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*On the Soul*

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## **Nous and Phantasia in Aristotle's *On the Soul***

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### **Abstract**

Aristotle's *On the Soul*, is one of the most intriguing philosophical treatises in the history of Western Philosophy. Despite Aristotle's well known capacity in dealing with difficult philosophical problems, one cannot help but realise that Aristotle's original ideas on the subject matter of imagination, cause more philosophical problems, than the ones Aristotle is expected to solve with his treatise.

In the present paper, I am trying to clarify what kind of meaning, if any, is expected to be found in imagination, according to Aristotle's handling of the subject. In *De Anima*, there are several definitions of imagination, which, in certain occasions, do not seem to be fitting each other.

When Aristotle first mentions "noein" in *De Anima*, he correlates noein with imagination. Aristotle might be using the word "phantasia" with the meaning of "image". In that case, the "noein" could be supposed to exist as an image or not without some image. If this is so, then we might be obliged to accept that the image in question brings with it some kind of meaning. The question is: what kind of meaning is this? Is it a meaning accompanied by an image, or an image with a certain meaning?

I am giving an answer to this question by making use of Aristotle's several mentions of imagination in *De Anima*. At the end, I am coming to the conclusion that imagination may have a wider sense than Aristotle scholars, along with Aristotle himself, are willing to admit.

**Keywords:**

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*Noûς* is one of the most demanding subjects of philosophical research. Trying to figure out what is happening when thinking goes on, is difficult enough, since everything that is to be found when looking for the content of our thought, is a matter of thought alone, and we are not really in a position to find out what the causes of our thought are. In any case, the subject of *νοεῖν* is of a paramount importance for philosophers of Ancient Greece already. Plato was the first to discuss several issues on the philosophy of mind, while Aristotle was preoccupied with the same issues, though much more systematically. In this paper, I am going to deal with Aristotle's theory of *νοεῖν* in his *Treatise on the Soul*.

Aristotle's theorizing on the soul is of particular interest, because Aristotle is the one who, for the first time, gave philosophical content to the notions which we usually think of when referring to the mind procedures.<sup>1</sup> Did Aristotle succeed in the definition of those notions? Did he focus adequately on the essence<sup>2</sup> of the intellectual operations he referred to?

In the present paper, I take a close look at Aristotle's endeavor to define imagination in *De Anima*. In my opinion, the complicated nature of Aristotle's account of *φαντασία* is due not to his philosophical incompetence, but to the fact that it is a kind of futile enterprise to locate imagination philosophically as distinct mind function. Nevertheless, even if it is difficult to know what a mind function really is, it is easy to know the products of mind, that is the ideas, which make us talk about imagination. In my analysis, I take into account the connection between imagination and desire, and I come to the conclusion that both come into being, and are supposed to exist as intellectual functions, because of the unexplained appearance of some ideas, which are supposed to be ideas of both the desire and the imagination.

In his *Treatise on the Soul*,<sup>3</sup> Aristotle tries hard to make the distinction between bodily functions and those which do not seem to be purely bodily,

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<sup>1</sup> According to Schofield (1997), who really made a seminal contribution to the study of *De Anima*: 'The great virtue of his account is its recognition of the range of psychological phenomena which deserve to be associated in this familial concept. His attempt to generalize from them about the logical peculiarities of the imagination is not carried through with a clear and steady view of the whole topic. But it remains seminal for anyone who seeks a better understanding. For Aristotle reminds us of the variety of the phenomena we need to consider, and compels us to find ways of connecting them; he puts in our hands, even if he himself does not exploit them very fully, many of the contrasts and comparisons which seem fundamental for the conceptual mapping of imagination; and his very inconsistencies suggest crucial problems in its comparative anatomy.'

<sup>2</sup> Rorty (1997) explicitly accentuates the metaphysical character of Aristotle's research: 'The scope of *De Anima* is much broader than that of either contemporary philosophy of mind or contemporary philosophical psychology. It is a metaphysical inquiry into the ontology of *psychē* and of *nous*.'

