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**Being in Aristotle and Avicenna:
From the Multiplicity of Essence to
the Unity of Existence**

Hussain H. A. H. Esmail, Ph.D.

Department of Philosophy - Faculty of Arts

Kuwait University

Author:

Dr. Hussain H. A. H. Esmail

- Ph.D. in Greek Philosophy; Dissertation title: "The Possibility of Philosophical Discourse in Plato's Theaetetus." Boston College, 2005.

Assistant professor, Philosophy Department. Kuwait University.

Being in Aristotle and Avicenna

From the Multiplicity of Essence to the Unity of Existence

Abstract:

This paper evolves around the question of the possibility of constructing a theoretical understanding of being that reflects, objectively, its primary instance. My answer is negative because there is, in my view, an elementary pre-theoretic temporal understanding that grounds any philosophic formulation of the content of the concept of being.

To support my claim, I compare two interpretations of the meaning of being, that of Aristotle and that of Avicenna. The upshot is that each of them grounds his final conceptualization of the primary instance of being on a specific elementary understanding of what the proper instance of being must be.

Another significant result is that each of the indicated elementary concept of being seems to reflect a specific attitude toward the world of experience and its epistemic value, one (that of Aristotle) appreciate it, the other (that of Avicenna) does not. Here, in my opinion, resides a serious problem: Avicenna's failure to consider the world of experience a legitimate and reliable "road" that can lead us to the recognition of a more fundamental form of reality. It is timely to reconsider Avicenna's influential "rational" approach to the concept of being with a different perspective.

The concept of being is one of the most significant and enduring concepts in the history of philosophy. In my opinion, part of the significance of the concept of being lies in its intimate relation with the question of being: What is it? Although the relationship between the concept of being and the inquiry about its proper instance may seem, from some philosophical outlooks, to be an outdated subject that deserves no further attention, I strongly believe the opposite. I emphasize its relevance to our time for the simple reason that, in terms of its content, the concept of being, in its elementary pre-theoretic expression, discloses an attitude toward the structure of being; it is a concept that contains an understanding of the nature of being. As an understanding of being, it *supposes* (or *presupposes*) that being should be in such a form and not otherwise. However, understanding being is an *act*; therefore, it is an *event* that happens in, and is substantially conditioned by, space and time. In that respect, every understanding of being is *historical* in nature.

Moreover, every systematic inquiry about the nature of being rests on a given pre-theoretic conception of being; for that reason, it is also historical. Being historical means that in its attempt to unfold (or deductively determine) the true nature of being, the inquiry about being unfolds its 'subjective' basic metaphysical suppositions and its idea of truth. In its essence, then, the 'science' of being

cannot be transcendental in the sense of being objective and above the state of temporality.

However, the philosophical treatment of being is more than a systematic formulation of a certain elementary understanding of being; it is also a logical and structural justification for it, and as such, it rationally affirms its presence in the spiritual world to which it belongs as the true expression of reality. The effect of rationalizing a pre-theoretic understanding of being is not limited to the theoretical sphere of thought; it also extends to the practical sphere because the latter is based on the conceptual and logical structure of the former.

To substantiate my claim regarding the relationship between the concept of being and the theoretical decision of its proper instance as well as my claim that this concept discloses a certain understanding of the nature of being upon which the inquiry about being rests, I compare the ways in which Avicenna and Aristotle interpreted the concept of being and show how their different interpretations of the meaning of the concept affect their final views regarding the true nature of being.

I must note, however, that my paper is more than an attempt to provide a substantiation or justification for my claim of the presence of a connection between the concept of being and the systematic determination of

its proper instance. In addition, this paper raises critical points regarding Avicenna's interpretation of the content of the concept of being and his 'method' of 'deducing' its proper instance. One of my notes regarding Avicenna's treatment of the concept of being is that, unlike Aristotle's treatment, it began not from a question about its proper instance but rather from a certain sense of being that it considers, a priori, self-evident and immediate. Thus, the concept of being is not regarded by Avicenna as a problematic concept that requires further clarification and determination, as is the case with Aristotle.

In my view, Avicenna's choice to begin with the self-evidence of the meaning of being as the proper starting point for the investigation led to a certain concept of reality (or being) whose content was considerably different from the one advanced and supported by Aristotle. Reality, according to Avicenna's final conception of being, no longer admits form or essence as its proper and primary instance. What is primary and real is existence, which is (as we shall see) different from essence and is its efficient cause (that is, its cause of existence).⁽¹⁾ The metaphysical supremacy of existence over essence undermines not only the ontological position of essence but also the reality of its diversity because existence is that to which everything is ultimately reduced. However, this is, in my opinion, a mystical attitude in nature clothed

in philosophical terms. In one of its essential aspects, mysticism tends, by the act of meditation, to reduce (or transcend) beings to one ultimate Being.

There is a high price, however, for the reductionist attitude, that I ascribe to Avicenna, toward the true nature of reality: the theoretical and practical neglect of the world of experience (*phenomena*) *by virtue of itself*. I do not think that Aristotle's conception of reality takes us as far as a sort of reality that diminishes and devalues the world of experience in the way it is given to experience—although he admits the existence of the supreme Being (the Unmoved Mover) as *one* of the first principles and the highest causes of being *qua* being.

Another point that may give our investigation further significance is that Avicenna's interpretation, of the meaning of the concept of being, paved the way for the idea of the supremacy of being (or existence) over essence, as articulated by one of the most distinguished figures of late Islamic philosophy, Mulla Sadra of Shiraz (1572-1640). Mulla Sadra constructed a 'philosophic' system that was faithful in its spirit to the aforementioned mystical attitude regarding the true nature of reality. In fact, one of the basic goals of his 'transcendental philosophy,' as he called it, was to rationalize what most trends in Islamic mysticism take for granted based on

bare subjective experience (intuition): that in the end, Reality is one and not many. In doing so, he completed the process of injecting the Truth of mysticism into the field of philosophy, a logical concluding step considering how the investigation of being began and the type of spiritual horizon under which it developed.

Let me begin with Aristotle and highlight his reaction to the question of being and the way his answer develops toward its final form.

I

The task and the aim of First Philosophy: According to Aristotle, wisdom, or first philosophy, is the “knowledge of Truth” 993b21, and “we cannot know the truth apart from the cause” 993b24. First philosophy, then, is the “knowledge about certain principles and causes” A 982a1-2. More precisely, philosophy is “a science that investigates the first principles and causes” of sensible beings, “which are *qua* being” 1029b2-3.⁽²⁾ These principles and causes reveal or disclose the *why* of the sensible things, and only through them one can attain true knowledge about the reality of these things.⁽³⁾

There are four types of causality, Aristotle notes: the material cause, the formal cause, the efficient cause and the final cause 983a24-983b7. The material cause

is “that from which, as a constituent,⁽⁴⁾ something is generated. For example, the bronze is the cause of the status.”⁽⁵⁾ The formal cause is “the form or the pattern,” which is the “substance or the essence” of the thing 983a27. The efficient cause is “the source which begins motion” 983a31. The final cause is “the end... [that for the sake of which].”⁽⁶⁾ For example[,] walking is for the sake of health” 1013a33. It is worth mentioning here that the number of these causes and their natures are dialectically postulated by Aristotle.

Because first philosophy seeks the first principles and the highest causes of being(s) *qua* being, its nature must therefore be universal. However, there is another reason (or respect) for the universality of this science related to the universal nature of its subject matter, being *qua* being (which designates, as we shall see, the substantial element of the sensible things by means of which the aforementioned causes and principles are disclosed and attained)⁽⁷⁾, insofar as first philosophy investigates being as such and is not a special department of it. Aristotle says, “This science is not the same as any of the so-called ‘special sciences,’ cutting of some part of it. Each of them investigates the attributes of that part, as in the case of the mathematical sciences” 1003a23-26. It must be noted that the universal character of being is two-sided: one is ontological and the other is

conceptual, where the universality of the latter reflects that of the former⁽⁸⁾, because within the multiplicity and the diversity of things given to us through sense experience, one can observe that all can be subsumed under different but at the same time specific concepts, with essential characteristics and peculiar properties. This is to say that each of the objects of sensible experience is given to us as having a definite and fixed identity that possesses certain essential attributes and peculiar properties. These “essential attributes” are distinguished from exterior or accidental attributes, which do not appear as belonging to the essence of these things. In other words, sensible experience shows us two ontological and universal facts related to the being of its objects: (1) the presence of permanent unchangeable underlying entities that possess essential attributes and peculiar properties, and (2) these entities are accompanied by exterior accidental properties. The presence of a permanent fixed subject, then, strikes our everyday experience as something universally given through its manifold (i.e., the manifold of experience). This experienced universality (or generality) of the presence of basic entities without which no sensible being can be determined and individuated is the origin of the universality of the concept of being—not the other way around.

