Animal's Vulnerability or Human Sociability? A Question on the Aristotelian Ethics[1]

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Abstract: This paper intends to show that Aristotle's theory on the political nature of man implies a specific difference in relation to other animals. This difference does not arise from his understanding of human beings as naturally vulnerable animals that seek political life as an artifice to redress their insufficiency or individual vulnerability. The qualitative difference of human beings in relation to other animals – including political species, such as bees or ants – drives them to an equally specific type of life, whose foundation adheres to values that can be universalized. The political use of these values does not correspond to what is done in the domestic sphere, nor does it correspond to the mere transposition to a quantitatively superior community. This is because the universality of political values is extracted from what human beings understand as necessary for the realization of man as man, not as an element of nature.

My exposition is directed to the natural aspect of friendship (*philia*) in mainly two of the so-called "zoological" works of Aristotle: *History of Animals* and, subsidiarily, *Generation of Animals*. This choice has a precise motivation: Alasdair MacIntyre, in his book *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*[3], mobilizes the Aristotelian notion of friendship among animals to show that the individual autonomy to guide actions by rational choice is not independent of the animality and vulnerability implied in our animal condition. According to the author, the proof of this is that the moral virtues guiding our actions result from our initial (in childhood) animal condition, and that the virtues are, in a way, an answer to the vulnerability of this very condition. In other words, our moral relations are partially defined in the infant stage, when we learn some moral norms of relationship according to a primary matrix of "giving and receiving" necessary to the actualization of specifically human potentialities.

MacIntyre seems to have found echoes of animal *philia* in the relations of human motherhood, a bond conductive to the learning of behaviors proper to the species. Jean-Luis Labarrière serves as an inspiration to MacIntyre. In his article "De la phronesis animale"[4],

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[2] I thank Professor David Lefebvre for his warm welcome at Centre Léon Robin (Paris-Sorbonne) and for the clarifying discussion of the present text (dispensing him of eventual mistakes).

[3] MacIntyre, A., *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*. Chicago, Open Court, 1999.

[4] Labarrière, J.-L., "De la pronesis animale" in Devereux, D., et Pellegrin, P., éds., *Biologie, Logique e Metaphysique chez Aristote.* Paris, Édition du CNRS, 1990, p. 417. Labarrière's article is expressly quoted by MacIntyre, p. 55 *passim*.

Labarrière defends the idea that the imperatives that govern human actions are similar to those governing the actions of other animals, implying an "analogue of reasoning (a kind of practical thinking)" among animals. This "practical reasoning" is more or less developed according to the degree of *phronēsis* (understood as "intelligence"[5]) in each rational or irrational animal.

Thus, I intend to present arguments indicating that the Aristotelian conception of human specificity prevents one from reducing the rational potency proper to the species to a distinction of quantity. The difference between animal and human intelligence is not merely a matter of "more and less"; it is not quantitative but qualitative. From Aristotle's perspective, one cannot find a "biological ground" of morality pertinent to the genus rather than to the species.

The works of Aristotle mentioned above are those in which the developments related to *animal* friendship (*philia*) and prudence (*phronēsis*) are most clearly found, even though they are sparse and very concise.

In *History of Animals*[6]*,* the core theme is the animals' way of life: friendship is taken as a character feature (*to ēthos*) of certain kinds of animals or as the manifestation of the attachment between the progenitor and the progeny. But in *Generation of Animals*[7]*,* friendship is linked to the very purpose of the work – reproduction – as one more gift of nature aimed at the eternal perpetuity of the species.

Therefore, such works could suggest, so to speak, a "naturalist" interpretation of friendship in general, insofar as it appears as an ulterior manifestation and, in some cases, as a more complex manifestation of the primordial parental care (*epimeleia*). Such an interpretation could at the same time lead us to the idea of a "biological ground" of morals, since nature has endowed us, like many other animals, with a feeling of care towards others, whether for the preservation of the other or for their wellbeing. This could lead to the idea of an "emotional base of morals"[8] on which reason could then operate.

It remains unacceptable to interpret parental care as the primordial manifestation of something that can become friendship. According to Aristotle, more *intelligent* animals and those with memory "live longer" and more politically (*polikōteron*) with their progeny.[9] In this

[5] In the quoted texts, "intelligence" is sometimes translated as *phronēsis*, *sunesis*, or *nous*. A similar fluctuation occurs with other terms. As will be shown below, it is a matter of choice, not neglect.
[6] *De historia animalium. History of Animals.* Translated by d'A. W. Thompson. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. *The Complete Works of Aristotle* I, 1995. Hereinafter HA.
[7] *De generatione animalum. Generation of Animals* Translated by A. Platt. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 1995. Hereinafter GA.
[8] This expression was employed by Marco Zingano in his course "Virtude e deliberação na *Ethica Nicomachea* de Aristóteles" (Virtue and Deliberation in Aristotle's *Ethica Nicomachean*) conducted at USP in 2001.
[9] Cf. HA, VIII, 1, 589a1-2.

group, we can include, for example, men and elephants.

Nonetheless, there seems to be a distinction between animal and human friendship, a distinction that would initially demand consideration of the fact that, indeed, "many animals have memory (*mnēmēs*) and are capable of instruction; but no other creature except man can recall or *remember* (*anamimnēiskein*) the past at will."[10]

The popular saying, "A scalded cat is afraid of cold water"[11] illustrates the unpleasant feline experience. Elephants are also known for their exceptional memory, but neither the elephant nor the unfortunate cat can *remember*. Some animals can retain or preserve a past sensation or knowledge, but only man has memory (*anamnēsis*), that is, the ability to *evoke* a past knowledge and make it current. Thus, memory has an active and voluntary character, it has characteristics of a rational operation specifically human[12] and of fundamental importance for the consideration of human friendship, which includes virtue[13] and, in this respect, the consideration of moral norms to be taken into account in practical circumstances.

The *History of Animals*[14] teaches us that the diversity of animals is expressed in their ways of life (*tous bious*)[15], that is, as aquatic or terrestrial beings and their subdivisions.[16] Animals are also distinguished by their actions (*tas praxeis*): some live in groups, some are solitary, others live arbitrarily in a way or another. Among the gregarious animals, some are political (*ta politika*), that is, they act in view of a common work, like men, bees, and ants;

[10] Cf. HA, I, 1, 488b24-26.

[11] The meaning of this Brazilian saying can be correlated to the meaning of "Once bitten, twice shy." (TN)

[12] See *De memoria*, 453a11 (in W. D. Ross, *Aristotle*: *Parva naturalia*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1955. Translated by J. I. Beare. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 1995). In this passage, the author defines memory as a kind of searching.

[13] See *Nichomachean Ethics*, VIII, 1, 1155a1-2. (Translated by W.D. Ross. Revised by J. O. Urmson. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 1995). Hereinafter NE. See also *Éthique à Nicomaque*. Trad. par R. Bodéüs. Paris, Flammarion, 2004.

