

title of the present study. Plotinus teaches the unicity of the soul and, *a fortiori*, the unicity of intelligence (*intellectus*). He teaches the possibility and desirability of the transformation of our ordinary intelligence into that higher intelligence. He teaches that such a transformation or union takes place in an ecstatic experience – *different from the ecstatic experience in which the union with the One is achieved*. The higher intelligence, though it transcends our intelligence is in some way present and (incessantly) active in us, though we are not conscious of its presence or activity. But obviously when we become united with it a *sui generis* enlargement of our consciousness takes place. This enlarged consciousness we could call metaconsciousness. The enlargement on one hand consists in our depersonalization, as the divine intelligence is impersonal. On the other hand the enlargement concerns the content of consciousness as the divine intelligence obviously in intelligizing all intelligibilia is in some sense of the word, omniscient. Quite obviously this newly acquired consciousness is a consciousness of a higher order. In the moment of union it is no longer we who intelligize – it is the superior intelligence which intelligizes in us. Of course it could also be said that only in this moment it is actually we who intelligize, viz. our true we. In this condition man has divinized himself and this means that he has truly become man. Monopsychism, mysticism, metaconsciousness – these three terms indicate why man can and should divinize himself, thus reaching his full stature as man, and the road leading to the goal of becoming divine.

### III THREE AVERROISTIC PROBLEMS

#### I COLLECTIVE IMMORTALITY AND COLLECTIVE PERFECTION IN AVERROES AND DANTE

In his *Great Commentary* to Aristotle's *De anima* Averroes<sup>1</sup> teaches that there are three intelligences – the productive (he says: *agens*), the material (he often says: *possibilis*), and what he calls the speculative.<sup>2</sup> The speculative intelligence is the result of the 'energizing' ('actuating') of the material intelligence by the productive intelligence (which itself is energizing or actuating in the intransitive sense of the word). This energizing of the material intelligence is not an act of direct 'illumination' of the material intelligence by the productive intelligence (nor is it the result of a direct action of intelligibles on the material intelligence).<sup>3</sup> Rather, the productive intelligence illuminates the *formae imaginativae*, i.e. the residues of sensations, existing in the human mind. After these *formae* have been illuminated, they act on the material intelligence.<sup>4</sup> As a result of this action, material intelligence becomes transformed into what Averroes calls speculative intelligence.<sup>5</sup>

After what was said on the preceding pages, only a minimum of commentary seems to be required. What Averroes here calls speculative intelligence is obviously essentially identical with Alexander's νοῦς ἐπίκτητος, i.e. human intelligence transformed into productive intelligence. Now, according to Averroes both the productive and the material intelligence are immortal,<sup>6</sup> whereas the speculative intelligence is on one hand perishable on the other imperishable (immortal).<sup>7</sup> And Averroes stresses that this doctrine is

<sup>1</sup> F. Stuart Crawford, *Averrois Cordubensis commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*, Cambridge, Mass. 1953.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 389, 80 (one aspect of it is the *intellectus in habitu*: p. 438, 1); 437, 8–438, 31.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 438, 41–439, 57.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 398, 334–5; 401, 402–410; p. 406, 556–562; p. 411, 693–702.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 384, 46.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 401, 424–426.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 389, 80–81; 406, 569–574; 407, 595–6.

peculiar to him. The speculative intelligence (or we should say: the human intelligence *qua* transformed into 'energized', activated potential or material intelligence) is immortal, because in one respect it is simply identical with the potential intelligence, which itself is imperishable (immortal). But at the same time the speculative intelligence is perishable. This is due to the part played by the *formae imaginativae* in the process of 'energizing' the material (possible) intelligence. For – here we clarify Averroes' train of thoughts – these *formae imaginativae* are both contingent and perishable. They are contingent – i.e. some may, some others may not receive sensations of which the *formae imaginativae* are the residues. And they are perishable, just as the sensations which gave rise to them, both sensations and *formae imaginativae* (φαντάσματα) being essentially dependent for their origin on the body and its organs.

But, we repeat, as speculative intelligence in another aspect is (or better: has become) productive intelligence (or productive intelligence plus 'energized' material or possible intelligence), it is imperishable (immortal).

That anything whatsoever should in one respect be mortal, in another immortal – such an assertion certainly sounds self-contradictory. But as we follow Averroes, the self-contradiction will, to a certain extent, be removed.

Having explained the double nature of the speculative intelligence Averroes continues:

*Quoniam, quia opinati sumus ex hoc sermone quod intellectus materialis est unicus omnibus hominibus, et etiam ex hoc sumus opinati quod species humana est eterna.*<sup>1</sup>

This is an unexpected turn. Of the *species humana* Averroes so far did not speak and it is moreover unclear, from what his conclusion follows. Why should from the unicity of the material intelligence (and, *a fortiori*, from the unicity of productive intelligence) follow that mankind is immortal?

As we continue, we read: *Quoniam, cum sapientiam esse in aliquo modo proprio hominum est, sicut modos artificiorum esse in modis propriis hominum, existimatur quod impossibile est ut tota habitatio fugiat a philosophia, sicut opinandum est quod impossibile est ut fugiat ab artificijs naturalibus. Si enim aliqua pars eius caruerit eis, scilicet artificijs, v.g. quarta septentrionalis terre, non carebunt eis alie quarte, quia declaratum est quod habitatio est possibilis in parte meridionali sicut in septentrionali. – Forte igitur philosophia invenitur in maiori parte subjecti in omni tempore, sicut homo invenitur ab homine et equus ab equo. Intellectus igitur speculativus est non generabilis neque corruptibilis secundum hunc modum.*<sup>2</sup>

Let us interpret this. The 'destiny' of the productive and of the material intelligence is to 'transform' human thinking so that it reaches perfection, i.e. wisdom (philosophy). But as far as any individual is concerned, only

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 406, 575–407, 577.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 408, 610–623.

part of wisdom can be achieved. For, the transformation of the human mind is conditioned by the presence of the *formae imaginativae* and not all of these *formae* can ever be present in any one individual. In other words, it is entirely possible that part of mankind is lacking in wisdom. Therefore we must assume that the destiny of the productive and the material intelligence is achieved not in any one individual but in mankind at large. If this part of mankind lacks wisdom, another will be in its possession. Should 'human mind' be identified with 'individual mind', then it would be possible that productive intelligence and material intelligence would not reach their destiny and thus be frustrated. But this contradicts the principle which Averroes accepted from Aristotle that nature is never frustrated (*natura nihil facit ociose* as we read in Averroes, or φύσις οὐδὲν μάτην ποιεῖ as we read in Aristotle and Theophrastus). Therefore the term 'human mind' must designate not the individual mind but the collective mind – this time not one existing independently from man but rather immanent in him – and 'he' in this context designates not any individual but rather the human race in totality. In other words, speculative intelligence transcends the intelligence of the individual, however this kind of transcendence is different from the transcendence of the productive and material intelligence. The latter transcend both man and mankind – they are divine indeed. The former transcends the individual but is immanent in the human race.

We therefore can also say that the human race taken as a whole thinks uninterruptedly and thinks everything that is thinkable. Because the productive intelligence (and the material intelligence) is immortal, also the human race must be immortal. Were it not so, these two intelligences would be frustrated.

Thus Averroes summarizes his doctrines as follows: *Intellectus . . . materialis . . . non accidit ei ut quandoque intelligat et quandoque non nisi in respectu formarum ymaginationis existentium in unoquoque individuo, non in respectu speciei; v.g. quod non accidit ei ut quandoque intelligat intellectum equi et quandoque non nisi in respectu Socratis et Platonis: simpliciter autem et respectu speciei semper intelligit hoc universale, nisi species humana deficiat omnino, quod est impossibile.*<sup>1</sup>

Let us comment briefly. The universal concept 'horse' will always be thought only by some individuals and sometimes. Here we have the contingent and therefore perishable aspect of the speculative mind. But the same universal concept 'horse' is uninterruptedly and always being thought by the human race. Here we have the non-contingent, eternal aspect of the human mind. 'Man' here means the human race. Only if there had been a time when no representative of the species existed, or only when there should be a time in which the species would not be represented by a sufficient number of individuals, productive intelligence would be frustrated and all

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 448, 136–144.

human thought perishable. But as this is impossible, the human race is immortal *a parte ante* and *a parte post*.

Averroes is more famous for his denial of the immortality of the individual<sup>1</sup> than for his assertion of the immortality of the human race. And yet – the latter assertion is highly remarkable, particularly as it is based on strictly non-empirical and therefore strictly universal and necessary reasons. The many proofs of the immortality of the individual are here replaced by a proof of the immortality of mankind.

Now, the thought of Averroes calls for some clarification. The human race as a whole thinks uninterruptedly everything that is thinkable and therefore the human race as a whole is always in possession of wisdom. But what does this mean? Obviously it can mean of two things one. Either we assume that Averroes means the endless succession of generations – in other words it is only in and through the infinite time that the destiny of the human race is reached. We could also say it is not in every moment of time that everything thinkable is actually thought, it is only in the fullness of time. Or we assume that what Averroes means is that in every moment there is an infinite number of individuals in existence, so that the human race is wise in every moment. Obviously Averroes can be interpreted in either of these ways. For, in illustrating his idea he speaks of parts of the globe, but also of the eternity of the human species. In other words, it seems appropriate to sum up Averroes by saying: temporal and spatial infinity of the human race are assured by the uninterrupted 'energizing' of the material intellect by the *formae imaginativae*, and their uninterruptedly being illuminated is in turn assured by the uninterrupted 'radiation' of light from the productive intelligence, falling on the 'images' (*formae imaginativae*), as they happen to come into existence.

