Chapter 8
Plato and Aristotle On What Is Common to Soul and Body. Some Remarks on a Complicated Issue

Marcelo D. Boeri

Abstract Aristotelian scholars tend to reject the Cartesian dualism as applied to Aristotelian model of the soul, and favor the view that denies that the soul is radically opposed to body. This is so due the fact that Aristotle takes the living being to be a unified whole (composed by form and matter). I start by reminding that both Plato and Aristotle argue that by their very nature soul and body are different, but at the same time they maintain that there are things that are ‘common’ to soul and body. The issue is how it is possible that two entities so different in nature have something in common. I argue that the key to the problem lies in the fact that both Plato and Aristotle regard the soul and the body as capacities, and that – in so far as they are able to act and to be acted upon – such is the ‘commonality’ shared both by soul and body. Given that capacities are relational entities, both of them turn out to be very plastic notions that should not necessarily be understood as entirely foreign to each other.

8.1 Introduction

Both Plato and Aristotle famously argue that soul and body are two different kinds of entities: the soul is immaterial and the body material; the former is able to set in motion the body, and the latter is motionless.1 If this is so, one might assume that by their very nature soul and body are two profoundly disparate entities. However, Plato and Aristotle claim that the living being is a sort of ‘combination’ between soul and body.2 Furthermore, even though soul and body are two disparate kinds of entities, they also hold that there are ‘things that are common to soul and body’.

1 For this point see note 13 below.
2 Cf. Pl. Phd. 106e; to be sure, he does not speak in terms of ‘combination’ here, but he clearly states that a human being is a composite of two ingredients: a mortal part, the body, and an immortal part, the soul. But in the Phaedrus 246c5 Plato explicitly says that the whole, ‘compounded of soul and body, is called ζωον’ (see also Tim. 87e5–6). In Aristotle the view that the human being is a composite of soul and body is clearer (Pol. 1254a34–36, 1277a6; de An. 408b11–29, 412a15–19).
Now Plato as well as Aristotle defended an immaterialist psychological approach; Plato, I hold, revised his own view (first adumbrated in the *Phaedo*) according to which the soul can deploy its activities *independently* of the body.\(^3\) Moreover, even though in the *Phaedo* Plato seems to refer to a certain sort of mutual causal relation between soul and body (79c-80b), in the *Philebus* he explicitly indicates that there are certain things that are ‘common to body and soul’ (33d5–6; 34a3-b8), thus suggesting that it is not possible that the soul develops its own activities independently of the body. The thesis that there are things common to body and soul became a *locus communis* in Aristotle,\(^4\) who attempted to fine-tune such a view in the context of what I will call his ‘middle-path psychological theory’, the two extremes of this middle-path being a ‘crude materialism’, on the one hand, (the atomists), and a ‘pure immaterialism’ (Plato), on the other. Insofar as Aristotle endorses the view that the soul is an immaterial entity (it is a form and an actuality; *de An.* 412a20-b9), he somehow supports an immaterialist approach. But as long as he emphasizes that the soul is in need of the body for developing its capacities, Aristotle rejects the tenet that the soul can continue to exert its powers independently of the body. If an Aristotelian individual is taken to be a combination of matter and form, and a living being has as its matter flesh, blood, bones, nerves, etc. which are organized in a distinctive way that allows the individual to function as the individual at stake—a plant, a dog, a person—works, there is no need to inquiry whether the soul and body are one, just as it is unnecessary to ask if wax and its shape are one (*de An.* 412b6–8). Indeed, for Aristotle soul and body are two items which are distinct in nature; however, he is willing to argue that there is no soul independently of a body, and at the same time there is no body (i.e. an ensouled and hence a living body) without a soul in it.\(^5\) Thus, it appears that, even granting that soul and body are two radically different entities, there is a sense in which one should regard them as being two interrelated items, which means that there is a sort of ‘co-dependence relation’ between soul and body.

Now if by their very nature soul and body are different, how is it possible to maintain that there are things that are ‘common’ to soul and body? I will tackle this question by suggesting that the key to the problem lies in the fact that both Plato and Aristotle regard the soul and the body as capacities.\(^6\) If this is really so, ‘soul’ turns

---

\(^3\)The recollection argument suggests that the disembodied soul still retains its powers (*Phd.* 70b3–4, 76c12–13).

\(^4\) *de An.* 403a3–5, 433b19–21; *Sens.* 436a6–11, b1; *Somn. Vig.* 453b12–15; *PA* 643a35. This topic has been discussed at length in the volume edited by King (2006) (see especially the papers by Morel, Sharples and Rapp).

\(^5\) Both Plato and Aristotle take the soul to be ‘the principle of living beings’ (*Pl. Phd.* 105c9-d4; *Arist. de An.* 402a6–7).

\(^6\) Plato applies the notion of δύναμις to different things (the capacity of a name or a letter, *Cra.* 349b5, 427b5; the power or capacity of dialectics or of the good, *Philb.* 57e6, 67a14). He speaks of knowledge and belief in terms of capacities (*R.* 477b-d), and takes the soul to be the cause of living for the body, since it provides the body the capacity to breath (*Cra.* 399d12; *R.* 366c). The notion of δύναμις is explored by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* V 12 and IX. It is pretty clear that he conceives the soul as a capacity (*de An.* 413b25–24, 416a19, 422b15, 414a31–32, 433a31-b1. See also *Juv.*
out to be a very plastic notion that should not necessarily be understood as something entirely foreign to the body. As far as the body is capable of acting and being acted upon, it can be considered both an active and a passive capacity. If, as discussed below, a certain kind of interactionism can be envisaged in Plato (Phd. 79c-80b; 81b-d), he would be in a position to admit that the soul can act upon the body and be acted upon by the body. Indeed, I am willing to hold that Plato was a ‘dualist’. However, by dualism I do not mean a theory that posits a radical separation between body and soul, despite their being taken to be two different kinds of entities. Rather, if my discussion of the ‘interactionist passage’ in the Phaedo is plausible, one should consider that, even assuming that soul and body are two ontologically different things, they are nonetheless closely related to each other insofar as they can ‘interact’.

This interactionist tenet is also envisaged and probably endorsed by Aristotle, who in the Physics VII 3 maintains that the perceptive soul is altered by perceptible things, this way implying that the soul and its bodily mover are in spatial contact. But if the soul is what sets the body in motion (de An. 415b21–22), one should assume that at some point in the development of his psychological theory Aristotle changed his mind.

My purpose in this chapter is not to challenge the interpretations of other scholars about these matters, but to continue to explore what I take to be a ‘complicated

---

467b17; GA 736b8, 14, 745b24–25), but he thinks that the notion of capacity can be applied also to lifeless things (cf. Metaph. 1019b13–15, where the example of an artificial instrument is provided: a lyre that ‘can be made to sound or cannot be made to sound’) and to ensouled bodies (de An. 413a1: ἡ δύναμις τοῦ ὀργάνου). So nothing prevents one from extending the notion of capacity to the body, which can be considered to be an ‘organic instrument’. For a full discussion of the issue of capacity in Aristotle (with a special focus on its psychological meaning) see Johansen (2012, Chap. 4–5).

7 On this point cf. Chap. 1, Sect. 1.1; for the ontological dependence of all causal powers (powers understood as properties that are displayed in causal processes) see Ellis (2010, especially pp.135–137).

8 Aristotelian scholars are used to arguing that the label ‘dualism’ cannot be properly applied to Aristotle (especially when ‘dualism’ means ‘substance dualism’), to the extent that he denies that the soul (the ‘numerical’ or ‘individual’ soul, not the ‘specific’ one; de An. 415b7), a ‘substance in the sense of form’ (412a19–20), can continue to exist independently of the body. Moreover, scholars tend to reject the view that Aristotle endorses a dualistic view, since both in De anima and in other psychological works he takes the living being to be a unified whole (composed by form and matter; see Kahn (1966, p. 44); Morel (2006, pp. 122–124), and (2007, Chap. 3); Charles (2008)). Indeed, if psychological capacities are seen as functions of a unified psychophysical whole, the psychological cannot be opposed to the physical and thence there is no ‘dualism’. Yet, insofar as Aristotle distinguishes (like Plato) soul from body as two ontologically different things (this is a usual characterization of ‘dualism’ in contemporary philosophy of mind), it seems to me that one can still say that he also supports a certain kind of dualism. Interestingly, Shields suggests that Aristotle adopts a non-Cartesian way of substance dualism (what is called ‘supervenient dualism’ in the domain of contemporary philosophy of mind): the immaterial substance of the soul supervenes on the material substance of the body (Shields (1988, p. 106)). For the rejection of the supervenient interpretation of Aristotle’s psychology, see Bolton (2005, p. 216).