[14] According to Pierre Louis, the editor and translator of Aristotle's "zoological" treatises published by Les Belles Lettres, the meaning of the word ἱστορία (*historía*) in the *corpus aristotelicum*, but also among contemporary authors of Aristotle, "designated the knowledge of the particular facts from which Science is elaborated." "History of Animals" means, thus, the 'exposition of facts concerning animals' or, rather, the 'state of knowledge concerning animals'". "Introduction" in *Histoire des animaux*, pp. XIX-XX. In the opposite direction, James G. Lennox, in his book *Aristotle's Philosophy of Biology* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), understands that the set of Aristotle's zoological writings not only represents a systematic investigation of animals, but also establishes the foundations of a science of living things, which is the case of the first book of *Parts of Animals*. By bringing this book closer to the four books that compose the *First* and *Second Analytics* (his philosophical investigation of the scientific knowledge), we can believe, as Lennox affirms, in the theorical interdependence of his "zoology" and his "philosophy of science". I'm indebted to David Lefebvre for of the specificity of the relational and scientific character of the zoological treatises.

[15] HA, I, 1, 487a11-12.

[16] Among the aquatic animals, there are those that live and feed in water (fish) and those that live and feed in water but do not breathe air or water (shellfish). Among the land animals, there are those that breathe air (all animals that have lungs) and those that do not breathe air (bees, insects, wasps). Aquatic and land animals differ in their locomotion, diet (carnivorous, omnivorous, carpophagous), habitat, and reproduction. See HA, I, 1, 487a28-487b32.

others live in groups but do not depend on their peers for their survival, like the dove, the pigeon or the tuna fish. Another distinction concerns character (*to ēthos*): "In the great majority of animals there are traces of psychical qualities (*ikhnē tōn peri tēn psukhēn*), which are more clearly differentiated in the case of human beings"[17]: docility (*hemerotēs*) and despondency (*dusthumia*) are attributed to the ox, the boar is irascible (*thumōdēs*) and stupid (*amathēs*), the deer is prudent (*phronimos*) and fearful (*deilos*), the serpent is evil (*aneleuthera*) and perfidious (*epiboula*), the lion is noble (*eleutheros*) and wrathful (*andreios*), the wolf is wrathful and insidious (*epiboulos*), some are astute (*panourga*) and ferocious (*kakourga*) like the fox, the dog is docile (*thumikos*) and affectionate (*philētikos*).[18] There is also the disposition to temerity (*tharros*), to desires (*thumoi*)[19], besides the disposition to something

> equivalent to sagacity (*tēn peri tēn dianoian suneseōs eneisin en pollois autōn homoiotētes*). [Some of these qualities in man, as compared with the corresponding qualities in animals, differ only quantitatively: that is to say, a man has more of this quality, and an animal has more of some other; other qualities in man are represented by analogous qualities]: for instance, just as in man we find knowledge (*tekhnē*), wisdom (*sophia*), and sagacity (*sunesis*), so in certain animals there exists some other natural capacity (*tis hetera toiautē phusikē dunamis*) akin (*analogon*) to these.[20]

The animal's intelligence (*sunesis*), when directed to prevision or precaution, is generally called *phronēsis*[21], which, according to Labarrière, indicates the arbitrary use of these terms to designate "the practical intelligence" of animals.[22] In fact, the doe is said to be *phronimon*[23] because it gives birth to her offspring at the margins of roads to avoid other wild animals that flee from human contact to get closer. Deer, when they lose their horns, stay hidden and feed only at night because they do not have their tools to defend themselves.[24] Many animals (specially quadrupeds) eat plants when they feel sick or when they are poisoned by spiders or snakes.[25] Bees foresee (*proginōskousi*) bad weather and rain so that they do not fly far from the hive.[26] Elephants have well-developed senses (*euaisthēton*), and their understanding (*sunesis*, again) is superior to that of other animals, a proof of this is that when one of them mates with a female elephant and impregnates her, he does not touch her again.[27]

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[17] HA, VIII, 1, 588a16-17 and IX, 1, 608a11 ff.
[18] See HA, I, 1, 488b11-29.
[19] Pierre Louis, ad HA, VIII, 1, 588a, reminds us of its similarity with *Timaeus*, 69d. See Plato, *Timée. Critias. Œuvres complètes, X.* Texte établi et trad. par A. Rivaud. Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1925.
[20] HA, VIII, 1, 588a21-26.
[21] See HA, IX, chapters 5 and 6.
[22] Labarrière, p. 406.
[23] HA, IX, 5, 611a15-16.
[24] HA, IX, 5, 611b10-17.
[25] HA, IX, 6, 612a1-5.
[26] HA, IX, 40, 627b10-13.
[27] HA, IX, 45, 630b20-22.

However, there are many passages in the Aristotelian *corpus* in which it is affirmed that animals are deprived of *nous*, *dianoia*, *logismon* and, evidently, *logos*.[28] In *History of Animals*, a work in which is found a vast repertoire indicating the intelligent behavior of animals, Aristotle emphasizes that man is the only animal endowed with reflection (*bouleutikon*).[29] This capacity belongs to the rational part of the soul and allows us to know what is contingent – what can be different from what is or what was. It is precisely in this environment that all animate beings live, whose actions would be blind or random if they were not endowed with *bouleutikon* – the ability to reflect on what one must do in certain circumstances.

To the extent that one must avoid the false prognosis of the contradiction between the texts or the understanding that the semantic sphere of these terms, when attributed to other animals rather than to humans, is restricted to the metaphorical record, one must try to understand this natural faculty *analogous* to the human rational faculty as a necessary condition for the development of those intellectual virtues: art, wisdom, and intelligence.

The attribution of intelligence, or of terms employed to qualify intelligent behavior in animals[30], has above all the purpose of establishing an *analogy* between the rational faculty and a corresponding natural faculty in animals, the theoretical consequence of which is to establish degrees of intelligence in animals in general, and to derive from them a biological basis for morality, sustained in the recognition of vital interdependence.

According to Pierre Pellegrin, in establishing such an analogy, Aristotle would be relating two groups of animals, one of which would be taken as a reference (some animals are more intelligent than others), in order to finally relate all living beings to a single being, man, understood as a model of intelligibility.[31] Therefore, the doctrine of analogy strongly

[28] See, for example, *De anima*, II, 3, 415a7-11, III, 3, 427b6-14, III, 3, 428a22-24, III, 4, 429a6, III, 10, 433a11-12. Hereinafter DA: *De l'âme*. Texte établi par A. Jannone. Trad. et notes de E. Barbotin. Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1995, 2ème édition revue. *Metaphysica*, A, 1, 980a27 ss. *Metafísica*, Ed. trilíngue. Trad. de V. García Yebra. Madrid, Gredos, 1970. *Nous* refers to the intellect that directly grasps the universal and indemonstrable principles of science, or the particular and contingent fact – the minor premise of the practical syllogism (see NE, VI, 12, 1143b1-3); *dianoia* refers to discursive thought; *logismon* corresponds to the calculative operation of the faculty that Aristotle calls *to logistikon* or *to doxastikon*, a faculty that knows the contingent and would operate as the cause of moral action.

[29] HA, I, 1, 488b24-25. This faculty is also called *to logistikon* (calculative) in NE, VI, 2, 1139a11; *to doxastikon* (opinionative), in NE, VI, 5, 1140b26; or *to bouleutikon* (deliberative) in DA, III, 10, 433b3.

[30] I make use of Labarrière's already mentioned article to present the relation between the terms used by Aristotle: *panourgia* (astuteness in HA, I, 1, 488b20, VIII, 1, 588a23, IX, 8, 613b23); *eumēkhanos* (engeniousness) and *eubiotos* (ease in finding food, a quality attributed to the hoopoes and the robin in HA, IX, 11, 615a16, HA, IX, 15, 616b10-12); *tekhnikos* (skillful in HA, IX, 11, 615a19, 616a4, 620b10); *ergatikos* (diligent), *ergasia* (work), *ergadzontai* (to work) in HA, IX, 38-43, (622b19, b24, b26, 624b31, 627a6 etc.).

