Islamic and Comparative Philosophy

Introductory

As the editors of the thematic block "Islamic and Comparative Philosophy", i.e. as the guest editors of a special issue of the journal *Synthesis philosophica* dedicated to this topic, we are indebted to the authors of the papers collected here for their valuable contributions written for this volume.

Contributions included into this volume are aimed at deepening intercultural understanding, especially between the Islamic and Western philosophical traditions. Listing towards the traditions of the "East-West symphony" or the "East-West philosophical antiphony", to use Jim Heisig's syntagmatic construct, the authors have focused on common horizons, refuges of thought, by applying comparative and historical approaches, creative forces of constructive engagement, orchestrating harmony in the network and labyrinth of life, while, at the same time, moving forward in deciphering its micro-macro dimensions. It is about a "Logos of Life philosophy" developed by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka who so skilfully and adeptly revealed the methods and modes of dialogue between Islamic and Occidental philosophy, for instance, in the volume entitled *Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue: The Logos of Life and Cultural Interlacing* (ed. by A.-T. Tymieniecka, N. Muhtaroglu, and D. Quintern, Springer, Dordrecht et al. 2014).

We also received significant encouragement from Ali Paya who sent us a copy of his book, *The Misty Land of Ideas and the Light of Dialogue: An Anthology of Comparative Philosophy: Western & Islamic* (ICAS Press, London 2013) and convinced us that such a project is possible, *hic et nunc*, while sufficient insights into the topic were provided by two seminal works: Oliver Leaman (ed.), *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy* (Bloomsbury: London et al. 2015) and Hans Daiber, *Bibliography of Islamic Philosophy* (Brill, Leiden 1999).

Comparative philosophy is a form of dialogue between philosophers-comparatists, a form of their *constructive engagement* (to use Bo Mou's term). Whereas dialogue in traditional branches of philosophy usually takes the form of dialogue between the two, here, on the other hand, we have three collocutors who do not necessarily have to be contemporaries, speak the same language or even belong to the same tradition. Moreover, the one acting as the intermediary between the other two is a true practitioner and proponent of comparative philosophy, or a philosopher-comparatist. He is an interpreter, a commentator, a critic, an expert on well-founded philosophical arguments and interesting ideas, an educator and communicator/presenter – all simultaneously and within the same person.

Thus, the following titles come as no surprise: *Turning Point of Islamic Philosophy: Comparative Studies on Thought of Ibn Sina*, a seminar held on 21

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December 2013 at the University of Tokyo with the participation of Haruo Kobayashi (Tokyo Gakugei University), Toshiharu Nigo (Kyoto University), and Hidemi Takahashi (University of Tokyo); *Philosophy East / Philosophy West: A Critical Comparison of Indian, Chinese, Islamic, and European Philosophy*, an amazing book edited by Ben-Ami Scharfstein (Oxford University Press, New York 1978); *The Epistemology of Comparative Philosophy: A Critique with Reference to P. T. Raju's Views* by Joseph Kaipayil (Centre for Indian and Inter-Religious Studies, Rome 1995); *The Problem of Definition in Islamic Logic: A Study of Abū Al-Najā Al-Farīd's "Kasr Al-Mantiq" in Comparison with Ibn Taimiyyah's "Kitāb Al-Radd Alā Al-Manṭiqiyyīn"* by Zainal Abidin Baqir (International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, Kuala Lumpur 1998); and others. Viewing this all from a different perspective, it is also no wonder to see the emergence of works such as those by late professor Čedomil Veljačić's daughter, Snježana Veljačić-Akpınar, *Buddhist Meditations on Islamic Contemplative Paths: Less Traveled Roads & Abandoned Junctions* (Dharma Realm Buddhist University, Ukiah, CA 2015); "Some Common Features of Islam and Buddhism: A Conversation with Snježana Akpınar and Alex Berzin", a somewhat revised version of "The Dharma of Islam: A Conversation with Snježana Akpınar and Alex Berzin" (*Inquiring Mind*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Fall 2003).

Also worth noting are the words of caution by Seyyed Hossein Nasr – arguably the leading Muslim scholar of our time and professor at the George Washington University, published in the most prestigious comparative philosophy journal ("Conditions for Meaningful Comparative Philosophy", *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 22, No. 1, January 1972, pp. 53–61) – that it is impossible to compare everything or to draw any sort of correlations (i.e. the warning concerning the fundamental distinction between Eastern metaphysics and modern philosophy). However, the process of cultivating comparative philosophy in the field of Islamic philosophy is surely needed for a better understanding of the West, on the one hand, and the structure of Islamic thought, on the other. Comparative methods can significantly help in refuting misconceptions about Islamic philosophy as being no more than a phase in the transmission of Greek ideas to the West. It is for this reason precisely that the comparative approach deserves to be applied to Islamic tradition for its numerous practical benefits, but also because it can largely expand our comprehension of aspects that remained unexplored and/or were pushed to the side-lines.

Comparative philosophy is an ambitious, but a historically necessary project for establishing a critical discourse between different philosophical systems and scholars belonging to these different cultures and traditions, and it is aimed at broadening the philosophical horizons and possibilities for understanding. Comparative philosophy has the special task of establishing international peace and understanding in a specific, practical manner, but at the same time an intellectual endeavour within multicultural communities. Therefore, we consequently speak of an intercultural, transcultural or global philosophy which exhibited a variety of objectives, methods, and styles through the course of its history. It is assumed that by means of such scrutiny we can attain openness to develop new and better forms of philosophical understanding, which is a mega-trend in philosophy today and primarily aims at redefining the definition of philosophy itself and developing awareness of the need for inter-traditional, intercultural, inter-system, integrative and global studies, or, in the case of Southeast Europe, ascending above the mad obsession with

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the ethnic, i.e. beyond the prevalent cult of nation. Instead of borders and divisions, the authors of contributions in this volume strive towards remaining at the "cross/roads", i.e. climbing the steep "cliffs of the soul", the "Himalayas of the soul" (Čedomil Veljačić's terms), to which their works earnestly invite us and intellectually seduce, as well as towards our aspirations to once again become a part of the democratically developed world where multicultural societies are the norm, rather than remaining obsessed with and stuck in the trap of ethnocentrism.

It is for these reasons that in our Mediterranean basin the Islamic cultural world carries such great importance; this third forgotten link between the European and the Islamic world, as opposed to fanatical absolutism, with all its diverse and specific cultural contexts and fully aware of the responsibility for the multicultural world, a society based on human dignity where articulation is achieved through dialogue, an entire intellectual, cultural-spiritual world of the East and West – with the idea of philosophical resonance and complementarity of different philosophical positions at its core, or rather, our care for a discourse rid of domination in the dialectics of intercultural logos.

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"An Introduction to the Comparative Study of Indian and European Philosophy" is the introduction to **Čedomil Veljačić**'s (1915–1997) doctoral thesis defended at the University of Zagreb in 1962 under the title *Komparativno proučavanje indijske i evropske filozofije* (*Comparative Investigation of Indian and European Philosophy*), which was never published. It is preceded by the article "Čedomil Veljačić and Comparative Philosophy", written by his daughter **Snježana Veljačić-Akpınar** (who also translated Veljačić's text into English), which represents an introductory note to Veljačić's text. Both texts are reasonably chosen as opening chapters of this special issue of *Synthesis philosophica*, because they preserve historical memory of this philosopher-comparativist and perennial thinker. All scholars in the countries of former Yugoslavia are indebted to Čedomil Veljačić and his legacy in Eastern, comparative, and perennial philosophy. It is quite obvious that, according to his approach to the study of Buddhist and Asian cultures in general, Veljačić was primarily a comparative philosopher. On the occasion of the centenary of Veljačić's birth, we would like to remind ourselves and international colleagues in these fields that it is really worth revisiting his "Introduction to the Comparative Study of Indian and European Philosophy", not only in order to attempt to place a bookend on Veljačić's life, but also to assess his interaction with contemporary philosophical currents. The concluding statement of his *Crossroads of Asian Philosophies* (*Razmeđa azijskih filozofija* I–II, Sveučilišna naklada Liber, Zagreb 1978) argues that: "There is a philosophy which cannot be thought unless it is lived." He was a living example of this kind of philosophy, as were his successors Rada Iveković, Mislav Ježić, and Dušan Pajin.

