

THE ARISTOTELIAN *DE ANIMA* AND MAN AS «THINKING ON THINKING»*

In the *corpus aristotelicum* the three books of the *De anima* are destined to inquire the nature of the soul. According to the Stagirite this inquiry raises one of the most important philosophical issues. The relevance of this investigation derives from the ontological prominence of its object, from the accessibility of such an object to a rigorous method of inquiry and, finally, from the philosophical presupposition that the knowledge of the soul «gives a great contribution to the truth in all fields of investigation»¹, because it synthesizes in itself the ontological degrees in which the structure of reality consists.

Even though the soul was traditionally thought of as the animating principle of all beings², the analysis that Aristotle makes of the psychological speculations of his predecessors reveals several points of controversy. The *ἀπορίαι* brought to light by the Aristotelian analysis of such *endoxa in fama* represent the *impasse* of the psychology of the time, which Aristotle intends to remove by his personal contribution³.

The soul is primarily evoked, as Aristotle says in the first book of his *De anima*, in order to explain three fundamental characteristics of beings: the life *tout court* in its basic capacities of nutrition, growth and reproduction⁴, functions that Aristotle will then attribute to the vegetative soul⁵; secondarily, the soul explains the capacity of movement, possessed by the most part of the animals; finally, the soul answers for the cognitive capacity that in the animals consists in the perception and that in the *homo sapiens* includes also the ability of thinking⁶. These faculties are related to each other in such a way that the

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1. ARISTOTLE, *De anima*, A1 402a1-7.

2. J. LEAR, *Aristotle: the desire to understand*, Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 96.

3. *De anima*, A1 403b20-30; A2 404b10-405b10-15. These passages, where Aristotle investigates the position of his predecessors on the ontological *status* of the soul, show us to which extent he borrowed from them some of his fundamental positions as, for example, that the soul synthesizes in itself the ontological structure of reality, and that the soul is the cause of sensation and movement. On the «dialectical» method used by Aristotle, cf. E. BERTI, *Aristotele: dalla dialettica alla filosofia prima*, Padova, 1977; IDEM, *La dialettica in Aristotele, L'attualità della problematica aristotelica*, Padova, 1970.

4. *De anima*, B2 413a20-25.

5. *Ibid.*, B2 413b10-15; 414a30; B4 415a25-426b31.

6. *Ibid.*, A2 403b25-27; cf. Γ3 427a17-19

presence of the superior capabilities always involves the presence of the inferior ones⁷. According to the Stagirite the most controversial position assumed by the earlier philosophers consisted in the consideration of the soul as an entity that lives independently from the body: on this basis the soul was just juxtaposed to the σῶμα, and this juxtaposition was given for granted without providing any explanation of the nature of this union⁸. Aristotle reputes possible to eliminate this difficulty by approaching the problematic of his time psychology on the ground of his «statical» conception of the substance (as σύνολον of ὑποκείμενον and εἶδος) and of his «dynamical» idea of being (matter/δύναμις, form/ἐνέργεια, στέρησις)⁹. In this sense, Aristotle defines programmatically the soul as «the form of a natural body that has life in potency»¹⁰ and on the ground of this fundamental presupposition he develops his further investigations. Since the form of a natural body consists in its nature, the soul will represent the nature of the beings, i.e. their internal principle of rest and movement: the soul is then the «first actuality of the body»¹¹.

All the informations deriving from the observation of the animals' faculties must be interpreted in the light of these ontological principles¹². Moreover, such an observation informs us of the specific variety of the animals' souls, so that the possibility to give a unique and an a priori definition of the concept of soul is absolutely excluded¹³. Consequently, the Aristotelian starting point is that the soul constitutes the form and therefore the actuality of the body¹⁴, while the matter, of which the body is composed, will represent its potency: the soul is so the λόγος of the living organism¹⁵. In this sense, it will be showed that a

7. *Ibid.*, B3 414b25-30.

8. *Ibid.*, A3 407b13-26. Cf. also A3 407a-407b30, where Aristotle expresses his criticisms against the Platonic conception of the soul as «extension». The different conceptions of the soul in ancient Greek philosophy have been studied by G. REALE, *Anima, corpo e salute*, Milano, Cortina, 2002.

9. In *De anima*, A1 402a18-402b, Aristotle states that the nature of the soul must be investigated according to the principal meanings of being, i.e. in the sense of the substance and the categories, and in the sense of the potency and the actuality.

10. *Ibid.*, A1 402b5-15; B1 412a20-1.

11. *Ibid.*, B4 12a20-22; cf. B1 412a.

12. *Ibid.*, A1 402b20-430a.

13. *Ibid.*, B3 414b25. Cf. also 402a10-22, and b21-403a2. Cf., on this point, D. W. Ross, *Aristotle*, London – New York, Methuen, 1985.

14. *De anima*, B1 412a27-28, b5.

15. *Ibid.*, 412b10-11. Cf. B2 414a15-22: «For, as we said, the word substance has three meanings – form, matter, and the complex of both – and of these matter is potentiality, form actuality. Since then the complex here is the living thing, the body cannot be the actuality of the soul; it is the soul which is the actuality of a certain kind of body. Hence the rightness of the view that the soul cannot be without a body, while it cannot be a body; it is not a body, but something relative to a body».

consistent interpretation of the *De anima* can be attained only if we consider the concepts that we have just illustrated in the light of the ontological relations that, in the Aristotelian world, bind the beings together in the structure of an ascending hierarchy. This hierarchy articulates itself in different degrees of potencies and actualities, which are then characterized by an univocal dependency relation: the lowest degrees are always presupposed by the highest ones, toward which they manifest a constant tendency¹⁶.

1. The perception in the *De anima*. In the Aristotelian inquiry, the perception constitutes the fundamental *analogon* of the intellectual activity, so that its correct investigation will provide us with a privileged access to the secrets of mind's functions¹⁷.

In the *De anima* the αἰσθησις is a process that takes place only in the sense organs¹⁸; in fact, the perception is conceived as a kind of alteration that consists

16. *Ibid.*, B1 412a10, a22; cf. B5.

17. *Ibid.*, B5 417b18-25; Γ4 429a10-429b.

