AVICENNA ON COMPOSITIVE IMAGINATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ACTIVE PERCEPTION DEBATES

Mehmet Zahit Tiryaki
İstanbul Medeniyet University, İstanbul-Türkiye
tiryakizahid@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1346-9775

Abstract

The history of philosophy reflects the tensions between the claim that the human mind is the mere perceiver of objective reality in the external world and the claim that the human mind is the founder of objective reality in the external world. Is the object perceived without any processing? Or is perception formed in the mind through certain processes? In classical philosophical psychology, including Avicenna's, the internal senses are referred to as the faculties that enable the relation between the purely rational and the purely material in the perception and movements of both celestial and human souls. The discussions about the imagination that occurred in this period are important not only because of the questions they raised but also because they highlighted areas of tension among fragmentation, difference, and individuality in the sensory realm and among

Ilahiyat Studies
Volume 16 Number 2 Summer/Fall 2025
Article Type: Research Article

p-ISSN: 1309-1786 / e-ISSN: 1309-1719
DOI: 10.12730/is.1751643

Received: July 26, 2025 | *Accepted*: December 29, 2025 | *Published*: December 31, 2025

To cite this article: Tiryaki, Mehmet Zahit. "Avicenna on Compositive Imagination in the Context of Active Perception Debates". *Ilahiyat Studies* 16/2 (2025), 293-326. https://doi.org/10.12730/is.1751643

simplicity, commonality, and generality in the rational realm. This article analyses how Avicenna's scheme of internal senses, and particularly compositive imagination, influenced his position on active perception. To this end, first, the scheme of internal senses, which originated with Avicenna, is considered. Second, Avicenna's redefinition of the functions of compositive imagination, especially with respect to active perception, is analyzed.

Key Words: Avicenna, internal senses, compositive imagination (*mutakhayyilah*), active perception

Introduction

The history of philosophy reflects tensions between the claim that the human mind is the mere perceiver of objective reality in the external world and the claim that the human mind is the founder of objective reality in the external world. On the one hand, things have a reality independent of subjective and individual human experience. On the other hand, things are susceptible to the experiences of different subjects in different ways, even though it cannot be sharply argued that the subjective human experience of things constitutes the truth of things in reality. In this case, subjectivity and individuality emerge more in a singular human experience. In the context of the abovementioned tension, the intellect is understood as the ground of objectivity and commonality both when it is defined as the mere perceiver of external reality independent of human beings and when it is defined as the founder of external reality. On the other hand, other faculties between external senses and intellect, especially retentive imagination (*khayāl*) and compositive imagination (*mutakhayyilah*), stand out as the grounds of subjectivity, individuality, and difference.

The philosophical debates on imagination are important in that they highlight areas of tension between fragmentation, difference, and individuality in the sensory and bodily realms and simplicity, commonality, and generality in the intellectual realm. In such discussions, imagination is foregrounded as a faculty that perceives, preserves, reproduces, and draws associations with diversity as a concept. Therefore, whereas the senses appear passive in the process of acquiring knowledge, the imagination appears to assume an active role. Throughout the history of philosophy, but especially after Kant,

some of the problems discussed in the context of imaginational activity are as follows: the imagination's acquisition of diversity from sensory data; the imagination's processing of such diversity; the imagination's reproduction of the representation obtained after such diversity is processed; the imagination's retention of diversity and the perceiver's synthesis of such diversity under a rule and general concept; the fact that the imagination's synthesis at a specific time and place is not valid at all times and places, and that this allows the subject to recreate the object in each perception and thus enables subjectivity.[1] Therefore, one of the main problems related to imagination seems to be related to the objectivity and subjectivity of the relation to reality. With respect to the perception of external objects, are they perceived without any processing? Or is perception an active process that occurs because of certain operations in our mind?

One of the points emphasized in contemporary debates on perception is that perception of the external world does not simply result from external things causally affecting the senses. In the perceptual process, where the role of the perceiver is quite important, first, the set of beliefs and knowledge prior to any individual perceptual experience plays a role, and second, the psychological and physiological information processing systems that are naturally possessed by a particular species play a role. However, this emphasis

[1] In his work examining the long history of imagination in the premodern, modern, and postmodern periods, Richard Kearney states that throughout the history of Western thought, the human ability to imagine things has been understood in two ways: "1) as a *representational* which reproduces images of some preexisting reality, or 2) as a *creative* faculty which produces images which often lay claim to an original status in their own right". Richard Kearney, *The Wake of Imagination* (London: Routledge, 2003), 15. Avicenna's distinction between retentive imagination and compositive imagination allows us to view him as an important figure in this historical process, both in terms of the two meanings of imagination indicated here and in terms of premodern discussions on imagination. For the transformations that imagination underwent during the historical period with which Avicenna was associated, it may be useful to refer not only to the work by Kearney (Kearney, *The Wake of Imagination*, 1-33, 37-152) but also to the following works. Amy Kind (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Imagination* (London - New York: Routledge, 2016), 15-26; Eva T. H. Brann, *The World of the Imagination - Sum and Substance* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 9-28, 31-67.

on the role of the perceiver is not strong enough to eliminate the role of external objects in active perception. Therefore, activity in perception appears to be a two-way process that includes the following: 1. activity related to the nature of the things through which knowledge is gained (the formation of internal representations of external objects as images, types, or ideas); and 2. activity related to the processing of sensory information through the interpretation and organization of sensory data.[2] In other words, the perceiver is active in both the process of initially accessing information and the process of processing that information.

Although it is very difficult to define active perception, the following definition seems reasonable: "Active perception can be understood in a broad sense as the inclusion of any account that takes perception to be the result of the soul's own agency, with or without the reception of sensory stimuli, regardless of whether such stimuli are causally relevant in the explanation of perception". This definition provides a sufficient basis for tracing the early historical discussions of active perception, contrary to the general idea that associates active perception particularly with the post-Cartesian and post-Kantian periods.[3]

The question of whether external objects or the mental activity of the perceiver is more important in the perception of sensory content has been debated throughout the history of philosophy. General descriptions of ancient theories of perception indicate that Aristotle defended a passive theory of perception, whereas Plato, the Platonists, and the Neoplatonists defended an active theory of perception. According to the Aristotelian model, the perceiver takes form from an external object or the object of perception. According to Aristotle, who believed that we perceive the world objectively, preserving the phenomenal properties of the external world requires that the objects of perception affect our sensory faculties. The less interference there is with sensory data coming from outside, the more accurate a picture we obtain of the world around us. The Platonic model, which identifies

---

2 Jose Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri, "Introduction: The World as a Stereogram", *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*, ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri (Cham: Springer, 2014), 1-4.

3 Silva - Yrjönsuuri, "Introduction: The World as a Stereogram", 3.

perception as unreliable and deceptive and does not view the objects of perception as variable, unreal, or suitable objects of knowledge, emphasizes the active role of the perceiver and claims that some of our knowledge or mental abilities go beyond what can be attained through perception. The Platonic model does not separate perception and reasoning as two different cognitive functions; it identifies perception as being closely connected to the rational abilities of the soul and even considers perception to be a type of reasoning. In this framework, perception is a process that has a completely material aspect but results from the rational faculty of the soul.[4] Neoplatonic commentators, who made some changes to Aristotle's theory, attributed sensation to the sense organs and retained Aristotle's assumption that external objects are sensed; however, like Plato and his followers, they emphasized the role of the rational soul in perception and identified perception with rational perceptual judgments. According to Aristotle, the active cause of perception is the object, and the perceiver is a passive recipient of the object, whereas according to the Neoplatonists, the passive activity caused by the external object is limited to the sense organs, and the object cannot be the primary active cause of the act of perception. According to the Neoplatonists, the active cause of perception must be the rational soul, which reflects "common concepts" on the effects that occur in the sense organs. The critical point regarding the similarities and differences between Aristotle and the Neoplatonists emerges here: Aristotle does not reject the perceptual judgments made by the rational soul, but he does not identify such judgments with perception. Neoplatonic commentators, on the other hand, do not deny irrational sensations, but they see them as related to the sensory organism.[5] In other words, Aristotle and the Neoplatonists differ in terms of the

---

[4] Paulina Remes, "Plato: Interaction Between the External Body and the Perceiver in the *Timaeus*", *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*, ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri (Cham: Springer, 2014), 9-11; Klaus Corcilius, "Activity, Passivity, and Perceptual Discrimination in Aristotle", *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*, ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri (Cham: Springer, 2014), 31-33, 51.

