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301

Jari Kaukua

Avicenna on Subjectivity

A Philosophical Study

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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ABSTRACT

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The present study investigates two aspects of Avicenna's (980–1037 CE) theory of subjectivity: (1) intentional awareness of objects other than the subject of awareness, and (2) the subject's awareness of herself.

In chapter 3, an argument is presented for a crucial link between Avicenna's conception of estimative apprehension of intentions (*maʿānī*) and intentionality in the modern sense. According to our interpretation, Avicenna's intentions should be taken as structuring principles of experience. As a consequence, estimation amounts to the apprehension of a meaningfully structured whole. On the basis of this interpretation estimative apprehension is shown to satisfy the commonly accepted criteria for an intentional state. However, in accordance with the adopted holistic interpretation of Avicenna's faculty psychology, we will also argue that Avicenna takes sense perception to be intentional through and through. Evidence for this argument is presented in a discussion of Avicenna's treatment of perception of movement.

The discussion of self-awareness is divided in two parts. Chapter 4 investigates the explanatory roles to which Avicenna employs the phenomenon of self-awareness. These are shown to be three. In order of discussion, self-awareness accounts for the individuation of human souls, it renders the manifold of experiential data into coherent unitary wholes, and it provides the reference for first personal indexical expressions. In chapter 5 we take our cue from these explanatory roles and ask what sort of descriptive concept of self-awareness can fulfill them. Our conclusion is that the primary type of self-awareness amounts to mineness or first personality inherent in all human experiences. However, this is not the whole story of Avicenna's descriptive account of self-aware phenomena. In addition, we will consider Avicenna's theory of self-awareness in animals, of reflective self-awareness, of self-knowledge, and of awareness of one's own body.

Keywords: Avicenna, consciousness, history of philosophy, intentionality, medieval philosophy, philosophy of mind, self-awareness.

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a time when prospects of employment could not have seemed much bleaker, I probably would not have even started. I also thank him for his trust in hiring me as a researcher in the project he led, as well as his unfaltering belief in my work throughout the long stretches when it was but a constant promise. Taneli has been a trustworthy guide ever since my first tentative steps on the field of medieval Islamic philosophy. He has shown remarkable patience with my constant fits of ignorance, and has never kept either his tremendous knowledge or his excellent private library to himself if only he has detected a possibility to help a fellow with more meagre facilities. Most importantly, together with Mikko, Taneli has devoted his full attention to preliminary versions of the present text. I hope I have been able to turn at least a portion of their penetrating remarks to my benefit. Much as I would like to blame others for the mistakes, however, they're all mine.

My parents Virva and Kalevi Kaukua ought to be thanked for insisting upon the importance of education at a particularly uninspired time. I now agree that it was not a forthrightly discardable idea to enter and endure high school. Together with my parents-in-law, Virpi and Ossi Kemppainen, they have also provided important financial assistance at times of need, thus enabling me to concentrate on this work. Heartfelt thanks are due to them all.

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CONTENTS

1 PREFACE

Won't somebody tell me
Answer if you can
Won't somebody tell me
Just what is the soul of a man
Blind Willie Johnson

As a child, I was particularly puzzled whenever I heard someone, usually an adult, speak about "the soul". Admittedly though, such soul-talk was already quite rare in the Finland of the 1980s. In fact, it seemed to be largely confined to the realm of state religion that I only visited in the compulsory school classes on the subject, the biannual and equally compulsory visits to the village church with the school class, or baptisms, weddings and funerals in the family. But despite the status of soul-talk in the periphery of my youthful existence, the nature of the mysterious entity troubled me from time to time. It was not so much the question whether there was such a thing as the soul that bothered me. In fact, I wasn't even able to begin with such a question, since quite frankly, I had no idea whatsoever of what the word 'soul' was supposed to mean. It was clear that the soul had something to do with myself, or that it was something that I "had", but in the light of such vague notions, it could just as well have been the air inside my football as the stuff within my head. Whether I approached my elders with inquiries of any persistence, I cannot recall, but at least it seems I did not receive many answers worth remembering.

My first insight into the meaning of the word 'soul' came about, believe it or not, through philosophy, or to be more precise, through Aristotle. I suddenly realised that souls are what psychology deals with, and that there is an almost down-to-earth sense in which I can be said to have a soul, or even to be a soul. It dawned on me that the soul is what makes me the living entity I am, or what is somehow "behind" my experiences as their condition of possibility. But this dawn was to soon turn to dusk. As I delved deeper into the history of philosophical psychology, things started to blur again. This second time, however, the questions were slightly different. I kept asking just how much of my decidedly modern intuitions of what it is to be the kind of living entity that I am can I read

into a historical theory of the soul, for instance the theory of Aristotle. Or to take perception as an example, how can I be certain that Aristotle is speaking of perception in the sense that it is something *I experience*, and not simply a physical process describable in a similar manner as the animate functions in plants? Does Aristotle's soul, after all, have anything to do with what I take to be me?

It may seem that I was – truth be told, present tense would be just as appropriate – back at the starting point, with the only exception that the wielders of soul-talk were now, instead of priests and teachers of state religion, texts from the history of philosophy. The familiarity of the surroundings, however, is only apparent. For my relation to my own experience had changed. I had acquired analytic capacities that enabled a far superior grasp of my own experience in comparison to those I had at my resource as a child. I was now able to distinguish a number of distinct aspects in my experience, to conceive of the various ways in which these aspects can be mutually related, and even weigh differing descriptions of the experience against each other, descriptions some of which rejected the very aspects of experience others deemed necessary. But most importantly, I had arrived at a dawning understanding of the distinction between such psychological questions and concepts that I could consider entirely contingent or dependent on certain historical theories and circumstances on the one hand, and such that I couldn't but take as theory-neutral *facts* of experience on the other, as real constituents of all experience which I have to posit in a fellow being in order to be able to relate to her as to a being in some relevant respect similar to myself.

Such considerations have since taken an increasingly firm hold of my work as a student of the history of philosophy. I have become increasingly aware of the necessity of positing certain aspects of our experience as theory-neutral, or ahistorical facts as the non-textual background of my study. Let us call the facts posited in this manner *non-textual standards of plausibility* of our interpretive activity. Now, I claim that such facts are in fact always posited by any study of history of philosophy. They are a prerequisite for there being any meaning in a work of the past for us. Only in many cases the facts to be posited do not seem problematic at all, to the point that we may not even be aware of our positing them. To take a somewhat trivial example, it is a prerequisite of our understanding Aristotle's physics that we believe the world Aristotle is describing to be in general outline the same world we inhabit. In that world, just as in ours, stones will eventually fall to the ground no matter how high we throw them, fire will always burn dry wood, and also yourself should you be so careless as to touch it.

I do not believe there will be many objections to the position of facts of such description. But things are not quite as straightforward in philosophical psychology. The object we wish to describe seems to be too close to us, the complex whole we are living through all the time, on the face of which it seems well nigh impossible to settle in order to gain an objective view of any degree. It is only through necessarily somewhat metaphorical concepts that we can even begin to get a grasp of our experience, and no matter how carefully we apply

them, these concepts will inevitably smuggle a theory of some sort into our consideration, whether explicitly developed or only implicitly entailed. In the study of historical texts in philosophical psychology, the problem is doubled: in addition to our own concepts, we have to work with those of the author(s) under our study. Needless to say, this necessitates a great deal of caution, the dangers of anachronistically reading into a text what is not there are particularly foreboding.

Still, I want to argue that in spite of this danger, there is no escape from the necessity of positing some non-textual standards of possibility. To take an example, we have a very concrete, though largely inarticulate experiential grasp of what it is like to go through a sense perception – we have been going through such an experience for as long as we remember. Due to its familiarity, we may not notice that we rely on this experiential grasp when we set out to read Aristotle's discussion of *aisthēsis* in the second and third books of *De anima*. But we do. For if we didn't, how could we have any idea of what Aristotle is speaking? It is true that Aristotle describes physical processes that can be perceived in the world, much as the stones or the fire of our earlier example. But we understand or single out these processes precisely as instances of sense perception, i.e. in reference to our own *experience* of sense perception. And insofar as we believe we understand what Aristotle means when he speaks of *aisthēsis*, we must presume that his experience is sufficiently similar to ours to single out the same kind of processes in the world as we do when we speak of sense experience.

The simultaneous necessity and danger in positing the properly psychological non-textual standards of possibility need not lead us to despair. If we have a feeling that we understand what our ancestors in philosophy were doing, or better, what they *are* doing when we read their texts, we can perfectly well trust this feeling – in the absence of contrary evidence. But at the same time, if we have a sincere interest in what *they* have to say, we have to be constantly on guard of our own presuppositions, constantly checking whether our own analysis of our experience should be revised. Metaphorically, we should nail permanently on the walls of our study the question whether our non-textual standards of plausibility are guiding us toward an understanding of the text and not erring us away from it.

I am a philosopher by education and by vocation. This means that I tend to emphasise systematic over merely historical arguments, and questions that take their cue from our problems at least as much as historical ones.[1] In the present work this emphasis is evident in the fact that the structure of the whole is modelled on a description of subjectivity that most of us moderns would probably find plausible at least in broad outline. My work will restructure Avicenna's thought in an attempt to make it give an account, as if in an application of it, to an organized set of questions that may not all have been Avicenna's

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[1] I realise that the distinction is ultimately forced, but I think it can be used to pinpoint differences in tendencies or emphases in the studies we actually conduct. Nevertheless, I find that in the whole scheme of things the two tendencies should nourish each other: systematic acumen will make a historical account more accurate, and historical sophistication will make the systematic account more precise.

own. More precisely, I will set out to find whether there is such a thing as an Avicennian theory of subjectivity, whether he can be understood as giving an account of the kind of phenomena we expect to be accounted for in a theory of subjectivity. However, I will also do my best to remain faithful to Avicenna's psychological theory as a whole. The work is thus best conceived as a search for a common ground between our problems and Avicenna's problems with their corresponding solutions. We could also conceive the situation through a parable: imagine a *human* scientist encountering a fellow from a completely different cultural context, and starting to enquire her whether she has come to think of a particular question. In yet other words, we shall proceed to reconstruct a theory and test its application to a given set of questions. I believe this is a properly *philosophical* way of procedure with the history of philosophy, making it breathe the air of dilemmas, appropriating it as our own instead of yielding it entirely to historical treatment.

But why choose Avicenna as a conversant in the question of subjectivity? In brief, there are two reasons. First, my initial reading of the psychological sections of the *Shifā'* simply filled me with enthusiasm. Starting from the flying man,[2] the book seemed to be filled with intriguing hints of quite exceptional acumen in the description of self-aware experience. Besides, I soon found out that despite the obvious interest of the topic both for Avicenna and for us moderns, hardly any studies had been conducted on it.[3] There was an obvious *lacuna* for a young scholar to test his abilities. Second, we know that Avicenna is an extremely influential figure in the Latin philosophical psychology of the early 13th century,[4] and although his importance dwindles slightly at the wake of the Latin translation program of Aristotle's works together with Averroes' commentaries, he continues to be read and discussed in the subsequent centuries as well. Furthermore, one cannot fail to note the striking similarities between the flying man and René Descartes' *cogito* six centuries later.[5] Knowledge of his influence and this peculiar similarity with one of the most important thinkers of the modern era made the necessity of a systematic account of what the *Shifā'* hinted at seem all the more urgent.

* * *

After the general methodological considerations above, let us proceed with a more detailed consideration of our subject matter. Now, if there is any one thing on which the two opposed camps of modern philosophy of mind, i.e. the one formed by those who firmly assert the existence of something called subjectivity and the other constituted by those who flatly deny the same, agree upon,

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2 For the text and discussion of it, see ch. 4.1 below.

3 The only exceptions were the pioneering works of Shlomo Pines (1954) and Deborah L. Black (forthcoming), both of which will certainly become familiar in the course of this study.

4 For an excellent study of this influence, see Hasse (2000).

5 This connection has been a matter of scholarly debate for quite a while already. For the most recent assessments, see Druart (1988), McTighe (1988), and Hasnawi (1997).

it would probably be the claim that some kind of self-awareness is or would be an essential feature of subjectivity, whether or not anything of the sort really exists in the world. On the other hand, it seems almost equally natural an assumption that as far as we can tell, all subjects – with the possible, and largely theoretical, exception of God – live in a world. This entails another feature of subjectivity, i.e. awareness of the world, the presence of the world *for that subject*. This hetero-awareness, awareness of an other as opposed to awareness of oneself, is customarily dealt with under the rubric of intentionality. Here, in a nutshell, is the primary structural principle and goal of the present study: a systematic exposition of Avicenna's account of subjectivity as consisting of intentional awareness and self-awareness. But this is a tough nut to crack, and loaded with a number of the sort of methodological and metatheoretical problems which I described and which to me seem necessary to at least openly acknowledge, perhaps even preliminarily tackle with, at the outset.

The central non-textual standard of plausibility in the forthcoming study can be formulated in a blunt claim: self-awareness is an ahistorical, general and inherent feature of human experience. This claim may put off many readers, but it should not be read too hastily. In particular, it presupposes a careful distinction between different types of self-awareness. What I mean with my claim is that the phenomenon of self-awareness, *in the primitive sense* to be qualified, is an irreducible feature of our experience. More specifically, it is not dependent on a historically developed theory of the self or of self-awareness, as has sometimes been claimed.[6] On the contrary, I take it as the necessary condition for our capacity to understand each other, and therefore also for our capacity to understand beings otherwise similar to ourselves but of another time or another culture. And although we may hesitate in attributing any kind of self-awareness, at least of any higher degree, to other animals, it seems obvious to me that to the extent we can sympathize with their endeavours, relate to them in any meaningful way, or even believe we understand them – *and* take seriously our own experiences of sympathy, genuine relation, and belief of understanding – we have to regard them as beings aware of themselves. Of course we can have similar attitudes also towards such inanimate things as machines, for example, but if there is a difference between these two attitudes, I believe it concerns precisely the respective degree of validity we are willing to attribute to each.

On the other hand, despite the alleged irreducibility and omnipresence of self-awareness in all our experiences from the most reflective to the most common type, it is obvious that we are dealing with an extremely elusive phenomenon. It seems to me that this is essentially for the following two reasons. (1) There is a wide variety of degrees of self-awareness, and we are constantly vacillating between higher and lower orders of self-awareness, say between attention to a work at hand and attention to our being at work. Besides, we can often get so absorbed in our activities that it may seem as if a correct account of our states would rather entail some sort of selflessness, or plain unawareness of the self. Yet it has been very convincingly argued that some level of self-

6 See, for instance, Berrios & Markova (2003).

awareness is required even in these states if we want to make sense of the idea of continuity between such states and such explicitly self-aware states as reflection.[7] In the end, the most promising answers to the dilemma seem to be those that are preceded by a careful distinction between different levels or degrees of self-awareness and that lay some sort of primitive or minimal self-awareness at the very core of any and all mental states, as an irreducible feature of each and all of them. Yet whatever the case, extreme analytical acuity is always required whenever we speak of self-awareness or of selfhood as its constituent.

(2) The other reason for the elusive nature of the phenomenon of self-awareness is that whenever we take self-awareness as the object of our study, we have to reflect upon ourselves. This puts us in a peculiar type of self-aware state from the very start, a state we may not normally and for the most part be in, and by definition not when we set out to investigate our awareness. Thus, it seems that the sort of self-awareness we spend most of our lives in, and even the question whether or not it really is self-awareness at all, is peculiarly inaccessible. What we want to explore escapes us at the very moment we focus our attention on it, and in this we are certainly not helped in the least by the insidious infiltration into our reflection of the wide variety of theoretical conceptions developed about the nature of human consciousness, an infiltration the resulting anxiety of which my youthful self felt at the presence of soul-talk, or that was so forcefully expressed by the revered Blind Willie Johnson in the 1930 song the refrain of which we started this study with, in the hope of good auspices.

While it may be objected that the elusive nature of self-awareness is a threat only to a peculiar and in itself highly suspect method of study that is often somewhat disparagingly referred to by the notorious title of introspection, and that other methods may indeed yield a more secure, albeit less immediate, access to the phenomenon, it remains a fact that it is largely due to this elusive nature that in the present day we find ourselves in the midst of a largely uncharted territory of a vast variety of theories of self-awareness, of both contemporary options and historical relics. Some of the differences between these theories are largely due to more general preoccupations, often of an ontological nature, such as adherence to a materialistic metaphysics to only mention a presently prevalent position, which govern the way the particular phenomenon of self-awareness is approached. While in themselves these questions of more general preoccupations and their implications for theories of self-awareness may full well be of the highest philosophical interest, I will only make this passing mention of them here. Instead, the present study centers on a quite different set of differences, namely those due to the respective descriptions of the phe-

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[7] For a concise account of such arguments, see Zahavi (1999), 15-21. The main argument against reflection theories of self-awareness, in which self-awareness is taken to consist of a reflective attitude toward itself of a previously non-self-aware mental state or subject of such a state, was first presented by Dieter Henrich in his (1970) and has subsequently been an object of constant refinement and application in the work of Henrich and his followers who are often collectively referred to as the so called Heidelberg school.

nomenon to be explained in the more general framework. In a sense, this can be taken as the first step in any theory, reductionistic or otherwise, of self-awareness, since if we don't have a consensus of what it actually is that we are studying at the start, it is not a surprise that we don't have anything such at the results.

Descriptions of self-awareness, insofar as we can find them, are extremely interesting for a philosophical study of intellectual history. While many of the aforementioned, more general ontological frameworks of past thinkers may no longer be viable options for us – for instance Avicenna's dualism would probably not find many adherents among our contemporaries – their descriptions of the phenomena these frameworks are meant to explain may be just the contrary. What aspects of self-awareness are paid attention to? What, if any, kind of distinctions between types of self-awareness are being made? What sort of constitutive relations are posited between the different types of self-awareness? In short, what is the description of self-awareness as an overarching general phenomenon? Questions of this type are not tied to any one general ontology of the soul or the mind but constitute a common field that can provide the starting ground for comparisons.

The enumerated questions and the resulting differences in answers concern self-awareness as an *explanandum*. Another set of questions is related to the fact that self-awareness is often appealed to as an *explanans*. Such is the case for instance in one of the most burning questions of contemporary practical philosophy, i.e. the question how to distinguish between the entities that we wish to qualify as persons, as legal subjects, or as beings in some other way entitled to a special kind of treatment, and those that we do not wish so to qualify. More concretely, an ontological distinction is often drawn between human beings and other animals, and a corresponding, often even considered consequential, normative distinction between the ethically correct treatment of each class, is frequently made by reference to self-awareness. As much as the set of questions related to descriptions of self-awareness is a historical one – even if the object of description is not – so is this second set.

These two sets of questions constitute perhaps the most significant contribution of this work but to yield a full Avicennian theory of subjectivity they have to be appended with a study of Avicenna's theory of intentionality or intentional awareness of things other than oneself. After having presented three doctrines – Avicenna's dualism, his theory of the internal senses, and his epistemological theory of knowledge as abstraction – that are a necessity for the understanding of the ensuing discussion,[8] I will proceed with the study of intentionality in chapter 3. My strategy in this chapter is twofold. (1) I intend to show that in Avicenna, intentionality is present at every level of perceptual cognition, or cognition that takes place by means of the faculties of the sensitive soul, and not only on the level of estimative apprehension of intentions, conceived as it were in separation from the other internal sense faculties. (2) I will present a comprehensive theory of estimative apprehension of intentions which

8 See ch. 2 below.

will show that the operation of this faculty does provide the ultimate key to the Avicennian theory of intentionality but that in order to be able to see where the key fits in we have to conceive of perceptual apprehension holistically. In such a conception, which I come to call the comprehensive theory of estimation, the intentions will be taken as a sort of structural blueprints of perceptual experience, as that which provides the intentional structure according to which the sense data are organized. In this way, my investigation of intentionality will also provide a small contribution to an existing scholarly debate.

The study of Avicenna's theory of self-awareness will begin in the fourth chapter by a consideration of the explanatory roles in which he appeals to self-awareness, i.e. with self-awareness as an *explanans* in philosophical theories. The role of self-awareness will be studied in relation to three pressing problems of Avicenna's psychology: (1) individuation of immaterial human souls, (2) unity and coherence of perceptual experience, and (3) reference of first personal indexical expressions. Self-awareness is shown to have a central foundational role for Avicenna's psychology through its explanatory force in regard to the first problem. Briefly, Avicenna's solution there is to identify self-awareness as the very mode of existence of individual human souls. The explanatory force of self-awareness in the other two questions is largely grounded on this radical claim.

The fifth chapter proceeds to study the description Avicenna gives of the various types of self-awareness. I will take my cue from the requirements posed for the description by the explanatory roles examined in the previous chapter. By way of exclusion we will arrive at a very narrow core notion of self-awareness which will be termed primitive self-awareness and which will roughly amount to an aspect of *mineness* inherent to all experiences. This mineness will then be contrasted with both the type of self-awareness Avicenna is willing to attribute to animals and the reflective type of self-awareness, on both of which Avicenna presents a fairly elaborate theory. The chapter is concluded by an examination of two other types of self-awareness, i.e. explicit self-knowledge and awareness of one's own body. Although Avicenna does not explicitly discuss either of these topics at length, I hope to be able to show that his fragmentary remarks, often embedded in discussions of different yet related questions, provide surprisingly ample means for a (re)construction of properly Avicennian theories of these phenomena.

As I already said, the emphasis of my work will be on systematic study. For the most part I will simply set aside the task of situating Avicenna in a historical tradition. This is not meant to downgrade the interest and importance of such historical work; in fact, I have a preliminary belief that the Neoplatonic works he had access to constitute a significant source of inspiration for him, and in this way might yield insights for the systematic study as well. However, in the absence of prior studies of the Arabic Plotinus from the point of view of my topic, and in order to keep the work in manageable proportions, I have postponed this work to the near future. Moreover, I feel that a sufficiently strong

working hypothesis of Avicenna's theory is required for a profound estimation of its place in the historical lineage, and that is what I try to propose here.

As can perhaps be expected after such a delimitation of the scope of this work, I am not doing any philological work in the sense of uncovering texts so far neglected by scholars. My main source is, unsurprisingly, the psychological section of the *Shifā'*[9] but extremely important additional material is culled from the *Mubāḥathāt* and the *Taᶜlīqāt*[10], as well as *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*[11]. The psychological section of the *Najāt* has been constantly on the side as well, and in cases of important deviations from or additions to its counterpart in the *Shifā'*, I have made this consultation explicit.[12] In addition to the mentioned works, passing reference is made to some of Avicenna's minor works. Thus, my focus is on Avicenna's mature works,[13] and I treat them as mutually coherent for the major part.

As regards work with a wider selection of texts, I expect a significant contribution from Ahmed Alwishah, a colleague proficient in the field and fortu-

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9 Dimitri Gutas dates the writing of the *Shifā'* in the period between 1020–1027 CE. According to Avicenna's friend and disciple al-Jūzjānī, Avicenna wrote the work in return to a request to rewrite some of his earlier commentaries – that we're not readily available – on Aristotle's texts. He resigned from the task, preferring to present an independently organized compendium of the body of philosophical knowledge. In broad outline he does follow the Aristotelian classification of the sciences but within the scope of each science he proceeds in a more or less novel order. This is particularly true of the psychological part. (Gutas [1988], 101-111.) Throughout the present work, I will use Fazlur Rahman's edition, the one referred to by the majority of scholars. I will also give the reference to the widely used twelfth century Latin translation by Abraham Ibn Daud and Dominicus Gundissalinus, which was magisterially edited by Simone van Riet. For the nature and reception of this translation, see Hasse (2000), 4-9.

10 Both the *Mubāḥathāt* and the *Taᶜlīqāt* are compilations of comments and addenda to the *Shifā'*. The *Mubāḥathāt* consists of clarificatory and critical questions posed by Avicenna's colleagues and disciples, followed by the Shaikh's answers. The *Taᶜlīqāt* is a compilation of passages of varying width and depth on various themes of logic, natural philosophy and metaphysics. Gutas (1988), 141-144, argues that these works were a sort of running commentary that was updated discursively from the inception of the *Shifā'* until Avicenna's death. The textual history of both works has long been obscure, but much needed light on the *Mubāḥathāt* has recently been cast by David C. Reisman (2002). In the present work, I have used the edition of the *Mubāḥathāt* published by A. Badawī in his edition *Arisṭū ᶜinda al-ᶜarab*. Regarding the *Taᶜlīqāt*, I have worked with Badawī's edition.

11 According to Gutas, *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* was written between 1030–1034 CE. It is Avicenna's last major work, and it takes considerable distance from the traditional Aristotelian method of presentation. Although it follows the Aristotelian classification of sciences, it presents a scant amount of proper. Instead, the reader is presented with "pointers and reminders" that are supposed to aid her toward an intuitive grasp of the truths under examination. (Gutas [1988], 140-141.) I have used J. Forget's edition of *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*. There is a newer, and supposedly superior, edition by S. Dunya but at the time of writing I have not had access to it.

12 The *Najāt*, written in 1026/1027 CE, is an epitome of the central tenets of Avicenna's philosophy. According to Gutas, it is mainly based on his works prior to the *Shifā'*. In any case it is not, as is often claimed, an epitome of the *Shifā'*. (Gutas [1988], 112-114.)

13 Let it be said, however, that there is an argument for an earlier dating of *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* (Michot [1997], 153-163). This is not the place to go to the discussion – suffice it to say that I find Gutas' ([1988], 140-141) dating by far the more compelling.

nately working on the very questions at the focus of this work.[14] It may full well be that when Alwishah publishes his research, some reassessments to my interpretation will prove a necessity. However, so far all evidence points toward the belief that Avicenna is quite coherent in his thinking concerning self-awareness, even to the extent that I dare expect Alwishah's work to support my interpretation in the main outlines at least.

As a methodological conclusion, let it be mentioned that in regard to the claim, which used to be something of a truism among students of Avicenna until quite recently, of the existence of two potentially contradictory philosophies or philosophical systems in Avicenna, i.e. the more or less orthodox (though with a decidedly Neoplatonic bent) Aristotelian philosophy presented mainly in the *Shifā'* and the supposedly deviant, higher, or more mystically induced "Eastern" philosophy presented in certain lost works of Avicenna, I am in complete agreement with the position magisterially put forth by Dimitri Gutas (Gutas [1988], 125-130). I do not believe that there is any such thing as a specifically Eastern philosophy, distinct from *falsafa* to the point of contradiction, in Avicenna. This is not to deny the possibility of various modes of presentation of his thought – as we know, Avicenna was an avid allegorist among many other things – or various degrees of distance from the method of procedure characteristic of Aristotelian science. However, the claim of principial coherence in the whole of Avicenna's corpus, minor deviations and corrections over the course of his career notwithstanding, does not rule out the evident mystical bent of his poetry or of such texts as the final part of *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*, which was developed with great fervour by his followers in the Islamic world. Instead, as Avicenna himself seems to believe, it is possible to be both a philosopher in the medieval sense of the term and a mystic – truthful philosophy should be perfectly compatible with the true meaning of Islam.

This remark is important because self-awareness is a topic which becomes the object of some extremely exciting further development in the philosophical interpretations of Revelation by some of Avicenna's successors in the Islamic world. I hope that this work will also do a minor service in the project of introducing some of these figures – Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl, Ibn ᶜArabī, Mullā Ṣadrā, to mention but a few – into the scope of western (history of) philosophy the interest of which in the Arabs usually ends at the death of Averroes, i.e. in the *Spain* of 1198. Some of the further Islamic development along Avicennian lines can easily be shown to be of equal standing with Avicenna's groundwork once we get to work in overcoming the problems of interpretation and lack of common terminology with the developments in the Latin west.

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14 Alwishah is working on a dissertation with the title *Avicenna on the Self* at the UCLA under the supervision of professor Calvin Normore.

2 DOCTRINAL BACKGROUND

There are a number of fairly general doctrines some degree of knowledge of which is an absolute *sine qua non* for understanding Avicenna's theories of intentionality and self-awareness. In the form of a brief discourse, this chapter will present three of the most pertinent psychological doctrines that form the general background for our study. These doctrines are (1) the dualistic position, endorsed wholeheartedly by Avicenna, on the question of the relation between the human body and the mind or the soul (chapter 2.1), (2) the theory of internal senses (chapter 2.2), and (3) the epistemological abstraction theory based upon the idea of increasing cognitive separation of forms from matter (chapter 2.3). The simple purpose of this chapter is to give a general idea of these doctrines according to the interpretation currently prevalent among scholars. My own additions will therefore be scarce.

A presentation of certain of Avicenna's ontological doctrines of more general nature, such as his distinction between essence and existence or his conception of modalities, should arguably be included in this preliminary account. However, for reasons of conciseness and argumentation, I have refrained from such an inclusion. Instead, discussion of these doctrines will be taken up *in situ* according to their relevance to our specific topic.

2.1 Dualism

It is hardly a secret that Avicenna is one of the most full-blown dualists in the history of western philosophy. He adamantly asserts the independence of the human mind, soul or intellect from the human body in a number of occasions, and is willing to bite the bullet with regard to the consequences such a position entails. The struggle with these consequences is of course what provides flesh to the bare position of dualism, and for this reason we shall approach Avicenna's version of this notorious doctrine from the viewpoint of three problematic questions. (1) Why are the soul and the body connected? (2) How to describe the relation between the soul and the body? (3) What sort of normative

rules are we to draw from this relation, and what sort of rewards or punishments in the afterlife are we to expect?[15]

(1) Avicenna considers the human essence, like any other essence considered in itself and in abstraction from existence, one, undivided and simple. However, there is one important regard in which the human essence differs from all other essences manifest in the sublunar world. For all other essences of this world, their multiplication and individuation takes place in relation to matter. Such essences are multiplied and individuated as material forms, informing designated volumes of matter with unique spatial and temporal co-ordinates. But since the central tenet of psychological dualism is precisely the immateriality of the soul, a different account of individuation is required from Avicenna in the case of the human soul. This is where he appeals to the connection between the soul and the body.

In a word, the soul and the body share a mutual need for each other, but for different reasons. The body of course requires the soul to animate it, to make it a *living* body, since otherwise it would be just a peculiarly organized piece of matter, or as Aristotle remarks with regard to corpses, only homonymous with a living body (Arist. *De an.* II.1, 412b10-413a10). The soul, on the other hand, needs the body as a necessary condition of its initially coming to be, since as Avicenna says, "the soul comes into existence whenever a body does so fit to be used by it".[16] The idea here is that an individual human soul emanates from the active intellect whenever some corporeal composite suitable to function as its body is available. Such a composite is formed from the primary elements in the uterus of a human mother through the co-operation of the male and female seed. This material process alone is incapable of animating the resulting body, no soul emerges in the material process but must emanate from above at the sufficient degree of perfection of a suitable body. In other words, the emergence of the body is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the coming to be of an individual human soul. This account of the genesis of the human soul is strikingly similar to the general account of the genesis of material forms. Thus, despite his dualism Avicenna can be taken to emphasise the intimacy of the connection between the human body and the human soul over the independence of the soul from the body. For Avicenna, the connection between the body and the soul is a connection between two individual entities with a particular suitability for each other. The soul could not be in connection to any other body than its own, and by the same token, the body is by necessity animated by the very soul the emanation of which it enabled. A correlate of the intimacy of this connection is an inherent natural desire in the soul to govern, occupy itself with, and take care of the one body that is its own.[17]

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15 Most of the questions related to Avicenna's dualism are dealt with in a concise and clear manner by Thérèse-Anne Druart in her (1983), (1988), and (2000). Druart's work forms the essential background of the present chapter even in the absence of explicit references to it.

16 *Najāt De an.* XII, 57 (tr. Rahman). For a similar idea in the *Shifā' De an.*, see V.3, 223-227 (Rahman), 104-113 (van Riet).

17 *Shifā' De an.* V.3, 225 (Rahman), 107-110 (van Riet); *Najāt De an.* XII, 56-58 (tr. Rahman). As a result of the intimacy of the connection, the soul can only be in relation to

So, the outcome is that the soul is genetically dependent on the body. Most importantly, it cannot pre-exist the body since the body is the necessary condition for its genesis. But Avicenna still wants to maintain the soul's ontological independence from the body after its inception. Besides, he is not willing to embrace any version of a full-blown emergence theory, since he does not grant the body the status of a sufficient condition in the soul's coming to be. As Druart has observed (Druart [2000], 262-263), Avicenna prefers to speak of the co-emergence of soul and body as a simple simultaneous happening. He never presents the body as a cause of the soul's coming to be, and always speaks of the co-occurrence of the two geneses by using the preposition *maᶜa* ('with'), never the preposition *bi* ('by means of'). How do these theses – the soul's independence in existence from the body and the denial of the soul's emergence from matter – cohere with the idea of genetical dependence?

A full answer to the first question requires a theory of the soul's mode of existence which is capable to guarantee a sufficient degree of ontological independence from the body. One of my main arguments in the present study is that Avicenna takes the soul's existence to consist in self-awareness which he conceives of in a way that makes it independent of the body as regards existence, although it is dependent on it as regards content of self-aware experience. Although the independence ultimately proves to be quite narrow, it is enough to enable the soul's existence *post mortem*. However, since the argument is rather complex, it is best left at the status of statement at present.[18] Other than the elaboration of the soul's mode of existence, it is true that Avicenna's account of the soul's independence and the precise nature of the connection between the soul and the body remains somewhat obscure. He even confesses this himself quite openly on repeated occasions.[19]

As to the other problem, i.e. the argument against a full-blown theory of emergence, a fairly straightforward answer presents itself to Avicenna in his general cosmological framework of emanation. In brief, all information – both in the epistemic sense of knowledge and in the ontological sense of meaningful organization in the extramental world – in the sublunar world has its origin "in the above", immediately in the active intellect, and through a chain of mediating intellects of the heavenly spheres in God, the supreme being.[20] This concerns also the human soul. There is no way for the body alone to bring about the soul, since nothing can bring about anything ontologically nobler than itself. Thus, the only origin that the soul can have is in the higher intellects: the human soul is emanated from the active intellect at the emergence of a body suit-

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other bodies than its own by mediation of its own body (*Najāt De an.* XII, 57-58 [tr. Rahman]). As an interesting sidenote, it is precisely this intimacy on the basis of which Avicenna rejects transmigration of souls (*Shifā' De an.* V.4, 233-234 [Rahman], 123-126 [van Riet]; *Najāt De an.* XIV, 63-64 [tr. Rahman]).

18 For a full development of this idea, see chs. 4.1 and 5.1 below.

19 A typical Avicennian remark on the details of this connection is that they remain obscure to us. For examples, see *Najāt De an.* XII, 58 (tr. Rahman); *Shifā' De an.* V.3, 226, 227 (Rahman), 111-113 (van Riet).

20 For a lucid exposition of Avicenna's emanation cosmology, see Davidson (1992), 74-83.

able to be governed by it.[21] Once again, Druart has pointed out that the linguistic expressions for the role of the active intellect and the higher principles of the emanative chain in the coming to be of an individual human soul are much stronger than the ones expressing the body's function. The soul comes from (*min*) above but does not arise from (*ʿan*) the body.[22] But despite all this the active intellect cannot be considered a sufficient condition for the emergence of an individual human soul any more than the body could. Both conditions have to be fulfilled.

(2) Avicenna formulates his version of dualism in Aristotelian terms: the human soul is a substance since it is a pure form, i.e. a form that is not *in* a substratum (*Shifāʾ De an.* I.1, 4-16 [Rahman], 14-37 [van Riet]; I.3, 29 [Rahman], 60-61 [van Riet]). In other words, the human soul is not the form of the body. As a result, since the body and the soul of a human being are both substances, the connection between them is not as strong as the relation between a material form and the volume of matter informed by it. Instead, Avicenna calls the connection between the human body and the human soul accidental (*Shifāʾ De an.* V.4, 227-228 [Rahman], 114 [van Riet]; *Najāt De an.* XIII, 58 [tr. Rahman]). Since the connection is accidental, corruption of the body in death does not entail the demise of the soul (*Shifāʾ De an.* V.4, 227-233 [Rahman], 113-125 [van Riet]; *Najāt De an.* XIII, 58-63 [tr. Rahman]).

Avicenna argues for his dualism by means of the special characteristics of the various cognitive faculties of the soul. As regards the sensitive faculties, the two fivefolds of external and internal senses both require physical organs (*Shifāʾ De an.* IV.3, 188-194 [Rahman], 44-54 [van Riet]; *Najāt De an.* VIII, 41-45 [tr. Rahman]). Intellection, on the contrary, does not require the body since that which is supposed to receive the immaterial objects of intellection must itself be immaterial. Thus, the human intellect does not subsist in a body in such a way as to be in any sense a faculty residing in, or a form of, that body. (*Shifāʾ De an.* V.2, 209-216 [Rahman], 81-93 [van Riet]; *Najāt De an.* IX, 46-50 [tr. Rahman].) Thus, in principle intellection does not require the body since it does not require a physical organ (*Shifāʾ De an.* V.2, 216-221 [Rahman], 91-101 [van Riet]; *Najāt De an.* X, 50-54 [tr. Rahman]) but insofar as human knowledge has an empirical basis, as will be seen below in our discussion of the abstraction theory of knowledge, the corporeally operative cognitive faculties do play an important role in it. However, it is crucial to maintain the independence of intellection from corporeal means for other reasons, since in the absence of such independence, the human intellect would not be capable of understanding itself or understanding that it understands, i.e. it would be neither aware of itself nor capable of reflecting upon itself (*Shifāʾ De an.* V.2, 216-217 [Rahman], 91-95 [van

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21 This raises the question, much debated in medieval Latin philosophy, of whether the body already has some form before the emanation of the soul. A related question concerns the exact moment of the soul's emanation: is the soul emanated at the moment of conception or at the moment of birth, or perhaps somewhere in between? I am unaware of scholarly work on these questions in Avicenna. For an account of the variety of views in Latin philosophy, see Dales (1995).

22 Druart (2000), 262-263. The formulation used as an example is from *Najāt De an.* XV, 68 (tr. Rahman).

Riet]; *Najāt De an.* X, 50-51 [tr. Rahman]). This is an idea that will have become well rehearsed by the end of our study.

In trying to describe the connection between the soul and the body, Avicenna seems to arrive at an impasse. What is clear, however, is that this connection does not belong to the ontological category of relation (*iḍāfa*). Relations are always accidental, so that for instance a man who is a father of two sons is not multiplied because of the two instances of the relation of fatherhood to each of his two sons respectively (*Shifā' Met.* III.10, 116-123 [Marmura]). The connection between the soul and the body was also said to be accidental, but the problem is that, as we have already seen, the emergence of a suitable body is a necessary condition for the emergence of an individual soul. If the connection between a soul and its body as a necessary condition of the soul's individuation was accidental, the soul would be one in itself and only accidentally many. The critical consequence of this would be that at the corruption of the body, the relationship between the body and the human soul would cease to prevail, and this would end the accidental individuation of the one soul. This would mean the negation of personal afterlife, something Avicenna is not willing to embrace. (*Shifā' De an.* V.3, 225-226 [Rahman], 109-111 [van Riet].)

In the end, Avicenna remains in pains in trying to articulate the connection between the soul and the body:

> There is no doubt that [the soul] is individuated through something, and that this thing in the human soul is not its impression in matter – the falsity of that doctrine has been learned. Rather, that thing in the soul is a configuration (*hai'atun min al-hai'āt*), a potentiality (*quwwatun min al-quwan*)[23], and a spiritual accident (*ᶜarḍun min al-aᶜarāḍi al-rūḥāniyya*), or their entirety which collectively individuates [the soul], even if we did not know [the individuating entirety].[24]

The crucial explanatory task of the connection is the individuation of the human soul. According to Avicenna, in its coming to be at the emergence of a suitable body the individual human soul becomes qualified by a certain "configuration", or "potentiality", or again, "spiritual accident" – the details of which may elude us.[25] In my interpretation, this amounts to saying that phenomenologically we know the connection as a disposition or dispositions in the soul in relation to the body,[26] but that it seems extremely difficult to give a satis-

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23 *Quwwa* could of course be equally well rendered as 'faculty' or 'capacity'. I take Avicenna to mean a capacity special to the individual, due for example to her earlier experience or to particular features of her body. 'Potentiality' seems a vague enough term to refer to such capacities.

24 *Shifā' De an.* V.3, 226 (Rahman), 111 (van Riet). All translations, unless otherwise mentioned, are mine.

25 In the text immediately subsequent to our passage, Avicenna describes these individuating characteristics in a way which makes explicit their provenance from the soul's connection with the body. See *Shifā' De an.* V.3, 226-227 (Rahman), 111-113 (van Riet).

26 For a development of this idea, see ch. 5.5 below.

fying metaphysical account of it – a hardly surprising difficulty for a dualistic theory.

To be terminologically clear, properly speaking the individual human essence is to be called a soul only in its relation to the body (*Shifā' De an.* I.1, 15-16 [Rahman], 34-37 [van Riet]). When we examine the world according to our vocation as Aristotelian empirical scientists, we only come to know this essence from its effects that are manifested on the body it animates. This gives us no clue regarding the question what that essence is in itself which we know through its effects in the body as a soul. Avicenna's famous argument of the flying man is supposed be a pointer toward the answer to this question. The argument hinges on the claim that there is a direct access to the being of the soul in itself. This access is constituted by the human essence's awareness of itself.[27] But because of the possible diversity of the kind of existents that animate bodies, i.e. that function as souls, Avicenna's most general definition of soul conceives it as the perfection of a living body. We cannot say that soul in general is the form of a living body, since we have to allow differences between the souls of animals and plants on the one hand, and the souls of human beings and the celestial spheres on the other hand.

(3) The individual human essence finds itself in a peculiar situation. On the one hand it is an intellectual being and in this sense essentially similar to the celestial principles, in the final analysis maybe even to God Himself. On the other hand, it is in a fairly intimate animating connection with the body, as a result of which it has in itself as a disposition an almost irresistible urge to govern and take care of the body. Furthermore, as can readily be seen once we discuss the abstraction theory of knowledge Avicenna subscribes to, the body is necessary for the human intellect's acquisition of knowledge, i.e. for its project to actualise its essential similarity with the higher principles – a similarity which is initially at the state of pure potency. Avicenna expresses this peculiar situation of the human soul by the fitting metaphor of the "two faces" of human being, one gazing upwards toward the separate intellects, and ultimately toward God, the other looking downwards toward the body. (*Shifā' De an.* I.5, 47 [Rahman], 93-94 [van Riet]; V.2, 220 [Rahman], 98-100 [van Riet]; *Najāt De an.* X, 53 [tr. Rahman].) In more strictly psychological terms, one could say that there are two faculties, or better yet, two capacities in the immaterial substance of human being, a cognitive capacity and a practical capacity of agency in the sublunar world. Proper functioning of the capacity of agency amounts to a good governance over the body, or more precisely a cultivation of the body, which at first is simply a rather refined animal organism, to a specifically human body. This entails the perfection of bodily dispositions in both moral and cognitive terms. (*Shifā' De an.* I.5, 45-47 [Rahman], 90-94 [van Riet].) The fulfillment of the capacity of cognition or contemplation amounts to the immaterial human intellect's becoming informed by the immaterial intelligible forms. The ultimate perfection of man is reached through the acquisition of the state which Avicenna

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27 Thus, as Shlomo Pines (1954) has noted, self-awareness figures at the very foundation of Avicennian psychology.

calls the acquired intellect (*al-ᶜaqlu al-mustafād*) and which consists in actual contemplation of the intelligible forms.[28] Since this is the ultimate perfection of human being, and since nature does nothing in vain, eventually even the connection of the individual human essence with the body serves this supreme cognitive end (*Shifā' De an.* I.5, 47-51 [Rahman], 94-102 [van Riet]).

Interestingly, Avicenna conceives of the subservient role of the body in relation to the soul in the framework of a similar hierarchical order manifested by the sublunar world as a whole. In a descending order, the various states of the intellect all serve the common good of acquired intellect. The highest in this order of servitude is the so called actual intellect (*al-ᶜaqlu bi al-fiᶜl*), followed by the intellect *in habitu* (*al-ᶜaqlu bi al-malaka*) and at the last stage the material intellect (*al-ᶜaqlu al-hayūlānī*) which is the pure potency of intellection. The material intellect in its turn is served by the estimative faculty which governs memory and the whole of the sensitive faculties comprised of common sense, formative faculty and compositive imagination.[29] Within the sensitive faculties there is a further hierarchy in which the compositive imagination is served by the appetitive faculties and the formative faculty. The formative faculty in turn is served by the common sense which itself governs the five external senses of sight, hearing, smelling, taste and touch. The general appetitive faculty, itself in the service of compositive imagination, is served by the concupiscible and the irascible faculties, i.e. the specific faculties of pursuing what seems beneficial and of avoiding what seems harmful respectively,[30] and these are both served by the motive power operative in the muscles of the body. The sensitive faculties, i.e. the cognitive and appetitive faculties as a whole, are served by the vegetative faculties in the descending order of generative, augmentative and nutritive faculties. These eventually have the elements at their service. (*Shifā' De an.* I.5, 47-51 [Rahman], 94-102 [van Riet].) In the end, the whole sublunar world, down to the simplest instances of informed matter, is ordered hierarchically to serve in the perfection of human being.[31] For Avicenna, the perfect human being is the crowning achievement of this nether part of the cosmos.

The outcome of such a depiction of man's situation in the cosmos allows us to draw two interrelated normative conclusions as regards properly human behaviour, i.e. the proper relation between one's human essence or one's true self and one's own body. First, the body must be morally cultivated. This is in

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28 For the various stages of the human intellect, see ch. 2.3 below. A more comprehensive account can be found in Davidson (1992), 83-94.

29 For a brief account of the internal senses, see ch. 2.2 below.

30 As far as I can tell, there is no trace of the sort of distinction between a lower concupiscible soul and a more refined irascible soul along the lines of Plato's *erōs* and *thymos* (*Resp.* IV, 439e-441a; see also *Phdr.* 246a-b), although the terms of Gundissalinus' Latin translation of Avicenna (*concupiscibilis* and *irascibilis* respectively) are later often used in a sense closer to that of Plato (cf. Knuuttila [2004], 227-235, 242-246, 266).

31 Avicenna's treatment in the psychological part of the *Shifā'* at least leaves open the interesting question whether the extramental world is rationally organized independently from its cognition by a rational agent or whether it is not rationally organized in itself, but first becomes so in an overarching grasp of it, i.e. in the ascension of the perfect human intellect back to the celestial source of both itself and the world. In rough outline, the question would be on the relative emphasis of Avicenna between his Aristotelian and Neoplatonic sources.

perfect harmony with the Aristotelian idea of avoiding sensitive and emotive excesses so that one develops a tendency – "a second nature" – toward morally proper behaviour. As I conceive the Avicennian bent to this idea, the cultivation of the body must primarily concern the cognitive faculties of the sensitive soul, and perhaps first and foremost the estimative faculty, since as we shall see, it is the faculty which presents concrete mundane situations as demanding one type of action or reaction rather than another. Since estimation is a corporeal faculty, its cultivation can only be effected through practice. Second, what is closely related to the first point, the body must also be cultivated to assist efficiently in intellectual cognition. Much as the properly moral cultivation, this also concerns the internal senses which are necessary for discursive reasoning and through the representative operation of which the human intellect becomes capable of receiving cognitive emanation of the active intellect. None of this work on the body is said to be easy: in fact Avicenna says that the two capacities or interests of the human soul frequently work against each other (*Shifā' De an.* V.2, 220-221 [Rahman], 98-101 [van Riet]; *Najāt De an.* X, 53 [tr. Rahman]), as an evidence of which we can take for instance the tremendous troubles to concentrate on contemplation of a metaphysical truth while in pain or in hunger.

In a word, Avicenna's dualism is metaphysical on the one hand, moral on the other. In moral terms, the connection between the body and the soul must be conceived in terms of the soul's gaining power over the impulses of the body and disciplining these to serve its own ends. Though there are certain aspects of the body that are not fully in the soul's control, such as the humoral temperament which results at least in part from the elemental constituents the body is composed of, ultimately one must try to make even these aspects subservient to the soul's control of the body by means of the psychic faculties. Eventually, however, the connection with the body is but a passing temporal nuissance, necessary for the reasons enumerated but something to dispose of as soon as the good capable of being drawn from it has been exhausted. Or as Avicenna puts it in a fitting parable:

> A man needs a mount and other means to reach a destination. But when it happens that upon his arrival at this destination some of these means prevent him from leaving them behind, the very means of arrival become a hindrance. (*Shifā' De an.* V.3, 223 [Rahman], 105 [van Riet].)

