

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Finite infinitude: an Aristotelian approach to the question concerning
“for the same thinking as well as being”

TIAN QI JING
SPRING 2021

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree
in Philosophy
with honors in Philosophy

Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Mark Sentesy
Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies
Thesis Supervisor

Emily Grosholz
Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Philosophy, English, and African American Studies
Honors Adviser

* Electronic approvals are on file.

ABSTRACT

The question concerning the relationship between being and thinking has always been an important topic for discussion in the history of philosophy. To start a new interpretation on this topic, we might need to start by unpacking the concept of being and thinking. Parmenides asserts that “being is one”, thus, it follows that thinking is numerically one with being, but in doing so he also denies change. In order to solve this problem, Aristotle rejects Parmenides’ view that being could only be meant in one sense, and argues that all coming-to-be is made possible due to an underlying composite dynamic-energetic structure. Change, as a result, is the actualization of a thinghood’s potency of becoming specific forms, and the being’s potency orients itself to become the complete actuality. Correspondingly, the intellect faculty of the soul obtains the same structure. The activity of thinking could be described as the intellect realizing its potency of taking over the forms of beings in the world, and in this activity, the intellect and being come-to-be the same actuality: thinking in the form of knowledge. From this perspective, Parmenides’ famous fragment of “for the same thinking as well as being” could be interpreted as, the potency of the intellect and natural beings in their complete being-at-work-staying-itself (*entelecheia*), belongs to the same being of knowledge. Moreover, I would argue that in the way that all beings have the highest good as their ultimate end, thinking has truth as its ground and teleological cause. To phrase it differently, the good and truth are the first movers for being and thinking, they are the initial actuality and ultimate end that is being yearned. As a result, Parmenides’ quote could also be understood as, being and thinking yearned “for” the same unconditioned condition, which is revealed in two different forms as the good and truth.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABBREVIATIONS	iv
Chapter 1 The question concerning thinking and being	1
Chapter 2 Aristotle and the multiple senses of being	2
Section 2.1 The rejection of Parmenides’ “being is one” and the deduction of the categorical sense of being.....	2
Section 2.2 The dynamic-energetic structure of thinghood.....	8
Chapter 3 The unmoved mover: The end and the ground of beings.....	14
Chapter 4 On the soul: the faculty of thinking, perception, imagination.....	17
Section 4.1 The primary distinction between thought and perception	18
Section 4.2 On the essence of imagination.....	19
Chapter 5 The alethic being and the three senses of falsity	23
Section 5.1 The nature of the finite world: truth or falsity?	26
Chapter 6 The dynamic-energetic structure of thinking and perceiving.....	32
Chapter 7 The ontological structure of thinking and its relation to truth.....	36
Chapter 8 Conclusion.....	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	43
ACADEMIC VITA.....	44

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is my distinct pleasure to acknowledge the help and support provided by my thesis supervisor, Professor Mark Sentesy. Thank you for introducing me to the world of ancient philosophy, and preparing the enlightening lectures and questions to help us think through the difficult problems. In your class, not only that we gain a robust understanding of the content, but we have also acquired the insight to identify important philosophical questions.

I would also like to express special thanks to Professor Brady Bowman, for the time we spent discussing German idealist philosophers. My perspective and understanding would have been far more limited without your insights and guidance. Thank you.

ABBREVIATIONS

CPR	Kant, Immanuel, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>
DA	Aristotle, <i>On the Soul and on Memory and Recollection</i>
ENZ	Hegel, G. W., <i>Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline</i>
Met	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i>
Phys	Aristotle, <i>Physics</i>
SR	Aristotle, <i>On Sophistical Refutations</i>

Chapter 1 The question concerning thinking and being

For the same thinking as well as being.

τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστὶν τε καὶ εἶναι.

– Parmenides, Fragment 3

There are three questions that could be asked based on Parmenides' third fragment. What is *being*, what is *thinking*, and what does it mean for them to be the *same*. While it is possible to provide a reading on this statement with reference to other parts in Parmenides' poem *On Nature*, in this paper, I will attempt to give an interpretation of this fragment from an Aristotelian perspective. In general, the paper is structured into three parts with correspondence to the three questions that have been asked. I will start by unpacking Parmenides' own understanding of the idea of being, stated as "Being is one", and discuss Aristotle's response to his account. Next, I will articulate Aristotle's argument that it is necessary for there to be four distinct senses of being, namely, the categorical, dynamic-energetic, alethic, and incidental-essential, for motion and knowledge to be possible. Then, I will articulate how these different senses of being altogether reflect on Aristotle's fundamental understanding of the natural world, and how his view contrasts with the modern philosopher Hegel. At this point, we would have a brief view of what does it mean to be in the finite world for Aristotle. Thus, I will move on to discuss the being of the intellect soul, as that which thinks, and to articulate its dynamic-energetic structure of being. In the end, I would show how Parmenides' fragment could be understood under Aristotle's account of thinking and being, and how truth participates as both the ground and end of their being-at-work-staying-itself.

Chapter 2 Aristotle and the multiple senses of being

Section 2.1 The rejection of Parmenides' "being is one" and the deduction of the categorical sense of being

The discipline of ontology studies what does it mean for things to be. A modern way of phrasing it, would be to find out the positive determinations of being that allows it to be a thing-in-itself. In Physics I, Aristotle argued that the task of natural scientists is to determine the principles of natural entities. To make systematic scientific knowledge possible, we would need to discover the "sources (*arche*), causes (*aitia*), or elements (*stoixeion*)"¹ (Phys 184a1) of things.

The study of the concept of being itself has been one of the fundamental philosophical issues since Parmenides, it is the most primary and universal concept, that almost resists our attempt of definition. When we think about the concept of being, it seems so self-evident that it becomes easy to name it instead of to describe it. Being is everywhere, we do not have direct access to non-being except from negating the idea. Everything is being, although being itself as a universal concept does not set to establish any qualities of a particular thinghood, it is also absurd to take away being from its actual existence. On the one hand, it could be said that being is univocal, as it is the same for all natural beings; on the other hand, even when having the same sense of being, things are not the same and different-in-themselves. Therefore, when Parmenides argued that "Being is one", it seems to be a counterintuitive thesis. It would be important to explore what does Parmenides mean by being in his account. Is he talking about an object or an abstract idea? What are the implications of his assertion? How should we understand thinking under this conception of being? Parmenides presented his argument as follows:

¹ In this paper I will follow the translation introduced by Joe Sachs in *Metaphysics*, and all Greek will be transliterated.

A single story of a route still
 Is left: that [it] is; on this [route] there are signs
 Very numerous: that what-is is ungenerated and imperishable;
 Whole, single-limbed, steadfast, and complete;
 Nor was [it] once, nor will [it] be, since [it] is, now, all together,
 One, continuous; for what coming-to-be of it will you seek?"
 (Parmenides B8 1-6)

"Moreover, changeless in the limits of great chains
 [It] is un-beginning and unceasing, since coming-to-be and perishing
 Have been driven far off, and true trust has thrust them out
 Remaining the same and in the same, [it] lies by itself
 And remains thus firmly in place; for strong Necessity
 Holds [it] fast in the chains of a limit, which fences it about.
 Wherefore it is not right for what-is to be incomplete;
 For [it] is not lacking; but if it [were], [it] would lack everything.
 (Parmenides B8 26-34)

Now we can see that according to Parmenides, Being has the following characteristics, it is (1) ungenerated, (2) changeless, (3) complete (4) finite. One of the most outstanding implications of Parmenides' account of being would be that generation and change² is impossible, and all coming-to-be is merely an illusion. Let us start by examining the case of generation. The logical structure of Parmenides' argument is simple. First, if something comes to be, it must come from something (being) or from nothing (non-being)³, and the emergence of a thing is a transition from non-being to being⁴. However, non-being does not have any ontological status that could serve as the source of emergence, so nothing could come out of non-being. Moreover, "being would not come into being, since it already is" (Phys 191a31). As a result, being could neither be generated from being or non-being, thus, generation is impossible. Second, under Parmenides'

² In general, coming-to-be could be classified into two kinds. The first, in which Parmenides calls generation, happens where a thinghood comes to be from having not been, in a way that a new organism is born. The second form of coming to be is called change, which Aristotle would describe as an underlying being (*hupokeimenon*) coming obtaining a form (A) from having been absent of the form ($\sim A$), for instance, the color of an apple turns from green to red. For Parmenides, neither of the two kinds of coming to be is possible under his account of "Being is one".