The priority of the concrete being (as will be shown later) over the concept of being imposes certain methodological requirements upon the procedure of first philosophy. One of these requirements is to take notice of the idea of correspondence, which plays a significant role in the realist philosophy of Aristotle. This idea bounds the investigation of being with the realm of experience (appearances or *phenomena*), the source from which the concept of being gets its significant import and the realm by means of which one can attain its first principles and highest causes. For Aristotle, the philosophical procedure should not end with conclusions that seem to conflict with the world as it appears to human experience (as is the case, for instance, with the philosophy of Parmenides) but instead should be in harmony with it.⁽⁹⁾ This is why it is so crucial to him to “save the appearances” instead of destroying them by reducing them, theoretically, to one sort of being or existence.

It is noteworthy that Aristotle’s formulation of the question about being, his understanding of its meaning, his supposition of its proper instance, and his conception of its highest causes and first principles are introduced dialectically without demonstration. In other words, Aristotle starts his metaphysical investigation from particular concepts—the four causes and substance—

indicated but not proven by his predecessors.⁽¹⁰⁾ In that respect, Aristotle's metaphysical investigation is conducted under a certain horizon of understanding being and specific criteria that guide the decision of its proper instance and the nature of its causes and principles. Thus, it is not of the mark to say that Aristotle's metaphysical endeavor starts from a certain understanding (and criteria) of the meaning of true being—a point that will be confirmed in a moment.

II

The Question of Being in Aristotle's Metaphysics (the introduction of Substance as the proper sense of being and its primary instance): Aristotle in *Met.* Γ 1003a17-18 states:

There is a science that investigates being as being (ὅν ᾗ ὄν) and the attributes that belong to this in virtue of its own nature.

Then he provides clarification of the sense of “being” that he considers the proper subject of this type of investigation:

...There are many senses in which a thing is said to be, but all refer to one starting point. Some are said to be because they are substances, others because they are affections of substance, others because they are process towards substance, or destructions or privations

or qualities of substance, or productive or generative of substance, or of things which are relative to substance, or negations of some of these things or of substance itself... But everywhere science deals chiefly with that which is primary, and on which the other things depend, and in virtue of which they get their names. If, then, this is substance, it is of substance that the philosopher must grasp the principles and the causes. *Met.* 1003b5-18

In *Met.*1028a10-15, Aristotle provides a somewhat different version of what the term “being” means, though he keeps the same idea of substance as being the focal point of the philosophical investigation:

There are several senses in which a thing may be said to be, as we pointed out previously in our book on the various senses of words, for in one sense it means what a thing is, or a ‘this,’⁽¹¹⁾ and in another sense it means that a thing is of a certain quality or quantity or has some such predicate asserted of it. While “being” has all these senses, obviously that which is primary is the ‘what,’ which indicates the substance of the thing.

After several lines (1028a31-33), he concludes:

It is clear, then, that each of the others exists because substances exist. Thus, being, in the primary sense, not in a qualified sense but without qualification, would be a substance.

The first statement specifies the subject matter of the first philosophy as the study of being qua being and the attributes that belong to it in virtue of itself. Here, we find another task for first philosophy besides investigating the first principles and the highest causes of being qua being: the study of its essential attributes, such as unity and plurality, denial and privation, sameness and otherness, contraries, priority and posteriority, genus and species, whole and part, and the axioms of mathematics. ⁽¹²⁾ These “essential attributes” are general in nature, for they apply to everything that exists. Because they apply to everything that exists, they naturally belong to being qua being. Therefore, they should become objects of the study of first philosophy.

In the passages that follow, Aristotle outlines three distinctive characteristics that help to identify the sort of being that first philosophy seeks to discover: 1. It is that which is primary and definite (a *this*); 2. It is that upon which the other things depend on in their existence; and 3. It is that in virtue of which things get their names. All of these characteristics are, as the passages indicate, true of substance, because all of the senses of being and modes of existence are derived from and based on it. The ontological authenticity of substance shows itself intuitively through the use of language—through our expression of the content of the sensible experience in particular.

Before moving forward to the next stage of the discussion, I would like to note here, that the presentation of the various senses of “being” indicated in the passages above is not based on mere grammatical or logical analysis but on semantic considerations. It is the *mode* of the being of the referent (the object of sensible experience theoretically considered) that determines the import and the epistemic significance of the reference—the sense of “being” used. According to Aristotle’s statements above, we can observe two characteristics (or two modes of existence) in the object of reference. The first characteristic is intrinsic in nature and is related to the substantial side of the thing perceived (that is, the “component” that enjoys permanent and fixed identity). The other characteristic is extrinsic, related to the accidental attributes that accompany the substantial element of the thing perceived but are not part of it. This characteristic refers to all categories except that of substance. Thus, when “being” refers to the substance (that is, the basic constituent of the sensible thing, as we will see later) of a thing, it is used in the primary sense; when it refers to that which is related accidentally to substance, such as its quality, its quantity and so on. It is used in the secondary sense. Therefore, it is the mode of the being of the referent (whether it is dependent on a subject or is the underlying subject)

that determines which of the senses of “being” is used primarily and which is used secondarily. In other words, when the object of reference is *experienced* as having a definite identity and as a particular entity (“a *this*”) which persists—in the case of sensible destructible substances and eternal ones—through change and time, and which is never dependent on a subject nor *in* a subject, then the term “being” that refers to that object is used, as we just pointed out, in the primarily sense. When the thing—the object of reference—is described by means of its extrinsic properties—its color or its weight, for example—then the term “being” is used in the secondary sense. It is secondary for two main reasons: The first reason is that “being” is used here to refer to properties extrinsic to the substance (the basic entity) of the thing perceived. The second reason is that the being of these properties depends on an underlying entity and cannot exist independently of it. The sense of “being” that reflects this ontological dependency on a more ontologically fundamental entity is, as we just noted, indicated by all figures of predication—except, of course, that of substance, which is not predicated of any definite subject but is the subject of predication.

Accordingly, it is the mode of the being of the object of our reference that determines the various senses of “being” and their epistemic and ontological priority.⁽¹³⁾

However, what is the significance of saying that the referent (its mode of being) is what determines which of the various senses of being has epistemic and ontological priority? In my point of view, the significance is, , that the concept of being as it is used here is not considered abstract, i.e., as something that stands in its own right separate and apart from existing things,⁽¹⁴⁾ but is considered according to the way it appears through sensible experience, such as substance and accidents. In Kahn's words, "for Aristotle as for Plato, existence is always εἶναι τι, being something or another, being something definite. There is no concept of existence as such, for subjects of an indeterminate nature."⁽¹⁵⁾ This point is confirmed by Aristotle's identification of the inquiry about being with that of substance. He states, emphatically:

And indeed the inquiry or the perplexity concerning what being is in early times and now and always, is just this: What is a substance? For it is this that some assert to be one, others more than one, etc." *Met.* 1208b2-4.⁽¹⁶⁾

Here, we find a strong connection between the question about being and that of substance. Both aim to uncover the authentic and genuine component (the ontological basic entity) that underlies and governs the process of change and motion and that which is responsible for the identity of the given entities.

The question about substance, and the preliminary vagueness that surrounds its nature, points to the fact that the reality of the world—the reality that Aristotle seeks to uncover—is not immediately given. Thus, it needs to be unfolded. This unfolding comes about by attaining the basic components of being, a process that is accomplished gradually and dialectically from that which is immediately given to experience—that is, sensible substances. The final stage of this process provides a more refined (that is, theoretically well-grounded and logically coherent) understanding of the meaning of being and its proper instance.

