

RICHARD C. TAYLOR

Personal Immortality in Averroes' Mature Philosophical Psychology¹

In his *Faṣl al-Maḡāl* or *Decisive Treatise* (ca. c.e. 1178²), Averroes writes regarding the future life (*al-ma'ād*), « In this matter only the negation of existence is unbelief (*kufran*), because it concerns one of the principles of religion and one of those points to which assent is attainable through the three methods common »³ to all people. These methods to which Averroes refers are those which he had earlier specified as suitable to the rhetorical, dialectical and demonstrative classes of people. Islam summons people to its duties and rewards in accord with the diverse natures and abilities of its adherents to respond with assent to its call⁴. Of the three methods, the most profound and penetrating is not the rhetorical which sways people's emotions and minds by imagery and persuasive words, not the dialectical which is used by the religious lawyer who « has at his disposition only reasoning based on opinion »⁵. Rather, « we are under an obligation to carry on our study of beings by intellectual reasoning. It is further evident that this matter of study, to which the Law summons and urges those capable, is the most perfect kind

¹ This topic was explored in a preliminary way in my presentation, *The Future Life' and Averroes' Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*, in Amherst, New York, at *Averroes and his Influence : Remembering George Hourani* sponsored by the Philosophy Department of SUNY Buffalo and the Center for Inquiry, April 12, 1996. This was recently published in *Averroës and the Enlightenment*, edited by M. WAHBA and M. ABOUSENNA, Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York 1996, pp. 263-277.

² Regarding the dates of the works discussed in this paper the following are in agreement : M. ALONSO ALONSO, *Teología de Averroes*, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto 'Miguel Asín', Escuelas de Estudios Árabes de Madrid y Granada, Madrid & Granada 1947, pp. 88, 95 ; J. AL-DĪN AL-'ALAWĪ, *al-Matn al-Ruṣḡdī: madkhal li-qirā'a jadīda*, Dar Tubqal, Casablanca 1986, pp. 95-96, 100-102, 108-110 ; and M. CRUZ HERNANDEZ, *Abū-l-Walīd ibn Ruṣḡd (Averroes) : vida, obra, pensamiento, influencia*, Publicaciones del Monte de Piedad y Caja de Ahorros de Córdoba, Córdoba 1986, pp. 56-57.

³ IBN RUṢḡD (AVERROES), *Kitāb faṣl al-maḡāl with its appendix (Damīma) and an extract from Kitāb al-kaṣf fī al-manāhij al-adilla*, Arabic text, ed. by G. F. HOURANI, Brill, Leiden 1959, p. 17 ; Averroes. *On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy. A translation, with introduction and notes, of Ibn Ruṣḡd's Kitāb Faṣl al-Maḡāl with its appendix (Damīma) and an extract from Kitāb al-kashf fī al-manāhij al-adilla*, by G. F. HOURANI, Luzac & Co., London 1967, p. 61.

⁴ IBN RUṢḡD, *Kitāb faṣl al-maḡāl* cit., pp. 6-7 ; HOURANI, *Averroes. On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* cit., p. 49.

⁵ IBN RUṢḡD, *Kitāb faṣl al-maḡāl* cit., p. 7 ; HOURANI, *Averroes. On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* cit., p. 51.

of study using the most perfect kind of reasoning; and this is the kind called 'demonstration' »⁶. Such is the preferred method of the philosophers, the very group on which al-Ġazālī had leveled this third of his charges of unbelief. The other charges concerned the philosophers' teachings on the eternity of the world and on God's knowledge of particulars. Yet, while Averroes works to refute the suitability of the charges in regard to these two⁷, it is only on the issue of the existence of a future life that he in fact does allow that the charge may be rightly pressed and that the affirmation of the reality of a future life can be demanded from all classes of people.

In the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* (ca. c.e. 1180), Averroes addresses al-Ġazālī's accusation that the final resurrection of the body is denied by the philosophers. Here he asserts that in fact

« the philosophers in particular, as is only natural, regard this doctrine as most important and believe in it most, and the reason is that it is conducive to an order amongst men on which man's being, as man, depends and through which he can attain the greatest happiness proper to him, for it is a necessity for the existence of the moral and speculative virtues and of the practical sciences in men »⁸.

He then goes on to stress the importance of religious laws for society's welfare across cultures and religions because of the value of religion for the political arts whereby the mass of humanity can be assisted in achieving whatever level of fulfillment and perfection of which each person may be capable. And as for the matter of the future life, he asserts that in refutation of those who would seek to undermine religious beliefs « it must be admitted that the soul is immortal, as is proved by rational and religious proofs (*ka-mā dallat 'alai-hi al-dalā'il al-'aqlīya wa-š-šar'īya*), and it must be assumed that what arises from the dead is a likeness⁹ of these earthly bodies, not these bodies themselves, for that which has perished does not return individually (...) »¹⁰.

It is clear that the doctrine of the existence of the future life is explicitly asserted in each of these works. Yet it is equally evident that each of these

⁶ IBN RUŠD, *Kitāb faṣl al-maḡāl* cit., p. 2 ; HOURANI, Averroes. *On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* cit., p. 45.

⁷ IBN RUŠD, *Kitāb faṣl al-maḡāl* cit., pp. 9-15 ; HOURANI, Averroes. *On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* cit., p. 53-58.

⁸ Averroès. *Tahafot at-tahafot*, ed. M. BOUYGES, S. J., Imprimerie Catholique, Beyrouth 1930, p. 581 ; Averroes' *Tahafut al-Tahafut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*, translated by S. VAN DEN BERGH, Luzac & Co., London 1969, p. 359.

⁹ Revised from Van Den Bergh's 'simulacra'.

¹⁰ Averroès. *Tahafot at-tahafot* ed. BOUYGES cit., p. 586 ; Averroes' *Tahafut al-Tahafut*, transl. VAN DEN BERGH cit., p. 362. Arabic added.

works also expresses Averroes' well-known teachings on the three sorts of people : those swayed by rhetorical argument, those persuaded by the dialectical, and those moved by the demonstrative, namely, the philosophers who are capable of grasping truth in its most complete state¹¹. To what group might Averroes himself be speaking in these works ? The *Decisive Treatise* is a self-professed work of law and so would seem to be addressed to the dialectical. The same is apparently the case for the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut*, a work in which Averroes does not provide a positive demonstrative account throughout but rather assumes certain accepted viewpoints and then points beyond this work for the way of understanding suitable for those who seek demonstrative grasp and proof. In remarking on his preceding discussion of the divine attributes, he says :

« All this is the theory of the philosophers on this problem and in the way we have stated it here with its proofs, it is a persuasive not a demonstrative statement. It is for you to inquire about these questions in the places where they are treated in the books of demonstration, if you are one of the people of perfect eudaemonia¹², and if you are one of those who learn the arts the function of which is proof. For the demonstrative arts are very much like the practical; for just as a man who is not a craftsman cannot perform the function of craftsmanship, in the same way it is not possible for him who has not learned the arts of demonstration to perform the function of demonstration which is demonstration itself : indeed this is still more necessary for this art than for any other — and this is not generally acknowledged in the case of this practice only because it is a mere act — and therefore such a demonstration can proceed

¹¹ IBN RUŠD, *Kitāb faṣl al-maḡāl* cit., p. 5 ; HOURANI, *Averroes. On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* cit., p. 48 : « (...) it is evident that the study of the books of the ancients is obligatory by Law, since their aim and purpose in their books is just the purpose to which the Law has urged us, and that whoever forbids the study of them to anyone who is fit to study them, i.e., anyone who unites two qualities, (1) natural intelligence and (2) religious integrity and moral virtue, is blocking people from the door by which the Law summons them to knowledge of God, the door of theoretical study which leads to the truest knowledge of Him (wa-huwa bāb al-naẓar al-mu'addan ilā ma'rifati-hi ḥaqqā al-ma'rifati); and such an act is the extreme of ignorance and estrangement from God the Exalted » (my emphasis and addition of the Arabic).