³ Spangler, *Aristotle's Criticism of Parmenides in Physics I*, 93

⁴ Modified, Tegtmeier, *Parmenides' problem of Becoming and Its Solution*, 54

account, not only being could be generated from non-being, the only being of the One that is also changeless. In this case, change could be described as being becoming what it is not, namely, non-being. The argument here is simpler: for what “is not”, is. The concept of non-being depends on the existence of being to be its negation. When we say that something is not, we are already having in mind that something is, and since being is one, it is impossible to say that something that is not without presupposing that the same thing is. Therefore, we run into a contradiction when we assert that being is changeable, as it is conceptually impossible for being to become pure non-being. At this point, I would like to focus on the impossibility of coming-to-be, and suspend the other characteristics of being complete and finite for Chapter 5’s discussion of the finitude or infinitude of the natural world.

In a way, Parmenides’ account of being creates a challenge to Aristotle’s formulation of natural science as a discipline. If “there are not even many things, but only being itself” (Phys 191a34), it implies that there could only be one source, and it is indifferent from its element. As a result, there would be no difference but only identity, and we are unable to have knowledge about things through distinguishing it from another, since being is numerically one. From this aspect, it could be argued that Parmenides approaches the study of being from a different perspective than Aristotle. While Aristotle focuses on the nature of concrete and particular beings, Parmenides seeks to find out the ultimate, eternal, and universal truth. I would argue that Parmenides’ conception of being is closer to the ones of modern philosophers, which sets God or the Absolute as the ground and the end for all beings. Everything is in god, just as everything is in being. However, just as in German idealism the attempt to provide a systematic philosophy of being seems to unavoidably lead to determinism and thus a deprivation of freedom, Parmenides’

account of “Being is one” also prohibits individuation, and more fundamentally, it denies the happening of change.

Aristotle thinks that thinkers like Parmenides have lost their way on their way to truth, and they are not really studying nature. Since the study of nature is the study of sources, causes and elements, it is the study of things that change⁵. Therefore, Aristotle seeks to find out a way to resolve the problems raised by Parmenides. To argue that change is, we need to talk about a different sense of being than Parmenides’ being as one. Aristotle’s reading of Parmenides’ concerns being to be a subject that is predictable. If we look at the linguistic structure of the statement “Being is one”, we can see that it takes “Being” to be the subject, and “one” to be an attribute that describes its mode of being. Similarly, for phrases such as “Being is ungenerated, changeless, complete, and finite”, they all have the subject-predicate structure of “X is Y”. A more specific example would be: an apple is weighted 100 grams. It is different to be an apple than it is to be a weight. Although weight is unified with the apple as being its form, when we articulate it in language, they express different kinds of being. Therefore, for us to be able to describe anything, being must be spoken in at least two senses, as the underlying subject itself, and the predications of it. And it is not contradictory for us to describe one being with another, as subjects and predicates are not opposites. Aristotle seems to have assumed that language reflects the structure of reality⁶, as language on its own is not enough to give the subject-predicate structure, there must be something in reality that corresponds to the two senses of being that is involved in our use of language.

⁵ Spangler, *Aristotle’s Criticism of Parmenides in Physics I*, 92

⁶ Robbiano, Being is not an object: An interpretation of Parmenides’ fragment DK B2 and a reflection on assumptions, 264

Aristotle calls the attributions of the subject to be the categorical sense of being (*katēgoriai tou ontos*). One basic implication of the subject-predicate distinction is that it allows being to have different aspects while still being unified as one. For instance, an apple could be simultaneously sweet, red, and round-shaped while still being an apple. Being is composite, there is an underlying material (*hulē*) that holds all its formal attributes (*eidos*). Aristotle's distinction between the subject and its predicates also makes allows change to be possible without falling into non-being. To talk in an imprecise manner, Aristotle responds to Parmenides' "non-being" (nothing) by arguing that it is by essence "not-being" (something). While we say that an apple is red, it also implies that the same apple is not-green. In this case, not-being is reduced to the level of categorical predications, which does not cause annihilation to the subject itself.

Now that we and they say that nothing comes into being simply from what is not, but surely in some way a thing comes into being from what is not, for example incidentally. (For form its deprivation, which in virtue for itself is something that is not, and which does not continue to be present, something comes into being). (Phys 191b15-17)

In Parmenides' account for the impossibility of coming-to-be, he argues that generation and change either needs to come from or turn into non-being, and neither of them is possible.

Aristotle partially agrees with this conclusion, as opposing attributes (form and not-form) indeed do not bring each other into being. The source that initiates change is the thing's nature instead of the formal descriptions. More precisely, in a thing's coming-into-being, what is essential about its nature is always the same, while its incidental characters might change. For instance, we can say that a person becomes educated from being uneducated. However, this change in character does not alter the person's essential being as a human, and it depends on the person's capacity to be educated to come into being. On the other hand, the forms themselves are universal, and thus incidental to the being *this* of a particular thinghood. A form is a form of a

particular material. We need to have the being as itself before we could articulate it with our predications. In short, the aspect of non-being (not-form) could only be articulated without contradiction in the sense of categorical beings, and it depends on an underlying being as its source of change.

Aristotle describes change to be the transition from previously having a form into being deprived of the form, or vice versa. In all forms of coming-to-be, whether it is a change in itself or a generation of a new being, new features appear. There are in total three elements in the process of change, a (1) form (*eidōs*), its (2) privation (*sterēsis*), and the (3) underlying material (*hupokeimenon/hulē*)⁷. The form and its privation are a pair of opposites, and they cannot exist independently from the underlying material. The form-privation structure describes the start and end of a particular process of change, but they themselves do not enact on each other to bring changes about. It is the underlying being that is acted upon to be modified into a new form, or becomes what it potentially is. Therefore, the tripartite structure of form-privation and its underlying being could also be separated into two parts, as form-material, and privation-material. Again, change is not a transition from the form to its privation, but from the material to the form. The material, based on its nature, is capable of taking on certain forms. In other words, change comes-to-be as a realization of a thing's potency. For Aristotle, it is not the case that everything could come out of everything, as finite beings are limited by their potencies, and it is such determination that makes finite beings what they are. For instance, a stone cannot become a plant, as a stone lacks the potency of being alive. But a stone could be crafted into a house, as it has the capacity to sustain the shape without collapsing.

⁷ Sentesy, *Aristotle's Ontology of Change*, 19

In this section, we have discussed how Aristotle responds to Parmenides' assertion of "Being is one". He argues that beings are composite, and could be spoken of in many senses. The categorical sense of being allows us to affirm change, as well as to make distinctions between things in the world. It provides us a tool to think about things in words and articulate our observations into judgments. In this sense, the categorical sense of being is the way that we think about the world. Through unpacking the underlying being into its material and form, its source is revealed to us, and we get closer to having knowledge about the thinghood. As we have noted a few times before, the categorical sense of privation-form is not the source for the coming-to-be of things, there is a more primordial sense of being that grounds the categorical predications and makes it meaningful. In the next section, I will articulate what Aristotle calls the dynamic-energetic sense of being, as the underlying source of change.

Section 2.2 The dynamic-energetic structure of thinghood

Aristotle argued that in order for change to be, we must have at least two senses of being. The categorical sense of being provides us the tool to mark off the before-and-after moments of a thing's motion, and shows us the universal structure of change. However, the categorical opposites are not that which initiates change. The attribution of a new form to the underlying object is not a result of our description. There is something more primordial in the underlying being that is responsible for the activity of coming-to-be. The categorical structure of change only tells us "how" change emerges, yet without filling in the content, the structure of change by itself is only an empty concept. We still need to find an answer to the question of "why things

change”. Let us remind ourselves of what Aristotle stated at the beginning of Physics I. Our knowledge about the nature of a thing is the knowledge of its source, cause, and element.

Therefore, we should follow the same procedure in order to account for the nature of the underlying being. One possible way to start answering the question of “what is the underlying being, and why it is what it is” might be to look into the concept of thinghood itself, and try to out find the source of the being’s movement.

In *De Anima* Book II Chapter 1, Aristotle identifies three possible candidates of the thinghood,

One of the most general ways of being we call thinghood; of *this*, one sort has being as material, which in its own right is not a *this*, but another sort is the form or look of a thing, directly as a result of which something is called a *this*, and the third sort is what is made out of these. Now the material is a potency, but the form is being-at-work-staying-itself, and this is two senses, one in the manner of knowledge, the other in the manner of the act of contemplating.
(DA 412a6-13)

To phrase it differently, thinghood could be meant in three ways: First, there is the being of material (*hyle*), which is something in-itself, but capable of taking on other forms. The material is not a *this* (*tode ti*) in its own right, because the material could only be separated in speech but not in actuality. For example, a piece of wood is potentially a chair, but it is yet the *this* in the sense of being a chair before it acquires the form. In this case, the wood is only considered as a material in relation to the form of a chair. If we break it down further, we could say that a piece of wood on its own has a form of woodiness, and the proximate material of the wood would be xylems. This process of separating the material out of the form could continue endlessly until we reach the ultimate underlying being, or the elements out of which something is made. Therefore, although material indeed underlies the opposing forms in the process of change, it depends on

the form to be a *this*. As a result, although the material is “the ultimate underlying being, which is no longer attributed to anything else” (Met 1017b26), it is still not an independent thinghood.

