

## Aristotelian Philosophy of Language and its Relation on Philosophy of Mind

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## **John Cabot University**

Department of History and Humanities

Bachelor of Arts in Classics  
Minor in Philosophy

Aristotelian Philosophy of Language  
and its Relation on Philosophy of Mind

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## Abstract

Aristotle is often attributed to have initiated the systematic study of fields of logic, physics, biology, mind and many others. Commonly this list does not include language. Surely, there are remarks, deep ones for that matter, in the *Organon*, but *sensu stricto* the study of language in Aristotle does not go beyond a curiosity and at best; in secondary literature, at most, he receives a vague reference that credits the so-called similitude theory of meaning. The theory is primitive and not well-developed but the tools provided by contemporary philosophy of language are a way to understand Aristotle's project in its full extent. The methods of theoretical reductionism have been applied to modern theories of language in relation to mind and the results are fruitful. Similarly, contemporary philosophical tradition enjoys a great analytic advantage, having divided the analysis of language into those of extension, intention, convention, psychology, &c. These categories, though not conceived by Aristotle in his time, can be used to investigate what an Aristotelian theory of language can be, and more importantly, in which regards would it relate to the mind. For Aristotle admits in *De Interpretatione* that there are linguistic and psychological aspects to the study of meaning and that can be referred to *De Anima* for a more elaborate discussion on psychology. A deeper inquiry into the relation between language and mind shows that theory of language is formally prior to theory of mind. Similarly, the key vocabulary of the mind, in particular the notoriously ambiguous notion of *phantasma*, is also reducible to the vocabulary of language, viz. *pathéma*.

## **Dedication**

In dedication to all of my professors in John Cabot University, who had to listen to me argue fervently concerning a minutest of points; in particular Brunella Antomarini, Thomas Govero, Inge Hansen, Sharon Salvadori, and Stefan Sorgner; it was your fault, you enabled me! *Keep enabling.*

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I am in debt of Brunella Antomarini, who had the misfortune to listen to me argue about Aristotle's theory of language, all too patiently and all too supportively, while at the same time having to bear to read the ensuing *short-paper*; I do hope now that I have managed to show the relevance of it, she could have some peace and feel I have not wasted both of our time for the last three years.

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# 1. Introduction

Simply put, our primary goal in the ensuing chapters is to present a case of theoretical reductionism, viz. psychology to language. In that regard, we will need to account for three different theses and show them to be the case: Firstly, we ought to show that there is a theoretical correlation between modes of explanation, i.e. theories, in psychology and language. This can be achieved quite easily by showing either that fundamentally they are analogous or that there is a strong parallelism. A parallelism would envisage a certain meta-theoretical relation that holds between two theories; such that given the formulae of one, we can derive the formula of the other through means of intensional substitution of certain terms, which would be analogically connected. Call the collection of fundamental and derived terms, notions, concepts and even conceptions of a particular theory its vocabulary, e.g. ionic bonds in chemistry and electric and magnetic charges in physics. A given vocabulary is analogous to another one if and only if every element of the vocabulary of a given theory fulfils the same functional role as the other. Furthermore, call two vocabularies weakly analogous if the fundamental notions alone can be shown to be functionally isomorphic to the derived notions of the other; anew, call strongly analogous if both derived and primary are isomorphic. In that regard, the theory of ionic bonds in chemistry is analogous with electric charge in physics weakly; whereas, the electric and magnetic charges are analogous with electromagnetic charge within physics. Intra-theoretic reductions make use of strong analogy and inter-theoretic ones, weak. Before moving onto outlining our two other tasks, let us briefly remark on two important goals fundamental to our project: vocabulary and theory. What we understand by a theory is simply a set of propositions

that somehow account for a certain phenomenon. The phenomenon dictates the form unto the propositions and without a subject-matter, the propositions can be said to be empty, i.e. they lack arguments to their predicates. It is the subject matter that determines the arguments and they are called the vocabulary. For simplicity and brevity, we will leave out the questions concerning the boundaries of what can be considered a theory and vocabulary and satisfy ourselves with being reminded of Ockham's razor that the best theory is one that postulates the least number of meta-theoretical vocabularies.

The second goal is to show the theories of one is derivable from the other, i.e. it is not merely a relation of analogy or parallelism, which is in essence relations of correlation, but causation. Henceforth, we will aim to demonstrate that there is causation between theory of language and mind (or soul, we are not distinguishing in terminology), through the analysis of their vocabulary. We will not, however, attempt to answer the question if these are strongly or weakly related, or in other words, if this is an inter-theoretic or intra-theoretic reduction, simply for brevity. We must nonetheless remark that such an inquiry may yield insightful meta-philosophical conclusions, e.g. whether the philosophy of language and philosophy of mind are as distinct domains of study as physics and chemistry or as theories of electricity and magnetism.

However, we must realise there are two ways of offering an reductionist account concerning philosophy of mind to philosophy of language: one may either choose to deal with the theories of language and mind, which are abstracted from particulars, and show that all theories of the mind are reducible to certain theories of language, which would be an abstract model; or one can take two theories, one of mind, another of language and show that the former is reducible to the latter, in which case the two theories could be taken as a greater project insofar as they would make up an internally consistent theoretical scheme, and thenceforth generalise the



finding into abstract theories. We will opt out for the latter and in our case, these theories will come from Aristotle. There are two reasons for this line of argumentation, one qualitative and one quantitative. Primarily, the Aristotelian psychology, i.e. his theses concerning the mind, is often discussed in isolation from language, though he indicates his intentions to be otherwise. In other words, by taking his theories of language and mind as related, i.e. dependent propositions, we can have better interpretative tools as we would then be able to make inter-theoretical arguments and fill the gaps in the theory wherever needed. Secondly, this method will let us offer a critical reading of Aristotle in which we can judge if his theories are in fact autonomous parts of a greater functioning complex. We will try to limit such remarks in the following chapters, yet, a critical evaluation seems inevitable. In short, we will attempt to read Aristotle in a new light, viz. reductionism.

History of philosophy is scarce with major novel interpretations of language in Aristotle, as far as we are concerned, there four of them: peripatetic school Arabo-catholic school, naturalistic and phenomenological school. Though we will mostly focus our attention the ancient schools, there will be some points in which we will need the insights of the Arabo-catholic school of interpretation. This, nonetheless, should not mean that we will not make use of other independent readings that concentrate on particular subjects, e.g. Frede, or others which aim attention at the man rather than the thought, e.g. Bazàn. We will, notwithstanding, not subscribe to any of these schools but instead utilise a different interpretative scheme than all: reductionism. For when we say that there are different schools of interpretation, what we mean is that there are different ways to interpret the text by infusing it with some other premise that may not be inherent to the text itself: in case of Arabo-catholic interpretation, it was the holy text; for naturalists, empiricism; and for the ancient schools, perhaps it can be said that the interpretation

is in one of its purer forms. The purity of interpretation, i.e. loyalty to the text, is not always an indicator of accuracy or consistency, nor is postulating metaphysical entities or relations. We will, as remarked above, confine ourselves to the simplest theory possible. In that regard, what we will try to do in the ensuing chapters is to present a new interpretation that is subject-independent, i.e. we hold that the same methodological scheme would work with biology and physics as well as with mind and language, and this interpretation will be a reductionist attempt, as much as it was outlined above.

Besides its claim to a historic novelty, our task has one other challenge, viz. identifying what on earth is an Aristotelian philosophy of language. Until very recently, there has been no speculative or interpretative attempt on the question of language in Aristotelian theses, which the first serious attempt is due to Putnam in 1981(!). His investigation nonetheless is far from a complete exposition and nor is it an analysis for Aristotle's sake. He merely makes the point that Aristotle is the first one to advocate for a similitude theory of meaning, which, in Putnam's reconstruction is the underlying theory of early modern theorists. Though a small step, in our opinion, it introduces the Stagirite doctor to the debate by posing the fundamental question of language: what is meaning for Aristotle? What follows him is a series of particular analyses on Aristotle's theses on language that aim to either show how they can be posited in relation to Plato or others. These, though valuable, are far too narrow to be considered an exhaustive account.

One interpretative scheme ought to catch our attention, however and it is due to Deborah Modrak in her *Aristotle's Theory of Language and Meaning* (2000). Her attempt is laudable in many respects, particularly in her attempt to show that the theory of language as assumed in De

Interpretation<sup>1</sup> is not only consistent with other areas of his inquiry, e.g. metaphysics—where she asks if meaning poses the question if ontological entities are accessible to human reason through language—or cognition—where she attempts to show that meaning is conceptualisation from concepts which are themselves perceptions, but also somehow is causally connected to them.

It is worth noting that the vocabulary is slippery in most cases. Putnam lectures us on reference, where as we argue he means meaning and Modrak argues concerning meaning, where we think reference is more appropriate in certain cases. We will therefore aim to construct our system independently from other secondary literature, for the most part. To that end, let us start by showing what we understand by an Aristotelian philosophy of language.

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<sup>1</sup> For an easier reading, we will use Latinised names for ancient texts, in roman script and without abbreviation.

## **2. Aristotle's Philosophy of Language**

Now let us start with admitting some difficulties concerning our analysis concerning philosophy of language as posited by Aristotle. The most pressing issue is that Aristotle never openly takes philosophy of language as an independent and distinct study from logic. Yet, during the twentieth century, we see major advances in the study of philosophy of language and as a result of this; we have to confront a distinct vocabulary than we are commonly used to.

Aristotle never talks of references, or intensions or extensions; he does not argue on psychologism and conventionalism; he does not attempt to formulate what meaning is, &c. He however has something to say of all of these, though be them under different names. Our first task therefore is concerned with vocabulary. Even before we can imagine that vocabulary of philosophy of mind is reducible to those of philosophy of language, we have to account for some sort of transliteration between modern and ancient vocabulary. In that regard, we find it helpful to start with our commonly used primitive and secondary notions so that there be no question as to what we mean by mental image when we argue that Aristotle's phantasm is a mental image.

### **A. Vocabulary of Modern Philosophy of Language**

Firstly—and perhaps most primitively—we have the notion of reference. Simply put reference is a linguistic or a meta-linguistic function that takes a word as its argument and gives out either another word or an object or an idea, where the output of the function is called a referent. Concerning the relationship between the referring expression (that is a word, a phrase or even a

sentence) and the referent, there are two major theories. On the one hand, there is what we now come to call the descriptivists. The descriptivist thesis is that the referent of a referring expression is exhausted by its definition. For instance, the referent of 'Augustus' is 'the first emperor of Rome.'<sup>2</sup> There is some level of choice how one is to make a definition, as one can easily define it as 'the husband of Livia and adoptive father of Tiberius' &c. To that end early twentieth century philosophers of language, who called themselves the Vienna Circle or logical positivists attempted to reformulate language in such a way that every word had to have a definite description and that any word shown not to have one was deemed nonsensical. Perhaps due to the influence of Hume, they moved on to argue that any expression of morality, e.g. good, evil, virtue, vice &c. lacked a definite description and consequently was nonsense.<sup>3</sup>

Conversely, we have the causalist theories of reference. The causalist starts by critiquing the descriptivist in terms of accidentalism. For instance, we could make the statement 'Octavian is Augustus,' which would be an empirically demonstrable statement of a historical fact. Furthermore, we can make the following two statements for the definition and referents of the involved expressions: 'Octavian is the grand-nephew of Julius Caesar' and 'Augustus is the first emperor of Rome.' Given the forms of these two statements it is merely by chance and historical contingency that 'the grand-nephew of Julius Caesar is the first emperor of Rome' is true. This is the problem of contingency, i.e. descriptivist referents and definitions are merely contingent, whereas the statement 'Octavian is Augustus' is not contingent; it is a statement of identity. Secondly, there is the problem of epistemology. For someone who is not learned in Roman history the definitions of 'Augustus' and of 'Octavian' are empirical facts, whereas the statement that Octavian is the same person as Augustus may not be. This indicates that the descriptivist

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<sup>2</sup> Bertrand Russell, "On Denoting" *Mind*, Vol. 14, No. 56.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Rudolf Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology" in *Meaning and Necessity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

theories are not well-equipped to be a consistent and a complete theory of reference.<sup>4</sup> In lieu de descriptions, the causalist contends that the word ‘Octavian’ refers to a certain person and it happens that the word ‘Augustus’ also refers to that very same person, their deeds and personae and historical contingencies do not and should not play any part in our determining the referents. Concerning the nomenclature, we are satisfied by noting that the causalist puts forth that there is a causal chain of reference that starts with the speaker and extends all the way back to the object.

Now, the two notions we have been pointing at but have not explicitly identified in this short summary are those of intension and extension. An intensional theory of reference claims that the referent can be substituted for the referring expression without any loss of meaning as the definition exhausts reference. On the other hand, an extensional theory of reference disputes this claim and argues that only the extension, i.e. only the physical or the mental object can exhaust reference.

In relation to reference, there is a final line we ought to address, for above, we have only considered the reference of a word and not of a sentence. Perhaps the first philosopher of language who has studied these notions in great clarity and rigour, Frege, has a slight distinction between what he calls sense (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung).<sup>5</sup> As we have outlined above, referent of a word is something that the word aims to mean. For Frege—another descriptivist—this is simply substitution, yet differing from our characterisation, he does not condition successful reference as no lack of meaning but of truth-value. In that regard, the referent is a description, when substituted preserves the truth conditions of the sentence. For instance, the sentence ‘Octavian is the first emperor of Rome’ is true, therefore, we can subsequently form the

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<sup>4</sup> Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (New York: Blackwell, 1980).

