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I

THE CONCLUSION DRAWN BY ARISTOTLE at *De Anima* 3.4,429b9–10 has been understood traditionally to bear in one way or another upon the knowledge the human intellect has of itself. The manuscript text, handed down without significant variants, allows only that meaning.¹ This text reads: καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ αὐτὸν τότε δύναται νοεῖν. It is rendered in the Oxford translation “the mind too is then able to think *itself*” (J. A. Smith), in the Loeb “moreover the mind is then capable of thinking *itself*” (W. S. Hett), and in similar ways in other English versions—Wallace (1882), Hammond (1902), Hicks (1907), Foster-Humphries (1951)—before Hamlyn’s translation (1968).

Likewise self-knowledge of the intellect was what the Greek commentators undertook to explain when dealing with the Aristotelian text at this point. Though radically divided in their understanding of the manner in which the human intellect knows itself, they regularly focussed their attention on the problem of self-knowledge for discussion here. That way of accepting the text can be documented as far back as Alexander of Aphrodisias in the late second and early third centuries of our era.² In orthodox Aristotelian fashion Alexander (p. 86.14–29) accounted for the self-knowledge in terms of the cognitional identity of knower with what is known, for in this identity the one could not be grasped cognitively without awareness of the other. He referred to the Aristotelian parallel of the tenet with what had been shown to take place in sensation. But he also explained that just as the intellect when exercising its cognition is

¹See critical apparatus in Paul Siwek, *Aristotelis Tractatus De Anima* (Rome 1965), *ad loc.* The only variants are the alternate form of the reflexive pronoun in a few manuscripts, and the omission of the adverb τότε in two.

²The history of the Greek commentators on Aristotle, except for a few scholarly studies on individual authors, has still to be written. Paul Moraux, in the first volume of *Der Aristotelismus bei den Griechen* (Berlin 1973), has offered the commencement of a study projected as far as the cessation of the tendency to be “orthodox,” a tendency that Moraux (xvi) sees ending about the middle of the third century A.D. This “tendency toward orthodoxy” (*ibid.*) reached its high point in Alexander of Aphrodisias, and ended before Porphyry. Accordingly Aristotelians “of the strict observance” are not to be looked for among the Neoplatonist interpreters (xvi–xvii). As regards the present question, these observations of Moraux throw light on the radical difference between Alexander and the Neoplatonist commentators in the understanding of intellectual self-knowledge. On the commentaries on the *De Anima* prior to Alexander, see Moraux, 132–136; 172–176; 207–208.

identical with the form known, so on the habitual level it is already *able* to know itself once it possesses that form. It has the habitual knowledge directly and *per se* of the known form. But coincidentally³ it is able to know itself because it *happens* to have become that which it knows.— There can be no doubt that Alexander is understanding the line in the sense that the intellect is able to know itself, and is able to do so because it has been actualized by the habitual possession of the form or forms of something else.

In the fourth century, Themistius (p. 95.19–32) gave the same general explanation of the passage as Alexander. The intellect is able to know itself, he emphasized, when it has habitual knowledge of things lying beyond it, since it is nothing other than the things known. He understood in the same way as his predecessor the respective opposition and identity of knower and known.

In the first half of the sixth century the passage was approached against a deep Neoplatonic background, but the problem was still definitely self-

³“Incidentally,” or “accidentally,” in the Greek *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*, means in Alexander (p. 86.22) that the intellect’s knowing of something else is a thing that has occurred (*συμβεβηκέναι*) to it, and in that sense is “accidental” to it. The self-awareness depending upon this occurrence is correspondingly “accidental,” or “incidental,” in Alexander’s explanation. His use of the notion *per se* calls for close attention. The *εἶδη λαμβάνειν καθ’ αὐτά* at p. 86.17 refers to the forms “by themselves” in the sense of “apart from matter” (see pp. 86.29–87.23), while the *καθ’ αὐτόν* at p. 86.21 means that it belongs to the very nature of the human intellect to know the forms of other things directly. Since in the Aristotelian context the form is the intelligible content of the thing, and the matter just in itself is unknowable, Alexander can refer to the forms as the objects known, quite as the universal is the object known.

