Squaring the Circle: The Suspended Person Thought Experiment's Conditions
Approved Apperception as an Onto-Epistemic Basis for Mullā Ṣadrā's Existentialist
Psychology

Submitted by Adelbert Finch to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Arab and Islamic Studies
in January 2020

Signature: …………………………………………………..

LIST OF CONTENTS

Abstract

This study is a philosophical engagement with historical texts in philosophy, arguing that, with proper application, Abū ʿĀlī Ibn Sīnā's (d. 415/1037)Suspended Person thought experiment produces a self as existence. However, this existential self lies hidden in its trajectory from its founder to Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrahīm b. Yaḥyā Qawāmī Shīrāzī's (d. 1014/1636). In the latter, we find an existentialist system close enough in pedigree to the Suspended Person's origins yet sufficiently augmented to support the original conditions-induced existential self. The objective of this analysis is to show how Shīrāzī's Transcendent Philosophy (*al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah*) manages to excavate an otherwise overlooked apperception in his application of the Suspended Person thought experiment. Here, the existential self's parallel in Ṣadrā's onto-epistemology is quickly ascertained. However, as far as the nature of self-consciousness is considered, Ṣadrā's system is mostly a synthesis of elements of the ideas of Abū ʿĀlī Ibn Sīnā (d. 415/1037), Shihab al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d.569/1191), al-Shaykh al-Akbar (the Greatest Shaikh) Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muhammad Ibn ʿArabī al-Ḥātimī al-Ṭāʾī (d.618/1240). Thus, the idea of the self as existence must be demonstrated through the gradual revelation of the conditions-based apperception via the various contributing philosophical developments provided by the thinkers mentioned above in each mode of the Suspended Person (or onto-epistemically similar situation) over time.

These crucial developmental elements gather in Transcendent Philosophy's knowledge by presence (*al-ʿIlm al-ḥuḍūrī*). Through it, the latent intuitive knowledge granted through Avicennian epistemology, largely exposed through Suhrawardian turns on the subject, is brought to the foreground on an existential basis, as informed by Akbarian thought, in a way prepared to ascertain the existential field of the Suspended Person's first-hand experience. Ṣadrā inadvertently excavates the original conditions-approved apperception previously buried under the initial Avicennian oversight, as gradually exhumed through the critique of these thinkers. The results of the Suspended Person's apperceptive conditions outstrip each of the systems engaging it until it reaches Shīrāzī. However, true to the Suspended Person's nature, Shīrāzī's oversights with the thought experiment are also shown to present challenges in his onto-epistemology.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Here, the statement that the "Flying Man" thought experiment, (henceforth

Suspended Person or SP)[1], a creation of the Persian thinker Abū ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā's

(hereafter Ibn Sīnā, and his thought Avicennian) (d. 415/1037), "prove(s) that the

human soul is an immaterial spiritual substance" (Rahman 1975, 165) is openly

critiqued. The reassessment made here suggests that the SP does not "prove" anything

as it was designed to serve as an indication, despite the tendency for its interpreters to

treat it as a proof. I maintain this position through every application in this study, even

when a thinker suggests otherwise. The more important reappraisal, however, is that

when its conditions are properly applied, the SP does not indicate the self's status as an

immaterial substance. Rather, with consistent application of its conditions, this study

finds that the SP indicates that the self (*nafs*) is *existence* (*wujūd*) and not an *existent*, in

the form of an immaterial substance or any other type of existence. In fact, the SP's

existential field is so absolute that she is incapable of recognizing her ontological

individuality. Effectively, I suggest that the SP's apperception as presented through its

conditions transcends the same Avicennian onto-psycho-epistemic structure that

---

[1] I have opted to refer to the "Flying Man" as the Suspended Person for two main reasons. The primary reason is that the term *al-Insān al-muʿallaq*, as is found in the some of the Arabic texts that refer to it means "the Hanging/Dangling Man" or "the Suspended Man" as opposed to *al-Insān al-ṭāʾir* i.e. the Flying Man. To refer to the SP as a "Suspended Man" approaches the subject with a presumptuous auto-gender assignment far surpassing the capacity of its sphere of consciousness. I opt out of referring to her as a "he" or "him" because assuming a male pronoun, as seems to be the convention in theoretical situations, both unnecessary and arbitrary. I refer to the SP as "her" or "she" in this study because the pronoun "it" seems to subtract from her personhood. Her personhood lies at the crux of the import of the study, at least in my estimation. Thus, to reduce her to a conscious object seems antithetical to our project.

produced it. However, as with all thought experiments, with the SP's purely speculative nature coupled with the transcending force of her conditions-approved apperception we may look into another comparable thought system to uncover the aforementioned apperception outside of a purely Avicennian presentation. This study looks for another onto-epistemic system symbiotic enough with Ibn Sīnā to share in the SP's conditions-approved application. Simultaneously, it must be distant enough from the same Avicennian suppositions the thought experiment transcends to consider it in a more existentially onto-epistemic capacity. By doing so my reading of the SP may be verified by the Avicennian tradition. At the same time, my reading helps develops more insight into the nature of the SP's existential apperception as Ibn Sīnā's system is prevented from doing so.

Research Question - What is the Proposal?

At the far end of the trajectory of Avicennian thought lies Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrahīm b. Yaḥyā Qawāmī Shīrāzī's (d.1014/1636) (hereafter Mullā Ṣadrā or Ṣadrā), Transcendent Philosophy (*al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah*), a synthesis of Ṣadrā's original thought, including the primacy of Existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*), the unity of the subject and object of cognition (*itttiḥād al-ʿāqil wa al-maʿqūl*) , and substantial motion (*al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah*) as well as select ideas from thinkers of the past, including Ibn Sīnā, Shīhāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d.569/1191) *al-Shaykh al-Akbar* (the Greatest Savant) Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muhammad Ibn ʿArabī al-Ḥātimī al-Ṭāʾī, (d.618/1240) (his school hereafter referred to as Akbarian) and others.[2] As indicated,

---

[2] The melding of these various concepts into a single unified system is not free from its apparent contradictions. An example of these opposing elements is that while his ontologically is suggestively

Ṣadrā's Transcendent Philosophy takes a different path toward understanding the nature of things. Instead of basing itself solely in discursive demonstration, as the Peripatetics before them would prefer, our new system takes Suhrawardī's cue for a transcendence of Avicennian rationalism with a more experiential path. Instead of merely demonstrating proofs indicating a correct conception of reality, Suhrawardī suggests we *be* the reality that we hope to understand through direct experience. (Faruque 2016, 6) On this paradigmatic shift in Ṣadrā, Muhammad Faruque explains:

> Put briefly, for Ṣadrā, as for Suhrawardī, philosophy is a 'graded' concept in the sense that it allows one to move from one stage (of philosophy) to another. Thus, transcendent philosophy makes room for discursive philosophy, but at the same time, it 'transcends' the latter by other higher modes of 'intellection' such as unveiling (*kashf*), illumination (*ishrāq*), and direct witnessing (*shuhūd*). Moreover, Ṣadrā's philosophizing should be understood in the light of what Hadot calls 'philosophy as a way of life', because it involves a set of 'spiritual exercises' that goes hand in hand with conceptual understanding and mastering philosophical principles (that is, spiritual practices and epistemology are intertwined). In addition, since Ṣadrā operates in the context of the Islamic religion, the realities of 'prophecy' and 'sainthood' (*wilāya*) play a notable role in his act of philosophizing, and in fact, he claims that one can actually 'harmonize' all these diverse modes of approaching truth (Faruque 2016, 6)

The most poignant aspect of this explanation, for our purposes, is the emphasis made on both gradation and harmony. In order to access the unique Sadrian treatment of the self, one must grasp the positioning of any one psychological issue in terms of the way he graduates and harmonizes it in his thought. That is to say, one must be able to appreciate how Ṣadrā both transcends the ideas of those who came before him, in an

---

monist, thanks to contributions by Ibn ʿArabī his psychology is often times discussed in standard dualist Avicennian parlance. This means that while Ṣadrā discusses the onto-epistemic nature of the self as an Akbarian, he covers its psychological nuances as an Avicennian. Thus, the Sadrian discussion on the self is couched in an ontological dichotomy between Ibn Sīnā's discursive psychology and Ibn ʿArabī's mystical vision of reality.

issue, while coordinating between the apparently opposing vantage points he uses to help formulate a supporting structure for his own position regarding it.

I find the Sadrian SP, in its various manifestations, betwixt Ibn Sīnā's discursive psychology and Ibn ʿArabī's mystical vision of reality supporting the correct reading of the thought experiment as decided by its conditions. That is to say, Ṣadrā's SP is existential and his system experiential enough to be an acceptable candidate for the thought experiment's exposure, as described above. The question here, though, is can a coherent representation of my position be presented in a manner meeting the needs of gradation and harmonization commensurate with any Sadrian philosophical constituent. That is to say, am I able to support my position that the Sadrian SP calls upon the original thesis that the self is existence while navigating through the opposing dualism and monism of Sadrian psycho-ontology. Further still, can it do so while demonstrating its transcendence through each contributing element to its full development in Ṣadrā?

In what follows I will demonstrate a portrayal of the condition-confirmed self-awareness as it appears in Ṣadrā's Transcendent Philosophy, in a manner agreeable to the demands of gradation and harmony familiar to his system. I will show that, although unnoticed initially, the SP's self as existence transcends the limitations of the various minds who treated it causing the initial self-awareness to manifest in Ṣadrā's synthesis supporting the transcendence of his ideas. I argue that, there, in the Sadrian homeland, the SP's existential status becomes most ontologically, psychologically, and epistemologically clear and accessible.

Procedurally, I will introduce the research's principle terms. After having defined the key terms, I will introduce the main characters involved in the SP's development. With the brief biographies of these critical thinkers, alongside their most important ideas established, I will then present a background and summary of the SP's argument as it represented in Ibn Sīnā. Following the synopsis of the argument, I will present samples of the SP's most common types of studies. I will also mention a few special receptions of it as well, although still confined to the limits of its popular reception. I will then comment on this dissertation's significance as its primary contribution to studies on the philosophy of mind is not limited to reconciling the more counter-intuitive aspects of Ṣadrā's thought. Instead, to add to that, I am proposing a novel take on the SP. After making this contribution clear, I will explain the manner in which I will perform it. A breakdown of the ensuing chapters will follow.

A Note on the Translated Terms

My translation is not literal. Instead, I have opted to convey the meaning in the terminology as is most applicable to this study's intent. Although accuracy is important, there are shades of meaning in the Arabic terms accessed here for the sake of consistency. I have tried to limit the corresponding terms between English and Arabic to a single term. There may be instances where I have taken liberties to keep a consistent conveyance of meaning. There is an assumption that the reader has a sufficient background in the subject at hand to not require voluminous amounts of linguistic deliberations. I have attempted to translate the texts involved to bring out their onto-epistemic focus, whenever applied. Thus, a nuanced term is often translated in a

manner that most immediately assists this study's aspirations. There may be instances

wherein a term has more than one useful nuance. In such an event the term is

reintroduced in Arabic to indicate another shade of meaning in the same word. I have

tried to avoid overly specialized terminology like "theosophy," for example, revealing a

more speculative approach to the material at hand. Instead, I have attempted to be

more philosophically temperate, preferring the arguments substantiated by more sober

readings of the texts as many of their subject matters are already transcendent in

nature. Overindulging in speculative terminology with obscure passages does not seem

to assist in a clear presentation of my argument. Preferring a more singular line of

presentation, I have also refrained from heavy annotations wherever possible.

I have refrained from neologisms. I have also abstained from archaic terminology

as much as possible. In the first instance, I am not interested in making additions to the

English dictionary. In the second, the subject is difficult enough on its own to use words

that require frequent reference to it. Given the deference to Ṣadrā in this analysis, I will

translate the terms to make his Transcendent Philosophy a consistent reference. Thus,

given the centrality of the Arabic word "*wujūd*" to this project I will translate it as

"Existence." I render *wujūd* this way due to the monist tendency in Ṣadrā's system. This

is because Existence is a grounding principle. "Being" is the fact of existing. The human

being, for example, is the fact of Existence in a human event. Each context, or modality

of existence, acts as a specific difference (*faṣl*) in Existence. When referring to the

ontology of the Absolute or Necessary Existence (*Wājib al-wujūd*) I will use "Existence,"

i.e., capitalized. When referring to one of Existence's modalities (*shuʾūn*), I will use the

term "existence" or in a specific case "existent." I will use the term "Essence" when

referring to the *Māhiyyah* of the Absolute. Again, I will use the lowercase "essence" when referring to the essence of one of Its modalities in the world of phenomenon. The same is true for all other ancillary terms like Attribute (*Ṣifah*) as opposed to attribute (*ṣifah*), and Name (*Ism*) in contrast to name (*ism*), etc.

In English the noun, "self" indicates one's own person. *Persona* is a Latin term for a mask, a false face. Face is from the Latin *facies,* an appearance, form, or figure. Thus, self does not indicate anything "substantial," as such. Rather, it points to a substance's false appearance. An appearance is that which is visible, manifest. Thus, the self indicates the manifestation of that which has no clear substance. In other words, the self represents something that escapes distinction, but doesn't multiply facades i.e., modes of distinction giving the impression that it does.

From this, we can see that the English term "self" is psychologically, philosophically and mystically laden with meaning. It causes the psychologist to ask what the matter of the self's indication is, i.e., *what* is it? It prompts the philosopher's enquiry as to why this arrangement exists and the wisdom it entails, i.e., *why* is it? It pulls the gnostic ever deeper into their own preoccupations with the identity of Existence i.e., *Who* is It? I use the term self as a tie between these various disciplines because the question at hand entails all these levels of enquiry at once. The term "self" directs our attention to the object of first-personality immediately. With these points in mind, and first-personality ground zero of this study, self serves as its rallying term. Consequently, when directed at the Absolute it will be capitalized as "Self." When signifying one of Its modalities it will appear in lowercase, as it the case above.

The word *ḏāt* can act as metaphysical catch-all indicating meanings as broad as, "being," "essence," "nature," "person," "self," and "subject." Context will determine the appropriate rendering with reference to the original Arabic in each case for insight. Thus, whenever I refer to *ḏāt* specifically I will follow the selected English term with the word *ḏāt* in brackets as in, "...and the essence (*ḏāt*) of the tree is perceived…". I will also translate other less principal terms as per context with an explanation provided in the footnotes if required. Again, I will try to use a single English equivalent for each technical term there as well.

Finally, the term "existentialism" is used often in this study. It is important to emphasize what I mean by the term considering the moniker is also shared by a tradition in Western European thought. Continental Existentialism and Sadrian Existentialism share the same ontological view regarding the preponderance of existence over essence (a topic taken up below in detail). However, these thinker's divergent theological views characterize the differences between the existentialisms they intend. Western European Existentialism, as represented by Jean-Paul Sartre (d.1980), is based in atheism. Sadrian Existentialism is based in theism. One of the areas these polarized positions play out is in the meaning and purpose of consciousness. In the former, consciousness is solely a humanist activity, one restrained to non-teleological concerns. In the latter, consciousness moves from the most basic created contemplations to the most complex theo-mystical visions.

To expand, the consequences of Sartre's atheism dictate that human beings have no essence because, there is no Creator, i.e. no Divine Essence, either. If God is non-existent then naturally there is no creation, i.e. non-divine essences to speak of.

The human being and the world are both voids. As consciousness is always *of* something, intentionality indicates that Satrian consciousness, in itself, is not *of* anything, i.e. it is empty. As a result, Mark Rowlands "Jean-Paul Sartre's Being and Nothingness" observes that for Sartre, as pockets of nothingness, human beings introduce nothingness into the world, i.e., an individual lack of essence. Sartrian consciousness, then, is as void as the world outside it. (Rowlands 2011, 180) The world, itself nothing, has itself further reduced through our individuated and individuating negations. Her individuated sense of nothingness has no choice but to form an identity and purpose for life. There is no one else to do so for one's self. This is because *what* she is and *why* she is is not predetermined. There is no preset teleological goal or reason for her existence. Without these grand overarching themes, the burden of existence, i.e. to "be" this or that, is upon her shoulders.[3]

In Edmund Husserl[4] (d.1938), a forefather of Sartrian existentialism, consciousness is intentional (always *of* something). As Sartre considers primary conscious an essence-less nothing, (Rowlands 2011, 175) all would-be objects of consciousness are outside of the void of primary consciousness and are thus "transcendent." (Rowlands 2011, 176) However, for Sartre, the transcendent nature of self-consciousness places it outside of consciousness as something secondary to it. Thus, self-consciousness is a part of the world that human consciousness faces but is not inherent to it. Ultimately, for Sartrian existentialism, self-consciousness does not

---

[3] See Jean-Paul Sartre and Philip Mairet. (London: Methuen, 1960).

[4] He was a German philosopher and founder of Phenomenology, or the investigation of the edifices of experience and consciousness.

exist as there is no self to speak of. Instead, human pre-reflective consciousness finds a void. [5]This void faces an equally essence-free world (although I am not sure how that makes Sartrian consciousness non-intentional).

 For Sartre, when reflecting on external objects or its own self-awareness, consciousness is "positional." When an object of consciousness does not stand outside of it, consciousness is termed "non-positional." [6] Sartre decides that both positional and non-positional consciousness are revealed through one's intuition from the void. My pre-reflective consciousness is of my mental states without reducing them to the "awareness of a mode of presentation of those states" or positions. (Rowlands 2011, 180) The void of non-positional consciousness only modifies directedness to the world of nothingness and does not direct toward self-consciousness as there is no self\essence toward which it would be directed. Pre-reflective consciousness characterizes my directedness to the world. It does not indicate a substantial form of directedness towards my own consciousness over and above modifying my directedness towards the world. (Rowlands 2011, 180) So, for Sartre, consciousness is only a direction toward the world. It may pre-reflectively modify as a revelation of the intuition of transcendent being produced through reflective consciousness. Reflective consciousness, however, is a "transcendent thing, hence not consciousness at all." (Rowlands 2011, 180) It is as if, for Sartre, the only activity in the world and our being

---

[5] For more on the translucent nature of Sartrian apperception and the pre-reflection see Kathleen Wider, "Through the looking glass: Sartre on knowledge and the pre-reflective cogito." (Kluwer,1989).

[6] See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Hazel Barnes, introduction by Mary Warnock (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1976), xxix.

faced-toward it (again somehow non-intentionally) are our mental states' pre-disposition toward individualizing a world otherwise entirely free of distinction.

Although the details of Ṣadrā's position come with much further depth later, I will mention some pertinent aspects here as a precursor to what follows illustrating some differences between the two existentialisms. Ultimately, Ṣadrā asserts that as static immutable substances are non-existent, Existence's flow prevails over all perceived essences as God prevails over all creation. Thus, Ṣadrā's theism places God's Existence as existence's anchor. The instability of the human substance provides her with the opportunity to gain proximity to Existence. One's consciousness is largely determined upon their placement along a band of existential possibility. The further along she finds herself in her ontological trajectory, the more conscious she becomes. The further her consciousness draws to Completion, the clearer her identity and reason for existing becomes to her. Existence, then, is the What, Why and Ultimate Reason for human existence in Ṣadrā.[7]

Thus, the difference between the two existentialisms is rooted in Sartre's atheism and Ṣadrā's theism. In the former, the human being is burdened with and consciously limited to the details of static existential choice. In the latter, existence is moving towards its completion. All degrees of find their completion in Existence. The human being is never limited to her burden of choice, nor a created world. In Ṣadrā, she may gain access to a world beyond herself and her choices, provided Divine providence

---

[7] The essence of this broad synopsis can be found in Ibrahim Kalin *Knowledge in later Islamic philosophy: Mulla Sadra on existence, intellect, and intuition* (OUP USA, 2010).

grants her access to do so. There, her consciousness is obliterated in the Consciousness of the Divine.

Sartrian ontology's presumption of the world (a thing), a human (a thing), and consciousness (a thing) while simultaneously arguing for existence's nothingness is problematic. Nonetheless, Sartre's pre-reflective consciousness as an existential void mostly resembles the SP's conditions-approved existential apperception. This is because the conditions-approved SP does not admit of a directedness toward the world as there is no world for it to be directed toward. Hence, in both scenarios, the subject's primary awareness is devoid of essence and hence not *of* anything. Ultimately, though, due to the theistic expectations in the Avicennian system that spawned it, Sartre's system cannot rise to the existentialist occasion created through the SP's flight toward Divine consciousness.

On the other hand, Ṣadrā's existentialism is designed to cross the bridge between philosophical and mystical existentialism. This factor, amongst others, makes Sadrian existentialism the proper candidate for our study. Nonetheless, as we shall see, the SP challenges Ṣadrā's epistemic discourse as it relates to substance and apperception/consciousness reducing it to something more closely resembling Sartre's take on the subject.

How The Study is to be Conducted

Christian Jambet asserts that Aristotle's *Categories* are settled upon "the passage from potentiality to act: the actual man comes after the potential man (substance), and it is the same for quantity, quality, relation, 'where,' 'when,' *situs*,

possession, action and passion," serve Ṣadrā's basis for essential motion. Their correspondence with static substance's accidents render them inappropriate for the Avicennian self existing outside of them. (Jambet 2006, 195) For the latter, existence *can* be a subject or predicate of a proposition. Yet, the predicates are not existence. So, with the SP showing us that the self and its awareness are existence, to place the consequences of this metaphysical situation in a Sadrian light, we must look beyond the confines of a metaphysics based on the Categories into one founded upon existence.

The analysis here needs to remain largely in the shadow of Avicennian thought. I intend to perform it with a mechanism autogenous to the Peripatetic project. To fit this criterion, I will explore the Sadrian concept of transubstantial motion as a method to explain what occurred to the fluid identity of human self-awareness, appearing in different forms until its pinnacle in Transcendent Philosophy. In keeping with this approach, I will show that just as "souls move; their acts of being 'are subject to transformation," (Jambet 2006, 212) the SP's self moves from thinker to thinker, seen differently at each important integral. By doing so, I treat the SP as an entity in Ṣadrā's theory of motion .The history of the SP can show that its existential self-awareness has the same Origin (*al-Mabdaʾ*) and Return (*al-Maʿād*) as it is in Sadrian Existentialism.

The SP's capacity to indicate the self is existence is hidden from the thinkers that embraced the thought experiment afterward Ibn Sīnā due to a procedural oversight. Like Aristotle who held that "substance must always be what it is, such that becoming, the passage from potentiality to act, may be possible," (Jambet 2006, 197) each thinker that embraces the supposition that the self is a static substance or in reaction to that conclusion. Thereby these thinkers extend the original misdiagnosis into their respective

philosophy. Doing so furthers it across the timeline between Ibn Sīnā and Ṣadrā. They are unaware of their active participation in the changing identity of the Avicennian self in each developmental phase. This plays right into the Sadrian treatment that sees the self as a motion whose becoming implies the transformation of a substance becoming more or less existent depending on the actualization of its potentialities. (Jambet 2006, 197)

If the self's existence is to ever be self-awareness, as it is in Ibn Sīnā, then the transformation of the self for Ṣadrā is to ever increase in self-ness. That is, it must "be" more and more a self for "men have a destination that recapitulates all the destinations of the universe: man is a microcosm enveloping the seminal seasons of the macrocosm. His substantial renewal both fulfills and encapsulates the renewal of all natures and all souls. He has a moral responsibility, a duty to intensify his own act of being, in a liberation and a return…" (Jambet 2006, 198) The self's alteration arises from the faculty of perception particular to each of the characters handling the SP's teleology.

Transubstantial motion, a mainstay of the School of Ṣadrā emphasizing that "being and becoming must be brought together," (Jambet 2006, 191) is a "comprehensive and unifying theory which deals with the Origin (*mabdaʾ*), and the Return (*maʿād*)" of entities." (Akbarian 2009, 199) Like a minority dialect or method of communicating within an already minority community excluding members of the original speech community, a thought system considering substance a morphing ontological current is anti-linguistic to Avicennian parlance. Thus, the concept of transubstantial motion is close enough for the common stock of Ibn Sīnā's followers to recognize it as a distant dialect of Ibn Sīnā, yet unique enough to exist as a subset within that tradition.

Ṣadrā's principality of Existence (*aṣālah al-wujūd*) holds that an object's existence is its facticity.[8] In transubstantial motion, this facticity *is* its mobility. Thus, an entity's mobility is synonymous with its existence. An entity does not exist *and* have motion. (Akbarian 2009, 105) Instead, the entity *is* its movement for the latter is not something super-added to the former. Its movement *is* its existence. Thus, Ṣadrā views existence in a very personal manner for:

> The formal substance, too, in its gradual increase in perfection is a temporal unique being which is continual in one sense and is connected gradually in another sense...And a connected unit has a single existence. Existence for us and for all others with deep roots in theosophy is the same personal entity. If motion were not the single connected unit, the judgement that blackness does not remain constant in its gradual increase in intensity more black would be correct, and the same judgement would go through with the Trans-substantial from at the time of its perfection, while it is not so... specific existence is fundamental for every object, and is determined by its own essence, and in spite of having entity and unity has degrees and stages. [9] (Akbarian 2009, 105)

The self's facticity is a band of existence as opposed to a specific static substance determined in a particular time and space. Its fulfilment comes through the motion of its components/faculties. These parts entertain a conjunctive/individual unity producing a sense of subsistence of the mobile entity in its transubstantive course. (Akbarian 2009, 205)

Transubstantial motion dictates that the self is moving toward its perfection, never maintaining the same identity at any point in the stream of that evolution. Thus, according to Sadrian terms, it is correct to view the SP's self as unstable for "essential or substantial motion is a motion of ipseity, of the 'self' because it would be unintelligible

---

[8] I mean the fact that the entity is "found."

[9] Quoting Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shirāzī, *al-Asfār al-arbaʿah,* Vol.1 (Beirut: Dār al-turāth al-ʿarabī, 1990), 382.

to say that what is renewed (the body) proceeded from something that was stable."
(Jambet 2006, 200–201) Likewise, "the soul in Mulla Sadra's view is an independent
substance that by transubstantial motion passes through the different stages, one by
one, until it becomes free from dependence on matter and *potentia* and achieves
eternity in the realm of the intellect." (Akbarian 2009, 217) For Ṣadrā, the world's
"movement starts out from itself and moves within itself and reaches itself again. But
this ultimate self is a stage of higher than the starting self." (Akbarian 2009, 216)
Likewise, the human self, moves from itself, within itself, and reaches itself again. Only,
its ultimate stage is a higher realization of its original self. As the self *is* its existence, the
original emergence of this existence pales compared to the clarity of its appearance in
the Return. This superior status is a product of the faculties emanating from it along its
evolutionary trajectory.

In the end, the process of transubstantial motion reveals the original potential
setting the entity into motion, initially. "The final stage of the mystic's journey, a
recognition that everything as a unified whole reflects the ontological unity of the divine
and that the realized human recognises a desire to return to the principle, the one who
is the source of being, God." (S. Rizvi 2009) The SP shows the principle of non-
delimited existence, the source of being apprehended at the beginning of the journey, is
the same existence returned to according to Rizvi. This great circle is further described
in Ṣadrā who:

> [M]aintains that the human soul is immaterial in its origin, corporeal at the
> beginning of its becoming, and intellective at its term. The soul is the
> substance that best manifests essential motion: its substantial becoming
> integrates the moments of the lowest materiality as well as those of the
> most glorious intellectuality, such that the soul is almost nothing in its first
> birth but draws near to God at the end of the journey. (Jambet 2006, 235)

With the self having actualized its existence, despite being, "nothing in its first birth" the

Return to the source is auto-initiated and consequently terminated motion. It is

noteworthy to highlight the point that something so potentially full and realized begins as

just that: potential. Thus, human greatness, achieved in the actualization of the self's

knowledge of itself i.e., existence, is a product of a latent ability or power within the

existence of the human being. The unfolding greatness is propelled forward by what it

will show itself to be as opposed to what it appears to be.

In this study, the trajectory of the identity of the SP's self-awareness shows a

constantly changing apperception. The radical empiricism of Avicenna reveals a mode

of the act of existence that seems to surpass the thought system that produced it. This

mode is then illuminated by the light-ontology of Suhrawardī. This perspective then finds

its essentialism challenged by an Akbarian vision of reality giving precedence to

existence over essence as is shown in the writings of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī

(d.736/1335). Finally, the philosophical savvy of a one-time follower of Ibn Sīnā, trained

by a Suhrwardian enthusiast,[10] is inspired by spiritual tasting (*dhawq*). In Ṣadrā, the

SP's awareness negotiates with the ontology of the Oneness of Existence (*Waḥdah al-wujūd*). It will be shown that its return to an existentialist perspective of consciousness

is a result of the unfolding of the talents of those who took it on both directly and

---

[10] A reference to Ṣadrā's teacher Muḥammad Bāqir Ibn al-Dāmād, (d. 1040/1631) popularly known as "Mir Damād" or "*al-muʿallim al-thālith* (*i.e.,* "the Third Teacher"—after first two being Aristotle and al-Fārābī (d.329/950, respectively), no doubt due to his tremendous stature, was a Safavid philosopher, teacher, and leader in Iran's cultural reawakening. His significant contribution to philosophy, which he said is based in revelation as opposed to Greek rationalism, was his concept of *huḍuth dahrī* ("eternal origination") as an exposition of creation.

indirectly until, like its origin, the end demonstrates that the self is existence. The steps

above seem to echo the idea that:

> Each individual is a mode of the act of being. It is singular through itself.
> Its concomitants, Sadrā says, are born from it as rays of light are born
> from the source of light. The individual is a singular monad of existence
> that, as such, has no quiddity. That is to say that the set of differences by
> which one designates it are indeed real differences, which we name
> through logical differences (thus man is a rational animal). But these real
> differences simply express the originary act of being, the source of light
> from which they emanate. Likewise, for time, place, quantity, situation: the
> categories of accidents are radiations of substance. But the substantiality
> of substance is the act of being. Changes in space, quantity, quality and
> so on express the motion of the substantial act of being. What Sadrā calls
> substantial motion is the metamorphosis of the individual act of being,
> expressing itself in the light of rays of accidental movements (Jambet
> 2006, 217)

That is to say, the mode of being apprehended in the SP seems to be affected by the

differing systems that embrace it, yet, in truth, they are expressions of the original mode

of being that produced them, due to post-Avicennian contemplations. As this original

notion moves the various accidental "forms" that it takes on manifest like lights of rays

from the emergence of the SP's awareness for "the continuous has one *act* of being,

even if it unfolds in the potential infinity of its degrees." Each step along the SP's

trajectory is a degree. "Its unity comes to it from its intelligible ground," here referring to

its mode of apprehension in the thought experiment, "of which the multiple sensible

expressions, the successive limits of gradation, are the shade and image." The various

thinkers who treated it in the current study are like respective limits of gradation, who

come in the wake of Ibn Sīnā. "This stable and permanent ground" of the mode

apprehended by all who take on the experiment with its conditions fulfilled … 'is

determined through itself, and it has stations (*maqāmāt*) and degrees (*darajāt*) through

its very ipseity and its very unity." (Jambet 2006, 216)

Here the SP's identity is like Sadrian motion, "indissolubly both disappearance, one thing after another, and education of being, one thing after another. In becoming, being and nonbeing are reciprocal terms; one ceaselessly passes into the other...Its act of existing unfolds in the rhythm of annihilation and manifestation." The motion in question is a "'renewal' (*tajaddud*) and 'expiration' (*inqidāʾ*) of the thing." (Jambet 2006, 195–196) This is something distinct from the Avicennian motion that is "the representation of motion in space or quantitative increase." Here motion is a change of the existent entity justifying the termination of a thing "in the sense that one says of a state that it 'comes to an end through a change of form. Renewal is innovation and becoming has an end; it is the desire for this end, for the actualization of perfection." (Jambet 2006, 196–197) Just as it is in transubstantial motion, the potential origin of the SP's self-awareness, dormant in its initial stage, unfolds within its various stages due to the faculties of post-Avicennian thinkers. They adopted enough of the Avicennian suppositions needed for them to propel the same forward stream while changing its identity along the way to help it meet our end it Ṣadrā.

To recapitulate, I do not agree with a method of doing the history of philosophy that proposes the Avicennian self is a static substance impervious to essential change, only altered accidentally by the various systems treating it through the centuries in its wake. This is because the SP, as a main indicator of the nature of the Avicennian self, does not support the existence of a static substance. In fact, it does not give credence to the existence of non-conceptual essences whatsoever. I propose that with its conditions followed and its history traced with this in mind, applying the theory of

substantial motion to the SP's philosophical history will reveal a self enduring change to manifest its original status in a more perfect way in the Sadrian synthesis.

This position is based on the Sadrian principle that the self *is* its movement. Its movement *is* its existence. Transubstantial motion dictates that the self is moving toward its perfection. It never maintains the same identity at any point in the stream of its evolution. The process of transubstantial motion reveals the initial potential setting the entity into motion. The trajectory of the identity of the SP's self-awareness shows a consistently changing apperception by those who handle it. I will take a retroactive look from the Return. There, the emergence of the SP's self as existence on the Sadrian side of the spectrum emerges. From there, using the Sadrian onto-epistemic paradigm, I will retrace the flow of the SP's self, taking note of the faculty exercised by each thinker who treated it in preparation for its ultimate unveiling as existence. Through this method, I plan to show that like Ṣadrā's transubstantial theory of motion, the SP flows from its origin as existence and return to the same origin in a state of clarity regarding its apperception produced by the phases it passed through to do so.

The Remaining Chapters

The remaining chapters disclose the relationship between the SP's condition-approved apperception and the philo-mystical steps providing its exposé in the Sadrian onto-psychology that eventually hosts it. Chapter Two, "The Thinkers, Their Related Ideas and Their Reception" presents the preparatory historical and sample academic context for our research by discussing the thinkers and theoretical groundwork associated with the SP. Chapter Three, then, "The Sadrian Psycho-Ontological Tension

Between Monism and Dualism," introduces the Sadrian ontological framework entertaining the SP. There I will discuss the difference between Sadrian Simple Reality and all other conceptual references to Existence. Doing so helps to uncover Ṣadrā's unfavorable disposition toward existential monism.

In its place, Ṣadrā offers clear distinctions between Simple Reality's Individual Unity (*Waḥdah al-shakhṣiyyah*) and the common-sense presence of multiple entities in the World of Occurrences. To clarify this distinction, Ṣadrā assigns these various entities to the minds of those who perceive them. Perception, in turn, is treated as one's location in the gradational reality of the world phenomenon: the degree to one's proximity to the Simple Reality's completion or otherwise determines which side of the ontological coin one experiences existence. From there, we began to understand that the gradational experience determining how we perceive what we perceive as gradational reality explains the Sadrian interpretation of the self-body conundrum. As all entities strive for their fulfilment in Simple Reality, the basis of these entities is their neediness.

Prime Matter is the most indigent of entities. It gives rise to the individual self. The individual self is a corporeal existent whose internal drive for perfection climbs toward its fullest end due to ardent love for completeness. Once there, we understand that Ṣadrā's onto-epistemic view of the world dictates a novel approach to the supposed self-body problem. Like love, which is neither something limited to the lover or the beloved, the corporeality of the human being strives beyond itself for its origins in the Simple Reality, producing a full-fledged version of itself that no longer requires the assistance of the Prime Matter serving as a condition for its generation.

With the onto-epistemic grounds prepared for the SP's conditions approved reception in Ṣadrā, Chapter Four, "The SP's Unfurling Trajectory Before Ṣadrā" reveals the philo-historical ingredients used to do so. Here, the intellectual requirements necessary to sustain Transcendent Philosophy's synthetic solution to an otherwise unclaimed apperception in the SP materializes. The first onto-epistemic change undertaken by the SP's conditions-approved apperception is in the Suhrawardian phase, wherein knowledge and existence identify. The SP's primary utility is to probe the concepts of apperception and self-awareness, given by Avicenna and personal observations. There the SP's own experience in knowledge by presence (ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī) alludes to a self-familiarity before logic, or outside of the categories, and different to intellection. We will see that the outcome of this project positions the SP as a device to ascertain the self's status as pure essence. Alternatively, we will find that the Akbarian treatment of an SP influenced by both Plotinus and Ibn Sīnā recommend a purely existential self. Thus, Ṣadrā receives traditions that, while treating the same SP-esque scenarios, come to completely polarized conclusions.

In Chapter Five, "Setting Up the Suspended Person's Full Accessibility in Ṣadrā," we find that Ibn Sīnā's epistemology did not entertain presential knowledge. Instead, his approach relied on static substances and emanation as an explanation for the nature of the Divine's more indirect awareness of the world of phenomenon. In turn, we will see that human consciousness reflects the same epistemic structure in Ibn Sīnā. In contrast, for Ṣadrā, however, we will see that the phenomenon of motion challenges Aristotelian the veracity of static substance. Life's fluctuations require occurrences in both Divine and human knowledge to be understood outside the realm of an inactive substance.

As a result, we will see that Ṣadrā overthrows the Avicennian onto-epistemic structure's basis in static substances. In its place a post-Suhrawardian knowledge by presence capable of providing insight appropriate for a gradational cosmos emerges. From God to humankind, we find that in Ṣadrā, like Ibn ʿArabī, entities emanate according to their existential possibility as pre-determined by their gradational placement in God's Knowledge. Unlike the Akbarians, however, the root of the emanations does not lay in static essences. Rather, they participate as pre-spatiotemporal points in a band of existential possibility. In the end, we find that these existential possibilities are realized in the world as they were before it for all "things" are predetermined modalities of Simple Reality.

Chapter Six, "An Excavation of the SP's Conditions Approved Perception in Ṣadrā," recollects the philo-historical elements culminating in Sadrian knowledge by presence's ability to surface. This permits the SP's stipulations- authorized apperception to appear. There, each moment of her transformation epitomizes Sadrian knowledge by presence as self-discovery is the engine of existential fulfilment. Sumeyye Parildar's study on Sadrian mental existence, entitled "Mullā Ṣadrā on the Mental: A Monist Approach to Mental Existence, "points to the Sadrian self's capacity to transform all it perceives into the self-same immateriality. There, Parildar calls on Ṣadrā's Animal SP as a specimen for Sadrian psychological monism as the commonality of self-awareness between humans and animals in Transcendent Philosophy serving as a bridge between animal and humankind. Like the animal SP, the human SP perceives through her existential reality. She is what she perceives. Thus, we find that her apperceptive experience must also be existential. As the Avicennian self's existential status requires

a move away from its origins in Ibn Sīnā's inhibiting system, we find a resolution in Parildar's observations regarding Sadrian psychological monism in an existential SP. The basis of this version of the thought experiment surfacing late in the Avicennian trajectory, we find, is in the synthesis of Avicennian, Suhrawardian, Akbarian, and Sadrian onto-epistemology as represented by Sadrian knowledge by presence.

In Chapter Seven, "A New SP Induced Problem in Ṣadrā's Onto-Epistemology" we observe that the SP is both for and against Ṣadrā's onto-psycho-epistemic system. On the one hand, it provides a practical tool to access an existent's simple reality as a window into the nature of Simple Reality on account of Ṣadrā's position on the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-kāmil*), all of which share an existential correspondence outside the confines of modal existence. The thought experiment is an affront to Transcendent Philosophy because undermines the critical concepts of substantiality and transubstantial motion, ruling out the possibility for individuals to achieve the onto-epistemic status of the Perfect Human. Ultimately, we find that the SP's conditions-approved apperception surpasses the limitations of yet another host system in Ṣadrā.

Chapter II: The Thinkers, Their Related Ideas and Their Reception

Here, we will examine the thinkers involved in our study. The analysis will focus
on their respective principles shaping the SP's formation in each stage of its
development. An introduction to the thought experiment's onto-epistemic developments
will be emphasized in each stage of its reception. This overview will include Avicennian
Suhrawardian, Akbarian, and Sadrian contributions to the SP's development over time.
will be taken up briefly in an attempt to point to more specific elements required in this
study to set the stage for the bulk of the research. The SP's ontological status is easily
determined once its conditions are considered more carefully. It is also obvious that
Ṣadrā's system also comes to a similar conclusion. The remainder of this study will
show how Transcendent Philosophy can support the SP's original conditions based
existential apperception.

Following this, a literature review is included here in an attempt to catalogue the
most typical relevant academic responses to the thought experiments non-conditions
approved reception. By doing so, my research findings are placed in the context of the
SP's greater conversation and reception. My comments on the various arguments
illustrate how significant the oversight mentioned above is in juxtaposition with the
scholarship that has engaged it. We have limited the literature review to five categories.
By placing the most diverse range of relevant SP studies into historical, philosophical,
comparative, existential, and mystical considerations, as appropriate, we can present a
thorough and pertinent panorama of the thinkers, ideas, and treatments contextualizing

the research done here. Thus, this chapter begins with a limited account of the essential relevant figures involved and their crucial SP thoughts. Then an overview of the literature on the latter will follow it. Finally, I offer the previous studies.

\

A Limited Account of the Important Relevant Figures

Although there are more characters to the story, I will limit to four foremost contributors for the sake of brevity. As the SP is of Avicennian origin, it must be supplemented with some background regarding its creator's ideas. This way, one can appreciate what Ibn Sīnā had in mind while formulating the SP to understand its *raison d'être* better. Doing so, at least as far as my reading is concerned, allows for an easier assessment of the limits of the discursive thought that produced it compared to the apperceptive vision it inadvertently spawned. Suhrawardī's illuminationism (*Ḥikmah/Falsafah al-Ishrāq*) is crucial here for the epistemic turn from argument to instinct in post-Avicennian thought. This arises from his reaction to Ibn Sīnā's Peripateticism, clearly displayed in the manner in which he emphasizes knowledge by presence, an intuitive approach to knowledge, in the SP scenario. Akbarianism, Ibn ʿArabī's inspired school, here mostly represented by Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, (d.c. 729/1350) [11] emphasizes the personal relationship between existence, intuition and knowledge, as manifested in the articulation of their spiritual visions resembling SP-esque scenarios.

Each of these schools introduced an element of Transcendent Philosophy directly contributing to the Sadrian thesis of existential apperception as it applies to the SP in Ṣadrā's thought. I will discuss them chronologically to help place the

---

[11] al-Qayṣarī is a key Akbarian figure originally from Kaisar, in modern-day Turkey.

development of the SP's ability to better expose its true consciousness in the Sadrian period. I will also focus on the areas of each system's philosophical contribution to our concern here. Each school is represented, more or less, by their founder. The Akbarian school, while rooted in Ibn ʿArabī, again, finds most of its representation, here, in Ibn ʿArabī and his student, al-Qayṣarī. Ṣadrā, the great synthesizer of all these schools and respective representatives, portrays an SP capable of representing the original condition-approved vision, via the insights of Suhrawardī and the Akbarians. He does so just enough to expose the philosophical implications in a manner transcending his written musings, upon deeper reflection. An introduction to the ideas that helped produced this synthesis is presented here while further personal details of the individuals who presented these ideas are available in many alternative places. A reference to those places will be provided in context.

Finally, I am excluding post-Sadrian thinkers despite their contributions to the self-revelation of SP consciousness. An exception is found in Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1360 /1981) [12] whose sparse presence in this study makes some of Ṣadrā's basic ideas further accessible. Rather, I have opted to keep the parameters of my questions on the subject limited to Ṣadrā himself. By doing so I point out the developments that led up to him in a concentrated fashion delivering the answers to the main questions at hand. Once that question is answered there is no need to look past Ṣadrā.

---

[12] A prominent post-Ṣadrā thinker in contemporary Shia Islam. He was a philosopher, mystic, Quran exegete, and hadith specialist. Most commonly known as "Allāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī, he is probably most famous for his "*Tafsīr al-mizān*" a twenty-volume exegesis of the Quran. He also taught both Henry Corbin (d.1978) and Seyyed Hossein Nasr who have both shared considerable in the legacy of Islamic Philosophy in the West. Thus, Allāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī has made considerable indirect contributions to the study of its ideas globally.

Ibn Sīnā

Ibn Sīnā's ontology, epistemology, and his SP thought experiment are the

foundation of this study. As the initial assumptions of these elements and his

conclusions are the points of agreement, negotiation and at times refutation for the

concerned thinkers coming in their wake their centrality is evident here. At this point,

some introductory comments will be made about his ideas on the nature of existence,

theory of knowledge, and their relationship with the SP and its conditions. Finally my

initial remarks about the subtle oversight in the latter revealing an Avicennian recipe for

an existential self. Ultimately, I assert the SP's original onto-epistemic pre-settings force

it to have an existential apperception transcending the parameters of Avicennian onto-

epistemology.

The Centrality of Avicennian Ontology

Ibn Sīnā excelled in ontology focusing more on questions related to existence

than any other philosophical enquiry. This causes some to opine that "if the central

element of Platonic metaphysics is the theory of Ideas, and that of Aristotle is the theory

of potentiality and actuality, Avicenna's metaphysics is the study of being *qua* being."

(Afnan 1958, 108) His focus on being *qua* being[13] is principle such that "Ibn Sīnā is

---

[13]Again, the difference between the two nouns is that a "being" is a living creature while existence is the state of being or happening; being-hood. I have stressed the reasons for my preference of the term "existence" when considering *wujūd* instead of "being." As I am not convinced that a non-particularized sense of existence, one beyond his conceptual framework, works in Ibn Sīnā, I leave the term "being" in place as is familiar with those who treat his ontology. There is also evidence of this distinction in the manner in which he associates knowledge with things, in general. Ibn Sīnā states, "we would like to encompass all metaphysical knowledge (*al-ʿUlūm al-ilāhiy*). We say, then, [that] every kind of natural knowledge, and likewise, every mathematical knowledge is scrutinized based upon the condition of one of the beings-in-the-world (*mawjūdāt*). All particular knowledge [is scrutinized the same way]. None of them is scrutinized against the conditions of the Absolute Existence (*al-Wujūd al-muṭlaq*), [nor] its concomitants

above all a 'philosopher of Being'; all knowledge for him involves the analogy of the

beings of particular things with Being itself which stands above and anterior to the

Universe. The highest form of knowledge, in fact, is the knowledge of Being itself, to

which the knowledge of mathematics and of the physical world are subordinated." (Nasr

1993, 197) Avicennian knowledge, then, may be said to be based on analogous

relationships between Being and being. Thus, it may be inferred that for Ibn Sīnā the

Universe and its contents are understood solely as they relate to his concepts regarding

Reality.

Avicennian Epistemology

The engine propelling Ibn Sīnā's thought forward, the conceptual structure

through which it does so, and its primary focus is on Being. It seems to have permeated

every aspect of his system as:

> Avicenna's ontology of being (*al-wujūd*) reflects a shift from the Aristotelian
> categories of being while pointing towards some sort of a
> phenomenological encounter with the question of being. This is attested in
> investigating the semantics, and it is mainly illustrated by his ontological
> as well as logical consideration of being in relation to the modalities of
> necessity (*wujūb*), contingency (*imkān*), and impossibility (*istiḥāla*,
> *imtināʿ*). Like all great philosophers, the groundwork of Avicenna's
> metaphysics is laid down in his logic."   (El-Bizri 2000, 11)

(*lawāḥiq*), or principles (*mabādiʾ*). (Ibn Sīnā 1953, 322) The SP, in my reading, and its destination in
Ṣadrā both involve a *Wujūd* beyond the considerations of any particularly identified entity i.e. Absolute
Existence.

Thus, unlike Aristotle who seems to impose a structure on to being, Ibn Sīnā imposes being onto our structures. Any conceptual object having a relationship with being finds itself categorized by it. Being's necessity stands in contradistinction to those entities who may share an earthly bond with it. Even those items which may never liaison with being must be negotiated with it. Thus, there is collocation of being and reason in Ibn Sīnā.

The "blank slate" (Lat. *tabula rasa*) theory holds that the self, created instantaneously with the body, is void of any pre-corporeal knowledge, or innate ideas, whatsoever. Several arguments buttress the Avicennian rejection of a pre-corporeal self. If the self is one, he suggests, then for the self to exist before the body there must either be a plethora of selves or only one. As selves are immaterial, he continues, the plurality of selves proves impossible, as without the dividing principle of matter the possibility for the selves' multiplicity is irrational. The selves, he continues, cannot be one before they come into the body because this would mean that everyone shares the same self, which is absurd. Therefore, he concludes, it is impossible for the soul to exist before the body providing the conditions for it to exist in the same way that form needs matter. (Ibn Sīnā 1958, 300-302) If the self had no pre-terrestrial existence, i.e., if the self did not precede the body, then it cannot have any pre-existing memories either.

Ibn Sīnā claims both human and celestial intellects are congeneric (*mujānis*), immaterial substances. For him, the celestial intellects, conversely, are related to eternal bodies and are forever actual. Therefore, their knowledge is purely intellectual because they know the differences between the intelligibles and what causes them. The human intellect, on the other hand, requires both the external and internal corporeal

senses, both external and internal, in order to perceive the effect of an intelligible form.

He claims both human and celestial intellects are congeneric, immaterial substances.

(Gutas 2014) The unlimited potential to receive intelligibles serves as the basis of

Avicennian thought in the same way that matter stands to the reception of form in

Aristotle. To actualize forms, or "think," requires a three-fold agency. These three

requirements are, "the innate, if unrealized, aptitude (*istiʿdād*) for intellectual perception

that the material intellect possesses; a source from which the rational soul can 'take'

intelligibles; and an agent that moves the passive material intellect from inchoate

formlessness toward crystalline actuality." (Heath 1992, 84–85)

     The Avicennian thinker activates the course of thought-action via the initial

apprehension of the external world. When the intellectual facility witnesses the

particulars in the composite imagination, and the light of the Active Intellect (*al-ʿAql al-*

faʿāl)[14] illuminates them in the subject, these particulars become abstracted from matter

and its attachments. These particulars imprint on the rational self. This impression is not

in the sense that the particulars themselves are moved from the imagination to the

intellect in the subject. It is also not in the sense that the concepts laying in material

attachments manufacture another like itself. Instead, the intellect's assessment of

impressions prepares the self for the time when the abstract intelligibles from the Active

Intellect emanates unto it. [15] How, then, do these abstract intelligibles emanate to a

person?

---

[14] *De Anima* 3.5 discusses both the passive and Active Intellect. Most scholars concur that the passive intellect, whose passivity is akin to hylomorphic material, is a faculty of the human self. Many think the Active Intellect, similar to the formal role in hylomorphism, is also one of its powers. Others, however, posit that the Active Intellect is the God of Aristotle's God-the Immovable Mover of *Metaphysics Lambda*, or an alternative being beyond the human self.

[15] See *al-Nafs* in Ibn Sīnā 1995, 321–322.

The process that occurs for the Active Intellect to emanate onto the rational self is syllogistic. Ibn Sīnā defines the syllogism as, "a statement composed of statements which, when made, another different statement by itself and not by accident, follows necessarily." (Afnan 1958, 60) The syllogism is comprised of at least two premises, and a conclusion is limited to three terms in each set. Each basic set involves a major and minor premise and the middle term. The major term occurs as the predicate in the conclusion. The minor term appears as its subject. The middle term occurs once in each premise, though never in the conclusion. Verifying the validity of the premises requires their criteria of soundness as well as acquiescence to the accuracy of the conclusion they produce in the corresponding world. However, to do so, the link between them, or the middle term must be distributed between the premises. It cannot be dispersed if it is not recognized. Through a syllogistic method of reasoning, in general, then, observations lead to propositional statements. These compounded prepositional statements lead to added abstract concepts. The original phase of Ibn Sīnā's mind is the material intellect; a pure potentiality prepared to receive the forms through the syllogism, a process dependent on the middle term. (Adamson 2004b) Therefore, the grasp of the middle term is vital to demonstration.

Demonstration is the fabric of Ibn Sinan thought. For the philosopher, the entire syllogistic process hinges upon interaction with appearances in the external world. While the celestial intellects are always aware of their causes, the logic Ibn Sīnā proposes here is the process wherein the human being can reason syllogistically back to its cause. In this sense, Ibn Sīnā's system is limited to an empirical theory of

knowledge wherein the senses are the means through which the self accumulates epistemic units through the senses. At that point, they gain various epistemic acquaintances (*maʿārif*) syllogistically (and consequently compared through a conjunction with the Active Intellect). All of this occurs through the experience of particulars in the world through one's senses. (Gutas 2014) Thus, human beings must understand the causes from their effects in the world. This is why the senses are the first port of understanding in Ibn Sīnā's theory of knowledge. As the human intellect comes into being in an absolutely dormant state it needs its association with the perishable body in order to actualize itself. (Gutas 2014) From birth, the human intellect is a "pure potentiality" actualized through the apprehension of physical objects in the world consequently offering the possibility of knowledge. Knowledge is achieved through abstracted universal concepts via an empirical familiarity with one's surroundings. (Adamson 2004b) Thus, other-than-God are intelligible emanations arranged in a grand syllogism. These first-principles bare concepts ascertained through the senses. The concepts make up the categories and rational facts including syllogistics. (Kemal 2001) The human mind participates as a receptor of these intelligibles containing first principles.

The complex process of human cogitation or putting concepts together and framing syllogisms is a process in the brain involving the accumulation of appropriate images. This activity prepares the human intellect to conjoin with the Active Intellect to think a thought. Through this pattern of cogitation and conjunction, the self becomes more and more capable of conjoining with the Active Intellect. (Marenbon 2007, 112) Eventually, the self gains the same contents that are in the Active Intellect until the

human mind identifies with it. The middle term connects one proposition to another until one realizes their intellectual potential through logical assent.

For Ibn Sīnā, an essentially physiological endeavor like cogitation is based upon a valid syllogism whose cogency is grounded upon the distribution of an immaterial middle term. He defined the middle term as, 'the cause which makes assent to the existence or non-existence of a thing easy-i.e., the evidence that justifies the judgment." (Scharfstein 1988, 298) Though the syllogism contains the three previously mentioned constituents, the middle term, being *a priori*, is prior to them all, conceptually. This is because the middle term is the vehicle required to make the connection between any two concepts in the human mind. It follows that realization of the nature of things, and the implementation of a syllogism is predicated on the middle term. If the foundation of Ibn Sīnā's mind is pure potential prepared to actualize via the syllogism, subsequently this process is also dependent on the middle term. Dimitri Gutas epitomizes these points by discussing intuition (*ḥads*) saying:

> Avicenna's epistemological theory revolves around the pivotal concept of
> *ḥads*. All knowledge consists of the totality of the intelligibles contained in the
> intellects of the celestial spheres and is structured in a syllogistic fashion;
> that is, it contains the extreme terms of syllogisms along with the middle
> terms which cause, or explain the conclusions. The acquisition of this
> knowledge, which is the goal of all human activity because the misery or
> bliss of the immortal rational soul in the hereafter depends directly upon it,
> proceeds accordingly by the consecutive discovery of middle terms. (Gutas
> 2011)

With the syllogistic primacy of the middle term in place, a closer look at intuition needs to be made to comprehend the implication of his pivotal placement of it, and its place in the awareness of the SP. According to the philosopher, the middle term is realized via intuition. (Black 2013, 131) Intuition, he posits, is an everyday occurrence. (Black 2013, 131) As

such, on a daily basis the middle term, so vital to the syllogism and cognitive assent toward

the Active Intellect, is realized intuitively. "The intuitive grasp of the middle term yields a

principle of knowledge that is certain and indubitable." (Black 2013, 131) It follows thus far

that the middle term is the assured foundation for which Avicennian deduction may occur. If

Ibn Sīnā's actualization of the material intellect occurs via the middle term, then cognition is

dependent on intuition.

The basis of the philosopher's ideas regarding intuition is found in Aristotle. The

Stagirite verifies the previous statements regarding the identification of intuition or "quick

wit" and the middle term as mentioned in the *Posterior Analytics*. He says:

> Quick wit is a faculty of hitting upon the middle term instantaneously.
> It would be exemplified by a man who saw that the moon has her
> bright side always turned towards the sun, and quickly grasped the
> cause of this, namely that she borrows her light from him; or observed
> somebody in conversation with a man of wealth and divined that he
> was borrowing money, or that the friendship of these people sprang
> from a common enmity. [16]

As this passage indicates, intuition is "hitting upon the middle term instantaneously."

Looking at the rest of the passage one may say that instantaneous recognition of the

middle term is intuition. It seems to explain intuition as 'seeing' beyond that which is

apparent to comprehend whatever evident principle lies behind what is seen.

With the middle term and intuition identified, as soon as the former is grasped,

one has attained knowledge in that very instance. Gutas states, "*ḥads* constitutes the

only point of epistemological contact, in Avicenna's thought, between the sublunar and

the superlunary realms, or between the mundane and the transcendental, and it refers

to a strict and precise syllogistic process. Avicenna admits no other way to knowledge

---

[16] Posterior Analytics I.33, 89b 10-11

of the intelligible world and ultimately of the Necessary Existent (*Wājib al-wujūd*)." [17]

Once intuition activates, all mental potential is realized.

According to the Philosopher, to the extent that one may realize the unobserved connections linking the forms existing within the intellect, though placed by the Active Intellect, the closer one comes to realize human perfection. With the doors of intellectual possibility opened this way via having a mere hunch, one can say that the essence of Avicennian cognition is intuition. As mentioned before, this intuition identifies with the middle term. The middle term is *a priori* and as such does not need verification. The middle term is prior to acts of recognition and cognition. It only requires itself and is constantly self-evident. Ibn Sīnā states that logic is the theoretical factory identifying which of the forms and materials through winch the correct definition may be truly be called a definition. (Ibn Sīnā 1958, 5) Sense exposure to the world provides the quiddities that become the concepts that we may or may not verify through syllogistic reasoning thereby formulating the basis of Avicennian logic.

Ibn Sīnā and Self-Awareness

It may be inferred from the above that for Ibn Sīnā, the human is the most important being, different from vegetable and animal due to her ability to reason.[18] She is below the celestial heavens in this manner for reasons already conveyed but potentially above all sub-lunar existents provided she ascends to the Active Intellect

---

[17] Dimitri Gutas, "Avicenna V. Mysticism", Encyclopedia Iranica
http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/avicenna-v (accessed November 6th, 2018).

[18] For more on the human rational self as opposed to the animal, or vegetative self, see Rahman 1958, 32-33.

syllogistically. He also holds that human reason splits each ontological object into existence and essence. This distinction is noteworthy, although without the exact terminology when he states:

> A thing and that which exists in its place may be indicated by another meaning in every language. Everything has a reality through which it is what it is. A triangle has a reality with which it is a triangle. Whiteness (*al-bayāḍ*) has a reality with which it is whiteness. That [thing] is what they might have called particular or "proper existence"(*al-wūjud al-khāṣ*). We do not intend the meaning of "the fact that something is established" (i.e. confirmed existence) (*al-wujūd al-ithbātī*) with this [former] term. The expression (*lafẓ*) "existence" (*wujūd*) also indicates many meanings including the reality upon which something is [established]. It is as if this meaning is what is intended with something's being the proper existence of something [else]. (Ibn Sīnā 1964, 31)

For Ibn Sīnā, when the mind asks what an object is, it considers its proper existence or that which tells us *what* something is its quiddity (*māhiyyah*). The incidental fact that something is there as opposed to not being there is its confirmed existence. That is to say, although we behold an object, when we ask what it is the answer regarding its identity is not supplied to us by the fact that it is there. Rather, its identity is confirmed by the aspects concomitant with its substantial presence in our minds. So, when a one considers their own person, they can perceive that they exist and that they exist as a particular substance. This is because the self's awareness of herself is the basis of her knowledge. Thus, the most important basis of human reason is self-awareness. This also implies that Avicennian knowledge is based in essences as the Avicennian self is an immaterial substance. The human is the most important being, then, due to her self-awareness. The self-aware essence, then, is the most important existence. Perhaps this is part of the reason for Ibn Sīnā's formation of the SP, an experiment:

> [W]hich hinges precisely on the supposition that in a special situation we may be aware of nothing but ourselves, but it is especially evident in the

arguments based on intuitions concerning our personal identity, which Avicenna applies to distinguish the self from accidental features that are due to our relations to our bodies. Since all these features are subject to change and cessation, the self that remains intact throughout their variation must be really separate from them. (Kaukua 2014b, 250)

According to Jari Kaukua, for Ibn Sīnā our onto-epistemic and psychological mainstay is our self. It endures outside serving as the place where the accidents resulting from the self's association with the body adhere. It endures while the various accidents may not.

In terms of longevity and impact of the SP as it relates to the legacy of Ibn Sīnā:

From the twelfth century CE onwards, most philosophical authors will begin their discussion of the human soul, sometimes even their entire psychology, with the famous experiment of the flying man, or apply crucial stages the evidence of the subjective unity of experience or the argument against reflection-based models of self-awareness...this is because the unanimously subscribe to Avicenna's description of self-awareness and his way of singling out this particular aspect of human experience. (Kaukua 2015, 4)

Thus, the Avicennian penchant for discussion on the self perpetuates in the generations that come after him through their taking up the SP. Granted, they do not seem to consider the ramifications of that focus their usage of the experiment and their agreement with its conclusions are all important factors that will be taken up later. We will now turn to the thought experiment.

The Suspended Person Thought Experiment

Scholars differ regarding Ibn Sīnā's objective in the SP. For example, Michael Marmura maintains its objective is to prove the self's immateriality. (Marmura 1986, 391) Dag Hasse maintains that its commitment is to sustain the self's independence from the body. (Hasse 2000, 86) Others have maintained that the SP was developed "to prove: (a) the existence of the rational soul; (b) that the rational soul exists

independently of the body; and (c) that if the rational soul, or self, is unaware of the body, it is still aware of its own existence." (Ibn Kammūna 2003, 39) [19]

Ibn Sīnā's thought experiment proved crucial for Avicennian thought as the self's nature is of central importance to it. The SP is said to be the first time in philosophy that the immediacy of self-awareness and its intuition is taken up in a way that draws "attention to that specialness of self-awareness." (Adamson 2012) "In a point closely related to the conclusions of the Flying Man (i.e., the SP) Avicenna points out that as long as we know something, we can point out that *that* we know that we know something. All knowledge, potentially, is accompanied by self-knowledge." (Adamson 2013) In what follows, I will place the SP experiment within Ibn Sīnā's epistemic theory. I will show that the subject of the thought experiment is in a state of primitive self-awareness.[20]

The SP's Conditions

Taking the validity of thought experiments as an indication toward truth for granted, Ibn Sīnā proposes that we consider an imaginary experience. In a version of

---

[19] It is my contention that position "c," regarding the nature of the self's apprehension of its own awareness, is contradictory when considered alongside his rejection of innate ideas. This point will be taken up in the section wherein I discuss the problems in the SP.

It should be mentioned here that "modern scholars studying the Flying Man focus their attention on the prerequisite of self-awareness. They spend less time evaluating Avicenna's argument and, when they do, often reach negative result'. Some claim that Avicenna is not arguing for a categorical conclusion, but merely provides the perspicacious reader with a reminder (*tanbih*) for the fact that we have constant self-awareness. Muehlethaler 2009, 181.

[20] This self-awareness is a supposition or prerequisite in the majority of the versions of the SP including, *al-Shifā*, *al-Ishārāt*, and *al-Mubāḥathāt*.

the experiment found in *al-Shifāʾ*, the stipulations of the body-self division are given. He

says:

> So, we say that it has to be envisaged as though one of us was created
> complete in an instant, but his vision is veiled from directly witnessing the
> things of the external world. He is created as though floating in air or in a
> void but without the air supporting him in such a way as to feel it, and the
> limbs of his body are stretched out and away from one another, so they do
> not touch each other. (Heath 1992, 88)

For effectiveness, one accepts Ibn Sīnā's epistemic pre-conditions that: 1) One's self

has no pre-corporeal existence. 2) One is born with a blank slate. 3) One's knowledge is

only given through their senses. 4) One is not to be exposed to any external stimuli. 5)

One is born instantaneously as an adult with full mental maturation, yet devoid of any

memory. With these conditions fulfilled and while pre-supposing awareness in that

state, he declares what the object of awareness would be. He states, "then, he

considers whether he can assert the existence of his self (*ḏāt*). He has no doubts about

asserting his self (*ḏāt*) as something that exists without also [having to] assert the

existence of any of his exterior or interior parts, his heart, his brain, or anything external

whatsoever [*wa lā shayʾin min al-ashyāʾ*]." (Ibn Sīnā 1995, 26–27)

After establishing the nature of the anticipated awareness, he makes it clear that

awareness of anything else is impossible. As the word he uses, *ḏāt*, meaning both

"essence" and "self" implies, the individual apprehends a substance/essence alone.

This isolation becomes clear in the next section of the text. He states:

> He will, in fact, claim the existence of his self (*ḏāt*) without asserting that it
> has length, breadth, or depth, and, if he had potential for him in such a state
> to conceive a hand or some other extremity, he would not be able to imagine
> it as a part of his self or as a necessary condition of his self (*ḏāt*) - and you
> know that what can be said to exist is not the same as what cannot be so
> asserted and that what is stipulated is not the same as what is not stipulated.
> (Ibn Sīnā 1995, 27)

In other words, this essence is apprehended, devoid of either quality or extension. Even if she could manage to conceive of additions to this self/essence, its simplicity could not relate to that which is beyond it due to the latter's complexity. This awareness provides, he claims, a clear distinction between what is hers and what is not. He then applies the principle of noncontradiction, as that which is verified is not the same as with that which is not. As the two are not the same, it follows that the self and the body are also different substances.

For the philosopher words like, "essence," "self," and "soul" are used interchangeably. In this instance, his satisfaction with the experiment is clear. He claims, "thus, what [the one who participated in the thought experiment] has been alerted to is a way to observe that the self is not the body - nor in fact any body - to know it and feel it, if it is in fact the case that he has been disregarding it and needed to be hit over the head with it." (Ibn Sīnā 1995, 26-27) In other words, one is potentially capable of constant awareness of a self distinct from the body. He claims this indication is cause enough for a person to realize the reality of the distinction between the two (i.e., the self and the body). Finally, the self's existence as an act of self-awareness, he claims, has been made clear for those who were previously unaware of that which is obvious though one may not be conscious of it.

Elsewhere he attempts to illustrate the difference between consciousness and awareness by analyzing the nature of the two whilst one is sleeping. A doubt was raised to him that a sleeping person is not aware of himself. So, he objected that if:

> [T]he person who is asleep acts upon his images just as he acts upon his sensibles while awake. And oftentimes he acts upon cogitative intellectual matters just as he does in waking. And in this state of his acting he is aware

that he is the one acting, just as he is in the waking state. For if he awakens and remembers his acting, he remembers his awareness of himself, and if he awakens and does not remember this, he will not remember his self-awareness. And this is not proof that he was not aware of himself, for the memory of self-awareness is different from self-awareness, or rather, the awareness of self- awareness is different from self-awareness. (Black, 6)[21]

When a person is asleep and dreaming while unconscious, he contends, it is like one who is awake. Both people, he holds, respond to mental activity. He asserts that while the subject is dreaming and engaged with these stimuli, they are aware of doing so. He attempts to prove this point by positing that when they awaken, they remember having been aware of their self's activity in the dream. This recollection after having dreamt is on par, he claims, with someone awake who recalls an act previously committed while asleep. The inference is that the difference between consciousness and awareness is that the latter is constant even if one is not privy to the former. In the end, he attempts to show that the pure awareness at the base of recognizing one's existence is not the same as being aware of one's awareness, periodically (i.e. consciousness). This is to say, recognizing one's self-observation, or awareness is not the same as being aware of one's self, or conscious, at one point in time as opposed to another. Awareness is constant while consciousness is intermittent.

This subtle difference between consciousness and awareness begs for further understanding of the simple awareness mentioned in the SP and how it relates to the identity of the human self. For example, if the rational self has no qualities how can it be defined? What is the rational self according to the Philosopher? To answer this

---

[21] Quote from D.C. Reisman, *al-Mubāḥathāt*: *The Making of the Avicennian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 210.

question, he makes several statements elsewhere demonstrating his intentions

regarding the identity of the rational self or human being and whatever correlations that

may exist between what it *does* and what it *is*. Ibn Sīnā states that:

> Self-awareness is fundamental to the self/essence (*al-shuʿūr bi al-ḏāt li-al-nafs*), it is not acquired externally. It is as if, when the self comes to be, awareness comes to be along with it. Nor are we aware of [the self] through an apparatus, but rather, we are aware of it through itself and from itself. And our awareness is an awareness without qualification, that is, there is no condition for it in any way; and it is continually aware, not at one time and not another. (Ibn Sīnā 1973, 160)

According to Ibn Sīnā, the act of self-awareness is fundamental to the simple self. This

fundamental act of self cannot be accredited to any other entity in the SP's suspended

state. This is because she is incapable of conceiving of anything in the external world.

As a dualist, he holds that the self is created alongside its physical counterpart.

Consequently, the self's awareness began at that time as well. Essentially, "I" is all the

self knows while suspended, as far as Ibn Sīnā is concerned. Simple in every way, it

exists as an act of awareness. Here, action and essence equate, as the Philosopher

states, "our awareness of ourselves (literally our "essence") is our very existence

(*shuʿūrnā bi ḏātinā huwa nafs wujūdinā*). Ibn Sīnā further states, "self-awareness is

natural (*gharīzah*) to the self, for it is its existence itself, so there is no need of anything

external by which the self is perceived. Rather, the self is that by which we perceive the

self." (Ibn Sīnā 1973, 161) [22]

---

[22] Suffice it to say now that my initial statements on the relationship between being/existence and self-awareness resonate in Avicennian scholarship. Beyond the surface coverage on the subject on the self's primitive awareness and the like, there is a more penetrating take. An example of this more piercing perspective says that the SP:

> [P]oints toward an experiential field whereby the self or subject is not a substance or unity but is rather what generates itself. It is a *nafs* as a self/soul field of experiences that is self-generated from an experiential process... The self-generated experiences are not therefore taken to be a state, they rather describe a

Ibn Sīnā's Primary Self-Awareness

The Avicennian suspended self is identified as a singular auto-generated act of its own awareness. However, in this passage the continuity, as opposed to a one-off sense of self-awareness that may be repeated per each personal imaginary experience of the SP, is revealed. Here, Ibn Sīnā peels the nature of the self's identity back an additional layer. He says:

> My apperception (*idrākī*) is something which subsists in me, for it does not arise in me from the consideration of something else. For if I say: 'I did this,' I express my apprehension of myself even if I am heedless of my awareness of it. But from where could I know that I did this, unless I had first considered my self? Therefore, I first did not consider my self, not its activity, nor did I consider anything by which I apprehend myself. [23]

If an act were analyzed, he says, even if the subject were not present during its execution, immediate recognition of its executer occurs afterwards. He asks, how would the actor be known despite subjective witnessing during the act? This recognition would occur, he explains, via an immediate subjective encounter of the self in the backdrop of the action in the mind of the actor. So, the subject does not confront the self first nor its act. Instead, after having performed the act the subject uses itself to recognize the self in the backdrop. It does not use something outside itself to recognize the self located

---

vector. In this sense, the self is not a self-same substance. It is rather a potentiality-for-being-itself.... El-Bizri 2000, 13–14.

Here the self has moved from its status as an immaterial substance to a self-generating vortex. Instead of being a static entity easily accessed through the Aristotelian categories from which it sprung, it is on par with the modality of being Heidegger considered to go beyond the angst we experience in our daily routines and habits.

[23] Ibid, 160.

continually in that location. Therefore, this passage indicates that the act of self-awareness that the Philosopher outlines in the SP is one of constant intuition. It is not a singular or momentary auto-generated occurrence of self-awareness. I conclude this point with a passage summarizing the points expressed so far. Ibn Sīnā says in *al-Ishārāt*:

> Return to yourself and reflect whether, being whole, or even in another state where, however, you discern in a thing correctly, you would be oblivious to the existence of yourself (*ḏātika*) and would not affirm yourself (*nafsika*)? To my mind, this does not happen to the perspicacious –so much that the sleeper in his sleep and the person drunk in the state of his drunkenness will not miss knowledge of his self, even if his presentation of his self to himself does not remain in his memory. And if you imagine yourself (*ḏātika*) to have been at its first creation nature and whole in mind and body and it is supposed to be in a generality of position and physical circumstance where it does not perceive its parts, where its limbs do not touch each other but are rather spread apart, and that this self is momentarily suspended in temperate air, you will find that it will be unaware of everything except the 'fixedness' (*thubūt*) of its individual existence. (Ibn Kammuna 2003, 39)

Ibn Sīnā uses the SP experiment to conclude that the act of self-awareness is the sole continually persistent intuitive act serving as the structure of our subjective existence. In conclusion, intuition is found to be the basis of self-awareness in the SP, "an argument which establishes the self by a supposition in which self-awareness is a prerequisite." (Muehlethaler 2009, 181)

The SP's Conditions Indicate an Existential Self

We have mentioned that there are approximately five (depending on how you enumerate them) specifications for the SP: One accepts that the self has no pre-material existence, accepts the blank slate theory, and holds that the senses are the sole provider of knowledge. They believe that they are born as an adult; thus, they have no memory and with full mental maturity, having never been exposed to external stimuli.

With these stipulations in mind we are considered capable of asserting our self's existence, without recourse to any external means, nor stimuli. However, Ibn Sīnā was a blank slate empiricist. The subject undergoes absolute sense deprivation. She may also not carry any innate ideas. Hence, through preventing the possibility for her to remember any substance, and having prevented any exposure to external substances through sensory deprivation, and after having appeared suddenly as a full adult, to claim the SP would know universal, particulars, substances, quiddities, or any "things" is not sustained by the Avicennian structure that created it. Rather, according to Ibn Sīnā's standards the SP does not know any substances i.e. "things." The SP also takes ontology beyond the limits of "being" and its preoccupation with this or that type of existence into the field of the absolutes shadowing (in the least) Existence without qualification.

So, while I agree with the claim that the SP is primitively aware as one cannot approach the notion of a person worth the name who is incapable of awareness. However, as the Avicennian binary would have it, if there is no essence (i.e. substance) then all that is left, ontologically speaking, is existence. Also, when there are no objects of thought, as such, reasoning cannot occur. Thus, in place of cogitation, the SP intuits existence. As an act of intuition, the SP appercepts existence *as* her own as there is no alternative entity to claim it exists. I contend that the SP's only possible object of awareness is its presence / pure existence. Ibn Sīnā claims the self exists *as* awareness. (Black 2008) When its conditions are observed properly, I contend that the SP shows that the self is aware of existence. I do not intend any one "thing" as opposed to another when using the term self for the SP from this point. I also do not mean one's

person as opposed to another's. I do intend, however, the synonymy of first-personal presence and existence, itself. That is to say, when its conditions are properly fulfilled there is no difference between the absolute-ness of the existence the SP is experiencing and her personal experience. In other words, she is the totality of a presence beyond both universals and particulars. It is in this capacity that I claim that the thought experiment indicates that the SP's self exists as existence. I also claim that the move from Avicennian being to existence is predicated on the SP's apperception; she is not experiencing a *kind* of existence. Rather, she is the non-categorical existence she experiences intuitively.

Conclusion

Ibn Sīnā's ontological cynosure, his intuitive reading of the nature of self-awareness in the SP, and the epistemic structure used to familiarize with it are the basis and point of departure in this study for the thinkers coming in his wake. These parts are referred to moving forward and will, as a result, appear many times over in our effort to trace the development of the excavation of the original SP apperception, as given by its stipulations, in Ṣadrā. For now, our onto-epistemic stance regarding her awareness is that the thought experiment does not simply "prove" that the self is while the body may be. Rather, the SP is not a proof. It does not nor was it intended to present conclusive evidence concerning the self's existence nor its relationship to entities alien to it. Instead, when rightly observed, the thought experiment's context and conditions indicate that the SP's self is existence. She has no recourse to the syllogistic tools to perceive,

nor for the assent to the concepts extracted from those perceptions. She does have

instinct. What she intuits is simple. This is because the SP simply *is.*

The SP's ontological non-complexity and subsequent distance from post-sensory

induced knowledge does not supersede her ability to intuit. Thus, she is aware of

existence, as opposed to any living creature, i.e. being. Her awareness of existence is

not as something outside of her self. She is existence without recourse to ontological

categorization, nor need for proof. Her presence is as evident as the middle term in a

syllogism. Later in this examination, we will have more of an opportunity to uncover the

nature of this condition-approved apperception. Here, in a word, we have established

that Ibn Sīnā provides the basic structure consequential limitations and points of critique

in the SP. The thought experiments onto-epistemic pre-settings compel it to have an

existential apperception transcending both them and their impediments. As we shall

see, this transcendence occurs through all the thinkers mentioned between Ibn Sīnā

and Ṣadrā thereby enabling the SP to reveal its original apperception.

Suhrawardī

The relationship between the Suhrawardian [24] self's capacity to *be* more or less

knowledge by presence serves as the foundation of his contributions in the vital

developments that occurred between Ibn Sīnā and Ṣadrā. These contributions enabling

the SP to reveal its original apperception eases the tension between Ṣadrā's concurrent

dualist and monist perspectives on self-awareness. It does so through indicating the

---

[24] For a biography on Suhrawardī, see Aminrazavi 1997.

self's status as existence. Suhrawardī added a new color to the palette of epistemology

changing the expressions of Islamic Philosophy from his era forward. This is because:

> Suhrawardī brought about a rapprochement between discursive thought,
> intellectual intuition (*dhawq*), and mysticism into a single coherent
> philosophical school of thought. Suhrawardī, who should be regarded as
> the father of philosophical mysticism, tells us he was puzzled and
> frustrated by his failure to find the answer as to how the soul/self (*nafs*)
> knows itself. In his dream -vision, Suhrawardī is told by Aristotle to seek
> the answer from such Sufi masters as Ḥallāj and Bāyazīd, rather than the
> Peripatetic philosophers. Suhrawardī takes this to mean that practical
> wisdom and asceticism are not only essential in knowing the soul but are
> superior to discursive reasoning. (Aminrazavi 2017, 373)

Thus, philosophical mysticism starts with the Shaykh al-Ishrāq on the point of

understanding self-knowledge. According to him, the father of Peripatetic thought

informed him that his answer is in the statements of the Mystics like Abū al-Mughith al-

Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d.244/866) [25] and Abū Yazīd Bāyāzīd Bistāmī (d.261/874-

75 or 234/848-49). Both of these mystics are known for their ecstatic utterances

(*shaṭaḥāt*) indicating the extent of their presence with the Necessary Being or The One.

Al-Ḥallāj's most controversial statement "I am the Truth," (*anā al-Ḥaqq*) cost him his life

for suggesting that he shared ontological space with God. [26] While referencing a

potential link between Neoplatonic deification (*theosis*) wherein one's soul becomes

united with God through intellectual ascent and al-Ḥallāj's own proposed deification

through divine *telos* Saer al-Jaichi remarks:

> Ḥallāj was probably the first non-Hellenistic thinker to borrow the language
> of deification…in the Neoplatonic sense of awakening divine thoughts
> within oneself. Ḥallāj uses the language of deification as the equivalent of

---

[25] It's interesting that Suhrawardī and al-Ḥallāj, like Socrates before them, were all killed for their apparent transgressions against authority. The first two against God and the latter against the authority of the state.

[26] For a study on these various ecstatic utterances, see Khogali 1987.

becoming a partaker in a contemplative vision. This vision…he calls "mushāhada," allows man to penetrate deeply into the divine reality. (El-Jaichi 2018, 117)

Alternatively, according to some scholarship the "I" in this statement is a first-person pronoun referring to God's person. It does not refer to the first-personality of al-Ḥallāj. (Abdul-Hamid 2013) This analysis would place al-Ḥallāj's statement as a subjective testimonial to the unity of Existence (waḥdah al-wujūd), akin to Akbarian thought. Thus, he shares in the same ontological vision holding all of existence as a single expression of the Existence of the Absolute Existence (i.e., God).

Thus, although Aminrazavi's point is well taken, it is more direct to say that Suhrawardī understood the intuitive vision akin to this statement from al-Ḥallāj took precedence over discursive reasoning for them both. That is to say, although practical wisdom and asceticism may lead to unveilings, the experiential knowledge causing a mystic to utter super-rational statements seems to be the source of knowing the nature of the self, according to Aristotle.

The Suhrawardian Ontological Paradigm Shift

Keeping to his characteristic originality, "Suhrawardi argues that light is the necessary condition for things to be observed and therefore it is light and not being that should be the constituent element of an ontology." (Aminrazavi 1997, 32) Thus, instead of speaking in terms of being/existence and non-being/existence, Suhrawardī's school, the Iluminationists (al-Ishrāqiyyūn) base ontology in light. This is because "Suhrawardi argues that light is the necessary condition for things to be observed and therefore it is light and not being that should be the constituting element of an ontology." (Aminrazavi

1997, 32) Suhrawardī examined the existence-essence dichotomy handed down from

Ibn Sīnā. His mystical vision saw that all things are fundamentally extant in an equal

fashion: no one thing exists more than another thing i.e., they are all existentially

present in the exact same sense. Thus, existence is undetectable. It is only

distinguished from the essence of the things that are observed by the mind. (Aminrazavi

1997, 35) Thus, existence is a universal concept, devoid of any extra-mental reality

(Aminrazavi 1997, 33). Essence, then, for Suhrawardī, not only has ontological primacy

and is the only reality.

The Suhrawardian Onto-Psychological Fusion

For Suhrawardī, as all things are Light and Light is Essence, to know any

ontological object is for its light to appear to the one who would perceive it. "There is

one thing which is 'being-in-itself' in the sense that its being does not subsist in another,

and that is known to us by virtue of knowledge by presence. This thing is the reality of

my 'I-ness,' which has been proven to be in itself, though not necessarily by itself, and

present to itself, in the sense that it cannot possibly be more apparent to itself than

simply being in itself." (Yazdī 1992, 82) As the self is Light and Light is Essence, to

know the self is for its light to appear to the one who perceives it. Thus, for Suhrawardī,

the fact that the self is the most illuminated (read: apparent) ontological entity, means it

is both the most real and the most stellar proof for knowledge by presence at once.

