

Topic no. 1: "Images belong to the rational soul in the manner of perceptions, and whenever it affirms or denies that something is good or bad, it pursues or avoids. Consequently, the soul never thinks without an image"

Before entering the topic of the essay, it must be stated, as a stipulus, that beyond the logical problem that the dichotomy of soul and rationality combined in a brittle *coincidentia oppositorum* arises (it uses the framework of two different categories – and, implicitly, two different domains of one's inner existence – inside which it operates consistently ignoring the inadequability of terms to the domains they are applied to, whilst ignoring the relative parameters), the ethical problem of action grounded on reason, on the one hand, and emotion, on the other, is highly actual and has its useful and fruitful implication that ought to nurture today's philosophical debate.

I. Introduction.

Having been inspired by the platonician method of understanding and approaching ethics (under the strong imperative of love – eros –, the humanly instinct that, by excellence, calls one towards an universal thinking of the other as a equally rightful human being in the parameters of a beforehand determined moral: *to see* [i.e. to understand, to grasp upon] *is to remember* [the initial bold and pregnant form of the Idea] and, thus, to be moral is remembering the bound of the initial Eros that both connects and liberates), Aristotle's quote from "*De Anima*" recalls a twofold radical problem: both epistemological and ethical, inside which knowledge and action fuse under the magnitude of pure philosophical intuition and freely oriented terminological directions, as we are to see in what follows.

Aristotle's uses a deixis by arguing on the dianoetical nature of the soul, whilst following the reason of a technically coherent logical scheme:

1. **the soul has its rational compounds** which attributes to it the liable characteristic of rationality, thus, obtaining the fully comprehensible **rational soul** (an entity that explains the dual structural manifestation of humans, that act simultaneously in both an intellectual manner and a strongly emotional one);
2. **the mechanics of reason** are mostly fueled by the use of **imagery** [the epistemological problem]: here, once again, Plato's idea of the archetypal Logos (the primordial word that contains its own representation and can not be multiplied, nor altered in any way) is renewed – the intellectual subject relies upon the play of images so he can shape meaning and generate sense.
3. **when the soul becomes rational** (and practical decisions need to be made), **images will still** be the ones that **rule upon the decision** taking process: affirmation and denial, as an act of the

soul, are still based upon the certain form –available to senses– that springs in imagination, as a product of ration and reason.

Aristotle's rationalizes ethics and states that moral judgement can be considered a form of intellectual judgement. Behind the practical and immediate manifestation of one's moral decision lays a plethora of images (and memories) that orient one's calibration of good and bad and can explain psychologically, the human tendency towards representation (and repetition) and the general kindred towards certain decision: if, within the rational soul, the intellect generates a certain image that has a very specific effect on the subject's emotional ambient, his reaction has as the germinative point the nature of the image, and as a self-explanatory content, the emotional force that lies beneath the individual personality and conscience. In a concrete disposition of the argument, we can use a sample of reaction: when put in a morally demanding situation, the intellect generates an arbore of potential sequels and consequences, adds coherent visual representation to it and transfers this product to the emotional level that applies a scale ranging from good (which ought to be pursued) and bad (which ought to be avoided), sets values and, finally, picks the most convenient alternative.

In this plactical view that we now benefit of, how can we separate reason (as the product of mind) from emotion (as the product of the soul)? In a specific epistemological context, how is it possible to rightfully evaluate the contribution of these two dimensions of the human being? If one's practical outcome is directed by his one's inner emotional climat, how justified cand we, as a community, be in the judgement of his actions, bearing in mind that he acted accordingly to his strongly subjective set of values? These are some of the many problems that arose from the Aristotelian quote and I will try (knowing that an essay is a mere attempt) to put under analysis.

In the following essay I will try to argue reflectively on some points that I consider neuralgical and of critical importance of Aristotle's stipulus and reasoning, whilst following the ambivalent plan that he proposes:

1. before working on the ethical hypotheses that Aristotle's brings forward, I will analyse the **gnoseological** implications of his judgement upon the concept of **rational soul**, while compiling some decisive notions, such as:
 - a. *the problem of identity*: consciousness, self-consciousness;
 - b. the difficulties of *rational sensing*;
 - c. sensitivity and meaning: *sense and senses*-vectorial director of activity.
2. after establishing the epistemological terms, I will lead the argumentations on the **ethical** scale and observe the relative implications of **reason in ethics**.