<sup>3</sup> Concerning the text of *On the Soul* itself, I always keep in mind Nussbaum's warnings: 'Like most other works of Aristotle, the *De Anima* survives in a relatively large number of manuscripts; but none of these is earlier than the tenth century AD. (Fragments of the earlier tradition can in some cases be recovered from citations in the ancient commentators—see Section II below; but it must be remembered that their work itself survives only in manuscripts

and, nevertheless, belong to the human substance. According to Aristotle, the human substance is continuous. The human soul is not to be considered as hypostasis itself, distinct from the human body. There are some conceivable intellectual data, attributable not to the human body straightforwardly, but to a certain mind function which is to be connected to the living human body, that is to the human soul.<sup>1</sup> Let me explain, now, how Aristotle tries to clarify several mind functions.

In 403a8<sup>2</sup> of *On the Soul*, Aristotle first introduces his subject, uttering that, if a certain intellectual soul is to be differentiated from the body, *νοεῖν* is what may make it happen. Nevertheless, if *νοεῖν* is *φαντασία*, or if it couldn't exist without *φαντασία*, the mind could not exist without the body.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, then, Aristotle thinks of *φαντασία* as depended on the body. However, Aristotle does not give any definition neither for *νοῦν* nor for *φαντασία*. This is what he is supposed to be doing later on. Indeed, when defining *φαντασία*, he makes clear that its characteristics would allow him to refer to *νοεῖν* as a certain operation of the mind.

*Τις*, however, in the defining of *νοῦς* as *φαντασία τινά*, might very well mean that, for Aristotle, there are certain types of imagination, which, though, are not to be considered as distinct faculties of the mind. Alternatively, *νοῦς* does not exist without imagination (*μὴ ἄνευ φαντασίας*). This is not to be thought as without a certain imagination, since there might be several kinds of imagination. On the other side, Aristotle might mean that *νοῦς* contains some images, or that *νοῦς* itself is an image, or that it does not exist without an image. In that case, we might be obliged to accept that the image in question has or brings with it a certain intellectual content. Nevertheless, would it be a meaning accompanied by an image or an image accompanied by some meaning? Whatever the case may be, what is for sure is that Aristotle attributes to imagination a dominant role, whatever imagination is meant to be here.

Later on, in 427b15<sup>4</sup>, Aristotle comes back, and states that imagination differs from sensation as well as from *νοεῖν*. However, imagination cannot

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of the same age as the Aristotle manuscripts—so there is a good deal of room for error to creep in.)’

<sup>1</sup> Goldberg (2004) summarizes successfully the character of Aristotle’s theorizing: ‘To see how liberally Aristotle uses mentalistic terms, consider first what he means by ‘soul’. Aristotle seems to treat soul as function.’

<sup>2</sup> ‘μάλιστα δ’ ἔοικεν ἰδίῳ τὸ νοεῖν· εἰ δ’ ἐστὶ καὶ τοῦτο φαντασία τις ἢ μὴ ἄνευ φαντασίας, οὐκ ἐνδέχοιτ’ ἂν οὐδὲ τοῦτ’ ἄνευ σώματος εἶναι.’

<sup>3</sup> According to Caston (2005): ‘Aristotle is trying to make as general a claim as he can about the soul’s relation to the body and about the consequences this has for the proper form of definition for psychological states, as involving both matter and form. He countenances only one possible exception, the understanding; and even here he thinks there may be a connection with the body. If this is right, then Aristotle seems to be committed to underlying physiological changes in perception and quite possibly for every type of mental state in general. The passage appears to voice support, directly and explicitly, for both a Broad Church position and Chalcedonian Orthodoxy.’

<sup>4</sup> ‘φαντασία γὰρ ἕτερον καὶ αἰσθήσεως καὶ διανοίας, αὕτη τε οὐ γίγνεται ἄνευ αἰσθήσεως, καὶ ἄνευ ταύτης οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπόληψις. ὅτι δ’ οὐκ ἔστιν ἢ αὐτὴ [νόησις] καὶ ὑπόληψις, φανερόν.’

exist without sensation,<sup>1</sup> and without imagination there is no way to have as a result *ὑπόληψις*,<sup>2</sup> which is the outcome of *νοεῖν*.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, even if we take as granted, that imagination differs from sensation and mind, we cannot identify it, since we do not know what Aristotle had in mind when referring to sensation and mind. As far as the relation of imagination and sensation is concerned, it is rational to be wondering likewise: is imagination depended on sensation? What if imagination is not an operation, but a consequence of the sensational consciousness?<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, as far as the relation of imagination with the intellect is concerned, either imagination is a particular operation, which cooperates with the intellect, in order to produce *ὑπόληψις*, or it is a part of the intellect. However, Aristotle makes clear that imagination is not the intellect. What's the probability, then, of imagination's being a part of *νοεῖν*, without being *νοεῖν*? Actually, in 427b30, Aristotle defines that a part of *νοεῖν* is imagination while the other one is *ὑπόληψις*.

