

EDITORIAL

Editorial

This special issue of *Analiza i Egzystencja* is dedicated to *The Intersection of Willing, Thinking, and Sensing: Late Medieval Concepts of the Human*. Its varied contributions show that many issues that might be described as psychological and anthropological were addressed in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries from a plurality of perspectives, intertwining logic, theories of perception and cognition, physics, medical physiology, ethics, and theology. This plurality of models and viewpoints is also reflected in the backgrounds of the contributors to this volume; while trained as philosophers, they have each previously worked in disciplines related to these fields, ranging from theology to ethics, from logic to medicine, from cognitive theory to physics, and from ontology to semiotics. Taken together, their essays demonstrate that multidisciplinary approaches to the study of medieval texts are both fruitful and increasingly indispensable for understanding the cultural dynamics of the late Middle Ages.

Marek Gensler's contribution is devoted to Walter Burley's (c. 1275–c. 1345) discussion of the role of the heart and the brain in human and animal cognition in his commentary on Aristotle's *Parva naturalia*. Gensler highlights Burley's attempts to reconcile the Aristotelian theory, which considered the heart to be the principle of perception and the location of sleep, with the Avicennian view (itself inspired by Galenic physiology and medicine), which located this principle in the brain. Burley assigns the primary role to the heart and a secondary one to the brain. As Gensler notes in his conclusion, the limitation of Burley's approach lies in his reliance on a speculative, rather than an experiential, perspective when dealing with medico-anatomical and physiological issues.

Edit Anna Lukács examines the concept of nakedness in fourteenth-century metaphysical and epistemological discussions and its impact on prevailing forms of empiricism. Lukács traces the development of the adjective “bare” as applied to the intellect and the will, from the late thirteenth-century theological and epistemological debate between John Duns Scotus and Henry of Ghent to the way it was used by the Oxford Calculators, particularly Robert Halifax (d. c. 1349) and Thomas Bradwardine (c. 1295–1349). The latter employs the notion of bareness to insist that worldly events depend on God, whom he conceives not merely as the Aristotelian unmoved mover but as an active participant in the universe.

Andrea Nannini discusses John Rodington’s (?–1348) anti-Ockhamist polemic on the relationship between the intellect and the will, especially in connection with the beatific vision. Rodington supports the Scotist position on the freedom of the will and the contingency of the beatific vision itself. In particular, he adopts the framework developed by the Franciscan Francis of Marchia and, to preserve the freedom of the will, he insists on the distinction between the essential will (unchangeable by any external object, whether created or uncreated) and the accidental will (whose degrees of adherence depend on the quality of the object).

Michael W. Dunne’s essay examines Richard FitzRalph’s (1299–1360) account of the human mind in his commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*. FitzRalph seeks to bring together the hylomorphic framework of Aristotelian psychology with a neo-Augustinian approach grounded in a careful rereading of Augustine’s *De Trinitate*. Dunne’s contribution demonstrates that FitzRalph’s neo-Augustinianism should not be interpreted as a conservative insensitivity to contemporary innovations. This is evident in his inquiry into the distinctiveness or identity of memory, the intellect, and the will (issues on which Augustine did not express himself clearly) and in his discussion of the distinction between the human soul and its rational, sensitive, and vegetative faculties, which leave room for a reconciliation with the positions of Aristotle and Averroes.

Monika Michałowska analyzes Roger Roseth’s (d. after 1347) position within Oxford debates on voluntarism in the first half of the fourteenth century. Roseth developed his theories of the will in a commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, which was apparently composed without being preceded by formal lectures. In question 2, Roseth follows and employs FitzRalph’s arguments on the relationship between cognition

and volition, also proposing his own ideas and solutions. In particular, Roseth develops a series of analogies between cognition/volition and natural phenomena, such as the relationship between the intensity of light and the intensity of its perception. These analogies lead him to the conclusion that an increased intensity of the cognition of an object does not result in the will's increased desire to attain it and, therefore, that the freedom of the will is unaffected.

Sylvain Roudaut's contribution examines John Dumbleton's anthropology, especially the relationship between the human soul and its faculties as discussed in Dumbleton's still under-researched *Summa logicae et philosophiae naturalis*, a work that remains largely unedited. Although Dumbleton avails himself of analytical techniques characteristic of the Oxford Calculators, he also embraces reductionist positions inspired by William Ockham, including in his treatment of the relationship between the soul and its operations. In studying the human body, Dumbleton develops a corpuscularian model, in which certain phenomena can be explained in terms of material entities and the processes they generate, such as nutrition and the perception of flavors. These views result in his endorsement of the theory that both primary and secondary qualities inhere in prime matter and the theory of the plurality of forms, both with regard to the body and its organs and with regard to the soul.

Claudia Appolloni presents a preliminary analysis of a question from a *Sentences* commentary penned by the English Franciscan Richard Brinkley between 1355 and 1360. Long considered lost and known only through a summary produced in the 1380s, the work has recently been identified by Appolloni in a manuscript held by the National Library of Florence. Her contribution discusses the fallibility of the senses, a topic that Brinkley addresses in a section of Question 1 of his commentary. Brinkley's analysis goes beyond sensory illusions or phenomena involving the persistence of perception in the sensory organ, issues already discussed by theologians such as Peter Auriol and Gregory of Rimini. He also examines physiological phenomena such as diplopia and employs thought experiments involving divine intervention in order to deny the existence of sensible species and to reject the theory of their multiplication through the medium as an explanation of perception. On this basis, he concludes that the possibility of error is intrinsic to the sensory faculty itself. By exploring human cognition in such terms, he ultimately grounds assent to the truths of faith in divinely

illuminated and assisted human reason, as opposed to purely human reason, which is confined to the knowledge of things and is never immune to error.

Finally, Costantino Marmo's contribution focuses on a chronologically earlier issue in addressing the topic central to Radulphus Brito's extensive philosophical work from the end of the thirteenth century. Specifically, Brito considers the possibility of knowing essences (or substances) through their accidents, which are at once the proper sensibles of the various sense organs and the effects of the substances themselves—in short, everything that humans can know through sensation. Brito's discussion is remarkable in that it shifts from the first version of his commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge* to his commentary on Book I of Aristotle's *De anima*, a transition that suggests that the problem lies at the intersection of logic and theories of cognition. This change of the textual setting is accompanied by a corresponding change in Brito's position, bringing with it a clarification of the structure of the internal senses (reflected in an additional, still unedited, question appended to Brito's commentary on Book II of the *De anima*), though without making explicit the epistemological and semiotic implications of that position.

This issue evolved from the papers read at the international conference *At the Intersections of Willing, Thinking, and Sensing: Late Medieval Concepts of the Human*, which was collaboratively organized by the University of Bologna and the Medical University of Łódź and held at the Department of Arts, University of Bologna, on 19–20 May, 2025.

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