Second, we have the form (*eidos*), that which puts in-activity (*energeiai*) the potency of the material, and sustains as a being-at-work-staying-itself (*entelecheia*). In this case, the form is “that which is responsible for the being of a thing” (Met 1017b15), it is something on its own, and does not belong to it through another. For instance, a piece of wood is being acted upon and made into the form of a chair, which hence becomes a *this* insofar as it has determinate functions as a being of a chair and is no longer recognized as mere woodiness. Thus, it could also be said that to identify what a thing is, would be to define or articulate its form. However, there are a few problems in considering the form to be a thinghood. For instance, the form alone could not account for the unity between the material and the form. Having a form is not the cause for a thing to be one. In reference to the previous example, the reason why the wood could be made into a chair is because there are certain qualities of the wood that could make it sustainable of such a form. The form of a chair could not come to be independent by itself as a form is the form of a material. When the form is separated from the material, it is an abstract concept that has no real being. Simultaneously, “when length, breadth, and depth are taken away, we see nothing left behind” (Met 1029a18). Moreover, although when being attributed to a material, the form allows it to be come a *this*, the form itself something universal and thus precisely not a *this*. As a result, similar to the material, the form cannot be an independent thinghood on its own.

We have shown that neither the material nor the form is alone a definite individual thing, as they could only appear inseparable from each other. Thus, lastly, we are left with the possibility that thinghood should be defined as the combination of material and form. By viewing them to be a composite unity, they could together appear as a *this* that is independent, being in and for

itself, and not predicated of anything else. The remaining problem would be, what is the ontological structure of the thinghood, that allows it to be in one way two different senses of being, but in another way univocal? Aristotle explains it by bringing in the idea of potency and activity. The potency is a particular kind of source, that when it has the right conditions, the being necessarily and immediately sets to work⁸. The potency could be activated with an eternal actor, or it could come to be through itself as itself. In the latter case, the potency of a thing is also called its nature. Let us start with the simpler example of a living being that come to be on its own. For instance, an egg is potentially a chicken, and through nourishing it sets in activity of such potency, and actually becomes a chicken. If we take the concept of a chicken to also include its coming-to-be from an egg, then it could be said that the egg and the chicken are one. But in another sense, they are also different, as the coming-to-be of the chicken requires the deprivation of the form of being an egg. The case is slightly more complicated for non-living beings. While they have a potency to be changed in themselves, it also requires a source of change that is “some other thing” (Met 1046a10) to put them at work. For example, in the activity of house building, we have the builder who actively works on the wood, and the wood being passively acted upon and shaped into the form of a house. They are performing the same activity of house building, but the type of potency that is involved in both sides are different. Yet, although for non-living beings, their coming-to-be is necessarily related to some others, their being could still be expressed in the structure of being-at-work-staying-itself of the particular potency. Therefore, although in the beginning Aristotle presents the being of thinghood as having these three “ways”, they are not really separable from each other. Each form is an in-activity of the potency of the

⁸ Sentesy, *Aristotle's Ontology of Change*, 64

material, which depends on the material to exist.⁹ As a result, it would be slightly misleading to think of the form being attached to the material. The form is potentially in the material, they are together one sense of being, although we could separate them in speech.

Furthermore, thinghood which obtains the dynamic-energetic structure could also be distinguished into two kinds by their characteristics:

“One kind is *perceptible*, of which one sort is *everlasting* and the other sort, which everyone acknowledges, is *destructible*, as with plants and animals, and it is necessary to grasp the elements of this kind of thinghood, whether there is one or many. Another kind is *motionless*, and some people say that this is separate, some of them dividing it into two kinds, other making the forms and the mathematical things into one nature, and other assume only the mathematical things among these” (Met 1069a31-36)

To put it clearer, there are two larger categories that all thinghood belongs to, one is the perceptible, the other is the motionless. In addition, within the perceptible, we have the everlasting and the destructible. Thinghood are destructible in the sense that they are capable of undergoing change. As we’ve discussed before, change is represented as contrary opposites, namely the deprivation and acquiring of a form of an underlying being. Yet, it should be noted that “the contraries themselves do not change” (Met 1069b5), as change happens in the dynamic-energetic sense of being. Following these descriptions, it is now possible for us to align the new categories of thinghood with the previous ones that we have discussed: the destructible thinghood is the material, and the everlasting is the form. The material is not a thing-in-itself without a form, and a form is universal and thus precisely not a particular being. It is only when the form and material are composed together, we have an individual thinghood on its own.

⁹ Therefore, Aristotle uses the analogy of “knowledge” and “contemplation” (DA, 412a13) to distinguish between the material and form. A person with knowledge might not always be thinking, but the activity of contemplation by definition involves the use of knowledge. This point would be important in the later sections when we discuss the nature of the thinking soul.

The being of the motionless is something different and relates to a more fundamental question of the source of beings in the world. Thus, I would make the discussion of the motionless an independent section and articulate it with reference to other thinkers.

To conclude this section, through analyzing the nature of the possible candidates of thinghood, Aristotle introduces the dynamic-energetic sense of being to account for the material-form composition (cf. *Met.* VII 3-6). In comparison to the categorical predications, the dynamic-energetic sense of being is the primary sense of being that allows anything to be a *this* that is both a being-in-itself and also capable of undergoing movement and change. Although there are other senses of being, such as the incidental-essential, categorical, and alethic¹⁰, it could be argued that all of these are based on the primary sense of thinghood, which is the dynamic-energetic. In other words, to have knowledge about a thing's essence, is to understand its dynamic-energetic structure of being.

¹⁰ Sentesy, *Aristotle's Ontology of Change*, 14

Chapter 3 The unmoved mover: The end and the ground of beings

We might need to pay special attention to the motionless thinghood, as it is not only a being in itself, but also serves as an unmoved source that brings other things into being.

And since what is in motion and causes motion is something intermediate, there is also something that causes motion without being in motion, which is everlasting, and independent thing, and being-at-work. But what is desired and what is though cause motion in that way: not being in motion, they cause motion. But the primary instances of these are the same things, for what is yearned for is what seems beautiful. (Met 1072a 24-28)

A being is an unmoved mover when it is being desired by others and cause motion, without itself being changed by the one that is moved. For instance, when a fruit is being desired by a hungry animal, it impulses it to seek for fulfillment, and the fruit is unmoved before being consumed by the animal. It is necessary to have an unmoved mover to serve as the source and ground for all beings, as if it is the case that all movement are caused by the external forces exerted by moved movers, we will unavoidably run into an infinite regress and face the question of “what is the first mover”. In this case, one possible solution would be to assert God as the first mover that causes everything including itself to come into being, but we might also face the problem of determinism if everything follows necessary from God’s activity.

The problem that Aristotle responses to with his account of the first mover is different than the freedom discussion that raises in the later period of history. Aristotle seeks to find out what allows things to come into being. As “nothing comes into being from simply what is not” (Phys 191b15), there must be something there that already is for all other beings to emerge. Thus, he argues that without the motionless that serves as the first being-at-work-staying-itself (*entelecheia*), nothing could raise out of the “night” (Met 1072a20) and come into being. In this passage, there is a Platonic moment of having the good as the ultimate end of all beings. Living

beings naturally yearn for the good, their desire for the good drives them to come into being, while the good itself is unchanged. If the good is that which initiates movement, then I would argue that truth is both the ground and end for thinking. In our knowing of things, our thinking is attracted to the object in the world, as Aristotle writes,

the power of thinking is set in motion by the action of the thing thought, and what is thought in its own right belongs to an array of affirmative objects of which thinghood is primary, and of this the primary kind is that which is simple and at work. (Met 1072a31-33)

In other words, without the presence of thinghood, there would be no thinking activity. Just like if there is no food, we are unable to perform the act of eating. In this case, although proximately the food and the thinghood could be seen as the source that initiates our activity, there is something more primordial that underlies both finite beings, namely, the good and truth. These two ultimate forms of ends provide us with a universal structure of orientation, that allows our being and thinking to come to being. Besides, if we relate to Parmenides' fragment of "for the same thinking as well as being" that is always present in the background of this essay, we are also able to conclude that in one way, the good and truth are identical. In Hegelian terms, both being and thinking are yearning at the "unconditioned object" that is "true and absolute" (ENZ §45), and thus, they are "for" the same thing.

