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AFTER THE ENLIGHTENMENT THE REDISCOVERY OF AVERROES BY TIEDEMANN AND HERDER

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Abstract. Both Arabic modernists and Western humanists often regard the Muslim philosopher Averroes as one of the earliest precursors of Kant and the European Enlightenment. In contrast to this reputation, this paper argues that it was Kant's critics Herder and Tiedemann who rediscovered Averroes. Tiedemann was the first German historiographer to give an accurate account of Averroes' thought. This was accompanied by a re-evaluation of Averroes by Herder in his *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity*, in which he recognized the similarity between his own concept of the spirit of the age as historical reason – his alternative to the Enlightenment concept of a universal and ahistorical reason – and Averroes' concept of a single material intellect for all individual human minds. Finally, the paper outlines the possible connections between Averroes' interpretation of Aristotle's intellect and Hegel's concept of reason in history.

Résumé. Les modernistes arabes et les humanistes occidentaux considèrent souvent le philosophe musulman Averroès comme l'un des premiers précurseurs de Kant et des Lumières européennes. Contrairement à cette réputation, cet article soutient que ce sont les critiqueurs de Kant, Herder et Tiedemann, qui ont redécouvert Averroès. Tiedemann a été le premier historiographe allemand à donner un compte rendu précis de la pensée d'Averroès. Cela s'est accompagné d'une réévaluation d'Averroès par Herder dans ses *Lettres sur les progrès de l'humanité*, dans lesquelles il reconnaît la similitude entre son propre concept de l'esprit du temps en tant que raison historique – son alternative au concept des Lumières d'une raison universelle et anhistorique – et le concept d'Averroès d'un intellect matériel unique pour tous les esprits humains individuels. Enfin, l'article expose les liens possibles entre l'interprétation d'Averroès de l'intellect d'Aristote et le concept de raison historique de Hegel.

Both Arabic modernists and Western humanists now often regard the medieval Muslim philosopher Averroes as one of the earliest precursors of the European Enlightenment, who prefigured modern ideals such as freethinking, rationalism, and the critique of dogmatic theology.¹ From a historical point of view, this appraisal is rather surprising. Both his commentaries on Aristotle and his notorious theory of the unicity of the material intellect (i. e., the idea that there is only one material intellect for all human beings) were highly controversial among thinkers from the Middle Ages up to the sixteenth century.² But there was no important “Averroist” after Cesare Cremonini (1550-1631), who died about seventy years before the rise of the Enlightenment.

Therefore, most portrayals of Averroes as a precursor to the European Enlightenment claim only some general affinity between them. A more specific emphasis has been put on the connection between the philosophies of Kant and Averroes.³ The starting point for this comparison is

¹ Richard C. Taylor, “Averroes. God and the Noble Lie,” in R. E. Houser (ed.), *Laudemus viros gloriosos. Essays in Honor of Armand Maurer* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), p. 38-59, 38; Georg Brunold, “Ahne der europäischen Aufklärung,” *NZZ*, 20.07.2010; Stefan Schick, “Averroes – Ein Aufklärer im Mittelalter?” *Philosophische Rundschau*, vol. 59 (2012), p. 78-92; Robert Gatti, “Between Maimonideanism and Averroism: Gersonides’ Place within the Maimonidean Paradigm,” in James T. Robinson (ed.), *The Cultures of Maimonideanism: New Approaches to the History of Jewish Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 137; Stefan Wild, “Islamic Enlightenment and the Paradox of Averroes,” *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 36 (1996), p. 379-390.

² Concerning Averroes’ theory of the material intellect see: Averroes, *Über den Intellekt. Auszüge aus seinen drei Kommentaren zu Aristoteles’ De anima. Arabisch – Lateinisch – Deutsch. Herausgegeben, übersetzt, eingeleitet und mit Anmerkungen versehen von David Wirmer* (Freiburg: Herder, 2008); Averroes, *L’intelligence et la pensée. Grand commentaire du De anima. Livre III. Présentation et traduction inédite par Alain de Libera* (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1999); Herbert A. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect. Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, and Theories of Human Intellect* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1992); Richard C. Taylor, “Separate Material Intellect in Averroes’ Mature Philosophy,” in Gerhard Endress, Rüdiger Arnzen, and J. Thielmann (ed.), *Words, Texts and Concepts Cruising the Mediterranean Sea* (Peeters, 2004), p. 289-309.

³ Tornay, for example, compares Averroes’ separate intellect with Kant’s transcendental self, and the intellect in action with Kant’s empirical self; see Stephen Chak Tornay, “Averroes’ Doctrine of the Mind,” *Philosophical Review*, vol. 52 (1943), p. 270-288, at 286. See also Fernando Montero Moliner, “El ‘averroísmo’ en la filosofía moral de Kant,” *Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía*, vol. 9 (1992), p. 39-58; Alparslan Açıkgenç, “Ibn Rushd, Kant and Transcendent Rationality: A Critical Synthesis,” *Alif*, vol. 16 (1996), p. 164-190; Philipp W. Rosemann, “Wandering in the Path of the Averroean System: Is Kant’s Doctrine on the *Bewußtsein überhaupt* Averroistic?,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 73 (1999), p. 185-230.

Herder's criticism of Kant's *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* (1784) for championing an "Averroean philosophy."⁴

In contrast to the reputation of Averroes as a precursor of Kant or of the mainstream Enlightenment, this paper argues that it was Kant's critics Herder and Dietrich Tiedemann (in his historiography *The Spirit of Speculative Philosophy*, 1791-97) who rediscovered and re-evaluated Averroes. Tiedemann was the first German historiographer to give an accurate account of Averroes' life and thought. This was accompanied by a re-evaluation of Averroes by Herder in his *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity*, in which he recognized the similarity between his own concept of the spirit of the age as historical reason – his alternative to the Enlightenment concept of a universal and ahistorical reason – and Averroes' concept of a single material intellect for all individual human minds.

In order to argue for this thesis, the paper proceeds as follows. I will first give a sketch of how Averroes was viewed in the German Enlightenment up until Tiedemann and Herder (I). I will then summarize Tiedemann's presentation of Averroes (II). I will then discuss Herder's reinterpretation of Averroes' concept of the material intellect as congenial to his own concept of the spirit of the age (III). Finally, I outline the possible connections between Averroes' interpretation of Aristotle's intellect and Hegel's concept of reason in history.

1. THE IMAGE OF AVERROES IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT

To trace the image of Averroes in the Enlightenment, this section (a) first sketches out the general lack of interest in Averroes among German thinkers and the distortions of his biography and philosophy in German historiographies until Tiedemann. (b) I then discuss the depic-

⁴ Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Werke in zehn Bänden, vol. VI, ed. Martin Bollacher (Frankfurt am Main: DKV, 1989), p. 338. Whereas most studies focus on generic similarities between Kant's and Averroes' philosophical ideas without providing textual evidence for a possible impact of Averroes on Kant, Sgarbi explicitly tries to determine Kant's actual knowledge of Averroes, referring to authors such as Paul Rabe (1656-1713), Johann Franz Budde (1667-1729), Johann Joachim Lange (1699-1765), and of course Leibniz. But ultimately, Sgarbi amalgamates these authors' references to Averroes, Averroism, and orthodox Aristotelianism, and ends up only with a generic identification of Kant as an Averroist; see Marco Sgarbi, "Immanuel Kant, Universal Understanding, and the Meaning of Averroism in the German Enlightenment," in Anna Akasoy and Guido Giglioni (ed.), *Renaissance Averroism and Its Aftermath: Arabic Philosophy in Early Modern Europe* (Springer, 2013), p. 255-269.

tion of Averroes as an atheist and (c) as a dogmatic imitator of Aristotle. Finally, (d) I outline the understanding among German Enlightenment thinkers of his doctrine of the material intellect.

a) Drawing on the verdict of the Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives that Averroes “did not know *belles lettres*” and that “[n]o one ever saw him playing or looking for an amusement,”⁵ since he was concerned only with philosophy,⁶ Wieland’s bizarre novel *Don Silvio von Rosalva* fabricates a caricature of Averroes in the narration of Prince Biribinker, in which the nymph Mirabella confesses to being an adherent of Averroes.⁷

⁵ Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, vol. I (Amsterdam: Brunel, 1740), p. 385, 388; Gottsched, *Herrn Peter Baylens, weylend Professors der Philosophie und Historie zu Rotterdam, Historisches und Critisches Wörterbuch, nach der neuesten Auflage von 1740 ins Deutsche übersetzt ...*, vol. I (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1741), p. 390. Bayle borrows this opinion from the *Bibliotheca hispana vetus* of Nicolás Antonio. More specifically, this passage is a summary from *Le journal des savans*, 1 July 1697 (Bayle quotes p. 475). The original text is: *nunquam lusisse, nunquam inter vana ac inutilia tempus abire passum* (Nicolás Antonio, *Bibliotheca hispana vetus*, vol. 2 [Madrid: Ibarra, 1788], p. 393).