The paper "How Constructive Engagement in Doing Philosophy Comparatively Is Possible" by **Bo Mou** should be placed within the context of his earlier work on the same issue. Unfortunately, this context is not well known to the general public, but regardless, by reading this text one can form an opinion about the value and importance of the author's approach and theses. The author's ambition is to point out what he thinks are adequate conditions

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that make a constructive engagement out of the "doing philosophy comparatively". It should be said that one can *a priori* accept this ambition as valid and justified; the final judgment should depend on accepting or not accepting the author's vision of adequate methods in approaching different texts or ideas belonging to different philosophical and/or cultural traditions and contexts in a comparative way. The author, in his meticulously elaborated paper, lays out principles, methods, and conditions for an adequate way of "doing philosophy comparatively", and illustrates his methodological "system" of comparing philosophical ideas pertaining to different traditions with examples that help the reader to understand the author's methodological approach. The author's "network" of principles, methods, and conditions represent a logical whole. The purpose of this is to reach a situation in which distinct approaches in philosophy "can constructively talk to each other" and through this dialogue "make a joint contribution to the development of philosophy". So as not to burden the reader of this review with the detailed presentation of Bo Mou's construction of adequate methodology, we believe that it is essential to proceed directly to "passing judgment" on the value of this paper. Is it convincing enough in making the reader accept the author's view of adequate methods in approaching texts or ideas belonging to different philosophical traditions? The answer to this question is definitely affirmative. It could be said that the methodology the author of the paper advocates imposes itself as something that stands to reason, something that is a matter of course – its adequacy lays in complying with the matter itself. The author's merit lays primarily in the very complete way in which he elaborates the principles, methods, and conditions that make up a complete methodological whole. And if the goal of comparing philosophical texts that belong to different cultural and philosophical traditions is to reveal and expose the possibility of their joint contribution to philosophy, Bo Mou's methodology of "doing philosophy comparatively" is undoubtedly very valuable.

Ali Paya's paper "Muslim Philosophies: A Critical Overview", as the very title suggests, presents an overview of Muslim philosophies, which, for the reader who does not have a deeper familiarity with Islamic (or Muslim) philosophy, can be of great interest and usefulness. The reader who is familiar with general insights into Islamic philosophy will probably be fascinated by the critical dimension of the paper, also announced in its title. It should be said that to present an overview of such a rich tradition and legacy that fall under the notion of Islamic philosophy is almost an impossible task, and it is obvious that Paya's paper has no such ambition. Bearing this in mind, one has to say that the overview presented in it successfully points out some of the main achievements and acquirements of that tradition and legacy. Still, one is tempted to say that the author did not pay sufficient attention to a specific corpus of Islamic philosophy which undoubtedly deserves attention – to great philosophers of Western Islamdom. These philosophers (e.g. Ibn Baǧǧa, Ibn Ṭufayl, Ibn Rušd)* are only mentioned, so that it could be said that there is a certain bias in favour of the philosophers of Eastern Islamdom. However, such an objection cannot minimize the value of the paper – it is still a very interesting and useful paper. The most interesting element of the paper is the part in which the author gives a

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The editors respected each author's choice of transcription/transliteration, which resulted in different modes of transcription/transliteration in different papers; for example, Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Bajjah, Ibn Rušd and Ibn Rushd, Ibn Ḫaldūn and Ibn Khaldun, etc.

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general presentation of two major developments in traditional Islamic philosophy of the 20th century (section VI of the paper) and the part in which the shortcomings of traditional Islamic philosophy are presented (section VII of the paper). (One can only regret, again, the absence of such a perspective on 20th century philosophical production in Arab countries.) Very pertinent is the author's discussion of the possible further development of Islamic philosophy; on its future. Here one feels that the author "has struck the chord" by stressing the need for "reconnection" with science, as well as stressing the need for encouragement and enhancement of the spirit of critical and rational thinking and openness to ideas and views developed in other cultures. In conclusion, it should be said that Paya's paper deserves full attention, because it is based on a broad insight into what is called Islamic philosophy.

As for **Nader El-Bizri**'s paper "*Falsafa*: A Labyrinth of Theory and Method", the author's main concern is how to make studying *falsafa* fruitful in the contemporary context. This is why the paper is mostly dedicated to discussing methods (and the principles of methods) of approaching *falsafa* in a contemporary way. El-Bizri's goal is to define the path for a renewal of possible influence of classical *falsafa* texts through philosophizing; this being the only way to recognize its universal value, beyond any ideological, sectarian, or any other listing. The author starts by explaining the way this "heritage" lives on for us, stressing that "what survives as a trace from a past origin in our life-world belongs essentially, not only to the context from which it originated, but also communicates constellations of meaning that inhere in our own world". He states its goal as follows: "our intention is to be proactive in the production of knowledge in view of founding new directions in philosophizing that may in part benefit from renewing the impetus of *falsafa*". In order to achieve that he stresses the importance of historical philosophemes being critically analysed with a sense of presentism and beyond the limitations of historicism. Studying *falsafa* should mean philosophizing, and it will be philosophizing only if the past (i.e. *falsafa*) acquires its meaning in our present-lived experiences. This is possible because "what survives as a trace from a past origin in our *life-world* belongs essentially not only to the context from which it originated, but also communicates constellations of meaning that inhere in our own world". This is the principle that has to be taken into account if a (philosophically) fruitful approach to *falsafa* is intended, because – as he puts it – "we are all marked by modernity, and not simply culturally, but more essentially […] even if we claim to be traditionalists". The question of real renewing *falsafa* as an inherited tradition cannot be readily undertaken along the pathways that have been followed hitherto by revivalists, reformists, activists, or intellectuals who viewed heritage as a source of inspiration for thought in the modern era", but by approaching it in a manner that could "inform our contemporary intellectual concerns". The universal value of the *falsafa* heritage should be deciphered through renewal of philosophizing *per se*, not through a philologist and historicist approach to it. This means that the traditional and the modern should be "co-entangled in thinking". El-Bizri sees several hindrances to the appliance of that principle: historical (i.e. positing *falsafa* as exclusively mediaeval), cultural (i.e. assuming that *falsafa* is oriental), textual/archival (i.e. studying texts exclusively as codices, manuscripts, epistles), and seeing the *falsafa* as "Islamized" (i.e. resisting the 'contamination' of traditionalist Islamic legacy by non-Islamic philosophical sources). In an approach to the *falsafa* legacy one should be aware that *falsafa* was animated by *tafalsuf*,

