

IMPLICATIONS OF AVICEBRON'S NOTION OF WILL

Introduced into Neo-Platonic Metaphysics

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THE UNIQUENESS OF AVICEBRON

Avicbron, more properly called Salomon ben Gabirol, flourished as a poet and philosopher in Saragossa in the middle of the eleventh century. His major philosophical work, *Yanbu' al-Hayah* (Fount of Life) was known in Christian Europe under the title of the Latin translation, *Fons Vitae*. It was first translated in 1150 by members of the School of Toledo, the brilliant group of scholars working under Archbishop Raymond (1126-51) to bring Arabic learning to the West. The most widely known translation, however, was made by the Sicilian Gundissalinus, and it was this version which was read by Robert Grossteste (1175-1255), and Roger Bacon (1214-1292?), Albertus Magnus (1193-1277), Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274) and Duns Scotus (1274-1308). In the thirteenth century, we should add, a translation of an extract into Hebrew was made by Joseph Ibn-Falaquera.

Avicbron himself is an enigma. He was born in Malaga about 1021, and died in Valencia about 1058. His emphasis upon the Will of God and obvious leanings upon the apocryphal *Theology of Aristotle*, which emphasized the role of the Word of God as mediator between the Prime Cause and the Creation, made him appear as a Christian to Christendom. At the same time, he was undoubtedly a Jew. Jewish learning had reached a high level in Southern France and, flourishing under Moorish protection in Spain, it was very much in touch with the world of Arabic learning and paralleled the intellectual activity in Baghdad. It is almost certain that not only the metaphysics of Avicenna were an important influence upon Avicbron, but the doctrines of the Brethren of Sincerity also. Avicenna was a follower of Aristotle, whereas the Brethren of Sincerity were more aligned to the doctrines of Neo-platonism and Pythagoreanism.

He appears to have been connected with the Western Illuminist (*ishraqi*) school founded by ibn Masarra (883-931) of Cordova. The Illuminist brotherhoods introduced a complex word symbolism that had obvious influence upon the "Great Art" or thought-algebra of Raymond Lull (1235-1315). Perhaps more important were their contributions to the theoretical and practical aspects of the Intelligence that is beyond the ordinary mind. Avicbron, no doubt, played an important part in the arising of the philosophical viewpoint of the Franciscan Order. In Roger Bacon, and above all in Duns Scotus, there is fairly substantial evidence of a development of some of Avicbron's most original ideas and philosophical attitudes. Amongst Islamic philosophers, ibn-'Arabi (1165-1240) later brought into full expression the Illuminist philosophy which had been first expounded in the West by ibn Masarra and Avicbron, so that it paralleled the work of the great Eastern master al-Suhrawardi (<. 1191).

Thus he was at the focus of many streams of thought: Jewish, Islamic, Christian and Greek. Perhaps because of this, he was able to make the step that transformed the whole Neo-platonic scheme of explanation. For a thousand years, this scheme had exerted a powerful influence upon Western thought, including, of course, the father of Christian philosophy, St. Augustine. In Augustine there is an awkward contrast between the framework of revealed religion based on the notion of the free will of God and the framework of Neo-platonic thought based on the divinity of the Ideal Forms. In Avicbron, the two are reconciled and for the first time, *Will* comes forward as the central principle of metaphysical explanation.

Avicbron, however, never developed, as far as we are able to tell, the notion of will sufficiently to connect up metaphysics with practical problems of life.

In more recent times, it has been Kierkegaard who has seized again on will as the starting point of any authentic philosophy—which means one *integral* with actual personal life. But only in the context of modern thought have there arisen forms of thinking which can enable a comprehensive notion of will to be developed. As we shall attempt to explain, will is through and through *structural* in nature and can best be understood in terms of evolution and transformation, individuation and Individuality.

In our exposition of Avicbron's philosophy, we shall refer, for the sake of completeness, to both his forbears and his successors and attempt to develop the implications of his ideas, as we interpret them, in the context of modern modes of thinking.

Our first section briefly discusses the historical background of notions of matter and form and Avicbron's introduction of a third independent notion in Will. There follows an exposition of his notion of substance and the hierarchical structure of the world. The forms of thought belonging to Avicbron's scheme are then developed with respect to the problem of individuation, where we describe an elaboration of the notion of Will in the notion of *fragments of will operating within existence*. After that there comes a discussion of the nature of Intellect and its relation to mind. In this, the developed notion of will and an extension of Avicbron's doctrine of substances are used. Following on this, the action of Intelligence is considered with respect to the mediaeval view of the structure of the human mind.

The notion of the structural character of will is then developed. In this section we introduce together in one paragraph the words *compatibility*, *compresence* and *coalescence*. These designate distinct modes of togetherness. They have been formally defined in the paper *Towards an Objectively Complete Language* by Bennett, Bortoft and Pledge (*Systematics*, Vol. III, No. 3). We conclude with sections devoted to the notion of unity from the perspective of matter, form and will.

The source material is taken from Pierre Duhem's translations in volume five of his *Le Systeme du Monde*. The *Fons Vitae* was planned in three parts.

"In the complete science, there are three parts, which are: The science of Matter and Form, the science of Will, and, finally, the science of the prime Essence." (*Fons Vitae*, I, 7.)

The Latin title of the first part was: *Liber fontis vitae, de prima parte sapientiae, id est scientia de materia et forma universali*.

The second part is not extant, but had the title: *Origo largitatis et causa volendi esse*. This can be roughly translated as: "The Origin of Manifoldness and the Cause of Willing Actual Existence." We can only suspect that if the book ever came to light, it would confirm our elaborations on his doctrine of the will as they appear in the first part.

I must thank Mr. J. G. Bennett for invaluable aid in reducing the ambiguity and inconsistency of the paper. The remaining obscurities are entirely attributable to myself. I must also thank Miss S. Mallam for making the translations from Pierre Duhem's French text which are quoted here.

TWO COSMIC PRINCIPLES

The question of the origin of existence, raised by the Pre-Socratics who were in contact with the ancient doctrines of Mesopotamia and Egypt, became for the later Greek philosophers a question not of a process in time with *abeginning* in the past, but of the structure of existence as a whole present enigma. Anaximander, Thales and Anaximenes argued that there was a primal undifferentiated "stuff", differentiated by some active principle. This principle was variously called "*Nous*", or Intellect, "Generator of Opposites", and so on. In some way, the primal stuff had *latent* in it the separate and distinctive existences of the universe. The principle brought these into manifestations by definite stages: as in the vortex theory of Anaxagoras. At the same time, it is this principle which initiates and sustains the activity of existence and which imparts the power of manifestation. This is clear in the later Empedoclean doctrine of Love and Hate, the two principles which vie with each other and move the whole universe in cycles of integration and disintegration.

Some of these earlier thinkers considered, as far as one can tell, that the active principle and the primal stuff could not be considered apart from each other: they could not *stand*—or *be*—independently. However, in the doctrine of *Nous* or Intellect (misleadingly translated as "mind") there is obviously the notion of the independent being of an Intellectual Principle. The two attitudes are reflected in the difference between Plato and Aristotle: the former accepted the independent being of the world of Ideas, whereas the latter saw Form as being only when in conjunction with matter.

We cannot say how far back these notions go, but the same kind of notions are to be found in the *Enuma Elish*—the Sumerian Creation Epic first composed before the third millennium B.C. In it, the primal undifferentiated "waters" (Thales later called the ultimate substance "water") of Apsu, Tiamat and Mummu "were" before any particular existence or entity appeared. This unmanifest triad of the "sweet waters of the Abyss" the "bitter waters of the ocean" and "mist" is profoundly interesting, for it suggests the *latency* of form, matter and existence in the prime undifferentiated state. Manifestation is then represented as a progression through a primal duality to a complex of relationships ending in the fixation of existence: Matter (Tiamat) is divided and anchored at the limits of existence; Pure Form (Apsu) is separated into a nonexistent (sleep) state and the vagueness of existence (Mummu) "tethered". The Pre-Socratics attempted more explicit explanations, and Plato put forward a few "fables" (such as those in the *Timaeus* and the *Republic*); but not until the Neo-platonists is there a direct confrontation with the problem. It was somewhat obscured by the doctrine of the "Eternity" of the world proposed by Aristotle: a necessary conclusion of his belief in the inseparability, except by abstraction, of form and matter. This doctrine was accepted by most Arabic followers of Greek thought, save for a few important exceptions. With Avicbron, the doctrine was directly opposed and the philosopher was thereby endeared to the Christian West.

This short review of early ideas indicates the basic conceptual frame-work of the philosophy of the two cosmic principles. Together with the basic duality of form and matter, and the problem of their independent being, we have to consider the relevance of a primal undifferentiated state which is not to be wholly identified with matter. For, we must understand that the terms "matter" and "form", as well as representing *distinct* realities, are also *relative*. Aristotle emphasized, for example, the relativity of substantiality: to each kind of existence there corresponds a different kind of *substance*. Though substance, again, is not to be identified with matter—this we shall explore later—it does correspond, in part, with matter taken in the relative sense. Matter is not the same as the undifferentiated state—this is implicit in the *Enuma Elish*. The Brethren of Sincerity—a powerful group of Islamic thinkers who flourished in the tenth century and greatly influenced later philosophy by their encyclopaedic labours—called the undifferentiated state the *Primitive Foundation*. That foundation is ontologically very distant from the matter inhering even in material objects. A whole interplay of forms act before matter can arise which can be *composed* into bodies.

The Primitive Foundation appears to denote a realm wherein form and matter *cannot be distinguished*; but, one could also say, they are so totally apart that they are in a state of pure latency and exhibit their purely distinctive characteristics. These contradictory formulations cannot be amalgamated into a compromise definition, for that would do violence to the ideas.

Here we introduce the valuable notion of *threshold*. The Primitive Foundation, taken on the threshold of existence, represents the completely formless state of pre-existence. The "form of corporeity" (using Avicbron's phrase) must act before existence is possible. Again, this state will be discussed more fully later. On the threshold of *pure form*, it represents absolute latency. Considered from the realm of pure form, it has the unity of pure being given by the primal infusion of the unity of form. In Neo-platonic thought, unity had many modes, and further explanation must be deferred until the argument has been developed.

We have established enough to grasp that the concepts of matter and form, as well as representing the most general abstractions which can be made from our experience of existing things, were regarded as means of apprehending realities beyond the domain of particular existences. The two principles establish two paths of abstraction. Because there are two paths and not one, we escape the impasse to which Parmenides was led, which consists in affirming that the *only reality* is Being, or the One, and all else

is *illusion*. The two paths suggest the possibility of the reality of states of pure matter and pure form which might be crucial for understanding existence itself. Not only that, they give the basis for describing a *hierarchy of existence* with its implication of conditions of *pre-existence* and *supra-existence*. As we shall see, the hierarchy developed by Avicbron, following in this great tradition of thought, was far from being a simple and unconvincing linear scale.

