

Introduction

My object in this book is to put a question to Aristotle and to work out his answer to it as developed in the *De Anima*. My question, roughly put, is about Mind and World: what about the one makes it such as to know the other – that is, to perceive and to understand honest-to-God truths about honest-to-God beings? My principal contentions will be, first, that the question is Aristotle's, and second, that the nub of his answer to it is that in a way Mind *is* World – in his language, “*psuchē* in a way is all beings” (ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ ὄντα πῶς ἐστὶ πάντα, *DA* III 8, 431b21). (I leave *psuchē* untranslated for reasons I will come to.)

The snippet I have just quoted is admittedly cryptic. It is introduced as wrapping up and drawing the moral of at least some of what Aristotle has said to this point about *psuchē* (*DA* III 8, 431b20–21, see Rodier 1900, 520 *ad loc.*). But the moral as stated is highly compressed, perhaps even startling; anyhow it cries for elaboration and comment. Some of this, we get in the lines that immediately follow (*DA* III 8, 430b21–432a3); I start then by quoting this passage and briefly rehearsing its main points, by means of clarifying in a preliminary way some aspects of my proposal:

But now, to sum up what we have said about *psuchē*, let us say again¹ that *psuchē* in a way is all beings; for beings are either perceptible or intelligible, and in a way scientific understanding (ἐπιστήμη) is its objects, and perception its objects. But what way this is needs looking into. Well, scientific understanding and perception are divided into the things: [what is scientific understanding and perception]

¹ “again” (πάλιν): I follow Rodier and now Crubellier in taking πάλιν here as marking not the repetition of a previous point but simply the progress of the narrative (Rodier 1900, 520 *ad loc.*, Crubellier 2020, 230, also Bonitz *s.v.* 559b13–23).

potentially into [things that are] potentially, [what is scientific understanding and perception] in fulfillment into [things that are] in fulfillment. But the sentient and scientific [parts] of *psuchē* are these potentially, in the one case what is scientifically understandable, in the other what is perceptible. And it is necessary that they be either the things themselves or their forms. But surely not the things; for it is not the stone that is in the *psuchē* but rather its form. The upshot is that *psuchē* is just like the hand: indeed, for the hand is tool of tools, and intelligence form of forms, and sensibility form of sensibilia.² (DA III 8, 431b20–432a3)

There are three points in this passage I want to draw attention to. [1] Aristotle's initial wording notwithstanding, it is not, in fact, all *psuchē* he thinks is all beings;³ that honor belongs only to some *psuchē*: specifically, to such *psuchē* as is at once sentient and intelligent (cp. DA III 8, 431b26–28). This is clear from the reason he gives for saying *psuchē* is all beings: namely, that while beings are either perceptible or intelligible, perception (or: sensibility) in a way is the perceptible beings, as “scientific understanding” (ἐπιστήμη) in a way is the intelligible ones (lit. τὰ ἐπιστητά) (DA III 8, 431b21–22).⁴ Since the only *psuchē* Aristotle thinks is capable of both perceiving and understanding is our *psuchē*, we may put the point this way: for Aristotle, it is specifically human *psuchē* that “in a way is all beings.” [2] The statement that *psuchē* is all beings, even when restricted

² νῦν δέ, περὶ ψυχῆς τὰ λεχθέντα συγκεφαλαιώσαντες, εἴπωμεν πάλιν ὅτι ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ ὄντα πῶς ἐστὶ πάντα· ἢ γὰρ αἰσθητὰ τὰ ὄντα ἢ νοητά, ἔστι δ' ἡ ἐπιστήμη μὲν τὰ ἐπιστητά πως, ἢ δ' αἴσθησις τὰ αἰσθητά· πῶς δὲ τοῦτο, δεῖ ζητεῖν. τέμνεται οὖν ἡ ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις εἰς τὰ πράγματα, ἢ μὲν δυνάμει εἰς τὰ δυνάμει, ἢ δ' ἐντελεχείᾳ εἰς τὰ ἐντελεχείᾳ· τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς τὸ αἰσθητικὸν καὶ τὸ ἐπιστημονικὸν δυνάμει ταῦτά ἐστι, τὸ μὲν ἐπιστητὸν τὸ δὲ αἰσθητὸν. ἀνάγκη δ' ἢ αὐτὰ ἢ τὰ εἶδη εἶναι· αὐτὰ μὲν δὴ οὐ· οὐ γὰρ ὁ λίθος ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶδος· ὥστε ἡ ψυχὴ ὡς περὶ ἡ χεὶρ ἐστὶν· καὶ γὰρ ἡ χεὶρ ὄργανόν ἐστιν ὀργάνων, καὶ ὁ νοῦς εἶδος εἰδῶν καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις εἶδος αἰσθητῶν.