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i.e. that it is philosophizing. That is why the contemporary "epistemological, ontological, or logical trajectories" should be contexts for rethinking and fruitfully reviving ideas and leitmotifs of the historic legacy of *falsafa*. If such a heritage is still the source of cultural inspiration for a number of (Muslim) communities which in many ways still shapes some of their outlooks on the universe, their understanding of the truth, of the good, of beauty, of justice in governance, this intellectual heritage should not be approached trough "the narrow channels of academic expertise in documenting and curating". In a word, El-Bizri advocates critical engagement when analyzing Islamic philosophical legacy by looking for the "potential connection of their fundamental elements with contemporary concerns in thinking and practice". The author also exposes principles for comparative inquiries. When concerning oneself with the history of ideas in Islam, the linguistic and conceptual transmission from Greek into Arabic should be taken into account. Not only that, but the process of transmissions from Arabic into Latin as well. Such should be the procedure that defines the context for the comparative study of texts and of intercultural adaptations. For example, if the object of such a comparative study is Ibn Sina or Ibn Rushd, it should be compared with its Greek predecessors. But comparative inquiry has a role in the contemporary reading of *falsafa* as well. The author takes the example of Avicenna's analysis of the modalities of being in terms of necessity, contingency and impossibility. It can be approached by ignoring its roots in the emanation theory, or by ignoring the casual connections and movement from potentiality into actuality, or – as the author puts it – without being constrained by conceptual structures that belong to scholastic thought and mediaeval outlooks on reality; instead it can be "undertaken in terms of critically rethinking Heidegger's critique of metaphysics by studying the ontology of Avicennism, and surpassing both towards a new direction in ontological thinking that does not fetishize its sources". This is an example of what the contemporary re-thinking of *falsafa* according to El-Bizri should be. Reading a classical text is in itself interpreting. But, in reading, one accompanies the act of reading with one's prior knowledge, which means that the meaning of what is being read arises integrated within "our configurations of knowledge, comprehension, and lived experience". As the author says: "We are mortals who gather the fragments of worlds that passed, which leave their traces as inherent things in our own worldliness and destine them to posterity through the way we handle them in our being-in-the-world." What is important is that a text which we approach as legacy "is revealed as being meaningful to us", that "it speaks to our consciousness, to our epistemic preoccupations, cognitive frames of mind". That should be the real goal of approaching and studying *falsafa* in a fruitful way. El-Bizri's paper provides the reader with the principles and methods for achieving this goal.

Osman Bakar's paper ("Towards a New Science of Civilization: A Synthetic Study of the Philosophical Views of al-Farabi, Ibn Khaldun, Arnold Toynbee, and Samuel Huntington") presents the evolution of philosophical views of what is the 'science of civilization', in which evolution is reflected in what the author calls the 'epistemic status' of that science. He reminds the reader of the Aristotelian roots of that science, but the main focus of the paper is on the evolution of it in Islamic philosophy. In order to define what is the epistemic status of the science of civilization and what its evolution was, the author presents the views of Al-Fārābī, Ibn Ḫaldūn, Toynbee, and (very briefly) Huntington. It seems that the author is convinced that the title of the "father of the science of civilization" belongs to Al-Fārābī, with Ibn Ḫaldūn being the

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thinker who made another important step in refining and completing that science. Although it might be true that Al-Fārābī might have introduced the new term of *al-'ilm al-madanī*, it seems to us that an important dimension of defining both the concept and the science of civilization has been ignored, i.e. the Greek contribution, which is the basis of the concept itself. (Al-Fārābī's term *al-'ilm al-madanī* is not arbitrarily chosen; *madanī* comes from *madīna* which is Arabic for Greek *polis*. If we take this into account, together with Plato's *Politeia* and Aristotle's *Politika*, this has to raise the question as to whether there is an essential difference between the 'science of politics' and the 'science of civilization'?). But regardless of this, Osman Bakar's paper is a most valuable reminder of the importance of Al-Fārābī's and Ibn Ḫaldūn's thoughts in this field. Especially important is the author's stressing of Ibn Ḫaldūn's contribution, which is not a contribution among contributions, but an essential innovation on how to conceive the concept of civilization and laying the basis for a new, modern view on human society and civilization, for Ibn Ḫaldūn's concept no longer has much in common with its Greek foundations. One is tempted to say that his concept pertains much more to sociology *ante litteram*, while both the Greek and Al-Fārābī's concepts still pertain to philosophy. Al-Fārābī's importance, on which the author insists with reason, is in that he laid the basis for Ibn Ḫaldūn's later creative contribution, which shows the continuity of Islamic thought in that regard. So one would be right to say, what the author does not say but implies: without Al-Fārābī, there would not have been Ibn Ḫaldūn, and without Ibn Ḫaldūn there would not have been further development of the science of civilization. Be this as it may, Muslim Peripatetic philosophers were not merely transmitters of Greek thought; they provided an essential contribution to its further development. The author rightly notices that Al-Fārābī played an important role in refining the Aristotelian definition of science and in defining the epistemological structure of a true science, although we could say that it is questionable whether Farabian contribution really was "epistemologically comprehensive and far-reaching enough as to be unsurpassed by the subject matter of Ibn Ḫaldūn's *'ilm al-'umrān*". Ibn Ḫaldūn's claim that he invented a new science, which he himself calls *'ilm al-'umrān*, testifies that he is aware of the novelty of the object of this science, and it is precisely for that reason that he gives it a new name. If it is right to say that Al-Fārābī's epistemological contribution is broad enough to comprehend the further development of the concept of *'ilm al-madanī*, it is also right to say that Ibn Ḫaldūn's 'new science' transcends the boundaries of Al-Fārābī's concept by taking into account – as the author rightly stresses – what Al-Fārābī "neglected", i.e. the "physical, demographic, and historical dimensions of human social organization". That is why he says that the object of his science is *'umrān*. As the author reminds us, it is in light of the ideas conveyed by the term *'umrān* that Ibn Ḫaldūn "was able to speak of civilizational development and progress", of "two types of civilization". "The topics covered under the subject matter of Ibn Khaldun's science of *'umrān* are far more numerous and detailed" because his subject matter is no longer theoretical, as Al-Fārābī's was. The fundamental assumptions of his new science are not based on the Farabian concept and doctrine of happiness, which – the author rightly says – "properly belongs to metaphysical or spiritual anthropology". It is because of this that the goal of Ibn Ḫaldūn's science is "a deep knowledge of human social organization", and it is because of this that he "provided a major contribution to this body of knowledge, improving vastly on the knowledge contributed by al-Farabi and his successors in the Islamic philosophical tradition". After masterly presenting the essential overview of the development of

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the 'science of civilization' within Islamic philosophical tradition, the author proceeds to presenting modern and contemporary contributions, reminding that Arnold Toynbee considered Ibn Ḫaldūn's philosophy of history and science of sociology "unsurpassed until modern times", from the point of view of "epistemic concern and depths of analysis". Toynbee's work *A Study of History* does not extend beyond the scope that was outlined by Ibn Ḫaldūn; Bakar sees his contribution in the development of a new branch of the science of civilization, i.e. the study of civilizational diversity and comparative civilization. While Ibn Ḫaldūn studied only one civilization – the Islamic one – the work of Western archaeologists and orientalists made it possible for Toynbee to take into account a great number of human civilizations, bringing their plurality and diversity into the focus of science. This is a theme – stresses the author of the paper – which "seems to be gaining more attention from contemporary scholars", including Samuel Huntington (who is another scholar taken into account by the author in reviewing the development of the science of civilization). An important remark regarding Huntington's contribution is that he "approaches the study of this theme on the basis of the contemporary global political configurations". This is the reason why his contribution could be regarded as controversial. His *Clash of Civilizations* pretends to afford an insight into what he calls the "global politics of civilizations", referring mainly "to the growing civilizational rivalry during the last several decades", speculating that this rivalry could bring about a major clash of civilizations. Although one might be disappointed that the author of the paper does not pay more critical attention based on an analysis of Huntington's work, his stressing that "inter-civilizational relations and politics need not be viewed only from the perspective of conflicts […] since there are deeper reasons why we need to focus on ethics in the politics of civilization" is very important. There is a need to further refine and strengthen the political dimension of human civilization, and Osman Bakar sees the *raison d'être* of the science of civilization in helping to secure "mutual cooperation among human groups" for the sake of the "common good and the realization of higher purposes of human life".