[5] Miira Tuominen, "On Activity and Passivity in Perception: Aristotle, Philoponus, and Pseudo-Simplicius", *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*, ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri (Cham: Springer, 2014), 55-58, 75-76.

question expressed as the problem of the content of sensory experience, which is also discussed in contemporary theories of perception and can be expressed as follows: Is perception related to the irrational perception of sensory objects or to rational judgments? The view that the rational soul is not a passive recipient of sensory stimuli but the agent of its own actions and the active cause of perception was also defended by Augustine and later influenced the philosophy of the Middle Ages. According to this view, perception is the result of the activity of the rational soul.[6] Although comments on the details of the views of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, or other Neoplatonic commentators on active perception point to differences from this general description, the general framework is as presented above.

An important work by Jari Kaukua, which falls within the scope of this study in terms of examining the activity of the soul in perception and will be evaluated in the second part, is also noteworthy.[7] Kaukua argues that while active perception that emerges through the faculties such as common sense and estimation may exist in Avicenna, it is not a mode of active perception that would remove Avicenna from the Peripatetic ground and bring him closer to Neoplatonic tendencies. In his article, Kaukua does not deny the role of the compositive imagination in the active perception process but focuses on the role of common sense and estimation in the active perception process. However, a closer reading of the compositive imagination, which is extremely functional in both the process of abstraction that occurs from the bottom up and the process of emanation that occurs from the top down, reveals that Avicenna did not compromise on Neoplatonic grounds as much as he did on Aristotelian and Peripatetic grounds.

---

6 José Filipe Silva, "Augustine on Active Perception", *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*, ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri (Cham: Springer, 2014), 79; José Filipe Silva, "Medieval Theories of Active Perception: An Overview", *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*, ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri (Cham: Springer, 2014), 143.

7 Jari Kaukua, "Avicenna on the Soul's Activity in Perception", *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*, ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri (Cham: Springer, 2014), 99-116.

Within the framework outlined here, against the backdrop of the debate on abstraction and emanation, this article aims to show that discussions on active perception in Avicenna can be traced through the compositive imagination (*mutakhayyilah*), which functions in both the abstraction and emanation processes. By focusing on the role of the compositive imagination in the active perception process, this article aims to show that Avicenna's position on perception emerged not only on an Aristotelian but also on a Neoplatonic basis. To this end, first, Avicenna's system of internal senses and some of his transformations are presented. Second, Avicenna's new framework for compositive imagination (*mutakhayyilah*) and its functions, especially in terms of active perception, are analyzed.[8]

1. Internal Senses in Avicenna: Between External Senses and Intellect

In general, two fields, sensible and intelligible, constitute the basis of human sensory and rational knowledge. The intelligible, on the one hand, is the domain of universal, general, and abstract essence. The sensible, on the other hand, is the domain in which quiddities materialize and individuate and become individuals existing in a certain time and space outside. Therefore, in contrast to intelligible things, sensible things, in which differentiation is realized through the conjunction of quiddity to matter and its various accidents, correspond to particularity and difference. The description here has some implications for metaphysics, perception, and movement, especially in view of the sharp distinction between the pure intellectual and pure material realms in classical philosophy. The relationship between God as a pure intellect and an immaterial being at the top of the classical emanation schema and the material realm is established through

[8] One of the debates in contemporary literature concerning Avicenna is the almost classic debate over whether Avicenna's epistemology is abstractionist or emanationist. This debate, which began with Étienne Gilson, has since involved scholars such as Fazlur Rahman, Herbert Davidson, Deborah Black, Olga Lizzini, Cristina D'Ancona, Dimitri Gutas, Dag Nikolaus Hasse, Jon McGinnis, Tommaso Alpina, Richard Taylor, Jari Kaukua, and Stephen R. Ogden. Which of the abstractionist or emanationist approaches is correct, and how this debate should be elaborated, is beyond the scope of this article.

discrete intellects and souls, which are themselves immaterial. These intellects and souls are defined as the mediators that establish a relationship with a material domain in which time, space, individuals, matter, and accidents of matter are concerned. Human perception and movement are also compatible with the framework drawn here, in terms of the fact that human beings have intellectual and sensory aspects. This is because the corporeal human body has perceptions and movements, acts and actions that are related to time, space, and the individual.

The classical explanation related to the intellect's management of a world undergoing generation and corruption is also used in relation to the human intellect's management of the body, which is the owner of the movements undergoing generation and corruption, and the soul is brought into play as the means by which the intellect manages the body. In the perception and movements of both celestial and human souls, the internal senses are referred to as the faculties that provide the relationship between the purely intellectual and the purely material. The theory of the internal senses is a theory that finds its origin in Aristotle's view but is often corrected and developed with Platonic concepts.[9] At the center of the theory of the internal senses is *phantasia*, which is central to all human cognition.[10] The relation of compositive imagination with the external senses and intellect has also been a problem of concern to philosophers. The compositive imagination has sometimes served as an intermediary faculty between the external senses and intellect, and at other times, it has tried to free itself from being used by the external senses and the intellect. In this respect, as an internal sense conditioned to two horses drawn in opposite directions, compositive imagination is a necessary part of the activity of knowing, positioned between sensation and intellection.[11]

---

9 E. Ruth Harvey, *The Inward Wits: Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London: The Warburg Institute University of London, 1975), 32.

10 Gerard Watson, *Phantasia in Classical Thought* (Galway: Galway University Press, 1988), 27.

11 Harvey, *The Inward Wits: Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, 49; Alfred L. Ivry, "The Triangulating the Imagination: Avicenna, Maimonides, and Averroes", *Intellect and Imagination in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Maria Cândida Pacheco - José Francisco Meirinhos (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 667-676.

The relationship among the internal senses, especially between the compositive imagination and the intellect, has followed an contradictory course throughout the history of philosophy.[12]

Avicenna was influenced by both Aristotle and Neoplatonism in the relationship between the external senses and the intellect and proposed a scheme in which the relationship between these two areas is provided by the compositive imagination and other internal senses.[13] The theory of the internal senses reached its most comprehensive and detailed version through Avicenna's modifications. As a philosopher who proposed "one of the most complex and sophisticated accounts" of the internal senses in medieval philosophy,[14] Avicenna finalized the theory that would become established as the theory of the internal senses and remain in circulation for a long time. Avicenna relates to the previous debates on phantasia through texts such as his commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*, which was attributed to Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn; Alexander's *De Anima* and *De Intellectu*; the *Uthūlūjiyā*, which was erroneously attributed to Aristotle; and the ideas of Plotinus

---

[12] For more comprehensive analyses of the historical development of internal senses, see Murray W. Bundy, *The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Mediaeval Thought* (Illinois: The University of Illinois, 1927), 69-73, 122-123, 131-132; Harry A. Wolfson, "The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew Philosophical Texts", *The Harvard Theological Review* 28/2 (1935), 69-73; Watson, *Phantasia in Classical Thought*, 1-13, 15-38, 100-103; Michael V. Wedin, *Mind and Imagination in Aristotle* (New Haven - London: Yale University Press, 1988), 82-83; Simon Kemp - Garth J. O. Fletcher, "The Medieval Theory of the Inner Senses", *The American Journal of Psychology* 106/4 (Winter 1993), 559-560; Katherine H. Tachau, "Approaching Medieval Scholars' Treatment of Cognition", *Intellect and Imagination in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Maria Cândida Pacheco - José Francisco Meirinhos (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 16-20.

[13] Harvey, *The Inward Wits: Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, 61; Deborah L. Black, "Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western Transformations", *Topoi* 19 (2000), 59-62; Ahmed R. D. Alwishah, *Avicenna's Philosophy of Mind: Self-Awareness and Intentionality* (Los Angeles: University of California, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2006), 96; Cristina D'Ancona, "Degrees of Abstraction in Avicenna: How to Combine Aristotle's *De Anima* and the *Enneads*", *Theories of Perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Simo Knuuttila - Pekka Kärkkäinen (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 50-58.