The idea of the immortality of the human race is interesting from one more point of view. The dimension of time suddenly acquires decisive importance for that which is eternal in the sense of being outside of time, as productive intelligence and material intelligence obviously are. These two time-exempt entities need, if we may say so, for their full realization time, viz. infinite time. Now, it is worthwhile to reflect on the relation between this idea and that of importance of history, as stated by Hegel. The briefest formula to express Hegel's thought on the relation between the realm of that which is space and time-exempt (divinity, the absolute, etc.) and the realm of the spatio-temporal is: *deus sive natura sive historia*. In order to become fully real, the absolute must overcome its pin-pointlike mode of existence, its utmost contraction and expand in both space and time, i.e. fall away from itself. But for Hegel the time process in which history takes place has a definite direction. It points toward the future and though after history will have been completed all moments of the past will be present in the moment of fullness, this fullness can be achieved only by

<sup>1</sup> See below, section III 2.

the irreversible march of history. Nothing of this in Averroes. There is no time-arrow in his speculations. The timeless needs infinite time, but there is no order within the flow of time. Whether part of the wisdom has been thought in the past, is being thought now, or will be thought in the future is entirely irrelevant. In other words, though the absolute (or what in the philosophy of Averroes is its equivalent) 'unfolds' in time, this unfolding is not a progress. What happens when and where is indifferent. What matters is that everything that must happen to prevent the productive intelligence (and the material intelligence) from being frustrated, happens sometime and somewhere within the infinity of time and space.

There is something absolutely revolting in the idea of progress. This idea means that all those who lived and died before the goal of progress has been achieved were at a disadvantage in comparison with all those who will live after that goal has been achieved. If somebody is unable or unwilling to remain satisfied with the certain expectation that others will enjoy the result of progress, he can only feel bitter toward the idea of progress. And even if he himself does not feel so, what could he say of the millions who undoubtedly did not even know anything of the idea of progress and thus died without even having had a chance to comfort themselves by being altruistic and not grudging to others what they themselves did not have?<sup>1</sup>

But the idea of progress becomes even more revolting when we consider the possibility that perhaps the number of those who will enjoy the fruits of progress will forever remain infinitely smaller than the number of those who died before the goal of progress has been reached. One of C. F. Meyer's poems starts with the words:

We hosts of the dead ones – much more numerous are we  
Than you who still walk on earth, and you who still sail the sea.

And it is entirely possible that even if the goal of progress is reached, this will remain so, because it is equally possible that the human race will perish, before the number of those who are living under the new dispensation, that of the goal of progress reached, will have surpassed the number of those who died before the new dispensation.

Comparatively speaking, the idea of Averroes is less revolting than that entailed in the concept of progress. It is less so for two reasons. First, it is based on the conviction that the human race is immortal. This eliminates the possibility that only a minority will be privileged to enjoy the result of progress. And secondly, because Averroes' infinite time has no arrow pointing to the future, future has no privileged status with regard to the past. From the point of view of the individual, the goal of the human race has been reached in the past (or: could have been reached in the past), so that past generations are not at a disadvantage in comparison with the future ones.

In our time, Averroes' assertion that the human race is immortal is

<sup>1</sup> *Universitas* 6 (1964) p. 423: So far 77 billions persons born – thus today's population

likely to find very few adherents. Not only do many scientists assure us that mankind has reached a stage in which a mistake can cause the extinction of life (or at least of human life) on earth. Even previous to this, most scientists would have assured us that because of the inevitable increase of entropy the whole universe is doomed to the heat death.

Now, in our time Marxism is absolutely committed to the idea of progress. How, then, does Marxism face the problem resulting therefrom?

It wouldn't be surprising if orthodox Marxism would simply be unable to believe in the extinction of the human race as the result of man's action. And it is not at all surprising to see that Marxist scientists try to prove that the law of entropy does not hold for the universe as a whole.<sup>1</sup> We can immediately see that this problem is of crucial importance for Marxism.

But let us return to Averroes.

It is obvious to what extent Averroes' distinction between the destiny of man and that of mankind lends itself to some kind of social philosophy. In the Christian world this application was made by Dante. What he wanted was a separation of the competence of the state from that of the Church. And here is the way in which he achieves his end.

*Patet . . . quod ultimum de potentia ipsius humanitatis, est potentia sive virtus intellectiva.*<sup>2</sup>

We are familiar with this concept from Averroes.

Dante continues: *Et quia potentia ista per unum hominem, seu per aliquam particularium communitatem . . . tota simul in actum reduci non potest; necesse est multitudinem esse in humano genere, per quam quidem tota potentia haec actuetur.*<sup>3</sup>

This is of course nothing but an application of Averroes' idea: the destiny of man is reached only by the whole human race. And Dante illustrates it by another parallel thought:

*Sicut necesse est multitudinem rerum generabilium, ut potentia tota materiae primae semper sub actu sit; aliter esset dare potentiam separatam, quod est impossibile.*<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the expression is not quite clear. At no moment, says Dante, can it happen that that which is possible should not be actual, because if this should ever happen, we should have what he calls a *potentia separata*, i.e. obviously something that is possible but not actual – and this is impossible, for in such a case nature (or God) would have created something in vain. But of course it does not matter where and when the possible be-

<sup>1</sup> See M. W. Mikulak, "Soviet Philosophic-Cosmological Thought", *Philosophy of Science* 25 (1958), p. 35–50; G. Klaus, *Jesuiten Gott Materie* (2nd. ed. 1958, 1st ed. 1957), p. 175–179, replying to G. A. Wetter, *Dialectical Materialism*, New York 1958, p. 302–304 with a characteristic quotation from A. Vislobokow, *O nerazrynosti materii i dvizhenija*, Moscow 1955, p. 45f.

<sup>2</sup> *De monarchia*, ch. III (IV).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

comes actual. What matters is only that it becomes actual somewhere and somewhen – and this presupposes a *multitudo* of things, in one of which the possible becomes actual.

*Et huic sententiae concordat Averrois, in Commento super iis quae de Anima.*<sup>1</sup>

Here the great commentator is explicitly named.

We are therefore not surprised when Dante continues:

*Satis igitur declaratum est, quod proprium opus humani generis totaliter accepti, est actuare semper totam potentiam intellectus possibilis . . .*<sup>2</sup>

But this *actuatio* can take place only in men who can devote themselves to undisturbed, peaceful contemplation. This, in turn, presupposes a condition of universal peace.

The implication is of course a universal monarchy. Whereas the Church will be administering the salvation of the individual souls, the state will take care of conditions assuring that the purpose for which man, i.e. mankind has been created, viz. contemplative life, can be achieved.

The same idea Dante states in simpler, less abstract terms. Nature, he says, has produced the finger for a purpose different from the purpose for which the hand has been produced. The same holds for the relation of the hand to the arm, etc. *Sic alius est finis ad quem singularem hominem, alius ad quem ordinat (scil. nature) domesticam communitatem . . . et denique ultimus ad quem universaliter genus humanum Deus aeternus arte sua, quae natura est, in esse producit . . . Propter quod sciendum est . . . quod Deus et natura nil otiosum facit; sed quidquid prodit in esse, est ad aliquam operationem . . .*<sup>3</sup>

It is well known how violently Dante was criticized for his Averroism by Vernani.<sup>4</sup> And it seems to me that Vernani's criticism is fully justified. The divorce of the destiny of every single individual from the destiny of the human race is equally revolting whether it is applied, as Kern says,<sup>5</sup> longitudinally, i.e. to the series of generations or transversally, i.e. to the present society. Everybody is admirable who is ready to sacrifice himself *pro bono publico*, whether this *bonum* is to be achieved as the result of a

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. IV (V).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. III (IV).

<sup>4</sup> On Vernani see N. Matteini, *Il più antico oppositore politico di Dante: Guido Vernani da Rimini. Testo critico del "De reprobatione monarchiae"*, Padova 1958 (with ample bibliography, to which I should like to add: M. Grabmann, "Studien über den Averroisten Taddeo da Parma (c. 1320)", *Mélanges Mandonnet* II [Bibliothèque Thomiste XIV], Paris 1930, esp. p. 83–86). Vernani's main argument against Dante: *omnes homines generaliter et quilibet singulariter appetunt unum ultimum finem, scilicet beatitudinem* (p. 95,25 Matteini). Matteini defends Dante: p. 43–51. Literature on the problem of Dante's Averroism: p. 46, note 46. See esp. A. P. d'Entrèves, *Dante as a Political Thinker*, Oxford 1952, esp. p. 41–51; 107. The edition of Dante's *Monarchia* by G. Vinay, Florence 1950, is amply annotated.

<sup>5</sup> F. Kern, *Humana Civitas (Staat, Kirche und Kultur)*, Leipzig 1913, esp. p. 12–14. To Kern I am indebted for the phrase "numerus clausus for blessed souls in Dante" (p. 12, note 2).

historic process or that of a present organization or institution. But to designate some people as instruments for the achievement of the *publicum bonum*, whether they agree to their assigned role or not, is, as I said, revolting.

Dante has been defended, e.g., by Nardi.<sup>1</sup> What Nardi has essentially to say is contained in his statement: *E poichè alla piena attuazione dell' intelletto non può giungere il singolo da sè, vi giunge per mezzo della comunione cogli altri uomini.*<sup>2</sup> Certainly – this would be a defense of Dante, if it could be said that community makes it possible for everybody to 'actualize' one's intelligence. But the one who lives only so that others may achieve it is fully entitled to reject the idea of community. He is fully entitled to say that Dante's idea makes as much sense as to comfort the poor ones by assuring them that their society is rich. It is entirely beside the point whether the subordination of the individual to the community is *objectively* justifiable. Suppose it is – the one who refuses to recognize this has the full right to rebel. Only a philosophy which would assume that in some way the individual will in the end voluntarily sacrifice himself to the community could *bona fide* speak of the justifiability of that sacrifice. Whether a man is punished justly or not may make a difference to those who punish. But for the one who is being punished it is entirely irrelevant whether his punishment is just or not, as long as he did not acknowledge the justice of it. And the same reasoning can be applied to all cases where personal destiny and destiny of mankind do not coincide.

