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On the Relations of Soul to Body in Plato and Aristotle¹

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MY CONCERN IN THIS PAPER is to give an exposition of, apology for, and to draw implications from, the following contrastive statement:

On Plato's understanding, the soul is in the body; but Aristotle's account implies that the body is in the soul.

On first glance, the former clause seems commonplace and quite intelligible, while the latter seems to do violence both to history and to common sense. One can perhaps understand how a soul could be in a body, on analogy to a loaf of bread in a breadbox, or to a pilot in a ship—or even to a ghost in a machine; but a reversal of the relation of body and soul seems as ludicrous as a reversal of these analogue relations of containment and of agency. Yet, I hope to show that Plato's account is an unintelligible one, especially in the light of his own ontology; that while Aristotle never asserted the relationship that I claim for him, his account of body and soul clearly requires it; that Aristotle's account is both consistent with his own ontology and intelligible in its own right.

I. The first clause of the aphorism is *prima facie* unproblematic, the characterization in the *Phaedo* of the body as the prison house of the soul being a commonplace. How we are to understand the soul/body distinction in Plato, together with this container model for their relationship, is not all that clear. Indeed, we find shifting concerns, if not shifting concepts, through the several dialogues. Crombie has astutely delineated three different contexts in which the soul/body distinction is of concern: (1) the religious context, in which the concern is with the soul surviving the body after death; (2) the psychological context in which a distinction is drawn between the psychological and the physiological, and their interaction considered; (3) the ethical context, in which concerns with spiritual needs and activities are distinguished from concerns with carnal needs and activities.² That there are conceptual shifts from context to context can readily be argued; that one context will frequently be coalesced or confused with another seems patent; that all three contexts of concern with the relation of body to soul exist

¹ An early version of this paper was presented under the title "Conceptions of *Psyche* in Plato and Aristotle" to the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology in 1972. My thanks for subsequent criticisms by David Hamlyn and Henry Schankula, making it impossible for this to be that version. I must also thank T. M. Robinson, Jesse deBoer, Hippo Apostle, and Alan Perreiah for their comments on a later version. I have cited quotations from Plato and Aristotle by the standard texts, using a variety of translations, some my own, and noting Greek terms where interpretation might be questionable.

² I. M. Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines* (London, 1963), I, 293ff.

in Plato's dialogues is evident. The first problem we face is to find some coherent concept or set of concepts of *psychē* which will give adequate understanding for the relation of the soul to the body, while acknowledging the various concerns involved.

The concerns that dominate in the *Phaedo* are the religious and the ethical ones. The conception of the soul is unitary in characterization and discrete from the conception of the body. By Book IV of the *Republic* we have a tripartite characterization of the soul with an accent on at least functional integration with the body. Here, psychological concerns dominate in an ostensibly ethical context—an ethical context, however, in which a soul/body distinction is not accented, but where moral defects are rather accounted for in terms of disfunctional relationships within the soul. This requires Plato to fudge a bit in the latter part of the *Republic*, maintaining that only a portion of the soul survives the body.³ We can perhaps see in the mythical account of the *Phaedrus* an attempt to reconcile these several concerns, with the surprising result that divine souls as well as human ones have a tripartite composition of rational, passionate and appetitive elements, only more reliably in harmony on the ideal model. In the *Phaedrus*, the tripartite conception is treated as appropriate to the soul's ideal nature, while in the *Republic* and the *Timaeus*, the composite nature is treated as derivative from the responsibilities necessitated by the soul's earthly charge of occupying a body. There is no clear indication which view is finally to be attributed to Plato.

For religious concerns, the soul is conceived as substantial, personal and separable. As substantial, it is a stuff or entity distinguishable from the body; as personal, it has individual characteristics that distinguish it from the souls of others; as separable, it is not dependent upon the body for its existence (this last, of course, is a point argued for throughout the *Phaedo*). Early in the dialogue, Socrates characterizes the soul as rational, and suggests that the hearing, sight, pleasure and pain of the body are impediments to its function (65C5–7). While there are suggestions of cognitive pleasures as well as bodily ones (e.g., 65A7, 65C9), the soul is so closely identified with intellection that this latter term (*dianoia*) is sometimes substituted for the former. This characterization of the soul presents particular problems for Plato's account of personal immortality: If the soul is closely identified with the rational, then in what sense are individual differences, and thus personality, maintained in the survival of the soul from the body? If the soul is not so identified, then in what sense is the soul so separate and distinct from the body? The notions of recollection and of ideal forms as the only true objects of intellection do not alleviate this problem; they only accentuate it. And it remains a problem not only in this dialogue, but for Plato's conception of immortality throughout his career.

Perhaps more to the point of my concerns is the container model exhibited in the notion that the body is a prison house (82E2, 92A1). This model demands, ironically, that we treat the soul in spacialistic-physicalistic language. If the bread is to be contained by the breadbox, then it must have dimensionality and distribution in space; it occupies space as well as place. So too for the soul if it occupies a body. This invites our treating the soul on analogy to the body, as being "healthy" or "ill," as being "dragged by the body" (79C5), as having "pleasure," as itself being a container for its contents. It also invites the notion of the soul becoming contaminated by its occupancy of the body (e.g., 81B, 84A8ff.), just as the bread might be contaminated by the moisture or

³ For an argument against this interpretation, cf. T. M. Robinson, *Plato's Psychology* (Toronto, 1970), pp. 50–54.

bacteria in the breadbox. Indeed, in the myths of afterlife, both in the *Phaedo* and in *Republic X*, the souls are seen as having all of the bodily characteristics that presumably are to be left behind at death. Nothing in Plato's conceptual equipment helps us to shuck the chaff of the mythical motifs for an adequate non-physical model.

