

# 2400 YEARS OF THINKING WITH ARISTOTLE

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It has been said that each century put forward its own particular understanding of Aristotle. For almost 2400 years, this founding philosophy has continuously generated debates and inspired fresh interpretations, in an uninterrupted dialogue with the intellectual tradition of ancient Greece. In November 2016, on the occasion of "Aristotle Anniversary Year" announced by UNESCO, celebrating 2400 years since the birth of one of the most influential thinkers of all time, the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Bucharest was the venue for an international conference involving a large number of participants, brought together by their interest in different aspects of the Aristotelian legacy.<sup>1</sup> Here are the reviewed versions of some of the papers presented at the conference.

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<sup>1</sup> Savu Totu, Oana Șerban (eds.), *The International Conference 2400 ARISTOTLE. University of Bucharest, Faculty of Philosophy, November 25-26, 2016 (Book of Abstracts)*, București: Ed. Universității din București, 2016.

# HUMAN'S TWOFOLD NATURE. ΜΙΜΗΣΙΣ AND ΦΥΣΙΣ IN ARISTOTLE'S THINKING

CORNEL-FLORIN MORARU<sup>1</sup>

## *Abstract*

The analysis of Aristotle's account on the process of imitation, as it is presented in the *Poetics*, could shed some new light on the way the Greek philosopher conceived of human's nature as a twofold phenomenon, including a non-judicative moment and a judicative or discursive one. Aside from the "rationality" and "sociability", presented in the *Politics* as essential to humanity, Aristotle designates imitation (μίμησις) as a non-judicative and a-rational side of human nature, which helps us gain the first pieces of information about the world and constitutes our "noetic life". My aim is to show that the act of imitation is viewed by Aristotle as the most fundamental trait of human's nature, the trait that makes our "rational" and "social" character possible.

**Keywords:** Aristotle, imitation, art, aesthetics, meontology, affective hermeneutics.

Aristotle's double account of the human nature in the *Politics* as ζῶον λόγον ἔχον and as ζῶον πολιτικόν (*Pol.*, 1253a) marks a cornerstone of the Western philosophical tradition. It was assumed by Roman philosophy through Seneca and Cicero and, later on, entered the Christian philosophy through St. Augustine. The first-mentioned Aristotelian trait of human nature gave birth to what we may call *the logocentrism* of Western Philosophy, namely the focus on the concept of "rationality" or discursivity in general that the entire philosophical tradition has manifested ever since. Among the "pit stops" on this path of thinking we may include the Stoic concept of ὀρθὸς λόγος or *recta ratio*, the Christian *verbum dei*, the Cartesian *cogito*, the Kantian *Ich Denke* (KrV, B 131f) and the Heideggerian *Rede* (Heidegger 1927, §7). The second trait pointed out by Aristotle also had an important impact to the philosophical tradition, establishing the so-called *sociocentrism* of Western Philosophy, namely the tendency to always view the human being in a social context. This sociocentrism manifests itself, among others, through concepts like the Augustinian *civitas Dei*, the entire modern ethical approach centred on the social interactions or Heidegger's *Mitsein* (Heidegger 1927, §§22-25).

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My hypothesis is that these two traits of the human nature give an account of what we could call *the discursive or judicative<sup>2</sup> moment of human's nature*, namely our conscious attitude towards ourselves, the world and others, mediated through language (λόγος) in general. But in Aristotle's thinking, the human being has the possibility of a more *direct* contact with himself, the world and others, that is not mediated through language but somewhat "directly intuited" through νοῦς – intellect or, yet better, *insight*. This *noetic or non-judicative moment* of the human being is used to directly grasp the first principles of things (*Et. Nic.*, 1143a) and, as I will argue in the following pages, constitutes the "ground zero" of humanity. In consequence, the noetic insight establishes the possibility of the other two "discursive" traits because, without *insight* into the world, ourselves and the others we cannot develop either language in general or social interactions.

