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# PHILOSOPHY HOUSE

Readings in Middle Arab Philosophy

The Way the Arabs  
Acquainted Themselves  
with Greek Philosophy

Contemporary Thought  
Returning to Islamic  
Philosophical Heritage

The Ideological Reading  
of Islamic Philosophy

Lucian of Samosata's  
Philosophical Intuitions





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## Editorial

Here we are, introducing the tenth issue of the House of Philosophy Magazine, pursuing, painstakingly and in earnest, the path towards foregrounding philosophy in our Arab world. This process is nothing but featuring philosophy in a discourse that addresses the problems in the realms of our life, conceptually and practically, taking into account the fact that Arab philosophical awareness is still making our ancestors' philosophical heritage a subject of consideration, narration, and even questioning.

This is not surprising, simply because there is no nation that does not make its cultural heritage a subject for consideration and reconsideration. However, the current philosophical examination of our philosophical legacy is not an act of repetition, glorification, or pride. Rather, it is a dialogue with the ancestors, which is not selective, fabricated, or slavish. That is why the focus of the tenth issue bears the title, 'Readings in Middle Arab Philosophy'. In this context, we do not need to explicate the concept of reading, as it has become uncontroversial that reading is a type of re-writing.

It would be philosophically prudent to pose the most important question: What has made contemporary Arab philosophical thought recall the Arab philosophical heritage? What is the perspective in which it has returned to this heritage? Is there an evocation worthy of philosophizing? Does the matter, otherwise, relate to an ideological endeavor that seeks to subjugate the philosophical heritage, arbitrarily, to what is ideological, and even to what is considered an enrichment of the prevailing philosophical awareness?

To my mind, criticizing the 'discourse of heritage' that prevailed in the seventies and eighties of the last century is a necessary threshold for embarking on new readings of heritage, readings that remain in the field of philosophy. Only then, new questions, and even new answers to old questions, are devisable. The original philosopher in history remains a rich source of interpretation and a reminder of what is worth examining. In this issue, the reader will learn about multiple perspectives of a number of Arab philosophers that are closely related to the above-mentioned concerns.

- Editor in Chief

# Contemporary Thought Returning to Islamic Philosophical Heritage

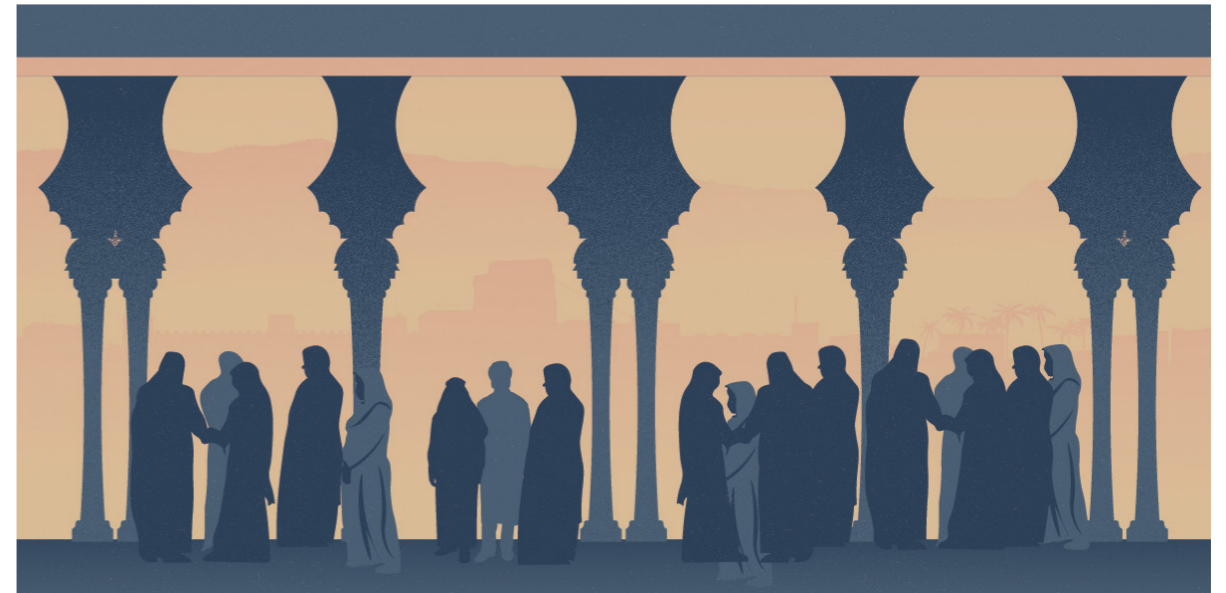
Ahmed Barqawi

As a matter of course, reinstating philosophy into contemporary Arab academic institutions had to be associated with a return to their Islamic philosophical heritage. This is obvious in the fact that the Islamic philosophical legacy has managed to provide Arab contemporary philosophers with a sense of continuity, a feeling of pride, and a kinship between them and the Islamic philosophers.

If we set aside the return of Farah Antoun to Ibn Rushd via Joseph Ernest Renan and turn to academic studies on Islamic philosophy, we will find that the Egyptian University has been offering philosophy as a specialized course in its study program. Similarly, there has been an ongoing tradition at all philosophy departments in the Arab world of teaching the three branches of Islamic philosophy, i.e., theology, philosophy, and Sufism. In addition to the scholastic objective of learning Islamic philosophy, studies in Islamic philosophy have been dealing with two primary issues: defending the distinctiveness of Islamic philosophy against some Orientalists who claimed it was nothing more than Greek philosophy [written] in Arabic, and presenting the basic features of this philosophy, each according to their philosophical perspective.

We, therefore, find that most of the famous books that chronicled Islamic philosophy began

by refuting the opinion of some orientalists who consider Arab-Islamic philosophy to be nothing more than Greek philosophy. This claim does not stop at stripping originality off the Arab-Islamic philosophy, but it also denies the Arabs the ability to philosophize, and accuses Islam of curbing philosophy. Among those orientalists, Renan's name became famous for these hostile stands. In his book, *The General History and Comparative System of the Semitic Languages*, the French writer claims that the Semites only recognized themselves 'in negative terms', given that they had no mythology, science, philosophy, curiosity, objectivity, sense of nuance, visual arts, epic, or pictorial myths. Their poetry is monotonous and subjective, their thought lacks aspiration, and contradictions do not work in it. In front of the wondrous novels and amazing scenes, you see the Arab devoid of all [intellectual] thinking, satisfied by telling you: "God has power over all things." Likewise, in cases of doubt between contradictory sects, he escapes his confusion by saying, "and God knows best." It is out of the question that you can argue for their philosophy, which is merely fabrications derived from the Greeks and written in Arabic, and it has no origin in the Arabian Peninsula, because the Arabs are incapable of any complexity and formation.



Thus, contemporary Arab philosophers' defense of Arab-Islamic philosophy and its originality became a defense of the Arabs themselves and a refutation of the distinction between races. In this context, Ibrahim Madkour, in his famous book, *In Islamic Philosophy, A Method and Its Application*, set out to demonstrate the invalidity of this racist call that extracts the characteristics of any people and its intellectual characteristics from its geographical environment, or from the race to which it belongs. He also argued that Islamic philosophy was not the product of Arab thought alone, as various peoples had contributed to its formation, including Persians, Indians, Turks, Syrians, Egyptians, Berbers, and Andalusians. In this way, he denied that this is an Arab philosophy in a racist sense, because Islam included under its flag various peoples and multiple races, all of whom contributed to its intellectual movement, in addition to the fact that its Islamism does not mean that it is the fruit of the ideas of Muslims alone. "This is what also contradicts history, because Muslims were taught – first of all – by the Nestorians,

Jacobites, Jews, and Sabians, and continued their scientific and philosophical activity, fraternizing and cooperating with their Jewish and Christian friends and contemporaries." Based on this, Madkour believes that it is an Islamic philosophy, distinguished by its topics and research, its issues and dilemmas, and the solutions it has provided for these and those.

In the first part of his book, Madkour enumerates the characteristics of Arab philosophy that dealt with the problem of God, the world, and man as follows: First: It is a spiritual philosophy based on religion, relies heavily on the spirit, and is religious in its themes. Secondly, it is a rational philosophy that attaches great importance to reason, and relies entirely on it to explain the problem of divinity, the universe, and man. Thirdly, it is a reconciliatory philosophy that brings philosophers together, especially Plato and Aristotle, in addition to accommodating revelation and reason. Fourthly, it is a philosophy closely related to science.



Undoubtedly, we do not need to review all the opinions that defended the originality of Arab-Islamic philosophy, as they, all, are almost similar. However, none has denied the influence of Greek philosophy on Arab-Islamic philosophy, but none has accepted the idea that the latter was an exact copy of the former. Here, one may want to stress that the books on the history of Islamic philosophy were presented according to their historical succession: with regards to theology, the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'aris, and with regards to philosophers, Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Bajja, Ibn Tufayl, and Ibn Rushd. If a book discusses Islamic philosophy, it begins by presenting the problems while maintaining this succession. However, the writer's philosophical inclination must appear in this or that form, as

he chronicles Islamic philosophy. In this way, it is not difficult to reveal Ahmed Amin's mental tendency when he stands for theology, without declaring it directly. Mahmoud Qasim, who praised the Mu'tazila and Ibn Rushd, made a case for this.

Ali Sami Al-Nashar, for his part, made it clear that

As an Ash'arite thinker who believes that his primary work in life is to preserve the entity of the Ash'arite doctrine, the doctrine of the great majority of Muslims, and the basis of their lives, I strongly gainsay Mahmoud Qasim's main idea, which suggests that the Mu'tazila doctrine, on the one hand, and the Averroist doctrine, on the other, are closer to the spirit of Islam than the Ash'ari school of thought.

I see that Ash'arism is the last thing that the Islamic mind has reached and that it speaks on behalf of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and which is expressed in authenticity and strength... We are completely in no need of the mental fossilization of the Mu'tazilites, just as we are far away from Ibn Rushd's interpretation of Islam in light of Aristotle's philosophy.

In addition, Al-Jabri's critical mental tendency and his clear inclination towards Andalusian philosophy, especially the philosophy of Ibn Rushd, the pinnacle of demonstrative philosophy, became famous.

If we were, in the stage of the return of first philosophy, tasked with a process that aimed to historicize this philosophy, regardless of the position of the historians of Islamic philosophy, such as Mustafa Abd al-Razzaq, al-Nashar, al-Tawil, Abu Raida, etc., then we can see that, in the stage of the sixties and seventies, the return to Islamic philosophy took a different turn. The trend of employing the Islamic philosophical heritage directly to defend contemporary opinions, and through it to renew Arab thought, or to change reality itself, or to bring about a revolution in thought and reality.

It will be sufficient that we listen to the claims made by those returning to the Arab philosophical "heritage" in order to know the task that this heritage was assigned to accomplish. Here is Muhammad Amara – when he was a rationalist – publishing his book, *Heritage in the Light of Reason*, in which he stresses that Being mindful of [our] heritage and reviving it does not mean imitating it or molding our present and future into the molds of yesterday. Rather, it means beholding the roots of our tomorrow, which we want to make glow on the bright pages of heritage, and to make the

social justice, which we struggle to realize, the advanced extension of our ancestors' dream of the rule of justice in human life. We aim at making the features of rationalism and nationalism in our heritage a good supply and a revolutionary spirit that actively act in our day and tomorrow. By so doing, our heritage becomes a spirit that prevails in the conscience and mind of the nation to tie up the stages of its history and push its development process forward, and thus – only thus – heritage becomes an active and effective energy, not 'rubbles' or shrouds of the dead', as many think and want it to be.

Dr. Hassan Hanafi argues that Heritage is the starting point as a cultural and national responsibility, and renewal is the reinterpretation of heritage according to the needs of the era. The old precedes the new, originality is the basis of contemporaneity, and the means lead to the goal. Heritage is the means and renewal is the goal, which is to contribute to the development of reality, solve its problems, eliminate the causes of its obstacles, and open up padlocked gates that prevent any attempt to advance it.

On the same line Al-Jabri proceeds to say Language, law, and political doctrine... are the elements that make up the reference benchmark of heritage with which – as we often repeat – the mind cannot be renewed and modernizes except by liberating it from the authority of heritage.

If we call on it here to be consistent in the aspects that we highlighted in the thoughts of Ibn Hazm, Ibn Rushd, Al-Shatibi and Ibn Khaldun, it is not for the sake of copying their ideas, nor for the sake of adopting their opinions as an imitation and dependence.

No, what we are calling for is to employ their rational-progressive tendency as a point of departure that connects us to the issues of our heritage, not for the sake of renewing them, alienating them, or rejecting them, but for the sake of transferring them into our present and deal with them on the basis of the requirements of the present and the need of the future and based on the thought and logic of the era.

Hosni Marwa believes that there is a connection between the revolutionary content of the Arab national liberation movement in its present stage, and the revolutionary position vis-a-vis the Arab-Islamic intellectual heritage: The revolutionary position towards the issues of the present requires starting from this position to see the heritage, that is, to know it in a revolutionary way. That is, to build this knowledge on the basis of the ideology of the present's revolutionary forces, themselves.

Tayeb Tizini, for his part, concludes his long journey in his book, *From Heritage to Revolution*, by stating that

Our exercise of the historical, traditional choice towards our Arab history and heritage in a dialectical, traditional manner, with the aim of transforming the positive outcome into one of the dimensions of creative revolutionary action in our strong, rising phase, would contribute to the formation and deepening of the international national character of the Arab revolutionary forces, and without fear of being dwarfed by others but flexing their muscles in front of their own people.

We can continue presenting the justifications given by those involved in rereading heritage, but since our goal is to identify the most

important of these justifications in order to reveal them, we will be satisfied with what we have presented, considering that these justifications are the major models that are usually presented.

However, with a closer examination of the above, we find that the desired goal of such a return is limited to the following points:

1- Finding the association between the present, future and past. This means that a break has occurred between the past of philosophy and its Arab present, and finding cohesion once again between the present and the past would open up better horizons. It would also define the concept of national identity as a rising error that would deprive it of the fragmentation that is occurring now.

2- Those who hold fast to heritage agree on a basic point that returning to heritage has no meaning except in the event that its viable elements are revealed and not in the event that it is presented as it is. Amara wants from heritage the features of 'rationalism and nationalism', Hanafi 'seeks contemporaneity based on authenticity, Al-Jabri 'seeks the rational-critical tendency' in heritage, and Tizini draws from heritage its contribution to the formation of the national and international personality. Marwa, for his part, wants to find in heritage the revolutionary facet, which can be derived by the 'forces of the contemporary Arab revolution' based upon the materialistic tendencies inherent in that heritage.

Therefore, the reference benchmark for heritage studies is to reveal rationalism and nationalism or revolutionary and materialism.

3- Everyone had started from the fact that establishing these concepts was not possible except by revealing them within the intellectual-philosophical achievement of the Arab heritage. Hence, contemporary knowledge lends heritage a new garment to make it appear contemporary. This means that their assertion of rejecting selectivity is a false assertion, since as long as they want things from the heritage and do not want other things, this means that they want to select from the heritage what reinforces their preconceived ideas, or the philosophical-ideological basis from which they proceed. This explains why they differ among themselves about heritage, and about what is most prominent in this heritage.

If we look, in this context, at the diversity of opinions about Ibn Rushd, we will see that each of them wants from Ibn Rushd what he already wants now. Amara views Ibn Rushd's commentaries on Aristotle as the beginning of the acquiring – by Arabic language and its philosophical thought – authentic Aristotle's views, untainted by the mixed views of Plato and Neoplatonist theories. The truth is that Ibn Rushd presented the most controversial and successful attempts at establishing links of fellowship and brotherhood between wisdom (philosophy) and Sharia, based on an enlightened, rational understanding of religion, through rational proof, and from the very basic grounds of philosophy.