¹² *min ahl al-sa'ada al-tāmma fī mawādi'i-hā min kutub al-burhān*. These « people of complete happiness » are those philosophers who attain the perfection of highest intellectual virtue. In book X of his *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle writes, « (...) the activity of intellect, which is contemplative, seems both to be superior in worth and to aim at no end beyond itself, and to have its pleasure proper to itself (and this augments the activity), and the self-sufficiency, leisureliness, unweariedness (so far as this is possible for man), and all the other attributes ascribed to the blessed man are evidently those connected with this activity, it follows that this will be the complete happiness of man, if it be allowed a complete term of life (for none of the attributes of happiness is incomplete) » : X 7, 1177b18-26. *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The revised Oxford Translation*, edited by J. BARNES, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1984, vol. II, p. 1861, translation by W. D. ROSS, revised by J. O. URMSON.

only from one who has learned the art. The kinds of statements, however, are many, some demonstrative, others not, and since non-demonstrative statements can be adduced without knowledge of the art, it was thought that this might also be the case with demonstrative statements; but this is a great error. And therefore in the spheres of the demonstrative arts, no other statement is possible but a technical statement which only the student of this art can bring, just as is the case with the art of geometry. Nothing therefore of what we have said in this book is a technical demonstrative proof; they are all non-technical statements, some of them having greater persuasion than others, and it is in this spirit that what we have written here must be understood »¹³.

Where should we look for « technical demonstrative proof (*qaulan šanā'īyan burhānīyan*) », that is, for Averroes' demonstrative philosophical statements on the existence of the future life? The technical works to which he refers are, of course, of his philosophical commentaries. Hence, we need to turn our attention to his discussion of the soul in his *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle* (ca. c.e. 1190), not only because it is his most comprehensive account of the soul and not only because it is arguably one of his most mature works¹⁴, but also because it has recently been argued that this *Long Commentary on the De Anima* contains a « doctrine of the future life » reconciling the Qur'anic conception of death and the Aristotelian conception of soul.

¹³ Averroès. *Tahafot at-tahafot* ed. BOUYGES cit., pp. 427-428; *Averroes' Tahafut al-Tahafut*, transl. VAN DEN BERGH cit., pp. 257-258.

¹⁴ While acknowledging that « In general (...) the *Long Commentary* represents Averroes' most thorough and definitive treatment of Aristotle's text » (p. 10), A. Ivry, editor of the Arabic *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's de Anima*, Cairo 1994, argues that the *Middle Commentary* is posterior to the *Long Commentary* (pp. 10-11). In this he is at odds with the generally accepted chronology (see the works cited in note 2 above) and at odds with H. Davidson over the understanding of certain passages in the *Middle Commentary*. Davidson, in his *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford 1992, pp. 276-281, 296-297, holds that the *Middle Commentary* contains an excursus derived from the understanding expressed in the *Long Commentary*. Davidson admits to having little manuscript evidence for reading the *Middle Commentary* as containing an interpolation, but argues from the philosophical content of the work that it can be seen to contain an intermediate position not yet that of the *Long Commentary* (which Davidson holds to express Averroes' most mature position), when read as containing an interpolation. Ivry argues his contrary position in the introduction to his edition of the Arabic text (English pp. 10-11) and also in *Averroes' Middle and Long Commentaries on the De anima*, « Arabic Sciences and Philosophy », 5, 1995, pp. 75-92. Also see *Averroes' Middle Commentary on the De Anima*, in *Knowledge and the Sciences in Medieval Philosophy*. Proceedings of the Eight International Congress of Medieval Philosophy (S.I.E.P.M.), ed. R. Työrinoja et alii, Helsinki 1990, vol. III, pp. 79-86; and *Averroes' Short Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, « Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale », 8, 1997, pp. 511-549, especially pp. 511-519 with its discussion of the relationship of the short, middle and long commentaries.

In a 1993 article in « International Philosophical Quarterly », derivative upon his 1984 book, Ovey Mohammed asserted that Averroes himself holds that « Human beings will enter eternal life when the resurrection body takes the place of our earthly body at the new creation »¹⁵. As he sees it, « Averroes' doctrine of the future life can be reconstructed from his *Long Commentary on the De Anima* alone if we accept a monistic conception of human beings and the future life as dependent on God »¹⁶. The religious character of Averroes' thought in the *Long Commentary on the De Anima* has escaped modern scholars who have struggled with his admissions of personal immortality in other works, for « their unfamiliarity with Qur'anic anthropology has left them unable to reconcile this finding with Averroes' theory of the intellect as found in the *Long Commentary on the De Anima* »¹⁷. On this account Averroes clarifies his understanding of soul and intellect thanks to revelation¹⁸ even to the extent that, according to this recent commentator, « One may say that it is Averroes' concern with the Qur'anic conception of human beings and their relationship with God that furnishes in part the reason why the intellect is conjoined or united (*copulatur*) to us. Moreover, (...) this theory of conjunction is of great importance in understanding how human beatitude in this life is related to a system of reward and punishment in the next »¹⁹. Furthermore, in reference to body and soul, « In fact, it is because of this Qur'anic teaching [on body and soul] that Averroes can state categorically that the use of a corporeal instrument is the decisive factor in determining whether a particular power should be called 'soul' or not »²⁰. And finally, « When Averroes shows emotion in defending his interpretation of the soul against Alexander, this surely indicates that it is because he has certain knowledge of it from a source other than philosophy, that is, from revelation »²¹.

It is obvious that these statements need to be given careful consideration in light of the teachings of the *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*.

¹⁵ O. N. MOHAMMED, S. J., *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an on Immortality*, « International Philosophical Quarterly », 33, 1993, pp. 37-55, see p. 54. This statement repeats what was written in *Averroes' Doctrine of Immortality. A Matter of Controversy*, Wilfried Laurie University Press, Ottawa 1984, p. 113. There it is also stated that « Averroes' exposition of the soul is an explanation of the future life guaranteed by the Qur'an in Aristotelian terms. It is a defence of the monistic conception of man found in Aristotle and the Qur'an ».

¹⁶ MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., p. 54.

¹⁷ MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., p. 41.

¹⁸ MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., p. 50 : « (...) Averroes has already clarified the ambiguity between soul and intellect with the help of revelation (...) ».

¹⁹ MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., p. 50.

²⁰ MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., p. 50.

²¹ MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., p. 51.

To that end, in what follows here, first, I examine relevant teachings in this work in order to give accounts of Averroes' complex and challenging doctrine of the intellect and of his understanding of the individual human being existing in this world of whom rationality and intellect are commonly predicated ; second, I examine in detail the meaning of the sole passage of the work in which explicit mention of religious laws and the immortality of soul is made ; and, finally, I return to examine the claims of Ovey Mohammed recounted earlier.

AN ACCOUNT OF AVERROES' DOCTRINE OF INTELLECT AND THE HUMAN INDIVIDUAL
IN HIS *LONG COMMENTARY ON THE DE ANIMA*

In the Aristotelian context of an epistemological realism which assumes that the soul is constituted so as to form in itself or to know non-sensible universals or intelligibles consequent upon sense perception²², Averroes follows Aristotle, Alexander, Themistius, al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and others in asserting the necessity of separate intellect for individual human beings to be knowers²³. For Averroes, as for all of these thinkers, it was necessary that there exist a separate Agent or Active Intellect which brought about the existence of intelligibles in actuality consequent upon human perception of sensible things of the world which were merely intelligible in potency²⁴. It did so by acting as a kind of light, for as light — in Aristotelian natural philosophy — actualizes the intervening medium so that what was potentially transparent may be actually transparent and may thereby allow the colors and sensible objects to be actually sensible and sensed by the receptive sensory power, so too the Agent Intellect is a cause of actuality that enables the potential intelligibles to become actual intelligibles and actually understood intellectually by the knower²⁵.

²² ARISTOTLE, *Posterior Analytics* II 19, 100a13-14.

²³ The positions of each of these thinkers are discussed in DAVIDSON, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect* cit.

²⁴ In the thought of Ibn Sīnā, « Language to the effect that man abstracts thought or that the light of the active intellect transforms potential thoughts into actual thoughts is (...) not to be taken literally, for the actual thoughts in fact come from the emanation of the active intellect » : DAVIDSON, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect* cit., p. 94. Avicenna's position is different from that of Averroes. « (...) Avicenna's position is that the intellect does not extract forms from images, but that the imaginative faculty — or faculties — presents images to the human intellect and thereby 'prepares' the human intellect for receiving thoughts from the emanation of the active intellect » : *ibid.*, p. 95. In contrast, Averroes holds that images produced in the individual human being are essential and causative elements in the process of the individual's coming to have knowledge.

