

Deconstructing the Thesis of Human Rationality as the Sole Faculty of Knowledge

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Abstract: This study contends that human rationality is not the sole faculty of knowledge. The Affective Sphere with the Heart as the Centre, an Engaged Personality and Human Emotions are also reliable sources of knowledge among others. The excessive credit assigned to rationality as the major tool in the acquisition of knowledge and the dismissive manner in which some philosophers have thought and written about the affective sphere and the human heart has prompted this hypothesis. Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Augustine, R. Descartes, I. Kant and other thinkers, gave human rationality an exalted position in the history of thought. They emphasized that all our emotions must be subjected to the light and the dictates of reason. Rationality, for them, was indispensable for the flourishing of the human person. Awards at intellectual ceremonies and the criteria for scholarships justifies the above stance. General Point Average (GPA), the product of cognitive skills is King. Our studies testify that the heart, an engaged personality and human emotions are also sources of knowledge. The scope of the heart in the cognitive process is broader than the scope of the intellect. As such, to arrive at a vast spectrum of knowledge, recourse must be made to the heart and the intellect and the will and not just the intellect. This approach also guarantees holistic education. We employed arguments from Dietrich Von Hildebrand, Stephen Darwall, Yunus Tuncel, B. Pascal, B. Spinoza, D. Hume, L. Congiunti, R. Sokolowski and others to deconstruct the supremacy of reason. Also, we underscore the invaluable role of the heart in acquiring knowledge. Consequently, we maintain that rationality is not the sole faculty of knowledge. The pseudo idolatry of reason has to be subjected to critical scrutiny.

Keywords: Deconstructing, rationality, heart, personality, emotions and knowledge.

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Introduction

Down the centuries, human rationality has been conceived and perceived as the distinctive mark of the human person. The apparent superiority of the rational faculty in the history of thought has been very noticeable. This approach has betrayed the narrow conception of human knowledge. Rationality has been conceived as the distinctive mark of humans. It is traditionally acclaimed as the indispensable tool in the art of Philosophy. Without the effective presence of rationality, any attempt at philosophizing becomes impossible. Thus, in the acquisition of philosophical knowledge, rationality enjoys pride of place. But is rationality the only source of philosophical knowledge? Where do we meet the entire person? In the Heart or in the Intellect or in the Will? Still: "Do

you believe that we only think with intelligence? Are we merely a bundle of faculties among which for this or that purpose we select the desired instrument? We think "with our whole soul," declared Plato. Presently we shall go further, we say: with our whole being. Knowledge involves everything in us, from the vital principle to the chemical composition of the least cell. (...) it is not the mind alone that thinks, but man" (Sertillanges, 1998, 20).

Thus, rationality is not the sole source of knowledge. There are other sources of knowledge. The affective sphere with the heart as its core is a source of knowledge. Von Hildebrand contends that: "The affective sphere, and the heart as its centre, has been more or less under a cloud throughout the entire course of the history of Philosophy. (...) no place has been allotted to the exploration of

the heart, but it also applies to the interpretation given to the heart whenever it is dealt with" (Von Hildebrand, 2007, 3). Darwall, writes: "Philosophers don't write about the heart. At least analytical philosophers don't. Why is this? Philosophers are said to live life "in their heads" rather than "from their hearts" (Darwall, 2024, 1). "They argue that human life must be guided by rationality that leads to truth; first principles may be discovered by reason alone and feelings misguide us and cannot produce what is true" (Tuncel, 2022, iii). This paper seeks to illustrate that the affective sphere and the heart as it's centre have a role to play in Philosophy. It advances the argument that there is need to move from the duology of knowledge to the trilogy of knowledge.

The Principal Attitude of the Heart

In every culture across the globe, the human heart is a symbol of love. "Love is the principal attitude of the heart. Love is implicit in all attitudes of the heart" (Darwall, 2024, 79). With love being implicit in all attitudes of the heart, it implies that there is no moment in the operations of the human person that the heart is left behind. Even in the cognitive process, it is not only the intellect and the will that are involved. The affective sphere and the heart are also a necessary part of the cognitive process. Taking cognizance of this fact, we cannot limit the source of knowledge just to the intellect and the will. And this is what we referred to earlier as the duology of knowledge. Due attention must also be accorded to the affective sphere and the heart. Thus, we speak of the trilogy of knowledge. That is, the heart, the intellect and the will.