III

What is Substance? The question about substance is complex because it is a question that aims to disclose the basic constituent and the primary entity of the composite substances (the objects of sense perception), including their first principles and their highest causes that determine their being in the way they are (1041b25-27).⁽¹⁷⁾ These causes and principles belong to substances as such and are considered by Aristotle to be substances as well (1041a7-10, 1041b7-8, 1041b28-31) (In fact, these causes and principles are nothing but the basic components—form in particular—responsible for the being of sensible substances.⁽¹⁸⁾ Accordingly, the term

“substance” refers here to: 1) particular and definite entity (a *this*) and 2) to the first principles and the highest causes of the *being* of that entity.⁽¹⁹⁾

It is *through* the particular perceived substances, things that are *qua* being (100317-19), that Aristotle tries to attain the basic principles and the highest causes of being. In other words, it is by means of that which is one, definite and persistent that Aristotle tries, theoretically, to arrive at the highest causes and the first principles of being. As we shall see, some of these principles and causes, the formal cause in particular, are *eminent* in sensible substances, in the sense that they do not exist apart from them (1033b19-25). Thus, first causes, in terms of their internal involvement in determining the being of a thing, are, in a certain respect,⁽²⁰⁾ particulars.⁽²¹⁾ This is the case insofar as these principles are considered from the perspective of their active role as the principles and causes of the being of particular composite substances. The causal effect of the first principles and the highest causes requires, in my opinion, their being ontologically present in and directly involved in the process of the generation and destruction of the sensible things and during the various stages of their formal actualization. However, in terms of these causes and principles being the cause of making *this* individual fall under universal classes or

kinds and thus become an object of knowledge, they can be considered universal. It must be noted that the universality assigned to the first principles and highest causes comes from the apprehension of their causal function, which is witnessed in the process of forming the identity and the being of all that is given to sensible experience. Accordingly, the universality indicated in the present context refers to a causal *act*, which is generally noticed in the being of sensible beings but occurs individually and temporally.

Let me return to Aristotle's answer to the question about substance: What is it?

Aristotle introduces (1028b33-1029a2) four candidates for being "the substance of a thing": (1) the essence, (2) the universal, (3) the genus, and (4) the underlying subject. The underlying subject is "that of which the rest are predicated, while it is not itself predicated of anything else" (1028b36-370). Aristotle thinks it is important to determine the nature of the underlying subject first because it is "considered to be in the truest sense substance" (1029a1-2).

The term "underlying subject" is used, Aristotle points out, to refer to three things: matter, form (shape), and the composite of form and matter. Matter seems to be the most qualified candidate to hold the status of

being the underlying subject and thus to be considered as substance “in the truest sense;” for, if, as has just been pointed out, substance “is not that which is predicated of a subject, but that of which the other things are predicated,” then matter will be substance,, since matter is what remains when everything else (every determination) is removed from the sensible thing (1029a). However, matter, according to Aristotle, cannot be substance because, as such, it is not a *this*; that is, it is “neither a particular thing nor a quantity nor designated of any of the categories that define being” (1029a20-22). In other words, matter is not something separate and definite, and the marks of substance, from Aristotle’s point of view, are *thisness* (particularity) and separability (1029a27-30). For these reasons, it is not enough to identify substance as “itself not predicated of anything else, while of which the rest are predicated” alone because it does not identify or singularize the substantial component in the being of a thing and may make matter, which is indefinite and indeterminate, the basic and primary substance.

What remains, then, from the three candidates, are form and the composite of form and matter. Aristotle excludes the composite of form and matter from being substance, “since it is posterior [to form] and obvious” (1029a31-32). The composite is posterior to

form because form is prior to matter and more truly existent than matter (1029a5-7). The priority of form is ontological and epistemic in respect of its being a *this* (actuality) and separate (in notion), whereas matter exists only potentially. As a result, form emerges as the most qualified entity for being the “underlying subject.”

Aristotle’s next step is to decide which one of the above candidates (essence, genus, and universal) best qualifies as the substance of a thing. He puts forward three criteria that a thing must fulfill to be considered substance in the fullest and truest sense:

- 1- It must be the “underlying subject” of a thing, in the sense stated above.
- 2- It must be a *this*—that is, something that enjoys (a sort of) particularity or individuality.⁽²²⁾
- 3- It must be separate—that is, something determinate, independent, definite and intelligible.

These criteria indicate that the substance of a thing must be particular and not universal: Aristotle states, “the substance of a thing is peculiar to it and does not belong to another thing” (1038b10-11). This means that both the universal and the genus are excluded from being the substance of the particular thing because both apply to more than one thing. that is, in their very nature, both “appertain to several things” and not one

particular thing, as the criteria of substance demand. Aristotle says, “It is evident that none of the things that belong universally is a substance and that none of the common predicates signifies a *this*, but only a *such*” (1038b35-1039a2). In the *Cat.* 2a8-17, Aristotle provides another reason why the universal and the genus cannot be considered substances in the primary sense (though they can be considered substances in a secondary sense): Their conceptual articulation comes as a result of identifying and thus mentally separating (extracting) the form (expressed in terms of genus and species) of *this* form from *this* form (the composite substance), and “if the primary substances did not exist, it would be impossible for any of the other things to exist” *Cat.* 2b5-6⁽²³⁾. (I will discuss this point later.)

Thus, the only candidate left for us is form, which Aristotle identifies later as “essence.”

IV

The emergence of form/essence as the true substance (being) of a thing: According to Aristotle:

The essence of each thing is what the thing is said to be in virtue of itself. The essence of you is not the essence of a musician, for it is not in virtue of yourself that you are a musician. Your essence, then, is what you are in virtue of yourself (1029b14-17).

After minimizing the metaphysical status of matter, the composite, and the universal in all of its types (specie and genus), Aristotle turns his attention to form. His attempt to unfold the nature of form and its causal function begins from a certain logical and linguistic experience: that of definition. Briefly stated, the aim of definition, according to Aristotelian teaching, is to provide true and scientific knowledge about its object. This indicates the presence of a form of correspondence between the definition and the thing defined, where the former discloses the true “what-it-is” of the latter. As we know, the idea of correspondence rests on the realistic assumption that our mind has the ability to understand the world *in the way it is* and that it can express this understanding by means of language. Whether this theory is philosophically tenable is not my concern here. I raise it only to highlight the basic assumption that seems to me to ground Aristotle’s connection between essence and definition (that is, between ontology and epistemology).

I noted above that one of the senses of the term “being” is “the what of a thing” (1028a12).⁽²⁴⁾ This sense is considered by Aristotle to be the primary sense of “being,” and it denotes substance (1028a14-15). He argues, “What is evident is the fact that definitions and essences, in the primary and unqualified sense, are

of substances alone. There are also definitions and essences of the others in a similar manner, but not in the primary sense.”⁽²⁵⁾ The primacy of the sense of being under consideration over its other senses mirrors the way the question about being (or about substance. This is because Aristotle identifies being with substance) is formulated—that is, in the form of “what is being (substance)?” The “whatness” question seeks to disclose the “essence” of a thing, i.e., the fundamental constituent of the being of sensible things. Essence, then, shows itself as the substance of the thing, because, as the passage above states, “the essence of each thing is that which is said to be in virtue of itself” (1029b14-15) and because “essence will belong primarily and in the full sense to a substance” (1030a30-31). Essence here is peculiar to the thing (in the sense of being identical with the substance of that thing), and it is definite and intelligible (separable): “Each thing and its essence are one and the same but not by accident, and that to *know* each thing is to *know* its essence. And so even by exhibiting particular instances, it is clear that a thing and its essence must be one” (1031b19-22). By “essence,” Aristotle means, here, form (1032b1). Apostle remarks that “the term ‘essence’ has two meanings: the form, as it exists in the thing, and the formula or *knowledge* of it, as it exists in the souls.”⁽²⁶⁾

However, although the essence of a thing is universally expressed through definition (that is, in terms of genus and species), one should not neglect the fact that this universal expression comes as the result of the direct experience with form that is *concretely* given from something which can be pointed to. The formula (the essence) of “man” is constructed out of the direct experience with *this* man, and the formula of “house” is constructed out of the direct experience with *this* house.

From the previous discussion, we can infer that, because Aristotle identifies form/essence with substance, the form/essence is the true substance (being) of a thing and its cause of being.⁽²⁷⁾

Let us now consider the causal function of form and its metaphysical consequences.

V

Form as the Cause of the Being of Composite Substances: The question that imposes itself at this stage of the discussion concerns the type of causality assigned to form. As we have seen above, Aristotle identifies four types of causality: the material cause (matter), the efficient cause (“the source of motion”), the formal cause (“the essential nature of a thing”), and the final cause (“the end of any generative or motive

process”) 983a26-983b3. We can comfortably dismiss the idea of form as the material cause of a thing as form, in general, is separable from matter and is *actuality*,⁽²⁸⁾ whereas matter is inseparable and is *potentiality*.

Now, according to chapters 7 and 8 from *Met. Book Z*, form is usually regarded by Aristotle as the efficient, formal and final cause of the composite substances.⁽²⁹⁾ This threefold function of form is witnessed in the process of natural generation and human production.⁽³⁰⁾ What is important to me, about these types of causality ascribed to form, is the one that focuses on it being the efficient cause of the composite substances. The importance of this type of causality is related to the fact that Avicenna, as we will see later, conceives the causal role of form/essence somewhat differently.

Let us see how Aristotle conceives the function of form in the process of generation and destruction.