<sup>1</sup> B. Nardi, *Saggi di filosofia dantesca*, Milan 1930, p. 256–272; cf. *idem*, *S. Tommaso d'Aquino. Trattato sull' unità dell' intelletto contro gli Averroisti*, new repr. (Florence 1947?), p. 48; *idem*, *Dante e la cultura medievale*, 2nd ed., Bari 1949, p. 69f. Dante's Averroism is often discussed in connection with the political theories of Marsilius of Padua. See, e.g., A. Gewirth, *Marsilius of Padua*, 2 vv., vol. II, New York 1956 and here Appendix II with ample bibliography, utilized also in W. Kunzmann von Horst Kusch (tr.), *Marsilius von Padua. Der Verteidiger des Friedens*, Berlin 1958. Cf. also H. Löwe, "Dante und das Kaisertum", *Historische Zeitschrift* 190 (1960), p. 517–552 (Löwe agrees with the interpretation of Gilson, on which see below, note 2).

<sup>2</sup> *Saggi* (above, note 1), p. 270. Nardi is the victim (or takes advantage) of the ambiguity of the phrase *per mezzo della comunione*. This phrase can mean either that the individual who could not achieve the actualization of the possible intelligence when living a solitary life, achieves it *when* living in society; or that living in community is the equivalent of achieving this actualization in that the community as a *whole* would achieve what the individual cannot. It should be obvious that Dante means the latter and not the former, this mitigated by the additional assertion that in an appropriately organized society *some* individuals would *qua* individuals achieve such an actualization. And it also should be obvious that in either case some other individuals would not *qua* individuals achieve the actualization. They would be precisely the ones doomed to be a living proof of the difference between the destiny of man taken singly from man taken collectively.

Unsatisfactory is also the defense of Dante adopted by E. Gilson, *Dante the Philosopher*, London 1948, esp. p. 166–171. According to Gilson Dante, though stimulated by Averroes, profoundly changed his doctrines in that he replaced the unique material (possible) intelligence by mankind at large. Far from being an interpretation of Dante's text (as can immediately be seen from the passage quoted in the text) this is simply an attempt to 'save' Dante from Vernani's criticism. How, then, does Gilson justify his

But, of course, we must not forget that after all, for Dante, the destiny of man lies not only within the *civitas terrena*. Dante the author of the *Divine Comedy* has a completely different outlook on man from that of Dante the author of *De monarchia*. One episode brings out this difference with full force. Just after he finished his conversation with Hugo Capet during his journey through Purgatory (a conversation devoted exclusively to political problems, especially all the evil actions of the Capetingians, including the poisoning of St. Thomas), Dante feels

*come cosa che cada  
Tremar lo monte*

of the Purgatory. What Virgil, the pagan, cannot explain, Statius (who soon will criticize some of the doctrines of Averroes), the Christian can:

*Tremaci quando alcuna anima monda  
Sentesi, sì che surga o che si muova  
Per salir su . . . .*

It is the ascent of the individual soul which shakes the mountain of Purgatory. We don't hear that the mountain would respond in such a manner to any political event, no matter how important. In spite of all the passionate interest which Dante takes in politics, it is only the salvation of the single soul which he describes as a world shaking event. Thus, his political Averroism is not the last word on the human destiny. But wherever man is assumed to have one destiny only, Averroism is as revolting

interpretation? Had Dante actually assumed that there is only one unique intelligence, he would not have suggested that it can achieve its ultimate goal only through an appropriately organized society (universal monarchy), so Gilson argues. Dante would have seen, Gilson continues, that the unique intelligence should be able to reach its goal without the help of any human institution. This interpretation of Gilson simply assumes that Dante could not have overlooked that he was inconsistent. But the fact is that Dante professed the doctrine that nature cannot be frustrated and yet suggested a universal monarchy precisely to prevent such a frustration. In other words, Dante from the statement 'nature cannot be frustrated' glided to another 'nature should not be frustrated'. But is this not the pattern of thought characteristic of all thinkers who try to base their prescriptions for man, society, etc., on what they consider the obvious intentions of nature?

It is, by the way, quite probable that the same inconsistency which we find in Dante is present also in Averroes. It is obvious from his commentary on Plato's *Republic* that he is interested in describing an ideal polity and in so doing he obviously defends the inequality of citizens. One of his arguments reads: "... It is impossible for the human perfections to be attained except dispersed severally ... For, if every individual were [by nature] capable [of attaining] all human perfections, nature would have done something absurd" (E. I. J. Rosenthal, *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, Cambridge 1956, p. 113; cf. 189f.). Unless Averroes believed that all states recognize this principle of inequality, we before us have a clear statement as to what the ideal state should be in order not to frustrate nature. In other words, "the destiny of man" is not a purely descriptive term. On the contrary, in the realm of political theory it becomes prescriptive. The same ambiguity is entailed in the concept of natural law, a term which seems to be purely descriptive, but actually never is.

as 'progressivism', admirable as the individual may be who voluntarily subordinates himself to a collective.<sup>1</sup>

## 2 ECSTATIC CONJUNCTION, 'DEATH', AND IMMORTALITY IN THE INDIVIDUAL

The best known texts in which Averroes speaks of the *unio* (*conjunctio*) is, as they are known in medieval translations, the *Tractatus de animae beatitudine* and the *Epistula De connexione intellectus abstracti cum homine*.<sup>2</sup>

Here are the most important passages:

*Intentio mea in hoc tractatu nobilissimo est declarare beatitudinem ultimam animae humanae (in hoc mundo et in futuro) <sup>3</sup> secundum principalem intentionem Philosophorum in ascensu supremo ipsius (scil: intellectus humani). Et, cum dico ascensum, intelligo quod perficiatur, et nobilitetur, ita ut coniungatur cum intellectu abstracto, et uniatur cum eo, ita ut cum eo fiat unum.*<sup>4</sup>

At their face value, the words mean that the human soul in this union with the *intellectus abstractus*, i.e. the *intellectus agens* or productive intelligence, is transformed into the *intellectus agens*.

Follows a three-partition of all existents, viz. into physicals, astronomicals, intelligibles, i.e. *intellectus abstracti*. One immediately recognizes the three-partition of Aristotle's *Met.* A 1.

*Ideo, cum dicitur de anima quod ascendit, intelligitur coniunctio eius cum aliquo intellectu abstractorum.*<sup>5</sup>

Obviously the *intellectus abstracti* are the unmoved movers of the celestial bodies, though it may be that in addition to them Averroes here is thinking perhaps of the souls of the spheres. Therefore, the *unio* with the *intellectus abstractus* can equally well be described as the *unio* with some intelligible.

Needless to say that these intelligibles cannot be universals, i.e. intelligibles-in-matter. They are precisely Alexander's *πρῶτα* (*κυρίως νοητά*).

<sup>1</sup> In a somewhat different form I presented some of the ideas of this section in a paper: "Averroes über die Unsterblichkeit des Menschengeschlechtes", *Actes du Premier Congrès International de Philosophie Médiévale. L'Homme et son destin*, Louvain-Paris 1960, p. 305-311.

<sup>2</sup> The text here quoted is that in: *Aristotelis . . . Opera* (apud Cominum de Tridino, Montisferrati), 11 vv., Venice 1560, vol. 10. I used a copy of this edition in the possession of the Hoose Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Calif., exactly four hundred years after it was published. I confess to a strange feeling on discovering that a number of pages has waited for me to be cut.

On the relation between the two treatises, their character, and their occurrence in Jewish philosophy see M. Steinschneider, *Al-Farabi (Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de Saint Petersburg, VII série, tome XIII, No. 4)* Petersburg 1869, p. 95-107.

<sup>3</sup> A marginal note related to the words in parentheses says: *alia editio non habet haec verba*. One wonders - were they inserted by a 'heretic' or omitted by an 'orthodox' corrector?

<sup>4</sup> Ch. I, f. 353 v., B.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

What is, in this context, the *intellectus abstractus*? Averroes answers: *est causa reducendi intellectum materialem in esse actu intellectum*.<sup>1</sup>

The mode of operation, by which this *reducere* takes place, is not explained. Nor is it clear whether *intellectus in actu* means simply the *intellectus materialis* qua 'energized' by the productive intelligence. For the time being let us assume that this question is to be answered in the affirmative.

Under the caption *De intellectu materialis cum abstractis intellectibus connexione* Averroes now describes this union in somewhat greater detail.

Now, it is striking in the wording of the caption that here the *unio* is not described as *unio* with the *intellectus abstractus*, but rather with *intellectus abstracti* in the plural. Obviously it makes no difference how we express ourselves, if we remember that οὐκ ἔξω νοῦ τὰ νοητά (Alexander and Plotinus), so that to be united with the *intelligibilia* which are the objects of the intelligizing of the productive intelligence is tantamount to a union with the productive intelligence itself. In any case, Averroes repeats: *intellectus materialis intelligit intellectus abstractos, ita ut efficiatur intellectus abstractus unus cum eo*.<sup>2</sup>

Again this sounds as if Averroes believed in the transformation of the *intellectus materialis*. And the equation *intellectus abstractus - intellectus abstracti* Averroes now expresses in the words: *Declaratum est enim quod illud quod intelligitur de abstractis, non est aliud quam intelligere rem, quae per se stat, videlicet intellectum agentem*.<sup>3</sup>

Follows criticism of al-Fārābī, summed up in the words: *omnes philosophos concordari vides ultimam animae hominis beatitudinem esse in apprehendendo abstractos intellectus. Et quidem vides quod Alexander posuit hoc in uno libro suorum*.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Averroes is conscious that his doctrine of the *unio* is derived from Alexander.

Again the formula is repeated after a review of Alexander: *haec autem receptio (scil. of the intelligibile) in actu non est aliud, nisi esse unum cum eo (scil. intellectu abstracto or agente)*.<sup>5</sup>

In what way does the *intellectus abstractus* act on the *intellectus materialis*? In a threefold way, answers Averroes, viz. as *causa efficiens*, *causa movens*, and *causa formalis*.<sup>6</sup> And the effect is of course the transformation of the *intellectus materialis*, its *unio* with the *intellectus abstractus*.