9 Ph. 246b24-247a18. This point has been shown and argued by Menn (2002, pp. 86–90), who favors the view that at this stage Aristotle was an ‘interactionist dualist’. I return to this Aristotelian passage in Sect. 8.3.
issue’ in any immaterialist psychological theory: the way in which soul and body, being two different items in nature, are related to each other. I will hold that the commonality between body and soul lies in the fact that they, in being passive and active capacities, are in need of each other in order to be what they are. The paper proceeds thus: in Sect. 8.2 I deal with soul and body as what moves and is moved, respectively. I also briefly present the Platonic psychology of the Phaedo, and discuss there a passage that shows that Plato already considered the possibility of a certain interaction between soul and body. In Sect. 8.3 and Sect. 8.4 I develop the issue of what is common to soul and body in Plato’s Philebus as well as the interactionist view defended by Aristotle in Physics VII. In Sect. 8.5 I will deal with Aristotle’s view that, even though the soul is in the body, it is not mixed with the body. In this section I briefly refer to Aristotle’s emotions (πάθη), his favorite examples of psychological items. Finally, in Sect. 8.6 and Sect. 8.7 I point out some difficulties regarding the way in which the soul is in the body and I provide some concluding remarks.

8.2 Soul and Body as Moving and Moved Factors in Plato

The soul-body problem goes back to Plato; he distinguishes the soul (ψυχή) from the body and argues that one’s soul is what uses and rules over the body. The ‘active property’ of the soul makes it ‘more valuable’ than the body.\(^\text{10}\) Now if the soul is the active factor and the body the passive one, and if the soul is able to act upon the body and the body is what allows the soul to deploy its powers when being acted upon, it is clear that both the active and the passive depend on each other. This point is particularly clear in Aristotle, but it goes back to Plato who in a well-known passage of the Sophist states that all that has the capacity of acting and of being acted upon ‘really is’ (247e3: πᾶν τοῦτο ὑποτευτον εἶναι). Now if the soul is the active item in the active-passive relation, one might assume that even in Plato there is a certain co-dependence relation between soul and body. After all, it is Plato who asserts that there is no active without passive or passive without active (Th. 157a5–6), a view taken for granted and exploited by Aristotle (cf. MA 702a13–15; Ph. 255b1ff.: whenever it happens that the active and the passive are present, at once the former acts and the latter is acted upon).

But even though Plato recognizes that there is a certain co-dependence between soul and body, in the Phaedo he stresses that if we are to have any ‘pure knowledge’

\(^{10}\) Cf. Alc. I 129e-130c; Phd. 79e8-80a6; Lg. 896c1–3. In a similar vein, see Arist. de An. 430a17. In modern times the authenticity of Alc. I has been questioned; the inauthenticity of the dialogue is argued by Smith (2004) and, more recently, by Renaud and Tarrant (2015, pp. 38, 46, and 267), even though they declare that their purpose is ‘to explore the hypothesis that the dialogue may be interpreted along the same lines as any other dialogue of Plato’ (p. 5). Other interpreters tend to take Alc. I to be an authentic work of Plato. For more details on this matter see Chap. 1, n.12 and the literature cited there. It should be recalled that the view that the Alc. I belongs to Plato was already defended by Adam (1901, pp. 40–65, cited by Giannantoni 2005, p. 117, note 56).
(Phd. 66d8–9: καθαρῶς τι εἰςεσθαι), we should be freed from the body and contemplate things as they are ‘with the soul by itself’ (ἀυτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ, 66e1–2). He adds that after we are dead we shall gain the wisdom which we desire, not while we are alive (Phd. 64c, 67d; Grg. 524b). But, why is the body, in accordance with the Plato of the Phaedo, so annoying? The irrational desires are related to the body, not to the soul (Phd. 66b–d), and the body is declared to be a hindrance for acquiring truth and wisdom; it is nothing but a source of confusion and a real evil (66a5–b6). Since the body has need for nurture, Plato says, it fills us with erotic desires, appetites, fears, fantasies of many kinds, and much nonsense. So, our body is an annoying element because it prevents us from having wisdom (φρονῆσαι) and its appetites (ἐπιθυμίαι) produce ‘war’ and ‘civil war’ (66b8–c7).\(^\text{11}\) In the Phaedo the soul as a whole is dragged by the body (not by another part of the soul) toward ‘things that are never identical’ (79c6–7). Thus, the separation of the soul from the body (i.e. death; Phd. 67d4) would be indispensable so as to avoid being cheated by the body. Plato warns us that, even though the soul cannot be completely separated from the body while the person is still alive, there is a way in which we can come nearest to knowledge: this manner would consist in refraining ‘so far as possible’ (ὅτι μάλιστα, 67a3) from association with the body. In fact, examining something together with the body is what we do in so far as we are alive. Of course, Plato is aware that one can get rid of one’s body just ‘as much as possible’ (65c8: καθ’ ὧσον δύναται; see also 66b-d); according to him, the soul reasons best when none of the senses troubles it (neither hearing, nor sight, pain or pleasure, and so on). Given that the senses are embedded in the body, maybe the way out is to develop a technique to neutralize the influence of the body upon one’s soul and what is associated to it. But even within this framework, where Plato heavily believes in the necessity of releasing one’s soul from association with the body in order to get ‘what is in itself’, he reminds us of the importance of perception as a previous step to attain what is ‘truly real’ through the argument of recollection, indicating again that the body cannot be completely divorced from the soul.\(^\text{12}\)

The view that the soul is the origin of motion is almost a commonplace in Plato. It even constitutes one of the basic premises of the famous argument for the immortality of the soul in the Phaedrus (245c). In the Phaedo (79e-80a; 98c-e) it is pretty clear that the soul is what sets the body in motion. The argument runs thus: (i) when soul and body are present in the same thing, nature ‘orders’ (ἡ φύσις προστάτει, 80a1) the latter to be a slave and to be ruled (τῷ μὲν δουλεύειν καὶ ἄρχεισθαι), and the former to rule and to be the master (τῇ δὲ ἄρχειν καὶ δεσπόζειν). (ii) The soul, in being incorporeal and dealing with the unchanging (this part of the premise is not

\(^\text{11}\) Unlike what can be found in the Republic, ‘war and civil war’ (πόλεμὸς τε καὶ στάσις) are not used in the Phaedo with reference to an agent who fights against himself, this himself being another part of the soul (R. 470b5-470d; 550e9-560a).

\(^\text{12}\) As already observed by other scholars, Plato does not say that nothing perceptual is significant: ‘perceptual experience’ is relevant to evoke the Forms, as held by Plato himself, Phd. 75a (Dixsaut (1991, pp. 97–99); Rowe (2001, p. 197), and more recently Vigo (2009, pp. 58–61); Trabattoni (2011, pp. XLIII-XLV, p. 86, note 98, p.87, note 100); and Casertano (2015, pp. 316–317, 332)). For a similar view (although in a distinct context) see Thr. 186b-c.
explicit in the argument, but it clearly can be inferred from the context), is like the divine. (iii) But the divine is able to rule and to lead by nature, while what is mortal is able to be ruled and to be enslaved. (iv) Thus, the soul is like the divine and the body like the mortal.

