

they encapsulate the three simple forms which the intellect needs to operate rationally.

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THE FOUNDATIONS OF ANALOGICAL THINKING IN LULL'S EPISTEMOLOGY

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The *Liber nouus de anima rationali* (LNAR) was written by Ramon Llull in Rome in 1296. The work deals with the existence of the rational soul and the intrinsic and extrinsic dynamics of its parts, parts which work together in order to achieve their ultimate goal, namely: to remember, to understand and to love God. Since the book inquires into the human soul and its faculties, it belongs to the psychological genre, broadly developed in the Middle Ages, a genre based on the Aristotelian work *De anima*, and in particular its third book, which examines the rational soul and the mechanisms of knowledge acquisition. By calling his work the “*New*” *Book on the Rational Soul*, Llull establishes a link with the Aristotelian tradition while, at the same time, presenting his text as a new approach which purports to go beyond that tradition.¹

1. The dynamic nature of the rational soul

Our article² will stress one fundamental aspect of Llull's theory of knowledge as developed in the LNAR, namely, its characteristic conception of the intellectual processes involved in the acquisition of knowledge. This conception, which attempts to integrate an Augustinian and an Aristotelian heritage, is based upon analogical inference as one of its particular mechanisms.

The Augustinian legacy is manifest from the very outset through the tripartite conception of the rational soul, composed as it is of

¹ Cf. C. López Alcalde, “El *Liber nouus de anima rationali* de Ramon Llull dentro del discurso psicológico del siglo XIII”, *Revista Española de Filología Medieval*, 18 (2011), pp. 81-94.

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memory, intellect and will. These faculties are complex in themselves: they actualise themselves by means of the so-called correlates, and consist of the principles of being: *Bonitas*, *Magnitudo*, *Duratio*, etc. Llull grants to these principles a dynamic nature, one which will prove essential to his conception of the rational soul: far from being isolated and static notions, these principles establish relationships and communicate their essential qualities among each other.³

Bonitas substantialis appropriat suam bonitatem accidentalem magnitudini substantiali, in quantum per ipsam est bona. Et illa bonitas magnitudinis est qualitas appropriata, sicut ignis, qui suam calorem appropriat aeri, et hoc idem facit magnitudo bonitati, cui appropriat suam magnitudinem et sic de aliis principiis animae.⁴

Nevertheless, such communication does not simply obtain among the principles alone: the principles also operate as *rationes* with regard to the faculties of the soul:

Anima habet in se sua propria et naturalia principia, scilicet bonitatem, magnitudinem, durationem, potestatem, sapientiam, voluntatem, uirtutem, ueritatem, delectationem, differentiam, concordantiam, principium, medium, finem, maioritatem, aequalitatem et minoritatem, per ista principia substantialia, ex quibus constituta est, habet rationes.⁵

Thanks to their active nature, they become the conditions of possibility for the facultative dynamism which enables the acquisition of knowledge:

[...] Sicut bonitas, quae est ratio animae ad memorandum bonum et ad intelligendum bonum et ad amandum bonum; et magnitudo, quae est ratio animae ad memorandum magnum et ad intelligendum magnum et ad amandum magnum, et sic de aliis obiectis dispositis ad recipiendum per dispositiones proprias stantes sub substantialibus rationibus, de quibus sunt qualitates.⁶

³ The texts of the *Liber nouus de anima rationali* are drawn from my Ph.D. Thesis, *Liber nouus de anima rationali: Edición crítica y estudio*, Bellaterra, 2012. On-line version: <http://orbitala.bib.uab.edu/llull/docs/Celia%20tesi%20COMP1%20CORR.pdf>

⁴ *LNAR*, VI.II.1, 3-7.

⁵ *LNAR*, II.II.1, 3-7.

⁶ *LNAR*, VI.I.4, 29-34.

