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PHILOSOPHY HOUSE

What truth is?

The Problem
of Truth

What Is the Relationship
Between Truth and Interest?

The Journal's
Philosophica figure
Ibn Rushd

Extensions of Arab Philosophy
in the Renaissance







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Editorial

What is it that makes the truth a persistent problem throughout all times, in front of every generation, and among all philosophers without exception, in addition to its presence in all of science and human knowledge?

Does this mean that there is no logical or real solution to the question of what truth is? Is truth merely an idea in the mind, invented by the intellect without any connection to reality? Or is truth hidden in reality itself but is intractable to uncover?

Since the first Greek philosopher until now, discourses concerning this problem have varied. Some view it as an ontological problem, some as a cognitive one, and others as an epistemological one. Do we suspend our judgment about truth as it is a thing in itself, as a Kantian noumenon, something unknowable that lies behind the phenomenon? These questions always prompt us to return to making truth a subject of contemplation. The significance of philosophical inquiry into truth increases with the diversification of knowledge domains as the philosopher wonders: is objective truth attainable in the human sciences, the sciences that deal with a diverse, changing, and different world and what does it really mean for knowledge to be objective? Does the relativity of knowledge negate its objectivity? Or does the relativity of its objectivity keep us in a perpetual quest for it?

Arabs once defined truth as “the adequacy of the intellect to things [*adaequatio rei et intellectus*],” which raises the question: what if there is a contradiction between what is in the intellect and what is in reality? For what is in the intellect doesn't have to necessarily align with what is, and what is in reality is far richer than what is in the intellect. Thus, answers to these questions can only be achieved through two fundamental aspects: logic in all its forms on one hand, and method on the other. Distinguishing between logic and method is of great importance, as we can only think based on correct forms of reasoning, and our thinking can only be valid based on knowledge that has transformed into a method of thinking. Through this, we grasp the truth in its form and content.

Finally, when the world around us, the world we live in, is a process, and since we cannot step into the same river twice, there exists a history of truth. At this point, Pascal's statement holds true: “Truth on this side of the Pyrenees, error on the other side.”

- Editor in Chief





The Problem of Truth

Ahmad Barqawi

Abstract

That we make truth problematic is because it has burdened many philosophers with providing multiple answers to the question of what truth is. And every question that has multiple answers becomes a problem. What drives people to turn their representations and imaginations, which have no real basis, into truths?

Keywords: Problem of truth, consciousness, the adequacy of the intellect to things, relative, absolute, objective truth, formal logic.

What has not been said yet about the concept of truth? Posing the problem of truth saves us from repeating the question of what truth is, but it does not rule out that defining truth is part of the problem of truth. Truth, as a problem, leads us into the realm of inexhaustibility in discourse about it, and this is a characteristic of the problem. And since philosophy had been preoccupied with metaphysics, it did not give much thought to the general consciousness of truth. Saying that truth is the adequacy of the intellect to things adds nothing new to the consciousness of a shepherd. The shepherd does not see the sheep as a lion, for example, because the mental image of the sheep does not match with the reality of a lion. The fact is that the senses are not sufficient for being conscious of truth, as exemplified by the analogy of the bending of a stick in a glass of water. It's enough for a person to take the stick out of the water to realize the errors of the senses. But if truth is defined as the adequacy of the intellect to things, what drives people to believe in a truth that does not belong to this definition? Here we are faced with one of the most important aspects of the problems of truth.

It is not the nature of philosophy to escape from lived reality into false problems, nor to abandon the courage to speak the truth, nor to repeat what is known, customary, and familiar, nor to manipulate common mind opportunistically and avoid danger, and nor it is characteristic of philosophy to appease

deceptive language to please its enemies. Philosophy is the courage to speak the truth.

But the truth is a problem that raises a set of questions beyond the traditional ones associated with the fear of speaking the truth, or with the distinction between relative truth, absolute truth, and objective truth, etc. Philosophy faces one of the most challenging problems, namely: is truth true for its possessor, that is, for those who believe in it? Is it courageous for someone to proclaim the truth as they believe it? Are imagined realities, based on the believer's faith in their happening, and regardless of their contradiction with the laws of nature and the logic of reason, truths? Are ideological theses like communism, Nazism, fascism, and Zionism considered truths according to their believers?

The reality is that the danger of these imagined truths is very significant because they generate a behavior that negates the different. Is it an act of courage to transform these ideologies into one of the sources of conflict with the different?

1- Truth between representation And concept

To begin with, let's say that a person cannot think correctly without thinking according to the rules of logic, and that if someone utters a statement outside the bounds of logic, they are not thinking in the first place.

However, it must be added that not all thinking based on formal logic necessarily constitutes sound thinking, and by sound thinking here, I mean the validity of our real logical judgments. Most people have not studied formal logic and do not know its rules. Nevertheless, there is no ordinary person who would say, "I exist now and do not exist now," or "Hot water is cold," or "An apple is a cherry." In fact, no one in their right mind would violate the rules of syllogism in their life to the extent that they appear foolish. So, no one can say, "Every human being is mortal/ Omar is a human being/ therefore, Omar is not mortal."

This is common knowledge known to everyone which we presented to introduce the issue or to explain the following thesis: formal logic is not only formal but also a logic of a reality. And when I say it is a logic of a reality, I don't mean that it is the logic of reality in an absolute sense, as not all aspects of reality fall under the rules of formal logic. Formal logic is defined as the forms of correct thinking. And for a judgment to be true, it must be real, as attributing a predicate to a subject can only be true if both the subject and the predicate refer to something real, which means that truth is the adequacy of the intellect to things. So, the judgment "Humans can speak" is true because humans can actually speak. However, if I said, "a human is a winged animal," this judgment is false, not because it violates the rules of logic, as the formal relation, is valid, but because there is no such thing as a winged human in reality.

So, the mind can adhere to the form of thinking and the rules of formal logic independently of reality, but in this case, it is not truthful. The criticism of formal logic was carried out according to this idea. However, this critique does not lead to a violation of its rules, and no normal human being can, while adhering to the rules of reason, overthrow the rules of formal logic.

The concept, as the basis of judgment, cannot be a concept except when it is real, no matter how abstract it may be. The reality of the abstract concept does not lie solely in that its significance is based on sensory reality. For instance, a stone and an identity are both abstract/real concepts (a stone: a solid object found in nature with a volcanic rock composition, etc., visible, and touchable; identity: a concept with no sensory existence, but it is that existing consciousness that humans possess distinguishing qualities from others, and this consciousness exists and is expressed through language.

All concepts of science, in this sense, are necessarily real concepts; otherwise, science could not have transformed into technological realities. Here, there's no problem, but the problem lies in representations. By representations we mean those imagined realities that our minds conceive and turn into cognitive tools. Some people mistakenly think that the representation expressed by word is a concept. And therein lies the problem.



I am not talking about representing something after its memory-related absence, nor am I talking about representing a geometric image of a house before its construction. Rather, I am talking about imagining entities that have no existence, yet they have taken on the form of a concept without having a way to formulate the concept as an abstract word that refers to realities. There is a significant difference between empirical concepts and theoretical concepts.

2- What are illusory representations?

We mentioned that a concept is an abstract word expressing similar realities or with similar essential qualities. Additionally, the mind forms concepts based on the processes of abstraction and generalization, disregarding non-essential attributes. A representation becomes false and illusory if it results from the attribution of real qualities to an unreal imagined entity. Originally, the mind could not represent concepts without realities. For example, a “ghoul” is a representation, i.e., a word denoting the existence of a being with terrifying characteristics. However, there is no actual existence of a ghou; it is a composition of a massive body, prominent large teeth, long nails, and thick hair. All these attributes are drawn from reality, which the mind synthesizes and assigns them the name “ghoul.” The body, the tooth, the nails, the hair, and the size are real sensory concepts which the imagination combined them in some image and attributed

to this imaginary construct the word ghou. This is why Arabs say: “There are three impossibilities: the ghou, the phoenix, and the faithful friend.” Leaving aside the faithful friend as a term referring to disappointment with the existence of a faithful friend, the ghou and the phoenix are imaginary entities with no real or actual existence. However, popular consciousness may treat them as truths.

There are real concepts that cannot be referred to sensorily, but their real existence is based on compound attributes, meaning that the mind constructs them, knowing that this construct exists in reality. Take, for example, the concept of “freedom.” There is no real body called “freedom”; what exists are human beings who behave in a certain way. However, behaving freely results from the consciousness of the individual that they are free in choice, thought, and behavior without the intent of this behavior to harm others. . We can define the opposite of this behavior as slavery, which means that there is a human being who always acts according to the commands of a master, whether that master is real or imaginary. In truth, distinguishing between the concept and the imagined representation is a necessary condition for real and logical thinking that aims at uncovering the truth.

And one of the important questions related to logical thinking is the following: are the laws of reason the same as the laws of reality, or do they pre-date them, i.e., innately exist in the human brain?



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Ahmad Barqawi

Let's consider what some researchers call the principles of reason: the principle of causality, the principle of teleology, or the principles of logic, the principle of identity, the principle of excluded third (or excluded middle), and the principle of non-contradiction. There is no doubt that causality is a true and real relationship between two or more terms. The naïve view of causality (which is true) is that every effect has a cause. Here, I am faced with a general judgment, but how did I arrive at what is called a principle? Let's take combustion as an example. Any combustible material burns if there is something that causes it to ignite, such as fire or a spark. Therefore, combustion is a fact that must have two causes for it to occur: combustibility, which is an intrinsic cause, and an external cause, which is the ignition material. What led me to a general judgment that says "Every body is combustible" is induction, and my mind's ability to generalize. Thus, I have developed in my mind a way of thinking based on the existence of causal connections. However, that which is called the principle of causality is, in fact, a principle of reality, not a principle within the mind. It is a principle of reality that has become a principle in the mind through the effectiveness of the mind.

Now, does thinking necessarily become real if I start with the "principle of causality"? Of course not. The ancient Greek and Aramaic Syrian maintained the principle of causality when they attributed rainfall to the existence of a rain god. However, rainfall is real, but not caused by the existence of a god specialized in bringing rain. The judgment that says that the cause of rainfall is the existence of a rain god preserves the formal validity of the principle of causality but does not

preserve its real validity. Here, we specifically address the issue of knowledge in terms of its reality. We emphasize once again that not everything that originates from the mind is real, and when the real originates from the mind, we say: all that is real here is mental [or rational]. What does this mean? Reality includes what we call the principles of reason, and if reality did not include the principles of reason, the mind would not have principles. However, reality only includes them insofar as they are partial realities that have been transformed into general judgments thanks to the effectiveness of the mind. Moreover, the principles of formal logic and its rules would not have been like this if they were not real. Therefore, it can be said that whatever is logical is real, and whatever is real is logical.

But what is logical, and how does it differ from the mental [rational]? First, every logical thing is mental, but not everything mental is logical. Every human is mortal is a universal judgment that includes two concepts: human and mortality. This judgment is true because every human is indeed mortal. If Socrates is a human, and he is, then he is mortal. Now, imagine if I said, "Every human is immortal, Socrates is a human, therefore Socrates is immortal. ." Someone would say, "The syllogism is valid formally." the premises must be true, and the words must be true, i.e., real. This is why formal logic remained part of philosophy due to its ontological proposition. There is no doubt that I reached this conclusion thanks to the mind because logical thought [reasoning] is the same as real mind. Now, if I consider the truths of reality that have become mental [rational] truths as principles of logical thinking, then, there is unity between thought and existence [being].

3- Truth and objectivity

It can be confidently stated that objectivity means issuing judgments about reality free from desire and fancy. Hence, it can be also said that objectivity is a quality of judgments about reality and not a quality of reality itself because reality is an object independent of the self. However, in the realms of politics, aesthetics, literature, and thought, it is rare for a person to attain a state of objectivity because all these worlds are dependent on a subjective position. This is why we see contradictory judgments about the same fact or event. Nevertheless, the mind cannot completely shatter objectivity in describing and understanding events and realities. Otherwise, humans would lose their connection to reality and become closer to folly than to rational thought. If such a state prevails in the culture of a society, it is a sign of its decline.

And if it's true that the breach of objectivity is a phenomenon that no one can escape, neither in the West nor in the East, it is particularly famous in the understanding of political realities, to the degree that one is amazed by the extent to which objectivity has been overthrown. The most insidious aspect of killing objectivity is evident in denying and ignoring the causes while only focusing on the results. At that point, discussing the results becomes a way to absolve the conditions that produced them.

4- Truth and ideological obstacles

Ideology is a form of consciousness that reflects the practical goals of social categories

or classes or nations, and it becomes an instigator of social-political behavior. In clearer terms, the immediate interests of humans are often obscured by ideology, as the language of discourse does not necessarily align with those interests, even if it purports to express them. Additionally, there is a direct relationship that sometimes connects ideology and interest. Therefore, truth is not considered a requirement of ideology, even though ideology can transform into an absolute truth in the eyes of its adherents. This is why the ideological discourse encompasses all contradictions of consciousness, combining rational and irrational tendencies, proof and faith, emotions and logic, and mythology and history.