I would argue that the eternal yearning, or the universal structure of orientation is that which is present in all finite beings, and thinkers such as Anaxagoras and Hegel both incorporate a similar idea in their account of nature. Anaxagoras presents the idea of the first mover as the Mind, which is "something infinite and self-controlling, and it has been mixed with no thing but is alone itself by itself" (Anaxagoras B12). In this case, in order to be both "unmixed" but also order-giving to the world, we could only interpret the Mind to be an unmoved mover that orientates the other things to itself through the other's yearning. Similarly, Hegel's idea of

infinitude also has such elements in its constitution. In one sense, the infinity could be seen as the end of the finite dialectic movement, but in another sense, it is also the ground that allows the continuous progression possible (Cf. ENZ §94). For Hegel, finite beings are not only yearning for the infinite, but the eternal yearning itself is also that which constitutes the idea of infinite itself. For these two thinkers, the Mind and the infinity participate in their account of being as a teleological end, but as an end that is present in the very beginning. Although the comparison is superficial, we are able to see the emergence of an underlying identical structure for thinking and being.

At this point, it would be important to articulate carefully the essence of thinking, before we discuss it in relation to being. For Aristotle, the faculty of thinking belongs to the soul. Thus, in the next chapter, I will explore Aristotle's concept of the soul, specifically from the perspective of how thinking differs from other faculties such as perception and imagination.

Chapter 4 On the soul: the faculty of thinking, perception, imagination

In Chapter 2, I have articulated the multiple senses of being given by Aristotle. Among the four, the dynamic-energetic sense of being is that which accounts for the *this* of a particular thinghood. In this chapter, I will move on to discuss the nature of thinking, in order to resolve Parmenides' puzzle of "for the same thinking as well as being." In short, Aristotle defines the soul to be the "being-at-work-staying-itself of the first kind of a natural, organized body" (DA 412b5). The soul alone is not a concrete thinghood in itself, rather "the being-at-work-staying-itself of such a body" (DA 412a20). In other words, the soul is the form of the bodily material. The difference between the form of soul and others, is that the soul is the activity of a living-being's nature, which is the source of change of itself; while the potencies for non-living beings could only be completed by being acted upon by another.

Having given an account of the soul in general, Aristotle then turns to a consideration of the different kinds and parts of the soul. The parts of the soul are identified by their functions: First, there is the *nutritive*, which is the capacity of nourishment, growth, and reproduction. This part of the soul is common to all living beings including plants, as it is necessary to be nourishing in order to stay alive. Second, there is the *perceptive*, which is the capacity for perception, pleasure and pain, and certain kinds of desire. The perceptive soul is common to all animals, but different in degree. For instance, "for many animals have neither sight nor hearing nor a sense of smell, but touch is present" (DA 415a3) Lastly, there is the *intellectual*, which is the capacity for reasoning and thinking things through, and this is the "most rare" (DA 415a9) among all living beings. Since we are concerning the relationship between thinking and being, we shall start by investigating the nature of the perspective and intellectual soul.

Section 4.1 The primary distinction between thought and perception

Aristotle starts his account of the human soul by making a distinction between thinking and perceiving. In one sense, it could be said that the attempt to articulate the human soul's dynamic-energetic sense of being is to distinguish it from other living-beings, such as animals and plants. Thus, "people define the [human] soul most of all by two distinct things, by motion with respect to place and by thinking, understanding and perceiving" (DA 427a18). Both perception and thinking are present in our knowing of things, and some predecessors of Aristotle indeed consider them to be the same. For instance, Empedocles says, "wisdom grows for humans as a result of what is present around them" (DA 427a5). His assertion seems to imply that the environment is that which causes thinking to emerge, and our thinking is limited by the things we perceive. Since there are no instances of thinking where perception is absent, it is natural to suppose the two to be numerically one. However, Aristotle responds to this idea by bringing in the problem of *making mistakes*. He points out that although both our thinking and perception could be true about things, yet, between the two, only the facility of thinking is capable of making mistakes.

For immediate perception, or the activity of the thing's revealing-itself to us, since it does not involve judgement, it could not be false. "As some say, that everything that appears is true, or that a mistake is contact with what is unlike" (DA 427b3). Mistakes occur when there is a contradiction between our propositional judgment and the nature of the being itself. In other words, mistakes occur when our thinking and perception do not correspond with each other. Therefore, if thinking and perceiving are the same, there would be no opinion but only

knowledge; but obviously this is not the case. In other words, falsity only exists within our categorical propositions, but not in the dynamic-energetic nature of things.

Section 4.2 On the essence of imagination

Aristotle argued that thinking is different from perception, as it has an active capacity to produce categorical statements, and when the statement does not describe the objective reality, we call it to be false or mistaken. However, although not all animals think and make judgments, they still make mistakes, as “making mistakes is more natural to living things and the soul goes on for more time in this condition” (DA 427b1). This leads to a problem that, if we assert thinking to be the only faculty responsible for making mistakes, then we are unable to account for the animals that only perceive and do not think, but still make wrong decisions. If perceptions are always true, and animals do not make judgments based on thinking, where do their mistakes come from?

To answer this question, Aristotle brings in the faculty of *imagination*, which is “different both from perceiving and from thinking things through” (DA 427b16). Like thinking, imagination also depends on perception to have its materials. Yet, imagination is also different from perception because of the same reason as thinking: “perception is present in every animal, while imagination is not” (DA 428a8). Moreover, it is possible to imagine while not perceiving, for instance, when one closes her eyes or dreams about something.

Imagination shares some characteristics with perception and thinking, namely, it is “that which we speak of some image as becoming present to us [...] some one among those potencies or active states by which we discriminate something and are either right or wrong” (DA 428a1-

2). To phrase it differently, imagination makes use of the perceptive material and present to us a distinct situation that is either right or wrong, which we could act according to it. For animals that imagine but not think, imagination unifies the perception according to how things are revealed to them. In this case, it could be said that imagination is an extension of perception. For instance, an animal could associate certain sounds with the image of its predator that makes such a noise. Strictly speaking, such application of imagination does not involve the act of making judgements, as no propositional statements are made within this process. Instead, the connection between the predator's sound and image is only made possible because the animal has memory. After experiencing some resembling situations, it becomes easier for us to pick out the perceptions that are present every time from our memories, and construct a possible situation based on past experience through imagination.

Thus, I interpret imagination to be a faculty that makes use of perceptual materials to creates alternative possibilities of the situation. Imagination “does not come about without perception” (DA 427b16), but it is possible for imagination to arrange perceptions in a way that might make them no longer true. Yet, since imagination depends on perception to have its materials, they share the same transcendental structure, which is to say, it is impossible for imagination to be atemporal and non-spacial¹¹.

Moreover, having imagination is different from having an opinion. Although both of them could sometimes be true, and “has to do with that which is not necessary and is capable of being otherwise”¹², imagination presents the unified perception as an image, instead of a judgment. They engage with different senses of being. An opinion is necessarily expressed in the

¹¹ Here I am referencing to Kant's notion that intuition, as out immediate relation to the object, “can never be other than sensible” (CPR B75/A51), as finite minds, our way of cognition is limited by our sensible perceptions.

¹² Olesiak, *Knowledge and Opinion in Aristotle*, 173

form of categorical predications, while imagination is not. In a way that Kant would describe it, imagination provides us with an apperceptive unity before we could have a scientific insight of how perceptions fit together under thinking. Imagination selects and puts things together in a particular way while we are aware of the whole sequence.

For beings that are capable of thinking, Aristotle writes, “without it [imagination] there is no conceiving that something is the case” (DA 428b16). I interpret him to be saying that, without the presence of imagination, we are unable to make a distinction between true and false judgements. Imagination allows us to “negate” the immediate perceptions that are always true (as $\sim A$), and by figuring out that the imagined case is false ($\sim\sim A$), we are able to assert something is the case through the logical process of $\sim\sim A=A$. On the other hand, another simpler interpretation goes as follows: we need there to be a case before we could make a judgement on it, and it is imagination, instead of thinking, that formulates the possible cases.

While perception is inherently true, imagination could be false. I would argue that the truth or falsity of imagination does not lie within the alethic sense of being that operates on the level of logical propositions, which is defined as “for to say that what is is not or that what is not is, is false, but to say that what is is and what is not is not, is true” (Met 1011b30), as imagination does not involve a secondary judgment that could correspond or contradict with the state of affairs. Imagination engages with a different sense of truth, which is of the same kind that determines the truthiness of perception, as “being in the sense of the true, and not-being in the sense of the false.” (Met 1051b36). As a result, imaginations are false not because they could make mistakes, but because they have non-being as their object. Furthermore, if imagination has true beings, “it remains, then, to see if it is opinion, since both true and false opinions occur” (DA 428a20). Namely, opinions are formed through categorical judgments by the faculty of

thinking on whether imagination is the case. If it is true, then we have the right thinking, such as “understanding and knowing and true opinion” (DA 427b10), and if it is false, we have their opposites.

