is not right. Still higher honor belongs to the possession and habit of the good.

An inconceivable beauty you speak of, he said, if it is the source of knowledge and truth, and yet itself surpasses them in beauty. For you surely cannot mean that it is pleasure.

Hush, said I, but examine the similitude of it still further in this way.

How?

The sun, I presume you will say, not only furnishes to visibles the power of visibility but it also provides for their generation and growth and nurture though it is not itself generation.

Of course not.

In like manner, then, you are to say that the objects of knowledge not only receive from the presence of the good their being known, but their very existence and essence is derived to them from it, though the good itself is not essence but still transcends essence in dignity and surpassing power.⁸

In his *DA* III.5, Aristotle describes the passive and active intellects in this way: "And in fact Thought . . . is what it is by virtue of becoming all things, while there is another which is what it is by virtue of making all things: this is a sort of positive state like light; for in a sense light makes potential colours into actual colours."⁹ The active intellect seems to assume the role of Plato's world of Forms, and maintains a separate status with respect to the preceding powers. Thus, in this light, Aristotle establishes a discontinuity between the lineage of powers in the soul, i.e., the powers of the nutritive, sensible, and passive intellect, on the one hand, and the active intellect, on the other.

Aristotle's exposition of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ in the *Metaphysics* is also aporetic, since there exists a

⁸ Plato. *Republic* VI, 508e-509b. Trans. Paul Shorey. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library), 1987.

⁹ *De Anima* III.5, 430a14-16.

discontinuity between Nature and νοῦς, which is the principle of intelligibility of Nature. Νοῦς' knowledge excludes the forms of Nature: its knowledge is only of itself. There is, then, a severance between the source of intelligibility and Nature. G. R. G. Mure further articulates this Aristotelian fissure:

. . . but if the divine Thought merely excludes and transcends the world, the world loses all intelligibility, and God's Thought becomes merely abstract and formal, a singleness below and not above distinction. If we sever utterly the developing series of actualisation from its culmination, then at every lower stage too a chasm opens, and the system disintegrates.¹⁰

Therefore, the ramifications of imposing a discontinuity of νοῦς from Nature are great, since a severance from νοῦς, as the principle (ἀρχή) of Nature, further entails a "chasm" at every stage of Nature. Νοῦς *is the necessary condition for substantial development in Nature.*

This is the ἀπορία that remains to be considered. If νοῦς is separate, then how can higher forms presuppose the lower for their operations? νοῦς would presuppose humanity as humanity presupposes Nature. Thus, νοῦς would presuppose Nature. This is the critique of Aristotle's presentation of νοῦς that is made by Hegel. Several eminent Aristotelian scholars, such as T. de Koninck, have attempted to overcome the chasm between νοῦς and Nature by suggesting that form is not an exclusive principle, but *inclusive*. Consequently, νοῦς, as the most perfect of forms, must *include* the preceding stages of form. However, the Aristotelian ἀπορία continues to be

¹⁰ G. R. G. Mure. *An Introduction to Hegel*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1966, p. 172. Mure's book is an excellent reference to Hegel and Aristotle studies, since it shows the inherent affinities between Aristotle and Hegel. In the Anglophone world, Mure's book appeared as an anomaly, due to there having been a general lack of interest in Hegel. Though Geraets, Suchting, and Harris's comment refers to Mure's commentary of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia Logic*, it naturally extends itself to Mure's *An Introduction*: Mure published ". . . at a time when most Anglophone philosophers could scarcely spell Hegel's name. [Mure's commentary] emphasises Hegel's affiliations with Aristotle." G. W. F. Hegel. *The Encyclopaedia Logic*. Trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, H. S. Harris. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.), 1991, p. 362. Henceforth, this reference will be cited as *EL*.

unresolved, as will be seen at the end of Chapter 1.

Interpretations of the active intellect and νοῦς vary from one philosophical age to another. Alexander of Aphrodisias and Plotinus are two Hellenic philosophers who have significantly contributed to a fruitful interpretation of the Aristotelian texts in question. Whereas Alexander identifies the active intellect with νοῦς itself, rendering a universal active intellect operative in Nature, Plotinus, though making the distinction between the two levels of νοῦς, supersedes the level of νοῦς altogether in order to affirm a prior, ineffable principle undergirding the whole of reality: the One. Consequently, Aristotle's νοῦς can no longer be purely actual, but must necessarily possess a degree of potency, which, therefore, introduces a degree of agitation and movement (κίνησις) in νοῦς as it relentlessly attempts to seize and exhaust the nature of the One for its proper intellectual object. However, to posit the One beyond νοῦς still maintains an ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of a primary principle. Thus, Plotinus' agenda was not to overcome the Aristotelian schism between νοῦς and Nature, but to resolve the apparent, albeit logical, duality of subject and object in Aristotle's νοῦς by affirming the purely simple principle of the One.

In his *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, G. W. F. Hegel demonstrates an acute awareness of the Aristotelian ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of νοῦς in Aristotle's *De Anima* and *Metaphysics*, and resolves to overcome it via his concepts of *Denken* (thinking) and *die Idee* (the Idea), the absolute Idea which is presented in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* (*EL*). Hegel's commentary of Aristotle in the *Vorlesungen* is a brilliant and humble reflection of a modern man's astonishment and respect for an ancient philosopher, whose works, at the time of Hegel, had been either fully discarded, or reduced to mere accounts of empirical investigations. Hegel considers Aristotle to be one of the greatest speculative minds that the world has ever witnessed, and it is in this light that one

should read Hegel's commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *De Anima*, the latter of which, incidentally, consists of three quarters of direct citations of Aristotle's *DA* III.4-6. This alone attests to Hegel's respectful attitude towards Aristotle.

The textual evidence of this respect via Hegel's commentary, however, was not preserved by Hegel in a book format. In other words, Hegel did not write and publish a history of Philosophy. The content of our present *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* is, in fact, an amalgamation of Hegel's lecture notes throughout the three different periods of his career: 1) The Jena period (1805-06); 2) the Heidelberg period (1816-17, 1817-1818); and 3) the Berlin period (summer term of 1819, the winter terms of 1820-21, 1823-24, 1825-26, 1827-28, 1829-1830). However, he only wrote two notebooks. During the Jena period, Hegel taught from a full manuscript, whereas during the Heidelberg and Berlin periods, he taught from a rudimentary outline of his Jena notebook, modifying the content slightly. The Jena notebook is the most complete manuscript of Hegel's history of Philosophy. To our great misfortune, the Jena notebook remains at present irretrievable. Due to his untimely death in 1831, Hegel, unfortunately, was unable to complete even the Introduction of a new series of lectures.¹¹

After Hegel's death, Karl Ludwig Michelet was commissioned to edit Hegel's lectures, which are found in volumes 13-15 of Hegel's *Werke* (Berlin). The first edition was published during the

¹¹ R. F. Brown. "Editorial Introduction," in G. W. F. Hegel. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: The Lectures of 1825-1826*. Vol. 3. Ed. R. F. Brown and trans. R. F. Brown and J. M. Stewart with the assistance of H. S. Harris. (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1990, p. 1. However, Brown and J. M. Stewart, with the assistance of H. S. Harris, are in the process of translating Hegel's Lectures of 1825-26, Vols. 1 and 2. This translation is, in fact, of the pre-critical edition of Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* in the "Griechische Philosophie II: Plato bis Proklos." Band 8, Teil 3. Herausgegeben von P. Garniron und W. Jaeschke. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag), 1996. (Henceforth, this reference will be cited as the "Meiner edition.") This edition is precisely pre-critical, since it has not fully exhausted all the various accounts of Hegel's lectures on the history of Philosophy in order to reproduce as close as possible the original Jena manuscript and its additions, which, as mentioned above, have been lost.

period 1833-1836, while the second edition was completed during the period 1840-1844. Michelet gathered numerous sources to compile the two editions. Unfortunately, according to Brown, Michelet “did so in an artificial construct not truly reflective of any version. It is not known whether or not he used all the materials available to him.”¹² Michelet’s second edition has, for the most part, remained the most common referential source.¹³ According to Brown, and various other Hegelian scholars, Michelet’s second edition is not only different from the first edition, but is also substantially poorer in quality.¹⁴ Brown writes: “The second edition is quite different and less satisfactory; it is considerably abbreviated, is much less useful in its notes and apparatus, and gives a decidedly flat impression because it does not reflect with as much authenticity the spirit of Hegel’s lectures.”¹⁵ Translations, therefore, were made of the two editions of Michelet. The English translation by E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, *Hegel’s Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, is, unfortunately, a translation of Michelet’s second edition. Brown considers this work readable, but cautions the reader about imprecisions of English terms translating German technical terms.¹⁶ The aftermath of

¹² Brown, “Editorial Introduction,” p. 3. Brown adds the following: “Michelet had at his disposal not only a number of student transcripts but also, in Hegel’s own hand, his lecture notebook going back to the first series in Jena, with subsequent additions written on it. These materials are all lost today with the exception of the manuscripts for the Introduction from the Heidelberg and Berlin series.” (*Ibid.*, p. 5).

¹³ Only recently has the Meiner edition taken precedence over Michelet’s second edition. For another brief summary of Michelet’s editorial work, consult T. M. Knox and A. V. Miller, “Translator’s Foreword,” in G. W. F. Hegel. *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. (Trans. T. M. Knox and A. V. Miller. (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1988, pp. v-vi. Cf. also W. Kern. “L’interprétation d’Aristote par Hegel. Le dépassement du ‘Nous’ aristotélicien dans l’‘Esprit’ Hégélien,” *Revue de Philosophie ancienne* 3 (1985), 54-58. In these pages, Kern highlights the difficulty of gathering the various students’ notes into a critical edition of Hegel’s lectures.

¹⁴ In fact, Knox and Miller decided to translate Michelet’s *first* edition for precisely this reason. (Knox and Miller. “Translator’s Foreword,” p. v.)

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁶ Brown, “Editorial Introduction,” p. 4.

Michelet's poor editorial work, therefore, has bequeathed to Hegelian scholars the ominous task of reconstructing Hegel's lecture notes from a plethora of written sources, some of which are fundamentally indistinguishable.¹⁷ Nevertheless, these various accounts of Hegel's lectures indubitably capture Hegel's admiration for Aristotle's philosophy, and express Hegel's general dissatisfaction with the limits of Aristotle's concept of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$.¹⁸

Hegel is fully aware of the Aristotelian $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$, and within his commentary of Aristotle, he offers a critique that proposes a solution to Aristotle's $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$. His general critique of Aristotle is that Aristotle's philosophy is not systematic, and, thus, a continuity from Nature to $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ is impossible to maintain. By his dialectical method, Hegel is able to preserve the lower levels of form in a unified continuum that culminates in the self-explicitation of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$. In his interpretation of

¹⁷ Cf. A. Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1999, p. 35, forthcoming. The pagination to Ferrarin's text, however, is subject to revision, since I merely quote from the pre-published manuscript, with which Professor Ferrarin has kindly provided me. Ferrarin also emphasizes Michelet's infidelity to the philological criteria of editing a work. "Michelet," writes Ferrarin, "... was in the habit of disposing manuscripts after their publication by entrusting them to people often unrelated to the edition of Hegel's works Reading Lasson's or Hoffmeister's criticisms of Michelet's work, one hardly imagines he could have done worse. He actually did. In the second edition of the *Lectures* (1840-44), Michelet garbled the concision of the previously (1833) published text. He inserted here and there footnotes, even simply quotes from texts, with which Hegel would not necessarily have agreed. He moved passages from chapters to others where they made less sense, and at times confused a clear order of paragraphs. He suppressed or reshuffled entire paragraphs. In particular, he suppressed most of the Greek words mentioned by Hegel and translated by him into German. In all of this he often made the text (which was never meant to be a book to begin with) more inconsistent and inaccurate. Unfaithful to his teacher's warning to beware of noble intentions, he accomplished all this in the desire to make the text more easily readable and to avoid cumbersome repetitions." (Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, pp. 35-6)

¹⁸ I primarily refer to the Suhrkamp edition, since I find that it is more extensive in Hegel's commentary of Aristotle than the Meiner edition. (*Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie II. Werke in 20 Bänden, Band 19 (Theorie-Werkausgabe)*. Eds. E. Moldenhausser and K. M. Michel. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp), 1993. Henceforth, this edition will be cited as *T.W-A*, followed by the page reference.) Although their structures are similar, the *T.W-A* includes more detailed reflections on the self-productive activity of *Denken*, which is pertinent to my thesis. Nevertheless, I refer sporadically to the Meiner edition in order to present a complementary interpretation or to show the alterations of Hegel's reflections concerning Aristotle. Furthermore, I occasionally make reference to the Haldane and Simson's translation of Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*. (*Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Vol. 2. Trans. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1955. Henceforth, this source will be referred to as the "Haldane translation.")

Aristotle's νοῦς, Hegel interprets in its movement – circular movement – and, consequently, potency in order to sustain the continuity of stages of form and content in one total system. Hegel, thus, alters Aristotle's notion of νοῦς as exercising the causal role of finality to that of finality *and formality*. More specifically, Hegel accepts Aristotle's claims for the coalescence of efficient and final causality with that of formal causality in sensible substances, but radically parts from Aristotle with respect to Aristotle's assertion of the transcendent, separate, fully actual, and self-sufficient activity of νοῦς, which only assumes the role of final causality. Hegel's interpretation of a *dynamic* nature in νοῦς is, in fact, an echo of the Neoplatonic interpretation of νοῦς as a *complex* substance.

Structure

In Chapter 1, a brief introduction to the Aristotelian conceptual framework will be presented. Within this section, I will highlight the importance of the four causal principles operative in Nature: material, formal, efficient, and final. One central theme emphasized in this section is the coalescence of efficient and final causality with formal causality in all substances, exempting νοῦς itself. This section will be followed by a close reading of Aristotle's *De Anima* III.4 and 5 and *Metaphysics* Λ.6-9. The purpose of this section is to elucidate the Aristotelian ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of νοῦς, and to investigate some contemporary Aristotelians' attempts to conciliate νοῦς with Nature, in spite of νοῦς' separate status. This will be seen in the last section under the heading of *Some Reactions*.

Chapter 2 will consist of three parts. Parts I and II constitute a detailed exegesis of Hegel's commentary, interpretation, and critique of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *De Anima*. Within his reading of these Aristotelian texts, Hegel elucidates the fundamental distinction between νοῦς in the human soul and νοῦς in the absolute sense, which Hegel interpolates as the ubiquitous activity of *Denken's*,

i.e., of the absolute Idea's, dynamic process of inner-differentiation in the *Scala Naturae*. These sections include not only Hegel's general critique of Aristotle's philosophy as unsystematic, but, *a fortiori*, disclose a shadow of Hegel's own philosophy and his interpolations of significant Aristotelian doctrines by the German terms used in his translations, such as Hegel's rendering of the Aristotelian term ἐνέργεια (actuality) by *Tätigkeit* (activity). For this reason alone, I have followed closely the German text in these sections. Hegel's commentary and critique of Aristotle did not escape criticism itself. I, furthermore, wish to highlight some reactions to Hegel's reading of Aristotle, since both Aristotelians and Hegelians alike have recognized not only certain distortions of interpretation, but, *a fortiori*, the prevailing Neoplatonic influence powerfully animating Hegel's reading of Aristotle's philosophy of νοῦς. However, in spite of Hegel's indebtedness to Neoplatonism, he clearly remains an Aristotelian by asserting without hesitation the primacy and sovereign nature of νοῦς, of *Denken*.

Part III will consist of a brief discussion on Hegel's concept of *Denken*, which is closely akin to the absolute Idea, as presented at the conclusion of the *EL*. The self-reflecting activity of the absolute Idea establishes an undeniable parallel with Aristotle's νοῦς, but differs in this way: the absolute Idea's self-reflecting activity does not exclude the various stages (*Gestalt*) of its thought-determinations, but *includes* them. In other words, the absolute Idea is responsible for the production of these thought-determinations, since they are relative reflections of the Idea itself. Thus, the ubiquitous activity of the absolute Idea is the system that includes all stages of the Idea's self-development and self-realization. It is precisely Hegel's claim of the uninterrupted continuum between the thought-determinations and the absolute Idea that overcomes the Aristotelian ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of νοῦς, since these thought-determinations are the manifestations of the inner-differentiation of the absolute Idea. In this thesis, I wish to argue that Hegel overcomes this ἀπορία

by attributing to the absolute Idea the roles of final *and formal* causality. Whereas Aristotle advances a final first cause, *independent* of Nature, Hegel asserts a continuity of stages, culminating in the absolute Idea, immanently operative in Nature. For Hegel, therefore, final and formal causality coalesce in the absolute Idea. The substantial lineage, for Hegel, is continuous; the absolute is not a separate activity from Nature. Rather, its emergence is merely the explicit activity of its latent dwelling in Nature. Only the absolute Idea in its systematic character can overcome the chasm established by Aristotle, a project that Hegel arduously attempts to realize, as this thesis hopes to demonstrate.

CHAPTER 1

THE STATUS OF ΝΟΥΣ IN ARISTOTLE'S *DE ANIMA* AND *METAPHYSICS*

And Thought in itself deals with that which is best in itself, and that which is Thought in the fullest sense with that which is best in the fullest sense. And Thought thinks itself because it shares the nature of the object of Thought; for it becomes an object of Thought in coming into contact with and thinking its objects, so that Thought and object of Thought are the same. For that which is *capable* of receiving the object of Thought, i.e. the substance, is Thought. And it is *active* when it *possesses* this object. Therefore the latter rather than the former is the divine element which Thought seems to contain, and the act of contemplation is what is most pleasant and best. If, then, God is always in that good state in which we sometimes are, this compels our wonder; and if in a better this compels it yet more. And God *is* in a better state. And life also belongs to God; for the actuality of Thought is life, and God is that actuality; and God's essential actuality is life most good and eternal. We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this *is* God.

–Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Λ.7, 1072b18–30.¹

INTRODUCTION

In his *De Anima* (περὶ ψυχῆς) II.2, 413b1–30, Aristotle raises the fundamental question of the nature of the soul. This question is sustained throughout his reflection of the passive and active intellects (*DA* III.5), culminating in a further discussion of νοῦς in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Λ.7 & 9. Aristotle proposes a doctrine of the soul that considers the power of nutrition and of sensation within that of the intellect; the activities of the sensitive power comprise those of the nutritive, and the activities of the intellect comprise those of the sensitive and the nutritive powers. This ascending lineage of powers is, then, suddenly interrupted in Aristotle's account of the intellect. The power of the intellect presupposes passive and active states. In *DA* III.5, Aristotle distinguished the separable activity of the active intellect, albeit operative *in* the soul (ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ) during the human soul's

¹ Trans. Sir D. Ross, Vol. 2.

existence, and then distinguishes it from the passive intellect, which is not separable. Thus, a fissure occurs between the passive intellect, which presupposes the sensitive and nutritive powers, and the active intellect, which operates independently of the passive intellect. Whereas the passive intellect's knowledge presupposes the activities of the nutritive and sensitive powers, the active intellect's knowledge is solely of itself; it has immediate self-knowledge.

The characteristics of the active intellect resemble those of νοῦς as depicted in *Meta.* Λ.7 & 9.² Many scholars, such as Alexander of Aphrodisias and Zabarella, as will be seen below, have interpreted this resemblance as an identification of the active intellect with νοῦς. Aristotle does not explicitly deny that the active intellect is identified with νοῦς, but the context of the passages in question suggest a denial of such an interpretation. With respect to the active intellect, he uses language of immanence, even though it is distinct from the passive intellect, and with respect to νοῦς, language of transcendence. Νοῦς supersedes the active intellect, although they have a common element, i.e., their self-reflective activity. The Aristotelian ἀπορία, then, is this: because Aristotle advances an ascending scale of psychical activities in the *Scala Naturae*, each presupposing the other after the power of nutrition, a fissure can be identified once Aristotle postulates the ontological separation of the active intellect from the passive, and, *a fortiori*, a separation of νοῦς from the preceding grades of being in Nature. Νοῦς remains a separate, independently pure form, devoid of any degree of potency; its knowledge is of itself. Thus, its operation does not presuppose the lower activities of Nature, and, *a fortiori*, the power of the human intellect. The fissure itself is comparable to a chasm between matter and form, which, in sensible beings, consist of a unity. To

² In fact, Gauthier and Jolif have shown that there is also a chronological relation between the doctrine of the *De Anima* and *Metaphysics* Λ, since they were both written in the same period. Cf. R. A. Gauthier and J. Y. Jolif. *L'éthique à Nicomaque d'Aristote*. Vol. 1. (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain), 1958.

assert νοῦς' status as a pure form devoid of matter entails a radical separation of νοῦς from the rest of Nature.

The structure of this chapter will first consist of a discussion of the notion of causality. In this section, Aristotle's four causes, in contrast to Plato's two, will be explained in light of the notion of change, which will be a recurring sub-theme throughout this chapter, and of the twofold division of being according to potency and actuality. This essential background will create the intellectual framework for a discussion of the ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of νοῦς in Aristotle's *DA* III.4–6 and *Meta.* Λ.7 & 9. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of how contemporary Aristotelians have attempted to resolve this Aristotelian ἀπορία.

CAUSALITY

Aristotle's cosmology is governed and ordered by a twofold causality (matter and form),³ which, when analyzed, consists of a fourfold causal doctrine: material, formal, efficient, and final causality.⁴ Aristotle's doctrine of four causes is his answer to the perennial question, "What are the causes of the cosmos?"⁵ In *Metaphysics* A, Aristotle claims, contrary to his predecessors, that only

³ Cf. *Meta.* Z

⁴ Cf. *Physics* II.3, 194b17–195a4.

⁵ The question in Greek philosophy originated with the Ionians (Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes) and the Pythagoreans. The speculative inquiries concerned the general structure of the Cosmos. Whereas the Ionians, in the east of Greece, sought for scientific foundations upon which the Cosmos is established, the Pythagoreans, in the west of Greece, aspired for a religious fraternity based on the mathematical principles inherently operative in the Cosmos. These two complementary beginnings to philosophy were bequeathed to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Cf. W. K. C. Guthrie. *The Greek Philosophers: From Thales to Aristotle*. (New York: Harper & Row), 1975, p. 22.

he has completely captured the causes of the Cosmos.⁶ The Greek terms αἰτία and αἵτιος refer to Aristotle's notion of cause. αἰτία is an adjective that is used substantively, and it means "that on which legal responsibility for a given state of affairs can be laid."⁷ In its substantive use, αἵτιος refers to the "'credit' for good or bad, the legal 'responsibility' for an act."⁸ With respect to Aristotle's cosmology, αἰτία refers to the rational explanation of the factual structure of the Cosmos, and of why particular objects in the Cosmos come into being and can be defined by the intellect.⁹ Causes are not merely conceptually based; they relate to the real events in the Cosmos. Each of the four Aristotelian causes provides partial explanations of the order of the Cosmos. An analysis of the twofold causality of matter and form creates the conceptual framework for the subsequent analysis of the fourfold causal doctrine.

For both Plato and Aristotle, all scientific inquiry requires the study of causes, the reason why Nature is structured the way it is. However, to know causes entails a degree of stability of form, which the intellect apprehends from the sensible object. However, the difference between Plato's and Aristotle's theories of science rests upon the status of the intellect's object. Plato taught that real

⁶ In *Meta.* A.1, Aristotle analyzes at length the trajectory of the four causes. He concludes that no other philosopher prior to himself has systematically captured the four causes that furnish the Cosmos: matter, form, efficient, and final.

⁷ A. E. Taylor. *Aristotle*. (New York: Dover Publications, INC.), 1955, p. 50; Liddell & Scott define αἰτία as follows: "the occasion of something bad, a charge, accusation, blame, a fault." Liddell & Scott. *Greek-English Lexicon*. Abridged. (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1958.

⁸ Taylor, *Aristotle*, p. 50; Liddell & Scott define αἵτιος as follows: "causing, occasioning; hence chargeable with a thing; but mostly in bad sense, causing ill, blamable, guilty . . . the party to be blamed, the culprit."

⁹ A. H. Armstrong. *An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy*. (U.S.A.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.), reprint, 1989, p. 82.

objects of knowledge can be defined, yet remain separate, from the perceptible objects.¹⁰ The Forms, or Ideas, maintain a transcendent, immutable, and eternal status in relation to the physical World's

¹⁰ There is much debate in this century among Greek specialists about whether or not Plato taught that the Forms are actually separate from the sensible object. Aristotle's main charge against Plato, which will be seen further below, is that Plato's theory of Forms is ineffective: "Again, it must be held to be impossible that the substance, and that of which it is the substance, should exist apart; how, therefore, can the Ideas, being the substance of things, exist apart?" (*Meta.* A.1, 991b1–3); "... without the universal it is not possible to get knowledge, but the separation is the cause of the objections that arise with regard to the Ideas. [Socrates'] successors [i.e., Plato], however, treating it as necessary, if there are to be any substances besides the sensible and transient substances, that they must be separable, had no others, but gave separate existence to these universally predicated substances, so that it followed that universals and individuals were almost the same sort of thing." (*Meta.* M.9, 1086b5–10) The debate concerns Aristotle's interpretation of Plato's rendering of the term *χωρισμός*, and, thus, concerns the status of the Forms. Does the Forms' *χωρισμός* necessarily entail merely their conceptual independence, or strictly their ontological independence. In the *Parmenides*, 130b, Plato clearly argues for the separability of the Forms. However, he does not provide a detailed explanation of this proposed doctrine. (Neither, in fact, does Aristotle provide an explanation of his criticism of Plato.) For a short summary, cf. R. Kraut. "Introduction to the Study of Plato," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*. Ed. R. Kraut. (New York: Cambridge University Press), 1996, pp. 41 no.34 and 123. For a more detailed discussion of this debate, cf. G. Fine. "Separation," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 2 (1984), 31–87; G. Vlastos. *Socrates*, in *The Philosophy of Socrates*, ed. G. Vlastos. (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday), 1971, pp. 256–65. Sir David Ross questions Aristotle's criticism of Plato. "It may be doubted whether Plato thus 'separated' the universal from its particulars. To distinguish the universal from its particulars is in a sense to separate it. It is to think of it as a *distinct* entity. Whether Plato also thought of it as a *separately existing* entity, it is hard to say. Much of his language lends itself to the charge, but it is possible that he may only be putting in an emphatic and picturesque way the doctrine that particulars always imply a universal." (D. Ross. *Aristotle*. 5th ed. [London: Methuen & Co Ltd], 1964, p. 158) This debate also abounds in the French-speaking world. Yannis Prélourentzos asserts that when referring to the *Rep.* 509d–511e, it is inappropriate to speak of two "Worlds." Rather, one should speak of "deux domaines d'un seul et même monde (Socrate parle de deux 'lieux' ou 'genres')." (Y. Prélourentzos. *La République* (Livre VII). [Paris: Hatier], p. 13) Monique Dixsaut sympathizes with this view; the Forms are not separate in another world, but the separation entails two dimensions of a same world. (M. Dixsaut. *Le naturel philosophe, Essai sur les dialogues de Platon*. [Paris: J. Vrin], 1985) Luc Brisson, however, does not endorse this theory. It is clear for him that Plato makes a radical, ontological separation between the Forms and the sensible world, since only an intelligible principle distinct from the sensible thing can provide a proper measure of the thing's intelligibility. (L. Brisson. "Une nouvelle interprétation du *Parménides* de Platon," in *Platon et l'objet de la science*. Textes réunis et présentés par P.–M. Morel. (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux), 1996, p. 80) Yvon Lafrance follows the interpretation of Brisson. Cf. Y. Lafrance. *La théorie platonicienne de la δόξα*. (Montréal: Bellarmin), 1981. In fact, both Brisson and Lafrance follow Harold Cherniss. *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 1944. According to Cherniss, Brisson, and Lafrance, the *χωρισμός* is the heart of Plato's philosophy of transcendence. It is difficult for analytic philosophers, such as Vlastos, Kraut, and Fine to accept this transcendent status of the Forms, since analytic philosophy itself does not permit such a dimension to philosophy. In denying the *χωρισμός* of Forms, analytic philosophers and Dixsaut, etc., do not appear to understand the Aristotelian critique. Aristotle's critique of Plato is of Plato's assertion of the real and universal status of Forms. In the early part of Plato's *Parmenides*, Plato argues that the Form is not a concept as such, *νοήμα*, but is beyond a concept. Analytic philosophers, however, tend to view Plato's Forms as concepts, and, therefore, deny the transcendent nature of the Forms. It is, however, beyond the scope of this paper to explore further the ramifications of either position. This paper merely wishes to accentuate Aristotle's conviction that Plato advances a doctrine of the separation of the Forms and that, according to Aristotle, Plato's theory is ineffective.

transient objects, each of which has a correlating Form;¹¹ the Forms are eternal patterns against which the natural world is fashioned by the δημιουργός (*Demiurge*) and preserved by the causes of Nature.

