

# Aquinas, Averroes, and the Human Will

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AQUINAS, AVERROES, AND THE HUMAN WILL

by  
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ABSTRACT  
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Marquette University, 2017

Scholars have largely read Aquinas' critique of Averroes on the issue of will and moral responsibility in a positive light. They tend to accept Aquinas' account of Averroes' theory and its shortcomings, failing to read Averroes' theory in its own right or take a critical eye to Aquinas' understanding of Averroes. This dissertation will provide that critical eye by addressing four key issues associated with the location and function of the will: (A) the nature of the Intellects as both separate and "in the soul," (B) the notion that the Intellects are "form for us," (C) the relationship between the individual human being and the intelligibles in act, and (D) the location and function of the will.

In addressing these four issues several questions will be raised and answered. First, it will be necessary to examine whether Aristotle, on whom both medieval thinkers rely for their disparate understandings of will and intellect, has a faculty of will in his system and what role the intellect plays in moral decision making. Next, we must determine what Averroes and Aquinas positions are on these issues and how they relate to that of Aristotle. Finally, the two philosophers must be brought into dialogue with one another as we determine the strength and cogency of Aquinas' critiques of Averroes' view of the will and the intellects. Is it coherent?

Through the course of this examination it will be demonstrated that Aristotle did not have a faculty of will in his philosophy and that the understanding of will attributed to him by Averroes and Aquinas actually has its roots in Stoic, Neoplatonist, and Peripatetic philosophy. It will also be demonstrated that, despite the view of many contemporary scholars of Aquinas, Aquinas' particular critiques of Averroes regarding the will are not tenable. Despite this, we will see that the nature of the intellects and, more importantly, the intelligibles in act is central to moral agency for Averroes; here, Aquinas' criticisms are more convincing.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CNE	<i>Sententia Libri Ethicorum and Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics</i>
conf.	<i>Confessiones</i>
deUnitate	<i>De Unitate Intellectus and On the Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists</i>
SCG	<i>Liber de Veritate Catholicae Fidei Contra Errores Infidelium seu &lt;&lt;Summa Contra Gentiles&gt;&gt;</i>
LCDA	<i>Averroes Cordobensis Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros and Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle</i>
lib. arb.	<i>De libero arbitrio</i>
MCDA	<i>Middle Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima</i>
QDAnima	<i>Quaestiones Disputatae De Anima and Questions on the Soul</i>
Sent	<i>Scriptum Super Libros Sententiarum magistri petri Lombardi Episcopi Parisiensis</i>
ST	<i>Summa Theologiae</i>
trin.	<i>De trinitate</i>

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. General Introduction

The question of moral agency and moral responsibility has been important for philosophers through the ages. It has often been connected, particularly during the Middle Ages, with issues of philosophical psychology and the nature of the soul. Aquinas was one important voice in the medieval discussion regarding moral responsibility and the role of intellect and will. Often this discussion took place within a larger philosophical context where Aquinas tried to explain his own view in relation to Aristotle and against his predecessors, notably Averroes.

One of Aquinas' most clear and concise condemnations of Averroes' philosophical psychology and its perceived impact on moral responsibility can be found in his late work *On the Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists*. Here Aquinas argues that the intellects must be in the human soul and multiplied according to the number of individuals, rather than being the separate shared entities of the Averroist system. Among Aquinas' many arguments in this work is one in which he appeals directly to the problem of the will and moral responsibility:

According to this position [that the Intellects are separate and shared], the principles of moral philosophy would be destroyed; for what is in us would be taken away. For something is not in us except through the will; and this indeed is called voluntary because it is in us. But the will is in the intellect<sup>1</sup>, as is clear from the statement of Aristotle in

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1. Aquinas is here referencing to *De Anima* 3.9 (432b5-6), where Aristotle explain that "wish is found in the calculative part and desire and passion in the irrational" (p. 687 in Jonathan Barnes' *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 1, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). It should be noted that this statement is key source of disagreement for Aquinas and Averroes, influencing how both philosophers understand the

Book III of the *De Anima* [...]

If, therefore, the intellect does not belong to this man in such a way that it is truly one with him, but is united to him only through phantasms or as mover, the will will not be in this man, but in the separate intellect. And so this man will not be the master of his act, nor will any act of his be praiseworthy or blameworthy. This is to destroy the principles of moral philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

This passage highlights several important elements regarding Aquinas' theory and the way he sees that theory in relation to the work of both Aristotle and Averroes. In this text Aquinas clearly links the will and the intellect and uses this link as an argument for why the intellects must be in the human being and multiplied according to the number of individuals, rather than being separate, shared entities. If the will is a rational appetite,

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location of the will and its relation to the intellect. This is discussed in some detail later in the dissertation. 2. Aquinas, *On the Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists [deUnitate]*, translated by Beatrice H. Zedler (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1968), Ch. III, sec. 81-82, p. 56-57. "Adhuc, secundum istorum positionem destruuntur moralis philosophie principia: subtrahitur enim quod est in nobis. Non enim est aliquid in nobis nisi per uoluntatem; unde et hoc ipsum uoluntarium dicitur, quod in nobis est. Voluntas autem in intellectu est, ut patet per dictum Aristotilis in *De anima*, et per hoc quod in substantiis separatis est intellectus et uoluntas; et per hoc etiam quod contingit per uoluntatem aliquid in uniuersali amare uel odire, sicut odimus latronum genus, ut Aristotiles dicit in sua *Rhetorica*. Si igitur intellectus non est aliquid huius hominis ut sit uere unum cum eo, sed unitur ei solum per fantasmata uel sicut motor, non erit in hoc homine uoluntas, sed in intellectu separato. Et ita hic homo non erit dominus sui actus, nec aliquis eius actus erit laudabilis uel uituperabilis: quod est diuellere principia moralis philosophie." (*De Unitate Intellectus*, in *Opera Omnia*, Vol. 43, Leonine Edition. (Santa Sabina and Rome: Editori Di San Tommaso, 1976), Ch. 3, ln. 336-354, p. 306).

A few paragraphs later he takes up this idea again: "Now it is clear that the intellect is that which is the principle agent in man, and that it uses all the powers of the soul and the members of the body as if they were organs. And on this account Aristotle said subtly that man is intellect 'or is principally this.' If, therefore, there is one intellect for all, it follows of necessity that there be one who understands and consequently one who wills and one who uses according to the choice of his will all those things by which men are diverse from one another. And from this it further follows that there would be no difference among men in respect to the free choice of the will, but it [the choice] would be the same for all, if the intellect in which alone would reside pre-eminence and dominion over the use of all [powers] is one and undivided in all. This is clearly false and impossible. For it is opposed to what is evident and destroys the whole of moral science and everything which relates to the civil intercourse which is natural to man, as Aristotle says" (Ch. IV, sec. 89, p. 60-61). "Manifestum est autem quod intellectus est id quod est principale in homine, et quod utitur omnibus potentiis anime et membris corporis tamquam organis; et propter hoc Aristotiles subtiliter dixit quod homo est intellectus <<uel maxime >>. Si igitur sit unus intellectus omnium, ex necessitate sequitur quod sit unus intelligens, et per consequens unus uolens et unus utens pro sue uoluntatis arbitrio omnibus illis secundum que homines diuersificantur ad inuicem. Et ex hoc ulterius sequitur quod nulla differentia sit inter homines quantum ad liberam uoluntatis electionem, sed eadem sit omnium, si intellectus, apud quem solum residet principalitas et dominium utendi omnibus aliis, est unus et indiuisus in omnibus. Quod est manifeste falsum et impossibile: repugnat enim hiis que apparent, et destruit totam scientiam moralem et omnia que pertinent ad conuersationem ciuilem, que est hominibus naturalis, ut Aristotiles dicit" (Ch. 4, ln 76-95, p. 308).

part of the intellects, the separation of the intellects from the individual human being would result not only in epistemological issues but also in moral ones: individuals cannot be held morally responsible for their actions if the locus of that action is separate from them. Aquinas sees this as a strong argument against Averroes' position regarding the intellects and he seems to think that Averroes' view of the will is the same as to his own. In addition, Aquinas claims that his view is in line with the view of Aristotle, even citing Aristotle's *De Anima* directly in reference to the relationship between the intellects and the will.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2 The Issues

Scholars have largely read Aquinas' critique of Averroes here and elsewhere in a positive light. They tend to accept Aquinas' account of Averroes' theory and its shortcomings, failing to read Averroes' theory in its own right or take a critical eye to Aquinas' understanding of Averroes. However, it is certainly the case that Averroes thought through and addressed the problems Aquinas points out and that he has clear reasons for developing his theories of the Intellects and human will as he does; this is evident when we examine not only the texts to which Aquinas had access but also some of Averroes' earlier works, such as the *Middle Commentary on the De Anima*, which provides a different account of the material intellect than that in the *Long Commentary*. Thus, these claims of Aquinas (and their acceptance by scholars) form a basis for this dissertation since they raise a number of important issues regarding the relationship that exists among the views of Aquinas, Averroes, and Aristotle. I shall address these issues

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3. This is, again, a reference to the key passage in *De Anima* 3.9.

one by one before turning to an account of the organization of the dissertation.

### **1.2.1 Does Aristotle have a faculty of will in his system? What is his view of the intellects?**

Both Averroes and Aquinas take for granted that Aristotle's philosophical psychology includes a faculty of will and both claim to be following his view of the will. Averroes insists that Aristotle held that the will was a power of the cogitative faculty located in the perishable human brain; Aquinas, on the other hand, quoted Aristotle as saying that it was a power of the intellect, and so for Aquinas an immaterial power located in the imperishable human soul. However, neither the *Nicomachean Ethics* nor the *De Anima* is clear when it comes to the will and there are a number of scholars who argue that the notion of will is a much later invention. Since the supposedly Aristotelian notion of will is a key element in both Averroes and Aquinas, an effort must be made to discover the truth. This question is one which scholars have examined, with mixed results. Some scholars, such as Irwin and Nielsen<sup>4</sup> hold that Aristotle did have a notion of will in his moral theory and that this notion informed later thinkers. For example, Irwin's project in "Who Discovered the Will?" is to show that the concept of will existed in Ancient Greek thought. Although he admits that Aristotle is perhaps not the best example of will in Greek philosophy he says we must start there precisely because Aquinas saw the concept in Aristotle. He even goes so far as to say we can answer the question 'does Aristotle have a concept of will' by backtracking from Aquinas: "If Aquinas has a

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4. T. H. Irwin, "Who Discovered the Will?" in *Philosophical Perspectives*, 6, *Ethics* (1992), pp. 453-455; Karen M. Nielsen "The Will—Origins of the Notion in Aristotle's Thought," in *Antiquorum Philosophia*, (2012) found at <http://works.bepress.com/karennielsen/16>.

concept of the will, then we can try to answer our original question about whether Aristotle has a concept of the will, by answering a more precise question. If Aquinas interprets Aristotle, correctly, then Aristotle has a concept of the will. If, on the other hand, we believe that Aristotle has no concept of the will, then we must show where Aquinas's interpretation of him is wrong."<sup>5</sup> In examining these questions Irwin points out that Aquinas' two primary claims about Aristotle on the will were that (1) the Aristotelian concept of wish (*boulēsis*) was a concept of will (and thus properly translated as *voluntas*), and (2) that Aristotle's account of voluntary action were about the role of will. While Irwin explains that Aquinas' exegesis of Aristotle is wrong in some places he argues that a proper understanding of Aristotle strengthens the view that Aristotle had a concept of will rather than calling it into doubt.<sup>6</sup> Others, such as Kahn, Sorabji, and Frede,<sup>7</sup> argue that although Aristotle's concepts of wish, deliberation, and decision may be said to form a foundation upon which the concept of will developed, a fully fledged faculty of will did not exist in Aristotle. Kahn, for example, explains that, although there is no concept of will in Aristotle, his larger psychological framework is essential to a fully realized concept of the will which is developed by Aquinas through an integration of Aristotle's psychological framework and Augustine's discussion of free choice of the will.<sup>8</sup> There is also Gauthier's famous assertion that the will does not exist in Aristotle's

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5. Irwin, "Who Discovered the Will?" p. 456.

6. Ibid., p. 457.

7. Charles Kahn, "Discovering the will from Aristotle to Augustine" in *The Question of Eclecticism*, edited by John M. Dillon and A.A. Long (Washington DC: Catholic University of America, 1988); Richard Sorabji, "The concept of the will from Plato to Maximus the Confessor" in *The Will and Human Action: From Antiquity to the Present Day*, edited by Thomas Pink and M.W.F. Stone (New York and London: Routledge, 2004); Michael Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, edited by A.A. Long (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2011).

8. Kahn, "Discovering the will from Aristotle to Augustine," p. 238.

psychology.<sup>9</sup> Since both Averroes and Aquinas take the existence of such a faculty in Aristotle for granted, it is important to examine this question in some detail.

As with the question of the will, there is some disagreement between Averroes and Aquinas as to how Aristotle should be interpreted regarding the nature of the intellects and human reason. Averroes holds that both the Agent Intellect and Material Intellect are separate entities shared by all human beings; Aquinas insists they must both be in the human soul as powers multiplied according to the number of individuals. They both explicitly claim Aristotle as support for their positions, relying on Aristotle's famously brief account in *De Anima* 3.5. Here again scholars have examined Aristotle and tried to determine his actual view with mixed results. Some claim that Aquinas is correct in his assessment of Aristotle. However, several important scholars of Aristotle suggest that he can best be understood as holding that the active intellectual element is one and shared (although deeply connected to the individual while 'in' the human being) while the passive element is fully individuated.<sup>10</sup>

### **1.2.2 Are either Averroes or Aquinas following Aristotle regarding the will or the intellects?**

The above two questions are about Aristotle's own views; we must also ask who

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9. "Dans la psychologie d'Aristote *la volonté n'existe pas* [...] le souhait n'est pas un acte de «volonté»." René Antoine Gauthier and Jean Yves Jolif, *L'Éthique à Nicomaque: Introduction, Traduction, et Commentaire* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1970), p. 218.

10. Joseph Owens "The Self in Aristotle" *Review of Metaphysics* 41 (June 1988), pp. 707-722; Joseph Owens, "Aristotle and Aquinas" in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, edited by Norman Kretzman and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge :Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 38-59; John M. Rist, "Notes on Aristotle *De Anima* 3.5 *Classical Philology*, 61.1 (Jan. 1966) 8-20; John M. Rist, "Aristotle: The Value of Man and the Origin of Morality" in *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 4.1 (Sept. 1975) 1-21.



is more correct in his assessment of those views—Averroes or Aquinas. Part of answering this question will include an account of who, if not Aristotle, can be said to be the true inspiration of the views of the will on the part of these two medieval thinkers. Regarding the will, this entails an examination of the historical development of the concept of will and its associated concepts of deliberation and choice in later Greek sources and into the Latin and Arabic traditions. Of particular interest is the development of these ideas in the Stoic tradition and the ways in which Arabic and Latin medieval thinkers (such as Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Augustine) discussed the issue and often attributed their views to Aristotle.

When it comes to the question of the intellect, where Aristotle's view is even more unclear due to the brevity of his account, attention must again be paid to the historical development of this notion and the influence of thinkers such as Avicenna and Themistius. Such an examination will help us to understand how Averroes and Aquinas are situated within the larger historical tradition and what Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian influences there may have been for their understanding of the moral and intellectual life of the human being. Here, again there is some disagreement. There are scholars<sup>11</sup> who insist that Aquinas can be said to be faithful to Aristotle, particularly about the intellects, while others accounts of Aristotle suggest that Averroes' understanding is closer to Aristotle, although not perfectly so.

### **1.2.3 What is Averroes' position and what motivates this position? Is it coherent?**

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11. Edward Mahoney, "Aquinas' Critique of Averroes' Doctrine of the Unity of the Intellect" in *Thomas Aquinas and His Legacy* edited by David Gallagher (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1994), pp. 83-106; Ralph McInerney, "Aristotle and Thomas: Père Gauthier" in *Aquinas on Human Action: A Theory of Practice* (The Catholic University Press: Washington, D.C., 1992), pp. 161-177.

In addition to examining the place both thinkers hold in the larger historical landscape, it is necessary to examine the actual views of Averroes and Aquinas regarding the natures of the will and the intellects, their relation to one another, and their relation to the human being as such. This is especially true when it comes to Averroes since his view is often read only in light of Aquinas' own ideas and critiques. A proper examination of Averroes' views must include not only those texts to which Aquinas had access but a more wide ranging selection where nuances and changes can be examined. This will allow for a more complete picture of Averroes' position on the Intellects and the will, including the motivation for his views and their internal consistence and cogency. While special attention will be paid to the *Long Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima* as a representation of Averroes' final position, it is also important to consider his earlier commentaries on the *De Anima* and his commentaries on Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in order to understand Averroes' overall position on moral action and philosophical psychology and how his views developed over time. Although the heart of the dissertation will examine Averroes in light of Aquinas' critiques, it will also address some issues with the internal consistency of Averroes' views which require an understanding of Averroes apart from Aquinas; a full picture of how Averroes integrates his views regarding the Intellects, the will, and the intelligibles in act is necessary to make this possible. In recent decades scholars have paid more attention to Averroes' own ideas as they exist on their own or within a larger historical context, but this has not yet become common enough to warrant our foregoing such an examination of primary texts here.

A similar account of Aquinas' views is also necessary. While our primary concern when it comes to Aquinas is with his critiques of Averroes, these cannot be fully understood apart from his own views of the issues at hand. Of course, much more has been done here in the scholarship than has been done with Averroes.

#### **1.2.4. Does Averroes' view hold up against the critiques of Aquinas?**

Finally, we arrive at the central question of the dissertation. As we saw with the above passage from Aquinas' *On the Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists*, Aquinas' critique regarding Averroes' position is made in a rather direct and matter-of-fact manner. He simply states that Averroes' position regarding the intellects has ramifications on the notion of will and, thus, on the notion of moral responsibility which are unacceptable. Although this particular argument focuses on the will and moral responsibility, most of Aquinas' arguments against Averroes deal with his understanding of the Intellects and the problems that Aquinas sees arising from Averroes' insistence that the individual human being can be a knower when both Intellects are separate and shared by all human beings. Of particular concern to Aquinas is the role that phantasms play in connecting the individual to the separate Intellects in his understanding of Averroes. He makes arguments along these lines of thought against Averroes not only in *On the Unity of the Intellects* but also in the *Commentary on the Sentences*, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, and *Summa Theologiae*, among other works.

Scholars have largely held that Aquinas' critiques are accurate and convincing, paying little attention to Averroes beyond the presentation his ideas receive in Aquinas.<sup>12</sup> Mahoney, for example, traces the development of Aquinas' critique from the *Sentences* through to the more famous account in *On the Unity of the Intellects*. The main objective of his article is to show that Aquinas noted problems with Averroes' views even in his earliest writings and that his critique developed overtime and was strengthened but did not change. Throughout the article Mahoney explains the critiques of Aquinas in positive terms (with the single exception of noting that Aquinas' "claim that Averroes maintained 'intelligibles species' is surely doubtful"<sup>13</sup>). He explains that Aquinas strengthens his critique over the course of his works and that in *On the Unity of the Intellects* he "deftly points to the weak point in the psychology found in Averroes' long commentary on the *De anima*."<sup>14</sup> At the end of the article he notes that Aquinas' ability to use new Latin translations of Themistius for his work in *On the Unity of the Intellect* made the resulting critique "even more formidable."<sup>15</sup> Further, McNerny provides a positive discussion of Aquinas critiques in "Averroes or Aquinas?,"<sup>16</sup> one of the "interpretive essays" attached to his translation of *On the Unity of the Intellects*. He focuses primarily on the interpretation by Aquinas and on Aquinas' critique of Averroes' use of Aristotle, arguing for Aquinas' interpretation of Aristotle over Averroes'. However, we must look more

12. Mahoney, "Aquinas' Critique of Averroes' Doctrine of the Unity of the Intellect," Ralph McNerny, *Aquinas Against the Averroists: On There Being Only One Intellect* ( Indiana: Perdue University Press, 1993), and Alain de Libera, *L'Unité de L'intellect: Commentaire du De unitate intellectus contra averroistas de Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2004) provide important examples of scholars who explained Aquinas' arguments in detail and viewed them favorably, although there is a wealth of scholarly work on Aquinas which at best explains Aquinas' position without calling into question the strength of his critiques let alone the depth of his understanding of Averroes' view.

13. Mahoney, "Aquinas' Critique of Averroes' Doctrine of the Unity of the Intellect,"p. 85.

14. Ibid., p. 97.

15. Ibid., p. 106.

16. McNerny, *Aquinas Against the Averroists: On There Being Only One Intellect*, pp. 188-196.

closely to determine whether all of Aquinas' criticisms are sound. In doing so it will become evident that things cannot be as simple as Aquinas suggests—if they were, surely Averroes would have noted the potential issues with his views. This is especially true when it comes to the two most facile of Aquinas critiques: that placing the will outside of the human individual would destroy moral responsibility while placing the Intellects outside of the individual would make it impossible to call the human individual a knower. Since Averroes presses on with his views, even shifting them to a more radical understanding of the separate Intellects (by making the Material Intellect separate in the *Long Commentary* when it had not been so in the *Middle Commentary on the De Anima*), we must assume that he thought he had done enough to address these potential issues,<sup>17</sup> maintaining the human being's identity as both rational and moral agent. So, rather than simply accepting Aquinas' views and critique of Averroes, we must give Averroes his due. It is true that in recent years scholars have been paying more attention to Averroes as a distinct figure from Aquinas; they have also been arguing for Averroes' position against Aquinas in some areas.<sup>18</sup> However, not enough has been done in this regard. Most importantly, no treatment of the particular issue the will (and the Intellects as they are

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17. Indeed, Averroes' shows in his *Long Commentary on the De Anima* [LCDA] the willingness to reconsider his position even further if objections arise, saying, in the midst of a discussion of the Intellects and their relation to the human soul: "I ask my brothers seeing this exposition to write down their doubts and perhaps in that way what is true regarding this will be found out, if I have not yet found [it]. If I have found [it], as I suppose, then it will be clarified through those questions. For truth, as Aristotle says, is fitting and gives testimony to itself in every way," (*Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*, translated by Richard C. Taylor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), Book 3, comment 5, p.315). "Et tunc rogo fratres videntes hoc scriptum scribere suas dubitationes, et forte per illud inveniatur verum in hoc, si nondum inveni. Et si inveni, ut fingo, tunc declarabitur per illas questiones. Veritas enim, ut dicit Aristoteles, convenit et testatur sibi omni modo" (*Averroes Cordobensis Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros*, edited by F. Stuart Crawford (Cambridge: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953), p. 399, ln. 365-369). This demonstrates that, although he thinks he has, with careful thought discovered the truth of these matters (even correcting his earlier views), he is receptive to further thinking.

18. Richard Taylor, Deborah Black, and Carlos Bazan are some of the key figures working in this area.

associate with the will) as it exists in Averroes against Aquinas' critiques has been undertaken.

### **1.3 Methodology**

In order to sufficiently address the above questions we must work systematically to develop an understanding of the relevant texts and historical contexts necessary to fully address the issues at hand. Although the ultimate focus of the dissertation is Averroes and the ability of his theory to hold against the critiques of Aquinas, there are several elements which must be addressed first. Thus, the dissertation is organized as follows.

#### **1.3.1 Aristotle and Other Influences**

Despite the drastic differences in their theories both Averroes and Aquinas appeal to the works of Aristotle, particularly his *De Anima* and his *Nicomachean Ethics*, when arguing for their conceptions of moral action and the roles that intellect and will play in this process. They both claim to be following Aristotle in their views regarding the nature and placement of the intellects, the importance of internal sense powers, and the existence, nature, and location of the will. In order to determine whether either medieval thinker can be rightly called Aristotelian it is essential to examine Aristotle's account of these issues. To do this I will offer, in Chapter 2, a discussion of key passages in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *De Anima* of Aristotle and consider the developments of the concept of will in later Greek thought. This examination will include a brief account of Aristotle's view of the nature of intellect and its relationship to the individual. It will also

include a close analysis of the notions of will/wish, choice/decision, and deliberation (*boulēsis*, *prohairesis*, and *bouleusis*) in the Aristotelian context. Important to this examination is the question of whether these notions exist in Aristotle, as some<sup>19</sup> suggest and Aquinas and Averroes suppose, or whether they are later developments<sup>20</sup> which were then anachronistically attributed to Aristotle in the tradition. Part of this examination includes a discussion of Stoic, Peripatetic, and Platonist sources which include the same terminology (*boulēsis*, *prohairesis*, and *bouleusis*) in a different context, as well as medieval Arabic sources who influenced Averroes and Arabic and Latin thinkers who influenced Aquinas.

This examination will provide essential background as we move on to address the ideas of Averroes and Aquinas in this area; both Averroes and Aquinas think that Aristotle had a conception of will and a related conception of choice. We must ask whether either of them can rightly be said to be following Aristotle in this matter; furthermore, we must examine other possible sources for the development of the notion of will and the surrounding concepts. By examining the Aristotelian texts along with later sources we will be able to make a determination not only regarding what Aristotle himself had to say but also, and more importantly for the purposes of this dissertation, whether Averroes or Aquinas can be said to be Aristotelian in the ways that they each claim to be.

This examination of Aristotle will allow us to address the question of whether or not Aristotle can be said to have a notion of the will<sup>21</sup> as it is understood by Averroes and

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19. See Irwin, "Who Discovered the Will?" pp. 453-473.

20. See Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, and Thomas Pink and M.W.F. Stone, *The Will and Human Action: From Antiquity to the Present Day*. (New York and London: Routledge), 2004.

21. Despite the fact that some argue not only that Aristotle had a notion of will but that Aquinas is following Aristotle quite well in his account of the will; see, notably, Irwin, cited above.

Aquinas. It will also allow for an examination of the accuracy of their understanding of other relevant aspects of Aristotle's moral philosophy, such as the practical syllogism. Furthermore, Joseph Owens argues that Aristotle has a complex view of the relationship between the individual human being and the separate immortal intellect<sup>22</sup> and that this creates a specific and potentially problematic view of the self in Aristotle.<sup>23</sup> While there are definite similarities in terminology between Aristotle and Aquinas along with ways in which Aquinas' thought can be seen as an extension of Aristotelian thought in some areas, it is also clear that there are key differences.<sup>24</sup> There are also areas where Aristotle's views are more clearly reflected in the philosophy of Averroes; this is particularly true when it comes to their respective notions of the intellects and their relationship to the individual human being. This is, perhaps, most clearly seen in Averroes' notion that the Agent Intellect is both separate substance and existing in the human being as 'form for us.'<sup>25</sup>

### 1.3.2 Reading Averroes and Aquinas on their own terms

The primary task of the dissertation is to analyze the nature and soundness of Aquinas' critiques of Averroes. Aquinas offers particularly harsh criticisms of Averroes' views regarding the nature of the intellects and their relationship to individual human

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22. Owens, "The Self in Aristotle."

23. Owens, "The Self in Aristotle," especially pp. 717-719. Also see Rist, "Aristotle: The Value of Man and the Origin of Morality," for a discussion of the what constitutes the human being in Aristotle, particularly as it relates to reason.

24. Owens, "Aristotle and Aquinas."

25. See Richard C. Taylor, "The Agent Intellect as 'form for us' and Averroes's Critique of al-Farabi" in *Proceedings of the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics*, 5 (2005) and "Intellect as Intrinsic Formal Cause in the Soul According to Aquinas and Averroes" in *The Afterlife of the Platonic Soul: Reflections of Platonic Psychology in the Monotheistic Religions*, edited by Maha Elkaisy-Friemuth and John M. Dillon (Leiden: Brill, 2009).



beings. Many of these critiques rest on Aquinas' understanding of Averroes' use of phantasms as a means of connecting the separate Intellects to the individual human being. Additionally, he thinks that Averroes' system is incompatible with moral agency and responsibility, as seen in the above quotation from *On the Unity of the Intellect*. While a proper assessment of these critiques requires an understanding of Aristotle and other potential sources, it also requires a careful reading of both Averroes and Aquinas in their own rights. Before the strength of Aquinas' critiques can be assessed we must develop a thorough understanding of each philosopher's theory on its own. For this reason Chapters 3 and 4 will provide detailed accounts of Averroes and Aquinas' views, respectively, focusing on their concepts of will, choice, the mechanism of moral decision making and action, and the role of the intellects in this process. These chapters will not question the validity of either view but will, instead, present the views as clearly and completely as possible.

It is especially important to offer a complete and detailed account of Averroes' view for two reasons. First, while Averroes is often read only in light of Aquinas' theory and critique, it is methodologically and historically preferable to examine his ideas in their own rights before allowing Aquinas to influence our understanding. Such an examination requires not only a look at Averroes' final position as it appears in the *Long Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, but also an appraisal of the evolution of his position. And second, it is essential to a proper evaluation of that critique that we have first developed an understanding not only of what Aquinas takes Averroes to be saying but also what Averroes is actually saying. This means referencing not only those works to which

Aquinas had access, but as many of the relevant texts of Averroes as possible. Thus, Chapter 3 will consist in a close examination of key texts of Averroes, culminating in a statement of his final position regarding the mechanism of moral decision making and action.

Similarly, it is important to offer an account of Aquinas' position and its development, including the critiques of Averroes he uses in developing that position for a few reasons. First, as with any historical account, it is important to carefully reconstruct, as well as possible, the authentic view of the philosopher in question; this includes the relationship this view has to its predecessors. Second, it is important to understand Aquinas' critiques of evaluations both as they relate to his own theory and as they relate to his understanding of Averroes; an analysis of the success of his criticisms requires an understanding of how Aquinas views Averroes' theory as well as an understanding of the theory itself. Thus, Chapter 4 presents an account of Aquinas' position regarding the mechanism of moral decision making and action as it appears in a number of important texts. It includes a presentation of Aquinas' critiques of Averroes as they fit into his account of his own view without addressing whether those criticisms are fair and accurate.

### **1.3.3 Assessing Aquinas' critique**

After examining the views of Averroes and Aquinas independently we will finally be able to address the cogency and accuracy of Aquinas' criticisms of Averroes. There are four main issues which need to be addressed to develop a complete picture of Aquinas'

relevant critiques. These four issues are: (A) the nature of the Intellects as both separate and “in the soul,” (B) the notion that the Intellects are “form for us,” (C) the relationship between the individual human being and the intelligibles in act, and (D) the location and function of the will. In Chapter 5 each of these issues is addressed systematically. For each issue the two philosophers will be placed in dialogue as each of their views is considered before Aquinas’ critiques are presented and assessed in light of the actual view of Averroes and in light of Aquinas’ own wider understanding of these issues.

The first 3 issues, A, B, and C, deal with the nature of the Intellects and their relation to the individual and to individual knowledge attainment. Aquinas argues that it is not possible to maintain that the Intellects can be separate entities shared by all human beings while also being “in” the individual human being has her form, subject to her will. He argues against Averroes’ understanding of phantasms and of a robust cogitative power as a means to bridge the gap between the individual and the separate Intellects. Principally, Aquinas thinks that it is not possible to maintain that the individual human being is a knower in Averroes’ system. Related to this issue of the placement of the intellects are questions about the nature and function of the intelligibles in act. The role of intelligibles in explaining Averroes and Aquinas’ philosophical psychology, must be considered in detail. Aquinas argues that Averroes’ understanding of the intelligibles does not allow for individual knowledge in the way that Averroes thinks. Aquinas also claims that they are markedly unAristotelian, bordering on Platonism. This chapter will address these claims and determine their cogency.

The fourth issue addressed in Chapter 5 is the location and function of the will.

Both philosophers try to develop an understanding of the will which fits within their larger system; their success in this regard must be considered. Aquinas' critiques here will be presented in detail; they revolve around his understanding of the nature of the relationship between the intellects and the individual (the focus of the earlier issues) and the claim that the will is located in the intellect. Here again Aquinas claims that Averroes' view is both untenable and unAristotelian. But, we must ask, is this so, or is Averroes' view of the will simply different from the way that Aquinas understands it? These questions will be addressed in detail. Answering these questions will allow us to develop some insight into the coherence of Averroes' overall account of moral responsibility.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

Finally, Chapter 6 will return to the questions raised here and summarize the answers reached throughout the 4 intervening chapters. Revisiting the claims of the scholars which have been highlighted above in light of what has been uncovered through the dissertation by way of careful examination of primary texts will allow for clear conclusions to be drawn. This will help to fill the lacuna which currently exists in the scholarship in this area by demonstrating what the real issues are in regards to the nature of Averroes' account of moral agency and how these issues, missed by scholars up to this point, must be addressed.

## CHAPTER 2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF WILL BEFORE AVERROES AND AQUINAS

### 2.1 Introduction

Before discussing how Averroes and Aquinas develop their ideas regarding reason, the will, and human moral agency it is important to come to an understanding of these ideas within the greater historical context. Averroes and Aquinas were both influenced by the Aristotelian tradition which was interpreted as including a notion of will. Gaining an understanding of how these ideas--particularly the idea of the will--have developed over time will allow us to see how Averroes and Aquinas both fit into this larger picture. In particular, we will see how both medieval philosophers see themselves as in line with the Aristotelian position while also drawing from other later sources.

There is some debate about when a concept of will emerged in philosophy and what that concept entails even today. Pink and Stone point out in the Introduction to their book *The Will and Human Action: From Antiquity to the Present Day* that even today there is no consensus “about what might count as a clear case of willing [reflecting] a fundamental lack of clarity about just what the notions of ‘will’ and ‘willing’ legitimately involve” beyond the general claim that it “refer[s] to the source of a drive that expresses itself in human action if nowhere else.”<sup>26</sup> The concept includes a variety of features such as desire, choice, decision/deliberation, volition, freedom, voluntariness, responsibility,

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas Pink and M.W.F. Stone, “Introduction” in *The Will and Human Action: From Antiquity to the Present Day*, edited by Thomas Pink and M.W.F. Stone (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), p. 1. This claim is also made by Richard Sorabji in his chapter “The concept of the will from Plato to Maximus the Confessor,” p. 7, and by Charles Kahn in “Discovering the will from Aristotle to Augustine,” p. 235. Michael Frede traces the history of the notion of free will from Aristotle through the Greek tradition and into Augustine throughout his work *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*.

intentions, and ‘will-power.’<sup>27</sup> It is also up for debate when the notion of will can be said to have emerged or been discovered with some pointing towards Augustine and others claiming it can be located, in some form, as early as Plato.<sup>28</sup>

What can be said with some degree of certainty is that Aristotle did not have a clear notion of will as a single faculty; however, he did discuss several abilities or faculties, such as *prohairesis* and *boulēsis*, which later came to be included in the faculty of will. What started with Aristotle was continually developed throughout Greek thought until the first clear notion of a will becomes evident in Stoicism. This notion of will can be seen as splitting into several branches, including an Arabic language and a Christian branch.<sup>29</sup> The views of Arabic language authors such as Al-Farabi and Avicenna is reflected in the work of Averroes. Aquinas was greatly influenced by Christian authors, particularly Augustine, who used the Greek ideas and combined them with traditional Christian ideas; it is these Stoic/Augustinian views of the will, which, in part, led Aquinas to some of his critiques of the Averroist position.

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27 Sorabji, “The concept of the will from Plato to Maximus the Confessor,” pp. 7-8, discusses clusters of functions associated with will; Sorabji provides a more robust account of these clusters of ideas and traces the history of these elements of the will from Plato through to Augustine in *Emotion and Peace of Mind : From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 319-340. Kahn, “Discovering the will from Aristotle to Augustine,” pp. 235-236, discusses four perspectives on the concept of will, its content and emergence. A. W. Price in “Aristotle, the Stoics and the will” in *The Will and Human Action: From Antiquity to the Present Day*, edited by Thomas Pink and M.W.F. Stone (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 29-30, discusses volitions and intentions as part of a more contemporary approach to will. Irwin, “Who Discovered the Will?” pp. 453-455, discusses the issue with a special focus on whether the Greeks can be said to have a notion of will. Frede also devotes much time throughout *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought* to an examination of what many of these terms mean in the various historical and philosophical contexts in which they appear and what, if anything, they have to do with the will.

28 This is indeed the concern of Frede’s, Sorabji’s, Price’s, Kahn’s, and Irwin’s investigations.

29 It should be noted that this discussion of will was also taken up by authors in the Byzantine context. While this dissertation leaves that branch of thought untouched it is important to realize that the problem of the will stretches beyond the Arab and Western Christian contexts which are the focus here.

This chapter will examine the development of the idea of will in some detail. It will start with the Aristotelian ideas of *boulēsis* and *prohairesis*, and related idea of voluntariness. It will then offer a brief account of how these ideas were used and transformed by later Greek philosophers with particular attention toward the Stoic and Platonist views of the will and its freedom. From the Greek tradition the chapter will move to a consideration of how the Christian and Arabic traditions were informed by this Greek tradition, making use of the works of Augustine, Al-Farabi, and Avicenna. This examination will result in an understanding of the history of the notion of willing and related ideas, leaving us in a position to move on to the works of Averroes and Aquinas to examine how they continued within this tradition and broke away from it in important ways.

## 2.2 Aristotle and His Interpreters

While Aristotle did not have a single faculty called the will, or indeed a strong notion of willing at all, his discussion of deliberation (*bouleusis*), decision (*prohairesis*<sup>30</sup>), and wish (*boulēsis*) in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *De Anima* provide many of the features that later became associated with the faculty of the will. It is here that we must start our examination. First, I will offer a discussion of some key Aristotelian texts and then I will discuss how these have been interpreted.

### 2.2.1 The Texts of Aristotle

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<sup>30</sup> This term is translated sometimes as choice rather than decision. The notion of choice is perhaps increasingly applied to the term as it is used by philosophers after Aristotle but I will generally speak of *prohairesis* as decision in the Aristotelian context since, as we shall see, it does not quite fit with our modern notion of choice.

Famously, Aristotle offers a concise statement regarding the parts of the soul responsible for thought and knowledge in *De Anima* 3.5. He notes that “thought, as we have described it, is what it is by virtue of becoming all things, while there is another which is what it is by virtue of making all things.”<sup>31</sup> Before this statement Aristotle discusses how mind or intellect has no nature of its own before it knows; for this reason it cannot be “blended with the body” and cannot “actually [be] any real thing.”<sup>32</sup> Rather than being actually some thing, it is potentially all things. One can actually be said to know when one is able to call one’s knowledge to mind at will--“When thought has become each thing in the way in which a man who knows is said to do so [...] he is now able to exercise the power on his own initiative [*di’ autou*].”<sup>33</sup> These statements seem to be about what in Aquinas came to be called the possible intellect—that receptive power which “becomes all things” — and to give a brief account of what it actually means for the individual to have knowledge.<sup>34</sup> We will see later on that this idea that knowledge is indicated, at least in part, by one’s ability to make use of it or call it to mind *at will* is centrally important to the views of both Averroes and Aquinas.<sup>35</sup>

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31 Aristotle, *De Anima*, Bk. 3 Ch. 4, 430a14-15.

32 Ibid., Bk. 3 Ch. 4, 429a24-25.

33 Ibid., Bk. 3 Ch. 4, 429b6-8.

34 A more detailed account of how knowledge attainment is achieved can be found in Aristotle, *De Anima*, Bk. 3 Ch. 7, *Metaphysics*, Bk. 1 Ch. 1, and *Posterior Analytics*, Bk. 2 Ch. 19. From these sources a picture of knowledge attainment emerges by which one begins with sense perception and arrives at understanding of universals. The general process presented in Aristotle is shared by both Averroes and Aquinas although the particulars vary substantially and significantly.

35 It should be noted that Aristotle does not use the terms “agent intellect” and “possible intellect” in *De Anima* (although, in some translations, such as that used by Myles Burnyeat in his 2008 lecture “Aristotle’s Divine Intellect,” he does use the term ‘passive intellect’ in Bk. 3 Ch. 5 [see Myles F. Burnyeat, *Aristotle’s Divine Intellect* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2008), p. 40]). Thus, something must be said about how these terms describe what Aristotle is doing in *De Anima*. It is clear from the text presented that there is an intellectual element that is related to potentiality and one that is related to actuality. It also seems from what Aristotle says that these are two distinct faculties or powers--as opposed to being two ways of considering the same faculty. This separation becomes especially clear when we distinguish between



Once a person has knowledge he/she can begin to use that knowledge to make practical judgments and decisions by bringing the knowledge to bear in particular situations. Aristotle offers an example of this kind of decision making in *De Anima* 3.7 when he gives the example of the beacon of fire signaling an enemy. An individual sees an advancing flame. He is aware not only of the sensory evidence but also of the “forms in the images”<sup>36</sup>--that advancing fire signals the enemy--which go beyond the bare sensibles. Using this data the person “calculates and deliberates what is to come by reference to what is present; and when it makes a pronouncement, as in the case of sensation it pronounces the object to be pleasant or painful, in this case it avoids or pursues; and so generally in cases of action.”<sup>37</sup> He notes soon after this that “wish is to be found in the calculative part [of the soul]”<sup>38</sup> and that “[local] movement [i.e. the

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‘thinking’ and ‘intellect.’ The distinction between these terms and the result this has on our understanding of Aristotle was the subject of Burnyeat’s lecture. He notes that *nous/noein*, which he translates as “intellect” and “understanding” (pp. 18-19), is different from *dianoia*, translated as ‘thought’ (p. 18) or “ordinary thinking” (p. 35). Drawing on Aristotle’s notions of first and second potentiality and actuality Burnyeat notes that while there is a sense in which *dianoia* is a kind of *nous*--the stage of second potentiality/first actuality whereby human beings qua human being have the potential for true intellectual knowledge of all things--*nous* in the fullest sense--the sense identified with the agent intellect--is different (p. 35) (for his detailed discussion of the levels of potentiality and actuality as they related to *nous* see pp. 19-28). By carefully distinguishing thinking from intellect Burnyeat is able to point out, using *De Anima* Bk. 3 Ch. 4, that for Aristotle it is the human capacity for thinking and judging, *dianoia* or “first potentiality nous” (p. 35) which gives us the potential to know or understand (pp. 33-37). He seems to be talking here about the potential intellect, the part of the soul which “becomes all things.” Burnyeat distinguishes this from “second potentiality *nous*” (p. 35), when we actually attain full knowledge of essences and use them in further thought (pp. 27-28). This contemplation is the result of our connection to the agent intellect, the true Intellect which allows us to understand by making the intelligible forms intelligible to us. Burnyeat associates this with the active part of the intellect in *De Anima* 3.5 and with God (following, he thinks, Aristotle’s view as expressed in both *De Anima* and the *Metaphysics*); true *nous* is thus the Agent Intellect but we also have our own intellect in so far as we come to understand with the help of this Intellect (pp. 40-43). While identifying the Agent Intellect with God is controversial, certainly Burnyeat’s account helps to shed light on the complexities of Aristotle’s view of the intellects regarding both their function and their relationship to the human being; this makes the differences between Averroes and Aquinas’ views of the separability and function of the intellects more understandable.

36 Aristotle, *De Anima* Bk. 3 Ch. 7, 431b2.

37 Ibid., Bk. 3 Ch. 7, 431b8-10

38 Ibid., Bk. 3 Ch. 9, 432b5-6. In discussing this passage Sorabji points out that the result is that Aristotle makes *boulēsis* distinct from reason and yet still related to it, in so far as it is a rational desire for the (real or apparent) good (8). Aristotle further notes at *De Anima* 3.10, 433a24, that when action is “according to calculation it is also according to wish.”

movement of action] is always for an end and is accompanied by imagination or by appetite”<sup>39</sup> All of this is then connected with an end (the real or apparent good) and with devising a means to that end: “thought [imagination...] calculates means to an end. i.e. practical thought [...] while appetite is in every form of it relative to an end; for that which is the object of appetite is the stimulant of practical thought; and that which is last in the process of thinking is the beginning of the action.”<sup>40</sup>

We can take what has been said so far in *De Anima* and connect it to Aristotle’s discussion of wish and deliberation in Book 3 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Here Aristotle notes that moral actions are a subset of voluntary actions which are particular to human beings. They are actions which are not only done by the individual without coercion and with knowledge of the particulars (the criteria of voluntary action and general)<sup>41</sup> but also involve deliberation (*bouleusis*) and decision (*prohairesis*), which distinctively belong to human beings because they involve “reason and thought”<sup>42</sup> We deliberate and, as result of this deliberation, make decisions about “what is up to us, i.e. about the actions we can do [...] each group of human beings deliberates about the actions *they* can do,”<sup>43</sup> not about eternal things or impossible things, nor about things which cannot be changed, such as the principles of science, nor about ends (which are the realm of wish). Deliberation and decision are necessarily connected in that they are about the same thing: “What we

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39 Ibid., Bk. 3 Ch. 7, 432b15-16

40 Ibid., Bk. 3 Ch. 10, 433a14-18.

41 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985), Bk. 3 Ch. 1 1111a22-24.

42 Ibid., Bk. 3 Ch. 2, 1112a16. While he is speaking here about *prohairesis* in particular it is clear that the entire deliberative process involves reason.

43 Ibid., Bk. 3 Ch. 3, 1112a31-34. Here Aristotle is talking particularly about deliberation. However, earlier he makes a similar statement regarding decision: “in general what we decide to do would seem to be what is up to us” (3.2, 1111b30).

deliberate about is the same as what we decide to do, except that by the time we decide to do it, it is often definite; for what we decide to do is what we have judged [to be right] as a result of deliberation.”<sup>44</sup> This discussion of deliberation and decision makes it clear that it is this ability to consider and decide from among (equally) possible options that makes an action not simply voluntary but moral; morality only makes sense when we can praise or blame a person for his/her actions and we can only do this if he/she could have decided differently.<sup>45</sup>

While decision and deliberation are concerned with means there is also a faculty that is concerned with ends<sup>46</sup>: wish (*boulēsis*).<sup>47</sup> Wish is for the (real or apparent) good.<sup>48</sup> It is with the object of wish--the end--in place that we can begin to deliberate about and decide upon means by which to reach that end.<sup>49</sup> Thus, we have some end in mind, something we deem to be good. We wish for that end; this wishing is not simply desiring but has a calculative element, as we saw from *De Anima*. This calculative element, which is akin to reasoning, leads us to think about the means by which we may attain this end. We deliberate about possible ways to achieve it based upon available information using practical reason. Finally, we make a decision (*prohairesis*) about the means we will

44 Ibid., Bk. 3 Ch. 3., 1113a3-5.

45 Indeed, in his explanation of the Greek term *prohairesis* or “deliberate choice” F.E. Peters notes that “it is precisely this that brings human actions (*praxeis*) within the realm of morality.” F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms, A Historical Lexicon* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), p. 163.

46 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. 3 Ch. 2, 1111b20-30; 3.4, 1113a15.

47 Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms, A Historical Lexicon*, p. 106, links *boulēsis* with “rational desire.” This is supported by the way that Aristotle discusses wish as not merely desire or appetite but as necessarily linked to deliberation and decision. This makes the transition from the notion of wish to the notion of will in its various forms a bit more clear in so far as it demonstrates that *boulēsis* is not simply about appetite but about desire for ends which are rationally considered and rationally desired. Aristotle notes that wish and desire are both appetites but that wish, unlike desire, moves a person “according to calculation” (Aristotle, *De Anima* Bk. 3 Ch. 10, 433a24).

48 Aristotle, *De Anima*, Bk. 3 Ch. 10, 1113a15-1113b1 offers a discussion of how wish is related to both the absolute good and the apparent good for the individual.

49 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Bk. 3 Ch. 5, 1113b2-5.

pursue and we take action in order to bring about the means and, as a result, the desired ends.

This work of practical reason, whereby one determines what course of action one should take, is played out in the practical syllogism, the conclusion of which is action. This syllogism helps us to see the link between deliberation and action, between universal and particular knowledge, and between reason and the deliberative process. Aristotle offers an account of the practical syllogism in both the *De Anima* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the *De Anima* the discussion appears within a discussion of imagination, desire, and appetite as it is found in non-rational and rational animals. In the course of this discussion he states that,

The faculty of knowing is never moved but remains at rest. Since the one premiss or judgement is universal and the other deals with the particular (for the first tells us such and such a kind of man should do such a kind of act, and the second that this is an act of the kind meant, and a person of the type intended), it is the latter opinion that really originates movement, not the universal; or rather it is both, but the one does so while it remains in a state more like rest, which the other partakes in movement.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima* Bk. 3 Ch. 11, 434a16-20. To see this text within the greater context here I present *De Anima* Bk. 3 Ch. 11, 434a5-20:

“sensitive imagination, as we have said, is found in all animals, deliberative imagination only in those that are calculative: for whether this or that shall be enacted is already a task requiring calculation; and there must be a single standard to measure by, for that is pursued which is greater. It follows that what acts in this way must be able to make a unity out of several images.

[...]Hence appetite contains no deliberative element. Sometimes it overpowers wish and sets it in movement; at times wish acts thus upon appetite, like a ball, appetite overcoming appetite, i.e. in the condition of moral weakness (though by nature the higher faculty is always more authoritative and gives rise to movement). Thus three modes of movement are possible.

The faculty of knowing is never moved but remains at rest. Since the one premiss or judgement is universal and the other deals with the particular (for the first tells us such and such a kind of man should do such a kind of act, and the second that this is an act of the kind meant, and a person of the type intended), it is the latter opinion that really originates movement, not the universal; or rather it is both, but the one does so while it remains in a state more like rest, which the other partakes in movement.”

In the *Nicomachean Ethics* the practical syllogism appears, in the form of an example, within the context of a discussion of incontinence (*akrasia*). Here Aristotle is trying to explain how the incontinent man relates to his knowledge. He says,

Further, we may also look at the cause in the following way, referring to [human] nature. One belief (a) is universal; the other (b) is about particulars, and because they are particulars perception controls them. And the cases where these two beliefs result in (c) one belief, it is necessary in purely theoretical beliefs for the soul to affirm what has been concluded, and in beliefs about production (d) to act at once on what has been concluded.

If, e.g. (a) everything sweet must be tasted, and (b) this, some one particular thing, is sweet, it is necessary (d) for someone who is able and unhindered also to act on this at the same time.<sup>51</sup>

We see in both of these texts an account of action which makes use of both universal and particular knowledge to explain human action. Aristotle explains that universal knowledge is a necessary precondition for action but that action is directly motivated by the particular knowledge of the situation; we act because the particulars of the situation are in accord with the universal. The necessity of the universal and the calculation involved in determining whether the particulars conform to it are what make actions of this kind (including moral actions) only possible for humans; animals do not have access

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<sup>51</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Bk. 7 Ch. 3, 1147a24-35. Aristotle goes on to explain that sometimes knowledge and appetite are in conflict at *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.3 1147a36-1147b5: “Suppose, then, that someone has (a) the universal belief, and it hinders him from tasting; he has (b) the second belief, that everything sweet is pleasant and this is sweet, and this belief (b) is active; and he also has appetite. Hence, the belief (c) tells him to avoid this, but appetite leads him on, since it is capable of moving each of the [bodily] parts.

The result, then, is that in a way reason and belief make him act incontinently. The belief (b) is contrary to correct reason (a), but only coincidentally, not in itself. For, it is the appetite, not the belief, that is contrary [in itself to correct reason].

Hence, beasts are not incontinent, because they have no universal supposition, but [only] appearance and memory of particulars.”

to the universals and so they act based upon the appetites and desires which arise from their encounter with the particulars. Humans have the ability to use the syllogism to act rationally rather than being swayed by appetite (but of course, as Aristotle points out, it is possible for appetite to overtake our rational capacity, leading to incontinent actions).<sup>52</sup>

Here Aristotle uses food related examples but we can also use his beacon of fire example from earlier. A man knows that advancing beacons of fire signal enemies approaching and that a good soldier ought to alert his superiors to the approach (universal premise); the man sees an advancing beacon of fire and knows himself to be a soldier (particular premise); thus, the man alerts his superiors about the approaching enemy (conclusion, which is an action). This and Aristotle's examples demonstrate the way in which universal and particular knowledge work together in the practical syllogism to produce an action. It shows the movement from deliberation about a situation to action based upon that deliberation. It should also be noted that there is already a wished for end (e.g. to be a good soldier) at work and that the syllogism acts as a kind of deliberation about the means to achieve this end in the particular situation at hand. Thus, the practical

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52 Ibid., Bk. 7 Ch. 3. It must be noted that there is some debate regarding how one should interpret the practical syllogism, especially as it relates to incontinence (*akrasia*). The generally accepted account of *akrasia* in Aristotle is that there are two types--one resulting from impetuosity and one from weakness. The impetuously akratic person acts upon her passions without first going through the process of deliberation; the one who is akratic due to weakness does deliberate and decide, but acts contrary to their reasoned choice because their passions overwhelm them and result in a weakened intellectual acuity (see Kraut, Richard, "Aristotle's Ethics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), forthcoming URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/aristotle-ethics/>> for a general discussion of this view and some other interpretations of Aristotle's view). It is the latter type which is of most interest to us. For more detailed accounts of how Aristotle's view of *akrasia* may be interpreted, particularly as it compares to the Socratic rejection of the possibility of *akrasia*, see John McDowell, "Incontinence and Practical Wisdom" in *The Engaged Intellect: Philosophical Essays*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009) pp. 59–76 and Pierre Destrée, "Aristotle on the Causes of Akrasia" In Christopher Bobonich and Pierre Destrée (eds.), *Akrasia in Greek Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) pp. 139–166. Also see Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*, especially pp. 310-313.

sylllogism can be seen as an explanation of the process of wish, deliberation, and decision which is the hallmark of moral agency and responsibility.

### 2.2.2 Interpretations of Aristotle

Now that the relevant texts from the *De Anima* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* have been laid out and explained in some detail something should be said about how these texts are interpreted by scholars, particularly as it concerns the idea of will as it is understood today. As mentioned above there is debate about whether Aristotle had a notion of will in a real sense. While some see Aristotle as advocating for a will<sup>53</sup> most agree that Aristotle's concepts of wish (*boulēsis*) and decision (*prohairesis*) together with his more general notion of the voluntary can be seen as presenting an early example of some key aspects of what was to become the will.<sup>54</sup>

Kahn explains that Aristotle, following Plato, identifies three types of desire: *boulēsis*, “rational desire for what is good or beneficial,” *epithumia*, sensual desire, and *thumos*, anger.<sup>55</sup> He notes that *boulēsis*'s function as a rational desire places it in an ambiguous position as being part of the desiderative part of the soul while also being

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53 See Irwin, “Who Discovered the Will?” and Nielsen, “The Will—Origins of the Notion in Aristotle's Thought;” Nielsen specifically argues against Frede's view of Aristotle, insisting that, although it cannot be translated as ‘will,’ Aristotle's notion of *prohairesis* fulfills the requisite role of the will in Aristotle's moral philosophy. She argues that Frede's concept of ‘will’ is not sufficiently broad to allow for conceptions of will which may be significantly different from those of the Stoics or later thinkers.

54 And some insist there is absolutely no concept of will in Aristotle, as Gauthier famously did in *L'Éthique à Nicomaque: Introduction, Traduction, et Commentaire*: “Dans la psychologie d'Aristote la volonté n'existe pas [...] le souhait n'est pas un acte de «volonté»” (p. 218).

55 Kahn, “Discovering the will from Aristotle to Augustine,” p. 239. Also see Sorabji, “The concept of the will from Plato to Maximus the Confessor,” pp. 6 and 9. Frede points out that the different kinds of desire are necessary given the tripartite division of the soul posited by both Plato and Aristotle; each part of the soul must have its own form of desire particular to its abilities and motivations (Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, pp. 21-22)

intimately connected to reason.<sup>56</sup> Frede further explains *boulēsis* and its relation to both reason and the good; he notes that it is “a form of desire which is specific to reason. It is the form in which reason desires something.”<sup>57</sup>

However, *boulēsis* on its own is not enough to account for deliberate action; it must be accompanied by *prohairesis*, the “rational choice or decision involving some deliberation as to the best manner of achieving one’s goal.”<sup>58</sup> *Prohairesis* is based on *boulēsis* and intimately connected with it; it is also more rational than *boulēsis* because it involves rationally deliberating about and deciding upon means to achieve the end (the result of *boulēsis*).<sup>59</sup> It may be said that *prohairesis* is exemplified by the practical syllogism--the rational consideration of a particular situations relationship to a universal, resulting in action. As we saw above with the discussion of the practical syllogism, reason is employed to determine what action is best in a given situation with reference to

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56 Kahn, “Discovering the will from Aristotle to Augustine,” p. 239. Sorabji explains that sometimes Aristotle calls it rational while at other times he separates it from reason (“The concept of the will from Plato to Maximus the Confessor,” p. 8)

57 Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, p. 20. He goes to explain that “if reason recognizes, or believes itself to recognize, something good, it wills or desires it. If reason believes itself to see a course of action which would allow us to attain this presumed good, it thinks that it is a good thing, other things being equal, to take this course of action. And, if it thinks that it is a good thing to do something it wills or desires to do it. Thus, it is assumed that there is such a thing as desire for reason and hence also that reason by itself suffices to motivate us to do something [...] reason, just as it is attracted by truth, is also attracted by, and attached to, the good and tries to attain it” (pp. 20-21). Thus, Frede emphasizes that *boulēsis* is not only a rational desire but, being thus connected to reason and to the good, it is enough to motivate us to action when some (real or apparent) good and a means to attain it are apprehended by our rational capacity.

58 Kahn, “Discovering the will from Aristotle to Augustine,” p. 239

59 Sorabji, “The concept of the will from Plato to Maximus the Confessor,” p. 11. Bobzien also gives an account of this relationship among decision (which she calls ‘choice’), wish (which she calls ‘wanting’) and deliberation. She explains that one’s “wanting,” or wish, provides a starting point for deliberation (95-96)—one can only begin to deliberate about means once the goal is set. This deliberation ends in choice and choice “is the efficient cause and origin of action” (96). She goes on to explain that although not every choice leads to action and not every action is chosen, virtue is necessarily tied up with choice: “the activities of virtue are actions that are in accordance with choice. The only way in which virtues can be realized in action is via *choice and* realization of the intermediate in action” (98). See Susanne Bobzien, “Choice and Moral Responsibility (NE iii 1-5)” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, edited by Ronald Polansky (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).



the particular conditions at hand and the universal (which we may relate to the wished for end) which is known (and/or desired).<sup>60</sup> It can be said that the major term of the syllogism is the universal which the individual already has knowledge of and has adopted as an end; the middle term is the object decided upon (*prohairesis*) through deliberation (*bouleusis*) which is determined to be in line with the universal; and the conclusion is the statement of the action one must take.<sup>61</sup>

What has been said here should not, however, lead us to believe that Aristotle views decision (*prohairesis*) the same way we view it today (as more or less analogous to choice); in particular, Aristotle does not conceive of decision as the freedom to select or choose from among various equally possible options. Rather, as Frede explains, we decide upon what seems to conform to our rational desire to achieve the good; then we may either live up to this decision (when we act according to our rational desires) or we may not (when we act according to our nonrational desires).<sup>62</sup> Frede claims that despite the differences between *boulēsis* and *prohairesis* (in particular the fact that we can will anything but only make decisions about what is “up to us” (*eph’ hēmin*)) *prohairesis* can be seen as a special form of willing (*boulēsis*) because of its connection to the rational

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60 Sorabji hints at this when he relates it to Aristotle’s dietary policy of eating dry foods (“The concept of the will from Plato to Maximus the Confessor,” p. 11). Kahn also discusses this connection, noting that *prohairesis* “marks the point of confluence between our desire for a goal and two rational judgments: first, our judgment that the goal is a good one, and second, our judgment that this action is the best way to pursue it” (“Discovering the will from Aristotle to Augustine,” p. 240). While neither explicitly mentions the practical syllogism is clear that it is the point of reference for both authors.

61 Bobzien, “Choice and Moral Responsibility (NE iii 1-5),” pp. 89-90.

62 Frede explains that this is what Aristotle means by *akrasia*. It is a case of “act[ing] against one’s choice (*prohairesis*) rather than [a case] in which one chooses to act against reason. (*A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, p. 23). Such cases do not involve rational consideration of options and a decision to choose some kind of temporary pleasure over a more rational option; rather, they are a matter of being swept away by one’s desires such that one temporarily ceases to reason and thus acts contrary to reason and in accord with one’s unchosen appetitive desires instead. See note 52 above for other sources on this topic.

capacity (deciding, like willing, is based upon our conception of the good and how to attain it). Thus, we wish for some end we see as good and we decide upon means which we reason will help us to attain that end. If we have trained ourselves properly we follow those decisions; if we have not, our rational capacity may become overwhelmed by our nonrational desires and we may act contrary to the decisions we have made.<sup>63</sup>

What we have seen from this examination of Aristotle is the emergence of some of the key elements of moral decision making which, for Averroes and Aquinas, came together to form the general concept of will. Aristotle represents one of several starting points for the development of the idea of will, although he cannot be said unequivocally to have had a notion of will himself. We must now examine how these fledgling notions of *boulēsis* and *prohairesis* became part of the later Greek traditions of the Stoics and Platonists.

### 2.3 The Greek Tradition After Aristotle

The Greek tradition continued on as philosophers struggled with these problems of moral responsibility and the relationship between reason and desire. It eventually reached past the Greeks and into the Christian and Arab language traditions. Here we will focus on those elements of the Greek moral tradition which modified these Aristotelian

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63 Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, pp. 22-24; pp. 26-29. Frede points out, in particular, that “choosing is just a special form of willing [...] But choices are not explained in terms of a will but in terms of the attachment of reason to the good, however it might be conceived of, and the exercise of reason’s cognitive abilities to determine how in this situation the good might be attained” (p. 27). He goes on to further clarify the role of choice in selecting not every action but a set of actions rationally determined to lead to the good, which may then be followed (when one acts rationally) or not (when one acts on the basis of appetitive desire), and the lack of a notion of freedom attached to choice, by noting that the wise and virtuous person has no choice but to act the way he does because he is never overcome by his nonrational desires (p. 29). Also see Bobzien, “Choice and Moral Responsibility (NE iii 1-5),” pp.96-97 and 101-104 for a general account of the relationship between choice and action and for an explanation of how the moral process is carried out for the various types of Aristotelian agents.

ideas and which, with Aristotle himself, were widely used in Medieval considerations of these issues.

### 2.3.1 The Stoics

The notions of *boulēsis* and *prohairesis* which we have discussed in relation to Aristotle also became a focus of Stoic philosophy. However, they were developed to fit within the Stoic conception of the soul and human rationality. The Stoics also added to these a particular notion of freedom (*eleutheria*). One major difference in the philosophies of Aristotle and the Stoics which impacted the Stoic view of willing was the Stoic insistence on a unified human soul which they identified with reason, as opposed to the tripartite soul found in the earlier philosophers.<sup>64</sup> This outlook on the soul means that the Stoics do not divide desires or actions into rational and nonrational the way that Aristotle did. This allows the Stoics to insist that the soul itself is reason and that “there is no nonrational part of our souls to generate nonrational desires which would constitute a motivation for us to act quite independent of any beliefs we have and could even overpower reason and make us act against our beliefs. The way we behave is completely determined by our beliefs.”<sup>65</sup> Indeed, the Stoics see all passions (including desire) as cognitive.<sup>66</sup> While we may have appetites which are irrational this does not mean that

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<sup>64</sup> Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, p. 31-32. Frede goes on to explain that human beings, like animals, are born with a nonrational soul but that it becomes rational as we develop and that this constitutes “a complete transformation of our innate and nonrational soul into a rational soul, a reason or a mind” (p. 35; see pp. 32-36 for the account of how the human soul relates to plant and animal souls)

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 32

<sup>66</sup> For example, Plutarch notes that the Stoics “say that passion is no different from reason” in *On Moral Virtue* 446F-447A (LS 412, SVF 3.459) in A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, Vol. 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). References of Stoic primary texts will include the author and text information followed by the page number in Long and Sedley (LS) and the SVF or other

these are non-rational. For example, appetite is seen as an “irrational stretching [desire], or pursuit of an expected good”<sup>67</sup> while wishing is “a well-reasoned stretching [desire].”<sup>68</sup> Clearly, this is quite different from the Aristotelian model which claims it is possible to act against our choices when we are overcome by our nonrational desires.

Related to this notion of the rational soul are the Stoic ideas of impressions and assent, and the inner life. The Stoics noted that both animals and humans have “impulsive impressions” but that for humans these impressions become rational in that they are assented to by reason and they also come from reason in so far as they are the result of the habits, beliefs and attitudes particular to the mind of an individual. This means that how one reacts to an impression and the ‘character’ or ‘coloring’ of the impression will be the result of the set of beliefs one has developed around the topic of the impression.<sup>69</sup> A person’s reaction to his impressions” is one of the few things that the Stoics saw as part of what was “up to us (*eph’ hēmin*).”<sup>70</sup> Frede points out that an action is up to us, in the early Stoic view, “if its getting done is a matter of our giving assent to the corresponding impulsive impression,”<sup>71</sup> such that my crossing the street is up to me in that I can assent or refuse to assent to the impression that it is good to cross the street. Later this view narrowed to include only the assent and not the action as part of what is considered up to us because, after all, external forces may thwart my will to cross the street successfully.

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additional reference when available.

67 Andronicus, *On passions* I (LS 411, SVF 3.391)

68 Diogenes Laertius 7.115 (LS 412, SVF 3.431)

69 Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, pp. 36-39. Also see Susanne Bobzien “Stoic Conceptions of Freedom and Their Relation to Ethics” in *Aristotle and After* edited by Richard Sorabji (London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 1997), pp. 76-77 for a discussion of impulsive impressions in the work of the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus.

70 For example, Epictetus says in his *Discourses* that “the one thing which the gods have placed in our power is the one of supreme importance, the correct use of impressions” (LS 391).

71 Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, p. 45.

This means that the assent is up to me but the action and its success are not; “we can will to cross the street, but we cannot choose or decide to cross the street.”<sup>72</sup> This means that our willing and choosing is about our assent to impression and not about action (although giving or withholding assent does lead to actions which are in accord with how we choose to handle the impressions we receive). Frede goes on to explain that given this context choosing (*prohairesis*) to give assent constitutes a willing and this willing leads to actions; thus, the Stoic notion of the will is connected with *prohairesis* rather than *boulēsis* because the relevant mental activity is one of choosing whether or not to assent to an impression rather than wishing for something.<sup>73</sup>

Something should be said here about what the Stoics say about causes and fate as it relates to this issue of assent. In general, “the Stoics [describe fate as] a sequence of causes, that is, an inescapable ordering and interconnexion”<sup>74</sup> It “is a certain everlasting ordering of the whole” which is “inviolable.”<sup>75</sup> This view is understandable given the view that “there are two things in nature from which everything is produced--cause and matter” and that causes can be further broken down into various types of causes which act

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72 Ibid., pp. 45-46.

73 Ibid., pp. 45-48 for his extended discussion of the relationship between choosing, willing, and assenting. He ends the section by noting that “With Stoicism, then, we get for the first time a notion of the will as an ability of the mind or of reason to make choices and decisions” (p. 48). Also see Bobzien “Stoic Conceptions of Freedom and Their Relation to Ethics,” pp. 73-76 and pp. 79-82 for her discussion of what is ‘up to us’ and the relevance of assent in the work of Chrysippus and Epictetus which are in line with what has been said in this paragraph.

74. Aetius 1.28.4 (LS 336, SVF 2.917)

75. Gellius, 7.2.3 (LS 336, SVF 2.1000); here Gellius is referring to the view of Chrysippus in particular. Also see Alexander, *On fate* 191, 30-192, 28 (LS 337-338, SVF 2.945). Plutarch notes that for Chrysippus “fate [is] an invincible, unblockable and inflexible cause” (*On Stoic self-contradictions* 1056B-C (LS 339, SVF 2.997))

upon matter to shape and direct it in various ways.<sup>76</sup> This means that fate is, in important ways, a term of physics, simply explaining how the world is governed.<sup>77</sup>

This view of fate does not mean that action is useless or that humans are not responsible for their actions. Cicero points out that one's actions are as fated as the outcome of those actions; for example, one may be fated to go the doctor for treatment of an illness as part of one's fate to recover from the illness.<sup>78</sup> For some Stoics this view of fate was so strong that it had the force of necessity. But, others claimed that "there are voluntary motions of the our minds, free from all fate." Cicero points to Chrysippus as attempting to advocating for a kind of middle position, but ultimately falling closer to the former view.<sup>79</sup>

Cicero uses the example of assent to demonstrate Chrysippus' claims. Chrysippus wants to move away from necessity while maintaining causal-determinism; he wants to claim that everything has a cause without doing away with moral responsibility. This leads him to distinguish between "complete and primary causes" and "auxiliary and proximate causes."<sup>80</sup> He goes on to claim that acts of assent are caused by proximate, not

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76. Seneca, *Letters* 65.2, (LS 334). Also see Galen, *On sustaining causes* 1.1-2.4, LS 334-335, and Clement 8.9.33.1-9 (LS 336, SVF 2.351) for a discussion of how some Stoics classify and explain causes; they offer accounts of a myriad of causes including complete/sustaining causes, preliminary causes, joint-causes, auxiliary causes, antecedent causes, etc.. The main point to understand from this is that for the Stoics everything is part of the vast causal network which governs the world.