In contrasting the soul to the body, the container model proves an ineffective instrument. Plato does give some initial contrastive characterization in the *Phaedo*, calling the soul "invisible, divine, immortal, and wise" (81A3), but here, "divine" and "wise" seem little more than epithets, and immortality is what remains to be argued for. Invisibility offers little more than a negative contrast. Indeed, whenever souls require some characterization as individuals, they must be "fleshed out" with bodily characteristics, as the container model invites. It seems that it is the permeation of the soul by the corporeal that gives it not only its impurity, but its personality as well. Talk of the soul's magnitude (*Republic* 431A7–B1, *Laws* 689A9) and its reception of sensation (*Theaetetus* 184ff., *Philebus* 33D2–E1) accentuates this problem in later dialogues.

In relating the soul to the body, the container model also proves ineffective. In the *Phaedo*, the relation seems dependent upon the body's infecting the soul. The tripartite account in the *Republic* attempts a more viable view by incorporating in the soul parts that were earlier attributed to the body. While this may give a better account of the functioning of the person, it does not itself advance any positive account of the soul's relation to the body. In the *Timaeus* these parts are seen as distributed to the head, heart, and belly (69D6ff.), and more diffusely throughout the bone structure. The soul is fastened to and contained in the marrow, which is especially constructed as the inner container for the soul (73C). While this further localizes the soul within the body structure, it fails to give any account of their relation or interaction. Indeed, it further invites a physicalistic-materialistic account of a refined container model. While Plato opposes throughout the atomistic alternative for an account of the soul's relation to the body, his container model drives him closer to it with each refinement. On the basis of the container model, he seems required either to give a physicalistic account of the relation, or to give no account at all.

The treatment of life as the *logos* of soul is a traditional view that Plato clearly presupposes in at least two of his arguments for immortality in the *Phaedo* (69E–72D, 102Aff.). In the latter argument it becomes a *tour de force* once certain concessions about the forms are made, but it yields no particular insight into the relation of the soul to the body. The soul brings life to the body, but there seems to be no claim that as a result the soul brings the body to life. Life is the *logos* (or at least the defining characteristic) of *psychē*, and *psychē* is separate and distinct from *soma*. If we identify the self with soul (as Plato frequently does), then a person never dies; if we identify the person with soul and body (as Plato sometimes does), then the person is alive when his body and soul are together and dead when they are separated. The latter seems to be the view of the first argument in the *Phaedo*; the former the view of the last argument. That both fail to give much of an understanding to the difference between life and death rests upon neither view's giving any consideration to the way in which soul is related to body.

The similarity of the soul to the forms, suggested in the *Phaedo* and expounded in the *Timaeus*, may give some hope of accounting for the way in which the soul is in the body. "On the one hand we have that which is divine, immortal, indestructible, of a single shape [*morphē*], accessible to thought, ever constant and abiding true to itself; and the soul is very like it; on the other hand we have that which is human, mortal, destructible, of many shapes, inaccessible to thought, never constant nor abiding true

to itself; and the body is very like that" (80B1–5). While the comparison is suggestive, it is not very helpful. Some maintain that later in the dialogue Plato treats the soul as a form (*eidos*).⁴ But even if this were so, he never treats it as the form of the body. Also, the plurality of souls would preclude treating the soul as form in any univocal sense, since actually to *be* forms, their plurality requires a different nature for each. Further, Plato would not say that the body "participates" in the soul as other physical objects are said to participate in the forms in the middle dialogues; nor that the body is a composite of the soul (*sic*) as the objects are suggested to be composites of forms in the later dialogues. Objects are never said to contain forms in the way that the body is said to contain the soul. Whatever satisfactions the analogy of form/soul as object/body may give, it gives no credence to the container or any other model for the relation of soul to body.

The analogy does generate dissatisfactions with the role of souls as such in Plato's ontology. Souls are neither of the realm of forms, and being, nor of the realm of physical objects, and becoming. They exhibit properties of the former (unity, identity, eternity), but also properties of the latter (plurality, position, corruptibility). Plato speaks to this problem in the *Timaeus*, locating the world soul (and by imitation, individual souls) in an intermediate state between being and becoming. Following Cornford's interpretation of 35Aff.,⁵ we find the demiurge first combining the indivisible with the divisible of existence, sameness, and difference; then combining those mixtures together to get soul:

FIRST MIXTURE		SECOND MIXTURE	
Indivisible existence	}	Intermediate existence	}
Divisible existence			
Indivisible sameness		Intermediate sameness	
Divisible sameness			
Indivisible difference		Intermediate difference	
Divisible difference			
		Soul	

These forms are three of the five "greatest kinds" set forth in the *Sophist*.⁶ They are wholly distinct and all-pervading. By the combination of the divisible with the indivisible, the intermediate status of the soul becomes both generated and intelligible; everlasting, but in time. Although like the forms as described in the *Phaedo*, it requires the change of the realm of becoming to be both alive and intelligent. It functions through time in space, where the forms themselves cannot go, but it knows the forms as like knows like, since it is composed of those forms that pervade all forms.