Now, in what sense can it be said that the soul ‘rules and leads what is mortal, the body’? It seems easy enough to answer this question: I move my arm because I have decided to do that. In Plato’s ontological map, ‘deciding’ is a psychological item, so the soul is able to set one’s own body in motion because the movement of one’s body depends upon one’s decision. This is what to rule over one’s own body means: the body does not move by itself.\textsuperscript{13} Recent studies have reminded us that Plato does not seem to have regarded the relations between body and soul as constituting a problem.\textsuperscript{14} This, according to Dillon, is an issue that appears from Aristotle onwards. Following this view, I claim that in the \textit{Phaedo} Plato clearly contends that interactionism between soul and body is possible and that, in doing so, he appears to have no conflict with his tenet that what moves is the soul and what is moved is the body.

As is also clear in the above passage of the \textit{Phaedo}, Plato holds that to rule belongs to the \textit{nature} of the soul, and to be ruled to the \textit{nature} of the body. Once again, one might easily understand this to mean that a body by itself is motionless, that is, the body cannot move itself and cannot set another thing in motion, either. So, ‘setting something in motion’ does not belong to the body’s nature.\textsuperscript{15} But the most appealing point is that, even though Plato provides this argument in favor of the soul as the moving principle, he also allows the soul to be affected by the body as well: the soul as a whole is dragged away (\textit{ἐξεκτείνω}, \textit{79c6}) by the body. Even though the soul uses the body to examine something (through the senses), thus highlighting that the soul is the active factor, Plato ascribes the soul a passive role as well. But if we are to accept his claim that the active role belongs to the soul, how is it possible that the soul is dragged away by the body? Moreover, the soul itself (due to the harmful influence of the body) wanders (\textit{πλανᾶται}), becomes confused and dizzy, ‘as if it were drunk’ (\textit{Phd. 79c7–8}; see also \textit{66a5–6}). To be sure, the cause of the soul’s being in such a state is the body, but this introduces a tension, because

---

\textsuperscript{13} In the \textit{Laws} (892a-893a, 895c-896a) it is clear that the body contains no principle of change in itself, and that change occurs (both in the single body and in the cosmos) thanks to the existence of a self-moving soul (at \textit{Phaedrus 246c4}, Plato asserts that the body ‘seems’ –\textit{δοκοῦν}– to be self-moving due to the power of the soul within it). In the wording of \textit{Alcibiades I} (129c-d), this shows that the soul is \textit{the user} and the body is \textit{what is used}. The ‘user-used terminology’ in reference to soul and body also appears in Aristotle (see \textit{Juv. 469a33-b1}; \textit{IA 705a19–20}; \textit{Metaph. 1017b3–5}), who, in a very Platonic vein, also assumes that ‘what rules by nature’ (τὸ μὲν ἀρχον ἐστὶ φύσει) is the soul and ‘what is ruled’ is the body (τὸ δ’ ἄρχομενον, \textit{Pol. 1254a34–36}). As is clear, Aristotle also is committed to allowing that the soul moves the body (\textit{de An. 406a30}). The moving power of the soul also is stressed by Plato in the \textit{Phaedo 98c-e}, where Socrates argues that the ‘true causes’ (τὰς ὡς ἀληθῶς σκίτικας) of his being seated are psychic items (such as decision and choice; \textit{98e1–4. 99b1}).

\textsuperscript{14} Dillon (2009), (2013).

\textsuperscript{15} This fits well with the normative character of nature as described in \textit{Phaedo 81a}. See also \textit{Phdr. 245c-d}; \textit{Lg. 895e-896a} (discussed by Casertano (2015, pp. 401–402)).
the active role is supposed to ‘essentially’ belong to the soul (it’s what nature orders the soul to do), not to the body.

At this point my suggestion is that Plato advances an idea, widely developed by Aristotle, according to which there is a sort of ‘co-dependence relation’ between soul and body. Although the view that the active factor is the soul is not new in Plato (it goes back to the *Alc. I*, and of course it is present in other dialogues too), the passage in the *Phaedo* is eloquent: the soul uses the body (τῷ σώματι προσχρῆται, 79c3) to examine what it examines and it does that through the senses (79c3–4). This means that the body is the *instrument* of the soul, so the preeminent place of the soul is clear. The unsolved problem here, I hold, is that the soul is supposed to be the active principle in the soul-body relation, but the soul is also subject to be affected by the body. If this ‘interactionism’ is possible, one might suggest that the soul is capable of acting upon the body and the body is capable of being acted upon by the soul because both of them are capacities that can deploy their powers when they relate to each other.

8.3 Plato on What Is Common to Body and Soul in the *Philebus*

In this section I argue that the ‘body-soul co-dependence model’, so important in the Aristotelian psychology, is sketched by Plato in the *Philebus*. If Dillon is right, Plato did not see any special problem with the mutual body-soul relation. At any rate, I think that one could hazard the guess that he had some worries about the soul-body relation when he continued to think about the issue, worries that prompted Plato to better develop what at this stage of his thought he saw as a problem. In the *Phaedo* the body is seen as disruptive for the soul; but when Plato wrote the *Philebus*, towards the end of his philosophical career, he endorsed a model where the body should not be despised as a mere source of nonsense. In the *Philebus* Plato still thinks that soul and body are two distinct entities, but their existence is possible

---

16 *Alc. I* 129c5–e5, 130a1; *Phd.* 245e5 ff.; *Lg.* 896c–897d; 898c–899a.

17 For the body as an instrument of the soul in Aristotle see *de An.* 407b25–26, 412a27-b6, 412b12, 413a1, 415b18–18, 433b19 *et passim*; *PA* 642a11, 645b14–20. See also *GA* 730b19 and 740b29–34, where Aristotle states that ‘the capacity of the nutritive soul … uses as instruments (χρωμένη οἷον ὀργάνοις) what is hot and cold’.

18 Aristotle’s ‘co-dependence view’ is briefly discussed in Sect. 8.4 below; but see *GA* 766a5–9, where Aristotle reminds us that nature provides each individual with the capacity (δύναμις) as well as the ‘organic instrument’ (ὁργανῶν), and that there is no sight (i.e. the capacity of seeing: ὄψις) without eyes and that the eye cannot be perfected (τελειοῦται) without sight.

19 It is clear that the soul is negatively affected by the body (which is regarded as an ‘obstacle’ —65a10: ἐμπόδιον τὸ σῶμα— and as ‘what deceives the soul’ —65b11: ἐξαπατᾶται ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ—).

20 The ‘dualist mark’ in the *Philebus* is clear when he argues that both the body and the soul undergo affections, and that there is a different kind of pleasure and pain, which belongs to the soul.
due to their close relation (34a-b). So even if Plato is intent on arguing that recollection is a psychological item, it presupposes a previous conjunction of the soul with the body. In a similar vein, perception arises when soul and body jointly undergo one affection (ἐν ἑνὶ πάθει ... κοινῇ), and are jointly moved (κοινῇ καὶ κυνείσθαι, 34a3–5). Plato’s important clue here is that perception does not belong exclusively to the domain of the body or the soul; it actually is the result of a process which is jointly undergone by the soul and the body. Perception neither is a purely bodily nor a purely psychological phenomenon: it is a bodily event because without a body where a sensation is rooted, there seems to be no sensation: my shoulder hurts because of my arthrosis in it (i.e. because of a bodily condition caused by chronic wear of cartilage). But there seems to be no sensation of pain without one’s soul being aware of pain.