Here, one may refer to Al-Jabri's viewpoints concerning 'the exclusion of knowledge' and the separation between 'statement' and 'evidence', and this is the same line that the Averroist

discourse follows in restoring Ibn Hazm's project through Ibn Tumart and Ibn Bajja, but at a richer and deeper level. He also sees in it the rebuilding of the relationship between statements and evidence with deeper awareness and more mature, realistic rationality than that of Ibn Hazm, Ibn Tumart, and Ibn Bajja. For his part, Ibn Rushd was able, "through his presentation of the issues of the relationship between matter and form, and the material cosmic unity of the world,' to contribute deeply to taking the heretical and dialectical materialist philosophy forward, especially in his emphasis on the world in its material unity on the one hand, and then his removal of the concept of the transcendent god from his philosophical doctrine. Instead, he made that god part of nature in terms of its reason or the legality of its existence, and this is what Tizini sees in Ibn Rushd.

If we assume that Ibn Rushd allows the conclusion of all of the above, then highlighting this or that aspect in Ibn Rushd's philosophy is a process governed by what is expected, or not expected from Ibn Rushd. It is a very legitimate process, and it is not an accusation, especially as the stand vis-à-vis the philosophical heritage can only be selective.

Then, how do we understand the emergence of the phenomenon of returning to heritage in general and philosophical heritage in particular? If we leave aside the reasons presented by those heritage-devoted scholars, we will encounter the following fact: Most of the basic books that appeared on heritage were published in the seventies and eighties.

The publication of these books was accompanied by studies and discussions. That is, these books not only helped their authors rise to fame, but also created an intellectual climate that seemed to be characterized by vitality. But what was the reality that forced the Arab thinkers to think about introducing heritage as an important element of enlightenment and the making of the future?

It seems to me that the seventies of the twentieth century were ripe for the rise of a crisis in the development of the Arab nationalist movement and Arab Marxism, or what was called the Arab Liberation Movement, and then its escalation in the eighties.



## Translation, from Understanding to Interpretation

Bassel Al-Zein

When we talk about translation in general, and about philosophical translation in particular, we – relying on our experience in translation and on our readings of translated books – come face to face with three simultaneous stages: understanding, explication, and interpretation.

### First: Understanding

The problem of understanding demonstrates itself on two levels: misunderstanding and multiple understanding.

With regard to misunderstanding, it is undoubtedly established that a sound knowledge of the linguistic rules of the source text is a necessary condition for proper translation. However, this astute knowledge of the rules of the language is not enough for achieving understanding because the confusion in understanding the meaning may arise from the difficulty of the translated text itself or from the set of ambiguous concepts contained in this text, and that is what brings us to the level of interpretation, which we will discuss shortly.

Multiple understanding means the multiple translations of the same book on the one hand, and the rendering of the same concept by more than one Arabic equivalent on the other hand. It suffices to point out in this context that Martin Heidegger's book *Being and Time* was published in French in three different translations, and that Rene Descartes' book *Discourse on Method* was published in Arabic in three different translations as well. The same can be said about every famous philosophical or literary book. This multiplicity of translations indicates a difference in

understanding and a difference in reading the text, although, in many cases, some translators may deliberately trace errors of understanding in the texts of those who preceded them in translating the book itself. However, multiple translations do not always relate to misunderstanding as much as relate to the interpretive tendencies, which we will deal with in the last section of this paper.

However, there is no doubt that the conceptual consideration requires the translators to justify their choice and justify the use of the term in this way, not the other. For example, the word 'pure' in the title of Kant's famous book, *Critique of Pure Reason*, [translated by Mousa Wahba], was translated into Arabic as 'الخالص' instead of 'الطاهر'. The truth of the matter is that the translation of the term Pure into two different Arabic terms has its justification, taking into account the nature of the Arabic language and the connotations it bears.

Musa Wahba, in his introductions of logical investigations, suggests that "These are, therefore, logical researches, not mere researches; rather, they do a sort of real investigation and elicitation of the connotations they bear, in the same way as an investigator does."

The previous references lead us to the essence of double understanding: understanding the source language in its contexts, contrasts, differences, and subtle distinctions, and understanding the target language as far as its rules, grammar, connotations, derivations, and morphology are concerned.

This confirms once again that the translation process goes beyond the issue of understanding the text in its original linguistic context to consider the mechanisms of the target language. It also provides the methods for conceptual integration that demonstrates the specific features of this language and the ability of its diction to accommodate the foreign vocabulary items incoming to its structure, and thus making them an integral part of Arabic. However, we may criticize –in this context – late Musa Wehbe’s resort to coining terms based upon transliteration, such as dogmatic and system, (which he later abandoned). He should have relied on the fact that Arabic, as we strongly believe, is capable of providing us with terms with a purely Arabic structure that convey the hybrid meanings of those extraneous items, instead of literal translation of the foreign counterparts.

## Second: Interpretation

Schleiermacher associates understanding with interpretation, believing that interpretation requires general fixed rules. Among the most important conditions for interpretation to him are “an astute knowledge of the rules of the source language ... of the writer’s biography, a comprehensive and fair understanding of the subject of the interpretation... and the interpretations he suggested to shed light on the text’s ambiguities and on the charges of meaning it holds.”

Here, we wonder: Should translators meet all these conditions?

It is no exaggeration to say that translators are interpreters before they are translators and their translations are not sound enough unless they are equipped with the sound knowledge of the source language, of the author’s biography, the interpretations of the intended meanings and the explication of the connotations thereof.

Accordingly, when we talk about differences in translations and about various versions of translations of a particular book, a very important issue arises. It is the ability to interpret the intended meanings of the text and the multiple levels of understanding. The fact remains that the differences between one translation and another lie in avoiding literal translation, taking into account the context of the target language and, above all, the ability to delve into the subtle differences the philosopher charged his text with. Besides, it is fundamental for translators to comprehend the various layers of connotations the philosopher’s terms bear before they render them with a precise interpretive fidelity and an etymological effort that reflects extensive knowledge and great patience.

If Musa Wahba was a model for a faithful and prudent translation in terms of meeting Schleiermacher’s rules of interpretation, and if he was one of the few translators who noticed the differences in terminology and strove to coin Arabic equivalents, then this matter does not prevent posing an important question. To what extent does he take into account the target context in terms of clarity, flow, flexibility, and most importantly, in terms of reproducing the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the target language grammatical structures?

The truth of the matter is that the difficulty of the source text may sometimes make the Arabic text unreadable, and this is due to the ambiguity of the source text, the strictness of its structure, and the multiplicity of its meanings. However, we may pose other questions: Doesn’t the translator also have an additional and essential task, which lies in making the Arabic text readable, its contexts intelligible, and its meanings accessible? Do we not find in Wahba’s texts in particular significant inaccuracies and misleading ambiguities?



In fact, we clearly distinguish here between the source language and the target language. If a keen knowledge of the source language is an inevitable condition in translation, then understanding the target language is a condition that is more important. The translator – I believe – should possess the language of a writer, the spirit of a philosopher, the eloquence of a linguist, and the insight of a critic. Accordingly, no matter how difficult the source text is, the translator who meets the aforementioned conditions should come up with a well-structured Arabic text, through which he conveys the intended meanings the philosopher’s ambiguous text in a clear, precise language. This is because translators in such cases have the advantage of expressing the translated texts in their native language. Clarity of meanings requires addition, rather than deletion, paraphrasing, not modification, and simplification, not reduction. This is what Mousa and all great translators should do boldly; they should be careful in coining their expressions in an authentic Arabic form that takes into account ways of clarification, substitution, explanation, interpretation, and addition.

## Third: Interpretation

In his book, Truth and Method, Hans-Georg Gadamer believes that “the translator’s task does not differ from the general interpretive task required by the text [...] and that the translator’s situation is essentially identical to that of the interpreter.”

If we join Gadamer in questioning the source of this similarity, we can say that it lies in the definition of interpretation itself as “rendering a word from its explicit meaning to something contrary to that.” It is a matter of course that translation requires delving into the intended meanings, as we mentioned above. Therefore, the translator must render the word from its explicit meaning to something that contradicts this apparent meaning. Accordingly, it is no exaggeration to say that translation is interpretation, and that multiple translations benefit from multiple interpretations, especially when we are talking about eternal texts that are, in turn, translated – into other languages – in an eternal linguistic form.



This brings to the fore the thoughts of the Italian linguist Umberto Eco, who argues in his *Interpretative Semiotics: Interpretation, Encyclopedia, [and] Translation*, that translation is a genus of the species of interpretation. He reminds us that a translation or interpretation always says something more and therefore can never say exactly the same thing as the original. He believes that “interpretation is not translation, because the world of interpretation is broader than the world of translation. It precedes translation with an investigative reading that looks at the various layers of the text, and with a textual analysis that makes a critical contribution to understanding the work to be translated.” Accordingly, Eco sees an integration between interpretation and translation, but he gives priority to interpretation, as translation is not correct except after looking at the various layers of the text and analyzing it thoroughly.

However, “translation assumes interpretive dialogue because it refuses to stop at the boundaries of linguistic structures. It follows the path of the text by being concerned with its various elements, which fall into three axes: The first is the writer, whose authorial personality intersects with various linguistic, literary, cultural, and social dimensions... The second focuses on

the content of the texts... The third axis revolves around the approach adopted by the translator, which is an approach that – according to Eco – should fall within the framework of negotiation, because, through negotiation, come solutions to the problems that confront the translator in his arduous task.”

In this sense, negotiation becomes interpretation in one of its aspects, especially since linguistic negotiation, according to Eco, requires examining the implications of the structures, including “deletion, implication, manipulation, metonymy, and metaphor.” The fact is that the function of dialogue here is an interpretive function par excellence. This is because dialogue with the text means examining its historical contexts, the circumstances of its linguistic formation, its cultural components, and the societal environments in which it emerged. Besides, there must be care to avoid the use of interpretive violence, to refrain from attaching to the text more dimensions than it can bear or adding to it meanings that have not been intended. Therefore, the translator must always strike a balance between the acts of negotiation, interpretation, and interaction, on one hand, and honesty, accuracy, and objectivity in rendering the text, on the other.



## The Way the Arabs Acquainted Themselves with Greek Philosophy

Muhammad Al-Mesbahi

The Arab-Islamic civilization opened up to Greek philosophy of its own free will, not under coercion from outside, as is the case with the advent of modernity into our societies in modern times. The openness was smooth in the beginning, but it quickly became tense and positions differed regarding it, about which Al-Farabi said, “As for philosophy, some of them were eager for it, some were free in dealing with it, some people... were silent about it, and some people... forbade it.” To facilitate examining the aspects of Arab reception of philosophy, we can reduce these four positions into two positions: the position of those who reject philosophy and the position of those who promote it.

Conservative circles declared a relentless war on philosophy after witnessing the extent of its comprehensive influence on all Islamic sciences and research. In their attack, these circles relied on a sophisticated trick, which is to distinguish between two types of knowledge: ‘useful knowledge’, which is the transmitted knowledge dedicated to achieving happiness in the afterlife, by knowing God and doing what pleases Him and refraining from doing what He dislikes. The path to this is imitating and following the Companions and Followers. The second is ‘useless knowledge, which is the rational knowledge, such as arithmetic, astronomy, medicine, chemistry, Arabic sciences, etc. It is reprehensible and useless knowledge, and even harmful because it distracts from worship and

leads to transgression, because the path to it is through rational proofs, not textual evidence.

In contrast to this, philosophers and scholars rose to praise the philosophy in which Al-Kindi advised us not to “be ashamed of approving the truth, and acquiring the truth from where it comes, distant races or far away nations, for nothing is more deserving of the seeker of the truth than the truth itself.” More than that, Ibn Rushd would raise openness to the other to the level of a “legal duty” by virtue of the fact that its wisdom, methods, and sciences qualify us to “completely consider the origin of the Sharia,” which is demonstrative. These two statements implicitly acknowledge that there is “no nation more sensitive and wiser than the Greeks are.” They also acknowledge the necessity of adopting the philosophical prospect within the Islamic perspective, despite their differences. Perhaps the Arab consciousness’s insistence on receiving “philosophy as it is philosophy” is what led Arab translators and philosophers to keep the Greek word for philosophy within the structure of the Arabic language and turn a blind eye to its translation out of a desire to preserve its Greek resonance within the Arabic language.

After this introduction, we move to investigate the most important aspects of the awareness of the Arabs (I take this name here by combining the name) with Greek philosophy:

1. The first manifestation of this awareness is the search for the legitimacy of philosophy's inclusion in the Arab-Islamic horizon. Al-Kindi found it to be the highest-status and most honorable of all human inventions, because its purpose is to realize the truth and work with the truth. It looks at the truth firstly in terms of it being "the reason for the existence of everything and its constant truth: because everything temporal has reality, so the truth necessarily exists, therefore, the temporal exists." It, secondly, looks at the truth because the subject of the first philosophy is 'the knowledge of the first truth' which is the reason behind all the truth" examined by the second philosophy, which is the natural and mathematical sciences. Therefore, "the science of the first cause is rightly called 'the first philosophy', since all the rest of philosophy is included in its science," in addition to the fact that "we know every piece of information completely, if we compass the knowledge of its cause." In this way, it was recognized, from the beginning, that there is a right other than the right of the Sharia, and that it is the reason for the existence of every right. It was also recognized that philosophy considers the first right that the Sharia considers, but without intending to compete with it, because it looks at it from the angle of proof, not from the angle of representation.

If Al-Kindi linked the legitimacy of the consideration of philosophy in the Islamic field to truth, then Ibn Rushd would link it to the fuller existence of man. Man "exists to the fullest extent of his existence, and it is the best of his actions, because it is the action in which the best of beings participate." This is what prompted him first to issue a fatwa in his book, *Fasl al-Maqal*, on the duty of systematic openness to others, regardless of their beliefs, as long as the research machine is neutral and

has nothing to do with beliefs. This is what Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi expressed when he said that logic is "an instrument held by its masters, like a scale with which they weigh all differences and all the agreed upon. There is no disbelief, no ignorance, no religion, no sect, no belief, no opinion, but rather, it is the purification of meanings and the purification of words." Secondly, it prompted him to announce the duty of cognitive openness in his books, explaining the books of Aristotle, Plato, Galen, and Ptolemy, because knowing the benefits of all existing things is the path to the complete knowledge of God Almighty, that is, the demonstrative knowledge, not representational knowledge.

2. From the perspective of the history of philosophy, the Arab awareness of philosophy passed through three stages: The first, the stage of combining the opinions of the two sages, Plato and Aristotle, with Al-Kindi and Al-Farabi. The second, the stage of declaring a move away from Aristotle and leaning towards Plato and Neoplatonism and allowing theological and Sufi elements to seep into the arena of philosophy with Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi and Ibn Sina. The third is the stage of returning to Aristotle and ridding his philosophy of Platonic, theological and Sufi elements with Ibn Rushd. This means that the Arab consciousness initially treated philosophy as one in essence, even if it appeared to be multiple in its formations. It then realized the great differences between the two systems of the two sages, Plato and Aristotle. However, Arab consciousness in general was characterized by its belief that philosophy was completed with the Greeks, especially with Aristotle, knowing that ancient Arab philosophical thought added a lot to the theories of existence, intellect, imagination, movement, etc.

3. The prominent feature of the Arab approach to philosophy is its keenness on its independence from theology. This is what Al-Kindi alluded to while speaking about "people who are estranged from the truth," who practice "trading in religion and are devoid of religion, because whoever trades in something sells it, and whoever sells something does not belong to it. Whoever trades in religion does not have it." While the people of truth, who are the philosophers, view it as "the knowledge of things with their divine truths, the knowledge of oneness, the knowledge of virtue, and the totality of knowledge of every beneficial thing and the path to it." I.e., a comprehensive science encompasses its topics and the topics of Sharia law together. For his part, Al-Farabi pointed out that "the speech industry in [the sect] is hostile to philosophy, and its people are hostile to its people, to the extent that that sect is hostile to philosophy." As for Ibn Rushd, he saw that theologians do not look at religion "according to the matter in itself," but rather they intend to "change the primary law, creating an atmosphere of tension and hatred, tearing apart the law, and exchanging accusations of heresy and infidelity among the sects. This comprehensive opposition

to theology indicates the extent of Muslim philosophers' keenness on the independence of philosophy and their rejection of any external interference to determine its fate.

This is what Ibn Tufayl depicted for us in a symbolic way in his story, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, when he made Hayy self-sufficient and able to discover, without religious guardianship, an independent path through Sharia law to prove the principle of existence, and formulate virtuous morals and worship independent of revelation. Ibn Bajjah preceded Ibn Tufayl in promoting the idea of the "recluse" who lives virtuously outside the regulations of Medina and Sharia.

