

Does the Soul Weave? Reconsidering *De Anima* 1.4, 408a29-b18  
(Forthcoming in *Phronesis*)

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**Abstract**

In *De Anima* 1.4, Aristotle asks whether the soul can be moved by its own affections. His conclusion – that to say the soul grows angry is like saying that it weaves and builds – has traditionally been read on the assumption that it is false to credit the soul with weaving and building; I argue that Aristotle’s analysis of psychological motions implies his belief that the soul does in fact weave and build.

**Keywords**

Aristotle; predication; soul; subject; affections; agency; motion; craft analogy

**1. Introduction**

In *De Anima* 1.4, Aristotle raises what is perhaps his most celebrated puzzle, which is whether the soul can be moved by its own affections. His conclusion – that to say the soul grows angry is like saying that it weaves and builds (*DA* 1.4, 408b11-13) – has traditionally been taken to express the argument that, because it is false to predicate the soul with weaving and building, so also is it false to predicate the soul with affections such as growing angry, hoping, and reasoning. I argue in this paper that this is not Aristotle’s argument. Instead, I offer a new interpretation of the weaving passage that focuses on its conditional structure. Fully stated, Aristotle’s claim is that, if affections are motions of certain parts of the body that are done by the soul, then to say that the soul grows angry is like saying that it weaves and builds. This conditional claim, I argue, implies that it is true to predicate these affections, as well as weaving and building, of the soul.

To show this, I first argue that the preliminary assumptions of *DA* 1 commit Aristotle to the view that the soul has affections which are motions, and that this raises a problem for his overall goal of showing against his Presocratic and Academic predecessors that it cannot be moved (Section 2). A preliminary solution to this problem is offered, I claim, in Aristotle’s admission in *DA* 1.4 that the

soul can move itself indirectly – a form of motion under which some entity *X* which is in an object *Y* initiates *per se* a motion in a *Y* which *X* only suffers *per accidens* (Section 3).

Having admitted this, Aristotle is then forced to tackle a more difficult problem. According to *DA* 1.1, he and his school do use expressions that predicate psychological motions directly of the soul (even if these motions also involve the body). This suggests that the soul is subject to motion. I argue that Aristotle avoids this conclusion not by denying that the soul can be predicated with affective motions, but by denying that having such motions entails being moved by them (Section 4).

I then argue that the traditional interpretation of Aristotle's weaving and building analogy falters, because it overlooks the fact that it occurs within a conditional claim whose antecedent assumes that it is true that psychological affections are motions and that these motions belong to the soul as an agent. Once this conditional structure is adequately appreciated, Aristotle's argument can be seen to be designed exclusively to defend the idea that, if an educated member of the Lyceum says 'The soul  $\phi$ -s', it is not necessary at the same time for her to hold that the soul is moved or in motion. Thus, Aristotle's argument is not, as has often been thought, an argument about the soul's ability to serve as a metaphysical or grammatical subject of predication *simpliciter* (Section 5).

I then offer a new interpretation of the weaving passage, which I call the *Agent-Patient Interpretation*. It argues that Aristotle's goal is to show that predicating affections of the soul is analogous to predicating motions of it that it performs *qua* agent, but does not suffer *qua* patient, because the motion done by an agent need only take place in the patient of that motion. This interpretation implies that, just like the antecedent of Aristotle's conditional claim, the consequent – saying that the soul weaves and builds – expresses a claim that he takes to be true (Section 6).

I then provide evidence for this interpretation by showing its relevance to Plotinus' difficulties in interpreting the weaving passage (Section 7), before discussing an objection to it provided by Alexander of Aphrodisias (Section 8). I then show how my interpretation helps to make sense of other ascriptions of direct agency to the soul in *DA* 1.3, 1.5 and 3.9 (Section 9).

In the final sections of the paper, I explain why, nevertheless, Aristotle's preferred way of expressing the soul's causal role in the body is the formula 'a man  $\phi$ -s with his soul'. I argue that this form of expression is not introduced as a stricture against expressions that make the soul a subject of predication; instead, I argue that it is introduced for at least three purposes: first, for blocking the inference that the soul is moved, which expressions of the 'worse' sort are not generally fit to do; secondly, in order to maintain, in virtue of this expression's Platonic origin, the soul's essential causal

role in constituting affections;<sup>1</sup> and thirdly, to accommodate the fact that some psychological motions, like motions from perceptible objects, are not produced by the soul, but by external objects (Section 10). This last admission, however, lands Aristotle in a further dilemma, namely how to express the soul's role in perception if it cannot be moved by perceptible objects. I go on to show how Aristotle attempts to resolve this problem in *DA* 2.5 and elsewhere (Section 11). I conclude with a summary of how Aristotle resolves his two dilemmas about psychological affections (Section 12).

## 2. Affirming and Denying Motion of the Soul

It is now relatively uncontroversial that one of Aristotle's two overarching goals in writing *DA* 1 is to give reasons for thinking that, although the soul is a natural efficient cause of animal motion (1.2, 403b24-7; 3.3, 427a17-19), nevertheless, it cannot, as earlier Presocratic and Academic theorists claimed, be defined as something that causes this motion by being in motion in any of its four canonical forms – locomotion, alteration, diminution and growth (1.3, 406a12-14).<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with this goal, Aristotle subjects both Plato's definition of soul as a self-mover (1.3, 405b31-406b11), and the latter's related description of the world soul's circular rotation in the *Timaeus* (406b26-407b15), to a withering battery of arguments. Each of these is aimed at showing the truth of a single idea: although causing motion *per se* is a distinguishing mark of soul, it is wrong to define the soul as something that can be *in* motion *per se*.

However, earlier in *DA* 1.1, and in direct tension with these arguments, Aristotle also insists that the soul has attributes or affections (*πάθη*) – some of which are later identified as motions – that occur in common with the body.<sup>3</sup> He writes (403a3-8):<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dillon 2009, who argues that Aristotle and other members of the Old Academy were hard at work on trying to fill in a lacuna in Plato's psychology, namely, how the soul moves the body. I argue here that the weaving passage is a central place for understanding how Aristotle developed his solution to this problem. In contrast, Rapp 2006, 207 claims, quite unfairly, that 'the question of how a psychic part could act upon a merely bodily part – i.e., the question of causal interaction' does not occur in Aristotle's writings.

<sup>2</sup> The other being to show that, although the soul is the natural cause of perception and knowledge, it is not composed of elements, and hence does not cognise in virtue of the naïve principle 'like knows like'.

<sup>3</sup> Although the term *πάθος* is cognate with *πάσχω*, and often denotes a passive form of suffering, this is not always the case. Given its gloss here as including instances of suffering *and* producing, and given that this passage immediately follows a discussion about demonstrating the soul's attributes (*τὰ συμβεβηκότα*) (cf. *DA* 1.1, 402b16-403a1), it is more likely that Aristotle is using *πάθη* to refer to attributes of the soul in general (whether active, passive or static). Cf. *APo.* 1.7, 75b1 and 1.9, 76a13, and also LSJ and Bonitz, s.v. *πάθος*. In what follows, I generally refer to the relevant *πάθη* as 'affections' to emphasise the kinetic element of the attributes under discussion.

<sup>4</sup> All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted. The theory of affections that are peculiar and common to the soul is first proposed by Plato in *Philebus* 33d2-34a5. For a good discussion, see Carpenter 2010.

But there is a puzzle also about the attributes of the soul (τὰ πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς), whether all of them are also common (κοινά) to what has soul, or if there is also something peculiar that belongs to soul; for to grasp this is necessary, but not easy. For it seems that, in regards to most of them, soul neither suffers (πάσχειν) nor produces (ποιεῖν) anything apart from the body; for example, in its [i.e. soul's] being angry, being courageous, desiring, and generally in perceiving, although thinking most of all would seem to be peculiar [to it].

On the grounds that these psychological affections occur at the same time (ἅμα) that the body suffers something (403a18), Aristotle affirms that there are attributes that in some way belong to both the soul and body, and that the soul either produces or suffers them when they occur.<sup>5</sup> Among them he lists getting riled (θυμός), gentleness (πραότης), fear (φόβος), pity (ἔλεος), daring (θάρσος), joy (χαρά) and loving and hating (τὸ φιλεῖν τε καὶ μισεῖν) (403a16-18).<sup>6</sup>

In explaining how the soul's affections are shared in common with the body, Aristotle focuses on anger as a paradigmatic example. Having shown that the state of the body is intimately connected to how and when an affection like anger occurs (403a18-25), he concludes that we should define 'growing angry' (τὸ ὀργίζεσθαι) as 'a kind of motion of this sort of body, or its part, or its power, done by something, for the sake of something' (κίνησις τις τοῦ τοιουδὶ σώματος ἢ μέρους ἢ δυνάμεως ὑπὸ τοῦδε ἔνεκα τοῦδε, 403a26-27). This kind of definition is apparently meant to generalize to all of the affections that Aristotle identifies as common to soul and body. However, even bracketing concerns arising from the *Metaphysics* about whether anger, as a non-substantial entity, can have a proper definition, this one still has a major problem: if the soul cannot be moved *per se*, which Aristotle insists upon in dealing with earlier Greek psychologists in *DA* 1.3-5, how then can it be something that shares a motion like anger in common with the body?

### 3. Specifying how Motion is Affirmed or Denied of Soul

An answer to this question begins to emerge in *DA* 1.4, 408a29-408b5, where Aristotle writes:

So, that the soul is not able to be a harmony, nor be moved in a circle, is clear from the things we have said. But (i) it is possible for soul to be moved *per accidens* (κατὰ συμβεβηκός), in

<sup>5</sup> See Johansen 2012, 150.

<sup>6</sup> In this second list, the reference to perception is silently omitted.

accordance with what we stated earlier, and (ii) to move itself (κινεῖν ἑαυτήν) *per accidens*, such as when what soul is in (ἐν ᾧ ἔστι) is moved, and this is moved (κινεῖσθαι) by the soul (ὕπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς); but (iii) in no other way is soul able to be moved in space. More reasonably (εὐλογώτερον), someone might puzzle over the soul's being in motion having paid attention (ἀποβλέψας) to the following sorts of considerations; for (iv) we say (φαμέν) that the soul is pained, or rejoices, or takes courage, or grows afraid, and also that the soul grows angry and perceives and reasons. However, (v) all of these seem to be movements (κινήσεις). (vi) From these observations, someone might infer that the soul itself is moved (κινεῖσθαι). But (vii) this inference is not necessary (τὸ δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἀναγκαῖον).<sup>7</sup>

In this passage, Aristotle begins by giving a summary of the conclusions reached so far. Although his reasons for denying that the soul can be an attunement, or a web of Democritean spherical atoms in ceaseless motion, or a Timaeian circular magnitude,<sup>8</sup> are all quite heterogeneous, notably, the basic reason why Aristotle holds each of these theories to be false is that none adequately describes how the soul moves the body.