When Plato distinguishes those affections (παθήματα) that are extinguished within the body from those that penetrate both the body and the soul, he appears to suggest that sense-perception is a sort of awareness. There is a manner in which this passage can be read without making so much emphasis on what is common to body and soul: the body, in being an extended magnitude, literally suffers a commotion. For example, when one looks directly at the sun, one’s eye is shocked by the luminosity of the sun. By contrast, the soul, an immaterial entity, can only be shaken figuratively. If the passage is taken in this way, my emphasis on what is common to soul and body seems to be mitigated. But Plato proceeds to argue that sometimes the soul ‘escapes the notice of’ (or ‘is not conscious of’: λανθάνειν, 33d8–9) those affections which do not penetrate through body and soul, while it does not escape notice of those that penetrate both. But λανθάνειν, Plato goes on to argue, does not give rise to any kind of forgetting (λήθη), since forgetting is the loss of memory. However, in the case at stake there is no memory yet, since one cannot talk of the loss of something that does not exist and never has existed. What has happened here is not a case of forgetting but a case of ‘non perception’, so instead of saying λήθη one should say ἀναισθησία. Perception (αἴσθησις) only occurs when body and soul are jointly (κοινῇ) affected and moved by or in a single affection (ἐν ἑνὶ πάθει, 34a3–5). Hence αἴσθησις is treated as an affection that is common to body and soul.
In my example, the sun directly affecting one’s eye is a clear case of an item affecting both one’s body and soul. It’s the kind of experience the soul is not oblivious to. But how about those affections which are or can be imperceptible? Think of a very superficial wound: you can have a light scratch, and be unaware of that. Plato would explain this by saying that it is an affection which did not penetrate through body and soul; such an affection has been ‘extinguished’ within one’s body, without reaching one’s soul. So, insofar as the subject does not realize he’s been scratched, he is not aware of it, and hence this is not a case of real αἴσθησις.26

8.4 Aristotle’s Interactionism and His ‘Middle-Path Psychology’

The last remarks show the importance of the *Philebus* in Aristotle’s psychological project.27 Let’s recall that he also endorsed interactionism between body and soul: in sensation and sensory pleasure (but also in the case of virtue and vice) the soul is moved by the body. At *Physics* VII 2 Aristotle is concerned with proving that between the agent of alteration and the altered object there is no intermediate. ‘Alteration’ should be taken in the restrictive sense Aristotle gives to the term ἄλλοιωσις in *Physics* VII (244b2-248a6), i.e. as ‘perceptible qualities’, such as being heated, sweetened, compressed, dried, or made pale (244b6: κατὰ τὰς παθητικὰς κολομένας ποιότητας).28 He stresses that these processes can take

26 When commenting on *Phlb.* 33c8–11 Delcomminette (2006, p. 314) speaks of αἴσθησις as the ‘simplest stage … which already involves consciousness, to move towards the more complex stages, i.e. memory, recollection, and desire’. In fact, insofar as sense-perception shakes both soul and body, it suggests the idea of ‘perceptive consciousness’ in the sense that the person experiencing a sensation can become cognizant about what he or she is experiencing. What is common to soul and body in Plato is also clear in his characterization of pleasure as ‘restoration (ἀναχώρησις) of the natural condition of the living being’ (*Phlb.* 32b2–4), when he argues that pleasure and pain do not belong exclusively to the bodily domain, since desire (ἐπιθυμία) belongs to the soul but it occurs through the body (in the *Phaedo* Plato attached desire to the body).

27 Even in the case that I am right and the *Philebus* really constitutes an important antecedent to Aristotle’s psychology (and also in his moral theory: the requirements of the good distinguished by Plato in the *Philebus*—perfection, sufficiency, and choiceworthiness—were taken into account by Aristotle; see *EN* I), Aristotle objects to Plato that pleasure is a certain kind of becoming (γένεσις, *Phlb.* 53c-55a; see Aristotle, *EN* 1173a29-b7, 1174b4-1175a4). As indicated by Hackforth (1945, pp. 105–106) and more recently by Migliori (1998, pp. 266–267) and Carone (2000, p. 265), Socrates (Plato) never endorses the view that pleasure is a process of becoming, and he prefers to treat it in a conditional way (see *Phlb.* 54d1: ἡδονὴ γε ἐπερ γένεσις ἐστιν). But given that the thesis that pleasure is a becoming coincides with an important aspect of Socrates’ argument to prove that pleasure is not the good (in fact, if pleasure is a becoming, it does not meet the requisite of perfection, 20d1–3), it seems irrelevant whether or not he subscribes to that position, since it is functional to the Platonic refutation of hedonism (my view on this topic partially agrees with what is argued by Delcomminette (2006, pp. 497–500)).

28 See also *Ph.* 244b7–8, 245b13, 246a.
place both in animate and inanimate things, surely because both of them are similarly affected when they are heated, sweetened, etc. (244b7–9). What Aristotle contends is that, where animate things are concerned, these processes occur whether one is talking about the non-sensitive parts (μὴ αἰσθητικὰ) or the sensations themselves (αὐτὰς τὰς αἰσθήσεις). In fact, even ‘the senses (αἰσθήσεις) are somehow altered, since an actual sensation (ἡ γὰρ αἰσθησίς ἢ κατ’ ἐνέργειαν) is a change that takes place through the body (i.e. through the sense-organ) when the sense is being affected in a way’ (πασχούσης τι τῆς αἰσθήσεως, 244b10–12). If this is so, Aristotle concludes, in all the cases in which the inanimate undergoes alteration, the animate undergoes alteration as well, but the opposite is not true since the inanimate does not undergo alteration in respect of sensations. The inanimate is unaware (λανθάνει) of undergoing alteration, whereas the animate is aware (οὐ λανθάνει) of it (it does not matter that the animate sometimes may be unaware of such an alteration when it does not take place in the senses; Ph. 244b15-245a2).

Further on, Aristotle argues that virtue and vice cannot be alterations, nor can the acquisition and loss of them be so. They come into existence when the perceptive part of the soul is altered by perceptible objects, since ‘all virtue is concerned with bodily pleasures and pains’ (Ph. 247a8). These pleasures and pains depend either upon acting or upon remembering or upon anticipating (Ph. 247a9: ἐν τῷ πράττειν ἢ ἐν τῷ μεμνημένῳ ἢ ἐν τῷ ἐλπίζειν). Pleasures and pains depending upon acting are related to perception; this should be a clear clue that there is a perceptible agent setting them in motion as long as they are aroused by something perceptible (ὑπ’ αἰσθητοῦ τινὸς κινεῖσθαι, 247a10–11). But even those pleasures and pains that depend on remembering and anticipating are based on perception as well, but according to the Physics version, there is perception when perceptible things affect the soul.29

The upshot of this discussion is that the soul is able to set the animal (i.e. the composite) in motion30 as well as the body is capable of moving the soul. Besides, Aristotle already seems to have in mind two crucial claims that appear again in his mature works: (i) the soul is neither without body nor a certain body (de An. 414a19–20; Sens. 436b6–7). Indeed, ‘sensation’ somehow is soul, but in order to be what it is, it needs the body as its instrument. (ii) Inversely, the living body (τὸ ἐμψυχον) is ‘conscious’ of its own qualitative states because of the soul (in fact, only the animal can be aware of its being heated, sweetened, and so forth). So, in addition to the fact that the body is a living body due to the soul, the soul allows the animal to be aware of its own affective states. Besides, given that any case of alteration requires the agency of perceptible things, the ultimate agent of alteration (τὸ ἐσχιστὸν ἄλλοιον) and the first altered object (τὸ πρῶτον ἄλλοιομένον) are continuous, i.e. they are ‘in contact’ (ἅμα, 245a4). In the case of physical contact (as the continuity between the body which is being altered and the air, or the contact between the color and the light) this is pretty clear. But Aristotle assumes that the

29 One can experience pleasure or pain when remembering what one has already experienced or when one anticipates what one is about to experience. This evokes Plato, Phlb. 35d-36c, 39d-e.
30 See Ph. 243a12–15, 252b22–23.
same goes for sight, hearing, and smell, for in these cases the air is the first mover with regard to what is moved. The contact between the body and the air, the color and the light takes place between bodies. But Aristotle extends his ‘contact thesis’ when positing that the light is continuous with sight. The same occurs in the case of tasting, inasmuch as the flavor is in contact with the sense of taste. The body and the light, the color and the light are bodily (although according to Aristotle, light ‘in general’ is not a body but a ‘presence of fire’ in the transparent), so what they have in common is that they have a ‘corporeal character’. But light and sight are two different kinds of items: the former is a body and the latter (the sense of sight) is an incorporeal. However, the light (or rather a visible object, which is visible because of light), a body, is able to activate the capacity of seeing. So what is common to light and sight is that they are capacities: the light is an active capacity (in fact, it is an actualized body endowed with active powers), and the sight is a passive capacity that can be activated by the light’s action (i.e. by the visible object). This in a certain way illustrates what I have called the ‘co-dependence thesis’ (which is so obvious in De anima), a view that somewhat is already present in Physics VII (251a12–16).