<sup>5</sup> Gottlob Frege, “Über Sinn und Bedeutung” as “On Sense and Reference” in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, ed. P. Geach and M. Black (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1980).

sentence, ‘the grand-nephew of Julius Caesar is the first emperor of Rome,’ and if the former is true, the latter must be true; therefore, as the truth conditions are preserved the definition of ‘Octavian’ is ‘the grand-nephew of Julius Caesar.’ The reason we invoke Frege, however, is not his theory of reference but of sense. For Frege, the sense is what is expressed. For instance, should we try to hunt for the referent of, say, ‘Apollo,’ we would fail to find it as Apollo as a physical entity is neither here nor there. Yet, when I say ‘Apollo is the god of prophecy,’ you would not say, “ah! You see, ‘Apollo’ lacks a referent; therefore, your sentence is nonsensical.” This is precisely what sense is. A word or a sentence may lack a referent, which are the conditions of substitution under which a given expression is true; nonetheless, it may still have a sense, so that the expression be not unintelligible or nonsensical, it still has a meaning and it still communicates an idea. It is therefore not wrong to say that for Frege—at least to a certain degree—the sense is closely related to meaning, if it does not exhaust it.

Let us introduce a new aspect to our analysis of language. Until now, we have been investigating the words and sentences as if they stood alone, in isolation from the human context, this is mostly because—like Aristotle—early philosophers of language took language as closely related to logic and not communication: let us introduce a speaker. Most of us, upon hearing something do not immediately imagine the extension of the words or the intensional substitution for a definition but merely take it as an expression of something that are in the mind of the speaker that she is trying to convey to us. In other words, we try to look for the speaker’s intent. In that regard, we can construct three pictures: (i) what is in the mind of the speaker, (ii) what the referent is and (iii) what is in the mind of the interlocutor. If all these three correspond to each other, then one may safely assume that the act of communicating is successful. There are, naturally, many flaws with this simplistic model, e.g. what if the speaker’s mental picture and the

interlocutor's are the same but the referent of the expression is distinct, is communication successful? What if the speaker lacks a solid intention in the utterance but the interlocutor interprets something? &c. nevertheless, for our purposes, this is a model sufficient enough to explain intention. Some argue that in looking for meaning, it is not the truth-value of the referent but the intention of the speaker is what is to be investigated.<sup>6</sup> We call these theories that centre on intention psychologist theories of meaning in opposition to logical theories we have outlined.

Before moving onto another sense of psychologism, however, we find it pressing to remark upon another—distinct—sense of intention. In philosophy of mind and in particular ethics, we see intention as a determinant or motivator of a certain action. Anscombe remarks, “The distinction between an expression of intention and a prediction is generally appealed to as something intuitively clear. ‘I am going to be sick’ is usually a prediction; ‘I am going to take a walk’ usually an expression of intention.”<sup>7</sup> In our case, we can well take an utterance as an action and the intention is what motivates that utterance. This analysis is fruitful when we consider expressions such as ‘I promise’ which are called language acts, as the speaker performs an action merely by uttering the sentence.<sup>8</sup> The analysis, nonetheless, comes to a halt when we consider ‘the cherry tree is blossoming.’ It may well be the case that the speaker has an agendum behind the utterance but this is not what the psychologist means when she talks of the speaker’s intent. To illustrate this, assume that the tree speaker is pointing at is not a cherry tree but a plum tree. They blossom around similar times of the year and the colours may not be very distinctive sometimes. In this case, the speaker’s intention is ‘the plum tree is blossoming’ and this means that the picture in the speaker’s mind and the interlocutor’s mind as well as the picture painted by the expression are going to be different. In that sense, we often distinguish between speaker’s

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<sup>6</sup> Donald Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> Gertrude E. M. Anscombe, *Intention* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 7.

<sup>8</sup> J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).



intent from agent's intent whereas the former is a mental state that paints a picture and the latter motivates an action. We argue, however, that this distinction is arbitrary and will attempt to show that in case of Aristotle, the speaker's and the agent's intent are implied by a common general notion of intention.

Now that we have mentioned a mental state, let us remark on it. Defining what a mental state is may be a difficult task as it may seem a very intuitive notion; there are, nevertheless, some controversial aspects. Firstly, the notion of mental state itself lacks any theoretical commitments, so that it can be taken to mean anything within a particular theory of mind. For instance, for the physicalist, who takes that there is no separate entity such as the soul and that the mind is merely a second degree function of the brain, a mental state—though as strange as it may sound in this case—say, that of pain, is fully exhausted by a brain state, the c-fibres firing. For an extreme dualist, on the other hand, it may be the case that the mental state of pain merely corresponds to a certain bodily state, viz. c-fibres firing. In that regard, the appeal of mental states is less about its content and more about its analytic power. As they do not postulate any meta-theoretical assumptions, the model of mental states can easily be adapted to Aristotelian theory of mind.

In relation to mental states, it is perhaps fitting to also touch upon the functionalist theory of mind. It was a major trend within the academia in the latter half of the twentieth century and had serious metaphysical and epistemic claims; yet, for our purposes the investigation of the mind as a functional machine is useful.<sup>9</sup> We consequently will use a somewhat functionalist framework of analysis when it comes to Aristotle, such that we will take there to be certain mental algorithms that lead the mind from one mental state to another and these are empirically analysable, for instance, when Aristotle contends that upon hearing the word 'Alexander' there

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<sup>9</sup> S. Shoemaker, "Functionalism and Qualia" *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 27, 314.

seems to be a mental representation of Alexander, most likely with his particular hairstyle. This is what we have in mind when we say an algorithm that produces a certain mental state from another. In this case, the initial state is the audio-sensation of a certain word, ‘Alexander,’ and the algorithm does its job to transform that state to another one, the final state, the image of Alexander. This may seem like a modern imposition to Aristotle, yet, we firmly hold that this reinterpretation is fully free from meta-theoretical assumptions; in other words, it does not make Aristotle claim something he has not already: it is a mere analytical tool.

Finally—and perhaps most akin to Aristotelian vocabulary—we have two theories that aim to explain through which mechanism a word attains meaning. Upon the one hand, we have psychologism, claiming that words have a certain mental fixation that the referent, the sense and the meaning are tied together with an intention so that the speaker knows what she means when uttering a word. On the other hand, we have conventionalism, which simply argues that the meaning of a word is not determined by the internal mechanisms of a speaker but instead, by a social convention amongst the speakers of a given language. In this point, we can make a distinction between the private (psychologism) and public (conventionalism) languages and how these interact with each other but such discussion is of little instrumental value to our analysis of Aristotle. Instead, we ought to represent these theories as alternatives to each other and a theorist to be in the position of making a choice between them.

## **B. On Aristotelian Philosophy of Language**

Having covered most of the modern vocabulary of philosophy of language, we can now start with the easiest one of the debates in philosophy of language, the so-called conventionalism versus psychologism debate, as Aristotle has a clear and simple answer for that. In relation to

that, we will also investigate the notions of sign, symbol, signifier and word, notions that may seem similar—or to most interchangeable—yet distinct in meaning and use. After having accounted for these, we will attempt to reveal the core of the Aristotelian theory of meaning, one dubbed as the similitude theory of meaning by modern commentators.

## I. Signs, Symbols, Words, Signifiers

“Ὄνομα μὲν οὖν ἔστι φωνὴ σηματικὴ κατὰ συνθήκην ἄνευ χρόνου”<sup>10</sup> states Aristotle. For our purposes there are three important words: (i) ὄνομα (name), (ii) σηματικὴ (signifier)<sup>11</sup> and (iii) συνθήκη (convention). Here, a name can be taken as a placeholder for the grammatical category of nouns or even generally words.<sup>12</sup> Aristotle’s interest therefore is not focused on only nouns or

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<sup>10</sup> Longinus and Demetrius. *Aristotle; Liber de Interpretatione*, ed. Harold P Cooke (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), 1.2. “A name, therefore, is a vocal signifier under a convention and without time.”

<sup>11</sup> We must however note that ‘signifier’ has a different connotation in the study of semiotics. We do not envisage the same notion when we use it. Saussure’s *signifiant* is the sound-image part of a sign whereas *signifié* is the mental part. Our vision is violently different from Saussure’s: for us, the difference between a sign and a signifier is of degree, not category. We use both, along with the notion of a word and symbol, to mean something that is audio-visual (or else) to mean something else, which is a mental image, in this case. We did not have any other suitable word, which was lacking a connotation of this sort that was grammatically fitting to capture the construction of σηματικὴ at the same time. Signifier somehow seems an abstracted version of a sign, as the suffix –ify, suggests. In this way, we can still maintain the relevance but distinction between σῆμα and σηματικὴ, which is the only reason we are calling the latter ‘signifier.’

One could have opted out for leaving the word untranslated, as we have done in other cases, but that seemed to us to confuse our reader more than necessary. Another alternative was using ‘significant’ as a translation. We decided against on two grounds. Firstly, it is somehow weak. The strength of ‘signifier’ in its capacity to be a sign of something is lacking in the word ‘significant.’ Secondly, it is not a loyal translation. The suffix –τικός implies a result action impersonally, perhaps even in a passive sense, whereas –fico in Latin implies an agent as it means ‘I do,’ which lacks that passivity. In our opinion, a word means something regardless of an agent necessarily being present. We will elaborate on this thesis later. In short, ‘signifier,’ though has been used in Saussure, had to be our choice.

That being said, however, we do not see a problem with this. After all, we have not introduced semiotics as a part of our narrative of the analytic philosophy of language. It is true that his Saussure and his semiotics are valuable to the intellectual discussion on language; nevertheless, they do not play a major part in philosophy of language per se. In that sense, we feel free to *appropriate* this term, and shifting its meaning. Thus, the reader should be warned to not to confuse it with Saussure’s *signifiant*.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Plato’s *Cratylus* 399b, “ἀντὶ ῥήματος ὄνομα ἡμῖν γένηται” (a noun indeed is transformed from a verb) where the dichotomy is between the verb and the noun and name is used to mean the noun.

verbs but words in general; similarly, he is not concerning himself with the sentence either. A word is the species if the signifier be the genus. Here, we ought to address the choice of words on Aristotle's part and adjust ourselves accordingly. For a word is not merely σῆμα (sign) but σημαντικῆ (signifier). The former appears, simultaneously in other places to mean a mark or a sign, and particularly in relation to enthymemes.<sup>13</sup> For instance, Aristotle discusses the rhetorical argument: "she has milk, therefore she is with child."<sup>14</sup> In this case milk is σημεία (sign or mark), which indicates, with certain certainty to a state. Given that in his wording, a word is a signifier and not a sign; and given that a sign is to be discussed with enthymemes in mind, we are forced but to conclude that there must be a difference between a sign and a signifier.

A sign is anything that stands for something else, whereas a signifier must be under some convention. Though the discussion here is on sounds and phrases, the uses of sign and signifier are clear. Observe: "ἢ οὔτε κωλύει οὔτε ποιεῖ φωνὴν μίαν σημαντικὴν ἐκ πλειόνων φωνῶν πεφυκυῖα συντίθεσθαι καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄκρων καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μέσου ἢν μὴ ἀρμόττει ἐν ἀρχῇ λόγου τιθέναι καθ' αὐτήν, οἷον μὲν ἦτοι δέ. ἢ φωνὴ ἄσημος ἢ ἐκ πλειόνων μὲν φωνῶν μιᾶς σημαντικῶν δὲ ποιεῖν πέφυκεν μίαν σημαντικὴν φωνήν."<sup>15</sup> Particles, e.g. μὲν, δὴ, τοί, δέ, or of, then, a, the, etc. are indeed signs, insofar as they mean something, whatever that is, and communicate an idea when heard in a sentence but are not signifiers alone, when they are outside of a proper compound. A similar case can be made from an etymological ground. The principle

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Furthermore, in Aristotle's *Ars Poetica*, 31, "ὄνόματος δὲ εἶδη τὸ μὲν ἀπλοῦν" (there are two kinds of words) in which a name stands for any word as he moves on to explain simple and compound words. This can be taken as to mean noun again, but the argument is not particular to nouns, therefore we do not find a need to specify it only for nouns as W.H. Fyfe does in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, 23, trans. W.H. Fyfe. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932).

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle, *Ars Rhetorica*, 33.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Aristotle, *Poetica*, 1457a1-5. "Anything that is not significant sound on its own or in combination with other sounds cannot start a sentence, such as 'then' 'the' 'to.' [cf. the Greek participles for better understanding.] Or it is a not significant sound or collection of them with meaning of each part preserved that is only significant with something else, such as 'anti' or 'pre.' [again, cf. Greek]"

parts of both are the same ση-, which comes from Proto-Indo-European root *\*dʰyeh₂-*, meaning to notice. -μα, is the suffix that often makes neuter nouns from verbs that comes to mean the result of that verb, e.g. *πρᾶσσω* (I do) becoming *πρᾶγμα* (deed). Therefore, *σημα* means what is noticed, i.e. a sign. When the suffix, -τικός, is added, a fitness or ability is introduced, e.g. *πρᾶγμα* (deed) becomes *πραγματικός* (fit for work or, in politics, pertaining to a deed). Then, *σημαντική* is something that is something suitable to be a sign or something pertaining to a sign. We prefer the former analysis better as it demonstrates the difference between a sign and a signifier as a difference in degree and not as members of two distinct categories.