77. See Cicero *On divination* 1.125-6 (LS 337, SVF 2.921) and Stobaeus 1.79, 1-12 (LS 337, SVF 2.913).

78. Cicero *Of fate* 28-30 (LS 339)

79. Cicero *On fate* 39-43 (LS 386-387, SVF 2.974)

80 Cicero, *On fate* 39-43 (LS 389, SVF 2.974). Something should be said here about how these different causes are defined. Long and Sedley offer an account of them in their discussion of causation and fate. Here they explain that a "complete/sustaining cause" is one which will sustain its effect as long as the cause lasts, once it is initiated by some proximate cause; a proximate cause is that which initiates the activity of the complete cause. They explain that Chrysippus uses these designations in regards to human action to explain how moral responsibility can be maintained alongside determinism (resulting in a kind of compatibilism). For Chrysippus one's moral character is the complete cause of one's actions while the external impression to which one gives or withholds assent (as result of one's character) is the proximate cause (Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, p. 341-342)

primary causes and so they can remain in our control; assent is prompted, or caused, by an impression but this does not mean the assent is necessitated, since the impression is not a complete cause.<sup>81</sup> The impression offers the stimulus or trigger<sup>82</sup> for assent but the act of assent is, itself, still “in our power [...and] move[s] through its own force and nature.”<sup>83</sup> Thus, human beings can retain some kind of freedom despite the causal-determinist nature of reality.<sup>84</sup> This means that human beings can still be held morally responsible for their actions; this is because moral responsibility is based on the opportunity rather than possibility to do otherwise. Given one’s character and the external circumstances it was not possible for one to act differently; however, this does not mean that the opportunity to act differently was not present (even one could not take advantage of it).<sup>85</sup> Thus, for Chrysippus moral responsibility and choice is maintained even within a causally-determined world; “we deliberate and make decisions because it is the means by which many of our actions are fated to come about”<sup>86</sup> and these decisions are caused not only, or even primarily, by external factors or impressions but by our internal character and dispositions which leads us to act as we do.

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<sup>81</sup>Cicero, *On fate* 39-43 (LS 386-388, SVF 2.974). Long and Sedley explain that this leads to the argument that everything in a particular “world cycle” is planned and set in motion at the start and so everything, landmark event and small ‘choice’ alike, is predetermined; there is a long causal chain in which each action plays a role, caused by something before and causing something after (*The Hellenistic Philosophers*, p. 343)

<sup>82</sup>Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, p. 393.

<sup>83</sup>Cicero, *On fate* 39-43 (LS 388, SVF 2.974).

<sup>84</sup>Gellius, 7.2.6-13 (LS 388, SVF 2.1000)

<sup>85</sup>Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, pp. 392-393. This view, Long and Sedley explain, allows for a distinction between fate and necessity; our actions may be fated, but they are not necessitated. Also see Diogenianus (Eusebius, *Evangelical preparation* 6.8.25-9) (LS 389; SVF 2.998), and Alexander, *On fate*, 181,13-182, 20 (LS 389-390; SVF 2.979).

<sup>86</sup>Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, p. 392; also see pp. 341-342

Furthermore, the Stoics maintained that only the wise person had freedom (*eleutheria*), although what is up to us applied to everyone (since everyone assents to or withholds assent from their rational impressions).<sup>87</sup> This is because *eleutheria* depends not primarily on external factors but on the condition of one's soul and particularly on its relationship to knowledge of the good. The wiser person "is master of his emotions [... and] cannot be bribed or blackmailed into actions which he does not want to perform."<sup>88</sup> *Eleutheria* is primarily a virtuous state of mind and is not concerned with actions as much as with the ability to understand what is up to us and to align one's desires with these things such that one is never thwarted in one's desires and plans by circumstances beyond one's control.<sup>89</sup> Bobzien points out that this view of freedom does not remove moral responsibility from those who are not sage and so are not free; this is because of the distinction between freedom and what is up to us.<sup>90</sup>

Frede gives a more detailed account of this unique view of freedom and its relationship to the will. He notes, like Bobzien, that *eleutheria* is reserved for the wise while everyone else is enslaved by their desires for and attachments to things which are

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<sup>87</sup> Bobzien, "Stoic Conceptions of Freedom and Their Relation to Ethics," p. 79; pp. 84-85. Also, Frede *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought* pp. 66-88. See Sextus Empiricus *Against the Professors* 7.151-7 (LS 255), Anonymous Stoic treatise (Herculaneum papyrus 1020) col. 4, col. 1 (LS 255, SVF 2.131), Plutarch *On Stoic self-contradictions* 1056E-F (LS 255, SVF 2.993), Stobaeus 2.73, 16-74, 3 (LS 256, SVF 3.112), and Stobaeus 2.66, 14-67, 4 (LS 379-380, SVF 3.560). Here they explain that the Stoic wise man never opines or supposes but only has knowledge. As a result the "wise men are incapable of being deceived and of erring" (Anonymous Stoic treatise (Herculaneum papyrus 1020) col. 4, col. 1 (LS 255, SVF 2.131)) but rather "does everything well [as a] consequence of his accomplishing everything in accordance with right reason and in accordance with virtue" (Stobaeus 2.66, 14-67, 4 (LS 379-380, SVF 3.560)).

<sup>88</sup> Bobzien, "Stoic Conceptions of Freedom and Their Relation to Ethics," p. 79.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 84-85. See Stobaeus 2.155, 5-17 (LS 419, SVF 3.564, 632) and Gellius 19.1.17-18 (Epictetus fr. 9) (LS 419) for a discussion of the good or wise man handles passion and desire.

<sup>90</sup> Bobzien, "Stoic Conceptions of Freedom and Their Relation to Ethics," p. 79; p. 85



not up to us.<sup>91</sup> Frede goes on to explain how this view of freedom fits within the causal determinist framework of Stoicism and how it leads to the development of the idea of free will. As may be suspected from what has been said already about the Stoic view of the world, freedom is not about choosing anything one wants but rather it is the result of aligning one's desires with the good properly understood. Human beings have a natural attachment to the good and a desire to understand the good and work for the good; freedom is a matter of being "solely motivated by [the] correct understanding of the good and [the] attachment to it."<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, human beings are constructed by God to have a natural ability to acquire the truth.<sup>93</sup> When this natural capacity for understanding the good and the truth is fulfilled, the wise person is led to act with regard to his impressions based on this understanding, rather than being forced by his desires to act in certain ways; the wise free person could not have acted other than he did but, because he is responsible for his beliefs and desires and it is these beliefs and desires which lead him in his actions, he is still free.<sup>94</sup> The good is such that it always aligns with the will of God and thus one's own will will be to do what God wills because it is understood to be good; this does not, however, mean that one is forced to will the way one does by God, but only that one's will and God's will will always be aligned if the good is properly understood.<sup>95</sup> This

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91 Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, pp. 66-67. See Diogenes Laertius 7.121-2 (LS 431-432): "Only he [the wise man] is free, but the inferior are slaves. For freedom is the power of autonomous actions, but slavery is the lack of autonomous action."

92 Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, p. 79

93 Ibid., p. 84

94 Ibid., pp. 79-83. Frede explains that the will of the enslaved person is forced to assent by the impression he receives by virtue of the unnatural and unreasonable desires and beliefs he has, while the free person is not forced by the impression but is led his understanding of the good to assent or withhold assent as is appropriate (p. 82). Thus, "the free man could not, given this understanding and insight, choose otherwise, except by sacrificing his rationality, which is not prepared to do" (p. 83).

95 Ibid., pp. 79-80.

ability to act of one's own initiative in pursuit of the good, rather than being forced to act is what was understood by the Stoics as a "free will."<sup>96</sup>

Now that Stoic views of choice and freedom have been examined something must be briefly said about moral action itself. The Stoic conception of the good is that is is something beneficial or virtuous; virtue "is a disposition of the commanding-faculty."<sup>97</sup> Once comes to understand the good naturally through reason.<sup>98</sup> Epictetus explains that "it is [the soul's] nature to be moved appetitively towards the good, with aversion towards the bad [...] Once the good appears it immediately moves the soul towards itself, while the bad repels the soul from itself."<sup>99</sup> this does not, as it might seem, indicate some kind of nonrational, animalistic movement towards the good; in fact, only humans and gods are capable of attaining or recognizing the good since "there is no good except where there is a place for reason."<sup>100</sup> This makes sense once we recall that even the appetites are a matter of reason for human beings, according to the Stoics. In the monist view of the soul there is only a rational faculty, which an individual can use well or poorly. Only the wise person is able to fulfill the natural human capacity for understanding and virtue and act accordingly. From this we can see that for the Stoics moral action is a matter of living up to only nature as rational being.

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96 Ibid., pp. 74-75. Frede points out that while the term used here, *autexousion*, is often translated as "having free will" this is not quite right. He explains that it "refers to the freedom of the person to act as he sees fit in pursuit of the good" rather than being forced to act in some way.

97 Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, p. 371. The Stoics also refer to virtue as a 'tenor' a state which does not allow for degrees; that is to say, one is either virtuous or not. (see pp. 372, 377, and 380 for some Stoic texts and pp. 376 and 383 for some discussion of this idea by Long and Sedley.)

98 Ibid., pp. 368-370.

99 Ibid., pp. 370-371. Also, p. 381: "all men have natural tendencies to virtue."

100 Ibid., p. 371.

Finally, from what has been said above and from additional information about the passions we also have some notion of the Stoic view of *akrasia* or weakness of will. Many have claimed that the Stoic system cannot adequately explain *akrasia* and that this is a problem for the system. This claim rests on the Stoic view of the soul as a unified rational, rather than divided soul with rational and non rational elements; this view of the soul entails the claim that the passions are also ‘rational’ in some sense, being judgments (Chrysippus) or caused by judgments (Zeno and Cleanthes).; appetite and desire are not separate from reason.<sup>101</sup> If *akrasia* necessarily includes conflict between reason and appetite/desire the Stoic model is at a loss; this is a problem if we are to grant, as many do, that *akrasia* is a reality of human experience.

However, some scholars have argued that the Stoic framework can adequately explain *akrasia*. These solutions hinge on the Stoic notion of assent to impressions, discussed above. Joyce explains three possible Stoic explanations of *akrasia*: the oscillation model, the appeal to impulses model and simultaneous assent model. The oscillation model, attributed to Plutarch, explains that for Stoics *akrasia* is a matter of assenting first to one thing and then to another from moment to moment; this would mean that there is no actual conflict and any particular time between reason and action.<sup>102</sup> The appeal to impulse model takes seriously that *akrasia* includes a conflict in which one

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101 Richard Joyce, “Early Stoicism and Akrasia” in *Phronesis Vol XL/3*, 1995, p. 318; Justin Gosling “The Stoics and ἀκρασία” in *Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science*, 20.2 (1987), p. 192; Galen, *On Hippocrates; and Plato’s doctrines* 4.3.2-5 (LS 414, Posidonius fr. 34).

How one should view the passions in Stoicism is a complicated issue which I will not fully address here. In any case, several fragments indicated that the passions were regarded as “irrational,” (Andronicus *On passions* 1 (LS 411, SVF 3.391) or “disobedient to reason” (Stobaeus 2.88, 8-90, 6 (LS 410, SVF 3.378, 389)), or “reason turned aside” (Galen, *On Hippocrates; and Plato’s doctrines* .2.10-18 (LS 413-414, SVF 3.462)), etc.. The many fragments offered by Long and Sedley in “65 The Passions” in *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, pp. 410-419 show the variety of ways the Stoics viewed the passions.

102 Joyce, “Early Stoicism and Akrasia,” pp. 325-326. Also Gosling, “The Stoics and ἀκρασία,” p. 189

reason that X is better while doing Y. It accounts for this conflict by explaining that one may initial assent to an impression that Y is best and that this leads to an impulse, or action towards Y which is so strong that one's subsequent assent to X and rejection of Y is not enough to counter that impulse and stop the action. For example, one may have the impression that the chocolate bar on the table would be good to eat, assent to that impression, and begin the action of unwrapping the chocolate to eat it. Upon further consideration one may assent to the impression one should not eat the chocolate because one is diabetic; however, the action of eating the bar which one began under the first impression may be too strong for the impulse resulting from the second impression to stop.<sup>103</sup> Here *akrasia* is a matter of not having full control over one's physical actions rather than an issue of internal conflict between reason and appetite. Finally, in the simultaneous assent model, which Joyce supports, one assents to multiple, even contradictory, impressions simultaneously and experiences impulses as a result of these impressions. In this case the 'strongest' impulse will override the weaker and result in action. Joyce argues that although this could not happen for the Stoic sage it is possible for the average person who must struggle to keep her rationality in line with the will of God.<sup>104</sup>

I will not adjudicate here which view is more in line with Stoic philosophy or which, if any, of these models any particular Stoic ascribed too. However, I think this account at least offers some insight into *akrasia* within a Stoic framework. It also serves

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103 Joyce, "Early Stoicism and Akrasia," pp. 327-328. Also see Gosling "The Stoics and ἀκρασία," pp. 189-190. Both authors site Chrysippus' example of the runner and the example of *Medea*.

104 Joyce, "Early Stoicism and Akrasia," pp. 328-330. Also see Stobaeus 2.155,5-17 (LS 419, SVF 3.564, 632),

to highlight how the Stoic view differs from the Aristotelian view of *akrasia*, which, as explained above, is described in terms of action contrary to one's rational decisions due to one's appetites.<sup>105</sup>

### 2.3.2 The Platonists and Peripatetics<sup>106</sup>

From what has been said so far we can see how the Stoics took what Aristotle (and Plato) had said about the ideas of *boulēsis*, *prohairesis*, and the voluntary or “up to us” and transformed them in important ways as they tried to fit these ideas into their world view and notions of the human soul. The Stoic view was not, however, universally accepted; Platonists and Peripatetics who disagreed with the Stoic conception of the soul as united to reason and with their causal-determinist world view working the Stoic ideas of assent, choice, and will into their own systems, further transforming them from their Aristotelian roots.

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<sup>105</sup> Gosling offers a brief comparison of the Stoic and Aristotelian views in “The Stoics and ἀκρασία” pp. 198-199.

<sup>106</sup> I will note here that I have left Plotinus out of the following discussion. Partly, this is due to constraints of space, but, more importantly, it is the result of keeping a strict focus on the human being. In *Ennead VI.8*, “On Free Will and the Will of The One,” Plotinus offers a discussion of willing which is largely focused on the divine will and discusses human willing in the context of understanding the will of The One. However, I will say a few things about Plotinus's view of human willing and freedom here. In defining freedom and relate it to voluntary action Plotinus says “we think of our free at as one which we execute of our own choice, in no servitude to chance or necessity or overmastering passion, nothing thwarting our will; the voluntary is conceived as an event amenable to will and occurring or not as our will dictates. Everything will be voluntary that is produced under no compulsion and with knowledge; our free act is what we are masters to perform” (VI.8.1 of Plotinus, *The Enneads*, translated by Stephen MacKenna (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1956), p. 596). He goes on to questions whether one can be said to have freedom when one is swayed by appetite, “fancy,” nature, etc.. He concludes that we are free, principally in so far as we live by Intellectual-Principle rather than bodily principles (I.8.2, p. 597), arguing that “our freedom of act, or self-disposal, must be referred not to the doing, not to the external thing done but to the inner activity, to the Intellection, to virtue's own vision” (I.8.6, p.599). Thus, Plotinus seems to think that human willing and human freedom is a matter of intellect or reason in so far as it is directed towards The Good and unimpeded or unswayed by bodily hinderances. For an account of how Plotinus views on the will one may see John R. Crocker, “The Freedom of Man in Plotinus,” in *The Modern Schoolman: A Quarterly Journal of Philosophy*, 34 (1956); the notion of *akrasia* in Plotinus and it's relation to the accounts of earlier Greek thinkers is discussed in Lloyd P. Gerson, “Plotinus on Weakness of the Will: The Neoplatonic Synthesis” in *Weakness of Will From Plato to the Present*, edited by Tobias Hoffmann (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), pp. 42-57.

Platonists and Peripatetics retained the tripartite view of the soul, claiming that it had appetitive, spirited, and rational elements and corresponding desires.<sup>107</sup> They combined this with the Stoic notions of impressions and assent, claiming that each part of the soul has its own set of impressions related to its particular kinds of desires. Assent to these various impressions, however, was still a matter of reason. Thus, Platonists and Peripatetics explained *akrasia* differently than either Aristotle or the Stoics; it was a matter of reason's assenting to an impression of the spirited or appetitive part of the soul rather than to a rational impression.<sup>108</sup> This new structure led to a view of reason as having a dual nature: on the one hand reason forms its own impressions of what is good and, on the other, it assents to or withholds assent from all of the impressions which are presented to it. This led, Frede claims, to the splitting of reason into a cognitive art and a willing part.<sup>109</sup>

One key figure in the Peripatetic tradition was Alexander of Aphrodisias, whose work on Aristotle was particularly important to both the Arabic and Latin language writers of the Middle Ages. Of special importance for our purposes is what Alexander says about deliberation and choice as proof against the determinist framework.

In *de Fato*, or *On Fate*, Alexander points out that the power of deliberation (*boulēsis*) is a natural power of the human being and that nature would not give humans such a power in vain. Deliberation allows humans to examine the world and “judge of the

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107 Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*. p. 51.

108 Ibid., pp. 51-52. It should be recalled that Stoics claimed all impressions were rational impressions since the soul was fully rational and Aristotle explained *akrasia* as a matter of failing to live up to choices one had already made.

109 Ibid., pp. 52-53

appearances that impinge on him concerning certain things as deserving to be chosen.”<sup>110</sup>

He points out that we deliberate about things “because we will gain some advantage from deliberating,”<sup>111</sup> namely, because it can help us in making choices. If we were not able to choose, everything being causally determined, deliberation would be useless; but, nature would not provide us with a useless power. This power to deliberate and to be the cause of one’s actions which is part of the nature of the human being as a rational being.<sup>112</sup>

Alexander goes on to connect deliberation to choice (*prohairesis*), which is what “depends on us [...] that over which we have control both to do it and not to do it.”<sup>113</sup> He further defines choice as “the peculiar activity of man [...] the impulse with desire towards that has been preferred as a result of deliberation.”<sup>114</sup> Again, it seems obvious that human beings exercise choice and that we could not have a choice about those things which are necessary or determined. The judgment we level at ourselves and others regarding decision making further supports the fact that not everything is determined. Some things are in our power to deliberate about and choose; if this were not the case it would make no sense that nature has given us this ability and inclination towards judgment.<sup>115</sup> This shows, then, that we are, for some things and sometimes, the cause of our own actions; we deliberate, choose, and act without the push of some outside cause

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110 Alexander of Aphrodisias *de Fato*, in *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Fate*, translated by R.W. Sharples (London: Duckworth, 1983), Ch. XI, p. 55.

111 Alexander, *de Fato*, Ch. XI, p.56.

112 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Anima libri mantissa* in *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Fate*, translated by R.W. Sharples (London: Duckworth, 1983), Mantissa XXIII, pp. 97-98; see Alexander of Aphrodisias *Quaestiones III.13* in *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Fate*, translated by R.W. Sharples (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp.118-119 for a further account of the relationship between deliberation and rationality. Frede also gives an account of how rationality plays a role in determining what is “up to us” (*to eph’ hēmin*) for Alexander in *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, p. 95.

113 Alexander, *de Fato*, Ch. XII, p. 57.

114 Ibid.

115 Ibid., pp.57-58.

which determines our actions. In fact, this ability is part of what it is to be human: “For man is the beginning and cause of the actions that come about through him, and this is what being is for a man.”<sup>116</sup>

Alexander further explains how choice “depends on us” in his *De Anima libri mantissa*. Here he explains that some choices are the result of nature or habit while others are contrary to what nature and habit would dictate, as when we choose to have a second candy bar despite our usual habit of healthy eating, because of “weakness or slackness of mortal nature;”<sup>117</sup> these are things which truly “depend on us” because they have no other cause and the opposite is possible.<sup>118</sup>

Frede points out that a key feature of Alexander of Aphrodisias’ views is that, although they are Aristotelian in many respects, they also represent a shift away from the Aristotelian views. Particularly, Alexander situates praise and blame with choice in a way Aristotle does not (in part, of course, because he does not have the relevant view of choice). In particular, as we saw above, Alexander emphasizes the importance of being able to choose differently, of the opposite of one’s action being possible; an action depends on us precisely when the opposite action could have been chosen.<sup>119</sup> Frede explains that for Aristotle praise and blame are given based upon how one is doing given the context of one’s actions, not on whether one could have done differently; a child is praised for his choice to refrain from hitting his sister not because he could have hit her

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 63).

<sup>117</sup> Alexander, *De Anima libri mantissa*, Mantissa XXII, p. 95.

<sup>118</sup> Alexander, *de Fato*, Ch. XII, pp. 57-58; *De Anima libri mantissa*, Mantissa XXII, pp. 94-96. It should be noted that many of the important passages from these primary texts can also be found in Richard Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200-600 AD: A Sourcebook*, Vol. 1 and 2 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

<sup>119</sup> Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, pp. 97-98.



but because it was a meritorious decision given his age and the circumstances. For Alexander, on the other hand, it is essential that the child could have done differently but chose the right action; the choice meritorious, not because of the context the child inhabits but because it was the right decision and the child could have done the opposite.<sup>120</sup> Frede claims that Alexander's notion is "the ancestor of the notion that to have free will is to be able, in the very same circumstances, to choose between doing A and doing B,"<sup>121</sup> something akin to some modern notions of free will. Thus, Alexander's ideas represent an important step in the development of the concepts of free will, choice, and deliberation. Although I will not go into detail here it can also be noted that Alexander's importance is further demonstrated in the examination of Alexander's influence on the Arabic-Islamic tradition of free will offered by Luis Xavier Lopez-Farjeat in "Determinism and Free Will in Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Arabic Tradition"<sup>122</sup> where he examines Alexander's influence on the Ash'arīte tradition and on the critique of that tradition by Averroes.

Along with this new view of the soul and its attitude towards impressions Platonists and Peripatetics developed a distinct understanding of freedom, choice, and what is "up to us." For example, as we have seen, Frede explains that Alexander of Aphrodisias makes a distinction between "What we do of our own accord" and "what we do because it is up to us" which corresponds in some respects to the Aristotelian distinction between the voluntary and the chosen while bringing in some Stoic ideas;<sup>123</sup>

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120 Ibid., pp. 98-100.

121 Ibid., p. 100.

122 Luis Xavier Lopez-Farjeat in "Determinism and Free Will in Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Arabic Tradition" in *Proceedings of the ACPA*, Vol. 81 (2008), pp. 161-177.

123 Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, p. 57.

this distinction is meant to explain the difference between unforced assent and considered, critical assent. This leads to the notion of *boulēsis*, now associated with the notion of will, as giving assent to either rational or irrational impressions.<sup>124</sup> It also lead to new developments in the ideas of choice and freedom. Platonists and Peripatetics reasoned that choice had to involve not only the ability to choose or fail to choose, as we saw in Aristotle's account of *prohairesis*, but the ability to choose to do or not do something. We have choice only when we are not compelled or forced into action or assent by impressions or our beliefs or desires. Furthermore, we have freedom of choice when the opposite choice is also possible.<sup>125</sup> Although this new theory has many problems, as Frede points out, it is significant that it is the first instance in which choice is about having options.<sup>126</sup>

## 2.4 Augustine on the will and its freedom<sup>127</sup>

Following in the tradition which started with Aristotle (or perhaps even with

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124 Ibid., p. 58; p. 63.

125 Ibid., pp. 94-97.

126 Ibid., pp. 97-100. Frede argues that a major problem with this notion of freedom is that it seems to suggest that freedom is a sign of weakness since Alexander still maintains that the virtuous person could not act other than he does; the suggestion is that freedom only exists for non-virtuous people since only that have options which could be viewed as equally possible. Frede explains that the problem arises out of a misunderstanding of praise and blame.

127 It should be noted that Augustine is, of course, not the only one to discuss the issue of will in the Christian tradition; nor is he the only one of which Aquinas is aware. However, he is certainly a major influence on Aquinas' theory of the will and he is often credited, erroneously, as we have seen, with being the first to develop a concept of the will. For these reasons, and for the sake of space, Augustine is the only representative of the medieval Christian tradition I discuss, aside from Aquinas himself. It should also be noted that a complete account of Christian, or even Augustinian, notions of will would include a theological account and references to Biblical notions of willing. But, this is not meant to be a complete account of the issue of will in the Christian tradition. Rather, it is narrowly focused on the philosophical notion of will and its development and transmission from ancient Greek into the accounts of Averroes and Aquinas. To this end, only major elements of Augustine's most prominent philosophical works on will which clearly reflect the influence of Neoplatonist and Stoic thinkers are discussed.

Plato) and carried through the Stoics and other thinkers, Augustine of Hippo<sup>128</sup> developed a strong notion of will which was both strongly aligned with the earlier Greek tradition and also firmly imbedded within the Christian context. There are a number of important texts where Augustine discusses his notion of the will and its freedom. Some key texts in the discussion of the problem of will and moral responsibility are found in *De Libero Arbitrio* (*On Free Choice of the Will*), *Confessions*, and *De Trinitate*. In this section of the chapter a close examine of these texts of Augustine will be undertaken, followed by a discussion of how they may be viewed from within the larger tradition of Aristotelian and later Greek sources. From this we will see how Augustine makes extensive use of later Platonist notions of freedom and choice which themselves were heavily influenced by Stoic ideas, as was demonstrated above.

### 2.4.1 The Texts

While *De libero arbitrio* (*On Free Choice of the Will*) is centered around the problem of evil, it also offers some insight into how Augustine views the will and its relationship to both the intellect and to moral action. Early on in their discussion of evil, Augustine and Evodius agree that learning or understanding is always good--in fact, Evodius declares that understanding is so good that “[no] human trait could be better.”<sup>129</sup>

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128 Kahn, “Discovering the will from Aristotle to Augustine,” p. 255. Also see Gerd Van Riel, “Augustine's Will, an Aristotelian Notion? On the Antecedents of Augustine's Doctrine of the Will,” in *Augustinian Studies* 38.1 (2007). For a general account of will in Augustine see Marianne Djuth, “Will” in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999) pp. 881–885.

129 Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, translated by Thomas Williams. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), Bk. I, sec. 1, p. 2. This work is referenced using book and chapter. All translations are from this source, unless otherwise stated. The Latin text is from: Augustine, *De libero*

This statement is made in the context of trying to identify the cause of evil (particularly whether human beings learn to do evil); however, it also demonstrates Augustine's view that understanding--reasoning--is an essential feature of the human being. Augustine further develops this idea that reason is central to the human being when he notes that reason or understanding is what "human beings have in virtue of which they are superior"<sup>130</sup> to animals and that the life of understanding is the best kind of life.<sup>131</sup> In order to attain this most human kind of life one must be well-ordered, with reason (also called 'mind' or 'spirit') ruling over one's other faculties. It is only when a person is in such a state that she can attain wisdom and so live rightly and be happy. In order to become well ordered and allow reason to rule one must simply will it.<sup>132</sup> Augustine says that it is only through an act of the will itself that the will can turn away from the eternal, unchangeable, immutable truths which are its objects and towards what is bad or evil,<sup>133</sup>

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*arbitrio [lib. arb.] in Saint Augustine: Opera Omnia-Corpus Augustinianum Gissense*, edited by Cornelius Mayer (Basel: Schwabe, 1995), [http://library.nlx.com/xtf/view?docId=augustine\\_la/augustine\\_la.00.xml;chunk.id=div.augustine\\_la.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=2;toc.id=div.augustine\\_la.pmpreface.1;hit.rank=0;brand=default](http://library.nlx.com/xtf/view?docId=augustine_la/augustine_la.00.xml;chunk.id=div.augustine_la.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=2;toc.id=div.augustine_la.pmpreface.1;hit.rank=0;brand=default); the reference numbers used for this work correspond to those on the online edition and do not correspond to the numbering system of the English translation.

"E. Prorsus ego duas esse disciplinas puto: unam per quam bene facere, aliam per quam male facere discimus. Sed cum quaereres, utrum disciplina bonum esset, ipsius boni amor intentionem meam rapuit, ut illam disciplinam intuerer, quae bene faciendi est, ex quo bonum esse respondi; nunc autem admoneor esse aliam, quam procul dubio malum esse confirmo et cuius auctorem requiro.

A. Saltem intelligentiam nonnisi bonum putas?

E. Istam plane ita bonam puto, ut non uideam quid in homine possit esse praestantius, nec ullo modo dixerim aliquam intelligentiam malam esse posse" (*lib. arb.* 1, 3)

130 Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, Bk. I sec. 7, p. 12; *lib. arb.* 1,16: "A. Bene sane. Sed item dic mihi, cum manifestum sit uiribus ceterisque officiis corporis a plurimis bestiis hominem facile superari, quatenus res sit, qua homo excellit, ut ei nulla bestiarum, ipse autem multis imperare possit? An forte ipsa est, quae ratio uel intelligentia dici solet?

E. Non inuenio aliud, quandoquidem in animo est id quod beluis antecellimus; quae si exanimis essent, dicerem nos eo praestare, quod animum habemus. Nunc uero cum et illa sint animalia, id quod eorum animis non inest ut subdantur nobis, inest autem nostris ut eis meliores simus, quoniam neque nihil neque paruum aliquid esse cuius apparet, quid aliud rectius quam rationem uocauerim?"

131 Ibid., Bk. I sec. 7, p. 13; *lib. arb.* 1,16. Understanding is the "most valuable" characteristic of human beings because it is one which human beings have and lower creatures do not.

132 Ibid, Bk. I sec. 8-10, pp. 14-17; *lib. arb.* 1,18-1,21

133 Ibid., Bk. II, sec. 8, p. 46; *lib. arb.*, 2.20-21. Here he discusses number as an example of the kind of unchangeable truth which cannot be arrived at through the bodily senses and the existence of which serves

he argues that it is not possible for what is weak (material objects of desire) to corrupt what is stronger (the mind/soul/spirit) and that what is superior would not corrupt the well ordered soul since to do so would make it, in fact, inferior; thus, “only its own will and free choice can make the mind a companion to cupidity.”<sup>134</sup> So, one achieves a good will along with a well ordered soul, by willing it (which is to say by desiring eternal rather than temporal things).<sup>135</sup>

Willing to have a good will is perhaps not quite as easy as it sounds. After all, if it were really that simple, everyone would have a good will and refrain from doing evil. Augustine explains that while everyone wants to be happy, and happiness is tied to the goodness of the will and the virtues which accompany a good will, not everyone desires to live rightly; living rightly (being well ordered) is necessary in order to have a good will.<sup>136</sup> This is because many people are ruled not by reason but by their inordinate desires. When a person is ruled by reason she understands that it is most important to follow the eternal law and cleave to what is eternal and unchangeable rather than to

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as a proof of God’s existence. We can also look to his discussions of the eternal law by which one should not love anything which can be lost easily or against one’s will, to which we should all cleave, forsaking inordinate desire (*libido*) (Bk. I, sec. 6, p. 11; *lib. arb.* 1,15)

134 Ibid., Bk. I, sec. 11, p. 17; *lib. arb.* 1,21: “Ergo relinquitur ut, quoniam regnanti menti conpotique uirtutis quidquid par aut praelatum est non eam facit seruam libidinis propter iustitiam, quidquid autem inferius non possit hoc facere propter infirmitatem, sicut ea quae inter nos constiterunt docent, nulla res alia mentem cupiditatis comitem faciat quam propria uoluntas et liberum arbitrium.”

135 Ibid., Bk. I, sec. 12, p. 19; *lib. arb.* 1,26. Augustine notes, in the *Confessions*, that even in a more general way the will and the power to act are one and the same. “For as soon as I had the will, I would have had a wholehearted will. At this point the power to act is identical with the will. The willing itself was performative of the action” (*Confessions*, translated by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), Bk.VIII, Ch. viii, sec. 20, p. 147). All translations are from this source, unless otherwise stated. The Latin text is from: *Confessiones [conf.] in Saint Augustine: Opera Omnia-Corpus Augustinianum Gissense*, edited by Cornelius Mayer (Basel: Schwabe, 1995), [http://library.nlx.com/xtf/view?docId=augustine\\_la/augustine\\_la.00.xml;chunk.id=div.augustine\\_la.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=2;toc.id=div.augustine\\_la.pmpreface.1;hit.rank=0;brand=default](http://library.nlx.com/xtf/view?docId=augustine_la/augustine_la.00.xml;chunk.id=div.augustine_la.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=2;toc.id=div.augustine_la.pmpreface.1;hit.rank=0;brand=default)

“ut uellem, possem, quia mox, ut uellem, utique uellem. ibi enim facultas ea, quae uoluntas, et ipsum uelle iam facere erat” (*conf.* 8, 20)

136 Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, Bk. I, sec. 14, p. 23-4; *lib. arb.*, 1,30. See Bk. I, sec. 13, pp. 20-21; *lib. arb.* 1,26-1,27 for a discussion of the virtues which accompany the good will.

desires for things which one can lose easily or against one's will.<sup>137</sup> Augustine claims that even preserving one by reason but by their inordinate desires. When a person is ruled by reason she understands that it is most important to follow the eternal law and because one is valuing one's body (which can be lost easily or against one's will) over one's soul (which cannot be lost). Later Augustine equates the pursuit of temporal things and the neglect of eternal things with evil doing and claims this is the result of a free choice of the will:

Augustine: [...] ask whether evil doing is anything other than neglecting eternal things, which the mind perceives and enjoys by means of itself and which it cannot lose if it loves them; and instead pursuing temporal things--which are perceived by means of the body, the least valuable part of a human being, and which can never be certain--as if they were great and marvelous things. It seems to be that all evil deeds--that is, all sins--fall into this one category [...] Evodius: [...] our argument showed that we do evil by the free choice of the will<sup>138</sup>

This account of evil doing and the freedom of human beings to commit evil through an act of the will demonstrates the great weight that Augustine places on both the will and reason in explaining human action. He clearly thinks that human beings are moral agents

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137 Ibid., Bk. I sec. 3-Bk. I, sec. 6, pp. 5-11; *lib. arb.*, 1,6- 1,15, offers a long discussion of inordinate desire and the eternal and temporal laws. Here Augustine explains that the temporal law follows the eternal law in an incomplete way and so it leaves open many opportunities for a person to follow the law but still indulge inordinate desires (which include, for example, a desire to preserve or defend the body from attack).

138 Ibid., Bk. I, sec. 16, p. 27; *lib. arb.*, 1, 34-35: "A: Referamus nos, si placet, ad questionem in exordio sermonis huius propositam et uideamus utrum soluta sit. Nam quaerere institueramus quid sit male facere, et propter hoc omnia quae dicta sunt diximus. Quocirca licet nunc animaduertere et considerare utrum sit aliud male facere quam neglectis rebus aeternis, quibus per se ipsam mens fruitur et per se ipsam percipit et quae amans amittere non potest, temporalia et quaeque per corpus, partem hominis uilissimam, sentiuntur et numquam esse certa possunt quasi magna et miranda sectari. Nam hoc uno genere omnia malefacta, id est peccata, mihi uidentur includi. [...]"

E: [...] et illud simul mihi uidere iam uideor absolutum atque compertum, quod post illam quaestionem, quid sit male facere, deinceps quaerere institueramus, unde male facimus. nisi enim fallor, ut ratio tractata monstrauit, id facimus ex libero uoluntatis arbitrio."

who make decisions about their actions and so have responsibility for them. Furthermore, this decision making is the result of both one's ability to reason and one's will. A well ordered person will be ruled by reason and reason will lead her to will not only to be happy but to live rightly, following the eternal law.<sup>139</sup>

Although we have a good picture of Augustine's view regarding the work of the will in moral action and its relationship to reason, not much has been said about what exactly the will is. In fact, in *De Libro Arbitrio* Augustine says little about exactly what the will is or how he knows that we have one. Before their discussion of the good will in Book One Augustine asks Evodius whether we have a will and Evodius responds that "it can't be denied that we have a will,"<sup>140</sup> neither expands upon this claim. Later, in Book Two's discussion of why God gave human beings a will at all, since it leads to evil-doing, Augustine claims that while free will is the source of evil-doing it is also the source of our doing good. As such, it was right for God to give human beings free will (and presumably to give human beings the will at all) because "human beings could not live rightly without it."<sup>141</sup> He goes on to say that since both sin and goodness require the will, so does God's justice—it would not be just to punish evil or reward goodness if a person had

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139 Augustine also makes this claim that evil doing is the result of the will in the *Confessions*: "the free choice of the will is the reason why we do wrong and suffer your just judgment" (Bk. VII, Ch. iii, sec. 5, p. 113). "Et intendebam, ut cernerem quod audiebam, liberum uoluntatis arbitrium causam esse, ut male faceremus et rectum iudicium tuum ut pateremur" (*Conf.* 7, 5).

140 Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, Bk. I, sec. 12, p. 19; *lib. arb.*, 1,25: "negari non potest habere nos uoluntatem."

141 Ibid., Bk. II, sec. 1, p. 30; *lib. arb.* 2, 3: "quoniam sine illis homo recte non potest uiuere."

not been free in her actions.<sup>142</sup> At the end of Book Two Augustine calls the will an intermediate good, because, while it is not evil in itself, it can be used to sin.<sup>143</sup>

In Book Three Augustine and Evodius discuss the issue of divine foreknowledge and its compatibility with what has been argued about our ability to be good and happy by willing it; if God has knowledge of everything I will do it would seem that they are done out of necessity rather than because of my willing them (for certainly I could not not have done differently since God already knows what I will do). Evodius also questions whether he is truly able to will to be happy and whether, if he is capable of making himself happy by willing it, this makes God's help unnecessary.<sup>144</sup> Augustine explains that the difficulty we now have in willing to be happy is the result not of a defect in our nature

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142 Ibid., Bk. II, sec. 2, p. 30; *lib. arb.* 2,3: "A: plane si haec ita sunt, soluta quaestio est quam proposuisti. si enim homo aliquod bonum est et non posset, nisi cum uellet, recte facere, debuit habere liberam uoluntatem, sine qua recte facere non posset. non enim quia per illa etiam peccatur, ad hoc eam deum dedisse credendum est. satis ergo causae est cur dari debuerit, quoniam sine illa homo recte non potest uiuere. ad hoc autem datam uel hinc intellegi potest, quia si quis ea usus fuerit ad peccandum, diuinitus in eum uindicatur. quod iniuste fieret, si non solum ut recte uiueretur, sed etiam ut peccaretur, libera esset uoluntas data. quomodo enim iuste uindicaretur in eum, qui ad hanc rem usus esset uoluntate, ad quam rem data est? nunc uero deus cum peccantem punit, quid aliud tibi uidetur dicere nisi: cur non ad eam rem usus es libera uoluntate, ad quam tibi eam dedi? hoc est ad recte faciendum? deinde illud bonum, quo commendatur ipsa iustitia in damnandis peccatis recteque factis honorandis, quomodo esset, si homo careret libero uoluntatis arbitrio? non enim aut peccatum esset aut recte factum quod non fieret uoluntate. ac per hoc et poena iniusta esset et praemium, si homo uoluntatem liberam non haberet. debuit autem et in supplicio et in praemio esse iustitia, quoniam hoc unum est bonorum quae sunt ex deo. debuit igitur deus dare homini liberam uoluntatem."

143 Ibid., Bk. II, sec. 19, pp. 67-68. *lib. arb.* 2,50-53. "[A:] ista ergo magna bona sunt. sed meminisse te oportet non solum magna sed etiam minima bona non esse posse nisi ab illo a quo sunt omnia bona, hoc est deo. id enim superior disputatio persuasit cui totiens sunt; species autem quorumlibet corporum, sine quibus recte uiui potest, minima bona sunt; potentiae uero animi, sine quibus recte uiui non potest, media bona sunt. uirtutibus nemo male utitur; ceteris autem bonis, id est mediis et minimis, non solum bene sed etiam male quisque uti potest. et ideo uirtute nemo male utitur quia opus uirtutis est bonus usus istorum quibus etiam non bene uti possumus. nemo autem bene utendo male utitur. quare abundantia et magnitudo bonitatis dei non solum magna sed etiam media et minima bona esse praestitit. magis laudanda est bonitas eius in magnis quam in mediis et magis in mediis quam in minimis bonis, sed magis in omnibus quam si non omnia tribuisset.

[...] ita fit ut neque illa bona quae a peccantibus adpetuntur ullo modo mala sint neque ipsa uoluntas libera, quam in bonis quibusdam mediis numerandam esse comperimus, sed malum sit auersio eius ab incommutabili bono et conuersio ad mutabilia bona; quae tamen auersio atque conuersio quoniam non cogitur, sed est uoluntaria, digna et iusta eam miseriae poena subsequitur."

144 Ibid., Bk. III, sec. 1-3, pp. 70-77; *lib. arb.*, 3,1-3,8.



as such but rather is a punishment for our participation in original sin; as human beings we are all responsible for the choice of Adam and Eve to willingly disobey God;<sup>145</sup> as a result we are given the punishments of “ignorance and difficulty” which corrupts our wills and reduces our freedom. This ignorance and difficulty results in a lack of freedom and this is a just punishment for our original act of willing to sin:

Because of our ignorance we lack the free choice of the will to choose to act rightly, or that even when we do see what is right and will to do it, we cannot do it because of the resistance of carnal habit, which develops almost naturally because of the unruliness of our moral inheritance. It is indeed the most just penalty for sin that we should lose what we were unwilling to use well, since we could have used it well without the slightest difficulty if only we had willed to do so; thus, we who knew what was right but did not do it lost the knowledge of what is right, and we who had power but not the will to act rightly lost the power even when we have the will.<sup>146</sup>

Human nature at the start was such that we had knowledge of what was right and a free will with which to choose do act according to our reason. However, the act of original sin was a free choice by the first human beings to go against this understanding and will to act wrongly. The punishment for this act was that we lost both our freedom and our

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145 Ibid., Bk. III sec. 19-20, pp. 107-111; *lib. arb.*, 3,53-3,58. Augustine offers extensive discussion in Book Three of how the sin of Adam and Eve was possible given that they were created with knowledge of what was right but I will not address this here as the specifics of his arguments are not directly relevant to our discussion. Also, see Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, pp. 164-167.

146 Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, Bk. III, sec. 18, p. 106; *lib. arb.*, 3,52: “[A:] nec mirandum est quod uel ignorando non habet arbitrium liberum uoluntatis ad eligendum quod recte faciat, uel resistente carnali consuetudine, quae uiolentia mortalis successionis quodammodo naturaliter inoleuit, uideat quid recte faciendum sit et uelit nec possit implere. illa est enim peccati poena iustissima, ut amittat quisque quod bene uti noluit cum sine ulla posset difficultate si uellet; id est autem ut qui sciens recte non facit amittat scire quid rectum sit, et qui recte facere cum posset noluit amittat posse cum uelit.”

understanding. Thus, the previous discussion of our free will was not meant as an account of our present state but of the “the will with which human beings were created.”<sup>147</sup>

Something still must be said about what exactly the will is and its relationship to reason and to the body. Augustine locates the will with reason (or the mind) rather than with some other faculty of the soul.<sup>148</sup> For example, in the *Confessions*, when discussing the difference between the mind’s commanding the body and commanding itself, Augustine says that “the mind orders the mind to will. The recipient of the order is itself.”<sup>149</sup> Clearly, then he is equating the mind (reason) and the will. He goes on to say that there is a way in which we can be said to have two wills; one which is responsible for the actions we command of ourselves and follow and one which is responsible for the other actions, which are not commanded. He calls this a “morbid condition of the mind”<sup>150</sup> in which our willing is incomplete (a condition that can be related to the improper ordering of the soul and the punishment for our original sin discussed above).<sup>151</sup>

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147 Ibid., Bk. III, sec. 18, p. 107; *lib. arb.*, 3,52: “[A:] cum autem de libera uoluntate recte faciendi loquimur, de illa scilicet in qua homo factus est loquimur.”

148 Aquinas follows Augustine in his placement of the will with the intellect and his insistence that both are immaterial, as we shall see in Chapter 4.

149 Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. VIII, Ch. ix, sec. 21, p. 147; *Conf.* 8,21. Sorabji points to this connection of the will with the rational soul as one of the ways that Augustine is moving beyond the tradition.

150 Ibid., Bk. VIII, Ch. ix, sec. 21, p. 148; *Conf.* 8, 21.

151 Ibid., Bk. VIII, Ch. ix, sec. 21, pp. 147-148; *Conf.* 8,21:

“Imperat animus corpori, et paretur statim: imperat animus sibi, et resistitur. imperat animus, ut moueatur manus, et tanta est facilitas, ut uix a seruitio discernatur imperium: et animus animus est, manus autem corpus est. imperat animus, ut uelit animus, nec alter est nec facit tamen. unde hoc monstrum? et quare istuc? imperat, inquam, ut uelit, qui non imperaret, nisi uellet, et non facit quod imperat. sed non ex toto uult: non ergo ex toto imperat. nam in tantum imperat, in quantum uult, et in tantum non fit quod imperat, in quantum non uult, quoniam uoluntas imperat, ut sit uoluntas, nec alia, sed ipsa. non itaque plena imperat; ideo non est, quod imperat. nam si plena esset, nec imperaret, ut esset, quia iam esset. non igitur monstrum partim uelle, partim nolle, sed aegritudo animi est, quia non totus assurgit ueritate subleuatus, consuetudine prae-grauatus. et ideo sunt duae uoluntates, quia una earum tota non est et hoc adest alteri, quod deest alteri.”

This idea is important because it shows that for Augustine all of our actions are willed (and so voluntary and worthy of praise or blame) in some respect.<sup>152</sup>

This connection of mind and will is further expressed in *De Trinitate* where Augustine is discussing the desire of the mind to know itself and what it may find while seeking this self-knowledge. Augustine explains that a careful examination of the mind by itself will result in its realizing that it has memory, understanding, and will (*velle*).<sup>153</sup> He goes on to say that

Since these three, memory, understanding, and will, are, therefore, not three lives but one life, not three minds but one mind, it follows that they are certainly not three substances, but one substance. For when we speak of memory as life, mind, and substance, we speak of it in respect to itself; but when we speak of it simply as memory, we speak of it in relation to something else. We may also say the same of the understanding and the will; for they are called understanding and will with relation to something else, yet each in respect to itself is life, mind, and essence. Therefore, these three are one in that they are one life, one mind, and one essence. And whatever else they are called in respect to themselves, they are spoken of together, not in the plural but in the singular.<sup>154</sup>

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152 Sorabji, "The concept of the will from Plato to Maximus the Confessor," p. 19. Also, see Kahn, "Discovering the will from Aristotle to Augustine," p. 259 for a more extended discussion of this passage; in particular Kahn points out that for Augustine the human being must rely "upon the will of the Creator." Kahn notes that this relationship between human will and divine will is foundational to the theory of Augustine and other medieval "voluntarists" (p. 235).

153 Augustine, *The Trinity* in *On the Trinity Books 8-15*, edited by Gareth B. Matthews, translated by Stephen McKenna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) Bk. 10, Ch. 10, sec. 13, pp. 54-55; Bk. 10, Ch. 11, sec. 17-18, pp. 57-58. All translations are from this source, unless otherwise stated. The Latin text is from: Augustine, *De trinitate [trin.]* in *Saint Augustine: Opera Omnia-Corpus Augustinianum Gissense*, edited by Cornelius Mayer (Basel: Schwabe, 1995), [http://library.nlx.com/xtf/view?docId=augustine\\_la/augustine\\_la.00.xml;chunk.id=div.augustine\\_la.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=2;toc.id=div.augustine\\_la.pmpreface.1;hit.rank=0;brand=default](http://library.nlx.com/xtf/view?docId=augustine_la/augustine_la.00.xml;chunk.id=div.augustine_la.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=2;toc.id=div.augustine_la.pmpreface.1;hit.rank=0;brand=default); the reference numbers used for this work correspond to those on the online edition and do not correspond to the numbering system of the English translation. *trin.*, 10,13; *trin.* 10,17-18.

154 Ibid., Bk. 10, Ch. 11, sec. 18, p. 58; *trin.* 10,18: "haec igitur tria, memoria, intellegentia, uoluntas, quoniam non sunt tres uitae sed una uita, nec tres mentes sed una mens, consequenter utique nec tres substantiae sunt sed una substantia. memoria quippe quod uita et mens et substantia dicitur ad se ipsam

Here Augustine is clearly explaining that the will, understanding, and memory are elements which make up the mind or rational soul. He goes on to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the three elements, making clear that there is a way in which they are distinct and a way in which they are all the same, as mind. Regarding the will in particular he says that “My will also comprehends my whole understanding and my whole memory, if only I make use of the whole of what I understand and remember.”<sup>155</sup> Here the claim is that the will, being in a sense the same thing as the understanding and the memory--that is, being mind-- has access to understanding and memory when it wills. This makes his claim that we will even what we seem to not want more clear; the interconnectedness of will, understanding, and memory means that when we move towards some action as a result of our understanding of it we are doing this from will as from understanding, whether we consciously will it or not.

#### 2.4.2 Interpretations of Augustine’s View

Although some of what is said by Augustine above is indeed unique, it is also clearly reliant upon the Greek tradition in important ways, as I shall point out below. Augustine is often viewed as a largely unique and thus monumental figure when it comes to his view of the will; some people even suggest that Augustine was the first philosopher

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dicitur; quod u et de uoluntate dixerim, et intellegentia quippe et uoluntas ad aliquid dicitur. uita est autem unaquaeque ad se ipsam et mens et essentia. quocirca tria haec eo sunt unum quo una uita, una mens, una essentia; et quidquid aliud ad se ipsa singula dicuntur etiam simul, non pluraliter sed singulariter dicuntur.”  
 155 Ibid., Bk. 10, Ch. 11, sec. 18, p. 59; *trin.* 10,18: “uoluntas etiam mea totam intellegentiam totamque memoriam meam capit dum toto utor quod intellego et memini.”

to include a clear notion of the will in his theory.<sup>156</sup> However, as we saw above various notions of willing, derived from the Aristotelian ideas of *boulēsis* and *prohairesis* were being developed long before Augustine. Indeed, Augustine is heavily indebted to these developments and his work can be seen to be a mixture of Stoic and Platonist views adapted to the Christian tradition Augustine is working within. Frede points out that Augustine's view represents a Christian Platonist view with heavy Stoic undertones; he claims that Augustine is working with a largely Stoic notion of the will and freedom embedded in a Platonist world view and modified by Christian notions of the importance of and need for grace.<sup>157</sup>

Augustine's notion of will is one in which the will is involved in every act of cognition. This is in line with the more complex Stoic view (generally not used by Platonists) whereby the will is responsible for all of our choices regarding whether or not we will assent to impressions. In some situations the choice to give assent, although involving will, is not an instance of willing but of believing, since we will to do and not just to believe (we will to assent but what we assent to is a matter of choice and is a belief). This connection, thought somewhat obscured by Augustine's conflation of willing and choosing under the term *velle*, is present in Augustine and is Stoic.<sup>158</sup>

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156 For example, Sorabji notes that while the concept of will and its associated terminology developed over time it had its "full flowering" with Augustine ("The concept of the will from Plato to Maximus the Confessor," p. 6)

157 Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, p. 155. Frede points out that there are those who argue that Augustine offers a radically new position—perhaps one that is even contrary to Stoic and Platonist views—in which will and cognition are separated and willing become involved in cognition rather than being merely a function of cognition; he argues against this (p. 157). There are also those who argue for a more middle ground approach, such as Gerd Van Riel's in "Augustine's Will, an Aristotelian Notion? On the Antecedents of Augustine's Doctrine of the Will," where he argues that Augustine draws from a variety of Neoplatonic, Stoic, and Biblical sources while developing a unique concept of will.

158 Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, pp. 158-159. Rist points out that *voluntas*

Of central importance to the discussion is Augustine's world view. He thinks that the world is full of evil and that this evil is the result of our own free choice. As was explained above, Augustine claims that human beings naturally have free choice but that this freedom is diminished in our present state because of original sin. Frede explains in more detail what we saw from Augustine's discussion of our share in this sin in Book 3 of *De libero arbitrio*; the act of Adam and Eve was done not just by the two individuals but collectively by humanity. Thus, we are all responsible for it and rightly punished.<sup>159</sup> In order to make sense of how we can be responsible for this action Augustine must claim that the evil was done by a wise and virtuous person (it would make no sense to punish someone for doing something if they lacked the relevant understanding and moral standing to do differently); this is another similarity between the views of Augustine and those of the Greek tradition, which insisted that only the wise were free while everyone else was a slave to their impressions, beliefs, and desires. Even in our present state, for both the Greeks and for Augustine, we are responsible for our actions and choices (although they are not now free) because we are responsible for the kind of person we are now and thus for what we now do.<sup>160</sup>

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encompasses at least some of the content of the Greek *prohairesis*. He goes on to say that by Augustine's time *prohairesis* had come to be associated in some sense with moral character. See John Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 186-188. Rist also claims that one of the transformative elements in Augustine's view is the association of will with love and thus we will or choose based upon what we love (God or worldly things) (p. 188).

159 Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, p. 164. One may also see Ann A. Pang-White, "The Fall of Humanity: Weakness of Will and Moral Responsibility in the Later Augustine" in *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 9 (2000) and John Rist, "Augustine on Free Will and Predestination" in *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays* edited by R.A. Markus (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1972) pp. 218-252.

160 Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, pp. 165-167. Also see pp. 66-88 for Frede's discussion of free will in the Stoics, as discussed above.

The component which separates Augustine's view from the Stoic and Platonist views is that the only way for us to be delivered from this state of 'ignorance and difficulty' we have put ourselves in is through divine grace. We can work to will rightly and to attain the good will but we will never, in our fallen state, fully attain such a will without grace.<sup>161</sup> This results in the feeling of having two wills which Augustine described in the *Confessions*. The Stoics, as we saw, also denied the possibility of freedom once we have become enslaved by our initial act of free choice to prioritize our desires; however, Augustine's solution to this--grace--is what is unique to him as a result of his Christian context. The need for grace is so complete that:

even if we manage to will the right thing in our fallen state, this is so only by divine grace because God set things up in such a way that we will or want the right thing. In this sense, also for Augustine, both the doing and the willing are God's. Thus God can set things up in such a way that some of us will be led to will to have a good will, to will to free ourselves of our enslavement and to succeed in our struggles.<sup>162</sup>

This suggests that, after our original sin, our goodness and our freedom are up to God. We made the original choice to turn from God to worldly things and as result we abdicated our free will. Now, we can with practice and struggle work towards regaining our initial state (and we can will to do so) but the success and strength of that willing is

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<sup>161</sup> Frede explains that "we are not even able without divine grace to will to have a good will once we are enslaved, though nothing is so much in our power as our will." (p. 169)

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p. 170. It is also worth noting that this seems similar to the Stoic notion that we can have some kind of responsibility even within the causal-deterministic world view; we are responsible for our original state and for things which are 'up to us' even though nothing happens that was not fated.

dependent upon the grace of God. Even if we are granted grace, our willing rightly is still a struggle because our nature is still flawed as result of the fall.<sup>163</sup>

## 2.5 The Arabic Tradition

We have seen how the notions of *boulēsis* and *prohairesis* developed from Aristotle through the later Greek traditions into stronger notions of will and freedom of choice. We have also seen how that Greek tradition was important to the development of the Christian notion of the will and its free choice in the work of Augustine. Now we will turn to an examination of how these ideas were approached in the Arabic tradition. We will see that the Arabic exposure to these ideas differed from the exposure of Augustine, especially as it regards their view of Aristotle. The translations of Aristotle's work which were available in the Arabic tradition imported some of the ideas developed later by the Stoics, Peripatetics, and Platonists. The result was that many important philosophers writing in Arabic came to think that Aristotle himself had notions of the will and choice; this led some philosophers to consider this issue somewhat settled and to move on to examine the still troubling problems of Intellect rather than focusing on the faculty of will.

In this section this issue of translation and its results will be explored. First I will examine the Arabic texts of Aristotle's *De Anima* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, demonstrating that the Arabic terms used carried meanings which were closer to the more developed notions of will and choice found in the later Greek tradition than to Aristotle's

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<sup>163</sup> Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*, pp. 171; 179. Rist points out that given this view human beings are, essentially is a state of *akrasia* all the time (p. 184)



ideas of wishing (*boulēsis*) and decision (*prohairesis*). Then I will look at how this issue of translation impacted the work of two important Arabic influences on Averroes (and thus Aquinas), Al-Farabi and Avicenna.

### 2.5.1 Translating Aristotle into Arabic

As we saw in the discussion above Aristotle explains his notions of *bouleusis* (deliberation), *prohairesis* (decision) and *boulēsis* (wish) in Book 3 of the the *Nicomachean Ethics*. An examination of these ideas in the Aristotelian context revealed that for Aristotle *prohairesis* and *boulēsis* are notions where are quite distinct from not only what we think of as choice and will today but also differ from the later Stoic, Platonist, and Peripatetic views. Aristotle did not see these as united within a single faculty, nor did he claim that our deliberations and decisions were free in the way that later writers did. In particular it is important to remember that *prohairesis* did not have the meaning of choice (as a free decision from among options) and *boulēsis* did not have the stronger meaning of willing that they came to have. This difference between the Aristotelian and the later Greek notions, however, is not born out consistently in the Arabic translations.

The discussion of *prohairesis* in 3.2 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is rendered throughout using the Arabic word *ikhtiyar* (choice). Whereas the Greek *prohairesis* has the connotation of decision in a more broad sense, the Arabic term is more closely associated with choice and with the will.<sup>164</sup> This terminology would suggest to a reader

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<sup>164</sup> The closest entry in Lane's *Lexicon* notes that *ikhtiyar* is "of, or relating to, the will or choice." Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon Part 3*, (Beirut: Librairie Du Liban, 1968), p. 831. It might also be noted that occasionally *prohairesis* is even translated as *irādah*, a term usually used for the will; see *The*

that Aristotle had a view of *prohairesis* that was closer to the Platonist view that *prohairesis* was about choosing such that one could do one thing or another as one willed.

Meanwhile, *boulēsis* was translated by several different terms, *hub*, *hawan*, and *irādah*.<sup>165</sup> In the discussion of the relationship between *prohairesis* and *boulēsis* the term used is *huwan*. The brief discussion of wish at *De Anima* 3.10, 433a22-25, is translated using a different word which is the word usually reserved as a translation of *bouleusis* or deliberation.

### 2.5.2 Al-Farabi<sup>166</sup>

In *On the Perfect State* Al-Farabi discusses a wide range of topics including human rationality. It is within the context of his discussion of reason and the relationship of the Active and Passive Intellects (which he also calls the material intellect) that he gives a brief account of the difference between will and choice. In particular Al-Farabi discusses the importance and impact of the “first intelligibles” on the human being. He says these intelligible are common to all human beings and include “(a) the principles of the productive skills, (b) the principles by which one becomes aware of good and evil man’s actions, [and] (c) the principles which are used for knowing the existents which are not the objects of man’s actions.”<sup>167</sup> Upon attaining these intelligibles one develops a

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*Arabic Version of the Nicomachean Ethics*, eds. Anna A. Akasoy and Alexander Fidora (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 606.

<sup>165</sup> Akasoy and Fidora, *The Arabic Version of the Nicomachean Ethics*, pp. 595-596.

<sup>166</sup> Although I address not only the conception of will but also the notion of intellect and knowledge attainment for most of the other philosophers in this dissertation I limit my treatment of Al-Farabi only to his brief accounts of will. This is because I use Al-Farabi not to offer another account of the issues at hand but primarily to make some of the terminological issues surrounding the problem of the will clear. For a treatment of Al-Farabi’s ideas regarding intellect see Chapter 3 of Herbert A. Davidson’s *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>167</sup> Al-Farabi, *On the Perfect State*, translated by Richard Walzer, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), Bk. IV,

natural inclination towards “examination, deliberation, practical thought and a desire to find out things.”<sup>168</sup> This inclination is explained to be of two types: first, there is an inclination towards “the apprehended object in general [...which is] the outcome of sensing or imagining” and second there is an inclination which results from “deliberation or rational thought.”<sup>169</sup> The first Al-Farabi calls will (*irādah*) and ascribes to both humans and nonrational animals; the second he calls an “an ‘act of choice’” (*ikhtiyar*) and ascribes to humans alone.<sup>170</sup>

Al-Farabi goes on to give an account of the rational faculty, divided into theoretical and practical reason, and its relation to the lower faculties including the appetitive and the sensitive faculties. He says that it is necessary that all of these work together to lead one to act in ways which will result in the good. He notes that sensation, imagination, and deliberation on their own do not cause action; they must be accompanied by a desire for the object of sensation, imagination, and deliberation. He seems to assert that this desire is a kind of willing as “‘will’ is an ‘inclination’ in the appetitive faculty towards that which has been apprehended.”<sup>171</sup> When this inclination is accompanied by reason and an understanding of the good it leads to good actions.

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Ch. 13, sec. 3 (pp. 203-205). Walzer provides facing-page Arabic which I will provide here when appropriate:

والمعقولات الأول المشتركة ثلاثة أصناف، صنف أوائل المهن العملية، وصنف أوائل يوقف بها على الحميل والقيح فما شأنه أن يعمل الإنسان، وصنف أوائل تُستعمل في أن تُعلم بها الموجودات التي ليس شأنها أن يفعلها الإنسان

168 Ibid., p. 205

169 Ibid., Bk. IV, Ch. 13, sec. 4 p. 205

170 Ibid., Bk. IV, Ch. 13, sec. 4 p. 205:

فعند ما تحصل هذه المعقولات للإنسان يحدث له بالطبع تأمل وروية وفكر وتشتوق إلى الاستنباط ونزوع إلى بعض ما عقله أولا وشوق إليه وإلى بعض ما يستنبطه أو كما اهله. والنزوع إلى ما أدركه بالجملة هو الإرادة، فإن كان ذلك عن إحساس أو تخيل سعى بالاسم العلم وهو الإرادة، وإن كان ذلك عن روية أو عن نطق بالجملة سعى الاختيار وهذا يوجد في الإنسان خاصة، وأما النزوع عن إحساس أو تخيل فهو أيضا في سائر الحيوان

171 Ibid., Bk. IV, Ch. 13, sec. 7 p. 209:

فإن الأحساس والتخيل والروية ليست كافية في أن تفعل دون أن يقترن إلى ذلك تشوق إلى ما أحس أو تخيل أو روي فيه أو علم، لأن الإرادة هي أن يُنزع بالقوة النزوعية إلى ما أدرك

This account, though brief, should sound somewhat familiar given what we have already said about the views of the Greeks on *prohairesis* and *boulēsis*. As we saw, the Stoics and the Platonists and Peripatetics emphasized the notion of choice over that of will (although they did not seem to suggest that all animals had a will). Al-Farabi seems to be suggesting here that human action is the result of deliberating about something which is an object of desire (or wish) and then choosing an appropriate course of action. This harkens back, in some sense, to the Stoic and later Greek notion of impressions and assent. All animals have impressions but humans use reason to analyze the beliefs and desires they have surrounding these impressions and then choose to assent or withhold assent to the impression.<sup>172</sup>

While there are clear indications of the tradition in this work of Al-Farabi what is also interesting is that the issue takes up very little space within the larger discussion of the human soul and intellectual faculties. This indicates, perhaps, that the problem was seen as less of a focus than it had been for the Greeks. Al-Farabi seems to prioritize the problem of the intellects and knowledge attainment, taking the notions of choice and the will as already clear. Indeed, in his *Commentary on Aristotle's De Interpretatione* Al-Farabi goes so far as to say that choice and will are part of our “primordial nature” and thus are not in need of further examination. He claims that while many commentators read Aristotle as examining whether “possibility” is part of our nature he considers this issue already settled for Aristotle:

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<sup>172</sup> In his commentary on this section (p. 407-413) Walzer indeed makes reference to the Stoic and Peripatetic schools, and particularly to the work of Alexander of Aphrodisias. He focuses on the notion of responsibility and contrasts it to the Stoic idea of fate and causal determinism (although, as we saw above, the Stoics did not see their determinist views and abrogating human responsibility).

The fact is that we know right from the beginning, from our primordial nature, that many things have a possibility of occurring and of not occurring, above all, those we know to be left to our choice [*ikhtiyar*] and will [*irādah*].... It is not, therefore, the existence of possibility which should be made the subject of inquiry; for our primordial nature makes it clear to us that we have the possibility (of acting one way or another) in voluntary matters, where the choice is left to us.<sup>173</sup>

We can see, then, that Al-Farabi takes the notions of will and choice for granted; they are concepts which do not need further explanation, let alone argumentation. Thus, it is understandable that he, and those philosophers who followed him, would focus more on the problem of Intellect, which they considered far from settled, than on will, which they considered a clearly “natural” phenomenon.

Following this discussion of the need for ‘possibility’ Al-Farabi discusses necessity. He points out that one problem with the idea that something is “necessary in itself” is that it must entail the elimination of “free will [and] deliberation [*irādah* and *ikhtiyar*]” and the downfall of religion, both of which he considered absurd.<sup>174</sup> This leads Al-Farabi to claim that there are different kinds of necessity and that some forms of

173 Al-Farabi, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Interpretatione*, in *Al-Farabi's Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's De Interpretatione*, translated by F. W. Zimmermann (London: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 77-78. All translations are from this edition. The Arabic text is found in *Alfarabi's Commentary on Aristotle's Peri Hermeneias (De Interpretatione)*, edited by Wilhelm Kutsch and Stanley Marrow (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1960); when sighting this text I provide page and line numbers. p. 83, ln. 13-25:

نَلْ نَحْنُ مِنْ أَوَّلِ أَمْرِنَا رَمَبَا فُطِّرْنَا عَلَيْهِ. نَعْلَمُ أَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ الْأُمُورِ مُمْكِنَةٌ أَنْ تَكُونَ وَأَنْ لَا تَكُونَ وَأَوَّلُ شَيْءٍ هُوَ الَّذِي يُعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ إِلَى اخْتِيَارِنَا وَإِرَادَتِنَا [...] فَلِذَلِكَ لَيْسَ يَنْبَغِي أَنْ نَجْعَلَ مَا فُطِّرْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ بَيَانِ وَجُودِ الْمُمْكِنِ لَنَا فِي الْأَشْيَاءِ الْإِرَادِيَّةِ الَّتِي اخْتِيَارُهَا الْبِنَاءُ مَطْلُوبَةٌ

174 Al-Farabi, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Interpretatione*, p. 93; *Alfarabi's Commentary on Aristotle's Peri Hermeneias (De Interpretatione)* p. 98, ln. 11-19.

فَإِذَا أَخَذْنَا ذَلِكَ عَادَ الشُّكُّ الَّذِي ذَكَرَهُ أَرِسْطُوطَالِيْسٌ وَهُوَ أَنَّ مَا عَلِمَ صَادِقًا أَنَّهُ سَيَكُونُ فَلَا مَيْكَنَ أَنْ لَا يَكُونَ. فَيَكُونُ وَجُودُ مَا يَوْجَدُ فِي الْمُسْتَقْبَلِ مَتَى كَانَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِ قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ صَادِقًا ضَرُورِي الْوُجُودِ. فَتَعُودُ الْأَشْيَاءُ كُلُّهَا فَتَكُونُ ضَرُورِيَّةً فِي الْفَسْهَاءِ. فَتَصِيرُ الشَّيْءُ مُمْكِنَةً مَجْسَبَ عَلَمِنَا فَقَطْ. فَتَرْتَفِعُ الْإِرَادَةُ وَالرَّوْيَةُ وَسَائِرُ تِلْكَ الْأَشْيَاءِ الَّتِي ذَكَرَهَا أَرِسْطُوطَالِيْسٌ. وَيَلْزَمُ فِي الْمَلَلِ كُلِّهَا أَنْ لَا يَكُونَ الْإِنْسَانُ مُخْتَارًا لِفَعْلِهِ (٥٤ ط) شَيْءٍ أَصْلًا. فَيَكُونُ مَا يَلْحَقُهُ مِنَ الْعِقَابِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ لَا عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِنْهُ كَابْنِ بَارَادَتِهِ وَلَا بِاخْتِيَارِهِ. فَيَكُونُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى الَّذِي هُوَ الْمُثِيبُ >وَالْمُعَاقِبُ غَيْرَ عَادِلٍ فِي فَعْلِهِ. وَهَذِهِ أَيْضًا كُلُّهَا شَنْعَةٌ وَمُسْتَنْكَرَةٌ فِي الْمَلَلِ كُلِّهَا وَضَارَةٌ أَنْ يَعْتَقِدَ النَّاسُ ذَلِكَ جَدًّا جَدًّا

necessity, particularly logical necessity, can allow for free will and deliberation.<sup>175</sup> Again, these statements, which are only indirectly about will and decision, take for granted that will and deliberation are a given.<sup>176</sup>

From this discussion of Al-Farabi we can see that the concepts of will and decision (*'irādah* and *ikhtiyar*) were not given the kind of deep consideration that the Greeks after Aristotle gave them. Indeed, Al-Farabi seems to think that they were settled even for Aristotle.<sup>177</sup> This demonstrates that even at this early stage commentators were reading a concept of will into Aristotle; this was certainly the case for Averroes and Aquinas who both think they are following Aristotle in their views of the will. Not only did Al-Farabi accept that Aristotle thought about and discussed these issues, he also saw them as largely solved. He considered the fact of the will and of choice to be part of our

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175 Al-Farabi, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Interpretatione*, pp. 93-94; *Alfarabi's Commentary on Aristotle's Peri Hermeneias (De Interpretatione)* p. 98, ln. 11- p. 99, ln. 8

176 It is interesting and telling that neither of these discussions of *irādah* and *ikhtiyar* are directly on the subject of will. They are about necessity and possibility; will and decision are mentioned in passing. Another telling reference is made further on in the text, during a discussion of the powers of the soul associated with reason. Al-Farabi acknowledges that there is debate about whether will (*'irādah*) is “a form of reason” or only “connected to reason” but he dismisses this problem, saying it “should be disregarded” since in either case there are a complex array of powers involved when dealing with possible actions (*Commentary on Aristotle's De Interpretatione*, p. 175; *Alfarabi's Commentary on Aristotle's Peri Hermeneias (De Interpretatione)* p. 181, ln 21-27.): “Of the powers by which bodies act or are acted upon some are part of the (faculty) of reason or connected with reason, others are neither. I say ‘part of reason or connected with reason’ because, on the one hand many people believe that it is, in the first place, reason by which man acts rather than by any other faculty; for they think that will is a form of reason, while others hold that will is not a form of reason but something else, (i.e.) another faculty, (albeit) connected with reason. But in the present context, this problem should be disregarded, no matter whether those powers by which man does his voluntary acts are a form of reason or (only) connected with reason. It is because of the whole complex of powers involved that we say of a thing that it is ‘possible’ for it to act in a certain way or to be acted upon”

والقوى التي بها تفعل الاجسام او تتفعل، منها ما هي نطق او مقرونة بنطق، ومنها ما ليست هي بنطق ولا مقرونة بنطق..وانما قلت نطق او مقرونة بنطق، لان كثيرا من الناس يرى ان النطق اولا هو الذي به يفعل الانسان، لا بقوة اخرى. فانهم يرون ان الارادة هي نطق ما. واخرون يرون ان الارادة ليست هي بنطق، ولكنها شي اخر وقوة اخرى مقرونة بنطق. وهاهنا ليس ينبغي ان يبالي الانسان كيف ما كان، كانت تلك القوى التي يفعل بها الانسان افعاله الارادية نطقا، او مقرونة بنطق. وجميع هذه القوى بها يقال في الشيء انه ممكن ان يفعل كذا او ان يفعل

Here we have a direct dismissal of the problem along with a claim that the details around the power of will are not particularly important given that it is clear that the will does exist (since voluntary actions exist).

