FORMING THE MIND

Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THE MIND/BODY PROBLEM AND LATE MEDIEVAL CONCEPTIONS OF THE SOUL

Henrik Lagerlund

1.1.

Contemporary philosophy of mind or philosophical psychology traces its origin almost exclusively to René Descartes. Almost all textbooks in philosophy of mind start with a discussion of Descartes. A legitimate question is, of course: Why? The answer is complicated, but one reason is that contemporary philosophy of mind is almost exclusively concerned with the so called mind/body problem, i.e., the problem how meaning, rationality, and conscious experience are related to a physical world, and they think Descartes was first to formulate this problem.

In a lot of ways the problem I just described, as the mind/body problem, was not *the* problem Descartes formulated, but it is, of course, still true that there is a problem or perhaps a set of related problems of how mind and body are related for Descartes. This set of related problems is what I will call the mind/body problem and in the course of this introduction I will try to show that this set of problems, or at least some of the problems in this set, can be traced back to the introduction and Latinization of Arabic thought and Aristotelian philosophy in the twelfth century. It was with the translation of Avicenna's *De anima* and the subsequent translation and discussion of Aristotle's *De anima* and Averroes' commentaries that the discussion began that continues today.[1]

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[1] See Lagerlund (2007) for further discussions of the importance of Avicenna for subsequent philosophical psychology.

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The mind/body problem that was a concern in the Middle Ages and in early modern times is, however, as indicated not the same problem that occupy contemporary philosophers. Today we want to explain how phenomena like consciousness and intentionality are possible in a material (or physical) world. The problem that faced medieval philosophers and Descartes was rather the opposite, that is, how can matter at all have an effect on the mental (non-material) and how can such a noble thing as a mind be united to a material body. The reason this was problematic was because material things and minds (or souls) was thought to be far apart on the great chain of being. Matter was considered to be lower on this chain than the mind or the soul. The mind/body or soul/body problem for medieval thinkers was thus foremost a metaphysical problem and to a much lesser extent an epistemological and a semantical problem. This is not to say that they were not concerned with epistemological and semantical problems–on the contrary–but the mind/body problem was not such a problem.

It is often unclear in discussions of the history of the mind/body problem what the problem actually is or rather was. The reason for this is, I think, that the problem can be spelled out in different ways and also that there are, as already indicated, in fact several mind/body problems. One problem is the so-called interaction problem, that is, how can such different things (or substances) as the mind and the body have an efficient causal effect on each other. Another problem is the unification problem, that is, how can the mind and the body, which can exist apart from each other, be united into one single thing; a human being. A third way of stating the problem has to do with the existence of sensations or sense ideas in the mind, which means that the problem is really how to explain in what way there can be sensations in a mind without a body. A fourth mind/body problem, which is quite neglected and which the present book does not deal with at all, but which is very important, is how final and efficient causality can be combined. How do we reconcile the material and animal world, which is governed by efficient causality, with the mental and divine world, which is governed by final causality.

This problem it seems to me, as the other three mentioned, grows out of the later Middle Ages. It starts primarily in the early fourteenth century when thinkers like William Ockham and John Buridan start to flirt with a mechanized view of the material world. They explicitly argue that efficient causality is all that is needed to explain movement and change in nature, and hence they limit final causality to immaterial object like minds, angels and God. From their argumentation a mind/body problem follows, namely how is human action and free will, which is governed by final causality, incorporated into a world, which otherwise is solely explicable by efficient

causality. This problem can be traced from the early fourteenth century into early modern times and is a major concern for Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz.

The essays in this book do not all deal with the mind/body problem but they all in one way or another treat problems associated with the mind or the soul and its relation to and functions in a body. They give samples from a long tradition starting with Avicenna and continuing up to and past Descartes. This incredibly rich tradition has been far too little discussed and its importance for modern philosophy of mind and the tradition following Descartes has not been appreciated enough. This book tries to fill in some of these gaps.[2]

In this introduction, I will give a brief account of the conceptions of the soul in the Middle Ages and up to Descartes. Given the similarity in conceptions of mind or soul, it is clear that the same problems associated with these conceptions will appear for the medieval thinkers as well. I will end this introduction with a short summary of the papers collected in this book.