The attunement theory, for instance, fails to ascribe to the soul the ability to transitively move (κινεῖν) the body at all (407b34-408a1). This contradicts Aristotle's repeated assertion that the soul is the primary *per se* efficient cause of the beginning of locomotion and rest in animals (1.4, 407b34-408a1, 408a32-3, 409a16-17; 1.5, 411a30). The unceasing motion of Democritus' soul atoms, in contrast, fails to account for the soul's apparent ability to cause animals to move *and* to rest through its activities of making a kind of choice or through thinking (διὰ προαιρέσεώς τινος καὶ νοήσεως) (1.3, 406b24-5). Similarly, but less obviously, a central reason that Aristotle thinks that the Timaeian world soul cannot move in a circle except *per accidens* is that, although the *Timaeus* describes the motion of the world body as being caused by the world soul, it never explicitly claims that *circular rotation* defines the world soul's essence (οὐσία) (407b5-9).

However, now Aristotle reminds us that he admitted that the soul can be in motion *per accidens*. In his criticism of Plato in *DA* 1.3, he argued that, of the two ways in which something can be in motion (κινουμένου) – in respect of itself (καθ' αὐτό), or in respect of something different (καθ' ἕτερον) (406a4-6) – the soul might be subject to the latter. Just as a sailing ship, Aristotle claims, is

<sup>7</sup> Roman numerals are given to mark out the claims of the passage, which I refer to in my reconstruction of Aristotle's arguments.

<sup>8</sup> On the details of these criticisms, and their importance to Aristotle's philosophy of mind, see Carter 2017.

moved *per se*, but the sailors contained in the ship are moved *per aliud* in virtue of being in the moving ship, so the soul seems to be moved locally only in virtue of being in a moving body (406a4-10, 406b5-6).<sup>9</sup>

In our current passage, Aristotle brings these two ideas together. He does this by drawing attention to the fact that he never claimed that souls are *only* moved through space in a *per aliud* or *per accidens* way, as one might have assumed from his sailor-ship analogy. Whilst categorically ruling out the Platonic possibility that a soul can move itself *per se* (405b31-406a2), in his summary he gives his *via media*: the soul can be the *per se* cause (e.g. through choice) of a motion it undergoes *per accidens* (e.g. when the body is moved by the soul's choice).<sup>10</sup> Thus, Aristotle does not think that one can infer from the fact that *X* is  $\phi$ -ed *per accidens* in virtue of *Y* that *X* is not  $\phi$ -ing (transitively) *Y per se*.

In some cases of local motion, in fact, it is obvious why to  $\phi$  (transitively) some *Y per se* would also be to suffer being  $\phi$ -ed *per accidens*. If one starts up one's car and presses down on the gas pedal, for instance, while one's car is moving one is *per se* an active (and continuous) cause of the car's *per se* spatial motion, and one is simultaneously *per accidens* moved through space in virtue of being in the car. Whilst one may truly be said to be *driving* the car *per se*, one does not thereby become the object which is *driven per se*. One drives cars, not persons (for the appropriate meaning of 'drive').

Indeed, by Aristotle's rule, one is *driven per accidens* not despite, but because, one is *driving per se*. We may call this idea of Aristotle's *indirect self-motion*:

<sup>9</sup> See Tracy 1982, 97-112 for a comprehensive account of the ship and steering analogy in *De Anima*. In *Phys.* 4.4, 211a17-22, Aristotle divides the class of things moved *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* into (a) that which *ἐνδεχόμενον κινεῖσθαι καθ' αὐτό*, such as the parts of the body, and rivets in the ship (i.e. separable parts of physical wholes), and (b) things *οὐκ ἐνδεχόμενα*, such as whiteness and knowledge (i.e. properties which are not separable parts of physical wholes). It is important to note, however, that objects in either class might serve as an efficient cause in some manner (e.g. whiteness causing the perception of white).

<sup>10</sup> See Tracy 1982, 104 and Menn 2002, 94. We might see this as an elaboration of the sailor-ship analogy, given that Aristotle suggests elsewhere that a sailor directs the ship through the water by turning the rudder (*DA* 2.4, 416b25-7). In both cases, the sailor and the soul would suffer the same motion *per accidens* that they initiate *per se*. Hicks 1907, 242 also notices this logical possibility in respect of a sailor on the ship: 'The passenger might conceivably propel the vessel by rowing, but in that case it would still be true of him οὐ καθ' αὐτὸν ἀλλὰ καθ' ἕτερον κινεῖται, viz. τῷ ἐν κινουμένῳ εἶναι.' He does not, however, recognise that this is essentially Aristotle's final position on the matter of how the soul moves the body through space.

Indirect Self-motion =<sub>def</sub> *X* moves itself locally *per accidens* iff *X* is moved locally *per accidens* in virtue of initiating a local motion *per se* in a *Y* different from *X*, and *X* resides in *Y*.<sup>11</sup>

Aristotle's distinction between (a) cases in which the soul is moved *per accidens* by external causes (for example, when the body in which the soul resides is knocked off course) (406b5-6), and (b) cases in which the soul's being moved *per accidens* is caused by the soul (for example, when an animal is moved by the soul's agency to run towards or away from an object),<sup>12</sup> is vital for understanding whether psychological affections – which by definition are motions that belong to the soul – necessarily cause the soul to be moved.<sup>13</sup> This is because, first, Aristotle's affirmation that the soul can engage in indirect self-motion confirms his acceptance of the claim that the soul can be the agent of a motion that it causes in the body without being in motion *per se*. Secondly, when he turns to discuss cases in which the soul is said to be in pain, to rejoice, to take courage, to fear etc. – which expressions, he claims, need not imply that the soul is moved – he explicitly classifies them as motions that occur by the agency of soul (ὕπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς, 408b7). By doing so in a passage that immediately follows the introduction of indirect self-motion, Aristotle signals that the psychological affections he is considering are to be viewed as analogous to indirect self-motions insofar as they are caused by the soul.

Aristotle's motivation for bringing up the puzzle about psychological motion after a summary of his preceding criticisms and his introduction of the concept of indirect self-motion appears to be twofold: first, even if one grants that the soul is moved locally only *per accidens* when it transitively moves *per se* the body it ensouls, still, one might think that this does not rule out the possibility that the soul is moved *per se* by its own peculiar psychological motions, such as loving and hating. Secondly, since the discussion begins with an occurrence of the first person plural 'we say' (φαμέν, 408b1), in itself relatively rare in *DA* 1, the puzzle seems to concern a position affirmed by members

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle's commitment to indirect self-motion provides an answer to Witt 1992, 77-9, who queries whether or not Aristotle means to model his idea of the soul's inability to be moved *per se* in space on that of attributes of the body generally, for example, colours. As the above shows, the answer is 'no'. Things of this sort (e.g. colours) are not good models of the soul's kinetic relation to the body, because such attributes do not initiate the local movement of the body in which they reside (e.g. Socrates' paleness does not itself initiate the motion of bringing Socrates to the beach).

<sup>12</sup> On the background of the problem of animals as self-movers, which ultimately requires the sort of solution Aristotle is working on here, the *locus classicus* is Furley 1978. Cf. Berryman 2002 and Morison 2004.

<sup>13</sup> On the difficulty of distinguishing how something is moved *per se* and *per accidens*, see Rosen 2012.

of the Lyceum.<sup>14</sup> In fact, one can go further: it is almost certainly meant to evoke the central puzzle of *DA* 1.1, discussed above, whether all the soul's affections are also common to the body.

The greater reasonability of the puzzle of whether the soul is moved by its own affections rests upon the fact that conscientious students listening to Aristotle's *DA* 1 lectures would be right to recognise that their Peripatetic teacher, so far, has claimed that (a) the soul has attributes that it causes or suffers in common with the body, (b) some of these attributes are motions and (c) earlier thinkers, including Plato, were wrong to hold that the soul is or can be moved *per se*.<sup>15</sup> Such a person might reasonably wonder how Aristotle gets away with all this. As we shall see, to solve the problem, he has to take special care in responding to the objection in a way that explains the consistency of (a)-(c).

Since Aristotle's defence rests upon the idea that the logic that leads to the conclusion that the soul is moved is not necessary, I shall call this argument the *Unnecessary Inference*. It can be formulated as follows:

1. Being pained, rejoicing, and fearing, are motions (κινήσεις). (v)
2. The soul is pained, rejoices, and fears. (iv)
3. Therefore, the soul is moved (κινεῖσθαι). (vi)

<sup>14</sup> And it *is* common for Aristotle to treat the soul as a subject of psychological attributes. For example, in *DA* 3.3, 427b2 he says that the soul – as grammatical subject – spends most of its time in a state of error (ἐν τούτῳ διατελεῖ ἢ ψυχῇ). Similarly, in *DA* 3.4, 429a10-11, he says that the soul – again as grammatical subject – knows (γινώσκει) and understands (φρονεῖ). In the ethical works, he claims that it is the subject of happiness (cf. *NE* 1.7, 1098a7; 1.13, 1102a5), of affections (*NE* 2.5, 1105b20), of epistemic states (*NE* 6.3, 1139b15), and even occurrent pleasure and pain (*NE* 9.4, 1166b19-22). Such uses are given metaphysical license in *Cat.* 2, 1a23-b3 and *GC* 2.7, 334a10-15 as well as in other places I discuss below. Hence, Hamlyn 2002, 81 laments that Aristotle's 'does not often live up' to his suggestion that we predicate affections of the human.

<sup>15</sup> In contrast, Hicks 1907, 275 sees Aristotle acquiescing to ordinary language concerns, while Ross 1961, 197 thinks that he is discussing Platonic views (although apparently Ross is operating on the incorrect assumption that all of the soul's affections are being treated here as spatial movements). Aquinas, *De an.* 1, lec. 10 also reads the text as a dialectical engagement with Platonist opponents, although he sees that Aristotle fully accepts the account of affections as motions produced by the soul that follows, and disagrees only about whether perception is subject to this account as well. Against the former thesis, Aristotle makes it apparent that he is thinking of a person who has provisionally accepted his claim that psychological affections belong to both soul and body, and then 'has looked at these sorts of considerations' (εἰς τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀποβλέψας), namely, that 'we say' the soul is in pain etc., and that psychological affections appear to be motions. The puzzle thus seems to be a philosophical one, arising from Aristotle's own commitments. Against the latter view, given that all other uses of the first person plural of φημί and λέγω in *DA* 1 (at 1.1, 403b17, 1.3, 406a5 and 1.4, 408a5) presuppose Aristotle's speaking *in propria persona*, it is unlikely that he is breaking this consistency to express someone else's (e.g. Plato's) viewpoint. Shields 2016, 143 notes that, 'whatever its provenance, the objection is close to home'.