Just as in the passage of Plato’s Phaedo discussed above, the soul-body interactionism (apparently supported by Aristotle) introduces the problem of how it is possible to maintain the view that the soul is the active factor in the soul-body relation. It is true that the interactionist view is abandoned in De anima, where Aristotle emphasizes the primacy of the soul as the mover of the body. But he also emphasizes the co-dependence between soul and body (even though the causal power belongs to the soul; de An. 415b8–20). It is clear that Aristotle does not endorse substance interactionism (insofar as he takes the soul to be a form that is what it is within the composite), but he does support the (Platonic) view that the soul (an immaterial entity) has causal powers over the body. Like Plato, Aristotle holds (maybe drawing on the Philebus) that perception is a phenomenon which neither is purely bodily nor purely psychological. In his view, there is a sense in which the extra-mental perceptible object (αἰσθητόν) can be regarded prior to perception. But such priority is not necessarily temporal, since at the level of the temporal analysis what occurs between the perceptible object and perception is a sort of contemporaneity that should obtain at once in order that there be perception and a perceptible object. However, Aristotle argues that the perceptible item is already an ‘actualized object’ (even though in order to be something perceptible it should be ‘intended’ by a percipient that is perceiving the perceptible object as being a perceptible object). That is why, although Aristotle clearly points out that the perceptible (what sets the capacity of perceiving in motion) is by nature prior to what is moved (i.e. perception as the capacity to perceive; de An. 417a6–8), there is a sense in which the mover (i.e. the perceptible object) and what is moved (the capacity to perceive) are reciprocal.33

31 Without light colors remain invisible (de An. 420a27–28; see also 418a26-b2, 429a4, 430a15–17).
32 For the distinction active-passive capacity see Metaph. 1021a14–19, 1046a11–27.
33 For evidence see Arist. de An. 417a6–20, 425b26ff., 428a5ff.; Metaph. 1010b30-1011a2, 1047a4–6. Some scholars have attempted to prove that Aristotle’s account of perception is
Aristotle’s distinction between potentiality and actuality typically proceeds thus: if an \( x \) can be considered as a potentiality, such \( x \) can be considered in terms of actuality as well. A potentiality is susceptible to being actualized, and given that \( \alpha\iota\delta\theta\alpha\nu\epsilon\sigma\theta\omicron\alpha \) can be understood in potentiality, it can be actualized. A perceptible body, an ‘actual object’, is capable of activating the soul (i.e. the soul understood in its passive way —the capacity to perceive— can be acted upon by a body). Sensation in actuality is a certain kind of movement that obtains through the body, this body being the material support enabling the soul to deploy its powers. That is why perception is not a property of the body, but is common to soul and body: both capacities, the bodily and the psychological, are necessary in order to produce a case of \( \alpha\iota\delta\theta\alpha\nu\epsilon\sigma\theta\omicron\alpha \). As is obvious in this passage, in the account of perception the active role is played by the body, not by the soul. But again, the active-passive relation is understood in terms of capacities; in fact, a body deprived of soul (a stone) cannot perceive, since perception in the strict sense is ‘perception in actuality’, not the capacity to perceive. But a stone, an \( \alpha\iota\sigma\theta\eta\tau\omicron\nu \), even though it is able to actualize the capacity to perceive (which belongs to sight, i.e. the ‘capacity to see’), it does not have the capacity to perceive since it is a soulless body. A stone, like any other extra-mental object, is capable of ‘triggering’ perception, but perception in the strict sense is a form, an activity of the soul, and as such it is an immaterial entity.

It is worth noting that all the examples provided by Aristotle of what is ‘common to soul and body’ are psychological items (perception, memory, rage, appetite —or ‘in general desire’—, pleasure and pain; Sens. 436a8–10). At first sight, this seems to suggest that, even though they are common to soul and body, they are particularly ‘rooted in the soul’, so to speak. But that cannot be strictly the case, since, as the argument goes along, Aristotle adds that it is clear that ‘all the mentioned things’ are common to soul and body, for they all either occur accompanied by or through perception. But the most important point, I hold, is that Aristotle states that perception occurs because of the soul through the body (διὰ σώματος γίγνεται τῇ...)

---

34 As is clear in this passage, the soul is depicted as a ‘passive capacity’ and the perceptible object as an ‘active capacity’.

35 See de An. 432a2–3, where \( \alpha\iota\delta\theta\alpha\nu\epsilon\sigma\theta\omicron\alpha \) is the form of perceptible objects (εἴδος αισθητών).

36 On the priority of \( \alpha\iota\sigma\theta\eta\tau\omicron\nu \) in this passage see Alexander of Aphrodisias, In librum de sensu commentarium 2.21–24.
ψυχῇ, Sens. 436b6–7), bestowing up the soul, once again, the active causal role and highlighting the function of the body as the instrumental support that allows the soul to deploy its capacities.37

Now, if Aristotle’s view that psychological capacities should be taken as functions of the living being (the latter supposedly being a unified psychophysical whole) is at all reasonable, one might more easily understand why he does not seem to believe that there is a serious problem that things such as perception, memory, appetites, pain and pleasure are ‘common to soul and body’. However, he appears to suspect that this matter is in need of some clarification. And this is so, I contend, because when Aristotle must explain the way in which the soul (and more specifically the νοῦς) is in the body, he must clarify that the soul (especially in its function of thought) is not mixed with the body.

8.5 Thought, Emotions, and the Soul-Body Relation

Without the presence of the soul in the body, such a body could not be a living body. This is the easy part of Aristotle’s theory: if the soul is the principle of life, there is no life without a soul, which makes the body function in a ‘vital sense’. The difficult part of the theory deals with the fact that, even though some psychological items (such as perception, emotions, memory) are ‘common’ to body and soul, body and soul are not mixed and, what’s more, if body and soul are so different in kind, it is hard to imagine what properties they share, so we can say that there are things that are common to soul and body.38 Aristotle seems to acknowledge the possibility that “the soul and the body” are mixed, but he rejects such a possibility on the grounds that the soul is not a body (de An. 412a17–20). When explaining why thought cannot be mixed with the body, Aristotle argues thus: thought cannot be mixed with the

37 I’m aware that the interpretation of the dative τῇ ψυχῇ (in the just cited line of Sens.) is controversial. Johansen (2006, p. 146) reads ‘perception happens to the soul’ (see also Johansen 2012, 261). Morel, following Burnyeat’s suggestion (who quotes de An. 408b15 as a parallel passage), gives it an instrumental sense (‘datif de moyen’; Morel, 2007, p. 81, n.1). But in the de An. passage τῇ ψυχῇ can have a causal role as well. One could object to my reading that, in the strict sense, ‘perception’ is not different from ‘soul’, so it is not the case that perception occurs because of the soul. But the causal sense of the dative may be depicting the idea that perception occurs through the body when the individual’s soul ‘intends’ the extra-mental object as being perceptible, thus allowing perception to take place. Sometimes Aristotle is interested in emphasizing the dependence of the perceptible object on the animate being that is able to perceive ‘because of’ its soul (after all, both perceptible objects and perceptions are affections of the perceiver; cf. Metaph. 1010b30–1011a2). More recently, Shields (2016, p. 95) has interpreted De sensu 436b6–7 as ‘perception comes about through the body in the soul’ (Johansen’s and Shields’ versions, unlike Morel’s and mine, obscure the active character from the dative τῇ ψυχῇ).

38 Actually, Aristotle is mainly thinking of the rational soul when he states that νοῦς is not mixed with the body (de An. 429a18; 24–25). But to some extent this distinction can be applied to the other two types of soul (nutritive and perceptive), insofar as the most important idea is that the soul, in being an immaterial entity, cannot be mixed with the body.
body, since then it would become ‘physically qualified’, i.e. it could be said that it is either cold or hot, that is, it would have perceptual qualities (*quod non*), and there would be an organ for it (*de An.* 429a24–27). In addition, one should recall that, in Aristotle’s view, a mixture (**μίξις**) can only take place among bodies (in fact, he maintains that those agents which involve a contrariety are capable of being mixed, for these are such as to be able to be acted upon by one another; *GC* 328a31–33; 328b22). So, even though the soul is *in* the body, the soul is not mixed with the body (and ψυχή indeed is ‘soul’ or rather a kind of it).