²⁵ For a valuable discussion of the Aristotelian philosophical context, see pp. 164-173 of Arthur Hyman's article, *Aristotle's Theory of the Intellect and Its Interpretation by Averroes*, in

For Averroes, the nature of intelligibles as universals required that they not be received by some individual material power, for such a reception would particularize the intelligible and rob it of its universality. Consequently, the intelligibles had to be received into an immaterial but receptive nature, an intellect, which would preserve their natures as actual universals, that is, as intelligibles in actuality²⁶. Moreover, the intelligible as universal could not be received into a plurality of different receptive intellects, for then it would not be a universal; rather, the universal, of which by definition there can only be one, would be something outside each of the individual receptive intellects, while the purported intelligible in those individual intellects would in fact be a particular intelligible in a particular intellect. Hence, for there to be knowledge in the sense demanded by the Aristotelian tradition of realism that Averroes followed, the universal as actual intelligible or intelligible in act had to be received into an immaterial intellectual power intellectually receptive, that is, in an intellect the nature of which is a distinctively intellectual potency for intelligibles²⁷. This receptive intellect, Averroes' famous Material Intellect, proceeds from a state of potency for receiving intelligibles to a state of actually possessing and being these intelligibles in act thanks to the Agent Intellect's role of making into actual intelligibles the potential intelligibles found in the imagination consequent upon sense perception.

Individual human beings, by means of sense perception of physical objects and the material intelligibles in them, generate images in the imaginative power of the soul. This imaginative power of the soul, then, plays a twofold role with respect to potential intelligibles and with respect to actual intelligibles. The images or potential intelligibles are 'spiritualized', that is, made less particular insofar as they are taken away from the physical particulars in which they

Studies in Aristotle, ed. D. J. O'MEARA, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C. 1981, pp. 161-191.

²⁶ *Averrois Cordubensis Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros*, ed. F. S. CRAWFORD, Cambridge 1953, p. 388 : (...) *recipit formas universales*. The *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle* by Averroes is not extant in Arabic. Fragments of the Arabic original were found and published by A. BEN CHAHIDA, *Iktisāf al-naṣṣ al-'arabī li-aḥamm aḡzā' al-ṣarḥ al-kabīr li-kitāb al-naṣṣ ta'tīf Abī al-Walīd ibn Ruṣd*, « *Al-Hayāt al-Taḡāfiyya* », 35, 1985, pp. 14-48.

²⁷ « There remains, therefore, the third division, namely that the intellect reaches a quiddity not having a quiddity, and what is so is a separate form. He supported this by what Aristotle is accustomed to say in such demonstrations, namely that, when it is necessary to cut off an infinite regress, it is better to cut it off in the beginning ». (« *Remanet igitur tertia divisio, et est quod intellectus perveniat ad quiditatem non habentem quiditatem ; et quod est tale est forma abstracta. Et confirmavit hoc per illud quod consuetus est Aristoteles dicere in talibus demonstrationibus, scilicet quoniam, quando necesse est abscindere infinitum, melius est abscindere eum in principio* ») : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 492 ; also see pp. 492-493 ; cf. pp. 411-412 ; p. 424.

primarily exist as forms and intentions of things²⁸. These images then are presented to the separate intellects, actualized as intelligibles by the Agent Intellect's noetic light, and received as actual intelligibles into the directed or determinate potentiality for intelligibles called the Material Intellect. The human contributor of the images shares in the process both by providing the images²⁹ and by being receptive of the consequences of this intellectual actualization of the intelligibles in the Material Intellect. The sole reason for the Aristotelian epistemological doctrine of the intellect, and particularly that of the Agent and Patient or Material Intellects, was the fact that human beings actually do become knowing after not knowing in a way that allows for a grasp of intelligibles, a way different from that of sense perception in which particulars are grasped. Hence, what is to be explained is not the phenomenon of knowledge existing in human beings, but rather how what we call knowledge comes about and how it is related in a philosophically consonant way to what has already been set forth in the metaphysical account of this epistemological doctrine³⁰. The intelligibles in act, insofar as they are intelligibles in act,

²⁸ « Since that is the definition of the material intellect, it is evident that in its own case it differs from prime matter in this respect : it is in potency all the intentions [388] of the universal material forms, while prime matter is in potency all those sensibles forms, not something which knows or apprehends. The reason why that nature is something which discerns and knows while prime matter neither knows nor discerns, is because prime matter receives different forms, namely individual and particular forms, while this [nature] receives universal forms. From this it is apparent that this nature is not a this nor a body nor a power in a body ». (« Et cum ista est diffinitio intellectus materialis, manifestum est quod differt apud ipsum a prima materia in hoc quod iste est in potentia omnes intentiones formarum [388] universalium materialium, prima autem materia est in potentia omnes iste forme sensibiles non cognoscens neque comprehendens. Et causa propter quam ista natura est distinguens et cognoscens, prima autem materia neque cognoscens neque distinguens, est quia prima materia recipit formas diversas, scilicet individuales et istas, ista autem recipit formas universales. Et ex hoc apparet quod ista natura non est aliquid hoc, neque corpus neque virtus in corpore ») : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., pp. 387-388 ; also see pp. 416 ; 491 ; cf. pp. 384-385.

²⁹ *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., pp. 406-408.

³⁰ Averroes' mature work as found in the *Long Commentary on the De Anima* and the *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics* is systematic in its metaphysical and epistemological teachings. In each work the doctrine of the Material Intellect is essential. He remarks at the beginning of the *Long Commentary on the De Anima* that psychology provides principles for the sciences of ethics and metaphysics (*Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 5) and later in Book III that the doctrine of the Material Intellect provides an essential component in understanding the nature of intellect in first philosophy, scil. metaphysics (*ibid.*, p. 410). In the *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics* he refers back to the establishment of the Material Intellect in his *Long Commentary on the De Anima* as essential to his metaphysical teachings. See *Tafsīr mā ba'd aṭ-Ṭabī'at*, texte arabe inédit établi par M. BOUYGES, S. J., Imprimerie Catholique, Beyrouth 1938-1948, vols. I-IV (Bibliotheca Arabica Scholasticorum, série arabe, tomes V, V 1, VI, VIII), vol. III (= t. VII), pp. 1593-1594. Averroes' doctrine of the Material Intellect and its role in the establishment

cannot be received into the particular human being ; rather, what can be received is an image. For Averroes, the terms speculative intellect and speculative intelligibles are used to denote primarily the intelligibles in act which exist in the separate Material Intellect where they exist with an eternal nature in accord with the nature of the intellectual potency into which they are received. They also have a generable and corruptible nature in the individual human passive or passible intellect which is the imaginative power in human beings³¹. Here the images or speculative intelligibles as present in the individual human being seem to be signs of the eternal speculative intelligibles in the separate Material Intellect, for the eternal speculative intelligibles in act could not exist in the particular human being's particular intellectual power³². This power in the individual human being in virtue of

of the principles of the science of metaphysics is a topic I will be considering elsewhere.

³¹ *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., pp. 476-477. See note 44 below for this text.

³² « The question addressing how the speculative intelligibles will be generable and corruptible while their agent and [400] recipient will be eternal and [that of] what the need is for setting forth an agent [intellect] and a recipient intellect if there is not something generated there, this question would not occur if here there were not another thing which is the cause that the speculative intelligibles are generated. Now, however, because those intelligibles are constituted through two things, one generated and the other not generated, what was said regarding this follows naturally. Conceptualizing by intellect, as Aristotle says, is like apprehending through sense; but to apprehend through sense is something which is actualized through two subjects, one the subject through which the sense comes to be true (this is the thing sensed outside the soul) and the other the subject through which the sense is an existing form (this is the first actuality of the sense organ). Hence, the intelligibles in act, then, must also have two subjects, one the subject through which they are true, namely the forms which are true images, and second that through which the intelligibles are among the beings in the world, and this is the material intellect ». (« *Questio autem dicens quomodo intellecta speculativa, erunt generabilia et corruptibilia et agens ea et [400] recipiens erit eternum, et que est indigentia ad imponendum intellectum agentem et recipientem si non est illic aliquod generatum, illa questio non contingeret si non esset hic aliud quod est causa esse intellecta speculativa generata. Modo autem, quia ista intellecta constituuntur per duo, quorum unum est generatum et aliud non generatum, quod dictum fuit in hoc est secundum cursum naturalem. Quoniam, quia formare per intellectum, sicut dicit Aristoteles, est sicut comprehendere per sensum, comprehendere autem per sensum perficitur per duo subiecta, quorum unum est subiectum per quod sensus fit verus (et est sensatum extra animam), aliud autem est subiectum per quod sensus est forma existens (et est prima perfectio sentientis), necesse est etiam ut intellecta in actu habeant duo subiecta, quorum unum est subiectum per quod sunt vera, scilicet forme que sunt ymagines vere, secundum autem est illud per quod intellecta sunt unum entium in mundo, et istud est intellectus materialis »): *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., pp. 399-400 ; see pp. 399-401 ; 404-407. Davidson rightly remarks, « Through images in the imaginative faculty, the soul becomes conscious of intelligible thoughts. Consequently, although men share a common material intellect, each still owns his personal individual thoughts, and thoughts are not shared » : *DAVIDSON, Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect* cit., p. 290.*

which one 'thinks' or 'understands' in the common senses of those terms using images is the cogitative power, one of the so-called 'internal senses'³³.

