

AN ABSTRACTIONIST CORRECTION
OF AVICENNA'S THEORY
OF INTENTIONALITY IN THE EARLY AVERROES

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1. INTRODUCTION

AVICENNA posited a total of five internal sense powers: (1) the common sense receives images from the external senses; (2) the retentive/formative imagination retains or stores these images; (3) the estimative faculty abstracts "intentions" from the images of the previous two faculties; (4) the memorative faculty retains these intentions; and (5) the compositive imagination manipulates these images and intentions to form judgments about the physical properties of objects. The distinguishing ground for the first two pairs of these faculties (common sense and retentive imagination on the one hand, and estimative and memorative faculties on the other hand) is the distinction between their objects, namely, images and intentions. Avicenna thus uses the term "intention" to refer to an object of internal sense-cognition that is proper to the estimative and memorative faculties.

Averroes, on the other hand, in his early psychological work, *Epitome de Parva naturalia* (henceforth, *EPN*),¹ posited only *four* internal senses: (1) com-

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¹ Unless otherwise stated, line and page numbers refer to those of the Latin *Vulgata* version in AVERROIS CORDUBENSIS, *Compendia librorum Aristotelis qui Parva naturalia vocantur*, A. SHIELDS, H. BLUMBERG (editors), Mediaeval Academy of America, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1949. Most of my research on *EPN* is based on the *Vulgata* edition along with its critical apparatus; nevertheless, it was subject to heavy comparisons with the Latin *Parisiana* (also in AVERROIS CORDUBENSIS, *o. c.*) as well as Blumberg's English translation in AVERROES, *Epitome de Parva naturalia*, H. Blumberg (trans.), Mediaeval Academy of America, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1958; for important Arabic terms, I consulted Blumberg's edition of the Arabic, in AVERROIS CORDUBENSIS, *Compendia librorum Aristotelis qui Parva naturalia vocantur*, H. BLUMBERG (editor), Mediaeval Academy of America, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1972. The translations used in this paper, however, are mostly not Blumberg's but my own, based on the Latin *Vulgata*, which is a rather literal rendering of the original Arabic by Michael Scot. Cfr. R. TAYLOR, "Remarks on *Cogitatio in Averroes' Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros*," in J.A. AERTSEN and G. ENDRESS (editors), *Averroes and the Aristotelian Tradition: Sources, Constitution and Reception of the Philosophy of Ibn Rushd (1126-1198)*,

mon sense, (2) imagination, (3) the cogitative faculty and (4) memory. For him each of these operates by means of *both* images and intentions: each takes an image from the previous faculty and *abstracts an intention* from it. Hence, unlike Avicenna, Averroes does not use the term “intention” to refer to a proper object of cognition; rather, by “intention” (*intentio, ma‘nā*) he seems to be referring to a much broader notion: that of a formal element of *any* cognition.

In this paper I shall present an account of Averroes’ early² doctrine of the internal senses with special reference to the role that intentionality plays in internal sense cognition. I intend to show that his account is hopelessly incoherent unless one interprets him as departing from, and indeed revising, the Avicennian doctrine of intentionality. More specifically, I shall ultimately argue that Averroes’ early account of the internal senses represents an abstractionist correction of Avicenna’s doctrine of intentionality.

I shall begin by (i) giving an outline of the Aristotelian background. Then (ii), I shall review the Avicennian map of internal sense faculties and of the role that intentionality plays in them. Next (iii), I shall proceed by giving an account of Averroes’ general doctrine of the internal senses as it can be gathered from the early texts, especially the *EPN*. Then (iv), I explain more in detail Averroes’ early understanding of the roles of the two pre-cogitative internal sense faculties, namely, the common sense and imagination. Subsequently, (v) I examine *EPN*’s doctrine on the cogitative faculty. Finally, (vi) I shall endeavor to provide a coherent³ account of Averroes’ doctrine of mem-

Brill, Leiden 1999, pp. 217-255, at 245. Where I did not think Blumberg’s translation needed to be corrected, I left it as it was.

² There is a significant wealth of material available on Averroes’ *later* doctrine on the internal senses, as it is reflected in his *Long Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima*; cfr. AVERROES (IBN RUSHD) OF CORDOBA, *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*, R. TAYLOR (translator, editor), Th.-A. DRUART (subeditor), Yale University Press, New Haven 2009. See also D. BLACK, “Memory, Individuals, and the Past in Averroes’ Psychology”, «Medieval Philosophy and Theology», 5 (1996), pp. 161–187; IDEM, “Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western Transformations”, «Topoi», 19 (2000), pp. 59–75; R. TAYLOR, “Remarks on Cogitatio in Averroes’ Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros,” cit.; IDEM, “Cogitatio, Cogitativus and Cogitare: Remarks on the Cogitative Power in Averroes,” in J. HAMESSE, C. STEEL (editors), *L’elaboration du vocabulaire philosophique au Moyen Age* [Rencontres de philosophie Médiévale Vol. 8.], Brepols, Turnhout 2000, pp. 111-146. Nevertheless, Averroes’ early doctrine remains largely unexplored by modern scholarship. Blumberg’s English translation (see note 1) includes a rather extensive section of notes but, unfortunately, they are not of much philosophical value. Black’s two articles are fine pieces, and they draw heavily from Averroes’ epitomes (early commentaries), but they do not distinguish early doctrines from later ones.