One further point must be made clear. In the doctrines of Plotinus— where Neo-platonic ideas were developed to the most sublime heights—the duality of matter and form assumed a moral character. Matter was considered as the gross, dark and corruptible aspect of existence—and therefore "evil"—whereas form was taken to be the incorporeal, light and imperishable element that is free from limitation—and therefore "good". These characteristics were made the basis for an imperative to shun matter and turn to form. The implied rejection of matter was not agreed to by such thinkers as Avicbron who taught that, with every degree of form, is to be associated a matter; and with every degree of matter, a form. This did not disallow the reality of states of form and matter beyond the realm of degrees, but led to a thorough-going relativity which vitiated the ethical interpretation of Plotinus.

We have already said that matter—as in the thought of the Pre-Socratics—was considered to be in a state of latency: existing things were "brought out" by the application of form. Matter is disposed to *receive* form. This is a different notion from the attitude that form *takes hold of* matter—which is one interpretation of the Pythagorean doctrine of the two principles of the Unlimited (Matter) and the Limiting (Form). The two can be considered together in *one Idea* if we see that the conjunction of form and matter requires *an act that cannot be provided by either*. This act can be said to *prepare* matter and *direct* form. It can also be said to *conjoin* them, as an *act*. This raised the problem of the *reason* of this conjunction which we shall meet again later when we refer to the discussion by Roger Bacon of individuation.

In the general description, Avicbron speaks of form disposed to give of its power to matter and by the Light (or Divine Illumination) of the Will of the Creator, and matter enabled also by the will to desire form as a movement towards unity. The constitution of the "form" and "matter" concerned, then determine their mode of conjunction. For example, the matter of the four elements (fire, air, earth, water) desires the form of bodies having colour, shape, etc. There is a hierarchy of relationships, where the form "above" the matter represents the unity towards which matter strives.

This idea of two basic cosmic urges—to create by differentiation and to become unified—is also very ancient. It is part of the doctrine of the cosmic involution and evolution whereby existence is diversified and integrated. There is a third element which reconciles immanence and transcendence.

In the hierarchy elaborated by Avicbron, every level is both material and formal in nature. Matter and Form are not different substances. But substances to which the form of corporeity applied were distinguished from those to which it did not apply. This was the distinction— between "composite" and "simple" substances. Aquinas, on the other hand, equated the simple substances, such as Intellectual substance, with matterless form. In doing this, he exemplified the dominant trend of Neoplatonic and Scholastic thought: to regard matter as meaning the corruptible, the source of separation and disintegration. Avicbron interpreted matter in a deeper sense as the ground of the homogeneity of existence, extending in a scale of increasing subtlety from the hyle to the matter of Intellect itself. He did this, as we shall see later more clearly, in order to avoid attributing to form the *cause* of creation and unity.

Avicbron was almost unique in grasping the significance of a notion of *will*. For a thousand years and more the problem of the structure and existence of the world had been considered only in terms of being. The Ideal Forms had become invested with the attributes of divinity such as creative power and inherent unity. Avicbron saw that the *distinction of matter and form required explanation*, and that neither matter nor form could be considered as the Primal Cause which must reside in an Act of God. Further, if form is to be *operative* in material things, it must itself be in some way material.

With Avicbron, then, the Neo-platonic tradition progressed from the dyad to the triad; but the complexity of the new synthesis to be established could only have been met with modern structural modes of thought. Avicbron was led into certain inconsistencies. For example, he answered the problem

of *individuation* in classical Neo-platonic terms. From our interpretation, the important thing is that it is *will* which is the principle of individuation.

In what follows, Avicbron's own expositions will be supplemented by material from Plotinus, Aquinas and Roger Bacon. But our main concern will be to use the intuitions of Avicbron towards a better understanding of the "cosmology" of will. With the step from dyad to triad, the character of the two terms changes. Matter and Form in Avicbron's scheme have different implications than those in the classical one, because they are *in relationship with will*.

Behind these controversies, however, there is the important problem of the *individuality* of entities, which was never satisfactorily resolved. The hierarchy of existence is confined to *ontology* and does not touch upon questions of the *Will*. To anticipate our conclusions, we can say here that *will as the principle of individuation* was the crucial element which was missing in Neo-platonic and Scholastic thought.

We must, however, return to the task in hand: to formulate the two cosmic principles in a non-superficial way so that we will not be led to restrict their application to any particular level or mode of existence. We are following in the path of Avicbron who, above all others, understood these two principles as cosmic realities—that is as essentially a coalescence of immanence and transcendence with respect to all "universes".

Form and matter do not have a lexicographical but a structural meaning. As we have said, they represent two paths of abstraction which acquire content only when applied. The paths of abstraction are complemented in the understanding by a real movement towards concreteness, which corresponds to the will. How they differentiate and coalesce into the multiplicity and order of the universe involves other categories: substance and its relativity, existence and individuation. These we will now study.

SUBSTANCE AND ITS RELATIVITY

Every substance in Avicbron's scheme is a coalescence of form and matter. His exposition of the relativity of substance runs as follows:

1. No form without matter, no matter without form.
2. Every substance is given form by a higher substance and matter by a lower substance. But these higher and lower substances, in their turn, are form and matter together.
3. There are three realms: Nature, Soul, Intellect.
4. The realm of Nature is that of inanimate existence where every thing is composed out of hyle or corporeal matter: matter disposed to receive quantity.
5. The realm of Intellect is that of *simple* substances constituted of structures of forms, free of corporeal matter, but having the power to impress order on the material world.
6. The realm of Soul is intermediary; it corresponds to what we would call Life. It is the realm of meeting between Intellect and Nature.

There are three levels: the vegetative, the sensitive and the animal or rational. Certain *active powers* *subsist* in each of these, but the inferior substance does not contain all that is in the superior. The vegetative soul corresponds to the level of constructive and self-regulating organic activity. The sensitive soul corresponds to the sensitivity exhibited in animal perception.

The rational soul is able to think: it corresponds to *mind*. Organic regulation, sensation and mentation form a strict hierarchy. The higher can organize the lower.

7. The souls "contain" bodies in the sense of permeating and encompassing all activities in them.
8. Soul is connected with Intellect by participation. Intellect can inform Soul from within.

"Thus, the more a simple substance is elevated and pure, the more it has the aptitude for receiving multiple forms and of taking in all sorts of shapes. . . . But, in the higher substances, the reduction of these diverse forms to unity is greater and more manifest than in the case of lower substances. Thus it is for Souls when one compares them with Nature. It is the same until we arrive at the most subtle and the

most simple, which is the Substance of Intelligence; this very substance must be the one that, in its essence and in its unity, comprises and understands all forms and unites them the most intimately." (*Fons Vitae*, V, 16.)

9. The Universal Forms of Nature reside in the Universal Intellect.

Avicenna regards the substances of Nature as "composite"; and those of Intellect, "simple". Intellect is inferred to be simple because it is that which gives *unity* to existence: forms—which reside in the Intellectual world—give a coherence to the composite. The substances of life—the souls—are strictly intermediate substances, being both composite and simple. "Life-stuff" or soul is not a blend of corporeal matter and intellect, but an independent substance, or set of substances, displaying both intellectual or formal power and material characteristics such as those of impermanence.

The three Universals of Nature, Soul (Life) and Intellect (Spirit) define *three distinct substantial realms* each with their typical *modus operandi*. In our interpretation, these can be characterized in terms of *motion*. Nature is *in motion*, Soul or Life has *independent motion*, and in Intellect or Spirit there is the *act prior to motion*. A similar comparison could be made in terms of any sensible quality. These comparisons are useful in that they are not grounded on the notion of universality.

The substances of Nature, Soul and Intellect can be combined in various ways, and when they are, the higher acts as the repository of form, and the lower as the substratum of matter. A material body arises because there is a predisposed matter, or hyle, capable of quantitative existence. On the other hand, the characteristics of a body which we discern through our senses (sensitive soul), which we call properties, are the manifestations of the activity of forms. These forms reside in a simple substance called *Nature*, which is simple by being a Universal Form in which all particular forms which act on corporeal matter are gathered up. This, in its turn, inheres in the Universal Intellect which is totally free of quantifiable matter.

Thus all that is bodily is contained in the simple substance of Nature and arises out of the substratum of Hyle. One could say that bodies exist upon a field of quantity through an organizing field of quality which brings about the structuring evident to our senses. Nature is here a spiritual substance—when considered in itself. Hyle is pure corporeal substance. It is in itself a blend of form and matter, of the Undifferentiated formless state and the form of "corporeity". It is matter on the threshold of dimensionality: whereas Nature is substance on the threshold of pure Intellect.

The realm of Nature as Avicenna saw it can be described by the following propositions: —

1. Undifferentiated Matter or ABSOLUTE UNIVERSAL MATTER

acted on by the
Form of CORPOREITY
gives
HYLE or bare existence.

2. Hyle

acted on by the
Forms of Universal BODY
gives
BODILY EXISTENCE.

3. Corporeal Existence

acted on by the
Forms of Universal NATURE
gives
SENSIBLE EXISTENCE with MOTION and
sensible QUALITIES.

4. The multiple forms of corporeal existence are unified in the Form of Universal Body.

5. The multiple forms of sensible existence are unified in the Form of Universal Nature.

6. The Form of Universal Nature contains the Form of Universal Body.

7. The Form of Universal Intellect contains the Form of Universal Nature.

We interpret three hierarchies in this scheme:

1. That of particular to universal, viz. the universals Body, Nature, Intellect.
2. That of the universals themselves.
3. That of the hierarchy of substances, viz. Hyle, bodies, sensibles; Body, Nature, Intellect.

The Universals are *simple substances*. They are distinguished by their *degree of omnipresence*. The containment of forms within forms is different from the containment of particulars within universals. The first is a *gradation of quality*, whereas the second is founded on degree of *universality of power*. They become identical in the pure Intellect.

Nature is substantial and within Nature all sensible things have their being. It is a simple substance; that is, the fragmentation which is a property of corporeal matter does not apply. Thus the forms in Nature are different from the forms as they apply in sensible things. The importance of this doctrine as a mental preparation for theoretical science is obvious. The forms as they apply to sensible things suffer a diversification from "the diversity which exists in the parts of space occupied by hyle; this diversity is fixed as the diverse orders at the bosom of the simple hyle."

Body in respect of form is contained in Nature, and Nature in turn is contained in Soul and Soul in Intellect. The Intellect is then in its turn dependent on the "light" of the Will of God.

According to this doctrine, the qualities of sense-perception (belonging to Nature) are manifestations of spiritual realities. But only through the intellect can these realities be directly seen. There they are seen through a unity of being: what is known is what the knowing is—the subject and object are identical. But this identity is an act—for the distinction of potential and actual remains.