These *rationes*, therefore, activate the epistemological process. As Llull conceives matters, the principles in question incline the faculties to find similarities or likenesses of themselves in the outside world. This coincidence between the qualities of the rational soul and the qualities of other entities makes knowledge of sensible entities possible, and, via such knowledge, a superior acquaintance with the principles themselves. Human knowledge thereby reveals two necessary poles: on the one hand, the faculties and the nature thereof, which consists in the principles themselves; on the other hand, information from the outside world, caused as this is by the contact that the senses establish with sensible objects. Species, understood by medieval authors as the formal or manner according to which data are present in the faculties,⁷ consist, therefore, in a synthesis of both of these moments; this is the reason why species are defined by Llull as being both “innate” and “acquired”:

Habet anima in se ipsa innatas species et impressas per suarum trium potentiarum acquisitionem constitutarum de primis principis, secundum quod diximus. Innatae sunt in quantum ipsas potest producere; impressae sunt per rationum actus, et acquisite sunt quando de potentia in actum sunt productae, sicut Martinus, qui filium suum intelligit album uel nigrum, bonum uel malum, magnum uel paruum, et sic de aliis, et intelligere est innatum et concreatum cum interiori actu, qui est de intellectu essentia, et intelligibile non est de illius intelligere essentia, quoniam de alia est substantia. Et illud quod intelligere ponit est species innata, producta de potentia in actum; et intelligibile conuersum in intellectum est species acquisita, et ita quod species est de omnibus tribus et potentiae interiores nihil in ipsa earum essentiae ponit, sed ipsam speciem in se ipsis habent.⁸

2. The role of the senses

Llull's definition of species serves to condense his thinking with respect to epistemological concerns. As previously mentioned, such

⁷ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q. 85 a. 2. c.: “Sed contra, species intelligibilibus se habet ad intellectum, sicut species sensibilibus ad sensum. Sed species sensibilibus non est illud quod sentitur, sed magis id quo sensus sentit. Ergo species intelligibilibus non est quod intelligitur actu, sed id quo intelligit intellectus.”

⁸ *LNAR*, II.II.5, 32-46.

thinking consists in a synthesis of Augustinian and Aristotelian perspectives, insofar as the species of the human rational soul are innate on the one hand – on account of that soul's faculties, which, being structured by the principles themselves, provide a template modelled upon the very nature of those principles – while, on the other, these species draw sustenance from the data deriving from external objects, data acquired as soon as the faculty of understanding has understood those objects. For this reason, the knowledge acquired by human beings, unlike that of spiritual beings such as God and the angels, is always mediated by the body and its senses:

Est ergo differentia inter angelum et animam [...], quoniam angelus per unum modum attingit obiecta, et anima per alium, quoniam angelus in suismet similitudinibus attingit obiecta extrinseca absque multiplicatione specierum illorum et quod ipsas ponat intus se ipsum, sed in se ipso illas accipit.⁹

According to Llull, the way that human beings are constituted – that is to say, as a combination of body and soul – determines the specific nature of human knowledge. Although it is based upon the senses, this knowledge, however, is not limited to the realm of the senses and is capable of ascending to that of spiritual beings and of understanding them. The difference between the rational soul's knowledge and that of the angels concerns the mode, rather than the degree, of cognition: in angels, cognition is an internal process which has no need of empirical experience. In this sense, an angel's knowledge is similar to that which the rational soul might enjoy once it has been separated from the body. So, whereas during its life on earth, each soul that attains God, attains him by means of species,¹⁰ in the next life, Llull writes, the soul's attainment of God is immediate:

Si anima est separata, intelligit Deum in proprietatibus Dei, videlicet in bonitate sua, magnitudine, aeternitate et caetera, et intelligit ipsum absque specie propter hoc quia sua intelligibilitas stat in magnitudine bonitatis, potestatis, voluntatis, virtutis et veritatis et delectationis. Et intelligendo anima Deum in proprietatibus

⁹ *LNAR*, IX.1.q3, 146-151.

¹⁰ *LNAR*, II.11.q9, 191-192: "In hac vita quaelibet anima quae attingit Deum attingit ipsum per speciem".

ipsius quiescit sua intellectivitas creata propter intelligibilitatem Dei, et ab illa quiete procedit et derivatur modus intelligendi animae, quae intelligendo Deum intelligit se ipsam, et quiescendo in Deo quiesquit in se ipsa. Et ideo dicitur quod anima beata et Deus vident se facie ad faciem.¹¹

During this life, however, man attains these intellectual and spiritual realities via his body and his sensory apparatus, as conceived by Aristotelian epistemology. In other words, in order to be considered "scientific", this knowledge must be based upon man's sensory nature and upon the conditions and possibilities which enable the intellectual faculties to produce such scientific knowledge (*scientia/episteme*).

