

Christopher P. Long

Aristotle on the Nature of Truth



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Aristotle on the Nature of Truth

This book reconsiders the traditional correspondence theory of truth, which takes truth to be a matter of correctly representing objects. Drawing Heideggerian phenomenology into dialogue with American pragmatic naturalism, Christopher P. Long undertakes a rigorous reading of Aristotle that articulates the meaning of truth as a cooperative activity between human-beings and the natural world that is rooted in our endeavors to do justice to the nature of things.

By following a path of Aristotle's thinking that leads from our rudimentary encounters with things in perceiving through human communication to thinking, this book traces an itinerary that uncovers the nature of truth as ecological justice, and it finds the nature of justice in our attempts to articulate the truth of things.

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Aristotle on the Nature of Truth

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accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in
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For

Chloe, Hannah, and Valerie

... σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίνοντας.
... *wisdom is for the ones listening to speak truth and act according to nature.*

Heraclitus, in Hermann Diels,
Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker

τοῖς μὲν οὖν τότε, ἅτε οὐκ οὔσι σοφοῖς ὥσπερ ὑμεῖς οἱ νέοι, ἀπέχρη
δρυὸς καὶ πέρας ἀκούειν ὑπ' εὐηθείας, εἰ μόνον ἀληθῆ λέγοιεν.

Back then, when they were not as wise as you young people, it was sufficient for them in simplicity to listen to an oak tree or a rock, if it should speak the truth.

Socrates to Phaedrus in Plato's
Phaedrus, Platonis Opera

... ὁμῶς δὲ παραλάβωμεν καὶ τοὺς πρότερον ἡμῶν εἰς ἐπίσκεψιν
τῶν ὄντων ἐλθόντας καὶ φιλοσοφήσαντας περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας.

... *thus, let us receive into the inquiry of beings also those who came before us, for they approached and philosophized concerning the truth.*

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*

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Prolegomenon

With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance. . . . [I]ts impulse springs from the beginning which came into the world when we were born and to which we respond by beginning something new on our own initiative.

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*¹

The things said in this book, itself a second birth, took root in the wake of the births of my two daughters: Chloe Aliza and Hannah Aveline. The appearance of these two beginners was for me an awakening in which the world came to life in new ways as two new lives found their ways into the world. They arrived with a wonderful openness to things, indeed, with the openness of wonder. Listening at first largely by touch, they felt their way into the world. Each was in her own way receptive to the myriad expression of things. As she learned to use her hands, Chloe would slowly, determinately reach out for a toy wooden block that, once procured, released the secrets of its insistent solidity as she turned it over, pressed upon it, dropped and recovered it, and finally, as if its very essence could be tasted, placed it in her mouth. And Hannah, always with an irrepressible smile, would

¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 176–7. Copyright © 1958 by the University of Chicago Press.

stretch out her hand toward the water dripping from the spigot in the bath, feel its inviting warmth and elusive liquidity, try and fail to grasp it, only then to announce with a screech of pure delight that what you really need to do with this is splash.

At such moments, as these two were beginning to get a feel for things, they were teaching their father about the profound and intimate ways things make themselves felt, impress themselves upon us, yield something of their truth to our careful, playful, and earnest attempts to discern precisely what they are and where we are with them. In these moments of tactile dialogue, I heard the faint whisper of a language that makes the world possible and opens us to the possibilities of the world. Although they could not yet speak in words, Hannah and Chloe were able to hear the ways things spoke to them, and they have learned – at first haltingly, and then with ever increasing confidence – to respond in ways appropriate to the saying of things.

Although rooted in those poignant moments of dialogical encounter in which the world opens itself to human articulation, this book is animated by the conviction that things go into words, though not without remainder, and that words are capable of articulating something of the nature of things. This conviction has ancient roots; for no thinker was more attuned to the ways words are able to give voice to the nature of things or more concerned to hear the ways nature lends itself to articulation than Aristotle. By following the paths of Aristotle's thinking as it attends to the saying of things, this book, in the spirit of Aristotelian thinking itself, seeks to say something new about Aristotle by saying something old about the human relation to nature. In so doing, it pursues a methodological strategy that is determined in the course of the investigation as a phenomenological legomenology. In this too, we follow Aristotle; for this methodological approach is grounded in the thoroughly Aristotelian commitment to allow one's thinking to be determined throughout by the appearing of things said, seeking in the many ways of saying the traces of an articulated truth. For Aristotle, as for us, truth is a matter of saying things in ways that do justice to the saying of things.

The structure of this book is chiasmic; its course, centripetal: it begins by following a path intent on tracing the meaning of truth as

justice and ends having traversed a path that attempts to articulate the meaning of justice as truth. Its focal point is also its fulcrum, found in the discussion of the ligature of appearing at the end of Chapter 4. At this jointure, the path of Aristotle's thinking that seeks to *address* things according to the ways they show themselves turns toward a way of *response* that opens the possibility of thinking truth as bound to the question of justice and justice as rooted in the attempt to articulate the truth. The central metaphor announced at the fulcrum is at once mechanical and biological; it is the metaphor of the lever or joint that articulates the manner in which diverse phenomena cooperate in a world in which they have, despite their irreducible differences, been somehow ordered together into ecological community. The focal point of this ecological community, and of this book, is the response-ability endemic to ontological encounter.

The original title of this work was *The Saying of Things: The Nature of Truth and the Truth of Nature as Justice*. Although the title under which it is here published, *Aristotle on the Nature of Truth*, accurately describes the book's content, it does not quite capture the spirit in which the book was written or the structure it embodies. This book traverses a path of thinking that leads to the focal metaphor of articulation and, lifted by it, moves toward an account of justice as the attempt to put words to things by attending to the ways they show themselves and responding in light of the whole to which they and we belong. It begins with an account of the unicity of the singular, of the irreducible uniqueness endemic to each individual encountered. It then moves back through the history of things said concerning the meaning of truth in order to call attention to an ancient understanding of truth as intimately bound to interhuman being-together. Having thus rehearsed some of the things said by our predecessors concerning truth, the book turns in earnest to the central predecessor with which it will remain concerned throughout: Aristotle. Chapter 3 offers an account of Aristotle's own legomenological method, which attends to the things said by his predecessors in order to discern the truth articulated there. This is no prolegomenon to the investigation into truth but a performance of how truth shows itself in the saying of things. This leads to Chapters 4 and 5, which together trace the path of concerned address that seeks to lend voice to things as it connects with the path of

attuned response that seeks to articulate things according to the ways they show themselves. Chapter 6 offers a reading of the many ways truth is said in Aristotle as an articulation of the plurivocal expression of things organically bound up with the intelligibility of nature itself. Here is heard an account of definition in Aristotle oriented by the attempt to say things according to themselves. In Chapter 7, this attempt to say each according to itself is brought into relation with Aristotle's account of the nature of the whole in which such sayings occur. This involves an engagement with those difficult sayings concerning the divine as an erotic principle expressed in terms of the enigmatic "thinking of thinking thinking" that opens the possibility of understanding ecological justice in terms of the attempt to articulate the truth of things. This marks the move beyond Aristotle to a thinking intent on weaving the good, the beautiful, and the just into the fabric of the interhuman community with nature by assiduously seeking to articulate the truth voiced in the saying of things. In the end, the things said in the pages that follow seek to articulate the nature of truth in terms of ecological justice and the nature of justice in terms of an ethics of truth.

This book is, however, a dialogue not only with the things Aristotle says but also with certain predecessors of our own who read Aristotle with sensitivity to the spirit of his thinking. It draws explicitly on the insights of Frederick Woodbridge and John Herman Randall, whose robust naturalism allowed them to hear in Aristotle the articulation of a natural cooperation between the ways things are said and the human ability to respond in meaningful ways. It is indebted to the thinking of John Dewey, who recognized the social, political, and historical dimensions of communication and offered an account of transaction that resonates with the ecology of ontological encounter offered here, which, like Dewey, refuses to posit a radical segregation between human-being and nature. This book remains indebted in more ways than can easily be said to the thinking of Martin Heidegger, whose existential phenomenology uncovers something of the truth about truth as the site of the appearing of being and who never ceased thinking about the ways human-being inhabits language as much as language inhabits human-being.

But this book too is a kind of response offered in dialogue with friends who have taken the philosophical stakes of my previous work

on Aristotle seriously. In it is heard an attempt to listen more attentively to the things Frank Gonzalez has said about my need to attend more carefully to the things Aristotle says about the activity of the divine.² Chapter 7 marks a kind of response, though perhaps one that will be less than satisfying to Frank – and perhaps even to Aristotle himself – for it continues to refuse to relinquish a dimension of potency in the divine activity itself. In this book is also heard a response to Claudia Baracchi, whose critique and work have convinced me that a simple reversal of the traditional hierarchy that placed the theoretical over the practical is untenable and fails to do justice to the manner in which nature expresses itself theoretically.³ Finally, these pages include an ongoing dialogue with three colleagues who, in different ways, have taught me to hear in Aristotle the nature of language and the language of nature. Vincent Colapietro has articulated in written and verbal dialogue a robust naturalism that opened me to the new possibilities for reading Aristotle articulated in what follows. Walter Brogan, in his thoughtful, generous, and provocative responses to my first book in book sessions held at the Pennsylvania State University and at the 2006 Ancient Philosophy Society meeting, has pressed me to rethink the nature of the universal not as that which is imposed from without but as something that shows itself in the natural expression of things. The book too is part of a dialogue with Aryeh Kosman, whose career-long attention to the things Aristotle said and whose committed attempts to do justice in writing and in person to those things said stand as its paradigm. My hope is that this response to the things said by these predecessors and colleagues will contribute to a continuing dialogue animated by a philosophical life devoted to justice and the love of truth.

In this spirit of ongoing dialogue, rooted in love and committed to justice, I dedicate this book to my daughters, Chloe and Hannah, and to their mother, Valerie, without whom neither they nor anything written here would be possible.

² Francisco Gonzalez, "Form in Aristotle: Oppressive Universal or Individual Act?" *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 26, no. 2 (2005): 179–98.

³ Claudia Baracchi, *Aristotle's Ethics as First Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 172.

Aristotle on the Nature of Truth

The Saying of Things

The whole vast scheme of things seems to be engaged in expressing what it is.

Frederick James Eugene Woodbridge,
*The Realm of Mind*¹

Human speech is rooted in our inchoate encounters with things. It grows in response to their primordial language, nourished by our attempts to come to terms with the world into which we are born. If, as Hannah Arendt claims, action corresponds to the human condition of natality insofar as it names the capacity to begin something new, speech must be heard to belong to a world of action in which new possibilities open as we are addressed by a language always operative in our encounters with things.² Human speaking emerges in and through acts of response to the saying of things.

If human speaking is intimately bound up with action in the manner Arendt so powerfully suggests, it is because the speech acts that give rise to human speaking are themselves predicated on an ability to respond to things in ways that do justice to the paradoxical ways they show themselves, at once lending themselves to and eluding

¹ Frederick James Eugene Woodbridge, *The Realm of Mind: An Essay in Metaphysics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), 62.

² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 178.

human articulation. However insightful, Arendt's analysis of the human conditions of action and speech does not go far enough. By grounding speech in "the fact of distinctness" and "the actualization of the human condition of plurality," she registers only the human side of the dialogue, in effect muting the eloquence of things. Distinguishing first between otherness, which belongs to everything that is, and distinctness, which names the capacity to exhibit variation endemic to organic life, Arendt goes on to emphasize the peculiar being of human-being:

But only man can express this distinction and distinguish himself, and only he can communicate himself and not merely something – thirst or hunger, affection or hostility or fear. In man, otherness, which he shares with everything that is, and distinctness, which he shares with everything alive, become uniqueness, and human plurality is the paradoxical plurality of unique beings.³

Yet this taxonomy mutes the unicity of things, dampening the extent to which even inanimate things communicate distinction and distinguish themselves. The term 'unicity' is designed to point, *mutatis mutandis*, to that in things which corresponds to what Arendt identifies as the human condition of uniqueness. If 'otherness' names the abstract difference that marks the sheer multiplicity of things,⁴ 'unicity' names the concrete phenomenon of singularity that announces itself in each ontological encounter. Human uniqueness as a condition for the possibility of human speech and action is always already funded and made possible by an irreducible ontological unicity that belongs to the nature of things.⁵ Here 'ontology' must be heard in a strict sense, for it articulates the very λόγοι of the ὄντα, the gathering of beings in a communicative transaction in which the beings involved express themselves as they are even as

³ Ibid., 176.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ To lend more determination to the term 'unicity,' it is perhaps helpful to draw it into relation with Peirce's category of "Firstness," which he defines in a letter to Lady Welby this way: "Firstness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, positively and without reference to anything else." Charles S. Peirce, *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss, and Arthur W. Burks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 8:328.

they are transformed in and by their encounters with one another. If human uniqueness is an echo of the ontological unicity that makes itself felt in such encounters, human articulation, anthropology, would then need to be heard as bound up with and held accountable by the ongoing and abundant dialogue of things.

Although all human speaking participates in this dialogue, the dialogue itself belongs to the nature of things. Heraclitus, who remained in continuous dialogue with nature, writes:

This λόγος holds always, but humans are not quick to apprehend [ἀξύνετοι] it, both before hearing it and once they have first heard it. For although all things happen according to the λόγος, humans are like the inexperienced when they experience the sort of words and deeds I describe according to nature, distinguishing each and declaring [φράζων] how it is.⁶

This indictment of the human capacity to listen attentively to the λόγος at work in nature and to apprehend what is experienced there remains today a provocative challenge to us, we who live in an era often oblivious to the λόγος.

As technology allows us to penetrate ever deeper into the nature of things, nature itself becomes ever more unfamiliar. Our expanding ability to manipulate nature for our own purposes threatens to annihilate the symbiotic relation to the λόγος of things that has sustained the human species since our most distant ancestors first became capable of language. Human action itself has been transformed by its newfound technological supremacy. For the first time in its history, human action has the power to compromise the very ecosystem that sustains life. With this increased power comes increased responsibility.⁷ Yet responsibility as an ethical imperative capable of animating action is itself ultimately rooted in the *ontological* ability to respond attentively to the λόγος of things. Here too technology has a

⁶ Hermann Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th ed., vol. 1 (Zurich: Weidmann, 1996), 150, fr. 1.

⁷ Jonas has articulated how the extended scope of human action transforms the nature of action itself and moves the question of responsibility to the “center of the ethical stage.” The axiom of the theory of responsibility is that “responsibility is a correlate of power and must be commensurate with the latter’s scope and that of its exercise.” See Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), x.

role to play, for as it transforms human action, it also opens new possibilities for human communication. If, however, the new modes of communication opened by technology are to cultivate communities of justice, they must learn to attend to the λόγος of things. Heraclitus thus speaks directly to us when he talks of those who “are at odds with the λόγος with which above all they are continuously conversing [διηνεκῶς ὁμιλοῦσι], with that which manages the whole [τῶι τὰ ὅλα διοικοῦντι], and the things they encounter every day; these appear foreign [ξένα] to them.”⁸ To be at odds with the λόγος in this way is symptomatic of a certain homelessness.⁹

If this homelessness is a function of the inability to attend to and live with the λόγος with which we are in a continuous and sustaining dialogue, a sort of homecoming is possible if we learn anew the language of things. Heraclitus himself hints at how to begin such an endeavor when he suggests, “A lifetime is a child playing ... the kingdom belongs to a child.”¹⁰ To observe a child as she feels her way into the world is to be reminded of those initial encounters in which things announce their irreducible unicity and provoke the playful response that is the soil in which human language takes root and begins to grow. If, however, human language is not to be uprooted by its own ingenious devices, it will need to return again and again to the site of its birth: the ontological encounter with the things of nature. It will need to recapture something of that childlike sense of wonder so long associated with philosophy.

At the beginning of his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle speaks of the wonder of philosophy:

For it is through wondering that human-beings both now and at first began to philosophize, wondering first about the strange things close at hand, and

⁸ Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 167, fr. 72.

⁹ Heraclitus evokes this sense of homelessness with the words ξένα, strange or foreign; ὁμιλεῖν, to be together with, to come or live together, to live in familiarity with or to be conversant with; and διοικεῖν, which means to manage, direct, or conduct, but in which the Greek οἶκος – house, abode, dwelling – continues to sound, as can be heard more acutely in the verb’s substantive manifestation: διοίκησις, which means housekeeping. See ξένα, n.; ὁμιλεῖν, v.; διοικεῖν, v.; οἶκος, n., in George Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

¹⁰ Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 162, fr. 52.

then little by little in this way devotedly exerting themselves [προϊόντες] and coming to impasses about greater things, such as about the attributes of the moon and things pertaining to the sun and the stars and the coming-into-being of the whole.¹¹

In his philosophical practice, Aristotle never loses this childlike sense of wonder, even as he exerts himself with devotion to the things of nature. This passage, with its recognition of the “strange things close at hand” and its intimation of that desire which stretches out toward the coming-into-being of the whole, might be heard as a kind of response to the Heraclitean indictment of humanity as deaf to the λόγος of the things encountered in everyday experience. And a second passage too might be heard as an indication of a way of proceeding, a μέθοδος, in the wake of the wonder evoked by the appearance of things strange. Again as if responding to the Heraclitean insistence that human-beings are like the inexperienced [ἀπείροισιν], Aristotle writes:

Inexperience [ἡ ἀπειρία] is responsible for a weakening of the power to comprehend the things agreed upon [τὰ ὁμολογούμενα συνορᾶν]. Hence those who dwell in more intimate association with the things of nature [ἐνφκῆκασι μᾶλλον ἐν τοῖς φυσικοῖς] are more able to lay down the sorts of principles that admit of a wide and coherent development; while those unobservant of the existing things [ἀθεώρητοι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων ὄντες] because of long discussions more easily show themselves as people of narrow views.¹²

Aristotle responds to the Heraclitean diagnosis of homelessness with a prescription for a sort of homecoming that enjoins a devoted commitment “to dwell in more intimate association with the things of nature” and a diligent willingness to ground our words in our encounters with things. To return home in this way, however, is not to deny that dimension of exile that also conditions the human relation to nature.

¹¹ Aristotle, *Aristotelis Metaphysica* (henceforth *Meta.*) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), I.2, 982b11–17.

¹² *On Generation and Corruption* I.2, 316a5–10. This translation owes much to H. H. Joachim’s, found in Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, vols. 1 and 2, Bollingen Series (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1:515.

We inhabit a natural world that exhibits a rich diversity that forever retains a certain strangeness. This sense of strangeness, this feeling of homelessness, is itself rooted in the recalcitrant unicity of things that invites dialogical engagement and lends itself to articulation without being exhausted by it. If the appearing of things strange provokes the wonder with which philosophy begins, philosophy's assiduous attempts to enter into dialogue with the things it encounters must always be tempered by a deep appreciation for the inexhaustible unicity of things that brings it up against the limits of its own capacities of comprehension. Such limits, however, are themselves announced by and in the saying of things.

A PERIPATETIC METHODOLOGY

Aristotle's thinking, animated by a desire to "comprehend the things agreed upon" and to "lay down the sorts of principles that admit of a wide and coherent development," never ceases to attend to the many ways beings are said. Yet Aristotle has no philosophy of language, no sustained systematic account of the nature of language and how it functions in philosophical investigation. Rather, his is a philosophy that lives in and from language, drawing life from it and allowing it to draw life to him. His thinking inhabits language; it is alive to the saying of things. Thus, Aristotle returns again and again to the many ways things are said, holding his thinking always accountable to the ways things express themselves and attending always to the things humans have said, forever listening for the echo of truth articulated there. If he has no philosophy of language, it is because his philosophical practice is guided throughout by the logic of things.

To pursue the direction of thinking Aristotle's philosophical practice embodies, it will be necessary to become rigorously *peripatetic*. If the students who followed Aristotle as he walked the paths of the Lyceum discussing issues of pressing philosophical concern were called *peripatoi*, the ones who walk, we too must cultivate an ability to follow along the paths of Aristotle's thinking as it seeks to put things into words and allow words to articulate the nature of things. The peripatetic approach is methodological in the etymological sense: it

names a way of following along after, μετὰ-ῥόδος, the λόγος of things.¹³ This λόγος belongs as much to the structure of nature as to the powers that seek to discern the nature of that structure. Put differently, nature expresses itself according to a λόγος that lends itself to articulation.

Yet the peripatetic methodology is no mere academic exercise in reconstructive hermeneutics; rather, it names a certain habit of thinking that belongs to a particular way of being toward things. *The peripatetic methodology is legomenology.* The things said, τὰ λεγόμενα, open a way into the nature of things; and it is the nature of things to express themselves. To become peripatetic, then, is to attend carefully to the ways things are said and to strive to respond to the saying of things in ways that do justice to what has been said. The name for this habit of thinking rooted in a way of being toward things is ontological response-ability. The peripatetic methodology, as a legomenology, is the philosophical practice of ontological response-ability oriented by and attentive to the saying of things. Ontological response-ability is at play wherever the expression of things opens itself to articulation. The site of the ontological encounter between

¹³ The peripatetic methodology differs from that of developmentalism, which remains limited for two fundamental reasons. First, developmentalism has come to be oriented by an overriding concern for systematic consistency intent on purging Aristotelian thought of contradiction. Yet the appearing of contradiction is for Aristotle the very sort of diction that announces the presence of a matter for thinking. Aristotle attends to such dictions carefully, not as intractable contradictories, one side of which must be destroyed to allow the other to reign, but as impassés to be navigated, oriented always by the beacon of the appearing of things. Second, the developmentalist approach is often too dependent on a set of biographical details – about Plato's influence on Aristotle, his time away from Athens, what was written “early” and what “late,” etc. – that are forever controversial and ultimately unreliable. Nevertheless, the great insight of the developmental approach articulated by Werner Jaeger is the recognition that Aristotle's texts give voice to a thinking that “lives and develops,” to use the phrase Jaeger borrows from Goethe. See Werner Wilhelm Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development*, trans. Richard Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), 4. The peripatetic methodology affirms the developmentalist recognition that the Aristotelian corpus was not born spontaneously and complete but rather grew over time as Aristotle lived in intimate association with the phenomena of nature and, indeed, the λόγοι of friends. See Christopher P. Long, *The Ethics of Ontology: Rethinking an Aristotelian Legacy*, SUNY Series in Ancient Greek Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 14.

expression and articulation has historically been identified as the locus of the happening of truth.

Here, however, the site of the happening of truth must be rethought in terms of ontological justice. Such a shift from the question of truth to that of justice is anticipated but not fully developed by Martin Heidegger in his 1925–6 lecture course entitled *Logic: The Question Concerning Truth*. There Heidegger reverses the traditional understanding of truth as a property of judgments, insisting rather, “The statement is not that in which truth first becomes possible, but reversed; the statement is first possible in the truth, insofar as one has seen the phenomenon that the Greeks meant with truth and that Aristotle grasped with conceptual sharpness for the first time.”¹⁴ This reversal grows out of Heidegger’s own intense engagement with the meaning of declarative saying – λόγος ἀποφαντικός – as articulated in the *De Interpretatione*. To anticipate a position that will be developed more fully in Chapter 4, Heidegger articulates the meaning of declarative saying this way: “[t]o say that which is said from the thing itself [*der Sache selbst*] so that in this speaking what is spoken about becomes visible, accessible to that which grasps.”¹⁵ When this formulation is heard together with Heidegger’s determination of phenomenology toward the end of his life as “the possibility of thinking, at times changing and only thus persisting, of corresponding to the claim of what is to be thought,” the importance of declarative saying for phenomenology announces itself.¹⁶ By orienting his thinking to

¹⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit*, ed. Walter Biemel, vol. 21, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1976), 135. Heidegger’s reversal runs counter to a received orthodoxy that locates truth in judgments. Ross, e.g., identifies the ordinary meaning of truth in Aristotle as belonging to a judgment that corresponds to reality. See W. D. Ross, *Aristotle’s “Metaphysics”: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 2:275. Wilpert too insists that the judgment is “the authentic carrier of the property of truth.” See Paul Wilpert, “Zum Aristotelischen Wahrheitsbegriff,” in *Logik und Erkenntnislehre des Aristoteles*, ed. F. P. Hager (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), 117.

¹⁵ Heidegger, *Logik*, 133.

¹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 14, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2007), 101. For the English, see Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 82. In what follows, the page number of the German text of Heidegger’s writings will be cited first followed by that of the English translation if available.

the phenomenon of truth, understood here in terms of the Greek ἀλήθεια, or unconcealedness, Heidegger points to a way of saying that is phenomenological in nature: it seeks to articulate what each thing is by attending carefully to the ways the thing shows itself.

Here “thing” translates the Greek πράγμα, which Heidegger thematizes in a vein that resonates with American pragmatism: for Heidegger, the πράγμα is “that with which one has to deal – what is present for the concern [*Besorge*] that deals with things.”¹⁷ This formulation does justice to the rich plurivocity of Aristotle’s own use of the term πράγμα, which must be heard in its relation to πράττειν, to act. “Thing” in this sense retains a connection always to the world of human action even as it comes to refer to a wide diversity of things, from subjects of predication to individual beings encountered, from states of affairs or situations to the general “facts of the matter,” from individual actions to the actions that make up the plot of a drama.¹⁸ This is the robust sense of “thing” to which James explicitly appeals in laying out the meaning of pragmatism.¹⁹

¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 17, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1994), 14/10. For the English, see Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom, Studies in Continental Thought (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). Kahn argues that existence, for the Greeks, belongs not to facts, propositions, and relations, but to particular things. See Charles Kahn, “The Greek Verb ‘to Be’ and the Concept of Being,” *Foundations of Language* 2 (1966): 261. At first Kahn thematizes the lack of a “systematic distinction between fact and thing” as a “failure.” He goes on, however, to suggest that this may not be a shortcoming but precisely what allows the Greeks to articulate the problem of truth and being so acutely (262).

¹⁸ This articulation of the plurivocity of πράγματα in Aristotle draws from Pritzl’s account of what he calls “Aristotle’s practice of ambiguity regarding πράγματα.” See Kurt Pritzl, “Being True in Aristotle’s Thinking,” *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 15 (1999): 184. Pritzl cites examples of each of these uses of πράγματα: as subject of predication, see, e.g., *De Interpretatione* 7, 17a38; *Topics* I.8, 103b8; *On Sophistical Elenchus* 24, 179a28; as individual existing being, see *De Anima* III.8, 432a3; *Physics* II.8, 208a15; *Politics* II.9, 1280a17–19; as states of affairs or facts of the matter, see *GC* I.8, 325a18; *Physics* VII.8, 263a17; as actions, see *Nicomachean Ethics* II.3, 1105b5; IV.6, 1126b12; as related to the plot of a drama, see *Poetics* 14, 1453b2, 6 and 1450a15, a 37. The use of “things” in such a plurality of senses moves decisively beyond my own earlier, limited critique of the “logic of things” that operates in the *Categories*; see Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 19–29.

¹⁹ James emphasizes the relation of πράγμα to action in establishing its meaning for pragmatism when he insists that “the term is derived from the same Greek word

If, however, Heideggerian phenomenology is fundamentally oriented by our encounters with such things, encounters that exhibit the peculiar logic of ἀλήθεια, truth as unconcealedness, American pragmatism, particularly as articulated in the work of John Dewey and John Herman Randall, emphasizes the historical, social, and communal dimensions of the truth of such πράγματα. Indeed, the pragmatism of Dewey and Randall, informed by the robust naturalism of George Santayana and Frederick Woodbridge, shares with Heideggerian phenomenology a deep appreciation for the importance of Aristotle's insistence that being announces itself in and through λόγος and that human λόγος belongs as much to being as being belongs to it. Together, these two traditions of thinking draw out Aristotle's own naturalistic phenomenology of truth, in which the truth of things is discernible to those who live in intimate communion with the things of nature. To live such intimacy involves seeking to articulate the nature of things by allowing them to speak for themselves and endeavoring to respond in ways appropriate to the things having been said.

Thus, Heidegger's reversal of the relation between the statement and truth – "The statement is not the locus of truth, but truth is the locus of the statement" – must be thought in yet more radical terms; for the site of ontological encounter is the locus of truth insofar as it evokes a response bound up with and always accountable to the ways things express themselves. The topology of truth gives way to an ecology of justice. If 'ecology' names a way of being at home with the λόγος of things and 'justice' names a way of being oriented toward what is proper to each in the context of the whole, then an 'ecology

πρᾶγμα, meaning action, from which our words 'practice' and 'practical' come." See William James and John J. McDermott, *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition, Including an Annotated Bibliography Updated through 1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977). 376. Here, in his lectures entitled *What Pragmatism Means*, James explicitly locates the source of pragmatism in Peirce's essay "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," in which Peirce too emphasizes that objects are ineluctably bound up with our practical dealings with them: "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object." See Charles S. Peirce, Nathan Houser, and Christian J. W. Kloesel, *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 1:132.

of justice' points to a way of inhabiting the world rooted in an ability to respond to the saying of things held accountable by the unicity of each and the integrity of the whole. The ecology of justice is marked by an asymmetrical reciprocity in which things lend themselves to human articulation even as they insistently express more than can be adequately articulated.²⁰ The question of truth is transformed into a question of justice in those palpable moments of ontological encounter in which things relinquish themselves to us in such a way that we are made acutely aware of their insistent unicity.²¹ This irreducible unicity holds all our attempts to put things into words accountable to the many ways things express themselves. If truth has always operated at the site of the relation between thinking and things, between human articulation and the expression of nature, then the attempt to locate the proper place of truth in one or the other is misguided, for truth belongs neither to thinking nor to things, but to their encounter – an encounter in which truth is always a matter of onto-logical response-ability, that is, of eco-logical justice.

TOWARD AN ECOLOGY OF ONTOLOGICAL ENCOUNTER

To think truth in terms of justice is to further develop a path of thinking initiated by Aristotle and taken up by Heidegger and the tradition of American pragmatic naturalism. And if in pursuing this path we retain a loyalty to the peripatetic methodology, it is because the peripatetic way of proceeding acutely recognizes that thinking is always funded by a long history that determines its direction and opens it to new possibilities. To begin to discern the possibilities that emerge from an active engagement with the legacy of Aristotelian thinking, it will be instructive to turn first to something said by Frederick Woodbridge,

²⁰ Emmanuel Levinas once criticized Martin Buber for determining the relation with the otherness of the Other in terms of mutual reciprocity, suggesting that "he has not taken separation seriously enough." See Paul Arthur Schilpp and Maurice Friedman, *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*, Library of Living Philosophers (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1967), 149, 47. Yet we must learn to hold the reciprocity that makes relation possible together with the asymmetry that characterizes its reality.

²¹ The use of the term 'insistence' is indebted to John Smith, who understood 'insistence' to name a primordial thereness, an insistent presence. See John E. Smith, "Being, Immediacy, and Articulation," *Review of Metaphysics* 24, no. 4 (1971): 597–8.

who identifies Aristotle as the thinker who most powerfully impressed upon him the importance of language for philosophy.

In his “Confessions,” Woodbridge writes, “Knowledge, with [Aristotle], is largely a matter of *saying* what things are.... And although truth is not a matter of nature, the *saying* of things is.... Existence is provocative.”²² The saying of things is natural in a twofold way corresponding to the pregnant ambiguity of the genitive that operates in the formulation: “the saying *of* things.” Taken subjectively, the genitive points to the natural fact that things speak, that being expresses itself. Taken objectively, the genitive announces the insistent objectivity of being that, however elusive, still always also lends itself to articulation. By nature, things speak and are spoken of: saying and being live together.

The life of being in its relation to saying is rich and manifold. Aristotle puts it this way: τὸ ὄν λέγεται πολλαχῶς – “Being is said in many ways.”²³ The morphology of the term λέγεται articulates an ambiguity of voice that resonates with the ambiguous genitive articulated by “the saying of things.” Λέγεται can be heard in the passive voice, in which case it means “to be said” and being is taken as the object of the saying; or it can be heard in the middle voice, in which case it means “to say for itself” and being is taken as expressing itself. The many ways being is said resonates with and gives voice to the diverse expressions of things. A certain symphony between saying and being is heard in Aristotle’s famous formulation, a symphony muted by the modern presumption of dissonance between language and nature, mind and body, subject and object. Aristotle’s thinking, however, remains guided throughout by the verb λέγειν, to speak, and particularly by the third person singular, middle/passive form λέγεται, which appears repeatedly in a diversity of contexts, as if a leitmotif that signals the consonance of saying and being.²⁴

²² Frederick James Eugene Woodbridge, *Nature and Mind: Selected Essays of Frederick J. E. Woodbridge, Presented to Him on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday by Amherst College, the University of Minnesota, Columbia University; with a Bibliography of His Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), 24.

²³ *Meta.* VII.1, 1028a10.

²⁴ If quantitative evidence could justify qualitative claims, it would be interesting to point out that by far the most frequent iteration of the verb λέγειν in the *Corpus Aristotelicum*, according to the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, is the middle/passive

Yet consonance is not identity and to insist upon it is not to deny discord. Being remains elusive even as it lends itself to articulation. Because Aristotle allows his thinking to be oriented by the saying of things, he is able to cultivate a habit of thinking capable of doing justice to the many ways being is said without naively denying that something is always also withheld in the manifold expressions of things. This habit of thinking is a *ἔξις* in the strict Aristotelian sense: it involves holding oneself in a certain way by active effort and attention.²⁵ The habit of thinking Aristotle both cultivates and practices involves the ability to respond to the many ways being is said in a manner appropriate to the very saying of things. In this, however, it is akin to the virtue he himself designates as truthfulness – *ἀλήθεια*.²⁶

Aristotle situates the truthful person (*ἀληθευτικός*) between the braggart (*ἀλαζών*) who exaggerates and the ironic person who understates things. The truthful person, in contrast, is said to be one who is able to call each thing by its right name (*ἀνθέκαστος*), neither exaggerating nor diminishing it.²⁷ Thus, the excellence of truthfulness involves a certain way of saying things. The Greek *ἀνθέκαστος* names a person who is blunt, someone who quite literally says it like it is. By articulating the excellence of truthfulness in terms of a certain way of speaking, Aristotle at once links the question of truth to

λέγεται, with 1,213 instances. The next most frequent is the infinitive itself, with 562 instances.

²⁵ Aristotle insists that excellent action involves not only doing the right thing, but doing it in the right way; it entails holding of oneself somehow (*πῶς ἔχων*). Specifically, the action should be done knowingly (*εἰδώς*), it should be chosen (*προαιρούμενος*) for its own sake, and it should be done in such a way that one cannot be moved completely into an opposite condition (*ἀμετακινήτως*). See Aristotle, *Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea* (henceforth *NE*) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1894), II.4, 1105a30–33. Sachs suggests the significance of *ἀμετακινήτως* when he insists that the addition of the additional prefix *μετα-* indicates that such actions are done steadfastly but not rigidly. Joe Sachs, *Aristotle: "Nicomachean Ethics,"* ed. Albert Keith Whitaker, Focus Philosophical Library (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2002), xiii. Rather, such actions involve the entire dynamic structure of Aristotle's understanding of ethical virtue in which a *ἔξις* is won slowly over time by doing things in the right way, at the right time, and as a result of the right deliberate choices. This notion of *ἔξις*, then, is nothing like rote habit, but is a dynamic and active condition that requires constant attention, effort, and reflection.

²⁶ *NE* II.7, 1108a19–20.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, IV.7, 1127a21–6.

character (ἦθος) and thus to action *and* draws this ethical meaning of truth into relation to what is often designated as his official theoretical definition of truth as correspondence.²⁸ In *Metaphysics* IV.7, Aristotle writes, “On the one hand, the false is to say [τὸ μὲν λέγειν] that what is, is not or that what is not, is; on the other hand, the true is to say that what is, is and what is not, is not, so that the one saying that it is or is not is either speaking the truth or is false.”²⁹ Truth here as in the ethical context is a matter of saying it like it is. It involves an ability to articulate things in a way that does justice to the ways they express themselves.

The formula by which Aristotle is said to inaugurate the tradition of truth as correspondence remains in Aristotle bound to a much older conception of ἀλήθεια as truthfulness. Aristotle introduces the excellence of truthfulness in the context of considering those virtues that are rooted “in social relations [ὁμιλία], in living together, and in sharing in common words and deeds.”³⁰ In so doing, he draws on an ancient, Homeric understanding of ἀλήθεια as intimately linked to verbs of saying that are directed toward encounters with individuals in a rich nexus of social contexts. Yet such social encounters and the truthfulness that belongs to the relations between humans cannot be divorced from the apparently more abstract determination of truth as saying it like it is; for both require a ἔξις cultivated by dwelling in intimate association with the things of nature, attending assiduously and responding appropriately to the ways things express themselves.

Thus, in a preliminary way that will gain depth and determination in the chapters that follow, it is possible to say that truth grows at the site of ontological response-ability, where an ability to attend to the ways things speak and to articulate responses that do justice to the saying of things is cultivated. Ontological response-ability involves an

²⁸ Brentano explicitly thematizes the meaning of truth in Aristotle as an “*Übereinstimmung*” between cognition and things. See Franz Brentano, *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 17–18. More recently, Deborah Modrak has unequivocally insisted that Aristotle “opts for a correspondence theory of truth.” Deborah K. W. Modrak, *Aristotle’s Theory of Language and Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 4.

²⁹ *Meta.* IV.7, 1011b25–29.

³⁰ *NE* IV.6 1126a11.

ethics of truth. ‘Ethics’ here is understood in terms of the Greek ἠθoς, or character, which Aristotle himself associates with ἔθoς, or habit.³¹ The ethics of truth thus involves a certain character, an active way of holding oneself, indeed, a ἔξις won in the course of lived experience informed by a deliberate engagement with the saying of things.

Although Aristotle’s thinking embodies an ethics of truth capable of responding to the many ways being is said, this ἔξις has long been paralyzed by the thick layers of scholastic sediment under which it has been buried for generations. Ironically, John Dewey, who has done so much to rehabilitate Aristotle’s rich understanding of ἔξις, remains himself committed to the calcified caricature of Aristotelian thought. Nevertheless, attending to the things Dewey says about Aristotle opens us to a deeper understanding of the dynamic logic that operates at the site of ontological encounter, a logic that points to the transformative potential endemic to the attempt to think truth as justice.

In *Experience and Nature*, Dewey announces with a certain reticence the debt his pragmatic naturalism owes to Aristotle: “Aristotle perhaps came nearest to a start in [the] direction [of a naturalistic metaphysics.] But his thought did not go far on the road, though it may be used to suggest the road which he failed to take.”³² Unlike Santayana, who unequivocally suggests that the secret of Aristotle lies in the fact that he was “the greatest of naturalists,”³³ Dewey always hesitates, equivocates, and qualifies: whatever his naturalistic tendencies, Aristotle remains for Dewey a naturalist in potency only. He points in the direction of naturalism, but fails in the end to bring his thinking to life.

Dewey’s hesitancy in relation to Aristotle devolves often into intense polemics based more on abstract caricature than on a rigorous

³¹ Ibid., II.1, 1103a17–18.

³² John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), 48. The naturalism delineated here is designated “pragmatic” for two reasons. First, it is designed to emphasize the manner in which this conception of naturalism remains focused on and concerned with τὰ πράγματα in its diversity of meanings. Second, it is designed to distinguish pragmatic naturalism from earlier forms of naturalism in the American tradition, specifically the sort of naturalism embraced by transcendental thinkers like Emerson and Thoreau.

³³ George Santayana, *Dialogues in Limbo: With Three New Dialogues* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957), 244. Woodbridge follows Santayana in speaking of Aristotle’s “thoroughgoing naturalism.” See Woodbridge, *Nature and Mind*, 5.

engagement with the thinking articulated in the Aristotelian texts. Each moment of praise for Aristotle is immediately qualified: "Aristotle acknowledges contingency, but he never surrenders his bias in favor of the fixed, certain and finished. His whole theory of forms and ends is a theory of the superiority in Being of rounded out fixities."³⁴ The alleged rejection of contingency seems to sting Dewey all the more given the acknowledgment it denies. Dewey himself situates his naturalistic metaphysics in a space between the stable and precarious dimensions of existence: "We live in a world which is an impressive and irresistible mixture of sufficiencies, tight completenesses, order, recurrences which make possible prediction and control, and singularities, ambiguities, uncertain possibilities, processes going on to consequences as yet indeterminate."³⁵ Yet although Dewey denies Aristotle the capacity to hold the tension between the stable and the precarious, Aristotle's thinking too is alive to singularity, uncertainty, and ambiguity even as it feels the pull of order and stability. For whatever reason, Dewey repeatedly reinforces that hackneyed vision of Aristotle as father of "*the* genteel tradition ... which identifies the fixed and regular with reality of Being and the changing and hazardous with deficiency of Being."³⁶

However, to reinforce such a petrified caricature of Aristotle is to succumb to a static and reductionist habit of thought anathema to Dewey's own naturalistic orientation. Naturalism, for Dewey, at its most basic level, entails a commitment to doing justice to the rich complexity of the things encountered in living experience. Experience itself, for him, is "'double-barreled' in that it recognizes in its primary integrity no division between act and material, subject and object, but contains them both in an unanalyzed totality."³⁷ His naturalism is integrative and holistic: it seeks to articulate the complexity of things in their togetherness.

This integrative naturalism distinguishes pragmatic from other forms of naturalism that seek to reduce the world and experience

³⁴ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 48.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

to a nature understood exclusively in materialistic terms.³⁸ Randall captures the antireductionist, integrative orientation of American pragmatic naturalism when he insists that for the pragmatic naturalist “[t]he world is not really ‘nothing but’ something other than it appears to be: it is what it is, in all its manifold variety, with all its distinctive kinds of activity.”³⁹ Such a naturalistic engagement with the world endeavors to do justice to variety without doing violence to integrity. Its interrogations turn to the varied, rich experience of things in order to give voice to hitherto unknown dimensions, functions, and structures of reality without destroying what they seek to articulate.⁴⁰

This integrative, interrogative naturalism is animated by the deep recognition that human-being is natural being. For Dewey, who prefers to speak in epistemological terms, this means experience and nature belong together: “[E]xperience is *of* as well as *in* nature. It is not experience that is experienced, but nature. . . . Things interacting in certain ways *are* experience. . . . Experience thus reaches down into nature; it has depth. It also has breadth and to an indefinitely elastic extent. It stretches.”⁴¹ Aristotle puts it this way in the famous first line of the *Metaphysics*: “All human beings by nature stretch themselves [ὀρέγονται] out toward knowing.”⁴² For Aristotle, as for Dewey, this stretching out is not simply an active accomplishment of the subject; rather, it is a dynamic *transaction*, to use Dewey and Bentley’s term,⁴³ in

³⁸ For a critique of this sort of reductionistic naturalism in the European context, see Edmund Husserl, “Philosophy as a Rigorous Science,” in *Husserl: Shorter Works*, ed. Peter McCormick and Frederick A. Elliston (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 169–85. While Husserl’s critique of naturalism focuses more on its inability to set philosophy on the secure path of science than on its reductionistic tendencies, it is largely because of these tendencies that naturalists in this vein are able to presume that natural science is in no need of further grounding in a more fundamental philosophical science.

³⁹ John Herman Randall, “Epilogue: The Nature of Naturalism,” in *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, ed. Yervant Hovhannes Krikorian (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 361.

⁴⁰ This formulation owes much to Randall; see *ibid.*

⁴¹ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 4a.

⁴² *Meta.* I.1, 980a21.

⁴³ John Dewey and Arthur Fisher Bentley, *Knowing and the Known* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949), 103–18. Here Dewey and Bentley explicitly distinguish between ‘interaction,’ which views self-actions in the tradition of classical mechanics and so as fundamentally isolated from the situation in which such actions always occur,

which what is actively desired permits itself to be passionately received and what receives allows itself to be transformed by that which it desires. Aristotle articulates the complexity of this transaction in a single word: ὀρέγονται, the middle voice of ὀρέγειν, which means to stretch out, extend, to reach out, hand, offer, give. In the middle voice, however, ὀρεγέσθαι, when used with an object in the genitive case, as it is in the first sentence of the *Metaphysics*, takes on the meaning of to grasp at, to reach after, and thus, indeed, to desire.⁴⁴ The middle voice gestures, however, also to the transactive nature of this desiring. The grammatical subject is in a sense both active and passive in relation to its grammatical object; in stretching out toward that which it desires, the subject is itself transformed. Here, Aristotle's λόγος must be heard to articulate that complex and dynamic relationship between experience and nature, subject and object – the saying of things. The site of this dynamic transaction, which, strictly speaking, is prior to the analytic distinction between subject and object, is quite literally onto-logical: it is the site of the encounter between τὸ ὄν and ὁ λόγος, between being and articulation.

The transactive dimension of ontological encounter opens the space in which to think the complex dynamics of the relation between being and articulation. Drawing on Dewey, John E. Smith insists that “articulation is not alien to Being, but, on the contrary, belongs to it essentially.”⁴⁵ To say this, however, is not to reduce being to being known; rather, it is to recognize that articulation belongs to being, but does not exhaust it. Indeed, Vincent Colapietro has put the point beautifully: recognizing that expression is integral to being, he reminds us that “[b]eing is always in some respect mercury in the mind's hands: the more pressure our conceptual fingers expend in their efforts to hold being firmly in their clutch, the more lubricious it proves to be.”⁴⁶ Yet the mercurial elusiveness of being – however insistent – does not mute the ways things communicate and lend themselves to articulation.

and ‘transaction,’ which insists that the observer, the observing, and the observed belong together (104).

⁴⁴ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. ὀρεγέσθαι, v.

⁴⁵ Smith, “Being, Immediacy, and Articulation,” 594.

⁴⁶ Vincent Colapietro, “Striving to Speak in a Human Voice: A Peircean Contribution to Metaphysical Discourse,” *Review of Metaphysics* 58 (2004): 386.

For pragmatic naturalism, however, the articulation of being happens as communication. Smith puts it this way: "Communication is the presupposition rather than the aim of articulation."⁴⁷ Ontological encounters with πράγματα occur in specific social, political, and historical contexts that themselves cannot simply be read out of such encounters in an attempt to distill the pure objectivity of things. Rather, objectivity communicates itself within such contexts on the basis of our pragmatic transactions with things. Dewey recognizes this when he too grounds expression in communication: "The heart of language is not 'expression' of something antecedent, much less expression of antecedent thought. It is communication; the establishment of cooperation in an activity in which there are partners, and in which the activity of each is modified and regulated by partnership."⁴⁸ Here, the meaning of ontological response-ability gains further determination; for ontological encounter is rooted in transactional communication, in a dynamic activity – indeed, a complex community conditioned by social, political, and historical realities – from which the truth of things emerges as beings communicate with one another.

Ontological response-ability is rooted in the insistent objectivity of things. The objectivity at play in ontological encounter can be discerned by drawing the German *Gegenstand* – to stand over against – into dialogue with the English 'object': objectivity names the capacity to *object* in ontological encounters where beings *stand over against* one another.⁴⁹ Truth here emerges as a question of justice that becomes possible when articulations subject themselves to

⁴⁷ Smith, "Being, Immediacy, and Articulation," 602.

⁴⁸ Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 179.

⁴⁹ The notion that objectivity is grounded in an object's ability to object to what is being said about it, i.e., to hold that which stands over against it accountable, draws on this striking formulation by Latour: "Objectivity does not refer to a special quality of the mind, an inner state of justice and fairness, but to the presence of objects which have been rendered 'able' (the word is etymologically so powerful) to object to what is told about them." See Bruno Latour, "When Things Strike Back: A Possible Contribution of 'Science Studies' to the Social Sciences," *British Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 1 (2000): 115. Latour's own insistence that the etymological meaning of the Latin *res*, thing, refers already to an "assembly of a judicial nature gathered around a topic, *reus*, that creates both conflict and assent" indicates the extent to which the very meaning of objectivity is bound up with the question of justice.

the objections of objects in transactive communication. The ability to respond in ways that do justice to such objections is the soil in which meaning first takes root. To insist that meaning emerges naturally from our transactive communications with things is to contextualize truth without rendering it relative.⁵⁰ *It is to recognize that meaning becomes objective and truth insistent only in transactional communication as beings hold one another accountable in the asymmetrical reciprocity of ontological encounter.*

As this last formulation suggests, the dynamic activity that conditions ontological communication involves not only cooperation, but also a certain intransigence, not only reciprocity, but also a certain asymmetry, the remainder that serves as a reminder of the inexhaustible unicity of things. This recalcitrant remainder functions in the logic of ontological encounter as an erotic principle that enjoins responsibility.⁵¹ As a principle, the remainder points to that which initiates ontological encounter even as it retains a certain autonomous authority; as erotic, the remainder plays upon desire, inviting cooperative communication even as it remains ultimately elusive. To seek truth in ontological encounter is to attempt to do justice to the elusive eloquence of things.

⁵⁰ Dewey writes, "Meanings are objective because they are modes of natural interaction"; see Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 190.

⁵¹ For a discussion of how erotic principles operate in the political thinking of Socrates, see Christopher P. Long, "Socrates and the Politics of Music: Preludes of the Republic," *Polis* 24, no. 1 (2007): 90.

A History of Truth as Cor-response

We must start with tradition, and we must end with tradition criticized, clarified, and enlarged.

John Herman Randall, Jr.,
*Nature and Historical Experience*¹

That truth has always in some sense been a matter of justice can already be heard in the historical articulations we have inherited as the “correspondence theory of truth.” The origin of the correspondence theory has been explicitly traced to the statement from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* already cited in Chapter 1:² “On the one hand, the false is to say [τὸ μὲν λέγειν] that what is, is not or that what is not, is; on the other hand, the true is to say that what is, is and what is not, is not, so that the one saying that it is or is not is either speaking the truth or is false.”³ We have already suggested that truth involves a saying that, in stretching out toward things, is capable of responding appropriately to the ways things ex-press themselves. ‘Ex-pression’ here means literally to press outward. It names the mode of presentation

¹ From *Nature and Historical Experience: Essays in Naturalism and in the Theory of History*, by John Herman Randall (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 10. Copyright © 1958 Columbia University Press. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

² See Alfred Tarski, “The Semantic Conception of Truth: And the Foundations of Semantics,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 4, no. 3 (1944): 343.

³ *Meta.* IV.7, 1011b25–9.

in which the unicity of things announces itself.⁴ Whatever else a cor-correspondence theory of truth involves, at its core is an attuned ability to cor-respond to and with the expression of things. The etymology of the term ‘correspondence’ is instructive in this regard: ‘cor-’ is equivalent to ‘com-,’ which means “together,” and ‘respond’ is from the Latin *respondēre*, to answer. Correspondence describes the site of ontological encounter in which things respond together with one another. The *Oxford English Dictionary* puts it beautifully: “The etymology implies that the word was formed to express mutual response, the answering of things to each other.”⁵

This dimension of mutual responsibility can still be heard in Aquinas’s decisive formulation of truth as *adaequatio intellectus et rei*, the equation of the intellect and the thing.⁶ In the *Disputed Questions on Truth*, Aquinas himself speaks of an agreement (*concordia*) between being and the intellect: “This agreement is called the equation of intellect and thing (*adaequatio intellectus et rei*).” He goes on to say, “This is what the true adds to being, namely, the conformity (*conformitatem*) or equation (*adaequationem*) of thing and intellect.”⁷ Here the mutual cor-correspondence of thinking and thing is heard in

⁴ The meaning of expression articulated here is indebted to John E. Smith, who distinguishes carefully between insistence, persistence, and expression. Insistence points to the “primordial ‘thereness’” that has here been set out in terms of unicity. Persistence, for Smith, indicates the character of lastingness that belongs to every identifiable thing; it identifies each thing as “having a ‘career’ or as cutting a swath that can be plotted and through which it can be identified.” Expression, however, “involves the relations among many individuals forming what Kant called the system of co-existence or community.” See Smith, “Being, Immediacy, and Articulation,” 598. Drawing, then, upon Smith’s understanding of expression, it is possible to hear in it a call to community rooted in what is here being called cor-correspondence.

⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., s.v. “correspond, v.” The etymology goes on to suggest that somehow in the long course of its translation into English this mutual response-ability came to be understood one-sidedly: “but before its adoption in English, it had been extended so as to express the action or relation of one side only, without however, abandoning the mutual notion, which is distinct in the modern sense of epistolary correspondence.”

⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Disputed Questions on Truth*, trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1952), QI, art. 1.

⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*, vol. 22, Opera Omnia Iussu Leonis XIII P.M. Edita (Romae: Cura et Studio Fratrum Praedicatorum, 1970), QI, art. 1, ll. 168–72. The translation here has been slightly altered from that of Mulligan in order to draw out the differences between *concordia*, *adaequatio*, and *conformitas*.

the way *concordia*, *adaequatio*, and, indeed, *conformitas* resonate with one another. *Conformitas* names the capacity for thinking and the thing to share a form. As such it retains the active and passive connotations of the English ‘conform,’ which means to fashion according to a pattern or model and yet also to yield to or comply with something.⁸ Indeed, the English ‘conform’ seems to have retained the connotation of harmony that echoes Aquinas’s own *concordia* and points in the direction of truth as a mutual co-response-ability.

Yet already in Aristotle, there is a tendency to designate the locus of truth in thinking as opposed to things: “[T]he false and the true are not in things [ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν] ... but in thinking things through [ἐν διανοίᾳ].”⁹ Drawing on this, Aquinas too emphasizes the primacy of the intellect in matters of truth: “A thing is not called true, however, unless it conforms to an intellect. The true, therefore, is found secondarily in things and primarily in the intellect.”¹⁰ Here conformity begins to take on a decidedly one-sided, subjective connotation that at once anticipates the foundational logic of modern subjectivity and risks eclipsing the dynamic transaction it originally suggested. Conformity tends toward compliance and things are subjected to thinking, as a stable foundation for truth is sought in thought. This tendency is amplified by Descartes in his 1639 letter to Mersenne:

[F]or my part, I have never had any doubts about truth, because it seems a notion so transcendently clear that nobody can be ignorant of it. ... [T]he word ‘truth’, in the strict sense, denotes the conformity of thought with its object, but ... when it is attributed to things outside thought, it means only that the things are able to serve as the objects [*ces choses peuvent servir d’objets*] of true thoughts, either ours or God’s.¹¹

Despite the transcendental clarity of truth for Descartes, his attempt to put truth into words itself articulates the complex meaning of

⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., s.v. “conform, v.”

⁹ *Meta.* VI.4, 1027b25–7. For a more detailed discussion of the passage, see Chapter 6.

¹⁰ Aquinas, *The Disputed Questions on Truth*, QI, art. 2.

¹¹ René Descartes, Charles Adam, and Paul Tannery, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, 11 vols. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1996), 2:597. For the English, see René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3:139. The translation is slightly modified here to draw out the notion of truth as an ability things have.

truth.¹² On one hand, echoing Aquinas, Descartes emphasizes the primacy of the intellect as the foundation of truth: things win the status of truth only insofar as they are able to serve as objects of true thoughts, be they human or divine. Yet, on the other hand, things become objects because of a certain ability (*pouvoir*). Truth belongs to things insofar as they have an ability to object in relation to the intellect. Indeed, they are intelligible, able to be discerned by the *intellectus*, only insofar as they have the capacity to object in this way.

Truth is *adaequatio intellectus et rei*, an equation of the intellect and the thing; yet *adaequatio* involves *conformitas*, the ability to share forms, which itself is a *concordia*, a kind of agreement or indeed resonance.¹³ When heard together with the terms *concordia* and *conformitas*, *adaequatio* points to the sort of equality between beings that is a condition for the possibility of justice; for justice is relational, and thus it is grounded in an equality between beings that enables them to correspond to and with one another, despite their irreducible unicity.¹⁴ The Latin formulation already articulates the extent to which truth is a matter of justice made possible by co-response-ability; indeed, the traditional correspondence theory of truth involves two different but cooperative abilities: the intellect's ability to do justice to that which

¹² The truth about truth becomes accessible precisely as Descartes attempts to put it into words. Yet this goes against the point of Descartes' entire discussion of truth in this letter to Mersenne, where the transcendental clarity of truth is based not on an attempted definition, but on a natural grasp of the truth. Descartes insists that there is no way to learn what truth is because we always already know it by nature. He goes on to say that the person who walks shows much better what motion is than does the one (Aristotle) who says "it is the actuality of a potential being insofar as it is potential." See Descartes, Adam, and Tannery, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, 2:597. Yet Aristotle's own attempt to articulate the meaning of motion itself gives voice to the nature of motion. See Remi Brague, "Aristotle's Definition of Motion and Its Ontological Implications," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 13, no. 2 (1990): 1–22. The attempt to put things into words reveals something of the nature of things.

¹³ With *concordia* we hear not the resonance of the mind but that of the heart. See *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., s.v. "concord, n."

¹⁴ Arendt articulates this point in an interhuman context when she insists that the basic condition of speech and action is human plurality, which has the "twofold character of equality and distinction." Regarding equality, she continues, "If men were not equal, they could neither understand each other and those who came before them nor plan for the future and foresee the needs of those who will come after them." See Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 175–6.

it encounters and the thing's ability to object in the context of such encounters. Truth is dialogical.

Pragmatic experimentalism is oriented by precisely this recognition that truth is rooted in dialogue with things. Charles Sanders Peirce recognizes that successful research in experimental science itself grows out of a "conversation with nature" that is pursued "till the mind is in tune with nature."¹⁵ Drawing explicitly on Peirce, Vincent Colapietro emphasizes that things "are decidedly *not* mute"; in fact, the intelligibility of things depends upon their capacity to express themselves objectively: "[T]his intelligibility is connected to what things are able to *express*, the way they press outward, the way they impress themselves on things other than themselves and, *in effect*, stand opposed to so many of our conjectures and suppositions."¹⁶ If truth in science is won by assiduously provoking objects and rigorously attending to the effects of such provocations, it is because things speak to one another in meaningful ways: they stretch out to each other in transactional communication, the traces of which are legible.

However, this accessibility to the intellect, this intelligibility, is only part of the truth, for truth grows at the complex site of ontological encounter in which situated, embodied human-beings enter into dialogue with things that announce themselves as objects of concern.¹⁷ This ecology of encounter is irreducible to the foundational logic of modern subjectivity in which things first become meaningful in and through their relation to thinking, be it divine or human. The foundational conception of subjectivity that supports the architecture of the modern mind itself grows out of and quickly forgets its roots in a contextually situated, embodied transactional subject open to the object-ability of things.

¹⁵ Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 5:168. Colapietro puts it in striking terms: "[A]n experiment has the form of a dialogue: it involves staging a scene in which mute objects might, in response to our conjectures, manifest themselves as objectionable characters in a complex drama – characters with the power to expose their expositors as mistaken or misguided." See Vincent Colapietro, "Signification & Interpretation," *Jornada do Centro de Estudos Peirceanos* PUC-SP (2003): 13.

¹⁶ Colapietro, "Signification & Interpretation," 14.

¹⁷ See Chapter 1 and Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, 14/10.

THE PROVENANCE OF TRUTH AS *ALETHEIA*

These roots remain discernible, however, in the Homeric understanding of truth as ἀλήθεια.¹⁸ In Homer, truth grows out of and remains ultimately concerned with the concrete lived experience of human being-with-one-another. From its beginnings, truth has always lived in and from interhuman being-together, even if already at an early age truth begins to stretch itself out toward the world of things. To trace the path of this movement from the interhuman to the site of the human encounter with things, it will be necessary to attend to the things said by Homer, Simonides, the Parmenidean goddess, and Herodotus; for these articulations give voice to the provenance of truth as ἀλήθεια.

In ancient Greek epic poetry, ἀλήθεια is intimately connected to the domain of saying.¹⁹ The term itself seems to articulate a privation of λήθειν, which is an older form of the verb λανθάνειν, meaning to elude notice, to be unseen.²⁰ In the middle/passive voice, λανθάνεσθαι takes on the meaning of to forget. Thus, ἀ-λήθεια involves not allowing something to elude notice or be forgotten. It grows out of a concern to attend to that which has already somehow disappeared; it concerns, indeed, the attempt to give voice to the appearing of things.

In Homer, however, the truth itself does not appear originally as a relation between humans and things; rather, it emerges in dialogue between humans and it announces itself often in the form of a question. Boeder puts it this way: "Someone requests the truth when he has

¹⁸ Heribert Boeder designates Homer as the figure who increasingly understands the true in terms of ἀλήθεια. In pre-Homeric usage, truth seems to have been captured by the word ἐτεόν (which perhaps derives from the verb εἶναι, to be). See Heribert Boeder, "Der Frühgriechische Wortgebrauch von Logos und Aletheia," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 4 (1959): 91.

¹⁹ Ibid., 94.

²⁰ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. λανθάνειν, v. In attempting to understand the Heideggerian understanding of ἀλήθεια, Friedländer goes so far as to suggest that the term does not involve a privation, but he does not give an alternative. See Paul Friedländer, *Plato*, Bollingen Series (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964), 1:221–9. Luther defends the traditional reading of ἀλήθεια as a privativum. See Wilhelm Luther, *Wahrheit und Lüge im Ältesten Griechentum* (Borna-Leipzig: Verlag Robert Noske, 1935), 11–12.

to rely on the knowledge of a witness.”²¹ This quest for the truth occurs in everyday situations, as when Hector asks his housekeeper about the whereabouts of his wife and she promises to “tell the truth.”²² It also often involves the attempt to discern something about the past. Thus, Telemachus, in search of information about his father, Odysseus, insists, “Nestor, son of Neleus, you tell me truly [ἀληθὲς ἐνίσπεες] how Agamemnon died and where Menelaus is,” to which Nestor replies, “I will speak the whole truth [ἀληθέα πάντ’ ἀγορεύσω].”²³ Truth as ἀλήθεια emerges first in such social, interpersonal contexts. It carries with it an intimacy of trust between the one who requests the truth and the one speaking it. That truth also always involves a dimension of trust points to the extent to which truth has from the beginning been a matter of a certain justice; for to speak truly in such contexts is to do justice to what has happened so as to weave that history into the fabric of human community. From this perspective, truth has as its object a concrete historical happening that has valence in determinate social, political contexts.²⁴ Thus, for the early Greeks, truth was

²¹ Boeder, “Der Frühgriechische Wortgebrauch,” 95. The examples to follow are just two of the many references to which Boeder himself appeals.

²² Homer and Thomas W. Allen, *Homeri Ilias* (Oxonii: E Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1931), 6.382.

²³ Homer and Peter von der Mühll, *Homeri Odyssea*, stereotypa ed., Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Stuttgartiae: In Aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1993), 3:247, 54. Note here that the term ἀγορεύειν has the sense of to speak in public, and thus to bring to light in a public way.

²⁴ Of the three places in the *Iliad* where iterations of ἀλήθεια appear in the sense with which we are concerned, one has been mentioned – the encounter between Hector and his housemaid (6.382). The other two are worth touching upon, as they draw out the social and political contexts in which speaking the truth is at issue. The first is at 23.361 when Achilles stations Phoinix at the turn post of the chariot race at the funeral games for Patroclus “so he would remember the running and speak truth.” Here the truth is bound to fairness and play; it is linked to memory, mourning, and competition; in short, it is quite literally at the turning point of a race performed for the sake of remembering one who has passed into oblivion but has not been forgotten. Phoinix was trusted to tell it like it was. That ἀλήθεια appears a final time in the context of Priam’s attempt to retrieve the body of his son should perhaps come as no surprise. Here (24.407) Priam enjoins Argeiphontes, a henchman of Achilles, to “tell the whole truth whether my son lies still by the ships, or whether he has already been torn limb from limb and thrown before the dogs by Achilles.” Here the truth is enjoined by a defeated king at the height of his mourning in an attempt to reach out to his enemy so as to rescue the body of his son, whose ψυχή had passed already into the house of Hades (22.363), having crossed the river Lethe. This request for ἀλήθεια

at first neither a matter of the mind's relation to nature nor a property of mental representations, but an urgent question bound up with human being-together.

In the course of its development, ἀλήθεια increasingly extends through the sphere of human being-together to the plurality of things directly encountered in the world.²⁵ A passage from Simonides and two from Herodotus are enough to give a sense of the trajectory of this transition. Its arc is discerned already in this enticing fragment from Simonides: τὸ δοκεῖν καὶ τὰν ἀλάθειαν βιάται – “To think will also violate that which is disclosed.”²⁶ The semantic range of δοκεῖν encompasses thinking, expecting, supposing, imagining, opining, and, indeed, the seeming that belongs to appearing itself. This range of meaning must be heard together with ἀλάθειαν, which appears here to designate the being itself of that which appears – not yet a reality behind the appearance to be sure, but the very reality of that which appears. Thus, this fragment gives voice to the healthy skepticism at

is shot through with all the emotional force of a father's attempt to rescue his son from oblivion. Truth is at stake where human finitude is felt most acutely.

²⁵ Boeder insists that in its later usage in the historical writing of Herodotus and the lyric poetry of Simonides, Pindar, and Solon, ἀλήθεια began also to point to the relationship between the knower and what is known or knowable. See Boeder, “Der Frühgriechische Wortgebrauch,” 111. Mi-Kyoung Lee traces a similar itinerary in following the changing meaning of ἀλήθεια in Archaic Greece, suggesting that for Homer “‘*alethes*’ is used for the content of statements, of what people say, and not of things themselves,” whereas “in the Archaic period and in Parmenides, *aletheia* comes to be used to refer not to a property of people and what they say, such as propositions and statements, but to a way of being, that of being ‘real’; ‘truth’ is equivalent to ‘reality.’” See Mi-Kyoung Lee, *Epistemology after Protagoras: Responses to Relativism in Plato, Aristotle, and Democritus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 42. In tracing this itinerary, however, we are attempting to articulate the manner in which both ways of thinking truth are rooted in the attempt to do justice to the saying of things.

²⁶ Denys Lionel Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci: Alcmanis, Stesichori, Ibyci, Anacreontis, Simondidis, Corinnae, Poetarum Minorum Reliquias, Carmina Popularia et Convivialia Quaeque Adespota Feruntur* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), fr. 93. Marcel Detienne has said, “Through Simonides’ thought and work we can see exactly how *Alētheia* came to be devalued.” See Marcel Detienne, *The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece* (New York: Zone Books, 1996), 107. His discussion of the history of truth in general reinforces the notion that the connection between truth and justice is intimate and ancient. His treatment of Simonides specifically reminds us of the degree to which δοκεῖν is already in Simonides associated with ambiguity and duplicity even if it is not yet bound up with the philosophical distinction between being and seeming (115).

work in every attempt to reach out toward that which appears: to what extent is this stretching out necessarily already a sort of violence, a distortion of things? The haunt of such skepticism is an expression of finitude itself; to attend to it without shrinking in the attempt to reach out toward that which appears is to recognize the inaccessible remainder that conditions appearing itself.

The articulation of the Simonides fragment is without context and so lends itself to a decontextualized understanding of ἀλήθεια, however much it also reveals about the elusiveness of disclosure. Here truth as ἀλήθεια stands over against the activity of δοκεῖν in a way that anticipates the words articulated by the goddess in Parmenides' poem when she juxtaposes "the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth" with the "opinions of mortals [ἦδε βροτῶν δόξας], in which there is no true reliance [πίστις ἀληθείης]."²⁷ In the fragment from Simonides and in the words of the goddess, ἀλήθεια seems to name the unconcealedness associated with being.²⁸ Indeed, the goddess delineates the two ways of inquiry that can be thought this way: "[T]he one, that it is and that it is impossible for it not to be, is the path of persuasion (for this follows along with the truth); the other, that it is not and that it is necessary for it not to be, that I declare to you is an altogether indiscernible road."²⁹ If the goddess follows Simonides in distinguishing ἀλήθεια from δοκεῖν, she nevertheless retains its connection with persuasion and so with the domain of human speaking together. The fragment that often is placed immediately after fragment 2 just cited is the famous τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν τε καὶ εἶναι – "thinking and being are the same."³⁰ Because in Parmenides νοεῖν and λέγειν are intimately linked,³¹ this formulation may be heard as an indication that saying

²⁷ Parmenides, fr. 1, 29–30. See Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 230.