As the self is the most apparent entity, it is also the most intense example of

reality. For this reason, "Suhrawardī does reach the position that ...the self is nothing

but pure existence. This is because, according to his illuminative principle that the

reality of the self sufficiently satisfies all the empirical essentialities of light, and because light also perfectly applies to pure existence in terms of the greatest 'apparency,' the self can be defined in terms of pure existence." (Yazdī 1992, 82–83) As light and personality are synonymous terms in Illuminationist thought, all existing entities are self-apparent to some extent. In this sense, all things are made of Light and their ontological status depends on the degree to which they are self-aware. An entities degree of consciousness of its essence determines its level of self-awareness. (Aminrazavi 1997, 33) The Conclusively Self-aware or the Light of Lights (*Nūr al-anwār*) is the Necessary Existence (W*ājib al-wujūd*) and the Ultimate Agent (Aminrazavi 1997, 31) of things which have less diverse degrees of awareness of their essence. The most significant of the contingent existents is the rational self (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*), so simple that it is free of matter. (Aminrazavi 1997, 79)

Thus, the intensity of an entity's self-awareness determines the extent to which it exists. Those essences that are the least conscious of themselves are the least existing. Those that are the most aware of their essence are the most existing. That Essence whose Essence is necessarily apparent to Itself is the Absolute. The Absolute, then, is the most Self-Aware, the Light of Lights. The Light of Lights is the cause for the most advanced of the contingent beings. The most advanced of the contingent beings is the human being. Her self is the most realized entity yet depends on the Light of Lights for her existence. The Light of Lights, on the other hand, needs nothing to make it shine. It has always been and will always be Lucid Illumination, i.e., Pure Essence.

Conclusion

With the above points in place, it can be said that:

Having identified the soul as an ontological level of reality, Suhrawardī
offers his epistemological theory, known as 'Knowledge by Presence' (*al-
ʿilm al-ḥūḍūrī*), in which the soul as an ontological level of reality is a type
of existence or presence (*ḥūḍūr*) which can be more or less. Since the
soul is the essence of man, it follows that humans also can be more or
less, and that some humans "are" more than others, ontologically
speaking. (Aminrazavi 2017, 375)

Suhrawardī brings forward some essential ideas to the foreground. Ontology becomes a

science of light with varying intensities. Knowledge is a matter of appearance as

opposed to abstraction. An entity's ontological degrees of illumination are determined by

the extent of their apperception. The relationship between the Suhrawardian position

that the self may *be* more or less and how it applies to knowledge by presence serves

as the foundation of his contributions in the vital onto-epistemic developments occurring

between Ibn Sīnā and Ṣadrā.

 Ibn ʿArabī

The introduction to Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibnʿArabī

al-Ḥātimī al-Ṭāʾī, commonly known as "Ibn ʿArabī"'s [27] magnum opus, the Meccan

Revelations present three kinds of knowledge: 1) rational knowledge (*ʿilm ʿaqlī*),

although not likely referring to philosophy as much as it applies to speculative theology,

2) empirical knowledge (*ʿilm al-aḥwāl*), [28] and 3) knowledge of the Secrets (*ʿulūm al-*

---

[27] For a biography on Ibn ʿArabī, see Addas 1993.

[28] In the commentary of the Bezel of Hūd, al-Qayṣarī mentions regarding Ibn ʿArabī's words, 'Every limb
has experiential knowledge specific to it." 'Meaning that knowledge concerns that limb, like the eye's
perception of things that are seen and hearing for things that are heard. This is why he said, peace be
upon him, 'Whoever loses a sense has lost (some) knowledge (*man faqada ḥissan faqad faqada ʿilma*).

asrār) or gnosis (*maʿrifah*). The Knowledge of Secrets is buried in the heart of every

person. It is only accessed when divine light is exposed to the hearts of those meant to

receive it. Gnosis includes both rational knowledge and empirical knowledge. The

former, however, is without reflection. (Ibn ʿArabī 1999 Vol.1, 54-55) Ibn ʿArabī's meta-

philosophical monist vision regarding the relationship between existence and self-

awareness informs us of his contributions in the vital developments occurring between

Ibn Sīnā and Ṣadrā. These developments enabled the SP to reveal its original

apperception thereby easing the tension between Ṣadrā's concurrent dualist and monist

perspectives on self-awareness through indicating the self's status as existence.

Ibn ʿArabī's Ontological Monism

What did Ibn ʿArabī's gnosis show him? What place does it have in his overall

schema? The basis of Ibn ʿArabī's gnosis is an ontological vision. The subject of this

perception is the ultimate Akbarian ontological entity i.e., God. He talks about this,

referring to the Quranic narrative (98:8) when he says:

> Allah is pleased with His slaves, and "they are well-pleasing and well-
> pleased with Him." He is pleasing, so the two presences confront each
> other and accept likes, and the likes are opposites because the two likes
> are a single reality which does not unify them since they would not then be
> distinct. There is only the distinct, so there is no like. There is no like in
> existence, and so there is no opposite in existence. Existence is one
> reality, and the thing is not opposite to itself. (al-Qayṣarī 2012, 351–352)

al-Qayṣarī said regarding these lines:

> The two opposing presences (that of the Lord and the slave) have two
> respective considerations between them: 1) the Gathering Reality (*al-*

This is because each limb is a site for a spiritual faculty (*quwwah rūḥāniyyah*). Each spiritual faculty is a site of the Divine Name (*al-Ism al-ilāhī*). This name has a knowledge that concerns it, flowing from it upon its site (of manifestation). al-Qayṣarī 2012, 408.

Ḥaqīqah al-jāmiʿah) and 2) the Dissimilar Reality (*al-Ḥaqīqah al-taghāyyur*). In reference to the unity of their reality, there is no dissimilarity between them nor opposition. So, there is no lordship nor slavehood between the two presences. There is dissimilarity and opposition in reference to the Dissimilar Reality, between them. In that respect, both lordship and slavehood are confirmed. Thus, their existence is true as it pertains to multiplicity while their non-existence is as it pertains to the unity (of Existence) is also true. The former harmonizes with the world and the latter is compatible with existence. (al-Qayṣarī 2012, 352)

From the two sections above, it can be said that there are two perspectives regarding the relationship between the Lord and the slave. On one hand, they both exist. In their mutual existence they both take on appropriate rolls. Here, the Lord is to be pleased and the slaves are to be pleasing to Him. In doing so they both have an ontological status. This aspect of Akbarian ontology synchronizes with the rational view of the world. Here, two opposing things cannot be the same thing at any point due to the principle of noncontradiction. This dissimilar reality is found in the outward sense of the Quranic verses above, 'they are well-pleasing and well-pleased with Him.'

The second view does not affirm multiple ontological entities. Rather, this perspective comes from a meta-rational vantage point. There, the principle of noncontradiction does not apply. The person who beholds existence cannot find any two multiple objects for which to compare or contrast. Thus, this person would not be able to apply the principle of noncontradiction to her experience due to immersion in the unity of existence. This view is called the Gathering Reality. It does not dismiss the dissimilar reality as much as not find a place for it from which to dismiss it. What is important for us here is noting that those who followed in the footsteps of Ibn ʿArabī managed to vouch for and explain both sides of this ontological coin.

Whether this explanation is most suitable for managing the commonsense view of multiplicity while simultaneously maintaining the simplicity of Existence will be taken up later in Chapter V. The special contribution Akbarian thought brings to this study is not how well they grasped ontological multiplicity and wrestled with its nature. Rather, the Akbarian contribution is in the terminology and expression through which they shared the experience of the unity of Existence through theoretical Sufism. al-Qayṣarī quotes Ibn ʿArabī from his "Bezel of the Unique Wisdom in the Word of Hūd "(*Faṣ ḥikmah aḥadiyyah fī kalimah al-hūdiyyah*) to say:

> Know that divine knowledge(s)of taste (*dhawq*) which are acquired by the people of Allah differ according to the different faculties acquired from them, even though they derive from a single source. Allah said: 'I am his hearing by which he hears and his sight by which he sees and his hand by which he strikes and his foot by which he walks. 'So, He mentioned that His He-ness is the source of the limbs which are the same as the slave. (al-Qayṣarī 2012, 407–408)

In other words, not every person is the same in their existential receptivity. The difference in their receptivity is based upon their capacity to do so. Thus, as each person's capacity to act as an existent differs, so do their apparent differences as sites of Existence's appearances. This is true despite the shared source of existence. This source is mentioned in a Divine Tradition (*Ḥadīth qudsī*) quoted here. In it the Absolute is quoted to say that Its selfhood (*huwiyyah*) is the source of the existence of the extremities of the one who receives existence from It. Naturally, as the limbs are all branches of the essence of a person, her very selfhood must exist from the same source as her branches. This final point is not said directly, yet it seems self-evident.

al-Qayṣarī continues to elucidate the same point regarding the relationship of existence to the one whom the Absolute (i.e. Existence) has full control over saying:

> Thus He-ness is one, but the limbs are different, and every limb has one of the sciences of taste which are specified from a single source and differ according to the different limbs. It is like water, which is but a single reality, yet differs in taste according to the different locations. The water of the Euphrates is sweet, and brackish water is salty, yet it is water in all its states and its reality does not change, even though the taste differs. (al-Qayṣarī 2012, 407–409)

al-Qayṣarī commented on these lines stating that:

> These different kinds of locations for water are like different kinds of knowledge. Unveiled knowledge (*al-ʿIlm al-kashfī*) is like sweet water as it irrigates its drinker and quenches his thirst. This is similar to how unveilings calm the one who receives them and makes him relax. Intellectual knowledge (*al-ʿIlm al-ʿaqlī*), on the other hand, is like brackish, salty water as it doesn't remove thirst but only increases thirst in the one who drinks it. Likewise, intellectual knowledge doesn't remove doubt. Rather, to the extent that one delves into it his thirst and confusion increases. The source of each is one, just as water is one. Allah, be He exalted said, '...watered with one water; but We make some of them exceed others in quality of fruit.' (13:4) Knowledge is made analogous to water because the former is the means for the life of the soul just as water is the life of the bodies. For this reason, water is called knowledge... (al-Qayṣarī 2012, 409)

Unlike much of contemporary Western epistemology, for Akbarians, knowledge is a given. They also recognize that it may have both rational and super-rational sources. Unveiled knowledge takes priority over knowledge acquired through secondary means. Regardless, they both have their place. Both are recognized to share the same source. The critique falls on the means through which the water is retrieved-will it be through a sweet or brackish source? In the end, the individual who drinks from the Euphrates i.e., sweet or intuitive knowledge is superior than the one who does not. This is because, like the sweet clear water she drank, she can see the nature of existence clearly.

al-Qayṣarī explains that despite knowledge having different vessels and locations, there are further differentiations in the case of knowledge as it relates to existence. He states:

> Tasting (*dhawq*) is what the Knower (*al-ʿĀlim*) finds through awareness (*wijdān*) and unveiling (*kashf*) as opposed to proof (*al-burhān*) and acquisition (*al-kasb*) or acceptance on faith (*al-akhdh*), and blind-following (*al-taqlīd*). This is because, while they are all important in their own right, none of them reaches the sciences of unveiling (*ʿUlūm al-kashf*) as reports are not like direct ocular experience (*al-ʿayān*). (al-Qayṣarī 2012, 408)

Again, although every knowledge has its place, one achieved via direct experience is superior to one acquired through secondary sources. Primary perception does not involve an intermediate agency. A secondary source does involve an intermediate agency. Thus, although every knowledge has its place, awareness, and unveiling have precedence over proof, acquisition, acceptance on faith, or blind following. In the case of awareness and unveiling, the Knower *is* the existence of the experience she endures.

Although Akbarians could speak from both a philosophical and gnostic perspective, they clearly championed the knowledge of the latter. This knowledge depicts existence on the basis of the Gathering Reality, in which Existence exists, alone. The one who perceives this onto-epistemic structure drinks directly from the source and is thus superior in understanding. Thus, by al-Qayṣarī's commentary upon the sections of the Bezels of Wisdom provided, we can determine that for Ibn ʿArabī, ontological monism is the bedrock of his epistemology.

Ibn ʿArabī's Vision of the Self

How does the ontological monism above relate to the Akbarian vision of the self? Although there are many references to this subject throughout Ibn ʿArabī's corpus and the Akbarian commentary elucidating it, these following lines give insight to the relationship between the unity of Existence and first-personality. Ibn ʿArabī says in the Bezel of the Wisdom of Loftiness in the Word of Ishmael (*Faṣ ḥikmah ʿāliyyah fī kalimah al-Ismāʿiliyyah*)":

> Only the Real remains.
> No phenomenal being remains.
> There is nothing connected, nothing distinct.
> For that reason, the eye-witnesses and inspiration came,
> so, I only see His source with my eye when I see! (al-Qayṣarī 2012, 352)

al-Qayṣarī commented on these lines stating:

> 'When the examples (*al-amthāl*) and the opposites (*al-aḍād*) are removed,
> and the unity of Existence (*Waḥdah al-wujūd*) appears then nothing
> remains but the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*). The world is annihilated in It due to the
> need for multiplicity. Thus, there is no one who connects nor that which is
> connected to nor is there a distinction. All has perished in the source of
> the Unity of Being.' As for his (i.e., Ibn ʿArabī's) statement, 'I only
> see...with my eye..' he means the eye in the head and the spiritual eye or
> the source of the eye in the head (whichever they are) but through the eye
> of the Truth, and Its Essence when I see or witness the existing entities
> (*al-mawjūdāt*) in the mind (*al-ʿaql*) and in the external world (*al-khārij*). (al-
> Qayṣarī 2012, 408)

al-Qayṣarī explains that despite the phenomenal entities' need for multiplicity, the unity of Existence is at the heart of reality. So, behind the veil of other-than-God there are no

ontological distinctions. Our point of interest here, however, is in Ibn ʿArabī's statements regarding first-personality as represented in the first-person pronoun "I." The eye's perspective, whether in the head or in the heart, is not its own. Rather, whenever we see something, that vision is from the personhood of the one who owns the eye. That is to say, as it is *my* vision or *my* perspective, whatever object the personality or "I" grasps is held by the self that beholds it. Here, however, al-Qayṣarī states that the beholding is "through the eye of the Truth, and Its Essence when I see or witness the existing entities in the mind and in the external world." In other words, the Absolute is the true beholder of all things inward and outward. As such, the author's first-personality or selfhood belong to It. Thus, even the first-person perspective of the gnostic is dominated by the unity of Existence.

Although the Unity of Existence holds each individual self is the Self of the Absolute, the sites (*al-maẓāhir*) of the Absolute in the world of phenomenon differ based upon their respective capacities. Each person receives their share of existence and differs with respect to the other on account of their capacity (*istiʿdād*). Nonetheless, according to Akbarian thought, they are all the same water i.e., existence. al-Qayṣarī comments:

> The People of Allah differ (in their tasting [i.e., direct experience]) according to their different potentialities (*bi ikhtilāf al-quwāh*). This is because each of them is a specific site and has knowledge specific to it. This is true whether spiritual, psychological (*nafsāniyyah*), or corporeal. Have you not seen that what is acquired by the eye is not done so by the ear, and the opposite is true? [Have you also not seen that] whatever is attained by the spiritual faculty is not done so by the corporeal one and that the opposite applies as well? Do you not see that this is the case, despite that faculty's returning to a single essence which is the Singular Essence (*al-Ḏāt al-aḥadiyyah*). (al-Qayṣarī 2012, 408)

In addition to what has already been stated regarding the vessels of the various sites of existence, here al-Qayṣarī is more specific about the nature of each site's limitation (spiritual, psychological and corporeal). Thus, each entity is further constricted in the soul, mind and body. For our purposes, the psychological aspect of the limitation of existence is further emphasized. Here, again, the existence or the water of the self, here mentioned as something psychological, despite its state of limitation within the already limited form of the overall constitution of man is said to return to one Essence.

Likewise, the various types of knowledge that Ibn ʿArabī endorses and their avenues all return to a single Reality. al-Qayṣarī states:

> (Or have you seen) how all these sciences (ʿulūm) return to the One Divine Essence (al-Ḏāt al-wāḥidah al-ilāhiyyah) as everything that belongs to the Names (al-Asmāʾ) and their Sites of Manifestation (maẓāhiruhā) profit from It. The differences between them are due to the differences in their receptivity since knowledge is a single reality (ḥaqīqah wāḥidah) while it became varied sciences due to the differences in its location. (al-Qayṣarī 2012, 408)

For Ibn ʿArabī's system, the Names of the Absolute are all those sites which manifest It. Each of them differs from the other based upon their incomplete ability to manifest It entirely. Nonetheless, the Essence of these Names or sites is complete. Thus, each Name leads to both multiplicity, by way of manifesting one particular aspect of the Essence as opposed to another, and unity, by way of hiding the Essence manifested through it.[30] We also see here that knowledge and existence are the same for "knowledge is a single Reality." The only single reality in Akbarian thought, as per the above, is Existence. The unity of Existence, then, dictates that there is a unity of Knowledge. This point will be taken up later.

---

[30] See al-Talimsānī 2015, 116–117.

Each person's self is a Name of the Absolute. Each Name is a perspective of Reality. As knowledge *is* existence, each perspective of existence is the limited understanding that that site bares. Thus, each perspective is self-limiting. On the other hand, as each self is a Name, it has the capacity to act as a window to the Essence through the Essence. Thus, each Name or self is a limitation and freedom at the same time. There is potential, then, for each self to know both multiplicity and unity with equal intimacy provided the self is immersed in the monist experience.

Conclusion

Although Ibn ʿArabī and his students are comfortable with discursive philosophical discourse, they champion a knowledge looking past phenomenon directly at the Absolute from which they emerge. This ontological monism better serves their epistemic sensibilities. The human self is an aspect of the Absolute. This Name is the source of human individuality and annihilation in the Absolute, at the same time. The latter is a possibility for those immersed in the ontological monist experience. This correlation connecting Ibn ʿArabī's metaphilosophically monist vision between existence and self-awareness serves as the basis of his contributions in the vital developments occurring between Ibn Sīnā and Ṣadrā enabling the SP to reveal its original apperception. As a result, the tension between Ṣadrā's concurrent dualist and monist perspectives on self-awareness eases through indicating the self's status as existence.

Ṣadrā

Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yaḥyā al-Qawāmī al-Shīrāzī,'s[31] Transcendent

Philosophy is composed of many aspects. Some of them are pulled from his many

influences. Others are native to him. Aminrazavi states regarding the him that:

> With his intimate and profound knowledge of earlier schools of Islamic
> thought together with his metaphysical acumen, Mullā Ṣadrā brought
> together a grand synthesis of nearly a millennium of Islamic intellectual
> thought into a single philosophical paradigm. This school of philosophy
> known as al-ḥikmat al-mutaʿāliyah (the Transcendent Philosophy), is a
> rapprochement of Islamic Peripatetic philosophy (mashshāʾī), the School
> of Illumination (ishrāq), gnosis (ʿirfān) of the School of Ibn ʿArabī, schools
> of kalām, both Sunni and Shīʿite, based on the Qurʾān and Ḥadīths of the
> Prophet and traditions of the Shīʿite Imāms. (Aminrazavi 2017, 379)

Although there are multiple factors contributing to the synthesis in Ṣadrā's thought, for

now, speculative theology (al-kalām) in either of the two main sects of Islam, the School

of Illumination, and the sources of Islamic law is left out. Rather, in this introduction I

will only consider two aspects of Transcendent Philosophy: 1) The Psychological

Dualism of Avicennian Peripatetic Philosophy and 2) The Unity of Existence of

Akbarianism. Both of these aspects remain in Ṣadrā's consideration of the self as:

> [T]he only reality is existence and essences are constructed by the mind.
> According to him, whenever soul is conceived as a concept and is defined, it
> will be found to be an essence. In direct self-experience, however, soul is
> only given as pure existence, and since existence has no genus, it is not
> given in experience either as a substance or non-substance. Direct, intuitive
> experience is the only way, for Sadra, to know reality, for discursive
> inferential reasoning can only know essences in an adequate manner (bi'l-
> iktinah), and not existences, which are unique. (Rahman 1975, 168)

---

[31] For a biographical account on Ṣadrā, see Sajjad Rizvi, *Mulla Sadra Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Existence as the sole reality is Akbarian (i.e., monism), par excellence. Nonetheless, the construct is addressed in an Avicennian way (i.e., considered in a dualist fashion). In other words, when considered theoretically the soul/self is an essence fitting into an Avicennian metaphysic. However, when considered experientially, Ṣadrā reads like one of the followers of the School of Ibn ʿArabī. These points require further explanation.

Ibn Sīnā's Peripatetic Psychological Dualism in Ṣadrā

Avicennian epistemology determines truth or falsity through discursive inferential reasoning. Beginning with the external sense impressions of essences, knowledge is acquired through the initial abstraction of essences from external objects. The object of knowledge in the Avicennian paradigm is essence. The study of the self plays a major role in his body of work. Thus, whenever it is to be considered therein it must be handled as an essence. When considering the role that the soul/self plays with the body, Ibn Sīna opts for a dualist position determining that the self and the body are separate essences. He uses the SP to determine that the two essences are distinct by utilizing the thought experiment "a person, under certain suppositions, can affirm his own ego without affirming the existence of his body." (Rahman 1975, 165)

In Sadrian thought it is stated that whenever the soul is conceived as a concept and is defined, it will be found to be an essence. Whenever considering the self outside of any direct experience or awareness of it, it is considered to be an essence. This is also true within the synthesis of Transcendent Philosophy. Thus, in this capacity Ṣadrā's Avicennianism is clear.

Akbarian Monism in Ṣadrā

As mentioned, Ibn ʿArabī says in the Bezels of Wisdom (*Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*), "there is no like in existence, and so there is no opposite in existence. Existence is one reality, and the thing is not opposite to itself." He then mentions some lines of poetry which state, "only the Real remains, no phenomenal being remains. There is nothing connected, nothing distinct. For that reason, the eye-witness's proof came, so I only see His source with my eye when I see!" (al-Qayṣarī 2012, 352) It may be gathered from these lines that for Ibn ʿArabī existence is void of real distinctions. His support for this position is from a spiritual vision or direct self-experience, as opposed to philosophical argumentation. As such, an existential vision of the Absolute is a product of intuition. Likewise, when we return to our analysis of Ṣadrā above, we see that as far as the vision of the soul/self, a direct experience is concerned, " soul is only given as pure existence, and since existence has no genus, it is not given in experience either as a substance or non-substance."

In Ṣadrā, both a monist and dualist context are given for many objects of knowledge both intuitive and speculative deliberations, for them. Thus, the two extremes of the ontological spectrum as they are represented in Ibn Sīnā and Ibn ʿArabī, are found in the onto-epistemic make-up of Transcendent Philosophy. This dichotomy will appear clearer as we proceed with our search.

The Self is Existence in Ṣadrā

The fact that the self is subjected to existential disparities is enough of a proof for Ṣadrā's determination of the self as existence. He states:

As long as the self has not exited from the faculty of corporeal existence (*quwwah al-wujūd al-jismāniyyah*) to the actuality of the transcendent intellect (*fiʿliyyah al-ʿaql al-mufāriq*), it is a material form with [all of its] various levels of proximity and distance from its intelligent source (*nashaʾtuhā al-ʿaqliyyah*) according to existential disparity [in terms of its] strength, weakness, perfection, and deficiency. [This is] because existence accepts intensification, and its opposite (i.e. abatement) ... (Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol.8:13)

The self's ontological status is clear in Ṣadrā. How does Ṣadrā's arrive at this position?

It is not difficult to detect the influence of Akbarian thought in Ṣadrā. His philosophical

framing of Akbarian apperception is also readily traced back to their tradition of

presenting the existential vision in a theoretical way. Ṣadrā states:

We apprehend ourselves (*dhawātanā*) through our very form through which we are we, not through a form additional to it. Thus, every human being apprehends himself (*dhātahu*) in a manner which prevents sharing. [...] [W]e refer to every universal concept and mental form—even if it were something subsisting through our self (*dhātinā*)—by 'it', whereas our self (*dhātinā*) we refer to by 'I', and our knowledge of our self is identical to the existence of our self and our individual being (*ʿilmunā bi dhātinā ʿaynu wujūdi dhātinā wa-huwiyyatinā al-shakhṣiyyah*). (Kaukua 2014b, 245) [32]

Kaukua informs us that 'Ṣadrā identifies self-awareness with the existence of the

individual human being." (Kaukua 2014b, 245) That is to say, like Ibn Sīnā, Ṣadrā

considers the self as its awareness. Its awareness is its existence. Thus, the self is its

own unique existence. As we are who we are and not someone else, Kaukua states,

"self-awareness is not a piece of acquired knowledge but a state that prevails

throughout our existence as immaterial substances." (Kaukua 2014b, 245) Again, the

Avicennian in Ṣadrā is highlights term "immaterial substance" one that represents the

self in its second order capacity. Ṣadrā's two distinct onto-conscious levels of the self

---

[32] Quoting Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī 2002, 49.

will be postponed for the appropriate place. Finally, he points out that the unique

existence of each self, is "because one can be aware of a self only by being that self, a

fact which is borne out by the unique deictic properties of the first-person indexical,

contrasted here with the properties of the third-personal 'it'. (Kaukua 2014b, 245) In

other words, when speaking of the self, the first-person pronoun is applicable. When

speaking of any other self, i.e., that which is not our own self, we would say "it." This

third person pronoun indicates that which is other-than-our-self.

> Ṣadrā states that:
>
> Knowledge is not a negative reality, as would be the mere separation from matter; it is not a reality of relation, but an act of existing. It is not every act of existence, but rather an actual and not a potential act of being. It is not every actual act of being, but a free (*khālis*) act of being, unmixed with nonbeing. The intensity of its being-knowledge is given by reason of its freedom from any mixture with nonbeing. (Jambet 2006, 291) [33]

How can we say something positive (i.e., what *is*) about anything when it is based

upon a negative (i.e. what *it is not*)? Unlike Ibn Sīnā, Ṣadrā does not view knowledge

as a subtraction. It is not something separated from the whole to be understood,

thereby making it less than it was as it is in extraction. How, after all, could the

negative impression made from the abstraction support a positive correspondence as

a true judgement? Instead, for Ṣadrā knowledge is holistic and positive. Knowledge is

what *is.* For this reason, knowledge is *existing.,"* As Jambet puts it, "The gift of

existence is the gift of knowledge…. Sadrā can confirm that knowledge is existence

itself." (Jambet 2006, 291) [34]

---

[33] Quoting Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah*, vol.3 (al-Najāf: Iraq: Dār al-maʿarif al-islāmiyyah, 1958), 297.

[34] Quoting Ibid.

Ṣadrā' is fluent in both Avicennian and Akbarian treatments of the self. This is evident in his handling of Ibn Sīnā's conceptualization of the self in the first case. The Akbarian existentialist focus is also managed with equal comfort. Both of these angles are incorporated into Transcendent Philosophy's synthesis. Moving forward, I will show that this amalgamation, coupled with Ṣadrā' s original onto-epistemic ideas offer a Sadrian alternative to essentialist ontology. When considered experientially, Ṣadrā reads like one of the followers of the School of Ibn ʿArabī considering the self *as* existence. Ṣadrā's second order treatment of the soul/self is as a substance. This Ṣadrian coverage matches Avicennian metaphysics (at least prior to asking *what* the object of awareness *is*).

Chapter II Conclusion A: The Relevant Personalities and Basic Suspended Person Engagement

We have shown that this study does not hold the SP to be a proof as it does not nor was it intended to present conclusive evidence concerning the self's existence nor its relationship to entities alien to it. Instead, the SP indicates the self is existence when its conditions are correctly observed. These stipulations find her without any sensory input, ideas, memories, syllogistic recourse, nor capacity for assent. These factors make her incapable of recognizing a self as an immaterial substance or otherwise. This is because the SP simply *is*. Her basic intuition acknowledges this. The structure that produced the SP serves as the starting point of all who will embrace it. Meanwhile, her apperceptive experience outstrips the limits of the structure that produced her.

We have shown that Suhrawardī's SP uses a different ontological-epistemic dynamic and language. There, knowledge is considered in degrees of Essence or Light perceived as per the subjective capacity of the one who looks on. The structure through which this advances in the intuitive knowledge by presence. There, one's self-appearance may be intrinsically more or less. The Akbarian SP suggests the self sits on opposite sides of the essence - existence debate, as an aspect of Existence. The latter do not use "knowledge by presence," per se, as an onto-epistemic structure to support their position. Instead, the Akbarians base their views on self-apperception on intuitive experiences generally described outside of the confines of philosophical enquiry. Both use the SP or situations similar to it in concert with these ideas. Ṣadrā's competency in all the above traditions is exemplified in his taking seemingly opposing onto-epistemic frameworks in hand. All of these elements are manifest in the manner in which he determines the self's status as existence while speaking in Avicennian parlance to do so based upon knowledge by presence. Moving forward, we need to see how his system pulled these elements together and how it is used in concert with the SP. Before doing so, I will consider previous relevant SP studies as an effort to explore their content and contextualize this study with respect to them.

Previous Studies

Here, I present typical SP studies from both primary and secondary literature. These involve the vast majority of those who treated the SP. Virtually everyone from its author, Ibn Sīnā up to Ṣadrā are intended. As vast as the subdivisions here could be further dissected, the objective is to show some broader, more overarching themes in the SP's typical reception. The standard reception of the SP has treated the self as a

primitively aware immaterial substance. I have opted to divide that coverage into its historical, philosophical (subdivided into philosophy of mind, and logic), and comparative studies.

The second category, are existential [35] and mystical studies of the SP. Although both treatments are based on intuition, these two submission are atypical to SP coverage. It should be mentioned here that the sixth chapter of Nader El-Bizri's "The Phenomenological Quest of Avicenna and Heidegger" (El-Bizri 2000), an existential account of the SP will be delayed until Chapter V. Secondly, the mystical account of the SP, here represented solely in Kaukua's "I in The Eye of God: The Role of the Human in Creation," a mystical treatment of the SP using the thought experiment to elaborate Ibn ʿArabī's position that God's individual self-recognition is the singular perspective of the human being's self-awareness acting as God's unique self-awareness in a mirror (Kaukua 2010) will be offered in the context of Chapter V, as well.

Finally, in both categories, I will assess the functionality and consequence of each argument as they refer back to Ibn Sīnā. The metric of assessment is three-fold. In the first instance, I ask whether, as an article of secondary literature, if the argument concerned does or does not remain faithful to the intent of the Avicennian project. In the second, while managing to stay within the confines of Ibn Sīnā's objective, I ask whether the argument achieves the Philosopher's aim with the SP. This method of triage helps us determine where an article of secondary literature lies concerning its origin in Avicennian thought. Even if an argument does not meet the standard of

---

[35] When I use the term existential, I mean a vantage point framing the SP from an ontological perspective resulting from the preponderance of existence over essence. Both Western European existentialism and Islamic existentialism are touched upon below.

Avicennian intention or fails to achieve what Ibn Sīnā anticipated, it remains an artifact

of SP literature. Thus, in the third sense of critique, I will consider each argument,

regardless of its Avicennian orthodoxy or accuracy, according to my focus and criteria

involving the conditions-approved apperception. There, I will determine the argument's

treatment of the apperceptive oversight at the core of our study. If it has treated the

oversight, I will ask what information it may provide for us toward the nature of the

conditions-approved apperception. After this survey I will discuss the SP's original

apperception as rendered by a correct fulfillment of its conditions. I will then explain

some of the ensuing consequences resulting from how my reception of the SP contrasts

with both former categories.

Historical

The first cluster approaches the SP predominantly as a historical event and

includes two essays: Juhana Toivanen's "The Fate of the Flying Man: Medieval

Reception of Avicenna's Thought Experiment" (Toivanen 2015) and Dag Hasse's

Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West: The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of

the Soul (Hasse 2000). I will cover them both here in turn.

Juhana Toivanen's "The Fate of the Flying Man: Medieval Reception of

Avicenna's Thought Experiment" is of research interest in intellectual history, medieval

history, thought experiments, Avicenna, and self-awareness. Toivanen covers a great

deal of material in this analysis. I will not be covering his concise account for the SP. I

will not consider all the receptions of the SP in the Latin West Toivanen discusses in

this review. My interest here is a disagreement in post-Avicennian thought raised by the

Franciscan theologian Peter John Olivi (d.1298).[36] The latter created a similar thought

experiment to the SP. There, the subject *is* aware of her body and her ability to

perceive. This original move reflected the trend, at the time, to question the supposition

that the SP is self-awareness as opposed to any other aspect of her existence.

Toivanen states that his aim in the study is to "analyze the various versions of the flying

man and to trace its fate from its first appearance in Latin philosophy to the dawn of the

fourteenth century." (Toivanen 2015, 66)

A Summary of Toivanen's Argument

Toivanen submits that the Latins primarily treated the SP as an ontological proof

for the existence of the self. The Olivian, "Man Before Creation," regarding a person

who exists before there is anything to perceive but is still, nonetheless aware of his

senses, as, Toivanen states:

> [R]resembles the flying man in many ways, but the most significant
> difference is that Olivi's thought experiment requires that the man in this
> peculiar state *is* aware of his body and his ability to perceive. In this way, the
> man before the creation reflects the late thirteenth-century trend of the
> diminishing centrality of the premise that the flying man is unaware of his
> body. It also shows how the thought experiment received a new role in the
> hands of an original philosopher. (Toivanen 2015, 66)

Olivi's re-creation of the thought experiment, featuring a woman unaware of her body,

hallmarks a focus shift of its epistemic possibilities. I find this construct compelling. It is

---

[36] Outside of the shift of the basis of her awareness in Olivi and he and his fellow Latin receptors, some of
whom treated it as an ontological proof for the existence of the soul like, Dominicus Gundissalinus (d.c.
1190), William of Auvergne (d.1249), Peter of Spain, and John of la Rochelle (d.1245), while others like
Matthew of Aquasparta (d. 1302) and Vital du Four (d.1327) who focused on the SP's ability to indicate
the self's direct self-awareness, -all still viewed her as a primitively aware immaterial substance. Rochelle
(d.1245), while others like Matthew of Aquasparta (d. 1302) and Vital du Four (d.1327) who focused on
the SP's ability to indicate the self's direct self-awareness, -all still viewed her as a primitively aware
immaterial substance.

as if Olivi placed himself in the SP's experience such that, instead of adhering to the established norm he decided against Avicennian authority about her capacity to perceive without senses,. Instead, he re-created a similar scenario validating the SP's epistemic claims through a more Aristotelian-approved means.

An Assessment of Olivi's Innovation

Olivi's project is against the Avicennian's supposition that the SP is corporeally and sensorily unaware, in principle. In this sense, it reflects the trend in Olivi and his circle to forego Ibn Sīnā's objective to use thought experiment to establish that the self is distinct from the body. Perhaps systemic commitments prevented Olivi from questioning the SP's conditions and structure more critically. If, after all, there was doubt about the SP's failure to sense her body, why not consider the conditions of the argument and the overall framework that produced it? If he had done so he might have concluded that including the SP's ability to be aware of both its self and body in a slightly different context does not cause it to escape from the contradictions SP suffers from. In other words, Olivi's re-creation is not liberated from the oversight of the conditions plaguing its predecessor. Therefore, while the adjustment he makes may cancel one of the symptoms of inconsistency in the SP's reception, it does not manage to circumvent the root problem. The core difficulty is that despite the impossibility of awareness of any particular thing over another Olivi is as guilty as Ibn Sīnā of giving the SP an awareness of both self as substance and body while its conditions do not grant either possibility.

Hasse's *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West: The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul* chronicles the appearance of the SP in the Avicennian corpus. His record of the placement of the thought experiment has some philosophical analysis. Although it is primarily a listing of the SP's various occurrences in the Avicennian corpus, there is a discussion about the limits of the experiments ability to indicate or prove the existence of the self or the intention to do so. This latter aspect of the study takes center stage here. In the end, after listing five versions of the SP in the Avicennian corpus, Hasse contends that the SP does not deal with the self at all.

A Summary of the Hasse's' Argument

Hasse opines that *De anima* I, 1 and the *Mashriqiyyūn* both concern the independence of the self from the body, although he admits there is a hint towards the incorporeality of the self in *De anima* I, 1 and its existence but only through implication, as opposed to any explicit statement. (Hasse 2000, 85) He states that De anima, V, 7 along with *al-Risālah al-aḍḥawiyyah* emphasize that the body and the limbs are not part of the "core entity of the human being" and holds that this statement is closer to the thesis on the incorporeality of the self. (Hasse 2000, 85) He notes that *al-Ishārāt's* version of the SP is "an illustration of a statement about constant self-knowledge" but then qualifies this illustration by stating, "however, the role of the body is discussed as well, […] where Avicenna argues that it is not the senses which are able to have this self-knowledge. (Hasse 2000, 85)

He then concludes that the various places wherein the SP material may be cited shows the SP has no "immediate access to himself." (Hasse 2000, 86) This appears to

be a refutation of Thérèse-Anne Druart's position in 'Imagination and The Soul - Body Problem.'(Druart 1983, 327) The former does not concur the SP is 'conscious of his existence' despite Herbert A. Davidson's position in *Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroes* (Hasse 2000, 86) nor does he 'affirm his existence', challenging Shlomo Pines' (d.1990) position, (Hasse 2000, 86) "but he affirms the existence of his core entity, essence, while not affirming the existence of his body." (Hasse 2000, 86)

Hasse distinguishes between the terms "self" and "core entity" for the core entity is not, he holds, the self. He notes that between the various relevant passages, Ibn Sīnā uses two terms when discussing the object of knowledge of the SP. He admits that the terms *ḏāt* may both translate as either *self or essence* as "both meanings are possible." (Hasse 2000, 86) Of the two terms, *annīya*[37] has entertained scholarly debate whether it may render as, "being, essence, that-ness, or I-ness and if it connotes a sense of individual-ness or essential-ness." (Hasse 2000, 83) He argues for a lac of consensus on the meaning of this latter term. (Hasse 2000, 83) As the passage *De anima* I, 1 uses it, *annīya* here could entertain multiple interpretations on the side of Ibn Sīnā in this version of the argument. Juxtaposing other versions of the argument utilizing the term *ḏāt*, due to their dissimilar interpretations, would not solve the problem of rendering the exact meaning of *annīya* in *De anima* I, 1.

He furthers his attempt to decipher the meaning of *annīya* as it comes in De anima V, 7. Hasse notes in this second version that Ibn Sīnā refers to the first version in De anima I, 1 only making this second version in the same book an abbreviated form of its first appearance. One difference he points out, however, in this now abridged

---

[37] I believe the term Hasse intends is normally transliterated as *ānniyah.*

secondary form of De anima V, 7 is that, where the first version uses the term *ḏāt*, this second one places the ambiguous term *annīya* in place of it. He deduces from this that "it seems that the two terms (i.e., *dhāt* and *annīya*) have a similar meaning in *De anima*" because they both refer to the same entity. (Hasse 2000, 83) He then states that this synonymy between *dhāt* and *annīya* "makes it unlikely that *dhāt* in the first passage means 'self' for *annīya* certainly does not mean 'self. 'The commonality between the two words is something unspecific like 'core being.'" (Hasse 2000, 83) In his third and last argument against the attestation to the self in the SP, Hasse opines that not only is it essence (not "self") but the *existence* of the essence. Based on the above Ibn Sīnā could just as easily be pointing out self as its existence.

Hasse struggles with the terms employed in the various versions of the SP. He concludes that despite the linguistic ambiguities listed, none of the citations proscribes the self's existence. No version of the SP verifies the self's existence for him. Hasse does not reject the SP's possible attestation to the existence of the self, it still remains highly improbable that it can do so. Thus, after having listed five versions of the thought experiment he argues that none of them proves the self's substantiality, much less its existence.

An Objection to Hasse's Assessment

The experiment, as per the above, has been specifically designed to indicate the self's existence. This existence is free from corporeality. However, Hasse argues that Ibn Sīnā has not managed to demonstrate the self's existence. Thus, according to Hasse, Ibn Sīnā does not meet his objective. Avicennian scholarship shares an

overwhelming disagreement with his conclusion. In this sense, Hasse's argument

seems unfaithful to Ibn Sīnā's intent with the SP. That being said, there is no point

wherein Ibn Sīnā describes the SP as a proof. As it is not meant to be a proof, there is

no surprise if it fails to prove the existence of the self. Ibn Sīnā has made it clear that his

intention in the thought experiment is to indicate the self's existence, and at times in

relation to the body. Ironically, the semantical debate in Hasse's essay on the identity of

the subject of the experiment seems to indicate the self's existence more than to prove

that it does not exist. Thus, Hasse's argument seems to strengthen the thought

experiment's ability to point toward the self's existence because as it is irrational to

debate the identity and name of something that simply does not exist.

The conditions of the thought experiment also rule out the existence of the

Avicennian self. If the premise of Hasse's argument against the self's existence as an

immaterial substance in the SP had been based upon something more substantial like

the disregard for the thought experiments conditions, I would have agreed with his

rejection of the substantiation of the Avicennian self in the SP. Merely citing the SP's

incapacity to prove the self's existence in critique of the thought experiment, however,

seems to undercut Hasse's objectives.

Philosophical

Subjectivity and what is associated with it generally falls under the category of

the philosophy of mind. For this reason, there are more studies with the SP in this

category than any other. Although a full-fledged analysis of each and every incidence of

the SP as a study on the philosophy of mind is an attractive prospect, I will limit to those

most pertinent to the focus here. I have selected Kaukua's *Self-Awareness in Islamic*

Philosophy: Avicenna and Beyond, along with his doctoral dissertation *Avicenna on Subjectivity: A Philosophical Study*. After that follows Deborah Black's "Avicenna on Self-Awareness and Knowing that One Knows." Following this is Peter Adamson and Fedor Benevich's ""The Thought Experimental Method: Avicenna's Flying Argument." The penultimate paper is John McGinnis's "Experimental Thoughts on Thought Experiments in Medieval Islam." Finally, I have selected Richard Sorabji's *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life and Death*.

A logical treatment of the SP follows the apperceptive and subjective focus above. A syllogistic analysis of the thought experiment follows that. The first is represented by C. P. Hertogh's "Ibn Sīnā's Flying Man: Logical Analyses of a Thought Experiment. The second is "Ibn Kammūna on the argument of the Flying Man in Avicenna's *Ishārāt* and al-Suhrawardī's *Talwīḥāt*," a study by Lukas Muehlethaler.

Philosophy of Mind

Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy: Avicenna and Beyond is an analysis of the discourse on selfhood and self-awareness from Ibn Sīnā to Mullā Ṣadrā. Despite the many important ancillary topics covered in this study that are useful to a variety of readers in the history of philosophy, history of ideas, Islamic studies and philosophy of mind, I have focused on the relationship between the SP and Kaukua's claims about first-personality as substantiated by his analysis of Suhrawardian exceptions to it, and the Sadrian modifications of the basic concept of Avicennian selfhood, respectively. Kaukua quotes Ibn Sīnā in *al-Risālah al-aḍhawiyyah*, that "when it comes to the truth, the human being, or the thing considered of the human on which the meaning of I is

based in him (*huwa al-wāqiʿu ʿalayhi maʿnā anā minhu*), is his real self (*dhātuhu al-haqīqiyyah*) is the thing of which he knows that he is it, and it is certainly the soul." (Kaukua 2015, 79) Kaukua comments that the Philosopher's message is clear, "the I is the real self and essence of the human being, and thereby his substance, and it is the thing discussed as soul in psychology." (Kaukua 2015, 79) Kaukua considers first-personality as the reality of the Avicennian self. It appears as the primitive self-awareness in the SP, acting as the principle of unity within the thought experiment's principle of unity.

A Summary of the Kaukua's Argument

The SP is indicated in several places in the seventh chapter entitled, "Mullā Ṣadrā on Self-Awareness." Amongst them is the "Flying Animal" located in *Asfār* IV.2.2., referring to the version found in the Psychology of the *Shifā,* I.I. According to Kaukua, this is one of four Avicennian arguments upheld by both Suhrawardī and Ṣadrā supporting the continuity of thought between all three thinkers on self-awareness. (Kaukua 2015, 165) Elsewhere, Kaukua entertains the relationship between Ṣadrā's link between knowledge and existence stating:

> When the human being's external faculties and corporeal senses are still due to sleep, lack of consciousness (*al-ighmā*) or [something] else, he will often find of himself (*yajidu min nafsihi*) that he hears, sees, smells, touches, strikes and walks. Thus, he has in himself (*fi dhātihi*) these sensations (*al-mashāʿir*), faculties and instruments without deficiency or the need of anything other than them. (Kaukua 2015, 167) [38]

---

[38] Quoting Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī 2002, 90.

Although this section is not specifically a thought experiment, it indicates an

epistemology built off of the same self-aware basis as the SP. Kaukua comments that

this section of the *Asfār* bears testimony that the intellectual, imaginative, and

perceptual modes of existence are all completely immaterial. Thus, those things that we

perceive are also in ourselves. On this point, Ṣadrā further says:

> Thus, his self is by itself (*dhātuhu bi-dhātihi*) sight for the apprehension of
> what is seen and hearing for the apprehension of what is heard, and
> similarly for every species of sensibles. Thus, in itself (*fī dhātihi*) it is
> hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch for itself (*li-dhātihi*). You already know
> from the preceding the unity of sense with what is sensed, and so he is the
> sense of all senses. (Kaukua 2015, 167) [39]

Kaukua uses both quotations above to establish Transcendent Philosophy's position on

the SP's self-awareness, with two qualifications: 1) that mental existence must include

both the intellectual and non-intellectual, 2) that it not question whether self-awareness

involves other aspects of the human experience.

The section "The Complicated Evidence of Self-Awareness" provides al-Rāzī's

critique of the lack of individuality in the Avicennian self prior to its corporeal connection.

In his Eastern Investigations in the Knowledge of Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy

(*al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyyah fī ʾilm al-ilāhiyyāt wa al-ṭabīʾiyyāt,*) al-Rāzī takes issue with

the Peripatetic requirement for the self's individualization through matter.[40] There, Ibn

Sīnā determines the self's pre-corporeal existence impossible due to its sheer

indistinguishability from other selves prior to connection to the body. Al-Rāzī challenges

---

[39] Quoting Ibid, 92.

[40] Kaukua directs us to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyyah fī ʾilm al-ilāhiyyāt waʾl-ṭabīʾiyyāt*, edited by Maḥmūd Shihābī (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1960), vol. 2, 402-403; Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol.8:391.

any need for a material basis to establish a psycho-ontological distinction.[41] He

observes the Avicennian position that self and its self-awareness are identified. He then

proposes that if the SP can be aware of her individual self (as opposed to any other

person), after having been born sense-deprived then there is no reason to reject the

capacity for the self to exist as an individual entity prior to materiality. She doesn't need

the body to recognize her self after having a body, why then would she require one to

do so before having a body? [42](Kaukua 2015, 185–186)

Again, Kaukua shows that al-Rāzī takes issue with the SP's in *al-Shifā fī al-nafs*

1.1 wherein the latter claims that despite the thought experiment's mission to point us

toward our non-corporeal self-awareness there is nothing within it that obliges us to

negate the existence of the body. If we say that the self is a substance, then whenever I

am self-aware, my self-awareness must be of a substance. However, as philosophers

debate over the substantiality of the self, this is not the case. The inference is that due

to the absence of clear substantial apperception, the self's status as a substance is in

question. (Kaukua 2015, 188–89)

An Assessment of Kaukua's Argument

Kaukua offers first-personality as the reality of the Avicennian self, appearing as

the primitive self-awareness in the SP. This awareness, in turn, acts as the principle of

unity therein. By doing so, he seems to extract further benefit from Ibn Sīnā's

---

[41] In his *Sharḥay al-ishārāt,* he criticized Ibn Sīnā for neglecting to clarify whether persistent self-awareness is primitive or requires demonstrative evidence in the *Ishārāt* version of the SP. See Muehlethaler 2009, 188.

[42] This point finds extends over into another Ibn Kammūna who argued for the eternal life of the self both before and after the body. The overlap lies in the fact that both are post-Avicennian thinkers who came near the SP in their writings, in their respective manner. See Ibid, 183.

arguments regarding the self's existence and its relationship to primary awareness. In this sense, Kaukua's argument does not share the same Avicennian objective with the SP, namely, to establish the self's existence as something independent from the body. Rather, he attempts to extract further benefit from the Philosopher's position. Unfortunately, the thought experiment's conditions prevent the apperception of first-personality in the first place. First-personality is inconceivable as there is no particular object for the pronoun "I" to indicate in the SP's apperceptive observation. Without an object for the I to point out, there is no unifying structure. Without a psychological edifice as rally point for for the various aspects of self-hood there is no recourse for the SP's private plane to gather together. Without anything to be aware of, the thought experiment does not offer an original anchor of consciousness to speak of.

Jari Kaukua's doctoral dissertation, "Avicenna on Subjectivity: A Philosophical Study," PhD diss., Jyväskylä, 2007, argues that the SP's *mineness* (or the quality of something belonging to "me") identifies the nature of Ibn Sīnā's epistemology and subjectivity, both based upon his theories à propos the nature of primitive self-awareness. This basis also serves as the platform to place Ibn Sīnā within the trajectory of phenomenological thinkers

A Summary of Kaukua's Argument

To proceed, we should grant reflection three parts: that-which-reflects, that-which-is-reflected-upon, and, the act of reflection itself. The one who would reflect on her self, requires a self that has already been reflected upon prior to her first act of reflection. If the act of reflection is the basis of self-awareness, then an account must be

given of how the subject of the initial reflective act can recognize her own self as the object of her pre-existing reflection in its most initial act of self-reflection. There, she will have to reflect herself before she reflects herself the first time. So, to avoid an infinite regress, our first state of awareness cannot be a reflective one. The need for an antecedent reflection for each initial act needs to be accounted for, in turn, ad infinitum rules this out. With such a circular case for self-awareness at hand, if no alternative basis for self-awareness were presented, we need to concede to the fact that the human subject is unaware of herself as there is nothing in place to affirm the possibility for self-recognition, in any instance.

As a solution to this dilemma Ibn Sīnā offers an alternative "primitive" self-awareness, as attested to by the SP, suggesting the self's awareness *is* herself. Herself appears as this sense of mineness. He states:

> It is on the basis of this mineness, then, that the reflecting subject is able to recognize the object of the reflective act as itself. The mineness in both the object and the subject state is one and the same. For Avicenna, reflection is a sort of doubling of the unique self which has been there from the very start. The separation of this self in two is required for there being a relation between the two terms, and the relation consists in the overcoming of that distinction, in the identification between the two *relata*. But the identification is only possible because its basis was already there in the first place. (Kaukua 2007, 151)

As the Avicennian self is mineness and mineness is possession, there must be two aspects to the self: the possessor/subject and the possessed / object. Without such a dichotomy, the self has no relationship with itself. If the Avicennian self has no relationship with it it knows nothing. If there is nothing to be aware of, there is no Avicennian self. If there is no Avicennian self, then as far as may be surmised by Kaukua, as far as Ibn Sīnā is concerned, we do not exist.

Conversely, we appear to be aware. That is what concerns a phenomenological framework. For Ibn Sīnā and Kaukua, we are aware of ourselves in a most primitive sense. Our most primitive sense of awareness is our possession of ourselves of our selves. Thus, to restate, mineness, as the SP indicates, is the Avicennian self. To discuss the matter of self-awareness, one must ascertain that the self is an established entity. Kaukua argues that Avicennian self is mineness. Thus, the focal point of this dissertation is mineness. The central topic of this critique is the evaluation of Avicennian mineness, as described here by Kaukua. Ibn Sīnā identified the internal state of primitive self-awareness to be intentional, i.e., mineness. The subject/object dichotomy was taken up by Ibn Sīnā and used to describe how mineness functions. Thus, the relationship between subject and object in the human being is inherently manifested in the sense of the self's primitive state of possession occurring between two selves, i.e., the subject self and the object self. With this conclusion in place, and left unchallenged, Ibn Sīnā not only assumes his position amongst the trajectory of phenomenologist thinkers, but he might also well be amongst its founders.

An Assessment of Kaukua's Argument

Ibn Sīnā did not use the SP to investigate and describe phenomena as consciously experienced free of consideration of their causal explanations or unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions as phenomenological approaches do. Kaukua does not advise this was the case, either. Instead, Kaukua suggests that the SP's possessive primitive awareness, i.e. its sense of mineness vis-à-vis its subject-self /object-self dichotomy anticipates the twentieth century's phenomenological movement.

Kaukua's attempt to place Ibn Sīnā amongst the founders of Phenomenology via the intentionality behind SP's primary awareness does not align with Ibn Sīnā's purpose for developing the thought experiment. However, as in the above, Kaukua attempts to obtain further philosophical advantage and insight from Ibn Sīnā's arguments for primary self-awareness and the mineness inherent therein. This attempt does not oppose the SP's projected utility in matters like deciphering between the self and the body, for example.

If the SP's conditions prevent her from perceiving a self as an immaterial substance due to the lack of any preceding notions of substantiality, then the primitive awareness described above is not possible. If the primitive awareness above is not possible in the SP then the intentionality between self as subject and self as object does not exist. If the intentionality between the self as subject and self as object does not exist, then the SP's self is not perceived in a phenomenological manner as there is no intention toward it. If the SP's self does not have an intention towards itself and thus participate in a phenomenological experience, then Ibn Sīnā's thought experiment is not one of the primary examples of phenomenological thought. If he has not contributed to the trajectory of phenomenological thought due to the SP's lack of phenomenological content, then its creator is not one of phenomenology's earliest contributors.

In "The Thought Experimental Method: Avicenna's Flying Man Argument," (Adamson 2018),[43] Peter Adamson and Fedor Benevich argue for a novel interpretation

---

[43] I was fortunate to receive a pre-published version of the essay numbering from pp. 1-18. This review is in correspondence with that numbering. The published version's pagination ranges from 147–64 as reflected in the bibliography below.

of the *al-Nafs* version of the SP based on a theory of knowledge coined "a conceptual

test." Through it the essential elements of an essence for one who perceives and

ponders its meaning is clarified. They determine that the SP grasps her essence, while

not grasping the existence of the body. The former establishes a lack of constitutive

connection of the body to the essence. As she does not grasp her essence, I do not

believe their reading of the *al-Nafs* SP is sustainable. Her lack of essential apperception

occurs in every version of the thought experiment. Thus, determining a constitutive

relationship with the body through the essence is irrelevant for any SP variant despite

the proposed conceptual test..

A Summary of Adamson and Benevich's Argument

Peter Adamson and Fedor Benevich's focus on the *On the Soul* (*fī al-Nafs*)

version of the SP deeming it best to inform us about the self's essence. Just as no part

of the essence of a triangle entails that triangles should have three equal sides, a

triangle could have three sides, but does not necessarily have to. Likewise, a soul may

share a relationship with the body but does not have to. (Adamson and Benevich 2018,

2) Therefore, there is a difference between essential and accidental attributes. So, while

a triangle could have equal sides, by chance, it does not have to, essentially. The main

point in the triangular example is that as the body is an accident of the SP, she does not

necessarily have to notice it.

Adamson and Benevich posit that "the crucial distinction for the argument in *On

the Soul* is […] between essential and accidental attributes. Aristotle has offered a

useful account of soul, but one limited to grasping soul through its accidental relation to

body, and the flying man argument seeks to improve on this by giving us an insight into the soul's essence." (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 9) In an analogous manner, they state, if the SP can grasp the existence of her soul's essence without grasping the existence of her body, then no relation to the body belongs to that essence. A "conceptual test" [44] built from different aspects of Avicennian thought, as will be explained below, is used to demonstrate this claim. The conceptual test, they posit, "forms a vital background for grasping the function of the flying man". (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 2) This point clarifies below. For now, Adamson and Benevich hold that the conceptual test is a thought experimental method for testing the attributes of essence.

Setting the stage for the conceptual test, they request us to grant two assumptions. The first assumption is that the SP is able to affirm her existence. The second assumption is that mental engagement of an essence entails a complete grasp of all the essence's features. They also assert that the SP's *On the Soul* version, despite Aristotle's definition of the self as the perfection of the body, gives us insight about how the self's essence provides information of its ontological independence from the body. (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 8) Adamson and Benevich then attempt to show how the SP does this.

They call on the conceptual test quoting Ibn Sīnā who says:

We must separately devote a different investigation to the essence (*dhāt*) of the soul; if we had thereby come to know the essence of the soul, then we would have had no difficulty about which category it falls into. For whoever knows and understands the essence of a thing, and then turns his own attention (*ʿaraḍa ʿalā nafsihi*) to the nature of some essential

---

[44] While they mention that this same conceptual test is applied to the existence-essence distinction as well as the concept that finitude is not essential for bodies, this review focuses on its application to the SP

feature (*ṭabīʿat amr dhātī*) that belongs to [that thing], has no difficulty concerning the existence of [that feature] for [that thing], as we have explained in the logic (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 8) [45]

For Adamson and Benevich, this passage is key to understanding the SP. It also manifests Ibn Sīnā's confidence, just as the logic in the triangle scenario above, that once an essence is grasped, its features are discernable. They call us to look deeper into Ibn Sīnā's explanation in his logic. (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 9) There, Avicenna offers various ways of understanding the difference between essential and accidental features, but the one that is relevant here is the definition of essentiality and accidentality presented in his Introduction to his logical works." (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 9) They offer Ibn Sīnā's logical summary as the template of the conceptual test. He states, 'a "thing" has a real essence (*dhātan ḥaqīqiyyatan*), and attributes pertain to it. The reality of [that] thing is composed out of some of them, whereas others are accidents that are not necessary for its existence, while still others are accidents that are necessary for it.'(Adamson and Benevich 2018, 10) [46] Adamson and Benevich devise their conceptual test from the above introduction to Avicennian logic, based on this quotation applying to both mental and extramental things as follows: "Y is essential for X if and only if X's mental existence presupposes Y's mental existence or X's concrete existence presupposes Y's concrete existence." (Adamson and Benevich

---

[45]Quoting *(*On the Soul 11.3-7) Ibn Sīnā, "On the Soul,' in *Avicenna's De Anima: Being the Psychological Part of the Kitāb al-Shifā*, ed. Fazlur Rahman (London: Oxford University Press, 1959)

[46] Quoting (Introduction 30.7-9) Ibn Sīnā, "Introduction," in *al-Shifā*, ed. Sh. Qanawatı,̄ Maḥmūd M. al-Ḥudayrı,̄ and Aḥmad F.al-Ahwānī (Cairo: al-Matḅaʿa al-Amır̄iyya, 1952)

2018, 11) The conceptual test, formulated for application in various places, is used to grasp an essence through grasping all its essential attributes so that what is merely accidental to it is well-defined. (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 12)

Here, Adamson and Benevich train the conceptual test, pulling from various places in Avicennian thought, on Aristotle's position on the identification of the self and body. (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 13) An essential definition of the self must include a complete knowledge of its essential attributes (epistemology). An essential attribute of an essence is its belonging to a category (Avicennian category theory). Aristotle's definition of the self as a perfection of the body does not tell us which category the self belongs to (Avicennian discussions on psychology). Therefore, the Aristotelian definition of the self is not an essential one. (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 13)

With the argument against the Aristotelian definition of the self as specifically bound to the body, established via the conceptual test, Ibn Sīnā is free to debate the former's essential relationship to the latter. The template is re-applied now for, "a connection to body is essential for soul if and only if soul cannot be grasped without grasping a connection to body." (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 13) This is precisely what they propose is the function of *On the Soul* version of the SP, as mentioned above. Thus, they arrive at the conclusion that "although a human soul, such as the flying man's, does indeed have a connection to the body, this connection is accidental." (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 14)

They then assemble the results of the applications of the conceptual test to this point and state, in total that," a person in the situation of the flying man has his or her soul as an object of mental grasping (it is *maʿqūl*) and thus as mentally existent while

his or her body is not mentally existent. This shows that the body is not essential to the soul. This is how, for the pair, that we can learn about the essential properties of the soul from the 'hypothetical' flying man thought experiment." (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 15) They conclude that the conceptual test proves the logical veracity of the SP's hypothetical capacity to remind us of the self's condition. This self-knowledge does not contain its need for a corporeal connection. Thus, in the end, Ibn Sīnā's conceptual test for the essential attributes shows that humans are capable of grasping what is and is not essential to the self. (Adamson and Benevich 2018, 17)

An Assessment of Adamson and Benevich's Argument

Adamson and Benevich's use the *On the Soul* version of the SP to develop a metric to determine the difference between the self's essential and non-essential attributes. They do not claim Ibn Sīnā's objective was to create this conceptual test. In a sense, their argument for the conceptual test is outside the original utility intended for SP. However, the new-found decipherability between essential/non-essential attributes does not compete with the *On the Soul's* indication between the soul and the body.

That being said, the conditions set by Ibn Sīnā do not allow for the supposition that the SP has an essence to appercept. This is because Ibn Sīnā set the condition that the SP is born with a blank slate, no sensory input, born devoid of ideas, and having no memory as she was born instantaneously. Thus, he does not provide her with essences from the external world to then call on the Active Intellect causing her onto-epistemic situation to appear, as he specifies. Without an essence to appercept, there is no constitutive relationship to the body through it. Therefore, the *On the Soul* version of

the SP is no more prepared to indicate the self's existence than any other version of the SP. Instead, if we were to apply the conceptual test above to any of the SP's variations, none are capable of providing information about the self-body relationship. Adamson and Benevich's thesis regarding the determination of a constitutive relationship to the body through the essence acts upon the assumption that the On the Soul version of the SP can affirm her existence with a complete grasp of all its features. I cannot grant the supposition that the On the Soul version of the SP is capable of detecting her essence, or its attributes, partially or in full. As a result, I do not find their argument for a thought experimental method based upon the conceptual test admissible.

Jon McGinnis's "Experimental Thoughts on Thought Experiments in Medieval Islam" (McGinnis 2016) suggests that thought experiments served as a median point between the stalwart rationalism and rising empiricism at the time through Ibn Sīnā's innovations regarding the estimative faculty (*wahm*). McGinnis claims that thought experiments act as a "halfway" house between two otherwise mutually exclusive vantage points. I argue against his claim that the estimative faculty's ability to credit thought experiments, an argument central to his position here, applies to the SP This is because the SP's estimative faculty is inoperative. It has never experienced any object of perception, internal or external, much less developed a sense of non-sensible intention intrinsic to them.

A Summary of McGinnis's Argument

McGinnis suggests that the prevalence of thought experiments in the medieval era led Ibn Sīnā to consider their science and laws. If a thought experiment were used to stoke a deeper understanding of a point already established through demonstration, he endorsed them without hesitation. When used as the central point of an argument, however, he used them with the caveat that they be accompanied with a conditional premise in a hypothesis whose validity itself was in question. Outside of this hesitation, he suggests that Ibn Sīnā stressed that the thought experiment must have a clear connection with the real world. It could not, then, be a product of mere imagination, or more specifically the estimative faculty. This is because, if thought experiments were to play a crucial role in proving something, they would have to be possible in the real world, at least in principle.

This possibility could occur through a plausible mechanical apparatus. According to McGinnis, these idealized mechanical thought experiments were prolific, according to McGinnis, showing the first scientific approach to physics in the medieval world. Using thought experiments this way, he argues, is in line with an empiricism of the time that was harmonious with clear rationalist approaches to learning. To support this claim, McGinnis notes that Ibn Sīnā stressed thought experiments were to be used alongside demonstration. Thus, a logical syllogism, based in first principles, derived from intellectual endeavor as opposed to the estimative faculty, was satisfactory. He uses the examples in Ḥasan Ibn Haytham's (d.430/1040) plausible use of mechanical apparatus in his experiments for his idealized mathematical demonstrations, and Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d.560/1165) listing numerous arguments against a *quies media* based upon

a strictly intellectual hypothetical fitting the criteria of an Ibn Sīnā approved thought

experiment.

Thus, thought experiments in the medieval era, claims McGinnis, acted as

halfway houses between empiricism and rationalism. They appealed to the sensible

intuitions of the empiricist approach to the sciences. They did this through their

connection to the world. They were to be used as integral parts of a proof, and the

idealization of intellectual hypotheticals taking one beyond the perfunctory device to

ideals beyond the material realm.

An Assessment of McGinnis's Argument

While McGinnis's study provides compelling categorizations and commentary on

the utility of medieval thought experiments, it creates questions regarding the status of

the SP amongst them. It also appears to create an internal crisis for the thought

experiment. The area in question arises surrounding the employment of the estimative

faculty that otherwise provides "Avicenna with a psychological underpinning for thought

experiments, which does justice to their frequently counterfactual nature while also

explaining how they can have import about the world as it actually is" in other thought

experiments. (McGinnis 2016, 8)

 McGinnis states:

> [P]remises produced by the intellect do not lend themselves to the
> counterfactual scenarios that frequently are at the core of thought
> experiments. Alternatively, if the premises of thought experiments are
> nothing more than unbridled compositions of the imagination, then there is
> no assurance that their content connects up with anything in the world so
> as to give one a deeper insight into the world. For Avicenna, the question
> at stake is a psychological one: what faculty of the soul produces the
> premises employed in (legitimate) thought experiments as opposed to wild

> ravings? Intellect seems too restricted and imagination seems too unrestrained. Avicenna's solution to this dilemma was to introduce a new internal sensory faculty, *wahm*, which for lack of any exact English translation is usually termed the estimative faculty. (McGinnis 2016, 6–7)

The estimative faculty, McGinnis suggests, is the link needed for the thought experiment to act as a halfway house between rationalism and empiricism by acting as a legitimate faculty establishing the required valid premise. The Avicennian validity of thought experiments depends on the estimative faculty for "if one is to move from the possibilities imagined in the estimative faculty to what exists, one must also have a demonstration or provide some actual instance in the world of what the estimative faculty posits." (McGinnis 2016, 7–8) This linkage is explained, with regard to the estimative faculty's appeal to rational concerns, when he states, that:

> [W]hile mathematical abstracts exist in a mental act of conceptualization (*taṣawwur*), they do not exist, at least not in the exact way that the mathematician investigates them, in the concrete material particulars that populate the world. It is the estimative faculty, then, that provides mathematicians and (theoretical) physicists with an idealized picture of the world. In this respect, the estimative faculty offers up a rough and ready guide to real physical possibilities. (McGinnis 2016, 7)

McGinnis's taxonomy divides thought experiments into three types: 1) fictional, 2) ideal and 3) mechanical. (McGinnis 2016, 2) The Avicennian stamp of authenticity for these experiments, regardless of their categorization, requires a plausible relationship between their premises and the world, as stated. These premises need to stem from a faculty of the self that is neither purely intellectual nor entirely imaginary. Thus, both respective faculties are excluded. To find a middle way between these two extremes Ibn Sīnā suggests an estimative faculty. Math, an entirely rational proposition, is not found in the world. Even so, the estimative faculty can extract a number from every enumerated object in the world, to then add, subtract and multiply it by other numbers

making it bound to it. (S. Rahman, Street, and Tahiri 2008, 49) All that is required to make this connection is a sensory exposure to an object in the world for counting. With regard to the estimative faculty's appeal to empirical concerns, the subject perceives an intrinsic non-sensible intention (*ma'nā*) emanating from the object. These intentions provide an explanation, for Ibn Sīnā, as to why the sheep fears an approaching wolf, or why one has good feelings toward a friend or child prior to good or bad action on their side..[47]

According to Ibn Sīnā, for the self to perceive the intentions of external objects, it needs to have exposure to them. If there are no objects for the self to perceive there are no intentions to apprehend. If there are no intentions to apprehend then the estimative faculty is not activated. If any of the thought experiments mentioned in the article do not use the estimative faculty, then they are not acceptable to Ibn Sīnā in neither a direct nor supportive role (*tanbīh*) (by way of a demonstration).

McGinnis's categorization places the SP as a purely fictional thought experiment (McGinnis 2016, 8–10) used to support what has already been proven through demonstration. However, as the SP has never been exposed to an object (external or internal) it has no reference to intention (personal or external). Thus, any estimative facilitation it may have is inoperative. This non-functionality divorces the SP from the category of thought experiments Ibn Sīnā deems valid. It also calls into question how discussions of the SP's primitive self-awareness are other than "mad ravings" when its estimative faculty is disengaged. That is to say, how can we consider the existence of a primitive self-awareness outside of the SP's exposure to self in the world? Secondly,

---

[47] See Black 2000, Black 1993, and Black 2010.

how can the SP have awareness of its intention toward itself when it does not have an estimative faculty to perceive it? Without the aid of the estimative faculty we could not determine what the SP's self intends. We cannot tell if it is aware of the self or some other object.

McGinnis' argument does not pose any challenge to the SP's intended functionality. Rather, it enquires about the estimative faculty's role above and beyond that verified by history for it. McGinnis asserts that thought experiments in the medieval era, acted as halfway houses between empiricism and rationalism. They appealed to the sensible intuitions of the empiricist approach to the sciences through their connection to the world if they were to be used as integral parts of a proof. They appealed to the idealization of intellectual hypotheticals, taking one beyond the plausible mechanical apparatus to ideals beyond the material realm. In a fictional situation, like the SP, wherein demonstration is required before a thought experiment could be used as a support, her estimative faculty makes the scenario more plausible by offering a link between her primitive self-awareness and the world. I argue that the legitimacy of the estimative faculty's ability to credit thought experiments through their connection to the world does not apply to the SP. The consequence of this inapplicability, according to McGinnis's reading, is that thought experiments cannot be counted amongst the indirect proofs supporting demonstration. It also complicates matter of the SP's intentionality.

Part V of Richard Sorabji's, Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life and Death, entitled "Infallibility of Self-knowledge: Cogito and Flying Man," (Sorabji 2006) investigates into whether human self-knowledge is susceptible to error focusing

on Augustine (d. 430 C.E.) and Ibn Sīnā. These two thinkers seem to share a similar position regarding the self's inability to be wrong regarding what it knows about itself. He attempts to find a common intellectual ancestor who might provide the impetus for this position in Plotinus (d. 270 C.E.). Sorabji presents Ibn Sīnā's famous thought experiment as an "argument" showing an infallible version of self-knowledge. Thus, as far as Sorabji is concerned, like Plotinus, Ibn Sīnā understood self-knowledge to be free from error. The latter used the SP as a tool to prove this point.

A Summary of Sorabji's Argument

For Plotinus, "the intellect is irrefutable because of the identity: what is says it is, and what it is it says." (Sorabji 2006, 218) As the intellect, for Plotinus, is the center of knowledge for when one speaks of it one is speaking of knowledge itself. If one were to speak of knowledge one speaks of the intellect. For Plotinus, the self and the intellect equate. Thus, Plotinian knowledge is of the self/intellect. When the intellect articulates it does so based upon what it knows. It knows itself and itself is what *is*. What *is* is factual. Therefore, Plotinus held that the self's knowledge is as real as the facticity of the one who thinks. Sorabji posits that the SP demonstrates Ibn Sīnā's like-minded ideas about the self, existence, and knowledge.

He also suggests that the infallibility of self-knowledge is an "understated principle" shared between Plotinus, Porphyry, Augustine, Priscian of Lydia,[48] and Ibn Sīnā. He attempts to show how this principle exists in Ibn Sīnā's ideas as found in *Reply to*

---

[48] One of the earliest Neoplatonists born in the late 5th century C.E.

Bahmanyār and al-Kirmānī.[49] The latter further clarifies what the SP indicates regarding

his position on the identity of self and knowledge stating:

> Avicenna imagines a man who comes into existence moving through air or
> vacuum without perceiving anything, not even the sensation of touching
> limbs. Once again, the argument turns on a claim about essence. The man
> would know directly that his essence existed, but he would not know that
> body exists. Avicenna concludes that his essence, which he takes to be soul,
> is independent of body. […] Avicenna further explains what he meant in
> *Reply to Bahmanyâr and Al-Kirmânî.*
>
> Avicenna gives his reason why the Flying Man must grasp his essence only in
> this recently translated text *(Reply to Bahmanyâr,* paras. 58-59, Michot). It is
> that nothing grasps a thing without grasping its *own* essence as grasping.
> (Sorabji 2006, 222)

Thus, after presenting the SP scenario, Sorabji, restates the thought experiment

revolves around an essence. This perceived essence is not a body, and as Ibn Sīnā is a

dualist, the alternative would be the soul. Thus, the essence in question is the self, as

"the man would directly know that *his* essence existed (italics my own). Thus, the SP

represents primary self-awareness for Ibn Sīnā. Here, Sorabji mentions a paraphrased

reply to his students stating, 'that nothing grasps a thing without grasping its *own*

essence as grasping.' Thus, Sorabji suggests that there is a confirmation here that Ibn

Sīnā is in accordance with Plotinus and the others who identify the self of the knower

with what she knows.

Sorabji introduced this point to bolster his position that the infallibility of self-

knowledge is a discreet position in Ibn Sīnā's thought and traceable in the SP. The

---

[49] Quoting Jean Michot, "La réponse d'Avicenne à Bahmanyâr et al-Kirmânî." *Le Muséon* 110, no. 1-2
(1997): 143-221

implication is that just as the Plotinian position is reported to have held that "the intellect is irrefutable because of identity: what it says it is, and what it is it says," implies that there is an identity. Thus immediate verifiability between knower and known underlies the SP version of self-awareness. Ibn Sīnā's position in *Reply to Bahmanyār*, that "nothing grasps a thing without grasping its *own* essence as grasping" supplies us with a similar understated principle. Grasping something implies "knowing" it. Thus, a similar understated principle lies in the implication that if the self (as in the SP) cannot perceive (i.e., understand) anything without first understanding it is *itself* that it understands, then nothing is known without the self being known in the process. (Sorabji 2006, 222) [50]

Thus, just as the SP knows, in a way not subject to error, that she knows herself primitively, the SP is an argument for the infallibility of the self's knowledge of itself.[51]

An Assessment of Sorabji's Argument

---

[50] The issue as to whether something must be known in whole or in part in order to have one of two types of knowledge -episteme [understanding] and eidenai [knowing], respectively- is one that Sorabji also takes up here. However, it not important for the current focus.

[51] Sorabji's study provides other instances wherein the SP and its indications regarding self-awareness in Ibn Sīnā is represented. The former mentions:

> There are further references to the Flying Man in Avicenna's *Ishârât* (*Remarks and Admonitions*), in his *Mashriqiyin* (note: it would appear that he meant *Mashriqiyyūn* (Easterners), which exists only in manuscript, and in his *Almahad* (The Return [sc. Of the soul after death], surviving in Latin only. The last translated by Alpago (died 1522) and became available to Latin readers a hundred years before Descartes in the Venice edition of 1546, repr. Farnborough 1969. Avicenna further explains what he meant in *Reply to Bahmanyâr and al Kirmânî*. In this valuable set of notes, he urges a former pupil to not be misled by the misinterpretations of his doctrine propounded by a tiresome shaikh. Sorabji 2006, 222.

Sorabji mentions three less likely SP locales (as opposed to five in other works). The last one, *Almahad,* now only available in Latin, as he claims, would be interesting to research regarding its relationship to Latin thinkers, considering the proximity it has to Descartes and as its Arabic counterpart seems to be no longer extant. The *Reply* is mentioned more than once in this review. Sorabji's paraphrase of Ibn Sīnā, here, stating, "he urges a former pupil to not be misled by the misinterpretation of his doctrine propounded by a tiresome shaikh." The statement gives us the reassurance that Ibn Sīnā's doctrine is susceptible to more than one reading, and like art, once the artist expresses, they no longer own the expression, as it is open to interpretation from that point on.

Sorabjji's position that the SP is an argument for the infallibility of the self's knowledge is additional to Ibn Sīnā's plan for the thought experiment. Ibn Sīnā is known for his rejection of the unity of the knower and the known. Sorabji's thesis charges that like Plotinus, he believed in the identity thesis. As Plotinus' application of the identity thesis leads to the infallibility of self-knowledge, Sorabji claims that Ibn Sīnā also upholds that owns self-awareness is devoid of error. However, as Ibn Sīnā does not accept the identity thesis, he also would not accept the infallibility of knowledge on that basis.

Even if Ibn Sīnā were to accept the identity thesis, the SP's conditions do not allow for the kind of self-awareness supposed in Sorabji's essay. This is because it is precluded by the conditions that rule out awareness of an immaterial substance. Thus, supposing Ibn Sīnā's hypothetical acceptance of the identity thesis still does not produce the self-awareness nor consequent epistemic infallibility that Sorabji suggests it entails. Perhaps Sorabji is suggesting that the SP's self-awareness makes Ibn Sīnā an adherent to the identity thesis in a manner he himself did not detect. While that proposition is intriguing, the conditions do not support it for the reasons I have mentioned above.

Deborah Black's "Avicenna on Self-Awareness and Knowing that One Knows," is a standard in SP studies arguing that Ibn Sīnā's objective in the SP is to establish that, "the unity of awareness, rather than the desire to establish the immateriality of that unifying subject, […] is of paramount importance to Avicenna, even in the Flying Man experiment—a point which is attested to by Avicenna's decision to incorporate two of

the three versions of the Flying Man into arguments for the unity of the soul." (Black

2008, 86) Her objectives in her study are as follows:

> I will show that Avicenna recognizes two distinct levels of self-knowledge, the most basic of which is exemplified in the experience of the Flying Man, which I will label 'primitive self-awareness.' Primitive self-awareness violates many of the strictures placed on self-knowledge by the Aristotelian principles rehearsed above, and Avicenna differentiates it from the reflexive awareness of oneself via one's awareness of an object that is characteristic of Aristotelianism. He also distinguishes primitive self-awareness from our knowledge of our bodies and psychological faculties and from our scientific understanding of our essential natures as humans; and he explicitly recognizes the capacity for 'knowing that we know' as a distinctive form of self-knowledge. Primitive self-awareness plays a central role in ensuring the unity of the soul's operations, especially its cognitive ones, and Avicenna appears to have seen the absence of such a unifying center of awareness as a major lacuna within Aristotelian psychology. (Black 2008, 65)

The analysis is comprehensive as the above suggests. I have omitted most

commentary on the reflexive levels of self-awareness, discussions on the incorporeality

of the soul, and deliberations on the "after-thought" status of the body in the SP, as she

portrays it. Rather, our main interest is her position that Ibn Sīnā used the SP to

demonstrate the psychological unity of primitive awareness.

A Summary of Black's Argument

To demonstrate the SP's psychological unity of primitive awareness she reminds

us of the nature of human intellection in Ibn Sīnā. This intellection occurs in an

immaterial substance. This immaterial substance requires a primitive level of awareness

supporting a more reflexive and clear contemplation. This primitive awareness serves

as the principle of unity in the SP. Black argues that the primary function of the SP is to

indicate this principle. She buttresses her argument on the Aristotelian premise that an

intellect must think of thinking. A human being has an intellect; thus, a human being must be thinking of thinking. She coins this basic attentiveness as "primitive awareness"[52] and claims its demonstration is the aim of, and the reason why so many versions of the SP exist. Acting as the constant ground of one's existence, all subordinate acts of awareness return to primitive self-awareness. Ultimately, primitive self-awareness serves as the psychological principle of unity missing in the Aristotelian schema.

An Assessment of Black's Argument

Ibn Sīnā does not use the SP to advocate primitive self-awareness's filling the Aristotelian lacuna involving the psychological principle of unity. So, while her argument brings additional value to the SP's functionality, it is beyond Ibn Sīnā's ambitions for it. Despite the central significance of Black's argument in SP studies, its original premise seems to betray the conclusions she argues for. The Avicennian principle that human intellection occurring in an immaterial substance makes reflective awareness subordinate to non-reflective thinking is a matter of commonsense. Without this basis the former is forced to produce a ground for reflection. Without the ability to produce a ground for reflection, reflective awareness is given to infinite regress. The need for primitive awareness as a ground for the SP's apperceptive "thinking," then, is self-evident. That primitive awareness be the point of origin and return for all awareness follows the centralizing nature of a ground.

---

[52] Muehlethaler assumes that although Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī (d.673 /1274), a major contributor to Avicennian revival and a commentator on works crucial to this study, comprehends the SP as an indication from which we might assume that our basic level of thinking is continual state of self-awareness, but it cannot be proven. Thus, this self-awareness is was not received wholesale positively by Ibn Sīnā's intellectual progeny. See Muehlethaler 2009, 189.

However, the SP's conditions prevent the intentional primitive awareness of an immaterial substance. That is to say, while it seems a matter of native wit to suggest that the SP would be aware (maybe not so much "thinking"), and that awareness must be of something, the thought experiment's conditions prevent that her awareness be *of* any thing. Thus, no substance, immaterial substance, nor material substance, nor substance, as such, can be said to be primitively aware *of* any thing. So, while arguing against the SP's awareness seems counterintuitive, while supporting a primitive non-reflective ground intuitive, the conditions refute Black's claim that the SP is primitively self-aware of an immaterial substance. This conclusion also negates the SP's primitive awareness' capacity as the unifying factor in Aristo-Avicennian psychology.

Logical

C. P. Hertogh's, "Ibn Sīnā's Flying Man: Logical Analyses of a Thought Experiment," is a logical analysis of the SP. This study attempts to resolve the dispute whether the SP and Descartes' Cogito have any substantial comparison through logical analysis. He re-assesses the logical terminology of both thought experiments alongside other correlative experiments to alleviate any linguistic confusion. He states that based on the thought experiment analyses and comparison to postmodern thought experiments that "the traditional historical comparison between René Descartes' *Cogito* and Ibn Sīnā's *Flying Man* is rather unlikely." (Hertogh 2013, 55) I will review Hertogh's main points in the SP's logical analysis.

A Summary of Hertogh's Argument

Regarding the debate between the traditional and modern interpretations (represented by Rahman and by Hasse, respectively), Hertogh posits that the SP is most likely a thought experiment about self-consciousness. Despite his belief in this high probability, Hertogh does not question the claim that the SP is about the self. He determines that the experiment can help to sustain arguments about the mind's incorporeality but seems to fail as proof for its status as a substance.