Aristotle starts with the following argument:

Since that which is generated is generated *by* something (by which I mean the starting point of the process of generation), and *from* something (by which let us understand not the privation but the matter...), and *becomes* something (i.e., a sphere or circle or whatever else it may be), just as the craftsman does not produce the substrate, i.e., the bronze, so neither

does he produce the sphere, except accidentally, inasmuch as the bronze sphere is a sphere, and he makes the former. For to make an individual thing is to make it out of the substrate in the fullest sense. I mean that to make the bronze round is not to make the round or the sphere but something else, i.e., to produce this form in another medium. For if we make the form, we must make it out of something else, for this has been assumed... It is therefore obvious that the form (or whatever we should call the shape in the sensible thing) is not generated—generation does not apply to it—nor is the essence generated, for this is that which is induced in something else either by art or by nature or by potency. But we do cause a bronze sphere to be, for we produce it from bronze and a sphere; we induce the form into this particular matter, and the result is a bronze sphere (1033a24-b10).

In another passage Aristotle says,

What causes that which exists potentially to be in *actuality*, then, aside from that which acts in the case of things that are generated? Doubtless, nothing else causes that which is potentially a sphere to be a sphere in actuality, but this is the essence in each (1045a30-34).

The first passage states that form/essence is not generated⁽³¹⁾ but is induced in matter by art, nature, or potency. What is generated, rather, is the “concrete whole which is called after it is generated” (1033b17-19). However, if form is not generated, does this mean then that form is independent—in the Platonic sense—from its particular instances? No, it does not, Aristotle answers, because if form exists independently from its particular instances as a *this*, “no individual thing would ever have been generated” 1033b23-25. That is, if form exists in itself, as Plato claims, apart from its sensible instances, this would mean that it must be individual—that is, a *this* and unity.⁽³²⁾ However, this would prevent it from being instantiated or shared by many and cannot, therefore, be causally active. Accordingly, form must be of a nature that allows it to be present equally in each of its instances. In other words, form must be immanent (and not transcendent) and must play a causal role in the process of the substantial and accidental changes of sensible things. Nonetheless, Aristotle seems to ascribe a sort of universality to form when he says that form must be “of such a kind; it is not a definite individual,⁽³³⁾ but we produce or generate from the individual something ‘of a such a kind’; and when it is generated it is an individual ‘of a such a kind’” 1033b25-28. We must emphasize, again, that Aristotle’s

description of form here as having a universal aspect does not contradict its being individual or particular, as we said above—though not in the Platonic sense of individuality, in the sense of being “one-above-many.” What is in Aristotle’s mind, I think, when he declares that form is not individual is that form in the platonic sense does not exist independently of particular substances—i.e., as a particular entity (that is, as a *this*) apart from and above its instances. Aristotle rejects such an idea of individuality—i.e., the idea that considers form to be ontologically separate from particular substances. Thus, the universality indicated by Aristotle in the present context should be interpreted in a way that does not contradict the idea of form’s being essentially immanent in the particular substances (or forms) and, thus, itself being somewhat individual.⁽³⁴⁾ This can be established by noticing that Aristotle (in the present context) removed—or at least diminished—the Platonic import of the idea of universality, which indicates ontological separateness from sensible objects, and singled out, instead, a particular aspect of it, as being “of such a kind”—which, in my opinion, does not have a metaphysical or ontological implication or commitment but rather contains an epistemic significance related to the way sensible objects are given and classified under general terms and classes. In my opinion, the

expression “of such a kind” is related to substance in the sense of a formula that “exists universally as knowledge in the soul.”⁽³⁵⁾ This “formula” cannot exist apart from the individual thing that instantiates it.⁽³⁶⁾ In other words, essence or formula (the definition of a thing), whose components (terms) are universal in nature, is extracted from the given individual form (or substance). This individual form is (mentally) separate, determinate, persistent and ontologically independent, and it is thus considered to be substance and being in the primary sense. Being persistent, determinate and separate allows the repetition (or, to put it differently, the transmission) and the possibility of the (generic and specific) repetition of the form of the individual form. This capacity of repetition removes the individual form automatically from the realm of spatiotemporal unrepeatable particulars and places it within a special ontological region that is not purely universal. To repeat: in my opinion, the universality assigned to the individual form is generated from the form’s capacity of repetition and persistence during the processes of substantial and accidental changes. Therefore, the individual form’s being repeatable and shared by many particulars does not entail its universality in the Platonic sense because the presence of one individual form is sufficient to constitute its universal conceptual

counterpart. In that respect, the actual sharing between several individuals in one attribute or one characteristic should not be, in my point of view, considered the source of the reality of its universality. However, if form is not universal, it is not particular, either, in the manner Socrates is, for Socrates is an unrepeatable entity, and his essence, as Socrates, is bounded by spatiotemporal features related to his own material features. The case, however, is different if we attempt to define Socrates in terms of his species and genus. The question here is no longer about a spatiotemporal entity (i.e., Socrates as such) but about a repeatable entity unbounded by the actual presence of Socrates, though it is shown and given through him and other human beings. In that respect, Socrates is a human being because he *is* a human being, but at the same time, he is not *the* human being because there are other individuals who share the same form of humanity. As a result of our present discussion, I venture to say that the immanent form is neither particular, in the sense Socrates is, nor universal in the Platonic sense, since it is given through sense experience as a *this* (*Cat.* 3b10-23; *Met.* 1042a29) (that is, its thisness, if I may say so, is noticed in its sensible instances and not apart from them). What is universal is the form as it exists in the mind, which is extracted from the individual particular form.

I think that this modification of the content of the concept of universality that I ascribe to Aristotle helped him to redefine the nature of the relationship between form and particular form—that is, between transcendence and immanence. Form, according to the Platonic corpus, transcends its particular instances, and this transcendence enables it to have a higher degree of being (or reality) than its instances. It also enables the concept of universality to have ontological advantage and priority over that of individuality or particularity. Aristotle, on the other hand, turns Plato's conception of form and universality upside down. To him, the forms of sensible substances are immanent in particular forms, and their universal aspect does not give them any ontological advantage over the particular forms; to the contrary, reality witnesses its complete fulfillment in particular forms. and the further form is removed from its concrete embodiment, (the place where it shows itself and appears. to a higher degree of universality), the further it is removed from reality.⁽³⁷⁾

I would like now to return to the point where I digressed, and discuss the import of the second passage, which explains the causal and the epistemic function of form.

Ultimately, form is the cause of the being of composite substances. It is “the cause through which the matter is a

thing” (1041b8-9). Thus, it answers the question of “why something belongs to something else” (e.g., why are bricks and stones a house?) (1041a22-25). The “*why*” question seeks the cause or the causes of a thing—that is, its essence—which is in some cases the final cause (as perhaps in the case of a house or a bed) and in others the first mover ... but while we seek the latter kind of cause in generations and destructions, we seek the former kind also in cases of existence” (1041a25-30). In that respect, form is not only the formal cause of a thing but can also be its efficient and final cause.

⁽³⁸⁾ Form is, therefore, the actuality of certain potency, the approximate matter, and it is the cause of the being of sensible substances. It is the cause of the being of the thing’s being because matter cannot become a *this* (a determinate perceived entity) without the agency of form. Form here is a *moving* force responsible for the actuality of that which exists potentially, and what is in the state of actuality is the immanent form. Form here is not only the cause of existence but also the real existent element in a thing. Keeping this in mind, we must not, however, neglect the role of matter in the process of the form’s individuation and actualization because, although matter becomes a definite entity, thanks to form, form is actualized and individuated through the mediation of matter. Without matter, no particular form

would exist. If this statement is accurate, then matter plays a significant role in the designation of form as a *this*—at least in the sensible realm.

It must be noted here that, according to the presentation above, Aristotle does not say anything about form/essence being the cause of its own existence because, as such, it is not generated. What he says, rather, is that the “individual form” (“a *this*”) in the natural generation⁽³⁹⁾ and the artificial production⁽⁴⁰⁾ (or form in general)⁽⁴¹⁾ is that which generates or produces *another* “composite substance.” And whether this production is natural or artificial, “some part must necessarily pre-exist, because the matter is a part and because it is matter that pre-exists in the product and becomes something” (1033a1-2). This means that “the causes of substances are particulars,”⁽⁴²⁾ “for the particular is the origin of the particulars, for man is the origin of man universally, but there is no such man who is no particular man, but Peleus is the cause of Achilles, and your father of you, and this B of this BA” (1071a20-2).

VI

General Conclusions: From the previous discussion, we can conclude the following.