Zabarella, *In III Arist. Libros de Anima* (Frankfurt 1606) cols. 781D–783A (3, text. 8), defends Alexander’s interpretation of the self-awareness as concomitant and not direct, against the Neoplatonic view of Simplicius. Zabarella (col. 782D) uses the Scholastic contrast of *spiritualiter* with *realiter* to explain the difference between cognitive identity and real identity. But he does not mean, as R. D. Hicks, *Aristotle De Anima* (Cambridge 1907) 485, would suggest: “Experience shows that the mind thinks other things without any self-consciousness.” Zabarella’s words are “*saepe intellectus noster alias res cogitat sine ulla suiipsius cogitatione*” (col. 782D), but the context shows the meaning to be that the intellect does not confuse the self and the object with each other. It does not understand itself to be really the same as the horse, and when it judges the horse to be different from the donkey it does not judge that it (the intellect) is different from itself. The meaning is clearly that the intellect knows other things without putting into them anything of what it knows about itself. But Aristotle’s doctrine, as well as Alexander’s interpretation of it, must require that self-awareness accompany every act of human intellection, without any exception. Zabarella’s (col. 782C) point was merely to show that this self-awareness is not direct. The situation vis-à-vis Aristotle is well expressed in the observation “in thinking of something the mind is conscious of itself thinking it,” in Richard Norman, “Aristotle’s philosopher-God,” *Phronesis* 14 (1969) 72, even though contrary to Norman’s conclusion one may hold that self-knowledge in the separate substances is not “the same activity that human minds perform when they engage in abstract thought” (67).

knowledge. For Simplicius (p. 230.12–29) the crucial concern in regard to the Aristotelian assertion was to show that contrary to Alexander the intellect knows itself not coincidentally (cf. above, note 3) but directly, in Neoplatonic fashion. The expressions used here by Simplicius are reminiscent of the way the intellect is fecundated in Plotinus (*En.* 5.2.1.10–21). Once fecundated the intellect for Simplicius (line 27) knows both itself and the forms within it, while the passivity implied by the fecundation does not involve any change. In the same epoch Philoponus (pp. 527.37–528.9) discussed problems arising from 429b10–12. He was concerned with upholding the impassivity and the self-actualization of intellection when the object is a material thing and other than the intellection itself. His conclusion was that insofar as the intellect is intellect it knows itself. The explanation is thrown (p. 528.25–26) into a strong Neoplatonic setting, with express reference to Plotinus. What continued to be the relevant theme in the discussion of the Aristotelian text at this point was self-knowledge.

In the same Neoplatonic setting Sophonias (13th–14th century) stated at this section of the text that in intellection the soul “finds the objects by gazing upon itself as possessing them” (p. 125.14). The intelligible object is not outside but inside the intellection, he reminds his Neoplatonic readers, nor is it wholly other than the intellection. No bodily change takes place. The only resemblance to passivity is fecundation as from something else, though this differs from passivity to the extent that the perfecting of intelligence is from itself (p. 125.8–13; cf. Aristotle *De Anima* 1.4,408b29–31). In this way Sophonias kept up the Neoplatonic assertion of direct self-knowledge instead of accidental dependance upon external causes.

The unvarying tradition of the Greek commentators, accordingly, understood the text at 429b9–10 as concerned with the intellect’s self-knowledge. This should support convincingly enough the only reading that is given in the extant manuscripts. Whether the self-knowledge was explained as concomitant, or in Neoplatonic fashion as direct, the topic at issue was taken by all to be the intellect’s knowledge of itself. This understanding of the Aristotelian text continued through the Latin middle ages, as in Aquinas (*etiam tunc potest intelligere seipsum*—*In III de An.*, lect. 8, Pirota no. 704), and the Renaissance, as in Zabarella (*intelligit se secundario, quia non per speciem propriam, sed per alienam*—*In III. Aristot. Libros de Anima*, 3 text. 8, col. 783AB). The text continued to be read in this sense of self-knowledge through the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, as may be seen for instance in Trendelenburg (1833) and Torstrik (1862). Right up into modern times, then, the tradition of reading the text in the meaning of the intellect’s knowledge of itself seems unbroken.

