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Interpreting Mullā Ṣadrā on Man and the Origin of Thinking

Abstract

*This paper explores key aspects of Mullā Ṣadrā's understanding of man's being in the world, where the embryo of perception and thinking is said to emerge under the unique conditions of man as the articulate social being. The same being who can speak also speaks to himself and about himself. But since man's "true reality" finds its root in the divine knowing and being in a twofold existentiation, at the heart of his being in the world lies intellect by which he "returns" from materiality to his origin in the divine, where all knowing and being begin and end. The problem of knowing and being – also expressible in terms of the one and the many – dates back to the Presocratics. To situate Ṣadrā's understanding of it, other philosophers are discussed, including Kant, the rationale of whose arguments surrounding the "I" were noted in Heidegger's critique. This is not primarily an epistemological problem for Islamicate philosophy or bereft of wider interest in the social animal called "man" (*insān*).*

Keywords

Mullā Ṣadrā, Martin Heidegger, Immanuel Kant, Qūnawī, Abū Naṣr al Fārābī, Hadi Sabzavari, Ibn ʿArabi, Shahāb ad-Dīn" Suhrawardī, metaphysics, philosophy of language

Introduction

Man is central to the philosophy of being, which Ṣadrā[1] expounded with great originality but also in keeping with the larger tradition. This paper explores the idea of man's being in the world according to which Ṣadrā sees the embryo of thinking – distinct from "active intellect" – emerging under the unique condition of man as the *articulate social being* and, by extension, the builder of civilisation.[2]

1
Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 1635/6) – henceforth Ṣadrā.

2
A number of studies on Ṣadrā in English and French bear on our subject, most notably Henry Corbin's seminal essay, "Introduction", in: *Le livre des pénétrations métaphysiques*, Verdier, Paris 1988, which contains valuable lexical insights into the unfolding of knowing and being; Fazlur Rahman's now classical work, *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*, SUNY Press, Albany 1975; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Mulla Sadra and the Doctrine of the Unity of Being", *Philosophical Forum* 4 (1972), pp. 153–161; Henry Corbin, *En Islam Iranian*, four volumes, Gallimard, Paris 1972, a general work; and more recently, but rather incompetently, Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mulla Sadra on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, Oxford University Press, New York 2010, which anyway is much too interpretative. A relatively more focused analysis is presented by Maria Massi Dakake, "Hierarchies of Knowing in Mullā Ṣadrā's Commentary on the *Uṣūl al-kāfī*", *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 6 (2010), pp. 5–44, doi: https://doi.org/10.5840/islamicphil201062. There are signs of serious misconstruction in: Hossein Sheykh Rezaee, Mohammad Mansur Hashemi, "Knowledge as a Mode of Being: Mulla Sadra's Theory of Knowledge", *Sophia Perennis* 4 (Autumn 2009), pp. 19–42;

In a sense, then, the same being who can speak also speaks to himself and about himself.[3] Unlike a soliloquy or closed solipsism, this human trait drew philosophers to the unfolding exterior (*ẓāhir*) and interior (*bāṭin*) of knowing, which unfolding they likened to branching from a root. The type of relationality they had in mind was thought to permeate speech (supersensible meaning conveyed through perceptible words), the self's noetic faculties (intellect and the external and internal senses) and God's self-manifestation (existentiation of every thing from absolute hiddenness as divine speech). *Ḥaqīqat al-insān* (*the reality of man*) – like all other realities – finds its root interiorly in the knowledge of God, not in the "world of the flesh". Ṣadrā describes God, who alone articulates knowing and being in a single existentiation, as *al-Fāʿil al-ḥaqīqī* (*real cause*) of the emergence of all created beings, first originating their "beginnings" and then making their goal the *return* to Him by way of intellect, soul, nature and matter.[4]

He means this return in the philosophic sense that existence begins and ends with intellect, between which lie many levels and waystations,[5] without this having to imply that intellect is identical with God, who is above everything. At the centre of His creation stands the archetypal Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*, lit. *the Perfect Man*).

The preoccupation with knowing and being traces back to at least the Presocratics, but the debate about how the human knower fares in their unfolding came to a head in the Ḥikma[6] tradition, beginning in earnest in the ninth century. Since antiquity, the problem has been considered amenable to analysis into oneness and manifoldness, a conflict of opposites (*muqābala* means *opposition*, not *contradiction*) that Ḥikma began to apply to every joining together (*jamʿ*) – including that of the community (*ijtimāʿ*) of beings, meaningful utterance, every perception through the faculties of the *nafs* (*self*, *soul*), and the divine self-manifestation that joins everything.

Thinking (*fikr*) figures in this scheme of things as a *quwwa rūḥāniyya* (*lit.* spirital[7] faculty), as Ṣadrā and Qūnawī agree Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 1037) originally described it.[8] It is the fourteenth of thirty terms associated with knowledge that Ṣadrā lists beginning with perception.[9] He defines it as the self's movement by judgment and conceptualisation toward apprehensions based on what apprehensions are already given about a thing.[10] This is standard for the thinking normally assumed by a learned person to proceed from the known (premises) to the unknown (the middle term on which a conclusion is drawn) by way of syllogism. Ṣadrā meant his definition to encompass the thinking of which all human beings are capable to varying degrees, however, and it is on this basis that he discussed factors internal and external to the self that contribute to *actualisation* at a higher plane than the material potentiality of the human intellect at birth. Thoughts are the modality that prepares the soul (*kayfiyya nafsāniyya*) for intellective beholding (*li-mushāhada ʿaqliyya*) and the telling (*ḥikāya*) of the thing's universal reality (i.e., which universality enters into the mental grasp of things).[11] Intellectual actualisation embarked the human being upon the path of *return* to his or her beginning in the divine through stages of knowing and being, so there is much more to all this than just cogitation.

In his list, Ṣadrā identifies six meanings of intellect. The most basic is said of someone *ʿāqil* (*reasonable*) and able to grasp the usefulness and harmfulness of actions and worldly things.[12] Another is that which he says the philosophers understand from the *Book of Demonstration*, where Ibn Sīnā divides the

knowledge acquired through thought (*al-fikra*), in the manner of Ṣadrā's definition above: judging (through reasoning, *fikrī*) and conceptualising (without reasoning).[13] This is followed – among others – by the ethicist's practical intellect and the intellect familiar in the "science of the soul". In that last, intellect has four aspects: potentiality (material intellect), preparation (intellect by

and Sajjad Rizvi's earlier attempt to pinpoint conceptual equivalences between Ṣadrā's and "Western" philosophies (*Mulla Sadra and Metaphysics: The Modulation of Being*, Routledge, London 2009). Also, Christian Jambet's otherwise nuanced, influential and intellectually engaging *L'acte d'être*, Fayard, Paris 2002, it should be noted, remains a highly interpretive work. Cécile Bonmariage, *Le Réel et les réalités: Mollâ Sadrâ Shîrâzî et la structure de la réalité*, Vrin, Paris 2008, offers a necessary corrective, perhaps, especially to the epistemological bias running through many contemporary studies. In Farsi, Sadra's ontology and its Sufi elements are masterfully explained in Jalal-al-Din Ashtiyani, *Hastī az nazar-i falsafa va ʿirfān*, Intishārāt-i Nahzat-i Zanan, Tehran 1980; *Maʿād-i jismānī: Sharḥ-i Zād al-musāfir-i Mullā Ṣadrā*, Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, Tehran 1981, which deals specifically with the Afterlife, a central theme. The late Dr. Mahdi Haʾiri Yazdi, a *ḥawza* seminarian who was also trained in Analytic Philosophy, wrote *Ḥarām-i hastī*, Institute of Cultural Studies and Research, Tehran 1981. Readers of Farsi may want to consult Hasanzada Amuli, *Al-Nūr al-mutajallī fī'l-zuhūr al-zillī*, Maktabat al-Iʿlām al-Islāmī, Tehran 1995, on the question of mental existence; Muhammad Fanaʾi Ashkivari, *Maʿqūl thānī: Taḥlīlī az anvāʿ-i mafāhim-i kullī dar falsafa-yi islāmī va gharbī*, Imam Khomeini Institute, Qum 2008, a comparison of second-intention concepts like "universal" across traditions; and H. Hamid, "*Para-yi ʿanāṣir-i Anaksimandres* [Anaximander] *dar nazariyya-yi vujūd-i Mullā Ṣadrā*", *Iranshenasi* 6 (1995), pp. 817–832, focused on certain Presocratic elements in Ṣadrā's philosophy. Among the Arabic sources, see: ʿAbd al-Majīd Riḍā, *Ḥiwār al-falāsifa: Aṣālat al-wujūd wa'l-māhiya bayna Mullā Ṣadrā wa'l-falsafa al-ishrāqiyya*, Al-Dār al-Islāmiyya, Beirut 2003, on *Ṣadrā*'s crowning thesis, the "primacy of existence".