This awareness of the independence of philosophy from theology is what led some contemporary European historians of philosophy (J. Jolivet, Rémi Brague, A. De Libera...) to acknowledge that Latin Christian thought borrowed the word philosophy in its sense independent of religion from Arab Islamic thought because it retained its true and original meaning, as the Greeks understood it. It is love of wisdom, not as some Byzantine circles understood it in the sense of Sufi practice, nor as the Church understood it in the sense of servant of religion.



4. On the other hand, the Arabs envisioned philosophy as an act of proving reason as a common denominator between the human self, natural existence, and divine law. With regard to man, Al-Kindi gives us a funny definition of man, which consists of three hypostases: “the living, the speaking, and the dead” He was the first philosopher to introduce death-nothingness into human reality, without that preventing him from acknowledging that his rational power is closely similar to the power of God if it is stripped of the body.” This is what Abu Bakr al-Razi echoed, saying that “Philosophy is the imitation of God Almighty to the extent which the human energy permits.”

In the same context, Al-Farabi considered that “the thing by which [man] became human is the intellect,” so he directed a harsh criticism at those who abandoned the mind in their definition of the essence of man. As for Ibn Rushd, he linked the rationality of man with the rationality of existence when he said that man realizes himself when he perceives the world, that is, when he uses his intellect to transform the existing into the intelligible. This means that “the intelligible is the perfection of the

intelligent,” but after the intelligible transforms the existing into the intelligible, which means that the self is completed itself while completing its existence with the intellect. Thus, philosophy has refused to define man by reason and not by the two testimonies (the oneness of God and the Prophethood of Muhammad).

5. We now reach the third part of the rationalization of philosophy, which is the rationalization of Sharia law. This is because it was not necessary for philosophy to think independently of Sharia. The way to achieve this is demonstrative interpretation, which works to bring about harmony between Sharia law and philosophy, that is, strengthening divine wisdom with human wisdom. From here came the idea of “brotherhood in breastfeeding” between wisdom and Sharia, that is, sharing the same subject and the same goal, which is the search for truth, justice, and human happiness.

The history of philosophy testifies that the Arab-Islamic civilization is one of the few civilizations that was able to interact strongly with Greek philosophy by adopting a perspective that lives alongside the Greek perspective without a desire to harness it to defend the Sharia. This outlook represented a major challenge to Sharia law, as a philosophical right different from the legal right was defended, and existence was lifted from marginalization and oblivion by looking at it directly in itself, without legal, verbal, or Sufi adaptation. This embrace of philosophy ensured the universality of Arab-Islamic civilization and demonstrated that philosophy is not an exclusive characteristic of one nation over another. Nevertheless, I believe that the decisive moment in Arab awareness of philosophy is the acknowledgment with Ibn Rushd that it exists at the core of human truth in general, and that it is indestructible.



## The Ideological Reading of Islamic Philosophy

Anwar Mugheeth

The expression ‘ideological reading’, *prima facie*, refers to a type of distorted reading that ultimately leads scholars to many areas of misunderstanding and distorted interpretation. This perception is due to the opposition that Marx marked between science and ideology, where science conveys true reality in the form of theories that express it honestly. Ideology, for its part, is a mask that obscures reality and presents a false image thereof, an image that is shaped by the individual’s beliefs, interests, and illusions. Therefore, if we start reading a text while projecting our false awareness onto it, its true intended objectives will be concealed from us or we will burden it more than it can stand for.

There is another contradiction in the history of thought between ideology and philosophy, where the former refers to a system of off-the-shelf ideas and beliefs, with which individuals align themselves. Philosophy, on the other hand, is free, unconfined contemplation and a mental effort open to the outcomes resulting from that contemplation, even if they contradict one’s beliefs. Hence, philosophy constantly

leads individuals to review their ideas. In addition, the term ideology is generally applied to common prejudices and axioms that are accepted without evidence or proof.

In this context, one may think of how Islamic philosophy in the middle ages fell victim to different types of ideological readings. The extent of the discomfort with these readings is obvious in two of the early books written by Arab authors. The first one is *In Islamic Philosophy: A Method and Its Application* by Dr. Ibrahim Bayoumi Madkour and the second is *A Preface to the History of Islamic Philosophy* by Sheikh Mustafa Abdel Razzaq. Each of these writers devotes the beginning of his research to responding to the unjust rulings against Islamic philosophy that were prevalent in Europe in the nineteenth century.

Mustafa Abdel Razek deplores Victor Cousin’s point of view, which holds that Christianity was the cradle of freedom, resurrected the sciences, and paved the way for modern philosophy, while the teachings of Islam are incompatible with free research and therefore did not embrace science and did not advance philosophy:

What did Christianity and the community of Christians produce for people? They brought modern freedom and parliamentary assemblies ... and what did the Brahminical religion, the Islamic religion, and all the other religions that still exist on earth produce? Some of them produced profound decadence, and some of them produced tyranny that has no scope ... Christianity is the origin of modern philosophy.

Ibrahim Bayoumi Madkour, for his part, is angry at the view of Ernest Renan, who distinguishes between the Semitic race and the Aryan race. The Semitic mind, to which the Arabs belong, "has no capacity except to comprehend particulars and items that are separate from each other ... It is a mind of separation and division, not of combination and amalgamation. Contrary to that, the Aryan mind brings things together." Therefore, what they call Arab philosophy is, in Renan's view, nothing but an imitation of Aristotle and a kind of repetition of Greek opinions and ideas written in the Arabic language. Madkour has every right to be surprised that the French are opponents of political racism, while they were sowing "scientific and philosophical seeds of racism, some of whose effects have extended into the present century."

Nevertheless, there are reasonable objections to this negative conception of ideological reading, as it may perpetuate the illusion of innocent reading, for it requires the reader to get rid of any intellectual background or cognitive concerns from the beginning, and therefore, it is an unrealistic demand. Moreover, ideological biases have become common and accepted: There are those who side with nationalist, liberal, or socialist

ideology without the fear from representing a challenge to their legitimacy as readers or scholars. Indeed, they have the right to revisit their intellectual heritage, searching for what reassures them of their intellectual biases or prompts them to revise them. In complete contrast to the negative perception, we find those who believe that ideological reading represents a lifeline that would guarantee the life of our philosophical heritage.

An example of this is Dr. Muhammad Abed Al-Jabri, in his book, *We and our Heritage*, who differentiates between the cognitive and the ideological content, and refers to the way in which Muslim philosophers sought, through the books they authored, to engage with the problems of their time. To him, the first content is dead and there is no way to revive it, while the second is alive and capable of [providing] inspiration. Indeed, it is considered the only point of connection between our contemporary attempts aimed at [realizing] renaissance and progress:

The cognitive content of Islamic philosophy, and indeed of every philosophy [that had risen] prior to our contemporary philosophies constitutes— for the most part —dead cognitive material that cannot be revived. As for the content of ideology, the matter is different. It varies ... The ideological content is an ideology, and ideology's time is 'future'. It lives its future in its present, but in the form of a dream.

It seems that Al-Jabri, by invoking the idea of a dream, seeks to bring ideology and utopia closer, despite the fact that what is common in the history of thought is their opposition, and what unites them is that both are thoughts that contradict reality.



Here, we may pose a question: how can we employ Al-Jabri's ideological reading when we deal with Islamic philosophy? We can start from the preoccupation of Muslim philosophers with trying to reconcile the principles of the Islamic religion, which they believe in and live under, and Greek philosophy, whose ideas they believe are correct and which they work to explain and summarize. If we directly visit these texts, we would be justified in judging them as a futile attempt or a squandered and unconvincing effort. However, if we read them in light of their intellectual and social contexts, the reality would appear to us as an arena of contradiction. Here we find ourselves face to face with a vibrant and deeply meaningful text.

This kind of approach highlights the disadvantages of reading more than its advantages. It marginalizes the content of the text and turns it into a mere excuse for a meeting between two ideologies: the ideology of the reader and the ideology of the author. It is a type of reading, which overlooks the

philosopher's thoughts; the important thing for this reading is how the philosopher said what he said and why he said it. Such a reading may help us analyze the era and highlight its features, but it will not help us understand the meaning of the text. If we had followed this path and confined our reading of the works of Plato and Aristotle to revealing their ideological positions in the conflicts of their time, we would have stopped reading them a long time ago.

The outcome of Al-Jabri's reading of our intellectual heritage was the creation of a division between the Illuminationist and Sufi tendencies in the East, represented by Ibn Sina, and the rationalist tendencies in the Maghreb, represented by Ibn Rushd. In his division, he relied on the sciences of rhetoric, jurisprudence, and philosophy, but he completely excluded science from the field of intellectual activity, even though the East's contribution to it was great.

It is worth noting here that when ideology directs reading, it turns it into an inspection process in which readers become interested in looking for the few pieces of evidence that strengthen their intellectual affiliation, but they then overlook much that does not achieve this goal. Here comes an example of two readings, both of which start from a contradictory ideological position: the first is Hussein Marwa's reading of our intellectual heritage in his book, *Materialist Tendencies in Arab Philosophy*, which is inspired by Marxism, and the second is by Taha Abdul Rahman in his book, *The Jurisprudence of Philosophy with a Salafist Tendency*.

In the first reading, Hussein Marwa applies the approach of historical materialism, which Marxist philosophy had developed, to Islamic history in the Middle Ages in general, and to



the texts of Islamic philosophy in particular. Philosopher Gyorgy Lukacs had pointed out that this approach, which emerged after a series of historical and social developments, was useful in explaining capitalist society, but it is inadequate when applied to previous historical periods.

In applying historical materialism to pre-capitalist eras, there is a feeling of a fundamental and extremely important methodological difficulty that does not appear when it criticizes capitalism.

This is to suggest that historical materialism, in its common form, is characterized by unilateral determinism, which attributes everything to economics, and the teleological tendency, which sees history as having a specific goal towards which it is directed. This premise is largely represented in Marwa's reading, because he stems from his belief that Marxist philosophy represents the pinnacle of the development of global thought:

We do not hope that the level of experimental sciences in Al-Kindi's era will make possible for philosophical thought what the levels of these sciences made possible in recent times, and our present thought in particular, of which Marxist thought is the pinnacle of its advanced development. .. But we aspire to the minimum to go beyond the Aristotelian positions.

In this way, Marxism turned into a criterion on the basis of which the texts of Muslim philosophers were read, to the extent that approaching the Marxist theses in these texts was considered closer to the truth, while moving away from those theses was [kind of heading] towards false awareness.

This is noticeable in Hussein Marwa's reading of Al-Kindi's philosophy, where he is keen to point out that Al-Kindi was interested, in theological as well as philosophical issues. This matter, he believes, goes back to the early beginnings, and, thus, he considers his later confinement to philosophical issues a sign of maturity. However, he considers his return to the interest in theological issues and holding the thesis of the creation of the world from nothing a regression. Besides, he argues that Al-Farabi's idea of the antiquity of the world is at the forefront of revolutionary ideas. With him, philosophy achieves its independence from theology. Here, Marwa states: "All of this opposes the official feudal interpretation that represents the state's ideology." In addition to this, Marwa explains Ibn Sina's bias toward Aristotle's realistic philosophy in his interpretation of natural sciences, research methods, and sciences, and then his adoption of illuminative knowledge as a position that expresses the ideology of the class with which he aligned. Thus, modern Marxist terminology swarms around the ancient philosophical texts.

Yet, there are two common, but deficient, tendencies in every ideological reading: neglecting the text itself and paying attention to the context in which it appeared, and what this entails regarding thinking as a mere outcome or reflection of the social situation. The second tendency is to view the philosopher as a pioneer whose texts bear references to a doctrine or theory that would crystallize later, such as dialectics, experimental doctrine, or materialism, which turns the philosopher a prisoner in his future.

The second model is the reading of the Moroccan philosopher Taha Abdul Rahman,

which is a Salafi reading in the contemporary ideological sense of religious Salafism. Abdul Rahman aims through this reading at restoring consideration to Al-Ghazali's position in his campaign to declare philosophers infidels. Abdul Rahman does not explicitly adopt a call to get rid of philosophy, casting it out of our contemporary intellectual space, but he reads history in search of possibilities that would have allowed us to produce a philosophy that does not conflict with religion and at the same time represents an original creativity for us, Muslims.

It is worth noting that Arab and Muslim philosophers and theologians have long looked into the contradiction between reason and emulation. Some of them adopted reason, while others backed imitation. However, others tried to reconcile the two. In Taha Abdul Rahman's view, we could have spared this confusion if we had freed ourselves from the Greek philosophers' concept of reason and held the principles that stem from our culture, which states that the Islamic law is open to both reason and imitation.

According to Abdul-Rahman, Muslim philosophers followed a misguided path from the beginning because of translation, as translators rendered Greek thought without taking into account the religious beliefs of the receiving culture, and without mastering the rules of the Arabic language. This is because those translators were Syriac-speaking scholars, with their poor Arabic. In addition, they were Christians, "familiar with beliefs that agree with their own beliefs, so they do not see the differences as others see them, nor do they feel their religious and spiritual effects as others feel them."

Through contemplation of the phenomenon of philosophical translation, Abdul Rahman sought to lay cognitive foundations for his Salafist ideological reading. Therefore, we see him dividing translation into three types: direct rendering, which is the literal translation of the original text, communitive, which is the translator's intervention by deleting and adding if necessary, and trans-creation, which is the translation that corresponds with the beliefs rooted in the target culture. This latest translation is what our Arab heritage lacked, and its absence made our Arabic philosophy appear to be an imitation and a pale copy of Greek philosophy. Translators had to take into account the established doctrines of the receiving culture's pragmatic sphere in order to avoid accusing philosophy of infidelity.

But, how is this done? Taha Abdul Rahman answers:

As long as the communicative translator strives to ensure that his translation is not a literal rendering ... and if this type of translators existed when rendering Greek philosophy to Arabic, they would have dropped the Greek concepts that clash ... with the Islamic beliefs ... such as: 'The gods are many', 'Minds are gods', and 'Matter is ancient'. [By doing so], they could have avoided all the reasons that led to what we know of the manifestations of infidelity and heresy accusations of those working in philosophy.

Abdul-Rahman's third kind of translators is entitled to more than omission. The author argues that if we are about to translate a text by Plato, in which he talks about God the Maker; if the text is talking about the

meaning of "He made the world," based on the acceptance of the existence of many gods cooperating with each other, then it is permissible for the translator to rid this statement of this postulate, and replace it with 'oneness of God', "whenever the culture of the target language rejects the idea of multiple gods ruling the universe." Isn't this considered fraud?

Abdul Rahman tries to reassure us, warning us that the Greek original [texts] will remain the same. He denounces the introduction of moral judgments related to betrayal and fidelity into the field of translation. It is an indicative model that the author provides us with authentic translation by criticizing the Arabic translations of the Cartesian cogito, "I think, therefore I am." After a patient analysis, in dozens of pages, of the connotations of French and Arabic vocabulary items and the metaphysical and existential implications of the phrase, Taha Abdul Rahman concludes by proposing to us the following translation: "I think, then I am created by a creator other than myself and there is nothing like Him."

This is what Salafi reading has brought us to this point. If we drop from Plato and Aristotle all ideas that contradict Islam, is there a way to distinguish between them, since the fundamentalist translators introduced them into the religion of Islam? Is it not more honorable for Arab philosophy to faithfully convey the opinions of Greek philosophers and then search for ways of creativity? Is not the free Arab philosopher have the right to say that the world was created, as Al-Kindi believed, or that the world was ancient, as Al-Farabi thought?

## Essential Trends in Greek Philosophy

Carol El Khoury

Greek philosophy had developed between the seventh century BC and the third century AD. However, it must be acknowledged that it reached the peak of its magnificence during the fourth century BC, especially with Plato and Aristotle. This article aims at introducing the major problems addressed by this distinguished ancient philosophy. As a point of departure, let me highlight the fact that it went through various phases, each of which included currents and trends which were intersecting at times, but diverging at other times.