Hertogh finds that the "bizarre experimentation supposal" of the SP and its presumption of the existence of a material world more closely resembles both Putnam's Brain-in-a-Vat and Chalmers' Anti-Materialist Modal Argument. (Hertogh 2013, 72) He resists the common attitude of equating the SP with Descartes' *Cogito*. For Hertogh, the SP is an "indicative methodology of alerting self-consciousness." The Cogito is based in Descartes' methodological doubt. The structure of the two experiments also clashes, according to Hertogh, The SP is an elaborate medieval thought experiment. The *Cogito* is an instance of "simple Universal Instantiation." He also claims they clash syllogistically. The SP is a rhetorical syllogism. The Cogito is categorical. The SP is a "pointer by alertness." The Cogito is proof arrived through intuition. (Hertogh 2013, 72)

Hertogh prefers St. Anselm of Canterbury's (d.1109) Ontological Argument and Einstein's Chasing a Beam of Light as SP analogues. Anselm's argument from pure analytic, a priori and necessary premises concluding with God's positive existence is included because it shares "common medieval features" with the SP. (Hertogh 2013, 72) Einstein's first contemplative experiment, Chasing a Beam of Light, is chosen

because both experiments suggest a flying man. The latter places him on a light ray as opposed to a state of suspension. (Hertogh 2013, 72)

For Hertogh, the SP is plausible on two grounds. The first is that, although it may be physically impossible to appear instantaneously and in the conditions demanded by Ibn Sīnā in order for the experiment to work (since we can imagine ourselves in such a scenario) it is a reasonable indicator. It is something that may be imagined in the mind. Common imagination visualizes such "flying" situations in various forms. It finds it reasonable and plausible. Likewise, just as someone flying on a ray of light, as in Einstein's *Chasing a Beam of Light* thought experiment is acceptable in a collective "cross-cultural objective imagination. (Hertogh 2013, 73)

For Hertogh, the way modern thinkers strike a comparison between the SP and the Cogito is like Wittgenstein's "language game." In the language game, the meaning between a name and its object is not accessed so much through direct correspondence as much as in the way words are used. If one was to dig too far under the surface meaning of this relationship there is a great deal of ambiguity. The language game is a feature of postmodern thought. Thus, for Hertogh, as modern thinkers attempt to revive the SP giving it some form of loose correlation to the Cogito proves revived interest in SP is an example of the formation of postmodernity. (Hertogh 2013, 73) Hertogh holds that although it is possible that Descartes may have been familiar some basic ideas contributing to the body of philosophy in his time, due to structural dissimilarities. However, it is improbable that Descartes wrote the Cogito having known the SP. (Hertogh 2013, 74)

Hertogh finds Ibn Sīnā's mind-body contemplations as preoccupation with the

occult. As Ibn Sīnā considers both the body and the mind from metaphysical standpoints (considering them both to be independent substances with a mystical relationship) the SP (and like-minded preoccupations with the relationship between the body and the mind) is like "(folk) psychology, as many people remain fascinated by phenomena like hypnosis suggestion the evil eye, magic and the effects of emotions and bodily vegetative functions of the body on the psyche." (Hertogh 2013, 74) After re-assessing both logical and linguistical reassessment, he considered a comparison between the two thought experiments unpropitious.

An Assessment of Hertogh's Argument

Hertogh's position that the SP is most likely about self-consciousness is in accord with its general application in Avicennian texts. In this sense, his argument supports the widely received intent Ibn Sīnā has for the thought experiment. His argumentation against its beign primarily about the self, however, is against its common recaption and may be interpreted to be against Ibn Sīnā's intention. Suggesting that the SP fails as a proof for the self's status as a substance seems very much in line with Ibn Sīnā. As has been stated above, the SP was never used in the capacity to prove anything for or against the self, its awareness, or status as a substance. Rather, the thought experiment is used to indicate these realities to those who may perceive it. That being said, I do not think Hertogh's protests are based upon this distinction. As thought experiments are understood through their performance and subsequent experience, it seems superfluous to put the SP and Cogito through a logical analysis. Comparing an interest in the self-body relationship to a preoccupation with magic seems a heavy

handed misconstrual of the Avicennian philosophical tradition.

Lukas Muehlethaler's "Ibn Kammuna (d. 683/1284) on the Argument of the Flying Man in Avicenna's Isharat and al-Suhrawardī's Talwīḥāt," asks that, Michael Marumura and Deborah Black's questioning its validity, can the SP be valid? Marmura questions its categorical self-awareness based upon a hypothetical premise. Black takes issue with a shift from an epistemological argument to an ontological one due to the ambiguity of referential syllogistic terms. Muehlethaler finds that both Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Kammūna consider the SP as a valid argument. The study also observes that thinkers who came after Ibn Sīnā merit their own research for its basis in and ingenuity regarding the latter's thought. (Muehlethaler 2009, 202)

A Summary of Muehlethaler's **Argument**

Muehlethaler consults the reception of Saʿd ibn Manṣūr ʿIzz al-Dawla Ibn Kammūna's (d.1284) to assess the SP's validity. Ibn Kammuna, a philosopher and prolific writer from Baghdad, interpreted the SP in three places: 1) his commentary in Suhrawardī's *Talwīḥāt* entitled *al-Tanqīḥāt fī Sharḥ al-Talwīḥāt* (1268), 2) his *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl wa al-Jumal min muhimmāt al-ʿilm wa al-ʿamal*, an interpretation of the *Ishārāt* (1273), and 3) in his philosophical summary later referred to as *al-Jadīd fī al-Ḥikma* or *al-Kāshif fī al-Ḥikma* (1278). After gathering together Ibn Kammūna's statements from these various sources, Muethelaher concludes that for both Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Kammūna, when the later reconstructs the thought experiment as a syllogism, its validity is logically verifiable. Ibn Kammuna's inference, made in the *Uṣūl* in a discussion akin to the

version of the SP in *al-Shifā* and summarized by Muethelaher says, " (1) the self is unaware of all things (corporeal) in the state of the Flying Man (2) the self is not unaware of the affirmation of its being in any state (3) the known is something else than the unknown (assumption). (4) The self is something other than 'all these other things (conclusion from 1) and (2) on the basis of (3). (5) Hence, its knowledge of its existence is evident." (Muehlethaler 2009, 189) The syllogism, stands on the supposition that (3) "the known is something else than the unknown." Thus, both Ibn Sīnā and his defender Ibn Kammūna take the assumption that that which is disclosed and that which is not are dissimilar as the basis for the SP's argument.

Proposition 3 is admissible by both thinkers because "both Avicenna and Ibn Kammuna consider the outcome of the thought experiment a proposition based on reflection, specifically reflection on the soul which results in valid, if only particular, grasp of the middle term that in the state of a Flying Man our self is 'unaware of everything except itself." (Muehlethaler 2009, 202) In other words, Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Kammūna both ground the supposition that that which is known is unlike that which is not identified on a given subject's turning back their thoughts on themselves finding that all she knows, deep down, is herself. The reason for failing to see that the self is the basis of her consciousness, they contend, is a lack of mental dexterity, i.e., intelligence.

Thus, if one were perspicacious enough, they would find that the self is essentially self aware in a way that does not require proof. This same clear perceptibility of the self is a singular object of recognition. It follows, then, for both thinkers that, if reflected upon, the self's status as something only aware of itself is an obvious fact. As such, proving the object of the self's awareness is superfluous. Thus, the categorical

conclusion that one is aware of themselves, at least for these two thinkers, is not a

matter of hypothesis but of intuitive fact, despite Marmura's objection.

al-Tanqīḥāt's syllogism shows why Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Kammūna both consider that

the known as something other than the unknown in the *Uṣūl* is valid, as above, by

continuing the syllogism. Muehlethaler sustains the Ibn Kammunian deduction stating:

> (6) The self of every man, this man is not unaware of it in all five
> aforementioned states (self-evident and result of thought experiment; minor -
> e-proposition)...(7) Every body and accident, this man is unaware of it when
> he is in one of the five states,[53] namely the fifth which everyone who is
> endowed with perspicacity understands necessarily (result of thought
> experiment; major -a-proposition)...(8) The self of every man is neither a
> body nor an accident (hence it is an incorporeal substance), (from minor (6)
> and major (7) - e-proposition). (Muehlethaler 2009,192-93)

Everyone endowed with sharp sight understands necessarily the SP is unaware of her

body and her non-essential characteristics. One is aware of whether they are asleep,

awake, sober, drunk, or spread-eagle in the SP and not aware of their body or its

accidents. Thus, the SP proves that the self, which one is always aware of, is neither a

body nor an accident. "The syllogism mirrors proposition 3, which states that the known

(the self) is different from the unknown (here bodies and accidents). "(Muehlethaler

2009, 193) In other words, that which is known (the self, in all five states mentioned) is

always known. The body and its accidents, on the other hand, are not always known.

Therefore, the self and the body and its accidents are not the same. This inference also

recommends that Proposition 3 is admissible.

While Proposition 3 seems vindicated as a source of logical judgement, does it

oppose Deborah Black's censorship of the SP's move from an epistemological

---

[53] When asleep, awake, sober, drunk, and when he is spread-eagle. Muehlethaler 2009, 19.

distinction to an ontological one via an "obviously fallacious inference pattern, (that) "If 1 *know* x but I do not know y, then x cannot *be* (italics mine) the same as y?" (Black 2008, 65) Black's examination, according to Muehlethaler, questions the validity of transferring from a question on knowledge (If I *know* x (which remains unidentified) but I do not know y (and hence both are now unknown), then x (whose identity remains *unknown*) cannot *be* (i.e., share the same ontological status) as y)

The latter's response to Black, on behalf of Ibn Kammuna, is in Proposition 7. There, no one is aware of their body and its accidents while in the SP scenario. Thus, as Black's critique concerns the SP, there is no "referential opacity" in term x. It is is the self. Anyone with perspicacity would find that to be necessarily the case. So, if I know the self but I do not know y (the body and its accidents), then the self cannot *be* the same as the body and its accidents. ((Muehlethaler 2009, 182) In other words, there is no ambiguity regarding the ontological status of x for those who are gifted with sharp vision. Rather, the principle remains consistent throughout syllogism: what we know (i.e., the self) is not the same as we do not know (i.e., the body and its accidents).

Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Kammūna do not share the same views on the thought experiment in every aspect. While they both agree that comprehending the correct nature of self-awareness is limited to those gifted with intuition to grasp the middle term of a syllogism, they disagree on how much comprehension one may receive from syllogistic reasoning, even if the middle term, here a reflection, is properly distributed. In other words, although they agree on the immediacy of realizing that the SP is self-aware, "Ibn Kammūna disagrees with Avicenna on the quantity which propositions based on reflection can receive. He formulates them as universal propositions, even

though Avicenna explicitly states that they are particular." (Muehlethaler 2009, 202) Muehlethaler also claims that Ibn Kammūna relinquished his view that the self is an immaterial substance, albeit for reasons unknown. (Muehlethaler 2009, 202)

Muehlethaler suggests that Ibn Kammuna's syllogistic renderings of the SP in both the *Uṣūl* and *al-Tanqiḥāt* are mutually supportive. They stand against the respective critical examinations of Marmura and Black. The first step achieved in the *Uṣūl* is to show that both Ibn Sīnā and his champion Ibn Kammūna accept that that which is unknown is not like that which is known as a feasible proposition. The second move, found in *al-Tanqīḥāt,* advances that despite whether asleep, awake, sober, drunk, or spread-eagle the SP is always aware of her self. If one is intuitive they will grasp this fact. These two propositions strengthen each other for that which is always an object of awareness, like the self, is not like that which is not, at times, an object of awareness. Muehlethaler concludes that both Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Kammūna consider the SP to be valid argument. The latter does so by a syllogism diffused across two separate syllogisms discussing the SP in both Ibn Sīnā and Suhrawardī. The study also observes that innovative thinkers who came after Ibn Sīnā merits investigation.(2009, 202)

An Assessment of Muehlethaler **'s Argument**

Muehlethaler's contention involves showing that Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Kammūna, and those who came after them found the SP to be a sound argument. This belief is outside intentional concerns and thus is non-consequential to what Ibn Sīnā hoped to achieve through the thought experiment. Again, the SP serves as an indication. An indication only points to an object. Someone's inability to see whatever the indication is designed

to point to does not invalidate the indication. In a sense, Ibn Sīnā treats the thought experiment as a proof for the intellectual elite i.e., those who are intellectually astute enough to see its evident nature. Thus, for Marmura to take issue with categorical conclusions based upon the SP hypothetical, in itself is well founded. I am not convinced that Black's issue with a perceived shift from an epistemological argument to an ontological one due to the ambiguity of referential syllogistic terms is convincing. My lack of conviction in her analysis stems from two issues. In the first, Ibn Sīnā does not technically consider the SP as an argument. Thus, to treat it like an argument seems somewhat misplaced. In the second place, there seems to be some metaphysical overlap in thinkers like Ibn Sīnā who tend to think with overarching principles determining the branches of their entire system. Thus, I am not convinced that Ibn Sīnā treats epistemology and ontology in such a mutually exclusive fashion.

Ibn Kammūna's syllogism seems flawed in several ways. It seems to repeat the same contradictions as the original thought experiment taken up here in this study. The self, he says, is unaware of anything corporeal. We know that the *tabula rasa* principle in Peripatetic thought requires that knowledge starts from a result of familiarity with corporeality, first. The self, he continues, is aware of its state of suspension. Knowing that you are suspended, it is assumed, is different than not knowing one is suspended. The self and its awareness is different than non-awareness and all that is not aware of itself. All that is not self-aware is also unaware of the state of their existence. Hence, the SP's knowledge of its existence (and the nature of that existence), he concludes, is evident as much as the opposite is true in that which does not have self-knowledge i.e., they do not know that they exist (nor the nature of that non-existence).

The SP's Avicennian configuration requires that its epistemic aspect must be initiated by sensory perception in the corporeal world. She does not have that connection. I do not know from where any sense of self-awareness can arise in the SP. I also do not know where any self that is aware of itself as opposed to other things may appear. It does not know of any "thing" self, non-self, or otherwise for comparison. We might be able to make this distinction and determination as minds outside of the suspended scenario. However, she would not be able to make any distinctions.

Comparative Renditions

Here, various versions of the SP are compared. The first of these studies evaluating is Michael Marmura's, "Avicenna's 'Flying Man' in Context. The second is Ahmad Alwishah's "Ibn Sīnā on Floating Man Arguments. Both scholars place two or more versions of the SP side by side for appraisal.

Michael Marmura's "Avicenna's 'Flying Man' in Context" considers the SP in three places; Kitāb *al-nafs*, twice (I, I, and V, 7) and *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*. In it, he determines that the "roles the 'Flying Man' plays in its three appearances, although related and complementary, are not identical." (Marmura 1986, 383) He also states, "the "Flying Man" and the arguments it includes or relates to in the texts are problematic." (Marmura 1986, 383) I have addressed an "immaterial self capable of self-awareness while totally oblivious of the body and anything physical" (Marmura 1986, 388) located in all three places, above. As such, I have opted to refrain from re-engaging them again

here. Begging the question, an issue that stems from this supposition, is addressed

here.

A Summary of Marmura's Argument

As for Marmura's critique of a *petitio principii* in renderings in *al-Nafs I,1* he

states:

> Moreover, the argument begs the question. This brings us to its
> assumptions which perhaps may help explain how Avicenna treats its
> conclusion in categorical terms. As indicated earlier, he holds that the self
> has natural, constant knowledge of itself. In the third version of the
> "Flying Man," …, he elaborates on this. Provided the self is able to
> "discern a thing correctly," then whatever the circumstances, it will have
> this constant knowledge of itself. Now Avicenna includes as one of these
> circumstances in which the self is still able " to discern a thing correctly"
> the state of its being totally unaware of the bodily and the physical,
> exemplified by the "Flying Man." But once he includes this, then he is
> already assuming the very thing to be proven: an immaterial self capable
> of self-awareness while totally oblivious of the body and anything
> physical. (Marmura 1986, 388)

Marmura accuses Ibn Sīnā of assuming that the SP is self-aware. As he has failed to

demonstrate the truth of this claim through logical evidence establishing the SP's state

of primitive self-awareness, he charges him with the logical fallacy of begging the

question. In other words, Marmura does not take intuition as an acceptable source of

distinction between true and false reasoning. He criticises Ibn Sīnā for having used a

self-supporting questionable premise in intuition.

An Assessment of Marmura's Argument

Marumura's argument is outside of the scope of intention. Thus, it is neither in

accord with nor in conflict against Ibn Sīnā's objectives. Rather, Marmura accuses the

SP of begging the question for rejecting intuition as an acceptable source of the distinction between true and false reasoning. Thus, Marumura's discourse questions the SP's structural soundness. Without evidence, he suggests, the truth of the nature of primitive self-awareness is already assumed in its initial premise. By doing so, Marmura challenges Ibn Sīnā's reliance on the assumption that one would be self-aware through their intuition. Thus, his argument challenges the objectives set by Ibn Sīnā in formulating the experiment. At the same time, the SP's conditions render the self-evidentness of her self-awareness impossible. The impossibility lies in the fact that the SP cannot be aware of any particular thing. The lack of the SP's awareness of any particular thing stems from its complete sensory deprivation while total dependence on the external world for knowledge. Without exposure to the external world, it does not know anything. Awareness of something as opposed to not having an awareness of something is an epistemic "thing." Thus, there seems to be a matter of redundancy concerning Marumura's position concerning intuition and its role in the SP.

Ahmad Alwishah's "Ibn Sīnā on Floating Man Arguments," finds that most scholars focus on the initial version of *al-Nafs.* They neglect other renditions elsewhere like *al-Taʿlīqāt* and *al-Mubāḥathāt.* It compares each version of the SP together to demonstrate the development of Ibn Sīnā's thought on the issues related to it. Ibn Sīnā is depicted to have treated the various SP issues interdependently as a result of that gradually and methodically. This paper contributes to this field of study by presenting the SP in a way that compares it to itself in a developmental fashion.

Thus, Alwishah's study shows how the SP unfolds over time in the thinker's mind as he addresses the problems that arise in it for him. Ultimately, he argues that it is only by recognizing these distinct steps, and the advances in Ibn Sīnā's thought, that one can reach a thorough and critical judgment of Ibn Sīnā's SP. I will summarize Alwishah's argument covering the stages of the SP as he suggests. I will also cover his focus on the centrality of the Awareness of Awareness (*al-shuʿūr bi al-shuʿūr*) to the thought experiment.

A Summary of Alwishah's Argument

The SP is represented in Alwishah's account as the Flying Man Argument (hereafter FMA) numbers 1, 2, or 3. These stages are varying degrees of development at different points in his engagement of the thought experiment. The three points of engagement focus on respected dimensions of the SP's ability to argue various points of separability between the SP itself and body, and/or within its self-awareness, respectively.

FMA[1] focuses on the "existential separability" between the SP's self and body. In *al-Taʿlīqāt*, *al-Nafs,* and *al-Mubāḥathāt*. Alwishah explains that FMA[1]'s objective to prove the ontological distinction between the self and its corporeal casing is based upon the affirmation of the self's existence in *al-Nafs* via an intrinsic knowledge of its existence. (Alwishah 2013, 51) He posits the Avicennian position that the self is self-aware with an awareness admitting the validity of the SP's ability to attest to her own existence through reconstruction of the argument. (Alwishah 2013, 53)

Alwishah claims that this focus on the ability for the self and the body to be ontologically pulled apart is continued in *al-Taʿlīqāt.* There, the SP is shown to know of her existence on the basis of her self-awareness. (Alwishah 2013, 53) Ibn Sīnā is argued to further the assertion that any act of cognition asserts the relationship between self-awareness and the self. (Alwishah 2013, 53) In each instance, the focus of FMA[1] is to establish existential separability of the self and the body.

Alwishah reconstructs the SP in *al-Nafs* and *al-Risālah al-aḍḥawiyyah* suggesting that FMA[2] engages in a more advanced degree of existential separability. Here the thought experiment focuses on the development and use of the term identity (*āniyyah*). Identity is a word that answers the question "which" something is as opposed to "what" it is. It replaces the term *ḏāt*. It is typically used to answer the question as to "what" something is as opposed to something else. FMA[2] has a secondary focus on the primary manner in which it affirms the knowledge of the self's existence. So, while FMA[1] converges on the disengagement of the self from the body and the senses to access the reflector, FMA[2] realizes the identity of one SP as opposed to another, *while* being corporeally unaware. Thus, both FMA[1] and FMA[2] affirm the different ways the self acknowledges its existence. It does so either while disengaging the body's existence while not being aware of the body *at the time* of the self's acknowledgement.

Alwishah shows FMA[3], to have two points of concentration. The first point is to establish "conceptual separability' between levels of the SP's self-awareness. Here Ibn Sīnā pursues the self's affirmation without reference to the body at all. Alwishah says that to answer the first one identifies the "I" with the body. Then one distinguishes between external and internal body parts. One then asserts the ability to distinguish

between internal parts by deciphering the difference between the brain and the intellect. The term "I" makes the distinction between the two difficult to determine. (Alwishah 2013, 58) Alwishah proposes that the brain's faculty of representation and estimation is the same as the term "I." (Alwishah 2013, 59)

The second point is to erect the immediacy and continuity of her self-awareness in the mind. Here the SP establishes that as there is no mediation between the self and its awareness, there is no gap between *what is*, and *what one is aware of.* (Alwishah 2013, 65) With the proximity of epistemology and ontology established, Ibn Sīnā strives to establish the uninterrupted connection of the self and its awareness spacio-temporally. To do so, he establishes that there are two levels of awareness. The primary horizon of awareness is intrinsic and thus continual with the SP's existence. The second level is reflective and may or may not be acquired. (Alwishah 2013, 65) This version, present in *al-Risālah al-aḍḥawiyyah* and *al-Mubāḥathāt,* uses identity to establish the SP's personhood. Here, identity is a particular aspect of the self pointing to the sameness and continuity of one's mode of awareness. Alwishah points out that as, Ibn Sīnā claims the "I" always refers to one's self (Alwishah 2013, 60), and existence is super-added to essence,[54] the "I" indicates an essence.

For Alwishah, all related points in his essay hinge on the SP's awareness. The above has been shown to determine both existential and conceptual separability. These are two important practical functions of the SP. While the SP's self-awareness is the point around which its instrumentality revolves, self-awareness can lead to infinite regress. If the SP is to perceive that she perceived, as is the case in the secondary

---

[54] See Ibn Sīnā 1957, 49.

reflection mentioned above, then she needs to perceive that secondary perception as well, *ad infinitum.* Alwishah calls to our attention that Ibn Sīnā attempts an escape from direct-self awareness's being is an awareness requiring a more advanced awareness of first-order awareness to sustain it. He does so by positing that the first perception/immediate awareness may also act as an apprehension of itself. Thus, it is unnecessary to assert that a new awareness, requires a new first-order basis.

An Assessment of Alwishah's Argument

Alwishah's "Ibn Sīnā on Flying Man Arguments" suggests that by reviewing the the SP's development and internal issues that set it into motion, we can grasp a more vivid idea of the thought experiment's significance. By doing so, his argument is in accord with, and illustrates Ibn Sīnā's intentions for the thought experiment showing how he achieved them, over time. I am not convinced that he accomplished what he set out to do. His analysis of the SP and its developments is based upon the assumption that the SP is aware of an essence. When the experiment's conditions are properly observed, recognition of an essence is impossible. Thus, if the various forms of the SP given here are based upon developments in Ibn Sīnā's treatment of a self-aware essence, then these suggested developments are not pertinent to the SP.

Existential and Mystical

Nicola Masciandaro's "The Sorrow of Being" (Masciandaro 2010) uses existentialism to posit that the SP is the form of the sorrow of being. The existentialism concerned in Masicandaro's study much more closely resembles Jean-Paul Sartre than Ṣadrā. At the same time, while the former's existentialism is atheistic, Western

existentialism also has theistic members like Gabriel Marcel, (d. 1973) and Nicolai

Berdyaev (d. 1948). It should also be remembered that despite their historical, cultural,

and religious differences, both types of theistic existentialists are rooted in Greek

thought, to different degrees. Ṣadrā has a Neoplatonic basis coupled with post-Hellenic

Islamic thought. Therefore, the terms in which he thinks meet those of his Western

theistic and atheistic existential counterparts in a secular Greco-Roman meeting point.

Thus, theistic existentialists share the common philosophical thesis of the primacy of

Existence over essence and belief in God. This paper is considered for its existential

coverage of the SP.

When taken at face value, the SP does not lend insight into existential value.

Rather, the failure to observe its conditions renders it to a single essentialist reading.

This study contributes to my attempt to re-read the SP from an existentialist framework

by pushing the existentialist possibilities inherent in it. With this essay, and those like it,

the landscape of an existentialist SP draws nearer for observation.

A Summary of Masciandaro's Argument

To help us believe his proposal, Masciandaro proposes an existentialist

argument to bolster his claim. Western existentialism holds that philosophical thinking

starts with the human subject's acting, feeling, and living. He asks, "what does it *feel*

like to be soul, to be purely oneself, alone prior to all aloneness, without any other

content or relation than the fact of one's own being? (Masciandaro 2010, 14) To

develop an answer we must consider relation as a connection between two things.

Masciandaro asks what it is like to feel, in the most primitive sense, that one's only

connection is to their own being. If one were to exist suddenly completely alone, how would they relate to the loss of the other connections they ought to have in an otherwise normal condition? How does one *feel* in a state of original privation?

"The privationist theory of evil is that something is an evil in virtue and only in virtue of the fact that it lacks something it *ought* to have. In other words, something is an evil insofar as it is defective or deficient (emphasis added)." (Anglin 1982, 3) Based upon this theory, there is something primitively evil, something crudely lacking and negative, in being "alone prior to all aloneness," for human beings are innately social creatures. Thus, we *ought* to experience a sense of other-than-myself. In a later place, Masciandaro states "sorrow seems universally related to the principle of evil or privation." (Masciandaro 2010, 10) But what is sorrow? What is this complete relation to evil/privation? She quotes Augustine that, "sorrow is the will's disagreement with something that happened against our will." (Masciandaro 2010, 12) She continues, "so in Augustine's definition of sorrow we can peer into the problem of being revealed as a cross-section cut by definition as an act of sorrow. Note how the definition, after all, throws me back into my own disagreeableness, towards the irresolution of my acceptance or refusal of my own will, into the problem of my being." (Masciandaro 2010, 12)

This problem (being's being a problem for itself) concerns above all the split between quiddity and haecceity. In other words, the *what* and the *that* of something as the irresolvable terms through which being both appears and remains inconceivable in itself or as a whole." (Masciandaro 2010, 12) It seems the object of Masciandaro's discourse relating to sorrow and now, being, itself, is to suggest that like sorrow, being,

itself, is broken. Thus, it lacks the wholeness and being found between essence and existence. They are both privations. Whatever is lacking is a problem. A problem is something deficient. Thus, being is sorrowful. Thus, being and sorrow are the same. In *Into the Void,* she suggests, that as the SP lacks awareness of anything but herself, "lacking consciousness of any object outside of himself, he would necessarily himself *be* this negativity (emphasis added)." (Masciandaro 2010, 12) Beforehand, when discussing sorrow and being, Masciandaro seems to have categorized sorrow and being as separate types of privations while in the SP they become the *same privation* existing as sorrow personified.

An Assessment of Masciandaro's **Argument**

Masciandaro's argument is remote from Ibn Sīnā's SP objectives. Instead of being an indication of the self's difference from the body (or something commensurate with that assertion), Masicandaro states that as the SP is "lacking consciousness of any object outside of himself, he would necessarily himself *be* this negativity (emphasis added)." (Masciandaro 2010, 15) In any event, why must the SP be her negativity? That the SP *must be* negativity, or any other *thing*, is inconclusive based upon the study's primary critique, mentioned in the introduction prior to this review and supported by the absence of any recognizable substance in the SP's awareness. A further point to add is, if the SP has never experienced anything in the external world, then she is not aware of entities outside of herself. If she is not aware of these entities, human or otherwise, then she could not endure the discomfort of loneliness. If she does not endure the discomfort of loneliness, then she could not know the sorrow mentioned in *Into the Void*. If she

does not know this kind of sorrow, then the SP does not serve as the form of the sorrow of being.

Chapter II Conclusion B: Previous Studies

I have assessed the functionality and consequence of most of the kinds of arguments found in secondary literature as they refer back to Ibn Sīnā (the remaining two are found in Chapter V as mentioned). The metric of assessment has been three-fold. Initially, I asked if the line of reason concerned remains faithful to the intent of the Avicennian project or not. Subsequently, if they managed to stay within the confines of Ibn Sīnā's objective, I asked whether the argument achieves the Philosopher's objectives with the thought experiment. Finally, I evaluated each submission as they relate to the conditions approved apperception. This sorting method contextualizes the article submitted in Avicennian thought while helping us to access any likely benefit in the studies submitted for our concentration. Most of the claims where outside of Ibn Sīnā's intent for the SP. This is not surprising considering his objective, for the most part, was simply to indicate the difference between the self and the body. This distinction also entails that the self is aware of itself without recourse to the body. In that sense, it is an immaterial substance, separated from the body's material substantiality.

All of the previous studies take the SP's Avicennian-observed apperception at face value. We have seen in each case that the SP's immaterial substance and its accompanying primitive awareness determines the dynamics of its engagement. Whether historical, philosophical, comparative, or existential, no essay questions the

fulfilment of the conditions dictated by Ibn Sīnā.[55] This lack of critique is the same from its inception to our times. In my estimation, had a more critical eye assessed the SP as per the dictates of its own conditions the SP's awareness or familiarity with Existence, alone and unqualified would have presented itself. As Avicennian psychology would have it this knowledge *is* herself and herself is her knowledge. Thus, the SP's conditions approved apperception determines that herself is existence. We have shown already that Ṣadrā concurs with this thesis. However, we must now show the link between these two thinkers through the SP's application as it moved between them.

---

[55] El Bizri's approach, which again will be taken up in Chapter V, is the closest to this critique but only in outcome. As will be shown, I find the Avicennian configuration through which El Bizri uses to support his account as an insufficient ground to do so.

CHAPTER III - The Sadrian Psycho-Ontological Tension Between Monism and

Dualism

With the personalities and their ideas in place, and with the reviews above, we can observe that no study presented addresses the SP's conditions. Rather, in my view, each of them accepts the conditional oversight in the thought experiment leading to an existential SP. I have suggested that Ṣadrā's SP manages the thought experiment existentially. To approach the Sadrian treatment of the SP and to detail the synthetic ingredients providing it we must first address Ṣadrā's basic ontological structure. As an inroad, we notice in our casual lives that every elderly person was once an infant. We call her by the same name in every stage of her life. Therefore, a consistent identity applies to every stage of her existence between birth and death. Likewise, it is observed that each phenomenal instance gathers between one constant identity in all things, and the various changes they endure. How can we perceive both stability and fluctuation throughout every self-same instance of our phenomenal experience? If we identify the woman above through her unity, then which part of her is one and stable? If she is identified through her many changes then which aspect of her do they all adhere to? Paradoxically, we find that the only constant in our world is always changing. So, which part of our experience in it is the basis of our reality? Is it the unity of the fact that everything changes or the plurality of the changes that are always occurring? How does the former relate to the latter? These questions stem from the ancient problem of the "one and the many": how do many things come from one and/or how does one thing stem from the many?

In what follows, I will discuss how Ṣadrā navigates this issue. I will focus on how Ṣadrā uses ontological monism to lay out the extent to which his system emphasizes unity. I will illustrate the novelty of his approach, signifying a critique and consequential ingenuity in his thought arising from his rejection of existential monism. Thereafter, I will delve more deeply into gradational reality, mentioned above, as an alternative to both strict ontological monism and/or pluralism. This will show how gradational reality resolves Ṣadrā's apparently contradictory attitude on the self/body connection. By doing so, we will see how Ṣadrā's alternative to previous monistic and dualistic ideas on gradational reality handles the issue of the one and the many. Through these steps, I will show that a cursory comparison of Ṣadrā's ideas on the relationship of the self and the body leaves the impression that tension lies between both monist and dualist tendencies in his thought. However, for Ṣadrā the stress betwixt these two ontological polarities is relieved through gradational reality.

Ṣadrā on the One

One point of departure between philosophers and mystics, most times, is their respective views of "reality" (*ḥaqīqah*). Each determines what reality is differently. The way each treats being vs. becoming, an age-old ontological conundrum, helps to understand how they approach the topic of reality, or that which does not change, respectively. Each group asks, what is "real" or actual? Is it the consistency we experience in the being of the individual objects we identify? Is it the fact that all that we identify seems to change into something else eventually? For our purposes, with regard to the philosophers, we will suffice with Plato and Aristotle's attempts at establishing the

nature of constancy vs. change. This will serve as an inroad to their concept of reality.

As for the Islamic mystics, reality is a non-discursive existential experience. We will limit

ourselves to the Sadrian grasp of the changeless here as it best suits the current focus.

For philosophers, how Plato and Aristotle considered universals may be

predicated upon individuals differed. How each treated universals will help explain much

of the assumptions in their wake. Pythagoras of Samos (c. 495 BCE) influenced Plato

(Republic 600).[56] He discovered the mathematical ratios used to determine the musical

scale's principle intervals. Like music, he held that all natural phenomena is understood

through numbers. Thus, for him life is based on the immaterial truth of numbers.

Likewise, Plato believed the material world is explained through immaterial truths.

These ideal, non-material truths are represented in the world through their shadows,

i.e., the mundane sensibles that make up our daily terrestrial lives. Plato's *Republic*

illustrates the relationship between immaterial truths and materiality. In the Allegory of

the Cave, the Sun and whatever is outside of the cave are the immaterial truths. The

---

[56] Plato alludes to his influences from the Pythagoreans elsewhere the *Republic* as Socrates says to Glaucon:

> "Well, there isn't just one form of motion but several. Perhaps a wise person could list
>
> them all but are two that are evident even to us. What are they? Besides the ones we've
>
> discussed, there is also a counterpart. What's that? It's likely that, as the eyes fasten on
>
> astronomical motions, so the ears fasten on harmonic ones, and that the sciences of
>
> astronomy and harmonics are closely akin. That is what the Pythagoreans say, Glaucon,
>
> and we agree, don't we? "(Republic 530d) (Plato and Grube 1992, 202)

shadows of these entities, as projected by the Sun of Truth, form on the cave-wall. In the dialogue Socrates, Plato's teacher says to Glaucon, the latter's older brother:

> Next, I said, compare the effect of education and of the lack of it on our nature to an experience like this: Imagine human beings living in an underground, cave-like dwelling, with an entrance a long way up, which is both open to the light and as wide as the cave itself. They've been there since childhood, fixed in the same place, with their necks fettered, able to see only in front of them, because their bonds prevent them from turning their heads around. Light is provided by a fire burning far above and behind them. Also, behind them, but on higher ground, there is a path stretching between them and the fire. Imagine that along this path a low wall has been built, like the screen in front of puppeteers above which they show their puppets.
>
> I'm imagining it.
>
> Then also imagine that there are people along the wall, carrying all kinds of artefacts that project above it-statues of people and other animals, made out of stone, wood, and every material. And, as you'd expect, some of the carriers are talking, and some are silent.
>
> It's a strange image you're describing, and strange prisoners.
>
> They're like us. Do you suppose, first of all, that these prisoners see anything of themselves and one another besides the shadows that the fire casts on the wall in front of them? (*Republic* VII 514-515c) (Plato and Grube 1992, 186–187)

The allegory is an ancient approach regarding reality as permanent and unchanging yet existing beyond the shadowy limitations of the world's theatre. The problem, in

short, is, explaining how change and identity co-exist in the same entity. As one of the first dialectical problems in Western philosophy, the issue may be traced back to Heraclitus (c.475 BCE) suggesting that everything is flux i.e., becoming. The fragments of his writings include the idea that, "everything flows, and nothing abides; everything gives way, and nothing stays fixed." (Savitt 2017)[57] He considers reality transient, that reality is, itself, becoming. There is nothing now that abides into the future.

Parmenides (appx. late sixth or early fifth century BCE), soon after, said, "there remains, then, but one word by which to express the [true] road: Is. And on this road there are many signs that What Is has no beginning and never will be destroyed: it is whole, still, and without end. It neither was nor will be, it simply is—now, altogether, one, continuous…" (Savitt 2017). [58] Reality, for him, is utter permanence. Nothing comes into being. Nothing stops existing. There is no past, present, or future. There is just being. All indications of becoming are non-reality.

Plato's alternative to extreme between being and becoming, in the *Timaeus*, is to suggest that there are things which always *are*, and never become. Some items, on the other hand, *become* without ever being. If something always is, then it is grasped rationally. If it only becomes, then it is perceived through sense-perception or non-reason. Since the Universe is tangible and has a body, it is perceptible. If it is discernible, then it has become. Thus, the World is a thing that has become. As something that has become, something has to have caused the Universe to become.

---

[57] Quoting Gould 1960.

[58] Quoting Ibid.

The Demiurge, he suggests, crafted the Universe, according to a model. The model either always existed or is something that has become. If the Demiurge is good and the Universe is beautiful, then the model is something that has always existed. If the opposite is true, then the model is something that has come into being at some point. The Universe, Plato decides, is supremely beautiful. The Demiurge is supremely good. Thus, the Universe is crafted by the Demiurge according to a model that has always existed. (Plato 2001)

Thus, like numbers, the model is a distinct reality in another realm. Abstract nouns represent and express the correlation between the aspects of this other-worldly model in this realm. Tree-ness, the never-changing perfection and epitome of a universal "tree," does not exist anywhere in this world. However, its shadow exists in the form of all the various trees we encounter in it. For Plato, while one cuts a tree or bush into the shape of a bird or animal, the object acts as an imperfect occurrence of tree-ness from another dimension. The topiary changes it endures do not affect its status as a tree. The idea of the tree is intact elsewhere, while the shadow of the tree is with us in the world of becoming being cut. Socrates continues with Glaucon:

> We say that there are many beautiful things and many good things, and so on for each kind, and in this way we distinguish them in words.
>
> We do.
>
> And what is the main thing, we speak of beauty itself and good itself, and so in the case of all the things that we then set down as many, we turn about and set down in accord with a single form of each, believing that there is but one, and call it 'the being' of each.
>
> That's true.
>
> And we say that the many beautiful things and the rest are visible but not intelligible, while the forms are intelligible but not visible.

That's completely true. (Plato and Grube 1992, 180) [59]

For Plato, the capacity to say anything about anything comes from these other-worldly universals. Their fleeting indications in the world do not produce knowledge. They only serve as pointers toward their correspondent Forms/Ideas. Anything derived through the sensations of the shifting and uncertain world is inadmissible. For Plato, the self exists before the birth of the body. It is present there with "the Good" and already comes infused with knowledge of all things in the most perfect of ways. Sensation, then, is not required for understanding. Instead, recollection (*anamnesis*) is needed to recall what one already knows. (*Meno* 80d, *Phaedo* 66b-d, and *Phaedrus*). When one perceives the tree in the world of flux, it calls upon the Form already known in the self. Once out of the cave of sensation, or conjecture, the Forms appear, as they are — the highest of them is the Sun of our unfettered selves. Sure, changeless, and universal truth are there as the root of knowledge, for Plato, is imprinted in the self. Their abode, however, is in the World of Ideas. The world of representation, however, is ultimately not real. Reality is there with the Forms and perceived through the self. It is not something available to the senses.

Aristotle's metaphysics, or the science of Being *qua* Being "-in the sense of Being *in communi*" as per John Duns Scotus'[60] reading of Ibn Sīnā and in the view closest to

---

[59] Quoting *Republic* 507b.

[60] John Duns Scotus (1265/66–1308) was one of the most important and influential philosopher-theologians of the High Middle Ages. He was also known as "the Subtle Doctor" for his remarkably nuanced thought.

Ṣadrā',[61] has been considered a science of substances/essences (*Ousia*). (Owens 1957, 5) Substance/essence in *Metaphysics* finds substance/essence as ontologically primary in Aristotle. He states, "There are several senses in which a thing may be said to be… for in one sense it means what a thing is or a 'this', and in another sense it means that a thing is of a certain quality or quantity or has some such predicate asserted of it. While 'being' has all these senses, obviously that which is primarily is the 'what,' which indicates the substance of the thing." (Aristotle 1995, 1623) [62] Aristotle's substance is "primary in every sense-in formula, in order of knowledge, in time. For of the other categories none can exist independently, but only substance." (Aristotle 1995, 1623–4) [63]Thus, substance is that existent exists independently of the other accidental categories. The latter, however, cannot exist without substance. The Categories serve as the set of doctrines providing the structure of inquiry for a large amount of Aristotle's philosophical investigations. Thus, substance/essence is the basis of the framework of the *Metaphysics'* scientific approach toward being *qua* being, the *Physics's* time and change, and even more distant *Nicomachean Ethics'* repudiation of Plato's ethics.

Substance also trumps Plato and the Pythagorean preoccupation with numbers (and by default all rational universals). Aristotle states:

> Since the term 'unity' is used like the term 'being', and the substance of that which is one is one, and things whose substance is numerically one, evidently neither unity nor being can be the substance of things, just as being an element or a principle cannot be the substance, but we seek *what* the principle is, that we may refer the thing to something more intelligible. Now of these things being and unity are more substantial than principle or element or cause, but not even the former are substance,

---

[61] For an explanation regarding Transcendent Philosophy's take on the equivocality of existence, for example see Ṭabāṭabāʾī 2003, 3.

[62] *Met. Z* 1, 1028a-18

[63] *Met. Z* 1, 1030a-35.

> since in general nothing that is common is substance; for substance does not belong to anything but itself and to that which has it, of which it is the substance. Further, that which one cannot be in many things at the same time, but that which is common is present in many things at the same time; so that clearly no universal exists apart from the individuals. (Aristotle 1995, 1643) [64]

In Aristotle's view, any random number exists because there exists any random number of objects in the sensible world. There is no universal abstract number to be found in another-worldly realm. In this sense, numbers are non-substantial. They enumerate things as there are sets of tens are found consistently everywhere and anywhere in our empirical experience. Instead, they are instantiated in the sense accessible substances around us in the world. (Barnes 1996, 45) These substances appear in our senses. They are the most basic element of our empirical experience. The most basic element of what can be known, in the Aristotelian worldview, are natural material objects. These perceptible objects make up basic reality.

Form (*eido*) and matter (*hulē*) make up substance. Form determines the being of something while its matter determines its change. Those objects that have more matter than form, like a gold, change less over a long period. Objects that matter more than form, like an apple, for example, change abundantly in a short time. In the former example, even after a thousand years, a gold bar will not have endured any significant change. In the latter example, the apple will not exist after an insignificant amount of time. Either way, the form serves as the universal for Aristotle. It exists in the particular objects which we perceive. Thus, according to Aristotle, a thing is before its universality as a thing's "thingness" is simply a matter of its existence in the world. That is to say, a

---

[64] (*Metaphysics Zeta 1040b16-25*)

blue thing exists before "blueness" as the existence of blueness means there are blue artefacts to perceive. (Barnes 1996, 46)

Perfect versions of how we think things should be (even if we cannot always define them) or Idealism determine Plato's reality. These Forms act as templates guiding us toward the Good. With the template of any goal in mind, one may achieve this or that well. Philosophy, for him, then, is a guidebook toward grasping these mental models or Forms. Reality, for Plato, are perfect ideas suspended in another place. For Aristotle, on the other hand, reality is a form making up the compound formulating the substances/essences we perceive in the physical world. By grasping the substance/essence of things through abstracting their universality from particular phenomenal instances, we can categorize each item we find for further scrutiny and understanding. For Aristotelians, reality is the object we perceive in our everyday life.

On the side of the Mystics, at times, Ibn ʿArabī embraces the language of the philosophers on this subject while referencing a meta-philosophical vision. For example, in *Kitāb al-maʿrifah* he addresses the relationship between substance, accident, and existence, as he sees it. He states:

> The Ashʿarites[65] have said that the entire world shares the same substance (*mutamāthil bi al-jawhar)*. Thus, it is a single substance. This is the heart of our statement that the essence is one (*huwa ʿayn qawlinā bi alʿayn wāhidah*). They then said that it (i.e, the world) differentiates through accidents (*yakhtalifu bi al-ʿarāḍ*) and this is exactly what we

---

[65] The Ashʿarites are the followers of Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʿAsharī (d.324/946). For more on his biography see Frank 2007, 2008. As his school, one of the hallmarks of Ashʿarism is the position that reason does not determine ethical principles. Rather, humankind depends on revelatory instruction to know the Divine want regarding obligations and prohibitions and to have moral integrity. Outside of this issue, the Ashāʿira approved of dialectical reasoning within theological enquiry. an essential school of Sunnī speculative theology (*kalām*), most scholars hold that in the sixth/twelfth century, Ashʿarism was increasingly influenced by Avicennian philosophy under the sway of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d.505/1111). Those before him were called the "early ones "(*al-Mutaqaddimūn*) and those after were termed the "latter ones" (*al-mutaʾakhirūn*). Schmidtke 2016, 226–7.

> (have) said. It then differentiates and multiplies through the forms (*al-ṣuwar*) and links (*al-nisab*) until it (i.e., the world) is differentiated. Thus, it is said that this is the essence of that in as much as its form, or its accidents, or its temperament (*mizāj*) are concerned. This is the essence of that in as much as its existence is concerned. (Ibn ʿArabī 1993, 57)

Ibn ʿArabī sides with the speculative theologians (*al-Mutakallimūn*) who opine that the world shares a single substance. Thus, for the Ashʿarites and the Akbarians, according to this claim, the essence of the world is one. The differences sensed in the world are due to accidents adhering to this single substance. The language is philosophical while the meaning is beyond demonstration. The upshot of what he is saying involves the unity of Existence, as accidents exist through the substance. The substance is a single existent entity.

Ṣadrā mirrors this point saying "know that if you were assiduous regarding the observation of the realities (*ḥaqāʾiq*) of things, you [would] find some of them are followed (*matbūʿ*) [and] surrounded (*muktanafah*) by accidents (*ʿawāriḍ*) and [that] some of them are subordinate (*tābiʾah*). The surrounded are the substances. The subordinate(s) are the accidents. Existence gathers them [together] because it is the One-Who-Manifests (*al-Mutajallī*) through every [one] of their forms (*bi ṣūra kullin minhumā*). (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 2:331–32) For both Ibn ʿArabī and Mullā Ṣadrā, reality is a single Existence manifesting through its accidents/manifestations. While using demonstrative philosophical terminology like substance and accident to describe this vision, the vision of existence, itself, is not presented through demonstrative philosophy.

Ibn ʿArabī warns of dismissing the expressions of the people whose ontological experience belie demonstration and common experience through critical analysis of their language and premises. He says:

> Beware that you should think through your defective cleverness, that the aims of these Folk (*al-Qaum*), from amongst the Senior Aware-Ones (*Akābir al-ʿurafāʾ*) and their technical terms and their symbolic language, are devoid of the kind of proof [rendered] through risky assessments (*min qabīl al-mujāzafāt al-takhmīniyyah*) and legal fancies (*al-takhayyulāt al-sharʿiyyah*). May they be excluded from that! Nor [surmise] that their words fail to follow correct evidential laws (*al-qawānīn al-ṣaḥīḥah al-burhāniyyah*) and true definitive antecedents (*al-muqaddimāt al-ḥaqqah al-ḥikmiyyah*), developing from the insufficiency of the speculators, the bereftness of their ability to sense them, and weakness of their comprehension of these laws. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 2:333)

For Ibn ʿArabī onto-epistemic veils (or the lack thereof) determine the exact divergent points of understanding between most logicians and the Senior Aware-Ones. Every aspect of other-than-Him represents a cover over that which actually is. An onto-epistemic screen reinforces itself with the tools of logic for those who cannot perceive beyond the rules of distinction between true and false reasoning. Much of the proposal of the Aware-Ones appears altogether unreasonable. The preliminary wording of a book attributed to Ibn ʿArabī' entitled the "Book of Experiential Knowledge" (*Kitāb al-maʿrifah*), praises God:

> [T]he one who veiled us from Him through Him [is too] dear for His nature to be known. He appeared as a light and was hidden from sight through His light. He manifested and was undetected through His manifestation. Thus, light was inserted into light and manifestation was hidden in manifestation. No eye sees anything but Him. No one exits [from anything] but they exist from Him. No one arrives anywhere but to Him. Intelligent People! Where is the absence, and the veil? Whose essence was [itself] a veil over Him? Thus, there is no veiled-one nor any veil. (Ibn ʿArabī 1993, 21)

Although His Presence is Absolute, It is not open to empirical enquiry or investigation. In

another place he tell us to look at each issue from both the outward and inward (*bāṭin*).

The inward is a place of bewilderment, far beyond the limits of the mind. Ibn ʿArabī

says:

> Know that Allah's affair, be He exalted, was to make an external (*ẓāhir*)
> and an internal (*bāṭin*) aspect for the human being. With his external
> aspect, the human being perceives things "in plain sight with his eyes"
> (*ʿayān*). He perceives things termed "knowledge" (*ʿilm*) with his internal
> [aspect]. [All this] while Allah, be He exalted, is the Manifest (*al-Ẓāhir*) and
> the Hidden (*al-Bāṭin*). Perception occurs through Him, be He exalted.
> Every manifestation (*tajallī*) in existence, is from Allah, be He exalted, to
> His slave, whether from the unseen realm (*ʿālam al-ghayb*) or the seen
> realm (*al-shahādah*), is but His Name "the Manifest" (*al-Ẓāhir*). As for His
> Name, "the Hidden", this relation (*al-nisbah*) never manifests-not in this
> world nor in the next. As the [concept of] manifestation means to appear to
> the one it appears to [and the Hidden does not appear to anyone]. (Ibn
> ʿArabī 1993, 63)

Thus, for Ibn ʿArabī, while we each have an inward and an outward aspect, knowledge

is an internal affair occurring through perception. This perception belongs to God.

Everything, inward and outward is from God to the person who receives it, including the

reception itself. Nothing exists but God's Appearances, even in the apparent inward

manifestations where perception occurs through God. Perhaps the main difference,

then, between the Logicians and the Aware-Ones involves the basis of onto-

epistemological enquiry. For the former, language and reason dictate truth. For the

latter, the inward perception, itself an act of and manifestation of Necessary Being,[66] is

the Truth it dictates.

---

[66] One of the three-fold modes of existence, as per Transcendent Philosophy. "Every idea when
considered from the viewpoint of existence is either necessary (*wājib*), impossible (*mumtaniʿ*), or
contingent (*mumkin*), i.e., neither necessary nor impossible. In the first case, existence is a necessity; in

Although living in the same physical world, these two factions are worlds of

perception apart. One considers the creation first. The other hardly considers creation.

Both parties, however, use their vantage points to evaluate the nature of the apparent

world they share. On this point, Ṣadrā speaks on the side of the Aware-Ones saying:

> Their unveilings (*mukāshafātihim*) are superior to proofs for delivering
> certainty. Rather, evidence is the way to witness things that have a cause
> because the cause is proof for that which has a cause. It has been
> established with them that certain knowledge of things possessing causes
> is not attained but through knowledge of their causes. If this is how it is,
> then is proof's necessity (*muqtaḍā al-burhān*) against the necessity of
> [experiential] witnessing's (*mūjab al-mushāhadah*) justify? If you deny
> some of what they have said with proofs, they refute you through
> [experiential] witnessing of its meaning, if, [that is], you reject them with
> what is [merely] called 'proof.' Otherwise, real proof does not contradict
> unveiled witnessing (*al-shuhūd al-kashfī*). Even if there is an element of
> their having that which violates the outward [aspects] of philosophical
> speculation (*al-ḥikmah al-nazariyyah*), in truth the outward soul of these
> previous investigations comes from the light of prophecy and the niche of
> knowing sainthood (*mishkāt al-wilāyah al-ʿālimah*) with the degrees of
> existence (*marātib al-wujūd*) and their concomitants (*lawāzimahā*). This
> [explanation] is why we do not avoid their exhibition [of these
> expressions], even if the philosophers and their followers refuse the likes
> of them. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 2:333–34)

For Ṣadrā, there are verifications beyond the superficial measures of common

experience. Just because individuals do not seem to have the background for insight,

and they may even appear to be speaking idle talk, he warns us to not let our own

---

the second, non-existence is a necessity; in the third, neither existence nor non-existence is a necessity.
The meaning of these modes is self-evident, and they are so pervasive that no idea is devoid of any of
them. Hence, they cannot be defined, and the definitions that have been offered are circular (like the one
that defines the necessary as ' a thing the supposition of whose non-existence entails an impossibility,'
the impossible as 'that whose non-existence is necessary' or ' that which is neither possible nor
necessary,' and the contingent as 'that whose existence or non-existence is not impossible.'

Each of these modes has a subdivision: i) essential (*bi-l-dhāt,* i.e., that which is such (i.e., necessary,
contingent, or impossible) by itself, ii) accidental (bi-l ghayr), i.e., that which is such by something else,
and iii) *bi-l qiyās ila-l ghayr*) i.e., that which is such in relation to something else… The Necessary Being,
whose existence is necessary by itself, without standing in need of anything else, represents essential
necessity." Ṭabāṭabāʾī 2003, 35.

pretensions delude us. The truths that appear to the hearts of the Aware Seniors are beyond the trappings of verification. Proof is the basis for verification. Proof depends on a cause. The source of the Aware's insight is beyond cause. Thus, verification's tools find the Aware's expressions inaccessible. The veracity of the latter's insight comes from the Causeless Source, i.e., Necessary Being. Ṣadrā considers both viewpoints.[67] So, while he reviews their statements analytically, the gap between the tools and that which they try to measure are clear to him. We can observe Ṣadrā's ambidextrousness when handling the disparate vantage points of those compromised by the veil of their own humanity and those who are not when states:

> The texts [provide us a] description of the existents as truly multiple without negation of Real Unity (*Waḥdah al-ḥaqīqah*), the words of the author of the *Iḥyā* after having described the three levels of monotheism (*al-tawḥīd*) where he said: 'The fourth level of monotheism [is to] not to see anything but One in existence. This is the vision of the Veracious (*al-Ṣiddiqīn*). The Sufis call it "annihilation" (*al-fanā*) in monotheism[68] wherein he does not witness but One. He does not see himself either. Meaning he has been annihilated from the capacity to see his self.
>
> If you were to say: 'How is it imagined that he [would] only see One, while he sees the skies, the earth, and all the corporeal bodies and they are many?' Know! This [vision above] is the zenith of the unveiling sciences (*ʿUlūm al-mukāshifāt*) and that the True Existent (*al-Mawjūd al-ḥaqīqī*) is One. Multiplicity in it belongs to he whose perception differentiates. The

---

[67] On the [fact that] the Reality of Existence has no cause in any sense:... 'Existence inasmuch as it is existence has no actor arising from, nor it is transforming to any material, nor [does it have] any subject (*mawḍu'*) wherein it may be found, nor any form (*ṣūrah*) that it dresses itself with, nor [does it] have any objective (*ghāyah*). Rather it is the agent of all agents, the form of forms, and the goal of goals because it is the final objective, absolute good, and that to which all realities and all quiddities end. Existence primarily arrogates above a connection with cause. It has become revealed that it has no cause, in the first order. There is no cause through it. There is no cause from it. There is no cause toward /from /about it (*ʿanhu*). There is no cause in it. There is no cause for it ..." Ṣadr Al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 1:65.

[68] Monotheism (*tawḥīd*) literally means to make [something] one. In Islam, God is considered to be essentially one, the monotheist cannot make Him one. God is "made one" in the mind of the monotheist through adherence to theological tenets designed to standardize an orthodoxy. Here, however, although Ṣadrā is using a term that applies to the correct dogma its meaning is closer to realizing God's unity in the soul, as it is, and beyond the tenets of faith designed to produce intellectual unity.

> [true] monotheist's perception does not differentiate the vision of the skies and earth [nor] any of the existents. Rather, he sees all [things] under the jurisdiction of One Thing [*al-Shayʾ al-wāḥid*) and the secrets of the unveiling sciences are not written down in books. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 2:241–242)

According to Ṣadrā and al-Ghazzalī, one potentially experiences existence at one of three different levels. Advancement in each level finds the external world ontologically the same while existential multiplicity steadily melts away in the subjective vantage point through which one experiences it. Following the norm of most mystics, Ṣadrā drives the point as far as decorum allows. There is no proof for what he says as a proof is for that which has a cause. God has no cause. His Existence dominates over the existence of all things. Only unveiling knowledge provides the reality of what this means. Whatever the provision may be Ṣadrā claims the certainty provided in it on the nature of Existence, and in turn, of all existent things is beyond the pitfalls of speculation.

Chittick notes that in the introduction to Ṣadrā's "Elixir of the Gnostics" (*Iksīr al-ʾārifīn*) that the latter "has taken its pearls of wisdom from the books of 'the folk of God (*Ahl-Allāh*)." We define this phrase, Chittick claims, in the *Asfār* to refer to the people of theoretical Sufism (*ʿIrfān*)- a reference to the Akbarians. Ṣadrā says, again on Chittick's account, that "he has been able to combine the 'tasting' (*dhawq*) and 'finding' (*wijdān*) of the 'folk of God'-that is, their intuitive and mystical perception-with the 'investigation' (*baḥth*) and 'demonstration' (*burhān*) of the philosophers.' (Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī 2005, xxvi) To express their findings, Aristotelian philosophers, given to investigation and demonstration, speak of what *is* with a disregard for shadow as the world is real, in itself, and not a reference to any supernatural reality. Conversely, the Platonists see the contents of this world in a shadowy fashion because they indicate real content

elsewhere. Neither, it seems, consider reality as a singular something to be experienced directly.

At the same time, like Ibn Sīnā and Aristotle before him, Ṣadrā concurs that the essences that make up the multiplicity of the external world are not illusions. Rather, he posits, they [meaning the aforementioned essences] are shadowy delimitations, contingent beings that entertain a "privitive and shadowy" (ẓillī) relationship (S. H. Rizvi 2013, 53) with Simple Reality (Basīṭ al-ḥaqīqah). He mentions in the sixth penetration of the Book of Penetrations (Kitāb al-mashāʿir) that Necessary Being's is the point to which all things return. Necessary Being, he says:

> [I]s a simple reality ...all that is a simple reality is, by its onenesss, the totality of things. ...Suppose that a simple thing is, for example, A and that you have said that A is not B. Now our point of view is A. If that rapport under which this thing is A were to be identical with the rapport that this thing is non-B, in the sense that this thing itself would be the subject of this negation, then affirmation and negation would be the same. … Therefore, it is apparent and verified that proposition A is different from proposition non-B, even with regard to the mind. It is therefore understood that every existent in which one denies a certain form of wujūd is not an existent whose reality is simple. Rather, its essence is composed of two aspects: the aspect by which it is such-and-such, and the aspect which it is not such-and-such. Reversing the opposite, [we obtain this proposition]: All that has a simple reality is all things. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2014, 54–55)

What is truly real, then, for Ṣadrā, are not perfect ideals in a remote realm, nor abstracted forms taken from particular instances in the sublunar world as detected by the senses. Reality is both necessary and simple. Its simplicity is on account of it being all things. Every form of existence applies to it as it is every form's existence, ultimately. So, while it is all these things, it is not any one of them in particular. It encompasses them while they do not encompass it. The Simple Reality he champions serves as the ground for these multifarious essences that cannot be tallied, has no one to tally them,

and no act of tallying. It possesses neither genus nor specific difference, nor definition

nor that by which I can know it, nor a demonstration [that] can be given for it. (Ṣadr al-

Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2014, 74) Simple Reality is an indefinable, ontological

affirmation. It is that which *is.* He states:

> Existence does not accept division (*inqisām*) nor fragmentation (*tajazzʾa*),
> in the first case. [It does not accept them] extra-mentally, nor intellectually
> due to its all-encompassing nature. It has no genus (*jins*), nor specific
> difference. Thus, it has no definition, as you know. [Through its nature] all
> perfections need it. All attributes exist through It. It is the Living (*al-Ḥayy*),
> the Knowing (*al-ʿAlīm*), the One-Who-Wills (*al-Murīd*), the Able (*al-Qādir*),
> the Hearer and the Seer through His Essence (*as-Samīʿ al-Baṣīr bi-datih*)
> and not through something else's mediation since every [other] thing's
> perfection, without exception, participates in It (*yulḥaqu bih*). Rather, It is
> the One that appears and transmutates in the various forms in the forms
> of these perfections. Thus, these perfections follow these essences
> because they are also exclusive existences (*wujūdāt khāṣṣah*). Every
> follower amongst the exclusive existences is consumed in the existence of
> the overpowering preceding them. Everything is annihilated in the
> Singularity of the Real's Divine Existence (*Aḥadiyah al-wujūd al-ḥaqq al-
> ilāhī*), disappeared in the First's deluge (*qahr al-awwal*), and [in] its
> Sublimity (*Jalālih*), and Loftiness (*Kibriyāʾih*)...Its bringing things into
> existence is Its hiding itself in them while they are manifesting It. (Ṣadr al-
> Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 1:309–310)

Thus, while Existence *seems* to be manifesting other-than-Itself, in the form of the

apparent multiplicity of existences, in reality, for Ṣadrā, ontology is a study of the Real.

So, all the multiple levels of phenomenon are nothing but "Divine Manifestations"

(*Tajalliyāt al-ilāhiyyah*). These discernible magnitudes make up the "Oneness" (*al-

Waḥdah*) of Its presence as opposed to the pre-conceptual Singularity mentioned above

without consideration of the appearances. The perceptible realm, a product of this pre-

conceptual Singularity is comprised of the "essences, the forms of Its perfection,

appearances of Its Names and Attributes, manifested first in Knowledge (*al-ʿIlm*) then in

the extra-mental world (*al-ʿayn*). (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 1:310)

At any rate, for Ṣadrā, the matter of Existence's self-revelation "through Its Essence, in every level of the universes (*al-akwān*), and Its descent into every affair amongst the affairs [of phenomenon] necessitates the revelation of a level from amongst the levels of possible existences amongst the fixed entities. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 1:80) All the while, even though Existence's self-revelation is based upon the structure of Oneness, with its various multiple levels and fixed entities (*al-ʿayān al-thābitah*) in play as he says, "every substantial or accidental existence is accompanied by a universal quiddity (*māhiyyah kulliyah*) called the "fixed entity" by the People of Allah (*Ahl-Allāh*) neither existent nor non-existent, in its essence, nor qualified with any of the qualifications of existence from cause, effect, priority, nor posteriority, etc, " (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 1:342)

Ṣadrā maintains the integrity of the Simple Reality saying, "I used to be of those who stressed the contemplative [aspect] of existence and the primacy of quiddities, until my Lord guided me and unveiled to me plainly that the affair was the opposite of that. [This unveiling showed me] the existents are the true deep-rooted existents (*al-ḥaqāʾiq al-mutaʾaṣṣalah al-wāqiʿah*) in the extra-mental realm (*al-ʿayn*). [It also showed] that the quiddities, customary called the "fixed entities' by a group of the People of Unveiling and Certainty (*Ahlu al-kashf wa al-yaqīn*)- […] have never smelled the fragrance of Existence, ever." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 1:58) This previous ontological position implies that he considered Oneness, or the level of the unified multiplicity of entities as the epitome of Reality. This is in opposition to his final position focused on Existence's singularity, despite its apparent multiplicity. The difference also

shines a light on the difference between the Reality as opposed to the concept of existence.

For Ṣadrā, the highest object of cognition is existence. (Akbarian 2009, 250) Some of these shadows are more "real" than others because of their ontological intensification in gradational reality. Thus, they are perceived in various degrees with relationship to their actuality with Simple Reality. Thus, Transcendent Philosophy involves issues relative to both shadowy and more transparent levels of ontological consideration. There, both of these levels are subordinate to an absolute ontological purity in Simple Reality as existence is constituted of a band of degrees of ontological intensity. Ṣadrā states, "the summit of its perfection is Pure *Wujūd*, of which there is nothing more perfect; and it is the Necessary, Simple Reality, requiring complete perfection and the most exalted majesty and infinitude of intensity." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2014, 74) [69]

Sadrian Self-Evident (Badīhī) Existence

To expand on the differences between reference to the Real and mental existence in Ṣadrā, Ibrahim Kalin mentions a contrast in how al-Fārābī and Ṣadrā deal with linguistic allusion to existence saying. It states:

> The proposition 'man exists,' existence, al-Farabi says, is both a predicate and not a predicate. From a logical point of view' (*al-naẓīr al-mantiqī*), the sentence has a predicate because it is composed of two terms, subject and predicate, and is liable of being true or false. From a 'natural point of view' (*al-naẓīr al-ṭabī'i*), which here means the ontological point of view, however, it does not have a predicate because the 'existence of something is nothing

---

[69] If this band of existence is that if we propose that gradational reality only applies to the contingent, but the contingent does not actually exist (being a shadow of Simple Reality, at best), then either gradational reality does not actually exist or God, who is Existence, endures substantial change. This seems problematic.

other than itself.' The most important conclusion that Sadra derives from this analysis is that existence is not an attribute conferred upon things antecedently. It is their very reality and makes them what they are. For Sadra, this is another proof for the primacy of existence.... Existence is predicated of all things that exist *in concreto*. (Kalin 2010, 100)

For Ṣadrā, mentioning something is mentioning what it *is*. Thus, for him, to mention something is to mention existence. To then add the copula "is" in reference to it, adds a secondary existence it doesn't have. Thus, when speaking about concrete existence, he, unlike al-Fārābī and others, does not consider linguistic subject/predicate combinations of language to refer to these factual objects. For Ṣadrā, there is an ontological perspective to consider when referring to phenomenal objects existing outside of language. This is because, as Rizvi puts it, these linguistic references are word combinations pointing to contingent beings whose existence is "privitive and 'shadowy' (*ẓillī*)." (Rizvi 2013, 53) Thus, words serve as twice removed signifiers for beings whom Ṣadrā only assigns figurative existence to.

When Ṣadrā speaks of essence or quiddity, substantially or accidentally, he is speaking of a conceptual mirage. Like an optical illusion in a desert, the appearance of quiddity in the mind is no more a source of reality than the mirage is truly water. A mirage occurs when air at a level is warmer than that at another level. This can happen on a hot day in the summer when a baking asphalt road heats the air directly above it, creating a distinct shift in air density levels near the ground. As light passes between the different levels it bends which creates mirages. This is, as Ṣadrā explains, the occurrence of quiddity to the mind as it perceives the course of an object's travel on the path of its transubstantial motion. All objects moving toward the Real, necessitate Its facticity. Kalin continues:

In this most generic sense, existence applies to things univocally (*haml bi'l-tawati'*). Predication, however, takes place with varying degrees of intensity. To give an example, light is predicated of the candle, the moon and the sun univocally in that they all participate in the quality of light, luminosity and brightness. Each of these beings, however, displays different degrees of intensity in reflecting light. Light is the most intense and brightest in the sun and weakest in the reflection of the moon on the pool. By the same token, existence is predicated univocally of necessary and contingent beings. Their share of existence, however, is not the same because a necessary being, say God, is ontologically prior and superior to contingent beings. (Kalin 2010, 101)

Therefore, like a mirage, quiddity is not a part of Reality, as such. Items like "tree," "and

rock," are not a part of Reality. In this sense, for Ṣadrā, quiddity is neither one, many,

universal, particular, existent, nor non-existent. It is neither substance nor accident. It is

simply a "negation of existence." (Rahman 1975, 43) While discussing the manner in

which existence accompanies thingness (*fī musāwaqah al-wujūd li al-shayʾiyyah*) i.e.,

how a thing's existence and its being-a-thing coincide, Ṣadrā states:

> A group of people have judged that existence is an attribute renewing upon the essence of that which is an essence in both states of existence and non-existence. However, this opinion is the epitome of dimwittedness and feebleness. The quiddity does not have an ontological standpoint. As long as quiddity does not exist, it cannot be indicated such that (it may be said) 'this is the quiddity.' All that may be known of the non-existent is per the (ontologically empty) words that indicate it. Thus, as long as quiddity is non-existent it is not a thing. Even the self/essence of its essence (*nafs ḏātihā*) fails to exist. This is because its being the essence of its essence is a branch of its (ontological) verification and its existence. This is because the (ontological) level of existence precedes that of the quiddity in actuality, even if the former comes after the latter in the mind. (This point is established) on the grounds that the circumstances (through which) the quiddity is qualified is (only in) the mind…That which is qualified, inasmuch as it is qualified, is an antecedent to the attribute in (its) attributive circumstance…. [70] (Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī 2002, v. 1:87-88)

---

[70] Ṭabāṭabāʾī seems to agree with and assist in elucidating this point for us by stating that:

> A thing's existence is additional to its quiddity, in the sense that each of them [i.e. 'existence' and 'quiddity'] signifies something not understandable from the other. From existence, the intellect first abstracts [or divests] quiddity, which is represented by the answer to the question, 'What is it?' Then the intellect considers it in isolation and attributes existence to it. This is what is meant by predication [ʿurūḍ, i.e., ascription of

For Ṣadrā, then, although quiddity does not exist, it points to what exists, because the mind has qualified something. That which is qualified is existence. In this sense, quiddity is a representation of the Real, as only the Real exists. Nonetheless, all references, shadowy or otherwise, stem from our shared concrete contingent circumstances in deference to the Ultimate Reality beyond all that assigned with quiddity.

Ṣadrā and Non-referential A Priori Existence

To restate the above, for Ṣadrā, true existence (*al-Wujūd al-ḥaqīqī*) is Simple. By existence, I mean, as Rahman determines, "simply the status of being real, not an attribute of something which is in its own right already something real." (Rahman 1975, 30) [71] By Real, I intend, that which is mind independent. By simple, I intend the Proto-Indo-European root meaning for "*sem*" meaning 'one; as one, together with.' (Harper 2019) That which is Simple cannot be described. Doing so betrays ontological uniqueness. This is because to describe simplicity qualifies it as one thing as opposed to another. Sadrian Existence cannot exist, in the common sense of language as words, the building blocks of language, only name quiddities. For our philosopher, quiddity is not something ontologically positive that gains existence. Rather, in terms of external reality, not only is quiddity not ontologically positive, it does not exist, as stated. It also

---

existence to quiddity]. Hence, existence is neither identical with quiddity nor part of it. (Ṭabāṭabāʾī 2003, 5)

[71] Quoting Ṣadr Al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Asfār al-arba'ah 1,* vol. 1 (Tehran, 1958), 43,47-48.

does not, not exist. That which has no ontological standpoint cannot be qualified

positively or negatively despite the mind's tendency toward modifying the pictures of

reality i.e. quiddities that it creates as opposed to approaching the properties of Reality,

Itself.[72]

Striking an analogy between mental concepts/quiddities and pictures of reality,

ʿAbd al-Rasūl Ubūdiyyāt speaks on the behalf of Transcendent Philosophy stating:

> We can easily imagine a person mistaking a very clear and accurate
> portrait with the subject depicted in the portrait. Because concepts,
> especially quiddities, are clear and accurate pictures of reality. People
> who have no way of comprehending external reality but through the
> conduit of these concepts and who never come into direct contact with the
> external realities presume that quiddities are in fact what populates the
> external world. As a consequence of this presumption, they sometimes
> misattribute the properties of concepts to the external realities which the
> concepts portray. Conversely, they sometimes ascribe wrongly the
> properties of reality to the mental concepts, the quiddities. In a word, they
> confuse the properties of reality and mental concepts. ('Ubudiyyat 2007,
> 201)

While this point unfolds with more depth later, according to ʿUbūdiyyāt, the distinction

between Existence and its concept, or between external and mental existence, is one of

the vanguard peculiarities in Sadrā's system. It serves as a key to many of its

achievements.[73] Above, we are called to underline the difference between image and

reality.[74] It is possible that a person may never have contact with the external world but

sees images of that world. In Ṣadrā, for her to mistake those images for the reality of

---

[72] Ṭabāṭabā'ī expands the peculiar case of quiddity, the answer to the question, 'What is it?' stating that 'as it is capable of accepting such attributes as 'existent' or 'non-existent,' 'one' or 'many,' 'universal' or 'particular' and yields to other such opposite descriptions, it is devoid of opposite attributes in the definition of its essence.' (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 2003, 46)

[73] See 'Ubudiyyat 2007.

[74] This is a distinction Jean Baudrillard (d.2017) may say is rapidly evading us who live in an ever pervading hyperreality. See Baudrillard 1994.

that world is similar to the difference between those who mistake concept or quiddity for Existence. The properties particular to the images and those that belong to actual existence are not the same. However, if one has conflated the two then the combination of their properties will follow. Likewise, the properties of reality and mental concepts are easily confused when a clear distinction is not made between them.[75] A major part of Ṣadrā's project is to make the dissimilarity between the two clear.

Transcendent Philosophy holds that what exists, instead of quiddity, are existential modes (anḥāʾ al-wujūd). The modalities are the essential emanations of existence, which are "primarily the object of instauration (al-majʿūl) in a multiple manner… modes of actualizations (I mean the essential individualized existences)." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2014, 43) In other words, the modes are instaurations of existence whose "permanence of movement is its renewal," (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2014, 33) as it continually escalates intensification. The mind perceives these moments of renewal as static quiddities providing the sense of multiplicity and diversity while existence, itself, is an unchanging unity. Thus, for Ṣadrā, a quiddity is a construction, at best, of an existential reality causing quiddities, languages, and words to appear to the mind. (Rahman 1975, 29)

Existence is not something that may be spoken of for Reality cannot be conceived but can only be intuited directly. (Rahman 1975, 32) Rahman calls this intuitive engagement of the Simple Reality an "unanalyzable fact." Although this

---

[75] Ṣadrā's critique of Suhrawardī has much to do with the former's belief that he had not made this distinction clear. The failure to make a clear distinction between the concept and reality of existence, for Ṣadrā, led to various errors in Ishrāqī thought. See Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqaliyyah al-arbaʿah vol.3 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-ʿArab, 1981), 304. and Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2014, xix.

analysis is questionable as Ṣadrā offers an entire system of ontology based upon

analyzable facts regarding the Simple Reality's being all things.[76] Ṣadrā states:

> But "existence" as an abstract noun, i.e., as "being existent," is a mental
> abstraction and as such has no real existence, while existence as a unique,
> unanalyzable fact is the concrete reality which never comes into the mind, as
> we have recurrently said. It is the same as "light," which as a general
> abstraction - i.e., in meaning "being illumined" has no share of existence in
> the external world, but "light" as a fact is what exists externally. Just as light -
> in the second sense - exists *per se* and makes other things visible by
> illuminating them, so does existence exist *per se* and makes all essences
> exist accidentally. Existence is, therefore, *per se* light; essences *per se* are
> darkness. (Rahman 1975, 33) [77]

This simplicity is not the subject of linguistic / shadowy reference.[78] For Ṣadrā, actual

interaction with reality is through the intuition of the one who experiences it. For him,

intuition shows us that despite our everyday recognition, "contingents literally vanish

into nothingness in the face of God, who alone is identified with reality and existence."

(Rahman 1975, 36)

Despite the shadows and their indications, "everything in the world...is (of the

order) of imagination or a fancy or a reflection in a mirror or a mere shadow." (Rahman

1975, 37). So, while we appreciate the different levels of contingent existence in the

flow of the created world from the potential to the actual, "our affirmations of different

levels of multiple existences and the concessions we make-in the interest of pedagogy-

concerning the diversity and multiplicity of existence do not contravene what we really

wish to prove...that both existence and the existent are but one and unitary." (Rahman

---

[76] I appreciate Professor Rizvi's having pointed out the irony in Rahman's statement.

[77] Quoting. Ṣadr Al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *al-Asfār al-arbaʿah,* vol. 1 (Tehran, 1958), 63.

[78] Professor Sajjad Rizvi pointed out to me that external existence escapes definition or grasp as to do so leads to its reification.

1975, 37) [79] That is to say that as far as what *is*, "there is no other inhabitant save God." (Rahman 1975, 37) [80]

Thus, the Real, has no actual reference point. There are no referrers and no referents. There are no words to indicate its Nature. It is Simple in every sense of the term while the term simplicity only presents a concept of Its reality. Intuition, however, experiences Simple Reality instantaneously. "Unity coincides with existence from the viewpoint of extension (*miṣdāq*) but differs from it in respect of intention (*mafhūm*)." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 2003, 81) In other words, Existence is unified with regard to its stretching out and sustaining the world we experience. However, we interact with Existence *as if* it were multiple in nature. Either way, according to Transcendent Philosophy, there are those who know that they experience while all experience it even if they are unaware, as there is nothing else occurring. For Ṣadrā, no one may speak of the Real for it cannot be limited by any language. One may experience the Real without language as it is non-referential. It must be experienced directly.

I have mentioned these points regarding shadowy reference to the Real to prepare us for further ontological splicing. By paring down possible candidates for linguistic reference we realize how elusive a discussion on the Real in Sadrian terms can be. Nonetheless, through a process of verbal elimination, we may draw closer to precisely to Ṣadrā's position on the relationship of the One Existence to the phenomenal world's numerous beings.

---

[79] Quoting Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *al-Asfār al-arbaʿah,* vol. 1 (Tehran, 1958), 47.

[80] Quoting Ibid, 292.

Ṣadrā and Existential Monism

Majid Fakhry contends that the philosophical mysticism of the Muslim Neo-Platonist is far removed from what he deems to be the extravagant ontological indulgences of the Sufis and pantheists. (Fakhry 1971, 206) For the Neoplatonizing philosophers of Islam, their "mystical" ideals remain more or less intellectual and human-centered, rooted in a supernatural locus altogether different from a theological divinity. (Fakhry 1971, 207) For Ṣadrā, they focus on the shadow of the Real by insisting on attaining it cerebrally as opposed to intuitively. Others, Fakhry claims, like al-Ghazālī, attempted to substitute such philosophical bleakness for a mystical, albeit transcendent, vision of the Divine. The theologically safe language used to illustrate such far reaching apprehension gave way to full blown pantheism and monism. Even so, for the more moderate Sufis, he explains, there remained a sense of veneration of the Truth, via an acknowledged incapacity to completely encompass Ultimate Reality. This was not the case, he argues, for the unrepressed amongst the Sufis who managed to "identify themselves with the Divine." (Fakhry 1971, 207) Existential monism consorts with what Fakhry considers the claims regarding the more extreme of the Sufis who openly self-identify with the Divine. He considers this metaphysical world view as "the most radical type, sweeping away the Koranic concept of transcendence (*tanzih*) and setting them at loggerheads with orthodoxy for centuries to come." (Fakhry 1971, 207)

Contrary to the staple onto-theological transcendence of the Divine in Islamic doctrine, existential monism treats the Divine as a substance. All phenomenal existents are its accidents, or parts. As parts of the substance, all things ultimately exist within a Single Individual. As Divine accidents, the transcendent is immanent through the parts

of the Cosmos. Each physical object in the world is a part of the whole of God's

Presence. For them, God is a tree or a rock, etc. Each of these items is Him. Each

primary entity in the material world, then, is a part of the Real. Thus, existential monism

is a pantheism where, God and the Universe are identical-God is everything and

everything is God. Putting it in Sadrian terms, the shadow and the actual (i.e., Simple

Reality) have an equal ontological footing. This lack of ontological distinction is

problematic for both theological and philosophical reasons in Transcendent Philosophy

for failing to safeguard the unity of God while simultaneously recognizing the

commonsense phenomenon of ontological multiplicity.

Ṣadrā's Distinction Between the Individual Unity (*Waḥdah al-shakhsiyyah*) and the Unity of Multiplicity (*Waḥdah al-kathrah*)

Existential monism abandons the distinction between the Real and contingent

beings. As a result, the primacy of Existence is compromised by equating the

ontological value of existents in the world of phenomenon with that of the Individuality of

Existence (*Waḥda al-shakhsiyyah*). Ṣadrā makes a distinction between the Individuality

of Existence and the phenomenon of multiplicity (*wujūd al-kathrah*). By doing so he

evades the theo-ontological hazards of existential monism. He does this by pointing out

that while Existence is Real the multiple phenomena are its affairs (*shuʾūn*). Its affairs

are quiddities. The quiddities are merely mental constructs, subjected to the limitations

of time and space. Thus, the difference between Existence and Its affairs is maintained.

At the same time, the vision of the People of Unveiling (*Ahl al-kashf*), confirming the

Individuality of Existence is also maintained without disregarding the common-sense

view of the world of phenomenon built upon a unified experience of the multiplicity of existences (*waḥdah al-kathrah*) without making those events God.

Here I will cover the ontological distinction between Individual Unity and its affairs. To do so I will firstly discuss the Sadrian relationship between Existence, Individual Unity and Quiddity, as they relate to Simple Reality. After that, I will describe the connections between the quiddities and the affairs, as Ṣadrā sees it. In turn, the correlation of the affairs, phenomenon, mental constructs and their association with Simple Reality in Transcendental Philosophy will be explicated. Ultimately, the Individuality of Existence is never compromised when speaking of the intuitive view of Reality. At the same time, the commonsense phenomenon of the multiplicity of existence is acknowledged. This is done by making a difference between Existence and Its affairs.

Existence, Individual Unity and Quiddity

The first step in understanding the dynamics above is to consider how Ṣadrā manages the relationship between Existence or Simple Reality and Its Quiddity. By understanding this primary relationship, the Sadrian relationship between existence and quiddity in the World of Phenomena is more accessible. In that vein, Ṣadrā calls us to "Know! His Self-hood (*Āniyyatuh*), be He exalted, is His Quiddity *and* [that] His Existence, be He exalted, is the existence of all things. His Existence is the reality of Existence (*ʿayn ḥaqīqah al-wujūd*) without any admixture of non-existence or multiplicity because every quiddity's existence is denied (*yuʿraḍu lahā al-wujūd*). (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2001, 12) Ṣadrā calls us to recognize that the Self of Existence,

is His Quiddity. At the same time, with regard to all that is other than It, His Existence is

their existence as well. However, this occurs without His Self, Quiddity or Existence's

involvement with other-than He in any ontological sense. This is because their existence

does not involve any amalgamation of the two *nor* ontological multiplicity. That is to say,

while Existence supplies the existence of all that is other-than-He, the latter poses no

form of ontological multiplicity as their quiddity is non-existent.

