

## FORMING THE MIND

# STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

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Volume 5

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# FORMING THE MIND

Essays on the Internal Senses  
and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna  
to the Medical Enlightenment

*Edited by*

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## PREFACE

In the beginning of the autumn of 2002, I arranged together with Olaf Pluta a conference in Uppsala with the same title as this book. The conference was motivated first of all by the general thesis that medieval and early modern philosophy (that is, philosophy between 1100 and 1700) should be seen as a continuous tradition and not as two separate periods. We then wanted to apply this thesis to the soul and its relation to and function in a body and see how the discussion had developed in the tradition. We did, however, not want to be too narrow and only look at the Western philosophical tradition. We therefore also invited scholars working on Arabic and Hebrew philosophy in this period, and also scholars working on the medical tradition. In general we manage to create a very good atmosphere of cross-fertilization between these groups of scholars that do not often get a chance to talk to each other. In this book, I now publish a selection of reworked papers from this conference. I hope that the reader will get the sense of enthusiasm and importance of this project that I felt both during the conference and in finalizing this book.

I would first of all like to thank Olaf Pluta for helping me organize the conference. I am furthermore indebted to the Department of Philosophy at Uppsala University and the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Natural Philosophy at Radboud University, Nijmegen, for their help in organizing and finalizing the conference. The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (grant nr. 245-20-001), the Swedish Research Council and the Wenner-Gren Foundation also generously supported me with funds for which I am very grateful.

Henrik Lagerlund, London, ON, 2006.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION: THE MIND/BODY PROBLEM AND LATE MEDIEVAL CONCEPTIONS OF THE SOUL

Henrik Lagerlund

### 1.1.

Contemporary philosophy of mind or philosophical psychology traces its origin almost exclusively to René Descartes. Almost all textbooks in philosophy of mind start with a discussion of Descartes. A legitimate question is, of course: Why? The answer is complicated, but one reason is that contemporary philosophy of mind is almost exclusively concerned with the so called mind/body problem, i.e., the problem how meaning, rationality, and conscious experience are related to a physical world, and they think Descartes was first to formulate this problem.

In a lot of ways the problem I just described, as the mind/body problem, was not *the* problem Descartes formulated, but it is, of course, still true that there is a problem or perhaps a set of related problems of how mind and body are related for Descartes. This set of related problems is what I will call the mind/body problem and in the course of this introduction I will try to show that this set of problems, or at least some of the problems in this set, can be traced back to the introduction and Latinization of Arabic thought and Aristotelian philosophy in the twelfth century. It was with the translation of Avicenna's *De anima* and the subsequent translation and discussion of Aristotle's *De anima* and Averroes' commentaries that the discussion began that continues today.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Lagerlund (2007) for further discussions of the importance of Avicenna for subsequent philosophical psychology.

The mind/body problem that was a concern in the Middle Ages and in early modern times is, however, as indicated not the same problem that occupy contemporary philosophers. Today we want to explain how phenomena like consciousness and intentionality are possible in a material (or physical) world. The problem that faced medieval philosophers and Descartes was rather the opposite, that is, how can matter at all have an effect on the mental (non-material) and how can such a noble thing as a mind be united to a material body. The reason this was problematic was because material things and minds (or souls) was thought to be far apart on the great chain of being. Matter was considered to be lower on this chain than the mind or the soul. The mind/body or soul/body problem for medieval thinkers was thus foremost a metaphysical problem and to a much lesser extent an epistemological and a semantical problem. This is not to say that they were not concerned with epistemological and semantical problems—on the contrary—but the mind/body problem was not such a problem.

It is often unclear in discussions of the history of the mind/body problem what the problem actually is or rather was. The reason for this is, I think, that the problem can be spelled out in different ways and also that there are, as already indicated, in fact several mind/body problems. One problem is the so-called interaction problem, that is, how can such different things (or substances) as the mind and the body have an efficient causal effect on each other. Another problem is the unification problem, that is, how can the mind and the body, which can exist apart from each other, be united into one single thing; a human being. A third way of stating the problem has to do with the existence of sensations or sense ideas in the mind, which means that the problem is really how to explain in what way there can be sensations in a mind without a body. A fourth mind/body problem, which is quite neglected and which the present book does not deal with at all, but which is very important, is how final and efficient causality can be combined. How do we reconcile the material and animal world, which is governed by efficient causality, with the mental and divine world, which is governed by final causality.

This problem it seems to me, as the other three mentioned, grows out of the later Middle Ages. It starts primarily in the early fourteenth century when thinkers like William Ockham and John Buridan start to flirt with a mechanized view of the material world. They explicitly argue that efficient causality is all that is needed to explain movement and change in nature, and hence they limit final causality to immaterial object like minds, angels and God. From their argumentation a mind/body problem follows, namely how is human action and free will, which is governed by final causality, incorporated into a world, which otherwise is solely explicable by efficient

causality. This problem can be traced from the early fourteenth century into early modern times and is a major concern for Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz.

The essays in this book do not all deal with the mind/body problem but they all in one way or another treat problems associated with the mind or the soul and its relation to and functions in a body. They give samples from a long tradition starting with Avicenna and continuing up to and past Descartes. This incredibly rich tradition has been far too little discussed and its importance for modern philosophy of mind and the tradition following Descartes has not been appreciated enough. This book tries to fill in some of these gaps.<sup>2</sup>

In this introduction, I will give a brief account of the conceptions of the soul in the Middle Ages and up to Descartes. Given the similarity in conceptions of mind or soul, it is clear that the same problems associated with these conceptions will appear for the medieval thinkers as well. I will end this introduction with a short summary of the papers collected in this book.