Although interpreters have often supposed that Aristotle believes this argument to be valid and, because he denies its conclusion, that he rejects either premise 1 or premise 2, there are good reasons to think that the converse is the case.<sup>16</sup> First, as we have seen, Aristotle has already committed himself to some version of premise 1 in defining anger as a motion. Secondly, he is not in a position to deny premise 2 without qualification; as we have seen, he has committed himself to some version of it in *DA* 1.1, as an assumption in his argument that most attributes of the soul are shared (in some way) with the body. This assumption is explained in terms of the soul, as a putatively metaphysical subject, either (a) doing something or (b) undergoing something when it becomes angry (*ὀργίζεσθαι*), takes courage (*θαρραίνειν*), etc. (403a6-7) along with the body. Thus, to deny premise 2 here without explanation would be tantamount to saying that a person's soul neither does anything nor suffers anything when she gets angry or is pained.<sup>17</sup> This would commit Aristotle to the radical claim that there is *no sense* in which these affections belong to the soul. In fact, it would entail that such affections, in the end, are peculiar *only* to the body. Since Aristotle does not hold either position, we have reason to think that his strategy for blocking the inference will be to accept both premises as true, and to argue that the syllogism as formulated is *invalid*.

#### 4. The Invalidity of the Proof of the Soul's Motion

Our first confirmation that Aristotle wants to attack the validity of the Unnecessary Inference is that he does not say that one of its premises is false, but that someone's inference from (*ὄθεν*) the first two premises is not necessary (*τὸ δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἀναγκαῖον*). The most immediate candidate for justifying this thought is that the syllogism's major term, 'motions' (*κινήσεις*) in premise 1, which should figure as the predicate in the syllogism's conclusion, does not appear there. Instead, it is replaced by the medio-passive verb 'is moved' (*κινεῖσθαι*).

This is a problem because the singular term 'motion' (*κίνησις*) is a nominalization of both the active verb 'it transitively moves' (*κινεῖ*) and the medio-passive form 'it is moved' (*κινεῖται*). Thus, to say that certain motions (*κινήσεις*) belong to something in the genitive case is *not* necessarily

<sup>16</sup> Pace Philoponus, *In De anima* 154.24-5 Hayduck, and Witt 1992, 179-80, although Witt represents it as an inconsistent triad. Shields 2007, 156 also understands the argument as invalid, but formulates it as: '(1) The soul perceives, pities, thinks (and so on). (2) Each episode of perception, pitying, thinking (and so on) is an instance of motion in its own right. (3) If (1) and (2), then the soul moves in its own right. (4) Hence, the soul moves in its own right.' The only problem with this formulation is that premise (2) might be seen as ambiguous, for whilst *subjects* can be said to be in motion *per se* or *per accidens*, *motions* cannot be said to be motions *per se* or *per accidens*.

<sup>17</sup> Everson 1997, 233 expresses a similar worry.

to say that that subject is moved – unless the subject is signified by the speaker as a patient, and not an agent, of those motions.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, Aristotle thinks that there is a real causal difference – in this case one reflected at the grammatical level – between saying that ‘X [transitively] moves’ (κινεῖν), and saying that, ‘X is moved’ (κινεῖσθαι),<sup>19</sup> because one cannot infer the latter proposition from the former. His opening criticism of Plato’s self-moving soul announces this exact principle: ‘it is not necessary (οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον) for what is causing motion (τὸ κινουῦν) also to be moved (κινεῖσθαι) itself’ (406a3-4). If we can find evidence that Aristotle recognised a similar illicit substitution of motion terms here, we will have an even stronger reason to suspect that he is concerned with the invalidity of the inference.

We do not have to look far. In what immediately follows, Aristotle explicitly reinterprets all of the psychological motions that ‘we’ predicate of the soul as analogous to indirect self-motions. This, as we saw above, allows for cases in which the soul transitively moves the body *per se* without itself being-moved *per se*. The dismantling of the inference begins thus (1.4, 408b5-13):

(viii) For even if one grants that<sup>20</sup> to be pained (λυπεῖσθαι) or to rejoice (χαίρειν) or to reason (διανοεῖσθαι) are motions (κινήσεις), (ix) and each of these motions is some kind of being-moved (κινεῖσθαί τι), and (x) the being-moved is done by the soul (ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς), for example, growing angry (τὸ ὀργίζεσθαι) or becoming afraid (φοβεῖσθαι) is the heart being-moved (κινεῖσθαι) in a certain way, and reasoning (διανοεῖσθαι) is a motion of this sort, or perhaps a different sort of motion, some of these motions being motions in respect of place,

<sup>18</sup> This observation derives from an objection of John Cooper to Mary Louise Gill’s account of agent motions, as reported in Gill 1980, 147 n. 18. Gill argues that this grammatical point does not exempt one from needing to conclude that an Aristotelian agent changes whilst it acts upon a patient, because, according to *Metaph.* Θ.6, as long as it is not true both to say that an agent changes and has changed (which would make the agent the subject of a complete activity), then the agent can be said to be in motion when it causes motion. However, Coope 2004, 206 n. 9 points out that this would follow only if the motion that the agent produces is *in* the agent. However, Aristotle denies this.

<sup>19</sup> See Waterlow 1982, who discusses Aristotle’s linguistic and conceptual justifications for inferring patients and (unmoved) agents of motion from the verbal forms of κινεῖν and κινεῖσθαι.

<sup>20</sup> εἰ γὰρ καὶ ὅτι μάλιστα – a standard phrase in Plato and Aristotle for granting a hypothesis for the sake of argument. See Ademollo, 402-3, n. 36. However, this tells neither for nor against the author’s acceptance of it. For instance, in *Phys.* 210b13-16, Aristotle does not accept the hypothesis offered, but in 225a27-9 he probably does. Thus, it is true that Aristotle need not be granting all, or indeed any, of the claims which follow, including the claim that psychological affections are κινήσεις. One must decide this question on the basis of other textual evidence. For instance, Peramatzis 2011, 159 argues that Aristotle’s claim that psychic affections only appear (δοκοῦσιν) to be motions ‘suggests that he is not committed to the identification of psychic functions and affections with types of change’. However, my earlier points about the classification of psychological affections in *DA* 1.1 suggest Aristotle’s acceptance of the hypothesis.

others motions in respect of alteration (of what parts and how they move, is a different account) – then<sup>21</sup> (xi) to say that the soul grows angry is like if someone were to say that the soul weaves (ὀφαίνειν) or builds (οικοδομεῖν).<sup>22</sup>

I shall bracket for the moment the fact that Aristotle is making a conditional claim in which the content of the antecedent affects the interpretation of the consequent. For now, it suffices to note that Aristotle begins by confirming the suspicion that premise 1 in the Unnecessary Inference (which asserts that affections are κινήσεις) does not, in conjunction with premise 2 (which asserts that the soul is the subject of these motions), necessarily lead to the conclusion that the soul *suffers motion* (κινεῖσθαι). Aristotle’s interpretation assumes, on the contrary, that to say that the soul φ-s and to hold that φ is a motion μ may be to say either (a) that the soul transitively μ-s Y, or (b) that the soul is μ-ed, or (c) both, in accordance with his earlier description of affections being possessed by the soul in virtue of the soul either producing or suffering them.<sup>23</sup> Thus, in order for the Unnecessary Inference to be valid, all the motions predicated of the soul should be able to be analysed into passive kinds of being-moved that belong to the soul alone.

However, Aristotle denies that they can be. This is because, in claim (x), he proceeds to clarify the major term in premise 1 of the Unnecessary Inference, namely ‘motions’ (κινήσεις), by describing each kind of motion as having two aspects: (I) the body’s ‘being-moved in a certain way’ (κινεῖσθαι τι), and (II) the body’s being-moved in a certain way ‘by the soul’ (ὕπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς). Under (I), affections like growing angry, hoping and so on – regardless of their surface grammatical forms – are classed as passive instances of the body being-moved in a certain manner. However, under (II), these same affections are *also* classed as transitive motions done by the soul. This is because, to say that X’s being moved (κινεῖσθαι) is done ‘by the soul’ is just another way of saying that the soul is transitively moving (κινεῖν) X (*Phys.* 3.3, 202b19-22). And indeed, this is what Aristotle *should* say, given that his paradigmatic definition of growing angry includes a distinct reference to an agent ‘by

<sup>21</sup> Reading δὴ, following Hicks 1907, Ross 1961 and Theiler 1959, who adopt the reading of mss. S and V. Shields 2016 reads δὲ with the majority of the manuscripts. Goodwin 1875, 195 notes that this kind of δὲ marks a consequent that is ‘emphatically opposed’ to the antecedent. If this is the right reading, it would give more justification to the traditional reading (but does not, I think, rule out my interpretation). Although Philoponus, *In De Anima* 156.11-13 Hayduck reads δὲ, he is frustrated by this syntax, and claims that Aristotle uses the particle to pick up the thought expressed in the antecedent, despite his view that the particle is grammatically superfluous.

<sup>22</sup> I follow Jannone and Barbotin 1966, who punctuate the end of the conditional with a period, instead of Ross 1961, who punctuates with a semicolon.

<sup>23</sup> Assuming of course that X and Y are different from one another.

which' (ὕπὸ τοῦδε) the motion of anger occurs, and this agent is clearly meant to be a cause distinct from the material *in which* the motion occurs (*DA* 1.1, 403a26-27).

Once Aristotle reinterprets the psychological affections referred to in the Unnecessary Inference as motions analysable under aspects (I) *and* (II), he begins to create a new and valid argument which, had he actually completed it, would have highlighted clearly the invalidity of this inference. Had Aristotle formulated such an argument in full, it would have run:

1. We say that the soul is pained, rejoices and reasons (and so on). (iv)
2. To be pained or to rejoice or to reason (and so on) is a being-moved of a part of the body by (ὕπὸ) the soul. (viii)-(x)
3. Thus, when we say that the soul is pained, rejoices, etc., we are only committed to the claim that the soul transitively moves a part of the body in a certain way. (Implied).

On this reading, to say that the soul is pained does not imply that the soul undergoes motion. This will be so despite the fact that the grammar of psychological affection verbs, which are generally intransitive,<sup>24</sup> *does not* reveal the agent-patient kinetic structure that Aristotle elucidates here. A further question will be dealt with below, namely, what is going on *in the soul* when it causes anger, hoping etc.

## 5. The Traditional Interpretation of Aristotle's Refutation

Despite laying the groundwork for showing that expressions such as, 'the soul is pained, etc.', need only commit one to the claim that the soul is transitively moving a part of the body during the occurrence of such an affection, Aristotle does not complete his argument by asserting this conclusion. Instead, he appears to brush aside his condensed and rich descriptions of the soul moving different parts of the body with different forms of motion stated in the antecedent,<sup>25</sup> in order to offer

<sup>24</sup> An exception is λυπεῖ. One can say in Greek that  $X$  λυπεῖ  $Y$ , and hold that  $Y$  but not  $X$  is λυπεῖσθαι. However, one could not infer from the claim that  $Y$  is λυπεῖσθαι that there is some agent  $X$  which λυπεῖ  $Y$ . Evidence that Aristotle did not think that the real structure of psychological attributes could always be 'read off' their verbal forms can be found in *SE* 1.4, 166b13-17, where he points out that ambiguity or homonymy sometimes occurs when activities are referred to by verbs which are passive, or when states, such as 'being healthy', are referred to with verbs which are active. Cf. *SE* 1.22, 178a4-24.