The analysis of Aristotle's thinking shows us that we may reach the noetic insight in two different ways. Firstly, we can gain insight to the world in a "rational" manner by means of discursive thinking (διάνοια). We follow the causality chain that our rationality discloses until we get a certain insight into the nature of the *first cause* or the *unmoved mover*, which is the divine νοῦς, which marks the climax or Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (*Met.*, XII). This is possible because of a certain feature of our λόγος which enables us to identify the cause with the middle term of a syllogism (*An. Post.*, 94a sqq). So, this rational way to insight is made by means of a series of syllogisms linked together by induction (ἐπαγωγή). But this "inductive" method has its non-discursive equivalent in the aesthetic κάθαρσις caused by the mimetic objects (μίμημα) because both cause a certain insight into the "general".

So, the inductive and rational method cannot be the only way we reach insight. If this would be the case, we couldn't gain any at all because we are born without any language and, in consequence, without the possibility to form syllogisms. There must be *another* way of reaching insight, an "existential" one, that doesn't need the preliminary acquisition of language and that stands at the foundations of any language-acquisition.

This is how we reach a second way of gaining insight into ourselves, the world and others, in a non-rational manner, by means of imitation (μίμησις), which is considered also by Aristotle an essential trait of human nature (*Poet.*, 1448b). As it is conceived in the *Poetics*, imitation can provide us this ineffable (i.e., non-discursive) insight into things and beings in general so we can,

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<sup>2</sup> I use the terms "judicative" and "non-judicative" in a similar manner with the one present in Viorel Cernica's works (Cernica 2016, §2).

afterwards, address them through speech or social interactions. This is what we could call “existential understanding” because it implies the effort to find an “existential” (i.e., “lived”) meaning, rather than a strictly cognitive one.

Thus, understanding Aristotle’s debate concerning the act of μίμησις and the definition of the works of art as “imitations in general” (*Poet.*, 1447a) may pave the way to a reconsideration of the place of aesthetics and the philosophy of art in the Greek philosopher’s thinking. If μίμησις is indeed the most fundamental trait of human nature that cannot be accounted for through λόγος, but is constitutive to rationality and sociability, then the *Poetics* could be viewed as a *non-judicative form of ontology that teaches us how to understand our “noetic side”* – meaning our ineffable insights in the world, our unspoken consents and our affective biases. Subsequently, the theory of κάθαρσις may be conceived as a non-judicative form of epistemology, based on the process of “purification of thought” rather than “abstraction”, which is the main element of judicative epistemology. In the following pages, I will mainly focus on the (*me*)*ontologic* character of imitation, leaving the problem of κάθαρσις for future consideration.

But in order for this interpretation of Aristotle’s thinking to be possible, we must approach the ancient Greek philosophy from a different standpoint, following the pre- or non-judicative elements which influence and predetermine the traditional “ontological” approach. In other words, we must not focus on the *being* (οὐσία) of things, but rather on their *nature* (φύσις). This will lead us to a *meontological* approach on the Aristotle’s philosophy, which could be extrapolated to Ancient Greek philosophy in general.

### **1. The meontological approach to Aristotle’s philosophy and the distinction between “being” and “nature”**

As it is usually conceived of by contemporary thinkers, *meontology* is an approach to philosophy that focuses on nothingness rather than being. I have previously argued that the beginning of philosophy in the pre-Socratic period had a predominant *meontological* character (Moraru 2017, §7). The main reason for this is that the first conceptual use of the term for Being, namely (τὸ ἕόν), occurs in the Parmenidian poem, approximately a century after the alleged date of Anaximander’s fragment, which is the oldest philosophical text preserved. This means that the pre-Parmenidian philosophical endeavours could not concern Being. Instead, they are focused on the concept of nature (φύσις), which originally designated a distinct phenomenon, not to be equated with Being. This

opposition between nature and being is also visible in the Parmenidian poem, where the concept of φύσις is only mentioned in the second part of the poem, the one dealing with the “opinions of the mortals”, where Being is always mingled with non-being.