2.2 Internal Senses

The theory of the so called internal senses can be called the paradigmatic theory in medieval cognitive psychology. The term itself, in its most frequent usage, refers to the cognitive faculties of the sensitive soul which are subsequent to the five external sense faculties of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, through which the soul receives sense data in the first place. The internal senses are various means of processing these sense data into the constituents of perceptual

experience which are not completely reducible to the operation of the external senses.

Despite frequent variations in the details of enumeration and classification of these faculties, for centuries there were hardly any voices of dissent against the framework as a whole. However, the historical origin of the theory is not quite as well attested as its subsequent reign. In a pioneering article, Harry Wolfson charted the threads of its origin and was able to find precedents to Avicenna (not all of whom could have had a direct influence on him of course) in at least Aristotle, the Stoics, Galen, Plotinus, Nemesius of Emesa (fl. c. 390), John of Damascus (675–749 CE), Ḥunayn Ibn Isḥāq (808–873 CE), the alchemist work *Kitāb sirr al-khalīqa wa sanā'a al-ṭabīᶜa* (dated between 650–835 CE), Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (854–925/935 CE), Isaac Israeli (855-955), and the so called Brethren of Purity (*Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*, tenth century CE).[32] The proper treatment of the historical question of precisely how much Avicenna could have borrowed from his predecessors in his theory of the internal senses transcends my capacities, but it seems a fairly safe bet that Avicenna was quite an innovator. This is attested not only by a number of modern scholars[33] but also by Avicenna's successor and ardent opponent Averroes who in both his early *Epitome of the Parva naturalia* (Averr. *Talkhīs kitāb al-ḥiss wa al maḥsūs* 39 [Blumberg], 24 [tr. Blumberg]) and later in the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* disparages Avicenna for the unwelcome multiplication of the internal senses:

> [Avicenna] distinguished himself from the rest of the philosophers by assuming in the animal another faculty than the imaginative, which he calls the estimative faculty.[34]

Moreover, in his own gloss to Aristotle's *De anima* III.3 Avicenna himself affirms his alleged classificatory innovations:

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32 Wolfson (1973), 250-266. With regard to the specific case of the estimative faculty, Wolfson considers also Porphyry and Philoponus (267-274). His claim (274-276) that the first to use the term *wahm* in Arabic philosophy was al-Fārābī has been shown to be based on a misguided attribution to al-Fārābī of two Avicennian works (see Black [2000], 69, n. 1).

33 According to Fazlur Rahman, each of Avicenna's internal senses is a differentiation of Aristotle's *phantasia* (*Najāt De an.* 83 [note to p. 31, l. 19] [tr. Rahman]). If Rahman is right, Avicenna's theory would be quite an innovation in psychological analysis. For other scholarly opinions suggesting innovativity on Avicenna's part, see Black (2000), 1, 69-70 (n. 1); Hasse (2000), 140. And insofar as Wolfson considers the Avicennian texts he attributes to al-Fārābī as innovative, he can be counted along as well. Certainly Avicenna conceived of his work as breaking some new analytical ground, as evidenced by his glosses to Aristotle's *De anima* on which Rahman's comment seems to be based.

34 Averr. *Tahāfut*, 546-547 (Bouyges), 336 (tr. Van Den Bergh). Despite his disapproving tone Averroes did not go back to the Aristotelian postulation of a single faculty of *phantasia* or imagination but instead construed his own version of internal sense theory. A helpful discussion of the relation between the Avicennian and the Averroian theories can be found in Black (2000). More specifically on Averroes' account of the internal senses, see Gätje (1965), Gätje (1988), Black (1996), and Taylor (1999).

> And what [Aristotle] here brings together under the term 'imagination' (*al-takhayyul*) can be divided into a number of active faculties, such as estimation and cogitation (*al-fikr*), and retentive faculties, such as the formative (*al-muṣawwara*) and the memorative (*al-mudhakkara*) faculty. (*Al-taᶜlīqāt ᶜalā hawāshin kitāb al-nafs li Arisṭū* 98 [Badawī].)

Although Avicenna's eventual classification of the internal senses differs somewhat from that described in the gloss[35], his own conception of his personal role is quite clearly attested.

Whatever the actual historical lineage, a systematic account of Avicenna's theory of internal senses can be given in a fairly straightforward fashion. Avicenna himself shows considerable systematicity in the presentation of the criteria for his distinctions between the internal senses. These criteria are three. (1) If we can discern a distinct type of cognitive object we have to postulate a corresponding distinct cognitive faculty.[36] (2) Faculties which have an active relation to their proper objects have to be distinguished from faculties which have a passive relation to them (*Shifā' De an.* I.5, 43 [Rahman], 85-87 [van Riet]). (3) Within the class of passive faculties, a subdistinction has to made between retentive and receptive faculties because of the differing material requirements for the organ of each type of faculty.[37]

On the basis of these criteria Avicenna arrives at a fivefold distinction of the internal senses. (1) There are two types of cognitive objects in the realm of the senses, namely sensible forms and intentions (*maᶜānī*). Thus, there must be at least two distinct internal senses to correspond to both types of objects. (2) There is one active faculty in addition to the aforementioned two faculties. (3) A subdistinction between the two faculties corresponding to forms and intentions gives us altogether five internal senses.[38] Together with their functions, these can be enumerated as follows (*Shifā' De an.* I.5, 44-45 [Rahman], 87-90 [van Riet]):

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35 In the end, even these slight differences can perhaps be explained. The absence of common sense in our passage is probably due to the fact that a *koinē aisthēsis* was already posited by Aristotle, and our passage only deals with Avicenna's division regarding Aristotle's *phantasia.* On the other hand, the passage mentions estimation as an *active* faculty whereas it is properly termed passive if one strictly follows the Avicennian criteria of classification. The active nature of estimation could, however, be explained by reference to its function as the governor of the imaginative or cogitative faculty along the lines explicated below in ch. 3.4.

36 *Shifā' De an.* I.5, 43-44 (Rahman), 85-86 (van Riet). This criterion can be linked to a realistic presupposition at play in the Aristotelian paradigm Avicenna operates in: there is always a strong correspondence between the real features of the world and the capacities of epistemic agents. There are no "hidden" features of the world just as there are no superfluous epistemic capacities. Nature does nothing in vain.

37 *Shifā' De an.*, 43-44 (Rahman), 85-86 (van Riet). The idea here is that both reception and retention consist in the organ's becoming informed by the cognitive object. Thus, reception requires an organ with a relatively malleable material constitution in order to be constantly able to adapt to new objects, whereas retention requires a relatively stable material constitution in order that the traces of the objects are kept intact.

38 In the end, Avicenna's method of distinction is perhaps not entirely persuasive. One would expect at least some account of why the single active faculty is not further divided according to the two types of objects.

1. common sense (*al-ḥissu al-mushtarak*): reception of forms
2. imagery (*al-khayāl*) or formative faculty (*al-quwwatu al-mutaṣawwira*): retention of forms
3. estimation (*wahm*): reception of intentions
4. memory (*dhikr*): retention of intentions
5. compositive imagination (*al-mutakhayyila*) or cogitation (*al-fikr*)[39]: active combination and analysis of forms and intentions.[40]

Our perceptual experiences are brought about through the co-operation of these faculties on the sense data provided by the external senses. This co-operation will be studied in greater detail in the third chapter of the present work, but a rudimentary account following the scholarly consensus can already be given. First, common sense unites the various sense data into a structured whole which is then retained in the formative faculty. This latter faculty can thus be considered a kind of memory for purely sensible appearances. After the sense data have been apprehended as a whole, the estimative faculty is capable of apprehending the intention. As will be seen, the concept of intention is extremely important in an Avicennian analysis of cognition in general and requires detailed study of its own. An intention is something that is conveyed to the subject of experience by means of the sense data even though it is not itself sensible. A famous example case of apprehension of an intention is the sheep's apprehending a wolf's hostility. Hostility is not a sensible form, but an apprehension of it is required to explain the sheep's fugitive reaction before the wolf. The sheep cannot decide to flee by means of intellectual deliberation which it is not capable of. Hence, a third kind of apprehension is required, and this is precisely what estimative apprehension of intentions amounts to. In due time, I will argue that intentions are best conceived as a kind of structural blueprints of the perceptual experience but for the moment this will have to suffice.

The above account may paint a rather atomistic picture of Avicenna's theory of the internal senses. This is absolutely not intended. The classification does have a material basis in the localisation of the faculties in the three ventricles of the brain. Moreover, it serves a definite scientific function: to gain empirical knowledge we have to analyse the phenomena, and insofar as our analy-

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39 The compositive imagination of human beings is called cogitation due to its functioning under reason's guidance in discursive thinking and formation of universal concepts.

40 There are some classificatory and terminological variations in Avicenna's works, most notably in the physics of the *Najāt* (where common sense is called *phantasia* and is assigned some of the functions of the formative faculty), in *Maqāla fī al-nafs* (where common sense and the formative faculty seem to be identified) and in his major medical treatise, the *Qānūn* (where a threefold and a fourfold classification are given in addition to the fivefold standard) (see Wolfson [1973], 276-282). This is not the place for a detailed account, let alone explanation, of these differences, since the classification Avicenna has in mind in all the contexts relevant to our concerns is the one presented above. However, I am inclined to agree with Wolfson's (1973, 279-282) explanation of the variation: a physician only takes into account the *localisation* of the faculties, and as a result ends up identifying otherwise distinguishable faculties located in the same ventricle of the brain, whereas a philosopher is concerned with the *functions* of the faculties and ends up with the above classification.

sis is correct, it cannot be solely heuristic. But knowledge also requires a synthetic grasp of what is analysed, and to gain a firm understanding of how these faculties function in shaping our experience to be such as it is, one has to examine their functions holistically. In other words, the operation of one internal sense implies the simultaneous operation of others. For instance, as I will argue in my exposition of Avicenna's theory of intentionality in the next chapter, estimation is best conceived to be at work in structuring most, if not all, perceptual experiences. The same holds for the other internal senses. This holistic attitude to the internal senses is a constant prerequisite in the following. It has a phenomenological counterpart in the observation that despite the analysability of our perceptual experiences, they are unitary wholes – the sheep cannot conceive of the wolf apart from its hostility, or the hostility apart from the wolf.

2.3 Abstraction Theory of Knowledge

As we have already seen, the supreme goal of human existence is knowledge, in the sense of disinterested contemplation of intellectual forms that are received by means of emanation from the active intellect. However, the way to this goal is long and arduous, and requires the cognitive involvement of the body. As Avicenna expressed it in his *Risāla fī al-nafs*:

> The rational soul does not perceive, in its essence, anything of the intelligibles, except through the mediation of the senses and the imagination. I would even go so far as to say that it will only have an intelligible form after this form has been sensible or imaginable. (*Risāla fī al-nafs* 158-159 [Michot], 101 [tr. Michot].)

Avicenna conceives this epistemic approach to the supreme goal of human existence as an abstraction (*tajrīd*) process. The idea is to ascend step by step on the epistemological ladder towards ever greater distance from material conditions, and towards increasing independence of the cognitive object from its material context of particularisation. For much of the following study, it is important to gain a rough understanding of these degrees.

Avicenna begins the relevant chapter in the *Najāt* by a general claim:

> [A]ll perception is but the abstraction by the percipient subject of the form of the perceived object in some manner.[41]

So, epistemic ascent in general is abstraction of the form. But Avicenna immediately adds that the kinds of abstraction are different and of various grades.

> This is because, owing to matter, the material form is subject to certain states and conditions which do not belong to it *qua* form.

41 *Najāt De an.* VII, 38 (tr. Rahman). See also *Shifā' De an.* II.2, 58 (Rahman), 114 (van Riet).

> So sometimes the abstraction of the form is effected with all or some of these attachments, and sometimes it is complete in that the form is abstracted not only from matter but also from the accidents it possesses. (*Najāt De an.* VII, 38 [tr. Rahman].)

Avicenna mentions the form or essence of human beings as an example. In itself, the essence of human is one, multiplicity is not part of its definition. Instead, multiplicity is added to the essence as an accident when it is connected to a body which is governed by it and in which its action as a soul is manifested. This connection with matter introduces a number of other accidents as well, for the essence's action as a soul is manifested at a certain time, in a certain place, and with certain quantitative and qualitative characteristics.[42] An embodied human being is always born at a certain time, spends his time in certain locations, and is of certain height and character, to take a few examples of such accidents.

Now, the lowest cognitive faculty in human beings is sensation. The cognitive act proper to the senses consists in abstraction of the form from matter along with the accidents introduced by the material context. In other words, the senses abstract the form insofar as the form *as sensed* no longer performs the function of material form, i.e. it no longer informs a designated volume of matter into a determinate being. But in the abstraction of the form proper to the senses, a relationship to matter is still preserved. For instance, a man is always seen as being of a certain height, of a certain colour, in a certain place and at a certain time. Moreover, it is characteristic to the abstraction proper to the senses that a direct causal relation to the actual designated volume of matter informed by the sensed form is required, i.e. sensation requires constant reception of the action of the object of sensation.[43]

The formative faculty is set as the next stage of cognition by Avicenna. It represents a further distantiation from matter in that the presence of the informed matter of the object of sensation is no longer required. The form remains in the formative faculty even in the absence of the material object. However, the form is not divested of any of the materially induced accidents in the formative faculty either. Instead, the formative faculty retains the form with exactly the same material accidents that it was conjoined with in sensation.[44]

The faculty of estimation proceeds yet further in the cognitive ascent. Its proper objects are the intentions which in themselves are non-material although they accidentally happen to be in matter. The accidental attributes of the form through which it is grasped by sensation and the formative faculty – i.e. such qualities as shape, colour and spatiotemporal location – are necessarily material, inconceivable apart from matter, but the intentions – such as goodness, evilness, agreeability or disagreeability – can be conceived in separation from matter.

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42 *Najāt De an.* VII, 38 (tr. Rahman). See also *Shifā' De an.* II.2, 58-59 (Rahman), 114-116 (van Riet).

43 *Najāt De an.* VII, 38-39 (tr. Rahman). See also *Shifā' De an.* II.2, 59 (Rahman), 116-117 (van Riet).

44 *Najāt De an.* VII, 39 (tr. Rahman). See also *Shifā' De an.* II.2, 59-60 (Rahman), 117-118 (van Riet).

However, estimation always conceives them in relation to some particular thing, individualised by accidental material attributes.[45]

The highest stage in the cognitive ascent is, of course, intellection. In intellectual abstraction the forms first apprehended in their enmattered existence are grasped from the point of view of their universality. Material accidents are neglected, i.e. abstracted from, and consideration is focused on what can be predicated of many material things univocally. These exist in the intellect as general concepts.[46] Strictly speaking, however, intellection constitutes a break in the abstractive ascent, since it is no longer arrived at exclusively through cognitive operations performed by the soul on objects of cognition of lower degree. Psychic preparation of the lower objects of cognition is required, but it is not enough. It only fulfills the necessary condition so that the human intellect can receive the emanation of a corresponding intelligible concept from the active intellect. (*Shifā' De an.* V.5, 235 [Rahman], 127-128 [van Riet].)

The traditional interpretation of the reception of intelligibles has tended to emphasise the action of the active intellect at the expense of that of the human intellect. The latter is conceived as a more or less passive recipient of the emanation of intelligibles.[47] One of the consequences of the traditional interpretation is an open conflict between the two constituents of Avicenna's theory of intellection, i.e. between the idea of the progressive abstraction of forms from their material context – which can be shown to be of Aristotelian origin – and the idea of emanation, of Neoplatonic order. In the end one is faced with the question whether the intelligibles are abstracted by the human intellect or emanated by the active intellect. The affirmation of both alternatives would yield a strange sort of causal overdetermination in human intellection, and according to most proponents of the traditional interpretation, one or the other component has to be rejected.

There is, however, an alternative intepretation of the role of the two intellects. In a recent paper, Dag Nikolaus Hasse argues for an interpretation of the crucial passage from the *Shifā'* which grants the particular human intellect an important active role in human intellection. In Hasse's view, the human intellect, by means of comparative examination of various representations of sensible origin, abstracts features common to more than one representation. This comparative examination prepares the human intellect to receive the intelligible emanation from the active intellect. The gist of Hasse's argument, *pace* the traditional view, is that this emanation does not consist of the relevant intelligibles. Instead, it should be conceived as akin to the corporeal light that makes seeing possible, a sort of intellectual lumination that enables the human intellect to conceive the essence of what it has abstracted as a universal concept. However, without the abstractive operation of the human intellect there would be nothing

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45 *Najāt De an.* VII, 39-40 (tr. Rahman). See also *Shifā' De an.* II.2, 60-61 (Rahman), 118-119 (van Riet).

46 *Najāt De an.* VII, 40 (tr. Rahman). See also *Shifā' De an.* II.2, 61 (Rahman), 120 (van Riet).

47 For the traditional interpretation, see Rahman (1958), 15; Gardet (1951), 151; Davidson (1992), 93-94; Weisheipl (1982), 150; Black (1997), 445; Goichon (1937), 309.

for the emanation to light upon. (Hasse [2001], 55-58.) To put this another way, there would be nothing to articulate the essentially holistic emanation to the sort of fragments human intellection typically consists of. I find that of all the alternatives, Hasse's interpretation is by far the most charitable to Avicenna – after all, Avicenna does explicitly present his theory of intellection in continuity with the lower abstraction processes – and I would willing to adopt it on this account alone. There are, however, texts that seem to explicitly assert the emanation of intelligible forms from the active intellect.[48] Whether such texts can be made consonant with Hasse's interpretation, or whether the discrepancies can be explained by a developmental account of Avicenna's thought, are questions I have to leave open for the time being.

So much for the general outline of the abstraction theory of knowledge. A couple of its implications are still worth pointing out. The cognitive faculties of the sensitive soul are required to prepare the intellect for the reception of intelligibles from the active intellect. But it is a fairly obvious phenomenological fact that even after learning a piece of knowledge, it is not constantly in our minds. This is due to the soul's preoccupations toward the body because of which it is unable to concentrate solely on contemplation. However, there is a corporeal remedy for this plight, as imperfect as it is. Subsequent to our having learned it, an intelligible can be brought to mind by means of the lower cognitive faculties. One simply entertains a corresponding perceptual representation, at the successful formation of which the intelligible automatically comes to mind. In the constant light of the emanation from above, the intellect simply recognizes the universal it has already understood. In the hereafter our situation is infinitely better, though. After the purgatorial process at least, there are no longer any preoccupations toward the body, and the intellect is free to concentrate on contemplation.[49] All of its knowledge is received in one atemporal whole.

A related aspect of Avicenna's epistemology is his explicit denial of intellectual faculty of memory in human beings, here in a concise formulation from *Risāla fī al-nafs*:

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48 Consider, for instance, the following passage from *Risāla fī al-nafs* (157 [Michot], 99-100 [tr. Michot]): "It is known that the intelligibles are not inscribed in what is divisible, i.e. what has a location, and [that] the treasury of all intelligibles are the active intellects (*al-ᶜuqūlu al-faᶜᶜāl*). When the soul has turned to the active intellects, the intelligible forms emanate to it from them (*fa idhan ṣārat al-nafsu muqbilatan ᶜalā al-ᶜuqūli al-faᶜᶜāli fāḍa ᶜanhā ᶜalayhā al-ṣuwaru al-maᶜqūla*) as long as it is turned toward [the active intellects]. But when it has turned away from them to the side of the body and the bodily faculties, it is distracted from [the intelligible forms] by these things. Whenever the intelligible forms have disappeared from from the soul, i.e. whenever the soul is not apprehending them, it considers the treasury of intelligibles, and apprehends those forms from it. But these forms emanate to it from the giver of forms through the mediation of the intellects (*bal fāḍat ᶜalayhā bi tawassuṭi al-ᶜuqūli tilka al-ṣuwaru min ᶜinda wāhibi al-ṣuwar*), just as the imaginative faculty, when it does not apprehend its imaginable forms, considers the treasury of its archives of intentions and forms, and apprehends from it those forms."

49 For an Avicennian account of the purgatorial process, see *Najāt Ilāhiyyāt* 326-334 (Fakhry). An English translation can be found in Arberry (1951), 64-76.

> [T]he human soul, as long as it does not turn towards the active intellects, does not perceive anything of the intelligibles and [...] no intelligible form gets preserved in it. Indeed, the soul is not one of those things which are divisible, one part of which preserves while another perceives, as is the case with the rest of the faculties. (*Risāla fī al-nafs* 159 [Michot], 101 [tr. Michot].)

Memory understood as storage would imply a localisation of that storage and the items stored in it. Localisation, on its turn, presupposes matter as the substrate of spatial division. Thus, interruptions in intellection during this life are explained by means of the soul's relation to the body. Sometimes corporeal preoccupations prevent the human intellect from considering the intelligibles, sometimes they assist in their reconsideration. Learning and becoming skilled in intellectual consideration of a given subject matter, for instance, is simply the cultivation of the lower cognitive faculties to more efficient assistance in that intellectual operation. Intellectual memory is not required in the hereafter either, since interruptions of intellection become a thing of the past together with the body. (*Shifā' De an.* V.6, 244-248 [Rahman], 143-151 [van Riet].)

To end this doctrinal introduction, let us introduce a related terminological distinction between the various aptitudes of the human intellect with regard to intellection. When the human intellect has yet reached no aptitude whatsoever for intellection, i.e. when it has not yet learned any piece of knowledge, it is called material intellect (*al-ᶜaqlu al-hayūlānī*). It is "material" due to its resemblance in this state to the prime matter, it is capable of receiving any intellectual form though in itself it consists of none. (*Shifā' De an.* I.5, 48-49 [Rahman], 96 [van Riet].) Once the first intelligibles, i.e. such very general concepts as unity and multiplicity, the relation of part and whole, or the logical falsity of contradiction, have been acquired and the intellect has become capable of acquiring other intelligibles through an orderly examination by means of the first intelligibles, its state is called intellect *in habitu* (*al-ᶜaqlu bi al-malika*) (*Shifā' De an.* I.5, 49 [Rahman], 96-97 [van Riet]). When other intelligibles in addition to the first intelligibles have already been acquired but the intellect is not presently engaged in contemplation of them, it is called intellect in act (*al-ᶜaqlu bi al-fiᶜl*). In this state, the intellect is free to contemplate the intelligibles it has acquired at will, provided its preoccupations with the body do not constitute an obstacle. (*Shifā' De an.* I.5, 49-50 [Rahman], 97-98 [van Riet].) And at last, as the crowning achievement of human being and by it the whole sublunar sphere, the intellect actually engaged in contemplation of intelligibles is called acquired intellect (*al-ᶜaqlu al-mustafād*).[50]

This much should suffice to allow us to make sense of Avicenna's theory of subjectivity. I will try to explain possible further references to large doctrinal wholes *in situ*.

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50 *Shifā' De an.* I.5, 50 (Rahman), 98-99 (van Riet). Avicenna adds the interesting qualification that in the state of acquired intellect, the intellect understands not only the intelligibles but also the fact *that* it understands.

3 INTENTIONALITY

Although the emphasis of the present study is on Avicenna's theory of self-awareness, there are two pressing reasons for including a study of intentional awareness of other things as well. First of all, on a general systematic level, intentionality must be conceived of as an integral part of subjectivity. A crucial aspect of what it means to be a subject of experience is to be aware of something facing oneself in the form of an object of experience. Hence, any comprehensive theory of subjectivity should contain at least a rudimentary theory of intentionality. Secondly, due perhaps in part to the somewhat latinizing tendencies prevalent in existing scholarship of Avicenna's psychology, intentionality and the scope of the Avicennian technical term 'intention' (*maᶜnā*) – in the specific sense of the proper object of the estimative faculty – seem to be quite frequently confused, at any rate very seldomly clearly distinguished. Through an attempt at providing an answer to the first requirement of a general theory of intentionality in a study of subjectivity, I will present what I take to be the correct relationship between Avicenna's concept of intention and intentionality as a phenomenon inherent to subjectivity.

To briefly run through the contents of the present chapter, its first subchapter will begin with a preliminary classification of two sets of features which I consider crucial to intentionality and which will take the lead in the following study of the properly Avicennian theory of intentionality. This classification will be followed by a sketch of the *status questionis* regarding the Avicennian concept of intention and Avicenna's conception of intentionality. Subsequently, the second subchapter will take a bottom-up approach to intentionality in Avicenna, starting from the most primitive cases of sense perception and the mode of intentionality already present in that level. The next two subchapters will proceed to discuss the more sublime internal senses of estimation and memory in order to investigate what precisely it is that apprehension of intentions (*maᶜānī*) adds to the most primitive layer of intentionality. We should end up with a comprehensive theory of estimation which will allow us to assess the relationship of intentions and intentionality.

In the following we will proceed in a fashion which may occasionally imply that I subscribe to an atomistic conception of Avicenna's faculty psychology. One more time, however, I wish to stress that the modes of intentionality proper to the common sense (ch. 3.2) and to estimation (ch. 3.4) respectively are dealt with separately for heuristic reasons alone. As already stated,[51] Avicenna's conception of the sensitive soul entails that the separate faculties operate together dynamically in most ordinary cases.

3.1 The Concepts of Intentionality and Intention

In the following, the term 'intentionality' will be used in the very general sense of 'directedness' or 'aboutness'. More precisely, it is taken to be a feature of most mental states. The question whether it is a feature of *all* mental states or whether there are some mental states, such as certain emotions or moods, that are non-intentional, will fall outside the scope of this study. This is also the case for the question whether intentionality is a feature of mental states *exclusively*, or whether there are non-mental entities with intentional properties, such as the well discussed example of the thermostat. These questions will simply be neglected here, in the belief that directedness or aboutness in the case of the sort of cognitive states we will study is indisputable enough.

In any case, intentionality will be spoken of in a general sense. This means that 'intentionality' is not equivalent with the common usage 'intending *to* (do something)'. Intending to, or as it is sometimes called, practical intention or practical intentionality, does of course constitute a type or species of intentionality, but intentionality in the sense here conceived is a more generic feature of most mental states.[52] In the sense we use the term 'intentional', both seeing a crow and intending to scare the crow away are intentional states.

There are two sets of features proper to intentionality in the general sense that deserve some attention. First of these are certain failures of entailment that are often taken as criteria of intentionality in logically or linguistically oriented discussions, and the second are certain features proper to perceptual intentionality pointed out and studied by Edmund Husserl and a number of subsequent phenomenologists.

To treat the failures of entailment first, the most well-known of these are (1) failure of existential commitment, (2) failure of truth-functionality, and (3) failure of intersubstitutivity of coextensive expressions *salva veritate*.[53] We can formulate them as follows:

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51 See ch. 2.2 above.

52 For a more comprehensive account of these distinctions along similar lines, see Searle (1983), 1-2. For the term practical intentionality, in distinction from non-practical intentionality, see Spiegelberg (1969), 189-191.

53 An excellent concise presentation of these criteria of intentionality can be found in Caston (1998), 250-253. In addition to these three failures of entailment, Caston adds (4) failure of the excluded middle, and (5) failure of quantifier exportation. For the original formulations of these criteria, see Chisholm (1956) for (1)-(3), Anscombe (1981) for (4), and Geach (1972) for (5).

> (1) 'X is thinking of (perceives, beliefs that, etc.) Y' does not entail either 'Y exists' or 'Y does not exist', nor does its negation entail either.[54]
>
> (2) 'X believes that Y' does not entail either 'Y' or 'not-Y'; nor does its negation entail either.[55]
>
> (3) 'X knows that Cicero is a cordate' does not entail either 'X knows that Tully is a cordate' or 'X knows that Cicero is a renate'.[56]

As Victor Caston has saliently pointed out, it is by no means necessary that all the peculiarities of intentionality pointed out by our contemporaries receive a common explanation by a thinker of a different era, or that they even be all treated in an alleged historical theory of intentionality. However, in order for us to be able to speak of a theory of intentionality – in our sense of the term – in the case of a given historical thinker, our thinker should show an awareness of at least some of these peculiarities *and* recognize the need to account for them. (Caston [1998], 252-253.) In the following, we will see that Avicenna takes (1) failure of existential commitment to be a quite regularly occurrent feature of estimative apprehension, and some of his remarks on estimation allow us to deduce that also (2) failure of truth-functionality as well as (3) failure of inter-substitutivity of coextensive expressions are features of the experience of a creature with the capacity of estimation.[57]

Another peculiar feature of intentionality proper to perceptual states has been pointed out by Edmund Husserl. This consists in the fact that the mode of presence of an intentional object of perception always refers to features of that very object that are in a strict sense absent from the perception. For example, a three-dimensional object can only be seen from one perspectival angle at a time, and as a result of this, it only shows some of its aspects and hides its opposite aspects. In the strict sense, one can never *see* the backside of a dice. But insofar as the object is perceived as a three-dimensional, i.e. spatial, object, what is seen in the strict sense is never taken to be all there is to the object. Instead, the object is seen in an intended continuity with the hidden aspects of the object, to which the gaze could at least in principle be turned. One can always turn the dice around and see the side that just before was the backside – but again, the dice has a backside that is not seen but that one takes to be the side seen a moment ago. (Husserl [1976], § 41, 83-86 [*Hua* 3/1].)

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54 Caston (1998), 251. The formulation originally derives from Chisholm (1956).
55 Caston (1998), 251. The formulation originally derives from Chisholm (1956).
56 Caston (1998), 252. The formulation originally derives from Chisholm (1956).
57 A critical reader may perceive an incoherence in our using essentially linguistic criteria of intentionality in a study which appeals to phenomena as general standards of interpretive plausibility. I do not admit any real incoherence. However, I do admit that a potentially huge amount of philosophical work is required to bridge the gap between propositions and phenomena. Such fundamental work far exceeds the boundaries of the present study. In the meantime, I will proceed with the perhaps somewhat naive and simplistic presupposition that the propositions in the criteria (1)-(3) unproblematically express features of intentional phenomena.

Correspondingly, a temporal phase of a temporal object, say of a descending spatial movement of our dice, is grasped in an intentional relation to both past and future phases of the same object, phases that are strictly speaking absent from the currently actual phase. Husserl even takes this presence of absent phases in the present phase as a condition of possibility for perception of temporal objects in general. (Husserl [1966], A.1.2.8-12, 19-32 [*Hua* 10].)

The interest of these examples for the treatment of intentionality lies in the fact that the reference to absent features of the present object are *intentional*. The absent features are there due to the mode according to which the perceived object is taken to exist, i.e. *as* a spatial or a temporal object. As will soon be seen, Avicenna pays passing attention to these features peculiar to perceptual intentionality in the *Shifā'*.

To shift the focus from systematic considerations to the study of history of philosophy proper, we can notice two seemingly conflicting views regarding the importance and the nature of the role of Avicenna in the history of philosophical theories of intentionality. One group of scholars is of the opinion that Avicenna plays a central role in coining the term *maᶜnā* which through its Latin rendering as *intentio* becomes determinative of much of the later development of the topic.[58] Others maintain variably either that he is not an innovator of much importance in any respect, whether in bringing the topic under discussion or in coining any new determining terminology, or that he does not really even treat the topic, i.e. that the *maᶜānī* have nothing to do with intentionality (cf. Engelhardt [1976]; Hasse [2000], 127-141; Caston [2001]). Whatever the case, the confusion calls for a systematically accurate rendition of Avicenna's conception of intentions on the one hand and his theory of intentionality on the other hand. Essential work on intentions and estimation as the corresponding cognitive faculty has been pursued by Dag Nikolaus Hasse and Deborah L. Black, who differ quite interestingly in the width of scope each is willing to attribute to estimation and intentions in Avicenna's theory of perception (Black [1993]; Hasse [2000], 127-141). In a nutshell, Black takes estimation to possess a very wide and central status in various fields of Avicenna's philosophy ranging from logic to psychology, whereas Hasse is willing to narrow it down to a "core concept" essentially designed to explain the psychological phenomenon of instinctive reactions in animals. Thus, Hasse denies the importance of estimation for other explanative purposes, presumably including a general theory of intentionality.[59]

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58 Spiegelberg (1969), 192-193; Sorabji (1991), 236-237. In fact, Spiegelberg considers Avicenna's treatment of the phenomenon of intentionality exclusively from the point of view of the term *maᶜnā*, or *intentio*, and the subsequent Latin distinction between *primae* and *secundae intentiones.* Sorabji's main emphasis is on the "materialising" or "dematerialising" interpretations regarding the Aristotelian idea of perception as "reception of form without matter". However, he makes a passing note about the Avicennian concept of intention as "the origin of our idea of an intentional object". Both Spiegelberg and Sorabji seem to neglect – though Sorabji does mention it – the distinction between the general concept of intention and the specific and more technical use of the term to refer to the objects of the internal sense of estimation.

59 By the same token, insofar as Avicenna's treatment of intentionality is considered to be closely related to estimation and intentions, Hasse could be taken to deny

To sum up, there are two sets of open questions the present study should settle. The first concerns the conceptual hierarchy of intentionality and intentions (*maᶜānī*) in Avicenna's general theory of intentionality, or more precisely, whether that general theory is entirely built on the concept of intention or whether intentionality is a more general feature of mental states. As will soon be apparent, I argue for the latter alternative, with certain reservations. This will lead us to the second set of questions, i.e. what role, if any, *do* the intentions play in intentionality. A consideration of the question in the light of the three failures of entailment enumerated above should lead us to adopt Black's comprehensive interpretation of estimation and notice estimation at play as the intentionally structuring faculty in the formation of most mental states.

During our treatment of the Avicennian theory of intentionality it will become clear that estimative apprehension of intentions always involves the particular subject of apprehension in a peculiar way. Our treatment of intentionality will end with a brief observation of a surprisingly intimate relation between intentionality and self-awareness in Avicenna. This observation will weave together the two main threads of the present work as a whole. Some of the observations of this chapter will be explicitly revisited in the subsequent discussion on animal self-awareness.

3.2 Synthetic Objects of Common Sense

Discussing the lowest or the least sublime of the internal senses, i.e. the faculty of common sense, Avicenna makes the following remark, extremely loaded of relevance for our topic:

> Among the internal apprehensive faculties proper to animals (*al-quwan al-mudrikati al-bāṭinati al-ḥayawāniyya*) is the faculty of fantasy (*banṭāsiyā*). It is the common sense (*al-ḥissu al-mushtarak*), and it is a faculty which is located in the first ventricle of the brain, receiving to itself (*tuqbalu bi dhātihā*) all the forms which are imprinted in the five senses and arrive [therefrom] to it. Then comes the imagery (*al-khayāl*) or the formative (*al-muṣawwira*) [faculty]. It is a faculty which is also located in the front ventricle of the brain, at the back, and it retains what the common sense has received from the five particular senses (*min al-ḥawāssi al-juz'iyya*), so that this remains in it after the disappearance of those sensibles (*al-maḥsūsāt*). You should know that reception (*al-qubūl*) belongs to a faculty other than the faculty to which retention (*al-ḥifẓ*) belongs. Consider this in the case of water. It is capable of receiving drawing, writing and all kinds of figures but it is not capable of retaining them. However, we will later provide you with a proof of this. If you want to know the difference between the act of the external senses in general (*al-ḥissi al-ᶜāmmi al-ẓāhir*), the act of the com-

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Avicenna's relevance to the history of philosophical theories of intentionality. However, this is not Hasse's concern in the discussion of estimation in Hasse (2000).

> mon sense, and the act of the formative [faculty], take a look at the state of a drop which falls down in the rain, and you will see a straight line, or [consider] the state of a straight thing which revolves in a circle so that its tip looks like a circle. Now, it is impossible that something is seen as a line or a circle, unless it is seen several times (*mirāran*). The external sense cannot see it twice, it sees it where it is. But when it is imprinted in the common sense and has disappeared before the form has been erased from the common sense, the external sense apprehends it where it is whereas the common sense apprehends it as if it were both where it was in [the common sense] *and* where it has come to be in [the common sense] (*wa 'adrakahu al-ḥissu al-mushtariku ka annahu ka anna ḥaithu kāna fīhi wa ka anna ḥaithu ṣāra ilayyhi*). Thus, it sees either a straight or a circular extension. This is absolutely impossible to relate to the external sense. As for the formative [faculty], it apprehends the two things and is informed by them (*tataṣawwuruhumā*) even when the thing is absent and has ceased [to exist].[60]

Avicenna's examples of the straight line perceived in the descent of a drop of rain or the circle seen in the rapid revolution of the tip of an oblong object, for example the fire in a lit torch, bear a curious resemblance to the sort of intentionality operative in temporal synthesis which was briefly alluded to as a discovery of modern phenomenology. Actually perceived, or rather sensed, features of a perceptual experience contain an intentional reference to features absent from the experience, or not actually sensed as such. As quite ordinary physical objects, the raindrop or the lit tip of a torch can inhabit one and only one spatial location at any one time. Furthermore, they can only give one impression of themselves on the sense organ at any one time. Hence, what is properly sensed in each case is one raindrop in one place at one time, or one fire in one place at one time. However, as Avicenna implies, this is not how his chosen examples appear in our respective experiences of them: we perceive them as a straight line and as a circle, or more precisely *as a line drawn by the descending waterdrop* and *as a circle drawn by the revolving tip of the torch*. How to account for this appearance, all the more enigmatic for its obvious counterfactuality?

It is hardly surprising that we see Avicenna, a faculty psychologist and a proponent of a theory of the internal senses, immediately resort in his explanation to the internal cognitive faculties that follow the external senses in the abstractive chain of cognition. His proposition for a solution is the operation of the common sense. The preceding phases in the descending course of the raindrop or in the revolution of the torch are present in the common sense *together with* the data, continually updated by the external sense, on their respective current locations. The peculiar role of the common sense is in the fact that it combines the continually expanding preceding phases and the continually updated sense

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60 *Shifā' De an*. I.5, 44-45 (Rahman), 87-89 (van Riet); my italics. Cf. the same example in *Ishārāt* 123-124 (Forget), where Avicenna is adamant that the temporal synthesis of the phases of movement into a continuity takes place "by way of what is seen, not by way of imagination or memory" (*ʿalā sabīli al-mushāhadati lā ʿalā sabīli takhayyulin aw tadhakkur*).

data into a synthetic temporal unity. This operation results in the experiences to be explained: in an experience of a descending line drawn by the raindrop or a circle drawn by the fire at the tip of the torch.

Thus, to use modern terms, the experiences contain intentional objects that Avicenna finds inexplainable by means of any simple causal relation between the extramental raindrop or the lit torch and the eye. The traditional Aristotelian doctrine of sensation as the unity *in act* of both active and passive constituents of sensation is incapable of accounting for them. *In abstracto* sensation is such a unity: a sensation of red is correctly described as the unity *in act* of the action of a red visible object on the eye and the passion of that action in the eye.[61] But what has already passed, i.e. the prior phases of the movement of our exemplary objects, cannot *actually* prevail. In order to save the phenomena, Avicenna must make full use of the cognitive system of his more recent design.

However, the suggested similarity between Avicenna's examples and the phenomenological interpretation of the intentionality functional in temporal synthesis is not a relation between two simple, or theory-neutral, phenomena but instead between two highly elaborate theoretical accounts of experience. Thus, we should not take it at quite the face value so far considered. In particular, we should pay attention to the fact that unlike in the celebrated phenomenological example of the "presence in absence" of past notes of a melody, the earlier phases of movement in both of Avicenna's examples are not properly absent – even "presently absent" – from the experience. In fact, the *explanandum* was an experience of a *line* or a *circle* that we know to be inexistent in extramental reality. In a very real sense, both phenomenologically (as a thing of experience) and physically (as an occurrence in the frontal lobe of the brain) there is a line or a circle in the common sense. However, in order for Avicenna's example to make sense, in order for it not to be a mere pointer to a phenomenologically opaque perception of a line or a circle, I must somehow be able to distinguish between the present location – the location that I take to be actual in extramental reality – of the raindrop or the lit torch and their respective prior locations *at the very same time* as I perceive the line or the circle drawn by them. There has to be some sort of internal structure present in my experience which is accessible to me as such, in order for me to be able to distinguish between the perception of the current state of the raindrop or the torch and the traces left by their movement. And if I cannot make this distinction, Avicenna's example says nothing to me, indeed I would have a hard time making any sense of it. After all, not only did we begin with an experienced line or circle but such that we knew *not to exist* in extramental reality.

In fact, I want to propose that despite the complicating role played by the common sensical "afterimages" in both of Avicenna's examples they are meant to hold true of perception of motion in general. The difference between our example cases and ordinary motion is only in the fact that ordinary motion does not contain the peculiar kind of afterimages at play here, or at least not as obvious ones. Avicenna narrates the examples in order to shed light on the differ-

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61 See Arist. *De an.* III.2, 425b27-426a28.

ence between the respective operations of common sense and the external senses. Presumably he resorts to a rather unusual case to better draw our attention to something that normally eludes us. Now, it is true that Avicenna is content merely to point out a phenomenon which is not accountable by reference to the external senses alone – that is enough for his purposes in the context. The interpretation I suggest, however, accords a general sense to the distinguishing feature pointed at by Avicenna: it should be conceived as a temporally synthetic operation performed by the common sense *in most, if not all, perceptual experiences*. Let us examine another, less problematic example of perception of motion. Consider the perceptual experience of seeing a person pass you by, slowly enough for her successive spatial locations to be clearly distinguished in your experience. Afterimages aside, the case here is exactly the same as in Avicenna's examples: reference to the external sense faculties alone would not be able to explain your *perception of the event* of her passing you by. Much as in the case of the descending raindrop or the revolving torch, at each and every moment the passer-by can be sensed in one and only one location but the connection between her being in these distinct locations is not present in any one separate sensation. And due to the constant activity of the extramental sensible object on the sense organ in the one actuality of their respective active and passive operations, the sense data is constantly updated in a way that makes any such connection *in the external senses* impossible in principle. The senses are entirely occupied with the reception of the action of the sensed thing, adapting to it in a way which severs any *sensible* connection between the various phases of that reception.

Thus, in both cases of perception of movement, i.e. whether involving afterimages or not, we are dealing with a temporal synthesis as a condition of possibility for an experience of a temporally extended object. As I have proposed, this temporal synthesis can be properly considered intentional. As a conclusion we can say that a form of intentionality is at play already in the common sense, on the very lowest or the least sublime level of the Avicennian internal senses.[62] Furthermore, the sort of intentional objects that result from the synthetic operation of common sense are subsequently retained by the formative faculty which, in Avicenna's words, "apprehends the two things", i.e. the present and past phases of movement, even in the absence of the external object of perception. In other words, the formative faculty retains a trace of a temporally organised experience instead of separate punctual sensations.

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62 In this aspect Avicenna's account of sense perception differs radically from the Aristotelian notion of normally functioning sense perception as unerring (cf. *De an.* II.6, 418a11-13; III.3, 427b12-14, 428a11-13; III.4, 430b29-30) and hence not intentional according to the criteria (1) and (2) considered above in ch. 3.1. In some passages, closely related to the topic we have occupied ourselves with in the present chapter, Avicenna even seems to explicitly adhere to a representational account of sense perception. Cf. e.g. *Shifāʾ* III.7, 141-143 (Rahman), 254-256 (van Riet), where Avicenna says that the form received by the senses is similar to the form in the perceived thing but *different* from it, and even calls the form received by the senses a simulacrum or representation (*shabaḥ*). This thesis is subsequently appealed to in the explanation of afterimages.

The one we have considered is not the only passage in which Avicenna discusses the peculiar examples of descending raindrop and the revolving torch. Another passage with a reference to them makes the connection with temporal synthesis explicit:

> In the same way a descending waterdrop is imagined as a line, and a point on a revolving wheel as a circle. However, you could not imagine and see that unless you saw some sort of extension. It is not possible that you see an extension by means of a point which is not moving in time unless you imagine the thing in two places. Therefore, this must be due to the being of the drop first above and then below, when its extension is what is in between, and to the being of the point in an extreme at the distance which it has revolved and in another extreme, when its extension is what is in between, and the appearance is conceived (*mutaṣawwar*) in you. *This is not commensurable with one now. Therefore, the preceding appearance must be retained after [the first now] and remain in the subsequent [now], then it is joined with the sensation of what has come later, and the two are united to an extension which is as if sensed.*[63]

Towards the end of the passage, Avicenna introduces the term 'now' (*al-āna*). For Avicenna, like Aristotle, time is a potentially divisible continuity. In itself, it does not consist of punctual nows. Instead, now can be apprehended by the estimation as a limiting point in time.[64] In our passage, now is used to distinguish the delimiting moments of a duration under consideration, say a given span in the descending movement of the raindrop. It makes little sense to assume that Avicenna takes the nows to be explicitly apprehended in this way in the first order experience presently under study. Rather, explicit apprehension of the nows takes place in the higher order perspective of our study of the first order experience. The first order experience is essentially a duration, potentially divisible but actually undivided. Avicenna says of this duration that it is "as if sensed", it is irreducibly present in the relatively primitive perceptual experience of a descending raindrop. The duration comes first in the experiential order, the division into successive moments or nows is a subsequent possibility. However, the condition of possibility for the duration is the intentional synthetic operation of common sense, and hence it requires something more than the mere operation of the separate sense faculty of sight.

I have not been able to find any Avicennian discussion of the spatial constitution of experience of any similar depth as shown by his treatment of its temporal constitution. It might be that he takes the spatiality of material things that function as objects of sensation to be so obvious that the question does not even arise. In this view, the spatiality of objects of perceptual experience would

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63 *Shifā' De an.* III.7, 142-143 (Rahman), 255-256 (van Riet); my italics. In the context, Avicenna presents the examples as proofs for his thesis that sensation requires reception of a simulacrum (*shabaḥ*) of the form of the perceived thing.

64 For Avicenna's theory of the now, see *Shifā' Phys.* II.12, 160-165 (Zayed); a carefully commented English translation can be found in McGinnis (1999).

be based on the spatiality of objects in the extramental world that is both independent of experience and plays such an active causal role in the generation of experience that the spatiality of experiential objects comes about as an analytically opaque side-product, so to speak.[65] It is true that perceived time, or temporal duration, is based on mundane motion, and in this sense time can be said to have an extramental foundation. But in order to be actualised as a temporal event, as something with duration, motion will have to be measured, i.e. perceived by a sufficiently endowed cognitive subject.[66] Thus there is a crucial difference between spatiality and temporality in that the latter, unlike the former, is strictly dependent on being perceived.

In any case, our discussion of the temporal constitution of perceptual experience should show that insofar as experiential duration is a result of intentional synthesis, we must distinguish intentionality as a relatively theory-neutral psychological phenomenon from estimative apprehension of intentions in the technical sense. In Avicenna, intentionality is at play from the very start on the lowest level of animal cognition, in simple acts of sense perception.

Our study in this subchapter has taken its main cue from the phenomenological observations that were briefly discursed above. Obviously, however, the type of intentionality that was shown to be operative on the level of common sense would also fulfill some of the more linguistically oriented criteria of intentionality as well, at least (1) the failure of existential commitment, and (2) the failure of truth-functionality. Quite trivially, one's having a perceptual experience of a line drawn by a descending waterdrop does not entail either the real, i.e. extramental, existence of the line or the corresponding non-existence thereof.[67] Similarly, the perception of a circle drawn by a lit torch does not entail

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65 For a discussion of Avicennian theory of spatiality, see McGinnis (2006). In the final analysis, for Avicenna space amounts to the bulk of the body, i.e. materiality entails spatiality. Therefore, it seems natural to assume that for Avicenna spatiality in experience is simply a necessary consequence of our perceiving material objects, and no further account needs to be given of it.

66 *Shifā' Phys.* II.13, 166-167 (Zayed). For discussion, see Hasnawi (2001). My interpretation of the descending drop and the revolving point is further corroborated by a discussion of similar examples in *Shifā' Phys.* II.1, 84 (Zayed), which Hasnawi (2001, 231-232) investigates at some length. In this passage, (1) imagery (*al-khayāl*) is said to relate the distinct phases of movement to each other as phases in one and the same individual continuum, and (2) it is said to perform a successive synthesis of the phases that are separate insofar as they are merely sensed. However, Avicenna's attribution of the synthetic activity to the imagery, i.e. to the formative faculty which is supposed to retain sense data (cf. ch. 2.2 above), may seem inappropriate. I am inclined to agree with Hasnawi (2001, 231) here: the details regarding the distribution of work between the internal senses is quite irrelevant to the context in physics, and this results in inexact expression on the part of Avicenna. As a matter of fact, in the same context he also speaks in very general terms of the operation of mind (*al-dhihn*) and of a matter of intellection (*al-amr al-maᶜqūl*).