For Averroes the internal sense faculties are four, which he lists in order of ascending spirituality (that is, in order of increasing immateriality and universality in their activities) as (1) the common sense, (2) the imaginative power, (3) the cogitative power, and (4) the power of memory³⁴. In his Comment on Book III text 6 he explicitly mentions that the cogitative power is in the genus of those powers which have their existence in the body³⁵. There it functions much as it does in Avicenna, namely as a discriminating (*al-mumaiyiza*) faculty which actively composes images from sense prior to the grasp of intelligibles and which actively utilizes intelligibles received from the intellect in its formation of propositions of science, morality, etc. in the particular rational person³⁶. It is the human imaginative faculty, characterized as rational or intellectual, which is the cogitative power³⁷. Is this cogitative power then rightly called intellect? In his comment on Text 5 (429a21-24) of Book III of the *Long Commentary on the De Anima*, Averroes notes that the Greeks sometimes would use the term 'intellect' in a general sense whereby it denoted the imaginative power³⁸. Rather, intellect is, as Averroes reads in Aristotle's text, « that part by which we draw distinctions and cogitate »³⁹.

³³ The work of H. A. Wolfson continues to provide a valuable foundation for understanding the internal senses and the development of the notion of the cogitative power in Medieval thought. See *The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic and Hebrew Philosophic Texts*, « Harvard Theological Review », 28, 1935, pp. 69-133. Also see H. GÄTJE, *Die 'inneren Sinne' bei Averroes*, « Zeitschrift des Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft », 115, 1965, pp. 255-293, especially pp. 278 ff. concerning the cogitative power.

³⁴ For a discussion of why memory may be regarded as the most 'spiritual' of these powers, see D. L. BLACK, *Memory, Individuals, and the Past in Averroes's Psychology*, « Medieval Philosophy and Theology », 5, 1996, pp. 161-187.

³⁵ *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., pp. 415-417.

³⁶ See WOLFSON, *The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic and Hebrew Philosophic Texts* cit., for the unfolding of philosophical development of the understanding of the internal senses. Also see DAVIDSON, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect* cit., pp. 95-102, regarding Avicenna.

³⁷ See below pp. 98-101 and notes 42, 44-46 and 49.

³⁸ On the understanding of intellect in Aristotle and the Greek and Arabic traditions, valuable contributions can be found in M. FATTAL, *La composition des concepts dans le De Anima (III, 6) d'Aristote. Commentaires grecs et arabes*, « Revue des Études Grecques », 108, 1995, pp. 371-387. Also see M. FATTAL, *L'intellection des indivisibles dans le De Anima (III, 6) d'Aristote. Lectures arabes et modernes*, in *Corps et Âme. Sur le De Anima d'Aristote*, édité par G. ROMÉYER DHERBEY et C. VIANO, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Paris 1996 (Bibliothèque d'Histoire de la Philosophie, Nouvelle Série), pp. 423-440.

³⁹ « (...) et dico intellectum illud per quod distinguimus et cogitamus (...) » : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 387. The corresponding Greek is λέγω δὲ νοῦν ὃ διανοεῖται καὶ ὑπολαμβάνει ἢ ψυχὴ (429a23). The important role played by the cogitative faculty and the

Note that Averroes does *not* say that the intellect is identical with what draws distinctions and cogitates but rather that intellect is that *by which* these activities take place. In the Comment to Book III Text 6 (429a24-29) Averroes explains that,

« Although, therefore, a human being properly has a cogitative power, nevertheless this does not make it such that this power is rational and discerning, for it discerns universal intentions, not individual ones (...). If, therefore, the distinguishing rational power were a power in a body, it would happen that it would be one of those four powers, and so it would have a bodily organ. Or it would be an individual distinguishing power different from those four. But it was already explained there that this is impossible. And because Galen thought that this cogitative power is rational and material, the argument of concomitance caused him to err in regard to this. For because the rational power belongs to human beings and the cogitative belongs to them, it was thought on account of the conversion of the universal affirmative that the cogitative power is the rational power »⁴⁰.

The logical error here lies with the Second Figure of the syllogism in the affirmative which does not yield a necessary conclusion. A human being, then, can be called rational or even intellectual without it being the case that intellect exists as such in that person. Properly speaking, however, the rational power by which a human being acts is that *by which* she acts and so need not be in a human being as is the cogitative power. Hence, later in commenting on Aristotle's mention of the passible intellect Averroes says that this consists of « the forms of imagination insofar as the cogitative power proper to man acts upon those forms »⁴¹. The powers of imagination, cogitation

activity of cogitation as understood in the translation used by Averroes and as understood by Averroes himself is beyond the scope of the present paper and will be addressed elsewhere.

⁴⁰ « Licet igitur homo proprie habeat virtutem cogitativam, tamen hoc non facit hanc virtutem esse rationabilem distinctivam; illa enim distinguit intentiones universales, non individuales. Et hoc fuit aperte dictum ab Aristotele in illo libro. Virtus igitur distinctiva rationalis, si esset virtus in corpore, contingeret ut esset una istarum virtutum quatuor, quapropter haberet instrumentum corporale; aut esset alia virtus individualis distincta ab istis quatuor; sed iam declaratum est illic hoc esse impossibile. Et quia Galienus existimavit quod virtus cogitativa est rationalis materialis, fecit ipsum errare in hoc locus consequentis. Quia enim virtus rationalis appropriatur homini, et cogitativa appropriatur ei, existimatur propter conversionem affirmative universalis quod cogitativa est rationalis » : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 416. That is, from the propositions « The rational power belongs to all human beings », and « The cogitative power belongs to all human beings », we cannot conclude that the rational power is the cogitative power. All we can conclude is that these two powers belong to human beings, not that these two powers are one and the same.

⁴¹ « Et intendebat hic per 'intellectum passibilem' formas ymaginationis secundum quod in

and memory are in human beings for the purpose of presenting the form of an imagined thing when sense is not present, and, he says, for this reason they work together to represent the individual nature of a thing as it is even when it is not present to sense⁴².

What, then, is cogitation? At Text 33 (431b3-8) of Book III Averroes reads Aristotle as saying, « For one cogitates, as it were, and sees a thing in the ways of the imagination, and cogitation of it in reference to future things is by virtue of things present (431b7-8) »⁴³. He then comments,

« The meaning of cogitation is nothing but this, that the cogitative power presents a thing absent from sense as it if were a sensed thing. For this reason things able to be apprehended by human beings are divided into these two, namely into the apprehensible which has as its principle sensation and the apprehensible which has as its principle cogitation. We already said that the cogitative power is neither the material intellect nor the intellect which is in act, but it is a particular material power. This is evident from the things said in *Sense and sensibilia*. It is necessary to know this, since the custom is to attribute the cogitative power to the intellect. It should not be the case that someone says that the cogitative power composes singular intelligibles. It was already explained that the material intellect composed them. For cogitation is only for distinguishing individual instances among those intelligibles and to present them in act as if they were existent in sensation. For this reason when they are present in sensation, then cogitation will diminish and the activity of intellect in regard to them will remain. From this it is explained that the activity of intellect is different from the activity of the cogitative power, which Aristotle called the passible intellect and [of which] he said that it is generable and corruptible. This is evident concerning this [power], since it has a determinate organ, namely the middle chamber of the brain. A human being is not generable and corruptible except in virtue of this power and without this power and the imaginative power the material intellect thinks nothing. For this

eas agit virtus cogitativa propria homini » : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 449.

⁴² « (...) ymaginativa et cogitativa et rememorativa ; iste enim tres virtutes sunt in homine ad presentandam formam rei ymagine quando fuerit sensus absens, et ideo dictum fuit illic quod, cum iste tres virtutes adiuerint se adinvicem, forte representabunt individuum rei secundum quod est in suo esse, licet autem non sentiamus ipsum » : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 449.