³ In fact, Aristotle's initial wording recalls a view attributed earlier to some of his predecessors: namely, that *psuchē* is an amalgam of (ἐκ) the elements of all beings (e.g. DA I 2, 404b8–10, 405b11–19, I 5, 410b16–17, 411a24–25) (so too Hicks 1907, 543 *ad loc.*). This makes it tempting to read the present passage as intended to correct that view: so to say, *psuchē* is not an amalgam of the elements of all beings, but simply all beings (ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ ὄντα πῶς ἐστὶ πάντα). (For a recent, detailed, and rather different reading of the chapter as a whole – different, in seeing the chapter as focused on the integration of sensory and intellectual cognition within the *psuchē* of individual human beings, rather than as making a pointed correction of a conception of *psuchē* prevalent among his predecessors – see now Crubellier 2020.)

⁴ “perception (or: sensibility)”: αἴσθησις. I generally use “sensibility” for αἴσθησις when it stands for “the senses” or the power to perceive, “perception” or “perceiving” when it stands for their operation or activity, that is, perceiving. Though the Greek word αἴσθησις can designate either, the English word “perception” is not similarly flexible, at least not to my ear; also, it is useful for my purposes to have a different word for each. (The passage I am discussing plays on the ambiguity of the Greek word αἴσθησις: there, what Aristotle calls αἴσθησις “potentially” [δυνάμει] is what I would call “sensibility”; what he calls αἴσθησις “in fulfillment” [ἐντελεχείᾳ] is what I would call “perception” or “perceiving.”)

to just human *psuchē*, needs further qualification. *In a way*, Aristotle says, *psuchē* is all beings, and the “way” he means, as he also says, is “potentially” (δυνάμει) (*DA* III 8, 431b23–28). It is only when our *psuchē* is (so to speak) “at work” – when we are *using* our senses or our intelligence, when we are perceiving or understanding – that it is, “in fulfillment” (ἐντελεχείᾳ), the beings we are then perceiving or understanding (cp. *DA* III 8, 431b24–28). [3] Even then a further qualification is in order. When Aristotle says of (our) *psuchē*, that it is (potentially) all beings, what he means is that it is potentially *the forms* of all beings: “for it is not a stone that is in the *psuchē* but rather its form” (*DA* III 8, 431b28–432a1).

These points, though still in need of interpretation – so far, they are just jargon – are relatively straightforward; they mark out a piece of untested, standard issue, garden variety Aristotle. Things are different when we come to the upshot, as stated in the last remark I want to consider at this juncture: “The result is that *psuchē* is just like the hand: indeed, for the hand is tool of tools, and intelligence form of forms, and sensibility form of sensibilia.”⁵ Though interpreting this remark is (in a way) the task of this book, I want here to make a suggestion about its relationship to the point I initially began from: again, that “*psuchē* in a way is all beings.” We have it so far that this initial point is to be limited and qualified: it is the point that (our) *psuchē* is (potentially) (the forms of) all beings. We have also some indication as to why Aristotle thinks this fairly characterizes our *psuchē*: namely, because our *psuchē* is both sentient and intelligent. Owing to its “sentient part” (τὸ αἰσθητικόν), or to what I will call “sensibility,” our *psuchē* is potentially the forms of all perceptible beings; owing to its “scientific part” (τὸ ἐπιστημονικόν), or to what I will call “intelligence” (νοῦς), our *psuchē* is potentially the forms of all intelligible beings. So far so good, but suppose we were to press a step further and ask: “yes, but owing-to-what are *they*, sensibility and intelligence, potentially and between them the forms of all beings?” Perhaps we will be told: “why, each of them thanks to its very own self, to its own nature or essence.” No doubt. But still the question remains, or at least seems to remain: “yes, but what *are* those natures? what is the nature, the essence, the ‘what-is-it’ (τί ἐστὶ) of sensibility? and what is the nature or essence of intelligence?” Granted Aristotle himself does not take this further step – does not raise these further questions – not explicitly, not in this passage. Still he does raise them, and answer them, earlier in the *De Anima*: sensibility, he says,

