AVERROES'S DIALECTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT. SOME DIFFICULTIES IN THE CONCEPT OF REASON

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A. The Unity of the Intellect

This theory of Averroes is to be combated during the Middle ages as one of the greatest heresies (cfr. Thomas's *De unitate intellectus contra Averroystas*); it was active with the revolutionary Baptists and Thomas Münzer (as Pinkstergeest "hoch über allen Zerstreuungen der Geschlechter und des Glaubens" [64]), but also in the "Aufklärung". It remains unclear on quite a few points [65]. As far as the different phases of the epistemological process is concerned, Averroes reputes Avicenna's innovation: the *vis estimativa*, as being unaristotelian, and returns to the traditional three levels: senses, imagination and cognition. As far as the actual abstraction process is concerned, one can distinguish the following elements with Avicenna.

1. The intelligible forms (*intentiones* in the Latin translation) are present in aptitude and in imaginative capacity, that is, in the sensory images which are present there;
2. The forms are actualised by the working of the Active Intellect (the lowest celestial sphere), that works in analogy to light ;
3. The intelligible forms-in-act are "received" by the "possible" or the "*material intellect*", which thereby changes into *intellect-in-act*, also called: *habitual* or *acquired intellect*: the perfect form of which – when all scientific knowledge that *can* be acquired, has been acquired –is called *speculative intellect.*
4. According to the Aristotelian principle that the epistemological process and knowing itself coincide, the state of intellect-in-act implies – certainly as speculative intellect – the conjunction with the Active Intellect.

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[64] Cited by Ernst Bloch, *Avicenna und die Aristotelische Linke*, (1953), in Suhrkamp, Gesamtausgabe, 7, p. 498.

[65] Cf. Herman De Ley, *De Filosofie van de Middeleeuwen*, Deel I: *De Islam*, pp. 118 sq.

So far there aren't too many problems. They start to appear, however, when Averroes not only recognises the Active Intellect as a distinct, and immortal substance which is the same for all of mankind (as was traditionally done), but also the Material Intellect. (based on Aristotle, 429a18: "seeing as it thinks it all, it must, as Anaxagoras says, be unmixed;" and *ibid.*, 429b24v.: " in the case that, as Anaxagoras says, the *nous* is singular and unmoved and shares nothing with anything"). The question arises how, if the Active Intellect *and* the Material Intellect are eternal, the intellect that comes into existence out of their bonding, that is, our human intellect -in-act, can then be individual and transient? Just like

"But the second question which states: in what way is the material intellect numerically one in all individual human beings, not generable nor corruptible, while the intelligibles existing in it in actuality (and this is the speculative intellect) are numbered according to the numeration of individual human beings, and generable and corruptible through the generation and corruption of individual (human beings) – this question is extremely difficult and one that has the greatest ambiguity – Haec quidem quaestio valde est difficilis, et maximam habet ambiguitatem." [66].

Averroes's "solution" consists of the identification of Aristotle's *nous pathetikos*, of which Aristotle says that it is transient, not with the "receiving," " material intellect" - which was Aristotle's intention -, but with the imagination. "Et intendit per intellectum passivum virtutem imaginativum" (ibid., 151r), see also 165r., where he concludes: "The word 'intellect' is used here in four ways: the material intellect, the intellect that is in habitus, the active intellect and the imagination." The conjunction of the intelligibilia with our human spirit, takes place through the images, which, as intelligibilia- in-aptitude, shape the conditions for knowledge *and* individual being. In so far the intelligibilia are received by the one Material Intellect, they are immortal, in so far they are abstracted from the sensory images, they are created. Our speculative intellect is thus, in a certain sense, transient (but it is everlasting in the sense that humankind, when it is viewed as the total of all individuals at one time, actually thinks all intelligibilia at one time). Each person's individual thinking is, as it were, a part which is accidental, and

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[66] Comm. on *De Anima*, 146v-147r Venice, Hyman-Walsh, p. 318)

temporarily separated from total thought. The Material Intellect is thereby not unified with us in the same manner as it is with the Active Intellect (namely by itself): it is unified with us through its unification with the sensory images, at least those that are effectively present in us. On the other hand, we are merely unified with the Active Intellect through the Material Intellect.

"Now Themistius was of the opinion that we are the agent intellect, and that the speculative intellect is nothing but the conjunction of the agent intellect with the material intellect. And it is not as he thought, but one must be of the opinion that there are three kinds of intellect in the soul. One of these is the receiving intellect, the second is the producing (agent) intellect, and the third is the produced (speculative) intellect. Two of these intellects are eternal, namely the agent and receiving intellects, the third, however, is generable and corruptible in one way, eternal in another way.
Since as a result of this discussion we are of the opinion that the material intellect is a single one for all human beings and since we are also of the opinion that the human species one for all human beings and since we are also of the opinion that the human species is eternal, as has been shown in other places, it follows that the material intellect is never devoid of the natural principles which are common tot the whole human species, namely, the first propositions and individual concepts which are common to all. For these intelligibles are one according to the recipient (the material intellect), and many according to the received form (the imaginative form).
Hence according to the manner in which they are one, the are necessarily eternal, for existence does not depart from the received object, namely the moving principle which is the form (intentio) of the imaginative forms, and there is nothing on part of the recipient which prevents (its reception). For generation and corruption belongs to them only according to the multitude which befalls them, not according to the manner according to which they are one. Therefore, when in respect to some individual human being, some knowledge of the things first known is destroyed through the destruction of the object through which it is joined to us and through which it is true, that is the imaginative form, it does not follow that this knowledge is destroyed absolutely, but it is (only) destroyed in respect to some individual human being. Because of this we can say that the speculative intellect is one in all (human beings).

If one considers these intelligibles insofar as they exist absolutely, not in respect to some individual (human being), they are truly said to be eternal, and (it is not the case) that they are known at one time and not known at another time, but they are known always. And that existence belongs to them as intermediate between absence of existence and permanent existence. For in accordance with the quantitative difference (literally: according to the increase and decrease) which comes to the intelligibles from the ultimate perfection (of human beings) they are generable and corruptible, while insofar as they are one in number they are eternal.
This will be the case if it is not set down that the disposition in respect to the ultimate perfection in man is as the disposition in respect to the intelligibles which are common to all (men), that is, that the world (literally: worldly existence) is not devoid of such an individual existence. That this should be impossible is not obvious, but someone who affirms this must have an adequate reason and one that puts the mind at rest. For if knowledge belongs in some proper fashion to human beings, just as the various kinds of crafts belong in some proper fashions to human beings, one should think that it is impossible that philosophy should be without any abode, just as one must be of the opinion that its is impossible that all the natural crafts should be without any abode. For if some part (of the earth) lacks them, that is, these crafts, for example, the northern quarter of the earth, the other quarters will not lack them, since it is clear that they can have an abode in the southern part, just as in the northern.
Thus, perhaps, philosophy comes to be in the major portion of the subject at all times, just as man comes to be from man and horse from horse. According to this mode of existence the speculative intellect is neither generable nor corruptible [67].