177 Al-Farabi, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Interpretatione*, p. 93; *Alfarabi's Commentary on Aristotle's Peri Hermeneias (De Interpretatione)* p. 98, ln. 11-19, offers the most direct reference to Aristotle in connection with these terms.

“primordial nature” and did not see much need to quibble over details (such as whether the will was part of the rational faculty or merely connected to it).

### 2.5.3 Avicenna

Although Avicenna does not offer much discussion of moral agency or will, his extensive discussion of knowledge attainment and the nature of the soul offers an interpretation of Aristotle which served as a standard against which Averroes reacted. Further, it is important not only for our later understanding of Averroes and Aquinas’s view of the soul and knowledge but also of the will, insofar as their interpretations of the function of the will are intertwined with their views of body/soul relationship and the role of knowledge in moral deliberation and action. Thus, it is necessary to examine Avicenna’s account of the soul and its relationship to the body and the agent intellect.

Regarding the human soul Avicenna states that it “is neither a body nor something that subsists as a form in any body.”<sup>178</sup> His claim here is that if the intellectual soul—the

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178 Avicenna, *De Anima of the Kitāb Al-Shifā’*, Bk.V, Ch. I. “Haec anima [...] non est corpus nec forma existens in corpore.” (Van Riet, Vol. 2, p. 81) (Rahman, p. 209)

He expands upon this idea in Bk V Ch. 2, saying: “One thing about which there can be no doubt is that the human is a thing and a certain substance that encounters the intelligibles through reception. We say next that the substance, which is the receptacle of the intelligibles, [210] is neither a body nor something that subsists in a body in the sense of being a faculty in it or a form belonging to it in some way. If the receptacle of the intelligibles is a body or a particular magnitude, then the part of it that the intelligible form inheres in is either (1) a single, indivisible thing, or (2) a divisible thing, where the indivisible part of the body is unquestionably a limit akin to a point.” (McGinnis p. 188)

“Id de quo nulla est dubitatio hoc est: quod in homine est aliqua substantia quae apprehendit intelligibilia recipiendo. Dicemus ergo quod substantia quae est subiectum intelligibilium non est corpus, nec habens esse propter corpus ullo modo eo quod est virtus in eo aut forma eius: si enim subiectum intelligibilium esset corpus aut aliqua ex mensuris, necesse esset ut aut forma intellecta subsisteret per se sola in aliquo illius indivisibili aut in aliquo eius divisibili: illud autem corporis quod non dividitur est extremitas punctalis sine dubio.” (Van Riet, Vol. 2, pp. 81-82)

إن مما لا شك فيه أن الإنسان فيه شيء وجوهر ما يتلقى لمعقولات بالقبول، فنقول إن الجوهر الذي هو محل المعقولات ليس بجسم ولا قائم في جسم على أنه قوة فيه أو صورة له بوجه، فإنه إن كان محل المعقولات جسماً أو مقداراً من المقادير فإما أن تكون إنما تحل منه شيئاً منقسماً، والشئ الذي لا ينقسم من الجسم هو طرف نقطي لا محالة.

(Rahman pp. 209-210)

This will be an important point to discuss in relation to the views of Averroes and Aquinas since

soul which receives intelligibles—was a part of the body or a faculty of a body its corporeality would interfere with the nature of the intelligibles as universal and indivisible. But if they were received in some divisible thing then the intelligibles would likewise be divided with the body they adhere in.<sup>179</sup> This dualism is emphasized by Jari Kaukua in his dissertation “*Avicenna on Subjectivity : A Philosophical Study.*” Kaukua calls Avicenna “one of the most full-blown dualists in the history of western philosophy”<sup>180</sup> for his strong assertions that the human soul or intellect is independent from the human body. Despite asserting this independence Avicenna, according to Kaukua, does claim the body and soul maintain a strong and necessary connection with one another. The body needs the soul to live and the soul needs the body to ‘come to be.’ The first part of this statement seems fairly unremarkable and follows Aristotle. However, the second claim--that the individual soul’s existence relies on or requires the body--is not Aristotelian, as such. Kaukua explains that the individual soul comes to be, emanating from the active intellect, whenever a suitable body comes to be from the human reproductive process.<sup>181</sup> This view of the soul and body relationship makes sense given Avicenna’s view that the human being is a rational soul which uses a body as a tool.

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they make different claims about the soul’s being both a subsistent form and the form of the body or “form for us,” as Averroes says.

Selections from this work are found in three sources since the work is available in English, Latin and Arabic. English is from “Selections on Psychology from *The Cure*, ‘The Soul,’” in *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources*, edited and translated by John McGinnis and David C. Reisman, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2007). Latin is from *Avicenna Latinus: Liber De Anima Seu Sextus De Naturalibus*, edited and translated by Simone Van Riet, ed.. 2 volumes. (Louvain-Leiden: E. Peeters-E.J. Brill. 1968-1972). Arabic is from *Avicenna’s De Anima, Being the Psychological Part of the Kitāb Al-Shifā*, edited by F. Rahman, (London: Oxford University Press, 1959). When referencing the text I will provide Book and Chapter as well as the page numbers where the selection can be found for each edition.

179 Avicenna, V.2, McGinnis, pp. 189-190; Van Riet, Vol. 2, pp. 84-88 (Vol2); Rahman, pp.211-213.

180 Jari Kaukua, *Avicenna on Subjectivity : A Philosophical Study* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2007), p. 19.

181 Ibid., p. 20. Kaukua quotes Avicenna’s claim from *Najat De. an.* that “the soul comes into existence whenever a body does so fit to be used by it.”



Thus, it would not make sense for the will (or any human faculty) to be located outside of the soul; as we will see, Aquinas is close to Avicenna in this regard, arguing that the will must be located in the rational soul, not in the body.

The soul, then, is in a kind of middle position; it requires a suitable body to come into being (although it is not caused by that body) and it maintains an intimate connection with that body; it comes to be from the active intellect and so it also maintains a connection to the active intellect.<sup>182</sup> The connection of the soul to both the body and the active intellect is demonstrated in the knowledge attainment process in which the sensitive faculties rely on the body and the intellectual faculties rely on the active intellect.<sup>183</sup> While we use sensation and the lower faculties in our attainment of intelligibles, they are the result of the intellectual faculty's ability to abstract away from particularities such as "delimited quantity, place, [and] position." Once this abstraction has happened, the form exists only as a concept in the intellect; as a concept, rather than an external thing, it cannot have bodily characteristics, such as divisibility, and "so it cannot be in a body."<sup>184</sup>

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182 Ibid., pp. 20-24.

183 Ibid., pp. 24-26. A more detailed account of this process is forthcoming.

184 Avicenna, V.2, McGinnis, p. 191. "Quod possumus etiam probare alia demonstratione, dicentes quod virtus intellectiva abstrahit intelligibilia a quantitate designata et ab ubi et a situ et a ceteris omnibus quae praediximus. Debemus autem considerare essentiam huius formae denudatae a situ, quomodo est nuda ab eo, scilicet si hoc ait comparatione rei a qua sumpta est, aut comparatione eius rei quae assumpsit, videlicet, esse huius formae intellectae denudatae a situ, si est ita in esse extrinseco aut est ita in esse formantis in substantia agentis. Impossibile est autem dici quod habeat esse sic in esse extrinseco: restat ergo dici non esse separatam a situ et ubi, nisi cum habet esse in intellectu; et quod, cum habet esse in intellectu, non est habens situm nec potest innui nec separatim ostendi nec dividitur nec habet aliquid eorum quae sunt huiusmodi: ergo impossibile est eam esse in corpore." (Van Riet, Vol. 2, p. 89)

ولنا أن نبرهن على هذا ببرهان آخر، فنقول إن القوة العقلية هو ذا يجرد المعقولات عن الكم المحدود والأين والوضع وسائر ما قيل من قبل، فيجب أن ننظر في ذات هذه الصورة المجردة عن الوضع كيف هي مجردة عنه أبالقياس إلى الشيء المأخوذ عنه أو بالقياس إلى الشيء الآخذ، أعني أن وجود هذه الحقيقة المعقولة المتجردة عن الوضع هل هو في الوجود الخارجي أو في الوجود المتصور في الجوهر العقلي، ومحال أن نقول إنه كذلك في الوجود الخارجي، فبقى أن نقول إنها إنما هي مفرقة للوضع والأين عند وجودها في العقل، فإذا وجدت في العقل لم تكن ذات وضع وبحيث يقع إليها إشارة تجزؤ وانقسام أو شيء مما أشبه هذا المعنى، فلا يمكن أن تكون في جسم (Rahman, p.

While the intellectual faculties are not bodily, that is not to say that they are completely unassociated with the lower faculties. Indeed, the theoretical intellect makes use of the practical intellect and the lower faculties which inform its activity. It is the estimative faculty which abstracts the connotational attributes from the particulars stored in the imagery (and resulting from sensation), allowing the knower to gain knowledge of universals from particulars. Furthermore, the soul makes use of experience and particulars when it does the work of separating and combining various principles. It also uses the lower faculties, such as the imagery, when there is a need to form images of things to be considered, goals or activities to be performed, etc.<sup>185</sup> Thus, there are many instances where the intellect makes use of the lower faculties to further its work of conceptualization of universal, intelligible forms. However, Avicenna also notes that once the soul reaches a certain level of perfection the lower faculties become unnecessary and it is able to carry out its activities on its own.<sup>186</sup> This process is important to the moral agency of the human being insofar as knowledge is necessary for correct moral action and insofar as part of the perfection going on is a moral perfection through cultivation of the body and the sensitive faculties, such as estimation.<sup>187</sup>

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185 Avicenna, V.3, McGinnis, pp.192-193; Van Riet, Vol. 2, pp. 102-103; Rahman, p. 222.

186 Avicenna, V.3, McGinnis, p. 193; Van Riet, Vol. 2, p. 105; Rahman, p. 223.

187 Kaukua, *Avicenna on Subjectivity : A Philosophical Study*, pp. 24-26. Kaukua writes that “proper functioning of the capacity of agency amounts to a good governance over the body, or more precisely a cultivation of the body, which at first is simply a rather refined animal organism, to a specifically human body. This entails the perfection of bodily dispositions in both moral and cognitive terms [...] The fulfillment of the capacity of cognition or contemplation amounts to the immaterial human intellect’s becoming informed by the immaterial intelligible forms” (p. 24). While this passage highlights the ultimate importance of the intellect--indeed Kaukua goes on to note that the acquired intellect is the ultimate perfection of man and that both the body and the soul work towards this end until the body becomes a hinderance rather than a help (p. 25; 26)—it also hints at the importance of morality and cultivating a morally responsible self. The development and cultivation of a moral self, a mostly bodily task, is a necessary step towards human perfection. As such, it is important for us to uncover exactly what such

While there are a number of lower faculties shared by humans and animals (sensation, the common sense, the imagery, the imaginative/cogitative faculty, the estimative faculty, and memory), the human being also has faculties which are specific to it and which are necessary if the human being is to carry out his/her unique action, which is “to conceptualize the universal connotational attributes (*ma'na*) belonging to the intellect that are abstracted completely of all matter [...] to arrive at knowledge of things that are unknown by assenting to them when conceptualizing things that are known to the intellect.”<sup>188</sup> These uniquely human faculties are the practical and theoretical intellects.

The theoretical intellect is responsible for determining truth and falsehood<sup>189</sup> and for attaining the universal forms which guide the practical intellect in its work.<sup>190</sup> It receives these universal, immaterial forms either directly, if they are already immaterial, or through abstraction from matter. The theoretical faculty is called “intellect” in a variety of ways depending upon the relationship it has to the forms it is to know.<sup>191</sup>

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moral cultivation looks like and how it relates to both the more bodily functions and the more contemplative or intellectual.

188 Avicenna, V.1. McGinnis, 186. “Quae autem est magis propria ex proprietatibus hominis, haec est scilicet formare intentiones universales intelligibiles omnino abstractas a materia, sicut iam declaravimus, et procedere ad sciendum incognita ex cognitis intelligibilibus credendo et formando. Haec autem actiones et dispositiones praedictae sunt ex his quae sunt hominis, sed plures ex illis sunt propriae hominis; quamvis illarum quaedam sint corporales, sed habent esse in corpore hominis causa animae humanae, quam non habent cetera animalia.” (Van Riet Vol. 2, p. 76).

وأخص الخواص بالإنسان تصور المعاني الكلية العقائية المجردة عن المادة كل التجريد على ما حكيناه وبيناه، والتوصل إلى معوقة> المجهولات تصديقا وتصورا من المعلومات العقائية، فهذه الأفعال والأحوال المذكورة هي مما يوجد للإنسان، وجلها يختص به الإنسان، وإن (Rahman, p. 206) >، كان بعضها بدنيا ولكنه موجود لبدن الإنسان بسبب النفس التي الإنسان التي أيسر لسانر الحيوان

189 Avicenna, V.1, McGinnis, p. 87; Van Riet, Vol. 2, p. 77; Rahman, p. 207.

190 Avicenna, I.5, McGinnis, p. 184. “Sed virtus cotelaplative est virtus quae solet informari a forma universali nuda a materia” (Van Riet, Vol. 1, p. 94). > أما القوة النظرية فهي قوة من شأنها أن تتطبع بالصور الكلية المجردة. (Rahman, p. 48). In V.1 (McGinnis, pp.186-187; Van Riet, Vol. 2, 78; Rahman, p. 207) Avicenna notes that the theoretical intellect is concerned with premises of deductive reasoning and with scientific investigation.

191 A discussion of stages of intellection and the various intellectual faculties can be found in Avicenna, I.5, McGinnis, p. 184-186; Van Riet, Vol. 1, pp. 96-102; Rahman, pp. 49-52. Also, Avicenna, V.1 (McGinnis, pp. 187-188; Van Riet, ) offers an extremely concise account of these various stages of intellect which corresponds to the earlier more detailed account. Also see Kaukua, *Avicenna on Subjectivity: A*

The practical intellect is responsible for moving the body “to perform particular actions determined by reflecting on what is required by customary opinions specific to [those actions].”<sup>192</sup> It is related to action and to determining the “good and evil in particular things.”<sup>193</sup> It relates to the appetitive,<sup>194</sup> imaginative/cogitative, and estimative powers as well as acting in a purely intellectual way. As it relates to the appetitive power the practical intellect is what creates in the human being feelings of shame, pride, happiness, sadness, etc. which spur him/her to act in a certain way. It determines “what is right, wrong, and permissible.”<sup>195</sup>

The practical intellect joins with the imaginative and estimative powers of the soul in order to find ways to handle the trials of the natural world and bend it to human needs. When the practical intellect is related to itself (or to the theoretical faculty) it gives

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*Philosophical Study*, p. 34 where he lists and briefly describes these intellectual faculties.

192 Avicenna, I.5, McGinnis, p. 183. “Vis autem activa est vis quae est principium movens corpus hominis ad actiones singulas quae sunt propriae cogitationis, secundum quod intentionibus convenit ad placitum quae appropriantur ei.” (Van Riet, Vol. 1, p. 90)

<فاعلمة هي مبدأ محرك لبدن الإنسان إلى الأفاعيل الجزئية الخاصة بالروية على مقتضى آراء تخصصها اصطلاحية> (Rahman, p. 45) Avicenna, V.1 also points towards the practical intellects use of “commonly held premises, commonly accepted premises, premises based on assumptions” and experience (as opposed to universal knowledge or scientific principles) and contrasts this with the more universal character of the theoretical intellect (McGinnis, pp. 186-18).

“Ergo prima virtus humanae animae est virtus quae comparatur contemplationi et vocatur intellectus contemplativus, qui est iudex veri et falsi de universalibus; haec autem virtus activa est de bono et malo in particularibus; ille est iudex de necessario et possibili et impossibili; haec autem activa de honesto et inhonesto et licito. Principia autem contemplativi sunt ex propositionibus per se notis; principia vero activi sunt ex probabilibus et ex auctoritatibus et ex famosis; experimenta autem debilia quae sunt ex opinionibus sunt aliud ab experimentis certis” (Van Riet, Vol 2, pp. 78-79)

فالقوة الأولى للنفس الإنسانية قوة تنسب إلى النظر فيقال عقل نظري، وهذه الشانية قوة تنسب إلى العمل فيقال عقل عملي، وتلك للصدق والكذب وهذه للخير والشر في الجزئيات، وتلك للواجب والممكن والممتنع، وهذه للقبيح والجميل والمباح، و مبادئ تلك من المقدمات الأولية ومبادئ هذه من المشهورات والمقبولات والمظبوطات ولاتجربيات الواهية التي تكون من المظنونات غير التجريبات الوثيقة، ولكل واحدة من هاتين القوتين رأى وطن (Rahman, p. 207)

193 Avicenna, V.1. McGinnis, p. 187; Van Riet, vol 2, p. 78; Rahman, p. 207.

194 Avicenna says that the appetitive faculty is the faculty which causes motion. It is broken down into two subcategories-- appetitive and irascible. The appetitive faculty prompts an animal to draw close to things that it considers (through imagination or estimation, not any intellectual thought process) desirable; the irascible power spurs the animal to flee from that which it deems harmful. I.5, McGinnis, p.180; Van Riet, Vol. 1, pp. 82-83, Rahman, p. 41.

195 Avicenna, V.1, McGinnis, p. 187; Van Riet, Vol. 2, p. 78; Rahman, p. 207.

rise to commonly held moral opinions, such as the opinion that lying is bad.<sup>196</sup>

Furthermore, it is the practical intellect which is responsible for our moral decisions and actions. It uses the universal knowledge resulting from its relationship with the theoretical intellect, as well as the knowledge it gains from its relation to the particular world through the lower faculties to allow the human being to reflect “on particular things with regard to what he should do, what he should avoid, what is beneficial and harmful, what is right and wrong, and what is good and evil.”<sup>197</sup>

196 Avicenna, I.5, McGinnis, p. 183. “Respectus autem quem habet comparatione sui ad se est modus qui generat in ea actionem et intellectum contemplantem, et hae sunt intentiones quae pendent ex actionibus et divulgantur famose, sicut hoc quod mentiri turpe est et iniuriare turpe est, non quasi probata et quicquid simile est huic de propositionibus quarum differentia a per se notis primis scilicet intelligibilibus definita est in libris logicis, quamvis cum probatae fuerint, fient etiam per se notae, sicut iam didicisti in eisdem libris” (Van Riet, Vol. 1, pp. 91-92).

واعتبارها الذي بحسب القياس إلى نفسها هو القبيل الذي تتولد فيه بين العقل العملي والعقل النظري الآراء التي تتعلق بالأعمال وتستقيض ذائعة مشهورة مثل أن الكذب قبيح والظلم قبيح لا على سبيل التبرهن وما أشبه ذلك من المقدمات المحدودة الانفصال عن الأوليات العقلية (Rahman, p. 46) >، المحضة في كتب المنطق وإن كانت إذا برهن عليها صارت من العقلية أيضا على ما عرفت في كتب المنطق

197 Avicenna, V.1, McGinnis, p. 186. Van Riet, Vol. 2, pp. 77-78. “Homo ergo habet virtutem quae propria est conceptionum universalium et aliam quae propria est ad cogitandum de rebus singularibus, de eo quod debet fieri et dimitti et quod prodest et obest et quod est honestum et inhonestum et quod est bonum et malum. Et hoc fit ad modum syllogismi aut considerationis verae aut falsae, cuius finis est dare sententiam de re particulari futura ex rebus possibilibus: de necessariis etenim et impossibilibus non cogitant an habeant esse an non; de praeterito etiam non cogitant an habeat esse quia est praeteritum. Et cum haec virtus iudicaverit, sequetur eius iudicium motus virtutum desideratarum ad movendum corpus, sicut sequeretur illud iudicia aliarum virtutum in animalibus, et haec virtus transsumit ex virtute iudicante de universalibus: inde enim transsumit maximus propositiones ad id quod cogitat et concludit de particularibus” (Van Riet, Vol. 2, pp. 77-78).

فكون الإنسان إذن قوة تختص بالآراء الكاية وقوة أخرى تختص بالروية في الأمور الجزئية فيما ينبغي أن يفعل ويترك مما ينفع ويضرّ وسما هو جميل وقبيح وخير وشر، و يكون ذلك بضرب من القياس والتأمل صحيح أو سقيم غايته أنه توقع رأيا في أمر جزئي مستقبل من الأمور الممكنة لأن الواجبات أو الممتنعات لا يروى فيها لتوجد أو لعدم، وما مضى أيضا لا يروى في إيجاده على أنه ماض، فإذا حكمت هذه القوة تبع حكمها حركة القوة الإجماعية إلى تحريك البدن كما كانت تتبع أحكام قوى أخرى في الحيوانات، وتكون هذه القوة استمداها من القوة التي على الكليات، فمن هناك تأخذ المقدمات الكبرى فيما تروى وتنتج في الجزئيات (Rahman, p. 207).

It is worth noting here that this statement seems to cover all the elements of what one may consider when deciding upon the moral worth and appropriateness of an action--whether it is right, whether it is good, what its relationship is to relevant universal concepts. Avicenna goes on to say that these deliberations are made through syllogistic reasoning and that this kind of reasoning--and by extension the use of the practical intellect in general--only applies to “future particular contingent[s]” (i.e. to things which could be otherwise, or things which the human being has some control over) since we cannot deliberate about what is inevitable or impossible, or what has already come to pass. Once one has arrived at a decision regarding an action the “faculty of resolve” sets the body in motion so that the actions required can be carried out. Avicenna notes that this faculty of resolve “extends out of the faculty for the universal” Thus, this account seems to provide a basic and as yet undeveloped account of moral reasoning from knowledge of particulars through deliberation and choice (with the help of universal concepts) and on to action which is similar to what Aristotle describes in the third books of both the *De Anima* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Furthermore, the practical intellect seems to be connected to what Kaukua terms the “capacity of

From these various functions of the practical intellect we can see that it is the element of the human being that is responsible for the use of human emotion, industry, advancement, and most importantly for our purposes, morality. Indeed Avicenna says that if we are to achieve moral excellence the practical intellect must rule over the other faculties while itself being under the guidance of the theoretical faculty.<sup>198</sup> If the soul is

agency” (*Avicenna on Subjectivity: A Philosophical Study*, p. 24). This capacity is responsible for proper governing and perfection of the body in such a way as to make bodily dispositions useful to the humans moral and cognitive success. Even the reference to agency in the name assigned to this capacity leads one to think about the issues of moral agency and responsibility which are central to this dissertation. While I do not think Kaukua’s “capacity of agency” is meant to be equated with the practical intellect--indeed Kaukua’s dissertation is focused on the faculties of the soul (especially those concerned with knowledge) and their relationship to self-awareness and subjectivity in broad terms--I think that it does at least hint at the practical, moral, elements of human thought which Avicenna explains using the practical intellect. 198 He says the practical intellect should not be “affected by [the other faculties] but rather they by it [...] so that they are kept in check below it” (Avicenna, I.5, McGinnis, p. 183). “Opertet autem ut haec virtus imperet ceteris vitutibus corporis, sicut opertet pro iudicio alterius virtutis quam postea nominabimus, ita ut haec non patiatut ab illis ullo modo, sed ipsae patiantur ab ea et sint omnino substratae sub ea, ne forte contingant in ea affectiones post se trahentes eam, provenientes ex rebus naturalibus, quae vocantur perversi mores, quia opertet ut ipsa non sit passibilis ullo modo nec tractabilis, sed imperans, et tunc habet mores optimos.

Possibile est autem ut mores comparentur viribus etiam corporalibus; sed cum illa fuerit dominans, habebit affectionem efficientem, et ex intellectu habebit affectionem patientem; nominemus autem omnem affectionem morem; erit igitur unum propter quod contingunt mores in hoc, et in illud contingunt mores propter hoc aliud; si autem ipsa fuerit victa, habebit affectionem passibilem et similiter affectionem activam non extraneam; quae etiam erunt duae actiones et duo mores, et mos quidem erit unus, sed habebit duas comparationes. Mores autem qui in nobis sunt non comparantur huic virtuti nisi quia anima humana, sicut postea scies, est una substantia, habens compositationem ad duo, quorum unum est supra eam et alterum infra eam, sed secundum unumquodque istorum habet virtutem per quam ordinatur habitus qui est inter ipsam et illud. Haec autem virtus activa est illa virtus quam habet anima propter debitum quod debet ei quod est infra eam, scilicet corpus, ad regendum illud; sed virtus contemplativa est illa virtus quam habet anima propter debitum quod debet ei quod est supra eam, ut patiatut ab eo et proficiat per illud et recipiat ex illo; tamquam anima nostra habeat duas facies, faciem scilicet deorsum ad corpus, quam oportet nullatenus recipere aliquam affectionem generis debiti naturae corporis, et aliam faciem sursum, versus principia altissima, quam oportet semper recipere aliquid ab eo quod est illic et affici ab illo. Ex eo autem quod est infra eam, generantur mores, sed ex eo quod est supra eam, generantur sapientiae; et haec est virtus activa” Van Riet, Vol. 1, pp. 92-94).

وهذه القوة يجب أن تتسلط على سائر قوى البدن على حسب ما توجبه أحكام القوة الأخرى التي نذكرها حتى لا تتفعل عنها البتة بل تتفعل تلك عنها و تكون مقموعة دونها لئلا تحدث فيها عن البدن هيئات انقيادية مستفادة من الأمور الطبيعية وهي التي تسمى أخلاقاً رذيلية، بل يجب أن تكون غير منفصلة البتة وغير منقادة بل متسلطة فتكون لها أخلاق فضيلية وقد يجوز أن تنسب الأخلاق إلى القوى البدنية أيضاً، ولكن إن كانت هي الغالبة تكون لها هيئة فعلية ولهذا العقل هيئة النفعالية، ولتسم كل هيئة خلقاً، فيكون شئ واحد يحدث منه خلق في هذا وخلق في ذلك، وإن كانت هي المغلوبة تكون لها هيئة انفعالية ولذلك هيئة فعلية غير غيبة، فيكون ذلك أيضاً هيئتين وخلقين، أو يكون الخلق واحداً له نسبتان، وإنها كانت الأخلاق التي فينا منسوبة إلى هذه القوة لأن النفس الإنسانية كما يظهر من بعد جوهر واحد وله نسبة وقياس إلى جنتين، جنية هي تحته وجنية هي فوقه، وله بحسب كل جنبه قوة بها تنتظم العلاقة بينه وبين تلك الجنية فهذه القوة العملية هي القوة التي له لأجل العلاقة التي إلى الجنية التي دونه وهو البدن وسياسته وأما القوة النظرية فهي القوة التي له لأجل العلاقة إلى الجنية التي فوقه لينفعل ويستفيد منها ويقبل عنها، فكان للنفس منا وجهين، وجه إلى البدن ويجب أن يكون هذا الوجه غير قابل البتة أثراً من جنس مقتضى طبيعة البدن، ووجه إلى المنادى العالية ويجب أن يكون هذا الوجه دائم القبول عمل هناك والتأثر منه، فمن الجهة السفلية تتولد الأخلاق ومن الجهة الفوقانية <تتولد العلوم، فهذه هي القوة العملية (Rahman, pp. 46-47)

not properly ordered in this way one will fall into vice since the various faculties will act without intellectual guidance. But, if the practical intellect is in control it will be able, with the help of the theoretical intellect, to act upon the other faculties and direct the moral temperament of the individual towards moral excellence. The practical intellect needs the body and the lower faculties<sup>199</sup> but it cannot be ruled by them. Avicenna notes that the practical intellect must be guided by the theoretical intellect. It serves as a kind of middle man of the soul whereby it is connected to the bodily faculties below it and the theoretical faculty above it, providing a link between the bodily and the purely intellectual.<sup>200</sup> Indeed Avicenna notes that the “the connection with the body is for the sake of perfecting, purifying, and cleansing the theoretical intellect, and the practical intellect manages that connection.”<sup>201</sup> The soul uses the body to perform external actions and to start the knowledge attainment process (since the lower faculties make use of the body) but these actions are not its ultimate goal.

199 Avicenna, V.1, McGinnis, p. 187; Van Riet, Vol. 2, p. 80; Rahman, p. 208.

200 Avicenna, I.5 McGinnis, p. 183; Van Riet, Vol. 1, pp. 92-94; Rahman, pp. 46-47.

201 Avicenna, I.5, McGinnis, 185. “Deinde intellectus efficiens deservit his omnibus: obligatio enim animae cum corpore, sicut postea adhuc declarabitur, est propter hoc ut perficiatur intellectus contemplativus et santificetur et mundetur; intellectus autem efficiens est rector illius colligationis animae cum corpore” (Van Riet, Vol. 1, pp. 99-100).

ثم العقل العملى يخدم جميع هذا لأن العلاقة البدنية كما سيتضح بعد لأجل تكميل العقل النظرى ونز كيته وتطهيره. <(Rahman, p. 50).

This alludes to the fact, noted later (McGinnis, 187; Van Riet, 80 vol2)) that the theoretical intellect uses the body and the lower faculties for some things (presumably because the knowledge attainment process begins with sensation and makes use of all the faculties mentioned thus far) but that it can also be self-sufficient. “Intellectus vero activus eget corpore et virtutibus corporalibus ad omnes actiones suas; contemplativus autem intellectus eget corpore et virtutibus eius sed nec semper nec omni modo; sufficit enim ipse sibi per seipsum” (Van Riet, Vol. 2, p. 80)

حوالعقل العملى يحتاج في أفعاله كلها إلى البدن وإى القوى البدنية، وأما العقل النظرى فإن له حاجة ما إلى البدن وإلى قواه لكن لا دائماً ومن كل وجه بل قد يستغنى بذاته، <(Rahman, p. 208)

This view of the relationship between the practical and theoretical intellects can be seen in Kaukua's discussion of the “capacity of agency” and the “capacity of cognition.” As mentioned above the “capacity of agency” is responsible for the proper cultivation of the body such that it can assist in the cogitative process. The “capacity of cognition or contemplation” is the actual intellectual ability of the human being; this includes the reception of the immaterial intelligible forms but the human intellect and the creation of the acquired intellect. This activity represents, for Avicenna, the perfection of the human being. (*Avicenna on Subjectivity : A Philosophical Study*, p. 24-25)

From what has been said here, particularly about the practical intellect, a picture of moral responsibility begins to emerge. Avicenna explains that the practical intellect is the faculty which deals with action, including moral action. He also explains that it relies upon the theoretical intellect for knowledge (of universals) that is necessary in making an assessment of what is to be done in a practical situation. This sounds very much like what Aristotle explains through the use of the practical syllogism. Universal knowledge forms the first premise of the syllogism and is necessary for a proper assessment of circumstances. However, it is the second premise, the one dealing with the particular, practical information at hand, which spurs one to action. Similarly, Avicenna explains that theoretical knowledge is necessary and is taken into account by the practical intellect; however, this knowledge is used not on its own but as an aid in assessing a particular circumstance and it is the particular, practical matters at hand which spur one to act in a certain way.

In addition to what has been said about about how intellect and practical reason is involved in moral decision making something can and should be said about the will. As mentioned, Avicenna does not devote much time to the will itself (perhaps reflecting a shift in focus between the Greek tradition and the Arabic tradition); however, he does offer some discussion of it in the “*irādah*” of the *Ta’aliqat*, within the context of a discussion of the will of the Necessary Existent.

Ruffus points out that Avicenna contrasts human volition to divine volition by claiming that human beings normally will things only “for the sake of some appetite or



pleasure” and not for some notion of the good. Even when there is something higher that the human will is directed towards it is the concept of the material or sensible object of desire and not the good.<sup>202</sup> This concept may have attached to it the idea that the thing is “excellent or beneficial” and thus has some good attached to it, although it is not intrinsic to it.<sup>203</sup> This leads Avicenna to claim that human will can be from imagination, opinion, or knowing something is desirable, because these forms of volition are focused upon a desired end.<sup>204</sup> Eventually Avicenna explains that a human being can will based on causal knowledge when the concept one has of a thing includes the knowledge that it is good in itself.<sup>205</sup>

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the concepts of will/wish and decision/choice from Aristotle through the Arabic language and Christian traditions in an effort to lay the groundwork necessary for a fruitful discussion of the positions of Averroes and Aquinas in the chapters to come. We will see that both Averroes and Aquinas take for granted that Aristotle has developed concepts of will and choice. It was demonstrated early in this chapter that Aristotle does not, in fact, have these concepts; he has some notions of wishing, deliberation, and deciding but he does not equate any of these with a particular faculty of will. This discrepancy made it important to see when the concept of the will as a particular faculty was divided and how it came to be associated with Aristotle.

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202 This makes human volition different from the volition of the Necessary Existent, which only wills for the sake of some “essential good.” Anthony Ruffus, *Explaining Volition in the Ta’aliqat: Avicenna’s View of Free Will*. Thesis completed May 2011, p. 18.

203 Ruffus, p. 19.

204 Ibid., p. 19.

205 Ibid., p. 19.

First, the chapter explored Aristotle's *De Anima* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, examining in detail what Aristotle's views of voluntary actions were. It was shown that Aristotle had a clear notion of voluntary action and that he identifies moral actions as a subject of voluntary actions only possible for human beings. These moral actions involve deliberation and decision, regarding means to attain wished for ends. This was explained in both texts using the practical syllogism, whereby one takes into account both universal and particular knowledge to make a decision regarding a particular action, whether it is to be done or not. The practical syllogism can be seen as an account of the moral process of moving from wish to deliberation and, finally, to decision; it is also clearly not related to willing or choice as these terms came to be understood; in particular, as Frede points out, desire (both rational and irrational) plays a large part in Aristotle's views and in some places can lead to voluntary actions which override our rational 'choices.'

In Aristotle, then, we have the emergence of several key elements of moral decision making but we do not have a notion of will or choice. It was not until the Stoic philosophers revisited the concepts of *prohairesis* and *boulēsis* that strong concepts of choice and the free will. We saw that the Stoics viewed the human soul as completely rational and so did not distinguish between rational and nonrational desires in the way Aristotle did and thus they left no room for acting contrary to our rational choices. For the Stoics one of the few things that are "up to us" is our ability to choose to assent to our impressions; this choose to assent or not constitutes a willing and this willing leads to actions. The Stoics saw the important activity, then, to be the choosing, not the willing (which was simply entailed in the choosing). The Stoics also tied these concepts of

choice and will to their notion of freedom; they claimed that despite causal determinism wise human beings maintained their ability to be free by aligning their desires with the good and so choosing the good. These unique notions of assent and impressions along with the concepts of choice, freedom, and will were further explored by the Platonists and Peripatetics who developed the idea that freedom of choice entailed the ability to choose from among options which were all possible.

Augustine was heavily influenced by these Stoic and Platonist ideas and he incorporated them into his particular view of Christianity. While the Stoics and Platonists focused on choice Augustine emphasized the will and explained that it was a rational faculty. Augustine saw choice as an action of the will. He explained that the will was a necessary faculty if we were to explain free choice and God's justice. For Augustine, as for the Stoics, the will is involved in every act of cognition. Furthermore, Augustine comes to conflate the concepts of willing and choosing/deciding which had, until this time, been distinct, in the term *velle*. While his ideas are clearly heavily influenced by his Greek predecessors Augustine offers his own addition to the concept by bringing in theological notions of grace; he claims that original sin keeps the human will from functioning as it should but that God can intervene through grace and help us to achieve more control over our will, bringing it more in line with reason and our rational apprehension of the good. These Augustinian notions became deeply influential to Aquinas.

The Greek tradition did not only enter the Christian tradition but was also deeply important to the Arab philosophical tradition as well. While Augustine took the Greek

views and incorporated them into Christianity in very purposeful ways the Arabs, for example Al-Farabi and Avicenna, adopted the notions of *prohairesis* and *boulēsis* (*irādah* and *ikhtiyar*) into their philosophy without addressing the issues as explicitly. As we saw, Al-Farabi discusses the concepts in passing and thinks that they are already present in a clear sense in Aristotle. Avicenna, likewise, spends much more time discussing the practical intellect and its role in moral agency than he does discussing the faculties of will or choice particularly. Thus, when Averroes goes on to offer his own commentaries on Aristotle and his own views about these faculties he is already embedded in a philosophical culture which sees them as Aristotelian.

All of this serves as important background for the discussion of Averroes and Aquinas which will account for the next two chapters. Having seen how the notions of wish/will, deliberation, and choice/decision developed along with how they were related to reason and the practical intellect we are in a better position to understand why Averroes and Aquinas make the philosophical claims they do and how they view these claims in relation to the work of Aristotle.

## CHAPTER 3 AVERROES

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the development of the notion will and the associated ideas of decision/choice, deliberation, and freedom. We saw that, while there was no faculty of will in Aristotle's theory, there were notions of wish, decision, and deliberation which were developed into a notion of will by later thinkers. In particular, later Greek writers, especially the Stoics, developed a notion of freedom which they tied to Aristotle's ideas of *prohairesis* and *boulēsis* to create a notion of a free will as a distinct faculty of the human soul. This notion became such a common element that free will (the notion that human beings have will (*irādah*) and choice (*ikhtiyār*)) was taken for granted as a foundational principle of human psychology by philosophers such as Al-Farabi. This, along with the enigmatic ways in which Aristotle addresses these issues, led some such as Averroes to claim that Aristotle had developed such notions in his own work. Averroes then used this as a foundation from which to build his own ideas about the faculty of the will and its relation to other human faculties—particularly the cogitative power and the intellects.

The development of these ideas in Averroes' philosophy is the focus of the present chapter. Here I will proceed by focusing on the faculty of will, a cogitative faculty, and its role, along with choice and deliberation, in the moral process. I will examine how Averroes views the will and its ability to function for the individual as she goes about practical decision making and action as well as how Averroes uses the separate

Intellects<sup>206</sup> to support the functioning of the will. We will see that Averroes believes he can maintain that human beings have moral responsibility despite the fact that they share not only the Agent Intellect but also the Material Intellect; this is possible because of his insistence that the will is a cogitative power--a brain power--which is not shared among individuals. Several key commentaries, including the *Epitome on the Republic*, the *Middle Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, and the *Middle and Long Commentary on the De Anima*, will be used here to trace the development of Averroes' view. Special attention will be given to the *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*, as a presentation of Averroes' final position and as a text deeply familiar to Aquinas.

Before continuing it should be noted that this chapter will make little mention of Aquinas, despite the fact that a major goal of this dissertation is to examine how his views of the will, the intellects and moral responsibility are related to those of Averroes. This is because in order for us to have a full understanding of the ways in which Aquinas' view differs from that of Averroes and of the salience and effectiveness of Aquinas' critiques we must first understand what Averroes himself is saying.

### 3.2 The Texts<sup>207</sup>

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206 Throughout this chapter I use capitalization to highlight when the Intellect(s) being discussed are separate entities shared by all human beings. In the earlier texts the material intellect is not separate and so I do not capitalize it or the term 'intellects' when referring to it and the Agent Intellect together. But, later both the Material and Agent Intellects are viewed as separate entities, and I note this by capitalizing terms.

207 I would like to point out an early work of Averroes which I will not be discussing at length but in which Averroes does make a few interesting and relevant points about the cogitative power: the *Epitome of the Parva Naturalia*. Here Averroes offers some brief discussion of the cogitative power and its relation to the other internal powers. He explains that that cogitative power is only found in human beings, since they alone possess the intellectual faculty, and that the cogitative power is a "spiritual" power which "requires the aid of the information furnished by these other faculties [the common sense and imagination]" (Averroes, *Epitome of the Parva Naturalia*, translated by Harry Blumberg (Cambridge: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1961), pp. 33-34). This hints at the multifaceted role the cogitative power has in Averroes' later works, as we shall see. One might also see pp. 48-49 and notes 22, 23 of Bk 2 ch 2 and 15 and 72 of Bk 2 Ch 3 for more information.

### 3.2.1 Commentary on Plato's *Republic*: The Theoretical/Practical divide and the cogitative faculty<sup>208</sup>

Before examining the notion of will that emerges in Averroes' work it is important to give a brief account of the general landscape of practical and theoretical sciences as Averroes sees it and how the category of moral action, to which the faculty of will is essential, fits into the overall view of knowledge and psychology. Here Averroes' commentary on the *Republic*<sup>209</sup> is especially enlightening. Averroes sees the *Republic* as a work concerning the practical arts which should be read along side the Aristotelian works about the theoretical and practical arts. Indeed, much of what Averroes says about will and action in his commentary on the *Republic* is said within this greater framework of relating the practical to the theoretical and is placed in a strongly Aristotelian context.

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<sup>208</sup> Although it is generally accepted that his *Commentary on the Republic* is a later work I place it first here in order to start with a more general discussion of the practical and the theoretical before moving on to the more specific discussions found in the other Commentaries.

<sup>209</sup> The Arabic text is lost. This English translation is from the Hebrew and represents a further effort at translating the text which was first translated into English by E. I. J. Rosenthal (as Lerner explain in his introduction to *Averroes on Plato's Republic*, translated by Ralph Lerner (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. viii). In addition to the Hebrew manuscripts there is also a Latin manuscript from the 16th century; I do not present the Latin text here, relying instead on Lerner's translation, because it would not have been available to Aquinas. See Rosenthal's Introduction in *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, translated by E. I. J. Rosenthal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1956, pp. 1-8 for a discussion of the Hebrew and Latin manuscripts.

It should perhaps be noted that although I am here discussion Averroes' commentary on Plato's *Republic* I have not said much on Plato's ideas themselves. Instead, I rely on Aristotle and, in Chapter 2, on later Greek philosophers whose ideas were generally attributed to Aristotle by medieval thinkers. This is because Plato did not factor into the accounts of Averroes and Aquinas as much as did Aristotle; indeed, as I say here, even Averroes' commentary on Plato is heavily influenced by his Aristotelianism. However, if one wishes to examine Plato's views and interpretations of them, there are, of course, sources one can look to. A particularly good account, with a great deal of bibliographic content, is Gabriela Soxana Carsone's "Akrasia in the *Republic*: Does Plato Change his Mind?" in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. XX, edited by David Sedley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 107-148; Carsone provides a detailed account of Plato's understanding of *akrasia* as he discusses it in the *Protagoras* and the *Republic* along with other texts. She argues against the commonly held view that there is a distinction between the Socratic and non-Socratic dialogues on this matter, showing that Plato is consistently against the possibility of *akrasia* or weakness of will.

From the very start Averroes makes it clear that the purpose of this treatise is to extract from the dialectic of the *Republic* those “scientific arguments” which may shed light upon “practical science [...whose subject is] volitional things, the doing of which is within our power, and the principle of these things is will and choice [... and whose end] is action alone.”<sup>210</sup> The language Averroes employs in these first few pages is highly Aristotelian and Averroes points out that the first part of practical science is addressed in the *Nicomachean Ethics* while the second part is addressed in Aristotle’s *Governance [Politics]* and in Plato’s *Republic*. He goes on to offer a brief account of the first part of the practical science before moving on to discuss the *Republic*, noting that there are four kinds of human perfections--“theoretical virtues, cogitative virtues, moral virtues, and [proficiency in the] practical [arts]”<sup>211</sup>--and that all are for the sake of the theoretical. Furthermore, human beings, by their nature, need help in cultivating these virtues, and thus they are political beings. Being political allows human beings not only to be more secure in terms of their basic needs but also to pursue one art and do it well. In this way Averroes points to Plato’s notion that it is perhaps impossible and certainly not best for a person to pursue more than one art and hope to attain some sort of perfection with regard to that art.<sup>212</sup> Averroes goes on to explain that in this context virtue, or justice, for the individual consists in each part of the soul fulfilling its function appropriately and that

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210 Averroes, *Averroes on Plato’s Republic*, pp. 3-4. Averroes goes on to distinguish two parts of practical science, one which deals with general rules and one which is more particular and more practical: “In the first part the habits and volitional actions and conduct are treated generally, and here is made known their relation to each other and which of these habits is for the sake of the others. In the second part is made known how these habits are established in the souls, which habit is ordered to which other habit so that the resulting action from the intended habit may become as perfect as can be, and which habit hinders which other habit. In general, this part supplies those matters, taken in their generality, that admit of being actualized.” (4) Averroes goes on to state that the end of the knowledge of what constitutes a virtue in a particular instance is “that one should act, not that he should know” (9).

211 Ibid., p. 5

212 Ibid., pp. 5-6



justice in the city is similar; the *Republic* uses the model of the city to explain soul.<sup>213</sup>

This discussion of practical sciences and actions and their relationship to the theoretical sciences is in the background as Averroes continues to discuss how volition and will work both in general and for individuals.

After this brief introduction to the work and to his view of how the idea of virtue and practical art, action, and volition are located within the larger theoretical framework, Averroes moves on to discuss Plato's text more directly. For example, he notes that the head of the guardians in Plato's state should be the most virtuous and disciplined and the most concerned for the well being of the citizens. Such a person will "not depart from his opinion against his will;"<sup>214</sup> that is to say, he should be steadfast in his opinions when they are correct and not change them out of fear, coercion, deception, etc. Averroes goes on to explain that human perfections do not exist in nature beyond dispositions and that perfection of those dispositions is not a natural occurrence but the result of "will and skillfulness" such that choice and will are the efficient cause of one's possession of the practical science or practical virtues.<sup>215</sup> The emphasis here is on the fact that practical philosophy--that is, action (including moral action)-- is the result of one's own will and the choices that one makes to carry out the willed-for end, rather than being some totally natural occurrence outside of the individual's control.

The will has no connection as such to the existence of the theoretical sciences and these sciences are not primarily or essentially "disposed toward action."<sup>216</sup> However,

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213 Ibid. pp. 7-8

214 Ibid. p. 34

215 Ibid., p. 83

216 Ibid., p. 88

since the end of the human being is to achieve intelligible existence as much as possible and this kind of existence is “acquired by the will,” the theoretical sciences do have some connection to volition and have primacy over other objects of volition.<sup>217</sup> Here Averroes is establishing the connection between the theoretical and the practical in the human being. Theoretical knowledge is necessary and useful for action in that it is a precondition for practical knowledge. This seems particularly important given Averroes’ mature views about the separate Intellects. Despite this reliance of the practical on the theoretical for existence, it is not the case that the function of the practical arts is, primarily, to further the theoretical (i.e. the purpose is not “good and excellent discernment”<sup>218</sup>) with the actions being secondary. Rather, Averroes asserts that “the truth is that the intelligibles of these [arts] were established at first only with a view to activity; if one perceives anything by them, it is by accident.”<sup>219</sup> So, while the practical arts rely on the theoretical they are not focused on furthering theoretical science or attaining theoretical knowledge. This makes sense when we think about how we view moral action. The focus of our will, deliberation, and choice is almost entirely on the action and the practical end to which the action aims; we rarely consider how a moral action will impact our general knowledge. It certainly is the case that sometimes our practical actions lead to more knowledge or understanding (for example, it is conceivable that an action can lead us to some further

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217 Ibid., p. 89. “its lordship over the volitional things consists in the primacy of intelligible existence over [sensible] existence, and in its giving the volitional beings their principles on which their existence depends—this by way of the intelligible existence giving the sensible existence what it depends on. It has already been made clear that this is not by way of the intelligible's serving the sensible; rather it [sc., the sensible] is something that follows on it [sc., the intelligible] and is necessitated by it. This being so, the theoretical sciences are indeed useful for action and necessary for action in the way in which it is said of intelligible existence that it is necessary for sensible existence.” Averroes goes on to say that “it may be seen from this treatise that the practical arts--be they faculties, or rulings or ministerial arts--exist only because of the theoretical sciences” (p. 89)

218 Ibid., p. 89

219 Ibid., p. 90

insight about the Good), yet, this does not seem to be the focus. This is particularly important given that the end of human action is knowledge attainment and perfection of the human being as knower.

Averroes moves on from this discussion of theoretical virtue to address cogitative and moral virtues. He asserts that these are “for the sake of theoretical intelligibles.”<sup>220</sup> He also makes a connection between the cogitative and the moral virtues which is particularly interesting and important, given what he will say about the role of cogitation (the faculty connected to the will) in moral action. He notes that appetite and desire are of two kinds: one stems from imagination and is found in all animals, and one stems from cogitation and thought and is distinctive of human beings.<sup>221</sup> He continues to expand upon the particularly human kind of desire, stating that

the moral virtues are nothing other than that this part of us is aroused toward that which cogitation judges ought to come into being, to the extent that it judges and at the time that it judges. It is evident that this activity belongs to nothing other than the theoretical part of the soul. This being so, it is [only] this part that acquires virtue from the cogitative part. The cogitative part, then, is more truly elevated; it is [more] noble and more choiceworthy. Also many of the animals have a share in this [moral] part—such as the modesty to be found in the lion— but it is human only by virtue of thought and cogitation, and whatever is the cause of something’s being of a certain character possesses that character to a higher degree. It can also be seen now from the case of these virtues that through them man serves others [...] But, as for theoretical science, why it is clear from its character that a man is not disposed toward it that he might serve others. Moreover, these virtues are more apt to be hylic than the theoretical sciences and more

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p. 90. Later he notes that “this kind [of perfection--i.e.], the moral, is laid down [in relation to] theoretical perfection as a preparatory rank, without which the attainment of the end is impossible.” and that all four classes of human perfections are “for the sake of theoretical perfection” (p. 92).

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

apt to be in need of the body for their continued existence.<sup>222</sup>

This passage highlights, indirectly, several aspects of Averroes' philosophy concerning the psychology surrounding practical science and moral action which he will directly address in his commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Here he notes that the cogitative power is that by which we judge what is morally virtuous and that this power is linked in some way to the theoretical part of the soul.<sup>223</sup> He also emphasizes the practical and physical aspect of moral actions, explaining that the moral virtues are likely to require the body for their existence; we may perhaps read into this claim, that the cogitative faculty, which is responsible for moral judgments, has a more 'hylic' nature as well. These remarks are supported by what Averroes says in other works about the location of the will--the faculty of moral judgment and choice--in the cogitative power, the location of the cogitative power in the brain<sup>224</sup>, and the relationship between this bodily power and the non-physical, theoretical Intellects.

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222 Ibid., p. 91

223 It should also be noted that he indicates in various places throughout the commentary, particularly in "The First Treatise," that the cogitative faculty and cogitative virtue is concerned with experience and with actualizing in a physical way what is understood theoretically. For example, he describes the cogitative faculty in general as something which one (in his discussion a physician) "acquires through experience" (p. 33); furthermore, in describing medicine as a practical art he says that "the physician will only be complete when, together with knowledge of the immutable universals of the art, there is realized in him through experience the cogitative virtue--[the virtue] through which he can actualize them [sc., the universals] in matter." (p. 9-10). He discusses the "political cogitative faculty--i.e. the experiential faculty that gauges [these] general things so that they come to exist in matter in actuality" (p. 45) when discussing the number of guardians necessary in Plato's city. Finally, when discussing the organization of the soul in relation to the organization of the city Averroes notes that "the cogitative part rules over the other faculties[i.e. the spirited and appetitive parts] and the other faculties are in submission to it" (p. 54) and that "the wise individual is only he in whom the cogitative part forever rules over the other parts, [as] is the case [in] the city" (p. 55); it might help to note that it seems for Plato in the *Republic* that the 'cogitative part' is more akin to reason or intellect than Averroes makes it seem here (since he contrasts it with the appetitive and spirited part and does not seem to include another part that would account for intellectual operations that go beyond what Averroes would include in cogitation). In any case, this discussion of cogitation does highlight its place for Averroes as a kind of middle ground between the physical and intellectual--between the body, of which it is a part, and the Intellects, to which it relates and with which it allows the individual to conjoin when desired.

224 It is important to note that Aristotle locates the cogitative power (and other rational faculties) in the heart, not the brain.

Even in the present commentary Averroes begins to make these associations more clear when he discusses the relationship between the individual and the “theoretical part” (the Intellects) and the theoretical sciences. He claims that “the theoretical part does not exist in us from the outset in its ultimate perfection and in actuality, its existence in us is only potential” and that “it is for us to bring into being and to perfect the perfection and actuality that are of this character--i.e. it comes to pass through choice and will since there is no sufficiency in nature to bring it about.”<sup>225</sup> Here Averroes is noting that there is a connection between our will—and the cogitative power of which it is a part—and the theoretical power.

Before moving on to a discussion of Averroes’ Commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* something more should be said about how the theoretical and practical intellects interact in Averroes’ view. To begin, Averroes points out in a general fashion that having knowledge of first principles can help in practical matters;<sup>226</sup> he goes on to say that the guardians will possess “two kinds of knowledge simultaneously—i.e. the theoretical and the practical”<sup>227</sup> and that is what it means to be wise<sup>228</sup> and to attain “ultimate perfection.”<sup>229</sup> In a more detailed account of the relationship Averroes explains that it is the theoretical sciences which supply the intention and the practical arts by which one attains that intention;<sup>230</sup> thus, both are necessary for action since one must have intention or goal in mind before one chooses a course of action. Although we do not have much detail in what is said here it is important to note that these types of statements are

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<sup>225</sup> Averroes, *Averroes on Plato’s Republic*, p. 93

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., p. 50

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., p. 87

reminiscent of Aristotle's practical syllogism.<sup>231</sup> These statements make clear that practical actions, which include moral actions, involve not only practical intellect but also theoretical intellect; human beings require some universal knowledge and some theoretical end towards which to aim and against which to judge the practical knowledge they attain and determine what actions they should or should not perform.

What we have seen so far in Averroes' discussion of the *Republic* provides some foundational considerations of Averroes' account of moral action as a part of practical science and its relationship to theoretical science. He makes it clear that willing and choosing are related to experience and to the cogitative power while also explaining that the cogitative power (and all practical virtues) are ultimately connected to the theoretical arts and the theoretical part of the human being. Averroes is clearly drawing from Aristotelian sources in his account and so it is no surprise that his views are made more clear when he comments directly upon the works of Aristotle, particularly on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *De Anima*. Thus, to expand the picture of Averroes' view we must move on to consider these texts.

### **3.2.2 Commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*: The will and the deliberative process**

Averroes' *Middle Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics* represents a paraphrasing of the Aristotelian text, with Averroes making relatively few additions.<sup>232</sup> It

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<sup>231</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 26-27 above.

<sup>232</sup> Of course, this is not unusual since Averroes' middle commentaries are paraphrasing while his long commentaries are more substantive. There is no long commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. This does not, however, diminish the value of the text as it does still provide insight into how Averroes read and understood Aristotle text. It is also worth noting here that, as with the commentary on the *Republic*, Averroes' commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* is available only in Hebrew and Latin. I have provided references to the Latin as needed.

does, however, offer a good foundation for seeing how Averroes more directly addresses the issue of moral action and decision making. As explained in Chapter 2, Aristotle begins his direct treatment of the character of actions in Book 3; Averroes follows Aristotle's text, discussing the voluntary and the involuntary. Averroes breaks the discussion of *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.1 into several chapters exploring the nature of voluntary and involuntary action. He explains that there are three categories of actions: voluntary, forced involuntary (often called mixed actions), and involuntary through ignorance.<sup>233</sup> He follows Aristotle in claiming that both voluntary and mixed actions (which are more similar to voluntary than involuntary actions) are worthy of praise and blame in a way truly involuntary actions are not. The most important category of actions for our purposes is the voluntary since voluntary actions are the result of principles which are in the agent, such as deliberation, decision/choice and wish.<sup>234</sup>

After discussing these kinds of actions and identifying what constitutes voluntary action Averroes moves on to consider the internal principles which allow for human voluntary action (moral action). He begins with choice (*electione*).<sup>235</sup> He notes, following

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233 "voluntarium et involuntarium et quod involuntarium duplex violentum, scilicet et quod propter ignorantiam." (Bk. 3 Ch. 1) Averroes, *Commentum Averrois super libros Ethicorum ad Nicomachum Aristotelis*, translated by Hermannus Alemannus, edited by Nicoletus Vernia, 1483. [http://dare.uni-koeln.de/dare-cgi/vaporlinks.pas?darevurl=leftBoxContent%3A%3DonLoadedChunkSync%3A%3D%2Fdare-cgi%2Ftext\\_chunk.pas%3Ftxt%3DFT201%26type%3Dsubdivision%26n%3D1%26side%3Dleft%2CrightBoxContent%3A%3DonLoadedWitnessTable%3A%3D%2Fdare-cgi%2Fwitness\\_table.pas%3Faw%3DAW82%26trad%3Dlat1%26side%3Drigh%26type%3Dfulltext](http://dare.uni-koeln.de/dare-cgi/vaporlinks.pas?darevurl=leftBoxContent%3A%3DonLoadedChunkSync%3A%3D%2Fdare-cgi%2Ftext_chunk.pas%3Ftxt%3DFT201%26type%3Dsubdivision%26n%3D1%26side%3Dleft%2CrightBoxContent%3A%3DonLoadedWitnessTable%3A%3D%2Fdare-cgi%2Fwitness_table.pas%3Faw%3DAW82%26trad%3Dlat1%26side%3Drigh%26type%3Dfulltext). All English translations of this text are my own.

234 Ibid., Bk. 3, Ch. 3. "Quando igitur dicatur de eo, quod fit coactae aut inscietae, quoniam fit in spontanea palam est, quoniam hoc, quod agitur sponte est, cuius agendi principium est in agente ipsum et agens ipsum scit particularia in quibus fit actio."

235 It is important to point out here some issue of language. As was made clear in Chapter 2 Aristotle's terms *prohairesis* and *boulēsis* should not be translated as choice or will. However, I use these terms here (along with the more appropriate decision and wish) to reflect the Latin terms used. While we cannot know the original Arabic terms the Latin translation lends further support to the argument made in Chapter 2 that Aristotle's views were mixed with those of later Greeks and this mixture was reflected in the terminology used by such early writers as Augustine and Al-Farabi.

Aristotle, that choice (decision in Aristotle) is voluntary (*spontanei*) but is not the same things as the voluntary (*intentio spontanei*). He goes on to distinguish choice from appetite (*concupiscentiam*), anger (*iram*), opinion (*opinionem*), and wish (*velle*). In particular, he notes that choice is not will because choice can never be about impossibles while will may be.<sup>236</sup> Using Aristotle's examples Averroes points out that we cannot choose to be immortal, nor can we choose the winner of a competition, but we can wish or will for (*volitum*) these things. We wish for ends and choose means which may lead to those ends. Later he expands upon this notion of wish and its relation to ends, explaining that we wish for the good. Even when something is actually bad it may seem good to us and so become an object of our will. A good person always wills the truth (the good itself) but a bad person may will something that is only the apparent good.<sup>237</sup> This notion

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236 Averroes, *Commentum Averrois super libros Ethicorum ad Nicomachum Aristotelis* Bk. 3, Ch. 5. "Et etiam non est electio velle quamvis videatur ei esse propinque eo, quod electio non est impossibilium, velle autem est. Si enim dixerit quid quod impossibilia eliguntur stultius reputabitur, velle vero invenitur circa res impossibiles. Verbi gratia vellemus immortales esse. Et velle etiam rerum est, quarum operatio non est in nobis, ut athletam vincere aut hypocritam. Et nullus quidem eligit huiusmodi res, immo res eas eligit quarum in se videt actionem et adhuc velle quidem maxime finis est. Eligentia autem non est nisi eorum, quae ducunt ad finem. Verbi gratia sanari volumus, eligimus autem per quae sanamur et felices esse vellemus et asserimus nos velle, non est autem dicendum eligere nos fieri felices"

237 (Ibid., Bk. 3, Ch. 7 "Et sequitur dicentes quod volitum sit bonum, ut non sit volitum nisi id, quod est bonum per se et rectum. Quando enim fuerit quid ex volitis erit bonum, hoc autem est inconueniens. Forsitan enim accidit multis velle eos hoc, quod est malum et ipsum videtur bonum dicentes vero volitum esse hoc quod videtur bonum sequitur hic non esse aliquid volitum per naturam. Sed erit illud, quod volet unusquisque hominum secundum quod sibi visum fuerit, donec velint aliquid et eius contrarium homines, intendo quod velit rem unam eandem unus. Et contraria eius alter, immo iam volet vir unus idem duo contraria in horis diversis. Si ergo sic se habuerit res, non erit aliquid volitum per naturam. Et hoc iterum est inconueniens. Si igitur non fuerint persuasivae hae duae opiniones oportet, ut dicamus, quoniam bonum illud, quod est bonum per se est simpliciter volitum et secundum veritatem. Et unusquisque hominum vult ipsum secundum quod ei videtur. Bonus igitur vult bonum illud, quod est bonum in veritate, malus vero illud, de quo contingit, ut videatur ei, quod sit bonum. Et hoc, quoniam perceptio vel apprehensio, quam habet bonus vel virtuosus de bono et iudicium eius de ipso similatur iudicio sanorum sentientibus de rebus sensibilibus, iudicium vero mali de ipso similatur iudicio infirmorum. Et illi, qui sunt in dispositiones sanitatis discernunt saporibus rerum qui sunt eis in veritate, intendo quod ipsi iudicant de dulci, quoniam dulce. Et de illo, quod est amarum, quoniam amarum. Illi autem, qui sunt infirmi faciunt huius diversum, intendo quod iudicant de dulci, quoniam amarum. Et similiter contingit eis in vocibus gravibus et acutis et odoribus et reliquis sensibilibus. Et quando sic est bonus, ergo est ille, qui iudicat de unaquaque rerum iudicium sanum. Et videtur ei verum in unaquaque earum, eo quod in unaquaque dispositionum sunt res venustae et res delectabiles, non secundum quod imaginatur de ipsis. [18] Dixit: Et dignum est, ut sit bono magna praecellentia super alterum in eo quod iudicet de vero et in dimissione eius, quod dimittit



of willing the good (either real or apparent) highlights the connection established in the commentary on the *Republic* that our practical thoughts and actions are always related to things which are theoretical. Our actions revolve, in some fashion, around the notion of the Good as a universal which is in itself the object of reason rather than action. We know the Good to a greater or lesser degree and then we act in accord with that knowledge. How this knowledge is possible will be addressed later in the discussion of the Intellects.

In addition to discussing these notions of choice and will, Averroes, following Aristotle, discusses the notion of deliberation. Deliberation (*consilium*), along with choice and will, is an essential component in the process of moral action. Like choice, deliberation is only about means, which are in our power. We deliberate only about things which are in our power to do.<sup>238</sup> The object of choice is the result of previous deliberation;<sup>239</sup> the difference is that when it is the object of deliberation it is not yet decided upon, but once it is chosen it is determinate.<sup>240</sup>

From this discussion of choice, will, and deliberation a picture of moral decision making and action begins to emerge. We wish for some (good) end; upon setting this goal we deliberate about means to attain that end (these means being whatever set of things is within our power to do); finally, we determine the action or set of actions which will lead

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unusquisque ex rebus. Etenim ipse existit tamquam regula et mensura rebus, per quam iudicatur de ipsis. Et verisimile est, quod error in hoc accidens multis hominum non accadat nisi delectationis causa eo quod ipsae videntur bonae et non sunt ita et volunt delectabile quasi bonum. Et a tristi fugiunt quasi a malo.”

238 Ibid., Bk. 3, Ch. 6, “Consiliamur autem de rebus, quarum actio in nobis est et currit per manus nostras.”

239 Ibid., Bk. 3, Ch. 5 “sed electum est, ut quandoque hoc sit praeconsiliatum.”

240 Ibid., Bk. 3, Ch. 6, “Et res quidem consiliabilis et eligibilis una est intentio determinata et consiliabilis intentio indeterminata. Et est quidem eligibile determinatum eo quod est res in quam assensum est ad faciendum ipsam propter iudicium consilii super ipsam, quoniam bona. Et propter hoc unusquisque hominum cessat ab inquisitione et consiliatione quando in se ipsum reduxerit principium ad id quod vidit in illa re et haec est res, quae eligitur, intendo illud, de quo iudicatum est ipsum esse bonum.”

us to our desired end and we choose to undertake it.<sup>241</sup> This language of deliberation and choice seems to be naturally connected to the discussion of theoretical and practical sciences or arts discussed above. While it all falls firmly into the category of practical art and is all the work of the cogitative faculty, it is clear from what has been said so far that these practical intellectual activities may be related to the more theoretical activities of the the Intellects themselves. The workings of the cogitative power become even more clear in Averroes' Commentaries on the *De Anima*, as does the cogitative power's relationship to the Intellects and so to knowledge of what may be called theoretical intelligibles (following what we have seen above in the *Republic* commentary).

This picture of the process of practical decision making and the relationship between universal and particular knowledge is highlighted by Averroes, following Aristotle, in the practical syllogism. Here Averroes uses Aristotle's example of sweet food. We have the universal idea that sweet things should be tasted; we then encounter some particular things which we know to be sweet. Given the universal knowledge that sweet things should be tasted and the particular knowledge that sweet thing lies in front of us, we are spurred to action and taste the sweet thing; we use our universal understanding to inform our actions in regards to particulars we encounter. The situation may be more complicated if our knowledge and our appetites do not coincide, as when we know we should not taste sweet things but we have an appetite for the sweet thing in front of us, and sometimes our actions do not coincide with our knowledge (we act on

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241 This process is highlighted in Averroes' statement of Aristotle's view: "Cum ergo si finis volitum est et omne quod ducit ad finem consiliabile et electum, tunc actiones, quae sunt in his sunt fientes sponte et per electionem, operationes autem virtutis in his fiunt, intendo in actionibus electionis et spontaneis" (Ibid., Bk. 3, Ch. 8).

appetite, not on reason). However, even in this case the link between universal and particular knowledge and the role they both play in action is clear.<sup>242</sup>

### 3.2.3 Commentaries on the *De Anima*: The cognitive power and the Intellects

#### 3.2.3.1 *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*

As we have seen, Averroes offers an account of the key elements of the process of (moral) action in the *Middle Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, explaining not only will but also deliberation and choice. This process of moving from willing an end to deliberating about and choosing means by which to attain that end is the process of moral action and it is by the results of this process one may be judged morally. In so far as each individual is responsible for his own moral process he can be held morally responsible. He gives an account of how the individual is responsible for this process in his commentaries on the *De Anima*, explaining the various intellectual faculties and their

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242 Ibid., Bk 7, Ch. 5, “Et forsitan patebit haec intentio etiam, quando perscrutatum fuerit de hoc ex ipsis quae dicta sunt in scientia naturali. Illic enim iam demonstratum fuit, quod apprehensio quae est rationis est universalis et quae est phantasiae est particularis, id est in particularibus quorum melius est motivum eo quod bonum. Et peius monitum eo quod delectabile solum. Duae ergo opiniones sibi contradicentes sunt naturaliter quando ergo conveniunt ambae opiniones in re aliqua, intendo opinionem universalem, quae est ex parte intellectus et particularem, quae est ex parte concupiscentiae tunc oportet quod dicatur quoniam comprehensio conclusionis ex istis duabus opinionibus est secundum fortunam eo quod earum convenientia per fortunam est et oportet ut sit actio statim sequens comprehensionem conclusionis, ut si apud nos fuerit opinio quoniam expedit ut gustetur omne dulce et cognoscamus per sensum quod hoc dulce statim gustabimus ipsum dummodo non sit aliquid prohibens. Quando vero fuerit opinio universalis prohibens gustationem, ut sciamus quod omne dulce movet cholera et sit apprehensio huius ad quod innuitur fiens per sensum quoniam dulce movens ad ipsum tunc motio rationis erit hic contraria motioni concupiscentiae, quae si vicerit erit non continentia cum existentia scientiae, erit igitur non continentia interdum cum ratione quando fuerit ratio conveniens concupiscentiae. Et interdum non erit quando fuerit adversans ei. Et non continentia, quae est contraria per se opinioni sane est illa, quae fit ex parte concupiscentiae solum. Illa vero, quae fit ex parte ambarum simul, intendo rationem et concupiscentiam non est contraria rationi sane per se sed per accidens. [15] Dixit: Et propter hoc quod incontinentia fit quando concupiscentia contraria fuerit opinioni universali non dicemus quod fere habeant incontinentiam, quando non sit eis apprehensio universalis. Et est quidem eis apprehensio particularis et est phantasia et memoria.”

relationship to the human being and to the will. We will begin with an examination of the *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*.<sup>243</sup>

Averroes posits the existence of a number of intellectual powers, particularly the agent and material intellects and the cogitative power. In the *Middle Commentary's* section on the rational faculty Averroes discusses “part of the soul whereby we have apprehensions, which is called intellect and comprehension.”<sup>244</sup> He first considers the more passive element of this intellect which has the capacity to “think all things,” concluding that this faculty, the “hylic [material] intellect,” cannot be mixed with the body because it must retain the ability to receive all intelligible forms without impediment and without changing the intelligibles.<sup>245</sup> From this Averroes concludes that the potential intellect is “nothing other than a disposition only” and that it is a separate substance and is related to the human being in so far as that separate substance is related

<sup>243</sup> It should be noted that Averroes wrote three commentaries on the *De Anima*, a short, middle and long. I will make reference to only the Middle Commentary (which is largely a paraphrase of Aristotle) and the Long Commentary (which supplies more of Averroes' critical commentary and unique philosophical work). Aquinas, however, only had access to the Long Commentary in Latin translation, as indicated by Taylor in his “Introduction,” in *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*, translated by Richard C. Taylor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. xcvi.