Now, what is the relationship between a signifier and a word? Aristotle says a word is a signifier &c, yet, the exact relation is ambiguous, as something can be something else in at least three ways: include it, included by it and identical to it; where each can be of necessity and of accident. Say, this rose is red. Here, the rose is included by the notion of rose, which 'red' implies or refers to the set of all things that are red. Then, say, what is red is the rose. Here, the rose includes redness; in fact, it should be interpreted from this context-free clause that the speaker observes a number of things and one among them is red and she identifies the red thing in question to be a rose, so that the set of things observed includes something that is red. Now, say, this is the rose. In this case, there seems to be a rose at a point in the past and the speaker points out that that thing is the same rose. In addition to this, say, a rose is a flower. A rose being a flower is a necessary relation, whereas a rose being red is accidental. Even identity of two things may be accidental. Imagine Hesperus and Phosphorus, a famous example by Frege, the evening star is the morning star and both are Venus. The identity that holds between Hesperus and Phosphorus is not of necessity, but of mere chance of discovery that they turned out to be the

same heavenly body. If the common belief were true, then the identity would not only be accidental but also false!

Prima facie, it seems wrong to think that Aristotle takes a signifier to be a subset of word and focus on the other possibilities:<sup>16</sup> word is a subset of signifier or word and signifier are one and the same. It is also the case that whatever relation they may have, it must be of necessity, otherwise it is not informative. If the word is a subset of signifier, then there must be other signifiers that are not words. Even Aristotle finds the need to specify that a word is a vocal signifier that is under a convention and without time. One may be tempted to interpret this that there are other signifiers that are not vocal or not under a convention or with time, for instance a written word. Aristotle disagrees: “καὶ τὰ γραφόμενα [σύμβολα] τῶν ἐν τῇ φωνῇ.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, a written word, in itself, is not a signifier but is a symbol of a signifier, which is the spoken sound. In other words, a name is not something that is written. We can enumerate other instances in which Aristotle explicitly or implicitly denies that a word is subset of signifier, but, for brevity let us demonstrate it through a conclusive argument and not merely through examples. Recalling the distinction between a sign and a signifier, and in particular that a signifier is something capable of being a sign, the relationship between a sign and a word is clear. If a word means something in any capacity, then it must be a subset of sign and this leaves us with no information on what the formal relationship is between a signifier and a word, as, at the same time, a signifier—because it is much stricter in its scope—is also a subset of a sign. As we cannot demonstrate a necessary relation, we abandon this option.

This relationship cannot be identity, either. If it were, then a written word is signifier as well as the spoken one, simpliciter because it is a word, but Aristotle dismisses the written one as

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Hans Arens, *Aristotle's Theory of Language and Its Tradition* (Amsterdam: Benjamins Publishing, 1984), 197.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 1.1. “And the written [symbol] of the spoken.”

merely a symbol of the spoken and not in itself a signifier. Then, we are left with the possibility we ruled out earlier, that a word is a greater category than the signifier, that the word is genus where the signifier is the species. Therefore, there is the greater genus, those that are signs and it has a species, words. In turn, words have two species, written and spoken, and we find the species of those that signify within the genus of spoken words. Given the formulation of a name as a vocal signifier under convention and without time, it holds.

Before moving on to convention, we need to account for the notion of symbol. It appears somehow frequently and it is not *prima facie* clear where it fits in our model of sign-signifier category. Word *σύμβολον* can be analysed into *συνβάλλω* (I throw together, from *συν* and *βάλλω*, where the voiced dental nasal, *n*, shifts into a voiced bilabial nasal, *m*, before a bilabial stop, *b*). The verb has a variety of meanings in different contexts, e.g. an assault in war, yet, Schwyzer observes that *συνβάλλω* is used to mean to cast a vote in the political context.<sup>18</sup> The method of voting was through putting either a black or a white pea, in other words, there was no room for interpretation so that the pea meant the will of the voter. In other instances, the noun form can mean a treaty and a legal document akin to a residence permit in Athens. That there is alternative interpretation, that the meaning of the sign is somehow predetermined, is what we believe is common in all these cases and consequently what is the sense of the word symbol. We take that a symbol is a sign with a fixed meaning, i.e. it lacks alternative interpretations, unlike a signifier which requires an interpretation or else, the meaning is not determined. In fact, simply due to this reason that Aristotle's work is titled *De Interpretatione*.

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<sup>18</sup> Eduard Schwyzer and Albert Debrunner, *Greek Grammar* (Munich: Beck Publishing, 1950), 85.

“τὸ δὲ κατὰ συνθήκην, ὅτι φύσει τῶν ὀνομάτων οὐδέν ἐστιν, ἀλλ’ ὅταν γένηται σύμβολον. ἐπεὶ δηλοῦσί γέ τι καὶ οἱ ἀγράμματοι ψόφοι, οἷον θηρίων, ὧν οὐδέν ἐστιν ὄνομα.”<sup>19</sup>

Aristotle remarks. Firstly, it needs be noted that the word δηλόω is of notice. It often means I make visible or exhibit. The common translation of the fragment is, on the other hand, “significant” as in the Boethius translation of “nam designant et inlitterati soni, ut ferarum, quorum nihil est nomen” or Edghill’s translation that is based on that, “inarticulate sounds, such as those which brutes produce, are significant, yet none of these constitutes a noun.”<sup>20</sup> Due to the lack of primary texts, we cannot declare an opinion on Arabic translations, but are rather certain that they too would follow the Boethius version. We are however uncertain why this is the common translation. There is only one instance in which δηλόω can be taken to mean something along the lines of ‘I signify’ or ‘I mean’ and it is in Sophocles: “δηλώσω σε κακόν.”<sup>21</sup> Even in this case, the exact translation cannot be ‘signify’ but ‘indicate’ or simply ‘tell.’ Furthermore, δηλόω can be used in an impersonal form and we see this in Plato and Xenophon, who are stylistically, scholarly and temporally closer to Aristotle than Sophocles, as in “δῆλόν ἐστι” to mean ‘it is clear.’ Then the translation would follow “they are clear that” and it must also be remarked that the particles γέ τι can be taken to introduce a sub-clause, yet, this sub-clause need not be reported speech in accusative but can follow direct speech in nominal form. If this is the case, then δηλοῦσί in fact links the previous sentence, that no name is a name in nature, to the next, that illiterate sounds of a wild beast are not names. Even if our suggestion is not correct, then in the light of the above distinction we made between a sign and a signifier, we reject the

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<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 1.2. “It is under convention, [because] no one of words is so in nature, but [is so] whenever it becomes a symbol. Then, illiterate sounds, though signs, such of a wild beast, are not names.”

<sup>20</sup> Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, trans. Mary Edghill, in *Works of Aristotle* ed. W. D. Ross and J. A. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), 42.

<sup>21</sup> Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*, 783. “I will mean bad to you.”



translation of δηλοῦσί as ‘signifies’ and take it as ‘signals’ or ‘is a sign’ &c. so that the case we have presented between signs, words and signifiers holds. At any rate, we disagree with the Boethius translation and other subsequent English translations that follow it.

Let us return to the relationship between the notion of convention and significance. Clearly Aristotle favours what we have called conventionalism. For him, a word attains meaning only through convention, whereby it becomes a symbol. It is important to realise that conventionalism is, by no means, particular to Aristotle. His master, too, advocates for it:

ἐμοὶ γὰρ δοκεῖ ὅτι ἂν τίς τῷ θῆται ὄνομα, τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ ὀρθόν: καὶ ἂν αὐθίς γε ἕτερον μεταθῆται, ἐκεῖνο δὲ μηκέτι καλῆ, οὐδὲν ἦττον τὸ ὕστερον ὀρθῶς ἔχειν τοῦ προτέρου, ὥσπερ τοῖς οἰκέταις ἡμεῖς μετατιθέμεθα οὐδὲν ἦττον τοῦτ’ εἶναι ὀρθόν τὸ μετατεθὲν τοῦ πρότερον κειμένου: οὐ γὰρ φύσει ἐκάστῳ πεφυκέναι ὄνομα οὐδὲν οὐδενί, ἀλλὰ νόμῳ καὶ ἔθει τῶν ἐθισάντων τε καὶ καλούντων.<sup>22</sup>

Plato’s conventionalism nonetheless seems to be some kind of linguistic nihilism, as he suggests that the meaning of a word cannot be used to access the idea behind it. That language is a misleading tool in accessing to these platonic ideas, is even extended into the more strict realms of geometry and epistemology in certain cases. To Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge as the combination of right opinion with right explanation, Socrates replies, “ὄναρ δὴ, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐπλουτήσαμεν οἰθηέντες ἔχειν τὸν ἀληθέστατον ἐπιστήμης λόγον. ἢ μήπω κατηγοροῦμεν;”<sup>23</sup> Even though epistemology plays a central part in Platonic discourse, defining knowledge is not an easy task.

Plato has a hidden agenda while presenting these fragmentary arguments, yet, the question whether a name can be correct is interesting. Given that naming and speaking are

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<sup>22</sup> Plato, *Cratylus*, 384. “It seems to me that if you give a name to something it would be the right name, and if you then change the name that one is not any better or any more correct than the first one. It should be just like changing our slaves; it is not inferior or correct as we use them by tradition and habit of those who use them before.

<sup>23</sup> Plato, *Thaetetus*, 208. “Then the true definition of knowledge, which we seemed to have is a dream or let us not condemn it yet?”

actions themselves, then we can interpret this correctness as success. “*Communicative* [author’s italics] success depends on shared conventions, by which one person can come to know what another one thinks. This point is made against Cratylus, 434e-435b: provided the conventions are shared, successful communication of thoughts is possible, no matter what conventions are.”<sup>24</sup> This position is nonetheless eventually rejected in favour of a conclusion that names cannot be correct. Aristotle seems to agree with Cratylus, nevertheless, communication is not the only criterion for success of a name. For instance, we can judge names based on truth-values of sentences they appear in, that ‘Mark Anthony is the emperor of Rome’ would involve a name that is not only communicatively unsuccessful but also plainly false. If we shared Plato’s linguistic nihilism towards names, then there would have been no reason why we should claim that it is false, yet, it is. This problem arises when we see conventions as something extrinsic to a language, as if a language could exist outside of a human context in a pure and unambiguous form. This was a mistake done by Plato in ancient and by the logical positivists in modern times.

One way to solve this problem is through introducing the notion of convention as an inherent and necessary part of a name, and Aristotle simpliciter does that. For if a word implies a convention necessarily, then, one cannot argue that just because reference is determined by convention, the words do not mean anything. Furthermore, let us return to the wording when Aristotle claims that a name is not a name by nature but through a convention which produces a symbol. It is not a sign or a signifier but a symbol that a name under a convention is. As we have illustrated that a symbol is something of which there can be no differing interpretation, viz. the meaning is fixed, and if a word is a symbol by convention, then words must have fixed meanings and these meanings must be fixed by convention. As a consequence of this redefinition of what a word is, the word is discharged from a claim to a platonic idea, now, it is—and as Plato rightly

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<sup>24</sup> J. L. Ackrill, *Essays on Plato and Aristotle*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 39.

notes—a mere set of sounds that come to mean something due to a convention. Therefore, even asking if a name is true or false is nonsensical, for a name lacks a truth-value in itself (which is why we tried to formulate the notion of success in terms of truth using the word in a sentence and not by itself) “τὸ δ’ ὄνομα ἀεὶ, οἷον Φίλωνός ἐστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν· οὐδὲν γὰρ πῶ οὔτε ἀληθεύει οὔτε ψεύδεται.”<sup>25</sup>

## II. Similitude Theory of Meaning

Now that we have finally established the Aristotelian framework and a great part of the vocabulary, we can come to questions more central to our investigation, e.g. what is meaning, what refers to what, is it a necessary relation, &c.

Aristotle’s theory of language can be summarised by this single proposition: “Ἔστι μὲν οὖν τὰ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ παθημάτων σύμβολα.”<sup>26</sup> Given that majority of our discussion will centre on what *pathéma* is, let us start with the etymology. It comes from *πάσχω* (I feel, I suffer) and the suffix *-μα*, which makes a neuter noun from a verb to mean the result of that verb, e.g. *σχίζω* (I divide) becomes *σχίσμα* (division) [there is also the drop of the dental stop, *d*, when a bilabial nasal, *m*, is introduced] &c. *Pathéma*, therefore, vaguely means a feeling or suffering. Suffering has a sense of passivity and this sense is also explicitly admitted by Aristotle as well: “Τῶν κατὰ μηδεμίαν συμπλοκὴν λεγομένων ἕκαστον ἤτοι οὐσίαν σημαίνει ἢ ποσὸν ἢ ποιὸν ἢ πρὸς τι ἢ ποὺ ἢ ποτὲ ἢ κεῖσθαι ἢ ἔχειν ἢ ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν.”<sup>27</sup> In this instance, the verbal version of *pathéma*, *paskhó*, is used to mean the passive voice of *poieó* (I do), viz. being acted on. In other words, *pathéma* is something that is merely a result of something else acting. Furthermore,

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<sup>25</sup> Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 1.3. “A word, such as Philo always is and is not. In no part it tells the truth or lies.”

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 1.2. “Then spoken words are symbols of sufferings in the soul”

<sup>27</sup> Aristotle, *Categoriae*, 4. “Things that are not composite express essence, quantity, quality, relationship, position in time and space, state, action, or being affection.”

there are instances in which, *paskhó*, openly means change or alteration: “καὶ περὶ τῶν μειζόνων διαπορήσαντες, οἷον περὶ τε τῶν τῆς σελήνης παθημάτων καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν ἥλιον καὶ ἄστρα καὶ περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως.”<sup>28</sup> In that regard, perhaps translating *pathéma* as an active voice verb and a nominal suffix is misleading; the correct translation should envisage it in terms of a passive voice verb and a nominal suffix, therefore, as ‘affection’ with the implication that there is something else that affects.