⁵ *DA* III 8, 432a1–3: ὥστε ἡ ψυχὴ ὡσπερ ἡ χεὶρ ἐστίν· καὶ γὰρ ἡ χεὶρ ὄργανόν ἐστιν ὀργάνων, καὶ ὁ νοῦς εἶδος εἰδῶν καὶ ἡ αἰσθησις εἶδος αἰσθητῶν.

is “a kind of ratio” (λόγος τις), specifically “as it were a kind of mean” (οἷον μεσότης τις), and intelligence is something “simple” (ἀπλοῦν), “separate” (χωριστόν), “unmixed” (ἀμιγές) (*DA* II 12, 424a27–28, 31, II 11, 424a4–5, III 4, 429b23–24, III 5, 430a17–18). It is these doctrines, I suggest, that Aristotle is drawing the moral of here in *De Anima* III 8. That moral, in a word, is that (our) *psuchē* is “just like the hand” – just like the hand, in that intelligence is the form of intelligible forms (lit. εἶδος εἰδῶν) and sensibility is the form of perceptible forms (lit. εἶδος αἰσθητῶν). Fitted to our questions, the idea is that it is by being *that* – the one the form of perceptible forms, the other the form of intelligible forms – that sensibility and intelligence are potentially and between them the forms of all beings.⁶

Well – whatever else we are to make of the remark that *psuchē* is “just like the hand,” one thing it shows is that Aristotle thinks of sensibility and intelligence as each of them *forms*: indeed, not just any forms, but *special* forms – special, that is, in their relationship or standing vis-à-vis other forms (*all* other forms). To be sure, the exact nature and consequences of this “special standing” are hardly to be extracted from this remark alone.⁷ Still the remark is suggestive, especially when read against the background of my question: why is it (in Aristotle’s view) in our nature to know beings? If the question were Aristotle’s; if he thought the answer to it lay in the very nature of our cognitive powers, of sensibility and intelligence; if the point of the remark we have been considering was to draw the moral of his accounts of the natures of those powers – in that case the result would be that, for Aristotle, the reason it lies in our nature to know beings is that sensibility and intelligence are “forms” of the forms of all beings. Put more intuitively, in terms of a tradition Aristotle is responding to, the result would be that, for Aristotle, the reason it is in human nature to know

⁶ Cp. now Crubellier 2020, 236–238, esp. 237: “La comparaison [of *psuchē* to hand] suggère donc que les ‘formes’ dont on parle ici sont *des moyens qui permettent* (facilitent, rendent plus précise) la connaissance des choses” (emphasis added).

⁷ The comparison to the hand is suggestive, especially given the similar remark in *PA* IV 10, 687a20–23: “the hand seems to be not one tool but many; for it is as it were the tool before tools (ὄργανον πρὸ ὀργάνων). So, nature has given the hand, the tool whose uses are most varied (τὸ ἐπὶ πλείστον τῶν ὀργάνων χρήσιμον), to the creature capable of acquiring the most arts.” But even this leaves many things unclear. What is the point – that hands are *multi-purpose* (many tools or organs in one)? that they are our *first* tool? that they are useful in *making* or *using* other tools? that many other tools are, in their very idea, *hand-tools*? And which points are invoked in *De Anima* III 8? How do they carry over when we put “intelligence” or “sensibility” for “hand,” “form” for “tool,” and “forms” or “sensibilia” for “tools”?

beings is that in a way man *is* “the measure of all things.” (I return to this below.) These at any rate are the points I try to develop in this book.

