

# On the Intellect. A Reading of John Buridan's *De anima*, III, qq. 3-6<sup>1</sup>

Chiara Beneduce

Università Campus Bio-Medico di Roma  
c.beneduce@unicampus.it

DOI: 10.17421/2498-9746-05-06

## Abstract

*In his commentary on Aristotle's De anima, III, qq. 3-6, John Buridan (d. 1361 ca.) presents his interpretive view on the intellectual soul. His text has been a source of lively scholarly debate. This article elaborates a reading of Buridan's qq. 3-6 and situates it in light of the work of Olaf Pluta and Jack Zupko. Contrary to Pluta and in agreement with Zupko, it maintains that Buridan does not embrace a materialistic conception of the soul but it further explores why Buridan devotes so much space to analysing Alexander of Aphrodisias's position. It moreover aims to move beyond Zupko to offer a more straightforward reading according to which Buridan genuinely supports the position of the faith. The article's interpretation of Buridan's De anima, III, qq. 3-6 ultimately allows for a broader reflection on the relationship between reason and faith in Buridan's thought.*

**Keywords:** John Buridan, De anima, soul, intellect, faith, reason.

## CONTENTS

1	John Buridan's <i>De anima</i> , III, qq. 3-6: the <i>opinionones magis famosae</i> on the intellect and scholarly interpretations of Buridan's views . . . . .	84
2	Reading Buridan's View on the Intellect in <i>De anima</i> , III, qq. 3-6 . . . . .	88
2.1	Averroes' and Alexander's Positions . . . . .	88
2.2	The Position of the Catholic Faith . . . . .	92
3	Conclusions: Natural Reason and Faith in Buridan's View on the Intellect . . . . .	97
	Notes . . . . .	99

1 JOHN BURIDAN'S *DE ANIMA*, III, QQ. 3-6: THE *OPINIONES MAGIS FAMOSAE* ON THE INTELLECT AND SCHOLARLY INTERPRETATIONS OF BURIDAN'S VIEWS

John Buridan (d. 1361 ca.) was an influential fourteenth-century Master of Arts at the University of Paris. During his career, Buridan produced both expositions and questions on Aristotle's *De anima*, and he seems to have lectured three times on the text, since a version of his *De anima* commentary is labelled the *tertia sive ultima lectura* in the manuscripts. An earlier version of that commentary (sometimes called *secunda lectura* but more correctly the *non ultima lectura*) also attributed to Buridan contains a slightly different version of that commentary. Both the "second" and the third lecture are featured in a considerable number of manuscripts. Buridan's name has also been connected to yet another *De anima* commentary, labelled *prima lectura* by its editor, Benoît Patar. In an article of 2011, Sander de Boer and Paul Bakker have argued that the arguments attributing Buridan with authorship of this (anonymous) text are not convincing. Besides the manuscripts, there is also another version of Buridan's *De anima* that does not precisely correspond with any of the aforementioned texts and is contained in an early modern printed edition: the so-called "Lokert edition", which was given the name of its editor, George Lokert (d. 1547). The panorama of commentaries by (or attributed to) Buridan on Aristotle's *De anima* is therefore complicated<sup>2</sup>. The contents of Buridan's *De anima* have opened several debates as well<sup>3</sup>. The most intense of these debates have arisen from qq. 3-6 of Buridan's third book, which are usually identified as the "treatise on the human intellect". There, Buridan discusses whether the intellect is mortal or immortal, material or immaterial, whether there is only one intellect for all human beings or a plurality of intellects, and if the intellect inheres in the body<sup>4</sup>.

In q. 3, in order to present his reflections on the nature of the intellectual soul, Buridan takes up three different positions (*opinionones magis famosae*) on the topic, those respectively ascribed to Alexander of Aphrodisias, Averroes, and the Catholic faith<sup>5</sup>. In Buridan's words, these three viewpoints on the nature of the intellect can be described as follows:

Prima opinio fuit Alexandri, ut ibi citat Commentator. Dicebat Alexander quod intellectus humanus est forma materialis generabilis et corruptibilis, educta de potentia materiae, et extensa extensione materiae, sicut anima bovis aut anima canis, et non est manens post mortem<sup>6</sup>.

Alia fuit opinio Averrois quod intellectus humanus est forma immaterialis, et ingenita et incorruptibilis, et sic non est educta de potentia materiae, nec extensa,

immo nec multiplicata multiplicatione hominum, sed quod est unicus intellectus omnibus hominibus, scilicet quo ego intelligo, quo tu intelligis, et sic de aliis. Ideo non est forma inhaerens corpori. Unde ipse imaginatur quod sicut [D CB]Deus est toto mundo et cuilibet parti eius praesens et indistans, et tamen nec mundo nec aliqui parti mundi inhaerens, sic ille intellectus se habet ad homines: scilicet quod nulli inhaeret, sed cuilibet indistanter assistit, licet sit indivisibilis<sup>7</sup>.

Tertia opinio est veritas fidei nostrae, quae firmiter debemus credere: scilicet quod intellectus humanus est forma substantialis corporis inhaerens corpori humano, sed non educta de potentia materiae, nec extensa de eius extensione, et ideo non naturaliter genita nec corruptibilis. Sed tamen non simpliciter perpetua, quia de novo creata. Et tamen sempiterna a parte post sic quod [numquam CB] [corrumpitur CB] vel annihilabitur, quamvis [D CB]Deus de potestate eius absoluta eam potest annihilare<sup>8</sup>.

According to Buridan's presentation of these three "most famous" positions on the intellectual soul, Alexander of Aphrodisias supports the idea that intellects are plural, material, mortal, and inherent to bodies. Alternatively, Averroes maintains that there is only one intellect, which is therefore not inherent to a given body, and which is immaterial and immortal. Finally, the position taken by the Catholic faith is that intellects are plural and inherent to the bodies but, at the same time, are also immaterial and immortal. This view thus lies between that of Alexander and of Averroes and maintains that intellects can be, at the same time, plural and inherent, and immaterial and immortal. In the literature, this has been referred to as the thesis of "immanent dualism"<sup>9</sup>.

Since Buridan's treatise on the intellect is by no means a simple text, it has gained attention from scholars attempting to locate Buridan's conception of the nature of the intellectual soul within his discussion of these views. Which position was Buridan supporting? What was Buridan's view on the intellect? The two most representative contributions to this topic, in terms of both quantity of writings and clear focus on the issue, come from Olaf Pluta and Jack Zupko. Their readings of Buridan's questions on the intellect represent the inevitable starting point for any further consideration of the topic.

I will briefly overview their positions here. Pluta's main claim is that Buridan supports a materialistic position on the soul, inspired by Alexander of Aphrodisias. However, according to Pluta, this position is not immediately evident and must be read "between the lines" of Buridan's treatise, because Buridan was avowing the materialism of the intellectual soul despite the limitations posed by the Parisian statute of April 1, 1272. Among other prescriptions, this statute decreed that a question touching both faith and philosophy always had to be determined according to the teachings of the faith<sup>10</sup>. According to Pluta, Buridan was therefore attempting to demonstrate agreement with Alexander's position by introducing it in a nuanced way

that can only be read when held against the light, so to speak. As evidence that Buridan's agreement with the position of the faith was only due to the regulations of the Parisian statute, Pluta stresses how Buridan always underscores the indemonstrability of the Catholic position rather than offer any arguments in support of it<sup>11</sup>. To ground his position, Pluta points out that in q. 3, Buridan "...refutes all the arguments of Aristotle and Averroes on behalf of Alexander of Aphrodisias..."<sup>12</sup> and that "this approach allows Buridan to give a more detailed account of Alexander's theory without being forced to dissolve his arguments according to the statute of 1272"<sup>13</sup>. According to Pluta, a similar thing happens in q. 5, where Buridan again tries to introduce his position without arousing suspicion by using his presentation of Alexander's position as a way to disprove Averroes'<sup>14</sup>.