## 1.2.

The word for ‘mind’ used by Descartes in the *Meditations* is the Latin ‘mens’ and the French ‘esprit’. In other works he also uses ‘anima’ or ‘ame’, and seems to mean the same thing. The Latin tradition that Descartes depends on uses both these words. ‘Anima’ is of course the main word used and it is usually translated with ‘soul’. According to the standard Aristotelian divisions, it is divided into the vegetative, sensitive and intellective. These are either functions, powers or parts of one soul, or they are divisions of different souls in one or several beings. For example, plants have vegetative souls, animals have one soul that is both vegetative and sensitive or two souls one of which is vegetative and the other sensitive, and humans have one soul with have all three powers or three souls (some thought humans have two souls one that is vegetative and sensitive and another that is intellective). The Latin word ‘mens’ was almost always reserved for the intellective soul or the intellective part of the soul.

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<sup>2</sup> Wright and Potter (2000) present a collection of articles on the history of the mind/body problem from Antiquity to the Enlightenment, but they have basically skipped the whole Middle Ages, which is unfortunate. The other collection of articles on the history of the mind/body problem is Crane and Patterson (2000), but it only contains one article on the whole Middle Ages.

All mental activity or all content of the mind, that is, all ideas, are conscious processes for Descartes, and his use of ‘mens’ or ‘esprit’ therefore correspond rather well to what most medieval philosophers called the intellective soul or for that matter ‘mens’. The processes covered by the vegetative and the sensitive souls Descartes pushed into the body—although the passions discussed in *The Passions of the Soul* are hard to classify and a matter of controversy.<sup>3</sup>

For Aristotle and a long Aristotelian tradition the soul is the principle of life. All living things have a soul. The definition of the soul given in Aristotle’s *De anima* is ‘the form of a natural body which potentially has life’ (II.1, 412a). The soul is hence the form of a body. One of the reasons Descartes wanted to use the term ‘mind’ instead of ‘soul’ was that he wanted to reject the view of the soul as a principle of life. Souls are not essential to living things, since only humans have souls or minds, according to Descartes.

While rejecting a certain kind of Aristotelianism, Descartes is embracing a notion of the soul that traditionally has been associated with Plato and Augustine. For Augustine the mind or soul is not primarily a principle of life, but rather a thinking thing or entity. As such it is incorporeal, inextended and indivisible. It has become a common place in the contemporary commentary literature that Descartes is indebted to Augustine for his conception of the mind.<sup>4</sup>

Terminologically Augustine is very close to Descartes as well. Augustine uses both ‘anima’ and ‘mens’ to refer to the soul and the mind, but sometimes he also uses the masculine word ‘animus’ to refer to the rational capacities of the soul. He seems not to draw a sharp distinction between these three different terms. The term ‘animus’ was used in the later Middle Ages as well, but it had as ‘mens’ not a wide spread usage, and when used it always referred to the rational part of the soul.

Stemming from respectively Plato and Aristotle two conflicting conceptions of the soul thus made its way into the Middle Ages, both with very respectable authorities standing behind them, that is, Augustine on the one hand and Aristotle himself on the other. Even though these conceptions of the soul are clearly separated by the tradition they were not so clearly separated by the later medieval tradition. The scholastic tradition tended to mix these conceptions of the soul and sometimes emphasize one more than the other, but they never clearly separated them from each other. One of

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<sup>3</sup> See Alanen (2003), Ch. 6.

<sup>4</sup> See for example Menn (1998) and Matthews (2000).

the main reasons for this was Avicenna. He sought in dealing with the soul to combine the thinking of Plato and Aristotle, which fused these traditions together in a way that was hard to separate.

In the part of the *Shifâ'* which came to be viewed as a commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* during a short period of the later Middle Ages, Avicenna draws a distinction between the study of the soul in itself, which belongs to metaphysics, and the study of the soul as the principle of animation, which belongs to natural philosophy.<sup>5</sup> The same soul can thus be taken in these two ways, that is, it is both a self-subsisting entity as Plato, Augustine and Descartes argue and it is a principle of life as Aristotle argues. These two aspects of the soul pull in different direction, namely according to the first aspect the soul is an independent thing and according to the second the soul is essentially united to a body that it animates. Can the soul consistently have both of them? I have argued that it cannot and it is this that give rise to two of the classical problems often referred to as the problems of dualism, namely the unification and interaction problems of soul/mind and body.<sup>6</sup>

All of this is complicated further by demands on late medieval philosophers to account for the immortality of the human soul. According to the well-known Christian dogma of immortality, the soul lives on after the body has died. This strongly suggests that the soul must be able to be taken by itself as a self-subsisting entity.

Despite the tendency to conflate the two traditions outlined above they can still be traced historically in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Augustinian tradition was influential among foremost Franciscan thinkers, and although they were certainly not anti-Aristotelian they tended to emphasize the soul's self-subsistence, and hence they emphasize the Augustinian conception of the soul. The Aristotelian tradition was through Aquinas predominant among Dominican thinkers.

Most major medieval thinkers seem, however, to have held that the soul is a substantial form of a body. This is not Aristotle's terminology in *De anima* but it was the interpretation presented by Averroes,<sup>7</sup> and for that reason it became official Aristotelian terminology in the later Middle Ages. Thinkers entrenched in the Augustinian tradition like John Peter Olivi, John Duns Scotus and William Ockham used the same terminology.

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<sup>5</sup> For the references see Lagerlund (2004). Many of the points made in this introduction can be found in the same article.

<sup>6</sup> See Lagerlund (2004).

<sup>7</sup> See Averroes Cordubensis, *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*, II, 5, 134–135.

Aquinas argued that the soul is a substantial form and that each living thing has one soul. Every substance in the sub-lunar world is composed of prime matter and substantial form, according to him. Prime matter is pure potentiality and a substantial form brings actuality to it. Animals as well as humans are composed in this way; however, their substantial forms are different. There is a sort of hierarchy among forms, according to Aquinas. The forms of lower bodies are closest to matter and possess no other operations than activity and passivity. Above these forms are the forms of compounds, which have operations derived from the celestial bodies. Above these are plants and then comes the souls of animals and humans.