In the year 1885, however, Ingram Bywater claimed that the question of self-knowledge does not belong to this stage of Aristotle's discussion at all. Rather, the proper place for that topic would be "in the sections at the end of the Ch., when Aristotle comes to deal with . . . the question whether *νοῦς* is *νοητός*." The point of the text at 429b9, a point "too important to be ignored," is that when actuated by the forms of other things the intellect has the "characteristic of free and self-determined 'energy' " that puts it in a position to exercise at will its power of thinking. For Bywater this was "the required sense." It was obtained by changing the *δὲ αὐτόν* at 429b9 to *δὲ αὐτοῦ*. By means of this very slight change, he maintained, "we not only get a clause that we want, but also rid ourselves of the one that we do not want." He translated it "of himself," in the sense of "at will" (417a27).⁴

Bywater's case for the proposed emendation of the text was immediately endorsed by Susemihl as "convincing."⁵ But it was not mentioned by Biehl in the revision of his text in 1896, and was expressly rejected by Rodier (1900) in favor of the traditional interpretation established since Alexander. It was mentioned in the critical apparatus by Hicks (1907), Apelt (1911), Förster (1912—with note on page 174 that it was probably right), Siwek (1965—with unqualified approval on account of the context⁶) and Jannone (1966), though none of these editors admit it into the text. With Ross (1961), though, it entered into the text itself. Because "there would be no point in a reference here to self-knowledge," Ross (292) found Bywater's emendation "clearly right," and saw support for it in the *δὲ αὐτοῦ* at 429b7 (as did also Siwek, *loc. cit.*) and in the *ἑαυτοῦ* of Sophonias on p. 125.13. Hamlyn (58) translates the emended text as "and then it can think by itself," without comment and without alerting the English reader to the different meaning accepted in the unbroken Greek tradition.

A survey of the history of the emendation, then, shows that the text at *De Anima* 429b9 was given a new reading without any manuscript authority at all. The change has been introduced admittedly for doctrinal reasons—to get "the required sense" (above, note 4). A textual emendation is of course permissible when warranted by serious considerations of the meaning that is involved. Copyists do make mistakes. But extremely

⁴Bywater, "Aristotelia II," *Journal of Philology* 14 (1885) 40–41.

⁵"... überzeugend . . . hergestellt." F. Susemihl, "Bericht über Aristoteles . . .," *Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 42 (1885) 240.

⁶"Contextus (b7) omnino exigit, ut in b 9 legatur *δὲ αὐτοῦ* . . ." Paul Siwek (above, n. 1) 328. Norman (above, n. 3) 65, though writing after the publication of the Ross and Siwek texts, adheres to the traditional reading, expressly declining to accept the emendation.

sensitive care is demanded where there is the possibility of trying to make the text conform to one's own understanding of the doctrine. Especially where a long tradition of commentaries has discussed the text in its accepted wording and found no occasion to challenge it, should one be on the alert in regard to doctrinal reasons for its rejection. In the present case the discussions centered around a radical issue in the interpretation of the Aristotelian conception of intellectual self-knowledge. The question was whether this knowledge was direct, or merely concomitant with the knowledge of something else.⁷ The issue was crucial, but the Neoplatonic commentators did not attempt to evade the adverse bearing of the traditional text by any claim that it was not meant to express the notion of self-knowledge. They considered it carefully, and were satisfied that it referred to self-knowledge, even though in the Neoplatonic setting it posed serious problems. The attitude of these commentators in accepting a text even though its *prima facie* meaning did not accord with their doctrinal approach, suggests care in emending the text for doctrinal reasons today. Consideration in depth seems called for, to make sure that the reasons are sufficient to justify the change when both unanimous manuscript tradition and pertinent discussion by the commentators are against it.

But from the philosophical viewpoint has the question involved in the text at 429b9–10 enough genuine interest to merit a close investigation? Bywater, in calling for the emendation of the text, maintained that the point he was trying to make “is too important to be ignored” (*loc. cit.*). The point is that in contrast to sensation the actuation of the intellect by the forms of other things permits thought about them even when they are not physically present. Possessing the forms habitually, the intellect can think about the things at will.⁸ Without doubt that point has its philosophical importance. Its status and bearing in the general structure of the passage deserve scrutiny. One may well ask whether in actual context the tenet excludes reference to self-knowledge, or whether it leads up to it as to a conclusion. Bywater's stand is that the reference to

⁷See above, n. 3. The Cartesian epistemology, in which mind is known to itself in priority to and with greater evidence than bodies (Descartes, *Prin.* 1.11; A-T. 8., 8.17–19), likewise remains in sharp confrontation with the basic Aristotelian tenet that only in the knowledge of external sensible things is the human intellect able to know itself. The Aristotelian tenet requires that something else be more present to the cognition than the cognition is to its own self. In this regard Descartes, in spite of his aim to separate the notion of mind from that of material things, seems to conceive the notion of cognition after the model of something material, which of course is more present to itself than is any other material thing.

