

THE PHILOSOPHY OF IBN RUSHD
THE EVOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF THE INTELLECT IN THE WORKS OF IBN RUSHD:
FROM PHILOLOGICAL EXAMINATION TO PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

Scholarly study has failed, as yet, to explore the full range and significance of Ibn Rushd's philosophy, and this adds to the difficulties of providing a precise and satisfactory treatment of the subject within such a brief paper as this. I have therefore felt it appropriate to focus on a single theme in Ibn Rushd's writings, and to attempt to establish, around this, the preliminary outlines of a new strategy for studying the Rushdi corpus and the philosophical system contained within it.

Several aspects of Ibn Rushd's thought might have served as such a focus. Of particular interest, for example, would be an examination of his metaphysical writings in the light of his evolving perspectives on any one of the philosophical problems in these works; or a consideration of his works on logic with respect to the development of a theory of knowledge and demonstrative proof. This paper, however, is concerned with the evolution of the problem of the intellect, a subject selected on account of its prominence in the history of medieval philosophy, and also because of the increasing interest now also felt by present-day writers in a subject clearly likely to give rise to fruitful research. This will further permit us to evaluate other related types of philosophical questions which have hitherto escaped the attention of ancient and modern scholars.

The question of the intellect occupies an obviously important place both in the general history of philosophy and in the particular context of the historical study of Ibn Rushd. No other aspect of the Rushdi discourse, indeed, has such a unique and distinguished history behind it; and while other aspects have failed to leave lasting reverberations, this one led on to the crucially important intellectual current subsequently known as Latin Averroism.

I should like, from the very outset, to stress this twofold aspect: we have to consider, on the one hand, the intrinsic question of the problem of the intellect in the Rushdi corpus; and, on the other, the place this question assumes within the history of medieval philosophy among the Latins. The latter aspect should not, however, lead us to overestimate the significance of the problem itself, nor should one stretch the problem beyond its own natural context by seeing it exclusively in terms of its role as an axis of Averroism. Still more importantly, the problem should not be seen as the defining element for comparing Ibn Rind's philosophy with other philosophical systems; to do so would be to give the reader the impression that other Rushdi topics and questions are insignificant, and that Averroism in its entirety can, in the final analysis, be reduced to a theory of the intellect. No doubt the problem of the intellect was a central feature, if still not the most important one, of Latin Averroism, but it was not a key element within Ibn Rushd's original Arabic writings, or within the historical context in which he lived. As such I believe we must first develop a reading of the problem of the intellect as embedded in the Rushdi corpus itself. I do not intend, here, to undertake a critical review of work carried out in this area, but rather to establish a different framework for considering Ibn Rushd's heritage, focusing, to this end, on a single theme in his psychological writings.

In a previous work¹ I set out a general strategy for the reading of the Rushdi corpus based on a comparative survey of Ibn Rushd's writings, particularly those in the original Arabic. It was maintained that there exist different yet correlating levels in the corpus, these correlations involving aspects of the following selected writings: *Al-Mukhtasarat* (the Epitomes), *Al-Jawami* (the Short Commentaries), *Al-Talakhis* (the Middle Commentaries) and various other commentaries and treatises. At this point I should like to re-examine² this thesis, in order to analyse how far the development of the definition of the intellect in Ibn Rushd's writings can in fact be determined.

Before presenting brief conclusions on the subject, derived from discussions and from my own research,³ I should like to draw attention to a centrally important principle which is often overlooked: namely, that the foundations of the Rushdi corpus have to be properly established before we are in a position to analyse Ibn Rushd's thought. An appreciation of this will set the present study on a proper footing, and will also shed critical light on the current state of Rushdi scholarship. Present-day students of Ibn Rushd are all too ready to apply the "synthetic approach" (*al-naẓar al-tarkibi*) to his writings, or to probe his philosophical depth and ideological intention, without realising that much more fundamental textual work still needs to be done. While not wishing to curb the legitimate aspirations of such scholars, I feel that their work is really premature; that the present state of Rushdi studies firmly precludes systematic analysis of this kind.⁴

Clearly, then, several difficulties have to be met. First, there is the particular difficulty of determining what, in the writings of Ibn Rushd, the problem of the intellect actually is, the barrier here being a linguistic obscurity which at times makes the author's intended meaning impossible to discover -all the more so when we are working

with the translation of a lost original text, as is the case with the main textual fragment forming the basis of the theory of the intellect in his writings, i.e., *Al-Sbarh al-kabir* (the Long Commentary) of the *De Anima* (*Kitab al-nafs*). Still more problematic is the fact that the surviving primary sources, Ibn Rushd's psychological writings themselves, exist in manuscripts which still remain unedited by recognised standards of editions—a discipline which requires the researcher first to undertake the work of the philologist. To this end the text and its manuscripts must be compared with the aim, on the one hand, of establishing a sound text and, on the other, of critically analysing the variants between the manuscripts. Such work is a prerequisite both for a general study of Ibn Rushd and for a specific examination of the problem of the intellect.

This, then, must be our starting point for any serious study of the question; and until this first phase is accomplished, none of our efforts will achieve fully satisfactory results, if indeed they achieve any worthwhile results at all. While it is no inalienable rule that philological and historical examination should precede philosophical examination, it is nonetheless our task, as students of the history of philosophy, to lay the proper groundwork for the study of philosophy and philosophical theory; and this will only be possible if we first focus on improving and correcting the primary tools of research. It is essential, in this case, that we assemble all the manuscripts at our disposal and verify their authenticity.

This first section of the paper will investigate a group of texts which form the basis of Ibn Rushd's psychological studies, and will attempt to clarify long-standing obscurities and confusions surrounding it. The examination will be restricted to those texts preserved in the original Arabic, namely, *Al-Mukhtasar* (the Epitome) and *Al-Talkhis* (the Middle Commentary) (*Al-Sbarh al-kabir* (the Long Commentary) will be examined in a subsequent section, where an attempt will be made to assess the influence of Averroism on the subject). Only the relevant chapters in the texts, namely those concerned with the question of the intellect, will be considered, and these will be examined as if with a view to publication according to the scientifically recognised principles of editing. In the second section I shall attempt to assess what developments, if any, may be discerned between the positions advocated by Ibn Rushd in *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Talkhis* and those in *Al-Sbarh al-kabir*. Our re-reading of the original texts in the first section will, therefore, prepare us for the analysis provided in the second; and it is for this reason that the subtitle "from philological examination to philosophical analysis" has been chosen for this paper.

I

1.1 *Al-Mukhtasar on psychology*

Al-Mukhtasar (the Epitome) on psychology has a special significance as against the other *Al-Mukhtasarat* (Epitomes) and *Al-Jawami*? (Short Commentaries). In addition to being an analysis of Aristotle's *De Anima*, it examines the entire peripatetic heritage on psychology, thus also introducing themes present in *Al-Jawami*?⁶ for Ibn Rushd had intended the latter to be an inventory of Aristotle's scientific statements as extracted from the dialectical arguments dispersed through the latter's writings. However, this *Mukhtasar* does not endeavour to deduce demonstrative proofs from *De Anima*: the prime motive behind the text is not, as is the case in *Al-Jawami*? *al-tabi'iyya*, to provide an abstract of Aristotle's opinions, but rather to defend his position concerning the problem of the intellect.? This intention is reiterated at several points in the text and will become more evident in the course of our analysis. Yet, having established the thematic relationship of this text to *Al-Jawami*?, we are now precluded from seeing it as part of the *Mukhtasarat*; for the *Mukhtasarat* were all written prior to Ibn Rushd's study of Aristotle and thus the text-contrary to what I previously affirmed in my study *Al-Matn al-Rushdi* is an anomaly.

With this established, we should now be in a better position to approach the work; and I hope, indeed, to return to the whole question in another study of the "Problematic of the Rushdi Text". What I wish to do here is to point out the difficulties involved in the reading of the text.

Two problems seem to me to be of central importance. The first of these will be briefly summarised and the second elaborated in greater detail thereafter.