The Aristotelian legacy consists of affirming the intelligibility of the transient, *physical* world. Aristotle's comments on Plato's description of the Forms are clear: they are but "empty words and poetic metaphors," since they do not contribute to the scientific inquiry of knowledge.¹² Although Aristotle refutes the χωρισμός of Plato's Forms, he steadfastly adheres to Plato's vision of the universe as an organized hierarchy of beings, and of the grades of perfection that ensue from the ontological development and surpassing of one stage to another.¹³

Aristotle maintains that philosophy is the attempt to explain the causes of Nature not by reference to a transcendent, separate cause, i.e., the Platonic Forms, but to the *immanent* activity of form in matter. Every sensible substance is characterized by the causal unit of matter and form. In reality, form and matter in sensible substances are inseparable in that the form is the intrinsic, universal principle that *defines* a sensible substance, and must 'co-operate' with matter, since matter individualizes form. The sensible substance *is* the matter organized and determined by the formal

¹¹ Plato. *Republic*. Trans. P. Shorey. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1987, 596a ff: "We are in a habit, I take it, of positing a single idea or form in the case of the various multiplicities to which we give the same name"; cf. also *Rep.*, 507a-b: "We predicate 'to be' of many beautiful things and many good things, saying of them severally that they *are*, and so define them in our speech And again, we speak of a self-beautiful and of a good that is only and merely good, and so, in the case of all the things that we then posited as many, we turn about and posit each as a single idea or aspect, assuming it to be a unity and call it that which each really is And the one class of things we say can be seen but not thought, while the ideas can be thought but not seen." Cf. also Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers*, p. 88.

¹² Aristotle. *Meta.* A.1, 991a12–13: The Forms "help in no wise towards the knowledge of the other things (for they are not even the substance of these, else they would have been in them)"; cf. also Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers*, p. 125.

¹³ The hierarchy of stages is primarily seen in *Meta.* A.1 and *De Anima* II.

principle. Thus, to posit a separation between form and matter, as Plato does, is absurd, since one would have to account for the unity of a thing by first asserting its divisible components. Only logically is form separable, since it can be abstracted and considered apart from matter by the human intellect. However, Aristotle remains sympathetic to the Platonic teaching that scientific knowledge *is* possible, but attained by the intellect's apprehension of the form inherent in the transiency of matter. Ultimately, Aristotle laboured to explain the phenomenon of motion or change,¹⁴ for which, he claims, Plato's Forms were unable to account.¹⁵ Within the fluctuating material Cosmos, form is the stable, intelligible principle. The Aristotelian form, then, is unchangeable and responsible for the intelligibility of each individual sensible substance in the natural world. Thus, the universal principle, form, is located within the individual substance.¹⁶

Aristotle defines 'substance' in two ways: 1) substance in a primary sense (πρῶται οὐσίαι) refers to the individual thing composed of matter and form; 2) substance in the secondary sense (δεύτεραι οὐσίαι) refers to the formal principle, the essence (οὐσία) that corresponds to the universal concept. Aristotle writes: "It follows, then, that 'substance' has two senses, (A) the ultimate substratum, which is no longer predicated of anything else, and (B) that which, being a 'this', is

¹⁴ Cf. Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers*, p. 128; Guthrie elucidates the problem: "How bring within the compass of philosophic knowledge a world of unstable phenomena, always changing, never the same for two instants together? Where is that stability which . . . the human mind demands?"

¹⁵ Cf. *Meta.* A.1, 991a8–10. The question of motion will be further analyzed in this chapter. Let it suffice to say that the problem of motion preoccupied Aristotle's scientific inquiry.

¹⁶ As aforementioned, Plato's Forms are *universal* but separate from the sensible object, whereas Aristotle's are, while still universal, operative within the sensible object. According to Aristotle, the universal form renders a substance into a *individual* thing, i.e., a *this*. Generally, Aristotle speaks of substances as sensible things in composition of matter and form. However, in the *DA* and *Meta.*, he speaks of νοῦς as an unperceived, albeit individual, substance, since it is devoid of matter, a topic that will be addressed later in this chapter. Cf. J. Barnes. *Aristotle*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1982, pp. 45–46.

separable –and of this nature is the shape or form of each thing.”¹⁷ This latter sense of substance is usually rendered οὐσία, essence, and is conceptually apprehended by the human intellect. Again, only in the latter sense is form separable, since it is logically abstracted by the human intellect. Although essence has its logical adherence in the human mind, it must exist extra-mentally in the material object itself; otherwise, the material object cannot be considered as an individual unity of matter and form. Insofar as the material object is informed, it is a real thing. Thus, contrary to Plato’s claim that the Form is transcendent to the object, Aristotle argues that form is inherent and *immanently* operative within it, and is accountable for the intelligibility and *realness* of the material object.

Aristotle’s sensible universe is characterized by substances changing in four ways: change of substance, of quality, of quantity, and of place.¹⁸ Change entails a beginning, an end, and a subject that endures through the change. In *Phys. V*, Aristotle says the following:

We have then the following factors: that which directly causes motion, and that which is in motion; further, that in which motion takes place, namely time, and (distinct from these three) that from which and that to which it proceeds (for every motion proceeds from something and to something, that which is directly in motion being distinct from that to which it is in motion and that from which it is in motion: for instance, wood, hot, and cold—the first is that which is in motion, the second is that to which the motion proceeds, and the third is that from which it proceeds).¹⁹

With respect to changes of quality, of quantity, and of place, a substance persists through the change.

Yet, the substance cannot evidently persist through its change; Socrates cannot persist through his

¹⁷ *Meta.* Δ.8. 1017b23–25; cf. also *Categories V*.

¹⁸ Change in substance entails the birth and death of a natural organism and includes the generation and destruction of an artefact; change in quality means the alteration of the properties of a substance, i.e., water alters when it is exposed to freezing or boiling conditions; change in quantity refers to the growth and diminution of a substance; and change in place refers to motion. Cf. Barnes, *Aristotle*, pp. 46–47.

¹⁹ *Phys. V.1*, 224a34–b4, trans. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye.

own birth and death. Thus, in the *Scala Naturae*, Aristotle presents change of substance as a unique type of change.

In the *Scala Naturae*, Aristotle presents a formless matter at the bottom and a matterless form at the top. Prior to the complexity of material beings, prime matter (πρῶτη ὕλη), at the lowest level of the *Scala Naturae*, remains the simplest matter, and, ultimately, the primary condition of change in the fluctuating world.²⁰ Uninformed matter cannot exist *per se*. In other words, prime matter, matter in itself, is a logical inference which Aristotle postulates in order to consider an indeterminate condition for shape to take place in beings.²¹ Therefore, its priority is within the level of logic. Indeterminate as it is, prime matter is the underlying substrate of changing substances, logically considered. Yet, although indeterminate, prime matter is *determinable*, since it is potentially any *thing*. Prime matter merely requires the impression of a *universal* principle, namely form, to enable matter to become some particular thing. Thus, matter and form are correlative terms which must co-operate to create the unity of a sensible thing.²²

The most simple elements in the *Scala Naturae* are earth, water, air, and fire. Yet, these elements are not indeterminate, as their simple nature would suggest, but they are already determined bodies through the faint activity of form. Collectively and duly proportioned at the lowest level of the *Scala Naturae*, they form minerals, which become the material for plants and animals. Ascending

²⁰ It should be noted that Aristotle rarely uses the term “πρῶτη ὕλη.” His disciples, however, considered it to be one of the most important doctrines in Aristotle’s philosophy. Cf. Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 168.

²¹ Prime matter is logically postulated in order to understand the added and juxtaposed properties or accidents in a substance. Cf. *Phys.* I.8, 191a31–2 and II.1, 193a29.

²² Ross contends that prime matter “ . . . nowhere exists apart. It is only an element in the nature of individual things concrete of matter and form. It exists in union with one of the prime contraries heat and cold, and with one of the other prime contraries dryness and fluidity.” Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 168.

the hierarchy, the human being presupposes the material and formal complexity of the preceding stages. The human is the highest organized being of animals, because of its capacity of reason, especially active reason. Surpassing the human being are the pure intelligent substances devoid of matter. At the summit of the hierarchy is a single, simple substance of pure form: νοῦς.²³

The Four Causes

As mentioned above, the sensible substance is composed of the inseparable causal unit of *matter* and *form*. In the *Scala Naturae*, the composite level of matter and form is located in the concrete, transient conditions of sensible reality, that is earth, a stage below that of the sublunary sphere, which contains only rotating, immaterial forms, i.e., the “gods.” Whereas the material cause (ὕλη)²⁴ is the material fabric out of which something is produced,²⁵ the formal cause (εἶδος) is the inner, animating principle of change that clearly defines a sensible substance as such and distinguishes it from another substance. The status of matter correlates to the four levels of change, and change itself correlates to four kinds of matter: local matter or matter for locomotion, matter for alteration, matter for change of size, and matter for generation and destruction. More specifically, sensible

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 168-69.

²⁴ In fact, ἡ ὕλη literally means *timber*, the timber of a boat. This rendering, used in Plato and Aristotle, most likely originated from the Pythagorean vision of the universe as a ship. Cf. Taylor, *Aristotle*, p. 45.

²⁵ The material substance that is produced is a configuration of the four material elements, earth, air, water, and fire, which are duly proportioned by the formal cause. This teaching is found in Plato's works, especially the *Timaeus*, where the four elements are duly proportioned into a determinate measure by the δημιουργός. Cf. *Timaeus*, 31c–32c, especially 32c, which provides the reason for δημιουργός' activity of harmonizing the elements of the Cosmos, namely, to ensure the Cosmos' unity: “For these reasons and out of these materials, such in kind and four in number, the body of the Cosmos was harmonized by proportion and brought into existence. These conditions secured for it Amity, so that being united in identity with itself it became indissoluble by any agent other than Him who had bound it together.” Plato. *Timaeus*. Trans. R. G. Bury. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1987. The four elements in the *Timaeus* are derived from Empedocles.

objects are a composite of form and local matter.²⁶ Change presupposes matter. Matter is the indeterminate dimension of a substance which acquires more determination in proportion to the increase of formal influence. With respect to the formal cause, Aristotle, in *Phys.* II.3, 194b27, considers form as the “archetype, i.e. the definition [λόγος] of the essence, and its genera, [which are] called causes.”²⁷ The form of a thing, as the inner, animating principle of alteration, provides the essence of a thing. The λόγος of the essence is what Aristotle refers to as the structure or “order” of the essence, which is particularized, or “instantiated,” in matter, thus rendering the thing intelligible.²⁸ J. Lear captures the relation between formal cause and the essence of a thing very well: “Because the form of a natural organism or artefact gives us what it is to be that thing, *the why* and *the what* converge . . . for *the why* of something is its essence.”²⁹ Both the form and the essence are required to provide an intelligent account of things.

The subsequent two causes, efficient (τὸ ὄθεν ἡ κίνησις) and final, are two necessary dimensions to the causal order of the Cosmos, establishing, in relation to the material and formal causes, a fourfold causal doctrine. They coalesce in that “*the changer will always introduce a form . . . which, when it moves, will be the principle and cause of the change*. For instance, an actual man

²⁶ However, later in his career, Aristotle asserts a subtle type of matter, i.e., intelligible matter or spatial extension, that is perceptible by thought only, that is, intelligible matter, though it cannot exist apart from local matter. That is, intelligible matter refers to the abstraction from sensible objects to mathematical objects. Yet, Aristotle clearly says, in opposition to Plato, that these objects of intelligible matter, do not exist in themselves; they are merely a conceptual abstraction of local (sensible) matter. Cf. *Meta.* M & N where Aristotle argues at length against Plato, Xenocrates, the Pythagoreans, and, *a fortiori*, Speusippus for their adamant theories of the separate and independent, substantial existence of numerical entities. According to Aristotle, only the individual, concrete being in the sensible world composed of matter and form is real. In the following discussion of matter, I will primarily refer to local matter, unless otherwise stated.

²⁷ *Phys.* II.3, 194b27.

²⁸ Jonathan Lear. *Aristotle: The Desire to Understand*. (New York: Cambridge University Press), 1988, p. 28.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

makes what is potentially a man into a man.”³⁰ The formal cause is inseparable from the efficient and final causes.³¹ The efficient cause³² refers to the being in actuality that initiates movement; it refers to the primary source of change,³³ the agent of change in a substance.³⁴ Again, the efficient and formal causes are not mutually exclusive. The principal agent of change is, therefore, identified with that which introduces the form. As a primary principle of change, the efficient cause is fully actual. Only form is actual. Therefore, efficient cause coalesces with, and is an expression of, form, *logically* speaking. “Therefore,” Lear concludes, “the primary source of change is form. The actual primary source is an active state.”³⁵

The final cause, “that for the sake of which” (τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα),³⁶ is the end or purpose (τέλος) for which the thing is brought into being,³⁷ or the goal to which the growth development is directed.³⁸ The final cause rightly characterizes Aristotle’s philosophy as teleological, since the emphasis is on the purpose or end, which is immanently operative in the thing during its development. Aristotle

³⁰ *Phys.* III.2, 202a9–12.

³¹ *Cf. Lear, Aristotle*, p. 28.

³² It must be remembered that Aristotle did not use the term “efficient cause.” This is an early Modern rendering of the term.

³³ *Cf., Phys.* II.3, 194b29–30.

³⁴ *Cf., Phys.* II.1, 193b2; *cf. also Lear, Aristotle*, p. 29.

³⁵ *Lear, Aristotle*, p. 35.

³⁶ *Phys.* II.3, 194b32–3.

³⁷ Armstrong, *Introduction*, p. 82. For a discussion on the τέλος of Nature, *cf. Henri-Paul Cunningham*. “Téléologie, nature et esprit,” in *La question de Dieu selon Aristote et Hegel*. Publié sous la direction de T. de Koninck et G. Planty-Bonjour. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France), 1991, pp. 25–35.

³⁸ Aristotle. *Selections*. Trans. Terence Irwin and Gail Fine. (Ind.: Hackett Publishing Company), 1995, *Glossary*, pp. 564–622, especially p. 582; *cf. Phys.* II.3, 194a35 and *Meta.* Λ.7, 1072b2.

clearly states that the final cause is not logically, but *really*, different from the formal cause, and is a fundamental expression of form:

since nature is twofold, the matter and the form, *of which the latter is the end*, and since all the rest is for the sake of the end, *the form must be the cause* in the sense of 'that for the sake of which' It is evident then *that nature is a cause*, a cause that operates for a purpose.³⁹

Although the form is necessarily a realized state, i.e., the necessary conditions of its assuming the role of the primary principle of motion, it is a state *relatively* realized in relation to a higher, more simple stage with less matter. Each stage yearns or strives for a higher form.⁴⁰ For example, at each stage of the acorn's development, its form is increasingly achieving full actualization, moving towards its end (τέλος): the oak. Paradoxically, the end towards which each thing aspires is inherent in the thing itself from the very beginning. The end is not severed from the growth process of the natural object. It is form that is the propelling force or power inherently operative in each thing and, as its moving principle, it is considered the thing's end. It is form in its actual state that functions as the final cause. As actuality precedes potency,⁴¹ the end (τέλος) precedes the actualized state of the thing, absolutely speaking. The τέλος is the force actualizing the substance's potencies. Again, the end is the form in its realized state. "The end, the form in its realized state," comments Lear, "is none other than a successful striving."⁴² Therefore, to render the process intelligible, form must be expressed as a final cause. "For Aristotle," continues Lear, "the reason one has to cite the form in

³⁹ *Phys.* II.8. 199a30–2.

⁴⁰ In fact, Aristotle will say that movement in Nature is caused by the Prime Mover, which functions as an object of love, towards which the whole of Nature aspires. The Prime Mover is the unmoved Mover. "On such a principle, then, depend the heavens and the world of nature." *Meta.* Λ.7. 1072b14.

⁴¹ *Meta.* H.1, 1049b5.

⁴² Lear, *Aristotle*, p. 35.

its final, realized state is that it is only by reference to that form that one can understand teleological behavior.”⁴³ With respect to matter, form is actual; however, in relation to the final τέλος, form is, in this present state of development, potential. Hence, whereas form in the *process* of self-actualization is potential, form realized (τέλος) is form fully actual.⁴⁴ The end is only present potentially, as the oak is potentially present in the acorn, and actually present when the acorn becomes an oak.

Development or growth entails the emergence of the actualization from that which is potential. Yet, development does not imply the emergence of something new, since the end is already inherent in the thing itself; the τέλος already governs the developing process of the thing's actualization. Development does not entail the changing of one *infima species* into another. In the *Categories*, Aristotle argues that each genus includes its unchanging *infima species*, and that development occurs only within the particular specimen, the substance, of the species. However, in his later works, Aristotle suggests that the *infima species*, and not the specimen, is the true substance. The genus alone is too abstract, indeterminate, and universal to be a substance. Yet, its development, i.e., its concrete determination through the admixture of diverse *differentiae*, enables the genus to become in the *infima species* an “indivisible (‘atomic’) unity of universal and individual.”⁴⁵

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁴⁴ Lear further writes that the “. . . form of a developing organism . . . is not merely its achieved structure, it is a force in the organism for attaining even higher levels of organization until the organism achieves its mature form.” *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴⁵ G. R. G. Mure. *Foreword* to Weiss, F. W. *Hegel's Critique of Aristotle's Philosophy of Mind*. (Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague), 1969, p. xiv.

δύναμις and ἐνέργεια

In *Meta. Θ*, Aristotle introduces the terms potency (δύναμις) and actuality (ἐνέργεια)⁴⁶ as corollaries to the matter–form distinction in order to further explain real development, i.e., change, in the *Scala Naturae*. Sensible things change, and thus the proportion of matter and form also changes. In all development, form increases, whereas matter decreases. As with matter and form, potency and actuality are defined only in relation to one another. However, potency and actuality differ from matter and form in that the latter pair do not properly analyze the real *movement* of a thing, whereas the former pair relate to the *dynamic* changes occurring in real, particular substances. As one considers the ascending order of the *Scala Naturae*, one only conceptually perceives an increase in form and decrease in matter. Whereas when the sensible thing changes, matter and form *per se* do not change, since matter and form remain abstract causal principles in any sensible substance. Consequently, the matter-form distinction remains an *abstraction* from the changing, sensible thing, and insofar as the distinction is an abstraction, it is reduced to a *static* representation of the sensible phenomena.⁴⁷ Thus, potency and actuality render a more precise account of change in *real* sensible substance.

As prime matter does not exist *per se*, potency cannot exist *per se*—it must necessarily “co-operate” with actuality. Aristotle provides two senses of the term δύναμις.⁴⁸ The first sense refers to the power one substance possesses to influence the movement of another. The second sense refers

⁴⁶ In fact, Aristotle makes a subtle distinction between ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια. ἐνέργεια refers to the completed process of growth of the form itself in a substance, i.e., the realization of form; whereas ἐντελέχεια strictly refers to the appearance or manifestation of the *realized* form. Cf. Taylor, *Aristotle*, p. 49.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴⁸ *Meta. Θ*.1, 1045b35–1046a11.

to the capacity of a material substance to *receive* a form. The first sense may be called *active* potency, whereas the latter *passive* potency.⁴⁹ An active potency entails the actualization or realization of a potency, prior to which state it remained passive. Thus, the active potency can effect change in individual substances by actualizing their potencies. Potency, then, cannot be defined by abstract concepts: it is merely observed in a particular, individual substance. Aristotle, says Ross, “sees clearly that the notion of potency is indefinable; he can only indicate its nature by pointing to particular instances.”⁵⁰ Potency characterizes the real change or development of a substance. However, potency alone cannot fully explain change, since nothing develops from passive potency to active potency without the agency of an actual thing.⁵¹ A substance’s full development into maturity entails not only two states of potency, but also an agent already fully actual which is responsible for influencing movement in the substance. Therefore, the actual state of the agent is the necessary condition for the actualization of the two states of potencies in any sensible substance. Actuality precedes potency with respect to time and logic.⁵² It is logically prior, since the actuality functions as an end or *that for the sake of which* the potency exists. An acorn is temporally prior to its full actualization as an oak, the oak logically precedes the acorn, because the acorn is for the sake of the oak. It is temporally prior, because something potential is always produced from an agent that

⁴⁹ For a helpful summary of this distinction, cf. T. A. Robinson, *Aristotle in Outline*. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.), 1995, pp. 44–45.

⁵⁰ Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 176.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁵² Aristotle also demonstrates a third way in which actuality precedes potency: that which is eternal is prior in nature to that which is perishable. Potency does not ensure the eternity of a substance. The substance that is potentially a being is also potentially a non-being, while the eternal substance, that which is always actual, never ceases to be. Aristotle refers to the immaterial substances in the sublunary sphere (*Meta.* Λ.8) and to νοῦς (*Meta.* Λ.7 & 9).

is already in actuality.⁵³ For an acorn to develop into an oak tree, an already existing oak tree must first produce the acorn. Thus, in the order of time and logic, actuality must precede potency, the oak tree must precede the acorn.

With this distinction of potency and actuality, Aristotle now provides a stricter definition of change. "Change," says Aristotle, "is the actuality of the potential *qua* such."⁵⁴ Change is essentially the *development* or process of an incomplete substance towards its proper perfect realization.⁵⁵ The entire Cosmos owes its movement to every being's movement towards self-actualization. For Aristotle, development is not the genesis of something new out of nothing. Rather, development is the *transition* from potential to actual states of being. Thus, development entails the operative activity of the end, i.e., actuality, through the entire process of growth.

The entire *Scala Naturae*, then, is governed by the interplay of both potency and actuality in

⁵³ Ross says: "A is not potentially B unless it can come to be actually B, and since it cannot do so except by the agency of something already actual, its very potentiality of being B presupposes an actuality." (Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 177) Barnes, however, contests Aristotle's claim for the temporal priority of actuality. Barnes argues that although Aristotle is correct in concluding that a substance receives particular qualities transmitted from an actual agent, Aristotle bases his argument on a faulty principle, the principle of "generation (or causation) by synonym": if x makes y F, then x itself must be, or have been, F; if x heats y or makes y an oak tree, then x must itself have been hot or an oak tree." (J. Barnes, "Metaphysics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*. Ed. J. Barnes. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1995, p. 96) Elsewhere, Barnes provides further explanation for contending Aristotle. Barnes' claim is that this level of *transmitting* a quality to another need not be causally related. He argues that Aristotle's "argument is ingenious; but in fact causation need not be—and usually is not—a matter of transmission." (Barnes, *Aristotle*, p. 50) It would appear that Barnes has Hume in the background. In one's experience, one cannot demonstrate a causal relation between event A and event B. One can only admit to a coincidence in time that allows B to occur after A. Perhaps, in this light, one is to interpret Barnes' claim that causality is not a transmission.

⁵⁴ *Phys.* III.1, 201a10-11.

⁵⁵ That is, change is the substance's *capacity* to always change insofar as its capacity is actualized. Barnes qualifies Aristotle's definition in the following paraphrase: "Something is in the process of changing whenever it possesses a capacity to change and is exercising that capacity." (Barnes, *Aristotle*, p. 50) It is interesting to note that as Aristotle advances towards a definition of change, his language becomes increasingly more difficult and convoluted. Perhaps the reason is that change cannot be conceptually grasped and defined, since a definition necessarily presupposes stability – a quality, according to Aristotle, that change obviously does not possess.

their various degrees of operation in a given substance, and in a given stage of being. Each stage exhibits a degree of potency and actuality, decreasing in potency as the stages rise in the *Scala Naturae*. Each stage is related to the stage preceding it (its proximate matter) and the one surpassing it. The higher up the hierarchy, the less potency and the more actuality there is in beings, culminating in the First Cause, νοῦς, which possesses pure form or actuality, devoid of any degree of matter or potency. This substantial lineage establishes a continuity of beings composed of potency and actuality duly proportioned to the particular stage. Thus, after the first stage, each stage implicitly presupposes the preceding stage by substantially assimilating it. The substantial assimilation of the nature of beings subordinate to the more actual beings into a greater unity and increased actuality establishes a continuity of life, which characterizes the Cosmos as a *living* Cosmos. Aristotle demonstrates in his *DA* that the interplay between potency and actuality in the *Scala Naturae* is also present in the soul (ψυχή) of living organisms.

DE ANIMA

In the *DA*, Aristotle essentially defines the soul as an “actuality of the first kind [ἐντελέχεια] of a natural body having life potentially in it.”⁵⁶ As the actuality of a living body,⁵⁷ the soul is the form of the body, and functions according to a final causal role. Analogously, as the body has developmental stages of growth, so, too, does the soul. The order of development

⁵⁶ *DA* II.1, 412a27, trans. J. A. Smith.

⁵⁷ A living body is made up of its diverse organic parts. Cf. *Meta.* Z.10, 1035b20-21 and *Generation of Animals* I.1, 715a10. The definition of an organ depends upon the living status of a body of which it is a part; knowledge of the function of an organ presupposes its operation within a living body. Cf. S. Everson. “Psychology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, p. 184; also for a fuller discussion, cf. J. L. Ackril. “Aristotle’s Definitions of *psuchê*,” *Articles on Aristotle*. Vol. 4. Eds. J. Barnes, M. Schoefield, and R. Sorabji. (London: Gerald Duckworth & Company Limited), 1979, pp. 70ff.

necessarily presupposes the principle of *inclusion*. That is, the higher developed a power of the soul is, the more its activities include and presuppose the lower grades of soul, although the lower grades may operate independently of the more highly developed.⁵⁸ Aristotle asserts three grades of psychological life, each including activities that are organized within an ontogenetic order: the nutritive, the sensitive, and the rational.⁵⁹ This ascending scale of the soul's activities further entails the grades of actuality, of form, operative within simple or complex structures of bodies (σώματα). The sensitive activity of the soul presupposes and includes the activity of the nutritive power, whereas the rational activity presupposes and includes the preceding two.⁶⁰ The nutritive soul can operate independently of the sensitive and rational grades of soul: "For the power of perception is never found apart from the power of self-nutrition, while—in plants—the latter is found isolated from the former."⁶¹ The ascension of the soul's activities culminates in the rational power, located within the human being.⁶²

⁵⁸ Cf. Taylor, *Aristotle*, p. 77.

⁵⁹ DA II.2, 413b11-13. This ascension is comparable to Aristotle's famous passage in *Meta. A*, where he explains the ascending degrees of the *Scala Naturae*: the passage from sensation through memory, experience, and art to theoretical knowledge.

⁶⁰ More specifically, the passive intellect presupposes the φαντασία (imagination) of the sensitive soul in order that it may operate conceptually. Cf. DA I.1, 403a8-9 and III.7, 431a16-17.

⁶¹ DA II.3, 415a1-2

⁶² It should be noted that Aristotle's teaching of an ascension of actuality or form does not presuppose a physical evolution. The Aristotelian notion of development pertains to the species itself within a genus. There can be no passage as such from one genus into another. However, there are moments in his corpus where Aristotle admits to the difficulty of identifying proper delineations between some genera. Cf. Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers*, pp. 140 and 144. In fact, Aristotle would probably disagree with Darwin's theory of evolution. If actuality necessarily precedes potency, then an actual being must already exist in order for development to occur. Therefore, Aristotle's notion of development requires a perfect agent at the beginning of a process of growth in order for something comparable to the agent to emerge, whereas Darwin's notion of evolution entails a gradual development *towards* perfection devoid of an active agent temporally prior to the developing species. In other words, whereas Darwin asserts the possibility of evolution to occur from one *infima species* into another, Aristotle denounces such a transition: change only occurs within the individual specimen within the unchanging species. Cf. *Categories* III and V. For further research on the relation between Darwin and Aristotle, cf. Etienne Gilson, *From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again: A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution*. Trans. J. Lyon. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press), 1984.

Aristotle's discussion of human rational thought is located in *DA* II.2, 413b25-30, and, *a fortiori*, III.4-5. The interplay of potency and actuality in beings furnishes Aristotle with the conceptual landscape to discuss human thought in relation to νοῦς, situated at the summit of the *Scala Naturae*. Within the rational soul, Aristotle makes a fundamental distinction between the passive and active intellects, the latter enigmatically characterized as independent and separable from all potency because of its active, purely self-reflective, and simple nature.