²⁸ Pindar too associates ἀλήθεια with the way things really are (*Nemean* 7.25). He also articulates the extent to which ἀλήθεια belongs to appearing as such when he stops himself from relating an "enormous and unjust venture" by saying, "[I]t is not always beneficial for the precise truth to show her face, and silence is often the wisest thing for a human to heed" (*Nemean* 5.16). See Pindar, Herwig Maehler, and Bruno Snell, *Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Leipzig: Teubner, 1987).

²⁹ Parmenides, fr. 2, 3–6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, fr. 3.

³¹ See *ibid.*, fr. 6, 1 and fr. 8, 7–8. Kahn recognizes that νοεῖν and λέγειν are closely associated in Parmenides, and he understands the meaning of ἔστι to be "veridical"

too belongs to being and thus to truth. If the *δοκεῖν* in Simonides is heard in its relation not to the goddess's *δόξα* in fragment 1, but to her *νοεῖν* in fragment 3, it becomes the skeptical correlate to the optimism of the goddess. This skeptical optimism belongs to truth as *ἀλήθεια*. Saying and thinking disclose phenomena as what they are even as what they are in truth remains always elusive – a certain concealing belongs to disclosure as such.

When heard together, the sayings of Simonides and the goddess situate *ἀλήθεια* on the side of being in its relation to *δοκεῖν* and *νοεῖν*. In so doing, they give voice to a phenomenological understanding of *ἀλήθεια* that risks losing its original connection with the sociopolitical and historical realities of human being-together. Yet as the goddess's insistence that *ἀλήθεια* belongs to persuasion intimates, truth never loses its connection to the complex domain of human being and speaking together. In Herodotus, this connection is emphasized.

In the *History*, the use of *ἀλήθεια* resonates with that of Homer insofar as *ἀλήθεια* is tightly woven into the fabric of human being-together. And often it is a tangled web indeed: Herodotus tells of Cambyses, the king of Persia, who out of envy dispatched Prexaspes to kill his brother, Smerdis.³² On a campaign in Egypt, however, when Cambyses heard a herald declare that Smerdis was now to be obeyed as king, he “supposed that the man spoke truth [*λέγειν ἀληθέα*] and that he had been betrayed by Prexaspes.”³³ For his part, Prexaspes, who had in fact carried out the order, cross-examined the herald with these words: “Now tell the truth [*εἰπας τὴν ἀληθείην*] and get out of

(as opposed to “existential” or “predicative”). He also claims that “Parmenides suggests a correspondence theory of Truth” and that *νοεῖν* should be translated as “to know.” See Charles H. Kahn, “The Thesis of Parmenides,” *Review of Metaphysics* 22, no. 4 (1969). In the third fragment of Parmenides, *νοεῖν* is translated as “to think” in order to give it a more dynamic meaning and to allow it to resonate with the verbs of saying to which it is related. The claims that *ἔστι* has a veridical sense and that Parmenides suggests a correspondence theory can be affirmed if in ‘veridical’ we hear aletheological and if in ‘correspondence’ we hear the capacity of thinking/saying to respond together with things. The disclosure of truth is conditioned by such co-response-ability. For a discussion of what Kahn means by the veridical sense of *εἶναι*, see Kahn, “The Greek Verb ‘to Be.’”

³² Herodotus and Ph.-E. Legrand, *Hérodote: Histoires*, 9 vols., Collection des Universités de France (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1946), 3:30.

³³ *Ibid.*, 62.

here... was it Smerdis appearing in visible form [φαινόμενος ἐς ὄψιν] before you that gave you these instructions?"³⁴ Truth appears here both as a question of the appearance of something and as embedded in a concrete and urgent political context in which speaking truth is, quite literally, a matter of life and death. Later, Prexaspes himself agreed to conspire with the Magians against Cambyses: mounting a tower with every intention to deceive the Persians by telling them to follow Smerdis as king, he "caused himself to forget [ἐπελήθετο]" his agreement with the Magians and "fully disclosed the truth [ἐξέφαινε τὴν ἀληθείην], saying that before he had concealed it [κρύπτειν] (for it had not been safe to say the things that happened [λέγειν τὰ γενόμενα]), but now necessity compels him to make them appear in the present [ἐν δὲ τῷ παρόντι ἀναγκαίην μιν καταλαμβάνειν φαίνειν]."³⁵ Having disclosed the truth – that he himself killed Smerdis – Prexaspes threw himself headlong from the tower to his death.

This story itself speaks something of the truth about the appearing of truth. As ἀλήθεια, truth is bound up with a certain forgetting that allows the things that happened to appear as they happened. It concerns the past – τὰ γενόμενα – as it bears upon the present. It is rooted in a kind of saying that is itself a showing, indeed, in a λόγος ἀποφαντικός that seeks to make present the things having been, precisely because what was effectively informs what is and makes possible what will be. The story is poignant because it articulates the complex nexus of relations in which speaking truth happens – that it is no abstract affair of correspondence between representations and their referents, but something insistent, capable of being compelled by a necessity that grows from a commitment to set things right, to do justice to that which happened, even if it means one's own ultimate demise.

If in Simonides and in the words of the Parmenidean goddess we hear the intimate connection, perhaps even identification, of truth and what is, this story, as in Homer, situates truth in its relation to what was. And while this, the historical dimension of ἀλήθεια must itself not be forgotten, the locus for the happening of truth seems

³⁴ Ibid., 63.

³⁵ Ibid., 75.

over time to have shifted from the saying of τὰ γενόμενα to the saying of τὰ πράγματα, the things encountered in concerned engagement with the world. Herodotus himself gives voice to this transition when he tells of Menelaus, who sailed to Memphis in search of Helen after failing to find her in the sacked city of Troy. When he arrived in Memphis, Herodotus says he “told the truth of the matter [εἶπας τὴν ἀληθείην τῶν πραγμάτων] and received great hospitality and took back Helen, quite unhurt.”³⁶ Here τῶν πραγμάτων means effectively what τὰ γενόμενα did in the Prexaspes story at III.75: Menelaus “told the truth of what happened,” as Grene rightly translates.³⁷ The syntax of the two clauses, however, articulates a subtle, yet significant shift: here, the genitive in εἶπας τὴν ἀληθείην τῶν πραγμάτων points to the things themselves as the origin of truth; there, in the expression λέγειν τὰ γενόμενα, truth appears to belong to the saying itself. Taken together, the two clauses articulate well the naturalism at work in the ancient Greek approach to truth, for truth belongs to saying as much as it belongs to being, to the things themselves as much as to the things said. There is no chasm between subject and object to bridge here: saying and being belong together, and truth is rooted in the articulations endemic to this community of communication.³⁸

³⁶ Ibid., 2:119.

³⁷ See Herodotus and David Grene, *The History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 180.

³⁸ This account of the naturalistic meaning of ἀλήθεια undermines the strict distinction between the logical and the ontological conceptions of truth that are sometimes anachronistically read back into Greek thinking. Paul Wilpert’s 1972 article, “Zum Aristotelischen Wahrheitsbegriff,” is a good example of this anachronistic approach. For Wilpert, Plato’s thinking operates with an ontological conception of truth, as articulated in *Sophist* 263b, where “the true speech says the things that are” while “the false speech says other things than the things that are.” On Wilpert’s view, the tension in Aristotle’s thinking on truth can be traced to Aristotle’s attempt to bring the question of truth to the things encountered in everyday experience. This leads Aristotle to develop a logical conception of truth allegedly grounded in the judgment. As Wilpert unequivocally insists, “It is well known and needs no further proof that Aristotle, in his didactic writings, gives priority to the logical [conception of] truth.” See Wilpert, “Zum Aristotelischen Wahrheitsbegriff,” 110. Yet the anachronistic distinction between the ontological and the logical conception of truth covers over the naturalistic meaning of ἀλήθεια. Kahn gets at something of this when he writes, “The language of Greek ontology naturally lends itself to the view that the structure of reality is such as to be truly expressed in discourse.” See Kahn, “The Greek Verb ‘to Be,’” 253. Wilpert’s attempt to show how the tension in

The naturalistic meaning of ἀλήθεια takes on a decidedly phenomenological dimension as the site for the happening of truth positions itself between beings. Truth grows out of ontological encounter. And while the site of this encounter is always conditioned by historical and social realities that exert various degrees of pressure on both the saying and what is said, the concrete presence of the thing increasingly becomes the condition for the possibility of truth as ἀλήθεια.³⁹ Here, truth remains intimately connected to a λόγος that belongs as much to the knower as to the known. Boeder puts the twofold meaning of the λόγος designated here this way: “[O]n one hand, [it means] the caring attention to a determinate thing, so that one has a relation to it; on the other hand, these relationships are those in which the thing itself exists according to its own peculiarity.”⁴⁰ Truth as ἀλήθεια is conditioned by this twofold saying: the saying *of* things. Here, things become the genuine witnesses to the truth;⁴¹ and truth becomes a matter of doing justice to the testimony of things.

TOWARD A PHENOMENOLOGY OF TRUTH

Philosophy is thus called again to and by “the things themselves,” which Heidegger rightly associates with phenomenology in all its

Aristotle’s conception of truth emerges as Aristotle increasingly moves away from a Platonic, ontological understanding of truth fails to appreciate the extent to which still in Aristotle the ontological and the logical belong together. The account of the provenance of ἀλήθεια outlined here is designed to trace the way the ontological is bound to the logical in the Greek articulation of truth.

³⁹ Boeder, “Der Frühgriechische Wortgebrauch,” 112.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 109.

⁴¹ The German *Zeuge* captures the manner in which “things” also bear “witness.” Both *Zeug*, which means “thing” in a broad sense – indeed, in the fifteenth century it came to stand for “objects of all kinds, (low quality) junk, words, thoughts,” etc. – and *Zeuge*, which is the plural “things” as well as the singular noun “witness,” derive from the Middle High German *(ge)ziuc*, which means “the one who is present at an event and can report what happened.” Strangely enough, the verbal *ziehen*, which means “to pull,” is related also to *(ge)ziuc*, which referred to the one “pulled before a judge.” See Wolfgang Pfeifer and Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, Zentralinstitut für Sprachwissenschaft, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1989), 3:2022. Such etymological considerations are not interesting but superfluous academic exercises: if saying and being belong together, etymology itself becomes ontologically significant as a site in which the saying (λόγος) touches upon the true (ἔτυμον).

guises. However, as Heidegger himself emphasizes, phenomenology has historically been so intimately bound up with modern conceptions of subjectivity and consciousness that the things themselves dissolve into the mere representations of the transcendental subject.⁴² In his attempts to turn away from the hegemony of modern subjectivity, Heidegger returns first to a more originary Greek understanding of truth as ἀλήθεια. Then, however, when the Greek experience of truth is thought to be itself too bound up with correctness and reliability, Heidegger jettisons the vocabulary of “truth” altogether and attempts to think ἀλήθεια as the name for the granting of presence itself. This renunciation of the Greek determination of truth as ἀλήθεια involves a denial of truth as co-response-ability insofar as it privileges a certain silent stillness over co-responsive engagement. In order to apprehend this and to delineate the extent to which Heidegger’s earlier appropriations of the Greek, and specifically Aristotelian, understanding of ἀλήθεια may be heard as decisive contributions to the attempt to think truth as co-response-ability, it will be necessary to read Heidegger backward.⁴³

Heidegger moves forcefully away from his earlier articulations of the Greek meaning of truth as ἀλήθεια in two lectures from the

⁴² Heidegger traces this story in terms of Hegel’s speculative dialectic or Husserl’s science of pure consciousness; see Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 76–9/61–4.

⁴³ Schürmann has suggested that in order to correctly understand Heidegger’s earlier writings it is necessary to read him backward, “from end to beginning.” See Reiner Schürmann, “How to Read Heidegger,” *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 19/20, no. 2/1 (1997): 5. In his later writings, Heidegger replaces his earlier vocabulary of the “meaning of being” and the “truth of being,” both of which retain traces of anthropocentrism insofar as they remain linked to signification and the being of human-being, with the vocabulary of the “topology of being.” For Schürmann, the “topology of being” attempts “to grasp presencing as a force of plurification and of dissolution” (4). The topological approach is then identified with a commitment to a plural economy that points to an understanding of action as “hostile to the standard,” i.e., as anarchic. Such anarchic action is said to be “diametrically opposed to the ‘Führer principle’” and its reductions of the plural to the uniform. To read Heidegger backward serves as an antidote to the tendency to read his earlier writings as leading to and grounding philosophically his disastrous political engagement in the 1930s. Here, however, the impulse to read Heidegger backward is driven by a recognition of the limits of the anarchy of topology and the need to retrieve a deepened understanding of signification, not as anthropocentric, but as humanistic and naturalistic, i.e., as capable of responding to the saying of things.

early 1960s: *On Time and Being* and *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*. In the latter, Heidegger attempts to think ἀλήθεια topologically as openness itself: “Ἀλήθεια, unconcealment, we must think as the opening which first grants Being and thinking and their presencing to and for each other.”⁴⁴ The result of this shift in the meaning of ἀλήθεια for Heidegger leads him to the following realization:

The question concerning ἀλήθεια, of unconcealment as such, is not the same as the question concerning truth. For this reason, it was inadequate and misleading to call *aletheia*, in the sense of opening, truth.⁴⁵

The phenomenal sense of ἀλήθεια associated with the Greek engagement with and articulation of truth is supplanted by an allegedly more radical apprehension of ἀλήθεια as the opening that grants presence.⁴⁶ Ἀλήθεια in the sense of opening, however, comes to language in Heidegger here as a site of stillness: “The quiet heart of the opening is the place of stillness from which alone there first is something like the possibility of the belonging together of Being and thinking, that is, presence and perceiving.”⁴⁷ Heidegger’s attempt to think ἀλήθεια more radically risks uprooting it from the rich soil of being-together-in-the-world. Although the stillness of which Heidegger speaks remains relational insofar as it articulates a certain attunement to that which comes to presence, the attempt to locate ἀλήθεια in this “place of stillness” privileges silence over articulation and attunement over response in a way that dislocates truth from the site in which it is nourished and grows.

Despite its being a site of quiet stillness, Heidegger nevertheless tellingly attempts to give voice to this opening that grants presence by articulating it in terms of the *Es gibt* that carries the sense of both “there is” and “it gives.” Yet in *On Time and Being*, Heidegger speaks *Es gibt* only to immediately problematize its capacity to express the granting of presence as such due to its very structure as a predicative

⁴⁴ Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 84/68.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 86/70.

⁴⁶ The hyphenated articulation ἀλήθεια is borrowed from John Caputo, who uses it as a “graphematic device” to delineate the Greek conception of ἀλήθεια from the sense in which it comes to designate the granting of openness itself. See John D. Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 22.

⁴⁷ Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 84/68.

sentence. The *Es* of *Es gibt* is grammatically a subject even if it is “not necessarily a subject in the sense of an ‘I’ or a person.”⁴⁸ Predicative language breaks down in the face of the event of presencing, forcing Heidegger to express this “emancipatory thought” in neutered terms.⁴⁹ In his attempt to think the “It” itself from itself and thus from outside the economy of predication, Heidegger insists that we must think “the ‘It’ from the kind of giving that belongs to it: giving as destiny [*Geschick*], giving as an opening up which reaches out.”⁵⁰ Note here, however, that this remains a thinking something “as” something and thus it belongs, if not to the economy of predication, at least to that of apophantic articulation. Indeed, the very structure of this opening may be heard as an abstract articulation of the structure of expression itself: an opening that reaches out.

Heidegger goes on to name this event of presencing *Ereignis*, which might here be heard as a kind of palinode of *Es gibt*. The *Es gibt* shows itself only to withdraw into the originary event designated as *Ereignis* and articulated in terms of ἀ-λήθεια.⁵¹ If in the *Task of Thinking* lecture ἀ-λήθεια is itself said as “the opening of presence concealing itself, the opening of a self-concealing sheltering,”⁵² *Ereignis* can be heard to designate the dynamic of a happening always already at play between beings as they come to presence to and for one another. *Ereignis* might thus be said to express the very dynamic of co-response-ability we have been attempting to articulate as ἀλήθεια. If so, however, then Heidegger speaks only part of the truth when he identifies ἀλήθεια as *Ereignis* with stillness and goes on to suggest that “the task of thinking would then be the surrender of previous thinking to the determination of the matter for thinking.”⁵³ The “matter for thinking,” *die*

⁴⁸ Ibid., 23/18.

⁴⁹ Caputo calls Heidegger’s awakening to the oblivion of being a “profoundly emancipatory thought” because it “puts us all on the alert for the powers that be, or presume to be, who give themselves airs of ahistorical necessity and immutable presence.” See Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 33. But what of those who give themselves airs of the ahistorical necessity of radically mutable presencing? Surely, we ought to be on the alert for such powers as well.

⁵⁰ Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 24/19.

⁵¹ Ibid., 29/24.

⁵² Ibid., 84, 88/68, 71.

⁵³ Ibid., 90/73.

Sache selbst, calls indeed for a certain attuned openness to that which comes to presence, but to thematize co-responsive attunement in terms of stillness and surrender is to emphasize only the passive side of a middle-voiced activity. The granting of opening as such comes to presence between beings, as things express themselves to and for one another within the rich context of encounter. Heidegger himself suggests the dynamic at play in ontological encounter in the essay “Der Weg zur Sprache,” written just a few years before the two lectures under consideration here. There he writes:

What stirs in the showing of saying is owning [*das Eignen*]. It produces what comes to presence and withdraws in each case into its own, from which each thing shows itself according to itself and lingers in its own way. Let us call the owning that produces things in this way the owning that stirs the saying as indicating what shows in it – the appropriating [*das Ereignen*].⁵⁴

Das Ereignen names the manner in which what is proper to each thing, its unicity, is disclosed in and through apophantic saying – a saying and being said, always in the middle voice, that allows what appears to show itself from itself.⁵⁵ If, as Heidegger never tires of reminding us, there is an ineluctable concealment endemic to disclosure itself, *still the saying of things is a matter of co-response-ability conditioned as much by attentive openness as by responsive disclosure*. In speaking of

⁵⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 12, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1985), 246–7.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of propriety in relation to singularity and unicity, see the section entitled “The Aesthetics of Ethical Imagination” in Chapter 8. Although Heidegger thinks *Ereignen* in linguistic terms in *Der Weg zur Sprache*, elsewhere he also articulates it in visual terms. See Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 24–5. William McNeill has emphasized this dimension of *Ereignis* in his book *The Glance of the Eye*: “Such happening, as an *Ereignis* or event of finitude, is, Heidegger writes, *eigende Eräugnis*: the disclosive event of a glance that brings beings into their own, into what is appropriate to them.” McNeill goes on to suggest that the looking involved here is a kind of co-responsive activity that belongs to language when he writes, “‘Looking’ here cannot simply or primarily be thought in terms of the activity of the eye as such. Rather, it is things themselves that call to us in looking at us, in ‘catching our eye,’ in showing themselves in their very withdrawal (*Enteignis*), thus (appropriatively, via the essence of language) coming into their own being (*Ereignis*).” See William McNeill, “The Glance of the Eye: Heidegger, Aristotle, and the Ends of Theory” (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

“the appropriating” as “what stirs in the showing of saying,” Heidegger articulates the middle-voiced dynamic endemic to ἀλήθεια, even if, later, he relinquishes truth in an attempt to think the opening itself as itself. In so doing, however, he privileges stillness and surrender over expression and co-response-ability.

Thus, when Heidegger, in the face of philological criticism from Friedländer and Boeder, renounces his earlier attempts to articulate ἀλήθεια in terms of truth, he risks uprooting truth from the ontological soil in which it grows and is nourished. Heidegger seems to turn away from the Greek meaning of ἀλήθεια because “already in Homer the word *alethes* is used always only in the *verba dicendi*, in statement and thus in the sense of correctness and reliability, not in the sense of unconcealment.”⁵⁶ Yet we have heard that the verbs of saying that so often appear with ἀλήθεια in the things said by the ancient Greeks belong themselves to an unconcealment that stretches beyond, even if they also may include questions of reliability and correctness. What these verbs of saying themselves show is that ἀλήθεια is never a mute and neutered happening, but is always embedded in and alive to the rich nexus of being-together-in-and-with-the-world. Ἀλήθεια names a certain ability to respond to the things themselves, not as abstract happenings, but as expressive πράγματα that announce themselves to us in and through our concernful dealings with things.

To emphasize this dimension of ontological responsibility, we have spoken of truth in terms of justice, and more specifically as an ability to do justice to that which presents itself in ontological encounter. Truth as justice happens in concrete encounters between situated beings, not between that which grants openness and the thinking capable of tarrying with “the opening of a self-concealing sheltering.”⁵⁷ To insist that ἀλήθεια belongs to verbs of speaking and that truth happens always in a rich nexus of worldly relations is not a return to the metaphysics of presence, or to representational thinking in the modern sense, but to an ancient insistence that truth is a matter of doing justice to things as they appear in the context of their appearing. Truth as justice involves a saying of things that is irreducible to the economy

⁵⁶ Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 87/70.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 88/71.

of correctness and accuracy because it is rooted in a reciprocal ability to respond that undermines every attempt to reify or silence the objects with which truth is concerned. However, truth as justice is also bound to an economy of articulation that is not reducible to, but also not closed off from, the predicative structure of language that seeks to say something as something, *τινὸς κατὰ τινός*,⁵⁸ in such a way as to allow things to show themselves as what they are.

Heidegger develops his original conception of phenomenology from an early engagement with Aristotle's conception of such apophantic saying. A return to these early articulations of the meaning of phenomenology in relation to Aristotle's discussion of the *λόγος ἀποφαντικός* in the *De Interpretatione* and the *De Anima* will allow us to discern the naturalistic and phenomenological nature of Aristotle's own account of truth. This account finds itself situated between an ancient tendency to associate *ἀλήθεια* with the social, political, and historical dimensions of human being-together and a growing attempt to extend the meaning of truth to include a certain manner of comportment to the plurality of things encountered. If pragmatic naturalism recalls this earlier tendency to think truth as embedded in and determined by a rich nexus of social, political, and historical relations, Heideggerian phenomenology evokes this enlarged determination of truth as oriented toward the appearing of things. Drawing the traditions of pragmatic naturalism and Heideggerian phenomenology together in turning again to the Aristotelian texts concerning truth will educe an account of truth as co-response-ability that has far-reaching implications for the manner in which human-beings live in and with the natural world.

PRAGMATIC NATURALISM, ARISTOTLE, AND EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY

Although truth is rooted in human being-together, it is not conditioned exclusively by the interhuman social, political context in which it occurs. Rather, truth involves a way of stretching out to the

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Aristotelis Categoriae et Liber de Interpretatione* (henceforth *De Int.*) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 17a25.

things with which it is concerned. As has been heard, this reaching out across to things is emphasized by the prefix “trans-” in Dewey’s conception of “transaction.”⁵⁹ Yet this transactional intentionality is fundamentally phenomenological – directed toward that which shows itself, τὸ φαινόμενον. If pragmatic naturalism offers an integrated, transactional orientation to the complex, historically funded *topoi* of truth, phenomenology seeks to articulate the complex dynamics of encounter evoked by the appearing of things. Thus, existential phenomenology, far from standing in opposition to pragmatic naturalism, complements it by focusing attention on and seeking to articulate more deeply the logic of appearing.⁶⁰ Randall explicitly links “phenomenological criticism” to the “experimental” method championed by the pragmatists insofar as both begin “with the funded body of knowledge already acquired in the past. There can be no experimental method except in the context of an already tested store of beliefs and ideas.”⁶¹ In yet a deeper sense, existential phenomenology, particularly as developed by Heidegger, resonates with pragmatic naturalism in identifying the transactional event of ontological communication as the fertile soil in which truth and meaning naturally grow.⁶²

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger articulates the ontological structure of *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world in terms of what is here being called the

⁵⁹ See Chapter 1.

⁶⁰ The qualifications “existential” and “pragmatic” are important, for as Husserl’s attack on naturalism indicates, his pure phenomenology of consciousness is adamantly opposed to the reductive naturalism that seeks to understand the world in terms of physical forces. Of course, Husserl’s phenomenology, insofar as it seeks to set itself on the secure path of science by an *epoché* that brackets its investigations from the lifeworld, would stand in opposition to both existential phenomenology and pragmatic naturalism.

⁶¹ John Herman Randall, *How Philosophy Uses Its Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 41–3.

⁶² Randall recognizes the extent to which Heidegger’s existential phenomenology resonates with the pragmatic naturalist conception of experience: “I have always been impressed by the analogy to the conception of experience in the ‘existential ontology’ of Heidegger. That also emphasizes the naturalistic inclusion of man in ‘Being,’ the ‘self-world polarity,’ and the consequence that all human experiences have ontological implications, that they are all ‘transactions’ of man cooperating with the rest of things, which point to genuine traits of the world within which man finds himself.” See Randall, *Nature and Historical Experience*, 150.

transactional event of ontological communication. To register this in the terms of Heidegger's existential analytic of *Dasein*:

In speaking, *Da-sein* expresses itself not because it has been at first cut off as 'something internal' from something outside, but because as being-in-the-world it is already 'outside' when it understands. What is expressed is precisely this being outside [here Heidegger inserts a note: the there; being exposed as an open place], that is, the actual mode of attunement (of mood) which was shown to pertain to the full disclosedness of being-in.⁶³

For Heidegger, as being-in-the-world, *Dasein* ek-sists in the sense of "standing out beyond itself" or, to use the Aristotelian formulation, of "stretching itself out toward" beings it encounters.⁶⁴ The existential analytic of *Dasein* articulates the structure of the sort of trans-action endemic to being-in-the-world in terms of the equi-original existentialia of attunement, understanding, and discourse.⁶⁵

Attunement, or *Befindlichkeit*, names the manner in which *Dasein* finds itself always already embedded in a world of concerned relations with things. *Dasein* is tuned into things. This involvement is felt as mood, as the *Stimmung* that "rises from being-in-the-world itself as a mode of that being."⁶⁶ As a fundamental ontological mode of

⁶³ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 16th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1986), 162/52. Here and in what follows, this text is cited with reference first to the German page number followed by that of the English translation: Martin Heidegger and Joan Stambaugh, *Being and Time*, SUNY Series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996). Although translations are my own, they were made often in consultation with Stambaugh's renderings.

⁶⁴ This is the meaning of Heidegger's insistence that "Being is the transcendens pure and simple." See Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 38/33–4. In *Vom Wesen des Grundes*, Heidegger writes, "Transcendence means stepping-beyond. That which carries out this stepping-beyond is transcendent (transcending), it abides in stepping-beyond. This stepping-beyond as a happening belongs to a being. Formally this stepping-beyond can be grasped as a 'relationship' that stretches 'from' something 'to' something. Further, to stepping-beyond belongs that toward which this stepping leads, which is usually and improperly called the 'transcendental.' And finally, in stepping-beyond *something* is always surpassed." See Martin Heidegger, "Vom Wesen des Grundes," in *Wegmarken*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 33.

⁶⁵ The term 'existentialia' is used by Heidegger to indicate the fundamental, ontological determinations of *Dasein*. It is to his existential analytic what a "category" is to traditional ontologies of presence.

⁶⁶ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 136/29.

being-in-the-world, attunement belongs to the facticity of *Dasein*'s thrownness, to the existential-ontological fact that *Dasein* finds itself always embedded in a complex historical context that determines in fundamental ways *how* it stands out toward that which it encounters. Where pragmatic naturalism understands experience as historically funded and contextual, existential phenomenology speaks in terms of thrownness and attunement. In so doing, it emphasizes the existential mode and mood endemic to *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world as historical, that is, to its historicity.⁶⁷

Yet as a way of standing out toward beings, "[a]ttunement always has its understanding."⁶⁸ Here understanding names the manner in which *Dasein* projects itself toward that which it encounters in the world.⁶⁹ Understanding is *Dasein*'s capacity to find its way into and around the world. Thus, it is a sort of projecting or stretching out into the world always already disclosed in attunement. If attunement expresses the historicity of *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world, understanding expresses its futurity.⁷⁰ *Dasein* ek-sists as attuned understanding, which Heidegger further determines as thrown projection in order to emphasize the dynamic and, indeed, temporal structure of the being of *Dasein*.⁷¹

This determination of the structure of *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world can be heard as an existential phenomenological translation of the structure of transaction articulated by pragmatic naturalism. What is gained heuristically by such a translation, however, is a deeper engagement with the legacy of Aristotle's account of λόγος, an account that anticipates the role communication plays in the transactional event of truth. For Heidegger, attunement and understanding are both always

⁶⁷ Randall in particular recognizes the historical nature of human-being: "Human nature is thus not 'constant' and 'original,' but fundamentally historical in character: human nature is an *historical nature*, like the seed's career." See Randall, *Nature and Historical Experience*, 86.

⁶⁸ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 142/34.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 145/36.

⁷⁰ Of course, to emphasize the temporal determinations of the existentialia of attunement and understanding is here already to anticipate without articulating in detail the manner in which Heidegger understands the ecstatic temporality of *Dasein* to grow out of the existential structure of *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world.

⁷¹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 145/36, 223/5.

already matters of interpretation. They involve an essential mediation – the mediation of a λόγος that enacts the saying of “something as something,” τινὸς κατὰ τινός. Heidegger gives an analysis of this sort of λόγος a privileged position in his existential analytic of *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world, because he recognizes that “in the decisive beginnings of ancient ontology the *logos* functioned as the sole guide for the access to true beings and for the determination of the being of beings.”⁷² Access to being is mediated by λόγος. And although, as will be heard, this opens the possibility of dissimulation, it is also the medium through which the truth of things is articulated and heard. Randall puts this point beautifully and, as always, with reference to the things said by those who came before:

Experience...is not an encountering of Substance by something standing outside Substance, and external to it. Experience is rather a *participating in* Substance, a cooperation of factors *in* Substance.... Substance, then, the existing world, is what is encountered in all types of experience. And Substance *is* what it is encountered *as*, in all these ways: it is what it is “experienced *as*,” reflectively and non-reflectively.⁷³

Randall here gives voice – in the discernible vernacular of pragmatic naturalism – to what Heidegger calls in *Being and Time* the “existential-hermeneutical ‘as’” that lets things appear precisely as the things they are rather than as externally determined by a conceptual schema imposed upon them from without.⁷⁴ This existential-hermeneutical ‘as’ emerges as the ontological ground of *Dasein*’s attuned projections toward beings in the world.

The delineation of the existential-hermeneutical ‘as’ subverts the simple distinction between intensionality and extensionality that

⁷² Ibid., 154/44.

⁷³ Randall, *Nature and Historical Experience*, 150. Elided from this quotation are Randall’s explicit gestures to the manner in which Woodbridge and Dewey formulate the belonging together of experience and substance. For Woodbridge, there is a “cooperation,” for Dewey, a “transaction” understood not to be “items or characteristics of organisms alone, nor items or characteristics of environment alone, but the *activity* that occurs of *both together*.” See *ibid.* and Dewey and Bentley, *Knowing and the Known*, 71. It is no accident that this is the context in which Randall explicitly establishes the analogy between experience so understood and Heidegger’s “existential ontology.” See Randall, *Nature and Historical Experience*, 150.

⁷⁴ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 158/48.

has become central to much contemporary theorizing concerning the nature of truth.⁷⁵ To hold rigorously the distinction between the sense of an expression and its reference is to posit a strict dichotomy between subject and object that covers over the extent to which every attempt at meaningful articulation, every expression with *Sinn*, is always already bound up with that toward which it is directed. Heidegger emphasizes this when he insists that the statement must be recognized as having its ontological provenance in the existential-hermeneutical “as,” that is, in a circumspect interpretation that grows out of attuned understanding.⁷⁶ This recognition of the ontological provenance of the statement allows Heidegger to develop an original interpretation of the meaning of Aristotle’s *apophantical* “as.”

For Heidegger, the apophantical “as” that operates in those statements in which an attempt is made to say things as they show themselves to be is rooted ontologically in the existential-hermeneutical “as” that grows out of and belongs to *Dasein*’s own manner of existing as attuned understanding, that is, as a thrown project. Each attempt to say something as something is grounded in an originary existential interpretation of being in which that toward which the saying is directed has always already somehow taken hold of the saying. To recognize the roots of the apophantical “as” in the existential-hermeneutical “as” is to undermine the traditional interpretation of truth as the simple agreement of the intellect with the thing. By uncovering the existential-hermeneutical “as,” Heidegger is able to develop an account of truth as *discovering* [*entdeckend-sein*].⁷⁷ For the

⁷⁵ This distinction is traced back to Frege’s famous essay, “Über Sinn und Bedeutung,” in which the sense, or *Sinn*, of an expression is distinguished from that to which it refers. See Gottlob Frege and Günther Patzig, *Funktion, Begriff, Bedeutung: Fünf Logische Studien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1994), 40–65. “Sense” refers to the intension of an expression, while “reference” refers to the extension of an expression. Kirkham takes this distinction as central to an understanding of contemporary theories of truth. See Richard L. Kirkham, *Theories of Truth: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 4–14. This distinction has become central because truth inhabits the site in which things press out toward that which stretches out to them. However, if contemporary theories of truth allow this distinction to dissolve the natural relation between the expression and articulation of things, they will forever remain deaf and perhaps even hostile to the meaning of truth as co-response-ability.

⁷⁶ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 158/48.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 218/1.

Heidegger of *Being and Time*, truth in its most originary sense “is the disclosedness [*Erschlossenheit*] of *Dasein* to which belongs the discoveredness [*Entdecktheit*] of inner-worldly beings.”⁷⁸ This articulation of the meaning of truth anticipates the sense of truth as co-response-ability insofar as it recognizes that human-being ontologically belongs to and cooperates with the being of things.

Yet Heidegger yields to the Thomistic and Cartesian tradition of distinguishing a “primary” from a “secondary” sense of truth. For Aquinas and Descartes, as we have heard, truth applies primarily to the intellect and secondarily to things. Heidegger makes the distinction this way: “Primarily ‘true’, that is, discovering, is *Dasein*. Truth in the secondary sense does not mean to be discovering (discovery), but to be discovered (discoveredness).”⁷⁹ Such a distinction, however, repeats that metaphysical hierarchy in which that which is active is granted primacy over that which is designated as passive. Although the distinction itself articulates something of the truth of truth, namely, that it belongs in an important sense to the sort of being for whom its being is an issue, that is, to *Dasein* or, indeed, human-being, the attempt to ascribe truth *primarily* to such beings – like the tendency in Aquinas and Descartes to ascribe it primarily to the intellect or thinking – elides the degree to which truth belongs to things in an equi-original way. The danger of such metaphysical ordering in relation to the locus of truth is that it tends to eclipse the nature of truth as that which grows out of and is nourished by the *relation* between human-being and the beings of nature. To privilege thinking over things disrupts the symbiotic ecology of truth. If, however, Heidegger’s own determination of the being of *Dasein* as being-in-the-world calls into question the simple identification of *Dasein* with the active and the world as passive, then his articulation of the meaning of truth too should be permitted to unsettle this dichotomy despite the tendency for traditional modes of expression to seep into the text. Truth as discovering, then, would be heard to grow out of the ontological encounter between human-beings and things and so to belong as much to human-being as to the things encountered.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 223/5.

⁷⁹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 220/3.

Indeed, the human capacity to articulate in speech the truth of things – even of those things that seem at first to be saying nothing at all – is eloquent testimony to the λόγος at work in the nature of things. This λόγος, however, is the very medium through which the things of nature express themselves in truth – that is, as either discoverable or intelligible. Heidegger's insistence that the being of *Dasein* belongs to the discoveredness of things and his designation of this fact as the very meaning of truth suggest that his thinking too is infused with a robust naturalism that apprehends truth as co-response-ability.

Heidegger's own early engagement with the things said by Aristotle concerning the meaning and nature of λόγος allows him to discover the existential-hermeneutical "as" that names the peculiar manner in which *Dasein* belongs to the world into which it has always already been thrown. The existential-hermeneutical "as" belongs to *Dasein*'s mode of understanding, that is, to the manner in which it is projected and projects itself into the world. For Heidegger, the roots of apophantic truth "reach back to the disclosedness of understanding."⁸⁰ The originary, ontological understanding of truth in Heidegger thus belongs to the manner in which *Dasein* stretches out toward things. This stretching for Heidegger involves always a primordial interpretation, for the things toward which *Dasein* stretches itself are themselves always already there in such a way that they have themselves somehow taken hold of *Dasein*. This is the significance of the existential determination of *Dasein* as being-in-the-world.⁸¹ The existential-hermeneutical "as" then names the primordial interpretation that conditions all understanding as projection. But the condition for the possibility of understanding as projection is *Dasein*'s fundamental ontological determination as being-in-the-world, a determination that underscores the manner in which *Dasein*, in its very being, belongs to and with the beings it encounters.

To insist that *Dasein* belongs to the world in this way bears a striking resemblance not only to Dewey's discussion of transaction and Randall's notion of experience as participating in substance, but also to Woodbridge's naturalist understanding of the relation between

⁸⁰ Ibid., 223/5.

⁸¹ Ibid., 54/51.

human articulation and nature as *cooperation*. For Woodbridge, because nature itself is a universe of discourse, human language cannot be understood to be imposed upon nature from without.⁸² Rather, as Woodbridge so poignantly suggests, “[i]t would seem senseless to try to make sense out of Nature were not discursive speech as much coöperation with her [Nature] as digestion.”⁸³ Both digestion and articulation involve metabolic cooperation: in digestion, the materials of nature allow themselves to be received in such a way that the growth and thriving of the organism are promoted; in discursive speech, nature’s self-showing lends itself to articulate speech in such a way that a deepened understanding of the natural world becomes possible.

Returning, then, to Woodbridge’s insistence, cited in Chapter 1, that “although truth is not a matter of nature, the *saying* of things is,” we might do well to reconsider his claim that truth is not a matter of nature, even as we reassert his basic contention that the saying of things is. If discourse is itself a sort of cooperation with nature, truth, which grows out of and is nourished by this discursive cooperation, too belongs to nature. Woodbridge himself suggests the metaphor on which such a naturalistic phenomenology of truth might be thought when he writes of the relation between speech and what he calls the “pantomime” of nature, the very performance of nature’s self-showing: “And just as in breathing with our lungs there is intake and outgo in a continuous context which is polarized as organ and atmosphere, so here in the scenery of language organs and pantomime are polarized, . . . Because we live in and with her [Nature], her discourse is translated or transmuted into ours without severing the polarization involved.”⁸⁴ The vocabulary of “polarization” allows Woodbridge to think nature in its relation to human articulation without divorcing the one from the other. But the significance of this passage for a naturalistic phenomenology of truth lies in the analogy it establishes with natural processes like breathing. As air gives itself

⁸² Frederick James Eugene Woodbridge, *An Essay on Nature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 217.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁸⁴ Woodbridge, *An Essay on Nature*, 233.

to the lungs, so too does the appearing of nature lend itself to speech. When heard in conjunction with the example of digestion just cited, it appears possible to think truth, growing from the relation between the appearing of nature and articulate speech, as analogous to the way health grows from the relation between air and the lungs, or food and the stomach. If this is the case, then just as health signifies the symbiotic flourishing of the relationship between human-being and the world, truth may be said to signify the symbiotic flourishing of the relationship between the appearing of things (τὰ φαινόμενα) and the saying of things (τὰ λεγόμενα). The term 'symbiotic' must here be heard to articulate the rich and complex ways the phenomena *live together* with our articulations of them or, more generally, the manner in which human-being *lives in cooperation* with the natural world.

Truth, like health, would then have to be apprehended not as something lying out beyond the natural world to be intellectually intuited independent of the operations of human λόγος, but as an accomplishment that grows out of a particular way of living in cooperation with nature. We have already heard something of the nature of this way of living in our discussion of the ethics of truth and the truthful person; for it involves cultivating habits of relation nourished by the attempt to say things as they are. Aristotle's thinking, more than that of any of our predecessors, embodies such habits. In turning again to him, we seek to learn anew the saying of things and indeed to cultivate those habits of onto-logical response-ability endemic to the ecology of justice.

Saving the Things Said

And it is just to feel gratitude not only to those whose opinions one shares, but even to those whose pronouncements were more superficial, for they too contributed something, since before us they exercised the active condition [ἐξέτις] of thinking.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*¹

Let us begin again with Aristotle as Aristotle so often begins with us: by attending carefully to the words of the ancients.² Xenophanes, who, Aristotle so generously claims, “made nothing clear,”³ nevertheless gives voice to the hope and tragedy of the human condition: “But from the beginning the gods did not reveal all things to mortals; but by seeking they discover better in time.”⁴ Ours is not a world of superlatives but of comparatives – the best, the purest revelation of truth remains concealed to us, and yet in time, indeed by searching, we discover better. Xenophanes emphasizes the temporality of human striving, and one might imagine that this points not merely to the progressive attainment of ever more effective articulations of the truth,

¹ *Meta.* II.1, 993b11–15.

² A version of this chapter was originally published as Christopher P. Long, “Saving *ta Legomena*: Aristotle and the History of Philosophy,” *Review of Metaphysics* 60 (2006). I am grateful to the *Review of Metaphysics* for allowing it to be presented here in a slightly altered form.

³ *Meta.* I.5, 986b23–4.

⁴ Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, fr. 18, 133.

but also to the cumulative effect past articulations always already have on present attempts to give voice to the nature of things.

Despite his rather harsh judgment of Xenophanes, Aristotle's own words resonate with his:

Theorizing [θεωρία] concerning the truth is in one sense difficult, in another sense easy. A sign of this is that no one can [τὸ δύνασθαι] obtain it adequately, nor do all fail; but each says something concerning nature [λέγειν τι περὶ τῆς φύσεως], and although one by one each adds little or nothing to it, from all of them being gathered together something great comes into being.⁵

Like Xenophanes, Aristotle begins with human finitude: the capacity (τὸ δύνασθαι) to obtain the truth adequately has not been granted to human-beings. And yet, like Xenophanes, Aristotle does not recoil from this, but insists that something great comes into being when our polyphonous articulations concerning nature are gathered together.

Theoretical inquiry into the truth here involves not a detached *seeing*, but an engaged *saying*. Indeed, truth does not find expression in the isolated articulation of a single voice; it rather resonates in a polyphony of voices that emerges out of the various ways each engages the world by articulating “something concerning φύσις.”⁶ Thus, Aristotle's own investigations into φύσις begin by attending to the voices of his predecessors. This methodological orientation toward τὰ λεγόμενα, the things said, is no idiosyncratic accident. Rather, as Wolfgang Wieland has suggested, it is “an integrated moment of the objective investigation itself.”⁷ Indeed, this orientation toward the things said by those who came before runs throughout Aristotle's work, from his investigation into nature, to his treatment of the soul, to his inquiry into ethics; for in each case, the investigation into the truth begins where we find ourselves, addressed already by the things said by our predecessors.

⁵ *Meta.* II.1, 993a30–b3.

⁶ Baracchi suggests that Aristotle's approach to his predecessors is a “choral enterprise.” See Claudia Baracchi, “Meditations on the Philosophy of History,” *Research in Phenomenology* 31 (2001): 241n6.

⁷ Wolfgang Wieland, *Die Aristotelische Physik* (Goetingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 101.

In order to apprehend the central methodological role Aristotle's engagement with the things said has in his own attempts to articulate the truth, it will be necessary to sketch the basic contours of Aristotle's phenomenological approach to τὰ λεγόμενα. This will allow us first to offer a corrective to what seems to have emerged as a kind of received orthodoxy concerning Aristotle's engagement with the history of philosophy, in which, it is alleged, Aristotle manipulates the thinking of his predecessors such that they turn out to be nothing other than, as Harold Cherniss so colorfully puts it, "'stammering' attempts to express [Aristotle's] own system."⁸ Yet in his writings on φύσις, and specifically in the lectures on *Physis* and the *Parts of Animals*, something different is at work. These writings seek to do justice to the phenomena with which they are concerned. In them, Aristotle attends to the things said by his predecessors not to legitimize a fully worked out position, but rather to locate articulations that deepen our engagement with the nature of things.

TA LEGOMENA AS PHAINOMENA

Recent predecessors of our own have highlighted the important role saving the φαινόμενα plays in Aristotle's method. In his famous essay, "*Tithenai ta Phainomena*," G. E. L. Owen identifies what he considers to be an ambiguity in Aristotle's use of the term φαινόμενα.⁹ In one sense, φαινόμενα point to empirical observations, in another, to common opinions, or ἔνδοξα, on a subject. The first sense seems to operate in the biological works when, for example, Aristotle asks in *Parts of Animals* whether the natural philosopher "having first studied the phenomena regarding the animals and the parts of each, should then state the reason why and the causes."¹⁰ The second sense is at

⁸ Harold F. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), 348.

⁹ G. E. L. Owen, "*Tithenai ta Phainomena*," in *Aristotle: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. J. M. E. Moravcsik (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967), 168–76.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Aristote. Les Parties des Animaux* (hereafter *PA*), ed. P. Louis (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1956); I.1, 639b8–10. For some other references to the empirical meaning of *phainomena*, see *PA* I.1, 640a13–15; Aristotle, *Aristote. Du Ciel* (henceforth, *De Caelo*), ed. P. Moraux (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1965), II.13, 293a23–30; II.14, 297a2–6; III.7, 306a5–17; Aristotle, *Aristotelis Analytica Priora et Posteriora* (henceforth

work, for example, in Aristotle's discussion of ἀκρασία, or incontinence, in *Nicomachean Ethics* VII, where he says:

It is necessary, as with other things, when setting forth the φαινόμενα and having gone through the impasses a first time, to exhibit especially all the opinions [ἔνδοξα] concerning these experiences, or if not [all], then most or the most authoritative. For when the difficulties are resolved and [certain] opinions remain, it would have been made sufficiently evident.¹¹

Here the ἔνδοξα, which at the end of the chapter are simply called τὰ λεγόμενα, themselves function as the φαινόμενα orienting the investigation into incontinence. Drawing on Owen's delineation of the different senses of φαινόμενα in Aristotle, Terence Irwin suggests a distinction between two different methods of inquiry, the one, corresponding to the first sense of φαινόμενα, is empirical; the other, corresponding to the second sense, is properly dialectical.¹²

John Cleary, however, has taken issue with this bifurcation of Aristotle's method, suggesting that "there is a single common method, but that the meaning of 'phenomena' is always relative to the subject matter."¹³ For Cleary, the phenomena play two roles in Aristotle's common procedure: they serve as a starting point of the investigation and they provide a test for the first principles.¹⁴ Cleary rightly traces this method back to an ancient practice in astronomy – and if Simplicius is to be believed, it was a practice initiated by Plato¹⁵ – which involved

Post. Anal. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), I.13, 78b39–79a5; *Meta.* XII.8, 1073b32–8.

¹¹ *NE* VII.1, 1145b3–7. This translation attempts to capture the force of two participles, one present (τιθέντας), the other aorist (διαπορήσαντας), in the first sentence. It seems important to highlight the notion that setting forth the phenomena is an ongoing process that includes exhibiting the ἔνδοξα and perhaps even going through the difficulties a first time.

¹² Terence Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 29–30. Irwin admits, however, that the "distinction between dialectical and empirical argument is admittedly rough, and does not imply that the same work cannot include both types of argument" (30).

¹³ John J. Cleary, "Phainomena in Aristotle's Methodology," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 2, no. 1 (1994): 90n13.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁵ I. L. Heiberg, Simplicius in *In De Caelo Commentaria*, in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca: Editio Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Reginiae Borussiae*, ed. K. Akademie der Wissenschaften Berlin (Berolini: Typ. et Empensis G. Reimeri, 1897), vol. VII, 488.18–24. For a discussion of the problems with this, see Jürgen

“saving the φαινόμενα” by developing a mathematical account capable of doing justice to the observed movements of the heavenly bodies. Although this original meaning of φαινόμενα remains identifiable in Aristotle’s work, particularly in the *De Caelo* and *Metaphysics* XII.8, where an attempt to save the phenomena led Aristotle to entertain the possibility that there were, in fact, forty-seven unmoved movers,¹⁶ Aristotle’s own use of the term points to an even broader meaning than has been suggested to this point.

Cleary points to this broader understanding of φαινόμενα when he recognizes that Aristotle not only uses the term to refer to empirical observations and received ἔνδοξα, but more generally, and to modern ears more strangely, takes linguistic evidence itself as a kind of φαινόμενα. Cleary notes a passage from the *De Caelo* that draws our attention to the intimate relationship between λόγος and the φαινόμενα as Aristotle considers the nature of a fifth element that had long been posited to be the material of the heavenly bodies. Aristotle claims:

It seems that our λόγος bears witness to the φαινόμενα and that the φαινόμενα bear witness to our λόγος. . . . It seems that the name [for the primary heavenly body] too has been handed down right to our own day from the ancients who have taken it up in the way that we too are expressing. . . . And so, saying that the primary body is something other beyond earth, fire, air and water, they gave the highest place the name of *aether* [αἰθήρ], positing the name for it from [the fact that] it ‘runs always’ [θεῖν ἀεί] for an eternity of time.¹⁷

Leaving the question of the validity of the etymology to one side, Cleary claims that this passage “shows that language is one of the relevant phenomena for Aristotle because he sees it as a repository of truth that can be drawn on by each generation.”¹⁸ Although

Mittelstrass, *Die Rettung der Phänomene: Ursprung und Geschichte Eines Antiken Forschungsprinzips* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1962).

¹⁶ *Meta.* XII.8, 1074a1–17. For an indication of the relevant passages from *De Caelo*, see note 10, this chapter.

¹⁷ *De Caelo* I.3, 270b1–24. In the *Meteorology*, Aristotle makes the following related claim: “[I]t appears to be an old belief and one which men have held in the past, for the word ‘aether’ has long been used to denote that element.” This is E. W. Webster’s translation found in Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. I, *Meteorology*, I.3, 339b20–2.

¹⁸ Cleary, “Phainomena in Aristotle’s Methodology,” 71.

the passage does suggest that language can be viewed as a sort of φαινόμενα pointing in the direction of the truth for Aristotle, Cleary's statement does not do justice to the extent to which λόγος itself serves as a φαινόμενον for Aristotle.

It is not just that λόγος serves as a "repository of truth" for Aristotle, but more fundamentally, the truth of things is accessible for human-beings only as mediated by λόγος. Owen seems to begin to express something like this when he writes, "[A]nd the λεγόμενα turn out as so often to be partly matters of linguistic usage or, if you prefer, of the conceptual structure revealed by language."¹⁹ Martha Nussbaum comes closer when she claims, "We can have truth only *inside* the circle of appearances, because only there can we communicate, even refer, at all."²⁰ Yet even these statements fail to do justice to the extent to which in Aristotle λόγος itself serves as a φαινόμενον.

Aristotle operates with a naturalistic conception of the relationship between being and language that allows him to recognize that our very speaking about beings reveals something of the nature of these beings themselves.²¹ Here there is no unbridgeable chasm to traverse between language and the nature of things. Wieland puts it this way: "The language-thing [*Sprache-Sache*] distinction is an opposition of reflection; phenomenologically it does not exist in the natural attitude: in speaking we always already have to do with the things of which we speak without ourselves being conscious of the opposition between language and things."²² Expressing it more boldly,

¹⁹ Owen, "Tithenai ta Phainomena," 170.

²⁰ Martha Craven Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 257.

²¹ For Aristotle, the being of nature and the human capacity for articulation belong together; human-being, as the animal having λόγος, is itself a natural being whose capacity for articulation is one of the ways nature expresses itself. This *naturalistic* conception of language is beautifully expressed by Frederick Woodbridge: "But [Aristotle] will not let the naturalness of language be natural in admission only. He makes it natural in nature. It becomes one of nature's supreme products, the product in which all other products find articulated linkage." Frederick Woodbridge, *Aristotle's Vision of Nature*, ed. John Herman Randall (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 24.

²² Wieland, *Die Aristotelische Physik*, 145; cf. 141: "One has with speaking, phenomenologically understood, not to do with the linguistic, but rather, indeed, with the things of which one speaks, without oneself knowing that it thereby concerns itself with things of which one speaks."

Wieland writes, “[E]very ὄν is an ὄν λεγόμενον.”²³ Or to put it in John Herman Randall’s language, “Things are what they can be said to be.”²⁴ Yet these formulations must not be misunderstood to collapse being into being-said; rather, they express the belonging together of being and articulation – they say, to use John Smith’s vocabulary, that “articulation is not alien to being.”²⁵

For Aristotle, each attempt to *articulate* something of the truth of things is always already involved with the expression of the things encountered. To presume a fundamental disjunction between articulation and being is to impose a distinction of reflection upon a natural relationship and so already to pervert it. This is, it seems, a symptom of the lasting hegemony of the modern segregation of the object from the subject.²⁶ Aristotle’s thoroughgoing naturalism undermines the assumption of a separation between being and articulation. For Aristotle, although there remains a discernible difference between being and appearing, there is no sphere of real being independent of the world of appearance and articulation. Appearing is a way being expresses itself. Access to being is thus gained by attending to τὰ φαινόμενα. Therefore, when Aristotle characterizes the proper method of his investigation into nature, he speaks not of the direct intuitive grasp of separately existing realities, but of a “natural road” from what is more known to us to what is more known by nature.²⁷ This road begins with the natural ways in which we and our predecessors speak about things because these articulations express something of the truth of the things themselves. This naturalistic phenomenological approach to τὰ λεγόμενα is rooted in the recognition not merely that language can lend voice to the nature of things, but also that the being of things naturally expresses itself through and in λόγος. From this perspective, Aristotle’s collection and criticism of the

²³ Ibid., 201.

²⁴ John Herman Randall, *Aristotle* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 118.

²⁵ Smith, “Being, Immediacy, and Articulation,” 594.

²⁶ Heidegger has recognized how inappropriate it is to import the subject–object distinction back into ancient Greek thinking. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, ed. Mark Michalski, vol. 18, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002), 56.

²⁷ Aristotle, *Aristotelis Physica* (henceforth *Phys.*) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), I.1, 184a16–8.

things said by his predecessors must be heard not as a prolegomenon to the investigation into nature, but as an integral moment of the investigation itself.

THE PATH OF INQUIRY

Although the tendency to begin with the things said by his predecessors runs throughout Aristotle's work, the first chapter of the *Physics* eloquently expresses the methodological intuition that animates the practice. It starts by insisting that τὸ εἰδέναι and τὸ ἐπίστασθαι begin with a kind of γνωρίζειν – a familiar acquaintance with the first principles and causes of the beings of nature. Here, two of the highest forms of knowledge in Aristotle, εἰδέναι – knowing in the sense of directly seeing the look, or εἶδος, of something – and ἐπίστασθαι – demonstrative, scientific knowledge – are said to be themselves somehow dependent on, indeed to grow out of, the familiarity with things that orients us toward the world in which we find ourselves. Natural things are pre-reflectively there for us. We have a kind of pre-understanding of them that serves as a condition for the possibility of both τὸ εἰδέναι and τὸ ἐπίστασθαι.²⁸

Aristotle emphasizes the importance of the sort of recognition associated with γνωρίζειν when he asserts that “it is necessary to lead forward in this way: from what is less clear by nature but more clear to us to what is clearer and better known [γνωριμώτερα] by nature.”²⁹ The things with which we are familiar, however, are at first somehow jumbled together (συγκεχυμένα); we perceive them as undifferentiated wholes, while the rich contours of their natural being remain hidden. “Thus,” Aristotle tells us, “it is necessary to proceed from the universal [ἐκ τῶν καθόλου] to the particulars [τὰ καθ’ ἕκαστα]; for the whole is better known [γνωριμώτερα] according to perception, and what is universal is some kind of whole.”³⁰ Strangely enough, this passage seems at odds with Aristotle's general tendency to associate

²⁸ Wieland uses the vocabulary of *Vorverständnis* in this context. See Wieland, *Die Aristotelische Physik*, 72.

²⁹ *Phys.* I.1, 184a18–21.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 184a23–4.

particulars with perception and to identify the proper path of investigation as proceeding from particulars to universals, rather than the other way around.³¹ Here, however, the καθόλου does not name the universal so much as those undifferentiated wholes we encounter in our everyday engagements with the world. From this perspective, τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα does not designate “the particulars” so much as, to use Heidegger’s poignant formulation, “those moments that bring what is at first superficially meant into a compelling distance so that I actually see it in its articulateness.”³² For Heidegger, as for Aristotle, the movement from that which is more familiar to us, though less known by nature, to that which is more known by nature is a matter of articulation.

This can be heard in the two examples to which Aristotle appeals at the end of the first chapter of the *Physics*. The first example, taken from the sphere of geometry, points to the relationship between a name and its λόγος, or meaning. “A name,” says Aristotle, “signifies some whole indiscriminately, such as a circle, but the definition [ὁρισμός] takes it apart into particulars [διαίρει εἰς τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα].”³³ Here the definition is a matter of a sort of διαίρεσις – not, to be sure, the διαίρεσις that divides something according to a hierarchy of genera and species, but rather a διαίρεσις that literally articulates the undifferentiated things of natural experience.³⁴ The nature of this sort of articulation is reinforced by Aristotle’s second example: “And children too at first address all men as father and all women as mother, but later distinguish [διορίζει] each of them.”³⁵ The investigation into nature is oriented at first by the things that are closest to us; from

³¹ See, e.g., Aristotle, *Aristotelis De Anima* (henceforth *De An.*) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), II.5, 417b20–5; *Meta.* XIII.10, 1087a12; and *Post. Anal.* I.2, 72a4–6.

³² Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, 38. Heidegger defends this understanding of τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα by suggesting that the ἐκός refers to a certain “distance” (32). The conceptual origins of the distinction between everydayness and authenticity that plays such an important role in *Sein und Zeit* can be traced back to Heidegger’s early engagement with the first chapter of the *Physics* presented in these 1924 lectures.

³³ *Phys.* I.1, 184b1–3.

³⁴ For a discussion of the difference between this notion of διαίρεσις and that found in Plato’s *Sophist* and *Statesman*, see Wieland, *Die Aristotelische Physik*, 87.

³⁵ *Phys.* I.1, 184b3–5.

out of this orientation toward the familiar we somehow grow into an understanding of the world by learning how to articulate the proper boundaries and limits of the things we encounter. The child at first speaks poorly, because she has not taken hold of the proper limits of things; yet she also speaks beautifully, because in attempting to articulate the things she encounters, she speaks the truth – all women are, in a certain way, mother; all men, father.³⁶

If the path from what is more known to us to what is more known by nature takes its orientation from the manner in which the things of nature are themselves articulated and, indeed, if each attempt to articulate something true about the things with which we are concerned itself contributes something to the truth, it is no surprise that Aristotle's own investigation into φύσις begins not with empirical observations, but with an engagement with the things said by his predecessors. Yet for Aristotle, and to the chagrin of many pre-Socratic philologists, this turn to the past is never undertaken with the intention of loyally reconstructing the thought of the past in its own terms. Rather, Aristotle's own philosophical questions lead him to the things said by his predecessors. The articulations of the past are neither convenient places to begin, nor preliminary introductions to the general nature of the problem, but rather the very site from which philosophy must begin. Aristotle pauses to listen to his predecessors because he recognizes *that we are always already determined by the history in which we are embedded, that our thinking is inherently an inherited thinking, and that our questions find faint responses, barely discernible echoes, that resonate in the voices of the past.*

Aristotle's own thinking is rooted in dynamic dialogue with the past. The structure of this dialogical thinking is eloquently expressed by Randall when he writes of "a 'dialogue' in which the future asks questions of the past embodied in the present, and the present

³⁶ In his lectures on Plato's *Sophist*, Heidegger emphasizes how the καθόλου is grasped through speaking, i.e., by the attempt to "address something as something." There he writes, "The καθόλου is something that shows itself first and only in λέγειν." See Martin Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 19, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 82. For the English, see Martin Heidegger, *Plato's "Sophist"* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 57.

replies – by generating a new philosophy.”³⁷ Our inquisitive engagement with the things that address us at once inherits a determinate past and opens a possible future. The future itself addresses us in our encounters with things, demands an account, indeed, accountability: a dialogical articulation that attempts to put things into words, recognizing both their ineffability and their yearning for articulation. We exist precisely as such a dialogue with things: already determined by expressions past, never yet capable of wholly adequate articulations, and held always accountable by the things that address us, demanding an account.

This dialogue cannot be oriented by an attempt simply to reconstruct the thought of past thinkers. Rather it emerges from a genuine philosophical engagement with the world, indeed, from a primordial kind of questioning. It is not, as Harold Cherniss has suggested, that Aristotle simply uses these theories to establish “artificial debates which he sets up to lead ‘inevitably’ to his own solutions.”³⁸ Such a position presumes that Aristotle’s μέθοδοι express an already worked out system, indeed, that Aristotle loads the dice as he plays with the thinking of his predecessors such that “one theory is set against another in such a manner that each may bring to light the other’s difficulties which are then resolved by a reconciliation: this reconciliation is the Aristotelian system.”³⁹ Andrea Nightingale seems to agree that Aristotle “constructs” his history of philosophy to reinforce and legitimize his own philosophical position.⁴⁰ Focusing primarily on Aristotle’s treatment of his predecessors in *Metaphysics* I, she insists that his engagement with the history of philosophy is teleologically oriented such that Aristotle’s own philosophical system always emerges as the clearest, most mature expression of the truth.⁴¹ J. Mansfeld even goes so far as to suggest that Aristotle must have believed his

³⁷ Randall, *How Philosophy Uses Its Past*, 27.

³⁸ Cherniss, *Aristotle’s Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy*, xii.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Andrea Wilson Nightingale, *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy: Theoria in Its Cultural Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 26–9. She writes, “The ancients therefore give Aristotle’s own theoretical activities a venerable pedigree even as they point up his vast superiority to the entire tradition” (28).

⁴¹ Ibid., 28.

system approximated the final goal closely.⁴² Catherine Collobert too emphasizes the importance of Aristotle's teleology: "A history of philosophy supposes, even implicitly, a philosophy of history, which is, for Aristotle, a teleological conception of philosophy's development."⁴³ While it is perhaps true that Aristotle's engagement with his predecessors is determined by a kind of teleological conception of history, it is a natural teleology that is oriented by the *φαινόμενα* themselves.⁴⁴ Such a teleological conception of history resonates with Xenophanes' insistence that *in time*, by searching, we discover better. If, however,

⁴² J. Mansfeld, *Studies in the Historiography of Greek Philosophy* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990), 48.

⁴³ Catherine Collobert, "Aristotle's Review of the Presocratics: Is Aristotle Finally a Historian of Philosophy?" *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40, no. 3 (2002): 287. Collobert's own orientation to the practice of Aristotle's history of philosophy allows her to distinguish between Aristotle's "synchronic" ordering of the positions of the past, in which he puts into perspective conflicting points of view in order to find a solution, and a "diachronic" ordering, in which Aristotle reviews the general movement of a philosophical question ending with a solution – confirming a theory (289). This distinction brings into focus the difference between Aristotle's approach to his predecessors at the beginning of the *Metaphysics* and his engagement with their thinking in the *Physics*. In the *Metaphysics*, the things said by his predecessors serve as "witnesses" confirming Aristotle's understanding of the four causes. In the *Physics*, however, past articulations emerge as part of a dialogical investigation into the truth of *φύσις* itself. Collobert's distinction between "synchronic" ordering and a "diachronic" ordering covers over the extent to which even the synchronic gathering of positions is part of a diachronic engagement with genuine philosophical questions. Collobert's insistence that Aristotle's engagement with his predecessors is ultimately oriented by the solutions expressed by Aristotle himself eclipses the degree to which Aristotle's own positions emerge from out and as a result of a deep engagement with the thinking of his predecessors. The difference, then, between the approach of the *Metaphysics* and that of the *Physics* is the difference between the ordering of juridical legitimation and that of philosophical questioning.

⁴⁴ Nightingale rightly points out the biological vocabulary deployed in Aristotle's account of his predecessors in *Metaphysics* I. This reinforces the notion that the teleology that determines Aristotle's understanding of history is itself a natural teleology and not a mere construct. However, the impression that Aristotle *constructs* the views of his predecessors to legitimize to his own philosophical position seems determined largely by a limited focus on the approach of the first book of the *Metaphysics*, in which Aristotle explicitly turns to his predecessors as "witnesses" who are able to legitimate his previously established distinctions concerning the four causes (see *Meta.* I.7, 988b15). Yet there is more to Aristotle's engagement of his predecessors than this attempt to legitimize his own position. In the *Physics* and *Parts of Animals*, as just two examples, Aristotle turns to the things said by his predecessors as phenomena that uncover the nature of natural beings.

the teleological structure of history is understood to be constructed with an eye toward a *telos* that stands outside of the order itself, it ceases to be natural and becomes artificial. If history manifests a natural teleological structure, this can be discerned only from within the movement of a history that is itself taken as a phenomenon. The tendency, heard in the things said by Cherniss and Mansfeld in particular, to identify Aristotle's approach to his predecessors with an artificial teleology eclipses the extent to which Aristotle turns to the things said out of a deep, implicit awareness of his own historicity.

Aristotle's engagement with the past is not determined by a previously worked out system, nor is it concerned with a kind of dialectical reconciliation of the positions of his predecessors. Rather, Aristotle begins with them because he recognizes that they have always already begun with him. The past, as Randall suggests, funds the present in such a way that whenever it enters into a genuine questioning of things, it must begin with the sayings of the past; for the future is born in and through such sayings. Aristotle's dialogue with the past is animated by an inquisitive engagement with the world oriented toward the future. "Questions," Gadamer says, "always bring out the undetermined possibilities of a thing."⁴⁵ Aristotle's object is not the reconstruction of the thought of those who came before, but the attempt to articulate "the undetermined possibilities" of the things with which he is engaged. Gadamer expresses it this way: "[U]nderstanding is always more than merely re-creating someone else's meaning. Questioning opens up possibilities of meaning, and thus what is meaningful passes into one's own thinking on the subject."⁴⁶ This is precisely how the most fecund possibilities of Aristotle's thinking emerge – in an inquisitive dialogue with the voices of the past.

SAVING THE THINGS SAID

Let us listen, then, to how Aristotle's own engagement with the things said by his predecessors opens up new possibilities of thinking and

⁴⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2d ed. (New York: Continuum, 1994), 375.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

meaning in two texts: the *Physics* and the *Parts of Animals*.⁴⁷ These two texts in particular articulate the phenomenological orientation toward τὰ λεγόμενα at work in so many of Aristotle's inquiries because they remain guided by an insistent and sustained philosophical interrogation of the being of natural beings.