In conclusion, our activity of thinking, perceiving, and imagining could not come to be independent of the beings in the world, and they do not only engage with the categorical sense of being. The discussion of imagination and the question concerning mistakes and falsity leads us to a deeper problem that concerns the nature of the beings. For instance, although we have shown that immediate perception cannot be false since it does not involve categorical judgments, in this case, we derived the conclusion that it is necessarily true only negatively. We still do now have a concrete understanding of what does it mean for it to be inherently true. In order to give a satisfying answer to these questions, we might need to explore the concept of truth and falsity in their own senses of being.

Chapter 5 The alethic being and the three senses of falsity

At this point, we have enough material to introduce Aristotle's third sense of being, which is to be true or false. In the last section, we have reached a superficial conclusion that mistakes, or falsity arise within the contradiction between our logical judgement and the actual state of affairs of being. The classical definition of knowledge as *justified true belief* (JTB) also sets its base on a similar idea. Under the JTB account of knowledge, for a person to be considered as knowing something, she would need to provide a logically constructed argument that is universal and necessary in its conditions, which also accurately describes the objective reality. Moreover, it is also important for the person to "believe" in it, in the sense that she "perceives" her judgement to be the case¹³. Hence, it is clear that knowledge involves both thinking and perception. Although not all knowledge is empirical, they set base on our sensible perceptions. In the categorical sense of being, falsity is defined as follows:

A statement is false which is about things that are not, insofar that it is false, for which reason every statement is false about something other than that about which it is true. (Met 1024b 26-28)

In other words, whatever is untrue, is false. But what does it mean for statements to be true about something? All of our statements or propositions are formulated through the categorical sense of being. We are able to articulate the thing's being in our speech, by attributing the subject with predications. However, not all predications are essentially related to the being's nature. The categorical beings either come along with others incidentally (*sumbebēkos*), or are related to

¹³ The understanding of the word "belief" has been shifted as history progresses. Nowadays, we normally consider the act of "belief" to be a subjective feeling, as if it is a decision made by us to trust our arguments or not. The ancient Greek word for "belief" is *doxa*, which means "to appear, to seem". In this case, "belief" should be understood as is more of an objective acceptance of the things, as the way that things appear to me. As a result, we can see how perception participates in our thinking and knowing: in one way, the expression of knowledge as justified true belief could be rephrased as "the thinking of the true perception".

them through their own being essentially (*kath' auto*)¹⁴. For the incidental predicators, although they are true by themselves, they do not account for the being's nature, so they would be in some sense untrue in a statement. For instance, a doctor could be wearing a gown, but what makes the doctor is the knowledge and ability of healing diseases, instead of what kind of coat one is wearing. In this case, a falsity arises when we define a doctor to be a person who wears a gown. Thus, for a statement to be true about something, is to articulate the essential attributes of the thing's being.

In Aristotle's *On Sophistical Refutations*, he describes one of the forms of such falsity to be a logical fallacy that is "connected with accident" (SR 166b20). Such fallacies occur when one claims that "some attribute belongs similarly to the thing and to its accident; for since the same thing has many accidents, it does not necessarily follow that all the same attributes belong to all the predicates of a thing and to that which they are predicated" (SR 166b30). To phrase it differently, it is possible for a thinghood to have a variety of attributes, and those could exist simultaneously at the same time, however, not all of these attributes are responsible for the thinghood's being of a *this*. As a result, if we do not distinguish between which attributes relate to the thing's nature and which do not, and take the incidental characters to be the *this* that is responsible for the thinghood, we are making mistakes. One example of the fallacy that connects with accident would be: an apple is red, and a strawberry is red, therefore an apple is a strawberry. In this case, being red is an attribute that is incidentally accompanied with the apple and strawberry, which does not account for their being of a *this*. There is a specific form, namely being an apple or a strawberry, that makes it knowable by us¹⁵. To avoid such mistakes, and to

¹⁴ Sentesy, *Aristotle's Ontology of Change*, 13

¹⁵ There are two points that should be noted here. First, the categorical predications are not the sense of being that is the source of a thing's nature, in the sense that it could only express what is universal, namely the forms. For instance, when we point to a being in the world and say, "there is an apple", we mean that there is a particular type of apple that is present, instead of apples

understand a thinghood as itself, we would need to distinguish between what is essentially and incidentally related to the being's nature.

Now we have articulated what it means to be false in a statement, but there are still two other ways of how a thing could be false:

False is meant in one way in the sense that a thing is false, and in this way one sort of falsity is because the thing doesn't go together or cannot be put together (in the way that one claims the diagonal to be commensurable or you to be sitting down, for one of these is false always and the other sometimes, wince these things are not that way), and other sort includes things which are, but which naturally seem to be either of a sort that they are not, or things that are not (for instance a perspective drawing or dreams, for these are something, but not what they produce the appearance of). Things, then are said to be false in this way, either because they are not, or because the appearances of them is something that is not. (Met 1024b 17-25)

First, since, according to Aristotle, our world is finite, and we are restricted temporally and spatially, not all things are always the case. Therefore, if something true happens, nothing in itself could guarantee it to be always true, and falsity arises when there is a change.

Consequently, the judgment made based on temporal occasions would also be false when things are no longer the case. Second, falsity arises where there is an uncorrelation between the thing's appearance and it's essentially being. Aristotle illustrated it through the example of dreams. In dreaming, although we perceive things to be the case, we are not actually gaining knowledge about the thing's being, as our perceptions are engaged with appearances instead of the real objects in the world. In this case, it could be said that falsity arises where knowledge fails to come into being. The normal process of knowing involves the being-at-work of two potencies,

as-such. Language depends on the dynamic-energetic sense of being to point to and articulate particular beings. Thus, although I said that it is the form of an apple that makes it a *this*, the concept of apple is still something universal, and only when it is revealed in a material it becomes something particular. Second, although through listing out all the attributes of a thing we are able to distinguish it from others, in the way that if we overlap enough sets of Venn diagram, there would only be one being remaining in the center, but such process does not provide us with knowledge about the individual being. In this case, the being is only an abstraction and does not have anything positive in itself. Moreover, it would require us to have the knowledge about the sets in order for such a filtering process to work. In any case, we are being guided to another sense of being, the dynamic-energetic, to articulate the nature of beings.

the thinking capacity of an agent and the capacity of being-thought of the patient, and they together form one activity of thinking, having knowledge as their product. However, since the forms of the appearances in our dreams do not have a material, then, strictly speaking, it could not count as a thinghood. Thus, if the capacity of being-thought only belongs to that which is a thinghood, then the activity of thinking could not take place with appearances. In dreams, our thinking capacity could not take over the form of the appearance in the way that it acts upon a thinghood. On the other hand, dreaming could be seen as a special form of imagination since while people are at sleep none of their perceptual faculties are in activity. Aristotle wrote, “perception is always true, but most imaginations turn out to be false” (DA 428a12). In short, appearances are false not only in the way that they could not bring about the activity of knowing, but even if we do make attempts to judge whether things are the case in dreams through our imagination, most of the conclusions that we get are also false in the categorical sense of being.

Section 5.1 The nature of the finite world: truth or falsity?

Although we make mistakes in our thinking and imagination, Aristotle has no doubt as to whether the being’s nature in itself could be known by us. As I have discussed in Chapter 3, it is the truth that serves as the ground and end of our process of knowing. He believes that by being a part of nature we are able to understand nature. We grasp the nature of being by using predicates to describe its essential dynamic-energetic sense of being, and the truth or falsity of the description is determined by whether it corresponds to the facts in the world. It could be said that mistakes are incidental to our knowing, rather than an essential part of our mind, although it accompanies our thinking in many cases. Nothing about the world prevents us from knowing it.

