

SOUL AS SUBJECT IN ARISTOTLE'S *DE ANIMA*

I

In the largely historical and aporetic first book of the *De Anima* (*DA*), Aristotle makes what appear to be some rather disturbing remarks about the soul's status as a subject of mental states. Most notably, in a curious passage which has aroused the interest of commentators, he seems to suggest that there is something wrong with regarding the soul as a subject of mental states:

Thus, saying that the soul is angry is the same as if one were to say that the soul builds houses and weaves: for it is perhaps better to say not that the soul pities or learns or thinks, but that the man does [these things] with his soul. (*DA* 408b11–15)

The import of this 'celebrated Rylean passage', as Barnes has called it,¹ would seem to be that the soul is not the subject of such states as pity or even thought; the proper subject of these states is rather the compound of form and matter, that is to say the human being.²

Perhaps we should expect this sort of remark from Aristotle. When advancing his own positive account in *DA* II 1, he differentiates the soul from the body on the grounds that the soul is not a *ὑποκείμενον* (subject or substrate), while the body is (*DA* 412a16–19). Here again Aristotle seems to suggest that the soul is not a subject, but that the body is. But already we have our first indication of a serious difficulty: if we accept the import of *DA* 408b11–15 to be what is made explicit at *DA* 412a16–19, namely, that the soul is not a *ὑποκείμενον*, we find Aristotle twice affirming the third proposition in an inconsistent triad whose first two members he also accepts:

- (1) If *x* is an *οὐσία* (substance), then *x* is a *ὑποκείμενον* (*Met.* 1029a1–2).
- (2) The soul is an *οὐσία* (*DA* 412a19–20, *Met.* 1037a5).
- (3) The soul is not a *ὑποκείμενον* (*DA* 412a18–19, and indirectly *DA* 408b11–15).

There are other difficulties as well. Significantly, Aristotle almost never heeds his own counsel; he quite regularly treats the soul as the subject of mental states, and unselfconsciously refers to it as such. For example, *DA* III 4 begins with the introductory remark: 'Concerning the part of the soul by which the soul knows and understands...' (*DA* 429a10–11).³ Furthermore, it would be peculiar of Aristotle to insist that the proper subject of every mental state, including notably thinking (*τὸ*

¹ See Jonathan Barnes, 'Aristotle's Concept of Mind', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, lxxii (1971–2), 101–10; reprinted in *Articles on Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes et al. (London, 1975–9), iv.32–41. All references are to the latter pagination.

² R. D. Hicks, *Aristotle: De Anima* (Cambridge, 1908), p. 275, offers the received understanding of Aristotle's concern: 'We are dealing with certain *ἔργα καὶ πράξεις*, or *πάθη καὶ ἔργα*. We have to determine what is the *ὑποκείμενον* or logical subject to which they should be attributed.' For similar interpretations, see Richard Sorabji, 'Soul and Body in Aristotle', *Philosophy* 49 (1974), 55–79 (see esp. p. 73), reprinted in *Articles on Aristotle*, iv.42–64; D. K. W. Modrak, *Aristotle: The Power of Perception* (Chicago, 1987), pp. 115, 153; and Joseph Owens, 'Aristotelian Ethics, Medicine, and the Changing Nature of Man', *The Concept Papers of Joseph Owens*, ed., J. R. Catan (Albany, 1981), p. 174, and 'Aristotle's Definition of Soul', *ibid.*, p. 211 n. 34.

³ Many other passages violate Aristotle's stricture. See, e.g., 418a14, 427a20.

νοεῖν), is the compound rather than the soul itself, given his insistence in *DA* III 4 that the mind (νοῦς) is unaffected (ἀπαθής) and unmixed (ἀμυγής) with the body.

II

I shall argue that we need not regard Aristotle as inconsistent as a consequence of his seeming reservations about the suitability of souls as ὑποκείμενα; nor need we accept the suggestion of those commentators who agree with Hamlyn in holding that *DA* 408b11–15 provides evidence that ‘the concept of a person or subject is generally missing from Aristotle’s discussion of the problems in the philosophy of mind.’⁴ But it will not be possible to avail ourselves of the solutions of those commentators who seek to deny either of the first two propositions in our *prima facie* inconsistent triad; and by focusing on the third proposition we can come to appreciate just how concerned Aristotle is with the questions which motivate our investigations into the nature of persons and personal identity, including especially the nature of the diachronic identity of persons.

Unless we are to regard him as inconsistent, we must suppose: (a) Aristotle does not really maintain some one of propositions (1)–(3), or at any rate does not maintain them at the same stage of his development; or (b) he does maintain (1)–(3), but οὐσία is not used in the same sense in (1) and (2); or (c) he does maintain (1)–(3), but ὑποκείμενον is not used in the same sense in (1) and (3).