<sup>244</sup> Averroes, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima* [MCDA], translated by Alfred L. Ivry (Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), p. 108, الجزء من النفس الذي به ندرك الإدراك المسمى عقلا و فهمًا

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., p. 109. “The hylic intellect, if it is to think all things--that is, receive the forms of all things--cannot be mixed with any one form; that is, it cannot be mixed with the subject in which it is found, as the other material faculties are.

If the rational faculty were mixed with any form, then one of two things would occur: either the form of the subject with which it was mixed would impede the forms this faculty would receive, or it would change them--that is, it would change the form being received. Were this so, the forms of things would not exist in the intellect as they really are--that is, the forms existing in the intellect would be changed into forms different from the actual forms. If, therefore, the nature of the intellect is to receive the forms of things which have retained their natures, it is necessary that it be a faculty unmixed with any form whatsoever.”

حذلك أن هذه القوة التي تسمى العقل الهيولاني إن كانت تعقل الأشياء كلها أي تقبل صور لأشياء كلها فقد يجب ألا تكون هذه مخالطة لصوره من الصور، أي لا تكون مخالطة للموضوع الذي توجد فيه كما توجد سائر القوى الهيولانية. وذلك أنه لو كانت مخالطة لصوره من الصور للزم فيها أحد أمرين: إما أن تعوق صورة الموضوع التي القوة مخالطة لها الصور التي تقبلها تلك القوة، وإما أن تغيرها أعني أن تغير الصورة المقبولة. ولو كان ذلك كذلك لكانت صور الأشياء لا توجد في العقل على كنهها أعني أنه كانت تتغير صور الموجودات في العقل إلى صور هي غير صور الموجودات. فإن كان العقل من طبيعته أن يقبل صور الأشياء محفوفة الطباع فقد يجب أن تكون قوة غير مخالطة لصوره من الصور أصلاً.

to the human being.<sup>246</sup> He explains that “the hylic intellect is something composed of the disposition found in us and of an intellect conjoined to this disposition. As conjoined to the disposition, it is a disposed intellect, not an intellect in act; though as not conjoined to this disposition, it is an intellect in act; while, in itself, this intellect is the Agent Intellect.”<sup>247</sup> We see here the beginning of an account of the complex relationship that must exist between the individual human being--the subject who has the disposition to know--and the intellects which think and receive intelligibles. The account given of the “hylic” intellect begins to hint at Averroes’ views of the Agent Intellect as well.

He takes up the issue of the Agent Intellect directly after presenting his account of

Aristotle’s famous passage in *De Anima* 3.5.<sup>248</sup> He explains that the Agent Intellect is that

246 Ibid., p. 111. “It became apparent that in one sense, the intellect is a disposition free of material forms, as Alexander said; and, in another sense, it is a separate substance attired with this disposition—that is, this disposition found in man is attached to this separate substance by virtue of the latter’s conjunction with man.”

> وإذا وفيت هذه الأقاويل قسطها من الشكوك ظهر أن العقل هو من جهة استعداد مجرد من الصور الهيولانية كما يقوله الاسكندر، وهو من جهة جوهر مفارق متلبس بهذا الاستعداد. أعنى أن هذا الاستعداد الموجود في الإنسان هو شيء لحق هذا الجوهر المفارق من جهة اتصاله بالإنسان، <

247 Ibid., p. 111.

> فقد تبين إذا أن العقل الهيولاني هو شيء مركب من الاستعداد الموجود فينا و من عقل متصل بهذا الاستعداد: هو من جهة ما هو متصل به عقل مستعد لا عقل بالفعل، و هو عقل بالفعل من جهة ما ليس هو متصل بهذا الاستعداد، <

It might be helpful to note that while Averroes seems to be discussing the agent and material intellects as separate faculties (particularly in the *Long Commentary* it has been argued that he really sees them as the passive and active states of “essentially the same being” (Alfred Ivry “Averroes’ Middle and Long Commentaries on the *De Anima*” in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, V.5 Is. 1 (1995), p. 78). Taylor, however, disagrees with Ivry’s interpretation, explaining that the material and agent intellect are not the same being and that Averroes’ account of the material intellect changes—it goes from being in the individual as disposition to being a separate substance—while his view of the agent intellect remains an “eternal, separately existing substance” throughout his work (although its role in other aspects of creation does change). (Taylor, “Introduction”, pp. xix-xxi).

248 Averroes, MCDA, pp. 115-116. “He said: That which concerns the intellect has to correspond to physical entities. In every genus of generated physical entities, we find one thing which corresponds to the recipient and another to the agent. The former is that which is potentially all the things found in that genus, the latter that which actualizes them, its relation in nature being like that of art to matter. Accordingly, these two differentia—namely, agent and a passive intellect—have to exist in the intellect, and thus there will be an intellect in us which is intellect with respect to [its ability to] receive every intelligible, and an intellect in us with respect to [its ability to] actualize every intelligible.”

> قال: ولما كان الأمر في العقل يجب أن يجرى مجرى الأمور الطبيعية، وذلك أنه كما نجد في جنس جنس من الأمور الطبيعية الحديثة شيئا يجرى مجرى القابل وشيئا يجرى مجرى الفاعل، أما الذي يجرى مجرى القابل فهو الشيء الذي هو بالقوة جميع الأشياء الموجودة في ذلك الجنس، وأما الذي يجرى مجرى الفاعل فهو الذي يفعل كل شيء في ذلك الجنس، وهذا هو الشيء الذي حال من الطبيعة كحال الصناعة من الهيولي، فقد يجب أن يوجد في العقل هذان الفصلان أعنى عقلا فعلا و عقلا منفعلا، فيكون فينا عقل هو عقل من جهة أنه يقبل كل معقول و

faculty which is able to “actualize every intelligible [...] and bring them forth”<sup>249</sup> giving the material intellect the ability to receive these intelligibles. The Agent Intellect is both a separate substance and a “form for us.”<sup>250</sup> It is in the human being but is still an ontologically distinct substance, completely unmixed with our material self and faculties and yet under the control of the will.<sup>251</sup> Here, then, Averroes is pointing out the unique relationship which exists between the individual and the separate Agent Intellect.<sup>252</sup>

Having offered an account of the rational faculty of the human being Averroes moves on in the next section to a discussion of the appetitive faculty, that part of the soul which is responsible for motion.<sup>253</sup> Of particular interest for our purposes in this section is what Averroes says about the cogitative power and the workings of the practical intellect. During a discussion of how the faculties of the soul should be enumerated, Averroes notes that “the principle expression of [the part of the soul which is concerned with desire and which causes motion], which is called choice, occurs in the cogitative faculty, while

فينا عقل من جهة أنه يفعل كل معقول.<

249 Ibid., p. 116. <كذلك هذا العقل هو الفاعل المعقولات و الخلق لها>

250 Ibid., p. 116. <صوة لنا> He also calls the agent intellect “our final form.”

251 Ibid., p. 116. “It is clear that, in one respect, this intellect is an agent and, in another, it is a form for us, since the generation of intelligibles is a product of our will. When we want to think something, we do so, our thinking it being nothing other than, first, bringing the intelligible forth and, second, receiving it. The individual intentions in the imaginative faculty are they that stand in relation to the intellect as potential colors do to light. That is, this intellect renders them actual intelligibles after their having been intelligible in potentiality. It is clear from the nature of this intellect--which in one respect, is form for us and, in another, is the agent for the intelligibles--that it is always superior to that which is acted upon, and the principle is superior to the matter. The intelligent and intelligible aspects of this intellect are essentially the same thing, since it does not think anything external to its essence. There must be an Agent Intellect here, since that which actualizes the intellect has to be an intellect, the agent endowing only that which resembles what is in its substance.”

>وبين أن هذا هو من جهة فاعل ومن جهة صورة لنا إذ كان توليد المعقولات إلى مشيئتنا، وذلك أنه متى شئنا أن نعقل شيئا ما عقلمناه، وليس عقلمنا أيه شيئا غير تخليق المعقول أولا و قبوله ثانيا. والشئ الذي ينتزل من العقل منزلة الألوان التي بالقوة من الضوء هي المعاني الشخصية التي في القوة الخيالية، أعنى أن هذا العقل يصيرها بالفعل معقولات بعد أن كانت بالقوة. وهذا العقل الذي هو صورة لنا من جهة و فاعل للمعقولات من جهة بين من أمره أنه مفارق وأنه غير كائن ولا فاسد وذلك أن الفاعل يجب أبدا أن يكون أشرف من المفعول والمبدأ أشرف من الهيولى. ومذا العقل هو الذي العقل والمعقول منه شئ واحد بذاته إذ كان لا يعقل شيئا خارجا عن ذاته. وإنما كان واجبا أن يكون هاهنا عقل فعال لأن الفاعل للعقل يجب أن يكون عقلا إذ كان لا يعطى الفاعل إلا شبيهه ما في جوهره.<

252 Averroes does not go into detail here about how this is the case but more can be said once we examine the very different doctrine of the LCDA and recall what has already been said about the will.

253 Averroes, MCDA, p. 123

the passionate and desiderative faculties are elsewhere than in the cogitative faculty.”<sup>254</sup>

He goes on to discuss motion (both locomotion and action more generally) and what faculty is responsible for motion in human beings. He notes that “speculative intellect” cannot be responsible for motion because it “does not contemplate that which is to be sought or that from which one flees,”<sup>255</sup> nor can the appetitive part be the primary motivation. Thus, it is “both together: desire with knowledge or with imagination” which result in motion.<sup>256</sup> When desire is accompanied by knowledge or intellect in this way it is called will and choice and it is the result of the desiderative part of the soul; this faculty allows one to pursue the universal/pure or practical/apparent good and to avoid the real or apparent bad.<sup>257</sup> It is only the human being who is able to recognize the nuances and possible contrariety that can exist among myriad goods and to deliberate and make choices regarding these goods, using the desiderative part of the soul.<sup>258</sup> The desiderative part of the soul is corporeal and so is related to the body<sup>259</sup> and it functions by pushing and pulling the animal;<sup>260</sup> human beings have the added ability to deliberate so they are

>، وذلك أن الرئيس من هذا الجرم وهو الذي يسمى اختياراً يوجد في الغير الفكر. < 254 Ibid., p. 124.

Ivry points out in note 4 that Averroes has substituted choice (*ikhtiyar*) here for will (the proper translation of Aristotle's *boulēsis*, wish). He suggests this is because the two are closely connected. This also highlights the emphasis placed on the deliberative element of the process for Averroes.

ولا أيضا نقدر أن نقول إن هذه الحركة هي عن العقل النظري، و ذلك أن العقل النظري ليس ينظر في الميؤب و لا. < 255 Ibid., p. 125.

>الهروور منه  
ولا نقدر أن نقول إن الرئاسة في هذه الحركة للجزء الشهواني، وذلك أنا قد نشتهى أشياء كثيرة ولا نتحرك إليها إذا. < 256 Ibid., p. 126.

>كان العقل يرى خلاف ذلك. وإذا كان هذا هكذا فظهر أنها تكون من قبل الأميين معاً، الشهوة مع العقل أو الشهوة مع التخيل  
257 Averroes notes that “the desiderative part of the soul and the faculty responsible for fleeing are one and the same, though they differ in being;” < (Ibid., p. 120). He also differentiates here between the sensory faculties which (along with the desiderative part of the soul) apprehend pleasant and harmful and the intellect, which only seeks the good qua good. Clearly he is making the distinction between what may be pleasant (an apparent good) and what the intellect knows to be good (the good itself); the desiderative power has the ability to choose between a variety of goods or apparent goods (pleasant things) and a disregard the knowledge one may have, though intellect, of the actual good (perhaps because it is not pleasant at the time).

258 Ibid., pp. 126-128

259 Here Averroes associates it with the heart (following Aristotle) but later, in the LCDA, he locates it in the brain, following later developments.

260 Averroes, MCDA, p. 130

not simply at the mercy of imagination or desire.<sup>261</sup> From what has been said here it begins to become clear that, for Averroes, practical, moral action is the result of several faculties working in conjunction. It is not enough to have desire, or knowledge, or imagination, alone; rather, all of these things play a part in the process which results in action. This is most easily seen in Averroes' account of the practical syllogism.

Examining how Averroes explains Aristotle's practical syllogism can further explain how he interprets the relationship between universal and particular knowledge and the faculties responsible for these types of knowledge. First, Averroes' points out that deliberation is the work of the cogitative power (and not the intellect itself), explaining,

Deliberation, however, is found only in a rational animal, since preference for one object of the imagination over other perceived and imagined things is due to the activity of the cogitative faculty. This, since the faculty which apprehends the preferred effect must be the same which apprehends many things—that is, many objects of the imagination simultaneously—and has to discern between them in order to apprehend that which is the preferred and best, just as the contemplative intellect apprehends the most important of many objects.<sup>262</sup>

This passage highlights the distinction between the material cogitative power and the immaterial power of the “contemplative’ or theoretical intellect. The intellect cannot be responsible for deliberating about several things in the same category because it knows only the universal concept, not the distinguishing characteristics of particulars. Given the

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., p. 130. >ولاكن نقول إنه كما قد تتحرك حركة غير محدودة ولا محصلة كذلك يوجد لها تخيل غير محصل ولا محدود، > والتخيل الحاصل موجود في الحيوانات الكاملة. فأما الرأي فليس يوجد إلا في الحيوان الناطق، وذلك أن إثارة شيء من الأشياء المتخيلة دون غيره من سائر الأمور الحسوسة المتخيلة هو من فعل الفكر. وذلك أنه قد يجب أن يكون الذي يدرك الأثر قوة واحدة تدرك أشياء كثيرة معا، أعني متخيلات كثيرة وتقابض بينها حتى تدرك الأثر منها والأفضل، كما يدرك العقل النظري من الأشياء الكثيرة أعظمها. وهذا هو السبب في >أن كان الحيوان الناطق له ظن، فإنه لا ظن ولا رأى لمن ليس عنده مقايضة بين الأشياء



universal concept already present, the cogitative faculty can then deliberate about which particular best fits the concept and is thus the ‘preferred’ option.

This is further explained by Averroes’ account of the practical syllogism itself:

The faculty which apprehends something universal is not moved by it, since that faculty belongs solely to cognition and the apprehension of universals and not to motion. However, while that which is universal does not attract motion, the faculty which apprehends particulars as such does move, in that it is moved. The faculty which apprehends universals in practical things is one which determines that, every time this sort of attribute occurs, it behooves one to act or avoid action, while the particular faculty is that which determines that a given object has this attribute (that on which the intellect has passed judgment), at which time motion occurs to this particular [faculty] from the object of because of it. This being the case, it is clear that the particular causes motion, whereas we can say either that the universal has no motion of its own or that motion belongs to both: the universal in that it is stationary, the particular in that it is moved.<sup>263</sup>

This text follows Aristotle in explaining both the necessity of universal knowledge and practical limitations of the intellect. One cannot act without knowledge of the universal because it is this knowledge which helps one to decide whether something is worthy of action or not. If one does not have this general framework—that some attribute in general should spur one to action—one will not act once one encounters some particular thing with that attribute. Once one encounters a particular object which has the attribute, one can decide, via the practical intellect/cogitative power, how to act towards that object.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

>فأما القوة التي تدرك الأمر الكلي فإنها لا تتحرك عنه لأن هذه القوة إنما هي للعلم والإدراك الأمر الكلي فقط لا بحركة. والأمر الكلي ليس إليه حركة وأما القوة التي تدرك الأمور الجزئية فهذه هي للجزئيات وهذه تحرك فقط بأن تتحرك. و ذلك أن القوة التي تدرك الكليات في الأمور العملية هي القوة التي تحكم بأن كل ما كان بصفة كذا فينبغي أن يفعل أو يتجنب، والقوة الجزئية هي التي تحكم على أن هذا المشار إليه هو بهذه الصفة التي حكم بها العقل، فتقع حينئذ إلى ذلك الجزء الحركة منه أو عنه. وإذا كان هذا هكذا فيبين أن الأمر الجزئي يحرك، وأما الكلي فإما أن نقول إنه ليس له تحريك على حدته أو نقول إن التحريك لهما جميعا لكن الكلي من قبل أنه ساكن والجزئي من قبل أنه يتحرك.<

Thus, the particular object provokes movement because of the way it embodies attributes understood by the intellect.

From this *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima* we have established Averroes' early position on the nature of the intellects and the cogitative power. Here he explains that the Agent Intellect is a separate substance whose function is to actualize potential intelligibles, making them knowable. The material intellect, on the other hand is a disposition of the human being; it is immaterial (in that it is not mixed with the matter of the body) but it is still individuated according to number in the case of each human being. It provides a link between the individual human being's soul and the separate Agent Intellect. The cogitative power is a brain power which has some of the responsibility for choice but does not house the desiderative power. This view of the material intellect and the cogitative power will be radically altered by Averroes in his *Long Commentary*, as shall be explained below.

### 3.2.3.2 *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*

Averroes takes what he has said in the *Middle Commentary* about the the intellects, cogitation, and other issues and offers a new account in the *Long Commentary*. The focus of our examination will be the cogitative power, which is given a number of new powers due to its role as the closest thing to intellect existing in the individual human being once the Material Intellect is taken as a fully separate Intellect.<sup>264</sup> Here

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<sup>264</sup> Although, as I mention, the focus of the discussion on the *Long Commentary* will be on the cogitative power and the will it must be noted that an important shift regarding the view of the Intellects takes place between the *Middle* and *Long Commentaries* on the *De Anima*. As we saw above, the *Middle Commentary* explains that there is a single separate Agent Intellect but individuated material intellects which are "dispositions" Here in the *Long Commentary* Averroes finds that the dispositional view he held earlier is

Averroes explains that, according to his reading of the *De Anima* 3.9, it is the cogitative power that is responsible for willing. This section of *De Anima* is quoted in the *Long Commentary* as stating that “what governs exists in the cogitative part.”<sup>265</sup> Averroes explains that this “governing power” is the desiderative power which “exists only in the rational soul (he meant this when he said in the cogitative part).”<sup>266</sup> The desiderative power, the power that is responsible for wishing, desiring, or willing, is thus related to the rational part of the human being but is not in the separate Intellects. Since the cogitative power, as we will see, is the part of the human being which is closest to the Intellects and is “a kind of reason,”<sup>267</sup> it makes sense to conclude that the will is in the cogitative power. Locating the will in the cogitative power in the human being (in the brain) allows Averroes to insist that both knowledge attainment and moral decision making are under the control of the individual human being despite the Intellects being separate and one for all. It is the cogitative power that allows individuals to make use of the Intellects and it is the cogitative power which brings the resulting knowledge to bear on particular situations. Thus, knowledge attainment, deliberation, and choice are “up to us” and done “by our will.”<sup>268</sup>

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not sufficient and so he argues that both the Material and Agent Intellects must be single, separate entities shared by all human beings. To represent this shift in perspective and the new status of the Material Intellect the terms Material Intellect and Intellect in general are capitalized.

265 Averroes, LCDA, Bk. 3, comment 42, p. 408. “Principale enim exisit in parte cogitativa” (p. 510.) In the corresponding passage in the MCDA Averroes specifically mentions choice (*ikhtiyar*) at this point, but here there is mention of either choice or will (*irādah*).

266 Ibid., Bk. 3, comment 42, p. 408. “Virtus enim principalis non existit nisi in anima rationali (et hoc intendebat cum dixit *in parte cogitativa*)” (p. 510)

267 Ibid., Bk. 3, comment 20, p. 359. “Ista enim virtus est aliqua ratio” (p. 449). He also notes here that without the cogitative and imaginative powers the Material Intellect “understands nothing,” making the connection between knowledge and cogitation even more clear. In so far as the will is part of the cogitative power its relationship to the Intellects and so to knowledge is, thus, also established.

268 Averroes’ addresses the issue of will and of what is done by our will in several places in the *Long Commentary*. In some of these areas he is directly addressing selections from Aristotle which include the notion of wish or voluntary action; these passages use the *voluntas* or some conjugation of *velle*, indicating

Motion, as we saw from Aristotle and from Averroes' discussion in the *Middle Commentary*, is always towards an end and is accompanied by imagination or appetite. Averroes explains in the *Long Commentary* that regarding action it is desire and the activity of the cogitative power or imagination which causes one to move towards a desired object. He notes that "the intellect in virtue of which there is activity [...] is the cogitative practical [intellect]"<sup>269</sup> and this intellect is focused upon action. Here Averroes is using the term intellect analogously to denote that part of the rational soul responsible for the deliberative process which spurs one to action—the cogitative power. This makes sense given Averroes' position on the relationship of practical and theoretical intellects—particular and universal knowledge—in the practical syllogism, which will be discussed below. Since the practical intellect "will desire in virtue of knowledge and will move in virtue of desire, it is necessary that the intellect itself be a cause of motion insofar as it is what desires, not insofar as it is what apprehends, and not insofar as desire is a power different from the intellect which is also a cause of motion."<sup>270</sup> Thus, while it is the practical intellect (i.e., the cogitative power) which moves the person to action, it does this not merely or principally as intellect—although knowledge in some sense, at least

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that Averroes was working from a translation of Aristotle which erroneously (as we say in Chapter 2) included the notion of will. These passages include: Bk. 1, comment 18, p. 22, Bk. 1, comment 89, p. 99 (p. 120 in Latin text includes the word *velle*), Bk. 2, comment 28, pp. 134-5, Bk. 2, comment 153, pp. 277-8 (p. 363 in the Latin text, where we find *voluerimus* in the reference to Aristotle), Bk. 3, comment 18 pp. 351-2, Bk. 3, comment 5 p. 307, Bk. 3, comment 36 p. 391, Bk. 3, comment 36 pp. 395-6, Bk. 3, comment 36, p. 399, Bk. 3, comment 50, pp. 415-16 (*voluntas* appears in the reference to the text of Aristotle in Latin, p. 518), Bk. 3, comment 57, pp. 427-8.

269 Averroes, LCDA, Bk. 3, comment 49, p. 414. "intellectus per quem agitur [...] est cogitativus operativus" (p. 517).

270 Ibid., Bk. 3, comment 49, p. 415. "et intellectus, quando comprehendit aliquid, desiderabit per scientiam et movebit per desiderium, necesse est ut ipse intellectus sit movens secundum quod est desiderans, non secundum quod est comprehendens, neque secundum quod desiderium est alia virtus ab intellectu que est etiam movens" (p. 518)

This is, again, a kind of equivocation regarding the term intellect; Averroes is following Aristotle here.

knowledge of the particular desired thing, must be involved—but as a desiring thing. This means that it is what desires (i.e. the will) and not intellect or imagination *per se* which moves the person; this is because one is not moved by either of these things in the absence of desire. This is not to say that intellect is not a necessary component of the moral process which results in motion. In fact, as the practical syllogism makes clear, action requires theoretical knowledge. What Averroes means is that knowledge on its own is not enough to spur us to action and so our actions are, in a sense, motivated not by knowledge but by desire. Averroes goes on to note that the location in the soul of this desiring is what differentiates will from appetite. Will is accompanied by cogitation, a kind of reason, and appetite is not.<sup>271</sup>

Cogitation, unlike imagination, exists only in rational animals (i.e. human beings); since willing is appetite/desire accompanied by cogitation, it follows that willing is something that only humans can do. Cogitation is further linked to the ideas of ‘choice’ and ‘judgment’ which seem to be related to Aristotle’s notions of decision and deliberation, respectively. These are likewise only human functions as it is only through the use of reason that one may apprehend what among many particulars (‘imaginings’) is most pleasurable and choose that thing over another.<sup>272</sup>

From what has been said so far we can begin to see how the will, an aspect of the cogitative power, is responsible for the human being’s ability to identify various ‘goods,’ consider their present and future implications, choose that which seems best, and initiate

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<sup>271</sup> He says that “the part of the soul which desires is what causes motion universally. If, therefore, it desires in virtue of cogitation, it will be called will and if it is without cogitation, it will be called appetite” (LCDA, Bk. 3, comment. 50, p. 416). “idest quod pars anime desiderans est movens universaliter; si igitur desideraverit per cogitation, dicetur voluntas, et si fuerit sine cogitatione, dicetur appetitus” (p. 519)

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., Bk. 3, comment 57, pp. 427-429; Latin pp., 529-531

action towards that good; this set of activities is often explained as the work of the practical intellect, which, as seen above, is associated with the cogitative power and, thus, the will. We can already see a sketch of how the practical and the theoretical sciences, discussed in more general terms in the *Commentary on the Republic*, are linked in the particular instance of moral action. The deliberative process from willing to choosing to acting is undertaken by the cogitative faculty which has a link both to the practical (being the corporeal power responsible for this process), and to the theoretical (being the part which links the individual to the theoretical part of the soul—the separate Intellects). It is this connection to theoretical or speculative knowledge which we have left to explore.

As with the discussion of the will and the cogitative power, the picture of the Intellects and their relationship to the individual is examined carefully in Averroes' *Long Commentary*. In this text Averroes explains, as he did in the *Middle Commentary*, that the Agent Intellect is called an intellect "insofar as it makes every intelligible in potency to be an intelligible in act,"<sup>273</sup> and the Material Intellect is that which "is made everything," receiving the intelligibles in act, which are the objects of knowledge. When the human being has the thoughts or images which represent the intelligibles in act in the Material Intellect, he is said to have intellect in a positive disposition (*intellectus in habitu*) and to know.<sup>274</sup> Both the Agent and Material Intellects must be separate substances, shared by all human beings, one abstracting and the other receiving the abstraction.<sup>275</sup>

273 Ibid., Bk 3, comment 18, p. 350. "et quod in ea etiam sit tertia pars que dicitur intellectus secundum quod facit omne intellectum in potentia esse intellectum in actu." (p. 437)

274 Ibid., Bk. 3, comment 18, pp. 350-352; Latin pp. 437-440

275 As was explained earlier, this must be the case because (1) they must be immaterial, that is separate from and unmixed with matter, in order to be able to know universal immaterial intelligibles; and (2) they must be separate from individual human beings because there can only be one set of intelligibles, shared by all knowers, and thus one intellect to know them. See the Introduction to Taylor's translation of the *Long Commentary* for a discussion of the tradition Averroes encountered and used (Taylor, "Introduction," pp.

The account of the cogitative power as it relates to will is combined with the account of the Intellects and their relationship to the individual (through the cogitative power) to provide a more comprehensive view of the individual's ability to know, to will, and to act. Averroes says that "it is necessary to ascribe these two activities to the soul *in us*, namely, to receive the intelligible and to make it, although the agent and the recipient are eternal substances, on account of the fact that *these two activities are reduced to our will*, namely to abstract intelligibles and to understand them."<sup>276</sup> This makes it clear that the human being is personally responsible for the actions which lead to knowledge and it is the human being who is said to understand once the process is complete. This is easier to grasp once we remember that knowledge attainment begins with the external senses and moves from these to the internal senses of the passible intellect. The passible intellect (called intellect only analogously) contains the three passible, material powers of imagination, cogitation, and memory.<sup>277</sup> These powers are "in human beings"<sup>278</sup> (they are

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xv-lxxvi).

276 Averroes, LCDA, Bk. 3, comment 18 p. 351, emphasis added. "*Et fuit necesse attribuere has duas actiones anime in nobis, scilicet recipere intellectum et facere eum, quamvis agens et recipiens sint substantie eterne, propter hoc quia hee actiones reducte sunt ad nostram voluntatem, scilicet abstrahere intellecta et intelligere ea.* Abstrahere enim nichil est aliud quam facere intentiones ymaginatas intellectus in actu postquam erant in potentia intelligere autem nichil aliud est quam recipere has intentiones. Cum enim invenimus idem transferri in suo esse de ordine in ordinem, scilicet intentiones ymaginatas, diximus quod necesse est ut hoc sit a causa agentis et recipientis. Recipiens igitur est materialis, et agens est efficiens." (p. 439; emphasis added).

This claim that intellectual powers must be *in* the individual is made in several other places as well, where Averroes uses phrases such as "form for us," "final form for us," and "united with us" to describe the relationship the human being must have to the Agent Intellect; he also makes it clear that the resulting knowledge of universals is 'in us.' See Bk 2, comment 60, p.172, Bk. 3, comment 5, p. 306-307, Bk 3, comment 18, p. 352, Bk. 3, comment 20, pp. 355-356, Bk. 3, comment 36, pp. 383, 387, 391, 395-6, and 399 for places where these phrases are used. In all of these discussion Averroes makes it clear that in order for us to be able to say that intellect is an essential attribute of the human being it must be the case that the intellectual faculties are *in* the human being in some real (though not necessarily ontological) sense. Taylor points out in "The Agent Intellect as 'form for us' and Averroes's Critique of al-Farabi," p. 20-21 and 23-24, that there are similar passages in the *Short Commentary* and the *Middle Commentary* despite the different view of the intellects which Averroes holds in these texts.

277 LCDA, Bk. 3 comment 20 p. 359; Latin p. 449

278 Ibid, p. 359; "in homine" (p. 449)

what we may call brain powers rather than intellectual powers<sup>279</sup>). These powers, particularly cogitation, are critical to linking the individual person to the Material and Agent Intellects and thus to knowledge. The cogitative power plays the dual role of (1) extracting the potentially intelligible individual intentions from the image and storing them in memory, thereby making them available to the Agent Intellect,<sup>280</sup> and (2) of housing the representative images of the actual intelligibles used in thinking, allowing the person to have intellect in a positive disposition (*intellectus in habitu*).<sup>281</sup> The cogitative power provides a link between the individual and the Material Intellect such that the individual may be easily conjoined with the Intellect whenever she wills.<sup>282</sup>

When we combine the role the cogitative power plays in conjoining the individual to the Intellects with what has previously been said about its role in relation to will and choice, we can enumerate the four functions the cogitative power has for the human being, all of which are essential to explaining knowledge and moral action. First, the cogitative power takes the individual intentions of the individual person's images and

<sup>279</sup> Averroes notes elsewhere that the cogitative power, specifically, is "a particular material power" (*virtus particularis materialis*) and that it differs from the intellect both in terms of its activity and because it is "generable and corruptible [...having] a determinate organ, namely, the middle chamber of the brain" (*generabilem et corruptibilem [...] cum habit instrumentum terminatum, scilicet medium ventricular cerebri*.) (LCDA, Bk. 3, comment 33, p. 379; Latin p. 476).

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., Bk. 3 comment 20 p. 359; Latin p. 449. Averroes also offers an extended discussion of the role of the cogitative power in presenting particular information to the intellect at Bk 3, comment 33, pp. 378-379; Latin pp. 476-477; he takes special care to note, again, that the cogitative power is not intellect, despite the "custom" of ascribing cogitation to the intellect.

<sup>281</sup> Richard Taylor provides a detailed account of how this happens and the role the cogitative power plays in allowing intelligibles in act to be operationally present in the individual human being (i.e. how the individual comes to have intellect in a positive disposition) in his article "Cogitatio, Cogitativus and Cogitare: Remarks on the Cogitative Power in Averroes," in *L'elaboration du vocabulaire philosophique au Moyen Age*, edited by J. Hamesse and C. Steel, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000). The entire article is relevant and useful for this discussion but see especially pp. 120-124 and pp. 133-137. Also see Richard C. Taylor, "Remarks on Cogitatio in Averroes' Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros," in *Averroes and the Aristotelian Tradition: Sources, Constitution and Reception of the Philosophy of Ibn Rushd (1126-1198)*, edited by Jan A. Aertsen and Gerhard Endress, pp.217-255 (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

<sup>282</sup> Averroes, LCDA, Bk. 3, comment 36, p. 399; Latin p. 500. Also see Taylor, "Cogitatio, Cogitativus and Cogitare: Remarks on the Cogitative Power in Averroes," for a detailed discussion of how these Intellects and the cogitative power relate.



prepares them for the work of the Agent Intellect. Second, it holds and uses the representative images which make the individual able to readily understand the intelligibles in act in the Material Intellect; it has a role in making the link between the individual human being, and the separate Intellects. In so far as this link is essential for all thought, it also allows for the practical intellectual work necessary for deliberation and decision making. These first two uses of the cogitative power make individual human knowledge possible. Third, the will is a function of the cogitative power and so it is cogitation which makes it possible for one to have ends. Fourth, the will allows one to make choices regarding how best to achieve those ends through a process of deliberation as it is the power which considers the means to the ends.<sup>283</sup> Thus, cogitation is key to the entire process of moral action from wishing for something to choosing a course of action to willing oneself to take that action. In so far as cogitation is a brain power and is the focal point of this process, it is clear that the individual human being is a moral agent who can be held responsible for her actions.

Now that we have examined in detail what the *Long Commentary* says about the cogitative power and its relation to both the Intellects and the will, something should be said about the practical syllogism, as an example of how the moral decision making process works and makes use of the various cognitive powers of the soul. He discusses the elements of the practical syllogisms in several sections, following Aristotle's text. First, he explains the role of the cogitative power. Averroes explains that the cogitative power is responsible for choosing or judging among 'imagined things' and for reviewing

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283 In his discussion of the beacon of fire example Averroes notes several times that what is going on in this example of deliberation or practical intellect is cogitation. See LCDA, Bk. 3, comment 33, pp. 376-379; Latin pp. 474-477.

those ‘imaginings.’ What he seems to be suggesting here is that it is the work of the cogitative power to deliberate about what possibility is best in a given situation; this involves imagining/thinking up various possibilities, reviewing them to judge their merits, and finally choosing one over the others; all of this is the work of the cogitative power. It is this process of reviewing and comparing the possibilities until one is “affected” by one of them and takes it up that allows human beings to have opinions and which constitutes the process of (moral) deliberation.<sup>284</sup>

This is not, however, a full account of deliberation. There must be some standard one uses when reviewing and judging these ‘imaginings.’ Averroes discusses this next, as he explains the role of the cognitive power (the Intellects). He says that the cognitive power does not cause motion because human beings are only spurred to movement by particulars while cognition is about universals. When the cogitative power judges some particular thing to fall under the universal, it initiates the activity associated with that universal.<sup>285</sup>

Thus, action, including moral action, requires the work of both the Intellects (the cognitive power) and the cogitative power because it requires apprehension of both a universal and a particular. While action is, principally speaking, the result of the workings of the cogitative power, this work requires the intellects in order to be fulfilled. Earlier in the text, in the beacons of fire example mentioned above, Averroes highlights the closeness of the relationship among the Intellects and the cogitative power when he explains the materiality of the cogitative power:

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid., Bk 3, comment 57, pp. 427-428; Latin pp. 529-530.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., Bk. 3, comment 58 pp 429-430; Latin pp. 531-532.

When the cogitative power draws aid for itself from the informative and memorative [powers] it is naturally constituted to present on the basis of the images of things something which is never sensed, in the same disposition according to which it would exist if it had sensed it, by means of assent and conceptualization. Then, the intellect will judge those images with a universal judgment [...] it should not be the case that someone says the cogitative power composes the singular intelligibles. It was already explained that the material intellect composes them. For cogitation is only for discerning individual instances among those intelligibles and to present them in act as if they were present in sensation.<sup>286</sup>

Here Averroes is again demonstrating that the cogitative power and the intellectual powers must work together. The material intellect composes and contains the “singular intelligibles” (the unique intelligibles in act) which the cogitative power is able to recall when it is spurred to do so by sensation or through the use of the memorative power. In this way the cogitative power allows the individual human being to ‘link up’ to the Material Intellect and have access to the intelligibles in act which reside therein. This allows the intellect to make a “universal judgment” about whether the particular is indeed related to the universal (intelligible) in the appropriate way; this in turn allows the cogitative power to “discern” what particular, sensible objects are related to these intelligibles and what actions should be undertaken.

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286 Ibid., Bk 3, comment 33, p. 378-379. “ Quando iuvabit se cum informativa et rememorativa, innata est presentare ex ymaginibus rerum aliquam quam nunquam sensit, in eadem dispositione secundum quam esset si sensisset eam, fide et informatione; et tunc intellectus iudicabit illas ymagines iudicio universali [...] Et non debet aliquis dicere quod virtus cogitativa componit intelligibilia singularia; et iam declaratum est quod intellectus materialis componit ea; cogitatio enim non est nisi in distinguendo individua illorum intelligibilium et presentare ea in actu quasi essent apud sensum” (p. 476). The entire section (pp. 377-379; Latin pp. 474-477) is relevant; I provide only the most important elements here for the sake of brevity.

It should be noted, given what was said about the Stoic notion of assent in Chapter 2, that the term assent here is not to be taken in the Stoic sense. Rather, it indicates the link between the mind and sensation. To assent in this regard is a judgment that what one conceptualizes in the mind “matches up” to what one has experienced or sensed from the world. Averroes offers some context for this account in his discussion of *De Anima* 3.6. Thus, his use of assent here is Aristotelian rather than Stoic.

### **3.3 Analysis and Interpretation: The Resulting View of Moral Action and Responsibility**

Having now offered an extensive account of Averroes' claims regarding the psychological mechanism by which individual human beings are able to undertake moral actions and be held responsible for those actions, a brief synthesis of what has been learned from the primary texts is in order. I will examine the resulting view of the knowledge attainment process first and then move on to an examination of the will and the deliberative process.

#### **3.3.1 Knowledge and the Intellects**

Averroes holds that there are five faculties or powers of the soul: nutritive, sensitive, imaginative, rational, and appetitive. The sensitive faculty consists in the five external senses and provides the foundation for knowledge insofar as human beings start with sensation and through a process of abstraction attain intellectual understanding. The imaginative faculty is an internal sense faculty which is distinct from both the sensitive and rational faculties. In human beings the imaginative faculty is replaced by the cogitative faculty.<sup>287</sup> The objects of imagination/cogitation are particular and material (unlike those of the rational faculty) but they need not be actually present or even real (a requirement for the sensitive powers). The special power of the cogitative power involves combining and separating the images from the imaginative power which are created and deposited in the imagination by the common sense as it combines the data obtained by

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<sup>287</sup> Although imagination, along with cogitation and memory, is part of the possible intellect, most of the functions which the imaginative faculty fulfills for animals are the work of the cogitative faculty in human beings.

the work of the sensitive faculty. It is directly responsible for stimulating the appetitive faculty. An animal is moved to seek or shun something according to how the imaginative faculty moves the appetitive faculty.<sup>288</sup> While the workings of the imaginative faculty in moving a non-rational animal are largely instinctual (or experiential), for human beings the cogitative faculty controls a more advanced and nuanced process by which an individual uses understanding of both particulars and universals to deliberate about and choose a course of action, as will be discussed below. Although the cogitative power is a material, bodily power it is intimately connected to reason and is sometimes included as part of the rational powers.<sup>289</sup> As explained above, the cogitative power is responsible (1) for extracting relevant intentions from the images provided by sensation, thus providing the fodder for the work of the Agent Intellect, and (2) for storing the representative images of the intelligibles, thus allowing human beings to access the intelligibles in act in the Material Intellect at will.<sup>290</sup> The cogitative power, as a “kind of reason [*aliqua ratio*]”<sup>291</sup> allows individual human beings to be called intellectual knowers despite the fact that both the Material and Agent Intellects are separate substances shared by all human beings for Averroes; it is the cogitative power which provides the link between the individual human being and the separate Intellects.

In addition to these faculties human beings have the rational faculty, which can be divided into theoretical and practical. The theoretical intellect is responsible for apprehending and understanding universal intelligibles. The practical intellect is

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288 See Majid Fakhry, *Averroes (Ibn Rushd) His Life, Works, and Influence*, (Oxford: One World, 2001) for a summary of these faculties and their workings.

289 See Taylor, “Cogitatio, Cogitativus and Cogitare: Remarks on the Cogitative Power in Averroes,” pp. 120-121

290 Ibid., pp. 120-124; pp. 133-137.

291 Averroes, LCDA Bk 3, comment 20. See pp. 105-106 above for a discussion of this idea in context.

responsible for apprehending the particulars which fall under these universals and spurring the human being to practical or moral action. Although we rely on sensation and imagination to provide us with the information necessary to allow us to grasp intelligibles, the intelligibles themselves are immaterial and universal.<sup>292</sup> They exist in the separate Material Intellect, the result of intellectual abstraction done by the Agent Intellect on the image presented to it by the cogitative power. The disposition to apprehend the universals exists in the Material Intellect which is also, in Averroes' final view in the *Long Commentary*, separate and one for all human beings. When the Material Intellect is actualized by the Agent Intellect, the imaginative forms are actualized and the state of acquired intellect is achieved. Once this happens the individual achieves the state of intellect in a positive disposition (*intellectus in habitu*) which is "the state of a human being who has come to be positively disposed by the reception of knowledge and who understands such that this knowledge can be easily recalled at will."<sup>293</sup> This process does not happen randomly; rather, it can be initiated by a person, through the use of the

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292 A discussion of the intellects and their role can be found in Fakhry, *Averroes (Ibn Rushd) His Life, Works, and Influence*, pp.67-69.

293 Taylor, "Introduction," p. xx. Here he provides an account of all of the stages or types of intellect. It is important to take note of the phrase "at will" here; this indicates that although the Material and Agent Intellects are separate the activity of knowledge attainment is initiated by individual human beings and it is individual human beings who come to know. Taylor also points out that all of these "intellects," including the separate Material and Agent Intellects are "in the soul" according to Averroes in the *Long Commentary*. Also see Taylor, "*Cogitatio, Cogitativus and Cogitare: Remarks on the Cogitative Power in Averroes*" for a discussion of the intellectual process.

Fakhry, offers an account of the "rational faculty" and the workings of the Intellects in *Averroes (Ibn Rushd) His Life, Works, and Influence*, pp. 67-73. However, this account is flawed in important respects. First, he claims that the intelligibles are stored within the Agent Intellect; in fact, as we see, as pure act the Agent Intellect cannot act as a storehouse. Rather, its job is to abstract from the information resulting from sensation to allow the Material Intellect to receive the resulting intelligibles in act.

Second, he claims that for Averroes the end result of the intellectual process is conjunction with the Agent Intellect, which he calls the acquired intellect. However, while Avicenna does advocate for a kind of conjunction this is not the view of Averroes.

cogitative faculty, and particularly by the will,<sup>294</sup> because, despite being separate, it is a power “in the soul”<sup>295</sup> according to Averroes. The cogitative power provides the necessary link between the separate Intellects and the individual human beings which is essential to the process of knowledge attainment; the process, starts with sensory information and it is the cogitative power<sup>296</sup> which takes sensory information and “distills individual intentions” and makes these intelligibles in potency available, through memory, to the separate Intellects which can actualize and de-particularize them.<sup>297</sup> This means that Averroes is able to claim that individuals have knowledge of theoretical concepts (such as the universal Good) despite sharing both Intellects. This is important for us insofar as moral actions must be judged based upon their conformity to the actual good, not just the apparent good or the desired end. As Averroes noted in his *Commentary on the Republic*, the theoretical and the practical sciences/arts are linked.

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294 Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, pp. 330-335 provides a detailed discussion of Averroes’ position (in the *Long Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima*) regarding how this conjunction is achieved and how determinate individuals can be said to have a role in it given that both intellects are separate.

295 As mentioned above, Averroes’ is insistent in several places that the intellectual powers must be “in the soul” and “form for us” if the human being is going to be a truly intellectual being. Taylor explains this idea, the Principle of Intrinsic Formal Cause, in, “Intellect as Intrinsic Formal Cause in the Soul According to Aquinas and Averroes,” pp. 202-211. He explains that the Agent Intellect must be “present in the individual human being such that it is intrinsic and essential” (p. 205) in order to account for the fact that human beings are essentially (rather than accidentally) rational and able to exercise our rational capacity at will. Theoretical intellect is the term used to indicate the intellectual state of the human being who is making use of the separate Agent Intellect.

296 Some things should be said regarding the cogitative power, for the sake of clarity. This power has a number of functions in Averroes system. In particular, the cogitative power, as the link between the individual human beings and the separate Intellects, plays a role in both generating knowledge *and* making use of that knowledge. On the one hand it aids in knowledge attainment by “distilling” the intentions found in sensory information and presenting the resulting intelligibles in potency to the Intellects which can then actualize them. On the other hand, it makes use of this theoretical or universal knowledge by allowing the individual to relate particular experiences or information to the universal knowledge housed in the Material Intellect, as when one uses the practical syllogism or considers a particular theoretical problem. Thus, the cogitative power plays an important role in all levels of reasoning, from the practical reasoning, important to moral decision making, to the inferential reasoning (*dianoia*) involved in more theoretical matters.

297 See Taylor, ““*Cogitatio*, *Cogitativus* and *Cogitare*: Remarks on the Cogitative Power in Averroes,” pp. 119-124 for a detailed account of the cogitative power and its role.

This provides a summary of the final position of Averroes. Taylor explains the development of this position, particularly in reference to Averroes' three *Commentaries* on *De Anima*. He points out that the views of Averroes can be broken down into several stages, roughly corresponding to the *Short*, *Middle*, and *Long Commentaries on the De Anima*. The earliest position holds that the material intellect exists in the individual as an "immaterial disposition of the soul having as subject by which it exists in a human being the forms of the imagination as receptive intelligibles."<sup>298</sup> This material intellect is actualized by the agent intellect, resulting in individual human knowledge.<sup>299</sup> Ivry points out that it is the view of the Agent Intellect as the means by which human intellect is perfected which later allows Averroes to claim that the Agent Intellect is "our 'final form.'"<sup>300</sup>

The position put forth in the *Middle Commentary* aims at a less physical view of the intellects, following Aristotle's insistence that the intellect must be unmixed with matter if it is to think all things without being held back by physical limitations or interferences.<sup>301</sup> Thus, here Averroes insists that the material intellect "must not be

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<sup>298</sup> Taylor, "Introduction," p. xxv.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., pp. xxii-xxviii for a detailed discussion of this "initial position" and its sources. Also see Taylor's "The Agent Intellect as 'form for us' and Averroes's Critique of al-Farabi," pp. 19-21 for a discussion of the material and Agent intellects in the *Short Commentary* and "Textual and Philosophical Issues in Averroes's *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*," in *The Letter Before the Spirit: The Importance of Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle*, edited by Aafke M.I. van Oppenraay (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 274-278 for a discussion of the development of the notion of the Material Intellect.

Davidson also offers an account of the nature of the intellects in *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, pp. 266-274 providing an extended discussion of changes made to the text and to Averroes' position which I will not address here since I do not discuss the *Short Commentary* in detail above.

<sup>300</sup> Alfred L. Ivry, "Averroes' Three Commentaries on *De Anima*" in *Averroes and the Aristotelian Tradition: Sources, Constitution and Reception of the Philosophy of Ibn Rushd (1126-1198)*, edited by Jan A. Aertsen and Gerhard Endress, (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 203, 208-209. It should be noted that "our 'final form'" is another way of saying that the Agent Intellect is "in our soul." This claim is intended to make it clear that the Agent Intellect are an essential part of the human being and of the intellectual process, despite being a separate entity shared by all human beings.

<sup>301</sup> Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, p. 276.



primarily tied to or in some particular power such as the imagination in the individual corporeal human being;”<sup>302</sup> The activity of the material intellect must be thoroughly intellectual and yet still within each distinct person’s capacity as a knowers. Taylor explains that Averroes’ solution is to hold that there is a receptive disposition towards intelligibles in each human being—the material intellect—which is then actualized by the conjoining of the human being with the separate Agent Intellect. This allows Averroes to claim that the material intellect is individuated without being material.<sup>303</sup> Ivry explains this relationship among the human being and the material intellect and Agent Intellect by claiming the material intellect is connected “incidentally” to the human soul but “essentially” to the Agent Intellect, which is responsible for performing abstraction on the immaterial intentions it receives as a result of individual human beings’ experiences; it thus serves as “a temporary instantiation of that eternal and always actual intellect, our ‘first perfection’; even as the Agent Intellect is our ultimate perfection or ‘final form.’”<sup>304</sup> It seems, then, that under this view it is the material intellect, not the cogitative power, which links the human being to the intellectual powers and which allows for determinate human beings to have their own knowledge despite the Agent Intellect’s being a separate and shared substance.<sup>305</sup> The material intellect is multiplied according to the number of

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302 Taylor, “Introduction,” p. xxxv; Also see Ivry, “Averroes’ Three Commentaries on *De Anima*,” p. 204-206.

303 Taylor, “Introduction,” pp. xxxv-xxxvi; Taylor explains: “Averroes is able to hold that the capacity called ‘material intellect’ in us is in fact intellectual in its own nature and unmixed insofar as it receives immaterial intelligibles in act. He is also able to maintain that it is a disposition belonging to us, since its presence comes only from coincidence of a natural albeit inchoate disposition and a relation realized by the agent intellect in the twofold way indicated” (p. xxxvi) Taylor notes in “Remarks on Cogitatio in Averroes’ *Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros*” that there is some disagreement about Averroes’s view of the material intellect in the *Long Commentary* (see. pp. 221-222)

304 Ivry, “Averroes’ Three Commentaries on *De Anima*,” p. 205.

305 Little is said about the cogitative power in the *Middle Commentary*. It is explained, along with the power of discrimination, as a power of the soul. Furthermore, choice is said to involve the imaginative power but to “take place in cogitation or in the cogitative power of the soul” and deliberation is said to

human beings and is a “power in the souls of particular human beings,” while also being specially connected to the agent intellect as a receptive intellectual disposition which must be actualized by the agent intellect.<sup>306</sup> Such is the view of the *Middle Commentary* which Averroes’ rejects in favor of a different view in the *Long Commentary*.

Averroes offers his final position on this issue in the *Long Commentary*.<sup>307</sup> Here Averroes further distinguishes the Material Intellect from the imagination and other internal sense powers, arriving at the claim that it is, like the Agent Intellect, a separate substance shared by all human beings. Averroes concludes that the Material Intellect cannot be a determinate particular for each human being because its objects, the intelligibles in act, cannot be determinate particulars.<sup>308</sup> This does not, of course, mean that individual human beings are not knowers—it is experientially evident that human beings have their own knowledge. He employs the internal sense powers to explain the link between individuals and the intelligibles contained within the separate Material Intellect; the imaginative, memorative, and cogitative powers provide the particular intentions which the Agent Intellect uses to abstract the intelligibles in act<sup>309</sup> which are, in

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occur “on account of the activity of cogitation or the cogitative power” (Taylor, “Remarks on Cogitatio in Averroes’ *Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros*,” pp. 221-222). Ivry also discusses the cogitative power in the *Middle Commentary*, including possible reasons why it is so much less prevalent than in the *Long Commentary* in “Averroes’ Three Commentaries on *De Anima*,” p. 201-202.

306 Taylor, “Introduction,” p. xxxix. Also see Taylor’s “The Agent Intellect as ‘form for us’ and Averroes’s Critique of al-Farabi,” pp. 21-24 for a discussion of the material intellect and the Agent Intellect in the *Middle Commentary*. Also see Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, pp. 274-282; Davidson claims the text contains an excursus in which Averroes changed his views, but I will not address this here.

307 Taylor discusses a “transitional position” between the *Middle* and *Long Commentaries* (see “Introduction,” pp. xlii-l) but I shall leave this out, focusing on the texts which have been covered above.

308 Taylor, “Introduction,” p. lviii

309 For a discussion of the Agent Intellect see Taylor, “Cogitatio, Cogitativus and Cogitare: Remarks on the Cogitative Power in Averroes,” pp. 126-129 where Taylor explains the view of Averroes as it is presented in the *Long Commentary*, in addition to the “Introduction” to his translation of the *Long Commentary*. Also, Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, pp. 315-317.

turn, deposited into the receptive Material Intellect which human beings have access to by an act of the will (using the cogitative power).<sup>310</sup>

The cogitative power is of particular importance, as we saw above, since it is responsible for processing the particular intentions which become the subject of intellectual activity. It is the cogitative power which grasps these intentions and presents them via memory to the Agent Intellect and which connects the individual human being to the intelligibles in act existing in the Material Intellect. This connection is such that the Agent Intellect can be said to be intrinsic to the human being as “form for us” and as subject to our will (in so far as we are able to achieve this conjunction when we will it). It is thus the cogitative power which is responsible for allowing individual human beings to participate in the intellectual activity and be called knowers.<sup>311</sup> The cogitative power and its ability to link the human being to the separate Intellects allows the intelligibles to be ‘in’ the human being at least in a functional sense while remaining, ontologically distinct from any individual person. This allows it to remain sufficiently universal to accommodate common understanding of universal terms and for communication.<sup>312</sup>

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310 Taylor, “Introduction,” pp. lix-lxii. Also see Taylor, “Cogitatio, Cogitativus and Cogitare: Remarks on the Cogitative Power in Averroes,” pp. 129-138, Taylor, “The Agent Intellect as “form for us” and Averroes’s Critique of al-Farabi,” pp. 24-31, and Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect* pp. 289-293; 331-335, for a further discussion of the role of the Material Intellect and its relation to the human being in the *Long Commentary*. Ivry calls the passible intellect, particularly the cogitative power, “material intellect surrogates,” emphasizing the need for something to take the place of the material intellect in the individual, to show that Averroes has changed his view about its location, although he later points out that there is a way in which the Intellect still function “in” the human soul (Ivry, “Averroes’ Three Commentaries on *De Anima*,” p. 212-214)

311 Taylor, “Introduction,” pp. lxix-lxxi. Also see Taylor, “Cogitatio, Cogitativus and Cogitare: Remarks on the Cogitative Power in Averroes,” pp. 120-124 and 137-138, and Taylor, “Remarks on Cogitatio in Averroes’ Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros,” pp. 223-231. Also see Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, p. 319 and Ivry, “Averroes’ Three Commentaries on *De Anima*,” p. 213.

312 Taylor notes that “for the intelligibles to be ‘in’ the individual human being, they must be operationally or functionally present there, not ontologically present there” (“Remarks on Cogitatio in Averroes’ Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros,” p. 230).

### 3.3.2 Willing and the Deliberative Process

Now that we have examined Averroes' overall account of knowledge and the powers of the soul responsible for knowledge attainment, something must be said about the will and the process of moral action. The cogitative faculty, so essential to the knowledge attainment process also plays a crucial role in human activity, including moral activity. This is because the cogitative power contains the will and is the location of the deliberative process, as we have seen. Following Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* Averroes claims that moral actions occur when one wills or wishes for an end and deliberates about and chooses the means to attain that end. This process again involves the cogitative power. Furthermore, since the cogitative power is a brain power, this process is thoroughly individual.

It might be helpful to look at an example of the kind of practical reasoning which results in action. Averroes uses the Aristotelian example of the beacon of fire in both the *Middle Commentary* and the *Long Commentary on the De Anima*. When a soldier sees the beacon of fire he is not only aware of the fire but of war which it signals and he chooses a course of action based upon this awareness. Averroes says in the *Middle Commentary* that "he moves to fight and seizes his weapon as if he had seen the war with his own sense."<sup>313</sup> Clearly the warrior takes action (the realm of practical science or knowledge) as a result of deliberating about how to attain a previously arrived at goal (or end) regarding how one ought to approach war. Presumably the warrior has willed the

313 Averroes, MCDA, p.121. مثال ذلك أبصر الحارب النارة بالحرب وهي النار التي توقد علامة على قرب الأعداء عن المنار. تحرك للحرب و أجذ لها أهبتة كما لو أبصر الحرب نفسها بالحس.

end of conquering his enemies and thus, when he encounters a signal that the enemy is approaching, he need only choose the course of action that represents the means to that end—taking up arms. In the *Long Commentary* the same example is presented slightly differently and is given a more extensive treatment. When the soldier imagines a signal fire is lit in the city towers, he cogitates about this with “reference to future things” and acts accordingly.<sup>314</sup> Understanding the fire to be signal he seeks to hinder his enemy by putting the signal out and cogitates about a means by which to do so. Again, the soldier has willed some end regarding the enemy and now chooses a means to attain that goal using the cogitative power (the power suited to deliberation about practical matters). One may judge the actions of the soldier not only based upon how well they conform to his desired end but also based upon their conformity to whatever universal knowledge one may have about war, enemies, the good, etc.

Both examples can be explained by the system of knowledge attainment and deliberation already discussed. Through experience the soldier has come to have some universal knowledge about what constitutes an enemy, and what the good is with regard to how one should respond to an enemy. This information was arrived at using the Intellects and stored in the cogitative power as a representative image<sup>315</sup> which would allow for easy access of the information whenever the soldier willed it. When a specific

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314 Averroes LCDA, Bk. 3, comment 33, pp. 378-379.

315 Averroes does not offer a discussion of what, exactly, he means by a representative image or what content such an image would have. Presumably it is the kind of flexible image, serving as a placeholder, which immediately comes to mind when one thinks of a general concept but which can be easily altered at needed and which one knows is not truly representative of the universal. For example, when I think of the universal ‘dog’ I think of my black Lab mix, but I understand that ‘dog’ includes particulars which are drastically different than this image, such as a white Chihuahua. But, it is a potential problem that Averroes does not flesh this out in a more robust way since it provides a link between the individual and the universals in the separate Intellects which is essential to explaining personal, individual knowledge in the Averroist system.

situation arises in which a particular enemy is seen to be advancing, the soldier is able to use the image stored in his cogitative power to ‘reconnect’ with the separate Intellects and remind himself of the details of that universal knowledge. He is also able to take this individual instance and compare it to the universal in order to deliberate about the best course of action in this situation. The deliberation and then the willing of some specific action is the result of the working of the cogitative power as it takes the particular occasion at hand and works to determine whether it corresponds to the universal. Once a choice has been made, the soldier is able to take action; because the soldier has gone through this process for himself, others are able to praise or blame him for his decision and for the resulting action.<sup>316</sup>

### 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has offered a close examination of the views of Averroes on the issues of intellect, will, and moral decision making. It has used several primary texts in order to attain a clear picture of how Averroes’ views developed over time and what his final position was on these issues. Part of the reason for this strategy was to ensure a full account of Averroes’ ideas without reference to later critics, particularly Aquinas; to that end, even those texts not available to Aquinas were used. This will allow us to offer a fair critique and analysis of both Averroes’ and Aquinas’ positions in Chapter 5. This

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<sup>316</sup> One might say that something should be said about freedom of choice and determinism at this point. However, for Averroes this is principally a theological issue, appearing in his theological/dialectical works rather than his philosophical works, and so I will not be addressing it. To do so would require a discussion of how those theological works should be treated in relation to the philosophical and how Averroes’ related to Kalam; that is beyond the scope of this dissertation’s project.

approach also allows us to see more clearly how Averroes' ideas relate to those of Aristotle.

The chapter offers an account of how Averroes' views of the intellects developed and how these developments impact his view of the cogitative power and the will. We saw how Averroes' view of the intellects changed over the course of his three Commentaries on Aristotle's *De Anima*. While the Agent Intellect remained separate and one for all human beings throughout, there was a major shift in how Averroes' viewed the material intellect. He went from holding that the material intellect was a power of the imagination, and thus individuated, to the view that it was a receptive disposition towards intelligibles, and thus individuated, to holding that it was a separate receptive Intellect and shared by all human beings. This shift in the view of the Material Intellect was accompanied by a shift in the view of the passible intellect and particularly of the cogitative power; this shift was necessary since Averroes needed to maintain individual human responsibility for both knowledge attainment and moral decision making and action.<sup>317</sup>

With both the Material and Agent Intellects separate and shared by all human beings the cogitative power, a brain power, became responsible, in Averroes' system, for key elements of knowledge attainment and decision making. The cogitative power allows the individual human being to have access to the Intellects *at will* by preparing and presenting the individual intentions, the result of sensory experience, to the Agent

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317 See Taylor, "Textual and Philosophical Issues in Averroes's *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*," p. 276-277 for an account of how Averroes' reading of the work of Themistius influences his view of the Material Intellect as it is found in the *Long Commentary*. Also see Taylor's "Introduction" to the *Long Commentary*, pp. lxxxiii- lxxxvi.

Intellect. The cogitative power also houses the representative images necessary to provide easy access to the intelligibles in act in the Material Intellect whenever one wills. This means that the cogitative power allows the individual human being to participate in the process of creating intelligibles in act and provides easy access to these intelligibles located in the separate Material Intellect; individual human beings are said to be knowers insofar as their sensory experience is essential to the process of bringing about the intelligibles in act and insofar as they have access to these intelligibles at will. It should also be noted that Averroes provides an additional level of participation with the Intellects by insisting that that Agent Intellect is “form for us” and is “in” the human being in a special sense; however, even this connection relies on the cogitative power. This position is also highlighted in the *Commentary on Plato’s Republic*, where Averroes makes the distinction between theoretical and practical science and explains that it is “by the will” that one is able to achieve theoretical knowledge and undertake moral action.

In addition to the special role the cogitative power plays in knowledge attainment, there is also the work it does in moral decision making. With separate Intellects Averroes must find a way to make the locus of moral decision making and action in the individual, if he is to preserve moral responsibility. He does this by locating the will in the cogitative power, following his versions of the Aristotelian texts which indicate that Aristotle had a notion of will and that it was “in the cogitative part.”<sup>318</sup> Averroes explains that the will, along with the related powers of deliberation and choice, are in the cogitative power and,

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318 Averroes saw himself as closely following the views of Aristotle regarding both the Intellects and the will. As was explained in Chapter 2, although Aristotle cannot be said to have a notion of will, he was interpreted to have one early on, as Arabic philosophers, such as Al-Farabi and Avicenna, conflated Aristotelian and Stoic ideas and took the existence of a will for granted. This led to Aristotle’s ‘wish’ (*boulēsis*) being translated as *irādah* (*voluntas*, in Latin). Averroes’ inherited this tradition and expanded on it in his own way.



thus, under the control of the individual human being. The individual is able to deliberate, choose, and act *at will*, making use of both particular information and universal knowledge, *at will*<sup>319</sup>, because of the relationship that exists among the power of will, the Intellects, and the cogitative power.

After this close examination of the texts of Averroes we can conclude that he was able to develop an understanding of both knowledge attainment and, more importantly for our purposes, moral responsibility which is consistent and coherent. We will examine the particular criticisms of Aquinas to this theory in Chapter 5 but, for now, it is important to note that Averroes's system allows for moral decision making, and thus responsibility, to be located firmly in the individual and to be "up to us" even while supporting the position that the Intellects are separate, shared entities.

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<sup>319</sup> It is perhaps helpful to note here that this notion of will in Averroes is, in fact, different from the notion of wish in Aristotle, despite Averroes' understanding that they are the same. As we saw in Chapter 2, Aristotle's *boulēsis*, commonly translated as will but more properly rendered wish, was not a full faculty or power of the human being but rather the general ability to desire some end. This is less robust than what Averroes has developed here since the will a faculty of the cogitative power by which one directs one's actions and one's thoughts (in so far as it leads to the conjunction of the individual with the separate Intellects).

## CHAPTER 4 AQUINAS

### 4.1 Introduction

Aquinas, like Averroes, argues for a particular conception of the human being which includes what he believes to be Aristotelian views of the soul, intellects, and will. However, Aquinas' views are quite different from those of Averroes and he includes specific critiques of Averroes' work based upon his understanding of it. This chapter will examine Aquinas' views of the human being, the intellect, and the will. In particular it will explain Aquinas' unique view of the will and how it fits into his view of the individuation of the intellects. Part of this examination will necessarily include Aquinas' understanding of Averroes and his critique of the Averroist position. I will not comment on the accuracy or strength of Aquinas' view of Averroes or of the view in its own right but will simply present it as clearly as possible; Chapter 5 will constitute the critical analysis of the theories of Aquinas and Averroes presented here and in Chapter 3.

In an effort to provide a penetrating account of Aquinas' views of moral psychology and agency as well as his understanding of Averroes this chapter will be divided into two main sections. The first section will present the view of Aquinas regarding the nature of the soul and the intellects and their relationship to the body and the will. The second section will examine Aquinas' critiques of Averroes and his understanding of the Averroist position. I will draw substantially from Aquinas' *Questiones Disputate De Anima* as it represents Aquinas' mature position, but further support will be taken from the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, and *Summa Theologiae*, among

other works.<sup>320</sup> This discussion will help to demonstrate that for Aquinas the primary focus is the intellect rather than the will; this fact is also heavily addressed in Chapter 5, where Aquinas is placed in dialogue with Averroes.

## 4.2. Aquinas' view

### 4.2.1. The soul and its relation to the body

The first issue that must be addressed is whether the soul is a body and, if not, what connection it has to the human body. In the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (SCG) Aquinas explains that the fact that the intellect is able to understand an infinite number of things, including itself and immaterial things, and receive substantial forms without losing its own form demonstrates that the soul cannot be a body; bodies can only have one form at a time and cannot move beyond the material to grasp the immaterial.<sup>321</sup> In the *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas explains that the soul is “the act of a body” and not itself a body; it is the “first principle of life in those things in our world which live”<sup>322</sup> and such a principle

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320 It is perhaps important to note that most of what Aquinas says about the will and moral responsibility is not presented in the context of a discussion and critique of Averroes, with whom his primary disagreements concern concepts related to the intellect. However, in so far as the two issues are related it is important to understand Aquinas' view as a complete account, aside from and in addition to his understanding of Averroes.

321 Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* [SCG] *Book Two: Creation*, trans. James F. Anderson (Indiana, London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), Bk. 2, Ch. 49, pp. 146-149; Also see SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 50, pp. 149-151 for other arguments for the immateriality of the soul based upon the nature of knowledge and the reception of sensible forms. For the Latin text of the SCG see *Liber de Veritate Catholicae Fidei Contra Errores Infidelium seu <<Summa Contra Gentiles>>*, Vol II, ed. Ceslai Pera, Petro Marc, and Petro Caramello (Taurini, Romae: Marietti, 1961), Bk 2, Ch. 49, pp. 169-171, sec. 1247-1258; Ch. 2 Bk 50, sec. 1259-1267, pp. 171-172. The Latin will be referenced using Book, Chapter, section, and page.

In the *Summa Theologiae* [ST] Ia Q. 75, A. 2 Aquinas uses a similar argument to demonstrate that the soul is both incorporeal and subsistent. He points out that the intellect could only know “all corporeal things” if it is incorporeal because it must be devoid of anything which would interfere with this knowledge. Since the main operation of the soul is done by the soul itself and not by using a body it must also mean that this soul is subsistent; “only that which subsists in itself can have an operation in itself.” (In *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, ed. Anton C. Pegis (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1973) p. 685.)

322 Aquinas, ST Ia Q. 75, A. 1, p. 683. “Nihil autem potest per se operari, nisi quod per se

cannot be a body because this would mean that every body would be alive. Since not all bodies are living, the principle of life must be something other than the body; it must be what actualizes some bodies. Aquinas comes to the same conclusion in *On the Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists*.<sup>323</sup> Furthermore, Aquinas explains that the soul is that by which we live *and understand* and so it is both the living and understanding components which are related to the individual human body. Intellect, the faculty by which human beings understand, is a power of the soul; the soul is the act of the body; therefore, the intellect is also, indirectly, a power of the body.<sup>324</sup>

Although the soul is not a body, it is not simply the form of a body but also a subsistent thing (*hoc aliquid*<sup>325</sup>). In the first question of the *Questiones Disputate De Anima* Aquinas asks whether the human soul can be both a form and a determinate particular (*forma et hoc aliquid*<sup>326</sup>). Here he works to determine whether the soul fulfills

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subsistit” (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (Rome: Editiones Paulinae, 1962) p. 344). Aquinas makes a similar point in his *Commentary on Aristotle’s De anima*, trans. Robert Pasnau (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), Bk. 3, Ch. 7, p. 345-346. For the Latin see *Sentencia Libri De Anima*, in *Opera Omnia*, Vol. 46 (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1984), Bk 3, Ch. 1, ln. 130-193, pp. 203-204.

323 Aquinas, *deUnitate*, Ch. I, sec. 3, p. 23; Latin Ch. 1, ln. 39-52, p. 290.

324 Ibid., Ch. 1, sec. 12-16, pp. 27-29; Latin Ch. 1, ln 218-306, pp. 293-294. In particular, Aquinas states that “[Aristotle] means that the intellect is a power of the soul, which is the act of the body” (Ch. 1, sec. 1 p. 29). “Vult ergo quod intellectus est potentia anime que est actus corporis,” (Ch.1, ln. 229-231, p. 294) and that “he meant the intellect to be a part of the soul which is the act of a physical body” (“manifestum est quod ipse voluit intellectum esse partem anime que est actus corporis phisici”)(sec. 16, p. 29; Latin Ch. 1, ln. 304-306, p. 294).