3. Analogical processes in human knowledge

The following quotation provides a more comprehensive picture of Llull's system of knowledge. The various phases of the epistemological process may be gleaned therefrom:

Quando intellectus incipit intelligere, incipit in se ipso et in sua natura, sicut homo volens facere cameram, qui incipit primo in habitatione, quae est finis camerae, sicut clausus, qui est finis martelli. Et incipiendo intellectus in sua natura interioris, inquirit exterius similitudines cum quibus possit habere interiores, sicut per sensum, cum quo perquirat colores, verba, saporem et caetera, et de illis multiplicat species quas accipit in imaginatione, et ab imaginatione accipit in se ipso, sicut considerare quod bonum est videre et audire, et ab illa consideratione considerat et accipit quod bonum est memorare et intelligere, et ita habet modum in attingendo bonitatem interiorem spirituales attingendo bonitatem exteriorem.¹²

The lines quoted above are highly instructive, insofar as they show at least three different moments of the intellectual process, moments which point to a degree of diversity as regards the direction of its movement: The process begins with an inner search of the intellect, which predisposes itself to make its descent to the senses, and to look for *similitudes* of the principles of the soul. The similitudes of goodness, greatness, etc., found in external objects,

¹¹ *LNAR*, IX.1.q6, 174-182.

¹² *LNAR*, IX.1.q1.113-123.

enable these to be remembered, understood and loved by the faculties. Normally, it is this inner search which grounds the knowledge process, although Lull does not deny the fact that the latter occasionally arises by chance.¹³

The second phase of the intellect's activity is made manifest in its clearly ascending movement. Once it has prepared the senses to acquire the sense data in question, the intellect operates by eliminating whatever is unnecessary: this is the moment of abstraction, that mechanism analysed by Aristotle, and which essentially consists of considering as separate from matter those things which are not, in fact, separate.¹⁴ This mechanism enables one to extract intelligible species from their sensible counterparts (*species exteriores*).¹⁵

Three phases having been identified in relation to the intellect, phases which reveal the degree of diversity present in the direction of its movement (the first of which involves a descent; the second, an ascent), what we subsequently find at the end of the passage quoted above refers to a moment separate from abstraction, even though this moment likewise concerns the production of *intelligibilia*. The third phase describes a horizontal movement of the intellect, one which facilitates the acquisition of knowledge

¹³ Lull explains in *LNAR*, IV.II.q10, 121-127: "Dum homo uigilat, nulla potentia animae otiosa potest esse simpliciter, quoniam si esset, homo non uigilaret, sed dormiret. Et quia homo multotiens non considerat finem quare est, nec finem suarum partium, nec finem altarum substantiarum, propterea a fortuna accipiunt suae potentiae aliqua obiecta non desiderata ut moueant lotum, scilicet hominem, ad finem desideratum, et non mouent illum coacte, sed excitanter et temptando ut ipse de necessitate ipsas moueat ad obiecta desiderabilia."

¹⁴ "Those things which are spoken of as in abstraction one thinks of just as, if one thought actually of the snub, not *quia* snub, but separately *quia* hollow, one would think of it apart from the flesh in which the hollow exists — one thinks of mathematical entities which are not separate, as separate, when one thinks of them". Aristotle, *De anima* III, 431b, trad. D.W. HAMLYN, Oxford/New York, 1993. For abstraction, cf. A. DE LABERRA, *L'art des généralités. Théories de l'abstraction*, Paris, 1999.

¹⁵ *LNAR*, IX.I.q3, 152-156: "Sed anima accipit species exteriores per sensum, et de sensu ipsas transmutat in imaginationem et de imaginatione ipsas ponit in se ipsa, quae sunt similitudines substantiarum corporaliu, et quando ipsas accipit spirituales transmutat ipsas de imaginatione in spirituales denudata a corporalitate."

regarding non-sensible reality. The example given outlines the way in which the intellect, by considering the goodness of the sensible faculties, is similarly capable of considering the goodness present in the rational faculties, and to acquire knowledge therefrom concerning the principle of goodness itself. By means of this example, Lull introduces into the cognitive process a new moment, one which makes reference to the disclosure of the general principles themselves. Although the latter are innately present within the rational soul, they are not known in full, but rather come to be known through this complex epistemological process itself, a process which, in turn, has its starting-point within the general principles themselves.