Despite his sharp criticism of Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd agrees with him concerning the subject of human perfection and bliss. His two Spanish masters, Ibn Bajja and Ibn Tufayl, had both learned that man is destined to be liberated from the imprisonment of his body and, by realising the conjunction (*ittisal*) with the Active Intellect, a state of intellectual bliss is experienced, comparable to that enjoyed by the separate Intellects. Ibn Rushd wrote no less than three tractates about the topic of "coniunctio" or *ittisal*, and explicitly states that man's eternal bliss exists in the "conjunction" of the

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[67] *De Anima*, 149v-150v, Hyman-Walsh, p. 321-322.

(impersonal) material intellect with the Active Intellect. There is no room for personal immortality and bliss here - he also corrects Ibn Sina's deviation from Aristotle here: "the passive intellect", that is, the imagination that forms the basis for the (temporary) "individualisation" of the intellect, belongs to the *soul.* As a physical expression of the body (cf. Aristotle) it is transient along with the body.

This state (sc. of ittisal) is a kind of divine perfection of man. Natural perfection, on the other hand, exists in the acquiring of natural states of proficiency in the theoretical sciences which are mentioned in the Book of Proof (that is Analytica Posteriora). That is the reason why these two proficiencies, that is, for natural and for divine perfection, can not be derived unambiguously from these sciences, because the aptitude for the ultimate divine perfection has no part in the material ability for personal individuality." [68].

It need not be said that for Ibn Rushd, reaching that part of intellectual excellence, is the privilege of a small minority. The mass can only reach a certain level of moral excellence by taking part in a life of practical virtue, for which the condition is not a theoretical grasp of truth, but sooner that orthodoxy of the soul, of which the conditions are defined in the Qur'an.

Concluding this discussion of Averroes's teaching of the unity of the intellect - or of "monopsychism" - as it is usually and somewhat imprecisely called by most-, one can note that " thus, in the relationship between God and the world, pantheism is excluded, and his monopsychism again has a monistical character" [69].
Along with the denial of the immortality of the soul it will cause scandal in Christianity: "His monopsychism was to be the single greatest danger to Christian thinking" [70].

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[68] Paraphrase by *De Anima*, cited by Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, Columbia University, 1970, p. 325.

[69] H. Dethier, *Summa averroïstica. I. Het averroïstisch-nominalistisch front en de leer van de dubbele waarheid*, Brussel, 1977, p. 26.

[70] Gordon A. Leff, *Medieval Thought, from St. Augustine to Ockham*, Chicago, 1958, p. 161.

B. What makes us Know?

Though all knowledge must "come from" experience, it comes from a rational experience with an intelligible world. What experience conveys can be put into language, *logos*: it can be expressed in words, propositions, and demonstrations. And though man cannot say all that the world is, what he can say is truly said. The world has the power of being understood, and man's understanding, his intellect, *nous*, is the operation of that cosmic power, the expression of the world's intelligibility. In the act of knowing, the power of *nous* to understand, and the power of the world to be understood, receive a common fulfilment, a common operation. Human knowledge becomes one with what the world really is: the intellect, *nous*, becomes itself the intelligible structure of things [71]. Yet Aristotle recognises certain difficulties. If *nous* is really so self-contained and insulated from everything else, as it must be if it is to know, "if *nous* is simple and unaffected and as Anaxagoras says has nothing in common with anything else, how will it think, if to think is to be acted upon?" [72] If *nous* has really no form or nature of its own, how can *nous* know itself? Perhaps *nous* is in a sense already all objects of thought potentially like the wax tablet. Aristotle had already stated, in contrasting "nousing" with sensing: "Actual sensing is always of particulars, while knowledge is of universals; and these universals are, in a manner, in the rational *psyché* or *nous* itself. Hence it is in our power to think whenever we choose; but sensing is not in our power: for the presence of the sensed object is necessary." [73] Why then do we not think all the time? Why do we not think all things at once? Why are not all universals continuously present to *nous*? What "makes" us think and know? What actualises certain universals at certain times? Is the efficient cause of "nousing" like the efficient cause of sensing? What "makes" us see is light: in seeing, it is light that actualises particular colours, and light is the outcome of the motion of a medium. Throughout Aristotle, only motion can be an agent, "make" things happen, and serve as an efficient cause. So we should expect Aristotle to answer his question, What makes us know? "Some motion makes us know." So far, the whole consideration has been biological and completely

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[71] John Herman Randall Jr., *Aristotle*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1960, pp. 98 sq.

[72] *De Anima* III, ch. 4: 429b 23-25.

[73] *De Anima* II, ch. 5: 417b 22-26.

naturalistic: and some motion is the only answer consistent with the rest of the *De Anima*. Perhaps it might be some motion of the nervous system: that was the answer to the same question of the efficient cause of knowing given by Spinoza, who on this point was a consistent Aristotelian. Perhaps it might be some motion of discourse, of language and communication: that is the answer given by moderns like George Herbert Mead and John Dewey. The whole discussion certainly implies an answer in terms of some particular experience - some particular *phantasma*, perhaps: that was the answer of Zabarella, the ablest of all the Aristotelian commentators. But instead of giving any of these answers, Aristotle turns Platonist in the end, as he so often does. What he actually says is: besides the power of knowing and becoming all universals, *nous* as *pathétikos*, "passive intellect," there must be "another distinction in the *psyché*," *nous* such that it makes all things, a kind of quality (*hexis*) like light. And it is this *nous* that is, in the words of Anaxagoras, separable (*choristos*) and unaffected (*apathés*) and unmixed (*amigés*). It does not become, but is a deathless and eternal activity, and knows "no intermittence," and without it the *nous* that becomes all things would not think at all. And it is such *nous* that makes us know, just as light makes us see: Aristotle falls back on Plato's metaphor, that knowing is like an illumination by an intelligible light, and resorts to a Platonic myth - he certainly employs in this paragraph the "likely language" of myth.