In the history of Philosophy, no philosopher has succeeded in formulating a standard definition of Philosophy. However, in the effort to define Philosophy by various philosophers, the concord among them is that Philosophy literally means "to love wisdom." Thus, love, which is the principal attitude of the human heart, lies in the very heart of the definition of Philosophy. As such, in the art of Philosophy and philosophizing the human heart is necessarily involved. How exactly is the human heart necessarily involved?

In Philosophy, the Philosophical *Eros* is of prime value. "Eros is understood as a dynamism, a tendency, an attempt to possess what one does not own, and, once possessed, to continue to desire it still more" (Congiunti, 2020, 15). In addition: "Eros is a divine force. It infuses all the earth. Yet, too often, in our culture *Eros* is equated with lust and sexual greed. But it is a more profound and sacred force than this. Eros is the light of wisdom that awakens and guides the sensuous. It is the energy that illuminates the earth. Without it, the earth would be a bare, cold planet for *Eros* is the soul of the earth" (O'Donohue, 2003, 162). It is abundantly clear that the concept of *Eros* permeates the entire fabrics of human existence. One cannot imagine a world with the absence of *Eros*. It seems everything is kick started by *Eros* in the Universe. Plato and Aristotle understood this full well and dedicated a remarkable length of time investigating on *Eros* and its role in Philosophy.

Love is identified with *Eros*. There is an intrinsic bond among *Eros*, Love and Beauty. The human heart is the abode of *Eros*. Love is felt and experienced in the human heart. The human heart is the seat of Love. The human heart is ever so often enchanted and entrapped by Beauty. Indeed, Beauty is actually like a string that keeps pulling the human heart toward Sublime realities. We realize, then, that *Eros*, Love and Beauty first of all find expression in the human heart. It is from the human heart that their impact on the entire person begins to be experienced. No wonder: "For Plato

Beauty was not a private experience of self-indulgence or pleasure. Beauty was internally related to Love and Goodness. The basic human drive is the desire for the Good. In the beginning Love was born of Beauty, 'from then on the ability to love Beauty has created all the good things that exist for gods and men'" (O'Donohue, 2003, 233). We would realize that all of this process will not be possible without the initial drive from the Philosophical *Eros*. Also, all the initial extrasensory movements take place in the human heart.

Beauty is one of the transcendental properties of being. Beauty also serves as the bridge among the transcendental properties of being. The Russian scholar, Tolstoy actually believed 'Beauty will save the world.' And it should be retained that: "The beautiful can attract us and make us happy, but its importance is inherently anti-pragmatic. In this way Beauty is a typical representative of the valuable, that is, of that which all genuine values possess, of that which characterizes them as values" (Von Hildebrand, 2016, 10-11). The concept of Beauty cannot be discussed outside the human heart. It is man who is attracted to Beauty. It is man who reflects on Beauty and it is man who experiences and savours Beauty in the heart and mind and will.

Still in line with Beauty, it was one of the central themes in the investigations and reflections of medieval thinkers. "Thomas Aquinas and others wisely recognized that Beauty was at the heart of reality; it was where truth, unity, goodness and presence came together. Without Beauty they would be separated and inclined towards destructive conflict with each other" (O'Donohue, 2003, 232). Consequently, the attraction of the heart towards Beauty is indeed an inclination towards being. Human rationality sets to work only after the human heart has been 'moved.' Without this initial stirring of the human heart, nothing seems to go on. There is definitely a bond between the human heart and the quest for philosophical knowledge. As such, human rationality is not merely the sole source of knowledge.