18. *Ibid.*, Γ2 426a5-15. Even though the interpretation of the Aristotelian theory of perception has certainly raised an inferior number of controversies in comparison to the concept of active mind, its clear understanding has been compromised by the impressive *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Cartesian philosophy: in the interpretation of the *De anima* many authors have generally searched for the «essential» distinction – and not only for a distinction «relative» to the different perspectives of investigation, as in deeds Aristotle himself suggests (A1 403a18-403b15) – between the physiological condition of perception – an event or a series of events in the body – and the psychological and mental event of perception, that we are used to locate in the soul itself. This distinction in terms of essences basically relies on the Cartesian separation of *res cogitans* and *res extensa* that some studiers felt the need to attribute to Aristotle himself, at least *in pectore*. Cf. on this point D.W. ROSS, *Aristotle, op. cit.*, pp. 136-137. Cf. in this sense also T. J. SLAKEY, *Aristotle on sense perception, Aristotle's De anima in focus*, Michael Durrant ed., London-New York, Routledge, 1997, pp. 75 ff. Cf. also R. SORABJI, *Body and Soul in Aristotle, op. cit.*, p. 65: this author rightly claims that the Aristotelian concept of soul is much wider than the one of Cartesian modernity; then, by Aristotle we deal with a biological concept of the soul that presupposes the continuity between vegetal and sensitive world. Cf. furthermore *ibid.*, p. 167: «In a very un-Cartesian way, Aristotle insists that in some sense of 'is' every mental act is a physiological process», and that «no acts are purely mental, since every pathos of the soul is, among other things, a physiological processes» (*ibid.*, p. 168). Finally, states SORABJI, *ibid.*, p. 169, «his [of Aristotle] most Cartesian remark is perhaps the one in the *Physics*, when he says that a change of a quality in the sense-organs of a living thing differs from a change of quality in a lifeless thing, in that it does not go unnoticed (*Phys.* 244b15-245a2)». Cf. D.W. ROSS, *Aristotle, op. cit.*, p. 132: «A notice like that of Descartes, that the existence of the soul is the first certainty and the existence of matter a later inference, would have struck Aristotle as absurd». For a Cartesian interpretation of the Aristotelian conception of the body-mind relation, cf. F. SOLMSEN, Antecedents of Aristotle's psychology and scale of beings, *American Journal of Philology*, 76, 1955, pp. 148-64; J. BARNES, Aristotle's concept of mind, *Articles on Aristotle*, vol. IV, J. Barnes, M. Schofield, R. Sorabji, eds. London, Duckworth, 1979; finally, on the same topic we recall the interesting essay by J.L. ACKRILL, Aristotle's definition of psyché, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian society*, 73, 1972-3, pp. 119-133.

in the transition of the sensitive faculty from its potential state to its actuality by force of an external object, i.e. by force of the perceptible that stimulates its sensorial capabilities to activity by its presence in the environment¹⁹. The core of the Aristotelian explanation of perceptual phenomena consists in showing that every kind of object is able in potency to cause an alteration in the respective sense organ *via* some *medium*²⁰; so perception can be defined as that physical process in which the perceived object affects the respective sense organ and leads it from the state of potency, in which the sense organ lies in respect to the possibility to assume the actual status that the sensible object possesses already, to the same actuality of the perceived object²¹. In other words, the sense organ is in potency such as the perceptible is already in actuality; consequently, Aristotle says, what is perceivable is such only in potency, and not in actuality²². For the accomplishment of the perceptual process two conditions must be provided. Since the sense is a *μεσότης*²³, i.e. a midpoint between the two qualitative opposites that determine the field of each sense, it will be perceptible only what presents a tangible quality that does not coincide with the average quality of the sense-mean; differently, the «thermometer» of our sense organs, by being unable to detect any qualitative difference, will not be able to perceive at all; this presupposition implies naturally the corollary that the perceptible must not be characterized by an extreme default or by an excess in its tangible quality (e.g., for the touch, an extreme cold or an extreme heat), because those excesses would destroy the «measuring mean» of the sense organs²⁴. Therefore, the sense organs are highly selective. The second necessary presupposition of perception is the presence of a *medium* by which the sensible quality can be transmitted: then, on the ground of the Aristotelian *Physics*, no action at distance can be admitted without intermediates as well as no perception in a sense organ that is put at direct contact to the perceptible itself²⁵.

19. *De anima*, B5 416b33-34; 417b20-21. Cf. also Th. J. SLAKEY, Aristotle on sense perception, *op. cit.*, p. 81: «The only distinction between «sense» and «sense organ» is that the word «sense» refers to the power of the sense-organ to change within a certain range of qualities. [...] Therefore I conclude that in this passage Aristotle holds that the perception of x is identical with a sense organ becoming x, because he tries to explain the perception of x as the change of the sense-organ to x. [...] the perception of x can be understood as a sense-organ becoming x».

20. *De anima*, B8 420a13-15; B9, 421b12-422a5; B11 423b22-25.

21. *Ibid.*, B11 423b30-424a2: «That, which makes something such as it itself actually is, makes the other such because the other is already potentially such».

22. *Ibid.*, B5 417a7.

23. *Ibid.*, B11 424a15 ff.

24. *Ibid.*, 424a30.

25. Cf. *Physics*, H, 2. The senses cannot perceive by immediate contact the perceptible, but only by the presence of the *medium*, i.e. by a means of transmission of the sensible qualities; cf., on this point, *De anima*, Γ1 424b22-425a.

So perception can be understood as that causal process²⁶ in which – differently from the processes of the vegetative soul, allocated to nutrition and reproduction and therefore destined to assimilate with the form of the external objects also their matter²⁷ – the «sensible form» of a body, without the matter of which it is composed²⁸, is assumed by the perceiving subject and, *via* some *medium*, transferred to the sense organ and then to the perceptual centre of the heart²⁹. This form represents the sensible quality that is in actuality in the perceptible, but only in potency in the sense organ³⁰. Finally, according to the presuppositions of the Aristotelian physics, the compatibility between sense organs and perceptible relies on the common microstructures of earth, water, air and fire that compose all sublunary beings³¹.