What on earth does Aristotle mean? The problem of interpreting what came to be called the *poiétikos nous*, the "Active Intellect" - the phrase does not occur in Aristotle himself at all, though *pathétikos nous*, "Passive Intellect," does - has determined men's whole view of Aristotle's thought. The problem really belongs, not to Aristotle himself, but to the history of the Aristotelian tradition in Hellenistic and medieval times; for it became deeply involved in one question clearly not intended in Aristotle himself, religious issues.

Aristotle's pupil and successor, Theophrastos, held that what makes us know is "in the *psyché*," a part of us, one of the human functions of our life, something that man does. It is a spontaneous "active intellect," part of the human *nous*, another function or way of acting of the human organism. The Hellenistic commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias held that it is the same for all men, an eternal activity in the world: it is God himself, the Unmoved Mover. The human intellect, man's "passive intellect," the capacity to know, is illuminated by the cosmic *nous*, by God. This is a Platonizing

interpretation; since it was largely adopted by St. Augustine, we can call it an "Augustinian" interpretation. Averroes held that man does not really think himself at all. The "passive intellect" is also the same for all men, one and single. Only "intellect" ever thinks - in us! The "rational intellect," *nous*, both active and passive, is not the form of the human body, it is not a human function at all. It is the lowest of the "intelligences" informing the heavenly spheres: its proper "sphere" is the entire human race. Man has a form and function of his own, the "cogitative soul," which is the passive power of the *phantasia* or imagination to serve as the instrument of this single "rational intellect" of all mankind in knowing. Averroes thus construes intellect, *nous*, not as a personal human activity, but as a kind of "realm of truth," in which men "Participate," a realm which actualises itself *in* men as knowledge, but not *by* men. This view strikes the student of modern philosophy as quite Spinozistic: that is, Spinoza is in many respects in the Averroïstic tradition, or at least in the tradition common to Averroes and Maimonides, who held rather similar opinions on the unity of the intellect. At this point Thomas Aquinas and the Christians appeared upon the scene, anxious to combat this Averroistic doctrine of the "unity of the intellect." They were not pantheistic, but fairly humanistic in their emphasis; and they were greatly concerned with the individuality of particular souls. Thomas held that the "active intellect" is the highest "part" or function of the individual human rational soul, and that it requires no bodily organ. We are thus back with Theophrastos once more. Finally, Pomponazzi and Zabarella, Italian Aristotelians of the beginning and end of the sixteenth century, of all professed Aristotelians probably the closest to the elusive "Aristotelian spirit," held that intellect or *nous* is indissolubly united to the individual body in its existence, and perishes when the body perishes. But in its functioning it can rise above the body's limitations. It needs sense images as its necessary materials, but in knowing *nous* lifts itself to universals, for a mortal intellect can nevertheless know eternal truth. It is in the act of knowing that *nous* is "separable and unaffected and unmixed," but not in its existence. The human or passive intellect is mortal, and dies with the body. The active intellect is alone immortal, for it is the intelligibility of the universe itself, its intelligible structure. So to Aristotle's question, What makes us know? Zabarella answers, It is truth itself, the logical structure of the World, joined to images as their "intelligible form".

The difficulty is that Aristotle's meaning cannot be found in his words alone. He does not press the point: there is a single concise, very elliptical paragraph. He then goes on in a thoroughly naturalistic vein as before. The "active intellect" is thus really the least important or significant part of the *De Anima*. To mix the metaphor, it is a Platonic wild oat coming home to roost: that is, it seems to be all that is left in the present text of the *De Anima* of what had been in his early dialogues a much more important part of Aristotle's youthful Platonism. This is the view of Werner Jaeger, A. E. Taylor, and most present Aristotelian Scholars: it is documented in F. Nuyens, *L'évolution de la Psychologie d'Aristote*, which follows Jaeger's methods. Perhaps it is best to leave it at that. Such a view of recent scholars transforms the logical problem of harmonising the active intellect with the rest of Aristotle's thought into the psychological problem of his intellectual "development"; and we moderns somehow feel that when we have abandoned logic for psychology we have "solved" a problem.

Of course, what Aristotle ought to have meant by "the *nous* that makes all things," the active intellect, in terms of his own thought, is clear enough. To his question, What makes us know? What actualises universals? the answer is, it is *logos*, discourse, language and communication. The "active intellect" is actually *logos*. Moderns like Mead and Dewey seem not only to be right - they are also thoroughly Aristotelian. But it is striking that, important as Aristotle makes *logos*, what things call be said to be, he never treats *logos* itself in biological and functional terms, as an activity of organisms with the power of *nous*: he never treats *logos* as a "part" of the *psyché*, as one of the functions making up life. Such a treatment is not in the *De Anima* at all, but it ought to be. What Aristotle himself actually meant cannot be learned by torturing this brief paragraph. One can get farthest by noting carefully the problems to which it is presented as an answer. The judgement of some scholars as John Herman Randall jr. for instance, is that the most probable answer arrived at by such a method is that of Pomponazzi and Zabarella. It seems clear that for Aristotle the "active intellect" must be something that is more than merely human. It may well be "the greater" or the cosmic "*nous*" of Anaxagoras [74], to whom Aristotle specifically refers throughout. Thus it is likely that as an Aristotelian interpretation Thomas Aquinas' is inaccurate. In any event, the "active intellect" is quite impersonal: Aristotle leaves no doubt

[74] Diels, fragment 12.

on that score. It is immortal and eternal, but has no memory. It is thus of little help to a Christian theologian, but it is very much like Spinoza.

If this really be Aristotle's own view, what can this mean? Accepting the account of Aristotle's intellectual development away from Platonism, we still have to ask: Why did he retain this early Platonic view? If we know what Santayana has called "The Secret of Aristotle," [75] that he is a naturalist through and through, we can, I think, see in the "active intellect" a recognition of the cardinal difficulty in any naturalistic theory of knowing and intelligence. If we grant "knowing" to be a fact - if we hold that intelligence is not merely an organ of adjustment and adaptation, but a means of arriving at what may fairly be called "truth" - then mind does seem to rise above the limitations and conditions of its bodily instrument, and to be, as Aristotle puts it, "unmixed and separable," and in its vision "deathless and eternal." This is Plato's insight. It is not so much a theory about the ontological status of *nous*, as an appreciation of what *nous* can do.