Pluta mobilizes a passage from q. 4 as a proof for this interpretation of all four questions. In q. 4, Buridan refutes Averroes' unicity thesis by showing that the plurality thesis must be maintained on the basis of both faith and *rationes naturales, fide circumscripta* (henceforth: RNFC, also for *ratio naturalis, fide circumscripta*). He pairs the position of RNFC with that of a pagan philosopher — a pagan philosopher who, Buridan adds, would endorse Alexander's opinion<sup>15</sup>. According to Pluta, this move is one of the key pieces of evidence of Buridan's Alexandrianism<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, when Buridan compares the positions of Alexander and Averroes in the same question, according to Pluta he presents them as the only two that are consistent with natural reason, while the third position, i.e. that of the Catholic faith, is introduced "...without offering any arguments in support..."<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, in q. 6 Pluta identifies an argument whose logic allows Buridan to let his audience "...draw the final conclusion concerning the question of immortality, namely that the human intellect consequently is not everlasting and hence mortal"<sup>18</sup>. Buridan, Pluta explains, lists six equivalent statements (each the consequence of the one preceding it) for the position of Alexander and six for Averroes' position. By showing that one of Alexander's statements (the inherence thesis) is self-evident, Buridan is logically able to conclude the same for Alexander's entire position. Pluta insists that Buridan's way of presenting the position of faith instead includes "...no arguments in favor of the faith, which can be based on natural reason alone without referring to divine and supernatural revelation"<sup>19</sup>. Pluta stresses the same point with regard to the arguments Buridan presents at the end of q. 6 to disprove Alexander's position. Pluta reads this list of arguments in favor of the faith as no more than an attempt through which "...once again [Buridan CB] makes clear that [Alexander's arguments CB] cannot be refuted on the basis of natural reason"<sup>20</sup>.

Zupko conversely claims that Buridan should not be read as supporting Alexander's materialism. Zupko maintains that we cannot ascribe Buridan a materialistic position on textual grounds, since Buridan never asserts the truth

of Alexander's position<sup>21</sup>. While Zupko's rejection of Pluta's view is very pointed, his own interpretation of Buridan's position fluctuates and is relatively cautious. In some passages, Zupko suggests that Buridan wanted to claim that naturalistic models are not the only way to explain the intellect. With respect to the question of the immaterial soul inhering in a material body, for example, Zupko writes, "Buridan is not suggesting ...that the inherence of the human soul is utterly inexplicable, but only that it cannot be explained naturalistically..."<sup>22</sup>. He also writes that, according to Buridan, "Some of the questions generating mixed judgments can be resolved with the aid of another method of inquire, e.g., by invoking articles of faith"<sup>23</sup>. However, in other passages Zupko underscores that Buridan sees the issues related to the intellective soul as characterized by an inescapable condition of doubt and that he is even aware of the "shortcoming of his account"<sup>24</sup>. Referencing Buridan's treatment of inherence, Zupko explains "...[Buridan *CB*] treats what little evidence is available to him concerning the human soul-body relation as insufficient to establish the truth about that relation's nature"<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, according to Zupko, Buridan's claim that the conclusions reached by faith cannot be demonstrated without a special and supernatural revelation "...places the natural philosopher in something of a bind, since the position he must firmly uphold on the nature of the intellect cannot be demonstrated via the principles and conclusions of natural science"<sup>26</sup>. Over the course of his analysis, Zupko ultimately differentiates Buridan's *credentia* from his *scientia*, i.e. what Buridan *believes* to be true (the position deriving from his faith) from what Buridan *knows* to be true (the position that natural reason can reach on the basis of sense and experience, which is clearly not immanent dualism). Zupko insists that Buridan's "...convictions are hardly agnostic... however, he is not about to let the strength of his convictions confuse him about he *knows* to be true"<sup>27</sup>. Zupko attributes Buridan with recognizing that, by reasoning about the nature of the intellective soul and using the suggestions offered by the Catholic faith, he is no longer doing (natural) philosophy, because he is entering other domains (i.e., metaphysics or theology). Buridan, a Master of Arts teaching on psychology, cannot and does not want to dissolve the boundaries between natural philosophy and other fields. This is why, according to Zupko, he shows his audience the *dubium* that characterizes the issues he is facing and why Zupko ultimately thinks that what Buridan *believes* must be distinguished from what he *knows* to be true<sup>28</sup>. In other words, according to Zupko, Buridan does not want to overcome the boundaries between the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Theology and, as a Master of Arts, he is committed to philosophical explanation, based on the evidence given by *pure* natural reason, which cannot concede immanent dualism<sup>29</sup>. In fact, while Zupko's point seems to be that Buridan supports immanent dualism against Alexander and Averroes' wrong

positions, Zupko seems to struggle in ascribing Buridan with a definitive position on the nature of the human intellect, as he constantly emphasizes that Buridan was a natural philosopher who could accept the Catholic faith position as true only with some difficulty and who had too little evidence to make strong declaration on issues concerning the intellect. While Zupko totally disavows Buridan's alleged Alexandrianism, he seems to resist saying that Buridan entirely and genuinely endorses the position of the faith as true, regardless of personal belief<sup>30</sup>.

## 2 READING BURIDAN'S VIEW ON THE INTELLECT IN *DE ANIMA*, III, QQ. 3-6

To setup my interpretation of Buridan's text, I would like to outline how he addresses the three *opinionones magis famosae* in qq. 3-6.

### 2.1 Averroes' and Alexander's Positions

In q. 3, Buridan associates the name of Averroes with the thesis of the immateriality of intellect. In particular, Buridan underlines that the faith and the Commentator are both against the position that holds the intellective human soul to be *forma materialis, educta de potentia materiae* and *extensa extensione materiae*<sup>31</sup>. Buridan lists Averroes' arguments to prove the immateriality position<sup>32</sup>. In this question, Buridan refers to the immateriality thesis as "true" (*vera*). At the same time, he explains that the aforementioned arguments are "probable" (*probabiles*) and that they become evident to reason only through the help of God<sup>33</sup>. In q. 4, Buridan uses Averroes' position as the *oppositum* against the inherence thesis (supported by both Alexander and the Catholic faith)<sup>34</sup>. Averroes' arguments are defined by Buridan as *probabiles*<sup>35</sup>, yet Buridan underscores the thesis that the soul is not inherent in the body as "false" (*falsa*) and states that both the faith and RNFC reject Averroes' theory of *perpetuitas* (seen as both *a parte ante* and *a parte post*) and the unicity of intellect<sup>36</sup>. Furthermore, Averroes is the target of Buridan's polemic in q. 5. The arguments in favor of the unicity of the intellect that he presents in q. 5 are all taken from the Commentator<sup>37</sup>, and the *oppositum* is built on some arguments that Averroes formulated against his own position<sup>38</sup>. However, Buridan also illustrates how Averroes rejects them<sup>39</sup>. The last part of the question therefore definitively disproves the unicity thesis, with Buridan answering Averroes' arguments one-by-one and showing that both the faith and RNFC support the plurality thesis<sup>40</sup>. In q. 6, Buridan confronts the issue of the immortality of the intellect and compares the positions of RNFC and the faith on the nature of the intellective soul as a means of summarizing qq. 3-6<sup>41</sup>. In the fifth *conclusio* of this question, Averroes is presented as offering one of the two complete and mutually-exclusive positions on the nature of human intellect dictated

by RNFC<sup>42</sup>. In the subsequent *conclusio*, Buridan goes on to show that, based on the discussion presented in qq. 3-6, the inherence thesis must be affirmed<sup>43</sup>. Finally, in the seventh *conclusio*, Buridan explains that, in the RNFC framework, the assertion of inherence leads to refuting Averroes' position in favor of that Alexander's<sup>44</sup>.