The first difficulty concerns the actual wording of the text. Ibn Rushd covers a wide range of ideas, leading the reader on from discussions of the theoretical intellect (*al-'aql al-naẓari*) to a consideration of theoretical intelligibles (*al-ma'qulat al-naẓariyya*), then shifting to an expose on the matter and the form of these intelligibles, and also examining the role of imaginary representations (*al-ma'ani 'l-kaluriyya*) in the process of intellection (*amalyyat al-ta'aggul*) and the problem of conjunction (*ittisal*) in the light of what had been affirmed by Ibn Bajja in his famous epistle on the subject. The course of the discussion may be summed up as follows: he begins with the theoretical intellect, then moves on to the theoretical intelligibles which serve as the pivot of the problem, and this subject is studied in depth, before he next moves on to a discussion of the active intellect (*al-'aql al-fa'al*), which is defined and examined in relation to the material intellect (*al-'aql al-hayulani*); he then concludes by defining the problem of conjunction within the context of the rational faculty (*al-quwwa 'l-nafiqa*).

It is important to note that the order of subjects followed by Ibn Rushd in this text differs from that

established by Aristotle in his investigation of the rational faculty in *De Anima*-this indicating that Ibn Rushd was not examining the book of the First Teacher (Aristotle) as he had done in the *Jawami`* texts and in both the *Talkhis* of *De Anima* and *Al-Sharh al-kabir* (Long Commentary) on it. For this reason the text is unique when set against the other types of Rushdi commentary.

The second difficulty in reading this text arises from the presence of several manuscripts,⁸ together with different printed editions of the text.⁹ A comparative analysis of the manuscripts yields its own peculiar difficulties, which will be examined in detail later, but first I should like to point out the related difficulties associated with the printed editions. For example, the Egyptian edition has prepared a text from a synthesis of two very different manuscripts (Cairo and Madrid).¹⁰ Yet the difference between these manuscripts is substantial enough to have warranted treating them separately; it would have been more appropriate to choose and print one manuscript, with the text of the other being reproduced in the margins. Preserving the distinctiveness of each manuscript would allow us to differentiate between what was written first and the later additions; and it is in fact these later additions that have convoluted the meaning of the text, thereby further confusing and misleading the reader in his attempts at interpretation.

It is obvious, then, that the text should be studied in the light of all the different manuscripts at our disposal—only so can we claim to have met the requirements of scientific research and reliability. Moreover, familiarity with the manuscripts brings to the surface differing interpretations which cannot be reduced merely to a matter of identifying common differences; the only way, in fact, to make sense of these differences is to assume that the text, subsequent to its composition, has been subject to revision, modification and augmentation. It is regrettable that the present state of Rushdi studies makes reiterations of this kind necessary. Such matters could simply have been dispensed with had the editors prepared the groundwork properly, and so provided the researcher with accurate and academically verified material.

We may surmise, therefore, that the manuscripts, collectively or individually, do not lend themselves to amalgamation into one, coherent text; attempts to do so will in fact only further remove us from an understanding of the content and aims of the work, and may also distort and exaggerate the force of the questions raised by Ibn Rushd. The only sure way of proceeding is, as indicated earlier, to make a scrupulous distinction between the earliest version and later accretions; and the manuscripts should then be read in the light of *Al-Talkhis* and, in particular, of *Al-Sharh al-kabir*.

Thus there definitely exists, I believe—especially with regard to those chapters dealing with the problem of the intellect—a first version of the book, in which Ibn Rushd drafted his initial thoughts, and within which a set of specific amendments and additions was later incorporated in the light of his subsequent writings, particularly *Al-Sharh al-kabir*. This would appear to provide the most probable explanation for the differences, in spite of Ibn Rushd's own assertion, in one of the Madrid manuscript copies, that he had not deleted anything he had originally written about the material intellect—a statement made in the context of certain other changes he had made in that manuscript on the subject of the rational faculty. I believe that the amendments in question were indeed made, but went unacknowledged, possibly because they were incorporated long after the time of the work's initial composition. An examination of the extant manuscripts yields specific clues enabling us to differentiate between the first version and the later additions. II Some editors have been aware of variants among the manuscripts, and of the distinction between an earlier and a later version, but they have not fully grasped the intellectual significance of these variants, with the result that the latter have hitherto remained unanalysed.

A careful comparative study of the manuscripts leads me to conclude that specific additions stem from his subsequent intellectual development, which saw a profound change in his position on the problem of the intellect; a change that involved a reformulation of his position on the nature of the theoretical intellect, and represented, too, a shift in his position on the nature of the material intellect and its relationship to imaginative forms. Ibn Rushd's psychological theory constitutes a very well defined structure, to the extent that a change in any one of the constituent elements will radically alter the structure as a whole; as such, his shifting positions constitute a reformulation of the entire system, and a careful effort has therefore been made to differentiate those elements within the manuscripts which are traceable to the first version and those which represent later amendments. Let us now consider the distinctiveness of this text vis-à-vis the other psychological writings of Ibn Rushd.

The major distinctive differences between the two versions can best be summed up¹² by saying that the first constitutes a coherent and well organised text, while the second contains additions to the first which create uncertainties over the actual meaning. Moreover, such uncertainties and dissonances manifest themselves throughout the text, so that it is in fact unintelligible in more than one place. The second part of this study will demonstrate in detail how sense may be made of these incongruities in the light of a perceived evolution in Ibn Rushd's own perspectives.

The differences between the two versions may be treated with respect to six specific factors, two of these involving the first version and the others the second.

The peculiar features of the first version are as follows:

(1) The analogy of the tablet is used to define the capacity of the imaginative faculty (*al-qumwa 'l-khayaliyya*) to accept intelligibles, which are represented by the writing on the tablet,¹³ while the subjective self (*al-nafs al-mandk`a*) of this capacity is represented by the tablet itself. It is clear that parts of this analogy reflect certain perspectives on the material intellect, imaginary representations and the theoretical intellect different from those set out in *Al-Talkhis*, and significantly different from the conclusions reached in *Al-Sharh al-kabir*.¹⁴ Interestingly, these perspectives are similar to those held by Ibn Bajja. The absence or omission of this analogy from the other manuscript copies is the first indication of Ibn Rushd's changing position on the structure of the material intellect (I am not postulating this evolution simply on the basis of one passage in one manuscript, which would be clearly unacceptable: the hypothesis is further supported by another version of the analogy in *Al-Talkhis* and a third version in *Al-Sharh al-kabir*).¹⁵

(2) The long chapter discussing the rational faculty is divided into two parts: in the first part Ibn Rushd summarises a portion of Ibn Bajja's *Risalat al-ittisal*, while in the second he sets out what appears to be a summary of Ibn Bajja's method-in such a way as to suggest support for it. The conspicuous absence or omission of these passages from later versions can be interpreted as a disavowal, by Ibn Rushd, of Ibn Bajja's theory of conjunction. A probable explanation for this is to be found not in *Al-Talkhis* but in relevant sections within *Al-Sharh al-kabir* of *De Anima*,¹⁶ with further evidence also to be found in the *Sharh ma bad al-tabi`a* (Commentary on the Metaphysics) under the heading *Al-Ta' and Al-um*.¹⁷

If we now turn our attention to the later manuscript, we find additions and amendments characterised by four features. The first of these is well known, because it is explicitly dealt with in the manuscripts, while the remaining three have been deduced by comparing the text not simply with the manuscript copies, but also with *Al-Talkhis* and *Al-Sharh al-kabir*.

The first feature is the amendment with which he concludes the chapter on the rational faculty,¹⁹ replacing the sections summarising portions of Ibn Bajja's *Risalat al-ittisal*. In this amendment Ibn Rushd clearly states that his earlier position on the material intellect, as set out in *Al-Mujasar*, was incorrect, and that his revised opinion can be found in *Al-Sharh al-kabir* of *De Anima*-the implication being that Ibn Bajja had been responsible for leading him into error. Although this amendment is so well known, it has not been sufficiently considered by scholars, who have thus failed to conclude that Ibn Rushd, having initially upheld Ibn Bajja's position, later relinquished it.

It has already been pointed out that Ibn Rushd's psychological theory is framed within a highly integrated structure, so that tampering with any one of its elements will affect all the other elements of the system; and, as such, the amendments to Ibn Rushd's positions on the theoretical intellect and theoretical intelligibles, and also on the subject of the material intellect and imaginary representations, must be seen as embodying a reformulation of his whole psychological theory. The amendments cited thus far are not in themselves sufficient basis for postulating such a reformulation, but it is hoped that the ensuing analysis of the remaining features will provide further evidence to this end.