I begin by providing the *prima facie* evidence that Aristotle is committed to (1), (2) and (3). I consider this evidence to establish not only that there is reason to believe that he accepts (1)–(3), but also that there is reason to suppose that one of the key terms in this triad, οὐσία, is univocal between (1) and (2), and so to rule out solution (b) (which, no doubt, many will regard as the most attractive solution).

(1) In the *Categories* (*Cat.*) *x* is a ὑποκείμενον just in case there exists a *y* such that *y* can be (or perhaps is) predicated of *x*; and *x* is a basic or primary ὑποκείμενον just in case there exists a *y* such that *y* can be (or perhaps is) predicated of *x* and it is not the case there is a *z* such that *x* can be predicated of *z* (*Cat.* 2a11–14, 2a34–5, 2b15–22, 2b36–3a6). What differentiates primary ὑποκείμενα from secondary or non-primary ὑποκείμενα is that the former, but not the latter, cannot be predicated of anything. Aristotle does not explicitly distinguish these kinds of ὑποκείμενον in the *Cat.*, but the distribution is implicit in his claims that secondary substances (like man and horse) are substances because, next to primary substances (individuals like this man and this horse), they are the best candidates for ὑποκείμενα (see esp. 2b36–3a6). Using this terminology, we may say that in the *Metaphysics* Aristotle explicates the notion of a ὑποκείμενον in much the same way as he explicates what I am calling ‘primary’ ὑποκείμενον in the *Cat.* In *Met.* VII 3, for example, he says that a ὑποκείμενον is that ‘of which other things are said, but is itself no longer [said of] anything’ (1028b36–7). And, importantly, in the *Metaphysics* he claims that a ὑποκείμενον is perhaps the best candidate for substance (1029a1–2), and also that ‘that is called a substance which is not [said] of a ὑποκείμενον’ (1038b15). These sorts of claims support our attributing (1) to Aristotle. He maintains that if *x* is a substance, then *x* is a ὑποκείμενον.⁵

(2), (3) The soul is a substance, but not a ὑποκείμενον. I deal with these two issues jointly since they come together in the problematical passage from *DA* II 1 cited

⁴ D. W. Hamlyn, *Aristotle’s De Anima Books II and III* (Oxford, 1968), p. 81.

⁵ See Gail Fine, ‘Plato and Aristotle on Form and Substance’, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 209 (1983), 23–47.

above, and since some would argue that this passage shows that Aristotle accepts (3), but rejects (2). In *DA* II 1, Aristotle wants to differentiate the soul from the body in the following way:

Since it [i.e. the ensouled body] is a body of such a sort, for it has life, the soul would not, then, be [the] body is not among the things [said] of a *ὑποκείμενον*, but is rather as a *ὑποκείμενον* and matter. (412a16–19)

Ross comments: ‘In l. 17 he infers that the soul is not a body, and the reason he gives (ll. 17–19) is that body is not an attribute, but a subject. The missing but easily supplied part of the proof is “whereas soul (or besouledness) is, as we have seen, not a substance, but an attribute”’.⁶ But Ross’s reconstruction reads more into the argument than is in Aristotle’s text.

The argument of the passage is not that since the body is a substance, while the soul is not, the soul cannot be identical with the body. It is, more precisely, that the body is not said of a *ὑποκείμενον*, whereas (and this I take to be the implicit premise) the soul is said of a *ὑποκείμενον*. Ross has the strategy of the argument right (it is a simple appeal to Leibniz’s law); but he supplies premises other than those which Aristotle intends.

But one might object that my complaint against Ross is myopic. After all, we have just seen that being a *ὑποκείμενον* is a necessary condition of being a substance and that being a *ὑποκείμενον* is here denied of the soul. Hence Aristotle’s argument at any rate entails that the body may be a substance while the soul cannot be. The soul is an attribute belonging to some substance, which is, of course, a *ὑποκείμενον*, but it is not itself a substance. Therefore, someone might conclude in the spirit of Ross’s reconstruction of the argument, Aristotle does not accept the inconsistent triad (1)–(3) above, since though he believes (1) and (3), he rejects (2).

Although this interpretation would save Aristotle from an inconsistency, it would involve another sort of mistake. The soul is, according to Aristotle, a substance. Throughout the *Metaphysics* form is Aristotle’s leading candidate for substance. Since the soul is, after all, a form (and, I maintain, a particular form), it must satisfy Aristotle’s standard criteria for substance (being a *τόδε τι*, *ὑποκείμενον*, and *χωριστόν*).⁷ For these reasons, I think there is a strong presumption in favour of our interpreting Aristotle as determining that the soul belongs in the category of substance. Thus, when at *DA* 412a18 he affirms (3), that the soul is not a *ὑποκείμενον*, I do not think that we can conclude that he *ipso facto* denies (2), that the soul is a substance. There is simply too much countervailing evidence throughout the *DA* and *Met.*⁸ to justify our concluding this straightaway.

