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THE COMMON IS THE COLLECTIVE

the analytics of common sense and its normative consequences for imagination

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I introduction

In his recent “Political *Phantasies*: Aristotle on Imagination and Collective Action,” Avshalom Schwartz takes up the task to exploit the ramifications of imagination (*phantasia*) in Aristotle’s political philosophy. As he diagnoses, “while political theorists often recognize the importance of psychology to Aristotle’s political thought, the political implications of *phantasia* and its role in Aristotle’s political writings have yet to be explored” (Schwartz 862). In turning to enquire how imagination, a term that Aristotle tackles in detail in his later writings, and most concretely in *Περὶ ψυχῆς* (*De Anima*; henceforth DA) and in *Περὶ μνήμης καὶ ἀναμνήσεως* (*De Memoria et Reminiscentia*; henceforth DM), Schwartz demonstrates persuasively how imagination

provides a crucial psychological foundation for many of the institutions and practices that regulate and support large-scale collective actions: from deliberation and legislation to civic friendship and education. It thus advances a more nuanced understanding of the roles of imagination in politics – a topic of growing interest in political theory – showing how a serious consideration of Aristotle’s theory of *phantasia* yields new insights into some of the foundational questions of political theory and contemporary politics. (863)

In what follows, I complement Schwartz’s proposition. By building upon his finding that imagination should be considered as a condition of politics, I wish to indicate how

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imagination and “common sense” (*κοινή αἰσθησις*) are entangled in Aristotle and how, therefore, common sense is rendered to a condition of Aristotelian politics. As Aristotle argues in DM, imagination and its result or product, i.e., the image (*φάντασμα*), is an affection (*πάθος*) of common sense (*κοινῆς αἰσθήσεως*; DM 450^a10–11), i.e., something inflicted upon imagination from common sense.¹ In the following, I demonstrate that if, according to Schwartz, imagination serves as “a crucial psychological foundation for [...]

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collective actions,” then common sense suggests at least two things. First, common sense is the *analytical-logical* foundation for the collectivization of political actions. Second, the logic of commonality underlying Aristotle’s conceptualization of common sense could perform a further, *normative*, functionality. Namely that only actions that do not violate the logic of the common – and we will later see how Aristotle defines this term – by subordinating action either under the individual or under the (impersonal and anti-individualist) general/universal can be properly called collective actions.

The article is organized as follows: I start by, first, presenting Schwartz’s reasoning as to why imagination could be the psychological foundation of collective actions. Building upon that, I return to Aristotle’s concept of common sense to sketch its functions and qualify it as a *σύνολον*, a condition of individuation, and, leaning on Catherine Malabou and Jacques Derrida, an analysis of common sense as a collective event. As an affection (*πάθος*) of common sense, imagination can indeed act according to Schwarz as a “crucial psychological foundation for many of the institutions and practices that regulate and support large-scale collective actions” (863) because it is the derivation of common sense understood as a collective and inclusive, both logical-analytical and normative, process that acknowledges, fosters, and accommodates difference. In the last part of the article, I further the political ramifications of such an understanding of common sense by hinting at the consequences that this understanding of common sense could have on concepts like memory and utopia.

2 from imagination to common sense as foundation of collective practices

To establish the fundamental character of imagination for collective actions, Schwartz starts by reminding us that imagination is for Aristotle a matter of movement itself. To do so, he draws on the fact that in contrast to the

rest of the mental faculties of which Schwartz mentions sensation (*αἴσθησις*), opinion (*δόξα*), knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*), and intelligence (*νοῦς*) that correspond to immediately given objects, imagination is the correspondence to an image (*φάντασμα*) that is the representation of an object but not the object as such. While the rest of the faculties cannot err since they correspond to certain concrete and apparent objects, imagination can be proven fallible or misleading since its primary attachment is not to an object but to a phantasma (*φάντασμα*), the indirect and mediating image of an object. Although Schwartz does not clearly state it that way, it seems that the latter is the reason for which movement and activity play such a crucial role regarding the conceptual core of imagination. If imagination were a direct correspondence to an object, there would be no (need for) movement. Interestingly enough, Aristotle seems to attribute the character of the movement to imagination (DA 428^b11) exactly because imagination is after something that is not immediately apparent but has to be assumed or reconstructed. As such, it leads the imagining subject in a state of epistemic, wandering uncertainty regarding the results of this mental procedure.

After these introductory remarks, Schwartz’s greatest merit lies in providing what I regard as three distinctive, yet interrelated, lines of argumentation that correspond to three functions of common sense and corroborate his argument why imagination ought to be regarded as providing “the psychological microfoundations of collective action and thus helps explain how we can move from individual psychology to collective agency and action” (868). Imagination seems (i) to fulfil a *unifying* function that accounts for and accommodates the (political) differences and in doing so (ii) allows for a *common goal* to manifest that then (iii) unravels a *regulative* function by making sure that this common goal is inclusive and not exclusive. Let’s take a closer look at these three functionalities of imagination.

First, imagination serves a *unifying* function that (either through deliberation or through aggregation) brings and holds together

potentially disparate political attitudes and stances. Schwartz illustrates this in the passage on the wisdom of the multitude from Aristotle's *Πολιτικά* (*Politica*; henceforth P). For Aristotle, as soon as the multitude (*πλῆθος*; P 1281^b6) comes together, it unravels a superiority (*διαφορὰν*; P 1281^b18) in contrast to the singular individuals that manifests itself in the multitude being able to judge better (*ἄμεινον*; P 1281^b9). The image of the multitude as that “of a single man with many feet and many hands and many senses” (*πολύποδα καὶ πολύχειρα καὶ πολλὰς ἔχοντ' αἰσθήσεις*; P 1281^b6–7) that seems uncoordinated and, in its plurality, unable to act, becomes, according to Schwartz, unified through imagination that composes and synthesizes this collective being rendering it thus capable of acting “as a single agent” (866). Thanks to imagination – this is the link that according to Schwartz, Aristotle fails to mention – the multitude becomes “one personality as regards the moral and intellectual faculties” (*οὕτω καὶ περὶ τὰ ἤθη καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν*; P 1281^b8). The reason lies in the fact that, as Schwartz puts it, “shaped and informed by a diverse multitude of individuals, it [the multitude] thus reflects diversity and plurality” (866).