This does not mean, however, that this union takes place at all times, in every individual. Rather this *conjunctio* takes place only sometimes in some individual. However, this happens always, so that at no moment the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. II, D.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. III, f. 354 v., D.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, f., 355 r., A.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, B. For obvious reasons (the problem of the unicity of human form) the assertion that the productive intelligence becomes *form* (formal cause), is of particular importance.

human race as a whole is deprived of the *conjunctio*.<sup>1</sup> This is so of necessity. For obviously the purpose of the *intellectus abstractus* is to achieve that *unio*. Thus, if at some moment nobody would experience this *conjunctio*, god (or nature) would have been frustrated.

This idea is, as we saw and shall still see, of central importance. The *intellectus abstractus* needs, if we may say so, man – but he needs no specific individual. This of course implies that beatitude is always being achieved but not by individuals, but by the human race as a whole in space and time.

If such is the case, if the *unio* is the necessary result of there being an *intellectus abstractus*, this *unio* must be a natural event. Thus any kind of grace, divine intervention, etc. would be excluded. *Et nobis quidem in hoc videtur quod eventus ad hanc perfectionem naturaliter accidit ut plurimum ex aggregatione [rerum] <hominum> coadiuvantium sese.*<sup>2</sup>

Follows another polemic against al-Fārābī. As Averroes presents it here, al-Fārābī originally believed in the possibility of such a *unio*, but when he found himself growing old without ever having experienced this *unio*, he denied the possibility.

Except for the principle that the *intellectus abstractus* acts on the *intellectus materialis* as efficient, moving, and formal cause we still do not know, how precisely the transformation takes place. The caption *De intellectus agentis natura: ac quo pacto intellectionis causa sit humano intellectui* seems to bring an answer. But the only clear part of it is that this *unio* takes place *sine novatione et generatione*.<sup>3</sup>

This is a striking idea. We should assume that every transformation is a change. But we know, of course that Averroes insisted that the material intellect, before it starts intelligizing, is sheer preparedness. Thus it has no existence previous to its intelligizing, therefore the category of change cannot be applied to it. If its *esse* is its *intelligere*, there is nothing which the *intelligere* could change. Obviously this idea is applied here to the transformation of the *intellectus materialis*. Whether the analogy holds, is another question. But in any case, when such a transformation has taken place, we before us have a complete unity of the subject of intelligizing, the act of intelligizing, and the object of intelligizing, with the result that the material *intellectus reducetur in essentiam gradus intellectus agentis*.<sup>4</sup> It is hardly possible to express the idea of transformation in stronger terms. Through the *unio* the *intellectus materialis* is raised to the rank of that substance which is the *intellectus agens*.

Once more Averroes repeats: *et apprehendere illum (scil. intellectum agentem) est ultimus gradus perfectionis animae nostrae, quia illud est finis, et nostra beatitudo*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* The same idea recurs in ch. IV, f. 356 r., A.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, C.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 356 r., C.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 356 v., D.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 357 r., A.

A sentence follows which is difficult to interpret. *Et substantia quidem intellectus agentis est una, quamvis gradus suus contineat id, quod dependet ab omnibus animalibus rationalibus receptivis beatitudinis. Et hoc est quod vocatur Spiritus sanctus*.<sup>1</sup>

The first sentence seems to express the idea that in spite of its unicity the *intellectus agens* needs, not to be frustrated, beings capable of beatitude, i.e. of becoming united with it. The designation of the human mind at its highest by Holy Spirit is standard in Moslem philosophy. But the connection of the two sentences remains unclear.

This winds up our review of *De beatitudine*. The *Epistula de conjunctione*, which is virtually identical with part of *De beatitudine*, brings nothing new.

That the *intellectus agens* should need some human mind not to be frustrated is a remarkable idea, we said. On one hand, it perhaps harks back to the way in which Aristotle proved that there can be neither more nor less unmoved movers than there are celestial bodies which they move – a proof implying that the existence of a mover who does not actually move would be some kind of frustration for the mover. The mover would, if we may say so, be unemployed and in this sense of the word, unfulfilled. On the other hand, it may be a relation of all the theories which for some reason or other try to establish the thesis that the divine in some way needs the human (in its crudest form, this idea is present in Nordic mythology as popularized by Wagner). But don't we read too much into this one short sentence by Averroes, and a sentence admittedly not quite clear at that?

Now, it is striking that in Avicenna's *Ishārāt* according to an earlier translation of Miss Goichon precisely the same idea seems to appear. In speaking of productive intelligence Avicenna says: *car elle est substance intellectuelle en acte lorsque se produit entre nos âmes et elle une certaine jonction, par laquelle sont imprimés en celles-là les formes intelligibles . . .*<sup>2</sup>

Thus, to become substance in actuality, productive intelligence must "join" human intelligence. Miss Goichon pointed out that such an idea parallels another according to which God is not perfect before he has become the creator, so that God, in order to be fully (actually) God, needs His own creatures.<sup>3</sup>

However, Miss Goichon later found it necessary to change her translation. The above passage now reads: *Reste donc qu'il y ait là une chose extrinsèque à notre substance, en laquelle sont les formes intelligibles elles-mêmes, car c'est une substance intellectuelle en acte telle, que lorsqu'il se produit entre nos âmes et elle une certaine jonction, d'elle en nos âmes s'impriment les formes intellectuelles appropriées . . .*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* On this idea in Avicenna and b. 'Arabi see below. On the 'holy spirit' see Section V, sub Avicenna.

<sup>2</sup> *Ishārāt*, p. 330 Goichon (above p. 27, n. 1), as translated in *Distinction* (above, p. 29 n. 1), p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> *Distinction*, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ishārāt*, p. 330 Goichon with note 2.

Thus, nothing remains of the original idea. The productive intelligence is actual *per se* and it is due to this fact that in the moment of the 'junction' the human mind (intelligence) becomes 'impressed' by the intelligible forms present in the productive intelligence. Miss Goichon explicitly recanted her former translation.

But in all modesty the non-Arabist may be permitted to wonder whether in the light of the passage in Averroes just mentioned Miss Goichon's original translation and interpretation can be ruled out. After all, the doctrine that God needs man is, if we may say so, congenital with very many mystics; and Avicenna was certainly close enough to the world of mysticism, to be influenced by some of its doctrines.<sup>1</sup>

The topic of the *unio* is of course treated by Averroes also in his commentary on *De anima*. The points of particular importance for our present topic are these. Averroes proves that what he (in a highly misleading manner) calls material intelligence (this intelligence is strictly immaterial according to him) is 'united' with us from the very beginning of our existence, but, as he says, not *per se*. It is united with us exclusively by *formae imaginativae* (φαντάσματα), i.e. semi-dematerialized sensations. It is these *formae imaginativae* which act on the material intelligence. This action seems to result in the acquisition of two kinds of intelligibles: principles of reasoning, which we acquire involuntarily, and forms abstracted from matter, i.e. universals, which to intelligize or not to intelligize depends on our will. But when the productive intelligence becomes the form of this material intelligence, then the material intelligence intelligizes what has always been the object of the intelligizing of productive intelligence, viz. pure forms (κυρίως νοητά) and in the manner in which productive intelligence intelligizes, viz. by non-discursive intuition. As both intelligences, the productive and the material, are immaterial, incorruptible, etc., the transformation of material intelligence by the productive intelligence is not to be construed as an event by which something corruptible has become incorruptible.

And after having explained to his satisfaction the manner of the *unio* Averroes says:

*Homo igitur secundum hunc modum, ut dicit Themistius, assimilatur Deo in hoc quod est omnia entia quoquo modo, et sciens ea (scil. all things!) quoquo modo; entia enim nichil aliud sunt nisi scientia eius, neque causa entium est aliud nisi scientia eius. Et quam mirabilis est iste ordo, et quam extraneus est iste modus essendi!*<sup>2</sup>

Thus with all clarity the process of *unio* is here described as divinization. This divinization consists in the fact that in the condition of *conjunctio* we intelligize the *κυρίως νοητά* which exist only as intelligized, i.e. in which

<sup>1</sup> We limit ourselves to one reference within the Islamic world: b. 'Arabī, according to R. Landau, *The Philosophy of Ibn Arabi*, New York 1959, p. 28 and p. 74 with a quotation from the *Bezels of Divine Wisdom*.

<sup>2</sup> P. 501, 617-622 Crawford.

*esse* and *percipi* coincide. This is the kind of divine knowledge in which God is everything and knows everything. In other words, in the condition of *conjunctio* man is omniscient in some way and identical with everything in some way, because he intelligizes everything. Indeed an out-of-this-world condition!

It is worthwhile to compare the passage in Themistius to which Averroes obviously refers. It reads: νοῦς (scil. ποιητικός) being ἀρχηγός τῶν νοημάτων ... καὶ θεῶ μάλιστα ἔοικε· καὶ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς πῶς μὲν αὐτὰ τὰ ὄντα ἐστὶ, πῶς δὲ ὁ τούτων χωρηγός.<sup>1</sup>

As productive intelligence is ἀρχηγός τῶν νοημάτων it is very similar to god. For god in some way is all the things and in some way the χωρηγός of all things. Right or wrong, Averroes takes this to mean that man *qua* transformed by the productive intelligence intelligizes everything, in which manner of intelligizing act, subject of the act, and the intelligible (of course a *κυρίως νοητόν*) are one. In this condition man possesses (or is possessed by) divine omniscience. And all this goes ultimately back to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, in which god is described as self-intelligizing intelligence on one hand, to Aristotle's *De anima*, where the identity of intelligizing with its objects is proclaimed, on the other.

While the authenticity of the *Tractatus* and the *Epistula* is, as we have seen, open to doubt and while without any doubt both treatises for whatever reason present themselves as a rather incoherent patchwork, there is one more treatise by Averroes which seems to be his most lucid presentation of the problem of the *unio*. It was translated into Hebrew and part of this translation has been done into German by Hannes.<sup>2</sup>

Here are some of the most characteristic passages.

In the *unio* with the productive intelligence man's beatitude consists because man's intelligence *wird durch diese Conjunction zu einem ewigen, immateriellen Existierenden auf irgend eine Weise*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Themistius, *In ... De anima paraphrasis* ed. R. Heinze (CAG V/3), Berlin 1890, p. 99, 23-25.