The *φαντασία* belongs also to the sensitive soul. It was traditionally thought of as the capability of retention and manipulation of the perceptual traces left in the heart by the percept; in reality, it plays the relevant role of «faculty in virtue of which the animal sees his object as an object of a certain sort»³²: since the way in which something appears to the animal depends on its peculiar observation point, on its desires and, in general, on its lifetime story, Aristotle attributes to the imagination the capacity to give a preliminary interpretation of the sensible data; the imagination determines in fact the *vis appetitiva* of the animal according to the principle of pleasure and pain³³. Furthermore,

26. *De anima*, B5 417b5-10; Γ2 426a10-15. Cf. T.W. BYNUM, A new look at Aristotle's theory of perception, *Aristotle's De anima in focus*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

27. *Ibid.*, B11 424b.

28. *Ibid.*, 424a15-20.

29. *Ibid.* In this passage we meet for the first time the example of the wax tablet that receives only the impressions and not also the matter of the signet-ring.

30. The sensible qualities can be perceived by two different sensorial perceivers. Some qualities can be detected by a unique sense: it is the case of the so called «special sensible» (for example, the colour can be perceived only by the sight, whose sense organ is the eye); some other sensible qualities are perceived by more senses simultaneously: they represent the so called «common sensible», such as: motion, rest, number, figure and size. Cf. *ibid.*, B5 418a8-25; cf. also Γ1 425a15-20. On this point it is important to notice that the special senses, when they perceive their specific sensible, are nonviable to mistake; mistakes can occur in the so called «accidental sensible» (*ibid.*, Γ1 425a15-30), or in the imagination, the most sophisticated faculty of the sensitive soul (*ibid.*, Γ3 427b11 ff.; cf. Γ6 430b1 ff.).

31. Cf. T.W. BYNUM, A new look at Aristotle's theory of perception, *op. cit.*, p. 94. Cf. R. SORABJI, *Body and Soul in Aristotle*, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

32. M. NUSSBAUM GRAVEN, *Aristotle's 'De motu animalium'*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 255.

33. *De anima*, B2 413b23-25; B2 414b. Cf. also D. W. ROSS, *Aristotle*, *op. cit.*, p. 130: «The sensitive soul has not merely the function of perceiving, but, as a necessary consequence of this, that of feeling pleasure and pain, and therefore of desiring, which is found in all animals». Cf. *ibid.*, p. 143, where Ross underlines that the principal functions of imagination are: 1) formation of images after the perception (cf. *De insomniis*, 459b5 ff.); 2) memory, i.e. the function by which we perceive the time and that could not exist without images (cf. *De memoria*, I).

imagination plays an essential role in man too, since without its imagery no thinking process could ever be possible³⁴: then, against Plato, who theorized that the dialectics should go beyond the sphere of the sensible images³⁵, Aristotle believed that only an irrelevant number of beings could be conceived in a state of separation from matter³⁶; the mathematical beings themselves do not belong to this restricted circle of beings, because they are the result of an abstraction process and in our νοῦς they are always thought by sensorial images³⁷. The objects of thought are then always conceived through the data of the φαντασία; just this attribution to the imagination of a first non conceptual interpretation of the sensible data will help Aristotle in his elaboration of the concept of νοῦς παθητικός.

In the light of these considerations, the core of the Aristotelian conception of perception and intellectual activity seems to lie in the nature of the force that leads the perceiver from his potential state to his actuality³⁸. This force is to be found in the fundamental concepts of matter and form, potency and actuality, which constitute the basis of the Aristotelian ontology³⁹.

2. The Aristotelian hierarchy of potencies and actualities. The Aristotelian investigation starts from the presupposition that the soul is the first actuality of the body⁴⁰. Aristotle conceives this actuality as a set of capacities, which articulate themselves in the nutritive, perceptive and noetic faculties. These capacities are not simply juxtaposed to each other⁴¹, but they are connected in a so intimate way to form a unity, whose structural complexity can

34. *De anima*, Γ7 431a16, 431b2, 432a28. In Γ7-8, Aristotle explains in which sense our thought is essentially connected to imagination: a thought is not in itself an image, but it could not proceed without images (cf. Γ3 427b14-16; 431a16; 432a7-14; *De memoria*, 449b31): an idea or a judgment can be conceived only when our mind discovers a point of identity between two or more images (434a9; cf. *Analytica posteriora*, 100a4-16; *Metaphysics*, A 980b28-981a12); it follows that nothing can be thought without the *continuum* of space and time, which result from memory and so from imagination (cf. *De memoria*, 449b30-450a9; cf. *Physics*, 223a16-29).

35. PLATO, *Republic*, 510b, 511c. Cf. ARISTOTLE, *De anima*, Γ3 428a-428b10; 429a1-10; Γ7 431a15-20; *De memoria*, 450a1-7; cf. 452b7-15.

36. *De anima*, Γ7 431b2-5.

37. *Ibid.*, Γ4 429b10-18.

38. On perception cf., finally, *De sensu*, 436b7; *De memoria*, 450a27-29; *De insomniis*, 454a7-11.

39. Cf. T.W. BYNUM, A new look at Aristotle's theory of perception, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-109.

40. *De anima*, B1 412a19, b5.

41. According to D. W. ROSS, *Aristotle*, *op. cit.*, p. 145, the capacities that Aristotle attributes to the soul are nutrition, sensation, movement, thought (*De anima*, B2 413a23; b11-13).

be understood as an articulation of several levels of potencies and actualities⁴². By observing animals' perceptual processes, Aristotle remarks that their soul is characterized by the capacity to assume the sensible qualities of the perceptibles without their matter, and in order to explain this perceptual process he uses the analogy of the wax tablet that «takes on the impress of a signet-ring without the iron or gold»⁴³, i.e. without assimilating also the signet-ring's metal.

Aristotle understands the perception in terms of alteration, i.e. as a movement that consists in the transition from a potential state to an actual one. At this point, the issue at stake is the definition of what induces the accomplishment of this kind of movement. We can notice that every external object, when it is perceived, actualizes its individual form in the higher level of «sensible form». The activity that takes place in the perceiver, whenever he detects a perceptible, produces the perceptual awareness of the reality of the perceived object: this sensible induces in the perceiver the perceptual awareness of itself⁴⁴. This perceptual awareness deals with the same sensible form of the percept: the only difference lies in the fact that by the perceptual awareness of itself this form reaches its higher level of actuality. In other words, the sensible form exists in the percept as capacity to induce, by means of its perceptibility and of its effective perception, the perceptual awareness of itself in a perceiving subject that is in condition to detect it⁴⁵. In this sense, even though a tree possesses the sensible form of «tree», it will be never be able to be perceptually aware of itself⁴⁶. So, the sensitive soul will be the place in which the sublunary world has the possibility to find its higher level of actuality by virtue of the ontological clarity that it receives in its being abstracted from the sublunary matter by the perception process.