Second, imagination furnishes the community, the polis, or the political agents that it comprises of, with a *common goal*. This is the point where, for Schwartz, the concept of phantasma unravels its fullest potential. As Schwartz denotes, imagination “is a mental faculty [...] and therefore not something that can be unified across multiple agents. The thing that can be shared, however, and that needs to be unified [...] is *phantasma*.” In doing so, he expands the notion of the phantasma to engulf not only images, but also goals and ends that “appear good to them all” (Schwartz 866) like “the security and flourishing of the city or its commitment to majoritarianism” (867). Deliberation, legislation, civic friendship, and education are some of the procedures or institutionalized processes that Schwartz mentions and according to Aristotle produce the images (*φαντάσματα*) that all abide to. The popular assembly and the law courts are some of the stages where the above-mentioned

procedures take place. Diversity, finally, seems to be the constitutive precondition for deliberation. Foreshadowing Jacques Rancière's famous eighth thesis according to which “the essence of politics is the manifestation of dissensus,” Aristotle argues that the city is a collective that does not only consist of *quantitatively* more than one human being but that these human beings should also be *qualitatively* different from one another (“not only does a city consist of a multitude of human beings (*ἐκ πλείονων ἀνθρώπων*), it consists of human beings differing in kind (*ἐξ εἶδει διαφερόντων*)” (P 1261^a24–25)). Collectivizations and massifications that lead to the individuals forfeiting their singularities thus becoming identical to each other do not lead to the fortification of the communal feeling and to a foundation of a city but quite the contrary to the disqualification of such a collective as being worthy of being called a city. As Aristotle declares, “a collection of persons *all alike* does not constitute a state (*οὐ γὰρ γίνεται πόλις ἐξ ὁμοίων*)” (P 1261^a25; emphasis added).² However, and herein lies the big difference to current radical-democratic theories and forms of politics (Marchart), the fact that the polis acknowledges and recognizes, if not even fosters, these different types of view, does not mean that – this time *contra* Rancière – that agreement is *not* possible. The concept of phantasma is called upon to accommodate this possibility. As Schwartz argues by referring to the Aristotelian *ὁμόνοια* from the *Ἠθικὰ Νικομάχεια* (*Ethica Nicomachea*; henceforth NE),

the idea of a shared *phantasma* provides us with a clear psychological mechanism explaining how a group of diverse individuals could become “like-minded” in the first place and how such “like-mindedness” could manifest itself at the level of individual psychology. (868)

Third, imagination fulfils a *regulative* character for which it is vested the processual form of habituation. Even without putting it in such terms, as Schwartz correctly discerns, what is at stake in Aristotle's politics “is not only how to achieve collective *phantasma* among diverse

individuals but also how to avoid unjust and self-destructive kinds of shared *phantasmata* and collective actions” (869–70). To this end, Aristotle has, as is well known, suggested in NE a use theory of habit and education where virtues are not what we dispose of but what we get accustomed to through experimentation and repetition (NE 1103^b1–2). However, this does not solve the normative question regarding how we evaluate whether the execution of certain habits or the socialization in a specific type of education succeed in rendering us virtuous. For Schwartz, this is the final contribution that imagination fulfils. The epistemic uncertainty and fallibility that, as already diagnosed, is inherent to the concept of imagination can be rectified or mitigated through habituation and education; two processes of which the one civic the other individual, through which on the one hand phantasmata are developed and on the other the members of the polis or community learn to evaluate them as such and avoid misjudgements. As Schwartz puts it in a way that the modern, Hegelian even, theorist would be enticed to call dialectical or reciprocal:

The good person does good deeds because these deeds appear to her as good, and her *phantasma* of the good matches the actual good, rather than mistaking it for the mere apparent good. This appearance, in turn, and the *phantasia* that produces it, are shaped by her habits, by her continuous performance of good deeds, which exposed and solidified the truly pleasurable nature of these good actions. (870)

As he summarizes his findings, imagination

encourage[s] the development of a collective *phantasma*, a common view of a given end or goal as good, one that is shared by all the citizens or by a sufficient number of them. This collective *phantasma*, in turn, could improve their capacity to act “as one” and lay the foundations for multiple political institutions and practices that require shared conceptions of practical ends or goals as “good” and worthy of pursuit. (871)

To a certain extent the pieces are already set as to whether also common sense could

serve as the analytical fundament upon which imagination relies in order to function as the psychological microfoundation of collective actions. The first, subtle but direct, allusion to common sense that we have already witnessed took place in what I called, leaning on Schwartz, the unifying function of imagination. There, Schwartz discerned between “a composite and diverse *phantasia* over the *phantasia* of a single individual” (866) and called the former “shared phantasia.” Imagination is, according to Schwartz, shared, which means, as I argue, *common* not because all single individuals share the same imagination but because it is the synthesis of different viewpoints that have been forged together through the mechanism of imagination and based upon the logic of common sense. As will be shown right away (under section 3.2), where common sense will be dealt with as functioning as a *σύνολον*, common sense denotes exactly this capability of bringing things sensations without however these sensations having to forfeit their particular (individual/singular) character. The second, this time less obvious, hint to common sense occurred in the second, above-mentioned, functionality of imagination that results in bestowing the community with a common goal. The commonality of the goals, just like the collective character of the polis, demands – from a logical perspective – that the differences that are at play regarding the various goals and viewpoints are upheld and not subsumed under one unilateral and singular goal. By tackling (also under section 3.2) common sense as a condition of individuation, common sense seems to fulfil for Aristotle said logical necessity; namely, to provide the space that needs to be presumed and within which the differences of the senses’ sensations can and will be thought, first, in their individuality, and second, in their interplay and reciprocity. Finally, I show (under section 3.3) how both functions depend on how Aristotle introduces the concept of eventuality in his disambiguation of common sense that

renders common sense to a collective event, the confactorial facultative materialization of a potentiality.

3 the common is the collective: the logical and normative analytics of common sense

3.1 functions of common sense

Coming now to address in a more detailed and systematic way Aristotle's concept of common sense (*κοινῇ αἴσθησις*) it is important to recall that this is a very scarce and underexposed term within the Aristotelian corpus. There are only three passages where the term appears that are acknowledged within Aristotelian scholarship (DA 425^a27; DM 450^a10; PA 686^a31)³ and another three (DA 431^b5; HA 489^a17; M 981^b14) where the scholarship is divided as to whether they refer to common sense.⁴ Equally contested are the functions of common sense. In the canonical typification of David Ross (88–90), common sense accounts for (i) the perception of the “common sensibles” (*κοινῶν αἰσθητῶν*); (ii) the perception of the “incidental sensibles” (*κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς αἰσθητῶν*); (iii) the realization (and awareness) that we are perceiving; (iv) the discrimination between the objects of different senses; (v) finally, the deduction that if our senses are cognitively and perceptually inactive when we sleep then this would mean that also our central perceptive organ is inactive. The problem that Aristotle addresses with common sense is a complex one: first, Aristotle is triggered by the fact that there are qualities in the objects that seem to be common and shared by more than one object. In the beginning of the third chapter of *Περὶ ψυχῆς* (alternatively: DA can be used here to supplement the Greek name of the book), Aristotle asks himself whether a sixth sense should be assumed that is capable of dealing with these qualities. Second, this observation begs the question whether there is a special sense organ (*αἰσθητήριον*) authorized to perceive these common qualities of the objects as it is the case with all the other senses. Aristotle's solution to this conundrum is ingenious: he introduces the concept of common sense as

what Sophia Rosenfeld calls a “super sense” (11) circumventing, thus, the necessity to come up with a different organ and, simultaneously, providing us both with a logical and analytic syllogism of how complex perception can only come to being. From the five functions of common sense, the first four are of importance for the further argumentation and need to be shortly introduced before proceeding.

(i) As Aristotle observes, qualities like movement (*κίνησις*), rest (*στάσις*), shape (*σχῆμα*), magnitude (*μέγεθος*), number (*ἀριθμὸς*), and unity (*ἓν*) (DA 425^a16–17) can be found in more than one object, accompany the perception of each of the senses, and as such are characteristics perceived by all different sense organs. Therefore, there can be neither one exclusive sense nor one exclusive sense organ that is responsible for them or else perception would fall apart altogether. Aristotle subsumes these qualities under the term “common sensibles” (*κοινὰ αἰσθητὰ*). They denote qualities of an object that cannot be ascribed exclusively to one of the five senses nor can be perceived exclusively by one sense organ. Common sense serves hereby as the logical necessity that can account for the combination of each sense's unique characteristic (what can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, and touched) with characteristics that can belong to more than one sense, like, for instance, the aforementioned movement (*κίνησις*), rest (*στάσις*), shape (*σχῆμα*), magnitude (*μέγεθος*), number (*ἀριθμὸς*), and unity (*ἓν*).