The Intellect is simple because it is purely formal and *coheres in itself*. The Souls are dependent for their coherence on the Intellectual realm. Bodies are wholly dependent on the forms residing in Nature for their motions, properties and qualities. But there is a hierarchy of Intellectual substances. The Universal Intellect embraces all forms: in knowing them it is them: in being them, it acts as them. But they are multiple, finding *Unity* in the Universal Intellect: just as the particular forms of bodies find a unity in the Universal Body, and all forms applying to corporeal existence find a unity in Nature. As Avicbron said in the passage quoted above:

"The more a simple substance is elevated and pure, the more it has the aptitude for receiving multiple forms ... the substance of Intelligence ... unites them the most intimately."

Intelligence—which we would interpret as "Intellect in action"—is simple as a *matter*. The matter inhering in Intelligence is not corporeal, but of close affinity to the forms of Intelligence themselves.

As we ascend the scale of substances, we see that in the higher form and matter become increasingly alike; whereas in the lower, they become quite distinct.

"This is what manifests the truth, that: The matter of Intelligence is more simple and more intimately united with form than the matter of the Soul: it is the same in the relationship of the matter of the Soul and of Nature, and so on, until we arrive at the Body, in the bosom of which the greatest diversity and the greatest multiplicity meet. One can say as much for the divers orders within the body: the heavenly body has more unity and simplicity than the bodies of the elements; among the elements that which is higher has more unity and simplicity than that which is found below it." (*Fons Vitae*, V, 42.)

It is relevant to point out here that this mutual relativity of matter and form removes all suggestion that form *in itself* is the ultimate cause of *unity*. Avicbron has allowed *equal status* to form and matter as they inhere in substances. It is only in the lower realms of composite substances that form stands apart from matter and acts, as it were, from "on high". The matter of form is not the matter of body or of soul, but it is still material. Thus everything that exists is material. What then makes the difference between the lower and higher realms? Avicbron answers this in terms of the *action of the Supreme Will*. Unity stems from Will, but this unity acts through intermediaries and establishes a world of multiplicity by the *fiat* of Matter and Form.

Hence, the hierarchy and relativity of substance is the result of Will. With this insight, Avicbron broke free from the doctrine of emanation, which attributed the scale of substantiality *entirely* to degrees of proximity to a Prime Source. By postulating the operation of Will directly on matter, he gave an *independent* meaning to evolutionary striving. The logical conclusion of the scheme is that *will establishes a substantial structure permitting varying degrees of freedom for its own operation*. Since the second part of his treatise, on the Will itself, has been lost, we cannot know whether he in fact worked out the implications of his scheme and came to a true doctrine of the Will. We can see, however, that he diverged radically from the classical tradition in his treatment of substance.

We can interpret Avicbron's hierarchy of substances as a blending of hierarchies of matter and form. The hierarchy of matter is from the gross to the subtle; that of form, from multiplicity to unity. Thus Avicbron avoids making a barren dualism of Matter and Form: in his philosophy they are complementary features of everything that exists—from the highest Intellect to the lowest particle. Later, Scholastics tended to reject this insight. For form—as the intellectual or spiritual side of human nature—was incorruptible and hence 'immaterial'. Leaving aside the question of how Intellect or form can then act on a substance *totally other in kind* (the souls), the notion of the immateriality of the intellect made it difficult to see how there could be transformation or activity in it. For that is the crucial feature of the matter: it is the *stratum or field of transformation*.

This is not to neglect the genius of Plotinus who conceived of an *intellectual activity* which *preceded* the imprinting of matter. Above all others, he was able to liberate his audience from the deadening sense of a static eternity of immobile Ideal Forms. His Intellectual World is the very source of all dynamism.

We simply have to recognize that on the *threshold* of composite substances at least—such as the rational soul of man—the Intelligence must enter a field of matter and permeate it throughout. It must be "latently present" for there is no distance between the rational soul and the intellect—nor between anything and the universal Intelligence—when we grasp that the *intermediaries* are not in spatial zones. Permeation and presence imply an underlying homogeneity which Avicbron allows for by attributing to each—soul and intellect—a matter. In doing so, however, the *act* of penetration and making actually present is separated from form itself and given to *Will*.

If we turn to the philosophy of Plotinus we do not find any notion corresponding to an *act of will*. He sought the explanation of everything in the Active-Intelligence. But he could never show a convincing explanation of how Intelligence operated on Matter or why the Primal One emanated into the multiplicity of Intelligence. His Authentic-Existing is a state of unity aspiring to further unity. It is a notion of *Being*. With Avicbron, Being is separated from Will and Will stands revealed as the central pivot of any system of explanation.

We should restate the two modes of multiplicity. The first is that which inheres in the Universals: in Intellect resides multiplicity of forms, which enter a second mode of multiplicity in applying to conditioned matter.

"Every corporeal substance is composite and completely passive. But a spiritual substance is, at one and the same time, active and passive; for it is simple in one way and composite in another. That which is at the same time active and passive, composite in one aspect and simple in another, comprises a multitude of forms; and if it comprises a multitude of forms, it is because in it these multiple forms have power. In every simple substance, therefore, there are a multitude of forms in power. Now, all of that which contains a multitude of forms in power makes them pass from power to act [as *operations*]. Every simple substance is therefore the agent that brings about the action of forms through the power contained in it." (*Fons Vitae*, III, 22.)

We should ask: how are the forms distinguished from each other in the universal? Place or time do not apply, nor can we apply considerations of quantity or of composition.

Distinction itself requires questioning. This, too, is a form which requires a locus and is evidently of an Universal character. Avicbron gave the nine categories of Aristotle—Quantity, Quality, Relation, Space (where), Time, Position (to be situated), State (to have), Activity (to act), Passivity (to suffer)—as the ultimate simple substance (Substance, or the "what" was the first of the total of ten categories); the prime Universal. Other Neo-platonists have placed there the essence of number: that is, number as a concrete active power which permeates the whole creation, not number as the distinction and combination of unitary elements.

The Universal must govern how the forms apply: that is, the process of Creation itself. For convenience, we can distinguish two "phases".

The first is the *self-commanding* of Form. Universal Form commands the order of forms which proceed within it. Remember that the Universal is not a form side by side with the multiplicity of forms—one of the many—it is the encompassing one which the many manifest, which the many are. The Universal is more than self-knowing—i.e. intellect—it is almost self-creating. Almost—because the power of creation is sent by the light of the Will of God and *does not reside in Form itself*.

Self-commanding, Form orders form. The eternity of form is not everlastingness, nor unchangingness unless measured by the changes of Nature. We must picture a *timeless activity* taking place *before any* manifestation.

When it comes to manifestation, there is an order of precedence which is again governed by the power of the Universal. Here we meet again the hierarchy of substances. Avicenna, in his *Resml f'l-hikmet* elaborates a numerological symbolism which depicts the structuring of creation in terms of the Arabic alphabet—this being itself a revelation of the order of creation.

The Universals are omnipresent and transmit an inner power of structuring. Avicenna wrote:

"Observe that spiritual substance has *no boundaries*; concentrate on its power; think of the power that it possesses enabling it to penetrate all things which are situated in front of it and which are prepared to receive it; then establish a comparison between it and corporeal substance. You will see that the corporeal substance has no power to *be everywhere at the same time*, and that it is too feeble to *penetrate into things*. Then, on the contrary, you will find a simple substance, the substance of the Universal Soul, diffused through the entire World. Thanks to its simplicity and its subtlety, it contains the world in itself. Also, you will find that the substance of Universal Intelligence is spread throughout the entire World and that it penetrates the World. It is so because of the subtlety of these two substances, of their strength, of their luminous character; the substance of Intelligence penetrates into the interior of things and infuses them there." (*Fons Vitae*, III, 15. Our italics.)

From our perspective, Form working in matter or *immanent* can be said to be *organizing*. Form taken in itself or *transcendent* can be said to be *self-knowing* with a *power of command*.

These correspond to the "second" and "first" existence of the *intelligibles* or forms as expounded by Duns Scotus in his Oxford Commentary. He propounded a third existence of the intelligible forms as they operate in our reason, a notion that will appear in our discussion of Intelligence. However, the distinction between the "first" and the "second" modes of existence must be made more clear. In the framework of our interpretation, the first is the *operational field* between Form and forms and the second the *organizing field* between forms and their material supports.

One can take the analogy of officers being trained to take command. When they actually enter the field and take charge of a battalion, they can only imperfectly fulfil their role. The men may not be up to the mark, the battle throws the battalion into confusion; communication with headquarters breaks down.

In the training centre, there was the situation of the *delegation of the power of self-commanding*. There are men who are officers before they lead. All training centres abide by the established *pattern of authority* and ways of conduct. The Universal "substance" is military discipline which permeates everywhere in the army.

This picture suggests that the simplicity of the Universal substance is primarily that of *authority*. But authority is *exercised* only through *patterns of organization*; and these work only in special conditions. The Supreme High Command cannot speak to each individual trooper; for the High Command, individual troops have no meaning—what matters are battalions, regiments, and so on.

The hierarchy of substances reveals a *relativity of the eternal*. The form of the substance above is a changeless pattern of organization for the substance below.

Using the analogy above, we can interpret what Avicenna called "intermediate substances" as means of transmission and organization which can be called *pattern-bearing*. These are *operational modes* of the simple

substances. Intelligence, for example, is the operational mode of the Universal Intellect: it enters into all knowing and is directed by creative act.

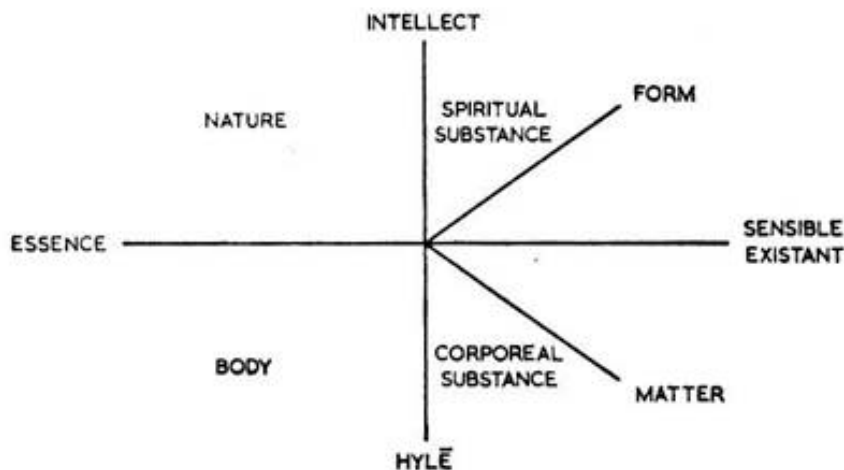
AN INTERPRETATIVE REPRESENTATION OF AVICEBRON'S SCHEME OF SUBSTANCES

Now Universalization applies equally to Matter as to Form. We have said that the matter of material things has been predisposed by an operation of corporealization to sensible existence. We have also said that Intelligence is free of corporeal matter. Avicbron postulated an Absolute Universal Matter as the common ground of corporeality and Intelligence. The matter of Intelligence is the same matter as that which can receive the form of corporeality and achieve material existence. In the development of Avicbron's ideas by Duns Scotus, this matter is called *materia primo-prima*. Nevertheless, as we said before, matter and form remain distinct and Intelligence itself is not conditionable by material limitations.