[14] Deborah L. Black, "Estimation (*Wahm*) in Avicenna: The Logical and Psychological Dimensions", *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review* 32/2 (1993), 219.

set forth in *the Enneads* and Themistius' commentary on *De Anima*.[15] Thus, Aristotle, who attributed the functions of the faculties to the heart and to the animal soul, was the philosopher with the greatest influence on the Avicennian theory of the internal senses, which was also strongly influenced by Neo-Platonic thought, especially in the context of phantasia. Avicenna's theory of internal senses was also influenced by Galen, who attributed the functions of the faculties to the brain and to the rational soul.[16]

In the Avicennian scheme, the five internal senses are as follows: 1. common sense (*al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*), 2. retentive imagination (*al-khayāl, al-muṣawwirah*), 3. compositive imagination and cogitation (*al-mutakhayyilah* and *al-mufakkirah*), 4. estimation (*al-wahm*), and 5. memory (*al-dhākirah*). *Common sense* is defined as the faculty situated in the anterior ventricle of the brain, which receives all the forms impressed in the five senses. *The retentive imagination*, on the other hand, is the faculty situated at the end of the anterior ventricle of the brain and preserves the forms obtained by common sense from the five external senses even after the disappearance of sensible things. Avicenna says that after retentive imagination, there is another faculty, which in the animal soul is called *compositive imagination* and in the human soul is called *cogitation*. This faculty is in a worm-like structure in the central ventricle of the brain. The function of this faculty is to combine and separate some things in the imagination. *Estimation* is the faculty situated at the end of the middle ventricle of the brain, which perceives the meanings that are present in sensible things but

---

[15] Herbert A. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect and Theories of Human Intellect* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 8-9; Richard M. Frank, "Some Fragments of Isḥâq's Translation of the *de Anima*", *Cahiers de Byrsa* 8 (1958-1959), 231-237; Alfred L. Ivry, "The Arabic Text of Aristotle's *de Anima* and its Translator", *Oriens* 36 (2001), 60-61; Alwishah, *Avicenna's Philosophy of Mind*, 14; D'Ancona, "Degrees of Abstraction in Avicenna", 47-50.

[16] Harvey, *The Inward Wits: Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, 21; Robert E. Hall, "Intellect, Soul and Body in Ibn Sīnā: Systematic Synthesis and Development of the Aristotelian, Neoplatonic and Galenic Theories", *Interpreting Avicenna: Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islam*, ed. Jon McGinnis (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 72, 80; Tachau, "Approaching Medieval Scholars' Treatment of Cognition", 26.

are not sensible in essence. This faculty is similar to the faculty that combines and separates imagined things. *Memory*, on the other hand, is the faculty situated in the last ventricle of the brain and preserves the meanings that are present in sensible things but are not themselves sensible.[17]

The two criteria Avicenna uses to clarify the differences among the internal senses suggest a very important point in the context of the abovementioned debates on active perception. The first criterion is the distinction that some internal senses have only *perception,* and some internal senses have *action along with perception.* The second criterion is the distinction that some internal senses are only *receptive*, whereas some internal senses are also *retentive.* Accordingly, in the Avicennian scheme of internal senses, the *retentive imagination* and the *memory* are faculties that are only retentive and non-acting. On the other hand, compositive imagination, cogitation, and estimation play an active role, as they are faculties that are both perceiving and

---

[17] Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā, *Avicenna's De Anima (Arabic Text): Being the Psychological Part of Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, ed. Fazlur Rahman (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 43-45. For more comprehensive analyses of faculty psychology and internal senses in Avicenna, see Dimitri Gutas, "Intellect Without Limits: The Absence of Mysticism in Avicenna", *Intellect and Imagination in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Maria Cândida Pacheco - José Francisco Meirinhos (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 355-359; Dimitri Gutas, "Imagination and Transcendental Knowledge in Avicenna", *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy – From the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank*, ed. James E. Montgomery (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2006), 337-354; Black, "Estimation (*Wahm*) in Avicenna", 219-258; Black, "Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western Transformations", 59-75; Peter E. Pormann, "Avicenna on Medical Practice, Epistemology, and the Physiology of the Inner Senses", *Interpreting Avicenna: Critical Essays*, ed. Peter Adamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 91-108. Mehmet Zahit Tiryaki, *İbn Sînâ Felsefesinde Mütehayyile/Müfekkire ve Vehim* (İstanbul: Marmara University Social Sciences Institute, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2015); Mehmet Zahit Tiryaki, "Tahayyül Kavramında İbn Sînâcı Dönüşümler", *Kavram Geliştirme – Sosyal Bilimlerde Yeni İmkanlar*, ed. Kübra Bilgin Tiryaki - Lütfi Sunar (Ankara: Nobel, 2016), 199-252; Nursema Kocakaplan, *Fârâbî ve İbn Sînâ'da Tahayyül* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2024), 69-103.

operating.[18]

2. Compositive Imagination and Active Perception: Between Abstraction and Emanation

The relationship between the compositive imagination and active perception in Avicenna can be understood in the context of the relationship between abstraction and emanation, one of the most important debates in contemporary Avicenna studies. Contemporary debates on Avicenna's theory of knowledge have taken shape around certain positions.[19] One side of the debate is represented by Étienne Gilson, who, referring to *l'Augustinisme avicennisant*, reduces abstraction in Avicenna to emanation.[20] Scholars such as Fazlur Rahman, Herbert Davidson, Deborah Black, Olga Lizzini, and Cristina D'Ancona have adopted Gilson's position and defended the priority of emanation over abstraction in Avicenna. According to those who defend this approach, Avicenna's epistemology is rationalist because he argues that the rational soul acquires intelligible forms through emanation from an external source.[21] In contrast, Dimitri Gutas argues that Avicenna uses emanation not as a solution to an epistemological problem but as a solution to an ontological problem and that the

---

[18] Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Najāh fī l-ḥikmah al-manṭiqiyyah wa-l-ṭabīʿiyyah wa-l-ilāhiyyah*, ed. Mājid Fakhrī (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīdah, 1985), 200-201; Ibn Sīnā, *ʿUyūn al-ḥikmah*, ed. Muḥammad Jabr - Muwaffaq Fawzī Jabr (Damascus: Dār al-Yanābīʿ, 1996), 78-79.

[19] For a general description of the debates and positions on this issue, see Tommaso Alpina, *Subject, Definition, Activity: Framing Avicenna's Science of the Soul* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 131-138; İsmail Kurun, "Avicenna's Intuitionist Rationalism", *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 38/4 (October 2021), 317-320.

[20] Étienne Gilson, "Les sources gréco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennisant", *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 4 (1929-1930), 1-107.

[21] Fazlur Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1958), 15; Herbert A. Davidson, "Alfarabi and Avicenna on the Active Intellect", *Viator* 3/1 (January 1972), 109-178; Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroes, on Intellect*, 74-126; Deborah L. Black, "Avicenna on the Ontological and Epistemic Status of Fictional Beings", *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 8 (1997), 445; Olga Lizzini, "L'âme chez Avicenne: quelques remarques autour de son statut épistémologique et de son fondament métaphysique", *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 21 (2010), 241; D'Ancona, "Degrees of Abstraction in Avicenna", 47-71.

rational soul acquires intelligible forms only through abstraction.[22] Scholars such as Dag Nikolaus Hasse, Jon McGinnis, Tommaso Alpina, and Richard Taylor have adopted the abstractionist interpretation, albeit with some important modifications. According to this interpretation, although abstraction is not the only epistemological method used by Avicenna, its use provides a strong empirical foundation for Avicenna's philosophy.[23] Recently, Stephen R. Ogden interpreted Avicenna's abstraction and emanation in a holistic manner.[24]

In the introduction to this article, it was noted that in contemporary perception debates, perception of the external world does not simply result from external things causally affecting the senses; the role of the perceiver in the perceptual process is quite significant, and therefore, perception occurs in a two-way manner. Also noted were the different positions presented within this problematic framework in the period

---

[22] Dimitri Gutas, "Intuition and Thinking: The Evolving Structure of Avicenna's Epistemology", *Aspects of Avicenna*, ed. Robert Wisnovsky (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 1-38; Dimitri Gutas, "Avicenna: The Metaphysics of the Rational Soul", *The Muslim World* 102/3-4 (October 2012), 417-425; Dimitri Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 179-201, 288-296. For a critical assessment of Gutas's commentary, see Jari Kaukua, "Avicenna's Outsourced Rationalism", *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 58/2 (April 2020), 215-240.