Massimo Campanini, in his paper "Ontology of Intellect: The Happiness of Thinking in Averroës and Giordano Bruno", discusses the political dimension of Averroës's and Bruno's understanding of the gnoseological process seen as the process of realizing man's happiness. The paper takes "for granted" Bruno's familiarity with Averroës's work (at least *Destructio destructionis*), and the author looks for – and finds – theoretical parallelism in the thought of Averroës and Bruno in relation to the political dimension of philosophical cognizance. The author's analysis of Averroës's theory of intellection as depending on contact (or conjunction) with the 'Active Intellect' as the lowest of celestial Intellects that proceed from the God as the First Mover or the First Principle is based on traditionally established interpretations of Averroës's doctrine. Regardless of the possible questioning of those interpretations (see, for example, Daniel Bučan's paper on the issue of 'Active Intellect' in this volume), the author's point is that Averroës (in his commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*) stresses that speculative knowledge is not only man's ultimate perfection but is his ultimate happiness as well. For Campanini the interest of this assertion of Averroës lays in its having gnoseological, theological and political implications. The highest form of knowledge – which, according to Averroës, is man's ultimate happiness, and man's happiness is the main goal of the State – belongs to the philosopher; that is why the right (or even the duty) to rule the State, or at least to advise the ruler, belongs to

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the philosopher. Stressing that the political commitment of Averroës "runs throughout his work", Campanini points out the example of his Middle Commentary on Plato's *Republic*, seeing in it "a plaidoyer for an Islamic government inspired by philosophy". The author of the paper does not forget Averroës's explanations of another – the highest and ultimate – form of happiness, which is the soul's empyrean bliss. And the prerequisite for this happiness (in both its forms, mundane and empyrean), according to Averroës, is reaching the highest form of knowledge, which is realized only through contact or conjunction with the 'Active Intellect'. The author concludes the first part of the paper, the part dedicated to Averroës, by stressing once more that the happiness of thinking has a political outcome, which in Averroës implies the philosopher's right and duty to rule, or at least to counsel the ruler. In the second part of the paper the author turns to another great thinker who nurtured an elitist view of philosophy, in which he is, according to the author, akin to Averroës. Giordano Bruno says that philosophy "opens the senses, contents the spirit, magnifies the intellect and brings the man to the real bliss which he can have as man", and intellectual perfection transforms morality and makes possible the conquest of infinity. The elitist element of Bruno's understanding of philosophy is his conviction (parallel to Averroës's) that only rare individuals are given the gift of being capable of philosophical thinking and reaching the highest, 'divine' level of knowledge. On the other hand, the political dimension of his understanding of philosophy can be guessed from his idea of "furioso". The philosopher who passionately strives to connect and to unite himself with the divine, with the supreme Intellect, in Bruno's eyes, is a "furioso" whose intellectual power realizes the conjunction with God – the intellect becomes God and God becomes intellect. Campanini points out that Bruno is aware of his indebtedness to Averroës, which is expressly stated: "It seems to me that Peripatetic philosophers (as Averroës explained) mean this when they say that ultimate happiness consists in perfection through speculative knowledge." Campanini reminds the reader within this Averroist framework that Bruno adds a genuinely political factor: his "furioso" has to be – is – ready to sacrifice his own life standing by his truth: when he himself was asked to renounce his ideas or die, he chose death. So, although the political dimension of philosophy in Averroës and Bruno might differ in terms of explicitness and elaboration, there cannot be any doubt that this dimension is obvious to both of them, that both of them are aware of it. Campanini's merit is his pointing this out for us. Concluding his paper, Campanini professes his own belief: "The possibility of achieving happiness through thinking gives concreteness and nobility to philosophy." One might say that this is true; there is a great number of examples of philosophical texts throughout the history of philosophy that testify to it. Campanini's point in this paper is that Averroës and Bruno, although belonging to different epochs and intellectual frameworks, are thinkers who bear witness not only to the intellectual, but also to the political value of philosophical thinking, and – in doing so – are examples that confirm Campanini's own belief as to the "concreteness and nobility" of philosophy.

The first paper by **Daniel Bučan** in this volume, "'Active Intellect' in Avempace and Averroës: An Interpretative Issue", makes the case for an interpretation of the notion of 'Active Intellect' as discussed in Avempace's *Risāla iṭṭiṣāl al-'aql bi-l-insān* and Averroës' *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect*. The author's main argument is that the explanation of the 'Active Intellect' introduced by the two philosophers from the Western

flank of Islamdom radically differs from the explanations produced by their counterparts in the Eastern flank of the Islamic world, including Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. The author maintains that while the latter group of philosophers were of the view that the Active Intellect belongs to the celestial order and its conjunction with man's Acquired Intellect resembles a mystical unification, the former group, while rejecting the mystical interpretation, were arguing that the Active Intellect is, in modern parlance, 'an emergent property' which emerges from within the sublunary realm and is not part of the supra-lunar sphere. As for a critical analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, the author, at least in the case of Ibn Bajjah, advocates a thesis which is not shared by the majority of students of Islamic philosophy, save Charles Genequand, whose work the author cites favourably. However, despite this fact, the author himself admits that to further corroborate Genequand's view, more substantive arguments are needed, and the only argument which he produces is a discussion based on the meaning of the word *'aql*, according to S. M. Afnan's dictionary of philosophical terms. But it seems to validate the claim made in the paper, which, by the way, appears to be plausible, but the author needs to develop more substantive arguments based on Avempace's own works. The author's discussion of Ibn Rushd's view is more convincing. Moreover, in the case of Ibn Rushd, contrary to the case of Ibn Bajjah, there are more writers who subscribe to the thesis developed by the author. An interesting case in point is Derek Gatherer's "Meme Pools, World 3, and Averroës's Vision of Immortality" (*Zygon*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 1998, pp. 203–219) where the author likens Ibn Rushd's notion of 'Active Intellect' to Karl Popper's notion of 'World 3', the objective world which has emerged as a result of interaction between individuals' cognitive-emotive apparatuses (World 2) with physical reality (World 1). Bučan's paper deals with an interesting issue which needs to be further explored, although it is a welcome intervention.

Snježana Veljačić-Akpınar's second paper in this volume is dedicated to a search for the ideas that in Islam reflect what the author calls 'skepticism'. The author's search – not without, although not explicitly expressed, reasons – gives the reader an insight into motives and methods of the greatest seeker for certain and indubitable knowledge in Islam. What is essential for Al-Ġazālī's "case" is that his skepticism, deeply rooted in his mentality of the seeker for the truth, led him to the Islamic version of mysticism – Sufism. Although – as the author puts it – Sufism "became the last hope for Al-Ghazali", although he accepted the Sufi "motto" that to attain real cognizance moral transformation is needed (and accordingly became, for a period in his life, a real ascetic), his personal version of Sufism is characterized – in the author's words – by a particular "synthesis of logic and ethics". For Al-Ġazālī, ethics means defining the moral constitution of the soul and the method of controlling it. His acceptance of Sufism did not mean giving up rational methods, which he still saw as a means useful for reaching "clear discernible perception". His work, entitled *The Just Balance*, is dedicated to "methods for removing disagreement", whose aim, as the author of the paper stresses, was to remove dogmatism from theological discourse. Owing to Al-Ġazālī himself, Sufism – before him generally criticized for alleged unorthodoxy – found its recognized place within Islam, and its insistence on immediate spiritual experience was recognized as an acceptable kind of corrective measure, both against dogmatism and against a "magical" approach to mysticism. Through his balanced understanding of both Sufism and orthodoxy, dogmatic theology was put "in its right place". As he himself says (in *Kitāb al-'ilm*), theology should be seen

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as "one of the disciplines that are needed […] only to safeguard the hearts of the common people as it has become necessary to hire an escort along the pilgrimage route", and according to this understanding, the theologian has to "know the limits of his position". Veljačić-Akpınar's paper, in spite of its very basic character, possesses the value of presenting – in a short and summarizing way – the essence of Al-Ġazālī's position within Islam.