But I have gotten ahead of myself. The question I am proposing to put to Aristotle – that I am proposing is his question – itself needs clarifying. Considered very generally, my question seeks the “cause” of a “fact,” the “why” (διότι) of a “that” (ὅτι): in a headline, of the “fact” that Mind Knows World. To start with, we might ask what fact this is.

It is characteristic of animals, in different ways and degrees, to be sensitive to opportunities afforded by their environments: to “make discriminations” (κρίνειν) and to “perceive” (αἰσθάνεσθαι), for example, predators and prey, obstacles and paths, offspring and mates, and so on – and if all that, then also things like size and shape and motion and rest – and if all that, then also one or more of (say) temperature, hardness, moisture, savor, odor, color, pitch. In Aristotle’s view, there is no question but that this *is* characteristic of animals. That is a simple “fact of life,” on a par with the “fact of nature” that some beings move (cp. *Phys.* I 1, 185a12–14, II 1, 193a4–9). As such, it is both a starting point for inquiry and a target of explanation – explanation ultimately in terms of the nature of *psuchē* (if not of all *psuchē*, then of sentient *psuchē*).

Another such fact, similar but different, concerns human beings. It is in human nature to pick up what is on offer, not merely in our environment in the way of just getting by, but in the whole wide world in the way of understanding or insight. It is true that, for Aristotle, not everything “is” (so to speak) “on principle,” and also that (in a way) absent a principle there is nothing to “get.” Some things are done on impulse, not on policy; some are due to luck, not to skill; some are due to chance, not to nature; of such matters (in a way) there is no “why.” But none of this upsets the larger point, which is not merely that (by and large) there is a “what” and a “why” to what we do and what there is, but that it is in human nature to seek and to find it. In short, understanding “why” is a “function” (ἔργον) or “fulfillment” (ἐντελέχεια) of our nature as intelligent creatures. In Aristotle’s view, this too is a fact of life, a starting point for inquiry, and ultimately to be explained in terms of the nature of *psuchē* – not of all *psuchē*, but of the intelligent part (lit. “the part of *psuchē* with which it both knows and judges,” τὸ μόριον τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ᾧ γινώσκει τε ἢ ψυχῆ καὶ φρονεῖ) (*DA* III 4, 429a10–11).

For a start, then, it is these big, broad, basic facts of life, about animals in general and about human beings in particular, that my question is about: taken together and in a headline, the fact that “Mind Knows World.” I take them together because Aristotle himself often takes them

together, treating them as one big fact. He puts that fact, roughly and schematically, by imputing “knowing” (τὸ γινώσκειν) to *psuchē*. The exact formulation varies. Sometimes he flat-out predicates knowing of *psuchē*, as in the passage just cited: “*psuchē* both knows and judges” (γινώσκει τε ἢ ψυχὴ καὶ φρονεῖ) (DA III 4, 429a10–11). Sometimes he uses a genitive of characteristic, saying that knowing or perceiving is “of” *psuchē* (e.g. DA I 2, 405b6). Other times he says that knowing “belongs” to *psuchē*, or, more fully, that it “belongs” to it “by nature” (ὕπάρχει κατὰ φύσιν) (DA I 5, 411a24–25, I 2, 403b25). Other times he speaks of perceiving or understanding as among the “attributes” (πάθη, συμβεβηκότα), “affections” (παθήματα), or “functions” (ἔργα) of *psuchē* (e.g. DA I 1, 403a3–11, I 5, 409b15–16). These formulations may be regarded for now as equivalent variations of a kind of shorthand.⁸ They serve to indicate, roughly and in general, what Aristotle regards as simply a fact: namely, that it is in the very nature of living things, at least some living things, to perceive, or to understand, or to perceive *and* understand, beings. My question asks for the “cause” of this fact: in brief and in shorthand, *why* does it “belong” to (some) *psuchē* to know beings?