Aristotle also tells us where these affections are: ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ (in the soul). The attic grammar allows this to be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, one can take dative preposition as location in the literal sense, that the *pathéma* to be included, contained in the soul, then, there must be something else in the soul that is somehow affected. Secondly, one can take the dative preposition as condition in a figurative sense, that it is the soul itself that is affected and therefore the affections are in it. In our opinion, both are valid interpretations for the passage. Sadly, however, Aristotle does not clarify his position but satisfies himself by remarking “περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων εἴρηται ἐν τοῖς περὶ ψυχῆς, —ἄλλης γὰρ πραγματείας.”<sup>29</sup>

The problem with this remark is—as many others have noted before—that we are not exactly sure where Aristotle discusses this matter in his work on the soul. *De Anima* seldom makes references to meaning and how the soul is affected in face of language, nor does it even offer a consistent vocabulary with *De Interpretatione*, that the word *pathéma* is almost uniformly lacking. We are told that this puzzlement may be visible as early as Andronicus or Alexander of Aphrodisias.<sup>30</sup> Some has also claimed that this passage may not be referring to *De Anima* but to another oeuvre: “a brief reference to words as symbols is made in the first chapter of the *De*

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<sup>28</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 982b15. “Problems with the big issues, such as about the change of the moon and the sun and stars, and the beginning of the cosmos.”

<sup>29</sup> Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 1, 1. “This matter having been discussed in my treatise on the soul is different than our present task.”

<sup>30</sup> Ross, *Metaphysics*, 10; Cooke, *Categoriae, De Interpretatione, Analytica Priora*, 114.

Sensu.”<sup>31</sup> In our opinion, it is futile an effort to search for an exact passage in which we can find a precise treatment of how these affections in the soul are made or what or where they are. One should always bear in mind that the texts that we have inherited from likes of Aquinas and Avicenna are merely—so to speak—lecture notes, hence, their language is not as polished as dialogues of Plato, are full of abbreviations and particles such as ‘former’ or ‘latter’ instead of explicitly naming the thing, and clearly omit certain discussions. It is our opinion that answering the question of affections in the soul requires us to take a more holistic view of language and its relation to the soul and view De Anima as a united discussion rather than distinct passages—a task which we will undertake in the ensuing chapters.

Let us now introduce the most common interpretation of this Aristotelian thesis and point out some of the most apparent weaknesses it has.

That Aristotle held it I am not sure; but it is suggested by his language. I shall call it the *similitude theory of reference*; [author’s italics] for it holds that the relations between the representations in our minds and the external objects that they refer to is literally a *similarity* [author’s italics].

The theory, like modern theories, employed the idea of a mental representation. This presentation, the mind’s image of the external thing, was called a *phantasm* by Aristotle. The relation between the phantasm and the external object by virtue of which the phantasm represents the external object to the mind is (according to Aristotle) that the phantasm shares a form with the external object.<sup>32</sup>

The first problem, clearly, is the vocabulary. In his discussion of meaning and language, Aristotle does not concern himself with phantasma but with pathéma. One can argue that there is somehow a causal relation between the two but Putnam does not offer that. We suspect that at the root of this misguided interpretation, is the confusion of a linguistic function, meaning or reference, with the faculty of perception, for it is De Anima, which Putnam is quoting here, in which Aristotle argues that perception results in what he calls a phantasma, a mental image.

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<sup>31</sup> Deborah Modrak, *Aristotle’s Theory of Meaning and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 23.

<sup>32</sup> Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 57.

Given that the phantasma and the actual object are somehow similar to each other, and yet, that phantasma lacks hylé but only has a morphé, the similarity is in terms of the form and this similarity guarantees that what is perceived is what is imagined.<sup>33</sup> This simplistic account is insufficient not only for understanding how sounds come to communicate ideas, let alone perception, for the resulting phantasma is nothing more than a mere particular, say a species of a genus, and the way to attain the universal is through intellection, therefore, it is still faulty to claim that Aristotle deems the result of this similitude as mere form. We will discuss this in greater detail, therefore, let us move on.

Secondly, one can raise issue with the notion of reference. Putnam understands reference along the lines of causalists: “We will assume that every language must have some constant objects of reference (things), ways of classifying and ordering them, ways of making statements, and ways of separating true statements from false ones. We will not go into the question as to how we come to regard some elements of experience as things, but one criterion for sorting out the elements of experience.”<sup>34</sup> His treatment therefore assumes that any given word is already under a given analytic category, which we can call necessity and is subject to a causal chain of reference. It is then clear that Putnam rejects Aristotelian theory of reference, which he calls the similitude theory of reference. In our opinion, the motivation for this rejection is guided not by textual analysis but associating Aristotelian theory with intensionalist theories of reference, which he criticises, because, if one were to adopt Putnam’s sketch of the similitude theory of reference, then the only way one can evaluate the truth value of a given proposition is through substituting the mental images words describe and comparing it to the extralinguistic composition of the world; if they correspond the proposition is true, otherwise false.

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<sup>33</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 3.7-8.

<sup>34</sup> Ruth Barcan Marcus, “Modalities and intensional languages” *Synthese*, Vol. 12. No. 4, 304.

One can instead view this theory as a theory of meaning and in the single largest work on Aristotle's theory of meaning and language, Modrak takes it so: "Meaning identified with an intention or mental content is consistent with Aristotle's conception of a pathema that is common to speakers and is the content of which the sound is a sign. Moreover, the question Aristotle addresses is what makes a linguistic sign, written or spoken, useful in a system of representations, and this is a question about meaning."<sup>35</sup> Here, the problem is not about the textual analysis or vocabulary but with the approach. It is certainly the case that what makes a word a linguistic sign is a question of philosophy of language, yet, it is not about meaning per se. For reference, taken as a relation between a word and a referent is enough to exhaust this relationship and Aristotle—at least in *De Interpretatione*—does not make a claim beyond that. His interest is simply focused on the relation between the object, word and the soul. As we pointed above, the discussion concerning the soul is deferred in *De Interpretatione* as already discussed in *De Anima*. Consequently, what is left is only the relationship between the word and the object, viz. The linguistic token and the referent, and this relationship is and can only be called reference.

Modrak's analysis makes the distinction between "the ultimate referents of words and the objects present to the knower through sense perception."<sup>36</sup> This is then followed by a rigorous line argumentation concerning the relationship between perception and intellection, the former being concerned with particulars and the latter with universals, as she reads that "Aristotle makes the perception of the external object the vehicle for the intelligible features of the object"<sup>37</sup> In short, she does not make the same mistake Putnam does—perhaps because she is indeed a scholar of ancients who is interested in language, whereas he is not.

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<sup>35</sup> Modrak, *Aristotle's Theory of Meaning and Language*, 220.

<sup>36</sup> Modrak, *Aristotle's Theory of Meaning and Language*, 31

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 85

In light of these realisations, we conclude that Putnam's analysis is textually misguided; yet, he manages to present a most valuable intuition, viz. that *De Interpretatione* is more about reference than meaning, and more importantly, the relationship between reference and cognition is linked to perception. On the other hand, Modrak's conclusion is philosophically—due to a lack of a better descriptive—false, nevertheless, her analysis captures the essence of the distinction between meaning and reference, while still acknowledging the interplay between language (in her case meaning) and perception. These staying as a guiding marks of short-falls to avoid, we hope to establish our theory, retaining the distinction between meaning and reference, while at the same time investigating the correct relation between language and mind.

Now, for a last time, let us return to convention and symbola. Sentences, have their meaning determined by the conventions of our language, however, they also have a relation to something we have in our mind. Following his line of argumentation, convention, something external, precedes *pathéma*. In fact, we believe that the power and importance of Aristotle's theory of language comes from the simple fact that he is not an internalist but an externalist when it comes to language, unlike his treatment of logic, in which he is more interested not only in the inner workings of the mind but also is in a position to advice his audience rather than to observe them. Furthermore, this is the point in which philosophy of language stops being a part of logic for Aristotle. For, his logic shows us how to reason correctly and how to think consistently, a process that is in itself internal or psychic, his philosophy of language, on the other hand, starts with observations and moves from these observations to make general claims about how words work, &c. We suspect it is simply because of this that the majority of *De Interpretatione* is devoted to stating the obvious, e.g. nouns and verbs combine to make sentences



&c. In other words, Aristotle does make a claim as Putnam and Modrak suggest, yet, his treatment of reference is not internalistic.

What then is the difference between modern theses of reference and Aristotle's; why does Putnam criticise Aristotle for advocating for an intensionalist theory of reference? Firstly, Aristotle does acknowledge that there is a one-to-one correspondence between the things and *pathéma*: “αὐταί· ὧν μέντοι ταῦτα σημεῖα πρώτων, ταῦτὰ πᾶσι παθήματα τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ ὧν ταῦτα ὁμοιώματα πράγματα ἤδη ταῦτά.”<sup>38</sup> Let us call this a naturalistic account of reference. The primary difference between Aristotle and the causalists, therefore, is, *prima facie*, the lack of causal chains of reference, as he does not explain how two different people can refer to the same thing without having access to each other's *pathéma*. In contemporary study of language, this is known as a scepticism concerning meaning, or the private language argument. Aristotle simply does not concern himself with it; as usual, his position is more concerned with describing the phenomenon with a common-sense approach.

The causal chain of reference, however, is not needed just for avoiding but also offering a foundation to how conventions actually work, e.g. by postulating that as every individual in a linguistic community partakes in the causal chain of reference of, say Churchill, by referring to something referring to something eventually referring the British wartime prime minister, there is a uniformity in conventions. Aristotle *simpliciter* lacks this feature in his analysis. Furthermore, there is certainly an aspect of intentionality in his discussion of reference, which is another reason why Putnam may be characterising his account unfavourably—yet, we cannot conclusively state that this is the reason.

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<sup>38</sup> Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 1.1. “Being however the sign in the first place, the affections are identical to all of souls, being already similar to the same thing.”

Intention, in itself, is a line of analysis that we cannot address within the framework of language alone and consequently, we need to formulate our thesis to investigate which mental functions and faculties are involved in the Aristotelian dictum. To that end, now let us summarise what we have achieved so far, then move onto philosophy of mind.

Firstly, there are differences among notions of sign, symbol, word and signifier, in an order of increasing specificity, respectively. A sign is anything that loosely communicates something; a symbol is a sign with a fixed interpretation, in Aristotle's case, under convention; a word is a sound that refers to something and a signifier is something that means something. Secondly, spoken sounds (words) are symbols of affections in the soul; we are still uncertain what is precisely affected and what affects it, yet, what we are certain is that there is a relation of similitude between the object, to which the word refers, and the *pathéma* in the soul, which is somehow a result of the word. Thirdly, the way the referent of a word is fixed in a language is through conventions, nonetheless, this does not mean—contra Plato—that words are not satisfactory ways to communicate and evaluate ideas but merely that language has a social externality to the soul, along with the psychic aspects exemplified in *pathémata* in our souls. Finally, Aristotle, though admitting he includes an aspect of intention into his position, advocates for a naturalistic extensionalist theory of reference, in which it is words refer to things—but not to other utterances of the word—and the proper analysis of language is not through substituting a descriptives in lieu de words, but through inquiring about the exact object to which they refer.

### 3. Soul, Its Faculties and how They Interact

Now, our primary aim in this section is to show that the faculties of the soul in which we are interested, i.e. perception and intellection, are somehow related to each other and furthermore that they share a certain parallelism. As we are set to unite them, we must firstly show that there is commonness in them. In our opinion, the perfect place to start this inquiry is Aristotle's much debated notion of *phantasma*. Even Putnam found *phantasmata* more appealing from *pathémata* in his characterisation of Aristotle's theory of meaning; therefore, we have to account for them. In that regard, it is also fitting to start with a general overview of the faculties of the soul as explained by Aristotle

#### A. What is *Phantasma*; and Other Faculties of the Soul

Aristotle starts with saying “τὸ ἔμψυχον δὴ τοῦ ἀψύχου δυσὶ μάλιστα διαφέρειν δοκεῖ, κινήσει τε καὶ τῷ αἰσθάνεσθαι”<sup>39</sup> He, then rightly specifies what this motion is: “Ἐπεὶ δὲ δύο διαφορᾶς ὀρίζονται μάλιστα τὴν ψυχὴν, κινήσει τε τῇ κατὰ τόπον καὶ τῷ νοεῖν καὶ φρονεῖν καὶ αἰσθάνεσθαι”<sup>40</sup> The distinction here lies in that motion can be taken in spatial terms, such as an animal moving, or in the mind, and we are interested in the mind. We have three motions ascribed to the soul: noetic, pensive and perceptive; with three faculties, thinking (*noein*), understanding (*phronein*) and perceiving (*aisthanesthai*).

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<sup>39</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 403b25-6. “It seems that the *ensouled* is certainly different from *asouled* in two regards: in motion and in perception.”

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 424a17-8. “Then there are two distinctions certainly define the soul, motion in location and intellection, in understanding and perception.”

The identity of these notions is certainly debatable but Aristotle seems to hold that they are distinct faculties of the soul, yet, somehow connected. For instance, the notion of *phronein* (understanding) and *noein* (thinking) are linked, in the sense that they both involve some sort of input from the outside world but then they create new ideas using them.<sup>41</sup> This process of creating new ideas is often called *φαντασία*,<sup>42</sup> which is another faculty of the mind, and any of the new ideas that result from the use of this faculty are called *φαντάσμα* (again, the suffix *-μα* creates a noun from a verb that is the result of that verb).