According to Plato and Aristotle, all Philosophy begin by wonder. Wonder is an emotional state of feeling astonishment, admiration, or surprise at something mysterious or new, or a curiosity about something. Being an emotional state, it means wonder is felt and experienced first of all in the human heart. For, the human heart is the centre of affectivity. As it were, it seems the human heart must first of all be 'moved' before any other movement occurs in the body. This implies the human heart is involved at the very beginning of the process of the acquisition of knowledge. Thus, in his *Pensées and Other Writings*, Blaise Pascal asserts that: "The heart has its reasons which reason itself does not know: we know that through countless things" (Pascal, 2008, 158). This assertion illustrates that if the human heart has its own reasons known to itself and unknown to reason, then the human heart has the capacity to think and retain its own thoughts. It is indeed a common belief in some traditions that the thoughts of the heart are deeper than the thoughts of the mind. But Western culture and Modern Science hold that what cannot be demonstrated rationally should not be admitted as true. Darwall asserts that: "But even if philosophers tend to be head rather than heart people, why don't they think and write about the heart? They wouldn't have to do that from their hearts. Moreover, it can hardly have escaped philosophers' attention that matters of the heart are central to what we human beings value most about our lives, including our lives with other animals" (Darwall, 2024, 1). The connection of the human heart is often deeper than the connection through

rationality. The human heart seems to settle directly on the essences of things. While reason follows a systematic process before grasping the essences of beings.

Consequently, Pascal holds that: “We know the truth not only by means of reason but also by means of the heart. It is through the heart that we know the first principles, and reason which has no part in this knowledge vainly tries to contest them (Pascal, *Pensées*, 158). Rather than futilely trying to contest the knowledge of the heart, reason should rather cooperate with the heart to acquire mental possession of any given reality in its essence. A healthy blend of the knowledge of the heart and the intellect and the will paints a realistic picture of the human person. The heart and the intellect and the will cannot be opposed to one another in the face of subsisting truth and intrinsic values. Truth is always truth. Truth is always one. Truth is indivisible. The truth of the heart and the truth of the mind are not opposed to one another. The difference lies in the path of arriving at that truth.

Human rationality is not the sole faculty of knowledge. no doubt, it plays a pivotal role in the acquisition of knowledge. But we must bear in mind that: “Our rationality is not simply the power to have ideas, to calculate, and to draw inferences in our mind; our rationality is essentially a disclosure of things, and even reasoning serves ultimately to show forth what things are. Reasoning comes to rest in understanding. In order to discuss rationality, therefore, we must discuss the manifestation or the truth of things as it occurs in its various ways: in perception, thinking, remembering, picturing, quotation, and the like, as well as in practical agency and deliberation, since human conduct also involves a specific manner of displaying the world” (Sokolowski, 2008, 7). It is evident from the thoughts of Sokolowski that rationality covers a broad spectrum. Rationality encompasses and engages the entire being of the knowing subject. This necessarily implies the human heart as well. Besides, it is generally held that: *The heart of education is education of the heart*.

It is not plausible to develop and inform and form and transform only the rational dimension of the human person. The entire person is always affected positively in the epistemological excursion. In this light, Socrates was absolutely right when he affirmed that knowledge is virtue and virtue is knowledge. It was hard for him to grasp the fact that a person who knows the right thing (Virtue), will posit the wrong act (Vice). Knowledge is power and virtue. Virtues are lived from the affective sphere of man with the heart as the centre. The heart cannot love what it does not know. The heart can only love what is good, true, one and beautiful. In the heart’s endeavour to know; it seeks to know the totality of being. This adventure to know by the heart is an intentional and conscious knowing. This is especially true because: “When we think of the human person, we are struck immediately by the fundamental role that knowledge plays in their lives. The unique capacity to partake in the entire world outside of us, a partaking that knowledge in all its gradations represents, from a simple perception right up to insight into a state-of-affairs, is the basis of our whole intellectual life. All our willing and striving, our loving and hating, our joys and sorrows presuppose knowledge, a consciousness of the object of willing, striving, loving, recognition of it, an understanding grasp of it (Von Hildebrand, 2021, 11 – 12). The acquired knowledge through the faculty of rationality, affects the integral person. Thus, the cognitive process necessarily involves the entire person, alongside the affective sphere and the heart.