What then is Buridan's overall opinion of Averroes' position? Buridan agrees with Averroes' only on the immateriality thesis presented in q. 3. In line with Alexander and the faith, he disproves Averroes' unicity thesis.

Turning to Alexander's position, the first thing one notices is the heavy use Buridan makes of it in qq. 3-6. According to Buridan in q. 3, Alexander and the faith agree upon two points: plurality and inherence. However, of the two, only Alexander's position is based on RNFC. Thus, it is easy to understand why Buridan, in q. 4 and q. 5, goes on to refer to Alexander's position in such a persistent way. Alexander's arguments are the easiest way for him to disprove Averroes' unicity and anti-inherence thesis *on purely natural grounds*. In q. 4, for instance, we find the highly debated statement on the "pagan philosopher": "Primo haec conclusio firmiter tenenda est ex fide catholica. Secundo etiam dicta conclusio etiam tenenda est rationibus naturalibus, fide catholica circumscripta, ita quod philosophus paganus teneret eam. Probo quia ego puto quod philosophus paganus teneret opinionem Alexandri"<sup>45</sup>. Pluta, as mentioned above, identifies this passage as evidence of Buridan's agreement with Alexander<sup>46</sup>. Yet by reading it in its entirety, we see that here Buridan only states that the *inherence thesis* discussed a few lines beforehand is supported by *both* the faith and RNFC. By pairing the position of RNFC with that of a pagan philosopher, Alexander, Buridan only clarifies that the position of natural reason he is mentioning belongs to Alexander. We cannot infer from such a clarification that Buridan agrees with Alexander's *entire* position, since Buridan is referring only to the inherence thesis, which *both* the faith and Alexander hold. Pluta furthermore applies his principle of suspicion by stressing that Buridan *pretends* to use Alexander's position just as a way to disprove Averroes' thesis. However, we have no reason not to simply think that Buridan is using Alexander's inherence and plurality theses to disprove Averroes' unicity thesis on natural grounds. This is exactly what Buridan in fact does in q. 4, when he introduces Alexander's arguments to show that natural reason alone disproves Averroes' idea that the intellect is not inherent to the body<sup>47</sup>.

While the inherence thesis should not pose many interpretive problems, since both the Catholic faith and Alexander support it, the issues of the immateriality and immortality of the intellect are more intriguing. Since Alexander and the faith do not agree at all on these points, interpreters have to explain why and how Buridan uses Alexander's arguments while discussing them. In q. 3, for instance, Buridan presents the conclusion that the human intellect is not a *forma mate-*

*rialis, educta de potentia materiae or extensa extensione materiae*. This position, Buridan claims, is *simpliciter vera* and *firmiter fide tenenda*. The arguments given in favor of it, Buridan adds, are demonstrable by evident principles only if faith is taken into account. Buridan concludes the question by wondering how Alexander would have answered the aforementioned arguments<sup>48</sup>. For Pluta, this last move of Buridan is evidence in favor of Buridan's agreement with Alexander<sup>49</sup>. Yet, it is not hard to argue to the contrary: this is not sufficient proof for ascribing a materialistic position to Buridan. Rather, Buridan here only claims that the immateriality thesis is true and notes that it is evident and demonstrable with the help of faith. What comes after does not undermine this argument. In fact, Buridan introduces Alexander in the same manner that a good teacher would, i.e., to introduce an important counterpoint, namely what RNFC would say about the topic he is addressing. This interpretation is also supported by some grammar clues. When outlining the immateriality thesis in q. 3, Buridan always uses the indicative form, whereas he uses the conjunctive when he lists Alexander's arguments. By shifting into the conjunctive, Buridan distances himself from Alexander's position and makes use of it just to show how natural reason, not supported by the Catholic faith, *would* react to the immateriality thesis<sup>50</sup>.

Similarly, when Buridan presents Alexander's arguments in q. 6 (during his discussion of the immortality of the intellect — the second point of disagreement between the faith and Alexander), he shifts into a didactic register. More precisely, Buridan wants to show to his audience (a) the conclusion RNFC is able to reach on the nature of human intellect and (b) that the principles offered by faith make it possible to reach the *complete* truth on the nature of the intellective soul. This is worth analyzing in further detail. In q. 6, Buridan lists the arguments against the immortality of the intellect. These arguments are not presented under the auspices of Alexander's position. They simply seem to be a group of problems that could arise by admitting the immortality of the intellect<sup>51</sup>. The *oppositum* is built on some Aristotelian assumptions<sup>52</sup>. Up to this point, Buridan has never mentioned the Catholic faith or Alexander. Later on, when he reconsiders the issues faced in qq. 3-6, he reintroduces the three *magis famosae* theses on the intellect. First, he explains what RNFC would say on the topic of the nature of human intellect and so presents Averroes' and Alexander's theses. Then, in the *sexta conclusio*, Buridan states that, as he has proven in the previous questions, the intellect inheres in the body. From the inherence thesis, he explains, from a RNFC framework we can infer what Alexander affirms, namely that the intellect is *generabilis, corruptibilis, eductus, extensus, inhaerens, et multiplicatus*<sup>53</sup>. Moreover, Buridan argues that not all of the arguments that RNFC would present on the nature of human intellect are true, because they are in contrast with the solutions offered by the faith. Afterwards, Buridan immediately introduces the teachings of the Catholic faith on the nature of human intellect and remarks that the as-

sumptions of the faith require supernatural revelation<sup>54</sup>. There are two elements to underscore here. First, Buridan is just repeating what he already stated in the previous questions, i.e., that if the inherence thesis is upheld in a framework of pure natural reason, without the help of faith, we get Alexander's position on the materiality and mortality of the intellect. However, Buridan never states that Alexander's *entire* position is true. Second, Buridan's remarks on the indemonstrability of immanent dualism without reference to supernatural revelation are not evidence of his disagreement with the Catholic position or a clear nod to Alexander's position. What we notice here is instead Buridan's common argument, the same used throughout qq. 3-6: the solution proposed by the Catholic faith cannot be demonstrated without principles revealed by God to natural reason. However, this does not mean that the faith position is entirely indemonstrable and must be rejected in favor of Alexander's. Buridan, in fact, always identifies two different types of demonstrability, i.e., what can be demonstrated at the level of pure RNFC and what natural reason, with a supernatural help, can demonstrate and make evident. Immanent dualism becomes demonstrable through the principles provided by the supernatural. It thus does not make sense either to infer that Buridan is an Alexandrian materialist "philosophically speaking" or "based on natural ground". For while Buridan explains that Alexander reaches *some* correct conclusions on the intellect (the inherence and plurality theses), he also argues that Alexander, by reasoning without the insight provided by faith, is not able to reach a *complete*, true explanation on the nature of human intellect.

This is further confirmed by what Buridan writes in the *septima conclusio* of q. 6. Here Buridan wants to show which positions natural reason must necessarily admit given the premises of the inherence and plurality theses. Immediately afterwards, Buridan introduces the position of the faith to show how natural reason, with supernatural help, can reach the *complete* truth on the nature of the intellectual soul: by presuming creation and *perpetuitas* only *a parte post*, it is possible to combine the inherence and plurality theses with the immateriality and immortality theses<sup>55</sup>. We have no evidence of Buridan's alleged Alexandrianism even in the last part of q. 6<sup>56</sup>. Here, the name of Alexander appears twice. We find it first in the apparently problematic phrase: "Prima ratio esset pro Alexandro, sed nobis est difficilis solutionis"<sup>57</sup>. Here Buridan presents three different strategies for responding to the argument that, by admitting the immortality of the intellect, we have to admit the immortality of the human being. All three of the arguments deal with the significations we could give to the name "human being". Buridan does not express preference towards any and instead states that the response to this doubt is located in the domain of metaphysics and theology, the fields in which questions concerning the meaning of "human being" or "Christ in the Triduum was a human being" are normally posed. In this sense, the response to the argument on immortality is not difficult (*difficilis*) because of Buridan's al-

leged avowal of Alexander's position (the mortality of the soul) but because, as Zupko suggests, Buridan thinks the resolution of that type of argument belongs to the field of metaphysics or theology<sup>58</sup>. Alexander's name appears for the second time a bit later. We can eliminate the problem posed by wrongly conceiving the intellects as *actu infiniti*, Buridan explains, in two ways: (1) by saying — as Alexander would — that the intellect is not *perpetuus*; or (2) by denying — as the Catholic faith would — that the *mundus* is *perpetuus* both *a parte ante* and *a parte post*<sup>59</sup>. From this presentation of the two solutions, it is not possible to infer any evidence of Buridan's alleged agreement with Alexander's mortality thesis. We see only another example of the way Buridan unfolds his argumentation in q. 6, i.e., presenting Alexander's position in order to show what RNFC would say on the particular problem and explain what the faith suggested on the same point. With the principles provided by the faith (Buridan clearly says "we, with the faith"<sup>60</sup>), we are able to maintain the immortality of intellect while avoiding the erroneous, metaphysical consequence of the actual infiniteness of intellects.

