

## ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPT OF ΣΩΖΕΣΘΑΙ IN TERMS OF HIS THEORY OF ANTIΛΗΨΙΣ

Aristotle's vast knowledge of biology inevitably influenced his psychological doctrine. The structuralistic aspects of his psychology which has, to some extent, and in some respects, a static character, could not altogether satisfy a biologically oriented philosopher. His purpose was not only to reduce mind to psychological elements, but further to see it as an *active*, outgoing process or flow of its constituting psychological δυνάμεις.

Αισθάνεσθαι, αντιλαμβάνεσθαι, and σκέπτεσθαι are the manifestations of inner οργανικῶν λειτουργικῶν caused by an ἐνεργητικὴ give-and-take relation of the organism with its environment. In reality, Aristotle saw and examined the psychological δυνάμεις of the organism from a broad biological perspective. More accurately, we might say that he saw them as but an extension of the pure biological activities of nutrition and reproduction. Ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι, therefore, must be viewed from this point of view as well.

For Aristotle, the organism strives to adapt to, and σώζειν itself, the complex environment which surrounds it <sup>1</sup>; all an organism's δυνάμεις such as nutrition, appetite, sensation, locomotion, perception and cognition <sup>2</sup> are functionally performed for the sake of the organism's adaptation and σώζεσθαι in his environment <sup>3</sup>. In this sense, Aristotle was indeed a functionalist. Dewey, for example,

1) *De Anima*, 434a 21—434b 30.

2) *De Anima*, 434a 24—26: Τὴν μὲν οὖν θρεπτικὴν ψυχὴν ἀνάγκη πᾶν ἔχειν ὅτι περ ἂν ζῆ καὶ ψυχὴν ἔχη ἀπὸ γενέσεως μέχρι φθορᾶς. ἀνάγκη γὰρ τὸ γενόμενον αὐξήσιν ἔχειν καὶ ἀκμὴν καὶ φθίσειν, ταῦτα δ' ἄνευ τροφῆς ἀδύνατον. ἀνάγκη ἄρα ἐνεῖναι τὴν θρεπτικὴν δύναμιν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς φαινόμενοις καὶ φθίνουσιν; 434a 34—434b: εἰ οὖν πᾶν σῶμα πορευτικὸν μὴ ἔχον αἰσθησιν, φθειροίτο ἂν καὶ εἰς τέλος οὐκ ἂν ἔλθοι, ὅ ἐστι φύσεως ἔργον· πῶς γὰρ θρέψεται; 434b—434b 4: οὐχ οἷόν τε δὲ σῶμα ἔχειν μὲν ψυχὴν καὶ νοῦν κριτικόν, αἰσθησιν δὲ μὴ ἔχειν, μὴ μόνιμον ὄν, γεννητὸν δέ. ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ ἀγέννητον 434b 6—9: ἢ γὰρ τῇ ψυχῇ βέλτιον ἢ τῷ σώματι. νῦν δ' οὐδέτερον· ἢ μὲν γὰρ οὐ μᾶλλον νοήσει, τὸ δ' οὐθὲν ἔσται μᾶλλον δ' ἐκεῖνο. οὐθὲν ἄρα ἔχει ψυχὴν σῶμα μὴ μόνιμον ἄνευ αἰσθήσεως.

3) *De Anima*, 434b 22—28: ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸ τοῦ ζῴου σῶμα ἀπτικὸν εἶναι, εἰ μέλλει σώζεσθαι τὸ ζῴον. . . αὐταὶ μὲν οὖν ἀναγκαῖαι τῷ ζῴῳ. Αἱ δὲ ἄλλαι τοῦ τε εὖ ἕνεκα. . . εἰ γὰρ μέλλει σώζεσθαι, οὐ μόνον δεῖ ἀπτόμενον αἰσθάνεσθαι ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄποθεν (underlines mine).

known for his functionalistic leanings - although he would disagree with Aristotle's reductionism, that is, with the reduction of the behavioral acts to simple psychological elements - would certainly agree that the organism has to be seen and studied, as «a whole functioning in its environment» <sup>4</sup>. Likewise, Harvey Carr, the best representative of functionalism, would endorse Aristotle's notion. For him (Carr), too, the various psychological functions are activities and aim at «the acquisition, fixation organization and evaluation of experiences and their subsequent utilization in the guidance of conduct» <sup>5</sup>. All nouns underlined indicate ἐνεργείας which the organism performs in order to adapt and σώζειν itself in its environment. They are necessary for the «guidance of conduct» in the same manner as the Aristotelian δυνάμεις from nutrition up to cognition, which are needed for the σώζεσθαι of the organism. Even the more advanced basically functionalistic assimilation theory of the biologically oriented psychologist J. Piaget coincides in its general framework with Aristotle's teaching. Piaget's concept of adjustmental equilibrium, for instance, and the two opposing organismic activities of adaptation and assimilation <sup>6</sup> could be included in the broad meaning of the Aristotelian concept of σώζεσθαι.

Aristotle's σώζεσθαι, Piaget's adjustmental equilibrium, Dewey's phrase of «functioning in the environment», and Carr's emphasis of an organism's «conduct», point to the same target. The difference in their terminologies should not prevent one from discerning the common ground which all these psychological trends have: that they go beyond the «is» psychology; that they deal with an «is for» psychology. Aristotle appears to have a «natural teleology» <sup>7</sup>, an τέλος towards which all are directed. For Aristotle an organism would not survive if it lacked, say, the ability to perceive. Thus, he points out that εἰ μὴ ἔξει αἴσθησιν, οὐ δυνήσεται τὰ μὲν φεύγειν τὰ δὲ λαβεῖν. εἰ δὲ τοῦτο, ἀδύνατον ἔσται σώζεσθαι τὸ ζῶον.