325 It should be noted that the term *hoc aliquid* is used to render Aristotle’s term *tode ti* (this something). While There is controversy around whether this term is applied by Aristotle to form as distinct from matter or whether it refers only to composite substances, my focus here is on the psychological rather than metaphysical issues. A passage relevant to this discussion can be found in *De Anima* Bk2, ch. 1 (412a6-11) where Aristotle is explaining the three sense of substance. *Tode ti* in this passage is translated in the Latin of the Averroes’ *Long Commentary* and in Aquinas’ *Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima* using the term *hoc aliquid*. Aquinas addressed the issue of whether the soul is a substance (*hoc aliquid; tode ti*) in detail in his *Questions on the Soul* and elsewhere, as will be discussed below. See Robert Pasnau, *The Treatise on Human Nature: Summa Theologiae Ia 75-89* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2002), p. 225 for a brief note regarding this terminology and B. Carlos Bazan, “The Human Soul: Form and Substance? Thomas Aquinas’ Critique of Eclectic Aristotelianism,” *Archives D’Histoire Doctrinale et Literaire du Moyen Age*, 64 (1997) for a more detailed account of the issue.

326 Robb uses “entity” to translate the Latin *hoc aliquid* in his translation (Thomas Aquinas, *Questions on the Soul* [QDAnima], trans. James H. Robb (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2005)). Pegis uses

the two characteristics of substance: (1) having the ability to subsist *per se*, and (2) to be complete in a given species and genus of substance.<sup>327</sup> The human rational soul understands universals via intelligible species which it abstracts from matter and from all material conditions; furthermore, it performs this essential operation not by the act of some bodily organ but by its own act. Since its essential operation does not involve the body, the intellective soul must also “possess an independent *per se* act of existing which is not dependent on its body.”<sup>328</sup> That is to say, it must be not only the form of a body but also a substance in its own right, fulfilling the first characteristic of substance.

The human soul does not, however, fulfill the second characteristic; it is not complete in itself with regard to a species and genus. Rather, it is the form of the species human being, a composite of body and soul, conferring being on the human body. If this were not the case then the body and soul would be only accidentally united.<sup>329</sup> So, the

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“this particular thing” in his translation of the ST (see Ia Q. 75, A2, for example). I will use “determinate particular,” a term Richard Taylor uses throughout his work on the subject, as I think it clearly indicate the particularity and subsistence of the *hoc aliquid* in ways that these other two options (particularly “entity”) do not.

327 Aquinas, QDAnima, Q1, p. 47. Aquinas also addresses these two senses of *hoc aliquid* in the first reply in ST Ia, Q 75, A2: “Ad primum ergo dicendum quod *hoc aliquid* potest accipi dupliciter: uno modo, pro quo- cumque subsistente; alio modo, pro subsistente completo in natura alicuius speciei. Primo modo, excludit inhaerentiam accidentis et formae materialis: secundo modo, excludit etiam imperfectionem partis. Unde manus posset dici *hoc aliquid* primo modo, sed non secundo modo. Sic igitur, cum anima humana sit pars speciei humanae, a potest dici *hoc aliquid* primo modo, quasi subsistens, sed non secundo modo: sic enim compositum ex anima et corpore dicitur *hoc aliquid*” (p. 345)

328 Aquinas, Questions on the Soul, Q1, p. 47. “Oportet quod anima intellectiva habeat esse per se absolutum, non dependens a corpore” (Q 1, ln. 246-247, p. 8 in *Quaestiones Disputatae De Anima* [QDAnima] in *Opera Omnia*, Vol. 24, edited by B-C. Bazan (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1996)). Latin references will be made using Chapter, line, and page.

329 Aquinas explains that if this were the case “death, which signifies the separation of soul and body, would not be a substantial corruption, and this is obviously false” (Aquinas, QDAnima, Q1, p. 47). “Mors igitur, que significat eorum separationem, non esset corruptio substantialis, quod patet esse falsum” (Q1, ln. 283-286, p. 9) It should perhaps be noted that is not as obvious as Aquinas suggests. More will need to be said about the nature of the relationship between the body and soul, particularly as it relates the immortality of the soul and the Resurrection; this is a metaphysical point of disagreement between Aquinas and Averroes and, it impacts their disagreement regarding the will and moral agency as well.

soul is not a species in its own right; rather, the human being is the species and is composed of soul and body as its form and matter.<sup>330</sup>

The argument that the soul as form of the body is made more strongly in the SCG and ST. In the SCG Aquinas explains that the soul is neither a part of the body nor mixed with the body, nor physically connected to it.<sup>331</sup> Despite this, the soul is still united to the body in an important way via a “contact of power”<sup>332</sup> which allows the soul to act upon and change the body without being acted upon or change itself. In this relationship the body and the soul are “not unqualifiedly one [...but rather are] one with respect to acting and being acted upon.”<sup>333</sup> Aquinas further explains that the body and soul are “one in

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330 It is perhaps worth noting that Aquinas argues in *Questions on the Soul*, Question 6 (pp. 94-95, Latin Q6, ln. 167-226, pp.50-51) that the soul itself cannot be composed of matter and form but, rather is immaterial in nature. He explains that the soul cannot be material since (1) this would mean the soul would constitute a species and we already saw this is not the case; (2) it would be impossible for the material soul to be the formal principle of existence for the body because matter receives existence and does not confer it; and (3) it would be necessary to posit a third thing by which the soul and body are connected but this cannot be since the soul must be directly united to the body as act is to potency.

331 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 56, pp. 164-165, Latin, Bk 2, Ch. 56, sec. 1313-1314, p. 180.

332 “Hic autem tactus non est quantitatis, sed virtutis.” (Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 56, sec. 1317, pp. 180-181. Something must be said, briefly, about this notion of “contact of power.” In SCG Bk 2, Ch. 56 Aquinas is examining how the soul and the body are united. He explains that the union cannot be by way of mixture nor physical contact (“contact properly so called,” “contactus proprie sumpti”). Rather, the contact between body and soul is one in which the body is touched and affected while the soul is not. This makes sense, according to Aquinas, when we focus on the relationship between activity and passivity. Aquinas uses the examples of the heavenly and elemental bodies to explain this kind of contact; heavenly bodies ‘touch’ and influence lower elements without being themselves altered. Elsewhere (ST Ia, Q. 8, A. 3), Aquinas uses this same idea, with the example of a king and his kingdom, to explain the relationship between God and His creation; for a brief account of this see Edward Wierenga, “Omnipresence,” in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Chad Meister and Paul Copan (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 330-331.

While this account of the body-soul relationship seems to allow Aquinas to explain how a material substance, the body, can have contact with an immaterial one, the soul, it is not as successful as Aquinas thinks. Particularly important to note is that it is based upon the inadequate science of the time--the heavens do not interact with the lower spheres in this way; other things that may seem to be examples of “contact of power” such as gravity or magnetic attraction and repulsion (which would be similar to how the heavens are supposed to act on the lower spheres) are explainable by modern science in ways that preclude Aquinas’ notion of immaterial “contact of power.” Thus, the issue of mind-body contact cannot be solved in the way that Aquinas here claims that it can be.

333 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 56, pp. 166-167. “Quae autem uniuntur secundum talem contactum, non sunt unum simpliciter. Sunt enim unum in agendo et patiundo: quod non est esse unum simpliciter” (Bk 2, Ch. 56, sec. 1319, p. 181)

reason.”<sup>334</sup> This type of union is only possible if the soul is the substantial form of the body. In Book 2 Chapter 68 of the SCG Aquinas explains that

for one thing to be another’s substantial form, two requirements must be met. *First*, the form must be the principle of the substantial being of the thing whose form it is [...] The *second* requirement then follows from this, namely, that the form and the matter be joined together in the unity of one act of being [...] And this single act of being is that in which the composite substance subsists: a thing one in being and made up of matter and form.<sup>335</sup>

Aquinas thinks the human soul fits these requirements and is the substantial form of the human body/human being. He notes that although the soul is the form of the body this does not mean that its powers are limited by the body. The human soul is the lowest type of intellectual substance and the human body is the highest type of body. The special connection between the two allows the soul to perform all of the functions the body along with some functions, i.e. understanding, which do not use bodily organs at all; this makes the soul both the substantial form of the body, allowing it to perform its functions, and an incomplete substance (a *hoc aliquid*, in the lesser sense) in its own right, capable of performing its own activity.<sup>336</sup>

334 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 56, p. 167. “Ratione unum” (Bk. 2, Ch. 56, sec. 1319, p. 181)

335 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 68, p. 204. “Ad hoc enim quod aliquid sit forma substantialis alterius, duo requiruntur. Quorum unum est, ut forma sit principium essendi substantialiter ei cuius est forma, principium autem dico, non factivum, sed formale, quo aliquid est et denominatur *ens*. Unde sequitur aliud, scilicet quod forma et materia convenient in uno esse: quod non contingit de principio effectivo cum eo cui dat esse. Et hoc esse est in quo subsistit substantia composita, quae est uno secundum esse, ex materia et forma constans” (Bk 2, Ch. 64, sec. 1450, p. 202).

336 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 68, pp. 205-207, Latin Bk 2, Ch. 64, sec. 1453-1459, pp. 203-204. Although it is not the focus of this account, it can be noted that in Ch. 71-73 Aquinas goes on to explain that the union of body and soul is without intermediary and that this relationship of body and soul means the possible intellect must be individuated. He makes a similar claim in his *Commentary on Aristotle’s De anima*, explaining that the body and the intellect have a formal unity which necessarily precludes the intellect’s being a separate substance: “It is impossible for that by which something operates *formally* to be separated from it in existence. That is so because something acts only insofar as it is in actuality. Therefore, something operates formally by something as it is made actual by it. But a thing is not made actually existent by anything if it is separated from it in existence. That is why it is impossible that that by which

Aquinas addresses the issue again in Question 76 of the first part of the ST. Here he starts the argument by asserting that “that whereby primarily anything acts is a form of the thing to which it is attributed”<sup>337</sup> and that the soul is that whereby the body acts because it is the life principle and the principle by which we understand. Aquinas continues by explaining that without the soul as the form of the body there would be no way to explain the fact that each individual has his own act of understanding which is essential to him. He writes:

So when we say that Socrates or Plato understands, it is clear that this is not attributed to him accidentally, since it is ascribed to him as man, which is predicated essentially [...] it is one and the same man who is conscious both that he understands and that he senses. But one cannot sense without a body, and therefore the body must be some part

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something acts formally be separated from it in existence. It is impossible therefore, that the possible intellect by which a human being has intellectual cognition—sometimes potentially, to be sure, but other times actually—be separated from that human being in existence” (Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's De anima*, Bk. 3, Ch. 7, p. 349). “Set impossibile est id quo aliquid formaliter operatur separari ab eo secundum esse; quod ideo est quia nichil agit nisi secundum quod est actu; sic igitur aliquid formaliter aliquo operatur sicut eo fit actu; non autem fit aliquid aliquo ens actu si sit separatum ab eo secundum esse; unde impossibile est quod illud quo aliquid agit formaliter sit separatum ab eo secundum esse; impossibile est igitur quod intellectus possibilis quo homo intelligit quandoque quidem in potencia quandoque autem in actu sit separatus ab eo secundum esse” (Bk. 3, Ch. 1, ln. 290-305, p. 206). Elsewhere, such as *De Ente and Essentia* Ch. 4 (in *Opera Omnia*, Vol. 43, (Rome: Editori Di San Tommaso), 1976), Aquinas does group human souls in the category of separate substances (“substantiis separatis, scilicet in anima, intelligentia, et causa prima”). However, this can be explained by noting that they are intellectual substances and are, thus, separate in the sense that they are free from matter (“immunitas a materia) as the lowest of the intellectual substances, but not in the sense that it is a complete and separate spiritual substance.

337 Aquinas, ST, Ia Q. 76, A. 1, p. 696. Here Aquinas explains that it is the intellect which differentiates human beings as rational and sets them apart from other animals; as such, this defining characteristic must be not only accidentally linked to human being but must exist as its form: “According to the Philosopher in *Metaph.* viii., difference is derived from the form. But the difference which constitutes man is *rational*, which is said of man because of his intellectual principle. Therefore the intellectual principle is the form of man.

“I answer that, We must assert that the intellect which is the principle of intellectual operation is the form of the human body. For that whereby primarily anything acts is a form of the thing to which the act is attributed” (p. 696).

“Secundum Philosophum, in VIII Metaphys., differentia sumitur a forma rei. Sed differentia constitutiva hominis est *rationalis*; quod dicitur de homine ratione intellectivi principii. Intellectivum ergo principium est forma hominis.

“Respondeo, dicendum quod necesse est dicere quod intellectus, qui est intellectualis operationis principium, sit humani corporis forma. Illud enim quo primo aliquid operatur, est forma eius cui operatio attribuitur” (p. 350).



of man. It follows therefore that the intellect by which Socrates understands is part of Socrates, so that it is in some way united to the body of Socrates.<sup>338</sup>

Aquinas is explaining here that it is necessary to maintain that the soul is the form of the body if we are to claim, as everyone does, that one's intellectual understanding—one's thoughts and ideas—are one's own. He is also pointing out that it is our intellectual ability which makes us human and as such it must be an essential part of each individual's being.<sup>339</sup>

For Aquinas, then, the soul has a dual role to play. It is both a substance and a form. The unique role that the body plays in the knowledge attainment process helps us to see that the soul must be linked to the body in a special way, while the immaterial nature of universals and the intelligible species which help us arrive at knowledge of universals demonstrate the soul's subsistence. Aquinas explains:

the soul is a [determinate particular<sup>340</sup> (*hoc aliquid*)], as being able to subsist *per se* but not as possessing in itself a complete specific nature, but rather as completing human nature insofar as it is the form of its body and thus as one and the same time it is a form and a [determinate particular...] For insofar as a soul possesses an operation which transcends material things, its very existence is raised above and does not depend on its body. But insofar as a soul by nature acquires its immaterial knowledge from

338 Aquinas, ST, Ia Q. 76, A. 1, p. 697. "Cum igitur dicimus Socratem aut Platonem intelligere, manifestum est quod non attribuitur ei per accidens: attribuitur enim ei in quantum est homo, quod essentialiter praedicatur de ipso. Aut ergo oportet dicere quod Socrates intelligit secundum se totum, sicut Plato posuit, dicens hominem esse animam intellectivam: aut oportet dicere quod intellectus sit aliqua pars Socratis. Et primum quidem stare non potest, ut supra ostensum est, propter hoc quod ipse idem homo est qui percipit se et intelligere et sentire: sentire autem non est sine corpore: unde oportet corpus aliquam esse hominis partem. Relinquitur ergo quod intellectus quo Socrates intelligit, est aliqua pars Socratis; ita quod intellectus aliquo modo corpori Socratis uniatur" (p. 351).

339 Part of Aquinas' arguments for his position involve a critique of the position of Averroes, as he understands it. This argument can be found in several places in Aquinas' texts, including SCG Bk 2, Ch 59, ST Ia Q 76, A1, and Bk 1, Ch 2. of *A Commentary on Aristotle's De anima*. I mention these only in passing here but will offer a detailed analysis of Aquinas arguments in Chapter 5.

340 Here, and throughout Robb's translation, I have amended the translation by replacing "entity" with "determinate particular;" as explained in n. 326, this is my preferred translation of *hoc aliquid*.

what is material, it is clear that the fulfillment of its nature cannot be achieved apart from union with a body. For a thing is not complete in nature unless it possesses those things which are demanded for the proper operation of that nature. In this way, therefore, a human soul insofar as it is united to its body as its form still possesses an act of existence which is elevated above the body and does not depend on it; clearly then this soul is constituted on the boundary line between corporeal and separate substance.”<sup>341</sup>

Inhabiting this boundary between corporeal and separate substance means that the soul is fittingly connected to the body while also being immortal and capable of surviving the death of the body. Aquinas argues that it is fitting that the soul, the lowest of the intellectual substances, be united to the human body since it requires such a body to fulfill its functions, including its most important function, understanding. Since the soul does not possess intelligible species innately it must acquire them from a consideration of the material world with the help of the body.<sup>342</sup> The human body is, thus, fittingly and necessarily connected to the human soul since it is only with body and soul that the human being can fulfill its most important function: understanding. This is not to say that the body is perfect. The body, as the kind of matter it is, is corruptible. Aquinas explains this theology when he explains that God mitigated this defect of the body with original justice, whereby the body would remain with the soul as long as the soul remained

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341 Aquinas, QDAnima, Q. 1, p. 47-48. “Relinquitur igitur quod anima est hoc aliquid ut per se potens subsistere, no quasi habens in se completam speciem, set quasi perficiens speciem humanam ut est forma corporis. Et sic simul est forma et hoc aliquid [...] In quantum enim habet operationem materialia transcendentum, esse etiam suum est supera corpus eleuatum, non dependens ex ipso. In quantum uero immaterialem cognitionem ex materiali nata est acquirere, manifestum est quod complementum sue speciei esse non potest absque corporis unione. Non enim aliquid completum est in specie nisi habeat ea que requiruntur ad propriam operationem speciei. Sic igitur anima humana in quantum unitur corpori ut forma et tamen habet esse eleuatum supera corpus, non dependens ab eo, manifestum est quod ipsa est in confinio corporalium et separatarum substantiarum constituta.” Q 1, ln. 286-290 and 328-341, pp. 9-10.

342 Ibid., Q. 8, pp. 114-115, Latin Q. 8, ln. 177-198, pp. 66-67.

subject to God. However, Adam's sin was a turning away from God and allowed the defects of the body to reassert themselves.<sup>343</sup>

While the body is corruptible because of original sin, the soul remains immortal. While the soul requires the body for many of its operations, the act of understanding does not require a body; "the intellective principle by which a human being understands possesses an existence that transcends its body and is not dependent upon its body."<sup>344</sup> Furthermore, that this intellective principle is an immaterial form and thus incorruptible can be seen by the fact that its objects are intelligibles which are abstracted from all matter. Since this intellective principle is not a separate substance (as will be explained below) but part of the human soul, the soul, too, is incorruptible.<sup>345</sup> While the soul is immortal and, thus, capable of existing apart from the body, this is not the most natural mode of existence for the soul since the soul requires a body for its most natural operation, understanding, to proceed in the best way possible; the separated soul will be able to understand in an imperfect way through an "influx from the separate substances."<sup>346</sup> This mode of understanding is imperfect because of the central role that sensation plays in the knowledge attainment process for human beings. According to Aquinas human knowledge is always grounded in particulars in so far as intelligibles exist in potency as common natures in things, not as separate ontological realities. Thus, perfect human knowledge requires the ability to experience particular things and to abstract the intelligibles from those particulars.

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343 Ibid., Q. 8, p. 117, Latin Q. 8, ln. 290-313, p. 69.

344 Ibid., Q. 14, p. 177. "Sic igitur patet quod principium intellectuum quo homo intelligit habet esse eleuatum supra corpus, non dependens a corpore" (Q. 14, ln. 206-209, p. 126).

345 Ibid., Q. 14, p. 177, Latin Q 14, ln. 210-226, pp. 126-127.

346 Ibid., Q. 15, p. 190; "influxus substantiarum separatarum" (Q 15, ln. 400, p. 136). For a more detailed discussion of the nature of the separated soul see Questions 17-21.

Before moving on to a discussion of the possible and agent intellects and their relation to the soul something should be said about how the views of Aquinas regarding the body/soul relationship and the nature of the soul should be understood both in their own right and in relation to the ideas of Aquinas' predecessors. Bazan offers a detailed and convincing account of these issues in his article "The Human Soul: Form *and* Substance? Thomas Aquinas' Critique of Eclectic Aristotelianism" which focuses on Question 1 of Aquinas' *Questions on the Soul*. Here Bazan examines the various positions available to Aquinas regarding the nature of the soul as form and substance. He points out that some, such as Augustine, argued for a kind of dualism which defined the human being as body and soul where each element was a substance in its own right, connected by the will of God; this allowed for the soul to be a substance, in the strongest sense of the term, but not a form.<sup>347</sup> Others, notably Avicenna, argued for a more "eclectic" approach whereby the human being was essentially the soul and that the body was merely a tool which allowed the soul to be individuated and perform its functions. In this view the soul is a spiritual substance and the *perfectio* or *motor* of the body (though not its form in the Aristotelian sense).<sup>348</sup> Averroes offered a different approach, arguing that the soul was the substantial form of the body. In this view the human being is a hylomorphic composite consisting of "the most perfect of sensitive souls"<sup>349</sup> and the body; the intellects were separate substances (though not *hoc aliquid* in the sense discussed above),

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347 Bazan, "The Human Soul: Form *and* Substance? Thomas Aquinas' Critique of Eclectic Aristotelianism," p. 102.

348 Ibid., pp. 103-104. Also see the discussion of Avicenna in Ch. 2 above for a more detailed account of the position of Avicenna.

349 Ibid., p. 105. According to Bazan the view of Averroes can be summed up as follows: "the human soul is only a form and not a substance; the Intellect is a substance but not a form (except equivocally), and its substantiality is not that of a *hoc aliquid* (a term that Averroes reserves for material substances)" (p. 106)

ontologically distinct from the human being. These three approaches offered the background from which further developments were made. Notably, some masters within the university faculties of arts and theology who developed the eclectic approach of Avicenna into one which argued for a dual ontological status of the soul as both form and spiritual substance (*hoc aliquid*).<sup>350</sup> Bazan points to Albert the Great as one such master who had particular influence on Aquinas. Albert explained that the soul could be understood in both Platonic and Aristotelian ways, depending on whether we were considering it in itself (as substance) or in the context of its relation to the body (as form).<sup>351</sup>

Bazan calls this view of Albert and other masters of arts and theology (and, to some extent, of Avicenna) eclectic Aristotelianism, and argues that it is this view which Aquinas is working against in Question 1 of the *Questions on the Soul*. As explained above Aquinas' solution in *Questions on the Soul*, a solution which he supports in other texts, is that the soul is a determinate particular and a substantial form: a form and a *hoc aliquid*, in a very particular meaning of the term (since it only meets one of the two criteria for *per se* subsistence<sup>352</sup>).<sup>353</sup> It is important to clarify what this means for the soul and the human being. Bazan explains that for Aquinas the soul is not a spiritual substance<sup>354</sup>:

Undoubtedly, for Thomas the self-subsistence of the soul does not mean that the soul is a spiritual substance in the

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<sup>350</sup> Ibid., pp. 106-113 for a discussion of several important figures.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., pp. 111-112.

<sup>352</sup> See note 325 above for the text of Aquinas which discusses these criteria.

<sup>353</sup> Bazan, "The Human Soul: Form *and* Substance? Thomas Aquinas' Critique of Eclectic Aristotelianism," pp. 114-117 for Bazan's account of Aquinas in *Questions on the Soul* Q. 1.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., pp. 119-121. Bazan notes that it is easy to misread Aquinas as advocating for the position that the soul is lowest spiritual substance.

strict Aristotelian sense of the word accepted by Thomas himself. On the contrary, the very essence of the soul is *to be the substantial form* of the human composite [...] the soul needs the body not only to operate, but *to be* in accordance with its essence [...] The soul is a subsistent substantial form, a form of matter but not a material form, and it must be acknowledged that there is no such form in the ontological scale of entities established by Aristotle. For Thomas, the only reality that qualifies for the status of substance in the strict sense of the word is the human composite, which is simultaneously a living, sensitive, and intellectual being. That is why the substantial form of the human composite is not only the source of the intellectual faculties, but also of all inferior faculties. And that is also why the human being is the highest of all hylomorphic composites, not an incarnate spirit [i.e. embodied spiritual substance].<sup>355</sup>

By holding this view of the soul as substantial form of the human being Aquinas is able to hold that the soul is both form and *hoc aliquid* while rejecting the eclectic Aristotelianism of his predecessors. He does this by offering a more nuanced view of what constitutes a *hoc aliquid*, allowing the soul to be called a substance even though it fits only one of the criteria for *hoc aliquid* in the strong sense. This allows Aquinas to avoid having to give the soul the dual ontological status which it seems to have in the positions of those with the stricter view, such as Albert. The soul for Aquinas is subsistent in that it has an essential operation that is immaterial (intellection), but it is not complete in itself, requiring a body to fully actualize even its intellectual functions; it is, thus, connected to the body in an essential way.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid., pp. 121-122.

<sup>356</sup> The soul/body relationship described here is sometimes characterized as one where the soul is characterized by the ability to be united to the body in a substantial way (*unibilitas substantialis*), such that the human being requires both body and soul. This idea may be related to the earlier discussion of “contact of power,” which Aquinas used to explain how the incorporeal soul could be united to the material body. This essential link between body and soul is one of the ways in which the human soul is differentiated from angels. The human soul is not a *hoc aliquid* in the fullest sense; rather, as discussed above, it is a substantial form, satisfying only one of the two criteria for *hoc aliquid*. For a discussion of *unibilitas substantialis* in Medieval thought see Magdalena Bieniak, *The Soul-Body Problem at Paris, CA. 1200-1250: Hugh of St-*

This unique view of the soul and its relation to the body has important consequences for the separated soul. As we saw above, while the soul's subsistence allows it to remain incorruptible and to exist even after the death of the body, its nature as a substantial form means that it cannot fulfill its nature in this state. Bazan explains that there is an important sense in which the separated soul does not live since "to perform those activities [proper to its nature] is for the soul *to live* [and a] soul without its ontological correlate [the body] cannot operate, and consequently does not *live*."<sup>357</sup> Joseph Owens also takes up this issue in his article "Soul as Agent in Aquinas,"<sup>358</sup> where he examines the issue of agency as it relates to the human being (composite) and the human soul; of particular interest for our purposes is what he says about Aquinas' view of the separated soul. Here Owens explains that the "the soul possesses its existence in independence of the matter it informs [and that] this means that the human soul, once it has received being, exists necessarily and perpetually,"<sup>359</sup> while questioning whether this existence constitutes immortality or life. Owens argues that Aquinas is unable to philosophically demonstrate that the soul lives on after death (i.e. that it is immortal) in

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*Cher and His Contemporaries* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2010). Here it is pointed out that *unibilitas* represented one of the ways in which the human soul is distinct from angels (pp. 40-46). While I do not agree with the author's suggestion that Aquinas' position is one where "the human soul is defined as a substance and a spirit of its own species" (p. 34), following, instead, Bazan's line of thinking that the soul is not a spiritual substance, the work provides some insight into the history of the theory. Bazan's argument, discussed above, that "the very essence of the soul is *to be the substantial form* of the human composite" ("The Human Soul: Form and Substance? Thomas Aquinas' Critique of Eclectic Aristotelianism," p. 121) and that there is no such entity in the work of Aristotle (or Aquinas' more immediate predecessors), and that this means that the soul cannot be a spiritual substance, being a subsistent substantial form and a form of matter instead, is compelling. Bieniak's discussion of Aquinas position, on the contrary, does not take into account the uniqueness of the theory to a sufficient extent, claiming that the human soul is a "spirit" and claiming that his theory is 'close to the traditional anthropological dualism' (*The Soul-Body Problem at Paris*, p. 34).

<sup>357</sup> Bazan, "The Human Soul: Form and Substance? Thomas Aquinas' Critique of Eclectic Aristotelianism," p. 125.

<sup>358</sup> Joseph Owens, "Soul as Agent in Aquinas" *New Scholasticism*, 48.1 (1974).

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., p.64

the sense of being able to perform its vital activity. The vital activity of the soul is intellection and for human beings this requires the abilities to sense and imagine, provided by the body; understanding for the separated soul cannot take place by natural means, but supernatural one's.<sup>360</sup> Aquinas can, however, demonstrate that the soul lives on in the weaker sense of “perpetual existence,” relying on the claim that existence does not require operation (a claim which comes with its own problems, Owens points out).<sup>361</sup>

#### **4.2.2. The intellective principle(s) of the human soul**

Having demonstrated the unique nature of the human soul and its relation to the body according to Aquinas, we must move on to examine the nature of the intellective principle(s). He examines both the possible and the agent intellects, arguing for their existence as powers of the soul which are multiplied according to the number of individuals. The fact that a person can be at one time actually understanding but at another time only in potentiality with respect to understanding demonstrates that there must exist a potential intellect, the possible intellect, which is “in potency to and able to receive all those things which are intelligible to a human being.”<sup>362</sup> This intellect does not have a bodily organ (since it would then be limited in the scope of its understanding by the organs powers), but neither is it a separate substance, totally disconnected from the body. The possible intellect is a part or power of the human soul which is the form of the body, as demonstrated above. If it were a separate substance, Aquinas explains, it would

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-66.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid., pp. 67-69.

<sup>362</sup> Aquinas, QDAnima Q. 2, p. 57. “Hunc igitur intellectum possibilem necesse est esse in potentia ad omnia que sunt intelligibilia per hominem et receptium eorum, et consequens denudatum ab hiis” (Q 2, ln. 182-185, p. 16).



not be possible to say that the human being understands by means of the possible intellect.<sup>363</sup> A substance's operation must originate in that substance; the act of understanding attributed to the human being must originate in that human being.

Furthermore, since this act of understanding is an act of the possible intellect, the possible intellect must be in each individual as her own intellect; that is to say, the possible intellect must be multiplied according to the number of human beings.<sup>364</sup>

Aquinas explains in ST Question 76 that in order to maintain the individuality of human beings as knowers (and as distinct human beings insofar as to be human *is* to be a knower) we must maintain that each person has his or her own intellect. It is impossible to explain diversity in understanding and knowledge using other means. Even if we recognize that individuals have their own sensory experiences and their own phantasms (as Averroes does), this is not enough to explain individual knowledge if the intellect is separate and one for all people. It is the intelligible species in the possible intellect, not the phantasms, which account for knowledge. A single human being can have many phantasms of the same type of thing, but these only create a single intelligible species and this leads to a single act of understanding the nature of the thing.<sup>365</sup> Aquinas points out, contrary to the view of Averroes, that multiplying the number of intellects does not affect the universality of the resulting knowledge; since we understand the natures in things and

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363 Ibid., Q. 2, p. 57, Latin Q 2, In 166-197, p. 16. Aquinas here offers an extended treatment of the view of Averroes, as he understands it (see especially Q. 2. In. 242-309, p. 17-18). This important discussion will be examined in detail later in this chapter, after the view of Aquinas has been sufficiently explained.

364 Ibid., Q. 3, *responsio*.

365 Aquinas, ST, Ia, Q. 76, A. 2: "Therefore, if there were one intellect for all men, the diversity of phantasms in this man and in that would not cause a diversity of intellectual operation in this man and that man, as the Commentator imagines" (p. 702); "Si ergo unus intellectus esset omnium hominum, diversitas phantasmatum quae sunt in hoc et in illo, non posset causare diversitatem intellectualis operationis huius et illius hominis, ut Commentator fingit in III *de Anima*" (pp. 353-354).

not separate intelligibles, having multiple intelligibles species in multiple intellects can result in multiple understandings of the “universal” common natures.<sup>366</sup>

In the SCG Aquinas makes similar arguments for the individuation of the possible intellect. The overall argument rests on the idea that “it has been proved that the substance of the intellect is united to the human body as its form. But one form cannot possibly exist in more than one matter [...] Therefore, there is not one intellect for all men.”<sup>367</sup> It makes no sense, according to Aquinas, to assert that the form is simultaneously the form of the individual human being, the source of their humanity (as distinct from their animality) and their knowledge, and that it is distinct from the individual and shared with all humans. A substantial form must be exclusive to that of which it is the form, otherwise all of the individuals with the same form would have the same being; this is clearly not the case.<sup>368</sup>

Having determined that the possible intellect must exist and must be individuated, Aquinas moves on to a consideration of the agent intellect, demonstrating that it must also be individuated, despite its being “separable,” “unaffected,” “unmixed,” and “in actuality as regards its substance.”<sup>369</sup> He explains that there must exist a power which

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366 Aquinas, ST, Ia, Q. 76, A. 2. It should be pointed out that I use universal not in any strong sense here. For Aquinas intelligibles do not have ontological reality; rather they exist in potency in particulars as the natures in things. Intelligible species do have ontological reality in the minds of individuals; but, for Aquinas these are not objects of knowledge.

367 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 73, p. 215. “Ostensum est enim quod substantia intellectus unitur corpori humano ut forma. Impossibile est autem unam formam esse nisi unius materiae; quia proprius actus in propria potentia fit; sunt enim ad invicem proportionata. Non est igitur intellectus unus omnium hominum” (Bk. 2, Ch. 73, sec. 1489, p. 208).

368 Here (SCG Bk 2, Ch. 73) Aquinas again offers a detailed critique of the Averroist position and why it cannot hold. As before, I will forgo an account of it here and present it in some detail in Chapter 5. Also see Aquinas, *de Unitate*, Ch. 3, sec. 63, p. 49, Latin Ch. 3, ln. 41-60, p. 303.

369 Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's De anima*, Bk. 3, Ch. 10, p. 366. “Intellectus agens est nobilior possibili; set intellectus possibilis est separatus, impassibilis et inmixtus, ut supra ostensum est; ergo multo magis intellectus agens. Ex quo etiam patet quod sit secundum substantiam suam actu” (Bk 3, Ch. 4, ln. 79-84, p. 220).

makes potentially intelligible things actually intelligible and presents them to the possible intellect. If this were not the case there would be no way for the intelligible objects known by the possible intellect to come into being. The power responsible for producing these intelligibles is the agent intellect. It functions by abstracting from matter and all material conditions, a process which results in an understanding of universals through the use of intelligible species.<sup>370</sup> The agent intellect, like the possible intellect, must be multiplied according to the number of individuals. It is the principle by which actual understanding takes place and this must exist in the individual if we are to say truthfully that each person has her own understanding: “there must be in us an essential active principle of our own, through which we are made to be actually understanding, and this principle is the agent intellect.”<sup>371</sup> Furthermore, Aquinas explains each individual experiences the act of abstracting from material conditions and the act of understanding as “taking place within [herself]” and this can only be attributed to the existence of formal principles of abstraction and reception *in* each person; thus, the possible and agent intellects must both be in the soul and multiplied according to the number of individuals.<sup>372</sup>

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370 Aquinas, QDAnima, Q. 4, pp. 78-79, Latin Q. 4, ln. 115-125, p. 33.

371 Ibid., Q. 5, p. 86. “Requiratur in nobis principium actuum proprium, per quod efficiamur intelligentes in actu. Et hoc est intellectus agens” (Q. 5, ln. 160-163, p. 41). Also see SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 76, p. 241-242 and *Commentary on Aristotle's De anima*, Bk. 3, Ch. 10, p. 367 (Latin Bk. 3, Ch. 4, ln. 122-127, p. 221) .

Aquinas notes that some people (Averroes) rely upon the cogitative power to regulate the act of understanding since it is responsible for presenting the phantasms. However, he argues that the cogitative power does not have the necessary control over the dispositions of the possible intellect.

372 “There must be in us a formal principle by which we receive intelligible objects and another formal principle by which we abstract them, and we call these principles the possible and the agent intellect. Consequently, both of these intellects are something existing within us” (Aquinas, QDAnima, Q5, p. 87). “Oportet igitur esse in nobis aliquod principium formale quo recipiamus intelligibilia et aliud quo abstrahamus ea. Et huiusmodi principia nominantur intellectus possibilis et agens. Uterque igitur eorum est aliquid in nobis” (Q. 5, ln. 202-206, p. 42). It is important to note that this idea of intrinsic formal cause does not preclude the possibility of separate intellects as easily as Aquinas suggests; Averroes is able to hold a similar notion using the idea that the Intellect are “form for us” despite holding that they are separate

Furthermore, if the agent intellect is a separate substance it will be “above man’s nature” and so incapable of producing a natural act for the human being; if this were the case understanding, the defining activity of the human being, would be a supernatural rather than natural activity. Clearly this is not the case; the act of intellect is done by individual human beings, and for this to be the case the principle of that action must be formally in the human being.<sup>373</sup> Finally, Aquinas points out that Aristotle himself “expressly says that ‘these (two) different things (agent and possible intellect) are *in soul*,’ by which he expressly lets it be understood that they are parts or powers of soul, not separated substances”<sup>374</sup> While it may be difficult to see how the same thing (the soul) could be both in potentiality and in actuality towards a single thing (the intelligible), this problem is easily resolved once we realize that they relate to the intelligibles in distinct

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substances. See Taylor, “Intellect as Intrinsic Formal Cause in the Soul According to Aquinas and Averroes,” for an account of this.

See also Aquinas, ST, Ia, Q. 79, A. 4, p. 752-754. Aquinas makes similar arguments from experience and formal principles in Article 10 of *De Spiritualibus Creaturis* and Question 5 of QD Anima.

373 SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 76, p. 244-245: “Man’s proper operation is understanding, and of this the primary principle is the agent intellect, which makes species intelligible, to which species the possible intellect having been actualized, moves the will. Therefore, if the agent intellect is a substance outside man, all man’s operation depends on an extrinsic principle. Man, then will not act autonomously, but will be activated by another. So he will not be master of his own operations, nor will he merit either praise or blame. All moral science and social intercourse thus will perish; which is unfitting. Therefore, the agent intellect is not a substance separate from man.” “Operatio autem propria hominis est intelligere: cuius primum principium est intellectus agens, qui facit species intelligibiles, a quibus patitur quodammodo intellectus possibilis, qui factus in actu, movet voluntatem. Si igitur intellectus agens est quaedam substantia extra hominem, tota operatio hominis dependet a principio extrinseco. Non igitur erit homo agens seipsum, sed actus ab alio. Et sic non erit dominus suarum operationum; nec merebitur laudem aut vituperium; et peribit tota scientia moralis et conversatio politia; quod est inconveniens. Non est igitur intellectus agens substantia separata ab homine” (Bk. 2, Ch. 76, sec. 1578, p. 225). Note here also that Aquinas points to the will and the lack of moral responsibility which he thinks will result if the intellects are separate substances rather than being part of the human soul.

374 Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s De anima*, Bk. 3, Ch. 10, p. 367. “[Aristotelis] esprime dicit has duas diferencias, scilicet intellectum agentem et intellectum possibilem, esse in anima, ex quo esprime dat intelligere quod sint partes vel potencie anime et non alique substantie separate” (Bk. 3, Ch. 4, ln. 122-127, p. 221). This issue of intellects being “in the soul” will be discussed in some detail in Chapter 5 since it is a main point of difference between Aquinas and Averroes.

ways since the “possible intellect is in potentiality to intelligible things [while] intelligible things are in potentiality with respect to agent intellect.”<sup>375</sup>

In addition to these arguments, Aquinas’ argument based on will in *On the Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists* is particularly interesting, given the focus of this dissertation. Here he explains that if the intellect were a separate substance, not a faculty of the soul of the human being, the will would likewise be separate and so free choice and moral responsibility would be destroyed:

Furthermore, according to their position, the principles of moral philosophy would be destroyed; for what is in us would be taken away. For something is not in us except through our will; and this indeed is called voluntary because it is in us. But, the will is in the intellect, as is clear from the statement of Aristotle in Book III of the *De Anima*<sup>376</sup>; from the fact that there is intellect and will in separate substances; and also from the fact it happens through the will that we love or hate something in general, just as we hate robbers as a class, as Aristotle says in his *Rhetoric*.

If, therefore, the intellect does not belong to this man in such a way that it is truly one with him, but is united to him only through phantasms or as a mover, the will will not be in this man, but in the separate intellect. And so this man will not be the master of his act, nor will any act of his be praiseworthy or blameworthy. This is to destroy the principles of moral philosophy.

Since this is absurd and is contrary to human life (for it would not be necessary to take counsel or make law), it follows that the intellect is united to us in such a way that

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375 Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s De anima*, Bk. 3, Ch. 10, p. 367-368. “Intellectus possibilis sit in potencia ad intelligibilia et quomodo intelligibilia sunt in potencia respectu intellectus agentis” (Bk. 3, Ch. 4, ln. 137-1139, p. 221).

376 It should be pointed out that there are issues of translation in regards to the key passage in Aristotle; The texts available to Aquinas and Averroes render the text differently when it comes to the location of the will. Aquinas’ text as the will “in the intellect” while Averroes’ has it “in the cogitative part” This will be addressed in detail in Chapter 5.

it and we constitute what is truly one being. This surely can be only in the way in which it has been explained, that is, that the intellect is a power of the soul which is united to us as form.<sup>377</sup> It remains, therefore, that this must be held without any doubt, not on account of the revelation of faith, as they say, but because to deny this is to strive against what is clearly apparent.<sup>378</sup>

In order hold that the principles of moral philosophy, from willing an end to deliberating about and choosing a means to that end, are within an individual's control the principle of these actions, the will, must be in the human being. Aquinas claims that the will is in the intellect and so, if the intellect is not in the individual human soul, the individual human being can neither understand nor will. If one cannot be said to will, one cannot logically be held morally responsible for one's actions, subject to praise or blame. However, we do in fact hold people responsible for their actions: we make laws, we praise and blame, we take counsel when making our own decisions. Thus, the very patterns of human life demonstrate that the will and, thus, the intellect, is in the soul.<sup>379</sup>

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377 It should be remembered that Aquinas has a unique view of the soul as substantial form of the body and *hoc aliquid*, as explained above. It should also be remembered that, despite what Aquinas seems to suggest, Averroes does not dismiss this idea; he argues, as pointed out in Chapter 3, that the intellectual soul is "form for us" while also maintaining the Intellects as separate entities.

378 Aquinas, *deUnitate*, Ch. III, sec. 81-82, pp. 56-57. "Adhuc, secundum istorum positionem destruntur moralis philosophie principia: subtrahitur enim quod est in nobis. Non enim est aliquid in nobis nisi per uoluntatem; unde et hoc ipsum uoluntarium dicitur, quod in nobis est. Voluntas autem in intellectu est, ut patet per dictum Aristotilis in 111 De anima, et per hoc quod in substantiis separatis est intellectus et uoluntas; et per hoc etiam quod contingit per uoluntatem aliquid in uniuersali amare uel odire, sicut odimus latronum genus, ut Aristotiles dicit in sua Rhetorica. Si igitur intellectus non est aliquid huius hominis ut sit uere unum cum eo, sed unitur ei solum per fantasmata uel sicut motor, non erit in hoc homine uoluntas, sed in intellectu separato. Et ita hic homo non erit dominus sui actus, nec aliquis eius actus erit laudabilis uel uituperabilis: quod est diuellere principia moralis philosophie. Quod cum sit absurdum et uite humane contrarium, non enim esset necesse consiliari nec leges ferre, sequitur quod intellectus sic uniatur nobis ut uere ex eo et nobis fiat unum; quod uere non potest esse nisi eo modo quo dictum est, ut sit scilicet potentia anime que unitur nobis ut forma. Relinquitur igitur hoc absque omni dubitatione tenendum, non propter reuelationem fidei, ut dicunt, sed quia hoc subtrahere est niti contra manifeste apparentia" (Ch. 3, ln. 336-363, p. 306).

379 Of course, much more must be said here about how Aquinas proves these claims about the relationship of the intellect and the will in a more substantial way and whether this constitutes a sound rebuttal of Averroes claims, but these discussions will be held off until later in this chapter and until Chapter 5, respectively.

From these many arguments we can see that Aquinas concludes that both the possible and agent intellects must be multiplied according to the number of human beings. If this were not the case, Aquinas argues, we would be unable to adequately explain the nature of the human being as essentially rational, individual human knowledge, and moral responsibility.

#### **4.2.3 Internal sense powers and their relation to the intellects: the importance of cogitation.**

So far we have seen how the rational soul relates to the body and how the intellect, the rational faculty, relates to the soul. Aquinas insists that human beings are composites of body and soul and that this soul must include the intellects if each person is said to understand. He argues, contrary to many of his predecessors, that both the agent and possible intellects must be multiplied according to the number of souls and must exist as faculties of each rational soul. He also notes that the intellect is unique among the powers of the soul in that it does not have a particular organ while all of the other powers of the soul and their organs are put to use by it. Before moving on to a particular consideration of the will, we have to examine this connection more closely; particularly, we must identify what Aquinas thinks about the workings of the internal senses which offer a point of connection between sensation and intellection.

Aquinas explains that in addition to the five external sense there are four internal senses: the common sense, the imagination, the estimative/cogitative power, and the memorative power. In discussing these internal senses Aquinas uses Avicenna as a guide, although he disagrees with Avicenna's inclusion of a fifth sense, phantasy as distinct from

imagination.<sup>380</sup> Animals need to be able to apprehend not only the sensible qualities of things but also the intentions<sup>381</sup> (“connotational attributes” mentioned in the discussion of Avicenna) of things; they must also be able to retain this information even when not directly sensing something. This means they require not only the external senses but internal senses capable of retaining information and apprehending intentions. This leads Aquinas to conclude that the various internal senses are also required:

Thus, therefore, for the reception of sensible forms, the *proper sense* and the *common sense* are appointed [...] for the retention and preservation of these forms, the *phantasy* or *imagination* is appointed, being as it were a storehouse of forms received through the senses. Furthermore, for the apprehension of intentions which are not received through the senses, the *estimative* power is appointed: and for their preservation, the *memorative* power, which is a storehouse of such intentions.<sup>382</sup>

Aquinas points out that this process is largely the same for human beings as it is for animals. The main difference is that the estimative power<sup>383</sup> is replaced in human beings

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380 See Deborah Black, “Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western Transformation,” *Topoi* 19 (2000), pp. 59-75 for a discussion of how the notion of internal sense powers developed from Avicenna through Averroes, Albert the Great, and Aquinas. In particular, Black explains that Aquinas rejects the idea of phantasy as a power distinct from “retentive imagination,” reducing the number of internal sense powers an animal or human being possesses to four (p. 66). Also see Jorg Alejandro Tellkamp “*Vis Aestimativa* and *Vis Cogitativa* in Thomas Aquinas’ Commentary on the Sentences,” *The Thomist* 76 (2012), p. 611-612 for an enumeration of the internal sense powers according to Aquinas. This issue of the development of the internal senses from Avicenna to Aquinas is also taken up in detail in Carla Di Martino’s, *Ratio Particularis: Doctrine des sens internes d’Avicenna à Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2013); see especially Chapter 4.

381 See Tellkamp, “*Vis Aestimativa* and *Vis Cogitativa* in Thomas Aquinas’ Commentary on the Sentences,” p. 613 for an account of intentions. Also see Di Martino, *Ratio Particularis: Doctrine des sens internes d’Avicenna à Thomas d’Aquin*, p. 91 and Chapter 9 of Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*.

382 Aquinas, ST, Ia, Q.78, A. 4, p. 742. “Sic ergo ad receptionem formarum sensibilium ordinatur *sensus proprius* et *communis*: de quorum distinctione post dicitur. Ad harum autem formarum retentionem aut conservationem ordinatur *phantasia*, sive *imaginatio*, quae idem sunt: est enim phantasia sive imaginatio quasi thesaurus quidam formarum per sensum acceptarum. Ad apprehendendum autem intentiones quae per sensum non accipiuntur, ordinatur *vis aestimativa*. Ad conservandum autem eas, *vis memorativa*, quae est thesaurus quidam huiusmodi intentionum” (p. 374).

383 Black points out that this inclusion of the estimative power in animals is in keeping with Avicenna’s view and is a break from Averroes, who rejected the need for such a power. She explains that the reaction of animals to intentions is more than an “aesthetic” reaction, related to feelings of pleasure and pain, thus requiring a particular sensitive power. (“Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western



with the cogitative power or “*particular reason*,” (*ratio particularis*)<sup>384</sup> which is located in the “middle part of the head.” This cogitative power is able to apprehend intentions in a more advanced way than the estimative power because it is able to make some use of humans’ more advanced intellectual capabilities to use comparisons rather than relying only on “natural instinct.”<sup>385</sup> Tellkamp explains:

the *vis cogitativa* is *ratio particularis* means that a given state of affairs or experience is seen as pertaining to general notions, so that someone can, for instance, see “this human being” because he or she possesses the universal concept of “human being” (i.e., rational animal), which includes at least a vague idea of how human beings are: two legs, arms, a head, and so on. Animals, however, only grasp the intentional content an experience entails insofar as it produces an action or emotional reaction. In this sense Aquinas argues that in human beings the *vis cogitativa* replaces the *vis aestimativa* of higher animals.<sup>386</sup>

From this account we can see that the cogitative power acts as a semi-rational power in that it makes use of universal knowledge as it examines a particular instance of that universal. The estimative power of non-rational animals does not relate the particular to a universal in the same way; rather, it elicits an instinctual response to the experienced

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Transformation,” pp. 66-68)

384 See Tellkamp, “*Vis Aestimativa* and *Vis Cogitativa* in Thomas Aquinas’ Commentary on the Sentences” for an account of the ways in which this distinction between estimative power and cogitative power (i.e. *ratio particularis*) represents a move away from Avicenna and towards a more Averroist framework when it comes to human beings (at pp. 621-640 Tellkamp offers a detailed discussion of Aquinas’ theory and its relation to earlier views of the internal sense powers).

385 Aquinas, ST, Ia, Q.78, A. 4, p. 743, Latin p. 374; Also see Aquinas, SCG BK 2, Ch. 60 for a discussion of the cogitative power. Although this discussion is set within a context of disproving the claim that the cogitative power is enough to account for human understanding and allow for separate intellects Aquinas does not seem to be objecting to the general account of the cogitative power he explains here.

386 Tellkamp, “*Vis Aestimativa* and *Vis Cogitativa* in Thomas Aquinas’ Commentary on the Sentences,” p. 623.

particular based upon aspects of the experiences which are extra-sensory (e.g. the hostility of the wolf towards the sheep).

Aquinas further explains the cogitative power in his *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*. Here he also calls it the “particular reason” and explains that it is responsible for apprehending individual intentions. He goes on to explain that this power is “in the soul’s sensory part” and yet is “united to the intellective power.”<sup>387</sup> It is the cogitative power which links the highest element of the sensory powers to the intellect in the human being, allowing individual human beings to link their universal and particular knowledge. Aquinas explains that “the cogitative power apprehends an individual as existing under a common nature. It can do this insofar as it is united to the intellective power in the same subject.”<sup>388</sup> This is different from the estimative power of nonrational animals, which “apprehends an individual, not in terms of its being under a common nature, but in terms of its being the end point or starting point of some action or affection.”<sup>389</sup> We can see from this that for Aquinas the cogitative power plays an important role in the human ability to sense particulars and understand their relationship to the common natures which are the objects of knowledge, the result of the intellective process. The importance of the cogitative power is felt in another way, when we consider the state of the soul after death; Aquinas points out that the passive intellect, which includes the cogitative power, dies

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387 Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, Bk. 2, Ch. 13, p. 208. “Dicitur etiam ratio particularis eo quod est collatiua intentionum individualium sicut ratio uniuersalis est collatiua rationum uniuersalium, nichilominus tamen hec uis est in parte sensitua, quia uis sensitua in sui suppremo participat aliquid de ui intellectiui in homine, in quo sensus intellectui coniungitur” (Bk. 2, Ch. 13, ln. 195-201, pp. 121-122).

388 Ibid., Bk. 2, Ch. 13, p. 208. “Cogitatiua apprehendit indiuiduum ut existentem sub natura communi, quod contingit ei in quantum unitur intellectiue in eodem subiecto” (Bk 2, Ch. 13, ln. 206-20209, p. 122).

389 Ibid., Bk. 2, Ch. 13, p. 209. “Estimatiua autem non apprehendit aliquod indiuiduum secundum quod est sub natura communi, set solum secundum quod est terminus aut principium alicuius actionis uel passionis” (Bk. 2, Ch. 13, ln. 211-214, p. 122).

with the body because it has a corporeal organ and pertains to the sensory part of the soul. Without this faculty the separated human soul or intellect “intellectively cognizes nothing.”<sup>390</sup> Thus, the cogitative power can be seen to play an important role in the process of knowledge attainment and particular in how the intellect understands the sensory world and the common natures.

While this will be discussed in much more detail below in the section on will and decision, it should also be pointed out here that Aquinas sees an important role for the cogitative power (or particular reason) in the deliberative process. It is the particular reason which supplies the particular information which spurs one to action in the practical syllogism.<sup>391</sup> He notes in the SCG that the cogitative power is a bodily power and dies with the death of the body. This death results in a change in or inability to understand when the soul becomes a separate, but incomplete substance at death because of the key role of the cogitative power when it comes to preparing the phantasms for the action of the possible intellect.<sup>392393</sup>

#### **4.2.4 The view of knowledge attainment which this picture entails—relation to both universal and practical knowledge**

From what has been said above a picture of Aquinas’s view of the knowledge attainment process emerges. For Aquinas, knowledge attainment starts with sensation, as it does for Averroes. Sensible species are brought together by the common sense and

390 Ibid., Bk. 3, Ch. 10, p. 369-370. “Intellectus noster nichil intelligit” (Bk. 3, Ch. 4, ln. 243-244, p. 223).

391 Ibid. Bk. 3, Ch. 16, p. 416, Latin, Bk. 3, Ch. 10, ln 123-145, p. 251.

392 Aquinas, SCG, Bk. 2, Ch. 80, p. 261, Latin Bk 2, Ch. 8, sec. 1618, p. 233; he also mentions the need for the passible powers in Bk. 3, Ch. 84, pp. 17.

393 It can clearly be seen from what has been said in this section that the cogitative power plays an important role in Aquinas’ view of knowledge attainment and that this role is, nonetheless, not as developed as it is in Averroes’ system; this will become more clear when we examine Aquinas’ view of the will.

stored as phantasms. For Aquinas the agent intellect works to abstract the intelligible species from the phantasm and places them in the possible intellect. It is by the intelligible species that the individual is able to understand the common nature in sensible object. This process, Aquinas argues, requires both the possible and agent intellects to be multiplied according to the number of individuals; if this were not the case it would not be possible for each person to have her own knowledge, distinct from that of other human beings and distinctly her's (not the intellect's).<sup>394</sup>

For Aquinas the thing known is not the intelligible species (or the intelligibles in act as it is for Averroes) but the common nature which exists in things. He thinks this is necessary if we are to be able to accurately claim to know the nature of things, not just intentions or species abstracted from the thing. Despite this our intellectual knowledge is not of particulars as particulars but rather it is of the universal nature of the particulars—those aspects which make the particular what it is and which it shares with all other instances of its kind. This allows Aquinas to hold simultaneously that knowledge is of things in the world and that we all know the same thing (the common nature) even if we have different experiences of different particulars.<sup>395</sup>

The universal knowledge which results from this process is used not only during theoretical considerations but also during practical reasoning. When one encounters a particular situation, one is able, using the particular reason (i.e. cogitative power), to recognize the individual intentions present in the situation and connect them to the universal knowledge one already has. As Aquinas explains, this allows the individual to

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<sup>394</sup> Dewan, "St. Albert, St. Thomas, and Knowledge," p. 129 for a brief account of this process and Stump, *Aquinas*, pp. 287-294 for a detailed account.

<sup>395</sup> Dewan, "St. Albert, St. Thomas, and Knowledge," pp. 129-131.

relate their particular knowledge to their universal knowledge with a mind towards action. This is often accomplished by way of the practical syllogism.

### 4.3. Will and its relation to the intellect and the human being in general

Now that we have seen how Aquinas explains the knowledge attainment process and how he explains the role and location of the intellects and other relevant powers we must move on to consider his views of the will and its associated powers of deliberation and choice.<sup>396</sup> This, along with what has already been seen, will allow us to come to a conclusion about how Aquinas views human moral action and agency; it will also provide some insight into how Aquinas views these things in light of his understanding and criticism of Averroes' position.

#### 4.3.1 The relationship between the will and the intellect and their objects

In the Book 2 of the SCG Aquinas discusses “intellectual substances” such as angels and human beings. Here he establishes that “intellectual substances must be capable of willing” and that this willing is a rational appetite (as opposed to the the natural or animal appetite present in non-intellectual substances).<sup>397</sup> David Gallagher

<sup>396</sup> It should be noted that choice here is to be associated with decision in the earlier accounts of Aristotle and others in Chapter 2. For Aquinas the notion of decision took on a much stronger sense which is in line with the term choice in a way the earlier accounts were not.

<sup>397</sup> Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 47, p. 142. “Has autem substantias intellectuales necesse est esse volentes. Inest enim omnibus appetitus boni: cum *bonum sit quod omnia appetunt*, ut philosophi tradunt. Huiusmodi autem appetitus in his quidem quae cognitione carent, dicitur *naturalis appetitus*: sicut dicitur quod lapis appetit esse deorsum. In his autem quae cognitionem sensitivam habent, dicitur *appetitus animalis*, qui dividitur in concupiscibilem et irascibilem. In his vero quae intelligunt, dicitur appetitus intellectualis seu rationalis, qui est *voluntas*. Substantiae igitur intellectuales creatae habent voluntatem” (Bk. 2, Ch. 47, sec. 1236-1237, p. 167). Also see ST Ia IIae, Q. 6, A. 2, p. 617, Latin pp. 57-58 and ST Ia IIae, Q. 8, pp. 626-628, Latin pp. 68-73 (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Vol. 2, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros, 1948)); for the Latin see *Prima Secundae Summa*

provides a detailed account of Aquinas' arguments distinguishing the rational appetite from the animal or sense appetite.<sup>398</sup> As an appetite the will of the human being is directed towards singulars; but, as a *rational* appetite it is directed in a universal way--the focus is on how the particular functions as an instance of a more universal consideration (i.e. the good). As Gallagher explains, "what is important, then, is not so much the object willed as the formality under which it is willed. Such a formality is always universal, and as such is an object of reason."<sup>399</sup> In an important sense the real object of the will is "the universal good;" although acts of the will are always of particulars, these are important insofar as they relate to the universal good towards which the human being is aiming and towards which the faculty of will, as a whole, is directed.<sup>400</sup> Pasnau points out that it is this capacity of the human being to understand universals which characterizes free decision.<sup>401</sup> Furthermore, the rational appetite is characterized by the ability to control one's inclinations in a way the sense appetite is not; apprehension of a particular as desirable does not necessarily result in pursuit of that particular.<sup>402</sup> This ability is further

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*Theologiae in Opera Omnia*, Vol. 6 (Rome, 1891). In ST I.82.5 Aquinas calls will an "intellectual appetite (*appetitus intellectivus*)" he also makes reference to Aristotle's "claim" in *De Anima* Bk. 3, Ch. 2, 432b5 that "the will is in the reason." Some issues surrounding this claim will be addressed in Chapter 5, below.  
 398 See both David Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on the Will as Rational Appetite," in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 29.4 (1991), pp. 559-584, and "Free Choice and Free Judgment in Thomas Aquinas," *Archiv Fur Geschichte Der Philosophie* 76 (1994), pp. 247-277. Also, Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, pp. 235-241.

399 Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on the Will as Rational Appetite," p. 563. Also, "The will, he says, tends directly and primarily toward the reason for the object's desirability (*ratio appetibilitatis*) and only secondarily toward this or that particular object" (p. 575)

400 Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on the Will as Rational Appetite," p. 578 for a discussion of "the universal good," but pp. 574-580 for the wider discussion. Also see Gallagher, "Free Choice and Free Judgment in Thomas Aquinas," p. 263.

401 Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, p. 219.

402 Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on the Will as Rational Appetite," pp. 564-565. One might look to Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* (Rome: Leonine Commission, 1972), 24.4, where Aquinas explains that free choice is "the power of will or reason--one as subordinated to the other," and to 24.2 where he addresses the ability of human beings to control their appetites. Also see ST Ia, Q. 83.

related to the ability to reflect upon one's judgment and to make free decisions regarding what is to be pursued or avoided.<sup>403</sup>

Thus, it is the will which explains how intellectual substances are able to have control over their own actions. He goes on to explain that will is the power by which "intellectual substances [...] move themselves to act, as having mastery of their own action."<sup>404</sup> This occurs in part because of the connection between will and understanding.<sup>405</sup> Other forms of appetite rely on something external to the substance to spur movement, whereas the rational appetite relies on the intellect, something internal to the substance. Thus, only substances possessing intellect (human beings and angels) have an internal source of motion.<sup>406</sup>

The relationship between the will and the intellect is a complicated one for Aquinas. They interact in a number of ways as the intellect affects the will and the will affects the intellect. In ST Question 82 Aquinas asks which power, will or intellect, is superior or higher. He determines that the intellect considered in itself is always superior, since its object is more noble; the intellect's object is the appetible good itself while the object of will is the appetible good as it is in the intellect (i.e. as it is apprehended or

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403 Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on the Will as Rational Appetite," pp. 569-571; 580. Importantly, while human beings have free will this does not mean they can act contrary to their judgments (as with *akrasia*); for Aquinas we cannot act contrary to our particular judgment, although we can act contrary to our universal judgments (p. 571). Also see Gallagher, "Free Choice and Free Judgment in Thomas Aquinas," pp. 252-256; 271-274. Pasnau points out that only human beings are voluntary agents because such agency requires the ability to deliberate and make choices in this way (*Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, pp. 213-215); he addresses weakness of will and the related issues of ignorance, passion, and malice at pp. 241-257.

404 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 47, p.144. "Substantiae igitur intellectualis seipsas agunt ad operandum, ut habentes suae operationis dominium" (Bk. 2, Ch. 47, sec. 1239, p. 168).

405. Aquinas argues in *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* 24.2, for example, that brutes are not capable of free choice precisely because they lack the knowledge necessary to curb their appetites, which intellect provides.

406 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 47, pp. 143-144; Latin Bk. 2, Ch. 47, sec. 1239-1240, p. 168.

understood).<sup>407</sup> However, relatively speaking, the will is a higher power than the intellect “when the object of the will occurs in something higher than that in which occurs the object of the intellect.”<sup>408</sup> Since the objects of the will (good and evil) are in things while the objects of the intellect (truth and error) are in the mind, this occurs when the object of the will is something greater than the human soul. This only occurs in relation to God; thus, “the love of God is better than the knowledge of God.”<sup>409</sup> Despite the usual superiority of the intellect over the will, the will acts as an agent, moving the intellect and the other powers of the soul towards their proper ends. This is because the will has a natural intentionality towards the universal good while the intellect is directed towards a particular good (i.e., knowledge of the truth). The intellect, on the other hand, moves the will as an end insofar as the end of the will is the understood good, which presupposed the working of the intellect.<sup>410</sup>

In arguing for the superiority of the intellect over the will in the SCG Aquinas makes explicit reference to the arguments of both Averroes and Aristotle. He notes that Averroes explains that even intellectual consideration is under the control of the will: “the will seems to be a higher power than the intellect, for the will moves the intellect to act; indeed, the intellect actually considers, whenever it wills to, what it retains habitually.”<sup>411</sup>

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407 Aquinas, ST Ia Q. 82, A. 3

408 Aquinas, ST Ia Q. 82, A. 3 p. 781. “Quod obiectum voluntatis in altiori re invenitur quam obiectum intellectus” (p. 393).

409 Aquinas, ST Ia Q. 82, A. 3 p. 781. “Unde melior est amor Dei quam cognitio” (p. 393).

410 Aquinas, ST Ia Q. 82, A. 4 p. 782; Latin p. 394.

411 Aquinas, SCG Bk 3.1, Ch. 26, p. 104. “Voluntas videtur esse altior potentia quam intellectus: nam voluntas movet intellectum ad suum actum; intellectus enim actu considerat quae habitu tenet, cum aliquis voluerit” (Bk. 3, Ch. 26, sec. 2076, p. 34). This seems to be related to what Averroes discusses in LCDA Bk 3, comm. 36 where he asserts that “after we have possessed the intellect in a positive disposition it is in our will to understand any intelligible we wish and to extract any form we wish” (p. 395; “Quoniam in voluntate nostra est, cum habuerimus intellectum qui est in habitu, intelligere quodcunque intellectum voluerimus et extrahere quaecumque formam voluerimus,” p. 495); he also says that we “extract and make intelligibles in virtue of our will” (p. 391; extrahimus intellecta et facimus ea per voluntatem nostrum,” p.



Aquinas argues that this cannot be the case; human beings are essentially intellectual and so their ultimate end must be an intellectual end. What's more, the intellect is superior to the will because, "primarily and directly, the intellect moves the will"<sup>412</sup> in that the will is moved by the known good and this is the result of intellect.<sup>413</sup> The will only moves the intellect in an accidental way, insofar as it desires understanding and so moves the intellect to understand because understanding is a known good and so an object of will.<sup>414</sup>

In an argument against the claim that the celestial bodies can cause acts of the will and choice Aquinas relies heavily on Aristotle. He explains that "the will belongs to the intellectual part of the soul" and that "every choice and act of the will is caused immediately in us from an intelligible apprehension, for the intellectual good is the object of the will."<sup>415</sup> Thus, the only way for one to err when making a choice is for there to be an error in one's intellectual judgment of a particular object of choice. Such choices are not natural but are the result of intellectual apprehension; this accounts for the fact that one can resist the pull of one's body if one is intellectually, and thus morally, superior, as when a temperate man is not moved to choose some pleasurable object, such as food or a woman.<sup>416</sup> From these arguments and the treatment of Averroes and Aristotle it is clear

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490) when the intellects are joined with us as our "final form belonging to us" (p. 391; "forma postrema nobis," p. 490) and we acquire intelligibles "voluntarily" (p. 396; "voluntarie," p. 496).

412 Ibid., p. 110. "Nam primo et per se intellectus movet voluntatem" (Bk. 3, Ch. 26, sec. 2092, p. 37).

413 Aquinas offers a number of arguments for why felicity is an act of the intellect and not of the will in SCG Bk. 3.1, Ch. 26. I will not address them here as they are not directly relevant to the larger project. Also see ST Ia IIae Q. 3. A. 4, pp. 598-599; Latin pp. 29-30 for a discussion of why happiness is not an act of the will.

414 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 3.1, Ch. 26 p. 110.

415 Ibid., Bk. 3.2, Ch. 85, p. 18. "Voluntas enim in parte intellectiva animae est [...] Omnis electio et actualis voluntas in nobis immediate ex apprehensione intelligibili causatur: bonum enim intellectum est obiectum voluntatis" (Bk. 3, Ch. 85, sec. 2598-2599, p. 121).

416 Ibid. It is interesting to note that Aquinas claims that his view is contrary to that of the Stoics, who think, according to Aquinas, "that all our acts, and even our choices, are ordered by the celestial bodies" (p. 23). "Ponebant omnes actus nostros, et etiam electiones nostras, secundum corpora caelestia disponi" (Bk. 3, Ch. 85, sec. 2614, p. 123). We saw in Chapter 2 that the Stoic view is considerably more nuanced than

that, although the will can and does move the intellect in some respects, the intellect is the superior power and the will could not, in the end, function without the intellect.

The object of the will is the “end and the good”<sup>417</sup> since the will is what moves intellectual substances towards their proper operations and proper end. While there are many acts which seem to belong to the will, such as delight, desire, and hate, the true act of the will is love and this is manifest in a desire/love for the good and for one’s proper end.<sup>418</sup> In the ST Aquinas offer a more extended treatment of the object of will; here he explains that “the will must of necessity<sup>419</sup> adhere to the last end, which is happiness;”<sup>420</sup> one always wills for what will make one happy—either in the sense of particular things that bring happiness or pleasure (which may be confused with happiness) or in the sense of the final end of human beings which is God. This does not mean, however, that the will desires everything it desires—or even every good thing or everything necessary for happiness—of necessity.<sup>421</sup> This is because there are some things which are good but not necessary for happiness and so are not necessarily desired. Furthermore, there are some

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Aquinas’ account would suggest.

417 Ibid., Bk. 4, Ch. 19, p.117. “Finis enim et bonum” (Bk. 4, Ch. 19, sec. 3559. p. 283). Also see SCG Bk. 3.1, Ch. 1, p.32, Latin Bk. 1, Ch. 1. sec. 1863, p. 2.

418 Albid., Bk. 4 Ch. 19, pp. 117-118, Latin Bk. 4, Ch. 19, sec. 3559-3561, pp. 283-284. Aquinas explains this in the context of a proof for the existence and nature of the Holy Spirit; however, what he says here seems to be general and as such applicable to the human being as well.

419 In ST. Ia IIae Q. 10, A. 1, pp. 633-634; Latin pp. 83-84 Aquinas explains that this willing is also natural to the human being, despite the fact that Happiness, the last end, is a supernatural one insofar as it is only to be found in God.

420 Aquinas, ST Ia Q. 82, A. 1, p. 778. “Voluntas ex necessitate inhaereat ultimo fini, qui est beatitudo” (p. 392). He explains that necessity in this context refers to “necessity of the end (*necessitas finis*),” not “necessity of coercion (*necessitas coactionis*),” and this is a natural necessity for the will. Also see ST Ia IIae Q. 1, A. 6, pp 587-588; Latin p. 14 where Aquinas argues that it is necessary that everything a human being desires is desired because it is seen as the good or tending towards the good. In ST. Ia IIae Q. 10, pp. 633-636; Latin pp. 83-89 Aquinas again reiterates that the object of the will is absolute or universal Happiness. Also see Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics* [CNE], trans. C.I.. Litzinger (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964), Book 1 (esp. Lec. 4, 9, and 10) for an extended treatment of happiness and an argument for its being the ultimate end of the human being.