³ *EPN* has many perplexing passages. There are in some places plain contradictions: for example, while there are many passages that explicitly state that the cogitative faculty is most active during dreams, there are a few that claim that the same faculty is in quietude during sleep. But other passages are not so much contradictory as simply perplexing due

ory by re-interpreting Avicenna's notions of image and intention based on Averroes' text.

2. AVICENNA'S ACCOUNT OF THE INTERNAL SENSES

Aristotle never offered a systematic treatment of the internal senses, yet he at least mentioned some of them in different passages of his psychological works. The "common sense" (*koinon aisthêtêrion*) is discussed in detail in *De anima* (henceforth, *DA*) III.2 (424 b20 – 22, 246 b7 ff); he gives an account of the "imaginative faculty" (*phantastikon*) in *DA* III.3 (427 b27 – 429 a9); the "cogitative faculty" (*dianoêtikon*) is mentioned in *DA* II.3 (414a32) and *DA* III.4-6 (*passim*); and finally, an entire treatise, *De memoria et reminiscentia*, is dedicated to the faculty of "memory" (*mnêmoneutikon*). Moreover, the fact that Aristotle couches his theory of abstraction and intentionality on his doctrine on interior sense perception, imagination in particular, has been the subject of relatively recent research.⁴ Now, even if Aristotle never gathered these four faculties into a single systematic treatise, his followers gradually managed to do so.⁵ Indeed, after almost a millennium of Peripatetic Philosophy, there had been numerous philosophical discussions on the subject, and many extraneous (that is, non-Aristotelian) notions had been added to the debate, notably by Avicenna.⁶

to the language; this is the case with regards to memory, whose operation Averroes seems to confuse with that of the cogitative faculty. In this study I shall attempt to resolve these conflicts even if, at the end, some will remain unsolvable. In any case, we will point out the inconsistencies as we encounter them.

⁴ Cfr. V. CASTON, "Why Aristotle Needs Imagination," «Phronesis», 41 (1996), pp. 20-55; see also Idem, "Aristotle on Consciousness", «Mind», 111 (2002), pp. 751-815; IDEM, "Aristotle and the Problem of Intentionality," «Philosophy and Phenomenological Research», 58 (1998), pp. 249-98; R. SORABJI, "Intentionality and physiological processes: Aristotle's theory of sense perception," in M. NUSSBAUM and A. RORTY (editors), *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1992, pp. 195-226; IDEM, "Aristotle on Sensory Process and Intentionality," in D. PERLER, *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*, Brill, Leiden 2001, pp. 49-61; C. RAPP, "Intentionalität und Phantasia bei Aristoteles," in D. PERLER, *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*, cit., pp. 63-96.

⁵ For a rather valuable and comprehensive (if dated) synopsis of the internal sense tradition, see H. WOLFSON, "The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew Philosophic Texts," «Harvard Theological Review», 28 (1935), pp. 69-133.

⁶ For a more detailed account than I provide here of Avicenna's doctrine of the internal senses (as well as Averroes' reception thereof), see D. BLACK, "Estimation (*Wahm*) in Avicenna: The Logical and Psychological Dimensions," «Dialogue», 32 (1993), pp. 219-258; IDEM, "Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western Transformations," cit., pp. 59-63; IDEM, "Memory, Individuals, and the Past in Averroes' Psychology," cit., pp. 163-165, 170-171. See also L. X. LÓPEZ-FARJEAT, *Percepción, intencionalidad y pensamiento animal en Aristóteles y Avicena*, in L. X. LÓPEZ-FARJEAT (editor), *La mente animal: De Aristóteles y el aristotelismo árabe y latino a*

Avicenna posited a total of five internal senses: the basis for his distinction lies in three fundamental *a priori* principles of perception.⁷

(A) *Faculties vary according to their object.* The internal senses act on two types of objects: the “images” of sensible objects (*ymagines*; *as-suwâr*) and their “meanings” or “intentions” (*intentiones*; *ma‘ânî*); for instance, the ‘hostility’ of a harmful animal, which is not reducible to a sensible quality or a combination thereof; therefore, the faculties whose objects are images must be distinct from those whose objects are intentions.

(B) *The same sense faculty cannot both receive and retain a sensible form,* for that which receives the form must be a malleable substrate, whereas that which retains must be a stable substrate. Therefore, the faculties that receive must be distinct from those that retain.

(C) *Activity and passivity are mutually exclusive,* and so passive faculties must be distinct from active ones.

With these principles, Avicenna then proceeds to argue that there must be:

(1) A faculty that is responsible for *receiving images* from the external senses: this he calls the “common sense” (*al-hiss al-mushtarak*).

(2) A faculty that *retains the images* which the common sense receives: the “retentive” or “formative” imagination (*al-musawwirah*, *al-khayâl*).

(3) A faculty that *receives intentions* drawn from the images stored in the retentive imagination: “the estimative faculty” (*al-wahm*).

(4) A faculty that *retains those intentions*: “the memorative faculty” (*al-dhâkirah*).

Now, all of these faculties are *passive*, insofar as they only receive or store their objects, the latter being merely imprinted on them. But there must also be a faculty by means of which we *actively* manipulate these images and intentions, combining them and dividing them, to form judgments about the physical properties of objects: this, Avicenna calls (5) the “compositive imagination” (*al-mutakhayyilah*).