⁴³ « Cogitat enim quasi videret rem per modos ymaginationis, et cogitatio eius in rebus futuris est secundum res presentes » : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 474. The corresponding Greek has, « (...) but sometimes by means of the images or thoughts which are within the soul, just as if it were seeing, it calculates and deliberates (λογίζεται καὶ βουλευεται) what is to come by reference to what is present (...) » : *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The revised Oxford Translation* cit., vol. I, p. 686, translation by J. A. SMITH, revised by J. BARNES. Greek added.

reason, as Aristotle says, we do not remember after death, not because the intellect is generable and corruptible, as one can hold »⁴⁴.

Our ability to summon the Agent to action and to bring about knowledge in ourselves is a function of our use and exercise of this faculty⁴⁵. This cogitative power in individual human beings is also the source of will and voluntary action on the part of the individual. In Book III Text 57 (434a6-8) Averroes reads that « The cogitative power (...) is in rational [animals] alone. To choose to do this or that belongs to cogitative activity »⁴⁶. The Greek here

⁴⁴ « Et intentio cogitationis nichil aliud est quam hoc, scilicet ut virtus cogitativa ponat rem absentem a sensu quasi rem sensatam. Et ideo comprehensibilia humana dividuntur in hec duo, scilicet in comprehensibile cuius principium est sensus, et comprehensibile cuius principium est cogitatio. Et iam diximus quod virtus cogitativa non est intellectus materialis neque intellectus qui est in actu, sed est virtus particularis materialis. Et hoc manifestum est ex dictis in *Sensu et Sensato*. Et oportet scire hoc, quoniam consuetudo est attribuire intellectui virtutem cogitativam. 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 ; et ideo, quando fuerint presentia apud sensum, tunc cadet cogitatio, et remanebit actio intellectus in eis. Et ex hoc declarabitur quod actio intellectus est alia ab actione virtutis cogitative, quam Aristoteles vocavit intellectum passibilem, et dixit eam esse generabilem et corruptibilem. Et hoc est manifestum de ea, cum habet instrumentum terminatum, scilicet medium ventriculum cerebri. Et homo non est generabilis et corruptibilis nisi per hanc virtutem, et sine hac virtute et virtute ymaginationis nichil [477] intelligit intellectus materialis. Et ideo, sicut dicit Aristoteles, non rememoramur post mortem, non quia intellectus est generabilis et corruptibilis, sicut aliquis potest existimare » : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., pp. 476-477.

⁴⁵ « And you ought to know that use and exercise are the causes of what appears to be the case concerning the potency of the agent intellect which is in us for separating [things] and the material intellect for receiving [things]. They are, I say, causes on account of the positive disposition existing through use and exercise in the passible and corruptible intellect which Aristotle called *passible*, and he said openly that it is corrupted ». (« Et debes scire quod usus et exercitium sunt cause eius quod apparet de potentia intellectus agentis qui est in [454] nobis ad abstrahendum, et intellectus materialis ad recipiendum ; sunt, dico, cause propter habitum existentem per usum et exercitium in intellectu passibili et corruptibili, quem Aristoteles vocavit 'passibilem', et dixit aperte ipsum corrupti ») : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., pp. 453-454. « They saw that this action of creating and generating intelligibles is due to our will and is able to be augmented in us in accord with the augmentation of the intellect which is in us, namely the speculative » (« Et cum viderunt hanc actionem que est creare intellecta et generare ea esse reversam ad nostram voluntatem, et augmentabilem in nobis secundum augmentationem intellectus qui est in nobis, scilicet speculativi [...] ») : *ibid.*, p. 390. On the passible human intellect as what distinguishes human beings as rational from other animals, see the footnote 46.

⁴⁶ « Virtus autem cogitativa est in rationabilibus tantum. Eligere autem facere hoc aut hoc est de actione cogitativa » : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 529. In his comments

corresponding to the Latin's *virtus cogitativa* is ἡ βουλευτική, the power of willing or wishing. And Averroes comments, « Imagination exists in other animals, while cogitation exists in rational animals. For choosing to do this imagined thing and not another is of the activity of cogitation, not of the activity of imagination. For what judges that this imagined thing is more pleasant than another ought to be of necessity the same power which reckons imaginations in which it judges what is more pleasurable »⁴⁷. He later adds in the same comment :

« (...) it is necessary that one power reckon those imaginations until it apprehends from them what is more pleasant, as one thing reckons unequal numbers until it apprehends which is the greater. Likewise, cogitation reckons imaginations and compares them until it is able to be affected by the imagination of some one of these. This is the reason why a rational animal has opinion, for opinion is a response which arises from cogitation (...). [A]side from the rational animal, none has cogitation because none has reason. The motion of animals is due to pleasure and it is simple motion, not complex [motion]. This is because it does not have the cogitative power together with appetite in such a way that these two powers command one another so that the animal is moved sometimes on account of will as [is the case] in regard to the rational animal »⁴⁸.

on book III Text 20 Averroes remarks, « And by that intellect which Aristotle called *passible* human beings are distinguished in terms of the four powers mentioned in *The Topics* which Alfarabi listed in *Sophistic Refutations*. And by that intellect a human being differs from the other animals. And if [it were] not [for this], then it would be necessary that the conjunction of the agent intellect and the recipient would be with animals in the same way ». (« Et per istum intellectum quem vocavit Aristoteles passibilem diversantur homines in quatuor virtutibus dictis in *Topicis*, quas Alfarabius numeravit in *Elenchis*. Et per istum intellectum differt homo ab aliis animalibus ; et si non, tunc necesse esset ut continuatio intellectus agentis et recipientis cum animalibus esset, eodem modo ») : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 454. Averroes' reference to the *Topics* seems to be to I 13, 105a22-25 : « The instruments whereby we are to become well supplied with deductions are four : one, the securing of propositions ; second, the power to distinguish in how many ways an expression is used ; third, the discovery of the differences of things ; fourth, the investigation of likeness » : *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The revised Oxford Translation* cit., vol. I, p. 175, revised translation by W. A. PICKARD. For Averroes the cogitative power in human beings is rational imagination. Other animals have imagination but not the ability to weigh presentations and make rational judgments and choices. See notes 44 and 51.

⁴⁷ « Et ymaginatio existit in aliis animalibus, cogitatio autem in rationabilibus. Eligere enim facere hoc ymaginatum et non hoc est de actione cogitationis, non de actione ymaginationis. Iudicans enim quod hoc ymaginatum est magis amabile quam hoc debet esse eadem virtus de necessitate que numerat ymaginationes in quibus iudicat magis delectabilibus » : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 529.

⁴⁸ « (...) et necesse est ut una virtus numeret illas ymaginationes donec comprehendat ex eis magis amatum, sicut unum numerat numeros inequales donec comprehendat magis maiorem ; similiter cogitatio numerat ymaginationes et comparat inter eas donec possit pati ab ymaginatione

In light of these remarks by Averroes, it is clear that choice and will as well as knowledge are available to the cogitative power and that it is this cogitative power which is responsible for the choices we make. Averroes rejects the Avicennian conception of the estimative power in animals as well as Avicenna's conception of the innate immortality of the rational soul. Instead Averroes follows Aristotle closely in regard to the individual soul and locates the self which is responsible for intellectual and moral development in the physical body and finds it evident in the cogitative power located in the brain. How could it be otherwise since the actions of the human self or soul concern particulars and the particular soul is liable to error? In the understanding of intellect in the thought of Averroes, intellect in Aristotle properly speaking concerns universals and is itself without error⁴⁹. The fact that Aristotle himself does speak of this human power as being *nous*, intellect, and attributes to it calculation and practical action⁵⁰, supports the understanding of Averroes that in Greek 'intellect' is sometimes used to denote imagination or a power of imagination such as cogitation⁵¹. In reading his Arabic translation of the Greek text of Aristotle's *De Anima*, Averroes understood that the perishable human cogitative faculty located in the brain could itself be denominated 'intellect', but he also understood that intellect in the fullest sense refers to the separate intellects, the Material and Agent Intellects. It is in virtue of the

alicuius earum. Et hec est causa quare animal rationale habet existimationem; existimatio enim est consensus qui provenit a cogitatione. Deinde dixit: non enim habet cogitationem, etc. Idest, et preter animal rationale nullum habet cogitationem, quia non habet rationem; et motus animalium est propter delectationem, et est motus simplex, non diversus, quia non habet virtutem cogitativam cum appetitu ita quod hee due virtutes dominarentur sibi adinvicem adeo quod moveretur animal quandoque propter voluntatem sicut in animali rationali»: *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 530.