<sup>2</sup> L. Hannes, *Des Averroës Abhandlung: "Über die Möglichkeit der Conjunction" oder "Über den materiellen Intellekt"*, in der hebräischen Übersetzung eines Anonymus, Halle 1892. In the subsequent quotations from this writing by Averroes square brackets indicate Hannes' explanatory additions to the text.

As Hannes informs us, this essay contains eight 'proofs' demonstrating the possibility of such a union (in Hebrew *d'vekuth* leading to *yihud*: G. Scholem, *Review of Religion* 14 [1950], p. 115-139), of which he translated only two (p. 11 Hannes). He also informs us that there exists a Latin paraphrase of the essay, not yet published.

According to Steinschneider, the Christian Middle Ages remained ignorant of this work of Averroes. It has probably been translated into Hebrew only in the first half of the 14th century and this translation has been preserved in the commentary by Moses Narboni (M. Steinschneider, "Josef b. Schemtob's Commentar zu Averroës' grösserer Abhandlung über die Möglichkeit der Conjunction", *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 32 [1883], p. 459-477; 514-521, esp. p. 460 and 477-479). But as I indicated above, p. 19, n. 3, in the treatise on the productive and the passive intelligence by Eckhart the Younger we can perhaps find traces of the doctrine that in the moment of the union man's speculative intelligence with its *formae imaginativae* (*Bilder*) disappears.

<sup>3</sup> P. 45 Hannes



*Auf irgendeine Weise* – Alexander's  $\pi\omega\zeta$  (cf. above, p. 16) survived a number of translations and an even greater one of centuries.

To describe the *unio* Averroes first distinguishes two kinds of it. The one he calls existential, the other com-prehensional (*Konjunktion der Existenz* and *Konjunktion des Begreifens*). The meaning is obviously that in the former kind the human intelligence has no knowledge of the productive intelligence with which it is or has become united. Thus, existential union is of lower rank than the com-prehensional one. Averroes explains: productive intelligence is *eine Form, die sich mit dem materiellen Intellekt, so lange der materielle Intellekt im Sein besteht, der Existenz nach, nicht dem Begreifen nach conjugiert*.<sup>1</sup> *Darum begreifen wir die Form des aktiven Intellekts so lange nicht, als der sogenannte Intellekt in actu* (i.e. human intelligence *qua* energized by the productive intelligence) *als ein wirkliches Wesen in uns besteht . . . Befindet sich aber dieser unser Intellekt in seiner letzten Vollendung, und bleibt von ihm nichts mehr von Vermögen übrig* (which I take to mean: after it intelligized in its own manner everything that is intelligible), *so muss notwendig zwischen ihm und dem aktiven Intellekt eine andere Conjunktion erfolgen*,<sup>2</sup> viz. the *Conjunktion des Begreifens und Vorstellens* scil. of the productive intelligence by the human intelligence.

Now, productive intelligence is quite obviously a  $\nu\sigma\eta\tau\acute{o}\nu$  and  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\epsilon\upsilon$   $\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\eta\varsigma$ . But in the act of cognition of a  $\nu\sigma\eta\tau\acute{o}\nu$  a full identity of the act of cognition with its object takes place. Therefore, the human mind in the moment of its com-prehensive union with the productive intelligence becomes productive intelligence. Therefore it seems to acquire one of its properties, viz. immortality. But how is this possible? How can something which is perishable, viz. human intelligence, become imperishable? This Averroes explains by the assumption that in the moment of union human intelligence simply disappears (or is annihilated) and thus the union takes place not between human intelligence as such, but rather between the material or possible intelligence and the productive intelligence. In the moment of the union the material or possible intelligence realizes all its possibilities – but obviously no longer due to the influence of phantasms (by which it was linked to man). In the words of Averroes: . . . *wenn der Intellekt in habitu* (i.e. human intelligence in its perfection) *bei seiner Läuterung durch den aktiven Intellekt im Momente der Conjunktion bestehen bliebe, so müsste notwendig etwas, was nicht ewig ist, Ewiges begreifen* (and thus, as we should complete the sentence, itself become imperishable). *Aber der Intellekt in habitu geht, wenn ihn der aktive Intellekt erhebt, zu Grunde und verschwindet in diesem Momente vollständig, und der materielle Intellekt, welcher die absolute Möglichkeit und Anlage ist, alle Formen zu recipieren, conjugiert sich [mit dem aktiven Intellekt . . .].*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. 50 f. Hannes.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> P. 53 Hannes. One of the (not too numerous) presentations of Averroes making full use of Hannes' translation is: P. S. Christ, *The Psychology of the Active Intellect of Averroes* Philadelphia 1926 (no publisher given), especially its 2nd chapter.

Let us interpret this. To realize (actualize) its potentiality the material intelligence in its normal condition needs phantasms. However, because of the contingent nature of these phantasms as a rule only part of the potentialities of the material intelligence can be actualized (realized). In less abstract terms: not everything intelligible is actually intelligized by man. But with greater perfection of the human mind comes an ever increasing amount of actualizations of the material intelligence. Finally, there may, for some, come a moment, when the full actualization of the material intelligence takes place, i.e. when everything that is intelligible is actually intelligized by man. In this moment material intelligence which up to this moment was tied to man by means of phantasms, resumes, if we may say so, its direct connection with the productive intelligence by severing its links to the human mind and thus is actuated no longer by phantasms but directly by the productive intelligence. Thus the latter becomes its form or formal cause. Material intelligence in this moment intelligizes the productive intelligence and the intelligibles ( $\sigma\upsilon\kappa$   $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\omega$   $\tau\omicron\upsilon$   $\nu\omicron\upsilon$   $\tau\grave{\alpha}$   $\nu\omicron\eta\tau\acute{\alpha}$ ) and in so doing becomes productive intelligence or rather resumes its former status of independence with regard to phantasms (the human mind and the human body). In this very same moment therefore the transformation of material intelligence (or material intelligence *qua* transformed) which had taken place under the influence of phantasms, disappears. In other words, man no longer intelligizes in the manner in which he used to intelligize. The achievements of his intelligence 'die' and disappear, to give place to a new kind of intelligizing, which we can call divine intelligizing or, with equal right, divine being.

Quite obviously Averroes once more describes the mystical ecstasy as a kind of omniscience. In this moment material intelligence which was the possibility of receiving *all* forms actually receives them.

It should be obvious that at this point a question will force itself on us. The question is: Does, then, ecstasy (and by implication: prophecy or revelation) presuppose that the human mind has reached its perfection? Is, in other words, ecstasy – in some sense of the word – the fruit, or the reward, or the result of, intellectual perfection? The question can be answered in three ways. One would be simply an affirmative answer. The second could be: under ordinary circumstances or for ordinary men this question ought indeed to be answered in the affirmative. But for exceptional men or by special divine dispensation the answer should be answered in the negative. And a third answer could be: *spiritus flat ubi vult* – and often it gives preference to the illiterate, feeble minded, etc.

And of course a number of answers more *nuancé* and mediating between these three can be constructed. It is not necessary to spell them out in detail. But perhaps it should be stressed that the second answer, when given by a philosopher, sometimes may be given with complete sincerity, sometimes as a face saving gesture.

One more thing becomes clear. It is very difficult to imagine that the same man who repeatedly tried to explain how man can divinize himself and therefore to immortalize himself *in this life* should assume another immortality of the human soul in all its individual aspects taking place after man's death.

### 3 THE DOUBLE TRUTH THEORY AND THE PROBLEM OF PERSONAL IMMORTALITY IN AVERROES

For centuries Averroes was charged (or as others would have it, credited) with two particularly characteristic doctrines, that of the double truth and that of the denial of personal immortality. We are witnessing a complete change.<sup>1</sup> The Middle Ages (and the Renaissance) was not familiar with all writings of Averroes, therefore misinterpreted him, so we hear scholar after scholar say. Once we have familiarized ourselves with those writings which remained unknown to the Middle Ages, we realize how gross their misinterpretation was. We have to distinguish between genuine Averroism and Latin Averroism.<sup>2</sup>

Now, at the risk of being presumptuous, I should like to say that to the extent that Averroes' texts are accessible to me, I find no reason to change the traditional interpretation. The formulas "double truth" and "no personal immortality" may be too simple to be entirely adequate, but with some slight qualifications they still seem to me to be correct. And as fortunately the problems which these formulas are supposed to solve are, if I may say so, macroscopic, I shall venture to justify my opinion by references to translations, confident that a microscopic analysis of the texts such as can be undertaken only by somebody in perfect command of the original, will not yield results contradicting those based on macroscopic observations.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The turning point in interpreting Averroes was an article by M. Asín Palacios, "El Averroísmo teológico de Sto Tomás de Aquino" in *Homenaje a D. Francisco Codera*, Zaragoza 1904, p. 271-331, reprinted in his *Huellas del Islam*, Madrid n.d. (1941), p. 11-72. In this article Asín Palacios presents Averroes as teaching the complete harmony of reason and faith in a manner entirely anticipating St. Thomas. In fact, as Asín Palacios sees it, in this respect St. Thomas is simply restating the position of Averroes.

Among the early critics of Asín Palacios particular mention deserves G. Manser with his articles "Die göttliche Erkenntnis der Einzeldinge und die Vorsehung bei Averroes"; "Verhältnis von Glauben und Wissen bei Averroes", *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und spekulative Theologie* 23 (1909), p. 1-29; 24 (1910), p. 398-408; 25 (1911), p. 9-34; 163-179; 250-277. Manser defends the traditional point of view according to which Averroes professed the double truth doctrine and denied personal immortality.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g. the article on Averroes in the *Enciclopedia Italiana*. It consists of two parts, the first by C. A. Nallino, the second by A. Pincherle and this division clearly expresses the conviction that there is a Latin Averroism different from Averroes' Averroism.