67 In this special case I speak of perceptual experience in the awareness that 'perception' might be conceived as a term the correct usage of which requires a certain kind of success in the type of cognitive operation referred to. Thus, only an *accurate* perceptual experience of a *really* existent perceivable thing would constitute perception. When I speak of perceptual experience, I want to leave this requirement of success out of the picture – obviously so, because precisely the lack of the depicted sort of success is crucial for the failure of existential commitment.

the truth of the proposition 'there is a circle of fire in front of me' anymore than it does the truth of its negation. Recognition of the fact that the experiences Avicenna uses as examples are inaccurate representations of extramental reality is not a feature of the first order experience but of a second order consideration of the first order experience. Nothing in the experience itself, taken singly in separation from all other experiences and beliefs, gives evidence either of its accuracy or its inaccuracy.

However, I think that a reading of the Avicennian passages on the descending raindrop and the revolving torch in the light of the phenomenological idea of intentional temporal synthesis both renders stronger the intrigue of Avicenna's passage and eventually makes better sense of his argument: to understand certain undeniable features of our experience, we have to postulate an internal cognitive faculty with this specific intentional operation.

Nevertheless, in the end a caveat is in order. If, as has been proposed, Avicenna's system of internal senses is holistic in nature so that most, if not all, of our sensitive experiences entail the co-operation of all internal senses, and in particular, if estimation is operative in any act of perception,[68] then there is no intentionality proper to the level of common sense. In that case, even the perceptual experiences of a line drawn by a descending raindrop and a circle drawn by a revolving torch would be structured according to corresponding intentions (*maʿānī*). However, it seems that Avicenna is willing to attribute a crucial role to common sense in the sort of intentionality proper to this primitive level, for the passages we have discussed contain no mention whatsoever of the more sublime internal senses – with the exception of the formative faculty, which is brought into play simply due to its function as the faculty retentive of the sort of intentionally structured experiential wholes that common sense was shown to be responsible for. Furthermore, study of the phenomenon of temporal synthesis in the form Avicenna performs it clearly shows that the relation between the concept of intention and the phenomenon of intentionality is not quite as straightforward as one might believe in light of the scholarly interest which has concentrated almost exclusively on the estimative aspects of Avicenna's theory of intentionality. Experiences structured by the sensitive or animal soul seem to be intentional through and through, whether or not explicit apprehension of intentions proper takes place.

3.3 Estimation and Intentions

To my knowledge, the most recent revisionist interpretation of estimative apprehension of intentions is that presented by Dag Nikolaus Hasse in his magisterial study *Avicenna's* De anima *in the Latin West*. As the title gives out, the focus of Hasse's book is on the western reception history of Avicenna's psychological *magnum opus*, but he studies the Avicennian doctrines to be received by the Latin thinkers with the philosophical acumen characteristic to him, and as a

68 As is implied by such passages of Avicenna as those discussed in ch. 3.4 below.

result his interpretations of Avicenna are of considerable systematic interest as well. As regards estimative apprehension of intentions, in a nutshell Hasse denies that the intentions in Avicenna's technical sense, and apprehension thereof, have anything to do with a theory of intentionality in the modern sense. Instead, he claims that Avicenna's theory of intentions is first and foremost meant to be a theory of instincts and instinctive reactions.

Hasse describes intentions and estimative apprehension quite accurately as constituting "one of the most widely known theories of Avicenna", but at the same breath he states, following Landauer, that estimation can be called the one of Avicennian cognitive faculties about which "people probably drivelled the most".[69] One of the alleged modes of drivel, according to Hasse, is precisely the confusion of intentions and estimation with the phenomenon of intentionality. Hasse wants to show that "Avicenna's psychological theory of 'intentions' has hardly anything to do with intentionality" (Hasse [2000], 127). This conclusion is arrived at through a study of the classical, or at least most often cited, Avicennian examples of apprehension of intentions (most notably the lamb's apprehension of hostility in a wolf) which will provide the starting point for our study as well.

But before we go to the case examples, a terminological sidenote is required for reasons of clarity. In the following, as in much of scholarly discourse at large, the term *maᶜnā* is translated as 'intention'. As Hasse points out (Hasse [2000], 128-129), the term *maᶜnā* has several slightly divergent technical senses in Avicenna, three of the most important of which can be enumerated as follows: the logical sense of (1) meaning of a word; and the psychological senses of (2) object of a cognitive operation in general and (3) object of estimation in particular. It is easy to see that the term 'intention', while in some ways a fitting equivalent, has connotations that are unfortunate if it is supposed to serve as a literal translation of this strictly defined technical term. A particularly potent danger in our case is to see a connection between *maᶜānī* and intentionality on an entirely contingent terminological basis in a language that was not Avicenna's. Under such perils one should of course always be careful and make sure not to read into a context a sense foreign to it. However, since an argument for the reading of a given sense into a context most often amounts to presenting a more or less fully explicated philosophical analysis of the text in question, I will not offer any general arguments for my choice of translation at this point. Of course, despite the absence of explicit preliminary arguments, my solution is intended to hold under close scrutiny; I will be particularly careful not to rely on any contingent historical connections of terminology, and will instead examine the connection between *maᶜānī* and intentionality on an exclusively systematic basis.

After all these reservations, I will simply announce that throughout this study, I will use the English term 'intention' exclusively in the sense of (3) specific object of estimation, or as Avicenna himself formulates it: "What the inter-

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69 Hasse (2000), 127. The reference is to Landauer's comment in *Maqāla fī al-nafs* 401 (Landauer).

nal faculties perceive of [the wolf] *without* the sense is specified in this place with the word *maᶜnā*."[70] As regards using the well-worn term 'intention' despite the mentioned connotative differences in comparison with *maᶜnā*, in the absence of more viable alternatives[71] I have resorted to the conventional compromise. Besides, as I hope will come clear by the end of the present chapter, there is a definite *systematic* connection between estimative apprehension of intentions and the phenomenon of intentionality. In view of this connection the etymological link in the Latin translation is not entirely unfortunate – as long as we keep in mind that in itself it is of dubious assistance in deciphering Avicenna.

Terminological problems aside, let us get to the heart of the matter. Avicenna's classical example of estimative apprehension is the case of the sheep apprehending hostility in a wolf and amiability in its own young:

> Then [follows] the estimative faculty and this is the faculty which is located at the back of the middle ventricle of the brain and perceives intentions which are different from that what is sensed but which exist in the particular sensata. Such [is] the faculty existing in the sheep and judging that this wolf is something to flee from and that this lamb is something to have affection for. It is likely that this faculty is also free (*al-mutaṣarrifa*) to combine and separate in what is imagined (*al-mutakhayyalāt*). (*Shifā' De an.* I.5, 45 [Rahman], 89 [van Riet].)

First of all, as Hasse points out (Hasse [2000], 130-131), intentions are "different from that what is sensed" yet "in the [...] sensata" (*fī al-maḥsūsāt*). Avicenna stresses repeatedly the close connection between intentions and sensible forms, saying elsewhere that despite the principial non-sensibility of the former, estimation "does not abstract this form[72] from [all] appendages of matter because it apprehends it as a particular, according to and in relation with matter, and connected with a sensed form" (*Shifā' De an.* II.2, 61 [Rahman], 119 [van Riet]). Secondly, Hasse wants to emphasize the fact, implicit not only in this example but in a number of others as well, that Avicenna's examples of estimative apprehension of intentions are in the norm practically oriented, or related directly to the survival or well-being of the percipient or its close kin (Hasse [2000], 131). Frequent examples of intentions are "the good, the bad, the agreeable, the disagreeable, and what is like these" (*Shifā' De an.* II.2, 60 [Rahman], 118 [van Riet]), "what is harmful and what is useful" (*Shifā' De an.* IV.3, 184 [Rahman], 38

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70 *Shifā' De an.* I.5, 43 (Rahman), 86 (van Riet); my italics. Reference to the wolf is due to the context: Avicenna is working with the example of a sheep's apprehension of hostility in a wolf. We will discuss the example shortly below.

71 Hasse proposes 'connotational attribute' as a translation of *maᶜnā*, but it is hard to take this solution as anything but even more misleading than 'intention', both stylistically and theoretically.

72 As I take it, in this passage Avicenna uses the term 'form' (*al-ṣūra*) in a loose sense to refer to the objective basis of cognition in general, in our case the "carrier" of the apprehended intention. Alternatively, 'form' would be used conventionally to refer to a sensible form which becomes abstracted in the act of estimation so that the resulting object of estimation is no longer properly called a form.

[van Riet]), or "hostility, badness, and aversion" (*Shifā' De an.* IV.1, 166 [Rahman], 7 [van Riet]).

On the basis of these remarks, Hasse concludes that the intention is "an indicator pointing to the significance or meaning of an image with which this indicator is connected". Furthermore, the intention is "something in the object and not in the perceiver". (Hasse [2000], 131-132.) By apprehending the intention, the perceiving subject judges the object as something towards which a certain kind of behaviour rather than another is likely to prove beneficial to the subject itself. For instance, the sheep judges the wolf as something to flee from, in order to save its own skin, and its own young as something to care for, presumably in order to contribute to the eternal existence of its own species.

Such indicators to the practical relevance of the object of perception to the perceiving subject can be apprehended instinctively or they can be based upon experience. For instinctive apprehension of them, consider the following passages:

> So let us say that this estimation has many modes (*min wujūh*). Among these are the inspirations (*al-ilhāmāt*) which emanate into everything from divine mercy, such as the disposition (*hāl*) of the infant who instantly after being born hangs at the breast, or the disposition of the infant who when lifted and made to stand so that he is about to fall spontaneously (*min mubādaratihi*) grasps something firm, due to a natural disposition (*gharīza*) in the soul (*al-nafs*), produced in it by the divine inspiration (*al-ilhām*). And if something gets into the pupil [of its eye] it spontaneously (*bādir*) closes its eyelid before it has comprehended (*fahima*) what is happening to it.[73]

> Through these inspirations (*al-ilhāmāt*) the estimation comprehends (*yaqifu*) the intentions, regarding what is harmful and what is beneficial, that are mixed with what is sensed. Every sheep is beware of (*taḥdharuhu*) the wolf even if it has never seen one and no harm has befallen it from the wolf. Many animals are beware of the lion. Many birds are beware of birds of prey, and without any experience the weak birds find them horrifying. (*Shifā' De an.* IV.3, 184 [Rahman], 38-39 [van Riet].)

Both texts clearly address the existence of phenomena that in common contemporary parlance would be called *instinctive* reactions. If we exclude embryonic learning of the beneficial effects of the mother's breast, it is obvious that Avicenna intends with the infant's knowledge "at the time it is born" an instinctive attitude towards the breast. While the other two examples in the case of the infant may come dangerously close to reflexes[74] to be of interest for a study of

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73 *Shifā' De an.* IV.3, 183-184 (Rahman), 37-38 (van Riet). Let it be mentioned that the twice occurring term *ilhām* could also be legitimately translated as 'instinct'. However, in order not to beg the question in a passage clear enough in any case, I have opted for the more vague term 'inspiration'.

74 Hasse (2000), 136, points this out in a critical evaluation of estimation as an Avicennian theory of instincts. According to him, inclusion of examples such as the infant's grasp for a stronghold or its closing the eyelids make Avicenna's theory too wide in

the relation between intentions and intentionality, it is obvious that in the second passage we are dealing with decidedly less problematic instinctive emotional reactions to novel objects of sense perception.

By contrast, the following passages involve prior experience with the object or type of object relevant for a given case of estimative apprehension:

> [...] dogs fear clods of earth or wood and other such things.[75]

> [...] with [estimation] [...] a child distinguishes its nurse as a friend from whom he need not flee. (*Qānūn* I.8.1, 561 [tr. Bakhtiyar].)

It would be a patent empirical falsity to claim that all dogs, or even most dogs, fear clods of earth or wood. Hence, to the extent that most dogs are fully developed in all their specific capacities, we cannot take fear of clods of earth or wood to be an emotion natural for dogs, or inherent to their essence. By the same token, the estimative apprehension, underlying the emotion, of the intention of threat in clods of earth or wood is not instinctive. Thus, it seems natural to assume that Avicenna refers to the particular cases of *some certain* dogs that have been seen to exhibit such fears. And while it is possible that an entirely material explanation for the phenomenon could be given – the dogs in question may be caused to act in the depicted way due to malfunctions or lesions in their cognitive system, and such are properly viewed as privations in an Aristotelian psychology. But to the extent that Avicenna is discussing the phenomena in the scientific framework of *cognitive* explanation,[76] the dogs' reactions are presumably to be explained on the basis of prior bad experience of similar objects. The passage from the *Canon of Medicine*, on the other hand, is more explicit in that it even involves reasoning, whether explicit or implicit is not clear, from a child's prior experience of someone taking care of him to an estimative judgment that that someone is not to be fled from.

Despite the case examples of estimation based upon prior experience, Hasse takes Avicenna's theory of estimative apprehension, or at least the core of it, to be a theory of instinctive reactions. Furthermore, on the basis of the terminological remark that the verbs Avicenna uses to describe the operation of

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scope. In this point, regarding both the alleged theory of intentionality and that of instinctive reactions, I am in agreement with Hasse. From our modern point of view, it seems natural to leave reflexes out from both theories. But it is precisely on such borderline cases that the assumptions we take to be natural are themselves shown to be quite laden with theory in the sense of the sort of implicit theorizing of cultural common sense from the insights of which explicit theories, scientific or otherwise, are bound to take their first cues. The open question here would be whether Avicenna's inclusion of reflexes in his theory of estimation implies his taking all cognitive functions of the sensitive soul as akin to reflexes, with the result of severely weakening the properly cognitive or experiential aspects of them, or whether on the contrary this implies an "experientially" or "cognitively" loaded account of reflexes.

75 *Shifā' De an.* IV.3, 185 (Rahman), 39 (van Riet). For the context, see the longer translation of the passage below.

76 This is evident from the context. See the translation of the context below, and the related lengthier discussion on estimation and prior experience.

estimation are similar to those he uses in descriptions of sensation, Hasse considers it "obvious that Avicenna modelled his theory of the perception of connotational attributes on the process of sense perception, so that it can hardly be called a theory of intentionality in the sense that it is concerned with the content of mental acts or states."[77]

At best, the inference is difficult to follow. For why would a theory of estimation that is based on the model of sense perception exclude intentionality in the first place? Besides, isn't a theory of sense perception, and by consequence of a cognitive operation "modelled on the process of sense perception", precisely an example of a theory "concerned with the content of mental acts or states"? On the other hand, Hasse neglects what I take to be a crucial difference between sensation and estimative apprehension. As proper objects of the latter, intentions are radically relational in a way objects of sensation are not. To modify Avicenna's example, one and the same wolf is apprehended under two quite different intentions by the sheep of our example and by a sufficiently armed human hunter. Even if we suppose their respective experiences to be identical in every respect insofar as sense data exclusively are concerned, the wolf would appear as fatally dangerous only to the sheep whereas the hunter might apprehend it as prey or as a nuisance for the business of sheepherding, to name but two possible examples, in any case not as something before which one must in any case simply flee. As I will argue below, this is precisely due to the inherent relationality of the intentions. However, the relationality inherent to intentions does not preclude them from being based on the material and sensible qualities of perceptible beings in the subject-neutral extramental world. Avicenna's concept of relationality, as presented in the metaphysical part of the *Shifā'*, precisely requires that relations be based upon real features of the relata, i.e. features independent from the relation (*Shifā' Met.* III.10, 116-123 [Marmura]).

Hasse attempts to counter the claim of the relationality of intentions, conceived as relativity to the perceiving subject, by insisting on the perceivability of the relation between the subject and the object of estimative apprehension from the third person perspective (Hasse [2000], 136). This cannot serve as a counter-argument, however. A behaviouristic analysis of the sheep's fugitive reaction before the wolf is certainly an option, and this is precisely what the alleged third personal access to the relation amounts to. But such an analysis is not Avicennian. Instead, Avicenna's strategy is to tackle the problem of explaining the sheep's reaction from the opposite direction, i.e. to explain the phenomenon of flight by appealing to a specific *mental* object. In a word, Avicenna's explanation is built upon the quality of hostility *as apprehended* in estimative apprehension. And as I will argue, this makes the relation between the sheep and the wolf intentional despite its having a counterpart in the subject-neutral extramental world.

Ultimately, Hasse ends up judging Avicenna's theory as wanting for a number of reasons (Hasse [2000], 136-137). One of these is particularly revealing

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77 Hasse (2000), 132. As was already said, 'connotational attribute' is Hasse's term of choice for translating *maᶜnā*.

for our discussion, for Hasse deems Avicenna's theory of intentions too wide in scope to serve as a plausible theory of instinctive behaviour, and this precisely because it includes apprehension of intentions due to prior experience. In itself, Hasse's assessment may full well be true – Avicenna's theory of estimation may not constitute a particularly viable theory of instinctive behaviour – but to be meaningful as a critique it requires that we follow Hasse in taking Avicenna's theory of intentions to aim primarily at explaining instinctive behavious. I see no ultimate reason to follow him in this, but to argue for that we have to look at a number of other passages that contain other examples of estimative apprehension of intentions problematic for Hasse.[78]

In an article that has become the *locus classicus* on Avicenna's faculty of estimation, Deborah L. Black refers to the texts on which Hasse's interpretation is based on as the "canonical presentation" – and it is indeed true that despite its revisionistic tone Hasse's approach to estimation is ultimately somewhat conservative. The canonical presentation is most often read from the psychological parts of the *Shifā'* and the *Najāt*, and it revolves around the familiar examples of the sheep's apprehending hostility in a wolf or amiability in its own young. According to Black, however, "in these canonical texts Avicenna tends, by and large, to focus on those activities of estimation that are *common* to both humans and animals, and which as a consequence are concerned primarily with the practical activities of motion and appetition. But this practical orientation by no means exhausts the functions which Avicenna assigns to the estimative faculty, particularly as it exists in human beings." (Black [1993], 220-221.) She goes on to propose a more extensive interpretation of estimation of which the theory of instinctive behaviour – taken to be the core of the theory of estimation, more or less ruined by the incompatible appendices, by Hasse – is only an aspect or an application. To support her interpretation, Black introduces a wide variety of texts, a number of which are of great interest for our discussion of intentionality.

We have already offered one argument against Hasse's narrowly focused interpretation in our discussion of Avicenna's explicit comparison of instinctive estimation – as evidenced by the example of the sheep and the wolf – with estimation based upon earlier experience. The latter is presented as "the other kind" or the other mode of apprehending intentions, the first kind, to which the beginning of the following passage makes a brief reference, being the instinctive apprehension which takes place "naturally".

> This is one kind, and another kind is through things like experience. This [is such] that when the animal is in pain or pleasure, or when it is in contact with [something] beneficial [and] sensi-

78 Hasse is of course aware of the option of a more comprehensive interpretation of estimation, as proposed already by Black (1993), for instance. However, his reasons for rejecting such an interpretation are far from convincing. For Black's interpretation of some of the central passages which we will discuss in short, Hasse's only concern is that a shift of focus to a more comprehensive interpretation of estimation "marginalizes the aspect of instinct [...], which Rahman saw – correctly, as I think – as the heart of the theory" (Hasse [2000], 136-137; the reference is to Rahman [1963], 494).

> ble, or when [something] sensible that is connected to a sensible form does harm to it, the form of the thing and the form of what is connected to it are imprinted in the formative [faculty], while an intention (*maᶜnā*) of the relation between the two as well as a judgment regarding the relation are imprinted in memory. Memory accomplishes this through its essence and natural disposition (*li jibillatihi*). When this external form appears through the imaginative (*al-mutakhayyila*) [faculty], it is aroused in the formative [faculty] and the beneficial or harmful intentions – and intentions in memory in general – are aroused together with it by way of the discursive survey (*ᶜalā sabīli al-intiqāli wa al-istiᶜrāḍ*) natural to the imaginative faculty. Estimation senses all of this together. It views (*raʼā*) the intention with this form. This is almost as if it was experienced (*hādhā huwa ᶜalā sabīlin yuqāribu al-tajriba*). Because of this dogs fear clods of earth or wood and other such things. Other judgments occur to the estimation by way of comparison (*al-tashbīh*), such as when a thing has a form that is connected to an estimative intention in some sensibles but is not always and in all of them so connected, and during the presence (*maᶜa wujūd*) of this form [the estimation] sometimes apprehends its intention, sometimes not (*yaltafitu* [...] *wa qad yukhlafu*).[79]

In a nutshell, Avicenna's argument proceeds as follows. In the first encounter with an object of perception, the synthetic whole of sense data is perceived in the common sense and stored as such a synthetic whole in the formative faculty. At the same time, estimation apprehends the intention of this synthetic whole, and this intention is subsequently stored in memory. Now, a second encounter with the same object or one similar in the relevant sense may of course take place at any posterior moment, or alternatively, the object may be brought to mind by a process of imagination. It is essential to recognize that this second encounter – or as I will argue, any other act of perception – is not merely an act of sensation. Instead, estimative apprehension, possibly also remembrance, of intentions is at play as well. Thus, in the case of a dog that fears sticks because it has been beaten with one, a prior experience consisting of visual sense data *and* sensation of pain *coupled with* the intention of harmfulness which combines the visual and dolorous sense data into an experiential unity can be brought to the dog's mind in a subsequent encounter with a stick which of course does by no means contain any inherent harmfulness, or even any essential "harmfulness-for-the-dog". Nevertheless, due to the intention brought forth from memory, the dog apprehends the stick as harmful, is moved to feel fear, and either flees or prepares for counterattack. The end of the passage on estimation by way of comparison seems to me to make the same point in more general terms. What we are dealing with here is a contingent relation between two objects of sense perception where the properties of one are transferred to the other.

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79 *Shifāʼ De an.* IV.3, 184-185 (Rahman), 39 (van Riet). The passage is pointed out by Black (1993), 226, 250, and commented upon by Rahman in *Najāt De an.* 81 (tr. Rahman).

Such reactions based on earlier experience do not constitute the only problematic case example of estimation for Hasse's core theory. The phenomenon which Aristotle called *aisthēsis kata sumbebēkos*, i.e. perception *per accidens* or incidental perception, and which he felt the urgent need to explain,[80] is another such case. Let us take a look at Avicenna's exposition of the phenomenon.

> Then we may make judgments on what is sensed by means of intentions which we do not sense and which are either not sensible at all due to their nature (*lā takūna fī ṭabā'iᶜihā maḥsūsāt*) or which are sensible but we do not sense them at the time of judgment. [...] As for those which are sensible, we see a yellow thing, for instance, and we judge that it is honey and sweet (*anhu ᶜasalun wa ḥulw*). Certainly at this moment the senses do not convey this [i.e. sweetness] to [the yellow thing] (*hadhā lā yu'addīhi ilayhi al-ḥāssu fī hadhihi al-waqt*). [The judgment] pertains to the genus of the sensible, and yet the judgment itself does not take place through anything sensible at all.[81]

It seems that Avicenna's analysis of incidental perception is very closely connected to estimation due to prior experience. If there is a way for me to be entitled to judge that the yellow substance I now see is sweet even before I have tasted it, it seems to be by way of prior experience, both visual and gustatory, of the same or in all relevant respects similar substance. Only for a person, who has had both visual and gustatory sensation of the substance we call honey in such a way that these two modes of sense data have been united in some synthetic experiential whole, is it possible to become aware of the sweetness of a yellow substance when it is perceived only visually. And according to Avicenna, the judgment regarding the sweetness of the yellow substance, just like the judgment regarding the threatfulness of the stick, is performed by the estimation.

Incidental perception does differ from the prior examples in one important respect, and in precisely this respect it also puts us before a seemingly severe interpretive difficulty the study of which will shed a great deal of light on our question on the relation between estimative apprehension of intentions and intentionality. The problem can be expressed through a series of questions. First of all, what does estimation apprehend in our example? Does it apprehend the sweetness, thus giving a gustatory enrichment to the experience which is exclusively visual at the outset? But would this not contradict Avicenna's own definition of intentions as that which "the internal faculties perceive [...] without the sense" (*Shifā' De an.* I.5, 43 [Rahman], 86 [van Riet]), since sweetness, after all,

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80 See Arist. *De an.* II.6, 418a20-25; III.1, 425a14-b4. Aristotle's famous example is the perception of something white as Diares' son. At the outset, this seems to constitute a case of greater complexity than Avicenna's example of being aware of the sweetness of a yellow substance one actually has only a visual sensation of. However, as should become clear once we have elaborated the comprehensive theory of estimation, cases such as Diares' son are perfectly compatible with Avicenna's account.

81 *Shifā' De an.* IV.1, 166 (Rahman), 6-7 (van Riet). I want to thank Jon McGinnis for his helpful suggestions regarding the translation of this passage.

would certainly be a prime example of the proper sensibles of taste? Thus, it seems that either Avicenna is unable to account for incidental perception or he has to yield in his distinction between the respective objects of the senses and estimation. Both horns of the dilemma are equally unenticing.

Black's take on the dilemma is that sweetness as such can be an intention when it is not actually conveyed by the external sense of taste (Black [1993], 225-226). Thus, non-sensibility in the absolute sense is not the defining characteristic of intentions. Instead, intention is constituted simply by the fact that an objective aspect of experience has not actually, i.e. in the present case, been apprehended by the senses even though it could in other cases be so conveyed. Black introduces two other passages, from the *Najāt* and *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*, to support her interpretation, neither of which, however, are unambiguously in favour of it.[82] In the end, Black argues that in incidental perception estimation is required to fill a gap of the filling of which imagination and common sense are incapable "since these internal senses only perceive what external senses themselves have perceived" (Black [1993], 226).

Black's argument can be countered simply by showing the falsity of the claim that compositive imagination, the formative faculty and common sense are incapable of filling the gap indicated by the experiential presence of sweetness when it is not actually sensed. Let us apply Avicenna's system of the internal senses to our example.[83] First, there is an actual sensation of a yellow substance. During this sensation, nothing precludes the compositive imagination, the single faculty capable of active analysis and synthesis of sensible forms and intentions, from retrieving the sensible 'sweetness' from the storehouse of sensible forms, i.e. from the formative faculty – as was already argued, there certainly must have been a prior sensation of sweetness, even sweetness of a yellow substance, for Avicenna's example to make any sense. When sweetness is thus brought to play, compositive imagination can connect it to the actually sensed yellowness. In this way, it will bring about an experience of a yellow object which is judged to taste sweet although there is no actual gustatory sensation of it. In light of this analysis, estimation is not needed to perform the operation Black intends, i.e. to present the sweetness to the experience in the absence of actual sensation of it. But according to Avicenna's text estimation has a role to play. It seems we are back at the starting point, wrestling with the dilemma.

I therefore propose a slightly different solution. Let us take a closer look at Avicenna's text. The crucial phrase is: "As for those which are sensible, we see a yellow thing, for instance, and we judge *that it is honey and sweet*." What does estimation do? First of all, it judges *that the yellow substance actually seen is honey*. It does also perform the further judgment that the substance is sweet, but it is important to pay attention to the latently hierarchical structure of the judgment. The proposition 'the substance is honey and sweet' should not be read as a

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82 Black (1993), 249-250, n. 29. The passages are in *Najāt De an.* III, 30 (tr. Rahman) and *Ishārāt* 124 (Forget).

83 A concise account of this system can be found in ch. 2.2 above.

simple conjunction but as an implicit inference: 'the substance is honey and (therefore) sweet'. Thus, the awareness of the sweetness of the yellow substance follows from the prior judgment that it is honey. What happens in this judgment is that the actual sensation of yellowness is subsumed under the intention (*maᶜnā*) 'honey' which is retrieved from memory by the compositive imagination due to similarities of the present sensation with earlier sensations which were combined with the intention 'honey'. The intention 'honey', on the other hand, entails the co-presence of yellowness and sweetness. Informed by this structure, the compositive imagination then retrieves the sensible quality 'sweetness' from the formative faculty, and combines it with the actually sensed yellowness. Although Avicenna's phrase is almost fatally elliptic, it makes perfect sense if we bear in mind the essentially holistic dynamics of his system of the internal senses. The required addendum then is that such sensible features of an experience which are not actually sensed can be only mediately present in the experience, i.e. they can only be re-presented through the mediation of an intention which entails the combination of them *with* the actually sensed sensible features. This intention as such cannot, of course, be sensed. Thus, intentions such as these seem to function as some kind of memorative quasi-concepts or proto-concepts that structure the experience.

In fact, Black herself eventually comes to an almost similar formulation on the basis of a passage from *Shifā' De an.* IV.3[84] and the passage referred to earlier on estimation based upon prior experience. In her own words, "Avicenna explains this estimative phenomenon as involving a complex process in which the estimative sense, with the aid of memory, sensation and the formative sense (*al-muṣawwirah*), reunites the forms and intentions perceived from a given object into the perception of a concrete whole. As a result, the estimative faculty is able to 'perceive the entirety of these things together', and to judge the object as an individual whole." (Black [1993], 226.)

Whatever the case in our interpretive puzzle, i.e. whether the intentions are non-sensible only in the sense of not having been actually apprehended by the external senses, as Black argues, or whether they are non-sensible through and through, an entirely different species of cognitive objects than all kinds of sense data, as I have argued, both my view and that of Black's are certainly in agreement in arguing that there is a definite and important role for estimation in incidental perception. If this is correct, then evidently there are cases of estimative apprehension of intentions that do not fit into Hasse's narrowly focused core theory. In itself this is nothing new, and Hasse of course is fully aware of Black's earlier study. But according to him, "[t]he problem remains, however, that this function of estimation [perception of absent perceptibles] cannot be compressed into a single scheme with the core function [instincts] described in Avicenna's abbreviated definitions of estimation, where the objects are connotational attributes that are not perceptible to the external senses." (Hasse [2000], 138.)

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84 *Shifā' De an.* IV.3, 165 (Rahman), 49-50 (van Riet). The passage is discussed below in ch. 3.4.

Yet in the cross-lighting of the requirements of doctrinal orthodoxy demanded by Hasse and of the most charitable attention to the written text represented by Black, it seems that there is a way to gain the best of both accounts, if we take the estimative grasp of the *intention of honey* as the key *explanans* in incidental perception. In the correct analysis of our experience we have neither a sensation of honey nor an estimative apprehension of sweetness. Instead, we have a sensation of yellowness, estimative apprehension of the intention of honey, and the combinatory operation performed by compositive imagination under the governance of estimation's apprehension of the intention of honey. The compositive imagination, working – and I stress this because it will turn out to be of some importance in what follows – under the governance of estimation, combines the actually perceived yellowness with the sweetness that is not actually perceived but has been perceived in the past and is therefore present in the formative faculty.

We are getting at a position to propose a comprehensive theory of estimation that enables us to re-evaluate the relation between the apprehension of intentions and intentionality in the modern sense, as well as shed some direly needed systematically strict light on certain seemingly puzzling remarks of Avicenna.

3.4 Intentions and Intentionality

It should be quite obvious by now that estimative apprehension of intentions is readily consonant with at least two of the three linguistic criteria of intentionality mentioned above. Nevertheless, let us examine them briefly one by one. As regards (1) failure of existential commitment, Avicenna's account of the perception of honey in the absence of gustatory sense data can be used as a straightforward example. Suppose that John senses something yellow, and suppose, for the sake of simplicity, that this is the only actual sensation that he has at that moment. Now, suppose further that due to his prior experiences of similar looking substances, what is actually sensed is enriched by other sense data (from John's formative faculty) under a suitable intention, so that all this results in an experience of the sweetest honey, albeit one that John is not actually tasting at that very moment. In such a case, the correct and most elemental description of his mental state would probably be 'John sees honey' – provided that 'see' is used in a sense which does not presuppose accuracy or success of the cognitive act in question. It should be obvious that the truth of this description does not entail the existence of any honey in front of John in the extramental world nor, by the same token, does it entail the truth of the proposition 'there is honey (in front of John)'. The same goes for the non-existence of the honey and the truth of the corresponding proposition 'there is no honey (in front of John)'. John may full well be right in his estimation, but equally well he might be mistaken in his application of the intention of honey to the yellow substance that he sees, even though he does correctly perceive the yellowness.

The case of (2) failure of truth-functionality is quite similar. Suppose that John perceives the yellow substance as honey and consequently believes, quite reasonably we might add, that it would taste sweet were he only to have a taste of it. In such a case, a correct description of his mental state would be a proposition such as 'John believes that the yellow substance, which he takes to be honey, is sweet'. Now, quite obviously the truth of that proposition by no means entails the truth of either the proposition 'the yellow substance is sweet' or its negation 'the yellow substance is not sweet'. The truth values of these two propositions are dependent on an entirely different feature of the world than that of the first proposition: in the one case, sweetness or non-sweetness of the yellow substance, in the other, John's believing or John's not believing.

Avicenna explicitly refers to similar criteria in discussing the case of a person who feels irrational disgust towards honey because of its resemblance in colour to bile:

> So let us say that [estimation] is the greatest judge (*al-ḥākimu al-akbaru*) in animals. It judges by way of an imaginative occurrence without this being certain (*yaḥkumu ʿalā sabīli inbiʿāthin takhayyuliyyin min ghayri an yakūna dhālika muḥaqqaqan*). This is like what happens to a man when he finds honey filthy due to its resembling bile (*li mushābahatihi al-marāra*).[85] If the estimation judges that [the honey] is so in a judgment on it, the soul follows that estimation even if the intellect disapproves of it (*yukadhdhibuhu*). Moreover, animals and people who are like them follow in their actions this judgment from the estimation which does not lie upon rational analysis (*lā tafsīla mantiqiyyan lahu*) but takes place only by way of some occurrence (*ʿalā sabīli inbiʿāthin mā faqaṭ*), although because of intimacy with reason (*mujāwarati al-nuṭq*) something happens to the senses and faculties of a human being which almost makes his internal faculties rational (*nuṭqiyya*) in distinction from animals.[86]

According to Avicenna's explicit words, it is the estimation's judgment of the sense data under the wrong intention that introduces the erroneous element into our cognition.[87] The operation of estimation can indeed introduce and subsequently sediment such strong beliefs in us that even our knowing their falsity through rational demonstration will not eradicate them or the consequent emo-

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85 Here I have deviated slightly from Rahman who has *li mushāyahatihi al-marāra*, roughly 'due to its being disfigured as bile'. I believe the adopted emendation (which is orthographically minimal) makes much better sense in the context. Let it be said, however, that my interpretation is in no way dependent on the adopted reading – the central point remains the same as in Rahman's version of the text. Thanks are due to Jon McGinnis for pointing out the possible emendation.

86 *Shifā' De an.* IV.3, 182-183 (Rahman), 35-36 (van Riet). Thanks are due to Jon McGinnis for his insightful comments on the translation of this passage.

87 Thus, it seems that in this regard estimation plays quite a similar role to that which Victor Caston (1996, 1998) has conceived for *phantasia* in Aristotle. This, for its part, gives credence to the general claim that the Avicennian internal senses are basically a differentiation of Aristotle's *phantasia*, with the proviso that estimation is the central agent in most of the complexities *phantasia* was designed to account for.

tional reaction. For the person who finds honey disgusting due to its resemblance to bile, knowing that honey in fact is not bile and tastes quite different from it may not do much to alleviate her situation.

As regards the remaining linguistic criterion of intentionality, (3) failure of intersubstitutivity of coextensive expressions *salva veritate*, our examples of yellow substance as honey or honey as bile are no longer enough. This criterion is essentially different from the first two since it is hard to understand without presupposing linguistic capacities in the subject having the intentional state. Thus, suitable case examples will only suggest themselves once we have integrated conceptually structured beliefs into our account of intentionality. Therefore, the discussion of estimation under this criterion will have to be slightly postponed.

In the meantime, a puzzling question raises its head. Given that estimation is one of the passive faculties, the function of which is simply to apprehend the intentions,[88] how can it have such a seemingly active role? One would suppose that rendering something inherently correct, i.e. the passively received sense data, into something potentially incorrect, i.e. the synthetic whole of experience under a given intention, requires action, not simply the passive reception of cognitive data.

I believe this puzzle can only be solved, once again, through a holistic understanding of Avicenna's system of the internal senses. Of course, provided that a normally functioning sensory system is trustworthy, to perceive something as other than what it actually is, requires mental addition or transformation of experiential information. More specifically, the sense data must be combined with an intention retrieved from the memory and some additional sense data retrieved from the formative faculty. As we know, this combination is performed by the compositive imagination, the only active faculty in the Avicennian classification of the internal senses. But where does compositive imagination draw its cue for the combination? True, in some cases it may function quite arbitrarily, and Avicenna introduces non-veridical sleep and a wandering mind as examples of such arbitrary operation.[89] But the most common everyday experience manifests a degree of coherence that seems antithetical to such arbitrariness – indeed, one of the most celebrated means in the history of philosophy of drawing a distinction between true perception and mere fancy, without appealing to the stronghold of the external world, has been by means of such coherence. Whence does it come?

Unsurprisingly perhaps, here the answer is estimation. Avicenna repeatedly stresses the leading status of estimation in the hierarchy of the internal senses, expressing this status in a variety of ways. A discussion of these will dissolve our puzzle and show the way in which estimation may be involved in all intentionality.

In the following text Avicenna makes the seemingly contradictory claim that estimation can be regarded not only the estimative faculty, but also the

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88 Cf. Avicenna's criteria of distinction of the internal senses in ch. 2.2.

89 See, e.g., *Shifā' De an.* IV.2, 172-173, 179-180 (Rahman), 17-18, 29-31 (van Riet).

imaginative and memorative faculty, due to the fact that these operations take place under estimation's guidance.

> It seems that the estimative faculty is in itself (*bi ᶜaynihā*) the cogitative, the imaginative (*al-mutakhayyila*) and the memorative [faculty] and that it is in itself the judging [faculty]. It is judging in its essence (*bi dhātihā*), imaginative and memorative in its movements and acts (*bi ḥarakātihā wa afᶜālihā*). It is imaginative through its work in the forms and intentions, and memorative through what its work is led to (*bi mā yuntahā ilayhi ᶜamaluhā*). As regards the retentive [faculty], it is the power (*quwwa*) of the treasury [of the estimative faculty]. It seems that memory of an intention which takes place deliberately (*al-tadhakkuru al-wāqiᶜu bi al-qaṣd*) is exclusive to the human being, that the treasury of forms is the formative [faculty] or the imagery (*al-khayāl*), and that the treasury of intentions is the retentive [faculty]. It is no obstacle (*lā yamtaniᶜu*) that the estimative [faculty] is judging in its essence but imaginative and memorative in its movements. (*Shifā' De an.* IV.1, 168-169 [Rahman], 11 [van Riet].)

I don't think we should read Avicenna as temporarily rejecting his rigorous fivefold classification of the internal senses here. Instead, estimation can be said to be the memory in that memory provides the intention the structure of which is imposed upon the whole of experience by the operation of estimation. More precisely, since estimation is here identified as the cogitative faculty as well, the operation is performed by means of the compositive imagination under the guidance of estimation's apprehending a certain intention.

Plenty of further passages support this interpretation. In the passage on estimative apprehension based upon prior experience which we have already studied,[90] Avicenna spoke of an intention *between* "the [sensible] form of a thing and the form of what is connected to it" (*Shifā' De an.* IV.3, 184 [Rahman], 39 [van Riet]). This is most plausibly understood in the light of the structuring role of intentions in cognition. Later in the same passage, estimation is said to apprehend the whole consisting of sensible forms and non-sensible intentions together. This is given as explanation of animal learning, such as the case of a dog which has been beaten by a stick and subsequently develops a fear of sticks. Again, it is quite natural to assume that the dog's experience of a stick is organized or structured according to an intention of threat apprehended by estimation, so that the compositive imagination then performs its own operation according to this apprehension.

On the other hand, Avicenna sees a corporeal correlate of the leading structural role of estimation in cognition in the fact that estimation presides over the whole brain whereas the other internal senses are ascribed their respective locations in the brain (*Shifā' De an.* V.8, 268 [Rahman], 182-183 [van Riet]). This would contradict the more frequent accounts of estimation having its

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90 See ch. 3.3 above.

proper location at the back of the middle ventricle of the brain,[91] were we not to interpret the present account as emphasizing the function of each internal sense in the genetic account of experience. Indeed, in our passage the common sense and the formative faculty are located in the frontal ventricle of the brain due to their intimacy with the external senses in their operation. Correspondingly, memory is at the very back of the brain, whereas compositive imagination or cogitation is placed in the brain's middle ventricle due to its mediating role as the faculty which combines the sensible and non-sensible aspects of experience into a whole.

Avicenna also expresses the hierarchical link between estimation and compositive imagination in more active terms, such as in the following text. Memory of a forgotten mental content occurs when

> estimation begins, by means of its imaginative faculty (*bi quwwatihi al-mutakhayyila*), to make forms which are present in the imagery [i.e. the formative faculty] appear one by one so that it is as if it saw the things the forms of which they are. (*Shifā' De an.* IV.1, 167 [Rahman], 9 [van Riet].)

That estimation "turns toward" the formative faculty can only happen through the mediation of the compositive imagination, and this results in a perceptual experience structured according to the intention which the estimation had at the outset. I believe this would also be Avicenna's account of our conscious imagination, or deliberate entertainment of certain perceptual representations by the subject.

In yet other places, estimation is said to be "in reality the internal percipient"[92] and the faculty governing the other cognitive faculties (*Shifā' De an.* IV.3, 182 [Rahman], 34-35 [van Riet]; *Ishārāt* 124 [Forget]). Furthermore, Avicenna mentions the case of dreams where it produces non-veridical images as a specific example of its governing function (*Shifā' De an.* IV.1, 164-165, 171, 184-185 [Rahman], 4, 14-16, 38-40 [van Riet]).

The problem of the activity of estimation in structuring experience can now be addressed. Strictly speaking, estimation is not active. To my knowledge Avicenna never claims, for instance, that estimation would arbitrarily peruse the storehouse of memory in search for an intention according to which to structure the sense data. Instead, it is always presented with an intention: either the sense data presents itself as already sufficiently structured so that an intention is readily – one might say instinctively, or in Avicenna's words, naturally[93]

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91 See ch. 2.2 above. *Ishārāt* 125 (Forget) gives both accounts in one and the same passage, so it is safe to assume that Avicenna does not take them to be incompatible.

92 Zayᶜur, Ali & Al-Qashsh, Idwar (eds.) (1987). *Qānūn fī al-ṭibb*. Beirut: Mu'assasa Izz al-Dīn, 96 – reference according to Black (1993), 250, n. 37. I have not had access to the edition by Zayᶜur and Al-Qashsh, and any such formulation is absent in the English translation edited by Bakhtiyar.

93 Cf. the discussion of instinctive estimation in ch. 3.3. The sort of naturalness we are dealing with here should perhaps be conceived as a kind of formal causality, if we take it to be due to the specific kind of soul of the subject of apprehension. However, at least in the case of human beings, we should not speak of this formal causality as

– apprehended, or an intention simply comes up from the memory through the operation of compositive imagination. Although the operation of estimation is passive, its apprehension has to be conceived as *judging*,[94] in perfect coherence with its governing role in the Avicennian hierarchy of the internal senses. That the estimation's apprehension of an intention amounts to a judgment means that the rest of the internal senses on their turn obey this judgment or function according to it. More precisely, the compositive imagination has a certain intention as a guideline in its active synthetic operation in relation to the formative faculty and memory, and in this way also these two passive faculties can be said to mediately obey the estimative judgment.

I believe that this is not only an internally coherent explanation, but also one which accords well with the phenomena. Despite our willingness to call our flights of fancy voluntary or something under the control of our own will, it is hard to imagine what it would be like to purely voluntarily invent a content of thought that is then manifested in perceptual form by imagination. Rather, in the majority of cases it seems that something to think simply comes up – arbitrarily for sure, but through whose arbitration, is already much harder to identify.

We are beginning to see the comprehensive picture of estimation's influence on intentional experience. However, our consideration still has to be extended so that we can fit intellectual apprehension of particular beings under universal concepts in it. For the purpose of such an extension, consider the following brief remark.

> And it is as if [the compositive imagination] were a power (*quwwa*) of the estimation and, through the mediation of estimation, of the intellect. (*Ishārāt* 125 [Forget].)

At first sight, the core of the passage seems to be an Avicennian version of the common Aristotelian doctrine according to which the intellect never understands without an image, i.e. that a human act of intellection requires a corresponding representative action of *phantasia*.[95] The difference seems to concern only the replacement of *phantasia* with estimation. But in view of what we've learned of the operation of estimation by now, a rather detailed picture can be drawn, one intimately connected with the theme of intentionality. In this picture, subsumption of individuals under a general concept, or vice versa, fictitious imagination of individuals according to a given general concept takes place through the mediation of estimation, compositive imagination, or cogitation as it is properly called when in human beings it functions under the governance of reason, and the sense data either received from the external senses or retained in the formative faculty. The first case is quite straightforward, or does

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necessity, since we always have the chance – at least in principle – to change our "instinctive" behaviour.

94 Cf. *Shifā' De an.* IV.1, 168-169 (Rahman), 11 (van Riet): "[estimation] is judging in its essence".

95 Arist. *De an.* III.7, 431a16-17: "[T]he soul never understands (*noei*) without a *phantasmatos*."

not yield to a very detailed analysis: the intention of the perceived particular is simply subsumed under a proper concept. But the particular's being apprehended in the light of that general concept, i.e. as an instance of the very genus or species, is of course an intentional act, as can readily be seen once we consider the resulting mental state in the light of one of the linguistic criteria of intentionality, i.e. (3) failure of intersubstitutivity of coextensive expressions *salva veritate*. Let us say that Jack's supervisor in his job at the university is Jill, a very nice person whom Jack finds highly attractive, to the extent that he has become profoundly enamoured with her. Jill is an unacknowledged biological daughter of the mayor of the town Jack inhabits, and it so happens that Jack is an ardent opponent of the mayor's policy, and durign the mayor's reign has developed a veritable disgust of everything related to the mayor, including the mayor's offspring. Now, in our definition of the situation, Jack would not hesitate in affirming the proposition 'Jack loves his supervisor' (or 'I love my supervisor') as true whereas he would be equally eager to deny truth of the proposition 'Jack loves one of the mayor's daughters' (or 'I love one of the mayor's daughters'). The syntactic object in both sentences refers to the same particular yet under different descriptions, due to which the sentences receive different truth evaluations, and thus fulfill the criterion of (3) failure of intersubstitutivity of coextensive expressions *salva veritate*.[96]

Let us consider cases with an inverted direction of fit, i.e. cases where estimation apprehends an intention according to a given concept, so that this intention subsequently provides the blueprint for the compositive imagination in its synthesis of a corresponding perceptual object from the sense data retained in the formative faculty. In such cases, general concepts are involved from the get-go as principles of estimation, as the "source" of its particular intentions, in the constitution of the sort of intentional states proper to estimation. Take the example of my reading a description of the giant squid. The description is by necessity given in general terms whereas the animal I imagine by means of it is by equal necessity particular – it has a certain shape, a certain colour, and emits certain noises, for instance. But despite the inverted direction of fit, we end up with a particular being subsumed under the universal 'giant squid', and the corresponding mental state is intentional in precisely the same sense as the example in our discussion of the opposite direction of fit between the operation of the intellect and the internal senses.

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96 It might be claimed that our example is better analysed as an instance of incidental perception, for 'one's supervisor' and 'the mayor's daughter' are attributes quite similar to Aristotle's 'Diares' son'. However, to me the only plausible interpretation of Aristotle's example is that in the absence of intellection, something white cannot be *explicitly* perceived as Diares' son (i.e. subsumed under the general notion 'Diares' son' which can be predicated of multiple individuals) but only as "some this", a thing ostensibly present in a perceptual experience, which is in a certain relation to "some that", another thing ostensibly present or potentially so in a perceptual experience. The relata can only be described as Diares and his son (or one of his sons) when intellection of sonhood and fatherhood is in play. Moreover, the necessity of intellection in our example is even more obvious since one of the expressions ('one of the mayor's daughters') picks an individual from a group construed by means of general terms.

To gather our threads together, let us bring into play one more example testifying to the special role of estimation in the hierarchy of the internal senses. In the following passage from the *Taʿlīqāt* Avicenna delimits the operation of external senses quite narrowly, implying once again that the full experience requires the structuring agency of estimation.