Anyway, in 427b, Aristotle makes clear what he thinks of imagination. Images in *φαντασία*, he says, are of the same rank with those in a painting. Obviously, Aristotle means that we consciously regard them as feign images and nothing more. This may be true for this particular kind of imagination alone.

Next, in 428a,<sup>5</sup> Aristotle tries to identify what imagination is. He says that imagination is responsible for the production of images.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, imagination is not a certain ability or *ἔξις*. Nor has it a critical power. It can neither be true or false. Nevertheless, later on<sup>7</sup> Aristotle says that most of the 'imagination' are false. However, what does 'false' mean here? Does it mean that imaginations are not corresponding to sensations? As a matter of fact, the ones and the others differ by definition. By sensation we do not mean imagination. Nevertheless, Aristotle might have thought that imagination functions

<sup>1</sup> See also 428a: 'εἴτα αἴσθησις μὲν ἀεὶ πάρεστι, φαντασία δ' οὐ.'

<sup>2</sup> Mesaros' (2010) description, I think, is fair enough: 'Imagination is a "border" or a territory of encounter for sensation and intellect, an uncertain area on which thinking depends but it can not rigorously be founded.'

<sup>3</sup> See also 427b29: 'περὶ δὲ τοῦ νοεῖν, ἐπεὶ ἕτερον τοῦ αἰσθάνεσθαι, τούτου δὲ τὸ μὲν φαντασία δοκεῖ εἶναι τὸ δὲ ὑπόληψις, περὶ φαντασίας διορίσαντας οὕτω περὶ θατέρου λεκτέον.'

<sup>4</sup> That's why, I think, V. Caston (2002) summarizes the Aristotelian theory of perception as follows: 'Our perceptions have a phenomenal character, that has to do with the qualities they represent, but is not exhausted by representational content.'

<sup>5</sup> 'εἰ δὲ ἔστιν ἡ φαντασία καθ' ἣν λέγομεν φάντασμα τι ἡμῖν γίνεσθαι καὶ μὴ εἶ τι κατὰ μεταφορὰν λέγομεν, <ἄρα> μία τις ἔστι τούτων δύναμις ἢ ἔξις καθ' ἧς κρίνομεν καὶ ἀληθεύομεν ἢ ψευδόμεθα; ...'

<sup>6</sup> Frede (1997) gives us a good idea of the several dimensions of imagination: 'We are also unsure what capacity, what process, and what product the word denotes in each case. ... It would then be (i) the capacity to experience an appearance, (ii) the on-going appearance itself, and (iii) what appears.'

<sup>7</sup> 'εἰ δὲ τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ τὸ αὐτό, πᾶσιν ἂν ἐνδέχοιτο τοῖς θηρίοις φαντασίαν ὑπάρχειν· δοκεῖ δ' οὐ, οἷον μύρμηκι ἢ μελίττῃ, σκόληκι δ' οὐ. εἴτα αἰ μὲν ἀληθεῖς ἀεὶ, αἰ δὲ φαντασῖαι γίνονται αἰ πλείους ψευδεῖς.'



independently from sensation. This would be a contradiction though, since *αὐτὴ τε οὐ γίγνεται ἄνευ αἰσθήσεως*. (427b15)

Lastly, Aristotle wonders whether imagination is *δόξα*.<sup>1</sup> Imagination is not *δόξα*. *Δόξα* is *δόξα* of the objects of sensation. However, if imagination is due to sensation, could there be a *δόξα* of imagination as well? Rather not, because *δόξα* is something which imagination could never be, and because, as Aristotle states, *δοξάζειν δ' οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν*, while imagining anything is supposed to be a matter of volitional action. Paradoxically though, Aristotle says that *τὸ οὖν φαίνεσθαι ἔσται τὸ δοξάζειν ὅπερ αἰσθάνεται, μὴ κατὰ συμβεβηκός*.<sup>2</sup>