The *Physics*

The question that orients Aristotle's first approach to the being of τὰ φυσικά concerns the number of their principles. Ironically, Aristotle begins with Parmenides and Melissus, who, he claims, cannot have spoken at all about nature and its principles, for in asserting that being is one, they fail to grasp the meaning of an ἀρχή: "For it is not any longer an ἀρχή if it is one only and there is therefore only one thing, for an ἀρχή is of something or some things."⁴⁸ This failure Aristotle ascribes to their tendency to speak for the sake of speaking [λόγου ἕνεκα λεγομένων] – that is, they are not able to say something concerning nature precisely because their words *do not address the things of nature*. This refusal to direct λόγος to things undermines the investigation into nature; indeed, it threatens the very possibility of speaking at all. Yet Aristotle calls this limit case the "most appropriate beginning" because it allows us to recognize that being is "said in more than one way."⁴⁹ The plurivocity of being is a condition for the possibility of the investigation into the principles of nature, for a principle is itself always a matter of a certain predication: to function as a source of intelligibility, an ἀρχή must be capable of being said of that of which it is the principle. Thus, when Parmenides and Melissus assert the univocity of being, they deny themselves the possibility of making the sorts of distinctions that allow the being of nature to come to expression.⁵⁰ For Aristotle, to assert the absolute oneness of being

⁴⁷ Our orientation toward these two texts is designed to amplify a methodological approach that is heard throughout Aristotle's work. These two texts are in some sense paradigmatic of Aristotle's overall phenomenological approach to the things said. The same points could have been made by careful attendance to almost any of Aristotle's writings.

⁴⁸ *Phys.* I.2, 185a5–7.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 185a23–4.

⁵⁰ Aristotle puts it this way: "But if all beings are one in λόγος as a robe and a cloak, [Parmenides and Melissus] turn out to assert the Heraclitean λόγος; for being-good

is to assert nothing at all, or perhaps better, it is to show its own impossibility because the assertion itself requires the saying of something as something and therefore already involves a kind of multiplicity. Some particularly zealous followers of Parmenides – worried that the same thing might be both one and many – seem to have attempted to abolish the ‘is’ from human language. Others, Aristotle tells us, “refashioned the language so that a human-being ‘has whitened’ rather than ‘is white’ and ‘walks’ rather than ‘is walking’ in order not to make the one be many by attaching ‘is,’ as though *one* or *being* were meant in only one way.”⁵¹ This attempt to reconstruct the language to fit a theory stands for Aristotle as the most appropriate starting point for the inquiry into the principles of natural beings precisely because it marks the limit of the possibility of the investigation itself.

Yet even here at the limit, Aristotle does not abstractly reject the things said by his predecessors. Indeed, he begins *Physics* I, chapter 5, by saying, “Everyone makes contraries the ἀρχαί.”⁵² Initially, this sounds strange, for surely Parmenides and Melissus do not make contraries the original beings. However, Aristotle is quick to point out that even Parmenides says that the cold and the hot are ἀρχαί, though he calls them “fire and earth.”⁵³ In a passage from the *Metaphysics* explicitly linked to this discussion in the *Physics*, Aristotle claims that Parmenides speaks of the principles as two because he is “forced by the *phainomena* [τοῖς φαινόμενοις]” to posit two causes or principles.⁵⁴ The attempt to say something about the beings of nature forces Parmenides to articulate something of the truth of natural beings, namely, that their principles are not simply one, but at least two. That something like this must be the case, Aristotle claims, is evident from the things said by his predecessors. This *consensus omnium* serves as a

and being-bad would be the same, as would being-good and being-not-good – so that what is good and what is not good would be the same, as would a human being and a horse, and their λόγος would not be about the being-one of beings but about the being-nothing [of beings]” (ibid., 185b21–7).

⁵¹ Ibid., 185b28–33.

⁵² Ibid., I.5, 188a19.

⁵³ Ibid., 188a20–1. Aristotle leaves Melissus out here presumably because the “crudeness” of his thinking precluded him from giving expression to the impasses that leads to a genuine encounter with the beings of nature; see ibid., I.2, 185a12–15.

⁵⁴ *Meta.* I.5, 986b26–987a2.

sign of the truth of what has been said. Aristotle arrives at the threshold of his own philosophical engagement with the beings of nature through the things said; for the recognition that contraries somehow serve as ἀρχαί provides not only the impetus for but also the context in which Aristotle's own rich analysis of the being and becoming of τὰ φυσικά develops. Hearing the harmony of voices claiming the central importance of contraries, Aristotle proceeds to offer an articulation of his own in which he translates the vocabulary of contrariety into that of opposition and suggests that the becoming of natural beings involves the transition from a certain shapelessness to being-shaped. Out of this discussion grows the philosophically fecund distinction between form and its privation that plays a central role in Aristotle's own articulation of the being of natural beings. Yet this distinction and that of the ὑποκείμενον (what lies there), which itself emerges not only from Aristotle's engagement with his predecessors, but also from his attention to our common ways of speaking, must themselves be heard to grow out of Aristotle's inquisitive dialogue with the things said by those who came before.⁵⁵

Parts of Animals

This dialogue is heard as well in the first book of the *Parts of Animals*, in which we find a powerful expression of Aristotle's legomenology. The text begins by insisting that "it is the manner of an educated person to be able to judge successfully what is beautifully said and

⁵⁵ Aristotle's method of "saving τὰ λεγόμενα" has two interrelated but distinct dimensions. The first, outlined here, involves an orientation toward the things said by his predecessors. The second orients itself toward the things commonly said, toward our common ways of speaking. For Aristotle, such articulations too express something of the truth of being. See, e.g., *Phys.* I.7, where the fundamental ontological distinction between form and matter is developed from a consideration of how people speak about becoming (190a21–b1). The same methodological orientation toward the things commonly said is at work in *Metaphysics* VII.7 and IX.7, where Aristotle points to the alteration of the way we commonly refer to the material element of a composite once it has taken on its form – a statue is not bronze, but brazen – to suggest that matter continues to play an ontological role in determining the being of the composite (see 1032b32–1033a23 and 1049a18–b4). For a detailed discussion of the ontological importance of Aristotle's attention to our common ways of speaking, see Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 71–5.

what is not.”⁵⁶ The question concerning the ability to judge what is and is not said beautifully leads Aristotle to one of the most explicit statements of his phenomenological approach: “[F]irst one should get hold of the phenomena concerning each kind, then state the causes.”⁵⁷ While this statement has important implications for how the *History of Animals*, which phenomenologically gathers the similarities and differences among animals, relates to the *Parts of Animals*, which is concerned with expressing causes based on this collection, it also opens up the question concerning the proper response to the “what is it” question.

For Aristotle, this involves an account of the what-it-was-for-something-to-be, its $\tau\acute{\iota} \tilde{\eta}\nu \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$. This, of course, is a technical term in Aristotle, and it seems to be deployed here having already been fully worked out conceptually.⁵⁸ Aristotle himself says later in book I of the *Parts of Animals* that his predecessors did not have an understanding of $\tau\acute{\iota} \tilde{\eta}\nu \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$ and “the capacity to delimit the being of beings [$\tau\acute{o} \acute{o}\rho\iota\sigma\alpha\sigma\theta\alpha\iota \tau\tilde{\eta}\nu \omicron\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$].”⁵⁹ Yet immediately upon opening the question concerning $\tau\acute{\iota} \tilde{\eta}\nu \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$, Aristotle turns to the words of his predecessors. At first the move is decidedly critical: for the most part, when responding to the question concerning what each being is, the ancient φυσικοί appealed to the material origin and failed to consider the “that for the sake of which” or the form. For Aristotle, however, this is not well said, for when we ask what a desk is, for example, it is not enough simply to say “wood.” Rather, as Aristotle suggests, we must articulate the form [$\epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$]; for the desk is a “this in that” ($\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon \acute{\epsilon}\nu \tau\tilde{\omega}\delta\epsilon$) or a “this-such” ($\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon \tau\omicron\iota\acute{o}\nu\delta\epsilon$).⁶⁰ The demonstratives here seek to articulate the enigmatic nature of composite beings. The linguistic gestures – $\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon \acute{\epsilon}\nu \tau\tilde{\omega}\delta\epsilon$, $\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon \tau\omicron\iota\acute{o}\nu\delta\epsilon$ – express the distinction between form and matter that shows itself in the beings we encounter. The very attempt to put the beings we address into words forces us to recognize

⁵⁶ PA I.1, 639a4–5.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 640a13–14.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of its technical meaning, see Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 61–7, 183n24. See also Christopher P. Long and Richard A. Lee, “Nous and Logos in Aristotle,” *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 54, no. 3 (2007): 364–5.

⁵⁹ PA I.1, 642a25.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 640b25–8.

that an appeal to matter does not say enough about them.⁶¹ When we address them, they speak to us, drawing our attention beyond their matter, to their very look – εἶδος.

Yet the precise manner in which the εἶδος is articulated in this text itself says something about the path of Aristotle's thinking. He says that in speaking about a bed "it would be necessary to speak about the configuration [σχήματος] and what sort of visible appearance [ἰδέα] it has."⁶² These words trace a genealogy. Whatever else it might suggest, the term ἰδέα evokes the thinking of Plato and so, for Aristotle, a conception of form as somehow separate from the matter from which it has been abstracted. Yet when this Platonic ἰδέα is said together with σχήματος, a λόγος that pulls in the opposite direction appears; for Aristotle explicitly associates σχήματος with the thinking of Democritus, an atomist and materialist, and so draws the ἰδέα back into relation with its matter. Aristotle's name for this conception of form as intimately bound to matter is μόρφη. Thus, he says, "The nature in respect to shape [μορφή] is more important than the material nature."⁶³ To hear this statement properly, it is necessary to recall that it is made in the context of a corrective of the φυσικοί who tried to articulate the being of nature exclusively in terms of matter.

Yet when Aristotle insists on the importance of μορφή, he is not simply thinking against his predecessors, but thinking with them as well; for Aristotle develops his own, more robust conception of form as μορφή by attending carefully to *the way Democritus speaks*: "Now if it is by virtue of its configuration [σχήματος] and color that each of the animals and its parts are, Democritus might be speaking correctly, for he appears to assume this."⁶⁴ Even if his overall theory of

⁶¹ What Heidegger delineates as the two dimensions of λόγος are at work here: "1. λόγος, λέγειν in the sense of to approach and point to something, λόγος in the sense of access; 2. λόγος says also that which is expressed as such; it lies in the being that is addressed." See Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, 212.

⁶² *PA* I.1, 640b27–8.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 640b28–9.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 640b29–31. Lennox recognizes that "[t]he wording suggests that Aristotle infers Democritus's beliefs from what he actually says. He *says* that it is clear what sort of thing a human is because this is known by way of configuration and colour." See Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals*, trans. James G. Lennox, Clarendon Aristotle Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 138.

atomism is misguided, still Democritus speaks well, for he appears to assume (φαίνεται... ὑπολαβεῖν) that it is by virtue of configuration that each animal and its parts are what they are. Attending to the assumptions in what has been said, to the very appearing of the speaking, Aristotle hears a way of thinking form as ontologically efficacious.

However, Democritus spoke in too unqualified a way (λίαν οὐν ἀπλῶς εἰρηται),⁶⁵ for appealing to the mere shape (σχήματος) is not enough. To make this clear, Aristotle appeals to the example of a corpse that, although it maintains the shape of human-being, no longer is what it was precisely because it has ceased to be able to do its work. Thus, its being is not merely its σχήματος, the configuration of its outward appearance, or even its εἶδος, if by this we hear an ἰδέα separated from its matter; rather, it is μορφή in its deeper sense as the being-at-work of matter. The appearing of speaking has directed our attention to the very manner in which the being of the being under consideration *is* in the world, to its very being-at-work, ἐνέργεια. This more robust conception of form, which now must be heard together with matter as expressed in the various ways in which beings *are* in their world, leads Aristotle's thinking to the very phenomenality of the phenomena, that is, to their ways of appearing; for it is only by living and speaking in intimate association with the phenomena that we are able to articulate the truth of things.⁶⁶

The Compulsion of the Truth: The Accountability of Things

The two texts we have been considering, the opening passages of the *Physics* and the *Parts of Animals*, find an echo in one another, for not only do they articulate how τὰ λεγόμενα offer access to the truth of things, but both texts vividly express the manner in which the truth compels its own articulation. In the *Physics*, after hitting upon the common agreement that the ἀρχαί are contraries and considering

⁶⁵ PA I.1, 641a5.

⁶⁶ Cf. Aristotle, E. S. Forster, and David J. Furley, *On Sophistical Refutations; On Coming-to-Be and Passing-Away*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, vol. 400, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 316a5–10.

the meaning of contrariety in this context, Aristotle again returns to the things said by his predecessors:

For all of them say that the elements and the things they call original beings are contraries, and even though they lay it down without argument [ἀνευ λόγου], they say [λέγουσιν] it nonetheless, as though compelled by the truth itself.⁶⁷

Aristotle's dialogue with his predecessors is oriented by and attends to a certain kind of λόγος, not, indeed, the λόγος of fully worked out, intentional arguments – although there is truth there too – but the λόγος that emerges from the direct, intimate engagement with the things themselves. The things having been said, τὰ λεγόμενα, are φαινόμενα that, when carefully assembled and critically questioned, speak something of the truth. This is the core recognition of Aristotle's legomenology.

Aristotle's attention to τὰ λεγόμενα as φαινόμενα determines his engagement with his predecessors. Remarkably, however, Aristotle shows little interest in the actual arguments they put forth, nor is he much concerned with the content their thinking expresses. Indeed, his account of their various positions is surprisingly formal. He is content to show, for example, that a wide diversity of thinkers – from the monist Parmenides to the atomist Democritus, from Empedocles to Anaxagoras – have said things that can in a certain sense be heard as harmonious. This harmony does not mute dissonance. Aristotle insists, “So they say things that are in a certain way the same as one another, but also different: different in just the way they seem to be to most people, but the same to the extent that they are analogous.”⁶⁸ What appears on the surface as dissonant reveals a deeper resonance. To hear the resonance of truth under the cacophony of voices, Aristotle reflects not so much on the content of the philosophical positions of his predecessors as on the form of what they say. This allows Aristotle, as Wieland suggests, both to take his predecessors seriously and to move beyond them. He can move beyond them because he is less concerned with *what* they say – that is, with the objective content of their

⁶⁷ *Phys.* I.5, 188b29–32.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 188b34–189a1.

thought – than with *how* they say it – that is, with the ways their words articulate the nature of things. He must take them seriously because their ways of speaking reveal what is implicitly already at work with regard to the things under consideration.⁶⁹ For Aristotle, every λόγος that genuinely seeks to say something concerning beings somehow resonates with the truth.

This is the force of Aristotle's suggestion that the truth compels his predecessors to speak in certain ways. Perhaps the apparent compulsion of the truth is nothing other than the objective expression of things resonating in and with those human articulations that touch somehow upon the things themselves, translating expression into articulated words. Truth speaks in the things said only as the things said are held accountable to the things themselves.

Two passages at the end of the first chapter of the *Parts of Animals* suggest the link between truth and things. "For nature is an origin more than matter. Even Empedocles occasionally stumbles upon this, led by the truth itself [ὕπ' αὐτῆς τῆς ἀληθείας], and is forced to say that the οὐσία, that is, the nature, is the λόγος, for example when he says what bone is."⁷⁰ Empedocles speaks the truth when he attempts to articulate what bone is. If truth compels us, it is only when we root our λόγοι in the attempt to articulate the nature of the things according to themselves. This is reinforced a few lines later when Aristotle says that Democritus was the first to touch upon the τί ἦν εἶναι "because he was carried away by the thing itself [ὕπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ πράγματος]."⁷¹ In commenting on these two passages, Heidegger writes, "Ἀλήθεια and πρᾶγμα [truth and thing] are here used in the same sense, that is, ἀλήθεια is not 'validity' that clings to the sentence or some such thing (as a logic gone astray thinks), but rather [ἀλήθεια is] nothing other than the being in its uncovering; it is πρᾶγμα, insofar as the being with which I have to do is there in a certain uncoveredness [*in einer gewisser Entdecktheit*]."⁷² This intimate connection between truth and thing emerges from a λόγος striving to articulate something of the truth

⁶⁹ Wieland, *Die Aristotelische Physik*, 143–4.

⁷⁰ PA I.1, 642a16–20.

⁷¹ Ibid., 642a28.

⁷² Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, 240.

of things. As with Aristotle, so with Heidegger: much depends on little words. Here, Heidegger's *einer gewisser* – “in a certain uncoveredness” – echoes Aristotle's frequent use of τις, “a certain,” to temper the force of a statement when the danger of hyperbole looms. The danger here is that of hubris, for “a certain uncoveredness” is precisely not pure revelation. Truth is revealed *through* λόγος. This claim is no renunciation of the limits of λόγος. Rather, it points to those limits and, by extension, to human finitude itself. If, as Santayana has a fictional Avicenna remind us, “[n]aturalists are often betrayed by their understanding of origins into a sort of inhumanity,”⁷³ we would do well to listen for this tendency in Aristotle, the “greatest naturalist” of all.

And indeed, such an inhumanity is discernible even in the way Aristotle himself appropriates the things said by his predecessors. The irony is that the very formalism that allows Aristotle both to take his predecessors seriously and to move beyond them involves a sort of appropriation, an abstraction from their original context, indeed a violence that makes the things said say things differently. Yet this too is a very human inhumanity; it is an inescapable consequence of human historicity. It is a reminder of the finitude of which Aristotle, echoing Xenophanes, speaks when he calls the investigation concerning truth difficult. Yet this very recognition humanizes the investigation; for, let us not forget, it is easy to speak the truth. We are natural beings and our attempts to articulate the truth of things will ineluctably say something true, but only to the extent that our λόγοι remain open and accountable to the things themselves. We have, in fact, inherited from Aristotle, and he, from his predecessors, this openness to things and the ἔξις of thinking that makes it possible. It is a human ἔξις, an active condition, a way of being in the world that refuses to remain content with the surface of things, but seeks to articulate the deeper truth of the things that are at once familiar and elusive.⁷⁴

⁷³ Santayana, *Dialogues in Limbo*, 243.

⁷⁴ I owe this formulation to Vincent Colapietro, who eloquently writes that the best metaphysics is “a continuous striving to speak in a human voice about what is most intimately yet elusively familiar, everyday experience in its broadest reach and deepest import.” See Colapietro, “Striving to Speak in a Human Voice,” 396–7.

Access to the truth, then, does not require immediate insight into the realm of pure being separate from the world in which we find ourselves. Yet it does involve a sort of transcendence, not the transcendence of which philosophers have often dreamed, confusing themselves with the gods, but finite, human transcendence – the ability to step outside oneself by attending to the things said before. In these articulations, the truth resonates. But this transcendence is finite, for we are limited even as we step outside ourselves, held accountable from two directions. On one side are the things said, the very history in which we are embedded and from which we speak. On the other side stand the things themselves, demanding to be put into words. Aristotle's naturalism tells us at once that things go into words willingly and that each attempted articulation, as an expression of a finite being, always leaves more to be said. Without denying this excess, let us learn to listen more attentively at once to the things said and to the saying of things, so that we too in time might begin to speak more beautifully and, in so speaking, do a certain justice to the nature of things.

By Way of Address

Lending Voice to Things

For things to go into language is as a going just as much of a going on their part, and just as natural, as their going into air or water, up or down, or from seed to flower.

Frederick Woodbridge, *Aristotle's Vision of Nature* ¹

If truth is an offspring of the symbiotic relationship between the ways things express themselves and the ways they are said, it is because truth is rooted in a λόγος attuned to the appearing of phenomena. Aristotle's name for the sort of saying that addresses things by allowing them to show themselves as themselves is λόγος ἀποφαντικός – declarative saying.² The question concerning truth in Aristotle announces itself implicitly as a matter of justice when his account of declarative saying is heard as an attempt to articulate a way of addressing the appearing of things held ultimately accountable by the ways things express themselves. This way of address is grounded in an ability to lend articulate voice to that which speaks with inarticulate eloquence. It is cultivated by an attentiveness that seeks to articulate things as they show themselves to be. In order to discern this way of

¹ Woodbridge, *Aristotle's Vision of Nature*, 24.

² The English 'declare' comes from the Latin *declarare*, to clear up, make clear or evident. See *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., s.v. "declare, v." "Declarative, a." means making clear, manifest, or evident.

address in Aristotle, it will be necessary to begin by attending to the way voice brings Aristotle's account of declarative saying to life.

Aristotle addresses the meaning of declarative saying in *De Interpretatione*, a text that seems on the face of it to treat λόγος in isolation from the life that gives it voice. This superficial judgment of the *De Interpretatione* resonates with John Herman Randall's central criticism of Aristotle in general:

But it is striking that, important as Aristotle makes *logos*, what things can be said to be, he never treats *logos* itself in biological and functional terms, as an activity of organisms with the power of *nous*: he never treats *logos* as a 'part' of the *psyche*, as one of the functions making up 'life.' Such a treatment is not in the *De Anima* at all, but it ought to be.³

Yet the impression that Aristotle fails to bring his account of λόγος to life is undermined by a small but significant reference to the things said concerning the soul in the opening chapter of the *De Interpretatione*.

At the end of that vexing and influential early passage in which Aristotle speaks of the things in the voice (τὰ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ) and their relation to the affections of the soul (παθήματα τῆς ψυχῆς), which themselves are likenesses (ὁμοιώματα) of actual things (πράγματα), Aristotle writes, "[B]ut concerning these things [περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων], it has been said in the things concerning the soul [ἐν τοῖς περὶ ψυχῆς] – but this is another matter [ἄλλης γὰρ πραγματείας]."⁴ This gesture to the things said concerning the soul is, like almost everything in this passage of the *De Interpretatione*, enigmatic. Ammonius reports that Andronicus of Rhodes heard this reference as grounds for doubting the authenticity of the text, for he was unable to locate places in the *De Anima* where Aristotle calls thoughts "affections of the soul."⁵ Ammonius disagrees with this, defending the authenticity of the text by pointing to Aristotle's discussion of the imagination (φαντασία)

³ Randall, *Aristotle*, 102. In what must be taken as a playful footnote, for even if serious, the hubris of it would make it comical, Randall writes, "The author has sometimes thought he might write out this section himself on papyrus and bury it in Egypt, where a future archaeologist might discover it" (102).

⁴ *De Int.* 16a8–9.

⁵ Ammonius and David L. Blank, *On Aristotle's "On Interpretation 1–8,"* Ancient Commentators on Aristotle (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 5.29–6.5.

and linking it to his treatment of passive intelligence (παθητικὸς νοῦς) in *De Anima* III.5.⁶ Over the generations, there has been no lack of suggestions concerning the passages from the *De Anima* to which this reference might point.⁷

The sentences immediately preceding the reference to the things said concerning the soul have been called “the most important part of Aristotle’s linguistic theory” and “the most influential text in the history of semantics.”⁸ In them Aristotle is concerned to delineate the relationship between things in the voice, the things written, affections of the soul, and the things themselves.⁹ He writes: “And just as

⁶ See *ibid.*, 6.5–7.14. For the reference to passive intelligence see *De An.* 430a24. Ammonius also appeals to the opening passage of the *De Anima*, where Aristotle speaks of the πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς. See Aristotle, *Aristotelis De Anima* (henceforth *De An*) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), I.1, 402a9.

⁷ Albertus Magnus points in a matter of fact way to the entire third book of the *De Anima*. See Hans Arens, *Aristotle’s Theory of Language and Its Tradition: Texts from 500 to 1750* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1984), 345. Aquinas suggests the reference is both to the first book of the *De Anima*, where Aristotle is said to call mental operations *passiones animae*, and to the discussion of the imagination in book III (404). More recently, Trendelenburg has pointed to *De Anima* III.6, because this is where the truth and falsity of simple and complex thoughts are discussed. Whitaker denies this as a possibility because the discussion of truth and falsity in the *De Interpretatione* comes after the reference to the *De Anima*. (For the reference to Trendelenburg and the critique, see C. W. A. Whitaker, *Aristotle’s “De Interpretatione”: Contradiction and Dialectic*, Oxford Aristotle Studies (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 14. Ackrill points us to *De Anima* III.3–8. See Aristotle and J. L. Ackrill, “Categories” and “De Interpretatione,” Clarendon Aristotle Series (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 113. Although Arens suggests that the reference may be to *De Anima* II.5 and 12 and III.4 and 8, he insists that “reading the relevant passages from the *De Anima* does not really help our understanding of *De Interpretatione* I.” See Arens, *Aristotle’s Theory of Language*, 32. For his part, Kretzmann criticizes all attempts to read the first chapter of *De Interpretatione* with reference to the *De Anima* because it gives what he considers to be the false impression that the *De Interpretatione* is “a summary statement of the foundations of knowledge and communication.” See Norman Kretzmann, “Aristotle on Spoken Sound Significant by Convention,” in *Ancient Logic and Its Modern Interpretations: Proceedings of the Buffalo Symposium on Modernist Interpretations of Ancient Logic, 21 and 22 April 1972*, ed. John Corcoran (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1972), 14.

⁸ For the former, see Arens, *Aristotle’s Theory of Language*, 27. For the latter, see Kretzmann, “Aristotle on Spoken Sound,” 3.

⁹ The question as to how τὰ γραφόμενα, the things written, are related to voiced sounds, affections of the soul, and the things themselves can be left to one side insofar as our concern is to consider the dynamic at work between the things in the voice, affections of the soul, and actual things. As symbols of the things in the voice, the things written are dependent on the relationship between the things

the things written are not the same for all [human-beings], neither are the voiced sounds [φωναί] the same. But the things of which these are the first signs – the affections of the soul – are the same for all [human-beings], and the things of which these are likenesses – the actual things – are already the same.”¹⁰ This passage has captured the imagination and attention of commentators for generations because it attempts to articulate – however elliptically – the complex dynamic between human articulation, the life of the mind, and the world of things encountered. By appealing to the works concerning the soul and designating this constellation of relations “another matter,” Aristotle attempts to isolate the present discussion of the λόγος αποφαντικός from the profound difficulties that animate the dynamic set of relations that determine human being-in-the-world.¹¹ Yet the ubiquity of voice in the first seven chapters of the *De Interpretatione* thwarts any such attempted isolation, for voice itself arises as a living response to the world of things encountered. The reference to the works concerning the soul, then, must itself be heard as a kind of voice that points

in the voice and the affections of the soul. However, once the complexity of this dynamic is delineated with reference to the logic of voice that brings λόγος to life in Aristotle, it is possible to discern how, by insisting that writing itself is brought to life by the voice, Plato’s thing itself is not eliminated but rendered plural and situated in concrete relation to that which encounters it. What follows here, then, might be heard as a kind of response to Agamben’s provocative insistence that, in Aristotle’s *De Interpretatione*, “the Platonic *thing itself* is removed and conserved or rather, conserved only in being removed: e-liminated.” See Giorgio Agamben and Daniel Heller-Roazen, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 37.

¹⁰ *De Int.* 16a5–8.

¹¹ To identify the λόγος αποφαντικός as a central topic of at least the opening chapters of the *De Interpretatione* need not necessarily be to embrace Ammonius’s bold suggestion that the title, *περί ἑρμηνείας*, is basically equivalent to *περί ἀποφαντικῶς λόγου*, “On Declarative Saying.” See Ammonius and Blank, *On Aristotle’s “On Interpretation 1–8,”* 5, 22–3. C. W. A. Whitaker has recently taken issue with the notion that the *περί ἑρμηνείας* is concerned primarily with declarative saying, arguing rather that the title that would be more true to its subject matter is *περί ἀντιφάσεως*, or “On the Contradictory Pair.” See Whitaker, *Aristotle’s “De Interpretatione,”* 7. Nothing Whitaker argues goes against the suggestion here that the immediate focus of the opening chapters of the *περί ἑρμηνείας* is declarative saying. To emphasize that Aristotle’s works concerning the soul involve a set of relations that determine human being-in-the-world echoes Heidegger’s suggestion that the *De Anima* “deals with the being of human being (or of living being in general) in the world.” See Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, 6/4.

to something (φωνή σημαντική), that is, as a λόγος that shows by indicating a path of thinking that quite literally brings the account of λόγος to life by drawing the *De Interpretatione* into dialogue with the things said concerning the soul. If we allow ourselves to be guided by the suggestive vagueness of the reference “to the things said concerning the soul,” the dialogue to which this gesture points will be made much richer, because it will require that we hear Aristotle’s account of λόγος as bound up with and articulated in the wide range of things said concerning the soul in a diverse set of texts, from the *History of Animals* to the *De Anima*, from the *Parts of Animals* to the *Politics*.¹²

BRINGING LOGOS TO LIFE

The *De Interpretatione* opens with a λόγος dissected. “First,” Aristotle writes, “it is necessary to set forth what a name [ὄνομα] is and what a verb [ῥῆμα] is, then what a denial [ἀπόφαισις] is and an affirmation [κατάφαισις] and a declaration [ἀπόφανσις] and a λόγος.”¹³ Although this opening sentence does serve as something like an itinerary for chapters 2 to 6 (Ackrill calls it “the programme”),¹⁴ the division is not so much programmatic as dialectical in the specific sense in which Socrates uses the term in his dialogue in the woods with Phaedrus. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates insists that “dialecticians” are “able to dissect a thing in accordance with its forms, following the natural joints

¹² Here, the long tradition dating back at least to Ammonius that draws the *De Interpretatione* into dialogue with the *De Anima* is both affirmed and expanded. In affirming the dialogical relationship between the *De Interpretatione* and the *De Anima*, we follow the work of some recent scholarship, e.g., Modrak, *Aristotle’s Theory of Language and Meaning*. See too Ronald Polansky and Mark Kuczewski, “Speech and Thought, Symbol and Likeness: Aristotle’s *De Interpretatione* 16a3–9,” *Apeiron* 23, no. 1 (1990): 51–63. Establishing a dialogue between the *De Anima* and the *De Interpretatione*, however, remains controversial. As mentioned, Kretzmann and Arens insist that reading the first chapter of the *De Interpretatione* with reference to the *De Anima* is misguided. See Kretzmann, “Aristotle on Spoken Sound,” 14. See too Arens, *Aristotle’s Theory of Language*, 32. While such judgments close off resources for understanding the text of the *De Interpretatione*, the dialogical approach taken here is yet more expansive than that advocated by Modrak, Polansky, and Kuczewski, for the proposal is to bring the *De Interpretatione* into dialogue with a range of texts in which Aristotle says things concerning the soul.

¹³ *De Int.* 16a1–2.

¹⁴ Aristotle and Ackrill, “*Categories*” and “*De Interpretatione*,” 113.

[ἄρθρα] and not in any way laying hands on it to hack it apart, attacking it in the manner of an incompetent butcher.”¹⁵ The opening sentence of the *De Interpretatione* is in fact a dissection of the living λόγος according to the natural joint that separates its vital organs, the name and verb. Once separated, the name and verb are set off from two species (denial and affirmation) and a genus (declaration) in a way that uncovers the anatomy of the λόγος.¹⁶ Such a dissection, however, is possible only on the basis of a deep and abiding familiarity with the natural functioning of the living λόγος.¹⁷

The vital parts of a complete λόγος are the name and verb. Heidegger puts it this way: “Ὄνομα and ῥῆμα can arise [*erwachsen*] only as modifications of the original λόγος.”¹⁸ What is last in the taxonomy of the *De Interpretatione*’s first sentence is first in the ecology of human being-in-the-world.¹⁹ The οἶκος at the root of ‘ecology’

¹⁵ Plato, *Platonis Opera*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901), *Pheadrus* 265e. Socrates says he has called those able to divide in this manner and collect dialecticians at 266c1.

¹⁶ The Greek ἔπειτα, since, separates the name and verb from the enumeration of the species, genus, and thing, each of which is separated by a simple reiteration of καί, and.

¹⁷ Although Ammonius appeals to an example from the world of τέχνη, he too recognizes that the name and the verb are not mere parts of speech (λέξεις), but rather vital parts of a complete λόγος: “For just as the planks of a ship are properly speaking its parts, while bolts, sail-cloth and pitch are also added to hold them together and for the unity of the whole, in the same way in the λόγος conjunctions, articles, prepositions and adverbs themselves fill the job of bolts, but they would not correctly be called parts inasmuch as they cannot be put together and on their own produce a complete [τέλειον] λόγος.” See Ammonius and Blank, *On Aristotle’s “On Interpretation 1–8,”* 12, 25–30. For the Greek, see A. Busse, Ammonius in *Aristotelis De Interpretatione Commentarius*, in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. IV. While the appeal to the ship does not do justice to the manner in which Aristotle associates λόγος and its parts with the *living* voice, the example does emphasize the primacy of the whole over its parts. In this way, Ammonius implicitly recognizes that the discussion of the name and the verb in the *De Interpretatione* is already determined by and thus must be discerned in terms of the τέλειον λόγον.

¹⁸ Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, 18.

¹⁹ Arens claims, “It still remains a puzzle why Aristotle should have chosen this illogical order of enumeration, which, of course, he could not follow in his treatise.” See Arens, *Aristotle’s Theory of Language*, 25. However, the enumeration is clearly not illogical, but precisely *logical* insofar as it is determined entirely and throughout by the λόγος that lies at the very center of the discussion in the first seven chapters of the *De Interpretatione*. Even if Whitaker is right that the central concern of the text as a whole is not λόγος per se, but contradictory pairs, still the engagement

designates a way of inhabiting the world as determined by a λόγος that belongs as much to the world as to the things existing in it.²⁰ Although the *De Interpretatione* is concerned with the specific possibilities that belong to a fundamental way human-beings exist with and address the world in which they dwell, the very sentence that first articulates the meaning of λόγος in this context points already to a more inclusive ecology of encounter.

Chapter 4 of *De Interpretatione* begins: “Λόγος is significative voice [φωνὴ σημαντική], some parts of which, having been separated, are significative as an expression [φάσις], but not as an affirmation [κατάφασις].”²¹ Λόγος is a kind of voice, indeed, a kind of significative voice – it is a φωνὴ σημαντική: a voice that is able to make things known by pointing. In *De Anima* II.8, Aristotle says, “[V]oice is a certain sound of that which has life [ἐμψύχου], for nothing inanimate voices.”²² Voice belongs to things that are ἐμψυχον, ensouled. It requires breath, πνεῦμα – the very principle of life for the Greeks – and specific movements in particular parts of the body made in response to things encountered in the lifeworld. Thus, voice is a psychosomatic phenomenon that grows out of a way of dwelling with the λόγος of things that belongs as much to certain animals as to human-beings. To pursue the ecology of voice in Aristotle’s thinking is, then, to traverse a path from the inarticulate sounds of nature to that articulate λόγος peculiar to human-being from which the *polis* naturally grows. Following

with λόγος determines and thus lies at the heart of the first seven chapters, with a summary statement at 18a8–27 that draws the previous discussion together into a sort of whole. See Whitaker, *Aristotle’s “De Interpretatione,”* 3. Although the opening sentence is set out according to the logic of the living λόγος, the *De Interpretatione*, as Heidegger rightly suggests, “did not meet any pedagogical provisions.” See Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, 14. However, heuristic considerations enjoin that we take the discussion of λόγος itself as *our* beginning.

²⁰ For the etymology of ‘ecology’, see *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., s.v. “ecology, n.” The modern meaning of the term points to the relationship between living things and their environment.

²¹ *De Int.* 16b26–8. Walz defends the translation of σημαντικός as “significative” rather than “significant” “in order to emphasize that Aristotle is referring to the *ability* of a vocal-sound or linguistic entity to perform the function of a sign (which is what the suffix -ικός [‘-ive’] indicates), which ability is fulfilled in the recipient of a sign.” See Matthew D. Walz, “The Opening of *On Interpretation*: Toward a More Literal Reading,” *Phronesis* 51 (2006): 239n22.

²² *De An.* II.8, 420b5–6.

the sound of Aristotle's voice leads from the woods to the city, connecting the natural world to the world of human communication and community even as it articulates their difference.

FOLLOWING THE SOUND OF VOICE IN ARISTOTLE

In the *History of Animals* IV.9, Aristotle establishes a threefold distinction between voice (φωνή), sound (ψόφος), and dialect (διάλεκτος) in largely, but not exclusively, physiological terms.²³ Voice is a specific way of sounding that requires the use of the pharynx, so that “however many animals have no lungs voice nothing.”²⁴ The various noises made by animals – from the humming of bees to the noise of the grasshopper – do not rise to the level of voice. They remain mere sounds. Dialect, however, is a specific way of voicing characterized as “the articulation [διάρθρωσις] of the voice with the tongue.”²⁵ The dolphin, for example, is said to have a voice insofar as, when it is removed from the water, it uses its lungs and windpipe to “squeak and moan in the air.”²⁶ But it has no dialect because “its tongue is not loose, nor does it have lips, so as to make something articulate of the voice [ἄρθρον τι τῆς φωνῆς ποιεῖν].”²⁷ Aristotle's formulation here suggests that voice is itself made articulate by specific physiological movements of the tongue and lips.²⁸

²³ The translation of διάλεκτος as “dialect” rather than, say, “speech” or “language” is designed to highlight the difference between διάλεκτος and λόγος and to emphasize the notion, clearly at work in this chapter of Aristotle's thinking, that dialect is bound to locality. See Aristotle, D. M. Balme, and Allan Gotthelf, *Historia Animalium* (henceforth *HA*), vol. 38, Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), IV.9, 536b9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 535a30.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 535a30–1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 536a2.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 536a3–4.

²⁸ This is reinforced in the *Parts of Animals* II.16 660a3–6: “For the voiced λόγος is composed of letters [γράμμάτων]; but if the tongue were not such as it is and the lips not moist, most of the letters could not be spoken, since some result from pressing the tongue, others from pursing the lips.” Aristotle, *Aristote. Les Parties des Animaux*, ed. P. Louis (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1956). The term γράμμάτων – “of letters” – probably means something closer to “of literate sounds” or, as the Lennox translation has it, “of articulate sounds.” See Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals*, 44. Zirin persuasively suggests that it is “here used in a phonetic sense: it obviously refers to the

There are, however, animals that Aristotle recognizes as having not just voice, but what he somewhat hesitatingly designates as dialect.²⁹ In a striking passage from this chapter of the *History of Animals*, Aristotle points out that the croaking of frogs and the vocalizations of pigs, goats, and sheep suggest that “each of the animals has idiosyncratic voices [ἰδία φωναί] for the purpose of living together [ὁμιλίαν] and association [πλησιασμόν].”³⁰ Birds in particular seem capable of a kind of articulated speech that rises to the level of dialect and, indeed, pushes toward the border of human λόγος itself. Because of the nature of their tongues, “some species of birds, above all other animals aside from humans, articulate literate sounds [γράμματα].”³¹ In the *Parts of Animals*, Aristotle insists again that birds “articulate literate sounds,” and he goes on to say that “all birds use their tongues to communicate with one another [πρὸς ἐρμηνείαν ἀλλήλοις], but some more than others, so that in some cases they seem to be learning from one another [μάθησιν... παρ’ ἀλλήλων].”³² At the end of *History of Animals* IV.9, Aristotle reinforces the distinction between voice and dialect with reference to the nightingale, which “has already been seen teaching [προδιδάσκουσα] its young, suggesting that the nature of dialect is not the same as voice, but that it admits to being shaped [ἐνδεχόμενον πλαττεσθαι]. Human-beings too speak the same voice, but their dialect is not the same.”³³ Here, where voice moves into dialect, a robust conception of communication emerges that pushes against the boundary of the capacity for λόγος that is said to be peculiar to human-being.

Indeed, one hears in this chapter of the *History of Animals* a certain ambivalence in Aristotle’s own voice. Just before claiming that birds have dialect, Aristotle insists that dialect “is peculiar to human-being.”³⁴ Although he says this in the context of a discussion

minimal unit of vocalization.” See Ronald A. Zirin, “Aristotle’s Biology of Language,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974–) 110 (1980): 337. As will be seen later, there is good reason to associate the vocabulary of the γράμμα with that of articulation.

²⁹ *HA* IV.9, 536b10–12. See Zirin, “Aristotle’s Biology of Language,” 342.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 536a14–15.

³¹ *Ibid.*, II.12, 504b1–3.

³² *PA* II.17, 660a34–b1.

³³ *HA* IV.9, 536b17–19.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 536b1–2.

of viviparous animals, none of which have dialect except humans, it remains suggestively disconcerting to hear such a claim just before the discussion of dialect in birds. Further, Aristotle introduces the discussion of dialect in birds with a certain hesitation: “[B]ut voice in articulations, which someone might call dialect [ἦν ἄν τις ὥσπερ διάλεκτον εἴπειν], differs both from one animal to another and between animals in the same species according to location.”³⁵ The use of the potential optative – “which someone might call dialect” – suggests that Aristotle is somewhat reluctant to ascribe dialect unequivocally to animals.³⁶ As we have heard, however, there is no sign of equivocation in those other passages in which he not only ascribes dialect to birds, but even grants that there appears to be a kind of learning and teaching at work in the communication such animals have with one another.

The Voice Phantasic

The phenomena of animal – and in particular bird – communication are treated somewhat haltingly here because they appear on the border that is thought to separate human-being from the rest of the animal kingdom. It is no surprise, then, that when the phenomenon of voice is brought more explicitly into relation with a specific power of the soul in the *De Anima*, Aristotle appeals to the φαντασία, that notoriously liminal dimension of the soul, living somehow on the threshold between perception and intellect in humans and, in its perceptual dimension, belonging as much to certain nonhuman as to human animals.³⁷

Aristotle evokes φαντασία in the context of considering the significative function of voice as distinguished from other sounds that can be made by the tongue and breath. A cough, to use Aristotle’s example, involves breath and specific movements, but is not yet voice. Rather,

³⁵ Ibid., 536b11–13.

³⁶ Zirin rightly notes that Aristotle’s hesitancy in this passage suggests that he still retains a distinction between διάλεκτος as articulate voice and the ordinary meaning of διάλεκτος as conversation. Zirin, “Aristotle’s Biology of Language,” 342.

³⁷ For an indication of the extent to which φαντασία is situated between αἰσθησις and νοῦς, see *De An.* III.3 and III.8. For an indication of φαντασία as situated between the human and the nonhuman animal, see *De An.* III.10–11.

for Aristotle, “it is necessary for the striking to be ensouled and with a certain capacity to be made apparent [μετὰ φαντασίας τινός], for, indeed, voice is a certain significative sound [σημαντικός γὰρ δὴ τις ψόφος ἐστὶν ἢ φωνή].”³⁸ The formulation is probative and provocative. The repetition of indefinite pronouns – a *certain* φαντασία, a *certain* significative sound – gives voice to the complexity of the phenomenon that is voice.

The passage is provocative insofar as it points to the variegated operation of the φαντασία in its relation to sounds significative in different ways. The appearance of the indefinite pronouns here should be met with a heightened sense of hermeneutic acuity. Aristotle deploys such signifiers to gesture to a nuance of meaning that must be considered with care. The passage is, however, also probative insofar as it attempts to articulate a dimension of φαντασία that is somewhat more active than its provenance would seem to suggest. As Malcolm Schofield has argued, the word φαντασία is derived from the verb φαντάζειν, which is found only in its middle/passive forms

³⁸ *De An.* II.8, 420b31–3. Although we have offered the intentionally awkward translation “to be made apparent” here, the term φαντασία will remain largely untranslated to retain the complexity and nuance of Aristotle’s usage. The traditional translation, imagination, is problematic for at least two reasons. (1) It remains too bound up with the English ‘image’ and thus with the traditional empiricist understanding of the imagination as a faculty that deals with images that resemble the things they represent. (For a powerful critique of this way of understanding φαντασία in Aristotle, see Aristotle and Martha Craven Nussbaum, *Aristotle’s “De Motu Animalium”* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985], 222–31. For a defense of the image imagery, see Michael V. Wedin, *Mind and Imagination in Aristotle* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988], 100–59.) (2) The English ‘imagination’ fails to capture the manner in which φαντασία resonates with φαντάζεσθαι, to become apparent or manifest. This is decisive for a proper understanding of Aristotle’s phenomenology. The attempt to emphasize its association with the middle voice heard in φαντάζεσθαι enjoins retaining the Greek φαντασία as a term that does not operate according to the modern dichotomy between subject and object. The difficulty in understanding the manner in which the φαντασία operates can be traced to the difficulty of thinking in terms other than the logic of this dichotomy. There remains, however, a sense of imagination in English upon which it is important to draw and to which we will appeal in the course of this study: it is the sense of imagination as a creative ability, the power to reach out beyond oneself in new and striking ways and thus to open new possibilities of thinking and acting in community with things.

prior to the Hellenistic period.³⁹ This suggests that even as the term φαντασία comes to designate a dimension of the soul capable of making apparent – as it does already in Plato, but here more definitively in Aristotle – the middle/passive sense endemic to φαντάζεσθαι remains operative and should continue to be heard.⁴⁰ In Aristotle, the term itself comes to designate a power of the soul that occupies a kind of middle space – between expression and articulation, meaning and intention, and at a yet deeper level, between perceiving and thinking, object and subject, body and mind.⁴¹

³⁹ Malcolm Schofield, “Aristotle on the Imagination,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s “De Anima,”* ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 251–211.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Schofield points to *Sophist* 236C as a place where already in Plato a more active understanding of something like φαντασία is at work. There the Eleatic Stranger speaks of φανταστική, the ability to make a φάντασμα, understood, it seems, to be a sort of apparition. The Stranger speaks of a “dual form of image making (εἰδωλοποικῆς),” one of which he designates as εἰκαστική, or an ability to make genuine likenesses, the other of which he designates as φανταστική, the ability to make an apparition. It may be that the Eleatic Stranger here goes too far in emphasizing the active dimension of φαντασία. Lycos argues that a central difference between Plato and Aristotle on the nature of appearing is that for Plato appearing itself seems to involve a kind of λόγος capable of being true and false, whereas for Aristotle there is no discursive judgment operating in φαντασία. See K. Lycos, “Aristotle and Plato on ‘Appearing,’” *Mind* 73, no. 292 (1964). Although Lycos seems too easily to identify the Eleatic Stranger with Plato, his suggestion that for Aristotle φαντασία does not yet operate with discursive judgment seems justified. What Lycos misses, as will be heard, is the sort of prediscursive discriminating (κρίνειν) at work in Aristotle’s account of φαντασία. Thus, although the active side never disappears, it is rooted in a certain attuned receptivity.

⁴¹ Freudenthal has suggested that the contradictions into which Aristotle’s account of the φαντασία seems to fall result from its position between thinking and perceiving. See J. Freudenthal, *Über den Begriff des Wortes Phantasia bei Aristoteles* (Göttingen: Verlag von Adalbert Rente, 1863), 53. Because it occupies such a middle position, Wedin has argued that the φαντασία should not be thought as a “faculty of the soul in its own right” but rather as a function that “subserves the operation of full-fledged faculties.” See Wedin, *Mind and Imagination in Aristotle*, xi. Wedin makes this distinction in order to argue that φαντασία cannot be investigated in the manner recommended for other faculties in *De An.* II.4, 415a16–22, which insists that the objects correlating to each power of the soul should be investigated before the powers themselves. See Wedin, *Mind and Imagination in Aristotle*, 46–52. However, the distinction between “full-fledged faculties” and subservient faculties is itself too rigid to do justice to the dynamic manner in which Aristotle thinks the various δύνανται in the soul. For an argument that the vocabularies of ‘ability’ and ‘power’ are more appropriate than that of ‘faculties’ because they are more flexible

If the plurivocity of the φαντασία and significative sound is muted, the passage cited in which Aristotle links voice to a certain φαντασία seems to reduce the very meaning of signification to the intended meaning of the one signifying.⁴² If μετὰ φαντασίας τινός is taken simply as Aristotle's way of determining signification in terms of intentionality, a cough then would not be significative, because it would not have been intentionally formed by the cougher. This would reduce signification to intended meaning: a sound would be said to be significative only when it was intentionally animated by the one making the sound. But surely this does justice neither to the phenomenon of coughing to which Aristotle appeals nor to that of signification. One can discern this by attending more closely to the example of coughing. Aristotle seems to have in mind the sort of cough that arises as a physiological response to a certain condition of the body rather than a cough made intentionally to convey meaning.⁴³ For example, when an excess of mucus builds up in the lungs, one coughs. The sound made by such a cough, Aristotle suggests, does not rise to the level of voice; that is, it is not a certain kind of semantic sound – σημαντικός τις ψόφος. Here, the indefinite pronoun must be heard, for a cough too is a semantic sound, but it is not the sort of semantic

and so more capable of articulating the complex, dynamic functioning of the imagination, see Christopher P. Long, "Two Powers, One Ability: The Understanding and Imagination in Kant's Critical Philosophy," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 36, no. 2 (1998): 233–53.

⁴² Hamlyn seems critical of Aristotle on precisely this score. He says that "the demand that the sounds made should have meaning seems too strict. All that is required is that the sounds should be in some sense intentional." See Aristotle, D. W. Hamlyn, and Christopher John Shields, *De Anima: Books II and III with Passages from Book I*, Clarendon Aristotle Series (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 109.

⁴³ It can happen that when some trash talker is talking trash, a person might make a meaningful gesture by coughing at just the right moment to indicate incredulity or barely repressible disagreement. Here the cough is significative insofar as it points to something intentionally meant – namely, to the fact of incredulity or disagreement. The apprehension of this sign as meaningful would also involve φαντασία, the capacity to reach out beyond that which is merely perceived so as to perceive its significance. In this sort of example of a cough, the sound has both significative force and an intended meaning. But Aristotle cannot have such an example of coughing in mind because it would undermine the very distinction he seems to be attempting to establish – namely, that between other sounds an animal makes and the sound that is voice.

sound that is voice. The Greek verb σημείναι, to show by a sign, to indicate or make known, must be heard in the adjective σημαντική, which itself designates an ability to point to something beyond itself. These words are related to σημείον, which means “sign” and can take on the sense of “symptom,” the natural sign indicating the specific condition of a given being.⁴⁴ A cough surely is significative in this symptomatic sense. The doctor or concerned parent is able to hear this sound precisely as something that points in a significant way beyond itself – for example, to pneumonia or the beginnings of a cold.

Thus, the cough example undermines any interpretation of that provocative passage concerning voice, φαντασία, and signification in *De Anima* II.8 that is deaf to the plurivocity of meaning announced by the indefinite pronouns.⁴⁵ Listen, then, again to the text itself. At first, voice is given a decidedly somatic determination: “Voice is the striking [πληγή] against the so-called windpipe of the air that has been breathed in, by the soul in these parts [ὑπὸ τῆς ἐν τούτοις τοῖς μορίοις ψυχῆς].”⁴⁶ The use of ὑπό with the genitive carries a sense of personal agency, but the agency is located firmly in the body itself: the striking is animated by the soul *in these parts*. Aristotle continues, “For not every sound of an animal is voice, as was said (for it is possible to make a noise with the tongue or as those who cough do), but it is necessary for the striking [τὸ τύπτον] to be ensouled [ἔμψοφον] and to be with a certain capacity to be made apparent [μετὰ φαντασίας τινός].”⁴⁷ Aristotle speaks of voice as a peculiar kind of striking, a soulful striking, a striking with a certain φαντασία. In so doing, he affirms the ecology of voice as a significative sound always already rooted in a way of dwelling responsively with the things encountered

⁴⁴ Drawing on this sense of σημείον, Kretzmann argues that Aristotle’s use of the word at *De Interpretatione* 16a6, when he claims that the things in the voice are the “first signs” of the affections of the soul, should be taken to mean natural signs in the sense of symptom. See Kretzmann, “Aristotle on Spoken Sound,” 7–18.

⁴⁵ The attempt to distill the passage of ambiguity is exemplified by Hicks. He identifies φαντασία with “the mental picture and not the faculty or operation of imagining” in order to state unequivocally, “Thus it is by the presence of the image that vocal sound is mainly differentiated from mere noise.” See Aristotle and Robert Drew Hicks, *De Anima* (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1965), 389.

⁴⁶ *De An.* II.8, 420b27–9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 420b29–32.

in the lifeworld. What brings this striking to life, what draws it into the sphere of significative sound, is a certain capacity for it to be made apparent.

The passage is itself striking precisely because it gives voice to the perplexing manner in which φαντασία operates on the border of sound and voice and, by extension, on the border between body and mind, the passive and the active, things and thinking, the nonhuman and the human animal. If certain animals are capable of voice, as was heard, it is because they too live with and encounter things through a certain φαντασία. In *De Anima* III.10 and 11, Aristotle distinguishes between perceptive [αἰσθητική] and deliberative [βουλευτική] φαντασία, the latter of which belongs exclusively to those animals that have λόγος in a certain way, namely humans.⁴⁸ Aristotle is led to this distinction by his attempt to account for the phenomenon of purposive animal motion. Such movements themselves are signs of the animals' capacity for desire, and, Aristotle claims, "there is no capacity for desire without φαντασία, but all φαντασία is either logistical or perceptive, and of the latter the other animals have a share."⁴⁹

This points to the sort of φαντασία at work in the phenomenon of voice, for voice seems to require not only the capacity to move the tongue in specific ways, but to do so with a desire to be heard in a specific way – be it for mating or to warn, or perhaps even to convey information as a nightingale does when she is observed teaching her chicks. This suggests that the perceptive φαντασία at work in voice itself operates in the middle voice, expressing both an active and a passive dimension. In its active mode, perceptive φαντασία may be said to animate the manner in which the air is struck against the trachea so that the sound becomes significative of something specific to be conveyed from one animal to another. This sort of significative communication is intentional in the sense that it is born of the

⁴⁸ Ibid., III.10–11, 433b27–434a10.

⁴⁹ Ibid., III.10, 433b28–30. A more detailed discussion of the relationship between the two modes of φαντασία and desire is taken up later in relation to the passage on the voice in the *Politics*, where Aristotle's distinction between those animals capable of voice and those that, in addition to this, have λόγος in a certain way already informs this distinction between perceptive and deliberative φαντασία.

desire of the one making the sound.⁵⁰ Yet intended meaning does not exhaust the significative power of voice. The more passive side of perceptive *φαντασία* is at work in the sound as well, for it is also able to be heard as significative to one capable of reaching out beyond what is merely perceived.⁵¹ When this more receptive dimension of perceptive *φαντασία* is emphasized, it is possible to understand how even a cough may be significative as a symptom of something beyond

⁵⁰ Aristotle emphasizes this in a peculiar way by ascribing a certain agency not, as we might expect, to the animal as a whole but to “the soul in these parts.” See *ibid.*, II.8, 420b28. This suggests not only that the traditional soul–body dichotomy is not operating here, but that the soul is so infused into the body for Aristotle that even its discriminate parts – here the tongue, the lungs, the heart, and the windpipe – are understood to be ensouled in such a way that their movement can be said to animate sound such that it becomes voice. He does this despite the claim in *De Anima* I.4, 408b13–15: “Perhaps it is better not to say that the soul suffers or learns or thinks things through, but that the human-being does this by means of the soul.” Hamlyn insists that Aristotle does not live up to this suggestion in the rest of the *De Anima*. See D. W. Hamlyn, “Aristotle’s Account of Aesthesis in the *De Anima*,” *Classical Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1959): 8. Aristotle’s suggestion, however, need not be taken as a rigid principle. Rather, when he is concerned, as he is here in *De Anima* II.8, to do justice to the physiological dimensions of perceiving, he locates the soul in the specific parts of the body.

⁵¹ Traditionally, a distinction has been made here between ‘sensation’ and ‘perception’ in order to distinguish the passive from the active side of αἴσθησις. This distinction, however, seems too bound up with empiricist theories of perception in which a dichotomy between the pure reception of sense data and the subjective awareness of something’s being presented to the mind threatens to divide analytically a power of the soul that is organically whole in Aristotle. Hamlyn writes in this context, “The *concept of aisthēsis* is in Aristotle, as with the Greeks generally, ambiguous between the concepts of sensation and perception.” See Aristotle, Hamlyn, and Shields, *De Anima*, 88. He goes farther in his book, *Sensation and Perception*, arguing: “[E]xcept by periphrasis the classical Greek philosophers had no way of distinguishing between sensation and perception. Moreover, the failure in the majority of cases to make the distinction even by periphrasis is an indication that they had in general no idea of the necessity of distinguishing the two concepts. Aristotle, perhaps, is on the threshold of making some such distinction, but he does not succeed fully in doing so.” See D. W. Hamlyn, *Sensation and Perception: A History of the Philosophy of Perception*, International Library of Philosophy and Scientific Method (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 3. Yet what Hamlyn laments as ambiguous and bemoans as a failure is, in fact, a sign of a more organic and naturalistic apprehension of the dynamics of perceiving. Thus, although we will follow Aristotle in delineating the active and passive dimensions of αἴσθησις, our translations will speak largely in terms of ‘perceive’ and its cognates, with the understanding that perceiving involves both receptive sensation and reflective apperception – both of which seem to be at work in Aristotle’s deployment of αἴσθησις.

itself. Although it is not voice in the strict sense because the sound is not informed by the desire to communicate something beyond itself, it nevertheless does communicate something beyond itself to one capable of hearing it with a certain φαντασία.

If, however, these two dimensions of perceptive φαντασία are evoked by Aristotle's gesture to a "certain φαντασία," we must hear a corresponding duplicity in the indefinite τις Aristotle invokes as he articulates the meaning of voice in *De Anima* II.8, 420b32–3: voice is a *certain kind* of significative sound. As Aristotle goes on to emphasize, voice "is not, like a cough, a striking by the air that is breathed in, but by means of the air [the animal] strikes the air in the trachea against itself."⁵² The capacity to move air in such a way as to make it signify something specific is what distinguishes the significative function of voice from the manner in which other nonvoiced sounds are significative. To put it succinctly, all voice is significative, but not all significative sound is voice. The cough, for its part, remains significative – as do the buzzing of bees, the noises of grasshoppers, and the rumble of thunder – but such sounds can be heard only in their significative function to those capable of hearing in a certain way, that is, with perceptive φαντασία. The ecology of voice, then, itself points not only to the manner in which living things dwell with and respond to the λόγος of things, but also to the manner in which communities of voiced communication are rooted in and grow from a responsive dwelling always already attuned to the expression of things.

Yet even if this delineation of the active and passive dimensions of perceptive φαντασία can account for the manner in which living things are able to engage meaningfully a world rich with significance, it remains incapable of accounting for the manner in which truth emerges from the sort of significative voice Aristotle identifies with the λόγος ἀποφαντικός in the *De Interpretatione*. In order to apprehend the difference between the significative voice associated with truth in the *De Interpretatione* and the manner in which even animals without the dianoetic capacity to think things through are nevertheless capable of meaningful communication, it will be necessary to turn to a passage from the beginning of the *Politics* where voice again is

⁵² *De An.* II.8, 420b34–421a1.

heard. A consideration of this passage will point beyond itself in two directions. First, it will direct us back to the site of the relationship between voice and λόγος in the *De Interpretatione* in such a way that truth may be heard to grow out of a certain saying oriented by the human encounter with the appearing of things – λόγος ἀποφαντικός. Second, however, this passage from the *Politics* points beyond itself to a more complicated path of response-ability in Aristotle's thinking that leads from perceiving to thinking through the elusive descriptions of φαντασία in the *De Anima*. This longer, more intricate path articulating the human ability to respond to things will be taken up in the next chapter. The way of response articulated there leads to a deeper understanding of the meaning of truth as rooted in a λόγος capable of *responding* to the expression of things.

The Politics of Voice

At the beginning of the *Politics*, voice again appears as Aristotle's thinking encounters the border between human and nonhuman animals. Having established that human-being is "by nature a political animal [πολιτικόν ζῷον]," Aristotle claims that the difference between this sort of community based on communication and that of other herd animals is that "human-being alone of the animals has λόγος."⁵³ Here the continuity between human-being and the world of nature is affirmed by the repeated insistence that human-being is "of the animals," indeed, is a "political *animal*." The difference, however, concerns a particular way of communicating, one that involves a specific deployment of voice peculiar to those animals that "have λόγος":

Voice, indeed, is a sign of pain and pleasure, and thus belongs to other animals, for their nature has come to the point at which they have perception of pain and pleasure and [the ability] to indicate [σημαίνειν] these things to one another [ἀλλήλοις]. But λόγος is the ground on which what is beneficial and

⁵³ Aristotle and W. D. Ross, *Aristotelis Politica* (henceforth *Pol.*) Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxonii: E Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1957), I.2, 1253a2–10. The Greek formulation of this latter passage is poignant because it involves the prolepsis of the word λόγος in a way that itself gives voice to the importance of this way of having λόγος: λόγον δὲ μόνον ἀνθρώπος ἔχει τῶν ζῴων.

harmful appear, and thus also what is just and unjust [λόγος ἐπὶ τῷ δηλοῦν ἐστι τὸ συμφέρον καὶ τὸ βλαβερόν, ὥστε καὶ τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ ἄδικον].⁵⁴

Nonhuman animals have the capacity for semantic voice. They can perceive that which is painful and pleasurable, communicate these things to one another by signs, and move through the world according to these perceptions and significations. Such significative expressions of pain and pleasure, however, are not yet *articulations* of the beneficial or harmful. A certain way of having λόγος is the ground in which what is perceived as painful or pleasant is rooted in a broader context and interpreted in such a way that the beneficial and harmful appear. In *De Anima* III.10 and 11, Aristotle lends determination to this way of having λόγος when he identifies a logistical, deliberative mode of being appeared to that belongs to those animals capable of orienting their desires toward what is better rather than responding immediately to what presents itself as pleasant or painful. Aristotle writes:

So perceptive φαντασία, as was said, is present in other animals, but there is deliberative φαντασία in those capable of λόγος [ἐν τοῖς λογιστικοῖς] (for whether one will act this way or that way is already the work of reasoning [λογισμοῦ], and it is necessary for it to be measured by one thing, for one pursues the better and thus one is able to make one from many appearances [φαντασμάτων]).⁵⁵

The active dimension of being appeared to seems to be emphasized here as Aristotle seeks to delineate the difference between perceptive and logistical φαντασία, for the capacity to make one out of many appearances seems to involve an ability to take up appearances in a certain way. Yet the question of how the appearances themselves come to presence to the one able to measure them by one thing, pursue the better, and thus make one from them remains unaddressed here. The passage thus presumes but does not pursue the longer, more intricate path of response along which Aristotle thinks

⁵⁴ Ibid., 1253a10–15.

⁵⁵ *De An.* III.11, 434a5–10. Nussbaum is correct in her reading of this passage to insist that the appearance of φάντασμα here cannot be understood in terms of a picture theory of the imagination. See Aristotle and Nussbaum, *Aristotle's "De Motu Animalium,"* 263.

the relationship between perceiving, being appeared to, and thinking. Although a deeper understanding of the nature of truth and the truth of nature can be met only along this longer path that leads from the expression of things to the life of the mind, let us remain for now with the text of this passage.

Here it must be emphasized that the capacity to take up what is presented as pleasant or painful such that it is measured against an apprehension of what is better and so can appear to be beneficial or harmful lends determination to that way of having λόγος that seems to mark a difference between the human and other animals. In the *De Anima*, Aristotle thematizes this difference in terms of the capacity to resist immediate pleasures by looking to the future.⁵⁶ He goes on to claim that the reason the other animals don't seem to have opinion is that they do not have the sort of φαντασία "from reckoning things together" [τὴν ἐκ συλλογισμοῦ]⁵⁷ that is capable of preparing desire by looking to the future and drawing upon the past, weighing this course of action against that, oriented throughout by a broader conception of the beneficial and harmful, the just and unjust.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ See *De An.* III.10, 433b5–13. Here Aristotle identifies this capacity to look toward the future as a way the thing desired either is thought [νοηθῆναι] or appears [φαντασθῆναι]. Thus, he seems to locate this capacity at the site where φαντασία and νοῦς cooperate.

⁵⁷ See *ibid.*, 434a11, taking the τὴν with Hicks and Nussbaum as referring to φαντασίαν rather than, as Sachs has it, to δόξαν. See Aristotle and Hicks, *De Anima*, 567; Aristotle and Nussbaum, *Aristotle's "De Motu Animalium"* 264. For Sachs's reading, see Joe Sachs, *Aristotle's "On the Soul" and "On Memory and Recollection"* (Santa Fe, NM: Green Lion Press, 2001), 156.

⁵⁸ This sentence draws a number of texts together. First, as mentioned, it looks to the passages from *De Anima* III.10 and 11 in which Aristotle associates the ability to look to the future with νοῦς and φαντασία (433b5–13) and delineates the difference between perceptive and deliberative φαντασία (434a5–15). The latter passage concerns specifically the relationship between deliberative φαντασία and desire. There Aristotle insists that desire is not of itself deliberative (434a12), and thus in animals without the capacity for logistical/deliberative φαντασία – and even for those with it but without self-restraint (ἄκρασία) – "at one time this desire conquers and moves that one, while at another time, that one [conquers and moves] this one, like a ball" (*De An.* III.11, 434a12–13). Nonhuman animal motion seems to remain determined in large part by what may be called the mechanics of desire in which one desire knocks out another without deliberative φαντασία "preparing" desire in such a way that it is directed toward an overarching apprehension of what is better. The language of "preparing" here and in the sentence from the text is drawn from a passage in Aristotle and Nussbaum, *De Motu Animalium* (henceforth *De*

Thus, Aristotle's understanding of the difference between perceptive and logistical φαντασία hovers just under the surface of the discussion of voice and λόγος in the *Politics*. In turning to the question of voice in that text, Aristotle underscores a kind of continuity between the manner in which animals and humans inhabit the world as beings capable of communication. Yet by introducing a certain way of having λόγος capable of making things manifest – λόγος is ἐπὶ τῷ δηλοῦν, that on the basis of which something appears⁵⁹ – he establishes a fundamental difference between the human and nonhuman animal by identifying an idiosyncratic logistical capacity with the human animal. This delineation of the difference between human-being and the other animals is itself predicated upon the difference between the sort of perceptive φαντασία at work in the phenomenon of voice and the logistical φαντασία that makes possible the appearing of the beneficial and the harmful, the just and unjust. The peculiar human capacity for λόγος, as an ability to allow the just and the unjust to manifest themselves, is the soil in which the city grows. Aristotle puts it this way immediately following the passage concerning voice and λόγος in the *Politics*: “For this is proper to human-beings as compared with other animals: the human alone has perception [αἰσθησις] of what is good and bad and just and unjust and the others; and a community [κοινωνία] of these beings makes a household and a city.”⁶⁰ If those passages from the *De Anima* dealing with the logic of deliberative

Motu) 702a17–19, where Aristotle speaks of the φαντασία as that which prepares [παρασκευάζειν] desire such that the animal moves. There Aristotle explicitly states that φαντασία “comes about either through thinking [διὰ νοήσεως] or through perceiving [δι’ αἰσθήσεως].” Insofar as it comes about through thinking, φαντασία is deliberative and logistical, and desire can be oriented toward the beneficial or harmful; insofar as it comes about through perceiving, φαντασία enables motion through desire as a perceptive response to what presents itself as pleasant or painful.

⁵⁹ The formulation – ἐπὶ τῷ δηλοῦν... ὥστε καὶ τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ ἄδικον – suggests that a certain way of having λόγος is the condition of the possibility of the appearance of the just and unjust. The preposition ἐπὶ when used, as here, with the dative can take on the sense of a conditional relationship. See Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 379. In this passage, the use of ἐπὶ along with the result clause beginning with ὥστε suggests a clear line of thinking in which the λόγος in its capacity to make the beneficial and harmful manifest gives rise to the appearance of justice and injustice.

⁶⁰ *Pol.* I.2, 1253a15–18.

φαντασία pointed to the more active dimension of the human capacity to be appeared to, this passage, with its emphasis on the power of perceiving not merely the pleasant and painful, but the good and bad, suggests the extent to which the human having of λόγος involves also a perceptive openness oriented to the good and bad in such a way that the question of justice is felt to press insistently upon human life.