[31] Such as in HA, I, 6, 491a19. See Pellegrin, P., *La classification des animaux chez Aristote. Statut de la biologie et unité de l'Aristotélisme.* Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1982, p. 110. Several other passages in Aristotle attest this relation. See, for example, HA, II, 1, 501a8-9.

denounces the anthropocentric character of the studies of anatomy and ethology made by Aristotle. By affirming anthropocentrism, Pellegrin is rejecting the interpretation of Jean-Marie Le Blond, who sees in the doctrine of analogy the reason why Aristotle should be considered "the beginner of the comparative anatomy and physiology."[32]

In *History of Animals* Aristotle often uses the doctrine of the analogy to explain the existence and variety of organs or parts of animals. The parts of animals have identity or difference. There is identity and specific or generic difference, and there is similarity by analogy, that is, there is *similarity of function* of parts that are generically different.[33]

Thus, parts are similar whether within the same species: one man's nose is similar to the one of another man; or they are similar in the genus but different in species by excess or deficiency[34]: among birds there are those that have long beaks and those that have short beaks; or parts do not have the same form (like the nose) nor differ by excess or deficiency (like the beak), but present analogies: "as, for instance, bone is only analogous to fish-bone, nail to hoof, hand to claw, and scale to feather; for what the feather is in a bird, the scale is in a fish."[35]

In *Parts of Animals* Aristotle defines his understanding of "analogy" (*analogia*):

> For instance, some groups have lungs, others have no lung, but an organ analogous to a lung in its place (*anti* – in the sense of equivalent); some have blood, others have no blood, but a fluid analogous to blood, and with the same office (*dunamis*).[36]

Each part of the animal exists in in order to perform a function, i.e., an action that nature has assigned to it[37]: therefore, the parts are analogous because they perform the same function, although they do not have specific similarities, that is, neither similarities of form within the species nor similarities within the genus, which vary according to excess and deficiency (or more and less). There is nothing in common between feathers and scales, except the fact that

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[32] *Apud* Pellegrin, p. 111. A reference to the *Traité sur les Parties des Animaux, livre I.* Texte et trad., avec intr. et commentaire par J.-M. Le Blond. Paris, Aubier, 1945. The translation and notes were republished together with Pellegrin's introduction (Paris Flammarion, 1995), in which he repeats the same commentary on page 6. It should be noted that Francis Wolff does not seem to consider that the relationship established between groups of animals – but taking man as reference – is strongly marked by an anthropomorphic bias. If the path to knowledge is always taken from what is more known to us to what is more known by itself, and given that man is the species that knows itself best (HA, I, 7, 491a22),then he will be the starting point that serves to elucidate the nature of other animals. See "Pensar o animal na antiguidade", *Cadernos de História e Filosofia da Ciência*, Campinas, 1998, série 3, v. 8, número especial, pp. 9-37.

[33] See, for example, HA, I, 1,486a14 ff, II, 1, 497b5-13.

[34] Birds and fish are generically different animals: the first are terrestrial, the latter are aquatic.

[35] HA, I, 1, 486b20-21.

[36] *De partibus animalium*, I, 5, 645b6-10. Translated by W. Ogle. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. *The Complete Works of Aristotle* I, 1995. Hereinafter PA. For Aristotle, the difference between sanguine and non-sanguine animals corresponds to what we call vertebrate and invertebrate animals.

[37] PA, I, 5, 645b19-20.

they perform an analogous function: they serve to cover the body.

Unlike species similarity (the nose of one man is similar to the nose of another man) or genus similarity with distinct gradation (the beak of one bird is bigger than the beak of another), similarity by analogy or proportional similarity implies a distinction of nature between the considered elements.

Now the blood and the corresponding humor in non-sanguine animals are of a different nature, and so too are of a different nature the natural faculty by which animals, unlike man, exhibit intelligent behavior, and the rational faculty which enables man to be endowed with art, wisdom, and intelligence. Thus, given the difference of nature between the two faculties, no attempt to introduce specifically rational activities into the general natural faculty seems productive to me.

Labarrière seems to defend this position when he considers as "very delicate" any interpretation that would limit a distinction of degrees only to characters and a distinction by analogy only to intellectual faculties.[38] According to him, Aristotle would have "opened" the functions of this natural faculty insofar as he included *phronēsis* among the affections (*pathēmata*) and the characters (*hexeis*) corresponding to each of those that man presents: "the qualities or defects by which animals differ more or less – and the intensity of these 'qualities' is not important here – can therefore be also attributed to this natural faculty."[39] With regard to this natural faculty, which is more or less common among the animals, one could speak of characters and intellectual qualities.

Labarrière then resorts to a passage from *History of Animals* as textual support for his interpretation. In that work, Aristotle states that, because they live longer, the animals that are more easily known by observation

> have a natural capacity corresponding to each of the passions of the soul: to good sense (*phronēsis*) or simplicity (*euētheia*), courage or timidity, to good temper or to bad (*khalepotēs*), and to other similar dispositions.[40]

A little further on, in a passage that the commentator does not refer to, Aristotle again includes intelligence, now under the semantic weight of the term *nous*, among the distinguishing features of animals: "the characters of animals, as has been observed, differ in respect to timidity, to gentleness, to courage, to tameness, to intelligence (*nous*), and to

[38] Labarrière, p. 411.
[39] Labarrière, p. 415 (Our translation).
[40] HA, IX, 1, 608a11-13.

stupidity."[41]

Thus, the lamb is the most stupid (*anoia*) of the quadrupeds because it stays in places where there is nothing to eat or it stays outside the shelter when the weather is bad, in contrast to bees, which are said to be intelligent because they avoid flying far from the hive when they predict bad weather.

However, since animals *always* act according to their sensible or desiderative nature, they are deprived of the calculative faculty (*to bouleutikon*) proper to the rational soul, by means of which human beings can and must reflect on actions they are about to perform[42], Aristotle cannot signify the animal and the human intelligence in the same way.

A natural faculty does not function to enable animals to perform a reflexive activity, although they have an *analogous* faculty: the bee *feels* the proximity of the rain, it does not make a judgement about the weather. Between feeling and action there is no rational operation that grounds or directs a choice, in contrast to human action, which interposes between feeling (or desire) and action *the adjucative consideration of the best*. Furthermore, the *Nicomachean Ethics* also makes a very brief reference to *natural* virtue (*phusikē aretē*), which is related to virtue itself (*aretē tēn kurian*), that is, the disposition to act by free choice. Several moral qualities are present in us from birth (a certain inclination to temperance and to courage), "for both children and brutes (*thēriois*) have the natural dispositions to these qualities, but without thought (*aneu vou*) these are evidently hurtful.".[43] Just as the *De anima* points out the necessity of distinguishing the faculties in terms of the relationship between the potentiality of the faculty and the corresponding activity:

> If opining is distinct from perceiving, to be capable of opining (*to doxastikon*) and to be capable of perceiving must be distinct, and so with all the other forms of living above enumerated [thinking or sensation or nutrition].[44]

Labarrière concedes that this is the case both regarding the difference between animal and human *phronēsis* and the non-adjucative character of animal *phronēsis* and, even more, that "strictly speaking, animal *phronesis* does not govern any *praxis*". However, the commentator notes that in animal *phronesis* there is a "certain use of sensations and habit in view of a certain better life and not simply of survival".[45]

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[41] HA, IX, 1, 610b20-22.
[42] See NE, VI, 11, 1143a11-18.
[43] NE, VI, 13, 1144b8-10.
[44] DA, II, 1, 413b29-31. See also DA, I, 1, 402b11-16 and the extensive footnote four of Richard Bodéüs's translation of the *De L'âme*. Paris, Flammarion, 1993.
[45] Labarrière, pp. 415-6, my emphasis (Our translation).

