the dialectical method' (p. 121). This last sentence offers the clearest version of what E. believes we have to gain by leaving aside the textuality/orality distinction, focusing instead on deceit and truth.

I very much appreciate the discipline of focus motivating E.'s work, which manages to take within its synoptic vision no fewer than two-thirds of the dialogues and say something quite substantial about a handful of them. That said, and notwithstanding the plausibility of the central argument in Chapter 2 ('The Critique of Orality in Plato's Works'), I wonder if it is possible to describe her claim about the ontology of the image in Plato's use of the dialogue form as, literally, a medium for disarming the inner contradiction of transmitting a critique of textuality textually absent more robustly via engagement with work that has been done in the past two generations of scholarship on 'Plato and the Poets', specifically a line of thinking that explores the textual/oral entanglement through a consideration of the performative dimension of poetry and philosophy in the cultural mode of rhapsody. For example, the pioneering work of G. Nagy gets only one mention (p. 57), and this is to note his 1996 work on 'Homeric Questions', rather than work he and others following in his wake have been doing on Plato and/as rhapsody, which seems germane to E.'s argument. There is not time for everything, but an opportunity to hear how and why E. would differ from this reading tradition, as I imagine she does, would have been fitting as part of this otherwise engaging monograph.

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ARISTOTLE ON PLATO

FERRO (A.) *Aristotle on Self-Motion. The Criticism of Plato in* De Anima *and* Physics *VIII*. (Philosophical Studies in Ancient Thought 1.) Pp. 463. Basel: Schwabe, 2022. Cased, CHF78. ISBN: 978-3-7965-4163-6.

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F.'s book is an in-depth treatment of a classic but still topical issue. The question of the status of self-movers became a *topos* in Aristotelian studies with D. Furley's famous 1978 article, 'Self-Movers' (in: G.E.R. Lloyd and G.E.L. Owens [edd.], *Aristotle on Mind and the Senses*), which attempted to restore the coherence of the doctrine by articulating two theses: on the one hand, the autonomy of the agents that animals constitute; on the other, their irreducible dependence on the prime mover of the cosmos, on the external conditions of existence and on the objects of representations and desire – such as the perception of prey or a predator –, objects that precisely determine the orientation of animal movement. The question is all the more sensitive in that it concerns not only animal ethology, but extends to human behaviour, human agents being both autonomous by virtue of their own capacity for deliberation and dependent on what they represent to themselves as being the good, and which does not depend on them. In the meantime other approaches – notably the volume edited by M.L. Gill and J. Lennox, *Self-Motion from Aristotle to Newton* (1994) – have enriched the debate. The question remains, however,

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and the problem is still open, because Aristotle's texts do not provide an explicit answer. This book is therefore most welcome.

The survey is divided into three chapters. The first, 'Self-Motion in *De anima* I 3–4: Aristotle *vis-à-vis* Plato', represents the *pars destruens* of the analysis. F. sets out Aristotelian criticism of the Platonic doctrine of the self-moving soul. The soul, for Aristotle, cannot move *per se*; it is moved only by accident; and the Platonic thesis of a soul that is moved by itself and for itself implies that it possesses this movement *per se*; it must therefore be rejected. The second chapter, '*Ph*. VIII 1–6: Self-Motion and its Necessary Conditions', takes us into the positive phase of the investigation. It is a precise reading of the major text in the dossier, a text in which the notion of self-motion is both placed in the foreground and called into question. F.'s approach, which consists of seeking in *Physics* VIII not the solution to the problem of self-motion but the conditions of possibility of an autonomous movement, is reasonable. The text of *Ph*. VIII is destined to remain partly mysterious, because of its polemical and allusive character. The results presented by F. are also reasonable and balanced: according to F., *Ph*. VIII makes it possible to establish that animals are self-movers, even if they are subject to the same external conditions that apply to any motor. There is no contradiction here, and F. convincingly dismisses excessively aporetic readings of a text that, overall, can be read as a coherent investigation. Even if the animal is not an integral self-mover – in all its parts and in every respect –, it is nevertheless a self-mover overall (see, for example, pp. 211ff.). Particularly noteworthy is F.'s insistence on the alternation of movement and rest that characterises the Aristotelian concept of self-motion, in contrast to the Platonic theory of the soul's continuous self-motion. According to F., this alternation reflects the characteristic non-continuity of the distinction between the mover and the moved, which lies at the heart of the Aristotelian definition of self-movers. The third chapter, '*De an*. III 9–10 and *MA*: Animal Self-Motion as Voluntary (Desire-Based) Locomotion', reminds us that the animal is capable of self-motion if it is capable of desiring, which presupposes the possession of *phantasia* or the faculty of representation. The animal must represent a desirable object for desire to fulfil its motor function, whether it is a positive desire (to pursue, to seek) or a negative desire (to flee, to reject). F. thus intends to clarify the relationship between *Ph*. VIII and *De anima* III 9–10: the latter text constitutes a necessary complement to the former by basing the movement of locomotion on desire, considered here as a unified motor capacity.

