

Christopher Shields. *Aristotle De Anima*. Oxford University Press : Oxford, 2016, 415 p. US \$ 32.00 (pb). ISBN 978-0-19-924345-7.

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The Clarendon Aristotle Series is releasing a new volume containing a translation, commentary and notes on the *De Anima* by Christopher Shields. This new volume offers several novelties in comparison with its predecessor in the same collection, namely, the classic work of 1968 on the *De Anima* by D. W. Hamlyn. The first of the items I want to mention is, evidently, an improvement: Shields' translation takes into account the whole treatise, something that Hamlyn's did not offer. For the latter skips from chapter 2 to 5 of the first book (he actually just took into account a few passages of Book I), because he thinks of it as a mere review of past opinions. In Shields' work, a complete translation is accompanied by the presentation of a commentary on those formerly missing chapters, which not only contributes to the discussion in Aristotelian scholarship (maybe in Presocratic scholarship too), but also could be useful for providing an explanation of the presence of the doxographical accounts in Aristotelian treatises.

The volume, then, is divided in two main parts: the translation and the commentary. It has also an introduction to the text, focusing on the main problems that arise from the treatise; a discursive outline, which can serve as a map; a list of notes on the Greek text (mainly pointing out where the reading has changed, but rarely the reasons why); a discursive glossary on Aristotelian terminology; and the bibliography.

Introduction

The introduction of this text is very useful for a student on philosophy: it concentrates less on historical features and philological issues related to the *De Anima*

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itself or its material transmission, and more on philosophical problems. This particular feature is in perfect harmony with Shield's own declaration that "the Clarendon Aristotle Series takes as its mission a plain, forthright exposition of Aristotle's philosophy for the engaged Greekless reader rather than the professional philologist" (p. xlvii).

Now, this fact is evident if we look at the architecture and content of the four subjects of the introduction. The first one, called "The Place of the *De Anima* in the Aristotelian Corpus" draws mainly on technical aspects, like the use of vocabulary, that can establish relationships with the rest of the Aristotelian works. As I said before, it contains no philological questions: the point that Shields displays has nothing to do with stylistic or textual matters of the treatise; its scope is, rather, towards the conceptualization process.

The second item on the introduction, "Some Principles of Hylomorphic Explanation" continues on the same line described before. There, the author explains what *hylomorphism* is and under which specific account or conception hylomorphism must be understood and applied in the *De Anima*, which concepts are involved in this philosophical apparatus, how the Aristotelian *four-causal explanatory framework* plays a role in this context, and how all these elements are articulated within the psychological project. The presentation of this theoretical framework leads to the third part, where the issue of "Soul and Body" is taken up. The application of the hylomorphic apparatus to the issue of the relationship of body and soul is, probably, one of the features that make the Aristotelian *De Anima* so famous. Nevertheless, it entails also a certain number of important difficulties where our understanding of the hylomorphist account is challenged by the consequences to which it gives rise in the psychological framework. The author offers a very interesting introduction to them, providing an account of the philosophical issues involved, some important positions on the discussion and several sketches (some more developed than others) of his own interpretation.

The last subject treated in the introduction is that of the "Faculties of the Soul". This, which is one of the most important doctrinal aspects of the *De Anima* is treated with some detail, providing an exposition of the main faculties (he does not focus on locomotion or imagination there, though), making a short but precise explanation of the Aristotelian account, and of the philosophical richness of the subject.

Translation and Source

The translation is, of course, one of the two main features of the volume (the other one is the commentary). As I said before, the mere fact of providing a translation of the full book is already a sign of improvement in relation to the former version of the Clarendon Aristotle Series' *De Anima*. A note on the text precludes the translation. Shields says there that he did his translation based on Ross 1961 edition, but he points out that a lot of "careful consideration" should be taken in dealing with this edition. The reasons for that advice include Ross' own philological and disputable choices, but also the fact that, in Shields words, "we do have a text based upon a much broader range of manuscripts that Ross or any other textual critic before him had consulted": Siwek's 1965 *Tractatus De Anima* (p. xlv). Although Shields expresses warm approval of Siwek's edition, complaining about its very poor circulation, and saying that is better documented than Ross', he does not employ it as his main text. Rather, he points out that he is not following Ross in "some fifty-five passages, and in dozens more" he has important reservations.