The support for this reading is found in a passage of the *De sensu* on the two functions of the "external" senses (vision, hearing, and smell) for animals endowed with local movement: these senses exist in view of preservation (*sōteria*), they guide the search for the useful and the withdrawal from the harmful, but they also allow a better existence, that is, the movement (or behavior) of animals endowed with the senses of vision, hearing, and smell is regulated by the "search of a good". In this passage Aristotle affirms:

> But in animals which have also intelligence (*phronēsis*) they serve for the attainment of a higher perfection (*tou eu heneka*). They bring in tidings of many distinctive qualities of things, from which knowledge of things both speculative and practical is generated in the soul.
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> Of the two last mentioned, seeing, regarded as a supply for the primary wants of life is in its own right the superior sense; but for developing thought hearing incidentally takes the precedence.[46]

Just as the commentator interprets this passage, the "external" senses with which animals with local movement are endowed, and for a more limited group also endowed with reflection, the activity of these senses would provide more than what is necessary for the conservation of animals, it would allow them to live better. What would this well-being, this *bien-être*, be? Labarrière goes on to say:

> A kind of knowledge and a certain kind of behavior that is not reduced to the instinct of self-preservation, and we can also observe that this well-being would also imply a certain kind of community life, whether it be sociable, political or simply familial.[47]

As for the fact that from the senses one obtains "knowledge from objects of thought and of the actions to be performed", which might seem to exceed the potentialities of animals other than man, Labarrière reminds us that animals endowed with hearing are also capable of teaching, not only of learning, which is possible thanks to visual sensation. *Phronēsis*, however, is not specifically a human characteristic in terms of the knowledge it provides, which is provided by hearing and seeing.,[48]

It is true that the senses are not only the starting point of all knowledge[49], but are themselves knowledge inasmuch as they allow us to distinguish sensible qualities such as color, sound, movement, figure etc.[50] But in view of the animic complexity of animals, if sensation

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[46] *De sensu*, I, 1, 437a1-6.. *De sensu et sensibilibus* in *Parva naturalia*. With an English Transl. by J. I. Beare. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 1995. The term *bien-être* was translated by Labarrière.

[47] Labarrière, p. 417 (Our translation).

[48] Labarrière, pp. 416-7.

[49] See for example DA, III, 8, 432a7-10 and *Analytica posteriora*, I, 18, 81a38 ff. *Analytica priora et posteriora.* Rec. W. D. Ross. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1964. See also *Seconds analytiques*. Intr., trad. et notes par P. Pellegin. Pais, Flammaion, 2005.

[50] DA, II, 6, 418a14-15. For the complete list of sensible qualities, see DA, II, 6, 418a7 and ff. and DA,

produces memory and the latter produces experience, which is the unification, under the form of a universal[51], of the same memory repeated many times, the possibility of scientific knowledge and of empirical knowledge (which unites the domains of art and *praxis*), both branches of properly human knowledge, is open. If, on the other hand, the animal is constituted in such a way that memory does not produce any experience, or only produces it to a minimum degree, without, however, being able to unify multiplicity in the unity under the form of a universal by means of reason, there will be only sensible knowledge, to which animals endowed with at least the senses of touch and sight will have access. The first chapter of the *Metaphysics* testifies the relation between sense and knowledge, with all its passages or gradations:

> For not only with a view to action, but even when we are not going to do anything, we prefer sight to almost everything else. The reason is that this, most of all the senses, makes us know and brings to light many differences between things.
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> By nature animals are born with the faculty of sensation, and from sensation memory is produced in some of them, though not in others. And therefore the former are more intelligent (*phonima*) and apt at learning than those which cannot remember; those which are incapable of hearing sounds are intelligent though they cannot be taught, e.g. the bee, and any other race of animals that may be like it; and those which besides memory have this sense of hearing, can be taught.
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> The animals other than man live by appearances (*tais phantasiais zēin*) and memories (*tais mnēmais*), and have but little (*mikron*) of connected experience; but the human race lives also by art and reasonings (*tōn anthrōpōn genos kai tekhnē kai logismois*). And from memory experience is produced in men; for many memories of the same thing produce finally the capacity for a single experience.[52]

I would like to emphasize a single idea from this long paragraph, despite its great richness and complexity. With regard to intelligence and knowledge, it is important to rephrase the *causal* relationship between these two dispositions and the animal's ability to retain visual and auditory sensations: only animals that have memory are also capable of learning and teaching. The lamb is the most stupid of the quadrupeds because it *returns* to the place where there is nothing to eat, repeating several times an insensate behavior. Contrary to the lamb, there are intelligent animals in that they are capable of preserving or retaining a past sensible impression and replacing it in future similar situations: so does the elephant that "kneels before

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III, 1, 425a 14 ff. Aristotle distinguishes proper sensible objects from common sensible objects. Proper sensible objects are those that can be perceived only by the proper organ: color by sight, sound by hearing, flavor by taste, the tangible by touch. Common sensible objects are those that can be perceived by more than one sense: for example, movement is perceived by sight and hearing.

[51] See *Analytica posteriora*, II, 19, 99b34 ff.

[52] *Metaphysics*, A, 1, 980a24-981a1. *Metaphysics*. Translated by W. D. Ross. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. The *Complete Works of Aristotle*, 1995. Hereinafter *Met*.

the king".[53]

It should be noted, however, that in the case of animals other than man, the substitute is not the evocation of a past knowledge, since evocation is a kind of search that emphasizes the active aspect of memory, that is, the reason why it is a kind of activity that is *specifically* human. Thus, when an elephant learns it must bow "before a king", it does so because it retains the image of something with certain characteristics (ornaments such as a cloak, a crown or a pink hat, a scepter) before which it must bow. On all future occasions the elephant is confronted with something with these characteristics that it has retained in its memory, it will bow as if it were always before the same king, the same image.

On the contrary, when a man learns that he must bow before a king, what is evoked in a future situation is a knowledge that is actualized before each and every man whose predicates refer to the royal state, an so he will do, even if the king is naked.

With regard to animal intelligence, it does not seem to me that its characteristic is to interpose commands by making use of sensations, memory, or *phantasia aisthētikē* –, and by determining behaviors in terms of a well-being. For Labarrière, what distinguishes human *phronēsis*, and should also characterize animal *phronēsis*, is the latter's relationship to the experience and its imperative character. *Phronēsis,* or animal intelligence is superior to sensation, memory, and even *phantasia* because it would rule by making use of what is proposed by these faculties.[54] Prudent conduct is different from instinctive conducts because a command intervenes.