A soul furthermore has an incomplete nature, according to Aquinas, and is only a proper substance in union with a body. It can, however, exist separated from a body, but it cannot function separated from a body. It has a natural inclination to be completed and unified with a body. In *Summa Theologiae* he writes:

It belongs to the very essence of the soul to be united to the body, just as it belongs to a light body to float upwards. And just as a light body remains light when forcibly displaced, and thus retains its aptitude and tendency for the location proper to it, in the same way the human soul, remaining in its own existence after separation from the body, has a natural aptitude and a natural tendency to embodiment.<sup>8</sup>

The substantial or essential union of the body and the soul is explained in this way by Aquinas, that is, the soul has this natural inclination to be united to a body or to some matter in order to complete or fulfill its nature. All this seems straightforward, but despite what he himself claims the soul's union with the body cannot in fact be essential. If the soul can exist apart from the body, the union must be accidental. The possibility of separation without destruction destroys the essential connection between soul and body. Aquinas cannot have it both ways. It seems therefore not possible to hold on Aquinas' view that the soul is self-subsistent and essentially inherent in matter. It is, therefore, not clear in what sense the soul and the body or the informed matter is one thing. To account for immortality Aquinas has to allow for the human soul to be able to exist separated from the body, but by doing this he also destroys the essential unity of the soul with the body. The two perspectives on the human soul derived from Avicenna thus comes in explicit tension in Aquinas' thinking on the soul.

The view of the soul as a single substantial form of the body defended by Aquinas was not the view of the majority. In fact it was considered

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<sup>8</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.76, 1.ad 6.

to be heretical and condemned by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Kilwardby, in the famous, 1277, condemnation in England. The opposing view, which was considered to be the position of faith, argued first of all that matter must have some actuality and cannot, as Aquinas argued, be purely potential, and secondly that at least living composite substances have many substantial forms. The view that living beings are made up of several substantial forms have come to be associated with Franciscan thinkers, such as Scotus and Ockham, and it is often referred to as the Franciscan view.

The arguments for the plurality of substantial forms in composite beings were taken from both philosophy and theology. In his *Quodlibetal Questions*, Ockham argues that the sensitive soul is distinct from the intellectual soul and that the corporeal form of the body is distinct from the sensitive soul. There is, however, no distinction between a vegetative soul and the sensitive soul in animals and humans.

Ockham gives three arguments for a real distinction between the sensitive soul and the intellectual soul. The first argument focuses on the impossibility of contrary appetites in a soul.

It is impossible that contraries should exist simultaneously in the same subject. But an act of desiring something and an act of spurning that same thing are contraries in the same subject. Therefore, if they exist simultaneously in reality, they do not exist in the same subject. But it is manifest that they exist simultaneously in a human being, since a human being spurns by his intellectual appetite the very same thing he desires by his sentient appetite.<sup>9</sup>

Since there can be contrary appetites in a human being, these appetites must be in separate souls.

The second argument has to do with sensation. He argues that sensations exist subjectively in the soul, but no sensation can exist subjectively in the intellectual soul, since a separate soul would then, by God's absolute power, be able to sense, and this is absurd, according to Ockham. In the third argument he points to the problem that what is numerically the same cannot be both extended and non-extended, both material and immaterial. The sensitive soul is extended and material, since it exists as whole in the whole body and as part in each part of the body, while the intellectual soul is non-extended and immaterial, since it exists as whole in the whole body and as whole in each part of the body, and from this it follows that they must be really distinct.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See William of Ockham, *Quodlibetal Questions*, II, q. 10, 132–133.

<sup>10</sup> See *ibid.*, 133–134.



To claim that there is a real distinction between the sensitive and intellective souls means for Ockham that they can exist apart from each other. A consequence of this is that the union seems to be accidental, and furthermore, how do we know that the intellect is a form at all and not a universal intellect as Averroes' argues in his long commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*.<sup>11</sup> Ockham is well aware of this problem and addresses it in q. 10 of the first quodlibet. He there poses the question whether it can be demonstrated that the intellective soul is the form of the body and writes the following:

The other [difficulty] is whether one can know evidently through reason or through experience that we do understand, taken 'understand' to mean an act proper to an immaterial substance of the sort the intellective soul is claimed to be, i.e., a substance that is ingenerable and incorruptible and that exists as a whole in the whole body and as a whole in each part of the body. [...] As regards the second difficulty, I claim that if by 'intellective soul' one means an immaterial and incorruptible form that exists as a whole in the whole body and as a whole in each part, then one cannot evidently know either through reason or through experience that (i) such a form exists in us, or that (ii) an act of understanding proper to such a substance exists in us, or that (iii) such a soul is the form of the body. [...] Rather, we merely believe these three things [by faith].<sup>12</sup>

Although he recognizes the problem and tries to discuss it to some extent, he also realizes that he cannot solve it satisfactory using natural reason alone. The problem of the intellective soul's union with the body, therefore, becomes something we must believe by faith.

Ockham will have even more difficulties explaining the unification of the intellective soul with the body informed by the sensitive soul than Aquinas due to the sharp distinction he draws between them. His dualism is starting to look a lot like Augustine's and for that matter also Descartes'. The struggle to tell a philosophically and theologically credible story of the mind/body or soul/body relation was, as can be seen from this, going on throughout the whole later Middle Ages and was certainly not new with Descartes.

In the middle of the fourteenth century discussions about the nature of the soul and its relation to the body takes a somewhat different turn in the writings of John Buridan. He agrees with Ockham on basic ontology and metaphysics, but at the same time he wants to give an interpretation of Aristotle. Buridan thus completely reinterprets Aristotle's texts

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<sup>11</sup> See *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*: II, 7, p. 138, and II, 32, p. 178.

<sup>12</sup> See *Quodlibetal Questions*: I, q. 10, 56.

in an Ockhamistic and non-Thomistic fashion. He is very sensitive to the preceding struggles to formulate an acceptable view of the nature of the soul and its relation to the body and thus takes into account much of the previous discussion when formulating his own position. He lays down three positions about the soul and its relation to the body that he thinks are the only credible alternatives. They are what he calls (i) the Alexandrian, (ii) the Averroistic, and (iii) the Christian positions.