I would thus argue, like Zupko, that qq. 3-6 do not allow us to ascribe Alexander's materialistic position to Buridan. Pluta often decontextualizes Buridan's statements on Alexander, rarely clarifying what Buridan is exactly referring to when presenting Alexander's arguments and arbitrarily inferring from Buridan's *presentation* of Alexander's position that he is *entirely* supporting it. That Buridan agrees with Alexander's view on the plurality and inherence theses — the points Alexander shares with the faith — does not give us reason to extend this agreement to the theses on materiality and mortality. As I hope to have demonstrated, Buridan makes extensive use of Alexander's position in qq. 3-6 not because he *entirely* supports Alexander's position but (1) to disprove Averroes' unicity and anti-inherence theses on purely natural grounds and (2) to make his discussion of the human soul as complete as possible. In other words, to show what natural reason, without the help of faith, would be compelled to infer from the inherence and plurality theses.

## 2.2 *The Position of the Catholic Faith*

There is no evidence in the text that allows us to repudiate the claim that Buridan supports the position of the Catholic faith, i.e. the inherence and plurality theses combined with the immateriality and immortality of the soul. Throughout qq. 3-6, Buridan makes associations between the words *fides* and *veritas*, and he often speaks in first person when presenting the position of the faith<sup>61</sup>. More precisely, in qq. 3-6, Buridan aims to show how faith enables us to reach the complete truth on the nature of human intellect. He particularly wants to stress how the faith is capable of guiding natural reason to the truth, by reconciling the propositions about the intellect that RNFC considers contradictory: the inher-

ence and plurality theses and the immateriality and immortality theses. The faith agrees with Alexander in supporting plurality and inherence. However, starting from the premises of inherence and plurality, RNFC is consequently led to admit the materiality thesis which, as Buridan has explained in q. 3, is incorrect. At the same time, Averroes, who also does not take up the ideas of the Catholic faith, only considers the immateriality of the intellect reconcilable with the unicity thesis and the idea of *perpetuitas*, both *a parte ante* and *a parte post*. Buridan's aim in qq. 3-6 is thus to show that only by reconciling the apparently irreconcilable theses of the plurality, inherence, immateriality and immortality of the soul is it possible to definitely shed light on the nature of the human intellect. While RNFC is not able to reach this goal, Buridan shows, the Catholic faith is. The conceptual keys offered by the faith are *perpetuitas a parte post* and *creatio*. To conceive the intellect as immaterial and immortal, but also plural and inherent in the body, requires admitting that *perpetuitas* is only *a parte post*, i.e. that there is a God who, out of free will, creates a plurality of immaterial and immortal souls and decides to unify each of these souls with a singular and particular body. Conceiving of the intellect as *perpetuus* both *a parte ante* and *a parte post*, as Averroes does, it becomes impossible to admit a plurality of intellects inherent in different bodies. The plurality and inherence theses only stand if the intellects are either generated or created. Yet generation necessarily implies materialism (and consequently the mortality thesis), whereas the creation stance allows for immateriality and immortality because of the peculiarity of the act of creation: it comes from God, who is *contingently* and *voluntarily* able to conceive something immaterial, put it into a material body, and enable it to survive beyond the corporeal death. Buridan therefore considers the principles of *perpetuitas a parte post*, *creatio*, *contingentia* and *voluntas* as the key concepts that the Catholic faith offers to natural reason for shedding light on the complicated issues of the nature of human intellect. They are able to overcome the aporias encountered by natural reason alone. Natural reason alone cannot conceive of the concept of creation, inevitably leading questions of the nature of the intellect to two completely opposed and erroneous conclusions: either the *perpetuitas* both *a parte ante* and *a parte post* of the intellect (which necessarily implies the unicity thesis), or the generation of the intellect (a process which constitutively requires matter and consequently presupposes materiality).

Buridan's view on the role of the faith in reaching the *complete* truth on the nature of the intellect appears more than once in qq. 3-6. The longest example is the part of q. 6 where Buridan reconsiders the three *opinionones magis famosae*<sup>62</sup>. Here it is particularly interesting to consider the order in which Buridan presents the *conclusiones* held by the faith:

...prima est quod intellectus humanus non est perpetuus a parte ante, sed est

perpetuus a parte post. Secunda conclusio est quod intellectus non est proprie genitus generatione naturali, sed creatus; nec est proprie corruptibilis corruptione naturali, sed annihilabilis. Et tamen non annihilatur [annihilatur *CB*]. Tertia conclusio est quod iste intellectus non est eductus de potentia materiae, nec extensus. Quarta conclusio est quod est multiplicatus secundum multiplicationem hominum. Quinta est quod est inhaerens corpori humano seu materiae quamdiu vivit homo, et est separabilis a corpore et iterum revertetur<sup>63</sup>.

The first and the second points are about the *perpetuitas a parte post* and the concept of *creatio*. By starting from these premises, it is possible to admit that the intellect is, at the same time, *non corruptibilis*, *non eductus de potentia materiae* and also *multiplicatus secundum multiplicationem hominum* and *inhaerens corpori humano*.

Another example appears in a passage of q. 4.

... Quarta ratio est quia humana ratio, circumscripta fide, aut etiam fides, non dictaret quod intellectus tuus esset antequam tu esses, nisi poneretur perpetuus et unicus, sicut voluit Commentator. Si autem esset factus de novo, hoc aut esset per modum creationis, quod ratio naturalis, circumscripta fide, non dictaret, aut hoc esset per modum generationis naturalis, et tunc esset eductus de potentia materiae et inhaerens. Omnes ergo debent illi conclusioni assentire, quamdiu homo vivit in hoc saeculo, sive fideles sive alii. Unde notandum est, ut mihi videtur, circumscripta fide et supernaturali actione, ratio naturalis dictaret in omni forma haec consequi, vel earum oppositas: scilicet, inhaerere materia, esse eductum de potentia materiae, esse extensum extensione materiae, esse multiplicatum (et non unicum, indivisum corporibus separatis et distantibus), esse genitum, et esse corruptibilem. Igitur haec omnia Alexander posuit de intellectu humano, et [Averroes *CB*] haec omnia simul negant. Nos autem fide ponimus quod haec non necessario se consequi ad invicem, scilicet ponimus inhaerentiam et multiplicationem, et negamus educationem de potentia materiae et extensionem. Et ponimus eum esse factum modo supernaturali, scilicet per modum creationis, non per modum generationis naturalis; nec ipsum est proprie esse corruptibilem, id est modo naturali, sed annihilabilem, et tamen numquam annihilabitur<sup>64</sup>.