Even the formation of the Greek word for “nature” designated a *process* rather than a *substance*. Φύσις is the ineffable process through which every substance is formed, the “constitutive” process of Being through which every entity gains essence and existence. In contrast to Being, φύσις is an unconscious or “automatic” process, taking place beyond the limits of our consciousness and constituting our consciousness. The “nature” of the parts of our bodies, for example, “thinks” through us (Parmenides, *Fragmenta*, 16), very often without us noticing it. It is somewhat of a “hidden meaning” of our every gesture that expresses this nature, without bringing it explicitly to consciousness (see Merleau-Ponty 1999, 243). This “hidden meaning” shaped by our nature is the foundation of every manifest meaning and is itself founded by nothing. As we will see, this hidden ensemble of meanings or “hidden significance”<sup>3</sup> is only “deposited” in time as a “sediment” of our actions and experiences, but never constituted as such. It is auto-sketching itself throughout our lives and parasitizing our conscious experiences, attitudes and actions, without ever appearing explicitly as a subject of our propositional judgements. This is the reason why we might call this a “non-judicative experience”.

Furthermore, if we look closely, we can notice that the process of nature thought in terms of change and movement, as Aristotle thinks it in his *Physics*, is meant to take things from a negative state to a positive one (*Phys.*, 189b sqq). That which is not sketched, ordered or formed becomes foreshadowed, well ordered and gains a stable form. In other words, nature takes things from an original indetermination (ἄπειρον) and brings them to determination so that they can be grasped through the λόγος of the human soul and “stabilized” into concepts. Contrary to the “stand-alone” and constantly stable character of Being or substance, the process of φύσις is rather “unstable” and impossible to be properly grasped by means of human λόγος. This is why Aristotle feels the need to postulate that every natural change takes place on the basis of a certain kind of substance, which serves as a “support” for or “substrate” of change. The human discourse always gives *substance* to things, so we cannot *speak of* non-substantial things without violating the rules of logic, which are the rules of a well-constructed λόγος.

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<sup>3</sup> I use the word “significance” in the sense of Heidegger’s *Bedeutsamkeit*.

This is the reason why the original indetermination of the principle of all things is highly aporetic, as it is shown in the second book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (994b sqq). But this "aporetical" character is viewed from the point of view of science, not of art. The aporetical character of the principle of all things and of the nature itself is only manifest for the theoretical attitude, the one which works at the level of human scientific λόγος. The need of stability that our rationality postulates forces us to establish a "concept" of φύσις, which is, in fact, nothing more than a hypostasis of this ineffable phenomenon in a certain conceptual context and from a certain point of view. In other words, for us to understand nature in a "rational" way by means of a λόγος ἐπισημονικός, we must postulate a "substance" which nature determines because "it is difficult to separate by thinking /the matter from the form/" (*Met.*, 1036b). The "sense" or "idea" of something is always "actualized" by means of a substance. So, nature brings something from non-being to being, but not in an absolute sense because our mind cannot conceive absolute nothingness (*Phys.*, 191b). Rather, we can only perceive the nothingness *as privation*, namely in a merely *relative* sense.

This is the reason why, one of the modes we can talk about non-being in Aristotle is as *virtuality* or *potentiality* (δύναμις). We have a schematic insight into the possibilities of a certain entity *before* we can determine it "according to its nature". This insight though, is in itself beyond being and a-logical because νοῦς is not a discursive way of knowledge. Insight or intuition is neither an affirmation or a negation, the two main characteristics of the λόγος ἀποφαντικός or "scientific speech". It is a direct and non-discursive grasping of a not-constituted and self-sketching objectuality, which usually manifests itself at the affective or dispositional level of our consciousness, not at an epistemological or rational level. In general, the interstice between the indetermination and concept is somehow intuited by means of an "ineffable consent", a vague feeling which cannot be fully grasped into concept.

This peculiar character of φύσις, which operates *beyond being*, becomes neglected after the "interdiction" which Parmenides puts on the meontological discourse. When stating that the way of non-being is "unconceivable" and "unutterable" (Parmenides, DK B, 2), the Greek philosopher paved the way to an ontological interpretation of philosophy. If there is no way to philosophy than "that which says that it is", then any entity *beyond* Being is excluded from the philosophical research. This is exactly the attitude which allowed Plato to speak about the presocratic philosophy as a "fight of Giants around Being/substance" (γίγαντομαχία περὶ τῆς οὐσίας – *Soph.*, 246a sqq.) and Aristotle to sketch a "history of Being" in the first book of his *Metaphysics* (983b sqq.) But neither of the two philosophers could manage to completely cast-off ineffability and indeterminateness

from their philosophy. There is a *vein of thought* that crosses their philosophy and makes a meontological interpretation possible.