The first position is attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias.

Alexander said that the human intellect is a general and corruptible material form, derived from a material potentiality, and materially extended, just like the soul of a cow or a dog, and it does not remain after death.<sup>13</sup>

The second position is Averroes'. The intellect is, according to him, immaterial, not derived from a material potentiality, does not inhere in matter and is not extended. The intellect is not generated and not corruptible, and, furthermore, there is only one intellect common to all humans.<sup>14</sup>

The third position he lists is what he calls the position of faith.

The third opinion is the truth of our faith, which we must firmly believe, namely, that the human intellect is the substantial form of the body inhering in the human body, but not derived from material potentiality, nor materially extended, and therefore, not naturally generated or corruptible.<sup>15</sup>

This is the position Buridan will go on to argue for and claim to be his own view. (See further Zupko's article in this book.)

Buridan seems to think that the third position, his own official position, has no answer to give to the problem of the souls unification and interaction

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<sup>13</sup> 'Dicebat Alexander quod intellectus humanus est forma materialis generabilis et corruptibilis, educta de potentia materiae, et extensa extensione materiae, sicut anima bovis aut anima canis, et non est manens post mortem.' (Zupko 1989, q. 3, 22.)

<sup>14</sup> 'Alia fuit opinio Averrois quod intellectus humanus est forma immaterialis, et ingentia et incorruptibilis, et sic non est educta de potentia materiae, nec extensa, immo nec multiplicat multiplicatione hominum, sed quod est unicus intellectus omnibus hominibus, scilicet quo ego intelligo, quo tu intelligis, et sic de aliis. Ideo non est forma inhaerens corpori. Unde ipse imaginatur quod sicut deus est toto mundo et cuilibet parti eius praesens et indistans, et tamen nec mundo nec alicui parti mundi inhaerens, sic ille intellectus se habet ad homines: scilicet quod nulli inhaeret, sed cuilibet indistanter assistit, licet sit indivisibilis.' (Ibid.)

<sup>15</sup> 'Tertia opinio est veritas fidei nostrae, quae firmiter debemus credere: scilicet quod intellectus humanus est forma substantialis corporis inhaerens corpori humano, sed non educta de potentis materiae, nec extensa de eius extensione, ideo non naturaliter genita nec corruptibilis.' (Ibid., 22–23.)

with its body other than that it is miraculous.<sup>16</sup> If only natural reason is taken into account, however, and these problems are confronted, then we are stuck with a choice between the first and the second position advocated by respectively Alexander and Averroes. Buridan himself is much more inclined to accept Alexander's position than Averroes', but he does not commit himself to this position. (See Zupko's article in this book.) It was, however, a very influential position, which had several defenders later on in the fifteenth century (see Pluta's article in this book) and a fully worked out position along these lines can be found in Hobbes.

As is quite clear from Buridan's discussion of Ockham's arguments for why one must assume a real distinction between the intellectual soul and the sensitive soul, mentioned above, that he is willing to allow for sensations in the intellectual soul.<sup>17</sup> An even clearer example of this can be found in John Mair's discussions of the soul in his *Sentences*-commentary. Mair, who lived well over a century after Buridan, is nonetheless influenced by his Parisian predecessor. Mair adheres to the view Buridan calls the opinion of the Christian faith and according to him there is only 'one form in a human being'.<sup>18</sup> This is an immaterial substantial form, which directly inheres in matter. Matter has by itself an individual existence and no corporeal forms, as Scotus and Ockham had argued, are hence needed, according to Mair. Animal souls are extended and generated directly from matter itself.<sup>19</sup>

Although Mair does not accept Ockham's distinction between the intellectual and the sensitive soul, he nonetheless accepts Ockham's distinction between two intuitive cognitions, that is, the distinction between sensitive and intellectual intuitive cognitions. He does, however, not see a problem with having two cognitions in one soul, since he writes that:

For confirmation I say that the love by which I esteem Socrates in present is an intuitive cognition, and together with this [cognition] I have a sensitive intuitive cognition. And it is not unsuitable to have several [cognitions] of the same object in the same subject as it is believed to be two cognitions in the intellectual soul of which one is called a sensitive and the other an intellectual [cognition], which are distinguished in kind.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See Lagerlund (2004).

<sup>17</sup> See also Lagerlund (2004), 379.

<sup>18</sup> 'In homine est sola una forma, et homo est perfectissimum animalium' (*Sententia*, II, d. 15, q. 1, fol. xlvivb.).

<sup>19</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> 'Ad confirmationem dico quod dilectio qua diligo Socratem in presentia est notitia intuitiva, et cum hoc habeo notitiam intuitivam sensitivam; nec hoc inconvenit

In this passage Mair says explicitly that he thinks that there are sensitive cognitions in the intellect. Ockham thought this position was impossible, but following Buridan and holding a very strong substance dualism between the body and a single soul Mair draws the consequence that there are sensations or sensitive intuitive cognitions in the intellective and immaterial soul. The position advocated by Buridan and Mair is virtually identical to Descartes' and differs only in terminology; particularly since it is possible on their view to think that there are, by God's absolute power, sensations in a separated soul.<sup>21</sup>

The three positions outlined by Buridan and mentioned above set the stage for the discussions about the soul or the mind in the centuries after Buridan, as we have seen in John Mair. Hence, when Pietro Pomponazzi in the beginning of the sixteenth century writes his famous *De immortalitate animae* it is not surprising that he has the same three positions in mind. And when he writes: 'For it seems to me that no natural reasons can be brought forth proving that the soul is immortal, and still less any proving that the soul is mortal, as very many scholars who hold it immortal declare',<sup>22</sup> he is only repeating what Buridan had said more than a century earlier.