The ecology of animal life is rooted in a way of perceiving that finds its proper expression as animals enter into vocal communication with one another and the world they inhabit. Aristotle has characterized this way of dwelling in terms of the capacity to perceive pain and pleasure. The ecology of human life, however, is rooted in an analogous, but different way of perceiving that finds its proper expression as humans enter into political communication with one another and the world they inhabit. Heidegger recognizes these two ways of encountering the world as different ways the world is “there” for humans and other animals. He writes, “[T]he possibility of the existing of the world in a living thing depends upon the grounding possibility of the extent to which this living is *closed* in upon itself or is awake, the extent to which being-in-the-world is uncovered or has the character of the uncovered there, and thus on the extent to which the world itself and the being-in-the-world are *discovered*.”⁶¹ The way humans have λόγος opens the possibility of discovering the world as co-constitutive of human-being itself. The human involvement with the world is not more intimate than that of other animals, but this intimacy announces itself to humans in such a way that we are capable of discovering the extent to which our involvement with the world is onto-logical. The being of human-being, like all living things, is grounded in an ability to respond to things encountered. The nature of human response-ability, however, has the added dimension of responsibility endemic to the recognition that its own rootedness in the world is decisively determined by and through a community of political communication capable of lending voice to things in such a way that justice and injustice first become possible.

These poignant formulations from the *De Anima* and the *Politics*, then, point in two directions at once. First, they point to a complex

⁶¹ Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, 52.

relation between perceiving and being appeared to that marks the continuity and discontinuity between the manner in which the human animal and other animals exist in and encounter the natural world. To anticipate a path of thinking that will be pursued in the next chapter in some detail: although all animals have the perceptive capacity to respond to the λόγος according to which the natural world expresses itself, the human ability to respond involves an additional, dianoetic dimension that first opens the possibility of justice, even as it also brings with it the possibility of its opposite. *But if the question of justice appears to be a certain ability to respond to the expression of things by a being having λόγος in such a way that it must always integrate such expressions into a deeper understanding of the whole, the question of truth may be initially apprehended as an imperative that comes with the human ability to address things according to the manner in which they express themselves.*

This, indeed, is the second direction toward which the passages from the *De Anima* and *Politics* point. They suggest that the difference between the voice of communicative animals and the λόγος proper to human-being is a manner of address that has come to be called articulation. Human λόγος is capable of articulating things in a way that opens the possibility of justice and injustice.⁶² Here, the human having of λόγος must be distinguished from dialect, which is associated with human and certain nonhuman animals alike and characterized as “the articulation [διάρθρωσις] of the voice with the tongue.”⁶³ Although birds and other animals have the physiological capacity “to make something articulate of the voice [ἄρθρον τι τῆς φωνῆς ποιεῖν],”⁶⁴ their dialect is limited to the ability to convey information. Such communication may rise to the level of teaching and learning – it may, indeed, allow for the development of complex

⁶² Zirin identifies νοῦς as at the root of the difference between the kind of articulation associated with διάλεκτος and that associated with human λόγος. See Zirin, “Aristotle’s Biology of Language,” 346. If this is the case, an account of the manner in which human-beings are noetic and thus have access to the whole of things in a certain way must be pursued. To pursue this path of thinking will require a passage through the *De Anima* and into *Metaphysics* I and II, where Aristotle develops the meaning of φιλοσοφία as a way of somehow knowing the whole of things. This path of thinking is pursued in Chapters 5 to 7.

⁶³ *HA* IV.9, 535a30–1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 536a3–4.

social structures – but it does not give rise to the sort of political communication capable of orienting its encounters with things toward the question of the good. This capacity to orient encounters toward the good, however indeterminately apprehended, marks a difference between human and nonhuman ways of being-in-the-world. It is a difference that carries with it the weight of responsibility that comes with the human ability to respond.

Human articulation is a joint response-ability held accountable at once by the unicity of things and the expression of the whole that opens us to the question of the good. The Greek *διάρθρωσις*, translated earlier as “articulation,” is related to *ἄρθρον*, which is here translated as “articulate” but which literally means the joint, particularly the socket of the joint.⁶⁵ The etymological connection between human articulation and the joint has been traced by W. D. Whitney, who claims that the Greek terms are “rendered into Latin by the verb *articulo*, denominative of *articulus*, ‘joint,’ with its various derivatives; and *articulatus* means ‘jointed,’ physically and figuratively.”⁶⁶ Attending to the way articulation has historically been said suggests that articulate speech has for millennia been thought in terms closely associated with the organic organization of the body. We have already mentioned the Socratic insistence in the *Phaedrus* that the dialectician be capable of dissecting the *λόγος* according to its “natural joints.”⁶⁷ In the pseudo-Platonic *Definitions*, the syllable is said to be “the literate joint of human voice [*ἀνθρωπίνης φωνῆς ἄρθρον ἐγγράμματον*].”⁶⁸ That text also defines *λόγος* itself as “literate voice, declarative of each of the things

⁶⁵ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, s.v. *ἄρθρον*, n. Whitney emphasizes the etymology of the Greek *ἔναρθρος*, “which means simply ‘jointed,’ and is, of course, used primarily in a physical sense, of a limb, a stalk of grass or reed, and so on.” See W. D. Whitney, “What Is Articulation?” *American Journal of Philology* 2, no. 7 (1881): 347.

⁶⁶ Whitney, “What Is Articulation?” 347. He continues, “Now the term ‘jointed’ is precisely, and in the highest sense, descriptive of human speech-utterance, as distinguished from our other utterances, and from sounds produced by the organs of the lower animals.” Without endorsing the characterization of nonhuman animals as “lower,” we nevertheless recognize that Whitney articulates well the connection between human articulation and the joint.

⁶⁷ *Phaedrus*, 265e–266b.

⁶⁸ Plato and John Burnet, *Platonis Opera*, 5 vols., Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1907), 5:414d.

that are [φωνὴ ἐγγράμματος, φραστικὴ ἐκάστου τῶν ὄντων].”⁶⁹ These texts suggest that λόγος is itself a kind of embodied ability to respond to things in a twofold sense. On one hand, the capacity for articulate speech requires certain physiological capacities – a loose tongue and moist lips – such that the joints of the λόγος can be meaningfully articulated. This is the sort of physiological articulation Aristotle associates with the dialect he ascribes to certain animals as well as humans. On the other hand, λόγος is the sort of articulate speech that has the capacity to declare each of the things that are because it is able to fit itself into and move along with the natural joints of things. This is not to suggest that the structure of λόγος simply mirrors the structure of things.⁷⁰ Rather, the human having of λόγος involves the capacity to give articulate voice to that which appears in its very way of appearing. The metaphor of the joint heard in the word ἄρθρον gives voice to the way a certain manner of speaking belongs to and moves with the things themselves, not as a mirror reflects images, but as the joints move the body in response to the things it encounters. Human articulation is a joint response-ability: its truth depends on our ability to articulate things according to the ways they show themselves.

ARTICULATING THE TRUTH OF THINGS

The name Aristotle gives to the sort of λόγος capable of articulating the truth of things is λόγος ἀποφαντικός. In order to hear the

⁶⁹ Ibid. The term φραστική is an adjective derived from the verb φράζω, which means to tell, declare, or pronounce. The rather strong translation of φραστική as “declarative” is justified by two considerations, one grammatical, the other strategic. Grammatically, the translation is meant to draw attention to the way the “-ικος” suffix denotes an *ability*. To say “declarative of” captures this along with the genitive that points us to the object toward which the ability is directed, namely, “of each of the things that are.” Strategically, to translate the term with reference to the English ‘declare’ draws a connection between the sort of articulate saying mentioned here and what Aristotle himself calls λόγος ἀποφαντικός in the *De Interpretatione*. There seems to be a strong connection in any case between the *Definitiones* and the *De Interpretatione*.

⁷⁰ Dewey seems to have something like this naive mirroring in mind when he criticizes the Greeks because “they took the structure of discourse for the structure of things, instead of for the forms which things assume under the pressure and opportunity of social cooperation and exchange.” See Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 170–1.

λόγος ἀποφαντικός as a saying that is able to move with and, indeed, give voice to the appearing of things, let us begin again with the first sentence of *De Interpretatione*, chapter 4: “Λόγος is significative voice [φωνή σημαντική], some parts of which, having been separated [κεχωρισμένον], are significative as an expression [φάσις], but not as an affirmation [κατάφασις].”⁷¹ In articulating the significative function of λόγος, Aristotle dissects the λόγος according to its articulations in order to allow the significative power of the λόγος ἀποφαντικός itself to appear as distinct from that of its parts. If, as Aristotle goes on to insist, an affirmation is itself the first declarative saying – λόγος ἀποφαντικός – and what distinguishes a declarative saying from other sorts of saying is that truth and falsity arise in it,⁷² the analysis of λόγος into parts destroys its capacity to function as the locus of truth. Yet an analysis of the parts of λόγος remains heuristically helpful so long as its parts taken in isolation are not given priority over the holistic and indeed organic function of λόγος itself. Despite the order of presentation in the *De Interpretatione* in which the parts of the λόγος are treated prior to the organic whole, Aristotle gestures to the phenomenological priority of the whole when he speaks of the parts as “having been separated” – κεχωρισμένον – from the whole. The perfect participle suggests that the separation is analytical and thus that the parts, taken as isolated, are not wholly what they are when operating together as organic parts of a complete λόγος.

Aristotle identifies the noun or name (ὄνομα) and the verb (ῥῆμα) as the parts of a λόγος, each of which signifies meaningfully according to agreement (κατὰ συνθήκη). The noun signifies without time, while the verb signifies with time.⁷³ Names and verbs are significative expressions, but taken in isolation, they do not signify in the manner of the λόγος. Aristotle designates φάσις, expression or assertion, as the sort of signification of which these parts are capable. When the name ‘fire’ is asserted, something is signified beyond the word itself. When the verb ‘ignites’ is expressed, something is also signified beyond the

⁷¹ *De Int.* 16b26–28.

⁷² For κατάφασις as the first λόγος ἀποφαντικός, see *ibid.*, 17a8; for the relation between declarative saying and truth/falsity, see 17a2–3.

⁷³ See *ibid.*, 16a19–21; 16b6–7.

verb, but now with the additional dimension of time. However, such significations, be they nominal or rhematic, are for Aristotle mere φάσεις, expressions.

The λόγος ἀποφανικός signifies in a different way, for its saying is also a kind of showing that allows what is said to show itself forth as itself. Aristotle articulates the difference between the significative function of λόγος and that of a mere name this way: “But I mean, for example, that ‘human-being’ signifies something, but not that it is or not (but there will be affirmation or denial whenever something is posited in addition to it [ἀλλ’ ἔσται κατάφασις ἢ ἀπόφασις ἐάν τι προστεθῇ]).”⁷⁴ The expression of the name ἄνθρωπος, human-being, does not yet involve an engagement with the concrete existence of a thing; the name is asserted in isolation from the context in which the thing to which it refers appears. But Aristotle goes on to claim that there will be a κατάφασις ἢ ἀπόφασις, an affirmation or a denial, *when-ever something is posited in addition to the simple saying*. Heidegger captures the importance of the term πρόσθεσις in this context: “Πρόσθεσις stands, for Aristotle, in contrast to ἀφαίρεσις (abstraction); the latter means taking something away from something and putting it, as so taken away, on its own footing. . . . Πρόσθεσις means concretion. . . . The κατάφασις is alive beyond the mere φάσις, if what is meant in speaking is meant as a concrete entity.”⁷⁵ The significative power of the λόγος is alive insofar as it is animated by the attempt to articulate the being of some thing in its concreteness. Ontology, which appears on the surface to be the most abstract of pursuits, is here in fact rendered concrete – it concerns the attempt to articulate the being of things *in the context* in which they are encountered.

Aristotle then goes on to say, “Each λόγος is significative, not as a tool, but as was said, according to agreement [κατὰ συνθήκην].”⁷⁶ In designating the significative function of λόγος as κατὰ συνθήκην – according to agreement – Aristotle underscores the connection between the significative function of the λόγος and that of the name. Heidegger recognizes the importance of this connection when he insists, “The word [i.e., λόγος] originally was a naming, but not that of

⁷⁴ Ibid., 16b28–30.

⁷⁵ Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, 20/15.

⁷⁶ *De Int.* 16b35–17a1.

a mere name, but rather something that is in the world is addressed as it is encountered.”⁷⁷ The manner of this address is described as *κατὰ συνθήκην* – a term that is often simply translated as “by convention” and read as evidence of Aristotle’s so-called conventional theory of language.⁷⁸ As Wolfgang Wieland has suggested, however, two things are important to note about this formulation. First, Aristotle does not speak in terms of the standard sophistical distinction between nature and convention (i.e., between φύσις and θέσις or νόμος). Second, he deploys the preposition *κατὰ* – according to – rather than the dative [*συνθήκῃ*], which would indeed have given the sense of the *means by which* the signification operates.⁷⁹ To say, then, that λόγος is able to signify *κατὰ συνθήκην* – according to agreement – is not to say that it functions by a convention posited prior to and existing independently of the signifying function of language; rather it is to say that λόγος signifies according to a kind of agreement rooted in the natural semantic capacity of human language itself.

This is further suggested by the way Aristotle articulates the meaning of the phrase by drawing it into close connection with the nature of the symbol: “But *κατὰ συνθήκην* is said because none of the names

⁷⁷ Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, 21/15.

⁷⁸ Both Apostle and Ackrill translate the term “by convention.” See Hippocrates G. Apostle, *Aristotle’s “Categories” and “Propositions”* (Grinnell, IA: Peripatetic Press, 1980); Aristotle and Ackrill, “*Categories*” and “*De Interpretatione*.” Although Whitaker recognizes that there is a tradition that takes *κατὰ συνθήκην* as meaning by composition rather than by convention, he thinks it is most natural to take the contrast to be between convention and nature. See Whitaker, *Aristotle’s “De Interpretatione,”* 45. Modrak goes a good distance in calling into question the simple dichotomy between nature and convention in Aristotle when she suggests that Aristotle “advocates conventionalism with respect to the relation between phoneme and the meaning it bears, and naturalism with respect to the relation between meaning and reference.” See Modrak, *Aristotle’s Theory of Language and Meaning*, 19. For a strong defense of the idea that this term is designed to ground “the claim that linguistic signification is conventional,” see Kretzmann, “Aristotle on Spoken Sound,” 10. As mentioned, Kretzmann establishes a strong distinction between a *σημείον*, which he takes as a kind of symptom or natural sign, and a *σύμβολον*, which he takes as a conventional sign. He uses this distinction to suggest that Aristotle’s intention at the start of the *De Interpretatione* is to ground his claim that linguistic entities signify by convention and to show the process of argument that leads from the notion that linguistic entities are natural signs to the conclusion that they are conventional. For a critique of this view, see Polansky and Kuczewski, “Speech and Thought, Symbol and Likeness,” 59.

⁷⁹ Wieland, *Die Aristotelische Physik*, 162.

exist by nature, but whenever they become a symbol [σύμβολον].”⁸⁰ The sort of agreement Aristotle seems to have in mind is that which operates in the σύμβολον. Originally, the σύμβολον was a mark of identification generated by two parties who, entering into an agreement with one another, broke a coin or bone in half such that each half stood for the identity of either party and for the agreement into which they had entered.⁸¹ Umberto Eco articulates the dynamics at work in the σύμβολον this way: “Two halves of the same thing, either one standing for the other, both becoming, however, fully effective only when they matched to make up, again, the original whole.”⁸² Although the original meaning of the σύμβολον has, in the course of the history of semantics, taken on an extended sense as a sign that points to something beyond itself, indeed, often to something altogether beyond the reach of articulation, Aristotle’s use of the term seems to have been bound specifically to the dynamics of its original meaning.⁸³ Walz emphasizes three aspects of symbolic signification originally understood:

(a) [T]he original symbol involves a whole made up of complementary parts, that is, parts that fit together because they are somehow suitable for each other. . . . (b) Although the parts of a symbol are complementary, there is no necessity in their being together. . . . (c) The complementary parts of the original symbol correspond to and stand in the place of other things.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ *De Int.* 16a26–8.

⁸¹ Heidegger points to this when he insists upon the original meaning of σύμβολον as rooted in interhuman relationships and particularly that of guest friendship. See Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt–Endlichkeit–Einsamkeit*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 29/30, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), 445–6.

⁸² Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, *Advances in Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 130.

⁸³ For a discussion of the extended meaning of the symbol in the history of semantics and specifically the notion that “[w]hat is appreciated in many so-called symbols is exactly their vagueness, their openness, their fruitful ineffectiveness to express a ‘final’ meaning, so that with symbols and by symbols one indicates what is always *beyond* one’s reach,” see *ibid.*, 130. For the claim that Aristotle’s use of the term is bound more closely to the dynamics of the original meaning, see Walz, “The Opening of *On Interpretation*,” 236.

⁸⁴ Walz, “The Opening of *On Interpretation*,” 237.

The delineation of these three aspects of the symbol suggests the extent to which the symbol is itself rooted in nature even if it grows out of the lived experience of human being-with-one-another. The significative function of the symbol depends first on a diremption of a whole, a forcible separation animated by a sort of agreement that is itself made in, with, and through language. Thus, the very ability of the symbol to function as a sign that stands for something beyond itself is codetermined by the natural integrity of the symbol as a whole and the agreement that animates its diremption. The symbol depends at once upon the original integrity of the whole and the meaning that the whole, now having been separated, takes on under the pressure of human communication and association. Although there is no necessity involved in the symbolic relation insofar as the parts need never be brought together, they remain bound to one another, not as mere “complementary parts,” but as *corresponding* parts of an original whole. Although the nature of the agreement to which these corresponding parts point will vary according to the social, historical, and political context from which it is born, the parts themselves express an insistent and natural necessity insofar as they belong together as part of a whole.

As Wieland has suggested, for Aristotle, agreement and the function of meaning are equi-original moments that cannot be separated. He goes on to insist, “[S]omething linguistic can have ‘meaning’ only in the sense that it is related to a possible agreement, to a possible understanding.”⁸⁵ The signifying function of words is always already bound up with and made possible by a community of communication that itself grows out of an attuned understanding of the things of which we speak.⁸⁶ Indeed, after establishing the connection between the name and the symbol, Aristotle returns to the difference between articulation and the inarticulate noises of animals: “Even the inarticulate noises, like those of the beasts, do indeed reveal something, but none of them is a name.”⁸⁷ Although the noises of the other

⁸⁵ Wieland, *Die Aristotelische Physik*, 162–3.

⁸⁶ See *ibid.*, 161–9.

⁸⁷ *De Int.* 16a28–9.

animals do disclose things, human articulation, as symbolic, is always involved in a co-constitutive dialogue with the things it discovers. Words are capable of discovering things, not because they signify by means of convention, but because they are rooted in agreements that themselves arise in communities of communication capable of holding their encounters with things accountable to the ways things show themselves. The dynamics of the original Greek experience that gave rise to the word σύμβολον, then, can itself be heard as a symbol of the complex relationship between human λόγος and the things it seeks to articulate. Even if the specific phonemes by which a community agrees to signify a particular thing differ, the agreement itself is nourished by and grows from those ontological encounters with things made possible by the natural cooperation between the powers of the soul and the expression of things. The symbolic power of words is rooted in this original bringing-together – συμβάλλειν – that is, in an original co-response-ability between the powers of the soul and the expression of things.

In the *Sophistical Refutations*, Aristotle underscores the symbolic nature of words in their relation to things:

For since it is not possible in dialogue to bring in the things [τὰ πράγματα], but we use names as symbols instead of things, and we suppose that what follows in the names follows also in the things, just as those who calculate suppose about their pebbles. But it is not alike. For the names and the quantity of terms [τὸ τῶν λόγων πλῆθος] are limited, but the things are unlimited in number. Thus, it is necessary that the same term and one name signify many.⁸⁸

Aristotle goes on to suggest that this is the reason why those who are not clever at managing the counters are cheated and also why “those who have no experience of the power of names reason falsely, both when they themselves dialogue and when hearing others.”⁸⁹ A familiarity with the symbolic power of names is a bulwark against deception and falsity, both of which arise from the symbolic nature of nominal signification. The specific dimension of the symbolic to which Aristotle points here as a possible source of deception, falsity, and,

⁸⁸ *Sophistical Refutations* I, 165a6–14.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 165a16–18.

indeed, injustice is the finite nature of the λόγοι themselves. Because there are limited λόγοι and an unlimited number of things, one name and the same λόγος will be required to signify many. Here again, however, the peculiar power of the symbol must be felt. If, as Aristotle insists at the start of the *De Interpretatione*, “the things in the voice are symbols of the affections of the soul,”⁹⁰ and affections of the soul are likenesses of things, the symbolic function of words as they seek to articulate things must itself be understood as rooted in the natural correlation between things and the affections of the soul. Again we are directed to that path of thinking that seeks to trace the complex relationship between the soul and the things it encounters. This path of thinking, however, will yet again be deferred – as Aristotle himself defers it at the start of the *De Interpretatione* – in order to complete the journey along the path of address in Aristotle that has now led through the natural semiotics of nonhuman animals to the symbolic communication of human animals in relation to things where the question of truth first announces itself. If human λόγος wins its ability to signify by virtue of a symbolic capacity that is at once grounded in the natural encounter between things and the soul and yet also cultivated by an agreement bound to the exigencies of human association, the meaning of truth will need to be heard as a question of justice.

Human animals are political because they have λόγος in a peculiar way: they are able to articulate things as intelligible parts of a larger whole and so, on the basis of their intelligibility, to create ecological communities rooted in and oriented by the question of the just and the good. However, this is possible only to the extent that humans are able and willing to go down, again and again, to the things themselves in an attempt to articulate them as they express themselves. The very finitude of human λόγοι enjoins that this intelligibility be expressed in terms of universals. Yet if such universals are to be capable of drawing communities of communication toward the question of the just and the good, they must assiduously attend and return to the expression of things from which they grow. It is not only that humans, as Walz suggests, “naturally use agreed-upon vocal-sounds to communicate the intellectual content that results from the soul’s

⁹⁰ *De Int.* 16a3–4.

having been acted upon and likened to things,”⁹¹ but also that what is good and just for the community itself is grounded in the human capacity to articulate things as they are; that is, to speak the truth of things to and with one another.

Declarative Saying

Thus, the sound of Aristotle’s voice has led from the woods through the city to the site of that sort of λόγος capable of articulating the truth by doing justice to the things encountered – λόγος ἀποφαντικός. In *De Interpretatione*, chapter 4, Aristotle identifies the λόγος ἀποφαντικός as a site for the happening of truth: “Every [λόγος] is not declarative [ἀποφαντικός], but only those in which the to be true or to be false arises.”⁹² This awkward translation is designed to allow the Greek to be heard more poignantly. Let us begin with ἀποφαντικός, which is translated as “declarative” in order to capture the sense of setting something forth so as to make it evident in terms of itself. Saying here appears as a kind of showing. In λόγος ἀποφαντικός, saying and appearing belong together. Because it is a saying that sets something forth, that allows a being to show itself as itself, λόγος ἀποφαντικός is a saying in which the to be true or to be false arises. Here, the English must be made to speak the two Greek articular infinitives: τὸ ἀληθεύειν ἢ ψεύδεσθαι. The latter can be rendered in English as “to be false” without losing its verbal sense, for it is a passive verb. But τὸ ἀληθεύειν must be permitted to strike us as strange – how is this active *verb* to be rendered?

The very structure of the word articulates the sort of activity toward which it points. We have already traced the etymological root of ἀλήθεια, which names a privation of λήθειν, to elude notice, to be unseen.⁹³ Thus, ἀλήθεια involves a kind of noticing. It points to a way of encountering that is awake and alive to that which shows forth. The verb ἀληθεύειν, then, should be heard as bound together with the process of appearing as such. It names a specific way of being

⁹¹ Walz, “The Opening of *On Interpretation*,” 244.

⁹² *De Int.* 17a2–3.

⁹³ See the section entitled “The Provenance of Truth as *Aletheia*” in Chapter 2.

open to the appearing of things, to the φαινόμενα. The appearing associated with ἀλήθεια, however, is no pure revelation. Rather, a certain concealment conditions the sort of appearing that belongs to truth as ἀλήθεια because it is situated always in and indeed made possible by a λόγος rooted in finite social, historical, and political life. A certain covering conditions every human discovery.⁹⁴ The φαινόμενον never simply appears as it is in itself. Rather, in appearing as itself, something of itself remains inaccessible. Yet the covering endemic to ἀλήθεια does not hide a realm of pure reality beyond or behind appearances. Rather, it announces a remainder that points to the ineluctable unicity of things, to a singularity that haunts every ontological encounter, rendering it open and holding it insistently accountable in such a way that every attempt to articulate the truth of things enjoins that justice is done to that which remains beyond the gathering power of articulation itself.

Thus, the happening of ἀλήθεια as a way of noticing involves a kind of ontological response-ability that cannot be reduced to the abstract, impersonal happening of being – its emergence into unconcealedness and simultaneous self-hiding.⁹⁵ Rather, τὸ ἀληθεύειν names truth as it grows out of the encounter between the human capacity for articulation and the expression of things. This legomenology of τὸ ἀληθεύειν points to the meaning of truth as co-response-ability: the ability to respond to the appearing of things – τὰ φαινόμενα – such that the truth they express is articulated. At the heart of this ability to respond is a sense of responsibility for the phenomenon encountered informed by an abiding recognition of the finite nature of every human response. Λόγος ἀποφαντικός names a way of speaking capable of addressing the appearing of things that opens the possibility of truth by lending voice to things.

Of course, every λόγος is not a λόγος ἀποφαντικός – a declarative saying that lends voice in such a way that truth and falsity are at stake.

⁹⁴ In *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes, “The being-true” of λόγος as ἀληθεύειν means: to take the beings talked about in λέγειν as ἀποφαίνεσθαι from their coveredness and to let them be seen as something uncovered (ἀληθές), to discover.” See Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 33.

⁹⁵ For the critique of this way of responding to the appearance of ἀλήθεια, see Chapter 2.

A prayer, a wish, or a vow [εὐχή] are λόγοι that are not declarative; such sayings do not attempt to articulate the truth of things. Aristotle further distinguishes declarative saying from simple expression this way:

Let the name and the verb be simply an expression [φάσις], since it is not to speak in such a way that reveals something with the voice with the result that it shows itself forth for itself [ἐπει οὐκ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν οὕτω δηλοῦντά τι τῇ φωνῇ ὥστ' ἀποφαίνεσθαι], whether one is asking a question or speaking spontaneously.⁹⁶

Although there is ostentation in both naming and rhematic saying, it is an abstract ostentation that does not yet involve an ontological engagement with the thing signified. The λόγος ἀποφαντικός is ostensive in a different way – its pointing involves an attempt to articulate the being encountered in its truth; indeed, it is a way of address rooted already in a determinate kind of *response* to the φαινόμενον.

The nature of this response is further suggested by the way Aristotle characterizes the λόγος ἀποφαντικός as a κατάφασις ἢ ἀπόφασις, an affirmation or a denial. We have already heard that such ways of saying happen “whenever something is posited in addition to it [ἄλλ' ἔσται ἐάν τι προστεθῇ].”⁹⁷ The importance of this positing of something has been indicated – such sayings always involve an ontological engagement with something concrete in and through a given context. Aristotle goes on to characterize the nature of κατάφασις, or affirmation, as a kind of declarative saying of something according to something [ἀπόφανσις τινὸς κατὰ τινός], while an ἀπόφασις, or denial, is a declarative saying of something from something [ἀπόφανσις τινὸς ἀπὸ τινός].⁹⁸ Heidegger makes an important point about the dual

⁹⁶ *De Int.* 17a15–20. The translation of ἀποφαίνεσθαι as “it shows itself as itself” is designed to draw out the middle voice of the verb. The middle verb indicates that the declarative voice does not so much accomplish the showing forth as it carries along with and lends itself to the disclosure of something according to its self-expression. Heidegger expresses the dynamic at work in the middle voice this way: “*Apophainesthai*: allowing the object for itself (medium) and from its own self to ‘appear’ as its own self.” See Martin Heidegger, “Phenomenological Interpretation with Respect to Aristotle (Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation),” *Man and World* 25 (1992): 397.

⁹⁷ See above, *De Int.* 16b30.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17a25–6.

nature of the “from,” or *ἀπό*, at work in *ἀπόφασις*: “In the *ἀπόφασις* lies a twofold *ἀπό*. The two [being *of* something and, on this basis, excluding something *from* it] do not coincide at all. This whole fact of the matter as it actually exists must be held onto for every further determination; only then can something be denied it or, rather, can something else be denied on the basis of it.”⁹⁹ The twofold dimension of the *ἀπό* of *ἀπόφασις* reinforces the notion that denial is possible only on the basis of an ontological engagement with the thing itself that is oriented by the attempt to say it like it is.

Yet if we hear a twofold *ἀπό* in *ἀπόφασις*, we might also listen for a corresponding twofold *κατά* in *κατάφασις*. The *κατά* at work in the declarative saying [*ἀποφάνεις*] that says something according to something [*τινὸς κατὰ τινός*] is possible only if the saying of *κατάφασις* has already “come down toward” [*κατά*] and, indeed, articulates “over against” [again, *κατά*] the being with which it is concerned. A *κατάφασις* cannot be abstract and remain what it is; rather, it must quite precisely *go down to* the things with which it is engaged, for *τὸ ἀληθεύειν ἢ ψεύδεσθαι* arises in such concrete encounters. The truth that always “concerns combination and separation” is itself made possible by a saying that combines and separates according to [*κατά*] the very appearing of things.¹⁰⁰ Here the twofold nature of the *ἀπό* – its being of something and on this basis excluding something *from* it – is itself heard in its dependence on an original *κατά-φασις*, a saying that *goes down to* some concrete being and thus *stands over against* it.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, 23/17.

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle speaks of truth as a matter of combination (*σύνθεσις*) and separation (*διαίρεσις*) at *De Interpretatione* 16a12–13. Brogan beautifully articulates the way combination and separation function in declarative saying when he considers the nature of naming in relation to the example of an encounter with a deer: “But, for example, in exhibiting the being as a deer, there is a denying to it all those ways of being that are not what a deer is. Likewise, letting the being be seen in this way ascribes to the deer those characteristics that it can have and that are appropriate to its way of being. Such affirmation and denial belong to naming precisely because synthesis and division are the ways in which beings such as natural beings give themselves to us to be disclosed.” Walter Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being*, SUNY Series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 183.

¹⁰¹ Aristotle himself gestures to the priority of the *κατάφασις* when he introduces the discussion of declarative statements this way: “The primary single [*εἷς πρῶτος*] declarative

Indeed, this double meaning of *κατά* articulates the complex dynamics of ontological encounter. The capacity to articulate something as something, to respond to and address things in meaningful ways, involves a dynamic openness to things – *κατά* in the sense of going down to things – and yet also an ability to stand over against things – *κατά* in its more agonistic register. This dimension of *κατάφασις* gives voice to the recalcitrant objectivity of things, to their capacity to object to that which is said about them.¹⁰² The twofold meaning of the *κατά* of *κατάφασις* articulates the extent to which things are at once accessible and elusive.

The Ligature of Appearing

The path of thinking that attempts to follow the sound of Aristotle's voice has led to a particular way of saying capable of articulating things according to the way they show themselves. This has been the path of concerned address, the way to the things themselves. Yet the work of articulation involves not merely the attempt to address things as they show themselves, but also the ability somehow to be moved by things in such a way that they are permitted to present themselves as themselves. This is the path of attuned response, the way from things to thinking. To articulate the truth of things is to enter into an intricate and dynamic ecology of encounter that draws the path of concerned address together with that of attuned response. As the sort of saying capable of articulating the truth and falsity of things, the *λόγος ἀποφαντικός* is a joint occurrence: it takes place between beings as they address and respond to one another. The phenomenon of the joint symbolizes this ecology of encounter insofar as it embodies a natural relation in which two seemingly separate phenomena are understood to be dynamically related as part of an organic whole. Let us undertake at this juncture, then, a brief consideration of the nature of the joint in relation to animal movement, for it connects the path of concerned address to this other path, now long deferred but already somehow traversed, that leads up from the things to thinking.

statement is the affirmation [*κατάφασις*]; then [*εἴτα*] is the denial [*ἀπόφασις*] and each of the rest are single by means of a connective." *De Int.* 17a8–9.

¹⁰² See Chapter 1.

The symbol of the joint offers a way to think the path of concerned address together with that of attuned response in such a way that they show themselves to be part of a symbiotic ecology in which human-being and the things of nature live together and from which truth, when cultivated by articulate voice, naturally grows.

In order to move from the way of address to that of attuned response, it is helpful to think, as Aristotle so often does, in terms of motion, for this path too passes through φαντασία, which Aristotle himself suggests is a “a sort of motion.”¹⁰³ Indeed, our characterization of the λόγος ἀποφαντικός as a joint occurrence and our suggestion that articulation itself involves an ability to move along with that which is encountered suggest the extent to which the ecology of ontological encounter is bound up with a certain way of moving. At the beginning of *De Motu Animalium*, Aristotle thinks the movement endemic to the encounters with particular things perceived in terms closely connected with the joints of animals:

For it appears in these things [i.e., things perceived, τὰ αἰσθητά] too that it is impossible for there to be movement if nothing is at rest – and first of all, in animals, which is the present concern. For if one of the parts moves, there must be some part at rest and because of this, joints [καμπαί] are in animals. For animals use their joints like a center, and the whole part in which there is a joint becomes both one and two, straight and bent, changing in potency and in being-at-work on account of the joint.¹⁰⁴

Aristotle’s reference to joints being like a center seems to be a gesture to the lever principle in which a rod is set upon a fulcrum, which acts like the center point of a circle. The points along a radius of the circle each move at different rates in proportion to their distance from the center. The *Mechanics* puts it this way: “[T]he mark at a further remove from the center is borne along more quickly than the one nearer when moved by the same force.”¹⁰⁵ The joint functions like the center point of the circle insofar as small movements at the joint produce large effects at the extremities of the limb.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ *De An.* III.3, 428b11.

¹⁰⁴ *De Motu* 698a14–21.

¹⁰⁵ *Mechanics*, 848b4–5. See Aristotle and I. Bekker, *Aristotelis Opera*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Reimer, 1831).

¹⁰⁶ De Groot is right to see the lever principle as relevant to Aristotle’s understanding of δύνανμις and specifically to the phenomenon in which small movements have the

However, the analogy between the joint and the lever contains something far more significant for our attempt to think the ecology of encounter in which the powers of the soul cooperate with the things they encounter. As Jean De Groot suggests, “[T]he lever is one place where we realize that power is not always agency (a) but is the disposition to receive agency productively (b).”¹⁰⁷ The lever principle illustrates how distance and weight (or force), two seemingly unrelated phenomena, are dynamically related such that the same amount of force exerted at an increased distance from the fulcrum is able to lift a correspondingly heavier weight located at the opposite end of the rod.¹⁰⁸ Just as the joint of the lever relates two seemingly disjointed things together, so too is the movement of *φαντασία* somehow able to relate the form of things presented through perceiving to affections of the soul. Just as the joint allows distance to show itself as naturally co-responsive to weight, so too does the *φαντασία* allow perceptions to show themselves as naturally co-responsive to thoughts.¹⁰⁹

power to produce large effects. See Jean De Groot, “*Dunamis* and the Science of Mechanics: Aristotle on Animal Motion,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 46, no. 1 (2008): 43.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 67.

¹⁰⁸ De Groot illustrates this by appealing to the Archimedean formula: $Ww::d:D$. He goes on to explicate the formula this way: “The balance in equilibrium may have unequal beams – i.e., distances from the fulcrum may differ on the two sides, $d:D$ – as long as the weights vary correspondingly.” Ibid., 46. Although the formulation of the *Mechanics* articulates the principle of the lever in terms of motion, the law of equilibrium here expresses the main point that the differing phenomena of weight and distance naturally correspond with one another.

¹⁰⁹ It is notable that Hegel appeals to the lever when attempting to articulate the natural correspondence between the real and the ideal. Thus, in clarifying the meaning of *aufhebung* in the *Science of Logic*, Hegel writes, “Something is ‘sublated’ only insofar as it has entered into unity with its opposite; in this more specific determination as something reflected can it fittingly be called a *moment*. In the case of the lever, weight and distance from a point are called its mechanical moments because of the sameness of their effect despite the difference otherwise between something real, as a weight is, and something ideal, such as a mere spatial determination, a line.” G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik: Die Lehre vom Sein*, vol. 385 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1990), 101–2. Here Hegel refers to a section from the *Enzyklopädie* in which he appeals to the lever to illustrate how ideality is translated into reality and vice versa. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, 1930 ed., vol. 33, Philosophisches Bibliothek (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1991), §261, pp. 13–4. I am grateful to Brady Bowman for drawing my attention to these passages.

In considering the nature of the sort of becoming-other associated with perceiving, being appeared to, and, indeed, thinking, Aristotle appeals again to the lever principle, this time as it expresses itself in the phenomenon by which a small shift in the movement of a rudder generates a large shift in the prow of the boat. The passage bears citing at length:

But appearances [φαντασίαι] and sense perceptions and ideas are ways of becoming-other. For on the one hand, sense perceptions arise straight away, being a kind of becoming-other; on the other hand, being appeared to [φαντασία] and thinking [νόησις] have the power of the things [τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων]. For the form [εἶδος] that is thought of [the warm or cold] or pleasant or fearful happens to be in some way like each of the things themselves; and because of this those who are just thinking [these things] shudder and are frightened. All these things are affections [πάθη] and ways of becoming-other. And when body parts become-other, some become larger, some smaller. It is not unclear, then, that a small change generated in the origin produces great and numerous differences at a distance – just as, if the rudder is briefly shifted, a great shift of the prow is generated.¹¹⁰

Aristotle deploys the example of the rudder to illustrate the point that small movements at a point close to the fulcrum of a circle generate large effects farther away. The close connection between this example and the dynamics of encounter endemic to the becoming-other associated with perceiving, being appeared to, and thinking suggests also that the lever principle offers Aristotle a way to think the movement of perceiving together with that associated ultimately with thinking. Thus, in the preceding passage, we find an initial articulation of the complex ecology of encounter that will need to be pursued in greater detail in the *De Anima* as Aristotle attempts to offer an account of how that which is encountered in perceiving is capable of being taken up into thinking by the movement that is φαντασία. To anticipate: things announce themselves in perceiving, which is already a certain becoming-other. These initial encounters of perceiving are taken up through the very form of things, through their εἶδος, by φαντασία and thinking, which are said to have the power of the things themselves. The εἶδος thus is *in some way like* each of the things themselves. Although

¹¹⁰ *De Motu* 701b16–23.

the manner of this likening of things to thinking is not fully fleshed out, so to speak, it is not presented as a kind of visual mirroring, but as something more palpable – indeed, as something pathetic: it is a kind of being-affected. This way of being-affected, however, arises from the very manner in which a living being finds itself having always already responded to the insistent expression of things.¹¹¹

Thus, perceiving, like motion, seems to begin with a kind of resistance, a certain objectivity. With regard to motion, Aristotle says, “[J]ust as there must be something unmoved within the animal if it is going to move, so even more must there be something unmoved outside of the animal, supporting [ἀπεριδόμενον] itself against which that which is moved moves.”¹¹² Aristotle associates the resistance against which movement is first made possible with a certain otherness: “It is necessary that this [which offers resistance – ἀντερείδεν] be other than that which is moved, and wholly different from the whole of it [καὶ ὅλον ὅλου], and thus what is unmoved must be no part of what is moved.”¹¹³ The joints in the animal seem to function in a way analogous to the way animals move in and through the world in that both sorts of movement require a certain resistance.¹¹⁴ According to the examples Aristotle uses, when resistance is lacking it is like tortoises walking in mud or humans in sand. If the joint suggests a way to think this resistance as belonging to the moving organism itself, the account of animal locomotion emphasizes the otherness of that which, remaining at rest, conditions motion.

Here the jointed limb and the dynamics of animal locomotion, when taken together, symbolize the ecology of encounter between the powers of the soul and the expression of things. Perceiving, as a kind of being moved, indeed, a way of becoming-other, begins with

¹¹¹ In his discussion of the *Rhetoric*, Heidegger gives voice to the meaning of πάθη to which we are here pointing: “These πάθη, ‘affections’, are not states of an ensouled being, but they concern the attunement of the living being in its world in such a way that it is positioned toward something, allowing the thing [*Sache*] to concern it.” Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, 122.

¹¹² *De Motu* 698b12–15.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 698b18–20.

¹¹⁴ See *ibid.*, 698b15–18. This suggests why Aristotle insists that the joint is somehow both one and two, for it must be two if it is to accomplish motion via resistance, but insofar as it is part of a living organism, it is one. See too *ibid.*, 702a22–7.

a certain resistance as something announces its presence and takes a stand in such a way that it first becomes an object of concern. Here, the recalcitrant unicity of things is the analogue in perceiving to the resistant otherness of the ground in terrestrial locomotion. Thus, the very possibility of addressing something in such a way that it is permitted to show itself as itself always already depends somehow upon this initial moment of resistance endemic to worldly encounter. Yet the relation between the power of perceiving and that which is perceived is also understood in terms analogous to the way the joint moves the limb, which, as Aristotle says, is “both one and two, straight and bent, changing in potency and in being-at-work on account of the joint.”¹¹⁵ The soul is wholly other than the thing perceived, and yet in the being-at-work of encounter, they are somehow one.

In *De Anima* III.2, Aristotle gives voice to the way the power of perceiving is one with that which is perceived: “[W]henever that which is capable of hearing is at work and that which is capable of sounding is sounding, then the hearing in its being-at-work and the sounding in its being-at-work come into being simultaneously.”¹¹⁶ Although what it is to hear and what it is to sound are not the same, in their being-at-work with one another, they are “the same and one.”¹¹⁷ This oneness is thought in terms of λόγος as a kind of συμφωνία existing between hearing and what is heard.¹¹⁸ Thus, turning again to the phenomenon of the voice, Aristotle writes:

But if voice is a sort of symphony [συμφωνία] and there is a way in which voice and hearing exist as one, and if a symphony is a λόγος, then it is necessary that hearing too be a kind of λόγος. And this is why each excess destroys; the

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 698a19–21.

¹¹⁶ *De An.*, III.2, 425b29–426a1.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 425b26–7.

¹¹⁸ This reading of συμφωνία in this context as articulating the relationship between sound and hearing itself resonates with the position of “Philoponus.” He reconstructs part of Aristotle’s argument when he writes, “... actual hearing is the same as sound, and sound is a consonance, not of itself to itself but to hearing (for that is what the argument wants, but he calls the community ‘consonance’ [συμφωνία]).” See John Philoponus and William Charlton, *On Aristotle’s “On the Soul 3.1–8”* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 472, 29–31. For a different take on the meaning of συμφωνία and a review of the positions of other scholars, both ancient and modern, see Aristotle and Hicks, *De Anima*, 441–2.

high as well as the low destroys hearing; and similarly, [an excess] in flavors [destroys] taste, and with respect to colors, the exceedingly bright or dark destroy sight, and with respect to smells, a strong smell, both the sweet and the bitter [destroy that sense], for the power of perceiving [αἰσθησις] is a kind of λόγος.¹¹⁹

Λόγος appears here not as an idiosyncratic power of human-being, but as that ratio that lives in and makes possible perceiving itself.¹²⁰ Λόγος is said in many ways, and here it must not be taken to indicate that perceiving involves a judgment in the sense of a pronounced verbal expression resulting from inference or other considerations of reflection.¹²¹ Rather, Aristotle is careful to say that hearing is λόγον τινά, a certain λόγος. Thus, λόγος appears to name the relation that conditions the cooperation of the power of perceiving and that which is perceived.

Perceiving, then, is like the joint, two and one. It is two insofar as that which perceives is other than that which it perceives; it is one insofar as in the act of perceiving the perceiver and the perceived belong together. Woodbridge gives eloquent voice to this natural

¹¹⁹ *De An.* III.2, 426a27–b3.

¹²⁰ Just after these passages, Aristotle goes on to identify perception and λόγος. At *De Anima* 426b7, he says, ἡ δ' αἰσθησις ὁ λόγος. Barker has taken issue with the claim that all perception involves a certain λόγος, suggesting that this passage involves the more limited claim that only certain kinds of perception involve λόγος. See Andrew Barker, "Aristotle on Perception and Ratios," *Phronesis* 26 (1981): 255–6. Modrak defends the more traditional reading of this text that makes λόγος integral to all perception and links this passage to that found at *De Anima* II.12, 424a28–b1. See Deborah K. W. Modrak, *Aristotle: The Power of Perception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 60–1.

¹²¹ Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, 29/21. Heidegger recognizes that there is a sort of discriminating at work in αἰσθησις that precedes judgment taken in the traditional sense. In an unpublished paper presented at a conference on ancient philosophy held at Princeton University in 1973, John Cooper distinguishes between judgment as it is associated with "explicit verbal performance" and the sort of κρίνειν that operates in αἰσθησις, which belongs as much to nonhuman as to human animals and which names a certain discriminating capacity at work in all acts of perception. For Cooper, this sort of discrimination characterizes the active side of αἰσθησις in Aristotle. See John M. Cooper, "Aristotle on the Ontology of the Senses" (paper presented at the Princeton University Conference on Ancient Philosophy, Princeton, NJ, 1973), 9. (I am grateful to Professor Cooper for his willingness to provide a copy of this unpublished essay to me.)

symphony between the soul and what it encounters when he writes that for Aristotle “there is a correlation between the powers of the soul and the natural conditions of their exercise.”¹²²

The sound of Aristotle’s voice has led us to the things themselves in such a way that what had been designated at the beginning of the *De Interpretatione* as “another matter [ἄλλης γὰρ πραγματείας]”¹²³ – namely, the relation between the affections of the soul and the things of which they always already [ἤδη] are likenesses – has announced itself as the very matter that must be pursued if a more comprehensive account of the happening of truth is to be heard. Yet if the sound of Aristotle’s voice points to a way of articulating things that depends on a certain resistance to the gathering powers of the λόγος, the path from the things to thinking must be heard as a kind of symphony in which things lend themselves to thinking even as they are not dissolved into it. Once perceiving itself is perceived as a kind of discernment (κρίνειν) that has its roots in the logic of things, φαντασία, which also involves a certain critical capacity, will appear to be precisely what brings the λόγος of things into relation to the life of the mind (νοῦς) in such a way that something like truth first becomes possible. Here, then, truth is not a matter of imposing ideas upon things, but truth is cultivated by a way of concerned address attuned to the logic of things that allows the things themselves to attest to their own significance.

The path of concerned address joins the path of attuned response wherever the articulation of truth is animated by the possibility of ecological justice.

¹²² Woodbridge, *Aristotle’s Vision of Nature*, 45. Woodbridge makes this point with regard to *De Anima* 429a17, in which Aristotle thinks the relation between νοῦς and its νοητά as analogous to that holding between τὸ αἰσθητικόν and its αἰσθητά.

¹²³ *De Int.* 16a9.

By Way of Response

The Logic of Cooperative Encounter

[T]hinking and walking are different ways of getting about in a common world which has a make-up agreeable to each of these ways.

Frederick James Eugene Woodbridge,
*The Realm of Mind*¹

The way of address has led to a λόγος capable of going down to the things themselves and articulating them according to the way they show themselves. This way to the things themselves is itself rooted already in a kind of perceptive response that grows out of the most rudimentary encounters between living things and the things with which they live. Such encounters involve a logic of cooperation between the powers of the soul and the nature of things. Things express themselves according to a λόγος capable of awakening those natural capacities of living beings by which they first become alive to things. The site of this awakening activity Aristotle calls τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι, perceiving. If we attend carefully to what this middle-voiced infinitive says, it will not be possible to think the activity of perceiving in purely passive terms as the mere reception of sensations. Rather, as Heidegger puts it, “With αἰσθησις [Aristotle] thinks the ‘apprehending’ [*Vernehmen*] of beings in the natural way, a hearing that is outstanding in that the senses involved thereby are those

¹ Woodbridge, *The Realm of Mind*, vi.

with which it mediates access.”² Apprehending in this natural sense involves a kind of cooperative mediation between the perceiving and perceived. If, as Aristotle claims, “without the ability to perceive it is not possible to be an animal,”³ the dynamics of perceiving will need to be investigated as the very manner in which the world discloses itself to those beings capable of life. Perceiving is dialogical: it involves an ability to respond to the λόγος of things that belongs at once to the ways things express themselves and to the ways such expressions are taken up by those sorts of beings capable of a living response. Heidegger articulates something of the dynamic at work here when he speaks of response as a kind of listening: “Every spoken word is already a response – a reply, a saying that goes to encounter and listens.”⁴ If, however, the perceptive ability to respond to the disclosure of things is at the root, ultimately, of the human ability to articulate things according to the manner in which they show themselves, the way of human response will need to traverse the path up from the things through both perceptive and deliberative φαντασία to thinking. Only as the path of attuned response is permitted to merge with that of concerned address does the possibility of truth show itself as the necessity of justice.

THE ECOLOGY OF PERCEIVING

The world discloses itself, is disclosed, in and through λόγος. Thus, Aristotle thinks the being-at-work of the power of perceiving [αἰσθησις] and of that which is perceived [τὸ αἰσθητόν] as a cooperation “according to λόγος.”⁵ This can be heard clearly in that famous

² Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, 29. Later Heidegger writes: “Αἰσθησις is not to be translated as ‘sensation’; αἰσθησις means simply the ‘hearing’ of the world, the way of having it there” (52). It names the natural way the world is disclosed to a living being.

³ *De An.* III.12, 434a30a.

⁴ Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 249.

⁵ See *De An.* II.12, 424a24. This passage echoes and further develops the account of hearing as a kind of symphony presented in III.2. Although to claim the connection between II.12 and III.2 is somewhat controversial, it finds support in Deborah Modrak’s suggestion that the passage from II.12, 424a25–32, intimately resembles that found in III.2 at 426a27–b3. See Modrak, *The Power of Perception*, 61. See too Chapter 4.

passage from *De Anima* II.12 that begins with a statement about all perceiving in general: “[I]t is necessary to grasp that the power of perceiving [αἰσθησις] is capable of being receptive of the forms of perceptible things [τῶν αἰσθητῶν] without the matter.”⁶ This is possible because although the forms of perceptible things belong to perceptible bodies, they remain separable in λόγος.⁷ However, this separability is itself rooted in the cooperative being-at-work-together of the power of perceiving and that which is perceived. Aristotle continues, “[T]he power of perceiving [αἰσθησις] of each thing is acted upon by that which has color or flavor or sound, but not as each of those things is said, but as the sort of thing it is and according to the λόγος [ἀλλ’ ἢ τοιονδί, καὶ κατὰ τὸν λόγον].”⁸ Aristotle here emphasizes that each particular power of perceiving receives the quality proper to it – for the power of seeing it is color, the power of hearing, sound – and, thus, that each power of perceiving receives the concrete thing not insofar as it is said to be what it is, but only *as* having a certain color or sound – namely, as being the sort of thing capable of being received by the power of perceiving proper to it. However, in delineating the

⁶ *De An.* II.12, 424a17–19. The passage continues with the famous and vexing example of the wax that is receptive of the design of the ring without the iron or gold. The literalist interpretation of this passage developed in different ways by Slakey and Sorabji is criticized by Modrak because “it is hard to see why the bare fact that the flesh has changed temperature should be a sensing of heat whereas the bare fact of a change in temperature in a plant or rock is not.” See Modrak, *The Power of Perception*, 199–200. See too Richard Sorabji, “Body and Soul in Aristotle,” in *Articles on Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield, and Richard Sorabji (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1979), 42–64. Thomas Slakey, “Aristotle on Perception,” *Philosophical Review* 70 (1961): 470–84. The problem is that the meaning of αἰσθησις is not thought by literalists in terms of τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι, i.e., as an activity in the middle voice involving both the action and passion of both the perceiver and the perceived. The slightly odd translation of τὸ δεκτικόν as “capable of being receptive” is designed to draw out the active ability endemic to receptivity in Aristotle. In so translating this term here, I problematize my own earlier interpretation of the hegemonic dimensions of Aristotle’s thinking in the essay “Totalizing Identities” and reaffirm a suggestion made in a footnote to that text about the active receptivity endemic to Aristotle’s God. See Christopher P. Long, “Totalizing Identities: The Ambiguous Legacy of Aristotle and Hegel after Auschwitz,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 29, no. 2 (2003): 215–21, 232n25.

⁷ Aristotle clarifies this in *Meta.* VIII.1, 1042a28–9. For a discussion of the importance of this passage, see Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 89–92.

⁸ *De An.* II.12, 424a21–4.

dynamics of perceiving as a kind of perceiving-as, Aristotle already points to the hermeneutics of perceiving endemic to the manner in which living beings inhabit the world. To be sure, this sort of perceptive discernment has not yet grown into the “apophantical as” capable of articulating things according to the way they show themselves, but it is already an inchoate trace of what Heidegger has called the “existential-hermeneutical as” that conditions human being-in-the-world.⁹ The hermeneutics of perceptive discernment, however, is not idiosyncratic to the human animal; rather, it conditions the way all living things inhabit the world.

To speak in terms of a “hermeneutics of perceptive discernment” is already to recognize that perceiving the forms of things is not a matter of pure receptivity – it is, rather, a way of *cooperating* with the λόγος of things. Thus, Aristotle insists that perceiving is an ability – it “*is able to receive* [τὸ δεκτικόν]” – and it occurs “according to the λόγος.”¹⁰ Here, however, λόγος is powerfully multivalent.¹¹ On one side, it seems to designate the ratio that is the very quality perceived. In the *De Sensu Sensibilibus*, for example, Aristotle suggests that a specific color can be understood as a λόγος or ratio of so much white and so much

⁹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 158–9/48–9.

¹⁰ Polansky claims that the phrase “according to *logos*” is “usefully ambiguous.” He goes on to say of the καὶ that separates the ἢ τοιονδί from the κατὰ τὸν λόγον that “[i]f the καὶ is explanatory (exegetical), then Aristotle refers directly to the sensible forms as *logoi*. His point is that the sense is receptive to sensible form only as unenmattered forms. The sensible forms are forms and forms even as ratios of sensible differences since many sensible intermediates are ratios of the extremes, i.e., white–black, sharp–flat, sweet–bitter, etc. But if the καὶ means ‘and,’ then Aristotle is saying that the sense is receptive to the sensible form in virtue of its own sort of being as a *logos*.” Ronald Polansky, “Receptive of Sensible Forms without the Matter in Aristotle’s *De Anima* II 12,” *Skepsis* (2003): 148–9. See too Ronald Polansky, *Aristotle’s “De Anima”* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 344. Yet the “ambiguity” of λόγος here is simply a function of Aristotle’s implicit recognition that the λόγος involved belongs as much to the things perceived as to the power of perceiving. Polansky seems to endorse something like this view in Polansky, *Aristotle’s “De Anima,”* 350–1.

¹¹ Ross points out that the source of the hermeneutic difficulty of the opening passages of *De Anima* II.12 is the meaning of λόγος: “In this difficult passage the main difficulty is that of discovering the exact meaning of λόγος in ll. 24, 27, and 31.” See Aristotle and W. D. Ross, *De Anima* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 264–5. What makes the passage difficult is also what makes it so powerfully pregnant as an articulation of the dynamics of ontological encounter: the plurivocity of the λόγος.

black.¹² There Aristotle appeals to a mathematical ratio even as he translates the visible into terms more audible when he writes, “[T]hese [colors] exist in the same way as symphonies; for the colors in well-reckoned numbers seem, just as symphonies, to be the most pleasant.”¹³ This already suggests, however, the other side of the λόγος that cooperates in perceiving; for if the ratio accounts for the existence of individual perceptible things, it also accounts for the manner in which they are received and indeed for the very possibility of their being received by the power of perceiving. This resonates with the discussion in *De Anima* III.2 at 426a27–b3 in which perceiving is said to be destroyed by excess; for not only will certain well-reckoned perceptibles be consonant with the powers of perceiving, there will be less well reckoned perceptibles, some of which will be proportional enough to be perceived, though unpleasantly, and others of which will destroy the receptive capacity of the power to perceive.

This deepens the relationship between III.2 and the passage from II.12 under consideration. The latter continues first by delineating the difference between the sense organ, which is extended, and the power of perceiving, which is “a certain [τις] λόγος and power [δύναμις] of that [which is extended].”¹⁴ This echoes the formulation in III.2 in which hearing is described as λόγον τινά, a certain λόγος. There, as here, what follows is an account of dysfunction in perceiving, although here the issue is not the destruction of the power of perceiving per se but that of the organ capable of perceiving [αἰσθητήριον]:

These things also make clear why excesses of perceptibles sometimes destroy the perceiving organ (for when the motion is stronger than the perceiving organ, then the λόγος, which is the power of perceiving [αἰσθησις], dissolves, just as the symphony and the pitch are destroyed when the strings of an instrument are struck too violently).¹⁵

¹² Aristotle and W. D. Ross, *Parva Naturalia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955, reprint, 1970), *De Sensu Sensibilibus*. 439b19–27.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 439b29–33.

¹⁴ *De An.* II.12, 424a27–8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 424a28–32. Here the term συμφωνία is used to refer to a certain ratio endemic to the thing perceived rather than the cooperation between the power of perceiving and that which is perceived. However, the two belong together as the λόγος cooperates in both, making perceiving itself possible. Thus, it is no wonder that the precise meaning of συμφωνία has been a matter of dispute for generations of

Perceiving is a certain way of being moved, one that can indeed be overwhelmed. Here again the analogy with a certain tuning or symphony [συμφωνία] articulates the dynamics of the relationship between particular perceptibles and the capacity to respond to them. Here too λόγος is identified with the power of perceiving, and the dysfunction of perceiving is ascribed to a failure of the λόγος. These passages, taken together, suggest the manner in which living things find themselves always already tuned into that which they encounter; for the λόγος belongs as much to that which is perceived as to that which is capable of perceiving. The suggestion that things express themselves and lend themselves to articulation is rooted in Aristotle's account of perceiving, which gives voice to the role a certain λόγος plays as a condition for the possibility of living encounters with things.

Perceiving as In-habiting

The λόγος that cooperates in encounters of perceiving is at the root of but not identical with the capacity for λόγος endemic to the human animal; it thus cannot be understood in terms of the traditional conception of judgment. Nevertheless, there remains a certain critical capacity at work in even the most rudimentary activities of perceiving. In *De Anima* II.5, where Aristotle attempts to give a general account of perceiving, he seeks to delineate the specific sense in which αἰσθῆσις can be understood to be a being-moved [κινεῖσθαι] and a being-acted-upon [πάσχειν]. Although his first suggestion, that “it seems to be a certain becoming-other [ἀλλοίωσις τις],”¹⁶ is oriented by the things said by those who understand αἰσθῆσις in primarily passive terms, in the course of the discussion Aristotle develops a subtle and powerful account of the sort of activity endemic to perceiving. The argument is guided by a legomenology of τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι. Aristotle hears two sorts

scholars; for some take it to refer to the consonance between the perceiving power and the perceptible thing (Philoponus, 472, 29; Priscianus Lydus 22, 24), others to the consonance of opposite extremes within the perceptible (Simplicius 194, 16; Trendelenburg). For a discussion of these various positions, see Aristotle and Hicks, *De Anima*, 441–2.

¹⁶ *De An.* II.5, 416b32–4.

of δύναμις in this articular infinitive that points, in the middle voice, to the activity of perceiving:

Since we say perceiving [τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι] doubly (for what has the potency of hearing and seeing we say hears and sees, even if it happens to be asleep, as well as what is already at-work seeing and hearing [τὸ ἤδη ἐνεργεῖν]), so too should the power of perceiving [ἡ αἴσθησις] be said doubly, on the one hand, as in potency, and on the other, as being-at-work; also similarly [ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ] that which is perceived [τὸ αἰσθητόν] is a being both in potency and at-work.¹⁷

The two ways that τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι, perceiving, is said leads Aristotle to ascribe a double sense of potency to the power of perceiving [ἡ αἴσθησις] and to that which is perceived [τὸ αἰσθητόν]. The first sense of potency seems to name the natural capacity to perceive prior to the activity of perceiving; the second names the capacity to perceive as at-work perceiving. Thus, the power of both perceiving and the perceived involve both senses of δύναμις: αἴσθησις may be articulated in terms of (1) its capacity to perceive when not perceiving and (2) its capacity to be-at-work perceiving, while τὸ αἰσθητόν may be articulated in terms of (1) its capacity to be perceived when not being-perceived and (2) its capacity to be-at-work being-perceived. Here the way τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι speaks in the middle voice can itself be heard in ἡ αἴσθησις and τὸ αἰσθητόν, for the former expresses the active and passive dimensions of the power of perceiving, while the latter expresses the active and passive dimensions of the perceived.¹⁸

This legomenology of τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι leads Aristotle to reconsider the very meaning of being-acted-upon [πάσχειν] and becoming-other [ἀλλοιῶσις], which themselves are said in at least two ways. In one sense, being-acted-upon and becoming-other involve a “certain destruction by the contrary,” as, for example, when something cold encounters heat, which destroys the quality of coldness.¹⁹ Such qualitative

¹⁷ Ibid., 417a10–14.

¹⁸ The passage under consideration from 417a10–14 suggests this with a beautifully cascading structure: “Since we say τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι doubly... even αἴσθησις should be said doubly... and also similarly τὸ αἰσθητόν is a being in potency and in being-at-work.” Both αἴσθησις and τὸ αἰσθητόν are thus understood to be rooted in the double sense of τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι.

¹⁹ Ibid., 417b2–3. The example is borrowed from Aristotle, who expands this way: “When a cold object is acted upon by fire, the coldness of that object is destroyed. Similarly,

changes, even if they do not change the nature of something, nevertheless involve a sort of destruction. Yet there is, for Aristotle, “another kind” of becoming-other and being-acted-upon at-work in the ability to perceive [τὸ αἰσθητικὸς].²⁰ He describes this other kind of being-acted-upon this way: it is “the preservation [σωτηρία] of the being in potency by the being that is at-work-staying-itself [ἐντελεχεία], and [the being in potency] is like [ὁμοίου] it in the way that a capacity holds toward being-at-work-staying-itself.”²¹ This sort of being-acted-upon is one in which the potency is not destroyed by its contrary, but rather is at once accomplished, cultivated, and preserved in and through its encounter with that which sets to work in cooperation with it. Thus, the perceiver, when hearing some thing at-work sounding, does not lose the capacity to hear. The perceiver does not become other in a strong sense, although there is a certain change involved: “Thus, it is not beautiful to say that that which understands [τὸ φρονοῦν], when it is understanding, becomes other, just as the house builder is not [different] when building a house.”²² These examples suggest that the beings in potency in this sense do not become other than they were prior to going to work; rather, their going to work is itself an expression of their own nature, of what they themselves are.

Therefore, Aristotle concludes, either such beings in potency must not be said to be acted upon or “it is necessary to say that there are two ways of becoming-other; the one is a change into a privative disposition [διαθέσις], and the other is a change into an active condition [ἐπὶ τὰς ἕξεις] and into the nature [of the thing].”²³ Perceiving is indeed a *certain* becoming-other – the perceiver is affected by the perceived – but this sort of being-affected is itself the exercise of a natural

when food is acted upon by the nutritive power, it is changed to flesh or bones or the like.” Hippocrates G. Apostle, *Aristotle’s “On the Soul”* (Grinnell, IA: Peripatetic Press, 1981), 113.

²⁰ *De An.* II.5, 417b7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 417b2–5. This translation uses Sachs’s rendering of ἐντελεχεία as being-at-work-staying-itself. For a discussion of this translation, see Joe Sachs, *Aristotle’s “Metaphysics”* (Santa Fe, NM: Green Lion Press, 1999), li.

²² *De An.* II.5, 417b8–9.

²³ *Ibid.*, 417b14–16. Sachs emphasizes the difference between διαθέσις and ἕξις this way: “The general word for disposition, *diathesis*, Aristotle uses only for the passive and shallow ones; for the deep and active ones he reserves the word *hexis*.” See Sachs, *Aristotle: “Nicomachean Ethics,”* xii.

ἔξις: in performing this activity, in responding to the address of the thing perceived, the capacity comes into its own. And correspondingly, when the ability to perceive stretches out to the thing perceived, the thing too responds, lending itself to the power of perceiving in such a way that something of itself is communicated. The ability to perceive belongs naturally together with the thing perceived. Aristotle puts it this way: “And the ability to perceive is in potency such as the perceived thing is already [ἤδη] in its being-at-work-staying-itself.”²⁴ With this ἤδη, “already,” Aristotle emphasizes that in being-perceived the thing perceived does not become something other than it always already was. Perceiving is a nonviolent activity. Aristotle says that encounters of perceiving occur “according to the λόγος.” Thus, as τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι, perceiving is dialogical: it names a cooperation according to λόγος between the powers of the soul and the things already at-work in such a way as to be perceived.

To lend determination to the relational ecology at work in encounters of perceiving, Aristotle appeals to a sophisticated understanding of ἔξις.²⁵ Although ἔξις is often associated with the cultivation of virtues in Aristotle’s ethics – an association that cannot be lost even in the context of this discussion of perceiving – its organic underpinnings announce themselves more clearly in the *Physics* as Aristotle considers the nature of elemental motion. In *Physics* VIII.4, for example, Aristotle makes a distinction between being moved by force and being moved by nature, insisting, “So fire and earth are moved [κινεῦνται] by something by force [βίᾳ] when they are moved contrary to nature, but they are moved by nature whenever, being in potency [δυνάμει ὄντα], they move into their own being-at-work.”²⁶ Aristotle goes on to think this sort of δύναμις in terms strikingly similar to those found in the discussion of the dynamics of perceiving in *De Anima* II.5. Thus,

²⁴ *De An.* II.5, 418a3–4.

²⁵ Aristotle’s appeal to ἔξις in the present context suggests the extent to which a way of thinking that has traditionally been associated with ethics and articulated in terms of ἔξις and πράξις is operative always as Aristotle thinks through the manner in which beings exist and encounter one another.

²⁶ *Phys.* VIII.4, 255a29–30. The translation here reads κινεῦνται in the passive voice when articulating the dynamics of forced motion and in the middle voice when articulating the dynamics of natural motion by which a capacity is activated for its own benefit, or by its own reflexive activity.

he says, “But always, whenever what can act and what can be acted upon are together, what is potential comes to be-at-work.”²⁷ Strikingly, Aristotle illustrates this immediate sort of coming into being-at-work by appealing to the example of a person who has knowledge [ὁ ἔχων ἐπιστήμην] but who is not theorizing. He goes on to suggest that when such a condition holds, if nothing prevents it, the person goes to work and theorizes. According to Aristotle, this active condition of the soul is itself activated when it encounters something knowable in a way similar to the way fire operates in nature, for when something takes on the active condition of fire and it encounters something combustible, if nothing prevents it, it burns.²⁸ The theorizing of the soul is like the burning of fire: both express active conditions that themselves cooperate in relation to their cor-responding things.

Perceiving too involves such a natural, active condition, which Aristotle calls ἔξις. A ἔξις must be understood, then, as both active and passive; it involves the active capacity for a being to hold itself in a certain way according to the sort of being it is and the passive capacity to be moved by things that resonate with its own natural capacities. In the context of the dynamic ecology of perceiving, however, the natural capacity to perceive involves a certain effort that renders it somehow different from, yet still similar to fire’s natural capacity to burn. The similarity lies in the fact that such capacities have an active dimension: the fire *itself* is said to be-at-work burning; the perceiving being *itself* is said to be-at-work perceiving.²⁹ A difference, it seems, lies in the conditions under which such capacities operate, for fire seems always and without effort to be in such a natural capacity that it burns, if nothing prevents it. Yet with perceiving – as, indeed, with all

²⁷ Ibid., 255a35–b2.