One remaining possibility short of attributing an inconsistency to Aristotle is (c), that *ὑποκείμενον* is not used in the same sense in (1) and (3), and this is the approach I would urge. In several passages he demarcates two senses of *ὑποκείμενον* corresponding to two irreducibly distinct types of *ὑποκείμενα*.⁹ When these two types are distinguished, (1)–(3) no longer form an inconsistent triad.

Translators sometimes render *ὑποκείμενον* as ‘substrate’ and sometimes as ‘subject’ in order to capture two distinct features of Aristotle’s notion. The former is what underlies form, or actuality, and so what persists not only through alteration, but also through substantial generation: namely matter. The latter is what underlies

⁶ W. D. Ross, *Aristotle’s De Anima* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 212–13.

⁷ For an excellent discussion of Aristotle’s criteria for *οὐσία*, see Fine, art. cit. 26–30.

⁸ Of course, the evidence that the soul is a substance is not limited to the *DA* and *Met.*; but most of it will be found in those works.

⁹ See W. D. Ross, *Aristotle: Metaphysics* (Oxford, 1924), ii.213.

properties (πάθη), both essential and accidental, but cannot persist through substantial generation: namely compound or form. The compound or form is the proper subject of various forms of alterations, but cannot itself persist through substantial generation. The first sense, call it *ὑποκείμενον*₁, underlies form; the second, call it *ὑποκείμενον*₂, underlies properties and persists as the proper and non-derivative subject of change.

The most important textual basis for attributing any such distinction to Aristotle is *Met.* VII 13, which begins:

Since the inquiry is about substances, let us take up [this topic] again. Just as the *ὑποκείμενον* and essence (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι) and what comes from them [i.e. the compound] are said to be substance, so is the universal. We have spoken about two of these (for we have spoken about essence and *ὑποκείμενον*, and [said about the latter] that [something] underlies (ὑπόκειται) in two ways: either being some this (τόδε τι), just as an animal [underlies] properties, or as matter [underlies] the actuality). (1038b1–6)

Aristotle believes that something can be a *ὑποκείμενον* in two different ways. But are they the same ways as I have delineated?

It might seem not, since his examples suggest a distinction different from the one I have drawn. He claims that a *ὑποκείμενον* can be the matter which underlies a form; this seems to be my *ὑποκείμενον*₁. But his second example is not a form, but a compound of form and matter,¹⁰ whereas I have suggested that a form itself can be a *ὑποκείμενον*. Hence, one might conclude, Aristotle's distinction is not the one I have suggested.

This conclusion would be mistaken. It is true that he mentions the compound rather than the form as his second illustration. But notice what the compound is an illustration of: he offers the compound as an instance of something which is a *τόδε τι*. But a form can also be a *τόδε τι*. There is no reason to suppose that Aristotle means to restrict his second type of *ὑποκείμενον* to compounds; on the contrary, he gives as the type *τόδε τι*, and as one example of a *τόδε τι*, a compound of form and matter. He believes that form, like the compound, is (in some cases) *τόδε τι*. Therefore, some forms count as his second type of *ὑποκείμενον*, as that which underlies properties.¹¹

One might notice in the passage quoted from VII 13 that Aristotle, somewhat surprisingly, claims that the distinction he makes is one that he has made in the past. In no earlier passage, so far as I am aware, does Aristotle draw the distinction in the clear and explicit way he draws it in VII 13. He must, I think, have in mind a passage at the beginning of VII 3. There he lists his four main candidates for substance (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, τὸ καθόλου, τὸ γένος, and τὸ ὑποκείμενον). He defines it in a way reminiscent of what I have called the *Cat.* 'primary' *ὑποκείμενον*, as that of which others things are said, but which is no longer said of anything (1028b36–7). A *ὑποκείμενον* might be, Aristotle says, either matter, form, or the compound of form and matter (*Met.* 1029a2–3). Matter is not a surprising member of this list; it looks like a very good candidate for being a *ὑποκείμενον*₁, as what underlies form. The

¹⁰ Or so most commentators suppose. See e.g. Ross, *Metaphysics*, ii.164, 209. If ζῶον is the form, then this passage presents no problem for my view. I argue on the supposition that ζῶον = compound in order to show that even then there would be no problem for my view that forms are *ὑποκείμενα*.