The human heart is dominantly ‘moved’ and enriched by intrinsic values. As such, there is a propensity towards objective good by the human heart. Now, can the heart hate what it doesn’t know? Can the heart have reason for hating? If our response to both interrogations is in the affirmative, it implies there is a level of conscious within the human heart even before its cooperation with the intellect and the will in the pursuit of knowledge. There would definitely be certain issues that are better felt and experienced and understood deeper by the heart than the intellect and the will. It follows that: “If we can say that the being of persons cannot be thought of without including their capacity for knowledge, it holds also true that knowledge cannot be conceived of without spiritual persons, without their conscious being, without their intentional structure and their capacity for transcending themselves” (Von Hildebrand, 2021, 2). When it comes to the reality of transcendence, the human heart has a huge role to execute. It is quite unfortunate that Philosophy failed to have acknowledged this fact for a remarkable length of time. For instance, when it comes to the systematic classification of man’s capacities (as in *The Republic*), Plato did not grant to the human heart a rank comparable to that of rationality. He treated the human heart with scanty intellectual attention and in a dismissive manner.

For Aristotle, the intellect and the will belong to the rational dimension of man: the affective realm, and with it the heart, belong to the irrational dimension in man. That is, to the area of experience which man allegedly shares with the animals” (Von Hildebrand, 2007, 4). Such a stance dismisses completely the value and validity of Religious Experience in the Philosophy of Religion. Whereas, it is held that Religious Experience is one of the major proofs of the existence of God. It is first of all an affair of the heart and then the intellect. The intellect reflects on the experience of the heart which eventually has a grip on the whole person.

Do lower animals have the capacity to reflect on their experiences? Do their experiences have a direct impact on their hearts that can lead to a radical transformation in their being? Of course, this is definitely not the case. It is actually not possible. Thus, it stands to reason, that man’s experiences affect his entire being and alters his mode of being; intellectually and morally. They are not limited merely to the sentimental dimension of himself. Nor can these experiences be understood and interpreted solely from the point of view of rationality. For, it must be observed that: “Human emotions and experiences are layers of biology, biography, behaviour, and backstory (Brown, 2021, xxix). Given this value of human emotions and experiences, they cannot be treated in a trivial manner on the basis that they are not directly flowing from human rationality.

The human heart is the seat of emotions. These emotions do affect the integral person: his mood and operations as well as his spiritual, intellectual, psychological and social life. For this reason, it is unwise and imprudent to treat our emotions in a light hearted fashion. Human emotions and experiences remain a major source of self-knowledge and a window into the interiority of the person. That is, the heart and the soul and the spirit of the person. Rationality doesn’t cover such a scope. But the human heart does. In fact, the sphere of operation of the human heart is far broader than that of rationality. Consequently, in the act of cooperating with the heart, rationality only gets more equipped for its function.

Philosophical knowledge aims at knowing the deepest causes and essences of things. It takes into consideration their place and function and meaning in the Universe. On the strength of this: “The

philosophical posing of questions aims at a participation in being that is indescribably deeper and more intimately related to eternity. The philosophical Eros that permeates the Platonic dialogues and in a special way the works of St. Augustine, aims at being received into the Kingdom of truth as such. This is the reason for the solemnity and the ardour characteristic of striving for true philosophical knowledge" (Von Hildebrand, 2021, 210). As mentioned earlier, the heart is deeply involved in this process.

In his Confessions, book one, paragraph two, Augustine writes: "You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you" (Augustine, 1997, 19). The restlessness of the heart implies a certain degree of consciousness on the part of the heart. It is the consciousness of a privation. It is the consciousness of the absence of a necessary and subsisting good. Otherwise, the heart will not be restless. It will be morally and cognitively neutral or indifferent to reality. As such, the heart will simply wait to be guided and directed by the intellect and the will. But the heart is conscious of its restlessness without enlightenment from rationality or the will. The restlessness of the human heart keeps it ever searching and seeking for meaning and that which will definitively satisfy and keep it in a state of perfect tranquillity. This is convincing enough to let us know that the heart shares in the capacity of rationality to know things.