²⁸ Ibid., 255b2–7.

²⁹ Cooper refers to this as the “self-initiated” activation of the ἔξις. In order to combat the notion that perceiving is understood in passive terms in *De Anima* II.5, Cooper insists that this dimension of self-initiation is at work in both the “non-rational” ἔξις of fire and the “rational” ἔξις of perceiving. Cooper, “Aristotle on the Ontology of the Senses,” 19–21. Because we have been tracing a path of thinking in Aristotle that makes it clear that perceiving cannot be understood in purely passive terms, the vocabulary of “self-initiated,” which retains something of the subject–object *dichotomy*, cannot be wholly embraced. The point, indeed, is that perceiving is both self-initiated and other-initiated, the perceiver must be in a certain condition, and the perceived must express itself in ways capable of being perceived.

ἔξις of the soul – there seems always to be a certain effort involved. In the *Physics*, Aristotle says that a ἔξις is taken on “by the soul settling down [καθίστασθαι] out of its natural disorder [ταραχή].”³⁰ The middle voice heard in καθίστασθαι suggests that this sort of settling down involves both an active and a passive dimension.³¹ Reinforcing this, Aristotle continues:

Thus, children too are able neither to learn nor to discern according to perceptions [κατὰ τὰς αἰσθήσεις... κρίνειν] like their elders, for their disorder and motion are great. But the soul is settled down and brought to rest for some by nature itself, for others by other people, but in both ways by the becoming-other of something in the body.³²

This passage links the discussion of motion in the *Physics* to both the discussion of ἔξις in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the account of perceiving in the *De Anima*. The sort of settling down into an active condition of the soul that opens the possibility of learning and, at a more fundamental level, perceiving itself can be an accomplishment of nature or of others acting together with the child in accord with nature. In both cases, however, Aristotle insists that the motion is natural and embodied. Such a position is incoherent to a thinking that posits a strict dichotomy between soul and body and understands the operations of nature to be fundamentally different from, if not diametrically opposed to, the activities of human-being.

The sort of disorder Aristotle seems to have in mind with respect to young people echoes the things he says in the *Nicomachean Ethics* about the inability of young people, or indeed those with an immature character, to hear discourses on ethics and politics. They “follow their impulses” and “live according to feeling.”³³ The word ταραχή, translated earlier as “disorder,” also carries the sense of distraction, and we might hear in the meaning of settling down into learning, and indeed perceiving, a certain effort of concentration a way of being

³⁰ *Phys.* VII.3, 247b17–18.

³¹ In the middle voice, καθίστασθαι means “to appoint for oneself, choose, to make or render so, bring into a certain state.” Liddell and Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, s.v. καθίστημι, v.

³² *Phys.* VII.3, 247b18–248a4.

³³ *NE* I.3, 1095a2–11; cf. *NE* VIII.3, 1156a31–4.

open and awake to things.³⁴ That this process of settling into an active condition according to which the soul is awake to things should be characterized in terms of a certain “becoming-other of some things in the body” is powerful testimony to the embodiment of perceiving in Aristotle. This sort of being awake to things, however, is not, like the combustibility of fire, automatic. To borrow from the things Aristotle says in the *Nicomachean Ethics* as he discusses the manner in which virtues come to settle into the soul: “[T]he virtues come into being neither by nature nor contrary to nature, but in those of us who are of such a nature as to receive them, being brought to completion in them through habit [διὰ τοῦ ἔθους].”³⁵ This reinforces the difference between the ἔξις of fire and that of perceiving and learning, for fire acts simply by nature unless something hinders it, whereas perceiving and learning are natural capacities that must be cultivated. The cultivation of ἔξις involves effort, albeit one that works in cooperation with nature. Perceiving is the basic way living things in-habit the world.

Perceptive Discernment

To in-habit the world perceptively is to be capable of a certain kind of discernment (κρίνεν). Aristotle speaks of perceiving as a sort of discerning that belongs as much to nonhuman as to human animals. In the *Parts of Animals*, for example, certain soft-bodied animals (like cephalopods and soft-shelled crustaceans) are said to have something fleshy instead of a tongue “by which they discern [κρίνουσι] the pleasant in that which they eat.”³⁶ The discernment associated with perceiving names the capacity to distinguish in such a way that something comes to presence in a determinate way. Thus, in discussing the nature of sight in the *De Anima*, Aristotle insists that sight is of the visible and the invisible, “for darkness is invisible, but sight also

³⁴ In the passage from the *Physics*, Aristotle suggests that we cannot characterize those who are drunk, asleep, or sick as unknowing, even if, so long as they remain in such conditions, they will not be capable of using the knowledge they have. He goes on to speak of the settling of the soul explicitly in terms of a becoming sober or being awakened [νήφων γένηται καὶ ἐγερθῆ]. See *Phys.* VII.3, 247b13–248a6.

³⁵ *NE* II.1, 1103a23–6.

³⁶ *PA* IV.5, 678b8–9.

discerns [κρίνει] this.”³⁷ Perceptive discernment is the way things first announce themselves to living in-habitants of the world. Perceptive discernment is the condition under which things make themselves felt. Aristotle writes:

Thus, each power of perceiving [αἰσθησις] is of that perceptible thing lying there [τοῦ ὑποκειμένου αἰσθητοῦ], existing in the perceiving organ as a perceiving organ, and it discerns the differences of the perceptible thing lying there; for example, sight discerns white and black, but taste sweet and bitter, and this holds similarly with the others.³⁸

Here a subtle distinction can be heard between that perceptible thing lying there and the discernment endemic to the power of perceiving. The distinction is signaled by the Greek ὑποκείμενον, which as Heidegger emphasizes, names “that which is lying there [*Daliegendes*] from the outset.” He continues, “That which presents itself [*das Vorliegende*] need not, however, first be made. The perceptible thing is a ὑποκείμενον, and the power of perceiving constitutes the specific access to that which presents itself.”³⁹ Heidegger’s formulations draw out the extent to which the initial encounter between that which presents itself as perceptible and the power of perceiving involves already a kind of hermeneutical discernment. The sort of effort endemic to perceiving might be characterized as a kind of wakeful discernment, a way of noticing distinctions in things that present themselves.⁴⁰ This sort of noticing, however, is not an imposition of the mind’s categories

³⁷ *De An.* II.10, 422a20–1. See too III.2, 425b20–2, where Aristotle again uses κρίνειν in reference to the ability to “discern the darkness from the light by means of sight” and suggests that this is analogous to but also different from the manner in which sight discerns colors.

³⁸ *De An.* III.2, 426b8–12. The translation of ὑποκείμενον as “what lays there” is inspired by Heidegger’s insistence that the term refers to “that which is already there before all activities in *Dasein*.” See Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, 27/19.

³⁹ Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, 27/19.

⁴⁰ Cooper puts it this way: “[S]eeing involves at any rate noticing things and their properties and is therefore a discriminating awareness.” He goes on to insist: “But noticing the distinctive features of something is not the same thing as judging anything about it (not even that it has those features). The noticing may be direct and immediate, altogether without the reflection, however minimal, which would have to be involved if one were rendering a judgement.” Cooper, “Aristotle on the Ontology of the Senses,” 11.

upon the thing. It is not a judgment. Rather, wakeful discernment is the natural process by which the soul opens itself and responds to the things encountered in perceiving. Thus, although this sort of perceptive discernment does not rise to the level of an articulate, verbal judgment, it is not allogical, for it names the critical capacity to respond to the λόγος of things.

Aristotle's account of perceiving, thus, articulates an onto-logy of cooperative response-ability. Perceiving involves the soul's ability to hold itself in such a way that it is able to respond in cooperation with the λόγος at work in the things that present themselves. This sort of logical cooperation is heard in Aristotle's appeal to the συμφωνία between hearing and what is heard. It is heard in the repeated appeals to λόγος in *De Anima* II.12, where Aristotle focuses his attention on the ecology of perceptual encounter. And it is heard too in the discussion of the peculiar sort of "being-acted-upon" and "becoming-other" that renders the ability to perceive a kind of ἕξις. If, however, the most rudimentary cooperations of perceiving are rooted in a kind of active condition of attunement to the λόγος of things, the higher levels of psychic engagement with things find λόγος playing a slightly more sophisticated, but no less significant role. As has been heard, the relationship between a specific power of perceiving and the particular quality of the thing it is able to perceive is itself rooted in a λόγος that at once accounts for the very being of the individual quality and the possibility of its being-perceived. It should come, then, as no surprise to discover that λόγος cooperates also at the level of what Aristotle calls the common power of perceiving.⁴¹ Returning to the discussion of hearing in *De Anima* III.2 will allow us to apprehend the way λόγος again conditions the possibility of more complex kinds of perceiving. The way of response leads through such rudimentary encounters of perceiving to those more sophisticated engagements with things associated with appearing itself. This path, however, will lead back to the question of truth that itself grows out of the encounter between the human capacity for thinking and the expression of things.

In *De Anima* III.2, Aristotle evokes λόγος in order to account for a specific phenomenon of perceiving, namely, that it is not only

⁴¹ *De An.* II.6, 418a9–11.

possible to discern distinctions that belong to each sense – for the eye, for example, to distinguish white from black – but also possible for the power of perceiving to discern distinctions that cut across the specific powers of perceiving – the white may be distinguished from the sweet, for example.⁴² This recalls the central distinction in *De Anima* II.6 between that which is perceived by a proper power of perceiving and that which is perceived by a common power of perceiving, where the latter was introduced to account for the manner in which things that belonged to no specific power of perceiving – like motion, rest, number, and shape – are nonetheless perceptible.⁴³ The capacity to distinguish the white from the sweet cannot depend on a single proper power of perceiving; the eye cannot do this alone. Recognizing this, Aristotle suggests that the condition for the possibility of making such a distinction *in perceiving* is a certain saying, a λέγειν. He begins with a specific phenomenological fact: “But since we also distinguish [κρίνομεν] white from sweet, and each perceptible thing from every other, then there is also something by which we perceive [αἰσθανόμεθα] that they are different. And this is necessarily by the power of perceiving, since they are perceptible things.”⁴⁴ Here, Aristotle again makes it clear that the capacity to discern, κρίνειν, belongs to the power of perceiving itself. But he goes on to associate this discernment with a certain saying, a λέγειν, as the condition for the possibility of perceiving distinctions between and across the proper powers of perceiving:

And neither is it possible for separate powers of perceiving to discern [κρίνειν] that sweet is different from white, but it is necessary that both be apparent to some one thing...it is necessary for some one thing to say [λέγειν] that they are different, for sweet is different from white and therefore the same thing says so, with the result that as it speaks it thus both thinks and perceives [ὥστε ὡς λέγει, οὕτω καὶ νοεῖ καὶ αἰσθάνεται].⁴⁵

Perceiving and thinking are born of a certain saying. Here λέγειν is said to be at the root of both perceiving and thinking. The saying

⁴² Ibid., III.2, 426b12–14.

⁴³ Ibid., II.6, 418a7–20.

⁴⁴ Ibid., III.2, 426b12–15.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 426b17–22.

operative here, however, is that associated with the common power of perceiving and, thus, with appearing; for as Aristotle says in the *On Memory and Recollection*, “the appearance [φάντασμα] is an affection of the common power of perceiving.”⁴⁶ Perceptive discernment operates according to a λόγος capable of giving voice to a certain thinking.

THE ECOLOGY OF APPEARING

The suggestion that the being-at-work of λόγος in perceiving “gives voice” to thinking can be heard to return us to the discussion of voice in its relation to φαντασία; for if perceptive φαντασία was capable of bringing sound to life as voice – as the condition for the possibility both of a sound’s becoming significative of something beyond itself and of the capacity to hear the sound as significative – perhaps the λόγος to which Aristotle appeals in the passage in the preceding section may be heard to give voice to the way things perceived are brought by a natural operation of φαντασία into communication with the life of the mind. If so, then thinking too would be rooted in nature, not only insofar as nature is itself an expression of and in thinking, but also because human thinking itself grows naturally from encounters with the being-at-work of things.

The logical operation of φαντασία as it conveys to thinking what is presented by perceiving, however natural, remains inevitably somewhat obscure, for it conditions the very disclosure of things and thus the fundamental way human-being-in-habits the world. Yet the logic according to which the φαντασία cooperates with the things encountered must be heard as a natural extension of the logical operation of perceiving even if it involves a more sophisticated dimension of discernment than is at work in rudimentary encounters of perceiving. The discernment at work in the cooperation of φαντασία is itself, however, natural. As such, it cannot be thought to impose cognitive concepts upon received perceptions. Rather, what has been taken up by the hermeneutics of perceptive discernment is itself cultivated in cooperation with the φαντασία in such a way that it can be thought.

⁴⁶ Aristotle and W. D. Ross, *Aristotle. Parva Naturalia, De memoria et reminiscentia*, 450a10–1.

In appearing, things express their intelligibility. Being appeared to is a way of responding to the λόγος of things that opens into the life of the mind.

In order to apprehend the nature of this logical operation, indeed, in order to understand the logical operation of the φαντασία *as natural*, it will be necessary first to discern the manner in which φαντασία is related to perceiving, on one hand, and judgment (ὑπόληψις), on the other. This will allow the natural critical capacity of φαντασία to appear to be distinct from and at the root of the power of judgment directly involved with truth and falsity. Thus, phantastic discernment will take its place next to perceptive discernment as an existential-hermeneutical condition for the possibility of being appeared to in a determinate way.⁴⁷ Together, perceiving and φαντασία cooperate at the root of all living encounters with things, as the condition for the possibility of being appeared to and thus as the very way in which living beings in-habit the world. If, however, all life is conditioned by a certain perceptive φαντασία through which living things encounter the world in which they live, human life is conditioned also by a logistical φαντασία that opens it to the intelligibility of things. The path of human response-ability, then, will have to pass from perceiving, through logistical φαντασία, to thinking.

Phantastic Discernment

In the middle of *De Anima* III.3, as he seeks to differentiate φαντασία from other powers of the soul, Aristotle articulates its nature by speaking first in terms of how we speak about φαντασία and then by delineating it as one of the powers or active conditions of the soul capable of discernment.

So if φαντασία is that according to which we say [λέγομεν] that a certain appearance [φάντασμα] comes into being for us rather than anything we call

⁴⁷ This sentence draws first on the Heideggerian insistence that there is, prior to the “apophantical as” that conditions all appearing as true or false, a more primordial, “existential-hermeneutical as” at the root of *Dasein*’s attuned projections toward beings in the world. See Chapter 2. See also Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 158/48. The formulation that expresses φαντασία as a “being appeared to” is drawn from Lycos, “Aristotle and Plato on ‘Appearing’,” 496–7.

[φαντασία] in a metaphorical way, then it is some one power or active condition of those according to which we discern [κρίνομεν] and either speak the truth [ἀληθεύομεν] or are false [ψευδόμεθα].⁴⁸

Aristotle pursues here a legomenology of φαντασία to delineate the nature of being appeared to, just as in *De Anima* II.5 he had pursued a legomenology of τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι in order to delineate the dynamic ecology of perceiving. There, as here, we find a path into the nature of an activity of the soul by attending to the way we speak about it. There, as here, we find a certain kind of discernment at work. Although Aristotle does not explicitly associate the dual sense of δύναμις with φαντασία that he had with τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι, he does identify φαντασία as a single δύναμις or, indeed, ἕξις according to which we discern. This suggests that it is intimately linked in its nature and operation with the capacity to perceive.

Indeed, if perceiving was said to be an activity in the middle voice, capable of cor-responding to that which presents itself as perceivable in such a way that what is perceived is accessible to the soul, φαντασία may itself be understood similarly to be a middle-voiced activity. We have already heard the extent to which this is the case in relation to the role of φαντασία in rendering voice significative.⁴⁹ Here, the φαντασία is identified as the ἕξις of the soul “according to which we say a certain appearance comes into being for us.” As an active condition of the soul, the φαντασία is at once actively attuned to and passively receptive of that which presents itself through perceiving such that the soul is said to be appeared to in a determinate way. This activity of the soul, as Aristotle insists, does not operate without perceiving, although it involves a capacity for discernment that extends beyond that endemic to perceiving. In order to apprehend the difference between being appeared to and perceiving, it will be necessary to attend to what Aristotle himself says in *De Anima* III.3 about their different ways of

⁴⁸ *De An.* III.3, 428a1–4. “Philoponus” suggests that the meaning of κατὰ μεταφοράν is to be taken to isolate the sort of φαντασία that “carries off from the things that are and constructs a representation of that which is not, for instance a centaur.” Philoponus and Charlton, *On Aristotle’s “On the Soul” 3.1–8*, 497, 24–6. This is not to deny, however, that the φαντασία is metaphorical in a different way, namely, it is capable of carrying what is given and received in perceiving over to thinking.

⁴⁹ See Chapter 4.

relating to truth and falsity, for this will allow the subtle difference between perceptive and phantastic discernment to announce itself even as it also points to the nature of truth in relation to thinking.

In *De Anima* III.3, the question of truth emerges for Aristotle in relation to those beings with the capacity for thinking. Thus, in delineating the difference between thinking and perceiving, Aristotle insists that “in thinking [voeĩn] there is the correct and the not correct,” whereas “the power of perceiving, when directed at its proper objects, is always true, and is present in all animals, but it is possible to think things through [διανοεῖσθαι] also falsely, and this is present in no animal in which there is not also speech [λόγος].”⁵⁰ Aristotle goes on immediately to appeal to the φαντασία in an attempt to articulate further the way thinking things through involves but is not identifiable with φαντασία. Here, it is as if Aristotle appeals to φαντασία in an attempt to clarify the very meaning of what it would be for an animal to have λόγος: “For φαντασία is different from both perceiving and thinking things through, and it does not come about without perceiving, and without it there is no responsive supposition that something is the case [ὑπόληψις].”⁵¹ The translation of ὑπόληψις as “responsive supposition that something is the case” is an attempt to draw out the extent to which this sort of supposition involves a response to that which appears by taking it up in a determinate way. The word itself is related to ὑπολαμβάνειν, one meaning of which is “to take up a word and answer, to reply.”⁵² By situating φαντασία between the critical capacity of perceiving, on the one side, and the sort of responsive

⁵⁰ *De An.* III.3, 427b8–14. Although a distinction needs to be made between νοῦς and διάνοια, the former naming the activity of thinking as such, the latter, the thinking through of things, here διάνοια is simply taken as an instance of νοεῖν. For the distinction, see *De An.* I.4, 408b24–9; Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, 3d ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978), 412n10; Charles Kahn, “Aristotle on Thinking,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s “De Anima,”* ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 362.

⁵¹ *De An.* III.3, 427b14–16. To link this sentence so closely to the previous sentence and to read the introduction of φαντασία here as intimately connected to the discussion of those animals with λόγος is to take a position in direct opposition to Hicks, who argues, “The present passage 427b14 sqq. opens a distinct paragraph and should not be forced into too close a relation with the preceding sentences.” Aristotle and Hicks, *De Anima*, 456.

⁵² Liddell and Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, s.v. ὑπολαμβάνειν, v.

supposition that is true or false because it seeks to say something of something, on the other, Aristotle suggests that the discernment endemic to φαντασία conditions the possibility of the sort of judgment associated with the truth and falsity *but is not yet itself* a judgment in this apophantical sense.⁵³ Even so, however, phantastic discernment is not simply perceptive discernment, for it involves a certain capacity that moves beyond the symphonic attunement to the λόγος of things perceived.

In speaking of φαντασία as a critical capacity, as he does here in *De Anima* III.3 and again in *De Motu Animalium* 6, 700b19–20, and by distinguishing it from the sort of responsive supposition endemic to declarative truth and falsity, Aristotle has cleared the space to think what might be called the naturalistic-hermeneutical structure of human being-in-the-world. Although this formulation owes much to the Heideggerian determination of the “existential-hermeneutical as” that operates as the condition for the possibility of all declarative saying capable of being true or false, by determining the critical capacity of φαντασία as naturalistic, we are able to draw out its close connection to the sort of natural κρίνειν endemic to perceiving.⁵⁴ In considering the nature of perceiving, we heard that it is conditioned by the sort of discernment that allows the specific powers of perceiving to perceive their proper perceivables. Thus, perceiving itself was understood to be an active condition of the soul rather than mere receptivity. However, this sort of discernment was not yet capable of accounting for the appearance of things, nor indeed for the appearance of their common attributes. For this, another sort of interpretive discernment is necessary; this is the critical capacity endemic to φαντασία. Although Martha Nussbaum tends to think perceiving in largely receptive terms, nevertheless, she recognizes the decisive

⁵³ See *De An.* III.8, 432a10–12, where Aristotle says that φαντασία is other than assertion and denial. Engmann draws this point out nicely when she insists that φαντασία does not necessarily include assent or πίστις, acceptance. See Joyce Engmann, “Imagination and Truth in Aristotle,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 14, no. 3 (1976): 260. See too *De An.* III.3, 428a20–4.

⁵⁴ Polansky would reject this, insisting that *phantasia* is “not discrimination as sense and thought are, but a presentational or representational faculty.” See Polansky, *Aristotle’s “De Anima,”* 410n13, 12. Yet to be appeared to is already to have discerned.

importance of the hermeneutical operation of the φαντασία when she associates it closely with perceiving and insists that for Aristotle “reception and interpretation are not separable, but thoroughly inter-dependent.” She continues:

There is no receptive ‘innocent eye’ in perception. How something *phainetai* to me is obviously bound up with my past, my prejudices, and my needs. But if it is only in virtue of *phantasia*, and not *aisthēsis* alone, that I apprehend the object as an object, then it follows that there is no uninterpreted or ‘innocent’ view of it, no distinction – at least on the level of form or object-perception – between the given, or received, and the interpreted.⁵⁵

Even if there is a sort of hermeneutical discernment at work in perceiving itself, it remains incapable of moving together with what is presented in perceiving in such a way that it can appear as a determinate thing. For this, the discernment of φαντασία is required. This sort of discernment, however, must be apprehended in naturalistic terms, for it is not the sort of interpretation that involves the imposition of cognitive categories upon what is presented in perceiving; rather, it is itself a matter of being moved by things encountered in such a way that they are permitted to appear as what they are. The discernment of φαντασία, like that of perceiving, involves an attunement to the λόγος of things.

Aristotle himself thematizes the operation of φαντασία as a kind of moving and being-moved.

Since it is possible when one thing is being-moved for another thing to be moved by it, but φαντασία seems to be a certain motion and not to come into being without the power of perceiving, but in beings that perceive and from the things of which there is perception, and since it is possible for a motion to come about by the being-at-work of the power of perceiving, and necessary for it to be similar to perceiving, then this motion would be neither possible without the power of perceiving nor present in beings that do not perceive, and that which has it would do and suffer many things according to it [this motion – i.e., φαντασία], and it could be either true or false.⁵⁶

This passage is remarkable for the way in which the active and passive are bound up with one another from first to last. It articulates

⁵⁵ Aristotle and Nussbaum, *Aristotle's "De Motu Animalium,"* 261.

⁵⁶ *De An.* III.3, 428b10–19.

beautifully the confluence of powers that converge upon the φαντασία, making it as enigmatic as it is powerful. It is said to be moved by the power of perceiving and by the things perceived – indeed, it has been said to “have the power of the things”;⁵⁷ it is said to offer to those who have it the power to do and suffer many things; and it seems somehow at the root of the very possibility of truth and falsity. This articulation of the powers of φαντασία can itself be taken as an itinerary that charts a path from perceiving through appearing to thinking. It is a path that leads from the power of things through that deliberative or logistical φαντασία by which humans do and suffer many things and through which truth shows itself to be intimately bound up with the question of justice. This itinerary thus traverses in a different direction the same social-political terrain through which the path from thinking to the things themselves had passed. If that passage followed the sound of voice in Aristotle as it sought to articulate the λόγος of things, this passage leads through an ecology of thinking in which the capacity for νοῦς is seen to be at home with and indeed rooted in a logical engagement with things that opens the space for the happening of truth even as it is oriented ultimately by an integrated sense of the whole that conditions the very possibility of justice.

THE ECOLOGY OF THINKING

Let us take up the path toward such an ecology of thinking by returning to a passage from the end of *De Anima* III.2 that lends determination to the precise way the power of perceiving moves the power of appearing and yet also hints at the manner in which the φαντασία conveys what it encounters in perceiving to the power of thinking. The context in which this passage is found concerns the question as to how the power of perceiving is capable of discerning the difference between the white and the sweet, qualities that cut across the proper powers of perceiving. We have already heard how this sort of discernment involves a way of saying, a λέγειν, associated with the common power of perceiving and thus with a certain being appeared to. The

⁵⁷ The φαντασία is said to have the power of the things at *De Motu* 701b16–23. See too Chapter 4.

very saying of the difference was said to be that by which the difference between the white and the sweet is perceived and thought. The logic of appearing cooperates with perceiving and thinking; φαντασία lives between τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι and τὸ νοεῖν.

It has already been suggested that appearing is a kind of ligature connecting the power of perceiving to that of thinking.⁵⁸ This suggestion finds further justification at the end of *De Anima* III.2. Preparing to turn his full attention to the meaning of φαντασία, Aristotle there considers the manner in which perceiving or thinking, although each is itself one, is nevertheless able to discern (κρίνειν) different forms. Aristotle thinks this possibility in terms reminiscent of the dynamics of the joint and the lever principle on which it is based:

But just as some people say about the point, which exists as both one and two, in the same way [the capacity to discern] is both undivided and divided. Thus, insofar as it is undivided, that which discerns [τὸ κρίνον] is one and [it discerns] at once; but insofar as it has it in it to be divided, it uses the same mark [σημεῖον] as double at one time. So insofar as it uses the boundary as double, and discerns two things having been separated, it exists as having been separated. But insofar as it discerns by one thing, it is one and at one time.⁵⁹

The capacity to discern discussed here is, like the joint, both two and one; it is two insofar as it has the capacity to discern different things at different times, yet it is one insofar as when it is at work discerning, it belongs to and with that which it discerns.⁶⁰ But this is precisely the sort of discernment at work in φαντασία. Its relation to perceiving is understood to be a sort of being-moved, and insofar as it has the capacity to be moved by the power of perceiving, φαντασία is other than perceiving, but insofar as it is at-work being-moved, the φαντασία itself is aptly called “perceptive” [αἰσθητική].⁶¹ Here, however, the power of the symbol of the lever becomes yet more sophisticated and significant, for

⁵⁸ See Chapter 4.

⁵⁹ *De An.* III.2, 427a9–14.

⁶⁰ This passage resonates with *De Motu* 698a14–21, cited in Chapter 4. I am grateful to Eric Sanday for drawing my attention to the connection between this passage and the passages from the *De Motu*. See Eric Sanday, “Imagination in *De Anima* Iii.3” (paper presented at the Ancient Philosophy Society, New School, New York, 2008).

⁶¹ See *De An.* III.10 and 11, 433b29 and 434a5.

as we have heard, the lever principle articulates a natural conveyance whereby changes in distance from the fulcrum effect a corresponding change in the amount of weight that can be lifted. With the fulcrum, distance is felt to be dynamically bound to that which seems utterly unlike it, namely, weight. The φαντασία acts like the fulcrum between perceiving and thinking. With it, what is received in perceiving is felt to be bound dynamically and naturally to that which seems utterly unlike it, namely, affections of the soul, thoughts.

Thinking the Power of Things

If Aristotle thinks φαντασία in its relation to perceiving in terms of the sort of motion endemic to the lever, he thinks its relation to thinking in more visible terms. Thus, at the end of *De Anima* III.3, as he turns his attention to the question of thinking, he writes: “And since sight is the primary power of perceiving, φαντασία has even taken its name from light (ἀπὸ τοῦ φάους), for without light it is impossible to see.”⁶² This suggests the degree to which Aristotle at once thinks φαντασία as the very medium through which thinking happens and understands thinking generally in terms of the dynamics of perceiving and specifically in terms of the power of sight. The etymology Aristotle suggests helps clarify the dynamic at work between φαντασία and thinking even as it is potentially limited and misleading.

It elucidates the relation between φαντασία and thinking insofar as it suggests the manner in which the φαντασία mediates between perceiving and thinking by operating somehow between the two. Light is to seeing as φαντασία is to thinking. With regard to the dynamics of seeing, Aristotle writes:

For seeing comes about when what is able to perceive is acted upon by something, and because it is impossible to be acted upon by the color itself that is seen, what is left is that it is acted upon by what is in between, thus, it is necessary that something be in between, and if the between would become empty, it is not that nothing would be seen accurately, but nothing would be seen at all.⁶³

⁶² Ibid., III.3, 429a1–4.

⁶³ Ibid., II.7, 419a17–21. Watson has suggested the importance of this etymological determination: “It is light, then, which permits the transformation of an object into

This suggests the impetus for Aristotle's repeated insistence that "the soul never [οὐδέποτε] thinks without an appearance [ἄνευ φαντάσματος]." ⁶⁴ If the color of each thing capable of being seen is itself seen through light, then the εἶδος of each thing capable of being thought must itself be thought through φαντασία. Yet the visual metaphor must itself be understood in terms of a certain μεταφέρειν, a way of carrying something of the thing over from one place to another. In vision, an attribute of the thing is carried over into perceiving by the medium of light; in thinking, the way each thing "is seen" (εἶδος) is carried over into thinking, the "place of forms," ⁶⁵ by the medium that is the φαντασία. This conveyance into thinking is, however, a natural movement belonging to the nature of things. Things lend themselves to thinking just as they lend themselves to sight or hearing, smell, taste, or touch:

[Thinking] must be unaffected [ἀπαθές] but capable of being receptive [δεκτικόν] of the form and in potency it must not be the form, but such as it is [τοιούτον], and it must hold similarly [ὁμοίως ἔχειν], with the result that as the ability to perceive [τὸ αἰσθητικόν] is to the thing perceived, so too is thinking [τὸν νοῦν] to the thing thought. ⁶⁶

If the analogy with perceiving is held, as it is throughout Aristotle's account of thinking, then it will be necessary to apprehend the activity of thinking, as we did the activity of perceiving, as an activity of cooperation that is, strictly speaking, neither purely active nor purely passive. ⁶⁷ Thus, Aristotle's insistence here that thinking is "unaffected" must be heard as symptomatic of the recognition that thinking is ultimately determined by the things toward which it is directed without, however, relinquishing its identity in such determining

a sense-object: if it were not there the sense could not act. Aristotle obviously thinks it fitting that that which permits the transformation of what is sensed into potential objects of intellection should take its name from light." See Gerard Watson, "Fantasia in Aristotle, *De Anima* 3. 3," *Classical Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (1982): 113.

⁶⁴ *De An.* III.7, 431a16–17. See too III.8, 432a13–14; Aristotle and W.D. Ross, *Parva Naturalia, De memoria et reminiscentia*, 449b31.

⁶⁵ *De An.* III.4, 429a27–8.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 429a13–18.

⁶⁷ Pritzl has suggested that it is "remarkable how much of Aristotle's account of cognition, including thinking, is taken up with describing cognitive faculties as passive." See Pritzl, "Being True in Aristotle's Thinking," 192.

relations.⁶⁸ To be “unaffected” in this sense is to be open to things, and this openness cannot be characterized simply as passive. Rather, as has been heard, it involves the *capacity* to be receptive of the forms; this capacity is thought as that potency which is able to be the sort of thing the form is, although not the form itself. This passage resonates with that found in *De Anima* II.12 in which Aristotle insists that each power of perceiving is acted upon not by each thing taken as an experienced whole, but “as the sort of thing it is and according to the λόγος.”⁶⁹ If perceiving is said to be able to receive [τὸ δεκτικόν] the form of things according to the λόγος by which they announce themselves, thinking [τὸ νοητικόν] is said to be able, as Aristotle says, to think “the forms of things in the appearances [ἐν τοῖς φαντάσμασι].”⁷⁰ The discernment endemic to φαντασία, a discernment attuned to the very λόγος of things, is already operative in the activity of thinking itself. Thinking is always a response to and with the λόγος of things. Thinking is phantastic.

The etymology of φαντασία that establishes the analogy between perceiving and thinking in visible terms, however, remains potentially misleading insofar as it eclipses the extent to which the passage from φαντασία to thinking is less a representation by mirroring than it is a communication by signification. The passage from perceiving to φαντασία has already been heard to be thought in terms of the sort of motion endemic to the joint or the fulcrum of a lever. However, at *De Anima* III.2, 427a12, where the dynamic of the joint seems to be operative, Aristotle deploys the term σημεῖον to name the boundary point that, like the joint, is double at one time. This suggests that the mechanics of the lever that expresses in physical terms the manner in which a natural cor-relation is operative between two seemingly unrelated and distinct phenomena can also be thought in terms of a kind of metaphorical signification, a way of pointing to something beyond itself such that what is communicated is itself carried over into another vernacular. The work of the φαντασία in Aristotle is precisely

⁶⁸ L. A. Kosman, “What Does the Maker Mind Make?” in *Essays on Aristotle’s “De Anima,”* ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 357.

⁶⁹ *De An.* II.12, 424a21–4.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, III.7, 431b2.

this work of metaphorical signification.⁷¹ It is able to translate what is at work in perceiving into the idiom of the intellect. The φαντασία lends voice to thinking. Although Aristotle often thematizes this work of translation in terms of a kind of likening of that which encounters to that which is encountered, this likening itself ought to be read in terms of metaphorical signification rather than as reproductive mirroring.

Already in that enigmatic opening passage of the *De Interpretatione*, Aristotle determines the relation between things and the affections of the soul as a kind of likeness (ὁμοίωμα).⁷² There the affections of the soul are said to be the same for all human-beings because they are likenesses of things that themselves are said to be “already the same” (πράγματα ἤδη ταῦτά) for all. In the context of his account of the relationship between perceiving and the thing perceived, we have already suggested that the appearance of the little word ἤδη, “already,” underscores the extent to which the activity of perceiving belongs naturally to and with the thing perceived.⁷³ In that context, Aristotle insists:

And the ability to perceive is in potency such as the perceived thing is already [ἤδη] in its being-at-work-staying-itself. So it is acted upon when it is not like [the perceived thing], but when it has been acted upon [πεπονθός]; then it has become likened [ὁμοίωται] to it, and is such as that is [οἷον ἐκεῖνο].⁷⁴

The capacity to perceive is an ability to become such as the thing perceived is already in its being-at-work. In the event of perceiving, a likening has *already* occurred. The dynamics operative here in relation to perceiving resonates with that articulated by Aristotle in *De Anima* III.4 in regard to thinking. The capacity to think involves the ability to receive the form of the thing thought, becoming such as it is (τοιούτον) and somehow holding similarly (ὁμοίως ἔχειν). As

⁷¹ Modrak emphasizes that the φαντασία operates symbolically rather than reproductively: “The symbolic employment of a φάντασμα enables the thinker to go beyond the sensible and individual characteristics of cakes or of sweets in general, and at the same time to apprehend the universal as instantiated by particular perceptibles.” Deborah K. W. Modrak, “Aristotle on Thinking,” *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 2 (1988): 216.

⁷² *De Int.* 16a7.

⁷³ See section entitled “Perceiving as In-habiting” in this chapter.

⁷⁴ *De An.* II.5, 418a3–4.

with perceiving, this likening and becoming such is not a radical becoming-other; rather, it is that “other kind” of becoming-other and being-acted-upon operative in those sorts of natural *ἐξείς* Aristotle associates as much with activities of perceiving as he does with those of thinking.⁷⁵ Thinking, like perceiving, involves a becoming-other that is also a sort of settling into a natural condition of cooperation with nature.

In *De Anima* III.8, Aristotle lends determination to the ecology of encounter between thinking and things by drawing a strict parallel with perceiving:

But since, as it seems, no thing [*πρᾶγμα*] exists apart from magnitudes that are the separate perceivable things, the intelligible things [*τὰ νοητά*] – both the things said to be abstractions and however many active conditions and affections of perceivable things – exist in the forms of perceptible things [*ἐν τοῖς εἶδεσι τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς*]. And because of this, one who perceived nothing would not be able to learn or be aware of anything either, and whenever one theorizes, one must at the same time behold [*θεωρεῖν*] some appearance [*φάντασμα*]; for appearances are just like [*ὥσπερ*] the things perceived, except without matter.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Indeed, Aristotle tends to think this “other kind” of becoming-other and being acted upon primarily in terms of thinking. In the context of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle introduces *πρᾶξις* as complete in the sense that its activity or being-at-work does not annihilate but rather accomplishes the potency it activates. The examples to which Aristotle appeals there are those of seeing and thinking (*νοεῖν*) as well as living-well and understanding (*φρόνειν*) (*Meta.* IX.6, 1048b18–25.). Polansky argues convincingly that Aristotle’s understanding of the relation between the ability to perceive and the perceived thing “already in its being-at-work” points to the dynamic understanding of *πρᾶξις* and *ἐνέργεια* as distinct from *κίνησις* introduced in *Metaphysics* IX.6–8. See Polansky, “Receptive of Sensible Forms,” 146. See too Ronald Polansky, “*Energeia* in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* IX,” in *Aristotle’s Ontology*, ed. Anthony Preus and John P. Anton (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992). In the texts from the *Metaphysics*, as here in *De Anima* II.5, Aristotle uses the perfect tense with its completed aspect to articulate the way the capacity belongs to and is preserved by the activity. Whereas in the *Metaphysics* Aristotle speaks of activities that are said to be at once ongoing and complete – thus, one “sees and has seen,” “thinks and has thought” – here in the *De Anima* Aristotle speaks of “being-acted-upon” (*πάσχει*) and “having-been-acted-upon” (*πεπονθός*). The activity of perceiving involves at once being-acted-upon and having-been-acted-upon; its capacity is not destroyed by its being-at-work. For a discussion of this use of the perfect tense, see Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 98–109.

⁷⁶ *De An.* III.8, 432a3–10.

Aristotle here roots thinking in encounters with things perceived, calling the intelligible things not merely that which can be abstracted from such things, but the active conditions and affections that show themselves in the very appearing of things. This passage articulates the itinerary by which things pass through perceiving and appearing and enter into the life of the mind. Thinking here is not the imposition of concepts upon things, but the capacity to educe the intelligible in the very appearing of things. This sort of education is theoretical. But as theory, it is thoroughly practical insofar as it is determined by the very activity of the $\pi\rho\tilde{\alpha}\gamma\mu\alpha$, by its being-at-work in the context in which it is encountered. Thus, theory here cannot be understood to be a sort of contemplation detached from the activities of things; rather, theory is an engaged attempt to see into the depth of things through the appearances themselves, to discern the intelligible that shows itself in and through the appearing of things.

The Practice of Theory

The practice of theoretical education is, therefore, phenomenological. The intelligibility of things is discernible in and through appearances. Yet, as phenomenological, the practice of theoretical education requires the capacity to cooperate with the complex dynamics of appearing itself. Here again, as in perceiving, the capacity in question does not parse squarely into the active and the passive. It too is a middle-voiced capacity, an activity of the intelligible things as much as of those capable of discerning the intelligible; it is a matter of the mind's being receptive as much as it is of the intelligible things' being apprehended. Here again, it is the cooperation of a certain $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, at work as much in the intelligent as in the intelligible, that serves as the condition for the possibility of the very appearing of the intelligible. To discern this, it will be necessary to turn to those rich and perplexing passages in Aristotle that attempt to articulate the transition from perceiving to thinking.

Let us begin, then, with the passage from the end of the *Posterior Analytics* II in which Aristotle articulates the manner in which what is presented in perceiving leads in certain animals to a $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ that serves as the condition for the possibility of experience. Although

this passage comes at the end of a text concerned primarily with the sort of showing forth (ἀπόδειξις) endemic to ἐπιστήμη, it remains one of the few places in Aristotle where an attempt is made to articulate explicitly the natural connection between perceiving and thinking. Aristotle himself thinks this connection in terms of a kind of leading, which he calls ἐπαγωγή – perceiving leads naturally to thinking.⁷⁷ Aristotle describes the beginning of this sort of leading this way:

When many such perceivings have come into being, a certain difference already becomes, with the result that for some [animals] a λόγος comes to be from the abiding of these sorts [of perceivings], but for others it does not. For from a perception, memory comes into being, as we say, but from many memories of the same thing, experience comes into being; for memories that are many in number is one experience [ἐμπειρία].⁷⁸

It is tempting, particularly from a post-Kantian perspective, to think the manner in which experience settles upon those beings with the capacity for this sort of λόγος in active terms. However, the Greek speaks in the middle/passive voice: the λόγος “comes into being” as does the memory and, indeed, the experience itself. Aristotle articulates the process in terms of a way of being-together with what is encountered in perceiving.⁷⁹ Although the very capacity for experience (ἐμπειρία) involves a certain way of having λόγος, this λόγος itself “comes to be” (γίνεσθαι) from the abiding of the perceivings, an abiding made possible, it seems, by memory. There is, then, a certain

⁷⁷ Kosman rightly suggests that Aristotle’s understanding of ἐπαγωγή is plurivocal, “for although the term ἐπαγωγή sometimes has a narrow sense in which it refers to a particular method of acquiring knowledge of principles, it often refers more generally to any one of a number of paths by which we are led to such knowledge.” See L. A. Kosman, “Understanding, Explanation, and Insight in Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*,” in *Exegesis and Argument*, ed. E. N. Lee, A. D. Mourelatos, and R. M. Rorty (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1973), 386.

⁷⁸ *Post. Anal.*, II.19, 100a1–6.

⁷⁹ Modrak divides the later passages of *Posterior Analytics* II.19 into two sections: 99b34–100a9 concerns the psychological activities involved in the apprehension of the καθόλου, while 100a10–b3 concerns the same process from the perspective of the cognitive object. Modrak, *The Power of Perception*, 164–5. If her division of the chapter is correct, it is striking to note that the psychological activities are articulated in the middle/passive voice, suggesting again that the καθόλου is not a construction of the mind, but something by which the soul is affected in and through its encounters with things.

temporality endemic to the way experience settles upon those beings capable of it. Experience itself involves an ability to abide with the past, an ability to remain alive to that which has been encountered.

The coming-into-being of experience adumbrated here is nothing other than the process of being-moved by the power of perceiving that was said to condition the very manner in which “a certain appearance comes into being for us.”⁸⁰ Indeed, the role of the φάντασμα, although implicit in this passage, remains discernible in the way Aristotle associates experience with both λόγος and memory. Although we have already heard the manner in which the operation of φαντασία involves an attunement to the λόγος of things, here it will be helpful to turn briefly to a passage from *On Memory and Recollection* in order to discern more precisely the role the φάντασμα plays in conveying perceiving to thinking.

In considering the question as to how memory itself operates, Aristotle suggests that it must work with a φάντασμα that functions, in a way, like a picture if it is to be both something in its own right and a kind of likeness of that which was perceived but that now, when absent, is itself remembered. The picture is the metaphor not because it mirrors what was encountered in perceiving, but because it is capable of a certain kind of signification: it both stands independently for itself and points beyond itself as a kind of likeness of that which was present. That this sort of signification is not limited to visual φάντασμα, that is, images, is clear from the way Aristotle introduces the metaphor as answering a concern about perceiving in general, not exclusively of seeing. He says, “How, then, will one remember that which is not present? For one should then be able also to see and hear that which is not present.” He then goes on to introduce the metaphor of the picture:

Or is there a sense in which this is possible and does happen? For example, the picture drawn on a tablet is both a picture and a likeness [εἰκόν], and one and the same thing is both of these, although what it is to be these two things is not the same, and it is possible to behold [θεωρεῖν] it both as a picture and as a likeness; so too it is necessary to responsively take up [ὑπολαβεῖν] the appearance in us as being itself something according to itself and as being

⁸⁰ *De An.* III.3, 428a1–2.

of some other thing. Insofar as it is something according to itself, it is a thing beheld or an appearance [θεώρημα ἢ φάντασμα], but insofar as it is of something else, it is a certain kind of likeness or a reminder.⁸¹

Aristotle here lends determination to the meaning and function of “likeness” in the ecology of cooperative encounter by which perceiving acts in cooperation with φαντασία so as to translate appearances into the idiom of thinking. Aristotle himself gestures to this translation when he identifies the appearance with the thing beheld, for it seems that the capacity for the appearance to stand independent of the activity of perceiving is what allows it to settle into the soul as something capable of being thought. The appearance, like a kind of joint, points in two directions at once. On one hand, the appearance is itself a trace of that which is discerned in perceiving, a kind of reminder of those rudimentary moments of access to that which is originally encountered in perceiving. The use of εἰκὼν here further determines the nature of the kind of likeness that is associated with the translation from perceiving to thinking. While Aristotle often uses the wider term, ὁμοίωμα, in such contexts,⁸² the appearance of εἰκὼν here gestures to the capacity of the likeness to refer to something original.⁸³ The εἰκὼν thus announces a dynamic of signification rather than one of similarity based on resemblance.⁸⁴ Thus, with the determination of the φάντασμα as a kind of εἰκὼν, Aristotle reinforces the suggestion that the φαντασία is engaged in a kind of

⁸¹ Aristotle and W. D. Ross, *Parva Naturalia, De memoria et reminiscencia*, 450b14–27.

⁸² See, e.g., *De Int.* 16a7; *De An.* II.5, 418a3–4.

⁸³ Joe Sachs emphasizes this in his translation of *On Memory and Recollection*. See Sachs, *Aristotle's “On the Soul” and “On Memory and Recollection,”* 171. There he appeals to Klein's discussion of the meaning of εἰκασία in Plato's *Republic*, which Klein describes in the following terms: “The ‘state of the soul’ called εἰκασία necessarily presupposed the other one which consists in our responding to the familiar visible things around us with trust. For we see ‘through’ an image, as it were, its trustworthy original.” Jacob Klein, *A Commentary on Plato's “Meno”* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 115. As has been heard, in Aristotle this capacity to respond to things around us is itself a dimension of the critical discernment of perceiving, and the Platonic notion of εἰκασία or εἰκαστική, with its capacity to make genuine likenesses, seems to be the proper progenitor of Aristotle's φαντασία.

⁸⁴ Nussbaum rightly insists that similarity is neither sufficient nor necessary for representation, which is itself “a type of reference or denotation.” See Aristotle and Nussbaum, *Aristotle's “De Motu Animalium,”* 225–31.

metaphorical signification capable of translating what is presented in perceiving into the vernacular of thinking, without relinquishing the reminder of that original encounter without which thinking for humans would be impossible. On the other hand, having lent itself to separation according to the logical discernment of the φαντασία, the εἰκὼν, now indeed as εἶδος, has a sort of independent existence that is able, somehow, to settle into the soul.

Let us return, then, to the discussion of the manner in which perceiving is led to thinking; for if Jacob Klein is correct when he says that “the efficacy of an ἐπαγωγή rests on our being affected, through observable sensible features of a thing, by its εἶδος,” then it will be necessary to pursue the manner in which Aristotle describes this process of being affected in order to discern more palpably the phantastic nature of thinking.⁸⁵ Experience, Aristotle has said, always has its history; it is a matter of memory, “for memories that are many in number are one experience.”⁸⁶ If, however, φαντασία already cooperates in the coming into being of experience at the level of memory, it also seems to be cooperative in the process by which many memories become one experience. Aristotle explicitly associates the deliberative or logistical φαντασία with the capacity “to make one from many appearances.”⁸⁷ This process of making one from many appearances Aristotle calls συλλογισμός, which ought not to be rendered too quickly as “inference.” Rather it should be thought as an ability to allow the λόγοι of things to gather together as an expression of a coherent whole. Aristotle appeals to this kind of gathering of λόγοι in thinking about the nature of action and recollection, both of which are peculiar to those sorts of beings that “have λόγος” in such a way that they are able to take up what is presented in perceiving by allowing it to gather itself together so as to appear as an expression of a larger whole – indeed, to appear according to the whole, καθόλου. With respect to action, as has been heard, Aristotle determines this sort of gathering together as oriented by the future – for it is by looking to the future

⁸⁵ Jacob Klein, “Aristotle, an Introduction,” in *Ancients and Moderns: Essays on the Tradition of Political Philosophy in Honor of Leo Strauss*, ed. Joseph Cropsey (New York: Basic Books, 1964), 62.

⁸⁶ *Post. Anal.* II.19, 100a5–6.

⁸⁷ *De An.* III.11, 434a9–10.

that deliberative φαντασία is able to prepare desire in such a way that the beneficial and harmful appear to be distinct from what is merely pleasant or painful. With respect to recollection, Aristotle suggests that this sort of gathering together of λόγοι is also a kind of seeking. Attempting again to delineate the difference between human and nonhuman animals, Aristotle writes:

[W]hile many of the other animals have a share in remembering, none of the animals, as one might say, insofar as we know, shares in recollecting. The reason is that recollecting is a certain sort of gathering together of λόγοι [συλλογισμός τις]; for the one who recollects gathers together the λόγοι that one saw or heard or had some such affection before, and this is a certain seeking [ζητησίς τις]. But this belongs by nature only to those in whom the power of deliberation is present, for to deliberate too is a certain sort of gathering together of λόγοι [συλλογισμός τις].⁸⁸

By suggesting that deliberation is a certain way of gathering λόγοι together and by determining this sort of gathering as a kind of seeking, Aristotle has articulated the peculiar temporality endemic to those beings capable of “having λόγος” in a certain way; for such animals are able to allow the future to come into relation with the past such that a unity of experience is not only possible for them, but also possible in a way that offers them access to the whole of things.

Aristotle suggests that this unity of experience is precisely what allows a sense of the whole of things to settle into the soul. In the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle gestures to this in the briefest, most tantalizing way: “But from experiences or from the whole universal that has come to rest [ἐκ παντὸς ἡρεμήσαντος τοῦ καθόλου] in the soul (the one apart from the many, which is one and the same in all of those), there comes a principle of art or science.”⁸⁹ The vocabulary of settling (ἡμερμήσαντος) echoes that by which Aristotle describes the manner in which a ἔξις takes root in the soul.⁹⁰ To come to rest in

⁸⁸ Aristotle and W. D. Ross, *Parva Naturalia, De memoria et reminiscencia*, 453a7–13.

⁸⁹ *Post. Anal.* II.19, 100a6–8.

⁹⁰ See *Phys.* VII.3, 247b18–248a4, where the same word, ἡρεμίζω, is used in conjunction with καθίστασθαι, to settle down or be settled down, to describe the process by which an active condition is cultivated in the soul. The poignant image of the army whose “reversal in battle is generated [γενομένης] when one man makes a stand, then another, then another, until they attain a principle” (*Post. Anal.* II.19,

this manner, however, is a process that might best be described as a gathering together of the λόγοι operative already, as we have heard, at the level of perceiving, albeit inchoately. These λόγοι are further cultivated in memory and through logistical φαντασία in such a way that a unity of experience takes root. Patrick Byrne has suggested that ἐμπειρία “is habitual knowing of a *logon* that is a unity among many memories.”⁹¹ If so, this sort of habitual knowing is the settling of experience in the soul that is made possible by the capacity for a certain συλλογισμός, that is, for the gathering together of λόγοι that is the unity of experience. We sense, here, how a certain way of “having λόγος” is at the root not only of the capacity for political community, deliberative action, and, indeed, recollection, but of the very unity of experience for human-beings. The world is experienced in and through λόγος. Aristotle goes on to think the process by which the “whole universal” settles into the soul as a natural continuation of this process by which experience arises in those beings capable of having λόγος in a certain way. The process is repeated at the level of multiple experiences, which, when gathered together themselves, allow the “whole universal” to come to rest in the soul.

This process of settling, however, is not the construction of memories into experience and experiences into universals. Rather, the universal grows through and in experience, for one who lives in intimate association with the things of nature. Aristotle lends further determination to this process at the beginning of the *Metaphysics* as he delineates the difference between experience and knowing for those beings that “by nature stretch themselves out toward knowing.”⁹² Here again he marks a difference between the human and other animals, saying, “[S]o the other animals live by the appearances [φαντασίαις]

100a12–13) resonates, albeit in a somewhat different register, with the manner in which a ἔξις settles into the soul. For a discussion of this passage, including an emphasis on the importance of the appearance of γενομένης in it, see Christopher P. Long, “The Duplicity of Beginning: Schürmann, Aristotle and the Origins of *Metaphysics*,” *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 29, no. 2 (2008): 148–9. For more discussion of the relation between νοῦς and λόγος in *Posterior Analytics* II.19, see Long and Lee, “*Nous* and *Logos* in Aristotle,” 350–6.

⁹¹ Patrick Hugh Byrne, *Analysis and Science in Aristotle*, SUNY Series in Ancient Greek Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 173.

⁹² *Meta.* I.1, 980a21.

and memories, but have a small share of experience, but the human kind lives also by art and reasoning [λογισμοῖς].”⁹³ Here, again, the difference between human and nonhuman animals is one of degree; there remains a certain continuity, for they have “a small share of experience.” The sort of φαντασία involved here is perceptive, giving rise to appearances of a certain sort, but without themselves being apprehended as an articulated unity of experience in which the future and past are brought together in such a way that things can be apprehended “according to the whole,” καθόλου. Aristotle goes on in the *Metaphysics* passage to describe the coming into being of experience in a way that echoes and lends further determination to the terse sentence from the *Posterior Analytics* 100a1–6: “[B]ut experience comes to be for humans from memory; for many memories of the same thing [τοῦ αὐτοῦ πράγματος] bring to completeness [ἀποτελοῦσιν] a capacity for one experience.”⁹⁴ The capacity for experience is accomplished from many memories oriented toward the same thing. Aristotle plays on the plurivocity of the term πᾶγμα here, for it means both some concrete thing encountered and a single state of affairs. Indeed, it is perhaps important to hear these two meanings together in this passage and to suggest that experience comes to be from the unity that emerges from such encounters with things and the state of affairs that announces itself in and through such encounters.⁹⁵ Heidegger puts it this way: “What is essential in ἐμπειρία is the holding present of a determined connection in a single state of affairs.”⁹⁶ If, however,

⁹³ Ibid., 980b25–8. Modrak suggests that the passage here is consistent with the account offered in *Posterior Analytics* II.19, although the important mention of φαντασίαι suggests to her that in the *Metaphysics* passage he has a more sophisticated understanding of the psychological dynamics at play in the process. See Modrak, *The Power of Perception*, 165, 222n20.

⁹⁴ *Meta.* I.1, 980b29–981a1.

⁹⁵ Byrne is surely correct to insist on the inadequacy of those traditional interpretations that run as follows: “[M]any sense-perceptions of *exactly the same thing* coalesce to form a memory; many identical memories of *exactly the same thing* coalesce to form an ‘experience’; many experiences of exactly the same thing coalesce to form a universal, a concept, which is the principle of art or science.” See Byrne, *Analysis and Science in Aristotle*, 173. It is not the repetition of the same thing seen again and again that gives rise to experience and ultimately to the settling of the universal in the soul, but memories of concrete things in specific contexts that allow for the emergence of a unified account, a λόγος, of them.

⁹⁶ Heidegger, *Platon: “Sophistes,”* 72; Heidegger, *Plato’s “Sophist,”* 49.

experience has its history – indeed, Aristotle has said, “Length of time makes experience”⁹⁷ – the connection in a single state of affairs depends already upon a certain orientation toward the future, one that can allow for the integration of past and future in such a way that a certain coherence of experience arises. This dimension of the future is expressed by Aristotle’s use of ἀποτελεῖν, to fulfill or bring to completion, to determine the relationship between the many encounters with the same thing and the capacity for a unity of experience; for the unity of experience requires for its completion the ability to draw similar cases together and thus to apprehend this case or situation as related to that one. This relationship, although temporal, is not yet fully discerned in terms of the nexus of relations that gives rise to knowing. Rather, as Heidegger poignantly writes, “this connection is a temporal one, and indeed at first a purely temporal one: as soon as . . . , then. . . . It is a matter here of a peculiar connection in the temporal Being of *Dasein*.”⁹⁸

The temporality of experience is further discernible as Aristotle brings experience into tight connection with art or τέχνη and then proceeds to illustrate their relation by means of an example taken from the practice of medicine:

And art comes into being whenever, out of many thoughts [ἐννοημάτων] from experience, one responsive supposition [ὑπόληψις] comes to be concerning those that are similar. For to have a responsive supposition that this was beneficial to Callias when he was sick with this disease, and also to Socrates, and thus to many people according to each case [καθ’ ἕκαστον], is experience. But [the responsive supposition] that this was beneficial to all such people, marked out according to one form [κατ’ εἶδος ἐν ἀφορισθεῖσι], when they are sick with this disease . . . belongs to art.⁹⁹

As Patrick Byrne has argued, this passage suggests the best way to understand “memory of *the same*” in both *Posterior Analytics* II.19 and here at 98ob29: “*tou autou* does not refer to a ‘same’ object repeatedly remembered, but rather to the ‘same’ object of *empeiria* itself, namely the *connection*.”¹⁰⁰ The connection itself is a certain gathering together

⁹⁷ NE VI.8, 1142a15–6.

⁹⁸ Heidegger, *Platon: “Sophistes,”* 72/50.

⁹⁹ *Meta.* I.1, 981a5–12.

¹⁰⁰ Byrne, *Analysis and Science in Aristotle*, 174.

of λόγοι that allows this thing or state of affairs here to appear as related to that earlier thing or state of affairs. Experience, however, remains bound to single cases even if it already begins to reach out toward something common to them. Perhaps it is possible to say that a vague sense of the universal is discernible already in experience, even though it has not yet made a stand in such a way as to be articulated. The articulation of the universal is a matter of being marked out according to the one εἶδος.

Aristotle describes this being marked out of the εἶδος as a responsive supposition, a ὑπόληψις, that arises from many thoughts [έννοημάτων] from experience. Experience itself, although directed as Aristotle insists, to singulars [καθ' ἕκαστα], already seems to include an intellectual dimension. Although experience is not able to bring this intellectual dimension to articulation – it is not yet able to gather together λόγοι in such a way that the thing according to the whole (καθόλου) makes a stand – nevertheless, experience itself, and indeed even those basic modes of perceiving by which the presence of a determinate individual gives itself to experience, are already saturated by an inchoate intelligibility. This intelligibility is itself articulated in and through the very λόγος of things, in and through the various ways they address the soul and lend themselves to being discerned. This is heard already in *De Anima* III.4, where Aristotle attempts to articulate the relation of perceiving to thinking, a relation, it turns out, that is much closer than might otherwise be thought:

Since a magnitude is other than the to be for a magnitude [τὸ μέγεθος εἶναι], and water is other than the to be for water (and so for different cases but not for all, for in some cases they are the same), one discerns the to be for flesh and flesh by another potency or by the same one differently disposed. For flesh is not without matter, but is like a snub nose; it is a this in that. Now, it is by the ability to perceive that one discerns the hot and the cold, and those things of which the flesh is a certain λόγος. But one discerns the to be for flesh by another potency, either one that is separate or with the two having the relation a bent line has to itself when straightened out.¹⁰¹

This passage is difficult because there is a certain slippage between what is discerned by the power of perceiving, namely, the peculiar

¹⁰¹ *De An.* III.4, 429b10–18.

perceptibles of quality – the hot and the cold, for example – and identifiable things like flesh or water or even magnitude.¹⁰² If such examples point either to common perceptibles or to incidental perceptibles insofar as they are like the snub nose and thus instances of things that exist as this in that – as composite individuals of form and matter – then it is possible to hear how even in encounters with such individuals, a dimension of the intelligible is already at work. Indeed, even the discernment endemic to perceiving proper perceptibles operates according to “a certain λόγος,” a ratio that allows what is perceived to enter into communication with that which is able to perceive. What is yet more striking about this passage is that Aristotle himself does not seem too concerned about rigorously dividing the labor of the powers of perceiving and thinking.¹⁰³ Aristotle thinks the soul as an integrated set of capacities attuned to the various ways

¹⁰² Kahn points out that the reference to μέγεθος “is triply ambiguous” because it could refer to a common perceptible, or an extended body (in which case it would seem to be analogous to the examples of water and flesh), or indeed a mathematical form, as Hicks and Aquinas suggest. See Kahn, “Aristotle on Thinking,” 370–1n21.

¹⁰³ Modrak and Kahn have engaged in an interesting and lively debate concerning the division of labor, Modrak arguing that perceiving is able to discern compound wholes, Kahn arguing that the so-called incidental perceptibles already “represent the overlap or conjoined action of sense and intellect. ‘The son of Diare’s’ is already a *noēton*, a complex conception involving the notion of human being and fatherhood, as well as the notion of an individual substance corresponding to the use here of a proper name and individuating description.” See *ibid.*, 367–8. Modrak claims that Aristotle repeatedly insists that the καθ’ ἑκαστον is discerned by the power of perceiving independently of the capacity for thinking. See Modrak, *The Power of Perception*, 69. Modrak suggests that the passage under consideration is “open to at least two interpretations: a) the faculty in question is the noetic faculty which is differently disposed when a concrete particular is apprehended or b) the faculty in question is the perceptual faculty which is differently disposed when it is employed in a manner that yields a universal as the proper object of the cognitive act.” See Modrak, “Aristotle on Thinking,” 214. She defends the view that it is the perceptual faculty differently disposed, whereas Kahn calls this, rather harshly it seems, “some bizarre interpretation of *nous* as ‘sense otherwise disposed.’” See Kahn, “Aristotle on Thinking,” 372. Yet Aristotle does not think the soul in a rigidly compartmental way. The vocabulary of faculty here is misplaced. Rather, there are dimensions of the soul associated with different powers or capacities that are, nevertheless, integrated together in such a way that living beings are able not only to make their way in the world but also, when certain dimensions of the soul have developed a certain capacity for λόγος, to discern the intelligibility of the world at work in even the most rudimentary encounters of perceiving.

the world expresses itself. Indeed, the suggestion that the relation between perceiving and the thinking by which the very being of something is discerned is like that which inheres between a bent line and itself straightened out indicates that Aristotle thinks the world perceived and the world thought as one and the same world differently discerned. Yet to discern differently is not to isolate one mode of discernment rigidly from another; for, indeed, the very intelligibility of things is not articulated in separation from the perceptibility of things – rather, the intelligibility of things announces itself also in and through the power of perceiving. Sachs puts this nicely when, in commenting on this passage, he says: “This rich and difficult passage implies that intellect pervades all human experience.... Thus, the things that we perceive are already organized in accordance with something intelligible, and one of the things the intellect thinks is the perceptible thing in its wholeness.”¹⁰⁴ This passage from perceiving through φαντασία to thinking is precisely the path of response we have been attempting to trace. It is the very path along which the “whole universal” is encountered. This encounter is not the extraction or abstraction of the intelligible from the perceptible, or the imposition of a conceptual construct on the passively received impressions of sense, or, indeed, a mystical moment of revelation divorced from the cooperative logic of perceiving and φαντασία. Rather, the universal is rooted in and grows out of an integrated, organic, and ongoing dialogue with things. Here, indeed, the path of address and that of response must be thought together despite their having been presented in isolation from one another.

If “it is not even possible to think without a φάντασμα”¹⁰⁵ and if thoughts (νοήματα) are “not without appearances,”¹⁰⁶ thinking too will need to be apprehended as a way of being together with and attending to the λόγος of things. A thinking rooted in dialogue with things is a thinking attuned to the world of perceiving and appearing. It is a thinking that recognizes its thoughts as grounded in and ultimately accountable to the dynamic ecology of appearing in which

¹⁰⁴ Sachs, *Aristotle's “On the Soul” and “On Memory and Recollection,”* 141.

¹⁰⁵ Aristotle and W. D. Ross, *Parva Naturalia, De memoria et reminiscencia*, 449b31.

¹⁰⁶ *De An.* III.8, 432a12–14.

the singular, inchoately felt already in perceiving, expresses itself as an appearing individual whose very articulation is also the ongoing articulation of the universe expressing itself. Thus, any “universal” that cuts its relation to the appearing of things uproots itself from the ecology that gives it life. Intelligibility, if it is to be true to life, names an ability to discern each appearing individual as such and to articulate it according to the whole it expresses. Thus, Aristotle thinks the καθόλου itself as a kind of saying: “The καθόλου, or the thing said wholly such that it is a certain whole [τὸ ὅλως λεγόμενον ὡς ὅλον τι ὄν], is καθόλου in this way: it embraces many by being said according to each [τῷ κατηγορεῖσθαι καθ’ ἐκάστου] and they are all one, each by each, as are a human-being, a horse, and a god, because they are all living things.”¹⁰⁷ The universal announces itself in and through a kind of saying, indeed, a kind of predication of each thing according to itself. Here, the path of address connects with that of response: the soul is “capable of being affected” by the appearing of each thing such that the universal comes to be when one, then another, and a third, each articulating itself according to itself, makes a stand, holding the soul accountable and allowing the soul to give an account of each in terms of its community with the whole. Yet this is just to say that the universal is rooted in the soul’s ability to go down to each thing in an attempt to articulate it according to the way it shows itself as itself, κατάφασις.¹⁰⁸ This saying, this λόγος ἀποφαντικός, as can now be discerned, is already a kind of ability to respond informed by the ways things address the soul.

The way of response and that of address are part of an organic ecology of encounter in which the possibility of truth is rooted in the attempt to do justice to the saying of things. This organic ecology of encounter has been characterized throughout as a kind of joint

¹⁰⁷ *Meta.* V.26, 1023b29–32.

¹⁰⁸ Thus, Heidegger writes, “This determination is already indicated in the word καθόλου itself, insofar as the κατά refers to λέγειν as κατάφασις. The καθόλου belongs to *Dasein* insofar as *Dasein* is disclosive in the mode of λέγειν. The καθόλου is a ὅλον λεγόμενον, a ὅλον, a wholeness, which shows itself only in λέγειν.” See Heidegger, *Platon: “Sophistes,”* 80/55. Yet it is important to note that the καθόλου belongs also to the nature of things; i.e., it announces itself in the very expression of things.

activity, a kind of living cooperation that is expressed by Aristotle's Greek largely in the middle voice. Here, the καθόλου is said to be τὸ ὅλως λεγόμενον, that which is said wholly; it embraces many τῶ κατηγορεῖσθαι καθ' ἑκάστων, by being said according to each. This embrace, περιέχον, is a sort of comprehensive view that grows out of the cooperative ecology of encounter and announces itself to those beings capable of a certain λόγος who live in intimate association with the things of nature.¹⁰⁹ To have λόγος in this sense, as has been heard, is to be capable of responding to the expression of things in a way that is oriented by and toward justice. This now can be heard to mean to respond to the expression of each in such a way that justice is done to it both as itself and as an expression of its communal relation to the whole. Here, the relation of each to the whole and the whole to each, the relation, that is, between καθ' ἑκάστων and καθόλου, is the polarized field in which the traditional question of truth becomes a matter of justice. The path of response is entered upon in and through perceiving, which, as Aristotle repeatedly says, concerns the καθ' ἑκάστων.¹¹⁰ Yet perceiving itself has been shown to be a middle-voiced activity in which the perceivable belongs already to that which perceives in such a way that "an appearance comes to be." This appearing too is a joint activity, involving the cooperative activity of perceiving and the ability to allow what is presented there to move the soul in such a way that a determinate individual is able to show itself as itself. Aristotle calls the appearing individual τὸδε τι.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ See *On Generation and Corruption*, I.2, 316a5–10. See too Christopher P. Long, "Aristotle's Phenomenology of Form," *Epoché* 11, no. 2 (2007): 445.

¹¹⁰ See, e.g., *Post. Anal.* II.19, 100a17, and *De An.* II.5, 417b23–4.