Aristotle seems to be pointing, as always, to facts: here, to paradoxical facts. When we think, it is we men who are thinking: this is the individual and creative aspect of human living, in which our minds do seem to be able to lift themselves by their own bootstraps, and to become at once more self-contained and more self-sufficient, and more universal, more unlimited more penetrating, than anything connected with a particular animal organism has any right to be. The human mind *is* "unmixed with," "unaffected by," "separable from" its bodily conditions: it does seem to be in some sense "free" to seize on truth. Yet - we could not think at all if the world were not thinkable, if it had no intelligible structure, if it were not, in some sense, the embodiment of "reason," of *logos* - if it were not what can be aptly called a "realm of mind." [76] The hardheaded Spinoza, a consistent naturalist, displays the same "Platonism": "Man thinks, therefore God is." That is, the world is an intelligible system or order, a "realm" of reason and mind. And when we think, in spite of all our limitations, in spite of all the "perturbations" of our individual human minds, it is more than just we men thinking. It is more than just particular animal organisms doing something by themselves. It is the

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[75] See Santayana, *Dialogues in Limbo*, X, "The Secret of Aristotle."

[76] See F. J. E. Woodbridge, *The Realm of Mind* (New York, 1926)

actualisation of that system and order, of that "greater and cosmic *nous*," as Anaxagoras calls it.

Thinking and knowing is the "thought" embodied there in the world, "potentially," Aristotle would say, being actually thought by us mortals. It is the world reason or *nous* flowering in our human knowing. The farther you push the human mind, as Aristotle does, to "pure potentiality," to the power to know all truth, the closer you come to "pure actuality," to that perfect truth itself. In other words, Aristotle seems to be saying something very much like what Spinoza said. The human mind can free itself, is "separable from," *choristos*, determination by the mere play of the mechanical actions of the body, to be determined by the "reason" of the world-system - by the "*nous* that makes all things," by embodied truth. It is a metaphor, perhaps, in both cases. But it is a Platonic metaphor into which all the great "Knowers" - those who make sheer knowing their aim - seem to fall in the end. It is a metaphor that points to facts. The "active intellect" is clearly a Platonic myth, like the very similar Platonic myth of Book Lambda of the *Metaphysics*. It is clothed in the language of Platonic myth, the "likely language" of the *Timaeus*, not in the normal Aristotelian language of exact statement. Such language always points to human experience; and if taken too literally always turns out to be nonsense. But it expresses the "Platonism" in which all sincere naturalisms - like Aristotle's - seem to culminate. The implication of the myth, the point of the metaphor, is that thinking is not something alien to the universe. "Mind" is not a kind of cosmic accident. It is rather a natural and inevitable development in a universe with the character ours displays, reaching its "highest" actualisation in the minds of men.

In conclusion, it is worth stating the significance of Aristotle's functional approach to knowing. He treats knowing as a function of the human organism responding to its environment, as a way of dealing with its world, a way of functioning in a context. He treats it as a natural process: there is no gulf between "mind" and the rest of nature. Mind is an intelligible interaction between a knowing organism and a knowable world. There is no problem of "How knowledge is possible, and why it isn't." For Aristotle, "knowing" is not a problem to be solved, but a natural process to be described and analysed. In the light of our experience of many other approaches to the construing of the fact of knowledge, the approach of Aristotle, it is here submitted, is the only sensible and intelligible, the only fruitful attitude.

Indeed, any construing of the fact of "knowledge," whether Kantian, Hegelian, Deweyan, Positivistic, or any other, seems to be consistent and fruitful, and to avoid the impasses of barren self-contradiction, and insoluble and meaningless problems, only when it proceeds from the Aristotelian approach, and pushes Aristotle's own analyses farther, as in the light of our scientific knowledge they must be pushed farther today - only, that is, in the measure that it is conducted upon an Aristotelian basis. Indeed, in some respects Aristotle's functional and contextual behaviourism seems to be superior to our own biological and mechanistic behaviourism, because it views human experience, not as the interaction between a "merely" biological organism and a wholly illogical world, but as a co-operation between an intelligent biological organism and an intelligible world.

C. Political Averroïsm

During the very late Middle Ages (14th Century), Italian thinkers, more than all other European thinkers, have "averroised": the history of Averroism is entangled with the cultural history of Italy. Even now, there is no unified picture. There are periods and milieus. And in the background of scholastic traditions, there were also individuals.

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) and Marsilius of Padua (1275/1280-1342/1343). – If the legend of a Siger, who flees Paris, who is a defeated dialectic, a philosopher snapped by the beatings of Albertus (!) and of Thomas, has prevailed from the 1300's onward, then the rehabilitation came at the same time, and with still more impact. Dante has made him enter into the fourth heaven of Paradise[77]. The bearing of the six verses of the *Divina Commedia* (in which Saint Thomas himself introduces the philosopher to the travelling poet) remains contested. Which are then, the "obstructing truths" Dante mentions? Is he a personal adherent to them? In other words: is his praise a sign of "Averroism", and if so, which "Averroism" does he mean? In order to answer these questions one has to investigate the works themselves.

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[77] He, whose gaze you find regarding me, is the light of a ghost, with which serious thoughts, death slowly strides towards. It is the eternal light of Siger, which, during the teachings in the street of Fourra, syllogizes inappropriate truths.

Since the "Opinions of the inhabitants of the virtuous City" by Farabi, there is a political dimension to the "encounter" in Arab-Islamic thinking. In a certain sense it develops along with the critical dimension and the reformed intention of the *Decisive Treatise* by Ibn Rushd. Even if Dante, like all Latinists of the 1300's, knew no political works of Arab peripateticism, one finds with him, the undisputed traces of what could be called a "politicisation of Aristotelism", more than a "political Averroism". It is senseless to emphasise here that Alighieri shared the ideal of philosophical life with the Parisian "Averroists": in the Middle Ages he is the first who makes a systematic theory out of it with an unprecedented bearing, the first that resounds as a program: nobility (*nobiltade*). If the *Symposium* is the manifest of this intellectualist Aristocratism and if it profoundly theorises the notion of "intellectual bliss" (*felicità mentale*), launched earlier by Albertus the Great in the tracks of the farabo-Averroism, one should remark that, as with John of Janduno, the presence of philosophy in Dante's *Universal Monarchy* is regarded as the ultimate end of society: "Due to the fact that the power of the intellectual faculties of man, cannot be realised completely and simultaneously, neither by an individual, nor by special communities, it is necessary that there is a multitude in the human kind, due to which this entire intellectual power can be realised. (...) This is indeed, Averroes's opinion in his *Commentary on the Books De Anima.* (...) The task, taken as a whole and specific for human kind, is to activate the entire power of the potential intellect without pause, in a first period with the aim of reflection, then, as a consequence, with the aim of action". This may not suffice in order to speak of a "Latin Averroism" in the traditional sense of the term- because Dante does not seem to proclaim the division of the potential intellect (*stricto sensu*), but it suffices to link Dante with both a transpersonal and a political understanding of the philosophical activity characteristic for Averroes [78]. And there is more. Is the confirmation of the *necessity* of the "realisation of the intellectual power" for him, not a confirmation of the necessity of the "arts"? It is quite likely, and even more so because the passage of Ibn Rushd, cited by Dante, is precisely one in which he formulates the thesis of a