In the light of this interpretation, the perceptible and the corresponding sensitive faculty constitute two potencies that tend to a unique actuality, i.e. the perception itself⁴⁷. The form of the sensible object represents its first actuality,

42. Cf. R. SORABJI, *Body and Soul in Aristotle*, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-195, especially p. 163.

43. Cf. *De anima*, B12 424a17-24: «what produces the impression is a signet of bronze or gold, but not *qua* bronze or gold». Cf. the important consideration by J. LEAR, *Aristotle*, *op. cit.*, p. 101: «It is important not to confuse the sensible form of a thing with its form. The sensible form of, say, a tree is manifested, first, in the tree's appearance as a tree; second, in the tree's ability to cause appropriately situated perceivers to perceive it as a tree. The form of a tree, by contrast, is its nature or essence. Of course, sensible form is itself an expression of form: part of what is to be a tree is to appear like a tree. But the reality of a tree is not exhausted by its appearance».

44. *De anima*, Γ2 425b10-15.

45. On the existence – in the phenomenon of perception – of two potencies, one peculiar of the perceiver, the other of the perceptible, which realize themselves in a unique actuality that takes place in the perceiving subject, cf. *ibid.*, B5 417a8-20; Γ2 426a15-20.

46. J. LEAR, *Aristotle*, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

47. *De anima*, Γ2 426a15-20. Cf. D.W. ROSS, *Aristotle*, *op. cit.*, p. 138: «The actualization of perception is at the same time the actualization of the object».

i.e. it consists in the sensible form understood as capacity to induce a perceptual awareness in the available perceiving subjects. In this sense, the sensible form is the actuality of the percept, but it is also the potency to be perceived by a perceiving subject. This sensible form can reach a second level of actuality only in the sensitive soul of the animals. The soul of an animal will not allow however the highest level of actuality⁴⁸; higher levels must be found in the human intellectual capacities that deal with the intelligible forms: these constitute a higher level of actuality in comparison to the sensible form, because when this one indicates only the presence of beings, the intelligible form reveals their essences, i.e. their *λόγοι*⁴⁹.

In order to explain further the sense in which the Stagirite speaks of several levels of potency and actuality, he refers to the example of a person who has learned a determined subject – so he has passed from the potency of learning (a first level actuality) to the actuality of having learned some knowledge (a second level potentiality) – and of the same person, who «actually» exercises the acquired knowledge, passing from a second level potentiality to a second level actuality⁵⁰. Now, we have seen that the initial state of human soul is already defined as a «first level actuality» in the sense that it possesses a potentiality to use the knowledge that it spontaneously acquires⁵¹. In other words, the soul is the first actuality of the body, because it is already *ἐνέργεια* of the apprehensive intellectual process. It seems in fact that according to Aristotle the apprehension represents a kind of constant *ἐνέργεια* of the *νοῦς*⁵²: then, man's life consists in a constant «naïve» apprehending process, i.e. in a non 'theoretically' conscious process, of the essential structure of reality, toward which man maintains a constant intentionality as a kind of spontaneous disposition: its *ἐνέργεια*-status explicates its structural intentional character⁵³. In its second actuality the soul finds its highest level of reality: it coincides with the so called *νοῦς ποιητικός*, by which the knowledge that has been apprehended by the passive mind, i.e. the *λόγοι* of the encountered substances, can be theoretically contemplated. Finally, in this contemplation not only the soul reaches its second level actuality⁵⁴, but also the forms of the sublunary

48. *De anima*, B5 41721-27.

49. *Ibid.*, Γ4 429b15-20.

50. *Ibid.*, B1 412a23-26 : «Now there are two kinds of actuality corresponding to knowledge and to reflecting. It is obvious that the soul is an actuality like knowledge; for both sleeping and waking presuppose the existence of the soul, and of these waking corresponds to reflecting, sleeping to knowledge possessed but not employed, and knowledge of something is temporally prior»; cf. also B5 417a20-417b, and Γ4 429b5-10.

51. *Ibid.*, B5 417b2-7, b14-16. cf. *Metaphysics*, Θ6.

52. *De anima*, Γ4 429b25-30; Γ8 431b5-432a15.

53. *Ibid.*, B5 417b16-19.

54. *Ibid.*, Γ6 431a10; cf. also *Physics*, Θ 257b8.

beings, which are now considered in their pure intelligibility. Human mind is then the place in which the sublunary forms reach their highest actuality level. The Aristotelian world, where the forms exist at every level as potencies toward their own realization in a superior level of actuality, is dominated by an inflexible teleology: the Stagirite attributes to every form a force that tends to its ontological realization, which is attained with the increased «visibility» of its essential structure; the enmattered sensible forms are then conceived as potencies that tend toward their perceptual and intellectual awareness⁵⁵.

This constant tension of every level of actuality toward its superior state represents the expression in physical terms of the psychological dynamic of desire. As the animal tends to the preservation and realization of its own form on the ground of what it perceives as pleasant and painful, so the rational capacities are moved by the same desire to their thoughts and actions⁵⁶. According to Aristotle, every tendency as tendency toward a superior level of actuality represents the fundamental phenomenon of life that can arrest itself only in the actuality of God, so that the ὄρεξις constitutes, in each one of its levels, the attempt to participate in the eternity of God⁵⁷.

