

**Veloso's Response to Scott's *PrimaryCommentsOnCWVreply.pdf* and
*SecondaryCommentsOnCWVreply.pdf***

(themselves from the University of Lisbon Conference, July 2, 2025)¹

July 8, 2025 (via email)

Elle ne peut avoir une issue que si nous nous mettons d'accord sur au moins deux points basiques. Les voici.

I. Le premier point concerne la notion même de nature, selon le sens technique du terme, c'est-à-dire selon le sens de « principe de mouvement » de *Phys.* II 1, 192b 14 sq. Pour les substances naturelles, ce principe de mouvement est un principe formel (193a 28 sq.), en ce sens que c'est le principe de leur intelligibilité : c'est ce qui permet de définir les substances naturelles comme telles. Il est vrai que, selon le contexte, l'expression « principe de mouvement » peut avoir (au moins) deux sens différents :

- 1) un sens passif : la capacité d'être mû, c'est-à-dire de *subir* un mouvement ;
- 2) un sens actif : ce qui meut ou peut mouvoir, c'est-à-dire *produire* un mouvement.

Selon le sens (2), un principe de mouvement est précisément une *cause motrice*. Toutefois, le principe de mouvement de *Phys.* II 1 (la nature au sens technique du terme) n'est pas du tout cela : c'est un principe *passif*. Sont naturelles les choses qui sont *capables d'être mues*. Ainsi entendue, la nature n'est *jamais* la cause motrice du mouvement des substances naturelles, que leur mouvement soit naturel (*kata phusin*) ou bien contre-nature (*para phusin*). Ces dernières notions concernent en effet la destination du mouvement et non pas la cause (motrice) du mouvement : est naturel le mouvement qui va vers le lieu approprié ou naturel ; est contre-nature le mouvement qui ne va pas vers ce lieu. (Pour utiliser des expressions de la physique moderne, ce sont des notions *cinématiques* et non pas *dynamiques* – je précise que la cinématique est l'étude de la trajectoire du mouvement, alors que la dynamique est l'étude de la cause du mouvement.) Et pourtant, le mouvement d'un corps naturel élémentaire – soit-il naturel (vers le lieu naturel) ou contre-nature – *a toujours une cause motrice*, laquelle peut être un autre corps élémentaire (qui meut alors en étant mû par un autre corps) ou bien un corps automateur, c'est-à-dire animé. C'est ce qui est clairement dit en *Phys.* VIII 4 :

« Mais la difficulté principale c'est le reste de la division dont nous avons parlé en dernier. En effet, parmi les choses mues par autre chose, nous avons posé que les unes sont mues contre-nature (*para phusin*) : il reste à leur opposer [les autres] parce qu'elles sont mues par nature. Or ce sont celles-ci qui pourraient faire difficulté concernant la question de savoir par quoi elles sont mues, par exemple, les choses légères et les choses lourdes (*hoion ta koupha kai ta barea*). Ces choses, en effet, peuvent être mues par force vers des lieux opposés [à leurs lieux appropriés], alors que par nature elles le sont vers leurs lieux appropriés (*oikeious*), le léger vers le haut, le lourd vers le bas. Mais sous l'action de quoi, ce n'est plus manifeste comme ça l'est quand elles sont mues contre-nature. En effet, dire que ces choses se meuvent elles-mêmes d'elles-mêmes (*auta hup'h'autôn*), c'est impossible. Cela, en effet, est quelque chose de vital (*zôtikon*), c'est-à-dire de propre aux êtres animés (*empsychôn*) » (*Phys.* VIII 4, 254b 33-255a 8; trad. Pellegrin, légèrement modifiée).

¹ Published at <https://epspress.com/Lisbon2025/PostLisbon.pdf>, Sept 2025. Earlier sections can be found starting with <https://epspress.com/Lisbon2025/Lisbon2025-ScottAndVelosoDebate.pdf>

Tu sembles penser au contraire que le mouvement des corps naturels élémentaires sublunaires n'a pas de cause motrice, ou bien que la nature en est en quelque sorte la cause motrice. Mais cela est simplement faux, dans le cadre de la pensée d'Aristote. D'ailleurs, tu ne peux pas limiter ce passage de *Phys.* VIII 4 aux corps élémentaires sublunaires parce que « les choses légères et les choses lourdes » sont juste un exemple : *hoion ta koupha kai ta barea* (255a 2). Il est donc tout à fait légitime de l'étendre à l'éther.

II. Le deuxième point concerne la relation entre l'intellect et les autres âmes. Pour Aristote, la possession de l'intellect n'implique pas la possession des âmes perceptive et nutritive, même si chez l'humain, comme il est dit à plusieurs reprises, l'intellect opère toujours avec des *phantasmata*. Au-delà de Lambda, un passage de *DA* II 3 le suggère fortement :

« Il est donc évident que la formule définitoire de l'âme et [celle] de la figure seront unitaires de la même manière. Pas plus en effet qu'il n'est là de figure en dehors du triangle et de celles qui lui font suite, l'âme n'existe pas, ici, en dehors de celles mentionnées. Et supposé que, dans le cas des figures, on produise une formule commune, celle-ci s'harmonisera bien à toutes, mais ne sera, en propre, celle d'aucune figure. [...] Toujours, en effet, dans le conséquent il y a en puissance l'antérieur, dans le cas des figures et celui des animés : ainsi, le quadrilatère implique le triangle et la capacité perceptive, la nutritive. De sorte qu'il faut, pour chaque être animé, rechercher quelle est son âme (ainsi, quelle est celle d'une plante et quelle est celle d'un homme ou d'une bête), et examiner le motif pourquoi elles se présentent ainsi en une série. Car sans la capacité nutritive, la perceptive n'existe pas, mais la nutritive se détache de la perceptive chez les plantes. Et de nouveau, sans la perception tactile, aucune autre perception n'est donnée, tandis que le toucher est donné sans les autres, puisque bien des animaux n'ont ni vue, ni ouïe, ni perception de l'odeur. Par ailleurs encore, certains des animaux, doués de perceptions, possèdent la capacité de se déplacer eux-mêmes, d'autres non. [...] Quant à l'entendement contemplatif, c'est un autre discours (*DA* II 3, 414b 19-415a 12 ; trad. Bodéüs).

La dernière phrase laisse clairement entendre que le *nous* (intellect ou entendement) n'est pas dans la même relation d'implication que l'âme perceptive a avec l'âme nutritive.

Scott's Rebuttal of Veloso's Response

July 11, 2025 (via email)

Claudio, regarding your first point, which had been covered by some of the texts I gave, although perhaps obliquely because it was subsidiary to the main conclusion for Aristotle, I provide now the exact evidence that what you say about active & passive is *not* relevant to the elements, which by definition in *DC* III 3, 302a16-19 cannot, e.g., be broken any further into parts. Otherwise, the elements could stop and reverse course (moving like animals, in effect)...

Here are the two passages, with Ar writing the exact opposite of what you claim at the very end of the second passage:

τε γὰρ αὐτὰ ὑφ' αὐτῶν φάναι ἀδύνατον· ζωτικόν τε γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ τῶν ἐμψύχων ἴδιον, καὶ ἰστάναι ἂν ἐδύνατο αὐτὰ αὐτὰ (λέγω δ' οἷον, εἰ τοῦ βαδίζειν αἴτιον αὐτῶ, καὶ τοῦ μὴ βαδίζειν), ὥστ' εἰ ἐπ' αὐτῶ τὸ ἄνω φέρεσθαι τῶ πυρί, δῆλον ὅτι ἐπ' αὐτῶ καὶ τὸ κάτω. (255a6-9, from TLG).

It is impossible to say that their [the heavy and light elements] motion is derived from themselves: this is a characteristic of life and peculiar to living things. *Further, if it were, it would have been in their power to stop themselves* (I mean that if e.g. a thing can cause itself to walk it can also cause itself not to walk), **and so, since on this supposition fire itself possesses the power of upward locomotion, it is clear that it should also possess the power of downward locomotion.** (Hardie & Gaye translation, at <https://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/physics.8.viii.html>).

The clear implication is that fire could move downward by itself, which is absurd, so—Aristotle concludes—the reasoning is wrong. Thus, it is not correct to say, using Hardie & Gaye's words, that “their motion is derived from themselves.” Strictly speaking, as was indeed covered *both* in Ottawa and in Lisbon, “selves” refer to animals, and the motion [for elements] derives *from nature (but not **animate** nature)*.

This is all confirmed almost immediately by Ar, three lines later:

ἔτι πῶς ἐνδέχεται συνεχές τι καὶ συμφυὲς αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ κινεῖν; ἢ γὰρ ἐν καὶ συνεχὲς μὴ ἀφῆ, ταύτη ἀπαθές· ἀλλ' ἢ κεχώρισται, ταύτη τὸ μὲν πέφυκε ποιεῖν τὸ δὲ πάσχειν. (255a12-14)

Again, how can anything *of continuous and naturally connected substance* move itself? In so far as a thing is *one and continuous* not merely in virtue of contact, it is impassive: **it is only in so far as a thing is divided that one part of it is by nature active and another passive.**

The elements are continuous and naturally connected, so they cannot be divided into the parts necessary for “self-motion,” one of which is the mover and another the moved (like the parts of an animal, which *can* be divided). Even though not discussed in this passage, the aether is especially ruled out as being divisible, because it is always pure and simple, never mixed with any other element (at least in the highest outermost sphere).