### 1. The Pre-Socratic Phase

This phase was characterized in particular by an interest in cosmic issues, research into the origin and substance of the universe, and an endeavor to devise solutions to the concept of 'multitude' that led to, first, anxiety among the ancients, and second, the liberation from the state of intellectual distraction regarding the existence of man, his formation, and his relationship with the universe. Initially, naturalistic sages appeared in the Milesian school, trying to establish a materialist ontological basis in explaining the origin of existence. Thales of

Miletus (624-546 BC) declared that things, despite their diversity and differences, are composed of one principle, which is water, while his student, Anaximander (ca. 610-546 BC), proposed a different principle, that is the indefinite, the boundless, or the infinite. The beginning, according to him, was an infinite, unlimited mass, not subject to ageing or fading. For Anaximenes (ca. 585-525 BC), air was the essential substance that composed everything, since, through condensation, it could become visible in the form of fog or clouds, then in the form of water, then dust, and it also becomes fire by reducing the density.

After that, Pythagoras (580-ca. 495 BC) emerged. With his outstanding natural skill of a scholar of philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy, he combined three trends that begin with man and reach every issue related to him, during his life and after his 'departure'. Consequently, his school was based on harsh ascetic rules that were strictly applied to his disciples.

In this context, Pythagoras spoke of reincarnation or metempsychosis and the transmigration of the souls to life, holding the idea that every soul is immortal, and, upon death, it is transferred into a new body, time and again. Besides, he advanced the unshakable belief of deification of numbers, i.e., that the essence of all things are numbers, and that the universe was sustained by harmony.

The fifth century BC also witnessed the emergence of remarkable physicists, who attempted to continue research into the mysteries of the universe, each in their own way. Empedocles (ca. 492-ca. 432 BC) introduced the concepts of love and hate to explain the unity and division between the four elements of this universe, while Anaxagoras (ca. 500 – ca. 425 BC) turned to pure reason, revolting against any superstitious, irrational tendency. Almost simultaneously, Leucippus (ca. 460 -370 BC) and Democritus (ca. 460-ca. 357 BC) created a new theory based on atomism in a purely material form.

In fact, the clearest division was between Heraclitus (ca. 540-480 BC), the philosopher of continuous becoming and transformation, and Parmenides (ca. 515-450 BC), the philosopher of one and constant existence. He held the idea that the multiplicity of existing things, their changing forms and motion, are but an appearance of a single eternal reality (Being). This quickly paved the way for the emergence of the Sophists, who were distinguished by evading reliance on beliefs in the traditional sense, and by going to innovate special methods of teaching within a path that relies on relativism and subjectivity and sets man as the standard for everything.

## 2. Socrates (470-399 BC)

Thanks to Socrates, an exceptional revolution ignited in philosophy, arising first from his life of creating ideas, most notably the 'concept', and defending those ideas fiercely and smoothly at the same time, leading up to his acceptance of the death sentence with the courage of a true philosopher who never abandoned any of his principles until his last moments in life, as Plato described it in his book, *Phaedo*. Today, his critical dialogues continue to influence students' frames of mind, whom he refuses to confine within the walls of a school in the traditional sense of the word. Then he taught them goodness and virtue, which he described as knowledge and justice, in discourse of the one who urged others to get the truth from within themselves ("Know thyself," the rule that was carved into stone at the entrance to Apollo's temple at Delphi in Greece). Hence, his philosophy of ethics created a foundation and a point of departure for the most prominent philosophers who came after him and the philosophical trends that emerged thereafter.

## 3. Plato (428-348 BC)

Plato was impacted by the teachings of his master, Socrates, after he was frustrated by the unjust judgment of those who unreluctantly, publicly, and constantly spoke up and defended truth. Immediately afterwards, he embarked on a new vision in the world of thought that prompted him to transform the questions arising within himself into theories. These, actually,



were aimed to reveal the highest human values in a process of authenticating and foregrounding that he built on the basis of distinguishing between two worlds: the world of the tangible, immersed in the darkness of the people of the cave, and the world of ideals, embracing the universal, immutable truths. In other words, Plato asserts that there are two realms: the first is the physical realm, which is the material stuff we see and interact with on a daily basis, and which is changing and imperfect. The second realm is spiritual, which exists beyond the physical realm. Most of the theories he built in his dialogues thereafter were based, in one way or another, on the idea of his innovative, ideal world that does not change or disappear: from the dialectic of knowledge to the theory of remembrance, love and ascension, the soul in its parts and the proof of its immortality, all the way to the virtuous state or republic that should be ruled

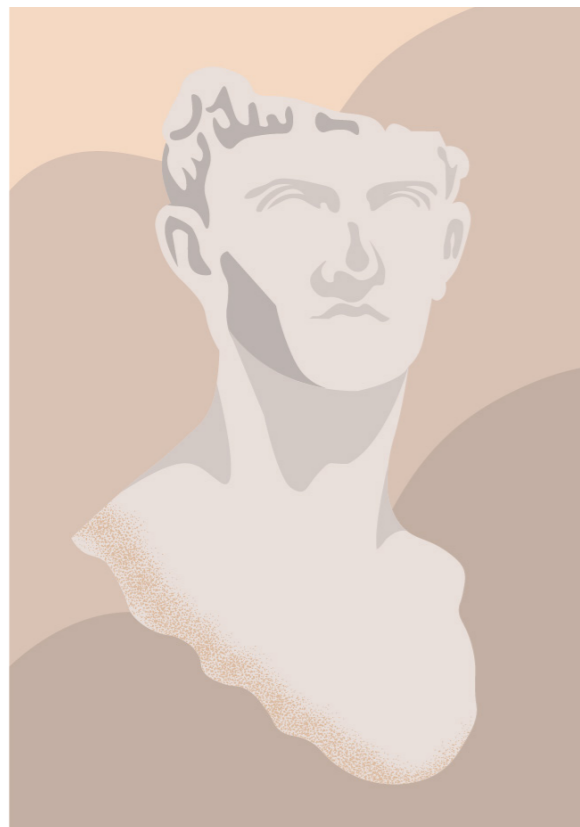
by the philosopher. This idea is closest to a type of utopia that is difficult for any regime to establish, even by the aristocratic system or by the elitist rule that Plato preferred.

## 4. Aristotle (384-322 BC)

It is understood that Aristotle opted to be a student of Plato, but his insight into philosophical thought and the new intellectual trend that he followed led him to choose to break away from the Platonic school, as, after he realized that the dualism rooted in Plato's philosophy was far removed from the logic that he decided to adopt. He decided to go beyond this dualism, launching his strict negative judgment on the world of ideals, saying that there was one world away from the hypothetical that had never convinced him.

## 5. Stoicism

Starting with the founder of the Stoic school, Zeno of Citium (ca. 334-ca. 262 BC) through to Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD), the Stoics excelled in their creative connection between the sciences of logic, nature, and ethics. Although, however, each Stoic philosopher had their own independent stand on the issue of assigning primacy to one or another of these four subjects, what brought them together and transformed their school into a captivating philosophical current was the contemplation of man reaching the stage of pure, true inner peace and placing this attainment in the status of the primary goal of their theories. They also linked their



belief in the inevitability of events to occur and the individual's acceptance of them with man's full will and freedom, and the urgent call for the individual to live themselves according to what nature dictates to them, far from thoughts, imaginations and emotions that could distance them from the course of natural law. Their goal, through this connection, is to bring man to the level of indifference to pleasure and pain, and overcoming the crisis of fear of death: "Whether it is a dispersion, or a resolution into atoms, or annihilation, it is either extinction or change." This is because death is a change in the elements that make up man and a return to what he was before his existence, according to Epictetus (ca. 50-130 AD), so that the human self is in harmony with the system of the universe. Some of them saw Stoicism as a surrender to the course of events and an absolute acceptance of it, while others believed that there was an exceptional strength in their steadfastness and asceticism.

## 6. Epicureanism

The philosophy of Epicurus (341-270 BC) devoted two central issues that were inseparable: the first was based on affirming that death is void or nothingness, so that a person should be freed from his fear in the face of death because when he is alive there is no death, and when death comes there will be no living. Epicurus explained this matter within the framework of his atomistic philosophy influenced by the doctrine of Democritus, as he described atoms as indivisible, and spoke of their shapes, weights, and infinite number.

He elaborated on his doctrine of atomism, urging man to first abandon the idea of fear of the gods who live between the worlds and have no authority over humans, and then to abandon the irrational desire for immortality. All of this was like the premise upon which he built the second issue, represented by his moral philosophy, which is based on defining three types of pleasures: natural and necessary, natural and unnecessary, and unnatural and unnecessary. He called on man to adopt the first type in order to enhance the health of the soul and body together, away from disorder, and to contemplate the second type in a way that makes him seek pleasures or turn away from them according to what his vision dictates. As for the third type, it should be avoided because it is not necessary for a person's survival or happiness. As for the judgments that were made against Epicurus, they are unfair because, even though he placed happiness in the pleasure of the body, he set limits on the matter and did not give up stressing the importance of philosophy in its practical aspect, considering it the only way to liberate the soul from pain and achieve its longing for a state of clarity in the mind and moderation, in the way of life.

## 7. Skepticism or Suspicion

It is well-established that most of the trends in Greek philosophy, despite their differences, which are slight at times and radical at others, have, since the pre-Socratic period, been desperate to confirm what they stated and introduced. As for skepticism, it was characterized by an attempt to lure the suspicious tendency into souls and

minds, to the extent that Pyrrho of Elis (ca. 365-275 BC), who was the most prominent Greek skeptic, stated that suspending judgment is a "necessary" condition for achieving a comfortable life away from the illusions of opinions and sciences. His theory was completed when 'Probability' was proposed within the new Skeptical Academy with Arcesilaus (ca. 316-241 BC) and Carneades (ca. 215-ca. 129 BC) in the face of the dogmatism of the Stoics, all the way to Aenesidemus (ca. 80-10 BC), who was influenced by Pyrrho, who was seeking to achieve the state of Ataraxia (inner peace) intellectually and practically.

In view of this, we have the right to ask: did the advent of logical and convictional concepts constitute a position of strength? Was embracing skeptical thought to the point of absolute indifference an attitude of weakness? I believe that this problem will remain unresolved indefinitely, as long as people feel that that the established is usually involving, within itself, mixed seeds of doubt and certainty.

## 8. Neoplatonism

It can be stated that the main feature that characterized the personal life of Plotinus (205-270 AD) was, in its most prominent title, emancipation from the influences of the body and a trend towards purifying the soul through asceticism and meditation, with obvious influences of ancient Indian thought and the philosophy of Pythagoras, Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, all the way to the Stoics, as well as the influences of the teachings of his teacher Ammonius Saccas (175-242 AD)



This same characteristic helped him complete this process of emancipation within a practical intellectual embodiment in his philosophy based on emanation and characterized by being guided to 'The One'.

It is from 'The One', which is the reason behind the existence of everything in the universe, that the 'Mind' emerges, the 'Mind' that contemplates the world of ideals. From the 'Mind' emerges the 'First Soul' or the soul of the world, from which a second soul, i.e. nature, emerges. As for matter, it is the nothingness and the source of evil. Thus, man's highest goal is to liberate the soul from the body because its presence in it is the cause of evil. How to do that? Through virtue, through love of the ideal world, and by following the contemplative path, one reaches a higher degree of liberation and from voluntary, spontaneous drowning in a return to The One.

The path taken by Plotinus may be far from the basic sense of the word logic. However, what prompted him to do so were two things: the first was freedom from any inquiry based on a logical view of things, and the second was his entry into the world of interpretations inclined to spirituality through the language of poetry and feeling, and this is precisely what has distinguished him from all other philosophers who preceded him.

It can finally be concluded that the brilliance of Greek philosophy, adorned with the depth of its propositions, was strongly present in all of its intellectual trends, despite the differences, that are sometimes simple and sometimes serious, between these trends. These differences did not prevent most Greek philosophers from adopting the same

highest goal, which is an honest dive into the depths of the human self, in order to know and practice virtue and achieve the existential response to man's continuous search for true inner happiness. It is undoubtedly, in this situation, that medieval Arab philosophy would embrace this Greek philosophical heritage, drawing from it the basic elements of thinking that contributed at that time to building Arab philosophical systems.

## The Resurrection of the Phoenix of Ancient Arabic Philosophy

Ali Muhammad Asber

The majority of historians of philosophy, Western and Arab, agree that the global philosophical beginning was with the Greek philosophers, specifically with Thales of Miletus (ca. 624 BC - 546 BC), who is considered the founder of the first school in the history of philosophy, by which I mean the Milesian or Ionian School. But these same historians did not view the ancient Eastern thought that appeared before Greek philosophy, whether it appeared in the Near East or the Far East, except as a mythical, symbolic thought that did not rise to the level of demonstrative conceptual thinking. This view has prevailed to this day, and historians of philosophy have turned a blind eye to any attempt aimed at rereading the universal philosophical beginning except within the horizon of the Greek beginning. Aristotle spoke about this beginning, explaining that

Thales, the founder of this school of philosophy [Ionian School], says the permanent entity is water (which is why he also propounded that the earth floats on water). Presumably, he derived this assumption from seeing the nutriment of everything is moist and that heat itself is generated from moisture and depends upon it for its existence (and that from which a thing is generated is always its first principle). He derived his assumption, then, from this; and also from the fact that the seeds of everything have a moist nature, whereas water is the first principle of the nature of moist things.

However, Thales was not the first to arrive at the first principle of things to be considered the first philosopher. What justifies our talk is the discovery of rare passages or fragments mentioned by the church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (265 AD - 339 AD) in his book, *Praeparatio evangelica* [Preparation for the Gospel]. Eusebius intends to prepare the pagan peoples to believe in the New Testament and abandon their paganism.

In this book, he reviews the pagans' beliefs and counter-responds to them. Among these peoples, Eusebius presents the Phoenicians' theory of the formation of the world.



The truth is that Eusebius derived his information about the Phoenicians from the Neoplatonic philosopher of Phoenician origin, Porphyry of Tiro (233 AD-304 AD), and specifically from a book by Porphyry titled *A Position Concerning Christians*. Only parts of this book have survived, but it seems that Eusebius was familiar with it and learned through it the philosophy of the Phoenicians. In this connection, an issue is worth noting: Eusebius clarifies that the source of Porphyry's theories was Philo of Byblos (ca. 64 AD-141 AD). This Phoenician writer, who is also known as Herennius Philon, was famous for translating *The History of Phoenicia*, the book which was authored by the Phoenician writer, Sanchuniathon of Berytus, and had a tremendous impact on biblical studies and the history of philosophy. Philo, himself, translated the book from the Phoenician language into Greek. Concerning Sanchuniathon, Eusebius cites a very important fragment from Porphyry. He says that

Sanchuniathon, who made a complete collection of ancient history from the records in the various cities and from the registers in the temples, and wrote in the Phoenician language with a love of truth, lived in the reign of Semiramis, the queen of the Assyrians, who is recorded to have lived before the Trojan war or in those very times. And the works of Sanchuniathon were translated into the Greek tongue by Philo of Byblos.

If the Siege of Troy took place around 1259 BC-1179 BC, then the history of Sanchuniathon should date back to the twelfth century BC. But what draws attention here is the fact that the book, *The History of Phoenicia*, does not include the opinions of Sanchuniathon himself. Instead, Sanchuniathon presents the Phoenicians' beliefs about the formation of the world, meaning that the history of these Phoenician beliefs goes back to a very ancient stage.

However, what concerns us in this regard is

what was narrated by Eusebius, whether it was from Porphyry or from Philo of Byblos, that is, what is related to the vision of the Phoenician philosophers, whose views on the formation of the world were reported by Sanchuniathon in his book, *The History of Phoenicia*, as follows:

The first principle of the universe he supposes to have been air dark with cloud and wind, or rather a blast of cloudy air, and a turbid chaos dark as Erebus; and these were boundless and for long ages had no limit. But when the wind, says he, became enamoured of its own parents, and a mixture took place, that connexion was called Desire. This was the beginning of the creation of all things: but the wind itself had no knowledge of its own creation. From its connexion Mot was produced, which some say is mud, and others a putrescence of watery compound; and out of this came every germ of creation, and the generation of the universe. So there were certain animals which had no sensation, and out of them grew intelligent animals, and were called "Zophasemin," that is "observers of heaven"; and they were formed like the shape of an egg. Also Mot burst forth into light, and sun, and moon, and stars, and the great constellations.