Aristotle's account of mistakes interestingly contrasts with Hegel's account of error. For Aristotle, mistakes do not occur because there is an inadequacy in either the soul or the world. Although an infant would need to develop its mere potency of thinking into a complete potency, but when it becomes a fully-developed rational soul, any particular being-at-work-staying-itself is by its meaning a complete activity that does not have any lack in its nature. Falsity or mistakes arises when things appear not to be the case, which leads to a misalignment of our believed justification and the facts. In cases like this, our perceptive and intellectual capacities are being-at-work as usual, but they acted upon the wrong object, for instance, they take over the incidental form of the object instead of the essential one and judges it to be the thing's nature. As a result, it is neither the deficiency of the perceiver nor the perceived that causes mistakes to occur. The world could not be ontologically false, otherwise, things would not be able to appear to us as unified. And since falsity is a concept relative to truth, with the absence of truth there would also be no false judgements. Thus, the truth of the world transcends our categorical judgments and serves as both the ground and end for all thinghood. It is necessary for truth to persist always at work in the same way (Cf. Met 1072a11) as the first actuality (*entelecheia*) in order for there to be a world with order and knowledge.

In contrast to Aristotle, Hegel argues that when the world exhibits the structure of the finitude, it is in-itself radically incomplete, and thus ultimately contradicting. Although it could appear to have order, we could not have knowledge about the most fundamental questions, such as whether the world has a beginning, or whether it is causally determined. If we try to seek answers to these questions in a finite world, we will necessarily run into antinomies (Cf. CPR A426/B454) and unable to get a conclusion that provides a totalized account¹⁶. For Hegel, the

¹⁶ Different from Kant who argues that it is the structure of the mind that limits its cognition, and the antinomies about the world

essence of a finite world is to develop into the truth, which is absolute and unconditional, and reach out to the infinite in the dialectical movement¹⁷. Error is a necessary stage in the development of the truth. As a result, it could be argued that our immediate perceptions of the finite world, is essentially untrue. To phrase it in an Aristotelian way, when we perceive the world, finite beings are by nature incapable of unifying themselves for us. Therefore, when we try to give a totalized account for beings in a finite world, we necessarily run into contradiction as things would not stand in themselves.

Moreover, if we consider what “for the same thinking as well as being” means for Hegel, we might have some new insights into the process of the world developing from error to truth, or from being finite to infinite. For Hegel, it could be said that the occurrence of error reflects that our thinking and the being are different. The development of our understanding is to reveal the identity between our thoughts and being. To put it clearer, for instance, every time when we encounter a new being, it would be almost impossible to give a totalizing scientific insight of the nature of the thing’s being, thus it could be said that falsity always accompanies the starting point of knowing. Yet, when we examine the being a few times more, we gradually generate a more adequate view, and we are able to see how our new understanding aligns with the being’s nature. At the highest point of thinking, the spirit comes to realize that it has the exact same structure as nature, and there is the becoming of the identity between thinking and being. For Hegel, thought is a becoming and a part of the structure of being, and spirit is the way how nature completes itself. In our finite thinking, we can only refute errors but not eliminate them.

is a result of us not being able to know the things-in-themselves, Hegel thinks that the finite world is ontologically incomplete, thus incapable of having totalized and uniformed knowledge about it.

¹⁷ For Hegel, to be infinite is to be both infinite and finite. The finite and infinite are not a pair of contradictions. The infinite is not the negation of the finite. Rather, the infinite is the affirmation of the finite, through the finite’s double negation of itself, and thus sublating itself to become a unity with the infinite.

In short, while Hegel would agree with Aristotle's conclusion that one sense of falsity occurs in the categorical sense of being and as a product of understanding, he also points out that there is error in the finite world itself. The finite world is radically incomplete, and the mind could only grasp what it currently is, but not as a concrete totality of infinitude.

It might be worth thinking, how could Aristotle affirm his account of thinking and being under Hegel's finite world? Moreover, is Hegel talking about a different sense of being in the identity between thinking and being, that is different from the four listed by Aristotle? Like Aristotle, Hegel also starts from the concept of being by looking at its relationship to non-being, and how becoming is possible within this process. According to Hegel, finite beings are constantly disappearing and passing away into non-being. For instance, the transformation of a seed into its complete form of being a tree, could also be described as the seed no longer existing in the world. The tree negates the seed to come into being, and the different stages do not exist simultaneously in time and space. Both thinkers articulate the process of becoming through a tripartite structure, where an underlying thinghood is deprived of its previous form ($\sim A$), and acquires a new one (A). From the perspective of the dynamic-energetic being, the being of the seed and the tree could be seen as one, insofar as we consider the seed to be potentially a tree. But if we look at their categorical forms alone without considering the underlying material, then the deprived-form and the new-form are clearly not the same, thus, change would be the disappearing of one form and the emergence of another. To put it clearer, the situation is, if we do not make a distinction between the underlying being's material and form, and take the categorical appearance of the privation-form transition to be a *this* in themselves, we have exactly what Hegel describes as the structure of the finite world. Which is to say, the privation of attributes is the privation of being itself. Thus, I would argue that Hegel's finite world could be

seen as an actualization of Aristotle's categorical structure of being as a thinghood in the world. However, as we have discussed in the previous sections, for Aristotle, the categorical sense of being could only tell us about the "what" and "how" of the change in thinghood, namely, to describe the change in the form without reference to the underlying material; but it is the underlying dynamic-energetic being that accounts for the "why" of things. Aristotle himself has never described the categorical predications to be the primordial sense of being (cf. *Met.* V 7-8), or to consider the appearing form alone to be a thinghood. While for Hegel, the limitation of our categorical predications is precisely reflected as our finite world, and there are no other ways of being until things are sublated to a higher phase of being.

Under Aristotle's account, after distinguishing between the two senses of being, we can see that the activity of movement no longer happens on the "horizontal" layer of privation-form within the categories, but it emerges "vertically" from the underlying being to its form as a dynamic-energetic sense of coming-to-be. One implication would be, when a being's potency comes to be its complete form, the potency is still present in its being-at-work-staying-itself, instead of being vanished as a result of the contradiction between the form and its privation. To make an imprecise comparison, it could be said that the relationship between Aristotle's categorical and dynamic-energetic sense of being is analogous to Hegel's finitude and infinitude, in the sense that in both cases the latter is the ground and source of the former. Moreover, in explaining the change of things as the coming out of being from its potency, Aristotle does not require a further mediator of becoming to resolve the opposition between being and non-being. For Aristotle, the unity of the thing is something that comes first instead of something that occurs later through the sublation of opposites. The underlying being maintains its thinghood while being changed, and simultaneously it becomes what it potentially is instead of passing away.

To conclude, Aristotle and Hegel have different understandings of the structure of the finite world, based on their disagreement on the primordial sense of being. Aristotle holds a positive perspective on the finite world and argues that finitude does not mean inadequacy of incompleteness, while Hegel holds the opposite view. Thus, while Aristotle would argue that our finite world is true in itself since it is finite but not deprived, and is capable of serving as the ground of our true perception and thinking, Hegel thinks that the finite world is essentially accompanied by error, and could only reach the truth through the progression of thinking. Their contrasting view on the essence of the world also has an implication on how they understand the unity between thinking and being. In the next two sections, I would explore in detail the accounts of the two thinkers.

Chapter 6 The dynamic-energetic structure of thinking and perceiving

Aristotle distinguishes thought and perception not merely by whether they are capable of making mistakes and how they are related to the alethic sense of being. In the later passages, he also examines their dynamic-energetic structure of being and what is involved in their being-at-work. In short, sense perception is the simultaneous being-at-work of the organ's perceptive potency and the thing's potency of being perceived. It is a necessary requirement for both the perceiver and the perceived to be present for the activity of perceiving to happen. If the perceived object is absent, then the perceiver would be imagining instead of perceiving. While perceiving, the soul is both the one that is acted upon and the one that acts on objects, it "is receptive of the forms of perceptible things without their material" (DA 424a19).

If thinking works the same way perceiving does, it would either become a way of being acted upon by the intelligible thing, or something else of that sort. Therefore, it must be without attributes but receptive of the form and in potency not to be the form but to be such as it is; and it must be similar so that as the power of perception is to the perceptible things. (DA 429a15-18)

In both the activity of thinking and perception, things reveal themselves to us, and we actively allow our soul to be affected by the things. The difference between the two is this: perception is simultaneously the being-at-work of the potency of the bodily organ of perception and of the thing's perceivability, whereas thinking occurs without relying on any such bodily organ.