1.2.

The word for 'mind' used by Descartes in the *Meditations* is the Latin 'mens' and the French 'esprit'. In other works he also uses 'anima' or 'ame', and seems to mean the same thing. The Latin tradition that Descartes depends on uses both these words. 'Anima' is of course the main word used and it is usually translated with 'soul'. According to the standard Aristotelian divisions, it is divided into the vegetative, sensitive and intellective. These are either functions, powers or parts of one soul, or they are divisions of different souls in one or several beings. For example, plants have vegetative souls, animals have one soul that is both vegetative and sensitive or two souls one of which is vegetative and the other sensitive, and humans have one soul with have all three powers or three souls (some thought humans have two souls one that is vegetative and sensitive and another that is intellective). The Latin word 'mens' was almost always reserved for the intellective soul or the intellective part of the soul.

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[2] Wright and Potter (2000) present a collection of articles on the history of the mind/body problem from Antiquity to the Enlightenment, but they have basically skipped the whole Middle Ages, which is unfortunate. The other collection of articles on the history of the mind/body problem is Crane and Patterson (2000), but it only contains one article on the whole Middle Ages.

All mental activity or all content of the mind, that is, all ideas, are conscious processes for Descartes, and his use of 'mens' or 'esprit' therefore correspond rather well to what most medieval philosophers called the intellective soul or for that matter 'mens'. The processes covered by the vegetative and the sensitive souls Descartes pushed into the body–although the passions discussed in *The Passions of the Soul* are hard to classify and a matter of controversy.[3]

For Aristotle and a long Aristotelian tradition the soul is the principle of life. All living things have a soul. The definition of the soul given in Aristotle's *De anima* is 'the form of a natural body which potentially has life' (II.1, 412a). The soul is hence the form of a body. One of the reasons Descartes wanted to use the term 'mind' instead of 'soul' was that he wanted to reject the view of the soul as a principle of life. Souls are not essential to living things, since only humans have souls or minds, according to Descartes.

While rejecting a certain kind of Aristotelianism, Descartes is embracing a notion of the soul that traditionally has been associated with Plato and Augustine. For Augustine the mind or soul is not primarily a principle of life, but rather a thinking thing or entity. As such it is incorporeal, inextended and indivisible. It has become a common place in the contemporary commentary literature that Descartes is indebted to Augustine for his conception of the mind.[4]

Terminologically Augustine is very close to Descartes as well. Augustine uses both 'anima' and 'mens' to refer to the soul and the mind, but sometimes he also uses the masculine word 'animus' to refer to the rational capacities of the soul. He seems not to draw a sharp distinction between these three different terms. The term 'animus' was used in the later Middle Ages as well, but it had as 'mens' not a wide spread usage, and when used it always referred to the rational part of the soul.

Stemming from respectively Plato and Aristotle two conflicting conceptions of the soul thus made its way into the Middle Ages, both with very respectable authorities standing behind them, that is, Augustine on the one hand and Aristotle himself on the other. Even thought these conceptions of the soul are clearly separated by the tradition they were not so clearly separated by the later medieval tradition. The scholastic tradition tended to mix these conceptions of the soul and sometimes emphasize one more than the other, but they never clearly separated them from each other. One of

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[3] See Alanen (2003), Ch. 6.

[4] See for example Menn (1998) and Matthews (2000).

the main reasons for this was Avicenna. He sought in dealing with the soul to combine the thinking of Plato and Aristotle, which fused these traditions together in a way that was hard to separate.