From this text, we may conclude that the first principle of the formation of the world was a massive cosmic explosion that transferred existence from chaos to order, and the process of transition from chaos to order required – as is apparent in the text – the interaction of the four elements (clay, water, air, and fire). Accordingly, Mot – which is a cosmic force – emerged from clay or watery rot, and, from it, primitive living beings appeared and smarter living beings developed from them, which they called "Zophasemin" or observers of the sky, and from them conscious life was born, including man.

It emerged from the death of the heavens, including the spheres, stars, and planets, and the formation of the world was completed.

The ideas contained in this text are much deeper than what are contained in the remaining ideas from the fragments of Thales of Miletus, in particular, and the fragments of the followers of the Milesian or Ionian school in general. In the same context, the seeds of the theory of evolution are present – as is quite apparent – in the text of the Sanchuniathon, which was translated by Philo of Byblos. The authenticity of this text cannot be challenged: The specialized researcher, Edinburgh Professor P. B. R. Forbes wrote that documents from Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit), published since 1929, have "proved conclusively that Sanchuniathon is doubtless a verity in view of the many correspondences between him and these fresh texts."

The truth is that the above also proves the sincerity of Eusebius in quoting Porphyry and Philo of Byblos. In addition, the influence of Phoenician philosophy on the emergence of Greek philosophy does not stop there. The Roman historian Pliny confirmed that the atomic theory of Democritus, the famous Greek philosopher, was mostly taken from Dardanus of Phoenicia, whose grave was exhumed in order to search for his books. The Syrian Stoic philosopher, Posidonius of Apameia, also believed that the atomic theory of Democritus was also taken from another Phoenician philosopher of the atomistic trend, Mochus of Sidon.

In addition, the scholar Joseph Azize, in his book, *The Phoenician Solar Theology*, tried to define the philosophical dimensions regarding the Phoenicians' opinion of the Sun as found in Emperor Julian's Hymn to King Helios (331 AD - 363 AD). That Byzantine emperor abandoned Christianity and embraced the philosophical beliefs of the Phoenicians, and found the truth in them.

Joseph Azizi asserts that the main concept of the solar theological vision of the Sun's representation of the mind had existed in Phoenicia long before Julian. This evidence is found in Mochus's statement that Oulomos was the first god that could be perceived by the mind, and was perhaps an unmixed mind.

There is no doubt that the idea of linking the cosmic mind and the Sun was present in Greek philosophy, specifically in the philosophy of Aristotle, who proposes a division into mind (nous) which he maintains is present generally in nature, between the active and the passive. He compares the action of the active mind to the action of light. In that assertion, we can see that the active mind is compared to light, which, in a certain way, makes colors that exist in potentiality exist in actuality. This mind is separate, impassive, and unmixed, as it already exists in its essence. This is because what he does is always more honorable than what he reacts to, as is the case with regard to the first principle and matter.

Accordingly, the reliable texts discovered about the philosophy of the Phoenicians reveal that the philosophical beginning was not Greek at all. Rather, it was Phoenician. The name Phoenicians was given by the Greeks to the Canaanites who spread throughout the Arab world, and there is no more evidence of the Arabism of the Canaanites than their alphabet discovered in Ugarit. The truth remains that this alphabet is considered the oldest alphabet in the world. The comparison between the Canaanite alphabet and the Arabic alphabet reveals decisively and definitively that the Canaanites are genuine Arab people and undermines all claims that deny their Arabism. If the global philosophical beginning began with the Arab Canaanites many centuries before the Greek philosophical beginning, is it not our cultural duty now that we resurrect the Arab philosophical phoenix from its ashes?

# Frankfurt School A Tale of Generations

Moaz Hassan

Enlightenment is the spirit of philosophy, as philosophical schools and movements, regardless of their times and conditions of emergence, have been preoccupied with liberating man and elevating his status. In this article, we are attempting at shedding light on one of the most important schools of philosophy in the modern era, i.e., the Frankfurt School, which has decisively contributed to the criticism of modern societies.

What makes the Frankfurt School so special is that it has been contemporary with all the turning points and fluctuations of the twentieth century as it developed its tools and approaches. This major contribution started since 1930, when philosopher Max Horkheimer, one of the founding philosophers, became director of the Institute for Social Research – headquarters of the Frankfurt School –, which was affiliated with Goethe University. It continued through to the fourth generation of today.

This school arose in light of the changes that gave birth to social and economic conflicts in the aftermath of the First World War. These changes were contemporary to major fluctuations of the era (Fascism, Capitalism, and Communism), which were together the basis for the School's philosophical project and its endeavor to criticize modern Western

society and make social change a central goal thereof. It is worth noting also that one of the most important reasons behind the school's emergence was related to the transformation of enlightened thinking that promised people liberation from superstitions and the barbarism of the prevailing social systems.

In 1924, a symposium was held in a hotel in Frankfurt, under the title 'Reviving Marxism'. At that time, more than twenty thinkers, including Max Horkheimer, Gyorgy Lukács, Friedrich Pollock, and Karl August Wittfogel, gathered there. Several issues were discussed, such as the crisis of social sciences and their relative independence, the crisis of the capitalist society, Marxism and philosophy. Therefrom, the features of the birth of a new critical theory of society came into light. After the end of the symposium, a number of participating philosophers held successive meetings in order to draft a philosophical project that was later known as the 'Frankfurt School'.

The Frankfurt School relied on a combination of a number of social sciences in presenting its theory. The truth is that it used the comprehensive approach in its criticism of modern societies, presenting a new vision based on the scientific intellectual bondage with reality and practice.



Following are some of the elite figures of this school:

- 1) In philosophy, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and Herbert Marcuse.
- 2) In sociology, Siegfried Krikor, Friedrich Pollock, Franz Neumann, and Leo Lowenthal.
- 3) In psychology, Erich Fromm.
- 4) In economics and politics, Klaus Ove and Henrik Grossmann.

Concerning the critical theory – the core of the Frankfurt School project – we may propose that the name goes back to a programmatic article titled Traditional and Critical Theory, which Horkheimer had published in 1937 in The Journal of Social Research, affiliated with the Research Institute. In this article, Horkheimer, in fact, criticizes the history of the basic features of scientific activity in the classical concept of theory, since the French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650).

Horkheimer's complaint has always been that scientific specialization, i.e., science as a profession, leads to the separation of theory, as a purely intellectual field, from social practice. The critical theory represented the cornerstone of the Frankfurt School, and it was also called Freudian Marxism, as it greatly intersected with Karl Marx's criticism of political economy and psychological

analysis by Sigmund Freud.

If we attempt summarizing its fundamental constituents or defining it, without falling into the trap of abridging it, we could say that it is an attempt to understand the world and the changes it witnesses. Besides, it is an attempt aimed at revealing the development of the critical mind, which is dominated by the culture of questioning and creativity, and at revealing the strengths and weaknesses in the human soul.

The majority of Max Horkheimer's articles, in the 1930s, focused on distinguishing the critical theory from its philosophical challenges, and on clarifying how Liberal Capitalism has betrayed its fundamental promise of creating psychological, ethnic, and political foundations for inclusivity. That era coincided with the rise of Nazism to power under the leadership of Adolf Hitler in Germany in 1933. At that time, the Institute was closed, given its Marxist ideology and the affiliation of the majority of its patrons to Judaism. The center moved to Geneva, Switzerland, and then to Columbia University in New York City in 1934. After the decline of Nazism, the Institute was reopened in 1951 in Frankfurt under the supervision of Friedrich Pollock.

Before that, however, Horkheimer worked, during his stay in the United States, with the philosopher Theodor Adorno on the most important publication of this generation, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

This book topped the school's most important achievements in the 1940s. However, despite dealing with the concept of enlightenment and its criticism, it continued the examination of the idea of getting rid of fear and liberating the mind from the crisis finds itself in, due to the myths of enlightenment. The most prominent chapter of the book, which has generated widespread controversy, is how researchers deal with the concept of Greek mythology through its connection with interpretation, its relationship with themes of sacrifice and victims, and with the body and the intellect. The truth is that these researchers tried to provide a new rationalization for the concept. They describe this development in an impressive way, by identifying the very ancient mythological impact that holds connotations that are still valid in the human psyche. In this context, they believe that in the mythical world of Homer's *Odyssey*, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, humans are characterized by a mechanism that controls their behaviors of self-affirmation through self-denial, exchange, deception, and alienation. These are behaviors necessary for mastering the rational nature.

Here, we cannot ignore the reference to the other works of the generation of major pioneers in the Frankfurt School, such as the book, *Reason and Revolution*, and *Eros and Civilization* by the philosopher Herbert Marcuse.

As for the contributions of the second generation of the school, we can confirm that they were more diverse in their approach,

playing a fundamental role in social change and in the cultural formation at the time. This, however, does not ignore their clear impact on the student revolutions at the end of the sixties of the last century, which, in turn, led to major radical changes in politics, culture, and social reality. Among the philosophers of the second generation, one may refer to philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas, the pioneer of the second generation. His most important books are *The Theory of Communicative Action*, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, and *Knowledge and Human Interest*. The next philosopher to mention is Karl-Otto Apel, whose most important works include *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy*, *Transcendental Semiotics* and the *Paradigms of First Philosophy*, and *Discourse Ethics, Democracy, and International Law: Toward a Globalization of Practical Reason*. Important to mention is also the German psychologist Erich Fromm. His most important books include *Escape from Freedom*, *The Sane Society*, and *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. Among them is also the jurist and sociologist Franz Neumann, author of *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*. It is worth noting here that the efforts of this generation focused on valuing the individual in liberal societies that describe themselves as progressive. We may remember in this context the most important addition of this generation in enriching the Frankfurt School, which is the exploration of the communicative foundations of the basics of the intellect. In fact, the contributions of the social philosopher Jürgen Habermas, a contemporary philosopher born in 1929, were the most prominent in this field.

Habermas established the law of the 'communication curve,' as he argues that language is the main factor in determining the degrees of consciousness and the moral standard of human beings. Based on the dissection of the communicative foundations of the reason, and their close connection with language, we can arrive at new laws and theories that will lead to social harmony. Accordingly, each speaker's statements represent claims of validity, which their interlocutors must acknowledge in their communicative procedures. Based on this self-recognition, individual actors can agree on controversial issues and reach a reasonable social consensus. The truth of the matter is that the enrichment of the critical theory from the second generation came through the law of the communication curve and the effect of linguistic exchange, in addition to dissecting the structure of liberal societies and understanding the laws of the process of social change.

The Frankfurt School was enriched by the knowledge of this generation, and was a source of inspiration for the third generation, which was led later by the philosopher Axel Honneth (b. 1949), who directed the Research Institute from 2001 to 2018.

It remains that the critical theory developed by the founding generation and followed by the second generation is more developed today thanks to the efforts of the third generation. By reading the book, *Pathologies of Reason: On the Legacy of Critical Theory*, written by the philosopher Honneth, we can understand the mechanism of modernizing critical theory and developing it in an ethical direction that serves the purpose for which this theory was

born. There is another book by Honneth that serves the same purpose, titled, *Pathologies of Reason: On the Legacy of Critical Theory* (2009 edition). He stands alongside philosopher Axel Honneth, Sella Benhabib and Hartmut Rosa in representing the third generation. In addition to developing critical theory, they worked to formulate the features of a new philosophical theory.

It is the philosophy of recognition, the most prominent contribution of the third generation, a social philosophy, which differs from sociology and the social sciences, given that it is distinguished by the ethical approach to the social issue. This new social theory allows for the establishment of a standard for criticizing society by examining questions such as, why do various social movements penetrate a single society?! How do we achieve inner peace within ourselves and external peace with others? What are the conditions for a good life? To answer questions like these, the philosopher Honneth suggests returning to the question of what is society basically? Thus, the first seeds of the emergence of the philosophy of recognition came into being, through the following topic: The struggle for recognition, the moral rules of social conflict. This philosophy is considered one of the most prominent milestones that shaped the third generation stage.

There is also a contribution represented in the move from criticism of political economics to criticism of instrumental reason, a contribution attributed to Sila Ben Habib (born in Turkey in 1950), who joined this generation through a coincidence that brought her together with the pioneer of the second generation, Jürgen Habermas.

That was when she studied under his supervision at the Max Planck Foundation in Starnberg after receiving a scholarship to Germany in 1979. Her work revolves around the validity of the transition to communicative rationality and connections with the outside world, and she mentions that the credit for this goes to Habermas, as he was the one who initiated the concept of communicative rationality.

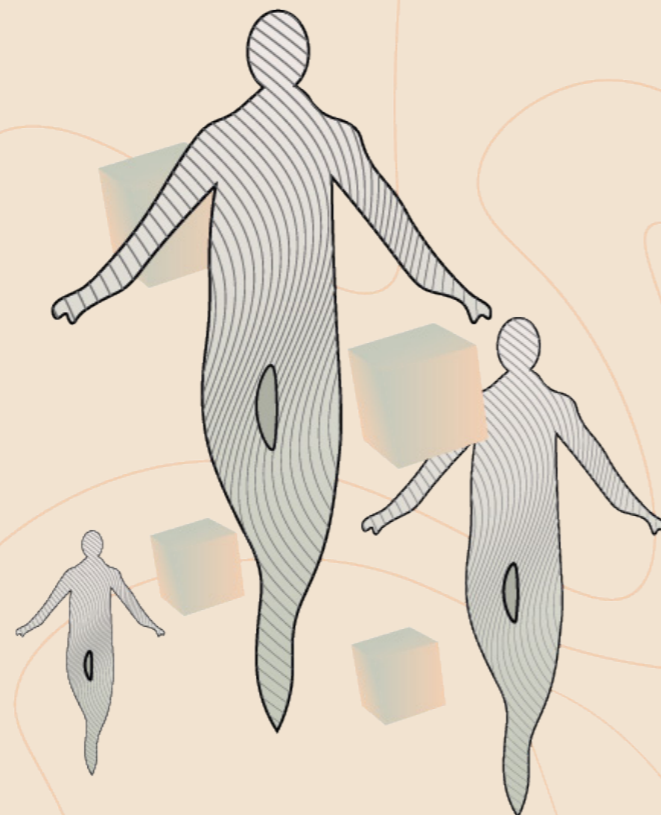
On the other hand, philosopher Hartmut Rosa (born 1965) is considered by many specialists to represent the fourth generation after Axel Honneth, even though they worked together as there is no significant age difference between them. We can describe Rosa as a pioneer of social acceleration who reshaped the critical theory in accordance with the current changes in our world. Technical acceleration and the acceleration of social change commensurate with the pace of social life made Hartmut Rosa's interest focus on understanding and studying contemporary social developments. In an interview given to the German magazine *Herder Korrespondenz* in 2017, Rosa said:

We have created social structures that impose on us the way the world is made anew. If we cannot deal with the existing speed and acceleration, alienation will be present even when eating breakfast with the family. In Our daily work: We are forced to have a silent relationship with the world in order to act as quickly and efficiently as possible, not to mention the alienation of man in his work, the pace of which is increasing in our time.

Rosa authored a book titled, *Social*

*Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*, which was a new formulation of the approach initiated by the first generation, but in line with the problems and spirit of the current era.

The bottom line is that the Frankfurt School was considered for a century the most prominent and influential school in European societies, due to being a social philosophy that directed its criticism at the concepts, values, and laws governing the mechanisms of these societies. It was the cornerstone of the process of social change, and over its four generations, the crises and concerns of each stage were kept at pace with a creative and renewed mind that did not deviate from its goal of enlightenment and advancement.



## Philosophical Responses Reconsidered

Husam-ud-Deen Darweesh

It is common, in general, and, in Arab philosophical culture in particular, to speak about the priority of questions in philosophy, and about them being more important than the philosophical responses, not to mention that they represent the most important element in philosophy. This claim involves, explicitly or implicitly, reducing the importance of the philosophical answer or answers that have actually been presented or that could be presented, in principle, in interaction with the philosophical question. In this text, I would like to bring to mind the fact that the philosophical answer has been reconsidered. This attempt does not aim to minimize the value of the philosophical question, but rather aims to identify some features of the philosophical answer, emphasize the dialectical relationship between it and the philosophical question, and argue that it is no less important than the question.