> The senses are nothing but sensation (*laysa al-ḥawāssu illā al-iḥsās*), regardless of whether the form of what is sensed exists (*ḥuṣūl*) in the senses so that we know that what is sensed exists externally (*wujūdan min khārij*) or whether it exists in the intellect or the estimation. [...]
>
> In the same way, when our hands are affected by heat for instance, they sense it, and there is nothing in them apart from sensation of it (*lā yakūnu lahā illā al-iḥsāsu bihā*). Insofar as we know that this heat is certainly in a hot body, this is only in the intellect. In the same way, when you have been carrying something heavy, you sense the heaviness and are affected by the heaviness (*tanfaʿilu ʿan al-thiql*). The soul or the estimation judges that this heaviness is certainly in the body of the thing [which you carry] and is not effected by [any other thing] resembling it, like heat is not effected by the heat of [another thing of] its kind.[97]

Avicenna repeatedly stresses that "the senses are nothing but sensation", in a sensation of heat "there is nothing [in our hands] apart from the sensation of [heat]", when one carries something heavy one only senses "the heaviness and [is] affected by the heaviness". These sensible qualities are intentionally attributed to some object of perception or of belief only through the operation of the intellect or of the estimation. If we read Avicenna in the light of what has been argued above, he claims that we only have cohesive, unified objects of perception through the structuring agency of estimation; as regards intellect as another alternative, it can only perform its structuring operation through the mediation of estimation in the manner we have just described. Thus, to the extent that our usual experiences do have distinct objects with multiple qualities, sensible and otherwise, our experience is usually structured by intentions. This is true even of the experiences that are as removed from practical import as can be imagined.[98] The senses cannot convey any objects with a definite structure. For this, estimative apprehension of a structuring intention is required, and as a result, simple sense experiences are rare, if not non-existent.

So, to sum up briefly: estimative apprehension of intentions is intentional through and through in that the intention provides the structural blueprint for

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97 *Taʿlīqāt* 68-69 (Badawī). For a similar claim regarding intellectual apprehension of essences, see *Taʿlīqāt* 147 (Badawī).

98 It may well be that in all animal instances estimative apprehension is closely related to practical concerns. However, as Black (1993, 220-221) has pointed out, this does not exhaust the various operations of estimation. One need only consider the epistemological role Avicenna accords to so called estimative premises (see Black [1993], 229-232) to see that at least in human beings the operation of estimation can be entirely independent from practical concerns.

the whole perceptual experience. Thus, the scholars assuming Avicenna to have a theory of intentionality based upon the concept of intention are on the right track. But this assertion does not say much in itself. As we have seen, through a reasonable amount of reconstructive labour Avicenna turns out to have a much more elaborate theory of the role of intentions in intentionality. On the other hand, our previous discussion of intentionality in the lower internal senses of common sense and formative faculty must now be qualified according to the caveat mentioned at the end of their discussion.[99] If intentions play such a fundamental role in the intentional structuring of experience, it seems natural to assume that some intentions would be at play even in Avicenna's examples of the descending waterdrop and revolving torch. But insofar as this is true, it implies a profoundly holistic understanding of the system of the internal senses. Thus, our earlier contention remains: estimative apprehension of intentions alone, separated as an operation of an atomistic faculty from other cognitive operations of the soul, is not the whole story of intentionality in Avicenna. The whole picture can only be seen once the system is considered as a whole.

Until now, we have mostly discussed passages in which estimation enriches or enables quite ordinary perceptual experiences. But it clearly has an important role in the case of such intentional states as beliefs as well, at least in the case of human beings, as becomes obvious from Avicenna's discussion of the so called estimative premisses or judgments. In human beings, estimation's judgment is said to command the soul to "deny the existence of things that are not imagined and that are not represented in [estimation], and refuse assent to them" (*Shifā' De an.* IV.1, 166 [Rahman], 8 [van Riet]). It can even be quite obstinate in its judgments, so that the resulting beliefs are difficult to eradicate, even through rational demonstration. Beliefs based upon estimative judgment are a frequent source of error in a number of fields. To take an example from philosophical cosmology, the reason why the Aristotelian doctrine of the limited cosmos may be hard to accept is precisely our inability to imaginatively conceive of such absolute delimitation. Despite the rational demonstration of its truth, estimation has a strong tendency to infer the falsity of the doctrine from its unimaginability.[100] For a more common example, consider the already discussed case of the person who finds honey disgusting due to its outward resemblance with bile. In both cases, the beliefs obviously fulfill at least some of the linguistic criteria of intentionality. Furthermore, Avicenna takes the role of estimation in the formation of beliefs to be significant enough to merit the positing of estimative premisses as a distinct class of propositions in logic, a class corresponding roughly to Aristotle's *endoxa*, i.e. widely accepted but not demonstrated beliefs.[101]

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99 See ch. 3.2 above.

100 In his critique of the *falāsifa* on the question whether the world has a temporal beginning, Ghazālī refers time and again to the false limits put upon our capacities of conception by estimation; cf. *Tahāfut* I, 23, 31-33, 35-39 (Marmura).

101 For far more profound examinations on estimative premisses than can be given here, see Black (1993), 228-232, 234-236 and Black (1990).

Another distinct class of intentional states is formed by emotions. I do not pretend to offer a full account of Avicenna's theory of emotions here, but some remarks with regard to their intentionality can be made. Besides, an excellent analysis of Avicenna's remarks on the topic has already been performed by Hasse,[102] and I believe Hasse's insights are on the right track once we ignore his ultimately implausible persistence in excluding intentionality from the picture. In a nutshell, according to Avicenna emotional states must be conceived as experiential compounds of perceptible objects and related intentions of positivity, neutrality or negativity depending on the specific nature of each emotion. Emotions are further distinguished by means of an additional intention of the object's temporal "location" in relation to the moment of consideration.[103] According to this analysis, fear of a future occasion, for example, consists of an imagined state of affairs *coupled with* an intention that this affair is undesirable *and* an intention that the affair may take place in the future. Wish of a future occasion, on the contrary, is distinguished from fear by the change of the intention of the affair's undesirability to one of its desirability. Thus, in a sense emotions are "doubly intentional". The representation of the state of affairs that is the object of the emotional state is structured according to some intention in the general sense described above, and to this representation of the state of affairs (already structured by an intention) are added – or perhaps one should say, blended or assimilated – the intentions of evaluation and of temporal distance from the moment of consideration. As regards the peculiar experience of *feeling* an emotion, *being in fear* for example, I am unaware of an explicit analysis by Avicenna. However, I believe it is best conceived to be due to the effect which the estimative apprehension of the intentions constitutive of the emotion has on the desiderative faculties, i.e. the couple formed by the concupiscible faculty and the irascible faculty.[104] Nevertheless, while these faculties can perhaps be held re-

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102 Hasse (2000), 133-134. Hasse's bases his account on *Shifā' De an.* IV.3 187 (Rahman), 43-44 (van Riet). An interesting similarity can be noted between Hasse's analysis and the examination of belief and desire as intentional modes in Searle (1983), 29-36. A wider discussion on Avicenna's theory of emotions is in Knuuttila (2004), 218-226.

103 *Shifā' De an.* V.1, 205-206 (Rahman), 75-77 (van Riet). In the context Avicenna gives a number of aspects determining human emotions. Particularly interesting is the emotion of shame which is said to involve the awareness that another person has perceived one's own misdeed.

104 In *Shifā' De an.* IV.4, 194 (Rahman), 54-55 (van Riet), Avicenna points out that an animal perceives that it wants something, for otherwise it would not proceed to action. Furthermore, he adds that the animal's wanting is not due to any of its cognitive faculties. These assertions can naturally be interpreted to affirm the phenomenal peculiarity of emotions. However, Avicenna soon adds that there is a desire proper to the imaginative faculty (*ishtiyāqun mā ilā shahwatin li al-quwwati al-khayāliyya*) as well, giving parental affection towards one's offspring and desire to free oneself from shackles as examples. This desire of the imaginative faculty is then treated as analogical with the desires proper to the concupiscible and irascible faculties. (*Shifā' De an.* IV.4, 195 [Rahman], 57-58 [van Riet]). My (admittedly very sketchy) interpretation is that the apprehension of a given object as positive or negative is due to the cognitive faculties, whereas the corresponding emotional reaction is due either to the concupiscible (in the case of positive things) or the irascible (in the case of negative things) faculty. However, the matter requires further study for which we do not have the occasion within the scope of the present study. For some discussion, see Knuuttila (2004), 222-224.

sponsible for the peculiar feel of emotions, the intentional structure of the emotion is entirely explainable by means of estimative apprehension of intentions.

3.5 Relationality of Estimation and Self-Awareness

As a brief concluding note of our examination of the Avicennian theory of intentionality, let us pay passing attention to an important point of connection between the themes of intentionality and self-awareness. Consider once more the example of the dog that is afraid of sticks due to a prior bad experience with one. Now, it is crucial to notice that the intention of threatfulness apprehended in the stick by the dog is particular to the individual dog which has had the bad prior experience. Sticks appear as threatful *for that dog*, not for any arbitrary subject of experience. There is of course a sense in which any perceptual appearance is particular. Objects of perception are apprehended by subjects that are situated in a common world with them, and since this world is material, one and only one subject can inhabit any particular perceptual position at any one time. Thus, for instance the respective perspectives of any two simultaneous visual perceptions are by necessity different. Furthermore, if we could perform a sufficiently detailed measurement of the sensitivity of the sense organs of all subjects of sense experience, it might full well turn out, *per impossibile*, that even perceptions of the same object from the same perspective at the same time would be particular to each subject. The object would appear different to each subject due to the supposed differences in the sensitivity of their sense organs. However, I want to suggest that estimation is more radically particular to the subject of experience. In this case the particularity, or better uniqueness, is irreducible to the material circumstances of the apprehension. Instead, the apprehension of a stick as threatful would not be possible without precisely this certain set of prior experiences that are particular to this very dog, i.e. without the particular dog's experiential history. If we want to give a plausible account of why the dog apprehends the stick as threatful, we have to include this particular dog with the relevant part of its particular history in it. Without radical revisions in our conception of the essence of dogness we are unable to explain the threatfulness of the stick in any other way than as threatfulness for this particular dog. The outcome of this observation is that estimation is radically relational, or self-involving, in the sense that it consists in such a relation between an object and a subject that the particularity, the uniqueness of the subject determines the way the object appears. Thus, the individual subject itself is included in an estimative apprehension of an intention as one of the relata necessary to complete the whole. No estimation is anyone's estimation, the intention is partly determined by the subject of its apprehension.

This inherent relationality of the intentions is not exclusively characteristic to the sort of estimative apprehension that is based upon prior experience. In fact, it may be even better highlighted by the other type of estimative apprehension we have considered. In our discussion of instinctive or "natural" appre-

hension of intentions we contrasted the apprehension of a wolf by a sheep with the apprehension of the same wolf by a human hunter. The outcome was two drastically different objects of perception, the difference between which was shown to be due to the relationality of the corresponding intentions. One of the relata, i.e. the object, the wolf, stays the same in the extramental world, but a change in the other relatum, i.e. the subject, the sheep and the hunter, makes all the difference in its appearance. The sheep apprehends the wolf as hostile *towards itself* and estimates a contact with the wolf as potentially fatal *to itself*. On the other hand, the hunter apprehends the wolf as something capable to be terminated *by herself*.

While this might still seem to be accountable by means of the sort of reduction of particularity to material circumstances that I proposed in the case of the dog and the stick, the situation is permanently transformed once we consider the fact that for the hunter it is possible to change her stance toward the wolf by apprehending it under a different intention. By conceiving the wolf, not as prey but as an instance of wildlife to be protected because of its inherent worth, the hunter not only brings about a change in the way the wolf appears to her. She herself is changed as well: the subject to whom the wolf appears as prey is in an important respect a subject different from that to whom the wolf appears as an inherently worthy instance of wildlife. Thus, intention is to be conceived as a bridge between the two poles of experience, the appearance of the object under a given intention is radically dependent on the subject of the experience. Estimation is unique in this respect, for with the other constitutive aspect of perceptual appearance, i.e. sense perception in the strict sense, it is not possible to bring about equally thoroughgoing changes of "perspective". Of course, at least in principle one can take a look at any visible object at several different angles, but this always involves motion in the world, either by the subject or by the object. However, the subject is not changed in any important respect in such motion because it is not involved with the apprehension in the way it is in estimation.

Now, there is of course an important difference between the human being and the sheep. The human being alone is capable of reflecting upon her estimative perspective, whereas the sheep is insurmountably tied to its own. However, I want to suggest that this difference is not due to any important divergence in the respective estimative capacities of the two creatures. Instead, the human capacity of reflection is solely due to her being essentially an intellect. The case of reflection is brought about for heuristic reasons only, to highlight a feature common to both the sheep and the human as beings capable of estimation, hence beings with intentional states. Thus, in my interpretation Avicenna conceives of intentions as inherently relational to the subject *in general*. Intentions are not subject-neutral, instead, the apprehending subject is indelibly involved in the apprehension of a perceptible object under a given intention. More precisely, intentional awareness is self-involving in the sense that intentionally apprehended objects are always objects *for someone*, even though this

aspect of intentional experience does not have to figure as an explicit feature of the experience.

If my analysis is correct, one would expect that insofar as Avicennian animals are capable of intentional apprehension of perceptible objects, they are somehow aware of themselves as well. If such is indeed the case, then Avicenna would – unlike his more famous fellow dualist Descartes – not deny at least a certain primitive type of self-awareness from animals. As we will see,[105] there are texts in which he seems to hesitate in the attribution of self-awareness to animals, but in equal amount there are also passages where he explicitly asserts that animals are self-aware in quite the same sense as human beings. Furthermore, in the texts that positively assert animal self-awareness, the role of estimation is often emphasised.

The foregoing will have to suffice as a pointer towards a topic which will be studied in greater detail in a more proper place.[106] It remains to be seen whether the two seemingly conflicting claims by Avicenna on animal self-awareness can be reconciled on the basis of the relation of estimative intentionality and self-awareness sketched here. If this preliminary account will turn out to be convincing in the more careful analysis, the fundamental connection between the two fields of enquiry, i.e. intentional awareness and self-awareness, can no longer be unhesitatingly considered a modern innovation. Just how innovative Avicenna is in taking perception to be self-involving to such a strong degree, is a historical question of great interest.

3.6 Summary

To sum up, in the foregoing we have argued that Avicenna takes cognitive states to be intentional through and through, from the level of the most common and simple perception to any act of intellection of particulars. In chapter 3.2 we started with a discussion of two passages that suggest an operation of intentional temporal synthesis by the common sense in the case of perception of movement. Discussion of these passages raised a doubt on the straightforward equivocation made by some scholars between Avicenna's theory of the estimative apprehension of intentions and his alleged theory of intentionality. Although it eventually turned out that estimation may have a role to play even in the sort of intentionality proper to the most primitive level of perceptual cognition, our material proved that the Avicennian discussion of intentionality cannot be simply reduced to his discussion of estimative apprehension of intentions (*maʿānī*) taken as a separate cognitive act. The necessity of a holistic approach was argued throughtout the chapter.

In chapter 3.3 we proceeded with a discussion of the divergent scholarly opinions on Avicenna's theory of estimation, and ended up to argue for an interpretation according to which intentions provide a structural blueprint for all

105 Cf. ch. 5.2 below.
106 Cf. ch. 5.2 below. See also the discussion in Kaukua & Kukkonen (forthcoming).

experiences. As the faculty apprehending the intentions, estimation thus performs a crucial structuring function in the constitution of all perceptual experiences. In chapter 3.4 we took this interpretation of estimative apprehension of intentions as our cue in the study of the relation between Avicenna's theory of estimation and his possible theory of intentionality in the modern sense. It turned out that through its structuring role estimation is indeed a key term in the Avicennian explanation of the phenomenon of intentionality. But it also turned out that any simple equivocation of intentionality and apprehension of intentions will not do. Instead, somewhat against the grain of the *status quaestionis* in existing scholarship, a fairly elaborate conception on the role of estimation in intentionality can be found in Avicenna – a role which was seen to fulfill a number of modern criteria for intentional states. Interestingly though, in Avicenna's pre-modern perspective the structure of mental states is not created by the cognitive subject, rather, estimation is by nature a passively recipient faculty. There is an order in the things themselves that can be grasped by the cognitive subject through a corresponding cognitive faculty.

We concluded in chapter 3.5 with an allusion to an interesting connection between self-awareness and intentional awareness brought about by estimation. This connection was based on the subject-involving nature of the intentions, but a more thorough discussion of it was postponed to chapter 5.2.

4 EXPLANATORY ROLES OF SELF-AWARENESS

In the following chapter the task will be to show that self-awareness plays a crucial explanatory role in Avicenna's theory of the human soul. Three of the most important purposes for which Avicenna appeals to the phenomenon of self-awareness will be examined. Firstly, and most importantly, Avicenna believes that self-awareness provides an answer to the question of the individuation of human souls, certainly a pressing one for any dualism that embraces the Aristotelian hylomorphic ontology with regard to particular beings in general. Avicenna elaborates this question explicitly in the light of self-awareness, the interpreter's task is just to collect the somewhat dispersed materials and slightly rearrange them. In the end, Avicenna's position will be quite understandable for a modern reader, even presaging some of the elements later deemed essential to the individuality of human existence.

As regards the other two explanatory roles for which Avicenna appeals to the phenomenon of self-awareness, these concern the mutually related questions of the phenomenological unity of experience and of the mode of reference of first personal indexical expressions in distinction from third personal expressions such as proper names or fully designated descriptions. The way in which self-awareness figures in Avicenna's treatment of these questions seems largely parasitic on, or even appendical to, the answer to the primary question concerning the explanation of the individuation of human souls. Moreover, Avicenna does not discuss these questions with any of the explicitness he shows with regard to the first question; obviously they, particularly the question of the reference of first personal indexical expressions, were not as problematic for him as they have been for some of our contemporaries. However, I still consider both Avicenna's explicit suggestions and their implications interesting enough to briefly dwell on them on their own right. In the end, it seems that slightly different aspects of self-awareness are appealed to in the treatment of these questions in comparison to those relevant to the first question.

What should become evident in the consideration of the explanatory roles Avicenna accords to the phenomenon of self-awareness is the fact that to successfully fulfill these roles his concept of self-awareness has to be a fairly spe-

cific one. It will turn out that Avicenna is required to show considerable analytic acuity in his corresponding description of the phenomenon in order to be able to single out just those aspects relevant to his concerns from the bundle of data contained in any ordinary conscious experience, and to be able to present the outcome as a *real* and *distinguishable* structural constituent of that experience instead of just an arbitrary abstraction of a feature or a set of features. In time, these considerations will lead us to the topic of the fifth chapter.

4.1 Individuation of Human Souls

We will do well to begin our investigation from the Avicennian *locus classicus*, i.e. the thought experiment frequently referred to in later literature as the flying man. As has been pointed out by a number of scholars, Avicenna makes frequent use of the flying man in his texts, with slight variations in the argumentative purposes he employs the case to.[107] Easily the instance most often referred to is that found at the end of the first chapter of the first book of the psychological part of the *Shifā'*:

> We say: one of us must imagine (*yatawahhama*) himself as created all at once and perfect but with his sight veiled from observing external things, and as created floating in the air or the void so that he would not encounter air resistance which he would have to sense, and with his limbs separate from each other in such a way that they neither meet nor touch each other. He must then reflect upon [the question] whether he would affirm the existence of his essence (*wujūda dhātihi*).
>
> He would not hesitate to affirm that his essence exists (*li dhātihi mawjūda*), but he would not thereby affirm any of his limbs, any of his internal organs, whether heart or brain, or any of the external things. Rather, he would be affirming his essence (*dhātahu*) without affirming for it length, breadth or depth. And if in this state he were able to imagine (*yatakhayyala*) a hand or some other limb, he would not imagine it (*yatakhayyalahu*) as part of his essence (*dhātihi*) or a condition for his essence (*sharṭan fī dhātihi*).
>
> Now, you know that what is affirmed is different from what is not affirmed and what is established (*al-muqarru bihi*) is

107 Marmura (1986) investigates the three variations in the *Shifā'* and the *Ishārāt*. In addition to these, Hasse (2000), 81-82, presents a variation from the *Mashriqiyyūn* and a closely related passage from *Risāla al-aḍḥawiyya fī al-maʿād*, and points out an allusion to the flying man in the *Mubāḥathāt*. For the influence of the thought experiment on twelfth and thirteenth century Latin authors, see Hasse (2000), 80-92. A comprehensive list of Latin writers quoting the flying man of *Shifā'* I.1 can be found in Gilson (1929), 41-42. The similarities between the flying man and Descartes' *cogito* have not escaped the attention of scholars, though it seems difficult, if not impossible, to prove any historical connection between Avicenna and Descartes. For the most recent assessments of the relation between the two authors, see Druart (1988), McTighe (1988), and Hasnawi (1997). As regards possible predecessors of the flying man, Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny (1959), 81, has pointed to an essentially similar passage in *Peri ēthōn*, a brief treatise by Galen, as a possible source for Avicenna.

> different from what is not established to him (*lam yuqarra bihi*).[108] Hence the essence (*al-dhāt*) whose existence he has affirmed is specific to him in that it is he himself (*huwa bi ᶜaynihi*), different from his body and limbs which were not affirmed.
>
> Thus, he who is attentive (*al-mutanabbih*) has the means to be awakened (*yatanabbahu*) to the existence of the soul (*wujūd al-nafs*) as something different from the body – indeed, as not a body at all – and to be acquainted with and aware of it (*'annahu ᶜārifun bihi mustashᶜirun lahu*). If someone fails to realise this, he is in need of educative prodding. (*Shifā' De an.* I.1, 16 [Rahman], 36-37 [van Riet].)

At the very beginning, an interpretation of this crucial passage must face the following question: what does Avicenna's argument ultimately rely upon? – What is clear is that Avicenna does not intend the flying man as any kind of scientific proof according to the criteria of systematic Aristotelian theory of demonstrative science. We are not dealing with an inference from known or proven premises to an as yet unknown or unproven conclusion. This is evident both from the technical epistemological vocabulary Avicenna employs and from the larger context the passage is embedded in. To deal with the vocabulary first, in Avicennian epistemology *tanabbaha* and its cognates refer to methods of education that rely on the intuitive capacities of the student to see the truth in question by means of the directives and reminders of the teacher which in themselves are logically inconclusive and thus insufficient to constitute a scientific proof. *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*, true to its title, is precisely a collection of such directives and reminders.[109] On the other hand, earlier in the general context of the end of the first book of the psychology of the *Shifā'* we have been ascertained that the soul is the agent behind the animate functions we can empirically witness in the bodies of living beings. Now, Avicenna asks whether the soul is an Aristotelian form and as such a secondary substance or whether it is in itself a primary substance independent from the body in which its action is manifested. He introduces the flying man in order to indicate – to those attentive, i.e. to those capable of seeing the truth by means of logically inconclusive evidence – that at least in the case of the human soul we are dealing with a primary substance independent from the body it animates.

So, the passage is not an inference from known or proven premises to an as yet unknown or unproven conclusion. Instead, Avicenna relies upon the

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108 I want to thank Jon McGinnis for suggesting the reading adopted here.

109 In Dimitri Gutas' words, "[t]his method depends on providing hints and guidelines, rather than ready-made arguments, to the student who is then expected to elaborate the entire theory on his own. This is what the two words of the title [of *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*], pointers and reminders, refer to." Gutas also calls this "the indicative method". (Gutas [1988], 141, 307-311.) This "indicative method" is to be distinguished from dialectical inference, the central characteristic of which is that it proceeds from generally accepted but unproven premises. Nevertheless, dialectical inferences are still inferences, and the only distinction in comparison to demonstrative inferences is in the epistemological status of their respective premises. The *locus classicus* for this distinction is Arist. *Top.* I.1, 100a25-30. The Arabic development of the theme is amply studied in Black (1989).

imaginative capacities of his interlocutors. As such an interlocutor, one must imagine an extremely peculiar experience for oneself and draw conclusions from that experience.[110] Now, in order for this kind of method to be conclusive in the first place, whatever the thought experiment is contentually based upon must be accessible to the person who actually imagines herself as the flying man, i.e. in principle to anyone with sufficient intellectual capacities. Clearly then we must be dealing with constituents of a possible experience that are experientially and not just inferentially accessible. Arrival at the desired conclusion may certainly involve a great deal of inferring but the basis and starting point of any such inference must be something actually present in the experience.[111]

Seemingly contrary to the interpretation I'm putting forth, it has been argued that the flying man should be read as an argument *per impossibile*.[112] According to one connotation of 'impossible', this would indeed undermine my interpretation according to which the point in the passage is essentially phenomenological *avant la lettre*. However, I believe we should make a careful distinction between two senses of 'impossible' here. By 'impossible' we can refer to (1) a thing or an event that never becomes actual in the entire course of time but that could in principle become actual without this entailing any contradiction in the cosmic scheme of necessary truths, i.e. an Aristotelian as well as an Avicennian impossible, or (2) a thing or an event that cannot in principle become actual due to an inherent logical contradiction. Now, it is of course highly unlikely that any being such as the flying man should actually occur.[113] By the same token, the experience proper to him could be called impossible in the sense that it never becomes actual save in someone's imagination. As regards thought experiments, however, this seems a rather

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110 Admittedly in the passage under discussion Avicenna frames the case in a way which does not make explicit the reliance on first personal experience. It may seem as if the performance of the depicted imaginative act by only one person from a group of interlocutors would suffice, and as if other members of the group could then observe the performance from a third personal perspective. However, upon further consideration it is quite clear that the first personal performance is what is eventually relied upon. What other members of the group, not performing the imaginative act, would have is the testimony of the one who does perform it. Should they wish to verify this testimony, the only means they'd have for doing so would be to actually engage themselves in the very imaginative performance under scrutiny, i.e. to imagine the flying man's experience as their own. Furthermore, other instances of the flying man are explicitly construed in second person singular (cf. for instance *Ishārāt* 119 [Forget]).

111 According to A.-M. Goichon, there is no direct experience of one's soul in Avicenna and the flying man is nothing but *"un simple procédé d'exposition de la pensée spéculative"* (Goichon [1951], 37). However, as I have tried to argue, it is hard to conceive any plausibility in such bare speculation.

112 Thanks are due to Mikko Yrjönsuuri for his insistence upon this point.

113 One might even be willing to claim the flying man impossible given the factual conditions of what it is to be human. In relation to the necessities of normal human existence, this would indeed be the case. But one of Avicenna's central points is precisely to abstract from normal or commonplace existence, to present us with a limit case in order to show something that is a constituent of our commonplace existence but tends to elude us nevertheless. On the other hand, it must always be borne in mind that a supernatural creator is presupposed in the thought experiment.

trivial kind of impossibility which is not at odds with my take of the passage, for an entirely imaginary experience is sufficient for the purpose at hand. Conceivability or imaginability is enough of a possibility for a thought experiment in general and the flying man in particular. On the other hand, if the flying man were an impossible being in the second sense, i.e. a logically impossible or inherently contradictory being, and if he would be such due to some properties of him relevant to our discussion, in all likelihood it would also be impossible to imagine the experience proper to him. However, I fail to see any reason in the belief that Avicenna takes the flying man to be impossible in this sense, for it would effectively render the whole argument quite aimless as the kind of directive it should be. If it was logically impossible to conceive of myself in distinction from my body, the conclusion that I might be separate from my body would certainly not seem particularly inviting.[114]

Having said that, we can proceed to investigate the actual content of Avicenna's thought experiment. Following Avicenna's description, I am to imagine myself in a mature and perfectly actualised condition as regards the operation of my body and its animate faculties as well as my intellect.[115] However, at the same time I have to imagine myself in a peculiar state of sensory deprivation, my eyes have been veiled and I see nothing, my ears are stuffed and I am actually hearing nothing, no odours find their way to my nostrils and I smell nothing, there's nothing to taste in my mouth, and I am floating in a volume of air the temperature and meteorological behaviour of which are such that I am unable to feel it at all.[116] In a word, I have no sense

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114 Considerable fluctuation can be noticed in historical conceptions of the nature of *per impossibile* arguments. However, it seems that in the majority of the cases where an assumption impossible in sense (2) is at play, we have an indirect refutation of that very assumption through the deduction of a patent absurdity from it. (A fairly comprehensive sketch for a history of *per impossibile* arguments can be found in Kukkonen [2002].) I take it as obvious that the flying man belongs to a completely different order of arguments.

115 To be honest, I am not quite sure what exactly Avicenna means by 'perfect' (*kamāl*) here. An open if crucial question is whether this involves intellectual perfection, i.e. perfectly actualised knowledge. However, I dare to doubt that Avicenna would have had such perfection in mind here, for it would practically render the performance of the thought experiment impossible for most of us human beings. As a humble creature with deficient knowledge, how could I possibly imagine myself in a state of perfect knowledge with any such accuracy as to enable me to draw reliable conclusions from it. Furthermore, intellectual perfection of any degree is entirely irrelevant to the argument. I do realise, however, that this reasoning requires accepting my interpretation of the argumentative gist of the passage – something not everyone might be willing to do – and that ultimately I have at most a persuasive circle here.

116 Ignorance of what we would now call proprioceptive sensations could be seen as a serious flaw in Avicenna's construction of the thought experiment. However, in an Aristotelian system of five external senses the faculty responsible for proprioceptive sensations would presumably be the sense of touch. Although Avicenna explicitly excludes only tactile sensations of things external to the body, it would hardly be an unreasonable extension of the principle of charity to allow him to exclude proprioceptive sensations alike. Our contemporary neurological literature certainly reports cases of serious proprioceptive dysfunctions (e.g. Sacks [1985], 42-52). On the other hand, the dispositions I will discuss in the context of the Avicennian concept of the lived body (see ch. 5.5 below) will not have had the time to form themselves because the flying man's soul has been created immediately to his current state. The only way

data whatsoever. In addition to this, I must imagine myself as being miraculously created to such a state without any previous personal history. What this amounts to in the empirically oriented Aristotelian epistemology which Avicenna subscribes to to the extent relevant here, is that in the imagined state there will not be any kind of sensory data in my memory to which I could resort and have at least imaginary sensations in the absence of actual ones. Thus bracketing all the said aspects of common experience, I must imagine myself in a state in which I have no experiences of sensory nature whatsoever.

Having managed such a reduction in my experience, I must ask myself whether there is anything left in my experience, or more precisely, whether I myself am still there. According to Avicenna, I will be forced to affirm that my *dhāt*, my essence or my self[117], still exists, is still there as something I am aware of despite the absence of any sensory content in that moment of awareness. In addition to affirming *that* my *dhāt* exists, I can affirm of my *dhāt* something of *what* it is, or rather – apophatically as it were – what it is not. On the basis of the fact that I have an experience of it despite my not having any experience of my body or of anything other than my *dhāt*, it must not be experientially identical to my body or any other thing for that matter. Now, at this stage, this independence from all extraneous things inherent to my *dhāt* is simply phenomenological, i.e. a matter of experience. My *dhāt* appears to me in the depicted way, or rather, does not appear to me in the same way as my body or other sensible corporeal things appear. But Avicenna endorses me to make the stronger ontological inference, namely that my *dhāt is* different from my body, that these are two different entities in reality and not just two different appearances of one and the same entity. Is this inference warranted by the thought experiment alone or would it require additional premises?

The validity of Avicenna's inference can indeed be placed in question, for it comes dangerously close to the kind of fallacious inference which proceeds from recognition of intensional differences between two concepts to a claim of extensional differences in their scope. Granted that my *dhāt* and my body are phenomenologically independent, this still does not rule out the possibility that my *dhāt* is ontologically dependent on my body as its material substrate.

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the body might make itself known to the flying man's soul would be through the necessarily somewhat vague yearning of the soul to take care of the body allotted to it (for this yearning, see for instance *Shifā' De an.* V.7, 255 [Rahman], 161-163 [van Riet]). Still, it is difficult to see what this could be in the absence of any concrete dispositions through which it could become manifest.

117 Hasse (2000), 82-84, argues against the translation of *dhāt* as 'self' in the flying man. Taken in itself, his reasoning seems perfectly plausible. However, as I hope will come clear from my exposition, in the case of the individual human being essence and selfhood are more or less equivalent. In this perspective Hasse's stronger claim, according to which "the Flying man does not have 'immediate access' to himself, nor is he 'conscious of his existence' or 'fully aware of his personal existence', nor does he 'affirm his existence', but he affirms the existence of his core entity, his essence, while not affirming the existence of his body" (Hasse [2000], 86), is not quite as persuasive. One of the graver consequences of such an interpretation is that if we make a categorical distinction between affirmation of the existence of essence and self-awareness, it is hard to conceive any plausibility left in the flying man. What would it be like to grasp the existence of my essence in these terms?

However, I believe that Avicenna's point in the thought experiment is primarily pedagogical,[118] he wants to focus our attention at a phenomenon that is often buried under other, more prominent features of our experience. Although we usually are aware of ourselves as embodied beings and although when reflecting upon ourselves we usually resort to some kind of representations of our bodily appearances or actions which take place in our own bodies or by means of them, taking such representations as objects of our reflection, this is not the only possible mode of self-awareness. The bracketing out of these all too normal constituents of experience in the case of the flying man is supposed to reveal a phenomenologically accessible immediate awareness of ourselves, or of our very essences. This alone does not warrant any inference like the one mentioned above. But within the general framework of Avicenna's psychology an attentive interlocutor must, on the basis of her immediate access to her *dhāt* and on the basis of the nature of that access, conclude that what she has access to as well as the means of that access must be something incorporeal. It has to be granted that the missing links on the way to this conclusion are not given in the context of our passage at the end of the first book of the psychological part of *Shifā'*. However, consideration of the ontological function of self-awareness will provide us with what is missing.

Most often Avicenna speaks of self-awareness using the phrase *shuᶜūr bi al-dhāt*, 'awareness of self' or 'awareness of essence'. As has been mentioned, both translations are equally viable, and in fact Avicenna seems to use this ambiguity of the Arabic to make a central point. The flying man hinges on the phenomenon of self-awareness but Avicenna has a reason, other than the idiosyncratic feature of the Arabic language, to speak of it in terms of awareness of essence.[119] This reason is directly linked to the ontological function of self-awareness. But let us first take a brief detour through a more general consideration of Avicenna's theory of essence and existence.

The systematically elaborated distinction between essence and existence is one of the central ideas in Avicenna's metaphysics. Only in the case of God, the first Being, is existence entailed by the essence. All other beings receive their

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118 In fact, he introduces the passage as something to awaken us to a given piece of evidence or remind us of something we already implicitly know (*Shifā' De an.* I.1, 15-16 [Rahman], 36 [van Riet]; cf. *Shifā' De an.* V.7, 257 [Rahman], 166-167 [van Riet]). In the metaphysics of the *Shifā'*, Avicenna claims that a similar reminding or focusing of attention is required to bring us to awareness of the primary ontological categories of 'existent', 'thing' and 'necessary': "[I]n conceptual matters, there are things which are principles for conception that are conceived in themselves. If one desires to indicate them, [such indication] would not, in reality, constitute making an unknown thing known but would merely consist in drawing attention to them or bringing them to mind through the use of a name or a sign which, in itself, may be less known than [the principles] but which, for some cause or circumstance, happens to be more obvious in its signification. If, then, such a sign is used, the soul is awakened [to the fact] that such a meaning is being brought to mind, in [the sense] that it is the intended [meaning and] not another, without the sign in reality having given [any] knowledge of it." (*Shifā' Met.* I.5, 23 [Marmura]; transl. Marmura.)

119 In the following I am in debt of inspiration to a paper given by Ahmed Alwishah in a conference on *The Human Condition* at the University of Victoria in August 2005. To the best of my knowledge, Alwishah's paper has yet to appear in print.

existence from without themselves. Considered in themselves, essences of beings other than God simply are *what* they are, nothing in them alone determines whether they will exist in the first place, and if they do, whether they will exist as particular beings in the world or as general concepts in the mind. In other words, neither particularity nor generality figures in their definition. Hence, to take Avicenna's example, the horseness in a given particular horse and in the general concept of the horse under which any given horse can be subsumed in a human apprehension of it is the same horseness. The two instantiations of one and the same horseness differ by the mode of *existence* proper to each, by the way in which the fact *that* horseness exists is brought about in the two cases.[120] Although neither mode of existence figures in the definition of essence, since it is not the First Being and hence not necessarily existent in itself, it necessarily exists in one of the two ways.[121]

Now, the flying man is obviously a particular existent. In general, an essence becomes a concrete particular existent through becoming determined by a host of accidental properties, starting from the most general attribute of thingness and proceeding towards ever more specific determinations. These for their part are due to the particular material conditions under which the essence functions as a form.[122] To stick with the example of horseness, the individuating accidental qualities of a particular horse are determined by the whole causal chain at the tail end of which are its parents – its genetic inheritance, we would now say –, the nutritive conditions during the early critical stages of its life, possible permanent injuries it suffers, and so forth. But eventually these accidental qualities will not be enough to individuate the essence, for in themselves they are every bit as universal as the essence. As a result, by means of reference to them alone we cannot rule out the possibility of there being another particular horse with the exact same qualities, i.e. the very same particular existing in two numerically distinct instances. For genuine

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120 Occasionally Avicenna also applies the technical terms *māhiyya* (whatness) and *anniyya* (thatness) to spell out the difference between essence and existence, i.e. between what a thing is by its essence and that it is existent. For instance, in the flying man passage from the *Ishārāt* (119 [Forget]) Avicenna speaks of the evident existence of the flying man for himself as *anniyya*. It is a peculiar feature of *anniyya* that without vocalisation it is orthographically identical to another highly abstract technical term, namely *aniyya*, 'I-ness'. Were we to adopt this reading, preferred by such later, and admittedly somewhat tendentious, interpreters of Avicenna as Mullā S□adrā, the point I am making would verge on the self-evident. However, since this reading is highly debatable (van den Bergh [1960], 514) and since I do not want to beg the question through terminological choices, I have opted for a slightly longer exposition. Let it be said, however, that the highly abstract and uncolloquial term *aniyya* was used by certain Sufis before Avicenna, and it figures at least in the extant writings of al-Ḥallāj (d. 922).

121 *Shifā' Met.* V.1, 153-155 (Marmura). To be clear, this of course does not mean that the essence exists necessarily in one way to the exclusion of the other, i.e. as a particular material being or as a general concept, but only that it necessarily exists in one or the other way.

122 "[The one] among these [natures] that requires matter would exist only in conjunction with the existence of matter rendered ready [for its reception]. Its existence would thus have been affiliating external accidents and states with it, through which it is individuated." (*Shifā' Met.* V.2, 158 [Marmura]; cf. also V.1, 152-153, 155-156 [Marmura].)

individuality something more is required.

In his discussion of our knowledge of particular beings, Avicenna alludes to a solution.[123] According to him a particular being can only be known through intellectual knowledge of the conjunction of its species with the individuating accidents proper to this very particular *coupled with* a direct reference to the particular being. This direct reference cannot be intellectual, instead it is provided by the sensitive faculties. (*Shifā' Met.* V.8, 188-189 [Marmura].) We can apprehend an individual being only by having a sense perception of it or by imaginatively representing it for ourselves. Now, what do those features amount to which can only be apprehended by means of direct sensitive reference? The answer is obvious: the concrete existence of the apprehended thing in a spatial and temporal "location" particular to it and it alone. Thus, existence of an essence in the concrete amounts to its being determined by accidental qualities due to the material conditions of its becoming existent *as well as* the particular spatial and temporal properties of the designated volume of matter informed by that essence. It must be pointed out that the spatio-temporal "location" is not apprehended intellectually as a point with certain spatio-temporal co-ordinates, for this would be equally universal as the essential and accidental properties and thus incapable of solving anything. It is crucial that the location be apprehended through the senses as something real or factual. What is thus apprehended is the existence of the particular being, the primitive and intellectually impenetrable fact of its *thatness*.[124]

If we now look at the flying man again after this brief detour, we can see that what must be affirmed through the evident and indubitable awareness of one's *dhāt* does not concern *what* the essence consists of. Avicenna does not claim that the flying man should know *what* he is. Instead, the fact *that* he is, *that* his *dhāt* exists, presents itself to him with undeniable force.[125] We are right at the core of the relevance of self-awareness to this fact once we realize that the above exposition on the individuation of other sublunar beings cannot explain the individuation of the human soul. For as we know, Avicenna is a full-blown dualist, and although he attributes a contributing role to the emergence of bodies in the initiation of particular human existence,[126] in the final analysis he cannot rely on any material factors as the sole explanation of the existence of particular human souls.

The following extremely resourceful passage from the *Talīqāt* says the essential:

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123 An epistemological thesis can be taken as a cue toward a solution in a metaphysical question, since in the Aristotelian universe Avicenna inhabits a strict correspondence always prevails between the cognitive capacities of epistemic subjects and the features of the world as an epistemic object.

124 For an extremely lucid, though textually somewhat liberal exposition of this ground tenet of Avicenna's ontology, cf. Goodman (1992), 49-122.

125 Thus, I do not accept Pines' (1954), 56, critique according to which Avicenna interpreted self-awareness to yield evident knowledge of one's own essence. Rather, just as Pines argues should be done, he starts from the *existence* of the self-aware subject.

126 Cf. ch. 2.1 above.

> Awareness of essence is essential to the soul (*al-shuᶜūru bi al-dhāti dhātiyyun li al-nafs*), it is not acquired from outside. It is as if when the essence comes to be, awareness comes to be with it. [...]
>
> Awareness of essence is the soul in act, and its awareness of its essence is continuous. [...]
>
> Our awareness of our essences is our very existence (*shuᶜūru-nā bi dhātinā huwa nafsun wujūdunā*). [...]
>
> Awareness of essence is innate to the essence. It is the very existence of the essence, and we do not need anything external by which we would grasp the essence. On the contrary, the essence is that by which we know its essence. (*Taᶜlīqāt* 160-161 [Badawī].)

Avicenna is quite plain: *awareness* of the essence of itself constitutes the *existence* in act of the human soul *as an individual soul*. Self-awareness is an essential feature of the human soul, it is the way in which, or better yet, that *as* which a human soul exists. In other words, human souls are individuated as first personal experiential perspectives, as acts of awareness of anything as *mine*. This does not rule out the possibility of other individuating factors, such as the "rational actions and passions" of the following passage:

> We are certain that when it happens that the soul exists, it has come to be with (*maᶜa*) the coming to be of a certain mixture[127], and that in addition a certain configuration (*hai'a*) of rational actions and passions (*al-afᶜāli al-nuṭqiyyati wa al-infiᶜālāti al-nuṭqiyya*) comes to be for the soul. This configuration differs from a corresponding configuration in another soul due to the conglomeration (*jumla*) [of rational actions and passions] in the same way as two mixtures differ in bodies. We are also certain that the acquired configuration, called intellect in act (*ᶜaqlan bi al-fiᶜl*)[128], is to an extent also something due to which the soul differs from another soul. And we are certain that an awareness of its particular essence occurs to the soul (*yaqa'a lahā shuᶜūran bi dhātihā al-juz'iyya*). This awareness is a configuration which is also proper to the particular soul and not to any other soul. It may also happen that a configuration comes to be in the soul with respect to corporeal faculties (*quwan*). This configuration is related to moral configurations, or identical to them. There may be further properties unknown to us which adhere to souls with (*maᶜa*) their coming to be and afterwards, like the properties adherent to particulars of a corporeal species which differ due to these properties as long as they persist. In this way the souls will differ in the particularities respective to each of them regardless of whether the bodies exist or not and whether we

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127 This mixture is of course the human body. It is a mixture either in the sense of a sufficiently refined and balanced conglomeration of material elements or in the sense of the Galenic humoral temperament. At present I am rather hesitant to assert one or the other, but it is obvious that the matter is quite irrelevant to my general point here.

128 In Avicennian noetics, the intellect in act is the state of the intellect of a human being who has gained knowledge but is not presently engaged in consideration of his knowledge. For the distinctions of human intellectual states in Avicenna, see ch. 2.3 above; a more thorough account is given in Davidson (1992), 83-94.

> know the dispositions (*al-aḥwāl*) or not or only know some of them. (*Shifāʾ De an.* V.3, 226-227 [Rahman], 111-113 [van Riet].)

When Avicenna speaks of individuating configurations of rational actions and passions he clearly has in mind a whole host of various mental determinations of a human soul. He mentions specifically actualised knowledge, various habits in relation to body with moral dispositions as a particular case, and other relations to the body of which one is not conscious. However, none of these determinations alone could function as an individualising factor. Taken in themselves they are general qualities which, in principle, could belong to any mental subject. Multiplication of such determinations will not help either, for although a sufficiently comprehensive set of determinations might yield a particular which is *in fact* the only instance of such a set in the world, *in principle* nothing rules out another instantiation of the identical set – except that in the absence of the spatiotemporal co-ordinates of material existence there would be nothing to provide even such a numerical difference. What is required is the determinations' becoming specified by an individual mineness, becoming present within the light of an individual soul's awareness of itself. This requirement is essentially similar to the one we have seen in the case of concrete material existence.[129]

It is true that in the above passage from the *Shifāʾ* Avicenna only mentions the soul's awareness of itself as if it were nothing more than one individuating factor among others. However, informed by the passage from the *Taʿlīqāt* – "our awareness of our essences is our very existence" – and Avicenna's general theory of individuation, I believe we are bound to accord a special ontological status to this awareness. As the existence of the individuated soul it is a necessary condition for there being any other individuating factors. Indeed, it is a necessary condition for these other factors' becoming individuated in the first place. In a sense self-awareness can thus be thought of as a kind of mental prime matter which becomes informed by the other individuating factors, or as the *locus* for the existence of such factors, although I am unaware of Avicenna himself pointing out any such comparison explicitly. In any case, the point is that knowledge, moral dispositions and the like are individuated by becoming *my* knowledge or *my* moral dispositions for someone who is an *I*. What is individual in them is their being given in a first personal perspective and as proper to that perspective exclusively.

To get back to the flying man now, what must be affirmed through a successful performance of the thought experiment, is the *existence* of one's *dhāt*, or

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129 For problems of individuation in the case of mental properties, see Black (2005). Black considers a number of possible options for an Avicennian account of individuation in these cases but finds all of them seriously wanting. Self-awareness is mentioned in passing but not studied as a distinct option at any great length. This is likely due to the underlying, if somewhat inexplicit, notion of self-awareness as something with an explicit conceptual or propositional content, and as a result of this something that requires a prior individuating factor instead of constituting one itself. As I will argue in ch. 5.3, however, we should expect this kind of structure only on the level of reflective self-awareness.

of one's essence as one's self. I may be quite ignorant as to *what* my essence is and consequently unable to offer any kind of definition of what my being consists of. But on the contrary, according to Avicenna, I can never deny or doubt the fact *that* I am. Furthermore, my existence is revealed to me as *awareness* of my *dhāt*, as awareness of my essence by my essence, i.e. as *self*-awareness.[130]

At this point, consideration of one possible problem is in order. If Avicenna is right in claiming that "humanness", the essence of human being, entails self-awareness, how can it be said that the *same* essence exists *in concreto* as a self-aware individual soul and *in abstracto* as a universal concept of the human species in the mind of someone who has grasped that concept? Is not any talk of self-aware concepts quite dubitable at best, incomprehensible at worst? And yet, Avicenna's general distinction between essence and existence seems to lead to such a conclusion. This is a huge problem, and one Avicenna does not attempt to resolve, but I would like to make an attempt towards a tentative solution.[131]

We must take seriously the idea of self-awareness as *existence* of the individual human soul, which does not as such figure in the definition of humanness as such. Consider the example of horseness once again. No one in her right mind would be inclined to claim that horseness as the essence of any particular horse should have a certain determined colorative appearance, a certain determined height, or a certain determined thickness of hair. And yet, anyone in her right mind would claim that such features are necessary implications of the way in which horseness exists *in concreto* – give or take possible environmentally induced deviations from the norm which Avicenna as an Aristotelian natural philosopher would conceive as privations, or imperfections in the actualisation of the essence as form. Moreover, one can hardly entertain an understanding of the general concept of horse unless one somehow understands how it must exist *in concreto*, for despite the essences' more noble origin in comparison to particulars it makes no sense to consider them completely abstracted from any possible particularisation. Now, to get back to our problem, the essence of human is determined regarding the kind of concrete existence it can have, even though this existence, individual self-awareness, as such is not part of the general essence. And similarly, it would be impossible to understand what a human being is without that understanding entailing that being's being aware of itself. In

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130 This interpretation eliminates the ambiguities Druart finds in Avicenna: "Avicenna assumes unity and continuity of consciousness and grounds them in a perception of the self. He uses rather ambiguous terminology and one cannot always be sure it is a perception of the self as such or of one's essence or both, since the Arabic term used (*dhat*) can mean both." (Druart [1988], 34.)