(ii) In addition, Aristotle observes that there are objects that gather qualities that have come together and find themselves sharing the same object not in a necessary fashion, but in a contingent fashion. One of Aristotle's examples for this category of sensibles is Cleon's son. As Aristotle argues, as soon as we see him, we realize that he pertains to Cleon's son. At the same time, though, Cleon's son is also white or, as Aristotle says, he happens to be white (*τούτῳ δε συμβεβηκεν νῖψι Κλέωνος εἶναι*; DA 425^a27). Aristotle categorizes these sensibles as “incidental sensibles” (*κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς αἰσθητὰ*). They are qualities that do not determine the object but find themselves attached to it and refine it in a contingent fashion.

Common sense is called upon, first, to differentiate between what accounts as necessary or contingent, and second, to explicate how they can be found and perceived together.

(iii) Further, common sense accompanies the individual senses and fills in certain lacunae by rendering the operation of the senses synthetic, namely both positive and negative, and therefore capable of perceiving even if the characteristic feature of the sense is not apparent. It is at this point where Aristotle brings together common sense and imagination as memory, however, without further clarifying whether memory conditions common sense or whether common sense conditions memory. As he puts it, “διὸ καὶ ἀπελθόντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἔννευσιν αἰσθήσεις καὶ φαντασίαι ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητηρίοις” (Aristotle, DA 425^b24–25). In Walter S. Hett’s (1964) translation of the passage for Harvard’s Loeb Classical Library, the passage reads as follows: “this is why, even when the objects of perception are gone, sensations and mental images are still present in the sense organ” (147). More recently, this passage has been translated by Christopher Shields (2016) as follows: “Even when the objects of sense have gone away, perceptions and imaginings remain in the sensory organs” (52). In C.D.C. Reeve’s (2017) equally recent rendition, the passage reads “that is why perceptions and appearances remain in the perceptual organs even when the perceptible objects are gone” (47). Despite their differences, what all these translations seem to communicate unequivocally is the fact that common sense is evoked to stand up for and explicate an observation and a function (like the ability to recall a bygone experience and a registered perception) that would have remained otherwise unthematized and unaccounted for.

(iv) The fourth functionality that common sense performs is to confirm that objects can be perceived by more than one sense while ascertaining which characteristic of the object is perceived by which sense. Objects are for Aristotle not exhaustively perceived. As he showcases by accroaching the example of bile (Aristotle, DA 425^b1–12), bile is bitter, and bile is yellow. As bitter, bile is perceivable by

taste; as yellow, bile is perceivable by vision. It is thanks to common sense that those two perceptions can be brought together so that bile is described as both yellow and bitter. This synergetic functionality of common sense rectifies deficiencies and prevents the senses from being deceived and becoming fallacious. Each sense encounters the quality of another sense *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* (DA 42^a30) that Walter S. Hett translates “incidentally” (145), Christopher Shields “co-incidentally” (51), and C.D.C. Reeve “coincidentally” (46). For taste, the colour yellow is perceived *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*. For sight, it is bitterness that is perceived *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*. If sight were to be the only sense accountable for bile, this would mean that every yellow thing could potentially be bile. Equally, if bitterness were to be the only quality of bile, then every bitter thing could potentially be bile. It is evident that neither of these syllogisms are correct but fallacious. Common sense is the analytical and logical necessity that needs to be presupposed to avoid such logical fallacies in perception. Common sense renders necessary that the properties/qualities/characteristics of an object are taken into account, allocated in their distinctive and corresponding sense, and finally combined together to provide an inclusive perception of the object in case. Bile is neither only yellow, nor only bitter. Rather, it is yellow and bitter at the same time. In addition, bile is not necessarily yellow and accidentally bitter, nor the other way round, namely necessarily bitter and accidentally yellow. It is necessarily both bitter and yellow. In this light, and adding insult to injury, Aristotle argues that the perceptions of one sense function for any other sense as “incidental sensibles.” Perceptions like bitterness and colour that correspond exclusively to a certain sense are called *ἴδια αἰσθητά* (Hett speaks of “proper objects” (145); Shields of “exclusive objects” (51); and Reeve of “special objects” (46)). However, as soon as they are found together in an object these *ἴδια αἰσθητά* are transformed to “incidental sensibles.” The complexity is concluded as soon as we add the “common sensibles” to the equation. For sight, bile is not characterized

through the colour yellow as its proper object or through the taste of bitterness as proper object to the sense of taste and “incidental sensible” to sight. It has also magnitude and, additively, it is a liquid and therefore also movement. Similarly, for taste bile is not only characterized by bitterness as its proper object or by the colour yellow as “incidental sensible.” Also for taste, bile has magnitude and is a liquid and therefore characterized by movement. This is the point where Aristotle answers why he needs to introduce the concept of common sense. As he says, should anyone ask (*ζητήσει δ’ ἂν τις τίς*; Aristotle, DA 425^b5) why we need several senses (including common sense) the answer is that otherwise the proper objects of the senses – the proper objects of the senses in their “concomitance” (trans. Hett 145), the manner how they “concurrently accompany one another they” (trans. Shields 51), or their way of “accompanying each other at the same time” (trans. Reeve 46) – as well as the “common sensible” properties that characterize all objects (like movement, rest, shape, magnitude, number, and unity) would be indistinguishable.

The question that arises now is how the different perceptions are to be organized and articulated with one another. The answer to that is given in the end of the second section of the third book of DA (426^b8–427^a17) and in the seventh and concluding section of *Περὶ αἰσθήσεως καὶ αἰσθητῶν* (*De sensu et sensibilibus*, henceforth DS: 447^a13–449^b3). While in the previous passages Aristotle was mostly occupied in documenting observations and deducting syllogisms, in these two passages he lays down a meta-theory of perception by providing an analytics of perception regarding how the results of sense perception and common sense relate to one another.

3.2 common sense as σύνολον and condition of individuation

The most significant element of Aristotle’s analysis is how unity can be achieved not despite difference but rather thanks to virtue of difference. To better illustrate and visualize

this argument, Aristotle introduces the image of the geometrical point. As he has defined in his *Φυσικῆς ἀκροάσεως* (*Physica* or *Naturales Auscultationes*: henceforth PH), “the point both connects the length and limits it, since it is the starting-point of one [segment] and the endpoint of another” (Aristotle, PH IV 11 220^a10–11). The point is of course a “fixed” (PH I 13 222^a13) position. Yet, depending on where it is found, the point can be a polysemantic entity. Take, for instance, the line. If found within a line, the point is the endpoint of the segment and at the same time it is the starting point of the segment after. Therefore, the point is both something fixed as well as a potential point of departure or, simultaneously, a potential point of arrival. As Aristotle writes in his PH, this is the case not only with the geometrical point. This polysemantic functionality pertains to the geometrical concept of the “limit” and to the concept of the “now” (*νῦν*).⁵ By drawing a line, the limits organize and concretize the amorphous surface while bringing at the same time the two segments into contact with one another. Similarly,

the now is on the one hand a division of time, in potency, and on the other hand, the limit and union of both [times]. The division and the unification are the same thing and in respect of the same thing, but their being is not the same. (PH IV 13 222^a18–20)

The “now” is not just a temporal point. It is also a temporal point in this temporal segment that we call the present. In addition, however, the “now” designates the end of the temporal segment that we call the past and signals the beginning of the temporal segment that we call the future.