Buridan explains that, unlike Averroes, both Alexander and the Catholic faith suggest that the intellect is *factus de novo*, i.e. not *perpetuus a parte ante*. Yet Buridan also adds that there are two different ways to understand the concept of *factus de novo*: (a) the way suggested by natural reason, according to which the intellect is generated *per modum generationis naturalis*, and (b) the way of the Catholic faith, according to which the intellect is *creatus*. Only conceiving the intellect as *factus modo supernaturali, scilicet per modum creationis* it is possible to admit the apparently irreconcilable theses of plurality, inherence, immateriality and immortality of intellect all at the same time.

A further example appears in q. 5, this time specifically referring to Averroes' position and the possibility of admitting the plurality thesis together with the immortality and the immateriality theses.

Sed tamen videtur mihi quod ista secunda conclusio potest poni, scilicet quod si fide circumscripta aliquis procederet ratione pure naturali sine supernaturali infusione, illa ratio dictaret illas conditionales esse concedendas, "Si intellectus est perpetuus, ipse est unicus omnium hominum"; et "Si non est eductus de potentia materiae, ipse est unicus". Sed fides ex supernaturali infusione negat illas conditionales ponendo quod est multiplicatus et tamen est perpetuus a parte post, et non sit eductus de potentia materiae<sup>65</sup>.

Without the help of the Catholic faith, Buridan argues, we have to admit that, if the intellect is *perpetuus* and *non eductus de potentia materiae*, then it is necessarily *unicus*. Only by considering the propositions of the faith can we claim that the plurality thesis is compatible with a non-materialistic conception of the intellect.

A close theoretical parallelism can also be found in the so-called *secunda lectura*. Here we find a much more exhaustive passage in which Alexander's position is also taken into account.

Tunc pono istam conclusionem hypotheticam quod, fide circumscripta, si quis procederet ratione pure naturali, illa ratio naturalis dictaret hanc propositionem esse concedendam: si intellectus humanus est perpetuus, ipse non est eductus de potentia materiae <et> ipse non est extensus extensione materiae, nec sunt multi intellectus secundum multiplicationem hominum. Et ideo quia Commentator credit intellectum humanum esse perpetuum et non habuit fidem catholicam, ideo habuit concedere omnia praedicta consequenter ad hoc quod dicebat ipsum esse perpetuum. Alia etiam conclusio hypothetica est quod, fide circumscripta, ut prius, ratio humana dictaret quod, si sint multi intellectus humani secundum multiplicationem hominum, illi sunt educti de potentia materiae et extensi et generabiles et corruptibiles. Ideo Alexander, cum crederet intellectus humanos esse multiplicatos, et non esset etiam de fide catholica, ipse conclusit etiam illos esse generabiles et corruptibiles et extensos, etc. Sed nos fide debemus tenere quod illi sunt multiplicati et perpetui a parte post, non tamen a parte ante, et non extensi nec educti de potentia materiae, sed creati et separabiles a materia<sup>66</sup>.

This passage is extremely important, because here Buridan clearly underlines the weakness of Averroes' and Alexander's positions. Without the principles of the Catholic faith, they cannot reach the truth: *et non habuit fidem catholicam; et non esset etiam de fide catholica*.

Moreover, the centrality of the concept of *creatio*, as well as the related notions of *contingentia* and *voluntas*, can be found throughout the entire set of qq. 3-6. In

fact, the concept of creation is mentioned in conjunction with Buridan's first reference to the position of the Catholic faith. The intellect, Buridan explains, is a *forma non simpliciter perpetua, quia de novo creata*. Unlike for Alexander, according to the Catholic faith the soul is not *naturaliter genita*, but in contrast with Averroes, it is also not *simpliciter perpetua*<sup>67</sup>. The concept of creation is also central in a final passage of q. 5. Here, the first argument supporting the unicity thesis was: "...prima est quia secundum Aristotelem intellectus est perpetuus, et nullum tale multiplicatur ad multiplicationem corruptibilitium"<sup>68</sup>. In an Aristotelian framework, the unicity thesis necessarily follows after admitting the *perpetuitas* of the intellect. Rebutting this argument, Buridan explains: "De prima Alexander negaret quod intellectus humanus est perpetuus, et fides etiam diceret quod non est perpetuus, a parte ante, sed est creatus apud hominis generationem"<sup>69</sup>. There are only two ways to refute the unicity thesis: (1) deny, as Alexander does, that the intellect is *perpetuus*, but this solution undermines the premise, i.e., *perpetuitas*; or (2) introduce a different type of *perpetuitas*, i.e. *perpetuitas a parte post*. This is the position of the Catholic faith, which disproves unicity by finding the weakness of the premise but not subverting it.

The strength of the faith position on creation is even clearer in q. 5, *secunda lectura*: "Et tunc solvuntur faciliter rationes. Concedimus enim intellectum humanum non esse simpliciter perpetuum, sed a Deo creatum qui potest in quolibet corpore humano creare intellectum proprium"<sup>70</sup>. Here Buridan briefly responds to Averroes' arguments by presupposing the principles given by the Catholic faith and does not present Alexander's solution at all<sup>71</sup>. Buridan continues by saying: "Nec aliae rationes arguunt nisi quid esset ponendum, circumscripta fide. Sed quin Deus posset aliter facere non arguunt"<sup>72</sup>. The fact that God can do something different is actually the key for Buridan. In this way a natural philosopher can take some supernatural principles into account to definitely resolve an issue in which RNFC would be condemned to remain trapped.

As a last example, we should consider the end of q. 6, *secunda lectura*:

Item igitur pono alias conclusiones secundum fidem et veritatem: prima, quod ipse intellectus humanus non est perpetuus a parte ante nec est genitus naturaliter, sed creatus, nec eductus de potentia materiae nec extensus, et tamen est multiplicatus, ita quod diversorum hominum sunt diversi intellectus humani. Cum hoc tamen ponitur, quod est perpetuus a parte post per voluntatem divinam, cum ipse non est de necessitate perpetuus, sed contingenter per dictam voluntatem, hoc patet, quia sicut [D CB]Deus creavit eum, sic possit eum annihilare<sup>73</sup>.

Here, the concepts of *contingentia* and *voluntas* are explicitly introduced and stressed: the intellect is not *de necessitate perpetuus* but *contingenter perpetuus* thanks to the *voluntas* of God. God can create intellects through an act of free

will and consequently give them not eternity but a condition of immortality that presupposes a beginning of time, i.e., a *perpetuitas a parte post*.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS: NATURAL REASON AND FAITH IN BURIDAN'S VIEW ON THE INTELLECT

The interpretation of Buridan's qq. 3-6 that I propose in this article supports Zupko's claim against Pluta's position, but it goes further in ascribing Buridan with a clear position on the nature of the intellective soul.

Together with Zupko, I first argue that Buridan does not support Alexander's materialistic position on the soul. The main problem with this interpretation, offered by Pluta, is that it requires taking Buridan's statements about Alexander out of context. Pluta ultimately takes Buridan's use of Alexander's arguments in qq. 3-6 as proof of Buridan's Alexandrianism. My argument goes a step further than Zupko, who also makes this point, to also explain *why* Buridan makes such widespread use of Alexander's arguments if he does not support Alexander's materialistic position. My claim is that Buridan's use of Alexander's arguments is twofold: first, Buridan uses Alexander's plurality thesis and his arguments on inherence to rebut Averroes' unicity thesis purely on the grounds of natural reason; second, Buridan presents Alexander's arguments on the materiality and mortality of the soul to show to his audience what natural reason, without the help of faith, would be compelled to infer from the inherence and plurality theses.