According to Aristotle, imagination is an action of the will.<sup>3</sup> However, if imagination is depended on sensation, then it could not be a result of the will, since what one perceives via senses is not a result of the will. In addition, if imagination is the same with sensation, why is it false most of the times? So, the question remains. What kind of imagination is true or false? Is imagination equally true and false? What is the criterion of defining imagination as true or false?<sup>4</sup> Does it depend on what the subject suffers because of it? In any case, what Aristotle says earlier, seems to be inconsistent: *αἱ δὲ φαντασῖαι γίνονται αἰ πλείους ψευδεῖς*.

In another context, imaginations produce acts in animals par excellence, but in humans as well, *διὰ τὸ ἐπικαλύπτεσθαι τὸν νοῦν ἐνίοτε πάθει ἢ νόσῳ ἢ ὕπνῳ*...<sup>5</sup> Aristotle seems to be implying here that the images of imagination do not have a cognitive content, at least when they are the result of situations which, by definition, produce errors: passions, illnesses, sleep. In the case of animals, however, imagination has a cognitive role, since animals have no other cognitive faculty. Therefore, it is easy to explain why Aristotle states: *διὰ τὸ ἐμμένειν καὶ ὁμοίας εἶναι ταῖς αἰσθήσεσι*. But, if this is so, what about humans? Is there a contradiction here? Imaginations which resemble to sensations are the same with those produced in passions, illnesses and sleep, which, by definition, are not attributable to sensations.<sup>6</sup> According to Aristotle,

<sup>1</sup> 'λείπεται ἄρα ἰδεῖν εἰ δόξα: ... οὐδὲ δόξα μετ' αἰσθήσεως, οὐδὲ δι' αἰσθήσεως, οὐδὲ συμπλοκὴ δόξης καὶ αἰσθήσεως, φαντασία ἂν εἴη, ...'

<sup>2</sup> See 428b: 'τὸ οὖν φαίνεσθαι ἔσται τὸ δοξάζειν ὅπερ αἰσθάνεται, μὴ κατὰ συμβεβηκός. φαίνεται δὲ γε καὶ ψευδῆ, περὶ ὧν ἅμα ὑπόληψιν ἀληθῆ ἔχει, οἷον φαίνεται μὲν ὁ ἥλιος ποδιαῖος, πιστεύεται δ' εἶναι μείζων τῆς οἰκουμένης: ... οὐτ' ἄρα ἓν τι τούτων ἔστιν οὐτ' ἐκ τούτων ἢ φαντασία.'

<sup>3</sup> See 427b15: 'τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ τὸ πάθος ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἐστίν, ὅταν βουλώμεθα (πρὸ ὀμμάτων γὰρ ἔστι τι ποιήσασθαι, ὥσπερ οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημονικοῖς τιθέμενοι καὶ εἰδωλοποιοῦντες), ... κατὰ δὲ τὴν φαντασίαν ὡσαύτως ἔχομεν ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ θεώμενοι ἐν γραφῇ τὰ δεινὰ ἢ θαρραλέα.'

<sup>4</sup> According to Engmann (1976): 'What underlies the apparent inconsistencies in Aristotle's account of imagination is not only a dual conception of imagination, but also a dual conception of truth.'

<sup>5</sup> See 429a5: 'καὶ διὰ τὸ ἐμμένειν καὶ ὁμοίας εἶναι ταῖς αἰσθήσεσι, πολλὰ κατ' αὐτὰς πράττει τὰ ζῷα, τὰ μὲν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν νοῦν, οἷον τὰ θηρία, τὰ δὲ διὰ τὸ ἐπικαλύπτεσθαι τὸν νοῦν ἐνίοτε πάθει ἢ νόσῳ ἢ ὕπνῳ, οἷον οἱ ἄνθρωποι. περὶ μὲν οὖν φαντασίας, τί ἐστι καὶ διὰ τί ἐστίν, εἰρήσθω ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον.'