Building upon these insights, Aristotle comes in DA to parallelize the functionality of common sense and perception with the functionality of the spatial point and its temporal counterpart, the “now.” Undoubtedly, and in comparison to the more elaborate analysis in his DS 7 449^a5–20, the passage in DA is, as Reeve calls it, “laconic” (145). Yet the dilemma that Aristotle sees himself confronted with is clear: we have either to accept that the

objects and their properties are divisible or that the objects and their properties are indivisible. In the former case, this would demand the existence of different sensory organs and perception mechanisms. In the latter case, this would demand the same sensory organ and the same perception mechanism. However, both alternatives are deemed by Aristotle as problematic and insufficient. The former alternative of divisible objects and properties is untenable since it endangers and cannot accommodate the previous findings, namely the existence of “common sensibles” and “incidental sensibles.” The latter alternative of indivisible objects and properties is equally untenable since it is opposed to our (empirical) observations and derivations according to which there are more than one “proper sensibles” to be found in the objects that as soon as they encounter each other are transformed and behave to each other in the form of “incidental sensibles.” Therefore, Aristotle suggests a third way to tackle the dilemma. Instead of having to opt for divisibility or indivisibility, Aristotle introduces commonality as a functionality that can account for both alternatives. Functioning similarly to the point or the limit, common sense is the mechanism that Aristotle suggests is needed to explain a multitude of things: (i) How we conceive of the various perceptions. (ii) How we make sense of them as being different from one another. (iii) How we allocate the different properties of the object to their corresponding sense. (iv) How we can combine the various properties of the object that are perceived by a different sense to one another. (v) How we can distinguish within perception between “proper sensibles” that are unique to each sense and properties of the objects that accompany all senses and do not belong exclusively to only one of them (“common sensibles”). Finally, (vi) how we can combine in our perception properties of the object that are found coincidentally within the object (“incidental sensibles”) with sensations that are proper and unique to our senses and characterize the object in a primary mode (“proper sensibles”). As Aristotle puts it in DA: “ἡ μὲν οὖν δοσι

telios

χρήται τῷ πέρατι, δύο κρίνει, καὶ κεχωρισμένα ἐστὶ ὡς κεχωρισμένω• ἧ δ’ ἐν, ἐνὶ καὶ ἅμα” (427^a13–14). In Reeve’s translation:

In the way, then, in which it uses the limit twice it discerns two separate things in a way separately, whereas in the way in which it uses it as one it discerns one thing and at one and the same time.⁶ (49)

The Greek ἅμα will occupy us further in this essay (under section 3.3). For the time being, it is important to address how the common in common sense is not just something shared that can be found for everyone. Rather, it connotes a *collective* (conjoint, synthetic, and holistic) functionality.⁷ As a collective task, common sense is the *conjoint* result of all different senses. In addition, it is a *synthetic* operation that brings all senses and accompanying (independently whether common or incidental) features together. Finally, common sense is *holistic* because it does not allow for any sensation or incentive to remain unaccountable or imperceivable. From this viewpoint, common sense accounts for following functions that occur simultaneously: common sense (i) designates the separate and distinctive perception of each of the senses (“proper sensibles”); (ii) it allows to differentiate between them; (iii) it makes it possible to allocate the different perceptions to the different senses; (iv) it renders possible the combined perception of the distinctive sensations of the senses; (v) it facilitates the perception and combination of the senses as refined and enriched with properties that can be found inherent not to only one of them but to potentially all of them (“common sensibles”); lastly, (vi) it accounts for the differentiation between the different senses’ unique sensations or their combination by taking into consideration not only properties that are inherent to all senses but also factoring in properties that are found coincidentally in objects (“incidental sensibles”). As such, common sense becomes a *σύνολον*, a literal “everything-together” or “whole-together,” the “concrete thing” (M III 995^b; VII 1029^a), “concrete substance” (M VII 1037^a30–32), or “concrete whole” (M VII 1033^b, 1035^b; XIII

1060^b) as Aristotle defines the concept of *σύνολον* in *Ta μετὰ τα Φυσικὰ* (*Metaphysica*; henceforth M). This is the reason why Michael J. Loux subsumes Aristotelian metaphysics under the type of what Nicholas Wolterstorff in “Bergmann’s Constituent Ontology” (111ff.) and “Divine Simplicity” (540–41, 547–48) qualifies as “constituent ontologies.” In this light, the Aristotelian common sense is disclosed as the immanent and particular processualization of different components that find themselves brought together in what Loux calls a “mereological structure” (375). Instead of being mere relationality, common sense connotes “wholes, complexes, or compounds made up of more finely grained objects” (376). Therefore, common sense is not just a mere complex procedure. Rather, it is a collective processualization that demonstrates its becoming in its final/finite result and by doing so retains and presents the parts it comprises of without forcing them to forfeit their singularity or distinctive character.

In doing so, Aristotle introduces in world history and bequeaths to the Western thinking a concept like common sense that – despite its realiterations – will persevere as one of the most tenacious and long-living concepts within Western thinking.⁸ At the same time, though, Aristotle’s concept of common sense differs substantially from the concept’s reappropriation within Western modernity. Aristotle does not part ways with Modernity only regarding imagination. Common sense is yet another concept that both Aristotle and Modernity might share but common sense occupies a diametrically different functionality within Aristotelian philosophy.⁹ For Fritz van Holthoon and David Olson, common sense “consists of knowledge, judgement, and taste which is more or less universal and which is held more or less without reflection or argument” (9). For C.S. Lewis, common sense “often means [...] the elementary mental outfit of the normal man” (146). And for George E. Moore for propositions for which

we know that they are features in the “Common Sense view of the world,” it

follows that they are true: it is self-contradictory to maintain that *we* know them to be features in the Common Sense view, and that yet they are not true; since to say that *we* know this, is to say that they are true. (44–45)

Yet, as Sophia Rosenfeld remarks, reducing common sense to “those plain, self-evident truths or conventional wisdom that one needed no sophistication to grasp and no proof to accept precisely because they accorded so well with the basic (common sense) intellectual capacities and experiences of the whole social body” (23) is a recent, i.e., since Modernity, reduction of the potential that the concept carries within it.