[...] and so intellect has no nature at all other than this, that is a potency. Therefore the aspect of the soul that is called intellect (and I mean by intellect that by which soul thinks things though and conceives that something is the case), is not actively any of the things that are until it thinks. (DA 429a23-25)

The two passages that I quoted in this paragraph each suggest an aspect of the intellect¹⁸ as a faculty of the soul. Let's start with the second passage (cp. DA 429a25). Aristotle argues that

¹⁸ In this paper, I will use the word intellect to refer to the potency or faculty of the soul, and thinking as the activity that it carries

similar to our perceptive capacity, intellect is only being-at-work-staying-itself when it actively thinks. However, unlike perception which “is a ratio, and what is excessive undoes or destroys ratio” (DA 426b9), since there is no specific bodily organ that restricts the intellect, we are able to think about the “excessive” things that might harm our perceptive organs. For instance, we can think about a sonic boom, but we could not hear it safely. Nevertheless, Aristotle also noted that “there can be no item of experience apart from the extended magnitudes which are the separate perceptible things” (DA 432a4). Although by using imagination we are able to think of the alternative possibilities of beings, thinking necessarily has perception and experience as its material. In other words, although thinking is capable of taking on any form, the only way in which we could have sensory objects as our thinking material is through our perception. In this case, it could be argued that there is a sense of duality in thinking, as there is one sort of intellect that is acted upon by sensible materials, and another sort that is “separate, as well as being without attributes and unmixed, since it is by its thinghood a being-at-work for what acts is always distinguished in stature above what is acted upon, as a governing source is above the material it works on” (DA 430a18).

To unpack these very dense passages, I would like to bring in Hegel’s theory of the mind as a way of clarifying Aristotle’s point. In contrast to Hegel, who directly asserts that the mind itself is an infinite being, for Aristotle, it would be more accurate to say that the mind is pure potency and capable of taking on any of infinitely many different forms. However, in both cases, the mind exists in a finite world that is not directly provided with any infinite materials. Therefore, Hegel asserts that the mind could only think about the concept of the infinite through the negation of finite perception, but in doing so, by essence, the mind is captured within a “bad

out in its engagement with an object that is being thought.

infinity” (ENZ § 94) and has not escaped the level of the finite, as it posits the infinite and the finite as each other’s negative determinations.

It should be noted that although the perspective soul has a large contribution to our thinking, and some modern empiricists think that if we do not have sensuous experience, we would have no thinking or consciousness at all, experience is not the source of our *concepts* of thinking. Since our perceptual experiences are insufficient to give us an insight into truth as the unconditioned infinite, Hegel, therefore, makes a distinction between the *representation* of things and the *concepts* of them. A representation is the immediate appearance of an object in one’s mind through perception, and there is a basic sense of understanding in being aware of the object’s presence. In representation, we do not have any scientific insight into the essential nature of the object. The phase of understanding only occurs in the concept. We would need to reflect and work on the representations in our minds in order to have concepts that tell us about the essence of beings. True understanding operates on a different level that surpasses our immediate empirical perception. In other words, it is a logical operation instead of a perceptual activity.

However, in contrast to Hegel, although Aristotle describes both perception and thinking as receptive of the forms of perceptual things, for instance, “a wax is receptive of the design of a ring without the iron or gold, and takes up the golden or bronze design, but not as gold or bronze” (DA 424a20), he does not refer to the wax as a representation of the ring. Instead, the wax is the form of the ring, which makes the ring a *this*. I would argue that the form in Aristotle’s account is closer to what Hegel calls a concept, because to grasp a thing’s form is not only to have an immediate awareness of its presence, but also to have a glimpse to the thing’s nature. The difference between representation and perception, as I would say, is that

representation is abstract while perception is concrete. Representation isolates the thing from its context and grasps it abstractly with our thought, while in the proper activity of thinking or perceiving, there is a sense of unity between the soul and the thinghood. To put it in a different way, representation only engages with the categorical structure of things and disregards the underlying dynamic-energetic being that concerns its nature. While Hegel criticizes pre-Kantian metaphysics for taking “those determinations [...] to be valid *per se* in their abstraction and capable of being *predicated of the true*” (ENZ §28), I would argue that Hegel is correct if we understand perception and thinking to have the categorical as their primary sense of being, but for Aristotle, what really accounts for the thing’s nature is not the categorical, but the dynamic-energetic sense of being. It is impossible to have concrete knowledge without referencing a thinghood’s *dunamis* and *energeia*.

To relate this section back to the idea of “the universal structure of orientation” that we have talked about before, it is possible to conclude that both the intellect and perception directs themselves to the thinghood. However, the difference is that, the being-at-work of perception only provides us with subjective and particular experience, but the being-at-work of thinking provides us with universal knowledge. I would thus argue that for animals that are capable of thinking, they have their perspective faculty served as a means to and ends of thinking, and together, they are yearning for the first mover of good and truth. In the next section, I will elaborate in detail how this structure works, by picking up with the discussion of the first quoted passage in this section (cp. DA 429a17).

Chapter 7 The ontological structure of thinking and its relation to truth

In the previous Chapter, we started by listing out the two aspects of the intellect, and elaborated on how the intellect is by nature a mere potency that only becomes being-at-work-staying-itself when it actively thinks.

Now we will move on to discuss the first property of intellect, namely as having the capacity to be things as their forms, without having their material (cp. DA 429a17). There are a few implications of this account. One is that, as pure potency, the intellect itself does not have any material substrate. For otherwise, it would be limited by the material cause of its own underlying being, and unable to take on the form of any other thinghood beyond its own. Now, as I understand Aristotle, there is a basic contrast at work here. Aristotle argues that the potency to think and the potency to be thought are, in one way, one potency, as they are necessarily related to each other (cp. Met. IX.1 1046a20–21). The thinking activity of the intellect is the same activity as the being-thought of nature. As a result, since their potency is one, their being-at-work as thinking, is also one.

Inspired by Hegel’s finite-infinite-syllogism, I will now go on to argue that such structure of thinking could be presented as intellect/nature (*dunamis*) – thinking (*energeia*) – nous (*entelecheia*). To unpack the terms, the intellect/nature (*dunamis*) refers to both the potency of the thinker and the potency of the object being-thought. Thinking does not come to be without having a concrete thinghood as its object. And when the intellect takes over the form of the natural objects, such activity makes thinking (*energeia*) come-to-be. I choose to use the word nous (*entelecheia*) to represent the complete being-at-work-staying-itself of thinking, with reference to the quote, “everything that comes to being goes up to a source and an *end*, (since that for the sake of which something is a source, and coming into being is for the sake of the

end), but being-at-work is an end, and it is for the enjoyment of this that the potency is taken on” (Met 1050a9), which is distinguished from specific being-at-work of the thinking (*energeia*) in the ordinary cases of “any one knower” (DA 430a22). In this case, I am referring to my previous assumption that the good and truth is the ground and end of all activity of thinking and being. Truth is the most complete of thinking. The thinking (*energeia*) yearns the *nous* (*entelecheia*), and within this process, it gains knowledge.

If we interchange Aristotle’s *nous* (*entelecheia*) with Hegel’s real infinity in the structure of thinking that I have drawn out, it is possible for us to see how for Aristotle, thinking is also potentially infinite. My argument goes as follows. First, we have the intellect that is pure potency and capable of taking on any form, including the forms of infinite beings. This corresponds to Hegel’s assertion that the mind is by nature infinite, but it does not come to realize itself as being the infinite until it goes through the stages of the finite. At the initial stage of thinking, we have mind on one side and nature on the other, and they are indifferent and un-related to each other. It is through moving on to the second phase, that the potency of the intellect takes on the form of other beings comes to be-at-work as thinking. In Hegelian terms, in the being-at-work of thinking, the intellect negates its previous being of pure potency and becomes a unity of an acting thinghood and the thing that is acted upon. In such activity, “the one sort is intellect by becoming all things, the other sort by forming all things.” (DA 430a15). In other words, the being-at-work of thinking is not only united with the potency of intellect, but it also relates to nature and comes to be a whole with it.

The third phase is where the two thinkers diverge. To explain the phenomenon of thinking unifying with nature, Hegel approaches it by asserting that the spirit is the self-externality of nature, and the spirit is what and how nature is completed. Moreover, thinking is a

productive activity, which brings itself to the form of universality. Thus, the word “forming” and “becoming” in our previous quote (DA 430a15) has been taken in its literal sense. In other words, thinking is not only the being-at-work-staying-itself in its completion of the potency of the intellect, but also the *entelecheia* of nature. In our thinking activity, we transform nature and complete its being. Relating this back to the concept of the infinite, then it would be, although at the starting phases both the mind and nature are present to each other as finite determinations, at the end of the spirit’s self-realization, it sublates the contradictions to a syllogism of the higher form of the unconditioned infinitude, which is the same that underlies the whole structure of transformation in the beginning. Therefore, it could be said that for Hegel, Parmenides’ third fragment of “for the same is thinking as well as being” is understood in the sense that being is the active self-differentiation of thinking itself. When thinking progresses from the finite to the infinite, it comes to see that it has the identical structure of nature, and thus, the highest form of thinking (spirit) is the being of nature.