Perhaps the most important of these is the twofold amendment relating to the material intellect and theoretical intelligibles. The first version, reflecting Ibn Bajja's influence, defines the material intellect as being that potentiality in imaginative forms through which intelligibles are received. In his amendment, however, he sets out, in the form of an overall summary, a viewpoint similar to that which he had demonstrated in *Al-Sharh al-kabir*, stating that

he no longer considers the material intellect to be a capacity within imaginative forms, but rather a substance which represents, *in potentia*, all intelligibles, but which in itself is not anything. Had he still been in agreement with Ibn Bajja, these differences would not have existed. He further confirms the amendments by linking theoretical intelligibles with two objects: one of them the material intellect, which he regards as eternal, and the other the imaginative forms, which are viewed as a corruptible entity. An examination of *Al-Sharh al-kabir* reveals a contradiction with the position taken in the earlier version, where he had concluded that these intelligibles were material, contingent, generating, corrupting, multiple and changeable. The fourth amendment focuses on the conception of Man as possessor of a capacity linked to imaginative forms, which enables Man alone, and no animal, to accept intelligibles. This amendment, though less valuable than the preceding one, is nonetheless important because it indicates a change in Ibn Rushd's position, if only in connection, apparently, with the role played by imaginative forms. The gist of his argument is that imaginative forms are not stationary but in motion, and this leads on to the formulation of what is effectively a new and specific position, in which he proclaims his disagreement with two major schools within the history of Aristotelianism,¹⁹ and further states that commenting on these two schools and judging between them will require far more extensive analysis than is possible within the confines of the *Mukhtasar*. This new position is developed in two successive stages, the first represented in *Al-Talkhis*, and the second transmitted through *Al-sharh al-kabir*, which will be examined in the second part of this study.

These, very briefly, are the most important deductions from my reading of this unique work, the general

conclusion being that it would be an error to regard *Al-Mukhtasar* as a single well-ordered text, or as a reliable source for establishing Ibn Rushd's position on the problem of the intellect. We may further conclude that, with regard to the problem of the intellect, and in particular to the question of the material intellect, he was influenced by Ibn Bajja and other commentators on Aristotle—such a position being incompatible with what he writes later in *Al-Talkhis* and *Al-Sharh al-kabir*, where he returns to reading the original texts of Aristotle (although, it should be noted that his position in *Al-Talkhis* is closer to *Al-Mukhtasar* than to *Al-Sharh*).

The parameters of the work will now become clearer to us, and we shall be forced to choose between two alternatives: we can either, when examining the problem of the intellect, focus solely on *Al-jarb* and use *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Talkhis* as supplementary works; or, on the other hand, *Al-Mukhtasar* may be viewed as an initial, fundamental fragment permitting us to examine the evolution of the problem of the intellect in the writings of Ibn Rushd—in which case the three texts will be treated initially as of equal value for our research, with preference given to *Al-sharh al-kabir*, as the most important, at a subsequent stage.

We might, also, examine the evolution of Ibn Rushd's position, or try to demonstrate the structure of the Rushdi system. In this case we would have to rely on *Al-Mukhtasar* as a primary text, or use it in conjunction with other texts containing similar passages and perhaps even addressing similar questions. I do not, however, believe that such an approach would be warranted by the texts.

1.2 *The Talkhis (Middle Commentary) of De Anima*

This *Talkhis* occupies an intermediate position between *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Sharh*, exhibiting similarities and differences, vis-it-vis these texts, in both form and content. With respect to form, *Al-Talkhis* is a commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*, being in fact Ibn Rushd's first commentary on this work²⁰ and its structure differs from that of *Al-Mukhtasar*, while bearing some similarities to that of *Al-Sharh*. With respect to content, particularly in its conceptualisation of the problem of the intellect, *Al-Talkhis* is closer to *Al-Mukhtasar* and differs from *Al-sharh*.²¹

It is immediately clear that the various positions of *Al-Talkhis*, particularly in its first version, may reasonably be regarded as an extension of those adopted in the minor *Mukhtasar*. The text is of crucial importance, not only because it records a shift in Ibn Rushd's position, but also on account of the distinctive style in which it is written. However, the primary consideration of this study is to identify the problems and difficulties the text places before the reader; and these are similar to the ones encountered in the preceding analysis of *Al-Mukhtasar*.

Al-Talkhis does indeed differ from *Al-Mukhtasar* in two significant ways: in the varying number of extant manuscripts²² and by the fact that *Al-Talkhis* still only exists in manuscript form. Nevertheless, the difficulties involved in reconstructing the two texts are similar in principle, although they are less evident in *Al-Talkhis*. It should be pointed out at the outset that, whereas our analysis and conclusions concerning *Al-Mukhtasar* were based on significant variants among the manuscript copies, the two important manuscripts of *Al-Talkhis* agree more closely with each other. Yet I have concluded that the *Talkhis* manuscripts represent two different versions, with one manuscript, particularly in respect of those chapters relevant to this study, representing an earlier version, and the other containing additions and amendments made to the text at a later date. The differences between the two manuscripts will be discussed later in this paper.

The distinction between earlier and later version is indicated in the first and third chapters of the text, where it becomes evident that revision has taken place following the completion of *Al-sharh al-kabir*. However, this cannot in itself be taken as sufficient confirmation of the differences: we must undertake a detailed examination of the text, particularly of those passages devoted to the problem of the intellect.

I have concluded that *Al-Talkhis* advances two mutually contradictory positions on the nature of the material intellect, which can only be reasonably explained as reflecting a later revision. In his first position one can trace the influence of the Alexandrian school of commentators, which claimed that the material intellect was a potentiality in which nothing exists. Yet it does not appear that Ibn Rushd adopted the position of the Alexandrian school in its totality: rather, 'he simply adopted some of the well-known conclusions of Alexander, the ancient commentator himself. His position can thus be seen as shifting from that of *Al-Mukhtasar*, in which he follows the school of Ibn Bajja, to that of *Al-Talkhis*, where he inclines towards the Alexandrian school.

As for the second position, this emerges in an important subsequent amendment in *Al-Talkhis*, which represents a break from his previous view that the material intellect is solely a potentiality. Here, for the first time, he postulates the material intellect to be a separate substance in and of itself, and, in addition, he advocates a doctrine of reconciliation between the opinions of Alexander and those of Themistius. This doctrine, which he refers to as *madhhab al-jam`* ("doctrine of synthesis"), will be examined later when considering the amendments from *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Sharh*.

These amendments and additions, which I take as evidence of a new position, change the meaning of the text as preserved in the first version. Moreover, they change the definition of important concepts in such a way as to align them with definitions advanced in *Al-Sharh*. Two additions in particular reflect the influence of the latter.

The first of these, cited in the first chapter, concerns the theoretical intellect and the habituated intellect (*al-'aql bi 'l-malaka*)²³ The amendment concisely summarises the positions found in *Al-sharh*, namely that the theoretical intellect is neither generating nor corrupting, but is rather a corruptible entity due to the matter (*madde*) which acts within it. The second addition, of less significance than the first, clarifies Themistius' stand on "the intellect which is within us".²⁴

There are two other amendments relating to the material intellect and, to some extent, to the active intellect, although no reference, explicit or implicit, is made to *Al-Sharh*. The likelihood that they were composed at the same period is heightened by the fact that the second amendment refers to the first and that they both convey his new position on the material intellect. The later amendment summarises arguments that the intellect is potential, and is other than a faculty or a capacity, this being clearly contrary to the position expressed more than once in the first version of *Al-Talkhis*.

All this would suggest that the revision of the text was completed at different periods, the first amendment being added before the completion of *Al-Sharh* and the second thereafter, and it heralds an enormous change in Ibn Rushd's conception of the material intellect. The new position cannot, it is true, be readily equated with that found in *Al-Sharh al-kabir*, nonetheless, it represents a decisive break with the position advanced in the first version of *Al-Talkhis*, and also with that of *Al-Mukhtasar*.