The ἀπορία in the *De Anima*

In *DA* III.4, Aristotle connects the passive intellect's operations with those of the sense organs. As the sense organ receives the form of its object, which then affects the organ by the qualities of the object, the passive intellect also receives and contains the form of its object, which affects the passive intellect. However, unlike the sense organ, the passive intellect is accorded a non-physical status, and, thus, is not considered as an organ.⁶³ If the passive intellect is not an organ, Aristotle's challenge is to explain how the passive intellect is akin to sense organs. He will employ language of potency and actuality to explain this kinship. Because the passive intellect is unmixed with anything, it has the potential to become identical with whatever form is impressed upon it. Only upon its reception of a form is the intellect awakened from its dormant state. The interplay between the form received and the passive intellect is also akin to prime matter's reception of form;⁶⁴ before the passive intellect receives the form of its object, it is not real, as prime matter is not real devoid

⁶³ Cf. D. W. Hamlyn. *Aristotle: De Anima, Books II and III*. Trans. and Intro. D. W. Hamlyn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1993, p. 136.

⁶⁴ Robinson, *Aristotle*, pp. 49–50.

of form.

If thinking is like perceiving . . . the thinking part of the soul must therefore be, while impassible, capable of receiving the form of an object; that is, must be potentially identical in character with its object without being the object. Thought must be related to what is thinkable, as sense is to what is sensible. Therefore, since everything is a possible object of Thought, mind in order . . . to dominate, that is, to know, must be pure from all admixture; for the co-presence of what is alien to its nature is a hindrance and a block: it follows that it can have no nature of its own, other than that of having a certain capacity. Thus that in the soul which is called Thought . . . is, before it thinks, not actually any real thing.⁶⁵

Thus, the passive intellect is potentially identical with its object, i.e., the form of the sensible object, but is "actually nothing, until it thinks."⁶⁶ The passive intellect is a potency of the whole person and is dependent upon the sense organs of the body. In this way, Aristotle maintains a continuity of potency and actuality of prior grades of being.⁶⁷ As with the power of sensation, which "has no actual but only potential existence,"⁶⁸ the passive intellect *per se* does not exist until it thinks. Prior to this point, it is potentially everything.⁶⁹

The received and contained form then becomes conceptualized by the active intellect, which enables the intellect to become identical with the form of the object. "The soul is in a way all things"

⁶⁵ DA III.4, 429a13-24

⁶⁶ DA III.4, 429b30.

⁶⁷ Aristotle's language of dependence enforces his thesis that there is an ontological ascension of activities: the power of sensibility depends upon the vegetative power, and the intellect depends upon not only its proximate matter, the sense powers, but also the vegetative power. "Now it is by means of the sensitive faculty that we discriminate the hot and the cold . . . the essential character of flesh is apprehended by something different either wholly separate from the sensitive faculty or related to it as a bent line to the same line when it has been straightened out Again in the case of abstract objects what is straight is analogous to what is snub-nosed; for it necessarily implies a continuum." (DA III.4, 429b14-18) As with form's dependence on a particular matter, the passive intellect is dependent on sense data.

⁶⁸ DA II.5, 417a6.

⁶⁹ Cf. Hamlyn, *Aristotle*, p. 136

(ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ ὄντα πῶς ἐστὶ πάντα).⁷⁰ Paradoxically, in becoming identical with the object, the intellect becomes an object to itself, and knows itself. The self-reflective activity characterizes the nature and function of the active intellect, which Aristotle presents in *DA* III.5. Historically, it has engendered many interpretations. The complexity of this passage demands a brief exegesis, within which historically divergent doctrines will be elucidated.⁷¹ “Since in every class of things,” begins Aristotle,

as in nature as a whole, we find two factors involved, a matter which is potentially all the particulars included in the class, a cause which is productive in the sense that it makes them all (the latter standing to the former, as e.g. an art to its material), these distinct elements must likewise be found within the soul.⁷²

The co-principles of nature, matter, and efficient cause that makes all things, are paradigmatic in Aristotle’s discussion of the nature of the rational soul. He states two central ideas. First, though distinct from each other, the active and passive intellects operate *in* the soul: ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ refers to the locus of the respective activities of both states of intellect.⁷³ The distinction between the active and passive intellects entails their separate, yet co-operative, activities.

Second, the active intellect does not make all things *ex nihilo*. The active intellect operates on pre-existing “material” provided by the passive intellect. In fact, the “material” upon which the active intellect works is the passive intellect itself. The active intellect, then, assumes the role of raising that which is potential to a state of actuality. It is a causally prior principle that “makes” a

⁷⁰ *DA* III.8, 431b21.

⁷¹ This exegesis will provide a framework against which Hegel’s interpretation of the *DA* will be analyzed in Chapter 2.

⁷² *DA* III.5, 10–14.

⁷³ It is Ross’ contention, and of most Aristotelians following Ross, that ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ should be translated as “in the soul” and *not* “in the case of the soul.” (Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 149 no. 1)

thing intelligible and allows the intellect to be identical with the form of its object.⁷⁴ Thus, lines 10-14 of *DA* III.5 express two interactive states of intellect operative within a human soul.

The nature of these two distinct intellectual activities is explained in the subsequent lines. “And in fact Thought, as we have described it, is what it is by virtue of becoming all things, while there is another which is what it is by virtue of making all things”⁷⁵ The passive intellect assumes the role of apprehension.⁷⁶ That is, knowledge is identical with the form of its object by virtue of the passive intellect’s apprehension of the *form* of the object. While the passive intellect becomes all things, the active intellect “makes all things.” The nature of the active intellect is to enable the passive intellect to apprehend and *become* its object. i.e., determined by the form of the object. The active intellect is the condition for the passive intellect’s grasping its object. Aristotle is consistent with his teaching in the *Metaphysics*:

For from the potential the actual is always produced by an actual thing, e.g. man by man, musician by musician; there is always a first mover, and the mover already exists actually. We have said in our account of substance that everything that is produced is something produced from something and by something, and is the same in species as it.⁷⁷

In *DA* III.5, 15-17, then, the passive intellect is analogous to matter by becoming all things, and the active intellect is analogous to the efficient cause by making all things (ποιεῖν πάντα).⁷⁸ As mentioned above, the active intellect does not make things out of nothing. Rather, as Hicks

⁷⁴ Lear, *Aristotle*, p. 137

⁷⁵ *DA* III.5, 15-17.

⁷⁶ Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 149.

⁷⁷ *Meta.* Θ.8, 1049b24-29; Ross comments: “. . . what the active reason acts on is the passive reason, which is a sort of plastic material on which active reason impresses the forms of knowable objects.” (Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 150)

⁷⁸ That is, the active intellect makes all things by raising the form of the object in question to a state of abstraction.

paraphrases, its activity operates by “making things of one kind into things of another,”⁷⁹ which accounts for the movement of the passive intellect.

The active intellect “is a sort of positive state like light; for in a sense light makes potential colours into actual colours.”⁸⁰ Like an efficient cause, the active intellect makes all things as a light illuminates that which is potential to actual; potential colours become actual by virtue of the light.⁸¹ The active intellect is related to the intelligible as light is to the visible.⁸² However, the active intellect differs from light. Light is defined as an actual transparent medium through which colours and objects may be seen by the eye. Light is the state of actual transparency in a living organism. Light is an actuality that functions as an effective medium.⁸³ The active intellect is not a medium between the passive intellect and its object. Rather, the active intellect has immediate apprehension of its object, since its knowledge is of itself. The analogy between the active intellect and light is accurate only in this way: both the active intellect and light are a third element in relation to the passive intellect and its object, and the organ, i.e., the eye, to its visible object.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ R. D. Hicks. *Aristotle's De Anima*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1907, p. 499; cf. also Rist: “All the objects of thought are ‘made’ into characteristics of the Passive Intellect which thus ‘is made’ or ‘becomes’ all things. Thus when one thought gives way to the next, the Passive Intellect, now ‘made’ of one kind of thought, is made into another.” (J. M. Rist. “Notes on Aristotle, *de Anima* III.5,” *Classical Philology* 61 (1966), 10)

⁸⁰ *DA* III.5, 430a17.

⁸¹ Reference to light as a metaphor of active intellect seems to be a reminiscence of Plato’s depiction of the Idea of the Good through the symbolic use of the Sun (cf. *Rep.* 507b-509d), as mentioned in the Introduction to this Thesis.

⁸² Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 150.

⁸³ *DA* II.7, 418b11-21.

⁸⁴ *DA* II.7, 418b12. Cf. also Ross: “Light is the condition of a medium which has been made actually transparent by the presence of an illuminant, and it is its actuality that makes it possible for the eye which *can* see actually to see, and for the visible object actually to be seen. (Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 150)

Lines 18–19 of *DA* III.5 begin the Aristotelian ἀπορία of the active intellect. These lines describe the active intellect in the following way: “Thought in this sense of it is separable (χωριστός), impassible (ἀπαθής), unmixed (ἄμιγύς), since it is in its essential nature activity (for always the active is superior to the passive factor, the originating force to the matter).” In line 22, Aristotle describes the active intellect as χωρισθείς. It is Hicks’ contention, agreeing with Zeller, that χωριστός does not mean separable, but “‘actually separate’ i.e. ‘not involved in physical life.’”⁸⁵ In fact, according to Hicks, the separate nature of the active intellect is best explained in Aristotle’s *De generatione animalium* II.3, 736b28. Here, the activities of the body operate independently of the activities of νοῦς.⁸⁶ Hicks further argues that the three predicates characterizing the active intellect in *DA* III.5 “were applied to νοῦς in [*DA* III.4] before any mention had been made of the distinction between active and passive intellect.”⁸⁷ His central claim is that these three predicates first apply to the passive intellect before they can be applied to the active intellect in *DA* III.5. In *DA* III.4, 429a15, Aristotle argues that the intellect in general is not mixed with the body and is ἀπαθής (impassible), but has the capacity of “receiving the form of an object: that is, must be potentially identical in character with its object without being the object.”⁸⁸ In *DA* III.5, χωριστός and ἀπαθής characterize the primacy of the active intellect over the passive: “for

⁸⁵ Hicks, *Aristotle*, p. 502.

⁸⁶ Cf. *DA* I.4, 408b29: “Thought is more divine and impassible [than the body, or vehicle].” Also cf. *DA* II.1, 413a4–8: “From this it is clear that the soul is inseparable from its body, or at any rate that certain parts of it are (if it has parts)—for the actuality of some of them is the actuality of the parts themselves. Yet some may be separable because they are not the actualities of any body at all. Further, we have no light on the problem whether the soul may not be the actuality of its body in the sense in which the sailor is the actuality of the ship.”

⁸⁷ Hicks, *Aristotle*, p. 502.

⁸⁸ *DA* III.4, 429a15.

always the active (ποιεῖν) is superior to the passive factor, the originating force to the matter.” Strictly speaking, then, the passive intellect in *DA* III.4 is not ἀπαθής as the active intellect is, but παθητικός, the *receptor* of forms, and, as a result, it is affected by the forms. The active intellect is clearly unaffected by the reception of forms. Only in *DA* III.5 does Aristotle naturally make a distinction within the intellect. The intellect now possesses passive and active powers. Therefore, Aristotle’s use of χωριστός and ἀπαθής in *DA* III.5 asserts the separation of the active intellect not only from the body, but also from the passive intellect. χωριστός must then mean *separable* from the passive intellect.⁸⁹

However, the aorist participle χωρισθείς also indicates that the active intellect is *separated* after the death of the soul. Aristotle recapitulates this teaching in *Meta.* Λ.3, 1070a25-26 in relation to the degree of separation entailed: “But we must examine whether any form also survives afterwards. For in some cases this may be so, e.g. the soul may be of this sort—not all soul but the reason: for doubtless it is impossible that *all* soul should survive.”⁹⁰ In this passage, Aristotle does not make the distinction between the active and passive intellects, but speaks merely of the intellect *tout court* that survives death. Whereas in *DA* III.5, the distinction is clear: the passive intellect belongs to the soul, which is the actuality of a living organism, and, consequently, the passive intellect is unable to survive this organism’s death.⁹¹ The passive intellect, therefore, is relegated to the part of the soul that does not survive death, while the active intellect does survive. As mentioned above, the implication here is that the active intellect is not separated insofar as the soul remains alive, but

⁸⁹ Cf. Rist, “Notes . . .,” 13–14.

⁹⁰ *Meta.* Λ.3, 1070a25-26.

⁹¹ Cf. Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 150.

is separated at death: “When separated (*χωρισθείς*) [from the passive intellect], it is alone just what it is, and this above is immortal and eternal”⁹² Rist captures the inevitable conclusion with respect to Aristotle’s two terms *χωριστός* and *χωρισθείς*: “Since then there is a time when the Active Intellect is not separated but linked in some way to the Passive, as efficient cause to matter, and since, however, separation *does* occur at death, then during a man’s lifetime his Active Intellect must not be separated but separable.”⁹³ However, it is Mansion’s contention that Aristotle upholds the view that the active intellect is *not* divine and immortal. Mansion writes:

il ne s’agit plus de l’intellect agent ou actif, mais uniquement . . . de la pure essence de l’intellect. De la sorte, de même que Aristote y oppose l’intellect potentiel ou passif, fonction caractéristiquement humaine et donc périssable avec l’homme, de même aurait-il pu dire et doit-on dire pour l’interpréter correctement, que l’intellect actif est périssable de la même façon et pour la même raison.⁹⁴

In other words, Mansion’s thesis is that the passive and active intellects are only features of the *essence* (*οὐσία*) of the intellect *in se*. However, Aristotle does not mention anywhere in *DA* III.5 that he is speaking of the essence of the intellect, as he speaks of essences so often in various other texts, and, consequently, *χωρισθείς* must, then, refer to the active intellect, which is immortal and divine, and therefore separate from the passive intellect at death. However, the active intellect co-operates with the passive intellect in the soul until they are separated.

⁹² *DA* III.5, 20. E. Barbotin remarks that the active intellect “retrouve à la mort la simplicité de son essence.” (E. Barbotin. *La Théorie Aristotélicienne de l’intellect d’après Théophraste*. (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain), 1954, p. 166) Rist, however, thinks that Barbotin’s claim could be misleading. According to Rist, the “. . . Active Intellect is always simple. During life, however, it not only exists in itself, but also affects the Passive Intellect.” (Rist, “Notes . . .,” 19 no. 17)

⁹³ Rist, “Notes . . .,” 14.

⁹⁴ A. Mansion. “L’immortalité de l’âme d’après Aristote,” *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 51 (1953), 468. Mansion is emphasizing that passive and active intellects are ways of speaking of the intellect in itself when the intellectual soul cooperates with a organized body. The intellect in itself is to be seen as immortal. However, when one considers the intellect as an activity within the union of soul and body, one can identify passive and active *states* to the intellect. Whereas the intellect in itself is the genus, the passive and active intellects are the species.

Both χωριστός and χωρισθείς indicate a tentative union of both states of intellect in one person.⁹⁵ That is, both terms imply a time when the active intellect is not separated from the passive intellect. Thus, if the active intellect is operative ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, then it cannot be completely transcendent.⁹⁶ The active intellect is not a single transcendent intellect governing the plurality of passive intellects, as Avicenna advocates. The brief mention of art to its material in line 12 of *DA* III.5 supports this claim. As a particular man is the father of this particular son,⁹⁷ so, too, a *form* of art in the mind of a particular artist is the efficient cause of this particular product. Thus, Aristotle argues that a particular active intellect is operative in a particular soul, and its function is to “make all things,” as the sculptor makes a product.⁹⁸

Aristotle continues: “Actual knowledge is identical with its object: in the individual, potential knowledge is in time prior to actual knowledge, but absolutely it is not prior even in time. It does not sometimes think and sometimes not think.”⁹⁹ The active intellect’s self-knowledge is not akin to that of the passive intellect’s, which is affected by the transient passions of sensation. Furthermore, the active intellect’s self-knowledge is unable to directly inform the passive intellect. Thus, Aristotle clearly perceives an impenetrable frontier that divides the passive and active intellects, such that the passive intellect co-operates with the lower powers, while the active intellect *in se* self-operates.

Aristotle concludes *DA* III.5 with the following claim: “When it has been separated

⁹⁵ Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 149 no. 1.

⁹⁶ Cf. Rist, “Notes . . .,” 8.

⁹⁷ *Meta.* Λ.3, 1071a20–21.

⁹⁸ Cf. Rist, “Notes . . .,” 8: “Every soul therefore contains its own individual Active and Passive Intellect.”

⁹⁹ *DA* III.5, 20–22.

(χωρισθείς) it is that only which it is essentially, and this alone is immortal and eternal (we do not remember, however, because this is impossible and the passive reason is perishable); and without this nothing knows.”¹⁰⁰ The active intellect is unaffected, immovable, and simple in its nature. Aristotle seems to argue that the active intellect is immortal when separated from the passive intellect and the soul in which the passive intellect operates. “Hence too,” says D. W. Hamlyn, “like God, it [the active intellect] can have separate existence and is eternal, just because of its lack of potentiality.”¹⁰¹ The passage in brackets “we do not remember (οὐ μνημονεύομεν δέ)” is a reference to a passage found earlier in the *De Anima*:

Thus it is that thinking and reflecting decline through the decay of some other inward part and are themselves impassible. Thinking, loving, and hating are affections not of Thought, but of that which has Thought, so far as it has it. That is why, when this vehicle decays, memory and love cease; they were activities not of Thought, but of the composite which has perished; Thought is, no doubt, something more divine and impassible. That the soul cannot be moved is therefore clear from what we have said, and if it cannot be moved at all, manifestly it cannot be moved by itself.¹⁰²

Memory does not survive death for two reasons: 1) since the active intellect is impassible, it does not account for or apprehend the particular, factual data of everyday life, whereas 2) the passive intellect which does apprehend data perishes at the death of the individual.¹⁰³ In this light, the last five words of *DA* III.5, and *without this nothing thinks*, offer at least four different possible interpretations:¹⁰⁴

1) without the passive intellect, the active intellect knows nothing; 2) and without the active intellect,

¹⁰⁰ *DA* III.5, 23-25.

¹⁰¹ Hamlyn, *Aristotle*, p. 141

¹⁰² *DA* I.4, 408b24-32.

¹⁰³ Cf. Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*; cf. also Hamlyn, *Aristotle*, p. 142.

the passive intellect knows nothing;¹⁰⁵ 3) without the passive intellect, nothing knows; and 4) without the active intellect, nothing knows. Ross, followed by Hamlyn, ultimately adheres to the last interpretation, granting the active intellect an eternal status. Hamlyn states that the active intellect is “absolute entity which has only a metaphysical role to play as a necessary condition of the functioning of the soul.”¹⁰⁶ Both Ross and Hamlyn agree that as a pure actuality, the active intellect exercises a role similar to that of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ in *Meta.* $\Lambda.7$ & 9, though they are not identical.¹⁰⁷ However, this was not the view of many of Aristotle’s followers.

Alexander of Aphrodisias

Alexander of Aphrodisias, an Aristotelian commentator in the 3rd century, a.d., concluded that the active intellect is identified with $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$, as presented in *Meta.* $\Lambda.7$ & 9, because of its *simple* and perpetually active nature. He argues that active $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ is self-reflecting and self-sufficient. Whereas Aristotle argues that a part of the soul is separable and unmixed, i.e., the active intellect, without which the passive intellect could not think, Alexander suggests that the *whole* soul is *passive*. Alexander concludes that a universal, transcendent active intellect is responsible for actualizing the

¹⁰⁵ It is interesting to note that T. Irwin and G. Fine have opted for this interpretation, though they admit that Aristotle could also be referring to the passive intellect: “And without this <productive [active] intellect> nothing understands.” *Aristotle: Selections*. Trans., Intro., Notes, and Glossary by T. Irwin and G. Fine. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.), p. 202 and no. 32.

¹⁰⁶ Hamlyn, *Aristotle*, p. 142. Opposing Ross, however, Hamlyn argues that the active intellect is not a separate form, exclusive of the subordinate activities of the soul. Rather, Hamlyn claims that Aristotle is briefly trying to explain why humans forget while an active intellect is perpetually thinking in us. The active intellect is unable to be affected, whereas the passive intellect, which is responsible for the general cognitive functions, such as memory, is affected, and, thus, perishes at death. In fact, the passive intellect is dependent on not only the body, within which operate various powers, but also the active intellect, which enables the passive intellect to think. Cf. Hamlyn, *Aristotle*, p. 142.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Ross, *Aristotle*, pp. 152-53 and Hamlyn, *Aristotle*, p. 142.

passive intellect.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the now transcendent active intellect does not require external forms to act upon it,¹⁰⁹ since it is self-sufficient and simple.

But the first intellect is superior to [our] intellect, in that it knows nothing other than itself. Because it is intelligible, it knows itself; and because its intelligibility is something actual that is part of its own nature, it must always exist as being known—obviously, by a knower that is always actually knowing. But [the supreme intellect] is itself the only intellect that is always actually knowing; therefore, it will be always cognizing itself. And it will know, as we said, nothing other than itself because of its utter simplicity. For a simple intellect cognizes a simple object, and there exists no simple intelligible other than the [simple] intellect itself. [To say that this intellect is “simple” means only that] it is not combined with anything else, and that it contains no matter nor potentiality within itself. Therefore, the simple intellect has only itself as object of its cognitive act Hence we can conclude that [the supreme intellect] knows itself as intelligible object, inasmuch as it is an intellect; that it is constantly in the act of knowing itself, inasmuch as it is both intellect and intelligible in act; and that it knows only itself, inasmuch as it alone is simple [intellect and intelligible]. As the uniquely simple intellect, it is oriented to the knowledge of some simple object; as uniquely simple among the intelligible, it is itself this simple object.¹¹⁰

Thus, Aristotle appears to have created a fissure between νοῦς and the ascending degrees of Nature, which occurs in line 23 of *DA* III.5 with the term χωρισθείς. Once wholly separated from the passive intellect, the active intellect is wholly independent, separate, and transcendent to the

¹⁰⁸ Cf. P. Merlan, “Aristocles and Alexander Aphrodisias,” in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*. Ed. A. H. Armstrong. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1967, pp. 117–123.

¹⁰⁹ Alexander draws this conclusion from *DA* III.4, 429b24–25: “If the mind is a simple thing, and not liable to be acted upon, and has nothing in common with anything else . . . how will it think, if thinking is a form of being acted upon?”

¹¹⁰ Alexander of Aphrodisias. *Commentary of Aristotle's De Anima*, 109, 22–23. Trans. A. P. Fotinis. (New York: University Press of America), 1980, pp. 143–44. Incidentally, this text greatly influenced Plotinus’ interpretation of Aristotle’s νοῦς. Cf. Plotinus. *Enneads*. V.3.5; V.4; and V.6. Plotinus, in fact, will deny the absolute simplicity of νοῦς, and, consequently, will ascend to a more simple principle that is responsible for the unity within the multiplicity of Nature: the One. For an excellent discussion on Alexander’s mediating role between Aristotle and Plotinus, cf. Merlan, “Aristocles and . . .,” pp. 117–123.

passive intellect.¹¹¹ Furthermore, its activity is no longer directed to the raising of the potential objects of νοῦς to states of actuality. Its activity is now purely self-directed. In other words, the now separated and immortal active intellect is purely self-reflective. There is very little evidence provided by Aristotle that can defend Ross' hypothesis that the active intellect is "something in us that actually knows already, some element that is cut off from our ordinary consciousness so that we are not aware of this pre-existing knowledge."¹¹² The active intellect does not apprehend *external* images, since it is self-reflective. Rather, it is the necessary condition for the attainment of actual knowledge. Thus, the active intellect does *not* presuppose the activity of the passive intellect, and, consequently, does not presuppose any stage that the passive intellect presupposes. The active intellect's separate and immortal status exempts it from being affected by memory and other bodily passions. It is for this reason that, once separated from the passive intellect, the active intellect does not *remember*. Because memory is an activity of the passive intellect, it belongs to particular sensible data. The active intellect operates by universal concepts and is, therefore, devoid, and independent, of the particular sensible data of Nature. Whereas the passive intellect presupposes the lower grades

¹¹¹ In *DA* III.4, 429a26-27, Aristotle captures the discontinuity of the active intellect from the passive intellect, though not yet having distinguished between the two: "It was a good idea to call the soul 'the place of forms', though this description holds only of the thinking soul, and even this is the forms only potentially, not actually." Thus, the active intellect does not depend on the objects of sense organs. Cf. Rist: "Whereas . . . the organ is affected by something external (*DA* 417b20), in the case of Thought, that is the grasp of universal . . . the stimulation is provided not by the objects of Thought . . . but by the Active Intellect. This is why the process of Thought does not depend on the possession of 'organs.'" (Rist, "Notes . . .," 19) Ross, in fact, argues that the active intellect seems to possess actual knowledge independently of the passive intellect. He writes: "Similarly, the fact that active reason already knows all intelligible objects makes it possible for the passive reason, in itself a potentiality, actually to know, and for the knowable actually to be known." (Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 150)

¹¹² S. D. Ross. *Aristotle's de Anima*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1964, pp. 149–50. According to Ross, the active intellect is "something in us that actually knows already, some element that is cut off from our ordinary consciousness so that we are not aware of this pre-existing knowledge." Ross' claim is that the active intellect possesses actual knowledge prior to its influence on the passive intellect. However, Rist argues the contrary to Ross. According to Rist, the active intellect does not possess pre-existing actual knowledge, but is a "power which enables such knowledge [actual knowledge] to be abstracted by the Passive Intellect." (Rist, "Notes . . .," 11)

of soul, the active intellect is separate from the passive intellect, albeit co-operative with it in the soul during the life of the body. Thus, the active intellect is a power that enables potential objects of itself to become actual, while it itself is unaffected, since its proper object is itself, a depiction akin to that of νοῦς in *Meta.* Λ.7 & 9.

METAPHYSICS Λ.7 & 9

In the earlier section on causality, it was mentioned that formal causality is expressed via efficient and final causality. However, this can only be the case in sensible substances. In *Meta.* Λ.7 & 9, Aristotle presents νοῦς as final causality, the unmoved mover. Although it is a pure form devoid of matter, it cannot be a formal cause, since νοῦς is wholly transcendent to sensible substances and not an immanent principle animating the development of Nature. Νοῦς moves Nature by being its object of desire,¹¹³ while it itself remains unmoved. Nor is νοῦς an efficient cause *per se*. Νοῦς is an agent of movement, but only as a *final cause*.¹¹⁴ Following Ross, Rist adds that νοῦς is an ἐνεργεία that is “ . . . an efficient cause only in the odd sense of being a final cause, that is, indirectly.”¹¹⁵ Thus, νοῦς remains a transcendent final cause to the transient sensible world of Nature.

There are a few passages in *Meta.* Λ where Aristotle possibly alludes to an immanent activity of νοῦς, guiding the development of history. In *Meta.* Λ. 1075a15, 1076a4, and 1075a19, Aristotle

¹¹³ *Meta.* Λ.7, 1072b14.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 181: “. . . God [Thought] is the efficient cause by being the final cause not in the sense of being something that never is but always is to be. He is an ever-living being whose influence radiates through the universe in such wise that everything that happens . . . depends on Him.”

¹¹⁵ J. M. Rist. *The Mind of Aristotle: A Study in Philosophical Growth*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 1989, p. 16.

analogously describes νοῦς' relation to Nature as a captain's relation to his army. The captain knows his army, and, thus, orders it according to his knowledge. Likewise, νοῦς is said to have knowledge of Nature and order it according to its knowledge. This would further imply that νοῦς has foreknowledge or foresight (πρόνοια) of Nature, as Plato believed.¹¹⁶ Ross, however, draws the conclusion that as a separate final cause, νοῦς is ignorant of Nature, since apart from these obscure and ambiguous passages, Aristotle generally uses language of transcendence when he speaks about νοῦς. Νοῦς' only knowledge is of itself: it is νόησις νοήσεως νόησις, a thinking of thinking. As a self-reflecting substance that moves the sensible world from without, it remains a pure form devoid of matter. Aristotle writes:

It is clear then from what has been said that there is a substance which is eternal and unmovable and separate from sensible things. It has been shown also that this substance cannot have any magnitude, but is without parts and indivisible But it is also clear that it is impassive and unalterable; for all the other changes are posterior to change of place.¹¹⁷

Aristotle confirms the simplicity and separability of νοῦς by denying the claim that νοῦς is a substantial extension of the *Scala Naturae*. If νοῦς were to contain a degree of potency, it would, like all substances containing potency, grow fatigued and think intermittently.¹¹⁸ Consequently, νοῦς would require a prior principle upon which to depend for its activity.

First, then, if "Thought" is not the act of thinking but a potency, it would be reasonable to suppose that the continuity of its thinking is wearisome to it. Secondly, there would evidently be something else more precious than Thought, viz. that which is Thought of. For both thinking and the act of Thought will belong even to one who thinks of the worst thing in the world, so that if this ought to be avoided (and it ought,

¹¹⁶ Cf. Plato. *Timaeus* 30c and 44c.