This account of the composition of soul is unworkable both in relation to the realm of forms and in relation to the realm of physical things. The soul is clearly neither a form, nor a combination of forms; it is neither a physical thing, nor a combination of physical things. *That* it is intermediate gives some satisfaction to Plato's earlier char-

⁴ E.g., Gregory Vlastos, "Postscript to the Third Man: A Reply to Mr. Geach," *Philosophical Review*, LXV (1956), 93, n. 14.

⁵ F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology* (London, 1937), pp. 59–66.

⁶ The relative dates of the *Timaeus* and the *Sophist* are important to Cornford's interpretations, but not to my discussion here. For a recapitulation of the controversy, cf. Robinson, pp. 70ff. It is important to note that motion and rest, which lack the pervasive and distinct nature of being, same and different, would provide an account of motion that is lacking in this part of the *Timaeus* and is given over to necessity in later parts.

acterizations, and seems to be required by his epistemology. *How* it is intermediate can find no consistent answer in his ontology. If the forms cannot mix with the physical realm, then the indivisible cannot mix with the divisible, and the basis for the intermediate is undercut. If the forms can mix with the physical, then the need for the intermediate is undercut. Either way, this account of the soul fails to be workable.

On Timaeus's account, being (ὄν), space (χώραν), and generations (γένεσιν) are the givens of the universe (52D4) with which and upon which the demiurge imposes the order of reason (νοῦς) upon the world, against the constraints of necessity (ἀνάγκη). The being here is evidently the forms; the space, more than just extension and place, is a medium for receiving shapes (*morphē*); the generations are erratic happenings, by virtue of the shaking of the medium by its given constraints (*ananke*). This last is evidently to serve as the account of how it is that necessity causes motion (48A8). That which reason contributes is not the motion itself, but its ordering, through the creation of time. It is against this backdrop that the creation of soul must fit.

The mixing of intermediate existence, sameness and difference is described in terms of complicated due proportionality which involves not only number but magnitude. This takes place without reference to the medium of space or to the constraints of necessity. The result is a soul which is rationally harmonious, and thus equipped to know, but not related cosmogenetically with the limitations of the world in which it is to operate. When the creator sees that the world soul is alive and in motion, he wonders (ἠγάσθη) (37C8).⁷ If the life and motion are part of the soul's nature, they are implausibly absent from the soul's design, and cannot be accounted for in terms of it. The design accounts only for its noetic character. Indeed, since the ground of all motion is attributed to the generations of space in this dialogue, and since no relation to space is established in the generation of the soul, the attribute of motion in the soul seems singularly anomalous.

The characterization of the ingredients of the soul as intermediate between the indivisible and the divisible can only be metaphorical in the light of the order of creation. The plurality of the body of the world is the result of the limits imposed by necessity upon reasoned order. These limits are not imposed upon the soul because (1) the composition of the soul involves no accounting for necessity and (2) the creation of the soul precedes the creation of the body. Cosmologically, the plurality of souls is not a necessity, but the outpouring of divine delight, a strange result in the light of the higher value of unity.

The container model continues to impose physicalistic terminology on talk about the soul. The world soul not only permeates the world body, but it also envelops it (36D6ff.). Again, the basis for contrast is that the body is visible, the soul is not; the soul is intelligent, the body is not (37A1ff.). But again, these contrasts provide no insight into the body/soul relation, nor any rationale or excuse for the container model with its physicalistic terms. Here, as elsewhere, the container model fails to illuminate the body/soul relation and finds no connection to the characterizations given for the body and for the soul. The treatment of magnitudes of soul-stuff in the composition of the world soul and of quantities of soul-stuff in the distribution of the human soul through the human body only compound the puzzles and problems.

⁷ The more usual translation treats the demiurge as rejoicing. However we translate "ἠγάσθη" here, there is no evidence that the demiurge anticipated life and motion, much less planned for it; nor is there any suggestion of why motion and life should come into being by virtue of the composition.

Motion in the *Timaeus* is grounded in the generations of space by necessity, and in heterogeneity (57E). Only for rational motion does the soul play a part. In the *Sophist* motion and rest are introduced among the greatest kinds to explain motion. But in the *Phaedrus* the very *logos* of *psychē* is “that which is activated by itself” (245E3). This is echoed in the *Laws* Bk. X, where the Athenian declares that “the *logos* for the thing of which ‘*psychē*’ is the name” is “the motion which can set itself moving” (896A). Here, the static accounts of soul in the *Phaedo* and the mechanistic accounts of motion in the *Timaeus* seem to be abandoned for a more fundamentally teleological conception of the universe. This later view of the soul at once gives expression to a popular conception and lays the basis for a metaphysics of motion. *Kinesis* must have some origin. The *archē* of motion by those entities that do not move themselves must be in things that are self-moved. Such self-activating beings are souls by definition, and the ultimate source of all motion.

Here, we have shifted from a container/contents model to an instrument/agent model for the relation of body to soul. If the soul is the source of motion, then bodies are dependent upon souls for any movement. In this sense, the soul has care of all that is inanimate (*Phaedrus* 246B6–7). In the *Laws* Plato strikes the same note in treating of the soul-stuff of the universe: The primary motions of the soul bring secondary and corporeal movements into being (897A). Here, the primary movements are described as instruments of the soul (897B1) to effect through secondary movements (a secondary instrumentality) all that is affected in the universe.

The first thing to note about this conceptual shift is that it does not provide, as claimed in both the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws*, a *logos* for the soul. The soul provides an accounting for motion, not the other way around. This leaves the soul in the esoteric position of being unaccounted for. Like the unmoved mover of Aristotle and the uncaused cause of Thomas, Plato’s self-moving movers are mysteries beyond the pale of explanation. If this is what “divine” as an epithet for soul is to convey, it seems appropriate to a religious context of mystery and worship. In a philosophical context of explanation and inquiry, it becomes no more than a *deus ex machina* to treat an important matter never adequately handled in the theory of the forms.