Seen through the lens of the provided analysis, Aristotelian common sense is indeed a common “perceptual capacity” (trans. Reeve 46) or a common “faculty” (trans. Hett 143). Yet common sense is a common capacity and a common faculty not in a deductive manner, i.e., because it is found shared by everyone. Rather, common sense is a common capacity and a common faculty in an inductive manner, i.e., because it *needs to be presupposed* for everyone in order for perception to succeed and take place at all. As Aristotle puts it: *θετέον (έστιν)* (DS 449^a18). Therefore, this *collective* (conjoint, synthetic, and holistic) functionality of common sense is not a mere observation. Rather, it is the result of an active imposition that is laid upon the individual as a framework that dictates to the individual how it has to make sense of its world. As such, common sense is not a quality of the individual that allows the individual to perceive the world around it. Instead, Aristotle establishes common sense as a *condition of becoming* that needs to be presumed in order to guarantee and make possible that the individual will come to being.¹⁰ In doing so, he qualifies the common in common sense not as something shared that accompanies perception, but as something that needs to be applied by all and only therefore common for everyone. At the same time, common sense stops being a fraction of the autonomous individual that is common also to every other individual. Rather, by establishing

common sense as the general condition of the individual's singular individuation and perception of the world, Aristotle reverses the tables. Henceforth, it is the individual that becomes a fraction of common sense and it is common sense that is rendered thereby to a container,¹¹ and, finally, to the individual's dynamic and contingent condition – or principle – of individuation.¹² As Albertus Magnus puts it in the fourth treatise of his book on Aristotle's DA, common sense is “a cause that formally preconceives that which emanates from it, just as the architectural plan preconceives the form of the house” (Albertus Magnus, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 7, 161–63; cited in Heller-Roazen 158).¹³

3.3 common sense as a collective event

Both the character of common sense as a *σύνολον* as well as its functionality as a condition of individuation depend on the fact that Aristotle introduces the parameter of eventuality in his conceptualization of common sense. The crucial character of eventuality for common sense becomes apparent as soon as Aristotle introduces the category of “incidental sensibles” (*κατὰ συμβεβηκός αἰσθητά*). As already mentioned, for Aristotle the “incidental sensibles” are perceived coincidentally by the different senses but as such by the common sense. While a particular characteristic of an object that coincidentally coexists with another characteristic is understood from a particular sense as belonging to one another, common sense is capable of differentiating between these two characteristics and acknowledges them both in their irreducibility as well as in their intertwinement.

This is certainly not an easily comprehensible term and line of thought and the different translations that the Aristotelian *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* has experienced have influenced our understanding and interpretation of this fundamental Aristotelian diagnosis and argument. Hett translates this adverbial qualification when it refers to common sense as “incidentally.” There is, however, one exception. In DA

425^a28 where Aristotle speaks of Cleon's son and distinguishes between “common sensibles” and “incidental sensibles” the *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* is rather paraphrased – than directly translated – as “directly” (145). This seems to be adhesive to another cluster of meaning that Hett attributes to *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*, namely as connoting something mediated (*διὰ μέσου*; DA 423b¹³) or heteronomous (*καθ' ἕτερον*; DA 406^a5). The more recent translations from Shields (2016) and Reeve (2017) translate the *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* as “coincidental” thus paying tribute to the Greek prefix *συν-* in *συμβεβηκός* that is indeed the Latin *cum-* or its successor, the *co-* of the Romance languages. Maybe to underline the importance of this *co-*, Shields uses the hyphen in “co-incidentally,” which again could also be a matter of typographic hyphenation since the word “co-incidentally” appears printed in the entire book, coincidentally enough, divided between two lines. Finally, for the first volume of the *Oxford Translation of Aristotle* that was published in 1908 and re-edited by Jonathan Barnes for Princeton University Press in 1991, J.A. Smith translates the *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* in the sentence “*τῶν δὲ κοινῶν ἤδη ἔχομεν αἰσθησιν κοινήν, οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός*” (DA 425^a28) as “incidental” whereas the second *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* in the sentence “*τὰ δ' ἄλλήλων ἴδια κατὰ συμβεβηκός αἰσθάνονται αἱ αἰσθήσεις, οὐχ ἢ αὐταί*” (DA 425^a31–32) is renditioned, interestingly enough, as “non-incidentally.”¹⁴

The differences in the translations reveal two crucial semantic issues: first, the temporalization of perception and, second, the perception's collectivization. The word *συμβεβηκός* is a substantivization of the neuter form of the perfect active participle of *συμβαίνω*, meaning to happen or occur. However, the Greek *συν-βαίνω* (*συν-*: with, together + *βαίνω*: to go) colours in a substantially different way the Romance “event” and the Latin “eventus” from where it originated. The word *eventus* stems from *evenire* (*ex-*: out + *venire*: to come). While the “event” connotes an appearance, an origination, a surfacing, or an arrival, the Greek *συμβεβηκός* stands for something that comes to being together and in a collective

fashion. While the “event” seems to carry *within itself* the power that makes it appear,¹⁵ the *συμβεβηκός* seems to be the result or the contemporaneous occurrence of more than one entity or procedure/process. In this light, the “event” seems to be something autonomous, sovereign, and integral whereas the *συμβεβηκός* seems to be the joint result of a collective effort.

In this light, it should not come as a surprise that thinkers like Jacques Derrida and Catherine Malabou felt drawn to the collective power – if not promise – of the *συμβεβηκός*. In her *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic* (2005), Malabou introduces the concept of the *συμβεβηκός* to account for the subject’s emanation as a particular, i.e., as the contingent manifestation of the encounter between the universal and the accidental. As she puts it,

the Greek word *συμβεβηκός*, “accident,” derives from the verb *συμβαίνειν* which means at the same time to follow from, to ensure and to arrive, to happen. Thereby it can designate *continuation* in both senses of the word, as *consequence*, that is, “what follows” in the logical sense, and as *event*, that is, “what follows” in a chronological sense. Self-determination is thus the *relation* of substance to that which happens. (Malabou 12; emphasis added)

For Malabou, the subject is neither the mere replication of the universal, nor the random result of the accidental. On the contrary, it is the collective and joint outcome of and interplay between the universal and the accidental.

To do so, Malabou refers to Derrida’s essay “Ousia and Grammē” in *Margins of Philosophy* (1982), a treatise on Aristotle, Heidegger, and Hegel. Derrida’s starting point in this essay is how the concepts of the “now,” the “point,” and the “limit” from Aristotle’s PH have germinated the entire Western metaphysical and ontological thought till Hegel and Heidegger. However, what interests Derrida in this essay is how it has come to think of time and space together and as a continuum. As Derrida argues in “Ousia and Grammē,” “the entire

weight of Aristotle’s text comes down upon a word so small as to be hardly visible, and hardly visible because it appears self-evident, as discreet as that which goes without saying” (56). This word is the Greek *ἅμα* to which we draw attention above in DA 427^a13–14 and announced that we would be coming back to later.

Technically, the Greek *ἅμα* – like the Latin *simul*, yet unlike the Greek *συν* – describes something that exists spatially parallel to something else, and temporally at the same time as something else. Yet, Derrida goes down a different path. He translates the Greek *ἅμα* as “‘together,’ ‘all at once,’ ‘both together,’ ‘at the same time’” (Derrida 56) and points out that this adverb conveys neither pure temporality nor pure spatiality but “the complicity, the common origin of time and space” (ibid.). As if that were not enough, there is for Derrida something even more fundamental at play here. As soon as Derrida establishes the co-originality of time and space, he argues that this “appearing together” or *com-paraitre* – a neologism that would be further exploited by Jean-Luc Nancy a decade later – constitutes “the condition for all appearing of Being” (56). However, even this is not enough for Derrida. The Greek *ἅμα* sets or “says,” as Derrida puts it, “the dyad as the minimum” (ibid.), i.e., as the minimal condition for the subject’s becoming. As Derrida declares, “Being-together is not a [*ex post*, retrospective; T.T.] determination of Being, but the very [*ex ante*, original, and antecedent; T.T.] *production* of Being” (ibid.; emphasis added).