In the part of the *Shifâ'* which came to be viewed as a commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* during a short period of the later Middle Ages, Avicenna draws a distinction between the study of the soul in itself, which belongs to metaphysics, and the study of the soul as the principle of animation, which belongs to natural philosophy.[5] The same soul can thus be taken in these two ways, that is, it is both a self-subsisting entity as Plato, Augustine and Descartes argue and it is a principle of life as Aristotle argues. These two aspects of the soul pull in different direction, namely according to the first aspect the soul is an independent thing and according to the second the soul is essentially united to a body that it animates. Can the soul consistently have both of them? I have argued that it cannot and it is this that give rise to two of the classical problems often referred to as the problems of dualism, namely the unification and interaction problems of soul/mind and body.[6]

All of this is complicated further by demands on late medieval philosophers to account for the immortality of the human soul. According to the well-known Christian dogma of immortality, the soul lives on after the body has died. This strongly suggests that the soul must be able to be taken by itself as a self-subsisting entity.

Despite the tendency to conflate the two traditions outlined above they can still be traced historically in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Augustinian tradition was influential among foremost Franciscan thinkers, and although they were certainly not anti-Aristotelian they tended to emphasize the soul's self-subsistence, and hence they emphasize the Augustinian conception of the soul. The Aristotelian tradition was through Aquinas predominant among Dominican thinkers.

Most major medieval thinkers seem, however, to have held that the soul is a substantial form of a body. This is not Aristotle's terminology in *De anima* but it was the interpretation presented by Averroes,[7] and for that reason it became official Aristotelian terminology in the later Middle Ages. Thinkers entrenched in the Augustinian tradition like John Peter Olivi, John Duns Scotus and William Ockham used the same terminology.

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[5] For the references see Lagerlund (2004). Many of the points made in this introduction can be found in the same article.

[6] See Lagerlund (2004).

[7] See Averroes Cordubensis, *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*, II, 5, 134–135.

Aquinas argued that the soul is a substantial form and that each living thing has one soul. Every substance in the sub-lunar world is composed of prime matter and substantial form, according to him. Prime matter is pure potentiality and a substantial form brings actuality to it. Animals as well as humans are composed in this way; however, their substantial forms are different. There is a sort of hierarchy among forms, according to Aquinas. The forms of lower bodies are closest to matter and possess no other operations than activity and passivity. Above these forms are the forms of compounds, which have operations derived from the celestial bodies. Above these are plants and then comes the souls of animals and humans.

A soul furthermore has an incomplete nature, according to Aquinas, and is only a proper substance in union with a body. It can, however, exist separated from a body, but it cannot function separated from a body. It has a natural inclination to be completed and unified with a body. In *Summa Theologiae* he writes:

> It belongs to the very essence of the soul to be united to the body, just at it belongs to a light body to float upwards. And just as a light body remains light when forcibly displaced, and thus retains its aptitude and tendency for the location proper to it, in the same way the human soul, remaining in its own existence after separation from the body, has a natural aptitude and a natural tendency to embodiment.[8]

The substantial or essential union of the body and the soul is explained in this way by Aquinas, that is, the soul has this natural inclination to be united to a body or to some matter in order to complete or fulfill its nature. All this seems straightforward, but despite what he himself claims the soul's union with the body cannot in fact be essential. If the soul can exist apart from the body, the union must be accidental. The possibility of separation without destruction destroys the essential connection between soul and body. Aquinas cannot have it both ways. It seems therefore not possible to hold on Aquinas' view that the soul is self-subsistent and essentially inherent in matter. It is, therefore, not clear in what sense the soul and the body or the informed matter is one thing. To account for immortality Aquinas has to allow for the human soul to be able to exist separated from the body, but by doing this he also destroys the essential unity of the soul with the body. The two perspectives on the human soul derived from Avicenna thus comes in explicit tension in Aquinas' thinking on the soul.

The view of the soul as a single substantial form of the body defended by Aquinas was not the view of the majority. In fact it was considered

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[8] See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.76, 1.ad 6.

to be heretical and condemned by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Kilwardby, in the famous, 1277, condemnation in England. The opposing view, which was considered to be the position of faith, argued first of all that matter must have some actuality and cannot, as Aquinas argued, be purely potential, and secondly that at least living composite substances have many substantial forms. The view that living beings are made up of several substantial forms have come to be associated with Franciscan thinkers, such as Scotus and Ockham, and it is often referred to as the Franciscan view.