The second thing to note is that this claims a kind of relation between soul and body more clearly than the container model seemed to allow, but it provides us with no understanding of how that relationship obtains. Primary motions are said to be: “Wish, reflection, foresight, counsel, judgment, true or false, pleasure, pain, hope, fear, hate, love . . . and whatever other kindred . . . motions there may be” (897A1–3). These are said to “bring in their train” increase and decrease, integration and disintegration, and all their attendant characteristics in corporeal movements. Even if we avoid extending Plato’s affinities of kinds to “like causes like” here, we are left with no clue of how motions of the first sort are to cause motions of the second. The best that he can muster is a reiteration that the circular motions of the planets emulate reason (898B). We are left again with the assertion that the soul is the caretaker of the body (now in a more positive light than with the container model), but with no account of how the one is related to the other.

Finally, it is important to note that the image of a sailor in a ship does not adequately express the agency model, at least not as it is expressed in the *Laws*. A sailor directs a ship, but the power for the motion of the ship comes from the wind, not from the sailor. Also, the sailor is contained in the ship (a hangover from the container model), and is

thus conveyed through space by it. In comparing possible relations of the sun's soul to its body to the human soul/body relation, Plato treats the human soul as contained within the body, but the body as conveyed by the soul (898E8). Since the source of motion as well as direction is attributed to the soul, we have as a result a container notion of the body and a conveyer notion of the soul, which seems to defy any imaging techniques that we can muster for our modeling.

I have not here attempted to give a survey of Plato's psychology.⁸ Many conceptions (e.g., the ethical import of the relation of parts) and problems (e.g., the relation of the noetic-soul concept to that of the life-soul) I have left untouched. My concerns have been to show: how Plato's conception of the soul as in the body relies upon the container/contents model and (at least in the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws X*) upon the instrument/agent model; that these models, at least in Plato's hands, provide no adequate basis for the relation of the soul to the body; and that Plato never really finds a place for the soul in his ontology (unless we read *Laws X* as a new ontology completely displacing the theory of forms). The container model requires modeling the soul as a substance analogous to body, and allowing their relation only by undercutting their distinction, and that by understanding soul in terms of body. The agency model may sustain the distinction, but it leaves the soul as an esoteric non-physical entity, doing "this work of guidance by some other most miraculous faculties of hers" (*Laws* 899A). The formula of the soul in the body, on either model, proves inadequate for maintaining a body/soul distinction, for relating the body to the soul, and for locating the soul within the conception of the world.

II. Having shown the implausibility of the more familiar formula, at least in Plato's treatment of it, the task remains to elucidate the unfamiliar one in the light of Aristotle's work. This task is made difficult by its being a formulation as foreign to Aristotle's discourse as to our own, and by certain unresolved conceptual problems in Aristotle's treatment of form. The resolution of the former difficulties can be found, I think, in the resolution of the latter.

In *On the Soul* Aristotle concludes his discussion of the definition of the soul (N.B.: not two definitions) with: "Soul is an actuality or formulable essence of something that possesses a potentiality of being besouled" (414a27). In the course of coming to this conclusion, he treats soul ($\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$) as an instance of form ($\epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$) and of actuality ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\iota\alpha$), and in parallel fashion he treats body ($\sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha$) as an instance of matter ($\upsilon\lambda\eta$) and of potentiality ($\delta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$). He also speaks of the soul as in ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu$) the body, but denies that this sheds any light on the analogy of body/soul to ship/sailor (413a8). In *On the Soul*, as in the *Metaphysics*, he tends to treat "form" as equivalent to "shape" ($\mu\omicron\rho\rho\eta$). In the *Metaphysics* he tends to use " $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$ " and " $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\chi\iota\alpha$ " as roughly synonymous (though he does note a difference in range of meaning between them, 1047a30): but in *On the Soul*, these terms no longer appear in conjunction, nor are they interchangeable in discourse. These matters all require some exposition before we can come to terms with the relation of body and soul in Aristotle.

To treat of Aristotle's conceptions of the soul without an account of their development is, of course, a travesty and a disaster. The conception with which I am concerned

⁸ This is very ably done in Robinson's work, with a brief summary in the "Coda" at the end of the book.

is that presented in *On the Soul* Bk. II, which I along with such scholars as Ross and Jaeger,⁹ take as being his mature views, dating from after his return to Athens, when he regarded himself no longer as Plato's disciple, but as his successor. I also suspect, along with Jaeger, that Book III expresses earlier more Platonic views.¹⁰ What seems more problematic is the relation of Book II to ZHΘ of the *Metaphysics*. That these books, along with I, are later developments of the *Metaphysics* is a widely accepted view. That they can readily be dated in relation to *On the Soul* seems moot. I suspect that they are sufficiently contemporaneous in Aristotle's development to be treated as comparable conceptualizations, except for the use of "entelecheia" and "energeia."

In ZHΘ "entelecheia" and "energeia" appear for the most part interchangeable and coequal. They each serve as contraries for "dynamis," and they often appear in conjunction. Both are apparently of Aristotle's own coinage. "Energeia" appears in the *Protrepticus* as a contrast to "ergon." There the import seems to be a contrast between function and work, between what happens *in* an activity and what happens *through* it, between what is valued for itself and what is valued as a means to production. This conception of *energeia* most certainly lays a basis for Aristotle's uses of "entelecheia," that which is fulfilled in itself and valued for itself, though I know of no introductory passages comparable to that for "energeia."