It is this combined interpretation of common sense as a collective event which conditions, determines, and orients the individual that gives common sense its final punch. Read through the lens of Malabou’s concept of collective event and Derrida’s interpretation of the preposition, common sense discloses itself not as a foreseeable, bureaucratic explanation of the mechanisms how the individual perceives the world and its objects. Rather, common sense connotes an event that cuts through the individual’s perception in an unexpected way. This does not have to do, however, with the

event's or common sense's innate force. Rather, this openness, unexpectedness, and contingency of common sense as an event is to be attributed to the dynamic interplay and intertwinement of the components it consists of and that render common sense to an open, collective, and inclusive process. The entanglement of these components cannot be predicted or calculated in advance. Of course, the different elements that common sense factors in are on hand and countable. However, their effects and efficacy cannot be accounted for in advance. It is this joint and collective interplay of more than one sense, more than one sensible, more than one property that the objects carry within themselves that allows for common sense to be open to reconfiguration and rearticulation and renders individuation to a contingent and dynamic process.

4 outlook: from memory to utopia. vicissitudes of common sense

It should start to become clear why common sense serves as the ground for which imagination, according to Schwartz, can (i) unravel a *unifying* function that brings and holds together potentially disparate political attitudes and stances; (ii) furnish the community with an *inclusive common goal* without reducing and massifying the people under a common good; and, finally, (iii) function as a *regulative* principle that can avoid phenomena of injustice and exclusion. As a *σύνολον*, condition of individuation and collective event, common sense fulfils a logical-analytical necessity with clear normative consequences. As a *σύνολον*, common sense can explain which components of perception (sensory organs, senses, sensations, proper sensibles, common sensibles, incidental sensibles) have been factored in and result in the individual's perception. As a condition of individuation, common sense demands that all components of perception are necessarily factored in in order for the individual to be able to perceive while guaranteeing at the same time that the

telios

contributions of the different components are acknowledged both in their irreducibility as well as in their interaction, yet without getting subsumed under one category. As a collective event, common sense sees in the products of perception not uncertain, fallible, or misled results of a coincidental and automatic – as Aristotle would have called it (PH 196^a12–17) – process based on luck (*τύχη*), but the outcomes of a process that is collectively overdetermined, and only therefore open-ended and contingent.

For Schwartz, the Aristotelian multitude (*πλήθος*; P 1281^b6) can act together despite it having “many feet and many hands and many senses” (*πολύποδα καὶ πολὺχειρα καὶ πολλὰς ἔχοντ' αἰσθήσεις*; P 1281^b6–7) due to the “shared phantasia” that brings and holds the multitude together equipping it with “diversity and plurality” (Schwartz 866). However, it is thanks to the holistic character of common sense as *σύνολον* that imagination as an affection (*πάθος*) of common sense gets endowed with the ability to bring the different sensations into discussion and – more importantly – to guarantee that they retain their individuality and particularity that will allow for the multitude to appear not as a unified and uniform political body but as a political body that consists of citizens that are not only a lot but are also “differing in kind (*ἐξ εἶδει διαφερόντων*)” (Aristotle, P 1261^a24–25). Further, it is imagination as affection (*πάθος*) of common sense the reason for which, as Schwartz claims, imagination can avoid “unjust and self-destructive kinds of shared *phantasmata* and collective actions” (869–70). Functioning as a condition of individuation that needs to take into account and factor in every parameter of perception (sensory organs, senses, sensations, proper sensibles, common sensibles, incidental sensibles), common sense infuses imagination with a normative (egalitarian, inclusive, and democratic) compass that disallows hierarchizations and exclusions. Finally, imagination can rectify the fallibilism and uncertainty of the senses and can prevent them from going astray because as an affection (*πάθος*) of a collective event that is common sense, imagination

can also get organized to a collective experience and be (re-)treated through, e.g., education and habituation. Even the *performative* character that Schwartz seems to attribute to imagination can be traced back and attributed to the appearance of common sense as a collective event. As Schwartz puts it,

the Aristotelian collective *phantasma*, unlike a Platonic ideal, is not fixed, absolute, or unchanging. Instead, I suggest that we view it as a product of collective effort, shaped by multiple individuals in their daily activities as citizens and in their relation to and interaction with one another. (871)

As a collective event, common sense provides us with the mechanism to rethink and remodel the different sensations and induces different forms of interactions.

These last remarks should suffice to evince why imagination, thanks to it being an affection of common sense, can serve as what Schwartz diagnoses as “the psychological microfoundations of collective action and thus helps explain how we can move from individual psychology to collective agency and action” (868). The last, concluding remarks should provide enough evidence regarding both the *analytical-logical* and *normative* function of common sense. The *analytical-logical* function of common sense as *σύνολον*, condition of individuation and collective event allows imagination to facilitate the collectivization of political actions. The normative function of common sense as *σύνολον*, condition of individuation and collective event allows imagination to facilitate the transformation of common sense from a minimally shared to an inclusive, holistic, and overdetermined collective activity without either reducing it to a property and quality of the individual or subsuming it under a greater common good that levels the particularities it consists of.

Notwithstanding, these remarks do not exhaust the potentiality of common sense as precondition of imagination as laid down by Aristotle and explicated by Schwartz. As

Schwartz argues, “if the creation of a collective *phantasma* assumes active participation in collective life, perhaps we should begin by seeking it not in grand, national ‘imaginar-ies,’ but rather in the more concrete shared activities of smaller local communities” (871). Michel Foucault’s epistemic form of “local criticism” (81), Clifford Geertz’s (73–93) culturalist understanding of common sense, as well as Antonio Gramsci’s (435) dualistic, as I have called it in my “Social-Ontological Commentary on Gramsci’s Concept of Common Sense,” conceptualization of common sense are modern reactualizations that could equally profit from the analysis of Aristotle’s concept of common sense as a *σύνολον*, condition of individuation and/or collective event. The rereading of Aristotle’s concept of common sense as a collective event could aid Foucault’s local criticism to be rethought so as to become applicable also on the macrolevel without falling prey to power mechanisms. The conceptualization of common sense as a *σύνολον* could explain why for Geertz common sense is indeed “an everywhere-found cultural form” (85).¹⁶ And finally, as a condition of individuation, common sense could account for the emancipatory account that Gramsci attributes to the *buon senso* (*good sense*); a positive form of common sense that he juxtaposes to a non-critical form of common sense that he calls *senso commune* (literally: common sense).¹⁷