Thus, **the active and passive parts do not apply to any of the four elements, much less the most divine, namely, the “first element”**, — we could even call it Pure Actuality, to use the popular phrase from Lambda, which in *DC* is the purely simple, weightless and unchanging aether *with no potential*.

To summarize: Like the alleged Unmoved Mover of Lambda (and anything eternal, according to Theta 8), aether has no potentiality and is (Pure) Actuality. The *only* difference in *this regard* is that it is clearly visible and part of the physical world. (Primarily, Ar dropped Platonic “immateriality” or separability from physical reality.) Thus, the issue of passive power

is utterly irrelevant *regarding the aether*, even if you could refute or explain differently the passages above.

Furthermore, those passages— and anything “actualizing a potential”—refer only to finite things, properties and events, including particular instances of the four lower elements (even if as a totality they are eternal). As discussed now many times, Guthrie and Broadie both wrongly believed that “actualizing a potential” applies to eternal things, which, to emphasize for the last time, have no potential (per Theta 8). Will you address this or not? Silence hardly equates to rigor.

What I only recently discovered (in 2023) is that *DC I 12* *also* has the triangular ontological model that you keep missing or rejecting. Again, you offer no counter-argument. I've already stressed that Judson mangled the interpretation on this topic: Please reread my pp. 19-20 of the SecondaryComments where he completely misapprehends the triangular model: two extremes (“what is always” and “what never is”) and the “intermediate,” the finite to-be-or-not-to-be. Until you show how this model is irrelevant, when Ar gives it explicitly twice in that chapter alone, and when I had gleaned it in my book from the *Prior Analytics* and Aristotle's explanation of “necessity” in *Metaphysics V 5*, long before detecting the triangular model in *DC*, your acceptance of Judson seems a grave mistake.

On your second and third points:

...

I already gave some reasons for Ar's evolution above, and at the least, I take it you must accept that sometimes there are interpolations in the texts, no matter your stance on whether some texts are earlier than others. Take a look at the absolutely contradictory sentences in *DC I 9*, 279a17-23, which I discuss on pp. 6-7 of the PrimaryComments and which you ignore. *You really believe Ar himself could have written the conclusion and then the following sentence where something **does** have an allotted place in the area that has no void and no space?*

Some other considerations: *Physics II* is (somewhat) early Aristotle and he only recognizes the four sublunary elements at that point (as I discuss at p. 14 of the SecondaryComments). Fire is the highest during *that* stage of thought for him when clearly it is *below* the aether in *DC* (see pp. 2-3 of my Appendix for the textual citations). This all helps prove even more an evolution in his views.

Claudio, by your reasoning, all the other elements should or could have souls, which is absurd, and if not, what is the reason?

Note again, since you don't address it (and I begin to sound like a broken record, considering how many issues you skirt), the passage where Ar refuses to use *your* type of explanation employing active/passive when he is pressed: He appeals merely to, or *requires*, the principle of “nature,” saying it is the “only answer”: Review, please, the bottom of p. 26 and top of p. 27 of my SecondaryComments, and especially Ar's final remark):

*If the question is **still pressed** why light and heavy things tend to their respective positions, **the only answer is that they are natured so**, and that what we mean by heavy and light as distinguished and defined is just this downward or upward tendency.*

Guthrie correctly understood the passage about walking and stopping and the ramifications for the elements (and indirectly for the aether). István Bodnár also seems to get the meaning of the passage correct, whereas Simplicius appears to not fully comprehend it, thinking that the heavens might be alive (the third sense of *ouranos* that includes the earth could be considered alive but not apparently the middle outer-sphered heavens and certainly not the outer sphere, the two other senses of *ouranos*). Also, in the same general discussion by Bodnár, Eudemus was

focussing on *prime movers*, plural, which cannot be the Unmoved Mover with no physicality (see p. 6 of the Ottawa Handout).

PS. (July 12, 2025, via email)

[GS:] I didn't really understand how your second point about *De Anima* ("DA") and the intellect applied to Ar's "evolution" and I gave a quick answer before I raced out to a museum...but overnight realized, whatever your intent, you just made your view weaker:

1. If the intellect is part of any aether/outer sphere, then you have made it compound, whether or not the sphere has sensation.
2. If the soul is separate from the intellect, you have made something purely simple (and there can be *no* question about the aether being simple, right?) triply compound.
3. The soul of (the outer spheres of) Lambda must be desiring and loving, not merely thinking, right? So now the aether/outer sphere is even more complex, if you attribute to it both thinking and desiring.
4. Surely a desiring soul is animate, even if a kind of animal that has no eyes or that does not eat, which means now that the outer sphere must have weight as an animate being, —which, to reiterate yet again, means you're caught by the dilemma of Ixion: the soul, which can never sleep in order to keep the eternally continuous motion going, must live a painful existence trying to keep the weighted outer sphere(s) from falling to the earth. Only what is weightless can circle forever.

Veloso's Counter to Scott's Rebuttal (Part 1)

July 12, 2025 (via email)

Pour ce qui est du premier point, tu sembles m'attribuer une thèse qui est à l'opposé de la mienne.

Je dis que, pour Aristote, tous les corps naturels élémentaires (y compris l'éther) possèdent *comme tels* uniquement un principe de mouvement passif, de sorte que la cause motrice (donc active) de leur mouvement doit venir soit d'un autre corps naturel élémentaire (et dans ce cas il s'agit d'un moteur mû) soit d'une âme.

En ce qui concerne le deuxième point, tu ne réponds pas sur *DA II 3*.

Veloso's Counter to Scott's Rebuttal (Part 2)

July 12, 2025 (via email)

[CWV:] Je te réponds directement dans ton message en **gras rouge**.

... I didn't really understand how your second point about DA and the intellect applied to Ar's "evolution"

Quant à l'immatérialité de l'intellect, je pense que (malheureusement) il n'y a pas vraiment d' évolution chez Aristote, même si, contrairement à Platon, il reconnaît la nécessité des *phantasmata* dans le cas de l'être humain.

and I gave a quick answer before I raced out to a museum ... whatever your intent, you just made your view weaker:

Pas du tout. Voir ci-dessous.

1. If the intellect is part of any aether/outer sphere, then you have made it compound, whether or not the sphere has sensation.

Tu sembles mélanger deux compositions différentes.

Une sphère est effectivement un *sunolon* de forme et de matière, même si la forme en question est un intellect, lequel ne requiert, lui-même, aucun corps.

En revanche, une sphère est censée être simple dans sa constitution *matérielle*, même si cela implique des difficultés pour Aristote.

Par exemple, pourquoi les astres transportés par les sphères sont-ils visibles alors que le reste des sphères ne l'est pas?

2. If the soul is separate from the intellect, you have made something purely simple (and there can be no question about the aether being simple, right?) triply compound.

L'intellect est une âme pour Aristote (*pace* Gerson, qui a écrit un texte très malheureux à ce propos).

Les sphères possèdent un intellect, donc elles possèdent une âme. Mais elles ne possèdent ni d'âme nutritive ni d'âme perceptive. Donc il n'y a ni de double (voir la réponse précédente) ni de triple composition. Il y a une seule composition.

3. The soul of Lambda 6 must be desiring and loving, not merely thinking, right? So now the aether/outer sphere is even more complex.

Pas du tout. Certes, on parle d'intellect, mais c'est un raccourci, en ce sens que ce n'est que l'intellect ou l'entendement est juste la dimension *cognitive* de la chose.

La dimension cognitive (=relative à la connaissance en général) s'accompagne d'une dimension désidérative et d'une dimension évaluative.

En effet, de même que la perception s'accompagne d'une forme de désir (*epithumia* et *thumos*) et de plaisir/peine, l'intellect s'accompagne d'une forme de désir (*boulèsis*, volonté ou souhait) et de plaisir/peine ou, mieux, de satisfaction/non satisfaction (le jugement de valeur bon/mauvais).

4. Surely a desiring soul is animate, even if a kind of animal that has no eyes or that does not eat, which means now the outer sphere must have weight as an animate being, which means you're caught by the dilemma of Ixion: the soul, which can never sleep in order to keep the eternally continuous motion going, must live a painful existence trying to keep the weighted outer sphere(s) from falling to the earth.

Je le répète, puisque l'âme des sphères n'est qu'un intellect (même s'il s'accompagne de la capacité de souhaiter et de juger bon ou mauvais), les sphères n'ont pas de poids.

D'où l'importance de mon point 2: l'intellect n'implique ni la capacité perceptive (avec désir et plaisir/peine) ni la capacité nutritive (avec la croissance et la reproduction), comme le suggère clairement *DA II 3*.

Et il me paraît complètement arbitraire de dire que *DA II 3* est une interpolation, vu que ce passage s'accorde parfaitement avec le reste du traité, ainsi qu'avec les *Parva naturalia*.

Scott's Penultimate Comments

July 12, 2025 (via email)

Finally, Claudio, I see your point, and maybe this is where we should agree to disagree.