The truth of the matter is that ideology often borrows its cognitive material from science, religion, philosophy, and history. However, when it has a strong need for philosophy to give itself a comprehensive and general character, it takes certain philosophical concepts, divesting them of their philosophical significance, and turns them into an ideological function. This is what fascism did when it borrowed the concept of the state from Hegel, and it is what Nazism did when it borrowed the idea of Superman or Überman (Übermensch) from Nietzsche. This means that the ideologue needs the philosopher to bolster their ideological theses with a comprehensive philosophical idea, but only after uprooting it from the context of philosophy and incorporating it into their ideological system.

Truth, the Daughter of Time:

On Historiographical Paradoxes

Pascale Lahoud

Abstract

Bernini (1598-1680) worked on his sculpture “Truth, the Daughter of Time [Truth Unveiled by Time]” between 1645 and 1652. The result was a beautiful Venus-like woman, partially covered by a tunic, whose end is supposedly held by Time. However, there is no representation of Time in the sculpture. The artist continuously promised to complete the work by adding the presumed figure of Time until 1665 but didn’t follow through. Thus, we receive his “truth” as a masterpiece in rhetoric, with its incompleteness speaking of what it intended to convey – which wouldn’t have been said as forcefully – had it been completed. How can Time be depicted? How can the truth, as the child of Time, be complete before Time runs its course? Does truth reside above or at the end of Time, eternally fixed, so that it can only be veiled or unveiled by Time? Is she Time’s child in the sense of being built within Time? Does she emerge from it gradually, as if clearing after mist, or is Time playing with her, structuring, deconstructing, annihilating, and resurrecting it? The article traces the manifestations of this problematic in the history of science in the twentieth century.

Keywords: Truth, the Daughter of Time, historiography of science, unified universal theory, history of sciences, scientific community, genealogical sciences, scientific realism, structural realism.

1- How did the sciences represent truth?

When Barrias (1841-1905) wanted to personify nature in "Nature Revealed to Science," [as a woman], he depicted her lifting her own veil, with her gown about to slide down her body, as if the artist were showing us this moment just before her final revelation and the culmination of science. In reality, and throughout history, many scientists believed they were living in that desired final moment. Kelvin (1824-1907), for instance, expressed his pity for physicists who would come after him, as he believed they wouldn't have anything worthwhile to study since, in his view, physics had reached its end with his generation. In the 1920s, Max Born (1882-1970) told visiting students in Göttingen that physics, as we know it, would be completed within six months.

However, it became evident, disappointment after disappointment, that the end of science is continuously receding, and that time persistently belies what we thought was truth. The happy illusion that the sciences, unlike philosophy for instance, progress upwards from one truth to a more comprehensive one along the path leading inevitably to a total unified theory claiming the essence of the universe was shattered in the 1960s. Positivism and Popperism, despite their contradictions, both presupposed this schema. In both theories, facts accumulate, building upon each other, gaining precision, generality, explanatory fecundity, predictive power, and proximity to the correct unified theory about the universe.

But is this really what happens in the history of science? Can we say that Darwin completed Aristotle or that Harvey's theory developed Galen's ideas?

2- Daughter of time and its prey

The 1960s witnessed what has been termed the historical turn in the philosophy of science. The works of Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996), Imre Lakatos (1922-1974), Paul Feyerabend (1924 -1994), and others shed light on the actual history of science, with its tensions, discontinuities, and the intractability of its interpretations. They also illuminated the real work of the scientific community, with its unidealism, subservience to social and psychological considerations and conflicts that cannot be attributed to a zeal for truth in any shape or form. This was a departure from the philosophical endeavor of constructing systematic theories that define the characteristics of true science and the method of its optimal practice. This normative endeavor, which labeled epistemology, was replaced by "genealogical" sciences, and the homogeneous progressive history was substituted with a history of crises, revolutions, and upheavals. Thomas Kuhn demonstrated that the successive theories in the history of physics are not mere modifications or corrections within a single theoretical framework, and it cannot be said that they "describe" a single reality. Hence, Copernican and Ptolemaic systems share nothing, not even the concept of science itself or the representation of reality.



For moving from one “paradigm” to another radically changes how scientists perceive things within their research field. And as long as they only apprehend the world through what they see and practice (i.e., the “paradigm” they belong to), we can say that, after a scientific revolution, they interact with another world unrelated to the one they were dealing with before – an entirely new realm that has nothing to do with the previous world. For instance, classical mechanics represents the world as a collection of separate entities, while quantum physics envisions it as a world of intertwined states.

And if scientific paradigms are different visions of the universe that mutually undermine each other and succeed each other within a revolutionary process where new theories

obliterate everything that preceded them, could we not conclude that what seems true today will be overturned by a subsequent theory, without the latter being true itself? Could it be that the history of science was and still is a series of erroneous theories, each one discrediting its predecessor? Isn't this the case with Ptolemaic astronomy, the Four Humors theory in medicine, and the theory of the luminiferous ether in optics? The reality is that these theories seemed rational and convincing during a specific period, succeeded practically up to a certain point, and gained consensus or near-consensus, before entering what Kuhn calls a “crisis”, leading to their replacement with other theories that left no trace of them. Doesn't this allow us to infer that our current theories do not possess the immunity of truth?

3- The solution and its problem

To an observer considering the logical dilemma arising from the idea of incommensurability, scientific unrealism seems like the solution, and indeed, to a certain extent, it is. Instrumentalism treats theories as tools for predicting phenomena, without claiming to describe reality or reveal its intimate structure. Therefore, their abstract concepts that don't directly refer to concrete facts (such as mass, energy, or different particles) should be seen as mere theoretical constructs without ontological connotations. Since accepting a scientific theory doesn't necessitate believing in it, but rather acknowledging its pragmatic utility only, transitioning from one toolbox to another is a purely convenience matter. Here, instrumentalism intersects with conventionalism, which replaces the criterion of reality-matching with the criteria of convenience and simplicity. Poincaré observed that the differentiating between various geometries (Euclidean and non-Euclidean) isn't based on their conformity with reality because they stem from different axioms none of which can be proven, and therefore differ in their spatial representations, with no empirical experiment capable of settling the nature of space. When two theories possess the same explanatory power and there's no possibility of differentiating between them based on their conformity to facts, the choice becomes a matter of convention guided by simplicity and convenience.¹

4- Epistemology of miracle!

However, tapering the truth is not a solution. Not because science thrives on the "revenue of truth" and enjoys its position in modern societies due to its claimed authority alone², but also because departing from scientific realism is also fraught with logical and epistemic dilemmas. If we concede, for the sake of argument, that the criterion for differentiating between conflicting scientific theories isn't truth, and that theoretical concepts lack ontological thickness, being nothing more than tools invented by the human mind, how do we explain the success of these terms and tools in predicting and controlling phenomena? It's true that scientific realism, i.e., the philosophical stance asserting the existence of an external reality independent of our representations, and that scientific theories do convey truths about the real world, lacks a convincing explanation for the conflicts between the different ontologies assumed by the successive theories. However, its "decisive argument," in the words of van Fraassen, lies in not turning the success of science into a miracle.³

5- Towards a new realism

There is no escaping the acknowledgment that scientific theories do convey truths about the world. So, how do we reclaim truth after science "lost it on the way"? Could the concept of gradual approximation to truth, as crystallized by Popper for example, be the solution?⁴

But how can one erroneous theory be closer to the truth than another erroneous theory? And how can theories that are not only non-contradictory but also incomparable and incommensurable succeed in bringing us closer to the truth? Let's take the history of optics as an example. After viewing light as a stream of particles, we transitioned to considering it a wave, then to something that is neither a particle nor a wave... How is that an approximation to the truth? Doesn't it seem closer to serving as evidence for the validity of pessimistic inference which claims that we accumulate only faulty theories, and no logical justification allows us to say that the future of science will be different from its history?

Or perhaps what persists across different theories is not a specific content but a formal mathematical structure? This is what "structural realism" proposes, adopted by Maxwell (1970) and Poincaré, Schlick, Carnap and others. It suggests that much of what science can apprehend is relationships between things, and beyond these relationships, there is nothing in reality that we can comprehend. We should be "realistic" about the structural forms and equations without necessarily taking into consideration the ontological furniture they assume.

Thus was the debate between realism and anti-realism marked in the latter half of the 20th century, where both sides piled up arguments and counterarguments, which made Putnam conclude that progress on this issue could only be achieved by admitting that both positions are unsatisfactory. He advocated for an "open

realism," which acknowledges that ongoing revision doesn't only apply to our theories, but also to our concept of reality itself. While affirming that the world exists independently, this perspective reminds us that there's no way to know reality outside the human mind.

6- Time as a Judge!

The alternative solution, on the other hand, suggests abandoning the idea of regulating normative theory and letting the scientific process proceed without restraint. What we perceive as a fragmented scientific process, in which we attempt to find rationality, has its own inherent rationality that takes place behind the backs of scientists and philosophers.

For instance, van Fraassen sees scientific theories in their process are subjected to a Darwinian selective logic, where theories that are more accurate or less erroneous in explaining the most phenomena with the fewest principles tend to persist. Van Fraassen doesn't rule out the possibility that other factors unrelated to the pursuit of truth could play a role in this struggle, such as competition between research groups and countries, personal ambition, and public opinion trends. However, the outcome is the survival of the fittest theory. Just as nature preserves the most efficient bodies, time preserves the most capable theories⁵. Wray's position aligns with this context as well, for he believes that no scientist would waste a long time on a theory that doesn't allow precise predictions. Therefore, all theories discussed among scientists have the potential for success.

Scientists working on unsuccessful theories are as rare as mice unafraid of cats, and the fate of those mice and those scientists is extinction⁶.

Conclusion

At this juncture, we can examine another aspect of the radical revolution brought about by the historical turn, which is the alignment of the laws of nature with science itself, and the transforming the history of science into a purposeless process governed by the law of survival of the fittest.

An observer might object when contemplating the intricate philosophical debates that we have summarized only briefly above: Does science really need to pose these questions? Have the questions posed by the philosophy of science ever impeded its progress? It is indeed true that incommensurability obliterates the logical foundation of the concept of progress. However, in practical terms, we are well aware that today we have significantly more control over nature than we did during the Middle Ages, and we witness the outcomes of this expansion of knowledge and capabilities in all fields, from nanophysics to space, passing through medicine, communication, simulating human intelligence, living matter, and beyond.

Yet, nothing matches the enormity of what we can achieve, except the insignificance of what we know about how we know. Ironically, the “best” theories in explaining the “wonder” of aligning our knowledge with the world are those that turn us into fictional beings in a grand virtual simulation game.

It’s terrifying for humans to send powerful telescopes and probes to explore the infancy of the universe, and all the while wondering whether it truly exists in the original sense upon which the category of the knowing self was built, and whether the universe exists in the real world in the original sense upon which the category of reality was established.

Here, under the feet of science and philosophy, an awesome abyss opens. Yet, it’s a blessed awe that preserves the reserve of imagination within scientific practice. Perhaps Bernini’s unfulfilled promise, Barrias’s waiting for a falling robe that never falls, and Kelvin and Born’s eagerness to meet an end that never arrives, all signal one of the funniest and most perilous paradoxes of truth: testifying to the truth necessarily requires recognizing the limitations of our knowledge of it, and that the “Courage of Truth” sometimes is the courage to stare into the void gripping its tunic.



What Is the Relationship between Truth and Interest?

Majdi Abed El-Hafez Saleh

Abstract

◆◆

We talk a lot about truth, defend it, respect it, honor it, and appreciate it. We always strive to reach it, define it, and even proclaim it openly if possible. However, we rarely think to the same extent about the essence of truth! And rarely do we ask ourselves the most important question: What is truth? What we have said about truth is often said first and foremost in the context of interest. Therefore, in this article, we will seek to clarify the essence of truth, of interest, and of the relationship that connects them.

Keywords: Truth, interest, justifying functional relationship, authority, Kant, Hegel, Al-Razi, Al-Ghazali.

If we refer to language dictionaries, we find that truth, in the general sense, refers to what is true and real. In the logical sense, it signifies what is true, as the true in this context involves the agreement of thought with itself. Moving on to philosophy and metaphysics, we see that the true means the conformity of thought to its subject. Saint Thomas Aquinas defines truth as the correspondence of the intellect with reality, and, in his view, knowing this correspondence is equivalent to knowing the truth¹. The French philosopher Malebranche believes that truth is nothing but real, understandable relations². David Hume divides truth into two types: the first encompasses the discovery of relationships between ideas as they are, while the second type involves the alignment of our ideas about things with things as they are in reality³. As for Hegel, he expresses the concept of truth in different terms, for he sees truth as the agreement of representation with its object, because the realm of truth lies in our judgment when our representation of its object begins⁴. Nietzsche, on the other hand, denies its existence in the first place, viewing truths as mere illusions we have forgotten that they are just that. He describes them as borrowings which were used and have lost their sensory power⁵.

Most of these definitions stem from the idea that the criterion of truth lies in the alignment of what we say with reality, or the correspondence of our representation or idea with its subject. However, Nietzsche's definition flouted all these definitions, for he denied the existence of any truth, affirming that what we took for

truths are nothing but illusions we've grown accustomed to. Indeed, Nietzsche's definition prompts us to question what we consider as truths. In clearer terms, what we know is that truth is relative and related to time and place as each era has its own truths, and each society has its new demands and newly produced needs. Therefore, it's difficult to conceive the existence of an ultimate or absolute truth valid for all times and places, especially considering the rapid and continuous changes that shape our lives. In fact, scientific theories and laws are not fixed because the fundamental characteristic of scientific law is its ability to be modified, changed, and transcended due to the progress of technologies, methods, and their development.