Al-Talkhis is, therefore, a text of basic importance for understanding the developing treatment of the problem of the intellect in the writings of Ibn Rushd. *Al-Talkhis* and *Al-Mukhtasar*, in all their versions, are to be seen as embodying preliminary perspectives which were later superseded by the final version set out in *Al-Sharh al-kabir*. This is the main conclusion to be reached through an examination of his psychological writings as a whole.²⁶

Let us now, in the light of this conclusion, briefly review the positions articulated in the three texts in question, with a view to laying the foundations (as suggested above) of a new strategy for approaching the Rushdi corpus.

II

Introduction

From the above analysis, we can deduce two different stages in the evolution of Ibn Rushd's view of the intellect. The first, which may be referred to as the Ibn Bajja-Alexandrian phase, can be traced back to the two original versions of *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Talkhis*, i.e., those versions containing no amendments or additions; the second is that embodied in *Al-sharh*, and may be called the Rushdi stage. Given that these two stages involve radically different and contradictory conceptions, our study may now proceed in one of two directions. One alternative would be to trace the evolution in Ibn Rushd's writings; this would involve an examination of all three texts, and our analysis would proceed on the assumption that there are two discernible stages, and that the amendments in *Al-Talkhis* represent the middle ground between them. The other would be to attempt an analysis of Ibn Rushd's psychological system, or, more specifically, of his conception of the problem of the intellect. In this case we would no longer need to examine *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Talkhis* or, indeed, refer to them.

Since the differences between the texts are clearly the result of a developing process, an examination focusing on all three texts would be awkward and misguided. We are, in effect, postulating the existence of two possible approaches towards the problem of the intellect, stemming from what is not merely an evolution but an enormous change in Ibn Rushd's position, with two distinct stages being divided by a weak intermediate link (this link will be more fully considered later). Let us therefore now examine these stages more closely, confining ourselves, in our review, to those elements involving the material and theoretical intellect.

11.1. The Ibn Bajja-Alexandrian stage or the Ibn Bajja-Alexandrian Ibn Rushd

This stage, as noted above, combines two phases, contained in *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Talkhis*. The rationale for combining these into one single stage springs from important perceived similarities between the two texts in question; nonetheless, there are also differences between them, particularly, as mentioned earlier, with respect to the respective strategies employed. The significant similarities stem from the fact that Ibn Rushd compiled both these texts in the light of others' viewpoints; he was, at this stage, much more dependent on the opinions and analyses of previous commentators, effectively seeing and hearing Aristotle through the eyes and ears of others rather than cultivating his own independent perceptions. At the beginning he was primarily influenced by Ibn Bajja, then, later, by Alexander, and he only freed himself of these influences, finally, when he composed *Al-Sharh al-kabir*; it is in this text that we are offered a new image of Ibn Rushd, which best captures the independence and uniqueness of his thought. Al-Sharh's originality gives a sense of personal satisfaction, making all our arduous and painstaking efforts appear worthwhile in the end. As we follow Ibn Rushd's argument, we are struck by the insightful way he criticises the positions of earlier writers, positions which he himself had earlier upheld in *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Talkhis*; and, as such, his arguments might be interpreted as a form of self-criticism and self-

revision. This is why I have combined *AlMukk tasar and Al-Talk-1* is as representing a single stage, with the second stage represented by *Al-Sharb*. Let us begin by examining the two phases of the first stage as articulated in the original texts.

For all the difficulties associated with reading *Al-Mukhtasar*, its analysis can reasonably be seen as centring around the theoretical intellect or theoretical intelligibles. He regards these intelligibles as the most important structural element in his theory of the intellect, other elements having importance only in so far as they elucidate the nature of the intelligibles themselves-this applying, also, to the material and active intellect, which he considers to constitute the matter and form of the intelligibles (there will be an opportunity to examine this structure in more detail later in the paper). It is this conception of intelligibles which distinguishes *Al-Mukhtasar* from *Al-Talkhis*. Yet despite these differences-which become still more marked when we compare *Al-Talkhis* with *Al-Sharb*-the two works do in fact share a common approach.

In the first stage of his analysis Ibn Rushd concludes that intelligibles are subject to alteration. They therefore necessarily possess matter and have in the first place a potential existence and in the second place an actual existence. They are contingent, corruptible and plural with regard to the plurality of objects and they are numerous in the range of their numbers. This is significant when it is considered that their conjunction with imaginative forms is spontaneous. The analysis shows Ibn Rushd following Ibn Bajja's conclusions as set out in *Risalat al-ittisn*, although he never in fact mentions Ibn Bajja by name.²⁷ It must be emphasised that this position is very different from the one adopted in *Al-Sharb*, where he asserts that the theoretical intellect is eternal with respect to its substance and a corruptible entity with respect to its action-intelligibles being, in other words, linked with two objects: the material intellect which is eternal and imaginative forms which are a corruptible entity.²⁸ This analysis is equally relevant for understanding the positions found in *Al-Mukhtasar*, particularly his concept of the material intellect or the matter of intelligibles. When Ibn Rushd distinguishes between the form and the matter of intelligibles he states quite clearly that their form, which is the active intellect, remains unchanged, being neither generating nor corrupting. When considering the matter of intelligibles, however, he shows awareness of disagreements between the earlier commentators, and, by adopting the stand of Ibn Bajja, he rejects the other positions, particularly the view that the material intellect is an eternal substance; this rejection stemming from the contradiction inherent in the proposition that the intellect is eternal while the intelligibles found in it are contingent. Contingency, Ibn Rushd says, is incompatible with an eternal substance; and if intelligibles were in fact contingent, then the material intellect would also have to be contingent, because the material intellect is merely the capacity giving rise to the formation of intelligibles. This capacity is irreducible, and it is thus necessarily a special object, which is neither body nor intellect, but rather a soul. The conception of the soul is seen as being the object of intelligibles and is represented by imaginative forms-hence, the capacity found in imaginative forms capable of accepting intelligibles is the material intellect. The habituated or theoretical intellect can best be explained as the actualisation of intelligibles which had previously existed *in potentia*. Ibn Rushd buttresses his interpretation by citing examples used by Aristotle, especially when attempting to define the passivity of the intellect by comparing it to the passivity of the tablet which is merely disposed to writing. He states that the capacity of the imaginative faculty to accept intelligibles is similar to the corresponding relationship between the tablet and writing; the soul, subject to this capacity, being in the position of the tablet. Yet this capacity is not an actual thing in and of itself; thus the concept of passivity cannot really be applied to it. This analysis is no more than an interpretation of Ibn Bajja's propositions.²⁹ By the admission of Ibn Rushd himself, Ibn Bajja was the first commentator to state that the material intellect is merely a capacity found in imaginative forms; a capacity able to accept intelligibles. This interpretation endeavours to surmount some of the absurdities put forth by Alexander. The conclusion in *Al-sharb* is that the material intellect is neither an actual thing nor an explicitly eternal thing or separate substance. It is evident that a considerable interval separated the two stages as reflected in the two positions in question. Some of the reasons which led Ibn Rind, subsequently, to revise and amend *Al-Mukhtasar* have already been pointed out.

Such, then, is the basic nature of the first phase of this stage. The important points to bear in mind include the way Ibn Rushd deals with the problem of conjunction as set out in Ibn Bajja's famous treatise on the subject and the way he adopts Ibn Bajja's interpretation of the problem of the intellect, and his arguments should also be examined in the light of the selected themes and subsequent amendments in *Al-Mukhtasar*. Let us now examine the second phase of this stage, as represented in the text of *Al-Talkhis*.

Whereas the argument of *Al-Mukhtasar* revolved around the theoretical intellect or intelligibles, the analytical thrust of *Al-Talkhis* is primarily directed towards the material intellect and its role in the process of intellection.³⁰ This thematic difference between the two texts is both marked and significant.³¹

The change reflects the evolving position of Ibn Rushd on the problem of the intellect and, in particular, on the question of the material intellect, and it can, as mentioned earlier, be generally explained in terms of Ibn Rushd's transition from an echoing of Ibn Bajja's stand to his subsequent inclination towards the views of Alexander (though the two commentators do, we should remember, share the view that the material intellect is only a capacity and not a separate substance). Let us therefore consider further the full significance of the

differences between *Al-TaWbis* and *Al-Mukhtasar*, and let us focus on the amendments incorporated in *Al-Talk* is, especially those relating to the nature of the material intellect, which mark a revolution in Ibn Rushd's view of the subject and, indeed, on the entire question of the intellect—a revolution which later becomes fully articulated in *Al-Sharh*.