421 Aquinas, ST Ia IIae Q. 10, A. 2, pp. 634-635; Latin pp. 85-86.

things which are necessary for happiness—those which relate to our adherence to God—but are not fully known or understood before one sees God; since they are not fully known, the will does not know that it should/must desire them and so it may not.<sup>422</sup> Like Aristotle, Aquinas thinks that happiness is the ultimate goal of the human being; unlike Aristotle he locates this ultimate happiness in knowledge or apprehension of God, our final end. If we had perfect knowledge of God, we could not help but will to be near him and to conform to his will; since we do not have this knowledge, it is possible for us to will only apparent goods rather than the true good which would lead us closer to our final end.

Aquinas also recognizes that the failing of the intellect can impact what we will. He explains that the object of will can also be explained as that which is “apprehended as good;”<sup>423</sup> this claim indirectly supports Aquinas’ view of the relationship between the intellects and the will while explaining how it is that some people will bad things or follow the passions or lower appetites rather than reason. Sometimes reason is not functioning properly and the passions stir one towards something that is desirable because of passion but not good. Sometimes reason is so totally restrained that one acts without will, just motivated by passion. Sometimes the reason is working to some small extent and one may will contrary to one’s passions and choose not to engage in the desire. These complications regarding the working and strength of reason mean that

the will is moved not only by the universal good apprehended by the reason, but also by good apprehended by sense. Wherefore he can be moved to some particular good independently of a passion of the sensitive appetite.

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<sup>422</sup> Ibid., Ia Q. 82, A. 2, p 779; Latin p. 393.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., Ia IIae Q. 8, A. 1, p. 626. “Quod apprehendatur in ratione boni” (p. 68).

For we will and do many things without passion, and through choice alone; as is made evident in those cases wherein reason resists passion.<sup>424</sup>

Furthermore, the search for the good takes the shape of willing both ends and means.

Properly speaking the will wills for an end; but, it wills for the means insofar as they lead to the end.<sup>425</sup> The will is moved towards its object by the intellect insofar as it must rely upon the intellect's understanding that something is good, and thus an appropriate object of the will. However, the will also affects the intellect, and the other powers of the soul, insofar as its will for some apprehended good leads them to act in such a way as to attain that good.<sup>426</sup>

#### 4.3.2 The function of the will

Having offered a detailed account of the will in relation to the intellect and to its object we must move on to examine the internal functioning of the will. Aquinas explains that there are several acts of the will, and the intellect in association with the will, having to do with both ends and means. These include enjoyment, intention, choice counsel, consent, use, and command. Of principle importance for our discussion are the three actions of counsel, choice, and consent;<sup>427</sup> these seem to correspond to deliberation, wish,

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<sup>424</sup> Ibid., Ia IIae Q. 10, A. 3, p. 636. "Quod voluntas non solum movetur a bono universali apprehenso per rationem, sed etiam a bono apprehenso per sensum. Et ideo potest moveri ad aliquod particulare bonum volumus et operamur absque passione, per solam electionem: ut maxime patet in his in quibus ratio renititur passioni" (p 88).

<sup>425</sup> Ibid., Ia IIae Q. 8, A. 2-3, pp. 627-628; Latin pp. 70-72.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid., Ia IIae Q. 9, A. 1, pp. 628-629; Latin pp. 74-75. The rest of Question 9 addresses whether the will can be moved by itself or by other internal powers, such as the sensitive appetite, or external powers, such as the heavenly bodies and God. Aquinas' goal here is to explain the complex relationship that exists among the will and the various powers of the human soul and external world. But I will leave this aside to focus on the relationship between the will and the intellect.

<sup>427</sup> Also relevant are intention, command, and use which I will discuss below in my account of the deliberative process but which I will not offer a treatment of here. It is perhaps useful to point out here that the actions which result from these acts of will and intellect are, for Aquinas, human actions, properly speaking. He discusses this idea in ST Ia IIae Q. 1, A. 1, in the context of an account of the end of the

and decision in Aristotle. Aquinas offers a substantial account of these concepts in his *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics* and a less developed discussion of them in the ST.

According to Aquinas counsel or deliberation (*consilium; bouleusis*) precedes choice and involves a rational consideration of what has to be done to achieve a desired or willed for end.<sup>428</sup> One takes counsel about the various possible means by which one may achieve one's end<sup>429</sup> and then one decides, or consents<sup>430</sup> to, which of those means is best and chooses to act accordingly. Aquinas explains that "something is deemed worthy of deliberation inasmuch as men with good sense do deliberate about it. Men of this type take counsel only about things that of their nature require careful consideration and that are properly said to be worthy of deliberation."<sup>431</sup> That is to say, we take counsel about things which are in our own power to do.<sup>432</sup> Since "counsel is ordered to action"<sup>433</sup> we

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human being. Here he argues for a distinction between actions which properly speaking human and actions which are simply done by humans. Human actions are those which are "proper to man as man," ("propriae hominis inquam est homo") done "through will and reason [...as they] proceed from a deliberate will" ("per rationem et voluntatem [...] ex voluntate deliberata procedunt"). On the other hand, some actions, such as absent-mindedly tapping one's foot, are done by human beings but are not specifically human because they are the result of deliberation. This distinction is important as it highlights the important role will and intellect together play in the distinctively human life.

428 Aquinas, ST Ia IIae Q. 14, A. 1, p. 647, Latin p. 105. Aquinas claims to be following Aristotle here, who he quotes as saying that "choice is the desire of what has been already counseled" ("electio est appetitus praeconsiliati") in Ethics iii.2. Tobias Hoffman argues that this is actually a departure from Aristotle, who does not make the distinction between judgment or counsel (a cognitive act/act of the intellect) and choice (an appetitive act/act of the will) in "Voluntariness, Choice, and Will in the Ethics Commentaries of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas" in *Documenti e Studi Sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* XVII (2006) Firenze: Edizione Del Galluzzo, p. 89-90.

429 Aquinas, ST Ia IIae Q. 14, A. 2, p. 648, Latin p. 106.

430 Ibid., Ia IIae Q. 15, pp. 650-653, Latin pp. 110-112.

431 Thomas Aquinas, CNE, Bk. 3, Lec. 7, C. 459, p. 203. "Sed illud vere dicitur conciliabile de quo consiliantur homines habentes intellectum recte dispositum. Tales enim non conciliantur nisi de rebus quae in natura sua talia sunt ut de eis consilium haberi debeat, quae proprie dicuntur consiliabilia" (*Sententia Libri Ethicorum Vol 1 in Opera Omnia* Vol. 47 (Rome: Fratrum Praedicatorum, 1969), Bk 3, Lec. 3, ln. 21-26, p. 139).

432 See Aquinas, CNE Bk. 3, Lec. 7, C. 460-464, p. 203-204; Latin Bk. 3, Lec. 7, ln. 29-85, p. 139, for a discussion of the various things about which we do not take counsel.

433 Ibid., Bk. 3, Lec. 7, C. 465, p. 204. "Consilium enim ad operationem ordinatur" (Bk. 3, Lec. 7, ln. 90, p. 139).

deliberate about what actions we can take to achieve the ends we have already set for ourselves (or the final end in as much as we understand it). These actions include those which have their cause in the individual human being by virtue of being caused by “the intellect and whatever else is man’s agent, as will, the senses, and other principles of this kind;”<sup>434</sup> Since each human being has different abilities in this regard, each person deliberates about different things. Counsel is taken, then, in some creative arts and practical sciences, such as medicine and business, as regards their practice in a given situation, and in the speculative sciences, as regards their use. In general “counsel is more necessary in the arts (the practicable) than in the sciences (the speculative)” since there is more room for individual control and nuance in the arts.<sup>435</sup>

Having determined what things we take counsel about, Aquinas moves on to discuss the methods by which we deliberate. Aquinas reiterates, following Aristotle, that deliberation is about means, not ends. Thus, one deliberates about what actions one should take to achieve the desired end.<sup>436</sup> This deliberation takes place in an analytic inquiry where one must first establish the principles, or ends, and then inquire regarding the means to those ends, or the conclusion of the inquiry;<sup>437</sup> one cannot help notice here that this seem to be the language of the practical syllogism where one has certain circumstances set before one and must come to a conclusion regarding what action to take to achieve one’s goal given these circumstances. Sometimes one concludes that the

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434 Ibid., Bk. 3, Lec. 7, C. 466, p. 204. “Causa intellectus et quicquid est aliud quod producit id quod per hominem fit, sicut voluntas et sensus et alia huiusmodi principia” (Bk. 3, Lec. 7, ln. 104-107, p. 140).

435 Ibid., Bk. 3, Lec. 7, C. 469, p. 205. “Magis necesse habemus consiliari circa artes, scilicet operativas, quam circa disciplinas, scilicet speculativas” (Bk. 3, Lec. 7, ln. 151-153, p. 140).

436 Ibid., Bk. 3, Lec. 8, C. 475, p. 208; Latin Bk. 3, Lec. 8, ln. 36-58, p. 143.

437 Ibid., BK 3, LEC. 8, C. 476, pp. 208-209; Latin Bk. 3, Lec. 8, ln. 59-77, p. 143. Also see CNE Bk. 3, Lec. 8, C. 474, p. 208; Latin Bk. 3, Lec. 8, ln. 18-35, p. 143.

means to achieve the end are not immediately within one's power; in this case one must start the process over by taking the elected means as ends and determining what must be done to achieve them; the deliberative inquiry stops once one has reached something which it is in one's power to achieve.<sup>438</sup> From this account we can see the immanently practical and practicable nature of counsel/deliberation and how it fits into determining practical actions, including moral actions.

After one takes counsel and determines the means by which one's end may be achieved the next step is to consent to whichever means are the best.<sup>439</sup> According to Aquinas consent is an act of the appetitive power, particularly the will, since the act of consent constitutes a kind of affirmation of or moving towards some particular.<sup>440</sup> He notes that it can be said to be part of reason or part of the higher part of the soul in so far as reason includes the will.<sup>441</sup> It is important to note that Aquinas makes a distinction between assent and consent, explaining that

*assentire (to assent) is, to speak, ad aliud sentire (to feel towards something); and thus it implies a certain distance from that to which assent is given. But consentire (to consent) is to feel with, and this implies a certain union to the object of consent. Hence the will, to which it belongs to tend to the thing itself, is more properly said to consent: whereas the intellect, whose act does not consist in a movement towards the thing, but rather the reverse, as we have stated in the First Part [...] is more properly said to assent; although one word is wont to be used for the other.*

438 Ibid., Bk. 3, Lec. 8, C. 477-481, p. 209; Latin Bk. 3, Lec. 8, ln. 78-139, pp. 143-144.

439 If there are many possible means we may consent to several and then choose one; if there is only one viable option that consent and choice differ only logically (Aquinas, ST Ia IIae Q. 15, A. 3, p. 652; Latin p. 112)

440 Aquinas, ST Ia IIae Q. 15, A. 1, pp. 650-651; Latin p. 110.

441 See Aquinas, ST Ia IIae Q. 15 A. 1, p. 651; Latin p. 110, and Aquinas, ST Ia IIae Q. 15, A. 4, p. 653; Latin p. 112.

We may also say that the intellect assents, in so far as it is moved by the will.<sup>442</sup>

It is clear from this passage that Aquinas views consent, the result of deliberation as a power of the will which consists in offering a kind of approval to the particular means which one has arrived at through the act of deliberation. It is a kind of preparation for action. On the other hand, assent, as an intellectual activity, is more remote, being removed from particulars.<sup>443</sup>

Now that we have examined the powers of counsel and consent in some detail we must say something about choice, the next step in the process of practical action. Aquinas explains that choice (*electio; prohairesis*) is a power of the will which involves the voluntary act of selecting or choosing some possible means by which one reasons one will achieve one's end. It has the same object, means, as counsel and it takes place after the process of taking counsel has concluded; One takes counsel and comes to a decision about what action is best given the circumstances; then, one chooses to act upon this judgment and take action.<sup>444</sup> Aquinas explains that choice "is only a desire (arising by reason of counsel) for things in our power. Choice is an act of the rational appetitive faculty called will [...] it is a deliberating desire inasmuch as, via counsel, a man arrives at a judgment regarding the things which were discovered by means of counsel. This

442 Ibid., Ia IIae Q. 15, A. 1, p. 651. "Assentire est quasi *ad aliud sentire*: et sic importat quandam distantiam ad id cui assentitur. Sed consentire est *simul sentire*: et sic importat quandam coniunctionem ad id cui consentitur. Et ideo voluntas, cuius est tendere ad ipsam rem, magis proprie dicitur consentire: intellectus autem, cuius operatio non est secundum motum ad rem, sed potius e converso, ut in Primo dictum est, magis proprie dicitur assentire: quamvis unum pro alio poni soleat Potest etiam dici quod intellectus assentit, inquantum a voluntate movetur" (p. 110)

443 From this account we can see that consent bears some similarity to the Stoic notion of assent, although it is only intellectual in so far as the will is related to the intellect. See Tobias Hoffman "Voluntariness, Choice, and Will in the Ethics Commentaries of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas," pp. 79-80 for some discussion of Aquinas' use of the Stoic idea of consent and its relationship to deliberation.

444 Aquinas, CNE Bk. 3, Lec. 9, C. 484, p. 211; Latin Bk. 3, Lec. 9, ln. 19-35, pp. 145-146.



desire is choice.”<sup>445</sup> It is not the same as sensual desire, opinion,<sup>446</sup> anger, or even wish.

First, Aquinas explains that non-rational animals have appetite but not choice. He also explains, following Aristotle, that there are times when one’s choices and one’s appetitive desires are incongruous: “the incontinent man acts in conformity with sensual desire but not in conformity with choice, for he does not reasonably direct his choice because of his sensual desire. But the continent man on the contrary acts from choice and not from sensual desire, which he resists by choice.”<sup>447</sup> This indicates that choice is related not to sensual appetite but to “the judgment of reason.”<sup>448</sup>

Second, he offers an extended treatment of the relationship between choice and wish and between these two and the will. Here he follows Aristotle in arguing that choice

445 Ibid., Bk. 3, Lec. 9, C. 486, pp. 211-212. “Electio nihil aliud sit quam desiderium eorum quae sunt in nostra potestate ex consilio proveniens; est enim electio actus appetitus rationalis qui dicitur voluntas. Ideo autem dixit electionem esse desiderium consiliabile, quia ex hoc quod homo consiliatur pervenit ad iudicansum ea quae sunt per consilium inventa <...>, quod quidem desiderium est electio” (Bk. 3, Lec.9, ln. 55-63, p. 146).

446 Ibid., Bk. 3, Lec. 5. Aquinas offers an extended account of choice and opinion in CNE Bk. 3, Lec. 6 where he explains that choice pertains to the will while opinion pertains to the intellect. We are judged morally for our choices but not our opinions; “a man is called good simply because he has a good will. However, from the fact that has a good intellect he is not called good simply but relatively” (CNE Bk. 3, Lec. 6, c. 451, p. 199). “Et ideo aliquis dicitur simpliciter bonus homo ex hoc quod habet bonam voluntatem, ex hoc autem quod habet bonum intellectum non dicitur bonus homo simpliciter, sed secundum quid” (Bk. 3, Lec.6, ln. 53-57, p. 136).

447 Ibid., Bk. 3, Lec. 5, C.439, p. 195. “Incontinens operatur secundum concupiscentiam, non autem secundum electionem, quia non immanet propriae electioni propter concupiscentiam; continens autem e converso operatur ex electione, non autem ex concupiscentia, cui per electionem resistit” (Bk. 3, Lec. 5, ln. 94-99, p. 132). This discussion of incontinence is part of the larger issue of weakness of will. Although a detailed account is beyond the scope of this project, something should be said about Aquinas’ views in this regard. In addition to the discussion of *akrasia* presented here Aquinas addresses the issue in *Ila Ilae Q. 156.*, where he explains that there are two types of incontinence, impetuosity and weakness, and relates it to sin. In *ST Ia Ilae Q. 77* he discusses sin’s relation to the sensitive appetite. Here he argues that one can act against knowledge only in the sense that one can have understanding of the universal but not understand that some particular falls under the heading of the universal (article 2); he takes this to be somewhat contrary to Aristotle’s claim that one can knowing do wrong. In Article 3 he addresses the idea of weakness of soul as a cause of sin, attributing it to a disorder within the soul, such that one’s reason is overtaken by one’s irascible or concupiscible powers. Aquinas also presents arguments around this idea of weakness and sin in *Quaestiones Disputatae de Malo Q3, A. 9-11* (In *Opera Omnia*, Vol. 23 (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1982); for English see Aquinas, *On Evil*, translated by Richard Regan, edited by Brian Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). For a discussion of this issue in Aquinas and some of the scholarship around it one may see Michael Barnwell, “Aquinas’s Two Different Accounts of *Akrasia*” in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84.1 (2010), pp. 49-67.

448 Aquinas, CNE Bk. 3, Lec. 5, C.441, p. 195. “Iudicio rationis” (Bk. 3, Lec.5, ln 123, p. 133).

and wish are not the same because wish is about ends and choice is about means and that we can wish for things that are impossible or beyond our control but we cannot choose them.<sup>449</sup> He makes this same claim in the ST where he explains that choice “results from the decision or judgment which is, as it were, the conclusion of a practical syllogism”<sup>450</sup> (which would be associated with the means whereas the premises would represent the ends) and that choices are always about actions which are within our power (i.e. possible).<sup>451</sup> Importantly, however, he prefaces these arguments in the CNE by explaining that choice and wish are similar and part of the same power, something that is not to be found in Aristotle, although Aquinas attributes the view to Aristotle:

[Aristotle] says first that choice is not even wishing although it seems to be closely connected with wishing. Both belong to the one power, the rational appetitive faculty or the will. Wishing designates an act of this power related to good absolutely. But choice designates an act of the same power related to the good according as it belongs to an act by which we are ordered to some good.<sup>452</sup>

This account makes it clear that Aquinas thinks he is following Aristotle when he says that the will exists, is a rational appetite, and has several acts, including choice and wish (which would seem to conform to ‘willing’ or volition). As was indicated in Chapter 2, Aristotle’s views are not as developed as Aquinas is making them out to be here. Indeed, Aristotle does not have a notion of choice, properly speaking, let alone will.

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449 Ibid., Bk. 3, Lec. 5, C.444-447, p. 196; Latin Bk. 3, Lec.5, ln. 155-197, pp. 133-134.

450 Aquinas, ST Ia IIae Q. 13, A. 3, p. 644. “Electio consequitur sententiam vel iudicium, quod est sicut conclusio syllogismi operativi” (p. 101).

451 Ibid., Ia IIae Q. 13, A. 4-5, pp. 645-646; Latin pp. 101-102.

452 Aquinas, CNE Bk. 3, Lec. 5, C. 443, p. 196. “Dicit ergo primo quod neque etiam electio est voluntas, quamvis videatur esse propinqua voluntati; utrumque enim pertinet ad unam potentiam, scilicet ad appetitum rationalem, qui voluntas dicitur, sed voluntas nominat actum huius potentiae secundum quod fertur in bonum absolute, electio autem nominat actum eiusdem potentiae relatum in bonum secundum quod pertinet ad nostram operationem per quam in aliquod bonum ordinamur” (Bk. 3, Lec.5, ln. 145-154, p. 133).

Having discussed deliberation and choice, Aquinas moves on to a brief discussion of willing (*voluntas*; *boulēsis*).<sup>453</sup> He explains, following Aristotle on wish, that the object of willing is the end (not the means) and that this end is the good (or the apparent good). He points out that the ends vary based upon the moral quality of the individual insofar as the virtuous person wills what is really good while the vicious person wills what is attractive or pleasurable (because it *seems* good).<sup>454</sup> This is because the virtuous person has right reason and is able to make appropriate judgments about the good.<sup>455</sup> He has developed his habits in such away that the true good is also pleasurable to him and he has developed his rational capacity to be able to correctly deliberate about how he can achieve this good. Will, then, represents the final step before action in the process of moral decision making. After one has deliberated about a practical situation and chosen a course of action, one wills this course of action into being and acts. It is not until one actually wills something that one acts; this is what distinguishes it from choice.

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453 It is important to note here that Aquinas is discussing the part of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in which Aristotle discusses wish (NE 3.4, 1113a15-1113b2)

454 Aquinas, CNE Bk 3, Lec. 10, C 493, p. 215; Latin Bk. 3, Lec.10, ln. 57-74, p. 148.

455 Ibid., Bk 3, Lec. 10, C 494. "The virtuous person correctly passes judgment on individual things that pertain to human activity. In each case that which is really good seems to him to be good. This happens because things seem naturally pleasurable to each habit that are proper to it, that is, agree with it. Those things are agreeable to the habit of virtue that are in fact good because the habit of moral virtue is defined by what is in accord with right reason. Thus, the things in accord with right reason, things of themselves good, seem good to it. Here the good man differs very much indeed from others, for he sees what is truly good in individual practicable matters, being as it were the norm and measure of all that is to be done because in these cases a thing must be judged good or bad according as it seems to him."

"Virtuosus singula quae pertinent ad operationes humanas recte diiudicat et in singulis videtur ei esse bonum id quod vere est bonum. Et hoc ideo quia unicuique habitui videntur bona et delectabilia ea quae sunt ei propria id est quae ei conveniunt; habitui autem virtutis conveniunt ea quae sunt secundum veritatem bona, qui habitus virtutis moralis diffinitur ex hoc quod est secundum rationem rectam; et ideo ea quae sunt secundum rationem, quae sunt simpliciter bona, videntur ei bona. Et in hoc plurimum differt studiosus ab aliis quod in singulis operabilibus videt quid vere sit bonum, quasi existens regula et mensura omnium operabilium, qui scilicet in eis iudicandum est aliquid bonum vel malum secundum quod ei videtur" (Bk. 3, Lec. 10, ln. 77-91, p. 148).

Before moving on to an account of the moral process which results from these powers of the soul, something should be said about human freedom and the free choice of the will which result from this account. From the fact that intellectual substances have an internal source of motion, the will, it follows that these substances also possess free choice: “That they act by judgment is evident from the fact that through their intellectual cognition they judge of things to be done. And they must have freedom, if, as just shown, they have control over their own action. Therefore, these substances in acting have freedom of choice.”<sup>456</sup> Furthermore, if this were not the case, “counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards, and punishments would be in vain.”<sup>457</sup> This means that intellectual substances are unique in that they have freedom of judgment in addition to the freedom of movement or action which they share with non-rational animals. This involves some understanding of the good and the ability to apply one’s universal conception to particulars, since action relates to particulars while understanding is of universals.<sup>458</sup> Thus, free judgment is the result of some act of reason and can incline one to act in different, even opposite ways, depending upon the arguments used. Aquinas contrasts this with the natural judgment of non-rational animals who can only act in one

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456 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 48, p. 144. “Quod enim arbitrio agant, manifestum est: eo quod per cognitionem intellectivam iudicium habent de operandis. Libertatem autem necesse est eas habere, si habent dominium sui actus, ut ostensum est. Sunt igitur praedictae substantiae liberi arbitrii in agendo” (Bk. 2, Ch. 48, sec. 1242, p. 169).

457 Aquinas, ST Ia Q. 83, A. 1, p. 787. “Dicendum quod homo est liberi arbitrii: aliqui frustra essent consilia, exhortationes, praecepta, prohibitiones, praemia et poenae” (p. 396).

458 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 48. Here Aquinas makes use of Avicenna’s account of the sheep and the wolf; while the sheep judges the wolf to be dangerous as a result of natural estimation the human being is not as constrained in her judgments. The human will is inclined to the good in a universal sense and so it can affirm any particular which is presented to it under the aspect of the good (whether the particular actually is good or not); this allows for freedom of choice which the sheep does not have. Also see Aquinas, SCG Bk. 4, Ch. 22, p. 127; Latin Bk. 4, Ch. 22, sec. 3589, p. 289 for a brief account of how it is possible, “by reason of passion or bad habit,” for one to will the wrong things or to act “slavishly” (i.e., against one’s will) despite the fact that the will “is ordered to do that which is truly good.”

set way, given the particular stimuli.<sup>459</sup> He goes on to explain that free choice, or election, is an appetitive power by which we elect the means to an end (the good) which is the object of appetite.<sup>460</sup> As a intellectual appetitive power free choice belongs to to the will. While willing is for ends, free choice, or election, is for means; in this way they are two sides of the same coin, two aspects of the same faculty.<sup>461</sup> It is important to point out here that this discussion of will and free choice/election is essentially a discussion of willing and choosing. Aquinas seems to equate this with the Aristotelian discussion of wish (*boulesis*) and decision (*prohairesis*); as we saw in Chapter 2 such a connection is misplaced as Aristotle did not view wish and decision as faculties or as powers of a single faculty of will.

### 4.3.3 The process of willing from intellectual consideration to action

What we see from the various texts examined above is the development of a complex system whereby Aquinas is able to explain how human actions, including moral actions are undertaken. This system includes multiple operations of both the intellect and the will. Here I will offer an account of this process and discuss how it has been categorized by scholars regarding both the role of the will (i.e., voluntarist or intellectualist) and free choice (i.e., libertarian or compatibilist).

For Aquinas the term will has several meanings. It is is a “rational appetite” and faculty responsible for several acts which are necessary to the workings of the practical

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459 Aquinas, ST Ia Q. 83, A. 1, p. 787, Latin, p. 396 Here Aquinas again uses Avicenna’s example of the sheep’s response to the wolf.

460 Ibid., Ia Q. 83, A. 3, pp. 789-790, Latin pp. 397-398.

461 Ibid., Ia Q. 83, A. 4, pp. 791-792, Latin pp. 399

intellect. These acts include the acts of willing (for an end), intention, consent, choice (free choice, *liberum arbitrium*), and use. These acts of the will are closely related to the acts of the intellect, which include: (1) attaining universal knowledge (2) considering particulars as they relate to the universal and determining that they are good, (3) taking counsel, and (4) commanding. Aquinas offers an account of the process of moral action, from the first consideration of a particular to action in the ST I-II.8-17, where he examines each of the acts of the will and intellect associated with his theory of action. Here I will offer an account of the mechanism of human action which emerges from these considerations, using the text of Aquinas along with the accounts of Stump and McInerney. I will present Stump's account first and then explain some areas where McInerney provides a different reading.

Human actions are, of course, about particulars. The individual has already done the intellectual work of coming to some understanding universal/absolute good/end (God) as far as one can. Then, the individual encounters some particular end and determines, through an act of intellect, that this end is good under these particular circumstances. This leads to the first act of the will—willing. Willing is a simple volitional act whereby one comes to desire the end because it is judged to be good “in these particular circumstances at this particular time.”<sup>462</sup> Once the individual has willed the end the intellect determines that the end is indeed within the power of the willer to achieve through some means which are within her power in the given circumstances. This is followed by intention, the

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<sup>462</sup> Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas*, (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 287. See pp. 287-290 for the complete account of human action which I follow here.

act of the will whereby one intends to achieve the end through some yet to be determined means.

At this point the individual has set a particular end, determined it to be good (in line with the absolute end as she understands it), and decided that the means to achieve this end are discoverable and within her power. Now she must set out to discover these means and act upon them. This requires the act of intellect called counsel. Counsel is the process of considering the various means by which one might achieve one's end. The result of counsel is the act of will called consent, where the will accepts the means which the intellect has deemed suitable to achieving the end. Depending on the end and on the preferences, abilities, etc. of the individual various means will be more or less appealing and thus garner stronger or weaker consent.

When there are several possible means to one's end, additional rational consideration is needed so that one means, or set of means, can be chosen. This is carried out by the intellect in the form of the practical syllogism, which allows the person to consider both universal knowledge and particular circumstances to arrive at a conclusion about what is best. Once this conclusion is reached by the intellect, the will chooses or wills this conclusion. Where there is only one way to reach the desired end, this step is skipped. Once a particular course of action has been chosen, or willed, the intellect commands that this course of action be undertaken and the will uses the powers under its control, including the bodily powers, to act, causing the individual to act.

From what has been said we can see that Aquinas' account of the process of human action is complex and that it involves a number of interactions between the will

and the intellect. Stump groups these interactions into five pairs of acts of intellect and will and I have followed this grouping above.<sup>463</sup> However, even the picture presented above does not take into account all of the possible complexities since it largely ignores the fact that the will can exercise control over the intellect and so can interfere with the acts of intellect which occur along this process, directing it one way or another and that this process is not always consciously done.<sup>464</sup>

To a large extent McNerny presents a picture of Aquinas' view human action similar to that presented by Stump.<sup>465</sup> However, he interprets Aquinas' account differently in a few respects. McNerny explains that human action "proceeds from deliberate will; it is a knowing wanting."<sup>466</sup> Thus, rather than focusing on intellect/will pairs McNerny focuses his presentation of Aquinas' view on the acts of the will, distinguishing two categories, acts of will bearing on ends and acts of will bearing on means, with three acts of intellect entering into the system at important moments.

An initial rational act of determining some end to be good is followed, in the account, by the three acts of the will related to the end: will, enjoyment, and intention. Will and intention have already been explained (although it is important to point out that McNerny follows Aquinas more closely in noting that intention focuses on the end and not the means<sup>467</sup>). Enjoyment, on the other hand, was not explained in Stump's account. McNerny explains that enjoyment is part of what helps us through the process of

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463 Ibid., pp. 289-290 for a helpful chart where she enumerates each pair.

464 Ibid., pp. 290-294 for a discussion of these complications.

465 Ralph McNerny, *Aquinas on Human Action: A Theory of Practice* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), pp. 51-74 presents McNerny's interpretation of "The Structure of Human Action" according to Aquinas.

466 Ibid., p. 53.

467 Ibid., p. 63; compare with Stump, *Aquinas*, p. 287.



screening the various possible ends. It is a kind of pull or pleasant feeling which indicates that something is good (or seems good) and offers a hint of what one will feel upon attaining that end.<sup>468</sup>

After one has determined an appropriate end, intending to pursue it, one must decide on the best means to achieve that end. This involves taking counsel. As with Stump's account, here taking counsel involves the use of both theoretical and practical understanding in the form of the practical syllogism (practical reason).<sup>469</sup> Once this act of intellect is complete, the will is again engaged as one consents to the means resulting from practical reason and chooses the best course of action from among them. McInerney sees these two acts of the will as following one after the other, without an act of intellect in between.<sup>470</sup> After the choice of means has been made, the intellect is again engaged as it commands "the external [or internal] acts which execute the choice"<sup>471</sup> Command is followed by use, the act of the will by which action finally occurs.<sup>472</sup>

From what has been said it is clear that Aquinas' account of human action involves a complex relationship between intellect and will, although there is some disagreement regarding whether the loci of moral action for Aquinas is in intellect, will, or both. This disagreement has led some to insist that Aquinas is an intellectualist, locating the crux of moral decision making and moral action in the rational faculty, others to insist

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468 McInerney, *Aquinas on Human Action: A Theory of Practice*, p. 62.

469 Ibid., pp. 64-66.

470 Ibid., p. 66-67.

471 Ibid., p. 69. See pp. 68-72 for McInerney's entire account of command, where he explains (1) how command is one of the many parts of what is, in reality, a single moral action and (2) that acts of reason, imagination, etc., along with physical actions can be commanded.

472 Ibid., p. 67. McInerney points out that Aquinas states that "command and the commanded act are one human act" but that this is simply stressing the fact that all of the acts of will and intellect we have been considering are parts one single moral action. While we can distinguish them as separate acts must also remember that they are only parts of the single act which is the action the human being undertakes (p. 69).

that he is a voluntarist, prioritizing the faculty of will, and still others to claim that he is neither (since the roles of the intellect and will are so fully integrated in his system); related to this debate is the question of whether Aquinas is a libertarian or a compatibilist.<sup>473</sup> While it is not necessary to go into this issue in great detail here, I think that the account of human action we have seen above demonstrates the close connection between intellect and will. Even under McInerney's account, which clearly emphasizes the will, intellect plays an essential part in the process of moral action. Thus, I think that those who argue that Aquinas' view of intellect and will are so integrated as to make his theory neither fully intellectualist nor voluntarist, neither compatibilist nor libertarian,<sup>474</sup> seem most accurate. As Shanley points out, it is the human being as a whole, not the intellect or the will which is the ultimate subject of freedom and the ultimate actor.<sup>475</sup>

#### 4.4 The emerging view of moral agency and responsibility

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473 See Matthias Perkams, "Aquinas on choice, will, and voluntary action," in *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Tobias Hoffman, Jorn Muller, and Matthias Perkams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) and Tobias Hoffman, "Intellectualism and Voluntarism," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, Vol. 1, ed. Robert Pasnau, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Brian J. Shanley, "Beyond Libertarianism and Compatibilism: Thomas Aquinas on Created Freedom," in *Freedom and the Human Person*, ed. Richard Velkley (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007); Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas*, pp. 277-306, and Eleonore Stump, "Aquinas's Account of Freedom: Intellect and Will" *Monist* 80.4 (1997) for discussions of these various opinions and who holds them. Also, Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, pp. 221-233 offers a discussion of freedom and the ways in which the will and intellects influence one another.

474 While this discussion focuses on the intellectualist/voluntarist debate, something more should be said here about how Aquinas could be said to be neither compatibilist nor libertarian. Aquinas' unique view of human freedom is one which is not defined by the ability to do anything one may choose (as a libertarian would normally define it), nor is it the idea that freedom means to be free from external constraints, even if internal causes still exist (as the compatibilist would have it). Rather, for Aquinas freedom is a matter of being able to pursue the true good (understanding God as our end and ultimate happiness) to the best of our ability. True freedom is to be free from the enslavement of the lower parts of the soul and to be able to pursue our true, higher, nature. At the highest level of realization of this freedom (possible only after death or during rapture) one would be completely free but capable of doing one thing since one would finally have an understanding of the good and so would only act in accord with that good. The blessed in heaven are the most free even though they cannot do other than what they are doing.

475 Shanley, "Beyond Libertarianism and Compatibilism: Thomas Aquinas on Created Freedom," p. 77.

Having offered an account of the ontological status of the will and its relation to the intellect Aquinas moves on in the second part of the ST to examine moral action in some detail. In ST I.II.6 Aquinas discusses the notion of voluntary action; he identifies two categories of voluntary actions—perfect and imperfect. Human beings act voluntarily because they have knowledge of their ends (both particular ends and their end in God) and an internal principle of action.<sup>476</sup> Perfect voluntary action requires deliberation about the end and the means to achieve it.<sup>477</sup> Will, the rational appetite, is involved in perfect voluntary action through deliberation about a desired end and the means to achieve it. This use of deliberation means that human beings can participate in perfect voluntary actions. It is the ability to deliberate about one's actions and to be open to multiple possible actions or inactions that makes human action perfectly voluntary and worthy of praise and blame.<sup>478</sup> Aquinas notes that "voluntary is what proceeds from the will,"<sup>479</sup> this can be both action and inaction since in both cases one has deliberated and chosen/willed to act/not act. Involuntary actions are those that are "against the will"<sup>480</sup> and this does not include things done from a bad character, from vicious passions (e.g., concupiscence), fear, etc. because one does will things as a result of these defects.<sup>481</sup> Further, he notes that

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476 Aquinas, ST Ia IIae Q. 6, A. 1, pp. 616-617; Latin pp. 55-56.

477 Ibid., Ia IIae Q. 6, A. 2, pp. 617-618; Latin pp. 57-58.

478 Ibid., ST Ia IIae Q. 6, A. 2, p. 617: "Reply Obj. 2. The fact that man is master of his actions, is due to his being able to deliberate about them: for since the deliberating reason is indifferently disposed to opposite things, the will can be inclined to either. But it is not thus that voluntariness is in irrational animals.

Reply Obj. 3. Praise and blame are the result of the voluntary act, wherein is the perfect voluntary; such as is not to be found in irrational animals."

"Ad secundum dicendum quod ex hoc contingit quod homo est dominus sui actus, quod habet deliberationem de suis actibus: ex hoc enim quod ratio deliberans se habet ad opposita, voluntas in utrumque potest. Sed secundum hoc voluntarium non est in brutis animalibus, ut dictum est.

Ad tertium dicendum quod laus et vituperium consequuntur actum voluntarium secundum perfectam voluntarii rationem; qualis non invenitur in brutis" (p. 58).

479 Ibid., Ia IIae Q. 6, A. 3, p. 618. "Voluntarium dicitur quod est a voluntate" (p. 58)

480 Ibid., Ia IIae Q. 6, A. 5, p. 619. "Quod est contra voluntatem, dicitur esse involuntarium" (p. 60)

481 Ibid., Ia IIae Q. 6, A. 6-8, pp. 620-622, Latin pp. 61-63

acts of the will are two fold: wishing and doing (whereby the will causes/commands an act in accord with the wish).<sup>482</sup>

The moral actions of human beings are directed by the will while the action of the will is related to reason. This relation to reason allows for morally bad actions without the need for a totally bad will. When one acts based upon mere sense perception or upon a misunderstanding regarding the good (i.e. when something is apprehended as a good when it is not) this results in a morally bad action. Aquinas explains that such an action is voluntary and morally wrong but not evil, since it was done for good ends (as the result of a misunderstanding of the good).<sup>483</sup>

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

Upon examining the views of Aquinas regarding both intellects and the will we have developed an understanding of his view of knowledge attainment and willing and how these relate to moral action and moral responsibility. Aquinas argues that it is necessary for both the possible and agent intellects to be in the individual human soul and to be multiplied according to the number of human beings. He sees this as essential to properly explain both individual knowledge attainment and practical (moral) action. It is only if the intellects are individuated that the intellectual soul could accurately be called the form of the human being and that individual knowledge can be preserved, Aquinas argues.

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482 Ibid., Ia II ae, Q. 6, A. 4, pp. 618-619, Latin pp. 59-60.

483 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 3.1, Ch. 10, pp. 59-61, Latin Bk. 3, Ch. 10, sec. 1946-1951, pp. 13-14.

Furthermore, since Aquinas sees the will as an rational appetite and thus as an intellectual power he holds that separate Intellects would entail a separate will and, as result, a lack of moral responsibility. The process of moral decision making and action is discussed in detail by Aquinas. He provides a picture in which the faculties of intellect and will are intimately connected and acts of both will and intellect are involved in the process of moral action. This has led to a great amount of debate about where Aquinas within the spectrum of libertarianism and/or compatibilism and whether he is best termed an intellectualism or a voluntarist. It is clear, however, that Aquinas' system is designed to explain moral decision in such a way that the individual is morally responsible for one's actions--in fact, one of Aquinas' claims against Averroes is that his system will eliminate moral responsibility; again, this is a claim which must be examined further in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### AN ANALYSIS OF AVERROES VIEW OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY IN LIGHT OF THE CRITIQUE OF AQUINAS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have (1) offered a detailed look at the history and development of the concept of the will from Aristotle through the Stoics and Peripatetics and into the Arabic and Latin speaking worlds of the Middle Ages (Chapter 2); and (2) provided a detailed account of the views of both Averroes (Chapter 3) and Aquinas (Chapter 4) on the concept of the will and its place within their greater philosophical psychologies.

These studies have highlighted several areas where there is disagreement between the views of Averroes and Aquinas both in how one should interpret Aristotle and in what constitutes the correct view of human intellect and moral agency. The present chapter will make this conflict of ideas explicit by putting the two thinkers into dialogue with one another regarding several issues key to the nature of the will. The four issues to be addressed will be: (A) the nature of the Intellects as both separate and “in the soul,” (B) the notion that the Intellects are “form for us,” (C) the relationship between the individual human being and the intelligibles in act, and (D) the location and function of the will. In addressing these four issues the chapter will demonstrate that Averroes’ views on each can be traced, ultimately, to his understanding of the nature of the intelligibles in act. It will also address the efficacy of Aquinas’ particular critiques of Averroes’ views with respect to these issues, showing their overall cogency as it relates to the Intellects and intelligibles as well as the critiques’ misrepresentation of Averroes as it relates to the will.

Part of this assessment will require consideration of how Aquinas' own views influenced his understanding of Averroes; thus, an account and analysis of Aquinas' views on these issues will be presented here as well. In each case, after placing the two thinkers in dialogue I will offer my own analysis, arguing that, although Averroes' views have internal consistency and seem to be closer to those of Aristotle in some respects, his problematic account of the intelligibles in act leaves his philosophy open to pointed criticism. It should be noted that issues A and B will be treated together since they are closely related and a separate treatment would entail unnecessary repetition and confusion; issues C and D will receive their own treatments.

## **5.2 Issues A (placement of the separate Intellects/ "in the soul") and B (separate Intellects as "form for us")**

The first issues to be discussed revolve around the relationship between the intellect and the individual human being. Both philosophers must explain how the intellects are related to the individual human being and to one another. This section will examine Averroes' claim that the Intellects are separate entities shared by all human beings yet also intrinsic to the individual as "in the soul" and "form for us." It will also address Aquinas' critiques of Averroes, influenced by his own position that the intellects must be multiple according to the number of individuals, part of the each person's intellectual soul. I will demonstrate that Aquinas raises important and ultimately decisive concerns regarding Averroes' approach.

### **5.2.1 Averroes' Coherent Account of the Separate Intellects as "in the soul" and "form for us"**

Averroes maintains that the Intellects can be separate entities and also be “in” the souls of individual human beings. It was not unique to claim that the Agent Intellect was a separate entity, as this was part of the tradition stretching back to Aristotle himself.<sup>484</sup> However, his insistence in the *Long Commentary* that the Material Intellect is also separate and shared was unique. For Averroes both Intellects cannot be ontologically present in the individual because this would adversely impact the universal availability of the intelligibles in act which reside in the Material Intellect. Yet, holding that both intellects are separate would seem to cut off the possibility of individual human understanding. How can the individual be said to know when she does not have any intellect of her own?

Averroes addresses this potential problem by insisting that the Intellects are separate but also naturally present “in the soul” when the individual is actively thinking. He explains that, while the Intellects are separate entities, the individual is essential to the process by which intelligibles in act come to be in the Material Intellect. The intelligibles

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484 Aristotle says in the *De Anima* that both elements must “be found within the soul” in 3.5 (430a 13). Owens explains that, although Aristotle does not expand on this point, Aristotelian epistemology requires that the agent intellect be “separate and eternal, and accordingly has existence in itself, in a type of actuality that is not dependent on the body” (Owens, “The Self in Aristotle,” p. 716); it is “in reality separate, yet in its activity it is in the human soul” (p. 719). This is because (1) the nature of thought is not impacted by the deterioration and decay of the body, (2) thought has unlimited range, (3) knowledge is of formal nature separate from material considerations, and (4) it has the ability to attain “complex reflexive knowledge of itself (p. 716).” This indicates that there is a relation between the agent intellect and the individual whereby the intellect is separate in nature but “in” the individual in such a way that “the agent [...] is still the whole man, a composite individual, using the separate mind as an instrument” for knowing (p. 717). Thus, the agent intellect is “in” the soul while being “separate in its own nature,” (i.e. ontologically distinct). On the other hand, the passive element is perishable and, thus, is not separate from the body in its nature. From this we can see that, according to Owens’ interpretation, Aristotle held that the agent intellect was a separate entity while also being “in” the human soul in a strong enough sense that it contributed not only to individual knowledge but to the very selfhood of the individual. It should, perhaps, be noted that although there is disagreement regarding how one should interpret *De Anima* 3.5 Owens’ view provides an interpretation which is quite in line with the view of Averroes, who thought himself to be in agreement with The Philosopher.



in act exist as intelligibles in potency in particular things which are experienced by individuals. The cogitative power extracts these potential intelligibles from the image of the particular and deposits them in memory, which presents them to the Agent Intellect. The Agent Intellect abstracts the intelligibles, actualizing them, and deposits them in the Material Intellect. During this process, Averroes claims, the Intellects are “in” the individual and subject to her will: “it is necessary to ascribe these two activities to the soul *in us*, namely, to receive the intelligible and to make it, although the agent and the recipient are eternal substances, on account of the fact that these two activities are reduced to our will, namely to abstract intelligibles and to understand them.”<sup>485</sup>

Averroes explains that the human being, as rational animal, must have the principle of rationality in it as its form: each thing has its essential feature on account of its form; the essential feature of the human being is the ability to reason; therefore, the principle of rationality (i.e. the Intellects) must be the form of the human being.<sup>486</sup> Yet, as noted earlier, the Intellects are also separate entities shared by all human beings. To navigate this seeming contradiction Averroes relies on the idea that the Intellects can be “in” the soul as explained above on his particular understanding of intelligibles. He explains:

We, therefore, have already found the way in which it is possible for that intellect to be conjoined with us in the end and the reason why it is not united with us in the beginning. For when this has been asserted, it will necessarily happen that the intellect which is in us in act be composed of

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485 Averroes, LCDA, Bk. 3, comment 18 p. 351, emphasis added. “Et fuit necesse attribuere has duas actiones anime in nobis, scilicet recipere intellectum et facere eum, quamvis agens et recipiens sint substantie eterne, propter hoc quia hee actiones reducte sunt ad nostram voluntatem, scilicet abstrahere intellecta et intelligere ea” (p. 439).

486 Averroes says repeatedly that the Intellects, and the Agent Intellect in particular, must be “form for [or ‘in’] us” or “final form for us” (LCDA Bk 3, comments 20 and 36).

theoretical intelligibles and the agent intellect in such a way that the agent intellect is as it were the form of the theoretical intelligibles and the theoretical intelligibles are as it were matter. In this way we will be able to generate intelligibles when we wish. For because that in virtue of which something carries out its proper activity is the form while we carry out our proper activity in virtue of the agent intellect, it is necessary that the agent intellect be form in us [...W]hen all the theoretical intelligibles exist in us in potency, it [the agent intellect] will be united with us in potency. When all the theoretical intelligibles exist in us in act, it will then be united with us in act.<sup>487</sup>

Elsewhere he notes that the agent intellect is “united with us only in virtue of the mediation of the material intellect.”<sup>488</sup> Here we can see how Averroes understands the interaction between the individual and the Intellects as focused around the issue of intelligibles. Intelligibles in potency are abstracted from sensory objects by the internal senses (particularly the cogitative power) and prepared for actualization. It is in this activity that the Agent Intellect is conjoined with the individual and the potentially intelligible becomes actually intelligible. These intelligibles in act (i.e. theoretical intelligibles) are in the individual in so far as they are also in the Material Intellect. It is the connection with the Material Intellect which allows the individual to easily reconnect with the Agent Intellect and regain access to the intelligibles at will. The actualization of these intelligibles takes place through the Agent Intellect which is also “in” the human

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487 LCDA Bk 3, comment 36, pp. 398-399. *Iam igitur invenimus modum secundum quem possibile est ut iste intellectus continuetur nobiscum in postremo, et causam quare non copulatur nobiscum in principio. Quoniam hoc posito, continget necessario ut intellectus qui est in nobis in actu sit compositus ex intellectis speculativis et intellectu agentis ita quod intellectus agens sit quasi forma intellectuum speculativorum et intellecta speculativa sint quasi materia. Et per hunc modum poterimus generare intellecta cum voluerimus. Quoniam, quia illud per quod agit aliquid suam propriam actionem est forma, nos autem agimus per intellectum agentem nostram actionem propriam, necesse est ut intellectus agens sit forma in nobis [...] Et manifestum est quod, cum omnia intellecta speculativa fuerint existentia in nobis in potentia, quod ipse erit copulatus nobiscum in potentia. Et cum omnia intellecta speculativa fuerint existentia in nobis in actu, erit ipse tunc copulatus nobis in actu” (pp.499-500).*

488 Ibid., Bk. 3, comment 20, p. 355. *“Iste intellectus non copulatur nobis nisi mediante esse intellectus materialis generabilis et corruptibilis in nobis” (p. 444).*

being during this process.<sup>489</sup> The Agent Intellect is united to the individual, via the cogitative power, in some way (in potency) even when we are not actively thinking as *intellectus in habitu*. Thus, it is “in” us or “form for us” potentially all of the time even though it is only active in us some of the time (when the potential intelligibles are actualized).<sup>490</sup> The Material and Agent Intellects are extrinsically linked to the human being by virtue of the fact that the conjunction of human being and Intellects through the cogitative power is a part of human nature; the individual must supply the intelligibles in potency through sensory experience. The connection is intrinsic when one is actively thinking; intelligibles in potency provided by the cogitative power become intelligibles in act in the Material Intellect by the work of the Agent Intellect. This constant link allows Averroes to claim that thought is up to us, a matter of our will. After the initial effort of abstraction we are able to recollect the intelligibles by reconnecting with the Intellects at will using the cogitative power. In this way one is able to reconnect to the Intellects and recall the intelligibles which exist therein. This understanding of the relationship between individual human beings and Intellects allows Averroes to hold that the individual is a knower without positing that the single set of intelligibles in act exist in any individual in a way which would require the multiplication of intellects.<sup>491</sup>

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489 Ibid., Bk. 3, comment 36, p. 398, Latin p. 499 offers an account of how the Material and Agent Intellects interact in the creation of the theoretical intelligibles. Here he explains that the Material Intellect is the subject of both the theoretical intelligibles and of the Agent Intellect. See also the discussion of double subject below.

490 See Taylor, “Introduction,” pp. lxx-lxxiii for an account of the Intellect as “form for us”

491. It is perhaps useful to say something, briefly, about the perishability of the human being in Averroes’ account. Averroes holds that the individual human being, including the soul, is perishable. There is no part of the individual which can function without a bodily organ; therefore, there is no part of the individual which can continue to exist after death. Averroes does hold like Aristotle before him and Aquinas after, that intellectual activity is at least in some respects incorporeal; however, since his commitments regarding the intelligibles in act and the unity of science require both the Material and Agent Intellects to be separate entities this does not result in the continued existence of the individual human being who merely makes use of these separate Intellects.

It has been hinted at above but it is useful to make explicit the role the cogitative power plays here. For Averroes the cogitative power is a brain power which is “a kind of reason.”<sup>492</sup> It fulfills a vast number of roles in Averroes’ account of human nature. First, it is that by which human beings begin to make sense of their sensory experiences, developing phantasms and bringing the myriad experiences of similar things together to abstract the intelligible in potency. It is also the cogitative power which presents these phantasms to the Agent Intellect so that it can abstract the intelligible in act. It is the cogitative power which links the individual to the Material Intellect which has received the intelligible in act from the Agent Intellect, thus granting the individual access to the intelligible when they are thinking. What’s more, it is the cogitative power which has, as a result of this process, become primed for a speedy reconnection with the Intellects when the individual must think about and use the intelligible again. It is also the cogitative power which is responsible for will and the deliberative process, but more on this will be said later.

It would seem from this account that Averroes holds to one interpretation of the Principle of Intrinsic Formal Cause.<sup>493</sup> For Averroes the formal and intrinsic presence of rationality does not require the permanent presence of individuated intellects in an individual knower. All that is required for Averroes is that the Intellects are present in the

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492. Averroes, LCDA Bk. 3, comment 20, p. 259. “Aliqua ratio” (p. 349).

493 See Taylor, “Intellect as Intrinsic Formal Cause in the Soul According to Aquinas and Averroes,” pp. 202-211 for a discussion of the Principle in Averroes. Of course, Aquinas works with a different interpretation of this principle. For Aquinas the intellects are “in” the individual as part of the “formal nature of each individual” (p. 191). That is, since intellection is the defining characteristic of the human being, and since it is an act of individual human beings, it must exist in each as part of their substance or form. It is impossible for something to meet this criterion and, at the same time, to be extrinsic to the individual in its own nature. See Taylor pp. 191-202 for an account of Aquinas’ understanding of the Principle.

soul as its form when thinking occurs. Under this view the Agent and Material Intellects are intrinsically present in the human being despite being ontologically distinct and extrinsic entities.<sup>494</sup> Taylor explains that “the very nature and actuality of the transcendent Agent Intellect must be shared or participated by us essentially in the fullness of its intellectual power for abstraction and understanding”<sup>495</sup> to take place. Thus, Averroes is able to assert that, although the intelligibles in act only remain in the individual while she is conjoined to the Material Intellect during the act of thinking, the activity is intrinsic to her during this time and the disposition towards this state of being (*intellectus in habitu*) is retained even when she is not conjoined to the Intellects.<sup>496</sup> Taylor explains that, when the individual is actually joined with the Intellects, there arrives the acquired intellect in the individual’s soul;<sup>497</sup> he equates this with the theoretical intellect which is, in some

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494 Ibid., p. 208; 210. This view of the relationship between the Intellects and the individual human being calls into question the notion of substance Averroes is using. Under Averroes’ view it would seem to hold that a being’s essential characteristic does not have to be in it in a substantial way. The essential characteristic of the human being is intellect; yet, intellect is not part of the substance of the human being since the Intellects are both ontologically distinct from the individual; the highest faculty that is part of the of the individual human being in a substantial way is the cogitative faculty (which is akin to the animal estimative faculty). As we will see later, this is problematic not only in that it is not Aristotelian but also, and more importantly, in its own right.

495 Ibid., p. 211.

496 B-C Bazan explains that this is possible given that the the “truth content” (*Intellectum Speculativum*: Averroes, Thomas Aquinas, and Siger of Brabant on the Intelligible Object,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 19:4 (1981), p. 427) of intelligibles is provided by images (i.e. by the experience of individual human beings) which are derived from sensation by the cogitative power (passible intellect) while “their reality as objects known” (p. 428) is provided by their being abstracted from matter by the agent intellect and known by the material intellect. This view allows Averroes to claim that individuals are responsible for the formal content of knowledge while the agent intellect acts as efficient cause, making that information knowable. The intelligibles in act (*intellectum speculativum*) are, thus, “the result of two principles: the one, generable, corruptible, and multiple (the image); the other, eternal and unique (the material intellect)” (p. 428). ( See pp. 425-431 for Bazan’s account of Averroes’ position). Bazan is giving an account here of Averroes’ doctrine of double subject (also see Taylor, “Introduction” p. lxi or a discussion of this theory) which Aquinas argues against in detail in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*.

497 Taylor “Introduction” p. lix. The acquired intellect is defined as “the intellect as realized in the immediate moment of the actualizing reception of intelligibles in act” (p. xx).

fashion, retained by the individual human being.<sup>498</sup> According to Averroes, this allows for the individual to be called a knower despite the complicated relationship between the individual human being and the separate Intellects. By (1) providing a strong role for the cogitative power as a means by which the individual is connected to both particulars in the world and the separate Agent and Material Intellects, and (2) by emphasizing the fact that the Intellects are “in” the soul when actual thinking is occurring, Averroes has argued that the individual human being is the knower.<sup>499</sup>

## **5.2.2 Aquinas’ view on the intellects as “in the soul” and “form for us”**

### **5.2.2.1 Aquinas’ position**

Aquinas argues that both the possible and agent intellects are powers of the human soul which are multiplied according to the number of individuals. The fact that a person can be at one time actually understanding but at another time only in potentiality with respect to understanding demonstrates that there must exist a potential intellect, the possible intellect, which is “in potency to and able to receive all those things which are

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498 Ibid., p. lix. Theoretical intellect is “the intellect containing the intelligibles in act. For the mature Averroes this intellect and its intelligibles exist as eternal in the separate material intellect and also as perishable in their individual perishable human subject” (p. xx).

499 It should be noted here that, even when we put aside a Thomistic critique of Averroes, the notion that an individual can be an essentially intellectual being, a knower, even when not connected to the intellect is problematic. Averroes clearly wants to hold that it is the individual who knows and that individuals can know different things, since they supply different experiences from which intelligibles in act are abstracted. Yet, in so far as the Intellects (particularly the Material Intellect, responsible for retaining these intelligibles) is distinct in its nature from the individual and sometimes even fully extrinsic (when the individual is not actively engaged in thought), it cannot, it seems, be said that the individual retains knowledge (in the memory, for example) in such a way that it can truly be said to be *her* knowledge. This problem will be addressed in more detail below.

intelligible to a human being.”<sup>500</sup> This intellect does not have a bodily organ (since it would then be limited in the scope of its understanding by the organ’s powers), but neither is it a separate substance, totally disconnected from the body. The possible intellect is a part or power of the human soul which is the substantial form of the body. If it were a separate substance, Aquinas explains, it would not be possible to say that the human being understands by means of the possible intellect.<sup>501</sup> A substance’s operation must originate in that substance; the act of understanding attributed to the human being must originate in that human being.

Furthermore, since this act of understanding is an act of the possible intellect, the possible intellect must be in each individual as her own intellect; that is to say, the possible intellect must be multiplied according to the number of human beings.<sup>502</sup> Aquinas explains that in order to maintain the individuality of human beings as knowers (and as distinct human beings insofar as to be human *is* to be a knower) we must maintain that each person has her own intellect. It is impossible to explain diversity in understanding and knowledge using other means. Aquinas holds that multiplying the number of intellects does not affect the universality of the resulting knowledge; since we understand the natures in things and not separate intelligibles, having multiple intelligible species in multiple intellects can result in multiple understandings of the “universal” common natures.<sup>503</sup> The overall argument rests on the idea that “it has been proved that the substance of the intellect is united to the human body as its form. But one form cannot

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500 Aquinas, QDAnima, Q. 2, p. 57. “Hunc igitur intellectum possibilem necesse est esse in potentia ad omnia que sunt intelligibilia per hominem et receptivum eorum, et consequens denudatum ab hiis” (Q 2, ln. 182-1854, p. 16).

501 Ibid., Q. 2, *responsio*.

502 Ibid., Q. 3, *responsio*.

503 Aquinas, ST, Ia, Q. 76, A. 2.

possibly exist in more than one matter [...] Therefore, there is not one intellect for all men.”<sup>504</sup> It makes no sense, according to Aquinas, to assert that the form is simultaneously the form of the individual human being, the source of their humanity (as distinct from their animality) and their knowledge, and that it is distinct from the individual and shared with all humans. That is to say, the intellectual soul is the substantial form of the human being. A substantial form must be exclusive to that of which it is the form since it accounts for the substance, the essence, of that thing. If it were separate and shared by all human beings this would mean that human beings are essentially animals with an advanced estimative power<sup>505</sup> and the ability to ‘connect’ with and use the rational faculties; reason would not be an intrinsic part of the human being.<sup>506</sup>

Aquinas argues that the agent intellect must also be a power belonging to the individual human soul, despite its being “separable,” “unaffected,” “unmixed,” and “in actuality as regards its substance.”<sup>507</sup> He explains that there must exist a power which

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504 Aquinas, SCG, Bk. 2, Ch. 73, p. 215. “Ostensum est enim quod substantia intellectus unitur corpori humano ut forma. Impossibile est autem unam formam esse nisi unius materiae; quia proprius actus in propria potentia fit; sunt enim ad invicem proportionata. Non est igitur intellectus unus omnium hominum” (Bk. 2, Ch. 73, sec. 1489, p. 208).

505. Aquinas is referring here to the cogitative faculty, the estimative power as it exists in human beings. While Aquinas agrees with Averroes that the cogitative power is a brain power, one of the internal senses, he does think it can be responsible for the many tasks it performs in Averroes’ system. The primary tasks of the cogitative power for Aquinas is to create the phantasms and to note the particular intentions of individuals. In this way the cogitative power is important in helping the individual use the more universal knowledge gained through intellectual apprehension in practical ways, relating it to the particular, material world. However, it is not fundamentally involved in the working of the intellects; this is because there is no need in Aquinas’ philosophy to bridge a connection between separate Intellects and individuals since the intellects are not separate.

506 It should be noted that part of the reason for Aquinas’ critique of Averroes’ view of substantial form come from his understanding of Aristotle. Aquinas’ understanding of what it means to be a substance and a substantial form is, generally, in line with the view of Aristotle. On the other hand, Averroes’ understanding is rather unAristotelian and falls into a kind of Platonism, despite Averroes’ claims to be fully in keeping with Aristotle’s views. A detailed account of this issue will be provided later in this chapter.

507 Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s De anima*, Bk. 3, Ch. 10, p. 366. “Intellectus agens est nobilior possibilis; set intellectus possibilis est separatus, impassibilis et inmixtus, ut supra ostensum est; ergo multo magis intellectus agens. Ex quo etiam patet quod sit secundum substantiam suam actu” (Bk 3, Ch. 4, ln. 79-84, p. 220).



makes potentially intelligible things actually intelligible and presents them to the possible intellect. If this were not the case there would be no way for the intelligible objects known by the possible intellect to come into being. The power responsible for producing these intelligibles is the agent intellect. It functions by abstracting from matter and all material conditions, a process which results in an understanding of universals through the use of intelligible species.<sup>508</sup> The agent intellect, like the possible intellect, must be multiplied according to the number of individuals. It is the principle by which actual understanding takes place and this must exist in the individual if we are to say truthfully that each person has her own understanding: “there must be in us an essential active principle of our own, through which we are made to be actually understanding, and this principle is the agent intellect.”<sup>509</sup> Furthermore, Aquinas explains each individual experiences the act of abstracting from material conditions and the act of understanding as “taking place within [herself]” and this can only be attributed to the existence of formal principles of abstraction and reception *in* each person; thus, the possible and agent intellects must both be in the soul and multiplied according to the number of individuals. The act of intellect is done by individual human beings, and for this to be the case the principle of that action must be formally in the human being.<sup>510</sup>

In addition to addressing the issue of how the intellects can be in the soul Aquinas also examines the notion that the intellects are the form of the human being. He explains in several places that the soul cannot be a body. It must be the act of a body, a principle of

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508 Aquinas, QDAnima, Q. 4, pp. 78-79; Latin Q. 4, ln. 115-125, p. 33.

509 Ibid., Q. 5, p. 86. “Requiratur in nobis principium actuum proprium, per quod efficiamur intelligentes in actu. Et hoc est intellectus agens” (Q. 5, ln. 160-163, p. 41). Also see SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 76, p. 241-242 and *Commentary on Aristotle's De anima*, Bk. 3, Ch. 10, p. 367; Latin Bk. 3, Ch. 4, ln. 122-127, p. 221.

510 SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 76.

life; furthermore, it is that which gives the human being her essential characteristics.<sup>511</sup>

Although the soul is not a body, it is not simply the form of a body but also a subsistent thing (*hoc aliquid*). In the first question of the *Questiones Disputate De Anima* Aquinas asks whether the human soul can be both a form and a determinate particular (*forma et hoc aliquid*). Here he works to determine whether the soul fulfills the two characteristics of substance: (1) having the ability to subsist *per se*, and (2) to be complete in a given species and genus of substance.<sup>512</sup> The human rational soul understands universals via intelligible species which it abstracts from matter and from all material conditions; furthermore, it performs this essential operation not by the act of some bodily organ but by its own act. Since its essential operation does not involve the body, the intellective soul must also “possess an independent *per se* act of existing which is not dependent on its body.”<sup>513</sup> That is to say, it must be not only the form of a body but also a substance in its own right, fulfilling the first characteristic of substance.

The human soul does not, however, fulfill the second characteristic; it is not complete in itself with regard to a species and genus. Rather, it is the form of the species human being, a composite of body and soul, conferring being on the human body. If this were not the case then the body and soul would be only accidentally united.<sup>514</sup> So, the soul is not a species in its own right; rather, the human being is the species and is

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511 See, for example, Aquinas, SCG, Bk. 2, Ch. 49 and 50, ST, Ia Q. 75, A. 1 and 2, and *de Unitate* Ch. I, sec. 3.

512 Aquinas, QDAnima, Q1, *responsio*. Aquinas also addresses these two senses of *hoc aliquid* in the first reply in ST Ia, Q 75, A2.

513 Aquinas, QDAnima, Q1, p. 47. “Oportet quod anima intellectiua habeat esse per se absolutum, non dependens a corpore” (Q 1, ln. 246-247, p. 8).

514 Aquinas explains that if this were the case “death, which signifies the separation of soul and body, would not be a substantial corruption, and this is obviously false” (Aquinas, QDAnima, Q1, p. 47). “Mors igitur, que significat eorum separationem, non esset corruptio substantialis, quod patet esse falsum” (Q1, ln. 283-286, p. 9)

composed of soul and body as its form and matter. This argument that the soul is form of the body is made more strongly in the SCG and ST. In the SCG Aquinas explains that the soul is neither a part of the body nor mixed with the body, nor physically connected to it.<sup>515</sup> Despite this, the soul is still united to the body in an important way via a “contact of *power*”<sup>516</sup> which allows the soul to act upon and change the body without being acted upon or changed itself. In this relationship the body and the soul are “not unqualifiedly one [...but rather are] one with respect to acting and being acted upon.”<sup>517</sup> Aquinas further explains that the body and soul are “one in reason.”<sup>518</sup> This type of union is only possible if the soul is the substantial form of the body.<sup>519</sup>

Aquinas addresses the issue again in Question 76 of the first part of the ST. Here he starts the argument by asserting that “that whereby primarily anything acts is a form of the thing to which it is attributed”<sup>520</sup> and that the soul is that whereby the body acts because it is the life principle and the principle by which we understand. Aquinas continues by explaining that without the soul as the form of the body there would be no way to explain the fact that each individual has his own act of understanding which is essential to him.<sup>521</sup> For Aquinas, then, the soul has a dual role to play. It is both a substance and a form. The unique role that the body plays in the knowledge attainment

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515 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 56, pp. 164-165; Latin, Bk 2, Ch. 56, sec. 1313-1314, p. 180.

516 “Hic autem tactus non est quantitatis, sed virtutis.” (SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 56, sec. 1317, pp. 180-181)

517 Ibid., Bk. 2, Ch. 56, pp. 166-167. “Quae autem uniuntur secundum talem contactum, non sunt unum simpliciter. Sunt enim unum in agendo et patiendi: quod non est esse unum simpliciter” (Bk 2, Ch. 56, sec. 1319, p. 181).

518 Ibid., Bk. 2, Ch. 56, p. 167. “Ratione unum” (Bk. 2, Ch. 56, sec. 1319, p. 181).

519 Ibid., Bk. 2, Ch. 68.

520 Aquinas, ST, Ia Q. 76, A. 1, p. 696. “Illud enim quo primo aliquid operatur, est forma eius cui ope ratio attribuitur (p. 448a, ln. 44-45 in *Summa Theologiae*. Cura et studio Instituti Studiorum Medievalium Ottaviensis ad textum S. Pii Pp. V iussu confectum recognita. Tomus primus complectens. Ottawa: Commissio Piana, 1941).

521 Aquinas, ST, Ia Q. 76, A. 1.

process helps us to see that the soul must be linked to the body in a special way, while the immaterial nature of universals and the intelligible species which help us arrive at knowledge of universals demonstrate the soul's subsistence.<sup>522</sup>

Inhabiting this boundary between corporeal and separate substance means that the soul is fittingly connected to the body while also being immortal and capable of surviving the death of the body. Aquinas argues that it is fitting that the soul, the lowest of the intellectual substances, be united to the human body since it requires such a body to fulfill its functions, including its most important function, understanding.<sup>523</sup> Thus, while the soul, including the will can exist apart from the body that is not its most natural type of existence and it cannot fulfill all of its functions. For Aquinas this serves not only the theological purpose of explaining personal immortality and supernatural reward and punishment, but also, is a necessary feature of his view that the intellectual soul has a power (i.e. intellection) which is not tied to a bodily organ and so can continue to function without the body.

### 5.2.2.2 Aquinas' particular critiques of Averroes

Given this understanding of the relationship between the Intellects and the individual, Aquinas argues that the individual would not be *per se* rational under Averroes' view since the intellectual powers are not part of the individual's substance.

Aquinas sees Averroes' view as a kind of Platonism<sup>524</sup> and as no longer Aristotelian. An

<sup>522</sup> Aquinas, QDAnima, Q. 1.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid., Q. 8, pp. 114-115, Latin Q. 8, ln. 177-198, pp. 66-67.

<sup>524</sup> This is because Plato held that the soul/intellect was separate from the body and also, more importantly, that knowledge was of a separate immaterial entity with ontological reality (which might here be equated with the intelligibles in act, objects of knowledge existing in the separate Material Intellect) and

early and detailed account of Aquinas on the need for the intellects to be intrinsic to the human being and multiplied according to the number of individuals can be found in his *Commentary on the Sentences*. Detailed arguments are also provided by Aquinas in his *Summa Contra Gentiles* and *Summa Theologiae*. Here I will use the *Commentary on the Sentences* as the foundation for the discussion and bring other texts as needed for additional clarification and to strengthen Aquinas' argument.

In *In 2 Sent.*, D 17, Q2, A1, "Whether there is one soul or intellect for all human beings," Aquinas offers an account of the tradition, as he understands it, along with his own arguments against that tradition. He explains that although "nearly all philosophers after Aristotle are in agreement that the agent intellect and the possible [intellect] differ in substance and that the agent intellect is a certain separate substance,"<sup>525</sup> this position cannot be accepted as it is contrary to the faith. He notes that there is much more diversity of opinion regarding the possible intellect, citing the views of Alexander, Ibn Bajjah, Avicenna, Themistius, and Averroes.<sup>526</sup> While he quickly rejects the views of

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not of things in the world (as Aristotle and Aquinas would have it); see *deUnitate*, especially #109, for some discussion of Averroes' Platonism.

525 Taylor "Aquinas and 'the Arabs': Aquinas' First Critical Encounter with the Doctrines of Avicenna and Averroes on the Intellect, *In 2 Sent. D. 17, Q. 2, A. 1*" in *Philosophical Psychology in Arabic Thought and the Latin Aristotelianism of the 13th Century*, ed. Luis Xavier Lopez-Farjeat and Jorg Alejandro Tellkamp (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2013), p. 283. "Sciendum est quod in hoc fere omnes philosophi concordant post Aristotelem, III *De anima* [...] quod intellectus agens et possibilis differunt secundum substratiam, et quod intellectus agens sit substantia quaedam separata" (pp. 422-423 in *Scriptum Super Libros Sententiarum magistri petri Lombardi Episcopi Parisiensis [Sent.]*, Vol2, edited by R.P. Mandonnet, (Paris: P. Lethielleux) 1929).