Avicenna, moreover, established that the first three of these faculties (common sense, retentive imagination, and estimation) constitute the intermediary steps in a hierarchy of abstractive faculties between the external senses and intellect: they gradually isolate the sensible form from the matter, each making the form gradually more ‘intelligible’ (although not in the strict sense of ‘universal’).

It is within this background that Averroes will develop his psychology. His main contribution to the tradition will be to re-set it to its original Aristo-

la filosofía contemporánea, Los libros de Homero, Mexico City 2009; L. X. LÓPEZ-FARJEAT, J. MORALES LADRÓN DE GUEVARA, *El contenido cognitivo de la percepción: Avicenna y McDowell*, «Thémata», 43 (2010), pp. 251-270.

⁷ Cfr. D. BLACK, “*Imagination and Estimation*,” cit., p. 59.

telian bounds – or at least to bring it back to a reasonable closeness to the main trends within Aristotelian abstractionist psychology. Averroes implicitly rejects Avicenna's underlying principles for the distinction among internal senses, especially that there must be a distinction between active and passive, receptive and retentive faculties. For Averroes, the internal senses are sense faculties that can both passively receive and actively process the sensible form of an external object. He enumerates four stages in this process:

(1) The common sense (*sensus communis*; *al-hiss al-mushtarak*), which forms the image of the sensible object from the different sensibles of the external senses;

(2) The informing faculty or the imagination (*ymaginans, informans*; *al-musawwirah, al-khayâl*), which draws the intention from the image;

(3) The discriminative (*distinguens*; *al-mumayyizah*) or cogitative (*cogitativa*; *al-mufakkirah*) faculty, which combines and divides the image and the intention; and

(4) The memorative faculty (*rememorativa*; *al-dhâkirah*), whose complex operation includes the retention of the image-intention complex (which the cogitative faculty combined) as well as its re-presentation after it has been forgotten.⁸

Hence, we see even in this outline that Averroes reforms the Avicennian pattern rather substantially. Averroes clearly intends to put forward a more orthodox Aristotelian map of internal sense faculties.⁹

3. GENERAL THEORY OF THE INTERNAL SENSES

Averroes' revision of the Avicennian internal senses will be a significant one. He proceeds from empirical data (rather than from *a priori* principles, as did Avicenna). Using the medical knowledge available to his times, he locates the organs of these faculties in different regions of the brain: front, middle, and back. The imaginative faculty is located in the front, the cogitative faculty in the middle, and the memorative faculty in the back. For him, this translates into a hierarchical dependency among these faculties: the higher faculties (that is, those in the middle and in the back of the brain) will depend on the opera-

⁸ Cf. *EPN* 195 vb56–62/p. 58: «Primus est [...] forma sensibilis extra animam. Secundus autem est esse istius forme in sensu communi [...]. Tertius est esse eius in virtute ymaginativa [...]. Quartus est in virtute distinctiva. Quintus est esse eius in virtute rememorativa [...]».

⁹ The *functions* that the Avicennian faculties performed will, however, still find a place in Averroes' model: he eliminates the compositive imagination entirely but assigns to the cogitative and memorative faculties the compositive function that Avicenna had ascribed to it-something entirely absent from the Aristotelian model; he also assigns to the cogitative faculty the role that the estimative faculty played in Avicenna, even if he refuses to call it the "estimative faculty," all of which is also entirely missing in Aristotle.

tion of the lower one (in the front) – and not vice-versa.¹⁰ he remarks that, «the impairment that may affect one of the faculties by means of another will usually be transmitted to a higher faculty by means of a lower one [...]».¹¹ That is to say, since the function of each faculty is to ‘process’ the sensible form and prepare it for the intellect, the successful operation of each faculty will depend on the fact that the faculties that are below it (that are previous or prior to it) have performed *their* operation successfully.

Following Avicenna, Averroes will explain this operational dependency in terms of abstraction; yet in Averroes’ model, all of the internal faculties are abstractive, a point on which he departs from Avicenna. Averroes says that the higher internal senses and their objects are “more spiritual” than the lower faculties and their objects. In comparison with the forms of the higher faculties of cogitation and memory, the forms that are in the common sense and in the imagination are abundant in corporeality and scanty in spirituality. That is, each step of the process, beginning with the common sense, makes the form less corporeal and more spiritual than the previous stage.¹² Thus, what the internal senses do is to abstract (*distinguunt*) the perceived form from its corporeality. The corporeality is the ‘residue’, as it were, of the matter of the extramental object. He describes this through the metaphor of a “rind” that the faculty must peel off as from a fruit (*quasi cortices fructum*).¹³ Thus, he will say that the memorative faculty is the “most spiritual” because it «receives the pulp [of the fruit] (*medullam; lubb*) which the three previous faculties have abstracted [...]».¹⁴

¹⁰ Almost all of the relevant passages explicitly affirm this. Nevertheless, there is one passage that seems to deny this: EPN, 202 va59–60/p. 113 (emphasis added): «virtus ymaginativa debilitatur quando cogitativa vigoratur, et e converso». It is difficult to reconcile this passage with the rest.

¹¹ EPN 196 ra18–20/p. 61: «Et ista lesio que accidit quibusdam virtutum per quasdam accidit in maiori parte superiori per inferiorem».

¹² Now, this should not be interpreted as meaning that the sensible form is a matter–form composite. Once the common sense forms its object, the matter of the extramental object is left behind outside the soul. What is left in the common sense is its form. However, that form is still particular in some respect, and this is what Averroes means when he says that it still has some “corporeality,” that is to say, a material element.