The Universal Matter resides where Form does not apply. Yet Universal Matter and Universal Form must be coterminous. Here we encounter a remarkable threshold—that of the *fiat ex nihilo* of God.

To return to Form, we can distinguish three states. First, Form in the state of "self-ordering". Secondly, form in *transcendent activity*. Thirdly, form inherent in a conditioned substance, or *immanent form*. These distinctions have to be taken together with the *hierarchy of substances*. Form hi itself is pure Being to be associated with a Unity of Will. As transcendent activity, it involves matter and corresponds to unconditioned modes of action, or universal operations. Immanent in particular existences it is the power of organization and represents the eternal component that contrasts with multiplicity and change. Hence we have the situation that from the Unity of Form there arises the multiplicity of forms, each of which then brings about a unity in particular things. This brings Form into involvement with the *materia secundo-prima* (Duns-Scotus) instrumental to propagation or *informatur* and the *materia tertio-prima* (Duns Scotus) underlying transformation. We will leave until later the implications of this for the operation of different states of will.

A complex structure has to be grasped: a particular thing is *permeated* with a spiritual substance and *composed* out of a corporeal substance; hi it inheres a manifest form and its composition in terms of the elements, or whatever can be deduced. It exists *within* Nature, and is an *exemplar* of Body. All of this can be represented by the diagram below. The notion of *Essence* and its relevance here will be discussed in the next section.



Within the Universal Nature sensible things have their substantiality. This substantiality is a coalescence of the active forms which arise from Nature and the bodily matter which is supported by the Hyle.

The threshold between the sensible existant and spiritual substance consists of the perceptible *organization* due to the *immanent form*.

The threshold between the corporeal substance and the sensible existant is the material *composition* which is not directly perceived, but inferred. This will consist of the four elements, or the "sub-lunar" matter subject to generation and corruption.

The upper limit of spiritual substance is the Intellect, in which Nature is summed up together with the soul in which the sensible existant is perceived.

The lower limit of corporeal substance is the bare hyle with its primary differentiation according to the various "parts of space". This differentiation is summed up in the overall form of the Body.

The scheme allows for a whole range of perceptible entities, including that of the celestial bodies, composed of a matter not subject to disintegration. In this case, the spiritual substance would include the "Celestial Intelligences" for whom the sphere of the stars is a special locus of action.

Intellect is represented as a line which penetrates to the centre where it meets hyle. The centre, then, represents Universal Matter, and is validly depicted as a dimensionless point.

Intellect can penetrate everywhere where it can find itself, i.e. into all things save the hyle.

The threshold between Nature and Body can be seen as representative of the *orders of Nature*. The primal differentiation of "space" as the ground state determines the locus of each land of corporeal existence.

AVICEBRON'S VIEWS ON UNITY, CREATION AND INDIVIDUATION

The usual Neo-platonic explanation of individuation ran as follows:

The form of corporeity brings about a state of separation in the hyle. There apply the distinctions of time, place and quantity as well as of number. Thus corporeal matter is inherently a substance of separation and is responsible for the distinctions between individuals belonging to the same species.

All the instances of a universal, such as "all men", are exemplars of a single form, such as that of the species *man*. Beyond that lay the single form of the genus of rational beings and so on. What was multiple in corporeal substance was a manifestation of a unity in spiritual substance.

It followed that all individuation was a result of the action of a form, single in itself, upon a matter that could support only separated existences, i.e. bodies. There was an Intellectual substance which was the very stuff of the ultimate forms which applied to all that existed: the substance of Universal Order.

The circularity of the argument is fairly clear. If one postulates a universal that is single but applies in a multitude of individual cases, then it is by definition an account of matter that diversification of the Universal takes place. Avicbron, it must be admitted, followed this doctrine. However, in attempting to describe the relation of the Universal Form to the multiplicity of forms, he could not use the argument that this was due to *corporeal* matter. The multiplicity within the simple substances was certainly attributed to matter; but, assuming consistency in his scheme of substances, this is the matter of the Universal Form itself.

"All diversity, all division which is met with among forms, originates not from form looked at in itself, but from the matter which serves as support for forms." (*Fons Vitae*, V, 14.)

The Unity of the Universal Form is peculiar in that it is intrinsically capable of division and multiplicity. The way in which this comes about is by *engagement in matter*. This is the prime matter, the *Universal Matter*, and this engagement is the second stage of creation after the creation of Matter and Form. It was called by Avicbron *hylearsis* or materialization.

Avicbron spoke of the Universal Form as that Form which was *exemplified* in all other forms. Exemplification does not mean replication or duplication, but an "interpretation" according to circumstances. Descending the hierarchy of substances, the Universal Form finds exemplification in a complex of forms, which, in their turn, have to find application in a matter and finally reach a state of manifestation and separation.

In Aristotle's *Metaphysics* there is a formal proof that there can be no all-embracing *class* such as "Being" or "One". Form is not a notion of logic. We can come to some appreciation of the supra-logical status of the Unity of Universal Form by the following considerations. Let us say that there is a prime form of *oneness*, whereby any kind of unity or *whole* can be recognized by the intelligence; let us also suppose a *twoness*, whereby distinctions, pairing, complementarity, conflict and so on can also be recognized. Then we have to admit a single form which is the unity of oneness and twoness and not a further category to be placed beside these two. For if it could, we would have to seek a unifying form between the third and the other two and so on *ad infinitum*. Unity of form implies a *structural* unification which is *prior* to manifestation. The word "structure" is used here because a set of independent conditions have to be coalesced. In our example, there would have to be integrated: the *similarity and difference* of oneness and twoness; the *togetherness* of oneness and twoness; the *hierarchical distinction* between the ultimate category and the other two.

When we described this kind of unity as supra-logical it was also to emphasize that the usual view of Neo-platonic thought as a reification of logic is too limited a view. The hierarchy of individual, species, genus, family, etc., can be founded on the basis of similarity and difference; since it is a matter of sheer classification. But what we find at the heart of the notion of form is a unity that is not describable in these terms. This was emphasized by Duns Scotus. In the instance of a man, he asserted a *pluralitas formarum* which has at its summit a *forma ultima*. This highest form *is unity with respect to all the rest*, both matter and form. The practice of *speculatio*, or play of intellect in disciplined discussion (Erigena) and that of Abelard's *dialectic* more closely correspond to the disciplines to be associated with this tradition. They allow for *triadic reasoning* (exemplified in the example above) and this is a necessary component of the scheme. We shall return to this at the end.

Before pursuing further the supra-logical realm of formal unity, we should take note of a contradiction. Matter in general can be called *amorphous* and lacking in distinctions. In its pre-existent mode it is literally *nothing*. Then, it is only by the application of form to matter that distinctiveness can arise: this distinctiveness is not in prime matter itself. This appears to conflict with the notion that it is to *matter* we should look for the source of multiplicity and division.

"But", objects the disciple in Avicenna's treatise, "Since form is only diversified and multiplied through the multiplicity of matters, how is it that the same Hyle can have different forms, for example the forms of the four elements?" (*Fons Vitae*, IV, 15.)

The problem is capable of resolution in the light of the notion of hierarchy. On one level of substance, a set of forms *inhere*. From another level of substance, another set of forms *act*. The *inhering forms* provide a *field* with a minimal differentiation and distinctiveness in which the *acting forms can operate*. Thus, corporeal substance gives, amongst other things, the field for the bodily existence of souls, supporting *life-activity*. Further, the two lower souls provide a field for the vital existence of rational beings, supporting *mental-activity*. Again, the rational soul provides a field for the operation of Intellect, or *Intelligence*.

These explanations leave out of account the problem of the *specificness* of the action of forms. The differentiation of existence is far from exhausted by a single set of *levels*. The notion of *field* which we have introduced suggests the possibility of *concentration* of action. Between the unity of form and the differentiation of corporeal matter lies the complexity of concentration, exemplified by human beings which are specific coalescences of intellect, soul and body (though normally spoken of as a dual only—soul and body). This will be discussed in the next section.

Let us consider the "movement" of form towards matter and of matter towards form. Matter desires unity, and this is the same as a desire to receive form. It is said that matter "gives itself up" or "dies" to receive form. This evolutionary urge to return to the Source is a desire for "The Good", since in the ultimate Unity, goodness resides.

It is, indeed, difficult for us to appreciate such a notion, to conceive of matter which we consider to be inert and wholly passive, as endowed with an urge towards perfection that is a *value-impulse*, as well as an *existential force*. We have to picture a movement of the passive that is to place the passive under the action

of the active. It is an "opening", a making vacant, also, so that form will be attracted, seeking to give of itself. But it is not an act arising out of matter as such; neither is the complementary desire of form self-produced:

"Every simple substance desires that what it possesses potentially should pass into act." (*Fons Vitae*, III, 20.)

This is in *imitation* of God, and in *exemplification* of the *impulse* which He communicates to form.

"This Primary influx, that envelops all substances, is the one that compels them to have influence the one upon the other. The sun will furnish you with an example of this: it is not the sun itself that has given itself the power to radiate; if it emits its rays, it is because it is subject to the Primary Influence which it obeys." (*Fons Vitae*, III, 13.)

The primal influx stirs the simple substances and from this a flux arises that is instrumental to their realization in matter: a movement and a desire. It is a *communication* of the Will of God with form, where the latter is: *instrumental* to the Divine Will; *exemplary* of the Divine Being; *imitative* of the Divine Action.

The Unity of the Universal Form is, in reality, a unity *imprinted* by the Primary Unity of God. Thus God establishes a *Universal Individuation*. But the communication of God to form permeates all levels of substance: it is as a light which diminishes in intensity the farther it reaches from its source. The "Light of God" is the illumination that communicates *God's Wish* to Existence.

"When we speak of a light near to Will, you must imagine that it is in *direct harmony*, and *without an intermediary*, with the Will. You must explain in the same way the proximity of one part of the light to another." (*Fons Vitae*, IV, 19. Our italics.)

But what of the side of matter? It is by the Word of God that matter is enabled to desire unity from form. We have already mentioned that it is the power of God which *prepares* matter to receive form; that this was necessary in order to derive a matter from the Universal Matter capable of responding to form. At the threshold, however, there is a formless desire which is the direct working of the Word or Will of God.