<sup>6</sup> The same way as Frede (1997), I treat phantasia as unified concept in Aristotle. Frede refers to phantasiai as follows: 'They are sensory images or imprints that can exist independently from their original source. Their history may be quite different, depending on whether they are

Aristotle, humans act *κατά τάς φαντασίας* only in passions, illnesses and sleep. In every other case, human beings act according to the intellect, which, nevertheless, contains imaginations.

Of course, once more, it is evident that the productivity of imagination is not a matter of the will. In addition, while in passions or illnesses, the images of imagination are not painless at all: *ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ θεώμενοι ἐν γραφῇ τὰ δεινὰ*. There is another question as well. Why is it that the intellect does not function in illnesses and passions? Does imagination have an intellectual content, which leads to action? This is not consistent with Aristotle's theory. Consequently, imaginations are not produced reflectively alone, because of the act of the senses. We do not imagine only because we have senses. If this is so, then where *φαντασίαι* come from? Aristotle does not really tell anything about such an origin. In addition, *φαντασίαι* may be produced independently from the senses in the case of animals as well. Finally, why is it that *φαντασίαι* are deprived of cognitive value in passions, illnesses and sleep? And what if they have such a value? What if the cognitive content of *φαντασίαι* is the generator of passions?

I am coming, now, in the Aristotelian analysis of the connection between *φαντασία* and *νοῦς*.<sup>1</sup> In 431a15<sup>2</sup> Aristotle says that in the 'intellectual soul' the images look like senses. Those *φαντάσματα*, according to Aristotle, are neutral, till the intellect pronounces its positive or negative view. In that instance, the humans act in order to pursue or avoid whatever. Nevertheless, the question again is: where those *φαντάσματα* come from? Certainly, they do not arise the way *αἰσθήματα* do. *Αἰσθήματα* are caused thanks to the objects which move the senses. Do *φαντάσματα* have objects? If *φαντάσματα* are similar to *αἰσθήματα*, then they have the same objects.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, *φαντασίαι* are not false. Nevertheless, this does not seem to be true in the case of passions, illnesses and sleep.

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due to immediate awareness or have undergone a long-term storage, as may be their function and the occasion of their occurrence in dreams, hallucinations, memory, thoughts, or decisions. Most of all, their character and value may vary: they may be clear or confused, simple or complex, true or false.'

<sup>1</sup> Caston (1998) considers the connection in question as a matter of intentionality: 'Aristotle not only formulates the problem of intentionality explicitly, he makes a solution to it a requirement for any adequate theory of mind. ... In fact, it is precisely because Aristotle regards this theory as inadequate that he goes on to argue for a distinct new ability he calls 'phantasia'. ... The theory of content he develops on this basis (unlike Brentano's) is profoundly naturalistic: it is a representational theory, formulated in terms of the causal powers and physical magnitudes of the body.'

<sup>2</sup> 'τῆ δὲ διανοητικῆ ψυχῆ τὰ φαντάσματα οἷον αἰσθήματα ὑπάρχει, ὅταν δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακὸν φήσῃ ἢ ἀποφήσῃ, φεύγει ἢ διώκει· διὸ οὐδέποτε νοεῖ ἄνευ φαντάσματος ἢ ψυχῆ.' Beginning from the end, is *φάντασμα* a reason for the soul to think? It seems that the soul does not think without a *φάντασμα* in it.

<sup>3</sup> Although White (1985) accentuates Aristotle's parallelism between sensation and imagination, he fails to see the importance of this parallelism for the cognitive value of phantasmata: 'The analysis of sensation, the characteristic power of animals, could, it seems, be adequately carried out with little reference to phantasia, even though Aristotle is elsewhere led to stress the closeness, and even, in some respect, the identity of these two powers;...' See also Lowe (1983).

According to 431b,<sup>1</sup> νοῦς is moved by φαντάσματα, just like it is being moved by sensible objects. The movement of the intellect is knowledge, which is being based in the sense of sensible objects and the common sense. The intellect thinks and decides the same way when moved by the senses and φαντάσματα or νοήματα as well. Is there a chance, then, that φαντάσματα have a certain intellectual content?<sup>2</sup> If this is the case, then the so called νοῦς probably does nothing but give its consent to an already given meaning. Νοῦς may just make a pronouncement of the meaning which already exists. This is probably the reason that Aristotle uses the verbs φήση, ἀποφήση and εἶπη, when referring to νοῦς.