For me, following, e.g., *DC* III 1 and 2, all four elements in the sublunary world (actually called two by Aristotle because he subsumes fire and air under "light" and water and earth under "heavy"), the elements move, if not forced unnaturally, according to whether they are heavy or light: to the center of the universe, the earth, if heavy, and up if they are light. That is their natural motion and end, and *it is simply their nature* to move in that manner and to those destinations.

If you mean [by the French] this:

I say that, for Aristotle, **all elementary natural bodies** (including ether) possess as such only a passive principle of motion, so that **the motive (and therefore active) cause of their motion must come either from another elementary natural body** (and in this case, it is a moved mover) **or from a soul**.

then we clearly have two different conceptions of what elements are for Ar and why they move *naturally*, because you do not even mention heavy and light. I gave before the passage where the elements, *as continuous, cannot be divided into [parts with] a part that is passive*, -- although I see now why you ignore that distinction, because you are claiming that, say, water, either has its motion coming from another "elementary natural body" or from a soul!

Finally, the Northern Greek confirms the view I attribute to him in a number of places throughout *DC*, and not in just one *ad hoc* location. Here, I (only) present three of them (all translations are by Guthrie):

- I 2, 269a19-33: "...circular motion must be primary...circular motion is prior to rectilinear... rectilinear motion is the motion of the simple bodies (as *e.g.*, fire moves in a straight line upwards and earthy bodies move downwards...it clearly follows that there exists some physical substance besides the four in our sublunary world, and moreover that *it is more divine than, and prior to, all these*" [my italics];
- I 3, 269b30-270a14: "Now the body whose motion is circular cannot have either weight or lightness, for *neither naturally nor unnaturally can it ever move towards or away* from the centre... With *equal reason* we may regard it as ungenerated (*agenēton*) and indestructible (*aphtharton*)..." [my italics];
- IV 4, 14-17 "The existence of an absolutely light and an absolutely heavy may be demonstrated as follows. By these terms I mean a body **whose nature it is** to move *always* upwards, and one **whose nature it is** to move *always* downwards, unless prevented" [my italics].

How would you handle those passages?

Does water or earth have a soul for you? (I don't think so but I am so baffled by what you say, I must double-check, and I wonder whether the soul is active and the material passive in your view.)

Let me confirm additionally: Are you saying that earth has its motion coming from water (or air or fire) in *all* circumstances or (only) in some? That is, obviously Ar suggests a rock could be thrown upward, which means earth (and any other partial mixture that forms a compound object, if the rock is not pure earth) can be forced sometimes to move unnaturally. **That is**

another topic, though. We are speaking of natural motion of the (four) elements, because we can leave aside the aether, but just for the moment. Since particular instances of earth like a rock do not have a soul (and since the whole totality of earth does not have a soul), I believe you are saying that the *natural* "active cause" of their motions, when not enforced, has to be another element. Correct?

If so, we should put our views to a vote by the profession, in my opinion, because for me Ar holds that the elements move according to whether they are heavy or light, unless something forces them to move temporarily in an unnatural direction or blocks them from moving to their natural end-location. Soul has no role for Ar, as I read the texts, for bodies that are simple and that have simple motions by nature (rectilinear up and down for the two classes of sublunary elements).

July 13, 2025 (via email)

[GS:] In addition, I comment on your red remarks with my own **green** remarks (starting with "&&"):

...I didn't really understand how your second point about DA and the intellect applied to Ar's "evolution"

Quant à l'immatérialité de l'intellect, je pense que (malheureusement) il n'y a pas vraiment d' évolution chez Aristote, même si, contrairement à Platon, il reconnaît la nécessité des *phantasmata* dans le cas de l'être humain.

&& Thus, you believe that, until he died, Ar accepted that there are intellects which exist somewhere and somehow (or in no location) with no physical component whatsoever (and no *phantasmata*) and that these intellects "think" in a sense of the word that has been covered in his corpus, especially in *DA*?

and I gave a quick answer before I raced out to a museum ..., whatever your intent, you just made your view weaker:

Pas du tout. Voir ci-dessous.

1. If the intellect is part of any aether/outer sphere, then you have made it compound, whether or not the sphere has sensation.

Tu sembles mélanger deux compositions différentes.

Une sphère est effectivement un *sunolon* de forme et de matière, même si la forme en question est un intellect, lequel ne requiert, lui-même, aucun corps.

&& Thus, it seems that, for Ar on your account, there are some intellects that exist entirely apart from all physical substances (including the aether-spheres) and some intellects are somehow "attached" or combined with the outer spheres, making them form-bodies (plural), each of which is an all-together, a *sunolon*?

Would you care to say why nature allows this to be so for Ar? Does the outer sphere need an intellect, for instance, to move? Or for anything other reason? You heard [in a session by Pavel Gregorić in Lisbon] the implication, if I understood correctly, that even Medus worried about the need [for an ensouled outer sphere] to desire the UM for movement if the spheres have souls, even leaving aside their intellect, because the souls could then make their corresponding body move all by themselves, no?, whether or not because of a desire for the Unmoved Mover. (That is, no argument is ever given that a soul can have one desire maximum.) Even you earlier had worried about this for your new book, correct?

Moreover, do you continue to deny that, if the spheres have weight, their souls would live a painful existence, like Ixion, given that the souls would have to stop the spheres from falling to

our earth-globe, the center of the universe, *because* that circular motion is continuously eternal and the soul therefore could not sleep for respite, correct? That is, you deny that the outer spheres with a soul each has weight, correct?

En revanche, une sphère est censée être simple dans sa constitution matérielle, même si cela implique des difficultés pour Aristote.

Par exemple, pourquoi les astres transportés par les sphères sont-ils visibles alors que le reste des sphères ne l'est pas?

&& Are you referring to *DC* II 8? Ar concludes at 289b32-33 that the circles move and the stars are fixed, which is the only option (starting with 289b1) that for him does not lead to the absurdities detailed in II 8. I have no idea what else you are referring to, and, moreover, no one doubts there may be, and indeed are, difficulties in some of his doctrines. *Every* doctrine has issues that can be raised, but, in any event, how is this all relevant to the debate about outer spheres having souls? Are you denying that the aether *qua* fifth element is simple (because the denial allows that the bodies of the aether could have intellects or souls or both)?

2. If the soul is separate from the intellect, you have made something purely simple (and there can be no question about the aether being simple, right?) triply compound.

L'intellect est une âme pour Aristote (*pace* Gerson, qui a écrit un texte très malheureux à ce propos).

Les sphères possèdent un intellect, donc elles possèdent une âme.

Mais elles ne possèdent ni d'âme nutritive ni d'âme perceptive.

Donc il n'y a ni de double (voir la réponse précédente) ni de triple composition.

Il y a une seule composition.

&& For the sake of argument, let's accept that intellect necessarily entails "soul" and that this requires no physical prerequisites. As you say at the end, there is still a "composition," and you then presumably revert to your answer above, that, even though there two aspects or parts or "ingredients," it does not count as a composition (=compound). Yet this composition *qua* compound does not count as a compound in the sense, e.g., of *DC* III 1, 298a25, where Ar speaks of having discussed the composition (*sunestasi*) of the elements, but not in the sense of a soul coupled with a body; rather it is in the sense of the elements mixing with one another, namely, the parts (*merōn* at 289a25). Otherwise, please provide *one* clear passage--that is not covered in ways already explained by Guthrie or myself--which reveal Ar accepting in *DC* I and II that the 5th element has a soul.

3. The soul of Lambda 6 must be desiring and loving, not merely thinking, right? So now the aether/outer sphere is even more complex.

Pas du tout. Certes, on parle d'intellect, mais c'est un raccourci, en ce sens que ce n'est que l'intellect ou l'entendement est juste la dimension cognitive de la chose.

&& Now I'm really puzzled. Are you denying that the outer sphere has its own intellect and simply saying that the intellect is shorthand for *our* understanding of it? Yet if they don't have intellects, this means they don't have souls, at least of the appropriate type (a plant-soul hardly seems apropos), which means that you presumably are *not* taking this approach. Please explain.

La dimension cognitive (=relative à la connaissance en général) s'accompagne d'une dimension désidérative et d'une dimension valuative.

En effet, de même que la perception s'accompagne d'une forme de désir (*epithumia* et *thumos*) et de plaisir/peine, l'intellect s'accompagne d'une forme de

désir (*boulèsis*, volonté ou souhait) et de plaisir/peine ou, mieux, de satisfaction/non satisfaction (le jugement de valeur bon/mauvais).

&& Again, I'm puzzled. You say that the intellect is accompanied by a form of desire, etc. How can that type of soul therefore not be complex? Also, imagine a magnet circling eternally and you claim it thinks but without any perception or any other animate material. How can it desire? Moreover, why is the desire *of those spheres* rather than of some other disembodied intellect-souls having a desire, which you suggest *DA III 4-5* allows, if I understand you correctly (and that is a big "if")?