While "energeia" finds its first uses in Aristotle's work when he was still in the Academy, it seems likely that "entelecheia" did not come into use until the latter part of his middle period, shortly before his return to Athens. This view is made textually problematic by the frequent use of the term in the *Physics*, since that text is not from a single period and the dating of the parts of it seems far from settled. Yet, even there, many of the relevant passages can easily be seen as later interpolations, often at odds with the conceptual orientation of the surrounding text. Particularly worthy of note is the singular appearance of "entelecheia" in Book II: "The form is indeed nature, rather than the matter; for a thing is named (or is said to be) when it exists in actuality [*entelecheia*] rather than when it exists potentially" (193b6,7). Not only does this stand in marked contrast to the tone of the rest of the book, but it foreshadows the orientation of ZHΘ, where form is consistently the preferred accounting of being. While textual and historical difficulties remain, it is speculatively inviting to see that Aristotle critically frees himself from important features of his platonic heritage by finding a basis for his understanding of reality in his accounting of actuality and activity.

In Book Θ, Aristotle offers us his justification for conjoining "energeia" with "entelecheia": "The term 'energeia', which is placed alongside the term 'entelecheia', has been extended to other things from motions, where it was mostly used; for *energeia* is thought to be motion [kinesis] most of all. And this is why people do not attribute motion to what does not exist. . ." (1047a30ff.); and, "For *ergon* is an end, and *energeia* is *ergon* [or better: *ergon* is an *energeia*]. And so, even the name 'energeia' is derived from the name 'ergon' and strains to *entelecheia*" (1050a22-23). These passages give us at once an understanding of Aristotle's reasons for conjoining the terms in the *Metaphysics* and for separating them again in *On the Soul*. *Energeia* finds its basis in *kinesis* but its fuller meaning in *entelecheia*. Motion is a sign of activity, and activity of actuality. But just as Aristotle envisions activity without motion (e.g., thinking), so he

⁹ Cf. W. D. Ross, ed., *Aristotle's De Anima* (London, 1961), pp. 7-12; and Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle* (London, 1948), p. 331.

¹⁰ Cf. Jaeger, pp. 332ff.

sees the need to talk of actuality without activity. Just as the eye remains in actuality an eye when it is not seeing, so the soul remains in actuality when it is not functioning (cf. 413a1). Both the soul and the eye may be said in one sense to be complete, even though in another sense they are complete only when functioning. The terms “*energeia*” and “*entelecheia*” are separated in *De Anima* by the division of labor between first and second actualities. The latter term sometimes serves as a general term for both, but it is used more particularly for first actuality; the former term serves generally for talk about function, and its use for talk about actuality seems to fade if not vanish.

The conjoining of “*eidos*” and “*morphē*” appears in both works but more frequently in the *Metaphysics* (e.g., 999b16, 1015a5, 1017b26, 1033b5, 1044b22, etc.) than in *On the Soul* (e.g., 407b23, 414a9). There are no qualifications in these passages that suggest that Aristotle ever draws a distinction in meaning between them, nor does there seem to be a shift in use between the two works. The problems come in their relations to the notions of *energeia* and *entelecheia*. In the *Metaphysics*, we have explicit assertions that *eidos* stands to *energeia* much as it does to *morphē*, and the names are conjoined in similar fashion (e.g., 1043a20, a32, b1). In *On the Soul*, form (soul) stands to matter (body) as actuality (*entelecheia*) to potentiality. (That *eidos* is never conjoined with *entelecheia* in the former and never with *energeia* in the latter reinforces my sense of the conceptual shifts between the two works regarding the key terms for actuality.) So, in the former work, *eidos* is understood as both shape and function, and in the latter as both shape and completion.

Putting these synonymies together presents us with two kinds of problems. The first is that Aristotle seldom conjoins shape and function (or completion). A glaring exception is at the end of H, 2, where he is making his usual distinctions of senses of substances into matter, form and composite; but here he uses “ἡ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἡ μορφή” in lieu of “τὸ εἶδος.” The clear implication is that, at least at this stage of his conceptual development, he is taking “shape and function” as equivalent to “form.” He makes no suggestion here or elsewhere that this is a contrastive conjunction. Nor does he ever offer any suggestion of how they are related as two aspects of form or as two ways of viewing form. Nor is there any indication that he ever achieved conceptual closure between *morphē* and *energeia* in ZHΘ, or between *morphē* and *entelecheia* in *On the Soul*. These conclusions seem all the more puzzling since the passages in question seem to be expressions of Aristotle’s most mature understandings of form, and offer more decisive contrasts to Plato’s understandings than those earlier passages where he is exercising freedom from his former master’s treatments (e.g., 988a1–7).

The other problem is with interpreting the conjunction of shape and function (or completion) from modern, post-mechanistic perspectives. Some may be tempted to treat “form” and “shape” as synonymous (cf. Ross’s translation of 1043a28, 32), thus suggesting a contrast with function. Others, on the pretense of a neo-Aristotelean orientation, may take shape as related to form (in Aristotle’s sense of “form”) as matter is related to function. This latter seems to be the orientation of recent discourse about form and function. If Aristotle never attained a conceptual closure between *morphē* and *energeia*, we are certainly still amiss if we impute to him the conceptual disjunction that post-modern orientations invite.