131 Of course, the problem is not particular to Avicenna. It was already pointed out by Plato (*Prm.* 132a-d) in relation to his own theory of ideas, and subsequently criticised by Aristotle (*Met.* I.9, 990b15-17; VII.13, 1039a1-3; XIII.4, 1079a12-14) as the famous problem of "the third man". In general, one might say it is a dilemma any realist theory of essences has to tackle with: how to account for both the existence of an essence in its own right and its capacity to explain the relevant similarities between its concrete instantiations *without* attributing the essential qualities of the instances to the essence itself, thereby necessitating a higher-order essence to explain the similarity of the first essence with its very instantiations?

a word, if I conceive another person as a human being, I conceive her as a being aware of herself. If this conception is absent from my apprehension, I necessarily conceive her as something other than human.[132]

If my speculation is anywhere near the mark, it should suffice to prove that Avicenna's theory is not patently incoherent. On the contrary, it seems to aspire to a rather more profound conception of human being than that implied by the at times nearly caricatural simplicity of the traditional designation 'rational animal'. As such, it also opens ample possibilities for various themes of practical philosophy, possibilities largely uncharted by Avicenna himself.

As we will come to see, the special role Avicenna awards to self-awareness in his theory of the individuation of human souls has important consequences for his descriptive account of the phenomenon. For now, I will simply mention two of the most pressing ones. First of all, insofar as we have no reason to doubt that our existence as individual entities is continuous, self-awareness as that very existence must be continuous as well. Thus, there cannot be lapses into lack of self-awareness of any kind. Secondly, due to this radical demand of continuity, the self-awareness Avicenna intends cannot be just any kind of awareness I can have of myself. As we will come to see, some primary candidates as to what it consists of have to be ruled out, for instance a simple model of self-reflection will not do. These are demands I will come to consider soon enough. But before that, let us take a look at two other explanatory roles the phenomenon of self-awareness plays in Avicenna's psychology.[133]

4.2 Unity of Experience

According to Avicenna, one of the experiential givens any credible psychological theory has to account for is the unity and relatively high degree of coherence in our experience. How can we explain the fact that it is within one and the same experience that such distinct passions as sensations and emotions are lived through? Furthermore, how can we account for the obvious fact that these distinct passions can have an effect on one another? After all, descriptions of the type 'hearing the noise made me angry' would presumably be quite commonly accepted as causally accurate descriptions. Even causality in the contrary direction, i.e. cases in which a prevailing emotional state transforms the way in which I perceive sensible qualities of the world, do not seem to be entirely off the mark. Problems of this kind are of course particularly pressing for proponents of faculty psychology such as Avicenna, one of whose central methodological principles was seen to be the necessity of postulating a *distinctly operative* faculty for the apprehension of any distinguishable quality of experience.[134]

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132 I will develop this idea in some more detail in ch. 4.3 below.

133 There is one problem related to the role outlined in the present chapter, namely that of how animals who are individuated through matter can be similarly aware of themselves. I will discuss the problem in ch. 5.3 below. Tentative remarks are also made in Kaukua & Kukkonen (forthcoming).

134 Cf. ch. 2.2 above.

In the psychological part of the *Najāt*, Avicenna lays out the relevant explanatory options from the point of view of a faculty psychologist:

> [W]hen something affects sensation, either [i] the same thing affects the faculties of anger and of appetition, so that it is the same faculty of the soul which becomes angry and also perceives and imagines, in which case different kinds of action would emanate from the same faculty; or [ii] sensation and anger would come together under one faculty, in which case they would not be separated into two independent faculties which do not come under a unifying principle. (*Najāt De an.* XV, 64 [transl. Rahman].)

The second alternative is quite clear: sensation and anger, two distinct faculties and operations, are apprehended as one by a higher cognitive instance. Regarding the first alternative, however, Avicenna's formulation may appear slightly awkward in that it seems to confound two different possibilities. At first this alternative seems to consist of the suggestion that one and the same thing can become the object of two distinct faculties, but immediately after this Avicenna brings up the somewhat different idea according to which this would mean that one faculty could have two different types of object and correspondingly two distinct types of operation. However, I believe the confusion is only apparent, and certainly of no consequence to our topic. If we keep in mind the strict requirement of Avicenna's faculty psychology – i.e., a distinct faculty for every distinct type of object – and wish to make sense of the first idea, we have to take it in the sense that one and the same thing *in the same respect* can become the object of two distinct *operations*. To take an example, a bull perceives a red cloth and becomes angry. In a trivial sense it is true that the red cloth is the object of both the bull's seeing and its anger, the crux of the question is whether it is the object of both *in the same respect*, i.e. as a red object of certain shape, or whether the bull's anger requires something in addition. If the red cloth is the object of seeing and anger in the same respect, say as a visually apprehensible red object, it can only be grasped by that cognitive faculty the objects of which are precisely that type of things. Since it would be superfluous to postulate two faculties of the same type in any animate being, the foregoing entails one and the same faculty's performing two distinct operations, i.e. those of seeing and becoming angry. The first alternative in Avicenna's passage thus consists in the suggestion that one and the same faculty can perform two distinct types of operation.

Having belabored that point of minor significance but potentially major confusion, we can return to our discussion. Given that one of the faculty psychological criteria for postulating distinct faculties in the sensitive soul is the correspondence between distinct objects and distinct faculties, it is obvious that the first alternative of our passage is a non-starter. One faculty apprehends one type of object, and in this sense performs only one type of operation, period. Thus, Avicenna opts for the second alternative, concluding that something capable of apprehending the operations of the lower faculties of both sensation

and anger is required to make the cognitive objects of the two constituents of one experience. (*Najāt De an.* XV, 65 [transl. Rahman].)

In *Najāt*, Avicenna then proceeds by asking whether that something is the body (or something in the body) or the soul. The arguments presented in that context for ruling out the body as a possible candidate are not entirely persuasive but more conclusive evidence can be culled from a related passage in the *Mubāḥathāt*. If the body, or rather, a cognitive faculty which operates by corporeal means were responsible for the unity of my experience, presumably this would have to be the most sublime or most spiritual of my cognitive faculties. After all, my experience is a result of the operation of the whole range of my cognitive faculties, and one of the tenets of the abstraction theory of knowledge entailed by Avicenna's faculty psychology[135] is that whereas higher cognitive faculties may to some extent be able to apprehend the operation of lower faculties, this does not hold symmetrically in the other direction. Thus, were the unity of my experience due to a corporeally functioning cognitive faculty, one would suppose that the primary candidate would be estimation. However, not a great deal of further consideration is required to show the implausibility of this suggestion. After all, in addition to sensible and intentional features apprehended by cerebral cognitive faculties my experience contains all sorts of constituents that are exclusively accessible to the intellect. Apprehension of intelligibles requires an immaterial faculty, and for this reason alone estimation is ruled out from the group of potential candidates for the unifier of experience. Thus, no body and no corporeally functioning cognitive faculty can account for the unity of our experience.[136]

Against this background from *Mubāḥathāt*, the following conclusion from *Najāt* seems quite unproblematic:

> Then most probably the truth is that when we say 'I perceived and became angry' we mean that something in us perceived and something in us became angry. But when one says, 'I perceived and became angry', one does not mean that this occurs in two different things in us, but that something to which perception transmitted its content happened to become angry. Now either this statement in this sense (in which we have interpreted it) is false, or the truth is that what perceives and what becomes angry is one and the same thing. But this statement is manifestly true (i.e. in the sense in which we have interpreted it). Then, what becomes angry is that very thing to which the perceptive faculty transmits the content of its perception. Its being in this status, even though it be body, is not due to its being body alone; it is then due to its being in possession of a faculty by which it is capable of combining both these things. This faculty not being a physical one must be the soul itself. Thus the substratum in which both these qualities inhere is not the whole of our body, nor any two organs of our body, nor

135 See ch. 2.3 above. For a concise presentation in Avicenna, see *Shifā' De an.* II.2, 58-61 (Rahman), 114-120 (van Riet).

136 *Mubāḥathāt* 423, 221 (Badawī). Cf. *Shifā' De an.* V.2, 216-217 (Rahman), 93-94 (van Riet).

> yet a single organ in so far as it is a physical organ; so the conclusion is that the combining substratum is soul itself or body inasmuch as it possesses soul, the combining substratum even in the latter case really being the soul, which itself is the principle of all these faculties. (*Najāt De an.* XV, 66 [tr. Rahman].)

To sum up, Avicenna's conclusion is that the soul as a whole, instead of any one of its corporeally operative cognitive faculties, unites the several strata of experience into one coherent whole. The continuous concessions and references to the role of the body in this unification are probably due to the intention to cover both those features of experience that are common to human and animal beings alike as well as the specifically and exclusively human, i.e. intellectual features. Thus, even in the case of animals, the unity of their experience is provided by the soul as a whole governing their body.[137]

But saying that the soul as a whole is responsible for the unity of experiences does not yet bring us particularly close to our main question, i.e. that concerning the role self-awareness plays in explaining the unity of experiences. However, once we recall our conclusions from the previous chapter, we begin to see the picture. It was argued that for Avicenna, self-awareness is the mode of existence of an individual human soul. Now, being responsible for the unity of experience of course amounts to making all the constituents of experience features of one and the same experience, and it is the *individual* human soul which is responsible for the unity of its experience. Furthermore, it seems only natural to assume that unity of experience requires that the different constituents of experience exist in one and the same "place", to use an improper metaphor, or what in more proper terms is almost a tautology, in one and the same experience. Bearing all this in mind, it does not seem too far-fetched to proceed to the conclusion that what the soul's unifying role amounts to is containing the distinct features of experience present in one and the same act of self-awareness, providing a forum in which the whole range of experiential content can come together. In fact, this is exactly what Avicenna seems to say. Consider the following passage from the *Shifā'*:

> [W]hen one of the faculties is in act and no connection (*ittiṣāl*) prevails between it and another faculty the other faculty is not hindered in its action, for the instrument is not common, the location is not common, nor is any other thing to unite the two common [to both of them]. How [can this be] when we see that sensation (*al-iḥsās*) arouses desire although the desiderative faculty is not affected (*lā tanfaʿilu*) by what is sensed insofar as it is sensed? If [the desiderative faculty] is not affected [by what is sensed] insofar as it is sensed, there is no affection of desire for this that is sensed (*lam yakun al-infiʿāla al-ladhī yakūnu li shahwati dhālika al-maḥsūs*). Thus, [the affection] would necessarily be-

137 The higher status of the soul as a whole in comparison to its cognitive faculties is a recurrent theme in Avicenna's regrettably scarce references to the question of animal awareness. For the relevant texts and their discussion, see ch. 5.2 below. A slightly more comprehensive treatment can be found in Kaukua & Kukkonen (forthcoming).

> long to that which senses. But it is not possible that the two faculties would be one, and this makes it evident that the faculties belong to a single thing. Therefore it is correct when we say 'since we sensed, we desired' and 'since we saw such and such, we became angry'.
>
> This single thing to which these faculties are united is *the thing that each of us sees as his essence* (*al-shay'u al-ladhī yarāhu kullun minnā dhātahu*), so that it is correct when he says 'since we sensed, we desired'. (*Shifā' De an.* V.7, 253-254 [Rahman], 158-159 [van Riet]; my italics.)

Quite simply, the "single thing to which these faculties are united *is the thing that each of us sees as his essence*", i.e. the thing we saw Avicenna take to be the individual human soul which exists as singular self-awareness. However, this still leaves open a number of pressing questions regarding the causal and constitutive relations between the soul's self-awareness and its corporeal cognitive means, or to put it in another way, the form of self-awareness and its various contents. Two such questions in particular force themselves upon us who approach Avicenna's theory with modern preoccupations. First, how coherent or unified is the content of self-awareness in itself, i.e. how much unifying processing takes place in the brain without any awareness necessarily involved or before awareness is involved? And secondly, are the connections between distinct corporeal cognitive faculties primarily corporeal or mental? To stay with Avicenna's example, does the corporeal affection in the irascible faculty have a mental origin, so that the *experience* of seeing causes the *experience* of anger and with it a corresponding change in the body, or is it caused by the corporeal sensitive faculty through some empirically observable corporeal process in the brain?

Unsurprisingly, Avicenna does not discuss these problems explicitly, and it would of course be anachronistic to expect him to at least in the modern terms we put them. However, his discussion in the psychology of the *Shifā'* regarding the emotions can throw some light to the distinction between the categories of the corporeal on the hand and the mental or experiential on the other. Having gone through various actions and passions of the sensitive and desiderative soul in light of the question whether these actions and passions are properly attributed to the body or the soul, Avicenna concludes:

> To sum up, we say: it is characteristic of the soul that a change of mixture in the corporeal element is brought forth from it, and [this change of mixture] is brought forth from incorporeal action and passion, [so that] warmth is not brought forth from what is warm nor coldness from what is cold. For when the soul has formed an imagined representation (*takhayyalat al-nafsu khayālan*) and [the representation] has become vivid in the soul, in no time (*lam yalbath*) the corporeal element receives a form or a quality related to [the representation] (*ṣūratan munāsibatan li dhālika aw kaifiyya*). This is because the soul is like the substance of a principle which invests the matters with whichever of the constitutive forms (*al-ṣuwari al-muqawwima*) is in them, when

> [the matters] are more closely related to that substance than any other, provided the aptitude [of the matters for the forms] is complete. [...] When this principle has invested the element with a form constituting a natural species – due to a relation which subsists between [the element and the form] – it is not unlikely that it also invests it with qualities which do not require there being any contact or corporeal action or passion originating from contrariety. On the contrary, the form which is in the soul is the origin (*mabda'*) of what is brought forth in the element, like the form of health which is in the doctor's soul is the origin of whatever recovery is brought forth or similarly the form of bed in the carpenter's essence. However, it is a principle which is not lead to the issuance of what is effected by it (*iṣdāri mā hiya mūjibatun lahu*) except by means of instruments and media. Rather, the instruments are required for [the issuance of what is effected by it] due to incapacity and weakness. (*Shifā' De an.* IV.4, 199 [Rahman], 62-64 [van Riet].)

At the beginning of our passage Avicenna clearly asserts that incorporeal, i.e. mental or experiential, actions and passions bring forth changes in the body which do not require any additional material causes. Imagination is stated as a case example – whenever an imaginative representation is formed in the experience, the corresponding material process takes place in the brain "in no time". I believe we should take the temporal qualification literally: the two events, mental and physical, are not successive, instead they are two aspects of one and the same process which has its origin in the soul. Our passage continues with an exposition of more general nature on the relation between soul and body, and ends on an interesting note asserting the requirement of instruments and media for sensitive and desiderative operations of the soul. This of course alludes to the fact that these operations take place through corporeal organs, but it also entails the more interesting fact that were it not for these organs and the operations they enable, there would be no content to the soul's experience. On the other hand, though, neither would there be corporeal organs of cognition in the absence of an experiencing soul which governs the body. A dead body no longer either senses or desires.

Extrapolating from the foregoing, we can say that Avicenna seems quite Aristotelian in that he would be unwilling to distinguish the categories of the corporeal and the mental in a way that would allow us to make sense of experiences with objective content in complete absence of corresponding corporeal processes. Rather, what happens in the brain and what appears as objective content of self-aware experience are two sides of the same coin. The body, or the brain as its cognitive organ, cannot be understood as a mechanism, however complex. To make any sense of it one has to examine it in the light of the animating operation of the soul. This amounts to saying that cognitive operations which take place through corporeal means as well as the connections such operations require between the various cerebral faculties can only be understood by reference to the corresponding content in the self-aware experience. What happens in the brain is the corporeal counterpart to what is given in self-aware

experience. On the other hand, without the various processes in the body and in the brain, there would be no objective content in experience.

Thus, with regard to the first question, one can deny the existence of any unifying processes in the brain which do not have a corresponding mental appearance. This does not mean that the cerebral process is experienced as such, nor does what is experienced need to bear any resemblance to what goes on in the brain. In lack of detailed textual evidence, we have to leave the correspondence rather vague: any object of experience has some cerebral process as its corporeal correlate. As regards the second question, its solution, or rather negation of its sense, should now be quite evident: the cerebral connections take place due to their mental correlates, and on the other hand, there cannot be any objective content in the self-aware experience without the corporeal cognitive processes.

There is a fairly evident potential problem though. If the individual soul's existence is identical to its awareness of itself, how come there is no awareness of the soul's effect on its body? That there is no such awareness is a phenomenological truism: I do not experience my brain in action. Nevertheless, I believe the problem is only apparent. We have to remember that even though the human soul in its individual existence is self-awareness *essentially*, this does not rule out the possibility of *accidents* of other kind. One such accident is the soul's relation to the body.[138] Besides, as Avicenna says in regard to retentive cognitive faculties, their operation does not yet constitute apprehension. There is a great deal of sensible forms in my imaginary faculty as well as intentions in my memory without my being aware of them. I apprehend them only when they are brought under the consideration of the common sense, imagination and estimation. (*Shifā' De an.* V.6, 246 [Rahman], 147-148 [van Riet].) This apprehension is something one is aware of, and hence can be considered the corporeal side of the coin of cognition, the other equally necessary side of which is awareness.

Another apparent difficulty lies in the ambiguity inherent in the formulas Avicenna uses to describe the unified nature of experience, for instance in the formula 'I perceived and became angry'. So far I have not analysed the unity of experience in any great detail. However, it seems quite natural to distinguish between at least two different types of unity if we consider the temporal interval or lack thereof between the distinct constituents of experience. Thus, we can speak of unity of synchronic aspects of experience on the one hand, and unity of diachronic aspects of experience on the other. The Avicennian formula 'I perceived and became angry' can be analysed in both of these ways. In the synchronic analysis, the perception and the irate reaction are simultaneous. Although the perception may have an earlier temporal beginning, at the moment of analysis the two operations are both actual. A diachronic analysis, however, would yield a perception which is followed by an irate reaction and which ends

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138 The soul is properly called a soul in reference to its relation to the body. But according to Avicenna this does not yet give us any clue regarding what that which we call soul is *in itself*, i.e. essentially. For an argument which appeals to the flying man, see *Shifā' De an.* I.1, 14-16 (Rahman), 33-37 (van Riet).

before the latter. At the moment when only the irate reaction is actual, one would presumably still be able to describe the occurrence of one's current state by the formula 'I perceived and became angry'. It may seem that the latter case involves a unifying self-awareness different in kind from that in the prior case. In the synchronic case we only need one self-awareness with two distinguishable objects, something sensible and an intention capable of rousing ire. On the other hand, it might be argued that the diachronic case requires self-awareness with an intention as its object of ire, a more or less accurate sensible representation of the thing to which that intention is conjoined, and in addition to these a recognition that the representation is a representation of a prior perception by or in that very self-awareness. In this analysis, a diachronic unity of experience would require a second order self-awareness regarding an aspect of one's experience. This would on its turn place new requirements on Avicenna's concept of self-awareness by the description of which he will have to justify his appeal to self-awareness in the psychological explanation under scrutiny, i.e. that of the unity of experience.

While the distinction between diachronic and synchronic unity of experience is valid in its own right, I do not think the observation entails the supposed consequences for Avicenna's description of self-awareness. We must consider the fact that for Avicenna, whatever is remembered involves intentions. Intentions, on the other hand, were and will be argued to be relational in the sense that any intention I apprehend is essentially an intention which involves me as the apprehending subject.[139] In a word, any intention I apprehend is intention *for me*. Thus, no further recognition of the remembered representation as *my* representation is required in the diachronic case as it was described.[140] We can of course conceive of more complex cases of remembering which do involve explicit higher order self-awareness but they have to be studied precisely as such, i.e. as cases of more complex types of self-awareness, and by the principle of charity one would then have to see whether Avicenna is then able to provide a plausible explanation of them. They cannot be used in a forthright attack against Avicenna's explanatory appeal to a more primitive kind of self-awareness.

4.3 Reference of First Personal Indexical Expressions

As can be seen from Avicenna's formulations for the unity of experience in some of the passages discussed above, the question of the reference of first personal singular pronouns and related expressions is closely connected to the theme of experiential unity. Avicenna takes his cue for the question of experiential unity from propositions which link together two separate experiential contents while presenting them as predicates of one and the same subject. In other

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139 For a sketch of this idea, see ch. 3.5 above. For a fuller treatment, see ch. 5.2 below.

140 For the role of estimation in remembrance, see *Shifā' De an.* IV.3, 187-188 (Rahman), 43-44 (van Riet).

passages he tackles the question of the reference of this subject term more directly. Consider the following text which starts from a question we have already discussed, i.e. whether a body or a corporeal faculty could bring together the various cognitive operations of the soul:

> If it [i.e. the body in which the powers of the soul converge] is not the whole body but a special organ, then that organ is the thing which I believe to be me in its essence (*aᶜtaqida anhu li dhātihi anā*), unless the intention of that which I believe to be me is not this organ even though it cannot do without the organ (*yakūnu maᶜnā mā aᶜtaqiduhu anhu anā laysa huwa dhālika al-ᶜuḍwa wa in kāna lā budda lahu min al-ᶜuḍw*). If the quiddity of the essence of that organ – i.e. of its being a heart, a brain, some other thing or a number of organs capable of this – or the quiddity of their collection is the thing of which I am aware that it is me (*ashᶜuru bihi anhu anā*), then it is necessary that my awareness of me is my awareness of that thing (*yakūna shuᶜūrī bi anā huwa shuᶜūrī bi dhālika al-shay'*). But the thing cannot be, in one and the same sense, both what [one] is aware of and what [one] is not aware of. The case is not like that, anyway. On the contrary, when I know (*aᶜrifu*) that I have a heart and a brain, this is through sensation, hearing and experience, not through my knowing that I am me (*lā li annī aᶜrifu annī anā*). Thus, that organ in itself (*li nafsihi*) is not the thing of which I am aware that it is me in essence (*al-shay'a al-ladhī ashᶜaru bihi anhu anā bi al-dhāt*). It is me accidentally (*bi al-ᶜarḍ*), though, but that what is meant (*al-maqṣūd*) – and by means of which I know of me that I am me (*bi mā aᶜrifuhu minnī annī anā*) – and which I refer to (*aᶜanīhi*) in my saying 'I sensed, understood, acted, and combined these characteristics' is a different thing, and that is what I call 'I'.[141]

If we keep in mind the conclusions of the previous chapters, the end of the passage is quite clear. Not only does self-awareness as existence of the individual human soul guarantee the unity of that soul's experience, it is also that to which first personal indexical pronouns uttered by that same soul refer. But right before this conclusion Avicenna quite adamantly asserts that first personal indexical expressions can also be used to refer to corporeal things. For instance, an infant can recognize herself in the mirror ("That is *me* in the looking glass!"), something we are so used to that we hardly ever pause to consider it, or I can

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141 *Shifā' De an.* V.7, 255-256 (Rahman), 163-164 (van Riet). The position of the citation marks in the last sentence is debatable. I have followed Rahman's reading in my translation, but as van Riet argues in a note *ad locum* in her edition of the Latin text, the end of the sentence could also be translated as follows: "that what is meant [...] and which I refer to in my saying 'I sensed, understood, acted' – these characteristics are combined in another thing, and that is what I call 'I'." A translation along these lines was adapted in Gundissalinus' Latin version, and it is followed by A.-M. Goichon (1938), 432. It should be clear that this alternative translation is equally well, if not better, in line with my interpretation of the passage. It also makes more sense of the sentence which Avicenna uses as an example ('I sensed, etc.'), insofar as an everyday utterance – parts of which such clauses as '[I] combined these characteristics' rarely are – is meant. However, I have adopted Rahman's version because to me it seems syntactically by far the more charitable reading.

designate a hand or a foot, or any other organ of a body, as *my* hand or *my* foot in a very special sense. Furthermore, in both instances the resulting propositions are capable of being true and false. Avicenna does not deny that these are genuine instances of self-reference. However, he claims they do not constitute the *primary* reference of first personal expressions but only a secondary reference derived from the primary.

Now, it seems natural to distinguish between at least two different types of this secondary first personal indexical reference through which one identifies corporeal entities as oneself in some sense. On the one hand, a corporeal entity I recognize as me can figure in my experience as an explicit object, such as the heart or the brain mentioned by Avicenna. But on the other hand, my hands or my feet seem to constitute a somewhat different case. For the most part they do not figure as explicit objects of my experience, yet it seems all the more natural to regard them as mine, as parts of *me*, precisely when they do not force themselves into the focus of my attention but rather function smoothly as instruments in my various acts. It is of course always possible to bring them to the scope of my conscious attention, but this has often catastrophic results for the act I'm performing. My hands or my feet are somehow transformed by becoming explicit objects of attention, and this transformation serves to confirm the distinction we have drawn.

Elementary treatment of both kinds of secondary first personal indexical reference can be found in Avicenna. The example of the heart or the brain in the previous passage deals with explicit *objects* in the field of self-awareness that are subsequently appropriated as oneself or parts of oneself. The following passage from *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*, on the other hand, speaks of action but can be easily extended to cover the case of the *instruments* by means of which the self-aware soul brings about its action in the corporeal world.

> Perhaps you say: I cannot affirm my essence by means of (*min*) my action. Then it is necessary that you have an action that you affirm in the said premise, or a movement or something else. In our consideration of the said premise we have put those out of your reach (*jaᶜalanāka bi maᶜzilin min dhālika*).
>
> When we regard the more general matter, if you have affirmed your action as action in the absolute sense (*muṭlaqan fiᶜalan*), it is necessary that you affirm an agent of it in the absolute sense, not in a particular sense (*fāᶜilan muṭlaqan lā khāṣṣan*). [This agent] is your very essence (*dhātuka bi ᶜaynihā*). If you have affirmed [your action] as your action, you do not affirm your essence through it (*bihi*). On the contrary, your essence is part of the concept (*mafhūm*) of your act insofar as it is *your* act. The part is affirmed in the conception (*fī al-fahm*) preceding it and it is not made any less by being with it but not through it (*maᶜhu lā bihi*). Thus, your essence is not affirmed through [your action] (*bihi*).[142]

142 *Ishārāt* 120 (Forget), my italics. Cf. *Taᶜlīqāt* 160-161 (Badawī).

According to Avicenna, when I say 'I saw', I mean that the seeing was *my* action in an irreducible sense. It is not the case that an agentless action is ontologically prior to its being attributed to me as an agent, the action is *mine* from the very beginning. Similarly, the sense organs through which the visual perception took place can be called *my* eyes due only to their role in the action which is irreducibly mine. And still in the same way, whenever I say 'I acted', the limbs by means of which I performed my action can be called my limbs due to this connection.

Avicenna's reasoning comes quite close to the idea us moderns are accustomed to name *immunity of misidentification*. The term is intended to point out the crucial difference between first personal indexical expressions and third personal expressions (such as those featuring proper names or definitely described concepts) when both are used to refer to the same individual being. The central insight is that for any third personal expression, a scenario can be devised in which it is used incorrectly so that the result is a misidentification of the referential object. Hence, the utterance in which the expression figured is rendered false. First personal indexical expressions are essentially different: they are immune to any such misidentification. However false beliefs a subject may hold of herself, she is incapable of erring in referring to herself as 'I'.[143] Unsurprisingly, Avicenna does not deal with the phenomenon in these terms, but it seems evident that he is aware of it. Consider the following two passages, the first of which is from *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* and follows right after Avicenna's claim – the central argument of which is based on the flying man – that one has an immediate awareness of oneself, whereas the second comes from the psychology of the *Shifā'* and is embedded in a context in which Avicenna is primarily concerned with the impossibility of self-awareness in corporeal cognition:

> Did you conclude that what is apprehended (*al-mudrak*) of you is something your sight apprehends from your skin? No, for if you were stripped of [your skin] and would change on your part (*tubaddilu ʿalayka*), you would [still] be you. Or [maybe what is apprehended of you] is something apprehended through your touch which can only be [something] from your external organs? No, for their case is the same (*ḥālahā mā salafa*), besides we are in the first phase of the hypothesis[144] where we have disregarded the operations (*afʿālihā*) of the senses. Thus, it is evident that what you then apprehend is not one of your organs, such as heart or brain. How could it be when their existence is concealed from you, were it not for dissection? Neither is what you apprehend a whole[145] insofar as it is a whole. This is obvious to you from what you examine in your soul and what you have been reminded of (*mimmā nubbihta ʿalayhi*). What you apprehend is another thing, different from these things

143 The *locus classicus* for this topic is Shoemaker (1968). A major part of Hector-Neri Castañeda's lifework was devoted to a studious examination of first personal indexical expressions. His central articles are collected in Castañeda (1999).

144 This hypothesis is the flying man whose state has been described right before our passage in *Ishārāt* 119 (Forget).

145 Presumably Avicenna means the body as a whole (*jumla*).

> which you do not apprehend while you do apprehend your essence and which you do not consider necessary for your being you. What you apprehend does not in any way (*bi wajhin min al-wujūh*) belong to what you apprehend through the senses or through what resembles the senses of which we shall [yet] speak. (*Ishārāt* 119-120 [Forget].)
>
> This demonstration clearly shows that it is not possible for that which apprehends by means of an instrument to apprehend its instrument in the apprehension. Because of this the sense only senses an external thing, it does not sense itself (*dhātahu*), nor its instrument or its sensation (*iḥsāsahu*). In the same way, the imagery does not imagine itself (*lā yatakhayyalu dhātahu*) or its action in any way. *If it has imagined its organ, it has imagined it not as particular to it* (*lā ʿalā naḥwi yakhuṣṣuhu*) *and indubitably exclusively its own* (*anhā lā mahālata lahu dūna ghayrihi*). *Instead, the sense conveys to it the form of its instrument, if it is able to.* (*Shifā' De an.* V.2, 218 [Rahman], 96-97 [van Riet]; my italics.)

If corporeal entities such as limbs, sense organs, heart or brain, or even the body as a whole, were the primary reference of first personal indexical expressions, not only should I have awareness of myself each time I have awareness of the relevant corporeal entity, but the relation should also hold symmetrically the other way around, so that each time I am aware of myself I would be aware of the relevant corporeal entity. While the first implication clearly holds – after all, Avicenna says we are continuously aware of ourselves regardless of what happens to be the experiential content at any given moment – the second does not, and this is precisely what the flying man was designed to show. But more interestingly, I think Avicenna wants to say that if corporeal entities were necessary in my reference to myself I should always perceive them *as myself*, i.e. I should neither be able to err in designating them as *my* body or organs of *my* body nor to withhold this designation from them. Thus, what we call immunity of misidentification seems to be the central criterion for ruling out all things corporeal as the potential primary reference of first personal indexical expressions. Unlike self-awareness, none of the corporeal things which can only be *objects* of self-aware experience are immune to misidentification.

The outcome of all this is that the organs of the body and the body as a whole figure in my self-designation only as objects or instruments of action. In both cases they receive their designation as mine or as me from something else. I can either recognize them as my own due to cognitive conviction – say, the moment I realise that a given optical setup is capable of transmitting to my eyes visual information of the brain which belongs to the body I experience as being under my governance. Or more intimately, I can perceive them as mine due to their being closely entangled as instruments in an action the subject and initiator I feel myself to be.

But does Avicenna consider the more standard cases in the considerations of immunity of misidentification, such as proper names? After all, it seems natural to assume that in some sense the expressions 'I' as pronounced by me

and 'Jari Kaukua' as pronounced by any linguistic agent have a common reference, certainly more natural than a similar assumption regarding the terms 'I' and 'Jari Kaukua's body'. Despite the ease of assumption, however, there is a difference between the two terms, and the crucial philosophical task is to spell this out. To my knowledge, Avicenna does not address this question explicitly, but he does provide elements for a possible solution. Consider the following passage from the *Shifā'*:

> Now, if somesome said that you do not know that [the I] is a soul (*nafs*), I would say that I always know it according to the sense (*al-maᶜnā*) in which I call it the soul.[146] I might not know it as designated by the word 'soul', but when I comprehend (*fahamtu*) what [it is that] I refer to as the soul, I comprehend that it is that thing and that it is what uses motive and cognitive instruments. I am ignorant of [the I as designated by the word 'soul'] for only as long as I do not comprehend the meaning (*maᶜnā*) of 'soul'. This is not the case with the heart or the brain, for I may comprehend the meaning of 'heart' and 'brain' and not know (*aᶜlama*) [the I]. When I mean by 'soul' that it is the thing which is the origin (*mabda'*) of those motions and cognitions (*al-idrākāt*) that belong to me and that end in this collection (*al-jumla*), I know that either it is really me or it is me as using this body. It is as if I now was not able to distinguish the awareness of me pure and simple (*al-shuᶜūra bi anā mufradan*) from [its] being mixed with the awareness that it [i.e. I] uses the body and is associated with the body. (*Shifā' De an.* V.7, 256-257 [Rahman], 164-165 [van Riet].)

In a sense, the two expressions 'my soul' and 'I' have the same reference. The difference between them is that whereas I naturally know the correct reference of 'I', I have to learn the correct reference for the term '(my) soul'. Similarly, I cannot err in using the term 'I' whereas error is possible in any use of the term 'soul'. Another difference is due to the fact that 'soul' is a generic term, it refers to an essence regarded as a generic concept which can be uttered of many particular instances in the same sense. Even though 'I' can also be uttered in many instances, it is not a generic term, for in each instance it refers uniquely to the individual uttering it. In none of these instances is it possible to utter 'I' of anything else than oneself.

It is true that in the passage above Avicenna speaks of the two terms 'I' and '(my) soul' as if they were identical in reference. But once we consider the more general ontology of individual human souls underlying the discussion, we are bound to draw the conclusion that insofar as both refer to the same individual soul, they do this in radically different senses. 'My soul' expresses the *essence* of that being from a general point of view conjoined with its designation as mine, 'I' its uniqueness, i.e. its *existence*. In other words, 'I' refers to the bare fact of the existence of the individual soul, whereas 'my soul' is a description or

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146 For Avicenna, the individual human essence is properly called 'soul' only in its relation to the body. Cf. *Shifā' De an.* I.1 and ch. 2.1 above.

a characterisation of that existence. To the extent that we want to say that the two expressions amount to exactly the same, a drastically different emphasis in the interpretation of the expression 'my soul' is required. Just as we saw in our consideration of the appropriation of an action as one's own, in the present case the more particular designation in the expression 'my soul' – i.e. the designation expressed by the possessive pronoun 'my' – is itself based on the irreducible fact of self-awareness expressed by 'I'. If I can genuinely grasp myself by means of the expression 'my soul', this is only because the expression already depends on primary and irreducible first personal indexical reference. Yet ultimately there remains a difference, for unlike expressions containing general terms, simple self-reference does not describe its referential object in any way.[147]

This very problematic also contains the key to an Avicennian articulation of the difference between first personal indexical reference and third personal references to an individual soul. In the regard relevant in the present context, proper names can be taken to function exactly like general terms. The term 'Jari Kaukua' thus expresses either a definite description, i.e. a complex bundle of general terms that picks out one and only one particular, or an individual intention capable of the same,[148] both of which are in principle accessible to anyone with sufficient cognitive capacities. Whichever alternative is chosen, the term refers to a particular soul from the point of view of its essential and accidental properties or one singularly instantiated property, i.e. it refers to the soul as a *thing*, a substance which can be apprehended as the subject of these properties. As an immaterial entity, the soul cannot be immediately accessible to any human knower in this sublunar world. However, it can be apprehended through the mediation of the particular body it animates as well as all the apprehensible qualities and relations that are manifested in the being, or if you will, life of that body. However, the case of my referring to myself by means of the pronoun 'I' is entirely different. At no point do I have to apprehend properties by means of

147 However, *Mubāḥathāt* 346 seems problematic for my account in that it seems to equate the self-awareness of a rational soul with its knowledge of itself, with the latter taken to be essential similar to knowledge of other things. However, I believe that passage is best read as an account of either reflective self-awareness or more elaborate self-knowledge. Then, of course, one is faced with the potential problem of intellectual knowledge of particulars, but that is an entirely different question.

148 For Avicenna's theory of intellectual apprehension of individuals, see Adamson (2005) and Black (2005). According to Black, Avicenna seems to opt for a theory of individual intentions, neither entirely consistently nor successfully. Black's central critique is that while Avicenna capably spells out the problems inherent to the bundle theory of individuation, his theory of the individual intention ends up being but a variation of it. I consider my present exposition as a preliminary defence of Avicenna's position in the special case of individual human souls. The important point Black ignores is that we have to take self-awareness as the primary factor in individuation. As such, it is immediately accessible exclusively to the individual soul itself. In case my interpretation is correct, the problem dissolves, if only we accept the idea that we always have an inadequate grasp of other individuals. In the final analysis their individuality – i.e. the individuality of an immaterial, hence intelligible substance – eludes us, and we never have immediate access to it. We can grasp others as individuals only through their embodiment, but this, like any other corporeal thing, is not intelligible. – Adamson's take on the question is slightly more favourable to Avicenna. I will give a slightly more detailed account of it in my discussion of the question of God's knowledge of individual human souls in ch. 5.4.

which I recognize myself. Instead, my awareness of myself is the necessary condition for my ability to conceive of myself as a subject of potential properties in the first place. In other words, the first personal expression refers to the existence that is then qualified by this or that property. For Avicenna's articulation of this idea, consider the following two passages from the *Taʿlīqāt*:

> When I said 'I did so and so', I expressed my grasp (*idrākī*) of my essence even if I ignored my awareness of my essence. If [it were not so], how could I know that I did so and so if not by first considering my essence? Therefore, I first considered my essence, not its action, and I never consider a thing without thereby grasping (*adraktu*) my essence.[149]

Thus, self-awareness is the precondition for knowing any of the contents of awareness. Similarly, a capacity to refer to oneself is the prerequisite of the capacity to attribute actions or attributes to oneself. The next passage, immediately following the previous one in the *Taʿlīqāt*, articulates the difference between first and third personal reference:

> Awareness of other requires prior knowledge (*maʿarifa*) on the states and properties [of that other thing], for if you did not know (*lam taʿrif*) a friend by his states and properties, you would not recognize (*lam taʿalim*) that he is the one you know (*taʿarifahu*) when you apprehend him (*adraktahu*) by the senses, nor would you recognize (*lam taʿalim*) that he is for instance the philosopher. The seen thing which is not preceded by your recognition (*ʿilmuka*) of it does not enable you to say: "It is the thing which I know (*aʿrifuhu*)."[150]

In a word, existence precedes objective reference in both first and third personal cases. But what is essential is that we are dealing with two different kinds of existence. In the first personal case, existence amounts to self-awareness, immediate lucidity of the individual essence to itself. This, as we have seen, is the soul's essential existence. In the third personal case, the existence of an immaterial individual soul amounts to the material existence of its effects in the body animated by it through the mediation of which alone the soul can be grasped and thus referred to.

To conclude this chapter, we may point out an interesting remark of Avicenna's in the *Mubāḥathāt*. He is posed with the following set of questions:

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149 *Taʿlīqāt* 160-161 (Badawī). The clause "even if I ignored my awareness of my essence" may require explanation, lest it be taken as evidence for the possibility of mental states that are not self-aware. It seems quite obvious to me that the clause refers to the second order awareness of one's action expressed in the proposition 'I did so and so'. What is intended is that in uttering the proposition it is possible to pay second order attention to one's action exclusively and neglect or ignore the self-awareness involved. According to Avicenna, this does not entail the absence of self-awareness in the action to which the proposition refers.

150 *Taʿlīqāt* 161 (Badawī). On the necessity of prior self-awareness in uttering propositions that attribute actions to oneself, see *Taʿlīqāt* 147 (Badawī) and *Ishārāt* 120 (Forget).

> [W]hen I have understood the soul or humanity, does there occur in the understanding part of me something other than my essence (*dhātī*)? And when I have understood Zayd's humanity or Zayd's soul, is what is understood of the soul or humanity other than my essence with the concomitants inherent to Zayd's humanity? Or does there occur in my essence another humanity with other accidents? (*Mubāḥathāt* 426, 222 [Badawī].)

His answer goes:

> When you have understood the soul or humanity absolutely (*muṭlaqan*), pure and simple (*mufradan*), you have understood a part of your essence (*dhātaka*). And when you have understood Zayd's humanity, you have added another thing to a part of your essence, united the two, and so regarded a part of your essence as well as a part of another essence. Thus, humanity is not multiplied in you with regard to subject (*bi al-mawḍūᶜ*) but with regard to consideration (*bi al-iᶜtibār*). (*Mubāḥathāt* 426, 222-223 [Badawī].)

Avicenna says that in order to understand another being as a human being I have to rely on something I already know from my own essence. Admittedly, this passage can be interpreted in terms of simple definitions: the celebrated definition for a human being is 'an animal endowed with reason (or language)', and to the extent I subsume another being under this definition I subsume him under a part of my own definition as well. But there is a more exciting interpretative possibility as well. We have seen that what is always present to me of my essence is its existence as self-awareness. Thus, what even the person uneducated in Aristotelian natural science would know about himself as a human being, is that he is aware of himself. He also knows a number of other things about himself. But insofar as he grasps another being as *essentially* similar to himself, he ignores these other features of himself and grasps the other as aware of herself. As I've already pointed out, he does not have direct access to the self-awareness of the other, but it is essential in his grasping the other as a fellow human being, as a being similar to himself, that he attribute a similar kind of existence to her. Thus, self-awareness seems to be a distinctive feature of some beings in the third personal perspective as well, even though it cannot be grasped directly.

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There is yet another philosophical problem in the treatment of which one might expect Avicenna to appeal to self-awareness, namely the question of personal identity. However, to the best of my knowledge Avicenna does not discuss personal identity in any terms resemblant to the modern discussion. In the end, this is hardly surprising, considering that the immaterial soul, or rather immaterial individual human essence, *as an entity* seems to contain a ready-made third personal solution to the problem at the very outset. The individual human

essence *endures* from its birth to the hereafter as a being that is entirely present throughout its existence.[151] The problem simply does not arise. But it might help to gain insight into Avicenna's concept of self-awareness, if we pause for a moment to consider whether self-awareness in the expounded sense could constitute a solution to the problem of personal identity from the first personal point of view, were the question posed to Avicenna.

In a sense, personal identity is guaranteed by self-awareness in the form of a continuous existence of an individual human soul. But as we will soon come to see, this concept of self-awareness is extremely thin when it comes to content, and for a good reason it should perhaps be called pre-personal at least as far as modern conceptions of personhood are concerned. Within the bounds of reason, even the most stripped down modern account of personal identity – in the first personal sense – would presumably include at least some features which in Avicenna's theory would fall under the general category of content, such as central events in one's personal history or emotional relations to other persons, to mention only two. For Avicenna, personal identity involving any content cannot be based exclusively on the most primitive level of self-awareness. Instead, some amount of essentially reflective self-knowledge is required, and by consequence use of memory and the occurrence of higher order types of self-awareness. In fact, as we will soon see, the Avicennian theory of primary self-awareness seems to be in agreement with those modern theories which claim that self-awareness is more primitive than personality, indeed even dissymmetrically constitutive of personality, and that there can be self-awareness without the sort of content-related continuity or coherence which personhood seems to require.[152] As far as I know, Avicenna does not present any developed account

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151 I am speaking of an endurance model of personal identity in distinction from a perdurance model of the same. In a nutshell, an endurance account of personal identity posits a core substance of some sort to a person as the basis of her personal identity. This substance is entirely present throughout its existence and does not undergo any kind of change, and as such it can guarantee personal identity despite apparent changes in a person's life. A perdurance model, on the contrary, conceives of the person as a static four-dimensional spatiotemporal entity. When time, the dimension of change, is viewed statically as a linear container of all apparent change, the changes can be included in the description of the person. Personal identity is then guaranteed by the definiteness of the four-dimensional entity. In the final analysis, two considerations encourage me to opt for the endurance model as the more likely candidate for an Avicennian account of personal identity. Firstly, Avicenna's dualism entails a rather rigid ontological distinction between the invariable field of self-aware experience and its variable content. It is precisely the invariable aspect that Avicenna encourages us to identify with, with the variability providing all sorts of inessential appendices. Secondly, in Avicenna's version of Islamic eschatology changes in the course of a human life have a determinable end which does not coincide with the end of the existence of that human being. The hereafter brings about nothing novel – at least after our post-purgatory entrance to our final dwelling according to the dictates of the final judgment due upon us – yet we continue to exist as the same individual beings. A simple perdurance model would be in pains to define a four-dimensional person entity when it is infinite in one dimension. Let it be emphasised, however, that these considerations are highly tentative, particularly in the absence of any textual evidence.

152 Cf. Strawson (2002a), Strawson (2002b). For critical assessments of such a thin concept of self-awareness, see Brook (2002), Olson (2002) and Wilkes (2002). Zahavi (2005), 124-132, argues for the distinction between the core sense of self-awareness as

of personal continuity in the stronger sense, but this much can at least be said on where *not* to look for it.

4.4 Summary

In the foregone chapter we have considered the most important explanatory functions Avicenna employs the phenomenon of self-awareness to. The most important explanatory role concerns the problem of individuation where self-awareness is identified as the mode of existence of individual immaterial human souls. The other two functions, i.e. those of being the guarantor of unity of experience and the reference of first personal indexical expressions, while important in themselves, are subject to and dependent on the primary one.

These explanatory roles result in a number of seemingly difficult requirements for Avicenna's concept of self-awareness. We will work with most of them in the next chapter. There is one radical consequence which we will not revisit, though, and which therefore should be reiterated conclusively at present. As we have seen, for Avicenna the human soul exists essentially in such a way as to be inapprehensible to anyone but itself, it exists as self-awareness, exlusively accessible to the soul itself. However, the soul does have accidents and accidental relations to things other than itself. Through these relations, most importantly through the relation to the body which is perceptible in the sublunar world to any cognitive agent with sufficient means, the soul is mediately accessible to cognitive agents other than itself. But there is no way to apprehend another soul directly from a third personal perspective. Thus, for Avicenna self-awareness is radically and irreducibly first personal.

In any case, it should now be obvious that self-awareness is a phenomenon of crucial importance for Avicenna. At the same time, what he thinks is conclusive of it can hardly be considered self-evident. On the contrary, the theses he bases on self-awareness seem extravagant at least if we consider the fact that for the most part we seem to be engaged in matters other than reflective examination of ourselves, and correspondingly spend the major part of our time precisely in the lack of self-awareness. Thus, if he expects to be taken seriously Avicenna has to provide more support for his thesis. I want to claim that this is precisely what he does through an elaborate descriptive analysis of what self-awareness in the sense appealed to above really consists of, and more importantly, what it does not entail.

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the experiential dimension of mineness and the more developed sense of narrative conception of oneself which he takes to be founded upon the former. He also voices a concise criticism against Strawson, however (see 234-235, n. 14).

5 TYPES OF SELF-AWARENESS

In the previous chapter, we saw that Avicenna's conception of self-awareness is designed to explain the individuation of immaterial human souls as well as the unity and coherence of human experience, and provide the reference for first personal indexical expressions. In the light of these explanatory roles, it is obvious that the conception capable of successfully playing in all of them has to be a quite special one, perhaps even unusual. In this chapter, I will investigate the requirements posed to such a conception by the explanatory roles and try to elaborate the Avicennian concept of primitive self-awareness by means of them. The first subchapter below will take this task upon itself. The second subchapter will deal with the questions whether animals are primitively aware of themselves in phenomenally the same fashion as humans, and if they are, whether the psychological explanation for animal and human self-awareness is the same. Conclusively we will examine the question whether animals share all the features constitutive of human self-awareness, most crucially, whether their souls too are immaterial, hence immortal, substances.

Anticipating a bit, at the end of the first two subchapters we will have ended up with a fairly thin concept of self-awareness to which an explanation of the richer and more complex varieties of self-awareness has to be appended. Most importantly, Avicenna must provide some sort of theory of reflective self-awareness most of us are familiar with to at least some extent. In the third subchapter, I will contend that he does provide precisely such a theory – or at least rudiments thereof.[153] The fourth subchapter is devoted to possible further types of self-awareness in Avicenna. He does not elaborate at any length on the issue, but I will try to argue for the possibility of construing at least a general theory of explicit and elaborate self-knowledge on the basis of the material we have. In any case, however, the treatment in this subchapter is bound to be fairly speculative.

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153 Deborah Black (forthcoming) has also argued for the distinction between the primitive and the reflective types of self-awareness in Avicenna. As far as I know, she is the first to make this crucial opening on a textually difficult field. However, I will try to show that a few emendations to her interpretation are in order.

The fifth and final subchapter is a sort of appendix in which I briefly consider a central feature of most modern genetic accounts of self-awareness, i.e. the question of embodied self-awareness or awareness of oneself as embodied. I will propose sketches for Avicennian theories of this phenomenon, proposals which should of course be taken with a grain of salt, for it would be only too obviously anachronistic to expect a full and explicit treatment of such a specifically modern concept from a medieval author. My central point is to use the phenomenon of awareness of one's own body as a means towards a more vivid picture of the dynamics of Avicenna's psychology.