Ultimately, also the temporal intertwining of common sense and imagination needs to be revisited. From a modern perspective, the two are the most surprising features of Aristotle’s intrication of imagination with common sense that at the same time create a rift between Aristotle and Modernity. The first pertains to the fact that also memory is best understood as a sub-category of this “psychic faculty” (*De Sensu and De Memoria* 105) that according to G.R.T. Ross imagination is. As Aristotle states, while the future cannot but be assumed and hoped for (*ἀλλ’ ἔστι δοξαστὸν καὶ ἐλπιστόν*) and while perception (*αἴσθησις*) is the means to

approximate the present (DM 449^b10–15), the past demands its own and distinctive form of approximation, for which Aristotle accroaches the term memory (*μνήμη*). For Aristotle, also memory is a *πάθος*, i.e., a form of “affection.” In qualifying, however, memory as a form of imagination, Aristotle also posits memory at the orbit of common sense. The second feature of Aristotle’s intrication of imagination with common sense that creates a second rift between Aristotle and Modernity pertains to the fact that Aristotle questions what in modernity has been a crucial characteristic of imagination, namely its creative capacity. By assuming that imagination is an affection (*πάθος*), namely something *inflicted* upon us *from the outside*, Aristotle seems to suggest that the *phantasma* is a mere reproduction and reenactment instead of something that imagination genuinely/originally/autonomously produces and generates on its own. However, a shift interlopes between Aristotle’s conceptualization of imagination and modernity’s conceptualization of imagination. What differs is that for Aristotle imagination does not have a creative, forward-looking character as it is the case with the thinkers that have shaped the modern understanding of imagination like, e.g., Aquinas, René Descartes, or Immanuel Kant. Regarding Aquinas, recall how he calls imagination in *Summa Theologiae* (1981) a formation (*formatio*) “inasmuch as the imagination forms for itself an image of an *absent* thing, or even of something *never seen*” (I 85 ad 3; emphasis added).¹⁸ Regarding Descartes, in the Fourth Meditation in Descartes’s *Meditations on First Philosophy with Selections from the Objections and Replies* (2003), the mind can turn to “things which are objects of the intellect alone and are totally separate from matter” (37). In doing so, Descartes separates once and for all imagination from the representation of and association with the experienced entities upon which Aristotle insists. Finally, and regarding Kant, Kant introduces in *Anthropology* the power of imagination (*facultas imaginandi*) as an “intuition even *without* the presence of an

object” (265 §15). In doing so, Kant establishes imagination as a productive “faculty of the original presentation of the object (*exhibitio originaria*), which thus precedes experience” (278 §28). Strictly speaking, it is not that Aristotelian imagination does not create. Imagination does create, but it creates *phantasmata*. Yet unlike the modern theorists, who bestow upon imagination the ability to produce something novel and original, the Aristotelian *phantasma* is an intermediate entity; a placeholder mediating between something experienced and intended to help us recall this experience.¹⁹

Building upon these findings, it is worth inquiring the ramifications of the intrication of common sense and imagination not only for the past as in the case of memory, but also for the present and, if possible, also for the future. In regard to common sense and imagination in/of the present two paradigms seem to come into question: first, Immanuel Kant’s dependence of aesthetic taste on common sense (*Gemeinsinn*) in his *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (2000) that he glosses as *sensus communis aestheticus* (§40). Second, Hannah Arendt’s politicizing rereading of Kant’s aesthetical understanding of common sense in the *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* (1992) that she recalibrates as a democratic constant. Analogous to Aristotle, both modern authors agree that common sense is not a capacity that the subject disposes of but the result of the subject’s dependence upon the/its Other. However, while Kant identifies common sense in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* as a “broadened way of thinking” that forces the subject “to think from the standpoint of everyone else” (§40), Arendt diagnoses common sense in the *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* (1992) as the need for “each other’s company even for thinking” (27). Nevertheless, both renditions of common sense imply some sort of imagination: in Kant’s case the imagination to predict and presuppose a similar aesthetic taste that would confirm the subject’s taste; in Arendt’s case the imagination of a

democratic community, where being a part of serves as the precondition for the subject to evaluate the soundness of their judgements.

These similarities between Aristotle, Kant, and Arendt notwithstanding, there are fundamental differences between the three authors regarding the two concepts and their temporal conjunction. For both Kant and Arendt, imagination seems to apply – *contra* Aristotle – also to the subject’s present and not only to the recollection of its past. The Kantian subject does not need to just perceive the Other but needs to imagine, i.e., create, its/the Other(s) and forecast their judgement to confirm and evaluate its own judgement. Similarly, Arendt’s subject does not need to just sense or perceive of the Other but imagine, i.e., create in a presupposing way, a fellow member of the political community interacting with the subject, thereby preparing the political stage for both the subject and its/the Other(s). Further, the contours of imagination that have been just vaguely delineated before as soon as Aristotle defined imagination as an affection of common sense acquire with Kant and Arendt a more defined outline. It is the Other that conditions the subject’s imagination, or more concrete: it is the Other with whom the subject presently shares its (epistemic, social, political, and cultural) world that delimits the subject’s faculty of imagination (by determining, well-noted, the subject’s common sense).

Ultimately, it would be worth revisiting the implication of common sense and imagination not only for the past (as in the case of Aristotle) or the present (as in the case of Kant and Arendt) but also for the *future* and scrutinize the consequences of common sense for the future through the concept of hope or even through the concept of utopia. A joint reading of Aristotle’s concept of *κοινῇ αἴσθησις* (common sense) as *σύνολον*, condition of individuation, and collective event could transform utopia to a *koinotopia* (cf. Telios, “On Koinotopia”). From this perspective, *koinotopia* – a neologism composed from the Greek *κοινός* (the common) and *utopia* – would reconceptualize utopia as an inclusive,

collective, and performative programming of the future that is not to be merely assumed or hoped for (*ἀλλ’ ἔστι δοξαστὸν καὶ ἐλπιστόν*; DM 449^b10–15), as Aristotle argues, but decidedly and intentionally organized, prepared, and achieved, if not already prefigurative in the here-and-now.



disclosure statement

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notes

1 David Bloch (28) is correct when translating the Greek *πάθος* as “affection” and not as a mere “modification” or “phenomenon” as G.R.T. Ross translates the Greek *πάθος* (Aristotle, *De Sensu and De Memoria* 103).

2 Whether Aristotle actually succeeds in guaranteeing difference is one of the biggest points of contention within the Aristotelian scholarship. For an overview of the different arguments on this matter, i.e., whether Aristotle manages to overcome Greek ethnocentrism, to thematize women and women’s bodies per se, as well as for a critical assertion of Aristotle’s natural slavery thesis, cf. Dobbs; Freeland; Pellegrin; Trott; Urricelqui. Unfortunately, I cannot elaborate further on these extremely controversial and actual issues. However, I cannot avoid arguing against cancelling Aristotle. Nevertheless, this is not to say that Aristotle should come out unscathed. Rather, Aristotle should be fundamentally criticized for the fact that despite having acknowledged, thematized, and included – even if abstractly – difference in his political theory/philosophy, he still decided not to step in to abolish slavery or to broaden the recipients of the rights he declared to include women and foreigners.

3 The abbreviation PA refers to Aristotle’s *Περὶ ζῴων μορίων* (*De Partibus Animalium*). As Pavel Gregoric asserts in *Aristotle on the Common Sense* (2007), the most recent attempt to systematize and exhaustively discuss Aristotle’s notion of common sense, the passage in PA has been dismissed as “unusual,” “eccentric,” or “curious”

(Gregoric 83) and goes on to provide an intriguing interpretation of the importance of the passage. In what follows, I will not refer, however, to this passage nor to the one from the HA (*Τῶν περὶ τὰ ζῷα ἱστοριῶν*; *Historia Animalium* (henceforth HA)), since it would demand the consideration of a series of Aristotelian topics that fall outside of the scope of this essay.

4 D.W. Hamlyn's ("Aristotle's Account"; "Koine Aisthesis") prevalent position regarding which passages refer to common sense has been challenged – more or less convincingly (Shields; Herzberg; Marmodoro) – by Pavel Gregoric in his *Aristotle on the Common Sense* (2007).