⁸Bywater's reference to *Ph.*, 2.5, 417a24–28, shows beyond doubt that he is correct in using “at will” to express the meaning of “of himself” at 429b7. It was similarly interpreted by Aquinas as “*cum vellet*” and “*cum voluerit*” (*In III de An.*, lect. 8, no. 701), and by Zabarella as “*quando vult*” (*In de An.*, 3, text. 8, cols. 778E–779B).

self-knowledge “has no place here,” and Ross’s similarly is that there would be no point to it here. In itself the problem of the intellect’s self-knowledge is vital to Aristotelian epistemology. The origin of all human knowledge in sensation has to be safeguarded, and the intelligible objects are to be located in the sensible forms (*De An.* 3.8, 432a3–14). The intellect’s knowledge of itself can be no exception in the Aristotelian noetic. The way intellectual self-knowledge is explained seems to make the radical difference between Aristotle and Neoplatonism. But also in the much wider arena outside the intramural discussions of the Greek commentators the issue is of perennial importance. If Aristotle has a worthwhile contribution to make on the way things outside the intellect become known, it is surely to be found in his tenet that only knowledge of those external things makes possible the intellect’s knowledge of itself.

There is no question, then, of the importance of the problem of intellectual self-knowledge in Aristotle. The one point at issue is whether the clause at 429b9–10 is the appropriate place at which the epistemologically important conclusion expressed in the traditional text should follow from the Aristotelian premises.

III

To answer this question, the structure of the Aristotelian reasoning in the passage as a whole requires examination. The passage, with the traditional text retained at 429b9, reads:

Once the mind has become each set of its possible objects, as a man of science has, when this phrase is used of one who is actually a man of science (this happens when he is able to exercise the power on his own initiative), its condition is still one of potentiality, but in a different sense from the potentiality which preceded the acquisition of knowledge by learning or discovery: the mind too is then able to think *itself* (*De An.* 3.4, 429b5–10; Oxford trans.).

The general structure of this long sentence is apparent enough. First, the state of habitual knowledge is described. The intellect has become its objects one by one, in the way of a man who actually knows the things but is not thinking of them. This state is indicated by the ability to go into the activity corresponding to the habitual knowledge at will, or just alone. That is the basis for the two assertions that follow about the intellect in the remainder of the sentence. The first assertion is that the intellect is still in a state of potentiality, though of a different type from before. The second is that it can then know itself, if the traditional text is followed, or, in Bywater’s emendation, that it can then think on its own initiative. Zabarella (col. 779F) expresses this outline very clearly. The

subject of the proposition is the intellect in the habitual state, and of it Aristotle asserts two predicates, one that it is still in a potential condition, the other (col. 781C) that it can then know itself.

One may quite securely go a step further and analyze the structure into a ground and two conclusions that follow with equal immediacy upon that ground. The ground is the intellect habitually actuated by the forms of things it has become in cognition, as shown by ability to think about the things at will. In this way the basis for the reasoning is established, since if that ground is present the two other assertions hold good of the intellect. They have accordingly the status of conclusions. The Greek particles *μὲν . . . δέ* in introducing the two conclusions suggest equally immediate sequence from the one ground. There is no indication that the second is meant to follow through the first.

In the emended text, the second conclusion is that the intellect is then able to think by itself. There is no doubt about the truth of this assertion for Aristotle, nor about its importance. Equipped with the forms of other things, the intellect is not dependent upon the external causes to provide it with the forms required for thinking. It can now think by itself.⁹ But this ability to think by itself had already been laid down in the first part of the sentence (429b7). Ability to think by itself was the indication used to show that the intellect possessed the forms habitually. It established the basis for the reasoning. Reasserted in the conclusion it would be at best a useless repetition, and at worst a *petitio principii*. Its only possible but unlikely justification would be that at 429a7 the text stated generically that the intellect could go into activity by itself, and at 429a9 specified the activity as that of thinking.