[78] Actually, the notion of a "collective" realization of science is an Averroistic thesis, well illustrated by John of Janduno, *Quaest. In XII libros Metaph. I, quaest.4 cited, Edition: f° 279a-285a and 375b-383b.*

necessary "realisation" of the philosophy in *omni tempore.* [79] Indeed, more than searching for the unity of the intellect in the cosmos, Dante searched for it in the city-state, or more so in the Empire. His *Universal Monarchy* is monopsychism, as a social doctrine, as political life, as history. It is with the same theoretical gesture that at the same time Alighieri commemorates the political figure of Frederic II and the philosophical figure of Siger of Brabant. Dante is an "Averroist" to the extent that he is an empirical theologian, a theoretic of the necessity of the unity of temporary power, in short that he comes from political Laicism. But not in the details of a philosophical psychology and of a theory of the soul which is equally indebted to Albertus the Great and the Arab philosophy in general as to Averroes alone. The paradox of Dante's thinking is that he has recovered one of the authentic meanings of Averroism- the political - without having been able to view the texts in which this is discussed.

Political Averroism, though born with Dante, did not die with him. One finds its essence in the work of Marsilius Mainardini, a fervent follower of the emperor Louis of Bavery, a determined adversary of popedom, a theoretic of the autonomy and unity of political power (in opposition to religious power), better known under the name of Marsilius of Padua. Ghiblin, but also student and master in Paris (he was rector in 1313), a personal friend to John of Janduno, banned by John XXII, fled to Munich (like the other opposer of the "fullness of pontifical power", *plenitudo potestatis*, namely William of Ockham), Marsilius leaves behind an oeuvre, that is justly viewed as the fleuron of empirical transposition of monopsychism: *Defensor Pacis* (1324), *Defensor Minor* and the *Treatise on the Translation of the Empire* [80].

D. Comparison with Hegel's Dialectic of Nature. The Unity and Distinction of Nature and Culture

1. Introduction

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[79] Cf. Averroes, *In Aristotelis De anima*, III, comm. 5, ed. Crawford, p.407, I.605-623.

[80] Cf. *Le Défenseur de la Paix de Marsile de Padoue*, transl.J Quillet, Vrin, 1968; Marsile de Padoue *Oeuvres mineures* (*Défenseur mineur. Traité de la translation de l'Empire*) eds, translation and notes by J. Quillet and C. Jeudy, Paris, 1980).

If one wants to try to thoroughly understand man's culture, one cannot but confront it with its opposite: nature. After all, culture is the effect of the special position human kind has in the midst of other species. Differently said: his exceptional position in nature is that he is both part of nature and also a special part of nature, namely the part that is productive and receptive towards nature as a whole [81]. Regarding the unity and the distinction of nature and culture, only the first step has been taken towards insight into the dialectic of culture. In order to get a grip on the further tread of culture it is useful to distinguish three aspects of moments in the relationship between man and culture. We propose to distinguish between 'objectification', 'self-sufficiency', and 'estrangement'. Anticipating on the theme of the rest of this paragraph: man is a creature who objectifies himself; whose objectifications become self-sufficient and whose self-sufficient objectifications estrange him from himself. 'Estrangement' is, then, the experience of man who loses himself as it were, in the world of culture that he created himself, instead of feeling recognised by that world and able to develop in it. As a realisation of the failure or at least the failing of self-fulfilment by culture, estrangement is an important concept to understand the whole process of the dialectic of culture, the process in which man develops via the detour of the cultural world which he himself created.

2. Objectification

The first aspect we would like to distinguish in this process is that of *objectification* or externalisation. The specificity of man is not that he is a creature that expresses itself - because animals also express themselves- but lies in the circumstance that he can express himself in a specific manner (symbolising, changing, "intellectually") and that he can shape his expressions into a more or less lasting form. Man disposes of the ability to express his impressions in more or less solid forms that have a certain objectivity and that exist autonomously apart from him. In anthropology ('material culture': economy, technology, housing etc.), it is immediately clear what can be meant by these more or less independent and sustainable forms in which man expresses himself. As far as the 'immaterial' culture (language, art, religion etc.) is concerned, the objectivity of these cultural

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[81] Ton Lemaire, *Over de Waarden van Kulturen. Een inleiding tot de kultuurfilosofie*, Ambo, Baarn, 1976, pp. 380 sq.

expressions is much less tangible. Their objectivity lies in the fact that they are continuously present in the behaviour and consciousness of participants in the culture. They let themselves be guided, in for example speaking, by the given grammatical and other rules, which are common in their society and necessary in order to reach understandable expressions. When they marry, they again, follow common rules for marriage which in general, they do not make up ad hoc, but which are in force in the tradition of their society. From an elementary perspective, culture is nothing other that the whole of these objectified expressions of a society; a whole of in fact, conventional forms, in which a society, traditionally organises a lifestyle for its members. As 'objective forms' they are the precipitation or deposit of the interaction of generations of people who wanted to speak, work, marry, think, pray, etc, within that society. Their 'style of being' at first seems somewhat mysterious, not only because it is so often hardly tangible, but especially because it is self-evident and its effect takes place beyond the consciousness of those involved. It is the dimension of reality that is neither organic nor purely ' intellectual' but the embodiment of a collective way of living; the fixing of patterns of behaviour of many subjects in the tradition which the community requires. According to Durkheim, these patterns betray the individual. White defines them as an 'extra-somatic continuum of symbol-borne events' whereas Kroeber prefers the term 'the superorganic'.

