



Aristotle and the human intellect

Talking about human intellect is stimulating.

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Talking about human intellect is stimulating. In part, by theories that seek to explain it, or that deny its existence. Partly because we find it very difficult to understand what happens when we think.

Aristotle's theory also today offers elements for reflection. Because for the famous Greek philosopher the subject of the soul and, in particular, the subject of the intellect, were fundamental.

Without covering the different contributions of Aristotle on this subject in his treatise "On The Soul", we can look at the following aspects: his approach, the comparison with the sensibility, and the explanation of the condition of the intellect with respect to the body.

The approach is simple: the intellect has characteristics similar to the sensibility, because it is something passive, that it receives, that it accommodates. Which raises questions. In particular, one of particular importance: do you have an organ?

This approach preserves a surprising momentum. The modern world has wondered at various times whether there is an organ or a measurable dimension that explains and founded our ideas and reasoning.

The comparison with sensitivity offers a stimulus to better understand the nature of the intellect. Because happening an interesting phenomenon. While feeling something intense the sensory organ suffers serious alterations, does not happen something similar to the intellect.

Maginemos a strong explosion. The ear is saturated, altered: it is not able to perceive for a time smaller sounds. This proves that the auditory faculty is strongly attached to the corporal and suffers the consequences of it.

Instead, what happens when we think of a very "strong" idea, such as a particularly difficult mathematical problem? That after, with surprising naturalness, we can think of something simple and easy. The Mind (intellect) moves from one subject to another without suffering alterations that incapacitate it.

From this phenomenon, Aristotle deduces that intellectual activity is not the result of a corporeal organ, because if depended on it would be altered as our eyes are altered to the intense light or our smell, particularly before a strong smell.

In addition, the intellect can think all things, while the faculty visual is limited to the colors and the auditory faculty with the sounds. To Pass so easily from the idea of infinity to the idea of sickness, of color or of justice, implies that the thought is not the act of a sensitive and material organ.

The modern world can receive, from Aristotle's reflections, a concrete stimulus to so many problems that we discuss when it comes to understanding the mind and will that characterize the human being.

Because, accept it or not, there is something in us that far surpasses what is linked to the laws of physics, chemistry, corporeality. That something explains the human peculiarity and leaves open space to understand that we are not only materials, but that we have something that the ancients called "separated" or, with a more widespread, "spiritual" adjective.