But what about interest? Interest or benefit, in general, refers to anything that is useful and advantageous for an individual or for all individuals. If we examine some philosophers' definitions, we find that Kant defines interest as what makes reason practical, in the sense that it becomes a matter that determinates the will⁶. On the other hand, Hegel defines it as what enables an individual to find in something an answer that has previously been given to the question: should one act, and was there something that could be done?⁷ , As for Fakhr Al-Din Al-Razi, he sees interest as what corresponds to a person in terms of acquisition and preservation, clarifying that acquisition means bringing benefit, and preservation means averting harm⁸.

He agrees with Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali in defining interest, but he adds another specific dimension that frames it and makes it contingent upon and aligned with the well-being of people, emphasizing that this does not differ from what the religious law [Shar'] intends. He clarifies that he did not mean what was understood from his statement. In clearer terms, he believes that the ultimate goal of interest is to preserve and uphold the objectives of the religious law⁹.

Perhaps Al-Ghazali's understanding of interest in this way falls within the framework of public interest. However, there is another personal interest associated with individual benefits – what we refer to as private interest, meaning matters concerning specific individuals or the interests of certain social groups and not others. On the other hand, public interest encompasses everything related to the interest of all members of society and its various segments. We do not forget that public interest is the foundation of authority in any society since it legitimizes its governing authority. We can also refer to public interest as the “common good” as it aims for every individual in society to live a better life. In fact, all state institutions work together to achieve this goal. It's worth noting here that we cannot provide a comprehensive, excluding definition of the concept of public interest, due to the difficulty of defining the essence of the common good, which naturally varies

according to different societies, governing authorities, time, and place.

Furthermore, there often occurs an overlap or conflict between individuals, parties, and authorities regarding the nature of the common good and how to choose it. Consequently, we find that each group, in an attempt to disguise their underlying self-interest that conflicts with the public interest, emphasizes in their defenses that their demands are nothing but a legitimate defense of the truth. In reality, we observe this phenomenon when every group seeks to defend their personal interests in the name of truth or the common good, rendering truth a means for whoever wants to embody their personal interests in it, without disturbing opponents or critics on one hand, while also attempting to mislead public opinion and gain supporters on the other.

Therefore, modern societies insist that their definitions of public interest enjoy dynamic properties to avoid the trap of confusion we currently witness between public interest and private ones. In a report by the French Consultative State Council, a precise definition was provided in an attempt by the members of the Council to establish clear and distinct boundaries between these two interests. The definition states that public interest is the ability of individuals to rise above their affiliations and personal interests in order to collectively form a political community¹⁰.

Here, it can be said that there is often an illusory relationship that individuals establish with the truth when they mix it with their observations, thoughts, and knowledge, i.e., when one confuses the truth with personal opinions, political or religious ideologies, asserting that these opinions are always correct and can never be mistaken. Those who hold these absolute truths are often extremists in every place and domain, such as followers of rigid or extreme religious currents within Judaism, Christianity, and Islam¹¹.

On the other hand, we cannot overlook the utilitarian manipulation of truth by non-religious entities, especially when certain governing authorities in some countries use carefully selected slogans to solidify a status quo, change policy, or steer public attention towards a specific issue or individual. The truth of the matter is that these authorities divert the public from engaging in political matters, making them direct their attention and thoughts to superficial and trivial matters. In conclusion, we affirm that the relationship between truth and interest is a tight knit and highly intertwined one. Furthermore, every individual is inclined to use this relationship to justify their actions, opinions, or even acts of violence, whether in the name of religion, universal principles, justice, human rights, or the law, and so on. In essence, the relationship between truth and interest is an automatic one, functional and justifying at the same time.

Objective Truth and Relative Truth in Contemporary Philosophical Discourse

Al Zawawi Baghoura

Abstract

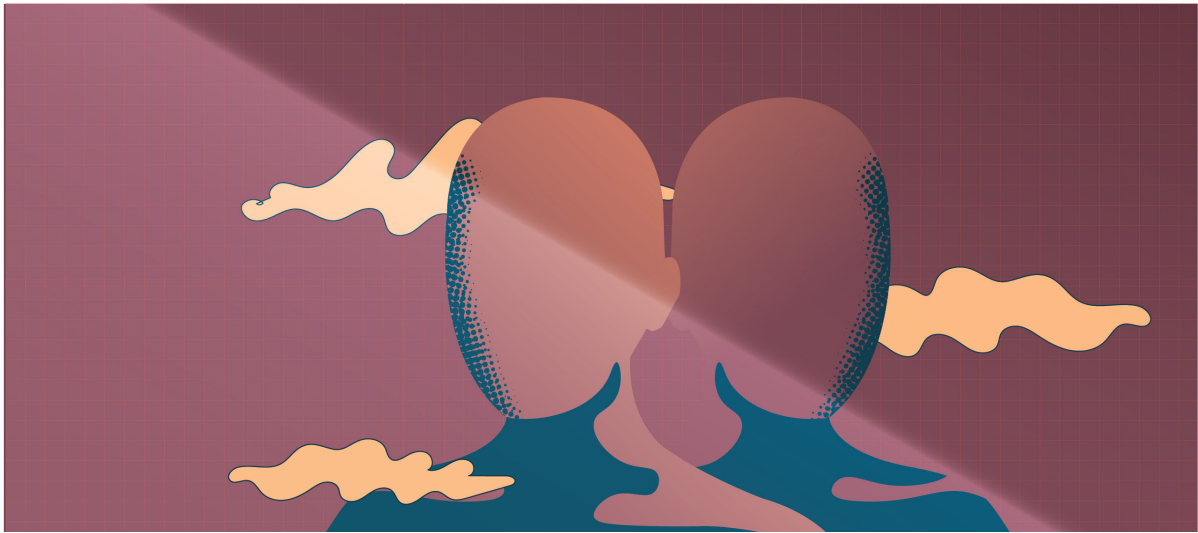
I may not stray far from the truth if I say that the concept of truth is perplexing, and it becomes even more confusing in philosophy in comparison with other different branches of human knowledge. Although philosophy is, as we know, defined by the pursuit of truth, and considering this preliminary given, I believe the best approach to discuss this concept, for an appropriate and useful methodical discussion, is the contextual and historical one, or, in other words, an approach through a historical example. This is an attempt to narrow down the philosophical discussion which is characterized by a lot of bifurcations and generalities on this subject, and then extract the most important characteristics of the concept of truth in general, and objective and relative truth in particular. This means that I will try to show a facet of the truth experience among contemporary philosophers, comparing them to ancient philosophers, especially regarding our various descriptions of truth, its classification into different types, and its order in multiple domains. For instance, we talk now, to name but a few, of objective and subjective truth, absolute and relative truth, universal and particular truth, partial and, general truth, and we subject truth to various relationships that the ancients didn't concern themselves with, such as its relation to power, utility, commodity [market], practice, action, and application, among others.

Keywords: Objective truth, relative truth, contemporary philosophical discourse, Jacques Bouveresse, Michel Foucault.

The philosophical discussion initiated by the contemporary French philosopher Jacques Bouveresse (1940-2021) in two of his many books, *Nietzsche versus Foucault: Truth, Knowledge, and Power*¹ (2016) and *Nietzsche's Thunderbolts and the Blindness of the Disciples*² (2021), serves as a typical example of a contextual and historical approach to truth, for it directly addresses the issue of truth. The same could be said on the issue of relative or subjective truth that we read about in many texts by contemporary philosophers, with Michel Foucault (1926-1984) at the forefront. Foucault is considered a pillar in this philosophical discourse, as he introduced and employed new terms to describe truth or to connect it to various relationships, such as "will to truth," "politics of truth," "regime of truth," "history of truth," "production of truth," "truth-power," "games of truth," etc.

How did Jacques Bouveresse, and he, as a professor of the philosophy of language and knowledge at the Collège de France for over a decade (1995-2010), had given lectures that contributed to the two aforementioned books in this institution, which welcomed a large number of philosophers and scholars interested in the pursuit of truth across various branches of human knowledge, including Michel Foucault from 1971 to 1984, view these terms? But before delving into Bouveresse's perspective, it's essential to understand how Michel Foucault addressed the issue of truth. Foucault says, "By truth I do not mean the set of true things that there is to discover or to make people accept, but the set of rules

according to which one disentangles the true from the false and attaches to the true specific effects of power."³ Based on this premise, he went on to argue that his central concern is not truth itself but rather the politics of truth. He states, " My problem is the politics of truth (...). The issue here is not limited to separating in the discourse what is scientific and real, and what is not, because we notice how, at the level of history, reflections of truth are produced in the discourse which are not in themselves either true or false."⁴ With this proposition, Foucault's analysis differs from his teacher's, Louis Althusser (1918-1990), who distinguishes between the scientific and the ideological, the true and the false, the real and the wrong, within the historical epistemology established by Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962). Foucault's concept of truth appears in a series of historical analyses concerning specific human experiences, such as the experience of madness, illness, deviance, or sexuality, which demonstrate that there is a regime of truth associated with each of these experiences. The reality is that some scientific discourses represent truth, and some social and economic institutions produce it, not to mention that the authorities utilize this truth to govern the population, distributing and disseminating it through educational and media institutions, among others. Consequently, truth being a mere game transforms into the subject of social stakes and political conflicts, often referred to as "ideological struggle."



Indeed, it is evident that upon examining his later texts, one can easily perceive Foucault's desire to interpret his entire philosophy in line with the term of "games of truth." He explicitly expressed this in the second part of his book *The History of Sexuality*, subtitled *The Use of Pleasure*. He states, "After first studying the games of truth (*jeux de vérité*) in their interplay with one another, as exemplified by certain empirical sciences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and then studying their interaction with power relations, as exemplified by punitive practices—I felt obliged to study the games of truth in the relationship of self with self."⁵ Clearly, Foucault intends to present his philosophy as a whole, whether in its epistemological, political, or ethical dimensions, under the term of "games of truth," benefitting from the theory of linguistic games presented by the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein

(1889-1951) in his book *Philosophical Investigations* (1945).

Foucault retrieved the theory of games to employ it at the level of truth. The fact is that the themes of "games of truth" are strongly present in his historical analyses, which do not concern themselves with uncovering what is true but rather with diagnosing the rules governing truth. He also uses the concepts of "veridiction" (*véridiction*) and "dispositive" (*dispositif*) to identify the emergence of discourses labeled or perceived as true.

The aforementioned elements do not represent the comprehensive concept of truth in Michel Foucault as much as they represent an important aspect of it, which Jacques Bouveresse tried to discuss in the two books mentioned above, with the aim of defining its boundaries through a number of elements, the most significant of which are:

1- Emphasizing the importance of Foucault's historical analyses, as they allowed us to learn new and essential things about some of our contemporary institutions and practices by constantly looking closely at historical, social, and cultural realities themselves, rather than the representations constructed of them by philosophers. Consequently, the criticisms addressed to him do not stem from sympathy or hatred, but rather from a concern for rigor.⁶ The issue that concerns him [Bouveresse] is: to what extent Foucault succeeded in thinking differently about concepts like truth, objectivity, knowledge, and science?

2- Michel Foucault is considered one of the few contemporary philosophers who contributed to the discussion of truth and renewing some of its aspects. But he also "encouraged a style of sophistic thought that has unfortunately met and continues to meet great success with philosophers and sociologists."⁷ To Bouveresse, this poses a danger to scientific research because, for no matter how many statements Foucault makes about truth, they do not go beyond the concept of relative truth as it is subjective and differs from objective truth which is the alignment of thought with reality, or the adequacy of the intellect to things (*adaequatio rei et intellectus*), as the ancients would say, or the correspondence of the rational judgment with reality, as modernists would say.

3- If Jacques Bouveresse does not hesitate to classify Foucault's concept of truth as relative truth, supported by referring to phrases Foucault himself uses, such as



history of truth, will to truth, and regime of truth,—phrases derived from the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)—he does emphasize the need to distinguish between what can be considered as veracious, real, or true (*le tenir pour vrai*) and truth. Failure to make this distinction has led to a dangerous conflation of the will to truth and truth itself, reducing truth to what we may regard as veracious or real, and thus transforming it into a mere effect of human power on truth. This distinction between what is veracious and what is truth is attributed to the German philosopher and logician Gottlob Frege (1848-1925), and Jacques Bouveresse uses and employs it within the context of his discussion of Foucault's arguments concerning truth.⁸

4- While Foucault analyzed the mechanisms, rules, circumstances, and the historical and social contexts that lead to the production of truth, he drew imprecise conclusions about truth itself. Why? According to Bouveresse, it is because we cannot speak with complete rigor and precision about the production of truth, the history of truth, or the will to truth. The most that we can discuss is the production of knowledge, the methods of knowledge in studying truth, or the history of belief or faith in truth. Truth itself is purified of production or history, especially when considering scientific facts as presented by formal and natural sciences. Furthermore, Foucault's dependence in his analyses on what Karl Popper (1902-1994) termed as "pseudo-science or false science," especially psychology, psychiatry, and criminology, reveal Foucault's desire to dispense with the concept of objective truth as proven and verifiable through scientific and objective precise ways and methods. Accordingly, if the link between truth and power can be observed in the case of psychiatry, this relationship cannot be proven in the case of mathematics or natural sciences, except for usable purposes.