In total, Shields translation contains sixty-seven passages where he adopts a different reading in the Greek text: some notes are on Ross' edition of the Greek text; some others are indications that a conjecture of an interpreter is being adopted; a few more are about some modifications in the order of the text and transpositions of lines accepted for this version. What is striking about this is that, at least, twenty-four of these readings differing from Ross' are present in another more recent edition, that of Jannone (1966), which takes into account more manuscripts than Ross does; mainly, it should be noticed that manuscript H^a, which is very important to Jannone's edition, supports some of Shield's readings.

Given the particularities of the text chosen as the basis for the translation, it is strange that Shields did not use a more recent or more complete edition. We can imagine that he does so because Ross' edition is more known or circulated than the others. Nevertheless, if there is better material available, maybe a translator would be better served to use it, rather than in correcting another version.

Even if the translation follows the original Greel text very closely and tries to be very precise in the choice and systematical use of a single translation of a given term (mostly, of technical terms), it does not always do so, which is an important

strength. This translation shows the fact that languages are, by nature, polysemic, and that a philosopher is not far away from being a native user of his own language. This is clearly noticed in Shields' flexibility to translate, i.e. a word like 'λόγος' according to the context (see, for example, the commentary on page 99, 176 and the glossary entry on page 381), or in the presentation he made of the difficulties that faces a unique translation of 'νοῦς' (p. 294). This is why it should be remarked that in this case the principle of lexical accuracy does not lead to immobility or to obscurity.

Commentary

The second important feature of this work is the commentary, which is a very illuminating piece of hermeneutical effort on the treatise. One thing should be remembered: this commentary does not contain philological or textual criticism (it contains very few mentions of that kind of issues).

That the commentary's aim is not philological does not mean that it does not follow the progression of the text. As a matter of fact, it does, even if it is not a line-by-line commentary, and it puts very little stress on the Greek. The commentary is organized according to the order of the three books and its chapters respectively, but instead of focusing on lines or sentences it targets argumentative blocks. Thus, we find for each chapter an introduction, where Shields explains the content of the whole chapter, and then we are provided with some "subchapters", each named according to the main topic they deal with: the subject, or a methodological feature (description of a phenomenon, formulation of problems, objections to some theory). This is very useful since it helps to follow the interpretive proposal Shields offers, on the grounds of an understanding of the organization and structure of the Aristotelian treatise and investigative procedure; it is also very useful, since it frames the explanation on specific problems and, because of this, the philosophical points that the author provides to us for the discussion are clear.

I will present some important points that I think deserve to be taken into account, either for the way Shields interprets (or also because of some silences), or for his exegetical strategy, or for the connection with the translation.

1. Book I.

Aside from the fact that this volume is equipped with the translation of the first book, it also provides a commentary, which focuses on the passage where it finds the Aristotelian methodological statements and the definitional background of the present inquiry.

In the very first chapter of Book I, Aristotle offers methodological considerations regarding the inquiry he is about to start. Those methodological claims are formulated as *aporiai* that, in one way or another, give structure to the investigation. One of the puzzles presented has to do with the possibility of employing the properties of a given substance to acquire the knowledge of what this thing is. In that context, Aristotle says:

This is a case wher[a] For when we can render an account of all or most of the properties according to imagination (κατὰ τὴν φαντασίαν), we will also then be able to speak best about the substance (DA 402b22-25).

Here, I think, we are entitled to call into question the translation of ‘φαντασία’. It is clear to me that the translation of the term in this passage is in absolute consonance with the lexical choice in all the other occurrences of the term in the treatise. However, I am not convinced that keeping uniformity in this case helps us understand what Aristotle meant, for it is not clear what we should understand by a process of “rendering an account of something according to imagination” in a discussion about definition. All the translators of the *De Anima* in English (but also in other languages) that I know of, in this very case use a different meaning for the word ‘φαντασία’: for example, in English we have “attributes as they appear to us” (Hamlyn 1993 p. 3); or “attributes as they are presented to us” (Hicks 1907 p. 7).[†]

Now, one might think that the definition of imagination given in Book III, 3 could be adequate to the context of this passage: “For then imagining will be believing, non-co-incidentally, the very thing one perceives” (DA 428b1). Yet Shields is not that generous in this case: he does not explain how we must understand the faculty in this passage, or why we should. In the commentary to the passage we find a very interesting discussion of the plausibility of the procedure described by Aristotle, given that the properties of a thing are necessarily linked with that thing’s essence, but he never mentions the expression ‘κατὰ τὴν φαντασίαν’, nor does he explain why we

[†] On why Aristotle here cannot be making reference to the faculty, see Hicks (1907 p. 192) and Boeri (2010 p. 6)

should think that here we're invited to a definitional procedure stressing the imaginative capacity.

