

Book I, Endnote 1. On the Terms in 402a1-11 (Line by Line Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima Eugene T. Gendlin, © 2012 PDF Pages 217-219

TEXT OF THE ENDNOTE HERE direct URL to the spot PDF, page 217

<https://focusing.org/sites/default/files/upload/2022-11/Book%201%20and%202%20-%20Line%20By%20Line%20Commentary%20On%20Aristotle%27s%20De%20Anima.pdf>

Endnotes Book I

1. On the Terms in 402a1-11

Τῶν καλῶν καίτιμιών τὴν εἶδησιν ὑπολαμβάνοντες, μᾶλλον δ' ἑτέραν ἑτέρας ἤκατ' ἀκρίβειαν ἢ τῷ βελτιόνων τε καὶ θαυμασιωτέρων εἶναι, δι' ἀμφοτέρωτα ταῦτα τὴν περιτῆς ψυχῆς ἱστορίαν εὐλόγως ἂν ἐν πρώτοις τιθείημεν

δοκεῖ δὲ καὶ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἅπασαν ἢ γνῶσις αὐτῆς μεγάλη συμβάλλεσθαι

μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τὴν φύσιν·

ἔστι γὰρ οἷον ἀρχὴ τῶν ζώων.

ἐπιζητοῦμεν δὲ θεωρῆσαι καὶ γνῶναι τὴν τε φύσιν αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν,

εἴθ' ὅσα συμβέβηκε περὶ αὐτήν·

ὧν τὰ μὲν ἴδια πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς εἶναι δοκεῖ,

τὰ δὲ δι' ἐκείνην καὶ τοῖς ζώοις ὑπάρχειν.

“**Insight**” (εἶδησιν, line 1)

and

“consider” (θεωρῆσαι, theorein) line 7, fourth line above:

“Theorein” can refer to “considering” any topic but it includes the highest kind of contemplation (θεωρία, Meta XII- 1072B24). At the end of the *Ethics*, Aristotle says that “self-sufficiency belongs most to contemplating (theorein).” Then he says:

“Those who **have insight** (εἶδησιν) will have more pleasure than those who inquire” (1177a). In the first sentence of the *Metaphysics*, usually translated “All

human beings by nature desire to know,” the word for “know” is insight. Πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει.

For more on theorein see 408b22-27 in I-4, ENDNOTE 46 in II-5, and ENDNOTE 117.

γνώσις and ἄγνωναι see ENDNOTE 102 IN III-4.

PAGE 218 PDF

“dokei” (δοκεῖ)

“Dokei” appears near the start (fourth line), but why? How can it be uncertain that “an acquaintance with the soul makes a great contribution to the truth of **everything?**” How can any topic fail to contribute to the truth of everything? What is special, and not certain, about the soul in this respect? Aristotle alludes to the ancient view that the soul **is** in a certain way **all things**. In the next chapter he will mention this long held view. Plato also said “The soul is akin to **all things**” (Meno). So it is quite appropriate to state this very big idea tentatively. Later in III-4 and III-8 Aristotle will give his own well-differentiated version of the way in which “the soul **is** all things.”

“Dokei” appears again near the end of this passage, since people believe (dokei) that the soul can be affected. Therefore Aristotle for the moment considers **that there might be** affections (pathe) peculiar just to the soul as such.

“**arche**” (ἀρχη)

Arche (ἀρχη, line 6) means “source” or “principle.” It might require much investigation and thought to determine what the arche of something is, but Aristotle always means something which can be sensed or understood directly, and which is the source of other things.

“**living thing**” (ζῶον):

The word “ζῶον” can mean either “animal” or “living thing.” Obviously here it means the latter. It has the latter meaning also, for example, when Aristotle says: “We hold that God is a living thing, eternal and most good.” φημὲν δὴ τὸν θεὸν

εἶναι ζῶον αἰδίου ἀριστον (*Metaph* XII-7, 1072b.28). The theos or nous of the universe is alive, but is certainly not an animal; “animal” is defined by having sensation and a body with sense-organs. In this widely discussed chapter many commentators and translators miss Aristotle’s elegant beginning with its systematic divisions and subdivisions because they translate “ζῶον” as “animal”.

“**substance**” (οὐσία ousia):

I think one should not translate ousia as “essence,” as Hamlyn does in its first three occurrences here, and surely not if one translates the same Greek word as “substance” just a

PAGE 219 PDF

few lines further and in other places, especially at the start of II-1. Then the English reader cannot learn its use, and cannot follow how Aristotle begins this science here and again in II-1.

I will comment on Aristotle’s use and meaning of “substance” in ENDNOTE 2 after the word appears a three more times.

“**nature**” (φύσιν)

A natural thing’s nature determines its kind of motion and growth (*Meta* V, 4, 1014b18). For Aristotle a natural thing (a rock or an animal) has its own way of moving or growing. Not every substance is a nature. The prime mover is not a nature, since it does not move or grow.

“**attributes**” (συμβέβηκε, symbebeke): One kind of “properties” are “affections” (πάθη, pathe). and Aristotle further subdivides within these. Aristotle says: “of these (properties), **some** are held to be (dokei) **affections** peculiar to the soul.”

By translating pathe as “properties” here and at 403a3, Hamlyn loses the connection to Aristotle’s mention of “pathe” at 403a10 where he does translate

pathé as “affections.” Hamlyn obscures the fact that for Aristotle there are not only passive “affections,” but also active kinds of properties, e.g., habits and powers for activity. Aristotle’s usual distinction between active and passive properties (*Categories* 8) will be important for understanding what Aristotle means by “soul,” since he means just the active attributes, i.e., what he calls “habits” and “powers.” Those are the soul as such, and will all be included in the *De Anima*. This is the dividing line between what the *De Anima* will include, and what it will exclude. If there were pathé of the soul as such, the *De Anima* would include them, but it will turn out later that there are no passive properties of the soul as such.

From * **Line by Line Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima Eugene T. Gendlin, Ph.D. The University of Chicago Copyright © 2012** by Eugene T. Gendlin Published by the Focusing Institute. Gene's Introduction, Books I, and II [PDF] **NEW TEXT LINK** <https://focusing.org/sites/default/files/upload/2022-11/Book%20I%20and%20II%20-%20Line%20By%20Line%20Commentary%20On%20Aristotle%27s%20De%20Anima.pdf>

* [Table of Titles for the Endnotes. Line by Line Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima Eugene T. Gendlin, Ph.D. University of Chicago Copyright ©2012 \(2023 08 18 KH\)](#)

Focusing at Thinking in Movement Studio reference pages ~ comments welcome:

* Reading Group: Line-by-Line Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima Eugene T. Gendlin, Ph.D. ©2012 https://thinkinginmovement.ca/focusing_principles/gendlin-on-aristotles-de-anima/

* Reading Group: Mike McCullough “Self Organizing of Growing and Perceiving” Gendlin-Aristotle in relation to S. Kauffman and R.D. Ellis <https://thinkinginmovement.ca/mike-mccullough-self-organizing-of-growing-and-perceiving-2022/>