On the other hand the assertion that "it is then able to know itself" follows cogently as a second conclusion from the basis laid down in the first part of the sentence. When actuated by the habitual possession of the forms, the intellect is (a) still in potentiality towards actually thinking about the things, and (b) rendered capable of thinking about itself. The text of the *De Anima* (429a21–24) had just explained that the soul's intellect has no other nature than potentiality. Now it is regarded as having received the forms of other things, and made actual in the way form actualizes potentiality.¹⁰ Yet in this state it is (a) still in potentiality

⁹The further actualization of the habitual state is correctly called "actual knowing" by Ross (292). "Thinking," on the contrary, does not usually require the qualification of "actual," since it denotes rather the actual exercise of thought. The one Greek verb *νοεῖν* is used for both.

¹⁰The model may be seen in the description of soul as first actuality in the body (*De An.* 2.1, 412a9–b6). It actuates the matter of the body in stable fashion, in contradistinction to the further actualization found in passing activities such as thinking. In the Scholastic tradition this became standardized as the distinction between "first actuality" and "second actuality."

towards actual thinking, and (b) able to know itself. Possession of the forms of other things, in a word, equips the human intellect to think about itself as well as about the things. This follows cogently enough from the opening statement (429b5–6) that the intellect has become the other things. Accordingly it could not know them without thereby being aware of itself, on account of the cognitional identity. Through knowing other things the human intellect is made capable of knowing itself. The assertion is philosophically important, for it means that the human intellect has to know other things in order to be aware of itself, and it follows naturally and cogently as a second conclusion in the way required by the structure of the sentence.

But is this the appropriate place for introducing the topic of intellectual self-knowledge? Bywater's contention (above, note 4) was that the proper place for it would be towards the end of the chapter in the course of the discussion about "a wholly different matter," namely whether the intellect itself is knowable. Yet, in the sequence of thought found in the *De Anima*, is self-awareness "a wholly different matter" from the cognitional reception of forms?¹¹ Book 2 of the *De Anima* had ended with the explanation of sensible cognition through the reception of the forms of the perceptible things (12,424a17–b18). After a discussion of the common sensibles in the first chapter of Book 3, the second chapter went on immediately to show that every sensation involves self-awareness. The reason is that the actuality of the sensible object and that of the sensitive faculty are one and the same (2,426a9–19). This epistemology means that the object could not be perceived without self-awareness on the part of the percipient, since the two are identical in the actuality of cognition. To be aware of the one is to be aware of the other. The fourth chapter reaches the problem of intellection, and in parallel fashion shows that here too the form of the object is received by the knower (4,429a15–18). Different from an external sense, however, the mind retains habitual possession of the forms, and is thereby equipped both to think of other things at will and, according to the traditional text, to know itself. The latter conclusion seems required to round out the parallelism with sensation, in which the cognitional reception of the form results in identical actuality of percipient and perceived and thereby in self-awareness. Contrary to Bywater's view, then, the problem of the intellect's knowledge of itself is not "a wholly different matter" from its habitual possession of forms.

¹¹Norman (above, n. 3) 65, refers to the habitual possession of the forms and the actual exercise of thought as "two kinds of thinking." There is no difficulty of course in the Greek in understanding them as two different kinds of νοῦς or νοεῖν. Nor is there any hesitation in English in calling them two different kinds of knowing. But in ordinary use "thinking" seems to refer to the activity. Cf. above, n. 9.

The *De Anima* goes on to treat of knowledge of form in contrast to knowledge of composites, and then concludes the chapter by raising and discussing two aporiae. One of these is about the common aspect in acting and being acted upon. The second, really a particular application of that topic, is whether the intellect itself is knowable. Aristotle's answer is that the intellect is potentially the things known, and this potential identity itself provides the common aspect without requiring admixture with anything further (b23–31). It is here that Bywater would like to see the first introduction of the intellect's self-knowledge. But does not the aporematic setting presuppose rather that the self-knowledge has already been established? The double aporia is that if the intellect is simple and accordingly has no composition with anything common, how can it have the passivity necessary for knowledge and how can it have the common aspect expressed in the two notions of knower and known? The solution proceeds not by explaining how the intellect knows itself but by showing that it does have a common aspect with its objects. The solution regards the intellect's self-knowledge as already accepted, and undertakes to defend this self-knowledge against an objection.

The context, accordingly, requires that the conclusion about intellectual self-knowledge be drawn earlier than in the sections indicated by Bywater. The traditional reading at 429b9 draws the conclusion from its appropriate basis. This would seem to be the proper place, then, for showing how the intellect becomes able to know itself. It is rendered capable of doing so by the habitual possession of the same forms that enable it to think of other things. Far from "no point in a reference here to self-knowledge" (Ross 192), the habitual possession of the forms of other things is what makes *possible* the intellect's knowledge of itself, in the sense of possibility now under consideration. In the sequence of Aristotle's thought, this is exactly the place for the conclusion about intellectual self-knowledge. Siwek's assertion that the context by all means demands Bywater's emendation is not borne out by close analysis of the Aristotelian procedure.