From here, Ṣadrā turns the subject of the quiddity toward Existence itself. From

this point, it becomes clear that the non-existence of quiddity is not limited to other-than-

Him. Rather, the same non-existence applies to Existence as well. He states:

> So, the quiddity requires an instaurer (*jāʾil*), [thereby consequently]
> establishing it, to be described with existence and for it to be confirmed to
> have it. After the impossibility of the effect of something's existence has
> been established considering that the cause must precede the effect
> existentially and that the quiddity preceding its own existence is irrational,
> then His Existence, be He exalted, is His Quiddity and His Quiddity is His
> Existence. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2001, 12)

As quiddity is non-existent, it requires something to give it existence. This is because it

cannot already exist to then provide its own existence. So, with quiddity, there must be

some other entity existing prior to it to cause it to exist. This is a logical necessity, not

only for other-than-He but for Existence, as well. This is why to propose that Existence's

Quiddity might exist before itself to provide itself existence is absurd. Thus, as it is for

other-than-He, Quiddity does not exist independently. Rather, Quiddity and Existence

are the same when referring to God's Identity. To put it differently, when we ask "what"

God is, we are asking about Existence. Existence and Quiddity are, then, in this sense,

the same. This conclusion is logically necessitated by the simplicity of Existence.

Ṣadrā continues:

> If He were not the existence of all things, He would not have a Simple Essence (*Basīṭ al-ḏāt*) nor Pure Existence (*Maḥḍ al-wujūd*). Rather, He would be the existence of something and the non-existence of others. Then, a compound of non-existence and admixture between possibility and necessity would incontrovertibly occur in Him. This is impossible. Thus, His Existence is the existence of all things, due to His [status as being] the Pure Reality of Existence. He does not leave out anything small nor great but instead, He has counted it. [81] Thus, He is the root and the reality of existentiality (*al-mawjūdiyyah*). (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2001, 12–13)

With Quiddity all but consumed in the overwhelming nature of Existence outside of conceptual reference, Ṣadrā returns to the theme of Existence's Simple Reality. For Ṣadrā, if Existence does not include all that is other-than-He, then non-existence would refer to Him. In other words, if the existence of other-than-He belonged to them, then in relation to them He would be non-existent. After all, if He were the existence of some things and not that of others, then existence and non-existence would both apply to Him, which, for Ṣadrā, is not possible. Hence, having used quiddity as the pivotal point, he concludes that He is the existence of all things as He is neither subject to non-existence nor its admixture. This, however, solicits a better grasp of the ontological status of the phenomenon that are other-than-He.

The Quiddities are the Affairs or Phenomena in The World

Ṣadrā is clear that the quiddities are Existence's affairs and that something's matters are not the same as their person. He states:

> [All] that is other than Him are His affairs (*shuʾūn*) and circumstances (*ḥaythiyāt*). He is the Essence and whatever is outside of It/Him are His Names, Manifestations, and Appearances. He is the Light. Whatever is outside of It/Him are His Shadows and His Flashes. He is the Truth. Whatever is outside of His Noble Face is false. *Everything has perished*

---

[81] Qurʾān 18:49

except His Face.[82] *And We have not created the heavens and earth [and that between them] except in Truth.* [83] So, His True Existence is the Necessary Existence called "Necessary Existence (*Wujūb al-wujūd*)." The existence of all else is metaphorical existence (*wujūd al-majāzī*) called "the existence-through-other" (*wujūd biʾl-ghayr*) ...the Essentially Necessary (*al-Wājib bi al-ḏāt*)...exists with every expression (*al-ʿitibārāt*) and in every level. It is as if He is settled upon what He is. The meaning of existence and non-existence may be surmised from that. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2001, 12–13)

For Ṣadrā, all that is other-than He, includes all that is outside of the Essence (*al-Ḏāt*).

This means that the Names, manifestations, appearances (*maẓāhir*), shadows (*aẓlāl*),

and flashes (*lamaʿāt*) are all His affairs. They are, in themselves, false for whatever is

outside the Essence has no quiddity, while their existence is His. The heavens and the

earth, and all in between that for that matter, were *created* in Truth. The important

aspect Ṣadrā seems to be stressing here is that while the affairs are the phenomenon,

the common-sense realm of existence are not the same as the Individual Unity of

Existence any more than a person's actions are to themselves. The latter are, after all,

non-existent in themselves. While we acknowledge that the quiddities are the affairs,

and that quiddities are non-existent, al-Sayyid Kamāl al-Ḥaydarī explains that the

Individual Unity of Existence, that is to say, the ontological unity of the Divine, does not

deny our everyday common experience of ontological multiplicity. While on the one

hand Existence is completely all Its own and without other-than-Itself, this fact does not

deny the reality of the multiplicity of its affairs. (al-Ḥaydarī 2017)

Rather, as a Sadrian thinker he clarifies that "we believe in the unity of

ontological individual unity but this [belief] does not contradict [the fact] that, because

---

[82] Qurʾān 22:88-89

[83] I am not familiar with this verse and suggest this one including the context of what is between them is what is intended Quran 15:85

this unity is non-numerical, this [individual unity] has numerous modes, and appearances (*maẓāhir*) [associated with it]. These affairs and appearances do not occur through [simple anonymous and ambiguous] placement. Rather these are metaphysically true affairs (ʿ*umūr ḥaqīqiyyah*) ...and [are from] the same matter [i.e. source, meaning Existence]." (al-Ḥaydarī 2017) He then used the human self as a model displaying the nature of the interaction between an individual's ontological unity and the multiplicity of its affairs. In every stage of our life and all the changes that occur in their modes in this world and the next, al-Ḥaydarī explains, we always find ourselves and refer to it as "I" (*anā*). Therefore, this I-ness is established. However, the affairs related to this "I," that make up the vicissitudes of the events of one's life and person are fleeting. At one point one does not intellectualize, while they are still present. The self, then, is not an intellect, it *has* an intellect. The intellect is born from and returns to the self without the self being limited to *being* the intellect. Thus, he asserts, as all these things happen from the self while it itself remains unchanged, the self is simultaneously the rallying point and source of all these affairs (*majmuʿ shuʾūn al-nafs*). (al-Ḥaydarī 2017) Through this example, al-Ḥaydarī concludes that like the self and Its affairs, Existence's Individuality is not contradicted by the multiplicity of its affairs as the former's Unity is not compromised by Its affairs. This move seems to have eclipsed the phenomenal or shadowy reference points that caused the others, in Ṣadrā's eyes, to fall short of realizing Simple Reality in the midst of all its modes, or more denying the latter altogether, or yet still, making the Simple Reality ontologically identical to all the affairs.

The Phenomena are Mental Constructs

For Ṣadrā, phenomena or contingent beings are a mental occurrence, occurring

through the quiddities in the mind. He states, when referring to contingent beings, i.e.

those whose quiddity and existence may be spoken of separately:

> The possibility [of existence] must precede every contingent entity (*al-ḥādith*). No actor causes it to exist except that it [also] has the possibility of external existence. [It does not do so, simply] because it is [merely] mentally possible. If this were the case, then it would only be realized in the mind. It would not [then] be found in the external world. Therefore, it must have the possibility for external existence…. possible entities and all intellectual modes (*al-ʾumūr al-ʿaqliyyah*) and mental qualities (*al-awṣāf al-dhihniyyah*) and those like them have external forms (*ṣuwar ʿayniyyah*). However, the seeker of Truth must protect himself from these veils through granting that possibility. They are the intellects super-additions to the realities. That is, if the intellect were to notice the quiddity of the human being, for example, it would [do so] according to its self, inasmuch as possibility is not essence nor its essentiality. Likewise, [this applies to] all the characteristics that are not the same quiddity nor a part of it.
>
> As for [the proposition that] these super-added entities' have external forms, this is unsound. Oh God! [this is not true] except in the case of the characteristic of Existence. This is [the nature of] the Individual Unity which is identical to the Reality of Existence according to Those Firmly Rooted [in Knowledge] (*al-Rāsikhūn*) [equipped] with a special proof [granted] through Existence. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 1:206)

Everything else "exists" in a metaphorical manner (i.e. they point to meanings they

themselves do not possess). Like symbols, all these affairs point to His Existence

making Him present at every level of indication. Perhaps what Ṣadrā means is that a

difference between Existence and all that is-other than-He is the self-contained

meaning present in the former that is not present in the latter. Either way, the

difference is something that only occurs in the mind. As for external nature, for Ṣadrā,

there is only Existence, in truth.

Mental Constructs are Other-than-Simple Reality

The encompassing nature of His Existence does not make the affairs Him. This

is of key importance. Rather, they make them His affairs i.e., matters that indicate His

Presence, even if the mind cannot grasp it. This is similar to the way that one's actions

may notify another of their presence. Without the actions, themselves, being the person

notified they are not her, as such, while they are not other than her. As everything is

God's affair, there is no ontological location that does not indicate Existence. Simple

Reality, as mentioned above, requires this to be the case. Ṣadrā states:

> Know that God's All-Pervadingness (*shumūlīh*) over all things is not like
> the pervading-ness of the universals or particulars. Rather His all-
> pervadingness is His Expansiveness and Fluidity upon the structure of the
> quiddities (*hayākil al-māhiyāt*) in an inconceivable manner. He, in His
> Essence, is not a substance (*jawhar*), nor accident (ʿ*arḍ*) as they are both
> titles for universal quiddities (ʿ*unwān li māhiyāt kulliyī*). It has been
> established that Existence is Self-individualizing, ascertaining Its Essence.
> If It were [placed] under the [category] of substance, itself a specific
> meaning (*maʿanā jinsī*) or under a specific meaning related to the
> accidents, then it would be in need of that which acquires existence like a
> specific difference (*faṣl*) or something like it for all those that have
> acquired existence. Then, [in that case] Existence would not have [Its
> own] Existence and this is backward. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī
> 2001, 12–13)

For Ṣadrā, the ontological weight of the quiddity seems to be lost in the pervading

nature of Individual Unity. In this regard, he mentions that quiddity "is a simple matter

just as all the [ontological] paronyms (*al-mushtaqqāt*) referred to in Persian by [the term]

"there is, there are / is "(hast) and its synonyms [for example: is (*ast*), there is (*wujūd*

darad)] . It has no basis, in the first place, mentally or externally [or in any] other than

that of arbitrariness." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 1:51–52)

Conclusion

While the difference between Existence and Its affairs are maintained, the vision of the People of Unveiling, confirming the Individuality of Existence, is maintained without disregarding the common-sense view of the world of phenomenon built upon a multiplicity of existences. So, Ṣadrā avoids the pitfalls of existential monism, wherein the distinction between the Real and the contingent is abandoned, compromising the primacy of Existence by equating the ontological value due to the Individuality of Existence to the quiddity of things appearing in time and space. He does so by pointing out that while Existence is Real, the multiple ontological incidents are Its affairs. Its affairs are quiddities. The quiddities are mental constructs. Thus, while the Individual Unity of Existence (*Waḥdah al-shakhsiyyah*) remains intact, the common-sense occurrence of the multiplicity of the existence of phenomenon is also maintained. There, God is not everything, as is the case in existential monism. Rather, God is Reality, even if this is not perceived, while the reality of everything other-than-God is left intact in the mind of the perceiver. Suffice it to say, in Ṣadrā, when speaking about Reality, as opposed to phenomenal or shadowy concerns, "a simple reality cannot be predicated of anything since it is simple and unconditioned. Here diversity-in-unity is affirmed since if nothing can be predicated of God, then it follows that the cosmos cannot be predicated of Him. Thus, it (Ṣadrā's ontology) denies existential monism." (Rizvi 2013, 105) The second aspect of his overcoming the pitfalls of existential monism is the installation of gradational reality into the primacy of Existence. I will cover this second aspect now.

Gradational Reality as a Metaphysical Middle-Ground

Prior to Ṣadrā, most metaphysical world views were expressed in fairly straightforward and mutually exclusive boxes. Then a monist's ontological viewpoint simply expressed an incompatibility with the view that reality consists of two irreducible elements. Epistemic foundations informing central questions on ontology, identity and change, space and time, causality, necessity and possibility would result in completely different conclusions between these two perspectives when viewed in isolation. If these same epistemic notions were blended into one cohesive system, not only would the previous questions be dealt with uniquely, but branch conclusions on cosmology and cosmogony, mind and matter, determinism and free will, number, applied mathematics and so forth, would be thought anew.

Gradational Reality as a Metaphysical Alternative

There is a tendency in Ṣadrā to join between opposites, as is seen Jambet's words on the Sadrian treatment of the self (to be discussed below) that "put in the starkest terms, there is a choice: Platonism or Aristotelianism. Sadrā refuses to choose. He accepts the Aristotelian doctrine of the soul and pushes it to its most extreme limits while integrating it into a scheme that satisfies the fundamental demands of Platonism." (Jambet 2006, 251)

At the root of gradational reality in which "although existence is, in a sense, one single reality, yet in each case it is basically different and s*ui generis* as well" (Rahman 1975, 33) we find the existential act of transubstantial motion. Ṣadrā states, "the

difference between Its (i.e., Existence) individuals and numbers does not exist, except

through perfection and deficiency, anteriority, and posterity, richness and indigence.

(Sadrā 2015, 74) Simple Reality appears between extreme opposites. Each

individualized appearance, however, is in a class by itself. Therefore, each instance is

apparently different than another that is, in turn, unique. This movement occurs in

contingent beings in the world of phenomena. In this sense, Ṣadrā's Oneness of

Existence subscribes to is closer to a metaphysics that is, as, what Toshihiko Izutsu

describes as "neither monism or dualism...a metaphysical vision of Reality based on a

peculiar existential experience which consists in seeing Unity in Multiplicity and

Multiplicity in Unity, it is something far more subtle and dynamic than philosophical

monism or dualism." (Izutsu 2007, 37) This is because Ṣadrā's ontological position is

ambiguous regarding either extreme failing to recommend either. (Rizvi 2009)

Instead, Ṣadrā advocates a middle ground between the two metaphysics. Like a

monist, he considers existence holistically. As a dualist, he acknowledges differences in

existence. Unlike either, he advocates, a near Plotinian One, an entirely actualized

simple existence having "more 'existence' than other things." (Kalin 2010, 101) On the

other there is multiplicity; a potentially limitless negation of existence found in various

degrees of ontological actualization. Sadrā posits that, "every degree [of *wujūd*] below

this degree in intensity is not pure *wujūd*. Rather, it is combined with imperfections and

deficiencies. (Ṣadrā 2014, 74) Thus, gradational reality provides an ontological

alternative to both existential monism and dualism postulating a single self-propelling

contingent existence towards its ontological actualization through many substantial

changes. What the mind perceives as quiddity or static essences are the traces of

substantial renewal or re-origination of the contingent's substance, albeit only within the confines of its species, in a progression from the lowest to the highest potential that it has. (Rahman 1975, 36). Accordingly, man will not become a horse. However, the former can become more man based on intellectual growth. (Jambet 2006, 197)

Jambet fleshes out this point of substantial limitation emphasizing that Ṣadrā:

[R]adically displaces the question of substantial being. Its quiddity is indeed fixed and stable, since man remains a man and a plant remains a plant. It is not a matter of anything like an evolution of species. If substance, as such, undergoes increase and intensification, it does so within the framework of the species itself. It reaches higher levels or degrees of being, from the sensible world to the worlds of the soul and the intelligence. In such a way that the species itself comes to possess higher or lower levels of existence. (Jambet 2006, 202)

So, the contingent beings are moving and realizing their fullest ontological capacities to be more or less what they are and not anything else. They do so within their species. God, or the Necessary Existence, is beyond species. Thus, for Ṣadrā, man does not *become* God. In fact, no *thing* becomes or *is* God. Rather, Sadrian Existence, as has been stated, is Simple. Nonetheless, contingent being moves towards complete actualization, i.e. its best as a shadow of Simple Reality, God, or the Real. So, for Ṣadrā, what causes the appearances to move toward higher intensities of existence, even if they may become nothing than what they are?

Love and Substantial Change

Ṣadrā proposes that love (*ʿishq*) is the locomotion of contingent reality. "Know," he says, "that God, be He exalted, has decided that every intellectual, psychological, sensorial, and natural existent has a perfection. He placed a love (*ʿishq*) and desire (*shawq*) toward that perfection and movement toward completion of that perfection.

(Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 7:196) Everything, he suggests, is a love

of the Simple Reality, consciously or not. He states:

> Love (ʿishq) moves through all existents according to their [respective]
> ontological placement. Just as every weaker existence generates from a
> stronger one until arriving at the [level] of material and corporeal existents,
> likewise a higher love generates from every lower love until culminating in
> the love of the Necessary Existent. Every existent, according to their
> respective perfections seeks the perfections of that who is Necessarily
> Existent through Its Essence, imitating it in trying to achieve that
> perfection. So, the Originator (al-Bārī), may His Name be sanctified, is the
> objective of all existents and the end of all its levels. Thus, love and desire
> are the means through which existents exist according to their [respective]
> possible perfections and the means of their duration. Were it not for love
> and desire, no created thing would have appeared in the corporeal world
> nor creation of the Creator in the world of generation and corruption (ʿālam
> al-kawn wa al-fasād). (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 7:212-
> 213)

For Ṣadrā, love, *not* the typical subject of philosophy, is something intuitive, (much like

Simple Reality) causative, and at the root of his onto-epistemic theory. He says that

"whoever travels the path of the Divine Knowers (al-ʿUrafāʾ al-ilāhiyyīn) regards this

subject should consider the love of existents as an organizing principle driving every

love of the base for the love of the elevated in the best and most complete sense."

(Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 7:208)

As mentioned above, the two ends of gradational reality have the most complex

contingent on one extremity and the Simple Reality on the other. This never

compromises the integrity of Simple Reality as "Existence's Reality is Unity in every

ontological difference (mutafāwut) through the most [ontologically] complete (al-atamm)

and deficient (al-anquṣ). (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 7:211) Things

move forward from one love to the next " until concluding in the love of the Necessary

Existent. He does so until he obliges that all things are in love with It, yearning for Its

meeting (*mushtāqun ilayh*) .... (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 7:208) He

explains the mechanics of transubstantial motion through gradational reality through the

stirring of affection saying:

> As the perfection of the body is through nature/physics (*al-ṭabīʿah*), then it
> must love its completion through nature/physics. The perfection of nature
> is through the self that directs it (*bi al-nafs al-mudabbirah lahā*), therefore
> nature must love the self. The self's completion is through the intellect.
> Thus, the self loves the intellect. The completion of the intellect, rather,
> everything's completion, is through the Necessary, be He exalted. So, the
> intellect loves It and the latter completes everything. Rather, He is All in
> One (*al-Kull fī waḥdah*). He is delighted by His own Essence because
> there is no other [ontologically speaking]. He has no opposite. He has no
> partner. He is the Precious (*al-ʿAzīz*), the Overwhelming (*al-Qahār*): *He is
> the Vanquisher over His Servants* [84] *and God is behind them, All-
> Encompassing.*[85] Thus, the love that He has for all things is contained in
> the love He has for His Essence just as all the knowledge He has of all
> things is contained in the knowledge He has of His Essence... (Ṣadr al-
> Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 7:208).

Motion starts with that which is lesser in ontological intensity. It then graduates to that

which is higher still. As it increases intensity it assumes different forms: bodily, self-ish,

and intellectual. Intellectual completion is through the delight that Simple Reality has for

its Self. There, the human intellect experiences Simple Reality as an All-Encompassing

Love for Itself. All that was beneath it in intensity is included in non-intricacy. He

continues:

> Thus, all the upper and lower bodies are subsumed under the selves
> desire of their essences (*munṭawiyah taḥta shawq al-nufūs ilā ḏawātihā*)
> and to essences whose perfections are intellectual (*ḏawātin kamālātuhā*).
> The selves' desire to their essences are like this and their perfections are
> contained under the love the intellects have for their Highest Source (*li-
> mabdaʾihā al-ʾalā).* The intellect's love for their Highest Source is
> contained in the brilliance of the Original Light, Most Complete Good,
> Greatest Beauty, and Most Exalted Sublimity because He is the place of

---

[84] al-Qurʾān 6:18

[85] Ibid, 85:20

> return of all things and their objective/utmost (*ghāyah*). (Ṣadr al-Dīn
> Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 7:209)

In other words, existence at one end of the spectrum moves toward Existence on the other, only to find itself always subsumed in the latter, never having to become anything. This is because, for Ṣadrā, things are always moving. What is always moving is always returning to Simple Reality. What is always returning to Simple Reality never initially leaves It. All is in one and one is in all, in light and love. Nasrollah Pourjavady speaks on the Sadrian association of love and light saying that for our thinker:

> [E]xistence is a single reality wherever it may be and in whatever object it is found. The same is true of light. The light of the sun and the light of the candle, for example, are a single reality, although they exist at different degrees…. What we have said about essential oneness and the analogical gradations of love, light, and existence applies to beauty, (*jamāl*) too. Beauty is one single reality whether it is absolute or relative, whether it is in the spiritual realm or the phenomenal world, whether it is in the human body, in the sunset, or in a flower. The only difference is in its intensity or context. Since beauty is one single reality, love for a beautiful object is a manifestation of love for the absolute or divine Beauty. To see and appreciate sunlight, whether it in a garden or on a mountain, or simply a ray shining through a window into a room, is ultimately to appreciate the essence of light. Likewise, to love other human beings is to love God. There is no such thing as truly profane beauty, just as there is no such thing as truly profane love. The only problem is that sometimes one loves a relative form of beauty and mistakenly thinks that it is absolute Beauty. The love of a relative form of beauty, such as in the form of a human being, should act as a transition-a bridge-that takes the lover toward absolute Beauty, the Supreme Being. (Pourjavady 2007, 162–3)

So, for Ṣadrā, the contingent's love for Perfection causes the appearances to move toward higher intensities of existence. The more fulfilled an existent is, the more beautiful it is as Existence is Beauty. This attraction toward Beauty, to every degree of its Self-revelation, is the motivation of all movement everywhere. In every sense, from the least attractive, i.e., imperfect to the most attractive, i.e., perfect; each realizes its own perfection to realize Perfection/Beauty.

Conclusion

The relationship of the lover toward that which it loves serves as both the

mechanics and fuel of a substantially changing Universe. He states:

> Every caused entity's guardian love (*al-ʿishq al-ḥafiẓ*) is its love for its
> cause, an expression for the connection of its existence to its cause and
> its link to it. Through this link -I mean the relational existence (*wujūd al-
> intisābī*)-the self-hood (*huwiyyah*) of the caused maintains (*al-maʿalūl*) and
> completes its continuity through the benefit of its existence and is the
> completer of its essence (*mukammil ḏātih*). This is what they mean in their
> saying: Were it not for the love of the higher, the lower would obliterate.
> (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 7:212)

The beauty or self-love that each entity possesses belongs to Simple Reality. This

beauty, in the self of every ontological entity, as the self of each of them, belongs more

to Simple Reality, who is Beauty, than to the *would-be* entity it manifests. In the end,

Simple Reality's Self-love is the cause and end point of all transubstantial motion, with

every entity, themselves a manifestation of Self-love. They achieve proximity to it to the

extent that they can realize Beauty. Thus, for Ṣadrā, the lesser something realizes

Beauty, that is to say, the more distant it is from its own completion, the more deficient,

contingent, and non-existent it is. Ultimately, though, Ṣadrā assigned all worldly beauty

to the Divine, considering creatures as the display of Perfection, Favor, Lover and

Beloved. Thus, all the various levels of kindness and mercy in the world, then, are

representations of God's Beauty. [86]

With love now identified as the root of gradational reality, and its tendency

toward Unity as opposed to diversification established, we may now look at gradational

---

[86] For more on Sadrian aesthetic theory see Akbarian 2016.

reality as it manages the self-body problem. Like love, Ṣadrā's solution is to present a body whose move for that which is higher than itself manifests a self that, while originating from it, draws past its corporeal beginnings out of love for higher self-realization.

Gradational Reality, the Self-Body Problem and Solution

When the self and the body are considered as distinct interacting entities, with fundamentally different natures, we are forced to explain how their immateriality and materiality interact. Ṣadrā's physicalism, however, posits that the self is a purely physical construct, explained through a transubstantial physical theory. Hence, instead of determining how two distinct natures co-operate, in Ṣadrā we need to understand the body's management of the immaterial self via transubstantial change. To grasp the dynamics of this transformation an appreciation of Ṣadrā's ideas on the self's gradational reality and love is required. Through it Ṣadrā offers a solution to the self-body problem inherited from previous systems that wrestled with the mutually exclusive relationship between material and immateriality.

To understand the forces that put his solution into motion, I will first analyze Ṣadrā's take on the self before the body to understand the overarching themes related to the Simple Reality as a goal for that which is beneath it. Then I will look at Simple Reality's relationship with its appearances. I will begin with the self as a category before the sub-lunar world, followed by created entities in the world whose existence as effects of the Real. From there, I will determine how Prime Matter sets the standard for all the forms it accommodates in the act of love toward Simple Existence. Then, the individual

self, a product of Prime Matter's act of yearning, will be taken up. As the individual human self cannot be understood without a body correlation, in Ṣadrā, at least until the former realizes its fullest post-corporeal potential, how Ṣadrā negotiates its seemingly immaterial end with a material basis will be investigated. Finally, gradational reality is introduced to explain how Ṣadrā's self-body theory escapes the trappings of conventional monist-dualist explanations of that relationship interrelation. Ultimately, the initial love that Perfection has for Itself and its utterly Simple Reality blurs all the lines of separation and difference drawn by the concepts of the minds of pre-Sadrian philosophers.

The Self Before the Body: Simple Reality and Its Self-Appearances

As previously mentioned, Ṣadrā's Simple Reality is neither fixed nor fluid. It is neither monistic nor dualistic. Existence is existence. It is beyond property, attribute, multiplicity, or contingency. It is beyond perception. While it is beyond perception, its utter simplicity is Perfection. Perfection is Beauty. Thus, Simple Reality is Beauty. So, 'what do you think about Absolute Essential Beauty (*al-Jamāl al-muṭlaq al-ḏātī*), and Divine Glistening Light (*al-Nūr al-sāṭiʿ al-ilāhī*) that is full of the utmost of grandeur and furthest extent of pride and perfection. [That which] alarms the intellects and hearts from behind seven thousand luminous and unilluminated veils…? (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 2:73) It appears, however, in the costume of the contingents state of yearning for their own perfections (and ultimately for Simple Reality). Ṣadrā says:

> Rather, the forms of all created things and essences of all originated [entities] are the effects, and the lights of the True Existence (*al-Wujūd al-ḥaqīqī*) and Everlasting Light (*al-Nūr al-qayyūmī*). He is the Fountain of Pure Sublimity (*Manbʿu al-jamāl al-muṭlaq*), and Most Complete and

> Suitable Sublimity (*al-Jalāl al-atamm al-alyaq*). [He is] the One Who [for] the forms of the lovers (*ṣuwar al-maʿāshiq*) and the goodness of the spiritual and corporeal existents are but a drop with relation to the sea of that Beauty and a pearl in analogous comparison with the sun of that Grandeur and Sublimity. Were it not for His for His Lights, in the form of the external existents arrival at the Light of Lights, who is the Divine Absolute Existence (*al-Wujūd al-muṭlaq al-Ilāhī*) would not be possible.
> (Ṣadr al--Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 2:72–73)

As mentioned elsewhere, in Ṣadrā's system external existents have their perfections.

The self is a first perfection" (*kamāl awwal*). (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002,

vol. 8:13) Ṣadrā makes a distinction between the Adamic self's "first perfection" as a

category and the individual self, serving as the perfection of an individual corporeal

body. The former is prior to this world while the latter is of this world. He states:

> The 'Adamic' soul has a form of existence preceding the body, without this entailing the transmigration of souls, and without necessitating the pre-eternity of the (individual) soul, which is the well-known view of Plato. This (mode of pre-existence) does not require a multiplicity of individuals of a single species or their differentiation without reference to any matter or (material) preparedness; nor does it entail the soul's division after having been one, in the manner of continuous quantities; nor does it presume the soul's inactivity before (being connected with) bodies. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 1981, 140)

For Ṣadrā, the Adamic self as, a category, having a pre-corporeal life does not entail

metempsychosis any more than it necessitates the Platonic doctrine of the pre-eternity

or non-createdness of the individual self. This is because the existential mode of pre-

existence does not include the multiplicity of these particular individual selves as found

in the world. With regard to the self in the world of corruption and change, "one cannot,"

Ṣadrā says, "conceive of the soul's having being-so long as it is soul-except for a being

such that it is in connection with the body and utilizing the bodily powers, unless...it

should become transformed in its being and intensified in its substantializing to such a

degree that it becomes independent in its own essence and able to dispense with its connection to the physical body" (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 1981, 139) altogether. Thus, there are two main selves to consider prior to taking the Sadrian self-body relationship into account. The first self is a category, one that refers to the Adamic self as a class. This entity has a pre-corporeal life and does not apply to any particular corporeal self. This category of self is the source of the individual human selves appearing in the world of corruption and change. They are given to ontological perfection. The world of corruption and change, the abode of the individual changing self, is facilitated by Primary Matter's (*al-Ḥuyūlī al-ūlā*) longing for Perfection.

Prime Matter as the Basis for Sub-Lunar Yearning

Not every thinker embraces Ṣadrā's claim that an inanimate object can love Beauty, much less its own self-perfection (i.e., beauty) is unique in the Avicennian trajectory. Ṣadrā's survey of the argument mentions,[87] for Ibn Sīnā, Primary Matter is ontological prior to form and is pure passivity. Being pure passivity, it has no activity. Having no form, it has nothing by which to be active with. Thus, physical propulsion (i.e., being so in love that it moves forward, as Ṣadrā recommends) is completely ruled out for matter. Prime Matter, then, has no yearning. However, Ṣadrā affirms Prime Matter's love saying:

> Prime Matter's love is verified because it is a level of existence, and a portion (*ḥaẓẓan*) of the Universe/existence (*al-Kawn*) as the Lead Sage (*al-Shaikh al-raʾīs*) and others from the result of the followers of the Peripatetics acknowledged it...even if its existential level is weak. This is

---

[87] See Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *al-Asfār al-arba'ah 1,* vol. 1 (Tehran, 1958), 232-3, and 245.

because this level is equivalent to the faculty of the existence of abundant things that happen upon it (*fāḍa ʿalayhā*), are united through it in a material unification (*ittiḥād al-mādda*) through the form in existence, and the unification of species (*al-jins*) through the specific difference (*al-faṣl*) in the quiddity (*al-māhiyyah*).

Since it (i.e., Prime Matter) has a kind of existence (*naḥw min al-wujūd*)...(and) the root of existence is one and united with knowledge (*al-ʿilm*), and will (*al-irādah*), and ability (*al-qudrah*), then the perfections necessary to exist but realize. However, they are realized- it (i.e. Primary Matter) has a weak sense of fulfilment according to its weak existential condition [serving as] the existence of [both] its essence (*ḏātuhā*) and self-hood (*huwiyatuha*)....Due to its sense of deficient existence, it desires Absolute Pure Existence (*al-Wujūd al-muṭlaq al-kāmil*) which is the objective, affecting the essence of all things….[Despite] all of the portions of perfections it acquires [due to what] it does not acquire [of perfection], it yearns to obtain what it is disposed of loving to face what aligns with that lost thing and matches it, asking for the completion of what it finds in it through attaining it [for itself]. Thus, [Prime] Matter has extreme love towards the forms (*al-ṣuwar*), and its acquired natures (*al-ṭabīʿah al-muḥaṣṣalah*) themselves a specific variety (*nawʿin khāṣ*) of the types of natures that perfect and complete it. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 2:259)

Ṣadrā retorts that Prime Matter is a something. If it were a nothing, we could not speak

of it. As something, it exists. Therefore, Prime Matter has positive existence. For Ṣadrā,

existence is fundamentally the same in all areas of the ontological spectrum. It differs

merely in terms of intensity. Existence has attributes like knowledge, power, and will. He

says elsewhere:

Existence is a singular ocular/real reality (*ḥaqīqah wāḥdhah ʿayniyyah*). It is not just a mental concept or secondary intelligible (*maʿqūl thanawī*)-as later thinkers (*al-Mutaʾakhirūn*) claimed it to be. There is no difference between its individual [instances] nor its levels in terms of the completion of its essence, reality, species, (*faṣīlatan*), nor accidental (*ʿarḍiyatan*). Rather, [the differences in it are] through precedence (*taqaddum*), and antecedence (*taʾakhur*), perfection (*kamāl*), deficiency (*naqṣ*), intensity (*shidda*), and weakness (*ḍaʿaf*)...Its perfect attributes of Knowledge (*al-ʿIlm*), Ability (*al-Qudrah*),Will (*al-Irādah*), are the Essence of Its essence (*ʿAynu ḏātih*). [The above is true] because the reality of existence and its origin is through its self-same substantiation (*tajawharih*), [acting as the]

source of all ontological perfections (*al-kamālāt al-wujūdiyah*). So, if the existence of something strengthens, then all its perfect attributes do so with it. [Likewise] if it weakens, they weaken. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 2:254)

Thus, Prime Matter also has knowledge, power, and will to whatever extent it does. For this reason, he suggests, Prime Matter is knowing, able, and willing to receive the forms it does. Hence, matter yearns for these forms it receives. It has the potential to receive all forms. The more potential for formal reception it has, the more the yearning for them. For this reason, Ṣadrā concludes, in direct contradiction to Avicennian thought, that Prime Matter has the greatest love for Beauty; [88] as it has the greatest love and need for fulfillment.

The Self from Matter: The Individual Self

For Ṣadrā, the individual human being, a created entity in the sub-lunar world, the world of matter drives toward Simple Reality's fulfilment like Prime Matter does. This yearning for Simple Reality, or Love, is the factor that pulls the human being through her various stages of development in her earthly abode and beyond. Ṣadrā states:

> Verily in the self's annihilation in its metaphorical beloved who is, in a true sense, [itself] oriented toward the True Absolute Beloved (*al-Maḥbūb al-ḥaqīqī al-muṭlaq*), everything's Everlasting (*al-Ṣamad*), and Refuge of every living thing, ceasing Its Noble Aspect, the Source of Lights and Mine of Traces (*maʿadin al-āthār*). Thus, its arrival in the Divine Presence is acquired for it (i.e. the self). Its interior is illuminated by Its Light. As a result, the self perceives the universal affairs, and the transcendent intellectual forms through its becoming them (*li ṣayrūriyatihā*), at the time of perceiving the universals. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 2:73)

---

[88] See Rahman 1975, 101–102.

For Ṣadrā, then, there are two selves to consider when taking the account of the self-body relationship. The first self is a category referring to the Adamic self as a class. It exists pre-corporeally and does not apply to any particular corporeal self. The second, mentioned now, is the individual human self, which is the ocular manifestation of that class in the world. Like Aristotle, Ṣadrā agreed with the individual self being defined as the natural body's first perfection. (al-Kutubi 2013, 105–106) He did not consider it a by-product of the body's temperament (*mizāj*) as naturalists and physicians would have it. (al-Kutubi 2013, 101) It cannot be imagined without the body in this world. For Ṣadrā, each stage of each individual human self is grounded in basic material fulfilment. The fulfilment of one degree and consequent advance to another is through the appearance of each degree's completion. Again, these completions are the self. Ṣadrā states:

> The elements (*al-anāṣir*) were created to accept life (*al-ḥayāt*) and spirit (*al-rūḥ*). The first of the effects of life to be received was nutrition (*at-taghdhiyyah*), development (*al-nushuʾ*), accretion (*al-namāʾ*), and generation (*al-tawlīd*). Then, the life of sensation and movement. Then, the life of knowledge and distinction. Each of these types of life has a complete form (*ṣūrah kāmilah*) flowing over the effect of this life through faculties that serve it over matter. This form is called "self." The lowest of them is the vegetable (*al-nabātiyyah*) [self]. Their median is the animal self (*al-nafs al-ḥayawānīyyah*). The noblest of them is the "rational self" (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*). These three share an essential meaning and unifying definition. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 8:6)

From the above, we understand that Ṣadrā perceives the existence of three individual selves. Each of them is the perfection of the receptive entity fostering it. Thus, the self's status as the "first perfection of a natural body" (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī

2002, vol. 14) does not negate the self's versatile modalities.[89] Although the body,

Ṣadrā posits, is not a cause for the individual self, it is the latter's precondition requiring

it for its own substantiality. At the same time, the body is not the precondition for the

self's upkeep. Rather, he claims, "through its preparedness, the body is a net for

catching the soul from the Cause. After falling into existence by means of the net, she

has no need for the net's subsistence." [90] (Ṣadr Al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī 2005, 86) Ṣadrā offers

an explanation for this idea saying:

> The explanation of this is that the body is prepared for a form that is its
> perfection. The soul, with respect to being a form for the body, has an
> interlinking existence, but with respect to being an intellective substance,
> she has an existence [that is] in itself, for itself. When the body along with
> its preparedness is nullified, the soul's attachment with it is severed, but
> not her intellective existence. This is because one of the two existences is
> that which is called for by the body and for which it is prepared, but not the
> other existence, for, through God's configuring, [the intellective existence]
> is the effuser of the last configuration. (Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrazī 2005, 86-87)

As the body's fullest potential, the self's existence is interlinked with the existence of

what it perfects inasmuch as it is the actualization of the latter's existence. al-Kutubī

reminds us that Ṣadrā consistently maintains the self's becoming is initially "like first

---

[89] Ṣadrā states: Something's being the first perfection in one thing does not negate its being a second perfection for something else. Thus, does not mean that the human self (*al-nafs al-insānī*) is not an animal perfection, in what makes it an animal nor that the absolute self (*al-nafs al-muṭlaqah*) is not the body's perfection through what makes it a body. [This is based upon] what you have learned regarding the realization of every nature is through the realization of an individual [instance] (*fard*) from it and its elevation is through the elevation of all its individual [instances]. Thus, the self is a first perfection, even if it is a second perfection for something else. Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vols. 8:13–14.

[90] Ḥasan submits 'the reason for the connection between the self and the body (once the former emerges as an apparently distinct entity) is for the former's perfection, and for it to realize its fullest potential through the agency of the body. In the beginning of its creation, the self is free from every perfection and knowledge. However, it gradually makes a way for itself toward perfection and knowledge." Ḥasan 2009, 80.

matter, devoid of all formal perfection, all sensible, imaginative, or intelligible forms." [91]

The self, then, signifies a principle converting the natural body into the specifics of plant, then animal, and finally human form. (al-Kutubi 2013, 106–107) [92] Read in a different way, the elements above, created to accept life and spirit, then, are selves, or stages of the self, each their own perfection as they convert a natural body into the specifics of plant, animal, and finally human form.

Thus, for Ṣadrā, the self is firstly a corporeal reality. [93] Substantial motion, without the assistance of the cosmos or active intellect, causes it to re-emerge as a vegetative, animal, and finally human soul, all the while developing the respective faculties. (Kharrazi 2009) However, once actualized, the self transcends its corporeal origins, literally in *being* for itself. "The 'soulhood of the soul,' suggests al-Kutubī, "is nothing but its mode of being—not like the relation of ruler, captain, father, or anything else that has its own proper essence and only falls into relation with something else after already being in that essence." (al-Kutubi 2013, 107)

After having transcended its corporeal catalyst, the intellect, the apex of the Sadrian self, carries on without it. This is because, as al-Kutubī continues, for Ṣadrā, as long as it is not a pure intellect, the self's disconnected existence from the body is inconceivable. It then utilizes its powers while transforming into an entity that no longer

---

[91] al-Kutūbī directs us to see Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah.* ed. Riḍā Luṭfi, Ibrāhīm Amīnī, and Faẓl Allāh Umīd, Intro. by Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muẓaffar. (Qom: Talīʿāt al-Nūr, 2008), Vol. 8, 287.

[92] Ibid, 293.

[93] Ṣadrā uses motion as evidence for the self's existence, based upon the dualist "Natural Proof" (*al-Burhān al-ṭabīʿi*). Founded on the observation that both the self and the body move while the latter is not the source of the activities it performs, he asserts that the body acts upon the self's motion. See Ḥasan 2009, 45–47.

requires corporeal facilitation. (al-Kutubi 2013, 107) [94] Ṣadrā's mentions the body's

basic capacity to imprison the self in the world, and the latter's capacity to use the body

as a springboard for the next world saying:

> Know that the soul in this body is like a sheep with three legs bound and
> one free. The clarification of this is that the soul, when she first descends
> to this cosmos,[95] is in the level of sheer hylicity, imprisoned by the gate of
> natural bodiment against moving from location to location except with a
> potency eternal to her essence moving her in one direction; by the gate of
> growth and nourishment against moving in measure except with an
> external potency attracting another body to her and moves her
> correspondingly in her sides and extremities; by the gate of animality
> against diverse volitional movements in locational direction except with a
> sensate potency, a yearning, a desire; and by the gate of humanness and
> angel-ness against moving within the imaginal and intellective meanings
> and roaming in the world of the Absent except with a potency external to
> the potencies of this cosmos.
>
> When she undergoes transition to the degree of nature, one of her four
> legs are released, so that by the demand of nature she moves from one
> location to another location according to a single pathway. When she
> passes beyond the degree of nature to the degree of plants, her second
> leg is also released, so that she moves from one measure to another
> measure through her growth potency. When she undergoes transition to
> the degree of animals, her third leg is also released, so she can move
> toward that which agreeable to her animal constitution, seek it through
> appetite, and through wrath, moving away from and fleeing from what is
> incompatible with her constitution.
>
> She still remains prevented by her fourth leg from arriving at the absent
> forms that she conceptualizes and imagines-those for which the souls
> have appetite and which the inward eyes enjoy [43:71] (namely, what 'no
> eye has seen and no ear has heard' in this cosmos)-until God decrees an
> affair that was done [8:42,44]. Then she comes to possess a
> Sovereigntarial potency through which she roams in the space of the

---

[94] al-Kutūbī directs us to see Morris 1981, 139 and *al-Risālah al- 'arshiyyah.* Ed. and Trans. To Persian by Ghulāmhusain Āhnī. (Isfahān: Kitābfūrūshi Shahriyār, 1922), 238.

[95] Consequently, the Allegory on the Soul suggests that Ibn Sīnā's would-be pre-corporeal self in (*Qaṣīda al-Nafs*) is merely poetics; the urge for the self's appearance in the body makes its as if it were existentially ahead of itself in its longing to be realized in the body. See Madelung 2015. Thus, Ṣadrā's treatment of the self-body dilemma is more generous toward the Neoplatonic need for a pre-corporeal self by categorizing it beyond the reach of individuality while simultaneously maintaining the peripatetic tendency to deny existential possibility for the individual self prior to the body.

> Sovereign, making her dwelling place wherever she wills in the Garden [39:74]....
>
> Know that the soul is let loose in this bodily world with respect to one level and one potency-that is her reflective and imaginal potency, which is what belongs to her in her essence. She is imprisoned with respect to three levels; animal, vegetal, and inanimate potencies, belonging to her with respect to the body. This is the reverse of what we just mentioned about her release from the three legs and her imprisonment of one leg because the standpoint in the two is different. Here the discussion is according to the substance of the soul in the descent from the world of holiness to this cosmos. In the preceding, it was according to the root of her matter in the climb and ascent from this cosmos to the world of holiness. From two standpoints, she is approaching, and from the other, turning away. (Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī 2005, 65–66)

Dualists, like Plato, argue that one is not their body: your hand and the you recognizing it are not the same entity. So, how does a presumably immaterial entity (the self) interact with a material one (the hand)? Perhaps, as Aristotle recommended, only one substance exists, mind or body. Ironically, monists also negotiate a dichotomy: physicalism holding that only the body exists, and idealism, arguing that only the mind exists. Either way, the monist rejects a person's division into parts as they tend to reject fragmented dichotomies.

Ṣadrā's position on the relationship between the self and the body is more complicated than the monist versus dualist. For him, the self is the objective existence of particular phenomenon. Although we tend to perceive the self as something separate from the body, a product of the mind's tendency to divide things conceptually, just as 'blackness'[96] is treated separately from the object it qualifies for Ṣadrā, its objective

---

[96] While referencing the self-body correlation elsewhere, Ṣadrā states: This [self-body] annexation is like the appending receptivity to matter (al-qābiliyyah li al-hayūlī), of formness to the natural form, of Originator-ness (al-Mabdaʾiyyah), Knowingness (al-ʿAlimiyyah), and Ability (al-Qādiriyyah), to the Necessary, be He Exalted. [It is also similar to] the annexation of accidentality (al-ʿarḍiyyah) to blackness and whiteness and other accidental categories. I am not saying [they have] another existence other than

existence is its existence as a subject. (al-Kutubi 2013, 107–108) [97] Ṣadrā uses the

ontological unity of particulars in the world of phenomenon as the basis for his

explanation of the proper relationship between the self and the body. (al-Kutubi 2013,

107–108)[98] The unity of particulars, in turn, is explained through gradational reality.

Thus, Ṣadrā uses gradational reality to explain the relationship of the self to the body

where substance transubstantiates into various divergent substances in a trajectory

toward its self-actualization. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vols. 8:12–13)

In the case of the human self, we (see how it essentially gains its freedom from the

confines of the corporeal body from which it emerged to a freedom beyond material

confines.

The Individual Self-Body Relationship

      Continuing with the same theme, for Ṣadrā "the soul's existence is not something

other than its relationship to a natural body; this relation is what constitutes its objective

---

the accident's existence.' So, for example, blackness has a separate quiddity in its meaning and definition, and it belongs to the category of quality. However, its essential existence is the same as it is the subject (*mawḍuʾ*). I mean accidentality [by the use of the word subject, here]. Thus, the subject's accidentality (*ʿurūḍ*) essentially belongs to blackness's ipseity and not its quiddity. Likewise, [the same] analogy applies to matter, form, nature, and the self as each of them has a different quiddity [that is] substantial (*jawhariyyah*) as opposed to adjunctive (*iḍāfiyyah*). Just as accidents have other quiddities [that are] accidental [yet], not accidentalities (*ghayr al-ʿurūḍiyyah*) but whose personal individuality (*huwiyyatihā al-shakhsiyyah*) are annexed ipseities. Through this [example] it is known that existence is something additional to quiddity. Thus, due to its being quiddities form self's existence must be annexed to the body, just as every form has an annexation to matter. However, this does not mean that is a correlative (*al-muḍāf*), nor that it be an accident. This is because this an annexation of valuation (*al-taqwīm*) and completion (*al-takwīn*) and not one of absolute need (*al-ḥāja al-muṭlaq*) as [is the case for] the accident (*al-ʿarḍ*). Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vols. 8:12–13.

[97] al-Kutūbī directs us to see Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyya fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah.* ed. Riḍā Luṭfi, Ibrāhīm Amīnī, and Faẓl Allāh Umīd, Intro. by Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muẓaffar. (Qom: Talīʿāt al-nūr, 2008), Vol. 8, 15.

[98] Ibid.

existence." (al-Kutubi 2013, 112) [99] Ṣadrā rejects the ultimatum of philosophical dualism

that whatever is not a material body must be an immaterial entity called self,

established in the body. This is because the self "is not a separate rational substance

because separate substances are essentially immaterial beings and their acts are

immaterial too, whereas the soul is material in origination…and spiritual in subsistence

and intellection.'" (al-Kutubi 2013, 112) [100]

He also rejects a materialistic monism denying the existence of the self,

relegating psychological phenomenon and activity to physiology or neurophysiology. In

his own words, he states:

> The soul's existence, because it is the form of matter, necessitates that it
> is a relation to the body, as it is necessary for every form to be related to
> matter, but it does not follow from this that the soul falls under the
> category of the relative (*muḍāf*), nor that it is one of the accidents,
> because this relation is a relation of subsisting and perfection (*iḍāfah a-
> ltaqwīm wa al-takmīl*), not a relation of privation such as that of an
> accident. The soul, as long as it does not pass from the potentiality of the
> material existence to the actuality of the separate intellect, is a material
> form of diverse degrees of closeness and remoteness from its intellectual
> life according to variable degrees of strength and weakness, and
> perfection and deficiency of its existence--since existence admits of
> strength and weakness. (al-Kutubi 2013, 111) [101]

For Ṣadrā, the self is not an accident connected to the body as a builder is to a building.

Rather, the self has a constitutive relationship like form and matter. Thus, its

relationship to the body is of an essential nature. At the same time, the body only serves

---

[99] al-Kutūbī directs us to see Ibid, 302.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid, 15.

as a primary step for its self's substantial change. (al-Kutubi 2013, 111) [102] The rest of

the steps follow from the self's immaterial origination in the Active Intellect and, as such,

has an immaterial origin. Thus, the self's transubstantial change is full circle. Ṣadrā

states:

> If you consider its substance in the world of Intellect, you will find that at
> the beginning of its fundamental nature it is pure potential without any
> form in that world; but it has the capability of moving from potency to
> actuality with regard to intellect and the intelligible. Its initial relation of that
> world (of the intellect) is that of the seed to its fruit, or of the embryo to the
> animal: just as the embryo is in actuality an embryo and animal only
> potentially, so (at first) the soul is in actuality a mere mortal man but
> potentially is realized intellect. (al-Kutubi 2013, 111–112) [103]

Ṣadrā's consistent argument for Existence as the fundamental reality giving all other

realities their being also serves to justify their substantial variations from one mode of

Existence to another. Therefore, human individuals' substantial change, as well as their

wellbeing, is by virtue of their self *and* body, i.e. or their entire being. (al-Kutubi 2013,

118) [104] For Ṣadrā, then, we begin as plants. We then realize our animality after having

neither senses nor movement as a vegetable-like embryo. The potential to move from a

plant to animal makes us distinct from non-human animals. Born as an animal, we then

realize our potential in puberty to become human animals with a potential that again,

makes us distinct from other animals unable to do so. Later, around the age of forty, we

---

[102] al-Kutūbī directs us to see Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah.* ed. Riḍā Luṭfi, Ibrāhīm Amīnī, and Faẓl Allāh Umīd, Intro. by Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muẓaffar. (Qom: Talīʿāt al-Nūr, 2008), Vol. 8, 283.

[103] al-Kutūbī directs us to see Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *The Wisdom of the Throne: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra.* Trans. by James Winston Morris. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), 148-149. and *al-Risāla al-ʿArshiyya.* Ed. and Trans.To Persian by Ghulāmhusain Āhnī. (Isfahān: Kitābfūrūshi Shahriyār, 1922), 243.

[104] al-Kutūbī directs us to see Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma hal-mutaʿāliyyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah,* Vol. 9, 120.

become rational animals equipped with a cognitive perception of things and use of the practical intellect. (al-Kutubi 2013, 112) [105] For Ṣadrā, the self's transformation into intellect is not a conceptual exercise. Instead, one is ontologically cultivated through imitation of God's Mercy and Compassion toward creatures, resulting with rigorous contemplation and character refinement. This holistic approach results in the self's personification of Paradise for its self. (al-Kutubi 2013, 118) [106]

The Individual Self and Gradational Ontology

Despite the above explanation of the Sadrian take on the self's development, his position on the relationship between the self and the body intensifies the standard complications common to debates on the issue. That is to say, gradational reality further complicates the self-body relationship. Instead of merely determining how two distinct natures are able to operate in unison, as before him, with Ṣadrā we have to determine how a single nature can divide into two apparently opposing natures. We need to comprehend how an immaterial and material function coincide. To navigate the standing issue and the newer one presented we must establish an alternative to the monist-dualist norm. To escape pure subjectivism, wherein all knowledge is limited to the immaterial self, such that transcendent knowledge is impossible, and reductionism, wherein advanced psychological activity is explained in material and neurological conditions, in a cogent fashion, while still operating with the confines of gradational reality, Ṣadrā must present an original and comprehensive third option in wholism.

---

[105] al-Kutūbī directs us to see Ibid, vol. 8, 121.

[106] al-Kutūbī directs us to see Ibid, vol. 9, 120.

Self-Body Relationship, Love and Wholism

The body, in love with itself as an appearance of Beauty, self-actualizes in a way propelling it beyond its material limitations. A single process of transubstantial motion causes one thing (i.e., the self) to emerge from many stages of development as the self and the body both share the same existence. In this sense, Ṣadrā's gradational reality provides a third path outside the monism- dualism dichotomy as his system does not view the two as independent substances. Rather, while existentially speaking, the self and body are the same existence (yet in different modalities), for Ṣadrā, the two share a relationship akin to form and matter, both manifesting in and *as* the same existence. The trajectory of the self's substantial change from material to immaterial entity shows the self is not fully present in the mineral, plant, or animal stages of human development. Thus, self-body integration is accounted for throughout the entire developmental process. Likewise, the self *is* the perception gained at each stage of development and *is* its own faculties.

With all remaining categories dependent on substance, Ibn Sīnā forces existence to be understood in a binary fashion (i.e. existence/essence, form/matter and monism /dualism). Our subsequent Avicennian knowledge of the world determines reality through logical categories and binary relationships between substance and accident. An Avicennian worldview, then, produces an existence as determined by reason and prepares it for mental processing. So, as the mind is incapable of joining between opposites, an Avicennian thinker must also consider ontological categories in terms of mutual exclusivity. While appreciating the tendency for the mind to formulate non-

dynamic types, Ṣadrā offers an alternative manner of approaching these ontological

categories. He portrays them as mutually inclusive, as opposed to exclusive notions,

based on existence as the principle of unity, and not substance. This view is witnessed

intuitively and not an either-or conceptual bifurcation of events. The respective

modalities of immateriality and materiality, or body and self mentioned above are

according to degrees of self-love. While this position may shed light on how apparent

opposites coexist, and their harmonious cooperation toward fulfillment, it does not justify

how the interaction between these modes occurs. Despite the self (immaterial) and

body (material) acting as anterior and posterior stages of development of love for

perfection it cannot replace the need for a philosophical explanation for the connection

between these modes. Ṣadrā says:

> Know! The self carries the body. The body does not carry the self as many
> have thought despite their hearing that it (i.e. the self) is the best part of
> the elements (al-ʿanāṣir) and the best nature (ṣafwa al-ṭibāʿi). They also
> thought that the self is acquired from the body and that it strengthens
> through the power of food and weakens through its weakness. [The
> matter] is not as they imagined it. The self collects (tuḥaṣṣal) the body and
> originates it (tukawwin) while it goes in different directions. The self is with
> it and with its power and limbs, directing it wherever it likes. The (i.e. the
> self) takes it where it likes-from descent to lower [still], from ascension to
> [that which is] above inasmuch as it is able [to do so] with its density and
> heaviness. So, whenever it wants it ascension it starts to ascend, and it
> exchanges its heaviness for lightness. If it wills its descent, it descends
> exchanging its lightness for heaviness. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī
> 2002a, vols. 9:63–64)

Unlike the Peripatetic philosophers, Ṣadrā did not believe the self directs

universal affairs while the faculties manage particular ones. Rather, for him, the self

both presents and governs all of its faculties. Ṣadrā follows Avicenna in dividing the

human soul into vegetative, animal, and rational souls and in dividing the senses into

external and internal senses." (al-Kutubi 2013, 114) These faculties belong to the self,

as opposed to the body. Although the self is alone and single, the faculties'

diversifications and multiplicity, do not make them separated from the latter. They are

the self manifested at diverse existential levels. (al-Kutubi 2013, 113–114) The three

parts of the human self above and its multiple faculties are its modes or manifestations.

Ṣadrā states:

> The soul is all of the faculties…but not as an aggregate or collection of the
> faculties. Faculties are the 'modes' or 'manifestation' of the soul. At their
> own level, the faculties are real, but at the higher simpler level they are the
> soul itself. Those faculties are attributes of the soul because the soul has
> existential degrees…and it has motion in its essential development. When
> it reaches a certain level, it contains the previous level. (al-Kutubi 2013,
> 114) [107]

Al-Kutubī understands from this that the self's dominion over these faculties does not

make them extrinsic to it. They are at its disposal as long as it shares a connection with

a material body, only to lose them when disconnected from it rendering it void with the

newly departed faculties. Rather, according to Ṣadrā, we use the benefits of our

faculties in the absence of our material bodies for they are not dependent on the

material organs. (al-Kutubi 2013, 114)

As the self acquires greater stages of immateriality due to its transubstantial

motion, the self and body gradually appear as separate entities. The self is continually

present in all of its faculties, for "know," he says, "all these various faculties are

gathered in the self [itself] dispersed throughout the body." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-

Shīrāzī 2002a, vol. 9:142) So, managing every distinct affair of the body, the self is ever

inseparable from the body. In light of this fact, Ṣadrā does not focus on self, body,

immateriality or materiality.

---

[107] al-Kutūbī directs us to see Ibid, vol. 8, 223.

With the faculties an extension of the self, he also offers the intermediary "living spirit" (*al-Rūḥ al-ḥayawānī*) as a connection between the modes, neither entirely immaterial (like the self), nor material (like the body).[108] He states, "the self only acts in the dense contingent limbs (*al-'aḍāʾ al-kathīfah al-ʿunṣariyyah*) via an agent appropriate for both sides (i.e., the self and the body). That intermediary agent is the subtle illuminated body called the "soul" (*al-rūḥ*), serving as a window to the limbs through the mediation of the central nervous system (*al-ʿAṣāb al-dimāghiyyah*)." (Ḥasan 2009, 81) [109] He mentions this intermediary ethereal nature stating, "the bearer of all the self's faculties and its representative is the ethereal living spirit (*al-rūḥ al-bukhārī al-ḥayawānī*), the source of the clarity of their interaction and its subtlety, raising the limbs from the turbidity of interaction and its density. It emanates from the pine-shaped heart." (Ḥasan 2009, 81) It seems appropriate that Ṣadrā considers the origin of the living spirit to be the heart as the latter is, albeit poetically, considered the origin of love.

Conclusion

The self, a mode of existence, also has gradational stages. The intellect, the Sadrian self's peek actualization, is the initial mineral form's final perfection. The causative force producing all the self's developmental stages is its love of self-perfection. Thus, gradational reality provides a contingent existence whose own self-love actualizes. It is clear that Ṣadrā uses gradational reality to explain the self-body

---

[108] The living spirit is not a Sadrian invention, as Ḥasan mentions Ṣadrā's agreement with Ibn Sīnā on the intermediary nature of the living spirit. See Ḥasan 2009, 81.

[109] Quoting Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shirāzī *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'āliyyah fī al-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah.*, vol.9 (Iran: Manshūrāt Ṭalīaʿ al-nūr, 2004), 74.

relationship. Its basic theme is consistent: a substance transubstantiates making divergent substances in a trajectory of self-actualization. We see how the self's emergence is emancipation from the corporeal body. He also treats the self's faculties as a form of direct presence in every limb through the living spirit, an entity between materiality and immateriality, to explain the mechanical workings of the self-body circumstance. By doing so, Ṣadrā's system posits a fluid ontological alternative to the prevailing monist-dualist binary rooted in the mind's recourse to mutually exclusivity and rational categorization.

For Ṣadrā, the self and the body both share the same existence as the self *is* existence. The ground of all phenomena is Existence. All phenomena are this ground's modes. The self and the body are able to operate uniformly as ontological identities. As Sadrian nature does not divide into incompatibilities, he blames the illusion of modular difference for the issues, like the self-body relationship, posed by thinkers before him. Kamal Kharrazi recommends that Ṣadrā's self-body theory rejects both psychological dualism and materialistic monism. In the first, whatever cannot be related to the body is related to the immaterial self, settled in the body. The latter denies the self's existence altogether, explaining all psychological phenomenon in terms of physiology or neurophysiology. (Kharrazi 2019) Instead, according to Kharrazi, Sadrian philosophy is semi-wholist, suggesting that while the self is not initially fully present, as it endures transubstantial change, complicating with development of sensory, imaginary, and rational faculties, its presence permeates. Thus, its presence and immateriality increase simultaneously in an inextricable whole. In other words, despite the apparent distinction between the self and body, wholism is constant throughout the self's journey. In this

sense, Kharrazi suggests that Ṣadrā takes a middle course away from pure subjectivism, rendering one's materiality irrelevant and reducing psychological activity to materialist discussions on the neurological states. (Kharrazi 2019) This middle way is neither monist or dualist, but a kind of wholism that sees the self as an evolving development from its potential in Primary Matter all the way to the One who fulfills all potential, Itself.

Chapter III Conclusion

We have shown that Ṣadrā overcomes the pitfalls of existential monism, that include threats to the unity of the Divine and denial of common-sense experience of the multiplicity of phenomena, through two main avenues. The first provides a coherent ontological difference between God's Individual Unity and the commonsense phenomenological view of multiplicity. The second applies to the principles of gradational reality to the phenomena, thereby, not only distinguishing them from Reality but doing so through varying degrees of intensity and value. Sadrian ontology manages to transcend the dangers of existential monism by distinguishing between God's Personal Unity and the presence of sub-lunar multiplicity of ontological entities. For him, God is Reality, without rival, even if this is not recognized commonly. The reality of everything other-than-God is left intact. This is the case even if its credibility is limited to the mind of the perceiver.

The second aspect of his avoiding the snares of existential monism is through the use of gradational reality in the primacy of Existence. For Ṣadrā, the beauty or self-love each entity possesses belongs to Simple Reality. All the various levels of kindness and mercy in the world, then, are representations of God's Beauty. The less something realizes Beauty, that is to say, the more distant it is from its completion, the more deficient, contingent, and non-existent it is.

Nonetheless, as is the nature for the lover to strive toward the beloved, entities yearn for completion in the latter.

As a result, every sub-lunar entity realizes whatever degree of perfection it can as a result of its onto-amorous pursuit. On one end, there is Prime Matter, void of perfection and hence most passionate for fulfilment. On the other there is Simple Existence. It is wholly content and complete in Its own Realization. This is why it is the goal of all that is other-than-it. Every created entity is placed somewhere distinctly different from Simple Existence because of their lack of fulfilment. Yet, as Simple Existence is All-Inclusive, their limitations are contained within Its Completion. There is nothing that is not, ontologically speaking, Simple Existence as it is, by definition, Complete. Thus, while they are not It, they are not other than It either. Each entity is found with its portion of proximity to the One as per their degree of perfection.

As for gradational reality's application in the individual self, Ṣadrā's resolution to the self-body puzzle, wherein dualism and monist positions debate, is to present a self whose ascending motion manifests an entity whose love for the realization of the Beloved causes it to transcend its material beginnings. Gradational reality in primary Existence provides a structure for the self's faculties as a form of direct existential presence in every limb through the living spirit. It exists between materiality and immateriality, operating uniformly as ontological identities, despite the minds need to place them in a binarially. Treating the self-body relationship as a whole, Ṣadrā takes an intermediate course between monist and dualism. There, the individual self's love for Perfection causes it to change from form to form, and level to level of existence, moving from its basis in near-complete passivity toward complete fulfilment in Simple Reality.

CHAPTER IV: The SP's Unfurling Trajectory Before Ṣadrā

As has been stated, with its conditions in hand, the SP's true primaeval self-awareness indicates that the self is existence. Although this indication comes from an Avicennian framework, it transcends its ideological confines. I suggest that the SP moves forward structurally as it moves forward in time, Ṣadrā who holds that an individual self's love for Perfection moves it toward complete fulfilment in Simple Reality through a process bringing it out of pure materiality into pure immateriality, through the philo-mystical faculties acquired through each stage of its development. This study shows how this process works toward the excavation of SP's dormant primitive experiential knowledge in Transcendent Philosophy. Below, I will show the stages of development in Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, and Ibn ʿArabī, respectively. I will show that Ibn Sīnā's objection to the Aristotelian definition of the soul/self coupled with questions and counter-objections, and conundrums to his alternative definition, as demonstrated in the SP, provides the linkage between these thinkers. This is because part of the thought experiment's significance is to reveal its condition-based apperception in Transcendent Philosophy.

The Suspended Person's Foundational Avicennian Phase

Much has already been stated regarding the SP's emergence in Ibn Sīnā. The perceived inconsistency between the conditions=approved apperception and that mentioned by its creator, and subsequently carried on in his wake has also been thoroughly discussed up to this point. Here, I will focus on the most important aspects of distinction on the side of Ibn Sīnā most pertinent in excavating the SP's hidden apperception supporting the Suhrawardian phase to follow it. To do so, we will observe that the Avicennian phase of the SP gives the framework for the conversation on the self. This is based on the management of Aristotle's definition of the soul, a new determination of self-apperception as an unmediated presence of the self to itself, ensuring its unity and identity. As Suhrawardī takes specific issue with the Avicennian claim to intellective-free apperception of the human essence in the SP, I include an Illuminationist critique of this claim here as well. By approaching the subject this way, the transition to the Suhrawardian phase, one which makes huge leaps to uncover the SP's apperception, is more accessible.

Here, I will cover Ibn Sīnā's effort to treat an ailing definition of the self in Aristotle. Thereafter, I will consider Tahmbasi's argument for the Peripatetic need to make the intellect the means to self-knowledge in the SP a critique of key Aristotelian concepts helping bolster his position on self-awareness. Finally, some remaining remarks will be made, on Tahmbasi's argument, against presential knowledge's place in Ibn Sīnā's treatment of the SP.

Failing Definitions

If a definition is faulty the boundaries or determined limits and distinctive nature it

offers is also potentially defective. The need to prevent flaws in definition lead Ibn Sīnā

to produce the SP thought experiment. In *On the Soul* (*De Anima*), Aristotle defines the

self/soul as the "first perfection (*entelechy*) of a natural animate body,"[110] a "substance

as form of a natural body having potential life " [111] and, " a first actuality of a natural

body having potential life." [112] Rahman points out that the impetus for the formulation of

the SP was based upon Ibn Sīnā's attempt to construct a more comprehensive

definition of the self than what had been provided by Aristotle.[113] The entelechy thesis

was not sufficient for Avicennian standards. He states:

> [A]ccording to Ibn Sina, the definition of the soul as "entelechy" (although
> he thinks that this is the best possible and most comprehensive definition
> of the souls "in this world of ours") besides being ambiguous, does not
> include all the souls, e.g., the souls of the heavenly spheres, which neither
> work through a physical organ - since they are eternally immaterial
> substances - nor do they possess sense-perception, while their intellect is
> also eternally actual and not potential and passive as the human intellect.
> It is obvious that, basically, these objections arise against Aristotle himself,
> who was the author of the soul's definition as entelechy of the body, but
> who at the same time regarded the souls of the heavens as eternally
> actual and movers of the heavenly bodies. When we have defined the soul
> as entelechy of the body, Ibn Sina goes on, we have only defined the soul
> as a relation, for entelechy, actuality or perfection is entelechy, actuality or
> perfection of something viz., of the body, possessing organs. This
> definition, therefore, does not yield the nature of the soul-in-itself, i.e.,
> whether it is a separate substance or not. In order to prove that the human
> soul is an immaterial spiritual substance, Ibn Sina has, therefore, recourse
> to his famous argument whereby a person, under certain suppositions,

---

[110] De Anima ii 1, 412b5–6

[111] *De Anima* ii 1, 412a20–1

[112] *De Anima* ii 1, 412a27–8

[113] For more on Aristotle's definition of the soul as entelechy see Owens 1957.

          can affirm his own ego without affirming the existence of his body
          (Rahman 1975, 165)

According to Rahman, Ibn Sīnā's issue against Aristotle's definition of the self as the entelechy of the body possessing organs is on two fronts. For the former, the definition is incomplete. When Aristotle declares the self as the entelechy of the body possessing organs it excludes the heavenly spheres, for example. According to Aristotle, the heavenly spheres have eternal intellects. Thus, they are inorganic and devoid of sense-perception. To add to this inclusion, the Stagirite calls the self/soul a perfection *of* the body possessing organs. The definition fails to define what the self is *itself.* Thus, the proposed definition is insufficient and requires further development to provide the proper lines of distinction akin to adequate definition.

      Although it has been argued that Ibn Sīnā overcomes substance and subject ontology, (El-Bizri 2000) his alternative to the shortcomings of Aristotelian definition, as far as Rahman is concerned, is resolved through focusing on substance. That is to say, when Ibn Sīnā determines what the self *is* he resorts to substances. The Avicennian question, then, he posits, is to ask if the self is either a material or an immaterial substance? He chooses the latter. As a part of his demonstration to prove his position, he employs the SP to help indicate the self's status as an immaterial substance through experience. (Rahman 1975, 165–66)

Conclusion

      Ibn Sīnā's critique of Aristotle's definition of the self as an entelechy is not a wholesale rejection of the latter's interpretation. Rather, instead of being the first perfection *of* a natural body, it is considered an immaterial substance *in* the body. This

is Ibn Sīnā's main adjustment to the Aristotelian definition of the self, as far as it concerns this study. The body and the terms of its relationship are left intact, as the relationship issue poses no real obstacle for him. Likewise, the presumptions of the objectivity of Aristotelian category theory used to formulate the entelechy definition remain untouched.

Ibn Sīnā on the Intellect as the Means to Self-Knowledge in the SP

As mentioned above, some previous studies have gone to some length to establish that the SP is primarily aware. Although Ibn Sīnā discusses the possible means through which we gain self-knowledge, and its subsequent definition as an immaterial substance, in the SP, there is not much focus in current scholarship on the exact process through which that self-knowledge occurs in relation to the Avicennian self. Most scholarship reads Ibn Sīnā negatively to understand the avenue through which Avicennian self-awareness occurs. As a result, there is typical agreement that the primary awareness intended in the various SP scenarios throughout the Avicennian corpus is *not* through the senses. However, the avenue through which it *is* found given in the SP is left to a vague sense of intuition on her part. There is some neglect, then, in establishing how or from which aspect of the self basic awareness occurs. Here, we will consider an argument made by Tahmasbi suggesting that the SP's direct self-awareness championed by Ibn Sīnā is through her intellect. [114]

---

[114] This serves as a key distinction in Avicennian that inspires the Suhrawardian critique and argument for presential knowledge.

Ibn Sīnā dismisses the senses as a source of determining the nature of self-awareness as it is not from amongst the sensory forms (*ṣuwar maḥsūsah*). Also, the senses are blocked in the thought experiment. [115] Thus, the body is not apprehended in part or in whole. [116] Self-awareness is not through imaginal forms (*ṣuwar khayāliyyah*) as an abstraction. Thus, the means through which forms are acquired in Peripatetic philosophy, is impossible due to the prescribed blocking of the sense organs. [117] In this regard, Tahmasbi quotes Ibn Sīna to say, "I do not suppose that you need to have a mediator at the moment because there is no mediator. The only [possible alternative] which remains is that you apprehend your essence without requiring any faculty or mediator." (Tahmasbi 2016, 144) [118]

The SP is motionless, so how, then, does it intellect self-awareness while actionless. Tahmasbi quotes Ibn Sīna on this point that, "perhaps you would say: I do affirm my essence by means of my action (*min fiʿlī*). (Tahmasbi 2016, 144) [119] Ibn Sīnā responds by suggesting either: 1) the act of intellection does not belong to you, being a general as opposed to a personal act (*fāʿilan mutlaqan lā khāṣan*), or 2) the intellective act does not belong to you. In the first option there is an action, but you cannot say that you are the one to have performed it. In the second option you would have had to have considered your essence prior to considering your activity.

---

[115] Quoting Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīḥāt*, trans. Ḥasan Malekshāhī, Vol.1 (Tehran: Soroush Press, 2004), 162.

[116] Quoting Ibid, 162. and Kaukua 2004, 92-93.

[117] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīḥāt*, 174.

[118] Quoting Ibid, 161.

[119] Quoting Ibid. 164.

He notes that to affirm your essence by means of your action, you need to have an action or a movement in your limbs. However, based on the principle that you have no movement in your body and in its limbs, you cannot act.

He states that there are two possible alternatives: First, the action is a general action and it does not belong to you (*fāʿilan mutlaqan lā khāṣan*). Second, this is your own action (*fiʿilan laka*). In the first alternative, you affirm that there is a general actor (*fāʿil*), but you cannot affirm that your own essence is the actor. In regard to the second alternative, the issue is that you must have considered your own essence before considering your own actions. Your action fails to confirm your essence as it is part of the concept of the action you cannot confirm. (Tahmasbi 2016, 144–5) [120] For this reason, Ibn Sīnā rejects reflexive self-awareness concluding that we have direct self-awareness solely through our intellects. (Tahmasbi 2016, 145)

Conclusion

Ibn Sīnā offers that apprehension occurs either with or without mediation. The SP does not allow for mediation, due to the epistemic blocks mentioned above. As a result, all internal faculties, save intellect, are denied due to its ability to acquire knowledge without mediation. For this reason, Ibn Sīnā recommends that the SP realizes her self through her essence, intellectually.

---

[120] Ibid.

Avicennian and Aristotelian Intellectual Self-Awareness

Ibn Sīnā's epistemology is not distinct enough from Aristotle to call the former an innovator of knowledge theory in every respect. Rather, like categorical theory, Avicennian ideas on the nature of knowledge take their cue from the Stagirite with little deviation. Here, I will consider an argument placing Avicennian self-awareness on an intellective basis as a result of his Aristotelian inclination. Tahmasbi contends that the Avicennian SP's ground of self-apperception is its act of thinking of thinking, indicating an acquired self-awareness, as opposed to a self-knowledge already present in the knower.

Tahmasbi recalls a passage from *al-Taʿlīqāt* explicitly stating that our self-awareness is through our intellects: 'We are aware of our essences by virtue of our intellect." (Tahmasbi 2016, 145) [121] He also notes that Ibn Sīnā has also stated that self-awareness is not acquired through forms as *al-Taʾlīqāt* advises: 'the awareness of the human soul of itself is primal (*awwaliyyun lahā*) for it and it is not acquired *(fa lā yuḥṣalu lahā*) by means of acquisition (*kasb*)." [122] (Tahmasbi 2016, 145) The self, then, is essentially self-conceptualizing. [123] As Peripateticism suggests that human knowledge is based on divine knowledge, [124] Tahmasbi suggests that for us to understand the Avicennian verdict that the self is self-conceptualizing, we need to

---

[121] Quoting Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Taʾlīqāt* (Qum: Markaz Al-Nashr Maktabaʾl-ʿAlamalʾ al-Islāmī,1990), 161.

[122] Quoting Ibid, 79. See Black 2008, 69.

[123] See McGinnis 2010, 141.

[124] No doubt something well developed in and taken from Plotinian thought. For more on Plotinus and the relationship between divine and human thought see D'Ancona 1997 and Remes 2017.

understand Ibn Sīnā's theology in this regard for the way God knows Himself is the way we know ourselves. (Tahmasbi 2016, 146)

Tahmasbi quotes *al-Ishārāt* : 'As has been determined, it is necessary that the Necessary Existent contemplates its essence in a self-initiated manner.'[125] He also reminds us that the Metaphysics of *al-Shifā* mentions that God's Essence is intellect, intellector, and the intelligible, thus all at once self-aware. (Ibn Sīnā 1970, 357) Book Λ of *Metaphysics* states that, 'since the supreme intellect is the best thing in the world, it must think itself; its thinking is a thinking of thinking.' (Tahmasbi 2016, 147) [126] Aristotle continues: 'Therefore, since the object of thought and thought itself do not differ in the case of immaterial things, the divine intellect and its object will be the same; i.e. the divine act of thinking will be one with the object of its thought.' [127] As human self-awareness is modelled on divine self-awareness in Avicennian philosophy of mind, these statements about pure divine intellect apply to human beings. (Tahmasbi 2016, 146) It is this peripatetic notion of an intellectualizing self-awareness, Tahmbasi notes, that serves as the platform of Suhrawardī's critique on Ibn Sīnā's self's act of thinking about thinking. (Tahmasbi 2016, 147–8)

---

[125] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa al- tanbīḥāt*, trans. Ḥasan Malekshāhī, Vol.1 (Tehran: Soroush Press, 2004), 388.

[126] Quoting Aristotle 1956, ll. 1074b35–1075a In Metaphysics chapters, 7,9, and 12 Aristotle describes the Prime Mover's personal act as the intellection of himself thinking about thinking of himself. For more on this see De Koninck 1994.

[127] Quoting Ibid., 1075a1–5.

Conclusion

     Despite the opinions supporting a kind of pre-presential knowledge thesis in Ibn

Sīnā, Tahmasbi offers a textual argument against it. In his reading, Aristotle's epistemic

precedent sets intellection as the basis of Divine knowledge. Avicennian human

knowledge can only imitate this supreme precedence. Thus, For Ibn Sīnā, Divine and

human self-awareness are identical because they both have self-aware pure intellects

without form (*ṣūrah*), implying that their shared self knowledge is intellectual, yet direct.

(Tahmasbi 2016, 146) On this account, for Tahmbasi, the SP indicates an intellected

self-awareness and not presential knowledge, nor a precursor to it. (Tahmasbi 2016,

142) Rather, Tahmbasi, argues that for Ibn Sīnā, the SP's apperception implies an

intellective presence obtained through an indirect act of recognition in her "thinking of

thinking." It is on this basis that Tahmbasi considers the primitive self-awareness, as

found in a strictly peripatetic setting, remains a mediated form of knowledge.

     Ibn Sīnā states in *al-Taʿlīqāt* that "the self (*ḏāt*) is present (*ḥāḍirah*) to itself in

any state and there is not oblivious (*dhuhūl*) of its self. [128] Tahmbasi notes that some

scholars stress Ibn Sīnā's use of the word presence (*ḥuḍūr*) for the self's relationship to

itself to suggest that the Avicennian concept of self-awareness is based on presence.

Tahmbasi points to another Avicennian statement on presence in *al-Taʿlīqāt* wherein he

states, "the existence (*wujūd*) of it (the self) is none other than its apprehension (*idrāk*)

of its self. [129] Apprehension here, as far as Tahmbasi is concerned, is intellectualization.

Thus, based on this argument, any talk of Avicennian presence intended by Ibn Sīnā is

---

[128] Quoting Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt* (Qum: Markaz Al-Nāshr Maktaba al-ʿAmal al-Islāmī,1990), 148.

[129] Quoting Ibid, 148.

intellectual and intermittent. That is to say, Avicennian presence is none other than a

"thinking of thinking." (Tahmasbi 2016, 157) If the SP's self-awareness is essentially

thinking of thinking then its self-apperception is both intellective and non-continual. An

intermittent basis of self-apperception supplied through the secondary means of

intellection is not a recipe for presential knowledge on any philosopher's account.

A Further Note on the Lack of Presential Knowledge in Ibn Sīnā

Before proceeding to the Suhrawardian phase, it is important to analyze a

possible lack of support for presential knowledge in Ibn Sīnā a bit further.[130] Tahmbasi

reminds us of his expression in *al-Taʿlīqāt*, "if I perceive my own self, you should know

that truly I am the perceived; the perceiver (subject) and the perceived (object) are the

same. (Tahmasbi 2016, 155)[131] He also argues that this is not in reference to a

presential knowledge identifying a subject with its object. Rather, he suggests, it is

written in a peripatetic fashion, identical to Aristotelian notions. If we expect that Ibn

Sīnā is forwarding presential knowledge in the above passage, then in *De Anima*

wherein Aristotle states, "for where the objects are immaterial, that which thinks and that

which is thought are identical,"[132] must do the same. (Tahmasbi 2016, 155)[133]

---

[130] For more on scholarship who suggests that there is a precedent for presential knowledge in Avicennian epistemology due to passages wherein Ibn Sīnā speaks of a lack of division between subject and object see Kobayashi 1990, 66; Marcotte 2004, 5.

[131] Quoting Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt,* 79.

[132] Quoting Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans R.D. Hicks (Cambridge: University Press, 1907), 430a. See Black 2008, 63.

[133] Although Suhrawardī's vision of Aristotle supports this parallel, an Aristotelian support for presential knowledge is not likely to be upheld by most Aristotelian scholarship.

Tahmasbi also mentions Ibn Sīnā's words in *al-Mubāḥathāt*, "our intellect is not intellecting its essence continually. Rather, our self is always aware of its existence," [134] as used by scholars to support presential knowledge in Ibn Sīnā to establish a non-rationalizing continual self-awareness of its essence.(Tahmasbi 2016, 155) [135] Tahmbasi retorts that, in fact, this passage shows the difference between the self's awareness and its awareness of its awareness (*al-shuʿūr bi al-shuʾūr*), as mentioned above.[136] That is to say, our attention to self-awareness (*idrāk*) is an intermittent consciousness. Tahmbasi posits that self rationalization of the essence is not the same as the primary self-awareness as the former lacks continuity. So, while there is constancy in 'aware of itself' and not in 'rationalizing the essence by intellect,' Tahmbasi trumps Marcotte and others claiming presential knowledge is intended in the above passages on the grounds that presential knowledge implies continuity.

The SP's Avicennian Phase Summary

It is important to understand the aspects selected here from the Avicennian discourse on the self, and upon his precedence, occurring in his awake. The majority of the developments in this area were discussions in support of or in reaction to his contributions. His suggestions, in turn, were specific reactions to Aristotle's treatment of the soul/self. From that, Ibn Sīnā attempted to present a new definition of the soul/self

---

[134] Quoting Ibn Sīnā, al-*Mubāḥathāt (*Qum: Bīdār,1992), §550, 185.

[135] Marcotte, for example, submits that this passage indicates that the "awareness of itself'is the self's essence being present to itself, i.e. presential knowledge. The 'rationalizing the essence by intellect' then, is the self's reflexive, and thus, secondary intellectualizing treatment of the essence. Marcotte 2004, 2.

[136] See Ibn Sīnā, al-*Mubāḥathāt* §550, 185; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʾlīqāt*, 82.

as Aristotle's delineations were too vague for him. To provide further clarity to Aristotle's

attempt, Ibn Sīnā proposed the SP to establish that the human self is not merely a

perfection of the body but an immaterial substance. While establishing a clearer

definition of the self he also laid the way for a new means toward demarcation by

utilizing a thought experiment to do so. He also tried to portray the self as its own

unmediated self-presence. With little said about *how* the self is its own self-awareness,

a void was left for thinkers to explain how this is the case.

Tahmbasi raises a formidable argument, using Ibn Sīnā's own words, suggesting

that the direct self-awareness Ibn Sīnā championed is through the intellect (and thus

indirect). [137]The intellection serving as the ground of Avicennian self-apprehension is

the act of thinking of thinking and *not* a self-knowledge already present in the knower

serving as a precursor to the Suhrawardian notion of presential knowledge. Avicennian

self-knowledge is not a foundation in this manner, according to Tahmbasi, because the

primitive self-awareness, as found in a strictly peripatetic setting, remains a mediated

form of knowledge with no continuity.