3

This is suggested by the widely quoted maxim attributed to Protagoras of Abdera (ca. 490–420 BCE) that was first popularised by the *Falāsifa*, who passed it down as: "Man measures every thing and is the measure of every thing."

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Mullā Sadrā, *Al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, Būstān-e Kitāb Qum, Qum 2003 or 2004, p. 276.

5

Ibid., p. 277.

6

Instead of "Islamic philosophy", we shall use *ḥikma*, which means both wisdom and what we shall refer to here as the systematic quest for wisdom, as the term *philo-sophia* connotes. The *Ḥukamāʾ* (*philosophers*) had no pressing need for an "Islamic" label at every turn in an extended period of history basically defined by Islamicate civilisation. Their open philosophical inquiry, consequently, cannot simply be relegated, as it generally is in a Eurocentric worldview, to the status of local tradition or "religious apologetics". As a tradition, *Ḥikma* includes *ʿIlm al-ḥikma*, *Ḥikma ilāhiyya*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, *Falsafa*, *al-Falsafa al-ūlā*, *ʿIrfān*, *Taṣawwuf*, etc. Cf. Anthony F. Shaker, *Modernity, Civilization and the Return to History*, Vernon Press, Wilmington 2017, pp. 10–15, 224. Each has its own, if loosely defined, scope and aims. However, modern scholars often feel obliged to make perfunctory references to the more elementary division between the experiential mysticism defended by S. H. Nasr, Henry Corbin, and James W. Morris, among others, and the purely discursive philosophy emphasised by Fazlur Rahman, Hossein Ziai, John Wallbridge, etc. While rightly discarding anachronistic neologisms like "theosophy", the latter approach takes the technical jargon of Peripatetic philosophy as its principal yardstick. This division has led to sharp disagreements about how the very purpose of philosophising up to Ṣadrā's time was understood (cf. Carl W. Ernst's interesting reflections, "Sufism and Philosophy in Mulla Sadra", paper presented at World Congress on the Philosophy of Mullā Sadrā, Tehran, Iran, 23–27 May 1999). Few if any contemporary writers have reflected on the issues presented in this paper in the light of the broader tradition or the threads of thinking that enabled him to produce a full-fledged philosophy of being. The technical language he assimilated from predecessors had reached, at least by the time of Qūnawī (student and son-in-law of Ibn ʿArabī), a plateau of sophistication on the more fundamental question of the unfolding of knowing and being. We forget that central to this unfolding is man.

7

"Spiritual" is somewhat archaic, but I use it to avoid "spiritual", which has accumulated too

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habitus), perfection (intellect *in actu*) and what is "above perfection" (*active intellect*, *al-ʿaql al-faʿʿāl*).[14] Everything beyond perfection comes under the divine science (*al-ʿilm al-ilāhī*) and *meta*-physics (*lit.* "what lies beyond nature", *mā baʿd al-ṭabīʿa*), where intellect is a substance separate from bodies and states by essence, attributes and actions.[15]

Ṣadrā analysed these issues in minute detail throughout his writings. When faced with this thicket of arguments, the historian of philosophy can easily lose sight of their purpose and larger significance. So, instead of plunging headlong into the mechanics of his proofs, we shall present the general contours of ideas and broaden our discussion to other figures from Ḥikma, together with a few measured comparisons with Kant and Heidegger. Ḥikma faced formidable challenges trying to clarify the modalities of knowing the *realities of things* (*ḥaqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ*), a common expression that quickly acquired a technical connotation in philosophy. The effort drew in aspects of existence which earned Ṣadrā's constant reminder that theory alone failed to secure a plenary knowledge of these realities. Far from just another discipline, philosophy was treasured as thinking open to being in all its dimensions, rather than viewed exclusively through the prism of mental analysis or honed to questions connected empirically to the manifold of being's appearances.

One has to keep in mind that Ḥikma is the tradition that, from the very outset, consciously brought into its fold man's social and civilised existence (*ʿumrān*, *madaniyya*). It is still popularly supposed, because Humanism enabled western European intellectuals from the early modern period leading up to the French Enlightenment to recast man's place in the universe, that no one else – except perhaps the ancient Greeks, owing to the twentieth-century classicists' view of them – had given serious thought to the *Leitmotif* of "man". Not only is this not true, but Western historians themselves were at the forefront in crowning Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) the father of the study of civilisation and social science, that most "modern" of the humanities. It so happens that the "special science" he established for that purpose figured among the major branches of knowledge we now take for granted but the foundations of which were laid largely in Islamicate civilisation down to algorithmic reasoning, which proved indispensable then and which we need to run our precious computers. The philosophical innovations that began in earnest with al-Fārābī (d. 951) and Ibn Sīnā helped create the ontological space for the rapid proliferation of learning and scientific exploration, which were unparalleled in scale and driven by extensive institutional networks over the centuries. They help explain the affinities of Ibn Khaldūn's purpose with the prevailing paradigm (*unmūzaj*) that Ṣadrā later elucidated.[16] Central to philosophy was the quest for wisdom (*ḥikma*) where the wherewithal of technical science had to advance the well-being of human beings in this world in expectation of the next.

We shall not concern ourselves with where exactly the philosophy that grounded the positive sciences placed them within this civilising enterprise. The point is that if Ḥikma did not approach man in the same way as modern philosophers or with the narrow range of social science, this could not imply marginal interest. For, standing on the shoulders of many generations, Ṣadrā drew attention specifically to a paradigm for man "on earth".[17] There, perception would be of idle use (*muʿaṭṭalan*), he wrote, had God placed in man the highest intellectual attainments and perceptions, by which he perceived the things that conducted to his perfection, without also creating the natural pre-

disposition and the desire for it that impel him to *movement*.[18] The question is where thinking figures in this movement and to what end?

The Emergence of Thought

Ṣadrā declares that God's greatest wisdom with the creation of man is to have placed in him the elements for linguistic expression.[19] Man speaks out of a natural urge for cooperation in the conduct of his affairs, which requires the power to convey things out of the outer senses' reach. A single individual, totally isolated from other individuals of his species and kind would quickly perish or his livelihood deteriorate.[20] His livelihood derives from more than what nature provides, since he has to prepare food and manufacture clothes. However, no one alone can produce everything necessary for sustaining human life. Therefore, he needs a faculty to communicate to a partner in a transaction what is "inside him" through an outward sign and learn a craft.

These are the immediate reasons why the faculty of intellect dominates a paradigm regarded by Ṣadrā as the most fitting for man in the world of perception and argues for based on the sense organs' utilities.[21] By this paradigm,

many modern connotations to be useful as a technical term.

8
As stated in *Al-Shawāhid*, p. 299, and Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī, *Iʿjāz al-bayān fī tafsīr Umm al-Kitāb*, Muʾassasseh-ye Bustān-e Kitāb-e Qom, Qom 1423 AH, p. 30.

9
Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, The Islamic Iranian Academy of Philosophy, Tehran 1984, pp. 131ff.

10
Ibid., p. 138.

11
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Shawāhid*, p. 271.

12
M. Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ*, p. 135.

13
Ibn Sīnā, "*Al-Burhān*", in: *Al-Shifāʾ*, al-Idāra al-ʿĀmma li'l-Thaqāfa, Cairo 1956, v. 9, p. 51.

14
M. Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ*, pp. 135–136.

15
Ibid., p. 137.

16
Ibn Khaldūn set out systematically to explain the rise and fall of societies – after careful study of philosophy – for the sake of posterity, in his words. The range of meanings and uses associated with *unmūzaj*, originally a Farsi word, closely resembles that of παραδειγμα (grammatically, model or likeness of an existing thing). Plato's *paradeigma* referred to the Maker's patterning of the world according to what is unchangeable, roughly the "coming-to-be" relative to "being" (*Timaeus*, 28c); Aristotle further meant an argument or proof from example (*Prior Analytics*, 2.24). Ṣadrā has both these meanings in mind when discussing the paradigm for man's being in the world, though not uniformly so in every context. However, all differ radically from the epistemological and social scientific sense Thomas Kuhn and his critics attached to the theory of the historical development of science, based on a cyclic or spiral phase model.