4. Surely a desiring soul is animate, even if a kind of animal that has no eyes or that does not eat, which means now the outer sphere must have weight as an animate being, which means you're caught by the dilemma of Ixion: the soul, which can never sleep in order to keep the eternally continuous motion going, must live a painful existence trying to keep the weighted outer sphere(s) from falling to the earth.

Je le répète, puisque l'âme des sphères n'est qu'un intellect (même s'il s'accompagne de la capacité de souhaiter et de juger bon ou mauvais), les sphères n'ont pas de poids.

&& I trust when you say they are "accompanied by the capacity to wish and to judge good or bad" you really mean they *do* wish/desire, otherwise if the capacity stays unrealized they will never wish or judge. Also, I trust that the sphere itself is having the desire/judgment, not some other completely immaterial intellect that you assert happens to be next to, or somehow paired with, the particular outer sphere under discussion, right? Yet how can the outer sphere not be animate, if it has a soul and desires & judges? If animate, you still claim it is weightless?

D'où l'importance de mon point 2: l'intellect n'implique ni la capacité perceptive (avec désir et plaisir/peine) ni la capacité nutritive (avec la croissance et la reproduction), comme le suggère clairement *DA II 3*.

Et il me paraît complètement arbitraire de dire que *DA II 3* est une interpolation, vu que ce passage s'accorde parfaitement avec le reste du traité, ainsi qu'avec les *Parva naturalia*.

&& Sorry if I was unclear. I did not mean to suggest *DA II 3* was an interpolation (only at least parts of *DA III 4-5* and only that you yourself accept in other contexts the interpolations of phrases into Aristotle's corpus). The relevant points were covered above.

I think we are near the end, Claudio, and again, we don't have to convince each other; it is enough in my opinion if our positions are plain.

Final Questions to Veloso for Clarification
July 30, 2025 (via email)

[GLS:] Again, these are the crucial questions:

In your view, Aristotle held the aether must move because it has a soul, correct?

This means that the four sublunary elements (or the two classes of elements, the heavy and light) have no soul but the "first (aka 5th) element," the aether, has a soul?

If so, Ar has a mixed view on whether elements have souls?

To emphasize, I simply don't understand how you can attribute a soul to the aether (much less the other 4 elements), given *DC* I 2, especially 268b27-29, and the conclusion based on premises dealing with simple motion, 269a7, which imply nothing about a soul. (Guthrie agrees with Simplicius in the footnote that the natural simple bodies in this chapter, not the bodies of *Physics* II including plants and animals, are the elements, and the animals and plants are not necessarily even being referenced when Ar speaks of *compounds*. As I mentioned, he usually means the compounds of the elements, e.g. 269a2.)

Moreover, the fifth element exists for the reasons given in *this* chapter--and is *an element more divine than the other four*--at 269a30-33. Finally, at I 3, 270b1-2, the primary body of all (=fifth element) is eternal...and *impassive* (*apathes*). If it had a soul, and could desire, can it really be *apathes*? Why, then, would Ar not add any explanation at this point?

I gather you want the thinking mind to be a soul *and not to have sensation or perception* (or *feeling*), and moreover not to have any physical prerequisite (per *DA* III 4-5), but then how do you justify that they (the souls) are connected to the aethered-spheres? Are you going to posit now that they are connected also to the four elements? More crucially for you, various non-physical soul-minds cause the aethered-spheres to move, correct?, *but for this to be consistent with Lambda, they must desire, -- and yet according to you those souls only think!* How do you resolve *that* or am I misrepresenting your view? (Saying that the thought concerns itself with the good is different from desiring, no?)

Finally, 269a7-10, to add to the list of passages above, seems to contradict your claim that the elements move because of *other* elements (if you're presupposing "naturally").

18 Aug, 2025
GLS to CWV (via email)

PS.

(1) In assembling our arguments for public consumption, I realized better that you claim the outer spheres are mere intellects and require no body, and yet you also claim they do need, or at least have, a (circular) body, for example: **“Une sphère est effectivement un *sunolon* de forme et de matière, même si la forme en question est un intellect, lequel ne requiert, lui-même, aucun corps.”**

Which is it? The form of the material (for each outer sphere) is round but the form *qua* intellect presumably is *not* physically shaped. We see the outer heavens and spheres; thus, certainly the physical form is visible.

I assume that you are *not* saying invisible intellects are floating around and desiring the Unmoved Mover, — or are you? Those cannot be elements because elements are physical and visible. Thus, what evidence compels us to accept that, for Aristotle, the (visible) **round**

aether-spheres have intellects and a *desire* to move because of the Unmoved Mover rather than to move like instances of the other four elements, simply in virtue of their own nature?

(2)

One of the audience members in Lisbon, Cristóbal Palisson Krämer, a young scholar from Cambridge (MPhil, Kings College), wanted to read the exchange and he wrote the following in early September (private correspondence):

The incorporeality of this Mover attested in Text 6 of Claudio (*DC* II 6, 288a 27-b 7) seems a direct reference to Lambda's UM [= Unmoved Mover] and a powerful counterargument for your [Greg's] position. I do not consider that the reference to simplicity in the passage of *DC* implies that we are talking of an efficient cause sequence, ...[thus] *your argument seems to me insufficient to overrule Claudio's evidence...*"

Cristóbal made me realize how carelessly I had read one particular argument of II 6, which Guthrie had called the second of at least four arguments for the thesis in that chapter that the universe has to be regular and not irregular. Guthrie says that the first and third are "consistent with the view that the *aither as self-mover is the supreme being*" [pp. xxiii; my boldface]. Regarding the second argument—and I skip the fourth because it appears neutral between the aether and the UM—he writes:

it is impossible that irregularity should come from the side of the mover, for that which moves another is even less subject to change than that which it moves, *because it is more fully actual*" (p. xxiv; my italics).

However, why does Guthrie's short argument favor the UM above the principle of nature that I mentioned not only in my presentation but the later exchanges with you (and later with Cristóbal, which I repeat below): "... *nature we have defined as the principle of motion in them...*" Both options—nature as the principle of motion and the UM—ultimately rule out irregularity, the issue at hand, or don't they? Both are (allegedly) "fully actual." If not, to take up the last concern immediately, what text shows that the principle of nature is *less* actual than the *motion* of the aethered bodies itself? One might put this in other words: the "definition" is a formal cause, and what grounds are there for saying this kind of cause is less actual than other causes (and indeed the principle of nature, insofar as it is "embedded" in the aether might be said to be part of its material cause, just as body-soul might be said to be the material cause of man)? By the way, even though Guthrie often uses "principle" for *archēn*, it can mean and he uses at other times "source," which casts a different light on the passages, more physical and less conceptual (in English).

Moreover, even in Lambda, Ar stresses the importance of principles (*archai*). For instance, as he clarifies in Lambda 4:

...since **not only things which are inherent in an object are its causes**, but also certain external things, e.g. the moving cause, clearly "principle" and "element" are not the same; **but both are causes**. Principles are divided into these two kinds, and **that which moves a thing or brings it to rest is a kind of principle** and substance (1070b22-24, tr. Tredennick)

In other words, the principle of nature is, or can be, the cause, of the *moved but unchanging* body (of the outer heavens), which always moves in the exact same circle. As the cause of movement, is it not a mover?²

Also, in Lambda 6, while establishing the existence of “actuality” (*energeia*) and right before the conclusion, Ar emphasizes (according to the translation by Tredennick):

... that which exists potentially may not exist. Therefore there must be a **principle** (***archēn***) of this kind whose essence (*hē ousia*) is actuality (*energeia*) (1071b19-21).

I see for the first time that this passage (1071b20) in Lambda with *archēn* arguably supports my view more than the traditional one (defended by you in so many ways, despite your claim that Lambda is a “disaster” with respect to the Unmoved Mover), for reasons stemming from what Ar continues without pause to conclude:

Furthermore **these substances** (***ousias***)⁷ must be immaterial (*aneu hulēs*); for **they** must be eternal if anything is. Therefore **they** are actuality (*energeia*) (1071b21-23).

Please do not ignore, as so many have ignored, that the substances are plural, not a *single* “actuality.” Tredennick adds in footnote 7: “Aristotle is now thinking not only of the prime mover (God or Mind) but also of the movers of the celestial spheres.”³ *Yet God and Mind are not mentioned in this chapter*; it is only *energeia*, translated typically as “actuality” (or more dramatically “Pure Actuality,” with capital letters), and as we see later, *energeia* is exactly what the aether can be or, better yet, **is** (because “can” is synonymous with “is possible” and Ar has just said that what is potential, which is also synonymous at times with possibility, as I have clearly demonstrated with texts from the Organon, might not exist). For another scholar who presents reasons why *energeia* or the Unmoved Mover cannot be the same as the God (*ho theos*) of the later chapters of Lambda, see Michael Bordt’s “Why Aristotle’s God is Not the Unmoved Mover.”⁴

In short, then, why presume the passage from *DC* II 6—“...neither will the incorporeal mover change”—refers to an incorporeal UM/God when it can refer either to the *principle qua*

² There are at least four types typically considered: efficient, formal, material and final. I say “at least,” because suggests there could be more: “the cause of man is (1) the elements in man (viz. fire and earth as matter, and the peculiar form), and further (2) something else outside, i.e. the father, and (3) besides these the sun and its oblique course, which are neither matter nor form nor privation of man nor of the same species with him, but moving causes” (1071a15-18, W.D. Ross tr.).