Our interpretation of “*en*” in Aristotle’s talk of the relation of form to matter and of soul to body may also tend to reflect too much our modern perspectives. We perhaps see talk of something *in* something too readily as a container or place relation. But we also have a sense of “*in*” that expresses the state or condition of something: “I am in

pain,” not “Pain is in me.” This sense is equally appropriate to ancient Greek uses of “*en*.” It is precisely this latter sense that seems most appropriate to Aristotle’s own talk of the soul in the body; i.e., that the soul is in a bodily condition. On Aristotle’s view, a body is a condition for the existence of a soul, and it is in this sense that the soul is in the body (e.g., 414a20–23, 1043a35f).

Aristotle at two points gives us his own analysis of uses of “*en*.” The one instance is in his discussion of place in the *Physics*, where he exposes eight different senses (210a 15–24). Of these senses, the fifth is clearly appropriate to form in matter, and the seventh is appropriate to matter in form, but both are just as clearly contrasted to the “strictest” sense of in place, which is the last sense listed. The other instance is when he deals with several different senses of “having” in the *Metaphysics*, which he notes have similar and corresponding meanings to “being in something.” Here again, the first sense is appropriate to form in matter, the second to matter in form, and both are distinguished from the containment sense of the third (cf. 1023a8–25).

At one point Aristotle does bring two senses of “*en*” into explicit juxtaposition with reference to form and matter: “Matter may exist potentially, since it may come to the form, but when it exists actually, then it exists in the form” (1050a15–16). Here, the sense of “in the form” is as plausibly a condition sense as those passages that speak of form in matter or of soul in body, but Aristotle is not satisfied to leave the matter there. He goes on to illustrate that the matter of knowledge is in the actuality of knowledge not in any sense of containment, but in its performance (*ἐνεργουῦντα*), and so it is with nature.¹¹ He concludes that without this sort of resolution, it will be impossible to say whether the knowledge is within or without (1050a22). Matter is in form in this sense, that it is conditioned by performance and completion as its end (*telos*).

That this thinking on matter in form never carried over into Aristotle’s own treatment of the relation of body to soul is perhaps best reflected in his lack of decision over the metaphor of the pilot in the ship.¹² This was why my introductory aphorism required a shift from what Aristotle said to what was implied by what he said. So far as I know, Aristotle never *asserted* that the body was in the soul. I can, however, readily show on the basis of the textual evidence so far examined, why such a view must follow from Aristotle’s conceptual schemes:

1. Matter is *in* form in a conditional sense. Any matter, *qua* matter, has only potential existence, and comes into actuality only by becoming informed. Since body is matter and soul is form, the body is in the soul.

2. Matter is *in* shape (*morphē*) in a state sense. The shape of the matter determines what it is (e.g., bricks can be put in the shape of a wall or in the shape of a building). Since form is shape, the body is in the soul.

3. Matter is *in* function (*energeia*) in an operational sense. Since form is function, the body is in the soul.

4. Matter is *in* completion (*entelecheia*) in a fulfillment sense. The potential of matter is actualized in forms which are naturally or artificially its ends. Since form is completion, the body is in the soul.

¹¹ The argument is that it must be this sense of “*en*”; otherwise we could not tell if the knowledge were in the student or the student in the knowledge. His illustration of Paulson’s Hermes (a work of art that gave an illusion of the subject standing outside the medium) has unfortunately received more scholarly attention than the point he was attempting to make.

¹² Ross rightly notes that this is a surprising suggestion in the context made, “since it flatly contradicts the thesis that Aristotle has been maintaining” (*Aristotle’s De Anima*, p. 214).

That none of these senses of “*en*” is the usual, locative, sense may well suggest a reason why we do not find Aristotle speaking of the body being in the soul. Yet, as I have noted, he does use the conditional sense of “*en*” in treating the matter as in the form. This ontological relation finds its correlate in the logical relation of a predicate being in a subject. “By being ‘in a subject’ I do not mean present as parts are present in a whole, but being incapable of existence apart from the said subject” (1a22). His own explicit treatment of matter as *in* form is clearly in this conditional sense. This sense has the logical form: A is in B if and only if A cannot exist unless B does. This is the sense explicit in number 1, above, and at least implicit in 2–4. Because Aristotle treats the relation of the body to the soul as the same relation as that of the matter to the form, it must follow that the body is in the soul. It thus becomes clear that construing Aristotle’s conception as the body in the soul turns on employing a different sense of “*en*” from the apparently locative sense in which Plato treats the soul as being in the body. It also points the way to a better understanding of Aristotle’s treatment of bodies.

III. The inference that for Aristotle the body is in the soul clearly rests heavily upon his mature conceptions of form, which he saw at every turn to be in contrast with Plato’s conceptions. But equally important is the contrast between their conceptions of bodies, since Plato’s understanding requires the container or vehicle model, while Aristotle’s makes such models impossible. This difference in turn lays a basis for our understanding of their differences in understanding about souls as the principles for life and motion.