17
After discussing the divine equalisation in the earth's creation observable "outside the body and the soul", he writes: "Having learned a paradigm [*unmūzaj*] of the benefits on earth, now raise your head to the heaven and see and ponder the modality of the heavens' creation (…)." – Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya fīʾl-asfār al-arbaʿa*, Dār al-Maḥajja al-Bayḍāʾ, Beirut 2011, v. 3, p. 99.

18
Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Mabdaʾ waʾl-maʿād*, Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, Tehran 1976, p. 213.

19
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 3, p. 535.

20
Ibid., v. 3, p. 535.

21
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Mabdaʾ*, pp. 204–214; *Mafātīḥ*, pp. 504–520; *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 3, pp. 86–99, 319–337; *Al-Shawāhid*, pp. 285–99.

he intends that which "makes plain the ranking [*tartīb*] of everything to do with the perception that God put in man with respect to the faculties of sense, imagination and intellect", which faculties constitute one type of angels (in alternative religious parlance) "made subservient" to the proper organisation of his affairs commensurately with perception.[22] He points out, for instance, that man relies on hearing to perceive speech; indeed, his dependence on hearing is all the greater for it. Because sound is facilitated by his need to breathe, its "shapes" occur without him being overly aware of them. The inchoate *wholeness* of the sound emitted from the mouth multiplies into letters effortlessly put together in myriad combinations to complete what the person intends to communicate.[23] For this reason, human sounds are extremely detailed in their significations, giving us an almost limitless capacity for expression. Our ability to see allows us in addition to use letters and symbols, though the utility of sight alone is merely to make visible what is immediately present before our eyes.[24] And, despite our capacity to understand speech and to know what lies hidden from the senses, were it not also for the sense of taste, we would scarcely be able to "perceive" that something ingested may be harmful.

This account of utilities permits him to drive home the point that the sense organs are so interlinked through the intellect as to account for man's uniqueness. It is not the common sense (*al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*), the faculty that assembles sensations into their first unity, that properly distinguishes man from other animals. People can build houses like no bird can its nest or bee its hive; they perceive the "subtlest of things" and have the peculiarity of taking to laughter.[25] The very cooperation that enables them to perform these feats is, further, conditional upon the interdiction of certain acts and the enjoining of others by force of an inspiration (*ilhām*) proper to their species. In his view, such inspiration is the human equivalent to what becks the flight with which other animals respond to danger.[26] Thus, people fear certain things and hope for others, in the future, because of a unique power to recollect things beyond the range of their minds' immediate perception. Ṣadrā adduces this evidence to show up their ability to conceive general meanings separately from matter and thus to know things.

While internal to the person, thinking hence opens up vistas of cooperative activity without which no one could fulfil his destiny through the world without succumbing to that world. But rarer than all those abilities taken together is the coincidence with the divine world (*al-ʿālam al-ilāhiyya*). The human soul in such a state is no longer present to itself (i.e., to the otherness of its self); yet it survives. At this highest of stations, which Ṣadrā describes as *takhalluq* (*moulding*) in God's manner, God becomes the person's hearing, sight, hand and foot.[27] It is essentially what divine self-manifestation means for the person, and without the person, the concepts of humanity and society would be vacuous. There is no need to infer from the creation of man as a "single self", as the Qurʾān in part describes him, that the *community* of persons is itself a substance or alive in the manner of a person.[28] Language is how man becomes human in actuality because it gains him access to his causal source in a higher world he knows intelligibly.

In his philosophical commentary on the Qurʾān, Ṣadrā observes that God describes Himself as the exterior and the interior, but also as the speaker (*mutakallim*) even though in the word "Him-self", the "self" which is said to speak is unlike that of any created being.[29] The words of God are, on the contrary, the existents that emanate from His essence through His essence with-

out the intermediary of matter, place or predisposition. Yet, they resemble the letters and words created by man and into which "the air from his interior is shaped". Speech flows according to exteriority and interiority, and this is the pattern of man's being in a world where "man" is consequently understood to consist of one and many, universal and particular, active and potential, etc.[30] All the same, soul and body occur as two existents within a single existence, *as if* they were (*kaʾannahumā*) a single thing with two extremities.[31]

By this Ṣadrā means that whereas the exterior body is changing, ephemeral and functions as the branch, the interior soul endures like the root. So, when the self is perfected within the singularity of its existence, the body becomes purer and subtler, its conjunction with the soul stronger, thereby making the unity between them stronger.[32] Furthermore, it is intellective existence that renders the self the *one* thing changed by nothing. Here, the "suprasensible world" indicated by the term *maʿnawī* (derived from *maʿnā*, meaning) is the closest linguistic analogy to the "intelligible world". Meaning is conveyed through material syntax according to their respective interiority and exteriority, just as the "worlds" – intelligible and sensory – are two emergences in the single existentiation signaled by God's command, *Kun* (*Be!*).[33]

Human civilisation – basically, man's mode of being in the world – blossoms, then, thanks both to man's capacity to articulate his thoughts and to the articulation of all being according to two emergences in a single essential existence. The connection between these two articulations is so rudimentary that Ṣadrā's major works often begin by laying down its principles. Whatever is articulated clearly exhibits oneness and multiplicity, though the abstract opposition of one and many is only one way to state the matter. The important thing to Ṣadrā is that singular beings differ from each other and themselves essentially by the degree of existence. A formal accounting based on the attributes, properties, quantities, etc., of something would serve another analytical objective altogether. Modulated being (*tashkīk*) is how he sees the self come into its own because – not in spite – of a *movement* he describes as perfection-by-substance (*ḥaraka fī'l-istikmāl al-jawharī*), based on his famous theory of mo-

22
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Mabdaʾ*, p. 213. He distinguishes this type from the "faculties for moving" and man's desire for that which he is naturally predisposed, mentioned above, for without these the deeper apprehensions every perception relating to his perfection would be in vain.

23
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 3, p. 536.

24
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Mabdaʾ*, p. 212; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-karīm*, Dār al-Taʿāruf li'l-Maṭbūʿāt, Beirut 1998, v. 2, p. 17.

25
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 3, p. 537.

26
Ibid., v. 3, p. 538.

27
Ibid.

28
The Qurʾān affirms the singleness of man's self *out of which* God created him as a pair and a multitude (Q. 4.1, 7.189).

29
This is because God knows Himself as He is in Himself, while beings come to light through this knowledge (*Tafsīr*, v. 2, p. 17).

30
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 1, p. 33.

31
Ibid., v. 3, p. 549.

32
Ibid., v. 3, p. 550.

33
Inter alia, ibid., v. 1, p. 32; M. Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, v. 2, pp. 153–154.

tion-in-substance (*al-ḥaraka al-jawhariyya*).[34] With that theory, which we shall not discuss here, he leaves behind Peripatetics's immovable substance.[35]

Exteriority as Otherness

When marking a point about quiddity's relation to existence, Ṣadrā often speaks of the world "outside" the mind where things exist in their natural concreteness rather than as mental images, quiddities (*māhiyyāt*), or for that matter in the divine fullness of their *intelligible realities* (not to be confused with objects of sense). There, they are subject to judgments as to their time, place, mode, etc.[36]

This "outside" happens to be the world to which the modern age has also consigned social relations. Although Hikma did not regard relation as real (*ḥaqīqī*), and as external only as determined by the essence, Ṣadrā had no reason to quibble with the idea of a person at once existing as an individual in his own right *and* unable to survive in *total* isolation from others of the same species. Thus, social relations may evince something irreducible to any object perceivable by the sensory organs without these relations having themselves to be "real" in the same sense. We ordinarily assume that the social *other* – relative to self – stands for someone or something outside our person. However, anyone who can think will perceive himself, also, as an *other*. In this form, he may be as distant or estranged from his essence as he would from that of a fellow human being.