3. The Process of Self-Sufficiency

The second moment in the dialectic of culture is that of the process of *self-sufficiency*. The objectified expressions of the cultural community can exist by themselves, apart from and in opposition to the subjects whose externalisations they were at first, and the objectified expressions withdraw more and more from their creators' control. In fact this aspect is a further precision of what 'objectifying' means; all established cultural forms have this self-sufficiency; only from an analytical perspective, the process of self-sufficiency is a next phase in the objectification of man's expressions. Precisely because the objectifications are a collective product of many subjects and because man inevitably connects himself with nature, they obtain a weight of their own, their own inertia and 'facticity' . From this can be concluded that they should not be reduced to the human psyche, to individual and even collective intentions or needs, but represent a dimension with its own logic and its own objectivity which the subject has no access to.

Starting from Hegel, one calls this realm of human products, externalisations of the (subjective) mind the 'objective mind'; a concept that anticipates an understanding of culture but is then pushed aside by it. In this context this concept can be useful because it expresses man as a 'subjective mind' (as a longing, striving and thinking creature) objectifies his intentions and actions to an 'objective mind' so that he surrounds himself with a world of self made things, self-installed rules and self thought-up ideas, in which his mind is as it were sedimented. Once the mind has been objectified in the objective mind, man, from then on exists twice: namely immediately as a subjective mind and medially in his own expressions, as objectified mind. This doubling of human existence, made possible due to the fact that his expressions become self sufficient, turns out to be of vital importance for the development of mankind. Because once surrounded by an objective mind, a dialectic is created between man as subjective and man as objective mind. In this sense the objectifications of man as subjective mind now retroact his subjectiveness and influence it. This means that man firstly shapes, creates and produces but then is shaped, determined and produced by his own products. That man is indeed the creator of culture but at the same time its creation; that man produces but that he is also a product of his own product. Once the objectifications become self-sufficient with respect to man as a subject, following his own 'extrasomatic' and 'superorganic' development, man lives in and from a world brought forth by himself, but with its own logic and forcing the subject into certain directions. He is then shaped and controlled by that world of cultural forms. This means that, seeing as these shapes already embodied the cultivation of nature, man becomes 'cultivated' through his own treatment and symbolisation of nature. That man, by humanising nature, indirectly humanises himself, namely through his own externalisations. Man produces but thereby indirectly produces himself, and he, in the true sense of the word, is his own product: he is the product of his product. He is mediated by his own mediation; he is humanised by the humanising of nature.

4. Estrangement as a Bad Form of Self-Sufficiency

Finally, the third moment which we would like to distinguish is that of *estrangement*. It is not easy to get a grip on the concept of 'estrangement' since it recently has become such a trendy word in all kinds of sciences, philosophy and even daily speech. We want to stay with the original,

succinct meaning of the concept of 'estrangement' when we try to describe it as the state of man in which he experiences the objectified spirit as a *strange power* before him which hinders him to completely be himself. This definition is still somewhat vague, but it draws our attention to the possibility that is hidden by the dialectic in our culture, namely that man not so much develops and realises himself in and through his products but that he loses himself in them, is dominated by them and through his objectified mind he becomes a stranger for himself. The estrangement reminds us that the real meaning and 'intention' of culture is precisely to make life humane for the subject. This presupposes that man has 'fallen' from the immediacy of nature and that he has to mediate his life continually in and through the cultural shapes that he, himself creates. It is no less true that this detour which man must make via his objectifications, - and implicitly then, also via nature- in the end should lead him back to himself. If man can only realise himself via the detour of the objective mind, then this objective mind should in any case, allow him to recognise himself in his own work, to reaffirm him, in short: allow him to enjoy his own identity in them, even if it is mediated.

Estrangement comes down to a loss of identity: the circumstance in which man, as a subject cannot find his identity in his own objectifications. The concept 'identity', indeed allows us to penetrate deeper into the meaning of what estrangement really is. As opposed to an animal, which as far as we know, is immediately identical to itself, the identity of man is a necessarily a mediated, or more precisely: continuously in the process of being mediated. Due tot the fact that man is an 'excentric', 'nicht-festgestelltes' animal, he does not immediately correspond with himself, but he must identify with himself, he must ascertain himself, and he has to do so via the detour of the other and others. Man appears to be a creature that has to *acquire* his own identity in a process that covers both his individual biography as the history of the species. This process of self-identification and self-ascertainment, indicates that man's identity is mediated, that it will always encompass both himself and the other. Therefore the subject, in order to become himself, in order to realise himself, must take the detour via the objectified mind and also take the detour over the world and the others.

One can speak of 'estrangement' when a human being cannot find and acquire his identity as a subject through his own objectifications, but that he, as it were loses himself in the self-sufficient world of his own objects.

Apparently a certain implicit norm is created when the concept of estrangement is used, namely the norm that man indeed has to acquire his complete identity in and through his products. If all estrangement means a loss of identity, if it expresses that the dialectic of the cultures which man completes has partially or completely failed, then the norm for a state of non-estrangement is the following: the subject must come to an entire and completed self-ownership, because he enjoys his own objective mind as his own exteriorisation. It appears that the norm is that the subject indeed confirms his autonomy through the detour across the objects. The victory over the estrangement then lies in the fact that the subject tries to regain ownership of the objectifications that have withdrawn themselves from his authority and have started living a life of their own over which he has no control, and thus also regain his autonomy.

5. The notion of the Eternity of the Intelligible

If divine wisdom produces an ordered world, by bringing into actuality potential forms which group concrete individuals into genera and species, so, inversely, through the act of abstraction the human spirit can make these forms exist separately. This is both the most characteristic act of man and that which brings him closest to divinity. While this may legitimately seem to suggest neoplatonism, the preceding discussion demonstrates that it should not necessarily be related to it but rather that it arises from within the Rushdian problematic itself: there is nothing real but the concrete, hence the intelligible being of forms cannot be conceived except as corresponding to a level in the hierarchical structure of existing things where they may have purely intellectual status. Ibn Rushd finds this in the hypothesis of separate intelligences moving the celestial bodies in a manner comparable to the movement of the lover by the loved one, but also of a universal and continuous movement since any individual character could only come from the senses and the imagination which are absent at this level [82]. Thus the hierarchical structure of the universe and not a mystical type of perspective governs the status of the intellect. The latter, through the simple fact of understanding, i.e. conceptualising the real, must go back from one intelligible to another towards the organising wisdom of everything. Consequently, the diverse themes of Providence, the hierarchical structure of