[23] Dag N. Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West: The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul 1160–1300* (London: The Warburg Institute, 2000), 186; Dag N. Hasse, "Avicenna on Abstraction", *Aspects of Avicenna*, ed. Robert Wisnovsky (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 63; Jon McGinnis, "Making Abstraction Less Abstract: The Logical, Psychological, and Metaphysical Dimensions of Avicenna's Theory of Abstraction", *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 80 (2006), 169-183; Tommaso Alpina, "Intellectual Knowledge, Active Intellect and Intellectual Memory in Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Nafs* and Its Aristotelian Background", *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 25 (2014), 131-183; Alpina, *Subject, Definition, Activity: Framing Avicenna's Science of the Soul*, 130-138; Richard C. Taylor, "Avicenna and the Issue of the Intellectual Abstraction of Intelligibles", *Philosophy of Mind in the Early and High Middle Ages*, ed. Margaret Cameron (London - New York: Routledge), 2019, 56-82.

[24] Stephen R. Ogden, "Avicenna's Emanated Abstraction", *Philosopher's Imprint* 20/10 (April 2020), 1-26.

of the history of philosophy prior to Avicenna. Accordingly, general descriptions of ancient theories of perception indicate that Aristotle defended a passive theory of perception, whereas Plato and the Neoplatonists defended an active theory of perception. Therefore, preserving the phenomenal properties of the external world and the effect of the objects of perception on our sensory abilities was important for Aristotle. For Plato, who argued that part of our knowledge or mental abilities goes beyond what can be attained through perception, and for the Neoplatonists, who attributed sensation to the sense organs as Aristotle did but linked perception to rational judgments as Plato did, what was important in perception was the activity of the rational soul. Avicenna's discussions on abstraction and emanation gain importance in the context of these historical debates on perception. Avicenna, like the Neoplatonists, combines Platonic and Aristotelian aspects. On the one hand, he emphasizes the perception of external objects by the sense organs through a process of abstraction that occurs from the bottom up; on the other hand, he emphasizes the activity of the rational soul in the perception of external objects through a process of emanation that occurs from the top down. Therefore, in Avicenna, perception emerges fully at the end of a process in which, as opposed to the passive perception of external objects by the sensory organs, it is first the intellect and, ultimately, the rational soul that actively perceives external objects. This point requires an analysis of the process by which perception is imbued with an active dimension in Avicenna.

Jari Kaukua offers an interpretation that evaluates the roles of the internal senses in active perception in Avicenna. Kaukua argues that "when it comes to the question of his theory of perception, or more precisely, whether the soul plays an significant active role in bringing perception about, he seems to have been a rather orthodox Aristotelian" and "seems to have settled firmly on the Peripatetic ground, quite distinct from the sort of Neoplatonic tendencies in the theory of perception which are evident in Augustine and the tradition founded upon him". According to Kaukua, despite his theory of internal senses, Avicenna adopted "the view that perception is by and large a passive affair, and even though it involves a process of gradual abstraction of forms from matter, this takes place more or less as a rection by the soul to the necessary data provided by the external

object of perception". Thus, Kaukua suggests that the idea of the soul as an active principle in perception can be found in Avicenna in at least two senses, and he interprets this as an extension of Avicenna's Aristotelian teaching. First, we should note that active perception is present in Avicenna in the sense that the act of perception introduces something that is not initially present in the extramental object of perception. The second and more powerful sense of active perception in Avicenna stems from his idea that the perceiving soul structures the object of perception in a way that problematizes the concept of representation on the basis of a simple isomorphism between the object of perception and the extramental entity corresponding to it. In the remainder of his work, Kaukua examines the problem of active perception in Avicenna through common sense and the imagination.[25]

In Kaukua's work, there are two claims regarding the problem of active perception in Avicenna, one of which can be criticized and the other expanded upon. The first claim in Kaukua's work is that Avicenna was an orthodox Aristotelian. However, Avicenna presents not only an Aristotelian but also a Neoplatonic framework by reducing the passivity of perception at every stage of the abstraction process that occurs from the bottom up and emphasizing the active role of the rational soul over perceptions in the process of emanation that occurs from the top down. Here, the Neoplatonic principle, which Avicenna frequently emphasizes, that lower functions cannot cause higher functions, which also forms the basis for the claim that objects can affect the sense organs but not the judgment of the rational soul, supports the Neoplatonic aspect of Avicenna. This frames Avicenna as a philosopher of the medieval tradition that views the rational soul as the active cause of perception, not as a passive recipient of sensory stimuli, and that relates perception to intellect and rational judgment at an advanced level of perception or cognition, even if not at the level of sensation.[26]

The second claim in Kaukua's work is that, according to Avicenna, activity in perception occurs through common sense and estimation.

---

[25] Jari Kaukua, "Avicenna on the Soul's Activity in Perception", 99-100, 114-115.

[26] For the process of moving from sensation to perception or cognition in Avicenna, see Mehmet Zahit Tiryaki, "Duyumsama, Soyutlama ve Duyulur Nitelikler: İbn Sînâ Nitelce Temsilcisi ya da Dışsalcısı Olabilir mi?", *Felsefe Arkivi* 62 (2025), 64-71.

In fact, the criteria used by Avicenna to distinguish between the internal senses and emphasized by Kaukua[27] provide a framework for determining which faculties are responsible for activity in perception. Avicenna's first criterion is the distinction between the internal senses in which there is only perception and the internal senses in which there is both perception and action. The second criterion is the distinction between the internal senses that are only receptive and the internal senses that are retentive. According to Avicenna's scheme of internal senses, common sense, retentive imagination, and memory are faculties that do not perform any operations. In contrast, the compositive imagination and cogitation play active roles in that they both perceive and perform operations.[28] Kaukua's emphasis on the activity of common sense is based on the claim that temporal continuity, which does not exist in the external world, emerges in common sense. Kaukua characterizes this as the "trivial sense in which common sense could be called an active faculty of perception... However, Avicenna does not recognize any genuine activity" in common sense. Kaukua bases the role of estimation in the active perception process on the fact that the meanings perceived through estimation are not objective, fixed, or perceived in the same way by everyone, and that perception through estimation obtains meanings subjectively and actively. Kaukua focuses on the role of common sense and estimation in the active perception process. Nevertheless, he emphasizes that the system of internal senses, to which Avicenna attributes different functions, is not grounded in an atomistic theory of perception and that the functioning of a faculty is dependent on the functioning of the entire system; therefore, the retentive imagination and the compositive imagination also come into play in the active

[27] Kaukua, "Avicenna on the Soul's Activity in Perception", 100-101.

[28] Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Najāh*, 200-201; Ibn Sīnā, *ʿUyūn al-ḥikmah*, 78-79.

perception process.[29] Thus, in Avicenna, the problem of active perception or the activity of perception appears to be a problem that can be interpreted in a more comprehensive framework in relation to the internal senses, primarily the compositive imagination's control over data received from the external senses.

In Avicenna's psychology, the compositive imagination, which is included in the system as a faculty that is different from the retentive imagination, is the most active and dynamic faculty in the scheme of internal senses in terms of its unification and separation function with respect to the sensory material derived from common sense and retentive imagination, which precede it in the scheme of internal senses. Like the other internal senses, Avicenna uses compositive imagination to establish the relationship between the body and the senses as the sources of difference and diversity and the soul and intellect as the sources of commonality and sameness. In addition, Avicenna activates compositive imagination in the context of perception through both abstraction and emanation.

Avicenna first analyzes the role of the compositive imagination in the process of abstraction from the senses to the intellect and then its role in the process of emanation from the intellect to the senses. Thus, on the one hand, Avicenna emphasizes the role of compositive imagination in the process of abstraction from the sensory to the intellectual. On the other hand, he brings compositive imagination into play, from the intellectual to the sensory. In any case, a controversial issue that is difficult to resolve in terms of the Avicennian system emerges here: Does Avicenna constantly emphasize the process of abstraction through the operation of the compositive imagination on forms for all modes of thought? Or does he accept a thought that is realized through the specific function of the compositive imagination independent of the process of abstraction?

---

[29] Kaukua, "Avicenna on the Soul's Activity in Perception", 102, 107-109. For an emphasis on the activity of the compositive imagination in Avicenna, see also Zhenyu Cai, "Mad Man, Sleeper and Fire: Avicenna on the Perception of the External", *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 35/1 (March 2025), 57-58, 61-62. The faculty referred to as active sense in the 14th century, whose function is described as dematerializing and spiritualizing the perceptible, seems to correspond largely to the compositive imagination in Avicenna. See Silva, "Medieval Theories of Active Perception", 143.

In the abstraction stage, which starts from the senses and proceeds through retentive imagination and estimation to the intellect, the compositive imagination, as the most critical faculty between the senses and the intellect, performs the functions of unification and separation on the sensory forms transferred from the previous internal senses.[30] At this point, the compositive imagination plays the role of transforming sensory data into general concepts and making them suitable for the intellect's perception.