II. *Soul's Rationality: an Ambiguity of Terms*

The *thinking soul's* hypotheses has proved to be a very useful tool in the deconstruction of logical difficulties and in managing the moral difficulties that arise in society. In terms of one's identity, the discussion ought to refine the terminological and technical content that is laid forward. In what regards the overall applicability of the concept, there are certain inconveniences that ought to be diminished. On one hand, when thinking of the soul as a rationally fueled 'organ', we face the danger of underestimating its contribution to one's identity, as, on the other, when emphasizing on its ability to use reason, we are at risk to augment its traits. This aspect only broadens the difficulties in determining the power of the thinking soul to activate knowledge and acquire relevant rationalization skills. My thesis, on the epistemological dimension of the rational soul, is that it misses important aspects in what regards the structure of one's consciousness.

The concept of rational soul represents a reiteration of the two principles that antiquity believed to shape the (inner-) world and consciousness:

α : the state of flow, the initial clear and calm water, the unspoken, translated into the available framework in the manifestation of soul, emotion, spiritual reaction, moral evaluation;

β : the state of stability, inside which meaning is provided, the center of intellectual calculus and understanding, the epicentral point towards which ideas and representations of intelligible logos-es converge to;

In a more technical approach, and under strict observation, this two-shifted structural distinction inside the human referent might prove to be insufficient, as it misses the connecting point, the chain that brings the together and that is, in my opinion:

δ : the pure consciousness within which information and emotion are centered and metabolized efficiently. In the generically noted consciousness not only does identity stabilize itself and determine its limits and centres, but it also stores history and manages potential. It is this potential whom I think directs one's behavior, without applying scales neither on knowledge and information, nor on emotion. Consciousness is, simply put, the entity (and dimension of identity) that organizes both thoughts and feelings. When feelings are nurtured towards a certain events, thoughts are equally triggered; when thoughts arise due to certain endeavors, emotional vectors are also activated: consciousness, thus, adds the history and the human thriving for ever growth and brings balance into the opposing α and β . This sheds new light on the dianoetical nature of the soul: the usage of imagery that has been stipulated as the intrinsic trait of the soul is deactivated through the intervention of consciousness. Images are impossible to be generated without a strong background driven through δ , and the soul can not touch illumination (gnoseologically thinking) without the direct action of it that carefully shapes and models future manifestation of one's being, whilst involuntarily striving to perfection or, at least, towards bettering and evolution. Self-consciousness, which would have been impossible to speak about in terms of rational soul's imagery, now becomes the center of reflection that drives action and places itself on the moral scale.

When it comes to the ability rational soul to process information, we reach another striking difficulty: were one, as a sensitive being, to be put under the precise action of senses, how far will he advance in knowledge and how probably will he reach truth, having in mind that he is drawn back by both the probability to over-analyse and to add to much emotional content. Rational sensing, contains its own paradox: if one chunk of information is nurtured to the intellect and then redirected to the soul in order to obtain an emotional or spiritual reaction, it means that one can not ever acquire true knowledge through an intellectual endeavor, due to its strong bond with the soul that will permanently attach specific emotional colours to it. Imagery conspicuously takes place not only in the intellect, but in the soul equally, as emotions are later on distributed into thoughts, schemes, points of analysis and, finally, into images. When the souls perceive something, that which he perceives will be translated, modified and altered before reaching reason. Thought trembles between the two decisive factors of the rational soul and epistemological evolution becomes impossible, due to the subject being strangled in its own uncertainty and lack of meaning: an obviously not fair statement, as it is based upon a paradox. Moreover, another epistemological problem that the rational soul faces when it comes to the use of images “in the manner of perceptions” is the possibility of it generating meaning. *Senses generate sense*, as they represent the main input data the subjects can make use of, Aristotle states, and it is manipulated inside the inner athanor of ideas and reactions.

Consciousness, however, as the third term, comes in handy and solves this apparently insurmountable difficulty while asserting that beyond this play of sense-thought-feeling stays another structure of analysis that maintains integrity of information while converting it into manageable formats that suit the structure of the organism they’re destined to. Consciousness is the smoothly and useful transition from *reflexes* to *reflection*, inside which the rational soul inhabits and operates.