1. Being has many senses, all of which are related to one substantial entity: substance.

2. The question about being is a question about substance: 'What is it?' This question aims to uncover the true being of things and their ultimate causes and principles.
3. Being is not something other than, or different from, substance.
4. Form/essence emerges as the true substance (being) of a thing and its cause of being in the way it is.
5. Form is the *actuality* of that which exists potentially.
6. In that which concerns the sensible world, forms/ essences are not transcendent but immanent in sensible things, and they are the cause of the being of sensible beings
7. Forms are not spatiotemporal objects nor universals but something in between!
8. Accepting form/essence as that which determines the being of a thing and that which truly exists in the primary sense of being is admitting *the reality of diversity and plurality*. To accept that as a fact about the world not reduced to further form of reality is to reject the transcendental unity of being.

VII

The subject matter of first philosophy according to Avicenna: The proper subject matter of first philosophy, Avicenna says, is being qua being, "and the things sought after in [this science] are those that accompany [the

existent,⁽⁴³⁾] inasmuch as it is an existent unconditionally. Some of these things belong to [the existent] as though they were species—as, for example, substance, quantity, and quality. For, in undergoing such division, the existent does not require, [as is] required by substance, [a] prior division into many divisions, where it must [for example] be divided into human and not human. Some of these are akin to proper accidents, such as the one and the many, the potential and the actual, the universal and the particular, and the possible and the necessary.”⁽⁴⁴⁾ The first philosophy also investigates the basic principles and the highest causes of the contingent beings.⁽⁴⁵⁾

What makes “being” the proper subject of first philosophy is the “fact” that it is *common* to everything that exists.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Furthermore, its meaning, as “existence” or “actuality,”⁽⁴⁷⁾ is clear, simple,⁽⁴⁸⁾ and self-evident and, therefore, does not require clarification by means of further concepts.⁽⁴⁹⁾

However, before I take a step further into Avicenna’s view of being and its nature, I would like to make some preliminary remarks regarding his employment of the term “being” in the passages above, which might be a useful assessment in the upcoming discussion.

First, I must point out that the term “being” used in the introductory stage of the investigation is considered by Avicenna merely to be a mental concept in which its

content, as actuality, is given immediately to the mind. This concept, as such, has no reality (no *extension*) outside the mind whatsoever but nevertheless applies,⁽⁵⁰⁾ as we will see in the second remark, to different types and modes of being.⁽⁵¹⁾ Avicenna calls this concept “general being.”⁽⁵²⁾

Second, we can infer from Avicenna’s approach to the concept of being in *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, *al Najat*, and *Eyoon al Hikmah* that the notion of “general being” refers to two types of being: (1) necessary being and (2) contingent being. “Contingent being” designates, in turn, two modes of existence: (a) substance and (b) accidents. Necessary being necessarily exists in virtue of itself, and its essence is its very existence. Contingent beings (essences), on the other hand, necessarily exist, when they exist, in virtue of another being (that is, necessary being) and not in virtue of themselves. The essence of these beings is something other than their existence (I will discuss this point in detail later).

Thirdly, “general being” applies to the above designated regions of being *analogically*.⁽⁵³⁾ That is, the term “being” has the same sense (actuality) when applied to (or predicated of) necessary being and to contingent beings. However, it refers to the former (necessary being) primarily and to the latter secondarily because the essence of the latter is different from its existence, whereas the essence of

the former is the same as its existence. The term “being” also applies analogically to substance and accidents, but it refers to the former primarily—because it is neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject but is the subject of predication—and to the latter secondarily because they are present *in* a subject and cannot exist apart from it.

Fourth, Avicenna distinguishes between two modes of being: accidental and necessary. The former designates the state where being is something accidental or extrinsic to the existent essence, whereas the latter refers to the state where the essence of a thing is the same as its existence.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Fifth, in addition to “general being,” Avicenna introduces another term, “proper being.” “Proper being” signifies the thing’s essence or “reality.”⁽⁵⁵⁾ (“Reality” here denotes essence as having “extra-mental” existence).⁽⁵⁶⁾

The sixth remark is methodological in nature. Following Aristotle’s logical instructions regarding the conditions of scientific knowledge (demonstrative understanding) in that it “must proceed from items that are true and primitive and immediate and more familiar than and prior to and explanatory of the conclusions,”⁽⁵⁷⁾ Avicenna begins his investigation with a concept that seems to him to fulfill these requirements: existence. He states

that the meanings of “‘the existent,’ ‘the thing,’ and ‘the necessary’ are impressed in the soul in a primary way. This impression does not require better known things to bring it about....”⁽⁵⁸⁾ We notice here that Avicenna starts, as we just noted, from the content of a concept (the meaning of being as actuality) which, according to him, is immediately given and thus does not require further clarification by means of other concepts because there is no concept more evident than the concept of being.

VIII

The meaning of “being,” according to Avicenna: As we have seen in the previous passage, Avicenna starts his investigation from a specific sense of being, “actuality” (or existence). He considers this meaning self-evident, simple, and immediate and thus does not require further clarification or demonstration. “Being,” here, in the sense of actuality, therefore does not refer to a “proper subject” (substance), as it does with Aristotle.

It is clear from the previous elementary statements that Avicenna’s understanding of the concept of being is not formulated with regard to substance as its proper and primary instance in which its nature theoretically needs to be brought to light. This conceptualization puts him in contrast with Aristotle insofar as substance, according to Aristotle, refers to a certain mode of existence characterized

by being permanent, determinate (a *this*), and separate. This mode of being should be the object of philosophical investigation, and the question about being, what it is, is formulated in response to this desire—that is, the desire to *unfold* the real entities of being and their highest causes and first principles that primarily belong to them. The process of unfolding the reality (the substantial part) of being is gradual and dialectical in nature, beginning from the phenomena given through sensible experience and ending with a specific conception about its basic components. So, if the concept of being is, as Avicenna affirms, clear and self-evident from the beginning of the investigation, then it is no longer primarily related to substance (or to the question of being in general) in the sense posited by Aristotle. The correlation made by Aristotle between the concept of being and that of substance relies on the provisional indeterminacy of the latter. If the nature of substance (or being) is clear, determinate, and self-evident in the Aristotelian conceptual and metaphysical scheme from the beginning of the investigation (which is not the case with him), the concept of being and its proper instance will be clear as well and, therefore, there will no longer be a question about being in the first place. As a result, Avicenna's assertion of the self-evidence of the concept of being and his negligence of its relationship to substance point toward a form of reality in which substance/essence/form no longer serves as *the* fundamental entity, as it does

with Aristotle. This leads us to the following questions: What is the philosophical significance of Avicenna's exclusion of substance (or essence/form) from being the focal point of the metaphysical investigation? And why did he choose to start his investigation from a sense of being that clearly supports, as we will see in moments, such an exclusion? Is his choice motivated by a philosophical impulse to uncover being qua being, or, as I think, by a mystical one that tends to remove the multiplicity of being in favor of its unity—the favorite theme of mysticism? In other words, can we see in Avicenna's treatment of the concept of being a genuine desire to unfold the true nature of reality, or, to the contrary, a logical and philosophical expression of a certain religious understanding and intimate mystical experience?⁵⁹ We cannot, one might object, exclude the historical, the psychological and the social elements and their immediate influence on the temporal and social mind (however objective and transcendental it claims to be). This is a "fact" that applies to Avicenna as much as to Aristotle or to anyone else. Thus, we should pardon Avicenna if we find a trace of the spirit of his age in his work.

Though the pardon is granted and the influence of history is admitted, the dogmatic nature of Avicenna's treatment of the concept of being and its subsequent intellectual effect must be critically examined. The grand status that Avicenna occupies in the history of Islamic intellectual tradition and, more importantly, his tremendous influence

on later intellectual movements (in philosophy, mysticism, logic, theology, science and so on) that dominated the cultural scene in the Islamic world necessitates a critical reflection on his work in the spirit of another age: *our* age.

Keeping in mind the previous questions and remarks, I would like to move now to a discussion of what remains from Avicenna's perspective of the structure of reality and to postpone my answers and comments to the final stage of the discussion.