Daniel Bučan, in his second paper in this volume, "Thinkable and Unthinkable", discussing the division of the Being, reminds us of Plato's *khōrismos* (separation, which characterizes Platonic philosophy, a clear and distinct systematization in the distinction between 'sensible' and 'intelligible': the first one, which is second-hand reality, a mixture of being and non-being condemned to merely "becoming", the object of opinion, and the second one, which enjoys absolute being and, in consequence, is totally knowable). Drawing this parallel with the division of Being as 'perceivable' and 'thinkable', Bučan underlines *aisthēsis* as an opposite of intellection (*noēsis*), understanding and pure thought, as well as a dimension of the unthinkable whose best proponents were Sufis and among them Abū Hāmid Al-Ġazālī. In his short paper on the unidimensionality and pluridimensionality of the Being (where the very first type of perception grasps individual and the second one the universal in individual), the author alludes to the mentioned thinker who implies the division of the Being in a sensible dimension and the thinkable one in his doctrine of *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism). (Here one should mention Mahmoud Zakzouk's amazing comparative study *Al-Ghazalis Philosophie im Vergleich mit Descartes*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 1992, which was translated into Bosnian by Sulejman Bosto, a professor at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo: *Ghazalijeva filozofija u usporedbi sa Descartesom*, El-Kalem, Sarajevo 2000. This work can be helpful in understanding Al-Ġazālī's epistemology.) In point of fact, Bučan draws a comparison between Al-Ġazālī and Plato as comparable thinkers in this regard: the most important for both is the *un-thinkable, the highest*. Some Islamic mystics, including Al-Ġazālī himself, interpret this in a manner that is in complete accord with Buddhist doctrine, as well as Hinduism, where the three spiritual ways are known as the three *mârgas*: *karma-mârga* ("the way of works"), *bhakti-mârga* ("the way of devotion"), and *jñâna-mârga* ("the way of knowledge or gnosis"). A follower of the way of *bhakti* is known as a *bhakta* (or devotee), and a follower of the way of *jñâna* is known as a *jñânin* (or gnostic). The three *mârgas* broadly correspond to the three fundamental degrees or stations of Sufism: *makhâfa* ("Fear of God"), *mahabba* ("Love of God"), and *maʿrifa* ("Knowledge of God"). It is interesting to note that Christian mysticism has been characterized by the "way of love", but those who have manifested the "way of knowledge" include such great figures as Dionysius the Areopagite, Meister Eckhart, and Angelus Silesius. According to the author, both Plato and Al-Ġazālī state that "there is no way of putting it in words" or that mystic experience reveals things that cannot be "related in a full way". Actually, both of them testify to the un-thinkable dimension of the Being, testify that besides *khōrismos* that separates the sensible from the thinkable there is *khōrismos* that separates the thinkable from the unthinkable, from that which can be only experienced spiritually, and this is not irrational but knowledge of a supra-rational character.

Mehdi Aminrazavi, in his paper "A Discourse on the Soul in Later Islamic Philosophy", points out the process of shift from doctrines of the soul which followed and were based on Greek philosophic doctrine of the soul to doctrines that could be defined as esoteric and gnostic. The question of the soul

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is one of the philosophically most intriguing issues; it could be said that the complex of questions pertaining to the soul and different dimensions of that question have remained one of the most interesting throughout the general history of philosophy. This author has represented the changes in the theory of the soul in Islamic philosophy in the most adequate and congruous way, dedicating his interest mostly to the doctrines of the "later" Islamic philosophy, which is especially interesting. The changes testify to a specific current of philosophic thought for which the subject of the soul is of primary interest, reflecting the very essence of this current. The author begins by reminding the readers of the Qur'ānic concept of the soul, stressing the fact that in the later Islamic philosophical tradition the concept of the soul, understood within the modern philosophical context, as well as the concept of the body as opposed to the soul in the Cartesian dualistic tradition, does not exist. The concept of the soul in Islamic philosophical tradition is, according to the author, based on the Qur'ānic concept of *rūḥ* (= spirit). Following that, the paper briefly reviews the two first stages of evolution of the concept: the theological (*kalām*) stage and the philosophical (*maššā'ī* or Peripatetic) stage, and then focuses on the next two stages: the so-called illuminationist (*išrāqī*) stage and the gnostic (*'irfān*) stage. After presenting the first two stages in a very condensed way, the author shifts to a more detailed presentation of the later development of the concept of soul. This presentation begins by stressing that what the author calls "mystical transformation" of the concept of the soul begins with the later works of Ibn Sīnā. His basically Aristotelian understanding of the soul was intrinsically connected with his cosmology of Neoplatonic inspiration (based on the ideas of a text the Arabs knew as *Theology of Aristotle*, which actually was a paraphrase of Plotinus's *Enneads*). His Neoplatonic cosmology in a way "prepared" his more esoteric concept of the soul, expressed in some of his later works, including the *Poem of the Soul*. Stressing that Ibn Sīnā's "esoteric understanding of the soul" is best seen in that poem, the author cites the final part of it. Still, it should be said that Ibn Sīnā's understanding of the soul is still deeply permeated by the idea of the body – soul opposition, which is still seen in the cited poem. The result of theological criticism of the philosophical (Greek) conception of the soul, especially of the ideas of Al-Ġazālī, expounded in his work *The Niche of Light*, was the tendency that resulted in the mystical and gnostic view of the soul gaining more and more recognition. The founder of the so-called School of Illumination, Šihābuddīn Suhrawardī, marks the next stage. In the framework of his "Philosophy of Illumination" (*Ḥikmat al-'išrāq*) the soul is seen as being (in the ontological sense) more or less that what it can (and should) be: it can be more or less luminous, depending on how far it has ascended from the darkness of the body towards the light of its divine essence. Different ontological statuses of the soul connected with the idea of its ascending towards its divine origin, are directly connected also with the idea of mystical love. Ġiyāṯuddīn Manṣūr Daštakī's major work, *The Stations of the Gnostics* (*Maqāmāt al-'ārifīn*) speaks of the soul's ascendance to the Divine throne, the goal being the annihilation of the self in God. The mover that puts the soul on this journey, whose goal is unification with God and subsistence in God, is love. A new stage of the philosophico-gnostic view on the soul is epitomized in another great representative of the later Islamic philosophy – Mullā Ṣadrā. In his epistemic theory (based on Aristotelianism) known as "unification of intellector and intellected" (which is also the title of one of his works) – when the soul as the knower reflects upon God, they become one and the same. The evolution of the soul, according to Mullā Ṣadrā, is both spiritual and ontological. This evolution is one of the examples of his

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theory of 'substantial motion' in which a substance is subject to ontological changes: there are changes that overtake not only the accidents of a substance, but also the substance itself. When a soul changes from being less perfect to being perfect, it is going through such a substantial change. The "tenor" of Aminrazavi's paper is evolution which began with Al-Ġazālī and resulted in gnostic theories of the soul. In the final part of the paper the author points out that Islamic philosophy, being heavily influenced by the "transcendent philosophy" of Mullā Ṣadrā, reflects this influence of the gnostic brand up to the present time. The review of the evolution of understanding of the soul presented in the paper allows us to see something which is not expressly said – that the issue of the soul really is one of the central issues of Islamic philosophy, because there is no relevant Muslim thinker who has not tackled this issue, regardless of the school of thought to which he belongs. It is not by accident that one of the greatest, Ibn Sīnā, who – according to the author of this paper and according to many others – belonged both to the school of *mašši'īn* and to the so-called *falsafa mašriqiyya*, began his philosophical career with a treaty on the soul, and ended his philosophical career with another treaty on the soul; this fact testifies that for him the issue of the soul was the most important philosophical issue. Ibn Sīnā's universally recognized greatness makes him a personification of Islamic philosophy of sorts.