5.1 Primitive Self-Awareness

Let us reiterate the requirements for Avicenna's conception of self-awareness which resulted from the study of its explanatory functions in the previous chapter. The crucial thesis was that self-awareness amounts to the existence of an individual human soul. Now, if for argument's sake we leave aside the question of life after the corruption of the animate body, it seems natural to assume that prior to death the life, or what amounts to the same, the existence of an individual soul is temporally continuous. A contrary assumption would entail the successive cessation and re-emergence of animate functions within one lifetime. While this might be unproblematic for most animate functions taken singly, with regard to the most fundamental of them, such as circulation of blood or respiration, Avicenna would certainly find such an entailment equally repugnant as we do. So, without further evidence we can assume that the existence, hence self-awareness, of any given individual human soul, in this life, is continuous. This requirement of radical continuity rules out any such conceptions of self-awareness which take self-awareness to be an occurrent phenomenon, most importantly self-awareness as a reflective act I perform at my own will and intermittently. Thus, self-awareness is non-reflective.[154] Furthermore, given

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154 To be precise, we should distinguish between two types of reflective accounts of self-awareness. First, there is the account which takes the phenomenon of reflection, reflection as an explicit feature of experience, the experience of reflecting upon oneself, as the paradigm case of self-awareness. Second, there is the account which explains non-reflectively self-aware states through a reflexive relation of a mental state to itself. In such an account the self-aware subject is not aware of the reflexive relation which enables his being aware in the first place. (In the following I will use the terms 'reflexion' or 'reflexivity' when I mean an occurrence of the second type to distinguish it from reflection as an explicit feature of experience.) The first type of account seems to be deeply entrenched in our ordinary ways of thinking, to the extent that unqualified talk of self-awareness is usually taken to mean something of the kind. Unsurprisingly, there is also no shortage of corresponding philosophical theories. The second type of account seems to fare particularly well in contemporary cognitive science. As regards Avicenna, I have not found any treatment of self-awareness from the viewpoint relevant to reflexivity. Whether or not self-awareness in the primitive sense is constituted by an unconscious reflexive relation is not clear. Considering the immateriality and unicity of the soul, though, such an account would seem to be unlikely. However, some passages can be taken as evidence for the contrary as well, such as *Ishārāt* 119 (Forget) where Avicenna speaks of self-awareness as a representation of the subject in the subject's essence (*tamaththuluhu li-dhātihi*). Bearing in mind

that the flying man is a description of the type of self-awareness at issue, and given the absence of any objective content of experience in the flying man's experience, we have to conclude that the type of self-awareness Avicenna has in mind must not require the mediation of any objective content of experience. Instead, it has to be direct or immediate. Closely related to this, the flying man also allows us to conclude that this type of self-awareness has to be conceived of as lacking objective content in itself.

To sum up, we have four basic requirements for Avicenna's concept of self-awareness: (1) radical temporal continuity of self-awareness, (2) non-reflectivity of self-awareness, (3) immediacy of self-awareness, and (4) lack of inherent objective content of self-awareness. To be sure, Avicenna does not pay equal attention to all of the required features. However, it can be shown that he does pay explicit attention to (1) and (2) which are the most crucial features and which entail the other two. Furthermore, I will try to show that despite the scant explicit treatment by Avicenna, discussion of the other two features does not call for any major departure from his text.

Let us start from (1) the requirement of radical temporal continuity of self-awareness: if self-awareness amounts to the existence of an individual human soul, it has to be continuous in the same sense as this existence. While at first glance this may seem a rather vacuous remark, a moment of reflection will show that it has quite outstanding consequences and rules out a number of seemingly obvious candidates for the Avicennian concept of self-awareness. Consider, for example, the apparently regularly occurrent state of dreamless sleep. In Avicenna's definition, such a state would be self-aware. But what kind of self-awareness could it possibly contain? Aren't states such as dreamless sleep much more plausibly conceived as the negation of any and all kinds of self-awareness – even to the extent that it only makes sense to speak of self-awareness in comparative distinction to precisely this kind of mental states that obviously lack it? And yet, if such states occur during this life, they should be called self-aware states by Avicenna's definition. What is more surprising, Avicenna seems to endorse this outrageous thesis explicitly and wholeheartedly:

> Return to your self (*nafsika*) and consider whether, if you were healthy (*ṣaḥīḥan*) or even in some other state of yours (*ʿalā baʿaḍi aḥwālika ghayrihā*),[155] so that you grasp the matter accurately (*bi-*

Aristotle's famous formula for awareness in *De anima* III.2 (*aisthanometha hoti horōmen kai akouomen*), which has been treated in reflexive terms by Victor Caston (2002), apparently it would not be entirely anachronistic to suppose such an account in Avicenna as well.

155 I find this qualification somewhat enigmatic. It seems natural to take *ṣaḥīḥan* to refer to a normal state of an awake mind and *aḥwālika ghayrihā* to such states as dreamless sleep or drunkenness specified shortly later in the passage. However, the immediately following qualification *bi ḥaithu tafṭanu al-shaiʾa fiṭnatan ṣaḥīḥatan* does not fit well together with sleep or drunkenness. Perhaps *aḥwālika ghayrihā* refers to elated or ecstatic but clear states of mind instead. This would speak for the presence of primitive self-awareness in ecstatic experiences, and would encourage the interpretation according to which drunkenness must here be understood in the sense, prevalent in

> *ḥaithu tafṭanu al-shai'a fiṭnatan ṣaḥīḥatan*), you would be ignorant of the existence of your essence (*taghfulu ᶜan wujūdi dhātika*) and would not affirm your self (*lā tuthbitu nafsaka*). I don't think this would happen to the perspicacious (*li al-mustabṣir*). Even in cases of the sleeper in his sleep or the drunkard in his drunkenness, his essence will not escape his essence (*lā taᶜazibu dhātuhu ᶜan dhātihi*), even if no representation of him in his essence was left in his memory (*lam yathbutu tamaththuluhu li-dhātihi fī dhikrihi*). (*Ishārāt* 119 [Forget].)

Avicenna is quite adamant: even dreamless states of sleep and states of severe inebriosity[156] are self-aware states.[157] I believe this statement alone is enough to confirm that Avicenna endorses the requirement of continuity for the primary kind of self-awareness. The question whether he can do this with any plausibility will have to wait until we have considered the requirement (4) of the absence of inherential objective content in primary self-awareness, and are at the position to give a descriptive account of Avicenna's conception of the primary

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Sufi literature, of ecstatic unification with the divine. In any case, by Avicenna's time the term *ḥāl* (the plural of which *aḥwāluka* is) had already become a *terminus technicus* in Sufi psychology to designate the intermittent ecstatic states incumbent upon individual Sufis, and it would not be unreasonable to assume that Avicenna was aware of this special use of the term. At the moment, however, I am incapable of deciding for one interpretation or the other, but the part of the passage relevant to my argument should be clear enough.

156 It is not clear whether Avicenna means 'drunkenness' to be taken literally, i.e. referring to a mental state under the influence of a certain chemical substance, or metaphorically, referring to the elated state of unification with the divine. A contemporary reader of Avicenna's would have been well acquainted with the metaphor, a common *topos* in Sufi literature since the ninth century CE. Both interpretations would be interesting from the point of view of self-awareness. Presumably drunkenness in the literal sense would have to be treated similarly to the case of dreamless sleep, although I have not been able to find in Avicenna any descriptions of the relevant changes brought about by ingestion of alcohol. An educated guess would be that alcohol renders the matter of the brain more "fluid" and hence less disposed to retain the forms and intentions perceived. Thus while there are experiences, no trace of them is left in memory. Passing out due to a greater amount of alcohol can naturally be considered as a state of sleep. On the other hand, drunkenness in the metaphorical sense is interesting if we bear in mind the fact that elated states of unification are often characterised as "selfless" in one way or another. If Avicenna speaks of drunkenness metaphorically here, evidently he takes such states to be self-aware in the sense under consideration.

157 It might be objected that the phrase "his essence will not escape his essence" does not refer to self-awareness proper but merely the possibility of it: both the sleeper and the inebrious person *would* admit being self-aware *if* the matter occurred to them. However, a parallel passage in *Mubāḥathāt* 380 (210 [Badawī]), while not confirming conclusively, at least lends credence to the stronger interpretation: "If [the sleeper], when he wakes up, remembers his bahaviour [in the dream], he remembers his awareness of his essence (*shuᶜūruhu bi dhātihi*). And if, when he wakes up, he does not remember [his behaviour], he won't remember his awareness of his essence. But this is not a proof of his not having been aware of his essence." While not demonstrating the fact of self-awareness in dreamless sleep, this passage at least explicitly argues against its exclusion. On the other hand, the weaker interpretation of "will not escape" is perfectly coherent with the Avicennian interpretation of reflective self-awareness as proximate potentiality (see ch. 5.3 below). (For another text on self-awareness in sleep, see *Mubāḥathāt* 381, 210 [Badawī].)

type of self-awareness. At this point, however, we must investigate the kind of continuity Avicenna has in mind.

Avicenna says that the sleeper's or drunkard's essence will not escape his essence[158] "even if no representation of him in his essence was left in his memory". The role of memory is essential here. As we now know, for Avicenna memory is an internal sense the function of which is to retain intentions. Now, I proposed in chapter 3.5 that Avicennian intentions should be understood as relational and self-involving. Against this proposal, Avicenna's clause is quite understandable: what distinguishes the sleeper and the drunkard from a human being in a wake and sober state of mind is that no intentions of the objects of their respective experiences are left in their memory, and as a result of this they have no access to themselves as subjects of those particular experiences either.

Thus, continuity in the sense required here does not entail any second order awareness of this continuity, or even the possibility of such awareness. Anything of the sort would require remembering the prior parts of the continuous stream of consciousness. The point in speaking of dreamless sleep is precisely to say that we have no recollection of what that state was like. To be exact, we should say that we do not know whether there actually was a dream going on or not, since we are epistemically constrained to decide for one or the other, and for that matter we can as well speak of such states as dreamless states. This of course means that I do not have full knowledge of what has taken place between my falling to sleep and my awakening, or alternatively my beginning to remember my dreams shortly prior to my awakening. By taking a look at an external indicator of time – the clock, or the sky where the sun has evidently risen after having set around the time I went to sleep – I can assume a temporal gap between the experiences of falling to sleep and waking up, a gap of which I have no direct or experiential knowledge, but only knowledge by inference. Now, Avicenna's point is that the assumption of such a gap, while entirely correct and warranted in its own right, does not allow us to conclude a similar gap or any kind of breach at all in my self-awareness. Self-awareness and memory of self-aware experiences are two different matters. What is lacking in the depicted case is the latter, not the former. The same holds for the drunkard, whether he is at an elated state of unification with the divine, a conscious state of chemically acquired inebriosity, or the state of having passed out. Seeming lapses of awareness only amount to absence of experiential traces in the memory.

Now, it might be objected that crucial differences have been neglected between the states of dreaming sleeper, dreamless sleeper, conscious drunkard and one who has passed out, and a person actually undergoing a mystical experience. It is true that these cases fall into two distinct classes in one important respect: in some of these states the subject is actually undergoing an experience

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158 Obviously, I interpret this as yet another formulation for individual human essence's cognitive grasp of itself. We have already seen that Avicenna speaks of self-awareness in epistemic terms, the most common formula being *shaᶜara bi al-dhāt* or its nominative form *al-shuᶜūru bi al-dhāt*.

with objective content (dream, conscious drunkenness), while in others there is no objective content at all (truly dreamless sleep, the state of having passed out, possibly the mystical state). However, I intend my interpretation to hold equally of the stronger cases with no objective content of experience as of the weaker cases with objective content but no memory of it. As I said, only later will we be at the position to fully appreciate the gist of the argument here. In due time, I will argue that Avicenna's conception of primitive self-awareness excludes inherent objective content, and insofar as this is true, we can take our passage as speaking of the stronger cases.

In any case, the passage from *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* on the sleeper and the drunkard is not the sole evidence for Avicenna's endorsement of the radical continuity of primary self-awareness. In the following passage from the *Taʿlīqāt* he explicitly rules out any occurrent states of self-awareness from being the type he appeals to as the explanatory factor we studied in the previous chapter, and explicitly asserts that self-awareness is continuous.

> Our awareness [of our essences] is absolute (*ʿalā al-iṭlāq*) awareness, I mean that it does not require qualification (*wajh*), and it is continuous awareness, not sometimes more than others. [...]
>
> Awareness of essence is the soul in act, and its awareness of its essence is continuous. (*Taʿlīqāt* 160-161 [Badawī].)

So much for the requirement of radical continuity of self-awareness. Right after the above passage from *Taʿlīqāt* Avicenna goes on to explicitly deny that a reflective account could grasp the primary level of self-awareness, a denial which he obviously takes to follow from the requirement of continuity.

> As to awareness of awareness, it is potential. If awareness of awareness was in act, it would be continuous and would not require intellectual reflection (*iʿtibāru al-ʿaql*).
>
> My grasp (*idrākī*) of my essence is something that happens in me (*yaqūmu lī*), it does not occur to me from reflection (*iʿtibār*) on another thing. When I said 'I did so and so', I express my grasp (*idrākī*) of my essence even if I ignored my awareness of my essence. If [it were not so], how could I know that I did so and so if not by first considering (*iʿtabartu*) my essence? Therefore, I first considered my essence, not its action, and I never consider a thing without thereby grasping (*adraktu*) my essence. [...]
>
> When we know something and there is awareness of our essence in our knowledge of our grasping that thing (*fī ʿilminā bi idrākinā lahu shuʿūrun bi dhātinā*), we do not know that our essence has grasped it (*lā naʿalamu an dhātanā adrakathu*). First we are aware of our essence. If [it were not so], how would we know that we grasp [the thing] if not by being first aware of our essences? Such a thing is evidence, not a demonstration, of the fact that the soul is aware of its essence.
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> The first principles are not in act, otherwise there would have been no need of reflection. (*Taʿlīqāt* 161 [Badawī].)

Avicenna speaks of explicit reflective self-awareness as "awareness of awareness", an accurate expression which shows the reflective structure of that particular type of awareness and gives a quasi-propositional form to it. He also characterises this kind of awareness as potential, and we will have occasion to return to this characterisation below.[159] At this point, however, of greatest relevance is the mutual exclusivity between continuity and potentiality. In light of the exposition in *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* Avicennian modal theory seems essentially extensional, i.e. the modal terms are interpreted by reference to time, or more precisely, to the actualisation of the modally qualified property in the timeframe of consideration: 'necessary' means that which is always actual in the given timeframe, 'impossible' that which is never actual, and 'possible' picks out that which is actual at some time but not at another.[160] Furthermore, due to the strong connection in any Aristotelian system between logic and ontology potentiality and possibility go hand in hand.[161] In our case therefore, insofar as continuity is an essential, hence necessary feature of self-awareness, self-awareness cannot be possible nor by the same token potential. And if reflective self-awareness is potential, it cannot be the type of self-awareness in question. Thus, a rejection of reflective self-awareness as the primary type of self-awareness can be concluded on systematic grounds once we pay attention to Avicenna's conception of reflection.

The third paragraph in the passage above merely states that the type of self-awareness we are interested in at the moment is at play even when it is not explicitly noticed. When I cognize something other than myself, my awareness of myself is inherent in that cognition of the other thing although it does not become a proper or explicit object of knowledge as such. The following text from the *Shifā'* says precisely the same:

> [I]t is not when I am investigating whether [the thing which governs the body][162] exists and whether it is not a body that I am wholly ignorant (*jāhilan*) of it, rather I do not pay attention

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159 See ch. 5.3 below.

160 *Ishārāt* 32-36 (Forget); English translation in Inati (1984), 90-97. A proviso needs to be added concerning future possibility, i.e. consideration of a timeframe that is either undetermined or epistemically closed for the point of view of consideration (35-36 [Forget]). On the other hand, it must be mentioned that at present it is still a question of debate whether Avicenna really subscribed to an extensional theory of modalities. For a tentative suggestion of at least the possibility of such an interpretation, see Street (2002), 133, 135, 153.

161 Both potentiality and possibility have their basis in matter: "We call the possibility of existence the potentiality of existence. And we term the bearer of the potentiality of existence, which has the potentiality of a thing's existence, 'subject', 'hyle', 'matter,' and other [names] according to various ways of considering [things]. Hence, every temporally originated thing is preceded by matter." (*Shifā' Met.* IV.2, 140 [tr. Marmura]; cf. also 137 [Marmura].)

162 Shortly prior to the passage under consideration, Avicenna has discussed the question how one can be certain that what one conceives as oneself really is one's *soul*, so that properly psychological conclusions can be drawn from the phenomenon of self-awareness. Thus, here 'the thing which governs the body' refers specifically to what is *experienced* as the principle of such commonplace corporeal actions as walking or grasping a thing in one's hands, i.e. it refers to one's *dhāt*.

> to it (*ghāfilan ʿanhu*). It is often the case that knowledge about something is close at hand, but one does not pay attention to it, so that it verges on the unknown and is investigated at the greatest remove. Sometimes knowledge that is close at hand is like the reminder, which is lost through inadequate effort, so that one's wit (*fiṭna*), due to the weakness of [its] grasp, does not find the way to it, and then one needs to approach it from afar. (*Shifāʾ De an.* V.7, 257 [Rahman], 166-167 [van Riet].)

Primary self-awareness, like the first principles, *can* be made into an object of knowledge, though, and this is precisely what the seemingly enigmatic fourth paragraph in the *Taʿlīqāt* passage as well as the one from *Shifāʾ* state. Primary self-awareness is likened to the first principles of theoretical knowledge which always underlie knowledge of more particular things based on or deduced from them. Despite the dependency of all our knowledge on the first principles, we are not always explicitly aware of them. In the metaphysics of the *Shifāʾ* Avicenna claims that our lack of awareness of first principles is so great that most of us would not even be capable of giving any kind of account of them, even if they were highly knowledgeable on one or many of the fields of more particular knowledge based on those very principles.[163] Because the primary type of self-awareness goes similarly neglected in most of our cognitive dealings with the world, thought experiments such as the flying man are called for. And to point out the obvious, however we read it, the flying man as a whole is a prime example of reflective observation of one's own awareness and its constituents.

But we still have two more features of primitive self-awareness, immediacy and lack of inherent objective content, for which we have to find Avicenna's formulation. For the immediacy of primitive self-awareness, consider the following series of passages, again from the *Taʿlīqāt*:

> We are not aware of [the essence] through an instrument, instead we are aware of it through itself and from itself (*nashʿuru bihā bi dhātihā wa min dhātihā*).[164] Our awareness is absolute (*ʿalā al-iṭlāq*) awareness, I mean that it does not require qualification (*wajh*), and our essence is continuous in awareness, not sometimes more than others. Apprehension of the body is by means

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163 *Shifāʾ Met.* I.5, 23 (tr. Marmura): "Similarly, in conceptual matters, there are things which are principles for conception that are conceived in themselves. If one desires to indicate them, [such indication] would not, in reality, constitute making an unknown thing known but would merely consist in drawing attention to them (*tanbīh*) or bringing them to mind through the use of a name or a sign which, in itself, may be less known than [the principles] but which, for some reason or circumstance, happens to be more obvious in its signification. If, then, such a sign is used, the soul is awakened [to the fact] that such a meaning is brought to mind, in [the sense] that it is the intended [meaning and] not another, without the sign in reality having given [any] knowledge of it." See also Marmura (1984).

164 Here I have deviated from translating *dhāt* as essence, for the simple reason of legibility. It is hard to see how any other meaning than the reflexive could be intended here. Let it be mentioned that passages such as this do not exactly support the rigorous denials of reflexive readings of *dhāt* in passages such as the flying man, *pace* Hasse (2000), 82-84.

> of the senses, either through sight or through touch. Provided that knowledge of essence was by means of evidence of it from the senses, it would have to be so that one had not known one's essence absolutely (*ʿalā al-iṭlāq*) but [only] when one has perceived one's body. Also, apprehension through the senses necessitates that there is a thing known such that it apprehends that which is sensed by the senses but is other than the senses, and this must be the soul. Moreover, we are aware of the fact that we are aware of our essences, and this is an act of the intellect. (*Taʿlīqāt* 160-161 [Badawī].)

Here Avicenna explicitly rules out the role of any corporeal instruments of cognition, and by the same token any type of cognition which resorts to the use of such instruments, in self-awareness, something we are quite used to expect from him by now. Self-awareness is contrasted with apprehension of one's own body as well as apprehension of any external things, all of which require the mediation of the senses. Let us proceed:

> My grasp (*idrākī*) of my essence is something that happens in me (*yaqūmu lī*), it does not occur to me from reflection (*iʿtibār*) on another thing. When I said 'I did so and so', I express my grasp (*idrākī*) of myself even if I ignored my awareness of my essence. If [it were not so], how could I know that I did so and so if not by first considering my essence? Therefore, I first considered my essence, not its action, and I never consider a thing without thereby grasping (*adraktu*) my essence. (*Taʿlīqāt* 161 [Badawī].)

In this passage, which we have already glanced upon, Avicenna rules out the necessity of the soul's action for its awareness of itself, or ontological priority of action over awareness of it. In this he is decidedly un-Aristotelian: for Aristotle, self-awareness is dependent on intentional awareness of things other than oneself. Some such instance of intentional awareness, or to paraphrase Avicenna, action of one's essence, is required to function as the object of self-awareness.[165] Instead of following Aristotle, Avicenna reverses the relation of dependency: I could not be aware of any actions as *my* actions were I not *a priori* aware of myself as the subject of the act. Obviously the priority need not be temporal, although the flying man seems to allow such a possibility as well. Rather, we are dealing with an ontological claim of the utmost generality: no awareness of other things is possible without awareness of oneself, whereas no awareness of other things is required for awareness of oneself. This is something we have already learned to expect from Avicenna. But the next passage lays out an important entailment of the theses common enough by now.

> Awareness of essence is innate (*gharīzī*) to the essence. It is the very existence of the essence and we do not need anything external by which we would grasp the essence. On the contrary,

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165 Avicenna's deviation from Aristotelian orthodoxy is pointed out repeatedly by Black (forthcoming).

> the essence is that by which we know its essence (*al-dhātu hiya al-latī nudriku bihā dhātahā*). It is not certain (*lā yasiḥḥa*) that the existent (*mawjūda*) is other than that what it is aware of (*mashᶜūrin bihā*), provided that that which is aware of it is its essence itself and nothing other. This is not particular to the human being, for all animals are aware of their essences in this way. Awareness of other requires prior knowledge (*maᶜarifa*) on the states and properties [of that other thing], for if you did not know (*lam taᶜrif*) a friend by his states and properties, you would not recognize (*lam taᶜalim*) that he is the one you know (*taᶜarifahu*) when you apprehend him (*adraktahu*) by the senses, nor would you recognize (*lam taᶜalim*) that he is for instance the philosopher. The seen thing which is not preceded by your recognition (*ᶜilmuka*) of it does not enable you to say: "It is the thing which I know (*aᶜrifuhu*)." (*Talīqāt* 161 [Badawī].)

Nothing external is needed for self-awareness. On the contrary, the essence of which one is aware is that by which one is aware of it. No previous knowledge of the states or properties of one's own essence is required for self-awareness. Instead, as we just saw, knowledge of such states or properties requires self-awareness. Hence, self-awareness is immediate in the sense that it does not require any cognitive mediation.

As a sidenote, we may point out the interesting fact that in considering the requirement of immediacy of self-awareness Avicenna brings forth an argument with a distinctly modern ring to it. Consider the following passage from the *Mubāḥathāt*:

> There is no need to consider either awareness (*shuᶜūr*) or intellectual apprehension (*al-idrāk*). You know what intellectual apprehension requires. When it comes to awareness, you are only aware of your it-ness (*huwiyyataka*)[166], you are not aware of any of your faculties so that it would be what you are aware of [in your awareness of your it-ness] (*lasta inna mā tashᶜuru bi shay'in min quwanka ḥattā yakūnu hiya al-mashᶜūra bihā*). For in that case you would not be aware of your essence but of something from your essence. If you were not aware of your essence through your essence but through a faculty such as a sense or imagination (*takhayyul*), what [you would be] aware of [in your awareness of your essence] would not be the same as that which is aware. (*Mubāḥathāt* 55, 134 [Badawī].)

In other words, a faculty of the soul, i.e. something other than the soul as a whole, cannot account for self-awareness, because other problems aside, this

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166 *Huwiyya* is a difficult term to translate. It is a technical neologism used mainly in philosophical and theological discussions and construed from the third personal singular masculine demonstrative pronoun *huwa*. 'It-ness' or 'he-ness' is the literal translation, Goichon (1971) suggests 'ipseity'. As for the meaning in the passage under consideration, I am tempted to follow Pines (1954, 45) in taking it to refer to the individual identity of a thing, in this case the human soul. Thus, *huwiyya* is not essence in the general sense (capable of multiple instantiations) but rather considered as a singular thing. Cf. Goichon (1971), 645; and (1938), 411-413.

would not constitute *self*-awareness. We would only have a faculty which has the soul as its object but which in itself is something other than soul, even if it were its part. The recognition of the object of awareness as *oneself*, as the very subject of awareness, would remain unexplained – indeed, inexplainable. Self-awareness has to be considered as a primitive fact in the sense that it cannot be further analysed into discrete constituents.[167]

Obviously, the requirement of immediacy alone would also rule out reflective self-awareness from being the primary type of self-awareness. After all, reflective self-awareness requires a prior act of awareness which is subsequently taken as the object of explicit reflection. Reflective self-awareness in this sense is always mediated by a prior self-aware state. But we will delve deeper into reflective self-awareness later. What must be obvious by now is that Avicenna differentiates it from the primary self-awareness and presents at least rudiments towards a theory of reflective self-awareness.

We can easily convince ourselves of the last requirement, that of lack of inherent objective content, if we merely recall the depiction of the state of the flying man from the lengthiest version in the first book of the *Shifā'*.[168] Imagining the experience of the flying man meant precisely the bracketing out of all possible objective content of experience. Even in the absence of all such content, one was supposed to be aware of oneself. Hence, if self-awareness is possible in the absence of any objective content of experience, it must not inherently contain any such content.

To sum up, we have four requirements Avicenna's description of the primitive type of self-awareness must fulfill. The type of self-awareness in question has to be (1) continuous, (2) non-reflective and (3) immediate, and it must (4) lack any inherent objective content. What kind of description should we construe on the basis of these requirements? In modern terms, what feature or set of features from our self-aware experience is picked out by them?

I propose that for Avicenna, the primary and most primitive type of self-awareness is equivalent to the aspect of *mineness* inherent in any experience. It is that irreducible yet extremely elusive feature which makes experiences subjective, felt, lived through instead of mere bundles of objective data, accessible without any kind of loss for a description from third personal perspective. As Avicenna says, "I never consider a thing without thereby grasping my essence" (*Taʿlīqāt* 161 [Badawī]), or as the following passage from *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*, closely related to a similar one from the *Taʿlīqāt* we have just considered, puts it, self-awareness as mineness comes always along *with* the experience of doing or knowing something, but it is not *through* the experience or constituted *by* the experience.

> Perhaps you say: I only affirm my essence by means of (*min*) my action. Then it is necessary that you have an action that you

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167 Pines (1954, 45-46) also discusses the passage, pointing out that Avicenna's requirement of identity between the subject and the object of awareness in self-awareness is the heritage of the Aristotelian God as thought thinking itself.

168 For the text, see chapter 4.1 above.

> affirm in the said premise, or a movement or something else. In our consideration of the said premise we have put those out of your reach (*jaᶜalanāka bi maᶜzilin min dhālika*).
>
> When we regard the more general matter, if you have affirmed your action as action in the absolute sense (*muṭlaqan fiᶜlan*), it is necessary that you affirm an agent of it in the absolute sense, not in a particular sense (*fāᶜilan muṭlaqan lā khāṣṣan*). [This agent] is your very essence (*dhātuka bi ᶜaynihā*). If you have affirmed [your action] as your action, you do not affirm your essence through it (*bihi*). On the contrary, your essence is part of the concept (*mafhūm*) of your act insofar as it is *your* act. The part is affirmed in the conception (*fī al-fahm*) preceding it and it is not made any less by being with it but not through it (*maᶜhu lā bihi*). Thus, your essence is not affirmed through [your action] (*bihi*). (*Ishārāt* 120 [Forget]; my italics.)

Self-awareness is part of the apprehension of one's own act – whether of perception and hence awareness of other things, or of action in the sense of active relation to the body – *insofar as it is one's own act*. Self-awareness as mineness is inherent in any experience of other things, though with the important qualification that it is *with* the experience – not constituted *by* it.

If my interpretation of the primary and most primitive type of self-awareness in Avicenna is correct, it can hardly be called a comprehensive theory of self- awareness. The self-awareness described is so thin that if we take our cue from our everyday intuitions we may even have trouble conceiving of it as self-awareness proper. What we commonly call self-awareness is something phenomenally richer and much more explicit, even if its nature may again prove quite elusive. On the other hand, if self-awareness was taken to be a peculiarly human phenomenon in the sense that it explained the individuation of human souls by being equated with the very existence of such souls, it seems strange that the phenomenon is so basic, indeed something we would be quite willing to attribute to most creatures of the animal kingdom apart from ourselves. Indeed, as we will shortly see, Avicenna is also willing to make this attribution. Thus, his account of the primary type of self-awareness leaves one wanting for addenda, and as we will also shortly see, Avicenna makes at least a rudimentary attempt for providing such. But most importantly, he bases his account of what are more commonly called acts of self-awareness on the most primitive type of self-awareness, i.e. the type we have just studied.

5.2 Animal Self-Awareness

To begin with, let us recall what was anticipated in chapter 3.5 on the relation between self-awareness and intentional awareness of other things. In my interpretation, Avicenna conceives of intentions (*maᶜānī*) as inherently relational: intentions are not subject-neutral, instead, the apprehending subject is indelibly involved in the apprehension of a perceptible object under a given intention. More precisely, intentional awareness is self-involving in the sense that inten-

tionally apprehended objects are always objects *for someone*, even though this aspect of intentional experience does not have to figure as an explicit feature of the experience. Thus, insofar as Avicennian animals are capable of intentional apprehension of perceptible objects, one would expect them to be somehow aware of themselves as well. If such is indeed the case, then Avicenna would – unlike his more famous fellow dualist Descartes – not deny the primitive type of self-awareness from animals.[169] Though there are texts in which he seems to hesitate in the attribution of self-awareness to animals, there are also passages where he explicitly asserts that animals are self-aware in quite the same sense as human beings. Let us go through the texts and see whether a consensus between them can be reached.

The admittedly rather scant passages of direct relevance known to me are four. The first two seem to hesitate in attributing self-awareness to animals, while the next two make the attribution forthrightly:

> [Let us turn to] animal's grasp (*idrāk*) of itself – *if there is genuine* (*al-ṣaḥīḥ*) *[animal] self-awareness*. Although estimation is on the throne of the rational (*al-nāṭiqa*) cognitive faculties which the animal has, it is conjoined [to the body so that] it cannot be distinguished from or undressed of it. Estimation is different from the animal soul which is primarily aware (*al-shāᶜirati al-ūlā*), and it does not estimate (*yatawahhama*) itself or affirm itself, nor is it aware of itself. (*Mubāḥathāt* 305, 184 [Badawī]; my italics.)

> It was asked: if in the other animals [i.e. other than human beings] there is no part that is both that which is aware and that what it is aware of (*al-mashᶜūra bihi*), is it not the case then, that no [other animal] is aware of its essence? If, on the other hand, there is in [the other animals] a part that is both that which is aware and that what it is aware of, it must be [the animal's] essence. The answer: in [the other animals] that which is aware and that what it is aware of are not one. Instead, that which is aware is part of that what it is aware of. (*Mubāḥathāt* 358, 199 [Badawī].)

> Every animal is aware of its soul as one soul (*yustashᶜiru nafsahu nafsan wāḥidatan*) which orders and rules the body of the animal. If there were another soul which the animal was not aware of, which was not aware of the animal (*wa lā hiya bi nafsihi*),[170]

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169 If phenomenality, the necessary condition of awareness in general, is taken as a mental feature, then apparently Descartes would have to deny any kind of awareness from animals. Nevertheless, some scholars are struggling to provide Cartesian animals with something we would be willing to call genuine experientiality. For instance, Katherine Morris (2000) has argued that animals can feel but that there is no sense of "what it is like" in this animal capacity of feeling. While such a statement verges on the obvious if we take the "what-it-is-likeness" to be a higher order feature or something explicitly articulated, animal feelings quickly dissipate if we take "what-it-is-likeness" in the minimal sense of mineness and claim animals to lack even this. Whatever the correct account of Descartes, it is evident that in comparison Avicenna's animals are still quite Aristotelian animate beings.

170 I adopt Rahman's correction here. Cf., however, van Riet's remarks in her edition of the Latin text (125-126, n. 27). The parallel passage in the *Najāt De an*. XIV, 64 (tr.

> and which was not occupied with the body, it would not have any relation with the body, for the relation can only hold in this way. (*Shifā' De an.* V.4, 234 [Rahman], 125 [van Riet].)

> Awareness of essence is innate (*gharīzī*) to the essence. It is the very existence of the essence and we do not need anything external by which we would grasp the essence. On the contrary, the essence is that by which we know its essence (*al-dhātu hiya al-latī nudriku bihā dhātahā*). It is not certain (*lā yaṣiḥḥa*) that the existent (*mawjūda*) is other than that what it is aware of (*mashᶜūrin bihā*), provided that that which is aware of it is its essence itself and nothing other. This is not particular to the human being, for all animals are aware of their essences in this way. (*Taᶜlīqāt* 161 [Badawī].)

In the first passage, the hesitation concerns *genuine* self-awareness. I believe this can be taken to mean two distinct things. (1) Avicenna may be speaking of explicit reflective self-awareness, where primitive self-awareness is taken as an object of explicit attention, and denies such a capacity in animals. As will be seen, this is one of the most important phenomenological differences between animal and human self-awareness. (2) Avicenna may be thinking of the point latent in the seemingly straightforward denial of animal self-awareness in the second passage. We know that animal cognition is structured according to the faculties of the sensitive soul, the most sublime of which is estimation. However, we also know that none of the faculties of the sensitive soul is capable of apprehending its own operation because they all operate by means of a corporeal instrument.[171] Hence, there cannot be genuine self-awareness in animals – the subject and the object of animal awareness are bound to be distinct. The end of the first passage can be read as an essentially similar argument for the hesitation it begins with.

However, in the first passage Avicenna also gives a sense in which animals are self-aware: the animal's soul *as a whole* is aware of its action in governing the body of the animal. This is affirmed explicitly in the third passage, from the *Shifā'*: "every animal is aware of its soul as one soul". Furthermore, this awareness is presented as the necessary condition of there being a relation between the living body and the soul as its form. Thus, Avicenna seems to consider self-awareness as crucial in animal as in human life, although it does not

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Rahman) is as follows: "And every living being is conscious that he has a unique soul which governs and controls him, so that if there be another soul of which the living being is not conscious, neither is it conscious of itself, nor does it occupy itself with his body – then such a soul has no relationship with his body, for the relationship only subsists in this way." To be brief, I believe the crucial passage "neither is it [i.e. the soul] conscious of itself" really means "neither is [the soul] conscious of itself [as governing and controlling the body of the living being]". If I am correct, the passage in *Najāt* can easily be read as being in agreement with the corrected text in the *Shifā'*. In my reading both texts are elliptical but in different respects. The clause in the *Shifā'* then means: "which [i.e. the soul] was not aware of the animal [as that which it, i.e. the soul, governs and controls]".

171 Cf. *Shifā' De an.* V.2, 216-217 (Rahman), 93-94 (van Riet), and our discussion in ch. 4.2 above.

play any role comparable to the one it has in the individuation of human souls.[172] Finally, the third passage asserts animal self-awareness quite explicitly, and in the same context from the *Taʿlīqāt* which was already interpreted as dealing with the primitive type of self-awareness.[173]

To sum up, animals are primitively self-aware in much the same sense as humans. But whereas in humans the account of primitive self-awareness was most intimately connected to the individuated existence of the incorporeal human soul, this cannot be true of animals whose souls are material forms. What kind of account of animal self-awareness should we then expect from Avicenna? As already implied, I believe the answer is closely connected to his account of intentional awareness.

We can get closer to the relation between the operation of the internal senses and the phenomenon of self-awareness by considering two case examples. Let us first re-examine the most commonly cited one which we have already studied,[174] i.e. that of the lamb apprehending a wolf, or more precisely, the hostility of the wolf. As we know, in a nutshell the task is to explain the lamb's instinctive fugitive reaction to its apprehension of the wolf. The problem lies in the fact that there is nothing in the properly *sensible* qualities of the wolf by reference to which we could understand the lamb's reaction. The wolf is simply a creature of certain spatial dimensions and colorature, it emits certain sounds, and given contact close enough, would also have a certain smell and taste as well as certain tactile qualities. However, regardless of how rich this field of sense data is, nothing in it necessitates any fugitive reaction in the lamb. What is needed is the apprehension of threat or hostility appended to or inherent in the sensible appearance of the wolf. This of course is where intentions and estimation come into play. In the complex of sense data that represents the wolf the lamb's estimation apprehends an intention of hostility towards the lamb itself. Apprehending this intention of hostility, the lamb instantly attempts to flee from the presence of the wolf.

Now, let us consider the same wolf as perceived by a contemporary human hunter armed with a state-of-the-art piece of firearms. Despite likely differences in their sense organs and corresponding sensitivity of their sense faculties, for argument's sake we can assume that the sense data for the hunter would be in all relevant terms similar to the sense data for the lamb. Now, although our hunter might apprehend the wolf as hostile towards herself and feel a corresponding urge to flee from its presence, this will not *necessitate* her flight as it did in the lamb's case. The difference in the respective perceptions of the lamb and the hunter is due to the hunter's apprehending another intention different from hostility but equally inherent to the sense data which represents the

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172 Animal souls are individuated through volumes of designated matter which they inform (*Shifāʾ De an.* I.3, 27-29 [Rahman], 58-61 [van Riet]). Thus, no special account of their individuation is required. However, insofar as animal experience is unified and coherent in the same way as human experience is, it seems reasonable to assume that this peculiar unity is due to the soul.

173 Cf. ch. 5.1 above.

174 See ch. 3.2 above.

wolf. For the hunter, not only does the wolf appear hostile towards the hunter herself, it also appears as something the hunter herself is capable of terminating.

The one thing of interest for our concern with Avicenna's theory of self-awareness is of course the fact that intentions are particular to the percipient being. The lamb perceives the wolf as hostile *towards itself* and estimates a potential contact with the wolf as fatal *to itself*. On the other hand, our hunter perceives the wolf as a threat eliminable *by herself*. Intentions are always based on a relation between the object and the subject of perception.[175] Thus, it seems that Avicenna's conception of estimation and intentions as its proper object entails the ascription to animals of self-awareness of some kind.

Let us go back to the four texts we started with. First of all, what is the point of saying that it is the animal soul as a whole which is aware of itself? As we saw in our concern with the explanatory roles accorded to the phenomenon of self-awareness in human beings, one of Avicenna's central concerns seems to be to guarantee a coherent unity of experience. Avicenna is constantly on guard against positing several cognitive faculties, each of which would be self-aware in and for itself, in one and the same soul. For each subject of experience there must be a unifying centre of awareness in the scope of which all the faculties work.[176] This holds equally of animal as of human experience. None of the cognitive faculties of the sensitive soul can function as such a centre, for the simple reason that they aren't capable of apprehending their own operation.[177] This has

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175 Cf. the following passage in *Shifā' Met.* III.10, 118 (tr. Marmura): "[I]t may be required that there should be in each of the two related things something by virtue of which it becomes related to the other, as in the case of the one who loves and the one who is loved. Thus, there exists in the lover an apprehending state, which is the principle of the relation, while in the beloved there is an apprehended state which renders him loved by the lover. Such a thing may exist in one of the two things but not [in] the other, as in the case of the knower and the [object] known. For there has occurred in the essence of the knower a quality – namely, knowledge – in terms of which he became related to the other. But no other thing has occurred in the essence of the object known: it became related only because something in the other had occurred – namely, knowledge." Now, just as in the case of knowledge where something in the known object is what renders it known although its becoming known does not change anything in the object, there must be something in the wolf which causes a certain kind of estimation in the lamb and a different kind of estimation in the hunter although nothing in the wolf changes due to either of these estimations. Cf. Black (1993), 248, n. 16.

176 Cf. *Najāt De an.* XV, 64-68 (Rahman) and Rahman's notes, 109-111.

177 This is because the cognitive faculties of the sensitive soul are corporeal and thus capable of apprehending corporeal things exclusively. Thus, they are incapable of apprehending their own operation which, though taking place through a corporeal instrument, is still a mental or psychic occurrence. In some sense a sensitive cognitive faculty could be seen as capable of observing the operation of other faculties, or possibly even its own, by means of some sort of creative mediation. For instance, I can see my eye presently engaged in an act of vision by means of a mirror, or given the possibility of undergoing a cranial surgery while fully awake, a reasonably simple constellation of mirrors might allow me to have a look at my brain, and thereby at my internal senses in full operation. However, it is obvious that this will not solve the problem, for it does not entail any immediate self-awareness the kind of which is at issue. No matter how ingenious the means of mediation, I can never come to see my seeing as an *experiential* phenomenon. All I can see is a physical occurrence. I can of course grasp this physical occurrence as taking place in *my* sense organs if I have a

an important consequence: if the internal senses exhaust the field of possible cognitive objects for the animal, it cannot have itself *as an object*. How then can the animal soul be said to be aware of itself?

Let us read the formulation in the second passage carefully: "every animal is aware of its soul as one soul *which orders and rules the body it has*". We are dealing with an experiential presence for the animal of a unified governance of this bodily being that the animal is, i.e. an experience of being the subject of experience. But since there are no cognitive faculties that could grasp this experience, being a subject of experience cannot become the object of the animal's experience. In other words, although the animal's being a particular kind of cognitive subject does figure in its experience as the other relatum in any intention, there can be nothing like subjective points of view or awareness thereof for the animal. Its experience of the world presents the only world there is for it. But due to the intentional features inherent in the experience, it is still a world for someone, or something, although this being for something can never become an object of consideration. It is present in animal experience as that for which something appears the way it does and for the sake of which the animal must act the way it does. If we take seriously this limitation of animal's experience – which can be grasped only outside of animal experience, in our psychological theory of it – Avicenna's otherwise slightly vague references to animal's natural or instinctive awareness of intentions[178] and themselves as relata inherent in the intentions suddenly get a determinate psychological meaning. Instinctive awareness means roughly the fact that the awareness cannot become an explicit thematic object of the very same awareness, and hence that awareness cannot transcend its own limited point of view of the world. To put it another way, the expression 'world as it is for the animal' does have a sense and is meaningful but – setting aside the question of animal beliefs – it has no meaning for the animal. For the animal, its world is the only one there is. To characterise this in yet one more way, using the terms I have suggested for the interpretation of the primary type of Avicennian self-awareness, mineness is a constituent of animal experience in much the same way as it is of human experience, but it can never be made into an object of second order reflective self-awareness, and for this reason there is no more 'my world' than 'your world' or 'her world' for the animal.

This, I believe, is the key to Avicenna's hesitation in the first two of the passages we started with. From the point of view of mineness alone, there may not be any essential phenomenological difference between human and animal

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sufficient understanding of the means of mediation at play. However, unlike my awareness of seeing the eye, my grasp of the eye as mine is not – to borrow a contemporary phrase – immune to misidentification. The eye is mine only through a second order identification in which I can make a mistake. In principle the eye could always belong to the body of someone else and the physical occurrence correspond to that other person's act of seeing, or perhaps even to no such act of seeing at all, while my seeing is unmistakably mine. (See *Najāt De an.* X, 51-52 [tr. Rahman].)

178 For instance, in *Shifā' De an.* IV.3, 184 (Rahman), 38-39 (van Riet).

self-awareness.[179] What distinguishes human self-awareness is its capacity of taking itself as object of consideration. Consider our hunter briefly one more time. Provided that she is a sane human being, i.e. in reasonable command of her cognitive faculties, we must assume that in her encounter with the wolf she has at least the possibility of changing her stance towards the wolf. For instance, she has the possibility to conceive the wolf as a being of great inherent worth, the killing of which must be the last resort if the encounter between her and it can only take place in a mutually harmless way. What does such a possibility entail? At the very least, there must be a capacity to perceive the sense data under different possible intentions. By the same token, provided that intentions are relative in the way suggested above, this possibility entails a capacity of taking different stances to oneself. After all, in itself the wolf stays the same, it is the hunter's stance towards it via her stance towards herself that changes.

I do not intend to conceive of the human capacity of reflection as the crucial differentiating factor between animal and human self-awareness. Rather, I believe it should be taken as a consequence of a more basic difference between animal and human self-awareness, and as a consequence it can serve as a pointer towards that difference. As we have seen, the reason why no faculty of the sensitive soul can apprehend its own operation is that the operation takes place through a corporeal instrument. No corporeal instrument can turn into itself, and more importantly, no corporeal instrument can grasp the properly animate, or in this case *experiential* aspect of cognitive operation. However, these constraints do not concern intellection which is entirely incorporeal. Hence, human self-awareness as the existence of the incorporeal individual human soul is entirely free to turn towards its own action, indeed its own being, and take that as object of its explicit consideration. The distinction, thus, is between two modes of existence respective to the animal and human souls: the other is a material form, the other an immaterial substance. Thus, while perhaps phenomenally similar (in the end, there really is no way to tell) animal and human self-awareness constitute two distinct *explananda*. In animals, self-awareness is the relation between a form and the volume of designated matter informed by it. In human beings, awareness of the embodied self is the relation between an immaterial substance and a volume of informed matter governed by it.

This also provides the key to the consequences, problematic at first glance, of Avicenna's placing a considerable explanatory weight upon human self-

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179 In *Mubāḥathāt* 421, 220-221 (Badawī) Avicenna even claims that us human beings are aware of our seeing or hearing "through the animal soul by means of the estimative faculty". On the other hand, the general ontological function of self-awareness in human souls is radically different to that in animal souls, as has already been argued. However, in light of these considerations one would have to disagree with Pines (1954, 35-36), according to whom Avicenna takes self-awareness (*aperception de soi* in Pines) to be an exclusively intellectual phenomenon. It must be added, though, that later in the same work (53-54) Pines voices a concern about the lack of means of differentiation between intellectual self-awareness and ontologically inferior – because dependent on the body – forms of self-awareness. Below, I will argue that Pines' interpretation calls for precisely this kind of distinctions, and that contrary to his claim, Avicenna provides us with at least rudiments thereof.

awareness on the one hand, and his attributing a similar capacity to animals on the other. Perhaps the most fatal of these consequences is echoed in the question whether the attribution of self-awareness would result in the immortality of animal souls. After all, in human beings self-awareness is supposed to continue even after the relation between the soul and the body has terminated.[180] Again, I have not found any explicit treatment of this question in Avicenna, but my tentative and admittedly rather speculative answer would be that this "consequence" is a *non sequitur*, precisely due to the two different accounts given of animal and human self-awareness. Animal souls, and by the same token instances of animal self-awareness, are individuated strictly through matter. Animal souls are material forms which perish at the demise of the soul-body compound, and this entails the termination of animals' awareness of themselves as well. Animal self-awareness is relational through and through. In human beings, however, the relation of soul and body is between two substances, the existence of the other of which is self-awareness. The termination of a relation between two substances does not logically entail the termination of the existence of either of the substances, and indeed, for Avicenna the existence (i.e. self-awareness) of the immaterial human soul will continue after the termination of its relation to the body.

So much for animal self-awareness and its difference from human self-awareness. It is time to pay attention to the specifically human types of self-awareness. As I have already mentioned, Avicenna presents explicit treatment of reflective self-awareness. Let us start from that.

5.3 Reflective Self-Awareness

One of the crucial passages from the *Taʿlīqāt*, which we have already discussed with a focus on primitive self-awareness, included a pointer toward Avicenna's conception of reflective self-awareness. Let us have another glance at the passage in question:

> Awareness of essence is the soul in act, and awareness of essence is continuous. As to awareness of awareness, it is potential. If awareness of awareness was in act, certainly it would be continuous and would not require intellectual reflection (*iʿtibāru al-ʿaql*). (*Taʿlīqāt* 161 [Badawī].)