Ibn Rushd begins, in accordance with the text of Aristotle, by stating that the faculty capable of accepting intelligibles is neither passive nor subject to change. If there is indeed any question of passivity, this is merely confined to the acceptance of the intelligibles and does not imply mixing with any of the material forms. By this, Ibn Rus_hd means that the material intellect is the accepting faculty, accepting and comprehending all forms and all things. However, if it were to accept any forms, we would have to uphold one of the two following explanations: either it does not comprehend the other forms, only the form with which it is mixed; or it would be a mixed form which would change what it comprehends through the intellect, and it would thus be unable to comprehend fully the essence of things as they really are.

The material intellect is unable to mix with anything and is hence only a capacity; this implying, too, that the potential intellect is merely a capacity, containing nothing. However, although it is an object ultimately incapable of mixing, it is not to be classified as a subject of the potential intellect. On the whole the intellect carries a sense of passivity which is not confined to the process of acceptance only, and the subject of this acceptance is not a thing but a capacity able to accept intelligibles; there can be no notion of an independently existing capacity. This, as is well known, represents a summary of Alexander's position on the material intellect, and it is this position which is incorporated within *Al-Talkbis*, or at least in the passage from *Al-Talkbis* noted above.

Among the many features of *Al-Talkbis* which help to clarify Ibn Rushd's concept of the material intellect, the most prominent is the passage in which he compares the capacity in the intellect with the potentiality in the tablet to accept writing. He emphasises that, just as the capacity found on the surface of the tablet does not mix with the tablet itself, so this is the case, also, with the intellect and the intelligibles. The acceptance of the tablet does not signify passivity, and, analogously, the acceptance of the intellect is neither passive nor active. This interpretation differs from the one given in *Al-Mukhtasar*, where the capacity is represented by the ability of imaginative forms to accept intelligibles—a capacity, that is, whose object is embodied in the imaginary processes of the soul. However, in this case the capacity is not conceived as being similar to the blank tablet, and this is because the intellect as such is perceived as being a capacity and not an actual thing. As for the written tablet it resembles the perfected intellect while the actual intelligibles represent another type of intellect.

The analogy of the tablet helps us to understand the evolution in Ibn Rushd's position on the material intellect, not only in connection with the transition from *Al-Mukhtasar* to *Al-Talkbis* but also with respect to its final version as found in *Al-Sharh al-kabir*. In this final version Ibn Rus_hd traces the different positions back to their original authors,³² and it is in this context that he severely criticises Alexander's comparison of the intellect with the potentiality found in the tablet. His other criticisms will be examined later.

Other themes connected with Ibn Rushd's discussion of the active intellect should also be briefly noted: the first of these concerns the ontological nature of the active intellect, and the second its role in the process of intellection and cognition (*ma'rifa*).

He begins his first discussion in *Al-Talkbis* by citing an Aristotelian proposition that establishes a correspondence between the intellect and material things. Aristotle asserts that there exist, in all categories of natural matter, two things in opposition: that which has the capacity to receive and that which is the agent; the receptive capacity is potential in all things that exist, while the agent acts in everything within these categories. Ibn Rushd applies this notion of Aristotelian opposition to his concept of the intellect, thereby postulating the existence of an active and passive intellect,³³ and, despite the difference between this and what he later concludes in *Al-Sharh*, he continues to maintain that the active intellect is a transcendent substance, not a corruptible entity, comprehending its own essence when it is separated from humanity and comprehending the material affairs of the world when it is

linked to humanity. As such, the intellect and intelligibles, contrary to Ibn Rushd's later conception of the material intellect, are one and the same.

The second discussion in *Al-Talkbis* focuses on the process of intellection, with analysis centring on the active intellect to the exclusion of others. Like Aristotle, Ibn Rushd compares the role of this intellect with light; more precisely, it is a light which translates colours from potentiality to actuality, thus enabling the eye to see and experience them. Similarly, the active intellect provides the material intellect with the capacity for accepting intelligibles, and this capacity further changes the imaginary representations of the intelligibles until they are no longer potential but actualised. Though this description is very similar to what is contained in *Al-Sharh*, the passage still leaves us with some difficulties and questions.

The preceding discussion touches upon the most important points contained in *Al-Talk is*. There is, however, another dimension to this text which in effect makes it an intermediate link between the first and second stages of Ibn Rushd's thought. It is possible to examine this text from two different angles: on the one hand, it can be viewed, along with *Al-Mukhtasar*, as constituting the first stage in the evolution of Ibn Rushd's psychological

system; on the other, it can be seen as representing a bridge by means of which he was able to construct another version or form of the problem of the intellect. This dual viewpoint is made possible by the very nature of the amendments in *Al-Talkhis*; for these not only help us to distinguish the differences between Al-Talkis and *Al-Mukhtasar*, but also allow us to evaluate *Al-Talkhis vis--vis Al-Sharh*. The amendment to the analogy of the tablet marks the first transition from the former position, with the material intellect, regardless of the arguments put forth by Ibn Bajja or the Alexandrian school, now viewed simply as a capacity. As noted earlier, this change does not completely crystallise into a new position, but rather foreshadows the new developments that eventually took place in *Al-Sharh*. Let us now, as an introduction to the changes occurring in the second stage of Ibn Rushd's thought, examine the context from which the amendment emerged, confining our examination, for the moment, to a discussion of the nature of the material intellect and leaving till later a more general consideration of the intellect as a whole.

It is immediately apparent that the amendment reflects Ibn Rushd's struggle with the difficulties and absurdities inherent in Alexander's position (which, it will be recalled, he had earlier upheld, together with corresponding positions attributed to Themistius and other ancient commentators); he is attempting to formulate a conciliatory viewpoint through which to establish an appropriate interpretation of the viewpoints of the Alexandrian school.

He maintains, as Alexander had also done, that the material intellect is a capacity independent of material forms, but claims that it is also a transcendent substance invested with this capacity. In other words, this capacity is found in Man, and yet it is solely an object connected to a transcendent substance. It is not, as claimed by earlier commentators, a capacity existing, as it were, by the very nature of this transcendent substance; nor is it, as Alexander had claimed, a mere capacity.

The material intellect is a product of the conjunction between a transcendent substance and the capacity existing in Man. It can also be viewed as a compound of the capacity and its connection with the intellect. We must, therefore, seek to understand the nature of this compound and of the capacity inherent in it, and, also, to understand the link between the transcendent substance and its corresponding capacity. As for the transcendent substance, what is meant by it here is clearly the active intellect, the implication being that this intellect becomes a potential intellect in the state of conjunction. The substance of the active intellect is transformed when it is invested with a certain type of capacity, the character of which is best understood as the continuous movement from potentiality to actuality. In this movement the action of the intellect is transformed from one state to another; in other words the active intellect is eventually transformed into a material intellect, while the material intellect is, in its turn, eventually transformed into an active intellect. Ibn Rushd's rationale for this analysis is that he views the intellect as being one thing which yet contains two functions with respect to the soul: the first being the action of intelligibles, and the second that of accepting intelligibles.

While the identity and meaning of the separate substance has now been clarified, the notion of "capacity found in Man" remains somewhat obscure: we do not, for example, know whether this capacity is an intellect or a soul, or, moreover, whether it is capable of mixing with any of the faculties in the body. This obscurity can be attributed to the fact that Ibn Rushd did not himself define the nature of this capacity and its contents—which means that we also do not know the meaning of his statement that the material intellect is a compound of the capacity and that the intellect is linked with this capacity. A possible explanation can be found if we assume that the material intellect is not in itself a separate substance. Such an assertion would, however, run contrary to Ibn Rushd's later conclusion in *Al-Sharh*, where he makes a clear distinction between the active and the material intellect, considering them both to be transcendent substances, neither generating nor corrupting. We do not, though, know whether this amendment in *Al-Talkhis* refers to the material or the active intellect³⁴

Ibn Rushd is advancing, through this amendment, a new interpretation which he believes accurately reflects the original view of Aristotle, and he refers to this interpretation as the "school of synthesis", implying, by the latter term, a middle road between the views of Alexander and those of other commentators on the nature of the material intellect. According to Ibn Rushd, the synthesis enables him to go beyond the absurdities inherent in these, the avowed aim being to free himself from the necessity to debase a transcendent thing in whose substance some capacity exists, merely because this transcendent thing happens to exist in conjunction with Man rather than by virtue of its own nature. He further notes that the synthesis frees him from the necessity of limiting the potential intellect to being solely a capacity, merely on the basis that there is, somehow, a separate thing to which this capacity accidentally clings.