It is important to point out that, with the exception of Avicenna, the information Aquinas has regarding the philosophers he mentions is derived from his reading of Averroes' LCDA and not from primary texts. One can look to Taylor, "Introduction" pp. lxxvi-levi for a detailed discussion of how these and other philosophers' influenced Averroes and feature in the LCDA.

526 It is of some interest to point out that the positions of Alexander of Aphrodisias and Ibn Bajjah are similar to the positions which Averroes held in his *Middle* and *Short Commentaries* on the *De Anima*, although Aquinas would not have known this, having access only to the *Long Commentary*. He rejects both of these views: the intellect could not be a disposition, as Alexander says, because it would then be a the power of a body and a body cannot be receptive of all intelligibles; nor could the intellect be a power of the imagination, as Ibn Bajjah would have it, because then both the phantasms, which move the possible

Alexander and Ibn Bajjah, Aquinas asserts his agreement with Avicenna's view that the possible intellect is multiplied according to the number of individuals since it is part of the "essence of the rational soul and not [...] a bodily power," while disagreeing with his views of a separate Agent Intellect.<sup>527</sup> He goes on to reflect on the views of Theophrastus and Themistius, explaining that they assert that all of the intelligibles are in one separate intellect (the Agent/Productive Intellect) rather than being in each individual human being. The separate Agent Intellect guides the human intellect (intellect in a positive disposition) in this process for Themistius; this must be the case because "to abstract species from phantasms is in our power."<sup>528</sup> An important element of Themistius' thought which Averroes adopts is this idea that there is one set of intelligibles in act, contained in the separate Intellect; however, Averroes does not accept the notion that these intelligibles are eternal.

Having quickly refuted these earlier philosophers Aquinas moves on to a detailed refutation of Averroes' views. He states that Averroes holds the position that

the agent intellect as well as the possible [intellect] is eternal and is one in all [human beings], but the intelligible species are not eternal. He also holds that the agent intellect is not related to the possible [intellect] as its form but as a craftsman to matter and [that] the understood species abstracted from phantasms are as form of the possible

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intellect, and the intellect itself would both be located in the imagination and it is impossible for one thing to be both mover and moved (*In 2 Sent.*, D 17, Q2, A1, p. 284-288; Latin pp. 423-425). Also the article to which Taylor's translation is attached, pp. 147-152, for his explanation of Aquinas' account of Ibn Bajjah and Alexander

527 *In 2 Sent.*, D 17, Q2, A1, p. 286. "In essentia animae rationalis, et non esse virtutem corporalem" (p. 424). At pp.152-160 Taylor gives an extended treatment of Aquinas' view of Avicenna. Particularly noteworthy is how Aquinas adopts and uses the views of Avicenna in his critique of Averroes. First, Aquinas' adopts Avicenna's view of the possible intellect "as an individual and immaterial power of the rational soul" (p. 153). Second, he uses the Avicennian conception of the intelligibles in act as likeness of the natures of things to argue against Averroes' position regarding the need to keep intelligibles in act as the objects of knowledge (pp. 155-156; 293-294)

528 Ibid., p. 287. "Abstrahere species a phantasmatibus sit in potestate nostras" (p. 425).

intellect [and that] from the two of these there comes to be the intellect in a positive disposition.<sup>529</sup>

Aquinas notes that this position of Averroes is meant to solve several problems inherent in the position of Themistius. Particularly, it is supposed to show that the Intellects can be eternal while still allowing for human participation in the creation of intelligible species (i.e. intelligibles in act). However, he points out that there are a number of problems with Averroes' position that make it both incompatible with the views of Aristotle and generally untenable.

Aquinas starts by pointing to the problem of the twofold subject of the intelligible species. According to Averroes, the intelligible species have their material being and their "newness" by virtue of having the phantasms in individual human being's imagination as their subject; this allows for the intelligibles in act to be generable rather than eternal, the result of human experience and brain activity. Second, the intelligible species have immaterial being through the possible intellect; this allows them to avoid corruptibility and to maintain the stability necessary for the unity of science and human communication.<sup>530</sup>

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529 Ibid., p. 288. "Quod tam intellectus agens quam possibilis est aeternus et unus in omnibus; sed species intelligibiles non sunt aeternae; et ponit quod intellectus agens non se habet ad possibilitatem ut forma ejus, sed ut artifex ad materiam, et species intellectae abstractae a phantasmatibus sunt sicut forma intellectus possibilis, ex quibus duobus efficitur intellectus in habitu" (p. 425)

530 Ibid., D 17, Q3, A1. p. 288; Latin, p. 425. In SCG BK 2, Ch 73, p. 226 Aquinas' explains that, for Averroes, "the intelligible species have a twofold subject: the possible intellect, wherein they have eternal being; the phantasm, as ground of their newness." "Species intelligibiles habent duplex subiectum: ex uno quorum habent aeternitatem, scilicet ab intellectu possibili; ab alio autem habent novitatem, scilicet a phantasmate" (Bk. 2, Ch. 73, sec. 1515, p. 212). Also see Taylor "Aquinas and 'the Arabs': Aquinas' First Critical Encounter with the Doctrines of Avicenna and Averroes on the Intellect, *In 2 Sent. D. 17, Q. 2, A. 1*," pp. 165-167 and Taylor "Introduction," pp. lix-lxi for a discussion of Averroes' account of the twofold subject of intelligible species (i.e., intelligibles in act).

In the SCG Aquinas offers a detailed account of these ideas, explaining Averroes' view that the Intellects are connected to the individual through the phantasms in the cogitative power. At SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 59, pp. 178-179 Aquinas explains that "Averroes determines how it [the possible intellect] is brought into contact with us, saying that the species understood in act is the form of the possible intellect, just as the visible in act is the form of the power of sight. Thus, there arises one thing from the possible intellect and the form understood in act. The possible intellect, then, is united to anyone to whom that form is united.

This view is easily dismissed, in Aquinas' view, since it hinges on the erroneous view that the intelligibles in the possible intellect and in the imagination could be one in

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Now, it is united to us by means of the phantasm, which is a kind of subject of that understood form; and in this way the possible intellect also is brought into connection with us." "Determinat etiam modum quo continuatur nobiscum, dicens quod species intellecta in actu est forma intellectus possibilis, sicut visibile in actu est forma potentiae visivae. Unde, ex intellectu possibili ex forma intellecta in actu fit unum. Cuicumque igitur coniungitur forma intellectua praedicta, coniungitur intellectus, possibilis. Coniungitur autem nobis mediante phantasmate, quod est subiectum quoddam illius formae intellectae. Per hunc igitur modum etiam intellectus possibilis nobiscum continuatur" (Bk 2, Ch. 59, sec. 1360, p. 187). He continues this discussion in the SCG in Ch 60, and Ch. SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 73.

Also see ST, Ia Q. 76, A. 1, p. 697 where Aquinas explains that, for Averroes, the union of body and soul "is through the intelligible species, as having a double subject, namely the possible intellect and the phantasms which are in the corporeal organs. Thus, through the intelligible species, the possible intellect is *linked* to the body of this or that particular man;" the *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, Bk. III, Ch. 7, pp. 348-349, where Aquinas writes that "some people have been so deceived by this passage [429b5], however, that they have posited a possible intellect separated in existence from the body, like one of the separated substances [...T]hose who came up with this position have tried to find some means by which the separated substance that they call possible intellect is continuous and united with us, so that *its* engaging in intellectual cognition might be *our* engaging in intellectual cognition. For they say that an intelligible *species* is the form of possible intellect (since it becomes actualized by means of a *species*), but that the phantasm, which is in us, is a kind of subject for this *species*. In this way, therefore, they say that possible intellect is linked with us through its form [...they argued] in some such fashion as this: phantasms are in some way one with an intelligible *species*, but an intelligible *species* is one with possible intellect; therefore, possible intellect is united with the phantasms;" "Set horum occasione uerborum quidam in tantum decepti sunt ut ponerent intellectum possibilem secundum esse a corpore separatum, sicut una de substantii separatis [...H]uius positionis conati sunt adinuenire aliquem modum quo illa substantia separata quam intellectum possibilem dicunt continuetur et uniatur nobiscum, ut sic eius intelligere sit nostrum intelligere. Dicunt enim quod species intelligibilis est forma intellectus possibilis (per eam enim in actu), huius autem speciei subiectum quoddam est fantasma, quod est in nobis; sic igitur dicunt intellectum possibilem copulari nobiscum per formam suam [...] quasi sic arguens: fantasmata sunt quodam modo unum cum specie intelligibili; species autem intelligibilis est unum cum intellectu possibili; ergo intellectus possibilis unitur fantasmatibus" (Bk 3, Ch. 1, ln. 275-328, pp. 205-206). And, *de Unitate* Ch.3, sec. 63, p. 49 where he says that "Averroes, held that the principle of this kind of understanding, a principle that is called the possible intellect, is not the soul nor a part of the soul, except equivocally, but rather that it is a separate substance. He said that the understanding of that separate substance is my understanding or that person's understanding, in so far as that possible intellect is joined to me or to you through phantasms which are in me and in you. He said that this is accomplished in the following way. Now the intelligible species, which becomes one with the possible intellect since it is its form and act, has two subjects: one, the phantasms themselves; the other, the possible intellect. So therefore the possible intellect is in contact with us through its form by means of the phantasms; and thus, as long as the possible intellect understands, this man understands;" "Auerroes, ponens huiusmodi principium intelligendi quod dicitur intellectus possibilis non esse animam nec partem anime nisi equivoce, sed potius quod sit substantia quedam separata, dixit quod intelligere illius substantie separate est intelligere mei uel illius, in quantum intellectus ille possibilis copulatur michi uel tibi per fantasmata que sunt in me et in te. Quod sic fieri dicebat: species enim intelligibilis que fit unum cum intellectu possibili, cum sit forma et actus eius, habet duo subiecta, unum ipsa fantasmata, aliud intellectum possibilem. Sic ergo intellectus possibilis continuatur nobiscum per formam suam mediantibus fantasmatibus; et sic dum intellectus possibilis intelligit, hic homo intelligit" (Chapter 3, ln 46-60, p. 303).

Of particular importance is the emphasis which Aquinas places, on behalf of Averroes, on the passive intellect (cogitation, memory, and imagination) as responsible for preparing the phantasms for the action of the Agent Intellect (SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 60).



number. Rather, he explains, they must be distinct with the subject of the possible intellect being eternal and the subject of the phantasms being generable and corruptible. If this is the case the human being could not be a producer of knowledge through abstraction from phantasms but rather could only be said to discover the intelligibles which preexist in the possible intellect; this would be contrary to Aristotle, according to Aquinas.<sup>531</sup>

Next, Aquinas addresses Averroes' claim that his view allows for an individual human being to understand through its own conjunction with the possible intellect. As we know, Averroes' view is that each individual has her own phantasms by which she conjoins to the possible intellect via the intelligible species which has the phantasm as the possible intellect as its subject.<sup>532</sup> This view, according to Aquinas, leads to the conclusion that there is a part of the human being which is eternal (that part which is the possible intellect) but that the rest of the human being is not eternal. Thus, there is no immortality of the soul for Averroes.<sup>533</sup> Aquinas rejects this view for three reasons.<sup>534</sup> First, he reminds us of what was just argued regarding the impossibility of the twofold subject of intelligibles species and notes that this must lead us to conclude that there is no conjoining of possible intellect and individual human being. Second, Aquinas explains that under Averroes' view the "human being would not be a human being in a determinate species insofar as [the human being] has intellect."<sup>535</sup> That is, since the entire locus of

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531 *In 2 Sent.*, D 17, Q3, A1. p. 289; Latin p. 426.

532 Aquinas provides a more detailed account of this view of Averroes in SCG Bk 2, Ch. 59.

533 *In 2 Sent.*, D 17, Q3, A1. pp. 289-290; Latin pp. 426-427.

534 See Taylor, "Aquinas and 'the Arabs': Aquinas' First Critical Encounter with the Doctrines of Avicenna and Averroes on the Intellect, *In 2 Sent. D. 17, Q. 2, A. 1*" pp. 168-172 for Taylor's account of these three arguments of Aquinas, which Taylor breaks down into 4 problems raised by Aquinas against Averroes.

535 *In 2 Sent.*, D 17, Q3, A1. p. 290. "Homo non esset homo in specie determinata per hoc quod est habens intellectum" (p. 427).

intellectual operations would be outside of the individual human being, it would not be proper to call the individual a rational being. This is because the connection between individual and intellect is accidental rather than substantial. The Intellects in Averroes' view, according to Aquinas, are not intrinsically or substantially connected to the individual human being; instead they have an accidental connection at the time thought is occurring as they use the images presented by the individual cogitative power in the process of abstraction. What's more, this is contrary to Aristotle's view that "the soul is united to the body without anything intermediate and also without any mediating knowledge"<sup>536</sup> Third, he points out that Averroes' view would result not in a particular human being understanding but, rather, in her being understood.<sup>537</sup> This is the case since the possible intellect would be understanding the phantasms which the individual human being imagines. This issues results from the fact that, according to Aquinas, the intellects are not intrinsic to the human being.

Aquinas makes similar arguments in the SCG, where he calls the position of Averroes "worthless and impossible." Here he explains that the possible intellect must be a form of the body in order to properly connect a particular human being with the intellect and, thus, with knowledge.<sup>538</sup> According to Aquinas, to understand is to have

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<sup>536</sup> *In 2 Sent.*, D 17, Q3, A1. p. 290. "Animam corpori nullo mediante uniri, nec etiam mediante scientia" (p. 427).

<sup>537</sup> Alain de Libera offers a detailed discussion of this issue in his commentary on Aquinas' *de Unitate Intellectus*. Here he explains that, according to Aquinas, thought is an immanent action rather than a transitive one. As such, thought can only exist in an agent, as Aristotle contends; if thought is in a separate Intellect, as Averroes holds, than the agent, the knower, is that Intellect, not the individual human being. But, if this intellect is part of the soul which is, in turn, form of the body, as Aquinas holds, the individual can be said to be the knower (Alain de Libera, *L'Unité de L'intellect: Commentaire du De unitate intellectus contra averroistas de Thomas d'Aquin*, pp. 276-280). One should also see Ralph McInerny' commentary on the same text of Aquinas in *Aquinas Against the Averroists: On There Being Only One Intellect*, pp. 147, 150-152, and 205-2011.

<sup>538</sup> SCG Bk 2, Ch. 59.

intellect and to employ it such that the object of understanding is the “thing whose intelligible species is united to the intellect,”<sup>539</sup> not the intelligible species itself. That is to say, for Aquinas the intelligible in act is not the object of knowledge but rather a means by which the object of knowledge, the natures existing in things, is known. This is an important distinction since it allows Aquinas to be free from the need to explain how there can be one set of intelligibles in act which all people share; it is this need for a single set of intelligibles, which, in part, leads Averroes to posit a shared Material Intellect which can store these intelligibles and provide access to them for all human beings.<sup>540</sup>

According to Aquinas, while it is the case that the phantasm is the representation of a thing in the mind and that the possible intellect is “in touch with” that phantasm through the intelligible species,<sup>541</sup> this can only result in knowledge for the human being if the possible intellect is a form of the body of the individual human being. Since it is the proper operation of the human being to understand, the faculty by which this occurs—the

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539 SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 59, p. 179. “Intelligitur autem id cuius species intelligibilis intellectui unitur” (Bk 2, Ch. 59, sec. 1361, pp. 187-188).

540 It is important to remember that this does not mean that the intelligibles are in the Material Intellect from the start and human beings merely access them. It is essential to Averroes’ system that the intelligibles in act are generated by individual human beings through the intellective process which begins with sensation and ends with the creation of intelligibles in act. Of course, this system also brings with it important questions which Averroes did not address. For example, since there must be only one set of intelligibles, it is unclear how the intellective process concludes with the creation of an intelligible for each person since the one intelligible would be in the Material Intellect after the first human being formed it through the process of intellectual abstraction done in conjunction with the Agent and Material Intellects. For example, each individual arrives at the intelligible ‘horse’ after her own experiences of horses; but, is the intelligible abstracted anew each time this happens, or is the one intelligible simply re-certified and made accessible to a new individual each time the knowledge attainment process takes place?

541 Aquinas points out in *A Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima* (Bk. 3, Ch. 7, p. 349; Latin Bk 3, Ch. 1, p. 206), and *de Unitate* (Ch. 3, sec. 65, p. 50; Latin Ch. 3, ln. 76-96, p. 303) that the phantasms do not actually provide a connection to the possible intellect through intelligible species because the intelligibles species must be abstracted from the phantasm in order to be actually intelligible (and exist in the possible intellect). Thus, intelligible species cannot be connected to both the intellect and the individual (through the phantasm) at the same time.

intellect—must be in the human being.<sup>542</sup> Aquinas equates the relationship between the phantasm and the intellect to that of color and the sense of sight. Color exists on a wall and it is apprehended by sight; in this case the wall does not see but is seen. Similarly, if phantasms exist in the human brain (in the cogitative power) and they are apprehended by the separate possible intellect, the brain (or the individual) does not understand but is understood.<sup>543</sup> This is not a satisfactory account of the real phenomena of the personal experience of understanding that individuals have. It is part of the nature of the human being to understand and this is incommensurate with the position of Averroes as Aquinas understands it. Aquinas argues that in order to hold that the human being is, in her essence, a rational animal we must hold that the rational principle be intrinsic to the individual as part of her form.

This notion that the intellects must be formally united to the individual is found in several of Aquinas' works and reflects what Taylor calls the Principle of Intrinsic Formal Cause.<sup>544</sup> The main thrust of the argument is that the source of an activity, particularly if that activity defines the species, must be power which is formally existing in the individuals of that species. Since human beings are defined as rational animals, the rational or intellectual power must exist formally in the the individual as a part of her nature.<sup>545</sup> If the intellectual powers are not intrinsic to the individual, the individual would

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542 SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 59, p. 179-181; Latin Bk 2, Ch. 59, sec. 1367-1368, pp. 188-189).

543 ST. Ia Q. 76, A. 1, p. 697; Latin p. 450. Aquinas makes this same comparison in *A Commentary on Aristotle's De anima*, Bk. I, Ch. 2, p. 15; Latin Bk I, Ch. 2, ln. 46-69, pp. 9-10, and *deUnitate*, Ch. 3, sec. 66, p. 50; Latin Ch. 3, ln. 97-118, pp. 303-304.

544 Taylor, "Intellect as Intrinsic Formal Cause in the Soul According to Aquinas and Averroes." In particular, see pp. 190-202 for Taylor's discussion of the various places Aquinas uses arguments based upon the Principle of Intrinsic Formal Cause.

545 Ibid., pp. 201-202, "The very definitional difference distinguishing human beings from other animals lies in the intrinsic presence to each member of the species of the form which bears the essential and proper operations of intellectual understanding by the agent intellect and the possible intellect in each soul. A view

be only accidentally, not essentially, a knower; the knower, properly speaking, would be the separate Intellects.<sup>546</sup> It is not enough, according to Aquinas, that the intellectual power is linked to the individual via some object, such as the phantasms. In such a case the human being would be known objects rather than knowing subjects.<sup>547</sup>

Aquinas points out, as we see above, that Averroes thinks he can solve this problem using the cogitative power and the phantasms. Averroes, according to Aquinas, thinks the cogitative power, as the power which houses the phantasms (i.e. the images which represent the intelligible species in the possible intellect), is enough to explain individual human cognition. Averroes claims that the possible intellect (particularly the cogitative power), rather than the possible intellect, is the “subject of the habit of science”<sup>548</sup> and difference in phantasms among individuals is enough to explain the difference in knowledge, despite the sharing of the possible intellect.<sup>549</sup> But, Aquinas explains that the passive intellect is not enough to explain how individual human beings can be said to have universal knowledge (i.e. full scientific knowledge, knowledge properly speaking) because universal species cannot be in a bodily power.<sup>550</sup> It is not possible to sufficiently explain the distinction between humans and animals or differences in knowledge using the system of Averroes, as Aquinas explains it. Aquinas explains that

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that locates the power of understanding properly outside the individual human being denies to that human being something essential and intrinsic to human nature.”

546 Ibid., p. 202. “If human beings are properly understood as rational animals essentially distinguished by their rational or intellectual operations, those operations must be intrinsic as essentially contained within the very substance of the human beings, [Aquinas] argues. Otherwise human beings would be knowers only accidentally, not essentially, and the operation of intellect would belong essentially to the separate intellects and only non-essentially in human beings.”

547 Ibid., p. 191.

548 SCG Bk 2, Ch 73, p. 221. “Subiectum habitus scientiae non est intellectus possibilis, sed intellectus passivus et virtus cogitativa” (Ch. 73, sec. 1509, p. 211).

549 Ibid. Also see *de Unitate*, Ch. 3, sec. 63, p. 49; Latin Ch. 3, ln. 41-60, p. 303.

550 SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 60, p. 187; Latin Bk 2, Ch. 60, sec. 1382, p. 192. In ST Ia Q. 76 A.1 Aquinas argues that in Averroes’ system the individual would be the object of understanding, not the subject.

“man has a proper operation higher than the other animals, namely, understanding and reasoning, which is the operation of man as man.”<sup>551</sup> In order for this operation to properly be said to be part of the “specific nature” of the human being its principle must be in the individual human being. This can only be accomplished if the possible (and agent) intellect is multiplied according to the number of individuals. Averroes’ attribution of the the passible intellect (i.e. the cogitative power) to the human being as the locus of human nature in the way Aquinas describes it above is not enough to account for human understanding because “the principle of man’s proper operation must be *impassible* and *not mixed with the body*.”<sup>552</sup> He notes further that if the intellect is not individuated, humans must get their nature as human from the cogitative power with phantasms as the source of understanding *in* the determinate human being. This, he argues, is not possible under his own understanding of human nature. The cogitative power is a brain power associated with the other powers of the passive intellect. It is akin to other sensitive powers which require an organ; thus, the passive intellect, even given that only human beings have the cogitative power, is not enough to account for understanding (which does not require an organ) or to designate human beings as distinct from animals possessing sensitive souls.

Furthermore, the phantasms are not enough to provide the “specific nature” to human beings because (1) they are potentially intelligible but not actually intelligible and ones nature must come from what is actual; and (2) they are many/particularized and

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551 SCG Bk 2, Ch. 60, p. 183. “Homo habet propriam operationem supra alia animalia, scilicet intelligere et ratiocinari, quae est operatio hominis in quantum est homo” (Bk. 2, Ch. 60, sec. 1371, p. 190)

552 Ibid. “principium praedictae operationis oportet esse impassibile et non mixtum corpori” (Bk. 2, Ch. 60, sec. 1371, p. 190)

variable whereas a being's nature must come from something which is one and stable.<sup>553</sup>

Aquinas also argues that a multiplicity of phantasms is not enough to multiply the act of understanding of the possible intellect; even if there are many phantasms being used by the possible intellect, the resulting act of understanding will be numerically one for all of them.<sup>554</sup> After all, for Averroes there is still but one intelligible in act and this is the real object of knowledge; its existence in the Material Intellect means that it does not belong to an individual but is shared by all, like the Intellect itself. All of this proves, according to Aquinas, that the possible intellect must be in each individual human being in a real, ontological sense, and thus it must be multiplied according to the number of human beings.<sup>555</sup>

Additionally, Aquinas insists that Averroes' views are contrary to those of Aristotle. He first points to Aristotle's general definition of soul, noting that every kind of soul, under this definition, is "the first act of an organic physical body,"<sup>556</sup> pointing out that Averroes is wrong to express doubt in this definition (as it applies to the intellectual soul of human beings). He goes on to explain that Aristotle explicitly includes intellect among the powers of the soul in *De Anima* 2, thereby rejecting Averroes' view that it is a separate entity, not a power of the soul. Aquinas points out that Aristotle is clear that the intellect is "separated" only in the sense that it is not associated with a corporeal organ

553 Ibid., Bk. 2, Ch. 73, pp. 218-219; Latin Bk 2, Ch. 73, sec. 1498-1501, pp. 209-210.

554 Ibid., , pp. 221; Latin Bk 2, Ch. 73, sec. 1505, p. 210.. Aquinas offers additional arguments throughout Ch 73. Also see Bk. 3, Ch. 7 where he makes a similar argument within the context of demonstrating that relationship between the body and soul.

555 See Mahoney, "Aquinas's Critique of Averroes' Doctrine of the Unity of the Intellect" for a detailed discussion of Aquinas' account of Averroes' argument regarding phantasms and the possible intellect throughout his works. Mahoney notes that Aquinas' critique remains fairly constant throughout. Also see Lawrence Dewan, "St. Albert, St. Thomas, and Knowledge," where Aquinas' critique of Averroes and the resulting view of knowledge is compared with that of Albert the Great, his teacher and predecessor.

556 SCG Bk 2, Ch. 61, p. 191. "Est actus primus physici corporis organici" (Bk 2, Ch, 61, sec. 1397, p. 195.

and that this fact does not preclude it from being a part or power of the soul since the human soul “surpasses the capacity of corporeal matter and cannot be wholly encompassed by it.”<sup>557</sup> Finally, Aquinas quotes Aristotle as saying that the intellect is “‘that by which the soul judges and understands’ [and claims that] this makes it perfectly clear that the intellect is that part of the human soul by which it understands;”<sup>558</sup> again, this is meant to provide evidence against the view of Averroes that the intellects are entities separate from the human soul. He ends his account by once again asserting that “the Averroistic position in question is, then, contrary to the opinion of Aristotle and to the truth, and is to be rejected therefore as sheer fiction.”<sup>559</sup>

Aquinas also makes a detailed argument against Averroes’ views in his late work *De Unitate Intellectus*. His primary argument revolved around the idea that the intellect is the substantial form of the body and is not one for all.<sup>560</sup> According to McNerny’s commentary on this work we can break down Aquinas’ critique into three main arguments in support of the claim that the intellect is a part of the soul which is, in turn, the substantial form of the human being.<sup>561</sup>

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557 *A Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima* Bk.3, Ch. 7, p. 350. “Anima humana propter sui nobilitatem supergreditur facultatem materie corporalis et non potest totaliter includi ab ea” (Bk. 3, ch. 1, ln. 377-379, p. 207).

558 SCG Ch. 61, p. 192. “*Intellectum quo opinatur et intelligit anima*. In quo manifeste ostenditur intellectum esse aliquid animae humanae, quo anima humana intelligit” (Bk. 2, Ch. 61, sec. 1401, p. 196).

559 Ibid. “Est igitur praedicta positio contra sententiam Aristotelis, et contra veritatem. Unde tanquam fictitia repudianda est” (Bk. 2, Ch. 61, sec. 1402, p. 196). It should be remembered that, as we saw in Chapter 2 and in the beginning of this chapter, neither Aquinas nor Averroes can reasonably be said to follow the Aristotelian position to the extent they each claim.

560 McNerny, *Aquinas Against the Averroists: On There Being Only One Intellect*, p.147. McNerny notes that the other main line of argument Aquinas uses is that Aristotle did not hold that the intellects were separate. We have shown above that, although neither he nor Averroes accurately understood Aristotle’s notion of will, Averroes’ understanding of Aristotle’s position on the intellects is more accurate than Aquinas’.

561 Ibid., p. 150-152; 205-211.



First is the argument that individual human beings understand as part of their natures. This can only be the case if the intellect is a faculty of the soul which is the form of the human being. Intellect is not something one comes into contact with or uses as a tool; rather, it is an essential part of one's being. Aquinas argues that we experience ourselves thinking, wanting, seeing, and doing other "vital activities"<sup>562</sup> which we come to associate with the soul. In order for these activities to belong to the individual they must originate from within. McNerny lays out Aquinas' argument that "the first principle of our vital acts must be the form of body" using three premises: "1. A thing acts insofar as it is actual; 2. A thing is actual thanks to its form; 3. A thing acts thanks to its form."<sup>563</sup> He goes on to explain that "the force of 'This human understands' is that the person who thinks is engaged in an activity, the source of which is within, and that source is primarily form."<sup>564</sup> McNerny points out that this understanding of the origin of rational activity seems to require a conflation of soul and intellect. While this is potentially problematic since it would seem to entail that one is always thinking, Aquinas resolves this by identifying soul as a first actuality and the activity resulting from the soul's powers as second acts. He then colloquially identifies the soul with its most important power.<sup>565</sup>

Aquinas sees Averroes' dual subject theory of intelligibles as a denial of this notion that the source of these activities is the form of the human being. In *De Unitate Intellectus* he explains that such an account: (1) precludes the possibility that "the union of intellect and man [...comes] into being when he does," [i.e. when the human rational

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<sup>562</sup> Ibid., p. 206

<sup>563</sup> Ibid., p. 206

<sup>564</sup> Ibid., p. 206

<sup>565</sup> Ibid., p. 206. McNerny also notes that Aquinas is attempting to follow Aristotle's understanding of first and second actuality here.

soul is created and implanted in the individual by God after birth]<sup>566</sup> (2) would require that the union of intellect and individual would need not one but several causes, and (3) does not sufficiently explain that “this man understands.”<sup>567</sup> Aquinas is highlighting here that the episodic nature of the connection between the separate Intellects and the human individual is not enough to account for the experience of thought as personal. What’s more, it is not enough to account for the notion that intellect is vital to the nature of the human being (i.e. that the human being is *per se* rational).

The second argument Aquinas makes, according to McInerny, counters the notion that the soul (or intellect) is the mover rather than the form of the human being.<sup>568</sup> Here Aquinas argues that Aristotle’s hylomorphism requires that the human being be a composite of potency and act, body and soul. He argues that this is contrary to Averroes’ system, where the separate Intellects move the individual when thought occurs. Aquinas aims to prove that intellectual activity cannot be likened to motion in this way. Central to this argument is the claim that thought is not a transitive action, as motion is, but an immanent action. This means that it is an intrinsic action of some agent. If thought is an immanent action it is immanent to the intellect, not the individual, as Averroes claims. If thought is in the intellect and the intellect is separate from the human being, acting as mover rather than substantial form, the individual cannot be the one who thinks.<sup>569</sup> Even

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<sup>566</sup> Ibid., p. 153

<sup>567</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid., pp. 151-152.

<sup>569</sup> De Libera discusses this issue in some detail in his commentary on *De Intellectus*, saying: “L’argument est implacable : 1 la pensée est une action immanente (selon Aristote) 72 ; 2 Toute action immanente est dans ce qui agit (selon Aristote) ; 3 Ce qui agit/pense est l’intellect (séparé, selon les averroïstes) ; 4 Donc, que l’intellect soit uni à l’homme comme le moteur au mû (selon les averroïstes) ne change rien à l’affaire : la pensée est dans l’intellect ; elle n’est donc ni ne peut être en l’homme individuel ; elle ne peut donc s’attribuer à l’homme individuel ; donc l’homme individuel ne pense pas.” (p. 277) See pp. 277-280 for the larger discussion.

if thought were transitive, as motion is, the result would still not be that this man understands; rather, he would be understood.

The third argument revolves around Aquinas' and Averroes' different understandings of the form of the human being. Here Aquinas argues that intellect is the substantial form of the human being; this means that it is connected to the human body while also having operations separate from the body. As Aquinas explains: "the human soul exists by its own act of existing, in which matter it some way shares [though] not wholly comprising it, since the dignity of this form is greater than the capacity of matter; nothing therefore prevents the soul from having some operation or power that matter cannot reach."<sup>570</sup> He explains that this view of the intellect solves the problems which arise (1) from the view that the human being is identical to intellect and (2) from the view that the intellect is merely a material form of the human being. On the one hand, Aquinas takes from Aristotle the idea that "no part of the body can be defined without some part of the soul."<sup>571</sup> Furthermore, he notes that "man is placed in a species by the intellect" which is "the principle of the proper operation"<sup>572</sup> of the human being, the distinguishing feature which sets human beings apart from animals; since the intellect uses the bodily organs for the initial aspects of the intellectual process, "it is necessary that it be united to the body as form, not indeed so that the intellectual power itself would be the act of some

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570 Aquinas, *de Unitate*, Ch. 3, p. 58, #84. "Anima autem humana, quia secundum suum esse est, cui aliquantulum communicat materia non totaliter comprehendens ipsam, eo quod maior est dignitas huius forme quam capacitas materie: nichil prohibet quin habeat aliquam operationem uel uirtutem ad quam materia non attingit" (Ch. 3, ln. 395-401, p. 307).

571 Ibid., Ch. 3, p. 55, # 78. "Nulla pars corporis potest diffiniri sine parte aliqua anime" (Ch. 3, ln. 302-303, p. 306).

572 Ibid., Ch. 3, p. 56, #80. "Homo speciem sortitur forma est [...] quod est principium proprie operationis speciei; propria autem operatio hominis, in quantum est homo, est intelligere [...] oportet igitur ipsum uniri corpori ut formam" (Ch. 3, ln. 323-332, p. 306).

organ, but because it is a power of the soul which is the act of a physical organic body.”<sup>573</sup>

This demonstrates the necessary link between the body and the soul of the individual human being. On the other hand, one cannot hold that the intellect is merely the material form of the body, having no power distinct from the bodily organs. If this were the case, Aquinas notes, universal knowledge would be impossible since “whatever is received in the intellect, will be received individually as in matter, and not universally.”<sup>574</sup>

One can relate these two positions to those of Avicenna and Averroes. On the one hand, Avicenna’s view that the individual human being is the soul and that the soul is intellect is incorrect because it does not fully account for the importance of the bodily senses to the process of knowledge attainment and it denies the notion that the human soul is form of the body. On the other hand, Averroes’ view that the individual human being is essentially the body which, through the cogitative power, makes use of the separate Intellects at will is wrong because it does not adequately explain the necessary connection between the body and higher, non-physical intellectual activities such that the

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573 Ibid., p. 56, #80. “oportet igitur ipsum uniri copori ut formam, non quidem ita quod ipsa intellectiva potentia sit alicuius organi actus, sed quia est uirtus anime que est actus corporis physici organici” (Ch. 3, ln. 331-335, p. 306). Aquinas discusses and argues for this necessary link between body and intellect even in his earliest works, such as his *Commentary on the Sentences*; for example, in discussing the differences between the rational soul and angels Aquinas explains that “from the fact that the soul is form and act of the body, from its essence there proceed certain powers affixed to organs, such as sense and the like, from which it receives intellectual cognition. [This is] on account of the fact that what rational is something that has cognition running from one thing to another and in this way it comes from sensibles to intelligibles,” (Thomas Aquinas, In 2 Sent D. 3, Q. 1, A. 6, [http://academic.mu.edu/taylorr/Aquinas\\_Fall\\_2012\\_MU\\_KUL\\_UP/Supplementary\\_Translations\\_\\_Aquinas\\_In\\_2\\_Sent.\\_D.\\_3,\\_q.1.\\_A.6.html](http://academic.mu.edu/taylorr/Aquinas_Fall_2012_MU_KUL_UP/Supplementary_Translations__Aquinas_In_2_Sent._D._3,_q.1._A.6.html)). “Ex hoc enim quod anima corporis forma et actus est, procedunt ab essentia ejus quaedam potentiae organis affixae, ut sensu, et hujusmodi, ex quibus cognitionem intellectulem accipit, propter hoc quod rationalis est habens cognitionem decurrentem ab uno in aliud; et sec a sensibilibus in intelligibilia venit” (D. 3, q.1, a. 6, p. 104).

574 *deUnitate*, p. 56, #83. “Quicquid recipitur in intellectu, recipietur sicut in materia indiuidualiter, et non uniuersaliter” (Ch. 3, ln. 369-370, p. 306).

human being can be called knower *per se*. Aquinas provides a middle ground<sup>575</sup> between these two positions by holding that the soul is the substantial form of the human body, having some powers which requires bodily organs and others (i.e. intellect) which do not. That is to say, he holds that it is both a form and a determinate particular (*forma et hoc aliquid*).<sup>576</sup> He thinks this view of the body/soul relationship allows for truly individuated knowledge without sacrificing the universality of knowledge or the immortality of the soul, as Averroes' views must.

We can see that all three of these arguments come together to make the larger point that a successful theory of human intellectual agency must proved for individual intellectual ability as part of the very nature of the human being. This can only be done if intellect is in the individual in a substantial way, as part of the human soul, while also remaining somewhat separate from the body.

### 5.2.3 My critical analysis and assessment

In the *Categories* Aristotle provides a negative definition of substance as “that which is neither said of a subject nor in a subject, e.g. the individual man or the individual horse” and explains that the species and genus of these individuals, e.g. man and animal, are secondary substances.<sup>577</sup> In *De Anima* Aristotle discusses substance as it relates to form and matter, explaining that, while they are both substances in a sense it is

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<sup>575</sup> Averroes too might be seen as attempting to provide a kind of middle position, emphasizing the distinctness of the Intellect and the necessity of the body. However, whereas Aquinas is able to effectively integrate the two elements of the human being Averroes is not, falling instead too far towards the side which denies the notion of the body as will be discussed below.

<sup>576</sup> For the extensive account of how Aquinas argues for this throughout his works see section 4.2.1, “The soul and its relation to the body” in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

<sup>577</sup> Aristotle, *Categories* 5, 2a13-19. Jonathan Barnes *The Complete Works of Aristotle* vol 2.

the form which “is called a this” (*tode ti*) and brings actuality to the form/matter composite.<sup>578</sup> Later, when discussing thought or intellect he explains that “the soul which is called thought [*nous*...] cannot reasonably be blended with the body” because it must have the ability to receive the form of any object it is to know.<sup>579</sup> As we have seen, Averroes takes from this that the Intellects are ontologically separate substance from the individual human being; if the intellects are a different kind of soul from that which is the form of the body they must be separate. He insists that the connection between the separate Intellects and the individual is strong enough when activated to make the Intellects intrinsic to the individual as form. The Intellects’ use phantasms, provided by the individual human being’s cogitative faculty and based upon her sensory experience, is enough to make the Intellects part of that individual when they are in use. He combines this with the notion, taken from Themistius,<sup>580</sup> that the Material Intellect houses the intelligibles in act, and that these intelligibles constitute the objects of knowledge and, thus, must be shared by all human beings. Aquinas, on the other hand, insists that the Intellect can be receptive while still being part of the individual; it is both a substantial form, capable of existing apart from the body, and form of the body, ontologically united to the individual; the intelligibles in act are not the objects of knowledge and so are not shared by all. In this way Aquinas is trying to draw together two ideas which he sees as present but not fully or adequately explained in Aristotle’s text. On the one hand the

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578 Aristotle, *De Anima* 2.1, 412a6-11.

579 Ibid., 3.4, 429a15-25.

580 For discussions of the influence of Themistius’ work on Averroes see Taylor, “Introduction,” pp. lxxxiii-lxxxvi; Taylor, “Themistius and the Development of Averroes’ Noetics” in *Medieval Perspectives on Aristotle’s De Anima*, ed. Friedman and Counet, 2013; and Michael Blaustein *Averroes on the Imagination and the Intellect*, PhD dissertation, Harvard University (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1984), pp.136-149.

intellect is a power which is capable of existing on its own apart from the body, since it does not require any bodily organ to function, according to Aristotle; on the other hand, sense perception, provided by the individual human being's physical sense organs, is necessary for knowledge attainment and, in this way, the intellect forms knowledge on the part of the individual whose sense perceptions are used in the process. This leads to Aquinas' notion that the intellect is the substantial form of the human being, capable of being both form of the body and separate from the body (after death).

Although it might be said that Averroes' understanding of these issues follows Aristotle more closely and that he may provide a satisfactory response to some of Aquinas' critiques, in the end Averroes' theory regarding Issues A and B is untenable. It is not possible to hold both (1) that individual human beings are distinct knowers for whom the principle of intellectual understanding is intrinsic and formal, and (2) that the faculties by which intellectual understanding takes place are separate substances.

Despite Averroes' insistence that the Intellects are form for us and in the soul while thinking occurs, it is not the case that Averroes' system provides a strong enough connection between the individual and the Intellects (especially the Material Intellect). Under Averroes' system the individual cannot be called a knower in the fullest sense because the intellects are not "in" the soul in a strong enough sense (i.e., permanently in the individual as her particular intellects). Even when the individual is "conjoined" to the Intellects, the connection is not strong enough to allow us to call the resulting knowledge *that individual's* knowledge. In Averroes' system the term "in" has a relatively shallow meaning of being loosely connected by way of the cogitative power, while what is

required is a strong conception of “in” whereby the Intellects (or, at least the Material Intellect) are an essential feature of this individual’s soul such that they are part of the substance or form of the individual. This type of relationship would necessitate the multiplication of intellects according to the number of individuals. Instead, with Averroes’ system we have a Material Intellect which “certifies” the phantasm/image of a particular thing the person encounters and presents to it via the cogitative power without providing anything lasting in the individual for future use. But, in order to say that the individual is the knower, the process of knowledge attainment must take place in the individual as her own activity and the resulting known object must be retained in some way. This would fit with our common sense understanding that knowledge, unlike sense perception, is lasting, not transitory.

Averroes’ system might be made tenable if it were to include some kind of representative image or intelligible which remains *in* the individual human being and is *hers*. Averroes had something akin to this in his earlier commentaries on *De Anima*; however, his commitments to other ideas, particularly to the idea of the shared set of intelligibles, led him to reject this in his later work. In this way his earlier approach to the issue was perhaps, in some respects, superior. Such an addition would allow the individual to retain some positive content as a result of the process of abstraction which might be called her knowledge regardless of her current connection to the separate Intellects. However, it seems that there is not room for such an addition in Averroes’ final system given the view that the intelligibles must remain separate from individual human



beings if they are to retain their status as shared objects of knowledge, forming a common thesaurus of information and making scientific and interpersonal discourse possible.<sup>581</sup>

Furthermore, Averroes' view does not sufficiently explain how the human being could be *per se* rational when the loci of reason, the passive and active intellectual powers, are both separate from the individual. It is true that one might rightly say that his view represents an advancement in the tradition. Averroes' predecessor Avicenna had the notion of a rational soul which makes use of the body while remaining distinct from it. Averroes accepts this notion of a non-bodily rational power while arguing against Avicenna's claims (1) that the intelligibles in act preexist in that separate Intellect, ready to be accessed by one who uses her bodily powers to prepare for the conjunction, and (2) that the human being is essentially this rational soul distinct from the body. Rather, Averroes holds that the body is an essential part of the human being, necessary for knowledge attainment; he arrives at this understanding of the human being in part through his view that knowledge is the result of the Agent Intellect's acting on the intelligibles in potency derived from sense perception, creating the intelligibles in act for each individual; knowledge, then, is about the world, not some separate preexisting intelligibles in the Agent Intellect. The senses, and thus the body, become critical elements of the human being as rational.<sup>582</sup>

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581 See Taylor, "Intelligibles in Act in Averroes", especially p. 139.

582 It is perhaps important to note that, despite his rejection of Averroes' system as a whole Aquinas did find inspiration in Averroes. For a model of how abstraction functions see Therese Scarpelli Cory, "Averroes and Aquinas on the Agent Intellect's Causation of the Intelligibles" in *Recherches de Theologie et Philosophie medievales* 82.1, (2015), pp. 1-60; Cory argues that there exists such common ground here that she calls their view the "Averroean-Thomistic causal approach to abstraction" (p.1) Both have a theory of knowledge based on the apprehension of particulars, only difference is the location of the intellects. Also see Cory's "Rethinking Abstractionism: Aquinas's Intellectual Light and Some Arabic Sources," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 53.4 (October 2015), pp. 607-66.

However, while this solves some of the problems endemic to Avicenna's view and is perhaps more Aristotelian, it is not unproblematic, as Aquinas pointed out. Aristotle does not say enough about how particular and universal knowledge are linked and neither does Averroes. Averroes' problems here are compounded by his insistence on the separate nature of both Intellects, as described above. While Averroes thinks the existence of the cogitative power and his dual subject account of intelligibles are sufficient to bridge the gap between individual human being and Intellects, Aquinas' critiques of this are justified; it is not evident how one could truly call the individual person rational if no truly rational faculty is an essential (i.e. substantial) part of the individual. While Averroes has succeeded in demonstrating the importance of the body to the human being, he has not sufficiently linked it to the rational powers; in a sense he has gone too far in the opposite direction of Avicenna. Intellect is not sufficiently connected to the individual human being to justify the claim that he is rational by his very nature.

In addition to the problems which arise when the Intellects are not in use and, thus, extrinsic to the individual, there are also difficulties with Averroes' view of the relationship between the individual and Intellects during active thinking. Despite Averroes' efforts to say something stronger regarding individual involvement in the intellectual achievement, even when these Intellects are "in the soul" and "form for us" they are not ontologically part of the individual human being, but instead are only operationally present. Since this is the case, it seems that the individual is merely making use of a knowing entity rather than actually knowing things herself; as such, she can only be equivocally said to be knowing, as one who is in a plane is said to be flying although

she is merely making use of an external source of flight. Averroes and Aquinas follow Aristotle in defining the human as a rational animal. However, since Averroes' system locates all true intellectual capacity outside of the individual, leaving only the cogitative power as an individual pseudo-rational power,<sup>583</sup> the human being cannot be *per se* rational.<sup>584</sup> This problem is inescapable given Averroes' insistence that the intelligibles in act are ontological realities and objects of knowledge existing in one separate Material Intellect rather than mere representations of the true objects of knowledge (the natures in things), as they are for Aquinas.<sup>585</sup>

Regarding Aquinas' arguments that the human being must be a composite of act and potency, form and matter, and that the form of the human being, the soul, must include intellect, Aquinas' assessment is again correct. As we have seen, Averroes thinks that his theory adequately address these issues by providing for a close connection between the body and the separate Intellects such that the individual is able to make use of the Intellects at will by using the cogitative power to conjoin with them. A key element of Averroes' theory, one clearly meant to alleviate some of the issues which Aquinas points out, is his understanding of how the separate Intellects and the individual human being are connected. For Averroes the Intellects are separate and shared but still, as Averroes puts it, subject to the will and, perhaps more importantly, still require input from

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583 While Averroes calls the cogitative power a kind of reason it is clear that it cannot be a true intellect since the intellects must be immaterial and shared, as explained above.

584 In his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics* Averroes explains that we connect with the Agent Intellect, "our principle" only for short periods of time and that this constitutes "the highest state of pleasure, happiness and bliss" for us. He seems to be arguing here that this state of connection with the principle of rationality is the closest we can come to the type of immortality and happiness often associated with heaven and the afterlife. (*Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics: A Translation with Introduction of Ibn Rushd's Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book Lam*, Charles Genequand (Leiden: Brill, 1986), pp. 156-157.

585 Also see Taylor, "Intelligibles in Act in Averroes", pp. 112-117, 139 note 75.

the individual to allow thought to occur.<sup>586</sup> Here, as with Averroes' position in argument one, we can see that Averroes' view is, at least in part, a reaction to problems he rightly identified in the theories of his predecessors.<sup>587</sup>

However, Aquinas is correct that this is not enough to avoid the issues inherent to a system which ontologically disconnects the body and intellect so completely. As Aquinas points out, if the human being is to be *per se* rational it is necessary to locate the seat of reason, the intellect, in the individual human being in some substantial way.<sup>588</sup>

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586 A helpful, though imperfect, analogy for this relationship between the individual and the Intellects might be that of an individual and a calculator. A person who uses a calculator to perform a mathematical calculation inputs information at will; the calculator performs the desired function and returns an answer; the person accepts that answer and is said to know it, although it is easily forgotten and one is likely to have to use the calculator again if one needs to remember the answer in the future. Similarly, in Averroes' system the individual provides the basic set of information in the form of the phantasm to the Intellects at will; the Intellects do the work of producing the intelligibles in act from this information and displaying it to the person; one is said to know the intelligible despite the fact that after a time of inattention one must return to the Intellects again to recall the intelligibles. Despite this, we routinely talk about calculator users as doing math and knowing the answer to the equations they input into the calculator; it is, then, not unreasonable, to talk about a person in Averroes system as thinking and knowing in the same way. Of course, Averroes would insist that the relationship between the individual and the Intellects is much stronger than that of the person to the calculator; also, the information does not stay in tact in the calculator in the way the intelligibles stay in the Material Intellect—instead the calculator is always ready to redo the calculation. However, it is a close enough analogy to highlight the broad strokes of Averroes view in that it accurately describes the view that the process of intellection requires input from the individual while ultimately occurring in an independent entity.

587 It is perhaps helpful to note here that Averroes was clearly aware of the issues which present themselves in his system. However, he was trying to avoid the issues already noted in the views of Avicenna while maintaining the long tradition of the separate Agent Intellect. He simply could not find a convincing way to allow for individuated intellects while ensuring a common set of intelligibles. Aquinas was more successful in his endeavors to develop such a system in part because of his theological suppositions. He was able to posit multiple intellects created by God to function the same; this divine creative element allowed Aquinas to posit that all human beings could think the same (resulting in the same knowledge) despite the lack of shared Intellect or, more importantly, shared intelligibles.

588 If we return to our analogy from note 586, we can express Aquinas' critique in similar terms. One might wonder if the calculator user can really be said to know the answer the calculator has given him, let alone whether he can be said to know how to do the mathematical equation himself. After all, the work of calculating the answer, the 'reason why' as Aristotle would say, is not in the individual but in the machine. The user of the calculator is simply trusting that the equation went as planned and there was no glitch in the system. One is unable to explain the mathematical principles behind the calculation and is likely to not even retain the answer in his memory for very long. In such a case, Aquinas would say, we surely cannot say that the individual actually has knowledge of the mathematical principle at work or even, in a strong sense, of the particular answer; when we say they have such knowledge we can only be speaking equivocally. According to Aquinas, real knowledge would require that the actualization of that knowledge happen in the knower.

Aquinas explains in the SCG that the human soul, the lowest of the intellectual substances, fits the two criteria for a substantial form:

First, the form must be the principle of the substantial being of the thing whose form it is [...] The *second* requirement then follows from this, namely, that the form and the matter be joined together in the unity of one act of being [...] And this single act of being is that in which the composite substance subsists: a thing one in being and made up of matter and form.<sup>589</sup>

Thus, the human being is a composite of body and soul, capable of performing its essential functions, including intellectual apprehension, due to this connection. Aquinas points out that we attribute understanding to human beings essentially, not accidentally; for this reason it must be the case that the intellect is united to the individual in some way (as the rational soul is united to the body).<sup>590</sup> While the soul is the substantial form of the body, it is not limited by the body. Rather, it is also a subsistent thing (*hoc aliquid*) with some faculties, possible and agent intellect, which do not require bodily organs. These faculties must be multiplied according to the number of individuals, contrary to Averroes' views, if we are to take seriously the claim that it is the individual human being who is the knower. It is the immaterial nature of the soul which allows it to attain universal knowledge, making use of particulars without being limited by them.<sup>591</sup>

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589 Aquinas, SCG, Bk. 2, Ch. 68, p. 204. "Ad hoc enim quod aliquid sit forma substantialis alterius, duo requiruntur. Quorum unum est, ut forma sit principium essendi substantialiter ei cuius est forma, principium autem dico, non factivum, sed formale, quo aliquid est et denominatur *ens*. Unde sequitur aliud, scilicet quod forma et materia convenient in uno esse: quod non contingit de principio effectivo cum eo cui dat esse. Et hoc esse est in quo subsistit substantia composita, quae est uno secundum esse, ex materia et forma constans" (Bk 2, Ch. 64, sec. 1450, p. 202).

590 Aquinas, ST, Ia Q. 76, A. 1.

591 Aquinas explains that "the soul is a [determinate particular (*hoc aliquid*)] as being able to subsist *per se* but not as possessing in itself a complete specific nature, but rather as completing human nature insofar as it is the form of its body and thus as one and the same time it is a form and a [determinate particular...] For insofar as a soul possesses an operation which transcends material things, its very existence is raised above and does not depend on its body. But insofar as a soul by nature acquires its immaterial knowledge from what is material, it is clear that the fulfillment of its nature cannot be achieved apart from union with a

As we have seen, Averroes' theory is motivated by the work of both Aristotle and Themistius and is, in some ways, a reaction against Avicenna. It brings together Aristotle's view of the intellect as a substance which cannot be mixed with the body and Themistius' more detailed account of the Intellects (itself an expansion on Aristotle's *De Anima* 3.5) and intelligibles. We have seen that Averroes' understanding of the nature and location of the Intellects and their relation to the individual human being is not tenable in its own right; we have also indicated that the problem is, in large part, the result of his understanding of intelligibles in act. To gain greater insight into this we must now examine the nature of these intelligibles in act and their relationship to individual human beings; this is Issue C.

### **5.3 Issue C. The relationship between the individual human being and the intelligibles in act**

#### **5.3.1 Averroes' understanding of intelligibles in act**

As explained above, Averroes maintains that the Agent and Material Intellects

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body. For a thing is not complete in nature unless it possesses those things which are demanded for the proper operation of that nature. In this way, therefore, a human soul insofar as it is united to its body as its form still possesses an act of existence which is elevated above the body and does not depend on it; clearly then this soul is constituted on the boundary line between corporeal and separate substance" (QDAnima Q. 1, p. 47-48). "Relinquitur igitur quod anima est hoc aliquid ut per se potens subsistere, non quasi habens in se completam speciem, set quasi perficiens speciem humanam ut est forma corporis. Et sic simul est forma et hoc aliquid [...] In quantum enim habet operationem materialia transcendentum, esse etiam suum est supra corpus eleuatum, non dependens ex ipso. In quantum uero immaterialem cognitionem ex materiali nata est acquirere, manifestum est quod complementum sue speciei esse non potest absque corporis unione. Non enim aliquid completum est in specie nisi habeat ea que requiruntur ad propriam operationem speciei. Sic igitur anima humana in quantum unitur corpori ut forma et tamen habet esse eleuatum supra corpus, non dependens ab eo, manifestum est quod ipsa est in confinio corporalium et separatarum substantiarum constituta" (Q 1, ln. 286-290 and 328-341, pp. 9-10).

must be immaterial entities, unmixed with matter, if they are to be responsible for abstracting and then housing the unique set of intelligibles in act. This means that they must be separate entities shared by all human beings. This must be the case if the objects of knowledge, the intelligibles in act, are to be universal and knowable by all human beings. It is only in such a system, according to Averroes, that the intelligibles in act can be freed from the particularity associated not only with the individual things of which they are the intelligibles but also with individual, particularizing human beings. If this were not the case, the unity of science and the basis for human communication would not be preserved, as Averroes holds from Themistius. However, Averroes explains that even though the Intellects are separate entities the individual is essential to the process by which intelligibles in act come to be in the Material Intellect. The intelligibles in act exist as intelligibles in potency in particular things which are experienced by individuals. The cogitative power extracts these potential intelligibles from the image of the particular and deposits them in memory, which presents them to the Agent Intellect. The Agent Intellect abstracts the intelligibles, actualizing them, and deposits them in the Material Intellect. During this process Averroes claims that the Intellects are “in” the individual and subject to her will: “it is necessary to ascribe these two activities to the soul *in us*, namely, to receive the intelligible and to make it, although the agent and the recipient are eternal substances, on account of the fact that these two activities are reduced to our will, namely to abstract intelligibles and to understand them.”<sup>592</sup> Furthermore, after this process is

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<sup>592</sup> Averroes, LCDA, Bk. 3, comment 18 p. 351, emphasis added. “Et fuit necesse attribuere has duas actiones anime in nobis, scilicet recipere intellectum et facere eum, quamvis agens et recipiens sint substantie eterne, propter hoc quia hee actiones reducte sunt ad nostram voluntatem, scilicet abstrahere intellecta et intelligere ea.” (p. 439).

complete there remains in the individual human being the ability to conjoin to the intellects and access the intelligibles in act at will. When this occurs the individual has reached the level of *intellectus in habitu*, allowing her to easily conjoin to the Material Intellect and access the intelligibles in act in the future.<sup>593</sup> Thus, as discussed above, Averroes holds to the Principle of Intrinsic Formal Cause,<sup>594</sup> albeit in a fashion quite different from that of Aquinas.

Thus, Averroes is able to assert that, although the intelligibles in act only remain in the individual while she is conjoined to the Material Intellect during the act of thinking, the activity is intrinsic to her during this time and the disposition towards this state of being (*intellectus in habitu*) is retained even when she is not conjoined to the Intellects. Taylor explains that when the individual is actually joined with the Intellects there arrives the acquired intellect in the individual's soul;<sup>595</sup> he equates this with the theoretical intellect which is, in some fashion, retained by the individual human being.<sup>596</sup>

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593 It is worth mentioning here that Averroes has somewhat of a predecessor in this line of thinking in Avicenna, who held that the human being only had knowledge when it was conjoined with the separate Agent Intellect (One might look to Gutas, Dimitri, "Ibn Sina [Avicenna]," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2016 Edition, Edward N. Zalta (ed), URL=<<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall 2016/entries/ibn-sina/>> for a brief discussion of Avicenna on this issue. A major difference, however, is that Avicenna did not think that individuals possessed intellectual memory which Averroes provides as a power of the cogitative faculty. Rather, knowledge existed only in the Agent Intellect (in the form of intelligibles in act) and the individual only had access to them when conjoined with the Intellect. One might, then, see Averroes' approach as a step beyond that of Avicenna in terms of explaining individual human beings as knowers.

594 See Taylor, "Intellect as Intrinsic Formal Cause in the Soul According to Aquinas and Averroes," pp. 202-211 for a discussion of the Principle in Averroes.

595 Taylor "Introduction" p. lix. The acquired intellect is defined as "the intellect as realized in the immediate moment of the actualizing reception of intelligibles in act" (p. xx).

596 Ibid., p. lix. Theoretical intellect is "the intellect containing the intelligibles I act. For the mature Averroes this intellect and its intelligibles exist as eternal in the separate material intellect and also as perishable in their individual perishable human subject" (p. xx).



According to Averroes, this allows for the individual to be called a knower despite the complicated relationship between the individual human being and the separate Intellects.

In explaining the nature of the intelligibles in act and their relationship to the human being Averroes explains that they have a dual subject—the possible/Material Intellect and the phantasms. He uses the sensible forms as a point of comparison for his dual subject theory.<sup>597</sup> On the one hand, you have “the subject in virtue of which [intelligibles in act] are true, namely, the forms which are true images.”<sup>598</sup> These “true images” are produced by each human being as the result of their interaction with some determinate particular and the working of the internal sense powers of common sense, imagination, cogitation, and memory. This image is presented by the memory to the Agent Intellect which abstracts the intelligible in act and deposits it in the Material Intellect. The intelligible in act is true insofar as it can be traced back to some actually

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597 Ibid., note 107, p. lix; Taylor points out that this dual subject theory is likely inspired by Averroes’ predecessor Ibn Bajjah who thought that intelligibles existed as “spiritual forms, or images” in the human being but as “intelligibles forms” in themselves. One can also look to pp. lxxxix-xciii for a more detailed account of how Averroes was influenced by Ibn Bajjah’s work, particular regarding the nature of the intellects. Blaustein examines Ibn Bajjah’s position in “Aspects of Ibn Bajja’s Theory of Apprehension” in *Maimonides and Philosophy*, ed. Shlomo Pines and Yirmiyahu Yovel (Dordrecht: M. Nijhoff, 1986) pp 202-212, and his influence on Averroes’ position in the *Short Commentary* and Averroes’ later rejection of this view in *Averroes on the Imagination and Intellect*, pp.162-173. A detailed analysis of the theory itself (and Aquinas’ objections to it) can be found in Carlos Bernardo Bazan’s “*Intellectum Speculativum*: Averroes, Thomas Aquinas, and Siger of Brabant on Intelligible Object.”

598 LCDA, BK 3, comment 5, p. 316. “Unum est subiectum per quod sunt vera, scilicet forme que sunt ymagines vere” (Bk 3, comment 5, ln 386-387, p. 400).

existing thing which contains<sup>599</sup> the intelligible in potency.<sup>600</sup> These ‘true images’ are analogous to the external sense objects in the comparison with sensation.<sup>601</sup>

On the other hand, he writes, you have “that in virtue of which the intelligibles are among the beings in the world, and this is the material intellect.”<sup>602</sup> The intelligible in act, as a universal, immaterial, object of knowledge, cannot exist in determinate particulars, but only in something which is equally immaterial—the Material Intellect. Thus, it is only once the intelligible has been abstracted by the Agent Intellect, converted from intelligibles in potency to intelligible in act, and deposited into the Material Intellect that it can actually be said to exist. What existed only potentially in the particular thing and in the human being’s image exists in actuality in the Material Intellect.<sup>603</sup> The Material Intellect is comparable to the actuality of the sense organ in the analogy with sensation.<sup>604</sup>

Thus, the Material intellect is the subject of existence while the particular object is the subject of truth, guaranteeing that the intelligible is correct and corresponds to reality. This dual subject of intelligibles is necessary if Averroes is going to maintain that the intelligibles, as the objects of knowledge, are shared by all human beings via the separate Material Intellect, while also maintaining that it is possible for each person to

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599 It should be noted that, strictly speaking, the intelligible is only present in the particular object when the object is directly related to a knower. Intelligibility is a relational characteristic such that a thing is not intelligible in itself but only when it is being apprehended by an individual who can, through the use of the external and internal senses, produce from it the intelligible in potency.

600 Taylor, “Introduction” p. lx.

601 LCDA, BK 3, comment 5, p. 316; Latin pp. 400-401.

602 Ibid., “Secundum autem est illud per quod intellecta sunt unum entium in mundo, et istud est intellectus materialis” (Bk 3, comment 5, ln. 387-389, p. 400).

603 Taylor, “Introduction” p. lx.

604 LCDA, BK 3, comment 5, p. 316; Latin pp. 400-401.

have her own knowledge distinct from that of other people. It also allows Averroes to conclude that the intelligibles do not preexist in the Intellect as some of his predecessors suggested.

### **5.3.2 Aquinas' position and critique of Averroes regarding the nature of the intelligibles and their relation to the human individual**

#### **5.3.2.1 Aquinas' position**

Aquinas held a different view of the nature and function of intelligibles in act. This is most evidently displayed in his account of knowledge attainment. For Aquinas, knowledge attainment starts with sensation. Sensible species are brought together by the common sense. The imagination produces phantasms or images of these sensible species and stores them in memory. The cogitative power takes these phantasms and presents them to the agent intellect, a power of the human soul, which works to abstract the intelligibles in act (called intelligible species by Aquinas) from the phantasm. The intelligibles are received in to the possible intellect and stored in the intellectual memory when not in use. It is by the intelligibles species that the the individual is able to understand the common natures in sensible objects. This process, Aquinas argues, requires both the possible and agent intellects to be multiplied according to the number of individuals; if this were not the case it would not be possible for each person to have her

own knowledge, distinct from that of other human beings and distinctly her's (not the intellect's).<sup>605</sup>

For Aquinas the thing known is not the intelligible species but the common nature which exists in things; the intelligibles in act are “that by which [the intellect] understands,” the means by which “the soul knows the things which are outside it.”<sup>606</sup> Thus, according to Aquinas we know material things, “by a knowledge which is immaterial, universal, and necessary”<sup>607</sup> via a process which starts with sensation and ends with understanding via the mediation of immaterial intelligible species. Aquinas thinks this is necessary if we are to be able to accurately claim to know the nature of things, not just intentions or species abstracted from things. Despite this our intellectual knowledge is not of particulars as particulars but rather it is of the universal nature of the particulars<sup>608</sup>—those aspects which make the particular what it is and which it shares with all other instances of its kind. This allows Aquinas to hold simultaneously that knowledge

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605 Dewan, “St. Albert, St. Thomas, and Knowledge,” p. 129 for a brief account of this process. For detailed discussion of the knowledge attainment process see Stump, *Aquinas*, pp. 244-276. Taylor explains that Aquinas’ theory can be seen as “a form of representationalism” where the *ratio* of sensible things is represented in the possible intellect by the intelligible species after the process of abstraction (Taylor “Intelligibles in Act in Averroes.” p. 114).

606 ST Ia, Q. 85, A. 2 p. 817. “Species intelligibilis se habet ad intellectum ut quo intelligit intellectus [...] sequetur quod anima per species intelligibiles cognoscat res quae sunt extra animam” (p. 527a, ln. 23-25; 527b, ln.4-6). Also, see I.84.7 p. 809: “the proper object of the human intellect, which is united to the body, is the quiddity or nature existing in corporeal matter;” “intellectus autem humani, qui est quidditas sive natura in materia corporali existens” (p. 521b, ln. 44-47)

607 Ibid., Ia, Q. 84, A. 1, p. 795. “Anima per intellectum cognoscit corpora cognitione immateriali, universali et necessaria” (p. 512b, ln. 7-9).

608 It is important to point out here that by “universal nature” I do not mean “universals” in the sense of some really existing thing. For Aquinas universals, as such, do not exist; rather, particulars exist and these particulars share characteristics which can be abstracted from them to form the intelligible species/ intelligibles in act, which forms the basis for intellectual propositions. In this way Aquinas is able to preserve communication and the unity of science without positing the existence of ontologically distinct universals or separate Intellects.

is of things in the world and that we all know the same thing (the common nature) even if we have different experiences of different particulars.<sup>609</sup>

The universal knowledge which results from this process is used not only during theoretical considerations but also during practical reasoning. When one encounters a particular situation, one is able, using the particular reason (i.e. cogitative power), to recognize the individual intentions present in the situation and connect them to the universal knowledge one already has. As Aquinas explains, this allows the individual to relate their particular knowledge to their universal knowledge with a mind towards action. This is often accomplished by way of the practical syllogism.

### 5.3.2.2 Aquinas' critique

From careful consideration of what has been said above we can see that there are fundamental differences among the views of Aquinas and those of his predecessors. While the most relevant area of difference for this project is that between Aquinas and Averroes, it is also important to take note of how Aquinas' view differs from some other thinkers.

As noted earlier, an element of prime importance to Aquinas' view is that the intelligibles in act/intelligible species are the means by which we understand the world, rather than objects of understanding.<sup>610</sup> In this view our knowledge in our individual

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<sup>609</sup> Dewan, "St. Albert, St. Thomas, and Knowledge," pp. 129-131.

<sup>610</sup> As explained in more detail in Chapter 4, Aquinas holds that we have sense perception and we have imagination and cogitation (brain powers) which we use to aid in the knowledge attainment process. The intelligibles in act (i.e. intelligible species), however, are in the human intellect, not in a power of the brain. They are the means for having intellectual apprehension of the natures of things in the world; it is these natures, not the intelligible species, which are the objects of knowledge. Thus, the intelligibles do not have to be shared by all, as everyone has access to the nature through their sense perception of particulars.

intellects is, directly and naturally, of the material world, not of separate forms or ontologically distinct universals/intelligibles. Aquinas points out that this is contrary to earlier theories which posit separate forms as objects of knowledge and mentions the views of Avicenna and Plato<sup>611</sup> as examples of such theories. He sees these theories as motivated by a desire to “save the certitude of our knowledge of truth through the intellect.”<sup>612</sup> Instead, he argues that it is not necessary to posit separate forms or intelligibles in order to achieve such certainty and that these theories fail to account for other important aspects of philosophical psychology.

Aquinas sees his view of intelligible species as accomplishing several things. First, he argues that it alone provides sufficient reason for the union of body and soul. Theories which hold that knowledge is of some separate forms, as is the case with Avicenna and Plato, do not sufficiently account for the necessity of the body since the object of knowledge is never a material object (known in an immaterial way).<sup>613</sup> Plato holds that the Forms exist as real, immaterial, perfect entities distinct from all matter and from human beings and human intellects. The body provides more constraints to understanding these intelligibles than it does aid; an individual is better off as a soul by

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611 The theories of Plato and Avicenna can be understood as similar in that both posit the existence of separately existing intelligibles which serve as the objects of knowledge and which are in no way dependent upon human beings for their existence. For Plato, this entails the existence of intelligibles in act in the form of separate Forms or Ideas which exist on their own and which all human beings can come to know through a process of recollection. While individual knowledge of these Forms involves interaction with the material world (Plato, *Republic*, 596a-597d) the Forms themselves exist apart from such interaction; the human being contributes nothing to the Forms. For Avicenna, this means the existence of intelligibles in act existing in a primary way in the separate Agent Intellect. These intelligibles are the objects of knowledge and are known by individual human beings when they are conjoined to the separate Intellect after suitable preparation through experience of the sensible world. Still, while human sensory experiences can help to prepare a person for this conjoining they do not add anything to the experience of knowledge itself.

612 ST. Ia, Q. 84, A. 1, p. 794. “Salvare certam cognitionem veritatis a nobis per intellectum haberi” (p. 512a, ln. 1-3).

613 Ibid., A.4, p. 802; Latin pp. 516-517.

itself. For Avicenna, the body is more important in that sensory experiences help to prepare the human soul to conjoin with the separate Agent Intellect which contains the intelligibles in act. However, even here the conjunction is an activity of the soul and the body contributes little, only preparing the soul for that conjunction.