¹³ EPN 193 va34/p. 42; cfr. 195 vb57/p. 58; 195 vb64/p. 59; 196 rb12/p. 66; 201 ra69/p. 80.

¹⁴ EPN 195 vb63/p. 59: «recipit enim medullam eius quod distinguunt tres virtutes a cortice». Even though the object of memory is the “the pulp of the fruit” of the sensible form, and is the “most spiritual” of the internal-sense objects, this must not be interpreted to mean that it is the *universal*. That is to say, the abstraction of these sense faculties is not intellectual abstraction, but only *sense* abstraction; for it is a process through which the form is made *sensible*, not intelligible. The sensible form, when present in the internal senses, is just that: sensible. It is not yet intelligible. It is abstracted from matter to a high degree, but it is still in some way particular. As he will say, even the memorative power cannot apprehend universals: only intellect is capable of doing this.

4. THE PRE-COGITATIVE INTERNAL SENSES

The common sense *unites* all of the sensibles (for example, purple, sweetness, smoothness, roundness) into a single representation or image of an object (for example, a grape). Thus, Averroes states that the common sense is the faculty that first forms or «makes present» (*facit presentari*) the image of the object. This is for him, of course, what makes the common sense the first of the “spiritual stages”, for, in combining the disconnected sensible qualities of the external senses into an immaterial image or picture of the material reality that it perceives, it begins the process of abstraction.

Now, whereas the task of the common sense is to present the *image* of the object while the latter is still present, the function of the imagination is to present the *intention* of that image even when the object is no longer present. That is, the imagination receives the product of the common sense (namely, the image) and abstracts it from (some of) its materiality, producing the intention of that image.¹⁵ The level of ‘spirituality’ of the object of the imagination is high enough for the faculty to be able to operate without the presence of an external object: he says that, «inasmuch as the form in the [imagination] is more spiritual than it is in the common sense, the imaginative faculty will not require the presence of the external sense-object in presenting its form, the opposite of which is true in the case of the faculty of sense».¹⁶ In fact, in his *Epitome de Anima* (*EA*) Averroes makes clear that the imagination is not only able to operate when the object is absent, but operates in an even more perfect way when the object is absent, as is the case in dreams: because of this independence from extramental objects, the imagination has the power to combine in different ways the different intentions that it has produced, and thus, «to produce... forms of things that we had never been sensed before, but that we only knew separately... [and thus] to imagine some thing or not to imagine it».¹⁷ This freedom from materiality not only makes this faculty able to make the sensible form more abstract, but also accounts for this faculty’s ability to err, that is, to cause false images.¹⁸

¹⁵ Cfr. *EPN* 193 rb62–64/p. 39: «Non aspicit illam formam et abstrahit intentionem eius nisi post maximam quietem et intuitionem magnam».

¹⁶ *EPN* 193 rb59–62/p. 38: «Et quia est magis spiritualis quam in sensu communi, non indiget virtus ymaginativa in faciendo eam presentem presentia sensibilis rei extra; econtrario dispositioni in virtute sensus».

¹⁷ *EDA*, p. 174. This combination of intentions must be distinguished from the cogitative power’s combination of intentions with images. The page numbers of *EDA* refer to S. GÓMEZ NOGALES (editor), *La psicología de Averroes: Comentario al libro Sobre el alma de Aristóteles*, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid 1987. The translations are all my own.

¹⁸ Cfr. *EDA*, p. 174. This combination of images goes against the grain of Avicenna’s no-

Nevertheless, Averroes will emphasize the fact that this faculty is not wholly spiritual and so must not be confused with intellect. It still possesses some degree of materiality: «[Since] sensations [...] are temporal [...] this potency is, then, material and temporal in a way». ¹⁹ Accordingly, we conceive the objects of the imagination only insofar as they are individual and material. In order for the form to proceed to a higher level of abstraction, it must pass through the cogitative faculty.

5. THE COGITATIVE FACULTY

Now, from our analysis of Averroes' general theory of the internal senses, we gathered that the cogitative faculty must abstract in some way or another that which is in the imagination. This is certainly one of the functions of the cogitative faculty. Nevertheless, Averroes will also ascribe to it a much more complex function.

He claims that, «since the individual [object] outside of the soul is composite, it so happens that it is in the soul according to this [composition also]». ²⁰ That is, for him, objects in (extramental) reality are composed of “subject” and “form.” But the soul could not know this composition unless it knew its different parts. Therefore, the object must be known *as* a composite, and so the representation of the object must itself be composite: thus, he will claim that just as in extramental objects there is a distinction between subject and form, so also «in imaginable forms there is [a distinction between] (a) what is in a sense the subject, that is, the outline or figure [i.e., the image], and (b) what is in a sense the form, and that is the intention of that figure». ²¹ Further, since these different parts, namely, the subject and form of things, are knowable to different degrees and in different ways, they must be known through

tion of retentive imagination, which has no other function than to retain that which the common sense receives.

¹⁹ EDA, p. 175.

²⁰ EPN 195 vb7–9/p. 54: «Individuum enim extra animam, quia est compositum, acidit ei ut sit in anima secundum hoc [...]»