Ross identifies six different instances in which Aristotle uses *phantasia*, mental images, remembrance (*μνήμη*), reminiscence (*ἀνάμνησις*), dream (*ὄνειρος*), desire (*ἐπιθυμία*) and intellection (*νοητικόν*).<sup>43</sup> Most of these roles of *phantasia* are irrelevant to us, therefore, let us focus on the noetic and mental functions of *phantasia*. It seems that there is a sense in which *noein* can be taken to imply *phantasia*, yet, Aristotle is not very quick to concede that point, as he also states that when he talks of *phronein* (understanding), there must be *phantasma* involved, for understanding is not merely processing what one has seen but also a recreation of it in the soul.<sup>44</sup> In that sense, it is our opinion that *phantasia* is what lies between thinking (*noein*) and *phronein* (understanding), where the latter also has a sense of being related to something external, while the former is less so.

Furthermore, we can also see how *phantasia* is related to *aisthesthai* (perception). Perhaps, this is the easier of the three to realise, as *phantasma* can also be taken to mean the mental image, then it is related to perception, because perception is what provides the image in

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<sup>41</sup> Roland Polansky, *Aristotle's De Anima* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 405.

<sup>42</sup> Here, we must express some discontent with the study of Aristotle's psychology. Generally, it is translated as "imagination" (cf. Edghill's translation). However, we are not yet convinced that this is the best alternative. Due to this reason alone, we will opt for leaving it in its Greek form, as we have often did with *pathéma*. Our discussion will eventually lead to an understanding.

<sup>43</sup> David Ross, *Aristotle*, intr. J. L. Ackrill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 92.

<sup>44</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 427a19.

the first place. The argument—maybe because this realisation is very simply—is lacking in *De Anima* but is offered as a point in *Metaphysica*, as Aristotle compares *aisthema* (the perceived, result of *aisthethai*) to *phantasma*.<sup>45</sup> He notes that what is perceived must be, by definition, a particular as we cannot immediately observe universals. Then, he remarks, the after-image of what is perceived, too must be a particular because it is caused by a particular and a particular cannot cause a universal without any other faculty (for with thinking, we can form universals from particulars) and draws the parallelism between the perceived and *phantasma*, another particular. The underlying argument here is that *phantasmata* are created by images provided by perception.<sup>46</sup>

The difference between humans and animals is that humans have a rational soul in addition to the animal, or appetitive, soul. Then, the question becomes to what degree do animals share *phantasma* with humans. Aristotle's formulation is quite subtle. On the first level, he notices that animals, too, have desires on which they act, and they often fulfil these desires, which mean that there must be an underlying mechanism through which they achieve this. For Aristotle, this is called thinking, and in particular, practical thinking. He explains then illustrates this mechanism by nothing else than *phantasma*. Given that *phantasia* not only re-creates images provided by perception but also combines, redacts and even alters them, Aristotle claims that the beast must be *phantasising* itself in a point through some sort of self-representation and the desire becomes an actual desire. In a sense, until the *phantasia* re-invents an image in the soul of the beast, the desire is instinctual and unnoticed—even empty—and the only way for the animal to be able to act on that desire is to realise it in a particular. As they do not have the rational soul which creates the universal desires, as we can desire any gold without wishing a particular gold,

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<sup>45</sup> Polansky, *Aristotle's De Anima*, 474.

<sup>46</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 1010b34.

the lion only wishes to eat that stag and not all stags.<sup>47</sup> This theory received anew interest in recent history with mental-representation based models in philosophy of mind. McGinn, a scientifically informed philosopher of mind—as many others in nineties posits that “recent experimental work on image-dependent tasks strongly encourages the idea that images are internal models on which experimental manipulations are performed by the subject (or some subpersonal [sic] system within [them]).”<sup>48</sup>

Now, let us try to apply this same mechanism to speech. Aristotle would say that when one speaks, she imagines the end result. As this is not an actual claim he propagates, we cannot be certain in the exact details. Given that we do not choose our words and exact sentences when we speak but they seem to flow out of our mouths, speech is not a pre-calculated action. It is nonetheless the case that when we speak we know what we want the other person to understand or what could be understood in general by an average member of our linguistic community, in a sense, while speaking, we only determine the meaning and the rest happens instinctually, at least in most cases.<sup>49</sup> The method through which we determine this meaning we want to communicate is, simply put, intention. Though we do not intend to use exact words in daily speech, we do have a general idea what is going to come out. Then, can we apply the mechanism Aristotle ascribes to animals’ actions to humans’ speech? We hold that both are instances of intentionality towards a certain ends. They are not, as Anscombe dictates, mere wishes that something come true, yet, at the same time, they are not detailed plans on how the desired ends; they are a vague map of a goal.<sup>50</sup> We believe that this is the essence of the distinction between linguistic and behavioural intention. In Aristotelian terms, the animal only has access to behavioural intention, while the

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<sup>47</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 431b6-9.

<sup>48</sup> Colin McGinn, *Mental Content* (Basil: Blackwell Publishing, 1989), 186.

<sup>49</sup> Patricia Churchland, *Touching a Nerve* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013), 129.

<sup>50</sup> Anscombe, *Intention*, 46.

human also partakes in language. That being said, however, the mechanism through which these intentions are created are the same: phantasia. When we speak we have an idea of what we will mean, which—though often not an image, but we will debate if image is essential later—is a re-creation of perceptions and imagination and self-reflection, &c. in the same manner, the animal, too acts as it, too, has a phantasma in its soul.

Phantasmata, when taken as mental images, then are a particular, where the image is only bounded by the limits of phantasia. What are these limits? We would have to wait for Hume to explain the notorious equality between what is possible and what is conceivable.

Whatever is clearly conceiv'd may exist; and whatever is clearly conceiv'd, after any manner, may exist after the same manner. This is one principle, which has been already acknowledg'd. Again, every thing, which is different, is distinguishable, and every thing which is distinguishable, is separable by the imagination. This is another principle. My conclusion from both is, that since all our perceptions are different from each other, and from every thing else in the universe, they are also distinct and separable, and may be consider'd as separately existent, and may exist separately, and have no need of any thing else to support their existence.<sup>51</sup>

Notwithstanding, Aristotle has some characterisation of phantasma, from which we can infer its limitations. In discussing the difference between perception (another way of creating mental images) and phantasia, Aristotle notes that perception has a claim to truth, where phantasma can be—and in some cases indeed are—false.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, phantasia is not concerned with representing the reality as it is but freely alters it while creating images. In relation to this, he also states that there is no need for perception or external world for us to produce phantasma, as we do so in our dreams.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, phantasma can be taken as storage where we add images to each other and these can include things that do not correspond to how things actually turned

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<sup>51</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (New Jersey: Franklin Classics, 2018), 236.

<sup>52</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 428a6-15.

<sup>53</sup> Aristotle. *De Insomniis*, 459a15.

out.<sup>54</sup> In other words, phantasia can add things and take things away from perception; this alone is an Aristotelian account on why different people may remember same events differently. Again, this would be another point we would need to wait for Hume to explain why; according to him, it is because our mind does not work on a factual but an emotional basis, therefore, it is quite natural for different people to put emotional value in different things and consequently emphasise them in their memories.<sup>55</sup> Finally, as we have briefly mentioned in the previous section, they must have some similarity to the real objects.<sup>56</sup> This is the most crucial part, in our opinion. For instance, we can have the phantasma a golden mountain, yet, we have not in reality seen one. In a sense, what we do is to combine the image of gold and the image of a mountain; this is allowed and it is not, *sensu stricto* impossible. It could turn out that in the depths of the Amazon forest, there is indeed a golden mountain. In short, if phantasia combines different images to create new ones, then the resulting image need not be corresponding to reality; however, the ideas that were combined in the first place (if they are primary, viz. no other phantasmata). The correspondence to reality is a different way of saying that no logically impossible phantasmata are allowed. We have the image of a square and we have the image of roundness; nevertheless, these cannot be combined to create a new image and we hold that Aristotle somehow maintains this without explicitly stating it.<sup>57</sup>

If phantasmata are only limited by logical possibility, then they could also be in related to pure forms and not merely matter; in other words, there can be universal phantasmata as well as particular. We believe that the formulation of how this can be the case is what fundamentally differs Aristotle's psychology from Plato's. *Prima facie*, phantasma is also a term that appears in

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<sup>54</sup> Aristotle, *De Memoria*, 450a24-6.

<sup>55</sup> Hume, *Treatise*, 231.

<sup>56</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 429a3.

<sup>57</sup> Ihsan Baris Gedizlioglu, *Non-Classical Logical Systems* (Frankfurt: Omniscryptum, 2016), 12.



a multitude of Platonic dialogues, chiefly among which, the Sophist and the Phaedo. Let us try to present Plato's case and on grounds of what Aristotle rejects it.

In the Sophist, Plato, discussing what δόξα (opinion) is, writes the following.

ΞΕΝΟΣ

ὅταν οὖν τοῦτο ἐν ψυχῇ κατὰ διάνοιαν ἐγγίγνηται μετὰ σιγῆς, πλὴν δόξης ἔχεις ὅτι προσείπης αὐτό;

ΘΕΑΙΤΗΤΟΣ

καὶ πῶς;

ΞΕΝ.

τί δ' ὅταν μὴ καθ' αὐτὸ ἀλλὰ δι' αἰσθήσεως παρῆ τι, τὸ τοιοῦτον αὖ πάθος ἄρ' οἷόν τε ὀρθῶς εἰπεῖν ἕτερόν τι πλὴν φαντασίαν;

ΘΕΑ.

οὐδέν.

ΞΕΝ.

οὐκοῦν ἐπεὶπερ λόγος ἀληθῆς ἦν καὶ ψευδῆς, τούτων δ' ἐφάνη διάνοια μὲν αὐτῆς πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ψυχῆς διάλογος.<sup>58</sup>

For Plato, therefore, the notion of phantasma is a combination of opinion and perception (or sensation, either way, something dependent on the external world). Now, we know that an opinion is a justified belief.<sup>59</sup> This makes phantasma an epistemically charged notion. In addition, it is caused only by perception; therefore, it has a dependency on the external world. Given Plato's dislike for senses as a reliable source of knowledge, it is easy to see what his judgement on phantasma is: they are not reliable. We can draw a parallelism between Plato's construction of phantasma and Aristotle's notions of noein and aisthesthai. For the master,

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<sup>58</sup> Plato, *Sophist*, 264a.

“Stranger

Then something that comes to the soul in silence can have any name than opinion?

Theaetetus

Certainly not.

Str.

And if this is the case in all and through sensation and affection, can it be anything but an appearance or imagination?

The.

Not at all.

Str.

Then is *if* [our italics] words are true or false and thinking is conversing, opinion is the final product of the conversation of the soul with itself.

<sup>59</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus*, 201c-d.

phantasma is a half-breed category, it is half noetic and half perceptive, which corresponds more to the student's *phronein*—nonetheless, we will not insist on this similarity, in final analysis it does not hold strong, because for Aristotle all three are distinct, pure and independent mental faculties.

As a consequence of this disposition, Plato moves to reject that phantasmata can be sources of knowledge, simply because if perception is illusory, then anything that is caused by perception is equally illusory, hence wrong. What is the subject-matter of knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*)? What does Plato (and for most part, Aristotle) mean when they talk of knowledge? For Plato, only universals are the subject-matter of knowledge and particulars are of perception<sup>60</sup> and Aristotle agrees with him.<sup>61</sup>

Now, the question becomes what a universal is. For Plato, it is the form. As only the forms or ideas are truly real, in the sense that they exist, and everything else, which are subject-matters of our perception, is a distortion of this existence; then, only thing that can be known is simply the universals. The underlying assumption in this argument is that knowledge does not change over time: what is true will always be true. The idea, say justice, would not change over time and would remain as it is; on the other hand, just people may change. Plato, consequently, expresses this dichotomy of stability and alteration in terms of the quality of the being in question. Here, he describes them as *οὐσία* (being), indicating that only forms are being and everything else is merely becoming:

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ποτέρων οὖν τίθης τὴν οὐσίαν; τοῦτο γὰρ μάλιστα ἐπὶ πάντων παρέπεται.

ΘΕΑΙΤΗΤΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν ὄν αὐτὴ ἢ ψυχὴ καθ' αὐτὴν ἐπορέγεται.

ΣΩΚ

ἦ καὶ τὸ ὅμοιον καὶ τὸ ἀνόμοιον καὶ τὸ ταῦτόν καὶ ἕτερον;

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. 184b-e.

<sup>61</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 417b22-4.

Θεα

ναί.

Σωκ

τί δέ; καλὸν καὶ αἰσχρὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ κακόν;

Θεα

καὶ τούτων μοι δοκεῖ ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα πρὸς ἄλληλα σκοπεῖσθαι τὴν οὐσίαν, ἀναλογιζομένη ἐν ἑαυτῇ τὰ γεγονότα καὶ τὰ παρόντα πρὸς τὰ μέλλοντα.<sup>62</sup>

In contrast to the universals or forms, Plato maintains that phantasma can only access to the particulars and furthermore, these particulars are irrelevant to the universals and in consequence, cannot lead to knowledge. Positing an ontological problem as a problem of epistemology, Plato rejects the claim that investigation of particulars, viz. induction, can lead to understanding of the universals, a thesis that, in general, plays a central role in sciences and, in particular, Aristotle's vision of knowledge and logic. He asks in *Phaedo*, “ἐάν τις τι ἕτερον ἢ ἰδὼν ἢ ἀκούσας ἢ τινα ἄλλην αἴσθησιν λαβὼν μὴ μόνον ἐκεῖνο γνῶ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἕτερον ἐννοήσῃ οὐ μὴ ἢ αὐτὴ ἐπιστήμη ἀλλ' ἄλλη, ἄρα οὐχὶ τοῦτο δικαίως λέγομεν ὅτι ἀνεμνήσθη, οὐ τὴν ἔννοιαν ἔλαβεν;”<sup>63</sup>

Returning to the original question, i.e. what a universal is, and using Aristotle's terms, we argue that a particular is matter with form and the universal is the form alone. Anything that exists in the world, for Aristotle, is the combination of *hylé* (matter) and *morhépé* (form) and

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<sup>62</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus*, 186a-b.