The arguments for the plurality of substantial forms in composite beings were taken from both philosophy and theology. In his *Quodlibetal Questions*, Ockham argues that the sensitive soul is distinct from the intellective soul and that the corporeal form of the body is distinct from the sensitive soul. There is, however, no distinction between a vegetative soul and the sensitive soul in animals and humans.

Ockham gives three arguments for a real distinction between the sensitive soul and the intellective soul. The first argument focuses on the impossibility of contrary appetites in a soul.

> It is impossible that contraries should exist simultaneously in the same subject. But an act of desiring something and an act of spurning that same thing are contraries in the same subject. Therefore, if they exist simultaneously in reality, they do not exist in the same subject. But it is manifest that they exist simultaneously in a human being, since a human being spurns by his intellective appetite the very same thing he desires by his sentient appetite.[9]

Since there can be contrary appetites in a human being, these appetites must be in separate souls.

The second argument has to do with sensation. He argues that sensations exist subjectively in the soul, but no sensation can exist subjectively in the intellective soul, since a separate soul would then, by God's absolute power, be able to sense, and this is absurd, according to Ockham. In the third argument he points to the problem that what is numerically the same cannot be both extended and non-extended, both material and immaterial. The sensitive soul is extended and material, since it exists as whole in the whole body and as part in each part of the body, while the intellective soul is non-extended and immaterial, since it exists as whole in the whole body and as whole in each part of the body, and from this it follows that they must be really distinct.[10]

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[9] See William of Ockham, *Quodlibetal Questions*, II, q. 10, 132–133.
[10] See ibid., 133–134.

To claim that there is a real distinction between the sensitive and intellective souls means for Ockham that they can exist apart from each other. A consequence of this is that the union seems to be accidental, and furthermore, how do we know that the intellect is a form at all and not a universal intellect as Averroes' argues in his long commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*.[11] Ockham is well aware of this problem and addresses it in q. 10 of the first quodlibet. He there poses the question whether it can be demonstrated that the intellective soul is the form of the body and writes the following:

> The other [difficulty] is whether one can know evidently through reason or through experience that we do understand, taken 'understand' to mean an act proper to an immaterial substance of the sort the intellective soul is claimed to be, i.e., a substance that is ingenerable and incorruptible and that exists as a whole in the whole body and as a whole in each part of the body. […] As regards the second difficulty, I claim that if by 'intellective soul' one means an immaterial and incorruptible form that exists as a whole in the whole body and as a whole in each part, then one cannot evidently know either through reason or through experience that (i) such a form exists in us, or that (ii) an act of understanding proper to such a substance exists in us, or that (iii) such a soul is the form of the body. […] Rather, we merely believe these three things [by faith].[12]

Although he recognizes the problem and tries to discuss it to some extent, he also realizes that he cannot solve it satisfactory using natural reason alone. The problem of the intellective soul's union with the body, therefore, becomes something we must believe by faith.

Ockham will have even more difficulties explaining the unification of the intellective soul with the body informed by the sensitive soul than Aquinas due to the sharp distinction he draws between them. His dualism is starting to look a lot like Augustine's and for that matter also Descartes'. The struggle to tell a philosophically and theologically credible story of the mind/body or soul/body relation was, as can be seen from this, going on throughout the whole later Middle Ages and was certainly not new with Descartes.

In the middle of the fourteenth century discussions about the nature of the soul and its relation to the body takes a somewhat different turn in the writings of John Buridan. He agrees with Ockham on basic ontology and metaphysics, but at the same time he wants to give an interpretation of Aristotle. Buridan thus completely reinterprets Aristotle's texts

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[11] See *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*: II, 7, p. 138, and II, 32, p. 178.

[12] See *Quodlibetal Questions*: I, q. 10, 56.

in an Ockhamistic and non-Thomistic fashion. He is very sensitive to the preceding struggles to formulate an acceptable view of the nature of the soul and its relation to the body and thus takes into account much of the previous discussion when formulating his own position. He lays down three positions about the soul and its relation to the body that he thinks are the only credible alternatives. They are what he calls (i) the Alexandrian, (ii) the Averroistic, and (iii) the Christian positions.