In Aristotle's thinking, this meontological vein manifests itself in the threefold nature of the human being, where the *mimetic character* is the primary trait which gives the possibility for rationality and sociability to arise. Although Aristotle seems to *rationaly* think that the concept of non-being is impossible to be conceived of otherwise than in the coordinates of the *categories of Being* (*Met.*, 1089a), i.e., through language, in the *Poetics* he suggests that there are two fundamental traits of imitation, both operating in a certain sense with the non-being which lie *beyond* our possibilities of speech and conceptualization. This is why "poetical thinking" (i.e., the discursivity of creation) is not based on the rules of science, but rather on "improvisation" (αὐτοσχεδιαστική – *Arist., Poet.*, 1148b; 1149a). To understand the role of imitation in the human nature, we must first understand this "improvisational" character which Aristotle attributes to μίμησις, which is very different to the mode in which we nowadays conceive improvisation.

## 2. Imitation, improvisation and affectivity.

### The meontological character of the creative process

The generic meaning of "imitation" for the average modern man refers to a certain difference of nature between the "model" and the imitated object. In this sense, imitation is a necessarily degenerative process because the imitated object could never reach the perfection of the model. This is why we tend to view imitation as a non-creative process, the object resulting from it being a mere imperfect copy and not an authentic work of art. "Improvisation", on the other hand, refers to a phenomenon opposed by the modern mind to imitation. Improvisation is viewed, in the postmodern artistic experiments, as pure and spontaneous creativity that is not based on a pre-existing model. As action without a preconceived plan, improvisation has no model to refer to, so it is always original and unrepeatable.

Contrary to the common belief that imitation is a form of thinking in accordance with a model, the way Aristotle conceives improvisation shows us that we need to think the act of imitation in the *absence* of a model, because tragedy, "was born at first from improvisation" or "was born from an improvised principle" (*Poet.*, 1149a).<sup>4</sup> So, however we read the Greek text,

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<sup>4</sup> γενομένη δ' οὖν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτοσχεδιαστικῆς.

improvisation is a fundamental trait of imitation, one that is can be related to the non-discursive character of φύσις. For Aristotle, imitation is an act which occurs in the shadow of the (rational) human nature, predetermining that which is to be brought into consciousness. Just like nature itself (*Phys.*, 192b), the imitation has its own interior principle (ἀρχή) of change and doesn't follow an exterior ἀρχή, but is a kind of self-origination which ends up in a substance, because for Aristotle "nature always manifests in a substance"<sup>5</sup>, as I mentioned earlier. As a σύμφυτον (*Poet.*, 1448b), imitation accompanies and predetermines every discursive thought and every tendency towards social interactions, impregnating it with non-judicative experiences.

What differentiates imitation from other natural traits of the human being is the fact that is self-constructing its principle. That which is self-constructing or self-sketching (αὐτοσχέδιος) is not "determined in advance", but rather gets its determination by itself in the process of imitation. Through imitation we profile a thing from mere indetermination to some kind of conscious objectuality, which is not yet, properly speaking, an object. The objectuality derived from imitation is a σχῆμα, a pre-figuration of the constituted object. The interesting fact is that the *syllogisms* are also constructed on a σχῆμα, ο a certain insightful pre-figuration of the joining together of different judgements (συν-λογισμός). In other words, the difference between what we call a syllogism and three random judgements written one before the other are the "schematic elements" which provide us with insight that the three judgements we think at are really linked together, not just juxtaposed. Otherwise, without the σχῆμα we could make no inference, because we couldn't "construct" the "object" of the argument. The difference between the "mimetic schema" and the "syllogistic schema" becomes thus clearer – every mimetic schema is "self-constituted" or "self-sketched", while the "syllogistic schemas" are already constituted by the nature of our language. We cannot "improvise" other syllogistic schemas. They are *posita*, i.e., imposed, while the mimetic schemas are invented.