One of the important changes Avicenna made was that he distinguished between two different internal senses, namely, *retentive imagination* and *compositive imagination*. Therefore, these two faculties are the faculties in which Avicenna's intervention in the scheme of internal senses is most clearly observed. In some of his early works, Avicenna used retentive imagination and compositive imagination interchangeably.[31] However, whether the faculty referred to is retentive imagination or compositive imagination can be deduced from the context and function of the faculty. In particular, the fact that the faculty associated with the debates with respect to its functions and its relationship with the intellect is compositive imagination makes it easier for us to make a choice in such cases. After all, retentive imagination is one of the preservative faculties that has no function beyond preserving the sensible forms obtained via common sense.

Avicenna notes the primarily terminological distinction between retentive imagination and compositive imagination.[32] Elsewhere, he takes this terminological difference one step further: "The difference between the [compositive] imagination and the retentive imagination is that the retentive imagination has only what is taken from the senses,

---

[30] Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Nūrānī (Tahrān: Muʾassasah-ʾi Muṭālaʿāt-i Islāmī Dānishgāh-i Māk Gīl, 1984), 102-103; Ibn Sīnā., *Kitāb al-Hidāyah*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbduh (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhirah al-Ḥadīthah, 1974), 212-213; Ibn Sīnā, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 59; Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Najāh*, 208; Ibn Sīnā, *ʿUyūn al-ḥikmah*, 80-81; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, ed. ʿAlī Riḍā Najafzādah. Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār wa-Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 2005), 245; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, ed. Ḥusayn Mūsawiyān (Tehran: Muʾassasah-ʾi Pizūhishī-yi Ḥikmah wa-l-Falsafa-ʾi Īrān, 2013), 202-203.

[31] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 116-120. See also Dimitri Gutas, "Intellect Without Limits: The Absence of Mysticism in Avicenna", 358, footnote 19.

[32] Ibn Sīnā, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 165.

whereas the compositive imagination combines, separates, and creates the forms of what has not been perceived and what has never been perceived. Examples, such as the flying human being, the individual or person who is half human and half tree [are like this]".[33]

Avicenna reemphasizes the difference between retentive imagination and compositive imagination elsewhere. Accordingly, the retentive imagination is the faculty that receives or preserves sensible forms. The compositive imagination, on the other hand, acts on what is stored in the retentive imagination. The operation of this faculty is to combine and separate and imagine the forms in the retentive imagination as forms that are different from the forms that come from the senses, such as a flying person or an emerald mountain. However, the retentive imagination receives only what the senses obtain.[34] Robert E. Hall states that Avicenna uses only the term retentive imagination and its derivatives in Burhan III.5 and speaks of retentive imagination in a limited technical sense. This meaning is also used in IV.10, where retentive imagination refers to passive retentive imagination or the representational faculty. Here, too, the retentive imagination is portrayed as the faculty that preserves the sense data unified by common sense, as in *al-Shifāʾ: al-Nafs*, and that other faculties find these unified forms within it when necessary. The faculty Avicenna refers to as compositive imagination and cogitation, on the other hand, is included in the scheme as a higher, active faculty capable of dividing, recombining, using forms, and thus imagining in the modern sense.[35]

As Deborah Black also stated, the two functions of the compositive imagination, both to imagine the form coming from the senses and to imagine forms that did not previously exist by making combinations, are important in several respects. First, the multiplication realized in the internal senses through the distinction between retentive imagination and compositive imagination is a correction of what

---

[33] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 93-94.

[34] Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb*, ed. Idwār al-Qashsh (Beirut: Muʾassasat ʿIzz al-Dīn, 1993), 96.

[35] Robert E. Hall, "A Decisive Example of the Influence of Psychological Doctrine in Islamic Science and Culture: Some Relationships Between Ibn Sīnā's Psychology, Other Branches of His Thought, and Islamic Teachings", *Journal for the History of Arabic Science* 3 (1979), 63-64.

constitutes the basis of Aristotelian phantasia. For the problems Aristotle analyzed in *De Anima* III.3 in the context of phantasia, it was difficult to provide a holistic account of the Aristotelian concept. If a special faculty were designated for the perceptual function of receiving and preserving forms and meanings from the external world, and if that faculty were given further freedom to use these forms creatively, there would be no mechanism for guaranteeing the true character of the stored perceptions. Avicenna, on the other hand, was able to eliminate some of the tensions within the Aristotelian account by distributing the competing operations on the forms to different faculties.[36]

Another contribution of the distinction between retentive imagination and compositive imagination in Avicenna is a clearer distinction between sensation and retentive imagination and compositive imagination. This distinction is important with regard to the question of how it is possible for sense perception and phantasia, which share the same object, to have different functions. Avicenna attempts to resolve this issue, which is also debated in the Aristotelian tradition, by resorting to an intermediary faculty such as retentive imagination. This faculty is still causally related to sense perception because it preserves the abstracted object taken from the sensible object. However, through this faculty, we perceive the sensible object not as an object of perception but as an object ready for the use of more advanced faculties such as compositive imagination and cogitation. Consequently, Avicenna attributes some of the sensible or perceptible functions to the retentive imagination and some functions to the compositive imagination. In Aristotle, phantasia has three functions: 1. interpreting perceived things, 2. representing the object as a certain kind of thing, and 3. combining and separating perceptible form. Avicenna, on the other hand, accepts these three functions that Aristotle attributes to phantasia but attributes them to two different faculties. More precisely, according to Avicenna, interpreting perceived things and representing the object as a certain type of thing

[36] Deborah Black, "Rational Imagination: Avicenna on the Cogitative Power", *Philosophical Psychology in Arabic Thought and the Latin Aristotelianism of the 13th Century*, ed. Luis Xavier López-Farjeat - Jörg Alejandro Tellkamp (Paris: Vrin, 2013), 63-65.

belong to the retentive imagination, whereas combining and separating perceptible forms belong to the compositive imagination.[37]

According to Avicenna, form exists in the faculties of retentive imagination and compositive imagination in a more abstract manner than in the external senses. This is because the retentive imagination retains the form of matter in such a way that it does not need the existence of the form's matter. Even if the matter disappears from the reach of the senses, the existence of the form in the retentive imagination remains constant. Thus, the mere existence of form rather than matter in the retentive imagination completely severs the relationship between retentive imagination and matter. However, the retentive imagination does not abstract the form from material attachments. The form in the retentive imagination is, according to the sensible form, a kind of quality and condition.[38] The abstraction of the forms from their matter is not yet fully realized in the retentive imagination and compositive imagination. Although matter has disappeared and a certain amount of abstraction has taken place in retentive imagination and compositive imagination, complete abstraction has not yet been realized because of the accidents of matter. However, Avicenna points out that the unification and separation that the compositive imagination makes between the forms is not based on a judgment about external forms or the existence or nonexistence of something.[39]

It seems that Avicenna's main contribution is not only in the addition of this or that faculty but also in his systematic separation of the different functions previously attributed to a single faculty and in attributing a special faculty to each function. Avicenna first eliminated this terminological ambiguity with the distinction between retentive imagination and compositive imagination. Second, Avicenna positioned the retentive imagination below and related it more to the senses, whereas he positioned the compositive imagination above the retentive imagination. In this way, Avicenna was able to attribute the

---

[37] Alwishah, *Avicenna's Philosophy of Mind*, 99-100. For analysis of the second function, see also Martha Craven Nussbaum, *Aristotle's* De Motu Animalium: *Text with Translation, Commentary, and Interpretive Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 257, note 52.

[38] Ibn Sīnā, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 59-60.

[39] Ibn Sīnā, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 165-166.

function that the compositive imagination performs in the context of inferential reasoning to the cogitation and to construct the compositive imagination as a faculty through which the functions of the human mind other than abstraction are realized.