In the second part of this article I offer my interpretation of Buridan's position in qq. 3-6. My reading is that, in qq. 3-6, (a) we have no evidence to deny that Buridan is endorsing the position of the Catholic faith and (b) that the four questions are meant to show how the faith is able to help natural reason reach the *complete* truth on the nature of the intellect, namely the thesis of immanent dualism. Throughout qq. 3-6, Buridan explicitly expresses his agreement with the position of the faith. Moreover, he repeatedly underscores that, without the help of faith, natural reason cannot uphold both the inherence and plurality thesis, on the one hand, and the immateriality and immortality theses, on the other. More precisely, Buridan often uses the phrase *rationes naturales fide circumscripta* (RNFC) to indicate what natural reason is able to conclude without the intervention of the faith. Within the framework of pure natural reason, one either embraces the inherence and plurality theses, which then implies mortality and materiality (like Alexander) or, embracing the immateriality and immortality theses, one is committed to unicity and non-inherence (as in the case of Averroes). Therefore, in qq. 3-6, Buridan states that, in order to reach the thesis of immanent dualism, natural reason must be guided by some principles provided by faith. Those principles are the ideas of *creatio* and *perpetuitas a parte post*. If the human intellect is not merely

generated from matter but created by God, we can admit that it is an immaterial and immortal intellect despite the fact that it is inherent in the body. Moreover, if the intellect is created, it is also *perpetuus* only *a parte post* (not both *a parte ante* and *a parte post*). This implies that it can be immortal without being eternal, which makes possible a plurality of immortal intellects as well as their inherence in individual bodies.

All this brings me to say that Buridan's position is not as uncertain as Zupko sustains and that it is not necessary to pose Zupko's distinction between what Buridan *knows* to be true and what he *believes* to be true. More straightforwardly, we can just affirm that in qq. 3-6 Buridan supports immanent dualism and shows that the Catholic faith helps natural reason to reach that position — a position that natural reason alone could not reach. In other words, in qq. 3-6 Buridan shows that immanent dualism is not conceivable by natural reason alone but also that it is not indemonstrable *tout court*. Immanent dualism becomes acceptable to reason and demonstrable through the principles offered by faith. On this basis, it seems that the basic idea underlying Buridan's qq. 3-6 is that "what is impossible *secundum naturam* is not impossible *simpliciter*". In fact, Buridan shows that what is a shortcoming for natural reason is not impossible for human reason aided by some faith principles, namely the ideas of creation and *perpetuitas a parte post*. Therefore, I would further argue that if we have to look at a Parisian statute to understand Buridan's qq. 3-6, it is not primarily the 1272 statute but the later statute of 1277, which in proposition 147 precisely invited philosophers not to confuse the impossibility *secundum naturam* with something simply impossible<sup>74</sup>. As Alessandro Ghisalberti pointed out back in 1983 by referring to the condemnation of 1277,

The distinction that, in the theologian's opinion, the philosopher of nature must always keep in mind is between the impossible *secundum naturam* and the impossible *simpliciter*: what seems to be impossible in relation to the natural laws is not absolutely impossible, or rather, is not impossible with respect to the sovereign liberty of the Creative Power. This distinction was progressively received by the Masters of the Faculty of Arts, who set their own teaching in the exposition and commentary of Aristotle's texts. During his decades teaching among the Masters of Arts, Buridan would always be aware of the different levels of discourse and methodologically often distinguish the level of possibility or impossibility for the answers to questions<sup>75</sup>.

In conclusion, we can all agree that Buridan was a Master of Arts who took a naturalistic approach in the domain of psychology, and he undoubtedly did not enter the theological domain when natural-philosophical issues were at table. For instance, he did not write extensively or technically on the concept of creation, which he did not consider among his tasks; he respected the boundary between

the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Theology. Yet this does not mean that he rejected the position of the Catholic faith in favor of Alexander's (as Pluta claims) or that he was trapped in an inescapable condition of doubt, in which he always had to distinguish what he believed from what he knew to be true (as Zupko suggests). In qq. 3-6, Buridan openly adheres to the thesis of immanent dualism and shows that only the interaction between natural reason and faith can lead to that thesis. Neither the naturalistic approach typical of Buridan's psychology nor the institutional boundaries between faculties prevented him from integrating some faith-based principles into his commentary on Aristotle in attempt to solve the complicated issue of the nature of the intellective soul. For Buridan, the truths of the Catholic faith were not just personal beliefs but an integral part of the system of explanation in natural philosophy<sup>76</sup>. In other words, the institutional boundaries between *Arts* and *Theology* (which Buridan respected) did not necessarily imply a sharp separation between *reason* and *faith*. The picture of Buridan we get from this analysis of qq. 3-6 of the third book of the *De anima* is therefore that of a "faithful philosopher", as Femke Kook has defined Buridan in a recent book: "[Buridan *CB*] was a professional philosopher but he was also a faithful philosopher, loyal to both philosophy and faith"<sup>77</sup>. More precisely, Buridan *integrated* faith into the framework of natural philosophy. Echoing Scotus someway<sup>78</sup>, Buridan admits that immanent dualism cannot be demonstrated by RNFC. He poses a clear distinction between what natural reason can do without the help of faith and what it can do with the help of faith. That admission and this distinction do not lead Buridan to skepticism. In qq. 3-6, Buridan rejects that natural reason alone has the potential to reach the complete truth on the intellect and shows that the Catholic faith makes reason fertile enough to reach the right conclusions on the intellective soul, i.e., immanent dualism, even in a framework of psychology conceived as a natural science.

#### NOTES

1. This article originates from a M.A. thesis defended at Roma Tre University in the academic year 2011-2012. It was presented for the first time as a paper within a seminar held at the "Center for the History of Philosophy and Science" of Radboud University, Nijmegen in 2013. A later version was presented in Rome in 2019 at the XXIV International Conference of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. The present version incorporates the feedback I have received from 2012 to date. For this reason, I would like to thank all of the scholars who have commented on past drafts of this article, especially Alessandro Ghisalberti and Paul Bakker.
2. For a detailed account of the different versions of Buridan's *De anima*, see B. Michael, *Johannes Buridan: Studien zu seinem Leben, seinen Werken und zur Rezeption seiner Theorien im Europa des späten Mittelalters*, 2 vols., unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 1985, pp. 684-735 and S.W. de Boer and P.J.J.M. Bakker, *Is John*

- Buridan the Author of the Anonymous Traité de l'âme Edited by Benoît Patar?*, «Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale», 53 (2011), pp. 283-332. The edition by Patar is B. Patar, *Le Traité de l'âme de Jean Buridan* (prima lectura), *Edition, étude critique et doctrinale*, Editions de l'institut supérieur de Philosophie-Editions du Preambule, Louvain-La-Neuve-Longueuil 1991. A complete critical edition of Buridan's *Quaestiones de anima* (*secundum ultimam lecturam*) is forthcoming, see J. Zupko's entry on Buridan in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/buridan/>. In this article, I mostly refer to the edition of book three by J. Zupko, *John Buridan's Philosophy of Mind: An Edition and Translation of Book III of his Questions on Aristotle's De Anima (Third Redaction), with Commentary and Critical and Interpretative Essays*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, Ithaca 1989 (henceforth indicated as *QDA<sub>3</sub> III*).
3. The following issues of Buridan's psychology had a certain fortune in scholarly literature: the epistemological status of the science of the soul and its relationship with other disciplines such as metaphysics and theology; the nature of the soul and the limits of human possibility of knowing it; the debate on the unity of soul; issues on self-knowledge and self-perception, the topic of intentionality, and reflections on the so-called "faculties" of the soul. For an insight on some of those issues, see especially J. Zupko, *John Buridan: Portrait of a Fourteenth-century Arts Master*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame (IN) 2003 and S. W. de Boer, *The Science of the Soul. The Commentary Tradition on Aristotle's De anima, c.1260-c.1360*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2013. Gyula Klima has recently gathered some of the topics related to Buridan's philosophy of mind in G. Klima (edited by), *Questions on the Soul by John Buridan and Others. A Companion to John Buridan's Philosophy of Mind*, Springer, Cham 2017.
  4. The four questions are respectively titled *Quaeritur tertio utrum intellectus humanus sit forma substantialis corporis humani*, *Quaeritur quarto utrum intellectus humanus sit forma inhaerens corpori humano*, *Quaeritur quinto utrum sit unicus intellectus quo omnes homines intelligunt*, *Quaeritur sexto de natura intellectus humani utrum ipse sit perpetuus*.
  5. *QDA<sub>3</sub> III 3 ll. 56-57*.
  6. *QDA<sub>3</sub> III 3 ll. 58-62*.
  7. *QDA<sub>3</sub> III 3 ll. 63-73*.
  8. *QDA<sub>3</sub> III 3 ll. 74-82*.
  9. The expression is used by J. Zupko, *How are the Souls Related to Bodies? A Study of John Buridan*, «Review of Metaphysics», 46 (1993), pp. 575-601.
  10. E. Grant, *A Source Book in Medieval Science*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA) 1974, p. 45. On this statute see O. Pluta, *Academic Freedom in Medieval Universities. From the Parisian Statute of April 1, 1272 to the Papal Bull Apostolici Regiminis of December 19, 1513*, in T. Iremadze and U. Reinhold Jeck (edited by), *Veritas et subtilitas. Truth and Subtlety in the History of Philosophy. Essays in Memory of Burkhard Mojsisch (1944-2015)*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam 2018, pp. 309-318.
  11. O. Pluta, *Persecution and the Art of Writing. The Parisian Statute of April 1, 1272, and Its Philosophical Consequences*, in P. Bakker (edited by), *Chemins de la pensée médiévale. Études offertes à Zénon Kaluza*, Brepols, Turnhout 2002, pp. 563-585, O. Pluta, *The Transformations of Alexander of Aphrodisias' Interpretation of Aristotle's Theory*