5 For a discussion between W.D. Ross, D.W. Hamlyn, H.G. Apostle, and Deborah Modrak as to whether limit is correctly considered as an example of the collective function of common sense, see Finamore 29fn6.

6 The similar passage in DS delivers this complex line of reasoning in a more detailed manner than the one in DA. As Aristotle puts it in J.I. Beare's translation for Jonathan Barnes's re-edition of *The Oxford Translation of Aristotle* by Princeton UP (1991),

in the same way, therefore, we must assume also, in the case of the soul, that the faculty of perception in general is in itself numerically one and the same, but different in its being; different, that is to say, in genus as regards some of its objects, in species as regards others. Hence too, we may conclude (*θετέον*) that one can perceive numerically different objects simultaneously (*ἅμα*) with a faculty which is numerically one and the same, but not the same in its account. (DS 449^a14–20)

Pay attention to the fact that Aristotle also uses in DS the word *θετέον*: to be presupposed or presumed (and not just concluded, as Beare attributes it) to emphasize the logical necessity of common sense as a condition of individuation that needs to be surmised and not deduced.

7 As Deborah Modrak puts it, common sense "is not a separate sense; it just is the capacity for the joint exercise of several senses" (Aristotle 65; emphasis added). See also Modrak, "Koine aisthesis." In this light, I do not agree with Ronald Polansky who sees in the five senses "subfaculties"

telios

of the common sense (375). This would render the complex process that is common sense to a unified and hierarchically organized perceptual procedure, instead of a dynamic, contingent, and immanent operation. In a similar vein, Dorothea Frede argues that common sense "is not a faculty above the different senses but only their centre, where all the different perceptions converge" (285) and Charles Kahn attributes to common sense the role of a "co-ordinator" (52, 57ff.).

8 By stating that Aristotle fathered the concept of common sense, I under no circumstances mean that Aristotle's concept of *κοινή αἴσθησις* is identical or a direct precursor notion of the modern concept of common sense especially as cultivated and established during and in the aftermath of the Scottish Enlightenment. As already argued (Schaeffer; Critchley; Pettersson), not even the spatially and chronologically closer Roman concept of *sensus communis* is semantically related to the Aristotelian *κοινή αἴσθησις*. In addition, and unlike regarding *κοινή αἴσθησις*, there is a traceable and well-documented genealogy to be traced from Cicero's *rhetoric* use of *sensus communis* to Thomas Reid's *epistemological* understanding of common sense, Kant's *aesthetic Gemeinsinn* and Arendt's *politicized* variation of common sense via Shaftesbury's *aesthetic-ethical* conceptualization of common sense, Francis Hutcheson's *moral sense* and Adam Smith's concept of *sympathy*. However, I do think that Aristotle through his concept of *κοινή αἴσθησις* touched upon and presented an idea that I still find echoing within (Western) philosophy, namely the idea of collective and mutual inter-dependence (of senses, of citizens within a community, forms of actions, etc.). I am indebted to my anonymous reviewer for inviting me to better clarify this point.

9 As Otfried Höffe writes, "Aristotle's relationship to common sense and current opinion is too varied – alternately hermeneutical, critical, or affirmative – to allow for considering him a commonsense philosopher. Possibly one could speak of a qualified commonsense thinker open to criticism" (65).

10 By arguing that common sense needs to be presupposed or presumed, I do not mean to suggest that common sense is a metaphysical entity. Quite the contrary: as my anonymous reviewer correctly observed, a further comment

for which I am thankful, we actually need common sense to be able to perceive at all, and therefore common sense is not a metaphysical chimaera that is sheerly presupposed and declared without being able to prove its existence. However, I would still argue that common sense remains a theoretical *construct* and therefore is more than just a mere verifiable observation. What Aristotle does in DA is to fathom how certain observations (regarding how the senses work) can be organized and narrated in a meaningful and conclusive way. After all, this was also the debate between him and Democritus, namely whether the observations that Democritus meant to address under the concept of “a sixth sense” should rather be addressed under the concept of common sense.

11 The concept of container that I use to describe the analytic functionality of common sense is based on what Bruno Latour calls in *Science in Action* and “On Technical Mediation” a “black box.”

12 It is impossible at this point to analyse the concept of individuation. However, one thing is certain: unlike the Lockean tradition where individuation was reinvented to underline the individual’s metaphysically presupposed sovereignty and integrality, individuation still bears within the Aristotelian scholarship the scholastic interpretation of the term as a process where matter meets form in the shape of a concrete individual. This is not to say, however, that individuation is synonymous to (pre-)determination. Rather, individuation within Aristotelian scholarship (Richardson; Nussbaum; Nussbaum and Putnam; Whiting) is an open-ended and dynamic process. The final form cannot be foreseen or foretold. Rather, it is contingent and dependent on the interplay of the different components from which it emanates. For a historical overview of the concept of the *principium individuationis*, see “Individuation,” *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe* (1904); “Individuation, Individuationsprinzip,” *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (2007). For a recent panoramic account, see Leidi.

13 Daniel Heller-Roazen’s *The Inner Touch: Archaeology of a Sensation* (2009) is undoubtedly the best recent and most original commentary on Aristotle’s concept of common sense not only for its literary qualities but more importantly

because it provides a thoroughly documented genealogy of the concept from Aristotle to Giorgio Agamben.

14 The modern Greek translations are no less confusing and inconsequential. I.S. Christodoulou (2003) translates the first *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* as “ἀπὸ σύμπτωσης” (coincidentally; 239) whereas the second *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* as “κατὰ περίσταση” (occasionally; 239).

15 It is this temporal self-referentiality of the Latin term “event” that has prompted Martin Heidegger’s philosophy of the event (*Ereignisphilosophie*) and the post-Heideggerian event philosophies (Derrida, Agamben, Badiou, etc.).

16 See also Geertz’s definition that “common sense is not what the mind cleared of cant spontaneously apprehends; it is what the mind filled with presuppositions – that sex is a disorganizing force, that sex is a regenerative gift, that sex is a practical pleasure – concludes” (84). As Geertz further clarifies in “Common Sense as a Cultural System” (1983), common sense is “an everywhere-found cultural form” (85) that is “open to all, the general property of at least, as we would put it, all solid citizens” (91) and therefore “represents the world as a familiar world, one everyone can, and should, recognize, and within which everyone stands, or should, on his own feet” (91). It should be evident why Geertz speaks of common sense as a property of *citizens* or of the fact that common sense “represents” its surrounding “*familiar world*” and not of common sense as a human quality.

17 As I argue elsewhere, also Gramsci’s *senso comune* should be rehabilitated as unravelling an emancipatory rather than affirmative or legitimizing function; see Telios, “Social-Ontological Commentary on Gramsci’s Concept of Common Sense.”

18 To underline even more emphatically the creative character of Aquinas’s (modern) conceptualization of imagination, Leslie Stevenson translates in his “Twelve Conceptions of Imagination” Aquinas’s *formatio* as a “creative activity” (238).

19 This intermediate role of imagination is what motivates D.W. Hamlyn’s (trans.) critique according to which Aristotle’s “imagination has an unsatisfactory halfway status in his scheme between perception and the intellect, and its exact position is never made clear” (DA xiv).

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