²¹ EPN 195 vb5–7/p. 534: «In formis enim ymaginabilibus est aliquid quasi subiectum, scilicet lineatio et figura, et aliquid quasi forma, et est intentio illius figure». Now, the fact that the image-intention composition of sensible forms is a representation of the subject/form composition of extramental objects should not lead us to make the mistake of thinking that the image, because it is the material element of the sensible form, is drawn from the matter of the extramental object. Cfr. D. BLACK, “*Memory, Individuals, and the Past in Averroes' Psychology*,” cit., p. 168; “*Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western Transformations*,” cit., p. 72, n. 38. Rather, as we explained above, the matter of the extramental object is left behind, outside the mind, at the moment of external sensation, and so every abstraction is the drawing of a formal element *from* a formal element, or the drawing of a formal element from a formal element drawn from a formal element, and so on (or, the drawing of an intention from an intention, etc.).

different faculties: «the receiving of the two parts of which the object is composed will be due to two different faculties».²² Hence, as we have seen, the common sense makes present the *image* of the object, while the imagination makes present the *intention* of that image. But the soul must also be able to know these two combined; otherwise it would only know two different and unconnected things and not the object as a whole. But neither the common sense nor the imagination can know the object as a whole, because each of these faculties cognizes only one of the object's aspects. Rather, «the combining of the two parts will be due to a third faculty».²³ This is the cogitative or discriminative faculty, whose function is to «judge that this [or that] intention belongs to this [or that] image».²⁴ That is, it unites the products of the imagination and the common sense (the image with its intention) into a complex whole and thus produces a formal representation of the whole extramental thing (instead of just its image or its intention). Thus, whereas the common sense and the imagination can each only know one of these aspects, the cogitative faculty can know both of them simultaneously and unbrokenly.²⁵

Now, this ability to know things as composite wholes has also, for Averroes, implications for practical knowledge. It is the basis of a sentient being's knowledge of useful and harmful things; or, in his own words, it is, on the one hand, that by which animals «will naturally avoid that which is harmful, even though [they have] never perceived it before [...] [for example,] as many harmless birds avoid birds of prey, even though they have never seen them before»²⁶ and, on the other hand, that «by which [man] can know future useful or harmful things [...] so that he may prepare for them».²⁷

However, Averroes will make a distinction between the way humans possess this faculty and the way in which other animals do:

²² EPN 195vb9–10/p. 54: «[Accidit] quod receptio duarum partium ex quibus componitur sit duarum virtutum diversarum». Here Averroes is implicitly accepting Avicenna's principle that faculties are distinguished among one another by their objects – which is, ultimately, a fundamental Aristotelian psychological principle.

²³ EPN 195 vb11/p. 54: «[Accidit] quod compositio earum sit tertie virtutis».

²⁴ EPN 195 va60–61/p. 52: «Iudicare [...] quod ista intentio est istius ymaginis».

²⁵ Avicenna said that the composition and division of image and intention must be ascribed to a faculty different from the ones that receive (or retain) the image and the intention, because composition/division is active and reception/retention is passive, and activity and passivity are mutually exclusive. Averroes is saying the same thing, but for a different reason: each faculty has its proper object, and so different faculties cannot share objects; otherwise, there would be no basis for their distinction.

²⁶ EPN, 195 va68–69/p. 53: «Et per hanc virtutem fugit animal naturaliter nocitiva, licet numquam senserit ipsa».

²⁷ EPN, 202 vb20–21/p. 116: «Qua sciret res futuras utiles et nocentes, ut sit paratus contra illas». As we shall show later, he says that this function of the human cogitative is best accomplished in dreams.

«To judge that this [or that] intention belongs to this [or that] image is in man in the intellect (*in intellectu*), since he judges according to affirmation or negation; but in [merely] ‘memorative’²⁸ animals, this ability is similar to intellect: for this faculty [i.e., the cogitative] is in man through cognition (var., *cogitationem/cognitionem*)... But in others it is [present] by nature (*in aliis autem est natura*)».²⁹

Here, he is simultaneously adopting and adapting Avicenna’s thought.³⁰ Like Avicenna’s compositive imagination, this faculty in humans is influenced by the rational faculty. Thus, for Averroes, human cogitation is a quasi-rational function. Due to this great difference, however, Averroes prefers to reserve the term “cogitative faculty” to the faculty as is found exclusively in humans: «this faculty [as is found] in animals has no name and this is the faculty which Avicenna calls ‘estimation’ (*existimationem; wahm*)».³¹

²⁸ As opposed to those animals that can recall, namely, humans.

²⁹ EPN, 195 va60–65/p. 52: «Iudicare autem quod ista intentio est istius ymaginati est in homine in intellectu, quia iudicat in eo secundum affirmationem et negationem. Et in animalibus rememorativis est simile intellectui: ista enim virtus est in homine per cognitionem, et ideo investigat per rememorationem. In aliis autem est natura».

³⁰ Cfr. D. BLACK, “*Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western Transformations*,” cit., pp. 72–73, n. 42.