<sup>25</sup> Which, it should be mentioned, includes local motion (*DA* 1.4, 408b10). This raises the question of whether *some* affections might turn out to be cases of the soul undergoing indirect self-motion. However, Aristotle does not pursue this line of enquiry here, probably because it would raise questions about the spatial location of the

in the consequent what looks like another stand-alone refutation of the Unnecessary Inference. Such a proof appears simpler, and more to the point: saying that the soul grows angry and saying that it weaves and builds are analogous, and this, presumably, is not a good thing.

While I shall argue below that Aristotle's consequent does not offer us a stand-alone argument, it is important to see why so many interpreters have taken it this way. Call this stand-alone refutation of the Unnecessary Inference the *Traditional Interpretation*:<sup>26</sup>

1. To say that the soul grows angry (or is pained, or rejoices) is like saying it weaves or builds. (xi)
2. The soul does not weave or build. (Implied by (xi))
3. Thus, the soul does not grow angry, etc. (1, 2)

Advocates of this interpretation Aristotle's argument, appealing to his subsequent advice that it is perhaps better to say that 'a man in virtue of his soul' is the subject of affections, take premise 2 to rely upon the idea that the living being is the exclusive metaphysical subject of the affections discussed here. However, they are divided in how best to interpret the analogy's causal specifics.

David Charles, focusing on the analogy's metaphysical implications, argues that it rests upon Aristotle's radically un-Cartesian idea that no fundamental conceptual division can be made between the formal and material features that define a single psychological affection. He thinks that the point of the analogy is that, in the same way that weaving and building are essentially psycho-physical processes, such that one cannot conceptually isolate the psychological side of the motion of weaving from its physical side, so also one cannot conceptually isolate even the 'mental' side of anger from its physical realisation in the boiling of the blood around the heart.<sup>27</sup> I shall call this the *Inextricability Interpretation*.

Christopher Shields, focusing on the analogy's predicational implications and the metaphysical conditions necessary for motion to occur in something *per se*, argues that Aristotle is only concerned to deny that the soul can be predicated *per se* with motion, but not with denying that

parts of the soul in relation to the parts of the body. He does not attempt to resolve this question until *DA* 1.5, 411b14-27.

<sup>26</sup> This interpretation seems to have first been proposed by Alexander, *Mantissa* 104.36 Bruns. He is followed by Hicks 1907, 275, Rodier 1900, 2.135, Barnes 1971-2, Modrak 1987, 115 and Wedin 2000, 147.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Charles 2009, 296.

the soul can be a proper subject of metaphysical predication generally.<sup>28</sup> I shall call this this *Motion-Predication Interpretation*.

Charlotte Witt and Stephen Menn, focusing on the analogy's efficient-causal features, see it as promoting the thesis that the soul is an efficient cause of bodily affections, similar to an Aristotelian craft (τέχνη), the ἐνέργεια of which transitively moves a craftsman's body to instantiate its form in other materials whilst remaining unmoved.<sup>29</sup> I shall call this the *Craft Interpretation*.

## 6. The Agent-Patient Interpretation of Aristotle's Refutation

The common problem with all of these interpretations is that none can adequately account for the conditional structure of Aristotle's claim that underpins the analogy. As I noted above, the argument cited by most scholars who work within the framework of the Traditional Interpretation is grammatically the consequent of a conditional claim that is separated from its antecedent by a lengthy parenthetical digression.<sup>30</sup> It is generally the case that scholars who provide an explanation of one of these parts do not provide an explanation of the other.<sup>31</sup> However, if we put the contents of the antecedent and consequent on full display, a fuller, but more difficult, argument emerges. Call this the *Agent-Patient Interpretation*:

If to be pained or to rejoice (etc.) are types of being-moved, and each being-moved is a being-moved of a part of the body by the soul, then to say that the soul grows angry (or is pained, or rejoices etc.) is like saying the soul weaves or builds.

On this complete reading, given that the antecedent of the Agent-Patient Interpretation is hypothesized by Aristotle to be *true*, there must be some connection between the causal picture it lays out and the causal picture that an expression like 'the soul weaves' implies. Indeed, since the

<sup>28</sup> On the debate over whether soul can be considered a metaphysical ὑποκείμενον, cf. Shields 1988, and the criticisms of Granger 1995a and 1995b. Cf. Shields 1995 and Wedin 2000, 144-51.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Witt 1992, 180-1 (and *Metaph. Z.7*, 1032a32-b14); Menn 1992, 100-1.

<sup>30</sup> As Philoponus, *In De anima* 156.9-10 Hayduck notes: ἔχει δὲ ἀσάφειαν τὸ ῥητόν, ὅτι τὴν ἀπόδοσιν τῆς διανοίας μακρὰν ἐποίησε χρησάμενος μεταξολογία.

<sup>31</sup> This oddity is perhaps why a number of scholars, e.g. M. Frede 1992, 103, Kahn 1992, 366, Charles 2009, 306-7, whom I read as holding some version of the Traditional Interpretation, tend to cite *DA* 1.4, 408b11-15 as Aristotle's only refutation of the Unnecessary Inference, while either ignoring the antecedent, or omitting a full analysis of the lines that follow immediately after it (408b15-18). Wedin 2000, 147 emphasises the conditional structure, but gives an interpretation that ignores the fact that, in the antecedent, Aristotle makes the soul the agent of the motions discussed.

antecedent grants that statements in which affections are ascribed to the soul can be further (and coherently) analysed into statements about it transitively moving the body in some particular way – which is not to say that this is what such statements ordinarily mean – this implies that expressions such as ‘the soul weaves’ and ‘the soul builds’ are also subject to this same analysis. However, how would admitting that anger, for example, is a certain instance of the heart being-moved (κινεῖσθαι) by the soul, or alternatively, that it is an instance of the soul moving (κινεῖν) the heart, show that saying that the soul is angered is just like saying it weaves or builds?

The answer is that Aristotle is invoking a basic first principle of his physics: all motions or productions take place *in* the moved object, and not in the mover (or alternatively, in the patient, not in the agent) (*Phys.* 3.3, 202a13-16, 202a36-202b22; *DA* 2.4, 416a13-b2). Weaving and building, for Aristotle and his students at the Lyceum, were paradigm examples of this principle, being motions that clearly take place in the thing moved, and not in the agent of motion, when the agent causes these motions *per se*.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, we find exactly this technical point about both building and weaving in *Metaph.* Θ.8 (1050a30-34, tr. Ross, modified):

Where, then, the result [of an activity] is something apart from its use, the actuality (ἐνέργεια) is in the thing that is being made, for example, the act of building is in the thing that is being built, and that of weaving in the thing that is being woven (οἰκοδόμησις ἐν τῷ οἰκοδομουμένῳ καὶ ἡ ὕφανσις ἐν τῷ ὑφανομένῳ), and similarly in all other cases, and in general the movement is in the thing that is being moved (ἢ κίνησις ἐν τῷ κινουμένῳ).

In later chapters of *De Anima*, such as in *DA* 2.4, Aristotle will invoke a similar principle, when he argues that the nutritive soul acts upon the nutriment without being moved, just as a wood-worker is not affected by the wood (οὐδ’ ὁ τέκτων ὑπὸ τῆς ὕλης), but the wood is affected by him (ἀλλ’ ὑπ’ ἐκείνου αὔτη) (416a34-b2).

Even so, one might object that the *Metaphysics* passage only supports the idea that weaving and building do not cause *the weaver* to be woven or *the builder* to be built, but it does not imply anything about the correctness of predicating weaving and building of the *soul*.<sup>33</sup> However, Aristotle

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Kelsey 2003, 76-7.

<sup>33</sup> Aristotle mentions this sort of error in *Phys.* 8.5, 257a14-18: ‘Still more irrational than these things is that, on this view, it will turn out that everything that is able to cause motion will also be capable of being moved, if everything that is in motion is really moved by what is in motion; for then it will be cable of being moved (τὸ κινητικὸν κινητόν), just as if someone were to say (ὥσπερ εἴ τις λέγοι) that everything that is capable of making-

makes it clear that the subject of a craft motion *is* ultimately the craftsman's soul. Hence, in *Metaph.* Z.7, 1032a27-b23, he writes (tr. Ross, modified):

And all makings proceed either from craft or from a capacity or from thought . . . Concerning these cases, then, we must inquire later, but from craft proceed the things of which the form is in the soul (τὸ εἶδος ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ). (By form I mean the essence of each thing and its primary substance.) . . . And health is the formula and the knowledge in the soul. The healthy subject, then, is produced as the result of the following train of thought: since *this* is health, if the subject is to be healthy *this* must first be present, e.g. a uniform state of the body, and if this is to be present, there must be heat; and the physician goes on thinking thus until he brings the matter to a final step which he himself can take. Then the motion (κίνησις) from this point onward, i.e. the motion towards health (ἐπὶ τὸ ὑγιαίνειν), is called a 'making' (ποίησις) . . . Of productions and movements one part is called thinking (νόησις) and the other making (ποίησις) – that which proceeds from the starting-point and the form (ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ τοῦ εἶδους) is thinking, and that which proceeds from the final step of the thinking is making . . . That which produces, then, and the starting-point for the motion of becoming healthy (τὸ δὴ ποιοῦν καὶ ὅθεν ἄρχεται ἡ κίνησις τοῦ ὑγιαίνειν) is, if it happens by craft, the form in the soul.

Here Aristotle offers a model of how the soul generates a craft motion that eventuates in the production of crafted object: the single motion of producing health stretches from a doctor's soul thinking about how to heal a patient, through certain intermediate conclusions, to the doctor's arms being moved – again, by the soul – in order to complete the bodily motions necessary to bring about health in the patient. The same principle is stated in *GA* 1.22, 730b5-23, where Aristotle claims that the soul and its craft-knowledge move the craftsman's hands, which move his tools, which move his materials. It is also given in *MA* 8, 702a10-21, where he claims that thought or perception brings about φαντασία, which sets up a desire, which produces the affections which move the animal.<sup>34</sup>

As we learn here, and from *GC* 1.7, 324a24-b6, in cases such as these, Aristotle will allow us to call either the craft, or the soul-with-the-craft, the thing-moving (τὸ κινουόν) or the-thing-making (τὸ ποιοῦν) the crafted object. Given these affirmations, Aristotle and his students would be unlikely

healthy is capable of being-made-healthy (πᾶν τὸ ὑγιαστικὸν ὑγιαστὸν εἶναι), and everything capable of building is capable of being-built (τὸ οἰκοδομητικὸν οἰκοδομητόν).'

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Nussbaum 1978, 143-64.



to think that it is false to predicate a craft motion of the soul that it (or it-in-a-certain-state) originates *qua* ultimate agent.<sup>35</sup>

If so, there is no strong reason to think that Aristotle did not think it *true* to say that the soul weaves and builds. The Agent-Patient Interpretation of Aristotle's argument explains why this is: predicating craft verbs (such as weaving and building) of the soul is analogous to predicating affections of it, because in both cases, the motion that is performed by the soul occurs *in* a material substrate (or substrates) different from soul.<sup>36</sup> And, to repeat, this is what Aristotle should say, since his paradigmatic definition of anger as a motion done by an agent in a material (for a certain end) says just this.