Avicenna explicitly distinguishes reflective self-awareness from primitive self-awareness by referring to the latter as "awareness of essence" (*al-shuʿūru bi al-dhāt*), a term of some familiarity to us by now, and to the former as "awareness of awareness" (*al-shuʿūru bi al-shuʿūr*). He characterises reflective awareness, awareness of awareness, as potential and intermittent, and as requiring intellec-

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180 So far I have paid scant attention to this aspect of Avicenna's psychology. I will discuss it briefly below in ch. 5.4, as it is not entirely irrelevant for Avicenna's theory of explicit self-knowledge.

tual effort. Despite the brevity of the passage, it seems to express a fairly considered view. At least it is coherent in all relevant respects with a passage from *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* which elaborates on the kind of potentiality at issue:

> You know that anything which understands (*yaᶜqulu*) something understands by potentiality close to actuality (*bi al-quwwati al-qarībati min al-fiᶜl*) that it understands that thing (*annahu yaᶜquluhu*), and that is what understanding of the thing is *for it* (*wa dhālika ᶜaqlun minhu li dhātihi*).[181] Thus, understanding of its [own] essence (*an yaᶜaqala dhātahu*) belongs to anything which understands something. It belongs to the quiddity (*māhiyyatuhu*) of anything that is understood that [the quiddity] be conjoined to another intelligible (*maᶜaqūlan*). Thus the thing [which is understood] is also understood together with something else, and there is no doubt that the understanding faculty (*al-quwwatu al-ᶜāqila*) understands the thing in conjunction [with something else]. If the thing belongs to those which subsist by themselves (*yaqūmu bi dhātihi*) then it is no obstacle for a veridical apprehension of it (*ḥaqīqatihi*) that it is conjoined to an intelligible (*al-maᶜqūla*) intention, as long as the essence of that thing (*dhātihi*) is not afflicted (*mamnuwwa*) in its existence by conjunction with obstructing things, such as matter or other such thing. If veridical apprehension of the thing is pure, it is not obstructed by the conjunction [of the thing's essence] with the intellectual form. That is a possibility which entails the possibility of [the thing's] understanding its own essence (*ᶜaqlihi li dhātihi*). (*Ishārāt* 132 [Forget].)

At the very beginning of this passage Avicenna qualifies our potentiality for reflective self-awareness as "potentiality close to actuality", or following the Latin translators of the psychology of the *Shifā'*, "proximate potentiality" (*potentia proxima*). The idea is familiar from Aristotle who in *De anima* II.5 distinguishes between three senses in which a human being can be said to be knowing (*epistēmon*). In the weakest sense, a person can be potentially knowing by virtue of the fact that she is a member of the human species, an essential characteristic of which is the capacity to know. A person can be potentially knowing in a stronger sense if she has acquired knowledge through insight, experience or instruction and thus has access to knowledge at will, but is not presently engaged in consideration of her knowledge. Finally, a person is actually knowing if she has acquired knowledge and is presently engaged in consideration of her knowledge.[182] Avicenna relates this Aristotelian idea in the *Shifā'*, using the term 'potentiality close to actuality' in the process:

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181 An alternative, and perhaps more literal, translation would be: "and that is what understanding of the thing is in its essence [i.e. in the essence of the agent or subject of understanding]". I will consider this enigmatic passage in some more detail in the following.

182 Arist. *De an.* II.5, 417a22-417b20. Avicenna repeats essentially the same example in terms of human potentiality to write in *Shifā' De an.* I.5, 48 (Rahman), 95-96 (van Riet).

Learning is the pursuit of complete aptitude of conjunction with [the active intellect], to the point that the intellect that is simple comes about from it, and forms emanate from it in good order (*mufṣilatan*)[183] to the soul through the mediation of the cogitative [faculty].

Aptitude prior to learning is defective whereas aptitude after learning is complete. It is characteristic of learning that when something that is conjoined to the intelligible being pursued occurs to the learner's mind (*khaṭara bi bālihi*) and the soul turns to inspect it – and inspection means returning to the principle that gives to the intellect – there is a conjunction with [that principle][184], from which emanates the faculty of separate (*al-mujarrad*) intellect that follows the emanation of order (*al-tafṣīl*). *But if one has turned away from [the object of understanding], the faculty recedes and the form becomes potential, however, potential very close to actuality* (*quwwatan qarībatan jiddan min al-fiᶜl*). *The initial learning [of something] is like treating the eye which, when it has become a healthy eye, can turn according to its wish towards the thing from which it receives some form. And when it has turned away from that thing, the thing becomes potential close to actuality.* As long as the ordinary (*al-ᶜāmmiyya*) human soul is in the body it is obstructed from receiving the active intellect all at once (*dufᶜatan*), and its state is as we have said.

When it is said that somebody knows the intelligibles, the meaning of this is that inasmuch as he wishes he can get the form of anything to his mind (*fī dhahani nafsihi*), and this for its part means that whenever he wishes he can conjoin to the active intellect (*kāna lahu an yuttaṣila bi al-ᶜaqli al-faᶜᶜāl*) by a conjunction in which that intelligible is formed (*yataṣawwuru*) from [the active intellect]. [It does not mean] that that intelligible would always be present in his mind and formed in his actual intellect, but neither [does it mean] that [the intelligible] would be as it was prior to learning and acquisition of this sort of actual intellect (*al-ḍarb min al-ᶜaqli bi al-fiᶜl*). That is to say the soul has attained the faculty to understand – by means of [the faculty] – what it wishes, and when it wishes it conjoins [with the active intellect] and the intelligible form emanates into it. This form is in fact the acquired intellect, and this faculty is the intellect actual in us insofar as we understand (*fīnā min ḥaithu lanā an*

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183 I take *mufṣilatan* to mean syllogistic ordering of the piece of knowledge which emanates from the active intellect to the individual soul. The same goes for the passage below where Avicenna speaks of emanation of order (*fayḍānu al-tafṣīl*). It may be debated that syllogistic order is a feature of the lower level of discursive thought and is somehow transcended on the more radically unified intellection proper. I cannot go into this debate at any more depth here, but for a considered argument for syllogistic order in intellection, see Adamson (2004).

184 The Arabic original is simply *ittaṣala bihi* which in the context is ambiguous regarding the subject of the verb as well as the referent of the pronoun suffix. Both could refer either to the learner (or his individual soul, mind or intellect), to the thing learned, or to the active intellect as "the principle that gives to the intellect". I have adopted the translation that seemed most reasonable. It also conforms to the choice of the medieval Latin translator(s). The whole passage is infested with pronouns and implied subjects the referential relations of which are confusing to say the least. My interpretive additions, as always, are shown in parentheses [ ].

> *naᶜaqila*). As for the acquired intellect, it is the actual intellect as perfection.[185]

Thus, potentiality close to actuality refers to Aristotle's second sense of potential knowledge, to the case of the person who has acquired knowledge but is not presently engaged in consideration of her knowledge. Avicenna also characterises this kind of potentiality in relation to volition. In a state of potentiality close to actuality, one has an access to what one knows in this sense of potentiality any time one wishes to turn toward it. Thus, if we bring together the two passages with an eye specifically on reflective self-awareness, we see that in Avicenna's theory reflective self-awareness is a constantly open possibility for primitively self-aware intellectual beings.

Having qualified reflection as potentiality close to actuality, our passage from *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* makes an interesting remark. To transform the remark to the first person, my understanding – by potentiality close to actuality – that I understand *is what understanding is for me*. I take this somewhat surprising clause to be Avicenna's attempt at characterising the *individual* act of understanding, i.e. one imbued with a first personal perspective, and distinguishing it from understanding *in abstracto* without regard to point of view. If we follow this interpretation, an act of understanding is individual if it can be reflected upon by the understanding subject as an act exclusive to itself – as an act of which it is the subject and in the object of which it recognizes itself.

So far it may seem that Avicenna's conception of reflective self-awareness fits rather well into the conceptual mould of orthodox Aristotelianism according to which self-awareness or self-intellection is dependent on intentional awareness or intellection of other things. According to Aristotle, in itself the intellect is characterised exclusively by its receptivity, by its capacity to become any thing intelligible, or as Aristotle's famous formulation puts it, by the fact that the intellect is nothing before it thinks and because of this can be all things. Only when the intellect has acquired an object, i.e. when it has actually become something itself, is it capable of turning its reflective gaze upon itself.[186] Yet despite the seeming similarity, the ontological and epistemological prerequisites of reflective self-awareness or self-intellection are of a completely different order for Avicenna than they are for Aristotle. Where Aristotle claims the requirement and priority of intentional awareness, Avicenna vehemently asserts, as we have seen, that there is nothing in intentional awareness – considered *quasi* subject-neutral, or as awareness from the point of view of no one in par-

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185 *Shifā' De an.* V.6, 247-248 (Rahman), 148-150 (van Riet); my italics. See also *Shifā' De an.* I.5, 48-50 (Rahman), 96-99 (van Riet).

186 Arist. *De an.* III.4, 429a10-429b10. There is a superficially similar formulation at the end of *Shifā' De an.* II.2, 66 (Rahman), 129 (van Riet), according to which it is in some sense true that the sentient only perceives itself. However, Avicenna's point is not related to self-awareness but instead to the necessity of corporeal instruments for perception. His point is that insofar as sensations are changes in the sense organs, it is correct to say that in having a sensation the sentient perceives itself. This does not entail the dependency of self-awareness on intentional awareness, at least in the case of human beings.

ticular – that would enable it to become reflectively recognized as *mine*.[187] It is true that even in Avicenna's model, *reflective* self-awareness may require a prior intentional state which it can then take as its own proper object. However, if this prior mental state is to be recognized by the subject of reflection as its own state, it requires self-awareness in the *primitive* sense of mineness. I will come back to this in brief, but for the moment let it be said that for Avicenna, unlike for Aristotle, reflection is not the primary type of self-awareness, and as Deborah Black has suggested, he would probably accuse Aristotle either of giving a misguided account of the most primitive type of self-awareness or of entirely missing a crucial type of self-awareness in his psychology.[188]

Now, my interpretation of the passage from *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* might be challenged by claiming that in the main it deals with intellection pure and simple with no special regard for self-awareness in general. However, we should remember that in Avicenna's theory reflective self-awareness is an exclusively intellectual phenomenon – indeed, we have already treated it as a pointer towards the more profound difference between animal and human self-awareness. Thus, theory of intellectual reflectivity constitutes a comprehensive theory of reflectivity without further qualifications to the extent it figures in an Avicennian universe.

On the other hand, as regards the variety of objects of reflection, reflectivity should not be understood as an exclusive possibility of mental states that are already purely intellectual in themselves, i.e. states of cognition of universal concepts or of propositions and syllogisms construed from them. The passages discussed above in relation to the phenomenon of experiential unity and coherence[189] provide ample evidence for the fact that reflection can take as its object any primitively self-aware mental state. Even in the passage presently under consideration Avicenna refers to the problems related to an intellectual apprehension of a particular or singular thing, which is precisely what reflectivity is about insofar as the singular existence of me myself is the object of my reflection. For the reflection to be a genuine instance of self-awareness, I must be able to comprehend myself, not simply as an instantiation of the human species, but as the singular existent that I am. Otherwise there would be a difference between the subject (myself as a concrete being) and the object (an instantiation of human species) of reflection. If this is allowed, I don't think the content of any mental state, whether perceptual, volitional, emotive or motive, presents any problems for becoming an object of intellectual reflection. If the content of reflective intellection is adequately expressed by a proposition of the form 'I *x*', where *x* is an expression consisting of a verb or a verb-object combination of the relevant kind, the content of my first order mental state is simply grasped

187 See ch. 5.1 above.

188 See Black (forthcoming), 16-17. For Avicenna, Aristotle would be misguided if reflection upon intentional awareness is taken to be a theory of the most primitive type of self-awareness, and his psychology would be missing a type of self-awareness entirely if explicit reflection is conceived as the only kind of self-awareness that requires psychological explanation.

189 See ch. 4.2 above. For the texts, see *Najāt De an.* XV, 66 (tr. Rahman); *Shifā' De an.* V.7, 253-254 (Rahman), 158-159 (van Riet).

through universal concepts, referred to by the verb or verb-object combination, that are combined with an understanding of myself as the singular self-awareness, referred to by the first personal indexical expression 'I', in which the instantiations of these universals exist. In most cases, of course, the experience is phenomenally so rich that it cannot be expressed by such a rudimentary proposition, and may even prove inexpressible by any proposition in the final analysis. However, this need not be a problem for reflection: insofar as I reflect, I grasp only a limited amount of features from an intellectual point of view, i.e. as instantiations of universals. For instance, if I choose to reflect on my act of writing, my seeing the bookshelf on my right is not included in the act of reflection, although nothing precludes me from including it as an object of a reflective act, if I so choose.[190]

In any case, this aspect of Avicenna's theory of self-awareness has been deemed problematic by Shlomo Pines in his groundbreaking article "La Conception de la conscience de soi chez Avicenne et chez Abu'l-Barakat al-Baghdadi". Pines challenges Avicenna on two critical points. First, because Avicenna takes self-awareness to be an exclusively and thoroughly intellectual phenomenon, he has serious problems with empirically evident occasions of sensitive self-awareness. Secondly, Avicenna is unable to explain the possibility or elaborate the nature of a type of intellection which does not have universals as its object – as is the case with common cases of intellection – but which his intellectual theory of self-awareness nevertheless requires. (Pines [1954], 45-56.) While Pines does not voice these problems as problems of reflective self-awareness in particular, I think they are best dealt with in relation to it because Pines is clearly quite insensitive to the distinction between the primitive and reflective types of self-awareness. In my interpretation, both of Pines' challenges are quite insignificant for Avicenna's theory of primitive self-awareness, whereas they should be taken seriously with regard to reflective self-awareness which Pines manages to treat quite perceptively.

Pines bases his critique mostly on a couple of passages from the *Mubāḥathāt* in which Avicenna tries to elaborate on the phenomenon of self-awareness that was taken as a case of self-evidence and as such the argumentative basis of some of the most crucial tenets of his psychology in the *Shifā'*, not least through the aid of the flying man. The essential problem culminates in *Mubāḥathāt* 371, a rather lengthy passage which, however, we will do well to browse through as a whole:

> It is evident that the universal intention is not grasped by means of a body. It is also evident that the individual (*al-shakhṣiyy*) intention which has been individuated (*tu-shakhkhiṣuhu*) by material accidents, e.g. determined quantity and determined location, is not grasped by means of anything

190 On a sidenote, the example also manifests well the difficulty of gaining access to the precise structure and content of first order mental states by means of higher order reflection. As soon as we consider whether seeing the bookshelf is included in the reflective act as its object, it has already intruded into that act. The original act of exclusive reflection of my writing is no longer immediately accessible for reflection.

but a body. However, it is not evident that the particular (*al-jiz'iyy*) is in no way (*aṣlan*) known by anything but a body, or that it is not to be subsumed in a universal judgment. On the contrary, when the particular has not been individuated by quantity, location or whatever embellishes them, there is no obstacle for awareness of it – [and] I mean understanding. The impossibility of this is not evident here. It is not an objection that the cause of this individual is in some respect material or a material thing when the inherent individuating configuration (*al-hay'atu al-lāzimatu al-mushakhkhiṣa*) is itself not material but belongs to the configurations which distinguish that what is not in a body in its individuation (*mā laysa bi jismin bi ta-shakhkhuṣihi*). What the intellect or the intellectual soul does not grasp are particulars that are individuated by determining configurations which are material. As for the rest, it grasps [them] and it also grasps these [particulars that are individuated by material configurations] when it has stripped them of the distinguishing features or has connected the distinguishing features to them in a universal perspective. The things which are separate [from matter] are either individuals of a species that are differentiated by [their] properties and the essences of which are grasped as such, or singulars (*afrād*) the species of which is not subdivided by distinguishing [determinations], instead the species, [being] in [only] one essence, does not need to be differentiated by anything apart from [its] specificity. The essences of these are also grasped by means of their specificity. Here there is something to consider: is the first kind known in its individuality?[191]

191 *Mubāḥathāt* 371, 208 (Badawī). Cf. the intimately related text in the immediately following paragraph of the *Mubāḥathāt* (372, 208-209 [Badawī]): "It was asked: how do I understand my essence, when the intelligible is the subsistent universal intention? When I understand my essence, I must become abstract, and then I subsist by my definition like the universals. Everything which subsists by its definition like the universals is abstract and the capacity of passivity (*quwwatu al-infiᶜāl*) is not associated with it. How then could anything enter into my essence which would obstruct it from the abstraction proper to it? [/] The answer. If this awareness of the essence was not called understanding, and instead, the name 'understanding' was reserved for awareness of subsistent universals, one would have to say: my awareness of my essence is not understanding and I do not understand my essence. If, on the other hand, all grasp (*idrāk*) of the abstraction of subsistent things is called understanding, then it is not conceded that all intelligibles of everything are universal intentions subsistent by their definitions, instead it perhaps would have to be conceded that there are external intelligibles that are subsistent. The truth in this matter is that it is not conceded absolutely. Not every thing has a definition, and not every intelligible is only conceived simply (*laysa kullu maᶜqūlin inna mā huwa mutaṣawwurun basīṭ*). Instead, one of its states can be understood and its definition can be grasped mixed with its accidents (*bi ᶜawāriḍihi*). In the same way when I have understood my essence I have understood a definition with an accident inseparably connected to it. What we must say here is that the intelligible is the universal from among the things that are mixed with and partake of [the essence]. As for the intelligible in an absolute sense, which encompasses all things, its quiddity (*māhiyyatuhu*) is either abstract or connected to what is understood together with it. It happens in some things where that quiddity is universal, that [something] participates in it potentially or in act, and in some things not."

For Pines, this passage articulates *the* Avicennian theory of self-awareness, as a phenomenon that is to receive no further analysis of any significance from him. From such a viewpoint, it would indeed appear that Avicenna conceives of self-awareness as a fairly ordinary form of intellection. The problem would then simply be, as Pines says, how to account for the possibility of intellection of a particular thing when intellection is defined as knowledge of universals. Avicenna's answer is that what serves as an obstacle to intellection in particular cases is not their particularity as such, but rather their materiality or the dependence from matter of the features which render them particulars. In a moment I will consider whether this is an idea of any plausibility. However, Pines' more crucial critique is that such an overtly intellectual conception of self-awareness is grossly inadequate as an explanation of self-awareness in general. Empirical observation speaks strongly in favour of the view that there are lower forms of self-awareness with their basis in the realm of the senses, and even the philosophical tradition antecedent of Avicenna seems to have recognized such forms.[192] Thus, there is a serious gap in Avicenna's theory of self-awareness.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, I believe the passage in question should be read as treating the problem of higher order types of self-awareness, i.e. reflective self-awareness or even self-knowledge. First of all, this is due to the terms in which the type of self-awareness in question is discussed. Nowhere in his explicit discussions of primitive self-awareness does Avicenna mention the problem of intellectual knowledge of particulars. This specific problem is for him a problem of explicit objective knowledge, something primitive self-awareness is but a condition of. Furthermore, the text even seems to presuppose primitive self-awareness in the sense we have expounded it. When it mentions individuation, it does not simply speak of individuating accidental characteristics that would be due to the relation with a body, but points out *the individuality that attaches itself to these characteristics*, the individuality whose characteristics they are but which in the final analysis is not individuated by them.[193] As I have proposed,[194] we should understand this individuality to be primitive self-awareness as mineness.

Pines does recognize the short text of *Mubāḥathāt* 373 as an Avicennian attempt at the resolution of the problem he has posed. In this passage Avicenna suggests a proper cognitive category, different from objective intellection, for self-awareness:

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192 Pines (1954, 36-43) mentions Aristotle's treatment of sensitive self-awareness in *De anima* III.1, *De sensu* 7 and *De somno* as well as the general account of self-awareness of any action in *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.9, 1170a25-1170b1. He also refers to the stoics, Hierocles in particular, and brings forth a number of perspicuous passages from Plotinus (*Enn.* I.4.10, II.9.1, III.8.4, IV.3.2, IV.4.4, IV.4.24).

193 Thus, it seems Pines does not pay sufficient heed to his own advice (1954, 43-45) of proceeding with caution with the *Mubāḥathāt* and their lack of organization. He seems simply to suppose that there is one concept of self-awareness for Avicenna, which is all the more surprising considering his sensitivity to Plotinian distinctions of the same type (1954, 41-42).

194 Cf. chs. 4.2 and 5.1 above.

> It may be that 'intellection' [in the sense of that] which grasps the intelligibles is not applicable to the purity of the complete awareness of essence (*mujarrada al-shuᶜūri al-mujmali bi al-dhāt*) but comes after that (*bal baᶜda dhālika*). That is worth thinking about. (*Mubāḥathāt* 373, 209 [Badawī].)

However, Pines claims that the idea of a special cognitive category for self-awareness does not receive any further development in Avicenna. I, on the contrary, think we should pay careful attention to this loaded passage, and I believe that if we look at it in the light of the results of our study so far – most of which can indeed be seen as the kind of further elaboration, called for by Pines, of this special mode of cognition that primitive self-awareness is – we can see a rather considered view emerge in spite of the brevity of expression.

First of all, what should be distinguished from what? According to this passage, the other relatum of the distinction to be drawn is intellection *of the intelligibles*, i.e. *objective* intellection. Now, I propose that the remaining relatum is primitive self-awareness, indicated by the terminology (*shuᶜūr bi al-dhāt*, awareness of the essence) well enough rehearsed by now. Thus, Avicenna's point is not that self-awareness is not intellectual. Rather, he wants to distinguish it from *objective* intellection. Furthermore, Avicenna does not want to distinguish this kind of self-awareness merely from objective intellection in general but of intellection which *transcends* or goes beyond this awareness. This is a phrase which could be taken to mean objective awareness in certain modern philosophical parlances, but I believe that if we bear in mind the specific context in the *Mubāḥathāt* in which this short passage is embedded,[195] we should consider as more plausible the interpretation of transcendence as ascension to a higher order of awareness, i.e. as taking one's primitive awareness of oneself as explicit object of intellection in reflection. This interpretation would also link the passage directly to the previous passages in which reflective self-awareness and self-knowledge are dealt with in terms of objective intellection.

So much for Pines' critique that Avicenna's conception of self-awareness leaves, due to its overtly strong emphasis on intellectuality, a serious explanatory gap in the total field of self-aware phenomena. There is still the other problem, that of the possibility or lack thereof of intellectual knowledge of the particular or even singular existence that each knower herself is. This problem, at least in its traditional formulation endorsed by Pines, concerns intentional knowledge of a particular *object*, and it need not concern the primitive kind of self-awareness if we take it as just that: *a primitive feature that is not explicitly objective of all intellectual apprehension*. But it does concern reflective self-awareness since Avicenna clearly speaks about that in intentional objective terms. As we have already seen, Avicenna's attempt at resolution was roughly the idea that only matter and the dependency of individuating features on it constitute an

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195 The lack of organization in the *Mubāḥathāt* is a well known fact, but the placement of this particular passage cannot be entirely coincidental, for all the lengthier passages surrounding it revolve around the problems of self-awareness in general, and reflective self-awareness in particular. For a comprehensive analysis of the *Mubāḥathāt*, one should turn to Reisman (2002).

obstacle to understanding, not particularity or individuality as such. Whether the solution works is a question worth considering.

One might try to approach the problem by asking what kind of particularity the particularity of primitive self-awareness is. We have already pointed out the difference between the respective uses of first personal indexical pronouns on the one hand, and proper names or fully designated descriptions on the other.[196] We saw that it was in principle impossible for anything else but oneself to be referred to by the first personal indexical pronoun. On the other hand, the particular that is picked out by a proper name or a fully designated description can never be considered as the only one of its kind. There can always be another instance of the term in question, and this is a necessary condition of the possibility of error in the use of those terms, a possibility inexistent in the use of first personal indexical pronouns. Thus, in comparison to other particulars of the sublunar sphere the particularity of one's self – if indeed we can speak of particularity, since the term implies a corresponding universal the existence of which in first personal indexical reference is precisely what is contested – is of a very peculiar kind. On the other hand, it does not seem to be like the accidental particularity of the souls of the spheres either. Their particularity results from their being the only instances of their species *in fact*, not in principle. Insofar as it makes sense to conceive of the first person as species, there is always only one me *in principle*.

The passages in which Avicenna discusses the issue explicitly are unfortunately scant. Consider, however, the following text:

> Then he was asked: when I have understood the soul by a general intention (*bi al-maᶜnā al-ᶜāmm*), I am then a soul absolutely (*ᶜalā al-muṭlāq*), not a determined individual soul (*nafsan mukhaṣṣaṣatan shakhṣiyya*). Would I then be all the souls?
>
> The reply: there is a difference between the soul as absolute and considered in its essence (*al-muṭlaqati al-muᶜtabirati bi dhātihā*) on the one hand, and the soul as universal on the other hand. The consideration is other in the case of the universal which is predicated of all souls. One of these is a part of my soul, the other is not. (*Mubāḥathāt* 331, 192 [Badawī].)

The universal 'soul', i.e. soul conceived as a common feature of multiple mundane entities, is not a part of my self that I conceive intellectually in reflection. However, my self or my essence is an instantiation of the essence 'soul'. In this particular instantiation, it is immediately accessible exclusively to me although it is essentially the same as the universal. We are dealing with two instantiations of one and the same essence which exist in two different ways. The claim that Avicenna makes is that both types of instantiation are intelligible. However, this is for two very distinct reasons. The universal 'soul' is like any other general concept to the apprehension of which we can arrive by means of the epistemic process of abstraction. It is intelligible because all the appendices re-

196 See ch. 4.3 above.

ducible to particular volumes of informed matter have been abstracted from in consideration of it. But my very own essence is intelligible because its existence amounts to intellection, it *is* intellection of something *as mine*, as something *for me*.

In the end, Avicenna's proposal for a solution is quite straightforward. The *mineness* that primitive self-awareness was seen to amount to is intelligible because it is intellection. It is intelligible in a different way than general concepts, although a connection between it and certain general concepts can be made due to the fact that both are rooted in one and the same essence. But my primary reflective understanding of myself is not through a concept, say that of human being, of soul, or of intellect. Instead, it figures as a peculiar kind of object of intellection, which can *subsequently* – i.e., after it has become an explicit object – be subsumed under a concept. Only after I have reflected upon myself can I conceive of myself as a human being, an intelligent being, a soul – i.e. as an instance of some genus or species.

Pines' counterarguments aside, we should still consider the relation between reflective self-awareness and primitive self-awareness in some more detail. Avicenna says, somewhat enigmatically, that primitive self-awareness is not redoubled in reflection:

> A human being may be inattentive to his self-awareness; but he is not aware of himself twice.[197]

I do not believe this should be taken to mean, as Deborah Black has argued (Black [forthcoming], 19-20), that the preceding primitively self-aware mental state is somehow preserved in the act of reflection, but rather that it is no longer lived through as *primitive* self-awareness. What is primitively lived through or primitively self-aware at the state of reflection is the act of reflection itself. If I reflect on my writing, I am no longer simply writing – quite simply, I am reflecting on my writing. Thus, in this respect, *pace* Black, it is not correct simply to say that second-order awareness is a different kind of awareness from primitive self-awareness. Certainly it has a distinct object in comparison to the earlier first order awareness which by definition was not explicitly about itself whereas second order awareness is precisely defined as being about it. There is epistemic ascent, but somehow we always stay on the same level, as well. On the one hand, in itself any reflectively self-aware mental state is also an act of primitive self-awareness. It has the preceding primitively self-aware state as its object, but it is not reflectively aware of itself. Instead, it can become an object of a yet higher order reflective act on its own right.

On a sidenote clarifying this relation between primitive and reflective self-awareness, I would also like to propose a similar revision to Black's assessment of Ghazālī's critique of Avicennian self-awareness in the *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* VI.37 (Black [forthcoming], 20-22). Let us first take a look at the text:

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197 *Taʿlīqāt* 147. Cf. *Mubāḥathāt* 422, 221 (Badawī); 425-426, 222-223 (Badawī).

> Regarding their statement that whoever knows a thing knows that he is a knower by virtue of that very knowledge, so that, while the object of his knowledge constitutes a plurality, knowledge remains one, this is not the case. Rather, he knows his being a knower by another knowledge [and so on] until this terminates in a knowledge of which he is oblivious and does not know. We do not say that this regresses ad infinitum but that it stops [at a point] with a knowledge relating to its object, where [the individual] is oblivious to the existence of the knowledge but not [to that] of the object known. This is similar to a person who knows blackness, being, in his state of knowing, psychologically absorbed with the object of his knowledge – namely, blackness – but unaware of his [act of] knowing blackness, paying no heed to it. If he pays heed to it, he will require another knowledge [and so on] until his heeding ceases. (Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* V.37, 105 [tr. Marmura].)

According to Black, Ghazālī proposes here a conception of reflection according to which there is a seemingly arbitrarily fixed limit to the number of degrees of reflection we can ascend to, and on the other hand, also a lowest state on which there is no self-awareness at all. To me, this is at best a rather forced interpretation of the text at hand, and most certainly one that does not paint a particularly favourable picture of Ghazālī's philosophical acuity or intellectual integrity. Briefly, it seems to me that Ghazālī is quite well aware of Avicenna's distinction between primitive and reflective self-awareness and even adopts it as his own. Thus construed, his point is threefold. (1) In fact, there is always a limit as to the number of degrees of reflection we in fact take, maybe even to the number of degrees we *can* take. However, that limit is not preordained by the essence or nature of reflection in itself. Instead, it is purely factual: we simply stop reflecting, as we always ultimately do, at a given point either due to an incapacity in our particular psychological makeup of ascending further or due to some external disturbance demanding our attention.[198] (2) Ghazālī's example of a complete absorption in a perception of blackness highlights the fact that it would be a patent phenomenological falsity to claim that we are always reflecting – that we *find* ourselves in a reflective state is enough of a proof. It also points out a crucial prerequisite of any act of reflection: reflection always requires something to reflect upon. However, these claims of Ghazālī's do by no means have to deny the existence of the Avicennian primitive self-awareness. Instead, they can equally well be interpreted to presupposes it, or perhaps better, to be but another expression of it. (3) From (1) and (2) it follows that the highest reflective state to which one has ascended is itself prereflective. That, and only that, is

198 One is reminded of a passage in *Shifā' Met.* V.2, 160 (tr. Marmura): "Because it is within the power of the soul to apprehend intellectually, and to apprehend that it has apprehended, and to apprehend that it has apprehended that it has apprehended; and [because it has the power] to construct relations within relations and to make for the one thing different states of relationships *ad infinitum* in potency, it follows necessarily that there will be no stop to [the progression of] these mental forms that are arranged dependently on each other. It follows necessarily that [these] must proceed infinitely – [infinitely] in potency, not in act."

what Ghazālī means by the end of reflective ascension. In this discursive glance, Ghazālī would be on quite Avicennian lines in the matter of reflective self-awareness, and even able to formulate one of Avicenna's central ideas with exemplary clarity. For its part, the possible Ghazālīan development of the study of self-awareness is an intriguing prospect and would certainly merit a detailed study of its own.

There is one important question left in our discussion of reflective self-awareness in Avicenna: what should we think of the role of will in the formulation of potentiality close to actuality or proximate potentiality as which Avicenna chose to conceive reflective self-awareness. A quick glance shows that whenever proximate potentiality is mentioned in the psychological section of the *Shifā'* it is treated in terms of will. A usual definitive formula is that it is the capacity to perform a given action "according to one's wish" (*matā shā'at*).[199] The question thus becomes one of the nature of this will or wish in Avicenna? Bearing in mind the fact the question is huge and concerns one of the great concepts in the history of western philosophy, it can only be forgivable that I am unable to give a detailed and textually well argued answer at the present context. However, a couple of remarks can be made.

At least in the psychology of the *Shifā'* the relevant expressions containing *shā'a* or one of its cognate forms are used mostly in contexts which deal either with precisely the kind of intellectual capacity characteristic of acquired intellect, or with the operation of healthy sense faculties and organs, or with the operation of internal senses with regard to sensible forms or intentions stored in the formative faculty or in memory.[200] Thus, the term seems to have been quasi-technical, in any case it has a fairly defined and delimited use. Now, if we consider what is common to these different cases, any suggestion of completely free will in the sense of absolute arbitration is quickly ruled out. Such a will would have to be something that is free from the chain of causes of the sublunar world of matter, i.e. something that the operation of the cognitive faculties of the sensitive soul is not. Instead of such a conception of free will, I believe that the freedom inherent to proximate potentiality is better conceived as some degree of spontaneity of operation. For instance, it seems to be quite natural to say that we are free to direct our gaze at will as long as everything in our body is in good working order. But if we reflect upon any event when we in fact do direct our gaze, it seems that some external impulse, say a sound or something of possible interest at the periphery of our field of vision, is always involved. This external impulse alone may not be able to draw our gaze but it seems to be required as something to arouse the will to spontaneously direct the gaze. As re-

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199 *Shifā' De an.* I.5, 49 (Rahman), 95 (van Riet); I.5, 50 (Rahman), 98 (van Riet); III.7, 142 (Rahman), 255 (van Riet); III.8, 153 (Rahman), 270 (van Riet); V.6, 242 (Rahman), 141 (van Riet); V.6, 246-248 (Rahman), 148-150 (van Riet).

200 Cf. the texts mentioned in the previous note. There are only two unrelated passages in van Riet's indices (*s.v. shā'a*: vol. 1, 333; vol. 2, 242) to her edition of the Latin text. The irrelevance of these texts is evident from their translation: "should someone wish to (*shā'a*) change this order [of procedure in the study of the soul], let him do so" (*Shifā' De an.* praef., 3 [Rahman], 13 [van Riet]); "in any body you can posit as many points as you wish (*sha'ta*)" (*Shifā' De an.* I.2, 24 [Rahman], 52 [van Riet]).

gards the example of the internal senses, we have already discussed how our free agency in discursive thinking often vanishes under reflective scrutiny.[201] Instead, thoughts simply come up or our objective circumstances give impulse to them, and even when we deliberately search for a given content of thought from our memory, we are always already at work with some thought which provides the interest for our spontaneous perusal of memory. In all likelihood, the voluntariness of reflective awareness is to be conceived along similar lines. In most, if not all, cases of reflection there is something in the objective aspect, i.e. the content, of my experience that occasions the reflection, or at least seems to give an impulse to initiate a reflective act.

This sort of concept of will at the core of the proximate potentiality of reflective self-awareness would make Avicenna's theory of reflective self-awareness plausible also when applied to the cases of the sleeper and the drunken person. Both the sleeper and the drunken person are immaterial souls, and as such primitively self-aware even during the states that are used to characterise them. Thus, one would also expect them to be reflectively self-aware by proximate potentiality. The attribution of reflection as an open possibility to them would seem unconvincing in the extreme, unless we add the qualification that if there is nothing in their experience that serves as an impulse for reflection – or if, as in the extreme construal of these case examples, there is indeed no content at all in their experience – it will be quite unlikely that they would reflect upon their experience. No reflective interest simply arises for them.

5.4 Self-Knowledge

In our discussion of reflective self-awareness we alluded to the possibility of primitive self-awareness to become objectified in reflection, and subsequently subsumed under a suitable general or specific concept. By taking myself as an object in a reflective act of intellection I can conceive of myself as a human being, as a man, as an intelligent being, as a soul, or as an instance of a number of other concepts besides. It is important to notice that reflection is a necessary condition for this kind of intellectual grasp of oneself, since there is no other way to bring oneself to the fore as an object in the first place, as an object that can be understood as a thing qualified by certain intelligible properties. On this basis we can now construe an admittedly rudimentary, yet I dare say genuinely Avicennian, theory of self-knowledge. By self-knowledge I mean knowledge of one's own past or present life – of one's actions, decisions, emotions, perceptions, and so forth, with the necessary contextual addenda – that is either explicitly formulated in propositions or susceptible of being so formulated without drastic loss of information. To be sure, no such theory is explicitly put forth by Avicenna. But as said, the analysis of reflection provides the cornerstone for it, and besides, the question of self-knowledge has eschatological implications

201 Cf. ch. 3.4 above.

which Avicenna does quite openly discuss and against which we can evaluate the theory we have (re)construed.

Having laid the groundwork for the present discussion in our exposition of how primitive self-awareness can become an object of reflective intellection, we can now treat self-knowledge much in the same manner as any other form of knowledge. My knowledge of content related determinations of my existence, such as any object of my perception, apprehends these determinations as particular acts or things in the world. In reflection, I apprehend *my own* actions as objects of intellection essentially in the same way as I apprehend other particular things in a cognitive act directed toward them. I apprehend my own acts as events in the world, as acts of a psychological thing that itself belongs to the world and is unique only in the respect that I recognize it as myself. Considered only as objects of knowledge, the objects of reflection (a kind of "inward" apprehension) and the objects of "outward" apprehension are essentially similar. Furthermore, intellectual apprehension of my own acts, as of particular things in general, happens through my first learning the relevant universal concept by means of the epistemic process of abstraction, at the conclusion of which the concept is applicable by me in subsumption of particulars under its scope in my various encounters with mundane things. The only difference is that in the case of my own acts reflection is required to bring them into the status of an object in the first place.

Now, there may seem to be a sense in which all knowledge can be called self-knowledge. I can only know things that have come to the field of *my* self-aware experience, and insofar as they are considered as content related determinations of that experience, i.e. of my individual existence, they can be understood as determinations of my self. In other words, to the extent that we are willing to designate whatever constitutes my experience as a determination of myself, hence a part of me, the things I know are parts of me. However, I do not believe such a claim would be endorsed by Avicenna. After all, one of the implications of the flying man was precisely the separation, within the scope of my experience, between what is truly my self and the things that only seem to be part of it. The distinction between myself and other things was conceived as an internal feature of experience.

In fact, it seems that according to Avicenna self-knowledge in the sense now under consideration is best thought of as a kind of transcendence of the self, or going beyond what is properly oneself. By abstracting from the irreducible singularity of my experience in the subsumption of its constituents under universal concepts I render insignificant the primitive fact of mineness in that experience. Or more precisely, I simply leave it out of the picture. In effect, knowledge amounts to the adoption of a perspective that is in principle open to anyone. Let us consider a simple case example. Let us say that I have seen a crow. Reflecting on my seeing, I can affirm with certainty that I saw a crow, and I can express my affirmation through a proposition such as 'I saw a crow'. It is true that this proposition, as we have analysed it above,[202] does contain a refer-

[202] Cf. ch. 4.3 above.

ence to my self-awareness, to the primitively self-aware experience of seeing a crow, and more precisely, to the irreducible aspect of mineness inherent in that experience. Since the pronoun 'I' functions as an expression of that aspect of mineness in the sentence, its reference is not accessible to anyone else but me. But if the expression 'I saw a crow' is meant to communicate something to another linguistic agent, it cannot be an expression of an insurmountably private state of affairs, its sense cannot be something exclusively accessible to me. Thus, there must be a sense in which the proposition is understandable to others as well, since evidently it is possible to genuinely communicate information by means of it. This sense is fairly straightforward. Insofar as others understand my utterance, they have to conceive of it as equivalent with a proposition such as 'Jari saw a crow'.[203] The irreducibly first personal experientiality in the expression 'I saw a crow' is neglected and focus is entirely put on the objective content of that experience – on seeing a crow. Thus, there is a link between propositions expressing self-knowledge and propositions expressing knowledge of things other than oneself: when I form considered beliefs about myself, I myself figure in the belief as a constituent of its *objective* structure, as a mundane thing about the relations of which to other mundane things the belief is about. Such an objective structure is in principle accessible to any other intellectual agent, and even communicable between such agents by means of a suitable language. In other words, the structure of the object of self-knowledge is *not* dependent on my particular point of view. It is only dependent on *my* primitive self-awareness in the sense that the object had to be somehow brought about before it could be reflectively grasped in an act of self-knowledge.[204]

That such an understanding of my existence is in principle open to anyone may seem to be exclusively a question of principle. It is hardly probable that any of my coinhabitants in the sublunar world could have an equal wealth of information of my existence that I myself do.[205] However, such an exclusion is a

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203 It should perhaps best be leaved an open question whether it is a necessary prerequisite of understanding this proposition that the addressee conceives *for herself* what the proposition 'I saw a crow' means, i.e. understands the third personal proposition on the basis of her first personal experience of what it means to see a crow. The question is huge and difficult, and one in the analysis of which Avicenna may eventually not be of any great help.

204 To be precise, my individual primitive self-awareness is also required for such knowledge to count as self-knowledge in another sense: I have to recognize what is known *as myself*. This can only be done with regard to the subject of the cognitive act. I will come back to this shortly.

205 It might be contested that for instance infants or persons with certain cognitive disabilities constitute a counterexample. The issue is of scant importance to my point but can be used to illustrate it. It is true that in the case of certain types of information, other people may be more informed than the person whom the information concerns. For instance, an infant's parents may have the better idea of the location of the infant's birth. But with the possible exception of patients of severe brain damage, each sensitive being is constantly undergoing an experience the wealth of which is inexpressible due to temporal constraints alone – the time required by an exhaustive description of that experience simply is not there. Whether or not this wealth can be intellectually grasped by the subject of experience herself is not the issue – if it cannot be grasped by her, it cannot be communicated by her, and by consequence it cannot be grasped by any other (sublunar) cognitive agent either.

modern prejudice. For Avicenna, there is a supremely real cognitive agent the omniscience of whom renders such understanding a very real fact, instead of a *mere* question of principle. God's knowledge of particular human souls is crucial in determining the scale of His judgment on our blessing or condemnation to the hereafter. On the other hand, the theme of the wealth of veridical beliefs concerning oneself seems to contain a key to the question of the nature of existence *post mortem*. Let us use these two topics to try and gain insight into an Avicennian treatment of self-knowledge. Since they are implications of the theme of self-knowledge, discussion of them would seem to require some sort of account of it.

To begin with, consider God's knowledge of my being. Let us start with the following passages, an Avicennian description of God's knowledge of mundane things:

> He would thus apprehend particular things inasmuch as they are universal – I mean, inasmuch as they have attributes. If these [attributes] become specified individually in [the particulars], [this takes place] in relation to an individuated time or an individuated circumstance. If this circumstance is also [simply] apprehended with its attributes, it will be in the same position as [the particulars]. But, inasmuch as [these attributes] would depend on principles where the species of each is [confined] to its individual [instance], they are attributed to individual things. (*Shifā' Met.* VIII.6, 288 [tr. Marmura].)

God knows me, as He does other mundane things, inasmuch as I am universalisable, i.e. inasmuch as I have attributes that can be apprehended intellectually as a composite of essential and accidental properties.[206] Thus, we might say that God knows an infathomably long conjunctive proposition 'Jari x_1 and x_2 and [...] x_n', or perhaps rather, a syllogistically organized proposition expressing a con-

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206 In what is perhaps still the most authoritative scholarly discussion of Avicenna's theory of God's knowledge of particulars, Michael Marmura restricts this knowledge to such particulars that are the only instantiations of their respective species, i.e. to the celestial spheres, and what comes about through them, i.e. eclipses as the result of the spheres' coinciding revolutions (Marmura [1962]). Deborah Black (2005) accepts Marmura's view in general, yet does indicate that in principle there seems to be no obstacle for God's knowledge of other particulars as well, i.e. particulars that are not unique instantiations of their species. Peter Adamson (2005, 270-271) refuses to find any necessity for the restriction in Avicenna's text. On the contrary, Adamson is able to present rather convincing contextual reasons for Avicenna's choice of the celestial spheres and the eclipses as examples which do not exclude the extension of the scope of God's knowledge to other particulars as well. Briefly, Avicenna's examples are intended to show the connection between a particular and its definite description (i.e. a composite of all of its universal aspects). The spheres simply provide an economical means of making the point, for as unique instantiations of their species their definite descriptions are extremely restricted and thus readily comprehensible. In principle, however, there is no difference in the degree of *universality* between, say 'the sphere of Saturn' and the definite description expressed by 'Jari Kaukua'. One may be more *general* than the other but they both are *universal* through and through. This interpretation, unlike Marmura's, need not suspect Avicenna of any disingenuity or cheating in his interpretation (in *Shifā' Met.* VIII.7) of the Quranic idea of nothing taking place in the world without God's knowing it.

cept with a highly complex internal structure.[207] This complex concept contains my life as a whole in a perfectly veridical order. To use a figure of speech, such a proposition is then considered by God in His subjecting a judgment upon me on the Final Day. Now, in principle a content-wise identical proposition could be known by me as well, were I only equipped with unusually, one could say superhumanely, excellent capacities of both memory and discursive thinking, as well as an abnormally inquisitive attitude towards the facts of my life. But even in the extreme case of identity in respect to content between the two propositions, there would be one crucial difference between my knowing the proposition and God's knowing it. In contrast to the version understood by God, I would grasp the proposition as '*I* x_1 and x_2 and [...] and x_n' – or again, a syllogistically organized proposition expressing a concept with a similar extension – which would entail my identification of myself as the primitively self-aware knowing subject with the logical subject of the proposition, and through it, with the object of knowledge. This ability of mine to identify veridically with that very composite of intelligible attributes is not open to anyone else, not even God. The analysis is essentially the same as our previous analysis of the linguistic phenomenon of first personal indexical expressions: my unique perspective to this piece of knowledge amounts to my being able to say 'I' with regard to this composite.[208]

The other relevance of the theme of self-knowledge is for the question of the nature of our existence in the hereafter. Consider the following passage:

> He was asked: are we aware of our individuated essences after the separation [from the body] as we are aware of them now? Or are we aware of our essences as absolute, not as individuated, like we now understand the intention of soul and the intention of human being for instance?
>
> The reply: we are aware of [our essences] by means of the configurations through which [the essences] are individuated in

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207 This should be qualified with the proviso that God's understanding, as in fact all intellection, is indivisible insofar as it is actual. Its object can be called a conjunctive or syllogistically organised proposition only in the sense that were its content to be communicated linguistically, it would take such form. Thus, our propositional description of God's knowledge is entirely heuristic. On the other hand, indivisibility of God's intellection need not imply that it is not structured in any way (for an argument of syllogistical structure in intellects superior to the human intellect, see Adamson [2004] and [2005]). Needless to say, syllogistical organization does not imply any inference on God's part. By syllogistical organisation, I only mean the fact that there is a structure of logical priority and posteriority, or greater and lesser generality, in the object of understanding. For instance, the concept 'human being' consist of the more general or logically prior genus 'animal' and the logically posterior specific differentiating factor 'rational'. Moreover, 'syllogistical organisation' expresses the fact that there are relations of entailment between the constituents of the object of understanding. *If* these relations were discursively spelled out, they would result in what is commonly called a syllogism.

208 Cf. ch. 4.3 above. One might be willing to add that whereas I am *perceptually* aware of my experiences such an awareness is in principle unavailable to God. However, in the interpretation I am putting forth, experientiality in this sense is not a constituent of self-*knowledge*. It cannot be if the latter is supposed to be available in the hereafter – i.e. in absence of all perception – as well.

> an individuation proper to them (*tushakhkhaṣu al-tashakhkhuṣa al-lāzim*). Whether it is possible to be aware of the configuration as a singular (*mufradatan*), or whether one can only be aware of it as mixed with the general intention – that is another question. (*Mubāḥathāt* 427, 223 [Badawī].)

As we have learned, our individual existence continues uninterrupted after the death of the body. And as we have also learned, this continuous existence amounts to primitive self-awareness of which Avicenna has a rather narrow conception. The only thing that is guaranteed by primitive self-awareness in matters of eschatological importance is that whatever I experience after death, I will experience *as mine*, as present *for me*. The crucial question now is: what is it that I so experience? The answer is of course, either torment in Hell due to dispositions favourable to the body in my self, or blissful contemplation of universal truths, or in the third alternative, nothing much at all, in the rare case that I have managed to acquire neither knowledge nor vicious dispositions during my earthly sojourn.[209] From the point of view of the eschatological importance of self-knowledge, it is the intersection of the latter two alternatives we should focus on.

Suppose that I have acquired veridical knowledge in this life. In such a fortunate case, my hereafter will be spent in contemplation of that very fragment of knowledge, or more precisely, in continuous reception of precisely the amount of emanation from the active intellect for the reception of which I have developed the required cognitive aptitude during my life. Now, for the most part this knowledge may concern things other than myself. But insofar as genuine self-knowledge is a human option, I should also be able to think of myself, or the course of my own life. In a word, I can exist in the afterlife not only as primitive self-awareness, but also as object of my primitively self-aware intellection. I can contemplate my own life as a piece of objective knowledge, i.e. as something in the propositional structure of which the mineness inherent in my experience is set aside. However, insofar as I contemplate it as *my* life, I am still able to identify my primitively self-aware actual experience of intellection with whatever is represented in that specific piece of knowledge. To this extent I can indeed contemplate *my own* being in the hereafter.