Generally speaking, F. defends a positive reading of the Aristotelian theory of self-motion. In his view Aristotle in no way rejects the idea of self-motion; although he criticises the Platonic theory of the soul's self-motricity, he maintains that animals are self-movers, while proposing a nuanced concept of the capacity in question. The idea of self-motion, far from being a simple way of expressing himself, makes it possible to elucidate important points in his own natural philosophy.

F. approaches Aristotle's text and takes into account the positions of the commentators with great precision. However, it is a pity that he often loses himself in details and micro-analyses. The style sometimes lacks clarity – some sentences are unnecessarily long –, and the book as a whole could be shorter; it would only be more convincing. Be that as it may, the broad lines of the investigation are well indicated from the introduction, so that we know in what direction F. wants to take us.

In order to appreciate the contribution of the book to current debates, it is necessary to distinguish between two levels: the level of the overall interpretative position and that of the specific contributions on a given point of doctrine. F.'s book is particularly relevant at the second level. The novelty of his approach lies not so much in his overall conclusions as in the way in which he reaches them. F. presents his position in favour of positive

reading as original, but he is not the first to adopt this perspective. This was already the case, in other ways, in Furley's analysis (cf. also P.-M. Morel, *De la matière à l'action. Aristote et le problème du vivant* [2007], pp. 137–47). It is therefore not certain that the thesis defended by S. Waterlow, according to which 'self-motion simply cannot bear the explanatory burden Aristotle appears to impose on it in *Physics* VIII' represents 'the standard view' (p. 14). In fact, a relatively neutral reading of *Ph.* VIII is enough to show that Aristotle rejects the (Platonic) thesis that the soul is a self-mover, but also that the compound as a whole (soul *and* body) can and must be considered as a self-mover. We therefore need to distinguish between the mover and the moved in the agent itself in order to understand its ability to move by itself. F. points this out in the introduction (p. 18): Aristotle is categorical, in *Ph.* VIII 5, about the fact that 'mover and moved cannot be one and the same thing in form'. But the question remains: what explains the specificity of animal movement as self-motion? This is where F.'s book makes a useful departure from previous analyses: he does not content himself with a general solution, but tries to grasp what characterises animal self-motion in its own right, distinguishing between the different interpretative options and finally emphasising the function and the unity of desire.

The originality of the book lies less in its overall position than in the means by which it achieves it. Moreover, F. makes a justified methodological choice in favouring *Ph.* VIII within the corpus: the notion of self-motion, as Aristotle considers it, takes on its full meaning in the context of the cosmological argument, and it is undoubtedly on the basis of this that the other texts concerned must be understood. Generally speaking, although F.'s book does not bring the debate to a close – but who could claim to do so? –, it does provide precise and nuanced analyses that undoubtedly deserve to be taken into consideration.

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HUMANS IN ARISTOTLE

KIRK (G.), AREL (J.) (edd.) *Aristotle on Human Nature. The Animal with* Logos. Pp. viii + 225. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023. Cased, £85, US$115. ISBN: 978-1-350-34831-8.
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Aristotle distinguishes between the human ability to grasp immutable items in the world and general truths (*nous*), which is entirely theoretical and which few scientifically bent humans care to hone, and the ability to combine or dissociate concepts in propositions and to make inferences (*dianoia*). The latter ability is closely connected with the ability to express and understand concepts and propositions (*logos*), which seems to be universal among healthy human beings past their infancy. Aristotle's famous description of the human being as the 'animal with *logos*' (*zōion logon ekhōn*) is most probably referring to this universal and distinctive feature of human nature.

Unfortunately, Aristotle does not say very much about this feature. For instance, in *De anima* he seems to focus on the highly specialised theoretical ability (*nous*) and makes little effort to explain how that relates to the general human ability to reason and speak (*logos*).

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