What about the supporting considerations from the text and from Sophonias? Ross (192) advances the *δι' αὐτοῦ* at b7, two lines earlier, as an indication that the same phrase should be expected at b9. From the philosophical viewpoint, however, this repetition of the phrase causes the difficulties seen above. It would mean a useless restatement of what had already been said, or, if the procedure is regarded as reasoning, it would involve a *petitio principii*. But even from the viewpoint of textual transmission is it any support for the emendation?

Paleographically, the presence of *δι' αὐτοῦ* at b7 could help explain a corruption of *δὲ αὐτόν* into *δι' αὐτοῦ*. Fresh in the mind of the copyist, the latter phrase might have been inadvertently substituted for *δὲ αὐτόν*

two lines later. But the alleged corruption here is just the opposite. One has to explain how $\delta\iota' \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$, the supposed original, became $\delta\epsilon \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$. As the corruption had to have become established before the time of Alexander, it cannot be accounted for in terms of apostrophe, breathing mark, or accent. It would have to be explained through the substitution of an *E* for an *I*. This in itself is quite possible. But it can hardly appeal to the occurrence of $\delta\iota' \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ at b7 as a support. Rather, the occurrence of the phrase there would tend in the direction of perpetuating the alleged original reading.

Ross's other indication of support, approved by Siwek, is the use of $\acute{\alpha}\phi' \epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ by Sophonias, p. 125.13. Sophonias' literal use of the wording of the *De Anima* seems to end with the mention of the separate intellect at 429b5 (Sophonias, p. 125.5–6), just before the passage with which the present discussion is concerned, and commences again only with the beginning of the following chapter (*De An.* 3.5—Sophonias, p. 125.15). The intervening lines of Sophonias are a digression from the Aristotelian text in order to give a Neoplatonic account of the intellect's ability to know its objects. The intellect is fecundated by something else ($\upsilon\phi' \epsilon\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omicron\upsilon$ —p. 125.10), but the thinking (*ibid.*), i.e., the perfection of the intellect (p. 125.13), is from the intellect itself ($\acute{\alpha}\phi' \epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$). The notion suggested by the preposition $\acute{\alpha}\pi\acute{o}$ in this setting is that of origin rather than of the instrumentality that would have been implied in Aristotle's alleged use of $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$ here (see *De An.* 3.8, 432a1–3). Sophonias is insisting that the mind originates its own knowledge of its objects. He is not regarding it as an instrument for knowing them. It finds them rather in gazing at itself, as possessing them.

In this context, even with the best of will, can Sophonias' repeated use of the phrase $\acute{\alpha}\phi' \epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ be seen as reflecting a second occurrence of $\delta\iota' \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ in his text of *De Anima* 3.4, 429b7–9? He is not, it is true, specially concerned with a further conclusion that the intellect actuated by the forms is able to think of itself. For him this self-knowledge is already presupposed by the intellect's knowledge of the forms, since it finds them in knowing itself. What seems reflected is rather the $\upsilon\phi' \epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ of Philoponus (p. 527.39; p. 528.1 and 3) and Simplicius (p. 230.21) in the sense that the knowing is done by the intellect itself as the agent. Philoponus on facing the aporia why being known did not make the thing an intellect, explained that to be an intellect the object had to be known "by itself," as agent. Simplicius, in giving his explanation of *De Anima* 429b9–10, meant that the intellect in being known "by itself" as agent remains unchanged, and unaffected by anything exterior. The latter seems to be the immediate background against which Sophonias is thinking, for he is facing the same problems. In this Neoplatonic tradition his meaning was that the intellect in its own way originates its knowledge of other things.