Depending on its distance, otherness can relativise the truth concerning that single essence to the point of rupture, where no coincidence with the object possessing this essence can be expected. Sabzavārī (d. 1878 or 1881) quotes al-Fārābī to the effect that truth may refer to three things: the statement corresponding to what it informs about whenever it corresponds to it, to the existent that occurs *in actu* (*al-ḥāṣil bi'l-fiʿl*), and to the existent which cannot be falsified.[37] These hold simultaneously only in the case of God, who is said to be the truth (*ḥaqq*) in respect of that which is informed about Him and in respect of existence, such that there is no means to falsify Him.[38] Whereas no other being can possibly meet all these conditions, God spoken of here is still Other, the negation of which is thought to be requisite for anyone even thinking *about* God, much less claiming to *know* Him. The *other qua object* may refer to everything from human perception of its *I* to that of a completely different person. This range gave wide berth to the philosophical discussion about man in the world, especially where cause-and-effect referred – not to a relation between social events or based on a theory of truth correspondence but – to the relationality of the realities of things. Man was said here to be perfected by what is truest and most interior to him, his essential cause.

Ṣadrā uses this sense of causality to clarify how the self persists through its stages of bodily growth, interactions with the world and internal transformations as the selfsame person body and soul. The perfectional "return" to causal origin gathers everything attributed to the individual and, presumably, begins the very moment he or she is born. He confesses, though, that the customary arguments for persistence (*baqā*, or *survival*) do not satisfactorily establish the nature of life in the Hereafter and its connection to life in this world. His first concern is thus to refute arguments that either deny the body its place in this life with the freeing of oneself from the manacles of matter or claim that it will be left behind on the Day of Reckoning, which mainstream religious

tradition interprets as the "return" to God in body and soul. He rejects, for instance, the notion that when its worldly existence is transformed on the way to its existence in the Hereafter, the soul has to cast off its body like clothes.[39] Such a notion merely likens the soul to the body, he insists, rendering it a "dead carcass" or the hair and fur that fall off naturally. The *real* (intelligible) body remains the light that permeates the body of sense *by essence*, not by accident. Its relation to the soul is that of radiance (*al-ḍū'*) to the sun.

While the single substance of soul and body differs from one "world" to another, all their "existences" belong to the same person. When the person moves from the existence enclosed by the self (*al-wujūd al-nafsānī*) to intellective existence (*al-wujūd al-'aqlī*) and becomes intellect *in actu*, he persists through this higher existence as an intellective human being endowed with the limbs of the intellect.[40] The caveat is that this station derives from what organised order the person understands about the world in a bid to free himself (negation) from the taint of matter. He has to draw his "order" instead directly from the world of intellect. Here, Ṣadrā cites the author of the so-called pseudo-*Theologia of Aristotle* (*al-Uthūlūjiyya*) to the effect that the Intellective Man casts his light upon a Second Man in the world belonging to the soul, while the Second Man radiates his light upon the Third Man in the lower corporeal world.[41] Divesting himself of matter and moving from his terrestrial abode to the next world, man substitutes his first genesis – i.e., as a being in the flesh and *in potentia* – with another genesis. When the soul perfects itself and becomes intellect *in actu*, it does so not because one of its powers (such as sense perception) is wrested away and another like the intellect is spared, but because its *essence* rises, thereby raising the rest of the powers.[42]

This quintessentially is what the modulation of being purports to show in order to dispel any fragmentation of the self resulting from its movement. The self, not something else or a part of it, remains its sole source of will, Ṣadrā says. With the "raising" of its existence, oneness and unification gain in strength and power. The eyes of the higher human being differ from those of the lower because he sees things according to a superior and finer species.[43] His eyesight is stronger and greater because it descries the universals – technically speaking – whereas the lower views the particulars, incapable of anything finer. With new eyes, the person falls upon nobler things, more evident and clearer than the body.

The soul and body are one sort correlative in philosophy; another is theory and practice. Granted, philosophy was not meant to teach how to manufacture

34
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 3, p. 350.

35
Ibid.

36
Ibid., v. 3, p. 547.

37
Hādī Sabzavārī, *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma fī'l-mantiq wa'l-ḥikma*, Muḥsin Baydārfar (ed.), Manshūrāt Baydār, Iran, Qom 1428 AH, 1387 AS, v. 1, p. 200.

38
Ibid., v. 1, pp. 200–201.

39
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 3, p. 550.

40
Ibid., v. 3, p. 549.

41
Ibid., v. 3, p. 550.

42
Ibid., v. 3, p. 551.

43
Ibid., v. 3, p. 549.

practical tools or to build houses. The inquiry into beingness or being-as-such (*al-mawjūdiyya*, τί τὸ ὄν ᾗ ὄν), the subject-matter of the First Philosophy, demanded no particular practical outcome at all.[44] Still, in his commentary on Ibn Sīnā's *al-Ilāhiyyāt*, Ṣadrā recognises that the theoretical wisdom he calls a perfection of the mind is "completed" by practical wisdom.[45] This recognition is part-and-parcel of his paradigm for man, body and soul, where the actualisation of truth is connected with the realities of things that man seeks to attain in more than just their abstractions. Ibn Sīnā held that the practical sciences aim at perfecting the theoretical faculty for a conceptual and assenting knowledge of practical things.[46] This stance invited Ṣadrā's astute denial there was any inconsistency in saying that theoretical knowledge could be attached to the *modality* of action (*kayfiyyat al-ʿamal*), since such attachment did not imply an attachment to any particular *action*.[47] Instead, he sees in the modality of action a compensating factor for the limitations of mortal man, whose mind affords him no complete view of – in Ṣadrā's words – the full consequences of his own choices.

Before the modern era replaced all such nuances with materialist concepts of "actuality", sensations too were viewed as the disparate actualisations of the intellect first synthesised by the common sense, as Ṣadrā held.[48] The material multiplicity of the sensory organs – their respective utilities aside – was a function of their distance from the unitary intellect. Nevertheless, one may further argue that, given this centrality of intellect to being, the whole subject of perception had to have served as a prolegomenon to weightier issues. That the *I* "persisted" in all its perceptions as the self-same perceiver presented a greater problem than the mere act of perceiving, but philosophers could not solve it without a better model for reasoning than that offered by the abstraction (*tajarrud*) of the universal from matter. Abstraction as the shedding of matter indicated a negative outcome, not something coterminous with the end.

The instantiations of a universal concept like "humanity" occur at a remove from the essence while remaining "human". But if the inductive enumeration of all its instantiations cannot establish the essence of humanity, then what other form of reasoning better meets the objectives of philosophy? As an illustrative device, the universal never translated the "distance" of its instantiations into a full-blown social thesis like, say, the one Marx argued *à l'hégélienne* according to which the reified product of labour represented the human self-alienation epitomised by the factory worker's peculiar relation to the means of production. Even then, something deeper seemed at play, because philosophically speaking the manifoldness of reified human *self*-expressions (tools, factory products, skills, habits, norms, artworks, and the general culture) had somehow to be reconciled with an essential, original unity – as Hegel sought to do on the canvas of metahistory for the *Geist*. Reducing man to his manifoldness is unusual in the annals of history except in a very special, minutely defined sense, as we shall see.

Ḥikma conceived the unity between knower and known, perceiver and perceived as the root cause of everything universal and particular, not something incarnated in man as such.[49] Any "reconciliation" (i.e., *munāsaba*, *consonant relation*) between the two elements of this unity found its origin in God's knowledge of Himself as He is in Himself. While no one is privy to this hidden knowledge, ultimately nothing can either exist in its individuality or be known without it. Accordingly, Ṣadrā is as keen as his predecessors to demonstrate how every being exists both *for itself* and *for another*: united at

the root in God's knowledge and – by virtue of God *qua* pure existence, the One Being that is the source of all being – existing as a single self through the two emergences on which its intelligible and earthly worlds are patterned.

This is not an easy train of thought to follow, to be sure, but it should become clearer in the course of this paper. After all, some of its implications for man's being in the world, and therefore to human thought and civilisation, came to the fore anew with the early modern philosophers' attempt to work the return of the *selfsame* into their systems – this is especially evident in Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche. Man exists and thinks in the world yet is not entirely of this world. We shall consider what Ḥikma made of this apparent paradox with regard to thinking as we uncover more aspects of selfhood and bring Kant briefly into the discussion.