IX

Essence and Existence according to Avicenna: Following the Aristotelian line of thought, Avicenna states that essence is what a thing is said to be in virtue of itself. The essence of each thing is its reality (essence) specific to it⁽⁶⁰⁾ and which differentiates it—ontologically and conceptually—from all other essences.⁽⁶¹⁾

Avicenna then breaks with Aristotle by separating (conceptually) the thing's essence from its existence.⁽⁶²⁾ He asserts, "It is evident that each thing has a reality proper to it—namely, its quiddity."⁽⁶³⁾ It is known that the reality proper to each thing is something other than the existence that corresponds to what is affirmed;⁽⁶⁴⁾ because "if you said, 'The reality of such a thing exists either in concrete things, or in the soul, or absolutely,

being common to both,' this would have a meaning [that was] realized and understood. [Whereas,] if you were to say, 'The reality of such a thing is the reality of such a thing,' or 'The reality of such a thing is a reality,' this would be superfluous, useless talk."⁽⁶⁵⁾

Avicenna elaborates upon the foregoing distinction between the thing's essence and its existence from a conceptual perspective by noting that "you may understand the meaning of the triangle but doubt its 'extra-mental' existence."⁽⁶⁶⁾ He says in another place, answering some of the Mu'tazilites, who declare that "'being' signifies nothing whatsoever:"⁽⁶⁷⁾ "The rational person does not waste his thought on these superstitions. Every reasonable man knows that the sky exists, and that its being a sky is something different from its existence."⁽⁶⁸⁾ What he says here is that if the essence of a thing is the same as its existence, we will be certain of its existence as soon as we grasp its essence. According to him, this is not the case: We may understand the essence of, for instance, a triangle but doubt its existence, which means, consequently, that the essence of a thing and its existence are different.

We must bring to the reader's attention that the difference posited by Avicenna between the thing's essence and its existence rests, basically, on the act of contemplating essence as such apart from any

characteristic or attribute that does not essentially belong to it.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Thus, being theoretically considered in this manner, essence, according to Avicenna, is “devoid” (or empty) of existence.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Therefore, it is different from it. This difference, however, is not confined to the mental realm as a result of the conceptual analysis of the presentation of an object (the essence of a thing) given through sensible experience or imagination, but it says something about the objective ontological state of the given essence and (as we will see in a moment) its relation to existence. This leads us to the following questions: (1) How will this conceptual distinction affect the metaphysical status of essence in the world and its causal function as presented by Aristotle? And (2) What form of reality will originate from it? I will try to answer these two questions in light of Avicenna’s following argument.

If essence is different from existence, Avicenna argues, and if it is devoid of existence, then essence lacks the capacity to grant existence (which appears as a predicate in the existential statements) to itself or to other essences. If it cannot provide existence, then its existence must be attained from an external agent whose essence is the same as its existence, to avoid infinite regress. Moreover, if existence is something external to essence, then essence, *in virtue of itself*, is not necessarily existent but possibly existent. If essence is possibly existent then existence

“occurs” or “happens” to essence.⁽⁷¹⁾ He says, “as for existence, it is not a quiddity of something nor a part of the quiddity of something. I mean that things having quiddities do not include ‘existence’ in the comprehension of their quiddities. Rather, existence is something that occurs to these quiddities,”⁽⁷²⁾ and, in that regard, existence is something accidental (or coincidental) to essence/quiddity. The idea of existence being “accidental” to essence must not be understood in the sense of being dependent on it (on essence) or *in* it but in the sense of being something that occurs (or happens) to it by means of an external agent.⁽⁷³⁾

Avicenna points out, afterwards, that “it is permissible that the [essence]⁽⁷⁴⁾ of a thing is a cause of one of the attributes of that thing and that one of the attributes of that thing is a cause of another attribute, as the specific difference [is a cause of] property”,⁽⁷⁵⁾ but it cannot be the cause of the thing’s existence because, as such, essence (as can be inferred from the above statements) is something “neutral”—that is, “inasmuch as it is possible, existence by its essence is not more appropriate than nonexistence.”⁽⁷⁶⁾ The “neutrality” assigned here to essence rests on the foregoing conceptual distinction between the thing’s essence and its existence. Thus, if existence is not a constitutive part of the essence of a thing, then the existence of that thing is not in virtue of

itself but in virtue of something else.⁽⁷⁷⁾ And if, to repeat, essence is essentially “devoid” of existence, it cannot be the cause of its own existence or the existence of any other entity. The only function of essence left, then, is to be the cause of the thing’s essence/form and the attributes related to it.

It is worth mentioning here that Avicenna’s consideration of the essence’s possibility or contingency arises from the act of contemplating the notion of being or existence as such.⁽⁷⁸⁾ He notes that by contemplating the “notion” of being/existence as such (a point to be discussed in a moment), we can identify two divisions of being (or existence), or two modes of existence:⁽⁷⁹⁾ (1) a being (or an existent) in which its existence is necessary in virtue of itself (that is, necessary being); and (2) a being that must exist in virtue of something else but as such and in virtue of itself is not necessary to exist. (I will soon discuss the method of deduction that Avicenna used to reach this conclusion.)⁽⁸⁰⁾

Now, the agent responsible for the essence’s existence and that which removes it from the state of pure neutrality and contingency to that of actuality (i.e., to that of existence) must be characterized by being existent *in virtue of itself* (that is, its essence is the same as its existence); otherwise, we will fall into infinite regress. Avicenna designates the agent (or the cause) responsible for the

essence's transmission from the state of contingency (and the accidental necessity of existence) to that of actuality with the name "efficient cause"—the cause of the essence's existence.⁽⁸¹⁾

I would like to bring to the reader's attention that the *idea* of necessary being (and that of contingent being as well) as deduced is already included in the aforementioned division of being (or existence) whence Avicenna started. However, it seems to me that there is a fallacy committed here—that of circular argumentation. (I will touch on this point in a moment.) The division itself is vague, problematic, and groundless and, thus, does not rise to the level of being self-evident,⁽⁸²⁾ as Avicenna assumes.⁽⁸³⁾ What is the conceptual ground for dividing existence into an existent in which its existence is necessary in virtue of itself and an existent that is necessary in virtue of something else. If one of its parts (viz., the former one) requires a demonstration of being a part of existence, whereas the other one is posited in terms of and, at the same time, opposed to the first part, which, as we just noted, requires a demonstration of being a part of existence?

Avicenna may answer our objection by saying that his argument follows a specific form of "scientific demonstration" where one starts from the cause (existence in our present case) and ends with its

effects (contingent beings).⁽⁸⁴⁾ I reply, in return, that this answer adds more obscurity to the “demonstration” in question than clarifies it, for two reasons. The first reason is that the aim of the demonstration advanced by Avicenna is to “prove” God’s existence by means of (the notion of) existence as such.⁽⁸⁵⁾ The problem here, as I just said, is with the manner in which this aim is achieved⁽⁸⁶⁾—viz., via the notion of existence, or, more specifically, via a postulated division of existence (that is, an existent that is necessary to exist in virtue of itself), part of which signifies, eventually, nothing but the being of God Himself. However, this is *arguing in a circle*. For how can God (or, more specifically, the notion of God), whose existence is under question, be a proof of His own existence? Secondly, God as being the efficient cause of beings is, like His existence, not self-evident and thus requires a demonstration. If it requires demonstration, then it cannot be the starting point of the scientific demonstration. Causality, classically speaking, is a relational concept that requires two parts—cause and effect (agent and patient)—related to one another. A cause is always the cause *of* something, and an effect is the effect generated *by* something else. Thus, one cannot consider one part of the causal relationship apart from the other. It is needless to say that the causal relationship under consideration must be proven. Now, the determination of God (necessary being) as the

efficient cause (in the sense of being the cause of the essences' existence) rests, as the remaining content of Avicenna's "demonstration" shows,⁽⁸⁷⁾ on the contingent state of essence (the effect). This contingency, and nothing else, is the characteristic that necessitates, according to Avicenna, positing necessary being as the ultimate cause of existence. Thus, in the end, the contingent beings (the effects) are the ones that lead to positing necessary being as their ultimate cause, and not the other way around, as Avicenna claims. Accordingly, Avicenna's "demonstration" contains, in my opinion, the germs of its own destruction.

We come now to Avicenna's understanding of substance and ask: What is its ontological status in his world according to the foregoing presentation? Avicenna preserves the intimate relationship posited by Aristotle above between essence and substance. He describes substance as "the thing having an established quiddity whose existence is not in a subject."⁽⁸⁸⁾ Identifying substance with essence (quiddity) places it, simultaneously, on the same level of being as that of essence, the state of contingency.⁽⁸⁹⁾ And if substance is contingent in nature and other than existence,⁽⁹⁰⁾ as we may logically conclude from the above, it no longer represents being in the primary unqualified sense. What takes the place of substance as being the primary being to which the term "being" applies primarily and without qualification is necessary being.