¹¹ This is strongly confirmed by Aristotle's summary in *Met.* VIII 1: 'There is substance as *ὑποκείμενον*, in one way as matter (by matter I mean that which, while not a *τόδε τι* in actuality, is a *τόδε τι* in potentiality), and in another as λόγος or shape, which being a *τόδε τι* is separate' (1042a26–9). Here Aristotle clearly notes that there are two distinct types of *ὑποκείμενα* and marks the difference in terms of their being (or failing to be) *τόδε τι* in actuality. Because the form is a *τόδε τι* in actuality, it is a *ὑποκείμενον*₂.

compound is a slightly less obvious candidate, but perhaps Aristotle's point is that the compound of form and matter, for example this man, underlies various attributes. But form is surprising here, particularly since the explication in VII 3 of what *ὑποκείμενον* means sounds very much like *ὑποκείμενον*₁ above, and it is not clear how form can be supposed to play this role. (Form was considered so surprising by Bonitz here that he regarded it as an interpolation or as a slip of Aristotle's pen.)¹² Form, as commonly understood, is an attribute of matter or the compound, rather than itself a recipient of attributes. But there is no surprise here at all if it is recognized that Aristotle has in mind another sense of *ὑποκείμενον*, as that which persists as the proper subject of non-substantial changes, and indeed that upon which matter is parasitic for its identity. Form is that in virtue of which, Aristotle thinks, we are justified in identifying and re-identifying particulars.

Aristotle believes that forms, including souls, are predicated of matter; this does not entail that souls, or other substances, are not themselves *ὑποκείμενα*₂. Like other substances, forms are non-derivative bearers of essential and accidental properties.¹³ Consequently, souls are not at all peculiar among substances in not being *ὑποκείμενα*₁; unequivocal substances like compounds are not *ὑποκείμενα*₁ either.

*ὑποκείμενα*₁ and *ὑποκείμενα*₂ are differentiated both by the range of predicates they can receive (the former but not the latter can have substances predicated of them [*Met.* 1029a21–5]) and by the manner in which they are *ὑποκείμενα* (the latter but not the former are properly *τὸδε τι* and so properly non-derivative subjects of non-substantial change). Given these different types of *ὑποκείμενα*, we can adopt solution (c), and read (1)–(3) as: (1) if *x* is an *οὐσία*, *x* is a *ὑποκείμενον*₂; (2) the soul is an *οὐσία*; (3) the soul is not a *ὑποκείμενον*₁.¹⁴

If I am right about forms counting as *ὑποκείμενα*₂, then we see first that Aristotle need not be considered inconsistent as a consequence of the triad above.¹⁵ Perhaps

¹² Hermann Bonitz, *Aristotelische Studien* (Hildesheim, 1969), p. 301.

¹³ Here I disagree with Ross, *Metaphysics* ii.164, 208. He paraphrases the beginning of *Met.* VII 3 as: 'We showed [substratum] to underlie in two ways, as the thing underlies accidents and as the matter underlies the actuality.' I do not see that the *πάθη* of 1038b6 must all be accidental.

¹⁴ Cf. Jacques Brunschwig, 'La Forme, Prédicat de la matière?', *Études sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote*, ed. Pierre Aubenque (Paris, 1979), pp. 131–58. When confronted with a problem similar to the inconsistent triad I have constructed, Brunschwig argues that Aristotle has not two types of *ὑποκείμενα* in mind, but rather two types of predication. He suggests that form is not predicated of matter in the way the properties are predicated of substances, and so that in the former case Aristotle uses 'predication' in an extended sense. But 1029a23ff. requires one sense of 'predication' for both types of *ὑποκείμενα*.

¹⁵ Others have recognized that forms count as *ὑποκείμενα* for Aristotle. M. Frede, for example, has suggested that it is 'most puzzling... that there is a way in which substantial forms might be construed as the ultimate subjects and, hence, as the real things as opposed to mere properties of things' ('Substance in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*', in his *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* [Minneapolis, 1987], 75). He resolves this puzzle by claiming that form can be understood as 'ultimate subject' since 'the form [is] the centerpiece of the cluster of entities that constitute the concrete object' (p. 77). But Frede evidently does not believe that Aristotle recognizes two distinct types of *ὑποκείμενα*. Although he acknowledges that '1029a23–4 suggests that matter is the ultimate subject by being the subject of the substance in question which, in turn, is the subject of the non-substantial entities' (75), he concludes that form is the ultimate subject (p. 77) only to wonder how forms can be both ultimate subjects and universals, since 'it is of the very nature of ultimate subjects that they cannot be predicated and, hence, cannot be universal' (p. 77). He rightly concludes that this is a pseudo-problem, since Aristotelian substantial forms are particulars, and not universals; but he assimilates what I have called *ὑποκείμενα*₂ to *ὑποκείμενα*₁ in claiming that ultimate subjects cannot be predicated. *Met.* 1029a21–5 requires that substantial forms be predicated of matter; we have seen numerous other passages which require that they nevertheless be *ὑποκείμενα*. Frede's final analysis, then, is inconsistent with *Met.* 1029a21–5, in so far as it presupposes a univocal account of the *ὑποκείμενον*.

more importantly, we see also that souls can be the subjects of properties in the same way that compounds are subjects, namely as the bearers of non-relational or non-derivative properties.