Another important emphasis in Avicenna's scheme of internal senses is the distinction between the compositive imagination and cogitation and the relationship of these two faculties to the intellect. As notes, Avicenna considered the compositive imagination and cogitation as faculties that fulfill the same function and thought that the difference between them arose from the fact that the compositive imagination is a function of the animal soul, whereas cogitation is a function of the human soul. Therefore, for Avicenna, in terms of its function in the process of abstraction, analyzing the compositive imagination means analyzing cogitation. In almost all his texts, Avicenna analyses cogitation together with compositive imagination and believes that it is responsible for combining and separating things stored in the retentive imagination. In fact, the two faculties perform the same operation, but where the rational soul is involved in the function of combining and separating, the faculty takes the name of cogitation.[40] In *al-Qānūn*, just like in his other texts, Avicenna also moves from the association of compositive imagination and cogitation. However, immediately after his definition, he states that there is a difference between these two faculties and begins to explain the distinction between the retentive imagination and the compositive imagination.[41]

Avicenna's emphasis on the function of combining and separating both compositive imagination and cogitation is also compatible with the general Avicennian approach in which human thought occurs in a dual stage. At the stage of knowledge pertaining to the soul (*nafsānī*), there is a unification from sensory and fragmentary knowledge to simple and holistic knowledge through abstraction. In the stage of intellectual knowledge, on the other hand, there is separation from

---

[40] Ibn Sīnā, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 45; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, 93-94; Ibn Sīnā, "Risālah fī l-nafs wa-baqāʾihā wa-maʿādihā", *Aḥwāl al-nafs*, ed. Aḥmad Fuʾād al-Ahwānī (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyyah, 1952), 62; Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Hidāyah*, 214; Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Najāh*, 201-202; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 245; Ibn Sīnā, *ʿUyūn al-ḥikmah*, 78.

[41] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb*, 96.

rational and holistic knowledge to composite and fragmentary knowledge through emanation. Cogitation performs the function of unification in the abstraction process that develops from the soul to the intellect and the function of differentiation in the process of emanation that develops from the intellect to the soul.[42] However, in this process, which is realized through the relationship between simple intellectual knowledge and the composite and fragmented sensual knowledge obtained through cogitation, Avicenna aims to explain how multiplicity is achieved through forms on the one hand and to preserve the simplicity and integrity of the intellect and intelligibility on the other hand.[43]

In Avicenna's texts, cogitation is given less attention than compositive imagination. Avicenna's emphasis on compositive imagination rather than cogitation first appears to indicate that the primary faculty responsible for unification and separation is compositive imagination. However, Avicenna makes another distinction that complicates this understanding. In *al-Mubāḥathāt*, Avicenna states, "If by cogitation is meant the seeking faculty, it belongs to the rational soul. It is the dispositional intellect (*ʿaql bi-l-malakah*), especially when it aims at perfection and does not exceed the *al-malakah*. If by cogitation is meant that which is presenting moving forms, it is the compositive imagination in the sense that it moves under the direction of the intellectual faculty".[44]

In the Avicennian system, the compositive imagination, along with the other internal senses, plays an important role in the emanation process that continues from the One to the lowest material being. This role emerges in the process of the external realization of existence at the end of the processes of individualization (*tashakhkhuṣ*), specialization (*takhaṣṣuṣ*), determination (*taʿayyun*), and multiplication (*takathtthur*). Despite this framework, which at first appears ontological, this description has an epistemological dimension, since coming into existence in the Neoplatonist and Avicennian systems is a process of intellection (*taʿaqqul*). This

---

[42] Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, 96-97.

[43] Black, "Rational Imagination: Avicenna on the Cogitative Power", 73-75.

[44] Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā, *al-Mubāḥathāt*, ed. Muḥsin Bīdārfar (Qom: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 1371/1992), 111.

dimension leads us to another aspect of the Avicennian theory of knowledge, specifically, a different kind of knowledge that emerges in the revelation received by the prophet, the inspiration of the saint, or the dream of the dreamer. Therefore, a complete analysis of the compositive imagination in Avicenna requires consideration of the functions of this faculty in the process of abstraction as well as its role in the process of emanation from the intellectual realm to the sensory realm. In this context, compositive imagination is also used to explain issues such as prophecy, revelation, vision, and dreams. Just as the compositive imagination has the function of abstracting the forms it receives at the sensory level and transforming them into intellectual concepts, it also has the function of translating the immaterial and incorporeal intelligible meanings they receive from the divine realm into material forms.

Gutas discusses the function of the compositive imagination in acquiring knowledge about the supreme realm in Avicenna, arguing that this knowledge is obtained through either the acquisition of intelligible universal concepts from the active intellect or the acquisition of particular forms concerning particular events from the souls of the celestial spheres. According to Gutas, in *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, Avicenna is clear about the faculty that receives from the active intellect is the rational faculty; however, he is not equally clear in his definition of the faculty that receives from the souls of the celestial spheres, and this raises some problems. This issue stems from Avicenna's statement that the faculty that receives the second type of knowledge is estimation and the compositive imagination. In his view, the opinion expressed in some contemporary interpretations of Avicenna that the compositive imagination can interact with the active intellect is incorrect. Gutas finds a reasonable solution within Avicenna's framework by relating the faculty that receives particular knowledge from the heavenly souls to the practical intellect rather than the theoretical intellect. In conclusion, it is not the animal soul and its faculties that are connected to the supreme realm, but ultimately the intellect. The animal soul and its faculties, such as estimation and compositive imagination, serve only the practical intellect and thus the intellect in this sense. However, Gutas does not deny that the compositive imagination can assist the theoretical intellect during its interaction with the active intellect. In both cases, the compositive

imagination transforms this knowledge into perceptible and visible forms, but when the content of the knowledge is the divine message of revelation, it is transmitted to humans as a sacred text. Knowledge about particular events, on the other hand, reveals itself in dreams or in the waking state of people with a strong compositive imagination in the form of hints and the like.[45]

As stated in the description of contemporary interpretations of Avicenna's epistemology at the beginning of this section, Gutas does not view emanation as a method of acquiring knowledge that is different from abstraction or an alternative to abstraction. It is also clear that Gutas interprets Avicenna's theory of knowledge in a more empirical and rational manner. From the perspective of the focus of this present article, it is important to emphasize that Gutas does not completely negate the role of the compositive imagination in the process of emanation but rather claims that this role is also mediated by reason. In addition, in regard to emanation, what Gutas rejects and criticizes is not the role of the compositive imagination in the normal process of acquiring knowledge but rather its role in acquiring knowledge about the sublime realm. Considering the compositive imagination only in relation to mystical and spiritual knowledge would lead to overlooking its epistemological aspects and its relevance to the problem of active perception, which is the subject of this article. Therefore, even with a different interpretation, the compositive imagination plays an epistemic role in the process of emanation, in addition to its function in the process of abstraction. However, as seen in Kaukua's interpretation, interpreting Avicenna as an orthodox Aristotelian in regard to the compositive imagination and the problem of active perception would mean disregarding the Platonic and Neoplatonic aspects of Avicenna, making it difficult to fully reveal the ways in which Avicenna's view of perception differs from Aristotle's.

When we look at the functions of the compositive imagination related to emanation and active perception in Avicenna, we encounter the following picture: Avicenna thinks that individualization (*tashakhkhuṣ*), specialization (*takhaṣṣuṣ*), determination (*taʿayyun*), and multiplication (*takaththur*) cannot occur in intelligible meanings

[45] Gutas, "Imagination and Transcendental Knowledge in Avicenna", 337-354.

that have absoluteness, generality, or commonality. The specialization of species and human individuals cannot occur intelligibly. According to Avicenna, intelligible meaning is essentially one, or, in other words, indivisible meaning.[46] In Avicenna, being intelligible is something that cannot be combined with individualization, specialization, or multiplication.[47] After stating that individualization, specialization, or multiplication cannot occur in intelligible things, Avicenna claims that there must be something specializing in particular things that will specialize them. The intelligible aspect of a thing must be universal. The compositive imagination does not interfere with the intelligibility of the absolute intellect. Each particular thing must also be specialized by something specializing. This specialization is necessary for the emergence of something that is actually present, with the exception of unique species that consist only of a single individual.[48] The specializing thing (*mukhaṣṣiṣ*), which is needed for the actual existence of individuals, is the thing through which the existence of a thing gains determination (*taʿayyun*) and is distinguished from its counterpart. In this case, the specializing thing is included in the existence of a thing. The thing that individualizes a thing (*mutashakhkhaṣ*), on the other hand, is included in its actual existence as an individual (*taqwīm*) and its formation (*takwīn*).[49]After Avicenna proves the existence of something that individuates and specializes things, he examines the things that will ensure individuation. Among the things listed by Avicenna are matter,[50] body or corporeality,[51] exterior existence with one of its individuals,[52] position, time, and space.[53] Avicenna adds to these, in different contexts, his views that infinite motions, essence, or causes other than essence play a role in the individualization, specialization, and multiplication of things.[54]

---

46 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 409-410.