5- There is a methodological observation that imposes itself on this critical analysis presented by the philosopher Jacques Bouveresse—who is specialized in Wittgenstein's philosophy and had spent years teaching him at the Collège de France, explaining the philosophy

of language or, more accurately, the linguistic philosophy whose foundation was laid by Wittgenstein. This observation concerns the fact that he does not focus on the term "games of truth" but rather on the intersection between Nietzsche's conception of truth and its application by Foucault. Moreover, Bouveresse does not pay attention to what Foucault presented in his final lessons on Greek philosophy concerning the interest in self-examination, its interpretation, and its relationship to truth, especially in his study of the concept of truth in the works of Plato, the Stoics, and the Cynics, among others. This indicates that Bouveresse was primarily concerned with the connection between Foucault and Nietzsche **first**, and the link between some French philosophers and Nietzsche **second**, as clearly manifested in his second book, in which he criticizes what he calls the leftist interpretation of philosophy. This is all done to establish the idea in which he claims that Nietzsche's concept of truth is broader than what Foucault used, and that the latter focused on Nietzsche's work *Genealogy of Morals* only. In conclusion, Bouveresse is trying to offer a new interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy.

6- If Foucault had not been concerned with truth in the realm of formal and natural sciences—a fact he did not deny—his contributions to the human sciences in general, and history in particular, require, in my opinion, discussion and criticism, especially concerning the concept of truth in this complex field of knowledge. Furthermore, Bouveresse's critical observations could have been more productive if they focused more on the issue of truth in history, for example, as presented by Foucault. Rather, he took refuge in the objective truth of the natural sciences, leaving aside its problematic aspects in the human and social sciences, particularly in history. For Foucault, however, the question of truth in historical writing is the crucial one that deserves discussion, for through it one can decide on the concept of truth or truths he reached in his historical and philosophical research alike.



Philosophy and Skepticism

Haytham Tawfic Al-Atwany

Abstract

The complex human experience throughout history indicates the importance of doubt and its role in philosophy, as it is immanent in human existence and human knowledge itself. In fact, this concept has been the subject of intellectual debates throughout the history of human thought and will continue to be so as long as humans ask themselves questions about their existence and the universe. Therefore, in this article, we will explain how doubt allows humans to take a critical stance towards all axioms, certainties, and the prevailing and familiar categorical ideas.

Keywords: Doubt, thinking, Descartes, methodological doubt, cogito, method.

Can humans reach certainty when they start with doubt? Some argue that this predisposition towards doubt carries a negative meaning that could lead to suspending judgment, while others see the experience of doubt as a necessary gateway to reach certainty. But does this doubt lead us to a certainty that we cannot doubt? And what is the criterion for certainty?

1- Meaning of doubt

Doubt: It is the opposite of certainty. For example, I doubted, and I have doubts, and so-and-so made me doubt it.

Skepticism: Skepticism is derived from the Greek word "Skeptikos," (Σκεπτικός) meaning the "inquirer " or "investigator."¹ This is why Sextus Empiricus classified skepticism as one of the philosophical schools that continues to search and investigate, in juxtaposition to Aristotle, the Epicureans, and the Stoics, who "believe they have discovered the truth."² Skepticism emerged in ancient Greek philosophy, with Pyrrho representing it, and its formulation was developed by Sextus Empiricus. Skepticism is based on various pillars, the most prominent of which is doubting the certainty of sensory knowledge and the exaggeration of the relativity of human knowledge. Skepticism was, in fact, a response to the dogmatism of excessively abstract philosophical constructs.

The meaning of doubt varies depending on the field of study. "In psychology, it refers to a state of hesitation in accepting conflicting issues when there are valid reasons for accepting

each one and also valid reasons for rejecting them. In natural sciences, it means that every knowledge is subject to testing, examination, and analysis. In philosophy, it refers to the denial of issues that philosophers previously agreed upon accepting and believing."³

Philosophical doubt is closely related to the theory of knowledge, as it is built on the assumption of the human mind's inability to acquire knowledge in everything, "that cognition is not accessible to human being"⁴ and that it is "the hesitation between two opposing judgments, where the mind does not favor one over the other due to equal evidence supporting both judgments or the absence of any evidence in either of them."⁵ Skepticism, as a philosophy, "doubts the existence of a criterion for truth."⁶

Therefore, the doctrine of skepticism takes various forms. Some skeptics believe that the human mind is incapable of establishing absolute objective knowledge, and they affirm that all knowledge is subjective and relative. On the other hand, some others believe that the mind is capable of issuing absolute objective judgments in certain areas, such as direct psychological self-experiences, but it is unable to provide precise evidence for the existence of entities outside the self. In this context, it is essential to mention Descartes' experiment, given its utmost significance



2- Methodological doubt

According to proponents of this approach, objective knowledge is possible. They argue that precise knowledge refers to the firm and certain knowledge that does not vary from one person to another. Additionally, they believe that the mind possesses the capabilities to attain certainty. However, reaching certainty begins with doubt in all inherited beliefs, and cautions against accepting what previous philosophers have agreed upon. According to this perspective, doubt is an act of will for it “focuses on judgments rather than on perceptions and ideas since perceptions without judgment are considered neither true nor false.”⁷

Methodological doubt is the pathway to certainty, and it is necessary to train the mind to form the faculty of criticism, analysis, and

discussion of what the predecessors called “first principles” so that we, in turn, reach new first principles upon which we can build other indisputable propositions.

3- Descartes (1596-1651)

The method of doubt was closely associated with Descartes’ philosophy of the mind, which aligned with the spirit of his time and was influenced by social, political, and intellectual circumstances. This period was characterized by relative stability and tranquility, which helped him establish the foundations of system in French thought. Hence, Descartes’ work was indicative of the birth of a new and unconventional era in France and Europe, especially as he sought to search for undoubted knowledge – knowledge of the means that guarantees validity, truthfulness, and distinctiveness of this knowledge.



Thus, he found in the method of mathematics the certainty and precision he aspired for and applied it to metaphysics to ensure its certitude. His approach brought about a transformation in the trajectory of thought at that time, as his philosophical system laid the foundation for modern rationalism, later developed by Spinoza, Hegel, Leibniz, and others.

Descartes explained his metaphysics in three works: *Discourse on the Method* (Part IV), *Meditations*, and *Principles of Philosophy* (Book 1- He consistently followed the same order: doubting the existence of material things while affirming the unshakeable certainty of the cogito: "I think, therefore I am." For metaphysics progresses from doubt to certainty, or more precisely, from a first judgment of certainty inherent in doubt itself to increasingly more certain judgments. This is because certainty alone can generate further certainty.

Descartes based his work on the reasons for doubting sensory perceptions and built his doubt upon them. In the illusions of the senses, things appear to us as if they are real, but we quickly judge them to be false, which is a sufficient reason to doubt our senses that have deceived us before.

Descartes was interested in scientific issues and closely followed their developments, presenting his views to the scholars of his time. His goal was to crystallize a scientific method and construct a philosophy that matches

the development of science and work on its advancement for the interest and service of humanity. As for the doubt that Descartes sought, it was merely a mental stance in which the mind attempts to purify its thoughts and representations.

Thus, Descartes started from the idea of doubting the existence of all things and the validity of all knowledge, whether sensory or intellectual. However, he was certain that he doubted, and doubt is a thought, and thought is existence. He "wanted to establish modern philosophy solely on reason, which [philosophy] remains the total comprehensive science, not a collection of partial knowledge or specialized sciences. Rather, it is the science of first principles, representing the noblest and highest essence of all sciences. Philosophy, for Descartes, is both theoretical and practical, but theorizing is not demanded for mere theorizing; rather, it is theorizing that provides us with the foundations of action."⁸ It should be noted that Descartes likened philosophy to a tree, with its roots being metaphysics, its trunk natural science or physics, and its branches encompassing medicine, mechanics, and ethics.

Descartes also believed that the first intellectual reform a philosopher should undertake is to achieve a method that leads him to true knowledge. If previous philosophers had triumphed in this method, they would not have stumbled in their inquiries.

Furthermore, Descartes made science and philosophy determined by the stage of critical thinking, where the philosopher is concerned with studying the method and specifying the steps of scientific inquiry. Thus, he dedicated part of his study to establishing the foundations of the method that it became mathematical, based on intuition and deduction, relying on clarity and distinctness as the fundamental criteria for the validity of inference. The rules of the methodology he developed are as follows:

- 1- Rule of Certainty: Avoiding recklessness and hasty judgments before careful examination.
- 2- Rule of Analysis: Dividing the problem under study into simple parts as needed.
- 3- Rule of Synthesis: Proceeding gradually in knowledge from the simple to the complex.
- 4- Rule of Enumeration: Conducting complete enumeration and comprehensive reviews to ensure that the researcher has not overlooked anything.

In addition, “Descartes believes that impulsiveness and premature judgment are among the causes of error. Impulsiveness stems from a lack of caution in judgment and a failure to investigate the different aspects of a phenomenon. . . . Urgent practical needs may drive us to act without due ponderation and complete the investigation, and here lies impulsiveness. Premature judgment, on the other hand, arises from what a person inherits and receives from their environment and upbringing in the form of judgments

they have not reached themselves through their own reasoning. Instead, they accept and imitate them from parents, teachers, or the general public, making them a standard for their own judgments.”⁹

Thus, through method and order, knowledge can be built on firm foundations. The correct system in philosophy requires starting with the most clear and simple truths, those truths that include only the simplest connotations. Then, step by step, progressing towards the most complex truths, being confident that each step in the demonstration is indisputable.

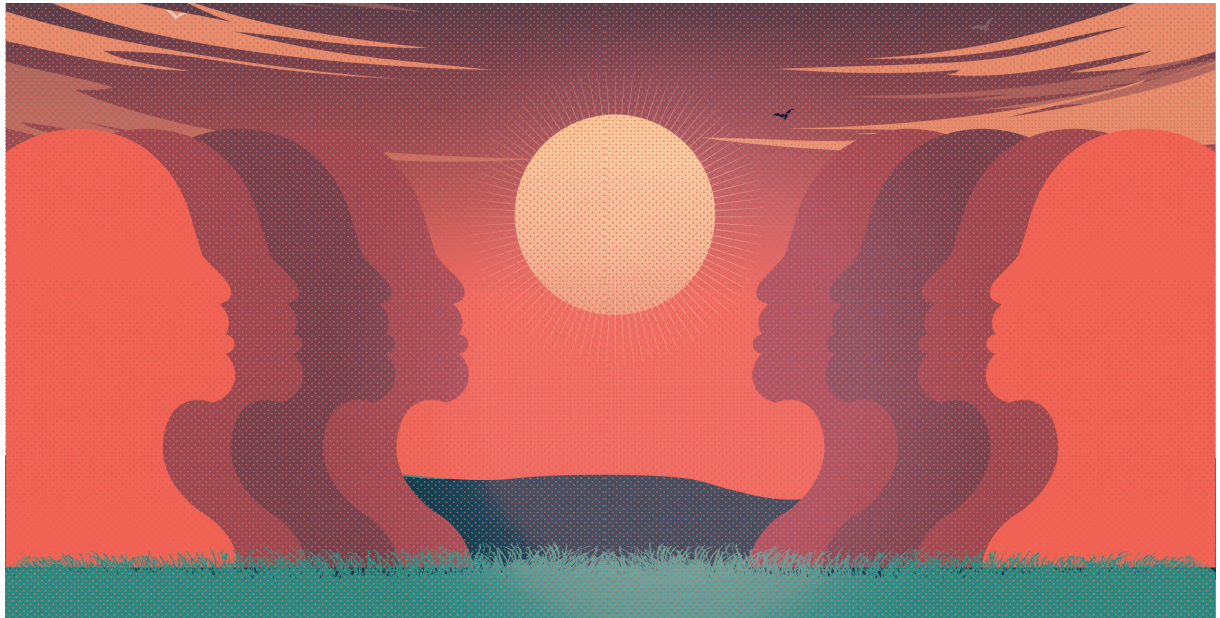
Extensions of Arab Philosophy In the Renaissance

Gerard Jihami

Abstract

Whoever thinks that Renaissance thought is detached from its past, drawn from vacuum, is delusional. The heritage of the past, especially the philosophical one, has future visions extending through the history of thought and science, just as the present has past visions that still reflect on the collective unconsciousness and intellectual consciousness. The reality is that our ambiguous present suffers from a disorientation that has affected the Renaissance and from philosophical extensions that have hindered its right path. Therefore, we see it necessary to find common ground that connects the past and the present, or between the relative presentness of the past and its valid propagation in the renaissance of yesterday and today. However, we limit the approach between them philosophically and intellectually, without delving into historico-geographical fields, lest the research becomes lengthy and exceeds the limits of the article.

Keywords: Renaissance thought, Age of Enlightenment, Averroism, reason, Al-Kindi, extensions of Arab philosophy.