“Socrates

Where does being belong? For it certainly attends to all things.

Theaetetus

I [put it] in things that the soul grasps in itself

Soc.

Similarity and dissimilarity, sameness and distinctness?

The.

Yes.

Soc.

And handsome and ugly, and good and evil?

The.

It seems to me that the soul sees these in relative terms, reflecting on what has it been in the past and present and what in the future

<sup>63</sup> Plato, *Phaedo*, 73c-d. “If a man having heard or seen something not only has knowledge of the thing but also the perception of something else, whose knowledge is not the same as the first, then are we not correct to say he recollects that what he perceived?”

everything that we observe is—by definition—material. Therefore, every observable thing must at least have matter and since everything is combination of matter and form, observables must also have forms. Furthermore, in perception, the resulting mental image is, certainly, immaterial, yet, at the same time it exists. In Aristotelian terms what we observe is nothing more than the form of the matter.<sup>64</sup> This does not mean that what we observe exists in itself or that it is an actuality; it merely means that phantasma lacks matter. This is a point in which Plato would agree with Aristotle. Their separation starts when the epistemic elements of this suggestion are considered.

Aristotle agrees with Plato that only what is unchanging and real, in the sense that it exists or is actual, can be known. Particulars change over time and, anyone disillusioned from Plato's extreme idealism would say, universals do not exist on their own. Then what can be known? Aristotle has an interesting answer. For him, it is οὐσία. In this instance, we should beware the temptation to equivocate Plato's sense of the notion and Aristotle's. For both masters, the denotation is stability, non-temporality, existence, actuality, realness, &c. yet, because for Plato, οὐσία is the universal, their denotation by it is simpliciter different.

In one instance, Aristotle defines οὐσία as “τὸ τί ἐστί.”<sup>65</sup> In another case, compares it thus: “αἱ πρῶται οὐ [οὐσία ἐστί].”<sup>66</sup> Within the context of logic, it is primary category of existence.<sup>67</sup> On a similar note, he then compares it to accidents (συμβεβηκότα).<sup>68</sup> Most interesting use, and in our opinion, the most informative use is when it's used together with φύσις (nature): “... [ταν οὐσίαν]—τὰ γὰρ ὕστερα τῆ γενέσει πρότερα τὴν φύσιν.”<sup>69</sup> Peck's

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<sup>64</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 424a17.

<sup>65</sup> Aristotle, *Analytica Posteriora*, 90b30. “what it is.”

<sup>66</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 1045b29. “individuals are not the substance.”

<sup>67</sup> Aristotle, *Categoriae*, 1b26.

<sup>68</sup> Aristotle, *Analytica Priora*, 43a27

<sup>69</sup> Aristotle, *Partibus Animalium*, 646a27. “What is originated, then, is in the order of being (nature).”

translation does not even distinguish between φύσις (nature) and οὐσία (being) and calls both of them Nature.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, another definition includes “ἐνέργεια”<sup>71</sup> (actuality), which will be a very important aspect of our analysis soon. In light of these instances, what seems to be the commonality in all of them is something that is *the true nature* of something, a nature such that it gives thingness to the thing and encompasses not only the matter and the form but in which manner they are to be combined. One may see this as the combination of the four causes which move a thing and consequently suggest that this unity necessitates whatever motion that thing undergoes;<sup>72</sup> certainly, this interpretation is favourable to the use of οὐσία in opposition to συμβεβηκό (accident). We suggest that—as others also have<sup>73</sup>—the correct translation is substance.

Now, let us put substance in its proper mechanism. For Aristotle, substance dictates which form would beget which matter; it is the underlying principle that we can access through investigating the union of matter and form to make a claim about the unmattered form, in other words, it is what enables induction to be a valid method of argumentation. Looking at a triangle, we can make the claim that the interior angles of this triangle are equal to two right angles; however, the claim is not only true for this triangle but for all triangles. When we encounter another triangle tomorrow, we can recall yesterday’s triangle and again make the claim that this new triangle, too, would have its interior angles equal to two right angles. The form of the triangle may change, say the one we observed yesterday is an obtuse triangle, whereas tomorrow

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<sup>70</sup> Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, trans. A. L. Peck (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 108.

<sup>71</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1072b6-12.

<sup>72</sup> Norman Dahl, “Substance, Sameness, and Essence in ‘Metaphysics’ VII 6” *Ancient Philosophy* Vol. 27, No. 1, 113.

<sup>73</sup> Polansky, *Aristotle’s De Anima*, 470. Cf. Aristotle, *Categories and De Interpretatione*, trans. J. Ackrill, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); and Aristotle. *Metaphysics, Books Z and H*, trans. D. Bostock, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). There are some passages, where nature or being are preferred, notwithstanding, the consensus seems to be translating it as substance, whereas in Plato it remains being.

we observe a right-angle triangle. The material, too, can change, say the former was drawn on sand, the latter on wax. In any case, what is common in both triangles is not necessarily the form or the matter; but how the form relates to the matter. If we try to change an angle of the triangle, by increasing it, the matter has changed and things that were true of the earlier are not true for the later one; nevertheless, for either of them, the relationship form has to the matter, e.g. how it is drawn, how large is the sum its interior angles, its total length, &c. are the same.

Now, let us introduce a species of phantasma into the picture. The memory of a triangle cannot be a particular, since we have defined a particular as the union of matter and form. If the memory were a particular, then it would have had matter, yet, it does not; it only has form. When we take a phantasma and think on it, then, we are contemplating on the mere form of it. Given we have access to different forms, we can discover the substance. Aristotle characterises this as the initiation of noetic processes. We do not merely have the mental image of a triangle, viz. the memory, but we can also use it to think about all triangles.<sup>74</sup>

We hope that our discussion concerning phantasmata has provided some general insight in terms of the contexts in which they could be invoked, how do they correlate to other products of the mind and (simplistically) which role they play in accessing substances through forms collected from particulars. If we have indeed attained some understanding what they are, then we should be able to provide a translation that captures most of these specifications.

“‘Appearance’ in a wider sense should be regarded as the central meaning (of phantasia) to which all functions of the term is related. It would then be (i) the capacity to experience an appearance, (ii) the on- going appearance itself, and (iii) what appears.”<sup>75</sup> This is an apparent problem for us. We have previously noted that one common translation is ‘imagination.’ It is our

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<sup>74</sup> Aristotle, *De Memoria*, 449b32.

<sup>75</sup> Michael Frede, “The Cognitive Role of *Phantasia* in Aristotle” in *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*, ed. M. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 279

strong belief that this comes nowhere close to satisfying our ambition. Firstly, there are the superficial problems, e.g. dreaming is not merely imagination but some sort of hallucination, where the subject is subjected to visual stimulus without an actual stimulator; memory is not always imagination, or desires may not involve an active visualisation of the end-result and simpliciter be verbal or related to other senses. Secondly, and more importantly, there are deeper philosophical problems. Even though, the sense of phantasma that is related to combining images and recalling others can be captured by imagination, the process we have described above, which turned into an Aristotelian justification of the validity of induction cannot be appropriately explained by mere imagination. If phantasma is mere imagination, then, how can it enable us to find out what is common in different universals? One can attempt to defend it by invoking a rigorous methodology of discriminating possible cases in which a given form cannot occur and then combining the rest; however, we do not think that a simple reflex of the human mind, i.e. to find patterns in seemingly chaotic collections and to do so without any effort or intention, is a product of an extensive—and intentional—mental activity. It must be something simpler. Similarly, we have also demonstrated that the cause of phantasmata is particulars and they themselves are universals. If phantasia were indeed mere imagination, then Plato's attack on it, i.e. that we cannot imagine what justice or beauty is, would be true, since, imagination is not abstraction but merely manipulation of previously observed imaged into new combinations. It could never result in universals, yet, as Aristotle shows us, it does. Finally, imagination would never be accessible to animals, as it is a creative process and within the framework of our discussion, animals do not have access to the rational soul, which is the root of creation.<sup>76</sup> On a similar note, mere imagination would not explain how animals—and humans—are motivated to act. It is true that intention includes a level of imagination or self-representation, as we have

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<sup>76</sup> M. Frede, *Rationality in Greek Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 56.

demonstrated, nevertheless, at the same time intention alone cannot motivate an agent; a further desire is needed, which is lacking in imagination but not in phantasia. On grounds of these criticisms, we conclude that imagination is a dissatisfactory translation for the mental faculty of phantasia.

Our suggestion is ‘representation,’ both for the faculty and the product (as the word can be used for both cases in English without a need of modification). Our primary motivation for this suggestion is that the term ‘representation’ is rather ambiguous. An ordinary language analysis shows us that it can be used in many different contexts and could come to mean very distinct senses. For instance, a dream may be taken as a representation, in the sense that it involves one’s personal history and unconscious drives, e.g. fears or desires, and emphasises them, resulting in a hallucination-like experience when she sleeps. Similarly, memory is a representation of a past event. Even crude imagination can be taken as a representation, in the literal sense of the word as re-presentation of other ideas. In a behaviourist reading, actions come to represent desires, with the underlying assumption being that an agent only acts if she expects that that action will satisfy her desires. In that line of argument, the mental image of the agent would indicate a desire. Furthermore, it can be taken as akin to intellection as representing involves a level of abstraction, because it is—as noted above—re-presentation of something else in the very literal sense. In short, all of the instances which Ross correctly ascribes to phantasma are satisfied by the notion of translation. This is nonetheless only a superficial, even statistical, reason for adopting it as the proper translation of phantasma; it also satisfies the philosophical mechanisms we have described, in particular, relating to epistemology and ontology.

Observation of particulars results in images that are forms, as they lack matter. Understanding the essence of how these forms relate to the matter being observed can only be



possible through understanding what they represent. Both the obtuse and right-angle triangles represent the same substance: trianglehood. In other words, the substance of the hylomorphism is the representation of the hylomorphic structure within the mind. By this argument, we can also conclude that phantasia is not only responsible for the mere mental images or after-images of one's perception, but also for the mechanism through which the human soul comes to distinguish them. We believe that representation can capture this sense of the word and closely resembles this complex nature of phantasia.

We have also discussed the interrelation between phantasma and intentions. Our previous account was centred vaguely on the translation of 'imagination.' As representation is the genus of the species imagination, we find no categorical mistake in claiming that representations are the causes of intentions. For behavioural intention, viz. intent to act, this is enough for us. For, even with imagination, which, we take, is a representation of a lower quality can account for behavioural intention, we will not discuss it in detail. Let us therefore investigate how linguistic intention works and finally conclude why phantasia is representation.

Now, a representation is symbolic imagination. It is not merely the re-creation of an image in the soul but also a re-attribution of meaning to that image. Imagine the following case. In a crowded party, Margaret is talking with her friend and says "the woman reading *De Anima* is my friend Jane." Now, assume that because the room is large and crowded and Margaret forgot to bring her glasses to the party—perhaps fearing she may break them par accident—she does not realise Jane is in fact not reading a book but the *Journal of Ancient Philosophy*. In this case, we can safely assume that Margaret wanted to identify the woman through a descriptive: *reading De Anima*, but her description does not correctly correspond to the reality. What was her intention when she uttered her words? Given that Margaret did make a mistake in misidentifying

the piece of paper Jane was holding, can we reasonably claim that what she intended was “the woman reading the *JAP*” or her intention was to say “that [*pointing at her*] woman, there”? We suspect that it is the latter rather than the former; daily speech does not conform to the rigorous expectations of logicians to be precise. We simpliciter try to convey an idea and if the communication is achieved, i.e. Margaret’s friend can understand about what Margaret is talking, then, the utterance is successful. In other words, the correct analysis of intention is not intensional but extensional.

Let us introduce the mental side of the problem. When Margaret utters the words ‘woman reading *De Anima*’ the mental representation she has in her soul is not a logical proposition in the form of ‘there is a woman,  $x$ , and she is performing an action  $f$ , reading, on a physical entity,  $y$ , and  $y$  is *De Anima* and there is only one  $x$  that performs  $f$  on  $y$ ,’ but Jane. If Margaret’s friend knew who Jane was, then the utterance would have followed the lines of ‘look! Jane is there,’ which is a proposition that cannot be analysed into smaller particles besides the imperative and the declarative. Her mental picture, therefore, involves two levels. Firstly, there is the realisation that Jane is in the party, this is the declarative. Secondly, there is a wish to make this fact known to her friend, this is the imperative. In other words, the mental picture she has is not wholly Jane reading something but more so that her friend notices Jane is in the room. The descriptive she employs is merely instrumental in making her desire that her friend notices Jane come true. In other words, the extension of the utterance is dictated by her mental representation, which is determined by her desires. In other words, the notion of representation can be used to account for linguistic intention through an extensional analysis of the utterance.

Henceforth, after careful examination, we come to the conclusion that what Aristotle means by *phantasma* can be captured—for the most part—by our modern word, representation.