The questions of Philosophy are primarily of a deeper and much more universal importance for man than those of the other sciences. We may simply bring to mind metaphysics, ethics, philosophy of community, philosophy of law, and, above all, natural theology. All these disciplines have a connection with the human heart. That is why in many aspects, Philosophy is much closer to life than all the other sciences. It is for this reason, too, that we can speak of deliberative dialogue wherever people are gathered in community, sharing a common space and life together. The intrinsic and extrinsic values constituted in the human heart easily assemble people together than ideas that are the fruits of rationality. Even at that: "Ideas come from searching, from asking questions. Ideas come from the necessity to overcome divisions, to live something new. Ideas are about harmonizing our hearts, heads, and experience. Ideas are about finding unity so that we can live in reality" (Vanier, 2016, 4-5, 9). At a closer examination, there exists an intimate link between ideas and the human heart. The issues that surface from the heart engage the mind to wonder and ponder about them.

Engaged Personality and the Acquisition of Knowledge

In the history and evolution of human thought, rationality has always been considered the principal too for the acquisition of knowledge. Running through the period of the Enlightenment right up to the present times of Modern Science and Technology, it is not an exaggeration to state that rationality has been deified. Rationality seems to legislate on every human affair and rules the world. Apart from rationality, are there any other sources of knowledge? Rationality is not the sole source of knowledge. Perhaps, the accent placed on rationality made people not to explore other sources of knowledge. This can be traced from the childhood years of the growth, the development and the progress of many adults today. For instance, Joe Currie observes that: "We have from childhood, been taught to control them, to use our heads and not our hearts. But, like it or not, feelings have a great influence on our behaviour, so much so that some people who should know say that *We are our feelings*" (Currie, 2016, 39).

Human feelings are not felt, experienced and expressed in a vacuum. It is in the concrete world of our existence. And feelings are always connected to someone, to some value or disvalue or any object of concern to man. They are important and should be given attention. In order to further elucidate the point, we turn to the worlds of Brown. She states that: "What surprises me the most when I was growing up was how little people seemed to understand or even think about the connection between feeling, thinking, and behaviour" (Brown, 2021, xvii). Our emotions actually interfere with our thinking and behaviour. Given this truth, we cannot just dismiss our feelings or emotions as base. They affect the heart, our rationality and influence our mood and will. Yet, they reveal so much about the inner person. Thus, they are a source of self-knowledge.

In the process of the acquisition of knowledge, the knowing subject must develop an engaged personality. In this context, an engaged personality is one who has mastered the art of listening to the heart, to the intellect and to the will. Since silence is the ability to listen, it follows that an engaged personality needs silence, attention and concentration for him to effectively study and acquire knowledge. An engaged person lives in a state of unity. That is, unity with the self, with the Other, with nature and with the Absolute. All of this is not possible without Eros – Love! Sertillanges raises and answers the following question: "What is the source of this unity? Love. "Tell me what you love, I will tell you what you are." Love is the beginning of everything in us; and that starting point which is common to knowledge and practice cannot fail to make right the paths of both in a certain measure interdependent (Sertillanges, 1998, 19). *Eros – Love*, is the heart of creation.

It is the heart that has the capacity to love. It is the heart that receives, experiences and appreciates *Eros – Love*. Just as love is the heart of creation and the starting point of everything in us, (and it is the heart that loves), so, too, knowledge begins from the heart. The heart can only incline towards what is true, what is good, what is beautiful and what brings about unity or communion. Afterall, is the objective of acquiring knowledge not meant to let us live and flourish to our fullest potentials? And we can live and flourish when we live from the heart, from our rationality and from a well informed and firm will. Consequently, authentic human living is necessarily linked to the heart having a deep consciousness of reality. This can come about when man lives an engaged life.