For all his claims, Ibn Rushd ultimately fails to construct a genuine synthesis; its falsity and incoherence soon, indeed, become clear to him, leading him to embark on a revision of his views in *Al-Sharh al-kabir*, where he does not refer to the doctrine of synthesis, but laboriously examines, one by one, the views of the schools of Ibn Bajja, Alexander and Themistius, then criticises them by comparison with the original Aristotelian text. And from the springboard which this critical strategy provides he simultaneously articulates and justifies his own new interpretation. Ibn Rushd's influence on the development of philosophy among the Latins, from the middle of the 13th century onwards, can be traced back to the legacy of this critical method.

Such, then, are the main characteristics of Ibn Rushd's new position—a position which, as noted earlier,

represents both the end of the first stage of his thought and a link or bridge, with respect to postulations about the material intellect, to the subsequent stage. It now remains to demonstrate how the analytical strands of this new position culminated in the creation of a new, second stage in his writings.

11.2. *The Rushdi stage; or the Rushdi Ibn Rushd*

This final stage was the fruit of more than thirty years of study and ceaseless probing. In retrospect, his writings can best be interpreted as a quest for both an original and an authentic interpretation of Aristotle's philosophical system—a quest sustained, as it were, both through a persistent dialogue with Aristotle's writings and through a concurrent critical engagement with major thinkers within the Aristotelian heritage.

Ibn Rushd's commentary on *De Anima* is, as I have noted in an earlier work,³⁵ the most important text among his psychological writings. Let us now examine it in detail, in order to analyse the evolution of his thought, and, more importantly, to assess the originality of his philosophical contribution.

The preceding analysis of *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Tabs* revealed the gradual processes whereby Ibn Rushd critically rejected the views of Alexander and, subsequently, those of Ibn Bajja, thereby exorcising the Alexandrian/Ibn Bajja influences in his own earlier writings. A similar transition had also in fact occurred with respect to Abu Nasr al-Farabi: his earlier writings on logic had been deeply influenced by al-Farabi's views, but in a later commentary on the *Analytica Posteriora* (*Al-Burhdn*) he severely criticised al-Farabi on account of views which he himself had specifically upheld earlier in *Mukhtasar al-Burhan* (Epitome of *Analytica Posteriora*)³⁶ Ibn Rushd's revisionist inclinations aptly demonstrate the degree of rigour and seriousness with which he pursued his philosophical vocation; and there is no better example of this rigour than *Al-sharh al-kabir*, which formulates a completely different psychological system and a completely different approach to the problem of the intellect, whose force almost annuls much of what he had previously written in *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Talkhis*.

The analysis of *Al-Sharh* will be conducted somewhat differently from those made of *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Talkhis*, the reason being that the original Arabic text of the work is lost; the earliest authoritative version is in fact preserved in a Latin translation. For the purposes of this paper I shall be basing myself on sections of the text which have been translated into French from the Latin version³⁷ and on portions of the text which have been recorded in the margins of the manuscript copies of *Al-Talkhis* found in the Modena library. Let us begin by briefly reviewing the central strands of this text, which sufficiently indicate the complete transformation in Ibn Rushd's thought.

The transformation appears not only in the new views advanced but in the very style in which *Al-Sharh* is written. There is a conscious attempt, on Ibn Rushd's part, to articulate processes of thought which have now led him to confront hitherto unexplored questions and unexamined obscurities. The conclusions reached in the work are advanced in a manner which implicitly suggests a new set of perspectives.

Ibn Rushd immediately makes it clear that the material intellect³⁸ constitutes the central theme of this text,³⁹ but he also clearly indicates, thereafter, that the examination of the material intellect in isolation from the other faculties would be impractical and misguided. As such, the scope of changes in *Al-Sharh* affects not only the conception of the material intellect, as previously articulated in *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Talkhis*, but his entire psychological structure, involving all the major elements from the intellect, theoretical intelligibles and the active intellect to imaginary representations. The implications of these structural changes are examined from the perspective both of epistemological states and of the different ontological states in question; his discussion of the material intellect is thus constantly linked up with all the other aspects of the intellect. With regard to the relationship between the material intellect and the senses, Ibn Rushd states that, while the material intellect is not affected by a passivity similar to that of the senses, and does not experience change analogous to what the senses undergo, there does nonetheless exist within it a concept of passivity whose meaning is subsumed within its function of acceptance. The material intellect is regarded as belonging among the genus of passive faculties, and is thus rightfully distinguished from the active intellect, yet it is neither a body nor a faculty within a body; it is, in effect, a substance which accepts all forms without itself being one of the forms it accepts. This is because the material forms are not separate, whereas the material intellect is simple and separate. The material intellect is devoid of a specific nature, except in so far as it exists in *potentia*. It contains, potentially, all universal material intelligibles, but in actuality it is not a thing prior to its being endowed with the faculty of reason.⁴⁰ Hence it differs from the irrational prime matter which accepts particular forms, and, similarly, differs from the form, the matter and the compound of both. It is a part of a particular mode of existence. To assert that the material intellect exists *in potentia* does not mean that it is not a definite thing or a substance; what is implied is that, whatever the substrate bears, it cannot exist in actuality and thus cannot be taken in an absolute sense, but should rather be approached in a qualified manner. However, the substrate need not be a definite thing in actuality; rather, what the substrate bears should not be found in it in actuality.

The first obstacle to understanding the nature of this intellect is the question of how it can be from the genus of the passive faculties, while at the same time being simple, separate and not mixed in with the body. If we say

that it is separate and simple, does this mean that the intellect and the intelligibles within it are one, as is the case with the active and separate intellects? This is a second difficulty.

The solution to the first difficulty lies in defining the concept of passivity in the context of the material intellect; for passivity, here, has a specialised meaning, implying a form of changeless potentiality, analogous to the disposition in the tablet to receive writing without being affected by passivity or change. Just as the tablet does not bear any writing either in actuality or *in potentia* approaching actuality, so the material intellect does not embrace any of the intelligible forms which it accepts, either in actuality or *in potentia* approaching actuality. It would be wrong to say, with Alexander, that the material intellect is similar to the disposition that exists in the tablet, rather than to the tablet itself inasmuch as it is disposed.⁴¹ This is because we must first know the nature of the thing that is disposed before we can completely know the nature of the disposition—this because the material intellect is not only a disposition. Here, clearly, Ibn Rushd is not only criticising the views of Alexander, but also laying aside his own positions in *Al-Talkis* and *Al-Mukasar*. He emphasises for the first time that the capacity within the intellect is different from all other capacities, since it does not bear any intelligibles, either in actuality or *in potentia*, and is neither a body nor a faculty within a body. Nor is it a capacity existing within imaginative forms; for, among the many other absurdities enumerated,⁴² this would make it a faculty within a body and therefore accepting the intellect itself.

As for the second difficulty, he asserts that the material intellect is closer to the other faculties of intellection than to separate intellects. There is, however, an important distinction, namely that it is, in its essence, an intellect existing in actuality, while the other intellects exist *in potentia*. He further states, however, that the material intellect ranks lowest among the separate intellects, in that the action of the material intellect is less powerful than that of the separate intellects. Furthermore, the material intellect is marked more by passivity than by activity, and in this respect it differs from the active intellect.⁴³

In *Al-Sharh* the material intellect is not simply discussed for the elementary purposes of formulating a new definition, but is also analysed for its philosophical significance. Ibn Rushd daringly asserts that the material intellect is eternal and unitary with respect to mankind, and it is this which underlines the radical transformation in his thought and the revolt against his own earlier positions and those of his predecessors. It is not possible, here, to analyse the significance of this assertion in detail; this paper will rather content itself with a brief review of the changes arising out of the new position. To this end, we must analyse the text with reference to general approach, content of the dialogue, criticism and the final conclusions embodied in the text, as against those reached in his earlier writings.