However, this objectuality of the mimetic act is not to be confused with the εἶδος as the origin of τέχνη (*Met.*, 1032a-b), because τέχνη is thought by Aristotle as "rational disposition", i.e., μετὰ λόγου ἕξις (*Et. Nic.*, 1140a). The objectuality sketched by imitation is rather an affective disposition than an idea in the cognitive sense, but an affective disposition that may be further developed, through thinking, into a cognitive idea. The self-sketched objectuality is that "eureka moment" the artist has when an idea "strikes" him. This "strike" is not

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<sup>5</sup> ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ ἐστὶν ἡ φύσις αἰεί.

yet the fully discursive idea, but rather a vague feeling, an affective disposition that needs to be interpreted and explained. The strike of the idea is the *affectus* which causes an *effectus* on our rationality, the “emotion” which moves us to start a necessary hermeneutical reaction from our discursive thinking. The “bump” we get from the strike of the idea is that which causes a “bending back” (lat. *reflexus*) of our reflexivity, which starts the thinking process. In the absence of this *effectus* or bending-back of our λόγος, the idea is lost – we had it a few moments ago, but now, when we try intentionally regard it, is gone “into thin air”.

This shows that the self-sketched ἀρχή of imitation is firstly grasped as an *affectus*, or as something that “strikes” us. We “feel the rhythm” of a melody and that which drives our dancing moves is not an idea, but rather an “affective disposition” which harmonizes itself by trial and error with the track we are dancing to. This is also the way an actor *acts* on stage, by improvising the actual moves and gestures of his characters and this is also the way a visual artist *feels* the moment of inspiration. In fact, all arts start from such a non-judicative experience, which needs to be developed by λόγος and transformed into work of art. In a certain sense, the work of art is nothing more than the hypostatization of this non-judicative or meontological experience into a certain object by the artist. The spectator intuitively “knows” this because he doesn’t see a piece of painted cloth, but painting. His νοῦς takes over and tries to reconstruct the object *as a work of art*, starting from the viewer’s own non-judicative and judicative experiences and from the presence of a mimetic objectuality (σχῆμα).

This “improvisation” or “self-sketching” character is an essential trait of imitation, because, without it, we couldn’t form any piece of knowledge at all. “We gain our first knowledge through imitation” (*Poet.*, 1448b) in our early childhood, when our rationality and sociability are not yet fully developed, this being the reason why the human being differentiates itself from other living beings. Humans are “the most imitative animals”, this being the basic natural trait we share with other living beings. But, because we excel in imitation, because we are “the most imitative” of the animals, we are able to further develop, on the basis laid by imitation, rationality and sociability. That simply means that we gradually gain the possibility to develop the affective disposition sketched by imitation into a *rational or discursive disposition*, by means of the *reflexivity* of our λόγος. In other words, we have the capacity to translate our emotions into words which can be further used to communicate our emotion and to develop sociability. This leads us to the idea, often ignored by modern exegetes, namely that *a quantitative difference leads to a qualitative difference* in the architecture of human nature and that *imitation is the process through which we develop both rationality and sociability*.