This process of intellectual comparison also functions in such a way as to explore the nature of the principles that exist in God. For this reason, Lull states:

Anima, cum aliqua similitudine, mouet suas rationes et suas potentias ad aliam similitudinem, sicut cum magna potestate regis considerat magnum posse Dei et cum antiqua duratione solis considerat aeternitatem Dei, et cum magnitudine mundi considerat infinitatem Dei, et sic de una similitudine in aliam successiue facit cum illa successione scientiam.¹⁶

The *LNAR* explains the analogical process as being one of the particular functions of the human intellect, a function capable of providing scientific knowledge (*scientia/episteme*) of the complex relationships between non-sensible things — such as God and his power, for example — by submitting entities which are ontologically diverse to a process of comparison. By so doing, Lull admits the possibility of one's achieving true knowledge of pure intellectalities and the dynamics thereof from the dynamics of sensible realities, by reason of the ontological link which exists between corporeal natures and their spiritual counterparts.¹⁷ When attributed to spiritual beings, therefore, concepts such as quantity, temporality and place are best explained by means of

¹⁶ *LNAR*, X.I.4, 125-129.

¹⁷ Cf. the definition of analogy given in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*: "Analogia graece, Latine similitum comparatio sive proportio nominatur. Cuius uis est ut, quod dubium est, ad aliquid simile, quod non est dubium, referatur, et incerta certis probentur". Cf. *Etymologiae*, Madrid, 2004, p. 310.

analogy. It is in this sense, then, that the simple quantity of the separated soul is compared to the quantity of silver found in a *denarius*; the permanent brightness of the sun, to the permanent properties of God.

4. The knowledge of supra-sensible realities

The aforementioned conception, according to which the structure and dynamics of sensible reality explains its spiritual counterpart, enables Llull to broaden the limits of the Aristotelian theory without succumbing to any kind of naïve Neo-Platonism or Illuminism: insofar as the intellect is structured with a view to understanding things "analogically", it succeeds in moving beyond sensory knowledge and in establishing a continuity between one's knowledge of *sensibilitates* and of *intellectualitates*. According to this perspective, then, one in which an authentic knowledge of supra-sensible realities is implied, the soul is, in fact, capable of understanding realities which, at first glance, may appear to be beyond its reach. This approach, however, should not be viewed as an ecstatic vision of the intellect, or *excessus mentis*,¹⁸ for, contrary to this, the rational soul is, in effect, designed to understand realities in whose regard knowledge cannot be attained by empirical experience:

Si in homine non est anima rationalis, suus intellectus est ex natura corporali, et sequitur quod homo intelligat per naturam, ueluti uidet uel audit per naturam, quod est impossibile et contra experientiam quam ex hoc habemus; quoniam plures homines uident et audiunt multa per naturam, quae non intelligunt. Immo intelligunt ipsa supra naturam, uelut miracula, creationem, resurrectionem et alia istis similia. Et homo qui oculos tenet clausos et nihil audit, intelligit seu intelligere potest. Est ergo intelligere alterius naturae altioris illa corporis, et illam appellamus animam rationalem.¹⁹

Llull would likewise develop this analogical capacity of the intellect in his *Liber de ascensu et descensu intellectus*, a work dating from 1305. Here the intellect, in attempting to understand the

¹⁸ Ruiz Simon compares Llull's theory of the transcendental points to other contemporary formulations, namely, the *excessus mentis* outlined by Bonaventure. Cf. J. M. Ruiz Simon, *L'Art de Ramon Llull i la teoria escolàstica de la ciència*, Barcelona, 1999, pp. 159-168.