The methodology of examining extensions requires fundamentals and principles with which we avoid reviving the outdated and the immersed in its past and accept what continues to be functionally active forming a part of the present. The theory of reasons/intellecets and celestial bodies, for instance, no longer establishes philosophical doctrine or is a base for cognitive principles after philosophical reason has reclaimed its role in these two processes, breaking itself away from the metaphysics criticized by Ibn Khaldun originally and later by Kant in modern thought and the Age of Enlightenment. We aim to leave the door open for objective epistemological interpretations that can be validly extracted from the philosophy of the distant past, free of preconceived judgments. The truth is that

the horizons of Averroism are vast and rich in this context, as we fully understand how Averroistic thought extended in Latin Western philosophy, Christian and Hebrew theology, and then into modernity. It is a thought that had laid the foundation for the development of Aristotelianism and supported the explicit call of religious laws [Sharia] to elevate reason and reflect on creation and creatures.¹

Here, we need to pay attention to the trajectory of the philosophical path that medieval Arab thought traveled through the stages of the Renaissance, and how it flowed strongly in the beginnings, but began to decline little by little with the consolidation of a new cognitive engineering in light of scientific and critical thought in particular.

1- Extensions and flows

Historians have circumscribed the Renaissance to four directions: the conservative direction, which maintains adherence to tradition and religious thought (Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, Hassan Al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb); the inclusive, reconciliatory moderate direction (Rifa'ī Al-Tahtawi, Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani, Abdul Rahman Al-Kawakibi); and the direction that accommodates with modern Western life and civilization in lieu of the Eastern one (Mikhail Naima, Gibran Khalil Gibran, Nageeb Al-Rihani); and the secular, rational, and evolutionary direction (Salama Moussa, Malek Bennabi, Zaki Naguib Mahmoud).² Thus, the First Renaissance (1870-1940) preserved the revival of classical old philosophical concepts, in continuity and connection, with the domination of religious authentic tradition prevailing over its mentality. **Question-oriented reason** worked on the research of philosophical and religious propositions in the form of informative narrative and fundamental analysis that is consistent with the character of Arab philosophy and the frameworks of its issues. This was done through constructing a rigid theological-doctrinal structure, albeit plagued by relative breaches and modifications by Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina [Avicenna], and Ibn Rushd [Averroes] in the light of **Aristotelian peripateticism**: reason and tradition, native and foreign sciences, wisdom [Philo-Sophia] and Sharia, formal-jurisprudential logic and empirical

logic, religious approach (method) and philosophical methodology, the material and the spiritual, and so forth. In reality, the predecessors, including jurists [faqih], theologians, and philosophers, addressed religious and intellectual issues methodically and in terms of content epistemologically under the title of **"masa'il"** [issues]. Although some Peripatetics leaned towards adopting rationalism in the manner of the Mu'tazilites, the general framework and objectives remained bound by doctrine and fundamentals.

The junctions of Arab philosophy dried up with respect to the religious criterion, as the true divine Word is acquired by humans through an active divine intellect as its source. Hence, truth became constricted and froze for centuries into fixed schools, beliefs, and principles, and got reduced to categories and concepts, part of which was Greek and the other Arabic Islamic or Persian. Its circles revolved within a comprehensive intellectual system which, despite its flaws, reached the Renaissance thinkers in the beginnings (1700-1890), and they found in it a key to asserting their positions regarding Arab civilization and self-identity. However, they later addressed the issues of this system (1890-1940) through **problem-dealing reason**, seeking topics with dialectical dimensions such as progress and belatedness, East and West, civilization and backwardness, etc., and these ideas were enriched and harmonized with European thought.

Thus, they accomplished the blending of tradition and the modern, merging them with modernizing, renewing thought as dealt with by reformists such as Muhammad Abdo and Muhammad Rashid Rida. This reason became a revelatory link of the relationships between the spiritual and civil authorities, between individual freedom and public liberties in the Islamic world. The past became a good resource for them to confront the present. Reason, as seen by Al-Ghazali and Abbas Mahmoud Al-'Aqqad, is "the intellect in the legitimization of Islam," both of which seek the truth³. It is as if we returned with them to raise the question of reason and theological-philosophical tradition, which turned into a problem for solution and implementation, similar to the problem of the East confronting the West and the infiltration of Western civilization into the core of Eastern civilization.

2- Extensions and shifts

Al-Kindi and Ibn Rushd, centuries later, found agreeable the thought of the other (Greek) and derived the truth from it within the process of intellectual cross-fertilization and acculturation. Ibn Rushd criticized the intellectual narrow-mindedness that Al-Ghazali enshrined in several of his works, especially in *Tahafut al-Falasifah* [The Incoherence of the Philosophers]. The Renaissance thinkers did the same in their research path when they adopted the methodology of human sciences of the West, applying it to the study of philosophical issues,

following the approach of Muhammad Arkoun. At this juncture, Renaissance reason moved from question-oriented reason and problem-dealing reason to become **problematic-dealing reason**. Thus, philosophical issues turned into ambiguous problematics, with conflicting opinions, positions, and treatments, imprinting its methodologies with a rejectionist and dialectical nature. Hence, this reason shifted away from imitation and doctrinal subservience, offering criticism as a key to actual renewal. This is what Nassif Nassar calls the "Second Arab Renaissance," distinguishing it from the First, that consecrated the past of philosophy in its proposals and visions⁴, and which necessitated and continues to require re-reading the texts in their original sources, interpreting them as problematics in light of what was previously unthought of or unthinkable. In this context, there was a critique of the identification with the thought of the past, a commitment to truth based on scientific-objective and subjective criteria, and the establishment of epistemological principles enlightened by the emerging sciences. It is important to note here that Ibn Khaldun's unique attempt to study sciences within the framework of history and 'umran [civilization], according to both types, could be borrowed and applied in this context.⁵

Seeing the present in the past and the past in the present requires, then, a critical spirit that has been gaining roots for decades beyond the extensions of medieval philosophical thought. One of the most significant contributions of Ibn Rushd in this regard, according to Muhammad Al-Musbahi, was “establishing speculative reason at the heart of Sharia.”⁶ In turn, today we demand a transformation of philosophical research, with its distinctive methodology and logic, freeing it from any authority that dominates its proposition with a closed horizon and a closed mind. The philosophical spirit transcends the consecrated, opening the door to interpretation and explanation as it is a process of permanent reconsideration of the text, and the intrusion of the new and the recently produced. It is a **critical philosophy** that must address both reflection and action, transitioning from the text to reality, from scholarly philosophy to practical philosophy.⁷ The major problem facing critics and modernists lies in the dominance of the invisible transcendence over the philosophical backward-looking reason. The invisible transcendence, as is known, does not satisfy the scientific mind. Positivism, as placed by Auguste Comte through the stages of human thought, transformed the positivist philosophical question from the “why” to the “how.” The mind, thus, began to search scientifically for the immediate and direct causes, overlooking distant ones. Thus, this is how later on the philosophical reason dismantled the integrated philosophical school and transformed it into multifaceted questions, issues, and problematics. The

fossilized vision of tradition collapsed, making way for a humanistic and scientific perspective that transcends the obstacles that limited the extensions of backward-looking thought and its flow into the domains of the contemporary reason and its concerns.

The extensions of Arab philosophy remain active as intellectual models and methodologies suitable as research tools and intellectual stances, such as the differential method (prioritizing reason over tradition), the differentiative method (distinguishing knowledge from ignorance), also, the demonstrative method (using logical demonstration), and the positivist realism, as prefigured by Ibn Khaldun. As such, these extensions represent a phase that partly characterized the Renaissance within the problematic of tradition as a whole.



Ibn Rushd criticized the intellectual narrow-mindedness that Al-Ghazali enshrined in several of his works

Especially in *Tahafut al-Falasifah* [The Incoherence of the Philosophers]. The Renaissance thinkers did the same in their research path when they adopted the methodology of human sciences of the West, applying it to the study of philosophical issues, following the approach of Muhammad Arkoun.

Gerard Jihami

The Rationality of Ibn Rushd:

The Global Impact of the Arab Philosophical Discourse

Sleiman Daher

Abstract

Ibn Rushd is one of the most famous Arab thinkers; he is a philosopher, scientist, and jurist, as well as the holder of a prominent position in literature, medicine, Sharia, mathematics, philosophy, logic, and the judiciary. His ideas are those of rational enlightenment in their fundamentals and objectives, which have gained a permanent, immortal legacy that transcends nationalities, so he deserved to be described as international and as “the Arab philosopher with a Western spirit.”¹

Keywords: Judge of Cordoba, jurisprudence, philosophy and theology, philosophical reflection, religious law [Shar’], European enlightenment, Latin Averroism.

First: Ibn Rushd's life and writings

A- His life

He is Abu Al-Walid Muhammad bin Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Ahmed bin Rushd, known in European thought in the Middle Ages as "Averroes." He was born in the year 1126 AD to a family that held great prominence in jurisprudence, politics, and the judiciary, as his grandfather was the judge of Cordoba, and one of the senior Maliki jurists, and his father also served as the judge of Cordoba.

In Cordoba, Ibn Rushd studied jurisprudence, medicine, theology, natural science, mathematics, and philosophy, which he drew from Ibn Bajja (1138 AD) and Ibn Tufail (1185 AD). The latter introduced him in Marrakesh to the Almohad Caliph Al-Mansur Abu Ya'qub Yusuf bin Abd al-Mu'min, who was a lover of philosophy, and urged Ibn Rushd to work on the interpretation of Aristotle². He was favored by the Caliph who appointed him judge of Seville, then chief justice of Córdoba, and then became his private physician.

When Al-Mansur assumed the caliphate (1184 AD), he made Ibn Rushd closer to him. However, this proximity drew the ire of his adversaries, who inflamed the Caliph's feelings against him. They accused Ibn Rushd of unbelief due to his engagement in philosophy. After commanding the burning of his books and all philosophical texts, the Caliph ordered his exile to Al-Yusana (Alicante) and prohibited the pursuit of philosophy and the sciences in general.³

B- His writings

Ibn Rushd applied himself to summarizing and explaining Aristotle's writings. It was through these works that he gained the title "The great commentator" in Europe. Among his notable works are: *Long Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, *Summary/Middle Commentary of Aristotle's De Anima [On the Soul]*, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's De generatione et corruption [On Generation and Corruption]*, etc. As for his own books, they varied between logic, philosophical dialectics, jurisprudence, theology, and medicine. The most famous of these works include: *Tahafut al-Tahafut [The Incoherence of the Incoherence]*, *The Decisive Treatise, Determining the Nature of the Connection between Religion and Philosophy [Kita:b Fa' al-maqa:]*, *al-Kulliyāt [Medical Colleges]*⁴, etc.

Second: Ibn Rushd's philosophy

1- The relationship between religion And philosophy⁵

The issue of the relationship between philosophy and religion is one of the main disputable and controversial issues in medieval Arab thought, and preoccupied most Arab philosophers, of whom Ibn Rushd was the most prominent. He tried to reveal the real reason for believing in the opposition between reason and tradition, and the contradiction between the demonstrative discourse [*burhan*] adopted by philosophy and the dialectical discourse [*jadaliya*]



with which theologians [*mutakalimu:n*] opposed and denied philosophy.

Having said that, and in response to the denial and opposition to philosophy, Ibn Rushd states that “philosophical activity is nothing but speculation upon existing beings, and reflection upon how, through the consideration in terms of their connotations that they have been created, one manages to demonstrate the Creator.”⁶

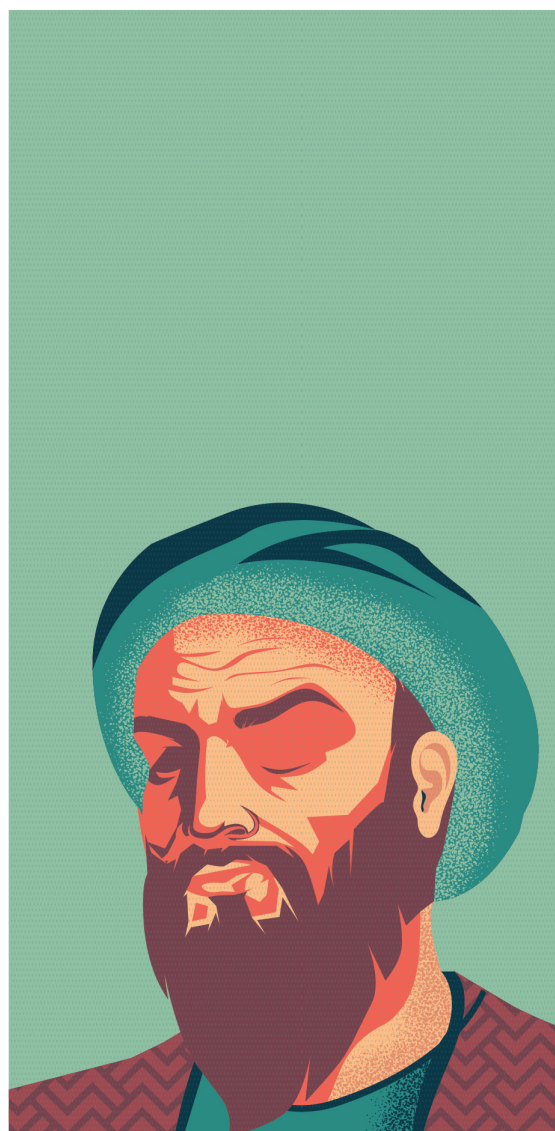
A-Religious law requires philosophical reflection

Ibn Rushd confirms that the call to deny philosophy and avoid looking at the books of the ancients is a fallacious call. Muslims argued that demonstrative reflection does not violate religious law since both aim at the true, and the true cannot contrast the true, rather it conforms to it and bears witness to it. Hence, there’s no contradiction between Sharia and philosophy because Sharia calls for and urges rational consideration, as mentioned in the Qur’an, Surah Al-Hashr, verse 2: { So consider, O you who have eyes to see.}

B- Interpretation is the subject of personal effort [ijtihad] and not the subject of consensus [ijma’]

Ibn Rushd asserted that there are both exoteric/apparent and esoteric/hidden meanings within religious law. If the apparent meaning aligns with what reason leads to, it

should be followed. However, if it contradicts reason, then it requires interpretation. According to Ibn Rushd, interpretation involves “to transport the argumentation from a real to a metaphorical plane”⁷ This approach is in line with the methodology of many jurists in various legal rulings.