¹¹⁷ *Meta.* Λ.7, 1073a4-5, 11-12.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *DA* III.5, 23: "[Thought in its active state] does not sometimes think and sometimes not think."

for there are even some things which it is better not to see than to see), the act of thinking cannot be the best of things. Therefore it must be of itself that the divine Thought thinks (since it is the most excellent of things), and its thinking is a thinking on thinking.¹¹⁹

Thus, νοῦς' intellectual activity is a thinking on thinking (νόησις νοήσεως), and its act of intellection must be generated from *within* itself, not only because it is devoid of potency, but, *a fortiori*, it is purely simple. If it were not simple, it would depend upon some other principle external to it.

SOME REACTIONS

Ross' interpretation of the separate nature of νοῦς and its exclusive self-knowledge was upheld by Joseph Owens.¹²⁰ According to Owens, νοῦς' perfection excludes knowledge of other forms in Nature. With respect to νοῦς' knowledge of Nature, Owens writes the following: "The text [*Meta. Λ*] is at pains to show that separate substance is a knowing of its own self. It implies that for a separate substance to know anything else would mean a change, and a change for the worse."¹²¹ Owens' claim is based on the principle that to be a perfect, actual substance implies being limited to itself: a perfect substance is one that is limited and finite, whereas an imperfect substance is one that is unlimited and infinite. Νοῦς, as a finite substance, is more perfect, and, consequently, does not know the infinite number of substances of Nature. Νοῦς would know Nature if it were an infinite, imperfect substance. "But in point of fact," contends Owens, "[Thought] is finite. It contains only

¹¹⁹ *Meta. Λ*.9, 1074b27–34.

¹²⁰ J. Owens. "The Relation of God to World in the *Metaphysics*," in *Études sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote: Actes du Ve Symposium Aristotelicum*. Ed. P. Aubenque (Paris: J. Vrin), 1979, pp. 207–222.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

its own perfection, not the perfections of other things. In knowing itself, it does not know them. The reverse does hold From sensible things one can attain to knowledge of the supersensible substances. But one cannot reason vice versa."¹²² Thus, Owens develops Ross' conclusion that as a transcendent, separate, self-reflecting substance, $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ knows nothing of Nature, since it is finite, i.e., perfect.

However, according to T. de Koninck, one "could not . . . be more completely mistaken."¹²³ De Koninck argues that as form becomes more perfect, the more it *includes* other forms. Analogous to the human intellect, which apprehends the forms of sensible objects, *a fortiori* does the divine $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ apprehend the preceding levels of form in Nature.¹²⁴ To be perfect is to be complete and self-sufficient.¹²⁵ That is, it is "that from which nothing is wanting."¹²⁶ Perfection in $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ does not exclude knowledge of what is posterior to $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$. $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ' knowledge of one object does not exclude the knowledge of another: $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ knows the other object "concomitantly,"¹²⁷ for "the more perfect the form," argues de Koninck, "the less it excludes and the more perfections, or other forms, it

¹²² *Ibid.*, pp. 219–20.

¹²³ T. de Koninck. "Aristotle on God as Thought Thinking Itself," *Review of Metaphysics* XLVII, No. 3 (1994), 496.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 492.

¹²⁵ Perfection entails the senses' proper orientation towards the best and highest of its objects. For the human cognitive activity, thought and contemplation will be "most perfect and pleasurable" when it is directed towards the "worthiest of its objects . . . and the pleasure perfects the activity." (*Nicomachean Ethics* (EN) X.4, 1174b20 and 1174b21–3. Vol. 2. Trans. W. D. Ross, revised by J. O. Urmson)

¹²⁶ *Phys.* III.6, 207a8–150.

¹²⁷ de Koninck, "Aristotle on God . . . ," 495.

contains.”¹²⁸ Rather, it is matter which excludes perfections, since matter entails contraries, and contraries, in turn, entail potency and imperfection. The subject of contraries is matter itself.¹²⁹ Form, as the universal principle infinitely correlated with a plethora of individuals, is inclusive, whereas matter receives one form at a time, in a successive order,¹³⁰ allowing for change, and admitting a degree of potency. To suggest νοῦς is ignorant of the forms located in Nature is to suggest that νοῦς possesses a degree of potency, and, consequently, cannot be perfect. “To attribute ignorance under any form to God,” says de Koninck, “would clearly on Aristotle’s principles be to introduce back into God what he has denied, namely, potency –imperfection, a contradiction in terms when speaking of the most perfect being.”¹³¹ Νοῦς, considered as the form of forms *par excellence*, must necessarily include and know other more imperfect forms, due to its perfect nature. Exclusion is always posterior to inclusion. As de Koninck says, “you can only divide what was previously one: prior to separating one thing from another in your mind, you must have them both together somehow. Here again it leaps to the eye that inclusion is prior to division or exclusion,”¹³² that actuality, or form, is prior to potency, or matter.

And all other thinkers are confronted by the necessary consequence that there is something contrary to Wisdom, i.e. to the highest knowledge; but *we* are not. For there is nothing contrary to that which is primary; for all contraries have matter, and things that have matter exist only potentially; and the ignorance which is contrary to any knowledge leads to an object contrary to the object of the knowledge; but what

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 496.

¹²⁹ Aristotle’s references to privation as an aspect of change are found in *Phys.* 1.7–9, 189b30–192b4; cf. also de Koninck, “Aristotle on God . . .,” 497.

¹³⁰ de Koninck, “Aristotle on God . . .,” 498.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 495.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 499.

is primary has no contrary.¹³³

Thus, νοῦς is not ignorant of other forms, since νοῦς does not possess any contraries as matter does, and so is most perfect.

According to de Koninck, Aristotle's claim is that νοῦς is an eternal, indivisible, simple, and purely actual substance, separate from, yet not ignorant of, Nature order. In fact, Aristotle's doctrine of νοῦς is an answer to a question raised in the *DA* III.4 (429b26): "is Thought a possible object of Thought to itself?"¹³⁴ Aristotle answers in the following way:

Thought is itself thinkable in exactly the same way as its objects are. For in the case of objects which involve no matter, what thinks and what is thought are identical; for speculative knowledge and its object are identical.¹³⁵

Aristotle is arguing that νοῦς has immediate apprehension of itself, such that the act of thinking and the object of νοῦς are identical. It is precisely the claim that νοῦς is simultaneously subject and object that characterizes Aristotle's philosophy as *speculative*.¹³⁶ The above citation, then, depicts νοῦς as pure actuality, since 1) it is devoid of matter, and 2) it grasps itself immediately, thus apprehending itself without the mediating role of contraries, since contraries include matter, and, thus, potency.

Aristotle further confirms this in *Meta.* Λ.7 in an extraordinary passage: "And Thought thinks

¹³³ *Meta.* Λ.10, 1075b19–24.

¹³⁴ *DA* III.4 429b26.

¹³⁵ *DA* III.4, 430a2–4.

¹³⁶ G. Rinaldi. *A History and Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel*. (Lampeter, Dufed, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press), 1992, p. 33. Later, I shall compare Aristotle's sense of speculative thought in light of Hegel's, for though a similarity exists, a great difference divides these two thinkers. Cf. S. Rosen. *G. W. F. Hegel: An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom*. (Great Britain: Yale University Press), 1974, pp. 50–3. Aristotle's speculative philosophy is, in fact, theoretical knowledge, and it is a level of knowledge that will attract Hegel's attention, although Hegel uses the term of speculation differently than does Aristotle.

itself because it shares the nature of the object of Thought; for it becomes an object of Thought in coming into contact¹³⁷ with and thinking its object, so that *Thought and object are the same*.”¹³⁸ Thus, in the same act of thinking, νοῦς and its object, i.e., itself are reciprocally ordered in such a way that one is not subordinate to the other, since both the subject and object entail the one simple activity of νοῦς.

CONCLUSION

The Aristotelian principle that the lowest being is presupposed in the higher in the ascending scale of beings generates problems when considering the relation of νοῦς with Nature. Aristotle introduces a discontinuity of substantial development in asserting the separability and transcendence of νοῦς from Nature.¹³⁹ The discontinuity is analogous to the separation of matter from form. Νοῦς becomes pure form devoid of all matter, which characterizes Nature. Νοῦς and Nature oppose each other and, thus, a discontinuity of substances is maintained. If a continuity were to have been preserved, Aristotle would have been compelled to admit νοῦς' assimilation of humanity's nature, and, *a fortiori*, of its rational activity, the culminating stage of the sentient world, which human reason presupposes.

¹³⁷ The Greek word (θιγγάνων) connotes the sense of touch. It is interesting to note that Aristotle privileges the sense of touch, as opposed to sight, as an analogy to thinking. Cf. S. Rosen. "Thought and Touch: A Note on Aristotle's *De Anima*," *Phronesis* 6, 2 (1961), 127–37. The reason for this is that touch is an immediate sense, whereby I, the knower, 'simultaneously' distinguish myself from the sensing object external to me; whereas, sight always entails a mediation between the object and the organ, since vision "is not strictly speaking visible in itself, but because of the color of something else." (*DA* II.7, 418b5–6) With respect to νοῦς, it immediately apprehends its object, rendering it simple, since its object is the act of thinking itself. Thus, the simplicity and immediacy of the object in νοῦς is analogous to the sense of touch.

¹³⁸ *Meta.* Λ.7, 1072b19–21, my emphasis.

¹³⁹ This is initially seen in his discussion of the active intellect.

It would appear that de Koninck is trying to overcome the fissure between νοῦς and the preceding grades of form. He still maintains the transcendency and separate status of νοῦς. By asserting νοῦς' knowledge of Nature, Aristotle does not reduce νοῦς to a substance with a degree of potency. Νοῦς is τὸ ὄν καλόν, perfection itself, and is not a δύναμις, a potency. "Neither in Chapters 7 or 9 [of the *Meta.*], nor anywhere else in Aristotle for that matter, does *knowledge* of one reality, for instance, of self, entail ignorance of another."¹⁴⁰ Aristotle's objective, according to de Koninck, is merely to deny attributing potency or dependence into νοῦς.

De Koninck upholds Ross' and Owens' claim for the transcendency and separability of νοῦς from Nature, but denies their conclusion that νοῦς, as a self-thinking substance, is ignorant of the preceding levels of form in Nature. Thus, de Koninck attempts to resolve the Aristotelian ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of νοῦς in *Meta.* Λ, and, by implication, in *DA* III.5. However, even by denying νοῦς' ignorance of Nature, de Koninck does not seem to resolve the Aristotelian ἀπορία. Νοῦς still remains separate, and its activity does not presuppose the lower activity. In other words, the lower activities do not culminate in νοῦς' self-thinking activity. The uninterrupted lineage of substantial activities stops, as has been shown, at the passive intellect. The only manner of overcoming the Aristotelian ἀπορία is by asserting νοῦς to be final *and formal* cause, immanently operative within the Nature's stages of its self-realization. Only by taking this path can the separation between νοῦς and Nature be overcome. This position is taken by Hegel, to whom we now turn.

¹⁴⁰ de Koninck, "Aristotle on God . . .," 495.

CHAPTER 2

HEGEL'S READING OF ARISTOTLE

- Stranger: O heavens, shall they easily persuade us that absolute being is devoid of motion and life and soul and intelligence? That it neither lives nor thinks, but abides in awful sanctity, mindless, motionless, fixed?
- Theaetetus: That would be a terrible admission, Stranger.¹

INTRODUCTION

In his *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Hegel opens his section on Aristotle with the following acclamation: "Aristoteles . . . ist eins der reichsten und umfassendsten (tiefsten) wissenschaftlichen Genies gewesen, die je erschienen sind, – ein Mann, dem keine Zeit ein Gleiches an die Seite zu stellen hat."² He further says that " . . . die Aristotelische Philosophie [enthält] zugleich die tiefsten spekulativen Begriffe. Er [Aristoteles] ist so umfassend und spekulativ wie keiner."³ These laudatory words of admiration for Aristotle must always be in the forefront of our minds as we investigate Hegel's reading of Aristotle's philosophy, for it is precisely in this attitude of awe and respect that Hegel sets out to comment, interpret, and critique Aristotle.

The structure of this Chapter will be as follows: the first two parts will consist of a detailed exegesis of Hegel's commentary and interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *De Anima*, within which Hegel's critique on Aristotle will be discussed, respectively. Hegel's principal critique of Aristotle is the following: Aristotle's philosophy is not systematic, and is, consequently, not a whole

¹ Plato. *Sophist* 248e. Trans. G. R. G. Mure. *An Introduction to Hegel*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1966, epigraph to his book.

² *T.W-A.*, p. 132.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 132-33.

that preserves the continuity of stages of the absolute Idea's self-development and inner self-differentiation. Because the accuracy of Hegel's commentary, interpretation, and critique is questioned by Aristotelian and Hegelian scholars, some scholarly reactions will be mentioned throughout the exegesis. I wish, furthermore, to highlight the intermediary influence of Neoplatonic doctrines operative in Hegel's interpretation of Aristotle. Finally, Part III will conclude this Chapter with a general exposé of Hegel's notion of *Denken*, whose significant kinship with the absolute Idea (*absolute Idee*) in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* (*EL*) enables Hegel to assert not the Aristotelian separate status of νοῦς, but the *ubiquitous*, intrinsic, and organic activity of the absolute Idea. The systematic character of the absolute Idea overcomes the Aristotelian chasm of νοῦς and Nature, since its self-conscious activity of the absolute Idea *includes* the various stages of its thought-determinations, which are *produced* by the absolute Idea itself. In other words, Hegel's answer to the Aristotelian ἀπορία entails the *presupposition* of the lower stages of thought-determinations through the dialectical process within the activity of the absolute Idea.

Hegel's overcoming of the Aristotelian ἀπορία, furthermore, radically alters the status of Aristotle's νοῦς: in Aristotelian terms, νοῦς is no longer to be considered as a final cause, separate and transcendent to the ascending scale of beings, but a final *and formal* cause, immanently operative at each stage of *its proper self-actualization*, which consists of its self-identity, albeit preserving the differences of the subjective and objective. Thus, Hegel retains the Aristotelian claim of the self-reflecting activity of νοῦς and the active intellect, but abnegates and overcomes the χωρισμός of νοῦς' internal activity from Nature – a χωρισμός that vitiates all possibilities of gathering fragmented and unrelated parts within species operative in the *Scala Naturae* into a systematic whole. The coalescence of formal and final causality alone renders possible the cohesion of these fragments

of the *Scala Naturae* into an organic whole, which culminates into, what is for Hegel, the emergent ἐντελέχεια, i.e.. the absolute Idea.

PART I

HEGEL'S COMMENTARY AND INTERPRETATION OF ARISTOTLE'S *METAPHYSICS*

The objective of Hegel's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is to elucidate Aristotle's three levels of substances: 1) the sensible; 2) νοῦς, as the active understanding (*Verstand*) that posits its own content in reality, and 3) the absolute substance, which Hegel eventually identifies with the *Idee*.⁴ Each level of substance is defined and explained by Aristotle's twofold metaphysical terms of δύναμις (potency) and ἐνέργεια (actuality). Hegel begins his commentary with a brief overview of these terms in order to establish the Aristotelian conceptual framework of the theme of substance, and, *a fortiori*, of Aristotle's notion of νοῦς.

δύναμις and ἐνέργεια

According to Hegel, δύναμις (*Möglichkeit*) is characteristic of the "Anlage, das Ansich,⁵ das Objektive,"⁶ and which is further characterized by Hegel as an empty, abstract universal that

⁴ Throughout his commentary, Hegel uses different terms to discuss Aristotle's first principle, i.e., νοῦς: *absolute Substanz, der höchste Punkt, Gott, sich in sich selbst, der Gedanke, Vater, Denken, Geist, Energie, absolute Tätigkeit, and absolute Wesen*. However, *Denken* best translates the νόησις of νοῦς. In this exegesis, I will follow Hegel's terminology carefully, since the structure of a commentary is as essentially fundamental in revealing the thought of the commentator as is the content.

⁵ *An sich* refers to "that which is as yet (onto)-logically undeveloped, or implicit." *Glossary* in *EL*, eds. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris. (Indianapolis/ Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.), 1991, p. 347, no. 2. Henceforth, reference to this Glossary will be cited simply as *Glossary*.

⁶ *T.W-A.*, p. 154. In the *Meiner* edition, Hegel relates δύναμις (*Möglichkeit*) to the *Idee* in its potential state. "Das ist die Idee, welche auch nur potentia ist." (*Meiner* edition, p. 69)

possesses only a *capacity* to be determined by the intrinsic, determining principle of form (i.e., ἐνέργεια). Ενέργεια (Wirklichkeit),⁷ as the form-giving principle, is further defined as “die Tätigkeit [activity],”⁸ and which is more properly related to ἐντελέχεια, which intrinsically includes the τέλος, and which “in sich Zweck und Realisierung des Zwecks ist.”⁹ The ἐντελέχεια is the epiphany of the τέλος’ self-realization.

Metaphysics Λ

As δύναμις is the objective, and, by implication, ἐνέργεια is the subjective, the “absolute Substanz”¹⁰ must necessarily include both potency and actuality, matter and form, but unseparated one from the other. “[D]as wahrhaft Objective hat allerdings auch Tätigkeit in sich, wie das wahrhaft Subjective auch δύναμις.”¹¹ The implications of Hegel’s claim are elucidated further in his commentary of this absolute Substance itself, in the third section. During the first two sections of his commentary on the levels of substance, Hegel recognizes the increasing proximity of δύναμις and ἐνέργεια the further up one ascends the scale of substances. However, only in the absolute

⁷ Hegel uses the term Wirklichkeit to characterize ἐνέργεια. Wirklichkeit, for Hegel, refers to the real and concrete actuality of something. More specifically, it is what is most “rational . . . [i.e.,] ‘meaningful’” (*Glossary*, p. 351, no. 36)

⁸ *T.W.-A.*, p. 154.

⁹ *Ibid.*; The Meiner edition of the *Vorlesungen* reads as follows: “Diese Energie, ἐνέργεια, kommt auch als Entelechie, ἐντελέχεια, vor, welche die nähere Bestimmung der Energie ist, aber insofern sie freie Tätigkeit ist und den Zweck in sich selbst hat, ihn sich selbst setzt und tätig ist, ihn sich zu setzen – Bestimmen als Gestimmung des Zwecks, Realisieren des Zwecks.” (Meiner edition, p. 71) A. E. Taylor is in agreement with this clarification between ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια: “When Aristotle is speaking most strongly he distinguishes the process by which a Form is realized, which he calls [ἐνέργεια], from the manifestation of the realized Form, calling the latter [ἐντελέχεια] (literally ‘finished’ or ‘completed’ condition).” (Taylor, *Aristotle*, p. 49)

¹⁰ *T.W.-A.*, p. 154.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-55.

Substance are “δύναμις, ἐνέργεια und ἐντελέχεια vereint.”¹² It is precisely with this affirmation that Hegel begins his commentary and interpretation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* Λ.6-9.

Λ.6: The Absolute Substance

Hegel recognizes in Aristotle that the highest level of substance is an unmoved (ἀκίνητον) or absolute mover, which is pure activity (*Tätigkeit*). “Die *absolute Substanz*, das Wahrhafte, Anundfürsichseiende, bestimmt sich hier bei Aristoteleles . . . näher so, daß sie das *Unbewegte*, Unbewegliche und Ewige ist, aber das zugleich *bewegend*, reine Tätigkeit, *actus purus* ist.”¹³ While the *absolute Substanz* remains an unmoved principle, it is also a moving principle.

Hegel is fully aware that his translation of the ἐνέργεια by *Tätigkeit* differs from the traditional rendering of it as *actuality*. He claims to have recaptured the most fundamental Aristotelian insight that ἐνέργεια refers to pure, dynamic *activity*. “Wenn es in neueren Zeiten *neu* geschienen hat, das absolute Wesen als reine Tätigkeit zu bestimmen, so sehen wir dies aus Unwissenheit des Aristotelischen Begriffs.”¹⁴ Clearly, his attack is of the Scholastics, who, although they rightly attribute ἐνέργεια to God as the *actus purus*, characterize God as a static Being. On the one hand, Hegel commends the Scholastics for having identified God with pure activity (*reine Tätigkeit*), which is in and for itself, and is devoid of matter. “Gott ist die reine Tätigkeit, ist das, was an und für sich ist; er bedarf keines Materials, –einen höheren Idealismus gibt es nicht.”¹⁵ On the

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 158.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.* In the *Meiner* edition, Hegel says that this “Substanz ist ohne ὕλη.” (p. 72) Nevertheless, in the *T.W.A.*, p. 154, Hegel claims that the absolute substance possesses form *and* matter: “Dabei hat die wesentlich absolute

other hand, Hegel defines God significantly different from the Scholastics: God is the absolute substance, in which potency and actuality are inseparable. Potency and form are indistinguishable in God, since God, in its potential state, produces from itself its own determinations, its own content (*Inhalt*). If in God potency is conterminous with activity, then God is, therefore, an amalgam of both potency *and* activity. “[Gott] ist die Substanz, die in ihrer Möglichkeit auch die Wirklichkeit hat, deren Wesen (*potentia*) Tätigkeit selbst ist; wo beides nicht getrennt ist; an ihr ist Möglichkeit nicht von der Form unterschieden, sie ist es, die ihren Inhalt, ihre Bestimmungen selbst, sich selbst produziert.”¹⁶ Paramount to this passage is Hegel’s definition of God, or the absolute Substance, as a *producer* of its proper determinations, its content, from the well-spring of its own potency. Thus, potency becomes the ultimate condition for the producing of determinations. This will be a fundamental point that he will discuss in his commentary on the *DA*, and is a central principle in the nature of the absolute Idea. In this present argument, Hegel confirms his above mentioned thesis that in the absolute Substance, potency, activity, and actuality are united and cooperate. By producing specific forms, the absolute Substance is responsible for causing motion.

The self-producing activity of Aristotle’s *voûç*, Hegel continues, radically differs from Plato’s static and inert Ideas, which cannot account for activity, and which, furthermore, bring nothing to the nebulous, sensible reality. “. . . die Idee . . . ist nicht identisch mit der reinen Tätigkeit, sondern als ruhend aufgefaßt. Die ruhenden Ideen, Zahlen Platons bringen nichts zur Wirklichkeit.”¹⁷ For

Substanz Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit, Form und Materie nicht voneinander getrennt.” Hegel also stresses an enigmatic claim that matter appears to be included in the absolute Substance, but considered merely as the initial moment of unmoved Being. In the *T.W-A.*, p. 159, he writes the following: “die Materie ist jenes Moment des unbewegten Wesens.”

¹⁶ *T.W-A.*, pp. 158-59.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

Aristotle, however, the absolute Substance, even in its inertia, has also absolute activity. “[D]as Absolute ist in seiner Ruhe zugleich absolute Tätigkeit.”¹⁸ The self-producing activity of Aristotle’s absolute differs from Plato’s Ideas, then, in that the former includes *in itself* absolute activity, whereas the latter is devoid of such activity. “‘Es ist möglichkeit, daß das, was Möglichkeit hat’”¹⁹ Hegel interrupts his translation to reemphasize Aristotle’s critique of Plato that the empty, abstraction of the Forms are impotent powers, unable to produce activity in the universe. “. . . (δύναμις ist, das Ding an sich, – mit solcher leeren Abstraktion hat Aristoteles nichts zu tun)”²⁰ After citing this text, Hegel comments that only Aristotle’s absolute is the ultimate principle that effects or influences change, and, as a result, must be defined as activity. This effectiveness or influence can only belong to the absolute itself. Hegel concludes by asserting that in spirit, energy is the substance itself: “so ist beim Geist die Energie die Substanz selber.”²¹

Continuing with his commentary and interpretation, Hegel recognizes in Aristotle’s νοῦς the absence of matter, and, as a result, of passivity. In this way, says Hegel, a predicate in the definition of νοῦς is negated, while nothing is asserted about the truth of νοῦς. What Hegel does assert, however, is that “die Materie ist jenes Moment des unbewegten Wesens.”²² The initial moment of unmoved Being is necessarily related to the Aristotelian question of the absolute priority of pure activity over potency. Hegel cites Λ.6, 1071b23-34 in order to highlight Aristotle’s conclusion that

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Λ.6, 1071b12. Single quotation marks within double quotation marks will always indicate in this exegesis the Aristotelian text translated by Hegel, unless otherwise mentioned

²⁰ *T.W.-A.*, p. 159.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

pure activity absolutely precedes potency. Aristotle demonstrates the validity of this claim by generating a counter argument, found in $\Lambda.6$, 1071b23. If everything that acts is able to act, then why do some things inherently possessing this capacity not act. Thus, it would seem from this discrepancy that potency must precede actuality, since the greater degree of potency enables a thing to act: potency considered here is the universal condition for action. Hegel's comments capture this argument: "Alles Energische hat auch Möglichkeit; aber es gibt auch Möglichkeit, die nicht energiert; so könnte man denken, die Möglichkeit stände höher."²³ However, continuing with Aristotle's argument, the precedence of potency over actuality would lead to an absurdity, since a thing's ability to exercise its capacities entails the immediate and effective influence of something already actual. Thus, actuality must take precedence over potency. In relating the absolute Being to the priority of actuality, Hegel writes that "das absolute erste Wesen ist das, was in gleicher Wirksamkeit sich immer gleich bleibt."²⁴

$\Lambda.7$

In the beginning of his commentary and interpretation of $\Lambda.7$, Hegel elucidates Aristotle's hierarchy of the universe, the *Scala Naturae*. At the summit of the *Scala Naturae* is the true Being, which moves in itself, i.e., which is self-relational, and this self-relational, circular motion is, according to Aristotle, unceasing. In theory, one must postulate this circular activity, but in *fact*, in *deed*, it is most manifest: "Als das Wesen, das Wahrhafte, ist also zu setzen,"²⁵ was sich in sich selbst.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Setzen* means to not only posit, but also " 'to be made explicit' as a moment in the process of the self-articulation of meaning." (*Glossary*, p. 352, no. 39)

als 'im *Kreise*, bewegt und dies ist nicht nur in der denkenden Vernunft zu sehen, sondern auch durch die Tat (ἔργῳ).' ”²⁶ Its real, concrete influence in nature is the primary condition for the actualization of all substances within their respective species in Nature. In this way, the absolute Being is apparent in Nature; the movement in Nature attests to the effective influence of the perpetual, circular activity of the absolute Being. The absolute Being “ist vorhanden, existiert *realiter* in der sichtbaren Natur. Dies folgt aus der Bestimmung des absoluten Wesens als tätigen, das in die Wirklichkeit, gegenständlich Weise treten macht.”²⁷

Hegel comments that the absolute Being is characterized in two ways: the absolute is both thinking reason and the eternal heavens. The fifty five²⁸ unmoved movers and the one unmoved Mover are both absolute in that they remain unmoved. Although the eternal heavens share this common characteristic with the unmoved Mover, they differ in that they are also moved or affected. Hegel concludes with Aristotle that there must be a centre point (*eine Mitte*) that is responsible for generating movement, while it itself remains unmoved, and that it, furthermore, must be in itself simultaneously a substance and energy.

Als das sich Gleiche, was sichtbar ist, ist dies absolute Wesen der *ewige Himmel*: die zwei Weisen der Darstellung des Absoluten sind denkende Vernunft und ewiger Himmel. Der Himmel ist aber bewegt; 'er ist aber auch ein Bewegendes.' [Λ.7, 1072a23] Da das Kuglige 'Bewegendes und Bewegtes ist, so ist eine Mitte, welche bewegt, das Unbewegte ist, selbst zugleich eine Substanz und die Energie.' [Λ.7, 1072a24-26]²⁹

Thus, Hegel recognizes in Aristotle the two ways in which the absolute is spoken of. These two ways

²⁶ T.W-A., p. 160, Λ.7, 1072a21-22.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

²⁸ Cf. Λ.8, 1074a11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

capture the two levels of the *Scala Naturae*: the thinking reason and the eternal heavens.