⁶ This opinion is also the basis for Borges’ famous story, “Averroes’s Search”: since Averroes has no sense of playfulness, he cannot understand the terms “tragedy” and “comedy,” which are just “secret words” for Averroes. In contrast to this bias, Munk was right to maintain that Averroes “had shown an exceptional taste for the works of fine literature and poetry.” Not only had Averroes written important commentaries on the Poetics of Aristotle, but translating the terms “tragedy” and “comedy” was not problematic for the Arabs (Rémi Brague, *Au moyen du Moyen Âge: Philosophies médiévales en chrétienté, judaïsme et islam*, 2nd ed. [Paris: Champs, 2008], p. 305). For further information regarding the translation of Greek philosophy into Arabic see: Dimitri Gutas, *The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ‘Abbasid Society (2nd-4th / 8th-10th c.)* (Routledge, 1998); Cristina d’Ancona, “Greek Sources in Arabic and Islamic Philosophy (revised version Jan 28, 2022),” accessed March 7, 2022, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arabic-islamic-greek/>; L. E. Goodman, “The Translation of Greek Materials into Arabic,” in M. J. L. Young, J. D. Latham, and R. B. Serjeant (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature – Religion, Learning and Science in the Abbasid Period* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), p. 477-497. Concerning Aristotle’s *Poetics* in particular see O. J. Schrier, “The Syriac and Arabic Versions of Aristotle’s *Poetics*,” in G. Endress and R. Kruk (ed.), *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism. Studies on the Transmission of Greek Philosophy and Sciences dedicated to H.J. Drossaart Lulofs on his ninetieth birthday* (Leiden: CNWS Research, 1997), p. 259-78; Deborah L. Black, *Logic and Aristotle’s Rhetoric and Poetics in Medieval Arabic Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 1990).

⁷ In a letter to his former fiancée Sophie la Roche (16 February 1764), Wieland himself describes Mirabella’s story as “pretty odd”: *il y a dans un Conte asses burlesque qui y est, certaine fée qui est furieusement precieuse, qui etudie avec son amant les Livres d’Averroës et est sujette avec lui à des distractions, qui lui valent quelques humiliations ; enfin tout cela est assés drôle* (Wieland, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 3, ed. H. W. Seiffert [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1975], p. 239.) The opinion that the only pleasure not despised by Averroes was knowledge is also expressed in Jan Potocki’s *The Manuscript*

After Biribinker tries to win Mirabella's love with some flatulent oath of love,⁸ she answers: "A lady who has been studying *Averroes* for such a long time as I have, cannot be won by poetic florets; you have to *convince* us, if you want to *touch* us. The *power of truth* is the only thing that can force us to surrender."⁹ Her heart could "only be won *through the head*."¹⁰ She tells Biribinker that in her earlier friendship with the salamander Flox, their shared reading of Averroes superseded physical love: "In a word, he treated me as if I had been nothing but mind. Instead of philandering with me as my other lovers did, together with me he *analyzed* the mysterious writings of *Averroes*."¹¹

Nevertheless, her spouse Padmanaba becomes jealous of Flox because of the gossip of the other nymphs, who could not understand "that her love for philosophy could be so great that even in her *bedroom* she wanted to be taught in it."¹² Surprising them right when Flox and Mirabella were uniting with the intellect, Padmanaba misunderstands this act of unification. Yet even in this compromising situation, Mirabella vindicates herself by appeal to Averroes: "I asked my old spouse not to condemn me until he had listened to my vindication, and thanks to the seventh chapter of the *Metaphysics* of *Averroes* I was able to demonstrate to him *how deceptive the testimony of the senses is*."¹³

Thus, in 1772 Germany, the once famous commentator of Aristotle had become a mere subject of caricature. This decline in reputation had already begun by the end of the sixteenth century. Even in Italian universities, once a stronghold of Averroism, "[r]eliance on Averroes' commentaries diminished [...]. After being printed in Italy over ten times beginning in the 1470s, Averroes' collected works were never published again after 1576."¹⁴ About two hundred years later, at the peak of German Enlightenment, intellectuals took hardly any notice of

Found in Saragossa: their scientific studies "according to the writings of Averroës" put an end to Zubeida's and Amina's pretended rendezvous; see Jan Potocki, *Die Handschrift von Saragossa*, Neuausgabe, trans. and ed. René Radrizzani (Zurich: Kein & Aber, 2003), p. 30.

⁸ Wieland, *Die Abenteuer des Don Sylvio von Rosalva II. Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. XII (Leipzig: Göschen, 1795), p. 204 (repr. Hamburg: Greno, 1984, vol. IV).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 210.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

¹⁴ Craig Martin, "Providence and Seventeenth-Century Attacks on Averroes," in Paul J.J.M. Bakker (ed.), *Averroes' Natural Philosophy and Its Reception in the Latin West* (Leuven Univ. Press, 2015), p. 193-212, at 194.

“the Commentator.” In Kant, one finds only one reference to Averroes, in an unpublished sketch of the history of worldly wisdom, and it is hardly elucidating: “Arabs: *Avicenna et Averroes*.”¹⁵ We find this same neglect in Kant’s philosophical successors Reinhold, Fichte, Schelling, Schiller, Friedrich Schlegel, Hölderlin, Novalis, and Schleiermacher, who as far as I know, do not mention Averroes at all. Likewise, Hegel’s history of philosophy more or less passes over Averroes. Even Goethe, despite his taste for the Orient, mentions Averroes only in his *Theory of Colors* – admitting his knowledge of Averroes to be second-hand only.¹⁶ He explains that the Arabs did not pay much theoretical attention to the problem of colors, with two exceptions: “*Averroes* and *Avempace* might have said something about this subject in passing when they were commenting on Aristotle.”¹⁷

More striking than this lack of interest in Averroes, which might be explained by the Enlightenment’s general contempt for medieval philosophy, is that most of the German historiographies at the time did not consider Averroes an important Arabic philosopher. The most important sources for them were Herbelot’s *Bibliothèque Orientale* (completed 1697), Brucker’s *Historia critica philosophiae* (1742-44), which is rather a destruction of medieval philosophy than a presentation of it,¹⁸ and Bayle’s *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697), of which Gottsched had published a German translation. But both Brucker and Bayle barely refer to any writings or translations of Averroes, and Herbelot’s portrayal of Averroes is so poor that even Bayle is “immensely surprised about

¹⁵ Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. 16 (De Gruyter, 1924), p. 58.

¹⁶ Cf. Christoph Michel et al., eds., *Das Register zum Gesamtwerk von J.W. Goethe, Frankfurter Ausgabe*, Sämtliche Werke, Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche, vol. 40.1 (Berlin: DKV, 2013), p. 85.

¹⁷ Goethe, *Zur Farbenlehre*, ed. Manfred Wenzel, Frankfurter Ausgabe. Sämtliche Werke, Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche, vol. 23.1 (Frankfurt a. M.: DKV, 1991), p. 634. Concerning Averroes’ theory of colors see: *Averrois Cordubensis commentarium magnum in Aristotelis de anima libros*, ed. F. Stuart Crawford, CCAA vers. lat. VI 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953), p. 229-288; *Averrois Cordubensis compendia librorum qui parva naturalia vocantur*, ed. Aemilia Ledyard Shiels, CCAA vers. lat. VII (Cambridge, Mass.: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1949), p. 14-30; Helmut Gätje, “Zur Farbenlehre in der muslimischen Philosophie,” *Der Islam*, vol. 43 (1967), p. 280-301.

¹⁸ Catherine König-Pralong, *Médiévisme philosophique et raison moderne: De Pierre Bayle à Ernest Renan* (Paris: Vrin, 2016), p. 22. See also Hans Daiber, “The Reception of Islamic Philosophy at Oxford in the 17th Century,” in Charles E. Butterworth and Blake Andrée Kessel (ed.), *The Introduction of Arabic Philosophy into Europe* (Brill, 1994), p. 65-82, at 73.

its striking meagerness.”¹⁹ Zedler’s *Universal-Lexicon* (1732-1754) describes the natural theology of the Arabs by referring to al-Ġazālī²⁰ and their metaphysics and natural philosophy by referring to Ibn Ṭufayl,²¹ but Averroes is not mentioned at all in this context. Likewise, the German summary of Casiri’s *Bibliotheca* (1760), a catalogue of about 1800 Arabic manuscripts containing several quotations from Arabic works on history,²² does not refer to Averroes as a philosopher, but because of his pharmacological merits, specifically his alleged invention and description of remedies against chickenpox and other diseases unknown to the Greeks.²³ Conversely, the portrayal of Arabic philosophy is based on al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Avicenna, al-Biruni, and Ibn Ṭufayl.

This is striking for at least two reasons. First, the author of this summary seems to be deeply interested in Arabic philosophy²⁴ and even tells his readers that the Saracen Empire spread enlightenment throughout the whole world known at that time. Secondly, Casiri’s *Bibliotheca* strongly emphasizes the impact of the Latin translations of Averroes’ *Prolegomena philosophica* (= *Masā’il fī l-ḥikma* / *Muqad-*

¹⁹ Gottsched, *Wörterbuch*, 390; Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, 390.