Therefore, no scholar of demonstrative reasoning, who practices interpretation, should be reproached, as long as not all utterances of the religious law are subjected to interpretation. As a result, there is no requirement for consensus (*ijma'*) on this matter, as it is no more than a matter of personal effort (*ijtihad*) in the pursuit of the true. This implies that interpretation should not be allowed for the general public; rather, it should be reserved only to those who are well-versed in demonstrative reasoning or the philosophers "who are firmly grounded in knowledge." Accordingly, "philosophy is a friend to religion [and] its foster sister (...) [and] they accompany each other by nature, and by essence and inclination they mutually love each other." ⁸

2 - Natural philosophy

Ibn Rushd followed in the footsteps of Aristotle in his natural philosophy, and defined nature as the principle of change in the changing entities themselves, in the sense that the principle of change originates from an internal mover in them in particular and not from an accidental ⁹ one. He also argued that every natural body (which is susceptible to change) is composed of matter and form as two intrinsic principles of the body. Form is the meaning by which the existing entity came into existence. The form has two modes of existence: intelligible if stripped of matter, and sensory if it is in matter. ¹⁰

As for matter, it always exists in potentiality. The actual existence of a thing results from the union of matter and form. Matter exists in three levels: primary matter (hylè), the four elements, and sensory matter. A sensory body is composed of matter and form, and its oneness is in terms of form, while its multiplicity is in terms of matter. Consequently, form is the cause of a thing's intelligibility, and matter renders it sensory. Regarding non-being, it signifies the end of one form and the beginning of another, implying readiness to receive the form. This is why every matter contains an element of non-being as a principle for its being. For instance, a statue is a being in potentiality within copper.¹¹ Our philosopher, thus, concludes that "nature does not act in vain",¹² and that the universe is governed by teleological cause.

3- Divine philosophy (or metaphysics)

Ibn Rushd's divine philosophy falls within the framework of his fundamental theory of reconciling philosophy with Sharia. It primarily focuses on the existence of God, His attributes, and His relationship with the world.

A- Proof of the existence of God

Ibn Rushd demonstrated the existence of God with both legal and philosophical proofs. The fact of the matter is that he deduced two arguments of the existence of God, based on his interpretation of the Qur'anic verses.

The first argument is the argument **of providence**, that everything which exists in the world, with all that is in it of order and arrangement, has come to be for the well-being of mankind¹³. The second is the argument **of invention** based on the invention of the essences of things and entities, such as the invention of life in the inanimate and intellect in the living being. This evidence is based on two premises: first, that the entities of the world are invented, and, second, that every invented thing must have an inventor, and “therefore it is the duty of those who want to truly know God must know the essences of things in order to find out the true invention in all entities.”¹⁴ Ibn Rushd emphasized that these religious arguments, rooted in the spirit of the Qur’an, are the closest to the understanding of the majority of people.

As for the philosophical proof, it is the proof of motion, according to which motion is qadi:ma [eternal], that all types of motion rise to spatial movement, and that spatial movement rises to a mover caused by a prime mover, originally unmoved. Otherwise, there would exist an infinite number of movers, which is impossible, and, thus, there must be a prime mover [First Cause] that is eternally unmoved.¹⁵

B- Attributes of God

Ibn Rushd believes that God is one in His essence, and that unity is the most special of what is in Him. In addition, Ibn Rushd distinguishes the religious attributes of God

as mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, which are specific to the public and the commoners, such as science, life, ability, will, hearing, sight, and speech. As for the philosophical attributes relevant to those well-versed in demonstrative reasoning (burhan), they are namely: He is one absolute unit, simple in Himself, pure action, and the “meaning of the necessary existent is that God has no cause in the first place, neither within His own being, nor outside [Himself].”¹⁶

C- God’s knowledge

Ibn Rushd believes that what is meant by the knowledge of God is the Almighty’s saying: {Not absent from Him is an atom’s weight within the heavens or within the earth.}¹⁷ He believes that God’s knowledge encompasses all things in terms of their origination from Him, and not just in terms of His existence.

D- The soul

Ibn Rushd identified the nature and essence of the soul in the manner of Aristotle as the first completion of a mechanical natural body, and then studied its genera, arranged them into five according to temporal progress, namely: the vegetative or nutritive, the sensitive, the imaginative, the rational and the appetitive.

On the issue actuality of the soul and its unity, Ibn Rushd rejected the philosophers’ statement of the real actuality of the soul,

and stressed that it is eternal on the one hand in that it is one for all human beings, and that the multiplicity of human beings and their differences are nothing but an individuality arising from the body, that is, the soul of Zaid and Amr and others is one, on the one hand, and many on the other. It is as if you said: one regarding the form, and multiple in terms of its bearer, i.e., the body ¹⁸. As for the question of the soul's immortality, Ibn Rushd proved it based on his likening death to sleep. In clearer terms, if the state of the soul in death is the same as in sleep, it is immortal, eternal, and its annihilation cannot be imagined by the annihilation of the body, just as the corruption of a machine does not necessitate the corruption of its user.

Third: Ibn Rushd in the European Enlightenment

Ibn Rushd was an encyclopedic philosopher, which earned him a prominent position in the history of world philosophy. He represented a source of inspiration for many philosophers after him and had a significant impact on the philosophies of the European Enlightenment. He gained followers among Latin thinkers and philosophers from the 13th to the 16th centuries AD. His influence on the European Enlightenment can be traced through several factors, summarized as follows:

1- Translation

Translation is one of the most important factors that helped in the transmission of Ibn Rushd's thought to the West, especially what was translated by the Jews, who were a real support

for him when they received him in his ordeal, learned about his philosophy, kept some of his books in his original language, and translated others. Maimonides' translations are considered as a continuation of Ibn Rushd's philosophy.¹⁹ In addition, Michael Scot translated Aristotle's philosophy, citing Ibn Rushd's commentaries, and was the first to introduce Ibn Rushd's philosophy to Europe.²⁰

Spain then became the main center for translation from Arabic into Latin, with translations of Greek works and commentaries by Muslim philosophers, particularly those written by Ibn Rushd.²¹ The interest of Latin intellectuals in Ibn Rushd's thought is attributed to their feeling of the importance and need for his thoughts, and their desire to keep pace with Arab-Islamic growth and progress in rational knowledge.²²

2- Latin Rushdiya [Latin Averroism]

Upon its arrival in Christian Europe, Ibn Rushd's thought faced a number of obstacles, including the opposition of theologians to his philosophy, and the prohibition of reading and working on his books, because they contradict the official doctrine of Christianity.

But this did not prevent the spread of his ideas among a category of Christian philosophers who formed a philosophical current known in the history of Christian philosophy as Latin Rushdiya ²³ led by Siger de Brabant.

Averroism also appeared at the University of Paris among professors who considered Ibn Rushd's commentaries and interpretations of "the doctrine of Aristotle the truest form of it, and the fullest manifestation of reason."²⁴ The neo Averroists called for the necessity of using reason instead of the dialectic relied upon by theologians. Consequently, the works of Ibn Rushd and his commentaries became intellectual references adopted in European universities, especially in French and Italian universities. In fact, the University of Paris was the most influenced by his thought and philosophy²⁵, particularly during the period when Siger of Brabant taught Ibn Rushd's interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy at the University of Paris (1266 to 1277).

Averroism continued its intellectual activity at the University of Paris in the 14th and 15th centuries and moved later to the Italian University of Padua. The Averroists considered Ibn Rushd's thought as the primary source of philosophy. Among the prominent Averroists in the Italian University of Padua were Geatano da Thiene (1387-1465)²⁶, who dedicated much of his efforts to disseminating Averroism across Europe, and Cesare Cremonini, who is considered the last representative of the Averroism in Italy .²⁷



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Catastrophe and the Conditions of the Possibilities of Philosophizing

Bassel F. Saleh

Abstract

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The philosophical question about catastrophe is linked to the search for the survival of those who pose the philosophical question, namely, the survival of those who engage with philosophical possibility. This is because catastrophe overthrows the questioner, the question, and the subject matter of questioning. However, it should be noted that philosophy, in the occurrence of catastrophe, crystallizes as an endeavor outside the conventional structures of questioning and answering; that is, it goes beyond the possibilities of the positivism and scientism aspects.

Keywords: Possibility, catastrophe, All-is-wellness theory, positivism, scientism, ethics, values.

The question of philosophy's ability to address the problem of catastrophe falls outside the realm of philosophy itself because catastrophe overthrows philosophy and its questioning, especially after science has confiscated its imaginative tasks in the past two centuries. In other words, the question of the possibility of philosophy in the face of catastrophe lies within one of the domains of "philosophy by potency." If we wish to expand and delve deeper, the question of philosophy's possibilities in the face of catastrophe can surpass all the investigations of "cosmology," "axiology," and "ethics," thus, philosophy will rush back to its indeterminable position, that position which is incomprehensible to science and other investigations. I mean the position that repositions existence, science in the world and human perception, and the event itself, apart from its catastrophic nature. This is especially the case since the act of philosophizing, at that moment, can only approach science by reducing it to ruins, that is, turning it into an "easily digestible corpse" and a raw malleable material capable of redefinition and reshaping.

On that fateful night, the night of the earthquake that struck Turkey and northern Syria (6th of February 2023) and claimed the lives of over fifty thousand people, humanity witnessed, albeit unannounced, not only the toppling of humans and structures, but also a rethinking of new definitions for overthrowing, catastrophe, and disaster. Furthermore, it led

to a redefinition of the boundaries of concept-group such as good and evil, with all their gradations, across various fields and levels. This is because the earthquake was, unlike the COVID-19 pandemic, the largest natural event recorded in modern human history, surpassing the intensity of the earthquake that struck the Portuguese capital, Lisbon, about three centuries ago.

The matter is slightly more complex than that because the realm of philosophizing does not fit within the context of comparing one catastrophe to another or even evaluating the disastrousness of the catastrophe as an event. Rather, its impact lies in the realm of destabilizing the mechanisms of thought and its foundations and blasting the imagination. At that moment, the earthquake strikes, followed by the act of philosophizing, which strikes deeply in an attempt to transform the new event into a qualitative difference, surpassing being merely a slight modification of the old event, as well as transcending what imposes itself at the level of thought mechanisms and its rules. For when the catastrophe intensifies, its impact is not limited to the dissemination of space, time, and existent beings alone, but it also extends deeply to strike the realm of perceptions. The fact is that the catastrophe not only shatters our view of the world but also the world itself.

The truth is that the approach to the earthquake that struck Lisbon in 1755 was not confined to the catastrophic nature of the event or its devastating effects, such as enumerating and counting the number of casualties, and the roads that were cut off and cities and villages isolated from each other only. It also went beyond that to question the axioms that were prevalent at that time, including belief, nature, good and evil, and values. The fact is that a catastrophe has a unique impact on philosophy; an impact that goes beyond the investigation of God's role as an all-powerful, omnipotent, and the ultimate good in preserving the universe. It goes beyond that and reaches the examination of humans' behavior, their understanding of the universe, and the principle on which life itself is based. This is especially the case when considering the debates that took place during that period among three of the most prominent philosophers of modernity: the French philosopher Voltaire, the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, and the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These debates were initiated by Voltaire who, shocked by the earthquake, questioned the optimism put forward in the theory of the German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz, summarized in the equation "we live in the best of all possible worlds." The debates continued through a reconsideration of the foundations upon which theories of good and evil are built. It's as if these debates openly declare that we will witness, at every catastrophic turning point, a tremor

in those axioms and metaphysical postulates that legitimized theories of humanity based on kindness and the "all is well" in this universe. Truly, these debates present new hypotheses that may succeed where the old ones failed.

The reality is that Voltaire's deep-seated pessimism of his text, particularly when questioning the purpose of punishing children, women, and the pious, was heavily influenced by the earthquake, especially since it struck Lisbon on All Saints' Day. This pessimism paved the way for the arrows of doubt in Voltaire, who brought us back to question the affirmation of life's alignment with the "all is well" theory as a subject of inquiry which the catastrophe eliminates swiftly, unexpectedly, decisively, and without any significant effort. This is because reality is more dangerous, diverse, and harsher than the assumptions that attempt to portray it as peaceful, harmonious, and neutral. When a catastrophe occurs, all optimism that attempts to depict our lives in this world as a journey shatters, and any optimism that tries to present us as if we are in a garden filled with butterflies and flowers from every corner is crushed.