Αἰσθάνεσθαι, ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι and so forth are caused by the interaction between the organism and the environment, and, in turn, come to support the organism in its constant striving to obtain adaptational equilibrium, and thus σώζεσθαι. In his *De Sensu*, Aristotle emphasizes again that all δυνάμεις are fundamentally adaptational activities. Αἰσθάνεσθαι and ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι are, for him means σωτηρίας ἕνεκεν. As adaptational acts, the psychological δυνάμεις occur when the organism encounters food problems, tries to avoid noxious situations, and in general, tries to obtain adaptational equilibrium. They are, in fact, indispen-

4) J. Dewey, «The reflex arc concept in Psychology», *Psychological Review* 3, 1896, pp. 357—370.

5) A. Carr, *A Study of Mental Activity*, Longmans, Green, N. Y. 1925, pp. 1—2.

6) J. Piaget, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*, The Norton Library (paperback), N. Y. 1963, pp. 5 and 407.

7) J. Randall, *Aristotle*, A Columbia Paperback, 1960, pp. 225.

8) *De Anima*, 484a 22—25.

sable for providing information about the environment within which the organism must σώζεσθαι. For modern functionalists, too, perception is a fundamental process of adjustment, since an organism's responding to its environment depends largely on how it perceives it <sup>10</sup>. It is really by virtue of ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι that the organism becomes aware of its environment and adapts itself to it. Ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι has an active, dynamic character. It comes, as all others δυνάμεις to have a utilitarian value by being indispensable for the organism's σώζεσθαι. Indeed, there are cases where one *misperception*, a defective αἰσθάνεσθαι and ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι might well prove catastrophic for the organism. On the other hand, the more perfect an organism's ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι the more successful it seems to be in finding the proper food, αἰσθάνεσθαι probable dangers and identifying its environment. The definition which the functionalist gives for perceptual activity is that it is an act of «cognition of a present object in relation to some act of adjustment» <sup>11</sup>, which coincides with Aristotle's view.

To sum up, Aristotle does not limit himself to an «is» psychological theory of sensing and perceiving, but as a biologically oriented philosopher develops a kind of functionalism, in which activity is the principal characteristic of all psychological events. He further emphasizes «natural teleology», that is, he is concerned with an «is for» psychological doctrine, according to which, in co-operation with the other δυνάμεις, tends towards the natural realization of the organism, such an activity, the organism's.

## Π Ε Ρ Ι Λ Η Ψ Ι Σ

Ἄριστοτέλης εἰς τὴν Ψυχολογίαν τοῦ δὲν περιορίζεται μόνον εἰς τὰς φαινομενολογικὰς περιγραφὰς τῶν διαφόρων ψυχολογικῶν λειτουργιῶν διὰ τὸ μᾶς παρουσιάσῃ τὰς δομικὰς τῶν ἐπόψεις (ἀναγκαίων διὰ τὴν γνωσθεωρίαν τοῦ), ἀλλὰ προχωρεῖ πέραν αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὴν τελολογικὴν τῶν ἐρμηνείαν. Οὕτω ἡ ψυχολογία τῆς ἀντιλήψεως ἐρμηνεύεται ὑπὸ τοῦ Σταγειρίτου ἐν σχέσει μὲ τὴν βιολογικὴν ἔννοιαν τοῦ «σώζεσθαι» τοῦ ὄργανισμοῦ.

Τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα τῆς μικρᾶς αὐτῆς ἐρεύνης εἰς τὰς ἀριστοτελικὰς διατριβὰς καὶ ἡ σύγκρισις τοῦ μὲ τὰ ἀποτελέσματα τῶν συγχρόνων λειτουργικῶν (functionalistic) θεωριῶν τῆς ψυχολογίας δεικνύει ὅτι ὁ Σταγειρίτης ἔχει ἐκφράσει ἀπόψεις ὁμοίας μὲ αὐτὰς τοῦ κυρίου ἐκπροσώπου τοῦ functionalism G. Carr. Ἐπίσης, ἐπισημαίνεται ὅτι ἀπόψεις τοῦ Piaget, γνωστοῦ διὰ τὸν βιολογικὸν προσανατολισμὸν τοῦ εἰς τὴν Ψυχολογίαν, (assimilation, adaptation, equilibrium) συμπίπτουν μὲ αὐτὰς τοῦ Ἄριστοτέλους.

9) *Parva Naturalia - De Sensu*, 436b 19 : αἱ δὲ διὰ τῶν ἕξωθεν αἰσθήσεις τοῖς πορευτικοῖς αὐτῶν, οἷον ὄσφρησις καὶ ἀκοή καὶ ὄψις, πᾶσι μὲν τοῖς ἔχουσι σωτηρίας ἐνεκεν ὑπάρχουσιν, ὅπως διώκωσι τε προαισθανόμενα τὴν τροφήν καὶ τὰ φαῦλα καὶ τὰ φθαρτικὰ φεύγωσι, τότε δὲ καὶ φρονήσεως τυγχάνουσι τοῦ εὔ ἐνεκα (*Italics mine*).

10) H. A. Carr, *An Introduction to Space Perception*, Longmans, Green, New York, 1935, p. 86.

11) H. A. Carr, *A Study of Mental Activity*, Longmans, Green, New York, 1925, p. 110.