Nevertheless, I do call attention to this fact because it does not seem that Shields absolutely rejects the fact that 'φαντασία' can mean something different than just "imagination" (which, as I said, may obey just to a need of lexical consistency). The proof for me is in Shields own commentary when he refers to 'φαντασία' using the word "appearance" (p. 96, 275 and 366) and he just gives one reason: "in English, 'appearance' is not normally associated with a mental faculty, while 'imagination' is regularly associated with too narrow a faculty". He says, though, that he prefers to use 'imagination' given its philosophical pedigree. However, it seems to me that in the very first occurrence the translation of 'κατὰ τὴν φαντασίαν' as 'according to imagination' does not capture completely the fact that giving an account of the properties that we grasp by the senses when we perceive something can also help in the definitional process. (It should be taken in account that this is, pretty much, what the predecessors seem to have done and the reason why their views are worth considering.) At least, this difference is not that evident, and could be easily solved with an explanation in the commentary.

It should be remarked that the treatment the author gives to the doxographical section is serious and lengthy. The customary way of dealing with this kind of collection of opinions is to focus on the person Aristotle is presenting and to give some historical-erudite note on that character. Shields does not engage in that procedure; rather, he tries to explain the very function of these opinions in the context of the *De Anima*, except maybe in the case of the "*kinetists* catalogue" of the end of chapter two. In this case, we are provided with a description of the theory as presented by Aristotle, but he says very little about the role that this theory plays in the whole project of the first Book. Yet, the effort of dealing with Book I is reinforced with some remarks about the reconstruction process that Aristotle is performing on his predecessors' opinions. There is no reference, though, a reference to the reconstruction of these arguments by Harold Cherniss (1935 p. 289)[‡], or at least a discussion of the interpretation which seem to continue to be the dominant interpretation of how Aristotle deals with his predecessors.

[‡] I will provide some bibliography that I think crucial for the subject of the *De Anima*, which is, however, missing in the bibliography in Shields' volume.

Despite his improvements and efforts, Shields seems to be on the same page of the tradition, namely, to interpret these dialectical reviews just as *états de l'art*, or a way, on Aristotle's part, of showing his intellectual supremacy. We never get an explanation of how the dialectical review is articulated with the methodological claims of Aristotle, if it is the case, or how it is not the case. This topic, namely, the articulation between doxography and the program of the treatises has been the focus of attention of several scholars interested in the Aristotelian doxography, among who we can find, specifically talking about the first Book of the *De Anima*, Charlotte Witt (1992 170) and Hans Baltussen (2000 46). There are also different interpretations of the scope of this Book I, as the one proposed by Cherniss, but also the ones by Witt (1992) and Menn (2002), which may be considered on the debate, for they try to explain how this dialectical procedure is crucial for Aristotle's later interests in the treatise.

2. Book II

The commentary on this book has a remarkable particularity: dealing with an account, which focuses mainly on perception, Aristotle shows in most of the chapters a "primarily physiological" orientation (p. 240). Because of that, it may seem that most of the commentary is concentrated on the first chapters, and the last ones are treated less. However, the commentary proposed by Shields shows even in those physiological passages some important elements of Aristotelian coinage.

The commentary on the first five chapters targets some important definitional issues that have become classic within specialized criticism. One of them is the distinctions between two meanings of the word 'ἐντελέχεια', and the way in which those meanings must be applied to the understanding of the famous statement that the soul is "the first actuality of a natural body which has life in potentiality" (cf. *DA* 412b5).