This shorthand brings me to a second point. Considered in terms of its form, my question asks of an attribute (“knowledge,” τὸ γινώσκειν) why it belongs to some subject (*psuchē*). But this may be put a little more precisely: what I am asking, in particular, is *what about* that subject *makes* it a subject of that attribute. In Aristotle’s language, I am asking “by being *what*” (τί ὄν, διὰ τὸ τί εἶναι) it belongs to *psuchē* to know beings.

The point may be illustrated from a criticism Aristotle makes of some of his predecessors. These thinkers, he says, arrived at their views about *psuchē* from looking to the fact that it is of *psuchē* to know beings (DA I 2, 404b8–10). What must *psuchē* be, they wondered, if knowledge of beings is to belong to it by nature? An amalgam, they concluded, of the elements of beings. For, they held, knowledge is of like by like; but in that case, they reasoned, if it is of *psuchē* to know beings, *psuchē* must be like beings – just what it would be, if it itself were an amalgam of (ἐκ) all the same elements. The result is a view about “what” *psuchē* “is,” about its nature or essence. But it is not merely a view about that nature or essence. As Aristotle represents it, it is a view about the nature or essence of *psuchē* which purports also to show “why” it is of *psuchē* to know beings: it is of *psuchē* to know beings, because *psuchē* is like beings (like them, because an amalgam of all the same elements). Now, one criticism Aristotle makes of this view is that it fails to explain the fact it sets out to explain: it is not, he

⁸ I discuss this further in Chapter 1, Section 4.

says, of *psuchē* to know beings *because psuchē* is an amalgam of elements (οὔτε τὸ γινώσκειν ὑπάρχει τῇ ψυχῇ διὰ τὸ ἐκ τῶν στοιχείων εἶναι, *DA* I 5, 411a24–25). What is more, in making this criticism, or so it seems to me, Aristotle is virtually begging us to ask him in turn: then “by being what” *does* it belong to *psuchē* to know beings? It is true that, thus formulated, the question presupposes things Aristotle rejects: for example, that it *does* belong to *psuchē* (i.e. to all *psuchē*) to know beings, or that all *psuchē* is “uniform” (ὁμοειδής), that is, one and the same in every living creature. But even once these points and some others are acknowledged, the broad fact from which we began remains basically intact: that is, it *does* belong to *psuchē* – not all *psuchē*, but some *psuchē* – to know, that is, to perceive and to understand, perceptible and intelligible beings (i.e. *all* beings). And if the fact remains, the question remains too: by being *what* is it of (such) *psuchē* to do that?

In a way the answer to this question is obvious: the reason it belongs to (some) *psuchē* to know beings is that *psuchē* (of that kind) is sentient and intelligent. This brings me to a third point, which is that the question I am asking – that I think Aristotle is asking – is after something more than this. The point may be illustrated from Aristotle’s treatment of another “fact of life,” that animals move: in the shorthand, that it belongs to (some) *psuchē* to impart motion to animals. Here too we may ask: “by being what” does it belong to (such) *psuchē* to do that? What sort of answer would Aristotle give to this question? He imputes to his predecessors a tolerably substantive answer: roughly put, that the reason it is of *psuchē* to impart motion (κινεῖν) is that *psuchē* is *in* motion (κινεῖται) (cp. *DA* I 2, 403b28–31). It is true that Aristotle himself rejects this answer: it is impossible, he says, that motion should be even an attribute of *psuchē*, let alone any part of what it is in its essence (*DA* I 3, 405b31–406a2). But though he rejects the answer, he does not reject the question. He is not for his part simply to say that the reason it belongs to (some) *psuchē* to impart motion is that *psuchē* (of that kind) is “motion-imparting” (κίνητικόν, κινούν). On the contrary, the first question he asks, when he begins his own treatment of this topic, is *what* on earth is the motion-imparting part of the *psuchē* of animals (lit. *περὶ τοῦ κινούντος, τί ποτέ ἐστι τῆς ψυχῆς* [sc. τῶν ζώων])? Is it, in fact, just a part of their *psuchē*, or is it the entire thing (lit. *πότερον ἔν τι μόνιον αὐτῆς . . . ἢ πᾶσα ἢ ψυχῆ*)? And if a part, *which* part – one already mentioned or some other one besides (*DA* III 9, 432a15–22)? I leave aside the details of Aristotle’s answers to these questions, which are in any case controversial.⁹ The point