We can now see how Aristotle's refutation of the Unnecessary Inference was probably understood in its original Peripatetic context: Since psychological affections are motions that are done by the soul in the body, they are analogous to craft-motions like weaving and building, which motions the soul produces without being moved; hence, just as weaving and building can be predicated of the soul without implying it is moved (since the weaving occurs in a material outside the soul), so also psychological motions can be predicated of the soul without concluding that it is moved (since these also occur in a material different from the soul, namely, the body).

If this interpretation is sound, then Aristotle's refutation of the Unnecessary Inference can be judged successful in two respects: first, it has shown that, in constituting affections, the soul need not even be moved *per accidens*, as it is when it moves the body through indirect self-motion. Secondly, it has shown that there is a way to resolve the dilemma about how the soul can possess the psychological attributes that it shares in common with the body while remaining unmoved. Aristotle accomplishes this by tacit appeal to his earlier definition of anger, his broader theory of motion – which holds that every motion minimally involves *both* a mover and a moved object – and an analogy between the soul's production of affections and its production of craft motions.

## 7. Evidence for the Agent-Patient Interpretation in Plotinus

<sup>35</sup> Among the commentators, only Themistius, *Paraphrasis in de Anima* 27.35 Heinze, comes close to recognising this point: καὶ γὰρ τούτων [sc. ὑφαίνειν ἢ οἰκοδομεῖν ἢ καθαρίζειν] αἰτία μὲν ἡ ψυχή τῶν κινήσεων· ἢ γὰρ ἔξεις ἡ οἰκοδομική ἐν αὐτῇ. While Aristotle often uses the phrase εἴ τις λέγει to introduce a completely incorrect way of thinking (e.g. *Metaph.* N.1, 1087a33), at other times, he uses it to introduce a statement that is true, but needs further qualification (e.g. *Phys.* 1.7, 190b30-31).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Coope 2004, 219: 'What can make agency seem puzzling is that an *agent* has the potential for *something else* to be other than it is.' Cf. Heinaman 1990, 97 n. 28.

We can find further (albeit indirect) support for the Agent-Patient Interpretation by noting Plotinus' queries about the weaving passage. In his attempt to make sense of it, he rightly classifies an agent-patient reading as one of three logical ways that would make Aristotle's claim that affections belong in common to body and soul, and his claim that the soul does not suffer affections, consistent with one another.<sup>37</sup> At *Enn.* 1.1.4.25-5.2, he writes (tr. Armstrong, modified):

Aristotle says that it is absurd to 'to talk about the soul weaving,' and it follows that it is also absurd to talk about it desiring or grieving; we should attribute these affections rather to the living being. But we must define the living being as either (a) the body of this special kind (τοιόνδε), or (b) the community (τὸ κοινόν) of body and soul, or (c) another, third, thing, the product of both. However that may be, [when the living being is desiring or grieving] the soul must either (1) remain unaffected and only cause affections in something else or (2) must be affected itself along with the body, and if it is affected, it must either (2a) be subjected to the same affection or (2b) a similar one.

Insofar as Plotinus misreports (or misinterprets) Aristotle as stating that predicating affections of the soul is 'absurd' (ἄτοπον), it is fair to say that he accepts the Traditional Interpretation of the weaving passage. However, in trying to show why it is not absurd, he unwittingly uncovers the logical structure of Aristotle's conditional claim. He points out that, even if we only predicate affections of the composite, we still need to explain how the soul, which is an essential part of this composite, is related to these affections.

The possibilities, he says, turn out to be three. Either (1), (2a) or (2b) will hold true of the soul's relation to the affections of the composite. His claim amounts to the idea that, if the Traditional Interpretation is right, and Aristotle thought that it is absurd to predicate affections (viewed as motions) of the soul instead of the living body, this would imply that the soul has no causal role to play in the affections defined as common to body and soul, which is also absurd. In contrast, the Agent-Patient Interpretation can be read as implying a version of Plotinus' option (1); it clearly shows that Aristotle does not think that it is absurd to predicate specific psychological motions of the soul;

<sup>37</sup> It is unclear if he thinks Aristotle recognised this problem (cf. *Enn.* 1.1.6.1); however Plotinus' attempt to assign belief (δόξα) and desire (ὄρεξις) to the soul, which activities he views as (in some manner) distinct from the passive motions that belong to the body, is close to the view that I think Aristotle does hold. For a fuller discussion of Plotinus' attempt to navigate Aristotelian and Platonic views on the affections, cf. Noble 2016.

rather, he thinks that it is misleading, insofar as it might lead someone to infer unnecessarily that the soul is *moved*.

## 8. An Objection from Alexander of Aphrodisias

In contrast to Plotinus, Alexander of Aphrodisias' interpretation of the weaving passage represents a strong challenge to the idea that Aristotle could think that it is true in any sense to say that the soul weaves and builds. In his own *De Anima*, 23.18-24 Bruns (tr. Caston 2012), Alexander claims that:

Just as a wrestler wrestles in virtue of the disposition for wrestling, but the disposition for wrestling does not itself wrestle (τὴν ἕξιιν τὴν παλαιστικὴν αὐτῆς τῆς παλαιστικῆς οὐ παλαιούσης) . . . and the weaver weaves but the disposition for weaving does not weave (οὐχ ὕφαινούσης); so one should suppose that the same holds likewise for those activities which things possessing a soul engage in in virtue of being animate. For in none of these cases does the soul in its own right (καθ' αὐτήν) engage in a vital activity; rather that which possesses the soul does so in virtue of it (κατὰ ταύτην).

Alexander's account differs from the Agent-Patient Interpretation by denying to the soul the present active participles of motion, 'weaving' (ὕφαινούσης) and 'wrestling' (παλαιούσης). However, to correctly mirror Aristotle's linguistic and philosophical point under the Agent-Patient Interpretation and in *Metaph.* Θ.8, not to mention passages elsewhere in *De Anima* when he describes psychological faculties transitioning from potentiality to actuality (see below), Alexander would have needed to deny to the soul the present *passive* participles of motion, 'being woven' (ὕφαινομένης) and 'being wrestled' (παλαιουμένης). His argument thus proves too much.

As we have seen, the point of Aristotle's analogy, given the content of the antecedent, is *not* that the soul cannot itself be something weaving (ὕφαινουσα), as Alexander asserts. Since Aristotle claims that the affections of the soul occur ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς (*DA* 1.4, 408b7),<sup>38</sup> if he were to allow that

<sup>38</sup> On ὑπὸ with the genitive as indicating the agent, cf. Smyth 1956, 387. However, the reading advanced here is also consistent with the idea that ὑπὸ indicates soul as an 'internal cause' of the characteristic motions in the body.

weaving also occurs ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς (in virtue of a weaver’s soul exercising its craft knowledge), Greek grammar would imply that it is correct to say that the soul is weaving (ὕφαινουσα).<sup>39</sup>

It is important to note that Alexander’s systematic substitution of the preposition κατὰ for ὑπό in causal explanations of the soul’s activities is a self-conscious denial of the form of agency that the latter preposition implies in favour of the more static picture implied by the former; for this reason, we may doubt that his interpretation accurately reflects Aristotle’s considered view.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, there are two good reasons to think that it does not. First, Aristotle’s licence to refer to the soul in the dative, in expressions like ‘that with which we live and perceive’ (ὃ ζῶμεν καὶ αἰσθανόμεθα) (*DA* 2.2, 414a4), does not extend to all relevant psychological predications. In his discussion of the soul’s role in nutrition, for instance, Aristotle argues that soul is *not* that ‘with which’ (ὃ) the body is nourished – that causal role belongs to nutriment (ἡ τροφή) (2.4, 416b22-3). Aristotle claims instead that it is the soul to which the efficient causal role of actively ‘nourishing’ (τρέφον) belongs (416b21-2). Although Aristotle accepts that nourishing *may* be described generally as an activity done ‘with the soul’ (415b23-4), he thinks it is more accurately described as being done ‘by the soul’.

Secondly, even if one were to insist with Alexander that the proper Peripatetic way of making causal claims about the soul’s affections is to say that a ‘man φ-s κατὰ his soul’, *Metaph.* Δ.18 shows that these claims still admit of a further analysis that is consistent with the idea of soul being a metaphysical subject and an agent of motion.<sup>41</sup> There, Aristotle claims that a man can be said to be ‘alive in respect of himself’ (ζῆ ὁ ἄνθρωπος καθ’ αὐτόν), not because this phrase is a basic and unanalysable proposition about a hylomorphic compound, but because κατὰ signifies in this phrase

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Plotinus 1.1.5.29-31: ‘But when a man has a desire for sexual pleasure, it will be the man who desires (ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἐπιθυμῶν); but in another way, it will also be the desiring power of the soul that desires (ἔσται δὲ ἄλλως καὶ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν ἐπιθυμοῦν).’

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Alexander, *De Anima* 78.26-27 Bruns: οὐδὲ κυρίως λέγεται κινεῖσθαι τὸ σῶμα ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς. He argues at 78.24-80.2 that this is an improper expression because it conceptualizes the soul and body as two separate entities (he gives the analogy of oxen pulling a cart). Instead, he argues, soul should be treated as an irreducible but static attribute of animate bodies that explains why they move, on analogy with how the property of lightness explains how fire moves up. However, Aristotle’s own practice, in *DA* 1.4 and elsewhere, is to separate the two, and treat each as having both peculiar and common attributes. Incidentally, I suspect that it is Alexander’s insistence that κατὰ is to be preferred over ὑπό in causal explanations appealing to soul, and his belief that the latter has only a metaphorical sense in Aristotle, that causes Simplicius, *In De Anima* 57.35 Hayduck to emphasise that the body’s being changed in regard to anger or thought is *not* its being changed *in respect* of the soul (i.e. in Alexander’s sense), but *by* it (οὐ τῆς καθ’ ἣν κινεῖται, ἀλλὰ τῆς ὑφ’ ἧς). Cf. Sorabji 1974, 73, who similarly claims that, for Aristotle, walking, thinking, weaving etc. are things a man does ‘due to the soul’ but ‘not things the soul does’. As with Alexander’s ‘in respect of the soul’, the problem with this thesis is that it does not explain what ‘being due to the soul’ amounts to.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Lewis 1991, 302-3.

that the soul is a part of man (μέρος τι τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), in which part – in contrast to the whole man or his body – the activity of ‘living’ is claimed to reside primarily or directly (ἐν ἧ πρώτῃ τὸ ζῆν) (1022a31-2).<sup>42</sup>

### 9. Further Evidence for the Agent-Patient Reading in *De Anima*

We can add to the above a final confirmation that Aristotle did not intend the weaving passage to rule out that the soul is a subject of the motions it causes in the body by noting the way he characterises the relation between the soul and its attributes earlier in *DA* 1.3, later in 1.5, and much later in 3.9.