III. *Soul and Images. Morality and Perception*

The dianoetical soul, in the manner Aristotle described it, uses imagery in order to function and take decisions. My thesis, as far as the moral implications of the quote are concerned, is: good and bad [as ontologically opposed values and not social normative contracts] are not determined through the usage of imagery. If it were for these values to be situated inside the parameters of emotional and rational images, the dichotomy would be built on awry functioning and fragile subjective perceptions which could go as far as gathering them under a very sensitive distinction or pushing their limits beyond their normal state (good becomes perfection and bad becomes the perfect evil). If it were for imagery to be inserted into one’s personal view on what this ethical categories imply, then every image that would ever appear in one’s thoughts and feelings would be altered by the simple existence of the opposing terms.

St. Augustin’s take on the rational soul was, from an ethical perspective, simple and drastical: the rations that posseses a soul (and the soul that can make use of rations) are permanently seeking God, because God is the main objective in one’s existence, as he is the positive perfection and exceeds in quality any possible earthly alternative. The rational soul’s main characteristic, as the descriptions made by Aristotle

and St. Augustin imply, is to always strive for perfection, to deny evil and affirm (sustain and aim for) good. Imagery, however, is not necessarily active in this process: using projections in the decision taking process would make the moral act dubious in itself, because it would imply that the active subject is tributary to its own advantage, which is, from the start, ethically (and even pragmatically) awry: the more advantage an act brings, the higher it is in its moral content.

Good and bad, however, are not orientated within one subject's perception and nor does sensitive data automatically add to them. Decision, in this new context, is not based upon imagery. Reason, however, interferes in the decision making process, but not through images, but with open analysis of the present situation, as it can operate with more than real or virtual sensations and it can measure the depths of any given practical problem, if time and resources allow to. The key to the understanding the moral choices lays not in the concept of the dianoetical soul, but in the consciousness. δ is, in such instance, the personal dimensions in which neither of feelings and thoughts get to manifest their force, but rather a metaphorical "no man's land" in which archetypes, values, genetically determined psychological traits and bold structured moral scales are seeded and preserved whilst productively interacting with α and β .

Good and bad, as fundamentally sharp and irreducible categories, do not make use of images in order to be represented inside one's consciousness, and, thus, do not risk being altered in any way. When a moral subject exposes himself to mistakes and misunderstandings, he does not prove malfunctions, but effectively, not functions at all: one denies its own set of values in either of two situations:

1. when one is left without the ability to decide;
2. when one decides not to answer one's consciousness imperative;

In both of the named situations, the individual contribution to society is rendered useless and marginalized due to it being counterproductive and fallacious. Both intellect and soul prove to be deceitful: images are now only a mere manifestation of mind's possibility and can not make any changes regarding troubling ethical condition, as morality does not imply and does not need perception – one either is moral, or is not. The mechanics behind mistaking reiterate not in the wrong representations (as Aristotle would say), nor in the wrong usage of rationality and emotion, but rather in not activating the δ state, the reservoir of deep humanity and moral arguments and resources. Ethical attitude and action is provided undoubtedly in the structure of any living human being, but is up to oneself to discover, explore and exploit his inner store-house of encrypted values.

IV. Conclusions

Summing up some directions of my essay (attempt and take on the Aristotelian standpoint), it must be stated, now as a postulation, that the command-center of true, authentic knowledge stands not in the rational soul [or soul's rationality], but rather within the depth of one's being: every living person possesses unique traits, has self-determining characteristics and takes decisions in ways they can only grasp and explain – consciousness, or the nominated **δ -state**, represents the main vector within authentic morals and ethics [that respect the matrix of good and bad] are redetermined and brought into actuality with every given context.

Images and their usage in both epistemological and ethical dimensions of the soul is relative and must not be considered compulsory or definitory. The rational soul is not sufficient: consciousness does not operate with images (like α and β do) and, thus, moves beyond graphical representations towards the strength of concepts that can assure epistemological evolution and moral correctitude and coherence. Consciousness does not deal with facts, but with purpose and sense.