¹⁹ *L'NAR*, I.1.10, 108-115.

complex reality of spiritual beings (beings such as itself), descends to a less abstract level, the comprehension of which is immediate:

In essentia intellectus est intellectiuis; cum quo intellectus est actiuus, et homo cum ipso. Sed intellectus quaerit: Per quem modum homo mouet intellectuum ad obiectum? Et tunc descendit ad ignem, qui calefacit aerem, ut possit multiplicare suum actum, et suum destruere inimicum, scilicet ipsam aquam. A simili suo modo homo mouet intellectuum, ut per ipsum possit cognoscere desideratum, sicut iustitiam, prudentiam, etc.; et ut possit destruere iniuriam, auaritiam, etc. Item intellectus quaerit: Per quem modum ipse facit species acquisite intelligibiles? Et tunc descendit ad usum, qui habet in se tria concreta sibi coessentialia, scilicet uisitium, uisibile et uidere.²⁰

In answer to the question of how man inclines the active part of his intellect towards its object, the intellect, by means of a descending movement, creates a link between the spiritual and the sensory levels, establishing therein a relationship based upon similarity. Thus, in order that it may itself understand how it proceeds in the matter of apprehending a knowable object which ought to lead man to virtue, the intellect operates by understanding things that help to distance it from vice and assist it in drawing closer to virtue, in the same way that fire heats air in order to break down or overcome water. Similarly, in the second part of the text quoted above, the analogy concerning vision helps one to understand the presence and necessity of the correlatives within the intellect, since in vision one can clearly distinguish the faculty involved, the visible thing and the act of vision.

5. Conclusion

The Llullian theory of knowledge attempts to establish a form of scientific knowledge that embraces both the corporeal and the spiritual realms. The principles within the various faculties, here conceived as their material component, or content, establish the conditions of possibility for knowledge: the knowable object can only be known by reason of the principles which constitute the rational soul. Through a search for similitudes, it is possible to

²⁰ Ramon Llull, *Liber de ascensu et descensu intellectus*, ed. A. MADRE, Turnhout, 1981 (*ROL*, 9), pp. 1-99, p. 93, 165-176.

achieve not only knowledge of external objects, but also that of the spiritual parts of the human soul itself. In this sense, human knowledge can be considered to involve a combination of innateness and acquisition, and this acquisition is carried out via the mechanisms of the cognitive system, mechanisms which include the intellect's capacity to operate analogically by drawing comparisons between ontologically diverse realities, and by establishing relationships of similarity between different dynamics or structures.

In sum, the theory of the intellect developed in the *LNAR* shows how the mechanisms of the intellective soul account for knowledge of the whole of reality, both corporeal and spiritual. According to the Lullian conception, therefore, the intellect contains *in se* all the conditions of possibility for knowledge of the natural and spiritual realms. The Augustinian part of Lull's epistemology is represented by the innate presence of the principles, while the Aristotelian part stresses the fact that the possibility of full knowledge concerning these innate principles can only be achieved by recourse to empirical realities.

As a result of the above, knowledge of the principles – these being one of the key elements of Lull's Art – emerges from the sensible realm, by abstraction as well as analogically by comparison; this Art itself comprises, among other things, a combination of letters intended to express universally valid functions, universal for the reason that the diverse objects of reality (i.e. creatures, souls, God) share a similar structure which can be understood by all men by means of the analogical operations of the intellect.²¹ Once we have understood Lull's complex conception of intellectual processes, we can also understand more fully his use of literary analogies, so abundantly present as these are throughout his texts. The weight and legitimacy of these latter as argumentative devices are founded upon the significance they occupy within Lull's ontological and epistemological system, a system which constitutes the back-drop to their discursive/demonstrative functions.

²¹ About the role of analogy in Lull's Art, cf. R. D. F. PRING-MILL, "L'estructura analògica de l'art Lulliana", in *Estudis sobre Ramon Llull*, ed. L. BARDIA & A. SOLER, Barcelona, 1991, pp. 241-252.

ABSTRACT

The Foundations of Analogical Thinking in Lull's Epistemology

Ramon Llull, in his work *Liber nouus de anima rationali* (1296), explains how the intellect proceeds in order to reach knowledge of intellectual objects that cannot be obtained through the ascending process of abstraction from sense data. From Llull's point of view, there is one privileged way to overcome the gap between the *res sensuales* and the *res intellectuales*, namely, the knowledge that results from the intellectual process of analogy. On this account, analogy provides us with an understanding not only of intellectual realities but, particularly, of the relations between them, such as the relations between the constitutive principles and the faculties of the soul. By means of this intellectual device, Llull tries to reconcile Aristotle's empirical approach to knowledge with the Neo-Platonist idea of an autonomous realm of knowledge, focusing especially on how to understand relations between concepts.

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