⁹ The short answer is that the reason it belongs to (some) *psuchē* to impart motion is that *psuchē* (of that kind) is desiderative, where it is understood that desire is an “operation”

I am now making is just that, in seeking *why* it belongs to some *psuchē* to impart motion, Aristotle is not content just to say that *psuchē* of that kind is “motion-imparting.” Ditto, I submit, as regards why it belongs to our *psuchē* to perceive and to understand beings. What is wanted is not simply the information that our *psuchē* is the kind that is sentient and intelligent. What is wanted is an account of what makes our *psuchē* sentient and intelligent – if not its being an amalgam of elements, then what? Put slightly differently, what is wanted is an account of sensibility and intelligence themselves, an account of “what” each of them “is,” such as will also tell *why* (lit. “by being *what*,” τί ὄν, διὰ τὸ τί εἶναι) it belongs to them, is their function or work, to perceive and to understand beings.

This brings me to a final clarification I want to make at this juncture. I am asking of an attribute (“knowledge”) why it belongs to a subject (*psuchē*); the question seeks a categorical answer, in terms of the nature or essence or “what-is-it” (τί ἐστίν) of that subject. My hypothesis – it is defeasible – is that Aristotle means to provide such an answer. That said, the question is dizzying in its generality. What could count as a satisfying answer? What would such an answer exclude? What would it secure? Though really these are matters for the book as a whole, I do want to say something here about how I am thinking about them. Consider first some analogous questions as raised about analogous facts: for example, why (“by being what”) does it belong to the art of medicine to heal or to the art of building to build? These are questions about the “functions” (ἔργα) of these arts; they ask why those functions are functions of those arts and seek answers in terms of the nature of those arts. I allow that these are questions which (in some moods) Aristotle might well refuse, on the grounds that the arts in question are simply defined by their functions.¹⁰ But I observe that (in other moods) he might well rise to the bait, making appeal to the doctrine that arts are the forms of what it is theirs to produce (e.g. *Met. Z* 9, 1034a24). This doctrine makes a categorical statement, admittedly very general, about what arts are. The generality of the statement precludes it from saying very much. Still, it does exclude something: for example, that the association of medicine with health

(ἐνέργεια) of sensibility, which in turn has been defined as a kind of ratio or mean (*DA* III 10, 433b10–11, III 7, 431a10–14). But this short answer needs qualifying if it is to be adequate to certain problems in this area and the necessary qualifications are not easy to interpret. (For the problems, see *DA* III 9, 432a30–433a8; for the qualifications, see esp. *DA* III 10, 433b10–13.)

¹⁰ Cp. *Cael.* IV 3, 310b16–19, *Phys.* VIII 4, 255b15–17, *Cael.* IV 1, 308a29–31.

and of building with buildings is merely a coincidence.¹¹ It also secures something: for example, that healing and building really do “belong” to the arts of medicine and building – that they really are *functions* of those arts. Moreover, there is sometimes a point to securing even this much, in contexts in which the going alternatives effectively deny it. Such is the context Aristotle often takes himself to be in. Certainly it is the perceived context of his investigation of “nature” (φύσις); as he complains about Empedocles in *Physics* II 8, “a person who says *that*” – namely, roughly, that this comes from that “as luck would have it” (ὡς ἔτυχεν) – simply “does away with nature and things due to it altogether” (*Phys.* II 8, 199b14–15, tr. Charlton 1970). And he speaks in a similar vein about earlier views about *psuchē*, complaining that most of them neglect the fact that things interact, *not* just any old thing with just any old thing, but “because of their community” (διὰ τὴν κοινωνίαν) (*DA* I 3, 407b15–19) – in the case that interests me here, the community of subject and object, of knower and known, of *psuchē* and beings.