The first position is attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias.

> Alexander said that the human intellect is a general and corruptible material form, derived from a material potentiality, and materially extended, just like the soul of a cow or a dog, and it does not remain after death.[13]

The second position is Averroes'. The intellect is, according to him, immaterial, not derived from a material potentiality, does not inhere in matter and is not extended. The intellect is not generated and not corruptible, and, furthermore, there is only one intellect common to all humans.[14]

The third position he lists is what he calls the position of faith.

> The third opinion is the truth of our faith, which we must firmly believe, namely, that the human intellect is the substantial form of the body inhering in the human body, but not derived from material potentiality, nor materially extended, and therefore, not naturally generated or corruptible.[15]

This is the position Buridan will go on to argue for and claim to be his own view. (See further Zupko's article in this book.)

Buridan seems to think that the third position, his own official position, has no answer to give to the problem of the souls unification and interaction

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[13] 'Dicebat Alexander quod intellectus humanus est forma materialis generabilis et corruptibilis, educta de potentia materiae, et extensa extensione materiae, sicut anima bovis aut anima canis, et non est manens post mortem.' (Zupko 1989, q. 3, 22.)

[14] 'Alia fuit opinio Averrois quod intellectus humanus est forma immaterialis, et ingentia et incorruptibilis, et sic non est educta de potentia materiae, nec extensa, immo nec multiplicat multiplicatione hominum, sed quod est unicus intellectus omnibus hominibus, scilicet quo ego intelligo, quo tu intelligis, et sic de aliis. Ideo non est forma inhaerens corpori. Unde ipse imaginatur quod sicut deus est toto mundo et cuilibet parti eius praesens et indistans, et tamen nec mundo nec alicui parti mundi inhaerens, sic ille intellectus se habet ad homines: scilicet quod nulli inhaeret, sed cuilibet indistanter assistit, licet sit indivisibilis.' (Ibid.)

[15] 'Tertia opinio est veritas fidei nostrae, quae firmiter debemus credere: scilicet quod intellectus humanus est forma substantialis corporis inhaerens corpori humano, sed non educta de potentis materiae, nec extensa de eius extensione, ideo non naturaliter genita nec corruptibilis.' (Ibid., 22–23.)

with its body other than that it is miraculous.[16] If only natural reason is taken into account, however, and these problems are confronted, then we are stuck with a choice between the first and the second position advocated by respectively Alexander and Averroes. Buridan himself is much more inclined to accept Alexander's position than Averroes', but he does not commit himself to this position. (See Zupko's article in this book.) It was, however, a very influential position, which had several defenders later on in the fifteenth century (see Pluta's article in this book) and a fully worked out position along these lines can be found in Hobbes.

As is quite clear from Buridan's discussion of Ockham's arguments for why one must assume a real distinction between the intellective soul and the sensitive soul, mentioned above, that he is willing to allow for sensations in the intellective soul.[17] An even clearer example of this can be found in John Mair's discussions of the soul in his *Sentences*-commentary. Mair, who lived well over a century after Buridan, is nonetheless influenced by his Parisian predecessor. Mair adheres to the view Buridan calls the opinion of the Christian faith and according to him there is only 'one form in a human being'.[18] This is an immaterial substantial form, which directly inheres in matter. Matter has by itself an individual existence and no corporeal forms, as Scotus and Ockham had argued, are hence needed, according to Mair. Animal souls are extended and generated directly from matter itself.[19]

Although Mair does not accept Ockham's distinction between the intellective and the sensitive soul, he nonetheless accepts Ockham's distinction between two intuitive cognitions, that is, the distinction between sensitive and intellective intuitive cognitions. He does, however, not see a problem with having two cognitions in one soul, since he writes that:

> For confirmation I say that the love by which I esteem Socrates in present is an intuitive cognition, and together with this [cognition] I have a sensitive intuitive cognition. And it is not unsuitable to have several [cognitions] of the same object in the same subject as it is believed to be two cognitions in the intellective soul of which one is called a sensitive and the other an intellective [cognition], which are distinguished in kind.[20]

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[16] See Lagerlund (2004).