Nevertheless, there is a matter related to translation, which can have an incidence on the potential grasping of Aristotelian subtle nuances, namely, the English choice for 'ἐντελέχεια' and 'ἐνέργεια', since both terms are rendered as "actuality" in Shield's translation. I am completely aware that the distinction and

relation between both terms is a very disputed issue[§]. Shields never entertain the subject in his commentary; he does, though, in the glossary in the entry “Actuality, Activity” (p. 382). There he provides a brief summary of how both terms “differ slightly in meaning”, but he does not actually give an argument to avoid a differentiation in translation. Nevertheless, I really think that rendering both terms in the same way may be a source of confusion.

On the one hand, it is true that those terms can be treated, sometimes, as almost synonymous, and this could be the case in several passages of the *De Anima*. But, on the other hand, it cannot be proven beyond any doubt that this synonymy is a rule in all the occurrences of those terms in the treatise (not to talk about the whole corpus). This situation is particularly remarkable in Book II, chapter 5, where the hylomorphic apparatus is applied for the analysis of perception.

The second book opens with the correlation between the pair of opposites matter-form and potentiality-actuality:

[a] Matter is potentiality, while form is actuality (ἐντελέχεια); and actuality** (τοῦτο) is spoken of in two ways, first as knowledge, and second as contemplating is (DA 412a9-11).

As can be noticed, the correlation between both pairs of opposites is established without much difficulty. Nevertheless, the last term in this equation, actuality, entails a distinction, which is better elaborated few lines before:

[b] *Actuality* (αὐτή) is spoken of in two ways, first as knowledge is, and second as contemplating is. Evidently, then, *the soul is actuality* as knowledge is. For both sleeping and waking depend upon the soul's being present; and as waking is analogous to contemplating, sleeping is analogous to having knowledge without exercising it (τῷ ἔχειν καὶ μὴ ἐνεργεῖν). And in the same individual knowledge is prior in generation. Hence, the soul is the first actuality (ἐντελέχεια ἢ πρώτη) of a natural body which has life in potentiality (DA 412a22-28).

As is clear, in this passage, very early in Book 2 we get, besides the term ἐντελέχεια, the very first occurrence of the idea expressed with the other term in

[§] The ambiguity is, in fact, the matter of discussion among critics (Bonitz 1955 253; Menn 1994 75). There are also scholars who said that it should be given a special attention to every occurrence to those terms without generalizations, because it may be a synonymy, it may be not (Blair 1993 96).

** I underlined the words that are interpreted or supplied in these passages by Shields in his translation.

dispute, ἐνέργεια^{††}. It is also, at least so far as I noticed, the only case in the whole book where both terms are not rendered by the same word, “actuality”. This oddity for me is an indication that the terms are more than slightly different in meaning in the *De Anima* for Shields himself, and that this distinction has to do with the fact that ἐντελέχεια is said in two ways (I think that the explanation of Shield’s in the glossary may go in the same direction; see also note 6 below). As I understand the argument, there are two senses of ‘ἐντελέχεια’: (i) a sense in which it is active permanently, a perfect act, as someone who is “already contemplating, who is in actuality and strictly knowing this *A*” (*DA* 417a29; p. 33), and a sense (ii) in which some capacity is in potency (a human being knows by being in the class of knowers), or when such a capacity already acquired may come to be in activity (a human knows when they have a given kind of knowledge, even if they are not executing a task involving that knowledge). When we speak of the soul, not in a qualified way, we refer to the second sense, in which we say that soul is present in living things as long as they are living, no matter the psychic functions they are, or are not, currently experiencing^{‡‡}.

However, there is another distinction between these two terms, namely ἐντελέχεια can be taken as ranging over all functions of the soul, whereas ἐνέργεια denotes a specific function of the soul, like seeing or hearing. According to this second contrast, the soul is an ‘ἐντελέχεια’ in a qualified sense as an ἐνέργεια, for it appeals to a particular function that is not always operative, so that ἐντελέχεια will be a term with a more broad use, and ἐνέργεια should be reserved when denoting the execution of a certain activity. As Shields seems to accept this second way of contrasting ἐντελέχεια and ἐνέργεια (in the way he understands the two senses of ἐντελέχεια), he should have taken more care in translating both terms differently, so

^{††} In this case, though, we do not have a noun, but an infinitive. Nevertheless, infinitives work also as substantives, and they can also construct prepositional syntagms with adverbial value, like in this case. So, this may be counted as an occurrence of the idea I am seeking for. The other thing to bear in mind is that both the substantive and the verb are neologism of Aristotle’s own coinage (Menn 1994 75), so their semantic and functional frames obey to a specific technical employment.