III

Souls can be subjects, or *ὑποκείμενα*₂. Although they cannot, as forms, receive substantial predicates, souls evidently can be the proper subjects of mental states; at any rate, nothing Aristotle says in *DA* II 1 precludes their being such. This being so, *DA* 408b 1–15 becomes all the more puzzling. If its import is that souls cannot be subjects or *ὑποκείμενα*₂, then this will be an isolated remark for Aristotle, and not one which can be explicated in terms of his general analysis of soul and its relation to the body. At *DA* II 1 412a16–19, he reasonably denies that souls are substrates, or *ὑποκείμενα*₁, but this is perfectly compatible with their being subjects, or *ὑποκείμενα*₂. This does not seem to be the case at *DA* 408b11–15: in this earlier passage, Aristotle claims not that the soul cannot receive substantial predicates, but that it is wrong to say that the soul pities, or learns, or thinks.

This leaves us with a clear problem: the soul, as form and so *τόδε τι*, is a perfectly suitable *ὑποκείμενον*₂, but its suitability as a *ὑποκείμενον*₂ is precisely what Aristotle would seem to deny at *DA* 408b11–15. He gives only a glimmering of an argument by suggesting that 'saying that the soul is angry is the same as if one were to say that the soul builds houses and weaves' (*DA* 408b11–13). Hicks interprets him as arguing:

If it is absurd to predicate weaving and building of the soul, it can only be partially true to say that the soul pities or learns or thinks. The logical subject must be the same in two cases, viz. the man, the *ἐμψυχον ζῶον* who pities, learns or thinks with, in, or by means of, his soul.¹⁶

The general argument would then be:

- (1) One can regard the soul as the *ὑποκείμενον* of mental states only if one can regard it as the *ὑποκείμενον* of other sorts of states including housebuilding and weaving.
- (2) It is absurd to regard it as the *ὑποκείμενον* of these latter states.
- (3) Therefore, it is absurd to regard the soul as the *ὑποκείμενον* of mental states.

If this captures his position, then Aristotle will be right to ignore his own suggestion; for the first premise seems highly dubious.

(1) asserts that a necessary condition of the soul's being a subject of mental states is that it can also be a subject of other sorts of states which manifestly – or analytically – involve the body. According to (1), there is no possible world in which there are subjects of mental states, like thinking, which are not also subjects of states which necessarily entail that their subject be a body, e.g. weighing 108 pounds.¹⁷ But this is false: there are such possible worlds, whether or not they are actual. Since a disembodied consciousness is logically or metaphysically possible, (1) is false.

¹⁶ Hicks, op. cit., p. 275.

¹⁷ All of the examples of predicates Aristotle provides in this passage are what Strawson calls P-predicates. While not necessarily ascribing states of consciousness, P-predicates 'imply the possession of consciousness on the part of that to which they are ascribed' (P. F. Strawson, *Individuals* [London, 1979], p. 105). M-predicates, e.g. weighing 108 pounds, by contrast, imply that their subject are bodies. There are, then, two classes of P-predicates: those which beyond entailing the possession of consciousness entail the possession of a body as well (P₂-predicates), and those which do not (P₁-predicates). Using this notation, a precise formulation of Hicks' first premise would be: an entity can have P₁-predicates only if it has P₂-predicates. For our purposes, however, it will be simpler to ignore this complication and to read Hicks' first premise as equivalent to the claim that nothing can have P-predicates if it does not also have M-predicates, and this will not compromise the criticism I offer of his interpretation.

Some have denied that the imagined world is indeed logically or metaphysically possible.¹⁸ But their arguments have not been compelling. More importantly, they will be of no use for Aristotle, who commits himself to the actual existence of a disembodied consciousness: in *Metaphysics* XII 9, he commits himself to the existence of an immaterial god who is the subject of intellective states. Hence, (1) is false and was recognized to be so by Aristotle.¹⁹ Consequently, the standard reconstruction of the argument from *DA* 408b11ff., as exemplified by Hicks, does not capture his position.²⁰

Of course, Aristotle does not expressly mention *ὑποκείμενον* at all in the environs of *DA* 408b11; consequently, even without considering the problems resulting from the traditional interpretation, some caution is warranted before determining that his primary concern is with the soul's suitability as a subject of mental states. To understand the passage, it is first of all crucial to appreciate its context. *DA* I 4 is in the main devoted to refuting two theories, the enticing view that the soul is a *ἀρμονία*, and the view Aristotle calls 'the most irrational of all' (*DA* 408b33), that the soul is a self-moving number.²¹ He bridges his discussions of these two theories with an interlude on the sense in which the soul can, and that in which it cannot, move (*DA* 408a29–b29), and it is within this passage that he offers his judgment regarding the proper recipient of various psychological predicates.

Aristotle concludes his discussion of the *ἀρμονία* theory by summing up some of the negative results attained thus far in *DA* I: the soul cannot be a *ἀρμονία*, nor can it be, as Plato had argued in the *Timaeus* (34b–35e), moved in a circle (*DA* 408a29–30). The reference to Plato's theory, which had been refuted in *DA* I 3, is not at all intrusive in the context of I 4.²² As Aristotle represents it, the account of soul

¹⁸ See, e.g., Michael Tye, 'On the Possibility of Disembodied Existence', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 61 (1983), 275–82.