Avicenna often uses the words Light, Word and Will quite indiscriminately. We have fixed the term "Word" to apply to the operation directly on formless matter because, according to Avicenna, in the Universal Matter lies the Wisdom or Knowledge that God has. The Word "awakens" matter. Hence there is a Cosmic Operation that immediately communicates to the extremities of matter and form; that establishes them as distinct; that impels them towards each other so that they can coalesce in a world of action.

The last is the establishment of the mutual desire of matter and form for unification. In Avicenna's scheme, this desire is itself a substance and is *Love*, the substance of Unitive Power.

In passing into form, the Will of God is as a light or Illumination that directly works through the Intellect and indirectly then in the domain of composite substances as its intensity becomes diminished in the multiplicity of existing things. In that domain, each form works independently, and, as we move lower, we find a greater and greater "confusion" of movements in the density and grossness of the lower corporeal substances.

"There you will see that everything, although separated, reaches out to mingle the one with the other. At the extreme inferior level, therefore, there will be confusion as at the extreme superior level there is union." (*Fons Vitae*, V, 35.)

By introducing explicitly the notion of Will, Avicenna made a bridge between the "gnostic" and "other-worldly" orientation of the earlier tradition and the Christian tradition of the rising West. He also made a link with the endeavours of St. Augustine, who himself did so much to utilize Platonic thought in the light of Christian revelation.

DISCUSSION OF AVICEBRON'S VIEWS WITH RESPECT TO EXISTENCE AND INDIVIDUATION

The Unmoved Prime Mover is *Will*, and is not the Ideal World or ontological One. Moreover, Will is the bridge between the Prime Essence—the in-itself of God—and the dual of Matter and Form. Again, we have a triadic unification and can now appreciate that *unification is from the Will*. Also, that unification must be *structural* and not *substantial*. To *become one*, there must be made the *different* and the *many*; the distinction of levels; action and so on. The unity of the world is a *unity in progress*. The Unity of Being is a *unity of multiplicity*. The unity of God is the only *self-standing uniqueness*, communicated to the Creation by the act of the Divine Will.

Avicbron does not attempt to describe the workings of Will *from within existence*. Yet this is the heart of the problem of individuation. Allowing for the particularization of existences due to the properties of corporeal matter, there remain the questions of *concentration* and of the *specific* cases of the coalescence of matter and form.

The problem was later tackled by Roger Bacon, but left unresolved. In his *Questions*, he affirmed that the essence of an individual was specific, residing neither in the spiritual nor in the corporeal substance joined together in the entity. There is for each man an individual essence. He conceived of this as a form, which was inherently composite, in that it was the form of the conjoining of that form and matter which together make the man. The categories of species, genera and so on were inadequate, for Bacon, to deal with the individual. It was not enough to say that individuals arose merely out of the divisibility and separateness of corporeal existence. In a fascinating passage, he affirms that it is solely on account of the limitations of our Intelligence that we have to work by way of the universals. A strong intelligence would be able to see the *individual intelligibles*.

In the same work, we find him saying that the *quiddity* of a thing is *the thing itself*; any separation is purely conceptual. But why is there the notion of quiddity at all? Bacon later abandoned all this line of approach, but the dilemma is very suggestive. Firstly, the doctrine of hierarchy of species, genera, families, etc., is shown to be limited; it cannot account for individuation in any positive sense. Bacon was constantly introducing the distinction between *universal* and *particular* elements, showing that this posed a real problem to the whole scheme. Secondly, that the notion of form could not be extended to really account for the *concrete entity*. The solution was not to be found in *substance*—union of matter and form—alone; nor with the addition of another form, or even the arising of a specific composite form.

The dilemmas of Bacon can be resolved only in the notion of *Will*. *Individuation* can be understood only as a *particularization of will*. No one can escape the feeling, in reading Bacon's questions, of his deep dissatisfaction with the simple hierarchical schemes of his forbears which allowed active individuation only to the Intellectual substances: the unique examples of their species. He concentrates on the question: how are individual entities brought into being and what are they? Only a general answer can be given by the classical scheme. In the case of a man, the spiritual substance ("soul") and corporeal substance ("body") are infused with the form of *humanity*; this is the prime conception. Bacon coupled to this the *particular* cause of the father of the man. Yet the step from *humanity* to *the man* is across a void, and even allowing for the complexity attendant on the conception of a man (soul, bodily substance, father) and all the accidents adhering of time and place, there is still an emptiness in the place of a *reason for individuation*. We would attribute this to *Will*. However, there did not exist a structural mode of thinking in the Middle Ages which could have evolved an *adequate* notion of Will. Will was considered, with respect to God, as the source of omnipotence, and, with respect to man, as a faculty of mind. These two extremes gave a very primitive notion of will. The Pre-Socratic understanding of existence in terms of two cosmic principles was a parallel, but even that was, relatively speaking, more advanced than the Mediaeval grasp of will.

We will see, however, how vast a compass is embraced in the case of an individual man. A man is *made to be*. There is a "causation" which is not that of time and place, conjoined with that of time and place, in a structured act. A man is given a corporeal location; "he" enters time through his parents; "he" is

ascribed a spiritual substance. Then, "he" is enabled to will and be free; thus, there is a Will that a man should will.

Only will can fit the double need of a complex *structuring of an occasion*—the man—and the *impartion of an equivalent power to that occasion*. Will is simultaneously outside and inside, but there must be gradations of particularization of will.

Individuation was a central theme in the work of Duns Scotus. According to him, the *quiddity* or concrete existence of an individual entity is not a defective condition, that is as a form limited by matter, but a positive thing, a making perfect. He used the term *hceccitas* to designate that which makes the individuation. Sometimes this word was used to designate the *individual* itself. This strongly suggests that *hceccitas* corresponds with our *coalescence*. This is supported by the new insights which Duns Scotus brought to the operation of the *will*.

Avicbron ascribed the power of the forms to Will, but, as we have seen, the forms must be taken in a far more complex and subtle way than as they are represented in his scheme. Also, a continuing problem was the transition from *potency* to *act*. The forms *pre-exist* their manifestation. What is the transition caused by? It must be Will, which in Avicbron's scheme, is the origin of the division and the mutual desire of Matter and Form; and the bridge between them and the Prime Essence.

According to Duns Scotus, in God alone is *quiditas per se haec* fully concrete. God is *pure Act*, whereas individual entities are *simultaneously composed*. Further, every finite individual must suffer *separation* from other individuals; in God alone is separation non-applicable. By the variety of expressions which he used for individuation we can reasonably suggest that he was inspired by a sense of the *relativity of individuation* that is so crucial to our theme.

Our interpretation leads us to picture the Supreme Will as capable of entering into existence and manifesting there in analogy to itself, yet under limiting conditions established by itself. This simply implies an immediacy of communication and transfer which can only apply to that which *does not itself exist*, which is not a substance; for no functional link, nor translation of substance or even pattern is involved.

We saw that the Unity of the Universal Form was imprinted by the Primal Unity of the Will of God. We must again consider how this imprintation introduces also a particularization of the Supreme Will: the *Universal Individuation*.

Avicbron was fond of saying: "Will is infinite in its essence, but finite in its actions." It takes its finiteness from the entities to which it applies. But there is tendency for the philosopher to treat these actions in the model of the action of the *forms*. We should look to the prime act: there was then a real donation of power, so that the Universal Form is *exemplar* of the Primal Unity. So, surely, *throughout*.

"Why is it said that the sublime and holy Creator is in all things?"

"Assuredly this is said, because His Virtue [Will in act] is infused in all things, and that it penetrates all things, and that nothing exists without it and that all things have their existence and their constitution through it." (*Fons Vitae*, V, 39.)

The distinction between the infinite and the finite modes of Will has a correlation with the distinction between the simple substances of the Intellectual or Spiritual realm and the composite substances of living and material things. Infinite Will operates without the limitations of conditioned existence, or even the particularization of living entities. It is able to operate freely in the Intellectual realm. The finite will-operations in the realms of composite things are attached to the frameworks of action. We can postulate a gradation. In the realm of Nature, will is not attached to entities so much as to *occasions*: individuation is atomic rather than organic. The self-direction of living things implies an attachment of the will to *entities*. In the Intellectual realm, the will is individualized without any existential support.

". . . in the matter of Intelligence the Will produces . . . without time intervening in this production, the Being . . . the Universal Form that contains all forms . . . in the matter of the Soul, the Will produces the essential life and movement. In the matter of Nature, which is below the preceding one, it

produces the local movement and the other movement. All these movements are derived from Will." (*Fons Vitae*, V, 37.)

These differences can be represented in a table where the particularized and operational modes of Will are indicated for each of the three realms.

	<i>Nature</i>	<i>Life</i>	<i>Spirit</i>
Particularized Mode	Atomic occasions	Entities	Individualities
Operational Mode	Laws of Framework	Evolution	Cosmic Operation

The laws of framework operate in the hyle to render it capable of receiving the bodily forms. The cosmic operations are those of: Intellectual activity (not the same as mental activity), Illumination and Transcendental operations of the Supreme Will. In the Spiritual realm, Form is not distinct from the Will as it is in the Natural realm.

Avicbron did not consider that the Oneness given to form is exemplary of the *uniqueness given to every concrete occasion because there is present a fragment of will*.

Individuation, creation, evolutionary urge, freedom, all are associated with particularized will. In the first stage of creation—which is the instantaneous operation whereby Matter and Form are distinguished—creative power is *given* to the created. But the *fiat lux* which gave rise to Intelligence is exemplified throughout the Universe; and, throughout, will does not enter through the portals of form alone, it is already present "before" form or matter move together. This priority of presence is of a special kind, for the fragment of will is *present* only in an existing thing. Beyond ontological priority—that of the forms—we must conceive of a priority in terms of *will*.

Now we can see that as Will bridges between the Prime Essence and Matter and Form, so does particularized will bridge between the essences and the existences of particular things. The "qualities of God", being the only real qualities, must have correspondences in the World. The doctrine of the *divine ideas* is only a partial answer to this: the archetypes of the intelligible world (Robert Grosseteste) correspond, not to modes of willing, but modes of being. In God, these are the same (Aquinas), but in existence, they are not, since every existing thing is conditioned by something outside of it and is also dependent, as God cannot be.

In Scholastic usage, the word "essence" referred to the nature of an entity, or the kind of thing it was. Those Scholastics who considered the essences of things as really separable from their existences, such as Roger Bacon in one of the phases of his intellectual activity, interpreted essence in terms of form. This led to inconsistencies: if there is a form of an entity, which is a coalescence of matter and form, then in what matter does this form inhere? The scheme of matter and form breaks down. If, however, we take Prime Essence to be God Himself, then the essences of things are attributes of God which can become manifest in the existing world. The attributes of God are not the same as the Intellectual Forms which are *instrumental* to creative activity.