This reading of Hegel's did not satisfy Michelet, who clearly claims that Hegel misread or interpolated the Aristotelian passage in question. For Michelet, Aristotle does not advance two substances in the *Scala Naturae*, but *three*. Aristotle's fixed hierarchy entails the influential presence of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$, which moves the eternal heavens and the sublunar world, which, in turn, is moved by the eternal heavens. Michelet, in fact, bases his argument on Alexander of Aphrodisias' reading of $\Lambda.7$, 1072a23-26.³⁰ In other words, to assert that the eternal heavens are merely moved by the unmoved Mover, but which also move, entails an *object* that they must move. This object is, in Michelet's reading, the sublunar world, the third substance in the *Scala Naturae*, which Hegel, according to Michelet, failed to recognize. However, Michelet's reproach is unfounded, as we will see below.³¹

Pierre Aubenque further criticizes Hegel for not recognizing the first substance, $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ itself, or the unmoved Mover, as being beyond and *outside* of the heavenly spheres, which consist of the moved movers. According to Aubenque, Hegel errs in asserting that in *Meta. $\Lambda.7$* (1072a21-26) "le moteur mû, c'est-à-dire le Premier Ciel, est un 'milieu' qui meut en restant immobile, alors qu'Aristote conclut au contraire du caractère 'médian' du moteur mû que, de même qu'il y a au-dessous de lui des mus non moteurs, il doit y avoir au-dessus de lui et *en dehors* de lui une troisième substance qui est le Moteur immobile."³² Although Hegel acknowledges $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ in the absolute Being,

³⁰ Cf. Michelet, in a footnote in the Haldane translation of the *Vorlesungen* pp. 145-46, no. 1. Basing his argument on the teachings of Alexander of Aphrodisias, Michelet feels justified in translating Aristotle's text in the following way: "Besides the heavens in perpetual motion 'there is something which the heavens move. But since that which at the same time is moved and causes movement cannot be other than a centre, there is also a mover that is unmoved.' " (Haldane translation, p. 146, no. 1)

³¹ See below, page 67, no. 47.

³² Aubenque, Pierre. "Aristote et Hegel," in *Hegel et la pensée grecque*. Publié sous la direction de Jacques D'Hondt. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France), 1974, p. 105. Henceforth, I shall refer to this source by

he, according to Aubenque, fails to recognize the transcendent nature of νοῦς. Aubenque, then, claims that Hegel reduces νοῦς to the intermediary level of the moved movers. Consequently, Hegel alters the transcendent status of νοῦς to an immanent one. Aubenque's criticism of Hegel's interpretation is clearly an affirmation of the χωρισμός.

Hegel continues to comment that Aristotle's definition of the absolute Being, as a circle of reason (*Vernunft*), entails a return into itself.³³ "[S]ie bestimmt dem Aristoteles den Kreis der in sich Zurückkehrenden Vernunft"³⁴ To explain Aristotle's definition, Hegel employs modern terminology, which he claims is identical in content to Aristotle's. In doing so, Hegel reveals the kinship between Aristotle's νοῦς with Hegel's *Idee*.³⁵ On the one hand, νοῦς and the *Idee* are self-moving, self-identical, and remain in self-relation while moving the lower levels of substances. "[D]as Sichselbstgleichbleibende, die Idee, bewegt und bleibt in der Beziehung auf sich selbst."³⁶ Hegel

"Aubenque," followed by the page reference.

³³ Aubenque further criticizes Hegel for defining the unmoved Mover as the absolute Substance, whose circular reasoning entails its *return into itself*, since, according to Aubenque, the relation, albeit with itself, presupposes a duality between the subject and object, and, as a result, this would introduce a degree of potency, which is "incompatible avec la pureté de l'acte divin Hegel semble commettre un contresens sur l'expression ἐνέργεια δὲ ἡ καθ' αὐτήν (*Meta.* Λ.7, 1072b27-28), qui ne signifie évidemment pas 'l'acte rapporté à soi-même,' mais l'acte par soi, l'acte proprement dit (la phrase entière signifie: 'l'acte par soi de Dieu est une vie excellente et éternelle.' " (*Ibid.*, p. 105, no. 1) Hegel refuses to exclude potency in the absolute, since potency necessarily presupposes movement and self-development, without which the absolute could not return into itself. Thus, although Hegel accepts the Scholastic definition of God as *actus purus*, he acknowledges a necessary degree of potency for its self-movement, its development. Once again, the χωρισμός of νοῦς is not viable for Hegel, for otherwise the most paramount activity of the *Scala Naturae* would be posited as an isolated substance, unintegrated with the preceding levels of the *Scala Naturae*. The absolute's return into itself extends the circular relation of νοῦς with itself to the totality of reality. Thus, by the ennoblement of potency, Hegel overcomes the deleterious results of the χωρισμός of νοῦς from Nature, and asserts the uninterrupted continuum of the absolute's self-development – a development which inevitably must entail a degree of potency.

³⁴ *T.W.-A.*, p. 161.

³⁵ Hegel, in fact, also draws this parallel in *EL* § 236A. The "A" refers to the Addition to § 236. The codification of *EL* will be explained below in Part III.

³⁶ *T.W.-A.*, p. 161.

rightly bases this assertion on the following Aristotelian text: “ ‘Sein Bewegen ist auf folgende Weise bestimmt. Dasjenige bewegt, was begehrt wird und gedacht wird; dies, was begehrt wird und gedacht wird, ist selbst unbewegt.’ ”³⁷ Hegel is stressing here the τέλος of the absolute, whose content (*Inhalt*) consists of the desire for νοῦς. More specifically, this τέλος is the Beautiful and the Good. “Es ist Zweck; dieser Inhalt oder Zweck ist aber das Begehren und Denken selbst; solcher Zweck heißt Schönes, Gutes.”³⁸ The status of this τέλος, furthermore, implies that it is objectively beautiful, and that its beauty is not contingent upon our affirmation of it. Thus, the absolute Being produces motion in Nature by evoking within Nature the desire and inclination for the absolute; it produces movement in Nature by being an independent object of love.³⁹ “[E]s selbst ist selbständig, unser Begehren wird erst erweckt.”⁴⁰

The true principle, says Aristotle, is the νόησις of νοῦς, which Hegel translates here as *Denken* (thinking), since the object of thought is moved only by the productive activity of νόησις. νόησις, then, has an object (νοητόν), and is itself unmoved, but moves. Furthermore, the content is itself a product of thought, and as a product, the content, i.e., the object of thought, remains therefore identical with the pure activity of *Denken*.

Der Gedanke hat Gegenstand; er ist das Unbewegte, welches bewegt. Aber dieser Inhalt ist selbst ein Gedachtes, so selbst Produkt des Gedankens; es ist unbewegt, und so ganz identisch mit der Tätigkeit des Denkens. Hier im Denken ist so diese Identität

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Λ.7, 1072a26-27.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Cf. Λ.7, 1072b3. Incidentally, Hegel recognizes in Aristotle's νοῦς its power as a desirable object of love, towards which all of Nature aspires. This desire draws Nature to its own τέλος, which, for Hegel, is the return into the absolute Being.

⁴⁰ *T.W.A.*, p. 161.

vorhanden; das, welches bewegt wird und welches bewegt, ist dasselbe.⁴¹

Once again, these reflections confirm Aristotle's teaching that actuality precedes potency, since it is the activity of *Denken* that first produces its object, its content. This object, the *Gedachte* is in reality the co-element of νόησις, and this identity of *Gedanke* and its object astonishes Hegel: "(man traut kaum seinen Augen) . . ."⁴² Hegel reinforces Aristotle's claim that the essence of the intelligible, the co-element of *Denken*, is *Denken* itself, and that its object is also the absolute cause, which in itself is unmoved, yet is identical with the *Gedanken*, whose movement is produced by *Denken*. "Die οὐσία dieses Gedankens ist das Denken; dieses Gedachte ist also die absolute Ursache, selbst unbewegt, aber identisch mit dem Gedanken, der von ihm bewegt wird."⁴³

In his translation of Λ.7, 1072b1-2, Hegel imposes on the text a different meaning from Aristotle's. The Aristotelian text reads as follows: "That that for the sake of which is found among the unmovables is shown by making a distinction: for that for the sake of which is both that *for* which and that *towards* which, and of these the one is unmovable and the other is not." (Λ.7, 1072b1-2) Hegel, however, translates this as, "Daß aber das Unbewegten zum Unbewegten gehört, zeigt der Begriff."⁴⁴ Aristotle clearly does not speak about the teachings of the *Begriff*, though, of course, the *Begriff*, according to Hegel, is operative in Aristotle. However, Hegel continues to interpret this text as an Aristotelian teaching that *Begriff* is the unmoved cause of movement, which Aristotle calls God (θεός). "Jenes, der Begriff, *principium cognoscendi*, ist auch das Bewegende, *principium essendi*;

⁴¹ T.W.A., p. 161.

⁴² *Ibid.*, cf. Λ.7, 1072a29-32.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

er spricht es als Gott aus und zeigt die Beziehung auf das einzelne Bewußtsein.”⁴⁵ The identification of θεός with *Begriff* is, then, an interpolation Hegel makes of Aristotle’s account of final causality of the First cause, *erste Ursache*. However, Hegel rightly comments on Aristotle’s discussion of the relationship between the First cause and the individual human.

Aristotle clarifies what he means by defining the First cause as a necessary principle. Although necessity can refer to a violent outcome of an event that opposes one’s impulses, or that without which the Good cannot be sustained, necessity, in relation to the First cause, means that which cannot be otherwise than it is. Only in this case can necessity be absolute. It is precisely upon this necessary principle that “‘nun der Himmel aufgehangen und die ganze Natur.’”⁴⁶ Hegel qualifies what Aristotle means by the whole of nature, which encompasses “das sichtbare Ewige und das sichtbare Veränderliche.”⁴⁷ Only this cosmic system is eternal, and, as a result, says Aristotle, humans can only enjoy this system for a brief period, since they are subject to the limits of time, which is a subordinate principle to the eternal. The individual, rational human, then, can only glimpse or briefly participate in God, who remains eternally the necessary, first causal principle of Nature. Nevertheless, the brief human attainment of this first principle produces joy not paralleled to any in the transiency of Nature. Furthermore, this flashing glimpse of the internal activity of the first principle heightens all human powers. Pure thinking is a thinking of that which is best and most excellent in itself, i.e., thinking itself, νόησις νοήσεως. In this light, Hegel rightly adds that

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Λ.7, 1072b14.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 162. Hegel’s recognition of Nature including the eternal heavens and the sublunar world (*sich bare Veränderliche*) clearly undermines Michelet’s criticism that Hegel omitted any reference to the sublunar world. Michelet not only wrongly intervenes with his opinion as editor, but also he wrongly comments on Hegel’s reflections. Thus, Michelet’s criticism is unfounded and must be ignored as a valid criticism.

Denken is the absolute end (τέλος) for itself: “absolute Endzweck für sich selbst. Dieser Endzweck ist der Gedanke selbst.”⁴⁸ Only by participating in the νοητόν, that which is thought, can νοῦς (*Gedanke*) come into contact with, and apprehend, its object, which, as Aristotle has shown, is identical with *Gedanke* itself. Thus, Hegel stresses the identity of νοῦς and νοητόν, of *Gedanke* and *Gedachte*. Hegel concludes this section with a reminder that the object of *Gedanke*, the *Gegenstand*, is first produced by activity, i.e., by the activity and energy of *Denken*: “der Gegenstand schlägt um in Aktivität, Energie.”⁴⁹

Thus, Hegel recognizes the highest point of Aristotle’s philosophy: the identity of νοῦς (*Denken*) and νοητόν (*Gedachte*), “daß das Objective und das Denken (die Energie) ein und dasselbe ist Das Denken ist das *Denken des Denkens* [νόησις νοήσεως].”⁵⁰ Hegel further recognizes Aristotle’s claim that the possession of an object actualizes *Denken*. Of course, the receptivity of *Denken*’s object is proper to human νοῦς, and more specifically to the passive nous, which receives the sensible forms from the material object. In Λ 7, 1072b22-23, Aristotle clearly speaks about God’s nature, whose object is itself. Aristotle’s claim of νοῦς’ possession or receptivity of its object is merely figurative, since νοῦς eternally possesses its object, and, therefore, is always actual. With respect to Λ.7, 1072b23, where Aristotle states that νοῦς is active when it possesses its object, “ ‘Es wirkt, insofern es hat,’ ” Hegel adds that “ . . . (sein Besitz ist eins mit seines Wirksamkeit)”⁵¹ Hegel stresses, however, that this apparent possession of the object is

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

not the focal point in this discussion, but the *activity* itself, the *energy*, is what is primordial. This profound Aristotelian insight, then, did not escape Hegel's eye. In other words, not only does Hegel recognize the self-identity of *Denken*, he astutely recognizes that the pre-eminent status of *Denken* is not its self-identity *per se*, but the intrinsic *energy* operative in it. "Nicht das Gedachte ist das Vortrefflichere, sondern die Energie selbst des Denkens."⁵² To reflect on *Denken*'s self-apprehension is to reflect at a speculative level, and this level, according to Aristotle, is what is most pleasing and the best activity. Only God, comments Hegel, subsists perpetually in this excellent state, in which we occasionally participate through contemplation or speculation (θεωρία). The nature of God is precisely this eternal thinking activity. ". . . Gott ist dies ewige Denken selbst . . ."⁵³ Aristotle further says that the self-thinking activity of God *is* life, and that its life is an influential, or efficient, power. "Denn das Leben des νοῦς ist Wirksamkeit," comments Hegel.⁵⁴ Hegel ends this section with the Aristotelian passage that identifies life with God, and with Aristotle's final remark that the οὐσία of God is devoid of magnitude. God must be a purely simple and actual substance.

What follows of Hegel's commentary and interpretation of Λ.7 is a comparison and a positive evaluation Aristotle's νοῦς in light of the recent teachings on the *Begriff*. *Begriff*, Hegel says, teaches us in modern times that Aristotle's νοῦς is a unity of subjectivity and objectivity, neither of which effaces or cancels out the other, nor assimilates the other. It is precisely this advance by Aristotle that characterizes Aristotle as a speculative philosopher, since the unity of subjective and objective is a concrete, *living* identity of the two, contrary to the dead or dry identity of terms in the

⁵² T.W.A., p. 163. my emphasis.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

abstract understanding (*Verstand*). The identity Hegel perceives in Aristotle's νοῦς is an organic energy, which is characterized by activity, movement, and repulsion. This threefold characteristic of νοῦς, therefore, allows for difference to be included into the identity of subjectivity and objectivity. In other words, the unity of νοῦς is an identity-in-difference.

Das Ansich, der Gegenstand, ist nur die δύναμις, das Mögliche; das Wahrhafte ist ihm diese Einheit selbst. Einheit ist schlechter Ausdruck; sie ist Abstraktion, bloßer Verstand. Die Philosophie ist nicht Identitätssystem; das ist unphilosophisch. So ist es bei Aristoteles auch nicht trockene Identität; sie ist nicht das τιμιώτατον, Gott, sondern dies ist die Energie. Sie ist Tätigkeit, Bewegung, Repulsion, und so nicht tote Identität; sie ist im Unterscheiden zugleich identisch mit sich.⁵⁵

To suggest, argues Hegel, that Aristotle posits the dry identity of *Verstand* would strip Aristotle of his dignity of having attained the speculative Idea, where νοῦς and νοητόν are united, and where, according to Hegel, "Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit sind identisch."⁵⁶ Hegel says that νοῦς is also potency, but not the universal potency that is subordinate to that which is singular and active. "νοῦς ist auch δύναμις, aber nicht Möglichkeit das Allgemeinere – darum Höhere –, sondern Einzelheit. Tätigkeit."⁵⁷ There are, then, two distinct aspects to νοῦς: the active and the passive. "Er unterscheidet zweierlei νοῦς, den aktiven und passiven."⁵⁸ The passive νοῦς is nothing other than the in-itself of the absolute Idea. The first and unmoved, as passive νοῦς, and as distinguished from activity, is, however, itself activity, absolutely considered. This νοῦς is everything in itself, but is only itself in Truth through this activity.

Der νοῦς als pasiv ist nichts anderes als das Ansich, die absolute Idee als an sich

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 163-64.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

betrachtet, der Vater; aber erst als Tätiges wird es gesetzt. Jedoch dies Erste, Unbewegte, als von der Tätigkeit unterschieden, als passiv, ist doch als Absolutes die Tätigkeit selbst. Dieser $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ist alles an sich; aber es ist erst Wahrheit durch die Tätigkeit.⁵⁹

Thus, according to Hegel, Aristotle has attained the speculative Idea, wherein the subjective and objective are united, yet maintain their differences.

Hegel's Critique

Hegel found in Aristotle the highest level of speculation. He found in Aristotle the ultimate end of philosophy: the pure, self-reflecting activity of *Denken*. Only through this active level of *Denken* can humanity be at home with its world, since *Denken* can wholly apprehend, and be identified with, its object.⁶⁰

After making this brief commentary and interpretation, Hegel, however, fundamentally criticizes Aristotle's philosophy. Although Aristotle attains speculative thought, *Denken* is still regarded as merely one object juxtaposed to other objects, a condition separate from other conditions. For Hegel, Aristotle does not affirm *Denken* to be the whole Truth, that everything is *Gedanke*. Rather, Aristotle concludes that *Gedanke* is "das Erste, Stärkste, Geehrteste."⁶¹ Hegel, however,

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ With respect to the human's homecoming with the world via the power of Thought. Gray writes that "[m]an united with his world, his sense of being at home there, could come about, in the last analysis, only by [Thought] and the power of reason. There the thinking self could entirely appropriate its object, the object of [Thought] could be one with the thinker. The very nature of [Thought] raised to its highest level in philosophy was reflection on self or self-consciousness. That became in Hegel's vision the goal of intellectual history. (J. Glenn Gray. *Hegel and Greek Thought*. (New York: Harper Torchbooks), 1941, p. 85)

⁶¹ T.W-A., p. 164. Pierre Aubenque's comments are helpful here: "Mais ces sciences restent disjointes, elles ne communiquent pas l'une avec l'autre, ne passent pas l'une dans l'autre, ne s'unifient dans aucun savoir totalisateur. La cause en est qu'Aristote en est resté au niveau de l'entendement, à la juxtaposition des concepts, qu'il n'a pas systématisés en un tout." (Aubenque, p. 110)

firmly asserts that the self-relational activity of *Gedanke* is the whole of Truth, and that all of reality is encompassed by it. “Daß der Gedanke, als das zu sich selbst sich Verhaltende, *sei*, die Wahrheit sei, sagen wir. Ferner sagen wir, daß der Gedanke *alle* Wahrheit sei; nicht so Aristoteles.”⁶²

Hegel recognizes, however, that Aristotle’s reflection on νοῦς relatively resembles that of his own with respect to *Denken*’s nature as the universal ground of all phenomena. Aristotle’s speculative philosophy, however, does not entail the all encompassing, ubiquitous activity of *Denken*, but is characterized by *Denken*’s ability to transform the objects of thought into itself. “Eben dies ist die spekulative Philosophie des Aristoteles, alles denkend zu betrachten, in Gedanken zu verwandeln.”⁶³ Aristotle’s speculative philosophy refers to the *orientation* of *Denken* towards its object, and only when its object is apprehended is the object said to exist in Truth, i.e., that the object’s essence (οὐσία) is apprehended and known. The objects of Nature, however, do not possess a thinking capacity. Rather, once these objects are thought or apprehended by the individual subject, one’s thought is in accordance with the concept of the object, which is the essence of the thing. “Daß heißt nicht, daß die Gegenstände der Natur darum selbst denkend seien. Die Gegenstände sind subjektiv von mir gedacht; dann ist mein Gedanke auch der Begriff der Sache, und dieser ist die Substanz der Sache.”⁶⁴

For Hegel, the significance of *Begriff* is fundamental to understand Aristotle’s philosophy. *Begriff*’s involvement in Nature is not akin to the free, self-relational activity of νοῦς, but is, nevertheless, a real and living soul, which Hegel aptly characterizes as being composed of flesh and

⁶² T.W-A., p. 164..

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

blood. “. . . der Begriff . . . hat Fleisch und Blut; er hat aber eine Seele, und diese ist sein Begriff.”⁶⁵

In Nature, the *Begriff* is burdened or stilted by external factors: “Der Begriff ist nicht für sich selbst, aber er ist, durch Äußerlichkeit verkümmert.”⁶⁶ The metaphor of flesh and blood to describe the real and living nature of the *Begriff* is used to counter the common definition of Truth, which is expressed as the adequate agreement of the representation of an object with the object itself. Hegel asserts that only “im Denken ist wahrhafte Übereinstimmung des Objektiven und Subjektiven vorhanden; *das bin Ich*.”⁶⁷

Aristotle, according to Hegel, has attained the ultimate standpoint of speculative thought by asserting the true harmony of the subjective and objective in *Denken*, in spite of his appearing to make his standpoint in empirical data. In other words, this ultimate standpoint alone always has itself as its form, although it gives the impression of beginning with empirical conditions, such as sleep and fatigue. From these empirical conditions, however, Aristotle separates *Denken*. Although Hegel exalts Aristotle for having attained this highest standpoint, he criticizes him for not having studied properly the nature of νοῦς. “Aristoteles spricht nur von νοῦς, nicht von einer besonderen Natur des νοῦς.”⁶⁸ Hegel’s criticism of the *Metaphysics* is, on the one hand, a recognition of the Aristotelian ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of νοῦς, and, on the other, a provisional solution. For Hegel, *Denken* cannot be, as it is for Aristotle, a separate, isolated, self-reflecting activity. Rather, self-reflecting *Denken* is inclusive of the preceding stages, since these stages are themselves *Denken*’s

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 164-65.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

diverse manifestations through the different moments of its self-development and inner self-differentiation. In other words, Hegel commends Aristotle for presenting the identity of the subject and object in the active intellect and $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ itself, but criticizes him concerning their separable status. Thus, Hegel differs from Aristotle by way of his unceasing desire for absolute unity, for a *system*.⁶⁹ With this critique, Hegel ends his commentary and interpretation of $\Lambda.7$ and proceeds to comment on $\Lambda.9$.

$\Lambda.9$

Aristotle, says Hegel, attempts here to overcome certain doubts concerning the complexity of *Gedanke* and whether science (*Wissenschaft*) can be an object of science itself.⁷⁰ Hegel begins his commentary on $\Lambda.9$ by quoting $\Lambda.9$, 1074b15-20, where Aristotle highlights the problematic concerning the nature of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$. $\text{No}\hat{\upsilon}\varsigma$ is the most divine substance of all reality. However, to describe its divine character is difficult. First, if it thinks of nothing, like the state in which a sleeper

⁶⁹ Hegel's criticism is also echoed in his *Phänomenologie des Geistes*: "For the real issue is not exhausted by stating it as an aim, but by carrying it out, nor is the result the actual whole, but rather the result together with the process through which it came about. The aim by itself is a lifeless universal, just as the guiding tendency is a mere drive that as yet lacks an actual existence; and the bare result is the corpse which has left the guiding tendency behind it. (G. W. F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A. V. Miller. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). 1977, § 3, pp. 2-3. Henceforth, this reference will be cited as *PS*.) Gray also acknowledges this difference: "Herein lies the great difference between the two thinkers. What separates Hegel from Aristotle most definitely is his desire for unity, for synthesis, for system as against Aristotle's equally strong desire for distinctions, for analytic investigation, for subject-matter in its discreteness. Aristotle's aporetic method could hardly be further in intention from Hegel's dialectical logic." (Gray, *Hegel and Greek*, pp. 86-87); cf. also Giacomo Rinaldi. *A History and Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel*. (Lampeter, Dufed, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press). 1992. He writes: "The *dualistic* outcome of Aristotle's metaphysics is evidenced, e.g., by his setting the transcendent, unmoved unity of the *nóesis noéseos* over against the contingent, mutable plurality of the *súnola* constituting the 'hierarchical' order [*scala naturae*] of the Universe; by the one-sided dependence of (both 'essential' and 'unessential') accidents and relations upon the immediate self-sufficiency of substances." (p. 35)

⁷⁰ The majority of Hegel's commentary on $\Lambda.9$ consists of quotes from $\Lambda.9$. For lack of space, I will merely indicate and paraphrase the Aristotelian texts that Hegel has chosen, and will then highlight Hegel's commentary.

is, how can one attribute the dignity of a divine quality to νοῦς? Second, if νοῦς' thinking activity depends upon a higher principle, then νοῦς cannot be the best substance (as νόησις), and, consequently, would have to admit a degree of potency within itself. Again, Hegel endorses Aristotle's conclusion that νοῦς (*Denken*) alone, which is never inert or at rest, is the primary principle undergirding the *Scala Naturae*. "Alles ist Denken, immer eine Nichttruhendes; wir finden nicht auch ein Denken vor."⁷¹ Aristotle continues to say that the activity of thinking confers this highest substance with the greatest value. Νοῦς, then, is the highest substance, and no substantial principle can precede it.

Aristotle now continues to resolve a subsequent question, which has three corollary questions:

1) if νοῦς is its own substance, then what does it think, itself or something different? 2) Furthermore, if it thinks of something different, does this remain the same or does it become something else? Aristotle answers first by way of refuting the view that νοῦς (*Gedanke*) is merely a *power*, since, as Hegel adds, "Kraft nutzt sich ab."⁷² 3) Furthermore, if νοῦς were a mere power, and would grow fatigued, it would be subordinate to a more excellent principle, a claim that Aristotle clearly rejects. Thus, νοῦς only thinks itself, since it is the most excellent: "der Gedanke des Gedankens (νόησις νοήσεως)."⁷³ All powers subordinate to *Gedanke* have objects distinct from themselves, whereas only *Gedanke* has itself as its object.

4) Finally, if the act of thinking and the being-thought (*Gedachtwerden*, νοεῖσθαι) differ, with respect to which of the two does the Good belong? Aristotle reiterates his claim that the Good

⁷¹ T.W-A., p. 165.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Λ.9, 1074b34.

is not the same for *Denken* (νοήσσει) and for the object of thought (*Gedachte*, νοουμίνω), and emphasizes that knowledge itself of a science can be what matters. For example, in the practical sciences, the substance and essence of the object devoid of matter is the acquired knowledge, whereas in the theoretical sciences, the act of thinking which defines an object is the object itself, since the nature of this object is universal and also devoid of matter. “Im Praktischen (τῶν πρακτικῶν) ist es [what matters] die Substanz und die Bestimmtheit des Zwecks (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι), im Theoretischen der Grund (λόγος) und der Gedanke (νόησις). Da also das Gedachte und der νοῦς nicht verschieden sind, als welche keine ὕλη haben, sind sie dasselbe; und es ist nur *ein Gedanke des Gedachten*.”⁷⁴ The nature of νοῦς is, of course, included in the theoretical sciences, since the νόησις of νοῦς is its own object. However, Aristotle does not fully develop his answer concerning the relation of the Good to νόησις. The νόησις of νοῦς is unique in that it is its own object. However, where does the Good belong? Is the νόησις the Good because it knows itself or because it is known by itself? No doubt, Aristotle’s assertion is a tautology, which Aristotle uses in order to emphasize the simplicity of νοῦς. However, on a theoretical level, which requires accurate definitions, Aristotle’s question remains unanswered.⁷⁵

Aristotle concludes with a final question of whether νοῦς is composite. If νοῦς were composite, it would necessarily be affected by changing from one part to another of the whole. However, since the Good is not reduced to the specific parts of the whole, it is the best substance in

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Λ.9, 1075a1-4.

⁷⁵ Ross, however, suggests an answer. This “. . . question is left unanswered. The answer Aristotle probably has in mind is something like this: If A knows B and is known by C the question may be asked, ‘is it in virtue of its knowing or of its being known that A is good?’ But when A knows itself [as is the case with νοῦς], the question becomes ‘is it because A knows A or because A is known by A that A is good?’ and this is an unmeaning question.” (W. D. Ross. *Aristotle: Metaphysics*. Vol. 2. Intro. and commentary W. D. Ross. (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1997 Revised, p. 398)

the universe, and differs substantially from these parts of the universe. So, too, is *Denken*, since *Denken* is the Good itself. Thus, since $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ subsists in all eternity as a whole that is in perpetual self-relation, it is purely simple. Aristotle also refutes other embarrassing theories in $\Lambda.9$; Hegel does not elaborate on these refutations.

Hegel's commentary and interpretation of $\Lambda.9$ recapitulates what he has said about $\Lambda.7$, but he expresses its relation with $\Lambda.8$. The speculative Idea is what is best and most free, and can be seen in Nature ("*als Himmel*") and in the "*denkenden Vernunft*."⁷⁶ In $\Lambda.8$, Aristotle discusses God's visible manifestation in the heavens. In fact, according to Hegel, the living God *is* the universe. "Gott, als lebendiger Gott, ist das Universum; im Universum bricht Gott als lebendiger Gott aus."⁷⁷ Hegel is clearly asserting the ubiquitous activity of God and of God's immanence in Nature. God is, as Aristotle says in $\Lambda.10$, the Good and the Best that organizes the universe into a whole. With a quotation of $\Lambda.10$, 1075a14-24 and 1076a4, Hegel ends his commentary and interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. As Aristotle gives Homer the last word in order to confer the pre-eminent status of the Good. "Nimmer Gedeihn bringt Vielherrschaft; nur einer sei Herrscher,"⁷⁸ Hegel allows Aristotle usage of Homer's line to end his commentary and to confirm the supreme and ubiquitous activity of *Denken*.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 168; Homer's *Iliad* II, 204.