³ From:
<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0051%3Abook%3D12%3Asection%3D1071b>

⁴ Michael Bordt, “Why Aristotle’s God is Not the Unmoved Mover,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. XL, Summer (2011) 91-109. I agree with his arguments, but he does not really leverage his insights; see www.epspress.com/NotToFearUpdates.html#Bordt

During one of the keynote addresses in Lisbon, by Pavel Gregorić, I discovered that Bordt is not the first on record (to my knowledge) in non-Arabic exegesis to deny the identity of Actuality (*energeia*)/Unmoved Mover with the god (*ho theos*) of the later passages in Lambda. As Gregorić writes in the publication he graciously provided after the conference, regarding the thinker from Dubrovnik, Antun Medo (*aka* Antonius Medus), c. 1546–1603: “Medo refuses to identify the first unmoved mover with God, which was the inclination of many Christian thinkers, as opposed to Averroes and his followers; see Lerner, *Le monde*, vol. 1, 178–86.”

Pavel Gregoric, “The Organistic Cosmological Theory of Antun Medo,” in Pavel Gregorić and Martino Rossi Monti (eds.), *Renaissance Aristotelianism in Southeast Europe: Metaphysics, Scholarship, and Interactions with Platonism* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025) 167–187.

source in Lambda 12 just noted or to the reality which the principle refers to (if you think “principle” is merely conceptual)? This is arguably the same principle of nature that *each* of the *multiple* aethered bodies has, namely to move “itself” for all eternity. **If not, how do you resolve the mention of the plural substances in Lambda 6 (and of the 47+ unmoved movers of Lambda 8), which are easily explained by the theory of DC?**

In addition, the relevant part of Lambda does not guarantee regularity: Where is any argument that *the desire of the outer spheres*, in the theory of Lambda, must be regular *throughout eternity*? Bodies that desire, at least in any way that makes “desire” understandable to us, desire some things intermittently or in varying degrees over time. Thus, desire (on the part of the outer spheres) is hardly guaranteed to be **eternal and regular** (except of course in romantic poetic declarations of love by a fanciful suitor). DC II 6-12 clearly demonstrates that celestial movement could vary in a number of ways. Only the aethered outer spheres having a principle of nature simply in virtue of their own nature, rather than any other factor, makes the conclusion for regularity seemingly sound (and recall the argument from the *Physics* that I gave in the Presentation, namely, that whatever moves itself takes priority over, and thus is superior to, something which is moved by something else, of which more in a moment when we see Guthrie’s precise reason for thinking that the UM is the cause of the movement of the *different* bodies of the outer heaven) in II 6.

Again, in that chapter, the crux of the issue (for the second of the four relevant arguments) stems from this statement:

...Since, then, the object moved, which is body, does not change, neither will the mover which is incorporeal change [GS:= *neither will the incorporeal mover change*]. It is impossible therefore that the motion should be irregular (288b5-8; Guthrie tr.).

Following are additional reasons for why the “incorporeal mover” is not the UM, but rather the principle (or source) of nature inherent in the aether that causes it to move forever, just as fire has an “incorporeal” principle of nature which causes *it* to move in a rectilinear way upwards (and with a normal, natural speed), unless something else blocks it or compels it to move differently, that is, unnaturally.

First, Ar would easier and more plainly have written “neither will *energeia* change,” if that is what he intended. However, even that is not plain enough. As I wrote above, “actuality” also fittingly describes the aether, if anything does, considering that it is eternal, necessary and without potential. *If not, why not?*

Second, if the principle of nature is analogous to a soul in moving a body without being corporeal itself, we do not have to categorize it (the principle) as a mover *qua* efficient cause. It could be part of its material cause or part of its formal cause.

Third, every (reasonable) scholar agrees that the UM does not, and cannot, push or pull the outer spheres, or the like. It would not be an efficient cause, because it has no matter or potentiality—rather it is the inspiration by the ensouled outer spheres desiring the UM and moving *themselves* because of that desire which causes the (self) motion. Yet what is being moved in DC II 6, the “primary” and “simple,” is not suggested in any way to have a soul. That is, the heaven [= aether] was just described a few sentences before the troubling sentence at hand: “*primary*, simple, ungenerated, indestructible, and altogether changeless [even though it moves in the perpetual circle]” (288b1-3). If *energeia* or the UM was really *primary*, Ar presumably would have qualified this statement.

Fourth, Ar takes pains in II 6 to say that “**only what is primary can move the primary**, what is simple the simple, what is indestructible and ungenerated the indestructible

and ungenerated” (288b3-5, tr. Guthrie).⁵ Thus, we expect him to continue writing “the incorporeal moves the incorporeal,” yet, if the text is authentic, he does *not* say that but writes instead something that is supposed to lead to the conclusion that the motion (of the heavens) must be regular. *How* does Guthrie’s (and others’) assumption that the UM and by implication ensouled outer spheres are being referenced really support that conclusion? This question takes us back to how desire is hardly guaranteed to be eternal or regular or both.

Fifth, the troublesome phrase “...neither will the incorporeal mover change” could be a mistaken edit of a corrupted phrase or an interpolation by a later editor trying to insert the UM, especially given that arguments one and three, per Guthrie, show the supreme being to be the aether. You, Claudio, of all people accept that at times there are wrong interpolations in the corpus, especially if a few words are utterly contrary to what Ar has said in other places. Indeed, Guthrie adds that supplements are often added to multiple proofs by Ar for a single conclusion and suggests that this one in II 6 could be another, advancing a view that Ar is not really committed to for a larger reason (p. xxiv).

I have a slew of other arguments, showing what in Lambda seems to be utterly consistent with *DC*, and what few claims Ar dropped (mostly Platonic existence in another realm) but they take us for the moment too far from the current debate about whether the outer spheres have souls. The slew of arguments in our whole debate and in my previous publications overwhelming shows, I continue to assert, that Ar had an evolutionary theology, and the next question is whose account is correct: Guthrie’s, mine or a yet-to-be articulated third. The precise aspects of Lambda that the Northern Greek dropped in this regard will be explained in *Aristotle’s Apostasy*.

⁵ By the way, this passage in and of itself, completely rules out Judson’s implication, and your seeming acceptance of the view, that *the four sublunary elements could explain and move the aether* and its movement.

Veloso's Final Statements with Scott's Final Remarks

Email from Veloso (12 September 2025), with Scott's Subsequent Remarks (starting with ## in green)

J'insiste sur le fait qu notre discussion ne peut continuer que si on se met d'accord sur deux points, à savoir (1) le sens de l'expression « principe de mouvement » en référence à la nature (au sens technique du terme) et (2) l'immatérialité de l'entendement (*nous*).

Je commence par le second.

Il te paraît étonnant qu'Aristote puisse être resté sur la thèse de l'immatérialité de l'entendement, mais je m'étonne de ton étonnement. C'est aussi la thèse de Descartes (qui a pourtant tendance à confondre entendement et conscience), ainsi que, de nos jours, dans le sillage de ce dernier, de David Chalmers...

Bien entendu, Aristote affirme à plusieurs reprises que (pour les humains) il est impossible de penser (*noein*) sans *phantasmata* – et il soutient cette thèse sans aucune restriction –, mais, à ses yeux, cela ne suffit pas à rendre l'entendement l'activité ou la fonction définitoire d'un corps.

D'ailleurs, sur ce point, Aristote est supérieur à Descartes, comme je le dis ailleurs, car ce dernier croit démontrer l'immatérialité de l'entendement sur la base du fait qu'on peut comprendre quelque chose sans avoir besoin d'une image de cette chose. Ce serait le cas de son fameux exemple, le chiliogone, dans la *Sixième Médiation métaphysique*. En fait, même s'il était vrai qu'on peut comprendre ce qu'est un chiliogone sans en avoir une image, cela ne démontrerait pas l'immatérialité de l'entendement.

Si aujourd'hui on peut affirmer que l'entendement n'est pas immatériel, ce n'est pas du tout sur la base de l'usage d'images, mais sur la base du fait que tous nos états mentaux correspondent bien à une configuration neuronale déterminée.

Si tu veux continuer à discuter sur ce point, trouve stp [s'il tu plaît] un passage où Aristote indique clairement l'existence d'une partie corporelle humaine quelconque qui serait l'organe de l'entendement, c'est-à-dire l'organe dont l'entendement serait l'activité ou la fonction. À ma connaissance, il n'y en a pas, mais tu finiras peut-être par en trouver un.

(Pour essayer de remédier cette absence, on a soutenu que l'organe de l'entendement n'est pas une partie déterminée mais l'ensemble du corps humain: l'attribution à Aristote de cette thèse à la Bergson me paraît très peu crédible, même si aujourd'hui ce genre de thèses est à la mode, en raison de plusieurs recherches récentes sur les plantes et surtout cet extraordinaire être vivant qu'est *Physarum polycephalum*.)

Cela dit, il y a effectivement une tension – jamais résolue – entre la conception aristotélicienne de l'entendement et l'habituel hylémorphisme aristotélicien.