The notion that God's Essence can manifest *in the creation* is foreign to the Western Philosophical Tradition. It implies a "deification" of creation and denial of the world's *absolute* dependence on God and nothingness compared with Him.

In our view, the Will is also *within* the created world, and will implies independence and autonomy. The structure of existence enables there to be a relativity of will-operations and degrees of autonomy. Extending Avicbron's notion of the Will as mediator between Matter and Form, and the Prime Essence, it follows that the limited will operative in existing things can mediate between them and a particularization of the Divine Essence. It would then seem perfectly true that the essences of things *do not exist*. Only in God are Existence and Essence coincident. The doctrine of the *Divine Energies*, such as loving

and life-giving, to be found in the contemporary Eastern Tradition of Byzantium, answers the problem of the gap between the Divine Will and the creaturely will. These cosmic operations were means whereby the attributes of God Himself were made present in the creation separated from Himself. Gregory Palamas, the great Byzantine theologian of the thirteenth century, paralleled Avicbron by postulating the Will as intermediary between the Divine Essence and the creatures.

Palamas wrote: "God, by an excess of goodness towards us, being transcendent to all things, incomprehensible and inexpressible, consents to become participable by our intelligence and invisibly visible in his supra-essential and inseparable power." (Quoted in Meyendorff's *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, p. 226.)

It is not known whether Avicbron ever wrote the third part of the *Fons Vitae*, and we shall have to be content with this quotation from the first part to make a comparison.

"Consider the moment of creation, that is to say the beginning of union of Matter with Form; imagine on the other hand, Essence which has neither beginning nor end, the Essence of the Creator; lastly, imagine that all that exists, that which is corporeal as well as that which is spiritual, exists in this Essence, in the same way as you can imagine that something intelligible exists in your soul; then you will see that Virtue of the Creator that is very-high and very-holy *is in all that exists in it*. Also you will see that the virtue and essence of everything that exists is in all things that are found below this very thing [the Divine Essence] and this is so to the extremity, to the limit where that virtue rests. By this method, you will imagine how Matter and Form are stretched, an extension that is one and continuous, from the highest to the lowest point of creation." (*Fons Vitae*, V, 30.)

THE NATURE OF INTELLECT

We have moved far from a mere description of the scheme of Avicbron, but our elaboration and extension of the notion of will have enabled us to see a way of viewing the Universe in a more concrete way than as a shadow-play of an ideal world. Avicbron himself pointed the way, but no one who followed was able to take the necessary steps and the weakness of modern philosophy are largely attributable to this. We can include both the rationalist and idealist dogmas of later times: the one seeing the universe in terms of form; the latter in terms of matter. This conjoined with the dualism of mind and matter—a residue both of Greek psychology and misunderstood Neo-platonic and Peripatetic thought—has established a whole succession of philosophies, many brilliant in details, but incapable of affording a total view of the Universe.

The ancient notion of Intellect affords an excellent example of an idea for which modern thought can find no meaning, in its own terms, but which can make sense of so much that is puzzling to us. How can we discern the structure of the Universe through our minds? What do we mean when we say "man has a soul"? Where and what is intelligence?

The fundamental postulate is that of the *relativity of substantiality*. Everything that affects existence exists in a substance, but there are *finer and grosser* substances. The fine can penetrate the gross, permeate it with its presence, so that the fine "contains" the coarse. Looked at in another way, the fine is "within" the coarse, being eternally elsewhere, on another plane.

The relativity of substantiality is constructed by the Will. Hence the substances, on our interpretation, correspond to different modes of will-operation. Their *independence* is inexplicable if they are considered in terms of being alone. We shall remember that the distinction between

Matter and Form is made by the Will. Without Will, there is but the Primitive Foundation where nothing is distinguishable. On our interpretation, the hierarchy of substances is made by a structuring of *will in operation*.

Avicbron adopts the Neo-platonic scheme according to which there are three basic kinds of substance that work in living beings: the vegetative soul, the sensitive soul and the rational soul. All three are present in man and give him, independently, three different sets of powers. The first consists in the faculties of nutrition, growth and self-renewal. The second is the powers of movement, reaction and

perception. The third is most easily exemplified by thought, and corresponds to *mind* as the word occurs in modern usage.

Each of these three has a different mode of *form-action*. The vegetative soul is able to change the location of the parts of composite bodies. The sensitive soul can take hold of a body as a whole in an image and ascertain the movement of this image. The rational soul can discern the intelligible forms of things but only one after the other—discursively. It understands through the intelligible forms but cannot see them *as they are*. This last is the property of the Intellect, which is above Life. For the Intellect, the forms are not something other, they are itself. This is the direct knowing where the knower is what is known. The Intellect knows all forms. However, this is the *Universal Intellect*, which Avicbron calls the Third Intellect. The first is the rational soul which has something of intelligence in it. When this soul submits itself as matter to receive the form of the Universal Intelligence, it becomes the *Second Intellect*. Here we should note that *this* intellect should correspond to the *individualized soul*, as *quid* and intelligence as *actus*. As Avicbron puts it, the "second intellect" is "ready to act".

The distinction between reason and intellect first made by the Neo-platonists, was considerably evolved with Avicbron and is of foremost importance for any descriptive model of human intelligence. For the reasoning mind, the intellect is invisible yet works in every act of reflection. Mind can abstract from the images of perception the intelligible forms, but these are recognized *for what they are* only by the intellect. They have an effective existence in the mind as *concept*. In an act of reflection, the *mind itself comes under the action of a form*, as it itself renders its own content intelligible through its own act. The very word *ratio* clearly designates reason as mediation between Intellect and the sense-world.

The partial knowing of the rational mind can easily suggest that knowing can be extended by extending sense-perception. This is true, but only within the field of sensible objects. We can say that an *intelligent act of cognition* requires that the mind itself be under the action of intelligence. This necessitates a re-orientation of our usual thinking; it requires that we should regard mind as instrumental to intelligence, just as we regard sense-perception as instrumental to mind. Most of those who speak of the workings of creative intelligence admit that their own powers of reflection are but an intermediary to the action; it has its creative power from somewhere beyond the mind. We can go further: reports on creative thinking often concur in describing a state of exhaustion, quietness, emptiness, of having "given up", or of being in sleep as preliminary to the creative action. This corresponds exactly to the rational soul "making itself as matter" and thereby ready to receive the imprint of the Universal Intellect.

The subject-object dualism arises only with respect to the workings of the mind with perception. The images and concepts of rational thought are distinct from their objects and are *in the mind*. However, the ontological distinction does not exclude a realism of cognition. What can be truly known about the world is what inheres in the Intellect itself; and it is from Intellect that the mind derives its guarantee of certainty.

The scholastic presentation of this was lacking in adequate consideration of the process at work in mind. All attention is directed towards the ascent that leads to the direct knowing of the Intellect. The transition from reason to intellect was not understood as a complex action. Intellect was considered to be "behind" all acts of reasoning but not to be capable of *transforming reason itself*. However, as we have said, the Intellect must *exert an action on mind*. This follows from the general properties of the scheme of substances. Already we have considered the evidence of creativity to support the notion of Intellect. Creativity is just the power given to form by the Light of the Will of God. If there is a *coalescence of Intellect and mind*, we have a *creative moment* in which the mind itself undergoes a significant change.

Intellect can know the form of things because it is of their very substance. But knowing is only the passive mode. There is an active mode of the Intellect whereby the Intellect *creates*: its most immediate manifestation is the creation of *new mental structures*. On the threshold between the rational soul, or mind, and the Intellect, knowledge and activity are distinct.

Certainty belongs to the will and the link between the objects of mind and the Intellect in the act of understanding is a will-connection. Something can only be understood through that which *makes it what it is*. The discussion of "causes" which permeates Peripatetic thought is a distant hint of this. Understanding

is an act of will that establishes a valid connection between subject and object. Creativity is an act that transforms such connections. Thus the mind can recognize the forms of things but cannot change itself or its mode of perception. But at the heart of Intellect itself, there is no distinction of knowing and acting, there is only creativity. This remains subordinate to the higher power which is capable of transmitting the power of God to the existing world. Even creativity is an instrument of the Divine Power.

Many people in our own times have expressed astonishment that the free creations of the human intelligence, such as those of pure mathematics, should have such fertile application to the world we discern through our senses. But the two have a common origin, and the mind itself is a manifestation of the same working.

THE WORKINGS OF INTELLIGENCE IN MAN

The psychology of the early mediaevals is profoundly interesting. Above the five external senses, which afford a limited contact with the accidental forms applying in objects, was placed the *sensus internus*. In modern language, this is the "internal world" which overlaps with the world of sense: and includes dreams, random imagination, reveries and expectations. It consists of all that mental content which is not of the givenness of the present moment of perception. Set above that was the *ratio* or *logos*, the organ of abstraction and discursive reasoning. The substance of this consists of the conceptual representations we make out of the world of sense, which we can apprehend in series which we call *arguments* or *chains of reasoning*. It is therefore the region of *logic*. We should extend this to *language* of any kind. The categories of Aristotle are, in fact, nothing if not the logical structure built into the Indo-European languages.

Language is a structured representation of the world. It is more than an aggregate of ostensibly definable terms. There are forms of *relationship*, for example, and levels of abstraction. And there are terms, such as those analysed by Kant as time, space, causality, etc., which are not apparent in the present moment of sense-perception, but require that we have a mental content which bridges over in any such moments, and can structure them into memories and history, purposes and expectations. These elements are in our language, but force themselves upon us *as they are*, only in logic and philosophy.

The *ratio* is, hence, a complex organ. There are structures of representation which in themselves correspond to the structure of reason. In ordinary language we point to this when we affirm that, *when we know, we know that we know*. The representation is recognized as being *other* to the world and yet it is *applied to grasp* the structure of the world as it appears in the mind. The whole structure is never seen. We come to the other meaning of the *ratio*. Not only does it bridge between the moments of perception and the moment of the mind, it also bridges between perception and the *intellect*.

The underlying structure of things perceived is apparent to the Intellect; so, too, is the nature of the rational mind and the representations which it employs to deal with the world of sense and to have some knowledge of its very own nature. It is thus from the Intellect that language comes and *enables* the bridge between mind and perception to be made. This is an important notion for understanding how reasoning power develops, whether in individual people or in the evolution of the human mind. In Intellect, language and all conceptual apparatuses are seen as *one whole*. Further, since they arise—in their *structure*—from the Intellect, they inversely *represent the Intellect itself*.