3. The three fundamental analogies of human νοῦς: perception, arts, light. The idea that Aristotle suggests of man, individuated in its peculiarity by the possess of νοῦς, must be grasped in the light of the explicit suggestions given by the Stagirite. In this sense the *De anima* offers three fundamental analogies, in which the intellectual activity is respectively compared to perception, to the process which the technical production occurs and, finally, to the *medium* of light. In the synthesis of these elements we will find the Aristotelian concept of the νοῦς.

a. *The analogy between perception and intellectual activity.* On the ground of

55. D. W. Ross, *Aristotle, op. cit.*, p. 141.

56. *De anima*, Γ9 433a10-20; *Metaphysics*, Θ5; *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1145a15-1152a36; *De motu* 6-10. Aristotle relates desire to action – that consists in the tendency toward the τέλος indicated by the potency of the agent, who always aims at a higher level of actuality –, when he says that the efficient cause of πράξις is the προαίρεσις that in deeds represents a certain kind of desire (*De anima*, Γ9 433a10-20). Aristotle distinguishes then between βούλησις, i.e. the desire of something that is good in itself, and the προαίρεσις, desire for something that is in our power to have and that we have considered to be the best means for the end we desire. The desire for an end, accompanied by reasoning, represents the efficient cause of the action in consideration of the best means to this end; so it is the desire for the means to be the efficient cause of the action. The desire for an end, according to Aristotle, can be in fact directed to things that are not immediately in our power, such as the health when we are sick, or for things that are entirely independent from us, as physical beauty, or that are impossible at all, as immortality (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139a31-32; cf. also 1111b19-30).

57. *De anima* B4 415a26-27.

this analogy⁵⁸, the νοῦς should proceed in its activity in an analogous way to perception⁵⁹. As the sensitive faculty is in potency in respect to the actual state of the perceptible regarding its sensible form, so the νοῦς is in potency in respect to the intelligible forms, i.e. to the λόγοι of beings⁶⁰. In this sense, the human νοῦς is primarily defined by its capacity to assume these λόγοι⁶¹. As it occurs in the sensation, where the sense organ takes on only the sensible form of the percept, so the νοῦς becomes identical to the object of its apprehension, and in this transition from being that λόγος in potency to being this λόγος in actuality it acquires its second level potentiality. The impassibility of the νοῦς – that on the contrary of the sense organs does not undergo any kind of physical alteration – guarantees its unlimited capacity to become identical to all λόγοι⁶². Then, in the theoretical examination of the apprehended contents, our mind becomes aware of itself and it is able to comprehend itself⁶³: the νοῦς can be thought as well as all the other things, because in its case «speculative knowledge and its object are identical»⁶⁴. As the God of Aristotelian *Metaphysics*, also the human νοῦς, when it contemplates the content of its own thought, is «thinking on thinking»⁶⁵.

However, the analogy between thought and perception is not perfect. Differently from the sense organs, the νοῦς is immaterial: its nature is potency to become identical to every possible intelligible⁶⁶; so, whereas the senses are highly selective on the ground of their physical qualities, the νοῦς is on the contrary pure capability to assimilate whatever intelligible form is available to him⁶⁷. The mind's attributions of incorporeity, impassibility and purity from every admixture guarantee its unlimited range of apprehension⁶⁸. The νοῦς, by becoming identical to the apprehended λόγοι by means of a theoretical rea-

58. *De anima*, Γ4 429a10 ff. Cf., on this point, M. V. WEDIN, *Tracking Aristotle's Nous, Aristotle's De anima in focus, op. cit.*, pp. 128-161.

59. As well as perception, intellectual activity is a special mode of «being acted upon»: in the intellectual activity this process occurs by force of the intelligible; cf. *De anima*, Γ4 429a13-14.

60. *Ibid.*, 429b17-18. Naturally, this analogy is not perfect, since the senses undergo a physical alteration, whereas the mind is impassible; moreover, the senses require always the external presence of the perceptible, while the active mind is independent from every external object: the dependency on the external reality is attributed only to passive mind. Cf., *ibid.*, B5 417b19-28.

61. *Ibid.*, Γ4 429b10-18.

62. *Ibid.*, 429a10-429b.

63. *Ibid.*, 430a1-10.

64. *Ibid.*, 430a5.

65. *Ibid.*, 429b5-10; cf. *Metaphysics*, Λ9 1074b33-35.

66. *De anima*, Γ4 429a25-30.

67. *Ibid.*, 429b29-430a7.

68. *Ibid.*, 429a14-18; cf. *Metaphysics*, Λ6 1072a30.

analysis of its contents, actualized itself in a second level actuality⁶⁹. Correspondently to the Aristotelian example of the two «states» in which a man can be in respect to the knowledge he has acquired, the intellectual process articulates itself in three phases: in the first place the intelligible is only potentially present; in a second time, the νοῦς apprehends an external object by abstracting its intelligible form and assuming its λόγος. In this case, we still deal with a first level actuality in the sense of the illustrated example of the man who has acquired some knowledge but still does not exercise it. The third phase of the activity of νοῦς can be accomplished, when it already possesses the λόγοι of the beings, i.e. when it is already a second level potentiality⁷⁰: then, it can recall these λόγοι in absolute autonomy from all external contingencies, in order to analyse them theoretically in their pure ontological structure. In this transition from its first level actuality to its highest actuality the νοῦς acquires a stable condition, i.e. an ἔξις⁷¹.

b. *The analogy with the arts.* In the *De anima* Aristotle compares the activity of the νοῦς with the process by which the technical production occurs⁷². In order to grasp the relevance of this second analogy and its explanatory power in reference to the nature of human mind, we must refer to a fundamental passage that Aristotle dedicates to this topic in its *Metaphysics*⁷³. According to the Stagirite there are two fundamental relations on the ground of which an activity can be related to its end: the first one is peculiar of those activities, of which τέλος is represented by an external product, that remains autonomous from the activity itself at the end of the production process and that consists in something already accomplished. The second kind of relation regards those activities, the τέλος of which is achieved in the accomplishment of the activity itself. Examples for this kind of relation are the sight, the theoretical contemplation and, finally, the life itself⁷⁴. When the first kind of relation characterizes the τέχναι properly said, the second one defines the so called practical activities, in such a way that also the theoretical contemplation can be considered as a special kind of practical activity⁷⁵. Now, as we have said, the soul is actuality, i.e. ἐντελέχεια of the living body. In order to grasp the sense of this definition, we must notice that the concepts of ἐνέργεια and ἐντελέχεια, both Aristotelian

69. *De anima*, Γ4 429b1-10.

70. *Ibid.*, Γ8 431b25-432a15.

71. *Ibid.*, Γ4 429b5-7.

72. *Ibid.*, Γ5 430a10-20.

73. *Metaphysics*, Θ8 1050a30 ff.

74. Cf., on this point, G. Picht, *Aristoteles' De anima*, Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1992², pp. 38-40.