We are notwithstanding sorry to admit that such a proposal cannot be found in the long history of commentary on Aristotelian philosophy. Hopefully, we will have contributed to the scholarship, though little, with this philosophical and linguistic suggestion. Our task, then, is to understand how representations work in the context of two particular faculties of the mind: intellection and perception. We will now try to show how they are processed through mechanisms similar not in quality but, quantity.

## **B. Representation, Intellection and Perception**

We will focus on two faculties of the soul and how they employ representations in this section, yet, let us start with briefly explaining why we chose these two faculties and not others. Firstly among other things, we have established that perception is certainly relevant to language and heavily employs representations in the soul. As our task is to understand what the relationship between language and the mind is for Aristotle, we must account for perception. Also, we want to clarify why Putnam's brief analysis is faulty and how it should be corrected and as his mistake is to confuse representations (*phantasmata* in his text) and meaning, we suspect it is worth or while to dwell on perception.

Similarly, we have also established that intellection, also employs representations to a certain degree and given the Greek doctrine that only humans—and only Greeks, for that matter—have access to *λόγος* (loosely, *language*), because they have rational minds; the fundamental distinction between them and animals, intellection intuitively seems like another important aspect for language. It is our understanding that the relationship between intellect and language is not merely an underlying assumption but a motivating factor for most ancient theorists. Modern scholarship may contest this assumption, nonetheless, within our framework, it

must be seen as a given.<sup>77</sup> With these motivations in mind, let us start with perception as it is better attested and illustrated both by commentators and *the philosopher*, himself.

## I. Perception

The first part of *De Anima* is focused on the physical process of perception, and rightly so. This can be seen as a kind of anti-platonic position, whereby Aristotle demonstrates that there is a causal relationship between the percept and the object, which may ground perception as a reliable source of knowledge. This discussion covers more physical aspects, e.g. the media of senses, sensory organs or the transmission of the information. For instance, the medium for auditory sense is air and what is transmitted is sounds; for the visual sense, what is transmitted is light, &c.<sup>78</sup> We are, however, not very interested in the physical aspects of perception, consequently, it is only useful for us to be mindful that Aristotle takes the object observed as an actuality—as every particular is actual, being the union of form and matter—and what is observed a mere potentiality: “τὸ δ' αἰσθητικὸν δυνάμει ἐστὶν οἷον τὸ αἰσθητὸν ἤδη ἐντελεχεία, καθάπερ εἴρηται.”<sup>79</sup> This important passage and ones similar in nature caused some lines of interpretation and we believe it is only right to review them.

Καθόλου δὲ περὶ πάσης αἰσθήσεως δεῖ λαβεῖν ὅτι ἢ μὲν αἴσθησις ἐστὶ τὸ δεκτικὸν τῶν αἰσθητῶν εἰδῶν ἄνευ τῆς ὕλης, οἷον ὁ κηρὸς τοῦ δακτυλίου ἄνευ τοῦ σιδήρου καὶ τοῦ χρυσοῦ δέχεται τὸ σημεῖον, λαμβάνει δὲ τὸ χρυσοῦν ἢ τὸ χαλκοῦν σημεῖον, ἀλλ' οὐχ ἢ

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<sup>77</sup> Cf. Dario Martinelli, “Introduction to Zoosemiotics” *Biosemitotics*, Vol. 5, 1-64.

<sup>78</sup> We cannot help but to notice the linguistic interplay Aristotle presents here. The notion of φάντασμα is in fact a derivative of φάντα, which is an active participle form of φαίνω (I appear), hence meaning apparent or visible with -μα as a suffix, creating a noun from a verbal adjective, i.e. participle, thus roughly meaning one that is made apparent. The etymological curiosity arises from the root of φαίνω, however, which is the epic active verbal form of φανός, meaning bright light. Perhaps, this is the reason Aristotle is too fond of phantasmata being visuals, because he deems light as the transmitter of sight; a theory we shall not elaborate.

<sup>79</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 418a3-4. “The perceiver is in potentiality of what is perceived in actuality.

χρυσὸς ἢ χαλκός· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις ἐκάστου ὑπὸ τοῦ ἔχοντος χρῶμα ἢ χυμὸν ἢ ψόφον πάσχει, ἀλλ' οὐχ ἢ ἕκαστον ἐκείνων λέγεται, ἀλλ' ἢ τοιονδί, καὶ κατὰ τὸν λόγον.<sup>80</sup>

The fundamental proposition can be summarised as ‘like becomes like in perceiving. The first interpretation—and the dominant one—is the cognitive, or as we will call the metaphorical, interpretation, and its proponents take that the process of perception does not involve a literal likeness, e.g. the eye becomes like the object seen, but the soul changes in some way that it eventually becomes similar to the observed object. This interpretation can be contrasted with the psychological, or as we shall call, literal, interpretation on the grounds of the latter include the claim that the likeness is a physical likeness, i.e. the eye becomes like the object &c. The cognitive approach is preferred by commentators of Aristotle, ancient and mediaeval alike. In that regard, we find it fitting to look at one celebrated mediaeval commentator.

Alio modo potest responderi, quod ex hoc ipso, quod dicebant causam cognitionis esse ex hoc quod anima tangit id quod est sibi simile, datur intelligi quod causa deceptionis sit haec quod anima tangit sibi dissimile. Hoc est ergo quod concludit, quod quia antiqui philosophi non assignaverunt causam deceptionis animae, necesse est, quod aut omnia, quae videntur, vera sint, ut quidam dixerunt, aut quod tactus, quo anima tangit rem dissimilem, sit deceptionis causa. Tangere enim dissimile videtur esse contrarium ad cognoscere sibi simile.

Primum autem reprobatum est in quarto metaphysicae.<sup>81</sup>

Following other mediaeval commentators of Aristotle, chiefly Averroes, Aquinas concludes that the similarity between what is perceived and the perceiver, viz. the eye, is a cognitive similarity and that it should not be taken as that the eye becomes like the object.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 424a17-22. “Senses take the universals, perceptible forms, without matter. Wax, for instance, takes the shape on the ring without taking its iron or gold; it takes the shape in the gold or bronze, but not the shape qua gold or bronze”

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia Libri Aristotelis De Anima*, 626-7. “Then, it might be answered that it is the soul contacting something that is unlike itself. Ancient philosophers do not take this error in consideration, Aristotle concludes that they took truth as appearance or they claimed soul contacted things unlike itself as like and unlike are opposites

The former is refuted in Book IV of the *Metaphysics*.”

<sup>82</sup> Averroes, *Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libras*, ed. F. Crawford (Cambridge:Medieval Academy of America, 1953), 1 22-24.

Instead, they advocate for an alteration that occurs in the soul that somehow becomes like the object in question. In our opinion, this is in contradiction with the Aristotelian thesis. How can something of a certain category become something else from a different category? How can the actual become possible, the particular, universal, the matter the form, the being, the becoming? If the relation were that the observation in the soul is merely similar to what is observed, then this interpretation would have been more plausible; however, the claim is that the observer becomes the observed. This notion of becoming is troubling for the cognitive interpretation and that is why many mediaeval commentators aim at formulating a soul that is quasi material, in the sense that there exists something in the soul that can become what is observed, often this is the so-called the mind's eye, which is a philosophical postulate motivated by religious doctrine.<sup>83</sup> This ontologically charged notion of becoming is lacking in Averroes, and it is our firm opinion that a closer reading of his work would reveal much insight on a middle interpretation that lies between the cognitive and psychological approaches.<sup>84</sup> We will not elaborate on this.

Now, there is also the so-called psychological, or the physical, interpretation of this Aristotelian thesis of perception. It simpliciter claims that what becomes like the observed is the sensory organ itself. Prima facie this may sound counter-intuitive, yet, in our opinion, this is a better interpretation. Aristotle notes that sense perception cannot arise ex nihilo but it needs a physical component to cause it.<sup>85</sup> Thus, the phenomenon of perception is firstly dependent on the sensory organs; in other words, whatever is created without the senses, i.e. whatever is purely in the soul as the cognitive approach suggests, cannot be perception. Furthermore, he notes “διὸ ἔστι μὲν ὡς ὑπὸ τοῦ ὁμοίου πάσχει, ἔστι δὲ ὡς ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀνομοίου, καθάπερ εἴπομεν· πάσχει μὲν

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<sup>83</sup> Avicenna, *de Scientiis Metaphysicis*, 7348.

<sup>84</sup> Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, “Survivance et renaissance d'Avicenne à Venise et à Padoue,” in *Avicennéen Occident*, ed. d'Alvemy, 60-112 (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1993), 76.

<sup>85</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 417a3-5.

γὰρ τὸ ἀνόμοιον, πεπονθὸς δ' ὁμοίον ἐστίν.”<sup>86</sup> As the soul, being only a form, cannot act upon the object being observed that is a union of form and matter. The notion of acting upon something else requires that both parties involved be in the same category and consequently, we take that it must be the sensory organ itself that is acting (poiein) and being acted upon (paschein). Now, let us outline how this dual—even dialectic—process of acting and being acted upon is realised and how it relates to the soul.

Aristotle admits that perception is a type of alteration (ἀλλοίωσις) but not qua alteration. “As he explained in II-5, coming into act is not a change. But it can require ordinary affecting as well. For example the light affects a change in the eyes and thereby activates (does not change) the potentiality to see every [colour].”<sup>87</sup> In the same passage, he also remarks that perception is result of being affected (paschein), which would make it a pathéma, though Aristotle does not use this exact wording.<sup>88</sup> The main thesis of perception is this: There are two levels of transition. On the one hand, the eye is affected by the sensible object, whereby it transforms from a potentiality (of perception) to an actuality (i.e. perception). This is not perception, however, as we also need to account how the eye transmits this information to the soul. Therefore, the actuality in the eye is, in fact, another kind of potentiality and through pathémata the percept becomes a mental image, which means that the image is now processed and *understood* (if not in whole, at least in part).<sup>89</sup> Aristotle explains this dual transition as the following.

ὄντες, ἐνεργεῖα γίνονται ἐπιστήμονες,

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid. 18-20. “Therefore, the like acts and is acted upon by the unlike, just as we have said. The unlike is acted upon having the like acting upon it.”

<sup>87</sup> Eugene Gendlin, *Line by Line Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, Books I & II (New York: Focusing Institute, 2012), 188.

<sup>88</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 2.5.

<sup>89</sup> For instance, one may see a centaur for the first time, though not knowing what it is; she can still identify its parts as horse-like lower and human-like upper body.

ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν διὰ μαθήσεως ἀλλοιωθεὶς καὶ πολλάκις ἐξ ἐναντίας μεταβαλὼν ἔξεως, ὁ δ' ἐκ τοῦ ἔχειν τὴν ἀριθμητικὴν.<sup>90</sup>

Now, it is our opinion that the cognitive approach prioritises the secondary transition (from a higher level of potentiality to actuality) and the psychological approach emphasises the first transition (from a lower to a higher level of potentiality). With these in mind, we cannot but conclude that both interpretations are misrepresenting the Aristotelian thesis and consequently should be abandoned. Instead, this multi-layered model should be adopted. This nevertheless may be a difficult suggestion as we do not have different names for these two transitions. Aristotle, himself, notes this. “ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνόνημος αὐτῶν ἡ διαφορά, διώρισται δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ὅτι ἕτερα καὶ πῶς ἕτερα, χρῆσθαι ἀναγκαῖον τῷ πάσχειν καὶ ἀλλοιοῦσθαι ὡς κυρίους ὀνόμασιν.”<sup>91</sup>

Now, let us see if we can see any parallel mechanism in intellection.

## II. Intellection

Aristotle describes intellection (*noein*) as akin to perception and in relation to the hylomorphism. Where perception is concerned with the particulars, intellection is concerned with universals; the subject-matter of the former is something presently observed and needs to be a singular entity, the latter is not bounded by time and quantity. Just by looking at a single bird, we can make claims about birds of the same species or the genus of birds in general; say that they have wings and feathers, &c. This is due to the common substance among the members of the same species and it causes the members to have a certain similitude towards each other.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 417a30-1. “knowledge is actuality. On the one hand, it is the alteration through affections [potentiality] and then often having turned into the opposite, by the opposite [potentiality]. On the other hand, it is the alteration from that to being able to actualise it [actuality].”

<sup>91</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 418a1-3. “Difference between these has no name, yet, it is shown that they are different, and therefore we use ‘affection’ and ‘alteration’ as substitutes.”



In other words, it is the universal, i.e. the forms, which intellection processes. This primary level of mental process can be called a passive intellect as the soul creates these in itself, without any conscious action necessary. Aristotle calls this νόος παθητικός (affectionate intellect).<sup>92</sup> The product of this passive intellection is an understanding of the forms and not knowledge. Perhaps, in Platonic terms, this can be equated to *doxa* (opinion).<sup>93</sup> It should nonetheless be noted that the transition from forms to opinion is in fact a transition from a potentiality to an actuality. Even though the intellect is merely affected and hence passive (just like physical perception) during the process, the opinion is much more actual than the universal, which remains potential.

On the other hand, there is also the νόος ποιητικός (constructive intellect).<sup>94</sup> This mental mechanism is responsible for taking the passive affections of the affectionate intellect and combines them to create ἐπιστήμη (knowledge). This is the point in which the opinion, which is a potentiality, turns into an actuality. It is again important to remember that Aristotle's notion of epistémé is along the lines of Plato, in the sense that it is immutable and timeless, &c. in that regard, it is natural that only the real knowledge is an actuality, something which requires an active mind, whereas opinion (concerned with forms) is merely potential.<sup>95</sup>

It is therefore similar to the transition between the physical and psychological levels of perception. We again have a transition from a lower level of potentiality to a higher one (this is the affectionate process) and then from that potentiality to an actuality (this is the constructive

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<sup>92</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 404a28.