The Suspended Person's Suhwardian Phase of Presential Knowledge (*al-ʿIlm al-ḥuḍūrī*)

By Suhrawardī's time, the SP and discussions regarding self-awareness were

commonplace in philosophical circles, thanks to the preponderance of the Avicennian

school. As it standardized throughout the Muslim (and non-Muslim world for that matter)

various extensions and arguments against Ibn Sīnā's position on apperception and

---

[137] For more on the perceived lack of clear demarcation between Ibn Sīnā's ideas on self-apperception and its potential intellection see Marcotte 2004.

knowledge also appeared. Naturally, the SP scenario is found in Suhrawardī's works. Its primary function, ironically, is to support his critique against Avicennian self-awareness based upon discursive proofs and/or reflective awareness while pushing intuitive or presential knowledge forward.

A primary example of this approach toward buttressing philosophical opinion upon the SP is somewhat standardized in Suhrawardī is in the Book of Flashes (*Kitāb al-lamaḥāt*). Here Suhrawardī commands us to:

> Know that you are not absent from your essence/self (*ḏātik*) even if you do not maintain awareness of your remembrance (of it) like when intoxicated. If you imagined your essence created at once with a mature intellect (ʿaql kāmil) and in a moderate climate such that your members are suspended separately to not touch, you would not feel bodies, nor that which is impressed upon them. You would, however, not be entirely absent for the existence of your essence. Thus, your self-knowledge is known without a mediator. (al-Suhrawardī 1991, 116)

Here, a form of *al-Ishārāt's* SP, impresses upon us that one is primarily self-aware without the need for mediation, even while inebriated. This is presential knowledge in Suhrawardī as it relates to self-awareness, and, as we will see below, ontology. For our purposes, presential knowledge is the most important Suhrawardian development in the context of the SP's apperceptive unfurling, serving as the platform to experience self-knowledge's status as the identification of knowledge and being. In what follows I will uncover how Suhrawardī's treatment of Avicennian definition, substantiality, ontological intensity, and a perceived vagueness in the peripatetic theories regarding primitive self-awareness leading to the Illuminationist school's promotion of presential knowledge as its epistemic ground.

Suhrawardian Treatment of Peripatetic Definition

Suhrawardī takes issue with Avicennian Peripatetic inductive science inasmuch as they make the acquisition of the genus and specific difference the foundation for knowledge and demonstration. Instead of inducing human understanding and familiarity through a process of abstraction and conceptualization, as Ibn Sīnā suggests, he asserts that the basis of knowledge is something already present within us. Although the Illuminationist ground is based on a kind of platonic intuition, it does not reject discursive knowledge outright. Rather, it deems the exercise of the power of reason, or the process of thinking logically secondary to immediate perception. The crux of the Suhrawardian critique against peripatetic inductive science lies in Ibn Sīnā's having made reason and logic on the basis of Aristotelian definition as the basis of his Ibn Sīnā's theory of knowledge.

Unlike the Peripatetics, Suhrawardī considers innate knowledge to be the basis of human understanding and familiarity. If objects are not known innately, their point of reference is ultimately based on this internal comprehension. He states "man's knowledge is either innate or not innate. When an unknown thing cannot be made known by pointing it out or bringing it to mind and it is something that cannot be attained by the true visions of the great sages, then knowledge of it must depend on things leading to it in an order and are ultimately based on innate knowledge." (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 8) If an Aristotelian looks for definitions to establish the objective truth of something through proofs, and the basis of definitions is that which is not subject to proof and is subjective, then the reason for the charge against circular logic on behalf of

Iluminationists is obvious. Thus, for Suhrawardī, all definitions inevitably lead to *a priori*

concepts which themselves are in no need of definition. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 194)

If knowledge were not innate and relied on lists of essential differentia,

Suhrawardī submits, then knowledge is hardly attainable. He states, "knowledge of

anything that man desires to know will depend on previously obtaining an infinite

number of things, and he will not even be able to obtain the first step in knowledge-

which is absurd." [138] With Aristotelian definition placing attributes and accidents as

much a part of a thing as its essence is, (Aminrazavi 1990, 171–3). Suhrawardī deems

peripatetic avenues of knowledge obscure. As Aminrazavi summarizes, for the

Illuminationists, Stagirite definitions fail because the differentia of substance is

unknown, essence is defined by what it is not, and the soul/self and mental concepts

have unknown differentia. Without definition the peripatetic cannot arrive at truth.

Suhrawardī contends that definition cannot be established for these items. Hence, he

claims that as it is impossible to circumscribe all their essential components, it is

impossible to produce essentialist definitions. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 10–11)

Definitions, used to reveal the essence of natural universals through cataloguing

their proximate genus and differentia, proved unfeasible. Suhrawardī contests that if

these essential definitions were operative then knowledge of their class and their

respective differences within the class would be commensurate with knowledge of their

essence. If these aspects of the essence are unknown, then definition is meaningless.

Thus, even *if* all the essential differentia were capable of being ascertained knowledge

of a thing makes definition superfluous. If one does not know the object to be defined, a

---

[138] Ziai 1990, 114–128.

definition will not be of any assistance either. John Walbridge conveys a typical

Illuminationist attitude toward Aristotelian definition, stating that:

> While real definitions clearly would be very useful in sciences, it is doubtful whether any have ever been constructed. There is no way to know whether a property is in fact peculiar to a given essence, and, one in possession of certain essentials, there is no way for certain that others were not overlooked. Finally, there were some things, like bodies, which everyone knew perfectly well, but where there was no general agreement about their essential parts or whether indeed, they have any.
>
> Moreover, whenever the Peripatetics advanced examples of their real definitions-for example, 'Black is a color that gathers vision'-the definition in every case used intellectual fictions, such as *color*, or differences less known than what *gathers* vision. In fact, black was a simple reality, directly known to whomsoever saw it and unknowable to anyone who had not. Concepts went back to such directly known simple realities. Composite concepts were known by compounding simple realities. (Walbridge 1992, 53–55)

Without the objective certainty of the components needed for Aristotelian definitions, nor

which components are (or are not) found in any would-be defined object, nor the

certainty that all necessary items are accounted for, Illuminationists find the Peripatetic's

epistemic concerns altogether drowned in obscurity. Suhrawardī agrees with Platonists

that the multiplicity of particular phenomenal objects is unified under the "common

essences" or Platonic Ideas, as opposed to a generic "existence." As these essences

have their own reality, when we mention 'black-ness' as it refers to a particular object in

our everyday experience, we are not referring to abstract universal concepts shared

between particulars (i.e., like existence is portrayed in Illuminationist thought). Instead,

when we make reference to the black-ness of a particular black object we also refer to

objective essence. (Kamal 2010, 12) The object in question is simply 'there' and not in

need of further scrutiny.

Rather, for Suhrawardī, something is known via an immediate encounter between the knower and the known. A definition, at best, may be used to indicate the content of direct experience. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, sec. xxiv) [139] Instead of building knowledge on concepts that ultimately require *a priori* truths to establish their veracity, Suhrawardī opts for simple direct apprehension of things as they are as the platform for understanding *what* they are. That is to say; a person realizes what is to be defined, is to see what it is through their self-awareness of them. (Ziai 1990, 104–14) On this, Maḥdī Yazdi comments, "the most outstanding feature of knowledge by presence...is that the immediate objective reality of the thing as it is, is its being known." (Yazdī 1992, 89) Upon apprehension, the self grasps the essence of what is defined and may translate those findings for discursive purposes once the original apperception of reality has been experienced. In this way, Suhrawardī's unified theory of apprehension (Arabic: *idrāk,* Persian: *daryāftan*) or knowledge by presence advances into an onto-epistemic inquiry outside of Avicennian methodology. There, dyadic differences (i.e., essence and existence/subject and object, etc.) form first principles rooted in predicative laws. Here, like self-consciousness, Suhrawardī proposes a field of knowledge prior to the mind's binary trappings.

At the same time, he attempts to fulfill the same epistemic expectations in intuitive knowledge as held by those who depended upon discursive knowledge only from a pre-discursive form. That is to say, the same first principles required in the formation of the precision of deductive reason are to obtained through "perceiving I-

---

[139] For more on the Illuminationist destruction of the Peripatetic definition see Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī 1969, 58–61, and

ness" (*al-anaʾiyyah al-mudrikah*). They are then assessed by non-intuitive modes of inference for their conceptual validity. [140] In this sense, in Suhrawardī, self-consciousness acts as the ground of what is simply apprehended, and that which is said about or not said about it. (al-Suhrawardī 1998, xix)

The basis of the Illuminationist theory of knowledge, relying on direct experience, is the Knowledge of Lights (ʿ*Ilm al-anwār).* [141] Suhrawardī states, "Since there is nothing more evident than light, there is nothing less in need of definition." (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 76) Thus, peripatetic definition can only attempt to explain empirical experience through rational investigations and demonstrations, themselves based upon *a priori* notions completely devoid of objective reality. (Ziai 1990, 81) It has no access to the clarity of intuitive experience presented from the direct empirical presence of an object itself. The simple presence of empirical objects serves as the basis of the new Illuminationist epistemology having no need for Aristotelian definition, as such.[142]

Suhrawardian Treatment of Peripatetic Substantiality and Intensity

In Suhrawardī, we see a tendency to consider *what* Ibn Sīnā is supposing, and *how* it is determined more than how it is demonstrated rationally. This was true in Suhrawardī's treatment of Aristotelian definition and will repeat itself here in the examination on his treatment of the Avicennian substance. Much for the same reasons

---

[140] al-Suhrawardī 1998, xviii.

[141] Ibid., xvi–xvii.

[142] As for the Avicennian inheritance, we can include the recognition of the self's modes of perception into two different levels: 1) an unmediated presence of the self with the self, 2) a substance's intellective perception of its essence. Suhrawardī made the level of direct apperception, or presential knowledge, the foundation of his epistemology. Marcotte 2004, 4.

overruled Avicennian-Aristotelian standards of definition, Suhrawardī discarded

substance as the basic ontological entity. Here we will look at how Suhrawardī handles

the Avicennian discourse on the self as substance [143] as a model of his aversion to

Avicennian substantiality.

Light as the Basic Entity of Suhrawardian Ontology and Intensity

Against Ibn Sīnā, as Mehdi Aminrazavi summarizes, "Suhrawardī argues that

light is the necessary condition for things to be observed and therefore it is light and not

being that should be the constituting element of an ontology." (Aminrazavi 1997, 32) [144]

"Being" here meaning the combination of the concepts of essence and existence, as per

Ibn Sīnā. That is to say, in terms of what *is* anything of which nothing more apparent can

be given in definition or explanation must be truly and even literally called 'light.' (Yazdī

1992, 72–3) This is because "Suhrawardī...conventionally equated the meaning of light

with existence and the meaning of darkness with nothingness." (Yazdī 1992, 74)

Suhrawardī examined the existence-essence dichotomy handed down from Ibn

Sīnā. His mystical vision saw that all things exist with equal significance as Light. This

equivocality is reflected in the perspective that all things are present in the same sense

making existence, itself, undetectable. Existence is only distinguished from the essence

of the things that are observed by the mind. (Aminrazavi 1997, 35) Thus, Suhrawardī's

---

[143] Not entirely surprising, however, is that we can see this follow up question appearing in the Avicennian corpus. That is to say, Ibn Sīnā's perspicacious insight into these matters already anticipated the rise of this enquiry.

[144] The shift from being to light occurred to him through mystical inspiration as opposed to rational enquiry. Thus, the move from a rational peripatetic approach to a mystical Illuminationist one happened through spiritual experience.

existence is a universal concept, devoid of any extra-mental reality.(Aminrazavi 1997,

33) What is "real" then, for the Illuminationist is essence. With existence as a mere

concept, it requires a concrete entity to appear to a person to exist. Existence, then, is

contingent upon essence. Thus, the principality of Essence (*aṣālah al-māḥiyyah*) gives

essence ontological primacy in the order of the actualization of an entity. (Aminrazavi

1997, 34)

Light does not reveal the existence of an entity, as existence is only in the mind.

Rather, the only object revealed in light is the essence.[145] Essence is light, light is

essence. (Aminrazavi 1997, 35) Light has an infinite capacity for gradation i.e., lesser

degrees of intensity. Thus, although all light is equally significant, it is "made up of an

infinite succession of contingent dependent lights." (Aminrazavi 1997, 31) "Each light is

the existential cause of the light below it." (Aminrazavi 1997, 32) Although all things are

essentially the same essence, Their ontological status depends on the degree to which

they are self-aware. (Aminrazavi 1997, 32–3)

The Ultimately Self-Aware or the Light of Lights (*Nūr al-anwār)* is Necessary

Existence (*Wājib al-wujūd*) and the ultimate cause (Aminrazavi 1997, 31) of those things

which have less varying degrees of self-consciousness of their essence. The most

important of the contingent creatures is the rational self (*nafs al-nātiqah*), so pure that it

is matter-free (Aminrazavi 1997, 79) Light has an infinite capacity for gradation or lesser

degrees of intensity. While the Essence is Light and it is ultimately one, the degrees of

participation in it creates the appearance of distinct contingencies. (Aminrazavi 1997,

---

[145] In the end, he concluded, if existence had concrete reality, and managed to be distinguishable (i.e., if existence were different from essence) then existence would need existence to support it. That existence would also require an existence to support it, and so on. Aminrazavi 1997, 35.

79) Although all things are essentially the same light, their ontological status depends on the degree to which they are self-aware. (Aminrazavi 1997, 32–3)

Self-awareness is based on an entity's degree of consciousness of its essence. (Aminrazavi 1997, 33) It is so pure that it is matter-free (Aminrazavi 1997, 79) The body is the absence of light, hence the least intense. The only distinction between the "I" and the body is the varying intensities of light between them. (Aminrazavi 1997, 40)

Conclusion

Suhrawardī determines that Light is the only essential reality. Light's reality exists in degrees of self-awareness. The only distinction between the self-awareness of entities is the varying degrees of Light they have, respectively. Thus, the only difference between self-awareness and the body is the difference of Light intensity between the "I" and the body. Likewise, the selves are distinguished by degrees of intensity as Aminrazavi states:

> [H]aving identified the soul as an ontological level of reality, Suhrawardī
> offers his epistemological theory... in which the soul as an ontological level
> of reality is a type of existence or presence (ḥūḍūr) which can be more or
> less. Since the soul is the essence of man, it follows that humans also can
> be more or less, and that some humans "are" more than others,
> ontologically speaking. (Aminrazavi 2017, 375)

All these ontological variables and possibilities are based upon Light, as opposed to the peripatetic substance.

The Inadequacy of Avicennian Substance

Suhrawardī seems to note the repetitive inadequacies of substance as the basis of both logical definition and ontology in the school of Aristotle. He states:

> The Peripatetics have made it impossible for anything to be known, since substances have unknown differentia. They define substantiality by something negative, while the soul (*nafs*) and the separate substances, according to them, have unknown differentia. They define accidents like blackness, for example, as a color that collects vision. Collecting vision is accidental, and you already know about color-ness. Thus, bodies and accidents would not be conceivable at all. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 51–52)

Here, instead of defining what substance *is,* the peripatetic tendency is to determine what substance is not. Thus, a substance of the gaps emerges. No doubt a fallacy in Suhrawardian terms, substance serves as the explanation for the otherwise unknown phenomenon of a basic ontological entity. For Suhrawardī, the peripatetic substance theory is a compounded argument from ignorance for not only is the substance defined by what it is not but its constituents are also left undetermined. Suhrawardī considers substance the source of unsolvable problems through its negative definitions and tendency toward regressive argumentation. Due to their reliance on the flimsy foundations provided by substantiality, each proposition mentioned, be it the definition of bodies or accidents requires further justification.

Suhrawardī recommends that considering the self substantially is an onto-epistemic misfire. The latter states:

> Substantiality, whether taken as the perfection of its quiddity or as an expression for the denial of a subject or a locus, is not an independent entity that could be your essence itself. If substantiality is taken to be an unknown meaning and if you apprehend your essence continually by some means other than something superadded to your essence, then this substantiality, of which you are unconscious, can neither be the whole or your essence nor any part thereof. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 80)

Substantiality of the self, then, according to Suhrawardī, makes the 'I,' through and from which we know all things, something extended out or thrown before itself. Hence, Suhrawardian critique includes an objection to understanding the self through

substantiality as it makes the self's essence into an object (i.e. other-than-I.) Thus, as

Marcotte summarizes, there is no Suhrawardian argument on this point that does not

focus on the idea that knowing the self through something added to it, no matter what it

may be, is simply not possible. (Marcotte 2019, 188) [146]

Suhrawardī takes issue with what he coins "Beings of Reason" (*iʿtibārāt*

ʿaqaliyyah). These are concepts that, unlike concrete attributes like blackness, fail to

exist outside of the mind. Rather, existence, necessity, contingency, unity, duality, color,

privation, relation, and substantiality result from meditation on things but do not exist

outside of these thoughts. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, xxv) Relentless with his attack on the

ambiguity of substance and its concomitants he says:

> The followers of the Peripatetics say that accidentality is external to the
> reality of accidents. This is correct, for accidentality is another intellectual
> attribute. Some of them explain this by saying that man can intellect
> something yet be unsure about its accidentality. However, they fail to
> apply this reasoning to substantiality, not thinking that when man is unsure
> about the accidentality of something, he is unsure about its substantiality
> as well. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 51)

Both accident and substance are products of the mind). Whatever is outside of the mind

has aspects that may or may not be ascertained by it. Thus, just as some accidents go

---

[146] It may be added here that Suhrawardian psychology is so focused on the point of the self's isolation from all non-essential that not just the body, but the world itself is considered to be completely ontologically irrelevant to it that it is both defined by this isolation and completely beyond the world. After a deliberation in the Structures of Light on this isolation al-Dawwānī comments (Suhrawardī's words in brackets) that, "since the self's freedom from the body is established, he (now) indicates its definition in his words [the rational self is a substance (*jawhar*) as everyone knows intuitively that it exists through its essence and is not an attribute/non-essential (*ʿāriḍ*) for other than itself [to indicate it through the senses is unimaginable]... and [The rational self , and others that will be mentioned] of the intellects [is not a body nor is it corporeal. It is not in the world nor outside of it, not connected to it nor disconnected from it] because exiting is the absence of entering that which is entered, and disconnection is the absence of connecting to what is connected to. If the absence of entering and exiting is what was intended here without qualification, then the intention would be to say that the self leaves and is disconnected from the world. [All of these are attributes (*ʿawāriḍ*) of bodies]. al-Dawwānī 2010, 89-90.

unaccounted for, so does their substantiality. If substance is the basic ontological entity

and it is not always established, then what clarity can be offered regarding what *is*?

Along with the pitfalls of the ambiguity surrounding Avicennian substance and its

relationship with it's differentia, Suhrawardī also questions the overcomplexity of

substance's form and matter viewing hylomorphism [147] as an unnecessary complication.

Using common objects to examine his point on the redundancy of substance and to

challenge the utility of the doctrine that physical objects result from the combination of

matter and form he states:

> [E]ach part of that which is predicated to be a substance in a certain
> respect is not necessarily itself a substance. One may predicate of a chair
> that it is a substance in a certain respect and that the states by which it is
> a chair are part of the chair, but it does not follow that these are
> substance. Only in the case of a substance that is a substance in every
> respect are all the parts substance. The fact that it is a substance in all
> respects just means that all its parts are substance if it had parts. Water
> and air are considered to be pure substances, yet they are only
> substances with respect to their corporeality, and their being water and air,
> in particular, is caused by accidents. Water is a substance with accidents
> that are not themselves substance. They argued: 'The form is a
> constituent of the substance, so it is a substance. But the substantiality of
> the forms consists in their not being in a subject. Being not in a subject
> means that the locus is not independent of them. That the locus is not
> independent of them means that they are constituents of the locus.' Thus,
> to say, 'the form is a constituent of the substance, so it is a substance is
> equivalent to saying, 'The form is a constituent of the substance, so it is a
> constituent of substance.' We have shown that accidents may be
> constituents of a substance. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 61–62)

To describe an object through a substance's relative attributes may not always verifiy its

substantiality as it has to be a substance in every respect. Thus, using every associated

attribute related to a particular substance must be determined to define and conceive

---

[147] For example, when discussing bodies, Suhrawardī suggests that instead of being a complex
combination of form and matter with various distinctions, he suggests that a body is a simple subsisting
value (*miqdār*). al-Suhrawardī 1999, 78–79.

the substantiality of the object's substance in all of its parts. According to Suhrawardī, water fails the test of substantiality as it has accidents (i.e. parts) that are themselves not substances. At this point, the Peripatetic hylomorphic argument suggests the substantiality of form makes form stable and vice-versa. His response suggests that their argument on both form and substance resemble accidents. The accident's status has already had a less than stable depiction in Suhrawardī.

To save form from the quagmire of Peripatetic oversight Suhrawardī suggests a different footing for it as it applies to the physical world:

> By, 'form,' we mean in this book only the simple reality of the species, whether substantial or accidental. There is nothing in the elements but corporeality and states-nothing else! Now that we have proven that there are no non-sensible forms such as they had affirmed, all that remains are qualities that become more or less intense. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 61–62)

There is nothing in front of us, he suggests, but the simple reality of its presence as there is nothing more reliable to consider when observing phenomenal objects.[148] One either encounters an external object or one does not. It may be either legible, open, closed, wet, dry, or whatever other condition upon witnessing, but that is all that may be said of it. It is determined by one's senses as the object presents itself to us. For Suhrawardī, hylomorphism does not offer a verifiable means to appreciate essences on the account of the form nor the shaky substantial theories prepared by the Peripatetics who aim to classify reality into neat conceptual packages.

---

[148] As for the immaterial reality intended in the term 'form' by the Peripatetics Nasr offers that, "Suhrawardi alters the Aristotelian system by rejecting one of its fundamental tenets, namely, the doctrine of hylomorphism which is the backbone of Peripatetic natural philosophy. For Suhrawardī and the rest of the Ishrāqp school, the Universe consists of degrees of light and of darkness, which is the absence of light. And bodies, so far as their material aspect is concerned, are no more than this darkness, or obstruction, which does not permit the light to penetrate through it. As for the Aristotelian form, it is identified with the angel which "watches over" and guards each thing, the light that is contained in each body by virtue of which that body is able to exist.' Nasr 1969, 67–68.

The Self's Light and Understanding

With the Illuminationist critique of the negatives of Peripatetic definition and

substance at our backs, the relationship between the self, light, and understanding

remains to be seen. How, then, does Suhrawardī positively explain the relationship

between these pieces of the epistemic process? That is to say, how would he explain

how it is that we have comprehension of ourselves and our surroundings on the basis of

immediate experience if the Peripatetic model is unworthy of this explanation, at least

as a basis of understanding. Yazdi begins an answer stating that:

> [T]o know myself through knowledge by presence is to rule out any
> element of not being myself, which would not be present in myself, and to
> concentrate instead on the absolute purity of 'I-ness,' which is wholly
> present to myself. Since this knowledge remains, at this particular stage,
> in absolute simplicity, the self also, because of our equation, must remain
> in the ultimate degree of simplicity. (Yazdi 1992, 89)

With the ground of substantiality shifting under the weight of Suhrawardian scrutiny,

Illuminationism pushes knowledge by presence as an answer to negative identification.

With them, direct knowledge provides a barrier for a psychological content of the gaps.

Instead of proposing a conceptualized content that may be better explained for what is

not (what else could be done for Suhrawardī in an attempt to take on the Avicennian

immaterial substance as self?) the Illuminationist move toward positive identification in

self-awareness. Rahman submits that since Suhrawardī "believed Aristotelian

categories to be purely subjective, (he) asserted that in the direct experience of the self

all that was given was a self-aware or self-luminous being to which all other concepts

like substance, differentia, etc. were extrinsic. He, therefore, describes himself only as a self-luminous being, of the nature of light;" (Rahman 1975, 168).

The self-apparent light is beyond existence, necessity, contingency, unity, duality, color, privation, relation, and substantiality. It simply *is.* It is direct, clear, and utter certainty. Even the terms of visibility strike a new meaning in the Illuminationist paradigm. It is in this sense of reorientation that Yazdi points out, the word 'apparent' itself takes on a different meaning in Suhrawardī than in typical phenomenologist jargon. Here it is not 'showing something' to 'something else,' but rather as a state of utter certainty. "I am apparent to myself' accordingly means that I am so sure about myself that it is absurd for me to cast the slightest shadow of doubt on the truth of my being. This is because it would be absurd for me to be at all absent from myself." (Yazdī 1992, 90) Thus, For Suhrawardī, in contrast to the token Peripatetic false dilemma of conceptual structures and all that they entail, an appearance is not a decoy. What we see, then, is not used to throw one's attention to another object for contemplation. Rather, what is apparent is most certainly true. There is nothing more certain than the appearance of my self. Psychological dissonance has no place in the Illuminationist account simply because one cannot escape one's self.

The absurdity of a lack of self-awareness also serves as a bridge between Suhrawardian ontology and epistemology. This is because:

> Suhrawardī pointed out that although we are, in actual circumstances, aware of ourselves, we have clearly understood that it is absolutely impossible to attain this awareness through a representation that would obviously count as something other than the bare reality of ourselves in necessarily though the sheer 'presence' of the reality of ourselves. The awareness of ourselves means neither more nor less than the very existential reality of ourselves. This is the material equivalence between 'knowing' ourselves by presence and 'being' in ourselves as the objective

> reality of ourselves, and this is the meaning of the self-objectivity of knowledge by presence, which in fact constitutes the positive aspect of illuminative theory. (Yazdi 1992, 88)

Our sheer presence makes for veritical knowledge. Traversing the threshold of subjectivity, our selves grant us the certainty of what we know as much as what we know *is* certainty. As self and knowledge are synonymous terms, such proximity bears no logical chance for other-than-self. The field of "I"-ness reveals that knowing is existing and existing is knowing. There the "most private" of my private reality is nothing but the individual fact of my existence, for which the word 'I' has been designated as a direct reference, not to be used in the manner that an ordinary word is used in its meaning. (Yazdi 1992, 81) In other words, I *is* the essence of a reality of certain comprehension.

Conclusion

With Avicennian substance deemed vague and inadequate, and in that sense, darkness, Suhrawardī uses light as his simple reality. Each object in the world, a mere example of the simple reality, appears to us as it *is.* Our immediate experience of it does not need to define it to understand it for its mere appearance is itself a form of clarity. As the clearest and most simple light for us is our own self, through that light we detect the more obscure lights around us. Thus, for Suhrawardī the most illuminated aspect of a person, the "I' is the superior gauge through which to determine the nature of things as they appear to us in their various intensities. In this sense, Suhrawardī's rejection of the Avicennian substance as the basis of ontology, preferring the light of

immediate experience, leads to a triumph in self-appreciation and of all things through it,

over the confines of post-conceptual contradictions and second-guessing.

It is on this basis that Suhrawardī answers a remaining question for us: Is the self

a substance? His response to this question is as follows:

> Substantiality (*al-jawhariyyah*), however, whether considered as a complete essence of the self, or given as a negation of a [subsisting] subject or locus for its occurrence, is not something [objectively] independent, such that your reality (*dhātuk*) itself consists of a 'that' object referred to as an 'it' (*hiya*).

> Assuming 'substantiality' to have an unknown meaning, while you constantly know your reality, not by anything superadded to that reality known by yourself, this unknown substantiality which is absent from yourself will not count as the whole, and note even as part, of your reality (*dhātuk*) at all. When you have made your careful enquiry into yourself, you will find out that what you are made of as 'yourself' is nothing but that which knows its own reality. This is your own [performative] 'I-ness' (*anaʾiyyatuk*). This is the manner in which everyone is to know himself, and which everyone's [performative] 'I-ness' has in common with you. (Yazdi 1992, 90-91) [149]

Yazdi's explanation say that, 'basing himself simply on the grounds of the substantiality

of the self … whatever one knows of oneself by virtue of presence must count as the

sole reality of one's self.`` Therefore Suhrawardī 'believed that it follows that the

existence of the performative 'I-ness' is absolutely pure, and that the purity of the 'I-

ness' is nothing but its 'independence' from being in another.' Thus, my self-aware

experience grants me my individuality from another person who is also essentially their

own self-awareness. He continues, "since in the scope of this knowledge nothing can be

---

[149] Quoting Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī and Henry Corbin. *Œuvres Philosophiques et Mystiques de Shihabaddin Yahya Sohrawardi:(Opera Metaphysica et Mystica II)*. Institut Franco-Iranien (Paris:1952), 112.

found in act other than the "I-ness' of the self, the objective reality of the self must be in conformity with a mode of being that does not exist in another. This kind of existential independence counts for substantiality." (Yazdi 1992, 91)

In other words, the Suhrawardian substance is its isolated self-awareness in its pure state of I-ness free from any other field of self-apperception. There, Individuality and substantiality are the same for "the self has a form of reality which does not imply any sense of 'otherness'. Meaning other than its own self. "This is the meaning of independent reality equivalent to Suhrawardī's terminology of 'substantiality' (Yazdi 1992, 91) This understanding, we may add, replaces the Avicennian sense of 'substance' in Illuminationist thought. Unlike the Peripatetics who relied on dogmatic structures that seemed to originate from non-empirical accounts of the world, Suhrawardī's account of substantiality is simply a thing's not being another thing. The basis for its determination as not something else is the immediacy of its presence to one's person. (Yazdī 1992, 91–2) Ultimately, Suhrawardian substance is I-ness.

Suhrawardian Treatment of Peripatetic Vagueness Regarding Self-Awareness

Here, we will continue from the previous discussion on the Avicennian phase to observe how Suhrawardī's intuitive use of the SP lays the foundation for presential knowledge to take the center stage in the SP's development. Simultaneously, it turns its focus on self-awareness into an ontological direction. While Suhrawardī finds the substance proposed by Peripatetic standards and proofs insufficient, he still adheres to some important Avicennian mainstays regarding the substance he redefines. While considering it a point of illumination, Suhrawardian substance is still immaterial, self-

enduring, knowing, and has jurisdiction over the body. There, the illuminated self

dominates over the shadowy body (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 147–48) with the vital spirit

acting as the intermediary receptionist between the two. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 216–17)

Nonetheless, despite these harmonious points, the core of Suhrawardī's critique of

Avicennian representational knowledge is an alternative non-discursive knowledge,

exemplified in his analysis of pain and presented in the ontological consequences of "I-

ness" or substance as it relates to self-awareness. With his athematic comparison of

Avicennian representative knowledge. I offer Suhrawardī's reaction to Ibn Sīnā's

dependence on representative knowledge, and the ontological implications of the I as a

field of presence here.

Ibn Sīnā's Representational Knowledge

Alongside definition, Suhrawardī asks if the self-awareness depicted in the SP is

in concert with the self's intellection of its essence, or not? (Marcotte 2004, 17) In other

words, Suhrawardī questions if the SP's self-awareness is immediate enough. To return

to Suhrawardī's disagreement with Ibn Sīnā regarding self-awareness, the latter

presumed a self-intellectualizing immaterial essence. Tahmasbi observes that Ibn

Sīnā's conceptual self-awareness is the same as his concept of Divine knowledge.

Avicennian Divine knowledge is the same as the concept of Aristotelian intellect. The

latter holds that consciousness is the thinking of thinking. Ibn Sīnā's concept of self-

awareness, then, is thinking of thinking, [150] thus once removed from direct witnessing.

---

[150] He notes that this similar intellectualization is found in Descartes' *Cogito*. The apotheosis of the cogito, he argues, may be found in Kant's transcendental ego for the "I think" of the cogito, now transcendental

Suhrawardī replaces representation or form with apperception to explore the

possibility of a mode of perception prior to logical enquiry and intellection. Tahmasbi

argues that since Ibn Sīnā's ideas on presence are based on intellection, while

Suhrawardī's are derived from non-intellection, the latter's presential knowledge is not a

product of Avicennian epistemology. (Tahmasbi 2016, 157) He uses his epistemology

on self-evident knowledge as determined by the concepts discussed above (including

the self's existence, identity, unmediated knowledge, etc.) to push an innate and

unmediated knowledge forward (Marcotte 2006).

Like Avicennian thinkers, Suhrawardī concurs that the self is essentially its own

self-awareness.[151] He does not carry on the Peripatetic substantiality thesis used to

define it. [152] Instead, he opts for a theory of illumination instead. He explains all

---

ego is a condition without existence. Hence, he claims, the Avicennian self-awareness apotheosis presupposes a self with no ontological connotations. Tahmasbi 2016, 152.

[151] Suhrawardī's adamance regarding the unicity of self-awareness and existence is well documented. In *Kitāb al-lamaḥāt*, for example he states: The self does not exist before the body because at that time it is completely devoid of awareness." al-Suhrawardī 1991, 120 Thus, he uses self-awareness as an argument against the pre-corporeal existence of the self prior to the body as the former's absence precludes the possibility.

[152] This alternative understanding of substance, self, based upon the Suhrawardian critique of Avicennian reflective knowledge is indicated by Rahman as he recounts a statement from Ibn Sīnā's commentary on De Anima. He states:

[W]hen Ibn Sina was asked if substantiality is a constitutive factor of the soul, why are we not able to affirm its substantiality as self-evident, without inference, he replied, 'About the soul, we know nothing except that it governs the body: in its essence, it remains unknown. Now substantiality is constitutive of that essence... but what is constituted by substantiality is unknown to us and what is known to us is not constituted by substantiality." Rahman 1975, 168 quoting Ibn Sīnā 1959, 46.

He remarks "it is obvious that Ibn Sina is thinking here of the general definition of the soul as entelechy of the body and does not refer to his special proof which is based on direct experience of the self." Rahman 1975, 168. The particular proof intended here is the SP and the implications regarding the self as a privately aware immaterial substance.

On that front, Suhrawardī's epistemic preference presses the issue against the platform through which Ibn Sīnā determines the self's substantiality. Has the self been a product of Aristotelian categorical theory assuming concepts like substance, and a specific difference in determining the nature of things? In this sense, is the substantiality of the SP as much a product of direct self-consciousness as it is intellection?

ontological questions on a single principle. He also carries on the tradition of accepting

the unification of the knower of the known as found in pseudo-Aristotle, yet vehemently

opposed by Ibn Sīnā in his theories on presential knowledge. Unlike this tradition, the

justification for his presential knowledge relies on a direct consciousness of the self. It

finds its status as illumination as a state of being existing *as* the illuminated

consciousness that it is.

Pain and Discursive Knowledge

To illustrate the union of knowledge and being Suhrawardī's Book of Radiance

(*Partūnāmah*) steps away from knowledge as the inherence of forms from the object

known in the mind of the knower as held by the Peripatetic tradition before him. For al-

Suhrawardī such knowledge beckons intellectual certainty and the correspondence of

knowledge with reality, alone. Suhrawardī's epistemic focus is much closer than the

external world. He states:

> Know that when you know yourself, you do so not because of a form of
> you-in-you, because knowing your you-ness by a form can be in only one
> of two ways: either you know that the form of your thou-ness is equal to
> thou or you do not. If you do not know that the form is the same as your
> you-ness, then you would not know yourself, while we are here assuming
> that you do know it. If you do know that the form of your you-ness is equal
> to you, then you would have known yourself with the form of your you-
> ness so as to know that it is equal to your you. Therefore, your knowledge
> of yourself is not by form. It can only be that your essence is self-
> subsistent, free from corporeality and always self-cognizant. And anything

---

Rahman 1975, 168. See Yaḥyā Ibn Ḥabash Suhrawardī, *Opera Metaphysica Et Mystica*, ed. Henry Corbin, vol. 1 (Maʿarif Matbaasi, 1945), 115 and Yaḥyā Ibn Ḥabash Suhrawardī, *Opera Metaphysica Et Mystica*, ed. Henry Corbin, vol. 2 (Maarif Matbaasi, 1945), 112, 224. Suhrawardī contends, on the contrary, that the self shows itself to be a self-illuminated, self-perceiving light. Rahman 1975, 168.

> whose essence is absent from you, so you cannot perceive its essence,
> then you cannot (also) perceive its form. (al-Suhrawardī 1998, 39) [153]

Suhrawardī argues that you do not know yourself by other-than-yourself as your self-knowledge is the ground of all that you can know. There is no representation of 'you' through which you would know yourself nor what you know. He calls on us to recognize that it is impossible for self-awareness to occur through a form of you-in-you because either: 1) you know that the form of you is the same as you, or 2) you do not know if the form of you is equal to you. If you do not know that the form is the same as you then you do not have self-knowledge. The assumption is that you do have self-knowledge, otherwise there is no point in the investigation. If you know that the form of you is the same as you, then your self-knowledge without form is established. Otherwise, how would you know it is the same as you? Thus, Suhrawardī concludes that self-knowledge, the default activity of the self, is not dependent on form (i.e., there is no awareness but you of yourself).

Suhrawardī draws parallels between the immediate non-discursive knowledge present in the perception of pain and this kind of default self-awareness. (Kaukua 2015, 130–1) When we feel pain, he suggests, we do not feel the wound that is associated with it. Although there is a possible relationship between injuries and hurt (not all wounds hurt, after all) when we do hurt, we feel pain, directly. More importantly, the wound which may represent the pain we feel is not more real than the pain we feel, as Kaukua points out. He makes an important observation that Suhrawardī's account of

---

[153] He seems to use this observation as a proof for God's Oneness continuing to say: 'However, the Necessary Being is an essence free from form and corporeality, and it is self-cognizant. Further, It exists by intellect, knowledge and perfection, qua its own existence, and does not require multiplicity." al-Suhrawardī 1998, 40.

pain is a model for all his ideas on perception, in general. No perception is based upon forms representing objects in the external world. Yazdi concurs on this point stating that, "while we are experiencing pain or pleasure, our actual object of acquaintance, with which we are acquainted, belongs to the order of being of our mind. It has nothing to do with the moment of experience, with the order of 'conception' and representational 'apprehension." (Yazdī 1992, 60) Rather, perception is the "entrance of the very things perceived" via the self's faculties into the self, that is itself a "field of presence." (Kaukua 2013, 319) Muhammad Kamal points out that for Suhrawardī, discursive knowledge, based upon the collection of forms, has its place in pointing toward the nature of reality i,e, toward a presence. However, intuitive philosophy, one based upon direct knowledge, as demonstrated in the difference between pain and speaking about pain, he argues, is the single road to the heart of reality. (Kamal 2010, 57) That is to say, For Suhrawardī, the I's intuitive knowledge is the single road into the field of presence i.e., the self.

Suhrawardian Self-Awareness (I-Ness) Ontological Implication

Tahmasbi points out that, I-ness or self-hood requires no image, form, nor notion or attribute of essence. It perceives its essence on its own in Suhrawardī. (Tahmasbi 2016, 152) [154] Thus, the self, for Suhrawardī, is none other than 'I-ness.' Suhrawardī also uses I-ness as proof for the existence of the self and its independence from the body. The Book of Flashes informs us, as Emile Maalouf summarizes, "each body is

---

[154] See Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, *Majmūʿah muṣannafāt Shaykh Ishrāq Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī*, ed. Henri Corbin (Tehran: Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies, 2001-2009), 2:111-7.

referred to as 'it.' No part of the 'I' is referred to as it. Therefore, nothing of the body is 'I

'. The body is not the reality of the self, nor is it part of the self. Therefore, the self can

be conceived separately (from the body)." (al-Suhrawardī 1991, xiv) In other words, the

body is not the self because the former is never called 'I' while the latter is referred to in

the first-person. Suhrawardī expounds on this theme stating:

> Know that although you may (at some time) cease to feel any or every
> part of your body, and some body parts may even become annihilated, yet
> a human being's life and perception do not decline on account of this.
> Some parts of the body-such as the brain, the heart, and the liver-can only
> be known through dissection and comparing them to other parts. In short,
> you may be cut off from any bodily or contingent perception but will remain
> cognizant of yourself and know 'yourself' without recourse to any
> phenomenal thing. Therefore, your 'essential self' or 'thou-ness' is not
> dependent on the body, either in part or in whole. If it were inside a part of
> your body, then you could never be conscious of your 'thou-ness' without
> that part. Therefore, your essential self or 'I-ness' is not limited to the
> bodily nor accidental. (al-Suhrawardī 1998, 24)

You may not always be entirely physically aware or entirely physically intact, but as your

existence does not depend on your awareness of your body, neither does your 'I-ness.'

He continues:

> You call yourself 'I,' but you refer to all the parts of your body, each one of
> them, as 'it.' And whatever you call 'it' cannot be the speaker of the 'I' in
> you, because that which you regard as 'it' cannot be your 'I' at the same
> time. Were it so, you would have to separate it from itself and from its own
> 'I-ness', and this is impossible. Thus, all things pertaining to you called 'it'
> are neither all of you nor part of you. If it were possible for you to separate
> a part of yourself from your 'I-ness' would not remain as 'I-ness.' Just as if
> you separate even one part from a house, like a wall or a door, it can no
> longer be called a house. Therefore, since you refer to all your bodily
> parts-such as the brain, heart, liver, and other parts-by 'it,' as well as
> whatever else is in heaven and earth, your essential self is beyond all this.
> (al-Suhrawardī 1998, 25)

There is a difference between the referents of the words 'it' and 'I.' Nothing is both it and

I at the same time. When using the word 'it,' then, one cannot also mean I and vice-

versa. These terms are mutually exclusive when referring to objects. If you call a body

part 'it' it follows that that part is also not I. Like all other objects that are referred to

through the word 'it,' I is not that. Thus, there is a difference between the self and all

other objects. These two passages together show that Suhrawardī deems I-ness in an

ontological class of its own with autonomous epistemological consequences.[155]

As Suhrawardian ontology is also based in light and has priority over existence

as the latter is merely an intellectual consideration,[156] Tahmasbi advances that unlike

Ibn Sīnā's project, Suhrawardian ontology does not place intellectualization over that-

which-is (in this case Light.) (Tahmasbi 2016, 152–53) All is made manifest through the

Light's Presence. That which is made manifest is known and understood. Thus, the self

is concrete reality prior to epistemology and intellectualization and is the means through

which either of them make things clear in a discursive fashion. (Tahmasbi 2016, 153)

The Suhrawardian substance, or I-ness, then, Tahmasbi concludes, unlike the

substance of Avicennian primary self-awareness, is not a thing that thinks, nor a pure

intellect. As a light, the self's existence does not need to be proven as was the case for

the Avicennian self-hood as a thinking thing. Rather, as a presence, Light/self is

ontological from its start. These mutually exclusive starting points mark the difference

---

[155] To recap, light is self-evident. That which is self-evident is also self-manifesting. Suhrawardī advances that," if you wish to have a rule regarding light, let it be that light is that which is evident in its own reality and by essence makes another evident." Tahmasbi 2016, 152 quoting (falyakun al-nūr huwaʾl-ẓāhir fi ḥaqīqat nafsihi al-muẓhir li-ghayrih bi ḏātihi) See Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, *Majmūʿah Muṣannafāt Shaykh Ishrāq Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī*, ed. Henri Corbin,(Tehran: Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies, 2001-2009), 2:113; al- Suhrawardī 1999, 81. For Suhrawardī, I-ness is pure light. I-ness is also the essence of the self. Thus, the Suhrawardian self *is* pure light. (Tahmasbi 2016, 152) See Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, *Majmūʿah muṣannafāt Shaykh Ishrāq Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī*, ed. Henri Corbin, (Tehran: Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies, 2001-2009), 2:216.

[156] Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, *Majmūʿah muṣannafāt Shaykh Ishrāq Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī*, ed. Henri Corbin, (Tehran: Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies, 2001-2009), 2:64-73.

between the Avicennian and Suhrawardian phases of the SP. (Tahmasbi 2016, 153–4)

In Suhrawardī, the SP is not required as an intellectual proof or indication for the self as

there its existence is already "proven" through its manifestly self-evident nature.

Conclusion

Unlike the Peripatetics, for Illuminationists, knowledge is not a justification but an

entrance of direct consciousness on the self. In this sense, the self exists *as* a

consciousness. This is a far cry from knowledge as representation and correspondence

through the forms and what they represent most subtly as the form of you-in you. In

fact, for Suhrawardī discursive way is treated as a theoretical indicator of true

knowledge, at best. True or intuitive knowledge is the sole pathway into I-ness, unlike

the subject of Avicennian primary self-awareness, is neither a thinking thing nor a pure

intellect. As a presence, the I is its knowledge and serves as the basis of all subsequent

knowledge making apperception an onto-epistemological consideration at one and the

same time.

Unlike Avicennian self-hood, the light of self-knowledge makes the need to prove

self-aware redundant. In Suhrawardī, the SP is not required as an intellectual proof or

indication for the self is already "proven" through its self-evident nature. How Ibn Sīnā

and Suhrawardī negotiate their metaphysics of being and theories of knowledge

alongside self-awareness mark a difference between the Avicennian and Suhrawardian

phases of the SP, as we shall see below. For now, the essence of the Illuminationist

critique of Avicennian representational knowledge forwards a non-discursive knowledge

as the ground of human understanding as basic, direct and non-negotiable as the statement, "I am hurting" means I *am* pain.

The most significant development in the Suhwardian phase of the SP's self-revelation is in presential knowledge wherein knowing and being identify. This is a move away from an Avicennian-Aristotelian framework wherein secondary entities like words, concepts, and substances are used for representation, as opposed to the experience, of that which is obvious. Substance and concepts are mentioned in the same context here for Suhrawardī, in keeping with his innovative parlance more suitable for his ontology, finds them both falling short as basic constitutional elements of existence. Peripatetic substance theory offering no positive definition nor defined constituents is, in Illuminationist terms, a dark specimen; incapable of offering clarity (i.e., light) on the nature of things as its own nature is unclear. Peripatetic substantiality cannot offer what it does not have as each proposition based upon it requires justification. The Suhrawardian self *is* as clear, immediate, and undeniable as the sensation of pain. Clarity is beyond the Aristotelian categories whose task, a least for the Suhrawardian, is to classify the murky content needed for the concepts making up discursive knowledge. Instead of mental boxes, the immediate apparentness of the I is exemplified in his analysis of pain and presented in the ontological consequences of "I-ness" as it relates to self-awareness.

Suhrawardī and Presential Knowledge: Identity, Knowing and Being

In the above we have attempted to contextualize Suhrawardian presential knowledge that is born out of and negotiates with the Avicennian tradition. By contrasting the two positions clearly the significance of the Illuminationist-onto-epistemic

move becomes clearer. This development will be further manifest when we consider Suhrawardī's treatment of the SP directly below. For now, the main issue is that presential knowledge indicates that self-knowledge is the identification of knowledge and being. In what follows, to reveal a relationship with presential knowledge, as we have covered it until now, and a particular human being's knowledge of herself, as per the Suhrawardian understanding, I will focus on presential knowledge as it relates to self-awareness, identity, knowing, and being, respectively.

When covering Suhrawardī's issues with Avicennian self-awareness I gave some consideration to the apparent dependence that Ibn Sīnā put on representation, even when considering the SP's primitive self-awareness. It is fair to say that his epistemic commitments gave him no other recourse than to rely on representation of self-awareness over presential knowledge, even if his thought experiment helped develop the latter. Here, again for the sake of focusing on the aspects of Suhrawardī's contribution to the SP's unfurling we would like to further emphasis that presential knowledge shows us that it is impossible to be self-aware through self-representations. This is because with Suhrawardī, the knower and the known are the same.

On the point of completely ruling out self imagery or likeness as the ground of the self-awareness project, Yazdi explains that:

> Suhrawardī pointed out that although we are, in actual circumstances, aware of ourselves, we have clearly understood that it is absolutely impossible to attain this awareness through a representation that would obviously count as something other than the bare reality of ourselves in necessarily though the sheer 'presence' of the reality of ourselves. The awareness of ourselves means neither more nor less than the very existential reality of ourselves. (Yazdī 1992, 88)

According to Yazdi, a reason why self-representation must be completely withheld to realize the basis of self-awareness is because of the onto-epistemic obstacles that ensue. When we allow for self-awareness's representation as opposed to its presence, we allow for that representation to account for the ontological status of our I-ness, in spite of the immediate knowledge that sheer presence provides. The superfluous secondary reading of our self-awareness offers a shadow of true knowledge and existence thereby conflicting with what is already available through presential knowledge.

Despite Ibn Sīnā's position(s) [157] regarding epistemic identity between the knower and the known, Suhrawardī's supposition concords with Aristotle, Porphyry, and others of the majority of thinkers before him. With Suhrawardī, the knower and the known are the same. In fact, Suhrawardī's Light ontology, wherein everything is Light, depending on various degrees of self-awareness, everything is the same knower knowing the same self-evident clarity intuitively. He states that, "when you have made a careful inquiry into yourself, you will find out that you are made of 'yourself' that is, nothing but that which knows its own reality. This is your own I-ness (*anāʾiyyatuka)*. This is the manner in which everyone is to know himself and in that, everyone's I-ness is common with you." (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 112)

With a single onto-epistemic component in common between all existents in a single shared personal identity, Suhrawardī's innovation in the field of the conjunction of the knower and the known takes a step toward the ineffable. How, after all, can all

---

[157] İbrahim Halil Üçer argues that Ibn Sīnā's earlier view, as in *al-Mabdaʿ* supported an identity between direct self-awareness and self-reflection. After, al-*Shifāʾal-Nafs,* however, a distinction was made between the two on the basis of the theory of representation to which he remained consistent. See Üçer 2018.

things be the same individuality, albeit in varying positions in an illuminated hierarchy,

while still maintaining the aggregate of peculiarities of that shared Essence. As illogical

as it appears, this foray into the uncharted territory of self-familiarity is the logical

conclusion Suhrawardī's ideas on epistemic identity.

Epistemic identity serves as the essence of Suhrawardian ideas on knowledge

by presence. (Yazdī 1992, 52–53) With all things essentially the same, Illuminationist

knowledge penetrates deeper into the nature of what is most familiar to us. As Yazdi

puts it:

> The pure reality and the absolute presence are governed by nothing other
> than the ontological state of 'I-ness.' Were there any element that could be
> understood as constitutive of a genus or differentia other than 'I,' and
> which could be referred to by 'it,' it would give way to the state of 'it-ness'
> and, as a result, cause the entire subject-authority of the performative 'I-
> ness' to collapse. In this case the 'I-ness' and 'it-ness' would become
> contradictory. Just as there is no possibility for a transition from the state
> of 'I-ness' to that of 'it-ness' so also there is hardly any possibility for
> suggesting any composition of 'I-ness' and 'it-ness' when the state of 'I-
> ness' is in effect. Therefore, to know myself through knowledge by
> presence is to rule out any element of not being myself. Since knowledge
> remains, at this particular stage, in absolute simplicity, the self also,
> because of our equation, must remain in the ultimate degree of simplicity.
> (Yazdi 1992, 89)

The unity of the knower and the known is utter simplicity. Total indivisibility is only

experienced through singular selfhood as other-than-selfhood has no room to manifest

any more than selfhood and other-than-selfhood can share the same ontological space.

Selfhood does not allow for other than selfhood to be known, even if it appears to be

other-than-selfhood. [158]

---

[158] Without recourse to representations of objects nor the perceptions of actions like doubt, feeling, or knowledge of other-than-selfhood, the self even manifests its own self-doubt and doubt about other-than-selfhood through the secondary correspondence championed by the Avicennian school. Yazdī 1992, 56.

Through that familiarity things which are less innate (i.e., less illuminated) may become more so. The clarity, however, does not seem to risk exponential obscurity as discursive knowledge seemed to by going further and further into unfamiliar territory. Rather, all external enquiry reveals further aspects of personal intimacy. In this sense, the knowledge provided by knowledge by presence is utter simplicity. The Illuminationist communes with a self-familiarity completely closed to any from duplicity. Like the simple knowledge shedding light on its nature, the Suhrawardian self exists completely void of qualifications. It is not a body, nor is it bodily. It is not inside or outside of the world. It is not attached to the body nor the world nor is it disconnected from them. All of these qualifications are attributes of dark entities and the Suhrawardian self is indivisible. (al-Dawwānī 2010, page 89-90)

As Suhrawardī dissolves the Avicennian complexities resulting from the intellect and demonstration as the tools for verifiable truth, we come to the crux of the matter. Illuminationism equates knowledge and essence, while placing the self (i.e. the rational soul) as the pinnacle of illumination in the sub-lunar world. Thus, it considers the knowledge and being of the rational soul as the pinnacle of all existence outside God. For the Illuminationists, the human essence is oblivious to everything except its own pure reality and facticity. In this sense, the Suhrawardian self is its oblivion to everything except its pure reality and the fact that it *is.*

Suhrawardī considers this point saying:

If you examine this matter closely, you will find that that by which you are you is only a thing that apprehends its own essence-your 'ego' (*anāʾiyyuk*). All else that apprehends its own essence and ego shares with you in this. Apprehension, therefore, occurs neither by an attribute nor by something superadded, of whatever sort. It is not part of your ego, since

the other part would still remain unknown. Were there something beyond consciousness and awareness, it would be unknown and would not belong to your essence, whose awareness is not superadded to it. It is thereby apparent too that thingness is not superadded to awareness, for it is evident in itself and to itself. There is no other property with it of which being evident could be a state. It is simply the evident itself-nothing more. Therefore, it is light in itself, and it is thus pure light. Your apprehension is not something else posterior to your essence, nor is the capacity for apprehension accidental to your essence. If your essence were assumed to be an identity that apprehends its essence, it would itself be prior to its apprehension and therefore be unknown-which is absurd. Thus, the matter is as we have said. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 80–1)

If we examine the nature of the Suhrawardian self, its simplicity becomes evident for, "the reality of the self does not subsist in another being." This is the definition of Suhrawardian substantiality. "The self, therefore, according to Suhrawardī's philosophy, is an independent reality as well as a simple and indivisible being, no matter what category, if any, does *a priori* apply to its essentialities." (Yazdī 1992, 92) All entities with self-apprehension, meaning rational souls, exist in this simplicity. [159] The self-evident simplicity is the basic act of apprehension as the self's being does not exists in any other mode for it.

Yazdi expands on this point explaining that for Suhrawardī:

---

[159] Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī comments on the similar simplicity entertained by animals stating that in brackets on Suhrawardī's words in the section of the Philosophy of Illumination, "On that which realizes its essence, like the rational soul, is a pure light (*nūr al-mujarrad*)" [meaning all animals have selves free from their bodies as they are heedless of their bodies like human beings. This statement is clarified in our saying) whoever has an essence is never heedless of it. Thus, it is not a shadowy (*ghāsiq*) [meaning it is not a dark corporeal substance (*jawhar jismānī muṭlim*) to its self manifesting essence [and is not the shadowy substance (*al-jawhar al-ghāsiqah*) to its essence.] It [i.e. that which is never heedless of its essence) is not a secondary dark configuration (*hayiʾah ṭulmāniyyah*) [like the body, for example] because the light configuration is also not a light for itself, [for reasons explained in the second maxim (*al-ḍābiṭ al-thānī*) much less the dark (configuration). So, it [i.e., that which is not heedless of its essence] is a pure light, and may not be indicated (*lā yushāru ilayhi*) [through a sensory indication. This is because whatever is not a shadowy substance (*jawhar ghāsiq*), nor a light configuration (*hayiʾa nūriyyah*) not a dark (configuration) is a pure light existing through its essence (*nūr mujarrad qāʾim bi ḏātihi*) that cannot be indicated via the senses (*ghayru mushārin ilayhi biʾl ḥiss*) nor possessing a direction or location. Otherwise, it would be one of them and it is not one of them." Q. al-Shīrāzī 1969, 282

> [T]o know myself through knowledge by presence is to rule out any
> element of not being myself, which would not be present in myself, and to
> concentrate instead on the absolute purity of 'I-ness,' which is wholly
> present to myself. Since this knowledge remains, at this particular stage,
> in absolute simplicity, the self also, because of our equation, must remain
> in the ultimate degree of simplicity." (Yazdī 1992, 89)

Its being *is* its knowledge. Thus, the self *is* its own knowledge. For Suhrawardī, any other conclusion is absurd. This knowledge is the life of the Suhrawardian self. It gives things their life and is itself eternal being. Suhrawardī makes a comparison between the intellects, enduring above the limitations of opaque corporeality. He says, "their self-consciousness is their life and essential to them; therefore, they do not perish [i.e., become nonexistent.]" He then reveals something of his Platonic influence stating, "the master Plato has said the same thing concerning the soul-that it gives life to things." That is to say, that like the intellects existing above the sub-lunar world acting as its cause, the self also brings things into being through its apperceptive life. He continues, "and whatever is attributed as 'giver of life,' its own life is self-constituted by its essence. Thus, the soul will never accept anything that is contrary to its essential existence and necessary to its what-ness [i.e., quiddity]. (al-Suhrawardī 1998, 70)

The gravity and centrality of the simplicity of the Suhrawardian self is quite palatable at this point. Absolute in every sense, the self-objective knowledge of knowledge by presence uncovers a world and "language of being" all its own. (Yazdī 1992, 68) For Yazdi, the language developed and experiences expressed culminate according to the illuminative principle that the reality of the self sufficiently satisfies all the empirical essentialities of Light. Light also perfectly applies to pure existence in

terms of the greatest 'apparency,' the self can be defined in terms of pure existence because of it." [160] (Yazdi 1992, 82-83)

Conclusion

Despite Avicennian objections, Suhrawardī follows up the conclusions of many thinkers before him supporting an epistemic union of the knower and the known. Unlike them, however, Suhrawardī's presential knowledge thwarts discursive philosophy's reliance on representations of reality to comprehend it. The direct experience in presential knowledge presents our identity as both knowledge and being in a completely unmediated fashion. There, the essential importance of the self takes center stage with a system capable of expounding its most innate secrets in a language modified from Avicennian precepts.

The Suspended Person in the Akbarian Phase of Existential Primitive Self-Awareness of Existence

Scholarship offers some mixed conclusions about the nature of philosophy in Ibn ʿArabī's thought. Some opine that if the word philosophy is not limited to the contributions of the Peripatetics, for example, then Ibn ʿArabī is a philosopher. (W. Chittick 2018) Others seem to have taken a less liberal approach, placing the role as a philosopher on one side and mystic on the other. There Ibn ʿArabī's is an isthmus between the two. (Rosenthal 1988) Others, further still, consider Ismaʿilī Neoplatonism as the origin of the bulk of Ibn ʿArabī's metaphysics. (Ebstein 2014, 231–232) Putting

---

[160] I am not sure why Yazdi comes to this conclusion considering Suhrawardī's position that existence is a mental construction having no external reality. It seems more accurate to say that he considered the self as pure essence (i.e., pure reality).

aside a precise description of the presence or absence of (Greek) philosophy in Ibn

ʿArabī's thought, or its juxtaposition alongside mysticism or not aside, as we will see

below, a palatable link between Plotinus's (203 CE) body doffing and that of Ibn ʿArabī

can be traced from the latter to the former by way of the "Arabic Plotinus."

Plotinus and Corporeal Disengagement

The *Enneads*, Plotinus's writings divided into six groups of nine mentions

something of the experiential relationship of the self-body relationship. The *Ennead*

IV.8.1[161] says:

> Many times it has happened: lifted out of the body into myself; becoming
> external to all other things and self-centred; beholding a marvelous
> beauty; then, more than ever, assured of community with the loftiest order;
> enacting the noblest life, acquiring identity with the divine; stationing within
> It by having attained that activity; poised above whatsoever within the
> Intellectual is less than the Supreme: yet, there comes the moment of
> descent from intellection to reasoning, and after that sojourn in the divine,
> I ask myself how it happens that I can now be descending, and how did
> the Soul ever enter into my body, the Soul which, even within the body, is
> the high thing it has shown itself to be. (MacKenna 1956, 357)

As we will see in the next section, covering the Theology of Aristotle [162] and a section

from the *al-Futuḥāt al-makkiyyah*, recurring themes begin here in Plotinus. These

themes include: 1) separation of the self and the body, 2) existing as the disengaged

self, alone, 3) beholding a marvelous light after disengagement, 4) living the best life as

a result of having done so, 5) identification with the Divine. From this point, having been

---

[161] For more on this *Ennead* see Grimes 2018; S. Rizvi 2005, 232; Erdt 2018, 109.

[162] Lat. *Theologia Aristotelis*, Arab. *Uthulujiyyah Arisṭu* a ninth century Arabic text containing portions of the *Enneads* (IV-V1), as per Porphyry's ⟨(d. c. 305 CE) Born in Roman Tyre who wayproduced his teacher Plotinus's Enneads for posterity. His importance for Neo-platonic thought, then, is evident). commentary, mentions

just short of the One,[163] he then addressed the descent into the body. The body is

depicted as a lowly abode for the self, although the latter maintains its lofty status after

the descent into it. (Grimes 2018)

Pseudo-Aristotle and Corporeal Disengagement

Although falsely received as Aristotle's work (hence the pseudo-Aristotelian

qualification) the Theology of Aristotle acted as a conduit for Plotinus's ideas into the

Arab mind. As Plotinus blended Aristotle and Plato together, this work also acted as a

conduit for the manner in which these thinkers received Greek thought in the Arabic-

speaking world. These ideas are also not mere carbon copies of Plotinus's corpus but

are also themselves, interpretations. These interpretations also manifest in the

Neoplatonic philosophy spawning from this work in the Arab world from the ninth

century on. (Adamson 2017) At any rate, despite the interpretive nature of the Theology

of Aristotle regarding Plotinus's *Enneads*, *Ennead* IV.8.1 makes a clear cameo for those

who studied it. The *Theology* states:

> If I were to just be my self (alone), stripped of my body, casting it to the
> side as if I were a pure non-corporeal substance (*jawhar mujarrad bi lā
> badan*), I would then be inside my essence (*dāt*), depending on it (*rājiʿan*)
> outside of all things (*khārij min sāʿir al-ashyāʾ*). I would be knowledge, the
> knower, and the known - all of them. I would see the greatest extent of
> goodness, brilliance and light in my essence. I would know that I am a part
> of the parts of the Noble Divine World, possessing an active life (*al-ʿālam
> al-sharīf al-ilāhī dhū ḥayātin faʿāla*). (Badawī 1955, 22)

As mentioned above, there are five points that reoccur from the source of this chapter (

mīmar) of the Theology. Here we see: 1) separation of the self and the body, 2) existing

---

[163] For more on the First Cause see Adamson 2002, 6.

within the disengaged self, alone, 3) beholding a marvelous light after disengagement, 4) living the best life as a result of having done so, 5) identification with the Divine (in this case depicted as a world). In addition to that, we find 6) the identification of the knower and the known.

It is fair to say, then, that for the Arabs who read the Theology of Aristotle and used it as a basis for their philosophical enquiry, these points served as the basis of their intellectual preoccupations. Any ideas occurring afterwards would need to negotiate with these foundational points. The portion quoted above managed to make its way from the Enneads and into the *Theology* in what seems a reasonably complete fashion. As all ten of the latter's mayāmir are dedicated to deliberations on the soul (six with it as their primary focus and the remaining four with a considerable amount) (Adamson 2002, 6) these shared points on the nature of the self-body relationship would also predominate the *Theology* even if only by way of implication.

Ibn ʿArabī and Corporeal Disengagement

As stated previously in our introduction to this study, Ibn ʿArabī's ontology considers existence as a Single Reality for, "strictly speaking, only God has *wujūd* and the OTHERS do not exist, are not found, and do not find." (W. Chittick 1998, xix) The various modes it takes on or self-disclosures of the Real (*tajaliyyāt*) (W. Chittick 1998, 52) offer a sense of multiplicity. Each of them manifests the singularity of the Real, according to their respective showings, but are not, in themselves, Reality, as is. They are He/Not He. (W. Chittick 1998, xxvi) These ambiguous semi-determinations act as signs of the Single Reality.

Ibn ʿArabī's place on the timeline affords his having had direct exposure to the

SP as the teachings of Ibn Sīnā had reached the Iberian Peninsula by then.[165] There is,

however, no textual proof that the former studied Avicennian texts. As previously

mentioned in the review of the SP literature, the students of Ibn ʿArabī moreintellectually

were noteworthy for their direct exposure to the Avicennian corpus. Their turn toward

Akbarian metaphysics, in the case of al-Qashānī, followed his peripatetic studies.[166] He

faced the work of Ibn ʿArabī with his Peripateticism while expressing Ibn ʿArabī's

thought. Ibn ʿArabī's corpus, itself, does not have a notion of psychological

disengagement with the body. Qaiser Shahzad explains that for Ibn ʿArabī, the World

(al-ʿĀlam) is a collection of God's signs. The body is part of the world. Thus, the body is

one of the self-disclosures of God. Thus, to neglect the body in one's effort to realize

God, i.e., Existence, is an error. Thus, while the capacity to disengage from the body is

a feature in his thought, Ibn ʿArabī treats it as a misstep. He states:

> God made a manifest (zāhir) and a non-manifest (bāṭin) for man only so
> that he could seclude with his Lord in his non-manifest and witness Him in
> his manifest...otherwise he would never know Him. When I come to know

---

[165] Ibn ʿArabī's met w with Abūʾl-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn ʾAḥmad Ibn Rushd (d.577/1198), in the former's youth. Ibn Rushd asked him, 'How did you find the situation in unveiling and divine effusion? Is it what rational consideration gives us?' I replied, 'Yes and no. Between the yes and the no spirits fly from their matter and heads from their bodies.' al-Futuḥāt al-makkiyah I.154, in W. Chittick 1989, xii. This interaction points to the extent of the interaction between the Andalusian Peripateticism and the legacy of Akbarian thought. Ibn Rushd is well known for his aversion of the Peripateticism in Andalusia in his day, preferring pure Aristotle over the Avicennian interpretation prevalent in his time. Whatever differences Ibn Rushd had with Ibn Sīnā, the both of them agreed on the importance of intellectual reasoning for demonstration opposed to direct experiential knowledge. The philosopher turned pale and trembled, it seems, because he was confronted with an alternative category of knowledge beyond the binary of rational consideration (naẓar) (hence something between a no and yes) he fiercely defended as an advocate of Aristotelian demonstration and from a child, no less.

[166] That being said, Ibn Sīnā's commentary on the Theology and other portions of the Arabic Plotinus, written in the year 420 AH/1029 CE, called al-Insāf or The Fair Judgment is well known. Adamson concludes that as Ibn Sīnā made his remarks on the work once his system had been fully developed and he was past the days of his youth, he judges the text making corrections upon it that serve to harmonize it with his own ideas. Adamson 2004, 74.

> for the first time that reality is as I have described it, I disengage myself from this frame of mine, intellectually and factually (*ḥāliyyan*), due to any ignorance of the Real's placement in the respect of this frame (*al-nashʾah*), and not knowing that for God there is a specific face in everything. (Shahzad 2007, 516) [167]

Although he was able to separate himself from his body, doing so leads him to think he was paying credence to the non-manifest manifestation of the signs of God. To be present corporeally is as important in spirit as God is just as much the Manifest as He is the Hidden.

 This marks two areas of import for our study. In the first, we see a near replication of the stripping away akin to the *Enneads* and the *Theology* leaving one in a place of evident realization. In the second, we see that Ibn ʿArabī does not view his body as an obstruction to Reality. Rather, he sees the self in a holistic manner that includes the self and the body at once.

Thus, by the time the *Enneads* disengagement reaches Ibn ʿArabī's treatment, the original points (five from Plotinus and an additional sixth from Pseudo-Aristotle) are reduced to one: everything in one's experience (ontological, epistemological, and psychological) identifies in the univocity of Existence. There, a self-disclosure finds itself in the light, as the light, clear and identifiable, each in its respective degree. (W. Chittick 1998, xxvii) To turn away from the body, or any other aspect of existence (i.e., mode of self-disclosure) is to cast one's self into darkness. That is to say, like the night, one would not have full visibility of what *Is.*

---

[167] Quoting Muhyi al-Din Muhammad b. 'Ali Ibn 'Arabi, *al-Futuhat al-makkiyyah*, Vol.3 (Beirut: Dar Sadir, n.d.), 265. For more on Ibn ʿArabī's apparent approval of the "doffing metaphor" in Plotinus see Grimes 2018; S. Rizvi 2005, 232; Erdt 2018, 109.

Chapter IV Conclusion

In review, we have established that, for Suhrawardī, presential knowledge shows

us that it is impossible to be self-aware through self-representations. This makes the

conjunction of the knower and the known necessary. If this knowledge is an

indispensable one, it makes the conjoining or meeting of individuals or distinct parts of

knowledge difficult to comprehend in its context as there was never a time wherein

there was a separation between the knower and the known. In this sense, for

Illuminationists, reality shows us that its principal mode as the self is an obliviousness to

everything except the Absolute Reality and facticity of Light. The most significant

development in the Suhwardian phase of the SP's self-revelation is in presential

knowledge wherein knowing and being identify.

At this stage of the SP's development, the clarity of selfhood, as it manifested

with Ibn Sīnā, despite the incapacity for his system to recognize it, shows itself. In the

Illuminationist scheme, the depth of the SP's onto-epistemic experience serves as the

basis of all understanding. Labelled "knowledge by presence," this experience is the

center of the Illuminationist project. Knowledge by presence's place as the centerpiece

of Illuminationist thought implies that delineating the SP's natural condition is

Suhrawardī's central occupation.[169] The SP's main utility, for Suhrawardī, is its capacity

---

[169] Yazdi observes that in the wake of Suhrawardī Tūṣī saw something of the gravity and consequence of
the SP. He states, "Avicenna's doctrine of the 'suspended soul' has quite accurately been interpreted as
the primary mode of knowledge by presence. This interpretation was first given by Tūṣī in his commentary
on *al-Ishārāt* where he characterized self-knowledge on the identity of knowing and being. Tūṣī says:
'That Avicenna made the stipulation for the suspended soul to be in absolutely temperate air means that
the soul in this condition does not sense anything extraneous to itself...It is in these circumstances that
the soul is oblivious to everything except its pure reality and the fact that it exists. Yazdī 1992, 194–195
quoting Tūṣī, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā *Commentary on Avicenna's Kitāb al-Ishārāt* (Tehran, 1951), 344.

to show us that self-knowledge is not in need of the indirect tools of discursive thought to provide proof that we are self-aware. To show this application in the SP, he probes the concepts of apperception and self-awareness, as given by Avicenna and personal observations, alluding to a pre-logical perception. That is perception outside of the categories, and different to intellection as given in the SP's personal experience.

With this approach, he addresses the SP's existence, its self-identity, presential knowledge's directness and problems related to individuation. From these observations he places presential knowledge as the basis for his ontological and epistemological contemplations. From it, Suhrawardī delved into the inconsistencies of Avicennian thought. Moving on the clarity of Light, the SP's self returns from the conceptual quagmire of its status as a thinking thing to its home as an autonomous point of illumination. The support for his amendments, at times, outright revolts against the traditional Avicennian norms, were outside of the standards of proof and justification determined by Ibn Sīnā and his followers. The overwhelming message communicated in the Illuminationist project, for our concerns, is that the SP is a device positioned for us to experience (as opposed to conceiving) the self status as pure essence.

On the other hand, we find the Akbarian treatment of the same scenario in Ibn ʿArabī's doffing exercise and al-Qāshānī's Avicennian-Plotinian influenced SP recommending the self' status as pure existence. Thus, while both Suhrawardī and the Akbarians interact with philosophy enough to communicate their meta-philosophical visions of the ontological reality of the self, they arrive at opposing ends of the essence-existence debate promulgated by Ibn Sīnā centuries before them. I have shown that the

Akbarian school, the proponents and developers of Ibn ʿArabī's thought, are well known

for their support of their master's ontological viewpoint on the singularity of Existence.

This view, coupled with his doffing exercise resembling the SP (albeit from influences in

Plotinus, and thus well before Ibn Sīnā's time), and notions from his follower al-Qāshānī

(arguably directly influenced by Avicennian teachings) make for cross-roads between

the unity of Existence and primitive self-awareness. The significance of this intersection,

as it pertains to the SP relates to the SP's self-revelatory apperception manifests in its

Sadrian phase.

The passages above point to similarities between Plotinus and Ibn ʿArabī

regarding corporeal disengagement. [170] Whatever position taken on the place of

philosophy in Ibn ʿArabī's thought, the connection between Plotinus's corporeal

---

[170] The issue of the union of the knower and the known, for example, something taken up strongly by Ṣadrā, showcases in Ibn ʿArabī, as well as in Plotinian thought. See Menn 2001. Naturally, the SP was treated by thinkers after Ibn ʿArabī who did not prescribe to his ontology. Aminrazavi reports Tūsī's position on the SP as a critique of al-Rāzī's position. So, first, about the latter's position: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d.589/1210) paraphrases his argument in the SP in two places in his Sharḥ al-ishārāt. In one place states, as quoted by Aminrazaviī, "despite Abū ʿĀlī's thoroughness, his proof with regard to the self is not free from deficiency. When [Ibn Sīnā] says 'man is never ignorant of his self,' [this proposition] is neither axiomatic nor does he offer proof for it. It is not axiomatic because if we compare that proposition with the proposition 'whole is bigger than its parts' [the first proposition] is not self-evident in its concept. Therefore, it requires proof but Ibn Sīnā has not offered any." (Aminrazavi 2003a, 93) Quoting al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-ishārāt,* vol. 1 (Egypt: Al-Khayriyah Press, 1907), 122.

In another place in Mehdi's book, he is quoted to say just after in the *Ishārāt*: Abū ʿĀlī in proving the 'self' has become verbose, it would have been sufficient to state 'man sometime (sic.) knows itself but is ignorant of his organs and because the known is different than the unknown, therefore the essence of man is other than his parts.' This much is sufficient and there is no need for all those elaborations. Assuming man can know his essence, he will have no conception of his self and therefore Ibn Sīnā should have offered proof for the existence of the self. (Aminrazavi 2003a, 93) quoting al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-ishārāt*, vol. 1 (Egypt: Al-Khayriyah Press, 1907), 124.

Aminrazavi reports Tūsī's objection in his *Sharḥ al-ishārāt* states, "what is your concept of 'self'? If self is the same as that which understands and moves, then there is no distinction so there would be a need of argue for this sameness. If in your opinion, self (*nafs*) is other than man's special essence (dhāt), this is not in concordance with the opinion of Abū ʿĀlī. Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī was ignorant that by self Abū ʿĀlī meant essence but due to his liking of the ignorant, he acts as one. (Aminrazavi 2003a, 93) quoting Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-ishārāt*, vol.2 (?), 298.

disengagement and the former is visible. Perhaps this linkage will suffice as proof of his

own treatment of an SP-esque scenario. As we shall see, Ṣadrā takes the contents of

these various relevant ideas of these schools of thought into hand producing an SP that

both raise and resolve many of the issues hindering and hiding the SP's condition

approved apperception.

Chapter V: Setting Up the Suspended Person's Full Accessibility in Mullā Ṣadrā

I have shown that knowledge by presence emerges as the critical platform for the ontological, epistemological, and psychological schematic supporting the SP's treatment in Ṣadrā capable of presenting the thought experiment's original conditions-approved apperception. Without it, it is otherwise buried in the protocol of Peripateticism and its influences. I maintain that while the developments that occurred in Suhrawardian knowledge by presence are crucial for this unfurling, the onto-epistemic components adjusted through Ṣadrā's version of knowledge by presence complete the means for excavation of the original apperception. The original Avicennian ontology that produced it divides its subject into essence and existence. There, the senses derive knowledge of essences through the senses. Sense deprivation, then, leaves the apperception in an existential mode of apprehension. That is to say, with the conditions applied faithfully, instead of producing a primarily aware substance/self, the SP's onto-epistemic awareness intimates with non-delimited existence.

The Avicennian line of thinking tends to operate as a point of divergence for Ṣadrā. To understand why he opts out of substance theory for his version of knowledge by presence, which is emerging for us, now starts with understanding Ibn Sīnā's epistemic positions further on this issue. To comprehend why Ibn Sīnā puts weight on Aristotelian substance theory is to understand where God's knowledge weighs into Avicennian epistemology. In short, I argue that Ibn Sīnā's theories about God's Self-knowledge and knowledge of the world is through the latter's representations of the former suggesting that it is also a static substance. This is because the latter are static substances and as representations, they cannot be anything but mirrored images of

what they represent. Thus, Yazdi's proposal that Ibn Sīnā's version of God's knowledge of Himself is via the emanation of reproductions implicates a self-same initial static substance in God. The human being, a product of God's emanating Self-knowledge, follows suit in her own knowledge acquisition. For Ṣadrā, however, motion challenges the veracity of Aristotelian substance theory. It demands another explanation for the nature of human knowledge, as it reflects God's knowledge. The scaffolding of Aristotelian substance falls top-down, for Ṣadrā, resulting in an entirely different approach to knowledge via ontological adjustments made to Suhrawardian knowledge by presence.

The relevant constituent parts in Sadrian knowledge by presence enabling it to carry out this task are simple. The first is the Sadrian alternative to Ibn Sīnā's perceived failure to provide proper support for self-perception on the grounds of the abstractions of static substances based upon transubstantial motion. The second are the principles of knowledge by presence in Suhrawardī supplemented with existentialist epistemology as opposed to an essentialist one.[172] This adjustment also includes the unity of the intellect and the intellected, a point missing in Suhrawardian ideas on direct knowledge. The third is an affirmation of Akbarianism's unity of existence. There, the self is existence, and it contains all of its modes, just as Sadrian existence requires, while the latent

---

[172] This is because my basic claim is that SP's application in Ṣadrā is a more robust reading of the thought experiment than those who came before him because he treated the self as existence, as opposed to essence. As far as my research can detect, this treatment is novel on the side of Ṣadrā. Although he does state the self is existence explicitly, he does not use the SP to say that the existence and the self are synonymous terms. I contend that the Sadrian corpus fails to make any clear and detailed expressions about the SP's ability to indicate the self's status as existence. It also fails to show how his transcendental philosophy is able to sustain such a claim for the SP, in a manner leaving no room for confusion or doubt.

Akbarian essentialism in the fixed entities is abandoned to provide a consistent theory

of the primacy of Existence giving more clarity on the nature of motion.

Ibn Sīnā on God's Knowledge as the Model of Human Knowledge

Yazdi informs us that in Avicennian emanation theory that which is singular may

only produce a single emanation. (Yazdī 1992, 193) The First Intelligence (*al-ʿAql al-*

awwal) is the first emanation from the Self-contemplation of the First Principle (*al-*

Mabdaʾ al-awwal) i.e. Necessary Existence, or God. The former is possible in itself, and

necessary with regard to the First Principle. It knows both its essence and the essence

of the First Principle. From this two-fold onto-epistemic basis springs forth the whole

nine celestial spheres of emanations, the nine intelligences, and their nine souls.[173]

The Active Intellect is the lowest of the celestial intelligences and Form-Giver

(*Wāhib al-ṣuwar*) to all individual entities in the phenomenal world. The Active Intellect

rouses the material or potential intellect from latency through activation of universal

forms and perpetual truths in the human intellect. After its activation, the human intellect

resembles the Active Intellect, thereby becoming an acquired intellect (*ʿaql mustafād*).

The Acquired Intellect, in turn, takes possession of further universal forms, thereby

further partaking in the Active Intellect through conjunction. Thus, in Ibn Sīnā the

transformation of the human intellect into the acquired intellect occurs through the

collection of forms, just as terrestrial knowledge does. If the Active Intellect is the Form

---

[173] For more on Ibn Sīnā's ideas covering the generation of the universe see Seyyed Hosein Nasr's Anatomy of Being in, an Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines see Nasr 1993, 197–214. For an albeit Farabian account of this Neoplatonic emanationist hierarchy as it pertains to the "Ten Intellects" (*al-ʿUqūl al-ʿashara*) see Peterson and Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh Kirmānī 1990.

Giver then it is the human intellect's imitation of the lowest level of the Divine Intellect

that causes it to rise to its highest potential.[174] (López-Farjeat 2015, 133–4)

In order to ensure integrity regarding the principle that only unity can produce

unity, Ibn Sīnā uses the same logical principle to develop this "nobler possibility"

(qāʾidat imkān al-ashraf) into a descending ladder from the Source. Ibn Sīnā calls our

attention to this hierarchy of emanation stating, "notice how the reality of existence

emerges from the nobler principle down to the next (which is of less nobility) until the

hierarchy of nobility terminates (at the lowest degree of existence,) in matter." (Yazdī

1992, 193) [175] Yazdi also mentions that in Ibn Sīnā, the Active Intellect, itself, is fixed,

and imperishable, bringing about all potential knowledge into measured actuality in the

human mind. (Yazdī 1992, 14–5)

For Ibn Sīnā, God knows the Universe as His emanation. Yazdi informs us that

Ṭūsī elucidates how Ibn Sīnā distinguishes between the world, a place of ordered

distinction, while being an uncomplicated procession from the Simple Principle. He

mentions the Tūsian account of Ibn Sīnā's position of how God's knowledge of the first

effect is described, proceeding to His knowledge of the World and its distinctive order is

accounted for. Ṭūsī states:

> We have understood that the First Principle knows Himself without any
> differentiation through the mediation of a representation between His
> reality (ḏātih) and the apprehension of His reality in existence, except in
> the intellectual evaluation of those who reflect upon His reality [as distinct
> from the apprehension of His reality].

---

[174] For more on Avicennian Emanationism, in general and/or with specific reference to mysticism see
Parviz Morewedge 1972.

[175] Quoting Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt.* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʾārif,1960), 241. Yazdi did not
provide the place of publication of this quote from section 'On Abstraction' in the text in his bibliography.

We have also already decided that His knowledge of Himself is the efficient cause for His knowledge of the first effect. Now, if you are to make your judgement correctly that the two seeming causes, namely, His own reality and His apprehension of it, are in existence one and the same and cannot be different in truth, you have then committed yourself to making a subsequent judgement, on the same grounds, that the two seeming effects, that is, the reality of the first effect and the form of His knowledge of that reality, are one and the same and can never be different in truth. There is, however, no difference whatsoever to be made in truth to distinguish its reality from the knowledge of that reality by attaching the latter to the existence of the former.

The result is that the very existence of the first effect is nothing but the very act of the First Principal's knowing it, with no need for Him to approach it by a representation (ṣūrah) interposing in Himself.