Ibn al-'Arabī, the great Andalusian mystic, can be both a fascinating and a frustrating subject of scientific research. **Sara Sviri** starts her paper ("Seeing with Three Eyes: Ibn al-'Arabī's *barzakh* and the Contemporary World Situation") by stressing the frustrating dimension of her endeavour to understand and to interpret Ibn al-'Arabī's concept of *barzakh*, his 'third principle' which opposes the essential binary structure of our cognitive faculties by denying it. The frustration stems from the unavoidable binary character of all our insights, including scientific ones, and from the question: Is scholarly (scientific) hermeneutics suitable to such a task? However, at the end, as the reader will see, there is a lesson that will be the fruit of the endeavour of trying to grasp the mystery of *barzakh* – the stage between this world and the hereafter. Sviri begins by citing Ibn al-'Arabī's words in introducing the idea of *barzakh*: "The 'middle', that which separates between two sides and makes them distinguished from one another, is more hidden than they are […]. We know that there is a separating line there, but the eye does not perceive it; the intellect acknowledges it, though it does not conceive of what it is." In so doing, he states that what is "more hidden" (more than the two different sides it divides) belongs to the dimension of the unseen, to that which can be revealed only by imagination, because only imagination can account for something which is – as *barzakh* is – something which (having a name) has ontic existence and is, at the same time, something which is intelligible but of which real existence is denied (like, for example, an intelligible but not really existent dividing line between black and white, or sunlight and shadow). By attributing to the *barzakh* such contradictory attributes (of existing and at the same time non-existing) Ibn al-'Arabī – says Sviri – "takes us to the field of paradox and apophasis", i.e. to the sphere of 'unsaying', but still, says she, we can ask how to see and how to know what is between two opposites, which is the 'third', but which is not observable by our binary perception. We can ask is there anything beyond our binary perception and, if so, what is it? There are more questions like: Do separate identities of the two opposites merge and annihilate in this unobservable dividing the 'third' which is *barzakh*, or do their ontological identities remain intact? Sviri concludes that Ibn al-'Arabī en-

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courages the pondering of these questions, which seem unsolvable for binary cognition. He says that the intellect acknowledges it, although not conceiving what it is exactly, and Sviri concludes that he suggests that intellect "can grasp something of this tertian universe, at least the enigma behind our existential-epistemological grasp of reality". The author continues along these lines and asks whether *barzakh* (being a *mağma'*, i.e. a 'place' of juncture or union) is a 'coincidence of opposites', *coincidentia oppositorum*. She reminds that Ibn al-'Arabī's writing *ğam'* and its antonym *farq* are key concepts for his understanding of the relationship between God and Creation – their juxtaposition indicates the *coincidentia oppositorum*, to which testifies his poetic verse in *Futūḥāt*: "the essence of *jam'* is the essence of *farq* look / in your essence (also: with your eye) for togetherness (*ijtimā'*) in separation (*iftirāq*)". She also reminds that Ibn al-'Arabī often cites a Sufi saying which states that the question "By what means have you known God?" is best answered if the one asked says "God is only known by bringing together the opposites". Asking how does Ibn al-'Arabī perceive this "coincidence", how does he perceive the nature of reality in the realm of *barzakh*, and what happens to the differentiated identities which are held together, she seeks help in the title of the twenty-fourth chapter of *Futūḥāt*, which says that it concerns "the Knowledge that derives from the Ontological Sciences and the Wonders that it contains". There she finds – and cites – a passage that asserts the singular individuality and particularity of every existing thing, that God creates every single thing as unique, which means that nothing really merges with anything in a manner that would bring about it losing its pre-ordained individual identity. But despite of this lasting individual identity, all things are embraced by God. In this embracement God becomes known because each and every thing has its place in the unity of opposites. The *coincidentia oppositorum* is the coexisting of everything that is, and that – says Sviri – is the paradigm which "allows for wonders and possibilities beyond the grasp of binary thought". The author of the paper finally stresses that the ethical implications of this vision are far-reaching, because "ours is a world of binary thinking, of dichotomies, polarization, opposing opinions and antagonistic value-systems". In such a world "'right' is contrary to 'wrong', 'good' contrary to 'bad', 'just' contrary to 'unjust', 'sacred' to 'profane'". Our culture – in the name of 'identities', of values, ideologies, and dogmas – is a "culture of blame, self-righteousness and victimhood". Ibn al-'Arabī teaches us that beyond our cultural, religious, moral and political viewpoints there is a larger and wider perspective, a "land of marvels" where "the large can mount the small and the broad the narrow without the broad becoming narrow or the narrow broad". It is a marvellous lesson we should all learn.

The author of "The Concept of God's Unity in the *Kitāb farāʾid al-fawāʾid fī uṣūl ad-dīn wa-l-ʿaqāʾid* by ʿAḫdīšūʿ bar Brīḫā", **Željko Paša**, states the goal of his paper as "firstly to present the still little known ʿAḫdīšūʿ's Arabic work *Kitāb farāʾid al-fawāʾid*; secondly, to expose its teaching on the Oneness of God and, finally, to analyse its doctrine on the Threeness of God exposed in the dialogue with Islam". 'Abdīšūʿ's work, to this day, "is one example of the exposition of Christian teaching on the Trinity in a dialogue with Islam", which is a testimony of the need of Christians to defend the doctrine of God's Oneness in Threeness against accusations for polytheism within the new cultural (and religious) context in which they found themselves under Islamic rule. The author proceeds, firstly, by presenting 'Abdīšūʿ's work written in Arabic. As to whom the work was addressed, the author of the paper speculates that (basing this speculation on the fact that in 'Abdīšūʿ's work there are a number