75. G. Picht, *Aristoteles' De anima*, *ibid.*, p. 295: «Das nicht zum Ziel gelangte In-sich-Haben des Zieles macht vielmehr das Wesen der Bewegung selbst aus. Bewegung ist überhaupt nichts anderes als nicht zum Ziel gelangtes In-sich-Habens des Zieles».

neologisms, are borrowed from the world of the arts. They designate the state of accomplishment and perfection of an ἔργον. In the ἔργον is the εἶδος, which is present in the mind of the craftsman, to indicate the τέλος to which he should tend. When Aristotle says that perceiving is an ἐνέργεια rather than a κίνησις⁷⁶, he means that the kinetic processes remain incomplete as long as they do not reach their end; on the contrary, ἐνέργεια implies already in the actualization of its own activity the end toward which it tends⁷⁷: in such activities τέλος, εἶδος and ἔργον coincide. In this sense, as in the ἔργον of «seeing» the act of perception accomplishes itself, so also in thinking the τέλος is internal to the ἔργον. When we assume this presupposition and we follow the Aristotelian analogy, we understand that in an opposite way to the process by which the craftsman impresses the form that he has in mind to his building material, so the forms of the world impose themselves to our mind⁷⁸ as the signet-ring on the wax tablet⁷⁹. And even though this special kind of alteration does not have a special name, Aristotle compares it to the transition from the potentiality to the actuality that occurs when the craftsman starts his production process⁸⁰. The production activity does not create anything different from the form that the craftsman has in mind⁸¹: it is always the same form but brought to a superior level of actuality, which it is reached by the being produced of the product⁸². In this analogy, the passive mind corresponds to the capacity of the building material to receive the form that exists in the mind of the craftsman: it is the form without matter to be present in his mind and that allows him to impress this form to his building material; in a similar way, it is by its incorporeity that the passive mind can become identical to every intelligible. The active mind corresponds then to the craftsman's ability to pass from the state of having the product's idea in mind to the actual state of putting it into practice; but differently from the craftsman, the νοῦς ποιητικὸς accomplishes this second activity in itself, so that subjective and objective potencies are already present in its essence⁸³.

Finally, the essence of human activity does not consist in the efficacy of the displayed producing power, i.e. in the concreteness of what it produces, but rather in the ability to bring something to its essential and natural perfection⁸⁴.

76. *Metaphysics*, Θ6 1048b18-38; *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1174a14-b9; *De sensu*, 446b2-3.

77. *Physics*, Θ 257b8: when the movement is defined as incomplete ἐντελέχεια of the movable, we understand why the soul is not defined as κίνησις.

78. *De anima*, Γ4 429a13-15, b24-6; B5 417b7, b14-15.

79. *Ibid.*, 430a.

80. *Ibid.*, B5 417b7-12, b14-16; Γ4 429a14-15, b24-26, b29-30.

81. *Metaphysics*, Z 7 1032a32-b2, b12-14.

82. *Ibid.*, Θ8 1050a25-34; cf. *Physics*, Γ3.

83. *Metaphysics*, Θ 8 1050a28-b1.

84. On the concept of τέχνη by ARISTOTLE, cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Z4 1140a9-10; cf. Z3 1139b22-23.

As Martin Heidegger says in its commentary to the book Θ of the Aristotelian *Metaphysics*⁸⁵ the ἐπιστήμη ποιητική is an intellectual activity that occurs in the occasion of the ποίησις. It is not pure ἐπιστήμη, which is essentially self-knowledge and meta-knowledge; on the other side, it does not merely consist in the ability to manipulate the things; on the contrary, its essence specifically consists in letting the things be in their οὐσία, i.e. in their presence and persistence, in order to perceive them according to *what* and *how* they are. In analogous way, the human intellect displays its activity, whose potency is tendency to enlighten the being of beings. From this analogy derives a special understanding of the τέλος of the activity of human νοῦς: it consists in the «production» of a renewed visibility of the fundamental ontological relations that constitute our reality. The νοῦς, when it produces a λόγος that is synthesis of opposed λόγοι, is the light that illuminates the truth of being⁸⁶.

c. *The analogy with the light.* Finally, Aristotle compares the νοῦς to the light⁸⁷. In order to clarify the implications of this analogy, it is necessary to see which are the physical characteristics attributed to this fundamental physical *medium*. The Stagirite believed in the existence of a transparent *medium*, such as for example air, water, some solids, the ether, but that is present in small quantities in all kinds of bodies⁸⁸. This *medium* is supposed to accomplish the essential function of «mediating», i.e. of transmitting the perceptible's qualities to the perceiver⁸⁹. Since the immediate contact of the perceptible on the surface of the sense-organ, for example of a coloured surface on the eye, does not allow any perception, then, in order to justify the phenomenon of perception at distance, Aristotle affirms the existence of an intermediate being that assumes in actuality the sensible quality of the perceptible in order to transmit it to the perceiving subject. This *medium*, called the «diaphanous», can also exist in potency or in actuality⁹⁰; it is in actuality when a being such as fire is present. In the case of light, according to Aristotle, we deal with the active state of the «transparent», while the colour, in reference to the sense of sight, is what puts the light in motion⁹¹; however, since without light the colour could not be visible, then the light can be considered in a wide sense as the actualization of the colour⁹².

85. M. HEIDEGGER, *Metaphysik Θ 1-3. Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft*, in *Gesamtausgabe*, Band 33, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1981.

86. *Ibid.*, pp. 127-129.

87. *De anima*, Γ 5 430a15-20.

88. *Ibid.*, B7 418b5-10, and *De sensu*, 439a 20-5.

89. Cf. *supra*, n. 25.

90. *De anima*, B7.

91. *Ibid.*, B7 418a31-b2, 419a9-10.

92. *Ibid.*, Γ 5 430a15-18.

What is important to notice in order to understand the implications of this analogy for the comprehension of the nature of the νοῦς, is that the light is not the cause of the transparent, which in deeds is the fire; rather, the light is «the presence of fire in transparent»⁹³ and, as such, it cannot be engaged in any kind of ‘productive’ activity: it designates simply the actual state (ἐξίς) of the transparent *medium*, i.e. a ‘dispositional’ activity. In this sense, light is the actuality of the transparent *qua* transparent. On the ground of the Aristotelian analogy of the light, the active νοῦς should be conceived as a «stable ontological condition» that allows the intelligible forms to actualize their λόγοι in the dianoetic contemplation. The νοῦς ποιητικός is then the disposition of the soul that makes it especially receptive of the influence of the natural enmattered forms; finally, the fact that Aristotle uses also here the metaphor of the wax tablet for the νοῦς παθητικός allows to interpret the νοῦς ποιητικός just in these terms⁹⁴.