In addition, later on, Aristotle defines νοῦς as εἶδος εἰδῶν.<sup>3</sup> But, if this is so, then νοῦς may contain imagination as well. This may be confirmed by Aristotle's stating that: τά νοητά ἐν τοῖς εἶδεσι τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς. So, the theoretical knowledge as well, is due to φαντάσματα. This being the case, why φαντασίαι are false? Besides, φαντάσματα do not seem to be material. Nevertheless, if φαντάσματα are like αἰσθήματα, what is the matter of αἰσθήματα? In any case, Aristotle makes clear that imagination has nothing to do with the pronouncements of the intellect. But, if true and false is a matter of combination of meaning, why is that the φαντασίαι are false? Which are the first meanings?

The analysis regarding imagination in Aristotle's *De Anima*, is concluded with the explanation of the notion of desire (ὀρεκτικόν). In 432a30<sup>4</sup> Aristotle declares that the φανταστικόν, which could be explained as the operation of imagination, is different in comparison to other functions of the mind. As far as the ὀρεκτικόν is concerned, it is to be found both in the thinking and the non-thinking part of the soul. What exactly is, then, the relation between

<sup>1</sup> 'τὰ μὲν οὖν εἶδη τὸ νοητικὸν ἐν τοῖς φαντάσμασι νοεῖ, καὶ ὡς ἐν ἐκείνοις ὄρισται αὐτῷ τὸ διωκτὸν καὶ φευκτὸν, καὶ ἐκτὸς τῆς αἰσθήσεως, ὅταν ἐπὶ τῶν φαντασμάτων ἢ, κινεῖται. ... ὅτε δὲ τοῖς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ φαντάσμασιν ἢ νοήμασιν, ὡσπερ ὄρων, λογίζεται καὶ βουλευεται τὰ μέλλοντα πρὸς τὰ παρόντα· καὶ ὅταν εἶπη ὡς ἐκεῖ τὸ ἡδὺ ἢ λυπηρόν, ἐνταῦθα φεύγει ἢ διώκει· καὶ ὄλως ἐν πράξει.'

<sup>2</sup> According to Caston (2006): 'Aristotle explicitly treats phantasmata as representations that underwrite the content of mental states generally. ... But they are not in general something "towards which" (ad quem) mental states are directed – in general they are not themselves the objects of mental states.'

<sup>3</sup> See 431b 30: 'ὥστε ἡ ψυχὴ ὡσπερ ἡ χεὶρ ἐστίν· καὶ γὰρ ἡ χεὶρ ὄργανόν ἐστιν ὀργάνων, καὶ ὁ νοῦς εἶδος εἰδῶν καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις εἶδος αἰσθητῶν. ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐδὲ πρᾶγμα οὐθὲν ἐστὶ παρὰ τὰ μεγέθη, ὡς δοκεῖ, τὰ αἰσθητὰ κεχωρισμένον, ἐν τοῖς εἶδεσι τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τὰ νοητά ἐστὶ, τὰ τε ἐν ἀφαιρέσει λεγόμενα καὶ ὅσα τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἕξεις καὶ πάθη. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὔτε μὴ αἰσθανόμενος μὴθὲν οὐθὲν ἂν μάθοι οὐδὲ ξυνεῖη, ὅταν τε θεωρῇ, ἀνάγκη ἅμα φάντασμα τι θεωρεῖν· τὰ γὰρ φαντάσματα ὡσπερ αἰσθήματά ἐστι, πλὴν ἄνευ ὕλης. ἐστὶ δ' ἡ φαντασία ἕτερον φάσεως καὶ ἀποφάσεως· συμπλοκὴ γὰρ νοημάτων ἐστὶ τὸ ἀληθὲς ἢ ψεῦδος. τὰ δὲ πρῶτα νοήματα τί διοίσει τοῦ μὴ φαντάσματα εἶναι; ἢ οὐδὲ ταῦτα φαντάσματα, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄνευ φαντασμάτων.'