[17] See also Lagerlund (2004), 379.

[18] 'In homine est sola una forma, et homo est perfectissimum animalium' (*Sententia*, II, d. 15, q. 1, fol. xlvivb.).

[19] See ibid.

[20] 'Ad confirmationem dico quod dilectio qua diligo Socratem in presentia est notitia intuitiva, et cum hoc habeo notitiam intuitivam sensitivam; nec hoc inconvenit

In this passage Mair says explicitly that he thinks that there are sensitive cognitions in the intellect. Ockham thought this position was impossible, but following Buridan and holding a very strong substance dualism between the body and a single soul Mair draws the consequence that there are sensations or sensitive intuitive cognitions in the intellective and immaterial soul. The position advocated by Buridan and Mair is virtually identical to Descartes' and differs only in terminology; particularly since it is possible on their view to think that there are, by God's absolute power, sensations in a separated soul.[21]

The three positions outlined by Buridan and mentioned above sat the stage for the discussions about the soul or the mind in the centuries after Buridan, as we have seen in John Mair. Hence, when Pietro Pomponazzi in the beginning of the sixteenth century writes his famous *De immortalitate animae* it is not surprising that he has the same three positions in mind. And when he writes: 'For it seems to me that no natural reasons can be brought forth proving that the soul is immortal, and still less any proving that the soul is mortal, as very many scholars who hold it immortal declare',[22] he is only repeating what Buridan had said more than a century earlier.

It is in the wake of the decree of the Fifth Lateran Council, namely that philosophers in their teachings must prove the immortality of the soul, and the subsequent so-called Pomponazzi affair, that Descartes is writing. The decree of the Fifth Lateran Council was repeated and strengthened by following Lateran Councils. In the *Dedicatory letter to the Sorbonne*, which is published together with the *Meditations*, Descartes writes that: 'the eighth session [of] the Lateran Council held under Leo X condemned those who take this position [that is, those who denied personal immortality], and expressly enjoined Christian philosophers to refute their arguments and use all their powers to establish the truth; so I have not hesitated to attempt this task as well.' (AT VII, 3; CSM II, 4.) Descartes is thus very much aware of the history that precedes him and he seems to think that he is involved in the same project, that is, in finding a philosophically and theologically acceptable position on the human soul/mind and its relation to the body.[23]

One might argue that if this is Descartes' aim he is entirely unsuccessful given the famous problems his account gives rise to. Descartes' final position

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plusquam de eodem obiecto habere in eodem subiecto puta in anima intellectiva duas notitias quarum una vocatur sensitive et altera intellective, que specie distinguntur.' (Ibid, I, d. 1, q. 11, fol. xviiivb.)

[21] For the same view in Adam Wodeham see Karger (2004), 228.

[22] See Pomponazzi (1948), 377.

[23] See Fowler (1999) for a discussion of Descartes on immortality.

on the mind and its relation to the body is, however, very much under debate, but the trend seems to be that he was not an advocate of such a strong dualism as we traditionally have been lead to believe.[24] (See Browns article in the present book.) He would, according to some interpretations, have given up the immortality doctrine and the notion of the soul's self-subsistence to be able to explain the essential union of the mind and the body.

Even though the details of the mind/body problem are not the same throughout the period between the twelfth and the seventeenth century, this tradition still circle around the same problem. It seems to me that it was Avicenna's attempt to mix two conceptions of the soul that brought up the problems to the surface, and that certain Christian doctrines added to these problems. Contemporary philosophy of mind should not seek its origin in Descartes' *Meditations*, but much earlier in the period covered by this book.

1.3.