- of the Soul, in M. Pade (edited by), *Renaissance Readings of the Corpus Aristotelicum: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Copenhagen, 23-25 April 1998*, Museum Tusulanum Press, Copenhagen 2001, pp. 147-165, O. Pluta, *How Matter Becomes Mind: Late-Medieval Theories of Emergence*, in H. Lagerlund, M. Yrjönsuuri and L. Alanen (edited by), *Forming The Mind. Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment*, Springer, Dordrecht 2007, pp. 149-168, at p. 151.
12. O. Pluta, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, cit., p. 579.
  13. *Ibidem*.
  14. *Ivi*, p. 581.
  15. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 4 ll. 76-82. See *infra*, footnote 45.
  16. O. Pluta, *The Transformations of Alexander of Aphrodisias' Interpretation of Aristotle's Theory of the Soul*, cit., p. 157.
  17. O. Pluta, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, cit., p. 581.
  18. *Ivi*, p. 583.
  19. *Ibidem*.
  20. *Ivi*, p. 584. References to Buridan's supposedly materialistic position on the intellectual soul are not so isolated in literature. See for example K. Michalski, *La lutte pour l'âme à Oxford et à Paris au XIV<sup>e</sup> et sa répercussion à l'époque de la Renaissance*, in O. Pluta (edited by), *Die Philosophie im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert: in memoriam Konstanty Michalski (1879-1947)*, B. R. Grüner, Amsterdam 1988, pp. LIII-LX, K. Michalski, *La lutte autour de l'âme au XIV<sup>e</sup> et au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in O. Pluta (edited by), *Die Philosophie im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert: in memoriam Konstanty Michalski (1879-1947)*, B. R. Grüner, Amsterdam 1988, pp. XLIX-L, K. Michalski, *L'Influence d'Averroès et d'Alexandre d'Aphrodisias dans la psychologie du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, «Bulletin Internationale de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences et des Lettres, Classe de Philologie, Classe d'Histoire et de Philosophie», 1, 3 (1928), pp. 14-16. See also G. Federici Vescovini, *Le Quaestiones De Anima di Biagio Pelacani da Parma*, L. S. Olschki, Firenze 1974, M. E. Reina, *Note sulla psicologia di Buridano*, Arti Grafiche Grisetti, Milano 1959 and, P. King, *Body and Souls*, in J. Marenbon (edited by), *The Oxford Handbook to Medieval Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2012, pp. 505-524.
  21. J. Zupko, *On Buridan's Alleged Alexandrianism: Heterodoxy and Natural Philosophy in Fourteenth-Century Paris*, «Vivarium», 42, 1 (2004), pp. 43-57, esp. pp. 51-52.
  22. J. Zupko, *How are the Souls Related to Bodies?*, cit., pp. 575-601, at p. 599.
  23. J. Zupko, *John Buridan on the Immateriality of the Intellect*, in H. Lagerlund (edited by), *Forming the Mind. Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment*, Springer, Dordrecht 2007, pp. 129-147, at p. 147.
  24. J. Zupko, *John Buridan: Portrait of a Fourteenth-century Arts Master*, cit., p. 181.
  25. J. Zupko, *How are the Souls Related to Bodies?*, cit., p. 601.
  26. J. Zupko, *John Buridan on the Immateriality of the Intellect*, cit., p. 138.
  27. J. Zupko, *John Buridan: Portrait of a Fourteenth-century Arts Master*, cit., p. 182.
  28. See also the following passage: "In more recent terminology, we would say that Buridan thinks we can firmly believe that the human intellect is immortal and perhaps even be certain of it. But we could never know it". J. Zupko, *John Buridan on the Immateriality of the Intellect*, cit., p. 144. A few pages later, Zupko adds: "But he is not about to let the strength of his convictions confuse him about what he knows to be true on other grounds". *Ivi*, p. 146.

29. For Zupko's entire position, see especially J. Zupko, *John Buridan: Portrait of a Fourteenth-century Arts Master*, cit., p. 179 and J. Zupko, *How are the Souls Related to Bodies?*, cit., p.597.
30. In addition to those quoted in the footnotes above, Zupko has published other studies on the topic of Buridan and the intellect: J. Zupko, *What is the Science of the Soul? A Case Study in the Evolution of Late Medieval Natural Philosophy*, «Synthese», 110, 2 (1997), pp. 297-334, J. Zupko, *Substance and Soul: The Late Medieval Origins of Early Modern Psychology*, in S. F. Brown (edited by), *Meeting of the Minds: The Relations Between Medieval and Classical Modern European Philosophy*, Brepols, Turnhout 1998, pp. 121-139 and J. Zupko, *Horse Sense and Human Sense: The Heterogeneity of Sense Perception in Buridan's Philosophical Psychology*, in S. Knuuttila and P. Kärkkäinen (edited by), *Theories of Perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, Springer, Dordrecht 2008, pp. 171-186. Buridan's position on the intellect has also been broadly addressed by Henrik Lagerlund, especially the relationship between body and soul. See especially H. Lagerlund, *John Buridan and the Problem of Dualism in the Early Fourteenth Century*, «Journal of the History of Philosophy», 42, 4 (2004), pp. 369-387 and H. Lagerlund, *The Mind/Body Problem and Late Medieval Conceptions of the Soul*, in H. Lagerlund (edited by), *Forming the Mind. Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment*, Springer, Dordrecht 2007, pp. 1-15. A recent interpretation of Buridan's position on the intellect has been provided by M. Klein, *Philosophie des Geistes im Spätmittelalter. Intellekt, Materie und Intentionalität bei Johannes Buridan*, Brill, Leiden 2019. Like Zupko, he makes a distinction between *knowledge* and *belief* in order to explain Buridan's position. See especially pp. 124-168 of the book. In the rest of the book, he shows that Buridan in fact assumes the intellect to be immaterial in his theory of cognition, but this has no effect on his theory of intentionality or epistemology (part III of the book, pp. 227-337). I thank the author for sharing his reflections on the topic with me in a private conversation. A more complete list of scholarly references to the problem of the nature of the intellective soul in Buridan can be found in M. Klein, o.c., p. 215.
31. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 3 ll. 88-91.
32. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 3 ll. 92-93.
33. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 3 ll. 144-151.
34. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 4 ll. 3-5.
35. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 4 l. 15.
36. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 4 l. 73, ll. 76-80, ll. 121-130.
37. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 5 ll. 3-4.
38. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 5 ll. 53-54.
39. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 5 l. 66.
40. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 5 ll. 86-90 and 125.
41. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 46-47.
42. The other is Alexander's position. This is how Buridan summarizes the two positions after having previously presented them analytically: "Quinta conclusio: quod haec sex se mutuo consequuntur: intellectum esse perpetuum, non esse genitum nec corruptibilem, non esse eductum de potentia materiae, non inhaerere materiae, non esse extensum extensione materiae, et non esse multiplicatum. Et similiter sex opposita illorum consequuntur se mutuo: scilicet, non esse perpetuum, esse genitum