¹⁹ It may be objected that there are salient disanalogies between souls, as characterized in the *De Anima*, and the god of *Met.* XII, and that consequently the evidence I have cited against Hicks' analysis is irrelevant. This objection is not compelling: (a) premise (1) of Hicks' argument remains false, whether or not it was recognized to be so; and (b) the evidence of *Met.* XII demonstrates that Aristotle indeed recognizes its falsity. It would be wrong, of course, to presume that souls have many characteristics in common with Aristotle's god (although cf. my 'Soul and Body in Aristotle', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* vi [1988]); but this presumption is not required for the present argument.

²⁰ Some commentators will also raise reasonable questions regarding the second premise. Why should it be absurd to regard weaving and housebuilding as actions performed by the soul? Some will argue that this sort of claim will obtain only if souls or Aristotelian forms generally are immaterial; in such a case, it might reasonably be suggested that souls *alone* cannot perform such feats. But the assumption that souls and other particular forms are immaterial in Aristotle has been widely doubted. Many commentators argue that particular forms in Aristotle are constituted by matter, especially when this is construed as proximate matter, and so are themselves material. See e.g. David Wiggins, *Sameness and Substance* (Cambridge, MA, 1980), and Michael J. Loux, 'Form, Species and Predication in *Metaphysics* Z, *H* and *Θ*', *Mind* (1979), 11 n. 2.

²¹ This theory was evidently advanced by Xenocrates; for evidence, see Rodier, ii.138–9. Zeller remarks, 'Again, it [the soul] is not a number that moves itself, for it is not a number, and if it were a number it certainly could not do so.' See Eduard Zeller, *Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics*, trans. B. C. F. Costelle and J. H. Muirhead (New York, 1962), ii.4.

²² Hicks supposes that 408a29–b29 is essentially a digression: 'At this point [408a29] comes a pause in the criticism and refutation. The two theories of harmony and circular motion are dismissed, but, before A. proceeds to refute the self-moving number of Xenocrates, he stops to consider once more if motion can be attributed to the soul and, if so, in what sense this is possible' (273). He adds, more directly, 'The whole passage 408a34–b29... is more or less of a digression' (p. 279). On my analysis, the passage does represent a pause in the refutation, but is not a digression; rather, Aristotle means to guard himself against a dialectical backlash resulting from his criticisms.

to be found in the *Timaeus* shares in common with the view that the soul is a self-moving number the presupposition that the soul can be moved. But Aristotle's own criticism of the *ἁρμονία* theory might seem to imply that the soul is moved. Despite its similarities to his own considered view,²³ Aristotle rejects the harmony theory in part because 'it does not belong to a harmony to move [anything], but everyone assigns, so to speak, this most of all to the soul' (*DA* 407b34–408a1).²⁴ But, someone might object, if the soul can move its body (and all assign this ability to the soul), then presumably it can move itself by moving the body in which it is; and trivially, if it can move itself, the soul can be moved.

Aristotle's response, at 408a30ff., relies on a distinction introduced earlier (406b31) between movements *καθ' αὐτό* and *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*. He can criticize the *ἁρμονία* theory without implicitly endorsing the unwanted feature of the Platonic account, by allowing that the soul can be moved *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*. But then we have a further, initially more puzzling objection: if the soul cannot move *καθ' αὐτό*, how can it be angry, or perceive, or think, when these are all alterations (*ἀλλοιώσεις*), and alteration is a species of movement (408b1–5)? Indeed, why does, e.g., thinking or fearing in the absence of an object fail to count as an instance of the soul moving itself? He responds by claiming that such an inference 'is not necessary' (*DA* 408b5). Even granting that, e.g., to feel pain or joy, or to think, counts as a motion which is effected 'by the soul' (*ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς*; *DA* 408b7), one need not infer that the soul moves or is moved *καθ' αὐτό*. He suggests that it would perhaps be better to say not that the soul pities or thinks but that the man does these things by or with or in his soul (*τῇ ψυχῇ*). He then continues, and qualifies his claim that a man does these things *τῇ ψυχῇ* by cautioning: 'but this not in the sense of there being motion in it [i.e. the soul], but [in the sense of motion's] sometimes extending to it or [originating] from it' (*DA* 408b15–16).

Aristotle himself quite clearly states the argument he means to reject, and it does not turn on the question of whether the soul can be a *ὑποκείμενον*:

We say that the soul is pained and rejoices or courageous or afraid, and further that it is angry and also perceives and thinks, but these all seem to be movements. For this reason someone might think that the soul moves. (*DA* 408b1–4)

The argument here is simply: (1) the soul is pained, perceives, thinks, etc.; (2) these are movements; therefore (3) the soul moves. Aristotle will point out that (2) is ambiguous between (2a) these are *καθ' αὐτό* movements' and (2b) these are *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* movements. The imaginary critic will then rightly insist on (2a) and the dialectical argument will become all the more pointed: (1) the soul is pained, perceives, thinks, etc.; (2) these are all *καθ' αὐτό* movements; (3) therefore, the soul moves *καθ' αὐτό*. But this is precisely the conclusion Aristotle seeks to deny.