Even though Aristotle must be clarifying that the soul is *not* blended with the body and is not a body, it is always ‘located’ *in* a body and exists *through* a body (*de An.* 403a16–19, 414a19–20). This emphasis can be understood as one of Aristotle’s ‘healthy’ attempts to abandon Plato’s ‘substance dualism’, according to which the soul can keep on existing independently of the body (Pl. *Phd.* 78c-79b). Aristotle, like Plato, believes that body and soul are different items but, unlike the Plato of the *Phaedo*, he argues that the soul cannot continue to develop its proper vital functions independently of the body and preserve its psychological powers.

In his nuanced formulation of the issue Aristotle seeks to make plausible the already quoted view that, although the soul is not a body (and on this point, Plato is right), it does not exist without a body (this is what Plato failed to note, Aristotle seems to think; *de An.* 414a19–20). This is a reasonable way to adopt a middle path between two extreme positions.

Aristotle tends to emphasize the dependence of thought on perception and its contents: if there is no thought without an image, and if there is no image without perception, it seems that αἴσθησις must be taken to be a sort of necessary condition for thinking. In spite of the fact that he denies that there is a sensory organ of thought, he apparently suspects that, in keeping with his hylomorphism, an ‘organic ground’ for thought should be assumed. The organic base of thinking is only a

---

39 A detailed reconstruction of the argument can be found in Shields (2016, pp. 300–301), who favors the idea that the claim that there is no organ for ψυχή is an ‘implicit addition, not in the text, but accepted by many translators’ (p. 301). Maybe Shields is right when suggesting that it is an ‘implicit addition’; but it is also certain that cold and hot can only be perceptual qualities of a body, this body being a sense organ (this must be the reason why interpreters accept that addition).

40 See *de An.* 407b1–5, 429a24–25; cf. also *Sens.* 440b1–25, where it is also clear that mixture is among bodies.

41 The problem that the soul can continue exerting its powers when separated from the body is envisaged by Plato as well; see especially *Phd.* 77c1–5, where the character Cebes notices that, even accepting that the soul existed before one was born, further proof is needed in order to show that, after one’s death, the soul continues to exist ‘n less’ (**οὐδὲν ἔχειν**, 77c4) after we have died. Thus, after admitting that the soul continues to exist after death, the relevant issue is whether or not our soul preserves its psychological powers. As is clear, although Plato thinks that the soul continues to exist after death, he casts doubts (through the character Cebes) on the fact that the soul preserves its powers.

42 *Mem.* 449b30-45a1; *de An.* 427b2, 429a9, 432a10–14.

43 Even though Aristotle denies that there is an organ for thinking, he takes the heart to be the physical center of the animal’s mental life (*de An.* 403a31, 432b31, 408b25. The heart is ‘like the acropolis of the body’; *PA* 670a25–26). Aristotle’s cardiocentrism is discussed at length by Morel
necessary condition, and it would not be indispensible to suppose that, when such an organic base is destroyed, thinking is also destroyed. At any rate, it is pretty clear that without that organic base (in the required good condition) intellectual activities cannot take place.44 Thinking as a psychological activity that lack an organic base introduces a certain tension in the Aristotelian psychological model, because it claims that there is thought independently of the body, which somehow would violate the fundamentals of Aristotle’s hylomorphism. In *de An.* II 4, where he develops an argument against the survival of the ‘numerical’ soul and in favor of the persistence of the ‘specific’ soul, he appears to put the issue in more ‘Aristotelian terms’: the soul is immanent to or remains within the body, so in so far as the soul is a form, there cannot be, one might assume, an intellectual activity independently of the body.45

As already said, the πάθη constitute excellent examples of psychological items for Aristotle, and as long as they are ‘emmattered structures’ (*ἔνυλοι λόγοι; de An.* 403a25), they are particularly helpful in highlighting the ‘co-dependence view’.46

(2011, pp. 70–74), who shows both the crucial place the heart has as the basic principle of life and its role regarding cognitive functions and action. For the relevance of the heart in Aristotle’s physiology see also the sophisticated account provided by Corcilius and Gregoric (2013, pp. 58–60). In *de An.* 422b34-423a1 Aristotle is probably thinking of the heart as the sense-organ for touch as internal (τὸ αἰσθητήριον ἔντος; as suggested by Rodier (1900, p. 325), flesh would be just the means. The heart also is the seat of emotions such as anger and fear; *de An.* 403a31, 408b8, 432b31). In fact, the heart constitutes the principle of movement and dominant sensation, or as Aristotle says in *Juv.* 467b28, it is the common sense organ for the specific organs of sense, in respect of which the ‘actual sensations’ must meet (cf. *Juv.* 469a20–23; *PA* 656a27–657a12).

44 In order to prove that what decays is the sense-organ, not the psychological power, Aristotle provides his well-known example of the eye: if an old man could get hold of an eye which works as an eye (i.e. as an eye that is able to see), he would see just like a young person. Thus old age consists in something that has happened not to the soul (οὐ τῷ τῷ τῷ ψυγήν ἠπενθευμεν) but to that in which the soul is (ἀλλ’ ἐν ὃ), that is, to the body (*de An.* 408b20–23). Aristotle was aware of this problem, an issue that produced a major tension in his psychological theory (for a thoughtful discussion of this point see Zucca (2015, pp. 270–272)).

45 A similar argument is developed by Aristotle in *GA* 731b31–732a3 (he is drawing on Plato’s *Symposium* 208a-b). For the difference between ‘numerical and specific’ identity see Arist. *Metaph.* 1018a5–9. In his massive commentary on Aristotle’s *de An.* Movia takes this passage to be a ‘digression on the eternity of the species as the end of the living beings’ (Movia (1991, pp. 298–299)). In my view, the passage suggests more than that, since it can be read as the only place where Aristotle argues against the persistence (and thereby the ‘immortality’) of the individual soul.

The dialectical definition of anger (ὀργή) clearly states that a πάθος is a sort of ‘desire’\(^{47}\); this explains why anger (like any other affection) is an ‘enmattered λόγος’: it is a λόγος because, as far as it is a desire (and hence a psychological item), it is ‘soul’ (i.e. a form or structure; de An. 412a19–20).\(^{48}\) Besides, anger is ‘enmattered’ because a desire exists in an individual: each person or animal is the composite that gets angry. The dialectical definition of anger points to the character of λόγος, which is a property of any affective state, and the ‘physical’ definition (‘boiling of the blood or heat around the heart’) points to the characteristic feature of ἔνυλος, which is also present in any emotional state, insofar as any emotion is located in a composite and has a corporeal manifestation: the one who is ashamed blushes, and the one who fears death turns pale.\(^{49}\) Both of them, Aristotle claims, appear to be ‘in a certain sense’ bodily (σωματικά δὴ φαίνεται πῶς), which seems to be a property of affection rather than of a state or condition (πάθους μὴλλον ἢ ἔξεως εἶναι. EN 1128b14–15). When he asserts that a person who ‘reddens’ blushes because of shame (διὰ τὸ αἰσχυνθῆναι) is not called ‘red’, nor is a person who becomes pale because of fear (διὰ τὸ φοβεῖσθαι) called ‘pallid’, and that this person is said to have been experiencing a certain kind of affection (πεπονθέναι τι, Cat. 9b30–33), he seems to be attributing a certain causal role to the πάθος, although actually such causal role belongs to the belief and the representation.\(^{50}\) That is, the shame or fear the subject is experiencing makes the body turn red and pale; after all, it is not the soul that is angry, pained, pleased, confident or afraid, but the composite, the person who experiences these things ‘because of’ his soul (de An. 408b14–15: τὸν ἄνθρωπον τῇ ψυχῇ).\(^{51}\)

\(^{47}\) It is the ‘desire (ὄρεξις) for returning pain for pain’ (de An. 403a30–31). The kind of desire Aristotle is thinking of is θυμός; see Rh. 1378a30–32, where anger is ‘desire accompanied by pain for a conspicuous retaliation (τιμωρία φαινομένη) due to a conspicuous belittling (ὀλιγορία)’. Aristotle takes ὀργή and ἐπιθυμία to be ‘irrational desires’ (1369a4–7; at line 7, ὀργή is replaced by θυμός).