A Neoplatonic Influence

It is difficult to reconcile Hegel's interpretation of Aristotle's νοῦς as possessing both potency and actuality with Aristotle's account of νοῦς, which is described as *solo* actuality, and cannot possess any degree of potency, since that which is eternal in nature can admit no degree of potency: "for eternal things," says Aristotle, "are prior in substance to perishable things, and no eternal thing exists potentially." (*Meta.* Θ.8, 1050b6) Hegel's interpretation of Aristotle's νοῦς as a dynamic activity, however, appears to be greatly influenced by the Neoplatonic interpretation of Aristotle.⁷⁹ As mentioned above, Hegel, in translating ἐνέργεια by *Tätigkeit*, *activity*, believes he has recaptured the true nature of Aristotle's νοῦς as a substance in motion, which is pure ἐνέργεια: Life in νοῦς itself is a *dynamic* pulsation that is an immanent *activity* within all levels of Life.⁸⁰ The central difference between Hegel and the Greeks is that whereas the latter consider perfection to be immovable, Hegel envisions perfection as a dynamic movement.

As seen in Hegel's commentary on Λ.9, Hegel affirms with Aristotle the primacy of νοῦς. Hegel is reticent, however, to assert the Neoplatonic affirmation of a principle, i.e., the One, that transcends νοῦς. Yet, Hegel does not fully reject the Neoplatonic tenets. In fact, he brilliantly adopts the Neoplatonic interpretation of Aristotle's νοῦς: influenced by Plotinus, Hegel *vitalizes* νοῦς by introducing into it a dynamic activity, which becomes all-encompassing.

⁷⁹ Cf. Aubenque, pp. 106-108 for a more detailed discussion on Hegel's interpretation of Aristotle via Neoplatonism.

⁸⁰ J. P. Lawrence comments on the relation between ἐνέργεια and *Tätigkeit*, and on the ramifications of Hegel's interpretation to the status of νοῦς itself. "Aristotle's *energeia* is radically different from Hegel's *Energie*. The former refers to the pure form of work always accomplished, whereas the latter refers to the energy that sustains work yet to be accomplished. Energy is closer to Aristotle's *dynamis* than it is to *energeia*. Given this misinterpretation, it is not surprising that Hegel extends his commentary to assert the identity of *nous* and *dynamis*, which would completely destroy the "separability" that Aristotle insists upon for pure intelligence." (Lawrence, "The Hidden Aporia . . .," 174, no. 22)

The foundation of the Neoplatonic and Hegelian interpretation of the status of Aristotle's νοῦς is found in Plato's *Sophist*. Plato attempts to capture the *dynamic* and *vital* nature of Being:

- Stranger: O heavens, shall they easily persuade us that absolute being is devoid of motion and life and soul and intelligence? That it neither lives nor thinks, but abides in awful sanctity, mindless, motionless, fixed?
- Theaetetus: That would be a terrible admission, Stranger.⁸¹

If Hegel's comment on the circular, dynamic relation entails a dual nature in νοῦς, inevitably, potency would be introduced in νοῦς, as Plotinus argued.⁸² However, Hegel does not admit to a prior principle to νοῦς: νοῦς, i.e., *Denken*, remains the primary principle of all that is real and intelligible, and is the ultimate condition for everything's self-realization.

PART II

HEGEL'S COMMENTARY AND INTERPRETATION OF ARISTOTLE'S *DE ANIMA*

Hegel's commentary on *DA* III is, for the most part, a study of chapters 4 and 5, concerning the natures of the passive and active intellects that operate within the essence of the intellect (νοῦς), and the ubiquitous activity of *Denken*, which produces the passive νοῦς as its own object. After having made an extensive commentary on the nature of sense-perception, Hegel proceeds to study Aristotle's speculative reflections on νοῦς (*Denken*).

⁸¹ Plato. *Sophist* 248e, trans. Mure, *Introduction*, epigraph to his book.

⁸² In his new edition of *Plotin, ou la simplicité du regard*, Pierre Hadot recognizes two levels to Plotinus' νοῦς: the eternally distinct and eternally united. Whereas the latter type of νοῦς has immediate contact with the One, the former type, in the act of thinking the One, relegates itself to a fragmented nature, whereby the multiplicity of the world of Forms is generated. It now contemplates the One reflected in the multiplicity of the Forms, which mediate the presence of the One. The Soul is capable of surpassing not only rationality, which characterizes the nature of Soul, but also the lower mode of νοῦς in order to rise to the upper level of νοῦς and to contemplate in a mystical contact the One in itself. (Pierre Hadot. *Plotin, ou la simplicité du regard*. (Paris: Gallimard), 1997, pp. 197-201) Nevertheless, the νοῦς in itself is an effervescent, dynamic being that longs for the One. It is this dynamism that introduces potency in νοῦς.

DA III.4

Hegel opens this section of the *DA* with an Aristotelian passage from *DA* III.4, 429a15-24, in which he sporadically interjects his comments and interpretations. “ ‘Das Denken . . . leidet nicht, ist nicht passiv (ἀπαθές)’ ”⁸³ The part of the soul of which Aristotle speaks is that which actively thinks and makes judgements; this active νοῦς, as Hegel emphasizes, is “schlechthin tätig.”⁸⁴ “ ‘[E]s nimmt die Form auf und ist der Möglichkeit nach eine solche.’ ”⁸⁵ Hegel asserts that *Denken* is also a potency, since it is potentially the form of the object that it has received. It apprehends the form independent of the object. *Denken*, then, is related to the form received and not to the sensible object *per se*. “Wenn gedacht wird, so ist das Gedachte insofern Objekt, aber nicht wie das Empfundene werdende; es ist Gedanke, und dies ist ebenso der Form eines Objectiven beraubt. Das Denken ist auch δύναμις.”⁸⁶ “ ‘Aber es verhält sich zum Gedachtwerdenden nicht wie die Empfindung zum Empfundenerwerbenden’ ”⁸⁷ Hegel comments that the sensible, the object of the sensation, is completely different, and is opposed, to the activity of νοῦς. “ . . . hier ist ein Anderes, Sein, gegen die Tätigkeit.”⁸⁸ “ ‘Der Verstand (νοῦς) weil er alles denkt, so ist er unvermischt (ἀμιγής)’ ”⁸⁹ Hegel briefly comments here that νοῦς is not associated with

⁸³ T.W.A., p. 212. *DA* III.4, 429a15-16.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, III.4, 429a17.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, III.4, 429a18.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, III.4, 429a19.

something totally distinct from it, “nicht ein Anderes, durchaus ohne alle Gemeinschaft”⁹⁰

Aristotle continues to say that:

damit er überwinde (κρατῇ), wie Anaxagoras sagt, d.h. daß er erkenne; denn hervorbrechend in seiner Wirksamkeit (παρεμφαινόμενον) hält er das Fremde ab und verwahrt sich dagegen (ἀντιφράττει, macht einen Verhau, Umzäunung). Deswegen ist die *Natur* des νοῦς keine andere als das Mögliche (ὥστε μηδ' αὐτοῦ εἶναι φύσιν τινὰ μηδεμίαν ἀλλ' ἡ ταύτην, ὅτι δυνατόν).⁹¹

This potency, comments Hegel, is clearly not identified with matter, and since this potency belongs to the very essence of νοῦς, νοῦς cannot be said to possess matter. *Denken*, then, is not to be implicit (*an sich*). Because of νοῦς' purity, its actuality or reality is not to be for another, but its potency is to be for itself. “[D]ie Möglichkeit selbst ist nicht ὕλη, der νοῦς hat keine Materie, die Möglichkeit gehört zu seiner οὐσία selbst. – das Denken ist dieses, nicht an sich zu sein.”⁹² A thing is actual, i.e., real or genuine, only when it is determined, and when its opposing determination, its potency, is not in it. In the corporeal realm, we have matter and external form; matter is the potency opposed to the form. However, the soul is, on the contrary, itself potency without matter. Rather, its essence is actuality: “Ihr Wesen ist Wirksamkeit.”⁹³ Thus, Aristotle concludes, “‘[d]er νοῦς nun der Seele, der Bewußtseinde, ist nichts *actu*, ehe er denkt.’”⁹⁴ Although Aristotle does not refer to consciousness in this passage, his general doctrine is well captured by Hegel: νοῦς is real only through the activity of thinking, of *Denken*. In itself, it is potentially everything, but it is nothing

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 213

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 212-3, III.4, 429a19-24.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 213

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, DA III.4, 429a23-24.

unless it thinks: “er ist absolute Tätigkeit, existiert nur so, und *ist*, wenn er tätig ist.”⁹⁵ Hegel’s decision to open this section with this Aristotelian passage has no other purpose than to establish a transition from the sensible powers, which are always *particular* and operate for another substance, to the activity of νοῦς, whose universal δύναμις is *for itself*. The universal δύναμις of νοῦς, then, cannot be reduced to the particular fibre of matter.

Hegel ends this section with a quote from III.4, 429a24-27 and 429a31-429b9. In the first passage, Aristotle concludes his argument for the νοῦς’ unmixed nature. Νοῦς cannot be mixed or affected by the body, for otherwise it would assume the changing qualities of the senses. In the second passage, Aristotle demonstrates νοῦς’ opposing nature to that of the sense-organs. Whereas the sense-organs are partially debilitated after perceiving a violent perception, i.e., a perception too great for it to apprehend, such as the massive explosion of a bomb destroying part of the capacity of the ear drum, disabling the ear from operating as before, this distinction does not apply to thinking, when thinking of an object that is difficult and strenuous, grows in its capacity to think, and is more able to think afterwards of other objects less complex.

From III.4, 429b6-9, Aristotle discusses the two degrees of potency in νοῦς: a potency without knowledge or training and a potency with knowledge and training, but unexercised. The latter form of potency is, then, more actual than the former, and allows for νοῦς to think itself, as Aristotle concludes in III.4, 429b9.

In the subsequent section of his commentary and interpretation, Hegel states that *Denken* makes itself into the passive understanding (*Verstand*), i.e., into its object. “Das Denken macht sich

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

zum passiven Verstand, d.i. zum Objektiven, Gegenstand für es: *intellectus passivus*.⁹⁶ In light of this comment, Hegel suggests that the dictum that ‘nothing is in the intellect that has not first come through the senses’ may be only relatively Aristotelian. The reverse of this dictum is also true, as we will see below.

Hegel proceeds immediately to quote and comment III.4, 429b23-29, in which Aristotle attempts to answer an ἀπορία of the nature of νοῦς. Aristotle’s question in III.4, 429b23-25 concerns the nature of νοῦς’ thinking of an object. If νοῦς is simple and unaffected, and has nothing in common with anything else, then how can νοῦς think if to think something is also a passive affection? Within his translation of this text, Hegel comments that *Denken* is only for itself, since it makes what is other into its own object. Otherness here is, says Hegel, only *Schein*. “. . . (sondern nur für sich ist, indem es Anderes zum Seinigen macht; das Andere ist nur Schein) . . . ”⁹⁷ This is clarified in what follows. Aristotle explains that when two things have something in common then one appears to be active and the other passive, i.e., that which is acted upon.⁹⁸ Hegel’s translation of these verses is as follows: “. . . Denn insofern etwas Zweien gemeinschaftlich, so scheint das eine zu tun, das andere passiv sich zu verhalten.”⁹⁹ Hegel uses the transient verb *tun* to translate the Greek ποιεῖν, which translates as *acting*. *Tun* means to ‘do’ or to ‘make.’ Aristotle also uses ποιεῖν to refer to the agent’s productive nature in III.5. While Aristotle introduces the two aspects of νοῦς in III.4, 429b24-25, the active and the passive, he characterizes the active νοῦς as a

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

⁹⁸ *Cf.* III.4, 429b24-25.

⁹⁹ *T.W.A.*, p. 214, III.4, 429b24-25.

productive principle.¹⁰⁰ *Denken*'s making of the passive νοῦς demonstrates nothing other than *Denken*'s absolute and ubiquitous nature; all things are produced by *Denken* as determinations within *Denken*. Hegel's commentary and translation account for this Aristotelian insight. Since Aristotle anticipates his more explicit discussion of νοῦς' distinction between the passive and active in III.4, 429b23-29. Hegel is fully justified in bringing the significant insight of the productive *Denken* to our attention prior to his commentary on III.5. This producing activity of νοῦς is not limited to the human soul, but is the universal activity of *Denken*, as Hegel will demonstrate in III.5.

After his translation of III.4, 429b24-25, Hegel comments that while in νοῦς there appears within something distinct from itself, νοῦς is also pure and unmixed, and, thus, unaffected by its object. "Damit scheint sogleich ein Passives im νοῦς zu sein: es ist damit ein Verschiedenes von ihm

¹⁰⁰ Weiss parallels the productive activity of the sensible to clarify the analogous productivity of the activity of *Denken*. He says that "active sensing makes itself into what is for it the object; that is, the actuality of sense activity was seen to be both the actuality of itself and its object, but that this object nevertheless remained distinct from the activity of sensing. In this sense, active sensing makes for itself what is objective." (Weiss, *Hegel's Critique*, p. 40) Similarly with νοῦς, the potency of νοῦς is engendered by the activity of νοῦς, by *Denken*. "The 'pregnant' potentiality of *nous*," Weiss concludes, "is thus something posited to explain *actual noēsis* or thinking." (*Ibid*) Although the causal role of νοῦς is akin to that of the senses, the object of νοῦς does not remain distinct from active νοῦς, but is identical, since the object of active νοῦς is νοῦς' inner self-differentiation. "Sense activity, on the contrary, every time it comes into existence, i.e., is 'energized', does not coincide with itself, but rather appears as opposed to its object. The sensible object, prior to its being sensed, is implicitly [*an sich*] the sensed object, but as Aristotle tells us, 'the distinction between their being remains.' No such distinction remains between [Thought] and its object. Actual thinking 'coincides with itself'; it does not posit an object over against itself, but rather in its activity realizes itself as it actually is, and sees itself only in its objects." (*Ibid.*, p. 41)

The problem with this interpretation, as W. Kern has highlighted, is that Weiss insinuates that Hegel's technical language of *an sich* and *für sich* is equivalent to Aristotle's δυνάμις and ἐνέργεια. There is no doubt that Hegel drew his inspiration from Aristotle, but his terms prove to be an advance beyond Aristotle. It is not the case, says Kern, that passive νοῦς is akin to the pure inactivity of νοῦς, and is, therefore, engendered by active νοῦς. "Weiss," writes Kern, "qui malheureusement interprète mal Aristote (par exemple, il comprend le '*nous* passif' comme pur être-non-encore-en-activité, comme l'inactivité du *nous* en général . . . , affirme que Hegel a trouvé chez Aristote ses propres concepts" (W. Kern. "L'interprétation d'Aristote par Hegel," *Revue de philosophie ancienne* 3 (1985), 46, trans. A.-M. Roviello) While Kern is correct in making the distinction between Aristotle's terminology and those of Hegel, he appears to be inaccurate regarding Weiss' interpretation of the status of the universal δυνάμις of νοῦς. Weiss does not reduce the universal δυνάμις of νοῦς to that of prime matter, but includes within it a degree of actuality. (This will be further explained below.)

in ihm, und zugleich soll er rein und unvermischt sein.”¹⁰¹

Aristotle continues with the corollary to his initial question. Can νοῦς be a possible object to itself?¹⁰² If we answer that νοῦς can be its own object, then either νοῦς is present in everything, or else it will possess qualities that are inherent in all other material objects. Whereas the former advocates a simplicity to νοῦς, the latter advocates its complexity. The latter must be discarded, since νοῦς’ potential nature does not permit it to appropriate any particular quality: νοῦς must initially be a universal δύναμις if it is to have itself as its own object. Hegel, however, does not see a disjunction within this Aristotelian question. For Hegel, the distinction between νοῦς and its object as otherness is the shining of νοῦς’ universal and internal activity; all objects (*alles Gedachte*) are the outward expression of νοῦς. “. . . er erscheint als Gegenstand, als Anderes.”¹⁰³ Furthermore, Hegel adds that νοῦς is implicitly its object, i.e., its content. Νοῦς, then, belongs to all things, since it is potentially all things. “Der νοῦς denkt alles, ist so bei sich, er ist selbst bei sich alles.”¹⁰⁴ Hegel remarks that Aristotle’s speech is idealistic in nature, and not empirical, as many of Hegel’s contemporaries assumed.

Aristotle ends his discussion of this question with the reassertion that while νοῦς is potentially everything and what is thinkable in all objects, it is not actual until it thinks. “‘Aber zugleich ist er der Wirklichkeit nach nichts, ehe gedacht worden.’”¹⁰⁵ According to Hegel, this

¹⁰¹ T.W-A., p. 214.

¹⁰² DA III.4, 429b27-430a1.

¹⁰³ T.W-A., p. 214.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ DA III.4, 429b31.

passage implies that the self-conscious activity of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta$ is not merely implicit, or in itself, but is actually *for itself*, since it is only as activity, and its essence is energy. “[D]er selbstbewußte $\nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta$ ist nicht bloß an sich, sondern wesentlich für sich, – er ist nur als Tätigkeit, die οὐσίᾱ des $\nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta$ ist Energie.”¹⁰⁶ Only from the point of view of what is thinkable is “Möglichkeit *vor* der Wirklichkeit.”¹⁰⁷ The self-conscious $\nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta$ is explicit, because it is in actuality all things. Hegel illustrates the principle of potency prior to actuality with the example of a burning object, which is potentially ashes, but is afterwards actually ashes and smoke. “Passivität ist Möglichkeit *vor* der Wirklichkeit. Dies Ding verbrannt ist Möglichkeit der Asche, nachher seine Wirklichkeit Asche, Rauch . . . dies ist das wirkliche Ding.”¹⁰⁸ With this illustration, Hegel emphasizes Aristotle’s teaching that in the order of acquiring knowledge, the passivity of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta$ as what is thinkable is to be regarded as a potency already present in actuality. In other words, before the wood is burnt, it is already potentially ashes. In this light, that which is potentially in *Denken* is already in reality present in *Denken*.

Aristotle compares the content of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta$ to characters potentially written on a blank writing-tablet. Hegel’s commentary, in fact, attempts to clarify a contemporary misinterpretation of Aristotle’s analogy. After citing Aristotle’s analogy that $\nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta$ is like a writing-tablet, “ein Buch,”¹⁰⁹ which is devoid of any written characters, Hegel clarifies that Aristotle refers to the “Papier, aber kein Buch,”¹¹⁰ contrary to the popular interpretation, which stubbornly attributes the expression *tabula*

¹⁰⁶ T.W-A., p. 214.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

rasa to the nature of νοῦς. In other words, these interpreters claim that Aristotle advances the theory of νοῦς as a blank page, “worauf dann erst geschrieben werden soll von den äußeren Gegenständen.”¹¹¹ However, this view that considers the generative source for the acquisition of knowledge external to νοῦς is, according to Hegel, plainly incorrect. According to Hegel, these interpreters have not adhered to the teachings of the *Begriff*. They have characterized νοῦς to be as static and as passive as a writing-tablet, whose determination is derived from external characters. For Aristotle, says Hegel, νοῦς is “die Wirksamkeit selbst.”¹¹² To suggest that νοῦς is a universal δύνάμις for itself, as Aristotle says in III.4, 429a15-24, is to assert that ultimately its objects are not external forms, but result from the internal activity of its inner differentiation.

Hegel interprets Aristotle’s analogy to entail the soul’s possession of a content under the condition that there is actual thinking. “Die Vergleichung beschränkt sich aber nur darauf, daß die Seele nur einen Inhalt habe, insofern wirklich gedacht werde.”¹¹³ The soul, then, is to be interpreted as this unwritten writing-tablet, and is implicitly its content, i.e., everything, but in itself, it is not yet the totality of the content. In other words, potentially, the soul contains everything, but actually, it contains nothing prior to the activity of inscribing characters onto it. “Die Seele ist dies unbeschriebene Buch, d. h. alles an sich, sie ist nicht in sich selbst diese Totalität: wie der Möglichkeit nach ein Buch alles enthält, der Wirklichkeit nach aber nichts, ehe darauf geschrieben ist. Die wirkliche Tätigkeit ist erst das Wahrhafte . . .”¹¹⁴ Effective activity, which is characteristic of

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

νοῦς, therefore, is what is most genuine.

In the ultimate section of III.4, Aristotle concludes that *der* νοῦς *selbst* is νοητός, *denkbar*. Concerning that which is devoid of matter, “im Geiste,”¹¹⁵ there is the identity of that which thinks, “das Subjektive,” and that which is thought, “das Objektive.”¹¹⁶ This identity constitutes speculative or theoretical knowledge, since only this level of knowledge admits an identity between νοῦς and its object. However, material things are only potentially objects of thought. Thus, material objects do not possess νοῦς, since νοῦς is a potency devoid of matter. Hegel comments that νοῦς *is* its content, its νοητά, but as such it is only implicitly itself. Hegel’s subsequent remark is clearly an interpolation: although Nature contains the Idea, it is only implicitly understanding (*Verstand*). However, as implicit, νοῦς cannot be said to exist, i.e., to be genuine: it exists only when it is explicit, i.e., for itself. Νοῦς is essentially universal potency devoid of matter, and is only actual when it thinks.

[D]er νοῦς ist alle νοητά, aber so ist er es [i.e., νοῦς] nur an sich. Die Natur enthält die Idee, ist Verstand nur an sich: als an sich existiert der νοῦς nicht, er ist so nicht für sich; und deshalb kommt dem Materiellen die Vernunft nicht zu. Der νοῦς ist aber nicht das Materielle, sondern das Allgemeine, die allgemeine Möglichkeit ohne Materie, und ist nur wirklich, indem er denkt.¹¹⁷

Thus, on the one hand, Hegel recognizes the passive aspect of νοῦς in the human soul, but, on the other hand, he affirms its universal potential of becoming all things actually. Passive νοῦς, as a product of *Denken*, is potentially all that is actually thinkable.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

DA III.5

The nature of the active state of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$ is elaborated by Aristotle in DA III.5, where Aristotle clearly makes the fundamental distinction between *tätige* $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$ and *passive* $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$. The latter two are, therefore, aspects of the substance of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$. Within the soul, that which is thinkable, the *passive* $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$, is related to the sensible and imaginary powers, whereas the *passive* $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$ in itself is related to Nature.

As mentioned above, the active element of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$, *tätige* $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$, has a productive character. In III.5, Aristotle asserts the efficient, causal role of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$. In every species, and also in Nature taken as a whole, one observes on the one hand matter, which is potentially all the particular specimens in the species, and on the other a causal agent, which produces, i.e., brings order to matter. This twofold presence in Nature must also be paralleled in the soul, which $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$ comprises in its substance the active and passive elements of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$.

Aristotle reemphasizes that as a passive power, $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$ is potentially all that is thinkable, whereas that which is active, i.e., *tätige* $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$, makes all that which is potentially thinkable actually into its own. This productive agent is further defined as a positive state, a $\epsilon\tilde{\xi}\iota\varsigma$. Hegel interrupts his translation to briefly mention that this $\epsilon\tilde{\xi}\iota\varsigma$ (power, *Kraft*) is not an isolated or separate, productive activity: “($\epsilon\tilde{\xi}\iota\varsigma$ ist nicht ein einzelnes Tun)”¹¹⁸ In other words, within the human soul, *tätige* $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$ is not a separate substance juxtaposed to, and co-operating with, passive $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$, but is the active *aspect* of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$ within the human soul. It is not, then, a separate activity, since it constitutes one aspect of the essence of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$ in the human soul. However, as mentioned in chapter 1, Aristotle also speaks of a separate activity of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$, the $\chi\omega\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\hat{\varsigma}$, which Hegel

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

translates as the *an und für sich*. “ ‘νοῦς ist an und für sich (χωριστός)’ ”¹¹⁹ Hegel recognizes in these Aristotelian verses the absolute character of νοῦς, which surpasses the intermittent thinking activity within the individual human soul. The absolute νοῦς is the science which according to its activity has itself as its own object, whereas the passive νοῦς within the human soul is characterized by external images and senses, “. . . (äüßerer Verstand, Vorstellung, Empfindung)”¹²⁰ This absolute character of *tätige* νοῦς does not entail, as it does for Aristotle, a wholly transcendent, separate nature; for Hegel, this νοῦς is not reducible to the individual, human soul, but is the absolute *Denken* in its fullest realization. Νοῦς, as the *an und für sich*, essentially means, then, the full realization of νοῦς.¹²¹ Hegel ends his translation with a reference to a comment made by Tennemann, that *Denken* has an external origin to the human νοῦς: “Das Denken kommt von außen.”¹²² With this comment, Hegel acknowledges the externality of *Denken* with respect to the human soul. The human activity of thinking is not a vacuous activity, but is one that entails relationship amongst humans. However, the ultimate condition for this human interaction is the absolute and ubiquitous activity of *Denken*, which is perpetually self-reflecting. In this light, Hegel agrees with Aristotle that human thinking operates intermittently, whereas the absolute activity of νοῦς eternally thinks itself. Whereas Aristotle postulates a radical separation of active νοῦς from

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, DA III.5, 430a17.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 216. Haldane translates the German by “absolute.” (Haldane translation, p. 198) This term can be further defined as the “. . . fully developed and explicit return into itself from the stage of the (supposed) self-sufficiency of distinct and even opposite terms. It expresses the complete (but irreducibly processual) self-comprehension (and being) of the Concept, of Spirit, and of the Idea.” (*Glossary*, p. 347, no. 2) In this case, *an und für sich* refers to the explicit articulation of νοῦς’ inner differentiation. The *an und für sich* of νοῦς, therefore, entails the inclusion of all νοῦς’ objects, its νοητά.

¹²² T.W.A., p. 216.

the human soul, Hegel asserts that the absolute *tätige* νοῦς, *Denken*, is separate only in that it is irreducible to the individual human soul, since it is the totality of all that is in the *Scala Naturae*. According to Hegel, νοῦς' absolute nature is, therefore, the absolute Idea, which generates within itself its own content as results of its inner differentiation.

Hegel does not yet begin to comment on *DA* III.5, but rightly draws the reader's attention to Aristotle's development of the *passive* and *tätige* νοῦς in *DA* III.7 & 8.¹²³ Hegel first cites *DA* III.8, 431b20-21: " 'Die Seele,' das Denken, sagt Aristoteles (*DA* III.8), 'ist gewissermaßen alles Seiende' "¹²⁴ The Greek reads as follows: "ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ ὄντα πῶς ἐστὶ πάντα." The enclytic adverb πῶς, which Hegel accurately translates as *gewissermaßen*, expresses Aristotle's fundamental doctrine that the soul is not the totality of its object, but is *in a way* its object by having apprehended the *form* of the object. To eliminate the enclytic adverb would merely lead to the absurd conclusion that the object, e.g., the stone, is in the soul. Thus, it is not the material object that adheres to the soul, " 'sondern ihr Form.' "¹²⁵

Whereas Aristotle says in III.8, 431b20-21 that the *soul* is in a way all things, Hegel insists that *Denken* is in a way all things, and these things are, in fact, νοῦς as passive νοῦς, i.e., νοῦς παθητικός. As object, as object to itself, as *an sich*, it is only potency. However, νοῦς in itself is not merely a potency, but *is* only as ἐντελέχεια. This absolute character of νοῦς, of *Denken*, is expressed in what follows: ". . . und dies [alles Seiende] ist denn der νοῦς als pathetischer νοῦς;

¹²³ In fact, Hegel believes that chapters 7 & 8 have been written by another author, who has attempted to express in more detail the themes of passive and active νοῦς in III.4 & 5. As I make reference to chapters 7 & 8, I will continue to refer to Aristotle as the author, since Hegel himself does not make the formal distinction throughout his readings of these chapters.