Je traite cette question dans mon *Pourquoi la Poétique d'Aristote ?*, p. 86-92 ; 388-400.⁶

This is all irrelevant to my concerns regarding whether the aethered spheres have a soul; that is, if an (instance of any) element does not have a soul, following Guthrie and myself, then the issues above are a red herring. Let us grant Veloso that the "understanding" is immaterial in a certain sense, but even he admits that thinking requires *phantasmata*, and surely that is something physical, at the least presupposing a physical mind that also perhaps in

⁶ For the sake of transparency I should report that in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* (2007), Veloso followed my view in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* (2003) that Aristotle could not have written the whole pity, fear and catharsis clause in the definition of serious drama (*tragōidia*). Veloso corrected, however, one of my mistakes, which enabled me to provide a more rigorous exposition of my position in *Aristotle on Dramatic Musical Composition: The Real Role of Literature, Catharsis, Music and Dance in the POETICS* (2018, 2nd edition after the poorly edited version of 2016 was disavowed). Veloso often had, and has, different reasons for his own position, some good and some not in my opinion, and I reviewed his just-noted *Pourquoi La Poétique d'Aristote?: Diagoge in Ancient Philosophy*, Volume 39, Issue 2, Fall 2019: 498-505.

some sense is not *obviously* material or visible (even if MRI's or xrays show the associated mental activity when thinking occurs, whether precisely Bergsonian or not, all of which we can leave aside because Aristotle would not anticipate these modern-day views). As suggested much earlier in this whole debate, there also has to be a physical location in some respect, whether indirectly or "accidentally," for the relevant soul, otherwise, Veloso's own soul is (preposterously) still in Caën, his home, even though he is in Lisbon. My questions originally arose to determine how the *nous* was connected according to Veloso to the aethered spheres for the Northern Greek. However, the French-Brazilian specialist in no way addresses satisfactorily this matter, or even attempts to explain exactly the connection, which takes us to the next point.

Une dernière remarque pour dissiper un malentendu. Quand je parle de raccourci à propos de l'entendement (*Scott's Final Statements*, p. 11), **je ne veux absolument pas nier que les sphères célestes ont réellement un intellect, selon Aristote. Comme le montre clairement la suite de mon texte, l'attribution d'un entendement aux sphères est un raccourci en ce sens qu'il faut leur attribuer aussi cette forme de désir qu'est la volonté et les jugements de valeur.** De manière semblable, quand on parle des animaux comme des êtres capables de percevoir, on sous-entend qu'ils ont aussi des formes de désir (*epithumia* et *thumos*) ainsi que ces états affectifs que sont le plaisir et la peine. Dans les deux cas, Aristote les considère comme trois aspects d'une même et seule capacité. C'est pareil d'ailleurs pour l'âme nutritive: nutrition, croissance et reproduction sont vues comme trois aspects de la même capacité. Bref, ta remarque est complètement à côté de la plaque.

All of this still leaves unaddressed how the aethered spheres *qua* parts of the fifth element can be *simple* when, on Veloso's account, even if we consider understanding, desire, and judgments of value to be three aspects of one capacity, they must be complex. That is, at the least, the spheres have the material component that we see *and* the capacity. Moreover, capacities are something applicable only to finite entities, because as Aristotle states in multiple places and as I indicated in the earlier sections, what is eternal does not have potential (=capacity), at least with respect to essence. Finally, the capacity has to act on Veloso's account to cause the aethered sphere to move. It cannot stay unrealized, otherwise there would never be movement. Hence, it cannot be a mere capacity; it also must involve act, actuality or activity. To recall what he asserts: "*all elementary natural bodies (including ether) possess as such **only** a passive principle of motion, so that the motive (and therefore active) cause of their motion must come either from another elementary natural body...or from a soul.*" Thus, unless the motive cause is external, which we discuss further soon, the (alleged) soul of an aethered sphere must be the active source/principle of the motion. However, to recall our perpetual dilemma, with an (active) soul, the whole sphere, including the elemental body, seems to become complex, contradicting its crucial simplicity.

One consideration, which applies to the next section: Veloso says in the bolded lines above (on my translation): "I do not in any way mean to deny that the celestial spheres have an intellect, according to Aristotle. As the rest of my text clearly reveals, attributing an understanding to the spheres is a shortcut in the sense that *we need also attribute to them this type of desire, which is volition and value judgments.*" Can the spheres have these psychological components and *not* have a complex, animate-type soul?

Venons-en au premier point.

À plusieurs reprises, lors de nos échanges, tu me demandes si, pour moi, les corps élémentaires (y compris l'éther) ont une âme. Or je l'ai déjà dit et répété que c'est l'opposé même de ma position.

Veloso seems now to claim that the spheres have no soul even though they have (per the bolded lines just noted), understanding, desire, volition and value judgments. This is as absurd as saying an instance of pure earth, say, a rock, has no soul but has understanding. Are we using words in completely different ways? I cited the relevant text in my *PrimaryComments*;

did Veloso even read it and if so, why is he not rebutting it? That is, at *DC I 3 269b10-15* Aristotle says:

“...it is impossible for it [the eternal circular element] to move, either naturally or unnaturally, with any other motion but its own, **either itself as a whole or any of its parts, seeing that the same argument [just given] applies to whole and part**” (Guthrie translation, with my additions in brackets for clarification).

In any event, this gets discussed more below, because the issue may be a soul for the whole heaven versus a soul for each outer sphere *qua* star or the like.

En fait, c'est à toi qu'il faudrait poser cette question. Dire que la nature est un principe de mouvement actif revient à en faire une âme.

“To say that nature is an active principle of movement is to make it a soul” is, I suggest, to miss, or even distort, a critical distinction in the Stagirite's theory of *DC*. First, Aristotle never to my knowledge says “nature is an *active* principle (*or source*) (*archēn*) of movement,” and Veloso should cite a passage otherwise. The Northern Greek only ever says “nature is a source of movement” and I myself have never reduced this principle to “active principle.” Here are four passages across two treatises:

DC I 2

“...we may start from this, that all natural bodies and magnitudes are capable of moving of themselves (*kath'hauta*) in space; for nature we have defined as the principle of motion in them [natural bodies]” (258b15-17);

“Of bodies some are simple, and some are compounds of the simple. By ‘simple’ I mean all bodies which contain a principle of natural motion, like fire and earth and their kinds, and the other bodies of the same order...simple bodies will have simple motions and composite bodies composite motions, though the movement may be according to the prevailing elements in the compound. ...there exists a simple body naturally so constituted as to move in a circle in virtue of its own nature (269a1-7).

Note that the movement is not according to any active or passive principle but because *simple bodies have simple motions*.⁷

DC III 1 (as Aristotle explicitly switches focus from the outer heaven to the four sublunary elements):

“Now the word ‘natural’ is applied on the one hand to substances, and on the other to functions and attributes of substances. By substances I refer to the simple bodies, fire and earth and the others of the same order, and things composed of the, e.g., the heaven as a whole and its parts, as well as animals and plants and their parts; attributes and functions include the movement of each of these substances and all movement...” (298a27-33)

Note that “natural” has two senses, so when Veloso insists on restricting our debate to “le sens de l'expression « principe de mouvement » en référence à la nature (au sens technique du terme)” [“the meaning of the expression ‘principle of movement’ with reference to nature”], which “technical sense” does he isolate? He does not say, and in any event the issues of the four elements can be, and are, very different at times from the fifth element, given that the latter is inherently eternal in and of itself, weightless and rotating exactly the same way in a circle, which is why the Northern Greek devotes two whole books of *DC* to the sublunary elements that are weighted (“heavy and light”), move rectilinearly and, considered as a whole or generically, are eternal, but that, when existing as instances, come to be and pass away.

⁷ Simple bodies always having simple motions (by nature) is the reason that Xenarchus of Seleucia attempted to argue that there should be a sixth element, because he believed, wrongly, that the helix was a simple motion; see my “PART 3: Strato, Xenarchus and Later Antiquity,” pp. 31ff, in “On Sarah Broadie's ‘Heavenly Bodies and First Causes’: Two Turning Points in the History of Theology: Aristotle's Divine ‘Fifth Element’ and the Perversion by Alexander of Aphrodisias” at www.EPSpress.com/NTF/OnHeavenlyBodies.pdf (publ. Feb 2020).

Physics VIII 4 (already given in my SecondaryComments, but Veloso completely ignores it—Aristotle is speaking of the four elements and sublunary compounds, with an example of earth being thrown upwards, countering for a moment its natural movement to go down.⁸ As Ar writes:

...the whole animal moves itself because both mover and moved are parts of that whole self. The real difficulty then is narrowed down to those movements of things that are not self-moving [in the strict sense of “self,” which applies only to animals who can stop themselves] which we have not yet dealt with; for in pronouncing some of the movements of things which are not self-moving to be contrary to their nature, we have by inference laid down that the rest are natural; and **it is here that we come to grips with the real difficulty, viz. the question what is the agent of the natural movements of bodies heavy and light.** For such bodies can be forced to move in directions opposite to those natural to them; but whereas it is obvious that light things go up and heavy ones down ‘by nature,’ we have not yet arrived at any clear conception as to **what is the agent of this ‘natural’ movement**, as we have done in the case of the enforced and unnatural movements...