There is, therefore, an intimate connection between the heart and attention and concentration and knowledge. It was Simone Weil who spoke about an apprenticeship in attention. Weil said: "Thus, true attention – whether to a particular problem in geometry, to the beauty of nature, to an interlocutor in conversation, or to God in prayer – always involves an element of self-denial and thus a negative dimension, the positive one being patience" (Von der Rhur, 2006, 28). Thus, for one to be engaged, the heart must let go of certain distractions and grow in discipline, patience, humility, simplicity, flexibility of the will and openness to the truth and more. In all this, discipline and humility are very fundamental. "Thus, it has been said justly: 'Humility is truth.'" (Von Hildebrand, 1997, 26). Humility is the distinctive mark of a genuine intellectual. It is the soil in which all other intellectual virtues are inseminated, nurtured and nourished to fecundity. But humility must first of all begin from the heart. A man of haughty heart easily becomes intellectually arrogant and intransigent. Thus, Weil makes us understand that: "Attention, involves a kind of patience, but also, detachment, self-denial and humility. It acts as a

counterweight to the self and its egocentric concerns, and instead focuses the soul on an object of enquiry in the spirit of love" (Von der Ruhr, 2006, 29). The acquisition of knowledge is not possible without being engaged in the enterprise. Being engaged presupposes a detachment based on the spirit of *Eros* – Love.

In the ambit of education: "The educator's most important mission, is not only the cultivation of the intellect, but the formation of character, and it is from the latter that the notion of attention derives its ethical significance" (Von der Ruhr, 2006, 29). The formation of character is linked to the heart. Within the scope of the heart, the intellect and the will are involved. The heart plays a vital role in the cognitive process. We learn to learn. The heart pulls us on stage after stage in the process. The moment the heart loses interest in the process of the acquisition of knowledge, attention and concentration drop. If this ill disposition persists, at some level concentration completely vanishes. Comprehension becomes impossible.

Knowledge influences the entire person. This is manifestly evident in the person and the life of Socrates. "That is why the image of the *dying* Socrates, a man freed by insight and reason from the fear of death, became the emblem over the portals of science, reminding all who entered of their mission: to make existence appear intelligible and consequently justified" (Nietzsche, 2003, 73). Socrates lived as an engaged personality and even now continues to enrich the world with his wisdom. He lived passionately searching for the truth. He died defending the truth. Like Socrates, Hildebrand understood that: "Disrespect for truth, when not merely a theoretical thesis, but a lived attitude, patently destroys all morality, even all reasonability and all community life. All objective norms are dissolved by this attitude of indifference toward truth; so also, is the possibility of resolving any discussion or controversy objectively; peace among individuals or nations and all truth in other persons are impossible as well. The very basis of human life is subverted" (Von Hildebrand, 2021, 8-9). The engaged personality pursues knowledge to arrive at certitude. But he goes further to concretely live this out in his being. The heart and the intellect and the will are all engaged in the process, with each having a specific role to execute. The heart doesn't interfere in the role of the intellect or the will nor does the intellect or the will meddle in the role of the heart. But all three function in a cooperative manner and assuming collective responsibility for the information of the whole man.

Human Emotions and Knowledge

Emotions are rooted in our very constitution as human beings. It is not possible to find a human being without any emotions at all. And Eduardo Bericat, a sociology professor at the University of Seville, holds that: "As human beings we can only experience life emotionally." Our emotions are intimately connected to our experiences. Just as experience is a source of knowledge, so too, our emotions are a source of profound and sound knowledge. We cannot just dismiss the fact of our emotions because we imagine that they are not directly linked to our rationality.

Our emotions hugely influence us humanly, morally, spiritually, intellectually, psychologically, culturally and socially. In fact, for Yunus Tuncel: "Emotion is a crucial dimension of human existence, a dimension still not sufficiently understood; scholars and psychologists are trying to understand it based on speculation, experience, and research. Emotions are experienced throughout our entire being, from body to soul, mind, and language. Emotions are

affected by physiological conditions that have to do with our unique bodies, psychic conditions that often remain unconscious, and cognitive conditions, too. Finally, in addition to gesturally, we express emotions linguistically" (Tuncel, 2021, 1). Human emotions definitely share a link with knowledge. There is no such thing as an 'empty' or neutral emotion. Every emotion is directed toward a subject or value or object.