And even though animals have a small participation in experience and habit, according to the *Metaphysics*[55] – and still according to Labarrière's reading –, this participation must presuppose something like an "sub-proposition of the empirical" because it possesses something like a "pre-predicative under-universal"[56], even though this whole process is limited to the sensible soul. When the animal performs an act guided by *phronēsis*, that is, when it determines its behavior in view of a *to eu* (*bien-être*) from an acquired *ethos*, it does so through a *phantasia aisthetiké* superior to mere sensation. For animal *phronēsis* to be meaningful, it must correspond to a movement initiated by habit and experience, not just by sensation, in relation to three kinds of "vital acts": reproduction, rearing offspring, and nutrition.

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[53] HA, IX, 46, 630b21.
[54] *Met*., A, 1, 980a26-981a3. According to Labarrière, animal *phronēsis* is also superior to the sensible *phantasia* in animals, which implies an analogue of reasoning, i.e, a kind of practical thought that reasons in view of an end. See DA, III, 10, 433a9-21.
[55] *Met*., A, 1, 980b25.
[56] Labarrière, p. 418 (Our translation). But we ask, what could a "pre-predicative under-universal" mean?

I ask, however, first of all, to what extend would it be possible to affirm that the *phronēsis* operates within the sensible faculty and yet commands actions according to a "reasoning" like the following: "fresh, green, fluid, deer, then (*donc*) a river to quench my thirst"?[57] Even if the animal is capable of some experience (albeit to a minimum degree) and thus has learned that "king = to kneel", it is still very unlikely that it can perform an inferential operation like "*if* king, *then* bow". Furthermore, if the cuttlefish (a mollusc) spouts its ink and the water gets dark so that it can scape its enemies, could we still congratulate it for its astuteness, since it would seem to be a prudent command, but motivated by experience and habit, in contrast to an innate conduct with the precise purpose of preserving itself?

Second, the dual function Aristotle ascribes to the senses of sight, hearing, and smell does not seem to refer to the binomial "in view of life" and "in view of good", and that implies the distinction between "instinctive behaviors in view of preservation" and "behaviors limited to conservation".

On the contrary, the distinction that Aristotle seems to make is between the minimum and absolutely necessary senses for an animal to exist and live (touch and taste) and the senses that allow animals to better carry out their existence (sight, hearing, and smell). In both cases, it is always a matter of preserving oneself to better carry out one's existence.[58] As it is written in the *De anima*:

> An animal is a body with soul in it: every body is tangible, i.e. perceptible by touch; hence necessarily, if an animal is to survive, its body must have tactual sensation. […]. That is why taste also is a sort of touch; it is relative to nutriment, which is just tangible body; whereas sound, colour, and odour are not nutritious, and further neither grow nor decay. Hence it is that taste also must be a sort of touch, because it is the sense for what is tangible and nutritious.
>
> Both these senses, then, are indispensable to the animal, and it is clear that without touch it is impossible for an animal to be. All the other senses subserve well-being and for that very reason belong not to any and every kind of animal, but only to some, e.g. those capable of forward movement must have them; for, if they are to survive, they must perceive not only by immediate contact but also at a distance from the object.[…] It is evident, therefore, that the loss of this one sense (touch) alone must bring about the death of an animal. For as on the one hand nothing which is not an animal can have this sense, so on the other it is the only one which is indispensably necessary to what is an animal. […]
>
> All the other senses are necessary to animals, as we have said, not for their being, but for their well-being. Such, e.g., is sight, which, since it lives in air or water, or generally in what is transparent, it must have in order to see, and taste because of what is pleasant or painful to it, in order that it may perceive these qualities in its nutriment and so may desire to be set in motion, and hearing that it may have

[57] Labarrière, p. 418 (Our translation).

[58] When Mansion translates *tou eu heneka*, instead of *bien-être*, he prefers a periphrasis: "*conditions favorables d'existence*." See *Introduction à la physique aristotélicienne*. Louvain, Institut Supérieur de Philosophie/Paris, Vrin, [1913²] 1987, p. 260, n. 29.

communication made to it, and a tongue that it may communicate with its fellows.[59]

Now, all natural beings obey the dictates of nature – birth, growth, reproduction, and death –, which are carried out according to necessity and finality. Not absolute necessity, which applies only to eternal beings, but hypothetical necessity (*ex hupotheseōs*), which affects all beings subjected to becoming, whether in the realm of nature or of art. In these realms, "by necessity we shall sometimes mean that the requisite antecedents must be there, if the final end is to be reached; and sometimes that things are thus and so by nature".[60] Thus, every animal has at least the sense of touch, for every animal has a body, and every body is tangible; or rather, the sense of touch exists for the purpose of nourishment, therefore it is necessary that animals have organs adapted to this purpose.

With regard to nature as final cause and good[61], "a certain fullness of being is always found in it"[62], Aristotle clarifies it the following way:

> Now if nature makes everything either because it is necessary or because it is better (*to beltion*) so, this part also must be for one of these two reasons. But that it is not necessary for generation is plain; for in that case it would have been possessed by all creatures that generate, but as it is neither serpents have testes nor have fish; for they have been seen uniting and with their ducts full of milt. It remains then that it must be because it is somehow better so.[63]

Testicles are there to moderate the secretion of semen so that it is neither violent nor rapid. However, there are animals that do not have them out of necessity, not because it is better: fish do not have them because they would have to hold their breath when releasing the seminal fluid, which every animal that has testicles does. For the fish, it would mean stopping taking in water, which could be fatal. Hedgehogs, on the other hand, have their testicles in a different place from all viviparous animals because of the need of a quick intercourse due to the horns.[64] Here Aristotle confirms the undeniable betterment of nature.

It would seem, then, that if nature acts for the best, providing animals with organs that enable them to live better or to carry out their existence better, this does not mean that when animals make use of their resources, they would act by experience or by habit, specially since experience and habit are dispositions acquired in relation to things in which nature does not act according to a single direction: "for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to

[59] DA, III, 12, 434b12-15, 18-27 and DA, III, 13, 435b4-7, 20-26.
[60] PA, I, 1, 642a35-37. See also PA, I, 1, 642a3-13.
[61] See *Physics*, II, 2, 194a32, 3, 195a23-26. in W. D. Ross, *Aristotle*: *Physics*. Oxford Classical Texts, 1950. Translated by R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 1995. Hereinafter *Phy*.
[62] See Mansion, p. 254 (Our translation).
[63] GA, I, 4, 717a15-21.
[64] Cf. GA, I, 5 e 6.

its nature"[65]: thus the stone naturally goes down, the fire naturally goes up, and none of them would go in the opposite direction by the force of repetition.

In order to realize its nature, the animal does not need anything other than what nature provides, so even if it lives in a more complex way, sociably or politically, it does it in view of the dictates of nature, i.e., it *obeys* its nature. Man, on the other hand, fulfills his nature only when he *cooperates* with it: although the faculties also work in man, they do not work *naturally*, that is, according to a purpose established by nature. In animals, nature always works according to the same purpose: life, reproduction, and death. Since for man, the fulfillment of his nature means that he must live to fulfill *eudaimonia* and *thus* his nature, he must act ethically. For an animal, "living politically" does not mean living according to the dictates of prudence, it means simply obeying what nature determines: the bee does not get to choose to leave the hive (and there cannot be an *acratic* animal…), man is not determined to live in the *polis*, he does it in view of the best.