4. Man as thinking on thinking. In the light of the interpretative indications that Aristotle himself has suggested, we can formulate the following conclusions regarding the human νοῦς. The νοῦς is a first level actuality, second level potentiality and tendency toward its highest realization; according to Aristotle, the continuous apprehension of intelligible forms is something spontaneous in man: the νοῦς παθητικός represents the intentional structure of our mind. When the transition to a second level actuality occurs, i.e. when the λόγοι of beings are contemplated in themselves and connected to each other so to gain a perspective on the logical and ontological relations that constitute the Aristotelian world, then the νοῦς realizes itself as ποιητικός and as such it is able to think on itself⁹⁵. It becomes the light of being that draws the frame of the horizon in which the apprehension of further λόγοι is necessary as well as possible. Moreover, the νοῦς offers the visibility of the truth of being simply by virtue of its actual contemplation: the cognitive spheres in which the νοῦς articulates its activity, such as *techne*, *episteme*, *phronesis*, *sophia*⁹⁶, are nothing else but the ways in which the visibility of being as such is produced⁹⁷. The heideggerian image that indicates in man the «shepherd of being»⁹⁸ recalls this Aristotelian position.

93. *Ibid.*, B7 418b15-18.

94. *Ibid.*, Γ12 435a5-10; cf. B11 424a15-20. Cf. also *Metaphysics*, Λ3 1070a11; 1069b34; 1070b11. Cf. furthermore R.D. HICKS, *Aristotle, De anima*, p. 501, and T.W. BYNUM, A new look at Aristotle's theory of perception, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

95. *De anima*, Γ4 429a8-10.

96. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139b15-17.

97. M. HEIDEGGER, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles*, Stuttgart, Reclam, 2002, p. 45.

98. M. HEIDEGGER, *Brief über den «Humanismus»*, in *Wegmarken, Gesamtausgabe*, Band 9, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1976, p. 342.

On the ground of this interpretation, we can also understand better the terms by which Aristotle qualifies the active νοῦς: it is defined as χωριστός, ἀπαθής, ἀμικτός, ἀθάνατον and αἰδίων⁹⁹, all appellatives that seem at the first to suggest its divinity and so its ontological difference from the sublunary beings; but then the Stagirite does not attribute to active νοῦς an existence outside the human soul as long as its reality consists in being the actuality of the living body. Moreover, since the active νοῦς represents that peculiar «disposition» that allows man to contemplate the being, it is destined to remain estrange to what constitute the unrepeatable individuality of man, i.e. his memory and the knowledge that he peculiarly possesses and interprets on the ground of his personal perspective: this part of the soul coincides with the passive mind and it is expressively declared mortal by Aristotle¹⁰⁰. The separateness and immortality of the active νοῦς are not related to individual immortality: this position will belong to Christian revelation and remains fundamentally estrange to ancient Greek philosophy.

Rather, we must consider that for Aristotle θεωρία is the unique activity of man that can be realized independently from all external contingencies: then, it represents the most divine state in the sublunary reality. In this sense, Heidegger says that the pure understanding gains its concrete possibilities of realization when it becomes free from every finalized relation to its object. Θεωρία is just the *modus* in which life can assume a state of rest in its fundamental tendency. The θεωρεῖν, understood as the purest motility of man, represents also the purest actualization that life has at its own disposal; therefore, it is something «divine»¹⁰¹. For Aristotle the idea of divine does not consist in the

99. *De anima*, Γ 5 430 a15-20.

100. *Ibid.*, 430 a23-25.

101. M. HEIDEGGER, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles*, op. cit., pp. 61-62: «Das reine Verstehen hat seine konkrete Vollzugmöglichkeit im Freisein von den Besorgnissen des verrichtenden Umgangs; sie ist das Wie, in dem das Leben hinsichtlich einer seiner Grundtendenzen einen Aufenthalt nimmt. Das Theorein ist die reinste Bewegtheit, über die das Leben verfügt. Dadurch ist es etwas 'Göttliches'». On the interpretation of the appellatives of the active νοῦς as proves of its immortality, cf. A.-H. CHROUST, *Aristotle. New light on his life and on some of his lost works*, vol. II, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973, pp. 43-70. This author underlines against the studiers who want to see a continuity between the psychological conception of the lost Aristotelian *Eudemus* and the one of the *De anima* that, according to the ancient sources at our disposal, the *Eudemus*, Aristotelian dialogue of the platonic period, would have consisted in a *lamentatio vitae*; therefore, both because of the familiarity that Aristotle still felt at the time of the composition of the *Eudemus* to the platonic theories, and because of the rules of the literary kind to which this dialogue belongs, the *Eudemus* admitted the immortality of the individual soul and indicated in sensible life the prison of man, whose true home is the Heaven. In respect to this young Aristotle, in spite of the attempts made by some authors to show the opposite thesis, it is impossible to deny the further change of perspective as it is testified by the *De anima*, where we find no trace of

explication of a fundamental religious experience that suddenly becomes accessible: the θεῖον is rather the expression of the highest character of the existent that derives from the ontological radicalisation of the idea of being as tendency and realisation. The divine must be pure contemplation, and therefore free from every emotional relation to its end¹⁰². In this sense, the Aristotelian God cannot be envy, not because he is – as the Christian God – absolute love and piety, but because in its pure actuality he is not in condition to love and to hate: the Aristotelian God is ‘thinking on thinking’, and therefore he can only ‘be’. The active νοῦς, its closest correlative in the sublunary world, remains though something human: from its νοήσις νοήσεως, that represents the sublunary light of being, one falls systematically in the chiaroscuro of the existence¹⁰³.

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individual immortality; cf. in this sense the three stages in which the Aristotelian conception of the relation body-mind developed according to F. NUYENS, *L'évolution de la psychologie d'Aristote*, Louvain-La Haye-Paris, 1948; cf. also D.W. Ross, *Aristotle*, *op. cit.*, p. 132, where this author claims that for Aristotle would have been absurd to speak of transmigration of the soul.