In this context, it is imperative to remember that philosophy, in general, seemed to be constructed by the questions it had raised more than by the responses it provided. More than this, the history of philosophy suggests that asking certain questions was the beginning of philosophy itself. According to this history, philosophy emerged with the Greek posing questions about essences, such as "What is

being?", "What is justice?", "What is truth?" etc. For example, the question about the meaning of justice, as stated in the Socratic dialogue of Plato's *The Republic*, leads the interlocutors to pose questions about many other essences, related to medicine, engineering, politics, etc. It is worth noting here that before this Greek proposition, the addressing these topics, in Egypt and Mesopotamia, was limited, in the first place, to phrases such as: I do not steal, I do not lie, I will not commit adultery, etc., or questions of the type "Why is this injustice?" or, taking the form of the Jewish commandments, "Do not steal, Do not lie, Do not commit adultery, etc."

In the twentieth century, with Gottlob Frege and the emergence of what is called analytical philosophy, there became a new philosophical trend that gives priority to propositions, that is, to declarative statements, and does not care much about expressions, including those that include questions or inquiries. However, Robin Collingwood revisited the importance of questions, and spoke about the importance of the question and the necessity of taking it into account as a decisive methodological element in philosophy and in human knowledge in general. For his part, Hans-Georg Gadamer, in his book, *Truth and Method*, went further, and stressed the priority and precedence of the question.

While acknowledging the significance of the philosophical questions or inquiries in philosophy, I do see the need to emphasize the importance of the philosophical answers or the answers in philosophy by highlighting some of their characteristics and implications.

A philosophical question is not just a question, and a philosophical answer is not just an answer. The philosophical question is interrogative, concerned with obtaining an answer, assuming that it is possible, and realizing the multiplicity of possible answers. The philosophical answer, on the other hand, is a response to the concern inherent in the question to obtain an answer, and to its attempt to explore possible answers to that question. Just as the philosophical question that looks for an answer is distinguished from an epiplexis, erotesis, anthypophora, or rhetorical question, the philosophical answer is distinguished by providing new knowledge or vision, and not being limited to expressing emotions, or conjuring up pre-set knowledge and repeating it. The possibility of answering the question, stimulating thinking about it, and searching for the answer are some of the conditions for the question to be considered a philosophical question. In this sense, the possibility of an answer or a possible answer is one of the conditions for any question or inquiry to be considered a philosophical question or inquiry.

The question in general, and the philosophical question in particular, stems from knowledge of ignorance or lack of knowledge. In this sense, we understand the famous saying attributed to Socrates: "All I know is that I know nothing." The philosophical answer

includes this anti-dogmatic tendency and an acknowledgment of ignorance and the possibility of disagreement in it and about it. The philosophical answer generally takes the form of "yes and no," as Jalal Al-Azm rightly stated. It proves something, but it believes that there are limits to this evidence, or to the truth it contains and confirms. This is why the perspectival or interpretive feature is immanent to philosophy. As is the case with a philosophical question, the philosophical answer includes an acknowledgment, explicitly or implicitly, of deficiency and limitation, and in this recognition, especially or specifically, lies its philosophical perfection. This deficiency, or rather philosophical perfection, seems present and clear in the philosophical answer as much as it opens up horizons for additional questions and various answers.

The philosophical answer does not exhaust the question, but, in turn, it is not exhausted by any question either. It does not exhaust the question because it does not close it, cannot close it, and does not seek this closure at all. The philosophical question remains exciting to think in and about it, and about the answers given to it and with it, and to provide new answers that go beyond the previous answers, which are based on them, and do include them, at the same time. On the other hand, philosophical answers are not exhausted by the questions from which they start, but rather necessarily connect themselves to other philosophical questions and answers, and make themselves the starting point for additional philosophical discussions.

As is the case with every answer, the philosophical answer seems chronologically subsequent to the philosophical question. Based on this, such an answer seems, for a moment or more, subordinate to the question, and secondary or marginal compared to it. What is absent from this vision is that the philosophical question does not emerge from nothing, but rather is based on knowledge and philosophical answers that preceded it. Philosophy itself, with its questions and answers, should pose the question of what philosophy is, as Collingwood says in his talk about



the philosophical method. In philosophy in particular, history, in general, and the history of philosophy in particular, is present with its questions and answers, or it can be invoked in every philosophical question. In contrast to science, which moves, as Thomas Kuhn explains in his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, from one guiding model to another, and in which the new model is established by achieving a break from the old model, philosophy, with its questions and continuity, does not cut off the 'umbilical cord' with its past and its history, but it is often keen on 'kinship'.

Besides, when discussing a philosophical question, it is difficult to address, digest, and understand it, and seek to provide answers to it without understanding the answers on which it is based in the first place and without understanding the diverse and different answers, often to the point of contradiction, that have been presented to answer it. The history of philosophy is not only a history of questions, but also a history of answers to these questions. Philosophers not excel only by asking new questions, but also by providing different answers to the same questions. If philosophy were limited to the questions it poses, only or primarily, it would lose its historicity and philosophical dimension. The answers are what create a history of philosophical questions, and therefore, together with the questions, constitute the essence of philosophy.

Additionally, it can be argued that there is a constant controversy between questions and answers in philosophy. This debate is not negative, as is the case with Theodor Adorno, for example, in that it does not lead to any synthesis between the two sides, but rather it is a positive debate that allows them to move beyond themselves to new questions and answers. This transcendence takes a Hegelian form, such that the new composition does not include a complete cancellation or exclusion of the previous one. On the other hand, the philosophical debate between questions and answers does not lead to realizing the absolute knowledge, as is the case in the Hegelian debate. In all cases, the philosophical absolute remains relative and based on a certain perspective, without being able to dominate, impose its opinion alone, and produce cognitive unilateralism such as that which is often prevalent in religion, ideology, and even in science.

Usually, the answer responds to the call of the philosophical question and its real depth, and is embodied in questioning it, criticizing it, reformulating it, highlighting its prior hypotheses, and discussing its potential horizons. Accordingly, one may claim that, in every philosophical answer, there are philosophical questions, and in every philosophical question, there is a reliance on previous philosophical answers, and there is a foundation for subsequent philosophical answers. On this basis, we see that there is no room to separate the philosophical question from the philosophical answer, and there is no meaning in giving value to one of them by

underestimating the value of the other. Each of them contains the other, and enters into an integral relationship with it, even when they appear to be contradictory. Contradiction is a condition for integration and does not necessarily negate it.



# The Artistic Language in Philosophical Attention-Shifting

Marilyn Yunis

We live in a network of choices that slide between common sense and perspicacity and between the free format that escapes restrictions and the assigned narrative format. Besides, every linguistic classification involves a kind of *ordo*, according to Roman Jakobson, and this linguistic chivalry, which represents a subject of prevention, creates a dispute between considering language as a fortress of meaning, or as a means unable to keep pace with thought. Although philosophical thinking is one of the types of thinking that is most concerned with semantics and most capable of producing essential separation, it does not have any definite meaning, and the problem of philosophy lies in its semantic richness, as it is impossible for us to choose a specific semantic statement. The answer dictates to us that what produces truths are the positions of multi-dimensional ideas and their complex spaces that are spread in science, art, religion, and politics. These concepts, specifically art, require the presence of philosophy, which is pregnant with abundance and pluralism, and works to recover meanings from their infinite space. The reality of the matter is that the problem of language oscillates between the intellectual desire for the understanding and the aesthetic taste in the chaos of imagination. In other words, between the ontological positivism (*positivité ontique*)[1] where we lie in the realm of claims and the malleable exaggeration of the subject matter (*res posita*), and the positivism concerning creation[2] (*positivité théique*).

## 1 - Disturbances of the linguistic motivation between denotation and connotation:

The desire of philosophical wisdom appears, between those who endow the philosophical question with wisdom and judgment and those who endow the art of questioning with astonishment, to assume the task of creating logic to correct the mind so that it only understands what is right. However, the discrepancy in the performance of probabilities remains open to several problems that may not be determined by a clear interpretation. We sometimes encounter this matter in the conflict of philosophical schools of thought due to the difference in terminology [3], and we also encounter it in various types of scientific phenomena whose truth we prove through the available solution, or 'habitual knowledge'.

## 2- Introspecting the philosophical dimension in the language of art:

The philosophy of language is based on the study of thinking according to the linguistic symbols formed by the mind equivalent to language (Noam Chomsky) [4]. The world is made of signs, and the lack of signs is the lack of a signifier, as there is no reality in itself, but rather we must care about introducing meaning in order for there to be a reality (Nietzsche).

When language intervenes, the event is determined by adding the word to the original meaning. This addition does not carry any semantic benefit. In this context, Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi, in his book, *Al Imtaa Wal Mu'anasah*, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, in his *Logical-Philosophical Treatise*, explained that all philosophical problems, especially metaphysical ones, result from the misuse of language and inaccuracy thereof.

In contrast, philosophy without language becomes mere reflections, but it can control its various aspects, although ignoring and remaining silent about the inexplicable. This applies to the subject of beauty, which does not give any meaning to the signs of its issues. That is to say, between arts is a kinship, even if the means were different. They are, actually, the fruits of the self's evocation of the language of feeling, and the subject of the encounter between them does not take place according to the *modus operandi*, but rather the sign. Art is not a sensory being, but rather the being of the sensual, and it is not the given, but rather, it is that by which the given is given" [5]. Beauty, as an idea, sound, meaning, or image, can be the correct sense of the meaning (Vladimir Jankelevitch), the *Organon* and the only document of philosophy (Friedrich Schelling), or a cognitive state that the self realizes after getting rid of the demands of the will (Schopenhauer). Art, drawing, and cinema may enter into the game of developing thought and knowledge, given that the image of thought is constructed before thought (Deleuze), and it stimulates the language of signs, the shimmering of meaning, and the internal formation of the aesthetic event escaping the subject. This formation needs a language that derives its importance from the absence of what is present and from the way in which it is exploited, just like music, which Jankelevitch and Schopenhauer considered the language of revealing the cosmic and divine will.

Or what Socrates considered beautiful in Plato's dialogue *Cratylus* to be power, and this power is the mind that gives a name to things and performs the actions that we call beautiful and that give us pleasure. But the mind may be the cause of the problem of language (Descartes), and rationalization with its inferential meaning may be subject to criticism, so what we think of as a definition becomes a difference. So, how does the language of the mind express the essence of the soul?

## 3- Artistic recantation in the contradicting philosophy:

We often complain about the imperialism of the mind, the aridity of language, the process of liberating things from metaphysical interpretations, and the restrictions of grammar and logic revealed by Heidegger's writings that seek to shift language away from the traditional concept, the denotation, in order to reveal its creative connotations. This creative shift of language and the relating uniqueness are in a constant state of latitude, as if man turns free from restrictions in the imagination of languages and their migration and change.

As it has been established, we cannot define the spoken word without considering its intended purpose, but although language is considered a major mental structure [6], it sometimes abandons the predicates of the subject. In this context, Hegel believes that everything is much more than its actual state. For example, thought is more than its objects, and the language of thought is more than the language of reality because it looks at the potential of the things inherent in it. Kant also thinks that nature acts as a mind in man, and is the faculty of generating aesthetic ideas and the images of these ideas go beyond the concept of abstract thought.





So the word is said in the language of things and understood in another language. It may not help us in expressing things (Valerie). This is because determining the truth is not always the purpose of the statement. Someone may say that language enables us to conceal our thoughts. There are also senses that can be alerted according to the law of habit or according to extensive conclusions, and this is what we may call 'a state of belief'. In order to avoid the evil of falling into the paths of platitudinous knowledge, we resort to the negative path, and negation is what we take away from it what cannot be, "what is not." The fact is that we need to explore this negation in ways other than what thought explores because its basis is the absolute and its material is the reflective endowment. We also resort to the apophatic philosophy, which means ascending to the gentleness of the secret space and nullifying the effects of the ontic intrigue.

In art, utopias may intersect, offering alternatives to conflicting issues in order to establish new realities that extend far beyond the scope of their meanings, and from them the utopia of the music of meaning is formed. The power of the artistic language controls the world through vision and tongue and adapts it to its artistic image, in contrast to the philosophical language, which only reflects the system of culture, as Marina Yaquello says. This aesthetic language, which possesses the features of languages in all their cognitive fields, relies on an implicit belief within which the movement crystallizes in abandoning the fixed [the constant] in order to move into the space of the changing [the mutable]. By doing so, the relevant movements become active on behalf of artistic taste that gets the mind into contemplation and vision, featuring the language of intuition and luminosity. Accordingly, that which has been unthinkable turns thinkable.

## The Quotidian Tricks: An Essay on 'Second Philosophy'

Muhammad Abu Hashem Mahjoub

The idea of this paper is that philosophy is established and set according to a sort of transcendence of the everyday: elevating its multiplicity to an ideal unity (Socrates in the Dialogues), or denying its claim in the name of some essentiality (Plato and Aristotle). It may also take the form of representing it according to a mathematical or physical network (Descartes in the book *The Passions of the Souls*), concealing its truth against its obvious and direct appearance (Marx-Freud) or interpreting its never-ending meaning (interpretations of different variations). All of these positions define philosophy as "beyond" the everyday (*méta-quotidien*), and place the sign of its realization in leaving this appearance, or this phrase, which is the everyday, towards a kind of foundation that is precisely this beyond. There is, then, a kind of silent conflict between the partiality of the quotidian, its directness, and its fallacy, and the essence of philosophy, its totality, and its explication or interpretation. In this conflict, as is the case in every conflict, there are two types of discourse: one is an apparent, dominant discourse, which is the discourse of philosophy, and the second is a discourse that does not accept complete withdrawal, and expresses itself in an occasional way. It is a kind of presence that deceives the dominance

of philosophical statement, and creeps to the surface, outmaneuvering the censorship of the concept (*censure du concept*). However, even in this case, and even when the philosophical quotidian evades in order to appear at the scene, it fails to register its presence except through a form of a second philosophy, the other philosophy, which avenges on the desire to forget and repress it, and undertakes to express it as a state of the limits of philosophy. This second discourse is the purpose of this paper representatively, I mean by presenting one or two examples, in which philosophy seems to amend itself by acknowledging the repressed, forgotten traditional thing that we call the quotidian, or the simplicity thereof. However, we can without embarrassment call it 'reality', 'the simple experience of existence, etc. This meaning is what we intend to mean whenever we talk about the second philosophy. The Second Philosophy is not a philosophical doctrine, nor a new position with a specific content. Rather, it is methodologically many gestures, among which we can mention gestures of refutation, recantation, reminding, reasoning, etc., and all of this is related to the daily in whose name all of these gestures are elevated.

Since I do not want now to establish a general, holistic position, I suggest that our path be the path of representation through examples from which lessons can later be learned.

The first example: Al-Tawhidi and Miskawayh. Here I resume, with some modifications, from an earlier text:

Abu Hayyan Al-Tawhidi (923-1023) and Miskawayh (932-1030) authored a book titled, *Al-Hawamil wa al-Shawamil*, which consists of questions posed by Al-Tawhidi, which he called 'Al-Hawamil', addressed to Miskawayh, who answered them in what Al-Tawhidi himself called, 'Al-Shawamil'. Some historian suggested that Al-Tawhidi, in his interpretation, wanted through his questions, to embarrass Miskawayh in a sort of test of his philosophical knowledge. However, Al-Tawhidi describes that knowledge, in the second night of his book, *Al-Imtā wa al-Mu'ānasa* [Book of Enjoyment and Bonhomie], that it was a belated knowledge because its possessor had been preoccupied, for a long time, with chemistry, so when he came to philosophy he was nothing but an imitator, mimicker and marginal. Others, such as Mohammed Arkoun, for example, argued that the book combined the rebellious and urgent questions of conscience, and the coldness of wisdom, its 'objectivity', and its 'pedagogy'. Al-Tawhidi was the thinker of denunciation, embarrassment, challenge, and disapproval of all the givens. He was the thinker of the tragedy of the quotidian, who approaches the absurd without shame or reverence. He did not miss any opportunity provided by questions to sneak to the surface and expose the silence of the cold mind regarding the injustices of life, and the foundation of science on a kind of marginalization of the concrete, contempt of

the quotidian, and the elevation of the abstract lesson.