In her article 'Memory and Recollection in Ibn Sînâ's and Ibn Rushd's Philosophical Texts Translated into Latin in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries: A Perspective on the Doctrine of the Internal Senses in Arabic Psychological Science', Carla Di Martino discusses the place of memory in some very influential Arabic psychological texts. Together with Augustine and Aristotle, Avicenna and Averroes are the main sources for Western philosophical psychology. Their discussions of memory have been very little studied, however, and Di Martino highlights in her article the special status these authors gave to the faculty of memory. In humans, it is a faculty that bridges the gap between the sensory faculties and the intellective faculty, since it takes a halfway position and requires a unity with the intellect in order to be able to store the images represented together with the intentions accompanying them.

Rega Wood continues the discussion of the internal senses in her article 'Imagination and Experience in the Sensory Soul and Beyond: Richard Rufus, Roger Bacon and Their Contemporaries'. She presents a comparative and comprehensive study of Rufus and Bacon on the internal senses. Rufus is most likely the first commentator of Aristotle in the Western Middle Ages, but although Rufus is a commentator of Aristotle, his psychology seems more Augustinian and Bacon seems to be a devoted follower of Avicenna as far as psychology is concerned, Wood argues. The debate between Rufus

[24] See Almog (2002) and Alanen (2003), Ch. 2.

and Bacon on the internal senses seems to have set the stage for much of the later discussions about this topic.

In his article 'The Soul as an Entity', Mikko Yrjönsuuri wants to highlight some medieval thinkers conception of the mind/body or soul/body distinction. He discusses the positions of Dante Alighieri, Thomas Aquinas and Peter Olivi. As Yrjönsuuri portrays Aquinas, he holds that humans are embodied animals whose souls can exist apart from their bodies, but that the disembodied souls lack the very thing that makes them human souls. This is not at all the picture Dante paints of disembodied souls in the *Divine Comedy*. These souls are much more like Aquinas embodied souls. Yrjönsuuri therefore argues that the view of the nature of the soul found in the *Divine Comedy* is not at all Aquinas', but Olivi's. Olivi is influenced by Augustine and on this picture the human soul is a separate entity or substance who's essential feature is a self-reflexive consciousness. While the soul is primarily embodied for Aquinas, it is primarily disembodied for Olivi and Dante.

The theme of self-reflexivity and self-knowledge of the intellective soul is carried on by Christopher J. Martin in his paper 'Self-Knowledge and Cognitive Assent: Thomas Aquinas and Peter Olivi on the KK-Thesis'. He discusses the views of the two antagonists Aquinas and Olivi. Aquinas defends the Aristotelian view that the soul does not have direct access to it self. It only has access to itself indirectly through its thoughts of something else. Olivi on the other hand argues for the Augustinian view of the soul on which it directly and primarily knows itself.

In his article 'The Invention of Singular Thought', Calvin Normore argues that it was William Ockham in the early fourteenth century that invented the notion of singular thought. He contrasts Ockham's conception of thought with Aquinas on the one hand and looks for predecessors to Ockham's notion that singular thought is primary and universal thought secondarily in Abelard and Vital du Four. He also argues that John Buridan in the generation after Ockham radically misunderstood the concept of singular thought.

Jack Zupko's article 'John Buridan on the Immateriality of the Intellect' discusses John Buridan's view of the human soul mentioned above. Zupko argues that question 3 to 6 of the third book of Buridan's commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* forms a sub-treatie on the immateriality of the soul. By carefully studying these questions Zupko wants to settle the debate about Buridan's view of the human soul. Although Buridan to a great extent elaborates what he calls Averroes' and Alexander's views, he does not in the end defend any of them. He instead defends a view that holds the soul

to be individual and immortal, but he adds that we can never know that the soul is immortal–although it is highly probable and perhaps even certain.

In his article 'How Matter Becomes Mind: Late Medieval Theories of Emergence', Olaf Pluta picks up the position Buridan calls Alexander's and traces it in later medieval philosophy. As Buridan presents Alexander's view the human soul is a material form which is educed from the potency of the matter and is hence also corruptible. The opinion of Alexander was more popular than what has been thought, Pluta argues. He traces the discussion of Alexander's view from Averroes's commentary on *De anima* through Tomas Aquinas and John Buridan up to Nicholas of Amsterdam and John Hennon in the late fifteenth century.