Averroes, like Aquinas, thinks that more must be done to integrate the body into the knowledge attainment process and the understanding of the human being. As we saw above, Averroes thinks he is able to provide more of a role for the body since the individual human being is responsible for the generation of the intelligibles in act through a process which begins with sensation. However, the intelligibles in act ultimately exist in separate Intellects and it is these, not the sensible objects, which are the ultimate referents of knowledge. It is this insistence on a common referent which leads Aquinas to argue that Averroes' view is, in the end, a kind of Platonism. This is neither the strict Platonism of Plato himself, where the material world is a kind of illusion based upon the Forms, nor the Platonism of Avicenna, where the material world serves as a preparatory aid for the human soul's ultimate conjunction with the Agent Intellect where the intelligible in act pre-exist. The view of Averroes is a Platonism of sorts, according to Aquinas, because of its reliance on a single, separate, set of intelligibles shared by all human beings. This set of intelligibles in act is created by the abstractive work of the Agent Intellect on the intelligibles in potency derived from the sensory experience of individual human beings; however, this process results in a single shared set of intelligibles in act, rather than a set for each individual based upon her experiences. While one might argue that the fact that these intelligibles in act do not pre-exist the way they do for Avicenna or Plato is an

improvement over the stronger Platonisms, the fact that they exist at all is enough, according to Aquinas, to move Averroes' view towards Plato and away from Aristotle. Furthermore, Aquinas notes that all of these Platonisms share as a flaw that the individual is not in possession of the knowable object.

In contrast to these sorts of Platonisms, all of which must be dismissed, Aquinas' theory demonstrates that the body is neither a hinderance to knowledge, as it is for Plato, nor a mere tool, as Avicenna would have it; neither is it useful for the initial stages of knowledge attainment, but ultimately unconnected with the known object, as it is for Averroes. Rather, the body is an essential component in the process of knowledge attainment and knowledge use. Furthermore, Aquinas' view preserves science by ensuring that the objects of understanding, like the objects of science, exist in the nature of particular things outside of the mind. This means that science is not about mere Ideas, as Plato says, nor preexisting intelligibles in a separate Agent Intellect, as Avicenna has it, nor a single set of intelligibles created by the individual and existing in the separate Intellect, as Averroes says, but about actually existing things in the world.<sup>614</sup>

Finally, regarding the teaching of Averroes in the LCDA, Aquinas insists that having intelligibles exist in separate intellects does not allow for individual knowers since knowledge is located in the shared intellects. Participation in the process of creating the intelligibles is not enough to fully explain differences in individual knowledge and, more importantly how an individual is able to retain her knowledge when not actively engaging in intellectual activity. In particular, he claims that Averroes' view of the dual subject of intelligibles in act, meant to preserve individual knowledge while maintaining separate

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<sup>614</sup> Ibid., Ia, Q. 85, A. 2.



intellects, is not able to accomplish that task. As we have already seen, Aquinas explains this in a number of places within the context of examining the relationship between body and soul/intellect. He explains that it is “through the intelligible species [that] the possible intellect is *linked* to the body of this or that particular man.”<sup>615</sup> He goes on to explain that this position is untenable because it does not account for the fact that thought itself must be ontologically (not merely operationally) present in the individual if the resulting knowledge is to belong to that individual.<sup>616</sup> Thus, these issues with the intelligibles species contribute to the issues with the nature of the Intellects discussed earlier.

### 5.3.3 A critical analysis and assessment of the teaching of Averroes

While it is clear from what has been said above and in Chapter 3 that Averroes is attempting to devise a system which accounts for both the unity of science and the role of the individual human being in the process of knowledge attainment, there are several issues he is unable to resolve successfully. Intelligibles cannot be the result of individual experience and yet exist as a single shared set in the separate Intellects; this simply destroys the unity of human individual experience and individual knowledge. Despite Averroes’ best attempts to argue for his view, it is not clear how something can be both

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615 Ibid., Ia, Q. 76, A. 1, p. 697. “Et sic per speciem intelligibilem continuatur intellectus possibilis corpori huius vel illius hominis” (p. 448b, ln. 50-449a, ln 2). For a detailed account of this notion across numerous works of Aquinas refer to note 530 above.

616 Alain de Libera offers a detailed discussion of this issue in his commentary on Aquinas’ *de Unitate Intellectus*. Here he explains that, according to Aquinas, thought is an immanent action rather than a transitive one. As such, thought can only exist in an agent, as Aristotle contends; if thought is in a separate Intellect, as Averroes holds, then the agent, the knower, is that Intellect, not the individual human being. But, if this intellect is part of the soul which is, in turn, form of the body, as Aquinas holds, the individual can be said to be the knower. (Alain de Libera, *L’Unité de L’intellect: Commentaire du De unitate intellectus contra averroistas de Thomas d’Aquin*, pp. 276-280). One should also see Ralph McInerny’ commentary on the same text of Aquinas in *Aquinas Against the Averroists: On There Being Only One Intellect*, pp. 147, 150-152, and 205-2011.

generated by each individual and also one for all individuals. Averroes claims that each person's particular sensory experience results in an image in their individual cogitative power; this image is then subjected to the abstractive efforts of the separate Agent Intellect; and this results in the intelligible in act which is realized in the Material Intellect, where it serves as the object of knowledge for the individual human being. The individual is a knower not because he has the intelligible in his own mind (since it remains, ontologically, in the Material Intellect), but because he participated in its generation and has access to it at will. However, he does not provide a clear account of how they can be the shared objects of knowledge for all human beings, while also being the result of each person's interaction with the Intellects based upon their unique experience of the sensible world. It would seem that once the first human being has made the connection and the Intellects have abstracted and received the intelligibles, they would persist in the Intellects for the rest of time, perhaps available to future human beings but no longer created by their experiences. That is to say, it does not seem possible that there exist a single set of intelligibles which somehow do not preexist (at least for most human beings) in the Intellects; Averroes does not address this problem.

Furthermore, Aquinas' argument that Averroes' insistence on a single set of intelligibles in act existing apart from individual human beings brings his views closer to those of Plato than to Aristotle is accurate. It is true that Averroes does not hold, as did Plato and, later, Avicenna, that the intelligible in act preexists the individual human being; he saw that this results in a view where the individual contributes nothing to knowledge. However, his commitment to the need for a shared set of intelligibles and to the need for

a separate Material Intellect, taken from Themistius, led Averroes to the unsupportable claims that intelligibles are generated as a result of individual sense perception and the working of the cogitative power (in partnership with the separate Intellects) and yet not present in the individual in any lasting or ontologically real way.

Additionally, Averroes is not able to provide a clear explanation of how one can be said to have knowledge in a substantial way if there is no mechanism for intellectual memory in his system. There is a distinction between physical memory (of particulars, phantasms, etc.) and intellectual memory (of intelligibles).<sup>617</sup> While Averroes is easily able to explain how individuals can have physical memory as a power of the brain he is incapable of providing a convincing account of how individual human beings can have intellectual memory. It would seem that the intellectual memory would have to be situated in the Material Intellect since this is the power which is responsible for receiving the intelligibles in act. However, since the Material Intellect is separate and shared this does not allow for individuals to have intellectual memory or access to intelligibles aside from when they are actively using them during thought. The best we can hope for in Averroes' system is some sort of disposition to reconnect at will to the Possible Intellect, where the intelligibles in act would be stored; but, this does not provide enough of an account to justify the claim, which even Averroes wants to make, that the individual has knowledge even when she is not making use of it.<sup>618</sup>

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617 For discussion of these issues see Taylor's "Remarks on Cogitatio in Averroes' *Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros*" and "Cogitatio, Cogitativus and Cogitare: Remarks on the Cogitative Power in Averroes."

618 An illustrative example may be in order here. One may ask: how does it happen in Averroes' system, that one can remember what a dog is, such that one can identify a never before seen dog as belonging to the category Dog, if one does not retain some intellectual memory of that universal after having abstracted it the first time. Yet, Averroes does not provide a location for such an intellectual memory. Does there exist in the brain (in the cogitative faculty, presumably) some representative image of Dog which one is spurred

Here, again, Aquinas is able to provide some solutions. For Aquinas, as for Averroes, knowledge attainments starts with sensation. Sensible species are brought together by the common sense and stored as phantasms. For Aquinas the agent intellect works to abstract the intelligible species from the phantasm and places them in the possible intellect. It is by the intelligibles species that the individual is able to understand the common nature in sensible objects.<sup>619</sup> Thus, for Aquinas the thing known is not the intelligible species (or the intelligibles in act as it is for Averroes) but the common nature which exists in things. He thinks this is necessary if we are to be able to accurately claim to know the natures of things in the world, not just intentions or species abstracted from the thing.

Despite this, our intellectual knowledge is not of particulars as particulars but rather it is of the universal nature of the particulars—those aspects which make the particular what it is and which it shares with all other instances of its kind. This allows Aquinas to hold simultaneously that knowledge is of things in the world and that we all know the same thing (the universal common nature) even if we have different experiences of different particulars.<sup>620</sup> In this way Aquinas is able to maintain the unity of science, the major concern of Averroes, without having to posit shared intelligibles in shared Intellects. This allows Aquinas to provide an account where the objects of understanding are available to all while also maintaining that the individual human being

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to use as a mechanism of quick connection to the Intellects when one encounters a dog? It is not clear how this would work.

619 Dewan, “St. Albert, St. Thomas, and Knowledge,” p. 129 for a brief account of this process and Stump, *Aquinas*, pp. 287-294 for a detailed account.

620 Dewan, “St. Albert, St. Thomas, and Knowledge,” pp. 129-131.

has her own intellectual faculties and so can be said, unequivocally, to be a knower and *per se* rational.

#### **5.4 Summary of these issues regarding the nature of the Intellects and intelligibles and their relation to the human being**

We have seen in the above discussions of issues A, B, and C how the views of Averroes and Aquinas differ regarding the nature of the intellects and the intelligibles in act and their relationship to individual human beings. Most importantly, it has been demonstrated that Averroes' view of the intelligibles in act as the ontologically real objects of knowledge necessitate separate active and potential Intellects. It is only by developing such a system that Averroes was able to explain the unity of science and human communication. While Averroes thought that he was able to maintain this system of separate Intellects and still argue for individual human beings as knowers, it was demonstrated that this was not the case. Aquinas provided several pointed arguments for why Averroes' system failed to provide a successful argument for the human being as *per se* rational or for human individuals as knowers in their own right. His position is, Aquinas points out, a kind of Platonism which is ultimately untenable, providing a flawed understanding of both the human being and knowledge attainment.

Aquinas' own position on these issues does not suffer from the same problems because he does not rely on the intelligibles in act to be that which we know. But arguing that they are, instead, that by which we know the natures of things in the world Aquinas is able to argue that each individual has her own intelligible species, the product of her own experience. This alternate account of intelligibles in act does not necessitate separate

Intellects; each individual is able to have her own intellects as an internal part of the individual human soul. While Aquinas' account is not free from all problems it is more coherent than Averroes'.

### **5.5 Issue D (the location and function of the will)**

Now that we have seen how the issues associated with the intellects are to be worked out between Averroes and Aquinas we can shift the discussion back to the central issue of this dissertation—the will and moral responsibility. We saw above that there are several compelling reasons for rejecting Averroes' views regarding the intelligibles in act and the understanding of the Intellects which these views necessitate. Here we will examine his understanding of the location and function of the will and the impact that has on moral responsibility. As with Issues A-C, this will involve an examination of both Averroes' and Aquinas' views as well the critiques Aquinas levels at Averroes. It will be evident from this discussion that, although Aquinas' critiques on this front are less compelling than his critiques regarding the intellects, there are still reasons to ultimately reject Averroes' understanding of the will.

#### **5.5.1 Averroes' view**

Averroes holds that the will is a power of the cogitative faculty. While the Intellects are separate and shared, the cogitative power, and thus the will, is multiplied according to the number of individuals and is associated with a particular bodily organ, the brain. Averroes explains that, according to his reading of Aristotle's *De Anima* 3.9, it

is the cogitative power that is responsible for willing. He quotes Aristotle as saying, “what governs exists in the cogitative part”<sup>621</sup> and that this “governing power” is the desiderative power which “exists only in the rational soul (he meant this when he said in the cogitative part).”<sup>622</sup> The desiderative power, the power that is responsible for wishing, desiring, or willing, is thus related to the rational part of the human being but is not in the separate Intellects. Since the cogitative power is the part of the human being which is closest to the Intellects and is “a kind of reason,”<sup>623</sup> it makes sense to conclude that the will is in the cogitative power.

Furthermore, Averroes explains that regarding action it is desire and the activity of the cogitative power or imagination which causes one to move towards a desired object. He notes that “the intellect in virtue of which there is activity [...] is the cogitative practical [intellect]”<sup>624</sup> and this intellect is focused upon action. Here Averroes is using the term intellect analogously to denote that part of the human soul responsible for the deliberative process which spurs one to action—the cogitative power. The will, an aspect

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621 Averroes, LCDA Bk. 3, comment 42, p. 408. “Principale enim exisit in parte cogitativa” (p. 510). In the corresponding passage in the *Middle Commentary* Averroes specifically mentions choice (*ikhtiyar*) at this point “The principle expression of this part [the faculty concerned with desire], which is called choice [*ikhtiyar*], occurs in the cogitative faculty” (MCDA, p. 124) but here there is mention of neither choice or will (*irādah*). It is worth noting that there are important issues regarding this passage of Aristotle as it was translated in the texts available to Averroes and Aquinas. The degree to which this is blame for their differing views of the location of the will and their claims to be following Aristotle in their respective understandings of the will shall be addressed in some detail below in section 5.5.3.

622 Averroes, LCDA, Bk. 3, comment 42, p. 408. “Virtus enim principalis non existit nisi in anima rationali (et hoc intendebat cum dixit *in parte cogitativa*)” (p. 510).

623 Ibid., Bk. 3, comment 20, p. 359. “Ista enim virtus est aliqua ratio” (p. 449). He also notes here that without the cogitative and imaginative powers the Material Intellect “understands nothing,” making the connection between knowledge and cogitation even more clear. In so far as the will is part of the cogitative power its relationship to the Intellects and so to knowledge is, thus, also established.

624 Ibid., Bk. 3, comment 49, p. 414. “intellectus per quem agitur [...] est cogitativus operativus” (p. 517).

of this cogitative power,<sup>625</sup> is responsible for the human being's ability to identify various 'goods,' consider their present and future implications, choose that which seems best, and initiate action towards that good; this set of activities is often explained as the work of the practical intellect. The deliberative process from willing to choosing to acting is undertaken by the cogitative faculty which has a link both to the practical (being the corporeal power responsible for this process), and to the theoretical (being the part which links the individual to the separate Intellects).

This process is seen most clearly in the practical syllogism which Averroes explains using Aristotle's beacon of fire example.<sup>626</sup> We can see in this example how the process of moral action integrates theoretical and practical knowledge. The soldier has some theoretical knowledge about what an enemy is, what a signal fire means in the context of war, etc.. That is to say, he understands the intelligibles in act "enemy," "signal fire," etc., through a previously completed process of knowledge attainment. When a particular instance of a signal fire arises this is noted by the soldier, who has had previous experience with such fires via the cogitative power and this prompts the soldier to recall the relevant intelligibles through a reconnection with the Material Intellect which houses that information. This reconnection with the separate Intellects is done at will.<sup>627</sup> Once he

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625. We see here that the cogitative power plays a major role in the deliberative process; it is the location of the will and it is responsible for all of the key elements of deliberation and moral decision making. This is in addition to the role it plays in the intellectual process and the ability of the human being to have knowledge. This means that the cogitative power is the linchpin .

626 Averroes LCDA Bk 3, comment 33. It is worth noting that Averroes address this same example in much the same way in his earlier *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*. First, he noted earlier that "affirmative and negative judgments in the theoretical intellect correspond to judgments of good and bad in the practical intellect" (p. 120). Then he goes on to explain that when the soldier sees the beacon "he is moved to fight and seizes his weapon as if he had seen the war with his own sense. For, when he sees the fire on the beacon, he imagines the forms of war and prepares something appropriate for each form, his view of future events deriving from his view of present ones" (MCDA, p.121).

627 Averroes' addresses the issue of will and of what is done by our will in several places in the *Long Commentary*. In some of these areas he is directly addressing selections from Aristotle which include the



has done this is he able to use this knowledge to make a determination about how one ought to act in a particular situation when one encounters the enemy's signal fires. He deliberates about possible courses of action chooses one, and then acts accordingly. This deliberation is informed by the universal knowledge he has and by the particulars of the situation. It takes place in the cogitative power since this is the individual human power which is closest to Intellect and which has some access to intelligibles. The fact that this is not, strictly speaking, intellectual activity but part of the will allows Averroes to insist that individual human beings have their own wills and thus are responsible for their own willed/moral actions. He is thus able to maintain, in his mind, that the Intellects are separate and shared while also holding that individuals have their own wills and are thus responsible for their own actions, moral or otherwise.

### 5.5.2 Aquinas' position and his critique of Averroes

#### 5.5.2.1 Aquinas' position

Aquinas' account of the will is considerably more complex than that of Averroes. For Aquinas the will is a robust faculty of the human intellectual soul with several related powers. He argues in Book 2 of the SCG that "intellectual substances must be capable of willing" and that this willing is a rational appetite (as opposed to the the natural or animal

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notion of wish or voluntary action; these passages use the *voluntas* or some conjugation of *velle*, indicating that Averroes was working from a translation of Aristotle which erroneously (as we say in Chapter 2) included the notion of will. These passages include: LCDA, Bk. 1, comment 18, p. 22, Bk. 1, comment 89, p. 99 (p. 120 in latin text includes the word *velle*), Bk. 2, comment 28, pp. 134-5, Bk. 2, comment 153, pp. 277-8 (p. 363 in the Latin text, where we find *voluerimus* in the reference to Aristotle), Bk. 3, comment 18 pp. 351-2, Bk. 3, comment 5 p. 307, Bk. 3, comment 36 p. 391, Bk. 3, comment 36 pp. 395-6, Bk. 3, comment 36, p. 399, Bk. 3, comment 50, pp.415-16 (*voluntas* appears in the reference to the text of Aristotle in Latin, p. 518), Bk. 3, comment 57, pp. 427-8.

appetite present in non-intellectual substances).<sup>628</sup> As an appetite the will is directed towards singulars; but, as a *rational* appetite it is directed in a universal way--the focus is on how the particular functions as an instance of a more universal consideration (i.e. the good). Furthermore, the rational appetite is characterized by the ability to control one's inclinations; apprehension of a particular as desirable does not necessarily result in pursuit of that particular.<sup>629</sup> This ability helps to highlight the complex relationship between the intellect and the will. Although the will moves the intellect to act, the intellect is the superior power, moving the will as the source of the will's end, the understood good.<sup>630</sup> Aquinas explains that "the will belongs to the intellectual part of the soul" and that "every choice and act of the will is caused immediately in us from an intelligible apprehension, for the intellectual good is the object of the will."<sup>631</sup> Thus, the intellect provides an understanding of the good, which is the object of the will; based upon this understanding the will moves the intellect towards action which will be in line with that understood good and leads to happiness, the ultimate end of the will and the human being.<sup>632</sup>

628 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 2, Ch. 47, p. 142. "Has autem substantias intellectuales necesse est esse volentes. Inest enim omnibus appetitus boni: cum *bonum sit quod omnia appetunt*, ut philosophi tradunt. Huiusmodi autem appetitus in his quidem quae cognitione carent, dicitur *naturalis appetitus*: sicut dicitur quod lapis appetit esse deorsum. In his autem quae cognitionem sensitivam habent, dicitur *appetitus animalis*, qui dividitur in concupiscibilem et irascibilem. In his vero quae intelligunt, dicitur appetitus intellectualis seu rationalis, qui est *voluntas*. Substantiae igitur intellectuales creatae habent voluntatem" (Bk. 2, Ch. 47, sec. 1236-1237, p. 167). Also see ST Ia IIae, Q. 6, A. 2, p. 617; Latin pp. 57-58 and ST Ia IIae, Q. 8, pp. 626-628; Latin pp. 68-73. In ST I.82.5 Aquinas calls will an "intellectual appetite (*appetitus intellectivus*)" he also makes reference to Aristotle's "claim" in De Anima Bk. 3, Ch. 2, 432b5 that "the will is in the reason." Some issues surrounding this claim will be addressed below.

629 Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on the Will as Rational Appetite," pp. 564-565.

630 Aquinas, ST. Ia Q. 82, A 3-4.

631 Aquinas, SCG Bk. 3.2, Ch. 85, p. 18. "Voluntas enim in parte intellectiva animae est [...] Omnis electio et actualis voluntas in nobis immediate ex apprehensione intelligibili causatur: bonum enim intellectum est obiectum voluntatis" (Bk. 3, Ch. 85, sec. 2598-2599, p. 121).

632 Aquinas, ST Ia Q. 82, A. 1, p. 778. "Voluntas ex necessitate inhaereat ultimo fini, qui est beatitudo" (p. 392). He explains that necessity in this context refers to "necessity of the end (*necessitas finis*)," not "necessity of coercion (*necessitas coactionis*)," and this is a natural necessity for the will. Also see ST Ia

The will is able to direct us, with the help of the intellect towards the good by virtue of its many functions. This is because the will is not only an appetite but a faculty in its own right. Aquinas explains that there are several acts of the will and the intellect which are necessary for action. These acts of the will include willing (for an end), intention, consent, choice (free choice, *liberum arbitrium*), and use. The acts of the intellect include: (1) attaining universal knowledge (2) considering particulars as they relate to the universal and determining that they are good, (3) taking counsel, and (4) commanding.

All human actions are about particulars. The individual has already done the intellectual work of coming to some understanding of the universal/absolute good/end. Then, the individual encounters some particular end and determines that this end is good under these particular circumstances. This leads to the first act of the will—willing (*voluntas*). Willing is a simple volitional act whereby one comes to desire the end because it is judged to be good “in these particular circumstances at this particular time.”<sup>633</sup> Willing always has the end as its object; this end is the real or apparent good (i.e. the universal good as far as one understands it).<sup>634</sup> Once the individual has willed the end the intellect determines that the end is indeed within the power of the willer to achieve. This is followed by intention, the act of the will whereby one intends to achieve the end through some yet to be determined means.

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Ilae Q. 1, A. 6, pp 587-588; Latin p. 14 where Aquinas argues that it is necessary that everything a human being desires is desired because it is seen as the good or tending towards the good. In ST. Ia Ilae Q. 10, pp. 633-636; Latin pp. 83-89 Aquinas again reiterates that the object of the will is absolute or universal Happiness. Also see Book 1 (esp. Lec.4, 9, and 10) of Aquinas' CNE for an extended treatment of happiness and an argument for its being the ultimate end of the human being.

<sup>633</sup> Stump, *Aquinas*, p. 287. See Stump pp. 287-290 for the complete account of human action which I follow here.

<sup>634</sup> Aquinas, CNE, Bk 3, Lec. 10, C 494.

At this point the individual has set a particular end, determined it to be good, and decided that the means to achieve this end are discoverable and within her power. Now she must set out to discover these means and act upon them. This requires the intellectual act of taking counsel (*consilium*). Counsel is the process of considering the various means by which one might achieve one's end. Counsel or deliberation (*consilium*) precedes choice and involves a rational consideration of what has to be done to achieve a desired or willed for end.<sup>635</sup> We take counsel about things which are in our own power to do.<sup>636</sup> Since "counsel is ordered to action"<sup>637</sup> we deliberate about what actions we can take to achieve the ends we have already set for ourselves (or the final end in as much as we understand it). It should be clear from this that counsel/deliberation is always about means, not ends.<sup>638</sup> The result of counsel is consent. Consent is an act of the will, since the act of consent constitutes a kind of affirmation of or moving towards some particular.<sup>639</sup> By consenting, the will accepts the means which the intellect has deemed suitable to achieving the end. Depending on the end and on the preferences, abilities, etc. of the individual various means will be more or less appealing and thus garner stronger or weaker consent.

After one has taken counsel and consented to a means or set of means, one chooses to act upon that decision.<sup>640</sup> Aquinas explains that choice (*electio*) "is only a

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635 Aquinas, ST Ia IIae Q. 14, A. 1-2, pp. 647-648; Latin pp. 105-106.

636 See Aquinas, CNE, trans. C.I. Litzinger (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964), Bk. 3, Lec. 7, C. 460-464, p. 203-204, *Sententia Libri Ethicorum Vol 1* in *Opera Omnia* Vol. 47 (Rome: Fratrum Praedicatorum, 1969), Bk. 3, Lec. 7, ln. 29-85, p. 139, for a discussion of the various things about which we do not take counsel.

637 Ibid., Bk. 3, Lec. 7, C. 465, p. 204. "Consilium enim ad operationem ordinatur" Bk. 3, Lec. 7, ln. 90, p. 139.

638 Ibid., Bk. 3, Lec. 8, C. 475-481, pp. 208-209, Latin, Bk. 3, Lec. 8, ln. 36-139, pp. 143-144.

639 Aquinas, ST Ia IIae Q. 15, A. 1, pp. 650-653, Latin p. 110-112.

640 Aquinas, CNE Bk. 3, Lec. 9, C. 484, p. 211, Latin Bk. 3, Lec. 9, ln. 19-35, pp. 145-146.

desire (arising by reason of counsel) for things in our power. Choice is an act of the rational appetitive faculty called will [...] it is a deliberating desire inasmuch as, via counsel, a man arrives at a judgment regarding the things which were discovered by means of counsel. This desire is choice.”<sup>641</sup> When there are several possible means to achieving the desired end additional rational consideration is needed so that one means, or set of means, can be chosen. This is carried out by the intellect in the form of the practical syllogism, which allows the person to consider both universal knowledge and particular circumstances to arrive at a conclusion about what is best. Once this conclusion is reached by the intellect, the will chooses or wills this conclusion. Choice “results from the decision or judgment which is, as it were, the conclusion of a practical syllogism.”<sup>642</sup> Where there is only one way to reach the desired end, this step is skipped. Once a particular course of action has been chosen, or willed, the intellect commands that this course of action be undertaken and the will uses the powers under its control, including the bodily powers, to act, causing the individual to act.<sup>643</sup>

### 5.5.2.2 Aquinas’ critique

641 Ibid., Bk. 3, Lec. 9, C. 486, pp. 211-212. “Electio nihil aliud sit quam desiderium eorum quae sunt in nostra potestate ex consilio proveniens; est enim electio actus appetitus rationalis qui dicitur voluntas. Ideo autem dixit electionem esse desiderium consiliabile, quia ex hoc quod homo consiliatur pervenit ad iudicansum ea quae sunt per consilium inventa <...>, quod quidem desiderium est electio” (Bk. 3, Lec.9, ln. 55-63, p. 146).

642 Aquinas, ST Ia IIae Q. 13, A. 3, p. 644. “Electio consequitur sententiam vel iudicium, quod est sicut conclusio syllogismi operativi” (p. 101).

643 It is important to point out, at least in passing, how this view relates to the practical syllogism of Aristotle. In some ways Aquinas’ view can be seen as a more complex understanding of Aristotle’s view that, when one is confronted with a particular situation where action is required one must use both the practical information and one’s universal knowledge to identify form within the image and make a determination about whether the sensed object should be pursued or avoided. While Aquinas’ account sounds quite similar to Aristotle’s account of moral deliberation in NE 3.3; however, Aquinas provides a more detailed account which includes the integration of a number of different powers of the faculties of intellect and will.

Now that we have an understanding of Aquinas' own position on the nature of will, its powers, and its location, we must consider the specific criticisms that Aquinas levels at Averroes' understanding of the will. It should come as no surprise, given what has already been said about Issues A, B, and C, that Aquinas considers the notion of the will, Issue D, to be intimately connected to the nature, location, and function of the intellects. For this reason, as we will see, he says relatively little about Averroes' specific position on the will itself; instead the problems Aquinas address in the earlier issues have ramifications for Averroes' understanding of the will which Aquinas finds inevitable. While it will be necessary to examine how Aquinas' understanding of Averroes' views regarding the intellect impact his views of the will, first it is important to examine the few instances where he directly addresses what he takes to be Averroes' notion of the will.

The most clear examples of this come in *De Unitate Intellectus* where Aquinas specifically mentions the will as a problematic aspect of the Averroist position. Here Aquinas twice argues that Averroes' position entails the destruction of moral responsibility. In the first argument Aquinas states:

[1] According to their position, the principles of moral philosophy would be destroyed; for what is in us would be taken away. For something is not in us except through our will; and this indeed is called voluntary because it is in us. But, the will is in the intellect, as is clear from the statement of Aristotle in Book III of the *De Anima* [...] If, therefore, the intellect does not belong to this man in such a way that it is truly one with him, but is united to him only through phantasms or as a mover, the will will not be in this man, but in the separate intellect. And so this man will not be the master of his act, nor will any act of his be

praiseworthy or blameworthy. This is to destroy the principles of moral philosophy.<sup>644</sup>

Here Aquinas is explicitly linking what he sees as Averroes' problematic understanding of the intellects with the will. He explains that it is necessary for the intellect to be "in" the individual human being in such a way that it is "one with him" in order for intellectual activity to be his. Similarly, the will must also be in the individual if his actions are to be voluntary. Aquinas declares that, according to Aristotle, the will is in the intellect and takes for granted that Averroes accepted this notion. If the the intellects are separate, as Averroes indeed claims, then the will would likewise be separate and voluntary action and moral responsibility would be lost.

Aquinas makes a similar argument in a second passage from *De Unitate*

*Intellectus*. Here he says:

[2] If, therefore, there is one intellect for all, it follows of necessity that there be one who understands and consequently one who wills and one who uses according to the choice of his will all those things by which men are diverse from one another. And from this it further follows that there would be no difference among men in respect to the free choice of the will, but it [the choice] would be the same for all, if the intellect in which alone would reside pre-eminence and dominion over the use of all other [powers] is one and undivided in all. This is clearly false and impossible. For it is opposed to what is evident and destroys the whole of moral science and everything which

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644 Aquinas, *deUnitate*, Ch. III, sec. 81-82, pp. 56-57."Adhuc, secundum istorum positionem destruntur moralis philosophiae principia: subtrahitur enim quod est in nobis. Non enim est aliquid in nobis nisi per uoluntatem; unde et hoc ipsum uoluntarium dicitur, quod in nobis est. Voluntas autem in intellectu est, ut patet per dictum Aristotelis in 111 De anima [...]. Si igitur intellectus non est aliquid huius hominis ut sit uere unum cum eo, sed unitur ei solum per fantasmata uel sicut motor, non erit in hoc homine uoluntas, sed in intellectu separato. Et ita hic homo non erit dominus sui actus, nec aliquis eius actus erit laudabilis uel uituperabilis: quod est diuellere principia moralis philosophiae." (Ch. 3, ln. 336-363, p. 306).

relates to the civil intercourse which is natural to man, as Aristotle says.<sup>645</sup>

In this passage Aquinas' argument regarding the role of the intellect and its influence on the will is made even more directly. Here he states that one intellect for all would necessarily result in one will for all and thus one "free choice of the will." He argues that insofar as the intellect has "dominion over the use of all other" powers, including the will, a shared intellect would lead to shared deliberation, choice, and, presumably, action. Rather than relying on his view that the intellect is in the will, here Aquinas is pointing to the relationship that he sees among the intellect and the other powers or faculties a person possesses.

In both of these cases the focus is on the will and its role, together with the intellect, in the process resulting in human moral action. It is essential, in Aquinas' view, that all aspects of this process remain in the individual human being if individual moral responsibility is to be preserved. If either the intellect or the will are not multiplied according to the number of individuals and located in the individual human's soul, the person's ability to deliberate, choose, and control their actions will be impaired in some way. Aquinas sees problems with Averroes' understanding of the intellect and the will, as Aquinas interprets it; thus, he considers Averroes' position doubly flawed with respect to moral decision making and action and the resulting moral responsibility.

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645 Ibid., Ch. 4, sec.89, pp. 60-61. "Si igitur sit unus intellectus omnium, ex necessitate sequitur quod sit unus intelligens, et per consequens unus uolens et unus utens pro sue uoluntatis arbitrio omnibus illis secundum que homines diuersificantur ad inuicem. Et ex hoc ulterius sequitur quod nulla differentia sit inter homines quantum ad liberam uoluntatis electionem, sed eadem sit omnium, si intellectus, apud quem solum resident principalitas et dominium utendi omnibus aliis, est unus et indiuisus in omnibus. Quod est manifeste falsum et impossibile: repugnat enim hiis que apparent, et destruit totam scientiam moralem et omnia que pertinent ad conuersationem ciuilem, que est hominibus naturalis, ut Aristotiles dicit" (Ch. 4, ln 81-95, p. 308).



### 5.5.3. Critical Analysis of Aquinas' critique of Averroes's supposed view of the will

Issues of translation regarding Aristotle's *De Anima* have been alluded to in several places in this chapter and elsewhere in the dissertation. It is important to make these issues explicit now because they provide a jumping off point for the divergence between Aquinas and Averroes regarding the location of the will and its connection to the individual. They also serve as a partial basis for Aquinas' critiques of Averroes on this issue.

Aristotle addresses the location of wish —the power which both Averroes and Aquinas associate with will —in passing in *De Anima* 3.9, where he explains that wish “is found in the calculative part and desire and passion in the irrational [part of the soul].”<sup>646</sup> Looking at the passage as it appears in the Latin text of Averroes' *Long Commentary on the De Anima* we can see that it states that the will (*voluntas*) is *in parte cogitativa* (in the cogitative part).<sup>647</sup> Averroes takes this to mean that will is a power of the cogitative faculty, the quasi-rational faculty located in the brain and, thus, multiplied according to the number of individuals. According to Averroes, locating the will here accomplishes several things. First, it allows Averroes to stay in keeping with Aristotle, as he understood him. Second, it maintains individual moral responsibility in a strong sense since the faculty of will, by which moral actions are initiated, is located ontologically in each individual, giving her complete control over her willing. Third, since Averroes sees the cogitative power as the faculty responsible for connecting the individual to the

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<sup>646</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima* 3.9 432b5-6.

<sup>647</sup> See Richard Taylor, “Cogitatio, Cogitativus and Cogitare: Remarks on the Cogitative Power in Averroes” for a discussion of this issue and its implications; pp. 140-141 deal with this passage in particular.

separate Intellects so that thought can happen “at will,” it provides a way for the will to be connected to separate Intellect, as is necessary for the proper functioning of the practical syllogism.

Aquinas had a different reading of the *De Anima* and, as a result, a different understanding of the location of the will. In the version of the text Aquinas was working from the passage explains that the will is *in rationativa*--in the rational [part]. Aquinas understood this to mean that Aristotle viewed the will as a rational appetite, a power of the intellects. This was not a problem for Aquinas, who understood the intellects to be powers of the individual human soul. In his understanding, this allowed for the close link between reason and will which is necessary for the proper functioning of practical reason. This understanding of the Aristotelian text and the philosophy which Aquinas subsequently develops around the relationship between the will and the intellects<sup>648</sup> leads Aquinas to make a pointed critique of Averroes.

As we saw, Aquinas argues that a separate, shared will must result in a lack of personal responsibility for actions and the subsequent “destruction” of moral philosophy. Since he understands the will to be part of the intellect and he assumes that Averroes shares this view (which he thinks they both receive from Aristotle) he thinks that Averroes’ separate shared Intellects necessarily result in a separate shared will. It is clear that if this were an accurate assessment of Averroes’ position he would, indeed, have a

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<sup>648</sup> It is useful to note here that Aquinas’ discussion of will and its relation to intellect is much more developed than that of Averroes. Aquinas offers a detailed account of the various powers of the faculty of will and how they interconnect with the relevant intellectual powers in the process of moral decision making from willing, to taking counsel, etc., and eventually to action. It is therefore much easier to see how Aquinas means to explain the process of moral action and the role of the will and intellect in that process than it is to see how this process is to work in Averroes’ system.

severe problem maintaining moral responsibility in his system. Even if we allow for Averroes' claim that the Intellects can be separate and shared and yet still in us as intrinsic formal cause, this does not seem to be as plausible when it comes to the will which relies more heavily on particular information supplied by the individual and results in particular actions of an individual.<sup>649</sup>

However, as we have seen, Aquinas' critique regarding the will does not accurately reflect Averroes' position. Averroes does not think that the will is in the Intellects. He understands the necessity of connecting the will to cognition and also sees that it must be a fully individuated power if he is to provide for a robust understanding of personal moral decision making and responsibility for one's actions. In fact, the location of the will in the individual becomes even more critical for Averroes, who must be concerned not only with moral decision making on the part of the individual but also with individual participation in the intellectual process. According to Averroes the individual connects with and uses the Intellects at will; thus, if the will were not individuated a person would be incapable of not only acting but also thinking. While Averroes thinks he is able to provide a strong enough connection between the individual and the separate Intellects by arguing that the individual is connected to the Intellects when thought is occurring, the will is a power which must be connected to the individual all the time if he is to be fully morally responsible for his actions. This is because action itself is personal and particular in a way that thought is not for Averroes.

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<sup>649</sup> That this is the character of moral actions is evident from what Aristotle says, and Averroes and Aquinas accept, regarding the nature of the practical syllogism where universal knowledge is applied to a particular circumstance and one's particular understanding of that circumstance, resulting in a decision about what is best to do *in that particular situation*.

In addition to being incorrect regarding how Averroes understood the will's relationship to the Intellects and the individual, Aquinas was also wrong in his assessment of Averroes' view in relation to Aristotle. Of course, as was made clear in Chapter 2, there is a sense in which neither Aquinas nor Averroes can be said to be following Aristotle regarding the will since Aristotle does not have a developed notion of will, as such. However, there is still something to be said about who was closer to Aristotle's views regarding the deliberative process and its relation to the intellectual process more generally. In this regard Averroes seems to come closer to Aristotle's view, despite Aquinas' insistence to the contrary. It does seem that Aristotle's view is that deliberation is something separate from intellect; this can be seen from the fact that it is possible to choose one thing through deliberation and then think and act contrary to that choice, as the incontinent person does. For Aristotle this change in course is the result not of will (or, more properly, wish) but of a flawed application of the practical syllogism resulting in an act contrary to one's wish.<sup>650</sup>

Perhaps more importantly, Averroes' understanding of the Agent Intellect seems to be closer to that of Aristotle. The Aristotelian scholar Joseph Owens provides a detailed account of Aristotle's position regarding how the human being relates to the intellects in his article "The Self in Aristotle." Here he explains that, although there is no term for "self" or "person" in Aristotle, there is still self awareness, achieved concomitantly with awareness of the sensible world, in both intellectual and moral terms.<sup>651</sup> Owens goes on to

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650. Indeed, this is precisely what incontinence is for Aristotle, as described in NE, 7.4.

651 "In that concomitant cognition, however, there is immediate and unshakable awareness of a single agent, namely oneself. This immediate awareness is not of a sense, or of a mind, or of a soul. It is of the man or the woman as cognitive agent. It is of the *anthropos* or, as we would say today, of the person who thinks and acts by means of those faculties or parts. In the ethical order one is in consequence immediately

explain that this self awareness is present despite the fact that the active faculty of intellect is separate because it is also “in” the soul:

What thinks and knows is the mind belonging to the soul [...] it is present *in* the soul as the active as well as the passive element [...] the separate, immortal and eternal mind is somehow *in* the soul, even though it is separate in its own nature [...] the passive mind is perishable, while the other mind is alone eternal. In the framework of the soul as the instrument by which the individual man thinks, this can hardly mean anything else than that the cogitative agent in question is the man himself, thinking through the instrumentality of the twofold mind.<sup>652</sup>

This account allows that knowledge requires sensible things as the vehicle by which forms/intelligibles are present to human individuals for comprehension;<sup>653</sup> it also means that it is the human being (i.e. the “agent self”<sup>654</sup>), as composite of matter and form, who is the one knowing, acting, and thinking by making use of the active intellect.<sup>655</sup> From this we can see that the many thinkers who advocated for an individual passive/possible intellect and a separate Agent Intellect are most in line with Aristotle; this includes Averroes’ early (*Short and Middle Commentaries*) position on the Material Intellect. Even with respect to the *Long Commentary* it is certain that Averroes’ position is much closer to Aristotle than is Aquinas’. This understanding of the active element in Aristotle sounds almost identical to what Averroes says about the Agent Intellect as instrumentally present

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aware of oneself as the moral agent, as the source of one’s free conduct, and one draws the firm conclusion that one is responsible for one’s deliberate actions [...] T]here is not the least doubt in the Aristotelian text regarding the immediate factual awareness of oneself as a unitary cognitive and moral agent.” Joseph Owens, “The Self in Aristotle,” pp. 707-708

652 Ibid., p. 717. Taylor discuss Owens account of Aristotle here and how this interpretation of Aristotle, supported by the view of Themistius, influenced Averroes in his “Remarks on Cogitatio in Averroes’ *Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis de Anima Libros*,” pp. 233-247.

653 Owens, “The Self in Aristotle,” p. 713

654 Ibid., p. 718

655 Ibid., p. 718. One can also look to Rist’s “Aristotle: The Value of Man and the Origin of Morality,” pp. 1-21 for an account of what it means to be a human being for Aristotle. Rist concludes “that it is primarily the degree of intellect which determines human value” (p. 13)

”in” the soul as “form for us” and thus subject to our will, while also being ontologically distinct and shared. Aquinas tries to reconcile his insistence that both the possible and agent intellects are faculties of each individual human being’s soul with what he finds in Aristotle by developing the notion of the human soul as both form of the body and separate substance, but this is not very Aristotelian, especially when compared to the view of Averroes.<sup>656</sup>

### **5.6 The impact of these critiques on the issue of moral responsibility in Averroes.**

Averroes’ problematic solution to the issues of knowledge attainment has important ramifications for the understanding of moral responsibility. Principally, if we cannot, after all, say that the individual person has knowledge in Averroes’ system, this calls into question whether a person can have moral responsibility in a meaningful way. We saw from Aristotle’s accounts of the practical syllogism that decision making, including moral decision making, requires the application of universal knowledge to a particular situation by the individual. This can only happen, properly speaking, if the individual knows both the particular information of their present situation and the universal information about what simply is the case (i.e. the intelligibles). It is not enough to have access to the intelligibles as they exist in the separate Intellects, even if one can be said to have had a hand in creating those intelligibles.<sup>657</sup> Rather, one must be said to know them in a real way such that the knowledge is immediately present within the

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<sup>656</sup> In “Aristotle and Aquinas,” pp. 38-59, Owens discusses key metaphysical differences between Aristotle and Aquinas which might underly and explain the unAristotelian nature of Aquinas’ thought.

<sup>657</sup> And, we have already seen that the claim that each human being has had a hand in the creation of the intelligibles in Averroes system is dubious.

individual.<sup>658</sup> What's more, the intellectual capacity to think through and apply the information must belong to the individual for immediate use; it cannot take place in some separate shared Intellect if the individual is going to be held responsible for the resulting action. The synthesis of particular and universal information through reason which is required for moral responsibility must happen not just when the individual wills it. It must also be present in a dispositional way, since, as Aristotle claims, moral action is a matter of habit and character; thus, it must take place *in* the individual as a necessary feature of their being.

Averroes' system does not meet the above criteria. His location of the will in the human being and his strong version of the cogitative power are not sufficient to provide the level of integration between intellect and individual which this process requires, especially given the problems we have seen regarding the connection between the individual and the intelligibles in act in the separate Intellects. Aquinas' theory, on the other hand, is more capable of addressing these issues and, thus, allowing for moral responsibility both in this life and the next. By arguing that the intellect is both the form of the body and a substantial form capable of existing as a separate entity, he is able to make the individual the bearer of both universal and particular knowledge.

An example may help to highlight the differences between the two approaches and demonstrate the superiority of Aquinas' account. Let's use a modified version of Aristotle's beacon of fire. Suppose there is a soldier on lookout and he sees a beacon of fire in the distance, moving closer. He recognizes that this signals the approach of the

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<sup>658</sup> Again, we have seen that Averroes provides no mechanism for intellectual memory sufficient to explain a quick connection with the separate Intellects, let alone the immediate presence of knowledge required here.

enemy. Since he is brave and knows that the brave (and thus moral) thing to do in such a case is to engage the enemy, rather than run, he rallies his comrades and moves to engage the enemy. This whole scenario takes but a few minutes, but it is highly complex. There are many steps, both intellectually and practically, which must take places under both Averroes' and Aquinas' accounts. First, the soldier must have had previous sensory experience of fire beacons so that he can know that this particular light is a fire beacon and not something else; he must also know that such beacons signal the enemy. Furthermore, he must have previous knowledge and experience with the virtue of bravery such that he understands what the brave thing to do in such a situation is (i.e engage the enemy rather than flee); then, he must will to act bravely;; then, he must act on this knowledge. If he is a moral/virtuous person, he will act habitually, without having to first consider what action constitutes bravery first.

Averroes' system is not well suited to explaining these many intellectual interactions which are required for this action to take place. His insistence that the individual human being has no intellectual memory means that the soldier will have to conjoin with the Intellects, using the cogitative power, to, in a sense, relearn what the beacon of fire is and what it means. He will then have to use that connection to deliberate and make a decision about what to do (again using the separate Intellects). Finally, he will have to will to act upon that information (using the cogitative power) and then act accordingly. It is not clear, as has been stated, how the soldier himself can be said to be doing all of this thinking, let alone knowing, about the relevant universal information when the Intellects are separate entities. Furthermore, the connection between the will, in



the cogitative power, and the necessary knowledge, in the Material Intellect, is insufficient, as indicated earlier. Given this, it is difficult to say that the soldier is morally responsible for the resulting action, since most of the necessary mental activity does not take place in the soldier's own powers.

On the other hand, Aquinas' insistence that the intellects are powers of the human soul, multiplied according to the number of individuals, allows him to locate both universal and particular knowledge in the individual human being so that it can be remembered and accessed at once. Furthermore, his view that the will is a rational appetite allows for a close connection between the knowledge and action. He is able to explain the process of moral action as a complex interplay between the various acts of the intellect and will<sup>659</sup> which takes place entirely within the individual. This means that the soldier in the example above is able to move from seeing the beacon fire to taking action via a process which is completely his own. For this reason the resulting action can be called his action in a way that it cannot be for Averroes, who must rely substantially on separate external substances (the Intellects) as sources of information.

It is important to note here that, while Aquinas version clearly provides a level of individual involvement and responsibility which is lacking in Averroes' account, this is not because Averroes does not see the individual as a morally responsible agent. Rather, Aquinas and Averroes have different views about the nature of moral responsibility, and the issue of post mortem reward and punishment. They both agree that there must an intellectual element which is unmixed with matter and, thus, immortal. Averroes' understanding of the nature of intelligibles leads him to locate this, the Agent Intellect,

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<sup>659</sup> See section 4.3.3 of Chapter 4 of this dissertation for an account of the process.

outside of the human being; as a result, the individual human soul is not immortal according to Averroes.<sup>660</sup> Thus, Averroes is not concerned with moral responsibility as something with ramifications beyond this life; perhaps this leads him to develop a less robust account of moral responsibility in general. On the other hand, Aquinas' view of intelligibles requires him to locate the intellects in the individual human being's soul. In this way, he is able to hold that the soul is not only form of the body but a subsistent form, capable of existing on its own because it has a faculty which does not require a body. Thus, he holds that the individual human being's soul is immortal, capable of existing without the body, although that is not its ideal state. As a result, his concerns regarding moral responsibility are more wide reaching than Averroes' since they must include an account of eternal reward or punishment. It also allows Aquinas to provide a more unified overall approach to the human being by incorporating both the intellectual and practical faculties into each individual as part of their nature.

## 5.7 Conclusion

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660 One might clarify this position by saying that it is not immortal in any philosophically demonstrable way. Averroes' observes a strict distinction between his philosophical and theological works and does not view the immortality of the soul as something that is provable, demonstratively, in his strictly philosophical accounts. Rather it is found in his dialectical works such as the *Decisive Treatise*. Richard Taylor's "Personal Immortality in Averroes' Mature Philosophical Psychology," *Documenti e Studi Sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 9 (1998), pp. 97-110 offers a detailed account of Averroes on the issue as it can be found in the philosophical works.

One can look to Averroes' *Commentary on the Metaphysics* for some discussion of the human beings relationship to immortality. Here he says that human beings connection to the "principle which is an intellect in the highest state of pleasure, happiness and bliss" is only in "contact for a short time [...because] that part of us which is united is subject to generation and corruption." He goes on to say: "It clearly appears from that that Aristotle thinks that happiness for men *qua* men consists in this contact with the intellect which has been shown in the *de Anima* to be principle, mover and agent for us. The separate intellects *qua* separate must be principle of that of which they are principle in both senses, I mean as movers and as ends. The active intellect, insofar as it is separate and principle for us, must move us in the same way as the beloved moves the lover and if every motion must be in contact with the thing which produces it as end, we must ultimately be in contact with this separate intellect, so that we depend on such a principle, on which the heaven depends, as Aristotle says, although this happens to us but for a short time" (pp.156-157).

Thus, although Aquinas provided some direct criticism of Averroes' notion of will, most of his criticism of Averroes' views surrounded the issues of intellect and intelligibles. While at first glance one might think that such criticisms would not be relevant to the problem of the will and moral responsibility, a closer examination, as given here, demonstrated that they are the essential components of Aquinas' critique. This chapter broke Aquinas' critiques down into four issues: (A) the placement of the separate Intellects "in the soul," (B), the nature of the separate Intellects as "form for us," (C) the relationship between the individual human being and the intelligibles in act, and (D) the location and function of the will. Each issue was examined in detail so that an account of Averroes' and Aquinas' unique views was given as well as an account of Aquinas' critiques of these issues. It was demonstrated that Aquinas had a flawed understanding of Averroes' view of the will and that, as a result, his criticisms of Averroes on this issue were unsupported. However, it was also discovered that this was a relatively minor part of Aquinas' overall critique of Averroes' understanding of the human being as moral agent; most of Aquinas' critiques revolved around Averroes' problematic understanding of the intelligibles in act and the resulting view of the relationship between the Intellects and the individual human being. These critiques were more damaging to Averroes, pointing out valid flaws in his understanding of the human being as rational. This flawed understanding of human rationality meant that Averroes' understanding of moral responsibility was also flawed because of the importance of reason and universal knowledge to practical thinking and moral action. On these fronts Aquinas was able to

provide a more coherent and plausible account of the intellectual and moral agency of the human being.

## CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Introduction

Now that we have completed the assessment of Averroes' views in light of the critiques of Aquinas we must return to the questions with which we started the dissertation. This will serve as a means of reviewing the main conclusions of the dissertation and it will also help highlight areas for future investigation.

6.1 Does Aristotle have a faculty of will in his system? What is his view of the intellects?<sup>661</sup>

Averroes and Aquinas, along with earlier medieval thinkers, attributed to Aristotle a strong and evident faculty of will. Both relied on this attribution to support their own views, claiming that their own accounts followed that of Aristotle. For this reason, an examination into Aristotle's actual views was necessary. So, in Chapter 2 several relevant works of Aristotle, including large sections of the *De Anima* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, were examined.<sup>662</sup> Aristotle's concepts of deliberation (*bouleusis*), decision (*prohairesis*), and wish (*boulēsis*) were analyzed to determine whether they conformed to the concepts of deliberation (*rū'īah/consilium*), choice (*ikhtiyar/electio*), and will (*irādah/voluntas*) used by Averroes and Aquinas.

As a result of this examination it was determined that Aristotle's understanding of these concepts, while providing a picture of voluntary action, does not constitute an account of a faculty of will, let alone a notion of freedom of the will, as it is traditionally

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661. The questions which comprise the headings for these sections are taken from Chapter 1, where these questions were used to highlight important issues to be addressed in the dissertation.

662. See Chapter 2, section 2.2.1.

conceived by Aquinas and Averroes and their traditions.<sup>663</sup> For Aristotle the process of voluntary moral action is one in which the individual starts with a “rational desire of what is good or beneficial”<sup>664</sup> (*boulēsis*), rationally deliberates about how to achieve the goal of that desire (*bouleusis*), and finally decides upon what course of action would be best (*prohairesis*). While this may at first bear a resemblance to choice and will as it is traditionally understood, closer scrutiny determined that was not the case. This is because Aristotle does not conceive of decision as the freedom to choose from among various equally possible options. Rather, we decide upon what seems to conform to our rational desire to achieve the good; then we may either live up to this decision (when we act according to our rational desires) or we may not (when we act according to our nonrational desires). This differs substantially from the notion that we have the freedom to choose from among several options and that whatever action we ultimately take, if it was voluntary, was the result of a willed choice.. It is also distinct from theories which hold that we will actions since Aristotle’s system holds that we wish for an end but not that we wish for (or will) our actions; it is perfectly possible to act in a way that is contrary to one’s wish.

Thus, as we have seen, it cannot be said that Aristotle’s moral system includes a faculty of will. Rather, it revolves around the notion of voluntary action which can be the result of following either one’s rational or irrational desires. However, that is not to say that Aristotle’s philosophy is useless in our examination of will and moral agency. For it did lay a foundation upon which other thinkers expanded, developing more robust

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663. See Chapter 2, sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

664. Kahn in “Discovering the will from Aristotle to Augustine,” p. 239.

concepts of will and freedom of choice. It was the work of these later thinkers, Stoics,<sup>665</sup> Peripatetics, and Platonists<sup>666</sup>, that was adopted and adapted by medieval thinkers in the Arabic and Latin traditions and attributed to Aristotle.

In so far as the question of moral agency and responsibility relied heavily on the relationship among the will, intellect, and individual, it was also necessary to provide some account of Aristotle's view of the Intellect. Here, as with the idea of will, Averroes and Aquinas both claim to be following Aristotle, despite their radically different understandings of the intellects and their relation to the human being. As we know, Averroes held that both the active and passive intellectual elements, the Agent and Material Intellects, were immaterial entities existing apart from individual human beings and shared by all; Aquinas insisted that both elements had to be faculties of the individual human soul, multiplied according to the number of individuals. Of course, both views cannot be correct assessments of Aristotle. And, it is difficult to determine what Aristotle thought given the little he says on the subject in his works, most notably the infamous passage in *De Anima* 3.5. A reading of the passage suggests that Aristotle does at least view the active part of the intellect as separate enough from the individual human being that it does not require a bodily organ and may continue to exist after the individual dies (whereas all other elements of the human being do require the body and so do not subsist after death). It is also the case that the tradition after Aristotle, for example Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius, held that the active intellectual element was separate and shared while the passive element was a faculty of the individual human being's soul.

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665. See Chapter 2, section 2.3.1.

666. See Chapter 2, section 2.3.2.

## 6.2 Are either Averroes or Aquinas following Aristotle regarding the will or the intellects?

As is well known, both Averroes and Aquinas claim to be Aristotelian in their views, claiming support from the texts of Aristotle regarding both the intellects and the will. However, it has been determined through the course of our investigation that neither Averroes nor Aquinas are particularly in line with Aristotle when it comes to these concepts.

Regarding the will, both thinkers hold (1) that Aristotle had a concept of will which was in line with their own understandings of the faculty, and (2) that Aristotle's assessment of the location of the will within the human being was akin to their own. Regarding the first proposition, it was made clear by the end of Chapter 2 that Aristotle does not, properly speaking, have a faculty of will in his system. Thus, it is impossible for either medieval thinker to be following Aristotle in this regard. Rather, Averroes and Aquinas were relying on contemporary sources--Al-Farabi,<sup>667</sup> Avicenna,<sup>668</sup> and Augustine,<sup>669</sup> among others--in developing their understandings of the faculty of will and the concept of choice. Some of these thinkers, Al-Farabi and Avicenna in particular, attributed their views to Aristotle; but, in truth, they were developed out of later Greek sources who had more robust concepts of choice and freedom. Part of this error has to do with how the texts of Aristotle were translated in Arabic.<sup>670</sup> *Prohairesis* and *boulēsis* were translated using the Arabic words *ikhtiyar* and *irādah* (or sometimes *ḥub* or *hawan*), terms already loaded with more robust connotations of choice and will than the Greek of

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667. See Chapter 2, section 2.5.2.

668. See Chapter 2, section 2.5.3.

669. See Chapter 2, section 2.4.

670. See Chapter 2, section 2.5.1.



Aristotle. This led Arabic thinkers, including Averroes, to attribute these stronger notions to Aristotle. When it came to Augustine, a major influence on Aquinas, his influences were more clearly Platonist, although he also developed this theory using strong theological underpinnings. Aquinas accepted the view of Augustine, taking it to be in line with his understanding of Aristotle (received from his own reading of the Philosopher and from the Arabic commentators).

The above assessment is contrary to the views of some scholars of Aquinas, notably Irwin, who argued in his essay “Who Discovered the Will” that Aristotle had a concept of will by working backwards from Aquinas.<sup>671</sup> This methodology is, in part, responsible for Irwin’s error; one must start with the Aristotle himself if one is to discover what Aristotle thinks. By examining the texts of Aristotle and later Greek thinkers in their own words we were able to trace the notion of will from its limited foundations in Aristotle through to the more robust account found in the Stoics, Peripatetics, and Platonists, and from there into the medieval traditions. This allowed us to explain both the progression of the notion of will and to account for its erroneous attribution to Aristotle by Aquinas and Arabic philosophers. While this demonstrates that Irwin and others who argue for will in Aristotle are wrong, it also shows that the many scholars who argue that there was absolutely no notion of will until Augustine are also incorrect.

In addition to this problematic transmission of the Aristotelian notion of wish into will, there was significant disagreement regarding how Aristotle understood the will (or, more correctly, wish) to be related to the intellects. This was, again, the result of

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671. Irwin, in “Who Discovered the Will?” pp. 453-455.

difficulties in translation. As we saw,<sup>672</sup> Averroes' version of Aristotle had him locating wish/will in the cogitative power, whereas the translation Aquinas had located it in the rational power; modern translations of Aristotle say wish is in "the calculative part." This issue of translation clearly influenced both philosophers' understanding of where the will should be situated in the human being, providing further evidence to support the positions towards which their respective philosophies were already tending. However, it is now clear that neither Averroes nor Aquinas can be said to be correct in their assessment of Aristotle's actual view since we have demonstrated that Aristotle did not have a notion of will at all.

Regarding the notion of intellects, we can again say that neither thinker is fully following Aristotle. It has generally been accepted in the tradition that Aristotle held that all human beings shared a single, separate active intellect while possessing their own passive intellect.<sup>673</sup> This is the understanding gleaned from Aristotle's *De Anima* 3.5 discussion of the active and passive intellects, developed, and adapted by later Greek thinkers, such as Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius, as well as thinkers in the Medieval Arabic and Latin traditions. Averroes reacted against this tradition, developing the idea that both intellectual powers must be separate and shared entities; he agreed with the conventional understanding of the Agent Intellect as separate and shared by all human beings but his understanding of the intelligibles in act as the foundation for the unity of science led him to assert that the Material Intellect must likewise be shared. Aquinas, on

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672. Chapter 5, section 5.5.

673. It is perhaps important to remember that the terminology surrounding the active and receptive elements of the intellect, and the related possible intellectual powers, differs from philosopher to philosopher. Taylor provides a detail discussion of this terminology in "Introduction," pp. xix-xx, especially n.10.

the other hand, developed a different understanding of the nature of intelligibles which led him to conclude that neither intellectual power could be a separately existing entity and shared. In so far as he is following Aristotle regarding the Agent Intellect, Averroes may be said to be more Aristotelian, although whether this is a meaningful assertion, given the lack of detail in Aristotle's account, is surely debatable. This is contrary to the generally accepted view held by Mahoney and McNerny,<sup>674</sup> among others, that Aquinas is faithful to Aristotle in general and regarding the intellects in particular. While these scholars start with Aquinas and assess his arguments on their own, here again our analysis has benefited from a different methodological approach, one where we started with the texts of Aristotle and the transmission of key passages into Arabic and Latin to pinpoint their influence on the work and understanding of Averroes and Aquinas.

### **6.3 What is Averroes' position and what motivates this position? Is it coherent?**

Chapter 3 of this dissertation carefully examined a number of important texts<sup>675</sup> of Averroes in an effort to determine Averroes' final views regarding the Intellects and the will as well as how this view developed over time. Many of these texts were not available to Aquinas, whose source for Averroes was his *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*; however, since the objective was to understand Averroes in his own right they were important elements to discuss.

Averroes' final position on the Intellects is that both the Agent and Material Intellects must be separate entities shared by all human beings. Throughout his works

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674. Mahoney, "Aquinas' Critique of Averroes' Doctrine of the Unity of the Intellect."

675. Chapter 3, section 3.2 contains several subsections, each dealing with a text of Averroes.

Averroes insists that the Agent Intellect is an eternal separate substance shared by all human beings as “form for us” and subject to our will. However, there is a shift over time regarding his view of the Material Intellect. In the *Middle Commentary* on the *De Anima* <sup>676</sup>Averroes calls the material intellect a “disposition only”<sup>677</sup> and seems to hold that it is a disposition of the individual human being which is activated during thought by connection to the separate Agent Intellect. It is immaterial (in that it is not mixed with the matter of the body) but it is still individuated. The cogitative power helps to provide a means by which the material intellect and Agent Intellect can be linked in thought. This view reflects the more traditional account of human intellectual power.

However, it was not ultimately satisfactory for Averroes because it could not adequately address the function of the intelligibles in act. Averroes held that the intelligibles in act, created by the Agent Intellect and stored in the Material Intellect, must exist as a single set of intelligibles knowable by all human beings if the unity of science is to be maintained. While they are created, he claims, through the knowledge attainment process of the individual human being (rather than preexisting in the Agent Intellect), they must not exist in the individual since this would make communication and science impossible. A single set of intelligibles requires a single storehouse; thus, Averroes ultimately<sup>678</sup> argues that the Material Intellect, like the Agent Intellect, must be a separate shared entity, not part of the individual human being’s soul.

The individual is able to access both Intellects via the cogitative power, a brain power which is multiplied according to the number of individuals and is equivocally

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676. See Chapter 3, section 3.2.3.1.

677. Averroes, MCDA p. 111.

678. In the LCDA See Chapter 3, section 3.2.3.2.

referred to as reason. It is this cogitative power which allows the individual to conjoin with the Agent Intellect during thought, using her own sensory experience and the resulting phantasms to provide the materials from which the Agent Intellect can abstract the intelligibles in act.<sup>679</sup> In this way the individual human being has access to those intelligibles in the Material Intellect. The individual is able to make these connections to the Intellects “at will” and the Intellects are said to be “in the soul” and “form for us” during this process. It is also the cogitative power which plays a central roll in moral action since it is the location of the will and the associated deliberative powers. Thus, Averroes is able to hold simultaneously that the Intellects are shared but the will is not. The strength and versatility of the cogitative power allows Averroes to develop an overall view which coherently addresses problems endemic to other theories of intellect while maintaining individual moral responsibility. However, while he is able to provide innovative solutions to weaknesses in his predecessors’ theories, his own system is flawed in other ways.

#### **6.4 Does Averroes’ view hold up against the critiques of Aquinas?**

As we saw in Chapter 5, by means of a detailed analysis of Aquinas’ critiques of Averroes’ position, there are several issues to be considered. These include: (A) the nature of the Intellects as both separate and “in the soul,” (B) the notion that the Intellects are “form for us,” (C) the relationship between the individual human being and the intelligibles in act, and (D) the location and function of the will. By taking each of these

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679. It is also the cogitative power which is the locus of the theoretical intelligibles, the intelligibles as they exist in the individual during her connection with the separate Intellects.

issues in turn we determined that there are times when Aquinas' criticisms of Averroes are merited; however, this is not universally the case.

Importantly, we saw that the criticisms Aquinas levels at Averroes' understanding of the will and its relation to the intellects were unwarranted and represented a misunderstanding of Averroes' position. Aquinas erroneously assumes that Averroes shares his understanding of the will as a power in the intellect and thus asserts that by separating the Intellects from the individual he also separates the will, making moral responsibility impossible. It was argued that, despite the tendency to accept Aquinas' understanding of Averroes, a careful examination of Averroes' own work demonstrates that Aquinas misunderstands Averroes. Specifically, he does not take note of Averroes' insistence that the will is a bodily power, located in the cogitative faculty. Rather, Aquinas assumes that Averroes is following the same translation of a key passage in Aristotle's *De Anima* and, as result, coming to the same conclusion about the nature of the relationship between the will and the intellect. However, we saw that there were issues of translation which led Aquinas and Averroes in two different directions in their quest to remain in line with Aristotle on this issue. Further, we saw that Averroes recognized the need to maintain individual control over both the intellectual and moral processes. These reasons led Averroes to separate the Intellects from the will and to locate the will in the individual human being's brain while the Intellects were separate and shared. As a result, Averroes is able to maintain his view of the Intellects without automatically sacrificing individual moral responsibility in the way Aquinas claims. The problems that this particular critique of Aquinas exhibit are often overlooked by

contemporary scholars who frequently read Aquinas without referencing Averroes directly; as a result they praise his critiques as “deft” and “formidable.”<sup>680</sup>

Despite this error in his assessment of the will in Averroes (Issue D), Aquinas’ critiques of Averroes regarding the Intellects and the intelligibles in act (Issues A, B, and C) are generally warranted and are themselves enough to call into question Averroes’ view of moral agency. As we know, Averroes held that both the Material and Agent Intellects must be separate entities shared by all human beings; this view was in keeping with the tradition about the Agent Intellect, but represented a unique position about the Material Intellect. He was pushed to this position by his understanding of the intelligibles in act, which he viewed to be the objects of knowledge for all human beings, created for each person when her own sensory experience was used by the Agent Intellect to abstract the intelligibles. He accounted for individual knowledge by insisting that individual sensory experience was necessary for the development of the intelligibles; these intelligibles did not pre-exist in the Material Intellect, as they did for philosophers such as Avicenna. Furthermore, he held that the Intellects were “in” the individual human being’s soul when in use. The cogitative power, a brain power, was fundamental to this process as it was the power in the individual human being which brought forth the phantasms, presenting them to the Intellects, and linked the individual to the Intellects during thought.

Aquinas argued that Averroes’ account was not enough to fully explain individual human knowledge and that under Averroes’ system the human being was, at best, the object known, not the knower. He argued against Averroes’ understanding of intelligibles

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680. Mahoney, “Aquinas’ Critique of Averroes’ Doctrine of the Unity of the Intellect,” pp. 97; 106.

and the dual subject theory, by which they are linked to the individual through the phantasms and the Intellects through the Material Intellect (the possible intellect in Aquinas' terminology); he explained that the intelligibles in the possible intellect and in the imagination could not be one in number since the subject of the possible intellect was eternal and the subject of the phantasms was generable and corruptible. He goes on to argue against Averroes' view that the individual knows through conjunction with the possible intellect using the phantasms resulting from her own sensory experiences and containing the intelligibles in potency. Here Aquinas again points to problems with the dual subject theory; he also argues the human being under this view has only an accidental connection to the Intellects, not an essential one, and so cannot be *per se* rational. Further, he reasons that it is more proper to say that in Averroes' system the human being is the object of knowledge rather than the knower since the phantasm are in the human being but the knowing element, the intellects, are not. Aquinas also argues against Averroes' understanding of intelligibles in act as a single set of intelligibles shared by all human beings and acting as the objects of knowledge. He calls the theory more Platonic than Aristotelian and explains that it does not leave sufficient room for the individual human being to participate in the knowledge attainment process. Furthermore, it is not clear how it could be true that each person is responsible for the creation of the intelligibles in act they know while also insisting that there is one set known by all. Aquinas holds that the thing known is not the intelligibles in act but the common nature which exists in things; the intelligibles in act are "that by which [the intellect]



understands.”<sup>681</sup> This allows him to preserve science, as was Averroes’ goal, by ensuring that the objects of understanding, like the objects of science, exist in the nature of particular things outside of the mind. In this way he was also able to preserve the notion that the individual, not the separate Intellects, are the knowers.

Developing a proper understanding of not only the will but also the nature of the intellect and the intelligibles is essential to the discussion of moral responsibility because, as Aristotle notes and Averroes and Aquinas accept, moral action is a matter of both intellect and will. This is reflected in the practical syllogism. While both Averroes and Aquinas adopt the practical syllogism as their account of the process of moral decision making, the problems highlighted by Aquinas with Averroes’ views of knowledge attainment make it impossible for Averroes’ system to properly use the syllogism in a way that allows for individual moral thinking and, thus, individual moral responsibility. If one cannot be said to be truly rational or to truly know, one cannot, properly speaking, be said to act on one’s knowledge in matters of practical, moral import. Thus, despite Averroes best efforts and the advancements he made beyond his predecessors, and despite the problems that exist with some of Aquinas’ critiques Averroes, in the end his theory is insufficient to fully account for individual moral responsibility.

## 6.5 Final Remarks

Several things have been accomplished during the course of this dissertation

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<sup>681</sup> Aquinas, ST Ia, Q. 85, A. 2, p. 817. Also, see Q. 84, A. 7, p. 809: “the proper object of the human intellect, which is united to the body, is the quiddity or nature existing in corporeal matter.”

which are important to the study of Medieval philosophical psychology in the Arabic and Latin traditions. First, it has closely examined the issue of the will in Aristotle and later Greek thinkers with a view towards understanding medieval thought; while much work has been done on the Greeks for their own sake, it has not been sufficiently applied to the thought of medieval philosophers, particularly in the Arabic tradition. Accomplishing this task allows us to move forward with a better understanding of the role that Aristotle did and did not play in medieval thought on the issues at hand. Second, the importance of Averroes' view of the intelligibles in act to the question of moral agency had not been properly developed up to this point; it became clear through the course of this dissertation that Averroes' understanding of the intelligibles had bearing not only on his view of the Intellects but also on his view of the will. Additionally, while Averroes and Aquinas have been studied in their own right (Aquinas extensively so), a close examination of the Aquinas' critiques of Averroes within the context of a full account of Averroes on the relevant issues has not been undertaken; too often the works of Aquinas are given precedence and accepted as accurate reflections of Averroes. While what has been done here is a mere start to this project, it is an important contribution to the question of how one should approach the issue methodologically. This new approach allowed us to see where Aquinas' critique were flawed; it also allowed us to more fully appreciate the ways in which his criticisms were justified.

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