This is not room for expansion in the interpretation of the meeting between Al-Tawhidi and Miskawayh, nor in drawing the features of the personality of each of them. Our main intuition within this 'compact' article is for the controversy of Al-Tawhidi and Miskawayh, which Arkoun went so far as to hint at, but it is an unsubstantiated hint. It may be, according to Arkoun, an imitation of the Platonic dialogue, and that we are in the midst of a debate between a Socratic tradition within Arab culture, and an Aristotelian-Platonist tradition. Here, it will suffice that we focus on the Socratic tradition, considering that it is a non-systematic tradition, which does not yet belong to the tradition of systematic philosophy, but, rather, it is closer to a kind of dialectical ethics, as Gadamer would say. Contrary to that, we consider the Aristotelian Platonic tradition a tradition of systematic philosophy, all parts of which are determined according to a principle that controls them, while they are in fact derived from it. Our intuition is that Al-Tawhidi is the one who represents this Socratic tradition, within which philosophical aspects are involved, which we will come to reveal later, and that Miskawayh is the one who represents the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition, I mean the philosophical tradition of sublimation of the everyday within the concept.

The reality is that the questions of Al-Tawhidi come from a rebellious soul that does not hesitate to pinpoint and expose contradictions and list their details, naming evil as it stands, without prevarication, for there is no embarrassment in the realm of philosophy.

The mission of philosophy has always been determined not to evade questions. Nevertheless, embarrassment occurs when its spokespersons deliberately hide behind a kind of general 'ambiguity' that, as Merleau-Ponty said in a slur on Bergson, aims to elevate "the divine wisdom that makes evil a lesser good." Here we are faced with a central problem in philosophy: the problem of justice, which is not only the justice of rewarding actions according to the degree of harm, and not only fairness to people with their rights, but it is also the typical image of justice, I mean divine justice, I mean the justice of giving in exchange for virtue, and deprivation in exchange for deficiency.

We know very well that this topic is a traditional topic, and that this question was not only raised between Al-Tawhidi and his Miskawis, but it is also a question of justice for a philosopher who did not even accept to listen to the cry of his interlocutor, the relevance of which is not hidden from any mind.

Al-Tawhidi said in issue 88 of *Al-Hawamil wal-Shawamil*, addressing his friend Miskawayh the philosopher, what we will summarize in this passage:

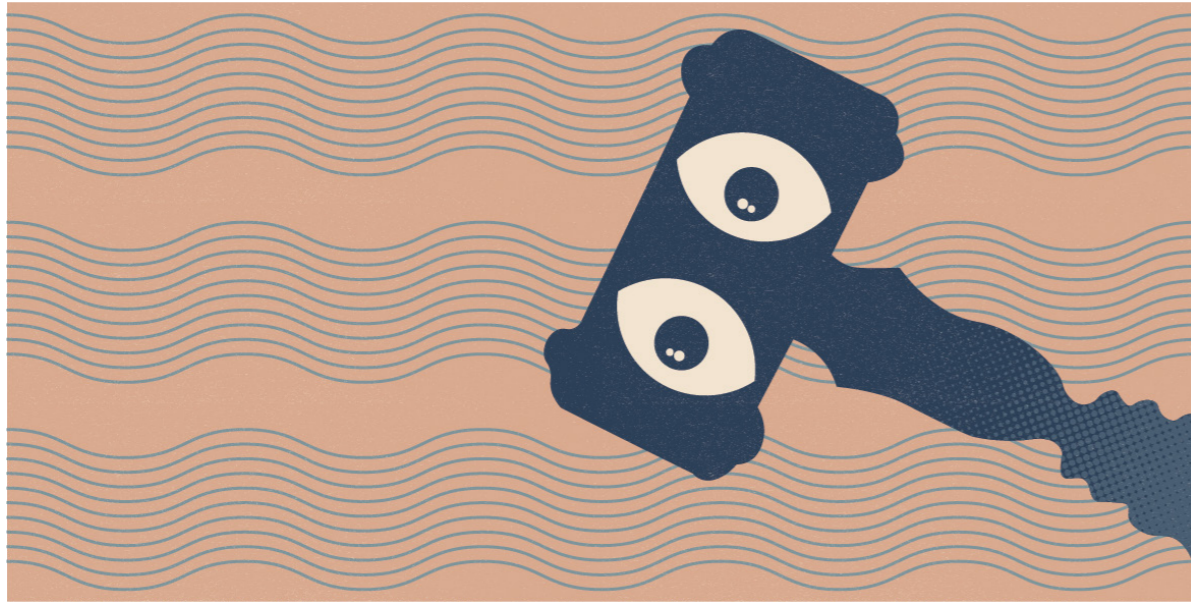
Tell me about an issue that is the queen of issues and the answer to it is the prince of answers, which is the soreness in the throat, the dirt in the eye, the pain in the chest, the ache on the back, the tuberculosis in the body, and the heartbreak in the soul... This issue is the deprivation of the virtuous and rewarding the deficient. For this reason, Ibn al-Rawandi took off the bond of religion, Abu Sa'id al-Husayri adopted doubt, [Mr.] X turned atheist and [Mr.] Y cast doubt on wisdom...

Al-Tawhidi cites the example of Abu Issa Al-Warraq, concluding that "researching this secret is obligatory, for it is a door to the peace

of the heart, the soundness of the chest, and the health of the mind..."

Muhammad Arkoun comments on this passage in particular that it bears the boldness of al-Tawhidi, and his unlimited search for a spiritual excess and an excess of truth. But the audacity of Al-Tawhidi, in our opinion, does not stop there: it is represented in particular in qualifying everyday topics to be topics of philosophical contemplation. Therefore, we cannot neglect his question, for example, about those who denounce an individual's conversion from one sect to another, or even residing in uncertainty. We cannot also neglect his question (in Issue 82) about the wisdom of considering people, on the one hand, equal in honor even though, on the other hand, they are different: does not this difference force us to recognize that they are either oppressed or ignorant? We cannot ignore his question (Issue 142): Why has the ban become a burden on people? Or about his question (Issue 65) about what drives a person to kill himself due to failure, need, inability, or the lack of what he finds for what he seeks...





All of these questions do not originate from the books of philosophers, and it is not their habit to delve into them. What is found with Al-Tawhidi is the entry of everyday awareness into questions of philosophy in an embarrassing way: they are questions that are embarrassing religiously and ethically, but they are especially embarrassing for philosophy because it is unconventional in itself. Philosophy has become established to answer its questions. However, it has not yet become accustomed to answering questions that it cannot deny the possibility of, and that it cannot answer except with major deliberation. It is these manipulations that we want to try on Question 88, which raises the issue of justice as fairness, and assumes that according to the criterion of virtue, we are required to answer: How can the virtuous be deprived? And the imperfect gratified?

The philosophical elaboration that we expect from Miskawayh is disappointingly delayed: Firstly, he refers delving into it to 'boredom' and 'apathy'. Secondly, he apologizes that he does not know the "simple words" of those who came

before about this issue. Miskawayh, answering the question, refers to what existents have in common, concluding that the purpose of man's existence is not "to acquire an abundance of possessions and to enjoy food and drink." Rather his purpose is to acquire sciences and knowledge, exercise insight and reasoning, and choose the best, that is, the image of humanity is completed by achieving honorable abodes that are not permitted to anyone other than those qualified for.

Thus, it makes the possessions that Al-Tawhidi described as a state of deprivation in not attaining them are not part of the essence of the purpose for which man was created.

Miskawayh's answer then justifies the deprivation of the virtuous by the fact that what he seeks is not his business, and the gains of the deficient by the fact that what he obtains is due to his specific nature and essence. There is no need for me to extrapolate the extent of Al-Tawhidi's conviction in Miskawayh's answer.

Is it justice that a person does not get what he deserves? If the abundance of possessions and the enjoyment of food and drink are outside the essence of man, then why did God make the reward of the afterlife almost limited to it? These are questions that Al-Tawhidi does not ask because Al-Hawamil wal-Shawamil is a book of questions and answers and not, as Arkoun thought, similar to a Socratic dialogue in which questions jump against answers and against answers to answers. Here we are within the structure of a philosophy that is based on a surprising answer, not on resuming the question.

Perhaps, there is justice with which we require to examine ourselves, a justice whose essence is based on the fact that those who are deemed to possess, and that those, who do not have, are deemed to get their reward from God. I do not know if these answers satisfy the deprived masses and the youth who waste their time daily, these young people whose day has become scorching, so we answered them with a scorching philosophy.

Now, I will return to Miskawayh: Arkoun worked hard to cultivate in Al-Hawamil wal-Shawamil two streams of Arab humanitarian tendency that we can refer to as an appeal for ourselves. Arkoun did not see that the humanitarian tendency was not a tendency shared by Miskawayh and Al-Tawhidi. Al-Tawhidi represented a day full of questions, and an awareness that objected to everything that was not compatible with the sound reason. As for Miskawayh, he did not see anything beyond the wisdom of universal goodness, which nothing can prevent from transcending the scene of the evil of small things in the name of that universal good. Those small things that force

the hopeless person to commit suicide, and the virtuous person to endure "the dried-up piece of bread, the withered legume, and the patched shirt." (Al-Imtā wa al-Mu'ānasa, Night 40).

Then, what is the human tendency? Let us understand for once that it is not only the tendency to ask about man, but it is also the decisive philosophical decision that man is the one who represents the world, wants it, and determines the values thereof because he is its center. We will not go to any civilizational, political, social, or cultural modernity. We will not go to all of that with a philosophy that justifies what exists in the name of supreme justice, total goodness, and nature drawn into things and beings. We will go to that modernity and to that human centrality by embarrassing that supreme justice, disturbing that universal good, and displacing that established meaning, I mean by cultivating it in man after it has long resided outside of him. Such questions were asked by Al-Tawhidi but not by Miskawayh, who was only busy putting out fires.

Parmanides reproached Socrates for his hesitation to make an example of everything, including hair, garbage, and clay. He told him:

That is because you are still young, Socrates, and philosophy has not yet mastered you as he thought it would one day, when you will not disdain any of these things. Now, because of your age, I can see that you have a lot of respect for people's opinions... (Parmanides, 130).

What makes something philosophical? What is the dividing line between the "philosophical" of this thing and the "non-philosophical" of the other? Can we assign to philosophy topics that, by their nature, belong to it, and other topics that philosophy excludes, does not recognize, and does not address?

To philosophy, I mean to metaphysics, which is its other name, belong traditional topics that philosophers have identified since the Pre-Socratics uttered the terms logos, nous, and cosmos...then Plato and Aristotle made them objective topics for thought. Consequently, the matter does not relate to denying philosophy its traditional topics, but it also does not relate to recounting its propositions, I mean the propositions of philosophers on these traditional topics. What we would like to delve into instead is that pebble that was carried by the first salvos of the uprising of the oppressed, which carried the symbolism of individual winning and losing in boys' games, and which philosophy did not always pay attention to after psychoanalysis placed it in the reservoir of the unconscious. It is that which Hegel, according to some historians, looked at its heaps, accumulated in the Alps, glorifying the magnificence of those mountains and reassuring himself that they did not represent any gain for dialectical consideration. However, Hegel aesthetically returned to see in the circles that the child creates, by throwing the pebble into the water, an act in which he finds a reflection of himself and a recreation thereof. This is similar to Merleau-Ponty's belief that the physical body is an important part of what makes up the subjective self. Ponty realizes through Bergson that even if we are not that pebble, then

when we see it, it awakens in our perceptual system echoes, so our awareness reveals itself as a descendant of that pebble... and as a rescue from us of that mute thing that, as soon as it enters our lives, begins to spread its implicit presence, that mute thing that

reveals itself through us. So, what we thought was identical, we found it coexisting.

Therefore, we want to talk about the pebble. Not about the pebble itself, but rather as a neglected paradigm in philosophy, and the model of the everyday from which philosophy has always determined its estrangement. In return, we want to philosophize about this forgotten neglect, and raise it to the method of philosophical contemplation and consideration.

The bottom line is that I will consider philosophy not in terms of what it is as a discourse about the neglected, concluded from what philosophers may have said here or there, but in terms of what it is as a gesture and a style. Given the horizon that I looked at, I can say that the philosophical thing is first and foremost a non-philosophical thing, because philosophy is not fundamentally aware of itself as a philosophy of things. Rather, it is not aware of itself as such except in a second sense, perhaps among the purposes of what I call a 'second philosophy'.

## Lucian of Samosata's Philosophical Intuitions

Nariman Amer

The Euphrates was in splendor when the Syrian city of Samosata, located on its western bank, witnessed the birth (in 125 AD) of one of the greatest philosophers and men of letters in the period of the Roman occupation of Syria that began in the year 64 AD. In that year, the Roman general Pompey ended the rule of the Greek Seleucids and turned Syria into a Roman province. During the period when Syria had been subject to the rule of the Seleucids, from 312 BC onward, the Seleucids imposed the Greek language on its people with obvious domination of the Hellenistic culture to the extent that the country became a model of Hellenistic civilization. This was mostly due to the long contact of Greek civilization with the Eastern civilizations after the conquests of Alexander the Great in Asia.

This means that Lucian grew up in a country dominated by the Greek language and culture, and ruled by Roman emperors. From his birth to his death in 180 AD, he lived through the times of four Roman emperors: Hadrian (117-138 AD), Antonius Pius (138-161 AD), Lucius Verus (161-169 AD), and finally the Stoic emperor and philosopher Marcus Aurelius (169-180 AD). It was an unfortunate coincidence for Lucian and this stoic Emperor to die in one year, which

meant that human thought of the era would lose the most brilliant Syrian writer and the most humane Roman Emperor.

Being engrossed in the mythologies, epics, and philosophies of the Greeks, Lucian wrote in their language. However, we cannot understand what he wrote in their language but an attempt at undermining their thought.



This is because he read the Greek philosophical heritage with keen intuitions and insightful visions. Besides, he refused to be submissive to this heritage, so he focused on subjecting it to sarcasm.

In 165 AD, Lucian traveled to Athens and stayed there until his death. There, he became acquainted with various philosophical currents, including Pythagoreanism, Platonism, Peripateticism, Skepticism, Stoicism, Epicureanism, and others, observing the farcical struggle – of this large number of philosophers – to reach the truth.

One of the central themes in Lucian's philosophy is death. He was able to employ the ontological significance of concept in a brilliant way. According to him, death causes the human ego to fall into a bottomless abyss, and the human personality, with all its hopes, dreams, and aspirations, to disappear, and the human pride to turn into dust blown away in the wind.

In his book, *Dialogues of the Dead* Lucian chooses two philosophers belonging to the Cynic school to discuss life's pointlessness, about which the Greeks were extremely passionate. The first philosopher, Crates of Thebes, begins his conversation addressed to the second philosopher, Diogenes of Sinope, about one of the wealthy Greeks, Moriches of Corinth, and his extremely wealthy cousin, Aristos. Crates narrates that these two wealthy men died without taking with them the debris they had collected from the world other than their bad reputation.

Here, Lucian directs the dialogue with a great artistic skill, bringing up proper names and places from the Greek context, and beginning with the response of Diogenes to what Crates told him:

Diogenes: Give me the conclusion, Crates, for it is worthy of being heard.

Crates: They died in one day. While they were sailing from Sicyon to Keras, a westerly wind wrecked their ship in the middle of their journey, drowning them, and their inheritance passed to their relatives, Eunomius and Therascales, who never thought that things would turn out this way.

Diogenes: They have done well. As for us, when we were alive, we never thought about such things. I did not wish for the death of Antisthenes in order to inherit his scepter ... and I believe that you too, Crates; you did not wish to inherit, after my death, the barrel that I own.

Crates: Neither you nor I needed such things, Diogenes, because the necessary things you inherited from Antisthenes, and I inherited them from you, and they are far more honorable and greater than the kingdom of the Persians.

Diogenes: What are you talking about?

Crates: Wisdom ...

The text of this dialogue shows Lucian's deep intuition about the meaning of the life of the Greek aristocracy, as it was ultimately doomed to extinction.

The ornaments that this class clings to are nothing more than medleys of dreams. In this way, one may strongly believe that Lucian's choice of philosophers from the Cynic school was intentional and accurate. This is because Antisthenes (445-365 BC), mentioned in the dialogue, is the founder of the Cynic school, and is considered one of the philosophers who are called the Minor Socrates. Therefore, Lucian chose a group of Greek philosophers who represented the complete opposite of the mainstream of the Greek civilization! Thus, we discover the depth of the bitter sarcasm that Lucian directs in the form of intuition, revealing the shortcomings of a people who have been claimed throughout history to have the miraculous knowledge at all levels.