³¹ EPN 195 va66–68/p. 53: «Et ista virtus in animalibus non habet nomen et est illa quam Avicenna vocat existimationem». Averroes also refuses to call it ‘estimation’, and so, *pace* Blumberg, we shall not call it estimation. Cfr. R. TAYLOR, “*Cogitatio, Cogitativus and Cogitare: Remarks on the Cogitative Power in Averroes*,” cit., p. 220, n. 15; D. BLACK, “*Memory, Individuals, and the Past in Averroes’ Psychology*,” cit., p. 164, n. 10. Averroes does not give it a name, however, so we are forced to leave scruples aside and call it the “non-human cogitative,” but should bear in mind that this expression must be taken in a loose sense; for strictly speaking, animals cannot “cogitate” according to Averroes. In fact, Averroes’ position on the status of the cogitative power in non-rational animals is ambiguous. The *Vulgata* text of EPN has Averroes acknowledging that in non-rational animals there is such a faculty by means of which they flee what is harmful even if they have not sensed such harmfulness (cfr. EPN, 195 va68–69, p. 53, quoted above); this faculty, he says, does not have a name, and is the faculty that Avicenna calls the “estimative faculty.” The Latin *parisiana* version gives a more detailed account of this behavior of animals and calls it an “instinct of nature” (*instinctus nature*) instead of “estimation” (*estimacio*) because estimation presupposes “assent” (*fidem*), which in turn presupposes reason (*racionem*), and animals lack reason (cfr. EPN, *Parisiana*, p. 53). The EDA, in turn, bluntly reduces the behavior to a combined function of the imaginative faculty and the sense appetite, while making no mention of “estimation” or of Avicenna at all (cfr. p. 179); it also states that, in non-rational animals, the highest faculty is imagination (cfr. p. 179). This is the basis for Black’s claim that Averroes is “apparently leaving non-human animals with only two internal sense faculties, i.e., common sense and imagination.” (D. BLACK, “*Memory, Individuals, and the Past in Averroes’ Psychology*,” cit., p. 72, n. 33). But this claim involves many difficulties in face of the many references in EPN – which we shall later see – to the sub-rational power of retention as a function of memory in animals. But this is not the place to debate the issue: we are ultimately concerned with (human) cogitation.

6. MEMORY, IMAGES AND INTENTIONS

Memory (*memoria*) is the last of the pre-rational stages, and hence the most “spiritual” among them, in the process of abstraction. Averroes, thus, makes plain that it is distinct from and not reducible to the other internal senses, for its action fundamentally consists in receiving and making present the complex representation (the “core of the fruit”) that the other internal senses have processed. Therefore, it presupposes that these other faculties are distinct.³²

Now, just as there is a great difference between human and non-human cogitative faculties with regard to the extent of their capabilities, so there is a great difference between human and non-human memorative faculties with regard to the extent of their capabilities. To explain this difference, Averroes makes a distinction between retention (*conservatio*) and recall (*rememoratio*³³): For him, memory «is one in substrate but two in aspect».³⁴ On the one hand, memory can function as *retention*, which is «nothing but the continuous existence of the object of sense-perception in this faculty and this, without interruption,»³⁵ such that the object remains in the soul from the time it was perceived in the past until the present moment. On the other hand, memory can function as *recall*, which is the «the cognition of something already cognized after the cognition thereof has been discontinued,»³⁶ or, more simply stated, «the return of the intentions that were apprehended in the past to the present».³⁷ Thus, Averroes will assert that while «recall is [in a sense] a discontinued retention [...] retention is a continuous recall».³⁸

This difference between human and non-human memories is based on a

³² Cfr. EPN 195 vb56–66/p. 58: «Et ideo sunt igitur quinque ordines, quorum primus est corporalis magni corticis et est forma sensibilis extra animam. Secundus autem est esse istius forme in sensu communi et est primus ordinum spiritualium. Tertius est esse eius in virtute ymaginativa et est magis spiritualis. Quartus est in virtute distinctiva. Quintus est esse eius in virtute rememorativa et est magis spiritualis [...] declaratum est igitur cuius esse est ista virus [...] quod est alia ab ymaginativa et distinctiva [...]»

³³ In EPN the term *rememoratio* is used equivocally, sometimes designating the *faculty* of memory, sometimes the act of recalling a forgotten intention. Cfr. D. BLACK, “*Memory, Individuals, and the Past in Averroes’ Psychology*,” cit., pp. 162–163, n. 5.

³⁴ EPN 195 va23–24/p. 49: «Ista igitur virtus est una in subiecto et due secundum modum».

³⁵ EPN 195 vb69–196ra3/p. 59: «Et declaratum est quod conservatio est continuatio esse intentionis sensibilis in hac virtute sine abscissione».

³⁶ EPN 195 va24–26/p. 49: «Rememoratio igitur est cognitio eius quod fuit cognitum postquam cognitio eius fuit abscisa».

³⁷ EPN 195 va11–12/p. 48: «Rememoratio enim est reversio in presenti intentionis comprehense in preterito».

³⁸ EPN 195 va22–23/p. 49: «Rememoratio est conservatio abscisa; conservatio autem est rememoratio continua».

more fundamental difference between humans and other animals. While the memory of non-rational animals operates independently from other internal senses, the memory of humans collaborates with the internal senses in order to conjure up lost images. That is to say, the faculties operate separately in retention and jointly in recall. This is what Averroes has in mind when he makes reference to the words of Aristotle: «So it may happen, as Aristotle says, that these faculties need not aid each other in order to present that which they must present, but each of them may make its proper object present without help; and at other times this [presentation] does not happen without [mutual aid]». ³⁹ Although the internal senses of non-rational animals may be said to work ‘jointly’ insofar as each gradually abstracts the sensible form from its corporeality, their ‘cooperation’ and the ‘cooperation’ of the human internal senses in recall are said of them equivocally; for, while recall requires the diligent and simultaneous effort of the internal faculties in the search for the forgotten image, retention presupposes merely that each internal faculty has done its own work correctly. Hence, Averroes will say that in the latter operation they are in reality working separately, for each is doing its own operation independently, that is, without the simultaneous cooperation of the others:

«And since the operation of these faculties upon sensible forms is either of two operations, [that is] either [in] combination or [in] separation, when the form that was sensed is recalled, then combination is done. And this is, as we said, when each of the two faculties [common sense and imagination] makes its proper simple intention present and a third faculty [the discriminative] combines them. The separation, however, is in the definition ⁴⁰ of the sensible thing insofar as it is sensible. And this is when the sentient being *first* senses the extramental thing, and *then* the imaginative faculty imagines it, and *then* the discriminative faculty discriminates the intention of its form from its description, of which it is the intention, and *then* the retentive faculty receives that which the discriminative faculty discriminated». ⁴¹

³⁹ EPN 196 ra46–51/p. 64: «Et accidit, sicut dicit Aristoteles, quod iste virtutes non indigent adunare se adinvicem in iuvamento ad presentandum illud quod debent presentare; sed unaqueque earum facit presentari suum proprium sine adiutorio sui operis; et quandoque non accidit hoc nisi per adiutorium».

⁴⁰ This “definition” (*definitio*) seems to refer simply to the fact that the process of abstraction makes the form more definite or ‘intelligible’ (although not in the strict sense of making it an object of intellect).

⁴¹ EPN 195 vb31–43/p. 56–57 (Emphasis added): «Et quia actio istarum virtutum in formis sensibilibus est altera duarum actionum, aut compositio aut divisio, quando iam reduxerit formam quam sensit, tunc facit compositionem. Et hoc erit, sicut diximus, quando utraque virtus fecerit presentari utramque intentionem simplicem sibi propriam, et composuerit eas tertia virtus. Divisio autem est in definitione rei sensibilis dum fuerit sensibilis. Et hoc erit quando sentiens senserit primo rem extra animam, deinde ymaginaverit ymaginans, deinde dixit dixerit distinguens intentionem illius forme a suo descripto, cuius est intentio, deinde recipit conservans illud quod distinguens distinguit». Here we see the two functions

In short, retention is the simpler of these two operations, and so it is common to all animals endowed with memory, including man.⁴² Recall is peculiar to man, however, for it presupposes this simultaneous cooperation of the other three internal senses. Hence, speaking of the internal senses, Averroes remarks that, «their joining is due to the rational soul, that is, through their obedience to it, in the same way that their separation is due to the brute soul. And their joining is very difficult for man; and the ease (*quies*) of the brute soul is due to their separation».⁴³

As it stands, Averroes' account so far seems coherent. Now we must ask, What exactly does this 'combination' of faculties consist in? Averroes tells us that, in recall, the human internal senses seek, with the help of reason and deliberation and by means of similar images,⁴⁴ the image that has been forgotten in order to restore it in the memorative power. More specifically, the memorative power has to "compose" the objects of other internal senses. Here is where the problems begin, for Averroes seems to be confusing the functions of memory and the cogitative faculty. This is especially true when he lists the different things that are involved in recall on the part of the memorative faculty: «There are therefore four [different things]: the image (*ymago*), the intention of that image (*intentio illius ymaginis*), the presentation of that intention, and the judging that it is the intention of that image that was previously sensed».⁴⁵ That is to say, the memorative faculty takes the image from the imagination and abstracts (and "presents") its intention. He illustrates

of the cogitative faculty come together: one consists in the *joining* of image and intention from the common sense and imagination, respectively, and the other consists in its own *separate* abstraction of what is given to it by the imagination.

⁴² Ironically, however, he claims that retention is the "nobler" of the two; *EPN* 196 ra63-65/p. 65: «Et ideo conservatio nobilior est rememoratio: motus enim equalis continuus nobilior est absciso diverso» – that is, for a continuous representation of one and the same thing is more accurate than a discursive reproduction of a thing through its similitude (see note below).

⁴³ *EPN* 196 ra37-41/p. 63: «Et adunatio earum fit per animam rationabilem, scilicet per obedientiam earum ad ipsam quemadmodum separatio earum est per animam bestialem. Et earum adunatio est valde difficilis homini: et quies anime bestialis est in separatione earum».

⁴⁴ Cfr. *EPN* 196 ra58-59/p. 65: «Quod enim rememoratur, rememoratur per suum simile». Averroes seems to believe that these similitudes or "similar images" are drawn by the imagination from the other three internal senses; *EPN*, 203 ra49-51/p. 123-4: «motus enim istius virtutis, scilicet ymaginative, semper est in thesauro istius virtutis, scilicet cogitative et rememorative, et thesauro sensus communis». The exact meaning of these words is not clear, however.

⁴⁵ *EPN* 195 va53-56/p. 51-52: «Sunt igitur quatuor, ymago et intentio illius ymaginis et facere illam intentionem esse presentem et iudicare eam esse intentionem illius ymaginis que prius sentiebatur».

this process of memorative abstraction by drawing an analogy between the objects of imagination and memory on the one hand, and a picture and its meaning on the other: «What the imaginative faculty apprehends of the subject is that which the painter paints on a wall. And that which the memorative faculty apprehends is the meaning of that picture». ⁴⁶ After this abstraction, the memorative faculty will combine the image of the imagination with the intention that it abstracts from it by judging that they mutually correspond. This description of human memory seems to be almost a replication of what he already established as the proper operation of the cogitative faculty.