Ibn Rushd has finally broken away from Alexander's position on the material intellect, which he himself had earlier upheld, and, just as he had attacked Ibn Bajja's writings, so he criticises the school of Themistius and others for their views on the theoretical intellect and the active intellect.⁴⁴ The main criticism is directed against Themistius' view that the theoretical intellect springs from the conjunction of the active and material intellect within us, and is therefore external. Since the first two intellects are external, Ibn Rushd asserts that Themistius' viewpoint has departed from that of Aristotle and is in opposition to truth itself. Ibn Rushd had already criticised this position earlier, in *Al-Mukhtasar*, but there his criticism reflects his adoption of the Ibn Bajja or Alexandrian school, whereas now it springs from a new position and a new conception of the system of relations required by the process of intellection. The criticism is equally determined by the ontological position of the material and active intellect, together with the role played by imaginary representations. All this is in contrast to the viewpoint of earlier schools, which had concluded the theoretical intellect to be eternal. It is this belief, in Ibn Rushd's view, that will eventually lead to absurdities undermining the process of intellection and the intellect itself.

The intellect is indeed the offspring of the material and active intellect, yet different from both. The compound of two things which are eternal, as the material and active intellect are, must itself necessarily be eternal and one. There is, however, another important element neglected by Themistius and his followers, namely the decisive role played by imaginative forms in the process of intellection. In this respect, the connection of the theoretical intellect to its activity regarding imaginary representations in particular is corrupting and multiple, due to the corruption and multiplicity of the imaginary representations themselves. This necessary connection is similar to the connection existing between the senses and sensibles. Just as the senses do not perceive anything without the presence of sensibles, so, similarly, the rational faculty does not conceptualise without imagination. Hence the intellect and intelligibles are not to be seen as contingent, generating and corrupting.

Yet it cannot be conceived that intelligibles are contingent while the intellect is eternal; for this would not correspond with the proposition that the material intellect is eternal and one. In other words, if the material intellect is the first perfection of Man and the theoretical intellect is the second perfection, then both these categories should be functioning under the same conditions. For example, if Man is generating and corrupting, this would apply equally to the first and second perfection within Man—a viewpoint which contradicts earlier conclusions and leads to absurdities and ambiguities concerning the material intellect. The assertion, for example, that the material intellect is a body or a faculty within a body could not possibly be upheld, since it has already

been postulated that the intellect is not generating or corrupting. When we say that the first perfection is one and not multiple in relation to the human race, then inescapable ambiguities emerge, which can only be resolved if we assert that the first perfection is an individual concept embedded in matter, which is corruptible and multiple in relation to the multiplicity of individuals. We are then left with several questions: can we resolve this problem, and what exactly is the nature of the theoretical intellect and theoretical intelligibles if we are to assume that the material intellect is one and eternal?

Alexander resolves the problem by stating that the material intellect is generating and corrupting, and is at the same time a faculty. This Ibn Rushd rejects, just as he rejected Ibn Bajja's position, which, in his view, did not satisfactorily resolve Alexander's inconsistencies. All earlier views are in fact judged inadequate, the only way out being through the assertion that theoretical intelligibles have two elements, the first contingent and the second eternal. The first element makes them contingent and the second element makes them one of the existents. Imaginative forms are the first element and the material intellect is the second element. Imaginary representations or forms set the intellect into motion, this motion arising out of the process whereby the active intellect has transformed imaginary representations from potential intelligibles into active intelligibles.

I conclude, with Ibn Rushd, that there are two separate aspects to intelligibles: with respect to the subject which makes them contingent they are generating and corrupting, while with respect to the material intellect which makes them one of the existents of the world *they* are eternal; from this perspective they can be viewed as simultaneously generating, corrupting and eternal. The theoretical intellect is, in other words, eternal with respect to its activity. This solution bypasses the difficulties and absurdities found in the previous schools of commentators, and Ibn Rushd takes evident pride in his significant discovery, which enables him to uphold and further fortify his central thesis about the intellect and its eternity⁴⁵

Conclusion

These, then, are some of the major points it has been possible to derive from Ibn Rushd's key psychological texts. It has not been the aim of this study to analyse the points in full critical detail, but rather to explore the transformation in approaches to the problem of the intellect up to the writing of *Al-Sharh*. If the paper has shed some light on this area, then any oversights apparent in the analysis may perhaps be excused.

There are, I am convinced, two distinct phases in the evolution of Ibn Rushd's psychological system—this is indeed the claim from which the study begins—and the recognition of an evolution in his thought provides further encouragement for taking a more chronologically systematic approach to the Rushdi corpus. The discovery of amendments, as in the case of *Al-Mulbhasar* and *Al-Talkhis*, will inevitably lead us to label Ibn Rushd's earlier writings as obsolete, yet such an approach will, nevertheless, ultimately provide us with deeper and richer insights. It would in any case be mere obstinacy to ignore such established differences between texts as occur in the various versions of *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Tallih*.⁴⁶

What must now be investigated is the nature and philosophical significance of the evolution in Ibn Rushd's thought. Was it, for example, an evolution born of successive and laborious interpretations of the Aristotelian text, or did it rather reflect a philosophical curiosity in search of new horizons beyond the limits of the original text? In either case what is the scope and depth of this evolution? Is it possible to speak of an evolution or a change within the context of an interpretative philosophy? These and other such questions represent a whole new and vital area of study. For the moment I shall rest content merely with raising them, in the hope of tackling them in a future study.

NOTES

1 *Al-Matn al-Rushdi, mad li-jal li-gira'a jadida*, Casablanca, 1986.

2 Another examination of the evolution of the theory of demonstration according to Ibn Rind was made in a paper contributed to *Al-Halqa al-Rushdiyya. Symposium Ibn Rushd 1*, which took place in Fez in March 1989.

3 In its original format this study was a critical review of the book *Isbkaliyyat al-'aql 'ind Ibn Rushd* by Muhammad al-Misbahi, Casablanca, 1988.

4 A commendable effort has been under way for some years now to publish the works of Ibn Rushd in their original language, as well as in their Hebrew and Latin translations. Hopefully this work will soon be completed, and the major basic impediment to contemporary Rushdi studies removed.

5 Ibn Rushd left behind nearly ten treatises on the soul (*nafs*), the intellect (*'aql*) and conjunction (*ittisal*), all of which are lost in the original Arabic, with the exception of an addendum to the doctrine of the rational faculty within an Epitome (*Mintasar*) of the *De Anima* in the Cairo manuscript; this addendum being, apparently, a commentary or part of a commentary on the *Risalat al-ittisal* of Ibn Bajja. Most of it is in Hebrew and Latin translations. He also composed three texts which represent, I believe, the kernel of the Rushdi study of the subject, these being, in order: (a) the Epitome (*Al-Mukhtasar*) on the soul, which is extant in the original Arabic and has several printed editions (which might rather mislead the reader than guide him), *foremost* among these being the Egyptian edition; (b) The *Talkhis*, of *De Anima*, which is also extant in the original Arabic, although transcribed in Hebrew characters, but remains for the moment in manuscript. A published