^{‡‡} I think that this point is very well explained by Shields: “Minimally, of course, it must be allowed that necessarily if *x* has a soul, then *x* is alive. It does not follow immediately, however, that if *x* is alive at time *t* that at *t* *x* is currently actually (= second actuality) engaging in some one of life’s characteristic functions, i.e. digesting, or reproducing, or perceiving or knowing (cf. 412a14-15, 415b28). To insist that whatever is actually ensouled is actually (= second actuality) living, is simply to insist without argument that the distinction introduced here collapses or is otherwise incoherent. Aristotle is not constrained to accept either of these conclusions” (p. 171).

as to allow the reader to make up his mind about the significance of the distinction, or its irrelevance.

The concentration of occurrences of the term ‘ἐνέργεια’ and ‘ἐντελέχεια’ in book 2 is to be met in chapter 5. This chapter is crucial to understand if there is, or if there is not, a difference. But given that fact, the translation fails to show that this distinction is marked with a careful placing of both terms. Consider the following text:

[c] One must also draw a distinction concerning potentiality and actuality (ἐντελεχείας). For we have just now been speaking of them without qualification. In the first case, something is a knower in the way in which we might say that a human knows because humans belong to the class of knowers and to those things which have knowledge; but in the second case, we say directly that the one who has grammatical knowledge knows. These are not in the same way potential knowers; instead, the first one because his genus and matter are of a certain sort, and the other because he has the potential to contemplate whensoever he wishes, so long as nothing external hinders him. Yet another sort of knower is the one already contemplating, who is in actuality (ἐντελεχείᾳ) and strictly knowing this *A*. In the first two cases, then, those knowing in potentiality come to be knowers in actuality (ἐνεργείᾳ), but the first one by being altered through learning, with frequent changes from a contrary state; and the other, from having arithmetical or grammatical knowledge and not actualizing it (μὴ ἐνεργεῖν δέ) to actualizing (εἰς τὸ ἐνεργεῖν) in another way (*DA* 417a21-b2).

This passage seems to provide a good piece of evidence in favour of a distinction between both terms. Aristotle is providing three cases where just one, the third one, is properly speaking an ἐντελέχεια, or as some may say a “full reality”^{§§}; the first two are cases of coming to be in act from potentiality (and potentiality is also twofold)^{***}. The fact that potency has two meanings, but not two words, for some might be an argument for erasing the distinction between ‘ἐντελέχεια’ and ‘ἐνέργεια’.

^{§§} I am recovering the sense provided by the LSJ in the numeral II under the entry of ‘ἐνέργεια’ (1996 p. 564).

^{***} I totally subscribe Menn’s interpretation: “Aristotle says that the soul, since it is said like ἐπιστήμη and not like θεωρεῖν, is ‘ἐντελέχεια ἢ πρώτη of a natural body potentially having life’ (412a27-28), but this does not mean that there is such a thing as a δευτέρα ἐντελέχεια. What Aristotle says (after saying that the soul is ‘an ἐντελέχεια of such a body [412a21-22]) is that ‘this is said in two ways, one as ἐπιστήμη, the other as θεωρεῖν’ (412a22, repeating 412a10-11); he says further on that the act of seeing (ὄρασις) is ἐντελέχεια in one way, and the power of sight (ὄψις) is ἐντελέχεια in another (412b27-413a1). This means not that there are two kinds of ἐντελέχεια, but that any given ἐντελέχεια (such as seeing or living) can be predicated in two ways, through ἔχειν and through ἐνεργεῖν, and therefore that identifying the soul with the ἐντελέχεια of living is ambiguous between saying that the soul is present whenever something is living in the weak sense, or only when it is living in the strong sense. ‘Εντελέχεια by itself indicates the weaker sense of living; it is the ἐνέργεια of the ἐντελέχεια that indicates the stronger sense” (1994 105).