<sup>4</sup> 'ἔτι δὲ τὸ φανταστικόν, ὃ τῷ μὲν εἶναι πάντων ἕτερον, τίνι δὲ τούτων ταῦτόν ἢ ἕτερον ἔχει πολλὴν ἀπορίαν, εἴ τις θήσει κεχωρισμένα μόρια τῆς ψυχῆς· πρὸς δὲ τούτοις τὸ ὀρεκτικόν, ὃ καὶ λόγῳ καὶ δυνάμει ἕτερον ἂν δόξειεν εἶναι πάντων. καὶ ἄτοπον δὴ τὸ τοῦτο διασπᾶν· ἐν τε τῷ λογιστικῷ γὰρ ἢ βούλησις γίνεται, καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀλόγῳ ἢ ἐπιθυμία καὶ ὁ θυμὸς· εἰ δὲ τρία ἢ ψυχῆ, ἐν ἐκάστῳ ἔσται ὄρεξις.»

imagination and desire? Does the desire provide with content the imagination or the opposite? Aristotle says that the imagination provides with content the desire.

Nevertheless, Aristotle, in 433a, in order to explain the movement of the living being, uses *νοῦς* with the meaning of *φαντασία*!<sup>1</sup> The impression that is being given, is that *φαντασία* is *νόησις* as well. From what point of view? In order to understand this, I think, we have to go back, to the imagination which is to be found in sleep, passions and illnesses. In any case, as far as the principle of movement is concerned, Aristotle thinks that this principle is to be found in *ὄρεκτόν*, which moves via the intellect.<sup>2</sup> But, if this is so, then it is not *ὄρεκτόν*, than means the object of the desire, that moves, but its image!

According to Aristotle, though, imagination is not supposed to have the ability to move a living creature, if it is not for the desire to be present.<sup>3</sup> What is desire then? Is it contained in the imagination? Is it a kind of meaning? What characterizes imagination and desire, is that both are ‘right and not right’, in contrast with *νοῦς*, which is always right.<sup>4</sup> Of course, Aristotle does not make clear why desire and imagination are right and not right.

In any case, the power that moves a living being is the desire, and, as I told earlier, the object of the desire prevails. Nevertheless, this procedure is accomplished through the intellect or the imagination. Aristotle does not clarify why he uses those two terms interchangeably.<sup>5</sup> In 433b31, imagination is described as having two aspects. On the one side it is thoughtful, and on the other it is sensible.<sup>6</sup> The imagination which is connected with the senses, as I told earlier, there exists in other animals as well, while the thoughtful one is to be found only in human beings.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 433a11 Aristotle says: ‘Φαίνεται δὲ γε δύο ταῦτα κινῶντα, ἡ ὄρεξις ἢ νοῦς, εἴ τις τὴν φαντασίαν τιθεῖ ὡς νόησιν τινα· πολλοὶ γὰρ παρὰ τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἀκολουθοῦσι ταῖς φαντασίαις, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ζῴοις οὐ νόησις οὐδὲ λογισμὸς ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ φαντασία. ἄμφω ἄρα ταῦτα κινητικὰ κατὰ τόπον, νοῦς καὶ ὄρεξις...’

<sup>2</sup> See 433a21: τὸ ὄρεκτόν γὰρ κινεῖ, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἡ διάνοια κινεῖ, ὅτι ἀρχὴ αὐτῆς ἔστι τὸ ὄρεκτόν.’

<sup>3</sup> See 433a23: ‘καὶ ἡ φαντασία δὲ ὅταν κινῆ, οὐ κινεῖ ἄνευ ὀρέξεως. ἐν δὲ τι τὸ κινῶν, τὸ ὄρεκτικόν. εἰ γὰρ δύο, νοῦς καὶ ὄρεξις, ἐκίνουν, κατὰ κοινὸν ἂν τι ἐκίνουν εἶδος· νῦν δὲ ὁ μὲν νοῦς οὐ φαίνεται κινῶν ἄνευ ὀρέξεως (ἢ γὰρ βούλησις ὄρεξις, ὅταν δὲ κατὰ τὸν λογισμὸν κινῆται, καὶ κατὰ βούλησιν κινεῖται), ἢ δ’ ὄρεξις κινεῖ καὶ παρὰ τὸν λογισμὸν· ἢ γὰρ ἐπιθυμία ὄρεξις τίς ἐστιν.’