In order to understand this quite peculiar character of imitation, we need to take a look at some of its meanings in the Ancient Greek language and determine, on this basis, the “meontological essence” of imitation. For example, Homer uses the words *αὐτοσχεδόν* and *αὐτοσχεδῖος* exclusively in the context of “close combat” (e.g. *Il.*, 15, 510; *Il.* 12, 192; *Il.* 7, 273; *Od.*, 22, 293 etc.), where the fighters do not have a predefined strategy of attack and the battle is “auto-determined” by the response to the opponent’s actions. In fact, every strike of a sword and every defensive action is dictated by an imitative response, by a *reflex*, which unconsciously grasps the opponent’s intentions and pre-figures our response in accordance with it. The fighters do not have the time to properly constitute the opponent’s actions as objects of consciousness, but rather quickly sketch a vague objectuality or a *σχῆμα*, which drives the next move, this being the reason why they are driven by what we call “intuition” rather than thinking. In a certain sense, every imitation is a “close combat” because it implies a “strike” to which we have to respond reflexively. When an idea “strikes” us, we respond by trying to *think* it and bring it to a conceptual determination. This process is not a “deduction” as we usually think because we cannot deduce any determination from indetermination itself. It is rather *a fight*, in which we postulate different thoughts *in response* to the affective disposition caused by the strike of the idea, just as the fighter tries to act in response to the opponent’s attacks. As the fighter “anticipates” he directly counter-acts the opponent’s moves. There, “anticipation” is not linked with a “projection” in the future, or with representation, but with harmonizing two opponent parts. This is why there is a deep connection between dancing and fighting, exploited at a metaphorical level throughout the Greek literature. Every close combat is, as Hector himself puts it, a dance in the honour of Ares (*Il.*, 7, 241).

This means that the process of imitation, thought as some kind of bringing a thing into determination from non-determination without any other intermediary operations or representations, is a series of re-actions – *affective*, but also *bodily* – that are unmediated or, yet better, a series of *re-flexes*. The fighters do not “represent” themselves the opponent’s actions and then choose to act “in accordance”. If they would do this, they would have lost the fight from the first strike. Instead, they “go with the flow”, the same flow of which characterises nature as a whole in Heraclius’ *πάντα ῥεῖ*. In fact, this flow or stream is the main character of the Greek concept of *φύσις*, the character which the human consciousness tries to settle into stand-alone concepts and ideas. The *λόγος* itself is also a flow, a flow of thoughts and words which naturally springs from our soul, but which grasps the objectuality sketched by imitation and tries to settle it

into concepts which have a constant meaning that can be expressed and communicated. Without rationality or discursivity, we couldn't gain sociability conceived in an aristotelic manner. In other words, sociability arises on the basis of this fixation of the flow of λόγος into concepts and with the possibility of expression and communication (*Pol.*, 1253a). Although other animals *sense* pain and joy, they cannot reflect on it, bring it to concept and verbally communicate it.<sup>6</sup>

This self-sketching (αὐτοσχέδιος, i.e., improvisation) of the principle is one of the fundamental traits of the mimetic process which relates to a second fundamental trait, namely the *affective character of imitation*. We have already seen that, in the case of close combat, μίμησις operates especially at the level of human affectivity or, yet better, affective disposition. Aristotle explicitly states that one of the *natural causes* (αἰτίαι φυσικαί) of the manifestation of imitation in humans, besides the self-sketching character that grants the possibility of the first acquisitions of knowledge, is the fact that all humans *rejoice* (τὸ χαίρειν) imitation (*Poet.*, 1448b). In other words, imitation is deeply related to human affective disposition and has a peculiar power of affective transfiguration which is the basis for understanding Aristotle's view on κάθαρσις, a subject which exceeds the aim of the present study.

This affective moment of imitation concerns some kind of harmonization with the self-sketching principle of imitation, which has hypostatic properties. As in the case of close combat, the harmonization is a "polemic" one. The *rejoice* or *joy* which imitation brings springs the harmonization of two rather "antithetic" elements – the ineffable insight and the mimetic acts one responds with, in order to provisionally grasp it. For example, the harmonization of the insight concerning certain feelings which a spectator has with the events imitated on stage at a theatrical performance brings joy and meaning to those insights, sketching some kind of objectuality for the consciousness. This happens because through imitation our ineffable consents are projected on a substantial support and can enter in the light of consciousness. The joy which imitation brings is like a *marker* of this harmonization or, in a temporal sense, of rhythm, because rhythm is the temporal projection of harmony.

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<sup>6</sup> Aristotle's argument is also valid in the context of today's dispute about non-human persons because for Aristotle having the language and the possibility to express certain messages doesn't lead to humanity. Slaves, for example perceive the λόγος, but do not properly "have" it (*Pol.*, 1254b). "Having rationality", for Aristotle, is equivalent with being able to still the flow of consciousness into concepts that can be communicated, which is the basis of sociability. So, until the non-human persons will prove themselves able to form stand-alone concepts by reflection and communicate them, they aren't yet fully social.