Thus, the natural faculty, which is responsible for the manifestations of intelligence (*sunesis*) or *phronēsis* attributed to animals, must necessarily remit to the sensible faculty, through which:

> all of them participate also in a kind of knowledge (*gnōseōs tinos*), some more and some less, and some very little indeed. For they have sense-perception, and this is a kind of knowledge (*hē d'aisthēsis gnōsis tis*). (If we consider the value of this we find that it is of great importance compared with the class of lifeless objects, but of little compared with the use of the intellect (*phronēsis*). For against the latter the mere participation in touch and taste seems to be practically nothing, but beside plants and stones it seems most excellent; for it would seem a treasure to gain even this kind of knowledge rather than to lie in a state of death and non-existence.).[66]

Between the absolute opposite, that is, divine intelligence and the absolute sensibility of inanimate beings, there are degrees of knowledge and intelligence in terms of the availability of the faculties of knowledge, of the more or less complex faculty of sensibility, of memory, in sum, of the animic complexity of animate beings.67

On the other hand, there is a curious passage in Parts of Animals in which Aristotle attributes degrees of sensibility and intelligence (phronēsis) to the quality of the blood or its analogue: thick or thin, warm or cold, pure or impure. These are differences that, according to Aristotle, obey the criterion of the best68:

> and one section of animals is sanguineous, while the other has no blood, but only something resembling

[65] NE, II, 1, 1103a20-21.
[66] GA, I, 23, 731a31-731b4.
[67] It is important to keep in mind that the gods are among the animate beings (*zôa*). See *Met*., N, 1, 1088a9-10.
[68] PA, II, 2, 647b29-31.

it in its place. The thicker and the hotter blood is, the more conducive is it to strength (*iskhuos*), while in proportion to its thinness and its coldness is its suitability for sensation and intelligence (*aisthētikōteron kai noerōteron*). A like distinction exists also in the fluid which is analogous to blood. This explains how it is that bees and other similar creatures are of a more intelligent nature than many sanguineous animals; and that, of sanguineous animals, those are the most intelligent whose blood is thin and cold. Best of all are those whose blood is hot, and at the same time thin and clear. For such are suited alike for the development of courage and of intelligence.[69]

Aristotle explains the relationship between blood properties and behavior by the interaction of the constitutive elements of bodies: earth, water, air, and fire. An animal with a very watery blood is more agile because the cold chills, that is, the water solidifies under the effect of the cold.[70]

Referring to the transcribed passage, Labarrière refuses to align it to the text of the *History of Animals*[71]*,* in which Aristotle affirms the existence of a faculty analogous to that which in man is art, wisdom, and intelligence, because he considers the relation between them to be little convincing (sic). In fact, the commentator states that Aristotle would not have alluded in the *History of Animals* to the distinction between sanguine and non-sanguine beings that he alluded to in *Parts of Animals*. The comparison between the intelligence of bees and that of sanguine animals would lead to the hypothesis that

only non-sanguineous animals would be endowed with a natural faculty 'analogous' to what in man is art, wisdom, intelligence, whereas these differ from man in more and less, that is, sanguineous animals would only have characteristics of *sunesis*. That is why it seems very improbable to me, because there are many intelligent sanguineous animals, even though the bee or the ant surpass the sanguineous animals with thick blood (for example, bulls and boars) in intelligence.[72]

Now it does not seem that the distinction between sanguine and non-sanguine animals is relevant and necessary in the *History of Animals*, inasmuch as Aristotle there compares the totality of animals to man, the *de facto* possessor of the faculties proper to art, wisdom, and intelligence, of which animals in general possess only an analogous faculty. Moreover, with regard to the fact that only non-sanguine animals possess an analogous faculty, whereas sanguine animals only manifest differences of more and less, I do not think that this consequence can be inferred from the text. I understand that the difference to be emphasized concerns the blood or humor qualities or properties (which are otherwise of the same nature[73]), properties that "affect both the temperament (*to ēthos*) and the sensory faculties of animals in

[69] PA, II, 2, 648a1-11.
[70] See PA, II, 4, 650b27 ff.
[71] HA, VIII, 1, 588a16-b3.
[72] Labarrière, p. 414 (Our translation). The comparison between the intelligence of the bee, the bull, and the boar is of Aristotle himself. Aristotle: PA, II, 4, 650b33-651a4.
[73] PA, II, 2, 648a19-20: *hoti d'anankaion ekhein ē aima ē to toutōi tēn autēn ekhon phusin.*

many ways"[74], which includes a "more intelligent soul".[75] Thus, the thinner and the purer blood or humor is better than the thicker or more impure blood, because the former composition provides more sensitivity and intelligence.

In this way, the comparison or approximation between animal and human intelligence, or rather the similarity (by analogy) between the natural and the rational faculty, is explained by the fact that both nature and man (rational animal) act according to purposes. The difference, however, it that nature *always* seeks the best, never by deliberation.[76] But man, for his happiness or unhappiness, is not determined to act either well or badly. Acting according to the best depends on a choice, preceded by deliberation, of a life governed by justice and virtue as a citizen of the city.

Even though one could concede experience to animals, and Aristotle does so explicitly, and therefore, could attribute to this natural faculty the ability to "accede to something as a first universal"[77], a result of that minimum (*mikron*) experience that unifies several memories of the same thing; an experience that would determine animal behavior in view of a good (*to eu*); a good that is stabilized in an *ethos* or experience acquired and represented by the sensible *phantasia*[78]; all this seems not only to force the text to fit into a smaller manikin, but also to give unnecessarily (and involuntarily) support to those who, as MacIntyre, want to give ethics a biological basis, because it weakens the Aristotelian essential distinction between animals and humans, acting according to rationally established norms or according to a practical reasoning.

In Aristotle, the theme of animal friendship appears as a way in which MacIntyre shows the dependence of offspring on parental care and protection inherent in the vulnerability of the animal condition. The bonds of cooperation and affection characteristic of the parent-child relationship are forms of primary expression of what would become moral virtues or, more precisely, normative presuppositions for the relationships that would then be stablished in the ethical and political realms.[79]

In light of what has been said, I would now like to return to Aristotle's thoughts on friendship among animals.

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[74] PA, II, 4, 651a12-13. The explanation of this causal relation is the following: the blood is the matter and form of the body nourishment.
[75] PA, II, 4, 650b24-25.
[76] *Phy.*, II, 8, 199b26-28.
[77] Labarrière, p. 419 (Our translation).
[78] The only faculty to which animals have access to guide their actions. See DA, III, 3, 429a4-8.
[79] Broadly, this is the main these defended by MacIntyre in *Dependent Rational Animals.*

In *Generation of Animals,* we read:

> Nature seems to wish (*boulesthai*) to implant in animals a sense of care (*tēn aisthēsin epimelētikēn*) for their young[80]: in the inferior animals this lasts only to the moment of giving birth; in others it continues till they are perfect; in all that are more intelligent, during the bringing up of the young also. In those which have the greatest portion in intelligence (*phronēsis*) we find familiarity (*sunētheia*) and love (*philia*) shown also towards the young when perfected, as with men and some quadrupeds; with birds we find it till they have produced and brought up their young, and therefore if the hens do not incubate after laying they get into worse condition, as if deprived of something natural to them.[81]

First, it is important to emphasize the idea of providing the feeling of care under the form of a natural function. Secondly, the relationship between the complexity of the animal and the duration of the care provided to the offspring in view of its completion or development. Finally, the permanence of care, now under the form of attachment and affection/friendship, which persists among more intelligent animals, that is, care transforms into something beyond the preservation of life.