But maybe this very fact is an argument for proceeding in the exact opposite way^{†††}. Some may say that ‘δύναμις’ is an equivocal term, for just the same reason, and that the distinction between ‘ἐντελέχεια’ and ‘ἐνέργεια’ must be stressed. It is possible that ‘ἐντελέχεια’ denotes the possession of soul, with all that it implies, and ‘ἐνέργεια’ marks only the activity or execution of the potencies of the soul.

There is also another front in the debate. There are some scholars who doubt the utility or necessity of ‘ἐντελέχεια’ if ‘ἐνέργεια’ was already available. This may be a key question to make: why if they are synonymous, or “differ slightly in meaning”, so slightly not to make any differentiation between them in a translation, did Aristotle need another term?^{‡‡‡} Some scholars stress the fact that the reason may be the need of a metaphysical term avoiding “the connotation of κίνησις inherent in ἐνέργεια” (Graham 1989 80). This is a hypothesis that, if not accepted at the light of the *De Anima*’s evidence, at least deserves to be discussed.

Of course, this is not the place to provide a defense of a particular reading of Aristotle’s theory of act and potency, or anything similar. Nevertheless, I think we are not faced with a random usage of the terms, as one may expect if they were synonymous or, at least, if they were not marking some difference^{§§§}. I think that those passages, among others, show that a distinction in the translation of the terms could, at least, prevent a Greekless reader of failing to notice this fact, which is an important topic in Aristotelian studies^{****}. And I think that Shields himself points on that distinction sometimes, which is enough reason to maintain the distinction of both terms in the translation.

^{†††} For example, the account that the first actuality corresponds to the first potency and, likewise, the second actuality corresponds to the second potency. This is what Menn calls the ‘standard picture’ for integrating the power-activity distinction with the potentiality-actuality distinction (1994 88).

^{‡‡‡} “Considering that ἐντελέχεια (with its rather awkward dative form ἐντελεχείᾳ as a substitute for an adjective or an adverb) appears in his writings only 138 times, it seems odd that he would have felt the need for a new word which was indistinguishable in meaning from words he used more than twice as often” (Blair 1993 93).

^{§§§} Polansky noticed something similar: “Nevertheless, examination of all the appearances in this treatise discloses that he limits himself to *entelecheia* here in the definition of soul, while he tends to use *energeia* to speak of the operation and condition of the faculties of soul and their objects” (2007 150).

^{****} Besides Menn (1994), the debate can be reconstructed also with the aid of Graham (1989 75).

3. Book III

The commentary on Book three is the most interesting and elaborated. I am of this opinion because: (i) the explanations on the text are very detailed; (ii) we can find a good presentation on the debate that the text has inspired and a contrast between different positions, most of them in English language (which contrast with the discrete presence of the discussion with other scholars in the commentaries of the previous books); and (iii) the advantages and consequences of those positions are presented. I will discuss two passages: one, where this spirit is not that present; the other one, where it is crystal clear.

Chapter 1 contains a famous line that has been the source of certain astonishment among Aristotelian scholars. The subject is the perception of the common objects of perception which, among others things, are not exclusive objects of any of the five senses. They are not, though, perceived co-incidentally, as an exclusive object of taste (sweetness) is perceived by sight. Nevertheless, there is a passage of this chapter, which opens and closes in what we might call a contradictory way:

[a] Moreover, there cannot be some special sensory organ for the common objects, which *we perceive co-incidentally by each sense* (ὅν ἐκάστη αἰσθήσει αἰσθανόμεθα κατὰ συμβεβηκός)^{†††}—for example, motion, rest, shape, magnitude, number, and unity. For all of these we perceive by motion: for example, we perceive magnitude by motion (and consequently, shape, since shape is a sort of magnitude); something at rest in virtue of its not being moved; number in virtue of the lack of continuity as well as by the peculiar objects of perception (since each sense perceives one thing). Consequently, it is clear that there cannot be any special sense for these, for instance, for motion. For in this way things will be just as they are now when we perceive the sweet by sight: this occurs because we as a matter of fact have a perception of them both, by which we come to know them at the same time when they occur together. Otherwise, we would never perceive such things other than co-incidentally. For example, we perceive the son of Cleon not because he is the son of Cleon, but because he is a white thing, and it is co-incidental to this white thing to be the son of Cleon. *We have common perception of the common objects, however, and a not co-incidental one* (τῶν δὲ κοινῶν ἤδη ἔχομεν αἰσθῆσιν κοινήν, οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός). Thus these are not exclusive objects; otherwise, we would not perceive them in any way other than in the way just mentioned that we see the son of Cleon. (DA 425a14-30)