47 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 409.

48 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 374. The examples of this kind of species that Avicenna does not mention here are the celestial intellects and the souls.

49 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 303.

50 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 144, 184, 409, 430.

51 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 143.

52 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 162.

53 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 233-234, 275-276, 300-301, 304, 433-434.

54 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 371-372.

Notably, the compositive imagination is not involved in the intelligibility of the pure intellect in the Avicennian system, and the intelligibility of a thing must be universal. Therefore, compositive imagination does not involve the intellect's object (*maʿqūlahū*).[55] When an intelligible multiplies, it is no longer intelligible but imaginable. In this case, it becomes specialized with the compositive imagination.[56] This situation also shows that specialization and the absence of compositive imagination are combined in the intelligible plane. Therefore, if the intelligible is not specialized, it cannot be imagined at the same time, and if something is imagined, it is specialized and no longer intelligible. Avicenna also explains that in a place where the intelligible does not provide specialization, a particular specializer that specializes matter would be either imagined or perceived. Accordingly, it is appropriate for this specialized or individualized matter to be present in the nature of universal matter. In this case, the intelligible of this individual does not specialize its existence. In terms of being the nature of matter, it is possible that the nature of matter is not another matter but rather a specialized matter. In this case, there must be a particular specializer that is imagined or perceived for it.[57] Thus, the most important functions of the compositive imagination in the Avicennian system, which emerges in the process of emanation from top to bottom rather than from bottom to top, as in abstraction, have been identified. In Avicenna, there is individuality and singularity at the level of compositive imagination. However, at the level of intellect, there is no individuality and singularity but rather commonality and universality. Therefore, this singularity and individuality came to exist gradually through compositive imagination and other faculties in the process of descent from the intellect to the sensible. Although singularity and individuality exist precisely in conditions such as matter, body, corporeality, external existence, position, time, and space, the compositive imagination performs a preparatory function for the conditions of existence for singularity and individuality. The specific characteristics of the individual objects to which we are related to cannot exist or be

---

55 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 374.

56 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 409-410.

57 Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 370-371.

explained only at the intellectual level and on the basis of essence. The peculiar properties of the object that allow us to say "this object" by pointing to them gain prominence through separation, differentiation, individuation, and concretization, which are realized through compositive imagination and other faculties. The counterpart of this situation in Avicenna's epistemology first leads to the claim that knowledge is realized not only through abstraction but also through emanation from the active intellect. Therefore, in the Avicennian system, the realization of this kind of knowledge in normal human beings is examined, as is the realization of this kind of knowledge in people such as prophets and saints through means of knowledge such as prophethood, revelation, inspiration, and dreams.

Conclusion

This article examines the role of the compositive imagination in the context of active perception, specifically in the psychology of Avicenna. To this end, first, the problematic and historical framework related to active perception is presented in the introduction. This framework is established to relate and position Avicenna both within the active perception debates as a philosophical problem and historically within the philosophical tradition preceding him, alongside the debates of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. The history of philosophy chronicles a range of perspectives in the debate over whether the external object or the mental activity of the perceiver is more important in the perception of perceptual content. In ancient times, these perspectives were roughly classified in terms of Aristotle's passive perception theory and Plato's, the Platonists', and the Neoplatonists' active perception theory. Discussions about active perception, on the other hand, mostly involved faculties that realize the mental activity of the perceiver, primarily phantasia or compositive imagination, which Avicenna referred to as internal senses.

Second, this article mainly addresses Avicennian internal senses. In a cosmology where there is a sharp distinction between the sensible and intelligible worlds and an epistemology where the universal-particular distinction is quite significant, internal senses play an important role in the perceptual process that occurs through abstraction from the material to the immaterial or through emanation from the immaterial to the material.

Third, the article examines the function of the compositive imagination as an extremely important faculty in Avicenna's internal senses scheme in the context of active perception. According to Avicenna, in regard to the process of abstraction, the perception of external objects cannot be fully realized without the operations performed by the internal senses, primarily the compositive imagination. Avicenna appears to adopt a position closer to the active perception theory defended by the Platonists and Neoplatonists than to Aristotle's passive perception theory, emphasizing the role of internal senses in perception and, ultimately, the judgment and influence of the rational soul on perceptual activity. The effects coming from higher cognitive faculties, such as the rational soul and, beyond that, from the active intellect, can be associated with the dimension of Avicenna's theory related to emanation. In the process of emanation, which has dimensions related to perception and epistemology as well as movement and cosmology, Avicenna argues that the abstract and universal intellect cannot perceive particulars and cannot bring about movement. Avicenna proposes a framework that requires individualization, which he generally refers to with concepts such as *tashakhkhuṣ*, *takhaṣṣuṣ*, *taʿayyun*, and *takaththur*. In such a framework, the relationship between the fields in question is established through corporeal faculties such as the compositive imagination. In conclusion, from Avicenna's perspective, activity in perception emerges both in the processes carried out by the compositive imagination on data received from the external senses and in the process of individualizing the emanation received from the heavenly intellects and the spheres.

In conclusion, perception of the external world does not simply result from external things causally affecting the senses, and the role of the perceiver in the perceptual process is quite significant. However, this emphasis on the role of the perceiver is not strong enough to eliminate the role of external objects in active perception. Therefore, perception occurs in a two-way process. By emphasizing both the role of external objects in the perceptual process and the role of the compositive imagination and other internal senses in the active perception process, Avicenna presents a framework that cannot be characterized solely as Aristotelian or Neoplatonic. In this way, he

occupies an important place in contemporary perception debates with respect to this dual perception process.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

FUNDING

The author received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers of this article for their critiques and contributions, which have helped to make it more organized and coherent.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alpina, Tommaso. "Intellectual Knowledge, Active Intellect and Intellectual Memory in Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Nafs* and Its Aristotelian Background". *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 25 (2014), 131-183.

Alpina, Tommaso. *Subject, Definition, Activity: Framing Avicenna's Science of the Soul*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021.

Alwishah, Ahmed R. D. *Avicenna's Philosophy of Mind: Self-Awareness and Intentionality*. Los Angeles: University of California, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2006.

Black, Deborah L. "Avicenna on the Ontological and Epistemic Status of Fictional Beings". *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 8 (1997), 425-453.

Black, Deborah L. "Estimation (*Wahm*) in Avicenna: The Logical and Psychological Dimensions". *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review* 32/2 (1993), 219-258. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0012217300014414

Black, Deborah L. "Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western Transformations". *Topoi* 19 (2000), 59-75. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006399407731

Black, Deborah. "Rational Imagination: Avicenna on the Cogitative Power". *Philosophical Psychology in Arabic Thought and the Latin Aristotelianism of the 13th Century*. ed. Luis Xavier López-Farjeat - Jörg Alejandro Tellkamp. 59-81. Paris: Vrin, 2013.

Brann, Eva T. H. *The World of the Imagination - Sum and Substance*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

Bundy, Murray W. *The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Mediaeval Thought*. Illinois: The University of Illinois, 1927.

Cai, Zhenyu. "Mad Man, Sleeper and Fire: Avicenna on the Perception of the External". *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 35/1 (March 2025), 53-70. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423924000110

D'Ancona, Cristina. "Degrees of Abstraction in Avicenna: How to Combine Aristotle's *De Anima* and the *Enneads*". *Theories of Perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*. ed. Simo Knuuttila - Pekka Kärkkäinen. 47-71. Dordrecht: Springer, 2008. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6125-7_4

Davidson, Herbert A. "Alfarabi and Avicenna on the Active Intellect". *Viator* 3/1 (January 1972), 109-178. https://doi.org/10.1484/J.VIATOR.2.301667

Davidson, Herbert A. *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect and Theories of Human Intellect*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Frank, Richard M. "Some Fragments of Isḥâq's Translation of the *de Anima*". *Cahiers de Byrsa* 8 (1958-1959), 231-251.

Gilson, Étienne. "Les sources gréco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennisant". *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 4 (1929-1930), 1-107.

Gutas, Dimitri. "Avicenna: The Metaphysics of the Rational Soul". *The Muslim World* 102/3-4 (October 2012), 417-425. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-1913.2012.01413.x

Gutas, Dimitri. "Imagination and Transcendental Knowledge in Avicenna". *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy– From the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank*. ed. James E. Montgomery. 337-354. Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2006.