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of citations from the Qur'ān, as well as typically Muslim expressions like *ahl al-kitāb* and *ahl ad-dīn* for the members of monotheist religious communities) that the addressee were the Muslim community and the Jews. 'Abdīšū' starts his defence of the Christian faith by saying that things in it which are condemned by Muslims (and Jews) are condemnable only for their (external) appearance. The author of the paper continues by characterizing the work under his consideration as a Christian dogmatic and apologetic work. It presents seven principles of Christian faith, which are later explained, defended and legitimized. Paša stresses that 'Abdīšū' chose principles that are common to all monotheistic religions. The first three principles (on Oneness of God) are such, except that the 'Abdīšū''s third principle contains the statement "and His Attributes of the Essence are three", which is condemnable from the Muslim point of view, and which is a specific Christian belief. He explains and affirms the principles of Oneness of God, the principle of the world being originated, the principle of the world having the Originator, the principle of the Originator of the world being One. He legitimizes these principles reminding the reader of the Muslim theological arguments which affirm the same principles and using, as his method of demonstration, deductive reasoning based on Aristotle's logic. The Creator of the universe, being the Being itself, existing by Himself, is a Substance existing in Himself – He is only one substance, but one substance having three Attributes. As the author of the paper states, this conclusion represents the introduction to discussing the issue of Trinity. In support of the doctrine of God's attributes, 'Abdīšū' uses the arguments of Muslim *kalām* theology and citations from the Qur'ān (attributes as God's beautiful names – *asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*), with the intention to confirm that Christians are not polytheistic. By citing the Qur'ānic attributes of God, he integrated them into his teaching on Trinity, practically using the Qur'ān as implicit confirmation of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. These attributes are attributes of the transcendence of God, attributes of the majesty and power of God, and so-called 'emphasized attributes' (which are typical of the Arabic style of Islam's revelation). Besides the attributes of essence, there are attributes of action, which are indicative of the relation to other essences: the attribute of the Creator calls for the necessity of creature, and the attribute of the Originator the necessity of originated. It is clear that ᶜAbdīšūᶜ "uses the theology of attributes, with strong Qur'ānic expressions and the Islamic terminology of the Philosophy of the Kalām", states the author of the paper, in order to make the idea of the Trinity understandable – and, thereby, more acceptable to Muslims and Jews. However, 'Abdīšū' recognizes that, in order to understand the essence of God, one should see God's essence as deprived of all attributes: this essence is substance subsisting by itself, not by another. Seen in the light of the three properties of the Essence which is God – Eternal in essence, Wise in essence, and Living by essence – the God as One and Unique essence manifests Himself only by his own "properties" as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Three essential attributes of God – necessity of existence, wisdom, and life – are recognized by Muslims: they call God *al-qadīm bi-ḏ-ḏāt* (= Eternal by essence, by itself) hence of necessary existence, *al-ḥakīm bi-ḏ-ḏāt* (= Wise by essence, by itself), *al-ḥayy bi-ḏ-ḏāt* (= Living by essence, by itself). 'Abdīšū' calls each one of these essential attributes *qnoma* (which stands for Arabic *uqnūm*, i.e. for Greek *hypostasis*) and defines *qnoma* as "the receiving [of] an Essential Attribute along with the One represented, the Self-Existing". Based on this definition, it can be said that "it is permissible for us to say that the Creator […] is One substance [and] Three Qnome", because *qnoma* is nothing else but partaking (as an eternal process without

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beginning and without end) in the Essence. Christians have a name of their own for each hypostasis. They are: the Father – the Eternal in essence (*al-qadīm bi-ḏ-ḏāt*), the Son – Wise in essence (*al-ḥakīm bi-ḏ-ḏāt*), and the Holy Spirit – Living in essence (*al-ḥayy bi-ḏ-ḏāt*). The author of the paper stresses in the conclusion of the paper ʿAbdīšūʿ's confidence in the human intellect, because of which he uses logical reasoning in defending and legitimizing the Christian doctrine of Trinity, expecting the addressees of his work to accept his logical argumentation. A specific value of Paša's paper is that the author – in a very thorough and knowledgeable way – demonstrates ʿAbdīšūʿ's dialogical mastery, which consists especially in using (as indirect arguments and proofs) postulates of Muslim theology and citations from the Qurʾān. Such a method is the best testimony of what is the optimal way of dialogue between different cultures, religions and traditions – use of shared values and ideas as a basis for discussing the differences. ʿAbdīšūʿ's work is an example of very artful implementation of such a method in a mediaeval multicultural context.

Alexander N. Chumakov starts his first paper in this volume, "Culture in the Global World and Opportunities for Dialogue", by stating that culture penetrates all spheres of the material and spiritual life of a society. He stresses this because many problems that have international or even global character are connected with culture. This starting position makes it possible for the author to discuss, in a relevant way, the opportunities for dialogue in the contemporary world whose main characteristic is globalism. The process of globalization itself is burdened by many problems that are of cultural character. That is why dialogue and mutual understanding between different cultures – as well as between different sub-cultures within a culture – are of crucial importance. Cultural differences, differences of value-systems of the different and differences of socio-cultural patterns are (or easily become) factors of instability and even conflicts. The author reminds the reader of "globalization" *ante litteram*, showing that even in the era of great geographic discoveries cultural exchange had important consequences: communication and exchange of ideas and their spreading which gives them a universal dimension. In that light, the author reminds of different phenomena throughout centuries of the history of humanity which had the potential of imposing global universal trends and patterns of social behaviour. However, at the same time he also stresses that not all borrowed or accepted "cultural" patterns (or technological patterns that have cultural potential) are positive as such. Borrowing in his argumentation the arguments of Ivan A. Il'in, with regard to Russian culture, the author stresses that not all cultural (or technological) loans are creative; there are those which engender social strains and inspire critical evaluation. Still, the process of globalization is almost an unstoppable force. In illustrating such a view the author takes the example of China. He reminds the reader of how the Chinese emperor "less than 200 years ago" rejected the British overture and offers saying that China "has everything" and that Chinese "don't need the goods of your country", while today's China is open to the world and is a country that takes an active part in the process of globalization. One of the author's valuable theses is that the process of globalization has – generally speaking – two different dimensions: imposing certain values as universal and accepted as such, on the one hand, and instances of conflict, on the other. However – as Chumakov puts it – "relations of dialogue and conflict between various cultures are their natural attributes and even needful forms of their existence, like, for example, political struggle and political agreements being an inseparable part of any political system". In addition, he argues that

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in some instances globalization made regional problems global. He is also speaking of what he calls "modern contradictions", i.e. the clash of two opposite processes – "the integration process, including the area of culture, and the wish for national, local cultures to defend their originality and independence". The author's view is that we should expect increasing confrontation in the foreseeable future. At the same time, he reminds us that cultures that remain isolated, as well as those that oppress multiculturalism, are prone to stagnation and eventually degrade. Arguing that dialogue is the only efficient means to solving problems of the modern world which causes international conflicts or social problems, Chumakov stresses the fact that such a view is still not deeply rooted in the practising of international relations and policies. The solution, in his view, is to replace the power of force with the power of spirit, which requires "a certain level of development of spiritual and material culture". Although one could say that this is a too general conclusion, it is certainly based on a truthful diagnosis, i.e. the statement that "the age of globalization has caused a problem for dialogue having no alternative". Finally, it should be said that his theses are based on a number of relevant examples from the contemporary history of mankind, which gives to these theses – and to the final conclusion, howsoever general – credibility and merit.