²⁰ Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon Aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. XXVII (Leipzig / Halle: Zedler, 1741), p. 2031-2034.

²¹ Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, p. 2034-2036.

²² Miguel Casiri, *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis* (Madrid: Antonio Perez de Soto, 1760); cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1910), vol. 5, p. 449.

²³ Heyne, “Beytrag zur Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur,” *Litteratur und Völkerkunde*, vol. 5 (1784), p. 28-42 and 180-193, 192. The German author of this summary, “H...e,” has not been identified until now, but I have found evidence that it is Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729-1812): Gregorio Mayáns brought the *Bibliotheca* to the attention of Johann David Michaelis, a scholar in oriental studies in Göttingen (see Antonio Mestre, “Mayáns, die spanische Kultur und Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert,” in Elmar Mittler and Ulrich Mücke (ed.), *Die spanische Aufklärung in Deutschland* [Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2005], p. 55-66, at 62), together with whom Heyne had run the library of the University of Göttingen for some time. Furthermore, as head of the library, Heyne was responsible for building up the Hispanic collection in Göttingen. Through Herder, he tried to contact Mayáns in order to get some Spanish books; see Reimer Eck, “Zur Erwerbung spanischer Literatur durch die Göttinger Universitätsbibliothek im 18. Jahrhundert,” in *Die spanische Aufklärung*, p. 37-42. Although Heyne was primarily a classical scholar, he also contributed to oriental studies; see Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), p. 54.

²⁴ Heyne, “Beytrag,” p. 34.

dimāt fī l-ḥikma)²⁵ and commentaries on the scholastics.²⁶ Even Bayle liked to consult the *Bibliotheca* for his article on Averroes but had to content himself with a summary published in *Journal des Savans* (1 July 1697).²⁷

Not only do the German *Aufklärer* barely refer to Averroes, but they also had a rather distorted idea of his life. In his German translation of Herbelot, Schulz, a theologian and professor of oriental languages in Giessen, corrects some of Herbelot's mistakes, such as the identification of Averroes with another Ibn Rušd.²⁸ But whereas Bayle already correctly stated that Averroes was exonerated of the charge of heresy and its consequences,²⁹ Schulz's later view runs as follows: persecuted by Ya'qūb bin Yūsuf al-Manṣūr, Averroes was put in prison under the pretense of having excessively studied the texts of antiquity, but the true reason – according to Schulz – was Averroes' alleged attack on al-Manṣūr in his *History of Animals*.³⁰ As a consequence of this affair, Schulz con-

²⁵ Casiri, *Bibliotheca*, 1, p. 184; cf. also Samuel Astley Dunham, *History of Spain and Portugal*, vol. 5 (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, 1833), p. xxv.

²⁶ Casiri, *Bibliotheca*, vol. 1, p. 185. One of Casiri's sources is Nicolás Antonio's *Bibliotheca arabico hispana*, which lists Hebrew and Latin translations of Averroes and is part of Antonio's *Bibliotheca hispana vetus* (first published in 1672 and posthumously edited in a revised version by Cardinal Joseph Saenz de Aguirre in 1696). In the edition of 1788, ten pages are dedicated to Averroes; see Nicolás Antonio, *Bibliotheca hispana vetus*, vol. 2 (Madrid: Ibarra, 1788), p. 392-401.

²⁷ Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, p. 388; Gottsched, *Wörterbuch*, p. 390.

²⁸ Johann Christoph Friedrich Schulz, *Orientalische Bibliothek oder Universalwörterbuch, welches alles enthält, was zur Kenntniß des Orients nothwendig ist*, vol. 3 (Halle: Gebauer 1789), p. 784, supplementum Schulz.

²⁹ Gottsched, *Wörterbuch*, p. 390; Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, p. 389.

³⁰ Schulz, *Orientalische Bibliothek*, p. 784 (supplement Schulz). In fact, Averroes commented only on *De partibus animalium* and *De generatione animalium*, but not on the *Historia animalium*; see Dag Nikolaus Hasse, "Arabic Philosophy and Averroism," in James Hankins (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007), p. 130. Most probably, Schulz's *History of Animals* (*Thiergeschichte*) refers to the sixth volume of *Aristotelis libri omnes, Ad animalium cognitionem attinentes* (Venice, 1562), which contains Aristotle's writings on zoology together with Averroes' comments on these writings, except on the *History of Animals*. Concerning Aristotle's zoology and its reception in Arabic and Renaissance philosophy see Aristotle, *Generation of Animals: The Arabic Translation Commonly Ascribed to Yaḥyā ibn al-Biṭrīq*, ed. J. Brugman and H. J. Drossaart Lulofs (Brill, 1971); Aristotle, *The Arabic Version of Aristotle's Parts of Animals Book XI-XIV of the Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, ed. Remke Kruk (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1978); Stefano Perfetti, *Aristotle's Zoology and Its Renaissance Commentators (1521-1601)* (Leuven Univ. Press, 2000). On Averroes, in particular, see Gad Freudenthal, "The Medieval Astrologization of Aristotle's Biology: Averroes on the Role of the Celestial Bodies in the Generation of Animate Beings," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*,

tinues, Averroes died imprisoned in Morocco in 1198.

b) The legend that both Averroes and his Latin followers were heretics who were hostile to any revealed religion dates back to the anti-Arab attitude of the Renaissance.³¹ According to Petrarch, the Averroists are a “sect of men who practice philosophy after the modern fashion and think they are not efficient enough if they do not bark at Christ and His heavenly doctrine.”³² Leibniz and Daniel Georg Morhof then consolidated and enhanced “the association of Arabism and atheism”³³ in general and of Averroes and atheism in particular.³⁴ Brucker’s *Historia* thus portrays Averroes as a paradigm of impiety,³⁵ in contrast to his Persian predecessor Avicenna.³⁶ But it was especially Bayle’s downright hostile article on Averroes – the only article on an Arabic philosopher in the *Dictionnaire*³⁷ – that was little suited to arouse any interest in Averroes.³⁸ According to Bayle, Averroes rejected all religions: “[A]ccording to the opinion [of Averroes] Christendom is an impossible religion, the Jewish religion is fit for children, and the doctrine of Mahomet is a religion apt for pigs.”³⁹ Bayle traces this allegation back to Louis Moréri’s

vol. 12 (2002), p. 111-137; Ahuva Gaziel, “Questions of Methodology in Aristotle’s Zoology: A Medieval Perspective,” *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. 45 (2012), p. 329-352.

³¹ See Felix Klein-Franke, *Die klassische Antike in der Tradition des Islam* (Darmstadt: WBG, 1980), p. 32-33.

³² Petrarch, “An Averroist Visits Petrarca,” in Ernst Cassirer et al. (ed.), *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 140-141, at 140; Kara Richardson, “Averroism,” in Henrik Lagerlund and Benjamin Hill (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Sixteenth Century Philosophy* (New York and London: Routledge, 2017), p. 137-155, at 141.

³³ König-Pralong, *Médiévisme philosophique*, p. 59.

³⁴ König-Pralong, *Médiévisme philosophique*, p. 59.

³⁵ Catherine König-Pralong, “La philosophie arabe dans la médiévisme des xviii^e et xix^e siècles,” in J.-B. Brenet and O.L. Lizzini (ed.), *La philosophie arabe à l’étude / Studying Arabic Philosophy* (Paris: Vrin, 2019), p. 47-64, at 53.

³⁶ Olga L. Lizzini, “L’Hippocrate, l’Aristote des Arabes,” in C. König-Pralong, M. Meliadò, Z. Radeva (ed.), *Outsiders and Forerunners: Modern Reason and Historiographical Births of Medieval Philosophy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), p. 67-106, at 78.

³⁷ Harold Stone, “Why Europeans stopped Reading Averroës: The Case of Pierre Bayle,” *Alif*, vol. 16 (1996), p. 77-95, at 84. George Sale’s English edition adds articles on Avempace and Ibn Ṭufayl (see *ibid.*, p. 85).

³⁸ Stone, “Why Europeans,” p. 86-87.

³⁹ Gottsched, *Wörterbuch*, p. 392; Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, p. 387; see also Johann Jakob Brucker, *Historia critica philosophiae*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Weidemann and Reich, 1766), p. 109.