<sup>3</sup> The problem who in the Middle Ages actually professed the doctrine of double truth has now again come to the fore on the occasion of a newly found writing by

First of all, however, I should like to say that the whole thesis (the Middle Ages knew only part of Averroes' work, they therefore misinterpreted him) seems to be objectionable on grounds *a priori*. If on the basis of some of an author's works a certain doctrine, say, pantheism, has been attributed to him, and now other works of his are discovered, where he repeatedly states that he is not a pantheist, would it be sufficient to say 'those who interpreted him as a pantheist were mistaken?' Is it not rather obvious that a somewhat more *nuancé* interpretation is called for? Quite particularly when it is known that to profess pantheism openly would have been connected with unpleasant consequences for our author? <sup>1</sup> And even without taking into account the problem of consequences, shouldn't we interpret the newly discovered

Boethius of Dacia: G. Sajó, *Un traité récemment découvert de Boèce de Dacie De mundi aeternitate*, Budapest 1954. The editor sees in this writing the doctrine of double truth clearly professed by Boethius. F. Van Steenberghe, "Nouvelles recherches sur Siger de Brabant et son école", *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 54 (1956), p. 130-147, esp. 137-147, sees no such thing - on the contrary, he considers Boethius to be perfectly orthodox on this point. Quite obviously there is no general agreement on what the doctrine of double truth actually is and implies and the problem of interpreting is extremely subtle.

I shall try to state what to me seems to be the essential point in terms as simple as possible, even at the danger of oversimplification.

If a scientist says: "As a scientist I can discover no trace of God's existence" - would it be correct to call him an atheist? This will obviously depend on whether or not the scientist will also say: "But what I said does not preclude that by methods other than those of science God's existence can be discovered or proved". Now, to some such an additional assertion seems to be the last word on the question of the scientist's atheism. But some others will say something like this: "If the scientist really is convinced that the only *legitimate* method of proving the existence of anything, God included, is by science, his additional assertion is nothing but a device, either to hide his true meaning for fear of consequences, or not to shock or depress more tenderminded ones. Of course, it may be that the scientist sincerely believes that there are methods other than those of science and actually believes that by these methods God's existence has been proved. Only if this is the case, the scientist is not an atheist. But is there a way really to decide what the additional statement of the scientist actually meant?"

<sup>1</sup> I mentioned pantheism on purpose. For as a matter of fact, to call a philosopher a pantheist in the 18th and 19 centuries was often tantamount to calling him an atheist or a heretic and if the philosopher happened to be a teacher at a state and/or Church controlled institution such a charge, if considered proved by authorities, was likely to cost him his job and in any case to expose him to some unpleasantness with his state or ecclesiastical superiors. What was the result of such a state of affairs? That virtually no philosopher admitted being a pantheist. Who will decide to what extent such a denial was sincere in the sense that the philosopher was convinced that he by pantheism meant something different from what his accusers meant by it and thus felt entirely justified in disclaiming being a pantheist, viz. in the sense in which his accusers used the term? Who will decide to what extent such a denial was simply an act of prudence (cf. on such problems L. Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Glencoe, Ill., 1952)? Now, it is very difficult to imagine any kind of society in which there is not some penalty attached to professing some idea. The more one who professes this "disloyal", "heretic", etc. idea considers his persecutors to be simply malicious or ignorant, the less he will be inclined to expose himself to the penalty and the more he will feel entitled to disguise his convictions so as to minimize any dangers for himself. Should somebody accuse him of insincerity, he probably would answer that not everybody has the right to expect sincerity from others or that sincerity consists in using a language preventing his persecutors from misunderstanding him.

writings in the light of those previously known, instead of doing now exactly the opposite? Should we try to correct the mistake of basing the interpretation of Averroes on one set of evidences only by making another in the opposite direction, viz. basing it now exclusively on one set of evidences only to the disregard of another?

Now, I still have to find an interpreter of Averroes who would deny that in his commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* Averroes all but literally denies any personal immortality. Why not interpret the 'new' Averroes in the light of the 'old' one?

Thus much for some *a priori* considerations. Let us now present the evidences for the 'old' and the 'new' Averroes.

Why should the Middle Ages have misunderstood Averroes? As I said, sometimes the answer is being given, that they did not know all of his works and that in some of those which they did not know, Averroes explicitly rejects the doctrine of the double truth and explicitly asserts the immortality of the soul.

Whoever uses this explanation must be thinking of the three treatises, first edited and then translated by M. J. Müller in the 19th century.<sup>1</sup> No other work by Averroes has generally become known that late and in comparison with the assertions there found concerning these two problems, assertions concerning them which can be found in other works, e.g. in the *Destructio destructionis* are entirely ambiguous or unclear and in addition were undoubtedly known to the Middle Ages.

But it is not even certain whether these three writings by Averroes were

<sup>1</sup> These three treatises are often referred to as *K. falsafat*. The translation by M. J. Müller has been published under the title *Philosophie und Theologie von Averroes*, München 1875. It consists of three parts, the first, mostly referred to as *Faṣl* or *Faṣl al-maqāl*, the second, its appendix, mostly referred to as *Damīma*, and the third, mostly referred to as *Kaṣf 'an manāhiḡ*. . . . The English translation of these three Arabic titles, as found in Mohammed Jamil-ur-Rehman (*The Philosophy and Theology of Averroes*, Barod, n.d. (1921), reads: A Decisive Discourse on the Delineation of the Relation Between Religion and Philosophy; On the Problem of Eternal Knowledge which Averroes has Mentioned in His Decisive Discourse; An Exposition of the Methods of Argument Concerning the Doctrines of Faith, and in Determination of Doubts and Misleading Innovations Brought Into the Faith through Interpretations.

It is the first of these three treatises in which the words of Averroes occur that there can be one truth only, so that there can be no contradiction between religion and philosophy (p. 7 Müller; p. 161 Alonso – see below, p. 105, n. 2). As to the third, in the translation by Müller it is subdivided in the following sections: *Existenz des Schöpfers; Einheit Gottes; Eigenschaften Gottes; Kenntnis der Freiheit Gottes von der Unvollkommenheit; Abhandlung über die Gegend; Kenntnis der Handlungen Gottes*, this subdivided into five parts, viz. *Bejahung der Schöpfung der Welt, Sendung der Propheten; Verhängnis und Ratschluss Gottes, Von Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Ungerechtigkeit, Eschatologie* (for our purposes the most important part). On all the topics indicated by these titles Averroes asserts that the doctrines of philosophy completely agree with those of the *Koran*. It is difficult not to be reminded of Shakespeare's "The Lady doth protest too much methinks". It is also difficult to understand how Averroes ever acquired the reputation of a heretic instead that of an extremely orthodox believer – a reputation among Moslems, who were acquainted with all his writings, not only with those accessible to the Christian world –, if we take Averroes' words at their face value.

actually unknown in the Middle Ages. Asín Palacios, the same man who is credited with destroying the 'legend' of Averroes as representative of the double truth theory, found a quotation from one of these three writings (the so-called *Damīma*) and references to other parts of Müller's triad in Marti's *Pugio fidei*, one of the main sources of the Middle Ages' knowledge of Islamic philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, is it true that these writings, particularly the first, really prove that Averroes actually rejected the double truth theory? And does the third actually prove that he believed in the immortality of the individual soul?

We now have three modern translations of these writings<sup>2</sup> and unless all three grossly mistranslate Averroes, I do not think so.

It is true, in *Faṣl* Averroes sets out to prove that there is no contradiction between the teachings of religion and philosophy. This proof is based on the assertion that some passages in the *Koran* must be understood literally, some others may (or, if a philosopher reads them, must) be interpreted, in which case it will be seen that they do not contradict philosophical doctrines. Which passages, then, must not be interpreted but taken literally? Averroes limits his examples to three: the existence of god, the immortality of the soul, the reality of prophecy.

Now, it is immediately obvious that the doctrines one and three are the very same ones which Averroes has always professed as a philosopher. Would we not expect him in a writing which is apologetic in character, to stress the identity of (his) philosophy with religion where such an identity can be admitted by him without any compunction?

And is it really necessary to prove that what Averroes means when he says 'god' is *toto caelo* different from what the *Koran* says when using the same word? Or to prove that the prophet as Averroes sees him is one in virtue of the fact of his union with the productive intelligence and again has hardly more than the name in common with what a Moslem would understand by a prophet such as Moses, Jesus, or Mohammed?

But what about the third doctrine, that of the immortality of the soul?

There can be not the slightest doubt, says Averroes in *Kaṣf*, that the soul is immortal and will be rewarded and punished according to its merits. This is taught by every religion and philosophers confirmed it by proofs.

Philosophers – this must include Aristotle. Shall we say that Averroes was of the opinion that Aristotle believed in the immortality of the soul if immortality means individual immortality and that Averroes was of the

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* (above, p. 102, n. 1), p. 67. According to Asín Palacios the double truth theory can be found in b. 'Arabī, viz. in his *al-Futūḡāt al-Makkiya* (*The Meccan Revelation*) II 150 (not accessible to me).

<sup>2</sup> Viz. in addition to those mentioned above, p. 104, n. 1, also a Spanish translation contained in M. Alonso, *Teología de Averroes*, Madrid-Granada 1947.

We also have a translation of the first two treatises (*Faṣl* and *Damīma*): L. Gauthier, *Traité décisif*, 3rd ed., Alger 1948.

opinion that Aristotle believed in rewards and punishments in a life to come?

Let us take a closer view of the decisive passage, viz. the section on eschatology (cf. above, p. 104, n. 1). Averroes begins by quoting a series of passages from the *Koran* which seem to imply personal immortality. Characteristic is particularly XXIII 117 in which God assures man that he will be brought back before Him. But strangely enough, from here Averroes first of all derives the principle that man has been created for some specific work. This is the use of his rational powers, particularly their theoretical activity. And the perfection of these powers man acquires by goodness and virtue. And now Averroes continues:

*Están conformes todas las religiones en que existe realmente una felicidad futura en la otra vida. Entre los sabios podrán encontrarse las demostraciones apodícticas de este aserto.*

This is based on two principles: man is the noblest of all creatures and has not been created in vain but to exercise some specific action; specific meaning actions of *alma intelectual*, especially in exercising its contemplative power. Furthermore:

*La revelación divina en todas las religiones positivas enseña la inmortalidad del alma, la cual demuestran apodícticamente los sabios.*

And all religions agree that death is followed by happiness or unhappiness in the after life.