It is in the wake of the decree of the Fifth Lateran Council, namely that philosophers in their teachings must prove the immortality of the soul, and the subsequent so-called Pomponazzi affair, that Descartes is writing. The decree of the Fifth Lateran Council was repeated and strengthened by following Lateran Councils. In the *Dedicatory letter to the Sorbonne*, which is published together with the *Meditations*, Descartes writes that: 'the eighth session [of] the Lateran Council held under Leo X condemned those who take this position [that is, those who denied personal immortality], and expressly enjoined Christian philosophers to refute their arguments and use all their powers to establish the truth; so I have not hesitated to attempt this task as well.' (AT VII, 3; CSM II, 4.) Descartes is thus very much aware of the history that precedes him and he seems to think that he is involved in the same project, that is, in finding a philosophically and theologically acceptable position on the human soul/mind and its relation to the body.<sup>23</sup>

One might argue that if this is Descartes' aim he is entirely unsuccessful given the famous problems his account gives rise to. Descartes' final position

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plusquam de eodem obiecto habere in eodem subiecto puta in anima intellectiva duas notitias quarum una vocatur sensitive et altera intellective, que specie distinguuntur.' (Ibid, I, d. 1, q. 11, fol. xviiiivb.)

<sup>21</sup> For the same view in Adam Wodeham see Karger (2004), 228.

<sup>22</sup> See Pomponazzi (1948), 377.

<sup>23</sup> See Fowler (1999) for a discussion of Descartes on immortality.

on the mind and its relation to the body is, however, very much under debate, but the trend seems to be that he was not an advocate of such a strong dualism as we traditionally have been lead to believe.<sup>24</sup> (See Browns article in the present book.) He would, according to some interpretations, have given up the immortality doctrine and the notion of the soul's self-subsistence to be able to explain the essential union of the mind and the body.

Even though the details of the mind/body problem are not the same throughout the period between the twelfth and the seventeenth century, this tradition still circle around the same problem. It seems to me that it was Avicenna's attempt to mix two conceptions of the soul that brought up the problems to the surface, and that certain Christian doctrines added to these problems. Contemporary philosophy of mind should not seek its origin in Descartes' *Meditations*, but much earlier in the period covered by this book.

### 1.3.

In her article 'Memory and Recollection in Ibn Sînâ's and Ibn Rushd's Philosophical Texts Translated into Latin in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries: A Perspective on the Doctrine of the Internal Senses in Arabic Psychological Science', Carla Di Martino discusses the place of memory in some very influential Arabic psychological texts. Together with Augustine and Aristotle, Avicenna and Averroes are the main sources for Western philosophical psychology. Their discussions of memory have been very little studied, however, and Di Martino highlights in her article the special status these authors gave to the faculty of memory. In humans, it is a faculty that bridges the gap between the sensory faculties and the intellective faculty, since it takes a halfway position and requires a unity with the intellect in order to be able to store the images represented together with the intentions accompanying them.

Rega Wood continues the discussion of the internal senses in her article 'Imagination and Experience in the Sensory Soul and Beyond: Richard Rufus, Roger Bacon and Their Contemporaries'. She presents a comparative and comprehensive study of Rufus and Bacon on the internal senses. Rufus is most likely the first commentator of Aristotle in the Western Middle Ages, but although Rufus is a commentator of Aristotle, his psychology seems more Augustinian and Bacon seems to be a devoted follower of Avicenna as far as psychology is concerned, Wood argues. The debate between Rufus

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<sup>24</sup> See Almog (2002) and Alanen (2003), Ch. 2.

and Bacon on the internal senses seems to have set the stage for much of the later discussions about this topic.

In his article 'The Soul as an Entity', Mikko Yrjönsuuri wants to highlight some medieval thinkers conception of the mind/body or soul/body distinction. He discusses the positions of Dante Alighieri, Thomas Aquinas and Peter Olivi. As Yrjönsuuri portrays Aquinas, he holds that humans are embodied animals whose souls can exist apart from their bodies, but that the disembodied souls lack the very thing that makes them human souls. This is not at all the picture Dante paints of disembodied souls in the *Divine Comedy*. These souls are much more like Aquinas embodied souls. Yrjönsuuri therefore argues that the view of the nature of the soul found in the *Divine Comedy* is not at all Aquinas', but Olivi's. Olivi is influenced by Augustine and on this picture the human soul is a separate entity or substance who's essential feature is a self-reflexive consciousness. While the soul is primarily embodied for Aquinas, it is primarily disembodied for Olivi and Dante.

The theme of self-reflexivity and self-knowledge of the intellectual soul is carried on by Christopher J. Martin in his paper 'Self-Knowledge and Cognitive Assent: Thomas Aquinas and Peter Olivi on the KK-Thesis'. He discusses the views of the two antagonists Aquinas and Olivi. Aquinas defends the Aristotelian view that the soul does not have direct access to it self. It only has access to itself indirectly through its thoughts of something else. Olivi on the other hand argues for the Augustinian view of the soul on which it directly and primarily knows itself.

In his article 'The Invention of Singular Thought', Calvin Normore argues that it was William Ockham in the early fourteenth century that invented the notion of singular thought. He contrasts Ockham's conception of thought with Aquinas on the one hand and looks for predecessors to Ockham's notion that singular thought is primary and universal thought secondarily in Abelard and Vital du Four. He also argues that John Buridan in the generation after Ockham radically misunderstood the concept of singular thought.

Jack Zupko's article 'John Buridan on the Immateriality of the Intellect' discusses John Buridan's view of the human soul mentioned above. Zupko argues that question 3 to 6 of the third book of Buridan's commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* forms a sub-treatise on the immateriality of the soul. By carefully studying these questions Zupko wants to settle the debate about Buridan's view of the human soul. Although Buridan to a great extent elaborates what he calls Averroes' and Alexander's views, he does not in the end defend any of them. He instead defends a view that holds the soul

to be individual and immortal, but he adds that we can never know that the soul is immortal—although it is highly probable and perhaps even certain.