\(^{48}\) Polansky (2007, p. 56) explains the sense in which Aristotle takes emotions to be λόγοι by suggesting that they ‘can be reasonable and connected with speech —hence they enter so prominently into ethics, rhetoric, poetics, and perhaps even philosophy generally …’. This is a nice manner to tackle the issue, but this does not follow straightforwardly from Aristotle’s characterization of emotions as ἔνυλοι λόγοι here, where the focus is put on the fact that emotions are ‘formal structures’.

\(^{49}\) See de An. 403a16–18 (for a detailed examination of emotions as ἔνυλοι λόγοι see Chap. 9, Sect. 9.2 in this volume). Interestingly, Themistius provides a conflated version of both definitions of anger: ‘boiling of the blood around the heart because of a desire (δι’ ὀργέων) for retaliation’ (In libros Aristotelis de Anima paraphrasis 7.27). That is, the cause of anger (and hence of its bodily manifestation) is desire; as is clear, Themistius is highlighting the active character of the soul.

\(^{50}\) One’s belief plays a causal role (see the case of anger in Rh. 1382b29–31). According to Aristotle, when the individual’s belief changes, the emotion disappears.

\(^{51}\) Aristotle reminds us that when being angry (τὸ ὀργησθαι) is defined from the physical point of view, it is said that it is ‘a certain change of a body of such and such a kind’ (κίνησις τις τοῦ τοιοῦτος σώματος). Anger must involve a change of a person’s body which experiences the emotion; besides, that change does not take place in just any kind of body, but in a body that is able to experience a psychological state such as anger (‘of such and such a kind’; on this detail see Johansen (1997, pp. 16–17)).
This well-known characterization of πάθος provided in de An. intends to emphasize that the psychological states cannot be separated from the body in which they are realized (see 403a15–19). The example of emotional states also constitutes a case of forms (in fact, they are λόγοι) that exist ‘materialized’, this pointing out that there is no anger, pleasure, or fear independently of a material substratum where they can be realized and so, one might contend, the psychological and the physical ingredients in any emotion are so interwoven that they constitute a sort of ‘inextricably psychophysical processes’.

8.6 Some Physicalist Objections to Aristotle

At first sight, it seems that Aristotle is aware of the problems his ‘soul-body dualism’ involves: (i) the soul is not a body, but it is in the body; (ii) if the soul is not a body, how can it be possible that the soul is in the body? Aristotle contends that the soul is what holds the body together (ἡ ψυχὴ τὸ σῶμα συνέχειν); the soul is a form, so it has the capacity to organize and determine in a distinctive way the matter. Otherwise, there would be no living being. (iii) But how can it be possible that when the soul ‘departs’, the body disintegrates and putrefies? (de An. 411b8–9). (iii.i) Furthermore, one might object that unless Aristotle is speaking in a metaphorical way, these kinds of spatial categories cannot be applied to the soul, since the soul is not a body. That is, how is it possible that the soul ‘departs’ the body if the soul is not a body? If x departs y, it is because x was in y. (iv) The materialist could also argue that an Aristotelian soul cannot be contained by the body (i.e. the soul cannot be in the body) because the ‘containing-contained couple’ is only possible between

---

32 In a similar (not identical) vein, Aristotle argues that the bronze circle has its matter in its λόγος (‘formal structure’); there are some forms that exist materialized only in some specific composites, such as snubness with respect to nose, since ‘snub’ is a predicate that can be applied only to a nose (Metaph. 1033a1–5). See also 1014b36–1015a7, 1030b16–20, 1037a29–33.

33 As argued by Charles (2008, pp. 17–18), showing this way that Aristotle’s psychological model cannot be understood as a kind of dualism.

34 As remarked above, it is a ‘dualism’ denied by those who state (like Morel (2007) and Charles (2008)) that the living being is a psychophysical unity, and that any form of dualism when applied to Aristotle is based on a Cartesian assumption that Aristotle would not share (see especially Charles). When I refer to Aristotle’s psychology in terms of ‘dualism’ I certainly take for granted that he considered the living being to be a psychophysical unity. But in so far as he took the soul and the body to be two disparate kinds of things, he endorses a certain form of dualism (on this point see Chap. 1). In addition, I endorse the view that form and matter are ‘incomplete’ entities which are able to be completed by each other in their union in the composite (see Lowe (2012, p. 230)).

35 See also PA 641a17–19. Certainly, Aristotle both asserts that the soul ‘departs’ the body and that the νοῦς (the rational soul) ‘enters’ into the body ‘from outside’ (GA 736b27–29). Of course, this is a very intricate topic I cannot discuss here. For discussion see Bos (2003, pp. 159–161) and Berti (2008, pp. 296–311) (where the reception of Aristotle’s theory of νοῦς ‘coming from outside’ is dealt with).
bodies, but Aristotle holds that the soul is a form, so it cannot be a body. Indeed, he has no doubt that the soul (a form) is *in* the body. Aristotle and the Peripatetics would reply that the soul is not in the body in the same sense as a body is in another body, but like a form is in matter.\(^56\) But Aristotle has no problem in acknowledging that, even though the substance of the soul is not a body, it is nonetheless ‘obvious’ that ‘the principle of nutritive soul’ does exist *in* ‘a certain part of the body’ (ἔν τινι τοῦ σώματος ὑπάρχει μορίῳ φαινόν), ‘one of those possessing control over the members’ (Juv. 467b14–16).\(^57\)

Finally, one should grant that, to some extent, Aristotle accounts for the manner in which what is ‘common to soul and body’ *occurs*; at the beginning of the *De sensu* (436b1–8) he argues that (i) all the things mentioned as being ‘common to body and soul’ occur either accompanied by sensation,\(^58\) or through sensation. (ii) Some are either affections or states of sensation, others are its safeguard or its preservation, while others are its destruction and privation. Memory is a safeguard and a preservation (φυλακαὶ καὶ σωτηρίαι) of sensation since it is a sort of retention of something which was perceived. By contrast, forgetting must be a destruction or privation (of that of which one has had memory, for example). (iii) But the most important point is, as observed above, that perception occurs ‘because of the soul *through* the body’ (*Sens*. 436b6–7). If this is so, then without a doubt Aristotle holds that body and soul are co-dependent: without a bodily experience, there is no sensation. But without the soul, working as a ‘control center’, the bodily affections could not be organized. Thus Aristotle, in a clear Platonic vein, continues to believe that what rules is the soul, not the body. It is the soul that makes the body alive, but without a body there is no soul, because ‘soul’ is taken to be a set of ‘psychological functions’, functions that are only possible when the soul is embedded in a body. Hence it is not at all odd that Aristotle, drawing on Plato once again,\(^59\) maintains that there are some things that are common to body and soul.

\(^{56}\) Alexander of Aphrodisias was sensitive to the physicalist objection; he explains that, even though the soul *is* in the animal’s body (Alexander, *De anima* 13, 10: σὰρτήμα ἐν τῷ σῶμα τοῦ ζώου), the soul can only be in the body in the way that a form is in matter (the ways in which a thing is said to be in another are listed by Aristotle in *Ph*. 210a14–24; he refers to the case of the form in the matter in the lines 20–21, but unfortunately he does not provide a detailed account of this point).

\(^{57}\) When analyzing vision Aristotle gives an intriguing account regarding the *place where the soul is* (cf. *Sens*. 438b6–10): if outward vision is impossible without light, the same thing must happen in the case of inward vision. So there must be a transparent medium with the eye. And he adds that it is clear that the perceptive part of the soul is not at the external part of the eye, but it is ‘within’. If the soul is an immaterial entity, it cannot be located in any place of the body unless Aristotle means that the soul is ‘within’ in the sense of an inner perceptive capacity the animal is endowed with.

\(^{58}\) Waking is a psychological activity that occurs ‘accompanied by sensation’ because it is the restoration of the senses to their activity (Aristotle (1995, p. 184)).