Aristotle concludes his objections to the *Timaeus* account of the soul with the remark that its account of the body-soul relation is absurd (*ἄτοπον*) (407b13). On Aristotle’s account, “each body has its own soul. . . . Each craft must employ its own tools and each soul its own body” (407b23, 26). Both the *Timaeus* account and the “Pythagorean stories” characterize the relation between a particular body and a particular soul as an arbitrary matter. On those accounts, bodies are simply inert stuff, to which the soul brings life and motion. On Aristotle’s account, bodies are materials which have the capacity to become living and moving. Not all bodies have such capacities, and different bodies have peculiarly different capacities of peculiarly different forms. For Aristotle, matter is never amorphous, but is always informed. As the thing it is potentially, it is a matter, but as the thing it is actually, it is a form. Clay *qua* clay is actually clay and in the form of clay, but clay *qua* brick is potentially brick and is the material out of which the brick is made. Which body is informed by which soul is thus no arbitrary matter, but is limited by the capacity of that body to become the material for that shape and function. Just as each living thing has a *psychē* according to its *physis*, so every soul has a body whose capacities are according to potential completion in the soul.

This account of bodies makes it clear why a container model cannot apply. For Plato, the soul was conceived as in the body in a containment sense, showing a physicalistic view of the soul which makes the breadbox analogy a plausible one. But for Aristotle life is not *put into* the body as some separate entity from outside. It is rather formed *out of* the body into the peculiar shape and function for which that body has the capacity. Thus, they have quite different conceptions of *psychē* as a life principle. The one sees a soul as an esoteric something which infuses an alien entity and thus gives it life in some mysterious way. The other sees a soul as the completion of a body in which resides the capacity for life by its very nature. It may well remain mysterious what the basis for that capacity is, and why some bodies have it and others do not, but there is

no mystery about why body and soul go together or how they go together. And their going together in this way suggests our conceiving the body as in the soul in the ways already noted.

On Aristotle's account the soul is related to the body as ability is to capacity. The soul is in this sense the actualization of the body's potential, the first actuality (*entelecheia*) of the living being. The body is thus one kind of condition for action, providing the capacity for action to take place. Action also requires some object for the actualization of that ability in activity: "That which produces movement is twofold: that which is unmoved and that which produces movement and moves" (433b15). All animate motion involves the desired (τὸ ὀρεκτόν) and the desiring (ἡ ὄρεξις); requires both pulling (ἐλξέει) and pushing (ῥσσει)—"logically different, but inseparable in magnitude (μεγέθει)" (433b25). An animate activity is intentional, requiring an object as the end of its motion. The soul is the principle (*logos*) of motion in two senses. In the immediate act, it is the efficient cause that moves the organism to the desired end (ὁ ἕνεκα). In the overall scheme of understanding the actions of the organism, it is the fulfillment (*telos*) toward which each individual act serves as development. But the individual acts cannot take place without individual ends in view and without the bodily potentialities which find their formulations in desire for those ends. The soul as a principle of motion is conditioned both by bodily capacities and ends in view.

This account of motion shows why a vehicle model for body cannot apply to Aristotle's understanding. "Movement is desiring actualized (*energeia*)" (433b18). That by which desire moves, as by an instrument, is something bodily (433b19), but "bodily" here must still be construed in the Aristotelean sense. Desire can be seen as an actualization of a need or a lack, and thus as a completion in relation to the body as capacity; but it can also be seen as a potentiality to be completed by the attainment of a goal in action (*energeia*), and thus as bodily relative to the actual employment. This characterization of desire from the perspectives of both completion and potential is what requires considering it "among the operations which are common to body and soul" (433b20). The body is not like a ship moved by a pilot. The body is an "instrument" in action as a potentiality brought to completion through motion. Whatever the difficulties of this accounting for motion, it is an accounting. The soul is the *logos* which causes animate motion both as the efficient cause in relation to ends in view and as the final cause in relation to the nature of the organism. The body is the cause as matter, which lacks something and thus makes possible the actualization of the end in view from what is potential and also is the capacity which makes fulfillment of the organism's nature a possibility. Both as a lack fulfilled in function (*energeia*) and as a capacity fulfilled in completion (*entelechia*), we must view the body as in the soul to understand Aristotle's account of motion.

Why then does Aristotle himself waver over the image of the pilot in the ship? When the wavering is put into its context, it is all too readily understood. The remark follows a similar wavering about the divisibility and separability of (parts of) the soul from the body. He remarks that there seems to be nothing that prevents some parts from being separated, since they are not actualities of bodies (413a8). This remark is clearly an allusion to his conception of "creative mind" (νοῦς ποιητικός) which is to be discussed Book III. Its anomalous appearance here lends some credence to Jaeger's thesis that the latter book was written earlier. In the context of II-1, Aristotle has not only failed to give a basis for the remark but indeed has put forward much argument about the interdependency of body and soul which would seem to preclude it. And the same is true of his talk of parts being distinguishable by definition, but not in existence. The

creative mind seems throughout an exception to the rules of his psychology, even though it also seems required by his account of thinking about universals. It is only in the light of this exception that the question of the vehicle/agent model can even arise.

So far we have considered Aristotle's account of the body/soul relation only in a psychological context. For ethical concerns, he draws a distinction between the irrational and the rational. But in the sense that these are parts, there are an indefinite number of parts, divided according to a variety of concerns: rational/irrational for ethical, nutritive/sensitive/cognitive for biological, imaginative/appetitive, etc. for psychological concerns (432a25–b8). These parts are distinguishable in definition but not separable in existence; appetite is as integral to thinking as it is to eating. An animate being has a single nature, a single form, a single soul, which can be considered according to various concerns to have various aspects.

For religious concerns, we find in the notion of active mind a concept that is at once the pinnacle of Aristotle's psychology and the violation of all of its principles. As pure act, it is dependent upon neither matter nor an object beyond itself. As separable, it is by nature, not just by inquiry, a distinct and discrete part of the soul. As immortal, it requires no association with any body for its existence. For creative mind, the assertion that the body is in the soul clearly does not apply, but then neither does much of anything else said of the relation of body to soul. For the rest, our aphorism gives expression to how Aristotle conceives a soul's unity, its activity, its relation to its body, and its integration to the world.