In his article ‘How Matter Becomes Mind: Late Medieval Theories of Emergence’, Olaf Pluta picks up the position Buridan calls Alexander’s and traces it in later medieval philosophy. As Buridan presents Alexander’s view the human soul is a material form which is educed from the potency of the matter and is hence also corruptible. The opinion of Alexander was more popular than what has been thought, Pluta argues. He traces the discussion of Alexander’s view from Averroes’s commentary on *De anima* through Tomas Aquinas and John Buridan up to Nicholas of Amsterdam and John Hennon in the late fifteenth century.

The continuity of the late medieval tradition with the early modern and particularly with Descartes is brought out in Timo Joutsivuo’s article ‘Passions and Old Men in Renaissance Gerontology’. He studies the relation between soul and body in two medical texts from the renaissance, namely Gabriele Zerbi’s *Gerontocomia* (1489) and André Du Laurens’ *Discours de la conservation de la vieillesse* (1594). They both seem to take the relation as obvious, but not at all as straightforward. The passions are supposed to bridge the relation between the soul and the body. This makes passions the object of study for both the natural philosopher and the physician. The philosopher will study the passions from the ontological perspective and the physician on the other hand is interested in the passions for practical reasons, since they affect the health of the patient.

In his article ‘Why Isn’t the Mind-Body Problem Medieval’, Peter King argues that the Cartesian or early modern mind/body problem is not and cannot be found in the Middle Ages. The reason is, argues King, that sensation or ‘sensatio’ in the Latin is always used in relation to the body. Since there cannot on the medieval picture be sensations without bodies there cannot be a mind/body problem. The mind/body problem presupposes a complete disconnection between a sensation and its bodily correlate. To be able to say that the mind/body problem is medieval one has to make room for disembodied sensations in medieval philosophy and one cannot, King claims.

An example of the discussion of mind and body in the medieval Jewish philosophical tradition can be found in Tamar Rudavsky’s article ‘Matter, Mind, and Hylomorphism in Ibn Gabirol and Spinoza’. Ibn Gabirol is better known in the Latin Western tradition as Avicbron and his main work *Fons vitae* exists only in Latin translation from the Arabic original. Ibn Gabirol is famous for his universal hylomorphism and his postulation of spiritual matter which underlines incorporeal substances. Rudavsky examines the relation between Ibn Gabirol and Spinoza on spiritual substance.



In his article ‘Cajetan and Suarez on Agent Sense: Metaphysics and Epistemology in Late Aristotelian Thought’, Cees Leijenhorst takes up the problem of sensation and how things that are much lower in the chain of being can have causal effects on souls that are much higher up in the chain. This was in the fourteenth century considered to be such a difficult problem that an agent sense was postulated that had as one of its tasks to upgrade the motions coming from the lower material level to the higher spiritual level. This sense was debated by the late scholastics Cajetan and Suarez in the sixteenth century. In the last part of his paper, Leijenhorst draws some interesting parallels and show some even more interesting dissimilarities between Cajetan and Suarez on the one hand and Descartes’ early writings on the other.

Deborah Brown’s article ‘Is Descartes’ Body a Mode of Mind?’ continue with the problems of Cartesian dualism and asks whether his dualism really is a clear cut as we are lead to believe by contemporary scholarship. Brown argues that it is not, since Descartes’ body is not the same thing without it’s relation to Descartes’ mind. As Descartes’ body it cannot exist apart from Descartes’ mind. The reference of the term ‘Descartes’ body’ is simply to a portion of matter, which is designated by the relation it has to Descartes’ mind. Brown’s interpretation of Descartes brings him much more in line with the medieval tradition.

Robert Pasnau investigates in his article ‘Mind and Extension (Descartes, Hobbes, More)’ the notion of matter that some of the famous early modern philosophers take for granted. He therefore can be said to continue the discussion Brown started in her article. The authors Pasnau discuss all take for granted that matter is extension and in this they are in agreement with most earlier medieval philosophers. It is in their conception of the mind (soul) that they differ, he argues.

Timo Kaitaro starts his article ‘Emotional Pathologies and Reason in French Medical Enlightenment’ with a reference to A. Damasio’s book *Descartes’s Error*. Damasio argues in his well-known book that it is wrong to think that only minds think. The body and our emotions have a key role in the way we think and in rational decision-making. Kaitaro shows in his article that the post-Cartesian medical tradition was well aware of the importance of the role of emotions in thinking. The thinkers of the French Enlightenment developed sophisticated theories of how sound thinking involves emotions.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> I am grateful for comments and corrections on this introduction and on the whole book by two anonymous referees.



## CHAPTER TWO

# MEMORY AND RECOLLECTION IN IBN SÎNÂ'S AND IBN RUSHD'S PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS TRANSLATED INTO LATIN IN THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES: A PERSPECTIVE ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE INTERNAL SENSES IN ARABIC PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

Carla Di Martino

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

In about one century, between the fifties of the twelfth century and the twenties of the thirteenth, the most important works of the Arabic psychological science were translated into Latin. At the same time the Aristotelian treatises of psychology were being translated from Greek into Latin.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As known, Aristotle's *De Anima* was translated for the first time from Greek into Latin, by Jean of Venise, in about 1150 (*Translatio Vetus*). At the same time, between 1152 and 1166, Avicenna's *De Anima* was translated into Latin. As concerns Averroes, his *Great Commentary* on the *De Anima* (which contains the Aristotelian text in *lemmata* and many indirect citations from Alexander's and Themistius psychological works) and his *Epitome* of the *De Sensu* were translated in about 1220. In the sixties of the XIII century Wilhelm of Moerbeke translated Alexander's *De Sensu* and Themistius *De Anima* from Greek and revised the translation of Aristotle's *De Anima* (*Translatio Nova*). See AA.VV., *Internationale de l'Imaginaire – Le choc Averroes – Comment les philosophes arabes ont fait l'Europe*, Actes du Colloque Averroes, 6–8 Février 1991, Maison des cultures du monde, 1991;

This was the first direct contact, in the Latin West, between three different psychological traditions: the Latin, marked by Augustine, Aristotle's psychology from the Greek text, and the Arabic psychological science. The fiery debates that did arise in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries on the relation between soul and body and on the soul's definition and powers, which a large number of psychological works through the different literary genres disclose, had as their most important sources these Arabic texts.