Since these separate intelligible substances, including the first effect, apprehend everything which is not their own effect through representations in themselves, and on the other hand they all also apprehend the First Principle, and since it is certain that every existence in the world is but a mere effect of Himself, then it follows that all forms of existences, particular or universal, are represented in these substances.

The First Principle knows these intelligible substances as they are: that is, with whatever representations that they have stored in themselves. But He knows them not as representations in Himself but by the presence of the very reality of these substances and the reality of the forms. In this way He knows the world of existence as it in itself, not as it appears to Himself. [176] (Yazdī 1992, 121–122)

So, Ṭūsī takes up knowledge by presence in Ibn Sīnā's version of the First Principle's knowledge. However, at the level down from the First Principle forward, knowledge is a reflective act, represented in static substances. Thus, as far as Ṭūsī is concerned, both direct and indirect knowledge manifests through God, albeit between two distinct stages of emanation. From this account Yazdi concludes Ṭūsī's account of Avicennian emanationism as it pertains to His knowledge of the first effect and consequent world that flows from it. He states that God's relation:

---

[176] Quoting Nāṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī *Sharḥ kitāb al-ishārāt,* Vol. 3 trans. Medhi Yazdi (Tehran: nd, 1951), 283-5.

> [T]o His emanation (i.e., the existence of the universe) is not, and cannot be, by intentional knowledge, but rather through knowledge by 'presence.' Little reflection on Ṭūsī's account is needed to extract two kinds of knowledge by presence that are attributed to God, that is, presence by identity exemplified in God's knowledge of His own reality, and presence by emanation, such as the knowledge of God in connection with His emanation. Both are knowledge by presence, because in both cases there is no representation or mental image interposed between the reality of the thing known and the sense of knowing. (Yazdī 1992, 122)

It seems, though, that knowledge is only direct in the stage of the First Principle, afterward knowledge is represented by static substances. Is this not representational knowledge as opposed to knowledge through presence illustrated in the first stage? Perhaps this is an investigation for another time. What is important for the current purpose is to build our case for Ibn Sīnā's understanding of knowledge as it relates to emanation, abstraction theory, and human knowledge. We can see in the above that static substance, in the form of emanations, plays a large role in Avicennian knowledge well before the level of the Active Intellect's epistemic level is considered.

An examination of Ibn Sīnā's treatment of the "Light Verse" (*Āyah al-nūr*) a Quranic revelation contained in its eponymous chapter (The Chapter of Light) reveals more context to understand the Avicennian dynamic involving human knowledge as it relates to the emanation of the Necessarily Existent and static substance theory.

The Light Verse is as follows:

> Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things. [177]

---

[177] "Surah Al-Nur [24:35].

(Yazdī 1992, 194 n. 17)

Ibn Sīnā's commentary on the Light Verse sheds light on his ideas on the relationship between Divine and human knowledge. Both relate to emanation and abstraction theory based upon static substances. He remarks that:

> Of the soul's [intellectual] powers concerning [its] need to transcend its substance [from potential intellect] to the actual intellect are [the following]: First, the power of receptivity (*quwwat istiʿdādiyyah*) toward intelligibles called by some philosophers the material intellect. This is the niche (*mishkāh*) [of lights]. Next to this, is another power obtained by the intellect when the primary intelligibles appear in it. The occurrence of these primary intelligibles is the basis on which the secondary intelligibles can be acquired. [This process of acquirement] is brought about either through contemplation, which is [called] the olive tree, if the mind is not sharp witted enough, or by surmise called fuel [the oil of the olive tree], if the mind is exceedingly shrewd. [In either case] this power called the habitual intellect is as transparent as glass.
>
> The extreme nobility of this power is the divine kind whose oil is as if it lights up without fire touching it. Then, there comes to the intellect a power and a perfection: The perfection counts for the ability to acquire the intelligibles in action such that the mind can perceive them as they are pictured in the mind. This is a light upon lights. The power consists in that the mind is in a position that, without any need of new inquiry, it can obtain the previously acquired and presently forgotten intelligible as if perceived, whenever the mind wants to. This is the lighted lamp.
>
> The agent which causes the mind to set out from the habitual intellect to the state of the complete act, and from the material intellect to the habitual intellect, is the Agent Intellect. This is the fire.[178] (Yazdī 1992, 193–94)

The Avicennian self is a static substance actualizing its potential, by ultimately participating in the Active Intellect. Starting from its status as a material intellect, it develops through apprehension of the primary intelligibles. It then acquires secondary intelligibles. Through contemplation of substances, then, or activation of the habitual

---

[178] Quoting Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-ishārāt wa al- tanbīhāt* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʾārif,1960), 241.

intellect, the static substance self-advances through each stage. At this point, the Active Intellect intervenes causing instantaneous knowledge to occur to the self, in a circular motion towards the immediacy of self-knowledge. Ṭūsī stressed this while considering the First Principle's knowledge by presence. Here, the self receives this knowledge while in the First Principle it was inherent. Nevertheless, the human being's ascent is much like the process of descent on the side of the First Intellect down toward the Active Intellect. On each side of the ladder, the act of intellection, in either direction, is based upon static substances. In this sense, static substance theory determines the entire Avicennian arrangement of the anatomy of existence with the Divine order functioning as a model for the human epistemic framework.

Thus, for Ibn Sīnā, all intellectual activity, as Yazdi explains, belongs to the Active Intellect or the Fire (*al-Nār*). Through preparation of the faculties of perception and apprehension, the human being may receive its own proportional gradation of light from the Active Intellect. The closer the self is to the Active Intellect (via the appropriate preparations) through engaging a qualitative accumulation of each aspect of proximity, the greater its intensity of knowledge/light. Thus, the human -above-lunar epistemic relationship is one of light upon light (*nūr ʿalā al-nūr*) (Yazdī 1992, 14–5) i.e., there are two separate yet similar illumined substances. In this regard he states that:

> ... the relation of the First Principle to the world, as His emanation, is very much analogous to the emanative relation of the self to its private states. Insofar as knowledge by presence is concerned, God's knowledge of the universe as His emanative act belongs to the same kind of knowledge as that by which the self knows its sensations or imagination… the self is acquainted with its private states by presence, understood in terms of an illumination and supremacy, called presence by emanation… we arrive at the same division of knowledge by presence-presence by identity and presence by emanation. For we have shown that God's knowledge of Himself cannot be other than by representation of Himself to Himself. And

> God's knowledge of the universe as His emanation is also by His existential presence in the universe, yet it is manifested in the sense of illumination and supremacy over the emanative presence of the universe. Since, as Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī puts it, God Himself is the cause of the universe, and God's knowledge of Himself, which is the cause of His knowledge of the universe, are absolutely one and the same, hence, the existence of the universe as God's effect, God's knowledge of that existence as the effect of His knowledge of Himself, are also absolutely one and the same. This means that God's knowledge of the universe can only be by presence in the sense of illumination and emanation. (Yazdī 1992, 130)

This passage, in a section entitled "Mysticism in the System of Emanation" based on Avicennian emanation theory, harkens back to the point of contention taken up above whereupon Suhrawardī cites a pseudo-primary awareness in Ibn Sīnā, based on representational knowledge to forward a primordial consciousness. Notwithstanding the most important account here, for our purposes, is Yazdi's declaration that God's knowledge of Himself cannot be other than by self-representation.[179]

I argue, as I have above, that for any representation to occur there must be a form/static substance. A representation is an image or likeness. An image is a copy or an imitation. In order for one thing to copy another thing there must be two of them (i.e., the copy and the copied). Thus, the implications of Yazdi's proposal that Ibn Sīnā's version of God's knowledge of Himself is via the emanation of reproductions of the same initial static substance. Each reformation of this static substance appears with its commensurate downgraded irradiation in succession from the First Principle to the Active Intellect. The Active Intellect then presents the forms/substances of the world to

---

[179] This same dissent is found in Ṣadrā for "his critique of the representational theory of knowledge, which is the mainstream view of the Peripatetic school, is to a large extent based on that of Suhrawardī" Kalin 2005.

the awaiting Primary Matter. The human being, herself a product of emanation, follows the same epistemic pattern of the acquisition of substances through her own static substance in her return to the First Principle.

Ibn Sīnā's Static Substance Theory and Ṣadrā

The basis of Ṣadrā's confrontation with Ibn Sīnā's theories on the self's perception is a the latter's failure to explain it based on Aristotle's static substance theory. Aristotle's substance theory holds that the world may be divided into two ontological categories. The primary blocks of the Universe are substances. Accidents, on the other hand, play a supportive role to these substances. Aristotle's "common sense" policy holds that substances are most fundamental because they exist before the existence of the accidents inhering in them. Knowledge of substances, then, is hypothetically prior to accidents. This is because the existence of substances is before accidents as the latter cannot exist unless they have a substance to adhere to.

A substance, at least in theory, may exist before an accident as a shirt may exist before we qualify it with redness. Common sense, then, informs us that knowledge of substances is before accidents. Redness means nothing unless it has a substantial context for it. Accidents, without substance, are non-existent. Thus, they are unknowable. Thus, as far as Aristotle is concerned, without knowledge of substance, knowledge itself, is impossible. If, for Aristotle, we do not believe in substances, we are suggesting that the commonsense objects we behold do not exist.[180]

---

[180] A non-common-sense theory would need to be put in place suggesting abstract notions like atoms or particles as the basic building blocks of existence.

The Sadrian Account of Ibn Sīnā on the Union of the Intellect and Intellected

The era that produces Ṣadrā viewed the Avicennian school and its positions as a pivot for their own positions. Thus, his philosophical critique and alternative formations of thought generally arise from his engagement with and reaction to Ibn Sīnā indirectly or directly. An indirect sense is in his critique of Suhrawardī, for example, who, like Ṣadrā, also grappled with the status quo before him, although on a different essentialist footing. Below is an example of a direct critique of a significant shift in the wake of peripatetic thinking away from abstraction/static substance based epistemology toward a process system that does not require it.

Here, Ṣadrā takes up Ibn Sīnā's anxiety regarding unity between the intellect and that which it intellects. In short, Ibn Sīnā dismisses the unity of the intellect and intellected having "insisted [on this position] with the most intense insistence and rejected it with the height of rejection." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 8; 347) Ṣadrā delves into Peripateticism's suppositions to massage the constriction in the Avicennian take on the subject. To do so, Ṣadrā targets some contradictions at the core of Avicennian static substance theory.

He begins by first quoting *al-Ishārāt*'s account of Ibn Sīnā's issues on the subject. He quotes him to say that, "it has occurred to a people from amongst the Pre-eminent (*al-Mutaṣādirīn*) that when the intelligent substance (*al-jawhar al-ʿāqil*) intellects an intellectual form, it becomes it." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 8:346–7) To analyze this claim he proposes a hypothetical scenario regarding static substances

"A" and "B." He continues by weeding out contradictions in the unification theory to say "we will assume that the Intelligent Substance is 'A' and that it is, as per their opinion [dictates], itself the object of the intellect (*maʿqūl*) of 'A' [as well]. [The question is], is it, then, like this when "A" is not intellected?" (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 8: 347) In other words, does one understand that when intelligent substance "A" is not actively an object of thought it maintains the status of being an intellected substance regardless? Considering "A" is not an intellected substance when it is not intellectually objectified, then, it is not inherently an intellected substance. Naturally, if it is not an inherently objectified substance then the intellectual and intellected substance are essentially different, respectively.

He then focuses on this with regard to the unification theory on substance transformation. He states that," Alternatively, [might I ask,] has this [position regarding the identity of the intellect and the intellected] been disproven?" (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 8:347) For, after all, something is either inherently something else or it is not. He has shown that the intellectual substance is not considered an intellected substance outside the act of intellection. Therefore, the two are distinct and far from unified. He continues "if it [meaning the unification theory] remains [intact after this question]" he continues "then it is the same whether it intellected "A" or not." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, 347) In other words, if the intellect and intellected are the same entity then why discuss intellection at all? What need is there to explain the unification theory if something is already its own object of knowledge.

'If this has been disproven 'he persists, 'then it is disproven because of its [being the object of the intellect is simply] a state for it while the essence [of the would-be object of the intellect] remains [as it was].' If the theory of unification has been disproven it is because a single entity has a single static essence/substance. Any changes it undergoes is merely accidental and not essential. 'Thus, this issue, like all transformations, is not as they (meaning the people who support a unification theory) say [it is].' (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 8;347)

Ibn Sīnā seems to foreshadow transubstantial motion stating, 'if the issue [of the unification of the intellect and the intellected pivots on] its essence [being capable of transformation from one thing (i.e. the intellect) into another (i.e. the object of the intellect) such that its [original]essence is voided while something new occurs (i.e., a new essence) and not that it became something else-if you pondered on this, as well, you would know that it requires a shared materiality and compound renewal [and] not a simple [one].' (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, 347) In other words, the simplicity of the substance in question is never granted. Thus, it cannot be 'A' somehow transferring into 'B,' in the first place. Rather it is 'A+' transforming into yet another complexity which is not the context of his discussion.

Ṣadrā adds that Ibn Sīnā, in addition, mentions confusion amongst the earliest proponents on the theory. 'They have a man known by [the name of] Porphyry,' he says, 'who wrote a book on [the subject matter of] the [union of the] intellect and the intellected. The Peripatetics praise it while it is entirely rubbish. They know that they do not understand it." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:348) Porphyry's occupation as editor and publisher of the Enneads, a work done immediately under the

tutelage of his mentor Plotinus, places him at the very beginning of the post-Aristotelian

contemplation of epistemic fusion. Thus, Ibn Sīnā seems to suggest that from Aristotle

down, despite the currency it acquired amongst those who follow Aristotle, albeit with a

Platonic adjustment, he does not agree. He criticizes Porphyry, the champion of the

treatise in question, saying he "himself does not [understand it] ... "(Ṣadr al-Dīn

Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:348; Kalin 2010, 50–1)[181]

Ibn Sīnā totally negates the possibility for the synthesis of two independent

entities. Ṣadrā quotes him to say:

> Know! The words of one who claims that something can become another
> thing, not through the transformation (*istiḥālah*) from one state to another,
> nor via assemblage (*tarkīb*) with something else such that a third thing is
> produced from them, rather, [the one who claims something can be
> something else based upon the idea that] something was one thing and
> then became one other thing is [nothing but] poetry. [Thus their position
> is] unreasonable (*ghayr maʿqūl*). If each member of a two-fold matter
> exists, then they [*exist*] as two distinct things. If one of them does not
> exist, then whatever existed [in the concept of a two-fold matter] is void [as
> the matter is singular].' (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, 3:348–
> 49; Kalin 2010, 51)[182]

Ibn Sīnā places no philosophical value on the claims that two things can become one

thing or that one thing may become another completely different thing. This claim

cannot be intellectually substantiated. The mind's limitation does not afford it any

credibility. The mind, after all, cannot conceive the joining of two distinct entities any

better than it can entertain the joining of opposites. Thus, as joining opposites is outside

---

[181] Quoting Ibn Sīnā from *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt,* with the commentaries of Nasīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Vol. 3 (Tehran: Maṭbʿa al-ḥayḍarī 1958), 295.

[182] Quoting Ṣadrā from the *Shifā*ʾin "Ittihad al-ʿāqil waʾl-maʿqūl" in *Majmuʿa-yi rasaʾil-I falsaf i-yi Ṣadr al-Muta'allihin*, ed. Hamid Naji Isfahani (Tehran: Intisharat-i Hikmat, 1996), 81-2.

of the mind's capacity, the claim that it can occur is outside psychology, altogether.

Poetry is an art that places special importance on feelings and ideas, without any

recourse to their rational validity. Thus, for Ibn Sīnā, the unification claims are more

appropriate for the poets than the philosophers.

Ṣadrā quotes Ibn Sīnā's bewildered protest from *al-Shifāʾ* on the subject. There

he rants that 'statements about the essence's [capacity] to become the intelligibles are

from amongst the impossibilities, as far as I am concerned. I truly do not understand

[the meaning of] their statement [that] a thing becomes something else. I have no idea

how that is possible." (Ibn Sīnā 1975, 212; Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol.

3:349) As nonsensical as it may be, however, we can see his seemingly genuine

attempts to manage the subject, albeit through his own logical assumptions. He

continues to grapple with the subject suggesting that, 'if it (i.e., unification of the intellect

and the intellected) means that something has a form, then has that form been removed

for another one [subsequently] making this [secondary] form and the first one another

[different] thing?' (Ibn Sīnā 1975, 212; Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol.

3:349) In other words, do we agree that thing has a single form? If something has a

single form, are we then saying that this original single form is replaced with yet another

form? Might we assume that in that process the secondary form is *not* the same as the

original form?

If this is the case, then, [in response I would say that] the first thing did not

become the second. Rather, the first thing was voided.' Thus, there is no unification

between the two entities. The original form has disappeared altogether. Without the

original form intact, 'all that is left [of it] is a subject/principle (*mawḍūʿ*) or a part of it.'

This is because, at least for Ibn Sīnā, the discussion is limited to form and matter, the

two hylomorphic components of existence. If the form of something is no longer extant,

then it remains a hypothetical subject, principle, or memory. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-

Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 8:349) Ibn Sīnā concludes that 'if that is also not accurate, then we

need to reexamine to determine how it is possible [for the intellect and the intelligible to

be the same entity].' (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, 8:348) He opens the

door for his refutation on a more ontological footing. He states:

> We say if something became something [else]. Then that thing has
> become something that is either existent or non-existent. If it is existent,
> then both [things] exist and not [just] one thing. If it is non-existent, then
> that existent thing became a non-existent [thing] and not another existent
> thing. This [scenario] is nonsensical. If it is the first, then it became non-
> existent and did not become something else. Rather, it became non-
> existent and [something else] occurred [after it]. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad
> al-Shīrāzī 2002, 8:349–50)

If we were to claim that something becomes something else, then one of two scenarios

occurs; Either the thing became something that is or is not found. If it has become

something that is found, then what it was and what it has now become are both now

found. Thus, now there are two existents as opposed to one. There is no transformation

from one thing to another at all. If, on the other hand, the original found entity becomes

something that is not found, then the original entity disappeared. Again, there is no

transformation of one thing to another at all. Either way, he suggests, the situation is

redundant.

Thus, the basis of Ibn Sīnā's argument against the unification of the intellect and

the intelligible is on account of Aristotelian static substance theory. He also shows

contempt for the blind acceptance of Porphyry's position. He asks, 'how can the self

become the forms of things while most of the positions people take on this [subject] are what is composed for them in the *Isagoge*? [There, the author] was quick to speak [on this subject] with fanciful, poetic, and sufic (i.e. the words typical of the Islamic mystics or *Ṣufiyyah* that generally have little logical recourse preferring experiential intuition instead) for himself and others limited to the imagination.' (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:349) That is, the issue is relegated to pure subjectivity amongst people who believe in something outside of philosophical scrutiny.

For Ṣadrā, before delving into a response to the Avicennian objection to the unity two issues must be considered. Primarily, we must understand that "with everything, existence is the basis of existing-ness (*al-mawjūdiyyah*). It is the beginning of each thing's personhood (*shakhsiyyah*) and the basis (*mansha ʾ*) of its essence." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:351) Ṣadrā re-orients the ontology on the unification question away from Ibn Sīnā's essentialist framework. Rather than considering the question on the basis of distinct static substances and their interactions, Ṣadrā prefers to base it on the shared existence between the two things. He does so on the license that existence *alone* is real. The fact that these two static substances exist (at least conceptually) is what makes them the same prior to any change that would occur to them.

He then asks, "have you not seen that since the human being was a fetus, rather a drop [of sperm] until the fullest extent of its being an intellect, and intelligent, many phases have passed over it and that it has undergone developments while the manner of its existence and personhood has remained [entact]?" (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:351) In other words, despite the Avicennian logical structure, itself a

product static substance theory, life displays a different ontological narrative through

ours elves. Thus, he determines that 'existence intensifies [and] de-intensifies, [it also]

completes (*yukammil*) and decreases (*yanquṣ*). Personhood is existence (*wa al-shakhs*

huwa huwa). '(Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:351)[183]

The second point of re-orientation Ṣadrā makes outside the confines of the

Avicennian schema is that unity is considered in one of three ways. (ʿUbūdiyat 2010,

vol. 2: 114) The first is an existent uniting with another existent such that the two

become a single existent. The second is that one understanding (*mafhūm*) or a quiddity

(*māhiyyah*) should become that of another understanding or quiddity in an essential

primary predication (*ḥamlan ḏātiyan awaliyan*.) As for these first two negated versions

of unification Ṣadrā mentions that "two existent things [may] unite such that the two

existences for the two things a singular existence. There is no doubt that this is

impossible due to what the Shaikh (Ibn Sīnā) mentioned in his proofs negating [the

validity] of the unification [of the intellect and the intellected, for example]."(Ṣadr al-Dīn

Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3: 351) Here Ṣadrā recognizes the Shaikh's viewpoint

and concurs that two distinct things cannot have the same unique existence. Thus, this

kind of unity is rejected between both thinkers.

The next kind of negated unity, he suggests, is where:

> [T]he concept (*mafhūm*) of things conceived or an essence from [amongst]
> the essences is the essence of another concept that differs from it or
> another quiddity (*māhiyyah*) is different from it such that it becomes it or it
> becomes it as a primary essential predication (*ḥamlan ḏātiyan awaliyan*).
> This is definitely impossible because differing concepts are not capable of
> becoming one concept. [Nor can] part of them become others. (Ṣadr al-

---

[183] Incidentally, this last point, that the individual *is* existence is the most important point in Sadrian thought as it concerns our current focus.

Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:351)

Speaking in essentialist terms, Ṣadrā asserts one concept cannot become another

concept any more than one existence can become another existence. This negation

occurs in part or in whole for "this is definitely impossible for differing concepts,'

meaning variant mental constructs, 'are not capable of merging their essences with that

of other concepts, even if only in the mind. A person, after all, may only consider one

concept at a time. "[This is] based upon the necessity of the concept that every

meaning is not another meaning as far as meaning [is concerned]."[184] (Ṣadr al-Dīn

Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3: 351)

The last precis is a positive sense of unity, and the one Ṣadrā intends. He

states that this tertiary instance of union is exemplified in the human being. He

explains that:

> [T]he existent (*mawjūd*) is becoming, in as much as it may be verified as
> an intellectual concept (*mafhūm ʿaqlī*) and a universal quiddity (*māhiyyah
> kulliyah*), after its having been unverifiable, in the first place, due to a
> perfection [that has occurred] for it in its existence. This is not impossible.
> Rather, this is what occurs. All intellected meanings (*al-maʿānī al-
> maʿqūlah*) found scattered about the inorganic [items in the world) (*al-
> jamād*), and the plants, and the animals are all found gathered in the
> single human (*al-insān al-wāḥid*). (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī 2002,
> vol. 3: 352)

That is to say, that something goes from a place of ambiguity toward identification as

both an intellectual concept and a universal quiddity after having not been. This

---

[184] "So, for example, the intellect's concept cannot become the very meaning of the concept of the intellected. Yes, a single simple existence (*wujūd wāḥid basīṭ*) whose status as an intellect is confirmed, may exist. It may be intended to be intelligible until the existence is one and the meanings are [both]heterogenous [and] not conflicted [with one another. [This scenario] obliges the multiplication of existential directions (*takaththur al-jihāt al-wujūdiyyah*)" Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:352.

transformation may occur via substantial perfection. Again, positing his own views on

transubstantial motion, he claims that this is not only possible, this is what we find in our

selves. At one point, Ṣadrā posits, we were minerals, then plants, then animals, and

finally we became the humanity we witness due to the everyday occurrence of

transubstantial motion.

From here, Ṣadrā asserts the self's microcosmic centrality saying that "it is not

said that these animal, plant, and inorganic meanings are found in the human being

according to the abundance of his faculties as opposed to a single faculty." (Ṣadr al-Dīn

Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:352) Rather, for Ṣadrā, faculties are discounted as a

source for these meanings once we consider the centrality of self. He continues, "this is

because we say it (i.e., this perceptive affair) is according to the form of his

comprehensive essence (ḏātuhu al-mutaḍammu) rather than its faculties.(Ṣadr al-Dīn

Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:352) When one feels a pen in their hand, for

example, the sensation of grasping and the pressure of writing comes from the self and

not the hand and finger tips. On this point, Ṣadrā states:

> Sensation only occurs due to a perceptive shining form flowing from the
> Giver (al-Wāhib) (i.e. Active Intellect) engendering perception and feeling.
> This perceptive shining form is the actual sensor (al-ḥāss bi al-fiʿl) as well
> as that which is practically sensed (al-maḥsūs bi al-fiʿl). Prior to that there
> is no sensor nor sensed but merely the potential for both. As for the
> presence of a form in specific matter, it is simply part of the material
> required for the flow of this form that acts as the actual sensed, and
> sensor. Discussion regarding this form as the sense and sensor and
> sensed is like the discussion of the mental form (al-ṣūrah al-ʿaqliyyah) as
> intellect, intellector, and intellected. [185] (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī
> 2002, vols. 3:342–343)

---

[185] al-Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad. al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah Vol. 3.
(Beirut: Dār al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2013), 250.

Kaukua judges that while Ibn Sīnā's psychology was innovative in the thirteenth century, his ideas on the self's perception were conservative Aristotelianism. So, while he innovated the concept of the internal senses, a major development for considering how we cognize our experience of the world, the self's progressive extraction of forms from data laden external objects, demonstrates typical Stagirite epistemic passivity. (Kaukua 2014b, 99) Ṣadrā, however, treats this approach as unworthy of regard. Rather, for Ṣadrā knowledge is a course of mental activity wherein each event matches actual existence. He says:

> Knowledge is neither a negative affair (*amran salbiyan*) like an abstraction from matter (*al-tajjarud*) nor is it correlative (*iḍāfiyan*) but a being, not just any being but being *in actu* (bi-l-fiʿl) and not being *in potentia* (*bi-l-quwwa*). It is not even every being *in actu* but a pure being uncontaminated by privation (*wujūdan khāliṣan ghayr mashūb bi-li-ʿadam*). The extent it is pure from any contamination by privation, its intensity as knowledge increases. (Rizvi 2013, 89)

Rizvi explores this point stating that the images are extensions created by the self, identical to it, yet not in it. These extensions are immediately mutually present to one another in the self as quantities varying in value. He points to Hossein Ziai to specify the relationship between each other as 'non-temporal' and 'non-predicative relation between subject and predicate.' This 'illuminative relation' (*iḍāfah ishrāqiyyah*), then, does not, itself, inform us of the subject it is linked with. This information is supplied from elsewhere, as mentioned above. The quality of pointing toward the human primary awareness in the pronoun I, then, derives its support from other-than-itself.

On this point, Rizvi remarks that the self, with respect to intelligible forms (*al-ṣuwar al-ʿaqliyyah*) of foundational species (*al-anwāʿ al-mutaʿaṣṣilah*), is in a purely illuminative state of interconnection between it and the luminous intelligible essence

(*ḏawāt nūriyyah ʾaqliyyah*) in the world of creation (*ʿalam al-ibdāʿ*). That is, Rizvi

clarifies, of archetypal forms, establishing a relationship from them to their species

manifested corporeally. Rizvi also notes the Platonic influence of this argument,

inasmuch as, for Ṣadrā, "pure perception of the universal *intelligibilia* by the soul is not

an abstraction from *sensibilia* as most philosophers think, but a direct experience of

intelligible incorporeal essence (*dhawāt ʾaqliyya mujarrada*)." (Rizvi 2013, 89–90)

Thus, for Ṣadrā, although explained through Platonic mechanics, in truth, as it is

with mental forms, sensation only exists potentially with Simple Existence, for the latter

is all things, in actuality. The observance of Platonist mechanics is incapable of

providing the connections between subject and predicate in the mind. Even the form in

specific matter, a Neoplatonist concession to an Aristotelian abstraction, yet limited to a

generally necessary condition for perception, is merely a conceptual requirement to

explain the phenomenon of sensation we experience. Otherwise, the form of touch,

and the thing touched, in reality, are all a singular existence. This double layer of

reality/phenomenon is true with all existential events for Ṣadrā, a point addressed

below.

Continuing with Ṣadrā's contestation of static substance theory, he continues,"

[This is the case]," he maintains, [for] all the rational (*mudrikah*) and motor (*muḥarrikah*)

faculties of the human being flow over the body's material and [over] the limbs' places

from a single simple principle (*mabdaʾ wāhid basīṭ*). [This simple principle] is his self,

and his true essence (*nafsahu wa ḏātahu al-ḥaqīqiyyah*)." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-

Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:352) Thus, for Ṣadrā, perception is on account of the self's

essence, moving from branch to root and not the contrary. Here Ṣadrā illustrates the

mesmerizing relationship of the terrestrial *mise en scène* of the human self the super-

macrocosmic context of the Simple Intellect (*al-ʿAql al-basīṭ*) existing in her as the

Active Intellect. The self and true essence is the source of perception while," he

reiterates:

> All of these faculties are branches of that root. [That foundation] is the sensation of [all] the sensations, the actor of [all] the actions just as the Simple Intellect, which as confirmed by the Sages (*al-Ḥukamāʾ*), is the basis of all the detached intelligibles (*al-maʿaqūlāt al-munfaṣilah*). We will uncover [the meaning of] this [here]in this book [that] the Active Intellect in ourselves is all existent things, i.e. its essence. The prediction of all the universal meanings (*al-maʿānī al-kulliyah*) existing in the forms of the compositions (*al-mukawwanāt*) [located] in the world are substantiated through its essence. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:352)

The problem that remains, however, is to understand the relationship between

her self and the Active Intellect considering the inconceivability of the static substance's

becoming united with another static substance. Ṣadrā returns to Ibn Sīnā's protests

against the union of the intellect and the intellected dissecting the arguments of the

latter with lucid discernment. He says that "as for his general proofs mentioned in *al-*

Ishārāt, [and specifically] his statement [that] if each one [in a pair] of two things exists,

then they are two distinct [things], we have said: this is not granted because it is

possible for various concepts, at least in meaning (*bi-ḥasib al-maʿnā*) to exist through

one existence." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:353) By way of

explanation, the lack of specificity in Ibn Sīnā's argument leaves an aperture for Ṣadrā's

rebuttal. The former's oversight becomes evident when Ṣadrā reminds us of the fact

that multiple concepts spontaneously occur in the same existence of the human being.

For instance, he states, "the words "rational animal" (*al-ḥayawān al-nāṭiq)* [for example]

are [two] distinct words. One [word]may be separated from the other. Regardless, they both exist through one existence in man." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:353)

He advances the argument further while converting the suppositions to an existential ground stating that Ibn Sīnā's line of thinking holds that 'if something became something [else], then that thing has become something that is either existent or non-existent.' We said, 'We [have]chosen that it is existent. [As for] his words 'if it exists, then the second one is also either existent or non-existent.' We say: 'We also chose that it is existent in that case. As for his words, 'Then the both of them are two existents and not one existent,' we say 'Rather, they are both existent through one existence." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:353) This is where the clash between the two thinkers becomes evident. "Thus, it has been established that it is not impossible for different meanings to exist through one existence. The support [of this position] is what has been mentioned [above]." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:353) That is to say, on account of the argument above indicating the obvious regarding the existence of multiple concepts in a single existence, this issue seems to be settled. "If it was necessary," then, "that every meaning had [its own] single existence, to the extent that its various meanings would be one existence, then how can the human self, with all of its plainness, be a substance, existent, knowing, able, moving, hearing, seeing, and alive?" (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:353) In other words, how could you and I function as a unified act of individuality with all these aspects to our person if it was necessary that every meaning had its own existence? After all, how could a person ever take up philosophy if they were incapable of entertaining multiple ideas and

concepts in themselves?

After having used these examples to assert the seemingly self-evident rebuttals against the Peripatetic, he concludes, "Indeed, the Necessary Singular Essence (*al-Ḏāt al-aḥadiyyah al-wājibah*) is the proof (*miṣdāq*) of all the perfect meanings (*al-maʿānī al-kamāliyyah*) and the Beautiful Divine Attributes (*al-Ṣifāt al-ḥusnā al-ilāhiyyah*) through one simple existence (*bi-wujūd basīṭ*) without any difference in it in any sense, originally." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:353) Again, his terminal proof refers to God. This recurrent reference begs the question as to the relationship between the human self and the Simple Existence frequent in Ṣadrā's writings.

 In this connection Ṣadrā states, arguing against the position that knowledge is an annexed psychological quality (*kayfiyyah nafsāniyyah ḏāta iḍāfah*), one inappropriate for a Simple Essence that, by Its Nature does not accept the annexation of additional accidental qualities to it whom themselves are "from the weakest kind of creation" (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vol. 3:317) that:

> If [in fact] His Knowledge were a subjoined quality (*kayfiyyah muḍāfah*) His Essence, be He exalted, has a more a precedent existence (*aqdam wujūd*) than this quality, due to the impossibility for this quality to also be the Necessary Existence of His Essence. [This fact is] due to the non-viability of the Originator's (*al-Bārīʾs*) multiplicity. [This would also imply that] before this [additional] quality, His Essence did not know any thing. Hence, [if we posit that His Knowledge is an extra-essential quality, then] His Knowingness (*ʿĀlimiyyatuh*) of things is acquired and effected through something whose existence is possible [as opposed to necessary]. It is impossible for the one who gives every perfection (*al-Muṭīʿ lī kullī kamāl*) to other-than-Himself to benefit from the perfection of other [than Himself].
>
> Likewise, the proof is established [here] that our knowledge of our essence (*ʿilmunā bi ḏātinā*) is not other than our essence (*laysa ghayra ḏātinā*). Thus, if knowledge were a quality, then our essence would also be a quality. However, it has [already] been [previously] confirmed that it [i.e., our essence] is from the category of substance and not a quality. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vol. 3:318)

Ṣadrā's position is that the Essence must be singular, to avoid a multiplicity of essences, for an array of Essences establishes a variety of divine entities. If knowledge were independent, yet a corresponding quality with the Essence, then it, like the Essence, would also be separated from Him and pre-Eternal, like Him. Thus, the position that knowledge is an appendage, for Ṣadrā, is polytheistic. It also entails that the perfection of knowing the nature of things is not inherent in the Essence. Instead, the Essence depends on that perfection through the separate, yet co-existing quality of knowledge. In that event, God, presents entities their various created perfections. He would Himself receive the perfection of knowledge (presumably even about Himself) through this additional autonomous quality. Both the multiplication of pre and post-Eternal essences, as well as the epistemic dependence, described above, both contradict the unity of God presupposed in Ṣadrā's position.

What is more significant for our purposes, however, is the immediate reference to human knowledge once these points have been made. It as if Ṣadrā is suggesting that in the same way that God's Knowledge and His Essence must be synonymous, and hence Simple, our own onto-epistemic relationship must mirror this Divine simplicity. Otherwise, the same conundrum detailed above wherein if "knowledge was a quality [as opposed to an essence], then our essence would also be a quality [that is, something non-essential and in need of an essence outside of itself]" would affect us. However, for Ṣadrā, the human essence is a self-knowing simple substance/essence. It does not depend on another entity to know itself as its knowledge and its existence are the same simple reality. Thus, the Necessity of God's Simple Essence's being synonymous with Knowledge, thereby by-passing the quality conundrum above, serves Ṣadrā as a proof

for the nature the human relationship with knowledge. This is because Ṣadrā seems to see a parallel in the Divine's Simple Knowing Essence and our own simple self-aware essentiality.

To recap, a central item of contention between Ibn Sīnā and Ṣadrā is the insistence on the Avicennian side of the debate that each intelligible must have its own individual existence. Ṣadrā's treatment of the issue speaks volumes on his ontological perspective, not to mention his commonsense acumen and approach. Ibn Sīnā is consistent and committed to static substance theory. This is where Ṣadrā cites a weakness in Avicennian thought proving to be an ontological undoing of Peripatetic thought. Naturally, he opts for an alternative to static substance theory, at least in the way inherited from Ibn Sīnā, as the insistence on the essential reality of intelligibles conflicts with Ṣadrā's existentialism. Rather, he requires an epistemology that, like the self he advocates, roots itself in a single existence with nuance.[186] This is where Ṣadrā takes the offensive on Avicennian static substance theory.

Ṣadrā's Offensive: A Critique of Static Substance Theory

As for the practical link between the intelligent and the intelligible, Kalin explains that, for Ṣadrā, knowledge of something is obtained through the acquisition of its intelligible form (*al-ṣurah al-maʻqūlah*). Due to his commitment to conceptual realism,

---

[186] An important development here is that Suhrwardī, himself an emanationist and essentialist, as well, develops the thesis of God' Self-knowledge to understand human self-knowledge further. In concert with Ṭūsī's efforts to answer the question as to "how does God as the Necessary Being, who is also necessary in His act and His knowledge, know His emanation, Suhrawardī, believed that one cannot make any inquiry into the knowledge of others who are beyond the reality of one's own self before getting into the knowledge of one's self-hood which is nothing other than knowledge by presence." Following the Aristotelian instruction to "think of yourself before thinking of anything else. If you do so, you will then find that the very selfhood of yourself helps you solve your problem." Yazdī 1992, 24.

Ṣadrā defines these intelligible forms as substances proper to the intelligible world. They are not simply mental concepts or notions in the mind. "The key issue" in terms of comprehending how something's intelligible form is obtained "is to understand the ontological status of the intelligible world from which the intellect obtains intelligible forms." (Kalin 2010, 104) Like Neoplatonists, Kalin continues, Ṣadrā places the intelligible world independently from our shared phenomenal experience. There the archetypal realities, corresponding which each individual entity, exists in a strictly hierarchical manner. Sensate objects exist on a lower ontological plane because they are dim reflections of the Platonic ideas. Material forms 'are nothing but icons and molds of these disembodied [i.e., intelligible] forms.'[187] (Kalin 2010, 104)

As Kalin puts it, for Ṣadrā, the existence and essence of knowledge seem identical. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:305) Like existence, knowledge cannot be defined as there is nothing more known than knowledge. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:305) Existence is also the ultimate object of knowledge as all objects of knowledge are reduced to modalities of existence, "knowledge of something is nothing but a mode from amongst the modes of the existence of that thing (i.e. object of knowledge)." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 1:133) To say that we know something, for Ṣadrā, then, is to say we affirm a particular aspect of an intelligible object.

This is why, as Kalin summarizes, for Ṣadrā, the reality of everything is its existence through which it receives the effects specific to it, for the existent-ness

---

[187] Quoting Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿaliyyah f i al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah,* 1,3 (Beirut: Dar Ihyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1981), 304.

(*mawjūdiyyah*) of something and it's having a reality share a single meaning and a single subject. There is no difference between the two except in expression.[188] While the objects in the world are modes of existence and in this sense, "real" for Ṣadrā we cannot *know* them through a direct apprehension of them in the sublunar realm. So while the reality of existents are their very existence, the reality of their meaning is their existence elsewhere. To grasp the onto-epistemic reality of what we perceive in the world, then, is to intimate with their substances in the realm of the Forms. (Kalin 2010, 104)

Kalin explains how Ṣadrā relates superior archetypes to a world full of their icons. He states:

> The 'real' horse is not the physical horse composed of flesh and bones but the archetypal horse detached and disembodied from the entanglements of material existence. An individual horse may die, disappear, and come in various colors, sizes, and types, all of which lend themselves to impermanency and imperfection whereas the intellective horse remains constant and provides the context within which we attribute various 'meaning-properties' to the physical horse...These forms [i.e., the archetypal forms] are more exalted and nobler than what is to be found in lower existents. This animal in flesh, composed of contradictory qualities and forms in constant change, is a parable and shadow for the simple animal while there is still a higher [animal] above it. Now, this is the intellective animal which is simple, singular, and containing in its simplicity all of the individual instances and classes of material and mental existence under its species. And this is its universal archetype, i.e., the intellective horse. This holds true for all species of animals and other existents…. When the existence of something intensifies, it passes from its present species to a higher one even though every intensification takes place with full involvement in its current species. (Kalin 2010, 106) [189]

---

[188] Kalin quotes Ṣadrā: 'The reality of every thing is its existence through which it receives the effects specific to it, for the 'being-ness' (*mawjudiyyah*) of something and its having a reality/truth have one single meaning and one single subject, there being no difference between the two except in expression (*lafẓ*). See *aṣāla jaʿl-wujūd* in *Majmuʿa-yi rasāʾil-i falsafī-yi Ṣadr al-Mutaʾallihin*, ed. Hamid Naji Isfahani (tehran: intisharat-i ḥikmat, 1996), 182.

[189] Quoting Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿaliyah fi al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah* 1,3 (Beirut: Dar Ihyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1981), 304.

While Ṣadrā understands the world to be real, in as much as its reality is its existence, its epistemic meaning is derived elsewhere. The reality of the meaning of the world, then, for Ṣadrā, is not given in the sublunar world. Thus, this passage serves as a standard Platonist explanation for perception. The common treatment of the self's perception is with a largely Neoplatonic tone when considered intellectually. The mechanics of self-perception is explained in the language of the Ideas. The platform is also Platonic. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 3:450–451) However, it takes a sudden Sadrian turn for "when the existence of something intensifies, it passes from its present species to a higher one even though every intensification takes place with full involvement in its current species," is not Plato. At the same time, substance theory is not entirely discarded. We know from the above that Ṣadrā's treatment of existential intensification and decrease is based on substantial change. Also, when it comes to the sublunar side of perception, the Aristotelian influences on Ṣadrā are evident. He states:

> To us, imaginal and sensible sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-khayāliyyah wa al-ḥissiyah*) do not occur in the tool of imagination and the tool of sensibility (*āla al-takhayul wa āla al-ḥiss*). Rather, these tools act as mirrors and sights of manifestation (*mathāhir*) for them (i.e., these sciences). They [themselves] have no place/location (*maḥāl*) nor subjects (*mawāḍiʿ*). Their substances (*jawāhirahā*) are substances abstracted from materials (mawād). Their accidents (*aʿrāḍ*) are accidents subsisting through these substances. All [of this] subsists through the self in the same way that the possibilities (*al-mumkināt*) subsist through The Originator (*al-Bārī*), sublime is His mention. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vol. 3:331)

The sense data or commensurate imaginal formations occur in the human being as a result of the collection of forms/substances from the external world. This is standard Aristotelian epistemology. To suggest that our internal field produces all that is atypical

to it. Thus, here, we see a Sadrian reformation of Aristotelian abstraction theory. So, how do Aristotle and Plato fare with this transcendental synthesis? How does that combination assist our present project? The answer comes by appreciating the nuance of Ṣadrā's treatment of substance in light of transubstantial motion.

Overall, Ṣadrā is not satisfied with previous thinker's attempts to explain the self's perception based upon substance (*jawhar*) and accident (*ʿaraḍ*), until his time. He states:

> [The question as to] how the self is capable of intellecting (*ʿāqilah*) the forms of conceived things is from amongst the most obscure philosophical issues that have not been resolved by any of the scholars of Islam up to our times. Once we saw the difficulty this issue entails and pondered the conundrum [entailed in the theory that] knowledge through substance is [itself a] substance and accident, we did not see anything to solve the problem in the books of the Philosophers (*Qaum*) much less in that of their leader Abū ʿAlī [Ibn Sīnā] like *al-Shifāʾ*, and *al-Najāt*, and *al-Ishārāt* and *ʾUyūn al-ḥikmah* and others. Rather, we found him, and everyone on his level, [amongst those who] resemble him, and who follow him, like his student Bayhmanyar, and the Sage of the Stoics [i.e. al-Suhrawardi] and the Verifier [hailing] from *Ṭūṣ,* Naṣīr al-Dīn, and others from [amongst] the later [generations all] failed to come with anything reliable after him [to solve it]. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vol. 3:339)

Ṣadrā pivots away from the standard discussions on substance and accident as per the Aristo-Avicennian theory of knowledge's narrative. The main issue seems to be raised against Aristotelian static substance theory. The crux of this decisive issue is the lack of a clear distinction between substance (*jawhar*) and accident (*ʿarḍ*).

Ṣadrā addresses the Peripatetics on this issue, and Ibn Sīnā in particular. His push is aimed at the intellectual sciences. He aims his scope on substance theory as it applies to sublunar knowledge acquisition stating that:

> As for the intellectual sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyyah*), the dominant position is that our intellectual knowledge of things means the impression/manifestation (*irtisām*) of their forms in ourselves as

> knowledge is acquired (*muktasab*) from the forms of the existents (*al-mawjūdāt*)) stripped away from their materials (*mawādihā*). [The reason for this] is because knowledge is acquired (*muktasab*) from the existent's forms [having been] stripped away from their [respective] materials. [The existents] are the forms of substances (*ṣuwar jawāhir*) and the forms of accidents (*ṣuwar aʿrāḍ*). (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vol. 3:331)

Here, the standard analysis of Aristotelian static abstraction theory is offered

concisely. He explains that static forms/substances are stripped away from their

material bedrock. All things are either substance or accidents. There is no tertiary

ontological category to consider in knowledge acquisition. However, even the

Peripatetics, with Ibn Sīnā at the helm, have reservations about the status quo.

Ṣadrā explains that:

> They have a strong doubt regarding this [theory], [as] the Shaikh mentions in the Metaphysics of the Healing. [This doubt is that] since knowledge is obliged to conform with the known, if an object known is a self-sustaining essence (*ḏāt qāʾimah bi nafsihā*), then knowledge about it [must also] be in conformity with it and included in its species (*dākhilan fi nawʿihi*). Whatever is included in the something's species must also be included with it under the same genus, resembling it in that genus. However, the substance (*jawhar*) [that is] categorized with that which is beneath is categorized as a species (*qawl al-jins*). Thus, substance's intellectual form must also be a substance while knowledge about it is from the self-sustaining mental/psychological-manners established through the self (*al-kayfiyyāt al-nafsāniyyah al-qāʾimah bi al-nafs*). Thus, a single thing is [both] a substance and an accident (*ʾarḍ*) while nothing of the substance [exists] through an accident (*wa lā shayʾa min al-jawar bi ʾarḍ*). (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vols. 3:331–332)

Aristotle's suppositions of meaning and truth are based upon on correspondence. This

principle is based upon the simplicity of "God's" thought in *Metaphysics Lamda*. His

thought must, he offered, be based upon his self-contemplation, for thought must think

of itself. Thought must think of itself because thinker and thought both share the same

nature. They share the same nature because Aristotelian static substance theory

dictates that the thinker becomes the latter through contact and thinking its objects, making them the same.[190] Thus, when knowledge must comply with the known, if a self-sustaining essence is known, then the knowledge that knows it must also be self-sustaining and part of the same species. As species is categorized under a genus, two entities with a shared species also have the same genus. A substance, then, shares the same categorization as its species. Thus, the same object is simultaneously a substance and accident.

Despite the critical status afforded to substance and accident in Aristotle, and consequently in Avicennian thought, for Ṣadrā, there is nothing logically beneficial, nor ontologically coherent in saying that something is dependent on itself while being dependent on other-than-itself. In other words, to claim that the same thing may be substance and accident at once is incoherent. While something may hypothetically occur without an accident (i.e., a shirt may not be red at some point only to be dyed red at another), an accident (i.e., like redness) cannot subsist on its own. Thus, we cannot say that the same entity is both a substance and an accident for their subsistent capacity is not the same.[191]

Ultimately, Ṣadrā despairs of static essentialist explanations for perception altogether due to inconsistencies like this and, more importantly, his existentialist commitments. Even when speaking of emanation, a concept that backdrops human perception in this study, his ontological pledge is consistent. In fact, virtually all issues

---

[190] *Metaphysics*, Book 12, section 1072b21

[191] Ṣadrā mentions the Avicennian rebuttal to this problem in the *Asfār*, along with its critique as well. See Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vols. 3:331–337.

are explained away through the totality of existence. He says when speaking of "creation," which includes the self, perception, cognition, and any system designed to explain it that:

> This *wujūd* is in reality the first emanated among contingent beings (*al-ṣādir al-awwal*) from the First Cause (*al-ʿIlla al-Ūlā*), and is called "the Reality by which creation is created" (*al-Ḥaqq al-makhluq bihi*). And this *wujūd* is the source and principle of the existence of the universe, and its life and its light which penetrates into all that there is in the heavens and the earths. It exists in all things according to that thing in such a way that in the intellect it is intellect, in the soul it is soul, in nature it is nature, in the body it is body, in substance it is substance, and in accident it is an accident. (Parildar 2015, 58) [192]

Although this passage is specific to the sublunar realm, its depiction of Existence's all-pervading presence is transparent. Existence flows out from the First Cause. This motion qualifies Reality (Existence) and is the basis for that which is brought into being. It is in all things as it is all things. All things, here, being modalities of a single moving Truth. When we consider a modality called "intellect," Existence is given the name "intellect." When we consider a modality termed "soul," Existence is denoted as "soul." Most importantly, when Existence is in a modality marked as "substance" or accident" then existence is those things. The reason, it seems, that Ṣadrā does not acquiesce to Ibn Sīnā's excuses is that there is nothing truly ontologically distinct about substance and accident. They are only distinctions in the mind.

Just as the act of God's Self-contemplation serves as the epistemic model, as well as the reason for the motion that permeates the Universe in Aristotle, the relationship between self-perception/knowledge and movement serves as the proper account of the relationship between substance/accident and the phenomenological

---

[192] Quoting Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2014, 40–4,

reality of change in Ṣadrā. Aristotle's speculation cannot account for alteration in the world as the latter cannot occur with immutability of either substance nor accident. The latter's capacity cannot occur with the fixity of substance. Ṣadrā attempts to solve the issue by proposing existence in its modality as Primary Matter as a sole metaphysical constant, thereby redefining the relationship of the terms of Aristotelian substance theory while still retaining their use in his system.

For Ṣadrā, the cause for the perceived lack of distinction in Avicennian static substance theory between substance and accident is its non-variating essentialism. His solution to the problem is his theories on diversifying principle Existence. While Ibn Sīna and Suhrawardī both adhere to Aristotelian substance metaphysics, Ṣadrā, like Heraclitus before him, prefers a process of Existence over a still reality comprised of an independent unchangeable substance. Both use this to somehow explaining the phenomenal reality of change while also acting as the ultimate objects of predication (ḥaml).

Focusing on the act of Existence, as it proceeds to unfold itself, process metaphysics replaces substance metaphysics in Ṣadrā as the primary category of any given ontological account. There, process replaces substance as the most basic reality. It does not do so, however, while completely abandoning substance altogether. Instead, in Ṣadrā, Existence's nature overflows through substantial flux. As Rizvi puts it this overflowing process "ensures that reality remains a universal 'vortex' for the flow of being. Flux underpins reality and is essential to it. Indeed, being 'constantly flows' through events and substances." (Rizvi 2013, 29) He further explains that as this process is a continuous succession of 'renewal and lapse' (al-tajaddud wa al-inqiḍāʾ)

appearing as the 'structure of events,' Ṣadrā does not reduce metaphysics to a discourse on substances. Rather, ontology is treated in terms of existential modes, without being reduced to them, either. (Rizvi 2013, 29)

In Ṣadrā, substances and accidents are modalities of Existence. Like all modalities of Existence, then, they are mental concepts having no extra-mental reality. At the same time, these mental realities increase and decrease in ontological value. Therefore, the main difference between Ibn Sīnā and Ṣadrā's account on substance theory, as suits our objectives here, is the fact that these modalities are perceived in lesser and greater ontological intensities in the human self. They are not, then, static forms. Their qualifications are not perceived in external entities after having been abstracted and processed in the internal faculties. Rather, they are the self's reactions to external stimulations causing it to mirror the same modalities within itself.

Like Ibn Sīnā, Ṣadrā also claims that human knowledge to replicate God's knowledge. He states:

> [E]very existent which is posterior to the First Necessary Existence includes in Its unity many concomitants, forms and meanings according to its station and degree in existence, imitating the First Cause in being one, and that despite its unity it is also precisely the same as all the Divine Attributes, and Divine Names. You have learned before that God is all things without multiplicity [in Him]. Likewise, anyone who is nearer to Him is most intense in unity and more collected in meanings. Nay, every existent of this world imitates the world of the Lord in itself. The human soul gathers together in its essence everything that is scattered in the body from forms of organs, faculties and instruments. The different shapes of the organs are the shadows of the different faculties of perception and movement whose instruments are disseminated in all the organs according to the dispersion of the spirit arising from the heart and in the blood-vessels and nerves. Those faculties also, despite their differences and subdivision, combine in the being of the soul, and the soul is united with them like the unification of intellect and intelligibles in actuality. (Peerwani 2008, 102–3)

Everything below, God and all that is with Him, imitate Him in every way. All the nuances of their existence, like His, are represented in themselves without being other than themselves. Rather, their existence contains stations and degrees just as the First Principle does. The closer an entity is to God, the more intensely unified is their existence. The further away from Him, the more apparently fragmented. Everything is in the human being. Everything the human has is in her essence. Her essence is herself. Thus, all the forms/substances scattered about through the tools of perception, that is all that is fragmented through mental perception, are all found in the self. The self is united with them in the same way as the intellect and its intelligibles. The substances, accidents, sensors, perception, and all the like, are identical.

Ṣadrā's Amendments to Suhrawardian Knowledge by Presence

Ṣadrā's reconstruction of a coherent theory of knowledge is assisted by Suhrawardī's knowledge by presence as both thinkers consider it a more infallible account of knowledge .(Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 1975, 83) However, to understand how Ṣadrā adapts Suhrawardian epistemology in knowledge by presence for his own system, is to consider why two courses of actions occurred in the later. This includes: 1) The acceptance of the unity of the intellect and the intellected over Suhrawardī's essentialism that prevented it, and 2) the move from Suhrawardian essentialism to his own version of existentialism. With the explanations for Ṣadrā's course of action regarding substance theory and knowledge by presence, in contradiction to Ibn Sīnā and Suhrawardī in hand, we may now understand the link

between Ṣadrā's critique of Avicennian substance theory explains perception and his treatment of existentialist knowledge by presence.

Suhrawardī's knowledge by presence was championed by Ṣadrā, alongside the former's ontological gradation, without its quiddity-based platform. Conversely, Ṣadrā took the opposite position regarding the former's rejection of the unification theory. Here Ṣadrā's deems Suhrawardī's Avicennian position on the unification theory inconsistent with his ideas on gradation, even if it based on static substances. Rather, gradation requires the unification theory. The unification theory requires the primacy of Existence for coherency. Thus, for Ṣadrā, the genius of Suhrawardī's gradational ontology needs the augmentation of a primacy of Existence based on the unification theory for its full potential to be realized. I argue that these developments, overall, helped enable the Sadrian SP excavate its condition approved apperception.

Suhrawardī's stance against the unification theory seems unlikely considering his otherwise largely non-cooperative relationship with the Peripatetics. In turn, Ṣadrā raises an issue against Suhrawardī's Avicennian position on this point for being inconsistent with his ideas on self-knowledge and direct intuitive knowledge, as well as ontological gradation, even if it based on static substances. (Kalin 2010, 59) Suhrawardī's arguments against the unification theory are often Peripatetic in nature. Kalin mentions multiple places wherein Suhrawardī recites these arguments in full.[193] We will suffice here with a brief summary of those arguments. He raises three separate arguments against the unity of intellect and intellected in a way that may read as though directly lifted from the Avicennian corpus.

---

[193] For fuller coverage and explanation of Suhrawardī's anti-unification position see Kalin 2010, 60–65.

In summary, and as is most pertinent, the first of the arguments is from *al-Talwīhāt* and replicates the same "A" and "B" arguments against unification from Ibn Sīnā above. Despite the shuffling of the variables, because these are static substances, no unification can occur. Instead, one annihilates and one may remain but "two things do not become one except through admixture, conjunction, or unitive composition." (Kalin 2010, 60) The second argument, from *al-Mashariʿ wa al-muṭāraḥāt,* reiterates the same argument with the self as one substance and the object perceived as another with both shifted around negotiating the act of perception. There, an additional comment representing his campaign for knowledge by presence without the unification theory, a point that Ṣadrā finds intolerable, as mentioned. He states that "your self-conscious substance does not change all the time. It is rather one single permanent thing before [perceiving] a form, or with it, or after it, and the form comes about through its permanence. You are yourself with or without perception. Hence, there is no such thing as unification (*ittiḥād*). As Kalin observes, in both places Suhrawardī understands the word 'unification' (*ittiḥād*) requires both creation and decay; the demolition of two (static) and distinct substances and the creation of a new one. Again, al-*Mashariʿ wa al-muṭāraḥāt* expresses the same reservations and principles in regard to substantial unification with the Active Intellect. There, an intellect cannot become the Active Intellect, again, as they are two distinct substances. (Kalin 2010, 60–2)

ʿUbūdiyat summarizes that, "prior to Ṣadrā, modulation (*al-tashkīk*) was not entirely rejected in every instance." (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, vol. 1:222) ... Rather, there were two opinions found on the subject. Of the two "the *Ishrāqī* opinion [was] built upon essential or quiddity existential modulation (*al-tashkīk al-māhiyyah*)" and the "the

Peripatetic (*mashshāʾī*) opinion built upon accidental or conceptual modulation. (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, vol. 1:222) Thus, unlike previous systems in the wake of Ibn Sīnā, the Illuminationists challenged the tendency to view quiddity in strictly static terms. Although not as ontologically flexible as the ensuing Sadrian camp after him, Suhrawardī provided the basis for its flexibility. This foundation comes through the Suhrawardian contention that the self, Essence, and Light-all synonymous terms, appear in degrees. Therefore, the Suhrawardian self, essence and light in degrees paves the way for a similar Sadrian understanding. Here we expand on this notion to legitimize our claims regarding his foreshadowing of the Sadrian project's profoundly fluid ontological perspective on the self.

The synonymy of self, essence, and light is apparent throughout the Illuminationist effort. Suhrawardī states, "whoever realizes his essence realizes it is pure light. Every pure light is apparent to itself and self-realizing. This is the most guided of pathways. (al-Suhrawardī 1992, 114; al-Suhrawardī 1999, 82). Hence, the immediacy of the self is the immediacy of one's essence. In that epistemic moment, one realizes their immediate illumination. For Suhrawardī, these matters are apparent, awaiting discovery inside the perceiver as opposed to something to be discovered outside themselves. In other words, "something's self-realization is its appearance to its essence, not its extraction from matter as the Peripatetics hold it." (al-Suhrawardī 1992, 114; al-Suhrawardī 1999, 82).

As al-Dawwānī states, while commenting on Suhrawardī's "The Structure of Light" (*Hayākil al-nūr*) regarding the various grades of Light that:

> The self (*nafs*) has an established life' "*meaning it is an existent* " that has pointed to the Living (*al-Ḥayy*) *through His Essence,* the *Self-Subsisting*

(*al-Qayyūm*) *the Existent through His Essence, the Existent for other-than-Himself because it (i.e., the self) is possible. Therefore, it must have a Sustainer (muqawwim) and it must conclude in that whose subsistence is not outside itself due to the fallacy of circular logic and infinite regression.'* "The Self-Subsisting (*al-Qayyūm*) is manifest through His Essence' "*because He is the Light (al-Nūr) into which all the lights in the chain of needs (silsilah al-iḥtiyāj) conclude. Rather, all lights are flames from His Light.'* "And He is the Light of Lights, free from bodies and their connections" *'that completely necessitate deficiency and darkness, unlike other-than-He amongst the lights. These other lights have corporeal relationships either through design (tadbīr) or necessary proximate cause (al-ʿilla al-qarībah al-mustalzimah) for a completely compatible species (nawʿ munāsibah tāmm) between the lights and the bodies."* 'He is veiled due to the extent of His Appearance' "*for if a thing surpasses its limit it mirrors its opposite and overflows from it into the void of total non-existence (faḍāʾ al-ʿadam al-ṣirf)[194]. [There it serves] as a variety to the kind varying lights (anwār al-mutafarriqah) in intensity and weakness [determined] through distance and proximity from Him. These different lights are united in the illuminated reality (al-ḥaqīqah al-nūriyyah). The disparity between them is according to their differences in intensity and weakness….* (al-Dawwānī 2010, 185)

The self's status as a possible existent makes it a pointer to that which exists through itself as all possibilities must ultimately depend on a Necessary Existent for their existence. The facticity of their existence makes the latter's Existence a fact. Any other occurrence is both illogical and cyclical. God is portrayed as a Self-shining Light, while all else is described as a flame from that Light. As instances of Light, they are inherently devoid of the duration and intensity that is found in the Light of Lights. In other words, these flames are essences whose essentiality is dependent on the Essence. Each of them is more like Him (i.e. more illuminated) depending on their relationship with Him. Either way, for Suhrawardī and the Illuminationists, essences are instances of intensity in a ban of possibilities from the most devoid of light to the most illuminated. ʿUbudiyat

---

[194] While the text says *qaḍāʾ*, editor cites another version of the text that says *faḍāʾ*. The latter seems more apparently line with the commentator's intent.

states that "all philosophers, including Ṣadr al-Mutaʾllihīn (i.e. *Ṣadrā)* [understand that] distinction between the disparate affairs (*al-ʾumūr al-mutafāḍilah*) occurs must be the essence of what they share between each other. In other words, the same reality [between them] is [that which is] described with perfection, deficiency, and quantitative disparity (*al-tafāḍul*)." (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, vol. 1:226) "The previous philosophers (i.e. prior to Ṣadrā) believed that that which is shared between the disparate individuals (*al-afrād al-mutafāḍilah*) are the self-same quiddities of these individuals." (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, vol. 1:226)

For Faris Hajamaideen, Suhrawardī's placement of individual entities in a gradated field of light reconciles between Plato and Aristotle's "oppositional dualities — of the intelligible versus the sensible, of the mathematical versus the biological, and of form versus matter." (Hajamaideen 2019, 127) Instead, with Suhrawardī, "the entire cosmic fabric is considered as a seamless continuum of luminosities, as both metaphysical and physical realities are only composed of a single matter, light." In other words, there is only Essence, so it is the basis of modulation. "This light continuum," he continues, "is built up of varying densities strung across a gradated rule spanning from the thick opacity of earthly matter to God, the Light of Lights." (Hajamaideen 2019, 127–128) For Suhrawardī, if the light continuum manifests in varying densities, moving from less to most brilliant, then there is one Essence showing itself in a span of increasing or decreasing grades of intensity.

Between the two positions on modulation mentioned above "Ṣadrā adopted ...the second opinion based upon the position of the primacy of Existence and the conceptualization of the quiddity (*iʾtibāryyah al-māhiyyah*) calling it existential

modulation in existence (*yuṭlaqu ʿalayhi at-tashkīk fī al-wujŭd*)." (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, vol.

1:223) He did this because "...he deemed existential modulation [as] limited to the

reality of Existence (*munḥasir fī ḥaqīqah al-wujūd*). As for whatever is outside of it, it is

[deemed] false whether it is [related to] an essence or accident." (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, vol.

1:223)

Zailan Moris compares the modulation of quiddity (*tashkīk al-māhiyyah*), evident

in Suhrawardī, and Ṣadrā's modulation of Existence (*tashkīk al-wujūd*) stating that for

the former:

> Quiddities are capable of being 'more perfect and less perfect. It is the
> differences in the 'more or less perfect' condition of individual quiddities
> that distinguishes existents and sets them apart from each other. In more
> symbolic terms, Suhrawardī describes reality to be a single continuum of
> light punctuated only by distinctions of 'more or less' light or 'grades' of
> light. These 'grades' of light which are arranged in a hierarchic order
> extends from the Absolute Light or Light of lights (God) downward to
> darkness. All of creation is constituted of the various 'grades' of the one
> single light. (Moris 2013, 119–120)

According to Suhrawardī, we behold differences in the essence due to the

degree of illumination between them. Starting from that which has no dark aspect and

ending in that which has nearly no facet of Light aspect, we behold an array of diversity.

The variety we see, however, is fixed in a single quiddity. So, in a sense, there is

ontological diversification while in another, there is no difference. One and many are

both represented in the language of luminescence.

Expanding on the mechanics of the Suhrawardian solution to the problem

of the one and the many ʿUbūdiyat states that:

> [W]ith the commitment that that through which differentiation (*al-imtiyāz*)
> [which occurs] is also the quiddity as well [as in Suhrawardī] ...we have
> differentiated incidences possessing a single quiddity (*ḏāt māhiyyah
> wāhidah*) described with quantitative disparity. The sharing occurs

between them in the single quiddity. The imposition is that that which differentiates between differentiated things is the same reality through which sharing (*ishtirāk*) occurs. Therefore, the quiddity of the distinguished singulars (*al-afrād al-mutafaḍḍal*) is the same reality through which sharing occurs. Therefore, the quiddity of the distinguished singulars also serves as the means through which the distinction (*al-imtiyāz*) [between them] occurs. In other words, the specificities of the singular (*khuṣūṣiyyah fī al-fard*) and that which is the foundation of true quidditative comprehension (*malāk ṣidq al-mafhūm al-māhuwī*) like the basis of whiteness, for example, does not resemble one another in any of the singular quiddities. Nor are they confirmed in one [uniform] manner (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, vol. 1:226)

Instead, the quiddities are different in them in a way that there is a singular [entity] comprised of a link exceeding from the last singular resemblance in any of the single instances of the quiddity nor are they confirmed in the same way. This is precisely what occurs in essential modulation (*al-tashkīk fī al-māhiyyah*). (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, vol. 1:227)

Thus, the crucial difference between Suhrawardī on the matter of existential modulation is its basis. In Suhrawardī Essence occurs in Its Self-manifesting magnitudes. An example of this is in Suhrawardī's comments on the nature of gaining illumination (i.e. *Ishrāqī* spirituality) that:

The brethren of incorporeality have a special station in which they are able to bring into existence self-subsistent images in whatever form they desire. This is called 'the station of 'Be'. Whoever sees that station knows with certainty the existence of a world other than that of barriers. In it are self-subsistence images and managing angels, taking for themselves talismans and self-subsistent forms by which they speak and are evident. From there flow violent attacks and overwhelming seizures by astonishing images and sounds of which the imagination can in no wise tell. How very strange that a man hears that sound in a certain incorporeality and attends to it, finding at that moment that his imagination also listens to it, though that sound is from a suspended image! Whoever has experienced this in his divine trances as he ascends will not return until he has ascended from level to level of the agreeable forms. The more perfect is his ascent, the purer and more delightful will be his contemplation of forms. Thereafter, he will penetrate the world of light and finally reach the Light of Lights. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 155)

With a subtle reference to SP-esque incorporeality, Suhrawardī stresses the difference between the Light, the one who beholds It and the dominance of the higher light (the beheld) over the lower light (the beholder) while the lesser light loves and desires the superior light. "Whoever has experienced this in his divine trances as he ascends," he says, "will not return until he has ascended from level to level of the agreeable forms." Thus, illumination, that is to say going closer and closer to the Light of Lights is through essences. "The more perfect is his ascent, the purer and more delightful will be his contemplation of forms." After that," he continues, "he will penetrate the world of light and finally reach the Light of Lights." [195]

On this point Suhrawardī states, elsewhere "know that your eye both beholds and is shone upon by a ray. The shining of the ray is not beholding for the ray falls upon the eye wherever it is, but the seeing eye can only behold the Sun when it faces the Sun from a great distance…. Were the eyelid luminous or the Sun as near as the eyelid, both the ray and beholding would be increased accordingly. (al-Suhrawardī 1999, 97) The capacity to increase more Light, is due to the self's capacity to be further illuminated.

In presential knowledge, the known is present by the knower with its precise specifications and does not need correspondence. Due to his commitment to knowledge by presence, for Suhrawardī, if knowledge is Light, then its acquisition is being the Light it knows. If Light intensifies then the self that realizes, increased vibrancy also becomes more brilliant. Thus, as the self becomes brighter, it is the newfound luminescence. Therefore, the essence is capable of increasing, and decreasing in luminosity, as one's

---

[195] See Widigdo 2014, 124–125; Nasr and Aminrazavi 2013, 41.

self is more or less apparent to them through knowledge by presence. Therefore, for the

individual Suhrawardian self, Essence and Light also occurs in degrees.[196] For

Illuminationists, there is only one Light, all of the objects in the world are its

"punctuations" in the ban between pure light and pure darkness. A point, however, for

our purposes, is that both understand that the self moves.

To review, unlike previous systems in the wake of Ibn Sīnā, the Illuminationists

challenged the tendency to view quiddity in strictly static terms. Although not as

ontologically flexible as the ensuing Sadrian camp, Suhrawardī provided the basis for

their flexibility. The Suhrawardian self, unlike other punctuations, seems to be a self-

same quiddity whose brilliance may increase. This foundation comes through the

Suhrawardian contention that the self, Essence, Substance and Light-all synonymous

terms, appear in degrees. Therefore, the Suhrawardian self, essence and light are in

degrees. Ṣadrā, then, took the existential modulation of the self's quiddity from

Suhrawardī a step further.

Unlike Suhrawardī, Ṣadrā limited the agency of modulation to "external

occurrences inasmuch as they are [extra-mental occurrences]. Thus, for Ṣadrā

modulation does not occur in the quiddity. Rather, it occurs in the object's existence.

This is because, for Ṣadrā, quiddities do not have an extra-mental existence. (ʿUbūdiyat

2010, vol. 1:225) Moris continues comparing the modulation of quiddity (evident in

Suhrawardī, and Ṣadrā's modulation of Existence saying:

> Mulla Sadra refutes Suhrawardī's view that existence is only a mental
> notion or a secondary intelligible and asserts that existence is the sole
> reality. However, Mulla Sadra has taken over Suhrawardi's notion of

---

[196] Only for Ṣadrā, onto-epistemic travel is always upward. Higher movement is not restricted in the least nor is it limited to mere "witnessing" (*mushāhadah*). Rather, one *is* already the higher intensity they perceive before and after ocular vision.

'grades' or 'more or less' intensity of light and applies it instead to existence. Thus, it is not quiddity but existence which is capable of varying grades of intensity…. (For Ṣadrā) it is existence which is real and dynamic, and which can partake of grades of intensity of tashkik. Although, Mulla Sadra refutes Suhrawardi's view on the ontological primacy of quiddity,[197] he takes over Suhrawardī's doctrine of tashkik or analogical gradation and applies it to his concept of existence. Like Suhrawardi's conception of reality as a single reality of light which extends from the Supreme or Absolute Light in the direction of darkness, Mulla Sadra's conception of reality is a gradation of being which extends from Pure Being to Prime Matter. Thus, on the question of tashkik al wujud or analogical gradation of Being, Mulla Sadra's source of inspiration is Suhrawardi's view of reality as a single continuum of light punctuated by various degrees or grades of light. (Moris 2013, 119–120)

While Ṣadrā determines that each essence/substance, in itself, is capable of realizing

different degrees of its potential change, the extent of Suhrawardī's influence in Ṣadrā's

system for this element alone is greater than what this passage can convey. For Ṣadrā,

the reason why essence is not the factory of existence is that essence is limited to the

mind; it has no extra-mental reality. Otherwise, the influential structure of Suhrawardian

ontological ambiguity in Ṣadrā, together with its existentialist modifications, seems

evident.

Moving forward, knowledge by presence relies on unification. His task, then, at

least in part, is to show how that is the case. The essentialist principles that caused

Suhrawardī (and Ibn Sīnā for that matter) to reject the unification theory are used to

prove the need for it if one accepts knowledge by presence. Both the primacy of

---

[197] Mohammad Syifa Amin Widigdo points out that a group take issue with the Sadrian claim that Suhrawardī was an adherent to the primacy of Essence. Walbridge, he mentions, declares that there is no mention of the term "the primacy of essence" in the Suhrawardian corpus. Walbridge 2000, 19, Rizvi, adds that the Sadrian critique of Suhrawardī, has no textual basis. According to him, Ṣadrā also attempts to discredit the un-named, non-represented primacy of Existence in Suhrawardī as the latter attempts to show that existence and essence are both mental concepts for the Illuminationist. There, essence is as unreal as existence. Rizvi 1999, 224. With essence as unreal as existence, the latter hardly has claim to primacy. This super-existence/essence reading of Suhrawardī causes the Light to be interpreted by some in a non-dual fashion. See Widigdo 2014, 118, 123.

Existence and the primacy of Quiddity overlap on the point of gradation. In Suhrawardī,

quiddities have differing levels of intensity. In Ṣadrā Existence has divergent echelons

of concentration. In this sense, both primacies share a common trait. Gradation serves

as the axis through which the primacy of Quiddity becomes the primacy of Existence.

Kalin quotes Ṣadrā's take on Suhrawardī saying:

> The Shaykh (i.e., Suhrawardī) has assumed that disparity (*tafāwut*) takes place between two things in terms of perfection and deficiency in their shared quiddities without regard to any other condition concerning difference (*fasl*) or accident. The truth is that a single concept (*mafhūm*) does not possess disparity from the point of view of its meaning (*ma'na*). Disparity can be only in reference to more intensity and weakness through the modes of actualization (*al-ḥusulāt*) and concrete beings (*al-wujūdāt*) because existence allows disparity in [terms of] perfection and deficiency. [198] (Kalin 2010, 65)

Kalin understands this passage forwards Ṣadrā's contention that he and Suhrawardī

have two distinct ontologies. Here, the latter's ontology seems unfit for gradation, due to

its static peripatetic underpinnings. The fluidity that Suhrawardī suggests for his static

substances emerges from outside his own ontological parameters. Thus, he

recommends a different polar shift toward existence in order to substantiate

Suhrawardī's ideas on gradation. He then provides us with appropriate supporting

passage from *al-Asfār* which states:

> The realization of this matter [i.e., the unification of the intellect and the intelligible] is impossible except through the principles that were mentioned in the beginnings of this book [i.e., the *Asfār*] concerning the view that wujud is the principal reality in existence and the quiddity is derived from it. It is certain that wujud allows intensification and diminution, and whatever is strong in existentiation (*qawiyy al-wujud*) becomes more inclusive and encompassing of universal meanings and abstract intellective quiddities. When wujud reaches the level of the simple intellect which is completely disengaged from the world of corporeal

---

[198] Quoting Sadra, *Hashiyah sharḥ ḥikmah al-ishrāq*, (Lithographed edition) p. 210, quoted in Ghulam Husayn Ibrahim Dinani, falsafa-yi suhrawardī 4th Edition (Tehran: Intisharat-i ḥikmat, 1997), p. 217.

> bodies and quantities, it becomes all of the intelligibilia and all things in a manner more virtuous and nobler than what they are based upon. Whoever has not tasted this path cannot understand the simple intellect which is the source of all detailed sciences. That is why you see most of the virtuous people finding it very difficult and unable to verify it in spite of their deep involvement in following the sciences of wisdom such as Shaykh Suhrawardī in the *Mutaraḥāt*, *Talwīḥāt*, and *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*,[199] who has clearly rejected this view, and Imam [Fakhr al-Din] al-Razi and those who are in their state and class. (Kalin 2010, 66) [200]

In other words, Suhrawardī's essentialism prevented him from detecting the obvious, as far as Ṣadrā is concerned. His promotion of gradation required the fluidity of existentialism as static substances are not capable of ontological intensification. Whatever is capable of intensifying, as he agrees, does so through the further robustness of increased universal meanings and intellective quiddities. There is no reason to stop gathering them until reaching the most intense of existence or the Simple Intellect. The reason why he did not observe something that presents itself so readily, though, was on account of his low grade in the sciences of wisdom. Thus, Ṣadrā suggests, had Suhrawardī been an existentialist, and thus an adherent of the unity theory, the genius in Suhrawardī's knowledge by presence would have been fully realized by Suhrawardī.

In any case, Ṣadrā championed Suhrawardī's knowledge by presence, as well as ontological gradation without its quiddity-based platform. He also showed contempt for the former's rejection of the unification theory. However, he used Suhrawardī's stance on gradation to save knowledge by presence from a perceived contradiction and shortsightedness in *Ishrāqī* essentialism while securing his position on the unification

---

[199] Unfortunately, Kalin does not mention the respective passages.

[200] Quoting Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿaliyyah fī-al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyāt al-arbaʿh,* 1,3 (Beirut: Dar ihyāʾ al-turāth al-ʿarabī, 1981), 373-374. Asfar, I, 3, pp. 373–374.

theory in ways that necessitates a move away from quiddity-based metaphysics toward his existentialism. Thus, an overhauled Suhrawardian epistemology, equipped with a positive relationship with unification theory, and transubstantial existentialism are now intact. As we shall see, the Sadrian SP uses this updated version of knowledge by presence as the key platform for the ontological, epistemological, and psychological schematic needed to support the claim that the SP's treatment in Ṣadrā is capable of presenting the thought experiment's original conditions-approved apperception, otherwise buried in the protocol of Peripateticism and its influences.

However, some remaining adjustments are needed to assist the final stages of the SP's unfurling. The Sadrian resolution, to Ibn Sīnā's perceived failure to provide proper support for how the self perceives through the abstractions of static substances via transubstantial motion, has been covered. Just above is the adoption of Suhrawardian knowledge by presence, supplemented with the adoption of the unification theory and a reversal of essentialism for existentialism. If the unity of existence common to Akbarian thought applies, then as the backdrop of the Transcendental synthesis, this last pillar must stand the test of Sadrian examinations as the previous elements endured them.

What remains to be seen, then, is the fate of Ibn ʿArabī's unity of Existence under the Sadrian microscope checking for the signs of essentialism, as we saw in Suhrawardī, and ultimately how his ontological theory treats the self. In what follows, we will see that Akbarian theory of knowledge's integrity is tested by the pristine requirements of Sadrian motion's existentialism. Nonetheless, after this process the

previously incompatible elements in Akbarian thought in Ṣadrā's system that would

otherwise hinder the SP's condition-approved apperception are expunged.

The Unity of Existence and the Sadrian Self

According to Nadia M. Wardeh, Ibn 'Arabī influences Ṣadrā with the key

eschatological application of imagination. Ibn ʿArabī summons us in his "The Imprint of

the Bezels of Wisdom" (*Naqsh fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*), a summary on the Bezels of Wisdom,

to:

> **Know that the plane of imagination,** i.e. the level which embraces all of
> the images which take form within the imaginal faculty (*al-quwwat al-
> mutakhayyilah*) contiguous to the human level and within any imaginer
> whatsoever- a level which is also called 'the level of limited image-
> exemplars,' just as the World of Image-Exemplars [*al-mithāl al-muṭlaqah*]
> is called 'absolute imagination' - and whose relationship to the World of
> Image-Exemplars is like the streams branching off from a great river, **is
> the plane which encompasses and includes everything** existent in the
> external world **and every non-thing, for it possesses the power to
> represent both. And all of it,** i.e., the plane of imagination and the forms
> which appear within it, **is veridical** and corresponds to reality **and** is
> **divided into two kinds: a kind in which the image imagined
> corresponds to the form in the external world,** or in the plane external
> to the plane of imagination; **and this is called 'unveiling'** (*kashf*); **and a
> kind in which it does not correspond. Within the latter interpretation
> takes place.** (Ibn ʿArabī 1982, 121)

For Akbarians, then, everything outside of the Absolute Essence is in the all-

encompassing field of imagination precisely because it is capable of representing all

that is and all that is not. Corporeality is just one kind of existence, non-corporeality is

another. Thus, imagination is stronger than corporeality such that whatever the self

imagines is responsible for the materiality of that world and what occurs therein. This is

because, for Ibn ʿArabī, imagination refers to the intermediary between any two stages

of existence. These stages include the Cloud (*al-ʿAmā*), or the intermediate stage

between the Essence and the World of Phenomenon (mentioned in further detail

below), mental imagery, for being a stage between the spiritual world and the visible

one, dreams, as they are a stage between the Real world (associated with the fixed

entities, again mentioned further below), and mirror imagery as they are neither

concrete objects nor abstract ideas. (Affifi 1998, 56) All of this is important for the

spiritual will (*himmah*) of the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-kāmil)*. This is one who has

realized their full onto-epistemic capacity, consequently encompassing it, per Ibn ʿArabī.

They are an isthmus between God and humankind. They can influence all these

between places through her zeal. (Affifi 1998, 59–60) Thus, as the most perfect version

of Akbarian imagination is in the Perfect Human, its most perfect candidate is potentially

there in every self. More on the Perfect Human will be mentioned below.