If the question is still pressed why light and heavy things tend to their respective positions, the only answer is that they are natured so, and that what we mean by heavy and light as distinguished and defined is just this downward or upward tendency (254b31ff; transl. P. Wicksteed and F. Cornford).

Note that when pressed, the Northern Greek does not explain, as he should were Veloso correct, in terms of active and passive principles but only because the elements “are natured so.”

Physics II 1 (when speaking of sublunary substances like animals):

“The term ‘according to nature’ is applied to all these things and also to the attributes which belong to them in virtue of what they are, for instance the property of fire to be carried upwards—**which is not a nature nor has a nature but is by nature or according to nature**” (192b35-193a2, tr. Hardie and Gaye, my emphasis).

Why does Veloso believe that the Stagirite appeals to active or passive principles of nature rather than simply to “nature”? Perhaps he has relied on a translation or preconception of the Stagirite’s overall philosophy that with respect to this passage is as bad as the one of Wicksteed and Cornford (from the Loeb Classical Library edition of 1929, reprinted throughout the 20th century, until at least 1993):

“What we mean by “nature,” [is] anything that has in itself such a principle (*archēn*) as we have described may be said to ‘possess’ a nature’ of its own inherently.”... Further, not only nature itself and all things that ‘have a nature’, but also the behaviour of these things in virtue of their inherent characteristics is spoken of as ‘natural’. For instance, for fire actually to rise, **as distinct from having the tendency to rise**, neither is nature nor *has* nature; but it comes about ‘by nature’ and is ‘natural’.”

(*Physics* II 1, 192b33-193a2, tr. by Wicksteed and Cornford).

There is no Greek in the text (that the two British scholars themselves print) **for “as distinct from having the tendency to rise.”** This strongly suggests the type of capacity qua “tendency” that Veloso tries to embed in Aristotle’s alleged “technical” sense of “nature,” but it is an unwarranted, if not unconscionable, interpolation. Hardie and Gaye render the passage

⁸ The Stagirite is very clear at various times throughout the whole corpus: Earth, for instance, by nature heads to the center of the universe, our globe, unless blocked or constrained. However, it can get to its endpoint faster if, e.g., I throw an instance of it, say, a rock, *downwards*. We saw Veloso saying “For Aristotle, being moved by an external motive cause is not equivalent to being moved unnaturally, contrary to what you seem to believe.” However, the velocity at which the earth goes to the center in this particular case is forced, even if the endpoint is ultimately the same, of which more later. The example that perhaps best reveals the Northern Greek’s thought is when I am holding a rock at the edge of a cliff far above a sea and let it go (because he has no concept of gravity): Why does the rock now drop, even if there is a moderate breeze blowing upward from the water? There is no other element forcing it to go downwards and it surely has no soul; rather the rock drops and splashes simply in virtue of its own nature (including the way and matter of which it is constituted).

better. In any event, all of this applies arguably *only* in the context of *sublunary* elements and compounds.

Pendant très longtemps, on a interprété Aristote de cette manière, c'est-à-dire en faisant de lui un *panpsychiste*, ce qu'il n'est pas du tout.

Who are these who have interpreted the Stagirite as being a “panpsychist”—that is, apparently, those who identify *the principle of nature that causes motion* with soul? The same scholars who did not recognize that no Peripatetic for 500 years embraced either the Unmoved Mover or the narcissistic god of Lambda? In any event, Veloso should cite texts and provide an argument, not an *ad hominem*, because I myself in no way accept or conflate the “principle (or source) of nature” with soul. That is extremely Platonic and smacks of *Laws X*, as I have amply discussed in a publication already noted in this whole exchange (“Plato Imitates Aristotle...”).

Moi, en revanche, puisque je soutiens que, pour Aristote, la nature est un principe de mouvement passif (et non pas actif), je suis parfaitement en mesure de rendre compte de la différence entre les corps inanimés et les corps animés, chez Aristote.

Given the various points starting with my FirstComments and continuing in the following, I cannot agree with this: If Veloso cannot grasp Aristotle's theory of the elements correctly, *a fortiori* he cannot account fully for (all the) differences between inanimate bodies like the elements and animate ones, even if the account of animals is correct.

Scott's Rebuttal of Veloso Response (July 11, 2025) montre que tu n'avais rien compris de ce que je disais à propos de *Phys.* VIII 4, 254b 33-255a 8. En effet, je n'ai jamais dit que, dans les corps élémentaires, il y a une partie passive et une partie active. Or plusieurs passages des *Scott's Final Statements* et des *Final Questions to Veloso for Clarification* me font penser que tu n'as pas encore pleinement compris ma thèse.

I will grant that I did not understand Veloso's claims relative to VIII 4, considering how seemingly contradictory or inconsistent they were, and are, with the rest of Aristotle's philosophy and considering that I gave the reasons already.

Let us revisit the matter, using his own translation above from the email of July 8, 2025, pp. 1-2 above (with me rendering it in English),

“CWV: But the main difficulty is the rest of the division we discussed last. Indeed, among the things moved by something else, we have posited that some are moved against nature (*para phusin*): it remains to oppose them [the others] because they are moved by nature. Now it is these that could pose a difficulty concerning the question of knowing by what they are moved, for example, light things and heavy things (*hoion ta koupha kai ta barea*). These things, in fact, can be moved by force to places opposite [to their appropriate places], while by nature they are moved to their appropriate places (*oikeious*), the light upwards, the heavy downwards. But by the action of what, it is no longer manifest as it is when they are moved against nature. **Indeed, to say that these things move themselves (*auta hup'hautôn*) is impossible. This, in fact, is something vital (*zôtikon*), that is, proper to animated beings (*empsychôn*)” (*Phys.* VIII 4, 254b 33-255a 8; trans. Pellegrin, slightly modified).”**

Veloso has missed at least twice in my earlier explanations that Aristotle is only asserting here at the end that it is impossible to *say* that the elements move themselves, *an expression in Greek that applies (sensibly) only to animate objects which could stop their own bodies (and restart). Elements cannot stop their instances (or in figurative speech “themselves”)*. The Northern Greek is *not* asserting that the inherent source/principle of nature in elements *cannot* be responsible for the movement.

[We continue with Veloso's statement from 8 July 2025, pp. 1-2 above]:

Tu sembles penser au contraire que le mouvement des corps naturels élémentaires sublunaires n'a pas de cause motrice, ou bien que la nature en est en quelque sorte la cause motrice. Mais cela est simplement faux, dans le cadre de la pensée d'Aristote.

.

[You seem to think, on the contrary, that the movement of sublunary elementary natural bodies has no moving cause, or that nature is in some way the moving cause. But this is simply false, within the framework of Aristotle's thought.]

Even in Lambda the source or principle (*archēn*) is said to be a cause, thus the principle of nature being responsible for movement entails that it is the "mover." Thus, Veloso is just plain wrong, as already discussed above relative to *DC II 6* and why the universe is regular. I repeat for convenience:

...since **not only things which are inherent in an object are its causes**, but also certain external things, e.g. the moving cause, clearly "principle" and "element" are not the same; **but both are causes**. Principles are divided into these two kinds, and **that which moves a thing or brings it to rest is a kind of principle** and substance (1070b22-24).

[We return again to Veloso's email of 8 July, above, also with my translation]:

D'ailleurs, tu ne peux pas limiter ce passage de *Phys. VIII 4* aux corps élémentaires sublunaires parce que « les choses légères et les choses lourdes » sont juste un exemple : *hoion ta koupha kai ta barea*). Il est donc tout à fait légitime de l'étendre à l'éther.

[Besides, you cannot limit this passage from *Phys. VIII 4* to sublunary elementary bodies because "light things and heavy things" are just an example: *hoion ta koupha kai ta barea* (255a 2). It is therefore entirely legitimate to extend it to the ether.]

This is fine, but the same emphasis about the use of Greek language is also applicable to instances of the aether, the outer spheres: To say "themselves" in this case is also figurative language, probably for brevity (although the Northern Greek does not provide that reason). "They [non-animal elements] move themselves" really stands for "their bodies move because of their internal principle or source of nature."

##[Let us now continue with Veloso's email of 12 Sept]:

Je soutiens que, comme tels, les corps élémentaires n'ont qu'un principe de mouvement passif et que donc la cause motrice de leur mouvement est nécessairement externe, *même quand ils se meuvent vers leur lieu approprié*. Pour Aristote, être mû par une cause motrice externe n'équivaut pas à être mû de manière contre-naturelle, contrairement à ce que tu sembles croire.

[I maintain that, as such, **elementary bodies have only a passive principle of motion** and that therefore the motive cause of their motion is necessarily external, even when they move toward their proper place. For Aristotle, being moved by an external motive cause is not equivalent to being moved unnaturally, contrary to what you seem to believe.]