Le grand dictionnaire historique.⁴⁰ Relying on Bérigard,⁴¹ he charges Averroes even of having authored the infamous *Treatise of the Three Impostors* (i. e., Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad).⁴²

The impact of Bayle's depiction of Averroes as an enemy of religion can be seen in Jean Paul's *Exzerpthefte*: "Averroes called the Christian religion an impossible one, the Jewish one apt for children (because of the ceremonies), the Turkish one apt for pigs (because of its sensuality)."⁴³ Jean Paul combines this charge with a characterization of Averroes' dubious morals:

Averroes (the commentator of *Aristotle*) sometimes used to steal and said: "In doing so I am leading my rivals on a wrong track and draw blame to my morals. Otherwise, this blame would hurt my writings. My fame suffers more from the latter than from the former."⁴⁴

According to the Encyclopedist Formey, Averroes advanced infidelity and impiety by founding the sect of the Averroists.⁴⁵ For the *Berliner Aufklärer* Nicolai, it was the "familiarity" between Averroes and Frederick II that made the pope accuse Frederick of "hostile attitudes" towards Christianity.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ See Louis Moréri, *Le grand dictionnaire historique ou le Mélange curieux de l'histoire sacrée et profane. Tome premier. Lettre A* (Paris: Libraire associés, 1759), p. 506: [C]e Philosophe nommoit la religion chrétienne, une religion impossible, à cause du mystère de l'eucharistie; qu'il appelloit celle de Juifs, une religion d'enfans, à cause des différens préceptes & des observations légales; qu'enfin il avouoit que la religion des Mahométans, qui ne regarde que la satisfaction des sens, est une Religion de pourceau.

⁴¹ Claude Guillermet Bérigard, *De veteri et peripatetica philosophia in priores libros Phys. Arist.* (Udine: Schiratt, 1643), prooemium, p. 5f: *Aristoteles negat poenas & praemia post mortem I. Ethic. c. 14 & 15. Et 12. Metaph. fabulas utiles legislatorum esse putat quae dicuntur de superis, & inferis: unde Averroes scripsit contra tres legislatores Christum, Mosem, & Mahometum, deditque materiam scriptori impio de tribus Impostoribus.*

⁴² See Friedrich Niewöhner, *Veritas sive varietas: Lessings Toleranzparabel und das Buch Von den drei Betrügern* (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1988), p. 305-308.

⁴³ Jean Paul, *Exzerpthefte*, V-BVA-02-1781-1786-0212. Here he makes use of Prével, *Dictionnaire*, p. 121-122.

⁴⁴ *Exzerpthefte*, V-BVA-01-1780-1781-0731, accessed March 3, 2022, www.jp-exzerpte.uni-wuerzburg.de/.

⁴⁵ J.H.S. Formey, *Histoire abrégée de la philosophie* (Amsterdam: Schneider, 1760), p. 194; J. Gurlitt, *Abriß der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Leipzig: Müllersche Buchhandlung, 1786), p. 185.

⁴⁶ Friedrich Nicolai, *Versuch über die Beschuldigungen, welche den Tempelherren gemacht worden* (Berlin and Stettin: Nicolai, 1782), p. 110. Herder criticizes Nicolai's assumption as historically impossible; see Herder, "Briefe über Tempelherrn, Freimäurer und Rosenkreuzer," in *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 15 (Berlin: Weidmann,

This picture of Averroes as a heretic is most likely a significant reason for the lack of interest in his thought among German intellectuals of the Enlightenment. For at least the mainstream of the German Enlightenment was never as hostile to religion as the French *Lumières* and did not propose the non-confessional deism that the British Enlightenment did. On the contrary, most German intellectuals were more or less sympathetic to Protestantism, and thus the depiction of Averroes as a radical critic of religion must have limited his reception in eighteenth-century Germany. The Romantic August Wilhelm Schlegel was one of the first to cast serious doubt on this accusation. For Dante puts Averroes in limbo, together with Aristotle, other Greek philosophers, and Caesar, and it would be impossible that Dante “regarded [Averroes] as the author of the pamphlet against Moses, Christ, and Mahomet, as modern scholars do.”⁴⁷

c) Though Brucker dismisses the myth that Averroes had authored the doctrine of the three impostors, he thinks that this myth has a legitimate foundation in Averroes’ superstitious devotion to Aristotle and the teachings resulting from this – namely, the eternity of the world, the unicity of the human intellect, and the mortality of the soul.⁴⁸

Averroes’ loyalty to Aristotle had already been discussed during the Renaissance. Scholars such as the printer Thomas Giunta counted Averroes among the most important representatives of “an Arabic philosophical movement that advanced Greek knowledge.”⁴⁹ According to Giunta, Averroes did not imitate Aristotle, but rather clarified obscure topics in his works. The Arabist Thomas Arpenius (1584-1624), whose Arabic grammar Herder had studied, recommended that Averroes be studied in Arabic, since the “second Aristotle” could not be understood in the existing Latin translations.⁵⁰ On the other hand, Renaissance humanists such as Petrarch criticized Averroes’ interpretations of Aristotle on philological grounds.⁵¹ They disavowed his Aristotelianism, since, on account of his lacking a humanist education in ancient Greek, he had to rely on corrupted Arabic translations.⁵² With this in mind, Ficino denounced Averroes’ inability to read ancient Greek as the reason for his

1888), p. 82-121, at 113.

⁴⁷ August Wilhelm Schlegel, “Dante: Die Hölle,” in *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 3, ed. Eduard Böcking (Leipzig: Weidmann’sche Buchhandlung, 1846), p. 230-342, at 243.

⁴⁸ Brucker, *Historia*, p. 109.

⁴⁹ Richardson, “Averroism,” p. 139.

⁵⁰ Klein-Franke, *Die klassische Antike*, p. 54.

⁵¹ Richardson, “Averroism,” p. 139.

⁵² Klein-Franke, *Die klassische Antike*, p. 45-46.

inevitable misunderstanding of Aristotle. The impact of this criticism on the Enlightenment is obvious: Zedler's *Universal-Lexicon* still polemicalizes that, because they lacked any knowledge of ancient Greek, the Arabic philosophers inevitably misunderstood Aristotle.⁵³

But whereas the Cartesian Bernard Lamy still criticized Averroes for his distortion of Aristotelian philosophy,⁵⁴ and Bayle stated that if Averroes had mastered Greek he would have understood Aristotle more perfectly,⁵⁵ the Enlightenment's main criticism of Averroes' Aristotelianism had to do with another issue. Muslim Arabs were considered to be blindly devoted to Aristotle and to their religion,⁵⁶ and thus had a destructive influence on Latin philosophy.⁵⁷ As is well known, intellectuals of the Enlightenment considered their age to be the age of critique: every authority had to answer before the court of reason. Thus, Averroes' portrayal of Aristotle as the entelechy of reason,⁵⁸ which was reported by Malebranche,⁵⁹ led to Averroes' image as a dogmatic imitator of Aristotle. For Enlightenment philosophers, who considered the autonomous use of one's own reason as the hallmark of rationality, if Averroes was an unoriginal imitator, this disqualified him from being taken seriously.

Heyne's summary of the *Bibliotheca* insinuates that the interest of

⁵³ But "considering the global barbarism and ignorance at that time, this depraved and mutilated Aristotelian philosophy was the greatest light of wisdom" (Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, p. 2031).

⁵⁴ Bernard Lamy, *Entretiens sur les sciences: dans lesquels on apprend comme l'en doit*, 3rd ed. (Lyon: Jean Certe, 1706), p. 266; Craig Martin, "Providence and Seventeenth-Century Attacks on Averroes," in Paul J.J.M. Bakker (ed.), *Averroes' Natural Philosophy and Its Reception in the Latin West* (Leuven Univ. Press, 2015), p. 193-212, at 193.

⁵⁵ Gottsched, *Wörterbuch*, p. 390; Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, p. 385.

⁵⁶ Anton Friedrich Büsching, *Grundriß einer Geschichte der Philosophie und einiger wichtiger Lehrsätze derselben. Zweiter Theil* (Berlin: Bossen, 1774), p. 503. Gurlitt, *Abriss*, p. 183.

⁵⁷ Johann Gottfried Gurlitt, *Abriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Leipzig: Müllersche Buchhandlung, 1786), p. 184.

⁵⁸ "As for Aristotle's having completed them [i. e., logic, natural science, and divine science], no one who has come after him to this our time – and this is close to fifteen-hundred years later – has been able to add a word worthy of attention to what he said. The existence of [all] this in one man is exceedingly unusual and extremely amazing. When these things exist in some man, it is more fitting that they be attributed to divine existence than to human existence. It is for this reason that the ancients called him 'divine'" (Averroes, in Steven Harvey, "The Hebrew Translation of Averroes' Prooemium to His 'Long Commentary on Aristotle's Physics,'" *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, vol. 52 (1985), p. 55-84, at 83).