Ṣadrā calls on Akbarian imaginal theory when he states that, "one of the 'People

of Realization' (that is, Ibn Arabi) said, 'every man creates with his imagination things

which have no being outside the place of his intention… Yet his intention continues to

preserve them without this act of preservation at all tiring him: whenever neglect

overtakes him, though, that which he created disappears." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-

Shīrāzī1 981, 158) Elsewhere, he states, that

> [A]s for us, imaginal forms exist… in a region in the self once their effect
> and formation [occurs] through the implementation of the imagination (*bi
> istikhdām al-khayāl*), not in a world outside it (i.e. the self) through the
> effect of something besides it. [This is] evident because imaginal activity
> (*taṣarrufāt al-mutakhayyal*) and their arbitrary gags, (*diʿābātihā al-
> jazāfiyyah*) and whatever of the forms, and unpleasant imaginal formations
> they play with...only occur in the Adamic Microcosm (*al-ʿAlam al-ṣaghīr al-
> insānī*) due to the evil of the imaginal faculty (*shayṭana quwwah al-
> mutakhayilah*). [It is also evident that they occur from inside the self and
> not outside of it] because these imaginal forms (*al-ṣuwar al-khayaliyyah*)

abide through the self's concentration (*tawajjuh al-nafs*) and attention toward them (*iltifātihā ilayhā*) and its imaginal implementation in their formation and stabilization. If the self were to turn away from them, they would vanish and be no more." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vol. 1:353)

His reference to Ibn ʿArabī's imaginal theory above is matched here in his explanation of the source of imaginal forms. They come from the self, and not outside of it. The proof of the realm of their origination matches the same Akbarian reference for "if the self were to turn away from them, they would vanish and be no more." However, Akbarian imaginal theory is not simply grafted to Ṣadrā's system, wholesale. Ṣadrā who holds that one's ontological intensity coupled with their imagination are the theatre of onto-epistemic activity in this world and the next. Through both, the self's destiny is auto determined. He states:

It is not the case, as the physicians and natural scientists have claimed, that the cause of the occurrence of death is the finitude of the natural powers, the exhaustion of the body's innate heat and an excess of superfluous moistness in it, or some other influence of the heavenly bodies, according to their respective shares of influence in the ascendant at one's birth… Rather, the cause of death is the soul's self-substantiating power, its increasing intensity of being, and its Return-through that motion which is of its essence-to its Maker, from Whom is its beginning and in Whom is its end, whether it be gladdened and delighted or tormented and dejected. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 1981, 181)

In Ṣadrā, again, the self intensifies past the limitations of corporeality leading him toward the immaterial domain. There, questions about the self-body relationship, and death, the afterlife and the isthmus life (*barzakh*) between the two are contemplated applying the self's imagination to the problems as per Akbarian thinkers. He states that God has:

[M]ade the sensory stages (*al-maqāmāt al-ḥawās*), and imagination (*takhayyulāt*) as degrees and stairs that the spiritual traveler (*al-sālik*) climbs toward Him, be He exalted! So, he must first descend into the

World of Material Sensibles (ʾĀlam al-maḥsūsāt al-māddiyyah). Then, [he must descend] into the World of Sensibles Free from Visible Materiality (ʿĀlam al-maḥsūsāt al-mujarradah ʿan al-māddah al-marʾiyyah) through the essence of imagination (ʿayn al-khiyāl) for sensation to become imagination. Then,[he must descend] into the World of the Separated Forms (ʾĀlam al-ṣuwar al-mufārraqah) for imagination to become an actualized intellect (ʿaql bi al-fʿil)...The spiritual traveler doffs (khalʿ), then [dons] a new garment, dies, and is resurrected from it, and is then gathered to what comes after it (ḥush-shirah ilā mā baʿadah). Thus, the number of deaths, resurrections, and gatherings are [so] many [as to be innumerable]...there is no rest in this world for the natural substance (al-jawhar al-ṭabīʿi), especially the moving human substance in its essence (al-jawhar al-insānī al-mutaḥarrak fī ḏātih) until the next world, then to the Divine Presence. It must have its initial appearance and then to the levels of sensibles (marātib al-maḥsūsāt). Then it ascends slowly until it is free of them." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 9:328–329)

Thus, the human substance and its objective is achieved through its attention toward the Divine Presence. The latter is achieved through the self's imagination. In other words, for Ṣadrā, human beings achieve their desire through losing everything that is not their self until reaching what ultimately *Is*. This is done through moving between the polarities that border the isthmus. Wardeh stresses, however, that the inclusion of Akbarian imaginal theory is not without scrutiny or modification as per Ṣadrā's theories on substantive movement. While the Sadrian treatment of Akbarian imaginal theory deserves a study all its own, it suffices us, for now, however, to say that Ṣadrā employs this self-determining imaginal theory to explain key aspects of his eschatology, albeit with some adjustments.

According to Wardeh, Ṣadrā detected an inconsistency on the part of Ibn ʿArabī's application of the fixed entities (al-ʿayān al-thābithah) as they relate to the primacy of existence, to explain the new creation in the next life. In short, fixedness cannot sustain movement, and so, Ṣadrā takes issue with Akbarian imaginal theory on the grounds that its reliance on the fixed entities to explain the production of a new world after one's

demise, is faulty. In a novel shift, Ṣadrā reassigns Akbarian imagination, hitherto based

on the fixed entities to his transubstantial motion to support the fluidity of the existential

experience of the afterlife, thereby, overcoming this inconsistency. In the process of

explaining the divergence between these two thinkers, Wardeh suggests that Ibn ʿArabī

and Ṣadrā disagree on three key points: 1) the function of eternal fixed archetypes as

they relate to the transmutation in the Hereafter, 2) the precedence of the physical

forms over the spiritual forms, and 3) Ibn 'Arabi's regards toward physical bodily

resurrection. While the first point would also apply to a person's transmutation in this

world, thereby serving the immediate purpose best, all of these points will help make the

necessary connections between the Akbarian contribution toward the developments that

led to Ṣadrā's application of the primacy of Existence, the unity of the self, and

transubstantial motion in the Sadrian SP's knowledge by presence.

The Fixed Archetypes and Transmutation

Ṣadrā defines the quiddity while employing the fixed entities to execute the

mechanics of his transubstantive theory. He states:

> From what must be realized is that, even though there is no difference
> between existents through their essences (i.e. their essences are the
> same existence, only different in degrees of intensity) as per what we
> have mentioned [regarding] perfection (*al-kamāl*), deficiency (*al-naqs*),
> posteriority (*al-taqaddum*), anteriority (*al-taʾakhur*), manifestation (*al-*
> *ẓuhūr*), and hiddenness (*al-khafāʾ*), every level [of existence] must have
> specifying attributes (*awṣāf muʿayyinah*) and exclusive contingent
> descriptions (*nuʿūt khāṣah imkāniyyah*), appropriate [for them]. These are
> called "quiddities" by the Philosophers (*al-Ḥukamāʾ*), and "fixed entities"
> by the Masters of Unveiling of the Sufis and Knowers (*Arbāb al-kashf min*
> *al-ṣufiyyah wa al-ʿurafāʾ*). (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol.
> 1:82)

Thus, the fixed entities are the means through which difference, including intensity and the lack thereof, appears in the world. However, logic makes transmutation's source in a non-changing entity incomprehensible. This is precisely the issue that Wardeh raises on behalf of Ṣadrā toward Akbarian onto-epistemology regarding the latter's use of the fixed entities as the foundation for a world in flux. Wardeh argues that possible existents/engendered existents (*al-mumkināt*) the fixed entities, or the meanings (*maʿānī*) of the objects that make up the world, are activated through God's knowledge. (Muhammad Ibn ʿArabī al-Ḥātimī1 911, 281–2) [201] Ṣadrā acknowledges that despite the vicissitudes of time, and the changing nature of the created world, "the qualified realites" (*al-ḥaqāʾiq al-nawʿiyyah*) have an established existence in God's knowledge. Thus, He knows things in a fixed manner while the known things are varied multiples, just as His Ability is Pre-Eternal (while that which was enabled are created (i.e. subject to time and space), "that which is with you perishes, while that which is with Allah endures." [202] (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2001, 44) With a passing reference to a passage from *al-Futūḥāt* quoted in Ṣadrā's *Risālah fī al-ḥashr* [203]wherein Ibn ʿArabī discusses the human being's spirit-form relationship as it relates to the move toward the afterlife having left her earthly body. Her verdict on the subject follows Ṣadrā's discussion on the same topic in his *ʿArshiyyah.* (Wardeh 2018, 281) There, Wardeh

---

[201] Incidentally, Ṣadrā mentions "the forms of all existing things, for example, occur in His Essence-May He be exalted!-and subsist with Him without being (materially) incarnated in Him. Indeed, their occurrence in their Maker is more intense than their occurrence in their (transient material) receptacle. Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 1981, 158.

[202] al-Qurʾān 16:96

[203] Wardeh refers to Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʾaliyah fi al-asfār al-ʾaqliyyah al-arbaʾh*. 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār ʿihyāʾ al-turath al-ʾarabī, 1990), 250-55.

claims, Ṣadrā rejects Ibn ʿArabī's reliance on the fixed entities as the ground for the new

creation when he states:

> And as for the absolutely separate (Intellect) and the immaterial Forms,
> we must say something else (than the usual theories of the philosophers)-
> (namely), what is perceived by the inner knowing of the true "unitarians"
> who unveil (the inner reality and transcendent Unity of Being). It is that
> these (intelligible Forms) do not have any being in themselves and that
> their essences are submerged and obliterated in the sea of Unicity (of the
> divine Essence or Being) ... (Morris 1981,124-125)

James Morris, the translator of this passage from the ʿArshiyyah says that it and others

similar to it [204] that, for Ṣadrā, the "transubstantiation' of all beings...is the inner

dynamic relational between the universal noetic plane of Being and the forms of

manifestation continually emerging within that Whole." He continues that for Ṣadrā "this

relational includes in a sense even the intelligible Platonic Forms…and is actually only

another integral aspect of the all-encompassing Unity and Simplicity of Being…" (Morris

1981, 73) Ultimately, Morris informs us that unlike Akbarians who describe these

theophanies of Existence as "manifestations" (tajalliyyāt), Ṣadrā call them the

transubstantiation of existents. In other words, there is nothing still or fixed about the

entities we appreciate in of our common-sense experiences nor any realm above our

terrestrial one. The universal process of Self-manifestation of the Necessary Existent,

as witnessed through "transcendent knowing" is described as the "'transubstantiation' of

all beings." (Morris 1981, 73) In other words, Wardeh argues that since Ṣadrā sees

Existence showing Itself in the form of transubstantial motion, every incident of Self-

manifestation in the world, i.e. the entities we are and encounter, are not based in static

---

[204]Sections: Nine on Principle (deriving from) the Source of Illumination (concerning the union of God
and His Speech in all beings: the 'Breath of the all Merciful (Morris 1981, 112-113), and Ten on Principle,
concerning His Names-May He be exalted (Morris 1981, 116-18).

essences like the Forms.[205] Rather, the Forms are also transubstantial entities. Nothing is still. All things, continues Morris, are just "aspects of the all-encompassing Unity and Simplicity of Being." (Morris 1981, 73)

Wardeh establishes that for Ibn ʿArabī the Cosmos has two levels. The first is termed the non-delimited imagination. The second is the level of the fixed entities in their nonexistence. Existence belongs to God and so the fixed entities are ostensibly forever nonexistent. The Breath of the All-Merciful [206] (most likely to be the Cloud, a fixed substance) causes their imaginal properties/forms ("neither existent like God nor nonexistent like the archetypes in themselves") to appear. These accidental forms/engendered existence/possible existents are to the Cloud what images are to a mirror. [207]

Only God is free from transmutation, so no Existence is Real but His. Imaginal entities are delimited, and entificated and thus, non-Real. The source of their limitation is their quiddity. In themselves, however, the fixed entities have no limitation as they have no existence. [208] This subtle point, she argues, is the reason why God's Reality is synonymous with them. In other words, they, in themselves, have no existence and as such, they are not limited. God's Reality is also not limited. Therefore, the fixed entities are also purely non-delimited, in themselves, and thus ontologically the same, on account of their shared unlimitedness with Reality. The imaginal entities, on the other

---

[205] In other words, the fixed entities.

[206] The Breath of the All-Merciful refers to the prophetic report: "Verily, I find the breath of the All-Merciful [coming] from Yemen. (*innī la ajidu nafas l-raḥmān min qibali l-yemen*). For one of Chittick's discussion on this tradition and its application in Ibn ʿArabī see Chittick 1989, 127.

[207] W. Chittick 1989, 125–38.

[208] Ibid.

hand, which find the grounds of their manifestations in these fixed entities are incapable of such indications due to their delimited condition. In this way, she claims, the fixed entities and Reality are synonymous. (Wardeh 2018, 282) Although non-existent, cosmologically speaking, that is to say, non-manifest, they exist in God's knowledge (i.e., He is aware of their possibility). When the Breath of the All-Merciful engages them through the word "Be!" [209] their effects may become manifest in the world.

On this basis, Wardeh understands that all engendered existence/imaginal (*barzakhī*) (i.e. those between existence an non-existence) entities manifest through Divine exhalation, much in the way that words do with human breath (i.e., the words are not physically present, but their effects/meanings come and go in the imaginal world as imaginal entities). In this sense, the non-existent fixed entities go from a passive/nonexistent to an active state/manifest and hence existent state. On this account, she explains, Ibn ʿArabī considers the roots of the tail (ʿ*ajab al-dhanb*) as per the prophetic tradition declaring that "every son of Adam will be devoured by dust, except the (literally) "roots of the tail". From it, he was created and from it he will be recreated, [210] to be the non-decaying fixed entity . (Ibn ʿArabī 1911, vols. 4:454–5.) The non-decaying fixed entity , then, serves as the basis for the Akbarian precedence of the physical over the spiritual form, and attitude toward physical bodily resurrection.

Ibn ʿArabī holds that the spiritual form is self-distinguished before placement in the body. He does not feel that their determination is provided by the physical form,

---

[209] al-Qurʾān 36:82

[210] Muslim. Ṣadrā mentions an opinion from Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d.490 /1111) that "the 'root of the tail' is the self, and that the other world arose out of this." Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 1981, 177.

whatsoever. Rather, God creates one's physical form with an independent spiritual form

in close preparation to it for union. Thus, there are two stages to creation, the body and

blowing of the spirit into it. (Ibn ʿArabī 1911, vol. 4:448) [211] The two are united by the

spirit's breath into the body. The two-stage creation sequence is also used in reverse to

explain how the bodies are brought back in the new creation, as well. So, when Ibn

ʿArabī states regarding the former that:

> [J]ust as the sun's rays [that happen to be] reflected by a polished mirror return to the sun [i.e., do not disappear] if the mirror becomes tarnished,'[212] then, "in like manner, on the day of resurrection God will bring these physical forms back to life by breathing upon them through Israfil's second blowing that passes over these forms. Then the spirits are raised on the day of resurrection in their physical bodies, just as they had appeared in this world.[213]

This passage implies that our spirits are the rays and that our bodies are the mirrors

mentioned. If the mirror is corrupted that does not challenge the ray-ness of the ray as

they remain what they always were even after causing the mirror to shimmer. Likewise,

Ibn ʿArabī suggests that these corrupted mirrors will be back to shining capacity again

and when the rays shine on them again, due to the second blowing of the trumpet, then

the mirrors will shimmer i.e., the physical bodies will be animated yet again. (Wardeh

2018, 283–4)

---

[211] Wardeh does not seem to mention the creation of the spirit. Perhaps it is a simple oversight. If it is because Ibn ʿArabī is silent on the issue, this begs the question as to why there are not or how there may be three stages: 1) the creation of the spirit, 2) the creation of the body, and 3) the unification of the two through the breath in Akbarian thought. Is the spirit of the human being not a creation as well? If so, why is it not included, here. If not, then this is a worthy investigation for another time.

[212] Morris 1988, 160–161.

[213] Ibid.

Ṣadrā's Critique

Ṣadrā did not agree with the interpretation of the 'roots of the tail' as the fixed

entity through which God would resurrect the human being in the new creation. He also

did not accept the physical form's precedence over the spiritual one. Finally, he did not

accept the effective reversal of the second objection in order to explain how the human

being is brought back again in the world to come. While both thinkers appreciated the

primacy of existence as an ontological basis, the nature of that primacy differs between

them. Based on Wardeh's argumentation here, I would suggest that the basis of Ṣadrā's

critique points to a larger criticism: it does not seem that he found Akbarian

existentialism quite existential enough. This is due to a failure to distinguish between

mental existence and existence *qua* existence and its reliance on the fixed entities to

explain the relative nuances of the imaginal world. I would also re-emphasize that had

he accepted them, as Wardeh points, Transcendental Philosophy's systematic

approach toward transubstantial motion as the lynchpin to explain all the Sadrian

alternatives previously mentioned in this study would be for naught. (Wardeh 2018,

283–4)

Ultimately, the critique is grounded in Ṣadrā's rejection of the fixed entities as the

anchor of the creation theory in this world and the next. He was unable to do so

because it failed to harmonize with Ṣadrā's ontological commitments to the primacy of

existence and transubstantial motion. [214] In the first sense, existence is considered in

two ways: 1) Real Existence and 2) mental existence. The world, for Ṣadrā, is one

realm, so to speak, while the mind is yet another (even though they are the same

---

[214] See Rahman 1975, 94–117.

existence, the modalities are not the same). The mind may only essentialize existence due to its particularizing nature. The mind's act is to conceptualize the Real Existence that is the "world." It may only conceive of essences although it is ontologically the same as Real existence, yet different in degree. The two over-arching categories of essence are either: 1) the universal, or 2) the particular. Real existence is certainly not a particular, otherwise it would refer to only one kind of existence over another. Thus, the mind could only perceive of Real existence as a universal essence. However, Real existence is beyond essentiality, universal or otherwise. Thus, the external world, which is outside the categories of the mind, cannot maintain its ontological integrity in the it. As such, it can never be transformed into a mental existence. Ibn ʿArabī, on the other hand, in contrast to this point, bases non-existence as the ground of the fixed entities, themselves operating more like essences and ideas. As Wardeh put it, "this is not reality, "for Ṣadrā, "but an abstract idea opposed to non-delimited being (God in Himself)." In other words, this debate strikes at the heart of Akbarian existentialism as crypto-essentialism (Wardeh 2018, 283) a kind of primacy of non-existence represented in abstract ideas.

How does life seem to extend itself, one event after another, in every continual instance, everywhere? What is the cause of this empirical motion? Is it something itself still? If it is still, then where does motion come from? If it is moving, then how can these fixed entities provide motion? In fact, with their non-being and accidentality both motionless, are they not purely antithetical to the existential motion making up the most mundane aspects of our lives, not to mention the extraordinary and imaginative, in both senses of the term. After all, even if the fixed entity were granted enough existence, due

to the Breath of the All-Merciful, to actualize effects, its existence remains static. Thus, the same issues taken up against Avicennian essentialism are now waged against the Akbarian abstract idea or fixed entity. As Wardeh says, "a stable or enduring entity will contain in itself the passing phases of movement as a present fact, and this togetherness of all passing phases would amount to stability, not movement. Movement, therefore, cannot be established on the basis of a stable archetype." (Wardeh 2018, 283)

For Ṣadrā, accidents do not have their own existence, yet they are pivotal to substantial change, just as they find their existence in substance, they also find change there as well. The substances change due to the transformation of material forms. Thus, all accidental change is rooted in the material form as well. The world is in a state of continual spatiotemporal renewal every moment and thus is continually originating in time. With all existence in a state of continual change, engendered existence equals flux, while stillness is non-existence. (Rahman 1975, 95–96) The fixed entities, then, are problematic for Ṣadrā as they are non-existent, static essences. He equates the fixed entity with quiddity when referring to Existences' overwhelming singular presence when he states that, "It (i.e. Existence) is that which manifests in Its levels, and manifests in Its forms and realities in knowledge and in the extra-mental [realm]. They are called "quiddities" (*al-māhiyyāt*) and "fixed entities ...they, along with all existential qualities (*al-ṣifāt al-wujūdiyyah*) are annihilated in Existence's Essence. Thus, there is no [true ontological] differentiation outside the intellect." (Ṣadr al-DīnMuḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vol. 1:309) Thus, with their ontological application in this world limited to the

mind, the imaginal/transmutating life to come, for him, arguably much more involved, is incoherent if rooted in quiddities/fixed entities.

Wardeh reminds us of the Sadrian concurrence with Aristotle on the self's status as the body's entelechy, hence, "the identity of the body is due to the soul, which is its final form." (Rahman 1975, 256) The body produces the self's identity. The body is subordinate to the self as it is its final/most complete form, determining its quiddity, and the fountainhead of its conclusive differentia. (Wardeh 2018, 283) Thus the physical form is superior to the spiritual form. The body is in constant movement, as a spatio-temporal entity, in a state of constant renewal, but even when viewed in a dream, it is still the same body. Likewise, the body's shift to immateriality will not alter its identity in the life to come. (Rahman 1975, 256)

Ibn ʿArabī understands that corporeal reanimation will occur with the same earthly body. Ṣadrā argues that as in that world, the reality of the body is based on its form and not its matter. Just as in this life, upon completion, the self no longer requires its body. When we die, he argues, we are given "subtle bodies" (ajsām laṭifah) constructed out of the effects of the actions we performed while alive. Also, the landscape of the world we enter will also be in tune with our internal landscapes here. There, the form of the body, also known as its entelechy/self, is the resurrected's reality, inwardly and outwardly. (Wardeh 2018, 284)

She concludes that although Ṣadrā was influenced by Akbarian imagination, he replaced its structure with his own metaphysical conventions. These precepts include a primary existence that outstrips the illusions of mental existence, and the conversion

away from Platonic abstract ideas, toward moving Aristotelian substances.[215] Sadra was influenced by Ibn 'Arabi's theory of imagination but he detected an inconsistency on the part of the latter's application of the fixed entities as they relate to the primacy of Existence. He then rescued imagination with a new intellectual structure based upon his theory of substantial motion to overcome this inconsistency.

I say, in addition that while Wardeh's study is focused on the life to come, the discrepancy as to how a fixed entity can provide the motion in the current sub-lunar world in the form of its everyday movement is of more immediate attention than the problems that ensue on this basis regarding the continual "new creation" in the life to come. His solution to that distant problem was to replace Akbarian imagination for his transubstantial motion theories. By doing so, I claim, Ṣadrā also addresses the issue more immediate implications of Wardeh's observations. Our analysis of this adjustment helps uncover how Akbarianism is filtered through Ṣadrā's application of the primacy of existence, the unity of the self, and transubstantial motion into his version of knowledge by presence. If, after all, he had accepted the new creation theory as Ibn ʿArabī proposed it, his opinions on motion and its relationship to the primacy of Existence

---

[215] She concludes with an allegory to describe Ṣadrā's vision of the self-body relationship as it relates to substantive moment-a dynamic that helps to understand her presentation. She states that when the sperm:

> [D] develops into a fetus and grows to the form of a baby, who is then born and continues to grow from one form to another until it reaches full maturity. The body subsequently becomes weaker as the soul grows stronger until the person dies and reaches the "imaginal world." Ultimately, Mulla Sadra has formed his afterlife construction based on this fundamental theory and became the first to give a systematic and philosophical explanation of this life and the afterlife: how the soul joins the body and attains to the Divine Presence. Wardeh 2018, 284.

would have suffered the same inconsistencies he sighted regarding the Akbarian

dependence on the fixed entities to explain the new creation in the next world.

Thus, as it was with Suhrawardī, Ṣadrā 's distinct line between Existence and

existents is drawn. While there is only Existence to speak of, as both Ibn ʿArabī and

Ṣadrā concur, all forms of existence i.e. the existents are modalities. Existence, in itself,

is not a mode. While Akbarian imagination leans toward gradation and intensity, for

Ṣadrā, the case of the fixed entities reveals a lack of distinction between Existence and

existents. As Muhammad Kamal notes, the lack of distinction between the two in

previous epistemologies compromises mysticism. *al-Mashāʾir* states that:

> The reality of existence for entities includes entities having existence not
> in the way that universal meanings contain particulars and apply to them…
> the reality of existence is neither genus, nor species, nor accident, since it
> is not a natural universal. Instead, its inclusion happens in another mode
> of inclusion, and no one has gnosis of it except the mystics, i.e., those
> who are firmly grounded in [mystical] knowledge. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad
> al-Shīrāzī1992, 1997)

For Ṣadrā, the Akbarian mental existence and the fixed entities more resembles those

who do not have mystical knowledge. It resembles rationalism due to its lack of

ontological distinctions between Existence and existents along with their reliance on the

other-worldly, yet fixed essences/abstract idea entities. Rather, for Ṣadrā, taking on the

most mystical aspects of the *Ishrāqīs*, knowledge begins with self-knowledge. Kamal

reminds of the importance of this starting place for Ṣadrā in that "knowledge of the self

is important for knowing Being (i.e., Existence) because the self is a mode of Being and

cannot be separated from it. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002b, 16–17)

Chapter V Conclusion

In review, Ibn Sīnā's epistemology does not entertain the presential knowledge that Aristotle endorsed for God. Rather, his approach relied on substances and emanation as an explanation for the nature of the Divine's awareness of the world. In turn, human awareness is based upon the same structure. For Ṣadrā, however, the phenomenon of motion challenges Aristotelian substance theory's veracity. Both divine and human knowledge demand an alternative explanation for an inactive substance that cannot be the ground for a moving and emanating Cosmos.

Ṣadrā proceeds to overthrow the peripatetic onto-epistemic structure. Instead, he forwards a knowledge by presence capable of explaining how God and man share the same mirrored process of knowledge appropriate for a gradational cosmos, one that emanates entities moving vertically from potentiality to actuality in a band of existential possibility. With the unification of the intellect and intellected in place, despite Suhrawardī's reservations, the onto-epistemic approach was then aided with the Akbarian tendency for meta-philosophical contemplation to venture into the meanings of the primacy of existence and the self. There, Ṣadrā's criticism of the fixed entities seems to fine-tune Ibn ʿArabī's contributions.

I have shown that the relevant constituent parts in Sadrian knowledge by presence enabling it to carry out this task are simple. The first is Ṣadrā's resolution to Ibn Sīnā's failure to provide proper support for how the self perceives based on abstractions of static substances themselves based upon transubstantial motion. The second is an essential acceptance of the principles of knowledge by presence in Suhrawardī with the supplement that its epistemic paradigm is existentialist as opposed

to an essentialist one. Ṣadrā's augmentation of the second point includes the unity of the intellect and the intellected-a point missing in Suhrawardian ideas on direct knowledge. The third is an affirmation of the unity of existence as per Ibn ʿArabī. There the self is existence, and it contains all of its modes, just as Sadrian existence requires. However, as Wardeh suggests, Ibn ʿArabī's existentialism was not, perhaps, existential enough for Ṣadrā when it concerns the onto-epistemic function of the fixed entities . For him, other aspect of Self-manifestation, these entities are aspects of transubstantial change also. In this manner, Ṣadrā subsumes Akbarian fixed entities in the ocean of Simple Existence. So, while they may provide some intellectual solace Ṣadrā is capable of witnessing their transient nature in harmony with the rest of existence. By doing so Ṣadrā circumvents the stillness of the Forms for the fluidity of Existence thereby re-routing the ontological structure away from a perceived latent essentialism to a consistently existential theory.

With these features and adjustments in place, I have shown how Ṣadrā augmented and adapted knowledge by presence in his post-Akbarian existentialism. As the SP's conditions force the SP to be intuitive and purely existential (there is no onto-epistemic room for essence in its apperception) the claim that the SP's treatment in Ṣadrā is capable of presenting the thought experiment's original condition approved apperception, otherwise buried in the protocol of Peripateticism and its influences, is further sustained.

Chapter VI: An Excavation of the SP's Conditions Approved Perception in Mullā

Ṣadrā

I have argued that the original conditions approved apperception in the SP was hidden from Ibn Sīnā's time until Ṣadrā. I have maintained that philosophical contributions along the way helped enable the necessary onto-epistemic elements needed since its inception to help reveal it. While I do not claim that our thinkers involved thus far perceived their contributions to this development, it seems correct to assert that the onto-epistemic elements required for excavation are gathered together in Ṣadrā. I assert that all of these points are gathered in Ṣadrā's version of knowledge by presence.

The objective of this chapter is to apply Sadrian knowledge by presence to the SP after appreciating its onto-epistemic ability to do so. Showing this capacity substantiates the claim that Sadrian treatment of the SP reveals the content of the conditions-approved apperception. This capacity discloses itself through the dynamic between Sadrian transubstantial motion, time, and knowledge by presence. The redefinition of time in Ṣadrā plays a revolutionary role in onto-epistemics. Now, with time as a dimension of physical nature, as opposed to an abstract gauge of movement, the nature of presence in knowledge by presence, is also adjusted.

Afterwards, once the nature of Sadrian presence is adequately focused upon, Sumeyye Parildar's "Mullā Ṣadrā on the Mental: A Monist Approach to Mental Existence" serves as a practical example in Sadrian studies wherein his knowledge by presence establishes the SP's self as existence. This illustration occurs through Parildar's reading of Ṣadrā's Animal SP through the lens of psychological monism. After having shown how her argument fits into the SP's trajectory, as I see it, I argue

that her observation exemplifies an unearthing of the original conditions-approved apperception.

Sadrian Transubstantial Motion, Time, and Knowledge by Presence

Ṣadrā renovated knowledge by presence for his own purposes. With its ontological basis switched to the principality of Existence, the principality of Existence's filtering of its perceived essentialist tendencies, and the fixed entities as aspects of transubstantial motion to explain the imaginal, knowledge by presence is offered as a superior form of knowing Existence. The attention is directed at the self. The appropriate existential ontology is in place. There, knowledge by presence reveals the fruits of metaphilosophy through intuition. Kamal says:

> Those who wish to know the truth of Being should seek the mystic path or knowledge by presence, beginning with self-knowledge. The journey from the self (an ontic being) should finally lead to the truth of Being because the being of beings is not itself any entity. An entity such as the self is a mode of Being. That will lead us to the truth of Being, In this case, it is the knowledge of the ontic self that gives rise to ontology. (Kamal 2010, 98)

For Ṣadrā, the only way to know Existence is through knowledge by presence. The only way to know knowledge by presence, properly, is to know the self *as is.* The self, as is, is an instance of Existence. From that instance or mode of Existence the Reality of Existence becomes clear. The reality of Existence becomes clear through the ontic self, i.e., the self understood as an instance in existential time. There, an intuitive understanding of the nature of one's being an existential movement from one ontological phase to another, is the gateway to ontological clarity. This clarity, Ṣadrā insists, is based upon his adaptation of knowledge by presence. When applied to the SP, Sadrian knowledge by presence seems to be the most suitable excavational tool for

the original conditioned-approved reading of the SP. To see how this is the case, we need to look deeper into the relationship between Sadrian substance, motion and time.

A Closer Look at Sadrian Substance, Motion and Time

The subject, according to Transcendent Philosophy, in connection with the actuality it attains through motion is in a state of potentiality. It gains its actuality through potential motion as it does not have it itself. Thus, the subject is undergoing alteration and refreshing. Without alteration and flux it is static. In that case, there could be no motion as the subject would not produce it. Thus, the agency of motion must be the subject's potential nature. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 2003, 103)

The subject, according to Ṣadrā, cannot be any random element held together by an immaterial substance creating form and matter or the random agent of matter for it, as those who forward the belief in ongoing engendering and corruption (*al-kawn wa al-fasād*) hold it. Rather, as long as motion continues a fixed subject abides. Motion does not need an entity outside of the fixed subject to provide unity for it as motion's continuity, itself (despite the aforementioned conceptual divisions in the imagination) suffices. The subject of motion is that entity through which and for which change exists. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 2003, 109)

Ṣadrā went beyond peripatetic norms by allowing motion to occur outside of the four categories (quality (*al-kayf*), quantity (*al-kam*), place (*al-ayn*), and position (*al-waḍʿu*)) (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, 83; Eshots 2010, 80) in substance (*al-jawhar*). Ṣadrā had a number of arguments for advancing why motion occurs in substances. One of them claims motion occurs in the four accidental categories depending on substance for their

existence. In the same manner, actions depend on those who perform them. Accidents are like planes in substance's existence; their existence-in-itself is the same as that of the substance. Its alteration is the substance's alteration. Thus, substances must be the basis of motion. This, for Transcendent Philosophy, is the nature of substance. It was not something that was static, at some point, and then made to change at a later point. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 2003, 106–7)

Ṣadrā used transubstantial motion to repair virtually all of the shortcomings he perceived in the thinkers or systems examined in our study. Thus, whether it was Avicennian static substance theory, Akbarian primacy of Existence's inconsistency basing moving phenomenon on the fixed entities , or Suhrawardī's aversion to the unity of the intellect and the intellect, Ṣadrā's theory on the capacity for substances to beyond the limits of their essential nature has been the means to put these ideas in order. Here, it is appropriate to delve deeper into the relationship between Sadrian substance and motion further to understand what I mean by existential time as it applies to motion and the ontic self.

To be exact, by motion I intend the "verification of a probative (taḥaqquq miṣdāq) and an individual current (fard siyāl) from the substance…." (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, 84). ʿAbd al-Rasūl ʿUbūdiyyat gives an example of the Transcendent Philosophical application of the flowing individuality in the substance (al-fard al-siyāl fi-l jawhar) stating:

> If [we were to say that] an existent body (al-jism al-mawjūd) [that is] placed in front of us now, like this piece of paper, were flowing, [the expression] means that this existent piece of paper placed in front of us now is not the [same] piece of paper [that was present] in front of us a moment before. It is also not the [same] piece of paper that will be [located] in front of us after a moment. Thus, in every moment, [according to this theory] we are looking at a new piece of paper. (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, 84)

For Ṣadrā, the previous piece of paper, returns to nothingness. A completely different

piece of paper appears in the place of the previous, now no longer extant one. There is

no link established between the cessation and occurrence of these two completely

disparate pieces of paper. Instead, each appearance occurs in the stream of papers we

perceive as a single piece of paper in front of us (now). (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, 84) Although

Existence is One, with the potentiality for various incomplete degrees within it, "our

intellects can grasp these deficiencies by abstracting them from the unity of the original

act of existence, thereby translating them into essential and accidental quidditative

features, but in reality the act and its degree are inseparable." (Kaukua 2014b, 247)

Thus, the papers and their accidents find their unity in the same source for, "while

accidents need substance as their substratum and cannot exist without it, the substance

in a substratum has no need for other than itself. Since Ṣadrā views every corporeal

and psychic substance as an evolutionary and unidirectional process, its actual

substratum is nothing other than the continuity of this process." (Eshots 2010, 85) [216]

        To perceive the paper, now, the previous paper has to vanish. After that, another

paper appears. Thus, every "now" of the paper is achieved between these two

disparate instances whose lack of connection is not detected through common

perception. The papers appearance in the world as a continuously connected entity. For

Ṣadrā's Transcendent Philosophy, however, its existence is verified in the totality of the

time of its proceedings. (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, 84) In this sense, Rizvi summarizes our

contentions, here, stating that:

> Just as everything in existence is in constant flux and gradation, this
> insight being a result of Mullā Ṣadrā's twin key notions of the gradation
> and modulation of being (*tashkīk al-wujūd*) and substantial motion (*ḥaraka*

---

[216] See Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 3:87.

al-jawhariyya), so too is time, which is a consequence of these two facts, in motion and flux. So, unlike the notion of time as the measure of motion of a stable substance in *Physics IV*, time becomes the concomitant, indeed dimension of a dynamic unfolding and transforming substance. (S. H. Rizvi 2006, 728–9)

Sadrian time is not a container in which events occur. Instead, Transcendent Philosophy treats time as a measure of self-renewing physical nature. Thus, like the values of the moving three-dimensional nature it estimates, time is a moving extension of physical nature (*imtidād*). As both the measure and the measured share in their limitations as mental existence, the arising and passing of time is no more real than the appearance of static essences in extra-mental reality. Rather, for Ṣadrā time is motion, and the fourth dimension of physical nature. (Rahman 1975, 108–9; ʿUbūdiyat 2010, 84–8)

Time, like the intensifying and moving existents of which it is a dimension, is in motion and flux. In this sense, Sadrian time is categorically non-Aristotelian. This helps us understand the example offered in Ubūdiyyat's piece of paper for "its collective existence is verified by the totality of the time of its life." Half of its existence is determined by half of its duration, and so on, exponentially, until the onto-temporal breakdown of an entity's stream is divided into infinite subdivisions. (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, 84) Each temporal subdivision is a "now" (*ān*) in the stream of the collective succession of the paper's form appearing in such rapid succession that these hypothetical divisions (*maqṭʿāt farḍīyyah*) formulate a paper's static existence in the mind.[217]

---

[217] For more on this Bergsonian analogy and Henry Bergson's (1859-1941) similarities with Ṣadrā, see Shirawani 2019.

The paper's matter is its potential and preparedness to take on the self-renewing

origination in time. Yanis Eshots informs us that for Ṣadrā:

> [P]rime matter is nothing other than potentiality and preparedness, while the reality of form is nature with its self-renewing temporal origination. Through its evolving preparedness, the Prime Matter receives a new form in every instant, each form having a different matter, which accompanies it by necessity. In turn, this matter is prepared to receive another form, different from that which necessitated it (matter) through preparedness. Thus, we find that form is prior to matter in essence, but its (the form's) individual ipseity is posterior to matter in time. Hence, both form and matter possess self-renewal and perpetuity through the other. The popular belief that the form of a non-compound body remains forever the same and does not undergo any change arises from the similarity of the changing forms. In actual fact, however, these forms are one by their philosophical definition (ḥadd) and meaning, but they are not one in number, because they are renewed and replaced with each other in every instant, in a continuous manner. [218] (Eshots 2010, 83)

So, for Transcendent Philosophy, while the substantiality of the paper belongs to the

flick-book collective of pieces of paper appearing and vanishing quickly enough to

present the three-dimensional item in front of us, our minds consider a still-frame during

the duration of the animating process as a static substance. (ʿUbūdiyat 2010, 84–85)

While the paper's form and matter are both changing, the continuity of the process

remains the same. While the Peripatetics may hold that the constancy of the paper is

due to its static form and matter, and that time is a measure of the paper as a stable

substance, for Ṣadrā this is an illusion. For him, reality dictates that substance and

motion are identical and manifest in physical nature as four onto-temporal dimensions:

three of which are extensions and the final is its temporal measure in physical nature.

---

[218] See Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 3:63–64.

Sadrian Knowledge by Presence and Self-Presence

Commenting on the Avicennian notion of one's being present (*ḥāḍir*) to themselves shared in Ṣadrā, Kaukua presents the case for Sadrian self-awareness as it relates to its status as an immaterial substance. Ṣadrā's says in a statement selected for its insight on the Sadrian self's self-transparency:

> We perceive our essences (*dawātanā*) through our forms (*ṣūratanā*) through which we are [who] we [are]. [We do not apprehend them] through a form super-added to it. Thus, every human perceives his essence in a manner preventing sharing it [with someone else] ... [Also] we refer to every universal concept and mental form—even if it was something subsisting through our essence—by 'it', whereas our essence we refer to by 'I'. Thus, through our essence we know the essence of its existence and our individual self-hood (*huwiyyatunā al-shakhṣiyyah)*. (Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī 2000, vol. 6:149)

This passage highlights the identification of Sadrian self-awareness and individual existence, making self-knowledge something sustained through a specific person's status as an immaterial substance. (Kaukua 2014b, 245) There is a highly Suhrawardian tone in this passage, focusing on the pronoun "I" and its connection to self-knowledge. Again, unlike Ibn Sīnā and Suhrawardī, for Ṣadrā, the self's being present to itself in an intuitively familiar fashion or knowledge by presence involves the union of the intellect and the intelligible.

Kaukua also observes that Ṣadrā's broad concept of epistemic unity governs the process of human development from self to intellect. Starting from sense perception, onward to imagination and intellection, the act of cognition is through mental existence. Mental existence divides into the knower and the known. He states, by way of example, that "an intelligible exists in act only by being understood. This, however, requires that it be given to an intellectual subject, which in turn can only exist as an actual intellect by

understanding the intelligible. Were it not for this single act of intellection, both constituents would be merely potential." [219] Mental existence, regardless of its division, dictates the union in sense perception as well. [220] In fact, Kaukua reminds us that this unity *only* exists in mental existence in the "experiential realm of perception, imagination, and intellection." He concludes his analysis stating that, for Ṣadrā, "like any act of existence, an experience should be primarily understood as an indivisible whole, not a composite of a subject and various qualitative features. The subject cannot be really distinguished from its object, because in order to be an actual subject, it must be determined by an actual object." (Kaukua 2014b, 248) Thus, the unity between the intellect and the intellected, at the heart of Sadrian onto-epistemology is an act of mental existence. Otherwise, for him, there is no division in Existence in the first place.

Transcendent Philosophy's considering all knowledge as rooted in the self has been established above. The first object of perception for the self is the self, thus all perception outside of the self is secondary to it. According to Ṣadrā, the act of perception is the self's moving from one ontological level to the next from the sensory, imaginative and estimative, and intellective, respectively. The imaginative and estimative are placed together because both apply to that between the senses and the intellect. The type of perception that occurs in the self is determined by whichever level the self modulates in at the time of perception.

The cause-effect relationship in perception also gives way to the predominance of Existence in Ṣadrā. Rizvi comments that as Sadrian existence is a "singular

---

[219] See Ṣadrā al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī 2000, vols. 3:340–1.

[220] See Ibid, 342

modulated reality" and "the world-process is a modulated and related bundle of acts of being that emanate from and manifest the One," then "the world-process is the successive unfolding and deployment of divine theophanies and disclosures that are not related to causal connections." (Rizvi 2005, 576) As there are no existents outside of the One, in truth, there is no causality from them either. Rather, Existence's capacity to reveal is in degrees for the "higher principles are responsible for the effects of lower ones by which they 'comprehend' them.' Thus:

> What unfolds in this order of being are continuous divine acts, and there are no causes or effects as such but merely 'preparations' (*muʿiddāt*) for divine agency that are in constant motion. The world is a process emanating from God and as such is purely relational. The relationship between the First Principle and its manifestations is through deployment of the pool of being 'unfolding' (*al-wujūd al-munbaṣiṭ*). (S. H. Rizvi 2005, 576)

The external objects corresponding with these levels, visible, audible, or tactile are preparatory means for the occasion of the self's manufacturing of the perceptible image when the appropriate conditions are fulfilled for them. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī 2002; Peerwani 2008, vol. 3:393) When one touches something, for example, the tiny nerve endings at the tip of the finger do not create the sense of touch. Sensations such as pain, heat or cold, softness, stiffness, sharpness, and the like are not created by the dermis. Even the bottom layer of skin sending sensory messages to the brain, according to Ṣadrā, are all preparatory acts for the self to become the sensation it feels. (Rahman 1975, 222) With perception, then, the self plays the actor's role, *is* the action of perception, and is its form prepared by external stimulus when speaking of external knowledge. (Peerwani 2008, xxx–xxxi) Ṣadrā equates perception and the union of the intellect and intelligible, as Peerwani states, in Ṣadrā:

> [T]he perceiver becomes completely unified and identified with the object
> of its perception so much so that there remains no differentiation between
> the two. This is knowing not from the outside as an object of knowledge
> but from the inside by the soul's becoming it. Therefore, the status of
> being and the status of knowledge is the same for the knowledge to be
> possible. This according to Mulla Ṣadrā applies to all kinds of perception.
> (Peerwani 2008, xxxi)

The unification of the intellect and the intellected applies to all kinds of perception. The

self perceiving itself is not just a kind of perception, it is the basis of all perception.

From this we can say, confidently, that the union of the intellect and the intellected

occurs in primary apperception. (Peerwani 2008, xxx–xxxii)

Conclusion

The Sadrian self's perception is an act of trans-substantial motion as knowledge

is the substance's upward movement from one modality to another in self-realization.

This process is "a gradual increase in the being's individuality as it acquires new

degrees of perfection which, by being founded upon the earlier ones, encompass them

within themselves." (Kaukua 2014b, 249) Categorized by whichever ontological level it

realizes itself in, and thus, the union of the intellect and the intellected-the type of

knowledge at the core of knowledge by presence, occurs in the present. The present is

a now. Now is a conceptual marker in the onto-epistemic stream of the self's

transubstantiation.

Speaking on substances, in general Kaukua states, using a generic personality

to impress his point:

> The theory of substantial motion...leads back to the primacy of existence.
> The two stages in John's development can belong to one individual only
> because they belong to one and the same process, a single continuity of

> existence. [221] Although this continuity is metaphysically primitive and thus unanalyzable by means of more foundational concepts, such as a stable substantial essence, it is directed by an internal teleological principle. This principle is the Sadrian equivalent of the Peripatetic concept of substance in the sense that the identity of an individual existent is founded upon it, but, unlike the Peripatetic substance, it can only exist as the infinitely rich continuity of motion and therefore cannot be abstracted from any particular phase in that continuity. (Kaukua 2014b, 250)

Ṣadrā's four-dimensional transubstantial motion locating the self's apperception at a potentially infinite number of nows proves to be a significant point of interest. For now, we may conclude that the summit of knowledge by presence is the self's immediacy to itself at any one point of its substantial flow.

El-Bizri's SP: A Similar Conclusion for Dissimilar Reasons

Prior to investigating Parildar's argument regarding the Animal Soul SP's capacity to represent Ṣadrā's position that the self is existence based upon Sadrian knowledge by presence, I would like to mention a similar treatment of the SP. This treatment is reminiscent of her conclusion that the Animal SP indicates Ṣadrā's stance on psychological monism. It is mentioned here to both contextualize the notion's place in current studies while also highlighting an oversight in it magnify the steps we have taken toward Parildar to explain the legitimate need for Ṣadrā's onto-epistemic intervention.

---

[221] See Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 3:74–6, 83, 95.

Bizri's Existentialist SP

The sixth chapter of Nader El-Bizri's *The Phenomenological Quest of Avicenna and Heidegger* entitled " The Epistemology of Being" covers the SP, its relationship with Rene Descartes' *Cogito*, and the "inner sense of prehension," (*al-wahm*) as he coins it, on two fronts. There, he suggests Ibn Sīnā's theory of knowledge considers being to be engraved with two qualities. Here I will discuss the first quality as it pertains to the study directly. The secondary quality, although crucial to El-Bizri's account, does not share the same weight and as such will be avoided. [222] The first quality regards the thought experiment's self-affirmation. He suggests that for Avicennians the SP affirms its self-existence as 1) dissimilar to the Cogito self as substance, 2) has dimensions which are the same as Immanuel Kant's (d.1804) unity of apperception and Martin Heidegger's (d.1976) existential analytic of Dasein, despite the Avicennian distinctions, 3) carries on as a hermeneutically fluid entity that conceptually relates to time as its fixed limit, and 4) encounters being as both "I" ness, thereby simultaneously indicating the interdependence of existence and thinking and undergoing epistemic proximity.

El-Bizri's alternative phenomenological methods of Avicennian ontology usher in a crucial perspective on the SP. It renders Ibn Sīnā's ontology in a robust presentation of its phenomenological magnitude. By doing so, it invigorates Avicennian studies in

---

[222] The second quality of the epistemology of Avicennian being is not as crucial for us yet is intrinsic to El-Bizri's account. The secondary characteristic of the knowledge of being is its intentional and phenomenological disposition substantiated as inner sense of prehension. That is to say that for El-Bizri, Avicennian epistemology considers being as a seizure or arrest from within. This prehension is 1) of the elevated inner senses, 2) the bestower of import and recognition, 3) the obliger of real acts, 4) sanctions the Avicennian account of self as a hermeneutic process of bringing itself back to its point of origin.

general, and the SP in particular. Thus, his account of the SP is particularly important

for thinking the SP anew. It is also the most existentialist take on the SP that I have

come across. He argues that the primary encounter for the SP is being. By doing so it

actively asserts the primacy and immediacy of the original confrontation of being. (El-

Bizri 2000, 150) This position closely resembles my own position on the ontological

status of the SP and its self-awareness.

El-Bizri's Main Arguments Regarding the SP

In "Being and Existence, "the chapter preceding his treatment of the Avicennian

epistemology of being, El-Bizri argues that the distinction Ibn Sīnā made between

existence and essence, is based on modalities. He posits that this modular analysis, as

opposed to the Aristotelian *ousia* based one weighing out existence in terms of

contingency and necessity supports an existentialist metaphysic. He also submits that

this modular analysis also provides the structure for variant or degreed participation in

being (*al-tashkīk*). He claims that the existence/essence distinction grants essentialism

absolute ontological value because those who have proposed it in the past have not

read nor understood Ibn Sīnā completely. Rather, if they read him properly, they would

concur that the Avicennian distinction gives primacy to existence. (El-Bizri 2000, 129-

147)

El-Bizri suggests Ibn Sīnā's theory of knowledge considers being to be engraved

with two qualities. The first is an ontological contemplation regarding the thought

experiment's self-affirmation. He suggests that for Avicennians the SP affirms its self-

existence as 1) dissimilar to the Cogito self as substance, 2) has dimensions which are

the same as Kant's unity of apperception and Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein,

despite the Avicennian distinctions, 3) carries on as a hermeneutically fluid entity that

conceptually relates to time as its fixed limit, and 4) encounters being as an "I" ness,

(i.e., *ānniyah*) thereby simultaneously indicating the interdependence of existence and

thinking and an undergoing epistemic proximity.

This last point focuses on the SP as a practical example of the true nature of

Avicennian ontology as it relates to epistemology. He says that the SP:

> [P]oints toward an experiential field whereby the self or subject is not a
> substance or unity but is rather what generates itself. It is a *nafs* as a
> self/soul field of experiences that is self-generated from an experiential
> process (Almost similar to what one encounters in the notion of 'prehension'
> of Alfred North Whitehead (d.1947)). The self-generated experiences are not
> therefore taken to be a state, they rather describe a vector. In this sense, the
> self is not a self-same substance. It is rather a potentiality-for-being-
> itself...The self is experiential, existential, and its being is stamped with the
> mark of becoming. (El-Bizri 2000, 13–14)

Instead of calling the Avicennian self an immaterial substance, El-Bizri refers to it as an

auto-productive pasture whose plain conveys the possibility for being to occur. In other

words, the self is that which is undergoing a standing out, or an emergence, through

observing its existence as the source of its knowledge. "On this view, self-

consciousness is not dependent on anything else but on the convergence of the

affirmation of being with thinking." (El-Bizri 2000, 159) The SP's status as the knower,

knowing, and that which is known, incline together as the self's autonomous existence.

(El-Bizri 2000, 159) The thought experience here seems to traverse the binary of

existence and essence opening phenomenological dimensions in ontology that

overcomes both substance and subject based studies of being. He states:

> [T]his account of the experiential *nafs/Dasein* dimension is to be
> considered in terms of reflecting on the hermeneutic notion of *al-taʾwīl*

that represents a return to the ground of self as a return to *al-awal* (as primordial self). It also points to the non-alienating dimension in the conception of the unity of being (*wiḥdat al-wujūd)*, and the praxis of *tawḥīd* (unification) as it relates to *wujūd* (existence or being), and to the conceptions of *anā* (I), and *dhāt* (essence, or essential self). (El-Bizri 2000, 14)

El-Bizri catalogues diverse items of interest found in the SP. He qualifies Avicennian epistemology of being in the SP's example: a self/soul-field, much like Martin Heidegger's *Dasein*, whose exists as a primary concern about its own being. (El-Bizri 2000, 6). This field is a gathering together of identity and essence into a single practical ontological unity. In other words, the SP is not merely an experiment aimed at establishing the existence of the self, or its separability from the body, or the different levels or types of existence. Rather, when taken on, it returns us to our true primordial existential selves. By doing so it converts our subjective experience into an Avicennian demonstration of the epistemology of being.

An Assessment of El-Bizri's Argument

El-Bizri's claim that Avicennian ontology is existential in nature bolsters his claims regarding the SP's existential outcome as he has portrayed it. I am not convinced that Ibn Sīnā intended the thought experiment's reception in this manner. Nonetheless, El-Bizri's line of thinking is compelling. He seems to approach the SP phenomenologically. By doing so he removes it from the confines of classical readings. His reference to Heidegger provides enough contrast from standard Avicennian scholarship to help illustrate his intent. By doing so, he argues that the primary encounter for the SP is being. It also asserts the primacy and immediacy of a novel onto-epistemology. In this sense, he achieves what he has set out to do with consistency.

My reading of the SP has a similar result as El-Bizri but for different reasons. Unlike him, I don't suggest that Avicennian scholarship is misinformed regarding the nature of Ibn Sīnā's onto-epistemology. Instead, I posit that Ibn Sīnā did not adhere to his conditions in an oversight that eclipsed the self's status as "experiential, existential, and its being is stamped with the mark of becoming" just as El-Bizri argues. In order to arrive at self as existence, through the SP, yet without the peripatetic trappings that prevented it from doing so in the first place, I suggest that Ṣadrā's knowledge by presence is the only quasi-Avicennian methodology to do so.

Ultimately, I cannot substantiate El-Bizri's result as it assumes the SP's capacity to realize the self as existence upon Ibn Sīnā's ontology. This is leap is unsubstantiated for all the reasons that this study has found fault with Avicennian onto-epistemology. More specifically, I find that the structural underpinnings of Avicennian demonstration, including reliance on substance theory to do so, cannot be overlooked in to indulge El-Bizri's suggestions. Rather, we must arrive at the SP's existential awareness outside a good deal of the onto-epistemic assumptions that created them as has been done up to this point. In order to continue forward and to emphasize the need for Ṣadrā's knowledge by presence, having considered El-Bizri's approach and now moving past it for the reasons mentioned, first, we will look at Parildar's observations regarding the animal SP and psychological monism.

Pariidar's Unintentional Excavation of the SP's Conditions Approved Apperception

In, "Mullā Ṣadrā on the 'Mental:' A Monist Approach to Mental Existence," Parildar argues that Ṣadrā posits a category of existence outside of sensorially

perceptible existence based on the primacy of Existence. There, quiddities, contingencies, abstractions, non-existents and inventions are part of the make-up of the category of extra-mental existence. Due to their shadowy nature, these constituents exist at lower, less intense, levels of existence. The faintness of their ontological intensity, she concludes, explains why they are not detectable in the extra-mental realm. (Parildar 2015, 160) [223] Participating in the ban of ontological intensity, Parildar explains the place of mental existence within the context of Ṣadrā's gradational ontology.

The Context of Parildar's Presentation of the Animal SP

In the course of her essay, Parildar discusses how Ṣadrā understands sensation's relationship to the self. There, she explains, the self is an active agent, acting es as a result of a modality of a level of existence within it. (Parildar 2015, 164–5) Likewise, sensation is an internal process wherein an organ earns the self's attention through an extra-mental trigger. (Parildar 2015, 165) [224] For Ṣadrā, sensation's conditions include the introduction of the sense organs and their commensurate objects. Once these conditions have been fulfilled, the process of sensation occurs. As 'the object of perception is always from the genus of the perceiver,' (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 1:39; Peerwani 2008) the object, perceiver, and the perception are all identified in the self, just as Sadrian knowledge by presence dictates.

That which is perceived in the external world, based upon the conditional medium of "illuminative relationship" (*iḍāfah ishrāqiyyah*) between the sensor and the

---

[223] See Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 1:313–4.

[224] See Ibid, vol. 8:274–75.

sensed, (Parildar 2015, 165) for Ṣadrā, is 'present with the soul and not something extra-mental corresponding to it.' (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 8:238; Peerwani 2008, 174) Identical to its perceptions, the self and its epistemic content are identified. (Ṣadr Al-Dīn Shīrāzī 1973, 51; Parildar 2015, 167) The totality of the process of sensation and its actor are all defined as part of an immaterial identity. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 8:275; Parildar 2015, 165) This immaterial identification with all of its constituents are the self's imaginal realm. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 1:317–8; Parildar 2015, 167–68)

Sadrian sensation is dependent on imagination. Imagination depends on the intellect. Thus, as Parildar concludes, sensation depends on the intellect. For Ṣadrā, the sensibles are objects of the intellect. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 1:314–15; Parildar 2015, 168) Forms are created by the self through its imagination, making sensibles the objects of imagination. Mental existents, then, are the self's sensory-intellectual productions. (Parildar 2015, 168) Ṣadrā's univocity of existence extends the same ontological reality to mental existents. The sense objects above are considered constructs of the mind. The Sadrian mind is defined as the self's ability to learn. (Parildar 2015, 167; W. Chittick 2002, 220–1) "The created forms (in the mind) are particular existents resembling external form in dimension and positions." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 8:282; Parildar 2015, 168)

Parildar observes that, in Ṣadrā, the unification of the intellect and the intelligible is synonymous with knowledge by presence. (Parildar 2015, 169) This is a point of difference between him and Suhrawardī based upon the former's existentialism. The basis for Ṣadrā's converting knowledge by presence away from essentialism is due to

his issues with Avicennian static substances and motion, as we have expressed. For

Ṣadrā, knowledge is not a static essence. Rather, knowledge is existence. It is the

identity of existence. Whatever *is* is the same as its mode of existence. The self is the

same as whatever it knows. It knows only what it perceives. Thus, the Sadrian self is

the mode of existence of whatever it perceives. Existence appears in modalities of

intensity. Thus, Parildar mentions that along with the unification theory and knowledge

by presence, the "knowledge process changes" the object of perception under

transubstantial motion. (Parildar 2015, 169) Knowledge and motion, then, are the same

for Ṣadrā, as Parildar states, succinctly, that "knowledge is the process in which the

soul travels from a material being into an immaterial one." (Parildar 2015, 169) Thus,

human identity assumes an array of substantial changes with even the slightest

perception. She quotes Ṣadrā on this point saying "all of man's real perceptions and all

of his knowledge, intelligible or sensible... are not separable from its existence and

distinct from its existence. But its precept is essentially its very existence.[225]

As Sadrian knowledge is a mode of existence, and Sadrian existence appears in

degrees, the self's being precisely what it perceives, changing into the latter upon

perception, each perceptive experience *is* one of the self's variant planes. She supports

this statement through Ṣadrā's interior scaffolding of the self, that "the soul has three

modalities of being—intellective, imaginative and sensory. It has the unification with

intellect, imagination and senses. So, during the perception of the sensibles the self

---

[225] Parildar cites this source as Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā), *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya,* ed. S. J. Āshtiyānī, with glosses of Ḥ. M. H. Sabzawārī, Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1967, p. 203; tr. by S. Darebidy in: Darebidy, Sanei M., "Certainty and innate knowledge: a comparative comparison of the theory of knowledge of Mulla Sadra and Descartes," in: S. Gh. Safavi (ed.), *Perception according to Mulla Sadra*, London: Salman-Azadeh Publications, 2002, p. 177.

becomes precisely the same as the senses." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002,

vol. 8:278) As the self is immaterial and it "knows" by becoming the level of existence of

the material object perceived, then, this immaterialisation process, for Parildar, makes

the self and everything "in it" a single immaterial existence. Thus, Parlidar details

Ṣadrā's monist psychology. (Parildar 2015, 169)

As mentioned above, the self's substance is given to change. The process

above, informs us, that once the conditions of perception have been met the self

changes or learns. Here, Parildar brings us to the point of knowledge by presence as it

relates to perception (and apperception for that matter) in her study and, consequently,

how it relates to our own. She states:

> Simply by virtue of the fact that a human being can be unified with objects
> of perception, the knowledge by presence changes it and knowledge
> occurs as a substantial movement. The lowest levels of perception are not
> excluded from such change in the human and their identity. The essential
> change that the soul undergoes even at the lowest levels of knowledge
> engenders a different approach to knowledge itself. Knowledge is the
> process in which the soul travels from a material being into an immaterial
> one. A further claim is also made-namely, that knowledge is a mode of
> existence and with the increase of knowledge the soul changes and
> travels to a different level of existence. Thus, through knowledge, the soul
> changes in its essence. According to the identity principle, the soul is
> nothing but the things it perceives. (Parildar 2015, 169)

In other words, knowledge by presence is the factor behind the teleological

trajectory of the Sadrian self starting from post-perception material forms. From

there, once our cognitive organs have reached a sufficient stage of development,

self-perception initiates a rise to a new level of mental existence. Our status as

immaterial substances then lead from perception to imagination. Imagination

allows for further material independence via intellection. All of which begins with

the primary self-awareness at the core of Sadrian knowledge by presence. [226]

Coupled with the Suhrawardian observance that knowledge is immediate

familiarity, here, intuitive epistemology supplements with both pure existentialism and

the unification of the knower and the known. These are the Sadrian amendments

required to move forward in the search of the kind of knowledge by presence necessary

to reveal that original perception represents itself here. Parildar's observations of the

Animal SP in the *Asfār*, based in Ṣadrā's onto-epistemic renovations, opens a field for

the condition approved monist apperception dormant in the SP to show itself. There, an

immediate, unified existential experience, draped in "psychological monism," uncovers

itself.

Parildar's Presentation of the Animal SP

She employs the SP to support her claim that Ṣadrā's psychology is monist. To

do so she highlights that all things onto-epistemic for the animal self proceed from

sensation (unlike Plotinus and Ibn Sīnā who consider the animal self's faculties to be

material). If the faculties in the human self and the animal self differ, then the animal self

will be material, while the human self's faculties will be immaterial. Ṣadrā opts for the

immateriality of the animal soul. He calls on the SP to support the claim that the animal

self's faculties are immaterial. As all of existence is knowledge, all of existence knows

to the degree that it exists. Whether material or immaterial, Ṣadrā makes no distinction

---

[226] See Rahman 1975, 101–2; Kaukua 2014b, 249.

in this principle. Thus, whether mineral, vegetable, animal or human, every Sadrian self

is aware. [227]

As every existent *is* some degree of self-consciousness, Parildar mentions the

Sadrian SP's novel application to animals. She quotes Ṣadrā that:

> Man cannot know the external parts [of his body] except through his
> senses; nor can he know the internal parts [of his body] except through
> the dissection [of the body]. Also, an animal cannot know its parts [of the
> body], and if it knows then it is through one of the two [afore mentioned]
> ways. Another demonstration that animal is not just a sensible frame: We
> say, if it is postulated that an animal is created suddenly, and created as a
> perfect [entity], but its senses are veiled to see the external things; that it
> is suspended in the void or in the absolute air; that nothing collides with it
> in [its] standing in the air; that it does not sense anything from the
> qualities; its limbs have been severed so there is no mutual contact
> [between it and its limbs]. Now in this condition also it is able to perceive
> its self [or essence] and can become oblivious to all its external and
> internal parts [of its body]. Nay, it is able to affirm its self but is not able to
> affirm that it has extension, height, breadth, or any direction. Even if it
> imagines a position, or a direction, or an organ [of the body] in that state, it
> is not able to imagine that any of those is a part of its self. Thus, it is
> evident that the one who is aware of itself is other than the one from which
> it is oblivious. Therefore, its ipseity is different from all the parts [of its
> body]. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī 2002, vol. 8:47; Parildar 2015,
> 170)

Sadrian onto-epistemology determines that humans and animals are both self-aware

existents. It also determines that both human and animal faculties are the same. Unlike

Ibn Sīnā, Ṣadrā uses the SP to apply to animals as well, based upon these two

principles. Here, just as Ibn Sīnā used the SP to indicate the self's immateriality, Ṣadrā

uses it to indicate the immateriality of the animal self. If the animal and human self are

interchangeable like this, then if the word "animal" in the above were exchanged for the

---

[227] This is why throughout the course of this study I have been consistent in calling the soul "self." I do so with this Sadrian orientation in mind.

word "human," then the Sadrian SP would be a direct argument for the psychological monism championed early on in this study for human beings. (Parildar 2015, 170)

If the animal self renders psychological monism, the SP must itself be a monist experience. For the psychological field of the SP to be labelled as monistic, its apperceptive experience must view all phenomena from a single immaterial principle as dualism cannot produce monism nor vice-versa. Going a step further, according to strict adherence to the prerequisites of the thought experiment, there is no phenomenon observed from a single principle for the SP, be it existence or essence. There, as Sadrian knowledge by presence dictates, the witness, the witnessing, and the witness are all utterly unmentionable as Existence, in that place, is ineffable. There, there is only Total Uniqueness (*al-Aḥadiyyah al-maḥḍ*).

Parildar's Animal SP, Psychological Monism and the SP's Original Apperception

The maxims of the original SP thought experiment's conditions are specific. She appears instantaneously mature, sense-deprived, and with a blank slate. If she has a blank slate, has no previous life nor memory of it, and has never been in contact with another self so as to formulate the concept of self, or any version of particularity (or universality, for that matter) where, then, does this Avicennian self-hood arise from? I maintain that this claim is an oversight produced on the assumption that the self is given. If the Avicennian self is a given, then one must ask where it was allocated from? I have suggested that the SP' self *is* existence as that is all she can know with the conditions are observed properly. I have suggested that its conditions have determined

that it cannot be otherwise. Yet the system which produced this conclusion cannot sustain it.

I have suggested that the trajectory of the SP's development over time revealed the necessary philosophical and, at times, meta-philosophical tools required to reveal the original existentialist self-apperception that the conditions approved. I have argued that these components, pulled together from the Avicennian, Suhrawardian, Akbarian, and Sadrian eras of the SP's emergence throughout the time between the two thinkers prepared the conditions-approved self-apperception to reveal itself. I have claimed that Sadrian knowledge by presence contains all of these aspects at once. Thus, applying Sadrian knowledge by presence to the SP provides the conceptual wherewithal for the excavation of the original apperception, here couched in the thought experiment's application to a suspended animal, to occur. My research has attempted to show that, while none of the parties involved intended it, they all act as parts of a transubstantial uncovering of a seed perception now fully bloomed in Parildar's study.

The SP and Knowledge by Whose Presence?

Ali Shirvani states that "Transcendent Philosophy treats knowledge in an onto-epistemic fashion wherein the individual has a "personal unity of existence." Therein, the shadows of external and personal existence are both obscure existences indicating the Singular Existence of the Necessary Being. For Ṣadrā, "this school of philosophy presents … that quiddity is the shadow and manifestation of personal existences. Accordingly, external existences are the shadow and manifestation of the unique existence of the Almighty." (Shirvani 2019) At this point in her apperception, wherein

Existence seems to be more apparent than existents, the SP's individuality vanishes into the oblivion of non- delimitation. Without a boundary to perceive, her existentiality is beyond the confines of language. She is beyond qualification. Unique in every sense. However, onto-theologically speaking, only the Almighty *is* Total Uniqueness. In her utter actuality, wherein there is no possibility for intensification, the SP's apperception reaches the onto-epistemic end of the road and a place beyond philosophy. This place is alluded to in Ṣadrā's words that:

> [E]very existent, whether the intellect, the self, or an archetypal form (*ṣūrah nawʿiyyah), is one of the levels of the real lights (marātib al-nūr al-ḥaqīqī*) and the display of the self-subsisting Divine existence (*tajaliyyāt al-wujūd al-qayūmī al-ilāhī*) from the perspective of the People of Truth and the Transcendent Philosophy.

> Moreover, when the light of the Truth is spread, the illusions of the Veiled (*al-maḥjūbīn*) that deemed it possible for quiddities to have an existence in their essence, are excluded and immersed in darkness. All that arises from them are their postulates and concomitants from the levels of existents which are themselves the True Existence and the Unique Light's rays and shadows.

> This principle's proof is among the varieties of knowledge my Lord has granted me of wisdom from (His) pre-eternal care. He made it my share of knowledge by the emanation of His grace and generosity …Therefore, as the God be He exalted, through His Excellence and Mercy, granted me the grace of gaining awareness of sempiternal annihilation and endless nullification of contingent quiddities (*al-buṭlān al-azalī li al-māhiyāt al-imkāniyyah*) and possible external objects (*al-ʿayān al-jawāziyyah*), likewise He guided me to the right path through His luminescent celestial reasoning.

> This way leads to the fact that the existent (*mawjūd*) and existence (*al-wujūd*) are limited to a single personal reality (*ḥaqīqah wāḥidah shakhṣiyyah*) for which there is no associate in real existent-ness (*al-mawjūdiyyah al-ḥaqīqiyyah*), which is unrivalled in the external world, and except for which, nothing else exists. Moreover, what in this world seems to be other than the Necessary Object of Worship is nothing but from the manifestations of His Essence and Attributes, which are truly the core of His Essence (*ʿaynu ḏātihi*). (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002, vols. 2:313–4)

For Ṣadrā, intuition, at least for some, presents Self-Revelation. There, all mental existents, the quiddities of things that appear in the world, reveal themselves as levels of the Divine's Self's effects. So, quiddity never exists. The mental existence whose effects coincide with their notion trace everything back to a Single Identity. There, in human intuition, the world disappears. While Ṣadrā does not say so directly here, the consequent of one's self being a quiddity is that it vanishes too. All that remains in personal reality, then, is Self-Existence. Through possibility and quiddity's annihilation, Personhood is the Reality where personhood was once maintained. In other words, upon the intuitive realization, the personality that one imagined was their own is revealed to be a placeholder for the only Personality.

Kaukua's SP Mirror and Multiple Reflections

The revelation of Personhood over personhood in the SP, above, is similar to Kaukua's "The Eye of God: The Role of the Human in Creation," wherein he describes Ibn ʿArabī's position that God's individual self-recognition is the singular perspective of the human being's self-awareness acting as God's unique self-awareness in a mirror. As much of Ṣadrā's discourse on God's manifestation is reflected if not directly inspired in Akbarian thought, this essay is suitable to mention here. For Ibn ʿArabī, as something seeing themselves in a mirror is unlike seeing one's self without one,[228] human self-recognition is the mirror providing a different mode of God's Self-knowledge. The motive for the creation of the world is God's desire to have this different mode of self-

---

[228] See al-Qayṣarī 2012, 132–33.

knowledge made manifest. Kaukua claims that Ibn ʿArabī bases this concept of Divine

perception in the human being upon "an unvoiced conformity with certain tenants" of the

SP. (Kaukua 2010, 3) Ultimately, "The Eye of God" attempts to provide an Avicennian

philosophical structure to gain insight into an Akbarian mystical apprehension through

the thought experiment's.

Kaukua pursues this line juxtaposing Ibn ʿArabī's apprehension next to the

primitive awareness attributed to the SP to illustrate a similar consciousness in a section

of the Bezels of Wisdom (*Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*) entitled, "The Seal of Wisdom of the Breath

of Angelic Inspiration in the Word of Seth." There Ibn ʿArabī's mystical and philosophical

mirroring states:

> Then we return to the gifts and say that the gifts are either essential or
> nominal. As regards essential donations, presents and gifts, they are
> exclusively from divine revelation. Revelation from the essence takes
> place exclusively by means of the form of the disposition in the one
> subject to the revelation (*al-mutajallah lahu*), it does not take place
> otherwise. Thus, the one subject to the revelation sees nothing but his
> own form in the mirror of the Real. He does not see the Real, and he
> cannot see Him although he knows that he sees his own form only in Him.
> This is like the mirror for a beholder, for when you see the form in the
> mirror, you do not see the mirror although you know that you see forms, or
> your own form only, in it. God has made this comparison to point out His
> essential revelation, in order that the one subject to the revelation would
> know that He is what he sees (*annahu ma ra ʿāhu*). There is no closer or
> more apt comparison to seeing and revelation than this. (Kaukua 2010,
> 19–20) [229]

For Ibn ʿArabī, (and for Ṣadrā), the Universe is the theatre of the Oneness of Existence.

All objects within the cosmos share the same ontological status. God is Existence. All

the forms that appear in the totality of the cosmos are Existence's manifestations. The

---

[229] Quoting *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam li shaykh al-akbar muḥyi al-Dīn ibn ʿarabī,* Edited by. Abū al-ʿAlā Affifi (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿarabi 2002),61-62.

qualitative differences in the perceptible instances of Existence determine the form

through which It is witnessed. The color of the container determines the color of the

water it holds. (W. Chittick 1994, 174–5) Thus, while referring to the Self-manifestation

of the Real, i.e., God or the Absolute, Ibn ʿArabī posits that He does so according to the

disposition of the cite of the appearance.

The qualities of the container dictate the conditions of the act of manifestation

also. Thus, as he states, 'the one subject to the revelation sees nothing but his form in

the mirror of the Real. The Real's mirror is the self of the subject upon whom God

becomes evident. When he looks inside to catch a glimpse of himself, then, He is

looking at the self-same mirror. The quality of the mirror, i.e., its curvature, for example,

will cause the one who appears before it to also appear curved. Thus, Ibn ʿArabī

asserts, when the human being looks at his self, he is looking at a mirror, the Real

manifests, or stands in front of that mirror, and the resulting reflection is the self-hood

unique to that mirror. The suggestion here is that the unique self-hood that each one of

us perceives as our identity is nothing more than the self-manifestation of God upon the

composition of the mirror termed "myself."

Kaukua proposes that the SP's self-awareness is enough philosophically near at

hand to this mystical apperception to solicit the thought experiment's capacity to

illustrate it. Thus, as long as someone concurs that the SP produces a person utterly

oblivious to other-than-her self-awareness, it is possible to formulate the image of the

Unique Alone-ness that Ibn ʿArabī assigns to God. If one can grasp the intersection of

the Absolute perception perceived in the apprehension of the SP, one's imagination can

ascend to the human being's apperceptive utility for God. That is to say, the SP's act of

the mind by which she becomes conscious of her ideas of herself is both fundamental

and uncommon enough to reflect the unique apperception that God has of Himself.

Naturally, the last step, which is to imagine that the SP's utterly rare self-awareness *is*

God's, is a leap of faith for the uninitiated. If the jump was successful, Kaukua argues,

then the SP's job to provide a philosophical representation of Akbarian self-awareness

serves its task. [230]

---

[230] Incidentally, Kaukua's juxtaposition has historic backing for his argument in the person of the Ottoman

Akbarian thinker, al-Qāshānī , one who studied both Ibn Sīnā and Ibn ʿArabī, commented on the

Ringstone of the Wisdom of Breathing in the Word of Seth saying, 'He is your mirror in your vision of

yourself, and you are His mirror in the vision of His Names' (Ibn ʿArabī 2009, 47) calling for a non-

essential divestiture reminiscent of the SP. He states:

> Meaning if you were to be stripped of your attributes and your essence were to be
> isolated from all that could be taken from it, you would witness your essence in the mirror
> of the Truth. That (object of witnessing) is His manifestation in the form of your essence
> while He would be witnessing His Essence in you, described with His attributes, like the
> Hearing, and Seeing, and whatever (other attributes) connected to the two, relative to
> principles of audible and visual things. These principles are the provisions of the Hearing,
> and Seeing, that have manifested in you, in as much as you are an appearance of this
> from between two Names (i.e., Hearing and Seeing).' (al-Qāshānī 2007, 55)

Soon after, Ibn ʿArabī reminds his readers that the Names are nothing more than the Essence of

Existence. Ibn ʿArabī 2009, 47 The import here is al-Qāshānī's use of the phrase, 'if you were to be

stripped of your attributes and your essence was to be isolated from all that could be taken from it, you

would witness your essence in the mirror of the Truth.' In other words, Existence shows Its Self in the

human essence but only in the proportions the latter provides. It is noted that he used a philosophical tool

in order to illustrate a mystical experience. Qāshānī's Peripatetic training coupled with his experience in

the Akbarian school seems to shine brightly here his implementation of an SP-esque/doffing exercise.

An Assessment of Kaukua's Argument

Ibn Sīnā did not design the SP to operate as a rational handle on mystical experience. However, Kaukua's essay above is reasonable in its context, asking pertinent questions considering the complexity of the subject matter. Nonetheless, I have two issues. The first is that I am not convinced the SP illustrates the singular aspect of the human being facilitating God's seeing Himself in an additional modality outside of His Singular Aspect. This is because the SP represents every human being's primitive awareness. Secondary or reflective awareness is colored by human experiences and capacity. These qualifications make people different from one another.

As there are no distinguishing elements in primitive awareness and all people have it, at the level of primitive awareness there is nothing distinguishing one apperception from another. Thus, the SP's radical singularity doesn't lend to the experiential difference between multiple SPs as the core experience in each of them must be identical. In the end, if there were only one human being, thus one instance of the shared singular aspect between a woman and God, Kaukua's analogy between the SP and Akbarian self-conscious would operate. However, as there are many human beings and presumably many ways in which the Absolute manifests Its Self-awareness through them (otherwise why create so many human beings?), the illustration does not seem to produce its intended result. The second issue is that unless Kaukua reads the SP in an existentialist fashion, which I do not find evidence for here or elsewhere, his proposition effectively places an Avicennian essentialist apperception on par with an Akbarian monist one.

Chapter VI Conclusion

The Sadrian self's perception is knowledge portrayed as the substance's upward movement from one modality to another in self-realization. This actualizing process gradually and exponentially increases the knower's individuality as she ever identifies with each level of ontological familiarity in transubstantial motion. For Ṣadrā, she is present in each moment of her transformation, and the crest of knowledge by presence is the self's familiarity to itself at any one point of its existential current. In this sense, Parlidar's observations shows us that for Ṣadrā, knowledge by presence determines that while the self is immaterial, its intimate familiarity with all the levels of existence of the material objects it perceives makes the self and what it recognizes a single immaterial existence. While in the above Ṣadrā's onto-epistemology has been determined to be a middle way between dualism and monism systematically speaking, the identification of all objects of knowledge and the knower, here, as existence, call on the more monist aspect of his psychology.

It is insufficient to claim that Parildar's observations regarding Sadrian psychological monism in his Animal SP suffice as evidence of the SP's existential status on the grounds that Ṣadrā also utilized the SP. The insufficiency of this approach provoked me to trace the facilitating steps throughout the centuries between Ibn Sīnā and Ṣadrā and the synthesis of Avicennian, Suhrawardian, Akbarian, and Sadrian ideas involved in Transcendent Philosophy that lead to this moment. In this sense, and with the background provided, Parlidar's Animal SP observations, served as an excavation site for the exhumation of the SP's correct apperception via the tool of Sadrian

knowledge by presence. All the onto-epistemic detail it entails is gathered together in Transcendent Philosophy.

With the SP's correct apperception and its appropriate contextual edifice in full view, new onto-psychological questions emerge. For example, with the existent's obliteration in Existence, how do we determine the identity of the thought experiment's self-perceived entity? Is it an entity? With the self-identified with Existence, the Self-apperception entailed propels the SP beyond the confines of personality into the field of Personhood through knowledge by presence.

Chapter VII: A Conclusion and A New Problem in Mullā Ṣadrā's Onto-

Epistemology

We have used much of the prior research to show how the aspects needed to render the SP in a way that exposes its condition-approved apperception appeared. The study also indicates that the same lack of substantiality plaguing the SP in its original condition-approved scenario, appearing in each stage of its development, and overlooked in virtually all the scholarly research available to me on the thought experiment, reappears in a fundamental inconsistency in Ṣadrā. Here, I will show how the original conditions approved apperception presents a problem for Ṣadrā.

The crux of the problem, it seems, is that Ṣadrā's engagement with the SP poses similar, if not identical, issues for his system as it occurred in Ibn Sīnā. As it was there, I propose that the conditioned approved apperception belied the systematic assumptions that provided it. To uncover this problem and some aspects of its complexity, I will re-examine Sadrian motion's reliance on substance, how the mind manages this substance, and finally how the SP challenges the verifiability of the Sadrian substance's existence. I will then consider a few of these consequences as they involve knowledge by presence, the linchpin of the Sadrian synthesis.

Finally, the SP has been shown to outstrip each system it encountered when its conditions are properly observed. Thus, just as it was before Ṣadrā, again we find the SP harmonizing with, and supporting many aspects of a system, while exposing the contradictory way in which it engages it. This inconsistency tends to have significant ramifications for the aspects of said system since its principles incorporate the SP. As a result of this contrariety, the thought experiment tends to use the system as a steppingstone down the philo-mystical path history has caused it to travel (or in the way it self-propels?).

Ṣadrā seems to have been transcended in the same capacity as the systems before him. This chapter will show how this has happened, while also suggesting a parallel in the Sadrian SP and his ideas on the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-kāmil*). There a shared psycho-existential simplicity between the two, and the Simple Reality of God exists. The actualized onto-epistemic state in all three of them, as I will show below, makes the SP and the Perfect Human both outside of the limitations of Ṣadrā's modal existence. Instead, existences place in the field of Simple Reality. Their location outside the confines of modal existence indicates a new field of SP consideration.

Sadrian Motion's Reliance on Substance

Ṣadrā's reliance on substance as motion is a subtle and innovative point. Rajab ʿAlī Tabrīzī (d. 1080 AH/1669) (henceforth Mullā Rajab) does not accept it. Like Aristotle, the Peripateticism of Mullā Rajāb and Ṣadrā for that matter, all conceive of the natural world of change. For the first two, this change includes but is limited to quality, quantity and place. In Aristotle, (*Physics* IV 10-14) time is discussed in terms of change as the *Physics,* wherein time is only discussed *after* the nature of change and consequent notions on the philosophy of nature are in place. Thus, time is something dependent on change. Time, as it applies to psychology, then, is related to the mind's awareness of the instances of time. The instances of time are initially, like change, two: before and after. If a line is placed between these two points, then, time's magnitude may be measured as between these two points another point between them may be established. Thus, from magnitude we establish change (i.e., moving from one point to another on the line). From the measurement of these changes, we establish time. In this

sense, time is a number of changes with regard to before and after. Number is

measurable. The counting of time is through its instances (i.e., the points along the line)

and is thus measurable. These "nows" positioned across the line between the original

before and after mark divisions in the change between the original single before and

after series. Counting the nows makes for a measure of time. [231]

For Mulla Rajāb, for motion to occur a fixed subject must provide itself as a

perfecting entity moving from potentiality to actuality. On this account, motion's

actualization requires six things to occur: 1) the starting point (*al-mabda*ʾ) 2) the

terminus and point of actualization (*al-muntahā*) 3) the moved subject (*al-mutaḥarrak*) 4)

the mover (*al-mutaḥarrik*) 5) the course of actualisation from potentiality, 6) the time in

which motion *corresponds.* (Faruque and Rustom 2017, 12)

The sixth point highlights how different the relationship between substance,

motion, and time is for him compared to Ṣadrā. Mullā Rajab see time and motion as two

distinct things altogether. Rustom informs us that the real objective of the former's

contention, then, is to assert that for motion to occur, there must be a 'fixed subject'

whose movement is gauged from one point to another. Mullā Rajab's position that for

Aristotle motion is 'the first perfection for that which is in a state of potentiality *qua*

something in potentiality serves as the basis of this necessity for motion's

correspondence. The subject that actualizes must, in itself, be still. In other words, the

same entity must demonstrate past points on a line between a set before and after for

motion to correspond with time. If it changes as it actualizes or moves, then nothing, in

that case, moves. Instead, each substantial generation in the duration of the proposed

---

[231] See Coope 2005.

motion produces a still subject. One still subject after another cannot produce a sense of movement from place to place on a line.

However, as our common sense determines that we experience motion in the world, this cannot be the case for our commonsense experience disproves that. Thus, movement occurs in more than the places Aristotle determines (i.e., outside the categories of place, quality, quantity and position.) (Faruque and Rustom 2017, 13–4) The onto-temporal consequences of this position emerge in Faruque and Rustom's quote of Mullā Rajab suggesting that:

> If we suppose something to be in a state of substantial motion from a fixed beginning to a specific end, these two points would have to exist between finite motions. The moving object would therefore emerge in the end, since in the beginning of its motion it would not have subsisted as an individual entity or anything else. If in the end it subsists as an individual entity or something else, just as it was in the beginning, then it will not have been in a state of motion. Rather, it will have been in a state of rest. Yet we have supposed it to be in a state of motion, which would entail absurdity….[232] (Faruque and Rustom 2017, 14)

The stillness of the subject entailed means there is no movement. Without movement there is no measurement of movement. Without a measurement of movement, there is no time. Thus, for Mullā Rajab, Ṣadrā's substantial change does not have a temporal dimension. Sadrian identification of substance and motion is omitted. Mullā Rajab posits that time is not motion. Rather, as in Book IV of his *Physics*, time is defined by the number of changes with respect to before and after, and the place of an object as the innermost motionless boundary of that which surrounds it.