Man as the Speaking Rational Animal

The standard definition of man was *al-ḥayawān al-nāṭiq* (*articulate, rational animal*), after the Peripatetics. There is but one Arabic word for "rational" and "capable of speech" – *nāṭiq* (the λόγον in the Greek expression ζῷον λόγον ἔχον for *rational* animal). Man is *nāṭiq* because his articulateness is inseparable from his intellect (*ʿaql*) qua reason, the Greek equivalent of which, λόγος, also denoted speech, sentence, proposition. All these considerations coalesce in the idea embraced in Ḥikma concerning the consonance of speech and intellect with the structure of being, in which man participates.

Never satisfactory, the definition of man as the rational animal nevertheless came under close scrutiny, especially by Suhravardī (d. 1191) and onward. The *nafs nāṭiqa* (*articulate*, *rational self*) transcended its "parts" in a way that seemed to be tantalisingly paralleled by the model of definition, which answered the quiddative question (*What* is it?) but was itself composed of parts just as the animal was composed of faculties, organs and limbs. The "what" is that *one* thing the quiddity conceptually fixes in place. The trouble was that *nafs* (*self*, *soul*) could not be taken only as an objectified subject, like it would be – as Heidegger argued has happened since Descartes – if the *rational* animal was turned into the rational *animal*.[50]

Besides, *nafs* carries more than one meaning. It has to refer to the life force behind individuality, not just the perceptual faculties, and it is said to have the "luminosity" of spirit. The many stations and levels ascribable to it culminate in the sanctified prophetic self or soul (*al-nafs al-qudsiyya al-nabawiyya*), the distinctive mark of which is having no need to learn from another being

44
Aristotle specifies that actions (πράξεις) and productions (γενέσεις) are concerned with the *individual* (*Metaphysics*, 981a17), not the universal, through which the particulars cannot be determined. For example, the physician seeks to cure Callias or Socrates, and man only incidentally.

45
M. Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ*, pp. 10–11.

46
Ibn Sīnā, "*Al-Ilāhiyyāt*", in *Al-Shifāʾ*, v. 1, p. 4.

47
Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ va taʿlīqāt-e Ilāhiyyāt-e Shifāʾ*, Al-Kamel Verlag, Freiburg 2011, p. 18.

48
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 3, p. 523.

49
This sums up Ṣadrā's position and the broader background to the idea of the intellect's unification with what is intellected.

50
Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 2008, v. 2, pp. 124–125.

because it is itself the unmediated source.[51] So, even its stations, levels and faculties must not be thought of merely as parts of a composite whole; Ṣadrā argues indefatigably that the single person in soul and body is above them all.[52] Nor can the soul thanks to which one is able to act as an individual be a part, unlike what Ibn Sīnā held – at least Ṣadrā's construal of him – for this would make it one of its own faculties. On the contrary, he charges, Ibn Sīnā's own argument can only imply that the soul is the completion (*tamām*) of all the faculties, which remain multiple only in the world of separation, concomitance and division – precisely the terms under which operates analytical thinking – but are conjoined in the self under the epithet of *oneness* (*mujtamiʿa fī dhāt al-nafs alā naʿt al-waḥda*).[53]

How the same self of the human being survives every moment of its shifting (*tabaddul dhātihi*) and transformation associated with natural life, including growth and ageing,[54] rests with its essential oneness. Its *potential* intellect alone cannot safeguard this oneness. In fact, he attributes Ibn Sīnā's inability to solve the problem of the self's survival to his theoretical approach, on which he argues Ibn Sīnā relied for a representation of the self concocted by his own self using sensory, imaginative, estimative and theoretical "arbiters".[55] This, he says, forced him to carry on as if the self endowed with these faculties somehow counted among them. Man embodies the very thinking that a philosopher like Ibn Sīnā had then to deploy self-reflectively and systematically to untangle the complexities of knowing and being. As correct in his instinct may have been, Ibn Sīnā's overreliance on the theoretical method is misplaced, as far as Ṣadrā is concerned.

He found his key in the idea that the self moves *by substance* from one mode to another, which he based, once again, on his theory of motion-in-substance.[56] It accords perception a paradigmatic role which, it should be noted, no epistemology (in modern parlance) can fully investigate, any more than can an ethicist, for whom responsibility has to be still assigned to one person not to aggregate parts. Central to Ṣadrā's critique of Ibn Sīnā, which takes cognisance of the relation of thinking to being, is the paradox of *all* thinking: in order to be properly reconciled with the minutiae of its objectification (the attributes, properties, etc., gathered in the *other* of the thinking self), thinking would have to transcend its rigid logic and find self-identity at a higher, existential level of perfection. Given the unfeasibility of facultatively predetermining this with theoretical precision before an actual existence, he insists that the problem least soluble by this means – the survival of the selfsame self through its phases and modes – demands "discipline and effort" with a view to obtaining interior unveiling (*mukāshafāt bāṭina*), secret beholding (*mushāhadāt sirriyya*) and existential inspection (*muʿāyanāt wujūdiyya*), this time not just in contradistinction with thinking but, away from the worldly goals and the vain desires on which such goals are based.[57]

The shedding of wordliness indicates the entire negative path that leads to a mode of being, not only the abstraction from matter or the epistemic correspondence clinched between perception and its object. It would have been inconsequential if Ṣadrā had man speaking merely to himself or to an interlocutor without some higher existentiating *amr* (*command* or *factor*), which has several important implications. He contends that this *amr* implies, at the very least, that the person has first been created and equipped with what *pregiven* things God places in him before he could rise to the world of intelligibility, the ultimate source of which is the divine command (*Be!*), the existentiating

Word that contains everything. But since the self exists both in the intelligible and its earthly abodes as a single being, the perfect verifier possesses the locus of the "true eye" that joins "the two lights" represented by these worlds and, from there, perceives the two emergences (*nashʾatayn*) – the first and last lives – according to which God originated His creation and which pervade every created thing.[58]

Beings are conceivable through the relationality of creation's twofold emergence from the essential oneness of the self-knowledge of God, who alone has no associate (*lā sharīk lahu*) and is above all relationality in His utter hiddenness and singularity. He is properly the First "beyond perfection", undergoing no change and receiving neither affection nor intellecting from an *other*.[59] Since relationality is a mental category, not existential, Ṣadrā refers to the formal precept that must then govern the mental distinctions of all emergences in a single quiddity[60] – i.e., conceived apart from any existential consideration – down to the rational, speaking soul, which, while intellective by virtue of a higher (intelligible) world and earthly in its relation to the body, has to remain equally one in its faculties.[61] Of special interest to him in this otherwise negative path of *thinking* is that saying the soul has corporeal attachments should not contravene its "sanctification" from the lower matters through the universal and *to the measure* of its own separate existence, which he calls the hiddenness of the soul's hiddennesses.[62] This, after all, is the separate existence that makes for its individuality, thanks to which the soul, in turn, cannot forgo its ascent in the path of perfection in the facultative manner it was created.

From this perspective, philosophy cannot obviate the question of the knowing self precisely because the self is, in some overarching sense, the "measure". This measure does not consist of the matters of its existence, as in modern Humanism, but of the soul or self in its existence in a higher intelligible order causally connected with the order of the world's creation and without which the soul could not even move in the flesh. In sum, therefore, the self finds its true existence in the intelligible world, one, by way of man's nature as the speaking/perceiving subject; and two, due to the precept by which it prepares that thinking which formally judges that all beings emerge from a single command, each distinct from the other. Placing man at the heart of the problem of knowing and being based on the materiality of his faculties, including thinking, prevents this thinking from closing the circle of existential self-identity on its own at any level.

51
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 3, p. 542.

52
Ibid., v. 3, p. 539.

53
Ibid., v. 3, p. 540.

54
Ibid., v. 3, p. 556.

55
Ibid., v. 3, pp. 539–540.

56
Ibid., v. 3, p. 557.

57
Ibid.

58
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Shawāhid*, p. 289.

59
Ibid., p. 243.

60
Ibid., p. 398.

61
Ibid., p. 289.

62
Ibid.

The Structural Manifestation of Intellect

No wonder the human capacity to know the realities of things became a bone of contention. The thirteenth-century correspondence between Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (both died in 1274) focuses on passages in *Al-Taʿlīqāt*, Ibn Sīnā's valuable notebook, to the effect that man cannot cognise the realities of things, either deductively or inductively, solely by dint of his thinking faculty under the aegis of the ten categories of thought (substance, quality, quantity, relation, etc.).[63]

Using terms common to Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Qūnawī and Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), Ṣadrā takes it upon himself to show in what sense the realities of things are known and to what ends. Consciously or not, he keeps largely to a causal framing of the concept of community that Qūnawī familiarised.