As for the first point, it is based on the idea of nature as final cause: nature provides all animals with the disposition to take care of their offspring either *for the sake of* preservation, or so that the offspring reaches its completeness. The metaphysical conception according to which nature acts for the completeness or the perfect completion of all beings, in which it is the internal principle of motion and the final cause[82], also provides the conceptual framework of Aristotle's "zoological" treatises.

Complete (*teleion*) or perfect (*perfectum*, according to the Latin translation) is that beyond which there is nothing more, or that of which nothing is lacking.[83] This is the first sense of "complete" as revealed by the *Metaphysics*: "that outside which it is not possible to find even one of the parts proper to it, e.g. the complete time of each thing is that outside which it is not possible to find any time which is a part proper to it".[84] Again, according to the *Metaphysics*, "complete" is also said of "that which in respect of excellence and goodness cannot be excelled in its kind, e.g. a doctor is complete and a flute-player is complete, when they lack nothing in respect of their proper kind of excellence".[85] Or in a third sense of "complete": "the things which have attained a good end are called complete; for things are

[80] What is currently called "parental care."
[81] GA, III, 2, 753a7-17.
[82] See GA, I, 1, 715b14-16: "But nature flies from the infinite; for the infinite is imperfect (*ateles*), and nature always seeks an end (*telos*)."
[83] See the characterization of infinite as "something is infinite if, taking it quantity by quantity, we can always take something outside." *Phy.*, III, 6, 207a7-8.
[84] *Met*., Δ, 16, 1021b12-14.
[85] *Met*., Δ, 16, 1021b14-17.

complete in virtue of having attained their end.[86] Since *telos* also means "final", "finished", this last meaning refers to things that are said to be complete in the first sense.[87]

In the concept of completion there is also the idea of autarchy, which, according to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is that of which nothing is lacking, that is, for a being to fulfill its function it must possess everything it needs to do so. Thus, the city will be self-sufficient if it depends only on itself to achieve *eudaimonia*, a purpose the city fulfils through the satisfactory performance of its political, economic, and religious institutions. In the same way, a natural being is autarchic when its growth or completion has come to an end, the moment when it has all the resources it needs to live and reproduce.

Be it a man (Pericles), or be it a safe (the bunker of WikiLeaks)[88], both as substantial units of matter and form come into existence through an internal (nature, for the man) or an external (the artificer, for the safe) principle of movement through which the form is actualized in a determinate matter. What the form or format of a thing is in all the fullness of its being can come into existence in a determinate matter through an act of nature or of an artificer. In the case of natural beings, the full accomplishment of a being (*telos*) is either absolutely necessary or, as mentioned above, in view of the best. Eternal and divine beings are always and necessarily cause of the best because their nature is not affected by change or hindrance. On the other hand, beings that may or may not exist, those that are not eternal, can participate in the best or the worst. In spite of the ontological determination that affects beings subject to becoming, in most cases it is not chance that determines either their existences or their activities, but it is nature that "is and acts in view of an end, and this end is still nature, understood as form.".[89] In other words, nature always aims at its own fulfillment, and if it does not necessarily do so, it accomplishes, among the possible (*tōn endekhomenōn*), the best (*to beltiston*).[90]

For beings subject to generation and decay, to live is better than not to live because to be is better than not to be. Among those that exist, the animate being is better than the inanimate because the soul is better than the body. These are reasons for the existence of generation. Generation allows non-eternal beings to become eternal from the point of view of the species. No corruptible being can persist in its identity and individual unity in the temporal sense; it can

[86] *Met*., Δ, 16, 1021b23-25.
[87] *Met*., Δ, 16, 1022a1-3.
[88] I thank Marco Zingano for drawing my attention to the need to individualize a member of the species human and one of the species safe, which are indeed complete (*teleioi*).
[89] Mansion, p. 258 (Our translation).
[90] PA, IV, 10, 687a16-17. The degree of intensity of the good that nature seeks to achieve can also be measured by Aristotle's terminological option: *beltistos* is the superlative adjective of (*agathos*) good.

only do so in the unity of the species, by transmitting its being to another of its own kind.[91] If it is better to be eternal than ephemeral, then all living beings experience the need to reproduce in order to perpetuate the species. It should be noted, then, that nature operates in a very precise manner, the extremes of which are non-being and being, pure potentiality and act, and which nature, teleologically ordained, seeks to achieve.

For this reason, nature has endowed all living beings with at least a nourishing soul, in virtue of which there is life and reproduction. The most natural function is to live and to reproduce a living being like itself in order to participate as much as possible in the eternal and divine. All living beings seek these ends in their actions (*praxeis*), which include birth, growth, intercourse, vigilance, sleep, and locomotion.[92]

For Aristotle, this is the cause of generation, but although he does not explicitly say so, it seems to me that it is also the reason for the care that parents give to their offspring. Without parental care, the offspring, still incomplete, would not reach its end (as result of movement) and therefore would not fulfill its purpose (*telos*): to live and to reproduce. According to Mansion, "natural activity presents a certain consistency that engenders a stable order, governed above all by its internal characteristics"[93], an order that is identified with a good. Now in the case of corruptible beings, it is better to live in the eternity of the species, which is only possible if the animal, as individual unit, survives in order to perpetuate itself.

There is no way to scape nature. For the development of viviparous beings, nature has assigned to the female the function of providing the embryos (menstruum) with matter and, through the umbilical cord, with the nourishment they need to develop, just as the plant uses the dirt to extract the nutrients it needs.[94] As for the oviparous beings, nature places the food in the yellow part of the egg[95], and thanks to the cooking the offspring is formed; in the oviparous quadrupeds, the eggs are buried and the cooking is effected by the sun. Fish, because they are prolific, lay unfinished eggs because their uterus would not bear many eggs in development; they develop quickly outside to avoid the extinction of the species; nevertheless, many alevins perish, "for nature makes up for the destruction by numbers."[96]

Nothing changes regarding *epimeleia* (parental care). It is a gift of nature and it is not different from the other elements of the lot that nature provides in view if its purposes. The

[91] DA, II, 4, 415b1 ff.
[92] PA, I, 5, 645b33-35.
[93] Mansion, p. 255 (Our translation).
[94] GA, II, 4, 740a25-26.
[95] The white part is the matter from which the offspring is formed.
[96] GA, III, 4, 755a31.

female who takes care of her offspring does so so that it can reach the completeness necessary for its autonomy. However, there are animals in which this "friendship with their mates" (*philostorgos*) seems to be naturally more developed: sterile mares often take care of other mares' colts and provide maternal care, but since they have no milk, the colts die. Or when a mare dies, the others living in the same pasture raise her colt.[97]

From another point of view, many animals are friendly because they do not fight for the same territory, the same food, or because they are not the main prey in the food chain. The fox and the serpent, for example, are friends, says Aristotle, because one does not attack the other. Fish that do not swarm are friends: some species swarm when the female is pregnant, others after the offspring are born.

Many animals live in war (*polemos*) for opposite reasons, that is, because they fight for a habitat, for food, or because they maintain the relationship between predator and prey: the owl and the crow, for example, are enemies because one eats the eggs of the other. And all animals are enemies of the carnivore.[98]

Thus friendship or enmity among animals obey a very precise determination: *to favor life* in the broadest sense, for it includes the maintenance, preservation, and protection of the animal's own life and of its offspring.