<sup>4</sup> ‘νοῦς μὲν οὖν πᾶς ὀρθός ἐστιν· ὄρεξις δὲ καὶ φαντασία καὶ ὀρθὴ καὶ οὐκ ὀρθή. διὸ ἀεὶ κινεῖ μὲν τὸ ὄρεκτόν, ἀλλὰ τοῦτ’ ἐστὶν ἢ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἢ τὸ φαινόμενον ἀγαθόν· οὐ πᾶν δέ, ἀλλὰ τὸ πρακτὸν ἀγαθόν. πρακτὸν δ’ ἐστὶ τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον καὶ ἄλλως ἔχειν.’

<sup>5</sup> See 433b: ‘ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἡ τοιαύτη δύναμις κινεῖ τῆς ψυχῆς, ἢ καλουμένη ὄρεξις, φανερόν. ... εἶδει μὲν ἐν ἂν εἶη τὸ κινῶν, τὸ ὄρεκτικόν, ἢ ὄρεκτικόν-πρῶτον δὲ πάντων τὸ ὄρεκτόν· τοῦτο γὰρ κινεῖ οὐ κινούμενον, τῷ νοηθῆναι ἢ φαντασθῆναι-ἀριθμῶ δὲ πλείω τὰ κινῶντα.’

<sup>6</sup> ‘ὅλως μὲν οὖν, ὡσπερ εἴρηται, ἢ ὄρεκτικὸν τὸ ζῶον, ταύτη αὐτοῦ κινητικόν· ὄρεκτικὸν δὲ οὐκ ἄνευ φαντασίας· φαντασία δὲ πᾶσα ἢ λογιστικὴ ἢ αἰσθητικὴ. ταύτης μὲν οὖν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ζῶα μετέχει.’

<sup>7</sup> See 434a6: ‘ἢ μὲν οὖν αἰσθητικὴ φαντασία, ὡσπερ εἴρηται, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ζῴοις ὑπάρχει, ἢ δὲ βουλευτικὴ ἐν τοῖς λογιστικοῖς (πότερον γὰρ πράξει τότε ἢ τότε, λογισμοῦ ἤδη ἐστὶν ἔργον· καὶ ἀνάγκη ἐνὶ μετρεῖν· τὸ μείζον γὰρ διώκει· ὥστε δύναται ἐν ἐκ πλειόνων φαντασμάτων ποιεῖν).’

So, in order to understand how Aristotle thinks of imagination, we have to refer to the desire. Aristotle thinks of the desire as belonging to several mental functions. So, desire is connected to imagination. In a way, desire is expressed through imagination, since the object of the desire, which is supposed to prevail, is mediated by the intellect or the imagination.

Our conclusion, then, is that Aristotle, while trying to attribute ideas to intellectual functions, he always return to the result of those functions, that means the idea. As far as the ideas of the imagination are concerned, they resemble to those of the senses, but they are not the senses themselves, neither their images while working. The images of imagination seem to arise suddenly, without being able to know how they do so or where they come from. What Aristotle declares about the procedure of desire, make us wonder as follows. What exactly is the role of the desire in the production of the idea of *ὄρεκτόν*? Aristotle says that the *ὄρεκτόν* comes first. If the image, indeed, of the *ὄρεκτόν* comes first, then it brings with it a sort of meaning, and makes this meaning exist as a certain desire. From this point of view, the desire does not produce the image in question. When we say “I want to do this” or “I want this”, the thing in question is not the “object” of an operation of the human mind. The desire of whatever form is contained in its objects. The images of the objects are prevailing. Those images, I repeat, come about without knowing their source or be in a position to understand why they last so much as they last.

So, Aristotle, instead of locating *φαντασία* as a mental function whatever, he presents it as the reality of intellectual images, which are the content of several mental states. What is important is that the mental states in question are only a way to refer to the ideas which, in the final analysis, matter the most. Aristotle’s analysis of the mental functions mentioned, far from being acute, is indicative of the fact that mental content prevails whatever the procedures of its production may be, or whatever the names one invents, in order to describe those procedures.

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