102. On God as νοήσις νοήσεως, cf. *Metaphysics*, Λ 9 1074b33-35 ff.

103. ARISTOTLE, *De anima*, B4 415a25-415b. M.V. WEDIN, Tracking Aristotle's Nous, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-161.

**Ο ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ ΩΣ «ΝΟΗΣΙΣ ΝΟΗΣΕΩΣ»
ΣΤΟ ΠΕΡΙ ΨΥΧΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΗ**

Π ε ρ ί λ η ψ η

Τὸ ζήτημα τῆς φύσεως τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου νοῦ ποὺ ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης πραγματεύεται στὸ *Περὶ ψυχῆς*, προκάλεσε πλῆθος φιλοσοφικῶν συζητήσεων: ὀρισμένοι μελετητὲς ὑποστήριξαν ὅτι ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης διατηρεῖ ἀθάνατη ἀκόμη καὶ τὴν ἀνθρώπινη ψυχὴ, ἐνῶ ἄλλοι ἀρνήθηκαν διαρρήδην αὐτὴ τὴν ἐκδοχή.

Τὸ παρὸν ἄρθρο ἔχει στόχο νὰ παρουσιάσει κάποιες βασικὲς προϋποθέσεις ἀνάγνωσης, ποὺ θὰ παρεῖχαν τὴ δυνατότητα πληρέστερης ἐρμηνείας τῆς θέσεως τοῦ Σταγίριτη σχετικὰ μὲ τὴν σημαντικὴ αὐτὴ πραγματεία. Συγκεκριμένα, ἐπιχειρεῖ νὰ ἀποδώσει δέουσα βαρύτητα στὶς δυναμικὲς κατηγορίες τοῦ ὄντος ποῦ, κατὰ τὴν ἐρμηνεία τοῦ φαινομένου τῆς ἀντίληψης καὶ τῆς σύλληψης ἐπιτελοῦν μιὰ σημαντικὴ λειτουργία. Ὑπ' αὐτὴν τὴν ἔννοια, πρόκειται νὰ γίνῃ μιὰ ἐκ νέου ἀνάγνωση τῆς ἀριστοτελικῆς πραγματείας *Περὶ Ψυχῆς*, ὑπὸ τὸ πρῖσμα τῆς «τελεολογικῆς» ὄντολογίας τοῦ Σταγίριτη. Σύμφωνα μὲ αὐτὴν τὸ πραγματικὸ ἀρθρώνεται σὲ διάφορα ἐπίπεδα δυνάμεων καὶ πράξεως, κατὰ τὰ ὁποῖα οἱ κατώτερες δυνάμεις τείνουν πάντα πρὸς τὸ ἀνώτερο ἐπίπεδο τοῦ πραγματικοῦ, καθὼς καθοδηγοῦνται ἀπὸ τὴ βασικὴ δύναμη ἢ ὁποῖα ἐνυπάρχει σὲ κάθε σχῆμα. Ἐπίσης θὰ πρέπει νὰ ἐπισημανθεῖ ἡ ἰσχυρὴ ἀναλογικὴ φύση, ἢ ὁποῖα συνδέει τὶς ἱκανότητες τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ νὰ προχωρήσουμε στὴν ἀντίληψη τῆς φύσεως τοῦ νοῦ, ἐκμεταλλευόμενοι τὴν ἀντιληπτικὴ δύναμη τῶν τριῶν ἀναλογιῶν τὶς ὁποῖες ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης καταδεικνύει προκειμένου νὰ ἐπεξηγήσῃ τὴν ἀντίληψη: ἡ δράση τοῦ εἶναι ἀνάλογη πρὸς τὴν ἀντίληψη, πρὸς τὴν παραγωγικὴ διαδικασία τῶν τεχνῶν καὶ τέλος, πρὸς τὸ μεταξὺ τοῦ φωτός. Μία ἀκριβὲς ἀνάλυση αὐτῶν τῶν ἀναλογιῶν μᾶς ὁδηγεῖ στὴν κατανόηση τῆς φύσεως τοῦ νοῦ, στὴ διττὴ του ἱκανότητα. Κατὰ τὸν τρόπον αὐτόν, ἐὰν ὁ παθητικὸς νοῦς δηλώνει τὸν οὐσιώδη «ἀντιληπτικὸ» χαρακτήρα, δηλαδὴ τὸν προθετικὸ χαρακτήρα τῆς ἀνθρώπινης νοήσεως, ὁ ἐνεργητικὸς νοῦς συνίσταται στὴν ἱκανότητα ὑποβολῆς σὲ ἓναν θεωρητικὸ ἐπανέλεγχον τῶν λόγων, οἱ ὁποῖοι συλλέχθηκαν ἀπὸ τὸν παθητικὸ νοῦ. Ἄν συμβαίνει αὐτό, τότε ὁ ἐνεργητικὸς νοῦς εἶναι «ἀντίληψη» καὶ ἐνδελεχὴς προθετικὴ δραστηριότητα: αὐτὴ ὡς ὄντολογικὴ ιδιότητα, ἀνήκει κατ' ἐξοχὴν στὸν ἄνθρωπο καὶ ἔχει ὡς χάρισμα τὴν αἰωνιότητα. Ὅ,τι ὅμως συλλέγεται χάριν αὐτῆς τῆς διαθέσεως καὶ ὅ,τι συνιστᾷ τὴν προσωπικότητα καθενὸς ἐκ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ξεχωριστά, χάνεται. Στὸ *Περὶ Ψυχῆς*, δὲν γίνεται λόγος περὶ θεότητος τοῦ πρακτικοῦ νοῦ, παρὰ μόνον ὑπὸ τὴν ἔννοια ὅτι ἡ θεωρητικο-ἀντιληπτικὴ δραστηριότητα εἶναι, χάριν τῆς αὐτονομίας τῆς – τῆς ἀπεξάρτησής τῆς – ἀπὸ κάθε ἐξωτερικὸ παράγοντα, ἐκείνη ποῦ, στὴν αἰσθητὴ πραγματικότητα, πλη-

σιάζει περισσότερο την τέλεια πληρότητα τοῦ ἀριστοτελικοῦ θεοῦ. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐξάλλου εἶναι ὁ «διαυγής», ἐκεῖνος πού καθιστᾷ δυνατὴ τὴν ἀντίληψη τοῦ ὄντος ὄντος.

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