¹¹¹ In *Metaphysics* VIII.1, Aristotle clarifies the meaning of the τὸδε τι this way: "But an οὐσία is an underlying subject; and in one sense, this is matter (by 'matter' I mean that which is not a τὸδε τι in being-at-work, but is potentially a τὸδε τι); in another sense, it is the λόγος and the shape [μορφή], which, being a τὸδε τι, is separable in λόγος; but in a third sense, it is the composite of these, of which alone there is generation and destruction, and which is separate without qualification." *Meta.* VIII.1, 1042a26–31. In a parallel passage from the *De Anima*, Aristotle writes, "We call a certain one genus of things the οὐσία, but of these, one we say is as matter, which is not a τὸδε τι according to itself, another we say is shape or form [μορφήν καὶ εἶδος], according to which something is already [ἦδη] said to be τὸδε τι, and third, the thing from these [matter and form]." *De An.* II.1, 412a6–9. In both passages, the term τὸδε τι is said without qualification of the composite individual of form and matter. In both passages, however, the shape or form is closely associated

This articulation, τὸδε τι, gestures beautifully to the manner in which the individual always already involves an intelligible dimension even as it also retains a demonstrative connection to the sort of singularity expressed by the καθ' ἑκάστων.¹¹² If, in perceiving, the singularity of each is inchoately felt, in thinking, the whole too touches the soul in those moments of noetic expression that blossom as the λόγοι are gathered together in a life lived in intimate association with the things of nature. Aristotle associates both moments – that of perceptive encounter and that of noetic expression – with an insistent and trustworthy natural sincerity: at such moments, it is “not possible to be deceived.”¹¹³

Nature is sincere; it expresses itself honestly and in ways that are naturally accessible to human-being. Here, Aristotle's naturalism is heard to be rooted in an essential trust that nature addresses the soul as it is even if, in the course of appearing, the possibility of duplicity and deception naturally arises. These moments of honesty hold the soul accountable from two directions. At the level of the singular, the impossibility of deception points to the irreducible unicity of things. It expresses at once the possibility of genuine perceiving that serves as the condition for the possibility of being appeared to and the ultimate elusiveness endemic to the inexhaustibly perceptible multiplicity

with the λόγος of the composite, a λόγος in some sense separable from the concrete composite individual and responsible for its being articulated as an individual. However, note the appearance of the ἥδη in the *De Anima* passage. This suggests again the way that the λόγος of things, and indeed the form itself, is discernible only by attending carefully to the way each thing expresses itself. The εἶδος is that “according to which something is *already* said,” in the middle voice, “to be a τὸδε τι.” For a detailed discussion of the meaning of the τὸδε τι as “individual” as opposed to the singular, see Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 86–91, 157–8.

¹¹² For an indication of the sense in which the τὸδε τι retains a dimension of singularity and resists going cleanly into conceptualization, see Theodor W. Adorno, *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 35. For a more detailed discussion of the distinction between the singular, the individual, and the particular, see Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 51–2. See too Christopher P. Long, “Between the Universal and the Singular in Aristotle,” *Telos* 126 (2003): 35–40.

¹¹³ At *De Anima* II.6, 418a11–12, Aristotle says of the “proper perceivables,” concerning these ὃ μὴ ἐνδέχεται ἀπατηθῆναι – “it is not possible to be deceived.” At *Metaphysics*, IX.10, 1051b31, Aristotle says of the noetic discernment of the what it is, concerning these οὐκ ἔστιν ἀπατηθῆναι – “it is not possible to be deceived.”

of things. At the level of the whole, the impossibility of deception at once holds open the possibility of genuine insight into the nature of things and points to the very limits of the λόγος in and through which this nature articulates itself and allows itself to be articulated. *If the human soul is somehow in touch with the truth at the surface and deepest limits of its access to things, then, between the irreducible singular and the living universal, where human-being lives in community with nature, the nature of truth becomes the ineluctable demand for justice.* Truth here, between the singular and the universal, caught up with and bound naturally to the appearing of things, involves the ability to respond to things in ways that remain accountable at once to the singular and to the whole, to the irreducible unicity of things and to the manner in which they belong to and themselves articulate the very being of the whole.

Having traversed, then, the way of address that attempts to let things show themselves and so leads down to the very expression of the things themselves, and recognizing that such attempts are conditioned by an ability to respond to things in ways that open us to what they are as themselves and as articulations of the whole, we have in fact been navigating the dynamic topology of truth, which now announces itself as an ecology of justice: a way of being at home with the λόγος of things animated by an ability to respond to each rooted in an integrated sense of the whole. Thus, there are not two segregated conceptions of truth in Aristotle, one involving the “saying of something according to something” and another involving the noetic immediacy of touch and expression, but an integrated apprehension of a truth said in many ways but always pointing, πρὸς ἓν καὶ μίαν τινὰ φύσιν,¹¹⁴ “toward one and some one nature.” To think these two articulations of truth together is to chart a path toward ecological justice as an ethics of truth.

¹¹⁴ *Meta.* IV.2, 1003a33–4.

The Truth of Nature and the Nature of Truth in Aristotle

But truth is not ‘that which works’ but something in Nature that is worked with.

Frederick James Eugene Woodbridge, *An Essay on Nature*¹

In Aristotle, truth, like being, is said in many ways. A person is said to be “able to be true in life as well as in speech”;² an inquiry is said to be oriented toward the “truth and nature of things”;³ and the mark of good action is said to be the truth that “stands in agreement with right desire.”⁴ Truth is also, of course, articulated in the things said themselves: it belongs to those declarative sayings that attempt to give voice to the truth by saying something of something, by combining and separating, affirming and denying;⁵ and truth is said not to be missed by those who “say something concerning nature,”⁶ for it is “as though they were compelled by the truth itself.”⁷ Truth is compelling and

¹ Woodbridge, *An Essay on Nature*, 47.

² *NE* IV.7, 1127a24; see too 1127b2. See also Chapter 1.

³ *Phys.* I.8, 191a25. See too *De An.* I.1, 402a4–6, in which knowledge of the soul “contributes greatly toward all truth but especially toward the truth about nature.”

⁴ *NE* VI.2, 1139a30–1. Indeed, the intellectual excellences are all “ways the soul discloses truth by affirming and denying.” See *NE* VI.3, 1139b15–17.

⁵ *De Int.* 16a12–13; 17a1–3; *De An.* III.6, 430a26–8; 430b26–7; *Meta.* IV.7, 1011b23–1012a28; VI.4, 1027b18–34.

⁶ *Meta.* II.1, 993b1–2.

⁷ *Phys.* I.5, 188a29–30. See too Chapter 3.

pervasive. The power of perceiving, when directed at what is proper to it, “is always true”;⁸ and while being appeared to and thinking things through can be true or false,⁹ for a certain thinking, “the true is to touch and to express” and there is no falsity, “but only ignorance and not touching.”¹⁰ The pervasive plurivocity of truth in Aristotle testifies to the manner in which the nature of truth grows in and through encounters with the nature of things. Aristotle articulates the nature of truth by attending to the truth of nature. This is possible only on the basis of a thoroughly naturalistic and phenomenological engagement with the world. For Aristotle, truth is pervasive because it lives between human-being and the world encountered. It is plurivocal because rooted in the saying of things. If, however, truth is said in many ways, still it remains oriented toward some one nature, indeed, toward the expression and intelligibility of nature itself.

To discern this, it will be necessary to begin again by taking up the path of address and response from a slightly different approach, one that tracks the question of truth as it expresses itself along the way. If the way of response can be said to begin at the pole of perceiving and to lead through *φαντασία* to thinking, and if the way of address can be said to begin at the pole of thinking and to lead through voice to the articulation of things, then truth might be heard differently at the incipient poles than it is along the way. At the poles, truth relinquishes its relation to its opposite, falsity, and becomes an insistent sincerity that “touches” the soul in its initial encounters in perceiving and its deepest roots in thinking; along the way, however, truth is a matter of the assiduous attempt to say it like it is, to articulate things according to the ways they show themselves, and to live in accordance with such articulations.

To delineate the difference between the way truth is expressed at the incipient poles and the ways it is articulated between the poles need not be heard as a disintegration of the organic unity of “the

⁸ *De An.* III.3, 427b12. Interestingly, at 428b19 Aristotle vacillates a bit on the absolute infallibility of the power of perceiving in relation to what is proper to it by adding “or has the false the least.”

⁹ On being appeared to, see, e.g., *De An.* III.3, 428b10–17; on thinking things through, *διάνοια*, see, e.g., *De An.* III.3, 427b13–21; III.6, 430a27–b6; *Meta.* VI.4, 1027b25–8.

¹⁰ *Meta.* IX.10, 1051b22–5; *De An.* III.6, 430a26; 430b27–9.

truth and nature of things.” The poles are incipient in the sense that they mark “the ultimate things in both directions.”¹¹ At one pole is the irreducible unicity of the singular inchoately encountered in and through perceiving; at the other is a living sense of the whole, always at work expressing itself, that blossoms suddenly but grows over time for those led by the gathering of the λόγος of things. Truth thus belongs to an ecology of encounter in which the ability to respond is held accountable by the saying of things. That truth grows in such an ecology of co-response-ability suggests that truth is nourished by a sense of justice rooted in and held to account by that which is ultimate in both directions. To traverse the paths of truth in Aristotle is, then, to open the possibility of saying truth in yet another way: as an attempt to live, speak, and act in ways that do justice to the saying of things.

THE PATHS OF TRUTH

“Theorizing concerning the truth,” Aristotle says, “is in one sense difficult, in another sense easy.”¹² A common proverb articulates the one side of this truth about truth: “So if we happen to be in the condition of the proverbial saying, ‘Who could miss the doorway?’, in this way it would be easy.”¹³ Aquinas suggests that the proverbial doorway here is the outer door of a house. He goes on to say:

For it is difficult to know what the interior of a house is like, and a man is easily deceived in such matters; but just as no one is mistaken about the entrance of a house, which is evident to all and is the first thing that we perceive, so too this is the case with regard to the knowledge of truth; for those truths through which we enter into a knowledge of others are known to all, and no man is mistaken about them.¹⁴

Aquinas then suggests that a principle like the law of noncontradiction is the sort of truth accessible to all. However, in this passage, what Aquinas *actually* says about the “first thing that we perceive” comes

¹¹ NE VI.12, 1143a35–6.

¹² *Meta.* II.1, 993a30. See too Chapter 3.

¹³ *Meta.* II.1, 993b4–5.

¹⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's “Metaphysics,”* trans. John P. Rowan (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1995), bk. 2, lect. 1, §277.

closer to the Aristotelian position concerning the manner in which humans gain access to the truth of the inhabited world; for the natural path from what is more known to us to what is more known by nature opens through the door of perceiving.¹⁵ Perceiving opens the possibility of a more intimate access to the truth of things. Yet the human relation to truth is more intimate still, for not only are we unable to miss the doorway, we ourselves inhabit the house in which truth is born. Thus, in perceiving, we are welcomed with a sincerity rooted in familiarity. Here there is an insistent truthfulness;¹⁶ here, “it is not possible to be deceived.”¹⁷

Yet the trusted threshold of perceiving opens the way into a house of exceeding complexity and depth. If to live is itself to perceive and thus to gain a certain access to the inhabited world, a life capable of attending and responding to the λόγος of things will be made aware, however inchoately, of the whole even as it feels acutely the limits of its own ability to comprehend. Thus, Aristotle articulates the other truth about truth: “[B]ut to have the whole in a certain way, and yet to be incapable of part of it, shows the difficulty of it [i.e., theorizing concerning the truth].”¹⁸ Here, Aristotle lends voice to the manner in which human-being is conditioned at once by a natality that welcomes us into the ongoing dialogue of things through which a sense of the whole is intimated and by a mortality that announces itself in the felt awareness of our incapacity to grasp it all. Aristotle goes on to insist that to be incapable of part of the whole is due not to the things but to something in us, namely, the limits of our capacity to think:

But perhaps, because the difficulty is of two sorts, the cause is not in the things but in us; for just as the eyes of bats are related to the midday light, so too is the thinking capacity [νοῦς] of our soul related toward the things that are by nature most apparent of all [πρὸς τὰ τῇ φύσει φανερώτατα πάντων].¹⁹

Bats are not blind, but they see dimly and with great difficulty in bright light. So it is with the human capacity to think in relation to the

¹⁵ *Phys.* I.1, 184a16–b14.

¹⁶ *De An.* III.3, 427b12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, II.6, 418a11–12;

¹⁸ *Meta.* II.1, 993b6–7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 993b7–11.

things that are by nature most apparent of all: it is not that they don't offer themselves to thinking, but they do so and are discerned only dimly and with difficulty. However much we are at home in the world, there remains for us always a dimension of exile, a felt awareness of the elusive nature of the things with which we live and the ecology in which we dwell.

By associating this elusiveness endemic to the human attempt to theorize concerning the truth of the whole with "the things that are by nature the most apparent of all," Aristotle affirms the intimate relation between being, appearing, and truth. If truth is rooted in the appearing of being, it belongs as much to the disclosure of things as to the thinking power of the soul. The world of appearances is thus not a veil that covers over a world of reality beyond appearances; rather, being is expressed in and through the appearing of things. At the threshold of perceiving, this expression is direct and sincere – it cannot be missed; and yet in opening the way to appearing, perceptive discernment opens itself to illusion. The appearing of things and being appeared to is a joint activity in which the expression of things enters into an ecological dialogue with the soul. The dialogue is "ecological" because it belongs to the common λόγος of the οἶκος in which living beings encounter the things with which they live. In this dynamic, dialogical ecology of appearing, things show themselves as expressions that point, according to themselves, also to the larger community of the whole. Truth lives in this community of communication. Here, truth is not the correspondence of the intellect and thing. Rather, truth is rooted in the co-responsive community of dialogical encounter between the expression of things and the human capacity for articulate response.

If the path of truth is entered upon through the threshold of perceiving, it moves along with the appearing of things in such a way that the whole makes itself somehow felt. The touch of the whole, like the perceiving of proper perceptibles, is liminal: it marks at once a certain access and a certain limit, autochthony and exile. Aristotle articulates the dimension of autochthony by speaking of the truth that happens between the thinking soul and the thing thought as a kind of "touching." He announces the dimension of exile by speaking of its opposite not as "being false" but as "being ignorant" (ἀγνοεῖν), a

privation or limitation of *voũç*, a way of being out of touch.²⁰ If, however, at the liminal poles of perceiving and thinking, truth gives way to ignorance, as it dwells with the appearances between the poles, truth lives together with the possibility of falsity. Here, truth is a matter of articulation, the attempt to say it like it is. Yet these two articulations of truth – as noetic touching and declarative saying – belong to a unified ecology of encounter in which the human capacities to think and speak cooperate with the expression of things in such a way that the attempt to articulate each thing according to itself is the very manner in which a sense of the whole is touched upon even if to touch the whole means also to encounter a certain ignorance.

TO ARTICULATE AND TOUCH THE TRUTH OF THINGS

Although the tendency to understand Aristotle's conception of truth as fundamentally bifurcated is reinforced by some of the things Aristotle says himself, this tendency is undermined by Aristotle's own practice of philosophy as an activity animated by the desire to know and guided by the attempt to put things into words in a way that articulates the very nature of things. Aristotle is himself led to articulate truth in terms other than those associated with predication just after those moments when his own thinking touches upon the whole in a certain way. To discern the way this other sense of truth belongs together with the truth of predication, it will be necessary to attend carefully to those passages in which the nondiscursive truth appears and to read them not as mystical revelations but as the articulated moments of insight, won over time, in a philosophical life animated by an engagement with the natural world oriented by the attempt to do justice to things.

The Activity of Thinking

In the enigmatic fifth chapter of *De Anima*, book III, Aristotle touches upon the sort of "*voũç* that makes all things," putting it into words by saying that it is just as "*ἕξις*, like light; for in a certain way,

²⁰ See *ibid.*, IX.10, 1051b23–5; 1052a1–2.

light makes the things that are colors in potency be colors at-work.”²¹ This analogy with the medium of light brings thinking into intimate connection not only with perceiving, but also with appearing; for the φαντασία too was said to have taken its name from light.²² As has been seen, that φαντασία takes its name from light suggests the manner in which it is able to convey what is presented in perceiving to thinking, a conveyance that is thought both in terms of physical movement by means of the lever principle and in terms more directly associated with perceiving by means of the metaphor of light. If, however, thinking, like being appeared to, is a joint activity involving the cooperation of thinking and the thing thought, it is necessary to offer an account of the active side of thinking, which was not addressed in the preceding chapter of the *De Anima*. There, νοῦς was thought as potential in a twofold way. In one sense of potency, νοῦς was said to be like a blank tablet with nothing written on it.²³ Potency in this sense has come to be called “first potentiality,” the paradigmatic example of which is the child prior to learning. But the potency of νοῦς is also understood to be a settled, cultivated, and yet active condition, an ability to think that is not presently at-work thinking. This is the so-called second potentiality (which is also, of course, a “first actuality” in the sense that νοῦς actually is able to think intelligible things although it is not actively thinking them).²⁴ This second potency of thinking is articulated when Aristotle suggests that νοῦς retains a dimension of potency even after it has gone to work thinking: “[W]hen it has come

²¹ *De An.* III.5, 430a15.

²² *Ibid.*, III.3, 429a1–4; see Chapter 5.

²³ *Ibid.*, III.4, 429b31–430a3.

²⁴ Thus, Aristotle says this of νοῦς twice in this chapter: “[I]t is not actively any of the things that are until it thinks” (III.4, 429a24) and “[N]οῦς is somehow the intelligible things in potency, but it is none of them in actuality until it thinks” (III.4, 429b30–430a2). The suggestion here is that the distinction Aristotle makes between the various senses of δύναμις in *De Anima*, II.5, 417a20–418a6, is operative throughout his discussion of perceiving, being appeared to, and thinking. The three senses of potency are (1) the potency for something by virtue of being a certain sort (as the human-being’s capacity for knowing prior to learning), also known as “first potentiality”; (2) the potency that belongs to the active condition of an ability (the having of knowledge but not exercising it), also called “second potentiality” or “first actuality”; and (3) the being-at-work knowing (the activity of knowing, which Aristotle speaks of in terms of θεωρεῖν).

to be each intelligible thing, as the knower is said to be when he is at-work knowing (this happens when he is able to put himself to work knowing), it is even then somehow in potency, but not in the same way it was before learning and discovering; and it is then able to think itself.”²⁵ Already in the chapter on the so-called passive intellect, there is a dimension of activity born of the active engagement with things encountered. Thus, Aristotle turns immediately after the introduction of the cultivated potency of νοῦς to the discussion of how the to be of things is discerned by a noetic capacity that retains an intimate connection with the power of perceiving.²⁶ This suggests the possibility that despite Aristotle’s division of the discussion of νοῦς into the passive and the active, these dimensions of νοῦς must, like perceiving and being appeared to, be understood in the middle voice.

Thus, perhaps it is possible to say that even the potential νοῦς discussed in *De Anima* III.4 cannot be understood in isolation from its active engagement with things. The potential intellect could thus be said to have been cultivated by the φαντασία in cooperation with the power of perceiving such that it attains that level of potency which allows it both to think things and to think itself – this sort of self-awareness is cultivated in humans by our encounters with things; it is at work, however, in the whole as the ongoing activity of the thinking of thinking that, like the light that makes visibility and vision possible, makes intelligibility and thinking possible.²⁷ Indeed, the very brief

²⁵ *De An.* III.4, 429b5–9. Kahn recognizes that Aristotle is speaking here of what Alexander called the “acquired intellect,” i.e., the intellect trained and educated. He also argues for the textual basis of this translation of the final clause concerning the ability to think itself. See Kahn, “Aristotle on Thinking,” 373.

²⁶ *De An.* III.4, 429a10–b21; see the discussion of this passage in Chapter 5.

²⁷ Although Kosman does not link the notion of second potentiality/first actuality (i.e., what is here called a “cultivated ability”) to *De Anima* III.4 or to the activity of being appeared to, he does argue convincingly that *De Anima* III.5 articulates the transition to second actuality, namely, to the active activity of thinking. See Kosman, “What Does the Maker Mind Make?” 350–2. In the course of this argument, Kosman exploits the important fact that although Aristotle often speaks of light as creating visibility, he also speaks of light as creating vision. Kosman appeals to *De Sensu Sensibilibus* 447a11, where Aristotle says that “light makes seeing.” Kosman goes on to say, “[L]ight here seems to be thought of as bringing into existence the full actuality of being seen, and not merely the first actuality of visibility” (348). This seems consistent with the claim in *De Anima* II.7, 419a17–21, that without light nothing would be seen at all.

discussion of the “νοῦς that makes all things” focuses precisely on the being-at-work of thinking, which is, it seems, both a possibility of human thinking sometimes and the very manner in which the whole expresses itself. Thus, Aristotle thinks the activity of νοῦς in terms of the being-at-work of knowing:

Knowledge, in its being-at-work, is the same as the thing [τῷ πράγματι], and while knowledge in potency is prior in time in any one knower, with respect to the whole [ὅλῳς] it is not in time, but it does not think at one time and not think at another; but when separated it is just what it is, and this alone is deathless and everlasting (although we have no memory, because this [νοῦς] is unaffected, while the νοῦς that is able to be affected is destructible) and without it nothing thinks.²⁸

This passage suggests the extent to which the deathless and everlasting activity that is the ongoing expression of the whole is always what the human ἔξις of thinking is sometimes, namely, at-work thinking in such a way that it is actively identified with the thing thought.²⁹ This very sentiment is repeated almost verbatim at the beginning of *De Anima* III.7, where Aristotle adds the general ontological principle underlying his position, namely, “All things that come into being are from a being-at-work-staying-itself [ἔξ ἐντελεχείᾳ ὄντος].”³⁰ To illustrate this, Aristotle again turns to the model of perceiving, suggesting, “[I]t appears that the perceptible thing makes that which is able to perceive be at-work from being in potency, for that which is able to perceive is neither acted-upon nor is it a becoming-other.”³¹ The ecology of encounter between thinking and the things thought echoes that between perceiving and the thing perceived.³² What lies between the repetitive articulation of the manner in which human

²⁸ *De An.* III.5, 430a20–5.

²⁹ Although Norman speaks of the active condition of thinking at-work thinking as “abstract thought” and thus reinforces the misinterpretation that this sort of thinking leaves behind the concrete objects of thought, nevertheless, he is right to insist that when Aristotle describes the thinking of thinking, as he touches upon here and articulates in depth in *Metaphysics* XII.7, “he is simply describing the same activity that human minds perform when they engage in abstract thought.” Richard Norman, “Aristotle’s Philosopher-God,” *Phronesis* 14 (1969): 67.

³⁰ *De An.* III.7, 431a1–4.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 431a4–5.

³² For a detailed discussion of the ecology of perceiving, see Chapter 5.

knowing resonates with the being-at-work of the whole is a discussion of truth, and it is here that Aristotle delineates the difference between the sort of truth endemic to human existence between the poles of thinking and perceiving and the sort of truth at work at the poles. It is here too, however, that a sense of precisely how human thinking is somehow touched by the expression of the whole is gained. To anticipate, human thinking is touched by the whole by attending to and attempting to articulate the being of each individual it encounters. The twofold nature of truth that Aristotle describes in *De Anima* III.6 and that which he describes again in *Metaphysics* IX.¹⁰ thus must be heard together as articulations of the manner in which human-being cooperates with, participates in, and is held accountable by the ongoing expression of the whole.

The Accountability of Things

Although his own attempt to articulate the different dimensions of truth seems to lend credibility to the tendency to ascribe two separate conceptions of truth to Aristotle, his refusal to relinquish the vocabulary of ἀλήθεια when articulating the disclosure of truth in both contexts testifies to the manner in which these two dimensions of truth belong together. Immediately following the discussion of the νοῦς that makes all things, having touched upon it as a being-at-work together of thinking and things that accomplishes their identity, Aristotle turns in *De Anima* III.6 to the question of truth. If truth lives between thinking and things, it makes sense for Aristotle to turn to the question of truth in order to delineate the precise manner in which thinking is related to the things it encounters. Thus, at the start of *De Anima* III.6, he articulates two senses of truth corresponding to two different sorts of things toward which thinking is directed:³³ “[T]he thinking of undivided things [ἀδιαίρετων] is among those things concerning which falsehood is not possible; in the things in

³³ Pritzl has articulated well the way in Aristotle a power of the soul “is understood by its operation and its operation understood by its object; the text reaches these determinations about the mind and its operation by reference to its object.” Kurt Pritzl, “The Cognition of Indivisibles and the Argument of *De Anima* 3.4–8,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 58 (1984): 141.

which there is falsehood as well as truth, there has already [ἤδη] been some combining of intelligible things as though they were one.”³⁴ In order to discern the extent to which these two articulations of truth belong together, it is necessary to recognize the manner in which the question of truth is always a matter of encounter, indeed, of the actual being-at-work together of thinking and things.

Let us begin with the sense of truth and falsity where there “has already been some combining of intelligible things as though they were one.” In an extended discussion of the way being is said as the true and nonbeing as the false in *Metaphysics* VI.4, Aristotle articulates the meaning of truth and falsity in terms of combination and separation, insisting that “truth has affirmation in the case of combination and the denial in the case of separation, while the false has the contradictory of this division.”³⁵ Yet he goes on to suggest the deeper question involved:

But how it comes to pass that we think things together or apart is another story [ἄλλος λόγος]. I say together and apart in such a way that they are not one thing after another, but become some one thing.³⁶

This “other story,” however, is nothing other than the story of the λόγος at work in that complex ecology of encounter by which what is presented in perceiving enters into relation with the φαντασία so as to become some one thing, and thus capable of being thought.³⁷ If Aristotle associates this sort of unity with νοῦς, as he does in *De Anima* III.6 – “What makes each thing be one is νοῦς”³⁸ – it is that activity of νοῦς that operates together with both the powers of perceiving

³⁴ *De An.* III.6, 430a26–8.

³⁵ *Meta.* VI.4, 1027b20–3. This, of course, resonates with *Metaphysics* IV.7, 1011b25–9. See Chapters 1 and 2.

³⁶ *Meta.* VI.4, 1027b23–5.

³⁷ This passage might be heard together with the passage from the beginning of *De Interpretatione* in which Aristotle gestures to the complex ecology of encounter pursued in the course of the *De Anima* and then dismisses it as “another matter [ἄλλης γὰρ πραγματείας].” See *De Int.* 16a9. The “other matter” there goes together with the “other story” here as λόγος goes together with πρᾶγμα: word and thing belong together in a natural ecology of encounter that conditions the possibility of human thinking. For humans, thinking itself is born from an ability to respond to the saying of things, and it grows and deepens in the attempt to put things into words.

³⁸ *De An.* III.6, 430b5–6.

and φαντασία; it is thinking in the sense of thinking things through [διανοεῖσθαι].³⁹ Indeed, Aristotle's insistence in *Metaphysics* VI.4 that "the true and the false are not in the things [ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν] ... but in thinking things through [διανοίᾳ]"⁴⁰ reinforces the point that the thinking in question here is bound to appearing in such a way that the intelligibility of each thing depends upon the degree to which thinking is able to attend and lend voice to the appearing of things in accordance with what each shows itself *to be*. If, however, the true and the false are said to be *in* this sort of thinking and not in the things, this cannot be taken to mean that truth and falsity are mere properties of propositions understood in isolation from the things they seek to articulate. Here, we are returned to the way of address and the λόγος ἀποφαντικός that seeks to say things as they show themselves. This sort of saying, however, has itself been shown to be part of an organic ecology of encounter in and through which thinking lives together with things. As such, the way of address cannot be segregated from the way of response by which things are given through perceiving and φαντασία to thinking.

What Aristotle says immediately after his bald assertion that the false and the true are not in things but in thinking things through suggests the manner in which truth lives between thinking and things, even if, from one perspective, it can be located primarily in the mind.⁴¹ Aristotle thus continues, "[B]ut concerning simple things and the what-it-is for things, [the false and the true] are not even in thinking things through [ἐν διανοίᾳ]."⁴² On one hand, this qualification emphasizes that truth is said differently when thinking finds

³⁹ At *De An.* III.3, 427b8–9, Aristotle uses τὸ νοεῖν to refer to the sort of thinking that can be true or false. Later in that chapter, 428a3–5, he lists νοῦς as one of the powers or active conditions by which we discern and speak truly or falsely. This echoes the presentation of the so-called intellectual excellences in *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.3, 1139b17. This tendency to deploy νοῦς in contexts in which, strictly speaking, διανοία might be more proper is understandable if we take νοῦς as a more generic name for a variety of kinds of thinking.

⁴⁰ *Meta.*, VI.4, 1027b25–7.

⁴¹ As has been heard, the tendency to ghettoize truth by confining it to the subjective mind, be it divine or human, elides the degree to which truth lives between thinking and things. See Chapter 2.

⁴² *Meta.* VI.4, 1027b27–8.

itself engaged with concrete things encountered in the world than it is when thinking encounters the what-it-is for such things to be. On the other hand, however, the qualification also suggests the extent to which the things themselves insist upon and express a truth that may be said to be objective – one accessible to thinking only in and through a dialogue with things in which the things themselves are heard to insistently express what it is they are.⁴³

Indeed, already in the *Categories*, Aristotle recognizes that “the thing [πρᾶγμα] appears somehow responsible for the being true of the saying [τοῦ εἶναι ἀληθῆ τὸν λόγον].”⁴⁴ If Aristotle can say truth is in thinking and not in the things, it is only because the truth of thinking is held to account by the things themselves. In *Metaphysics* IX.10, Aristotle further articulates the dynamic at work in the truth and falsity of things. There he begins the discussion by suggesting that, although being and not being are said in many ways – according to the schema of the categories and according to potentiality and being-at-work – “being in the most proper sense is the true or the false [τὸ δὲ κυριώτατα ὄν ἀληθὲς ἢ ψεῦδος].”⁴⁵ He goes on to treat this most proper

⁴³ See Chapter 1.

⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Aristotelis Categoriae et Liber de Interpretatione* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), *Categories*, 14b14–23.

⁴⁵ *Meta.* IX.10, 1051b1. Burnyeat et al. suggest that the most natural way to read τὸ δὲ κυριώτατα ὄν ἀληθὲς ἢ ψεῦδος is to take κυριώτατα with ὄν rather than with ἀληθὲς. See Myles Burnyeat et al., *Notes on Eta and Theta of Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 156. They argue, “[T]he fact that ὄν is a key term in the sentence makes it very difficult to take κυριώτατα and ἀληθὲς together.” The decision to take κυριώτατα with ὄν, however, seems to give rise to a contradiction between *Metaphysics* VI.4 and IX.10. In the former, Aristotle sets aside the way being is said as truth because “since the intertwining and dividing are in thinking but not in things, and being of this sort is different from the being of what *is* in the most proper sense [κυρίως] ... both being as the incidental and being as the true must be set aside” (1027b28–34). Crivelli thus takes issue with Burnyeat et al., suggesting that taking κυριώτατα with ἀληθὲς is justified too by the context of the passage insofar as “since Θ 10 discusses truth and falsehood, it is just as natural to understand κυριώτατα (‘in the strictest sense’) as introducing the strictest sense in which something can be called true and false.” See Paolo Crivelli, *Aristotle on Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 236. This would dissolve the contradiction insofar as VI.4 would be speaking of the most proper sense of being, while IX.10 would be speaking about the most proper sense of the true and false. Heidegger suggests that the difference between VI.4 and IX.10 can be explained by recognizing that there are two distinct meanings of truth in Aristotle: one addressed in VI.4, in which truth is a question of λόγος and διάνοια, and another addressed in IX.10, in which truth is a question of touching. See Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie*,

sense of being as it is said with respect to concrete things encountered in the world: “[I]n respect to actual things [ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων] this [most proper sense of being] is due to combining and separating in such a way that one who thinks that which is separated is separated and what is combined is combined speaks truth [ἀληθεύει], while the one who holds thought contrary to the things is false [ἔψευσται δὲ ὁ ἐναντίως ἔχων ἢ τὰ πράγματα].”⁴⁶ The emphasis here is clearly on the things themselves – they are somehow responsible for the truth or falsity of the λόγος. If, however, this conception of truth is not to deteriorate into a simplistic dynamic in which thoughts are mapped onto things in such a way that if they correspond the thoughts are true, if not, they are false, then the other, more complex story that tells of the manner in which things open themselves to intelligibility by appearing as some one thing will have to be held in mind. Indeed, the very path of response that gives rise to the possibility of thinking is organically bound to and cannot be separated from the attempt to articulate things as they show themselves to be.

However, in the course of this attempt to put things into words, indeed, as a direct result of the assiduous pursuit of the nature of things, the natural human tendency to stretch out toward knowing comes into contact with that insistent saying by which things express themselves as themselves. In *De Anima* III.6, Aristotle speaks of a truth in relation to the thinking of “undivided things,” the dynamics of which he articulates as follows:

Every saying of something according to something, just as every denying, is also either true or false; but it is not so for every thinking [νοῦς], but the

vol. 22, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1993), 305–6. Crivelli characterizes Heidegger’s position as a claim that the two texts are about different properties: VI.4 is about truth as a property of thoughts, while IX.10 is about truth as a property of objects. He criticizes Heidegger because his position “requires that this change of properties should not be reflected in a change in terminology: Aristotle would be using the same word, ‘true,’ to express both the property that holds of thoughts and the property that holds of objects.” See Crivelli, *Aristotle on Truth*, 235–6. One can easily imagine Aristotle responding that truth is said in many ways; the question, however, is the degree to which Heidegger’s reading privileges noetic over logical truth. The real challenge is to think noetic, and indeed also aesthetic, truth together with logical truth. If the most proper sense of being is the true or the false, this is because truth holds of both thoughts and objects insofar as it grows out of their encounter.

⁴⁶ *Meta.* XI.10, 1051b2–5.

thinking of the what-it-is according to its what-was-being [ὁ τοῦ τί ἐστι κατὰ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι] is true, and is not a saying something according to something.⁴⁷

Aristotle introduces another sense of truth precisely at those moments at which thinking encounters the very what-it-is for something to be. Yet even if this encounter itself is not a matter of declarative saying, of saying something according to something, nevertheless, in Aristotle's own attempt to articulate the dynamics of ontological encounter, he cannot but engage in a kind of predication, insisting that the what-it-is of things is thought "according to its what-was-being," κατὰ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι. This phrase beautifully articulates the finitude of human thinking. It says that human thinking encounters the what-it-is always as a what-it-was, that is, as having entered into encounter though appearing. With the κατὰ here, Aristotle gestures to the complex ecology of apophantic saying that "goes down" to each thing in an attempt to articulate it according to itself.

In *Metaphysics* IX.10, Aristotle again puts the dynamics of ontological encounter into words, speaking here not of "undivided things" but of "noncomposite" things in attempting to articulate the manner in which thinking comes into contact with the very what-it-is of things. In a passage that clearly echoes that of *De Anima* III.6, he writes of such noncomposite things:

Rather, just as the true concerning these things is not the same [as with composite things], so neither is the to be, but the true or the false is this, on the one hand, the true is to touch [θιγγεῖν] and to say [φάναι] (for affirmation [κατάφασις] is not the same as saying [φάσις]); on the other hand, ignorance is not touching. For it is not possible to be deceived concerning what-it-is, except incidentally, and similarly, also concerning substances that are not composed [περὶ τὰς μὴ συνθετὰς οὐσίας], for it is not possible to be deceived about them.⁴⁸

This passage reinforces the notion that the "undivided things" of *De Anima* III.6 and the "noncomposite things" introduced here in *Metaphysics* IX.10 are the same, namely, the very what-it-is to be.⁴⁹ The

⁴⁷ *De An.* III.6, 430b26–9.

⁴⁸ *Meta.* IX.10, 1051b22–8.

⁴⁹ Berti has argued that the "undivided" things in *De Anima* III.6 and the "noncomposite" things of *Metaphysics* XI.10 "coincide perfectly"; the first articulation is designed to

true or false for the what-it-is to be is a matter of touching or not touching, of saying or not saying, indeed, of thinking or not thinking [voεῖν/ἀγνοεῖν]. It is important to note here that Aristotle establishes a *similarity* between the what-it-is of things and those substances [οὐσίαι] whose very being is noncomposite. For both, the true is to touch and it is not possible to be deceived about them, but they are not to be conflated. In speaking about truth as a sort of touching, Aristotle is not only speaking about those substances that are simple, but, as the example of the white in wood to which Aristotle appeals in clarifying the meaning of the term ‘noncomposite’ already suggests, he is also speaking about the noncomposite, undivided natures of sensible, composite substances and even of accidental characteristics like the white of wood.⁵⁰ Indeed, just as perceiving is not deceived when in touch with the white, so to speak, so too is thinking not deceived when in touch with the what-it-is to be.⁵¹

emphasize the unity of such things while the second emphasizes their separateness. See Enrico Berti, “The Intellection of Indivisibles According to Aristotle *De Anima* III 6,” in *Aristotle on Mind and the Senses*, ed. G. E. R. Lloyd and G. E. L. Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 148.

⁵⁰ For a discussion of this, see Long and Lee, “*Nous* and *Logos* in Aristotle,” 361.

⁵¹ This suggests part of the impetus for Aristotle’s repeated comparisons between the relation of perceiving and its proper object and that of thinking and its proper object – the what-it-is to be. Thus, the *De Anima* III.6 discussion of the true ends by establishing an analogy between the seeing of white and the thinking of the what-it-is: “But the same way that the seeing of something proper to sight is true, but seeing if the white thing is a human being or not is not always true, so it holds with [thinking] however many things are without matter” (430b29–30). Berti suggests that the things without matter here are not immaterial substances, but essences: “The fact that in the last line of the chapter Aristotle designates all these things, of which there is intellection, as things ‘without matter’ (ἀνευ ὕλης), does not mean that they are immaterial substances, since all essences, whether of substances or of accidents, are immaterial, but, being universals, they can never be separated substances, that is they cannot exist independently of material realities, but are, rather, the immaterial essences of material realities.” See Berti, “The Intellection of Indivisibles,” 147. It seems that Berti’s defense of this position generated a heated debate at the symposium in Cambridge at which it was originally presented. Berti reports that Sorabji agreed that the search involved was the search for the what-it-is and that Aubenque argued in contrast that the search for the what-it-is comes after having or not having intellection of it (162n39). The impetus behind Berti’s rejection of Aubenque’s position seems to be a desire to avoid a mystical reading of νοῦς in Aristotle, a reading that Berti explicitly associates with Heidegger (142).

Yet just as aesthetic truth is made possible by a certain λόγος, the condition for the possibility of noetic truth is a certain saying, indeed, one that goes down to the things and seeks to articulate them according to the way they show themselves. Thus, after establishing the similarity between the what-it-is of things and noncomposite substances, Aristotle returns to the more general discussion of truth in relation to noncomposites:

However many things that are in such a way that it is a something [εἶναι τι] and is in its being-at-work [ἐνεργείᾳ], concerning these things, it is not possible to be deceived, but one either thinks [νοεῖν] it or not; but about these things, the what-it-is is sought, whether they are such and such [τοιαῦτά ἐστιν] or not.⁵²

Here Aristotle suggests that the noetic encounter with the very what-it-is to be for something is not mystically revealed, but rather involves a kind of seeking. Indeed, it seems to involve a seeking that asks after the suchness of things as expressed in their “being something” and “at-work.”⁵³ Such a seeking involves going down to each determinate “something” at work being what it is in an attempt to articulate it according to the way it expresses itself; it involves the attempt to articulate what Aristotle calls the “definition,” ὁρισμός.

SAYING THINGS ACCORDING TO THEMSELVES

In *Metaphysics* VII.4, Aristotle says that “the τί ἦν εἶναι of each thing is what it is said to be according to itself [ὃ λέγεται καθ’ αὐτό].”⁵⁴ Aristotle

⁵² *Meta.* IX.10, 1051b30–3.

⁵³ This is a contested, but justifiable interpretation of a difficult text. The main issues seem to concern: (1) What sort of noncomposite things is Aristotle concerned with here, and (2) what is the order in which thinking comes into contact with the what-it-is: is it as a result of seeking or does it inspire seeking? As to the first, Aristotle’s emphasis on the “being-at-work of such things and their being something” suggests that although what it is not possible to be deceived by is the very what-it-is, still, this what-it-is shows itself in the being-at-work and in being “something” determinate. See Long and Lee, “*Nous* and *Logos* in Aristotle,” 360n43. Thus, we need not assume that Aristotle is talking about noncomposite *substances* here, but only about the what-it-is, which is itself noncomposite. As to the second, Berti defends the position suggested here when he argues that what is inquired about is the very what-it-is of things and that our intellection of the what-it-is is the result of the inquiry. See Berti, “The Intellection of Indivisibles,” 149–50.

⁵⁴ *Meta.* VII.4, 1029b13–14.

calls the sort of saying that points out the kathautarchy of a thing a definition – a ὁρισμός. It is significant that his discussion of definition does not begin with abstract concepts, but by drawing our attention to something with which each person is exceedingly familiar – you yourself. He insists:

Thus, the to be for you is not the to be for the educated, for you are not educated in virtue of yourself. Therefore, you are that which you are in virtue of yourself, but not even all of this, for it is not what is in virtue of itself in the way that white is in a surface, because the to be for a surface is not the to be for white.⁵⁵

The translation here seeks to capture the way Aristotle uses the articulation infinitive in conjunction with a noun in the dative case to pick out in λόγος the τί ἦν εἶναι of the being under consideration. He writes, οὐ γάρ ἐστι τὸ σοὶ εἶναι τὸ μουσικῶν εἶναι – “thus the to be for you is not the to be for the educated.” The terms in the dative case designate the things whose very to be is under consideration.⁵⁶ Aristotle often appends a noun in the dative case to the τί ἦν εἶναι formulation to indicate that the being in question belongs to the thing itself.⁵⁷ This generates expressions that might be translated as the what-it-was-for-you-to-be, that is, what you are said to be καθ’ αὐτό, according to yourself. To be educated is not what you are according to yourself; indeed, the passage anticipates the great difficulty in coming up with an articulation of the what-it-was-for-something-to-be, for not everything that is said καθ’ αὐτό is to be included. Aristotle goes on to suggest that there is a sense in which we might say that the white is in a surface, indeed, that the surface is in fact white in virtue of itself, καθ’ αὐτό. But we cannot say that the to-be-for-surface is the same as the to-be-for-the-white. The being of the white is incidental to the being

⁵⁵ Ibid., 1029b14–17.

⁵⁶ For a detailed discussion of this technical term in Aristotle, see Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 60–75. Although the contours of that account may be affirmed, it remains caught up in an understanding of the εἶδος that fails to appreciate the extent to which in Aristotle the εἶδος is understood naturalistically and thus as endemic to the way natural beings express themselves. For a more naturalistic and phenomenological understanding of the εἶδος, particularly in its relation to μορφή, see Long, “Aristotle’s Phenomenology of Form.”

⁵⁷ See Ernst Tugendhat, *Ti Kata Tinos: Eine Untersuchung zu Struktur und Ursprung Aristotelischer Grundbegriffe* (Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1958), 18n17.

of a surface; it is κατὰ συμβεβηκός, that which has come along with the surface but does not do so necessarily or even for the most part.

In order to draw out the sense in which such incidental attributes cannot be part of the articulation of the very what it was for something to be, Aristotle develops a quite ridiculous example. The humor of it is heuristically helpful. In order to consider whether a pale human-being apprehended as a kind of composite – a combination of the pale and the human-being – has a τί ἦν εἶναι, Aristotle suggests, “Let the name for it [the pale human] be ‘cloak.’ What is it for the ‘cloak’ to be? [τί ἐστι τὸ ἱματίῳ εἶναι].”⁵⁸ Here the name ‘cloak’ designates the pale human-being; indeed, it covers over the distinction between being pale and being human, making the two somehow one. Such a naming is indiscriminate, but it does allow Aristotle to illustrate the absurdity of two ways of seeking to articulate the τί ἦν εἶναι of something. He claims that the attempt to define the “cloak” – that is, to articulate what it is according to itself – thus fails in two ways: it either exaggerates or understates. It says too much when it seeks to articulate the what-it-is for the pale by stating what it is for a pale human-being to be, for the “cloak” does not permit the pale to be articulated in separation from the human-being. It says too little, however, when it seeks to articulate the what it is to be for the “cloak” in terms of the what it is to be for the pale, for the “cloak” is not simply the pale.⁵⁹ “The pale person is of course pale,” says Aristotle, “but what-it-was-to-be for it is not to be pale.”⁶⁰ Aristotle thus goes on to wonder if this thing cloaked in this way has a τί ἦν εἶναι at all.

For that which is a τόδε τι is the τί ἦν εἶναι; but whenever one thing is said according to another [ἄλλο κατ’ ἄλλου], it is not that which is a τόδε τι; for example, the pale human-being is not that which is a τόδε τι, if, indeed, the τόδε inheres only in οὐσία.⁶¹

A connection is here established between τόδε τι, οὐσία, and τί ἦν εἶναι – it seems that the what-it-was-to-be can be articulated only

⁵⁸ *Meta.* VII.4, 1029b27–8.

⁵⁹ Thus, the true definition is situated, like the truthful person, at the mean between that which says too much, the braggart, and that which says too little, the ironic person. See *NE* IV.7, 1127a21–26, and Chapter 1.

⁶⁰ *Meta.* VII.4, 1030a1–2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1030a2–6.

for the sort of being that is a $\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon\ \tau\iota$ – a this. We have already suggested that this term – $\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon\ \tau\iota$ – somehow articulates the appearing individual as such, neither simply an instantiated particular nor an unintelligible singular.⁶² Yet if this term picks out the appearing individual, it does so in a way that announces at once its intelligibility and elusiveness.

The demonstrative $\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon$ points to that dimension of appearing that escapes articulation by the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$; it simply points – “there” – indexing the singular presencing of qualities Aristotle himself associates with encounters of perceiving. The demonstrative gestures to the singularity of that which appears, a singularity about which it is neither possible to be deceived nor to put into words.⁶³ Yet already here in this indexical gesture, things are drawn into relation and a certain intelligibility is born: the $\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon$ is always already drawn to the $\tau\iota$.⁶⁴ The

⁶² See Chapter 5. See too Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 51–2, 87–9, 135–6.

⁶³ Peirce says of an indexical sign: “The index asserts nothing; it only says ‘There!’ It takes hold of our eyes, as it were, and forcibly directs them to a particular object, and there it stops. Demonstrative and relative pronouns are nearly pure indices, because they denote things without describing them.” Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 3:361. Insofar as Peirce associates “Firstness” with “unlimited and uncontrolled variety and multiplicity” and also with something’s being “peculiar and idiosyncratic,” it is possible to read the demonstrative $\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon$ in Aristotle’s $\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon\ \tau\iota$ as gesturing to the Firstness of things, which has here been designated in terms of “singularity” and “unicity.” See Chapter 1.

⁶⁴ In might be interesting to note that for Levinas the $\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon\ \tau\iota$ already names the singular as conceptualized; it is already caught up in the conceptual – it names the singular as already violated. “The refusal of the concept is not a resistance to generalization by the *tode ti*, which is on the same plane as the concept – and by which the concept is defined, as by an antithetical term.” Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 118. However, the ecology of encounter to which the $\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon\ \tau\iota$ points has a complexity that is perhaps better articulated in Peircean terms. As has been intimated in the discussion of perceptive discernment in Chapter 5, the effort involved in perceiving is itself a sign of the Secondness of all encounters of perceiving. As Peirce insists, “The experience of effort cannot exist without the experience of resistance. Effort only is effort by virtue of its being opposed; and no third element enters.” Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 8:330. If the $\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon$ gestures to Firstness, it stretches out already into a Secondness that points to a Thirdness, which is the “triadic relation existing between a sign, its object and the interpreting thought.... A Third is something which brings a First into relation to a Second. A sign is a sort of Third” (8:332). This describes well the manner in which the sign $\tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon\ \tau\iota$ in Aristotle accomplishes the intelligible, and the intelligibility that grows out of the relation between a First and Second and is not, as Levinas suggests, an imposition upon a pure Firstness.

τόδε τι points to the very appearing of the individual itself, the site at which the presencing of qualities discernible in perceiving becomes a determinate “something,” τι. Indeed, here in *Metaphysics* VII.4, the pull of the intelligible can already be felt, for the what-it-was-to-be for something can be articulated only in terms of its εἶδος.

In order to draw this out, Aristotle delineates two sorts of saying: one that says something according to something else (ἄλλο κατ’ ἄλλου) and another, associated with definition, that says something according to itself:

Therefore, there is a τί ἢν εἶναι of however many things the λόγος of which is a definition [ὁρισμός]. But there is not a ὁρισμός whenever the name signifies the same thing as a λόγος (for all λόγοι would be definitions, since there could be a name for any group of λόγοι whatsoever, and even the *Iliad* would be a definition), but [there is a ὁρισμός] whenever [there is an articulation] of some primary thing [πρώτου τινός]; these sorts of things are however many things are said not by articulating one thing according to another [ἄλλο κατ’ ἄλλου].⁶⁵

A ὁρισμός is a peculiar kind of λόγος; it involves a different kind of saying than the indiscriminate naming that gathers in the manner of the cloak: by throwing a cover over the thing, it goes on to designate it as somehow one without regard to the articulate contours of its being.⁶⁶ In the ὁρισμός, we must hear the echo of the λόγος ἀποφαντικός, the kind of declarative saying that goes down to things and attempts to articulate them according to the way they show themselves as themselves. This sort of saying is precisely *not* a saying of one thing according to another (ἄλλο κατ’ ἄλλου), although it may still be a kind of saying τινός κατὰ τινός, of something according to something, a saying of something that goes down to something. Indeed, the ὁρισμός is a saying of something *according to itself*, καθ’ αὐτό, a saying that goes down to the τόδε τι in order to articulate it according to itself.⁶⁷ The definition seeks to articulate the τόδε τι as it articulates itself.

⁶⁵ *Meta* VII.4, 1030a6–11.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Phys.* I.1, 184b2; see too Chapter 3.

⁶⁷ Ernst Tugendhat recognizes that the ὁρισμός is directed toward the τι of the τόδε τι and that it involves a saying “something according to,” τι κατὰ. He writes, “But the τι that is isolated in ὁρισμός is essentially a ‘τί κατὰ’; it shows, although distinctively, what it is, beyond itself according to a ὑποκειμενον.” See Tugendhat, *Ti Kata Tinos*, 30. For Tugendhat, following Heidegger, the ὑποκειμενον is that being which lies there factically before one (14–5n13).

Aristotle goes on to delineate the difference between the saying that says one thing according to another and the saying that is the *ὀρισμός*: “Therefore, there will be no τί ἦν εἶναι inhering in any of the things that are not forms of a genus [τῶν μὴ γένους εἰδῶν], but only to these (for these things seem to be said not according to a participating in, and being affected by, or as incidental [συμβεβηκός]).”⁶⁸ The translation “forms of a genus” is designed to call into question the presumption that the εἶδη involved are necessarily caught up in a taxonomic economy of species and genera governed by an ultimate, highest universal.⁶⁹ Rather, the phrase resonates with a passage in VII.12, where Aristotle uses the same phrase to make the point that the genus does exist apart from the forms that belong to the genus, and thus that “a definition is the articulation of differences [ὁ ἐκ τῶν διαφορῶν λόγος].”⁷⁰ In the passage from VII.12, the example Aristotle takes of a genus is the voice. He says, “For the voice is a genus and matter, and its differentiations make forms and letters out of that.”⁷¹

⁶⁸ *Meta* VII.4 1030a11–14.

⁶⁹ Ross simply presumes the phrase to mean “only a species has an *essence* or *definition*.” See Ross, *Aristotle’s “Metaphysics,”* 2:167. Lewis supports the suggestion here that the phrase should be taken to point to the meaning of εἶδος in the *Metaphysics*. See Frank Lewis, “Form and Predication in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*,” in *How Things Are: Studies in Predication and the History of Philosophy and Science*, ed. James Bogen and James McGuire (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1984), 75. Furth has argued convincingly that “Aristotle’s project is not taxonomic.” See Montgomery Furth, *Substance, Form and Psyche: An Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 99.

⁷⁰ *Meta*. VII.12, 1038a8–9. Frede and Patzig suggest precisely this connection; see Michael Frede and Günther Patzig, *Aristoteles “Metaphysik Z” Kommentar*, vol. 2 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1988), 66.

⁷¹ *Meta*. VII.12, 1038a6–8. The example suggests that what Aristotle has in mind is what Michael Loux has called “form-predication” and Frank Lewis articulates in terms of “supervenience.” Loux and Lewis are correct to identify a way of predication that does not involve the εἶδος being said of a composite individual in such a way that the individual is picked out as a member of its species. Loux, however, insists that form predication – of the form “this pack of flesh and bone is a man” – does not express a relation of essential predication, thus continuing to give ontological privilege to species predication. See Michael J. Loux, *Primary Ousia: An Essay on Aristotle’s “Metaphysics” Z and H* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 120. Lewis’s use of the term “supervenience” to think the εἶδος/ἔνλη relation – “form supervenes on the matter” – is itself problematic as it implies the coming upon something from the outside. See Lewis, “How Things Are,” 71. Aristotle, however, thinks the taking on of form in biological terms: that which exists as a mere “heap” of matter takes on form through a process of ripening (*Meta*. VII.16, 1040b9–10). For a

We might then say that these differentiations must be oriented by and responsive to the very differentiations that show themselves in things that appear if they are to have any hope of being articulations of the what-it-was-to-be for such things.

Thus, in *Metaphysics* VII.4, the phrase “forms of a genus” suggests that Aristotle has in mind the articulation of fully differentiated forms that belong to individuated, determinate things – that is, to something that may be designated as a τόδε τι. Articulating the being of a τόδε τι in terms of its εἶδος seems to provide a way to articulate its very what-it-was-to-be because it is *not* a derivative kind of saying, not a saying of something as participating in something else, or as being affected by something or as incidental. Here the explicit shift away from a Platonic conception in which appearances participate in an eternal and independent εἶδος opens the space for an understanding of the εἶδος as itself belonging to and, indeed, expressive of the appearances themselves.⁷² As the self-expression of things in appearing, the εἶδος is not said according to another (ἄλλο κατ’ ἄλλου); rather, it expresses things καθ’ αὐτά, according to themselves.

This phenomenological conception of the εἶδος opens the possibility of a naturalistic phenomenology of truth in Aristotle, a truth rooted in the attempt to articulate things according to the way they express themselves. Aristotle points to this in VII.4 when he writes, “But it is necessary to investigate also how it is necessary to speak concerning each thing, but not more, indeed, than the how it holds itself [τὸ πῶς ἔχει].”⁷³ This indicates the importance of not permitting the λέγειν to become detached from the way a being holds itself. Here, τὸ πῶς ἔχει must be heard as pointing not merely to the concrete being encountered in the saying, but more specifically to the way this being holds itself in its being. The intransitive sense of ἔχειν means to hold

more detailed discussion of this process of individuation, see Furth, *Substance, Form and Psyche*, 121–7; Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 97–8. A more naturalistic and phenomenological approach to Aristotle is able to recognize how the εἶδος shows itself in the active life of the thing under consideration. This showing of the εἶδος can be articulated by a saying that goes down to things and listens.

⁷² This understanding of the εἶδος can be thought in terms of a deepening of Aristotle’s own conception of μορφή; see Long, “Aristotle’s Phenomenology of Form.”

⁷³ *Meta.* VII.4, 1030a27–8.

oneself, indeed, to be;⁷⁴ the term is used by the Greeks to express a concrete way of existing or, perhaps better, to express the way a being precisely holds itself. The sentence, then, serves as a caveat against the dangers of a λόγος carried away with itself, against a λόγος that does not remain loyal to the phenomena.

Aristotle's attempt to articulate the way things might be said according to themselves has led him to identify the what-it-was-to-be for each thing with both the τόδε τι, the concrete composite individual, and its εἶδος. This marks an important refinement in Aristotle's understanding of how the εἶδος is related to the things to which it belongs. This refinement can be discerned with some clarity by attending to the way Aristotle says εἶδος and μορφή, or shape, together in the middle books of the *Metaphysics*.⁷⁵ If μορφή has always been intimately connected to the contingent individual, the εἶδος lives a kind of amphibious life, at once expressing the very being of the individual and yet also capable of being separated according to λόγος in such a way that it can be thought as somehow independent of the individual itself.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ See Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. ἑχεν, v.

⁷⁵ In "Aristotle's Phenomenology of Form," a longer story is told about the dynamic relationship between εἶδος and μορφή, which is there traced from the *Categories* through the *Physics* into the *Metaphysics*. See Long, "Aristotle's Phenomenology of Form." What follows is a slightly revised account of their relationship in the middle books of the *Metaphysics*. I am grateful to *Epoché* for granting me permission to republish parts of that essay here.

⁷⁶ Many commentators explicitly assert that εἶδος and μορφή are synonyms or implicitly suggest as much by translating the two by the single word "form." Daniel Graham is explicit. While he insists on the difference between μορφή and εἶδος in Aristotle's thinking in the *Organon*, he says that in Aristotle's mature system "μορφή is a synonym for εἶδος." See Daniel W. Graham, *Aristotle's Two Systems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 96. While Sachs does a nice job of delineating the difference in the glossary of his translation of the *Physics*, he translates μορφή sometimes as "shape" and sometimes as "form" depending on context and in accordance with his intent to rejoice in variety, for "some words have many translations that are equally good in their different ways." See Joe Sachs, *Aristotle's "Physics": A Guided Study*, Masterworks of Discovery (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 8. Hippocrates Apostle's translations gesture to the difference with the use of italics, often rendering μορφή as "*form*" and εἶδος as "form." His glossary cautiously claims that the "terms 'form' and '*form*' are probably used synonymously." See Hippocrates G. Apostle, *Aristotle's "Metaphysics"* (Grinnell, IA: Peripatetic Press, 1979), 460. In the Barnes collection, neither the translation of the *Physics* by Hardie and Gaye nor that of the *Metaphysics* by Ross attempts to delineate the difference between μορφή and εἶδος. In both translations, the two terms are indiscriminately

The attempt to articulate things in terms of the εἶδος they exhibit thus lends insight into the manner in which these individuals not only are whole beings existing according to themselves, but also belong to the community of the whole, the expression of which is itself somehow discernible by attending to the expression of each. By listening to how Aristotle says μορφή and εἶδος together in the *Metaphysics*, we will hear how his ontological engagement with the τὸδε τι leads to the biological works, which embody the phenomenological naturalism that seeks to articulate things according to the way they express themselves.

As soon as Aristotle establishes the connection in *Metaphysics* VII.4 between the articulation of the what-it-was-to-be with the fully differentiated εἶδος exhibited in concrete individuals, he recognizes an aporia. Thus, he begins chapter 5: “But there is an aporia: whenever someone denies that a λόγος that adds things together [τὸν ἐκ προσθέσεως λόγον] is a definition, will there be a definition of any of the things that are not simple but are as having been coupled together [συνδεδυασμένων]?”⁷⁷ The example to which Aristotle appeals in explicating what he means by the sorts of beings that exist as having been coupled together is snubness (σιμότης). Here the two things having been coupled together – συνδεδυασμένων – seem to be the nose and being-squashed-in, or concavity (κοιλότης). The reason this example is so helpful is that it points to something – namely, snubness – that we can define only by mentioning the material in which the shape appears. To say that snubness is concavity is to say too little, for snubness is not the abstract shape, concavity, but indeed the shape of a nose – it is concavity *in a nose*. Thus, its definition must somehow make mention of the nose in which the shape is manifest.

Aristotle is here in the process of thinking through the various senses of ὑποκείμενον, that which is set there before one, begun in VII.3:

rendered as “form.” See Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Martin Heidegger is an exception to this tendency to elide the difference between μορφή and εἶδος. See Martin Heidegger, “Vom Wesen und Begriff der Φύσις. Aristoteles, *Physik* B, 1,” in *Wegmarken*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976).

⁷⁷ *Meta.* VII.5, 1030b14–16.

[I]n one way it is said to be matter, in another μορφή, in a third, that which is from these. (By matter I mean, for example, bronze, by μορφή the shape of the outward appearance [τὸ σχῆμα τῆς ἰδέας], by that which is from these the statue as a composite), with the result that if the εἶδος is prior to and is being more than matter, then by the same λόγος it will be prior to that which is from both.⁷⁸

Here a certain tension between μορφή and εἶδος can be heard, for Aristotle says μορφή as he links form intimately to the shape and appearance of the composite, but as he considers the ontological priority of form, he says εἶδος. This is the very tension that turns Aristotle back to the question of the possibility of articulating the composite according to itself, which he had put aside at the end of VII.3. Already in chapter 4, a certain composite [σύνθετα] is at issue, the standard example of which is a pale human-being.⁷⁹ On this example, as has been heard, paleness is incidental to the being of the human-being and so is not part of the what-it-was-for-the-human-being-to-be. But in chapter 5 Aristotle seeks to flesh out, so to speak, the meaning of the composite. He begins here as he had in chapter 3 with λέγω – “I mean” – Aristotle’s standard locution when he is seeking to clarify a novel formulation:⁸⁰

I mean, for example, there is a nose and concavity, and also snubness, that which is said from both [τὸ ἐκ τῶν δυοῖν λεγόμενον], this in that [τόδε ἐν τῷδε], and indeed [γε] neither the concavity nor the snubness is in any way an attribute of the nose incidentally [κατὰ συμβεβηκός], but in virtue of itself [καθ’ αὐτό]. Nor is it in the way that the pale is in Callias, or in a human-being, because Callias, who is incidentally a human-being, is pale, but in the way maleness is in an animal or equality is in an amount, and all of the things that are said to belong to something in virtue of itself [καθ’ αὐτό].⁸¹

One is made to feel the force of Aristotle’s attention to the palpable presence of the συνδεδυσσμένον – that which has been coupled.⁸²

⁷⁸ Ibid., VII.3, 1029a2–7.

⁷⁹ Ibid., VII.4, 1029b22.

⁸⁰ See ibid., VII.3, 1029a30.

⁸¹ Ibid., VII.5, 1030b16–23.

⁸² This is a perfect participle that carries with it completed aspect. The point here is that what shows itself is something that *already has been* joined and now appears as one. The verb from which this participle comes is the Greek word for uniting a

It is a “this in that.” To think along with Aristotle here is to participate in a kind of ostentation: his λόγος involves the kind of pointing we have associated with the λόγος ἀποφαντικός; it is the pointing that seeks to articulate the being encountered as it shows itself in its truth. Here the composite shows itself as *already having being coupled*, as a “this in that” in which the “this” cannot be separated from the “that” without destroying the unity of the being under consideration. Here the pale human-being *in no way* captures the nature of such a composite. The force of Aristotle’s language is surprisingly strong: he uses the Greek particle γέ for emphasis and deploys a sentence structure with a double negative, which in Greek, unlike in English, serves to underscore and strengthen the force of the negation rather than to negate it. The relation between the shape of the nose and the nose itself here is not considered incidental, but rather the shape is in the nose as a dimension of the being of the nose – snubness is said of the nose in virtue of itself (καθ’ αὐτό). Just as to be female is a dimension of the what-it-was-to-be for a particular animal, so too is snubness a dimension of the what-it-was-to-be for an individual nose.

This points to a different sort of composite – that whose formal and material dimensions seem to be part of its τί ἦν εἶναι. But what has emerged to this point is that the composite cannot be thought in terms of the relation of a property to its οὐσία – it is not like the pale human-being hidden under the “cloak.” But neither is it completely analogous to the statue of bronze. The vocabulary of the συνδευασμένον already hints, however, at a more organic and dynamic account of the τόδε τι. The significance of this discussion of the snub for the question of truth is that it points to the site of appearing in which things have always already somehow been coupled. This dimension of having-been, however, has itself been seen to condition all appearing insofar as memory cooperates with φαντάσματα in order to translate what is encountered in perceiving to thinking.⁸³ This dimension of having-been is reaffirmed by the imperfect ἦν in the expression

pair in wedlock. Yet the two that become one here can be thought only through the encounter with the one, which appears precisely not as two, but as one. Any attempt to trace the being of this one to a more original two is a kind of abstraction.

⁸³ See Chapter 5.

τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, which itself articulates the very manner in which the soul is able to access the what it is of things – it does so κατὰ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, “according to the what-it-was-to-be.”⁸⁴ Thus, a certain having-been is endemic to the very intelligibility of things for humans. The example of the snub draws our attention to the temporality of human thinking insofar as it embodies the very structure of appearing and opens the question of the intelligibility of what appears. Already in *De Anima* III.4 Aristotle appeals to the snub in his difficult discussion of the relation between perceiving and thinking.⁸⁵

The snub appears again in *Metaphysics* VI.1, where Aristotle attempts to take notice of the manner in which the τί ἦν εἶναι of such things having been coupled is said: “But it is necessary for the τί ἦν εἶναι and how it is articulated not to escape our notice [λανθάνειν], for indeed to search without this is to do nothing.”⁸⁶ Here Aristotle suggests that the τί ἦν εἶναι is itself articulated and that an investigation into the nature of things is nothing if the τί ἦν εἶναι is not sought by attending to *how it is articulated*. For Aristotle, our ways of speaking are capable of articulating the very τί ἦν εἶναι of that of which we speak. This, however, requires a certain kind of speaking – one that remains attuned in its speaking to the very manner in which the phenomena themselves appear and, in appearing, speak for themselves. Only in a speaking that rigorously seeks to articulate each thing as it expresses itself does something like τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι come to appearance. Thus, Aristotle goes on:

But of beings that are defined [τῶν ὀριζομένων] and that have a “what-it-is,” some are like the snub, but others are like the concave. And these differ because the snub has been conceived [συνειλημμένον] along with its matter (since the snub is a concave nose), while concavity is without sensible matter.⁸⁷

Let us pause here before Aristotle gives us examples of beings that are analogous to the snub in order to consider the way the articulation of the snub differs from an articulation of a mere shape. Concavity can

⁸⁴ *De An.* III.6, 430b28.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, III.4, 429b10–18.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, VI.1, 1025b28–30.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1025b30–5.

be thought in abstraction from sensible matter; the qualification of matter as αἰσθητῆς here reminds us that all matter, for Aristotle, is not sensible and that even to think concavity requires thinking through φαντάσματα.⁸⁸ The snub, however, is here understood to be something definable and so to be something with a what-it-is, and the snub “has been conceived [συνειλημμένον] along with its matter.” The term συνειλημμένον is a perfect participle that comes from συλλαμβάνειν, which means to bring together, collect together into a body, to comprehend or understand, but also has the connotation of to conceive in the biological sense.⁸⁹ In English, ‘conception’ has this twofold sense as well, and we should perhaps not be too quick to read the biological connotation out of this passage. The biological connotation is important, because it suggests that the very attempt to think the what-it-was-to-be for things such as the snub is rooted in the biological fact that they *have been conceived* in such a way that their matter is a dimension of their τί ἦν εἶναι. The perfect participle carries with it completed aspect and so expresses the completeness of the being under consideration: that it is a whole that exists with a degree of ontological independence Aristotle associates with the τόδε τι.⁹⁰

Thus, Aristotle goes on to identify the being of the snub with a whole range of τὰ φυσικά, natural beings:

So if all natural beings are said in a way similar to the snub, as, for example, nose, eye, face, flesh, bone, animal as a whole [ὅλως ζῷον], leaf, root, bark, and plant as a whole [ὅλως φυτόν] (for the λόγος of none of them is without motion, but they all have matter), it is clear that it is necessary to seek and to define the what-it-is for natural beings to be, and why it is also necessary for someone theorizing concerning the beings of nature to pay attention to the soul, however much is not without matter.⁹¹

The full impact of the aporias to which the snub pointed in *Metaphysics* VII.5 can here be felt. This is no mere problem of formal logic; it is endemic to every attempt to articulate the being of natural things,

⁸⁸ For a discussion of the so-called intelligible matter, see *Meta.* VII.10, 1036a2–13.