⁵⁹ Malebranche, *De la recherche de la vérité*, 4th ed. (Paris: André Pralard, 1678), p. 126.

the Arabs in Greek philosophy, in general, was not to achieve knowledge but to interpret Aristotle. On account of Arabic philosophy's "slavish devotion"⁶⁰ to Aristotle,⁶¹ the "highest height of perfection pursued by their philosophy"⁶² was not to explore nature but to achieve "an over-subtle interpretation"⁶³ of Aristotle. As to other branches of *natural Philosophy*, they took everything as they found it from the Greeks:

And even *Averrhoes*, the celebrated *Commentator*, [...] has added nothing to the doctrine of that great philosopher, but has only, as an interpreter, explained one place of his works by another: nay, he was so strict an adherent to all his notions, that with him he believ'd the world to be *eternal*.⁶⁴

Even Johann Georg Hamann, otherwise a harsh critic of the Enlightenment, expresses in a letter to Kant (April 1774) the opinion that the Averroists were stubborn Aristotelians.⁶⁵ Jean Paul states in like manner: "Averroes: nature was not complete until the birth of Aristotle, who was the ultimate limit of the human intellect."⁶⁶

Whereas the humanists blamed Averroes for not knowing Greek, some Enlightenment historiographies considered him to be the translator of Aristotle into Arabic. According to Prével's *Dictionnaire* and Herbelot's *Bibliothèque*, Averroes was the first "to translate Aristotle from Greek into Arabic."⁶⁷ Allegedly, there were no Latin translations of Aristotle other than those based on the translations of Averroes, who added extensive commentaries to his translations, "of which St Aquinas and the other Scholastics made use."⁶⁸

It thus does not come as a surprise that the few intellectuals who took an authentic interest in Arabic philosophy were less interested in Averroes than in his Andalusian contemporary Ibn Ṭufayl and his novel *Ḥayy*

⁶⁰ Heyne (?), "Beytrag," p. 185.

⁶¹ Concerning the general accusation against Arabic and Latin medieval philosophy as an "Aristotelomania," see König-Pralong, *Médiévisme philosophique*, p. 53.

⁶² Heyne (?), "Beytrag," p. 185.

⁶³ Heyne (?), "Beytrag," p. 185.

⁶⁴ John Friend, *The History of Physick: From the Time of Galen, to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Walthoe, 1727), p. 27-28; cf. Klein-Franke, *Die klassische Antike*, p. 96. Cf. also Brucker, *Historia*, p. 105.

⁶⁵ Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 10, ed. Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften (De Gruyter, 1922), p. 157.

⁶⁶ Jean Paul, *Exzerptheft*, IIb-20-1790-0165.

⁶⁷ Schulz, *Orientalische Bibliothek*, p. 783; Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale, ou Dictionnaire universel*, vol. 5 (Paris: Moutard, 1783), p. 33; Honoré Lacombe de Prével, *Dictionnaire des portraits historiques, anecdotes, et traits remarquables des Hommes Illustres*, vol. 1 (Paris: Lacombe, 1773), p. 121.

⁶⁸ Schulz, *Orientalische Bibliothek*, p. 783; Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, p. 33.

ibn Yaḡzān. Ibn Ṭufayl was even considered the teacher of Maimonides, who in turn had a significant impact on the German *Haskalah*.⁶⁹ Ṭufayl's novel seemed to anticipate the Enlightenment ideal of a self-taught autonomous philosopher. Even Leibniz was said to have "read it with great pleasure."⁷⁰ Its first translation into a European language, by Edward Pococke (allegedly studied by John Locke), had already been published in 1671.⁷¹ In 1783 the second German translation, by Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, this time directly from Arabic under the title *The Natural Man*, was published by the powerful *Aufklärer* Friedrich Nicolai, who had commissioned it.⁷² The first translation into German (1726), based on an English translation,⁷³ had the meaningful title, *The Self-Taught Philosopher; That Is, A Pleasant and Ingenious Story of the Fabulous Events of Hai Ebn Yockdahn: It presents how the protagonist came to acknowledge the natural and supernatural things, peculiarly God / the immortality of the soul, and the life to come by the natural light*.⁷⁴ This title shows why Enlightenment intellectuals found the novel attractive:⁷⁵ by means of natural reason and empirical observation alone and without any help from a positive religion, a man acquires knowledge of the natural and supernatural world. Furthermore, the novel mentions the most famous Arabic philosophers, with special emphasis on al-Ġazālī and Avicenna. Since Averroes was a younger contemporary of Ṭufayl, he is not mentioned in the book; as a result, some people might have mistakenly believed that he was not as important as these two Persian authors.⁷⁶ This brings us to Averroes' teaching on the unicity of the ma-

⁶⁹ Tiedemann, *Geist der spekulativen Philosophie*, vol. 4 (Marburg: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1795), p. 127.

⁷⁰ Heyne (?), "Beytrag," p. 184. See also Eichhorn, *Der Naturmensch oder Geschichte des Hai Ebn Joktan ein morgenländischer Roman des Abu Dschafar Ebn Tofail* (Berlin and Stettin: Nicolai, 1783), p. 6.

⁷¹ See Lawrence I. Conrad, "The World of Ibn Ṭufayl," in Lawrence I. Conrad (ed.), *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān* (Brill 1996), p. 1.

⁷² Eichhorn, *Der Naturmensch*, p. 6.

⁷³ Eichhorn, *Der Naturmensch*, p. 20f.

⁷⁴ Johann Georg Pritius, *Der von sich selbst gelehrte Welt-Weise* (Frankfurt and Nürnberg: Monat, 1726).

⁷⁵ However, Nicolai's friend Mendelssohn did not appreciate the novel, remarking that "[i]ts notions of the world, the soul, and its whole ethics are deeply miserable" (*Gesammelte Schriften. Jubiläumsausgabe*, vol. 12/1, ed. Alexander Altmann [Stuttgart – Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1975], p. 10).

⁷⁶ Pierre Vattier, a physician and professor of Arabic studies, for example, took great interest in Avicenna. In 1658 he translated Avicenna's logic and published it under the title *La Logique, où les règles de celle d'Aristote tenues jusques à présent pour*

terial intellect, which is one of his most controversial interpretations of Aristotle.

d) Though Aristotle does not use these expressions, the distinction between the active and the material intellect goes back to *De anima* III, 4-5 (429a 10 – 430a 25), where he explains how the human mind is able to receive knowledge. Since the human mind is in principle able to grasp anything that exists, it must be at first pure potency without any determination. In this respect, the human mind is comparable to first matter and thus is called material intellect. But since this intellect is pure potency, it cannot by itself actualize its potency to think; therefore Aristotle introduces another type of intellect, the so-called active or agent intellect, which already is thinking in actuality and actualizes the material intellect.

Since these two chapters of the *De anima* are rather obscure, they became the starting point of fiery discussions starting in late antiquity, both on the correct interpretation of Aristotle and on the nature of human thought, including how both the material and the active intellect are related to the individual human soul.⁷⁷ Beginning with al-Kindi, Arabic thinkers continued this discussion, adding on the one hand further differentiation between the material and agent intellects and integrating these intellects together with higher pure intellects into their cosmologies, in which the main cosmological function of these intellects is to keep the celestial spheres in motion.⁷⁸

The doctrine that the active intellect is a simple, unitary, and separate substance that transcends the individual was held by many Greek, Arabic, and Latin commentators on Aristotle.⁷⁹ In contrast, the doctrine, which was first established by Averroes (with reference to Themistius) and then adopted by some scholars in the Latin West such as Siger of Brabant, was that the material intellect, which has the potency to know all knowable objects (“comprehendit omnia existentia extra animam”),⁸⁰

infaillibles. Vattier’s Italian contemporary Jacopo Gaddi even considered Avicenna the most exceptional philosopher in the Islamic world; see Catherine König-Pralong, “Introduction: Individuals in the History of Philosophy,” in C. König-Pralong, M. Meliàdò, Z. Radeva (ed.), *Outsiders and Forerunners: Modern Reason and Historiographical Births of Medieval Philosophy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), p. 9-26, at 16.

⁷⁷ Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes*, p. 3f.

⁷⁸ Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes*, p. 4.

⁷⁹ On Averroes’ theory of the active intellect see Richard C. Taylor, “The Agent Intellect as “Form for Us” and Averroes’s Critique of al-Fârâbî,” in Gyula Klima and Alexander W. Hall (ed.), *Universal Representation and the Ontology of Individuation* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), p. 25-44.

⁸⁰ Averroes, *Commentum magnum in de anima*, p. 383.

is not multiplied in the human individuals, but is only one simple, unitary, and separate substance.⁸¹ “intellectus materialis est unus in numero in omnibus individuis hominum, non generabilis neque corruptibilis.”⁸² It is not until his *Long Commentary on De anima* that Averroes introduces this doctrine of a unitary material intellect:⁸³ the individual act of knowing something is not individualized by an individualized material intellect but by human imagination which is a power and function of the individual human soul. In the act of knowing, the universal material intellect grasps the forms or intentions of the things known by means of the images which are presented to him by the power of imagination of the individual human being.⁸⁴ This operational unification of the individual imagination with the universal intellect in the individual human being individualizes the act of knowing.⁸⁵

This doctrine of the unitary material intellect had been criticized since Aquinas’s *De unitate intellectus*. But at the dawn of the Enlightenment, we see the distinction between the active and the material intellect confused: Leibniz, for instance, argued that Averroes’ doctrine of the human mind “was in conflict with [Leibniz’s] explanations of the nature of the individual substance.”⁸⁶ But he ascribes to Averroes only the idea of a universal active intellect. According to Leibniz, then, Averroes holds that only the *intellectus agens* is “eternal and common to all men” whereas the passive intellect is “particular to each individual” and “fades away at man’s death.”⁸⁷ Thus, Averroes is supposed to deny per-

⁸¹ *Et cum talis est dispositio intellectus materialis, scilicet quod est unum entium, et quod potentia est abstracta, et non habet formam materialem, manifestum est ipsum esse non passivum, cum passiva, scilicet transmutabilia, sunt sicut forme materiales, et quod est simplex, sicut dicit Aristoteles, et separabilis.* (Averroes, *Commentum magnum in de anima*, p. 386.)