¹²⁴ *T.W.-A.*, p. 216, III.8, 431b20-21.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 217, III.8, 431b30.

aber so als Gegenstand, als sich Gegenstand oder sofern er an sich ist, ist er nur die Möglichkeit. – er *ist* nur als Entelechie.”¹²⁶ Hegel, then, refers to Aristotle’s statement in III.4, 429a28, that the soul is the place of the Ideas: “τὴν ψυχὴν εἶναι τόπον εἰδῶν.” (DA III.4, 429a28) Aristotle clarifies that this ancient expression does not apply to the soul *per se*, but to the soul’s thinking power, since, as Hegel comments, only the thinking power in the soul (*denkende*) receives the forms of its objects: “nur die denkende noch enthält die Ideen [εἶδε].”¹²⁷ Aristotle adds that even this thinking power is not actually the forms but only potentially. Regarding this last statement of Aristotle, Hegel comments that the Ideas are first of all static, inert forms, and not activities: “die Ideen sind nur erst ruhende Formen, nicht als Tätigkeit.”¹²⁸ These Ideas do not exist in the thinking soul actually, but only potentially as thinkable objects. In the ensuing, albeit obscure, commentary, Hegel regards Aristotle not to be a realist. In making this claim, Hegel appears to be disproving a theory that reduces Aristotle’s philosophy to mere empiricism. Although Hegel does not state why Aristotle is not a realist, I suggest that this claim is made in virtue of the thinking soul’s apprehension or receptivity of the *form* of the object, as opposed to the absurd claim of its receptivity of the material object itself. Νοῦς’ apprehension of the *form* may account for Aristotle’s Idealistic disposition. However, Hegel does not mitigate the role of the senses. On the contrary, Hegel recognizes that for Aristotle, the senses are indispensable for the acquisition of knowledge in the thinking soul; although we think, sensing is also required. “Aristoteles ist so nicht Realist. Er sagt:

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

Die Empfindung ist notwendig; es wird gedacht, es muß aber auch empfunden werden."¹²⁹ Although Aristotle is described as an Idealist, Hegel, in my view, does not refer here to the absolute, ubiquitous activity of *Denken*. Rather, Aristotle speaks about the acquisition of knowledge within the relative, *human* νοῦς.

To confirm this comment, Hegel cites III.8, 432a4-9. In fact, Hegel divides this passage into two in order to make a comment of verses 4-6. In verses 4-6, Aristotle argues that the objects of thought, i.e., the νοητά, are in sensible forms: "ἐν τοῖς εἶδεσι τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τὰ νοητά ἔστι," ["the objects of thought are in the sensible forms"] (DA III. 8, 432a5), and these sensible forms include 1) all that is abstract, and 2) the qualities of sensible things. Hegel interjects with the comment that this unity in sensible form includes the distinct powers of the abstract and the sensible qualities: "... in der Einheit diese unterschiedenen Vermögen."¹³⁰ Thus, concludes Aristotle, the senses are indispensable for the acquisition of knowledge in the human soul, which is facilitated by sensible images (*Vorstellungen*), devoid of matter. Hegel adds that νοῦς in itself *makes* these forms into something thinkable, i.e., its νοητά, for itself; it makes these forms into δύνάμεις. The finite material objects and the conditions of the Spirit (*Geiste*) are external and separate from each other: the subjective and the objective are not identical, since they are external to each other. Thus, νοῦς here is only as potency, and not as actuality.

Diese Formen wie die der äußeren Natur macht der νοῦς sich zum Gedachtwerden, zur δύνάμεις. Die endlichen Dinge, Zustände des Geistes sind diese, wo nicht diese Identität des Subjektiven und Objektiven vorhanden ist. Es ist da außereinander; da ist der νοῦς nur δυνάμει, nicht als Entelechie.¹³¹

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

With respect to his reflections on *tätige* νοῦς or absolute νοῦς, Hegel begins by asserting that this level of reflection is the highest point that Aristotle had attained: his claim for the unity of the subjective and objective. Hegel reiterates that this νοῦς is active, and contains within it that which thinks, the subjective, and that which is thought, the objective. Both are distinct, but Aristotle also firmly states that both are identical in *tätige* νοῦς. In Hegel's way of speaking, *tätige* νοῦς is described as "das Absolute, Wahrhafte,"¹³² which entails the identity of the subjective and objective. This "absolute Denken,"¹³³ continues Hegel, thinks what is best, since it is the τέλος in and for itself. "Das absolute Denken (er nennt es den göttliche νοῦς), der Geist in seiner Absolutheit, dies Denken ist ein Denken dessen, was das Beste ist, was der Zweck an und für sich ist."¹³⁴ Absolute νοῦς, then, is the Spirit in its absolute sense, and is not, therefore, limited or reduced to the individual, subjective soul. However, this activity of νοῦς in the soul is a *productive power*, a power that sets apart, although relying on the senses, Thought (*Gedanken*) itself into an object. "Diese Tätigkeit ist ebenso eine Erzeugung, ein Abschneiden des Gedanken als eines Gegenstandes"¹³⁵ Similarly, in the activity of *Denken*, "der Tätigkeit des Denkens,"¹³⁶ the separation and relationship between Thought (*Gedanke*) and its object is one and the same: "Trennung und die Beziehung ist ein und dasselbe, so daß νοῦς und νοητόν dasselbe ist."¹³⁷ The essence or οὐσία that is picked up by *tätige* νοῦς

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 218.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 218. Again, in the Meiner edition, Hegel writes that this "Trennung. Unterscheidung und die Beziehung des Unterschiedenen auf das Subjekt ist ein und dasselbe, so daß der νοῦς und das νοητόν dasselbe

is νοῦς itself. “Dem das Aufnehmende des Wesens, der οὐσία, ist der νοῦς. Er nimmt auf, was er aufnimmt, ist die οὐσία, der Gedanke.”¹³⁸ Hegel, in fact, downplays receptivity in *Denken*. Even the apparent receptive aspect of *Denken* is active and engenders what appears as being picked-up. Although *Denken* becomes what it picked-up, it is already in a sense this object: “sein Aufnehmen ist Tätigkeit und bringt das hervor, was als Aufgenommenwerdendes erscheint. – er wird, sofern er hat.”¹³⁹ As Hegel further explains the nature of *tätige* νοῦς, he employs terms that he used to translate and describe νοῦς in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, because he wishes to downplay νοῦς’ reduction to a particular activity in the soul. Hegel argues that to take the object in the content for the divine is an incorrect interpretation of Aristotle, since the whole of the activity of the effectuating is itself the divine; the effects are the results of the inner differentiation of *Denken*. The totality of *Denken*’s activity is the divine. “Wenn wir den Inhalt des Gedankens, den gegenständlichen Inhalt für göttlich halten, so ist dies eine unrichtige Stellung; sondern das Ganze des Wirkens ist das Göttliche.”¹⁴⁰ The totality of activity is the divine *Tätigkeit*, which encompasses all objectivity. The excellence of this ‘divine’ activity is precisely its absolute, self-thinking nature, within which the unity of subjectivity and objectivity also maintain their distinctions. Νοῦς, therefore, is its own end, and is itself the totality of reality:

... der νοῦς denkt nur sich selbst, weil er das Vortrefflichste ist. Er ist der Gedanke des Gedankens, er ist das Denken des Gedankens; Einheit des Subjektiven und Objektiven ist darin ausgesprochen, und dies ist das Vortrefflichste. Der absolute

ist” (Meiner edition, p. 90) Thus, that which thinks and the content (*Inhalt*) thought of are, absolutely speaking, identical. However, it is only from the vantage point of *tätige* νοῦς that the subject can perceive this absolute unity (*absolute Einheit*).

¹³⁸ T.W-A., p. 218.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Endzweck, der νοῦς, der sich selbst denkt, – dies ist das Gute; dies ist nur bei sich selbst, um seiner selbst willen.¹⁴¹

Hegel's final comment on the nature of *tätige* νοῦς has the form of an explicit comparison with the *Denken* of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which is the highest level of speculative reflection one can attain.¹⁴² While the subjective and objective seemingly appear separated one from the other outside of *Denken*, they are in reality united in the absolute self-thinking activity of *Denken*. It is only appearance that *Denken* as such would be one power amongst others, as is the case in the human soul. "Es hat nur den Schein, als ob von dem Denken gesprochen würde neben anderem."¹⁴³ Hegel rightly says that Aristotle is speaking here on a speculative level, which implies that *Denken* is the absolute activity which excludes any sequencing of powers, as does the human νοῦς. "[D]iese Form des Nacheinander erscheint allerdings bei Aristoteles. Aber was er über das Denken sagt, ist für sich das absolut Spekulative und steht nicht neben anderen, z. B. der Empfindung, die nur δύναμις ist für das Denken."¹⁴⁴ For Hegel, however, all objects are outward manifestations or moments of *Denken*'s self-differentiation. Νοῦς is implicitly everything that is thinkable, and, as a result, its activity is the totality of Truth. All things are in themselves thinkable. The activity of νοῦς is the

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 219. In the *Meiner* edition, it is added that this τέλος in itself is the thinking activity of νοῦς: "Zweck an sich ist aber der sich denkende νοῦς." (*Meiner* edition, p. 89)

¹⁴² This is also explicitly confirmed in the *Meiner* edition, where Hegel writes that *Denken* "... hätte Gedanken und wäre zugleich auch Tätigkeit des Denkens. Aber das ist unrichtig, denn der νοῦς denkt nur sich selbst, weil er das Vortrefflichste ist, weil er der Gedanke des Gedankens ist; er ist das Denken des Gedankens, νόησις νοήσεως; absolute Einheit des Subjektiven und Objectiven ist darin ausgesprochen. Dies ist das an und für sich Vortrefflichste. Der νοῦς, der sich selbst denkt, ist der absolute Endzweck, das Gute; dieses ist nur bei sich selbst, um seiner selbst willen." (*Meiner* edition, pp. 90-91) The language used to characterize *tätige* νοῦς is strikingly similar to Aristotle's νοῦς of *Meta. A*. Hegel appears to be identifying *tätige* νοῦς and νοῦς itself. If this is so, then Hegel subscribes to the very long Neoplatonic tradition that identifies the active intellect with the pervasive activity of νοῦς. Of course, Hegel would flatly deny νοῦς' transcendent, i.e., separate character, as will be seen below.

¹⁴³ *T.W.-A.*, p. 219.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

being-for-itself and the being-in-itself, the νόησις νοήσεως.

Νοῦς in this sense is the absolute Truth, the νόησις νοήσεως in the *Metaphysics*. In spite of the apparently abstract expression νόησις νοήσεως, Aristotle's νοῦς is the most speculative and concrete principle.

Aber was er über das Denken sagt, ist für sich das absolut Spekulative und steht nicht neben anderen, z.B. der Empfindung, die nur δύναμις ist für das Denken. Näher liegt dies darin, daß der νοῦς alles ist, daß er an sich Totalität ist, das Wahre überhaupt, – seinem Ansich nach der Gedanke, und dann aber wahrhaft an und für sich das Denken, diese Tätigkeit, die das Fürsichsein und Anundfürsichsein ist, das Denken des Denkens, welches so abstrakterweise bestimmt ist, was aber die Natur des absoluten Geistes für sich ausmacht.¹⁴⁵

The self-thinking nature of *Denken* (τätige νοῦς) captures the true speculative nature of the absolute and all-encompassing *Geist*, which is expressed and elaborated at the end of Hegel's *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften III* with a quote, not commented, from *Meta. Λ*. Tätige νοῦς is the ubiquitous activity of *Denken*, and is not, therefore, merely reducible to an activity within the soul. Tätige νοῦς is all of reality as ἐντελέχεια.

In his *Hegel's Dialectic*, Gadamer makes a critique of Hegel's interpretation of Aristotle's νοῦς. Gadamer challenges Hegel's critique that Aristotle's absolute νοῦς, as the self-thinking substance, is the "principal systematic function which it has for speculative idealism."¹⁴⁶ Gadamer begins his critique by stating that Hegel rightly accepts Aristotle's claim of νοῦς' self-reflection, which is articulated in *Λ*.7, 1072b20-22, a text which Hegel cites and comments, as we have seen. " 'Der Gedanke (ὁ νοῦς) denkt aber sich selbst durch Annahme (μετάληψιν, Aufnahme) des

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer. *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*. Trans. P. C. Smith. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 1976, p. 27.

Gedachten (νοητοῦ)’ ”¹⁴⁷ Hegel comments here that Aristotle clearly speaks of νοῦς as being *receptive* of its object: “als seines Gegenstandes, so ist er rezeptiv.”¹⁴⁸ Aristotle continues to say that “ ‘er wird aber gedacht, indem er berührt und denkt (νοητὸς γὰρ γίνεται θιγγάνων καὶ νοῶν), so daß der Gedanke und das Gedachte dasselbe ist.’ ”¹⁴⁹ Hegel interprets this passage to mean that the objects are transformed or converted into activity, energy: “der Gegenstand schlägt um in Aktivität, Energie.”¹⁵⁰ Gadamer argues that this transformation for Aristotle means the reverse of what Hegel interprets. For Aristotle, according to Gadamer, does not argue that the object becomes active νοῦς, but that νοῦς becomes for itself its own object. Gadamer suggests that Hegel ratifies this claim in light of Λ.7, 1072b23: “ ‘Denn das Aufnehmende des Gedachten und des Wesens ist der Gedanke.’ ”¹⁵¹ Furthermore, this picking-up activity of νοῦς produces what appears as that which is being picked-up. As seen above, the activity of νοῦς is active because it already has that which is seemingly picked-up. Aristotle expresses this in Λ.7, 1072b23: “ ‘Es wirkt, insofern es hat.’ ”¹⁵² As we have seen in Hegel’s commentary and interpretation of the *De Anima*, Hegel says concerning νοῦς, “sein Aufnehmen ist Tätigkeit und bringt das hervor, was als Aufgenommen werdendes erscheint, – er wird, sofern er hat.”¹⁵³ According to Gadamer, Hegel accords activity even

¹⁴⁷ T.W-A., p. 162.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 218. Incidentally, Gadamer believes that this last phrase was tampered with by either the editor or the printer, since it should read, as it does in his translation of *Metaphysics*, “Es wirkt, sofern es hat,” and not “er wird.” Cf. Gadamer, *Hegel’s Dialectic*, p. 28, no. 19.

to this receptive νοῦς, which Gadamer asserts as being completely false. Although Aristotle says that that which is receptive has already the character of νοῦς, he means that νοῦς becomes actual by the apprehension and reception of its object. In the case of νοῦς, the object received is νοῦς itself, but, adds Aristotle, the active and not the passive element is the most divine.¹⁵⁴

Gadamer's central critique of Hegel is that Hegel's presupposition of the "priority of effectivity is so self-evident that he no longer recognizes at all that the analysis of the connection between being able to take up a thought and having it is, in Aristotle's considerations, meant to justify a subsequent conclusion,"¹⁵⁵ namely, that νοῦς self-reflects because it is what is most excellent. According to Hegel, this Aristotelian conclusion of the highest activity refers not to the content thought by νοῦς, but to the "the self of thought, [i.e., its] free activity . . ."¹⁵⁶ Gadamer contrasts the fundamental difference between Hegel and Aristotle: whereas Hegel asserts the *self* of νοῦς as the starting point of what is highest in νοῦς, Aristotle argues that the object of thought determines this divine status of νοῦς. However, the object thought is νοῦς itself, and, therefore, νοῦς can only think itself. Gadamer ends his critique with this Aristotelian conclusion. Gadamer may be interpreting Aristotle's text of the receptive element in νοῦς too literally. By no means is Aristotle equating the νοῦς' possession of its object with the νοῦς in the human soul. Aristotle speaks here of the absolute νοῦς, the νόησις νοήσεως, which cannot receive objects as from an external origin, since it is its own object. The reception or possession of which Aristotle speaks is figurative, and is, in the end, a tautology. Gadamer's critique would rightly apply to the human νοῦς, which

¹⁵⁴ Cf. A. 7, 1072b24.

¹⁵⁵ Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectic*, p. 28.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

receives its object, and the object apprehended determines the activity of νοῦς. When speaking of the absolute νοῦς, however, the object is the same as the νόησις of νοῦς, and, therefore, the distinction between νόησις and νοητόν is merely apparent. According to Hegel, this absolute νοῦς cannot receive objects, since all objects are its own thought-determinations, produced by its own inner self-differentiation.

Final Remarks

In speaking about νοῦς, Hegel recognizes, on the one hand, its twofold distinction of passivity and activity in the human soul, but, on the other hand, he further recognizes its universal character, which is equated with the νόησις νοήσεως, *das Denken des Denken*. The χωρισμός of νοῦς is precisely this absolute, ubiquitous activity of *Denken*, which encompasses *all* of reality, since the myriad of reality's thought-determinations are manifestations of *Denken*'s inner self-differentiation. *Tätige νοῦς*, *Denken*, is a productive activity that cannot receive external forms, since it itself is the totality and producer of these forms. By translating and defining the χωρισμός of νοῦς by the *an und für sich* of νοῦς, of *Denken*, Hegel has overcome the Aristotelian chasm between νοῦς and Nature.¹⁵⁷ The *an und für sich* of *Denken* entails the inclusive and total comprehension of *Denken*'s inner differentiation. The only plausible solution to the Aristotelian ἀπορία is to assert that within the unity of νοῦς, *tätige νοῦς* (*Denken*) must produce its own objects. Its objects are merely *Denken*'s self differentiation, and so *Denken*'s thinking activity must

¹⁵⁷ Mure adds that "Aristotle tries hard to link God and the world in a genuine unity. On the whole he fails, and he fails, judged from a Hegelian standpoint, because every effort he makes to establish the full real, intelligible, and good as concrete universal-individual lands him with a unity, be it God or an infima species, which is so self-determining and self-sufficient that it tends to tear away in isolation from all else, to repel any determining context because to acknowledge it would be to relinquish its claim to self-determination and self-sufficiency." (Mure, "Foreword," in Weiss, *Hegel's Critique*, p. xvii)

consist of its own self-reflection. In this light, the reversal of the reputedly Aristotelian dictum that ‘nothing is in the intellect which has not first come from the senses’ is also true: ‘nothing is in the senses that has not first come from the intellect.’ Hegel, in fact, seems to be echoing Anaxagoras’ thesis, as mentioned by Aristotle in the III.4, 429a15-24, that νοῦς is the cause of the world, although, of course, for Hegel the cause and the world are not diametrically opposed. In Aristotelian terms, Hegel has clearly attributed to *Denken* the coalescence of final and formal causality. Thus, in one way, Hegel accepts Aristotle’s χωρισμός of νοῦς in that the activity of νοῦς is not reducible to any individual soul, but he rejects Aristotle’s claim of isolating active νοῦς as a wholly separate activity from the rest of Nature. What remains to be done is a further inquiry into the nature of Hegel’s notion of *Denken*.

PART III

HEGEL’S NOTION OF *DENKEN*

Our discussion inevitably leads us to Hegel’s understanding of *Denken* in relation to Aristotle’s. This section will highlight two interrelated aspects to Hegel’s notion of thinking: its systematic character and its self-referential nature. With respect to the first aspect of thinking, the “Preliminary Conception” to the *EL* will serve as our primary text, since it is here that Hegel’s reflections on the nature of thinking are most concise and explicit. Concerning the second aspect, the *Science of Logic*, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, and the *Phenomenology of Spirit* will be consulted in order to confirm the thesis that the absolute Idea is wholly self-referential.

Thinking's Systematic Character

In *EL* § 19,¹⁵⁸ Hegel declares that the subject matter of the *Logic* is the pure Idea, i.e., “the Idea in the abstract element of *thinking*.” (*EL* § 19) More precisely, in *Additions* 1 and 2, Hegel equates Truth with the pure Idea: they both constitute the subject matter of the *Logic*. In his commentary, Hegel clearly argues that the Idea itself *is* thinking, considered “as the self-developing totality of its own peculiar determinations and laws, which thinking does not already *have* and find given within itself, *but which it gives to itself*.” (*EL* § 19R, my emphasis). This latter phrase elucidates a central theme in Hegel’s philosophy: that thinking *produces* its proper and particular determinations. It is for this reason that the pure (absolute) Idea is a totality, a self-developing totality. “. . . the Idea is the truth; the whole preceding exposition and development contains this proof.” (*EL* § 213A)¹⁵⁹ Its particular determinations, i.e., its thought-determinations (*Denkbestimmung*), are stages of *its* own self-development. The particular thoughts produced by thinking are the content¹⁶⁰ of this totality, and are inseparable from the form, which conditions the structure of the content. Thinking presupposes this content, i.e., the thought-determinations, and is

¹⁵⁸ References to the *EL* will be as follows: The section number alone refers to the body of reflection prior to the Remarks; “R” appended to the section number indicates the “Remarks” within that section; the appended “A” followed by a numeral refers to the specific Addition within the mentioned section: alone, the “A” indicates a single Addition within the section.

¹⁵⁹ The *Glossary* defines the Idea as “Hegel’s term for the Absolute inasmuch as it is the total process of the self-articulation of meaning and of what is meaningful.” (*Glossary*, p. 350, no.29)

¹⁶⁰ In English, “Content” covers two Hegelian terms. First, it refers to *Gehalt*, which entails an “intrinsic value” or “import” of something. (*Glossary*, p. 350, no.24) Secondly, it is also expressed as *Inhalt*, which refers to that which makes up a thing, i.e., its “constituents.” (*Ibid*) Thus, the content as *Gehalt* must bear significance or meaning to the absolute knower. This, actually, reflects an existential perspective, since the emphasis is on the thinking’s activity of the thing at hand. G. W. Cunningham has also expressed a similar view early in this century. “But the universal of the [Concept] is not a mere sum of features common to several things, confronted by a particular which enjoys an existence of its own. It is, on the contrary, self-particularizing or self-specifying, and with undimmed clearness finds itself at home in its antithesis.” (G. W. Cunningham. *Thought and Reality in Hegel’s System*. (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc.), 1984, Reprint, p. 17)

not, therefore, an isolated activity.

Thus, if the Science of Logic considers thinking in its activity and its production (and thinking is not an activity without content, for it produces thought and Thought itself [das Denken . . . Produziert Gedanken und den Gedanken], its content is in any event the supersensible world; and to be occupied with that world is to sojourn in it Thought says farewell [to the] last element of the sensible, and is free, at home with itself; it renounces external and internal sensibility, and distances itself from all particular concerns and inclinations." (EL § 19A2)

Thinking is precisely the Subject that thinks and produces thought-determinations. This subject is given the categorical status of "I."¹⁶¹ Hegel's claim is, again, to dissolve any separation between thinking and determinate forms of thought, since the latter are the moments (*Gestalt*) of the former's self-articulation. The I is not a separate, isolated, and particular thinking subject; rather, it is the "universal in and for itself" (EL § 20R). It is essentially a "we," since everyone experiences the sensibility, representation, and thought. Each of these operations presupposes the ubiquitous activity of thinking, which is its condition for operation. Thinking, then, is not reduced to a juxtaposed activity operative alongside that of the sensible and representation. In other words, the I is the pure self-consciousness, "pure relation to itself," (EL § 20R) and an abstract universality—abstract because it supersedes sensation and representation, and is, then, "abstractly free." (EL § 20R) Thinking, therefore, is "present everywhere and pervades all . . . determinations as [their] category." (EL § 20R)¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Cf. PS, V, p. 233, where Hegel first advances the category of the "I."

¹⁶² In Alfredo Ferrarin's words, the "'I' does not refer to anything exclusive or private about me, for everybody says 'I.' And 'I' means this empty pit or night, a universality which contains everything within itself. In other words, it is self-consciousness, that is, the identity within difference between I and my thoughts, my possibility of identifying myself with whatever content is for my consciousness and at the same time of abstracting myself from it." (*Hegel and Aristotle*, p. 91, forthcoming) This comment is, of course, based upon Hegel's declaration that although thinking's truth is objectively true, it is not a private, nor individual, activity, but communal. In § 23R, Hegel writes the following: Thinking is "not a *particular* being or doing of the subject, but consists precisely in this, that consciousness conducts itself as an abstract 'I,' as *freed* from *all particularity* of features, states, etc., and does only what is universal, in which it is identical with all individuals." Cunningham proposes an insightful

In the *Addition* to § 21, Hegel demonstrates the human process of developing universal concepts from our experiences of phenomena. The phenomenal event is transient, while the cause, the universal, is what is common to all the same phenomena. This concept is attained by the act of thinking. Thus,

in thinking about things, we always seek what is fixed, persisting, and inwardly determined, and what governs the particular. This universal cannot be grasped by means of the senses, and it counts as what is essential and true. (*EL* § 21A)

While in *EL* §§ 19-23, Hegel shows how thinking produces its objects (thought-determinations), as a product of the I, in § 24R, Hegel qualifies this claim by asserting that the production of determinate thoughts is grounded by a *logical structure*, which functions as the necessary condition for development and specific determinations, i.e., the relative concepts. In other words, it is the Concept [*Begriff*] itself that operates as the pre-condition of particular determinations. The Concept is the logical subject, which is in a perpetual and dynamic “movement of self-comprehension.”¹⁶³ The Concept establishes the structure of necessity *within* the various moments of its self-development. The self-realization of the Concept is the absolute Idea itself, which is the concrete universal, since the various thought-determinations engendered by thinking are, in fact, determinations derived from the one, universal Concept. Inherent in the Concept is an internal law

reflection on this communal, or universal, nature of thinking. It is Cunningham's contention that thinking is to be understood in two ways: psychologically and epistemologically. The psychological process of thinking can only be subjective and particular, since it is one moment amongst many others that constitute the “mental life of the individual subject.” (*Thought and Reality*, p. 10) However, epistemology “necessarily transcends this subjective standpoint of psychology,” since it is concerned with establishing “a criterion of truth” within the subject-object relation itself, and calculating the implications of such a relation. Epistemology, thus, is trans-subjective, since its object surpasses the mere horizon of the individual. (*Ibid*) The universality of thinking that Hegel advocates is clearly of the second way of thinking, since thinking is not merely my subjective thoughts, but the communal, i.e., universal, activity of thinking itself.

¹⁶³ *Glossary*, p. 348, no. 5. The Glossary also adds that the “Concept is the movement of comprehension itself.” (*Ibid*)

or necessity that is increasingly manifested in proportion to its self-development, and which culminates in the absolute Idea.¹⁶⁴

Thus, from the vantage point of the absolute Idea, the Concept precedes its manifestations and the philosophical activity of comprehending it. Historically, however, the philosopher must attain the realization of the Concept, i.e., the absolute Idea, through the many particular manifestations of the Idea, manifestations which are *determinate* or *singular universals*. Thought thinking itself is the nature of the absolute Idea, and is, thus, the *τέλος* of this historical ascension of reason.¹⁶⁵

Hegel continues to argue that thought-determinations, considered as objective thoughts, refer to the fact that there is “understanding, or reason, in the world,” (*EL* § 24R) without which language would be impossible. “It is in language that these thought-determinations are primarily deposited.”

¹⁶⁴ “... everywhere the *Idee* is the *Begriff* as realized, or as being realized.” (*Glossary*, p. 350, no. 29)

¹⁶⁵ A. Ferrarin captures this insight in the following way: “Absolutely speaking, then, first is the Concept, then its manifestations, and finally the particular philosophizing subjects who reflect and appropriate the Concept. Historically speaking, first you need care for truth and trust in reason (religion is one of the paramount cases of such a trust to be made true and validated by philosophy), then you find the determinate universals thanks to observational reason or empirical sciences, then you comprehend determinate universals as particular moments of thought, and finally you comprehend the universal as one logical form, among others, of thought thinking itself. Thereby objective thought and my thought turn out to be the same identical content, apart from the fact that I have to rise to the first in itself through a series of finite steps and transformations of form.” (Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, pp. 92-3) According to H. S. Harris, our concepts are generated by our experiences of the object at hand. However, these concepts fluctuate and *move* in proportion to our new experiences. “Hegel claims that the standard of what is true is only recognized to have failed because it has cumulatively generated the new standard out of its failure . . . [What] evolves is our concept of ‘the truth.’ ” (H. S. Harris, *Hegel: Phenomenology and System*, (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.), 1995, pp. 18-19) Only in the perfect correspondence of truth as concept and truth as object can the absolute Spirit be said to have resulted. (*Cf.* p. 21) Again, the presupposition for the emergence of the absolute is the uninterrupted continuum of the “‘logical development of the concept of ‘experience’.” (*Ibid.*, p. 21) However, adds Harris, although our experiences generate concepts, the absolute Concept precedes our experiences, since the Concept is the condition for our experiencing anything at all. “We all *embody the Concept (before we do any philosophizing at all) because it comprehends us; it provides the context (both practical or ‘real,’ and theoretical or ‘conscious’)* of all that we intelligently say and do—and of everything that we understand about what is unintelligent. But to embody it as a concept is to raise it to the level of explicit consciousness on its theoretical side.” (H. S. Harris, *Hegel’s Ladder II: The Odyssey of Spirit*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub.), 1997c, p. 708)

(*EL* § 24A2)¹⁶⁶ Reason in the world closely resembles Aristotle's $\epsilon\lambda\delta\eta$, the form inherently operative in matter, since both are determinate universals, which assume the causal role of a thing.¹⁶⁷ However, while the universal can operate as a universal in-itself, inherently in an object, it can also operate as a universal for-itself, as a separate status only conceivable to the thinking subject: "Man thinks and is something universal, but he thinks only insofar as the universal is [present] *for* him. The animal is also *in-itself* something universal, but the universal as such is not [present] *for* it; instead only the singular is ever [there] for it." (*EL* § 24A1)

However, insofar as the object is not in agreement with its concept, it remains untrue or inauthentic. Philosophically, truth entails the adequate agreement of "content with itself." (*EL* § 24A2)¹⁶⁸ Only the Concept is Truth, since its object is proportionately adequate to it. This level of truth is only attained in the absolute Idea. The goal of the *Logic* and of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the attainment of the adequate agreement of the subject and object, such that both cohere in the absolute Idea, whereby they become an identity. This statement, however, needs qualification, which Hegel provides.