- edition by Professor Alfred Ivry is expected shortly; (c) The commentary on *De Anima*, whose original is of course lost, although fragments are to be found in the marginal notes of the Modena manuscript of the *Talkhis* of *De Anima*, transcribed in Hebrew characters. Some years ago, also, Kalmen P. Bland published Ibn Ruahd's *Risala fi imkdn al-ittisal bi 'I-'aql al'fa'al* (New York, 1982) with a commentary by Moses of Narbonne, which will not, however, be discussed in this study.
- 6 See my book *Al-Matn al-Rushdi*, where the commentaries of Ibn Rushd are discussed in detail and the position of each of the texts is explained. Although a viewpoint was adopted there concerning the abridged *Mulbhtasar* of *De Anima*, I feel this is now in need of further careful examination and revision.
- 7 I am referring to the short commentaries (*awdmī*) on *Al-Samd' al-rabi i (De Physico Auditu)*, *Al-Samd' wa 'I-'alam (De Coelo et Mundo)* (ed. Jamal al-Din al-'Alawi, Fez, 1984), *Al-Kawn wa 'I fasad (De Generatione et Corruptione)* and *Al-Athar al-'ulwiyya (Meteorologica)*. We may add to these the synthesis (*janamf*) of *Ma bad al-rabi a (Metaphysica)*.
- 8 There are six known manuscripts today: two in Cairo and one each in Madrid, Teheran, the Chester Beatty Library and Hyderabad.
- 9 There are three printed editions: *Rasd'il 11m Rurhd*, Hyderabad, 1947; *Talkhis kitab alnafs*, ed. F. al-Ahwani, Cairo, 1950; and *Epitome de Anima*, ed. Salvador Gómez Nogales, Madrid, 1985.
- 10 The other two printed editions are in no better state.
- 11 Perhaps the latest editor to indicate this is Gómez Nogales in his edition of this *Mukhtasar*. which he calls a "Talkhis", as al-Ahwani had done. He states that the Madrid manuscript is the most recent copy and that he will be basing himself upon it. His edition of the book is no less bad than the previous two, despite his having new manuscript copies at his disposal.
- 12 It is possible, by and large, to say that the second version has been transmitted to us in the Madrid manuscript and the first version by the others—although differences between the latter are such that we may in fact consider there is an intermediate link represented by the Hyderabad manuscript. However, let us, for practical convenience, consider what we have as two versions until at least part of the book has been edited in an accurate and scientific fashion.
- 13 We do not find this analogy in the Madrid manuscript copy, or in the printed Hyderabad edition, which relied on another manuscript, being taken from the Cairo manuscript copy. Whether it is recorded in the other copies I do not know, as I have as yet had no opportunity to study them.
- 14 Possibly he deleted it for this reason when he revised the text of *Al-Mukhtasar* some time after its composition.
- 15 In *Al-Sharh al-kabir* he mentions Ibn Bajja as comparing the imaginative faculty's capacity to accept intelligibles with the tablet's retention of writing, the created self (*al-nafs alman-44'a*) of this capacity being compared to the tablet. In other words, this analogy follows the school of Ibn Bajja entirely.
- 16 See particularly section 36 of chapter III of the commentary on *De Anima*, Latin translation, edited by Crawford.
- 17 *Tafsir ma ba'd al-labia*, ed. Maurice Bouyges, Bibliotheca Arabica Scholasticorum, S6rie Arabe, Beirut, 1938-52,11, 1230 and 111,1489-90.
- 18 The Madrid manuscript copy is the only one with this amendment, just as the Cairo manuscript copy is the only one with the *Talkhis* of the *Risalat al-ittisal* of Ibn Bajja. The Hyderabad edition does not contain either the amendment or the summary.
- 19 Le., with the school of Alexander (together with Ibn Bajja) and the school of Theophrastus and Themistius. It will be seen how he reconciles the viewpoints of the two schools in *Al-Tallshis*, and we shall further see how, in *Al-Sharh*, he goes beyond both these schools to establish a new school which won him great fame among the Latins.
- 20 It is the first if we consider as commentaries other treatises which he composed on questions treated in the *De Anima* of Aristotle; otherwise it would be one of two, namely *Al-Talkhis* and *Al-Sharh al-kabir*.
- 21 This definition of *Al-Talkhis* is verified in the first version. If, however, we consider the additions to it, then we may say that it forms an intermediate link between *Al-Mukhtasar* and *Al-Sharh*.
- 22 There are two manuscript copies of the *Talkhis* of *De Anima*, transcribed in Hebrew characters: those of Paris and Modena (Italy).
- 23 See folio 114, recto, of the Paris MS.
- 24 See folio 147, recto, of the Paris MS. The text does, however, lend itself to two readings, the first ("as we have shown in our *tarf* of Aristotle's words") clearly suggesting, as said, a reference to the *sharh*, and the second ("as he has shown in his *,barb* on the words of Aristotle") embodying a reference to the *sharh* of Themistius. What makes the first reading more probable, however, is that Ibn Rushd calls the work of Themistius "*Talkhis*" and not "*Sharh*".
- 25 On the first amendment, see folio 144, recto (second column), and 141, verso, in the Paris MS. On the second amendment, see folio 148, recto, in the same manuscript.
- 26 It will be seen from the preceding and following argument that I do not share the viewpoint of Professor Alfred Ivry, editor of the *Talkhis* of *De Anima*, who claims that this *Talkhis* abrogates opinions expressed by Ibn Rushd in *Al-Sharh al-kabir* etc. See his study "On the commentaries of Ibn Rushd on Aristotle's book on Psychology" contributed to the Rushdi Symposium I in Fez, March, 1989. This will be published shortly in the proceedings of the symposium.
- 27 The really strange thing is that Ibn Bajja is not mentioned in *Al-Mukhtasar*, either explicitly or implicitly. As for the mention of him at the end of the discussion on the rational faculty in the Madrid manuscript copy, this is, as noted earlier, merely an amendment made by Ibn Rushd after composing *Al-Sharh al-kabir*.
- 28 This viewpoint is magisterially summarised in his revision of *Al-Mukhtasar*.
- 29 See my classified list of the later writings of Ibn Bajja, notably *Tadbir al-mutawabbid*, *Risalat al-wads'* and *Risalat al-ittisal*, the last being the most important in this connection (*Rasd'il Ibn Bajja'l-ilabiyya*, Beirut, 1968).
- 30 I mean that Ibn Rushd's preoccupation with the material intellect in *Al-Talkhis* exceeds his preoccupation with the other kinds. We should remember, in this connection, that the *Talkhis*—unlike *Al-Mukhtasar*—follows the text of Aristotle and

respects the order of its discussions.

31 Foremost among these reasons is that *Al-Talkhis* is a commentary on the meaning of Aristotle's text. As such, Ibn Rushd had to submit to the logic and order of the original text.

32 In the light of what is written in *Al-Sharh*, we may say that the analogy as it appears in *Al-Mukhtasar* is taken from Ibn Bajja, but that that in *Al-Talkhis* derives from Alexander. Ibn Rushd states, in *Al-Sharh*, that he held the opinions of Ibn Bajja when writing *Al-Mukhtasar* and leaned towards the standpoint of Alexander when writing *Al-Talkhis*.

33 The designation of the material intellect as the passive intellect, together with the twofold designation active and passive, should be stressed, and should be borne in mind later when we compare what he has to say in *Al-Sharh al-kabir*.

34 His discussion, in the final analysis, concerns the active intellect. As for the material intellect, it is the conjunction of the active intellect with the capacity existing in Man. Hence the active intellect is not only a capacity, nor is it only a transcendent substance.

35 See *Al-Main al-Rushdi*, referred to above.

36 See my article "*Talawwur nazariyyat al-burhan'ind Ibn Ruttid*", contributed to the symposium *Al-Halqa al-Rushdiyya al-ala*, Fez, March 1989, to be published shortly in the proceedings of the symposium.

37 This translation was made by Alain Griffaton, in collaboration with Muhammad al-Misbahi, and was published in instalments in *Majallat kulliyat al-adab*, Fez, Nos. 4-5 (1981/1982) and No. 6 (1982-1983), covering Crawford's edition, pp. 379-454.

38 There is also a particular interest in the active intellect and in the ambiguity of the conjunction with the active intellect.

39 I am referring to sections 5 to 20 and section 36 of Chapter III of *Al-Sharh al-kabir* of *De Anima* (ed. Crawford). See also the translation referred to above.

40 See section 4 of Chapter III of *Al-Sharh*, ed. Crawford. See also section 5.

41 The view attributed here to Alexander is, as noted earlier, the one he himself upheld in *Al-Talkhis*.

42 See sections 4, 5, 14 and 19.

43 See sections 13, 15 and 16.1 have also, in this brief synopsis, relied on the first twenty sections of the commentary on Chapter III of *De Anima*, ed. Crawford.

44 See section 5 of Chapter III. See also section 20.

45 In *Al-Sharh al-kabir* of the *Metaphysics*, he has summarised, in chapter *Al-Lam*, some of the conclusions emerging from his commentary on *De Anima*, ending this short commentary by referring to the synopsis indicated. See pp. 1487-1490, ed. Maurice Bouyges.

46 Mention must be made here of two important studies published in recent years by Professor H. A. Davidson, the first on Ibn Rushd's view of the material intellect and the second on the active intellect. See, respectively, "Averroes on the Material Intellect", *Viator*, 17, 1986, and "Averroes on the Active Intellect as a Course of Existence", *Viator*, 18, 1987.

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