Aristotle responds by pointing out that if (1) is true, the only acceptable reading of (2) will be (2b); if (2a) is offered, (1) will be false, but this is not because the soul is not a *ὑποκείμενον*. Rather, although such motions are done *τῇ ψυχῇ* (cf. *ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς* at *DA* 408b7 and *ἀπ' ἐκείνης* [sc. *ψυχῆς*] at *DA* 408b15–16), the soul

²³ See Hicks, op. cit., p. 263.

²⁴ I regard *ὡς εἰπεῖν* as qualifying *ἀπονέμουσι*, as opposed to *πάντες* as is claimed by Hicks, p. 266 and G. Rodier, *Aristote: Traité de L'âme* (Paris, 1900), ii.124 and presupposed in the Oxford translation of Smith. *ἀπονέμω* is not a word we find elsewhere in the *DA*, nor even very frequently in other works of Aristotle. The point would seem to be that everyone agrees that motion is to be explained by reference to the soul, even though, according to Aristotle, the soul itself does not move *καθ' αὐτό*. This more circumspect way of speaking frees him from claiming directly that the soul moves *καθ' αὐτό*.

nevertheless does not move *καθ' αὐτό*. Aristotle himself quite clearly accepts (2b) and (1), and so nowhere denies the soul's suitability as a *ὑποκείμενον*. On the contrary, he merely confirms his view that the soul cannot be moved *καθ' αὐτό*. Since it is nowhere laid down that *x* can be a *ὑποκείμενον* only if *x* can be moved *καθ' αὐτό*, *DA* 408b11–15 does not entail a rejection of the soul's suitability as a *ὑποκείμενον* (or, more precisely, as a *ὑποκείμενον*₂). Therefore, this passage does not commit Aristotle to any sort of self-contradiction on the status of the soul's ability to be, like all other substantial forms, an *οὐσία*, and so also a *ὑποκείμενον*.²⁵

This interpretation frees Aristotle from a manifest contradiction, but does not yet explain the striking locution that it is 'perhaps better to say not that the soul pities or learns or thinks, but that the man does [these things] *τῇ ψυχῇ*'.²⁶ The explanation is rather straightforward: in so far as perceptions of various sorts involve motions, we will need to say that the compound is involved, since the soul is not a magnitude (*DA* 407a1–2) and *x* is movable *καθ' αὐτό* only if *x* is a magnitude (*Physics* 211a4–17; cf. *DA* 406a6 and *De Caelo* 268b14–16). This is why Aristotle says that 'saying that the soul is angry is the same as if one were to say that the soul builds houses and weaves' (*DA* 408b11–13). The mental states Aristotle enumerates all involve motion, but the

²⁵ Two additional points are relevant to our assessment of this passage. First, Aristotle evidently expresses some caution in saying that it is 'perhaps' (*ἰσως*) better to speak in this way. The source of his reservation is unclear, but my own view is that he is concerned that he will be construed (as indeed he has been) as denying that the soul is a *ὑποκείμενον*, something he cannot afford to do given its substantiality. He may also express caution because one might equally say that the soul itself perceives and so forth, but that *aisthēsis* does not count as a species of motion (that is, one can deny the second as well as the first premise of the dialectical argument under consideration). Indeed, this would seem to be Aristotle's considered view. He is quite careful throughout the *DA* to avoid saying that *αἰσθησις* involves an affection of the soul; he prefers to say that it is affected in a certain way (*πάσχειν τι* rather than merely *πάσχειν*). Importantly, at *DA* 417b14–16 he suggests 'either one should not say that it [viz. *αἰσθησις*] is alteration, or that there are two types of alteration'. Cf. D. Furley, 'Self Movers', in G. E. R. Lloyd and G. E. L. Owen (edd.), *Aristotle on the Mind and Senses* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 176–7. Aristotle's point in *DA* I prefigures the ambivalence to be found in later books, and should not be received as evidence of a contradiction.

Second, not only does Aristotle refrain from denying that the soul is a *ὑποκείμενον*₂ in *DA* I, he employs locutions which seem to presuppose that it is: he says that recollections originate from the soul (*ἀπ' ἐκείνης* [sc. *ψυχῆς*] *DA* 408b15–16), that the body is moved *ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς* at *DA* 406a34, and even grants that certain actions are effected *ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς* at *DA* 408b7. These locutions suggest that the soul originates motion without moving itself; and in each case it seems plain that the soul is a *ὑποκείμενον*₂ of an action.