⁸² Averroes, *Commentum magnum in de anima*, p. 401.

⁸³ Concerning the evolution of Averroes’ theory of the material intellect see Taylor, “Seperate Material Intellect,” p. 293f.

⁸⁴ *Et ideo anima rationalis indiget considerare intentiones que sunt in virtute ymaginativa, sicut sensus indiget inspicere sensibilia* (Averroes, *Commentum magnum in de anima*, p. 384); *anima nichil intelligit sine ymaginatione* (p. 391).

⁸⁵ *Modo autem, quia ista intellecta constituuntur per duo quorum unum est generatum et aliud non generatum [...], necesse est etiam ut intellecta in actu habeant duo subiecta, quorum unum est subiectum per quod sunt vera, scilicet forme que sunt ymagines vere, secundum autem est illud per quod intellectam sunt unum entium in mundo, et istud est intellectus materialis.* (Averroes, *Commentum magnum in de anima*, p. 400.)

⁸⁶ Leibniz, “Briefwechsel zwischen Leibniz und Arnauld,” in *Hauptschriften zur Grundlegung der Philosophie*, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1996), p. 432.

⁸⁷ Leibniz, “Betrachtungen über die Lehre von einem einigen allumfassenden Geiste,”

sonal immortality (though there were many thinkers who proposed the unicity of the agent intellect without denying personal immortality).⁸⁸ Leibniz then describes the “Averroean” doctrine – inherited by the Italian thinkers – as follows: “At death, the individual soul of an animal reverts to the world soul.”⁸⁹

According to Bayle, Averroes invented the “very unrefined opinion” “that there is one mind, which without any multiplication inspires every singular individual of humanity, insofar as this singular is performing acts of the rational soul.”⁹⁰ Bayle considers this doctrine to be “godless and absurd,”⁹¹ since it is impossible that two men killing each other or two philosophers contradicting each other could share the very same soul. For Bayle, who relied on sources such as Pomponazzi’s *De immortalitate animae*, one of Averroes’ main reasons for suggesting this idea was the problem of how possible knowledge (i. e., the fact that we are able to know something) could become actualized.⁹² But as it is presented by Bayle, this problem (namely, the actualization of possible knowledge) only gives good reasons for assuming the unity of the agent intellect, which actualizes the knowability of the knowable object, just as the light actualizes the visibility of visible objects.⁹³

in *Hauptschriften zur Grundlegung der Philosophie*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1996), p. 305.

⁸⁸ According to Averroes, only the human species and its activity of imagination are eternal; see Richard C. Taylor, “Personal Immortality in Averroes’ Mature Philosophical Psychology,” *Documenti e Studi sulla Traduzione Filosofica Medievale*, vol. 9 (1998), p. 87-110.

⁸⁹ Leibniz, “Briefwechsel,” p. 432; cf. also *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, vol. 2.3 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013), p. 370; *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, vol. 2.2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), p. 248; *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, vol. 1.21 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012), p. 725.

⁹⁰ Gottsched, *Wörterbuch*, p. 390; Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, p. 385 and 387.

⁹¹ Gottsched, *Wörterbuch*, p. 391; Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, p. 386.

⁹² Gottsched, *Wörterbuch*, p. 392; Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, p. 386.

⁹³ *Et quasi dicit: et modus qui coegit nos ad imponendum intellectum agentem idem est cum modo propter quem indiget visus luce. Quemadmodum enim visus non movetur a coloribus nisi quando fuerint in actu, quod non completur nisi luce presente, cum ipsa sit extrahens eos de potentia in actum, ita etiam intentiones ymagnate non movent intellectum materialem nisi quando fuerint intellecte in actu, quod non perficitur eis nisi aliquo presente quod sit intellectus in actu.* (Averroes, *Commentarium magnum in de anima*, p. 439.)

2. TIEDEMANN

So far, the paper has sketched out the image of Averroes in Enlightenment Germany. This image will now be contrasted with the presentation of Averroes and his philosophy in Dietrich Tiedemann's influential history of philosophy entitled *The Spirit of Speculative Philosophy* (1791-97).

Dietrich Tiedemann (1748-1803) was a professor of philosophy at the University of Marburg and a critic of Kant. His history of philosophy in six volumes was not very well received by Hegel, who called it "a sad example of how a learned professor can devote his whole life to the study of speculative philosophy and nevertheless can still have no idea of speculation."⁹⁴ Even so, Hegel praises him for his knowledge of medieval philosophy;⁹⁵ and indeed, Tiedemann's account is a turning point in the historiographical presentation of Averroes, as part of his project to reappraise medieval philosophy as an anticipation of modern reason:⁹⁶

a) Tiedemann is well aware of his lack of historical information about medieval Arabic philosophy. He complains that there are many modern accounts that go into great detail about the names and biographies of Arabic thinkers but say little about the contents of their philosophy.⁹⁷ He complains about the inadequacy of the translations of *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*, which prevented him from discussing this text. The medieval Jewish philosopher Kalonymus ben Kalonymus translated it "into such an Arabic Latin" and with the commentary of Augustinus Nifo it was "accompanied by such a confusing commentary that most of it remains incomprehensible."⁹⁸ Another translation by an anonymous author was "so full of so many Arabic idioms and barbarisms that the wider context

⁹⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie I. Werke 18* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 134.

⁹⁵ Hegel, *Vorlesungen*, p. 134.

⁹⁶ Catherine König-Pralong, *Médiévisme philosophique*, p. 42.

⁹⁷ Tiedemann, *Geist*, p. 105.

⁹⁸ Tiedemann, *Geist*, p. 122. There exist two different Latin translations of *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*. In 1328, the Jewish scholar Calonymos ben Calonymos ben Meir translated the work from Arabic into Latin. This translation was printed in Venice in 1497, together with a commentary of Agostino Nifo (repr. Lyons 1517, 1529, and 1542). This edition lacked two metaphysical discussions and all four physical discussions. In 1527, another Jewish scholar, Calo Calonymos, rendered the complete Hebrew translation by Calonymos ben David ben Todros into Latin. This translation was published in 1527 and reprinted in 1550, 1560, and 1573; see H. Blumberg, "Averroes' *Destructio Destructionum Philosophiae Algazelis* in the Latin Version of Calo Calonymos. Beatrice H. Zedler," *Speculum*, vol. 37 (1962), p. 469-472, at 469. Tiedemann uses the edition Venice, 1560.

of its thoughts does not become comprehensible.”⁹⁹ Modern knowledge about Arabic philosophy in general and Averroes in particular was therefore poor.¹⁰⁰ Tiedemann himself was not able to redress this deficit as there were too few translations, and copies of the translations used by the scholastics were difficult to obtain. Yet he at least was able to give quotations from Averroes’ commentaries on *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, *De anima*, and *De substantia orbis*.

Furthermore, Tiedemann reappraises the importance of Averroes within the history of Arabic philosophy. Whereas he considers the philosophical impact of Averroes to be lower than that of Avicenna and Ġazālīy,¹⁰¹ he states that among Christians and Muslims Averroes’ “fame and prestige” exceeded even that of Ṭufayl.¹⁰²

b) Tiedemann’s opinion about the charge of heresy is quite sophisticated. On the one hand, he criticizes Averroes’ refutation of Ġazālīy’s accusation against the philosophers of apostasy¹⁰³ which was based on philosophical theses such as the eternity of the world¹⁰⁴ and that God cannot recognize material singulars.¹⁰⁵ For Tiedemann, Ġazālīy counters the Peripatetic assertion of the eternity of the world with the “pellucid reasoning”¹⁰⁶ that the world cannot be both created and eternal. Averroes, by contrast, tries only to “befog” this convincing argument “with dust clouds” with the idea of a continuous and eternal creation.¹⁰⁷ According to Tiedemann, this idea is inconsistent, since creation means nothing other than to bring non-being into being. Averroes’ counterarguments (e. g., that the sun as a cause is co-equal with the light as its effect) would not serve their purpose, as the shining of the sun would not be an effect of the sun but its property.¹⁰⁸

⁹⁹ Tiedemann, *Geist*, p. 122.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹⁰³ Yet already Bayle attested to Averroes’ defense of philosophy against al-Ġazālīy’s best intentions; see Gottsched, *Wörterbuch*, p. 393; Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, p. 387.