However, in contrast to Hegel, Aristotle certainly does not have an idealist account when he describes the relationship between thinking and nature. He would disagree with Hegel’s assertion that the spirit comes to realize nature as its self-externality in thinking things over. When Aristotle describes the faculty of the intellect, he explicitly states that while the intellect takes on the form of other beings, it does not become the thinghood itself. Therefore, Aristotle understands the relationship between intellect, thinking, and nature from a different perspective. I would argue that, for Aristotle, being and thinking are unified in the way that they are both yearning at the good and truth, which is to say, intellect/nature (*dunamis*) shares the same end of the *nous* (*entelecheia*).

At this point, I would like to add more materials to my discussion of the motionless thinghood in Chapter 3. Aristotle argues that, in order for there to be any thinghood in the world, “being-at-work takes precedence over potency” (Met 1051a3), as only the like comes from the like, without a first thinghood that is everlastingly being-at-work and precedes all potent beings, nothing could come into being. Although for individual cases, it might seem to be the case that being-at-work might come after the completion of a potency, for instance, a person could not come to know without thinking things through by herself; but “in the whole of things it does not take precedence even in time” (DA 430a23). In other words, without the original presence of *nous* (*entelecheia*), thinking (*energeia*) could not happen, as in the eternal realm, truth precedes all thinking activity in time, and it serves as the ground of all particular knowledge and thinking activities. Thus, if we consider *nous* (*entelecheia*) in the sense as being the truth as the first mover, it is not the case “at one time it thinks and another time it does not think” (DA 430a25), as the being of *nous* (*entelecheia*) serves as both the end and ground of thinking, that is always present. In this case, *nous* (*entelecheia*) as the complete being of thinking, could be meant identically as truth. In short, the difference between the thinking (*energeia*) and *nous* (*entelecheia*), as I would argue, is that in the former case, we have knowledge as the *energeia* of a particular instance of thinking about the sensible materials that gives rise to a universally applicable conclusion, while the latter we are talking about truth is the complete *entelecheia* of thinking that also retrospectively serves as an unmoved mover for all particular thinking activities.

On the other hand, Aristotle also asserts that, “knowledge, in its being-at-work, is the same as the thing it knows” (DA 430a21). This sentence could be interpreted as, for the potency of the intellect and the potency of the intelligible things, they come to be-at-work having

knowledge as their final cause. In the same regard, for Aristotle, the structure of intellect/nature (*dunamis*) – thinking (*energeia*) are perceived as a whole, not because that they have the same categorical form or a logical identity of “thinking equals being”, but in their dynamic-energetic sense of coming to be-at-work, they share the same end of *nous* (*entelecheia*). More precisely, in the activity of thinking, intellect/nature (*dunamis*) comes to be the *energeia* as knowledge itself. This structure is very similar to Hegel’s dialectic movement of the finite, as in his argument of the development of finite thinking, he is also asserting that the infinite is both the beginning and end for the cycle of finite thinking. For both thinkers, there is a complete first mover that serves as the source of all other motions. Although Hegel understands “complete” to be infinite, but Aristotle holds the assertion that finite beings could also be complete without privation.

As a result, I would argue that Parmenides’ fragment of “for the same thinking as well as being” would need a little modification to fit with Aristotle’s notion, as “for the same becoming, thinking as well as being”, while their becoming is already essentially included in their being. The intellect and being come to be what they potentially are in their activity of thinking, and they together belong to knowledge. Following this account, we are provided with a clue to understanding the last sentence of Book III Chapter 5, which touches on the role of the motionless being of truth in the process of thinking, as “when separated it is just exactly what it is, and this alone is deathless and everlasting, and without this nothing thinks” (DA 430a25). Truth is the end and ground for both the intellect and nature in their activity of thinking. They are the motionless first movers that which thinking is yearning for. Although particular knowledge that are expressed in the form of categorical predications can come to be false because of change, the idea of good is motionless, deathless and everlasting. Therefore, Aristotle’s argument could

be rephrased as, “knowledge alone is deathless and everlasting, and without truth, nothing thinks.”

The main difference between Hegel and Aristotle’s account, as I would argue, is that Hegel perceives the infinite to be the absolute idea of the spirit and the world; while for Aristotle, infinitude could only be in potency, in fact, the infinite by definition is “that which cannot be gone through” (Met 1066a35). However, the idea that infinity cannot be actualized should not be considered a problem that needs to be solved. As we have already concluded in our previous analysis, Aristotle does not have a negative attitude towards the finitude of the world. As a result, a finite mind fits perfectly with a finite world, and that is what allows us to know the truth. In this sense, the structure of intellect/nature (*dunamis*) – thinking (*energeia*) – nous (*entelecheia*) is unlike Hegel’s syllogism, as it does not involve any transformation of nature. Intellect/nature (*dunamis*) in its coming-to-be-at-work, becomes what it already is, namely as knowledge.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

Based on all the materials that I have discussed before, I interpret Parmenides' fragment "for the same thinking as well as being" to be saying that, both thinking and being are yearning "for" the same thing, which is the unconditioned conditioned, the first mover, or the good and truth. In desiring for the good, living beings sustain their lives; and in desiring for the truth, beings with intellect come to be themselves. It is also the truth and good that grounds all potent beings, providing them the light to come out of the darkness. As a result, thinking and being are the same as they have the same structure of orientation, and when being potent they are directed to the same end. In other words, they together belong to the same *entelecheia*. Moreover, in the activity of thinking, the intellect receives and becomes the form of the being that is thought, and in their complete unity, they become the same *energeia* as knowledge. To conclude, based on this paper, Parmenides' assertion of "for the same thinking as well as being" could be interpreted in two ways, first, is that they are yearning for the same end on the same ground; and second, in particular thinking activities, they come-to-be identically as knowledge.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aristotle, & Sachs, J. (2002). *Aristotle's Metaphysics*. Santa Fe, NM: Green Lion Press.
- Aristotle, & Sachs, J. (2001). *On the Soul and on Memory and Recollection*. Green Lion Press.
- Aristotle, & Poste, E. (1866). *Aristotle on fallacies; or, the Sophistici elenchi*. London: Macmillan.
- Hegel, G. W., Brinkmann, K., & Dahlstrom, D. O. (2010). *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel, et al. (1966). *Critique of Pure Reason*. Anchor Books, Doubleday.
- Parmenides, & Gallop, D. (1984). *Parmenides of Elea: Fragments: A text and translation with an introduction*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Robbiano, Chiara. (2016). Being is not an object: An interpretation of Parmenides' fragment DK B2 and a reflection on assumptions. *Ancient Philosophy*. 36. 263-301. [10.5840/ancientphil201636221](https://doi.org/10.5840/ancientphil201636221).
- Sentesy, M. (2020). *Aristotle's Ontology of Change*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Spangler, G. A. (1979). Aristotle's criticism of Parmenides in "physics" I. *Apeiron* 13 (2):92-103.
- Tegtmeier, Erwin (1999). Parmenides' problem of becoming and its solution. *Logical Analysis and History of Philosophy* 2.

ACADEMIC VITA

Tian Qi Jing

· Education

Aug 2018 – May 2021	The Pennsylvania State University, Schreyer Honors College
Major:	Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy
Minors:	English Information Science and Technology
Areas of Special Interest	Historical: Ancient philosophy, 19 Century Philosophy, German idealism Systematic: Metaphysics, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Technology
July 2020 – Aug 2020	Ancient Greek, Beginning to intermediate level - Dan Slușanschi School for Classical & Oriental Languages
Feb 2016 – June 2018	International Baccalaureate (IB) - Shanghai Jincai High School Int. Division
Aug 2012 – Dec 2015	Singapore Clementi Woods Secondary School (O-level)

· Teaching Experience and Internships

2021 Jan 19 – May 2	Information Science and Technology 402: Emerging Issues Technology: <i>Heidegger on The Questions Concerning Technology</i> (Prof. F Fonseca), Learning Assistant
2019 May 20—Aug 16	Mondelez Shanghai Food Corporation Management Co. Ltd Financial Intern

· **Awards and Achievements**

- 2021: The 2021 Department of Philosophy Student Marshal
- 2020: Department of Philosophy Dotterer Award, The Pennsylvania State University
Dean's List (2018 – 2020), The Pennsylvania State University
- 2017: The World Scholar's Competition, Hanoi Global Round, Senior Debate, Gold Medal
- 2017: The World Scholar's Competition, Shanghai Round, Senior Debate, Gold Medal
- 2017: ASDAN Math Tournament, Honorable Mention
- 2015: Singapore Chinese Calligraphy Competition, Gold Medal
- 2014: Singapore Chinese Creative Writing Competition, Silver Medal

· **Languages**

Mandarin (native speaker)

English (native speaker competence)

Ancient Greek (working knowledge, intermediate)