Regarding elementary bodies having only a passive principle, how does Veloso explain the rock falling downward out of my hand at the edge of a cliff (per the footnote above) if there is a breeze blowing *up* from the sea (and even if I throw the rock upwards when the breeze continues 500 feet higher than the apex of my throw)? The rock surely has no soul. What then is the "external motive cause"? There is none. This all entails that the internal source/principle of motion (its nature, that is, its material or material *and* formal constitution including its all-important weight for Ar) cause it to go downwards. Since the source is the cause of the movement, the source is technically a legitimate "mover," even according to Lambda 4, 1070b22-24, as we saw earlier.

Dans le cas des corps élémentaires sublunaires, cette cause motrice externe peut être un autre corps élémentaire (sublunaire ou non) ou bien un corps composé et ce dernier peut aussi être un corps animé (sublunaire), de sorte que, du moins dans certaines situations, les corps élémentaires sublunaires peuvent être mus, en dernière instance, par l'âme d'un corps animé ; d'ailleurs, ils peuvent être mus par une âme à l'intérieur même d'un être vivant sublunaire.

This is consistent with my own reading of the texts.

Bien entendu, aucun des trois passages du *DC* que tu cites au début de *Scott's Final Statements* (p. 9) ne concerne la cause motrice, de sorte qu'ils ne montrent ce que tu voudrais qu'ils montrent.

Veloso insists from the beginning of this post-Lisbon exchange that we focus only on the moving cause, as if what causes the movement cannot be material or formal or both. Aristotle does not employ "moving cause" in the three just-mentioned passages because the principle or source *qua* cause is his intention, reason or "be-cause," which is all I need to show. I will not take a moderator's role and insist that Veloso answer my other points, which he refuses to address, but he can hardly claim rigor with his approach, it seems to me.

En ce qui concerne tes *Final Questions to Veloso for Clarification*, je te prie d'arrêter de dire que j'attribue une âme à l'éther (July 30, 2025 ; p. 11). J'attribue une âme (intellective-volitive-valuative) aux sphères, lesquelles sont censées être des entités distinctes entre elles, bien que matériellement composées d'un même et seul corps élémentaire, l'éther, avec toutes les difficultés que cette thèse aristotélicienne comporte.

As suggested once in this debate, just because a doctrine has difficulties does not exclude Aristotle from holding it. In fact, it is ironic that the person who ostensibly will show how Lambda's Unmoved Mover is a "disaster" is complaining about this topic. However, Veloso's demand poses no problem: We assume that it is only aethered spheres which have souls with intelligence, volition and evaluation; so if there were ten stars in the whole heavens there would be only ten souls, not eleven. All of the fatal difficulties above and below still impact his assertion. Moreover, Ar himself recognizes the issue of how the spheres are composed as parts of the fifth element and addresses it in *DC* II 7; Guthrie discusses it further in one of his longest remarks, regarding how Alexander and Simplicius also recognized and addressed the issue in their own way (*op. cit.*, pp. 176-179).

Il y a aussi une confusion de ta part sur la notion d'impassivité. En toute rigueur, le désir est une activité de l'âme, de sorte qu'il n'est pas, lui-même, une passion. Je n'ai pas le temps de le montrer, ici, mais tu peux trouver quelque chose sur ce point dans mon *Pourquoi la Poétique d'Aristote ?*, p. 81-86.

The details are not at issue. What is at issue is whether an aethered sphere that is elemental and simple can have multiple parts or "aspects" like a soul, a "desire," even if it is not a passion, volition, understanding, value judgements, etc. (Mortal) animate beings have these phenomena, not a simple, weightless element that lasts and moves in exactly the same way forever.

Dans la même page (18 Aug, 2025, (1)), tu m'attribues une thèse absurde que je n'ai jamais soutenue: je n'ai jamais dit que les sphères sont uniquement des intellects. Je soutiens que leur âme est uniquement intellectuelle – ce qui s'accompagne aussi de volonté et de jugement de valeur, comme je l'ai dit. En revanche, l'intellect est évidemment invisible, selon Aristote.

The clarification is appreciated but it simply confirms the other points addressed above and answers one final question: Veloso holds, it appears, that four elements do not have souls but one does, namely, a "mixed" view, despite the Northern Greek emphasizing, e.g., in *DC* I 2 that *all* the elements are simple and have simple (natural) motion, four up or down in a straight line and the other in a circle.

Quant au point (2), Cristóbal a parfaitement raison sur *DC* II 6. Dans ta réponse, comme l'on dit en italien, *tu ti arrampichi sui vetri* (ou *sugli specchi*), c'est-à-dire que tu te raccroches à n'importe quoi.

"You [Greg] cling to anything"? This is hardly a fitting response by someone with Veloso's normal capabilities. Again, he refuses to engage with some crucial considerations, regarding, for example, *archai* and how, ironically, even some of the doctrine laid out explicitly in Lambda shows that *DC* II 6 is not suggesting (with "...the incorporeal mover") the Unmoved

Mover of Lambda but rather the incorporeal source or principle of nature that causes the eternal motion and that, *qua* source or principle, is itself unmoved in an appropriate sense.

A more fitting response from Veloso would have been “I have not considered this yet but will send an answer down the line,” especially because Cristóbal not only recognized the strength of the alternative with “principle/source” once I sent the new explanation to him but changed his initial impression that II 6 refers to the Unmoved Mover. As he wrote (11 Sept 2025, private correspondence): “...you made me realise, the principle of nature can represent a valid replacement of the UM in DC.” When I wrote to Cristóbal for permission to cite him, he assented and added (14 Sept 2025): “For your concern, I still believe that the principle of nature can represent a valid replacement of the UM in DC.” If a neutral party, who has no skin in this game (because he works primarily on the Pre-Socratics), can be convinced of my reading, which, by the way, means that *three* (and not just two, as Guthrie declared) of the four arguments in II 6 against irregularity all presuppose the “supreme being being the aether,” with the fourth absolutely inconclusive one way or the other, then I am hardly “clinging to anything” in a pejorative sense. For Veloso, then, to ignore this set of arguments reflects his prejudice or something else equally unprofessional.

Je me limiterai à te rappeler que, dans la Postface à ma traduction de Bèta, je commente longuement Lambda 6 et montre l'ambiguïté de la mention de *ousias* en 1071b 21.

I will happily take this account when I finish *Aristotle's Apostasy*.

Je me permets aussi de signaler une erreur dans la n. 2 (p. 15), à propos de Lambda 5 : le soleil et son cercle oblique ne constituent absolument pas un cinquième type de cause, mais une cause motrice, tout comme le père, simplement le soleil est une cause motrice (ou efficiente) plus éloignée.

This is a fair response but there still seems to be a fifth kind of cause, even if it is the moving or efficient cause now having two sub-kinds: one direct, close or immediate and the other indirect, distant or mediated. Also, what in this context is the “privation” (*sterēsis*) juxtaposed alongside matter and form?

Une toute dernière remarque. Tu sais parfaitement que, pour moi, il peut y avoir des interpolations. Si tu penses vraiment qu'il y en a une en DC II 6, je te prie de dire précisément le passage qui serait interpolé.

As I wrote (on p. 15):

Fifth, the troublesome phrase “...neither will the incorporeal mover change” could be a mistaken edit of a corrupted phrase or an interpolation by a later editor trying to insert the UM, especially given that arguments one and three, per Guthrie, *show the supreme being to be the aether*.

Again, though, this is a final (fifth) option, in case the first four solutions can be refuted. However, as we just saw, Veloso refuses even to attempt to refute them and instead prefers to accuse me of clinging to anything and everything. My solution keeps the “supreme being being the aether,” which surely makes the chapter more consistent and powerful.

Cela vaut aussi pour DA III 4-5.

There are a number of options, but because the current issue is whether an (instance of an) element can have a soul and because the texts and arguments to this point appear overwhelmingly to reveal they cannot, I refrain from entering the swamp that is III 4-5.

Closing Remarks

Following the principles and flexibility of digital publication (compared to traditional Gutenberg practices), this page will be a placeholder for any forthcoming rejoinder by Veloso or any of his

supporters (if only on this issue), to be updated at the same URL if and when any of them ever provides additional arguments.

Again, the crucial issue here is whether the aethered *spheres* can (each) have a soul, and not any kind of soul (like Thales's magnet or a plant-soul) but the kind that loves or desires, thinks, chooses volitionally, etc., because, *if not, then DC is incompatible with the theory of Lambda* in which the ensouled outer spheres desire either the Unmoved Mover, (Pure) Actuality or God, if these are not all identical, moving as a result. This is couched more precisely for Veloso in the claim that "*all elementary natural bodies (including ether)* possess as such only a *passive* principle of motion, so that the motive (and therefore active) cause of their motion must come either ***from another elementary natural body...or from a soul.***"

There can be no doubt, I believe, for anyone who has read *DC* carefully, from start to finish, that the eternal aether—in whole or in part (including the spheres like stars)—is never constrained or affected by the sublunary four elements (*pace* Judson). Therefore the only option regarding the "most divine element" for Veloso is that the "motive...cause" of each sphere's movement must come from a soul. That claim, however, is so outrageous, considering Guthrie's own work and even leaving aside my own arguments, that, unless better arguments arise, I merely now conclude with my own (provisional) **Summary & Conclusion**—which, again, can be changed quickly in this age of digital publishing—at:

www.epspress.com/Lisbon2025/PostLisbonSummary.pdf