In contradistinction with this inquiry, the approaches of Kant and Rousseau come to achieve a kind of balance, sweeping through new fields of interpretation or at least reviving and intensifying them. Kant's approach emphasizes the necessity of seeking the natural causes of a catastrophe, far from the influence of celestial bodies and any spiritual or ethical explanations.



Rousseau's approach, on the other hand, focuses on human responsibility itself. To put it more clearly, Rousseau refutes any doubt about the natural causes of earthquakes and confirms that the destructive causes of the catastrophic blast are attributable to the intensification of human-inhabited structures in the area, meaning that they are due to both engineering and natural causes. This implies that humans are responsible for realizing the essence of the catastrophe by causing these catastrophic effects as incidental consequences of the natural destructive earthquake.

In the latter two approaches, we can observe a neutrality towards catastrophes and evil,

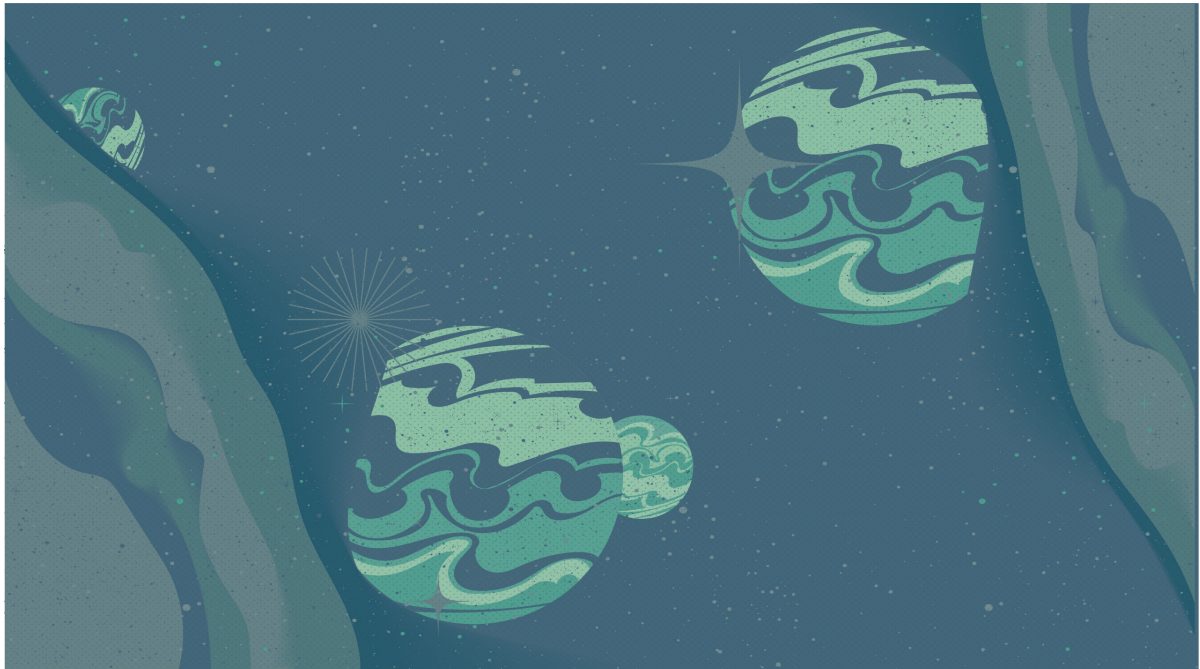
which opens up space for a new approach to catastrophe that does not consider questions of good and evil. It focuses on nature, or what cannot be approached as it should be, but as it actually is, and seeks a scientific interpretation that goes beyond science itself. It involves an attempt at thinking along the lines of Karl Popper, who represented the endeavor to avoid the catastrophe of the event, emphasizing that science does not work to avoid earthquakes but can bring exceptional results in terms of reinforcing structures that are more resistant to collapse and destruction.

The fact is that the aforementioned interpretations are not merely a theoretical possibility but methodological inquiries and foundational approaches in various forms which redefine responsibilities and reassign them. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that responsibilities establish a transition similar to the transition of ethical and theological explanations for everything in the Middle Ages to explanations outside ethics and theology, namely, to neutral and realistic scientific theories. Regarding natural catastrophes, we must provide earthbound explanations for earthbound events. These events cannot be burdened with the full judgments of the moral, ethical, and religious mind, as they exist in their own mere eventuality.

It remains that catastrophe can be seen as a reference to void, the establishing of zero, erasing space, time, memory: the geological activity that can strike philosophy itself following the pattern of if "catastrophe is being," then "philosophy is not being," and neither does "the world" exist, or "memory," "ideas," or "abstractions." Perhaps catastrophe is merely the occurrence of void and total and complete darkness, meaning a void and darkness that impose themselves on the universe and everything connected to humanity in an exceptional moment. Is catastrophe a reference to the void of philosophy? Or is it a reference to its impossibility? Or is it merely a zeroing that opens space for refilling the zeroeness with possibilities; an activity that can only be carried

out by philosophy itself, because philosophy is not just an activity, but it is, above all, a primary condition for all activity?

Attempts to answer this type of questions not only fall within the realm of philosophy but also depend on who poses it: Will the person witness the catastrophe, or will the catastrophe be the event in which they participate, and none survives them to try to answer?



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Bassel F. Saleh

Neoplatonism: Its Conceptions and Most Prominent Philosophers

Carole Khoury

Abstract

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Since the beginnings of Greek philosophy in the 7th century BCE, reaching its peak in the 4th century BCE, thanks to the works of Plato and Aristotle, this philosophy had to be crowned with a distinctive philosophical school, albeit it carried in many of its stages clear influences and reflections from all previous Greek philosophical history. It is Neoplatonism: Is it the end of ancient Greek history? Certainly not, rather it is the beginning of disseminating new intellectual seeds, marked by the past and open to the influences of later philosophical schools. Since the 3rd century, it has established a station where several philosophers have excelled, some of whom we will choose in our article, seeking to understand the thought of each one after defining Neoplatonism.

Keywords: The One, Reason (Intellect), soul, emanation, emancipation, conversion, union.

1- Definition of Neoplatonism

We use the term “Neo” to denote some philosophical schools and identify their connection to a previous school, which complements some of its paths¹. Hence the name “Neoplatonism,” which can be defined as a philosophical system that emerged in Alexandria in the third century and continued to be taught until the sixth century. Some attribute the expression to the English translator Thomas Taylor (1758-1835) in his translation of *The Enneads* of Plotinus in 1787. In this school, influences of Greek rational philosophers, especially Pythagoras (580- c. 495 BCE) and Plato (428-348 BCE), intersected with influences from Indian and Jewish roots of Sufism. This convergence resulted in a diligent attempt to construct a comprehensive interpretation of the universe and define the individual’s place in it, an effort that went beyond the ordinary in both method and thought wherein it reached a stage of integration between pure philosophical thought and literary path aiming at emancipation, in one way or another, from the rigidity of previous philosophical doctrines.

2- Key figures of Neoplatonism

Ammonius Saccas (175-242): He is a Platonist philosopher born and died in Alexandria. He was a prominent figure of Neoplatonism for two main reasons: first, he explained his philosophy without writing a single word, much like Socrates, and was known for his wisdom; second, in the school he founded in Alexandria, he taught Plotinus for nearly ten years, and thus

he launched for us a thinker who continues to inspire many to this day.

Saccas’s parents were Christians, and although some sources, like Porphyry of Tyre, mentioned that he renounced Christianity, other references deny this apostasy. We can consider his doctrine as a form of “eclecticism” which takes a philosophical stance that selectively chooses the most important elements from various philosophical currents to build a special integrated system reconciling different intellectual currents. Ammonius did this critically regarding the philosophies of both Plato and Aristotle, which was one of the most difficult tasks as it involved, for what is clear, dealing with two philosophical currents different in many origins and branches.

Ammonius had his unique perspective on the unitary relationship between the soul and the body. For him, the union between them does not imply the “contamination” of the soul because the soul is life itself. However, if any change affects the soul due to its union with the body, then it undoubtedly becomes something else, and it cannot be called life anymore. Ammonius founded his school and did not teach in the streets like Socrates, but there is a resemblance between them in their direct influence on their disciples, whether they adhered to their ideas or opposed them and became dissenters!

Plotinus (205-270):

He was the true founder of Neoplatonism. He was born in Lycopolis (present-day Asyut) in Egypt and passed away in Campania, Italy.



In the history of thought, he appears as a philosopher fully loyal to Plato's ideas while diligently striving to imprint his distinctive and unique philosophical thought; especially notable was the school he established in Rome around the year 244. In this city, enthusiastic disciples gathered around him, impassioned by his philosophy and his unfulfilled dream of building the "City of Philosophers," which he envisioned as a reflection of the ideal city which Plato sought for in his dialogues, especially in *The Republic*. One of the most important sources from which we can glean information about Plotinus

is the book *The Life of Plotinus* written by Porphyry of Tyre in the year 301. This book provides us with details about the method that Plotinus adopted in teaching philosophy to his students, as well as with records of the ideas of his teacher in what is known as *The Enneads*.

Plotinus' thought was characterized by three main theories that left a solid foundation which cannot be deviated from by those seeking to be acquainted with this philosopher who excelled in his uniqueness in the practical way of life and in philosophically thinking about it.

The first of these theories was his introduction of the concept of the three hypostases: the One, the Reason (Intellect), and the Soul. The ultimate goal was to achieve emancipation from matter and reach unity with the One, the supreme source of everything in the universe and the representative of its ultimate unity. In this context, the French philosopher Émile Bréhier (1876-1952) described the One as “the First, prior to any other reality, the One as the unifying principle, and the One as the fundamental and final good”,² all through a process of emanation or procession through which the intellect emanates from the One, and the soul from the intellect. This emanation is closely associated with the concept of “convergence” towards the One, meaning the conversion that leads to receiving illumination from the fundamental source of existence.

The second theory embodied in Plotinus’ philosophy is the distinction between three principles (or three capacities) of the Soul: the irrational soul with its “animal” nature, which is the first to develop in humans on the sensory level of their relationship with things; the rational soul characterized by intellectual capabilities in humans; and the intellect, based on the contemplative state in major truths through intuitive thought associated with knowledge and wisdom. The third theory, in our view, represents the true culmination of Plotinian thought. In this theory, Plotinus examines the relationship between the soul and the body, distinguishing between the rational soul, which is the part that is separate from the body that it considers as merely a tool, and the irrational soul, which is the part that is

attached to the body and descends to the level of a tool. Based on this, Plotinus confirms the necessity of separating the soul from the body because its descent into the body-matter is the main source of the proliferation of moral evil. Therefore, humans must emancipate themselves from this evil through several stages that ultimately lead them, though with difficulty along the path, to a voluntary return to the One. This process involves experiencing emancipation from material impurity and engaging in contemplative immersion in the source of existence, achieved through following virtue and practicing asceticism in life before reaching the stage of emancipation.

It is worth noting that this entire human emancipatory path and the achievement of completeness can only be realized through the philosophy which teaches us how to sculpt ourselves to get rid of everything that distances us from divine luminescence and renders us in a state of complete awakening after a long slumber within the confines of the body.

Porphyry of Tyre (234-305):

As in the history of philosophy in general and Greek philosophy in particular, there appears, once again, an essential factor that imprints the thoughts of philosophers with a distinctive character, influencing their lives and their reflections: it is the close intellectual relationship between the teacher and the student. This was the case for Porphyry, who was born in Tyre and studied in Athens until he gained profound intellectual richness when he became a student of Plotinus in Rome from 263 to 268.

Philosophy, with its infinite horizons, drove him to write in various fields of knowledge and wrote seventy-seven books on philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, mathematics, geometry, as well as psychology, botany, and music.

Thanks to Porphyry, we have become acquainted with The Enneads of Plotinus, which originally consisted of fifty-four treatises that Porphyry compiled after the death of his teacher. Thanks to him, also, we learnt about the lives of Plotinus and Pythagoras, as well as about the *Isagoge*, or the introduction to Aristotle's categories, among other writings.



Porphyry saw that Christianity involves concepts of divinity far removed from rationality, hence, his attack on Christianity in his book *Against the Christians*. On the other hand, he supported the principle of “vegetarianism” and wrote a book on austerity, directed to a friend who abandoned his vegetarian lifestyle, and resolutely advocated for the rights of animals, opposing their mistreatment.

In this context, it is worth pausing to consider Porphyry's psychological problem. Several sources mentioned that he suffered from depression during a period of his life, leading Plotinus to urge him to travel, which he did when he went to Sicily. When we briefly analyze this depressive state, it is essential to note a duality that distinguishes between a depressive disposition, which we can understand in a human – how much more so in the case of a philosopher seeking truth- and a free-thinking mind exploring various knowledge based on philosophical thought. Is there a contradiction between a depressive temperament and an emancipated mind?! In the field of psychology, depression is a mood disorder accompanied with feelings of sadness and lack of self-esteem. Thus, the contradiction indeed exists, as the richness of Porphyry's intellectual pursuits contradicts with the characteristics of this definition, suggesting that depression can, in some cases, particularly among great philosophers like Porphyry, serve as a driving force towards giving and as an attempt to overcome negative introversion, embracing positive openness to freedom of thought and criticism.