[82] Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd (Averroes)*, p. 106-115

the universe and the pivotal role of the human intellect unite in what has come to be called the doctrine of the unity of the intellect. The essential element of this doctrine is the notion of the eternity of the intelligible. To understand this, we have to return right to the very beginning in Aristotle's polemic against both the Megarians and Plato on the question of the appropriateness of conceptual language (universal) to concrete data (particular) (*Metaphysics* 1046, b30). Through this particular aspect, the entire problem of the soundness of thought is advanced. Why do all spirits function in the same way? When the individual stops thinking momentarily or definitively, does the truth cease to exist? The Megarians maintain that a concept can only be attributed to an object when the latter demonstrates it in actuality (the architect is only an architect when he actually constructs). Aristotle does not want to bring in the Platonic doctrine of 'participation' in the Idea. He therefore has to invoke the progression of the same being from potential to actuality, and then back to potential, etc. Thus the architect is always an architect from the moment he has learnt his profession, and even when he is not engaged in construction or when he momentarily forgets his skill. The Aristotelian solution is thus to 'expand' experience: momentary contact with the concrete is not enough to justify the attribution of a concept; what is needed is a repetition of this contact, the grasping of a process. If the spirit 'stick' to this process, there can be no error.

Ibn Rushd simply follows the same logic, extending the analysis to the level of the human species. The individual does not always think the intelligible, but the human species always thinks it, to the extent that Ibn Rushd considers it impossible for it to disappear [83]. The material intellect, so named because like the prime matter it can change into all things, is always thinking within the activity of the human species - hence the intelligible is eternal. The individual man only loses contact with it through the disappearance of the 'passive powers', i.e. the forms of the imagination, that are corruptible.

The theme of the unity of the intellect was already present in Ibn Bajja's work, but in a completely different context. Ibn Bajja principally describes a 'genesis of thought', whereas in Ibn Rushd's work there is 'a progression to metaphysical analysis' [84]. This theme enables us to understand not only the

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[83] Large commentary on *De Anima*, ed. Crawford, p.448

[84] Jolivet, *Annuaire de l'E.P.H.E.* 1970-1, p.321

'soundness' of thought, but also, as a result, the philosophical approach advocated by Ibn Rushd. The material intellect reaches perfection (*perfici*) through its own act of understanding material forms, and reaches it to an even greater extent in turning to immaterial forms 'intelligible in themselves', in particular the agent Intellect. Thus it reaches the level of the eternity of thought [85]. The term 'union' or 'conjunction' (*ittisal, conjunctio*) to the agent Intellect is used to describe the process by which the material intellect, which is nothing in actuality, becomes what it thinks and is united with the intelligible. It assumes a preparation involving the gradual acquisition of science, although the end of this process is itself beyond speculative science.

The details of the Rushdian concept of the intellect are extremely complex, and Renan himself was appalled by them. In fact, as mentioned, Ibn Rushd generally looks for the simplest solutions, since he considers complexity a source of error. However, on this particular problem he had to deal with an essential point on which the layers of commentaries and hypotheses had accumulated without it being possible to draw a clear opposition between the perspectives because, as J. Jolivet correctly points out, Aristotle's own perspective is tinged with Platonism. If Ibn Rushd's solution has been seen as neoplatonic in tone, it is because he wishes to take into account all the interpretations and do justice to each one, not through syncretism, but by integrating the particular aspect that justified its formulation. He distinguishes thought, which is passive, from abstraction, which is active and anterior to the former in our will. We understand the 'primary propositions' (*primae propositiones*) in a natural way through the action of the agent Intellect, and 'knowledge acquired (*intellecta acquisita*) from the primary propositions' in voluntary fashion both from the former and from the agent Intellect. The agent Intellect acts towards these primary propositions in a manner analogous to the cause efficient in relation to the instrument, or form in relation to matter, but this manner remains autonomous. This explains the capacity of the material intellect to grasp eternally both material forms and separate forms. In 'engendering' intelligibles, which is an action of the material intellect, but assumes the intervention of the agent Intellect, the latter becomes a form of the former. This is what constitutes union, but it takes place through a whole series of mediations: material intellect - images -

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[85] ed. Crawford, p. 450

potential speculative intelligibles - speculative intelligibles in actuality - agent Intellect. The Latin text (which is the only one known) speaks of 'movement towards junction' (*moveri ad continuationem*, p.500) and shows how Ibn Rushd was attracted - but not more than attracted - by the mystical perspective of Themistius. The treatise *De animae beatitudine* goes into even greater detail concerning the action of the agent Intellect. Since it renders material forms intelligible, it must be superior to them in intelligibility and there must be a mediator - the acquired intellect, which is that which is capable of thinking itself and which develops in time. The *intellectus-intellectio*, the *intelligibile* and the *intelligens* are thus united in a quasi religious perspective.

E. Scholar of the Philosophical Tradition

Breaking new ground in an environment that was intellectually unprepared, Ibn Rushd had to build up an audience. His own society did not recognise the status of the philosopher, acknowledging only that of the scholar or the politician (*faqih* or counsellor to the prince). These two figures were permitted - within the limits of orthodoxy - to construct their own vision of the world although, whatever its merit, it did not endow them with any moral authority. Such authority only existed in the ancient world. To gain an audience, the thinker had to turn himself into a scholar of the philosophical 'tradition'. Malik Ibn Wuhayb's success in this respect - despite his failure to produce anything of his own - earned him the title of 'philosopher of the Occident' amongst his contemporaries. If Ibn Rushd goes so far as to subject himself to the discipline of the commentary which is not only detailed but coherent, it is because he saw the principal danger to lie in the temptations of syncretism [86].

Above all, he had a very humble conception of his role as a philosopher, as Ibn Sab'in was later to confirm, despite his stern attitude towards Ibn Rushd. Ibn Rushd believed that wisdom transcends individuals. The wise man finds happiness in being the subject in which it is momentarily realised. Ibn Bajja had declared that the union of the human intellect with the agent Intellect is possible and that this is where supreme happiness lies. Knowledge of separate substances denied in certain texts, notably al-Farabi, is attained if

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[86] Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd (Averroes)*, pp. 115 sq.

the quiddity of the intelligibles is individualised in the act of recognition and is multiplied in accordance with the different thinking subjects. Ibn Rushd objects that it is not possible to talk in the same way about the quiddity of material things and the quiddity of intelligible things. Furthermore, Ibn Bajja believes that the material intellect is subject to generation and corruption, which makes it impossible for it to think the incorruptible; and in conceding that it is not subject to it and thinks eternally, this makes it impossible for intellection to take place within a determined time. Ibn Rushd's solution is to state that the material intellect is eternal and belongs not to each corruptible individual but to the whole of the human species – which like all species is eternal (as a corollary of the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of the world). This material intellect is able both to conceive material forms, hence the existence within it of ideas subject to evolution, and separate forms, which permits union with the agent Intellect which forms these intelligibles. Speculative knowledge, with which individuals can help one another through a process of accumulation, prepares the way for this final knowledge which in turn transcends it since it is no longer dependent on sensible experience.