That meaning bears no immediate resemblance to the assertion that once the intellect is equipped with the forms of other things it is able to think at will. Yet that is the meaning the expression ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ would have to have if it had been intended by Sophonias to reflect the reading at *De Anima* 429b9 as conjectured in Bywater's emendation. In the context it reflects the Neoplatonic stand that the intellect *qua* intellect knows itself (Philoponus, p. 528.9), rather than any new capability given the intellect by the habitual possession of the forms of other things.

v

What is called for in the Aristotelian noetic is a cogent presentation of the tenet that in man the intellect when actuated by the forms of other things acquires the habitual capacity to know itself. In the *Metaphysics* (Λ 9,1074b35–1075a5) Aristotle assumes in an aporia that *prima facie* the intellect seems to know itself only concomitantly in and through the knowing of something else, and in opposition to the universal extension of that view to all intellects he justifies his tenet of direct self-knowledge in separate substance. In the same book of the *Metaphysics* (1072b24–26), as well as in the *De Anima* (3.4,430a2–6; 5,430a22), he distinguishes the uninterrupted thinking in separate substance from the interrupted type of which men are conscious in themselves.¹² These are but occasional

¹²On the two readings at 430a22, see Siwek, 333. The opposition of these readings to each other does not affect the present point, for in either case the difference between the two kinds of intellection remains the same. Aristotle himself does not use the notion “direct” to qualify the knowledge he contrasts with the concomitant self-awareness in human cognition. But Alexander’s προηγουμένως (p. 86.21) seems best translated by “directly.” Norman (above, n. 3, 72) expresses it as “primarily.” This would suggest the Aristotelian πρῶτως and would seem to relate the two kinds of cognition as primary and secondary instances. That does not appear to be Aristotle’s intent in saying that an act of cognition is of something else though concomitantly of itself. There is but the one act of cognition, focusing on the object but simultaneously aware of itself. It is hard, in fact, to see how self could be regarded as a secondary object of human cognition, except in the temporal sense that a new act of cognition may now be focused upon the self. But that is not the question here. The Aristotelian meaning is rather that self is always concomitant with the object upon which the cognition focuses, on account of the identity of the two in the act of knowing. Alexander’s (p. 86.21–22) ranking of the two as *per se* and *per accidens* implies a relationship of primary and secondary from that angle, but here the force of the *per accidens* is that acts of human cognition *happen* to have taken place (see above, n. 3). It leaves intact the tenet that self-awareness is essential to and necessarily involved in every act of cognition. Alexander (p. 22.16–18) had already used the contrasted terms προηγουμένως and κατὰ συμβεβηκός to describe the body being moved *per se*, and its form *per accidens*. This is hardly a relationship of primary and secondary movements. Rather, it describes the way one and the same movement is attributed in different fashion to two subjects, somewhat as the seated passenger shares

references, passing statements prompted by the confrontation of separate intellect, which is actuality only, with the soul's (*De An.* 3.4,429a22) intellect. What is required is an explicit assertion that this latter intellect, which of its own nature is potential, becomes actually *able* to know itself as soon as it possesses the forms of other things. In the traditional text, is not that conclusion found just where it is to be expected, in close parallel with the preceding explanation of self-awareness in sensation? The assertion is brief and concise. But, like numerous other important statements in Aristotle, is it not presented in a manner quite in accord with that of a school *logos*? It is sharply etched, and definitive enough to serve as adequate basis for oral discussion. It allowed Aristotle (429b30–430a2) without further ado to proceed with the tenet that the intellect is actually none of its knowable objects prior to an act of cognition, like a writing table on which nothing has been written.

In general epistemology the traditional text at 429b9 offers an important contribution. If accepted, its doctrine justifies philosophically the knowledge of things existent outside cognition, since only through cognitive identity with external things can the intellect know its own self. The problem how to get outside the intellect does not arise. But that would be a much longer story.

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per accidens the motion of the ship. Zabarella (cols. 782C; 783BD), however, understands Alexander to mean a relationship of *principaliter-secundario* and *antecedenter* or *praeedenter-postquam*. The objects are contrasted as *primum* or *primarium*, and *secundarium* (783E). They may be found contrasted in this terminology by Aquinas (*ST* 1.87.3 c), but in the sense of the objects of two different acts of cognition. So John of St Thomas, *Ars Logica* 2.23.3, in *Cursus Philosophicus*, ed. B. Reiser (Turin 1930) 1.741–746, can regularly use the term “direct” for the cognition of objects and yet refer (742b32–34) to it in contrast to the knowledge of self as object with the words *primo . . . secundario*. The annoying confusion is avoided if with Hicks (above, n. 3, 485) the concomitant cognition is described as taking place “indirectly,” in contrast to the way the cognition focuses “directly” upon an object.