Gutas, Dimitri. "Intellect Without Limits: The Absence of Mysticism in Avicenna". *Intellect and Imagination in Medieval Philosophy*. ed. Maria Cândida Pacheco - José Francisco Meirinhos. 351-372. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006. https://doi.org/10.1484/M.RPM-EB.3.2880

Gutas, Dimitri. "Intuition and Thinking: The Evolving Structure of Avicenna's Epistemology". *Aspects of Avicenna*. ed. Robert Wisnovsky. 1-38. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001.

Gutas, Dimitri. *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Hall, Robert E. "A Decisive Example of the Influence of Psychological Doctrine in Islamic Science and Culture: Some Relationships Between Ibn Sīnā's Psychology, Other Branches of His Thought, and Islamic Teachings". *Journal for the History of Arabic Science* 3 (1979), 46-84.

Hall, Robert E. "Intellect, Soul and Body in Ibn Sīnā: Systematic Synthesis and Development of the Aristotelian, Neoplatonic and Galenic Theories".

Interpreting Avicenna: Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islam. ed. Jon McGinnis. 62-86. Leiden: Brill, 2004. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047405818_007

Harvey, E. Ruth. *The Inward Wits: Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*. London: The Warburg Institute University of London, 1975.

Hasse, Dag N. "Avicenna on Abstraction". *Aspects of Avicenna*. ed. Robert Wisnovsky. 39-72. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001.

Hasse, Dag N. *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West: The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul 1160–1300*. London: The Warburg Institute, 2000.

Ibn Sīnā, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī. *Avicenna's De Anima (Arabic Text): Being the Psychological Part of Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, ed. Fazlur Rahman. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.

Ibn Sīnā, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī. "Risālah fī l-nafs wa-baqāʾihā wa-maʿādihā". *Aḥwāl al-nafs*. ed. Aḥmad Fuʾād al-Ahwānī. 45-143. Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyyah, 1952.

Ibn Sīnā, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī. *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*. ed. ʿAlī Riḍā Najafzādah. Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār wa-Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 2005.

Ibn Sīnā, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī. *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*. ed. ʿAbd Allāh Nūrānī. Tahrān: Muʾassasah-ʾi Muṭālaʿāt-i Islāmī Dānishgāh-i Māk Gīl, 1984.

Ibn Sīnā, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī. *al-Mubāḥathāt*. ed. Muḥsin Bīdārfar. Qom: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 1371/1992.

Ibn Sīnā, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī. *al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb*. ed. Idwār al-Qashsh. Beirut: Muʾassasat ʿIzz al-Dīn, 1993.

Ibn Sīnā, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī. *al-Taʿlīqāt*. ed. Ḥusayn Mūsawiyān. Tehran: Muʾassasah-ʾi Pizūhishī-yi Ḥikmat wa-l-Falsafa-ʾi Īrān, 2013.

Ibn Sīnā, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī. *Kitāb al-Hidāyah*. ed. Muḥammad ʿAbduh. Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhirah al-Ḥadīthah, 1974.

Ibn Sīnā, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī. *Kitāb al-Najāh fī l-ḥikmah al-manṭiqiyyah wa-l-ṭabīʿiyyah wa-l-ilāhiyyah*. ed. Mājid Fakhrī. Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīdah, 1985.

Ibn Sīnā, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī. *ʿUyūn al-ḥikmah*. ed. Muḥammad Jabr - Muwaffaq Fawzī Jabr. Damascus: Dār al-Yanābīʿ, 1996.

Ivry, Alfred L "The Arabic Text of Aristotle's *de Anima* and its Translator". *Oriens* 36 (2001), 59-77. https://doi.org/10.2307/1580476

Ivry, Alfred L. "The Triangulating the Imagination: Avicenna, Maimonides, and Averroes". *Intellect and Imagination in Medieval Philosophy*. ed. Maria Cândida Pacheco - José Francisco Meirinhos. 667-676. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006. https://doi.org/10.1484/M.RPM-EB.3.2901

Kaukua, Jari. "Avicenna on the Soul's Activity in Perception". *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*. ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri. 99-116. Cham: Springer, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04361-6_6

Kaukua, Jari. "Avicenna's Outsourced Rationalism". *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 58/2 (April 2020), 215-240. https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2020.0037

Kearney, Richard. *The Wake of Imagination*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Kemp, Simon - Fletcher, Garth J. O. "The Medieval Theory of the Inner Senses". *The American Journal of Psychology* 106/4 (Winter 1993), 559-576. https://doi.org/10.2307/1422969

Kind, Amy (ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Imagination*. London - New York: Routledge, 2016.

Klaus, Corcilius. "Activity, Passivity, and Perceptual Discrimination in Aristotle". *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*. ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri. 31-53. Cham: Springer, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04361-6_3

Kocakaplan, Nursema. *Fârâbî ve İbn Sînâ'da Tahayyül*. İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2024.

Kurun, İsmail. "Avicenna's Intuitionist Rationalism". *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 38/4 (October 2021), 317-336. https://doi.org/10.5406/21521026.38.4.02

Lizzini, Olga. "L'âme chez Avicenne: quelques remarques autour de son statut épistémologique et de son fondament métaphysique". *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 21 (2010), 223-242.

McGinnis, Jon. "Making Abstraction Less Abstract: The Logical, Psychological, and Metaphysical Dimensions of Avicenna's Theory of Abstraction". *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 80 (2006), 169-183. https://doi.org/10.5840/acpaproc2006804

Nussbaum, Martha Craven. *Aristotle's* De Motu Animalium: *Text with Translation, Commentary, and Interpretive Essays*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978.

Ogden, Stephen R. "Avicenna's Emanated Abstraction". *Philosopher's Imprint* 20/10 (April 2020), 1-26.

Pormann, Peter E. "Avicenna on Medical Practice, Epistemology, and the Physiology of the Inner Senses". *Interpreting Avicenna: Critical Essays*. ed. Peter Adamson. 91-108. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139047890.006

Rahman, Fazlur. *Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1958.

Remes, Paulina. "Plato: Interaction Between the External Body and the Perceiver in the *Timaeus*". *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*. ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri. 9-30. Cham: Springer, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04361-6_2

Silva, Jose Filipe - Yrjönsuuri, Mikko. "Introduction: The World as a Stereogram". *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*. ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri. 1-7. Cham: Springer, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04361-6_1

Silva, José Filipe. "Augustine on Active Perception". *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*. ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri. 79-98. Cham: Springer, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04361-6_5

Silva, José Filipe. "Medieval Theories of Active Perception: An Overview". *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*. ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri. 117-146. Cham: Springer, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04361-6_7

Tachau, Katherine H. "Approaching Medieval Scholars' Treatment of Cognition". *Intellect and Imagination in Medieval Philosophy*. ed. Maria Cândida Pacheco - José Francisco Meirinhos. 1-34. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006. https://doi.org/10.1484/M.RPM-EB.3.2868

Taylor, Richard C. "Avicenna and the Issue of the Intellectual Abstraction of Intelligibles". *Philosophy of Mind in the Early and High Middle Ages*. ed. Margaret Cameron. 56-82. London - New York: Routledge, 2019.

Tiryaki, Mehmet Zahit. "Duyumsama, Soyutlama ve Duyulur Nitelikler: İbn Sînâ Nitelce Temsilcisi ya da Dışsalcısı Olabilir mi?". *Felsefe Arkivi* 62 (Haziran 2025), 59-76. https://doi.org/10.26650/arcp.260625

Tiryaki, Mehmet Zahit. "Tahayyül Kavramında İbn Sînâcı Dönüşümler". *Kavram Geliştirme – Sosyal Bilimlerde Yeni İmkanlar*. ed. Kübra Bilgin Tiryaki - Lütfi Sunar. 199-252. Ankara: Nobel, 2016.

Tiryaki, Mehmet Zahit. *İbn Sînâ Felsefesinde Mütehayyile/Müfekkire ve Vehim*. İstanbul: Marmara University Social Sciences Institute, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2015.

Tuominen, Miira. "On Activity and Passivity in Perception: Aristotle, Philoponus, and Pseudo-Simplicius". *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*. ed. José Filipe Silva - Mikko Yrjönsuuri. 55-78. Cham: Springer, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04361-6_4

Watson, Gerard. *Phantasia in Classical Thought*. Galway: Galway University Press, 1988.

Wedin, Michael V. *Mind and Imagination in Aristotle*. New Haven - London: Yale University Press, 1988.

Wolfson, Harry A. "The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew Philosophical Texts". *The Harvard Theological Review* 28/2 (1935), 69-133.

.