Qūnawī spoke of the "ends" realised in every perfection according to onenesses that are interlaced with manifoldness in a manner typical of construction forms.[64] Simpler than the syntax of a sentence, for example, the line-formation of persons standing next to each other has the precept of a single form generically known as an *ijtimāʿ* (*assembly*, *group*, *society*, *conjunction*). From this rudimentary form, he explains the "transformation" that conducts to ever-higher structural relations among the members of a whole (*jumla*, also sentence) and according to their active-passive movements toward perfection. Since no particular end can stand for the highest perfection of the whole, these movements exhibit more than one form of perfection. Technically, the precept of the secret of divine equalisation (*taswiyya ilāhiyya*) has to permeate every form – the stable, active element that *forms* matter – and everything connected with form. In the end, it is this divine equalisation that consolidates the *group* consequent upon the movements of perfection of each in relation to the other.[65]

Al-Fārābī was first in Ḥikma – and arguably in history – to centre some such interpersonal causality on the Active Intellect (*al-ʿaql al-faʿʿāl*), though he derived many elements directly from Plato and Neoplatonism. He saw it in human nature to strive for the realisation of the highest levels of perfection and felicity through the cooperation (*bi'l-ijtimāʿ*) made possible in man's collective existence, or *al-madaniyya*.[66]

This is the nexus we are searching for in Ṣadrā's paradigm of thinking man. The philosophic significance of man's natural ability to speak[67] is that it points to the intelligible world as the primary causal root for both the individual and the community (*ijtimāʿ*). But it is the Active Intellect, which al-Fārābī says is to man as the sun is to sight, that guides and oversees the actualisation of man's intellect from its potential state.[68] By taking the City of Virtue (*al-madīna al-fāḍila*) as the embodiment of the Active Intellect, al-Fārābī brings the social and political animal (*al-ḥayawān al-insī wa'l-ḥayawān al-madanī*) to the fore in philosophy, though without making philosophy its proper home.[69] This polis is intelligible – not a modern utopia or a reification of society in the hands of a scientific theory – as Qūnawī equally makes explicit with respect to *ijtimāʿ*. For al-Fārābī, the intellect extends like the articulation of the whole body and its parts – as Ṣadrā also put it – that constitute the loci, not the true origin, of their own functions.

Ibn ʿArabī adds that intellect is not only intrinsic to what he calls man's "city of his body", but also given *originally* as a whole rather than as a multiplicity of senses.[70] Before any attribution (multiplication), wholeness normally serves to stabilise perceptions about an object into a single entity akin to the

body, but it is the intellect that regulates everything within it at ever higher planes of self-identity. Clearly, the passive reception of information represents only one consideration of the potential intellect's actualisation in man. In order to gather the faculties together in the first unity of common sense, as indicated with respect to the shedding of matter, the soul has first to be one, incorporeal and not itself the body it oversees as its instrument.[71] And just as the perceiver is *one* as a single knowing but *many* in the self as a combination of faculties, bodily parts, etc., so the object of perception is one thing yet many in attributes and properties. All these structural relations have to be resolved from the root according to the singular unity of perceiver and perceived. Although "man" may be said to be the many things that exhibit his multiplicity, where matter is receptive to change and therefore quantifiably smaller or bigger, moving or stationary,[72] intellect raises him above his own composition.

The Primordial Singularity of the Self

Let us now retrace our steps by drawing in some more sources concerning *self* and *I* in order to contextualise Ṣadrā's view of thinking. Suhravardī, who figures large in Ṣadrā's writings, contended every human being knows he has a self (*dhāt*, *essence*) that knows itself and whose states – being internal to it – remain hidden to others.[73] This awareness does not dissolve a person's unique self into its own faculties, instruments and effects, because their multiplicity is incommensurate – as we saw – with a higher factor (*amr*) that makes for his self and distinguishes him from other persons. He may be a substance with extension as its property (like any other object), a soul with a will, and still, no act (technically, "effect") attributed to him in this world can fully establish what he or she is. Yet, despite this shortfall, he grasps intelligible things and learns and teaches as a *single* soul. Man is a single essence in relation to the totality of all the aspects belonging to his haecceity (*anniyya*, *thatness*, or *ex-*

63
Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Taʿlīqāt*, Iranian Institute of Philosophy, Tehran 2013, pp. 71ff, especially pp. 62, 71. Ṣadrā quotes a passage from it (*Al-Ḥikma*, v. 1, p. 269). Cf. Qūnawī, "*Al-Muṣiḥa*", in: Gudrun Schubert (ed.), *Annäherungen: der mystisch-philosophische Briefwechsel zwischen Sadr ud-Dīn-i Qōnawī und Nasīr ud-Dīn-i Tūsī*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Beirut – Stuttgart 1995, pp. 51–53. To some Ibn Sīnā's denial seemed inconsistent with what he states in "*Al-Manṭiq*" in *Al-Shifāʾ*, v. 4, p. 12.

64
Qūnawī, *Iʿjāz*, p. 75.

65
Ibid., pp. 74–75.

66
Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-siyāsa al-madaniyya al-mulaqqab bi-mabādiʾ al-mawjūdāt*, Al-Maktaba al-Zahrā, n.p. 1990, p. 69.

67
Ibid., p. 70.

68
Ibid., pp. 32, 35.

69
Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb taḥṣīl al-saʿāda*, Dār al-Andalus, Beirut 1983, p. 62.

70
Ibn ʿArabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, Dār al-Fikr, Cairo 1911, v. 1, p. 159.

71
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 3, p. 520.

72
Ibid., v. 1, p. 33.

73
Yaḥyā Suhravardī, *Kitāb ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, in: *Majmūʿeh-ye muṣannafāt*, Académie Impériale Iranienne de Philosophie, Tehran 1977, v. 2, p. 111.

istentiality), since they no more than serve to *point* to the essence of humanity. Once again, they are simply aspects that distinguish this person from another according to height, colour, etc., none of which can change the essence.

If this is so, Suhravardī rhetorically asks, how then could someone refer self-awareness back to himself solely by intellecting the whole through its parts.[74] Self-awareness (*shuʿūruhu bi-dhātihi*) persists separately from any awareness of the bodily parts, and it cannot be obtained through an *image* of oneself posing as I-ness (*anāʾiyya*).[75] It belongs to the entire person that no partial image could fully represent. Though an image of the *I* is distinguishable from the acting, self-aware *I* – no less than from the essence of any *he* (whether the objectified *he* of another person or the *I* as the *other*) – it still belongs to one's *own* I-ness, not someone else's, even as a he-representation. This is a standard argument that others like al-Jīlī proffered, as well. The point is that while a particular self-perception cannot be higher than the perceiver's self, it remains a manifestation of *this* self, not that of an entity abstracted from matter external to the self, as Suhravardī understood the Peripatetics to be trying to say.[76] This is because thingness cannot simply be superadded, he says, least of all to the one aware (*shāʿir*) of his self through himself. The person stays the selfsame person manifested in various ways to himself, a light unto himself and thus also "a pure light".[77] Perceiving the otherness of a thing, whatever that thing is, may be posterior to his self, but by assuming himself to be "an existence perceiving its self" he is liable further to infer, falsely, that the self – being prior to the perception – must then be unknown.[78] Suhravardī objects that the sentient person is the light that appears according to its own reality, but what makes manifest its *other* through itself as that very self depends on a higher, preponderant factor (*murajjiḥ*) for its existence: the beginning of all existences is a living, existing Giver of perception (*anniyya ḥayya darrāka*), the most perfect of existents and "second to none".[79]

Some of the paradoxes implied here should be familiar to the students of other traditions. They were of considerable interest to Hegel and Kant before the epistemological and psychological foci of their successors began to submerge the paradigmatic thrust of the debate on perception. Kant writes, "*I think* must be capable of accompanying all my representations; otherwise, something would be represented in me which could hardly be thought".[80] In other words, the *I* is the *I think* which is thought with it in every thought as the conditioning ground of the unifying *I* conjoined – *als der bedingende Grund des einigenden Ich-verbinde mitgedacht wird*.[81] At the same time, experience cannot establish the *I*, if the *I* is by definition what is not manifold as such (*etwas schlechthin Unmannigfaltiges*) but, on the contrary, the very basis of experience. Technically, it is the categories that are grounded in the *I* and its unity as the possible forms of combination for thinking, not the other way around. He designed his doctrine of pure reason accordingly to establish the possibility of experience. His position is that whatever is represented as the absolute subject of judgment – the judging subject, who cannot be determined by another thing – has to be substance. I, a thinking essence, am the absolute subject of all my possible judgments.[82] Hence, this representation is a predicate proper to me and what makes the thinking essence called the soul a substance.