In *DA* 1.3, there is already a strong suggestion that Aristotle thinks we should understand the soul as an agent, and the body as a patient, of the attributes that are common to body and soul. He writes (407b13-19):

But this is the absurdity in regards to this [account of soul in the *Timaeus*] as well as most (πλείστοις) other accounts concerning soul: they attach (συνάπτουσι) the soul to, and place it (τιθέασιν) within, body, having not added to their definition (προσδιορίζαντες) [of soul] the cause by which (διὰ τίν’ αἰτίαν) this occurs, nor in what state the body is in. And yet some such explanation would seem to be necessary; for it is on account of an association (κοινωνίαν) that one thing acts (ποιεῖ), and another thing suffers (πάσχει), that one thing is moved (κινεῖται), and another thing causes motion (κινεῖ); and of these relations, none belong (ὑπάρχει) to things related by chance.

Here, Aristotle complains that we need a principle that explains the kinetic relationship between soul and body. He suggests that this can be fulfilled by classifying one as the direct agent, and one as the direct patient, of motion. Obviously, this view is captured by the Agent-Patient Interpretation.<sup>43</sup>

In *DA* 1.5, 411a24-b5, in his investigation into whether the soul has parts, Aristotle reaffirms that his discussion in 1.4 did not rule out using expressions that predicate attributes of the soul. He writes:

So it is apparent from what we have said that it is not in virtue of being derived from the elements cognition (τὸ γινώσκειν) belongs to the soul (ὑπάρχει τῇ ψυχῇ), nor is it correct or

<sup>42</sup> This whole-part explanatory usage of κατά is also discussed at *Phys.* 5.1, 224a23-6.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Morel 2006, 133.

true to say that the soul is moved (κινεῖσθαι). But since cognition does belong to the soul (τὸ γινώσκειν τῆς ψυχῆς ἐστὶ), as well as perceiving (τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι), opining (τὸ δοξάζειν), irrational appetite (τὸ ἐπιθυμεῖν) and wishing (βούλεσθαι), and desires generally (ὅλως αἰ ὀρέξεις), and since motion in respect of place as well is produced in animals by the agency of soul (ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς),<sup>44</sup> along with growth, maturity, and decay, a question arises as to whether each of these attributes belongs to the whole soul (ὅλη τῆ ψυχῆ), such that we think (νοοῦμεν) and perceive (αἰσθανόμεθα) and are moved (κινούμεθα), and along with each of the rest, we both act and suffer (ποιοῦμέν τε καὶ πάσχομεν), or do we do each different thing with a different part (μορίοις ἑτέροις ἕτερα) of soul? And does the power of living (τὸ ζῆν) belong to some one of these parts in particular, or to more than one, or to all of them, or could life have some other cause (αἴτιον)?

Here, Aristotle uses both of the aforementioned ways of expressing the soul's causal relation to the body – locomotion, growth and decay being said to occur 'by the soul', and thinking, perceiving and moving, being said to be done 'with the soul'. Moreover, he affirms that, even though the soul does not cognise in virtue of being elemental and is not a proper subject of being-moved, it *is* the proper subject of the relevant psychological attributes.

There is, however, a suggestion that Aristotle is inclining towards confining the verbs that we predicate directly of the soul to the verbs of awareness listed here – γινώσκειν, αἰσθάνεσθαι, δοξάζειν, ἐπιθυμεῖν, βούλεσθαι – which he describes as ὀρέξεις. If so, it would be because he thinks that the most proper way of predicating a psychological attribute of only one of the two subjects that jointly define its agent and patient aspects would be to predicate of the soul only the definitional component of an affection that it does actively (the formal side of motion), and of the body, only the definitional component of an affection that it suffers passively (the material side of the motion).

This suggestion is picked up in *DA* 3.9, where, in ruling out the idea that practical and theoretical thought (νοῦς) are sufficient to produce local motion, Aristotle tacitly assumes the agent-

<sup>44</sup> These claims – which motivate the puzzles that follow – are a stumbling-block to the common view that Aristotle does not consider the soul to be a *per se* subject of any psychological attributes. Some commentators, for example Themistius, *Paraphrasis in De Anima* 37.27-8 Heinze, solve this problem by simply rewriting the entire argument to make it appear as though Aristotle claims that we should predicate psychological attributes of the human being. Hicks 1907, 299 reinterprets its obvious sense to make it conform to this idea as well. Others, such as Polansky 2007, 136, claim that, by means of the first person plurals, Aristotle 'respects the earlier point that the human or living being by means of the soul engages in various tasks'. However, the latter view is consistent with the claim that these capacities belong to *the soul*, and that some of them are done *by the soul* (ὑπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς) (e.g. when we, as the composite, think and perceive).

patient model that he uses in the weaving passage to show that, for the soul or mind to think of something as fearful or pleasant *is* for the heart (or some other part of the body) to be moved in a certain way. He writes (432b29-433a1):

But neither, whenever it [*sc.* thought] contemplates something of this sort, does it thereby issue a command to flee or to pursue (κελεύει φεύγειν ἢ διώκειν); for example, many times it thinks something to be fearful or sweet (διανοεῖται φοβερόν τι ἢ ἡδύ), but it does not command to be afraid (φοβεῖσθαι), but it is only the case that the heart is moved (ἡ δὲ καρδία κινεῖται), or, some different part [of the body].

This passage is helpful for elucidating what happens when the soul causes an affection in the body, for it adds a qualification to Aristotle's description of the motion 'by which' the soul moves a part of the body. In this example, the affection of being slightly afraid (but not terrified to the point of fleeing) is identified as the soul's *thinking something to be fearful*. This is of course what we should expect, since Aristotle's description in *Metaphysics Z.7* of how the soul's thinking process originates a craft motion implies that it begins from a cognition of some form, which is itself the beginning of a process of motion in the limbs of the craftsman that ultimately manifests itself in an external product. Analogously, the motion of anger will begin from a person's cognition of some perception or idea (e.g. that someone has slighted her, and she wants to harm them in return), which cognition is itself the beginning of a process of motion internal to the body that is experienced as the felt side of anger. Since Aristotle affirms, both here and later, that many judgments of the soul (e.g. that something is fearful), immediately cause her body to be co-affected (*DA* 3.3, 427b21-3), there seems to be no reason that he would deny that members of his school could truly state things like, 'my soul is afraid'. By doing so, a person would capture, minimally, that her soul was in the intentional state of judging something to be fearful, and maximally, that it was also causing her heart to be chilled.

#### **10. How to Express Better the Agency of Soul**

I have argued so far that in the weaving passage Aristotle attempts to face head on the difficulty of how he can hold both that the soul possesses certain psychological attributes *per se* that it either produces or suffers along with the body, and that soul is not something that can be moved *per se*. This tension, I claimed, is resolved by Aristotle's attempt to make (most) psychological affections

analogous to weaving and building<sup>45</sup> in virtue of the principle that the motion of an agent only occurs in a patient, and under the assumption that the soul (in a certain cognitive state) is the ultimate metaphysical subject of these craft activities. On this account, when psychological motions occur, the body (and only the body), is understood to be what is moved *per se*, and the soul (and only the soul), is understood to be what is causing these motions *per se* (under a cognitive description). Both aspects are intelligible apart from one another, despite the fact that Aristotle depicts them as necessarily co-extensive. What the weaving passage does not do is argue that predicating attributes of the soul is false.

However, if the Agent-Patient Interpretation is the right reading of Aristotle's conditional claim, this does not imply that he thought that to say that, 'the soul is pained, rejoices', and so on, is always the best way to express the soul's causal relation to the living body and its affections.<sup>46</sup> In fact, it is clear that he does not think so, because after giving the analogy, he introduces an alternative form of expression, championed by advocates of the Traditional Interpretation, which he thinks is better at expressing the soul's causal relation to the affections it constitutes in the body. Thus he continues (*DA* 1.4, 408b13-18):

(xii) For (γὰρ) it is better perhaps (ἴσως) not to say that the soul hopes or learns or reasons (διανοεῖσθαι), but to say a man [does these things] with his soul (τῆ ψυχῇ);<sup>47</sup> but (xiii) not in the sense of there being motion (κινήσεως) in the soul (ἐν ἐκείνῃ), but (xiv) in the sense that in some cases motion reaches (μέχρι) it [i.e. soul], but in other cases it originates from (ἀπό) it; (xv) for example perception (αἴσθησις) originates from particular objects (ἀπὸ τῶνδ᾽), whilst (xvi) recollection (ἀνάμνησις) originates from the soul (ἀπ' ἐκείνης) to the motions or their remnants (μονάς) in the sense-organs (αἰσθητηρίοις).

Having clarified in the Agent-Patient Interpretation the transitive mover / moved structure that psychological affections possess that allows one to avoid concluding that the soul is moved when

<sup>45</sup> The exception to this will be 'thinking' (νοεῖν). At *DA* 1.4, 408b25-9, Aristotle claims that νοῦς (which should be understood as thought in its contemplative mode) will not be a subject of psychological affections at all, neither as agent nor as patient. However, he admits that these affections belong to the common thing (τοῦ κοινοῦ) (i.e. soul as agent, and body as patient), only insofar as it has νοῦς.

<sup>46</sup> In fact, it is clearly inadequate, both because no patient which suffers the soul's motions is mentioned in such expressions and (as I discuss below) the psychological motion verbs that Aristotle lists are not transitive.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *DA* 3.4, 429a10 and 429a23.



predicating psychological motions of it, Aristotle now gives a further reason for why it is not necessary to infer the soul is moved when we affirm that motions belong to it.<sup>48</sup> To say that the soul grows angry, etc., he says, is not the only way we can express the soul's relation to the motions it produces in the composite. We may also say that a man hopes or learns or thinks *with* his soul, and this expression, for some cases at least, might be a better one than the former. Aristotle's use of the comparative 'better' (βέλτιον), confirms that he does not think it *false* to say that the soul hopes, thinks, etc., but only that it might not be the most accurate way to express the soul's relationship to its kinetic attributes.<sup>49</sup>

Why, however, would the expression 'a man φ-s with his soul' be a better form of expression than 'the soul φ-s', especially since, as I have argued, the logic of the Agent-Patient Interpretation shows that Aristotle thinks that it is true to say that the soul gets angry? After all, such an expression, according to his analysis, simply refers, under aspect (II) to the motion of the soul, *qua* agent, desiring revenge, and under aspect (I) to the blood around the heart, *qua* patient, boiling.

Aristotle's own elucidation of what this better form of expression signifies allows us to reconstruct an answer. First, he seems to think that it is less likely to mislead someone into thinking that the soul is moved when it causes an affection. And indeed he would be right. Since most psychological verbs in Greek are intransitive, their surface grammar does not reflect the fact that they are motions initiated by an agent and suffered by a patient distinct from the agent. Statements such as, 'the soul is rejoicing' – if one assumed this affection to be a specific kind of motion (e.g. locomotion, alteration etc.) – would almost always suggest to a Greek speaker that the soul is both causing and undergoing this motion. In contrast, Aristotle first points out that the phrase 'a man φ-s

<sup>48</sup> Reflected by the γάρ in 408b13. I take it that this γάρ, if explanatory, cannot refer to the immediately preceding conditional claim. First, it would be unclear how the fact that it is better to say one thing than something else would explain the entire conditional statement beginning at 408b5. Instead, it is more plausible to take Aristotle's γάρ as going back to the sentence *ending* at 408b5, that it is not necessary to infer that the soul is moved on the basis that 'we' say that soul is pained etc., even if these are motions. The γάρ would then explain that this form of expression is neither the only nor best way of describing the soul's relation to its affections, and *this* is why it is not necessary to infer that the soul is moved during their occurrences. I thank David Charles and Thomas Johansen for pressing me on this point.