Even the bond formed by those quadrupeds endowed with a broader memory and intelligence than others, to whom Aristotle refers in the passage quoted above[99], a bond that can be transformed into *philia* (friendship/affection or attachment), does not exceed the limit imposed by nature on these species of beings – irrational animals. In the words of Francis Wolff, only the strictly politic sphere can transpose the barrier from animality to humanity.[100]

Therefore, it should be noted that along the Aristotelian ordained description, despite its generic coverage, the principle of distinction between species is kept immutable, founded as the knowledge proper to the natural philosopher. Science architectonically grasps the relations of genus and species, but without ever crossing boundaries between species, or rather, science has as its *telos* precisely to determine them.

In Aristotle's "zoological" treatises, the animate genus (which includes insects, birds, fish, mammals, humans, and gods) is, as Wolff understands it, a broad *continuum*, and this *continuity* is characterized by a series of hierarchical and subordinate faculties: the nutritive,

[97] HA, IX, 3, 611a10-14.
[98] See more examples in HA, IX, 1, 608b19 ff.
[99] See the passage quoted above from GA, III, 2, 753a7-17.
[100] Wolff, F., "L'homme politique entre dieu et bête" in *L'être, l'homme, le disciple*. Paris, PUF, 2000, p. 144 (it is a modified version of "Pensar o animal na Antiguidade", op. cit.).

the sensible, the desiderative, and the rational faculties. All living beings, including plants, *also* possess the sensible and the desiderative faculties because if there is sensation, there is pain and pleasure, and therefore appetite (*epithumia*), that is, desire for the pleasurable. Only a few of the animate beings (gods and men) *also* possess a rational soul.

It is no less true that "nature passes from lifeless objects to animals in such unbroken sequence…, that scarcely any difference seems to exist between two neighboring groups owing to their close proximity."[101] But this minimum (*mikron*) seems to make all the difference because all the "biological" conditions are given that allow man, and only man, to overcome the barrier of mere animality, since he is the only animal endowed with reflection (*epithumia*), remembrance[102], and language.[103]

Therefore, even if the realm of living beings is a broad *continuum* ranging from plants, through intermediary beings such as the sea anemone[104], to the gods, as Wolff reminds us in the "zoological" works of Aristotle[105], the man does not in any case constitute a generic class distinct from the other, the animal. Thus, there are qualities that belong exclusively to the species "man": neither animals nor gods deliberate, for neither of them needs to reflect on whether their present action is the best one from the point of view of the fulfillment of their nature or *eudaimonia* (of their *telos*). In the same way, neither animals nor gods have memory: because they are not endowed with reflection, animals are incapable of searching in the "storage of memory" for the knowledge they have learned and of actualizing it in view of the present situation. Because they live eternally in the actual, gods do not need it. Finally, neither animals nor gods have language, at least not the articulated language: animals because they are incapable of propositionally articulating signs of things; gods because they do not need it, insofar as language is designed to communicate the just and the unjust, the good and evil in the political community, and gods do not live politically.

Nature has endowed man with certain capacities for a kind of life that he does not share with animals or gods. Man is the only being to whom ethical and political life is appropriate, and by means of which he can aspire to happiness, to the *good life* in community. Living in

[101] PA, IV, 5, 681a11-15. A similar statement is found in HA, VIII, 1, 588b3-7.
[102] HA, I, 1, 488b24-26.
[103] GA, V, 7, 786b18-20. Since language allows communication through concepts and propositions, it is implied that man necessarily possesses the rational faculty through which he elaborates concepts.
[104] The example used by Aristotle to show the difficulties found in distinguishing the species from each other, and the criteria that must gather them into the genuses: "Nature proceeds little by little from things lifeless to animal life in such a way that it is impossible to determine the exact line of demarcation […] So, in the sea, there are certain objects concerning which one would be at a loss to determine whether they be animal or vegetable." HA, VIII, 1, 588b4 ff. On the issue, see Pellegrin, *La classification des animaux chez Aristote*, op. cit.
[105] Neither in Plato nor among the Greeks in general. See Wolff, op. cit., p. 19.

community, in turn, is the work of *friendship* (*philia*)[106], for it is thanks to friendship that men *choose* to live together, not only because the union is pleasant, as is the case among the congeners of other species, but because it is a good. For this reason, friendship is one of the conditions for man to live and to live well politically, allowing him to overcome the barrier of animality, but true friendship could only flourish precisely because some specific capacities, shared neither with animals nor with gods, are positively part of his nature: reflection (*bouleutikón*), memory, and language.

These qualities make it possible to circumscribe a certain species of natural beings capable of action, specifically distinct both from the action of other animals and from divine action. Knowledge and memory, whether sensible or rational, determine action insofar as they can constitute a desire. Thus, because humans and animals know certain foods, a knowledge associated with the memory of something pleasant, they want to eat it. The difference, however, is that only human beings can deliberate (not about their desires, for one does not deliberate about ends) about the circumstances and consequences of their actions. There is an important difference here that will serve as a boundary between animal and human action, and specially between prudent and vicious action.

Animal desire is constituted by the activity of *phantasia aisthētikē* (sensible *phantasia*), i.e., when something appears to be pleasant or painful to the sensible discrimination, animals immediately act, whether to satisfy their pleasure or to avoid pain. Human desire is constituted by the sensitive activity *or* the activity of *phantasia logistikē* or *bouleutikē* (calculative or deliberative *phantasia*), that is, human beings can judge whether what *appears immediately* pleasant or painful is a good or an evil.

Consequently, only human beings can interrupt a movement toward a desired end, insofar as they are equally capable of rationally judging the goodness or the evilness of what seems pleasant or painful to sensation or desire. In the formulation of the principle of morality (voluntary action) provided by the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the rational capacity to interrupt the natural operation of the desiderative faculty is expressed by the idea that it depends sovereignly on the agent to act or not to act.[107]

This distinction places human beings and animals on opposite sides because no animal, even the most intelligent, can change the course of its actions, which naturally result from the operation of its faculties. Man, on the other hand, can direct his actions toward ends that are

[106] *Politics*, III, 9, 1280b38-1281a2. Translated by B. Jowett. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. *The Complete Works of Aristotle* II, 1995. Hereinafter *Pol*.
[107] NE, III, 7, 1113b6 ff.

not only *immediately* good and pleasant, but he can and must direct his actions toward the best of ends – *eudaimonia*. This is the difference between the *phronimos* and the other human beings, for he perfectly fulfills the proper definition of virtue: "is a state concerned with choice, lying in a mean relative to us, this being determined by reason and in the way in which the man of practical wisdom would determine it".[108] In other words, the disposition to desire what reason says is desirable because it is a good in itself.

Therefore, the fact that Aristotle attributes *phronēsis* or *philia* to some animals would not necessarily be due to the fact that we find some similar elements between them and human *phronēsis* or *philia*, but because the animal can accomplish only imperfectly what is expressed by such concepts, or can perfectly accomplish what is proper to it, while man can accomplish it perfectly. This hypothesis, associated with the idea of the division between natural and human action, can reduce, at least in certain aspects, the problems caused by the pretension of seeking a "biological ground" of morality.

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[108] NE, II, 6, 1106b36-1107a2.

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