- vel corruptibilem, esse eductum de potentia materiae, inhaerere materiae, esse extensum et esse multiplicatum". *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 87-94.
43. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 96-98.
  44. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 99-101.
  45. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 4 ll. 76-82. See *supra*, footnote 15.
  46. See *supra*, footnote 16.
  47. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 4 l. 73, ll. 76-82. See *supra*, footnote 36.
  48. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 3 ll. 88-91, 144-151, and 152-153. See also *supra*, footnotes 31 and 33.
  49. O. Pluta, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, cit., p. 579.
  50. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 3 ll. 92-143 for the arguments in favor of the immateriality thesis; *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 3 ll. 152-183 for Alexander's arguments against the immateriality thesis.
  51. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 3-34.
  52. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 l. 35.
  53. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 87-94, 96-98, 99-101. See also *supra*, footnotes 42-44.
  54. "Sed tamen firmiter tenendum est quod non omnes conclusiones sunt verae, quia sunt contra fidem catholicam. Sed credo quod oppositae conclusiones non sunt demonstrabiles sine speciali et supernaturali revelatione. Nunc narrandae sunt sine probationibus conclusiones vel propositiones quae in hac materia secundum fidem catholicam sunt tenendae, quarum prima... ", "Et omnes auctoritates quae hiis conclusionibus opponuntur sunt semper negandae, licet non possumus oppositas earum demonstrare". *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 102-123. Instead of those passages, in the so-called *secunda lectura* we can find a simpler and shorter statement: "Sed sicut dixit, ego non intendo nec dico, quod illae conclusiones sunt verae, sed solum dico, quod per rationem humanam circumscripta fide vel alia speciali revelatione divina poneretur conclusiones predictae". See B. Michael, o.c., p. 723.
  55. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 99-109.
  56. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 124-126.
  57. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 127-128.
  58. J. Zupko, *John Buridan's Philosophy of Mind*, cit., pp. 502-504.
  59. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 176-179.
  60. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 l. 177.
  61. *Fides* and *veritas* are associated in *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 3 l. 74: "...veritas fidei nostrae..."; *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 5 ll. 91-92: "...supernaturali infusione notitiae veritatis in nobis..."; and in the so-called *secunda lectura*: "Item igitur pono alias conclusiones secundum fidem et veritatem", see B. Michael, o.c., p. 724. On the contrary, Alexander's entire position is never defined as *vera*. The first person (singular and plural) is associated with the faith in the following passages: *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 4 l. 138: "Nos autem fide ponimus...", *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 l. 177: "...et nos fide negaremus...", in q. 5, *secunda lectura*: "Sed nos fide debemus credere...", see B. Patar, o.c., p. 768 and in the aforementioned passage of q. 6, see B. Michael, o.c., p. 724.
  62. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 46-120.
  63. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 6 ll. 108-120.
  64. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 4 ll. 121-144.
  65. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 5 ll. 116-124.
  66. B. Patar, o.c., pp. 767-768.
  67. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 3 ll. 58-62.

68. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 5 ll. 4-6.
69. *QDA*<sub>3</sub> III 5 ll. 126-128.
70. B. Patar, o.c., p. 768.
71. While in the *secunda lectura* there is only one argument, in the last version of the treatise Averroes' arguments are rejected one-by-one. In the second and third arguments (*tertia lectura*), Buridan answers Averroes only by using the suggestions offered by the Catholic faith, i.e. considering God's power and God's intervention in nature. In Zupko's opinion, this is disappointing, because Buridan does not directly engage with Averroes' argument but simply invokes God's power to reach the point (J. Zupko, *John Buridan's Philosophy of Mind*, cit., pp. 493-494). However, Buridan is simply doing what his argumentation strategy continuously leads him to do. After having underlined that the arguments of both Alexander and the Catholic faith lead to the right conclusion (i.e. the plurality thesis), and after having used Alexander's position to address Averroes' thesis, Buridan concludes by employing some arguments offered by faith in order to easily and completely foreclose Averroes' unicity thesis. This is all much clearer in the *secunda lectura*: here Buridan briefly answers Averroes' arguments by appealing to the power of God. Buridan clearly shows that only by faith can we reach the complete truth about the nature of the intellect. Thus, when he concludes the *quaestio*, it is not surprising that he similarly chooses the shorter path, introducing only the arguments of the Catholic faith and not resubmitting those of Alexander.
72. B. Patar, o.c., p. 768.
73. B. Michael, o.c., p. 724.
74. H. Denifle, A. Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, I, Paris 1899, prop. 147, p. 552.
75. A. Ghisalberti, *Buridano, Il cielo e il mondo: commento al trattato Del Cielo di Aristotele*, Rusconi, Milano 1983, pp. 28-29. Original text in Italian, translation is mine.
76. The same attitude applies, for example, to Buridan's treatment of the ontological status of accidental being in the *Metaphysics* and to the topic of the creation of the world in the *Physics*. In all of these cases, Buridan points out what natural reason alone would be led to conclude and what positions reason can reach by taking advantage of some principles coming from the supernatural domain of faith. He then integrates some faith-based principles in his natural philosophy to reach this point. See P. Bakker, *Aristotelian Metaphysics and Eucharistic Theology: John Buridan and Marsilius of Inghen on The Ontological Status of Accidental Being*, in J. Thijssen and J. Zupko (edited by), *The Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy of John Buridan*, Brill, Leiden 2001, pp. 247-264, esp. at pp. 249-250, P. Bakker, *Inhérence, univocité et séparabilité des accidents eucharistiques. Observations sue les rapports entre métaphysique et théologie au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in J.-L. Solère and Z. Kaluza (edited by), *La servante et la consolatrice. La philosophie dans ses rapports avec la théologie au Moyen Âge*, Vrin, Paris 2002, pp. 193-245, E. Sylla, "Ideo quasi mendicare oportet intellectum humanum": *The Role of Theology in John Buridan's Natural Philosophy*, in J. Thijssen and J. Zupko (edited by), *The Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy of John Buridan*, Brill, Leiden 2001, pp. 221-245. Undoubtedly, the relationship between faith and reason in Buridan's thought can be considered under several further respects. As the anonymous reviewer of this article pointed out, a relevant insight comes also from Buridan's

- Ethics* (with particular reference to the topic of the free will, see especially book X, q.2 of Buridan's *Ethics*, J. Buridan, *Quaestiones super decem libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum*, Paris 1513 rpr. Minerva, Frankfurt a. M. 1968, ff. 205rb-208ra).
77. F. Kok, *A Faithful Philosopher. Philosophy and Theology in John Buridan's Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Radboud University, Nijmegen 2014, p. 208.
78. *Ioannis Duns Scotus Opera Omnia*, Studio et cura Commissionis Scotisticae, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Civitas Vaticana 1950 ss., *Ordinatio* IV, d. 43, q. 2., vol. XIV, pp. 13-45. I thank Marina Fedeli for her help with this reference and Antonio Petagine for his remarks on this Scotistic nuance of Buridan's qq.3-6.
- 

© 2019 Chiara Beneduce & Forum. Supplement to Acta Philosophica



Quest'opera è distribuita con Licenza [Creative Commons Attribuzione - Non commerciale - Non opere derivate 4.0 Internazionale](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

[Testo completo della licenza](#)