The point missed by Mullā Rajab, it seems, is that for Ṣadrā, Existence's primacy entails that It is an all expanding reality (*al-Wujūd al-ʿāmm al-munbasiṭ*) and that the

---

[232] Quoting Mullā Rajab, Aṣl, vol. 1, p. 254; Fundamental Principle, vol. 5, pp. 298–9.

entities we perceive are its modalities. If he had critiqued Ṣadrā from the latter's

vantage point instead of superimposing his Peripateticism on it, his objection may have

gained more traction. Otherwise, it seems two different conversations are occurring

between Mullā Ṣadrā and Mullā Rajab. One is in the vernacular of Transcendent

Philosophy while the other is embedded in basic Peripateticism. (Faruque and Rustom

2017, 13–5) In any event, Mullā Rajab's take on substantial motion represents a

historical critique on the claim that substances move, and that time is not a dimension of

substance but may have a dissonant relationship with it altogether.

The SP's Mind and Her Primary Self-Conscious Substance

Mullā Rajab's somewhat faulty attempt to attack Ṣadrā's substantial motion

through critiquing Sadrian motion, substance, and the rupture between the two in time

makes for an excellent theoretical introduction to a new problem that the SP presents

for Ṣadra's system. The above infers that the substance is the most critical aspect of

motion: substance is both motion and moving. Substance is a crucial aspect of

existence. If it is viewed as an isolated incident, outside of the stream of motion, like an

inactive substance, then it is not motion. Substance, then, is arguably the most critical

aspect of motion as it is both motion and moving. Motion, then, is the most crucial

aspect of Sadrian existence.

The Sadrian self's perception is transubstantial motion. The self moves towards

higher levels of self-realization. Exponentially ascending in self-perfection through

presential knowledge, the SP's presence is a "now" flowing gradually more intensely in

each ontological present as it journeys. Thus, the human experience, a series of

substantial changes that make for ontological motion that, in turn, makes for variegated existence manifest like "still-frames," as mentioned above. They are isolated incidents contained in the mind, like the television freeze-frames that make up the continuous stream of single pictures from a television signal. When considered by the mind, life's flow is frozen as the mind can only accommodate the concept of motion, as opposed to its physical flow in extra-mentality. So, while substantial motion explains the phenomenon of motion, our minds may only take on this continuous variation of ontological placement, one still-frame at a time.

As mentioned above, Ṣadrā views every corporeal and psychic substance as an evolutionary and unidirectional process; its actual substratum is the continuity of this process. Nonetheless, when considering these divergences, for example, we can only conceive of it as a series of movements, one after the other, and not just movement, alone. The change intended is not instantaneous. These freeze-frames extend over time, wherein a Sadrian entity is transitioning from potentiality to actuality in steps, but they are out of existential time, as mentioned above.

If substance is viewed either as an isolated incident or outside of the stream of motion, as it is in a static substance, then it is not motion. If substance is viewed as part of a continuum without any real beginning or end, similar to the transubstantial substance, then it is motion, as intended by Ṣadrā. If we claim, as we have above, that Parildar's SP indicates psychological monism because the self, as a dynamic substance *is* existence, then we have buttressed our study on the assumption that the substantiality of the Sadrian self is a given. However, the Sadrian SP shows us that her substantiality may be inadmissible.

The SP's Primary Awareness and Lack of Substantial Existences' Verifiability

To demonstrate this conundrum, I call on a version of the SP as found in Ṣadrā's *Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah* entailing human apperception, directly*.* This is the version of the thought experiment closest to the Avicennian versions in form and content in Ṣadrā. We will use it to juxtapose the two ends of our study, one in Ibn Sīnā and the other in the former. Ṣadrā suggests that:

> If you were imagined to be in your original nature, with full intellect, possessing a sound body suspended in the air, with limbs separated, without touching, and without your using your senses in any way whatsoever-you find yourself unaware of anything but yourself (*dhātuk*). You find yourself without recourse to proof or intermediary. Thus, yourself (*dhātuk*) is other than that body or accident (ʿarḍ) you would not have perceived. (Ḥasan 2009, page 48) [233]

Ṣadrā asserts, you are to picture yourself within the earliest moments of existence, with the entirety of your capacity to distinguish between things intact, your physicality free from defect or injury, hung in the air (although not dangling, as that would allow one to feel the air against the skin), extremities kept apart from one another, and completely sense-deprived. There, you would find yourself vigilant regarding the presence of your person. This personhood is so immediate that it escapes perception, for finding indicates having lost or been unaware of something in the first place. Thus, your self (*ḏāt*) is not the body that you were unaware of, as you could not sense it nor what it can sense. This standard rendition of the SP places easily in Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, and Akbarian thought (to a degree).

---

[233] Quoting Ṣadrā al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah fi manāhij al-sulūkiyya*h (Qum: Būstān-i kitāb, 1962), 301-02.

The onto-epistemic underpinnings that have produced the thought experiment in Ṣadrā are different than those that came before him. All the developments mentioned in the previous chapters, gathered in Sadrian knowledge by presence, are in action here, as has been shown above. The issue that arises, however, presents itself in Ṣadrā's statement that, after having followed the conditions of the experiment "you find yourself unaware of anything but your self (*dhātuk*). You find yourself without recourse to proof or intermediary. Thus, yourself (*dhātuk*) is other than that body or accident (ʿ*arḍ*) you would yet to have perceived." (Ḥasan 2009, page 48) [234] The basis of the immediacy of your knowledge by presence is the utter essence/self. The self here is a substance/essence (*ḏāt*).

As a substance, it is also the perfection of the body. Although the person was born mature, and never endured the process of transubstantial change from vegetable, mineral, animal, and finally to human. Either way, she is existing. As an existent, she is a substance. As a living substance, she is in a state of motion. However, these are secondary descriptions that we, as those living outside of the SP scenario, would ascribe to her. She, herself, is incapable of doing so. Her primary awareness is synonymous with existence. She does not know anything beyond her experience. So, she does not know what a body is, nor what an accident is as these are modalities of existence. She is unaware of modality. As such, she is unaware of the modality of substance, altogether. All she can be said to know is *is*-ness. She is what she knows. She simply *is*.

---

[234] Ibid

A Lack of Substantiality in Sadrian Knowledge by Presence

Above we used Parildar's argument to demonstrate a place, within Ṣadrā, wherein the SP and the self's status as existence coincide. As explained, we have used much of the previous research to show exactly *how* the aspects needed to render the SP this way came about in Ṣadrā's Animal SP. Here, however, I have shown that Sadrian onto-epistemic theory relies heavily on the relationship between motion and time. I also illustrated the SP's incapacity to verify a self-aware substance due to the lack of any "now" in the timeline of her existential flow wherein a substance could be conceptualized. So, unlike Mullā Rajab, above, who attempted to break the relationship between substance, motion, and time, here the SP does not seem to verify substance, motion, or time in order for it to be broken. There is no "now" at any point in the SP's experience. Without the now there is no present, no place along an ontological timeline wherein she can be said to be moving toward an end.

The lack of substance in the SP does not invalidate Sadrian knowledge by presence, it seems. Instead, the Sadrian SP causes us to ask whose presence is known through it when the knowledge therein is of Total Uniqueness or Absolute Existence (*al-Wujūd al-muṭlaq*). So, while on the one hand, the SP seems to dismantle the notion of transubstantial motion, at least from the viewpoint of the SP, herself, an issue of considerable consequence for Transcendent Philosophy, it opens another door negotiating Simple Reality in the process.

The SP and Simple Reality

Ultimately, it seems that the SP challenges Sadrian onto-epistemology to its core by challenging the existentiality of substance, altogether. As a result of this, the SP challenges the innermost basis of Sadrian ontology, and consequently the verifiability of the Sadrian self: a primordially aware onto-temporal transubstantial substance. When considering existence altogether, Ṣadrā has categories for it. When the SP finds herself, finding herself, she cannot have found a substance. Since she cannot find a substance, there is only one of three options taking place: 1) she either does not know engendered or variegated existence, 2) knows non-engendered existence, or 3) knows nothing. None of our thinkers has accepted that she would know nothing. Yet, there is no "thing" for her to perceive.

The SP is alive. Thus she is definitely experiencing Existence. Yet the lack of the SP's perception of thing-ness presents an epistemic roadblock. Or does it? If we return to Ṣadrā's words in " On [the fact] that Necessarily Existent is the completion of all things, and of all existents and that all affairs return to It/Him" a division in the *Asfār* on Simple Existence, he states that every simple reality (*kullu basīṭ al-ḥaqīqah*) is every existent thing, except for what pertains to deficiencies and non-existence (*al-naqāʾis wa-l ʿidām*). The Necessary, be He exalted, is a Simple Reality, One in every aspect. Thus, He is all of existence (*kull al-wujūd*), just as He is all Existence (*kullu al-wujūd*)." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vol. 6:100) God, as the Absolute Being, is a Simple Reality. Completely actualized, God is inclusive of every form of Existence while omitting only existential defects and contingencies. He is free from parts yet includes all

existence for suggesting what He is not complicates Necessary Existence's integrity, as mentioned above.[235]

In several places Ṣadrā attempts an elaboration of the Attributes of the Necessary Being (including Life, Knowledge, Will, Speech, and Hearing) in a way that does not compromise the integrity of the Unity of Its/His Essence by resorting to the concept of the Simple Reality of God's Existence. Ṣadrā posits that God has knowledge of the world through his own Self-Knowledge, and as His Essence is all inclusive (being Simple Reality) He knows all "things." Found there in the Essence in a state of existential collectivity (*wujud al-jam'i*), the Divine's epistemic objects-all the things in the world- have a higher grade of existence than they do in the world as distinct essences.

Likewise, the human being mimics the divine epistemic model. The self has a similar relationship between its attributes and diverse psychic properties of knowledge and will, as well as its knowledge of the world. In both cases, Rahman suggest that Ṣadrā follows Ibn ʿArabī's in suggestion that the epistemic process between Lord and slave mirror one another. He summarizes the Akbarian position, again one taken up in Transcendent Philosophy, that when it comes to the stages of emanation that:

> God, who, as pure existence, had generated the self-unfolding existence, creates by a second reflection or effulgence upon Himself, a multiplicity of attributes-life, knowledge, power, etc. In other words, what the first stage of Divine Consciousness had adumbrated as a unity and contained in an implicit manner, now becomes explicit at the second stage of self-consciousness. These detailed contents of the second level consciousness are at once the attributes of God and the Ideal Essences of the created world. There is, however, a vital difference in the results of the two self-reflections. The first reflection-of existence-had reflected or

---

[235] While these statements are from the "divine riddles" (*ghawāmiḍ al-ilāhiyyah*), and thus difficult to comprehend for those who have not received direct knowledge divine understanding and wisdom, Ṣadrā does propose a proof for this position. For an explanation see Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, 100–101.

> irradiated the 'outward' of God, which is pure existence; the second reflection remains the 'inward' of God. This is because of the principle that existence is the reality while essences, as concepts, are confined to mental existence. (Rahman 1975, 86–87)

Rahman explains in more specific terms still that,

> Just as in the contingent existents there is nothing but a contingent existence which, when it comes into relation with a knowing mind, generates a multiplicity of concepts and essences, so, in the case of God, there is nothing but an absolute and pure existence which *in His mind* generates a multiplicity of attributes. The difference is that whereas in contingent existences (except man), there is only existence without (at least conscious) knowledge, in God both existence and knowledge coalesce-hence the necessary rise of attributes in His mind. (Rahman 1975, 87)

This mirroring in the process of Divine Attributes and contingent concept and essence is the crux of the aspect of Sadrian theo-psychology concerned with our study at this point. There is a place, where Simple Reality exists without any sense of qualification. This level of Simple Reality is the basis of any of God's Attributes, as all Attributes permeate from His Self, which *is* Simple Reality contemplating Its own modes. Likewise, I suggest that the Sadrian SP also has this potential simplicity prior to concept and essence. Our study has delivered us into this ineffable space in the SP's self-a place before concept and essence, or to put it differently, a place prior to the modality of existence. The SP would technically be called a modality of Existence, yet, as indicated above in the result of our study, has no substance or self, it is not one. The question that arises, then, is what does it mean for existence to *be* in the SP if it is not a self in the modular or conceptual sense of the term? How does this relate to the Divine Mind that it is meant to mirror? We will look at another sense of ideal personhood outside of the SP to approach an answer to these questions.

The SP and the Perfect Human

While I intend a full analysis of the subject in the future, the comparison between the SP and the Perfect Human Being deserves more explanation here. Ultimately, the correlation between the two revolves around the onto-epistemic fulfilment they have in common. In both scenarios, Existence is apparent to them in a Self-Manifestation beyond the confines of limitations of created self-apperception. As a result, understanding the Perfect Human's apperception provides insight into the SP's condition approved apperception. A considerable amount has been said about the SP's conditions-approved apperception in the above. A comparison between it and the Perfect Human's apperception in view of onto-epistemology merits an introduction.

Non-delimited Existence in the Perfect Human

Ṣadrā presents the Perfect Human stating that "in chapter three hundred and sixty-one, the author of *al-Futūḥāt* says...the Perfect Human is the Vicegerent of God and is created in the [noetic] Form of the Compassionate." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vol. 8:123; Peerwani 2008, 121) Ibn ʿArabī's contributions to Sadrian thinking regarding the centrality of the Perfect Human are blatant.[236] Al-Qayṣarī's on the "world's being the form of the human reality (*Anna-l ʿālama huwa ṣuratu-l ḥaqīqātu-l insān*) has lines of poetry epitomizing some of the core concepts shared between

---

[236] For example,Ibrahim Kalin advises us to see Asfar, II, 1, p. 294; III, 2, pp. 7, 17, 20–21, 32, 40, 103, 181–191; IV, 1, p. 140; and IV, 2, p. 41, for the Sadrian concept of perfect man-hood. Kalin's addition of the *Asfār* in this study is (Beirut: Dār iḥyāʾ turāth ʿarabiyyah,1981). Kalin 2010, 251 n.80.

Akbarians and those associated with Transcendent Philosophy on the office held by this individual. He writes:

> Glorified is He who manifested His Nāsūt... the Secret of the Splendor of His
> Penetrating Divinity.
> Thereupon, He appeared in His creation, manifestly... in the form of the one who
> eats and drinks.[237]

Put simply, according to Ibn ʿArabī, the Nāsūt is the human form.[238] Read in one way, the line suggests that the Nasūt, or Perfect Human is God's Form. This reading has obvious difficulties when juxtaposed with Islamic orthodoxy. On the other hand, God "owns" all things, and in this sense the human form, as another one of His possessions, is of no theological consequence. What is of more importance, however, either way, is that he does not mean just any human form. Rather, he means the form the Perfect Human.

After referencing God's Form in a prophetic tradition in "The Seal of the Wisdom of Sublimity in the Word of Moses," that "God created Adam in His Form"[239] he states that:

> For that reason, the Prophet said in respect of the creation of Adam who is
> the blueprint which gathers all the attributes of the Divine Presence which
> is the essence, the attributes and the actions, "Allah created Adam in His

---

[237] *Subḥāna man aṭhara nāsūtahu / sirra sanā lāhūtihi-l thāqibi*

Thumma badā fī khalqihī ṭāhiran / fī ṣūrati-l ākili wa-l shāribī al-Qayṣarī 2012, 90.

[238] See al-Qayṣarī 2012, 513, 522–23.

[239] For more on this narration in the Muslim tradition see Richter-Bernburg 2011.

>Form." His Form is only the Divine Presence. In this noble epitome, which is the Perfect Human, He brought into existence all the Divine Names and the realities of that which is outside of him in the Macrocosm separate from him. He made Adam a spirit (*rûh*) for the universe, and so He subjected to him the high and the low through the perfection of his form. As there is nothing in the universe that "does not glorify Allah's praise," in the same way, there is nothing in the world which is not subject to this man according to what the reality of his form accords him. Allah says, "He has made everything that is in the heavens and the earth subservient to you. It is all from Him." (22:65) All that is in the universe is subject to man. He who knows that from his knowledge is the Perfect Human. He who is ignorant of that is the Animal Man. (Muhammad Ibn ʿArabī al-Ḥātimī 2008; al-Qayṣarī 2012, 696–7)

The most poignant statement is that "His form is only the Divine Presence." If God created Adam on His Form, and Adam, in this sense refers to His vicegerent, then the Vicegerent of God is created on the Form of the Divine Presence. Thus, the Perfect Human, who is the epitome of viceregency is only the form of the Divine Presence.

Elsewhere, Ṣadrā says, "we have explained earlier that all the existents in this world are traveling toward God the Exalted, but they are unaware of it due to the thick veils [of ignorance over their souls] and piling up of darkness over them. But this essential movement, and this journey toward God the Exalted, is more evident and manifest in man, (e)specially in a Perfect Human who crosses all [levels] of the ascending arc."(Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vol. 9:68; Peerwani 2008, 387) He also states, "...the ascending arc does not end at Him the Exalted except by the wayfaring of the Perfect Human on it: *To whim the good word ascends, and he elevates the righteous deed* (Qurʾān, 35:10)." (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vol. 9:395; Peerwani 2008, 605) The grades of existence, whose simplicity creates phenomenal differences, moves in time irreversibly and unidirectionally (Rahman 1975, 11) in exponentially higher modes of existence in each step. Vertically

speaking, after acquiring various levels of existence, matter enables material forms to culminate in the morally and intellectively perfected Perfect Human. (Rahman 1975, 12,117; Peerwani 2008, 387) On the superiority and comprehensiveness of this individual, Ṣadrā states:

> The limit of nature [for instance] is to create the bodies and whatever it bears; but it has no general [powers] [for creating other than that]. The limit of the [power of] soul is to create the particular spirits in the modalities of nature. The spirits are from this world and they have no [power] for the general propagation. Only the Perfect Human who is the bearer of (the) (D)ivine Secret has been given [the powers of] the general propagation. Thus everything, but God, is a part of the totality of Man. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002a, vols. 8:163–4; Peerwani 2008, 122)

The Perfect Human is, "where the Contingent and the Eternal meet" making him a "member of the Divine Realm and … unified with the Attributes of God..." There the Intelligences or the Attributes of God are virtually completely actualized as they are "united with God's existence." (Rahman 1975, 11, 41,117) In this sense, wherein the Perfect Man is united with God's existence, he is also beyond modal existence for God's Existence is beyond modality.

Although, in another place, Rahman seems to contradict this bold assessment of the Perfect Human's unification with God's Attributes, themselves united with God's Existence, by stating:

> In the phenomenal world, the movement of 'modal' existence reaches its highest stage in man; man therefore, is the highest mode of existence. But since 'modal' existence is not absolute existence, and is, therefore, imperfect, implying some sort of duality between existence and essence, man must strive to attain as absolute and concrete existence as possible where he becomes a member of the Divine Realm, or simply Godhead which, as absolute and most concrete existence, is the final *raison d'etre* of all 'modal' existence. At this apex of evolution, stands the Perfect Man,

the most concrete differentia of all phenomenal existence. (Rahman 1975, 266)

That is to say, although the Perfect Man is the "Godhead," and thus beyond modality, he is also the object and reason for the existence of modal existence, "the most concrete differentia of all phenomenal existence." Thus, on the one hand, the Perfect Human has achieved the state or condition of being God, while on the other hand, he is the most solid example of individuality that modal existence has to offer, as all phenomenon ends in him, "the entire drama (of phenomenal existence) begins with God as 'the Merciful' and ends with the Perfect Man." (Rahman 1975, 188)

Nondelimited Knowledge in the Sadrian Perfect Human

Focusing on the point of the Perfect Human's identification with the Intelligences (Attributes), themselves identified with God's Existence, Rahman explains the apperceptive state of those who realize the station of the Perfect Human stating:

> They do not, therefore, 'yearn' for anything higher except that when they contemplate their own proper being, they are overcome by the negative self-feeling arising from their innate contingency which-as opposed to the pure and authentic existence of God-is non-being, darkness, and imperfection which characterize all essences and are then lost in the contemplation of God's being itself. But all other beings are subject to a genuine yearning simply because their nature needs to be perfected. (Rahman 1975, 117)

Although the Perfect Human is no longer yearning for actualization, the darkness of the shadow of any sense of independent existence from God is lost in the contemplation of His existence. There the Perfect Human's self simplifies due to its complete transcendent development. The simplification is through accepting fewer and fewer ontological limitations. Rahman explains this transcendent principle, again stating:

> The more existence something has, the less of such limitations it can accept, for existence by itself is the principle of inclusiveness, not of exclusiveness; hence 'essences' weaken when existence increases until we reach God or the Perfect Man whose nature is all-inclusive… It is this unlimitedness of existence, giving rise to unlimited attributes, that lifts such a being from the realm of essences.[240] (Rahman 1975, 160–61)

Again, an equivocation is made between the nature of God and the Perfect Human in their all-inclusiveness. What we can gather, thus far, is that for Ṣadrā, there is no self-apperception for the Perfect Human. Rather, he has direct experience with actualized existence as the self-same actualization. "It is this unlimitedness of existence", meaning of the Perfect Human's existence, "gives rise to unlimited attributes" because those attributes do not belong to the limitations of modal existence. This lack of limitation in both existence and attribute "lifts such a being," meaning the Perfect Human, "from the realm of essences."

As mentioned above, for Ṣadrā, knowledge is a mode of Existence. On this point, Hossein Sheykh Rezaee and Mohammad Mansur Hashemi mention the relationship of knowledge to Existence is summarized in the term *al-Ḥaqq* or "Truth" (although transliterated as *Ĕaqq* in the article). They say:

> There is one untranslatable key term in Sadra's system, which can clarify his attitude to the subject of knowledge. 'Ĕaqq' has two meanings simultaneously: on the one hand, it means God, Creator, Absolute and Necessary Being. This meaning reflects the ontological aspect of Sadra's system. On the other hand, it means (permanent) truth, and something which is correspondent to reality. [241](This term nicely shows that Sadra's system is neither pure ontology nor pure epistemology; rather he has an 'ontoepistemological' system. 'Ĕaqq' is wider than truth, because it has some connection with being. For Sadra, true knowledge must have a close relation with reality, and reality is nothing more than One, Simple,

---

[240] Rahman references Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 1958, vol. 3:238.

[241] Rezaee and Mansour refer to Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah*, vol.1 (Beirut: Dār iḥyā al-turāth al-ʿarabī, 1981), 89-90.

and Pure Being. For him true knowledge and Being are two sides of the same coin. (Razaee and Mansour 2009, 37)

So, again, for Ṣadrā, knowledge is *al-Ḥaqq*. *Al-Ḥaqq* is one of the Names of Allah. Allah is the Absolute i.e. Existence. Existence is Simple. As Simplicity is what *Is* knowledge, then, is a Simple Reality. [242] As knowledge is an onto-epistemic consideration in Ṣadrā, the Perfect Human's completeness in *al-Ḥaqq* indicates an epistemological fullness as much as an ontological one. Thus, the Perfect Human is completely realized in Existence. It also follows that as the apperception in the Perfect Human must be of Self-Recognition, the Perfect Human's existence must also be a Simple Reality. That is to say, the Perfect Human has no personal *ḥaqq* in any onto-epistemic sense*.*

Shared Onto-Epistemic Characteristics between the SP and the Perfect Human

The parallels between the SP's conditions -approved apperception as utter simplicity before concept and essence and the Perfect Man's meta-modal contemplation are compelling. They are both the unity of existence they experience. Both situations illustrate the consciousness of a realm beyond essences and as such, motion and time. There, both states are in a state of complete simplicity, i.e., total actualization. These two scenarios present an array of questions about the relationship between the SP and the Perfect Human. As neither of them is a mode of existence, by understanding more about the Sadrian concept of the Perfect Human, which is covered in Ṣadrā, [243] we can

---

[243] For example, Ibrahim Kalin advises us to see *Asfār*, II, 1, p. 294; III, 2, pp. 7, 17, 20–21, 32, 40, 103, 181–191; IV, 1, p. 140; and IV, 2, p. 41, for the Sadrian concept of perfect man-hood. Kalin's addition of the *Asfār* in this study is (Beirut: Dār iḥyāʾ turāth ʿarabiyyah,1981). Kalin 2010, 251 n.80.

develop a deeper understanding of what it means for the conditions-approved SP to

exist through it. By doing so, we can better understand what the SP's conditions-

approved apperception can offer regarding the nature of the self according to

Avicennian-Ṣadrā terms for as Ṣadrā says, if one wants to understand the perfection of

the Perfect Human:

> [L]et him look in his own soul, in his 'command' and in his 'interdiction' and his 'creation' without the intermediary of the tongue, or of the limb, or of anything created, etc. If the meaning concerning that becomes true for him, then he is a clear proof from His Lord in his perfection…. So, if a person collects himself [or unifies within his self] until he becomes one thing, then his spiritual energy permeates in whatever he desires...Indeed the 'Hand of God is with collectivity,' for by the collectedness the universe has manifested. The concrete entities are none but Him... Meditate on His saying: *There is no secret talk among three, but He is their fourth [companion].* [58:7]. Here ends his expression concerning the explanation of the 'station of unification', and the divine viceregency for the Perfect Man. (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī 2002 a, vols. 8:164–5; Peerwani 2008, 123)

The meanings implied here are rich in connection between the SP's conditions

approved apperception and that of the Perfect Human's inner landscape by way of a

shared existential simplicity. He says, if any person were to look at their own self, in a

capacity that is beyond anything created (is the self not created?) If the meaning of that

which is beyond the creation yet somehow associated with their self, then the meaning

therein will be obvious to them. If that happens, then this person's completeness, i.e.,

actuality is a proof of God, who is Himself actualized.

　　　　There "if a person collects himself [or unifies within his self] until he becomes one

thing" is paralleled in the SP's existential unity; free from universality or particularity "the

concrete entities are Him," in the Divine Presence. Consequently, so in the Perfect

Human, if the SP could conceive of concrete entities, she would know they are her own

existence. Thus, the parallel with the Divine Presence, the SP, and the Perfect Man is in

the sense of collectivity and that it serves as the basis of all else-creation for God, onto-

epistemology for the SP, and viceregency for the Perfect Man as he says, "meditate on

His saying: *There is no secret talk among three but He is their fourth [companion].* [58:7]

Here ends his expression concerning the explanation of the 'station of unification', and

the divine viceregency for the Perfect Human. Perhaps, the Perfect Human is the only

entity that can experience the onto-epistemic reality of the SP's condition approved

apperception?

In conclusion, as the SP is a philosophical thought experiment, its conditions-

approved apperception is intellectually approachable while based in intuition. That is to

say, enough theoretical footing exists therein to approximate its immediate apperception

of Simple Reality in the mind. The apperception of the Perfect Human, on the other

hand, while described to some degree in the texts of the Mystics who base their

understanding in intuition, is still limited to a conceptual portrayal. As topics of analysis,

the SP and Ṣadrā's Perfect Human approach consciousness in terms of a Simple

Reality. As a result, neither is capable of producing the intuitive reality of *al-Ḥaqq* in the

reader of such an investigation. Nonetheless, the SP''s conditions and the resulting

apperception of Simple Reality acts as a philosophical tool to better appreciate the onto-

epistemic position of the Perfect Man's apperception for those who would otherwise

have no recourse to the latter's consciousness. Ultimately, if one placed themselves in

the conditions-approved scenario the SP calls to, it may approximate the onto-epistemic

situation of the Perfect Human in respect of *al-Ḥaqq*. Perhaps, then, the thought

experiment is the only philosophical device capable of inducing a philosophical appreciation of the Perfect Human's apperception of Simple Reality?

Chapter VII Conclusion

In the above, I showed that the SP's condition-approved apperception, as per Ṣadrā's system, cannot perceive substance even theoretically. Thus, there cannot be any point wherein transubstantial motion is verifiable for the SP as there is no point wherein substance may be said to exist, even if only conceptually. The SP simply cannot sustain the theory. While she may be said to have experienced an intuitive and intimate familiarity, the object of that experience is Existence, without limitations or gradation. Thus, the dynamic relationship the SP has with Ṣadrā's system reveals itself to be both for and against it. It is for it by providing a thought experiment serving as a theoretical tool addressing the meanings of an existent's simple reality serving as a window into the Simple Reality of the Divine through Ṣadrā's position on the Perfect Human. There an existential correspondence seems to exist between the Sadrian SP, his Perfect Human, and the Simple Reality of God, placing them all outside of the confines of modal existence via transubstantial motion on equal footing. The thought experiment is against Transcendent Philosophy because it seems to bear witness against the critical concepts of substantiality as transubstantial motion. It may also be said here that the SP seems to rule out the possibility for individuals to achieve the transubstantial progress needed to become the Perfect Human. Nonetheless, if examined on its own, the Perfect Human's onto-epistemic condition and the SP's apperception both make for an interesting juxtaposition. However, all the implications of

this theory, true to the nature of the SP's conditions-approved apperception's ability to

surpass the limitations of its host system, requires an in-depth study all its own.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Al-Aḥsāʾī, Aḥmad Ibn Zayn al-Dīn. 2007. *Sharḥ al-mashāʿir*. Vol.1-2. Muʾassasa al-balāgh.

Āmulī, Sayyid Ḥaydar al-.1948. *al-Muqaddimāt min kitāb naṣ al-nuṣūṣ fī sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. Intishārāt Tūs.

Ibn ʿArabī, Muḥyiddīn. 1946. *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. Edited by A. A. Afifi. Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-ʾarabī.

———. 1982. "The Imprint of the Bezels of Wisdom." *Translated by William Chittick. Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society* 1:31-93.

———, and Caner K. Dagli. 2004. *The Ringstones of Wisdom: Fuṣūṣ Al-ḥikam*. Chicago: Great Books of the Islamic World.

———. 2008. "The Seals of Wisdom (Fuṣūs al-ḥikam)." Translated by Aisha Bewley. Aisha Bewley's Islamic Home Page. February 3, 2008.

———. 2009. *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. Edited by ʾAsim Ibrāhīm al-Kaylānī. Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-ʾilmiya.

———. 1911. *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah*. Beirut: Dār Sādir.

———. 1972. *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah* Edited by Osman Yahya. al-Ḥaya al-miṣriyyah.

———. 1999. *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah* 9 vols. Beirut: Dār al-kitāb al-ʿilmiyya.

———. 1990. *al-Insān al-kāmil*. 2nd ed. Damascus: al-Kitāb al-ʿarabī.

———. 1993. *Kitāb al-maʿrifah*. Edited by Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ. Paris: Dār al-mutanabbī.

Aristotle. 1985. *Aristotle Metaphysics (Books Zeta, Eta, Theta, Iota VII-X)*. Translated by Montgomery Furth. Indianapolis: Hackett.

———.1984. *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

———.1956. *Metaphysics*. Edited and translated by John Warrington. New York: EP Button & Co., Inc.

———. 1995. "Metaphysics." In *the Complete Work of Aristotle*, translated by W. D. Ross, 2:1552–1728. Bollingen Series LXXXI.2. West Sussex: Princeton University Press.

———.1956. *Metaphysics*. Edited and translated by John Warrington. New York: EP Button & Co., Inc.

———. 1995. "Metaphysics." In *the Complete Work of Aristotle*, translated by W. D. Ross, 2:1552–1728. Bollingen Series LXXXI.2. West Sussex: Princeton University Press.

Dawwānī, Jalāl al-Dīn al-. 2010. *Shawākil al-ḥūr fī sharḥ hayākil al-nūr lī Suhrawardī*. Edited by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq. Baghdād: Bayt al-warrāq.

Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid al-. 1961. *Muqaddima tahāfut al-falāsifa al-musammā maqāṣid al-falāsifah: mantiq wa-ilāhīyāt wa al-ṭabʿī-āt*. Edited by Sulaymān Dunyā. Dār al-maʿārif.

Heath, Peter. 1992. *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna (Ibn Sînâ): With a Translation of the Book of the Prophet Muḥammad's Ascent to Heaven*. Edited by Edward Peters. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Jāmī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-. 2004. *Sharḥ al-jāmī ʿalā fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyyah.

Jandī, Muʾayyad al-Din al-. 2007. *Sharḥ fuṣuṣ al-ḥikam*. Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyyah.

Jīlī, ʿAbd al-Karīm al-. 2004. *al-Insān al-kāmil fī maʾrifah al-awāʾil wa al-awākhir*. Vol. 2. Maktabah al-thaqāfah al-dīniyyah.

Ibn Kammūna, Saʿad. 2003. "Al-Tanqthāt fi sharh al-talwihat, Edited with Introduction and Analysis by Hossein Ziai and Ahmed Alwishah." Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda.

Ibn Sīnā, Abū ʿAlī. 1959. *Avicenna's De Anima (Arabic Text): Being the Psychological Part of Kitāb al-shifā*. Edited by Fazlur Rahman. New York: Oxford University Press

———. 1963. *Avicenne Livres Des Définitions*. Edited by A. M. Goichon. Cairo: L'Institut Francais D'Archeologie Orientale Du Caire

———. 1957. *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt: li-Abi 'Ali Ibn Sīnā Maʿa sharh Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī, Taḥqīq Sulayman Dunya*. Vol. 1. Cairo: Dar al-Ma ʿārif.

———. 1960. *Kitāb al-ishārāt*. Edited by Sulaymān Dunyā. 2nd ed. Vol. 3. Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif.

———. 1970. *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīḥāt*. Vol.1 UAE: al-Idārah al-āmah al-thiqāfah.

———. 1999. *Kitāb al-ishārāt wa al-tanbihāt*. Ma'had al-ʿilm al-ʿarabiyyah wa al-islāmyyah.

———.1944. *al-Mabdaʾ wa al-maʿād*. Edited by ʿAbdullāh Nūrānī. Muaʾssasa muṭalaʾa dāneshgā mīgīl.

———, and Michael E. Marmura. 2005b.*The Metaphysics of the Healing*. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press.

———. 1993. *al-Mubāḥathāt*. Intishārāt Bīdār.

———. 1953. *al-Najāt.* Cairo: Maṭbaʿal-saʿādah

———. 1949. *al-Risālah al-ʾaḍḥwiyyah fi amr al-ma'ād*. Beirut: Dār al-fikr al-'arabī.

———.1964. *al-Shifāʾ*. (al-*Ilāhiyyāt* 1). Ed. Ibrāhim Madhkūr. Tehran: Intishārāt Naṣir Khusru

———. 1975. *al-Shifāʾ*. Edited by Ibrāhim Madkūr. al-Tabīʿāt. Cairo: al-Maktaba al-ʿarabiyya.

———. 2012. *al-Shifāʾ (al-Ilāhiyāt)*. Ed. Saʿīd Zayd. Vol. 1. Cairo: Maktab Samāḥiyy

———.1908. *Tisaʿ rasāʾil fīʾl-ḥikma waʾl-ṭabīʿa*. Cairo: Maṭbaʿ Hindī

———. 1973. *al-Taʾliqāt* ed. A.R. Badawī. Cairo: al-Hayyiʾah al-maṣriyya al-ʿāmah li al-kitāb.

Lāhījī, Jaʿfar. 1966. *Sharḥ risālat al-mashāʿir li-Mullā Ṣadrā*. Edited by Sayyid Jalāl Al-Dīn Āshtiyānī. Muʾassasa-yi bustān-i kitāb.

MacKenna, Stephen. 1956. *Plotinus: The Enneads*. London: Faber and Faber.

Nīshābūrī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Isfarayīnī al-. 1963. *Sharḥ kitāb al-najāt li-Ibn Sīnā*. Edited by Ḥāmid Nājī Iṣfahānī. Tehran: Maktab-i Islāmī dar sharq u gharb.

Plato, Benjamin Jowett, and Irwin Edman. 1956.*The Works of Plato*. New York: Modern Library,

———. 2001. *Timaeus*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.

———. 1992. *Republic* (Grube Edition) Hackett Publishing.

Qāshānī, ʿAbd Al-Razzāq al-. 2007. *Sharḥ al-Qāshānī ʿalā fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. Beirut: Dar-al-kitāb al-ʿilmiya.

Qayṣarī, Dawūd al-. 2012. *Maṭlʿa khuṣūṣ al-kalam fī fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. Edited by ʿAsim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī. Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿarabī.

———. n.d. *Rasāʾail qayṣarī*. Iran: Muaʾassasa Prushī hikma wa falsafah.

Qunawī, Ṣadr Al-Dīn al-. 2013. *al-Fukūk fī asrār mustanadāt ḥikam al-fuṣūṣ*. Edited by ʿAṣim al-Kayyālī. Kitāb nāshirīn.

Sabzawārī, Hādī. 1969. *Sharh-i manẓūma*. Tehran: Offset Press Inc.

Shīrāzī, Quṭb al-Dīn al-. 1969. *Sharḥ ḥikmah al-Ishrāq lī Suhrawardī*. Edited by ʿAbdullāh Nūrānī. Tehran: Muʾssasa muṭalaʿāt al-islāmī.

Shīrāzī, Ṣadr Al-Dīnal-. 2014. *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations. (Kitāb all-mashā 'ir)*. Edited by Ibrahim Kalin. Translated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Islamic Translation Series. Provo: Brigham Young University Press.

———. 2005. *The Elixir of the Gnostics*. Translated by William C. Chittick. Lahore: Suhail Academy.

———. 1958. *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah*. al-Najāf: Iraq: Dār al-maʿārif al-islāmiyah.

———. 2002a. *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fīʾl-asfār al-arbaʿa al-ʿaqliyyah*. Edited by Maqṣūd Muḥammadī. 1st ed. 9 vols. Tehran: SIPRIn.

———. 2013. *al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-asfār al-arbaʿ al-ʿaqliyyah*. Beirut: Dār iḥyāʾ al-turāth al-ʿarabī.

———. 2004. *Ittiḥād al-ʿāqil wa al-maʿqūl*. Damascus: al-Madā Publishing.

———. 1992. *Kitāb al-mashā'ir*. Global Academic Publishing.

———. 1975. *al-Mabda' wa al-ma'ād*. Edited by S. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtīyānī. Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ṣadrā.

———. 2007. *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*. Edited by N. Ḥabībī. Tehran.

———. 1973. "al-Masāʾil al-qudsiyyah." In *Rasāʾil-i falsafī*, edited by Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī. Mashhad: Mashhad University Press.

———.2000. *al-Maẓāhir al-ilāhiyah fī asrār al-ʿulūm wa al-kamāliyyah*. Edited by Sayyid ʿAlī Khāmanaʾi. Tehran: SIPRIn.

———. 2002. *Risalih-yi sih asl*. Edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Tehran: SIPRIn.

———. 1962. *Sharḥ wa taʿlīqāt Ṣadr al-Mutaʾallihīn ʿalā ilāhiyāt al-shifāʾ li Ibn Sīnā*. Vol. 2. 1: Bunyād ḥikma al-islāmī Ṣadrā.

———. 1963. *Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah fi manāhij al-sulūkiyyah*. Edited by Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād. Tehran: SIPRIn Publications.

Suhrawardī, al-Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā. 1954. "Ḥikma al-ishrāq." In *Kitāb muṣanafāt ḥikma Shaykh al-Ishrāq*, edited by Henry Corbin, 1–260. Tehran: Purgu Hushgohi ʿulūm insān mutalaʿāt faranghī.

———.1991. *Kitāb al-lamaḥāt*. Edited by Amīl al-Maʿlūl. Beirut: Dar al-nahār.

———. and Wheeler Mcintosh Thackston. 1982. *The Mystical and Visionary Treatises of Shihabuddin Yahya Suhrawardi*. Octagon.

———. 1977. *Œuveres Philosophiques Et Mystiques,* Edited by Henry Corbin.Vol. 1-3. Tehran: Academie Imperiale Iranienne De Philosophie.

———. 1999. *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*. Mazda Publishers.

———. 1999. *Suhrawardi: The Philosophy of Illumination. A New Critical Edition of the Text of Hikmat Al-Ishraq*. Provo: Brigham Young University.

"Surah An-Nur [24:35]." 2016. Surah An-Nur [24:35]. January 18, 2016.
https://quran.com/24/35.

Talimsānī, ʿAfīf al-Dīn al-. 2015. *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam li Shaikh Ibn ʿArabī*. Dar al-kutūb
al-ʿilmiyyah.

al-Walīd 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn, Wilferd Madelung, and Toby Mayer. 2016. *Avicenna's
Allegory on the Soul: an Ismaili Interpretation: an Arabic Edition and English
Translation of 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Walīds al-Risāla al-mufīda*. London: I.B.
Tauris Publishers, in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies.

Secondary Sources

Abdi, Hassan. 2019. "The Nature of the Mind." Mullasadra.org. Accessed February 1.
2019http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/english/Paper%20Bank/Anthropology/H
amid%20Abdi%20@.htm.

Abdul-Hamid, Mustapha.2013."Religious Language and the Charge of Blasphemy: In
Defence of Al-Hallaj." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3,
no. 15: 283-290.

Abtahi, Sedighe. 2016. "The Analysis of the Substantive Motion Arguments of Mulla
Sadra." *International Journal of Philosophy and Social-Psychological Sciences* 2,
no. 3: 1–5.

Adamson, Peter. 2002. *The Arabic Plotinus: A Philosophical Study of the Theology of
Aristotle*. London. Duckworth.

———.2012a. "Avicenna and His Commentators on Human and Divine Self-
Intellection." In *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's
Metaphysics*, edited by Dag Nikolaus Hasse, 97-122. Berlin: De Gruyter.

———.2004. "Correcting Plotinus: Soul's Relationship to Body in Avicenna's
Commentary on The 'Theology of Aristotle.'" *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis
in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries* 2: 59–75.

———. 2013a. *Interpreting Avicenna: Critical Essays*, edited by Peter Adamson.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———.2013b. "*141- Into Thin Air: Avicenna on the Soul.*" *History of Philosophy Without
Any Gaps,* King's College, September 15, 2013b. Audio,
21:38.https://historyofphilosophy.net/avicenna-soul.

———.2012."Peter Adamson on the Flying Man Thought Experiment." Interview by
David Edmonds and Nigel Warbuton. *Philosophy Bites Podcast*, The Institute of
Philosophy. November 6th, 2012. Audio, 13:09.
https://hwcdn.libsyn.com/p/7/d/e/7de4e7a24ee48259/Peter_Adamson_on_Avice
nnas_Flying_Man.mp3?c_id=5176985&cs_id=5176985&expiration=1575716830
&hwt=4d37b93e08855fa6b7a2f2b766e52392

———.2004b."Non-Discursive Thought in Avicenna's Commentary on the Theology of
Aristotle." In *Interpreting Avicenna: Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islam*,
edited by J. McGinnis, 87–111. Leiden: Brill.

———. 2017. "The Theology of Aristotle." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,
edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2017. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford

University. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/theology-aristotle/.

———, and Fedor Benevich. 2018. "The Thought Experimental Method: Avicenna's Flying Man Argument." *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 4, no. 2: 1-18 (147–64).

Addas, Claude. 1993. *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn-Arabi*. Translated by Peter Kingsley. Golden Palm Series. Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society.

Afnan, Soheil. 1958. *Avicenna: His Life and His Works*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Ahmadi, Ahmad. 2019. "Sense - Experience and Its Relation to Universality and Induction." Mullasadra.org. Accessed February 1, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/english/Paper%20Bank/Epistemology/Ahmad%20Ahmadi.htm

Akbarian, Reza. 2016. "Approaches to Aesthetics in School of Mulla Sadra." *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, no. 1: 542–55.

———.2001. "The Basic Principle in Ibn-Sina's Ontology." *International Journal of Design & Nature and Ecodynamics: A Transdisciplinary Journal Relating to Nature, Science and the Humanities* 8: 1–14.

———. 2009. *The Fundamental Principles of Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Philosophy*. London Academy of Iranian Studies Press.

———. 2019."The Principle of Primacy of 'Existence' over 'Quiddity' and Its Philosophical Results in the Ontological System of Mulla Sadra." Mullasadra.org. Accessed November 28, 2019a. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/78187-4%20Akbarian%20@.htm.

———. 2019b. "Trans-Substantial Motion and Its Philosophical Consequences." Mullasadra.org. Accessed November 28, 2019b. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/trans-sustantial%20%20Motion%20@.htm.

———. 2019c. "The Union of the Intellect and the Intelligible from a New Perspective." Mullasadra.org. Accessed February 1, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/english/Paper%20Bank/Epistemology/Reza%20Akbari.htm.

Akkach, Samer. 1997. "The World of Imagination in Ibn 'Arabi's Ontology." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 24, no. 1: 97–113.

Ali, Mukhtar. 2009. "The Concept of Spiritual Perfection According to Ibn Sina and Sadr Al-Din Al-Qunawi." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2: 141–58.

Almond, Ian. 2001. "Divine Needs, Divine Illusions: Preliminary Remarks Toward a Comparative Study of Meister Eckhart and Ibn al 'Arabi." *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 10: 263–82.

Alwishah, Ahmed. 2006. "Avicenna's Philosophy of Mind: Self-Awareness and Intentionality." PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles.

———. 2015. "Avicenna on Self-Cognition and Self-Awareness." In *Aristotle and the Arabic Tradition*, edited by Ahmed Alwishah, Josh Hayes, Ahmed Alwishah, and Josh Hayes, 143–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2013. "Ibn Sīnā on Floating Man Arguments." *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 9 (July): 32–53.

Aminrazavi, Mehdi. 2003a. "Avicenna's (Ibn Sina) Phenomenological Analysis of How the Soul (Nafs) Knows Itself (ʿIlm Al-Huduri)." In *The Passion of the Soul in the Metamorphosis of Becoming*, edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, 91–98. London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

———. 2017. "A Discourse on the Soul in Later Islamic Philosophy." *Synthesis Philosophica* 31, no.2 : 371–83.

———. 2003b. "How Ibn Sinian Is Suhrawardi's Theory of Knowledge?" *Philosophy East & West* 53, no.2: 203–14.

———. 1990. "Suhrawardī's Rationalistic Approach to the Problem of Knowledge." *Islamic Studies* 29. no.2: 163–82.

———. 1997. *Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination*. Surrey: Curzon.

Amiri, Asgari Sulaymani. 2019. "The Principle of Presupposition and Categorical Existence (Qualification of Quiddity by Existence)." Mullasadra.org. Accessed November 28, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/Asgari%20@.html.

Anglin, Bill. 1982. "Evil Is Privation." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 13, no.1: 3-12.

Ansari, Abdul Haq. 1999. "Ibn 'Arabī: The Doctrine of Waḥdat Al Wujūd." *Islamic Studies* 38, no.2: 149–92.

Avicenna, and William E. Gohlman. 1986. *The Life of Ibn Sina*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Azadpur, Mohammad. 2011. *Reason Unbound: On Spiritual Practice in Islamic Peripatetic Philosophy*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Badawī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. 1955. *Aflụtin ʿinda al-ʿarab (al-Uthulujiyyah)*. Cairo: Maktab al-Nahḍa al-maṣriyyah.

———. 1976. *Al-Insān al-kāmil fī al-islām*. Kuwait: Wakāla al-maṭbūʿ.

Banchetti-Robino, Marina Paola. 2004. "Ibn Sina and Husserl on Intention and Intentionality." *Philosophy East & West* 54, no.1: 71–82.

Barnes, Jonathan. 1996. *Aristotle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barrett, Cyril. 1992. "The Logic of Mysticism—II." *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 31 (March): 61–69.

Belo, Catarina. 2014. "In the Age of Averroes: Arabic Philosophy in the Sixth/Twelfth Century Edited by Peter Adamson." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25, no.2: 212–15.

Black, D. L. 1997. "Avicenna on the Ontological and Epistemic Status of Fictional Beings." *Documenti E Studi Sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 8: 425–53.

———. 2008. "Avicenna on Self-Awareness and Knowing That One Knows." In *The Unity of Science in the Arabic Tradition: Science, Logic, Epistemology and Their Interactions*, edited by Shahid Rahman, Tony Street, and Hassan Tahiri, 63–87. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

———. 2013. "Certitude, Justification, and the Principles of Knowledge in Avicenna's Epistemology." In *Interpreting Avicenna*, edited by Peter Adamson and Peter Adamson, 120–42. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———.1993. "Estimation (Wahm) in Avicenna: The Logical and Psychological Dimensions." *Dialogue* 32, no 2: 219-58.

———. 2000. "Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western Transformations." *Topoi. An International Review of Philosophy* 19, no.1: 59–75.

———. 2010. "Intentionality in Medieval Arabic Philosophy." *Quaestiones Mathematicae. Journal of the South African Mathematical Society* 10 (January): 65–81.

———. 1999. "Mental Existence in Thomas Aquinas and Avicenna." *Mediaeval Studies* 61 (January): 45–79.

Bochenski, I. M. 1961. *On the History of the History of Formal Logic.* Translated by I. Thomas. Notre Dame: Indiana University Press.

Bos, Abraham P. 2012. "Aristotle's Definition of the Soul: Why Was It Misunderstood for Centuries? The Dubious Lines Anim. II 1,412b1–4." *Museum Helveticum* 69, no.2: 140–55.

Burckhardt, Titus. 2008. *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine.* Bloomington: World Wisdom, Inc.

Burrell, D. B. 2002. "Avicenna." *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, edited by Jorge J. E. Gracia, Timothy B. Noone, 196-208. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

———. 1986. "Essence and Existence: Avicenna and Greek Philosophy." *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Etudes Orientales.* 17:53-66.

2015. "Avicenna on Self-Cognition and Self-Awareness." In *Aristotle and the Arabic Tradition*, edited by Ahmed Alwishah, Josh Hayes, Ahmed Alwishah, and Josh Hayes, 143–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2010. "Existence Deriving from the Existent: Mulla Ṣadra with Ibn Sīnā and Al-Suhrawardī?" In *Avicenna and His Legacy*, ed. Y. Tzvi Langermann 249–55. Turnhout:Brepols Publishers.

Chittick, William. 2018. "Ibn Arabi." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2018. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/ibn-arabi/.

.———. 1994. *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn Al-'Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity.* Albany: SUNY Press.

———.1978. "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn'Arabî's Foremost Disciple and Some Notes on its Author." *Sophia Perennis* 4, no. 1:43-58.

———. 1981b. "Mysticism versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The Al–Tūsi, Al–Qūnawi Correspondence." *Religious Studies Review* 17, no.2 : 87–10.

———. 1979. "The Perfect Man as the Prototype of the Self in the Sufism of Jāmī." *Studia Islamica*: 135-157.

———. 2011."Qūnawī on the One Wujūd." *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 49: 117-127.

———. 1981a. "Sadr Al-Dīn Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being." *International Philosophical Quarterly,* 21, no,2: 171–84.

———. 1998. *Self-Disclosure of God, The: Principles of Ibn Al-'Arabi's Cosmology.* Albany: SUNY Press.

———. 1989. *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn Al-Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination.* Albany: SUNY Press.

Coates, Peter. 2002. *Ibn 'Arabi and Modern Thought: The History of Taking Metaphysics Seriously.* Anqa Publishing.

Coope, Ursula. 2005. *Time for Aristotle: Physics IV. 10-14.* Oxford University Press.

Corbin, Henry. 2014. *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital:(Mythos Series).* Vol. 188. Princeton University Press.

D'Ancona, Cristina.1997. "Divine and human knowledge in the Plotiniana Arabica." *The*

Perennial Tradition of Neoplatonism 24: 419-42.

Dagli, Caner K. 2016. *Ibn al-'Arabī and Islamic Intellectual Culture: From Mysticism to Philosophy*. Routledge.

———.2006. "From Mysticism to Philosophy (and back): An Ontological History of the School of the Oneness of Being." PhD diss., Princeton University.

De Koninck, Thomas. 1994. "Aristotle on God as Thought Thinking Itself." *The Review of Metaphysics* 47, no. 3: 471-515.

Dīnānī, Ghulām Ḥussain al-Ibrāhīmī al-. 2005. *Ishrāq al-fikr wa al-shuhūd fī falsafa al-Suhrawardī*. Beirut: Dār al-hādī.

Druart, Thérèse-Anne.1983. "Imagination and the Soul—Body Problem in Arabic Philosophy." In *Soul and Body in Husserlian Phenomenology*, 327-342. Springer, Dordrecht.

Ebstein, Michael. 2013. *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-ʿArabī and the Ismāʿīlī Tradition*. Brill.

Ejei, Mohammad 'Ali. 2019. "Individuation in Mullā Ṣadrā." Mullasadra.org. Accessed November 28, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Transcendent%20Philosophy/Individuation%20@%20Ejei.htm.

El-Bizri, Nader. 2001. "Avicenna and Essentialism." *The Review of Metaphysics* 54, no.4: 753–78.

———. *The Phenomenological Quest between Avicenna and Heidegger*. Global Academic Publishing, 2000.

Elkaisy-Friemuth, Maha. 2006. *God and Humans in Islamic Thought: Abd Al-Jabbar, Ibn Sina and Al-Ghazali*. Routledge.

Erdt, Agnieszka. 2018. "The Science of the Soul in ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī's Philosophy and Exegesis." PhD, Uniwersytet Warszawski.

Eshots, Yanis. 2007. "Mulla Sadrā's Teaching on Wujūd: A Synthesis of Mysticism and Philosophy." PhD diss., Tallinn University.

———. 2010. "Substantial Motion and New Creation in Comparative Context." *Journal of IslamicPhilosophy: A Special Issue on Mullā Ṣadrā* 6: 79–92.

Fakhry, Majid. 1971. "Three Varieties of Mysticism in Islam." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 2, no.4: 193–207.

Faruque, Muhammad U. 2016. "Mullā Ṣadrā and the Project of Transcendent Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā and Transcendent Philosophy." *Religion Compass* 10, no.1: 3–14.

———. , and Mohammed Rustom. 2017. "Rajab ʿAlī Tabrīzī's Refutation of Ṣadrian Metaphysics." *Philosophy and the Intellectual Life in Shīʿah Islam. London: The Shiʿah Institute*.

Fathtaheri, Ali. 2008. "Leibniz's Monad and Mulla Sadra's Hierarchy of Being: A Comparative Study." In *Proceedings of the XXII World Congress of Philosophy*, vol, pp. 93–100.

Fattāḥ, ʾIrfān ʾAbd al-Ḥamīd. 1992. *Nashaʾa al-falsafah al-ṣūfiyyah wa taṭawwuruhā*. Dār al-jayl.

Frank, R. M. 1956. "Origin of the Arabic Philosophical Term Anniyya." *Cahiers de Byrsa*, 181–201.

Frank, Richard Macdonough. 2007. *Early Islamic Theology: The Mu'tazilites and Al-Ash'ari. Texts and Studies on the Development and History of Kalam*. Edited by D. Gutas. Aldershot: Ashgate.

———. 2008. *Classic Islamic Theology: The Ashʿarites*. Edited by D. Gutas. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Frye, Richard Nelson, 1975.The *Cambridge History of Iran: The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*. University Press.

Gaborieau, Marc, Gudrun Krämer, and Kate Fleet. 2007. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three*. Brill.

Ghaffari, Hussein. 2019. "A New Version of the Principality of Existence in Sadrian Philosophy." Mullasadra.org. Accessed November 28, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/Ghaffari%20@%20N.htm.

Gould, Thomas. *The Classical World* 53, no. 53: 163. doi:10.2307/4344308.

Grimes, Pierre. 2018. "Plotinus - Enneads - IV.8.1-4 - On the Descent of the Soul - 1." Filmed n.p. Video,1:09 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8reTdGzqho.

Gürer, Betül. 2017."The Guidebook of Theoretical Tasawwuf: Content and Influences of Sadr al-Din al-Qunawī's Miftāḥ al-ghayb." *Cumhuriyet ilahiyat dergisi* 21, no. 2: 883-912.

Gutas, Dimitri. "Avicenna's eastern ("oriental") philosophy: nature, contents, transmission." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 10, no. 2: 159-180.

———. 2012. "The Empiricism of Avicenna." *Oriens* 40 no.2: 391–436.

———. 2011. "AVICENNA v. Mysticism." Encyclopaedia Iranica. Accessed November 28, 2019. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/avicenna-

———.1994. "Ibn Ṭufayl on Ibn Sīnā's Eastern Philosophy." *Oriens* 34: 222–41.

Hajamaideen, Faris. 2019. "ʾIlm and the Human Body: Al-Suhrawardī's Concept of the Illuminated Temple." In *Ilm*, edited by Samer Akkach, 125–38. Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press.

Halper, Edward. 2012. *Aristotle's "Metaphysics": A Reader's Guide*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Halper, Yehuda. 2015. "Averroes on Intentionality and the Human Experience of the Natural World." In *Aristotle and the Arabic Tradition*, edited by Ahmed Alwishah, Josh Hayes, Ahmed Alwishah, and Josh Hayes, 164–76. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hämeen-Anttila, Jaakko. 2007. "The Immutable Entities and Time." Journal Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society. December 3, 2007. Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society. *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*. Vol. 41. http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/immutable_entities.html.

Haney, Kathleen M. 2019. "The Unity of What We Can Know: Mulla Sadra, Precursor to Edmund Husserl, Jorge Borges, Kafka, Zeno, Robert Browning, Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers …." Accessed November 28, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/english/Paper%20Bank/Western%20Philosophy/Hany.htm.

Haq, Muhammad Abdul. 1967. "Mullā Ṣadrā's Concept of Being." *Islamic Studies* 6, no.3: 267–76.

Haque, Amber. 2004. "Psychology from Islamic Perspective: Contributions of Early Muslim Scholars and Challenges to Contemporary Muslim Psychologists." *Journal of Religion and Health* 43, no. 4: 357–77.

Harper, David. 2018. "Being." Online Etymology Dictionary. 2018. https://www.etymonline.com/word/being

.———. 2018a. "Existence|." Online Etymology Dictionary. 2018. https://www.etymonline.com/word/existence.

———. 2018b. "Quiddity." Online Etymology Dictionary. 2018. https://www.etymonline.com/word/quiddity?utm_source=extension_searchhint.

———. 2019. "Sem." Online Etymology Dictionary. 2019. https://www.etymonline.com/word/being.

Ḥasan, Hāshim. 2009. *al-Insān ʾinda Ṣadrā Shīrāzī*. al-Maktaba al-falsafiyyah. Cairo: Maktaba al-thaqāfah al-dīniyyah.

Hasse, Dag Nikolaus 2000. *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West: The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul 1160-1300*. 1 Warburg Institute.

al-Ḥaydarī, As-Sayyid Kamāl. 2017." Waḥdah al-shakhsiyyah la tunāfī wujūd al-kathrah." Filmed n.p. Video, 12:06 https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=0XonXtJyvY8.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1991. *Hegel: Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Cambridge University Press.

Hertogh, C. P. 2013. "Ibn Sina's Flying Man: Logical Analyses of a (Religious) Thought Experiment." *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 9: 54–74.

Hesamifar, Abdurrazzaq. 2017. "The Immateriality of Perception." *Transcendent Philosophy* 18: 77–94.

Hisaki, Hashi. 2017. "Plato as 'Idealist' and Aristotle as 'Realist' (?)—Reflecting the Idea and the Ousia in View of Comparative Philosophy." *Philosophy* 7, no 8: 405-413.

Ivry, Alfred L. 2001. "The Arabic Text of Aristotle's 'De Anima' and Its Translator." *Oriens* 36: 59–77.

Izutsu, Toshihiko. 1983. *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparison of Key Philosophical Concepts*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

El-Jaichi, Saer. 2018. *Early Philosophical Sufism: The Neoplatonic Thought of Ḥusayn Ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāǧ*. Gorgias Press

Jambet, Christian. 2006. *The Act of Being: The Philosophy of Revelation in Mullā Sadrā*. Translated by Jeff Fort. Zone Books.

Janssens, Jules. "Fakhr al-Din al-Razi on the Soul: A Critical Approach to Ibn Sina." *The Muslim World* 102, no. 3-4: 562-579.

———.2006. *Ibn Sīnā and His Influence on the Arabic and Latin World*. Ashgate.

al-Jazāirī,ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn, (Amir of Mascara), and Michel Chodkiewicz. 1995. *The Spiritual Writings of Amir 'Abd Al-Kader*. SUNY Press.

Kaka'i, Qasim. 2019. "The Theory of the Unity of Being." Mullasadra.org. Accessed November 28, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/Theory%20of%20the%20Unity%20@.htm.

Kalin, Ibrahim. 2014a. "Crisis and Maturity: Introducing Ṣadrā's Ontology." In *Mullā Ṣadrā*. Oxford University Press.

———. 2014b. "The Intellectual Journey of a Seventeenth-Century Muslim Philosopher." In *Mullā Ṣadrā*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

———. 1999. "Knowledge as Light: Critical Remarks on M. Ha'iri Yazdi's The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence." http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/Knowledge%20as%20light%20@.htm.

———. 2000. "Knowledge as the Unity of the Intellect and the Object of Intellection in Islamic Philosophy: A Historical Survey from Plato to Mulla Sadra." *Transcendent Philosophy: An International Journal for Comparative Philosophy and Mysticism,* 1, no.1: 73–91.

———. 2010. *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mulla Sadra on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*. Oxford University Press.

———. 2005. "Mulla Sadra's Appropriation and Critique of the Illuminationist Concept of Knowledge." Tebyan. December 4, 2005. https://english.tebyan.net/newindex.aspx?pid=27437.

Kamal, Muhammad. 2010. *From Essence to Being: The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra and Martin Heidegger*. ICAS Press.

———. 2013. *Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Philosophy*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

———. 2009. "Rethinking Being: From Suhravardi to Mulla Sadra." *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 2, no.4.

Kaukua, Jari. 2007. "Avicenna on Subjectivity. A Philosophical Study." PhD, diss., University of Jyväskylä. https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/bitstream/handle/123456789/13299/9789513927721.pdf?sequence=1.

———. 2014. "Avicenna in the Soul's Activity in Perception." In *Active Perception in the History of Philosophy: From Plato to Modern Philosophy*, edited by José Filipe Silva and Mikko Yrjönsuuri, 14:99–116. Switzerland: Springer Science & Business Media.

———. 2010. "I in the Eye of God: Ibn ʿArabī on the Divine Human Self." *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabī Society* 47: 1–22.

———. 2015. *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy: Avicenna and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. and Tomas Ekenberg. 2016. *Subjectivity and Selfhood in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*. Springer.

———. 2013. "Suhrawardī's Knowledge as Presence in Context." *Studia Orientalia Electronica*. 114: 309-324.

———. and V. Lähteenmäki. 2014c."On the Historiography of Subjectivity." *Vivarium* 52, no. 3-4: 187-195.

Kemal, Salim. 2001. "al-Shaikh al-Raʾīs Ibn Sina." Muslim Philosophy. http://muslimphilosophy.com/sina/art/ibn%20Sina-REP.htm#is2 (December 4, 2019)

Kennedy-Day, Kiki. 2015. "Ibn Sina." In *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy*, edited by Oliver Leaman, 224–28. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Khamenei, Muhammad. 2011. "Mental Existence." *Kheradnameh Sadra Quarterly* 63.

———. 2019. "Mulla Sadra's Philosophy of Platonic Spirit." Mullasadra.org. Accessed March 28, 2019.
http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/english/Paper%20Bank/Theology(Kalam)/Old%20Theological%20Problems/Khamenei%20@.htm.

———.2019. "Sense Perception." Mullasadra.org. Accessed February 1, 2019.
http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/english/Paper%20Bank/Epistemology/Soas.htm.

Khan, Zia Inayat. 2000. "Illuminative Presence." *Tobin Hart, Et. Al, Transpersonal Knowing: Exploring the Horizons of Consciousness*, 147–59. SUNY Press.

Kharrazi, Kamal. 2019. "Mulla Sadra's Idea of Soul-Body Relation and Its Consequences in Psychology." Mullasadra.org. Accessed February 1, 2019.
http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/english/Paper%20Bank/Anthropology/Kamal%20Kharazi%20@.htm.

Khatami, Mahmoud. 2013. "Becoming Transcendent: Remarks on the Human Soul in the Philosophy of Illumination." In *Soul: A Comparative Approach*, edited by Christian Kanzian and Muhammad Legenhausen, 97–123. Paris: Walter de Gruyter.

Khogali, Hisham Osman. 1987. "An Examination of the" Shatahat"(Ecstatic Utterances) Attributed to Abu Yazid Al-Bistami (d. 261/873) and Husayn Ibn Mansur Al-Hallaj (d. 309/922): And Their Discussion by Later Writers." PhD diss., University of London.

Knuuttila, Simo. "Aristotle's theory of perception and medieval aristotelianism." In *Theories of perception in medieval and early modern philosophy*, pp. 1-22. Springer, Dordrecht.

Knysh, Alexander D. 1999. *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam*. SUNY Press.

Kobayashi, Haruo. 1990. "Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi on Self-Consciousness." *Orient* 26: 62-77.

Kutubi, Eiyad S. al-. 2013. "Evolution of Being: Ṣadrā's Metaphysical Principles of Eschatology." PhD diss., Indiana University.

La Caze, Marguerite. 2002. *The Analytic Imaginary*. Cornell University Press.

Lamont, John Robert Toby. 2019. "The Real Distinction between Essence and Existence." Mullasadra.org. Accessed November 28, 2019.
http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/Lamont%20@%20N.htm.

Landau, Rom. 2013. *The Philosophy of Ibn 'Arabi*. Routledge.

Landolt, Hermann. 2005. *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought*. I.B.Tauris.

Lane, Andrew N. 2001. "Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi's (1641-1731) Commentary on Ibn Arabi's Fusus al-Hikam: an Analysis and Interpretation." PhD diss., University of Oxford.

Langermann, Y. Tzvi. 2007. "Ibn Kammūna at Aleppo." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland. Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 17, no.1: 1–19.

Leaman, Oliver. 2013. *History of Islamic Philosophy*. Routledge.

Lewis, Michael, and Tanja Staehler. 2010. *Phenomenology: An Introduction*. A&C

Black.

Leff, Gordon. 1976. *The Dissolution of the Medieval Outlook: An Essay on Intellectual and Spiritual Change in the Fourteenth Century*. Harper & Row.

Lim, Kevjn. "God's Knowledge of Particulars: Avicenna, Maimonides, and Gersonides." *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 5 (2009): 75-98.

Lipton, G. A. 2007. "Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī's The Equivalence between Giving and Receiving: Avicennian Neoplatonism and the School of Ibn ʿArabī Asia." Edited by Carl W. Ernst. Master of Arts, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

———. 2010. "Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī's Taswiyya Contextualized." In *Muslim Cultures in the Indo-Iranian World During the Early-Modern and Modern Periods*, edited by Fabrio Speziale Denis Hermann, 475–97. Institut Francais de Reserche en Iran.

López-Farjeat, Luis Xavier. 2015. "Causality in Islamic Philosophy." In *The Routledge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, edited by Richard C. Taylor and Luis Xavier López-Farjeat, 131–40. London: Routledge.

MacKenna, Stephen. 1956. *Plotinus:The Enneads*. London: Faber and Faber.

Madelung, Wilferd. 2015. *Avicenna's Allegory on the Soul: An Ismaili Interpretation*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Makas, Rebecca. 2011. "From Experiential Knowledge to Philosophical Transmission: An Analysis of Epistemology in Ibn 'Arabī's Fuṣūṣ Al-Ḥikam and the Prolegomena of Qayṣarī." Masters, Brandeis University.

Mannheimmanheim, Erwin Tegtmeier. 2013. "Ibn Sina on Substances and Accidents." In *Substance and Attribute: Western and Islamic Traditions in Dialogue*, edited by Christian Kanzian, Muhammad Legenhausen, and Walter de Gruyter, 229–36. Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag.

Marcotte, R. D. 2004. "Irjā 'Ilā Nafsika: Suhrawardī's Apperception of the Self in Light of Avicenna." *Transcendent Philosophy*. 1:1-22.

———. 2011. "Suhrawardi's Realm of the Imaginal." Edited by Y. Eshots. *Ishraq: Islamic Philosophy Yearbook* 2: 68–79.

Marmura, Michael. 1986. "Avicenna's 'Flying Man' in Context." *The Monist* 69, no.3: 383–95.

Masciandaro, Nicola. 2010. "The Sorrow of Being." *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences* 19: 9–35.

Massignon, Louis. 1994. *The Passion of Al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*. Princeton University Press.

Mayer, Toby. 2008. "Theology and Sufism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, edited by Tim Winter. Cambridge University Press.

McCarron, M. Salim. 2019. "The Question of Witnessing, Quiddity and Knowledge (Shuhud, Mahiyyat, and 'Ilm) in Mulla Sadra and Sufism." Mullasadra.org. Accessed November 28, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/Salim%20 Mc%20Carron%20@.htm.

McGinnis, Jon. 2010. *Avicenna*. Oxford University Press.

———. 2016. University of Pittsburgh."Experimental Thoughts on Thought Experiments in Medieval Islam." Accessed December 8, 2019. http://philsci-

archive.pitt.edu/12391/1/Thought%20Experiments%20in%20medieval%20islam.pdf.

Mehdi Dehbashi. 1981. "Mulla Sadra's Theory of Transubstantial Motion: A Translation and Critical Exposition." PhD diss., Fordham University. http://fordham.bepress.com/dissertations/AAI8111542/.

Menn, Stephen. 2001. "Plotinus on the Identity of Knowledge with its Object." *Apeiron* 34, no. 3: 233-246.

Meyerhof, Max, Joseph Schacht, and eds. 1968. *The Theologus Autodidactus of Ibn Al-Nafīs*. Clarendon Press.

Morewedge, Parviz, ed. 1979. *Islamic Philosophical Theology*. SUNY Press.

———.1971. "The Logic of Emanationism and Ṣūfism in the Philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Part I." *Journal of the American Oriental Society. American Oriental Society* 91, no.4: 467–76.

———. 1972. "The Logic of Emanationism and Ṣūfism in the Philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Part II." *Journal of the American Oriental Society. American Oriental Society* 92, no.1: 1–18.

Moris, Zailan. 2013. *Revelation, Intellectual Intuition and Reason in the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra: An Analysis of the Al-Hikmah Al-'Arshiyyah*. Routledge.

Morris, James Winston. 1987. "Ibn ʿArabi and His Interpreters Part II (Conclusion): Influences and Interpretations." *Journal of the American Oriental Society. American Oriental Society* 107, no.1: 101–19.

Mousavian, Seyed N. 2014. "Suhrawardi on Innateness: A Reply to John Walbridge." *Philosophy East & West* 64, no.2: 486–501.

Muehlethaler, Lukas. 2009. "Ibn Kammuna (d. 683/1284) on the Argument of the Flying Man in Avicenna's Isharat and Al-SuhrawardI's Talwillat." In *Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, edited by Y. Tzvi Langermann, 8:179–204. Belgium: Brepols.

Mustafawi, Zahra. 2019."Platonic Ideas in Mullā Sadrā." Mullasadra.org. Accessed November 28 ,2019.http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/Platonic%20Ideas%20@.htm.

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein and Mehdi Aminrazavi. 2013. *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia, Vol IV: From the School of Illumination to Philosophical Mysticism*. I. B. Tauris.

———.1993. *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*. SUNY Press.

———. 1996b. "The Meaning and Concept of Philosophy in Islam." In *History of Islamic Philosophy*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, 30. Routledge.

———. 1977. "Post-Avicennan Islamic Philosophy and the Study of Being." *International Philosophical Quarterly*17, no.3: 265–71.

———.1970. "Shi'ism and Sufism: Their Relationship in Essence and in History." *Religious Studies Review* 6, no.3: 229–42. .

Owens, Joseph. 1957. *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics: A Study in the Greek Background of Medieval Thought*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies.

Parildar, Sumeyye. 2015. "Mullā Ṣadrā on the 'Mental': A Monist Approach to the Mental Existence." *Ishraq* 6: 160–81.

Peerwani, Latimah-Parvin. 2019. "Mind-Body Relationship According to Mulla Sadra." Mullasadra.org. Accessed February 1, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/english/Paper%20Bank/Anthropology/Peerwani%20@.htm.

———. 2008. *Spiritual Psychology: The Fourth Intellectual Journey in Transcendent Philosophy: Volumes Viii and Ix of the Asfār*. London: ICAS.

Peters, F. E. 1968. *Aristoteles Arabus the Oriental Translations and Commentaries of the Aristotelian Corpus*. Brill.

Peterson, Daniel Carl, and Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh Kirmānī. 1990. *Cosmogony and the Ten Separated Intellects in the "Rahat Al-Aql" of Hamid Al-Din Al-Kirmani*.

Pourjavady, Nasrollah. 2007. "The Sufi Way of Love and Peace." In *Voices of Islam: Voices of Tradition*, edited by Vincent J. Cornell, 1:158–65. Greenwood Publishing Group.

"Quiddity." 2001. Online Etymology Dictionary. Accessed December 19, 2018. https://www.etymonline.com/word/quiddity.

Rahman, Fazlur. 1975. *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra (Sadr Al-Din Al-Shirazi)*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Remes, Pauliina. 2017. "Self-Knowledge in Plotinus." *Self-Knowledge*: 78-95.

Rezaee, Hossein Sheykh, and Mohammad Mansur. 2009 "Knowledge as a mode of being: Mulla Sadra's theory of knowledge." Sophia Perennis 4:19-44.

Richter-Bernburg, Lutz. 2011. "'God Created Adam in His Likeness' in The Muslim Tradition." *JOUR* 134 (January): 67–82.

Rizvi, Sajjad. 1999. "An Islamic Subversion of the Existence-essence Distinction? Suhrawardi's Visionary Hierarchy of Lights." *Asian Philosophy* 9, no.3: 219–27.

———. 2015. "Deconstructing Substance Metaphysics: Mullā Ṣadrā on Intensity in Ousia." *Academia.edu*. The University of Exeter.

———. 2009. "Mulla Sadra." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Accessed December 7, 2019. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mulla-sadra/.

———. 2005a. "Mulla Sadra and Causation: Rethinking a Problem in Later Islamic Philosophy." *Philosophy East & West* 55, no.4: 570–83.

———. 2013. *Mulla Sadra and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being*. Routledge.

———. 2005b. "Mysticism and philosophy: Ibn 'Arabi and Mulla Sadra." *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*: 224-246.

———. 2006. "Time and Creation: The Contribution of Some Safavid Philosophies." *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 62, no.2: 713–37.

Rosenthal, Franz. 1988. "Ibn'Arabī between" Philosophy" and" Mysticism": " Sūfism and Philosophy Are Neighbors and Visit Each Other". fa-inna at-taṣawwuf wa-t-tafalsuf yatajāwarāni wa-yatazāwarāni." *Orien* 31: 1-35.

Rowlands, Mark. 2011."Jean-Paul Sartre's Being and Nothingness." *Topoi* 30, no. 2: 175-180.

Saeed Shaikh, M. 2006. *A Dictionary of Muslim Philosophy*. New Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors.

Şahin, Eyüp. 2014. "Does Existence Precede Essence: Existentialism and Avicenna." *Ankara University Journal of Language and History-Geography* 54, no.1: 41-60. Accessed December 7, 2019. http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/26/1953/20432.pdf.

Saidi, Golbaba. 2019 "Mulla Sadra and the Doctrine of Trans-Substantial Motion." Mullasadra.org. Accessed November 28, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/Golbaba%20Saidi%20@.htm.

Sartre, Jean-Paul, and Philip Mairet. 1960. *Existentialism and humanism*. Methuen.

Savitt, Steven. 2017. "Being and Becoming in Modern Physics." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2017. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/spacetime-bebecome/.

Sawai, Makato. 2014. "The Divine Names in IbnʿArabī's Theory of The Oneness of Existence." Edited by Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad. Master of Arts, The American University in Cairo. http://dar.aucegypt.edu/bitstream/handle/10526/4139/MA%20thesis%20%28Makoto%20Sawai%29.pdf?sequence=1.

Scharfstein, Ben-Ami. 1988. *A Comparative History of World History: From the Upanishads to Kant*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Schmidtke, Sabine, ed. 2016. *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*. Oxford University

Sedgwick, Mark. 2014. "Ibn 'Arabi and the Contemporary West: Beshara and the Ibn 'Arabi Society." *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 25, no.3: 389–90.

Shahzad, Qaiser. 2007. "Ibn 'Arabī's Metaphysics of the Human Body." *Islamic Studies* 46, no.4: 499–525.

Shaikh al-Arḍ, Taysīr. 1962. *Ibn Sīnā*. Beirut: Dār al-sharq al-jadīd.

Shaker, Anthony F. 2012. *Thinking in the Language of Reality*. Xlibris Corporation.

Shields, Christopher. 2003. *Classical Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction*. Routledge.

Shirawani, Ali. 2019. "Motion in Mulla Sadra and Bergson." Mullasadra.org. Accessed February 1, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/english/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/Shirvani%20@.htm.

Shirvani, Ali. 2019. "Epistemology and the Transcendent Philosophy." Mullasadra.org. Accessed February 1, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/english/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/Shirvani%20@.htm.

Sīnā, Abū ʿAlī Ibn. 2019. "Ibn Sina's Autobiography." Muslim Philosophy.com. Accessed 28 November 28th, 2019. http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/sina/works/is-autobio.htm.

Sorabji, Richard. 2006. *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life and Death*. University of Chicago Press.

Stenlund, Sören. 2008. "Language and Metaphysics." *Theoria* 62, no.1-2: 187–211.

Ṭabāṭabāʾī, Muḥammad Ḥusayn. 2003. *The Elements of Islamic Metaphysics: (Bidāyat Al-Ḥikmah)*. Translated by Sayyid ʿAlī Qūlī Qarāʾi. ICAS Press.

Taheri, Ali Fath. 2012. "Leibniz's Monads and Mulla Sadra's Hierarchy of Being: A Comparative Study." *University of Tabriz Journal of Philosophical Investigations* 6, no.11: 95–107.

Tahiri, Hassan. 2016. "Ibn Sīnā and the Reinvention of Epistemology." In *Mathematics and the Mind: An Introduction into Ibn Sīnā's Theory of Knowledge*, edited by Hassan Tahiri, pp.9–24. Springer International Publishing.

Tahmasbi, Mohammad Reza. 2016. "Comparative Study of Self-Awareness in Suhrawardi's and Avicenna's Philosophy." *Transcendent Philosophy* 17 (December): 135–62.

Taji-Farouki, Suha. 2007. *Beshara and Ibn 'Arabi: A Movement of Sufi Spirituality in the Modern World*. Oxford: Anqa Publishing.

Takeshita, Masataka. 1987. *Ibn ʿArabī's Theory of The Perfect Man and Its Place in the History of Islamic Thought*. PhD diss.,Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

———. 1982. "The Homo Imago Dei Motif and the Anthropocentric Metaphysic of Ibn 'Arabi in the Inshaʿ Al-Dawāʾir." *Orient. Report of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan*, 111–28.

Thani, Sayyid Mahmud Yusuf. 2019. "The Principality of Existence and the Natural Universal." Mullasadra.org. Accessed November 28, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/Sayyid%20Mahmud%20Yusuf%20Thani%20@.htm.

"The Works of Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi - Translations from and Introductions to Many Titles." 2018. Accessed May 19, 2018. http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/works.html.

Thibault, Herve J. 2013. *Creation and Metaphysics: A Genetic Approach to Existential Act*. Springer.

Tiovanen, Juhana. 2015. "The Fate of the Flying Man: Medieval Reception of Avicenna's Thought Experiment." *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy* 3: 64-98.

Todd, Richard. 2014. *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology*. Brill.

Tracy, Theodore. 1982. "Ultimate Reality and Meaning in Aristotle: A Classicist's View." *Ultimate Reality and Meaning* 5, no.3: 210–29.

Tweedale, Martin. 1988. "Aristotle's Realism." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 18, no.3: 501–26.

ʿUbūdiyat, ʿAbd Al-Rasūl. 2007. "The Fundamentality of Existence and the Subjectivity of Quiddity." *Topoi* 26 (July): 201–12.

———. 2010. *al-Niẓām al-falsafī li madrasa al-ḥikmah al-mutʿāliyah*. Edited by Khanjar Ḥamiyya. Beirut: Markaz al-haḍārah li tanmiyah al-fikr al-islāmī.

Üçer, İbrahim Halil. 2018. "From Identity to Representation: Ibn Sına on the Identity of Knower and Known in the Human Rational Soul." *Nazariyat Journal for the History of Islamic Philosophy and Sciences* 4, no.2: 1–55.

Von Grunebaum, Gustave E. "Avicenna's Risâla fî ʾl-ʿišq and Courtly Love." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 11, no. 4: 233-238.

Wakelnig, Elvira. 2015. "'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's Philosophical Journey: From Aristotle's Metaphysics to the' Metaphysical Science'. (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies 88): 489-491.

Walbridge, John. 2000. *The Leaven of the Ancients Suhrawardi and the Heritage of the Greeks*. New York: SUNY.

———. 1996. "Suhrawardī, a Twelfth-Century Muslim Neo-Stoic?" *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34, no.4: 515–33.

Wardeh, Nadia M. 2018. "Imagination: Its Role in the Major Eschatalogical Events According to Mulla Sadra." *Humanities and Social Science Review*, 271–85.

Wāʾilī, ʿabd Al-Jabbār al-. 2002. *Waḥda al-Wujūd al-ʾAqaliyya*. Edited by Maktab al-Nahḍa. Baghdād.

Weismann, I. 2001. "God and the Perfect Man in the Experience of ʿAbd Al-Qādir Al-Jazāʾirī." *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*. http://www.ibnarabisociety.org.uk/articlespdf/Weismann.pdf.

Widigdo, Muhammad Syifa Amin. 2014. "Suhrawardi's Ontology: From "Essence-Existence" To "Light" (A Suhrawardian Reply to Sadrian Critiques)." *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 4, no. 2: 117-125.

Yazdī, Mahdī Ḥā'irī. 1992. *Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy, The: Knowledge by Presence*. New York: SUNY Press.

Ziai, Hossein. 1990. *Knowledge and Illumination: A Study of Suhrawardī's Ḥikmat Al-Ishrāq*. Scholars Press.

———. 2019 "The Theory of the Unity of Being." Mullasadra.org. Accessed November 28, 2019. http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/Question%20of%20Knowing%20@.html.