*Pero como de estas cosas no hay símil exacto entre las cosas sensibles y como lo que se recibe en la revelación, ha de variar con cada uno de los profetas, según lo que sobre esos conceptos le sea revelado, esto es, según las cosas reveladas, por eso han de variar también las religiones al sensibilizar los estados que después de la muerte tendrá el alma de los bienaventurados y el alma de los penados con tormentos.*

Follow examples of such 'sensible' interpretations, among them by the terms paradise and eternal fire. And in the *Koran*,

*leemos sobre la posibilidad de este estado pruebas comúnmente accesibles aun a la capacidad del vulgo . . .* And

*las imágenes sensibles* of the Islam are the most perfect, because most people can understand them. On the contrary *las imágenes de cosas espirituales son de menor eficacia . . .*

And he defends the possibility of survival in spite of the disappearance for the body: *Sabemos que de la desaparición de la actividad del instrumento no se sigue la desaparición de alma misma.*<sup>1</sup> To make this clear, Averroes

<sup>1</sup> I am quoting the translation by Alonso, *op. cit.* (see above, p. 105, n. 2). p. 341-350, because he belongs among the scholars who are absolutely convinced that Averroes believed in personal immortality. We thus can be sure that we don't base our interpretation, which is opposed to that by Alonso, on a translation biased in our favor. But I am not the first to remain unconvinced by this passage. See, e.g., Beatrice H. Zedler, "Averroes and Immortality", *New Scholasticism* 28 (1954), p. 436-453.

With Alonso sides: S. Gómez Nogales, "El destino del hombre a la luz de la Noética

reminds us that the disappearance of an artisan's tool does not mean that the artisan's activity is terminated.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly, *prima facie* this sounds like a very strong profession of belief in personal immortality. But what is the context in which this profession is being made? In *Fasl*, Averroes undertakes to prove that there is no contradiction between religion and philosophy. This he essentially does by carefully distinguishing two modes of discourse, the religious and the philosophic. In the religious mode of discourse all the religious doctrines must be taken literally. In other words, as religion teaches that the souls survive, those of the good ones to be rewarded, those of the bad ones to be punished, as religion teaches resurrection of the body, these teachings must be taken literally *in the religious mode of discourse*. And in this mode of discourse they are true. A philosopher who would try to reinterpret these doctrines, e.g. by taking them to be allegories, would be a subverter of religion.

However, the philosophic mode of discourse (i.e. the mode in which e.g. the commentary to *De anima* is written) is different. In the philosophic mode of discourse one should say that only intelligence survives and that there is only one intelligence. In the philosophic mode of discourse it must be denied that a bodily resurrection is possible or that souls are rewarded and punished after death. A philosopher, i.e. a man using the philosophic discourse, would be saying untruth, should he assert that the soul survives.

In other words, truth is something like Hegel's concrete universal. It is only one, and it is embodied equally well in the religious discourse as it is in the philosophic. The two say the same thing about the same thing, but

de Averroes", *Actes du Premier Congrès International de la Philosophie Médiévale: L'Homme et son Destin*, Louvain-Paris 1960, p. 285-304. But Gómez Nogales is fully aware how difficult it is to reconcile the doctrine of personal immortality with that of the unicity of intelligence. He reinterprets Averroes: unicity of intelligence means only that the first principles of reasoning are common to all men and that all men in one and the same manner abstract universals from particulars. However, individual souls reach different results (degrees) of universalization, as each uses its phantasms in a different manner. As a result, they differ from one another and this difference is preserved after death.

It can easily be seen that this interpretation is achieved at the cost of denying any substantial character to the unike intelligence. Is this still Averroes?

<sup>1</sup> However, this comparison should be a warning, understandable to every philosopher. For it is hardly anything but a quotation from Alexander-Aristocles, of whom none believed in personal immortality. They, on the contrary, use the artisan-tool simile only to explain the survival of the impersonal intelligence (ὁ θεῖος νοῦς ἀεὶ μὲν ἐνεργεῖ . . . καὶ δι' ὀργάνου δέ, ὅταν ἐκ τῆς συγκρίσεως τῶν σωμάτων . . . γένηται ὄργανον τοιοῦτον . . . Καὶ ἐκκρίνεται δὴ, ὅνπερ τρόπον καὶ εἰσκρίνεται however, ὡς ὁ τεχνίτης ἀποβαλὼν τὰ ὄργανα ἐνεργεῖ μὲν καὶ τότε, οὐ μὴν ὑλικὴν καὶ ὀργανικὴν ἐνέργειαν. Ἐλεγεν δὴ (scil. Aristocles) ὅτι εἰ ὅλως ὑπολαμβάνειν χρὴ κατὰ Ἀριστοτέλη θεῖον καὶ ἀφθαρτον εἶναι τὸν νοῦν, οὕτως ἡγεῖσθαι δεῖν . . . (p. 112, 27-113, 4 Bruns). In other words, it seems that Averroes felt entitled to say: What a "religionist" means when he says that the soul is immortal is actually that intelligence is immortal - only we mustn't tell this to a "religionist", because he will misunderstand it; a philosopher, on the other hand, will immediately understand what I mean, because he will recognize my quotation from Alexander-Aristocles.

as each says it in its own language, they seem often to contradict each other. But the moment we distinguish between the two modes, any contradiction disappears. Taken in isolation, the statements 'the soul is mortal' and 'the soul is immortal' seem to contradict each other. Taken in their proper context, they do not. To refute Averroes we would have to take the position that there is only one mode of discourse and that a sentence means precisely the same when it uses the same words, regardless of whether it is expressed by a 'religionist' or a philosopher.

Now, the position of Averroes is much stronger than it would seem at first and far from being sheer sophistry, hypocrisy, or a desperate attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable. His assertion amounts to saying that there is no one, abstract language of truth, just as there is no one concrete *langage* (speech) but only *langues* (languages). Each *langue* expresses in its own manner the one universal *langage*. The truth concerning the nature of the soul expressed in religious language reads 'the individual soul is immortal'. The same truth expressed in philosophic language reads 'only the impersonal intelligence is immortal'. Just as it is entirely possible that two different *langues* would express one and the same truth in a seemingly contradictory manner, so it is possible in relation to religion and philosophy.

Examples can easily be constructed. "This is a medicine *for* a headache" says the Englishman, whereas the German would say "Hier is ein Mittel *gegen* Kopfweh". "I am afraid he *is* cheating me" would an Englishman write, whereas a Frenchman might write "J'ai peur qu'il *ne* me trompe". It would obviously be naive to say that there is a contradiction here. But according to Averroes it is equally naive to assume that the same truth should not be expressed in seemingly contradictory manner in two different discourses, one philosophic, one religious.

One of the famous examples quoted time and again in the Middle Ages to prove the pernicious effects of the doctrine of the unicity of intelligence is the saying of some layman "Why should I not live a life of sin? If there is only one soul, I shall be saved, if the soul of St. Peter is". What would Averroes have replied? Something like this: "Obviously you are using the religious mode of speech. Therefore, you are quite wrong. And I can prove it to you. When a philosopher says that there is no personal immortality, but only the immortality of intelligence, in this is implied that he therefore should live a life of virtue. When you say that there is no personal immortality, this in your eyes implies that you can live a life of sin. So you see, in spite of the identity of words, what you say is false, what the philosopher says is true".

One sees immediately to what extent such a doctrine permits the *man* to be a philosopher part of his life, a 'religionist' if he so chooses, another. As a 'religionist' he will with complete sincerity pray for a happy afterlife for himself, as a philosopher he will with absolute sincerity teach that there is no personal afterlife. Some may doubt whether such a splitting of one's

person is possible. Let us ask among contemporary scientists. It wouldn't be surprising if many of them would entertain no such doubts.

Of course, there is one branch of knowledge for which there is no place in this scheme of things. This is theology. What theology quite obviously tries to do is to create one mode of discourse common to both religion and philosophy. If one accepts the possibility of such a discourse, then, of course, it is impossible to pronounce a sentence which is true in philosophy and false in religion or *vice versa*. It is therefore obvious why every theologian must object to Averroes. And it is equally obvious what Averroes reply would be. Theology, so Averroes would say, is an attempt to use *langage* instead of a *langue*. But this cannot be done.

We now can sum up by saying: Averroes the 'religionist' professed belief in personal immortality. Averroes the philosopher denied personal immortality. And Averroes who spoke of both, the philosopher and the 'religionist' asserted that there was no contradiction between these two theses. This is Averroes' doctrine of the double truth, as specifically applied to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The Middle Ages which attributed the denial of immortality and the doctrine of the double truth to him were right in a sense, wrong in another. The real issue is: is there only one mode of discourse in which truth can be expressed?

To make Averroes' position more intelligible I pointed at the attitude of many a scientist in our age. I should like to continue by another analogy.

Much discussion has recently been devoted to the problem of the cognitive function of poetry. Let us take a very simple example. In Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality* a naive reader will find the doctrine of the pre-existence of our souls expressed. In other words, our naive reader will take the poem to have cognitive claims in the ordinary sense of the word. But once he has become familiar with modern discussions concerning the relation of poetic language to scientific language he will probably change his opinion. In a poem the words 'our soul comes from elsewhere' simply cannot mean the same they would in a scientific work, or, for that matter, in a sermon, or for that matter, in a book on philosophy. They convey some truth – in the mode of poetic discourse. It is entirely possible that the truth they convey would be the same as the truth conveyed in a sermon in which the doctrine of pre-existence is criticized as being erroneous. Why is it possible? Because the use of words in poetry and in a sermon is only seemingly identical. Would it be correct to criticize Wordsworth for having expressed erroneous religious opinions in his *Ode*? Only he who would insist that behind poetry and prose is something which is neither, but which still can be expressed in prose could take such a stand. On the other hand, only he who would deny any cognitive claim of poetry *qua* poetry and would insist that all poetry is translatable into prose, would admit no truth whatsoever in Wordsworth's formula – because truth for him is a function of prose. But there would be many who would say that poetic discourse expresses truth

in a manner appropriate to it, whereas prose expresses the same truth in a manner appropriate to it and that identity of words does not prove that the two discourses mean the same, just as non-identity of words doesn't prove that they mean something different. In other words, our age is implicitly in sympathy with the doctrine of double truth – or rather, it is inclined to profess the doctrine of multiple truth. And in so doing, it helps us to understand Averroes' concern.