But he confesses that the real reason he calls it a substance is that one cannot deduce from the *I* the "I am a thinking essence persisting for myself", neither originating nor perishing by natural means.[83] Heidegger noted his judicious, if incomplete, effort to circumvent the logical conundrum involved: that which

conditions as such (*das schlechthin Bedingende*), namely, the *I* as the original synthetic unity of apperception, cannot be determined with the help of what it conditions in the first place.[84] He offered a telling quotation where Kant explains that "[t]he 'I think' expresses the act of determining my *Dasein* (i.e., my being an existent)", whereby "the *Dasein* is then already given" but not the manner in which "I should posit in me that manifold which belongs to it".[85] To this manner of positing (the giving itself) "belongs a self-intuition, at the ground of which lies a given *a priori* form – time – which is sensible and belongs to the receptivity of the determinable".[86] The problem is that without another self-intuition that "gives *what determines* in me before the act of *determining* I represent to myself only the spontaneity of my thinking – of the determining – and my existence stays determinable only sensorially as the *Dasein* of an appearance".

Kant sought to capture what underlies epistemic perception to show that "all intuition, all immediate giving of something moves in the forms of space and time".[87] This narrowing of the problem hardly avoids epistemology in favour of an ontology, as Heidegger believes Kant intended but did not completely succeed in realising. Still, failure to explain is no argument against the possibility of the matter in question. But beyond what the *I* is not, Kant's argument has only modicum explanation to offer. Heidegger avers that while he was "completely right" in declaring the categories – the ground concepts of nature employed by the thinking *I* – inappropriate for determining the *I*, given that the *I* subsumes them, "the impossibility of an ontological interpretation of the *I* in general does not follow from this unsuitability. It follows only on the assumption that the sole possible basis for knowledge of the *I* is the same kind of knowledge that holds for nature".[88] Kant's solution appeared restrictive to Heidegger precisely because the prerogatives of a science of nature were never far off.

As the present paper seeks to show, on the other hand, the philosophical problems under discussion have not only to do with questions of scientific knowl-

74
Yaḥyā Suhravardī, *Kitāb al-mashāʿir wa'l-muṭāraḥāt*, in: *Majmūʿeh-ye muṣannafāt*, v. 1, p. 403.

75
Ibid., I.404, and his *Kitāb ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, v. 2, p. 111.

76
Y. Suhravardī, *Kitāb ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, v. 2, p. 114.

77
Ibid., v. 2, pp. 112–113.

78
Ibid., v. 2, p. 114.

79
Y. Suhravardī, *Kitāb al-mashāʿir*, v. 1, pp. 403–404.

80
Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Verlag von Felix Meiner, Leipzig 1922, p. 178.

81
Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Klostermann Seminar, Frankfurt am Main 2005, p. 204.

82
I. Kant, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, p. 469.

83
Ibid., p. 470.

84
Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, p. 204.

85
Ibid.

86
Ibid., p. 205.

87
Ibid., p. 206.

88
Ibid.

edge. In essence, Kant tried to reconcile everything to what pure reason contemplates as the *other*. To be sure, *other* – not the unity of the intellect with the intellected object – is the only mode of being in terms of which science is qualified to investigate its objects, and physics was certainly in the back of Kant's mind. The "distance" of otherness is exactly what philosophers by tradition consciously sought to overcome, at least theoretically, even as otherness is intrinsic to the very thinking they employed. *Thinking-about* is always object-related even in the absence of an object. But Ḥikma emphasises that the self remains its own *I* through every order in which it subsists and with every object it thinks; and that only below this in its self-awareness, so long as the *I* is its own object of thought, it is an *other* – never completely identical to the *essence* of the real *I*.

It should be obvious by now that this formulation was not the last word of philosophy. The trouble is that historians tend to return the inherent *otherness* of thinking to the private world of a personhood that modern psychology objectifies, thereby losing the thread of thought that held such paradigmatic interest for philosophers. Overlooking the boundary separating the specialised otherness proper to scientific reason from the otherness of thinking makes it harder to discern the limited purpose that Ṣadrā, for example, assigns to thinking as the means by which human beings articulate their being in the world. In this articulation, Ṣadrā observes, there is more than one way in which the realities of things manifest themselves.[89] The primary function he envisages for philosophical theory is to *point* (*ishāra*), as feasibly as possible, to where the unities between knower and known figure for man in the unfolding of knowing and being, which unfolding no thought can capture in its totality.

The Paragon of Perception

In this scheme, however, it is intellect (not the thinking faculty) that most fully preserves what Ṣadrā calls the active lordly command and giver of perception (*al-amr al-rabbānī al-darrāk al-faʿʿāl*)[90] in the unity of the human perceiver and his object. The synonyms he relies on to explain *idrāk* (*perception*) are meeting (*al-liqāʾ*) and attaining (*al-wuṣūl*).[91] Al-Fanārī (d. 1431) aptly showed the full import of these semantic associations when he wrote, "Rise to the perceiver who is not outside of you."[92] Irrespective of the type of perception, "perceiver" thus signifies a relation of the conjoining of things that befits the level and type of joining.[93] But the highest conjoining is that of perceiver, perception and perceived. It is not the world that circumscribes this perceiver, therefore, but the reverse and only in this particular sense. Just as the self unites its faculties and instruments before it may be said to perceive anything, Ṣadrā says in a similar vein, so "the existence of the thing [perceived] in the soul is intrinsically [that thing's] existence *for the self* (*wujūdahu li'l-nafs*)".[94] Given that a person is intellect, soul and body, therefore, what lies "outside" them cannot be the original locus for the self's awareness (*mawḍiʿ shuʿūr al-nafs*). For, the natural relatedness of the self (*al-ʿilāqa al-ṭabīʿiyya*) – with respect to whatever it perceives – occurs proportionately (*bi'l-qiyās*) to the body and faculties that the soul disposes and governs, not to what is external.

There is no need to read modern-style subjectivism into this. One has simply to keep in mind what intellective actualisation implied. The higher and more *active* the perception is, the weaker becomes the multiplicity of relations and corporeality. Man, who lies at an intermediary point between God and His

creation as the summit of this creation, is thus enjoined to rise to the level of the giver of perception (*al-darrāk*), his source, rather than to remain a passive perceiver (*dārik*) of objects of sense. This root level, contends Ṣadrā, where "every perception occurs by way of the unification of the perceiver and the perceived", is why "the intellect which perceives all things *is* all things".[95] The *darrāk* is not an external substance indifferent to the movements of the person whose intellect is only *in potentia*. The noetic and existential orders manifested in man, body and soul, merely presage the source and giver of perception, by whom man rises above the temporal world he inhabits to the plenary life that is *a priori* to his physicality and determines his true destination. Ṣadrā also speaks of the "real freedom" that lies in what is innate to the soul, not the body, and which excludes the teaching and habituation of a person based on someone else's authority, however "excellent" these activities may be.[96] In support he invokes Aristotle's assertion that freedom is the habitus that belongs to and keeps vigil for the soul by substance, not artificial design. Thus, the weaker the attachment to the body and the stronger to the intellect, he says, the greater is the freedom; the contrary spells the enslavement to the lower passions. The outcome of wisdom and freedom, in short, is the power of mastery of what comes to man's knowledge and a separation of the self from material things. All the human excellences (*faḍā'il*) are traceable to these two fundamental excellences, he says.