\(^{59}\) See Pl. *Phlb.* 33d (discussed in Sect. 3 above). Taking into consideration what I have discussed above, it can be held that the Aristotelian treatment of sensation (as an affection common to soul and body) stems from the *Philebus*, where Plato presents a ‘moderate dualism’ (in comparison to what he argues in the *Phaedo*) and admits a close connection between body and soul.
Maybe, like some contemporary philosophers, both Plato and Aristotle, while posing a certain interactionist view, may have considered the ‘homogeneity thesis’ to be a too strong constraint to place on causation. But the fact that Aristotle abandons the interactionist stance shows that he could have been sensitive to the physicalist objection based on or derived from the homogeneity thesis.

8.7 Summary and Concluding Remarks

At the outset of this paper I have suggested that the commonality between soul and body is the fact that both of them are capacities. To some extent, this explains why when the soul acts upon the body, the body is able to receive the soul’s action, and vice versa (at least in the ‘interactionist view’, considered both by Plato and Aristotle). After all, capacities can be regarded to be relational properties of objects; Plato seems to agree with this view when he states the relational feature of what is active and passive (Th. 157a5–6). Indeed, if both the soul and the body are able to act and to be acted upon, both of them turn out to be very plastic notions that should not necessarily be understood as entirely foreign to each other. In Aristotle this is quite obvious; but, as it can be seen in the Th. passage just quoted, it is not less clear in Plato.

Now this commonality between soul and body does not explain how an immaterial entity sets the body in motion, or how a material entity is able to carry out a certain action on the soul. To be sure, Aristotle declares the soul to be ‘the cause and principle’ of the living being (de An. 415b13–14); given that ‘cause’ and ‘principle’ are said in many ways, he is compelled to clarify that the soul is cause (i) as a source of motion, (ii) as ‘that for the sake of which’, and (iii) as a substance (where ‘substance’—οὐσία—must mean ‘form’) of living bodies. The way in which the soul is

60 The view that an event e involving a substance A can enter into causal relations with another event e1 involving a substance B only if A and B are substances of the same kind; see Wong (2007, p. 172).

61 For the senses in which such commonality can be taken (strongly or weakly) as a possible strategy to understand what is common to soul and body, see Shields (2016, pp. 95–98).


63 Shields points out that Aristotle does not assert here ‘that the soul is the form of the living body, but says rather that it is its substance’ (2016, p. 203), but he immediately recognizes that Aristotle regularly identifies form as the substance of that whose being it provides. Of course, this is the case and is clear in many Aristotelian passages (including those cited by Shields). The interesting part of Shields’ commentary here is focused on the second premise of Aristotle’s argument (i.e. ‘living is being for living beings’), which can be regarded as a general assertion encompassing all the living beings. One can speak of the form ‘plant’, ‘dog’, or ‘man’, but these are ‘specific forms’, as it were, of specific living beings: ‘living’ or ‘being alive’ is the most general manner in which the fundamental form of a living being can be described. When commenting on these lines Berti interestingly suggests that life is an actuality in the second sense (i.e. not as the first actuality, which is potentiality; de An. 412a27), that is, ‘as the exercise of the constitutive capacity of the soul, that is to say, as activity’ (Berti, 2005, pp. 134–135).
cause as substance is clear: οὐσία understood as a form is the cause of being for all things (both artificial and natural); living is ‘being’ for living beings (i.e. what essentially characterizes a living being is ‘being alive’). It is also not difficult to understand how the soul is cause as ‘that for the sake of which’, the main argument being that all the natural bodies are instruments of the soul and so they are for the sake of it (emphasizing again the priority of the soul as the moving principle of body). Finally, the soul as an efficient cause means that it is the cause of quantitative and qualitative movements, but also of motion ‘in respect of place’ (κατὰ τόπον κίνησις; de An. 415b21–22). Further on (de An. 433a10–13, 31-b1) we learn that what sets the animal in motion is either the desire or the (practical) intellect (or rather ‘what is object of desire’ — ὁρεκτόν —, as Aristotle apparently corrects himself; 433a20). Given that both imagination and thought do not move without desire, they seem to depend on desire. But what is desirable is just the necessary condition of motion: without imagination and thought that ‘intend’ what is object of desire as being desirable, there is no motion. 64

Sometimes we tend to think of efficient Aristotelian causes as bodily items and often this is the case (see Ph. 194b30–31 and Metaph. 1013a31 where the examples of the father — the ‘producer’ — and the child — ‘what is produced’— are furnished). But Aristotle also thinks of decision as a good example of moving cause (ὁ βουλεύσας αἴτιος; Ph. 194b30, 195a22; Metaph. 1013a30–31). Thus, it is not at all odd that Aristotle takes desire and thought (immaterial items) to be efficient causes of motion. Moreover, he regards a capacity (δύναμις) as being a source of movement, which is (i) in another thing or (ii) in the same thing quæ other. An example of (i) is the art of building (insofar as art is a certain kind of knowledge, it is a psychological item), a capacity that is not present in the thing built. A capacity in the sense (ii) is the art of healing (Metaph. 1019a15–18). The important point here is that capacities (immaterial things) are efficient causes, and that both kinds of capacities produce a change in another thing, this thing being a body. What Aristotle is arguing is that incorporeal entities (the art of building, the art of healing) are able to produce a change in a piece of matter (stones and bricks, a person, etc.) and that those pieces of matter are able to be acted upon by those entities.

But we learn from the first three chapters of Physics VII that Aristotle is concerned with showing that the physical movement entails the ‘move-being moved relation’, and in such relation the mover must be in touch with what is moved; that is, there is no physical movement without physical contact: what physically moves is at once moved physically (see Ph. 202a5–7, 243a32–33: ἄμα τῶ κινομένῳ

64 At the beginning of de An. III 10 Aristotle appears to be thinking mainly of human beings; but later in the chapter he states that ‘when imagination moves, it does not move without desire’ (433a20). Human beings have both imagination and thought (and thought presupposes imagination); irrational animals only have imagination, so this can be the manner in which Aristotle parallels the way in which humans ‘intend’ what is desirable with the way in which irrational animals do the same thing (i.e. exclusively through perception and imagination).
ἐστι). Now if one considers these passages, one might wonder in what sense the art of building, which is an efficient cause and an immaterial thing, is ‘in touch’ with what is moved by it (i.e. stones, bricks). The two versions of the ‘treatise of the cause’ (those contained in the Physics and in the Metaphysics) assert that the producer can be both a corporeal and an incorporeal entity, so the causal relation can take place even though the mover and what is moved are not of the same nature and thereby not in physical contact. Aristotle did not think that between what is immaterial and material there is an incommensurable gap, which turns impossible causal action of immaterial things upon the bodies. This will be the task of post-Aristotelian philosophers.

Bibliography

Ancient Texts


65 Of course, Aristotle thinks that the soul is not moved, unless accidentally. On the meaning of ἅμα in this line see Manuwald (1971, pp. 103, 108–109) and Wardy (1990, pp. 121–123).

66 Maybe Aristotle might reply to this objection by arguing that the formal, final, and moving causes often coincide (Ph. 198a24–26; Metaph. 1070b 30–35). But a formal cause does not ‘move’, and ‘the primary source of motion is the same in species’ as the formal and the final cause (τὸ ἐδει τακτὸ τούτοις).

67 Different versions of this paper were presented at Nagoya University, Japan (May 2015), at the colloquium ‘Soul and Mind in Ancient Thought’ (Alberto Hurtado University, Chile, October 2015), at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (January 2016), and at the Argentine Catholic University (Buenos Aires, June 2017). I am grateful to all these audiences for helpful criticism and remarks, and especially to Yasuhira Y. Kanayama and their colleagues in Nagoya for a challenging and stimulating discussion, and to Ivana Costa and her students in Buenos Aires for their questions. Special thanks are also due to Gabriela Rossi who was kind enough to read the second draft of this chapter. Her remarks were important to improve the general presentation of this paper. The research for this work was supported by Fondecyt Project 1150067 (Chile).


**Modern Texts**


8 Plato and Aristotle On What Is Common to Soul and Body. Some Remarks…