⁴⁹ See *De Anima* III 6. Cf. *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 464.

⁵⁰ *De Anima* III 10, 433a14.

⁵¹ At *De Anima* III 4, 429a22-24 where Aristotle asserts that « intellect is that by which the soul reasons and makes judgments (ὃ διανοεῖται καὶ ὑπολαμβάνει ἡ ψυχὴ) », the text of Averroes has « et dico intellectum illud per quod distinguimus et cogitamus (and I call the intellect that part by which we draw distinctions and cogitate) ». Averroes comments on this as follows: « Next he said: "and I call the intellect", etc. That is, and I mean by 'intellect' here the power of the soul which is truly called intellect, not the power which is called intellect in the general sense in Greek, namely the imaginative power, but the power by which we distinguish speculative things and cogitate concerning practical things which will take place ». (« Deinde dixit: Et dico intellectum, etc. Idest, et intendo per intellectum hic virtutem anime que dicitur intellectus vere, non virtutem que dicitur intellectus large, scilicet virtutem ymaginativam, in lingua Greca, sed virtutem qua distinguimus res speculativas et cogitamus in rebus operativis futuris »): *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 387. Note also the following remark: « This term 'intellect', therefore, thus is said in this book in four ways. For it is said of the material intellect,

powers of these separately existing substances that perishable human beings can be called rational⁵².

IMMORTALITY AND « PROBABLE PROPOSITIONS » IN THE *LONG COMMENTARY ON THE DE ANIMA*

In light of the foregoing, it is difficult to see just how one might understand the doctrine of the soul in the *Long Commentary on the De Anima* as espousing any sort of human immortality. Averroes, however, does set forth a doctrine of human immortality when he faces the question of the necessity that knowledge always be in actuality. The metaphysical natures of the Agent Intellect and the Material Intellect require that they always be in actuality of thought, for they are in themselves separate substances, eternal and without any matter, sublunar or celestial⁵³. This means, then, that all that is entailed

of the intellect which is in a positive disposition, of the agent intellect, and of the imaginative power ». (« Hoc nomen igitur 'intellectus' secundum hoc dicitur in hoc libro quatuor modis. Dicitur enim de intellectu materiali, et de intellectu qui est in habitu, et de intellectu agentis, et de virtute ymaginativa »): ed. cit., p. 452.

⁵² « For this reason one must not object to this argument on the basis of the notion that some change occurs in the intellect due to the change of the powers of the imagination, and especially [due to] the cogitative power. For fatigue is thought to happen to the intellect in this way, and it is so only accidentally. For the cogitative power is of the genus of sensible powers. But the imaginative, cogitative, and recollective powers are only in the place of the sensible power, and for this reason there is no need for them except in the absence of the sensible [power]. And they all cooperate to present an image of the sensible thing, so that the separate rational power may behold it and extract the universal intention and later receive it, that is, grasp it ». (« Et ideo non oportet obicere huic argumento ex eo quod accidit in intellectu de transmutatione propter transmutationem virtutum ymaginationis, et maxime cogitative; intellectui enim existimatur accidere fatigatio hoc modo; et non est ita nisi accidentaliter. Virtus enim cogitativa est de genere virtutum sensibilium. Ymaginativa autem et cogitativa et rememorativa non sunt nisi in loco virtutis sensibilis, et ideo non indiget eis nisi in absentia sensibilis. Et omnes iuvant se ad presentandum ymaginem rei sensibilis, ut aspiciat eam virtus rationalis abstracta et extrahat intentionem universalem et postea recipiat eam, idest comprehendat eam »): *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 419. Davidson remarks regarding the cogitative and imaginative faculties, « Those faculties operate through ventricles of the brains of individual men, the cogitative faculty having the 'middle ventricle of the brain' as its 'instrument', and the imaginative faculty being located in the 'front of the brain'. The two faculties are, like the brain in which they reside, 'generated-destructible', and individual human consciousness of theoretical thoughts perishes with the faculties on which consciousness of such thoughts depends »: *DAVIDSON, Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect* cit., pp. 336-337.

⁵³ The matter of celestial bodies is different from that of sublunar things. Substantial change occurs in the case of sublunar bodies but not in the heavens. « [T]he celestial bodies (...) are neither generable nor corruptible (...). » (« corpora celestia [...] sunt non generabilia neque corruptibilia [...] »): *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 534.

by their natures must eternally or everlastingly be the case. When this metaphysical requirement is not taken into account, it might seem that human thought and the human soul in which it takes place are in fact perishable as are individual human bodies⁵⁴. Yet, given the natures of the Agent Intellect and the Material Intellect, there must always be thought⁵⁵. Since thought on the part of the Material Intellect requires images from human imagination on the part of individual human souls, there must always exist thinking human beings, that is, individual people exercising their imaginative and cogitative powers in the world⁵⁶ so that philosophy is always being carried on. In the case of individual perishable human beings, however, knowledge is actually had by way of the speculative intelligibles and the non-substantial actuality of knowing called the speculative intellect which is eternal as the actuality of the Material Intellect by the Agent Intellect and perishable as possessed by perishable human beings⁵⁷. In this way the speculative intellect is always in actuality even if the individuals are themselves generable and corruptible.

⁵⁴ « This will be the case if it is not asserted that the disposition in regard to the ultimate actuality in man is just as the disposition in regard to [408] the intelligibles common to all [human beings], namely that worldly being is not devoid of such individual being. For that this is impossible is not evident. Rather, one saying this can have reason sufficient and able to to quiet the soul ». (« Hoc erit si non fuerit positum quod dispositio in postrema perfectione in homine est sicut dispositio in intellectis communibus omnibus, scilicet quod esse mundanum non denudatur a tali individuo esse. Hoc enim esse impossibile non est manifestum ; immo dicens hoc potest habere rationem sufficientem et facientem animam quiescere ») : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., pp. 407-408.

⁵⁵ « For according to the multiplicity and diminution accruing to them from ultimate actuality [in individual human beings] they are generable and corruptible, while insofar as they are one in number [in the material intellect] they are eternal ». (« Secundum enim multitudinem et diminutionem contingentem eis a postrema perfectione sunt generabilia et corruptibilia, et secundum quod sunt unica in numero sunt eterna ») : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 407.

⁵⁶ « (...) because the relation of the images to the material intellect is just as the relation of the sensibles to sense, for this reason it was necessary that the material intellect not think any sensible without imagination. » (« [...] quia proportio ymaginum ad intellectum materiale est sicut proportio sensibilium ad sensum, ideo necesse fuit ut intellectus materialis non intelligat aliquid sensibile absque ymaginatione ») : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 469.

⁵⁷ « (...) one should hold the opinion that there are three parts of the intellect in the soul, one is the receptive intellect, the second is that which makes [things], and the third is that which is made. Two of these three are eternal, namely the agent and the recipient ; the third is generable and corruptible in one way, eternal in another way ». (« [...] opinandum est quod in anima sunt tres partes intellectus, quarum una est intellectus recipiens, secunda autem est efficiens, tertia autem factum. Et due istarum trium sunt eterne, scilicet agens et recipiens ; tertia autem est generabilis et corruptibilis uno modo, eterna alio modo ») : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 406. Also see *ibid.*, pp. 389-390.

In commenting on Aristotle's notion of the perishable passive intellect discussed earlier, Averroes explains that the notion « that the soul, that is, the speculative intellect [in the individual human being], is immortal » is one which arose from extrinsic considerations⁵⁸. But « it is impossible for probable things to be completely false »⁵⁹. An example of that is to be found in Plato's account « that the universals are neither generable nor corruptible and that they exist outside the mind ». This was in a way true and in a way false, writes Averroes. That they exist outside the mind, Aristotle refuted in his *Metaphysics*, but that they are neither generable nor corruptible is true⁶⁰. The contents of the speculative intellect are neither generable nor corruptible insofar as they are constituted by and in the action of the separate intellects. But the speculative intelligibles or the speculative intellect in individual human knowers is generable and corruptible insofar as these human beings are generable and corruptible.