¹⁶⁶ In relating the significance of thought-determinations in the *Logic*, Geraets comments that these thought-determinations deposited in language are "not *a priori* in an a-historical way, but have come, in the course of history, forms that condition our thinking: they are *a priori* in a transhistorical way. *Das Logische* is not so much the content of the *Logic*, but the very development of meaning contents that function in this way: it is what some have called the logical *gesture*." (T. F. Geraets. "The Idea: Logic, Nature and Spirit," Ottawa, 1999 (unpublished), 2)

¹⁶⁷ This insight is advanced by Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, p. 93.

¹⁶⁸ The philosophical significance of Truth is, according to Hegel, also found in our common linguistic usage of it. For example, we speak of true art or a true friend. This entails an adequate correlation between the object and the concept. A true friend is "one whose way of acting conforms with the concept of friendship." (*EL* § 24A2)

Thinking's Self-referential Nature

How is one to understand the nature of this identity, if, in fact, it is an identity at all, as some Hegelian scholars deny?¹⁶⁹ In other words, is one to accept the view that the nature of absolute knowing does not entail the identity of the absolute knower with itself as a self-conscious act, but is, rather, a mere conscious *relation* of its intersubjective conditions (culture, history, and language) from which it emerges? It seems clear from what Hegel has written concerning the status of absolute knowing that it is a self-conscious activity, in which the gap between the subject and object in the

¹⁶⁹ In recent years, there has been a shift in interpreting the nature of the absolute Idea. Present in the Fall issue of *The Owl of Minerva* 30:1 (1998) was a series of debates on the theme of Absolute Knowing. In his article, "Absolute Knowing," Simon Lumsden challenges the traditional interpretation of the closure of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* as "the elimination of the opposition between thought and being, subject and object." (S. Lumsden, "Absolute Knowing," 5) To rectify this reductive interpretation, Lumsden proposes a new interpretation that advocates a *relation*, as opposed to an elimination or an ascension towards an absolute identity, of the subject and object in the absolute Idea. Lumsden is suggesting that the knower (the subject) and the known (the object) establish a unity, but maintain their differences, nevertheless: the absolute knower is a unity-in-difference. For Lumsden, the absolute Idea necessarily presupposes the dynamic activity of culture, history, and language, i.e., of intersubjectivity.

In his article, "Absolute Knowing Revisited," Stephen Houlgate makes a significant response to Lumsden. Houlgate does not disagree with Lumsden's thesis that absolute knowing presupposes the intersubjective activity laden within language, history, and culture. Rather, Houlgate's criticism pertains to the status of the absolute Idea: contrary to Lumsden, Houlgate defends the metaphysical view that an *identity*, and not a high level of relation, which preserves the differences, between thought and its object in the absolute Idea is attained. "... Hegel emphasizes . . . that speculative logic involves no relation *between* thought and its object, but rather the identity of thought and its 'object' . . . Absolute knowing is thus nothing but thought thinking itself." (S. Houlgate, "Absolute Knowing Revisited," *The Owl of Minerva* 30:1 (1998), 56-7) Ultimately, Houlgate's critique is that Lumsden thinks that the absolute Idea is merely at the stage of consciousness of its object when, according to Houlgate, the Idea has attained the highest level of self-consciousness in the absolute knower. It is precisely this level of self-consciousness that characterizes the absolute Idea's self-reflective activity.

Although Houlgate does not deny this intersubjective necessity to the Idea's self-development, he asserts that intersubjectivity is to be grounded in the very idea of *Being* itself, the ultimate counterpart of Thought. It is precisely Thought's apprehension of Being that renders Hegel's philosophy ontological, a claim that is undeniably rejected by Lumsden, who argues that absolute knowing is consciousness operative in human intersubjectivity. Thus, for Lumsden, consciousness and self-consciousness maintain their distinction in absolute knowing, whereas, for Houlgate, as with the traditional metaphysical interpretation, the distinction is overcome by the absolute identity of the known and the knower: consciousness is sublated and what emerges is self-consciousness of the absolute knower, i.e., the philosopher. Houlgate justifies this claim by referring to Hegel's passage in the *SL*: "[T]his objectifying act, in its freedom from the opposition of consciousness, is more precisely (*näher*) what may be taken simply for *thought* [*Denken*] as such. But this act should no longer be called consciousness [*Bewußtsein*]; consciousness embraces within itself the opposition of the ego [*Ich*] and its object which is not present in that original act. The name 'consciousness' gives it a semblance of subjectivity even more than does the *thought*, which here, however, is to be taken simply in the absolute sense as *infinite* thought untainted by the finitude of consciousness, in short, *thought as such*." (*SL*, 62-3, translation modified by Houlgate)

lower stages is overcome.

However, the uninterrupted continuum of stages culminating in absolute knowing presupposes that the absolute is, in part, indebted to culture, history, and language. Otherwise, Hegel would inevitably be required to postulate a separate activity to thinking, to the absolute. Although the intersubjective conditions are conditions for the absolute's self-development, i.e., its self-realization, they have a *relative* validity, since the absolute cannot be reduced to this stage of objective spirit. The absolute is not merely conscious of its object, but is self-conscious, in that it thinks its own nature. Hegel expresses this in the first Preface of the *Science of Logic*.

Consciousness, as spirit in its manifestation which in its progress frees itself from its immediacy and external concretion, attains to the pure knowing which takes as its object those same pure essentialities [categories] as they are in and for themselves. They are pure thought, spirit thinking its own essential nature." (SL: 28)¹⁷⁰

Thus, the absolute is not conscious merely of its intersubjective conditions, but of itself, which logically renders it self-conscious.

This is further confirmed later in the second Preface to the *SL*, where Hegel says that thinking, as the pure science, entails the "liberation from the opposition of consciousness." (SL: 49) Again, Hegel reiterates the dissolution or overcoming of the *separation* of thought and its object. Pure thought (thinking) is the Truth itself, and the Truth is self-consciousness. The pure science "contains *thought in so far as this is just as much the object in its own self, or the object in its own self in so far as it is equally pure thought*. As science, truth is pure self-consciousness in its self-development and has the shape of the self, so that the absolute truth of being is the known Concept and the Concept as such is the absolute truth of being." (SL: 49) Thus, this overcoming (*aufgelöst*) of the

¹⁷⁰ All references to the *Science of Logic* are taken from A. V. Miller's translation. (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD.), 1969. Henceforth, all pagination to this text will follow the abbreviation *SL*. However, we will substitute Concept for Notion.

relation between thought and its object entails their *identity*. Another passage from Hegel confirms this:

What we are dealing with in logic is not a thinking *about* something which exists independently as a base for our thinking and apart from it . . . ; on the contrary, the necessary forms and self-determinations [i.e., thought determinations produced by thinking] of thought are the content and the ultimate truth itself. (SL: 50)

What is essential to recognize for the purposes of this thesis is that pure thinking's self-reflecting activity does not exclude its particular expressions, i.e., thought-determinations, but *includes* them, and is the free result of the necessary development of thinking. Only at this level has thinking attained Truth.

Truth is the adequate proportion between the concept of an object and the object in itself. In the case of thinking (absolute knowing), the concept of the object is in exact proportion to, and is a perfect *adequatio* of, the object itself. "God alone is the genuine agreement between Concept and reality; all finite things, however, are affected with untruth; they have a concept, but their existence is not adequate to it. For this reason they must go to the ground, and this manifests the inadequacy between their concept and their existence." (EL § 24A2) The *adequatio* of both terms is the whole Truth and is the elimination of the chasm between subject and object throughout the various phases of thinking's self-development. The elimination of this gap merely asserts the inclusive character of the absolute. As the result of the preceding levels of relations between subject and object, it must include these levels as modes of consciousness, modes of itself. However, whereas the lower levels are stages of consciousness, absolute knowing has attained the stage of self-consciousness in the eminent sense, the Truth itself.

Absolute knowing is the *truth* of every mode of consciousness because, as the course of the *Phenomenology* showed, it is only in absolute knowing that the separation of the *object* from the *certainty of itself* is completely eliminated: truth is now equated

with certainty and this certainty with truth [And] truth is pure self-development
 (SL: 49)

This continuity further entails the *presupposition* of thinking's activity on intersubjectivity (culture, language, and history), but it cannot, as Houlgate says, be reduced to consciousness "of its intersubjective conditions"; it must be conscious of itself "as inherently intersubjective":¹⁷¹ thinking must be self-referential.

This surpassing or overcoming of the subject-object distinction is also expressed in the *PS*. The Spirit, as absolute Subject, "has made its existence identical with its essence; it has its object just as it is, and the abstract element of immediacy, and of the separation of knowing and the truth, is overcome."¹⁷² The overcoming of this duality is, in fact, the surpassing of Spirit as substance to Spirit as subject.¹⁷³

However, having made this claim in the *PS*, Hegel, in the *EL* § 82, seems to relativize this identity of subject and object in the absolute Idea, and, consequently, to preserve in the unity of the absolute the *distinction* of the two terms.

If . . . we say that 'the Absolute is the unity of the subjective and the objective,' that

¹⁷¹ Houlgate, "Absolute Knowing . . .," 61.

¹⁷² *PS*, p. 21. Cunningham elucidates a central theme in Hegel's philosophy of absolute knowing. Basing his reflections of the *PS*, Cunningham emphasizes "our common knowing experience," as the condition for attaining absolute knowledge. (*Thought and Reality*, p. 3) This implies, for Cunningham, that the *PS* constantly refers to the various attitudes of consciousness of the subject's relation to its object. Thus, absolute knowledge is the highest mode of consciousness of its object. "In other words," writes Cunningham, "the standpoint of absolute knowing is involved in every, even the simplest, phase of consciousness; it is implied in every act of knowledge, in every subject-object relation,—which is tantamount to saying that it is conterminous with experience itself." (*Ibid.*, p. 4) Absolute knowing, then, is necessarily grounded in concrete, existential matters.

¹⁷³ Harris captures this passage very well: ". . . 'substance' must itself perish into *true* subjectivity—not the *imagined* subjectivity of an *independent* substance but the subjectivity of spirit, or of a *process* of free communication." (Harris, H. S. " 'And the darkness comprehended it not': The Origin and Significance of Hegel's Concept of Absolute Spirit," in *Hegel: Absolute Spirit*. Ed. T. F. Geraets. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press), 1984, p. 29)

is certainly correct; but it is still one-sided, in that it expresses only the aspect of *unity* and puts the emphasis on that, whereas in fact, of course, the subjective and the objective are not only identical but also distinct. (EL § 82A)

However, the notion of identity that Hegel opposes here is a *formal*, abstract identity of the subject and object. Hegel, rather, understands the absolute Idea as a *concrete* unity of both terms, an identity-in-difference, since its thought-determinations are included in the totality of thinking's self-reflecting activity. This point was brought out in his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and is, again, confirmed in § 573 of the *Die Philosophie des Geistes*.¹⁷⁴ The concrete unity, therefore, implies that the absolute is *identity-in-difference*, unlike Schelling's undifferentiated, abstract identity.

Only the most perfect mode of cognition is able to attain and grasp this pure form of thinking, and it is this mode of cognition that renders the human *free* from necessity, since this form of thinking is the "absolute one," within which the Truth in and for itself becomes transparent. Thus, this form of thinking is infinite compared to the finite thought-determinations.

The infinite mode of thinking is, then, the speculative side of the *Logic* (EL § 79), whereas

¹⁷⁴ "Am Schlusse der Philosophie ist nicht mehr der Ort, auch überhaupt nicht in einer exoterischen Betrachtung, ein Wort darüber zu verlieren, was *Begreifen* heiße. Da aber mit dem Auffassen dieser Beziehung das Auffassen der Wissenschaft überhaupt und alle Beschuldigungen gegen dieselbe zusammenhängen, so mag noch dies darüber erinnert werden, daß, indem die Philosophie es allerdings mit der *Einheit* überhaupt, aber nicht mit der abstrakten, der bloßen Identität und dem leeren Absoluten, sondern mit der *konkreten* Einheit (dem Begriffe) zu tun und in ihrem ganzen Verlaufe ganz allein es damit zu tun hat,—daß jede Stufe des Fortgangs eine *eigentümliche Bestimmung* dieser konkreten *Einheit* ist und die tiefste und letzte der Bestimmungen der Einheit die des absoluten Geistes ist. Denjenigen nun, welche über Philosophie urteilen und sich über sie äußern wollen, wäre zuzumuten, daß sie sich auf diese *Bestimmungen der Einheit* einließen und sich um die Kenntnis derselben bemühten, wenigstens so viel wüßten, daß dieser Bestimschiedenheit unter ihnen ist. Sie zeigen aber so wenig eine Kenntnis hiervon und noch weniger eine Bemühung damit, daß sie vielmehr, sowie sie von *Einheit* . . . hören, bei der ganz abstrakten, *unbestimmten Einheit* stehenbleiben und von dem, worin allein alles Interesse fällt, nämlich der Weise der Bestimmtheit der Einheit, abstrahieren. So wissen sie nichts über die Philosophie auszusagen, als daß die trockene Identität ihr Prinzip und Resultat und daß sie das Identitätssystem sei. An diesen begrifflosen Gedanken der Identität sich haltend, haben sie gerade von der konkreten Einheit, dem Begriffe und dem Inhalte der Philosophie gar nichts, sondern vielmehr sein Gegenteil gefaßt." (T.W.-A. 10, § 573R, pp. 389-90)

the finite thought-determinations remain within the level of understanding (*Verstand*).¹⁷⁵ Only *Verstand* attempts to seize and fix its object in abstract form, but speculative thinking discloses the fluidity and transiency of these seemingly fixed “truths” through the dialectical process. “The dialectic,” says Hegel, “is the self-sublation of these finite [thought-]determinations . . .” (*EL* § 81). The dialectic negates the finite thought-determination of *Verstand*, and enables the apparently fixed thought to be raised to further complex thoughts. These thought-determinations remain necessary moments in the absolute Idea’s self-comprehension. Dialectic is the impulse of every thought-determination to ascend towards higher, more complex thought-determinations, and, thus, the dialectic, by revealing contradictory concepts, incites movement towards a reconciliation, i.e., a new concept. However, since each relative concept cannot exhaust the whole, it remains incomplete, and, therefore, untrue or inauthentic. The goal of the dialectic, in Ferrarin’s words, is to destroy every finite determination’s “pretense to absolute validity.”¹⁷⁶ Speculative thinking, thus, presupposes *Verstand* and the dialectic.

The absolute Idea is the *result* of this necessary and teleological dialectic, and, in fact, *is* itself the process. The absolute Idea’s identity is

free identity of the Concept, because this identity is the absolute negativity and hence dialectical. The Idea is the course in which the Concept (as the universality that is singularity) determines itself both to objectivity and to the antithesis against it, and in which this externality, which the Concept has with regard to its substance, leads itself back again, through its immanent dialectic, into *subjectivity*. (*EL* § 215)

The absolute Idea, as the *result* of the three moments of the Idea’s self-development, is the

¹⁷⁵ In fact, it is Ferrarin’s contention that the “Preliminary Conception” in the *EL* is not a critique of traditional metaphysics *per se*, but of the metaphysics of *Verstand*. Hegel’s critique is of Kant’s philosophy, and, *a fortiori*, of Wolff’s metaphysics. According to Ferrarin, Hegel, in his “‘Preliminary Conception,’ criticizes the metaphysics of the understanding, not classical metaphysics.” (Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, p. 101)

¹⁷⁶ Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, p. 94.

final stage, which has a double significance: 1) it is on the one hand *what is first through the entire process of the Idea's self-development*, and 2) it alone is what is in and for itself, since at this level of speculative thinking, contradictions and oppositions of terms are overcome. Thus, whereas at every moment of the dialectic, each finite thought-determination contradicts the other, only in the infinite activity of the absolute Idea are the terms in agreement, i.e., are "identical," while maintaining their differences.

At the end of his *EL* (§ 236A), Hegel draws a parallel between the absolute Idea and Aristotle's νοήσις νοησέως in *Meta.* Λ.9. The parallel expresses the absolute Idea's self-reflective activity, whereby the seemingly distinct subject and object are united in one absolute activity, and which is wholly captured as the absolute Truth. "This unity, therefore, is the *absolute truth and all truth*, it is the *Idea that thinks itself*, and at this stage, moreover, it is [present] as thinking, i.e., as *logical Idea*." (*EL* § 236A) The two preceding stages of the development of the Idea (Life and Cognition) remain incomplete as expressions of the absolute Idea. Whereas Life is "still only the Idea *in-itself*," cognition is the Idea "only as it is *for-itself*, in the same one-sided way." (*EL* § 236A) It is precisely the unity of Life and Cognition that characterizes the Idea as absolute. As with Aristotle's Thought, the subject and object of the Idea are unified.

The unity and the truth of these two is the Idea that is *in* and *for itself*, and hence *absolute*.—Up to this point the Idea in its development through its various stages has been *our* object; but from now on, the Idea is its own object. This is the *noēsis noēseōs*, which was already called the highest form of the Idea by Aristotle. (*EL* § 236A)¹⁷⁷

For Hegel, in contrast to Aristotle, the absolute Idea is *not* a separate, transcendent activity.

¹⁷⁷ Geraets, Suchting, and Harris recognize the importance of this reference to Aristotle. They write the following: "What Aristotle actually defines as *noēsis noēseōs* is God's own *noēsis* Hegel, on the other hand, is clearly claiming that *our* thinking has at this stage become 'divine.' " (*EL*, Notes, p. 335 no. 50)

The various stages of the Idea's self-development form the content of the absolute Idea: "[I]ts true content is nothing but the entire system, the development of which we have been considering so far [T]he content of the absolute Idea is the whole display [*Ausbreitung*] that has passed before us up to this point. The last step is the insight that it is the whole unfolding that constitutes its content and its interest." (*EL* § 237A) Each stage of absolute Idea is a reflection of itself, but a reflection in a limited, finite, relative way.

In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel comments that each "new stage of *forthgoing*, that is, of *further determination*, is also a withdrawal inwards, and the greater *extension* is equally a *higher intensity*." (*SL*: 840-41) Hegel attempts to preserve the continuity of the absolute Idea's self-development in a single system. Whereas Aristotle's Thought does *not* presuppose the lower powers of Nature, Hegel's absolute Idea does, and, consequently, is the *result* of the living development of the Idea. The absolute Idea, as now *Subject*, is also its own object: its object is no longer a proximate distance from itself.¹⁷⁸ Thus, its activity is an absolute, or pure, knowing, i.e., a "pure self-consciousness in its self-development." (*SL*: 49) This is precisely why only the absolute Idea is the Truth: it alone corresponds with its concept. In this perfect *adequatio*, therefore, Hegel has overcome the Aristotelian chasm between Thought and Nature, between form and matter. In Aristotelian terms, Hegel's Absolute Idea is the final *and formal* cause, since it has now reached its ἐντελέχεια: the circle has now come to a close. That is, absolute Spirit as this ultimate form of

¹⁷⁸ In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel alludes to the Aristotelian ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of Thought, and foreshadows his conclusion to the *PS* by asserting the self-identical nature of the absolute Spirit, no longer considered as just substance, but as subject. Thus, "what seems to happen outside of it, to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing, and Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject. When it has shown this completely, Spirit has made its existence identical with its essence; *it has itself for its object* just as it is, and the abstract element of immediacy, *and of the separation of knowing and truth, is overcome*." (*PS*, Preface, p. 21, my emphasis) This insight of the self-identical nature of the absolute Spirit is maintained and elaborated in Hegel's *Science of Logic* and the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, concerning the absolute Idea.

self-consciousness is a significant advance beyond Aristotle, since the absolute is not the separate self-reflecting substance, but is the human community in perpetual interaction, which raises the memories of its cultural traditions, as Harris says, “into reflective (and finally self-conceptual) consciousness; and we do this by organizing it logically so that its shape and significance can be seen.”¹⁷⁹ The objectivity of the Spirit is the realm of human institutions, but it cannot be reduced or identified with Absolute Knowing *in se*. The latter, nevertheless, emerges from Objective Spirit, as mentioned above, and, thus, subsumes it in its self-conscious activity. Every human is the subject, or the self, of the Absolute Knower. One comes to see the importance of dialogue as the Spirit’s process of self-comprehension and self-realization. Comprehension of the whole, or of totality, is, in the end, the τέλος of the human’s struggle for self-realization. The transcendent God, or the separate νοῦς of Aristotle, no longer governs or animates the world, since only Reason immanently operative in the human spirit is now the propelling force that leads the human to self-consciousness within the disparate social, historical, and linguistic conditions. The uninterrupted ascension of the ubiquitous activity of thinking has, therefore, overcome the Aristotelian ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of νοῦς.

CONCLUSION

From the vantage point of the end of this chapter, one can detect many interpolations in Hegel’s commentaries on the *Metaphysics* and *De Anima*, which were highlighted by Michelet, Aubenque, and Gadamer. Hegel’s central critique of Aristotle’s philosophy is that it is not systematic. Although Aristotle’s νοῦς and active intellect are self-reflecting activities, they do not, as Hegel criticizes, *include* the whole of reality, but merely constitute one part, albeit the most important part,

¹⁷⁹ Harris, *The Odyssey of Spirit*, p. 748.

of reality. Hegel, however, claims to have obviated this Aristotelian chasm by extending the self-identical nature of νοῦς to all determinations in Nature, such that each determination becomes a relative expression of the absolute Idea.

At the beginning of his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Hegel introduces the threefold distinction of δύναμις, ἐνέργεια, and ἐντελέχεια into Aristotle's νοῦς. This interpolation, in effect, reveals the nature of the absolute Idea, considered as implicitly involved in Nature and emerging into self-consciousness. Hegel's critique of Aristotle's νοῦς does not, then, dismiss the self-relational activity of the "elements" in νοῦς, but extends this circular, relational movement of the "elements" to the whole array of reality, which the philosopher comes to discover is the absolute Idea itself. The various moments of thought-determinations in Nature are, in fact, *produced* by the absolute Idea inwardly differentiating itself. The thought-determinations, then, are to be considered as particular instantiations of the absolute Idea. Hegel's absolute Idea is not a transcendent deity that imposes order in Nature, but is an immanent activity (*Tätigkeit*) that posits its own differentiation as a means to self-develop into self-consciousness. Thus, for Hegel, the Aristotelian ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of νοῦς is overcome by asserting the final *and formal* causal roles to the absolute Idea. Aristotle's claim that final and formal causality coalesce in material substances is now characteristic of the absolute Idea. The coalescence of final and formal causality in the absolute Idea, therefore, not only alters the status of Aristotle's νοῦς, but, *a fortiori*, ensures the uninterrupted continuum of the absolute Idea's self-development into self-consciousness, its ἐντελέχεια.

CONCLUSION

I come to the end of a scant study of two of the most brilliant philosophers of the world with great reservation, for fear that I have not done justice to the depth of their reflections. Nevertheless, closure to this study is required. Prior to reviewing Hegel's commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *De Anima*, and his critique of Aristotle's philosophy, I wished to highlight the attitude with which Hegel perceived Aristotle. Hegel's great admiration for Aristotle is evident from his reflections in his *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, where Hegel admits that no philosophy has surpassed the speculative philosophy of Aristotle. To conclude, then, with the assertion that Hegel was considerably influenced by Aristotle's philosophy is justified. In spite of Hegel's differences with Aristotle, Aristotle's causal world view and, *a fortiori*, his teachings on the self-referential nature of both νοῦς and the active intellect provided Hegel with perspicacious insight into the nature of the absolute Idea.

Aristotle's fourfold causal doctrine coupled with his twofold expression of Being according to actuality and potency enabled Aristotle to methodically study the nature of material and immaterial substances. Every substance in the *Scala Naturae*, with the exception of νοῦς, operates according to the internal proportion of actuality and potency. Only νοῦς is a purely actual substance, operating independently of the subordinate substances in the *Scala Naturae*. Whereas material substances are constituted of material, formal, efficient, and final causality, and the immaterial substances with still a degree of potency are constituted of formal, efficient, and final causality, νοῦς only exercises a final causal role. Furthermore, Aristotle argues that efficient and final causality coalesce in material and immaterial substances, with the exception of νοῦς, which, again, only exercises a final causal role.

This conclusion of Aristotle entails the separate activity of νοῦς from the plethora of activities in Nature.

In the *De Anima*, Aristotle arrives at the same conclusion with respect to the active intellect. Whereas the passive intellect presupposes for its activity the sensible and vegetative powers, the active intellect operates independently of the passive intellect, in spite of their co-operation *in* the soul (ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ). The active intellect possesses self-immediate knowledge, as does the νοῦς of the *Metaphysics*.

Although Aristotle does not identify the active intellect and νοῦς, philosophers of successive generations have inferred an identity between them. Alexander of Aphrodisias, Plotinus, and Zabarella have advanced the argument that the self-reflecting activity of both the active intellect and νοῦς is the same. As a result, Aristotle's discourse on the active intellect and νοῦς would refer to the same substance: a separate, self-reflecting, purely actual, and simple substance. Plotinus, of course, will deny the *real* simplicity of νοῦς, and ascend to a prior simple causal principle of the world: the One. However, Aristotle argues that the ultimate principle is indubitably νοῦς, the pure self-reflecting activity.

As a final cause, then, νοῦς cannot directly influence or participate in the wide array of Nature's particular determinations. It moves Nature by simply being for it an object of love and desire. In other words, devoid of exercising a formal causal role, νοῦς cannot immanently operate or know the activities of the subordinate substances in Nature. Contemporary Aristotelians have attempted to perceive in νοῦς a formal causal role that would enable νοῦς to know the world, but this advance does not overcome the chasm existing between νοῦς and Nature. Thus, Aristotle's assertion that νοῦς and the active intellect operate as separate activities from the lower activities

establishes an ἀπορία: from where do νοῦς and the active intellect acquire their knowledge, if not from the lower activities?

Hegel was acutely aware of this Aristotelian ἀπορία, and his commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *De Anima* demonstrate this awareness. In his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Hegel clearly claims to have discarded the scholastic interpretation of attributing to Aristotle's νοῦς an immovable, purely actual nature. According to Hegel, Aristotle's νοῦς is not purely actual, if actuality refers to a static and separate substance, but is purely activity (*Tätigkeit*), in which νοῦς' self-referential nature is extended to include the diverse determinations of Nature and its thinking activity. This absolute character of νοῦς ensures the interrelation of all thought-determinations, since these determinations are the manifestation of the ubiquitous activity of *Denken*'s inner self-differentiation.

The dynamic activity intrinsic to the absolute, to *Denken*, enables Hegel to include in the absolute a degree of potency. This assertion, in fact, resembles Plotinus' interpretation of νοῦς. Contrary to Plotinus' claim, Hegel endorses Aristotle's unequivocal conclusion that νοῦς is the primary principle undergirding Nature. However, Hegel differs from Aristotle with respect to the status of *Denken*. *Denken* is not merely one substance amongst others, but *is* all of reality. Its various moments of thought-determinations in Nature are *products* of its inner self-differentiation. The self-production of *Denken* is also characteristic of νοῦς, which in its activity, produces *passive* νοῦς as its object.

Hegel's critique of Aristotle's unsystematic philosophy, however, should not detract us from Hegel's great admiration of Aristotle. For Hegel, Aristotle remains the most speculative philosopher in the world. Aristotle's assertion of the *identity* of the subject and object in νοῦς enabled Hegel to

assert the identity of subject and object in the ubiquitous activity of the absolute Idea. The absolute Idea is the result of an arduous process of its necessary self-development into self-consciousness. The absolute Idea is not a separate, self-reflecting activity, influencing Nature from without. Rather, the absolute Idea is the whole truth, which produces its particular thought-determinations, since in reality, as mentioned above, these thought-determinations are the absolute Idea's self-production and inner differentiation. On the one hand, the absolute Idea is the ἐντελέχεια of the lower stages of its development, but, on the other hand, it is intrinsically *involved* in the dialectical process of its self-development. Thus, while Hegel accepts νοῦς' final causal role, he adds to it formal causality. Only the coalescence of final and formal causality in the absolute Idea ensures an uninterrupted continuum of the stages of the absolute Idea's self-development into self-consciousness. Only by asserting this coalescence can Hegel claim to have overcome the Aristotelian ἀπορία of the χωρισμός of νοῦς.

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