<sup>49</sup> Irwin 1988, 583 n. 22 notes: '408b1-18 need not deny that the soul is a substance, even though Aristotle instructs us not *to say* that the soul is afraid or angry . . . It does not follow that the soul is not identical to the human being, *or that it would be false to attribute these processes to the soul*' (italics mine). Polansky 2007, 113 also notes that Aristotle 'does not deny that the soul does these things'.

with his soul' can, but need not, imply that there is motion in the soul (ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῆς κινήσεως οὐσης) (DA 1.4, 408b15).<sup>50</sup>

A second reason why saying that, 'a man φ-s with his soul' (τῆ ψυχῆ) would have seemed better to Aristotle than saying that 'a soul φ-s' is that the phrase 'with the soul' (τῆ ψυχῆ) is one that in virtue of its Platonic heritage is imbued with a rich causal sense that denotes the soul's power over the body.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, it is Plato who, at *Theaetetus* 184d, forges the grammatical distinction that Aristotle evokes here (with an important revision) between what Myles Burnyeat has called a 'with' idiom, represented by the instrumental dative, and a 'through' idiom, represented by διά governing the genitive case (1976, 29). There, Plato writes (*Theaet.* 184d1-5):<sup>52</sup>

It would be a very strange thing, I must say, if there were a number of perceptions sitting inside of us as if we were Wooden Horses, and there were not some single form, soul, or whatever one ought to call it, to which all these converge (συντείνει) – something *with which* (ἧ), through (διά) those things, as if they were instruments (ὀργάνων), we perceive all that is perceptible.

It is also Plato who, in *Timaeus* 45d2-3, first posits that motion reaches through the body 'as far as the soul' (μέχρι τῆς ψυχῆς) to cause perception (cf. 64b5). In adopting this Platonic idiom, Aristotle is able to maintain his view that the soul, and not the composite as such, plays the primary causal role in constituting the composite's psychological affections.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> This is because Aristotle specifies that, by means of this better expression, he, *unlike Plato* – who also uses this expression – does *not* mean that there is motion in the soul.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Johansen 2006, 146-7.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Plato, *Theaetetus* 185d3: τῆ ψυχῆ αισθανόμεθα. Cf. *Phaedo* 66e1.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Burnyeat 1976, 33: 'Evidently, the working rule for the "with" idiom is this: to say that a man φs with *x* is to say that *x* is that part of him (in the thinnest possible sense of "part") which φs when he does, that in him which does his φing or by φing makes it the case that he φs.' Aristotle's departure from this principle consists in the following: he thinks that (i) some cases of φ-ing happen *from* an agent, but *in* a patient, and that (ii) soul can undergo transitions from potency to actuality which he counts as passive forms of change, but not as instances of being-moved in the 'destructive' sense (see below). Burnyeat's formulation is equivalent to what Barnes 1983, 190 calls 'synecdochic predication', which he finds exemplified in Proclus' causal theory. Proclus' view derives from Plotinus, and Plotinus' view, as I have argued, is in part an attempt to work out the logic of Aristotle's view. Barnes expresses synecdochic predication as: 'If "*x* is *F*" is a synecdochic predication, then it may surely be *true*; but we may intelligibly add: "But *x* isn't *really F*", or better: "But it isn't really *x* that is *F*". For *x* is not *F* in its own right, it is not *F* καθ' αὐτο; rather *x* is (synecdochically) *F* in virtue of something else, *y*, which is (literally) *F*.' The logic of the weaving passage demands that a human, *x*, at least when viewed in abstraction from their soul, cannot be predicted with a psychological affection, *F*, *in their own right*, but can only be predicated with *F* as the patient of an active cause, *y*, which is *in* the soul, or *is* the soul. Cf. Simplicius, *In De Anima* 58.20-1 Hayduck.

Thirdly, and most importantly, in claim (xiv), Aristotle shows that there is a need for the better form of expression because, even if his agent-patient analysis holds of some psychological affections, *it does not hold for all of them*. This is because some psychological affections essentially involve motions that originate from outside the soul, such as the motions produced in our sense organs by perceptible objects.

This admission lands Aristotle in a new quandary. Whilst he can avoid saying, for the reasons given above, that the soul suffers the same motion *per se* that it causes, he cannot avoid saying that *something happens* when the motion of a perceptible object ‘reaches’ the soul. For Plato, when motion from a perceptible object reaches it, the soul is rocked about and a perceptual experience arises (*Phileb.* 33d2-6; 34a3-5; *Theaet.* 153b9-11).<sup>54</sup> But what happens on Aristotle’s account? Are we to imagine waves of perceptible motion travelling through the body only to break upon the soul as if it were an immovable metaphysical rock?<sup>55</sup>

The more natural inference, of course, would be to say that the soul is changed or moved once such motions reach it. Indeed, Aristotle himself raises this possibility in his criticism of Plato in *DA* 1.3, when he claims that, ‘if the soul is moved’ (κινεῖται), rather than believing that it moves itself, as Plato thought, we should ‘rather claim that it is moved by perceptible objects’ (ὕπὸ τῶν αἰσθητῶν) (406b10-11). However, since Aristotle maintains – throughout the whole of *DA* 1 – that we have no reason to accept the antecedent of this conditional, what does he think happens when motions from perceptible objects reach the soul?

## 11. Aristotle’s Second Psychological Dilemma and its Solution

Aristotle’s admission that motion reaches the soul places him in another dilemma: either he should allow that the soul suffers motion *per se* when these external motions reach it (as his predecessors thought), or he should deny that the soul plays an intelligible causal role in these cases.

This is a problem that arises for Aristotle’s description of perception in other places in his corpus as well. In *Phys.* 7.2, for instance, he draws the distinction between animate and inanimate things precisely in terms of the ability of the former to have their senses (αἰσθήσεις) altered by perceptible objects (244b10-12):<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Aristotle might also have his own earlier view in mind. See *Mem.* 1, 451a3.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Corcilius and Gregoric 2013.

<sup>56</sup> Similarly, in *Phys.* 8.3, 254a27-30, Aristotle claims that imagination and opinion seem to be kinds of motion in the soul.

For the senses (αἱ αἰσθήσεις) are altered (ἀλλοιοῦνται) in some manner (πῶς); for actual perception is a motion (ἢ κατ' ἐνέργειαν κίνησις) arriving through the body (διὰ τοῦ σώματος), with the sense being affected in some way (πασχούσης τι).

Aristotle's solution to this dilemma is to grasp the first horn of it, and he does so in *DA* 2.5.<sup>57</sup> During the course of this chapter, he offers a distinction that appears to be an attempt to reconcile the overarching thesis of *DA* 1, that the soul is always unmoved, with the thesis of *Physics* 7.2 (and elsewhere), that perception occurs when the soul (or one of its sensory powers) suffers some sort of alteration.<sup>58</sup>

In *DA* 2.5, Aristotle argues that the motions initiated by perceptible objects that reach the soul *do* cause it to alter, but *not* in the way that his classical account of motion describes (417b2-5):

Nor is suffering (τὸ πάσχειν) something simple; but one kind is a kind of destruction (φθορά) by what is opposite, and another is more a preservation (σωτηρία) of that which is in potentiality by what is in fulfilment and like it in the way that potentiality holds in relation to fulfilment.

Here, Aristotle divides the forms of suffering into two types: a destructive type, and a preservative type. By so doing, Aristotle finds a way to cut the Gordian knot tying together his denial in *DA* 1 that the soul can suffer motion (which implies that it cannot be altered, even by perceptible objects), and his affirmation in the weaving passage that motions reach the soul so as to constitute acts of perception. In his classical account of alteration, worked out in *Phys.* 5.2, alteration is viewed primarily in the first way, as the destruction of a particular perceptible quality in an object *via* the instantiation of an opposing perceptible quality in that object. However, perceiving, Aristotle now claims, is not this sort of alteration.

Instead, when something is led from a state of potentiality to fulfilment, such as when the capacity for thinking actually thinks something, it is inappropriate to say that it is being kinetically

<sup>57</sup> See Burnyeat 2002; Johansen 1997.

<sup>58</sup> If this is correct, then, contrary to Menn 2002, 89, neither *De Somno* 1, 454a8-10, nor *Phys.* 7.2, 244b11-12 need be taken to 'flagrantly contradict' the doctrine of *De Anima* that the soul is unmoved. Aristotle's claims there should be understood in the light of his doctrine that perception, no matter how one interprets it, is not a classical destructive change.

altered (διὸ οὐ καλῶς ἔχει λέγειν τὸ φρονοῦν, ὅταν φρονῆ, ἀλλοιοῦσθαι, 2.5, 417b8-9). Instead, one is only licensed to say either that it does not *suffer* anything (οὐδὲ πάσχειν φατέον) during this change, since the change does not share the essential destructive feature of suffering, or to say that there is a second and distinct kind of alteration going on: a change towards a positive natural state (417b13-15). The perceptual capacity of the soul, in virtue of being able to be brought into natural fulfilment by being made ‘like’ external perceptible objects, is classed as an example of something that undergoes the latter kind of alteration (2.5, 417b19; 418a3-6).

Here, we learn *what happens* when perceptible motions ‘reach’ the soul: the perceptual capacity of the soul is altered – but only in this second sense of being brought from a state of being potentially ‘like’ a perceptible object to being ‘like’ that object in fulfilment. This form of change is distinct from having an underlying actual property replaced by another actual property.<sup>59</sup>

With this new analysis of alteration, Aristotle can now hold all of the following: (1) the soul *per se* is the efficient cause of some psychological affections in the way that the weaving passage affirms; (2) the soul is not altered or moved *per se* in the destructive sense when bodily motions originating from perceptible objects reach it; and (3) the soul suffers alteration *per se* in the positive sense when perceptible motions reach it. It is (3) that allows the soul to play a necessary, and thick, causal role in constituting acts of perception, even though it cannot cause perception to occur without present external input (*DA* 2.5, 417b24-5).

Having made this distinction, Aristotle even felt entitled in *DA* 3.10 to return to the more ambiguous language of soul’s ‘being moved’ in identifying the soul’s faculty of desire as that which directly moves (κινεῖ) an animal (433a31-b1) in virtue of being moved (κινούμενον) itself, insofar as one’s soul thinks or imagines the practical good of a given situation (433b11-12). Here, it is not the soul, but the practical good (insofar as this is a stable conception in thought or φαντασία) that is identified as the ultimate unmoved mover of desire. This leads Aristotle to conclude at 433b15-21 that, in all cases of natural animal motion:

there is then first what is unmoved (ἀκίνητον), the practically achievable good; second, what causes the motion (κινεῖ) while being moved (κινούμενον), namely, the capacity of desire (for what is moved is moved insofar as it is desiring, and desire in actuality is a kind of motion); and lastly what is moved, the animal. But the instrument with which (ᾧ) the desire causes

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Heinaman 2007.

motion (κινεῖ) is already something bodily; for this reason, one ought to investigate it with the works that are common to body and soul.