⁸⁹ See Liddell and Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, s.v. συλλαμβάνειν, v.

⁹⁰ For a detailed discussion of the sort of conception of form and matter as existing together as moments of the whole that is τόδε τι, see Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 94–109.

⁹¹ *Meta.* VI.1, 1025b35–1026a6.

for such things are precisely like the snub: they are, somehow, their matter. Note the way Aristotle draws our attention here from material parts to organic wholes: the things similar to the snub are nose, eye, face, flesh, bone – ὅλως ζῶον; they are leaf, root, bark – ὅλως φυτόν. The articulation of such organic wholes must include their motion and so a mention of their matter. Nowhere here is the suggestion made that such beings might not even have a τί ἦν εἶναι; the point rather is to recognize what it is necessary to say when seeking to articulate the τί ἦν εἶναι for such natural things. This passage from *Metaphysics* VI.1 is critical because it introduces the notion of organic wholes and suggests that an articulation of the what-it-is of things involves attending to them as moving wholes living in a world. Aristotle begins with the organic whole, with the individual τόδε τι encountered in appearing, and on the basis of the way this individual expresses itself, he attempts to articulate it according to the what-it-was-for-it-to-be.

This is possible because for Aristotle the what-it-is for such individuals is not something other than the individuals themselves. In *Metaphysics* VII.6, Aristotle is concerned to establish precisely this point. Throughout this chapter, he continues to identify οὐσία with εἶδος even as he attempts to distance himself from a certain Platonic understanding of εἶδη as ἰδέαι. Aristotle expresses the crucial point that emerges in VII.6 this way:

So from these arguments each thing itself [αὐτό ἕκαστον] and its τί ἦν εἶναι are one and the same, not incidentally, and this is also because to know each thing [τὸ ἐπίστασθαι ἕκαστον] is this: to know its τί ἦν εἶναι, with the result that even according to the setting out [κατὰ τὴν ἐκθεσιν] [of the ἕκαστον], it is necessary that both of them be some one thing.⁹²

The ἕκαστον and its τί ἦν εἶναι must be one and the same, for otherwise, when we seek the what-it-is for each, we will need to refer to something other than it such that this other could be questioned as to its τί ἦν εἶναι. This will be, to use the language of VII.4, a saying ἄλλο κατ' ἄλλον – one thing according to another – and not a saying of something according to itself [καθ' αὐτό]. Aristotle marks the absurdity of this by imagining if the τί ἦν εἶναι of a being were to be given

⁹² *Meta.* VII.6, 1031b18–22.

a different name than the being itself: “[F]or example, the what-it-was-for-a-horse-to-be would be different from what-it-was-to-be the what-it-was-for-a-horse-to-be.”⁹³ Again, the humor of this draws our attention to an important ontological point: the τί ἦν εἶναι of a thing must be identical with the thing whose τί ἦν εἶναι it is.

Yet two other important dimensions of the 1031b18–22 passage are worthy of mention. First, Aristotle establishes the so-called identity thesis⁹⁴ by suggesting that its necessity shows itself κατὰ τὴν ἔκθεσιν, according to a kind of setting out. Ross has discussed the various technical senses of this term in Aristotle’s *Prior Analytics*, where it seems to mean either the setting out of particular instances by which the truth of a conclusion is established or the setting out in syllogistic form of an argument that was previously presented in an unsyllogistic way.⁹⁵ But Alexander glosses the phrase this way: “with the result that both from the articulation [ἐκ τοῦ λόγου] and from example ἐπαγωγή (for ἔκθεσιν says the same) each thing and what-it-was-to-be for each are something one.”⁹⁶ He clarifies the meaning of ἔκθεσιν as ἐπαγωγή with reference to a method used by the Platonists in which they “led all things into one and to their proper nature [οἰκείαν οὐσίαν]” by investigating each individual human at hand and observing the similarities between them in order to discover the one and the same nature in all.⁹⁷ Whatever the differences between Aristotle’s understanding of ἐπαγωγή and the process described by Alexander, the notion that the what-it-is of something is discoverable in the very ways they are set out is decisive, for it suggests that the what-it-is to be for each being itself appears with and is expressed by the way each individual exists. This means that the attempt to articulate each thing according to itself, καθ’ αὐτό, puts thinking in touch with the very what-it-is to be for each.

⁹³ Ibid., 1031b30.

⁹⁴ See Loux, *Primary Ousia*, 91–108.

⁹⁵ See Ross, Aristotle’s “*Metaphysics*,” 1:208. For the first sense, see Aristotle, *Aristotelis Analytica Priora et Posteriora*, *Prior Analytics* 28a23, b14, 30a9, b31, 57a35; for the second, see *Prior Analytics* 48a1, 25, 29, 49b6, 33, 50a1.

⁹⁶ Alexander et al., *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca: Editā Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Reginiae Borussiae* (Berolini: Typ. et Empensis G. Reimeri, 1882), 484, 10–11.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 124, 11–13. Once this one nature (human-being) was discovered, they noted the likenesses between human-beings and horses and dogs, etc.

This suggests the second important dimension of the passage under consideration, for Aristotle insists that there is a certain ἐπίστασθαι concerning the ἕκαστον. Just prior to this passage, Aristotle writes the following: “For there is knowledge of each thing [ἐπιστήμη τε γάρ ἕκαστου] whenever we recognize [γινώμεν] the what-it-was-for-each-to-be.”⁹⁸ The “recognition,” or γινώσις, of the τί ἦν εἶναι makes possible ἐπιστήμη ἕκαστου, the knowledge of each. This knowledge, however, grows over time as one lives in intimate association with things and seeks to articulate them according to the way the τί ἦν εἶναι of each shows itself. Thus, even if the recognition is ultimately encountered in the touch of noetic inseeing, the condition for its possibility is the kind of λόγος that seeks to articulate τὸ πῶς ἔχει – how it is. This suggests also that by careful attendance to the individual as such, its very what-it-is can be discerned.

Here we feel the pull of μορφή once again, for to attempt to articulate the individual as such means to say form in its relation to matter. This concern animates Aristotle’s discussion in *Metaphysics* VII.7 of composite individuals, an example of which he takes to be the bronze sphere. Here the voice of μορφή speaks through its envoy, σχῆμα:

We say what a bronze sphere is in both ways: both with respect to the matter when we say that it is bronze and with respect to the εἶδος [when we say] that it is this sort of shape [σχῆμα]; for this shape is the kind into which it is first placed. Thus, the bronze sphere has matter in its λόγος.⁹⁹

In this passage, Aristotle links εἶδος to σχῆμα in order to insist upon the need to include matter in the account of composite individuals. He goes on to suggest that our common way of speaking hints at how matter must be mentioned in the definition of such composites, for “whenever a being has been generated [ὅταν γένηται], that from which as matter it is generated is sometimes called, not that, but that-y; for example, the statue is not stone, but stony.”¹⁰⁰

This peculiarity of language is heard, however, only when the being already “has become,” ὅταν γένηται; that is, while we can speak of

⁹⁸ *Meta.* VII.6, 1031b6–7.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, VII.7, 1033a1–5.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1033a5–7.

matter before it becomes a determinate being and we can articulate the material dimension of that being once it has already come into being, we are left with only a sort of gesture to the very coming into being of the thing itself. If we listen attentively and turn Aristotle's own legomenology back on itself, we can hear precisely such a gesture to the coming to presence of things in the things Aristotle says as he attempts to think the nature of the τὸδε τι. It is heard in the phrase τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, which speaks at once the imperfect tense of the Greek εἶναι, to be, and its infinitive. The what is it question can be answered only in terms of the what-it-was-to-be, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι. The imperfect carries with it progressive aspect in past time, and although we are told that in this phrase the imperfect has no grammatically temporal sense, nevertheless, the phrase itself points to a certain temporality;¹⁰¹ for while the infinitive affirms the very presence of the being under consideration, the imperfect, with its progressive aspect, signifies that this presence is always already somehow past. The phrase speaks the temporality of the phenomenon in its very coming to presence through a λόγος that always comes too late. The ἦν marks the finitude of the λόγος through which things present themselves in perceiving, give themselves to appearing, and announce themselves to thinking.

The limit of this λόγος is again heard in VII.8 as Aristotle says form in yet another way: "But the [εἶδος] signifies a such [τοιόνδε]; and it

¹⁰¹ Concerning the status of the ἦν here, Joseph Owens says that "the Greek imperfect cannot here be taken as denoting *past* time." See Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, 183. Frede and Patzig argue that it indicates a logical priority and not a temporal distinction. See Michael Frede and Günther Patzig, *Aristoteles "Metaphysik Z" Einleitung, Text und Übersetzung*, vol. 1 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1988), 35. Joe Sachs recognizes the importance of the imperfect as expressing the progressive aspect of εἶναι, but insists that it has "no temporal sense." See Sachs, *Aristotle's "Physics,"* 254. These points have been made and discussed in some detail with slightly different emphases in Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 60–75. They are recalled here in order to lend determination to the manner in which Aristotle's own ways of saying things articulate the manner in which the nature of things lends itself to articulation. It is worth noting that in *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Heidegger understands the imperfect in a temporal sense, but he goes on to suggest that this indicates that being is understood from the horizon of production. See Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 24, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975), 119–20, 51. For the English, see Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 84–5, 107.

is not a *this* and a definite being, but what one makes or generates is a such from a *this*, and when it has been generated [ὅταν γεννηθῇ], it is a such this [τόδε τοιόνδε].”¹⁰² Here a faint echo of the *Categories*, with its insistence that εἶδος is a sort of quality, can be heard.¹⁰³ Μορφή too, as inseparable from the composite, resonates in this passage, for Aristotle rejects the notion that εἶδος is itself something definite and a *this* and thus capable of existing in separation from the composite. Yet what is most striking about the passage is the manner in which Aristotle gestures to the moment of individuation that remains inaccessible to λόγος. He does this in two ways. First, he uses a combination of demonstratives – τόδε τοιόνδε – to get at something of the very coming to presence of the individual. These gestures operate on the very boundary of λόγος. As demonstratives, they are strange λόγοι intent on designating the trace of that which always escapes the grasp of the λόγος – the singular unicity of the appearing individual. Second, Aristotle uses the temporal clause in conjunction with a verb in the aorist tense, with its completed aspect (ὅταν γεννηθῇ), to emphasize that the moment of individuation has already occurred. Before and after remain within the sphere of the λόγος, for we may speak about a form prior to its inhering in some matter, or of a matter prior to its taking on a determinate form, and we can identify each being once it has already become, but its very coming-into-being remains muted and inaccessible.¹⁰⁴ We must, with Aristotle, resort to linguistic gestures. Such gestures operate on the frontier of the conceptual and point to a conceptuality that resonates with the biological conception of things – to be conceived is always to have already been conceived in the sense of having entered into appearing. In these linguistic gestures we hear at once Aristotle’s intense loyalty to the phenomenality of the phenomena and his tenacious desire to know – εἰδέναι: to see the εἶδος of each as expressing the being-at-work of the whole.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² *Meta.* VII.8, 1033b21–4.

¹⁰³ See *Cat.* 3b15–6, where Aristotle suggests that a secondary οὐσία, i.e., an εἶδος or a γένος, “signifies a certain quality.” For more on this, see Long, “Aristotle’s Phenomenology of Form,” 436–7.

¹⁰⁴ This use of the aorist was already heard at 1033a5–7; there, however, it was said in the middle voice rather than in the passive, as here.

¹⁰⁵ If the being-at-work of each expresses the being-at-work of the whole, then the εἶδος must be understood as belonging organically to each individual rather than

Aristotle begins the process of linking the being-at-work of the whole to the being-at-work of each in *Metaphysics* VIII.1 when he clarifies the meaning of τόδε τι as it relates to matter, form, and the composite:

Now an οὐσία is a ὑποκείμενον, and in one sense, it is matter (by matter I mean that which is not a τόδε τι being-at-work [ἐνεργεία] but is a τόδε τι in potency); in another sense it is the λόγος and the μορφή, which is a τόδε τι being separable in λόγος; and [in a] third [sense] it is that which is from both, of which alone there is generation and destruction, and which is simply separable.¹⁰⁶

Μορφή is heard here instead of εἶδος as Aristotle attempts to think form and matter together as principles of the composite. Μορφή connotes this intimate connection between the form and its composite. Yet μορφή is linked to λόγος, to the very articulation of the being under consideration. While something like the formal dimension of the composite can be isolated in λόγος, this form cannot be reified into an εἶδος existing independently of the composite in which it is found.

However, in this passage we hear in the word ἐνεργεία, being-at-work, yet another, and this will be the final and most decisive way form is said by Aristotle. At the end of book VIII, Aristotle is concerned to address an aporia that emerges when the cause of a being

as being imposed upon the individual from without; for the latter conception of the εἶδος would lead to a deterministic understanding of the individual such that it is nothing other than the imposed articulation of the species. This concern is part of what drove the critique of a rather different account of εἶδος in *The Ethics of Ontology*. The account of the εἶδος offered here, then, must be heard as a kind of palinode in which a hegemonic understanding of the εἶδος as operating from without is replaced by the robust naturalistic understanding of the εἶδος articulated here. This more naturalistic understanding of the εἶδος emerged in dialogue, both spoken and written, with friends. Specifically, Walter Brogan's commentary on *The Ethics of Ontology* in panels at the Pennsylvania State University and the 2006 meeting of the Ancient Philosophy Society in Chicago helped clarify the extent to which *The Ethics of Ontology* invites a reconsideration of the nature of predication. From a slightly different perspective, Francisco Gonzalez's essay-length review of *The Ethics of Ontology* helped by implicitly suggesting that a more naturalistic understanding of the nature of the activity of thinking might allow us to think the activity of the whole as expressed in the activity of each. See Gonzalez, "Form in Aristotle," 189.

¹⁰⁶ *Meta.* VIII.1, 1042a26–31.

is posited as existing in separation from that being itself. When this is the case, it is not clear how to account for the unity of the individual; for if a human-being is what it is by participating in the idea of the Animal and the Biped, which themselves exist independently of the human-being, then the human-being will be two, not one – namely Animal and Biped. Aristotle suggests, however:

[I]f, as we say, the one is matter, the other μορφή, and the one is in potency [δυνάμει], the other exists as being-at-work [ἐνεργείᾳ], that which is being sought no longer seems to be an aporia. . . . What is responsible for that which exists in potency to be at-work aside from that which produces in however many things of which there is generation? But nothing else is responsible for the potential sphere to be a sphere at-work, but this was the τί ἦν εἶναι in each.¹⁰⁷

Here μορφή is said to designate the being-at-work of a being while matter is identified with potency. Further, μορφή is now linked to τί ἦν εἶναι, which is understood to be an immanent principle of the being of the composite. Aristotle says μορφή here precisely because it points to form as intimately linked to the composite individual. However, the ontological efficacy that had been associated with εἶδος is now ascribed to μορφή, which itself gives way to the vocabulary of τί ἦν εἶναι and “being-at-work,” ἐνεργείᾳ.¹⁰⁸ The latter two expressions mark a shift in Aristotle’s thinking away from the static and structural toward the dynamic and functional. Indeed, while μορφή and εἶδος are structural designations, τί ἦν εἶναι and ἐνεργείᾳ point to the ontological importance of the manner in which the composite itself functions.¹⁰⁹ This way of speaking about beings recognizes that the being of a given being is ineluctably linked to what that being *does*.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. VIII.6, 1045a29–33.

¹⁰⁸ Aristotle tends to write the dative, ἐνεργείᾳ, when the being-at-work in question belongs to the composite of form and matter. The dative serves to differentiate the sense of ἐνέργεια as it applies exclusively to form from its sense as designating composite as the active identity of form and matter. See Theodore Scaltsas, “Substratum, Subject and Substance,” in *Aristotle’s Ontology*, ed. Anthony Preus and John P. Anton (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 192, 207n58.

¹⁰⁹ See D. M. Balme, “Aristotle’s Biology Was Not Essentialist,” in *Philosophical Issues in Aristotle’s Biology*, ed. Allan Gotthelf and James G. Lennox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 305.

Despite Aristotle's ongoing tendency to elucidate the distinction between form, matter, and the composite by appealing to heuristic examples taken from the sphere of human fabrication – a tendency that reinforces the structural over the functional – Aristotle's intense engagement with the manner in which natural beings themselves come into being has led him to think μορφή and εἶδος together. Indeed, both τί ἦν εἶναι and ἐνεργεία are ways of saying form that combine the competing thrusts of μορφή and εἶδος. If μορφή cannot be separated from the being in which it inheres and if εἶδος is an ontological principle that expresses the very being of that of which it is the form, then τί ἦν εἶναι and ἐνεργεία say in a fundamental way μορφή and εἶδος together. To say ἡ μορφή καὶ τὸ εἶδος is to recognize that an account of the nature of the τόδε τι must assiduously attend to the ways such things appear. It will, in short, require a λόγος of their very βίαι, that is, a certain biology.

A Phenomenology of Life: Aristotle's Biology

Aristotle's biological works enact the very phenomenology of natural beings that our analysis of the interaction between μορφή and εἶδος has suggested is required. These treatises do not present a taxonomy of the animal kingdom, but rather, as A. L. Peck suggests, they "collect data for ascertaining the causes of the observed phenomena."¹¹⁰ This is accomplished by describing not animals so much as the similarities and differences between them.¹¹¹ The incredible breadth of this approach can be felt at the beginning of the *History of Animals*, where Aristotle writes, "The differences of animals are those that relate to their manner of life [βίους], their activities [πράξεις], their habits [ἤθη], and their parts."¹¹² Aristotle's biology is phenomenological: it describes the differences that emerge from the direct observation

¹¹⁰ See Aristotle and A. L. Peck, *Aristotle History of Animals, Books I–III*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), vi.

¹¹¹ D. M. Balme, "Genos and Eidos in Aristotle's Biology," *Classical Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1962): 98. The text of the *History of Animals*, e.g., is organized around the differences between animals mentioned below rather than according to the rigid hierarchy of genus and species.

¹¹² *HA* I.1, 487a10–11.

of animals *existing in the world*. Indeed, as Heidegger has suggested, “[ξ]ωή,” for Aristotle, “is a concept of being; ‘life’ means a *way of being*, that is, a being-in-the-world. A living being is not simply present-at-hand, but rather is in a world in such a way that it has its world.”¹¹³ For this reason, the ὁρισμός, or definition, of such beings must rigorously attend to their manner of life, their activities, their habits, as well as their parts, for only a λόγος of an animal’s being-at-work, its ἐνέργεια, can stand as an adequate account of the what-it-was-for-a-being-to-be and so touch something of the truth.

Thus, at the beginning of *Parts of Animals*, Aristotle takes issue with Democritus, who, he says, seeks to define each animal exclusively in terms of its σχῆμα or μορφή. The problem with this, according to Aristotle, is that “though the configuration of a corpse has the same shape [μορφή], it is nevertheless not a human-being,” for, as he goes on to say, it will no longer be able to do its work.¹¹⁴ Democritus spoke too simply. Although he was in a certain sense right to point to μορφή in his attempt to determine the being of animals, he failed to think μορφή and εἶδος together in their intimate relation to matter. He did not recognize that the being of each being is expressed in and through its being-at-work, ἐνέργεια. An adequate account of the being of such beings cannot simply point to μορφή as shape; rather, it must describe in detail the manner of living, the actions, the habits, and, indeed, the parts that manifest themselves as each animal functions in its world. As Kosman puts it, “[A]nimals . . . exhibit most manifestly the fact that form and matter in substance-being is linked to the concepts of activity and the structures of potentiality which empower that activity. For the being of an animal consists in its life functions, in the characteristic activities and modes of living in which it engages.”¹¹⁵

Because natural things are what they do, Aristotle’s biology must become a phenomenology of life. Its intent is to first gather as many observations as possible in order to go on to consider their causes.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, 18.

¹¹⁴ *PA* I.1, 640b34–41a2.

¹¹⁵ L. A. Kosman, “Animals and Other Beings in Aristotle,” in *Philosophical Issues in Aristotle’s Biology*, ed. Allan Gotthelf and James G. Lennox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 378.

¹¹⁶ See, e.g., *HA* I.8, 491a11–13.

Aristotle pursues this purpose with the tenacity of an avid collector. However, as Walter Benjamin suggests, “there is in the life of a collector a dialectical tension between the poles of disorder and order.”¹¹⁷ Throughout the biological works, we feel this tension in Aristotle’s “special interest” in animals that seem to defy classification.¹¹⁸ The seal, for example, exhibits characteristics belonging to both land animals and water animals; for although, like land animals, they breathe air, do not take in water, and sleep and breed on land, like aquatic animals they spend most of their time in water and derive their food from it.¹¹⁹ Aristotle calls such creatures ἐπαμφοτερίζοντα, beings that tend toward both, or as Peck translates, “dualizers.”¹²⁰ Apes, for example, tend toward both bipeds and quadrupeds, while bats tend toward both land dwellers and flyers.¹²¹ And while Aristotle may ultimately classify such animals in one or the other of the categories toward which they tend, he seems to take a special joy in subverting his own classifications. Such “dualizers” stand as reminders of the limits of the λόγος that seeks to set the animal kingdom in order. They are symptoms of the tension of which Benjamin spoke.

This tension animates Aristotle’s phenomenological approach, which seeks a general account while refusing to sacrifice the phenomenon for the sake of the theory, no matter how beautifully structured. Aristotle recognizes that any comprehensive view [συνοπᾶν] of the whole depends upon dwelling in intimate association with the things of nature.¹²² He is never willing to sacrifice the phenomena for the sake of such a vision. He is driven to positing principles of wide and coherent development and yet is aware that any principles not firmly rooted in the phenomena quickly give way to dogmatism. In the face of the allure of order, Aristotle remains ultimately loyal to the things themselves.

¹¹⁷ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 60.

¹¹⁸ Aristotle, A. L. Peck, D. M. Balme, and Allan Gotthelf, *Aristotle History of Animals, Books VII–X*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 73.

¹¹⁹ See *HA* VI.12, 566b27–567a12, and *PA* IV.14, 697a30–b13.

¹²⁰ Aristotle and Peck, *Aristotle History of Animals, Books I–III*, lxxiii–lxxiv.

¹²¹ For apes, see *PA* IV.10, 689b32. Aristotle says that they tend toward both human-being and quadruped at *HA* II.8, 502a16. For bats, see *PA*, IV.13, 697a30–b13.

¹²² Cf. *On Generation and Corruption* I.2, 316a5–10.

However, this tension between order and disorder is simply another expression of the tension we have heard between εἶδος and μορφή at the level of form, which itself now may be heard as symptomatic of the tension that animates a life lived among appearances between the incipient poles of perceiving and thinking. Aristotle's attempt to articulate things in such a way as to do justice to what is encountered at the poles – the insistent singularity of the individual felt in perceiving and its ineluctable community with the whole touched upon in thinking – compels Aristotle to say μορφή and εἶδος together in order to think the individual both as an expression of itself as an independent whole and as an expression of the whole of things. The very what-it-was-to-be for an individual is expressed in and through an εἶδος that shows itself in the being-at-work of each in the world in which it is encountered and lives. This attempt to articulate the phenomena according to their very being-at-work is a phenomenology that at once rigorously attends to the λόγος through which beings come to presence and dwells in intimate association with their peculiar ways of being-in-the-world. Aristotle practices precisely such a phenomenology by allowing his thinking to remain accountable to the saying of things in a way that puts him – and us – in touch not only with the truth of each, that is, with the very what-it-is to be for each according to the what-was-being, but also with the truth of the whole.

Aristotle's phenomenology of form suggests the manner in which truth grows over time as human-beings attend to the saying of things and respond in ways that seek to articulate things as they show themselves to be. This dimension of truth belongs to the process by which thinking is cultivated in humans; it marks the transition from νοῦς as first potentiality, belonging to the sorts of beings that have an ability to think but who have yet to cultivate that ability, to νοῦς as a cultivated ability, as “a certain ἔξις, like light.”¹²³ The truth that belongs to the cultivation of the power of thinking is a matter of combining and dividing, of learning to articulate things as they express themselves, indeed, of saying it like it is. On the other hand and, indeed, as a result of this active effort to do justice to the way things express themselves, it is possible to come into contact with the what-it-is of

¹²³ *De An.* III.5, 430a15.

things, but only, as Aristotle puts it, “according to the-what-it-was-[for-them]-to-be.”¹²⁴ Yet these two dimensions of truth cannot be divorced without disintegrating the organic ecology in which they cooperate. Such a divorce and disintegration would uproot truth from the site in which it is cultivated between beings with the capacity to think and speak and those that are able to be thought and articulated. It would situate truth in some metaphysical dimension disconnected from the world of appearing and turn truth into a matter of mystical revelation rather than a question of continuing accountability to the individuals encountered and the community of the whole to which they and we belong.¹²⁵ The preceding discussion of definition has traced the meaning of truth as an attempt to do justice to the appearing individual. Yet this appearing itself cannot be divorced from the context in which it occurs. The attempt to articulate the individual as it appears thus brings human thinking also into contact with the community of the whole in which it has been rooted from the start and to which it remains accountable throughout.

¹²⁴ Ibid., III.6, 430b28.

¹²⁵ Kosman associates this danger rightly with the tendency to think *De An.* III.5 as concerned with the transition from first to second potentiality. He writes: “It will therefore be misleading to claim that *nous poiētikos* effects the transition to the first stage of concept mastery. To do so will encourage us to continue to think of *nous* as a virtually miraculous power that provides us with a magical intuitive grasp of scientific principles. Far the better teaching is that the first actuality of *nous* is acquired by *learning*, by the various forms of *epagōgē* which include above all the activities of science themselves.” Kosman, “What Does the Maker Mind Make?” 351.

On Saying the Beautiful in Light of the Good

There has been handed down from those of ancient and earlier times to those of later times a legacy in the shape of a myth that these original beings are gods and that the divine embraces the whole of nature.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*¹

In speaking about those thinkers who set down “love or desire among the beings as a source,” Aristotle suggests an approach to Empedocles that is at once presumptuous and condescending.² He writes, “For if one were to pursue and take hold of Empedocles’ thinking [διάνοιαν], rather than what he said inarticulately [ψελλίζεσθαι], one would find friendship was the cause of good things and strife of the bad.”³ The presumption lies in Aristotle’s suggestion that he is able to discern the genuine thrust of Empedoclean thinking independently of the things he said inarticulately. The condescension is heard in the Greek ψελλίζεσθαι, which suggests the babbling of children.⁴ Indeed, at the end of his rehearsal of the positions of his predecessors in *Metaphysics* I, Aristotle repeats the talk of “baby-talk,” extending it beyond the

¹ *Meta.* XII.8, 1074a35–b3.

² *Ibid.*, I.4, 984b24–5.

³ *Ibid.*, 985a4–7.

⁴ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, s.v. ψελλίζεσθαι, v. Nightingale translates the term “baby-talk.” For this and its justification, see Nightingale, *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy*, 27n66.

thinking of Empedocles and suggesting, “The first philosophy concerning all things is like babbling [ψελλιζομένη], for it is young and just beginning.”⁵ Such statements, however, stand in tension with both the manner in which Aristotle’s own philosophical thinking *proceeds* and the things he himself says about the ancients elsewhere.⁶ As has been argued in Chapter 3, Aristotle’s engagement with his predecessors is not merely an attempt to legitimize the maturity of his own philosophical position; rather, it is part of a peripatetic legomenology according to which no concerted effort to articulate the nature of things according to the ways they express themselves “misses the doorway” that opens onto the ecology of truth.⁷

If, however, the words of the ancients articulate something of the truth about truth, this ecology of truth, the very house in which truth is spoken, must also be characterized as “divine” insofar as it “embraces the whole of nature.” Aristotle himself has handed down to later times the legacy of just such a divine ecology when, at the end of *Metaphysics* XII, he suggests that the nature of the whole holds itself with respect to the good and the best in the manner of a household, ὥσπερ ἐν οἰκίᾳ.⁸ This suggestion occurs at the end of a long and difficult undertaking, which Aristotle announces in *Metaphysics* XII.1 as a “theorizing concerning οὐσία.”⁹ Immediately, however, it is clear that Aristotle’s concern with the question of οὐσία in book XII is animated by the desire to articulate the nature of the all, τὸ πᾶν. Thus, Aristotle goes on to justify his intention to turn again to a theorizing concerning οὐσία by drawing it into relation with the question of the nature of the whole: “For if the all is some whole, οὐσία is its primary part,

⁵ *Meta.* I.10, 993a15–16.

⁶ As, e.g., in the epigraph to this chapter, when the ancients seem to have hit upon the truth. We speak here of a “tension” rather than a “contradiction” because, at least in the example under consideration here from XII.8, 1074a35–b3, the idea that philosophy is moving toward maturity can be made to resonate with the idea that the earliest thinkers hit upon the truth by the circular conception of time to which Aristotle appeals in XII.8. There he says, “[S]ince it is likely that each art and philosophy has been discovered to its potential many times and passed away in turn, one would consider these opinions of those people to have been saved like relics up to the present time.” See *Meta.* XII.8, 1074b10–13.

⁷ See Chapter 3 and Chapter 6.

⁸ *Meta.* XII.10, 1075a19.

⁹ *Ibid.*, XII.1, 1069a18.

and if the all is a succession [of parts], even so, the οὐσία is first, then the what sort and the how much."¹⁰ Thus begins a rehearsal of the three meanings of οὐσία: perceptible οὐσία as (1) destructible and (2) everlasting, and that οὐσία which is (3) motionless. This inquiry leads ultimately to one of the most perplexing and enticing dimensions of Aristotle's thinking: the attempt to articulate the nature of νοῦς as divine and its relation to the nature of the whole.

This attempted articulation is integral to the pursuit of the nature of truth and the truth of nature in Aristotle for three reasons. The first is that it lends determination to the nature of the whole in which human thinking is always embedded and with which it comes into contact as it addresses and responds to the saying of things in its pursuit of truth. As has been heard, the paths of address and response are rooted in and held accountable by the most rudimentary encounters of perceiving where the insistent unicity of things makes itself felt. These paths are, however, equally rooted in and held accountable by the nature of the whole expressing itself in ways that can be touched by a thinking cultivated by a saying assiduously attuned to the nature of things. Thus, the second reason Aristotle's attempted articulation of the nature of the whole is integral to the question of truth is that it itself performs the happening of truth along the path of address and response. Indeed, it is not the ultimate position on which Aristotle's thinking comes to rest concerning the divine in its relation to the whole that is as decisive as the *manner* in which his articulations themselves, insofar as they remain oriented by and accountable to the nature of the whole, articulate something of the truth about that nature. Thus, the methodological approach to the *Metaphysics* XII undertaken here proposes to do with Aristotle the opposite of what he does with Empedocles. Whereas Aristotle presumes to be able to discern the

¹⁰ Ibid., 1069a19–21. Helen Lang, from whom much of the present account of the structure of *Metaphysics* XII is borrowed, writes of the relation between οὐσία and the all: "But the meaning of the 'first' and hence our understanding of substance as prior to all else cannot be complete without knowing the construction of 'the all'; at the same time, the construction of 'the all' cannot be known without knowing substance, which is first. In this sense, an investigation of substance and the nature of 'the all' are inseparable and both are announced in the opening lines of A." See Helen S. Lang, "The Structure and Subject of *Metaphysics* A," *Phronesis* 38 (1993): 260.

truth of Empedocles' thinking despite the inarticulate babbling of his words, here the attempt is to discern the truth of Aristotle's thinking by attending carefully to the very articulations he enunciates. Such an undertaking is true to Aristotle's own legomenology insofar as it takes Aristotle's articulations themselves as phenomena that cultivate the appearing of truth. This suggests, finally, the third reason that Aristotle's attempted articulation of the divine in its relation to the whole is integral to the present investigation: Aristotle's articulations express the manner in which truth is ultimately a question of justice. In attempting to put the nature of the whole into words, Aristotle gives voice to an understanding of the beautiful and the good as erotic principles at work in and, indeed, alive to the inhabited world. As erotic, these principles orient human-being toward the question of justice even if the beautiful and the good necessarily lie beyond the capacities of human action and comprehension. Yet in drawing human-being toward the question of justice, the beautiful and the good, as erotic principles that announce themselves in the dialogical expression of things, have the power to transform the human relation to nature and the nature of human relations. To be drawn to the question of justice, to allow it to press urgently upon us and to inform our relations with things, is already to begin to weave the desired good into the fabric of reality.

In Aristotle's attempt to articulate the nature of the divine, we hear an account of thinking as a living activity, at once beautiful and good, with which human-being is able to cooperate when intent on doing justice to the saying of things. Let us listen again to the manner in which Aristotle himself articulates the nature of thinking as divine and its relation to the whole.

A PRINCIPLE EROTIC

At the beginning of *Metaphysics* XII.6, Aristotle divides the three kinds of οὐσία with which he is concerned in two, calling destructible and everlasting οὐσία "natural" (φυσικαί) and the other οὐσία "motionless" (ἀκίνητος).¹¹ The distinction suggests already a move beyond the

¹¹ *Meta.* XII.6, 1071b3–4.

natural, a sort of meta-physics. Yet Aristotle's discussion of motionless οὐσία remains thoroughly bound up with nature insofar as it seeks the source capable of accounting for motion. Thus, in embarking on his investigation in XII.6, Aristotle continually returns to the question of motion: the source (ἀρχή) must be capable of producing change;¹² it must be at work, "for if it is not at work, there will be no motion,"¹³ and, again, "[f]or how will things be moved [κίνηθήσεται] if there is not something responsible at work?"¹⁴ Whatever the nature of this unmoved source, it seems to be bound to and bound up somehow with the nature of things in motion. Even if the source that is responsible for motion may itself be said to be ἀκίνητος, motionless, and so understood to be beyond the scope of Aristotle's own determination of physics as concerned with things that have in themselves a source of motion and of standstill,¹⁵ nevertheless, the relation of this source to the totality of things remains an open question. Indeed, it is a question to which Aristotle turns in the final chapter of book XII when he introduces the two somewhat dissonant analogies of the general and the household as he finally addresses directly the question as to how the good is related to the nature of the whole.

If, then, the discussion of the motionless source of motion begins with an implicit gesture to a certain meta-physics, it ends with an ambiguous articulation of the nature of the relation between the source and that for which it is responsible. The ambiguity is significant, as will be heard, for it points precisely to the difficulty Aristotle himself identifies as endemic to the attempt to theorize concerning the truth: "to have the whole in a certain way and yet to be incapable of part of it."¹⁶ Nevertheless, each attempt to say something concerning nature contributes something, and perhaps none more than Aristotle's attempt to articulate the nature of the divine. Indeed, this attempted articulation opens the possibility of understanding the meta-physics implicitly suggested at the start of *Metaphysics* XII.6 not as a gesture to that which is *beyond* the physical, but rather as that which announces itself in and

¹² Ibid., 1071b15–6.

¹³ Ibid., 1071b17.

¹⁴ Ibid., 1071b28–9.

¹⁵ *Phys.* II.1, 192b13–14.

¹⁶ *Meta.* II.1, 993b6–7.

through a rigorous engagement with the things of nature, one that seeks to say things as they are.¹⁷ This is precisely the sense of metaphysics that seems to be at work in the final chapters of *Metaphysics* XII, which articulate a “certain everlasting motionless οὐσία”¹⁸ that announces itself in and through the attempt to speak the truth of things.¹⁹

This attempt has led Aristotle, in *Metaphysics* XII.7, to give voice to a way of being-at-work that is able to be responsible for motion without itself being in motion:

But this is the way that which is desired [τὸ ὁρεκτόν] and that which is thought [τὸ νοητόν] move: although not being in motion, they move. But the primary instances of these are the same; for what is longed for [ἐπιθυμητόν] is that which appears beautiful [τὸ φαινόμενον καλόν], but that which is wished for [βουλητόν] primarily is what is beautiful [τὸ ὄν καλόν].²⁰

In articulating the manner in which something can remain unmoved and yet be responsible for movement, Aristotle speaks the language of ethics and animal motion even as he gestures to that stretching out toward knowing that characterizes “all human-beings by nature.”²¹ To

¹⁷ The suggestion here is that the sort of metaphysics that points “beyond the physical” would need to be articulated by the use of μετά with the dative: μετά τοῖς φυσικοῖς. Andronicus of Rhodes, to whom we must trace the origin of the term ‘metaphysics,’ himself however seemed to have a sense of place in mind when he collected these books together under the title τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ βιβλία – “the books next after the books on the things of nature.” See Anton-Hermann Chroust, “The Origin of ‘Metaphysics,’” *Review of Metaphysics* 14 (1961) 601–16. This is one sense the μετά can offer with the *accusative*, but there are other senses too: coming into, in quest of, in pursuit of, according to. All of these suggest another sense of ‘metaphysics’ as that philosophical activity that rigorously pursues the things of nature or as that activity attuned to what announces itself *according to* nature through a rigorous *questioning* of nature.

¹⁸ *Meta.* XII.6, 1071b4–5.

¹⁹ The direction of this questioning of nature is anticipated by the very structure of the first chapter of *Metaphysics* II, which begins with the recognition that theorizing concerning truth is in one sense difficult, in another easy. The chapter concludes with the recognition that “it is also right to call philosophy the knowledge of truth,” suggesting ultimately that “what is responsible for the to be true with respect to posterior things is more true than they are. Because of this, the sources of the things that are always must be the most true (for they are not sometimes true, nor is anything responsible for the what it is [for them] to be, but they are the cause of other things), so as each has of being, that too it has of truth.” See *Meta.* 993b19–31.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, XII.7, 1072a26–30.

²¹ See *ibid.*, I.1, 980a21. For a powerful account of how this passage is bound up with Aristotelian ethics, see Baracchi, *Aristotle’s Ethics as First Philosophy*, 49–52.

apprehend the extent to which the dynamic between the unmoved source of motion and that which moves is at work throughout the whole of nature even if it points beyond the specific capacities of each natural thing, it will be helpful to recall some of the things Aristotle says about desire and the beautiful in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *De Motu Animalium*.²²

In *Nicomachean Ethics* III.2, Aristotle establishes a distinction between choice (προαίρεσις) and three sorts of desire: longing (ἐπιθυμία), spiritedness (θυμός), and wish (βούλησις).²³ There Aristotle suggests that choice seems to require a capacity for the sort of λόγος that belongs to deliberation and action, while longing and spiritedness do not. Wish, Aristotle says, seems close to choice – perhaps because it too involves a kind of attuned attention to something beyond itself – but wish differs from deliberative choice in not being limited to what falls within the purview of what the one wishing is able to do.²⁴ Unlike choice, a wish

²² Enrico Berti links this text explicitly to the *De Anima* and the *De Motu Animalium* when he recognizes that “the whole section 1072a26–b1 is a comparison between the unmoved mover and the objects of desire and thought, due to the fact that the latter – as it results from *De Anima* III.10. 433b10–18, and *De Motu*. 700b15–701a2 – moves without being moved.” See Enrico Berti, “Unmoved Mover(s) as Efficient Cause(s) in *Metaphysics* Λ 6,” in Aristotle’s “*Metaphysics*” Lambda: *Symposium Aristotelicum*, ed. Michael Frede and David Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 203. Berti implicitly draws the text into relation with the *Nicomachean Ethics* when he emphasizes that Aristotle’s discussion of the final cause as τὸ οὐ ἕνεκα is bound to the question of good action.

²³ *NE*, III.2, 1111b10–12. Aristotle explicitly calls these all ὁρεξις, desire, at *De Motu*, 700b22.

²⁴ Aquinas suggests that the similarity lies in the fact that they belong to the same power, which he associates with rational appetite, or will: “Wishing designates an act of this power related to good absolutely. But choice designates an act of this same power related to good according as it belongs to an act by which we are ordered to some good.” St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s “Nicomachean Ethics,”* trans. C. I. Litzinger (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1993), III, lect. 5, §443. Without endorsing the suggestion that the common denominator is will understood in the Christian sense, the formulation of “attuned attention” is here designed to get at something of the nature of the similarity between choice and wish insofar as it expresses their shared logistical orientation toward things, i.e., an orientation informed by the capacity for λόγος. Aristotle, however, links wish more intimately with desire than he does with the sort of λόγος endemic to thinking things through (διάνοια). Thus, in the *De Motu*, he locates wish on the side of desire as he suggests that choice shares in desire and thinking things through. The common denominator, then, might not be a capacity to will but a certain logistical capacity oriented toward what extends beyond the current state of reality. With choice, this involves deliberation concerning

can stretch beyond the capabilities of the one wishing. Thus, one may wish for impossible things, such as deathlessness, but one does not choose them. Further, a wish seems directed toward the end, while choice is, as Aristotle says, “of things related to the end.”²⁵ Thus, in *Metaphysics* XII.7, when Aristotle associates what is longed for with that which *appears* beautiful and calls what *is* beautiful “that which is wished for,” he gives voice to a dynamic between appearing and being that hints already both at the manner in which the good is related to the whole and at the peculiar way humans have access to that good.

As accessible to wish, the *being* of the beautiful is felt to be at work in the world of appearing even if it remains ultimately elusive, that is, beyond the specific capacities of the one wishing. Indeed, by speaking of the being of the beautiful as what is primarily βουλητόν, wished, Aristotle draws the beautiful into intimate relation to the capacities of those things capable of deliberation, βουλευτική, while simultaneously articulating the extent to which it remains, strictly speaking, beyond the scope of human action and thus deliberation.²⁶ Even so, the being of the beautiful is nevertheless capable of orienting human action by drawing our attention to what is good and beautiful as such. It does so as an erotic rather than an instrumental principle. In *De Motu Animalium*, Aristotle makes a distinction between the instrumental good and the good per se. The former causes animal motion by being for the sake of something beyond itself, while the latter is “the ever beautiful [τὸ αἰδιον κάλον] and that which is truly and primarily good and not good at one time and not at another.”²⁷ Aristotle associates

possibilities that lie within one’s capacities to achieve; with wishing, however, this extends even to things impossible that stand beyond one’s capacities.

²⁵ See *NE* III.2, 1111b18–30. For a more detailed discussion of the extent to which choice is bound up with ends in Aristotle, see Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 144–51.

²⁶ Therefore, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle suggests that “no one deliberates concerning everlasting things such as the cosmos or the diagonal and side of a square, that they are incommensurable” (*NE* III.3, 1112a21–3). He goes on, of course, to indicate many other things within the sphere of human action that one does not deliberate upon – things that happen by chance, like finding a treasure, or how cities other than one’s own ought to be governed. The common denominator seems to be that “we deliberate about things that are up to us and matters of action”; i.e., we deliberate about what it is possible for us to do. See *NE* III.3, 1112b30–5.

²⁷ *De Motu* 700b32–5.

animal motion with the instrumental good animated by a desire that itself moves while being moved.²⁸ However, the ever beautiful and the truly good move *without* being moved – οὐ κινούμενον κινεῖ.²⁹ They are not relative to something other than or beyond themselves. This, indeed, is the sense of the beautiful Aristotle designates as “the end of virtue” in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.7,³⁰ and it is the being of the beautiful he designates as “that which is primarily wished for” here in *Metaphysics* XII.7.

If, however, the *being* of the beautiful is at once accessible to those capable of wishing and yet also somehow beyond their capacities, the *appearing* of the beautiful, as “that which is longed for,” ἐπιθυμητόν, is accessible to and indeed at work upon all living things. To speak of ἐπιθυμία here is to emphasize a longing for the being of the beautiful as it expresses itself in appearing that extends to all living things. In *De Anima* II.4, Aristotle suggests how this longing for the beautiful expresses itself in nature. There he insists that “the most natural thing for a living thing to do . . . is to make another like itself, for an animal to make an animal, a plant to make a plant, in order to have a share in what is always and is divine in the way it is able. For all things desire [ὀρέγεται] that and for the sake of it do however many things they do according to nature.”³¹ This erotic longing belongs to all living things, although it expresses itself differently in each according to its ability. Thus, plants and certain animals, animated by erotic longing, respond to the appearing of the beautiful by entering into relation with one another, participating in the divine by communicating to their progeny the finite activities that make them what they are.³² Nowhere in

²⁸ To the extent that the instrumental good moves while being moved, it is like the joint of an organism, which is able to move the organism even if it also moves with it. See Chapter 4.

²⁹ *De Motu* 700b35.

³⁰ *NE* III.7, 1115b13.

³¹ *De An.* II.4, 415a28–b2.

³² This formulation owes any eloquence it has to Aryeh Kosman’s suggestion that “[f]or Aristotle, the imitation of divinity is thus manifest not only in thinking, but in the acts of reproduction as well, those acts by which substance beings pass on to their progeny the bounded activities of their mortal lives.” See L. A. Kosman, “Divine Being and Divine Thinking in *Metaphysics* Lambda,” 188.

nature is the ecology of cooperative communication more powerfully at work than in the reproductive process.³³

Yet if all living things are alive to the beautiful by a longing attuned to appearing, those living things with the ability to wish have access to a λόγος capable of attending to the appearing of the beautiful in ways that touch upon and remain accountable to its very being. Although Aristotle associates this sort of touching with the power of νοῦς, it remains rooted in a λόγος ἀποφαντικός, a declarative saying, that assiduously seeks to articulate the being of that which appears. This capacity to attend to the being of the beautiful through its very appearing uncovers the erotic nature of the beautiful. As erotic, the beautiful remains ultimately elusive even as it compels those capable of discerning it to attend to it. Indeed, by attending to the beautiful as impossible but accessible, that is, as an erotic principle, those beings with the capacity for λόγος and νοῦς first become capable of bending the community of the whole toward justice by orienting words, deeds, and thoughts toward the question of the good.³⁴ This capacity for

³³ This is clearly recognized by Socrates' Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* when she is reported to have said: "All human-beings are pregnant, Socrates, both in body and in soul, and when we come of age, our nature longs [ἐπιθυμεῖν] to give birth. Yet it is not possible to give birth in ugliness, only in the beautiful, because the union of a man and a woman, that is, birth, is a divine thing. Pregnancy and procreation instill immortality in a living, mortal being, and these things are impossible in what lacks harmony." See Plato, *Platonis Opera*, 206c–d. Further, Aristotle's words cited earlier from *De Anima* II.4 echo those of Diotima when she says: "[M]ortal nature seeks to be eternal and immortal as far as possible; and only in this way, by generation, is it able, always leaving behind another, a young one, in place of the old. And it is also in this way that each living being is said to be the same through its lifetime" (207d1–5). The translations of both passages, although altered, owe much to those of Cobb. See William S. Cobb, *Plato's "Symposium" and the "Phaedrus": Plato's Erotic Dialogues* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1993). In tracing the origins of Aristotle's understanding of the unmoved mover to the discussion of ἐρως in the *Symposium*, Kyung-Choon Chang recognizes the debt Aristotle owes to Plato even as he moves beyond Plato by extending the influence of erotic desire to cover the entire "scale of the universe as a whole." See Kyung-Choon Chang, "Plato's Form of the Beautiful in the *Symposium* versus Aristotle's Unmoved Mover in the *Metaphysics*," *Classical Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (2002): 441–6.

³⁴ The turn of phrase in which the community of the whole is "bent toward justice" echoes, of course, that phrase made famous by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who, in his 1956 *Statement on Ending the Bus Boycott* in Montgomery, Alabama, articulated the following, which would become an oft repeated refrain in King's oratory: "[T]he arc of the moral universe, although long, is bending toward justice." See Martin Luther

justice, as has been heard, is rooted in a kind of deliberative φαντασία that is able to “prepare” desire by orienting it toward an apprehension of the beneficial and harmful, that is, toward the very appearing of the good, by means of a thinking attuned somehow to the being of the beautiful.³⁵

If animal motion is predicated on a desire animated by the instrumental good, which itself moves even as it is being moved, the sort of motion Aristotle articulates in *Metaphysics* XII.7 is parallel insofar as it is predicated on a kind of desire; yet it remains irreducible to animal motion insofar as it involves an erotic principle capable of moving without itself being affected in any way. Such a principle remains remotely accessible to all living things insofar as they are animated by a longing that turns them toward one another in an attempt to procreate. It is, however, accessible in a different way to those with the capacity for deliberative φαντασία. This logistical capacity, which prepares desire by looking toward the future and drawing upon the past, is oriented not only by the instrumental good, but also more originally by an apprehension of the “ever beautiful and truly good,” which announces itself as something wished, yet becomes effective by the power of a certain thinking. The sort of thinking operative here is nothing other than that theorizing concerning the truth rooted

King et al., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 486. This phrase, distilled by King to its poignant essence, was borrowed from Theodore Parker, a Unitarian minister and abolitionist, who wrote: “Look at the facts of the world. You see a continual and progressive triumph of the right. I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but a little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends toward justice. Things refuse to be mis-managed long.” Theodore Parker, *The Collected Works of Theodore Parker* (London: Trübner, 1879), 48. That last sentence finds deep resonance with Aristotle’s phrase at the end of *Metaphysics* XII.10, 1076a3–4: “things do not want to be governed badly.” The formulation found in the text above, however, insofar as it places the responsibility for the bending of the community toward justice squarely on the shoulders of those beings with λόγος and νοῦς, resonates more strongly with Barack Obama’s more recent appropriation of King’s appropriation of Parker when he said that the arc “doesn’t bend on its own. It bends because each of us puts our hands on that arc and bends it in the direction of justice.” See Barack Obama, “Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,” http://www.barackobama.com/2008/04/04/remarks_for_senator_barack_oba_4.php.

³⁵ See “The Theory of Practice.”

in encounters of perceiving and cultivated by a responsive φαντασία capable of moving along with the appearing of things. As has been heard, this sort of theorizing is capable of touching upon something of the whole, even if it remains incapable of part of it. In the passage under consideration from *Metaphysics* XII.7, Aristotle lends determination to the dynamic of this sort of thinking.

Let us return, then, to that passage in which the being of the beautiful is said to be associated with wish and its appearing with a certain longing. These sayings are articulated as Aristotle attempts to draw on the nature of desire and thinking in order to give voice to a principle capable of being responsible for cosmic motion without itself being affected by it. To lend determination to the claim that the primary instances of both thinking and desire are the same, Aristotle first identifies longing with the appearing of the beautiful and wish with its being in order to emphasize that appearing, as the appearing of being, determines desire. He thus writes, “[W]e desire something because of the way it seems [δοκεῖ] rather than its seeming so because we desire it.”³⁶ That Aristotle says δοκεῖν here, rather than deploying a verbal cognate of νοήσις, suggests that his considerations extend beyond the human to include animals incapable of noetic thinking.³⁷ He goes on to suggest the manner in which the relation between appearing and desire should be thought when he writes, “for thinking is the beginning.”³⁸ This connects the dynamic that operates between appearing and desire to the *cooperative* dynamic between a thing thought and the activity of thinking. This is precisely the sort of cooperation that conditions the natural correlation between specific powers of the soul and the things most proper to them. Indeed, it is this sort of cooperation that conditions the soul’s relation to the very being of things as necessarily mediated by their appearing; for, as Aristotle says elsewhere, “it is not even possible to

³⁶ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072a29.

³⁷ This point has been made very nicely by Laks, who links this text to that found in *De Anima* III.10, recognizing, however, that it extends beyond the text found there insofar as it explicitly emphasizes that thinking itself is moved by the good. André Laks, “*Metaphysics* Λ 7,” in *Aristotle’s “Metaphysics” Lambda: Symposium Aristotelicum*, ed. Michael Frede and David Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 224.

³⁸ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072a30.

think without a φάντασμα.”³⁹ If *De Anima* III.10 is read together with *Politics* II.1, Aristotle can be heard to suggest that νοῦς and φαντασία are able to cooperate in such a way as to prepare desire, directing it from immediate pleasures toward a more deliberative awareness of the beneficial and the harmful, which is the ground for the appearing of the just and unjust.⁴⁰ Here, however, something is added, for he grounds the movement of thinking in the thing thought: “νοῦς is moved by the thing thought [ὑπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ].”⁴¹ Here, φαντασία and desire are rooted in a thinking oriented toward and capable of cooperating with its proper object, τὸ νοητόν. The object is said to have a certain agency.⁴² Indeed, it is an object that undermines the strict dichotomy between the active and the passive; for if a distinction is made, as Aristotle seems to suggest at the start of *Metaphysics* XII.9, between νοῦς and νοήσις, where the former points to the potency of thinking and the latter to its being-at-work thinking,⁴³ no such differentiation is articulated by τὸ νοητόν. As Laks suggests in a provocative footnote, “[A]t the level of the verbal adjective one does not have a distinction corresponding to the pair νόησις–νοῦς; a νοητόν is no less an object understood than an object capable of being understood.”⁴⁴ The parallel between that which is thought (νοητόν) and that which is desired (ὀρεκτόν) is thus deepened, for just as the desirability of the object of desire is not diminished by its actually being desired, so too is the intelligibility of the intelligible object undiminished by its being actively thought. This suggests the proper model by which to think a way of being that is capable of moving things without itself being moved. What is remarkable, however, is that this way of being is here thought not yet in terms of the living activity of thinking, but in terms of an object of thought

³⁹ *De Mem.* 449b31.

⁴⁰ See *De An.* III.10–11, 433b27–434a10, and *Pol.* I.2, 1253a10–15. See Chapter 4.

⁴¹ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072a30.

⁴² This is indicated clearly by the Greek: νοῦς δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ κινεῖται, where ὑπὸ with the genitive and a passive verb indicates agency.

⁴³ See *Meta.* XII.9, 1074b18–26. Brunschwig emphasizes the significance of this distinction; see Jacques Brunschwig, “*Metaphysics* Λ 9: A Thought Experiment,” in *Aristotle’s “Metaphysics” Lambda: Symposium Aristotelicum*, ed. Michael Frede and David Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 282.

⁴⁴ Laks, “*Metaphysics* Λ 7,” 231n64.

that annuls the rigid dichotomy between the active and the passive in such a way that its actively being thought does not diminish its potency to be thought. In this, it is analogous not only to the object of desire, but also to that of perceiving.⁴⁵

Aristotle goes on to clarify the nature of the way of being of τὸ νοητόν: it is “a thing thought according to itself belonging to one of two corresponding arrays of contraries [ἡ ἑτέρα συστοιχία]⁴⁶ of which οὐσία is primary, and of οὐσία, the primary is that which is simple [ἡ ἀπλή] and at work [κατ’ ἐνέργειαν].”⁴⁷ Immediately, Aristotle specifies the sense in which the “simple” should be taken: “But the one and the simple are not the same; for the one signifies a measure, but the simple signifies how a thing holds itself [πὼς ἔχον αὐτό].”⁴⁸ The object of the thinking with which Aristotle is concerned is that primary οὐσία which is at work holding itself as itself. To call this way of holding an “object” is misleading if by object some definite *entity* is understood. Rather, the object of thinking in this case is, to use Aryeh Kosman’s turn of phrase, “a mode of *being* which is the paradigm of being in general.”⁴⁹ The object of thinking Aristotle describes here is to be apprehended not as some supreme entity, but as a mode of being or, to put it in terms that resonate more deeply with the Aristotelian articulation, as a way of self-holding. This sort of self-holding is an activity, a being-at-work at work being – its objectivity is the activity of self-holding that poignantly expresses the cooperation between subject and object that is the condition for the possibility of encounter.

Aristotle goes on in this passage to insist that “the beautiful and what is desirable [αἰρετόν] in virtue of itself” is also in the same array

⁴⁵ See Chapter 5.

⁴⁶ This refers to the affirmative array that corresponds to an array of deprivations that together constitute two columns of contraries from which Aristotle’s predecessors had articulated the primary sources of things. See *Meta.* IV.3, 1004b27–1005a2. DeFilipo suggests that the positive column of the table of opposites contains members that “constitute the class of things that are intelligible in virtue of themselves.” See Joseph DeFilippo, “Aristotle’s Identification of the Prime Mover as God,” *Classical Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (1994): 401.

⁴⁷ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072a30–2.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1072a32–4.

⁴⁹ L. A. Kosman, “Divine Being and Divine Thinking in *Metaphysics* Lambda,” in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, ed. John J. Cleary (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988), 180.

as that way of being that simply holds itself at-work.⁵⁰ That the beautiful is now rearticulated as what is “desirable” or “chosen,” αἰρετόν – which resonates with Aristotle’s more restrictive, technical term for choice, προαίρεσις – suggests that the beautiful not only is accessible to wish, but also impinges somehow upon deliberative choice. This is not to imply that the beautiful is the object of deliberation. Rather, as beyond the capacity of human-being, it can at most be the object of wish: accessible, yet elusive. However, as such, the beautiful enters into the ecology of human action by means of deliberative choice, becoming potentially effective whenever, animated by the wish for the beautiful, human-beings orient their deliberative choices toward the good.

Indeed, the question of the good appears in the passage under consideration the moment the beautiful is associated with that which is chosen or desirable in itself; for as primary, the beautiful and the in-itself desirable are “always best, or analogous to it.”⁵¹ But the introduction of the good here leads Aristotle to speak the language of οὐ ἔνεκα, or that for-the-sake-of-which, a saying at home in the sphere of ethical action, where the good is that for-the-sake-of-which something is done. Yet the good operative in ethical action is always the good for someone: when ethical action is excellent, it is said to have resulted from an active condition of the soul “that makes one able to choose [προαιρετική], being in a mean condition relative to us, which is determined by a λόγος and by the way a person with practical wisdom would determine it.”⁵² Thus, the good as “that for-the-sake-of-which” is not motionless in the sense the present discussion requires. Concerned with this, Aristotle establishes a distinction between two ways the “for-the-sake-of-which” is itself said: “[F]or that-for-the-sake-of-which is either for something [τινί] or of something [τινός], but the latter is and the former is not [possible among motionless things].”⁵³ This

⁵⁰ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072a34–5.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1072a35–b1.

⁵² *NE*, II.6, 1107a1–2.

⁵³ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072b2–3. Ross clarifies this as follows: “[W]hen we speak of the οὐ ἔνεκα of a thing we may mean (1) that the thing is good τινί, for some conscious being, or (2) that it is good τινός (ἔνεκα), for the sake of some end.” Ross, *Aristotle’s “Metaphysics,”* 2:376–7. The genitive here is taken as the objective end, as opposed to the end for a specific being.

genitive, τινός, is objective and possessive. It describes the manner in which the that-for-the-sake-of-which belongs to the good and, indeed, the beautiful, as an inherent dimension of its nature and as not capable of being otherwise in any respect. Aristotle suggests precisely how to think the good and the beautiful as such a motionless and necessary mover: “But it moves as something loved [ἐρώμενον], and it moves other things by means of what is moved [κινουμένω].”⁵⁴

The attempt to think the possibility of something that is responsible for moving other things without itself being moved has led Aristotle to articulate that which is desired (τὸ ὀρεκτόν) and that which is thought (τὸ νοητόν) in terms of what might be heard as a kind of ascending series of verbal adjectives – τὸ ἐπιθυμητόν, τὸ βουλευτόν, τὸ αἰρετόν – that here find their highest and richest meaning, appropriately, in a middle/passive participle – ἐρώμενον. To speak of “ascent” in this context is to draw this passage from the *Metaphysics* into dialogue with the famous speech Socrates offers in Plato’s *Symposium*. An account of the contours of that speech lends further determination to Aristotle’s provocative and enigmatic articulation of τὸ νοητόν as τὸ ἐρώμενον. To articulate that which is thought in terms of the beloved is to suggest at once the erotic nature of the first principle and the peculiar manner in which it not only is related to the whole, but also relates the whole somehow to itself.

From Longing to Philosophy

In *Metaphysics* XII.7, 1072a26–b4, Aristotle implicitly follows a path of thinking from longing, through wishing and deliberative choice, to

⁵⁴ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072b3–4. The manuscript reading is κινεῖ δὲ ὡς ἐρώμενον, κινουμένω δὲ τᾶλλα κινεῖ. Ross says that the dative κινουμένω is “hardly possible Greek,” and suggests instead κινούμενα and the following gloss: “[I]t moves as being loved (*sc.* without itself being moved), while all other things move by being moved.” This requires also taking τᾶλλα as the subject of κινεῖ. The translation offered in the main text agrees with Laks and Jaeger in taking the manuscript reading at face value and in emphasizing that κινουμένω is a dative of instrumental means. See Laks, “*Metaphysics* Λ 7,” 220n35. The advantage of this reading is that it does not divorce the movement endemic to love from the movement that operates between things in the world: things that move one another while being moved too can be moved by love. Indeed, such is the movement by which mortals participate in the eternal: turning toward one another and generating offspring. Owens too, following Christ and Nolte, retains the dative; see Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, 442n24.

the good and the beautiful that Socrates had traced in his speech in praise of love in the *Symposium*. Socrates is led along this path because he seeks explicitly to “say the truth [τᾶληθῇ λέγειν] about each thing praised.”⁵⁵ We might then recognize the parallel paths as indicative of two attempts in different contexts to say the truth, in which case it will have been the very attempt to articulate the truth that led both Plato’s Socrates and Aristotle to think the first principle in erotic terms.

Socrates, like Aristotle, begins with a sort of longing, ἐπιθυμία. His discussion with Agathon, who had just given a speech in praise of Eros that seemed beautiful to those present, establishes a connection between the object of longing and that of love. What longing and love have in common, according to Socrates, is that both are directed toward that which one lacks. However, in linking longing to love, Socrates moves rather swiftly from rudimentary longings to more deliberative desires oriented toward a view of the good. He does this to underscore the notion that even possession of the desired object does not do away with the dimension of lack and thus of a certain longing. Socrates suggests:

But whenever someone says “while I am healthy, I want [βούλομαι] also to be healthy” or “while I am wealthy, I want to be wealthy”, or “I long for [ἐπιθυμῶ] the very things that I have”, we would say to him, “My good man, while you possess wealth, health, and strength, you also wish to possess them in the future as well, since at the present moment you already have them, whether you wish them or not. Consider if, whenever you say ‘I long for [ἐπιθυμῶ] the things I presently possess,’ you are saying anything other than this: ‘I wish [βούλομαι] to possess the things I now possess in the future as well.’”⁵⁶

Here the distinction between longing and wishing, ἐπιθυμία and βούλησις, is established in order to emphasize the notion that even in that sort of βούλησις associated with rational choices directed toward the future and oriented by a sense of the good, there remains a dimension of lack.⁵⁷ This allows Socrates to articulate a similarity between

⁵⁵ Plato, *Platonis Opera, Symposium* (hereafter *Sym.*), 198d3–4. Socrates emphasizes this again at 199a7–b1: “I am willing, if you want, to say true things in my own way and not in competition with your speeches, lest I incur ridicule.”

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 200d3–6.

⁵⁷ Drew Hyland has traced the manner in which the transition from ἐπιθυμία through βούλεσθαι to a deeper understanding of ἔρως involves a movement in degrees of rationality. He suggests that “the introduction of the deliberation involved in βούλεσθαι

ἐπιθυμία and ἔρως even as he introduces a deliberative, one might perhaps say syllogistic, dimension into the meaning of ἔρως itself.⁵⁸ The continuity between longing and love is underscored by Socrates' insistence that both are directed toward that which one lacks.⁵⁹ The objects of ἐπιθυμία and ἔρως remain elusive. And yet by an appeal to βούλησις, a deliberative dimension is ascribed to ἔρως that extends it beyond mere longing.

In *Metaphysics* XII.7, the difference between ἐπιθυμία and βούλησις articulates the difference between appearing and being. The object of longing is there said to be "that which appears beautiful [τὸ φαινόμενον καλόν]"; while the object of βούλησις, which in Aristotle has come to take on the technical meaning of "wish" in distinction from "deliberative choice," or προαίρεσις, is said to be "what is beautiful [τὸ ὄν καλόν]."⁶⁰ When heard in conjunction with Socrates' discussion with Agathon, however, Aristotle's use of the term βούλησις to articulate the manner in which the being of the beautiful becomes somehow accessible amplifies the extent to which the beautiful reveals itself as *elusive*. Indeed, its accessibility is determined by an elusiveness that uncovers a certain insufficiency, a kind of lack. This lack, however, is recognizable only to those beings capable of λόγος in a certain way, and this is what determines in part the difference between the longing endemic to all living creatures and the deliberative capacity of those beings capable of orienting their lives according to an erotic engagement with the beautiful and the good. In Aristotle, however, ἐπιθυμία itself is not without a certain relation to the λόγος of things. Indeed, as bound up with the capacity to perceive at work in all living things, ἐπιθυμία cannot be wholly illogical.⁶¹ Yet a different relation

lifts the status of the merely passionate ἐπιθυμία to the level of ἔρως. Again we can argue that central to the distinction between ἐπιθυμία and ἔρως is the presence of rationality in ἔρως. See Drew A. Hyland, "ἔρως, Ἐπιθυμία and Φιλία in Plato," *Phronesis* 13 (1968): 39. In the course of Hyland's persuasive argument, he appeals to *Republic* 437b–439b, in which Socrates, talking to Glaucon, distinguishes ἐπιθυμία, which makes no value judgment, from βούλεσθαι, which includes the dimensions of deliberation by which certain desires are assessed as valuable or good.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 5.

⁵⁹ *Sym.* 200e2–5.

⁶⁰ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072a26–30; *NE* III.2, 1111b10–30.

⁶¹ See Chapter 5.

to the λόγος of things is possible for those beings capable of deliberative ἔρως.

In the *Symposium*, the Mantinean priestess Diotima is made to articulate the variegated nature of ἔρως as it operates throughout “mortal nature.”⁶² Prior to the famous ascent passage in which she traces the stages by which a young person is brought by the activities of love from an erotic desire for an individual beautiful body to a life dedicated to “theorizing the beautiful itself [θεωμένῳ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν],” Diotima draws Socrates’ attention to the cause “of love and longing [τοῦ ἔρωτος καὶ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας]” in “all the wild animals.”⁶³ There she seems to emphasize the way love and longing pervade the animal kingdom, first drawing animals into relation with one another in an attempt to generate offspring and then causing them to defend and protect their offspring even if it threatens their own existence. This sort of erotic activity is rooted not in the exercise of λόγος – she says it is not done ἐκ λογισμοῦ⁶⁴ – but in that longing which animates “mortal nature” as it “seeks as far as possible to be eternal and immortal.”⁶⁵ Thus, Diotima emphasizes how ἔρως in its prelogical mode as ἐπιθυμία is at work throughout the animal kingdom. In so doing, she extends the erotic reach of the beautiful beyond the scope of human-being to the depths of mortal nature. And it is a small but significant step beyond the things said by Diotima to allow, as Aristotle does, the erotic reach of the beautiful to saturate the whole of nature.⁶⁶

Even if, however, Aristotle moves beyond Diotima in articulating the unmoved moving principle of the whole of nature in erotic terms, her account seems to lend insight into the manner in which such an

⁶² *Sym.* 207d1.

⁶³ See, first, *ibid.*, 211d1–3, then 207a7–9.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 207b6–7.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 207c9–d1.