Human emotions are always expressed and directed toward a concrete subject or value or object. As such, our emotions find tangible expression in being. There is need to study and master them. Since: "Without understanding how our feelings, thoughts and behaviours work together, it's almost impossible to find our way back to ourselves and each other. When we don't understand how our emotions shape our thoughts and decisions, we become disembodied from our own experiences and disconnected from each other" (Brown, 2021, xx). In order to derive knowledge from our emotions, we must first of all build an engaged personality. Without being engaged with the self, with the Other, it becomes challenging to derive knowledge from our emotions – Hence, Socrates exhorted: *Man know thyself!* The very first object of study is the knowing subject itself. This knowing subject is an emotional being and cannot be fully understood apart from his emotions. The emotions serve as a window into the soul, the heart, the mind and the will of the knowing subject. Indeed, the emotions guide one into the interiority or the inner chamber of the person. Our world of emotions is a really complex one. No two persons manifest emotions in exactly the same manner. The expression or the communication of emotions is one of those areas that reveals our uniqueness and difference as human beings.

Thus, various disciplines have embarked in the study of emotions. It is affirmed that: "The matter is complex because human emotions and experiences are studied from the perspective of philosophy, sociology, psychology, neuroscience, medicine, and mental health (to name just a few disciplines), and research topics include studies of facial expression, physiology, brain imaging, genetics, personality traits, cross-cultural analysis, and more" (Brown, 2021, xxiii-xxiv). Through the study of emotions, we are able to derive objective knowledge about a person. Also, our emotions are very important as far as the acquisition of knowledge is concerned: "They can tell us which situations to engage with and which to avoid. They can be beacons, not barriers, helping us identify what we most care about and motivating us to make positive changes. In addition, our emotions help us to make sense of our surroundings and provide needed input for managing ourselves and responding effectively to others" (Brown, 2021, xxii). The ability to master and manage our emotions is the fruit of deep knowledge of the self. It gradually leads to affective maturity.

Affective maturity is the capacity to blend the thoughts of the heart and the intellect as well as the desires of the will into a meaningful whole. In this light: "One can submit one's emotions to one's cognitive process, which entails reflecting, questioning, and thinking so that the problems of our raw emotion are exposed and can be transformed into higher emotions. In the spirit of Hume's scepticism, it must be noted that one cannot overcome problematic emotion solely through cognitive functions. Such a position will neglect the psychosomatic condition of such emotions. If one has dealt with these deeper conditions, one can also rely on the resources and powers of one's mind and think through difficult emotions. Thinking, arriving at conclusions, or having insights into one's self, can also be cathartic and help us overcome our

emotional problems” (Tuncel, 2021, 21-22). It is in this light that Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (book I), asserts that an excellent person knows how to transform low arousal or negative emotions into high arousal or positive ones.

Our emotions modify our bodies and put us through mood shifts. This naturally affects the intellect and the will. In brief, the integral person. We mentioned earlier that human emotions are a complex affair. It is of value to study them and know how to manage them creatively and constructively. Hence, “Control of emotions has been a hotly contested topic among philosophers. The Stoics believed that a good Stoic can and should control his emotions. This is easier said than done. First, the Stoics did not make a distinction among the multitude of emotions (they included only a few); second, how desirable is it to be controlling emotions at all times and in every context? And what does control mean? In psychoanalysis, control could be indicative of repression or a strong defence mechanism, which keeps the emotions hidden and repressed. There are times when we need to be fearful so that we can survive; there are other times when we need to feel the force of ambition so that we can strive for higher goals. Spinoza’s point and his acceptance of mind/body integration are far more insightful than the Stoic position” (Tuncel, 2021, 27-28). Therefore, it makes sense to master and manage one’s emotions through objective and frank conversation with the self. The Stoic tendency to pretend to keep emotions under control doesn’t really serve a useful purpose.