If Aristotle has not forgotten all of his careful qualifications that came before, he must be claiming here that the sort of ‘being moved’ that happens to the soul’s capacity of desire is the sort of suffering in which a thing or power moves from potentiality to fulfilment. The soul’s capacity of desire is then moved, but only insofar as it is altered – *in the second sense of alteration* – by entertaining a new perceptible or intellectual practical goal.<sup>60</sup>

In being moved in this second way, desire is able to produce animal locomotion through the instrument of the connate spirit (πνεῦμα) (MA 10, 703a4-10). Giving an account of how this works is the task of *De Motu Animalium*, which takes as its starting point the fact that *De Anima* has determined already about the soul, ‘whether it is moved or not, and if it is moved, how it is moved (MA 6, 700b4-6). The interpretation I have offered of the weaving passage explains how Aristotle answered each of these questions.

We are now in a position to see how alterative interpretations fare in respect of explaining DA 1.4, 408a29-b18 as a whole. I have already pointed out their common problem, which is that they fail to take into account the conditional structure of 408b5-13. We should now see how each compares to the Agent-Patient Interpretation.

David Charles’ Inextricability Interpretation shares with mine that Aristotle thinks of (most) psychological affections as unified psycho-physical processes that are definitionally inseparable from matter (i.e. their material and formal components are essential to their scientific definitions). However, on my account, this definitional inseparability stems from Aristotle’s idea that an affection is a motion that originates from a formal agent and takes place *in* a bodily patient – not from the idea that the formal and material aspects of an affection are *conceptually* inseparable. One can conceive of an agent separate from a patient (e.g. an agent that can do an action of a specified type in an unspecified object), just as one can conceive of a patient separate from an agent (e.g. a patient that can be affected in a specified way by an object of an unspecified type). The point of DA 1.4 is that, *because* we can describe a psychological motion under two distinct conceptual aspects – its being caused by the soul, *qua* agent, in respect of some cognitive goal, and its occurring in some bodily material, *qua* patient – we can affirm that only the body is moved when the soul causes psychological

<sup>60</sup> Corcilius and Gregoric 2013, 77 label this an alteration ‘with intentional dimension’.

affections.<sup>61</sup> It is true that one will not fully understand, in a scientific manner, what a certain affection is without grasping its full definition; however, it is also true that one cannot understand its full definition without being able to distinguish conceptually between the formal and material components that figure within it.

Christopher Shields' Motion-Predication Interpretation shares with mine that the weaving passage does not aim at showing that the soul cannot be a metaphysical subject of predication. It is also right that, since Aristotle denies that the soul is extended (*DA* 1.3, 407a2-3), and since he tends to assume that things that are movable *per se* are extended (e.g. *Phys.* 4.4), he has an *a priori* reason to doubt that soul could be moved *per se*. Even so, Aristotle makes no appeal to the soul's lack of extension in the weaving passage; more importantly, he does not claim that psychological affections are *per accidens* motions (or indirect self-motions) of the soul, in the way that local motions of the ensouled body are.<sup>62</sup>

Stephen Menn's and Charlotte Witt's Craft Interpretation shares with mine the idea that Aristotle deploys the craft analogy to highlight the soul's role as an efficient cause; however, in its details, it does not explain how attributes like growing angry belong to the soul (if at all) in common with the body, nor how the soul both causes motion in the body *and* responds to motion originating from outside it.

On the one hand, Witt affirms that the weaving analogy is a positive one, but thinks that Aristotle denies that the soul is the subject of the motions that he lists in *DA* 1.4 (1992, 180). Clearly, however, the soul needs to be the subject of these motions in some sense in order to share them in common with the body. On the other hand, Menn argues that Aristotle 'only denies that the soul alone is the subject of the complex πάθος of sensation or anger' (2002, 101). However, he neglects to mention whether Aristotle thinks that expressions that predicate affections of the soul *without*

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *Phys.* 2.1, 193b34-5. The difference between the status of mathematical attributes and psychological attributes in this regard is not that one cannot conceptually isolate through abstraction the psychological or formal side of the latter, but only that, if one *defines* these psychological affections apart from the matter in which they occur, one will not generate true scientific deductions and demonstrations (e.g. in cases where one's blood is in a material state such that it cannot be sufficiently heated so as to instantiate anger, or in cases where one's blood is heated unnaturally so as to be in a state resembling that of anger, but one has no corresponding desire to harm someone). In the mathematical case, no such scientific errors will result, because mathematical attributes are not *motions*, and hence they can be defined, and their properties deduced, without reference to the material bodies in which they inhere.

<sup>62</sup> In a later article, Shields 2007, 160 suggests that Aristotle may, in the end, accept that all the affections of the soul are positive alterations (of the sort discussed in *DA* 2.5), with the result that he may hold the 'peculiar' and 'in some ways inexplicable' view – that the soul simply perceives, pities etc. without being moved.

mentioning their other bodily subject can be true. Nor does he specify whether the weaving analogy is to be taken in a positive sense.

However, Menn's account shares with mine the general idea that Aristotle initially avoids the Unnecessary Inference by affirming that the transitive motion of some agent *X* does not entail the being-moved of *X*. It differs, however, in that it claims that Aristotle is relying upon the principle that the ἐνέργεια of an agent *X* (e.g. of an agent-soul) can be a κίνησις (in the sense of κινεῖσθαι) of a patient *Y* (e.g. of a patient-body) without there being κινεῖσθαι in *X* – and *not* the principle that the motion of an agent takes place in the patient. It also holds that this principle is used to defend the immovability of the soul both in cases where it originates motion, and in cases where motion reaches it.<sup>63</sup>

The problem is that, whilst the ἐνέργεια principle explains how the soul directly *causes* affections like anger without being moved, it does not explain how the soul can *respond* to external motions without being moved. This is because, as we saw above, in cases where an external motion (e.g. the motion of a perceptible object) reaches the soul, the external object would have the ἐνέργεια of an unmoved agent, and the soul the ἐνέργεια of a moved patient. Given the notion of ἐνέργεια that Menn specifies, it is unclear why the soul would remain unmoved when it is the patient of a motion originating from an external perceptible object. After all, Aristotle cannot simply stipulate that a motion originating from an external object occasions in the soul 'an ἐνέργεια which is not a motion' (Menn 2002, 100-1), since the whole point of the ἐνέργεια-κίνησις principle assumed by Menn's Craft-Interpretation is that the ἐνέργεια of an agent causes a κίνησις to take place in a patient (and not in itself). Since the soul can be either an agent or a patient of an affection (depending on what sort of psychological affection is occurring), Aristotle is in need of the more sophisticated distinctions he sets out in *DA* 2.5.

## 12. Conclusion

I have argued that Aristotle's commitments in *DA* 1 place him in a dilemma: he should either affirm that the soul has kinetic affections that it shares with the body, in which case it seems that that soul is moved *per se* like his predecessors thought, or, he should affirm that the soul is not moved *per se*, and accept that it does not have kinetic affections that it shares with the body. The Unnecessary Inference, which the weaving passage attempts to dismantle, is Aristotle's acknowledgement that he needs to solve this dilemma.

<sup>63</sup> Menn 2002, 94 n. 17.



I have also argued that the Traditional Interpretation of this passage, cogently defended by Alexander of Aphrodisias and a number of modern commentators, nevertheless does not adequately account for its conditional structure, and that it conflicts with Aristotle's prior commitment to the soul's possession of psychological affections defined as motions. Instead, I claimed that a proper understanding of the weaving passage is prepared for by Aristotle's distinction between two ways of being moved accidentally, one in which *X* is moved *per accidens* by some *Y*, and another when *X* transitively moves *per se* a *Y* that *X* is in and only suffers the motion of *Y per accidens*, which I called the principle of indirect self-motion. This principle, I claimed, is underpinned by a deeper one, advanced in Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, and appealed to later on in *De Anima* and *De Motu Animalium*, which is that motions take place in what is moved, and not in (first) movers. It is this principle, I claim, that Aristotle uses to analyse the soul's relationship to the motions it causes in the body.

I have also argued that Aristotle is not concerned in the weaving passage to deny that the soul is a proper metaphysical subject of predication *tout court*, but that he wants to refine the ways we speak about the soul in order to make it clear that there can be motion initiated by, or motion that goes to, the soul, without the soul being moved *per se*. By adopting the better Platonic expression 'a man  $\phi$ -s with his soul' – which he glosses as signifying that affections are motions that either arise from or go to the soul of a person – Aristotle is able to maintain that the soul causes motion in the body without being moved and, in addition, that it can respond to motions. This is important, since some motions, such as those involved in perception, have their origin in the external world. However, this, I argued, raises a problem about how the soul can respond to these motions without being moved, which is not solved until Aristotle distinguishes kinds of being affected and kinds of alteration in *DA* 2.5.

Aristotle accomplishes all these tasks, I have argued, by calling attention to the invalidity of the Unnecessary Inference. In doing so, he demonstrates that, because psychological motions have an agent-patient structure, there is no necessity to infer from expressions that predicate psychological motion verbs of the soul that it is a patient of these motions.

Aristotle's point in the weaving passage then is that, to say that the soul grows angry can, at least at the metaphysical level, be analysed in the same way as the claim that it weaves and builds, namely, as the claim that the soul is in possession of some cognitive form or goal – such as the form of a dress which is to be woven, or the form of a person who is to be punished for slighting – which translates into the body's being moved in a particular way. He does not claim, nor does he want to claim (as his later discussions of the soul's ability to move and be moved show) that the only

unqualifiedly true statements one can make about the soul are those in which a living being figures as a subject and the soul figures as an instrumental dative. Indeed, the only sense in which it could unqualifiedly be false to say that someone's soul is angered is if one uses 'is angered' to refer *only* to the material component of its definition, a bodily organ being-moved in a certain way, in ignorance of, or deliberately excluding, its formal component, 'desiring revenge'.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, for Aristotle, statements like 'a man  $\phi$ -s with his soul', just as much as statements like ' $\phi$ -ing is done by the soul' and 'the soul  $\phi$ s', are metaphysically thick, and in need of theoretical elucidation. In this respect, one may say, on good Aristotelian grounds, that it is true that souls become pained, rejoice, and weave and build – as long as one understands these claims, as Aristotle did, to elide an implicit qualification: 'in the body'.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. Barnes 1971/1972, 107.

<sup>65</sup> Numerous scholars have helped to shape the ideas of this paper over the past few years. Thanks are due above all to Christopher Shields, who read and offered decisive guidance on its first incarnation after its presentation at the University of Oxford in 2013, and to Thomas Johansen, who offered further encouragement and suggestions for improvement. For their gracious and astute suggestions on later drafts, thanks are due to Francesco Ademollo, George Boys-Stones, David Charles, Ursula Coope, Ana Laura Edelhoff, Elena Cagnoli Fieconi, Michail Peramatzis and especially my anonymous referees.

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