Concluding Remarks

The great enigma of man is that he should be the same being who lives, feels, speaks, reasons, philosophises, knows and articulates his own existence. This primordial condition places man at the centre of his own thoughts and activities, though not for the same reasons as in the empirical sciences or in modern humanism. Before becoming an object of his own thought, man cannot but be an agent in his own right; else, who in his place is contemplating anything at all? Early on, al-Fārābī determined further that things *human* concern philosophy only insofar as their realisation makes for the felicity of nations and citied peoples both in their first, worldly life and in the Afterlife[97] – the two emergences. Yet, the human thinking to which he anchored this rudimentary relation with the good is not as straightforward as it may seem on the surface of things. It agrees with the general drift of Ṣadrā's discussion of perception, which naturally cannot be avoided in the discussion on thinking, insofar as Ṣadrā's understanding of perception is quintessentially paradigmatic.

89
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 3, p. 350.

90
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Mabda'*, p. 253.

91
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 1, p. 854.

92
Shams al-Dīn Ḥamza al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns bayn al-ma'qūl wal-mashhūd*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut 2010, p. 182.

93
Ibid., p. 179.

94
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 3, p. 326.

95
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Shawāhid*, p. 328; cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ta'lāqāt*, Iranian Institute of Philosophy, Tehran 2013, p. 46, where the author says that intellect is all things in potential.

96
M. Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma*, v. 3, p. 542.

97
Al-Fārābī, *Taḥṣīl*, p. 49.

Indeed, Ṣadrā may be said to culminate a long tradition dating back to the Greeks for which thinking is at once an object of analysis and the primary means by which one arrives at judgments. What has changed in modern times is, not this formal distinction but, the positivist terms under which it is investigated. Narrowing the question of thinking to its experiential sources changes how philosophers interpret the unfolding of knowing and being. A familiar example of this reductionism, one we have not discussed in detail, is the fallacy surrounding the age-old problem of the world's creation. Long before modern astrophysics, Plato in the *Timaeus* understood the futility of pondering creation as if one could somehow escape the boundaries of the world within which one thinks and lives. The universe taken as a whole could not be explained in the same respect as any of its contents, a paradox that also dulls the significance to philosophy of the modern empiric-mathematical account of the universe's origin.

Ṣadrā applied himself to the *philosophical* implications of this problem with the same alacrity as his famous teacher, Mīr Dāmād (d. 1631), one the most formidable philosophers. Neither denied that facultative perception was experiential in some sense or other. But they also knew that treating perception as nothing more than an experiential event ensconced the knowing subject in the flux of his own mental states, cognition, conduct, etc. Before John Stuart Mill, mental states were normally kept separate from judgments about logical validity. But it would be wrong to infer from this strictly logical requirement, as Ṣadrā and the whole Ḥikma tradition stand witness, that *being* had then to be totally separated from thinking and intellection. Contemporary philosophy has, in any event, found ways to get around this formality.

The ideas discussed in this paper, in short, illustrate the extent to which the beingness of the knower impinges upon knowledge. Far from modern, recognition of the association of these two "presences" in every act of knowing means, at the very least, that no mortal can know everything, let alone the unknowable, but rather – in the sense explored here – according to man's measure. That is, to the measure of his *intelligible reality*. Save for the primordial, transcendental source of this being, in Ṣadrā's words, man can neither foresee the totality of consequences of his actions nor his intellect grasp the realities of things he needs to that end. This is what makes thinking *about* existence at once so perplexing and pregnant with possibility. Perhaps man needs to be perplexed if he is to avoid the immobility of mental abstraction and maintain the openness of his thinking despite its limitations, as Ṣadrā clearly intended.

Anthony F. Shaker

Tumačiti Mullā Ṣadrāa o čovjeku i izvoru mišljenja

Sažetak

U radu se istražuju ključni aspekti Mullā Ṣadrāova razumijevanja čovjekova bivstvovanja u svijetu, gdje se embrij opažanja i mišljenja pojavljuje u jedinstvenim uvjetima čovjeka kao artikuliranog društvenog bića. Biće koje može govoriti također govori sebi i o sebi. No s obzirom na to da čovjekova »prava stvarnost« nalazi svoj korijen u božanskom znanju i bivstovanju u dvostrukoj egzistencijaciji, u srcu njegova bivstvovanja u svijetu leži intelekt pomoću kojega se on »vraća« iz materijalnosti u njegov izvor u božanskom, gdje sve znanje i bivstovanje počinje i završava. Problem znanja i bivstvovanja – izrazivo u smislu jednog i mnogih – potječe još iz vremena prije predsokratovaca. Da bi se Ṣadrāovo razumijevanje moglo umjestiti, razmatraju se drugi filozofi, uključujući Kanta, čija je logika argumenata okupljenih oko »Ja« naznačena u

*Heideggerovoj kritici. To niti je prvenstveno epistemologijski problem islamske filozofije niti je lišen širег zanimanja za društvenu životinju naziva »čovjek« (*insān*).*

Ključne riječi
Mullā Ṣadrā, Martin Heidegger, Immanuel Kant, Qūnawī, Abū Naṣr al Fārābī, Hadi Sabzavari, Ibn ʿArabi, Shahāb ad-Dīn" Suhrawardī, metafizika, filozofija jezika

Anthony F. Shaker

Mullā Ṣadrā interpretieren: über den Menschen und den Ursprung des Denkens

Zusammenfassung
*In der Abhandlung werden Schlüsselaspekte von Mullā Ṣadrās Auffassung des menschlichen Seins in einer Welt ergründet, in der der Embryo der Wahrnehmung und des Denkens unter den einzigartigen Gegebenheiten des Menschen als artikuliertes Gesellschaftswesen erscheint. Ein Wesen, das sprechen kann, spricht auch zu sich selbst und über sich selbst. Aber angesichts dessen, dass die „wahre Realität" des Menschen ihre Wurzeln in göttlichem Wissen und Sein in zweiartiger Existenziation findet, liegt im Herzen seines Seins in der Welt der Intellekt, mit dessen Hilfe er von der Materialität zu seiner Quelle im Göttlichen „zurückkehrt", wo alles Wissen und Sein beginnt und endet. Das Problem des Wissens und des Seins – ausdrückbar im Sinne von einem und vielen – stammt noch aus den Zeiten vor den Vorsokratikern. Um Ṣadrās Betrachtungsweise einordnen zu können, werden andere Philosophen in Betrachtung gezogen, einschließlich Kant, dessen Logik der um das „Ich" gesammelten Argumente in Heideggers Kritik angegeben ist. Dies ist weder ein zuvörderst epistemologisches Problem der islamischen Philosophie, noch ist es des breiteren Interesses für das soziale Tier namens „Mensch" (*insān*) beraubt.*

Schlüsselwörter
Mullā Ṣadrā, Martin Heidegger, Immanuel Kant, Qūnawī, Abū Naṣr al Fārābī, Hadi Sabzawari, Ibn ʿArabī, Schihab ad-Din Suhrawardi, Metaphysik, Sprachphilosophie

Anthony F. Shaker

Interpréter Mollā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī sur la question de l'homme et de la source de la pensée

Résumé
*Ce travail recherche les aspects clés de la conception de Mollā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī de l'être de l'homme dans le monde, où l'observation et la réflexion de départ apparaissent dans des conditions uniques de l'homme en tant qu'être social construit. L'être qui est doté de la parole se parle également à lui-même et parle de lui-même. Mais compte tenu du fait que « la véritable réalité » de l'homme trouve sa racine dans la connaissance divine et de son être au sein d'une existence double, au cœur de son être dans le monde se situe l'intellect à l'aide duquel l'homme « revient » depuis la matérialité pour aller vers sa source dans le divin, où toute connaissance et tout être commencent et se terminent. Le problème de la connaissance et de l'être – exprimable dans le sens de l'un et du multiple – provient déjà de l'époque qui précède les présocratiques. Afin d'être en mesure de situer la conception de Mollā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, d'autres philosophes sont analysés, y compris Kant, dont la logique d'arguments réunis autour du « Je » est mentionnée dans la critique de Heidegger. Il n'est question principalement ni d'un problème épistémologique de la philosophie islamique, ni d'un problème dépourvu d'intérêt pour l'animal social du nom de « l'homme » (*insān*).*

Mots-clés
Mollā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Kant, Sadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, Abū Naṣr al Fārābī, Hadi Sabzavari, Ibn Arabi, Sihab al-Din Sohrawardi, métaphysique, philosophie du langage