Even if we lay aside for the moment the anomalies of creative mind, there are still two problems with Aristotle's treatment of bodies that command our attention. The first is with how and why we are to treat bodies as living bodies.¹³ The second is with why living bodies do not provide in themselves an account of living beings, without recourse to a conception of a soul. Aristotle bases his answers to both issues on his conception of final cause.

Aristotle argues that no examination of parts will be a sufficient basis for an explanation of the whole. "The syllable does not consist of the letters plus juxtaposition, nor is the house bricks plus juxtaposition. . . . For the juxtaposition or mixing does not consist of those things of which it is the juxtaposition or mixing" (*Metaphysics* 1043b5ff.). It is not that material explanation is bad; it is just insufficient, just as it would be insufficient to describe the products of art only in terms of their elements. The formal nature is of greater importance than the material (cf. *Parts of Animals* 640b25ff.).

But even this, if construed as no more than arrangement and quality, is not enough (for even Democritus conceded this much). "That which is dead (δ τεθνεώς) may be in the same configuration ($\sigma\chi\eta\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ μορφῆν) as a man, but for all that is not a man" (640b35). An adequate account of the nature of any natural being must include both the motor and the final cause, and for living things, this is what is designated by "psyche." The material may be said to constitute the thing only in the sense of having capacity for receiving a particular form. The juxtaposition or mixing of the materials

¹³ Aristotle uses "soma" in different senses but always in distinguishable contexts. As body in the mathematical sense, it may be distinguished from sensible bodies (*Metaphysics* 990a16), designate anything having magnitude (*On the Heavens* 268a9), or be the body of a proof. In physical contexts, it is distinguished from the incorporeal (*asoma*), usually in arguments against a void (*On Generation and Corruption* 321b6ff.) or against infinity (*Metaphysics* 1066b32). In biological contexts, it is invariably the body of living things, as distinct from corpses ($\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\acute{\iota}\varsigma$) or that which is dead ($\tau\epsilon\theta\nu\epsilon\acute{\omega}\varsigma$). In these latter contexts, the term is used without modifiers to signify living bodies, and the contexts assure no ambiguities of use. The discussions in *On the Soul* presuppose this latter use without discussion or argument.

may be said to constitute the thing only as it is interpreted in the light of the completion or function of that thing. That requires for natural things the account offered in the motor, formal and final causes, which is the form; and for living things, the account offered is the soul (cf. *On the Soul* 415b8–12). The mere arrangement or mixing of materials does not produce life, nor does it account for function.

The effect of introducing final cause as a condition on a thing being what it is, is that it is no longer that thing when the potential for completion and function are lost. It is not just that a dead body is no longer a man; it is that it is no longer a body of a man, since what “*soma*” means is just the potential for completion and function which that which is dead lacks. It can be called a man’s body only homonymously and is no more really a body of a man than a picture of a man is. In a similar way, “no part of that which is dead is just what it resembles; I mean, like an eye or a hand” (641a3).¹⁴ Given what Aristotle means by “*soma*,” at least in the context of talk about living things, it cannot be conceived apart from its potentiality for being informed. Without that potentiality, it is not *that* body at all.

The issue of life is somewhat more problematic. A body is living if it has potentiality for natural motion which cannot be accounted for by the elements of its composition. For *apsycha* beings, all natural motion is determined by the elements of their composition (water falls down, fire falls up); for *empsycha* beings, motion is determined by their forms, by the *physis* of each being, which is its *psychē*. Whatever the *morphē* of *apsycha* natural bodies, their *energeia* can be understood in terms of the elements of composition. This is perhaps why material cause receives such prominent attention in the physical works. It is not so for *empsycha* natural bodies: any adequate account must give an understanding of the *telos* of the whole and not just of the parts. It is in this sense that such natural beings are analogous to works of human skill (*technē*).

What makes the body living is just the activity and completion provided by the soul. The coming to be of new *empsycha* beings depends upon the activity of already existing *empsycha* beings, and it is insured by the fact that the generative function is common to all such beings. Whatever the limits of his biological account, Aristotle’s metaphysical point is clear: the chicken must precede the egg, not only in definition and perfection, but in order of existence. Thus, for understanding *soma*, *psychē* is required for generation as well as for definition and function.

We began with a simple aphorism depicting opposing views of the relation of body and soul. The soul in the body, on both container and agency models, leaves Plato with a conception of the soul that is not integrated to his own ontology and that fails to give an account either of the distinction of body and soul or of their relation. The body in the soul, while not articulated by Aristotle, is required by his ontology, once the relation of form and matter has been explicated and the conditional sense of “*en*” has been introduced. This conception provides an adequate account both of the relation of body and soul and of their distinction. Thus, the formula that was familiar at the beginning proves unintelligible in Plato’s hands, while that which initially did violence to conceptual sensitivities proves to be quite workable in the hands of Aristotle.

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¹⁴ Aristotle effectively avoids homonymy by using the participle of “*θνῆσκειν*” (“that which is dead”) to designate what we would call dead bodies. This preserves the use of “*soma*” in relevant contexts for living bodies and keeps clear the argument here in *Parts of Animals*. The tendency of translators (e.g., William Ogle) to translate that participle as “dead body” obscures the very point of Aristotle’s selection of terms and finds no basis in the text.