The *intellectus* or *nous* is working when, in conversation, two people share in the *same intelligence*. Language is here the substantial link between the two people *through* which the Intellect can work. Experimentation or *intellectualis visio* works by a unity of object and subject. It is above all contradictions. We can say that *triadic thinking* is intrinsic to it: if subject and object are identical, yet there is an act of knowing, then the identity must *include this act*. The identity, therefore, is the *reason for* the act of knowing. The three elements of subject object and identity are a *concrete coalescence*. In the reason, there is the mental subject, the perceived world and the representation; but these are only *compresent*; the coalescence is *virtual*. Compresence allows us to think about the world and even about our own minds, but there can be no cessation of the chains of reasoning or overcoming of the separation between mind and the perceived

world. The cessation and overcoming can only be in a totally different state to which the limitations of mind and perception do not apply.

Now, the Intellect is a substantial reality whether or not a rational being is connected with it. It is ascribed the role, on the universal scale, of *creativity*. This creative activity, not being dependent on mind, *is*. If we consider a rational being, then there must be conceived an action of translation from pure Intellect to mental activity. The *Intellectual coalescence* is purely *virtual* for the mind: it establishes a certain set of coalescent acts, or substantial intelligible forms, which bear on all that exists; but there is a sub-set which concern the mind most directly. For the reason, then, this sub-set of intelligibles represent a *possible condition of mind*: but this is not apparent to the reason itself. If there are suitable dispositions in the mind—it submitting itself as matter towards form—then the intelligibles can *exert an action on the mind*. A *compresence of intellect and mind* is established that is called *intellectus*. This transforms the compresences of mind, world and representation; because it is of a higher order. We can also say that there is a co-operation between Mind and Intellect which introduces a *higher degree of order into the mind*.

In the Eastern Sufi traditions, the truly *intellectual* powers of men are ascribed to higher centres of cognition, which are *always working beyond the normal range of the mind*. Two degrees are distinguished. The first is the set of intelligibles which carry the *intellectual truth of the particular mind*, the second gives the *Universal truth*. The mind or rational soul has its origin from a creative activity working in the world according to a definite set of patterns (or forms). This origin is not limited to being prior in time. There is a priority of level which is manifest in compresences of mind and intellect, when the Intellect can produce a new order in the mind. But there is another priority of quite a different kind which is that of the virtual activity in the Intellect which is prior to any mental manifestation. This is a priority of *will* also. Will operating in the mind is responsible for producing the coalescence of world and mind which we call the *human self*. This necessarily involves a mode or modes of *self-knowing*. In this sphere, the "inner" is the *formal* side and the "outer" the *material* side. Self-knowing is an *essential* property of self. Now this mode of willing, manifesting as *selves* (or rational beings), is brought about by a larger act which includes the coalescence which we call a *total human life* and even that of the *human soul*, stretching beyond life and death. The intellectual activity which is inseparable to these greater coalescences must, therefore, carry the truth of the mind concerned. The mind is a sub-coalescence of the total coalescence, and only in that total coalescence can the *significance* of mind inhere.

The locus of this intellectual activity was described as the *personal Intellect*. In it inheres the truth of the constitution of that particular rational being. Complementary to this, the centre of cognition called the *Universal Intellect or Objective Intellect*, represented the locus of the truth of every existing thing; it embodies the fundamental laws of the universe, but also the total of intelligibility concerning everything that exists.

When we turn back to our European philosophical tradition, we see that these ideas were reduced to considerations of the philosophical activity alone. The importance of *self-knowledge* was not seen. In our time also, there is an equivalent blindness. Together with the current interest in creativity, there is an almost total disregard for the significance of creative power in the transformation of the mind itself. We recognize how inadequate are our means for coping with the complexities of our mental content and this is representative of our inability to purposefully direct our lives. Modern psychology has effectively shown how what has been called "purposeful activity" is no more than the result of conditioning factors. It follows that it is only by connection with a *modus operandi* of quite a different kind can the mind become able to *work intelligently*.

This seeming contradiction must be explained. Our intelligent activities are almost wholly concerned with our operations upon the material world. In that sphere, our ability to gain mastery is obvious. But this is possible because we are dealing with something far more distant from the Source of Intelligence than we are ourselves. In material objects, intelligence is "thin" and hence we can reason and work out their patterns of activity and how to modify them—this is science and technology. But we are still incapable of being masters of our own minds. Most people *identify* their existence and even their personal will, with the content and activity of their mind. This leads to the illusion that selfhood and individuality are one and the same. If

individuality is the seat of freedom, it must be located elsewhere than in the mind which is its instrument. If there is to be freedom it must be situated between mind and Intellect, for the latter can bring a higher order into the mind than is intrinsic to it. Such a locus would constitute a *personal will* and be different from our ordinary state of will which is tied to the rudimentary selves which automatically develop. With a personal will, the mind can work intelligently.

All of this follows logically from the structure of the Neo-platonic schema as modified by Avicbron—once we make the step of recognizing the crucial significance of will and individuation.

THE STRUCTURING OF WILL

We must justify our correlation of will with *structuring power*. Three properties are requisite. The first is the ableness to produce *distinct elements* each with an *independence of power*. Of this, polarity is the first degree and the one most frequently referred to in ancient texts. The second is that the sets of distinct elements should not form *one homogeneous group*, but be *multi-valued*. The discrete sets are brought into a whole by the third property—that of *coalescence*. In the context of our enquiry, the first belongs to *creative act*, the second refers to the *structure* of the cosmos, and the third to *individuation*.

According to Avicbron, the first creative act of the Will of God is the distinguishing of Form and Matter: these are brought out of the Primitive Foundation and set apart with complementary powers residing in these principles themselves. Without will, there would have been *no separation of form and matter*. It is not as if form and matter are *held apart* by will as the rigid form of the magnet holds apart its magnetic poles. The dual of form and matter requires that something of the power of will passes into two distinct modes which can act towards each other without annihilation. Again, this is quite distinct from how it is with material systems where mutual action leads to neutrality.

We have already seen how form and matter are prepared in order to enter into a mutual action. Form in itself has no power to descend into matter—"to give of itself". It is the Light of the Will of God that infuses form with the desire to create and coalesce with matter. On the other hand, matter in itself is not able to respond to the organization of the forms: the bare hyle is *homogeneous* and lacks that primal differentiation which is the necessary foundation of our existing world. There would be no means for the forms to operate on a purely homogeneous substance to produce a multiplicity of individuals. So, according to Avicbron, the Word of God imprints a primal differentiation of the parts of space in the very "bosom of the hyle".

The three Divine Hypostases: Will, Word and Light have certainly not for Avicbron the connotations of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Nor is he consistent in his use of the three terms. The "mission" of the Divine Light is usually directed to the vivification of form and that of the Divine Word to the arousing in matter of the capacity to respond to the promise of form.

The two will-operations are complementary. As the creative and organizing powers of form are directed by an *infusion* of Light from the Will, so Will through the world *enables* matter to respond.

The two powers of receptivity and affirmation pass into the two movements of striving and creation, or evolution and involution. Between these, there plays the action of the Will in a different mode quite independent of matter and form. Will connects, through action, essence with existence.

"Nothing exists without it [the Will], for existence and the constitution of all things originate in it. . . . Do you not see, in fact, that the essence of all things comes only from Matter and Form, and that the existence of Matter and Form comes from the Will, since it is the Will which has created them, which has conjoined them and which holds them united?" (*Fans Vitae*, V, 39.)

We saw that, in the Eastern Church, there was the doctrine of the Divine *Energies*. The cosmic operations are the instruments whereby God is *manifested in existence*. Avicbron on our interpretation implies that this is applicable on every scale, and to every being we can ascribe an essence which is translated through will into an existing state—or *made to be*, as Aquinas put it. In the Ultimate, the Prime

Essence, Matter and Form, are connected by Will, which is the mediator. But this is Will in a different mode to that in which it creates Matter and Form.

The doctrine of essences is a representation of the will-structure of the Universe. It leads to the problem of *quiddity*, that is, of concrete existences.

A concrete existence or being is a coalescence of the action of matter and form together and the will-structure associated with the manifestation of Essence that establishes a unique mode of substantial reality under a set of conditions. Conditions are the composite limitations imposed by matter and form on that level of existence. The *strength* of the coalescence is qualitatively scaled by Avicenna when he speaks of distance from the Prime Source or the Creator. Illumination in the Neo-platonic scheme can be interpreted as the transmission of the power of coalescence in so far as it applies to existing things. It is itself established by the power that knits together matter and form under the poles of free creation and universal law. At its limit, it is pure Will *prior* to the act whereby Matter and Form are separated. This priority is not a privation, for the Transcendent Will on the threshold of existence has the powers of Matter and Form within it.

The notion that the amorphous must be divided and then reunited is one of the most profound of our legacies from ancient thought. Yet nowhere is there an explicit attempt in philosophy to seize the significance of coalescence. Gnosticism tended on the one hand to embrace a false dualism whereby matter and form are represented as independent creative powers without common origin, or on the other to seek to gain access to the uncreated and to leave the created. The Christian and Islamic influences gave the West and Near East an opportunity to become free of these snares. But one of the most difficult problems proved to be in the notion of *Intellect*.

Avicenna's assertion, rejected by Christian Scholastics including Aquinas as heresy, that the Intellect had to be *non-personal* was one of the many signs that the mediaeval mind was not able to grasp that personal existence—the most obvious example of coalescence—was a crucial element of any concrete philosophy and could not be compromised by notions of man as a merely *composite* being—i.e. a simple *compresence*. Aquinas taught that soul and body came into existence together, the soul or intellectual substance being the form of the body. He had also to assert that, after dissolution of the body, the soul survives as an independent being. This logically implies composition. The inseparability of soul and body in life is compatible with the doctrine of composite parts only if *distinct levels of coalescence* are admitted. Human nature takes its body from matter already existing and its form from universal substances. The universal substance or intellect is concentrated into the conditioned existence that is "body".

Avicenna was right in affirming that the nature of Intellect is that of a Universal, because it is unrestricted by corporeal existence. Aquinas was also right in saying that the Intellect *as it inheres in men* must be particularized. But there is a gap between the Universal Intellect and the Intellect as it operates in the ordinary workings of the mind. Logically, it would follow that a human being has an *individual* soul only as a possibility.

In Avicenna's terminology, the individual soul corresponds to the *second Intellect*. The coalescence of the creative and conscious substances of the intellect into an individual soul does not follow the same laws as that whereby a man of soul and body is formed. Theoretically, the Scholastics were able to conceive that the Intellectual activity was in part fully *compatible* with the activity of mind, though distinct in kind. This compatibility was obviously represented in the doctrines which showed all man's intellectual power as ultimately residing in the Intellect, even his ordinary powers of cognition. But there were not taken into account the *possibilities* given to men of achieving *higher degrees of coalescence with Intellect*. Intellect and mind are radically different as *substances*, and this implies a difference for *operations of the will*. An important distinction was made by Duns Scotus between Mind and Intellect. In Mind, thinking and willing are distinct, whereas in the Intellect they are one act.