In his dialogues, *Philosophies for Sale*, Lucian invokes the gods of Greek mythology and the philosophers who are still celebrated by the Greeks and the Europeans until now, in addition to his invocation of characters required by the course of his dramatic text. He also sought, with a methodology based on deep emotional perspectives, to undermine the foundations of Greek mythology and its following achievements that led, historically, to the emergence of the basic philosophical doctrines. By so doing, the text shows the Greek gods selling their philosophers in a public auction as follows:

Hermes: You two go down to the middle of the hall... Now I offer for sale the best of two lives, and I announce at the auction the sale of the two greatest sages.

The buyer: I am amazed, Zeus. One of them keeps laughing, while the other seems to be mourning a deceased person, and his tears are truly overflowing. You, what is wrong with you? What makes you laugh?

Democritus: ... There is nothing serious in what you do; it is all emptiness, the movement of an atom, and infinity.

Buyer: Rather, you are empty and foolish. How insolent, when will you stop laughing? ... As for you, my friend, what makes you cry?

Heraclitus: O stranger, that is because I consider that all human actions call for lamentation and weeping, since there is nothing in them that is not subject to annihilation ....

Buyer: So no one with good sense will buy you.

This text shows Lucian's critical methodology, who invokes – in a satirical theatrical scene – the two greatest pre-Socratic philosophers,

namely Democritus, who was called the laughing philosopher, who laughed because of the absurdity of human life, and Heraclitus, who was called the crying philosopher, meaning one who cries over... the states of human beings because they were doomed to nothingness. However, Lucian demonstrated with great critical skill that the proposition of each of these two philosophers was worth nothing to the gods of Greek mythology – symbolized here in the texts by Zeus and Hermes – because they sold them without caring about the value of their philosophies. However, the buyer refused to buy them. Because he did not like their ideas. Consequently, these two philosophers lost their values, metaphysically and sociologically. He also mocked the gods of the Greek mythology because the Greek gods sold the sages, and, thus, exposed the Greek society that rejected its sages. This is how Lucian was capable, with great intelligence, of directing the arrows of his sarcasm in every direction.

Lucian's criticism of the written history was the clearest form of his critical intuitions. In his books, *A True History* and *How History Is Written*, he wanted to compare Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In the first book, he criticizes the historians of his time with great sarcasm and mentions how history adorns poetry in an inappropriate way. He believes that the praise that historians heap on the victor causes nausea to those who were insightful. He also argues that the hegemony of passion over the narratives makes the written history closer to a play that does not convince even the naive. He, moreover, criticizes Homer, who made the gods have emotions like humans, and showed Hercules as if he was wearing a girl's costume!



In *A True History*, as well, Lucian states that there is no true history written, and that most of what is written is composed of lies. He promises us to hear the narrative of a new history, and in his *A True History*, he takes us to a series of travels and adventures that are considered entirely imaginary, but he wrote them in a charming literary style. Perhaps what is most mesmerizing in his writings is the accuracy of his descriptions of imaginary beings. Many critics give this book the credit for pioneering in writing the fantasy and science fiction, *Gulliver's Travels* as an example. One may observe that Lucian, in his book *How History Is Written*, seems extremely serious and strict in describing

the attributes of the true historian. He, in fact, was extremely sarcastic while criticizing the historians of his time.

Lucian also wanted to point out that the Greek history books were similar to books of fiction books because he was the son of a civilization whose history was stolen, distorted and reduced to the point that made the gods appear like puppets. As a result, he himself researched the history of the gods of his country and came up with a book titled, *The Syrian Gods*, in which he confirms that what he was narrating was what he had seen with his own eyes and what he had heard with his own ears.

Lucian narrated the history of the gods through the eyes of an explorer to say, "I am writing as a Syrian, and what I would narrate to you about the ancient times had come to me from my own observations on the one hand, and from soothsayers on the other.

After that, Lucian pointed out that the first to invent the idea of the gods, build temples and perform vows to them were the Egyptians and the Syrians. He also referred to the fact that "the temples of Syria were no less ancient than the temples of Egypt; I personally visited most of them, especially the Temple of Hercules in Tyre, and this Hercules is not the Greek Hercules, for he is more ancient than him, and he is one of the heroes of Tyre."

Based upon this, we can say that Lucian revealed that the origin of the mythology that the Greeks exported to the world was of a Syrian-Phoenician origin. He then listed the number of temples, catalogued their descriptions, and the rituals of their priests in northeastern Syria, Byblos, and Tyre, or as he called it Phoenicia, and we see that he wanted to refute the genealogies of the god Hesiod, which was stolen from his homeland, Phoenicia. He frequently stated that if Greece had returned what it had taken, its civilization would then have died of hunger.

Lucian deserves great attention, especially in our current era, in order to return to authentic sources of thought that contribute to restoring the flow to the original sources

of Arab culture. It is not possible to separate Lucian, even if he wrote in Greek, from his Arab cultural background on the pretext that he belonged another culture. This, in fact, requires digging deeper and deeper into the accumulated and calcified layers that have long obscured the truth. Lucian, as historical-intellectual figure, was not comfortable for European thinkers because he faced Greek philosophy, which is considered, historically, the basis of their civilizational superiority, with his intuitive powers that helped him surpass Greek thought in search of himself and his personal, creative thought.

# Artificial Intelligence: the frame problem and its transcendental solution

Claude Vishnu Spaak

Daniel Dennett wrote an article in 1984 dedicated to artificial intelligence, and more specifically to the “frame problem of Artificial Intelligence” (in reference to John McCarthy and Patrick Hayes who first mentioned it in 1969). The article begins with a humorous example, that of the R2D2 robot from Star Wars. Before this intelligent droid became operational, Dennett imagines earlier versions, all of which suffered from the frame problem, making these ancestors of R2D2 quite stupid. First there was R1, a robot asked to remove its battery from a room where a bomb was about to explode. R1 spotted the battery on a cart and pushed the cart out of the room, even though it clearly saw that the bomb was also on the cart, but was unable to infer the decisive consequence that the bomb on the cart would explode outside the room. Then came a better version, R1D1, the robot capable of making deductions about the consequences of its actions. But this led nowhere: our new robot was unable to act because it spent its time calculating all possible consequences of its various actions, and by the time the bomb finally exploded, R1D1 was still thinking about whether removing the battery would lead to a change in the room’s wall color. Then came R1D2, the robot capable of classifying consequences into two categories: the relevant ones and the irrelevant ones. But we want artificial intelligence that is capable of making the right decision at the right time and

taking into account relevant information, not a machine that endlessly classifies information into categories. The frame problem thus refers to the difficulty for AI to adapt to the same kind of ordinary situations that we constantly face, where we act in context, surrounded by tools that we manipulate, able to quickly frame the format of our action by selecting the relevant items to achieve our goals, and knowing how to recalibrate our action when unexpected events occur, given also that such unforeseen circumstances, even small, always do happen. As Dennett writes:

“To summarise: (...) an intelligent agent must engage in swift information-sensitive ‘planning’ which has the effect of producing reliable but not foolproof expectations of the effects of its actions. That these expectations are normally in force in intelligent creatures is testified to by the startled reaction they exhibit when their expectations are thwarted. This suggests a graphic way of characterizing the minimal goal that can spawn the frame problem: we want a midnight-snack-making robot to be ‘surprised’ by the trick plate, the unspreadable concrete mayonnaise, the fact that we’ve glued the (...) glass to the shelf. To be surprised you have to have expected something else, and in order to have expected the right something else, you have to have and use a lot of information about the things in the world.”

However, does surprise really operate this way? To be surprised, Dennett says, we must have anticipated or expected something else, which is certainly true, especially for a phenomenologist, for whom human consciousness is structured by intentionality, thereby exerting a grip on the world, aiming at objects according to certain expectations, which can be fulfilled or disappointed. Yet Dennett here does not speak of intentionality, and the absence of this concept is undoubtedly intentional in this case, when one knows that a few years earlier, in 1980, John Searle wrote a thundering article on artificial intelligence (“Minds, brains, and programs”, in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 1980, 3 [3], p. 417-457). In this article, Searle made use of a famous thought experiment (the Chinese room experiment where a man locked in a room is capable of producing texts written in Chinese even though he understands nothing of it, simply by following precise instructions or “algorithms”). He showed that what is lacking in artificial intelligence, and will always be lacking (at least as long as it presents itself as a digital computer manipulating data coded discretely by means of a complex algorithm), is the intentional capacity to give meaning to the symbols it manipulates, to rise above the merely syntactic level of formal symbol manipulation. For Searle, entry into the sphere of meaning occurs through an emerging event, when consciousness awakens in the brain, and this event is precisely that of intentionality at work in all facets of mental life.

Now, Dennett is in complete disagreement with Searle: intentionality is just a magical metaphysical substance that Searle

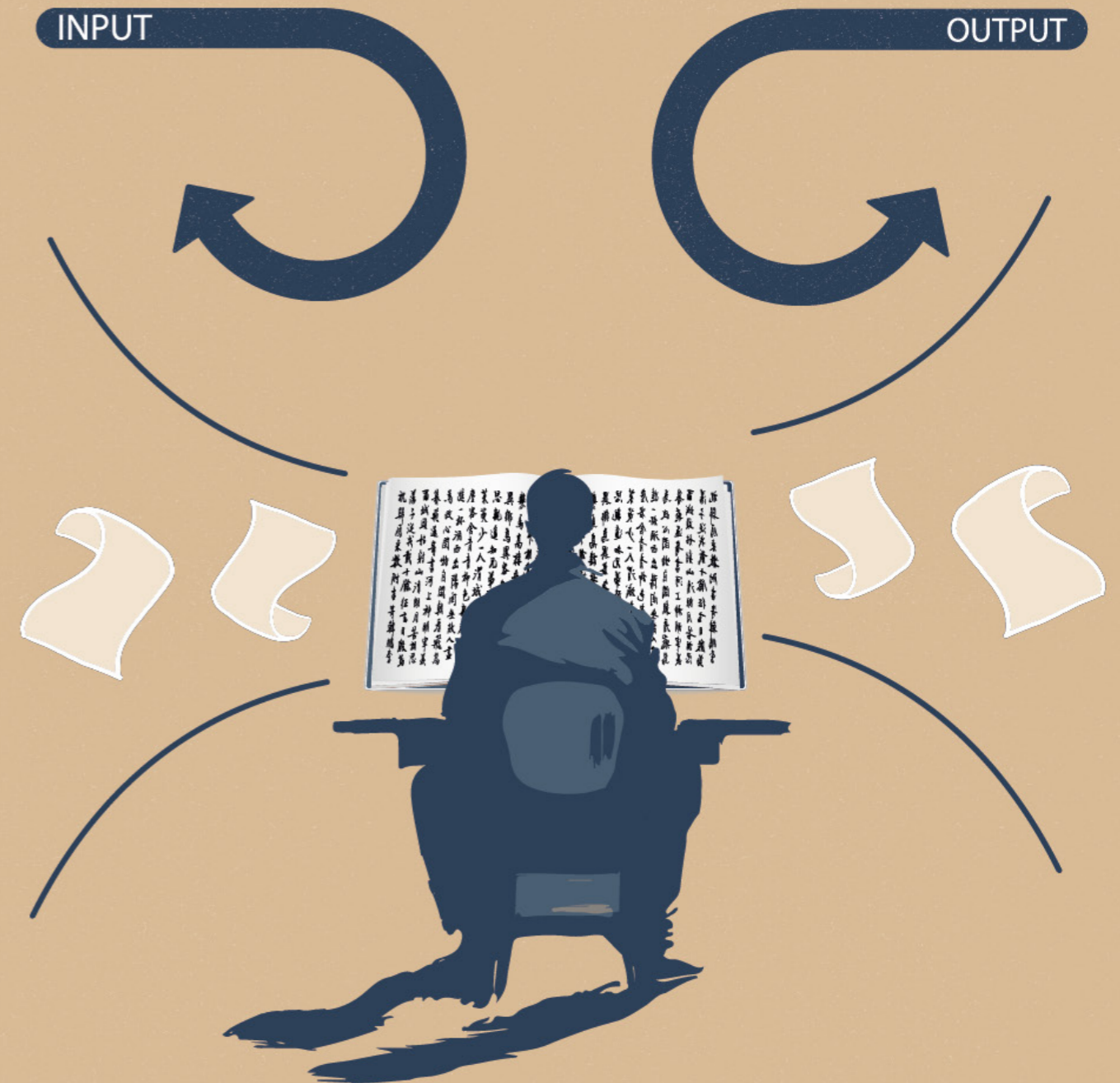
postulates. For Dennett, an artificial intelligent machine, much like the human mind (which is nothing more than a complex biological machine in Dennett’s view), is about controlling the external environment, in order to evolve within it appropriately, for the purpose of preserving its integrity and developing its utility. Hence the importance for Dennett of conceiving an AI capable of solving the frame problem. But how can an AI be surprised by unforeseen events that arise in a given situation, if it was expecting something else, without this expectation being described in terms of a prior intentional grasp on the situation? Let us recall Dennett’s answer: “to be surprised you have to have expected something else, and in order to have expected the right something else, you have to have and use a lot of information about the things in the world”.

However, the fact of having and using a lot of information about the world does not logically entail that we develop expectations, unless we already have an intentional requirement as to what the world should be in principle; unless, therefore, questions of fact (*quid facti*) are based on questions of ontological legality (*quid juris*). But Dennett refuses both intentionality and a transcendental structure in the Kantian sense. Dennett should therefore stick to Hume’s idea that just because the sun has risen every morning until now, it is not necessary for it to rise tomorrow. There is, to be sure, a Humean response to this problem of induction, which is to say that the more we observe a repetition of events, the more we are led by associations of ideas to expect them to continue to occur in the same way.

Hence, the surprise we feel if things do not happen again in the future as we had been accustomed to. However, for Hume, precisely, this psychological mechanism, based on the structures of human nature, is not a rational one; it relies largely on our imagination, on the tendency to believe in a uniform course of nature. In a Humean perspective, a truly intelligent being (operating only by the use of reason), like an AI, should not be surprised by change; it should adopt a neutral attitude. It would base its predictions on the use of statistical models: for instance, if the probability that the milk is not in the fridge is 5% (based on the analysis of stored data), then should the milk turn out to be really missing, the computer, unsurprised, would simply conclude that the situation it faces falls under the 5% category, and above that, it would even have to hypothesize the possibility that the world structure, in its present form, has perhaps changed and is no longer explicable through statistical models that essentially pertain to the past (such a possibility of the world having suddenly changed not being an illogical impossibility). But in this case, considering what Dennett tells us, how can such intelligence act in the world? Wouldn't it eventually fall into irresolution, since nothing would assure it that the course of nature will continue in the same way?

This is precisely why Dennett, if he believes in the possibility of artificial intelligence capable, like human intelligence, of solving the frame problem, by being able to be surprised when things do not go as expected, cannot remain in Hume's epistemological framework. If our information about the world gives us a right, a relative one of course, amendable without

a doubt, but still a right (and what is more: a rational one), to expect that the world will continue to behave in a certain way, it is because we already exert a valid grasp on it, one that is epistemologically warranted and grounded. This is the point that Kant, of course, raises in his transcendental philosophy. I come therefore, in conclusion, to the thesis that I would like to support here: 1) the frame problem of AI has to presuppose that there is an intentional grasp of the mind on the world, which in turn conditions our behavior towards the world. It is only because of it that the phenomenon of surprise can arise when what is given does not appear in accordance with the intentional expectation. 2) The fact that we can count on a coherence of the world, or on the fact that if the world were to change from one day to the next, such change cannot happen just in any way, without providing a logical and scientific account for this change (in short, that the world cannot suddenly plunge into chaos), this fact is grounded in transcendental philosophy. 3) The great philosophical quality of artificial intelligence is not that it shows what is already mechanical in human intelligence (that we are biological robots that will one day be simulated by computers), but to remind us that rationality is not unique to humans, it is not a human faculty. Artificial intelligence allows us to transcend anthropological relativism: reason is a universal structure that is not lodged in human consciousness, but rather it is human consciousness, and perhaps one day artificial intelligence, that are lodged in a transcendental rational structure of the world, which opens up the domain of transcendental philosophy.





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### The Artistic Language in Philosophical Attention-Shifting

Marilyn Yunis

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