In the study of the history of the Aristotelian tradition, the noetic power of the soul has often been favoured and, among the sensitive faculties, imagination has been privileged, but there are very few studies on memory. The Arabic psychological science gave a special importance to memory and its functions. There are mainly textual reasons for this.

In the history of ancient and medieval thought, the tradition of the *De Anima* has always been privileged. But the Aristotelian treatises known in the Arabic tradition as *Kitâb al-hiss wa-l-mahsûs* 'Book of the sense and the sensible' (which is the title of the first one of them), and which in the West is known by the name *Parva Naturalia*, played a central role for the most important authors of the Arabic psychological science.<sup>2</sup> In the Arabic version of *Parva Naturalia*, recently discovered in an Indian manuscript by Hans Daiber,<sup>3</sup> the faculty of memory plays an important role among the interior senses, more than in the Aristotelian texts in the Greek tradition.<sup>4</sup>

In her *Book of Memory*, Mary Carruthers<sup>5</sup> rightly points out the richness of discussions of memory in the medieval culture. Contemporary experimental psychology, she writes, which is focused on behaviour and on the short-term capacities of memory, leads to the identification of memory with the power of remembering the elements of one series in their exact order, and

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Bazán (1989); D'Alverny (1954), (1957), (1952), (1993); Elamrani-Jamal (1991); Gauthier (1982); Gilson (1969), (1929–30); Hasse (2000); Wéber (1970).

<sup>2</sup> For the history of Aristotle's *Parva Naturalia* in Arabic see Di Martino (forthcoming a).

<sup>3</sup> See Daiber (1997).

<sup>4</sup> The availability itself of these treatises in Arabic, close to the *De Anima*, at the time of the formation of Arabic psychological science, gave to this science a very special status, different from the one of the Latin tradition. Arabic psychological science is a part of physics: the application of the laws of physics to the soul-body complex and to the special kind of movement of alteration, that is, perception. According to this attitude, what interested Arabic psychological science was memory like a sensible faculty – and not, like in the Latin tradition coming from Augustine, intellectual memory and mind.

<sup>5</sup> See Carruthers (1990), 20.

it excludes from its functions the reconstruction of complex information. The medieval society on the contrary had a wider notion of memory. The main example she gives is the division, presented by Albert the Great in his *De memoria et reminiscientia*, between *reminiscientia*, which is an *investigatio obliti per memoriam*, that is “a searching for what has been forgotten, with the help of memory”, and *iterata scientia*, the repetition, which is not a searching and hence not an authentic memory.

A work like Albert the Great's, which is still neglected but nevertheless one of the richest and most interesting psychological works,<sup>6</sup> can not be understood without knowledge of Ibn Sînâ's (Avicenna's) and Ibn Rushd's (Averroes') doctrines of the internal senses, and in particular of memory. Moreover, Albert the Great himself begins his *De Memoria* (the second part of his *Parva Naturalia*<sup>7</sup>) with the following remark:

Quia autem, ut mihi videtur, omnes fere aberraverunt Latini in cognitione harum virtutum quas *memoriam et reminiscientiam* appellamus, ut aestimo propter verborum Aristotelis obscuritatem, ideo primo volumus ponere planam de memoria sententiam Peripateticorum, antequam Aristotelis sententiam prosequamur.<sup>8</sup>

The Peripathetics whom Albert refers to and whose doctrine of memory is presented in chapter I of his text are Ibn Sînâ and Ibn Rushd. In their main psychological texts translated into Latin in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the *Kitâb al-nafs/Liber De Anima* (the VI book of the *Kitâb al-Shifâ'*) of Ibn Sînâ and the *Talkhî kitâb al-hiss wa-l-mahsûs/Epitome* of the *De Sensu* of Ibn Rushd, these authors defined new themes and problems and established some divisions of memory which became the basis of the Western medieval theories of memory.

## 2.2. THE TWO MEMORIES IN THE *KITÂB AL-NAFS* OF IBN SÎNÂ

In the *Kitâb al-nafs/Liber de Anima*,<sup>9</sup> the interior senses, as is well-known, are five,<sup>10</sup> namely the common sense, imagination or the forming faculty, the imaginative faculty, whose name in humans is cogitative. They deal with

<sup>6</sup> On Albert's psychology see Michaud-Quantin (1955) and (1966); Steneck (1974) and (1980).

<sup>7</sup> Albertus Magnus, *Parva Naturalia*, in *Opera omnia*, t. 9/1.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>9</sup> Avicenna's *De Anima*, being the psychological part of *Kitâb al-nafs*. Latin Medieval translation: Avicenna, *Liber De Anima sive Sextus de Naturalibus*, IV–V; Avicenna, *Liber De Anima sive Sextus de Naturalibus*, I–II–III.

<sup>10</sup> On Ibn Sînâ's theory of internal senses see Black (1993); Elamrani-Jamal (1984); Hasse (2000); Wolfson (1935).

the perceiving, the treating (composing and dividing) and the preservation of the forms (*sûwar/formae*). The estimative faculty and memory deal with the perceiving and the preservation of the 'intentions' (*ma'ânî/intentiones*).