The difficulty, as can be seen, has lead Torstrik to intervene the first sentence in order to include a negation before the prepositional syntagm, as it is in below in the same passage. This emendation, however, has not been followed by the most part of

^{†††} In this passage I underlined the clauses involved mainly in the debate.

the interpreters in the text, although they have followed it somehow in spirit. So, the way they choose to overcome this difficulty without intervening the passage has been much discussed in the philosophical debate.

However Shields here seems to avoid the problem. In his commentary to the passage he recognizes the problem, and admits that the emendation “though understandable, is unnecessary”, but he just says that it should be understood somehow as an *endoxon* Aristotle does not accept. In Shields’ view, he is “entertaining a counterfactual hypothesis whose dominant contention he does not himself accept” (p. 261). It does not seem, because of the progression of the discussion in the passage, that it is the case. At least, we don’t advice dialectical marks or a refutational context. So, it seems that Shields’ hypothesis is neither, *prima facie*, convincing, neither enough explained. This line has produced several interpretive possibilities, however. Surprisingly, in this case we do not find the discussion of a single one of them.

Shields’ procedure in the second case is more interesting. Although it is a very brief, chapter five has been the origin of a large discussion. The introduction to the commentary makes explicit why it is that this chapter is so controversial. Shields describes it in the most clear way: “Aristotle now distinguishes an active from a passive reason [...] All of this raises the prospect that despite his plain denial that the whole soul is separable in *De Anima* II 1, reason, taken by itself, may yet be separable” (p. 312). Immediately after describing the problem, he presents the two main hermeneutical strategies that commentators have been following since Themistius’ times: on the one hand, there is the “divine interpretation” (elsewhere also known as *externalist*), which argues that Aristotle is not dealing with the human faculty, but with a divine non-human reason; on the other hand, the “human interpretation” (or *internalist*) pleads for avoiding the multiplication of entities, and engages in interpreting the dichotomy active-passive reason at the light of other dichotomies present in Aristotle’s own tool box: act-potency or perception-intellection, and so forth.

Shields carefully disposes both lines of interpretation, one in front of the other, applied to every argumentative step on the chapter. This is noteworthy, since both of the positions count with prominent counselors (it is strange, though, that Caston is counted as a militant of both armies). In this arrangement, the author is very neat in not showing a decided compromise with any of the interpretations; he rather presents

them as equivalent, and convincingly. The outcome of this attitude is that he is able to show the huge complexity of the debate, acting more as a provider of tools for the reader, rather than pontificating. Nevertheless, it seems that he is more akin with the “human interpretation”, when he denounces that a possibly undesirable result of this hermeneutical strategy could be “to foist upon Aristotle a Platonic, or still more anachronistically, a Christian conception of human immortality. Such an approach is, inter alia, out of keeping with the pervasively naturalistic and biological tenor of the *De Anima*, which treats human beings as natural, rational, corporeal beings” (p. 315).

Nevertheless, the absence of a decision leaves us without understanding how this chapter fits into Shields’ whole interpretation of the *De Anima*. This may mean that the text continues to be obscure to the author, or because the reading on this chapter does not affect his reading of the treatise in its totality.

Bibliography

I completely agree with Shields: the task of providing an exhaustive bibliography for the *De Anima* is a very difficult mission because of its vastness. In general what is provided to us, mainly in English, is a very good amount of literature, and certainly the most reputed and useful possible. There are very few omissions that I want to point out:

The text “Shields (2011)” that we found quoted in the commentary (p. 89, 181) is not listed in the bibliography.

We do not find the classic work by Harold Cherniss (1935), or some important discussions on the doxographical procedure of book one, like that of Witt (1992) and Baltussen (2000). The discussion on the definitional procedure of book II also could well received more attention. The discussion on the ‘ἐντελέχεια’ and its relation to the concept of ‘ἐνέργεια’ is, except for the texts by Kosman, completely left aside.

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