The two features of imitation – dispositional affectivity and self-sketching – are the basic moments which allow us to form an unexpressed (or, yet better, schematic) ensemble of meanings, upon which we can form our propositional judgements, our rationality and our sociability. This is why imitation pertains to the *non-judicative aspect of human nature* – it is infra-rational and pre-social. So, human nature, as viewed by Aristotle, is a twofold structure, consisting in a non-judicative moment and a judicative moment which are impossible to be rigorously separated. In other words, the human nature is a διχόμυθον, a structure of double signification which coagulates a coherent whole by means of harmonization. The “rational” or “logical” meaning, which we perceive at the level of conscious experience through propositional judgements is always founded on and parasitized by an *affective meaning*, which springs from the non-judicative level of our nature and is a product of imitation – a self-sketched objectuality which harmonizes to our noetic insights and ineffable consents.

This peculiar character of imitation, and its role in the architecture of human nature, points out to a specific form of *affective hermeneutics* because the forming of an objectuality through imitation is accomplished κατὰ μικρὸν (*Poet.*, 1448a). The “hermeneutical constitution” of the “mimetic objectuality” or the μίμημα is made by repeated phases of trial and error. This is why, from a meontological point of view, the phenomenological distinction between constitution and interpretation cannot be held anymore. In the case of mimesis, the constitution of the objectuality is carried out through a pre-judicative and infra-rational hermeneutical process, which involves a series of ineffable consents concerning the harmonization of the non-discursive insight (νόημα) with the μίμημα. I call this type of hermeneutics “*affective*” because the whole process of imitation aims our dispositional affectivity rather than the discursive or rational aspect of human nature. This might explain why every propositional judgement is constructed upon a series of pre-judicative elements which are nothing other than mimetic objectualities formed by means of *affective hermeneutics* at the fundamental level of our being. These “hidden meanings” which are deposited as sediments can be observed in two ways: by de-constituting the already constituted propositional judgements – this being the way Viorel Cernica deals with this phenomenon (Cernica 2016, §2) – or by understanding the mechanisms of hypostatization which are implied in the mimetic acts. If fighting is, for Hector, a (mimetic) *dance with Ares*, the searching for hidden meanings in our judgements is a (hypostatic) *dance with Hermes*. But the mechanisms that guide these two acts are similar in some sense. Imitation and hypostatization have the same heuristic logic and the same tendency for “antithetic harmony”. Although the original indetermination

and its determinative hypostatisation are opposed, we consent that a certain concept is a hypostasis of a certain ineffable or affective experience.

We have already seen why the mimetic act and nature in general can be conceived as a process of determining the indeterminate and of bringing to stability a never-ending flow in a semi-constituted object of consciousness or schema. This vague prefiguration or foreshadowing of an object is that upon which our intentional thinking aims to further determine and bring to concept. So, we might think of imitation as the first step in which our nature acts in order to bring the indetermination to concept or, in other words, to make something out of nothing. This nothingness that lays at the beginning and constitutes the guiding principle of our mimetic acts is none other than the ἀρχή of all things, the original ἀπειρον from which all order can be formed. This process of making something out of nothing is what I call hypostatization and consciousness can be thought of as a series of hypostatic functions which help us bring to stability the flow of nature.

This rough sketch of the act of imitation which takes part into the process of hypostatization of nothingness especially from an artistic point of view is just a preliminary endeavour and must, undoubtedly, be fully developed. Such a task, however, implies rethinking the nature of language as a whole and its power to signify meontological entities, on the basis that language itself plays a very important role in the hypostatic functionality of our consciousness. The mechanisms of the (mimetic) affective hermeneutics and of the process of hypostatization will then appear more clearly for the discursive thinking. The above-analysed remarks are also relevant as a key for understanding Aristotle's philosophy as a whole, starting from the twofold (non-)judicative nature of the human being and the role of mimesis in the constitution and acquisition of knowledge.

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