The same is true for the soul with respect to probable propositions. That the soul is immortal is one of these probable propositions which are not completely false. There are « probable propositions which give the soul both kinds of being, mortal and non-mortal ». This is something « which the Ancients recounted (...) and which all the religious laws alike reflect »⁶¹. The probable proposition stating the soul to be immortal asserted by the Ancients and the practitioners of religion is true. However, their understanding of this proposition is dialectical in character, that is, they assert the proposition without a full and proper understanding of the meaning and truth of the statement. This is a non-technical statement made without the benefit of technical demonstrative proof⁶².

Demonstrative argumentation founded on deductive argument from the metaphysical natures of the Material Intellect and Agent Intellect requires

⁵⁸ « Et intendit per 'intellectum passivum' virtutem ymaginativam, ut post declarabitur. Et universaliter ista intentio apparuit a remotis, scilicet animam esse immortalem, scilicet intellectum speculativum » : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 409. Regarding the meaning of « a remotis » here, see *ibid.*, p.16. The sense here is that of something arising from extrinsic or accidental (non-essential) considerations. That is to say, from consideration of the speculative intellect as an actuality of the Material Intellect and as the speculative intelligibles in the Material Intellect, we can conclude that those speculative intelligibles are immortal insofar as the Material Intellect is immortal. We cannot conclude that the speculative intelligibles in the souls of passible human beings, are immortal and so cannot conclude the human soul is immortal.

⁵⁹ « (...) probabilia enim impossibile est ut sint falsa secundum totum » : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 409.

⁶⁰ See note 63 for text.

⁶¹ See note 63 for text.

⁶² See the text of the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* given above on pp. 89-90.

that the imaginative *activity* of individual human souls be eternal. On the one hand, individual souls and their activities perish with the perishing of their bodies, that is, the *individual* soul is 'mortal', while on the other hand, human soul with its imaginative activity in actuality throughout time is 'non-mortal'. Hence, as I understand Averroes, it is the understanding of the human soul as immortal in species which he here endorses as the true part in these probable propositions⁶³. The probable propositions set forth in religion, then, are not completely false, for there is a sense in which propositions asserting the immortality of the soul are true, namely insofar as the speculative intellect through which all human beings are rational and intellectual is eternally active. As Averroes puts it,

« For, since it is the case that wisdom exists in some way proper to human beings, just as it is the case that [various] kinds of arts exist in ways proper to human beings, it is thought that it is impossible that the whole habitable world shun philosophy, just as one should hold the opinion that it is impossible for [the whole habitable world] to shun the natural arts. For if some part of [the habitable world], for example, the northern quarter of the earth, is devoid of the arts, the other quarters will not be devoid of them, because it was explained that habitation is possible in the southern as in the northern quarters. Perhaps, then, philosophy is found in the greater part of the subject in every era, as a human being is found [to come about] from a human being and a horse from a horse. The speculative intellect, therefore, is neither generable nor corruptible in this way. And generally it is for the agent intellect creating the intelligibles just as [it is] for the distinguishing recipient intellect. For, insofar as the agent intellect never ceases generating and creating absolutely speaking, even if some subject is removed from this, namely [from] generation, so it is concerning the distinguishing intellect »⁶⁴.

⁶³ « Unde Plato dixit quod universalis sunt neque generabilia neque corruptibilia, et quod sunt existentia extra mentem. Et est sermo verus ex hoc modo, et falsus secundum quod sonant verba eius (et est modus quem Aristoteles laborabat destruere in *Metaphysica*). Et universaliter ista intentio anime est pars vera in propositionibus probabilibus que dant animam esse utrunque, scilicet mortalem et non mortalem; probabilis enim impossibile est ut sint falsa secundum totum. Et hoc apologizaverunt Antiqui, et in representatione illius conveniunt omnes leges »: *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 409.

⁶⁴ « Quoniam, cum sapientiam esse in aliquo modo proprio hominum est, sicut modos artificiorum esse in modis propriis hominum, existimatur quod impossibile est ut tota habitatio fugiat a Philosophia, sicut opinandum est quod impossibile est ut fugiat ab artificiis naturalibus. Si enim aliqua pars eius caruerit eis, scilicet artificiis, v.g. quarta septentrionalis terre, non carebunt eis alie quarte, quia declaratum est quod habitatio est possibilis in parte meridionali sicut in septentrionali. Forte igitur Philosophia invenitur in maiori parte subiecti in omni tempore, sicut homo invenitur ab homine et equus ab equo. Intellectus igitur speculativus est non generabilis neque corruptibilis secundum hunc modum. Et universaliter ita est de intellectu agentis creante intellecta sicut de intellectu distinguente recipiente. Quemadmodum enim

Thus, the eternally active natures of the Agent Intellect, the Material Intellect, and the speculative intellect (the actuality of the Agent Intellect in the Material Intellect on the basis of images provided by human imaginations) require that the human species be eternal and that there always exist human beings providing images for the actualization of the speculative intellect in the one Material Intellect which all human beings share⁶⁵. In this doctrine human soul is indeed immortally present in existence in the world through the natural generation of individual members of the eternal species. But such a demonstrative doctrine has no place for continued existence of particular human souls after earthly death, that is, no personal immortality.

THE *LONG COMMENTARY ON THE DE ANIMA* AND THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF AVERROES' PHILOSOPHICAL PSYCHOLOGY

What then can we say of the statements of Ovey Mohammed on the value of the *Long Commentary on the De Anima* for establishing the religious character of the thought of Averroes on the nature of the soul ? The clearly stated purpose of his article is to argue and corroborate the hypothesis « that Averroes' treatment of soul and intellect exemplifies the harmony of faith and reason, but his treatment of the soul, including its immortality, harmonizes philosophical reason with Islamic faith and the doctrine of the Qur'an »⁶⁶. Now Averroes was himself a fine and learned logician, something very clearly and repeatedly evident in the *Long Commentary on the De Anima*. One sort of fallacy he notes several times concerns the use of the Second Figure with two affirmative premises. In some cases this amounts to a version of False Cause or *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Once he notes Aristotle's use of this to undermine the view of those who assert that the imagination must be the intellect since each is sometimes true and sometimes false⁶⁷. Another time he notes that some have held that, since fire causes change and the principle of growth and nutrition causes change, then the principle of growth and nutrition must be fire⁶⁸. And, as was indicated above⁶⁹, this is the fallacy noted by Averroes when

intellectus agens nunquam quiescit a generando et creando simpliciter, licet ab hac, scilicet generatione, evacuetur aliquod subiectum, ita est de intellectu distinguenti » : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 408.

⁶⁵ « (...) intellectus materialis est unicus omnibus hominibus, et etiam [407] ex hoc sumus opinati quod species humana est eterna (...) » : *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., pp. 406-407. Cf. Averroes' Comment on II 35 (415b2-7), *ibid.*, pp. 183-184.

⁶⁶ MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., p. 40.

⁶⁷ *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 368.

⁶⁸ *Averrois Commentarium Magnum*, ed. cit., p. 193.

⁶⁹ See p. 97.

he remarks that Galen identified the cogitative power as the rational power. Now, I raise this question of logic since it is ironically just this sort of difficulty which afflicts a number of the arguments of Ovey Mohammed. Let us consider briefly just seven assertions from that article.

First, we saw the assertion that « One may say that it is Averroes' concern with the Qur'anic conception of human beings and their relationship with God that furnishes in part the reason why the intellect is conjoined or united (*copulatur*) to us ». The argument for this assertion is simply : The Qur'an is concerned with human beings and their relationship with the transcendent. Averroes' doctrine on the intellect is concerned with human beings and the transcendent. Therefore, Averroes' doctrine is founded on Qur'anic concerns. Yet, the assertion that both Averroes and the Qur'an are concerned with the same matters yields no necessary connection between the thought of Averroes and that found in the Qur'an. The nature of the human soul is a matter for both religious and philosophical concern. The account in the *Long Commentary on the De Anima* only once mentions religious law⁷⁰ and evidences no dependence whatsoever on religious propositions in Averroes' sense, that is, on dialectical propositions. What Averroes' seeks to do the *Long Commentary on the De Anima* is to provide his promised demonstrative account of the soul and human immortality.

Second, let us consider the statement that « Averroes' doctrine of the future life can be reconstructed from his *Long Commentary on the De Anima* alone if we accept a monistic conception of human beings and the future life as dependent on God »⁷¹. As is evident from the foregoing analysis of Averroes' understanding of the separate intellects and of the human perishable cogitative power, there is no philosophical account of a future life for individual human souls in the *Long Commentary on the De Anima*. Many things may be possible if we accept the notion of divine involvement in a personal future life for individual human souls, but no such assumption is to be found in the *Long Commentary on the De Anima*.