According to Ibn Sînâ, the first and most important rule for classifying the interior faculties of the soul is the division of the qualities susceptible of perception into two kinds: the forms (*sûwar/formae*) and the intentions (*ma'ânî/intentiones*).<sup>11</sup> The second rule<sup>12</sup> is the following principle: the perceiving and the preserving are restricted to two different powers, and, hence, the common sense is not able to preserve the forms that it perceives. This is the function of imagination (*khayâl/imaginatio*) which has no power over the forms. It is only their repository. In the same way, the estimative faculty (*wahmiyya/aestimatio*) does not store the intentions; it is memory (*hâfiza*) that preserves them and is their repository. Another faculty, the imaginative faculty (*al-takhayyu/virtus imaginativa*) whose name in the human soul is the cogitative faculty (*mufakkira/vis cogitativa*) is free to compose and divide the forms preserved by imagination and to create, in this way, some complex forms which do not exist in reality. Moreover, the estimative faculty is able to put together forms and intentions and also to verify if what it formed corresponds to reality.

Therefore, there is a preservation of the forms, that is, the faculty of imagination, and a preservation of the intentions, that is, the faculty of memory. Ibn Sînâ calls both of them *hâfizât/vires conservativae*,<sup>13</sup> which comes from the radix *hfz*, which means preservation or remembering. But the memory of the intentions is more properly called *dhâkira*, which means 'recollection', and which is translated into Latin by *virtus recordativa*. The radix *dhkr* expresses the idea of recollection or specifically reminiscence. One of its derivatives, *mutadhakkir* or *tadhakkur*, which means 'what makes something remember', is translated into Latin by *reminiscentia*. The recollection is not the operation of a faculty, but a process of which the conserving

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<sup>11</sup> Among the examples given by Ibn Sînâ, the most frequent and well-known is the one of the sheep's perception of a wolf. In this precise case, the form of the wolf is its physical aspect, its intention is the sensation of hostility, which the sheep feels as it sees the wolf itself and that causes the sheep to run off. The form of a sensible object is therefore made up of sensible qualities (common and proper sensible of the Aristotelian texts, see Aristotle, *De Anima*, II.6); the intention is a not-sensible quality that the external senses do not feel while the subject is aware of it. See Ibn Sînâ, *Kitâb al-nafs*, I.5; II.2; IV.1.

<sup>12</sup> For rules see Ibn Sînâ, *Kitâb al-nafs*, I.5.

<sup>13</sup> See Ibn Sînâ, *Kitâb al-nafs*, V.2.

faculties *khayâ/imaginatio* and *hâfizah/memoria* are only instruments. The true recollection, that is, the sensible process that leads to the reminiscence, is a complex process that involves the actions of all interior senses, under the direction of the noblest of them, the estimative faculty.

If the estimative faculty (*wahmiyya*) is the proper faculty of the intentions, which Ibn Sînâ calls 'estimation', then *wahm/aestimatio* is more than that: it is all the discursive operations, which the estimative faculty organizes, and one of these is the reminiscence.

In animals, recollection takes place through free association, but human recollection is voluntary; proper reminiscence. Reminiscence is an inquisition (*inquisitio*) which follows the impulse of the longings under the direction of the intellect. The intellect itself does not act directly. It only gives all the interior senses a tension, a nearly rational power that animals do not possess. We must not forget, of course, that recollection is an operation of the sensitive soul.

### 2.3. THE SHORT-TERM MEMORY AND A STRANGE COINCIDENCE BETWEEN IBN SÎNÂ AND AUGUSTINE

By making a division between perceiving and preservation during the process of perceiving and the building of the mental image, Ibn Sînâ also makes a division between a long-term preservation, that is, the depository of sensible *data*, and a working memory, which helps all the perceptions to exist during some time.

Concerning the two kinds of sensible knowledge, that is, the perception and the estimation, the knowledge of the intentions through the estimative faculty is an immediate knowledge, that is, it takes place without any time passing. As far as the sense is concerned, this is not the same thing. Each external sense, in fact, perceives its own proper object in an immediate way, but the perception of a natural object in motion, for example, a raindrop that falls takes place during time. The perception of such a phenomenon needs the reconstruction of the identity and of the continuance of different single and proceeding perceptions of the natural world itself. This means that each perception needs to be preserved until the complete phenomenon is perceived in the end. Only in this way can the subject perceive, in the above example, a raindrop falling, which is not many instantaneous raindrops in different positions.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The example of the raindrop is given in I.5 to explain the difference among the external senses, common sense and imagination.

Therefore, despite the principle according to which the perceiving and the preserving are special to two different powers, perception seems to have some sort of memory, in the sense that it needs to preserve the forms for a very short time. It has a preservative power, which is different from the long-term conservation that is special to imagination.

Aristotle's theory of perception deals neither with the duration of the perceiving nor with the identity of the perceived object in time. Ibn Sînâ takes this problem into consideration, however, since he distinguishes the power of preservation from the power of perceiving. This division only concerns the long-term preservation, namely the sort of preservation that the oblivion can cancel and that starts at the same time the perceiving ends its activity. In fact, as Aristotle stated, the perceiving takes place in the present, memory deals only with the past. In this sense, the power of preserving during a limited time, which belongs to the common sense, is not a true memory, since it is bound to the presence of the object, that is, stating it with an oxymoron, it is a memory of the present, a preservation which takes place only during the progress of perceiving. The common sense remembers a collection of elements from the natural world in series; the different position of a raindrop and the following ones: when the last position of the series is perceived, and the raindrop falls onto the ground, all the series passes out of the senses – it is preserved in imagination. In contemporary psychology this function is called “short-term memory”.

Augustine describes the same function by help of a classical example, in his *De Musica* he states that we would not be able to understand a syllable, if our memory did not perceive it from its beginning to its end, which is of course *a fortiori* true of the understanding of a statement:

Quamlibet enim brevis syllaba, cum et incipiat et desinat, alio tempore initium eius et alio finis sonat. Tenditur ergo et ipsa quantulocumque temporis intervallo, et ab initio suo per medium suum tendit ad finem. (...) In audienda itaque vel brevissima syllaba, nisi memoria nos adiuvet, ut eo momento temporis quo iam non initium, sed finis syllabae sonat, maneat ille motus in animo, qui factus est cum initium ipsum sonuit, nihil nos audisse possumus dicere.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Augustine, *De Musica*, VI.8.21