Considerations like these are a guide – a defeasible guide – to what we may expect from Aristotle in the way of explaining certain “facts of life”: that is to say, the fact that it belongs to our *psuchē* to perceive and to understand – taken together and in short, “to know beings.” We may expect him to try to explain this fact in terms of the nature of *psuchē* – not of all *psuchē*, but of our *psuchē*, and specifically of its cognitive powers, sensibility and intelligence. In particular, we may expect that his accounts of “what” those powers “are” will be calculated to reveal their “community” with their respective objects, with perceptible and intelligible beings, and thereby to ensure that the association of those powers with those objects is not merely “as luck would have it,” but is rather in line with their respective natures. Put another way, we may expect his accounts of the natures of those powers, of sensibility and intelligence, to be attempts to say “by being what” it is their work to perceive and to understand perceptible and intelligible beings. In fact, we already know (more or less) what we will find: the thesis that sensibility is a kind of ratio, specifically a kind of mean, and that intelligence is “simple,” “separate,” “unmixed.” These theses, I suggest, just are Aristotle’s attempt to answer my question: to say “by being what” it is of sensibility and intelligence to perceive and to understand beings. In particular, I will suggest, they address that

¹¹ Compare Lewis 1983.

question by attempting to specify the “forms of the forms” (i.e. the *measures*) of those beings.

The literature on the *De Anima* continues to grow. One indication is the recent appearance of five new translations, four of them in English.¹² Business is booming. I should say at least something about the relationship of this book to that literature.

First, the book is not primarily conceived of as remedying its deficiencies: I mean, for example, as correcting important, long-standing, deep-seated mistakes, or as filling deplorable lacunae, or as providing new definitive treatments of select central topics. The particular question I have decided to pursue, and my particular understanding of it as detailed above, has arisen for me out of my own study and teaching of the *De Anima*; though I have been helped a great deal by the extant literature on countless points of detail, it has not been the essential point of departure of the broader inquiry.¹³ The book is rather in the first instance an essay: an attempt to follow out, and to make articulate in writing, a particular line of inquiry I have found useful in opening up and entering into a compact and difficult text. I do not mean that I aim to be idiosyncratic; on the contrary, I do think my question is implicit in Aristotle's question – in a word, what *is psuchē* – as I think the nub of his answer to it is encapsulated in the passage from which I initially began (*DA* III 8, 431b21). That said, however, I do try to enter into and appreciate his questions, or what I take to be his questions – to acquire a feel for the itch he thinks wants scratching. This does not admit doing just once and for all; it is something we do for ourselves, each in our own way, with the assistance of scholarship, but driven by our own questions, pursued to our own satisfaction; as such it is to some extent inescapably personal. Nonetheless I do hope and expect that at least some of what has seemed interesting and useful to me will also be of service to other readers of the *De Anima*.¹⁴

Second, my object in this book is not to cover an area, but to follow a line: Aristotle's line, on my question.¹⁵ This has some consequences. First, there are a number of traditional questions I say little or nothing about. Does Aristotle think (some) *psuchē* is separable from body? Does

¹² Shields 2016, Corcilius 2017, Reeve 2017, Bolotin 2018, and Miller 2018.

¹³ Though it is difficult to prove a negative, I do not think that *my* question, understood as I have tried to clarify it above, *is* a preoccupation of any considerable portion of the literature. (Note that in saying this I do not mean to be finding fault.)

¹⁴ Cp. Newman 1889, 384–385.

¹⁵ For a recent, comprehensive, book-length treatment of the *De Anima*, viewed as making a seminal contribution to “faculty-psychology,” see Johansen 2012.