To summarize the conclusion of this stage of the discussion regarding Avicenna's understanding of the natures of essence and existence and their relationship, we may say, first, that essence, according to him, is conceptually different from existence. Essence, theoretically contemplated, does not include existence as one of its constituent parts. Second, this conceptual difference says something about the ontological status of essence and its function in that it is, as such, devoid of existence and, thus, requires for its existence an external agent (efficient cause) in which its essence is the same as its existence. In that respect, third, essence/form is considered by Avicenna only as the formal cause of the sensible substances but not their existence. The cause of the being of sensible substance (and form, as well) is the being in which its existence is necessary in virtue of itself. Fourth and most importantly, essence, as long as it exists, is in a state of ontological deprivation, and its existence cannot be sustained without necessary being. Consequently, essences, in virtue of themselves, are nothing; that is, they are not-beings (and the same can be said about substance and its ontological status, because it is identified, by both Avicenna and Aristotle, as essence/form).

X

Towards the unity of being and the dissolution of essences (from multiplicity to unity): However, where does Avicenna's understanding of the ontological status of essence (and, thus, substance) leave us? To what sort of reality? My answer is as follows: If essence is *authentically* devoid of existence, if it is other than existence, if it is in a constant "need" for existence as long it exists, if it does not cause existence, and if, according to the previous premises, it implies or requires a higher mode of existence (necessary being) as the ultimate (and the only) cause of its existence and that which deserves to be regarded as the true being, then essence is not real in the metaphysical sense of the word. Furthermore, if existence (necessary being) is the ultimate reality and that to which all beings are directly and indirectly reduced, then multiplicity is simply nominal and not actual. We can sense here, if our inference is valid, a clear tendency in understanding and presenting being (or the ultimate reality) in mystical terms, though clothed in philosophical form. However, this mode of understanding, however convincing and poetic it might seem, has negative and grave consequences regarding the ontological position of the experienced world (the world of diverse entities or essences) and the way we

conduct ourselves, scientifically and morally, towards it (it is easy to notice the affects of such an understanding on the scientific, the cultural, the social, and the political movement of the Islamic world).

If we dwell on such an understanding of reality, convinced of its reasoning and what it says about the ontological status of the world of perception, then it is easy for us to *miss* experiencing that world *in virtue of itself and in the way it appears* and is *given* to us (and the way we are delivered to the world, so to speak), as a diverse, changeable world full of material and spiritual (not in the religious sense) possibilities and experiences. If one should attempt to understand and explain the phenomenal world (as Avicenna and some other Muslim thinkers tried and are still trying to do) within the horizon and the framework of such an understanding, he or she will find himself or herself compelled to conduct his or her investigation with an eye on being as the ultimate source of reality or truth and as the ultimate source of explanation. It is the *idea* of the reality of being and its unity, not experience, that will form and guide our attitude and our behavior here regarding the world of perception and its epistemic and moral value. Here, we find Avicenna moving far away from the world of appearances. He does not care, as Aristotle does, to save it or clarify it but, rather, to transcend it (or theoretically eliminate it). In short, he

reduces its multiplicity to one single authentic unity. And this is nothing, as we said, but mysticism presented in philosophical and logical language.

Conclusion:

Avicenna says: "Reflect on how our demonstration of the First's existence, oneness, and detachment from [accidental] qualities does not require reflection on anything other than existence itself, nor does it require consideration of its creation or its acts, even though such things give evidence of it. But the [the former] way [of demonstration] is more solid and nobler [than the latter]."⁽⁹¹⁾

The importance of Avicenna in the history of Islamic "philosophy" rests, in my opinion, on his laying the logical and philosophical foundation for the idea of the authenticity of being and its unity, which finds its highest expression in the late "philosophy" of Mulla Sadra. This idea could not have gained ground in the Islamic "philosophic" scene without Avicenna's assertion, accomplished by relying on a certain interpretation of the concept of being, on the conceptual difference between essence and existence. One of the logical and metaphysical consequences of this distinction is the removal of essence/form/substance from its primary ontological place assigned to it, directly and indirectly, by Aristotle and his predecessors. What comes to the

stage now, as reality in the fullest sense, is existence, which is other than entities (essences), as the conceptual analysis tells us (according to Avicenna, of course). However, if existence, which is other than essence, is ultimately real, then essence is not real even during its existence because its existence, while it exists, is not in virtue of itself. If essence is not real, diversity and multiplicity are not real either, because the reality of the unity of existence excludes, simultaneously, the reality of its multiplicity.

However, how did this shift in the metaphysical perspective regarding the proper instance of being come about? It came about, I think, through reliance on a certain possible interpretation of being as existence. This “deliberate” choice of a certain meaning and particular interpretation of the concept of being is made, in my view, under the presupposition that necessary being is, as the passages above clearly show, its primary instance, and its primacy needs to be proven and not dialectically discovered. Thus, the whole idea around which Avicenna’s metaphysical investigation revolves is necessary being—the same idea that the work of all Muslim thinkers revolves around. It is this sense of being that was the most appropriate one for Avicenna to begin with to prove the existence of necessary being.

It emerges that Avicenna's metaphysics is a form of philosophical mysticism that tends not to understand, dialectically, the highest causes and the first principles of the world of experience but, rather, to overcome it. There are big differences between the two attitudes in terms of their practical and theoretical outcomes: The first tries, in one way or another, to keep in touch with the world of experience and not alienate itself totally from it, whereas the latter tries to displace it with what it believes to be a higher form of reality that is alien and opposite to the world of experience. Unfortunately, this *otherworldly* attitude regarding the world of experience is the one that prevailed—and is still prevailing—amongst both the intellectuals and the laymen of the Islamic world. I think that now is the time to understand philosophy not as a rational and logical tool to prove (or improve) transcendental theological or ideological concepts but as a specific act of consciousness that tries, through certain questions and from a humanistic stance, to open and find new fields and regions of possibilities that belong to our world, the world of human experience.

(Endnotes)

- 1 'Efficient cause,' according to the Avicennian framework, designates (1) the principle of change and motion in the natural world and (2) the cause of the essence's existence.
- 2 "Qua" in the sense of "as": The idea here is that philosophy aims to study the being of things and not part of it, as special sciences (e.g., mathematics, physics) do.
- 3 Aristotle (981a30) points out that knowledge of the *why* is knowledge of the cause or causes, "for we say that we understand each thing when we think that we know its first cause" 983a25-26. Apostle's translation.
- 4 The matter or the underlying subject (983a30).
- 5 I would like to bring to the reader's attention that this paper will mostly rely on G. Apostle's translation of *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, the Peripatetic Press: Grinnell, Iowa.
- 6 Which is the Good, «for this is the end of every generation and every motion» 983a32-33.
- 7 1003 a26-32.
- 8 The "universality" is used here not in the logical sense but in the metaphysical.
- 9 Lear, Jonathan, *Aristotle: the Desire to Understand*, Cambridge: University Press 2009, p. 56. In *On Generation and Corruption* I. 8, 325a13-20, Aristotle says, regarding the Eleatics' line of thought, that "they were led to transcend sense-perception and to disregard it on the ground that one ought to follow reason; and so they assert that the universe is one and immovable..."

Moreover, although these opinions appear to follow logically, to believe them seems next door to madness when one considers the facts.”

10 See, for example, J. Owens’ remark in *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, Pontifical institute of Mediaeval studies: Toronto, Canada 1963, p. 174.

11 It seems that the «this» used here is meant to remove any illusion that the substance identified is of a universal nature.

12 *Meta.* 1003b22-1004b20.

13 See, Averroes, *Grand Commentaire de la Métaphysique*, Dar el Machreq éditeurs: Beyrouth, Liban, VII, p. 746-746.

14 D. Wyatt Alken, *Essence and Existence, Transcendentalism and Phenomenalism: Aristotle’s Answers to the Questions of Ontology*, points out that “Aristotle rarely touches upon the strictly theoretical concept of *Sein* [being] as such, or if he does, the illusion generally remains peripheral and nonexplicit.” In *Book I* from the *Metaphysics* Aristotle remarks that “if being itself cannot exist as a substance and as something which is one and is apart from the many (for it is common to all) but only as a predicate, then neither can unity be a substance, for ‘being’ and ‘unity’ are the most universal of all predicates” 1053b18-22. In that respect, being is not an entity, and it is not something different from (and additional to) the individual substance.

15 Charles Kahn, *the Verb ‘to be’ and the Concept of Being*, the *Logic of Being, Historical Studies*, edited by Simo Knuttila and Jakko Hintikka, p. 14.