The starting point of **Alexander N. Chumakov**'s second paper in this volume, "Philosophy as a Tool of Achieving the Worthy Life", is the denial of (Vattimo's and Swassjan's) idea of the end of philosophy, and – more important – (Habermas's and Rorty's) idea of the unquestionable value of philosophy, which means that it can have "a growing role under modern circumstances". Philosophy's importance lays in its power to reflect human essentiality and to define the human being as a being that has the power of critical thinking, doubting, and questioning. The author sees formulating and asking questions as an essential function of philosophy; this is its driving force. Philosophy addresses a limitless spectrum of problems and so it transcends the boundaries of existing knowledge. Its value stems from its self-sufficiency and from its rejecting absolute authorities. It does not deal – argues the author – with the truth, but with the truths of this or that philosopher, i.e. with subjective certainty that the philosopher's vision of essence of things is adequate. Questioning whether we need philosophy in our age of "high speed and technology", the author states that such questions are answered by life itself, which means that modern man encounters numerous "philosophical problems", some of which are new, i.e. never existed before. The world of today is "a single holistic system", which is a new quality and which "engenders questions of sustainable socio-economic development and harmonious relations between society and nature" and establishes "humane, good neighbourly relations between separate peoples". Along with "eternal philosophical themes" these questions take the most important place on the scene of modern philosophical studies. Based on this insight, the author stresses that now not only separate peoples, but the world community as a whole needs philosophy. Nevertheless, "we have no single vision of the subject of philosophy" and there is no certain answer to the question whether philosophy can "purposefully influence social development". If so, the question is in which way it can do this. For this situation the author has an allegoric image: philosophy "does not fit the Procrustean bed of exact and complete knowledge". Although the fact that philosophy is not a holistic teaching and does not have a single methodology and common laws can seem an essential shortage, the author stresses that this is also philosophy's greatest advantage, because, when we are confronted with

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complicated systems and when we have search resolutions for complex inter-disciplinary problems, rethinking such problems from the point of view of philosophy is essentially valuable. Philosophy addresses problems with much more freedom for interpreting the facts, widening the horizon of our vision of the problem and "initiates new, unusual approaches". The author proceeds further by reminding us of the difference between culture and civilization and defining their role in the shaping of separate nations and the world as a whole. Peoples are different because of their cultures; cultures divide peoples. On the one hand, being a unifying basis for separate communities "is a necessary condition for the existence of social life"; on the other hand, culture is what differentiates and divides peoples. However, different peoples develop common forms of organization of social life and civilization is reflected in these forms. Therefore, civilization "emerges as the means of smoothing cultural diversity" and is a "unifying factor of different countries and peoples". One might say that the world of today, representing "a single holistic system", is, in fact, global civilization. Although different peoples enter the process of civilizational change differently and with different speed, "the essence of global civilization does not change". Its basic contours were formed by the end of the twentieth century and with universal and mass culture, engendered by globalization, it confronts us today with "a single all-human cultural-cum-civilizational system". The result is that in the world of today we are faced with two opposed forces: the centrifugal force based in culture and the centripetal one conditioned by civilization. There is no doubt that this is a complicated issue. Be that as it may, as the author stresses, "it is not possible to acknowledge this reality and build an adequate global world outlook without philosophy". After having read Chumakov's paper, one is tempted to say: the world is not subject to merely man's will to change it; rather only changed man can change the world; and philosophy is the main means to changing man. Is this not what Socrates and his moral philosophy taught us?

Nevad Kahteran's paper should be viewed as a manifesto. It is a paper that not only gives general insight into what has been achieved within the field of the dialogue mentioned in the paper's title ("Recognizing a Model of Postmodern Pluralism through Looking at Islam from the Standpoint of Far Eastern Traditions: A Dialogue between Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism"), but it also has the value of a programmatic address – or an appeal – to the academic world of Eastern studies. This appeal is due to a situation that the author presents in a single but weighty sentence: "For far too long have the philosophical traditions of the East […] found themselves excluded from the mainstream of philosophy." However, the possible benefit of the dialogue between philosophies which developed within different cultures goes beyond the borders of academic scholarship, because – as the author stresses – "the dialogue of various cultures and traditions in the global world becomes a prerequisite for their survival and that of the world community". With regards to the academic world, "the history of world philosophy can no longer ignore its Eastern component", although "the treatment of these Eastern traditions has yet to emerge from the very cramped antechamber to which it is still, all too often, confined". The author's deep belief is that this should no longer be the case, so that he presents a number of examples in this paper which testify, not only to the possibility, but also to the benefits that a comparative inquiry into different philosophical (and cultural) traditions brings. Taking the example of the Islamic tradition (both culturally and philosophically) into consideration, the author first suggests the questions we need to ask ourselves in this regard. These questions are: What constitutes the substantiality and

value of Islamic philosophical discourse? What is the standard mode of this discourse? What became of visions of life and reality that can even now be discerned as pluralistic in the Islamic legacy? Has the Islamic philosophical paradigm really lost its vitality and vision? These questions are important because in asking them we can learn how to reconcile new contradictions, and – at the same time – we "raise questions concerning the transformation of our Muslim identity and vision towards a global understanding of the human race and the world as a whole". Reminding the reader that, for example, Islam developed its own ways of approaching Indian tradition, the author takes Al-Bīrūnī's book *Tarīkh al-Hind* as an example of the adoption of a method which presents all the rudiments of modern principles of religious studies. There are, of course, many modern authors (such as Stoddart, Guénon, Pallis, and Coomaraswamy) who, being so-called "perennial thinkers", have understood that there is a "common ground" shared by different traditions. The author of the paper values the work of contemporary authors, who – like F. Mujtabi and Reza-Shah Kazemi – look into cultural diversity of Indian society and Hindu/Muslim cultural relations, or seek common ground between Islam and Buddhism. All such endeavours rediscover a truth that has been almost forgotten within Islam today, namely, that, as the author of the paper states, "Islam is definitely […] a bridge between Asian truths hidden in the treasures of Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Hinduism, on the one hand, and the truths in the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism and Christianity". By regaining cognizance of this, the universalism of the Islamic model of thinking can be incorporated within the world's philosophical heritage on an equal footing with other great legacies. The same fruits are afforded by insight into the Chinese-Islamic encounter through philosophy and religion. Examples of this are given by the author's presentation of the contribution of Chinese Muslim authors in this field. The author also mentions his own initiative for establishing *A Platform for Islamic-Confucian-Daoist dialogue in the Balkans* as a project aimed at broadening philosophical horizons in the Balkans through the cooperation of philosophers and other scholars from former Yugoslavia and those from China. This is an initiative that shows appreciation for what S. H. Nasr said about Bosnia in the best way; namely, that Bosnia, with its Islamic legacy and living Islamic culture, can play an important role as "a bridge between the Islamic World and the West […] provided it remains faithful to its own universal vision of Islam, threatened nowadays by forces both within and outside its borders". The author's personal "confession" is that the universalist perspective of Sufis in India and of the *Han Kitab* authors (i.e. Chinese Muslim authors) has helped him avoid falling prey to what he calls 'parochial philosophy'. Avoiding such "narrow-mindedness" is but one aspect of the benefit that comparative studies of different cultural traditions and philosophies can bring about. Of probably greater value is the benefit which goes beyond the personal dimension, one that could contribute to the bettering of today's ever more "smaller" but ever more "complicated" world.

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Aside from sixteen papers within the thematic block "Islamic and Comparative Philosophy", in the section "Notes and News" we also publish a review of the International Conference *Comparative Perspectives: Islam, Confucianism and Buddhism* (Ljubljana, December 11–13, 2015), written by Maja Veselič, because it is of great importance, especially for the region of Southeast Eu-

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rope, that Jana S. Rošker and Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik, sinologists at the Department of Asian Studies, University of Ljubljana, organized a conference dedicated to the comparisons and dialogues between three major Asian religions and/or philosophies – Islam, Confucianism, and Buddhism.

Finally, we publish five book reviews written by Nevad Kahteran: Ali Paya (ed.), *The Misty Land of Ideas and the Light of Dialogue* (2013); Oliver Leaman (ed.), *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy* (2015); Oliver Leaman, *The Qur'an: A Philosophical Guide* (2016); Snježana Veljačić-Akpınar, *Buddhist Meditations on Islamic Contemplative Paths* (2015); and Massimo Campanini, *Philosophical Perspectives on Modern Qur'ānic Exegesis* (2016). All of them we consider as extremely important contributions to the studies of Islamic and comparative philosophy.

Nevad Kahteran
Daniel Bučan