Third, we saw the statement, « In fact, it is because of this Qur'anic teaching [on body and soul] that Averroes can state categorically that the use of a corporeal instrument is the decisive factor in determining whether a particular power should be called 'soul' or not »⁷². The argument for this, however, is merely that, since Averroes puts forth this general understanding of the soul and this general understanding of the soul can be found in the Qur'an, hence the Qur'an must be the source for Averroes' firm position on the

⁷⁰ See note 63 and pp. 106-107 above.

⁷¹ MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., p. 54.

⁷² MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., p. 50.

matter⁷³. The Greek philosophical concern for soul and the extensive tradition of philosophical commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima* long antedates the Qur'an and the 622 c.e. Hijra of Muhammad. Moreover, Aristotle himself dealt with this topic in book II of his *De Anima* where he set for his famous definition of the soul over a thousand years prior to the Qur'an and said of soul that it is « an actuality of the first kind of a natural body. That is why we can wholly dismiss as unnecessary the question whether the soul and the body are one : it is as though we were to ask whether the wax and its shape are one, or generally the matter of a thing and that of which it is the matter »⁷⁴.

Fourth, consider the statement, « When Averroes shows emotion in defending his interpretation of the soul against Alexander, this surely indicates that it is because he has certain knowledge of it from a source other than philosophy, that is, from revelation »⁷⁵. Strong emotion is indicative of certain knowledge. Revelation is a source of certain knowledge. Hence, the source or grounds for Averroes' strong emotion must be revelation. In point of fact, Averroes' position and his expression of it are consequent upon careful philosophical argumentation and analysis. His emotion regarding Alexander was likely an expression of his own frustration over the many years he spent pondering the issue of the material intellect, some of them spent following Alexander ! Davidson has carefully reviewed Averroes' many works in which he struggled with the texts of Aristotle and his Greek commentators showing that Averroes' final position as found in the *Long Commentary on the De Anima* was the culmination of many years of intellectual and emotional toil !⁷⁶ If Averroes is drawing on religion for the certainty of his propositions on the soul and the intellect, then his account would not be the demonstrative one which he is in fact so vigorously pursuing in the *Long Commentary on the De Anima*.

Fifth, as for the remark that the religious character of Averroes' thought in the *Long Commentary on the De Anima* has escaped modern scholars due to

⁷³ « (...) it may be helpful to remind ourselves that according to the Qur'an the soul can have no operation apart from the body after death. If, therefore, Averroes is to succeed in harmonizing philosophy with revelation, this much is certain : he cannot compromise the Qur'anic view of death by granting to the soul some operations after death. Hence, Averroes resolves Aristotle's ambiguity by explicitly affirming that since the intellect is not dependent on the body for its activity, "it is rather obvious that it is not a soul" (*Long Commentary*, p. 160). This clarification of soul and intellect is consonant with the teaching of the Qur'an that a reciprocal relation always exists between body and soul » : MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., pp. 49-50.

⁷⁴ *De Anima* II 1, 412b4-8, *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The revised Oxford Translation* cit., translation by J. A. SMITH, revised by J. BARNES.

⁷⁵ MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., p. 51.

⁷⁶ See DAVIDSON, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect* cit., pp. 258-298.

unfamiliarity with the Qur'an and its teachings, two considerations are pertinent. First, as already mentioned, there is no evidence of Averroes' use of the Qur'an in this work and every reason to believe on the basis of his comments on demonstration in the *Faṣl* and the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* that he would find that unsuitable in a demonstrative philosophical work. Secondly, the issue of the harmonization of religious teaching with Averroes' statements in the *Faṣl* and the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* was taken up in a remarkably similar way by G. F. Hourani in his article, *Averroès musulman*, published in 1978⁷⁷. Hourani, however, made no use of the *Long Commentary on the De Anima* and so could make no claim to be expounding Averroes' most philosophically authoritative account of the nature of the human soul and intellect.

Sixth, the fallacy of False Cause again appears when it is asserted, « It is because Muslims believe that God's agency is absolute that all medieval Muslim philosophers admitted that there is only one agent intellect for all humankind »⁷⁸. For the philosophical teaching of the unicity of the Agent Intellect arose from the problems of epistemology and metaphysics which Aristotle sought to resolve in *De Anima* III 4-5. The acceptance of this approach was the result not of religious teachings but of acceptance of Greek philosophical traditions⁷⁹.

Finally, consider the assertion that Averroes himself holds that « Human beings will enter eternal life when the resurrection body takes the place of our earthly body at the new creation »⁸⁰. Again, this assertion is made on the basis of Averroes' remarks at the end of the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* and can at best be regarded, on the authority of his own statement cited earlier, as dialectical and not at all demonstrative⁸¹.

CONCLUSION

This critique is a relatively simple matter but it is an important reminder for us when we consider our understanding of the thought of Averroes on the future life. While it can be concluded that there is no room for personal immortality or a personal future life in the philosophical teachings found in the *Long Commentary in the De Anima*, can we assert that as a consequence Averroes could not have held for a doctrine of personal immortality of

⁷⁷ G. F. HOURANI, *Averroès musulman*, in *Multiple Averroès*, Paris 1978, pp. 21-30.

⁷⁸ MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., p. 47.

⁷⁹ See DAVIDSON, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect* cit., for extensive discussion of this issue.

⁸⁰ MOHAMMED, *Averroes, Aristotle, and the Qur'an* cit., p. 54.

⁸¹ See pp. 89-90 and 102-105 above.

individual souls after death on any relevant grounds ? Strictly speaking, all that can be concluded here is that there are no texts or arguments in the *Long Commentary in the De Anima* on which an argument for personal immortality can be asserted. To be logically precise, we cannot conclude with necessity just on that basis that he personally held no such doctrine. There may have been emotive (rhetorical) or religious (dialectical) grounds for his holding such a belief. And if it were the case that Averroes in fact held a doctrine asserting the existence of a transcendent source for knowledge over and above what is naturally available to human beings, then we might be able to view revelation as an important source of knowledge and of true understanding of the human condition in the thought of Averroes. But such is not the case for Averroes who held that « we are under an obligation to carry on our study of beings by intellectual reasoning. It is (...) evident that this matter of study, to which the Law summons and urges those capable, is the most perfect kind of study using the most perfect kind of reasoning ; and this is the kind called 'demonstration' »⁸². Instead, we find that the ultimate arbiter of the meaning of revelation should be, not the theologian, but the philosopher⁸³. And for the philosopher Averroes in his *Long Commentary on the De Anima*, while there is demonstration of the existence of a 'future life' for the human species, there is no proof available for asserting the existence of personal immortality, no philosophical argument, no « technical demonstrative proof », for a personal 'future life'⁸⁴.

⁸² IBN RUŠD, *Kitāb faṣl al-maqāl* cit., p. 2 ; HOURANI, *Averroes. On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* cit., p. 45.

⁸³ IBN RUŠD, *Kitāb faṣl al-maqāl* cit., pp. 7-8 ; HOURANI, *Averroes. On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* cit., p. 51. In *Remarks on Averroës' Decisive Treatise*, in M. E. MARMURA, ed., *Islamic Theology and Philosophy. Studies in Honor of George F. Hourani*, SUNY Press, Albany 1984, (Studies in Islamic Philosophy and Science), pp.188-202, 305-308, M. Mahdi (p. 201) comments, « For Averroës, belief in the divine law is not, as it was for Algazel on at least one level, a supernatural gift or a suprarational faculty ».

⁸⁴ This conclusion is contrary to that of B. H. ZEDLER, *Averroes and Immortality*, « The New Scholasticism », 29, 1954, pp. 436-453. In critique of Zedler's view, see HOURANI, *Averroës musulman* cit., pp. 28-29. There is, of course, no demonstration of the non-existence of the future life. I am grateful to my Marquette University colleagues, Susanne Hill and James South for reading a draft of this paper, David Twetten for valuable comments for the clarification of its arguments, and Michael Wreen for other helpful suggestions. I also benefited from conversations with Charles E. Butterworth and Michael E. Marmura. I am glad to thank Deborah Black for reading this paper and Alfred L. Ivry for his detailed and helpful suggestions. Responsibility for the paper as it now stands is fully mine, of course.