In our version of the scheme, powers of coalescence are transmitted to the Intellect; but these powers can only be applied outside the Intellect *through instruments*. Of these, the rational mind is the most suitable we know. We have said that the mental act of knowing is a *compresence*; but it can be a coalescence also,

insofar as there is an element of *understanding*. Understanding, as distinct from knowing, arises through the coalescence of Intellect and Mind thereby enabling the coalescent power to operate in the domain of mind.

Understanding is essentially concrete, but also multi-valued. An act of understanding is a grasp of structure that is not an abstraction but rooted in a concrete apprehension: the Universal and the Particular, insofar as they manifest in the transformed mind, are coalescent. It is also a property of will, so that one can say that the "personal locus" of a man *is his understanding*.

Even in knowing, the operation of the understanding is necessary, albeit indirect. An act of cognition makes a cut; between knower and known, known and unknown; and between this and that, relevant and non-relevant. The cut is the basis of class, logic and much of mathematics. The representation is then the bridge which completes the triad which is the basis for a coalescence. We said that this bridge has its source in Intellect and now this becomes clear as another way of saying that the coalescent power of the Intellect finds an instrument in mind; which becomes effective as an instrument through understanding, or the *co-operation of Mind and Intellect*.

Such a notion is very reminiscent of the synergic doctrine of Duns Scotus. According to him, it is an *act of will by man* that renders him open to the infusion of Grace (in Arabic *barakd*). It is the personal will of a man that is central to both his knowing and his faith; and, he implied, their coalescence.

When we spoke of the transmission of coalescent power into Intellect—or Illumination—we did not stop to consider the nature of the threshold across which the transmission is effected. This threshold is none other than the Universal Form, which we have come to appreciate as something far beyond a static repository of universals. It is the most active region of Intelligence, its highest "component": to the coalescence of intellectual cognition it is an *agent*, the prime creative power. But that is in its operational role. In itself, it is *Individuality* and from it all individuations take their uniqueness.

Lacking in hyle, the Intellect is *not able to operate as an agent* in the corporeal world. The synergic act brings into the world the workings of Intelligence. In this way, mind serves to link the Intelligent agent and bodily existence.

The Individuation of concrete entities and the Unity of all forms stem from a single source, the Universal Individuality. This Unity is not ontological, but an act of will.

"When we say that Form holds Matter, we are speaking in an incorrect manner: it is from the Will that Form receives the power to hold Matter; it is manifest for the Form as an impression of the Unity, a reverberative force originating in the Unity, and the Will is itself the power of Unity; therefore the reverberative virtue comes from Unity. The Will holds Matter by the intermediary of Form: this is why one says that Form holds Matter."

"What proof have you", asks the Disciple of his Master, "that the Will is not in itself diverse?". "The proof of it is that the Will originates in Unity: even more; that the Will is the very power of Unity. The first diversity manifested itself at the moment when Matter and Form began to exist." (*Fans Vitae*, V, 39.)

The community of Oneness and singleness must be inherent in the Will which can structure itself and through these structures operate in the existing world. "Self-structuring" is an explicating phrase for Individuality.

To return to the coalescence that is a man. The actualization of soul in the particular body is the being of the man. But if we can speak of the independent existence of soul, then we have to postulate a link between man as living person and man as individual soul. This link is the *will*. The origin of a person as a being able to attain to individual soul is an intention that enters the coalescence of his nature. The subjective experience of freedom is valid and made possible by the intelligence working in him. It complements the supra-intelligent will that sustains the possibility of "his" Individuality.

THE UNITIES OF MATTER AND FORM, AS THEY APPLY TO ENTITIES

If unity of will is structural, the unity of formless matter is that of *sameness*. Our modern conservation laws are a reflection of this. The activity of the forms is upon the same matter which is, relative to them, quite unchanging. The material unity of the world can be represented as the indefinite surface upon which existence is constructed. It is not "unity of place" but "unity of the stuff of place". It allows for the transformation of one thing into another without discontinuous creation.

An analogy is that of the visual field. No matter what we actually see, there is always the same field. In the Neo-platonic terminology, the matter of the sensitive soul remains, whatever sensory images are imprinted on it. This has implications for knowledge. The sense-objects of our perception are knowably particulars, individuated by the divisibility of corporeal matter. But they are all *known on the same level* as corporeal existences. All factual knowledge—that is, knowledge of actual existences—is of the same kind because it reflects the underlying sameness of matter. Thus, factual knowledge is bereft of hierarchy, which has to be added by Intellection.

For understanding the unity of form, the domain of living things offers a useful field of discussion. We have said enough to have established a notion of form as a principle of *organization*, which in actual existences is the compelling agent of change and activity. In modern thought, there is a revival of interest in holistic systems and organizations where part is subordinated to whole. But the principle of organization is taken to be entirely *inherent* in the actual system.

Thus, an animal is a self-organizing system. Its ontogeny, patterns of activity and survival instincts reveal to our intelligence a unitary organization. It is that which we recognize as *the* animal and not any fragment of its activity or stage of its development. Using our Neo-platonic terminology, the unitary organization of the animal is its *form*. It inheres in all instances of the *life* of the animal. The total behaviour complex can be comprehended as subordinate to an *immanent form*. The immanent form cannot be identical with the actual existence since this changes.

It is *not*, therefore, part of the animal's *actual existence*. It must be placed in a domain of *potentiality* with respect to any actual duration of the animal life. In usual Neo-platonic discourse, however, the form of the animal is taken to be that of the *species*. The form is the universal common to all individuals of the species. If accorded ontological status, as it was by Avicenna, it must be *transcendental* to the individual organisms.

The transcendental form corresponds to the Platonic view of form, whereas the immanent form corresponds to the Aristotelian view. The problem centres on the real existence of the species. Using a modern evolutionary perspective, the species does present an actual life to which the notion of immanent form can apply. The immanent form of the species is then the transcendental form of the individual organism. This has a clear interpretation in the racial differences within a species. The immanent form of an individual organism is always far less than that of the species. Further, the mode of existence of the species is quite different from that of the individual. The populations of a species throughout its history correspond to its "body".

The alternation of immanence and transcendence as we move, conceptually, from one mode of existence to another, reflects Avicenna's doctrine of the hierarchy of substances.

The three factors—sameness of matter underlying actual changes; immanent organization of the life; and transcendental form of the class of existence—show a basic structure that is present in the realms of Nature, Life and Spirit.

	<i>Nature</i>	<i>Life</i>	<i>Spirit</i>
Transcendental Form	Nature	Intellect	Will
Immanent Form	Body	Soul	Illumination
Material Sameness	Hyle	Nature	Intellect

Our modern feeling for history, evolution and change gives us a totally different perspective on the Neo-platonic categories from those entertained in the Middle Ages. We can appreciate the contrast between the actuality of the passing state of existence and the overall pattern which unifies organic development. Whereas the Scholastics considered the unity pertaining to a multiplicity of individuals, as the principal manifestation of form, for us, the unity inherent in a developing individual is of greater import. The cognitive step from instants of actual existence to a life-span of organized activity involves an apprehension of immanent form—whether explicitly admitted or not. This has a great bearing on the field of biological thinking, but also applies to sense-perception and to the way our actual sensations are related to our experience of a world involving enduring objects, living things and other people.

Taking mind itself, perception is the flux of actuality. The immanent form is the "personality" or "character" of the man. Transcendent form is the Intellect. In man, the region between transcendent and immanent form can become operative in the individual life. Whereas, in other living things, it can bear only on durations far beyond the span of an individual existence.

UNITY OF WILL

In Nature, form and action are separate. As we ascend they come together, and in man his intelligence is both form and seat of his personal will. Beyond man, the individuals are Intelligent wills.

The relativity of individuation is partitioned into three. In Nature, things are individuated by their corporeal existence, attendant upon which are quantity and dimensionality. In life, entities are individuated not by their matter alone but by the coalescence of matter and form that is unique in every instance. Thus any living being is to some degree an independent world. In the spiritual realm, entities are not at all individuated by their matter, for this is non-corporeal and universal in character. They are individuated entirely by will, identical with form. This is the notion of demiurgic powers; but it also encompasses the postulate of messages of God and agents of His Purpose. The ultimate is reached in the Individuality that commands all existence. For every will-individual has a power to produce coalescence in the existing world and this must, logically, have a limit in a single will. But this power is decreed by a higher will and this is that Will of God which is transcendental and prior to the "arising" of matter and form. Indeed, all such priorities are not of time, but of *will*.

But we should not leave aside questions of *substance*. Substance is instrumental to the will, but the will can operate directly only through the universal substances. In Nature, the will works very indirectly as transcendental cause of all notions and as law, under a condition of *self-limitation*. Self-limitation is the opposite pole to the *self-structuring* we postulated for *Individuality*. In the realm of life we have the unification of the individual as a *striving*. The substances of Life allow for a mediate operation of will. In man, a bridge between life and the spirit, there is the power of *free choice* made possible by the substance of consciousness or *that which can know*: the bare matter of intelligence. The substantialior being unity of conditioned existence, the individuation of being things, and Individuality is *Love*. This substance, as we have said, for Avicbron, is the immanent power which calls everything towards unity.

CONCLUSION

The ancient notions of matter and form were not spurious fantasies but powerful notions capable of generating profound questions. The endless controversies of the Scholastics were, on the face of it, a demonstration of failure to find answers. But this failure is important. Taking Avicenna's astonishing treatment of the tradition, we have been led to seize upon the notion of *will* as the missing key in the system. The failure of the Scholastics is a demonstration *to us* that, without the notion of will, no metaphysics can be complete. What is difficult to arrive at is an adequate notion: one that enables us to speak of will without having to talk either in terms of persons or even of Schopenhauer's blind urge. The will is prior even to the higher Intelligence. Men have only a rudimentary unity of action, or, rather, a multiplicity that is given the appearance of unity by confusing a certain degree of immanent formal unity with unity of will. An understanding of *mind* is essential to any real philosophy. The Scholastics have much to offer if we wish to understand the structure of mind, but they did not take seriously enough the implications of the ordinary state of the will in man being operative only *in the mind*. This means, amongst other things, that the soul or intellect remains a potentiality until the will is freed to operate on that higher level. If this does not occur then the *man*, the *he*, does not *have* a soul.

When Aquinas wrote of existence as an *act* and used the phrase "made to be", he clearly had an intimation of real existence as a *coalescence by an act of will*. The transition from mental coalescence to soul coalescence is a transformation that corresponds to a unification of the will. Unification of the will has the paradoxical attendant of allowing intricate *structures* of action. The step from multiplicity of action to structured action is of very practical importance, but few philosophers have ever applied themselves to it. It involves, indeed, the whole metaphysical question of the step from "chaos" to "cosmos" that stands at the beginning of this whole tradition of philosophical enquiry. With Avicenna, the ground was laid for the Western enquiry into *personal reality*.