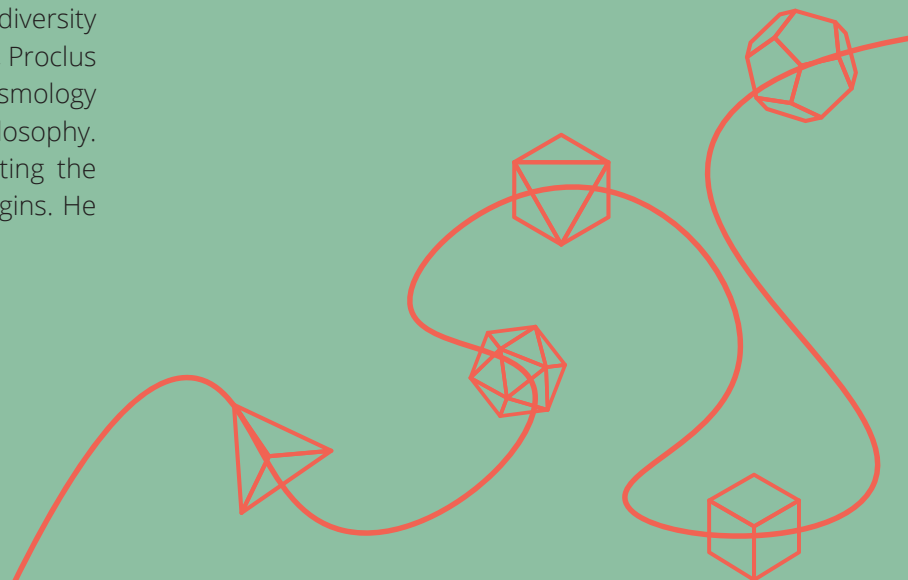
Proclus (412-485): He was a Greek philosopher and mathematician, born in Constantinople and passed away in Athens. He was a prominent consensual thinker in Neoplatonism and his social, political, and professional life was characterized by continuous giving. His philosophy consisted of elevated commentaries on various works of Plato, most prominent of which are his explanations of Timaeus and Parmenides. Proclus believed that the One [the ultimate source of all existence] is indescribable, as any attribute falls short of its essence.

Proclus constructed a special method in metaphysics, considering the One as the cause of all things which we perceive as one: At the highest level, there is the One, and on a lower level, there is a chain of units followed, in a descending order, by the chains of the intellect, of life, and of the soul. In his view, each chain in itself constitutes a world where all that exists in it includes, in its own way, all possible truths. He used the term "henads," derived from Plato's Philebus, to describe these unitary entities which formed in his philosophy a solution to issues that had long worried philosophical thought: how are the beginnings? How does multiplicity arise from the One? How do we consider the absolute One as a pure unit? These unitary entities point towards the divine One, embodying its essence through diverse forms or modalities. Each entity is a facet of the One. Hence, we can say that this theory of "henads" aims to preserve the original diversity within the context of divine unity. Thus, Proclus attempted to organize the science of cosmology within the framework of Plotinus's philosophy. His focus was concentrated on elevating the human soul to unite with its divine origins. He

also advocated the principle of theurgy, or the divine act, which aimed to awaken the divine aspect within the soul.

Conclusion

Between the myths and fantasies woven into Plato's works, which transported us to worlds where imagination and logic intertwines with the Eastern spirit rooted in revelation and inspiration, Neoplatonism emerged as a distinct philosophical school. It drew inspiration from Plato's vision of the universe and life while modifying some of its perceptions to suit the new method and content. From Plato's Academy in Athens to the school of Proclus in Rome, numerous are the intellectual currents that sculpted Greek philosophy in an enriching manner. However, Neoplatonism, especially with Plotinus, was and remains centered around the idea of human conversion towards "the One," reaching ultimate emancipation from matter and flowing into a contemplative state. Undoubtedly, Neoplatonism had a profound impact on the development of medieval Arab philosophy, a prominent field of philosophy that deserves to have another investigation dedicated to it.



The Transcultural Logic of Truth

Jacques Poulain

Abstract

◆◆

This article aims to highlight the importance of using language in a new and authentic way simultaneously to overcome all disconnection from the world, transcend any lack of harmony with it, with others, and with ourselves. To this end, it was necessary for us to also clarify the dialogical nature of truth, since every act of our speech depends on the response of our interlocutors and does not give us any authority to impose any consensus on them in any form.

Keywords: Logic of truth, transcultural logic, biological anthropology, audio-phonetic harmony, subject and predicate, dialogical logic of truth.

1- The transcultural logic of perception

By retracing the dynamics of communication as the base of all experiences, the contemporary anthropology of language has shown that the chronic abortive being, that is the human being, must make the world speak in order to be able to live. Because it is not a biologically well-formed being and is born a year too early – compared to mammals of similar complexity – it is only endowed with intraspecific instincts (nutritional, sexual, and defensive). He therefore needs to invent his visual perceptions, his physical actions and his consummatory actions by projecting the harmony between the sounds he emits and receives in his relationships with the world, with his fellow human beings, and with himself. This use of language was called “prosopopoeia” [personification/impersonation] by William



von Humboldt¹ to make it clear that the way in which poets make the world, stones, springs, animals speak in their poems did not constitute only an artistic process, but that it presented itself as the original use of language, as the source of dialogue.

The child experiences this harmony in an animistic way in his use of sounds because of its inability to perceive a difference between the sounds it emits and those it then hears, and it also lends its heard sounds to the world with which it identifies itself for the same reason. Arnold Gehlen's anthropobiology confirmed this linguistic hypothesis.² This audio-phonetic harmony lends its own law to the dynamics of our imagination, of our thought and of our desires in the following way: every hiatus and every disharmony with the world, with others, and with ourselves must be overcome by projecting a new form of pre-harmony with the world, with others, and with ourselves. As we spontaneously pre-harmonize by ear the sounds that we emit with the same sounds we try to hear, we pre-harmonize our perceptions, actions, and desires with the most favourable responses we can expect from the world, from others, and from ourselves.

This use of language makes all perceptions possible because the structure of agreement between the propositional subject and its predicate is projected into them to make it recognize that to exist for the named reality is effectively to be what we consume of it by using the propositional predicate, i.e., by identifying this object with its property denoted by this predicate.

. In the example most used by logicians “the snow is white”, the thought of this proposition or its expressive use transforms the private sensation into an objective perception because the identification of the thing called “snow” is produced in it with what we perceive of it, that is to say, with its property, by the use of the predicate “white.”

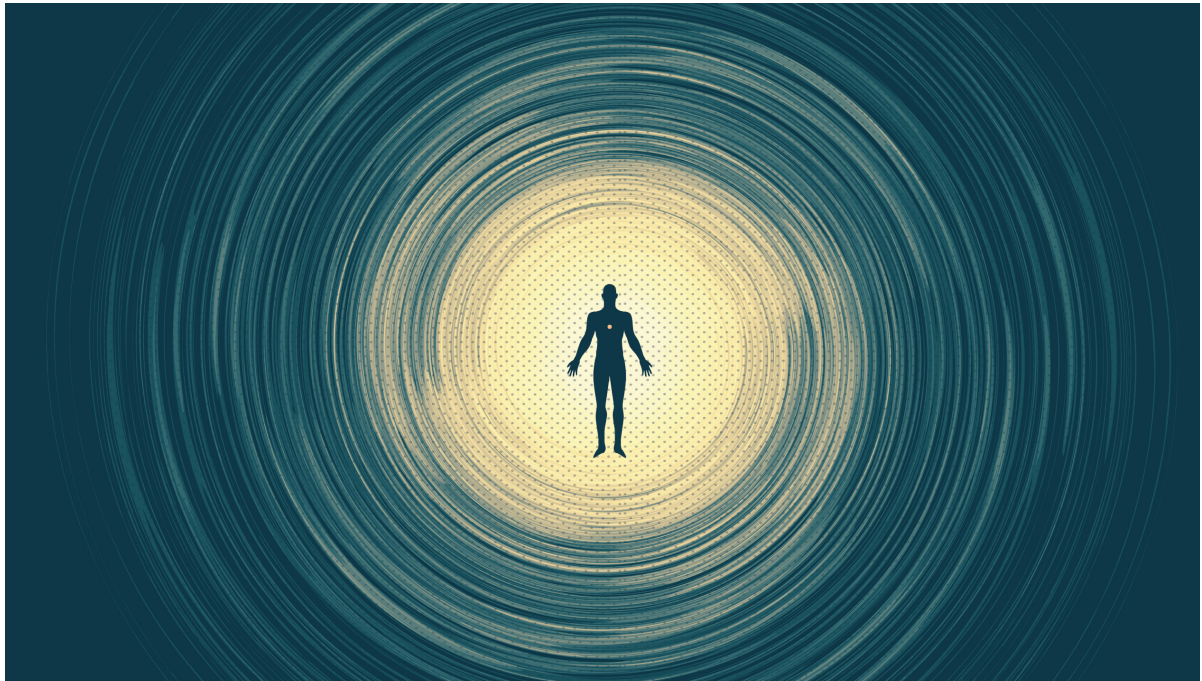
The cognitive and logical pre-harmonization which carries the propositions by which we objectify perceptions, actions, thoughts, feelings, and desires is always the same: we are incapable of thinking of a proposition without thinking that this proposition is true. Expressed in the words of Charles Sanders Peirce, “every proposition asserts its own truth.”³ It should be noted that in a proposition which makes possible the presentation of the perception described therein, listening to the sounds which are used constrains therefore to judge whether this “transcendental truth”³ (Kant) expressed in our words or in our thought is confirmed or not by the connection of sounds to reality which is projected by the phonic emission of sounds or in the proposition that we think of.

2- The dialogical logic of truth

Knowing the cognitive dynamics of our dialogical creativity, it is easy to understand that we can only speak to our listeners by projecting the dynamics of prosopopoeia into the use of speech acts. We can't talk to our addressee without taking his (or her)

point of view. We only follow thus a law that is already constitutive of our use of language and of our dialogical imagination. It is followed constitutionally by the interlocutors: they cannot do otherwise. Because dialogue gives us as interlocutors the ability to objectively judge the objectivity of the harmony that we create there as an agreement with others and ourselves, each speech act makes us dependent on the response of our addressees, but it does not give us any power whatsoever to impose any consensus whatsoever on them. We can apply to our consensual agreement of truth what we have learnt by applying it to the speech acts themselves. Contrary to their conventionalist and pragmatic description given by John L. Austin⁴ and contrary to John Searle's reduction of them to contractual promises⁵, it is necessary to take the dynamics of truth of the dialogue much more seriously than they do. They define indeed these speech acts as the unique acts that it is enough to designate them to perform them, i.e., they give them a sort of magical and reflexive characteristics that they derive from their self-referential meaning.

But the dynamics of our prosopopoeia obliges us to recognize on the contrary that these speech acts must and can be redescribed as affirmations. When we say: “I affirm that p is true”, this statement can be reconstructed as: “p is as true as I say that it is true, and that the fact described in p exists.”



He therefore needs to invent his visual perceptions

his physical actions and his consummatory actions by projecting the harmony between the sounds he emits and receives in his relationships with the world, with his fellow human beings, and with himself.

Jacques Poulain

The self-referential character of this description only registers our cognitive judgment on its truth, in short, on its objectivity.

The self-referential character of our speech acts follows the same logic of recognition. We can and must redescribe, for example, our promises in the same way if we wish to make explicit the dynamics of truth and objectivity which is inherent in them. "I promise to come tomorrow" means in effect: "it is as true that I will come tomorrow as I say so and that, by saying it, I judge that I have to come tomorrow." My utterance registers my recognition of the objective necessity of doing such and such an action as well as the fact that I recognize having to do this action by means of my assertion of the true judgment that I operate here and now. My reflexive judgment and the agreement that I expect from my addressee express both the common desire to see me come tomorrow and the determining judgment of the affirmation that I express to confirm my coming tomorrow as a mutual and common event that will exist as an objective action based on this statement.

This statement of truth expresses a common desire for truth about the action I designate by my words, and it simultaneously fulfills this desire for truth as a factual experience that I produce and that only my addressee can complete and fulfill by his (or her) agreement. The anticipation of this agreement expressed by the utterance in its use of the indicative

mood: "I promise to come tomorrow" makes an objective judgment that gives the addressee the opportunity to accept this fact as well as the objective relationship that I anticipate between us as our mutual reality in this dialogical relationship.

In this act of speech, the fact that I will come tomorrow is affirmed and recognized philosophically as a commonly assumed action by the sole fact that this affirmation operates in a self-referential way and let consume today my coming tomorrow as a commonly assumed event. This recognition, internal to each speech-act, denotes self-referentially its own philosophical dimension by means of this double affirmation that we have made explicit and explained as such. Statements, commands, expressions of feelings and beliefs must be redescribed in similar ways because they are all created by the speech acts that we have to articulate dialogically by identifying the objective elements of the mental world and of the social world, as well as they are claimed to be as necessary for our lives as they are actually recognized as such. These objective laws of our dialogical logic also govern each use of language and its articulation with the five senses. They are embedded in the articulation of all the natural languages, i.e., they are transcultural, although the dialogical agreements of truth must be expressed in different natural languages that seem to have nothing in common.

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