¹⁰⁴ According to Tennemann, Averroes’ opinion on this question is the result of his considerations concerning matter and form: Averroes denies the idea of creation because the forms that are actualized by the original being need to be in matter potentially before being actualized. See Wilhelm Gottlieb Tennemann, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 8.1 (Leipzig: Barth, 1810), p. 434-435

¹⁰⁵ Averroes’ concept of predestination is the idea that God is the cause of all good without any relation to the individual as an individual. See Tiedemann, *Geist*, p. 146-147.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 124

On the other hand, Tiedemann solves the problem of Averroes' attitude towards religion by distinguishing between his roles as a philosopher and as a Qadi. His enviers accused him of heresy, "because as a philosopher he was not in the habit of committing himself to strict orthodoxy."¹⁰⁹ In his theological writings, however, Averroes tried to regain "his lost reputation of orthodoxy."¹¹⁰ In Tiedemann's successor Tennemann, we find the solution of the contradiction between the philosophical and religious-theological statements of Averroes that is quite common today: the Islamic religion for Averroes was a popularization of philosophical truths. Averroes was "a bright and enlightened thinker. As an orthodox Muslim, he believed in the truth of the Quran but regarded it as popular guidance for the common people and a stooping to the level of their way of thinking."¹¹¹ As the *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut* claims, if one speaks to philosophers it is necessary to present the truth contained in the Quran in a scientific manner.

c) Tiedemann presents Averroes as someone who dedicated all his available time to philosophy and was an enthusiastic follower of Aristotle.¹¹² According to Tennemann, quoting from the Latin translation of Averroes' *Commentary on the Physics*,¹¹³ Aristotle was for Averroes the one through whom nature had tried to reveal "*what is the highest human perfection, and what can be known.*"¹¹⁴ Tiedemann expresses great admiration of Averroes for having interpreted Aristotle so well without mastering Greek, which he explains with the thesis that Averroes made use of the best available Greek and Arabic commentaries on Aristotle.¹¹⁵ In contrast to his forerunners, Tiedemann points out some differences between Averroes and Aristotle: in his (supposed) combination of Neoplatonist and Aristotelian thought, Averroes unintentionally went astray "from his leader, whom he almost worshipped."¹¹⁶ He also concedes some philosophical originality to Averroes: for example, he determined the relation between form and matter in a clearer way than his precursors,¹¹⁷ and emphasized more clearly that the law of non-

¹⁰⁹ Tiedemann, *Geist*, p. 138.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹¹¹ Tennemann, *Geschichte*, p. 425.

¹¹² Tiedemann, *Geist*, p. 140.

¹¹³ See note 58. The Latin text differs a little from the Hebrew translation.

¹¹⁴ Tennemann, *Geschichte*, p. 422.

¹¹⁵ Tiedemann, *Geist*, p. 141.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 144. See *Aristotelis metaphysicorum libri XIII cum Averrois Cordubensis in eosdem commentariis et epitome, Theophrasti metaphysicorum liber* (Venezia, 1552),

contradiction “is the first and self-evident principle of all knowledge, which allows for no proof, and without which any demonstration or philosophizing would be impossible,” thereby anticipating Leibniz.¹¹⁸

d) But first and foremost, Tiedemann’s portrayal of Averroes’ doctrine of the human intellect is more accurate than those of his forerunners. Averroes and Aristotle both thought “that thinking [is] similar to sensing.”¹¹⁹ Averroes’ intellect, according to Tiedemann, is related to the intelligible as the eye is related to the visible object, and the *intellectus agens* is equivalent to the light that makes the intelligible in potency intelligible in actuality.¹²⁰ Tiedemann even recognizes the importance of the concept of the material intellect and that the central problem for Averroes’ doctrine of intellect is the problem of the individuation of the material intellect in each individual human. Tiedemann confesses that he was not able to adequately reconstruct Averroes’ answer to the problem of the individuation of the intellect.¹²¹ The existing translations of the relevant texts were, according to Tiedemann, too inaccurate, and so the Averroist concept of the material intellect is “encased in several impenetrable obscurities.”¹²² The only thing certain is the doctrine of Averroes’ successors that the material intellect is “common in all humans, and not individualized in each of them.”¹²³

But ultimately, Tiedemann’s verdict on the relevance of Averroes’ doctrine of the material intellect is still withering: despite the fact that this doctrine established a new tradition, it is “too obscure and of too little substantiality to make it necessary to dwell upon it for a longer period of time.”¹²⁴

3. HERDER

We have seen that Tiedemann presents Averroes’ philosophical concepts quite accurately, especially the doctrine of the unitary intellect; nevertheless, he believes this idea to be of no great systematic importance. But it had a deep impact on the history of philosophy, as can

p. 141f.

¹¹⁸ Tiedemann, *Geist*, p. 143.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹²⁰ See note 92.

¹²¹ Tiedemann, *Geist*, p. 148.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

be seen from a change in the philosophy of Herder, whose philosophical ideas were otherwise similar to Tiedemann's.¹²⁵ For the first time, Herder makes use of Averroes' doctrine of the material intellect in his critique of Kant's Idea, where he contrasts his own idea of a history of mankind with Kant's allegedly "Averroean" idea of human history. For Herder, a *history* of mankind is possible only because man needs to be formed to humanity by means of a universal education. If different cultural traditions did not influence each other, the history of mankind would not be a historical development but only a sequence of isolated occurrences. Hence, there would be no "education of mankind."¹²⁶ But Herder insists that although individuals are educated by their surrounding traditions, nature, and culture, it is still an *education of individuals* that takes place in the history of mankind.

By contrast, Kant's concept of the education of mankind allegedly ascribes attributes to the species as such which do not belong to the individuals belonging to this species. According to Kant, humankind does not reach its perfection, that is, the complete realization of its intellectual powers, in its individual instantiations. It is only the human species, which by reproducing itself is immortal and approaches this complete realization approximately.¹²⁷

*In man (as the only rational creature on earth) those natural capacities which are directed to the use of his reason are to be fully developed only in the race, not in the individual. [...] However puzzling this may be, it is necessary if one assumes that a species of animals should have reason, and, as a class of rational beings each of whom dies while the species is immortal, should develop their capacities to perfection.*¹²⁸

According to Herder, this hypostatization of the human species is un-

¹²⁵ Tiedemann had published an *Attempt at an Explanation of the Origin of Language* in the same year that Herder published his *Treatise on the Origin of Languages* (1772). He was one of the few German thinkers of that time who approved Herder's various attacks on the Kantian philosophy and he even corresponded with him; see Günter Arnold, "Herder und die Philosophen des deutschen Idealismus nach den biographischen Quellen," in Marion Heinz (ed.) *Herder und die Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997), p. 189-202, at 197. Thus, we can assume that Tiedemann was well aware of Herder's review of Kant's *Ideas* before he published his article on Averroes, and that Herder afterwards became aware in turn of Tiedemann's article.

¹²⁶ Herder, *Ideen*, p. 337.

¹²⁷ Kant, *Recension*, p. 65.

¹²⁸ Kant, "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View (1784)," trans. Lewis White Beck, in Immanuel Kant, *On History*, ed. L.W. Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1963), p. 13-14.

intelligible, for it entails the presupposition of an intellect which is independent of the individual and its particular experiences and circumstances, just as it entails the idea of a species that has attributes independently of the individuals that belong to it. It is this Kantian idea which Herder identifies with Averroes' universal intellect:

Our philosophy of history shall not walk this path of "Averroean" philosophy, according to which the whole of humanity possesses just one soul, namely a very low one, which shares its being with the individual only in parts.¹²⁹

Whereas several authors wondered, whether Herder's identification of Kant as an Averroist is justified, not much attention has been paid to Herder's understanding of Averroes' concept of the intellect (referred to as "soul") in this passage. Even Martin Bollacher's meticulous textual commentary states that Herder's polemic is aimed at Averroes "only seemingly."¹³⁰ *Pace* Bollacher, Herder had very good reasons for his recourse to Averroes:

- In his critique of Kant, Herder refers to the material intellect as a separate substance which is somehow independent from human souls.

- Herder states that it is the "very low soul," which "communicates itself to the individual only in parts." With the notion of a "very low soul," Herder is seemingly referring to Averroes' material intellect. For according to Averroes' cosmology, there is a cosmological hierarchy of intellectual substances (the celestial spheres) with different grades of perfection according to the level of the contemplation of their origin, the prime mover. Within this hierarchy, the material intellect is the lowest intellect (a thesis also unique to Averroes).¹³¹

- From an epistemological point of view as well, the material intellect is the lowest of the intellects, since it has the least knowledge of the prime mover compared to the other intellects. For this reason, Herder might find Averroes' passive intellect similar to Kant's concept of the human intellect. For Kant also distinguishes two different kinds of in-

¹²⁹ Herder, *Ideen*, p. 338. Jean Paul echoes this critique of Herder when he notes "that the whole of humanity is only one soul, which communicates itself piecemeal to the individuals" (Jean Paul, *Exzerptheft*, V-BVA-03-1786-1787-0592).