The continuity of the late medieval tradition with the early modern and particularly with Descartes is brought out in Timo Joutsivuo's article 'Passions and Old Men in Renaissance Gerontology'. He studies the relation between soul and body in two medical texts from the renaissance, namely Gabriele Zerbi's *Gerontocomia* (1489) and André Du Leurens' *Discours de la conservation de la vieillesse* (1594). They both seem to take the relation as obvious, but not at all as straightforward. The passions are supposed to bridge the relation between the soul and the body. This makes passions the object of study for both the natural philosopher and the physician. The philosopher will study the passions from the ontological perspective and the physician on the other hand is interested in the passions for practical reasons, since they affect the health of the patient.

In his article 'Why Isn't the Mind-Body Problem Medieval', Peter King argues that the Cartesian or early modern mind/body problem is not and cannot be found in the Middle Ages. The reason is, argues King, that sensation or 'sensatio' in the Latin is always used in relation to the body. Since there cannot on the medieval picture be sensations without bodies there cannot be a mind/body problem. The mind/body problem presupposes a complete disconnection between a sensation and its bodily correlate. To be able to say that the mind/body problem is medieval one has to make room for disembodied sensations in medieval philosophy and one cannot, King claims.

An example of the discussion of mind and body in the medieval Jewish philosophical tradition can be found in Tamar Rudavsky's article 'Matter, Mind, and Hylomorphism in Ibn Gabirol and Spinoza'. Ibn Gabirol is better known in the Latin Western tradition as Avicebron and his main work *Fons vitae* exists only in Latin translation from the Arabic original. Ibn Gabirol is famous for his universal hylomorphism and his postulation of spiritual matter which underlines incorporeal substances. Rudavsky examines the relation between Ibn Gabirol and Spinoza on spiritual substance.

In his article ‘Cajetan and Suarez on Agent Sense: Metaphysics and Epistemology in Late Aristotelian Thought’, Cees Leijenhorst takes up the problem of sensation and how things that are much lower in the chain of being can have causal effects on souls that are much higher up in the chain. This was in the fourteenth century considered to be such a difficult problem that an agent sense was postulated that had as one of its tasks to upgrade the motions coming from the lower material level to the higher spiritual level. This sense was debated by the late scholastics Cajetan and Suarez in the sixteenth century. In the last part of his paper, Leijenhorst draws some interesting parallels and show some even more interesting dissimilarities between Cajetan and Suarez on the one hand and Descartes’ early writings on the other.

Deborah Brown’s article ‘Is Descartes’ Body a Mode of Mind?’ continue with the problems of Cartesian dualism and asks whether his dualism really is a clear cut as we are lead to believe by contemporary scholarship. Brown argues that it is not, since Descartes’ body is not the same thing without it’s relation to Descartes’ mind. As Descartes’ body it cannot exist apart from Descartes’ mind. The reference of the term ‘Descartes’ body’ is simply to a portion of matter, which is designated by the relation it has to Descartes’ mind. Brown’s interpretation of Descartes brings him much more in line with the medieval tradition.

Robert Pasnau investigates in his article ‘Mind and Extension (Descartes, Hobbes, More)’ the notion of matter that some of the famous early modern philosophers take for granted. He therefore can be said to continue the discussion Brown started in her article. The authors Pasnau discuss all take for granted that matter is extension and in this they are in agreement with most earlier medieval philosophers. It is in their conception of the mind (soul) that they differ, he argues.

Timo Kaitaro starts his article ‘Emotional Pathologies and Reason in French Medical Enlightenment’ with a reference to A. Damasio’s book *Descartes’s Error*. Damasio argues in his well-known book that it is wrong to think that only minds think. The body and our emotions have a key role in the way we think and in rational decision-making. Kaitaro shows in his article that the post-Cartesian medical tradition was well aware of the importance of the role of emotions in thinking. The thinkers of the French Enlightenment developed sophisticated theories of how sound thinking involves emotions.[25]

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[25] I am grateful for comments and corrections on this introduction and on the whole book by two anonymous referees.