Our emotions cannot be radically dissociated from our rationality. Rather, there is a necessary link between human emotions and human rationality. We mentioned above that we cannot have an ‘empty’ or neutral emotion. Our emotions are always intentional and purposeful. In this light: “Much of Spinoza’s theory of affect can be read as a response to Descartes’ theory of passions. Descartes treats passion as wilful activities of the mind. In his *Passions of the Soul*, Descartes considers the body to be passive (the receptor of emotion, nonetheless) and the mind to be active and the main source of all emotions. Therefore, his remedy to the problem of emotional disturbance is the mental control of emotions similar to what the stoics proposed” (Tuncel, 2021, 29). The human person always experiences the self as a composite being. Consequently, he must be understood in his totality. We cannot limit the comprehension of the human person just to his rationality. Still, we cannot reduce man merely to sentiments and sympathy as Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, advocates that emotions really assist us to gain knowledge of ourselves and of the other person. On account of this, there is need to give due attention to our emotions and that of others. “Our ability to accurately recognize and label emotions is often referred to as *emotional granularity*” (Brown, 2021, xxii). Emotional granularity is the capacity to recognize, differentiate, and articulate emotional experiences; moving beyond regulation, resilience, improved social connections and better overall mental health. In this light, the emotions bring us to a commendable degree of self-knowledge and knowledge of the other person. Hence: “Feelings have both a collective and individual dimension. Ultimately, a human being experiences a feeling only in a unique way; no one else can feel that very feeling. It is not even possible that someone close to that person (e.g. A family member or lover) can feel it in the same way, although this may contradict conventional wisdom. It is, however, possible that that other person feels a similar or an approximate feeling, but still, in his or her own way” (Tuncel, 2022, 6-7). Thus, human emotions assist us in knowing the uniqueness of every

person and how they communicate that uniqueness through the expression of emotions.

Finally, emotions are intimately connected with values; especially intrinsic values. While there is no such thing as collective emotions, however, there are fundamental values which define us as human beings. Consequently: “We feel emotions according to the values we have or according to what we value; if we have high self-esteem and someone slights us, we get angry. If we prize material wealth highly, we become envious of those who have such wealth. If retribution is the norm in our culture and wrongful act is done to us or to someone close to us, we feel vengeful. Values are what human being create overtime; therefore, insofar as emotions are shaped by values, they are subject to socio-cultural, historic emotions” (Tuncel, 2021, 46). And we must observe that there basically two major types of values. These are intrinsic and extrinsic or conventional values. with the emotions being linked to values, they reveal to us the quality of the personality of a person. The response of the person can be termed a value-response or just an instinctive and mechanical reaction. When it is a value-response, the person reveals affective maturity. But unfortunately: “When Aristotle opposes the irrational part of man, including appetites, urges, and passions, to the rational part, embracing knowledge and will, he leaves no place for affective responses. In confusing them with passions and appetites, he fails to do justice to the paramount role that they play in ethics, because he regards them only as an object for self-control” (Von Hildebrand, 2020, 214). From this insight, it is evident that value-responses or affective responses possess both a spiritual and a rational character. They cannot be uncritically categorized with passions and emotions.

Conclusion

Apart from human rationality, the affective sphere with the human heart as the centre, is a source of objective knowledge. We have endeavoured to analyse and explain this in the paragraphs above. Also, the brand of personality we form for ourselves enables us to readily and effectively embark on the cognitive process. It takes into consideration discipline, humility, attention and concentration. Still, we also made it evident that human emotions do share a link with the process of acquiring knowledge. Knowledge; no doubt, brings about intellectual conversion. It also brings about moral conversion. Intellectual conversion leads to greater freedom, greater openness to the truth, a positive shift in perspective and convictions, greater openness to novelty, the receptivity to new ideas and the courage to take initiatives, to be creative and inventive. The world is built by brilliant and enduring ideas. These ideas are not the fruits of our rationality alone. There are other sources of ideas; and thus, other sources of knowledge. Ideas do flow from the common treasury of our lived and shared experiences in life. We need intellectual humility to admit this fact. The mental possession of objective, pure and sound knowledge does not stay at the level of rationality. It permeates the entire being of the person. From the epistemological point of view then, the knowledge we acquire leads to transformation. This transformation takes place in the heart. The only way to fix the world is to fix the heart of man. This is achieved when we make use of wisdom of the heart, wisdom of the mind and a well guided will.

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