

3. From Soul to Subject

The Aristotelian treatise, De anima, treats of the souls of plants, animals, and men. For all three there is a single definition: soul is the first act of of an organic body.<sup>1</sup> Still each differs in essence from the others: a plant soul is a principle of living, an animal soul of living and sensing, a human soul of living, sensing, and understanding."<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. From Soul to Subject

The Aristotelian treatise, De anima, expands a general metaphysical scheme to define souls in general, to distinguish different kinds of soul, and to direct investigation of the different kinds. Common to the souls of plants, animals, and men is the relation of form to matter; and so soul is defined as the first act of an organic body.<sup>1</sup> The differences between souls are rooted in their essences but manifested in their different potencies; these potencies are to be known through their acts, and the acts through their objects.<sup>2</sup> Hence, psychological investigation begins from objects, proceeds to acts, thence to potencies, finally to reach the essence of the soul under scrutiny.

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1) Aristotle, De anima II, 1, 412b 4 ff.

2) Ibid., II, 4, 415a 14-20.

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Now there is a certain incongruity about employing the same method to study the souls of plants and the souls of men. No one would think of employing introspective techniques in studying plants. But that does not imply that they should be overlooked when one turns to the study of man. Nor, in fact, did Aristotle ~~omitted~~ omit them entirely. He did not anticipate the positivists and behaviourists. But neither did he advert explicitly to introspection and elaborate a method for its employment. In consequence, not only have Aristotelians had little to say about consciousness and the subject but they even tended to do less than justice to the solid grounding in psychological fact of Aristotle's account of human intelligence.

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In his little treatise, De anima, Aristotle is exactly right on too many points for it to seem possible that he reached his conclusions without any recourse to introspection. It remains, however, that introspecting does not is not granted any explicit explicit role in his method. There is a single metaphysical scheme that relates soul to organic body as form to or first matter and that distinguishes different souls by different potencies, acts, and objects. Moreover, thsi this scheme determines the method of investigation: different souls are to be known by their different potencies, potencies by their acts, and acts by their objects. So one begins from objects, procce proceeds to acts, thence to potencies, to reach finally the essence of the soul.<sup>1</sup>

3. From Soul to Subject

The Aristotelian treatise, De anima, expands a basic scheme that serves to define soul, to distinguish different kinds of soul, and to order the investigation of the different kinds. Common to the souls of plants, animals, and men is the relation of form to matter; so soul is defined as the first act of an organic body.<sup>1</sup> The differences between souls are more specifically, manifested in their different operations; ~~where~~ operations are known through their objects, potencies through their operations, and different souls by their different potencies.<sup>2</sup>

reside in their different potencies

reside of course in their different essences, but these essences are known through their potencies, the potencies through their acts, and the acts through their objects.<sup>2</sup> Hence, an investigation proceeds from the objects to the acts, from the acts to the potencies, and from the potencies to the different souls.