⁶⁶ Although Kyung-Choon Chang refuses to identify the unmoved mover in Aristotle with nature, he recognizes the deep connection between Aristotle’s account of the unmoved mover in *Metaphysics* XII.7 and the account of love in the *Symposium*. The main difference he identifies is this: “The fact that the Unmoved Mover acts as the ultimate cause of generation in the universe as a whole is the most distinctive feature compared to the operation of the Form of the Beautiful whose influence does not extend beyond the world of mortals.” See Kyung-Choon Chang, “Plato’s Form of the Beautiful,” 441.

erotic principle might be thought to operate. At its most rudimentary level as that longing which draws mortal beings toward one another, the erotic principle can be felt, to use Aristotle's terms, to "move other things by means of what is moved."⁶⁷ Indeed, the famous ascent passage of Diotima's speech also articulates the manner in which those mortals with the capacity to discern the λόγος at work in the movements of things are opened to an ecological relation with the beautiful and the good that is capable of orienting a life toward the question of justice. When Diotima's articulation of the ascent to the beautiful is read together with Aristotle's account of wisdom in *Metaphysics* I.1–2, the philosophical life, rooted in an erotic relation to the beautiful, is heard to draw human-beings into relation with the whole of things in a way that opens us to the demands of justice.

For Diotima the movement toward the beautiful begins in youth as a person, turning first toward an individual beautiful body and generating beautiful λόγοι there, comes to realize (κατανοήσαι, ἐννοήσαντα) in the course of such encounters that the beauty of all bodies is one and the same.⁶⁸ Aristotle articulates this process of realization in terms of the capacity to move from experience to art. For human-beings, Aristotle tells us, "experience [ἐμπειρία] makes art...and art comes into being whenever, out of many thoughts [ἐννοημάτα] from experience, one responsive supposition [ὑπόληψις] comes to be concerning those that are similar."⁶⁹ Condensed in this passage is the complex ecology of encounter traced in Chapter 5 as the way of response that leads from those rudimentary encounters of perceiving through φαντασία to thinking. If Aristotle insists that this way of response is rooted in that sort of "stretching out toward knowing" that belongs to all human-beings,⁷⁰ when brought into dialogue with the sayings of Diotima this desire to know may be heard as an erotic engagement with things that leads human-beings "to theorize the beauty in practical endeavors and in customs and to see that all beauty is akin."⁷¹ The ecology of encounter is saturated by an erotic dimension that

⁶⁷ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072b3–4.

⁶⁸ *Sym.* 210a4–b6.

⁶⁹ *Meta.* I.1, 981a3–7.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, I.1., 980a21.

⁷¹ *Sym.* 210c3–5.

discloses the kinship of all things in light of the beautiful. Yet to see things in light of the beautiful is to be animated by a love of wisdom rooted in but not limited to our concrete encounters with things.

Diotima suggests that the young person who comes to realize the kinship of beautiful things can be led from beautiful practical endeavors to philosophy. She says, “After turning to the great sea of beauty and theorizing it, he gives birth to many beautiful λόγοι and magnificent thoughts [διανοήματα] in an abundant philosophy [ἐν φιλοσοφία ἀφθόνῳ].”⁷² The abundance of philosophy, for Diotima as for Aristotle, is rooted in an ecology of theoretical practice in which the attempt to say things as they are gives birth to “beautiful λόγοι” and “magnificent thoughts” attuned to the beauty that expresses itself in nature. Such sayings and the capacity to think things through (διανοήματα) mark the manner in which philosophy is able to bring what is discerned as beautiful in its encounters with things to bear upon mortal life. What began in a proto-logical longing has, through the activation of the human capacity for λόγος animated by an ever deeper erotic engagement with the λόγοι of things, been heard to cultivate a love of wisdom, a φιλοσοφία. The story Diotima tells about the ascent from ἐπιθυμία through βούλησις to φιλοσοφία is the story of the cultivation of the syllogistic capacities of human-being – the ability to gather together the λόγοι of things in such a way that the beneficial and the harmful, as opposed to the merely pleasant and painful, are manifest. Thus, Diotima concludes her account of the ascent to a philosophic life by pointing not to the rapturous vision of the beautiful, but to the life of philosophy in which the vision of the beautiful is woven into the world of action and encounter. Her final sentences draw together the entire trajectory of her account, beginning with a kind of enthusiasm and concluding with the hypothesis of a mortal immortality:

“Are you not aware [ἐνθυμῇ],” she said, “that only there with it, when one sees the beautiful in the way it can be seen [ᾧ ὁρατόν], will one be able to give birth, not to phantoms of excellence, since one would not be touching upon [ἐφαπτομένῳ] a phantom, but to true excellence, since one would be touching upon [ἐφαπτομένῳ] the truth? By giving birth to true excellence

⁷² Ibid., 210d3–6.

and nourishing it, one would be able to become a friend of the gods and if, indeed, any human could become immortal, that one would.”⁷³

Diotima emphasizes here the elusive accessibility of the true being of the beautiful and the importance of weaving it into the world of human action by giving birth to and nourishing true excellence. The accessibility of the beautiful is articulated by the deployment of the term ἐφαπτομένῳ, a middle participle that means “to lay hold of, grasp, touch” but also “to reach (with the mind), attain to.”⁷⁴ With a single word, Diotima anticipates Aristotle’s determination of the sort of stretching out toward knowing that belongs by nature to human-being and suggests the way this stretching beyond belongs together with Aristotle’s articulation of truth as a certain touching.⁷⁵ Yet Diotima also marks the elusiveness of the beautiful when she emphasizes that seeing the beautiful is limited by “the way it can be seen [ᾧ ὁρατόν]” – access to its being-at-work is conditioned always by the powers of those capable of encountering it. To underline this elusive accessibility, she insists at the end that the one capable of such seeing becomes not a god but a friend of the gods (θεοφιλεῖ) and immortal in a decidedly human way.⁷⁶ This account of the activities of love, which is said to have persuaded Socrates himself and animated his own life,⁷⁷ suggests how the object of love, Aristotle’s ἐρώμενον, might be thought to “move other things by means of what is moved”;⁷⁸ for it operates in nature

⁷³ *Sym.* 212a2–7. A comment on the terms Diotima employs here is in order. As mentioned, the use of a cognate of ἐπιθυμία at the beginning of the passage (ἐνθυμῇ) gestures to the entire trajectory of Socrates’ speech insofar as it points back to that longing which is like ἔρως, because it is oriented toward that which it lacks (see 200a–212c).

⁷⁴ See Liddell and Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, s.v. ἐφάπτω, v.

⁷⁵ For the stretching out toward knowing, see, of course, *Meta.* I.1, 980a1, and Chapter 1. For the touching, see *Meta.* IX.10, 1051b22–5; *De An.* III.6, 430a26; 430b27–9. It is not insignificant that Aristotle articulates the life of thinking thinking itself in terms of a “touching” and “theorizing” according to which νοῦς and the νοητόν are the same; see *Meta.* XII.7, 1072b20.

⁷⁶ Here the emphatic manner in which Diotima articulates the “if,” εἴπερ, suggests that she meant to highlight the conditional nature of her articulation concerning the possibility of human immortality. Drawing on this passage, Cobb rightly suggests, “The hypothetical seems to be counterfactual, that is, it assumes that no human being can in fact ‘become immortal.’” See Cobb, *Plato’s “Symposium” and the “Phaedrus,”* 81.

⁷⁷ *Sym.* 212b2–8.

⁷⁸ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072b3–4.

by drawing things toward one another in an ecology of relation animated by an economy of variegated desire discernible in a diversity of ways throughout nature. The life of philosophy, that most human of desires, is animated by the attempt to discern the beautiful and the good at work in nature in order to live a life of true excellence in the light of what is thus discerned.⁷⁹ The beautiful and the good, accessible, yet elusive, function as erotic principles that draw us at once to them and toward one another. As elusive, they awaken in us a sense of lack that holds us open to new possibilities of relation; as accessible, however, they invite us to weave a sense for the good and the beautiful into our relationships with one another and the things we encounter.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL LIFE

In a different vernacular Aristotle traces a path similar to the one Diotima articulates from the direct experience of individuals through practical endeavors to the love of wisdom. For Aristotle, the movement is toward a certain capacity “to know all things [τὸ μὲν πάντα ἐπίστασθαι],” which “belongs especially to the one who has knowledge according to the whole [τὴν καθόλου ἐπιστήμην] because he has seen in a certain way all the things lying there present from the outset [οἷδέ πως πάντα τὰ ὑποκείμενα].”⁸⁰ This sort of knowledge of the whole is, however, like the abundant philosophy to which Diotima gestures, not divorced from the attempt to generate beautiful words that give rise to magnificent thoughts in relation to each thing encountered. When Aristotle’s discussion of σοφία in *Metaphysics* I.1–2 is heard in dialogue

⁷⁹ Hyland has emphasized the significance of Diotima’s insistence that the object of ἔρως is not only the beautiful but also the good (*Sym.* 205e–206a). In so doing, Hyland refers first to the passage from Plato’s *Charmides* in which Socrates suggests that the objects toward which ἐπιθυμία, βούλησις, and ἔρως are respectively directed are pleasure, the good, and the beautiful (*Charmides* 167e). He goes on to suggest, however, that this economy of relations is deepened in the course of Diotima’s speech when she articulates the erotic dimensions of deliberation and the deliberative dimensions of ἔρως. See Hyland, “Ἐρως, Ἐπιθυμία and Φιλία in Plato,” 45. Philosophy, as rooted in ἐπιθυμία, βούλησις, and ἔρως, might then be understood to be oriented by an integrated apprehension of the the pleasant, the beautiful, and the good.

⁸⁰ *Meta.* I.2, 982a21–3. For the rather robust translation of ὑποκείμενον as “the things lying there present from the outset,” see Heidegger, *Einführung in die φ / phänomenologische Forschung*, 27/19. See Chapter 5.

with the things said by Diotima, it can be recognized as animated by a love whose object draws it into a deeper relation to the individuals from which it is born.

Although Diotima articulates the transition from individuals to a vision of the beautiful in terms of ascent, Aristotle seems to think the transition as a descent from the surface to the depth of things.⁸¹ In *Metaphysics* I.1, this descent to the roots of things is said to begin in perceiving and to move according to a process of attuned learning:

By nature, then, the animals come into being having the power of perceiving, though in some of them memory does not emerge out of this, while in others it does. And for this reason, these latter are more intelligent and more capable of learning [φρονιμώτερα καὶ μαθητικώτερα] than those that are unable to remember, while as many of them as are not able to hear [ἀκούειν] are intelligent without learning (such as a bee or any other kind of animal that might be of this sort), but as many do learn as have this sense in addition to memory.⁸²

The emphasis on the importance of hearing is striking because it comes immediately after Aristotle's identification of seeing in its close association with knowing (τὸ εἰδέναι) as the most beloved of the powers of perceiving.⁸³ If, as Aristotle insists, the ability to teach is a sign of having seen – “a sign of the one who knows [εἰδότης] . . . is the ability to teach,”⁸⁴ – hearing in conjunction with memory is a condition for the possibility of learning. Yet because teaching is conditioned by having learned, perhaps vision too has its roots in a certain attuned hearing. Indeed, Aristotle's insistence that ἐμπειρία, experience, arises from memory and belongs primarily to human-being suggests also that the sort of learning from ἐμπειρία that gives rise ultimately to a kind of σοφία involves the capacity to hear as well as to see.

Aristotle thematizes the descent from the surface of things to their depth in terms of the transition from experience, which knows “the that,” to wisdom, which recognizes “why”:

⁸¹ The famous articulations of the path of Aristotle's thinking as moving from the things first for us to those first by nature suggest the itinerary of descent to the articulated roots of things. See *Phys.* I.1, 184a1–b14; *Meta.* VII.3, 1029b3–12. For a discussion of how this direction of inquiry operates in Aristotle's legomenology, see Chapter 3.

⁸² *Meta.* I.1, 980a27–b25.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 980a21–4.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 981b7–10.

Nevertheless we think that knowing [τὸ εἰδέναι] and understanding [τὸ ἐπαίειν] are present in art more than is experience and we take the technicians to be wiser than people with experience because [ὥς – which indicates Aristotle's agreement with this sentiment] in every instance wisdom is more something following along according to knowing [τὸ εἰδέναι]; and this is because the ones know that which is responsible [τὴν αἰτίαν] while the others do not. For people with experience know the that [τὸ ὅτι], but do not know the why [τὸ διότι], but the others are acquainted with [γνωρίζουσιν] the why and that which is responsible [τὴν αἰτίαν].⁸⁵

Wisdom here shows itself to be something comparative, not superlative: some people are wiser than others, depending on the depth of their familiarity with the why of things. Wisdom is not simply a matter of insight, but *it follows along* “according to εἰδέναι.” Indeed, the strange reduplication of words that designate knowing at the beginning of this passage gestures to the manner in which the kind of knowing associated with wisdom is not simply noetic insight. The shades of meaning associated with τὸ εἰδέναι – knowing, seeing – are brought into relation to a second articular infinitive: τὸ ἐπαίειν. This infinitive means to give ear to, to feel, perceive, and so, to understand, and indeed to profess knowledge of.⁸⁶ Heard together, these two infinitives articulate the trajectory of learning that leads to σοφία. Wisdom grows from a certain capacity to attend to things in perceiving that involves the attempt to address things as they show themselves and to respond appropriately to what has thus been seen. The reiteration of articular infinitives at the beginning of this passage designates σοφία as a way of knowing in which the dimension of hearing must be understood together with that of seeing. Every attempt to articulate the “why” begins in attuned attention to the irreducible “that” of things. The ἐπαίειν reminds us that insight grows out of a particular kind of hearing, an ability to attend to the things encountered in the world. Such encounters ground σοφία, calling it back to the world within which it is embedded.

In stretching out toward knowing, the love of wisdom is compelled to return to the things encountered in experience as the site

⁸⁵ Ibid., 981a24–7.

⁸⁶ Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. τὸ ἐπαίειν, v.

where a certain knowledge of all things is cultivated. Thus, although *Metaphysics* I.2 begins with a consideration of the “suppositions we have concerning the wise person,” the first assumption being that the wise person “knows all things [ἐπίστασθαι πάντα], in the way it is possible, but he does not have knowledge of them as particulars,”⁸⁷ a careful reading of *Metaphysics* I.1, when combined with a rich understanding of Aristotle’s naturalistic phenomenological methodology, suggests that this cannot be taken to involve the abstraction from particulars.⁸⁸ Aristotle touches upon the proper way to understand wisdom as the “knowledge of all things in the way it is possible” when, turning from and drawing upon the common opinions concerning the wise, he articulates the nature of wisdom this way:

[T]o know all things [τὸ μὲν πάντα ἐπίστασθαι] must belong especially to the one who has knowledge according to the whole [τὴν καθόλου ἐπιστήμην], since one has seen in a certain way all the things lying there present from the outset [οἷδέ πως πάντα τὰ ὑποκείμενα], and these are just about the most difficult things for a human to recognize [γνωρίζειν], those that are most universal [καθόλου], for they are the farthest away from the things perceived.”⁸⁹

This passage trades on a subtlety with regard to the grammatical position of the term πάντα that requires close attention, for it articulates Aristotle’s shift away from commonly held opinions to his own proper understanding of the meaning of “all things” in relation to the whole. When he expresses the common assumptions concerning the wise, Aristotle situates the πάντα in the predicate position. He says, “[W]e assume first that the wise knows all things [πρῶτον μὲν ἐπίστασθαι πάντα] in the way it is possible.” In the predicate position, which is its usual position, the πάντα means simply “all things.”⁹⁰ At

⁸⁷ *Meta.* I.2, 982a8–10.

⁸⁸ Here, then, is a palinode to the sentiments expressed under the heading “Philosophical Ideals” in Christopher P. Long, “The Ontological Reappropriation of Phronesis,” *Continental Philosophy Review* 35, no. 1 (2002): 37–43. The sentiments expressed there may yet be applied to the tradition of Aristotelianism, but a robust legomenological approach to Aristotle tells against ascribing them to Aristotle. Shaeffer argues that Aristotle’s understanding of wisdom as articulated in *Metaphysics* I.1–2 is concerned with abstracting from particulars. See Denise Schaeffer, “Wisdom and Wonder in *Metaphysics* A: 1–2,” *Review of Metaphysics* 52, no. 207 (1999): 641–56.

⁸⁹ *Meta.* I.2, 982a21–5.

⁹⁰ Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 296, §1174b.

first, then, Aristotle emphasizes the common opinion that wisdom is a knowledge of all things that need not attend to each in its particularity. However, when he turns to articulate his own position, he places *πάντα* in the attributive position – *τὸ μὲν πάντα ἐπίστασθαι* – where it comes to denote a certain wholeness.⁹¹ Aristotle underscores the relation between all things and the whole when he says that the wise one has “knowledge according to the whole [*τὴν καθόλου ἐπιστήμην*],” a phrase that *in its very articulation* shows the parallel between *πάντα* and *καθόλου*.⁹²

This parallel is clarified by the explanation of the meaning of the sort of knowledge according to the whole Aristotle ascribes to the wise one who “has seen in a certain way all the things lying there present from the outset [*οἷδὲ πως πάντα τὰ ὑποκείμενα*].” Here again the *πάντα* appears in the predicate position such that it means “all things taken individually,” but it has been transformed by its having been situated in relation to the whole in such a way that each individual is no longer understood simply to be a particular instance of a universal nature, but now it is said to be recognizable as an individual belonging to the whole in a certain way. This, indeed, is the “most difficult” path to the universal, for it involves a passage that leads farthest from the individuals encountered in perceiving without abandoning the truth encountered there. Yet, however difficult, this most universal knowledge, this knowledge according to the whole, is accessible by a certain recognition – Aristotle says, *γνωρίζειν* – that first becomes possible

⁹¹ Ibid., §1174a. Smyth speaks of it as “the whole regarded as the sum of its parts (the *sum total*, the *collective body*).”

⁹² Heidegger, following a slightly different path, comes to a similar conclusion: “Aristotle clarifies this *πάντα* as a *ὅλον* in the sense of the *καθόλου*; he substitutes the *ὅλον* for *πάντα*. Now this does not mean: the *σοφός* sees the whole as the sum of particulars; instead, the *σοφός* understands what every particular along with the others ultimately is. Now this shows itself: the *πάντα* that the *σοφός* has at his disposal is grounded in the *ὅλον* as the *καθόλου*.” See Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes*, 97/67. Heidegger’s reading does not make something of the positioning of the *πάντα*, and as a result he hears in the original articulation of the common opinions concerning the knowledge of the wise person the suggestion that *πάντα* means the whole as totality or the sum of the parts (95/66). The argument made here in the main text appeals to the positioning of the *πάντα* in an attempt to argue more persuasively from a legomenological perspective Heidegger’s central point that the *πάντα* must be thought in its relation to the *καθόλου* if a proper understanding of wisdom is to be gained.

through a way of having seen – οἶδε – all the things lying there from the outset. This having-seen is rooted in a way of listening attentive to the saying of things.⁹³

If Diotima articulates σοφία as the awareness of the beautiful growing in an ascending process that moves from the beauty in individual bodies through beautiful practical endeavors and beautiful lessons to a learned beauty (τοῦ καλοῦ μάθημα) that is beauty itself,⁹⁴ Aristotle articulates wisdom as a recognition of the whole that moves from those initial encounters in perceiving through experience, technical know-how, and practical understanding to a knowledge of all things as bound up with and indeed expressive of the whole. The recognition of the whole is thus itself rooted in the capacity to “embrace many by being said according to each.”⁹⁵ Significantly, Aristotle characterizes this most authoritative knowledge here in *Metaphysics* I.2 in terms of the capacity to know the good for each thing. This knowledge, he says, “recognizes that for the sake of which each thing must be done; and this is the good of each thing, and on the whole [ὅλως], the best in the whole of nature [ἐν τῇ φύσει πάσῃ].”⁹⁶ The love of wisdom, then, for Aristotle involves the capacity to recognize the good for each as it relates to the best in the whole of nature. Aristotle’s articulation of the “best in the whole of nature” here gestures already to his determination in *Metaphysics* XII.7 of the beautiful as “what is chosen in virtue of itself” that is analogous “to what is primary and always best.”⁹⁷

If philosophy is to be understood as the love of wisdom, it must be heard as a kind of life lived in intimate association with the things of nature oriented by an erotic relation to the appearing of the beautiful

⁹³ Here οἶδε has been translated as “one has seen,” not in order to deny that it means “to know,” but to highlight the perfect tense with its completed aspect and the close connection the word has to the sense of sight. This serves to draw the sort of having seen endemic to wisdom into close connection with the infinitive – εἰδέναι – toward which all human-beings stretch out by nature. The completed aspect suggests that the knowledge is rooted in a way of having seen all the things lying there present before one. It thus articulates the way in which encounters in perceiving are not abandoned in the kind of knowing that is wisdom.

⁹⁴ See *Sym.* 211c3–d1.

⁹⁵ *Meta.* V.26, 1023b29–32. See too Chapter 5.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, I.2, 982b5–7.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, XII.7, 1072a35–b1.

and the good in the whole of nature.⁹⁸ The beautiful and the good, however, are discernible in the whole of nature only by attending carefully to and responding deliberately with the λόγος of things, a λόγος with which, as Heraclitus reminds us, we are always conversing.⁹⁹ Thus, as φιλία, the erotics of wisdom involves a rigorous engagement with the λόγος of things animated by a desire to know (τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται), that is, by a stretching out toward knowing understood as a kind of having-seen. This “having-seen” is auditory as much as visual in the sense that it requires a particular way of attending to the things encountered in the world. To live according to such an attentive way of hearing and to seek, in stretching out toward things, to respond in the elusive light of the beautiful and the good is to live a philosophical life intent on doing justice to things.

AN ECOLOGY DIVINE

The philosophical life, like all of life, is rooted in an ability to cooperate with the λόγος of things. In the *De Anima*, Aristotle has been heard to speak in the middle voice as he articulates the joint activity

⁹⁸ Toward the end of *Wahrheit und Methode*, Gadamer suggests a way of understanding truth in Plato that brings him very close to the position ascribed to Aristotle here. Plato “was the first to show that *aletheia* is the essential moment in the beautiful, and it is clear what he means by this. The beautiful, the way in which the good appears, makes itself evident in its being: it presents itself. What presents itself in this way is not different from itself in presenting itself. It is not one thing for itself and another for others. It is also not something that exists through something else. Beauty is not radiance shed on a form from without. Rather, the ontological constitution of the form itself is to be radiant, to present itself in this way. From this, then, it follows that in regard to beauty the beautiful must always be understood ontologically as an ‘image’. It makes no difference whether ‘itself’ or its copy appears. As we have seen, the metaphysical distinction of the beautiful was that it closed the gap between idea and appearance. It is certainly an ‘idea’ – i.e., it belongs to an order of being that rises above the flux of appearances as something constant in itself. But equally certain is that it is itself that appears. As we saw, this is by no means an objection to the doctrine of ideas but the concentrated exemplification of its problem. Where Plato appeals to the evidentness of the beautiful, he does not need to insist on the contrast between ‘the thing itself’ and its copy. It is the beautiful itself that both creates and supersedes this contrast.” See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge Einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1990), 491. For the English, see Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 487–8.

⁹⁹ See Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 167, fr. 72. See too Chapter 1.

at work in the cooperative relation between the soul and the things it encounters. Already there, however, Aristotle had touched upon a noetic capacity, which he characterized as “a certain ἔξις, like light” and articulated as analogous to a being-at-work knowing in which the activity of knowing and the object known are the same.¹⁰⁰ If the simile of “light” is meant to highlight the manner in which νοῦς is to be thought to condition the possibility of such cooperative noetic encounters, the analogy with human knowing suggests that the activity of νοῦς, “when it has come to be each intelligible thing,” is somehow like that cultivated activity of human knowing Aristotle designates as θεωρεῖν and identifies as a kind of self-awareness that remains “somehow in potency, but not in the same way it was before learning and discovering.”¹⁰¹ This sort of awareness, which on the human level is the result of learning and discovery and thus rooted in our deliberative encounters with things, is articulated in the *De Anima* as an ability “to think itself.”¹⁰² The ability to think itself is not a kind of narcissistic self-contemplation, but rather a self-awareness that settles upon us in and through our encounters with things.¹⁰³ If, as Aristotle insists, to be-at-work knowing is a kind of ἔξις that involves the active identity between the activity of knowing and the object known, an identity that is *also* a kind of self-awareness, then the intentionality of the thinking endemic to this knowing will be doubled in a manner analogous to the doubled erotic power of the νοητόν Aristotle articulates as ἐρώμενον: if the ἐρώμενον draws things toward it by drawing them toward one another, perhaps the νοήσις that becomes its νοητόν may be said to think itself by thinking its object. Thus, the thinking at work in those cooperative encounters that Aristotle also calls “theorizing”¹⁰⁴ is as much a self-thinking as it is a thinking of others, for the two are one in the living, cooperative activity of thinking and being thought.

This, indeed, is the context in which Aristotle’s most poignant articulations of the ultimate erotic principle *as* the living activity

¹⁰⁰ See *De An.* III.5, 430a15 and 430a20–25, respectively. See too Chapter 6.

¹⁰¹ *De An.* III.5, 429b8–9.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 429b9.

¹⁰³ For a discussion of ἔξις as a way settling down into a natural, albeit cultivated, active condition, see the discussion of the ἔξις of perceiving in Chapter 5.

¹⁰⁴ See, e.g., *Phys.*, VIII.4, 255a33–b13; see too Chapter 5.

of thinking must be heard. Having established that the object of thinking – τὸ νοητόν – moves without being moved in a manner analogous to that which is loved and reasserting that its way of being is as a simple and necessary self-holding,¹⁰⁵ Aristotle emphatically announces that this simple self-holding is to be thought in terms of life. Indeed, he begins to think the ultimate erotic principle as a kind of life analogous to the best moments of human life: “But the course of its life [διαγωγή] is like the best we have for a short time.”¹⁰⁶ The course of Aristotle’s articulation concerning the beginning (ἀρχή) on which “the cosmos and nature depend”¹⁰⁷ itself begins with reference to those moments of cooperative encounter in which we humans are in touch with the nature of things. Aristotle’s λόγος moves then to an account of the activity of thinking – νοήσις – that resonates with the cooperative ecology of perceiving and concludes by identifying this activity not only as divine, but as the very life of god.¹⁰⁸ Thus, Aristotle’s most famous articulation concerning the divine begins with the cultivated activity of human thinking and proceeds by speaking the language of perceiving in order ultimately to think god as a living activity of thinking that poignantly articulates the nature of cooperative encounter by which each and any thing enters into relation with others.

¹⁰⁵ Aristotle determines the meaning of necessity here in terms of the simple condition, beautiful and good, that is not capable of being otherwise, but is, as Joe Sachs has eloquently put it, “the precondition for there being something variable that can have a good condition. It is called beautiful as the stable simplicity that makes order possible.” See Sachs, *Aristotle’s “Metaphysics,”* 242.

¹⁰⁶ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072b14–15. Laks does well to insist that the importance of διαγωγή is “underlined by the emphatic position of the term at the beginning of the sentence.” See Laks, “*Metaphysics* Λ 7,” 232.

¹⁰⁷ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072b13–14.

¹⁰⁸ This account of the itinerary of Aristotle’s articulation of the divine follows some of the things said by Richard Norman and Joseph DeFilippo. Norman has emphasized that the sort of self-thinking Aristotle ascribes to god is “the same as ordinary human abstract thought.” See Norman, “Aristotle’s Philosopher-God,” 67. Even if his determination of human theorizing as “abstract” ought to be rejected, Norman’s insistence upon the continuity between human and divine thinking ought to be affirmed. To affirm the continuity is not, however, to endorse the absolute identity between divine and human thinking. DeFilippo, for his part, recognizes the direction of Aristotle’s argument in *Metaphysics* XII.7, which moves not from god to νοῦς, but from νοῦς to life to god. See DeFilippo, “Aristotle’s Identification of the Prime Mover as God,” 394–5.

Listen, then, to the beginning of this decisive passage, attending both to the vocabulary associated with perceiving and to the manner in which self-thinking is said to come into being by “participating” in the object with which it is engaged:

But the being-at-work thinking, the one that thinks according to itself [ἡ δὲ νόησις ἢ καθ’ αὐτήν], is a thinking of what is best according to itself, and especially so with what is most of all [thinking]. But thinking [νοῦς] thinks itself by participating in that which is thought [κατὰ μετάληψιν τοῦ νοητοῦ], for by touching and thinking it becomes that which is thought with the result that thinking and that which is thought are the same.¹⁰⁹

Here the distinction, explicitly stated in *Metaphysics* XII.9, between νόησις, which names the being-at-work of thinking, and νοῦς, which names the potency for thinking, must be heard;¹¹⁰ for Aristotle introduces words associated with perceiving as he attempts to think through the dimension of δύμινις endemic to the very being-at-work of thinking. The key formulation is ὁ νοῦς κατὰ μετάληψιν τοῦ νοητοῦ – the “potency for thinking” becomes an activity of thinking “by participating in what is thought.” This formulation points to an ecology of encounter that is then determined as a kind of “touching” and “thinking.”

Perhaps insight into the ecology of encounter toward which this articulation gestures might be gained by attending to a similar passage from the *Eudemian Ethics* in which Aristotle deploys the formulation κατὰ μετάληψιν.¹¹¹ In that context, Aristotle seeks to articulate how perfect friendship does not undermine his determination of the good person as most independent, or autarchic. There Aristotle insists that the very autarchy of the good person is won in a life lived in common with others rooted in a natural desire for self-perception and self-recognition. He begins by considering life in its being-at-work and as an end:

It appears that it [namely, the being-at-work of life] is perceiving [τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι] and recognizing [τὸ γνωρίζειν], and therefore living together

¹⁰⁹ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072b18–21.

¹¹⁰ See *ibid.*, XII.9, 1074b18–26.

¹¹¹ Elders suggests the importance of the connection between these two passages. See Leo Elders, *Aristotle's Theology: A Commentary on Book A of the "Metaphysics"* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1972), 188.

[συνζῆν] is to perceive together [τὸ συναισθάνεσθαι] and to recognize together [τὸ συγγνωρίζειν]. But self-perceiving [τὸ αὐτοῦ αἰσθάνεσθαι] and self-recognition [τὸ αὐτὸν γνωρίζειν] are most desirable to every one [αἰρετώτατον ἑκάστω], and because of this, the desire to live is naturally rooted in all; for it is necessary to set down living as a certain recognizing.¹¹²

Here Aristotle roots life in the ecology of perceiving, suggesting, indeed, that the being-at-work of life is a perceiving together that involves also self-perceiving. As Elders has suggested, the term συναισθάνεσθαι is further clarified in the discussion of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where it is used to articulate the manner in which the perception of something involves also an awareness of the self.¹¹³ There Aristotle says in addition, “[T]here is something in us that is aware that we are at work, so that whenever we perceive, we are aware that we are perceiving and whenever we think, we are aware that we are thinking, but to be aware that we are perceiving and thinking is to be aware that we are.”¹¹⁴ This suggests that a certain self-awareness is concomitant with the being-at-work of thinking and perceiving – cooperative encounters that awaken us to our own existence.

Thus, returning for a moment to the passage from the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle deploys the formulation κατὰ μετάληψιν to articulate the dynamic by which self-awareness announces itself in encounters of perceiving and thinking. Drawing the discussion of self-awareness together with the desirable and the good, Aristotle first suggests that a certain communion with the nature of that which is determined is what itself determines the nature of recognition and perceiving: “[T]he recognized and the perceived are on the whole said by their communing [τῷ κοινωνεῖν] with the nature of the determined [ὀρισμένης], with the result that to wish to perceive one’s self is to wish to be something of a certain sort.” He goes on to say:

[W]e are not of ourselves in each of these conditions, but [become so] only by participating in these potencies [κατὰ μετάληψιν τῶν δυνάμεων] in perceiving and recognizing (for the one perceiving becomes perceived in that way and in

¹¹² Aristotle, *Aristotelis Ethica Eudemia* (henceforth *EE*) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), VII.12, 1244b24–9.

¹¹³ See *NE* IX.9, 1170b4–5; see too Elders, *Aristotle’s Theology*, 188n32.

¹¹⁴ *NE* IX.9, 1170a31–3.

that respect in which one first perceives and according to the way in which and the object which one perceives, and the one recognizing becomes recognized in the same way).¹¹⁵

The ecology of encounter – be it that of perceiving, recognizing, or thinking – is determined in terms of a kind of communion, or indeed communication, with “the nature of the determined.” That which is determinate itself determines the nature of the ecology of encounter. This ecology involves, as has been suggested, a logic of cooperation at work in the middle voice in which what perceives or thinks becomes what is perceived or thought. Here, however, the two sides do not simply dissolve into one another, but they retain a certain independence in and through their encounter; indeed, there is a way in which their encounter is rooted in a kind of self-awareness that belongs to perceiver and perceived, thinker and thought, a self-awareness that announces itself in and through the very activity of encounter by which things enter into relation with one another.

If we bring the passages from the *Eudemian Ethics* into dialogue with those heard in *Metaphysics* XII.7, a decisive substitution cannot escape notice. Where the *Eudemian Ethics* says κατὰ μετάληψιν τῶν δυνάμεων, the *Metaphysics* says κατὰ μετάληψιν τοῦ νοητοῦ. To substitute νοητόν for δύναμις in the *Metaphysics* passage is to suggest that in the ecology of encounter, the object of thinking is itself to be thought as a kind of potency or power. Elders proposes that the term δύναμις in the *Eudemian Ethics* passage means “the force, the activity of the object of knowledge which unveils itself in cognition.”¹¹⁶ This “force,” however, is perhaps better understood as that “power” by which the object is able to express itself as itself, an ability with which it is possible for a certain thinking to share. In the *Metaphysics* passage, this sort of sharing is called a “touching” and “thinking” and is articulated in terms of receptivity.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ *EE* VII.12, 1245a2–9.

¹¹⁶ Elders, *Aristotle's Theology*, 188.

¹¹⁷ In reference to this passage from the *Metaphysics* and others to which he appeals to clarify the meaning of “touching” here, Elders suggests that “[t]hese texts have a mystical ring.” He expands on this, saying, “[W]e conclude that θγγάνων and νοῶν of [1072]b21 must be understood as referring to contact with principle and pure being, a contact which results in illumination and mystical knowledge.” See *ibid.*,

For what is receptive of that which is thought and of the very being [τὸ γὰρ δεκτικὸν τοῦ νοητοῦ καὶ τῆς οὐσίας] is thinking [νοῦς], and it is at work when it has them [ἔχων]; therefore, it is the being-at-work more than the receptivity that thinking has [ἔχειν] that seems divine, and its theorizing [ἡ θεωρία] is pleasantest and best.¹¹⁸

Aristotle articulates the ecology of noetic encounter at work here, as he had done in those passages associated with the ecology of perceptive encounter, by saying τὸ δεκτικόν.¹¹⁹ Here, as there, the term evokes an understanding of receptivity as an active ability that, in being open to determination, does not become other than it is, but becomes more fully itself. In the *De Anima*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, and *Physics*, Aristotle thematizes this receptive capacity as a kind of active condition, a ἔξις, into which the soul settles itself as into its very nature.¹²⁰ Here he speaks of it as a kind of having, ἔχων, ἔχειν. The being-at-work seeing of the capacity to see is a joint activity with what is seen that settles the capacity to see into its own nature. So too, here, the being-at-work thinking of the capacity to think (ὁ νοῦς) is a joint activity with what is thought that settles the capacity to think into its own nature. When Aristotle, then, says that it is the being-at-work “more than” [μᾶλλον] the receptivity that thinking has that seems divine, he does

189. But the impression of mysticism is due to the manner in which Aristotle focuses on the moment of cooperative encounter without emphasizing the paths of address and response that lead humans to such moments; they are no more mystical, or less wonderous, than opening ones eyes to see, or one's ears to hear.

¹¹⁸ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072b22–4. Elders agrees with Bonitz that the καὶ in the phrase τὸ γὰρ δεκτικὸν τοῦ νοητοῦ καὶ τῆς οὐσίας is exegetical, clarifying the meaning of τοῦ νοητοῦ rather than suggesting something else in addition to it, but he disagrees with Bonitz's insistence that οὐσία here refers exclusively to the τὶ ἢν εἶναι, suggesting instead that it means existent thing or reality. See Elders, *Aristotle's Theology*, 191. The translation of οὐσία as very being attempts to articulate the truth of both positions insofar as it affirms Bonitz's claim that what is thought is the *Wesen* of the thing and Elders's emphasis on the determinate nature of what is thought. This would fit well with the passage from the *Eudemian Ethics* in which Aristotle seems to emphasize the determinate nature of that which is thought or perceived. The sort of reception at work in the ecology of encounter by which that which thinks becomes what is thought is not abstract, but determinate; it involves the concrete encounter with a determinate nature.

¹¹⁹ See *De An.* II.5, 417b14–16; *Phys.* VII.3, 247b17–248a4; VIII.4, 255a29–b7 – in each of which the example of theorizing is decisive; *NE* II.1, 1103a23–26.

¹²⁰ See Chapter 5.

not extirpate all potency from the being-at-work of thinking.¹²¹ To mark the “being-at-work thinking has [ἔχων]” as divine is not to root out potency altogether. Rather, its having is the sort of self-holding endemic to all ἔξεις: a being-at-work in which a certain ability remains always operative.

This is not to deny the priority Aristotle ascribes to being-at-work. Indeed, in *Metaphysics* XII.6, Aristotle specifically insists that the οὐσία of the first source cannot be δύναμις.¹²² However, this does not mean that its being-at-work involves no dimension of δύναμις at all. Rather, its οὐσία cannot be δύναμις. And yet a certain δύναμις cooperates in the very being-at-work of that thinking which expresses the dynamic of encounter itself. The peculiar sort of δύναμις involved is not that associated with matter; rather, it is to be understood as a sort of openness to determination that articulates the integrity of the activity itself. This is the manner in which δύναμις remains cooperative in all acts of theorizing; for the activity of theorizing does not diminish but enhances the capacity to theorize.

Aristotle himself gives poignant voice to the ecology that operates at the root of the possibility of encounter in *Metaphysics* XII.9. There he says of the very being-at-work of thinking, “[I]f it is the most excellent, it thus thinks itself and is the thinking of thinking thinking [ἡ νοήσις νοήσεως νόησις].”¹²³ The formulation has captured the imagination of philosophers since its initial articulation, for there is perhaps no better way to put the ecology of encounter into words. Indeed, the *articulation itself* declares the manner in which a certain δύναμις remains cooperative in that activity of thinking which expresses the relational dynamic of encounter on which all life depends. The very positioning of the words *shows* the dynamic endemic to every cooperative being-at-work together. This dynamic, the ecology of encounter, must be felt to retain a dimension of potency – announced here by the genitive νοήσεως – even as the activity of relating accomplishes a communion in

¹²¹ The μᾶλλον does not seem to indicate the annihilation of δύναμις; it is not “rather than” in an exclusive sense, but “more than” in order to mark the priority of the being-at-work encountering, even if in this very being-at-work a certain δύναμις remains operative.

¹²² *Meta.* XII.6, 1071b19.

¹²³ *Meta.* XII.9, 1074b33–5.

which the two sides become one in the activity of encounter itself. This is no identity without difference, nor is it a narcissistic self-thinking, but rather a certain self-awareness is concomitant with the ecology of encounter in which difference and potency are not extirpated from relation but rooted in it.

Here Aristotle's articulations touch upon something that he himself might have, strictly speaking, rejected; for he seemed often to think of δύναμις as threatening to the everlasting nature of the ultimate principle. Yet the example of the ἔξις of theorizing suggests how a dimension of δύναμις might be preserved in the activity itself, as an expression of its internal structure that does not threaten but rather characterizes its continuing operation. This is the deepest significance of Aristotle's articulation of ἡ νοήσις νοήσεως νόησις as a kind of life, indeed, a life divine: "For the being-at-work of thinking is life, and that [divine] being is being-at-work, and its being-at-work is in itself the best life and is everlasting."¹²⁴ God is the everlasting, living activity of relation. God is relationality.

Frederick Woodbridge has suggested that this living activity might be thought in terms of the phenomenon of catalysis in chemistry, in which a chemical reaction is facilitated by the presence of a substance that, while itself undergoing no change, causes the reaction by virtue of its presence.¹²⁵ Thus, the living activity of Aristotle's first οὐσία might

¹²⁴ *Meta.* XII.7, 1072b26–8. To bring the articulation of ἡ νοήσις νοήσεως νόησις found in *Metaphysics* XII.9 back into direct relationship with this sentence from XII.7 is to take issue with Brunschwig's suggestion that XII.9 is a "brilliant but short-lived improvisation," a "thought experiment" that was supplanted by the more sophisticated articulations of the life of the divine in XII.7. Brunschwig does well to suggest that the articulations of XII.7 are more sophisticated and more fully integrated into Aristotle's own account of perceiving and thinking found in the *De Anima*. Specifically, he is right to emphasize that Aristotle's explicit use of ἐνέργεια in XII.7, his recognition that intellection can be both of something else and of itself, and his use of the conceptual schema articulated in full detail in the *De Anima* all point to the fact that XII.7 is Aristotle's most mature articulation of the nature of the divine. See Brunschwig, "*Metaphysics* Λ 9," 301–6. However, this does not mean that the articulation ἡ νοήσις νοήσεως νόησις does not speak something of the truth of the divine. Indeed, as suggested, it is a saying that shows the truth of the divine as the active condition of relation always already at work where there is life.

¹²⁵ Woodbridge writes: "Now it might be said that Aristotle found nature in need of a 'catalyzer,' an activating principle. With him this principle is not chemical; it is logical or intellectual. It does not create; it 'catalyzes.' The way it influences is like

be said to catalyze relation: its simple, active presence may be discerned in and through the living ability to respond in relational encounter. Yet this way of articulating the activity that is οὐσία in Aristotle remains misleading if the activity itself is understood to be a transcendental cause of relation. If we continue to speak of it in terms of the “condition for the possibility” of relation, it is not to gesture once again to an ultimate transcendental principle in the Kantian sense. Rather, the divine activity comes here to language in the very attempt to articulate the nature of things. Its presence is discernible only in and through the relational encounters that give it voice. If, in a peripatetic legomenology that seeks to do justice to the voice of the divine heard in the saying of things, the divine itself may be said to be a “condition for the possibility of relation,” this is only because it is itself also heard to be conditioned by the possibilities endemic to relation. Thus, indeed, the divine does not point to a transcendental principle; rather, it articulates an erotic activity in the middle voice.

If the ultimate erotic principle in Aristotle is a way of being-at-work that articulates itself in terms of the deepest possibilities of noetic connection, it cannot be divorced from those most rudimentary encounters of perceiving that characterize the activities of life. Rather, the possibility of noetic connection is only the most articulated expression of an ecology of encounter always already operative each time some one thing enters into relation with another. To speak of God as ἡ νοήσις νοήσεως νόησις is to hold open the possibility that such relations are in principle intelligible, even if, for human thinking, there remains always something elusive and unintelligible about our encounters with things. And yet the desire to know, to discern in our relations with things and in their relations with one another what it is they are and how we are with them, is no mere intellectual curiosity; rather, it is the manner in which we in-habit the world. This desire, born of longing, becomes for the human animal a kind of wish that grows as a response to our erotic relation to things. To allow human life to be animated by the desire to know, that is, to live a philosophical life, is to be oriented toward the question of truth. If this quest for truth is not

the way a clear idea influences the development of a theme, or a motif in music influences the development of a symphony.” See Woodbridge, *Aristotle’s Vision of Nature*, 84–5.

separable from the ecology of encounter in and through which truth is articulated and discerned, it will have to be apprehended as a way of living committed to the continuing attempt to do justice to things as they show themselves to be and as they participate in the community of the whole. Indeed, the desire to know is animated by a living pursuit of truth rooted in an erotic quest for justice. To discern this, it will be necessary to turn to a final passage from the *Metaphysics*, in which Aristotle considers precisely how the good and the best is related to the whole; for as we have heard, the question of justice involves not merely articulating things according to the ways they express themselves, but responding to things in ways that do justice to what they are in themselves *and* as articulations of the whole.

At the end of *Metaphysics* XII, Aristotle returns to the question concerning the relation between the first οὐσία and the nature of the all with which the investigation began.¹²⁶ Now, however, with the determination of the first οὐσία as the living and active condition for the possibility of relation, Aristotle formulates the question in terms of the manner in which the good and the best are related to the whole: "It is necessary to consider in which of two ways the nature of the whole has the good and the best, whether as something separate, itself by itself, or as the order."¹²⁷ Immediately upon formulating the question, Aristotle suggests that perhaps it is "in both ways," and he appeals to the first of two analogies designed to articulate the manner in which the good is related to the whole of nature. The first analogy suggests that the whole has the good in both ways "like an army": "For its good condition [τὸ εὖ] is in its order and also is its general."¹²⁸ He goes on to suggest that the good condition is more the general than the order because the general does not depend on the order but the order depends on the general. This initial suggestion, however, is immediately eclipsed by another consideration:

But all things are somehow ordered together, though not all similarly, the things that swim and fly and grow; and they do not exist without being related at all to one another, but they are in some way related. For all things are

¹²⁶ Lang has recognized the manner in which this question holds the λόγος of *Metaphysics* XII together. See Lang, "The Structure and Subject," 259–60.

¹²⁷ *Meta.* XII.10, 1075a10–12.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1075a14.

ordered toward one, as in a household [ὥσπερ ἐν οἰκίᾳ], in which the free members of it are least allowed to do any chance thing, while the slaves and livestock do little for the common, but for the most act at random, since the nature of each is of that sort. I mean, for example, that it is necessary for each thing to come to be decomposed, and there are thus other things in which all things share that contribute to the whole.¹²⁹

The analogy with the army and its general is supplanted by an analogy with the household, or οἶκος, that is explicitly developed as a way to understand the natural manner in which things that fly, swim, and grow are related. Indeed, the analogy is introduced and developed in terms of the operations of the natural world – the relations that inhere between living things and the necessity of decomposition that contributes to the ongoing life of the whole. Thus, despite the odious appeal to slaves, the main thrust of the analogy ought to be heard to suggest that the good is somehow at work in the ecology of relations that constitutes a household. Indeed, the appeal to slaves and livestock in distinction from those who are free may be heard as an attempt, albeit perhaps a “babbling” one, to articulate the natural differences that cooperate in the common ecology of the whole.

Here our continuing appeal to the etymological sense of “ecology” resonates with the things Aristotle himself says about the proper manner in which to think the good in relation to the whole. Aristotle’s own λόγος articulates how things live together in relation (οἶκος-λόγος) to the good that is operative in and yet somehow also beyond the concrete ordering of the household itself. On this ecological analogy, the good does not stand, like the general, as an entity independent of the whole and imposing order upon it from without; but the good cooperates immanently as the condition for the possibility of the relations constitutive of the household and transcendentally as the ideal toward which the symbiotic activity of the whole must be oriented if it is to be healthy and thrive. To understand the whole thus in its relation to the good is to come to recognize the manner in which the good conditions our relations to things and enjoins an orientation toward them animated by the attempt to do justice to what they show themselves to be as organic parts of an ecology to which they and we belong.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 1075a18–25.

Here, the articulation of the divine as a life “thinking of thinking thinking” must be heard as an attempt to express the relationality at the root of all living together. Yet Aristotle’s determination of this principle as erotic and his identification of it with the good and the beautiful suggest that this immanent principle of relation opens also the possibility of a relation with the being of the good and the beautiful capable of transforming our common life together by opening us to new possibilities of relation. Indeed, it is the ability to perceive the good and the bad beyond the immediately pleasant and painful that Aristotle ascribes in the *Politics* to the human animal as the basis upon which the community of the household first becomes possible. Such a household is predicated on a certain capacity for λόγος, one that relinquishes its power to nurture the community of the whole if it ceases to root itself in its encounters with the appearing of things and fails to respond in ways that do justice to each as part of the whole.

To speak beautifully in light of the good is to seek ecological justice in the saying of things.

Ecological Justice and the Ethics of Truth

This sort of justice, then, is complete virtue, although not simply, but toward another [πρὸς ἕτερον]. And because of this, it often seems that justice is the most excellent of the virtues and “neither the evening nor the morning star is so wondrous,” and we say proverbially: “in justice all virtue is collectively in one.”

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*¹

Ecological justice is cultivated by an ethics of truth: it is nourished by concerned address and attuned response, and it grows over time in and through the attempt to put things into their proper words. The ethics of truth is rooted in a twofold responsibility that conditions the way human-beings in-habit the world. At the surface, this twofold responsibility announces itself in our rudimentary encounters with perceptible things; from the depths, it is heard in our attempts to articulate the intelligibility of things. At the surface, responsibility is twofold insofar as our encounters in perceiving at once lend themselves to our perceptive *abilities to respond* and awaken us to an insistent unicity that *enjoins response* even as it remains recalcitrant to human articulation. From the depths, responsibility is twofold insofar as our *abilities to respond* intelligibly to the coherent integrity of

¹ NE V.1, 1129b25–30. The first quotation in this epigraph is from *Melanippe*, a lost play of Euripides. The proverb is from Theognis.

things awaken us to the expression of the whole that presses upon us an *obligation* to speak in light of the good and the beautiful, however dimly discerned. The human ability to respond thus opens human-being to responsibility from two directions. Attentive to the surface and attuned to the depths, we in-habit an ecological community of ontological encounter that renders us acutely aware of our powerful abilities to respond and their concomitant responsibilities.

If we have, in the preceding pages, traversed a path of thinking that seeks to articulate the nature of this human ability to respond to the saying of things, it was not only to open the possibility of understanding truth in terms of ecological justice. The path was also undertaken to begin to cultivate the response-ability to hold our relations with the things we encounter accountable to the things themselves *and* to the ecological community in and through which all such encounters cooperate, thrive, and perish. Thus, we began with the irreducible unicity of things, only to find ourselves in the end somehow addressed by the question of the good and the beautiful in relation to the community of the whole. If over the course of this study, we have sought to articulate truth in terms of justice, here at the end, we shall attempt to speak justice in terms of truth. For truth, as has been heard, lives between human-being and the things we encounter. *It is made possible, however, only by a thinking intent on doing justice to the expression of things in light of the whole in which they are encountered. To do justice in this sense is to remain true to the things themselves as expressions also of the larger ecological community we co-habit with all things.* If this co-habitation is intent on weaving justice into the ecological community, it will need to remain true to the saying of things in its attempts to say things truly. Yet to do justice in this sort of responsive saying requires the cultivation of certain habits of thinking and acting capable of hearing in the things said an articulation of the integrity of the whole. It will, however, also need to cultivate the response-ability to stretch beyond these articulations with an eye toward the erotic principles of the good and the beautiful so as to enable thinking and acting to cooperate with the saying of things in symbiotic ways that contribute to the well-being of the ecological community. Truth as ecological justice was thus articulated in terms of the symbiotic relation between human-being and

nature rooted in the world of appearing. Yet if the condition for the possibility of truth was heard to be a *φαντασία* capable of translating encounters of perceiving into the language of thinking, the condition for the possibility of ecological justice is here said to be an ethical imagination capable of weaving the good and the beautiful into the fabric of our relations with things.²

In order to discern the nature of ethical imagination as the root habit of the ethics of truth and the condition for the possibility of ecological justice, the paths of thinking we have already traversed will have to be held in mind even as we move decidedly beyond the things Aristotle says concerning *φαντασία*. In so moving, however, we deliberately perform the precise theoretical practice Aristotle's own thinking repeatedly enacted; for by attending carefully to the things Aristotle has said about appearing, we seek to respond in ways that do justice to the things said in order to say things capable of bending the community of ecological communication toward justice. In this, the following account of ethical imagination remains animated by the phenomenological legomenology that seeks to save the things said as articulations of a truth that invites the saying of things anew and awakens our existing relational realities to new possibilities of thinking and acting grounded in a deep recognition of and commitment to ecological justice. The basic contours of the itinerary of what follows have thus already been articulated by the paths traversed: because the ethical imagination operates in the world of appearing that opens between the human powers to perceive and think, it will need to have an aesthetic and a noetic dimension. Once these two dimensions of ethical imagination have been articulated, it will be possible to recognize how the cultivation of ethical imagination might contribute to

² See Chapter 2. In what follows, we return to the vocabulary of the "imagination" and reluctantly relinquish that of the *φαντασία* embraced for the specific reasons outlined in Chapter 5, note 38. In so doing, however, we do not intend to purge the ethical imagination of the full range of connotations associated with *φαντασία*. To the contrary, we now intend to reinscribe the English term in a way that remains alive to those connotations. As such, the meaning of 'image' in ethical imagination cannot be limited to the visual, for not only will the full diversity of perceptible appearances – sounds, tastes, feelings, smells, as well as visions – be at work in ethical imagination, but so will the wide range of noetic images – thoughts, ideas, and ideals.

an ethics of truth capable of bending the community of things toward ecological justice.

AN INCIPIENT ARTICULATION OF THE TRUTH OF JUSTICE

As a way of moving toward an articulation of the meaning of ethical imagination in its relation to ecological justice, let us orient ourselves toward what Aristotle initially says concerning justice, not indeed to develop a complete account of justice in Aristotle, but to ground the articulation that follows in something said beautifully concerning the truth of justice. Before turning his attention in the *Nicomachean Ethics* to the sort of justice that is part of virtue, Aristotle suggests that justice is quintessentially relational:

[J]ustice alone of the virtues seems to be the good belonging to another [ἀλλότριον ἀγαθόν], because it is in relation to an other [πρὸς ἕτερόν ἐστιν], for one does what is advantageous to another, either to the one ruling or to the community member. Thus, the worst person is one who uses one's bad condition both toward oneself and toward one's friends, while the best person is one who uses one's virtue not in relation to oneself, but toward another; for this is difficult work.³

The difficult work of justice is to use virtue in relation to an other. If, as has been heard in the epigraph to this chapter, the things said proverbially by Theognis emphasize justice as a collectivity of virtues, Aristotle here seems to move beyond Theognis to locate the wonder of it in the subtle but decisive difference between virtue and justice:

It is clear what the difference between virtue and this sort of justice is from the things having been said, for they are the same, but the to be for each is not the same, but insofar as it is toward an other, it is justice, insofar as it is simply a certain sort of active condition [ἔξις], it is virtue.⁴

Justice is the whole of virtue as directed toward the good for an other. Here justice is heard to be that active condition of the soul that stretches out toward the good of an other intent on weaving that good into the fabric of the community. Thus, Aristotle is clear to associate

³ NE.V.1, 1130a3–8.

⁴ Ibid., 1130a10–13.

this sort of justice with the πόλις, insisting in the *Politics* that “justice is political; for the just is the order of political community, but justice is the discernment of what is just.”⁵ We have already heard how the discernment endemic to justice involves a certain way of having λόγος that belongs to the human animal insofar as it is capable of deliberative φαντασία.⁶ Justice for Aristotle seems to be a human capacity situated squarely in the sphere of interhuman community.⁷ Yet already in Aristotle’s initial articulation justice as a relation to an other, we hear the possibility of extending the meaning of justice beyond the sphere of interhuman community to the larger ecological community of things. To think ecological justice in terms of the ethics of truth is to stretch justice out also to the human encounters with nonhuman things even as it reaffirms the importance of justice in interhuman relations. Indeed, just as truth was heard to be originally situated in the sphere of human being-together, only then to extend in the course of the things said by Simonides, Parmenides, and Herodotus to the plurality of things directly encountered in the world, so too here must justice be extended beyond the merely human to the wider eco-logical community of things.⁸

In so doing, the “good belonging to an other” voiced by Aristotle’s articulation of justice must, in extending to ecological justice, be heard to point to the twofold response-ability that conditions the ways human-beings in- and co-habit the world. Thus, at the surface, the good belonging to the other is imaginatively discerned, however inchoately, when our encounters with each appearing individual are held open to the insistent unicity that awakens a perceptive awareness of singularity, the individual as other. From the depth, the good belonging to the whole is imaginatively discerned, however indeterminately, when each appearing individual is encountered as an irreducible

⁵ *Pol.* I.2, 1253a37–9.

⁶ See Chapter 5.

⁷ Claudia Baracchi beautifully articulates this dimension of Aristotle’s conception of justice when she calls justice “this unique virtue said to be ‘complete’ and distinctively concerning the relation to an other, that is, coexistence, commonality, community. Justice names the open, communal field of the working and practice of virtue. It names the psychological state *at work* relationally, *enacted* in the *polis*.” See Baracchi, *Aristotle’s Ethics as First Philosophy*, 143.

⁸ See Chapter 2.

expression of the whole itself. The ability to discern something of the good belonging to the other is thus rooted in an ethical imagination capable of stretching beyond the realities of ecological relation in two directions: to the other always already somehow present as the condition for the possibility of encounter and to the other always already at work in our encounters with things.

Thus, the contours of ecological justice have been touched upon by Aristotle even if not fully articulated. Ecological justice involves a certain capacity for λόγος, an ability to put things into words that articulate appropriately the expression of things in the context of their appearing. As Aristotle has suggested, justice is concerned with the good of an other in two directions, though here it is heard to be restricted neither to the ruler in a human community nor to other human members of that community. Rather, ecological justice is directed also toward the good of the nonhuman other in two directions, both, recalling Heraclitus, to that which manages the whole and to the things encountered everyday.⁹ Thus, ecological justice is cultivated by the ethics of truth insofar as it is nourished by a dialogical engagement with the λόγος of things that is oriented toward the good of an other. This good, however, is discernible only by means of an ethical imagination capable of going down to things and meeting them in a dialogue committed to articulating the truth. Ecological justice, then, as an ethics of truth, involves an ethical imagination that is able to weave the good of the whole into the ecological community by attending carefully and responding appropriately to the saying of things.

THE AESTHETICS OF ETHICAL IMAGINATION

We can discern the aesthetic dimension of ethical imagination by attending again to the ecological dynamics of the concrete encounter with the appearing individual. If perceptive discernment was heard to condition the very manner in which the living soul is open to and co-responsive with that which it encounters in perceiving,

⁹ The relevant passage from Heraclitus is found in Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 162, fr. 52. It is discussed in Chapter 1.

and phantastic discernment was said to be the condition under which what presents itself in perceiving enters into appearing, then the aesthetic dimension of the ethical imagination might be said to be the condition under which the human soul is made aware of the unicity of things expressed through yet irreducible to the appearing individual. Ethical imagination is aesthetic insofar as it is able to perceive the alterity of the individual. This perception of otherness announces a limit that holds the human relation to things accountable. It opens human-being to that which escapes its capacity to articulate, thus forcing upon us the recognition that what has been said stands ever in need of rearticulation in attentive dialogue with things.

The aesthetics of the ethical imagination opens thus to the question of propriety.¹⁰ As an ability to respond capable of corresponding with that which presents itself in perceiving as it enters into appearing, the ethical imagination is alive to the very phenomenality of the appearing individual. This phenomenality is twofold. As it enters into the community of appearances, the singularity of the individual is relinquished. Yet this singularity, the very unicity of each appearing thing, remains nevertheless discernible insofar as that which is appeared to is itself able to remain attentive to the elusive unicity of each appearing thing. Thus, what is proper to each individual, properly speaking, is somehow perceived even if it remains recalcitrant to articulation. The aesthetic side of the ethical imagination points to the sort of perceiving capable of stretching beyond the concrete appearing of the individual so as to imagine that which is ultimately proper to it. To respond appropriately is to ground response in an acute sense of propriety.

¹⁰ What is said here concerning propriety is articulated in the wake of some of the things Heidegger has said concerning *das Eigene* in the third section of *Der Weg zur Sprache*. See Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 245–57/413–26. In an introductory note to the English translation, David Krell puts succinctly the sense of propriety opened by the aesthetics of the ethical imagination: “*das Eigene*, whatever is a thing’s ‘own,’ that is, whatever shows itself when language lets a thing advene under its own power.” See Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings from “Being and Time” (1927) to the “Task of Thinking” (1964)*, 2d ed., ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1993), 396.

The ability to respond appropriately is, however, cultivated over time in the course of a life lived in dialogue with things, committed to articulating them in words most appropriate. Here, truth is not merely adequation, although it is rooted in an equality that conditions the possibility of cor-responsence.¹¹ Rather, truth is a question of appropriation: the attempt to articulate, itself always already a matter of a certain appropriation, what is proper to each. Yet, as appropriation, truth is not simply appropriation. It does not simply take over what is proper to the individual. Rather, as conditioned by the aesthetics of the ethical imagination, truth is able to perceive something of the proper in the very appearing of the individual. Truth grows from articulations oriented to that propriety, justice from articulations oriented by it. Ecological justice is thus cultivated by the ethics of truth as appropriation.

THE NOETICS OF ETHICAL IMAGINATION

If, however, the aesthetics of ethical imagination delineates the ability to discern something of the proper unicity of things, the noetics of ethical imagination points to the ability to orient our relations with things toward the question of the good and the beautiful. As has been heard, Aristotle's articulation of the principle of the whole in terms of a kind of erotic relationality opens those with the capacity to think to the appearing of the good and the beautiful. Indeed, if the *being* of the good and the beautiful was said to remain ultimately elusive, an erotic relation to the appearing of things animated by the desire to articulate what is proper to each – that is, the active life of φιλοσοφία – was said to be able to touch upon something of the beautiful and the good as expressed in the world of appearing.¹² Yet to touch upon something of the beautiful and the good is to possess neither Beauty Itself nor the Good Itself. Rather, the noetics of ethical imagination gestures to the attuned ability to discern the beautiful and the good at work in appearing. As such, it names the erotic ability to stretch beyond the idiosyncratic appearing of things to the larger ecological

¹¹ For a discussion of the meaning of truth as adequation, see Chapter 2.

¹² See Chapter 7.

community of the whole so as to imagine a possible good and beauty beyond but not divorced from the concrete reality of things. If, as has been heard, justice is concerned with the good of an other, the noetics of ethical imagination orients all our relations to things other to the question of justice.

Here, however, justice remains necessarily undetermined, for it can receive determination only in those concrete encounters with things animated by the attempt to articulate what is proper to each as an indispensable expression of the whole. The ability to respond appropriately here takes on yet another dimension, for the appropriate response is oriented not merely by what is proper to each, but also by what this propriety means in relation to the whole; for as has been heard, the ability to be appeared to involves the capacity to be moved by and to move with things in such a way that they become intelligible articulations of a larger whole.¹³ Ethical imagination is thus noetic insofar as it is able to intuit in appearing the alterity of the whole. This alterity is an otherness to which humans have access as thinking beings capable of gathering together the λόγοι of things. The intuition of otherness announces a limit that holds the human relation to things accountable. It uncovers the whole as never wholly revealed to a finite νοῦς cultivated by λόγος. The noetics of ethical imagination opens human-being to that which escapes its capacity to articulate, thus forcing upon it the recognition that what has been said stands ever in need of a rearticulation that roots the dialogue with things in a concern for the good of ecological community. The noetics of ethical imagination is the condition under which it is possible to discern each appearing thing in its relation to the whole such that the question of the good and the beautiful becomes accessible. It thus opens human-being in its relations to an as yet unarticulated but nevertheless possible good capable of transforming the ecological community by orienting it toward justice. Only on the basis of this intuitive accessibility of the good can a commitment to justice be woven into our transactive community of communication with things.¹⁴ Such

¹³ The path that led to an apprehension of φαντασία as an ability to be moved by and to move along with the appearing of things was traversed in Chapter 4. The manner in which this opens up the intelligibility of things was articulated in Chapter 5.

¹⁴ See Chapter 1.

transformative possibilities are, however, born ultimately of an ethics of truth committed to the proper saying of things.

TOWARD ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE AS AN ETHICS OF TRUTH

If ecological justice is cultivated by the ethics of truth, it is nourished by certain habits of thinking and acting that might here be adumbrated in a necessarily incomplete attempt to articulate the virtues of ecological justice. Indeed, continuing a tradition of articulations that gave voice to justice as the whole of virtue in relation to others, we might add the suggestion that ethical imagination is the root virtue of ecological justice. To say this, however, is to say briefly what has been said at length in the articulations voiced in the preceding pages. Let us then turn here at the end to a brief account of the virtues associated with the ethical imagination, an account, indeed, that is also a response to the things Aristotle has said concerning the virtues. For this articulation remains accountable to the things Aristotle said even if and perhaps especially because it moves along with and yet stretches decidedly beyond the things he said so well.

Ethical imagination involves not merely the *courage* to seek the good, the just, and the beautiful in existing relational realities, but also the fortitude to articulate our relations with things in ways that draw the ecological community toward these erotic ideals. Ethical courage, however, requires a certain *temperance* born of the recognition of the limits that condition the community of appearing. This temperance offers ethical imagination, however courageous, the capacity to temper its responses in ways that awaken us to the realities of the encountered other. This sort of tempered ability to respond points to our capacities for *gentleness* and *generosity* on the basis of which justice first becomes possible.¹⁵ Here our powers of imaginative discernment are at work; for to be awakened to the realities of the encountered other is to be able to imagine how it is for each, an

¹⁵ Aristotle's insistence that ἐπιείκεια, or equity, is an important dimension of legal justice seems rooted in an implicit recognition of the importance these two habits have for ecological justice. See *NE* V.10, 1137b14–38a3. For a discussion of the importance of equity in relation to practical wisdom, see Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 148–50, 60.

imagination, as has been heard, rooted in a certain perceptiveness. This attuned perceptiveness is the condition under which the expression of things might be gathered together in such a way that they can be heard not merely to articulate existing relational realities but also to point to other possible realities of relation.

Indeed, each of the ways the soul is able to articulate truth is in its own way bound up with those embedded “ethical virtues” tuned into the unicity of things.¹⁶ Science, if it is to remain animated by the rigorous search for truth that has always sustained its capacity to open us to new possibilities of relation, must return repeatedly to its ongoing dialogue with things, seeking there not only an objective response to its most imaginatively articulated hypotheses, but also an understanding of how best to secure the symbiotic flourishing of the ecological community. Technology, too, if it is to enhance rather than annihilate our relations with one another and nature, must itself be held accountable to the λόγος of things, the source of its own ingenious devices and the wellspring from which genuine ecological flourishing might first become sustainable. Recognized or not, science and technology have always been rooted in an ethics of truth that opens us to the possibilities of ecological justice; for they remain specific ways of cor-responding with the saying of things.

However, the possibilities that open for us when we orient our relations with things to the question of ecological justice will remain forever divorced from reality if they are not translated into the vernacular of existing relational realities by a *magnanimity* that is able to respond to things in their own terms even as it seeks to weave these responses into a community of relations capable of securing the flourishing of things. Our ability to respond with an eye toward flourishing has for generations been well articulated in terms of the deliberative ability to choose animated by an intuitive grasp of the good. This has justly been called practical wisdom, φρονήσις, the peculiarly human

¹⁶ NEVI.3, 1139b15–16. There Aristotle says, “Let the ways by which the soul discloses truth by affirming and denying be five in number. These are: τέχνη, ἐπιστήμη, φρόνησις, σοφία, νοῦς.” These so-called intellectual virtues must be understood together with the so-called ethical virtues. The argument for this has been articulated in Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 144–51.

ability to respond in ways that facilitate human flourishing.¹⁷ If, however, it is to be true to its name, practical wisdom will have to involve the very practice of wisdom and thus extend beyond the interhuman sphere, to the ecology of encounter with things that articulates who we are and how they are with us. Thus, we hear again, with new ears, the words of Heraclitus: “[W]isdom is for the ones listening to speak truth and act according to nature.”¹⁸ This wisdom is born already in those initial, inchoate encounters with things, and it grows over time as human speech learns to listen to the dialogue that opens the possibility of ecological justice in the saying of things.

¹⁷ For a detailed account of *φρονήσις* along these lines, see Long, *The Ethics of Ontology*, 153–65. The articulations heard in this book were born in the things said at the end of that book.

¹⁸ Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 176, fr. 12.

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