Let us, then, reformulate the thesis of the double truth. It should not read 'What is true in religion, could be false in philosophy, and vice versa.' It should rather read 'An *assertion* which is true in religion, could be false in philosophy, and vice versa. For, assertions mean what they mean, only within the context of the discourse to which they belong'. If an actor who is a bachelor, performs the part of a married man and says "I am a bachelor", he told what is a lie on the stage and true in his life. And is there any mode of discourse which is common to both the stage and life?

The illustration just given, however, is meant to be more than just an illustration.

The man who as an actor says 'I am a bachelor' is merely acting, so could be answered. It is therefore unfair to treat his utterance on the stage and another in his real life on the same plane.

It can easily be seen that this answer presupposes that there is a clear cut distinction between performing a part and real life. True, acting is part of real life, but what is said and done within the sphere of acting is no longer part of the actual life of the actor.

But is not such a presupposition unwarranted? Is not acting *ex professo* different from the rest of life *only* in that this rest is non-professed acting? But is there any clear line dividing those moments of one's life in which he only acts, *ex professo* or in a non-professed way and others in which he is 'serious' or 'simply himself', or whatever description we chose to describe living without acting? Is the philosopher when he writes, entirely free from acting the part of a philosopher? Is anybody ever completely free from acting, from assuming a role?

Before answering, let us clarify the term 'acting'. It means: when conducting oneself to take into account the impression this conduct will make on an audience (regardless whether it is an audience of one or of many) and regardless whether this audience is present to our senses or only to our imagination.

If we accept this definition, there will be many who will hesitate before asserting that a clear distinction exists between acting and non-acting.

Now, from here let us proceed another step. It is extremely unlikely that he who acts should act always the same part. This does not necessarily mean that he should actually perform different parts. But in actually performing some part is implied the possibility or potentiality of performing another. In the very idea of acting is implicit a plurality of roles.

Here our analysis of acting ends. We can return to the problem of double truth. If everybody is permanently acting, any statement he ever makes can be considered his own in any full sense of the word rather than another. Each statement, each assertion belongs to the context of the role within which it is given expression. There is no absolute difference of assertions made 'seriously' and made 'only' as part of a performance.

But if such is the case, then indeed truth must be multiple (not only double) in the sense in which we defined it above, i.e. in lieu of saying 'truth' we should say 'one and the same assertion may be true or false depending on the context in which it was made'.

Is such a theory tenable? What it ultimately implies is that all modes of discourse ultimately go back to something which makes all these modes possible without being itself available as another mode of discourse. In application to languages (*langues*) this would mean that ultimately all languages are rooted not in some one language, but in something which we could call speech (*langage*), which, however is never available (effable) in the form of a language. In what form, then, is it available if it is available at all? Obviously only in the form of transcending any given language towards that in which any language is rooted. Now, it seems that indeed what we mean when we say 'to understand a language' means ultimately to transcend it. And only because we transcend a language, we can translate it into another language. The same is true of any mode of discourse. It is understood only if and when it is transcended. But by the same token: whenever we want to express that which animates, if we may say so, any kind of discourse, we can do it only in another mode of discourse which is equally in need of being transcended. Thus, if there is no one mode of discourse, the doctrine of double truth follows as a matter of course. Any objections to this doctrine raised in the past, seemed to be directed in the wrong direction. In order to refute it, one would have to prove that there is one fundamental (or eminent, privileged, etc.) mode of discourse and that this is the only mode in which truth can be expressed. In other words, a philosophic polemic against Averroes should be more formalized and not concentrate on the conflict between reason and faith, etc.

But as the theory of the double truth was rooted in religious problems it is perhaps appropriate in concluding to relate it to such problems in our time.

Everybody is familiar with the problems and assertions of the *formgeschichtliche* method. To understand the meaning of the Scriptures we, so this method tells us, have to distinguish whether a specific passage was originally part of a sermon, a parable, etc. or as another expression has it, where its *Sitz im Leben* was. Only by so doing we shall avoid the confusion inevitable when something which was meant, to be e.g. a profession of faith is read as if it was meant to be a report on an historic event.

And nothing can testify better to how widely this kind of interpretation has been accepted than the fact that in *Divino afflante spiritu* the

*formgeschichtliche* method is declared to be a valid approach to the problems of scriptural interpretation.

Now, no matter how great the differences between the different modes of expression used in the Scriptures, they all have one thing in common: they are linguistic expressions. It is therefore entirely possible that an opponent to the *formgeschichtliche* method would say that an assertion is an assertion and has therefore the same meaning regardless of its *Sitz im Leben*. Here we have the Averroistic problem restated in modern terms. It is a difficult and profound problem, but it definitely is not a problem of faith against reason, hypocrisy against sincerity, etc.

Let us give a specific example of the relation between the results of the *formgeschichtliche* method in biblical interpretation and the problem of multiple truth.

In a well known Catholic periodical we find a relatively recent article on the interpretation of *Genesis*. The narrative concerning Paradise and man's fall, so the author tells us is a *Kunstprosaerzählung* (*Kunstprosa* is here obviously contrasted with expository prose – it belongs to what in English is called fiction rather than science). This immediately confronts us with the problem: In what sense can *Kunstprosa* be called true? Now, the author continues: This narrative is preceded by a hymn the subject matter of which is the creation and the ordering of the universe.

"Hymn" – this is quite obviously another literary form to which standards of expository prose do not apply. And so the author continues.

This hymn is 'true' (the quotation marks are the author's) in the sense in which the biblical author wanted the truth of his hymn to be understood. This kind of understanding, our author continues, can often be inferred only on the basis of our knowledge of the world of the Old Orient.<sup>1</sup>

What else is this but the doctrine of multiple truth? Neither a *Kunstprosaerzählung* nor a hymn consist of assertions which would be true in the same sense of the word, in which an assertion in a history of civilization or a scientific exposition of the origin of the universe is true. We must even be prepared for the possibility that both the scientific assertion "this universe has no beginning in time" and the "hymnic" assertion "in the beginning God created the universe" are "true", though contradicting each other if reduced to one and the same mode of speech.

Perhaps all this will make Averroes to appear more consistent than he actually was. After all, he accepted the existence of some of the *Koran* assertions which, he says, are not open to interpretation. Thus he admitted that there is something like common language for the philosopher and the "religionist". But on the other hand we must not forget – even the same

<sup>1</sup> A. Pohl, "Der Schöpfungshymnus der Bibel", *Stimmen der Zeit* 163 (84) 1958, p. 252–266.

words, when used in two different modes of speech, words like 'god', etc., may mean different things.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps worth mentioning that the *K. falsafa*, i.e. the work containing all three treatises was known to Jewish philosophers. See A. Hübsch, "Elia Delmedigo's: Bechinath ha-dath, und Ibn Rosch's: Faql ul-maqal", *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 31 (1882), p. 555–563; 32 (1883), p. 28–46, esp. p. 30–34; M. Golb, "The Hebrew Translations of Averroes' Faql al-Maqal", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 25 (1956), p. 91–114; 26 (1957), p. 41–64, esp. p. 64. Now, the extent to which del Medigo is simply repeating Averroes may be controversial: see J. Guttman, "Elia del Medigos Verhältnis zu Averroes in seinem Bechinat ha-Dat", *Jewish Studies in Memory of Israel Abrahams*, New York 1927, p. 192–208. Guttman sees the relative independence of E. del Medigo in the fact that the latter limits the permissibility of interpreting revelation whereas Averroes does not. But Guttman himself quite correctly lists all the doctrines of the *Koran* which Averroes explicitly exempted from interpretation (p. 204, with reference to Averroes p. 14 Müller = p. 180 Alonso), viz. the existence of god, of revelation (prophecy), and of reward and punishment in the beyond. Thus, I am inclined to side with Hübsch who asserts the complete dependence of del Medigo on Averroes. But whatever the case, the fact is that according to Guttman del Medigo professes the doctrine of double truth, in spite of the fact that he is familiar with the writing of Averroes the alleged ignorance of which induced the Christian Middle Ages to attribute this doctrine to him, an attribution allegedly erroneous. What, then, induced del Medigo to profess this doctrine?

It should be further remarked that del Medigo was criticized by his fellow religionists on about the same grounds on which "orthodox" Moslems criticized Averroes. See on him G. Vajda, *Introduction à la pensée juive du Moyen Age*, Paris 1947, p. 192f.; cf. p. 158f. on Isaac Albalag; also p. 67 (on Isac Israeli); p. 157 (on Hillel b. Samuel). I am in sympathy with Vajda's formula according to which there may be *deux formes de l'esprit connaissant, et par conséquent, deux vérités autonomes, qui peuvent se contredire*. Only I should like to modify it by eliminating the word *connaissant* from it.

On the historic aspects of the double truth theory see W. Betzendörfer, *Die Lehre von der zweifachen Wahrheit bei Petrus Pomponatius* (Diss.) Tübingen 1919; *idem*, *Die Lehre von der zweifachen Wahrheit. Ihr erstmaliges Auftreten im Abendland und ihre Quellen*, Tübingen 1924; M. Grabmann, *Der göttliche Grund menschlicher Wahrheits-erkenntnis*, Münster 1924. A very judicious discussion will be found in A. Hufnagel, "Zur Lehre von der doppelten Wahrheit", *Theologische Quartalschrift* 136 (1956), p. 284–295, esp. p. 284 and 292f. For some ramifications see Anneliese Maier, *Metaphysische Hintergründe der spätscholastischen Naturphilosophie*, Rome 1955, ch. I.