<sup>93</sup> L. A. Kosman "What Does the Maker Mind Make?" in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amélie Rorty (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 349.

<sup>94</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 3.4.

<sup>95</sup> M. Frede, "La théorie aristotelisienne de l'intellect agent" in *Corps et âme: Sur le De Anima d'Aristote* ed. C. Viano, (Paris: Vrin, 1996) 377-90, 381.

process), in either case the end result is something of a higher epistemic and ontological value than what is taken in the beginning.

Unfortunately, the Philosopher does not elaborate in detail concerning his distinction; therefore, we need to refer to his commentators and later interpreters. Firstly, since Aristotle was first translated into Latin, the constructive and affectionate intellects receive the names, *intellectus agens* and *intellectus possibilis*, respectively. Our contemporary notion of ‘intellect’ comes from Roman commentators, therefore. There are other instances in which *cogitio materialis*, referring to *intellectus possibilis* is used but on the whole, we do not see it enjoy the same commonality in later study of Aristotle, especially in the early modern period.<sup>96</sup>

Now, the greatest student of the Stagirite Doctor, Alexander (as historic irony has it) of Aphrodisias distinguishes between the affectionate and constructive intellect as two separate entities. This is mostly due to the tradition that Aristotle’s conception of the constructive intellect is read together with his remarks on the nature of the unmoved mover, which is an entity of pure active intellect (so active that it can cause things to be *ex nihilo*).<sup>97</sup> Alexander holds that the mechanism of constructive intellect is capable enough to distinguish between the actual forms and consequently separate them from the matter. “But now it is extremely problematic to claim that the human potential intellect would do this. How could a mere pure potency of reception perform the activity of separating the form from its material circumstances or conditions?”<sup>98</sup>

Alexander, however, may have a different notion in mind when he discusses the potential intellect, for the word he uses is *ὕλικός* rather than *ποιητικός*.<sup>99</sup> This may have the sense of

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Anima*, 26.

<sup>97</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 3.6-9.

<sup>98</sup> Miira Tirominen, “Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias on Active Intellect” in *Mind and Modality: Studies in the History of Philosophy in Honour of Simo Knauttik*, Ed. Vesa Hirvonen, Toivo J. Holopainen and Miira Tirominen, 55-70, (Leiden: Brill, 2006)

<sup>99</sup> Alexander, *De Aristotelis Libero De Anima*, 2.4.

purely distinguishing the universal from the particular. At the same time, his account also fails on the grounds of how this form is conceived. It can either be a disposition towards a universal or the universal itself, what Alexander means when he invokes the notion of form. If it is the former, then the account fails to distinguish between the affectionate and constructive intellects, as it is established by Aristotle that it is the affectionate intellect that works with dispositions. If on the other hand, it is the latter, then what is the reason there is an affectionate intellect in the first place?<sup>100</sup>

It is perhaps better to leave the commentators alone and be satisfied with the parallelism we have drawn between perception and intellection in Aristotle's own work. We suspect that these two processes share something more than a mere similarity but also make up a greater understanding of how the soul works.

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<sup>100</sup> B. C. Bazàn, "L'authenticité du 'De Intellectu' attribué à Alexandre d'Aphrodise," *Révue Philosophique de Louvain*, Vol. 7, 73.

## **4. Aristotle's Psychology and Philosophy of Language;**

### **Concluding Remarks**

It is our firm belief that the mechanisms of perception and intellection cannot be sensibly divided as functionally separate entities in the mind. It is true that they are distinct and may not interfere with each other necessarily, yet, they work towards a unified goal: attaining knowledge through understanding substances. In our opinion, this works in the following manner.

Firstly, the physical sensory organs are affected by an external object. This is the physical level of perception, where the universal is perceived from the particular, and we have called this a transition from a lower potentiality to a higher potentiality. Secondly, the universal from the external object is turned into a mental image in the soul; we called this the transition from that higher potentiality to an actuality. Now, we have also established that intellection moves in two levels: On the first level, the affectionate intellect receives the formal dispositions, which is a lower potentiality and creates a grasp of them; we have called this an understanding, which is a higher potentiality. Subsequently, the constructive intellect combines these formal dispositions to create knowledge of the substance, which is the truest actuality.

We argue that the formal dispositions that are used by the affectionate intellect are the mental images caused by the second level of perception. Call this the functionalist argument. In functionalist terms, the system of perception takes external objects, viz. particulars, as inputs and produces mental images, viz. forms, as outputs. Similarly, the system of intellection takes forms as inputs and produces knowledge as output. In our opinion, if two functions can be expressed with one's domain, i.e. input, is the other's range, i.e. output, then functionally, these two functions can be treated as if they were parts of a greater function, which takes the inputs of the

first one and transforms them into the outputs of the other. In other words, we envisage a longer chain of *intellecto-perception* that starts with the lowest level of potentiality i.e. that of a particular object, and is able to produce the highest actuality i.e. that of the substance. We have previously remarked on the reliability of induction and in our opinion, this is the exact mechanism of how inductive reasoning works within an Aristotelian frame of reference.

For the same conclusion, call this the argument from representation. The output of perception is a mental image and as we have discussed earlier, this is a representation, viz. *phantasma*, of the particular observed. Representations are formal dispositions in form of a mental image and Aristotle states that they are some sort of alteration between potential and actual. At the same time, intellection requires mental images to be able to combine them to unlock the substance. The similitude, after all, can only be understood in terms of visuals, for Aristotle. As the transition from perception to intellection is a transition from potentiality to actuality, then the functional entity that allows the transition must be representations. Henceforth, the final product of perception and the primary input of intellection must be the same thing. Q.E.D.

Now, after a rather long break, let us return to language. We have distinguished between four levels of things representing other things. On the lowest level we had signs; these were things that represented something else, with free interpretation and unboundedly.<sup>101</sup> Then we had symbols, which were signs with a fixed referent; then, words, which were vocal symbols. This vocality, as we have explained implies a human sound, as we have discussed this under intentionality earlier. We find it fitting to define a word, therefore, as a symbol that stands for

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<sup>101</sup> In fact, we were not able to discuss this notion of boundedness (*ὀριστός*, cf. *ἀόριστος*), for considerations of space, nonetheless, they do merit further attention. Aristotle is quite vague and indistinct about what he actually means by having a word bounded and in our opinion, this can be related to the modern logical notion of scope: the bounds of a word are the extent of the proposition they quantify, which is the scope, &c.

logos. Finally, we have signifiers, which are words that mean something, in a human context, under a convention, in sound and only they mean things in proper. As we have been interested in transitions for a while, now, let us illustrate how do these notions fare with each other and which linguistic functions are responsible for their transitions. Firstly, as it is clearly stated by Aristotle, the sign becomes a symbol when its referent is fixed under convention. Secondly, the symbol becomes a word when there is speaker's intention. Finally, a word becomes a signifier, when it means something. Let us call this chain the functional system of meaning, with any sign as an input and a meaning as an output.

The parallelism between the theory of language and theory of mind are parallel to each other; furthermore, there is a strong analogy between the vocabularies. In the first level of intellecto-perception, we move from particular to a form. In the first level of meaning, the referent of a sign is fixed. This is a transition from a particular to universal. The sign, be it visual, auditory or else, is a particular, without any convention it is merely another instance of an image or a sound, yet, when its referent is fixed, it becomes a symbol for that thing which makes it an abstraction, which is the form. In other words, as the mere image seen or sound heard cannot refer to something in itself, without convention, it remains in potentiality. The symbol, however, can refer to something but not all things; it can refer to the species but not to the genus. Consequently, it is still not an actuality but a higher potentiality. Therefore, the process of fixing a referent is also the process of transition from particular to universal, from a lower potentiality to a higher one, just like the primary transition that occurs in perception.

Secondly, the second level of intellecto-perception is the transition from form to representation; this is the second level of perception and the first level of intellection. In the second level of meaning, there is a transition from a symbol to a word. We have explained that

the essence of a word is intention and we have furthermore shown that representations (phantasmata) are necessary to linguistic and behavioural intention. In other words, both of these levels of transition make use of representations; we take the analogy and parallelism on this level is much clearer than the first one.

Finally, in the last level of intellecto-perception, there is a transition from understanding mental images to understanding the substance, which is knowledge. In the final level of meaning, there is a transition from word to signifier, which *means* something. We have already discussed how meaning works; for Aristotle, a signifier means something if and only if there is a similitude between the pathéma (affection) in the soul and the thing. Let us, in the light of our investigations, rephrase this doctrine. A means B if and only if A moves the soul in a certain way to cause a mental image (i.e. phantasma or representation) and that this representation is similar to the substance of the thing. In other words, we hold that pathéma is a species of phantasma, in particular one that is meaningful under a convention, with a fixed referent and a speaker's intent. Consequently, the notion of meaning is a mixture of intention and reference, for Aristotle.

Now, the final question we need to answer is which process has priority over the other, or whether they happen simultaneously, i.e. the relationship is not causation but correlation. One can attempt to answer this question in two ways. On the one hand, one can show that one is causally prior to the other; within the mechanism of coming to be, one is earlier than the other. On the other hand, we can show that one is formally prior to the other; one's assumptions are the other's conclusions or one's vocabulary can only be proven on grounds of the other. We think that choosing the former is not an adequate analysis. After all, we learn algebra before we learn Boolean logic, and in Boolean logic, algebraic formulae are used often; however, this does not mean that algebra has a priority to Boolean logic. In a deeper level of analysis, the system of

logic is formally prior to the system of arithmetic. We are—again—sorry to admit that Modrak in her seminal work falls to the trap of causalist priority and comes to the conclusion that mind must be prior to language.<sup>102</sup> We will not. Let us take *pathéma* and *phantasma*, the fundamental notions of mind and language and try to show (a) vocabulary of language is formally prior to that of mind, and (b) theory of language is formally prior to that of mind.

*Pathémata* are same in all human souls; similarly, substances are also common in things, though from different species.<sup>103</sup> Now, a linguistic function, say meaning, takes a substance as its argument and gives *pathéma* as a product. In that sense, the function must be a transitive over different instances of meaning: If A means B, and B means  $\Gamma$ , where meaning is the similitude between *pathéma* and *ousia*, then substance of A, call it  $\phi$ , must be similar to the substance of B, say  $\chi$ ; then, the substance of B,  $\chi$ , must be similar to the substance of  $\Gamma$ , call it  $\psi$ ; then because similitude is a properly transitive function, then  $\phi$  must be similar to  $\psi$  and, inverting the relation, A must mean  $\Gamma$ . The same holds for a model with only two variables, then it is also symmetrical. Furthermore, A must mean A, because every word refers to itself, then it is also reflexive. In short, given any number of things mean the same thing, then they must be the same substance.

The same case does not hold for *phantasma*. A mental image, say, a triangle, can be caused by different instances of triangles; therefore, the relationship is *simpliciter* not transitive. If A causes B and B causes  $\Gamma$ , it is not necessary for A to cause  $\Gamma$ . The reason for this is that the relation of meaning, as Aristotle constructs it, is between the (substance of the) object and the affection in the soul. The word, which can differ for different peoples and languages is not taken as a fundamental part of the process. The relation of *phantasia*, as Aristotle constructs it, is

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<sup>102</sup> Modrak, *Aristotle's Theory of Meaning*, Ch3-4.

<sup>103</sup> Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 1.2.



between the object and mental image. In this case, the object in phantasia does not correspond to the object in meaning. The object becomes a sign in representation, whereas it is the word that is the sign in meaning. In other words, when we analyse meaning, we take the object as a given or a constant; in analysing phantasia, the object is variable; it is not charged or fixed. As a consequence of this, representation cannot be transitive, because there is at least one element that is not fixed. Henceforth, pathéma is prior to phantasma, because it cannot be vice versa: one cannot derive a function that is transitive from a function that is not.

This means that the theory that involves pathéma must be prior to the theory that involves phantasia. Recall one of the components that we used to link perception with intellection: the *affectionate* intellect. In our opinion, the choice of the word affectionate is not accidental on Aristotle's part. The theory of intellecto-perception requires that there is a functional relation that operates in the soul and translates the observed, i.e. seen or heard, into a formal disposition and it is pathéma, *affection* in the soul. In other words, one of the assumptions of the Aristotelian theory of mind is a conclusion of his theory of language. Without showing that pathémata exist, we cannot explain how the forms are translated into formal dispositions through the *pathétic* intellect. Henceforth, theory of language is prior to the theory of mind just as vocabulary of language is prior to vocabulary of mind.

In short, we cannot help but to conclude that it must be the theory and vocabulary of language that holds formal priority over those of mind in Aristotle's general project. We hope to have been able to illustrate the Aristotelian theory of language in relation with the notions of sign, symbol, word and signifier, where the transitions between each were fixation of reference under convention, introduction of speaker's intent and creation of meaning, respectively. In this regard, we understand meaning as the similitude between the affection in the soul and the

substance. Arguments we have presented above compel us to see a similar mechanism in what we have called intellecto-perceptive function, which is formally derived from the linguistic function of meaning.

As a final note, we wish to conclude by suggesting that, in light of these considerations, it must be the combination of the discussion on phantasma in sections of perception and—more importantly—intellection that Aristotle refers when he dismisses the mental aspects of meaning in *De Interpretatione* as considerations that he has already discussed in his work on the soul. We believe that because he refers to a large portion of the text, which comprises of many arguments and analyses, he cannot and consequently does not offer a precise passage. Q.E.D.

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