However, this prospect receives a highly interesting qualification in a letter Avicenna wrote as an answer to the question whether concepts which refer to non-existent or ficticious entities remain after our separation from the body or whether they vanish with the corruption of the body.[210] It is this qualification which renders self-knowledge a matter of eschatological importance.

In brief, in this letter Avicenna denies the possibility of entertaining concepts that refer to ficticious entities after death. This is not due to any obvious non-intelligibility of ficticious entities, for at first glance it seems perfectly pos-

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209 For a readily accessible account of the optional eternities, see *Najāt Ilāhiyyāt* 326-334 (Fakhry). An English translation can be found in Arberry (1951), 64-76.

210 This letter, referred to here as *Risāla fī al-nafs*, was expertly edited, annotated and translated into English by Jean Michot (1985, 1987). An illuminating study of the text and the inherent problems of the theses voiced in it can be found in Black (1997).

sible to form untrue, in the sense of not having any extramental referent, intellectual concepts. It seems that we can have genuine intellection of such inexistent fictional entities as the phoenix or the king of Finland, since it is perfectly *conceivable* that such entities exist in the multiple so that we can grasp an essential feature common to them all. This, by definition, would be a universal concept. (*Risāla fī al-nafs* 155 [Michot], 98 [tr. Michot].)

The reason for the disappearance in death of such concepts is that they require corporeal cognitive faculties, i.e. the co-operation of the internal senses, in order to be entertained as objects of intellection. Avicenna argues for this as follows. Intellectual cognition, considered in itself, is received as emanation from the active intellect. The active intellect consists exclusively of actually existent essences. Hence, ficticious essences – which Avicenna treats as impossible and consequently as not actually existent – cannot be contained in it, nor can they, by the same token, be emanated from it into the human intellect. And since human beings do not have an intellectual memory, there remains no way for them to receive intellection of the ficticious entities after death. (*Risāla fī al-nafs* 156 [Michot], 99 [tr. Michot].) Thus, human beings cannot conceive of ficticious entities after death when all they have as content of experience is whatever they are apt to receive from the active intellect.

But how then do the unreal intelligibles come about during this life? – According to Avicenna, the internal senses are needed to bring about sensible representations of particular instances of such intelligibles. As intellection is based on a continuous emanation, it takes place automatically when a person has acquired sufficient aptitude to connect with the agent intellect. If a person who entertains an imaginative representation of an unreal being has the aptitude to understand the intelligibles that correspond to the constituents of that representation, a similarly combined complex object of intellection is formed in his mind even if such a combination did not exist in the agent intellect. (*Risāla fī al-nafs* 156-157 [Michot], 99 [tr. Michot].) As I take it, Avicenna means that in themselves the intelligibles in question are not combined to form a definition of the ficticious entity. Instead, their combination is only apparent, based upon the actual combination of correspondent sensible qualities in the imaginative representation, or perhaps rather upon the corresponding intention which functions as a blueprint of that combination.[211] While this may not be in accordance with our modern intuitions of intellection, it is in perfect harmony with the idea of syllogistic order of the cosmos: only what actually exists, is intelligible, and only what is intelligible, can exist.

In any case, Avicenna concludes his argument by stating that the internal senses are corporeal faculties and vanish at the corruption of the body. Since they are the prerequisite for the existence of unreal forms and corresponding concepts, both of these vanish with it. (*Risāla fī al-nafs* 157-158 [Michot], 100 [tr. Michot].) *Post mortem*, all we have as experiential content is whatever is emanated from the active intellect according to the aptitude for reception that we

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211 Estimation is in fact explicitly accorded a role in intellection of ficticious entities in *Risāla fī al-nafs* 160 (Michot), 101 (tr. Michot).

have acquired, and all of this received at once, in a timeless, non-discursive whole. (*Risāla fī al-nafs* 159-160 [Michot], 101-102 [tr. Michot].) Discursivity of thought, and by consequence succeeding states of intellection, is entirely due to the internal senses.

Despite the perhaps ultimately insurmountable problems of Avicenna's doctrine of the disappearance of vain ideas in death and his conception of such ideas as intellectual nonetheless,[212] the general idea can be applied to the topic of self-knowledge. Whether or not we endorse the overtly cynical view that human beings are particularly prone to exaggerate their own works of merit and even fabulate upon such things, we still have to allow at least the possibility that some of the features of our conception of ourselves and of our own lives can be ficticious. Otherwise it would be hard to explain for instance the fairly frequent phenomenon of surprise at the contrariety of other persons' apprehension of ourselves in comparison to our own. To take an extreme example, a mother who has committed infanticide may have entirely suppressed the memory of her deed, to the point that she now finds it profoundly insulting to be accused of such a crime. In the light of the foregone discussion, we would have to analyse the possibility of error in self-knowledge as follows. There is a world history, known by God in its entirety from a universal point of view, of which my existence forms a part. This world history, both in itself and as God's knowledge, is the standard against which an individual's, such as myself, knowledge of it is to be measured. Thus, to the extent my conception of myself and of the facts of my existence differs from that standard, it has to consist in corresponding part of elements of my own fiction. These, as we have seen, can be seemingly intelligible in the sense described in *Risāla fī al-nafs* so that I may full well entertain what seems to be intellection of them, and identify them as objects of intellection with the subject of primitive self-awareness that I am, i.e. to adopt them as facts of *my* life. However, these alleged facts are equally ficticious entities as are the phoenix or the king of Finland, and as ficticious entities they will be vanished at the corruption of my body the corporeal faculties of which are constantly required in entertaining them.

The critical consequence should be clear. If we try to paint a picture of our experience in the hereafter as conceived by Avicenna, for most of us the intellectual experience *post mortem* would resemble a puzzle in which a number – perhaps even a disconcertingly great number – of pieces are missing. As regards content, our existence would thus be rather fragmentary, but nevertheless completely stable. The fragments would all be there, without any relation to each other, but still as simultaneous constituents of my experience of understanding them. The stability is provided by the syllogistic and temporal order of the

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212 For a lucid exposition of these problems, see Black (1997), 449-453. The core of the problems seems to be the connection Avicenna makes between factual unreality and principial (or essential) impossibility. While it is true that ficticious entities are extramentally unreal, they must have some kind of existence in the mind. As a conclusion, they are not absolutely unreal. Insofar as they are not absolutely unreal, their existence has to be qualified by some essence, or in other words, it has to be the existence of some essence. In the light of such considerations, the connection of unreality with impossibility becomes seriously problematic.

wholesome origin of the fragments (i.e. the active intellect), whereas the fragmentation itself is entirely due to our lack of knowledge. Either we simply never learned the missing pieces and connections during our life of study, or more critically, we believed to have learned them but were in fact mistaken, as a result of which they are erased in death as fictions based upon the misguided operation of the internal senses. Most interestingly, this fragmentariness has to concern both our general knowledge of other things *and* our knowledge of ourselves. We are present to ourselves in the hereafter as objects of thought that we can identify with only insofar as our conceptions of ourselves are truthful. Thus, to the extent that we value such objective existence in the hereafter, a critical inquisitive analysis of our own life is of immeasurable importance.

In any case, it should be emphasised that this contemplation of oneself *post mortem* will be phenomenologically quite different from our common understanding of the course of our lives. Two important differences are particularly forthcoming. Firstly, reminiscing or recollecting the story of one's own life – either to oneself or with others – is best conceived as a narrative structure in which events are connected to each other by means of a meaningful plot. There are great variations in our success at the conception of such a structure, variations which in part account for the differences in degree of the meaningfulness of our lives. These variations also pinpoint the fact that in the weaving of the plot of our life story the telling and the tale are indistinguishable. My life first has meaning when one is given to it in a recollective narrative. In normal cases at least, the narration is restricted by the facts it has to incorporate in itself, but due to inevitable gaps in the availability of such facts, the story is not entirely determined by them. In Avicennian self-knowledge, on the contrary, the structure of the known thing is exhaustively determined by facts of the world. To the extent that there are gaps in my knowledge of my own life, they are not breached through a narrative but instead remain in my knowledge precisely as gaps that make my knowledge fragmentary. Secondly, recollecting the story of one's own life is an essentially temporal act. It is always a specific present, that of my own, which is understood in relation to the narrated past. Through the narration, this present is opened toward the future in the form of certain more or less general evaluations of various possible courses of action. For instance, I may conceive my becoming a father as one of the most crucial events of my life, one which profoundly determines what I am at present and what courses of future action I deem the most valuable. Avicennian self-knowledge, on the contrary, is entirely static. Not only is there no time of storytelling – insofar as I understand my life, I understand it as a whole in a single, undivided intellectual act – but the "story" is closed in both ends. There may be an internal temporal structure in what I know, but only in the fairly abstract or formal sense that the parts of the whole are understood in relations of 'before' and 'after' to each other.

The possible plausibility or implausibility of the foregoing analysis aside, in the end I must confess a certain skepticism. It is dubitable whether Avicenna would have held the possibility of contemplation of one's individual existence

in the hereafter in particularly great esteem. After all, as a philosopher he shares the values of his day according to which the general and the universal are infinitely more valuable than the particular and the individual. Besides, in his texts of more mystical bent he seems to explicitly downplay the significance of such self-knowledge.[213] In general, however, self-knowledge is a topic for the elaboration and analysis of which Avicenna's account of self-awareness does seem to give at least rudimentary means.

5.5 Awareness of One's Own Body

At first sight, Avicenna's account of self-awareness is quite emphatically focused on the human *intellect's* awareness of itself, to the extent that it verges on the improbable that a theory of any interest, or even rudiments thereof, of bodily self-awareness or embodied self-awareness could be found in his works. I do not pretend to reconstruct, much less discover as already complete, a full-fledged theory of it in this chapter. However, I do wish to make two remarks as to where such a theory should be looked for. The first of these is based on an interpretation of Avicenna's idea of body-related dispositions in the intellect, whereas the second concerns the introduction of perspectivity to experience by the corporeal means through which experiential content is largely conveyed. I hope that these remarks will be charitable enough to enlighten some of the embarrassment on questions of embodied self-awareness that we seem to have arrived at when following Avicenna's intellectual emphases in our study.

Let us, however, begin by taking the intellectual emphasis to its most ridiculous extreme. Consider the following passage from the *Shifā'*:

> [T]his body[214] (*al-jism*) is either the whole body (*jumlata al-badan*), in which case when something is taken away from it there is no longer that of which we are aware that we exist (*mā nashᶜuru bihi annā naḥnu mawjūdan*). This is not the case, for I am me even if I do not know that I have a hand, a leg or any other of these limbs, as was already reminded in another place. On the contrary, I think that they are servants and believe that they are instruments to me that I use according to need. If there weren't these needs, I would not need them. I would still be me even if they were not. Let us regard what we have already been reminded of and say that if a human being were created at a stroke (*dafᶜatan wāḥida*), and if he were created with his limbs separate and so that he does not see his limbs, and if it happened that he does not feel them [through touch] and they are not in contact, that he does not hear a sound, then he would be ignorant (*jahila*) of the existence of his limbs but he would know (*ᶜalima*) his thatness (*anniyyatihi*) as a single thing despite his ig-

213 Cf. *Ishārāt* 190-222 (Forget). An English translation of this part of the *Ishārāt* can be found in Inati (1996).

214 In the context, Avicenna is considering the possibility that what we conceive of as ourselves is a corporeal entity. This hypothetical corporeal entity is what is referred to here.

> norance of all that. What one is ignorant of is not the same as what one knows. Thus, in fact these limbs are to us merely like clothes which have permanently (*li dawām*) been associated with us and which we have come to consider as parts of us. For when we have imagined our souls (*takhayyalnā anfusanā*), we have not imagined them naked. Instead, we have imagined them as essences dressed in bodies. The reason for this is the permanence of the association. It is just that we are accustomed to undress of clothes and discard them, whereas in the case of limbs we are not accustomed to this. Thus, our belief that the limbs are parts of us is firmer than our belief that clothes are parts of us. (*Shifā' De an.* V.7, 255 [Rahman], 161-163 [van Riet].)

After the argument well rehearsed by now – if my essence or my self were a body, I should be aware of the body as body whenever I am aware of myself; but I am always aware of myself, while I am not always aware of any body; hence, my essence or my self cannot be a body – Avicenna introduces a telling analogy. The body is likened to a piece of clothing, with the qualification that it is one we never undress of. Due to the fact that we are and have always been dressed in the body, we have come to regard it as a part of ourselves through an estimative judgment. In all its hilarity, the analogy is certainly more vivid, and perhaps even slightly more plausible in the end, than the celebrated one of the sailor and his ship. Besides, I believe it contains the key to the best account Avicenna can offer about the embodiment of self-awareness. The key is in the idea of our becoming *used to* being in a body, our becoming *disposed* to consider ourselves as embodied.

Although Avicenna is certainly willing to keep his dualism intact, he seems to allow the formation of dispositions in relation to the body in the intellect. What is more, he even asserts that such dispositions are inborn due to the peculiar events in the engendering of the human soul:

> There is in the substance (*jawhar*) of the soul which occurs with some body – that body has necessitated (*istaḥaqqa*) [the soul's] occurrence from the first principles – a disposition (*hay'a*) of natural inclination toward occupation with and use of the body as well as concern about its states and attraction to it, [and this disposition] is unique to the soul (*tukhaṣṣuhā*) and turns it away from all other bodies. It is certain that when [the soul] comes into existence as an individual (*mutashakhkhiṣa*), the principle of its individuation attaches to it some dispositions by which it is rendered individual (*mabda'a al-tashakhkhuṣihā yalḥaqu bihā min al-hay'āti mā tataᶜayyanu bihi shakhṣan*). These dispositions are what necessitates [the soul's] unique possession (*ikhtiṣāṣihā*) of that body and relates the two as proper to each other, even if this condition and this relation remain obscure to us. (*Shifā' De an.* V.3, 225 [Rahman], 108-109 [van Riet].)

> We are certain that when it happens that the soul exists, it has come to be with (*maᶜa*) the coming to be of a certain mixture, and that in addition a certain configuration (*hai'a*) of rational ac-

> tions and passions (*al-afᶜālī al-nuṭqiyyati wa al-infiᶜālāti al-nuṭqiyya*) comes to be for the soul. This configuration differs from a corresponding configuration in another soul due to the conglomeration (*jumla*) [of rational actions and passions] in the same way as two mixtures differ in bodies. We are also certain that the acquired configuration, called intellect in act (*ᶜaqlan bi al-fiᶜl*), is to an extent also something due to which the soul differs from another soul. And we are certain that an awareness of its particular essence occurs to the soul (*yaqa'a lahā shuᶜūran bi dhātihā al-juz'iyya*). This awareness is a configuration which is also proper to the particular soul and not to any other soul. It may also happen that a configuration comes to be in the soul with respect to corporeal faculties (*quwan*). This configuration is related to moral configurations, or identical to them. There may be further properties unknown to us which adhere to souls with (*maᶜa*) their coming to be and afterwards, like the properties adherent to particulars of a corporeal species which differ due to these properties as long as they persist. In this way the souls will differ in the particularities respective to each of them regardless of whether the bodies exist or not and whether we know the dispositions (*al-aḥwāl*) or not or only know some of them. (*Shifā' De an.* V.3, 226-227 [Rahman], 111-113 [van Riet].)

The context for the first passage is Avicenna's discussion of the role of the emergence of a suitable body in the individuation of the human soul. In its emanation from the active intellect the soul is informed through a disposition to govern and take care of the body exclusively proper to it. Avicenna presents this disposition as some sort of inborn yearning which seems to verge on unconsciousness – unsurprisingly so, given that among other things, the yearning concerns the maintenance of functions proper to the vegetative soul.

The second passage enriches the variety of the intellectual dispositions somewhat. Among the dispositions in relation to the body are now mentioned cognitive configurations, i.e. characteristics such as acquired aptitude for knowledge through contact with the active intellect or increase in the amount of articles in the storehouses of memory and formative faculty through experience, as well as moral configurations, i.e. characteristics such as moderation in indulgence in sensible pleasures or moderation in relation to emotions.

Both kinds of dispositions, the inborn yearning to govern and take care of the body as well as the cognitive and moral dispositions, have great eschatological importance. It is essentially the yearning toward the body that the soul is purified of in the purgatorial process. The moral dispositions the soul has acquired during its connection with the body either shorten or lengthen this purification process, since they are essentially degrees of greater or lesser independence from the body and its impulses. The cognitive dispositions, on the other hand, are determinative of the richness or explicitness of the soul's existence in the hereafter. For those of us who have not proceeded far on the path of knowledge, there simply won't be very much to contemplate upon.[215]

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215 *Najāt Ilāhiyyāt* 326-334 (Fakhry). An English translation can be found in Arberry (1951), 64-76.

The common denominator in all these dispositions, even the cognitive ones, is that they are based upon the soul's relation to the body. Better yet, the soul's relation to the body – from the point of view of the soul – is constituted by these dispositions. They are what the connection between the body and the soul amount to. The soul's relation to its own body is unique only insofar as the soul does not have any such dispositions toward any other being of the extramental world. Insofar as it has relations to other mundane entities, these take place through the mediation of its own body.

The care over the body mentioned in the first passage presumably involves all animate functions manifested in the human body. Hence, it also involves cognitive and motive functions, and these provide the link to the theme of embodied self-awareness. As a broad characterisation, we can say that it is precisely a combination of cognitive and motive operations that modern theories of embodied self-awareness deal with. There can be great variety in the comprehensiveness of the descriptions of such operations and their mutual relations of entailment or presupposition, but in broad outline such phenomena constitute the object of study for such theories. Now, to consider a modern example from an Avicennian point of view, we can say that insofar as the growth of the human body involves development of its faculties, and insofar as consequent changes in self-world relations are brought about through learning based on both exteroception and proprioception, these changes concern the corresponding dispositions in the intellect. As a child I may not have paid much attention to the height of doorframes but the frequent occurrence of a sufficient amount of pain in my forehead has resulted in a somewhat different disposition during my process of growing up. This disposition concerns my estimation of spatial dimensions in relation to my body. Or to take another example, most of us are certainly familiar with the disillusioning experience of returning in adulthood to a scene of childhood excitement or sense of awe, only to discover that what was, say a gigantic heap of rocks, is now but a slight nuisance on the woodpath. The modern analysis of the phenomenon is, roughly, that our perception of our own bodies *in the world* has changed due to the growth of our bodies and our becoming used to it. For all I know, Avicenna would be fully willing to endorse this analysis, with the addendum that the change takes place in the body-related dispositions of the separate soul.

Thus, what we have just sketched is a rudimentary theory of embodied self-awareness based on the notion of intellectual dispositions. From the phenomenological point of view, Avicenna's theory of bodily awareness can be characterised as consisting of a base disposition to take care of the body – manifested most obviously in our reactions to pain or in our sense of position of the body, for instance – which is qualified by learned dispositions that Avicenna broadly terms moral. These can be, for instance, tendencies to feel in a certain way in certain types of situations, based partly on habituation, partly on the humoral temperament of the body regarding which there was a great deal of literature Avicenna was certainly acquainted with.

On a different note, as we have already noticed, the body is the origin of content-related *perspectivity* in experience. Conceived along Avicenna's lines, self-awareness yields only one aspect of first personal subjectivity, namely the relatively abstract feature of mineness, but the body – or more precisely, corporeally transmitted content of experience – gives it its characteristically concrete perspective. Consider the following passage in which Avicenna gathers evidence against the view of certain ancient philosophers according to whom the soul could somehow apprehend sensible things without the mediation of corporeal faculties:

> Similarly, since then the soul, according to them, is other than the body and not a thing with a location (*lā dhāta waḍ*^{c}),[216] it is inconceivable that some of the bodies would be close to it or in front of it whereas others far from it or hidden from it so that it would not sense [them]. In general it is necessary that there is no difference in location of the bodies relative to it, or in hiddenness or manifestation. These dispositions are in the bodies and among the bodies. It is necessary that the soul either apprehends all the sensibles or it does not apprehend, and that absence of the sensible cannot eliminate [the sensible] from its apprehension, because this absence is absence by [the vicinity of] something, and it is certainly other than presence. By [the vicinity] of that thing there is sometimes absence and sometimes presence according to spatial location. (*Shifā' De an.* II.2, 64 [Rahman], 126 [van Riet].)

The body does not have to be explicitly present as an object of perceptual experience in order to figure as a constituent of our self-aware being. It can of course be so present, but as we have seen, such instances are better conceived as exceptions rather than the norm. However, if we reflect upon the nature of perceptual experience, we quickly come to realize that it is by necessity embodied. As Avicenna says, absence and presence of sensible objects are entirely dependent on the corporeal instruments of sense perception. If I want to see a presently hidden aspect of a three-dimensional object, say the underside of the table in front of which I sit, I have to move into a position that allows me a sight of it, i.e. under the table. If I choose to move to the underside of the table, I get a different view at the table, but this on its turn is possible only at the expense of other aspects. I no longer see the table from the point of view I started with. In other cases, I may have to move into a position where other objects do not inhibit my view in order to get to the view I want. Thus, to see the accelerating racing car on the street I have to move to the window and stick my head out, in order not to have the wall of the house between my eyes and the passing car. That the body is not explicitly present as an object in the Avicennian interpretation of these first order experiences is certainly no theoretical fault. On the contrary, it would be patently absurd to claim that the embodiment of awareness

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216 This is of course maintained by Avicenna himself as well, but the difference lies precisely in the point I am trying to make: although the soul as self-awareness is separate from the body, it receives all concrete experiential content through the body.

amounts to the body's being explicitly present all the time. As we have seen,[217] Avicenna demanded such a strong presence in the question of the possible equivalence between self-awareness and awareness of the body but clearly the weaker presence of self-awareness in connection with the body does not require equally strict demands. Such claims would have but scant prospects to cash out the difference between painful and non-painful states for example, for one of the crucial aspects of painful states is the very fact that in pain the body comes into the foreground of experience in a way entirely foreign to ordinary healthy states.

Thus, it seems that in order to arrive at an Avicennian theory of the embodiment of self-awareness, one should approach the topic from two complementary directions. First, we have the idea of body-related dispositions in the intellect or the self. And secondly, the body is constantly implied in the way perceptual data is conveyed, i.e. in the perspectivity of all perceptions. A moment's reflection will show that these two directions of approach cannot be strictly kept apart, and that instead the field to analyse is complex and entangled. Suffice this, however, to serve as an opening and incentive for further study.

5.6 Summary

At the beginning of the preceding chapter we set out to examine Avicenna's descriptive account of self-awareness. We took our cue from the strong requirements placed upon such a description by the explanatory roles we saw Avicenna ascribe to the phenomenon in the previous chapter. It was shown that the type of self-awareness to be able to fulfill those roles would have to be (1) radically continuous, (2) non-reflective, (3) immediate, and (4) lacking any inherent objective content. It turned out that Avicenna is indeed able to find such a layer in our often complexly self-aware experience. This layer was termed primitive self-awareness and conceived as irreducible *mineness* inherent in all experience.

As soon as we arrived at the conclusion according to which primitive self-awareness conceived as mineness can fulfill the requirements set by its functioning in the explanatory roles mentioned above, we had to admit that it would be severely lacking, were it presented as the sole constituent of an analysis of the complex layers of different degrees of self-awareness in most instances of common experience. Furthermore, the question of animal self-awareness, presented as an open question in chapter 3.5 of our study, was brought to the fore: if primitive self-awareness in the expounded sense is a specifically human phenomenon – indeed, the mode of existence proper to individual human souls – should we deem animals as entirely lacking in self-awareness, or should we give an entirely different account of their self-awareness?

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217 Cf. ch. 4.3 above.

Our study of animal self-awareness showed that Avicenna chooses the latter alternative, basing his analysis on the self-involving relationality of estimative apprehension of intentions. One implication of the differences in the analysis of animal and human types of self-awareness was that unlike animals, human beings are capable of reflection. Thus, taking our cue from this implication as well as the fact that to become a plausible description of self-awareness, Avicenna's account of primitive self-awareness would have to be appended with a theory of further types of self-awareness, we set out to examine whether and by what means Avicenna does perform the analyses of different degrees of self-awareness from the basis of primitive self-awareness laid before. The first candidate was the peculiarly human possibility of reflective self-awareness, and it was seen that in order to make sense of some of the crucial passages in which Avicenna discusses self-awareness, we have to suppose him making a distinction between primitive self-awareness and reflective self-awareness. Further study of these passages showed that Avicenna conceives of reflective self-awareness as proximate potentiality inherent in human primitive self-awareness. According to Avicenna's analysis, each actualisation of this potentiality results in a new self-aware state which has the prior primitively self-aware state as an object of intellectual cognition *and* is for its own part a primitively self-aware state, containing again in itself the proximate potentiality to become an object of further reflection.

After our study of reflective self-awareness we set out to examine whether Avicenna has an account of self-knowledge that is explicitly formulated in propositions or capable of such formulation. Straightforward discussion of this topic by Avicenna proved scant but it was argued that it is possible to develop a rudimentary theory of self-knowledge from Avicenna's remarks on related topics. The crucial difference between first personal self-knowledge and third personal knowledge of other things was seen to be linked to the peculiar referential features of first personal indexical expressions. When primitive self-awareness becomes an object of reflection and is expressed in a first personal indexical proposition, it becomes possible to make a link between it and a third personal expression, for instance a proper name, which is conceived to be referentially coextensive with the first personal indexical proposition. Thus, the difference between the two types of knowledge becomes a difference of perspectives expressed in the two types of propositions, i.e. propositions construed in first person and those construed in third person. This difference amounts to the fact that only in the first personal perspective the subject uttering the proposition, i.e. the subject of knowledge, is capable of veridically identifying herself with the logical subject of the proposition, i.e. the object of knowledge. At the conclusion of the chapter, two eschatological ramifications of the theme of self-knowledge were pointed out, i.e. the difference between my knowledge of myself and God's knowledge of me, and the possibility of having one's own self as an object of contemplation in the hereafter.

Our study of Avicenna's descriptive account of self-awareness ended with an apology of sorts. The perhaps overtly intellectual emphasis in the preceding

exposition had given rise to the question whether Avicenna can provide any sort of plausible account of awareness of *one's own* body, or of self-awareness as an embodied phenomenon. Two interrelated approaches to this theme were suggested. First, from the very beginning of the individual human essence's coming to be, the body proper to it figures in its self-aware experience as various body-related dispositions. Avicenna allows that these dispositions can change over the course of one's life, i.e. over the course of one's existence in connection with the body. Following this clue, we tried to show that the sort of embodiment proper to human self-awareness can be given an Avicennian account by means of these dispositions. The second approach took its cue from the involvement of the body in the mode of transmission of all content of perceptual experience, involvement which is due to the fact that all such content is conveyed by means of corporeal faculties. An example of the body's involvement was the perspectivity proper to visual perception which results simply from the fact that seeing is a corporeal relation between two entities of the world, i.e. the sense organs of the animate body and the visible object of sight. Although our conclusions on awareness of one's own body in Avicenna were bound to be preliminary, they showed that one must not consider the prospect of developing a more detailed Avicennian theory entirely unpromising, despite the intellectual emphases in his dualistic psychology in general.

6 SUBSTANCE OF THINKING VS. SUBJECT OF THOUGHT – A CONCLUSION

In the eighteenth discussion of the *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, Ghazālī sets out to deny the demonstrability of Avicenna's thesis that the human soul is an immaterial substance. Having reiterated Avicenna's cognitive psychology in general outline, and having found no objection whatsoever to it, he begins the investigation of the philosophical argument from indivisibility of objects of intellection:

> They say:
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> Intellectual cognitions indwell in the human soul, being restricted [in number], and include units that are indivisible. It is inevitable, therefore, that their receptacle is also indivisible. [Now,] every body is divisible. [This] proves that their receptacle is something that is indivisible. One can formulate this according to the condition of logic in its [various] figures, but the easiest [to grasp] is to say: "If the receptacle of knowledge is a divisible body, knowledge that indwells therein is also divisible; but the knowledge indwelling therein is not divisible; the receptacle, hence, is not a body."[218]

The proof here concerns the indivisibility of any *actual* object of intellection. If I am to entertain intellection of the universal 'horse', I must conceive the various constituents of that universal in one and the same act. This does not rule out the *potential* divisibility of the universal, since I can always analyse it by considering its constituents as separate objects of intellection in their own right. Through such an analysis, however, I necessarily lose the intellection of the original universal 'horse'. In any case, the philosophers argue that indivisibility of the object requires indivisibility of the substrate in which it exists. Hence, the intellect as the substrate of the universal cannot be divisible, nor can it, by consequence, be material.

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218 Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 18, 182 (tr. Marmura). Throughout most of Ghazālī's book, the plural 'philosophers' refers to Avicenna's philosophy.

Ghazālī's strategy is to contend the major premise, i.e. the denial of the indivisibility of the substrate of intellection. He first proposes a *kalām* counter-argument based on the existence of indivisible atoms, but due to the inherent difficulties of atomism favours another argument. This penetrates deep into the systematics of Avicennian cognitive psychology itself:

> The second standpoint is to say: "What you have mentioned to the effect that everything that indwells in a body must be divisible is falsified for you in terms of what the [estimative] faculty that is in the ewe apprehends of the wolf's enmity. For it is within the domain of one thing whose division is inconceivable, since enmity does not have a part where one [could] hypothesize the apprehension of some part of it and the ceasing to exist of another part. But, according to you, [the ewe's] apprehension [of the enmity] took place in a bodily faculty." For the soul of beasts is imprinted in bodies, not enduring after death. (Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 18, 183 [tr. Marmura].)

This can certainly be considered a genial move from Ghazālī: if there is, *in the Avicennian system itself*, a corporeal cognitive faculty which is able to apprehend indivisible objects, why should corporeality constitute an obstacle for intellection? The situation is slightly developed through the addition of further arguments in defence of philosophers, but one can only notice the vastly inferior ingenuity of these attempts – unsurprisingly, since after all, it is Ghazālī's book. The problem is left standing.

I have presented Ghazālī's argument in the hope that it will help us toward one final insight which in my view neatly ties together the central ideas in Avicenna's theory of subjectivity we have been labouring with. However, in order to better serve in the generation of this insight Ghazālī's critical question should be slightly reformulated. The core of the question concerns Avicenna's reasons for the postulation of a separate *substance* of intellection when nothing warrants such a postulation in the case of estimation, even though the objects of the two cognitive acts are shown to be similar in the relevant regard. If we now turn our consideration from the similarity of the objects of these acts to the features of their subjects, we can ask: why does Avicenna want to postulate a *thinking substance*, why is he not content in giving a description of the *subject of thought*?

To be sure, a number of reasons are probably at play in motivating Avicenna. There are epistemological concerns such as those at the heart of the proof under Ghazālī's critique.[219] Biological data can be presented in favour of the immateriality of the intellectual soul, such as the observations that one cannot suffer fatigue in intellection, or that contrary to the operation of corporeal faculties, one's capacity of intellection is not in the least impoverished due to

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219 Epistemological issues are also wrought in the philosophers' second, third, fourth and tenth proofs for the immateriality of the soul in *Tahāfut* 18, 185-189, 198-200 (Marmura).

old age.[220] (Whether these are plausible arguments is of course an entirely different matter.) Preoccupation with the problem of personal identity may lead one to posit an immutable – and by consequence, immaterial – core self that guarantees stability in the face of continual flux in the material realm.[221] The theological aim of giving an account of personal afterlife may encourage the adaptation of this position as well. And finally, we cannot entirely rule out contingent historical reasons either – immateriality of the soul may be a thing of tradition, for instance something that Avicenna culled from the Arabic Plotinus.

However, I want to suggest that in the narrated variance of reasons there is one that rises well above the others: the postulation of an immaterial intellectual substance is the only means for Avicenna to give a satisfiable account of self-awareness, both in the reflective sense *and* in the primitive sense analysed above.[222]

Up to our time, all attempts at giving a corporeal foundation to self-awareness have been bound to face the same implausibility: a corporeal entity simply cannot be in a direct relation to itself. We can of course conceive of a corporeal self-relation in the sense that two parts of one and the same corporeal entity are in relation to each other. For instance, I can take a look at my hands writing this text, or I can scratch the back of my head with my hand. But the mutually related parts remain insurmountably distinct entities in any such conception, and the problem of explaining why this should constitute a *self*-relation is all the more pressing. In any case, such a relation cannot concern the self-aware entity as a whole, since at least the part of it which functions as the subject pole of that relation would be left out of the scope of the resulting self-aware state. I cannot see my eyes while they are directed at my hands, and while I can feel the sensation of being touched both in my hand and in my head, I cannot help feeling them as two distinct sensations. Avicenna's argument against a corporeal foundation of self-awareness was based on that very fact: a corporeal entity is incapable of being in a direct relation to itself.[223] This led Avicenna to posit the immateriality of the self-aware entity, i.e. of the human soul. That he posited it as an immaterial *substance* is simply due to the available ontological means: the category for a subsisting entity is substance.

On the other hand, a vast number of theories of self-awareness, modern as well as historical, take self-reflection to be the primary paradigm of self-awareness.[224] This is perfectly understandable in light of the fact that reflective awareness of oneself is phenomenologically the most obvious case of self-

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220 Cf. the philosophers' seventh and eighth proofs in *Tahāfut* 18, 193-196 (Marmura).

221 Cf. the philosophers' ninth proof in *Tahāfut* 18, 196-197 (Marmura).

222 See chs. 5.1 and 5.3. Interestingly, the fifth and sixth proofs of the philosophers as presented by Ghazālī (*Tahāfut* 18, 189-193 [Marmura]) deal with self-awareness. No special status is accorded to them by Ghazālī, though, but one cannot fail to note the scant degree of elaboration in these arguments when compared to the Avicennian arguments we have been studying.

223 For discussion of the argument, see ch. 4.2.

224 Pines' (1954) slighting treatment of Avicenna is telling in this regard; he only finds in Avicenna what he set out looking for. For a critical discussion of Pines' interpretation, see ch. 5.3.

awareness. In reflection I am *explicitly* aware of myself, my awareness of myself is what the whole state is about. But theories based on the model of reflection have to face a difficulty which in a sense is related to the one vexing corporeal accounts of self-awareness. Reflection always needs a prior foundation in the sense that there must be something to reflect upon, something that can become an object of reflection. Furthermore, if reflection is taken to be the foundational or the most primitive type of self-awareness, an account must be given of how the subject of the reflective act can recognize its object as being its own prior state. In other words, how can the subject of the reflective act recognize itself in its object? If the first order state, i.e. the one that becomes the object of reflection, is completely unaware of itself, there is nothing in it that enables the recognition. On the other hand, unless we wish to run into an infinite regress, the self-awareness proper to the first order state cannot be reflectively self-aware on its turn. If it were such, a prior reflection would be required to account for it, and so on *ad infinitum*.

As we have seen,[225] Avicenna offers a distinction between two types of self-awareness as a solution to this dilemma. He does not take reflective self-awareness to be the primary or the most primitive type of self-awareness. Instead, he conceives of a more primitive mineness as a feature of all mental states. It is on the basis of this mineness, then, that the reflecting subject is able to recognize the object of the reflective act as itself. The mineness in both the object state and the subject state is one and the same. For Avicenna, reflection is a sort of doubling of the unique self which is there from the very start. The separation of this self in two is required for there being a relation between the two terms, and the relation consists in the overcoming of that distinction, in the identification between the two relata. But the identification is only possible because its basis was already there in the first place

There may not be anything particularly ingenuous about Avicenna's thinking so far. His ingenuity is in the manner in which he weaves together the requirement of immaterial substance *and* the requirement of foundation for reflection: he conceives of the very mode of existence of the immaterial substance he's had to postulate as self-awareness of the primitive type, as mineness inherent in everything that this immaterial substance does, as mineness that both requires further definition through corporeally transmitted content and impresses its indelible stamp on all such content. As we have seen,[226] primitive self-awareness as mineness is by necessity a very narrow type of existence – but that is precisely its advantage. It makes it necessary, despite the resulting dualism, to conceive the whole of human being as embodied, otherwise there would be no content to its existence. At the same time it enables this being's peculiar relations to itself that all exclusively corporeal things are incapable of. And finally, it offers a very real sense to the idea of personal afterlife. Although Avicenna, like most of the *falāsifa*, takes the afterlife to consist in the contemplation of universal truths, for him there is always a particular perspective to that

225 See ch. 5.3.
226 See ch. 5.1.

contemplation. And it is the very same perspective in which I live my life here in the sublunar world as an embodied being, the same indelible mineness that dwells deep within all my experiences.

Somewhat paradoxically, however, I have a feeling that the major suspicion to arise in the consideration of my interpretation of Avicenna is due to its plausibility from the point of view of our contemporary considerations. One asks whether in the end there is not too much read into these eleventh century texts. Of course, the evaluation of my interpretation remains the reader's task. But one of the means of testing the plausibility of my interpretation is the examination of both Avicenna's source material and the subsequent discussion based upon him in light of it. Thus, we have to investigate just how developed a theory of self-awareness can be found in the corpus of the Arabic Plotinus for instance. On the other hand, we have a fairly comprehensive conception of the Latin reception of the flying man, and it seems that at least not all the nuances presented here were picked up in that context. But this observation should not lead to hasty conclusions. On the contrary, it should arouse heightened interest in the immediate disciples of Avicenna in the Islamic world: how did they read the additional texts in the *Mubāḥathāt* and the *Taʿlīqāt* that I have found so fecund but that were unable to the Latin thinkers? If the foregone analysis has provided any urgently felt incentive for the study of that material, it has fulfilled its task.

YHTEENVETO

Tutkimukseni käsittelee Abū ᶜAlī Ibn Sīnān (980–1037 jaa., lat. Avicenna) teoriaa subjektiivisuudesta. Aiheensa mukaisesti työ jakautuu kahteen osaan: luku 3 käsittelee Ibn Sīnān teoriaa intentionaalisesta tietoisuudesta, joka koskee itsestä eroavia kognitiivisia objekteja, lukujen 4 ja 5 keskittyessä hänen teoriaansa itsetietoisuudesta.

Tutkimuksen intentionaalista tietoisuutta käsittelevä osa ottaa lähtökohdakseen kaksi tapaa, joilla intentionaalisuudesta nykyfilosofiassa puhutaan. Yhtäältä asetetaan erilaisia sisällöllisiä kriteerejä, jotka mentaalisten tilojen on täytettävä ollakseen intentionaalisia. Toisaalta erityisesti husserlilaisessa fenomenologiassa on kaikkein perustavimpia ajan ja avaruuden hahmottamiseen liittyviä mentaalisia akteja käsitelty nimenomaan intentionaalisina akteina. Käytän näitä kahta intentionaalisuuden merkitystä systemaattisena apuneuvona selvittäessäni, löytyykö Ibn Sīnālta teoriaa intentionaalisuudesta. Tutkimuskirjallisuudessa tämä kysymys on aiheuttanut joltisestikin kiistaa. Eräät tutkijat tahtovat samaistaa Ibn Sīnān sisäisten aistien teoriaan kuuluvan arviointikyvyn (*wahm*) ja sen kohteina olevien ns. intentioiden (*maᶜānī*) tarkastelun intentionaalisuusteoriaan *grosso modo*. Toiset taas kiistävät arviointikyvyllä olevan mitään tekemistä intentionaalisuuden kanssa.

Esitetyn suunnitelman mukaisesti alaluku 3.2 tutkii Ibn Sīnān teoriaa aistihavainnosta Edmund Husserlin kokemuksellisen ajan hahmottamiseen liittyvien intentionaalisuutta koskevien huomioiden valossa. Alaluvun keskeinen huomio on, että intentionaalisuus tässä merkityksessä näyttäisi Ibn Sīnälla olevan kaikkeen havaintokokemukseen liittyvä tekijä. Se ei siis rajoitu pelkkään arviointikyvyn toimintaan.

Alaluvusta 3.3 alkaen intentionaalisuuden käsittely keskittyy arviointikyvyn toimintaan. Arviointikykyä lähestytään tutkimuskirjallisuudessa vallitsevan kiistan kautta: yhtäältä on väitetty arviointikyvyn olevan yksinomaan teoria eläinten vaistonvaraisesta toiminnasta, toisaalta sillä on argumentoitu olevan laaja joukko erilaisia tehtäviä toisistaan hyvinkin poikkeavien episteemisten ilmiöiden selittämisessä. Eri tekstejä kokoamalla pyrin argumentoimaan laajemman arviointikykyä koskevan teorian puolesta. Tulkintani mukaan arviointikyvyn eri esiintymien yhteisenä nimittäjänä on se, että arviointikyky käsittää kokemuksen rakenteesta vastaavia merkityksiä, joiden mukaan aistidata jäsentyy koherenteiksi kokemuksellisiksi kokonaisuuksiksi. Kun tämän tulkinnan mukaista käsitystä arviointikyvystä ja sen kohteista tarkastellaan intentionaalisuuden sisällöllisten kriteerien valossa, huomataan, että mentaaliset tilat, joiden muodostumisessa arviointikyvyllä on keskeinen tehtävä, täyttävät kaikki intentionaalisen tilan ehdot. Niinpä tutkimukseni keskeisenä väitteenä tältä osin on, että Ibn Sīnān teoria intentionaalisuudesta on kiinteässä yhteydessä hänen teoriaansa arviointikyvystä. Tämän yhteyden luonteesta voidaan kuitenkin esittää huomattavasti aiemman tutkimuksen tuloksia yksityiskohtaisempi kuvaus.

Työni itsetietoisuutta käsittelevä osa jakautuu kahteen lukuun: luvussa 4 tarkastellaan kolmea erilaista selittävää tehtävää, jotka Ibn Sīnā filosofisessa psykologiassaan itsetietoisuuden ilmiölle antaa, ja luvussa 5 tutkitaan, millaisen kuvauksen ja selityksen hän itsetietoisuudesta esittää. Alaluku 4.1 käsittelee itsetietoisuuden keskeistä selityksellistä funktiota. Itsetietoisuus toimii vastauksena Ibn Sīnān dualistisesta ihmiskäsityksestä seuraavaan ongelmaan yksilöllisen ihmissielun olemassaolon tavasta. Tarkastelun yhteydessä esitän sellaisen tulkinnan kuuluisasta ”lentävän miehen” ajatuskokeesta, joka liittää kyseisen argumentin Ibn Sīnān yleisiin ontologisiin periaatteisiin ja osoittaa sen mielekkääksi vain niitä vasten. Samalla myös hänen eksplisiittisesti esittämänsä suorat rinnastukset itsetietoisuuden ja ihmissielun olemassaolon välillä saavat tarkan systemaattisen merkityksen. Alaluvussa 4.2 tarkastellaan itsetietoisuutta tietoisen kokemuksen yhtenäisyyden takaajana. Keskeisenä tuloksena on, että itsetietoisuus kokoaa kokemuksen heterogeeniset ainekset yhdeksi sen nojalla, että ne ovat kaikki yhden ja saman tietoisuuden objekteja, ja niihin kaikkiin sisältyy indeksikaalinen viittaus samaan subjektiin. Aluluku 4.3 tarkastelee tähän liittyvää kysymystä ensimmäisen persoonan indeksikaalisten ilmaisujen viittauskohteesta. Keskeinen väite on, että itsetietoisuus tarjoaa viittauskohteen tällaisille ilmauksille, joiden loogiset ominaisuudet poikkeavat sekä erisnimistä että täydellisesti määrittävistä kuvauksista.

Luku 5 tarkastelee Ibn Sīnān kuvausta itsetietoisuuden eri tyypeistä. Lähtökohdaksi otetaan itsetietoisuuden selittävien roolien asettamat rajoitukset: millainen kuvaus itsetietoisuudesta rajaa esiin ilmiön, joka voi toimia näissä rooleissa? Selittävien roolien kuvaukselle asettamia rajoituksia on neljä: tarkasteltavan itsetietoisuuden on oltava (1) jatkuvaa eli katkeamatonta, (2) eireflektiivistä ja (3) välitöntä, (4) eikä se saa perustua mihinkään sille ominaiseen objektiiviseen sisältöön. Näiden rajoitusten pohjalta alaluvussa 5.1 argumentoidaan, että Ibn Sīnān ehdotus edellä tarkastelluissa selittävissä tehtävissä toimivaksi perustavaksi ja primitiiviseksi itsetietoisuuden tyypiksi vastaa olennaisilta osiltaan eräiden nykyfilosofien esittämää jokaiseen kokemukseen sisäsyntyisesti kuuluvaa *minuudellisuutta* eli sitä, että kokemus on aina annettu jollekin ensimmäisen persoonan kokijalle.

Alaluku 5.2 tarkastelee kysymystä, onko eläimillä Ibn Sīnān mukaan mainitun kaltaista primiitivistä itsetietoisuutta. Kysymys eläinten itsetietoisuudesta liittyy läheisesti kuvaukseen arviointikyvyn toiminnasta ja sille ominaisesta relationaalisuudesta subjektin suhteen. Tulkintani mukaan eläimet ovat primitiivisesti tietoisia itsestään havainnon subjekteina, mutta ne eivät periaatteellisista syistä kykene reflektoimaan tätä itsetietoisuuttaan. Tämä johtuu siitä, että eläinten itsetietoisuuden perusta on erilainen kuin ihmisen, jonka sielu on aineeton substanssi. Niinpä eläinten ja ihmisten itsetietoisuutta voidaan avicennalaisessa psykologiassa luonnehtia lähinnä vain homonyymisesti samaksi asiaksi.

Alaluku 5.3 pyrkii vastaamaan Ibn Sīnān primitiivistä itsetietoisuutta käsittelevän kuvauksen suppeutta koskeviin mahdollisiin kriittisiin huomautuksiin: koska meillä kiistatta on myös primitiivistä itsetietoisuutta korkeampia tai

monimutkaisempia itsetietoisuuden tiloja, ja koska nimenomaan tällaisia tiloja – esimerkiksi eksplisiittistä reflektiivistä tietoisuutta omista tietoisuuden tiloista – kutsutaan arkikielessä ensisijaisesti itsetietoisiksi, jäisi pelkkää minuudellisuutta korostava teoria fenomenologisesti kohtalokkaan vajaaksi. Ibn Sīnālta voidaan kuitenkin esittää tekstejä, joissa hän eksplisiittisesti panee merkille reflektiivisen itsetietoisuuden ilmiönä ja pyrkii antamaan sille teoreettisen selityksen. Keskeisenä käsitteenä tässä selityksessä on ”lähes aktuaalisen potentiaalisuuden” (*quwwatun qarībatun min al-fiᶜl*) käsite. Tyyppiesimerkki löytyy Aristoteleen *Sielusta*-teoksen toisen kirjan viidennestä luvusta, jossa ihmisen sanotaan olevan tässä mielessä potentiaalisesti tietävä, jos hän on jo oppinut tiedettävän asian, mutta ei satu tarkastelun hetkellä ajattelemaan sitä. Tässä mielessä tietävä voi kuitenkin aina halutessaan ryhtyä tarkastelemaan tietämäänsä asiaa. Ihmisen primitiiviseen itsetietoisuuteen kuuluu Ibn Sīnān mukaan sisäsyntyisesti kyky reflektoida itseään lähes aktuaalisen potentiaalisuuden mielessä, toisin sanoen ihminen voi aina ottaa oman ensimmäisen asteen primitiivisen itsetietoisuutensa reflektiivisen tarkastelun kohteeksi. Tästä seuraavan tietoisuuden tilan sisältönä on intellektuaalinen käsitys ensimmäisen asteen tilan toiminnasta, johon liittyy indeksikaalinen viittaus ensimmäisen asteen primitiiviseen itsetietoisuuteen. Ja koska tämä indeksikaalinen viittaus on sama sekä ensimmäisen että toisen asteen tilassa, on reflektio *itse*tietoisuutta. Toisaalta reflektiivinen kokemus on omasta puolestaan primitiivisesti itsetietoinen tila, johon ei sisälly reflektiivistä tietoisuutta itsestään, vaan ainoastaan ”lähes aktuaalisesti potentiaalinen” mahdollisuus nousta astetta korkeamman tason reflektioon.

Luvun 5 alaluvut 5.4 ja 5.5 ovat luonnosmaisia liitteitä, joissa Ibn Sīnān itsetietoisuusteoriaa tarkastellaan kahden nykykeskustelussa olennaisen teeman valossa. Alaluku 5.4 käsittelee eksplisiittistä itseä koskevaa tietoa omaa elämää koskevien käsitysten ja kertomusten mielessä. Alaluku 5.5 puolestaan tutkii mahdollisuutta antaa tyydyttävä kuvaus ruumiillisesta itsetietoisuudesta tai eletystä ruumiillisuudesta Ibn Sīnān dualistisessa kokonaisjärjestelmässä.

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