So, how is it that two distinct faculties perform the same task of joining images with intentions? The clue to the answer – and this is where the crux of my argument lies – is the fact that, whereas the image with which cogitation is concerned lies in the common sense, the image with which recall is concerned lies in the imagination. Thus, even though Averroes gives them the same name (“image”), they are not the same kind of sensible form. The object of the imagination is the intention drawn from the image that lies in the common sense. That is, the *image* with which recall is concerned is itself the *intention* drawn from the image of the common sense.

Thus emerges a broader notion of “intention” than that found in Avicenna’s doctrine of the internal senses. That is, in Avicenna, “intentions” are only the objects of two specific faculties: estimation and memory (estimation receives them and memory retains them). These intentions are the ‘formal’ element of (i.e., what is ‘abstracted’ from) the image that was present in the common sense and retentive imagination. In Averroes, by contrast, the intentions that are present in the imagination (which were formerly images in the common sense) *are themselves images* with respect to memory which can be abstracted, yielding intentions in the memory. Hence, a sensible form can be simultaneously an image from one perspective and an intention from another (for instance, the objects of the imagination are intentions from the point of view of the relation between common sense and imagination; they are, however, images, from the point of view of the relation between imagination and recall). Accordingly, it is possible to abstract ‘intentions’ from ‘intentions’ – although this would be said of them equivocally (for example, the intention that lies in memory is drawn from the image that lies in the imagination, which is itself an intention drawn from the image that lies in the common sense); it is also

⁴⁶ EPN 195 vb27–30/p. 55: «Quod igitur virtus ymaginativa comprehendit de subiecto est illud quod pictor describit in pariete. Et illud quod comprehendit virtus rememorativa est intentio illius picture». Here the contrast between Averroes and Avicenna is evident: whereas in Avicenna the memorative faculty was a purely retentive faculty with no cognitive activity of its own, in Averroes it performs the highest internal-sense operation (it reaches the “pulp”). Cfr. D. BLACK, “Memory, Individuals, and the Past in Averroes’ Psychology,” cit., pp. 171–173.

possible for ‘images’ to draw ‘images’ – equivocally so-called (for instance, the image that lies in the common sense will yield an intention in the imagination, which, in turn, is an image with respect to the intention that is abstracted from it by memory). Therefore, for Averroes “intentions” are not the object of a specific faculty, as in Avicenna. Rather, Averroes is following the general (pre-Avicennian) Islamic philosophical usage,⁴⁷ which designates the product of any cognitive abstraction, whether sensible or intellectual and, thus, the object of any cognitive faculty. More specifically, the term seems to refer in this context to the formal element of any sensible form,⁴⁸ the material counterpart of which would be the “image” from which that intention is drawn.⁴⁹ Under this interpretation, then, there is no contradiction in Averroes’ claims with regard to both cogitative and memorative faculties that the proper task of each is to compose images and their intentions: for the images and intentions with which one is concerned are different from the images and intentions with which the other is concerned.

7. CONCLUSION

In sum, having mapped the general picture of the first three internal senses (common sense, imagination, and the cogitative faculty), I have argued that Averroes’ account of the cogitative faculty is highly problematic unless we interpret him as transforming the Avicennian doctrine of “intentions.” For Averroes, as we saw, an “intention” is not the object of a specific faculty (as it is in Avicenna), but is, rather, the formal aspect of an internal-sense cognition of any level. This interpretation is required by the need to find coherence among those passages in Averroes’ *EPN* that ascribe the joining of images and intentions to both the cogitative and memorative faculties.⁵⁰

ABSTRACT: This paper offers an account of Averroes’ early doctrine of the internal senses with special reference to the role that intentionality plays in internal sense cognition. The au-

⁴⁷ Cfr. D. BLACK, “*Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western Transformations*,” cit., p. 60.

⁴⁸ Cfr. IDEM, “*Memory, Individuals, and the Past in Averroes’ Psychology*,” cit., p. 166, n. 17. See also, M. BLAUSTEIN, *Averroes on the Imagination and the Intellect*, Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1985, pp. 40-58, 86-87.

⁴⁹ For more on the relationship between images and intentions, cfr. D. BLACK, “*Memory, Individuals, and the Past in Averroes’ Psychology*,” cit., p. 168-169.

⁵⁰ An earlier version of this paper was read at *The International Conference on Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, Fordham University, Section: “Averroes, Aquinas, and Avicenna,” October 2004, with the title “*Averroes’ Retrograde Revision of Avicenna’s Theory of Internal-Sense Intentionality*.” I would like to thank Richard Taylor, Josep Puig Montada, and Luis Xavier López-Farjeat for reading later drafts of the paper and offering valuable comments. Remaining errors or inadequacies are, of course, my own.

thor points out that, whereas for Avicenna an “intention” is the object of a specific faculty, for Averroes it is the formal aspect at any level of internal-sense cognition. This interpretation is required by the need to find coherence among those passages in Averroes’ *Epitome de Parva naturalia* that ascribe the joining of images and intentions to both the cogitative and memorative faculties. Consequently, Averroes’ account is hopelessly incoherent unless one interprets him as departing from, and indeed revising, the Avicennian doctrine of intentionality along more a faithful Aristotelian-abstractionist framework.

KEYWORDS: Aristotelian philosophy, Averroes, Avicenna, imagination, memorative faculty, theory of intentionality.