²⁶ The dative locution *τῇ ψυχῇ* has misled some commentators and inclined them toward an unacceptable reading, because they have presupposed that it must be taken instrumentally. Beyond landing Aristotle in a contradiction, the prevalent instrumental reading disregards the cautionary note which follows his remark. After claiming that a man performs various actions *τῇ ψυχῇ*, Aristotle adds, 'but this not in the sense of there being motion in it [i.e. the soul], but [in the sense of motion's] sometimes extending to it or [originating] from it' (*DA* 408b15–16). That the soul be in a certain state is causally basic to there being an instance of *αἰσθησις* or *ἀνάμνησις*; *τῇ ψυχῇ* should for this reason be taken causally. A rough paraphrase will then be: we should say that a man perceives or thinks because his soul is in a certain state – but this doesn't mean that it moves *καθ' αὐτό* in being in this state; rather the body moves *καθ' αὐτό* and the soul *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*. Aristotle's remark is then similar to saying, 'Typing involves the use of a typewriter, but one types because of some activity of the brain. Of course, we should not say that one's brain types, but that an individual types because of some brain activity'. The instrumental reading would treat the *ψυχῇ* as an instrument of the composite, much in the same way that a typewriter is an instrument of a typist. But this way of reading *τῇ ψυχῇ* makes Aristotle's cautionary note perverse and, more importantly, contradicts his conviction that the body is the organ of the soul and not *vice versa*. The activity of the soul is explanatorily basic in describing the organization of the body and so of the compound (*DA* 415b19; cf. *DA* 407b25 and *De Partibus Animalium* 642a11).

soul is incapable of moving καθ' αὐτό.²⁷ The general argument, then, is: (1) one can say (a) the soul is angry only if one can say (b) the soul weaves or builds houses; (2) one cannot say (1b); therefore, (3) one cannot say (1a). The justification for the first premise (2) will be, on my interpretation, that since being angry, like building or weaving, involves καθ' αὐτό motion, one can no more say that the soul alone performs the former than the latter. The premise makes explicit that being angry involves καθ' αὐτό motion by comparing it with actions which more manifestly involve καθ' αὐτό motion, but does not in so doing entail that the soul cannot be a ὑποκείμενον.²⁸

IV

Aristotelian souls are subjects, or ὑποκείμενα₂, and the initially perplexing remark at DA 408b11–15 need not be construed so as to undermine this general position. Despite standard scholarly appraisals,²⁹ this passage has no consequences at all as regards the soul's status as a ὑποκείμενον₂. Those supposing otherwise do considerable violence to the context within which Aristotle's remark occurs, and more importantly ignore his broader analysis of the ὑποκείμενον. Consequently, though this passage has indeed been celebrated, it is hardly Rylean: on the contrary, in its presumption that the soul is an οὐσία but not a μέγεθος, DA 408b11–15 carries the seeds of an Aristotelian alternative to the Rylean dispositional analysis of mind.

Colby College, Maine

CHRISTOPHER SHIELDS

²⁷ This explains Aristotle's comment 'but this not in the sense of there being motion in it [i.e. the soul], but [in the sense of motion's] sometimes extending to it or [originating] from it (DA 408b15–16). He means to point out that though the compound moves καθ' αὐτό, the ψυχή does not so move. It is unclear why he would make such a remark if his primary, or even subsidiary, concern were with the soul's ability to be a ὑποκείμενον.

²⁸ This interpretation does not attempt to justify or even characterize Aristotle's claim that the soul is not a μέγεθος, or his related suggestion that the soul cannot be moved καθ' αὐτό, even though these premises are obviously crucial to his argument. See my 'Soul and Body in Aristotle' (above [note 19]) for a more detailed analysis of these claims. But for the present I can suggest that my interpretation explains a feature of Aristotle's analysis which Furley (art. cit., 177) finds unmotivated: 'The point is that external objects are not in themselves sufficient causes for the voluntary movements of animals. But they do have some effect on the soul, and it would be obstinate of Aristotle to deny that the effect can be called a movement.' It will not be obstinate or in any sense capricious of Aristotle to hold this view if it is entailed by his ontological commitments rather than by his account of motion as such; and the analysis I have given suggests that this is so.

²⁹ See n. 2 above. Some of the ancient commentators came much nearer the mark in discussing DA 408b11–15. See especially Sophonias, *In Libros Aristotelis De Anima Paraphrasis*, ed. M. Hayduck (Berlin, 1882), 27.29–28.3. See also Alexander, *De an. lib. alt.* 104.38: 'πάσαι γὰρ αἱ λεγόμεναι τῆς ψυχῆς κινήσεις τοῦ συναμφοτέρου τοῦ ζώντος εἶσιν.'

³⁰ I am pleased to thank T. Irwin, G. Fine, P. Mitsis, J. Ackrill, and the Editors for excellent comments on portions of earlier drafts of this work.