In contrast to the haughty isolation of the mystics and the advocates of illumination like Ibn Tufayl or Ibn Bajja's 'solitaries', the process by which philosophy is carried out is, according to Ibn Rushd, the concern of humanity as a whole. Both are eternal, and philosophy must always be being enacted in one part of the world or another. On the other hand, any personal elements in the thought of the individual spring from the imagination and are therefore perishable. This keen awareness of the insignificance of man and the greatness of thought is a continuation of the doctrine of the Mahdi described by the traditionalists as 'the doctrine of the *Logos*'. It was violently repudiated in the period of tension resulting from the problems of the Almohad regime and from the Christian threat. In the panic that set in well before the towns actually fell one after the other, the men of religion were far more attracted to a legalism which favoured accommodation and the search for the 'best', and to a mysticism giving precedence to the individual endowed with supernatural powers.

In short, the men of religion like the philosophers before Ibn Rushd, failed to combine a personal perspective with a concern for the public good. Ibn Rushd's approach was more balanced. Unlike Ibn Bajja he did not play the role of counsellor, nor did he compose a wholly circumstantial work like Ibn

Tufayl. Instead he applied himself to the commentaries on Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* and particularly, in the absence of Aristotle's *Politics*, to that on Plato's *Republic*.

F. Averroes's Compromis

Ibn Rushd's approach can be seen as a continuation of al-Farabi who had dealt with the two ancient thinkers in a similar way. Unlike his predecessor, Ibn Rushd does not attempt to reconcile the two at all costs, and he is generally aware of the differences between Plato and Aristotle. However, in the discussion of politics, he rarely opposes the two. Al-Farabi also serves as model for the way in which he envisages the links between this political philosophy and religious Law, particularly Islamic *Shari'a*. However, he is more conscious than al-Farabi of the supremacy of the *Shari'a* - a fact explained by his position as a jurist and by the climate of Almohadism. He generally accepts the basic conclusions of Plato's politics, though corrected by Aristotle, and considers synthesis not just applicable (whereas for Plato this would require almost impossible conditions) but applicable to his own society as long as enlightened leaders succeed one another. Ibn Rushd's defence of philosophy, which distinguishes him as a thinker from the other *ulema*, may even be seen as an adaptation to Islamic norms of the Platonic requirement that government be just in its beliefs and convictions. However, the political situation of his own time features in his formulation of this doctrine which is both Islamic and Platonic. Defining injustice as a situation in which 'each of the citizens prospers by means of more than one occupation', he adds, 'as happens in our country'. He envisages the ideal city and its degeneration as described by Plato, and opposes the Golden Age of the Prophet and his successors to the later Muslim states which, while theoretically maintaining the ideal structure and constitutional practices of early Islam, are in fact a distortion of it.

To an extent the political thought is a synthesis of Ibn Rushd's diverse investigations. He sees the common people as the recipient of rhetorical arguments aiming initially to instil adherence to sound beliefs and later to achieving good behaviour. Whereas Aristotle (*Nichomachean Ethics* 1179 a-b) considered it impossible to achieve the latter through argument alone, we have seen how Ibn Rushd benefited from analysis of the Almohad propaganda methods to challenge his master on the subject of the citizens.

With regards to enemies, the use of coercion is necessary, and on this point Ibn Rushd challenges Plato who only envisages war against the Barbarians and merely 'fraternal reprimands' amongst the Greeks: there are various levels of virtue even within the community based upon sound opinions, as Ibn Tumart's *tamyiz* taught. This is revealed in the practice of war which supposes an apprenticeship to discipline and, as already stated, this must be continuous since the exercise of the virtue of courage requires continuous conflict. For the 'guardians of the city' this conflict extends onto the intellectual level. Summoned to become leaders, they must struggle against the persuasive arguments that have shaped them initially, in order to raise themselves to the level of demonstrative arguments. There is thus a gradation starting with poetic arguments which aim solely at imitation even if this is false - as in certain children's fables - then rhetorical arguments which give possible imitation, dialectical arguments giving correct imitation, and finally demonstrative arguments, reserved for the elite, which are the only ones that give reality and above all lead to the truth.

The shift from dialectical arguments to demonstrative argumentation is represented in particular by the criticism of the atomist theory of the Mutakallimun, a theory intended to prove that there is no efficacy except in God. Besides the theoretical consequence that there must then be a principle of evil, Ibn Rushd draws from this the practical conclusion that there is no stability of good and evil. It is not only necessary to reject fables promising punishment or reward, which only incite action if the reward appears adequate or the fear is enough to act as a deterrent; it is also necessary to reject everything that prevents a grasp of that which is specific to each being. Classification by genus and species is the only method that enables the world to be put in order, or at least most of it, and it is naturally re-enacted in the political divisions which must be clear and unambiguous so as to avoid the risk of disorder. Dialectical argument is doubtless superior to poetical or rhetorical argument, but it is more perilous as it can lead to deception if it becomes sophistical. In presenting itself as exclusive and unsurpassable it leads to the fragmentation of the collectivity. The Platonic affirmation of the need for a stable form of knowledge in order to safeguard a common language and thus a social community is clearly at the root of Ibn Rushd's thought. Hence the third part of the commentary on the *Republic* gives a lengthy description of the different forms of social degeneration. This work can thus correctly be described as a 'pedagogical treatise'. Because it relies

on the objectivity of ethics, politics becomes the basis for the entire edifice of commentaries designed to provide an ideal picture of human knowledge. It in turn is guided by the model provided by theological reflection, making it possible for each person to achieve happiness according to his own capabilities, and through its main conclusions. Finally, like Plato, Ibn Rushd compares the acts of the political leader to those of the doctor. We have seen in the discussion of the *Kulliyat* how he envisages the latter: the doctor acts in accordance with each case, but bearing in mind the order of nature, and in a manner that reconciles the one with the other following a procedure governed by the laws of the discovery of the truth.

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