¹³⁰ Martin Bollacher, *Stellenkommentar zu Herder, Ideen*, p. 1026. Unsurprisingly, Kant does not respond to the reproach of being an Averroist. He pretends to be more surprised that Herder announces a *philosophical* writing; see Kant, "Recension von Herders Ideen Theil 2," in *AA VIII*, p. 58-66, at 66.

¹³¹ See Richard C. Taylor, "Averroes' Philosophical Conception of Separate Intellect and God," in Ahmad Hasnawi (ed.), *La Lumière de l'intellect. La Pensée Scientifique et Philosophique d'Averroès dans Son Temps* (Peeters, 2011), p. 391-404, 396.

tellekt, namely, the intuitive intellect, which might be attributed to God, and the discursive human intellect. Whereas God has an intuitive intellect by whose intuition the intuited entities immediately exist, human understanding needs to refer to the sensual manifold and is able to cognize only by concepts. Thus, compared to the intuitive intellect of God, Kant's human intellect is indeed just as low as Averroes' passive intellect is as compared to the higher intellects.

- In some way, Kant's statement that "those natural capacities which are directed to the use of human reason are to be fully developed only in the race, not in the individual" also fits Averroes' material intellect. For Averroes, the only way in which an individual participates in the material intellect is operationally in the act of thought, insofar as her (individual) imagination presents the forms of material things to the intellect. Whereas in Averroes' commentaries on the soul we do not find the idea of a historically evolving actualization of the intellect or a universal history of mankind, in his commentary on Plato's *Republic* one can find the idea that one man cannot actualize all human perfections, but only an association of men, namely a state (*polis/madina*); therefore, man is political by nature.¹³²

- Referring again to the material intellect, Herder can associate Kant's idea that each individual dies while the species is immortal, with Averroes' proof for the eternity of the human species.¹³³ According to Averroes, the material intellect is in need of forms presented to it by *human* imagination. Now, the material intellect is eternal but cannot be without objects to think. Without human imaginations, the material intellect would not be able to think anything and therefore would cease

¹³² Averroes, *Kommentar des Averroes zu Platons Politeia*, trans. Simon Lauer, comm. E.I.J. Rosenthal, intr. Friedrich Niewöhner (Zurich: Spur, 1996), p. 37-38. This idea is not specific to Averroes and it has no immediate relation to his specific doctrine of the intellect, but it can also be found in other Arabic thinkers such as al-Farabi. But there is also some idea of progress in science in Averroes' *Faṣl al-Maqāl*: see Averroes, *Die entscheidende Abhandlung oder die Bestimmung des Zusammenhangs zwischen religiösem Gesetz und Philosophie: Zusatz. Die Untersuchung über die Methoden der Beweise im Rahmen der religiösen Glaubenssätze*, ed. and trans. P. O. Schaerer (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2010), p. 16-17.)

¹³³ *Intellectus enim qui dicitur materialis, secundum quod diximus, non accidit ei ut quandoque intelligat et quandoque non nisi in respectu formarum ymaginationis existentium in unoquoque individuo, non in respectu speciei; v. g. quod non accidit ei ut quandoque intelligat intellectum equi et quandoque non nisi in respectu Socratis et Platonis; simpliciter autem et respectu speciei semper intelligit hoc universale, nisi species humana deficiat omnino, quod est impossibile. Et secundum hoc sermo erit secundum suum manifestum.* (Averroes, *Commentarium magnum in de anima*, p. 448.)

to exist, which is impossible because of its eternity. Therefore, the human species must be eternal, too.¹³⁴

Nevertheless, in his *Ideas* Herder obviously has a critical view of Averroes' concept of the material intellect. But there is another work of Herder which also refers to Averroes' doctrine of the intellect, namely, his later *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity*. In this text Herder reveals a much more sympathetic appreciation of what he supposes to be Averroes' concept of the intellect. Here he suggests that it could be applied to his own idea of the "spirit of the age":

Whereas Averroes believed that the whole of humanity has only *one* soul in which every individual partakes in its own way, sometimes actively, sometimes passively, so would I apply this idea rather to the spirit of the age. Each one of us is subject to its command, sometimes actively, sometimes passively.¹³⁵

It is quite astonishing that in his *Letters* Herder now associates Averroes' doctrine of the intellect with his own idea of the spirit of the age. Because the spirit of the age – which he defines as “the sum of the thoughts, attitudes, strivings, drives, and life forces”¹³⁶ of a certain people at a certain time – is in a way Herder's counter-concept to the idea of a universal reason shared by most Enlightenment thinkers. And it is also a counter-concept to the idea of an approximate realization of this universal reason within the history of humankind as Kant supposed it to be, and with which Herder himself had associated Averroes' doctrine of the intellect in his earlier critique of Kant.

According to Herder, the spirit of the age interacts reciprocally with the individual. On the one hand, it determines each individual, for it strongly influences the mode of the individual's understanding and acting; on the other hand, it is itself determined by singular individuals, since it is not an absolute entity but only the spirit according to which the

¹³⁴ Averroes, *Commentarium magnum in de anima*, p. 406f.

¹³⁵ Herder, *Briefe zur Beförderung*, p. 85. To avoid ambiguities, I give the original German text: *Wenn Averroës glaubte, daß das ganze Menschengeschlecht nur eine Seele habe, an welcher jedes Individuum auf seine Weise, bald tätig, bald leidend teilnehme, so würde ich diese Dichtung eher auf den Geist der Zeit anwenden.* To translate the German term *Wenn* into English in this context is kind of intricate, since neither “if” nor “when” do fit. The first part of the text (“If Averroes ... passively”) does not express a condition in the sense of “if, and only if.” Otherwise, the correct German would be *nur eine Seele hätte* instead of *nur eine Seele habe*. Neither does it express temporality (when). Thus, I think “whereas” might be the best translation in order to avoid misunderstanding. I thank the anonymous referee for calling my attention to this issue.

¹³⁶ Herder, *Briefe zur Beförderung*, p. 88; trans. Barnard, 2003, p. 126.

members of a nation act, understand, etc. The concept of a “spirit of the age” thus summarizes Herder’s critique of the Enlightenment concept of a pure reason which understands independently of language, culture, and history. To the contrary, the spirit of the age is the quintessence of a certain form of rationality as it is realized in language, culture, etc.

4. PROSPECT

We have seen that it was not Kant and the mainstream Enlightenment that considered Averroes one of its forerunners; rather it was critical thinkers at the periphery of the Enlightenment, who understood reason as realized in history, who rediscovered and in a way reinvented Averroes. The first eighteenth-century German thinker who positively made use of Averroes’ doctrine of the material intellect was not an *Aufklärer*, but Herder, whom Isaiah Berlin even considered (for insufficient reasons which cannot be discussed here) an enemy of the Enlightenment. In any case, by identifying Averroes’ material intellect with the spirit of the ages as reason in history, Herder gives this concept a very specific interpretation as a counter-concept to the mainstream Enlightenment understanding of universal reason.

This opens up a new perspective of research. On the one hand, Hegel’s appreciation of Aristotle’s concept of *nous* is obvious and widely acknowledged, just as Herder’s influence on Hegel’s concept of historical reason is.¹³⁷ Clearly, Hegel’s notions of a spirit of the age and of a national spirit derive from Herder.¹³⁸ As “world spirit,” reason renders itself objective in the constitution, art, laws, manners, sciences, religion, and morals of different nations at different times. The “essences” of these constitutions etc. at different times are the different realizations of the spirit of the age.¹³⁹ Just as for Herder, each spirit of the age is for Hegel the result of a development that is handed down to a people by its tradition,¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ See Henry S. Harris, *Hegel’s Development: Towards the Sunlight 1770-1801* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 271; Otto Pöggeler, *Hegels Kritik der Romantik* (Munich: Fink, 1999), p. 32-33.

¹³⁸ See Stefan Schick, “The Spirit of the Age and Reason in History: Herder, Hegel, and Jacobi.” *Hegel-Studien*, vol. 52 (2019), p. 134-164.

¹³⁹ GW 27,1, 39; Frederick C. Beiser, “Hegel’s Historicism,” in Frederick C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), p. 270-300, at 274; Hans Friedrich Fulda, “Geschichte, Weltgeist und Weltgeschichte bei Hegel,” *Annalen der internationalen Gesellschaft für dialektische Philosophie Societas Hegeliana*, vol. 2 (1986), p. 58-105, at 64.

¹⁴⁰ Beiser, “Hegel’s Historicism,” p. 275.

which is regulated by the absolute, that is, the world spirit. Thus, the spirit of a specific age, being the concrete realization of the world spirit, is a certain stage in the evolution of humanity coming to the consciousness of itself as freedom. This consciousness is the fulfillment of reason. Conversely, the spirit of the world does not exist apart from its concrete realizations in the different spirits of the ages as actualizations of freedom.¹⁴¹ It would be worth investigating to what extent Hegel's adaption of Aristotle's *nous* and Herder's spirit of the age is also a continuation of Herder's rediscovery of Averroes.

¹⁴¹ Fulda, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2003), p. 234-235.