- 16 The question about substance here, as we shall see later, is an inquiry about the first principles and the highest causes that are the substances of composite substances.
- 17 Owens, Joseph, *the Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto: Canada 1963, p. 173.
- 18 Because they are the principles of the composite substances (1041b2534-). See Charlotte Witt, *Substance and Essence in Aristotle*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 1989, Chapter 4.
- 19 Later (1039b20-22), Aristotle will state that there are two kinds of substances: the concrete thing and the formulae.
- 20 I will explain this complex and controversial view in a moment.
- 21 T.H. Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles*, Clarendon Press: Oxford 2002, p. 253.
- 22 Owens, the *Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, pp. 388, points out that the term “a *this*” refers to the form as separate at least in notion from matter and, thus, it is not a “singular.” But the form that is separate in notion is universal in nature, and universals, as just pointed out, are not substances in the primary sense.
- 23 “Primary substances” designate here individual substances; in contrast, “secondary substances” signify species and their genera (2a16-17).
- 24 A term that is equivalent to the notion of “essence.”

25 1030b5-8. 'Others' here refers to things that fall under other categories, such as the category of quality, quantity...etc.

26 Apostle, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, p. 331.

27 Aristotle identifies form with essence: "by 'form' I mean the essence of each thing, and its primary substance" (1032b1-2).

28 1043 a28-29.

29 Aristotle, in *Physics* (198a24-28), states that the form, the mover (the efficient cause), and the final cause "often" amount to one: "For both the whatness and the final cause are one, and the first source of motion is the same in kind as these (for man begets man), and, in general, this is so in the case of a movable mover."

30 1032 a20-1032b23.

31 There are some questions about whether Aristotle accepts the eternity of forms.

32 It must be pointed out here that Aristotle assumes that «if the form is to exist separately, then it must be a *this* in the sense of a particular." Bostock, David, *Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Clarendon Press: Oxford 1994), p. 131.

33 It is not individual apart from matter, as the Platonic Ideas must be, if they are to be considered, according to Aristotle, substances.

34 Witt, *Substance and Essence in Aristotle*, p. 143 says, for instance, that "for Aristotle, form or essence is an individual and not a universal."

- 35 G. Apostle, Hippocrates, *Aristotle's metaphysics*, p. 343.
361039 a1-3.
- 37 Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, Lund Humphries, London, 1951, p. 286.
- 38 D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Clarendon Press: London 1924, VII. p. 223.
- 39 Aristotle points out that «natural generation is the generation of things whose generation is by nature. That from [which] they are generated is what we call matter; that by which, is something which exists naturally; and that which they become is a man or a plant or something else of this kind, which we call substance in the highest degree» (1032a16-20).
- 40 Aristotle says that «all productions proceed from either art or potency or thought.... Things are generated artificially whose form is contained in the soul (by 'form[,] I mean the essence of each thing, and its primary substance)» (1032a27-1032b3).
- 41 «Form» in the sense of «substance without matter» (1032b15). Aristotle, in this passage, uses the term «essence» (εἶναι) to refer to this consideration of form/substance.
- 42 T.H. Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles*, 253.
- 43 I am going to use the term “being” instead of “existence” most of the time in my paper for the sake of convenience and nothing more.
- 44 Avicenna, *the Metaphysics of the Healing*, translated, introduced, and annotated by Michel E. Marmura, Brigham Young University Press: Utah 2005, pp. 9-10. As we shall see

in a moment, the generality assigned by Avicenna to being is different in perspective from the one indicated by Aristotle.

45 *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, p.10.

46 *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, p. 23. In part II p. 47 from *Al-Najat*, (Dar aljeel Press: Beirut), Avicenna points out that theology is the science that studies the states of the absolute being, its principles and its peculiar properties (p. 47).

47 Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, p. 24. It is worth noting that the meaning of “being” as “actuality” is mentioned by Aristotle but in contrast with being as “potentiality.”

48 Being, according to Avicenna, is not the composite of genus and differentia (i.e., it is not a genus). See Avicenna, *al Ishārāt Wa-t Tanbīhāt (Remarks and Admonitions)*, Translated by: C. Inati, Shams, Columbia University Press: New York, 2014, p.127.

49 I will discuss this point more later.

50 Or, better, divided into.

51 Regarding the multi-divisions of ‘general or absolute being,’ see, Fakhr al-dīn al-Isfarāyīnī al-Nīshābūrī, *Commentary on Metaphysics of Ibn Sīnā’s (Avicenna) Kitāb al-Njāt*, edited by Dr. Hāmed Nājī Isfahānī. Iran, Tehran, 2004.

52 Avicenna, *al Mubahasat (Deliberations)*, Intesharat Bedar Press: Qum, pp. 168-169.

53 Avicenna states that the term “being” does not apply to things synonymously (that is, equally) but analogically, *al Mubahasat*, p. 232.

- 54 Avicenna, *al Mubahasat*, pp. 153-154.
- 55 Avicenna, *the Metaphysics of the Healing*, p. 24.
- 56 I borrowed the translation “extra-mental” from Toshihiko Izutsu in his valuable introduction to Sharh-I Manzuma, *Commentary on the Meyaphysics of al-Manzuma* by H. M. Hâdi Sabzavâri, edited by M. Mohaghegh & T. Izutsu. Second edition, Society for the Appreciation of Cultural Works and Dignitaries: Tehran 2005, p. 109.
- 57 Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, chapter II, pp. 2-3. Translated with commentaries by Jonathan Barnes, Clarendon Press: Oxford, second edition 2002.
- 58 Avicenna, *the Metaphysics of the Healing*, p. 22. See also, *al-Najat*, pp. 48-49.
- 59 We may call this attempt: philosophical mysticism.
- 60 According to Islamic philosophy, essence, when has an “extra-mental” existence, is called “reality.”
- 61 Avicenna, *the Metaphysics of the Healing*, p. 24.
- 62 The idea of the difference between the thing’s essence from its existence seems to be of *Neo-Platonic* origin, introduced first to the Islamic world by Al-Farabi and then modified, logically and philosophically, by Avicenna and afterwards adopted by subsequent Islamic philosophy and theology as one of the integral parts of their dogmatic systems.
- 63 That is, its essence.
- 64 Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, p. 24.
- 65 *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, p. 24.

66 Avicenna, *Al Isharat Wa-t- Tanbihat (Remarks and Admonitions)*, (my translation from the Arabic text), p. 15.

67 Mu'tazilites were group of Mutakallimun (*Apologists and Theologians*) who appeared in the eighth century. "They were the first to expand the sources of religious cognition in Islam so as to include a valuable but previously—in such connection—rigorously avoided element: reason" (Goldzihar, Ignaz, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, translated by Andras and Ruth Hamori , Princeton University press, Princeton: New Jersey ١٩٨١, p. ٨٧.) It must be noted, however, that their use of reason is meant to support their dogma and nothing more.

68 Avicenna, *Al Mubahathat* (discussions), p. 93.

69 Avicenna, *Al Isharat Wa-t-Tanbihat (Remarks and Admonitions)*, Inati's translation, p. 122.

70 In the sense of not including "existence" as part of its essential constituents.

71 Avicenna, *Al Isharat Wa-t-Tanbihat (Remarks and Adminitions)*, p. 128.

72 Avicenna, *Al Isharat Wa-t-Tanbihat*, p. 128.

73 It seems to me that Avicenna here assigns to essences a mode of being like that of Platonic forms preceding their existence in the sensible world. (This point is subject to further examination.)

74 I used 'essence' instead of 'quiddity,' which the translator prefers.

75 Avicenna, *Al Esharat wha Tanbihah*, p. 125.

76 Avicenna, *Al Esharat wha Tanbihah*, p. 123.

77 P. 121.

78 The concept of being is meant here. I must say, however, that Avicenna draws metaphysical conclusions from this act of contemplating the concept of being, which shows a sort of Rationalistic tendency in his treatment of that concept.

79 Or two divisions of being.

80 P. 122. I tend to agree here with Professor John Cleary's remark that Avicenna's deduction of necessary being from contemplating the concept of being is somewhat similar to that of Anselm. So, I apologize for rejecting his suggestion when he presented it to me when I met him.

81 Pp. 121-122. Unlike Aristotle, Avicenna takes "efficient cause" to signify two sorts of effect: one is in accordance with Aristotle's *Physics*, the principle that causes motion in the natural world; the other is the principle that causes essence's existence.

82 The idea of self-evidence itself and its epistemic worth is philosophically and theoretically debatable.

83 And Al-Farabi before him.

84 *Al Esharat wha Tanbihah*, p. 130 and *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, p. 16. He says, for instance, in *the Metaphysics of the Healing*, p. 16: "You ought to know that, within [this subject] itself, there is a way to show that the purpose in this science is to attain a principle without [requiring first] another science. For it will become clear to you anon, through an intimation,

that we have a way for proving the First Principle, not through inference from sensible things, but through universal, rational premises [(a)] that necessitate [the conclusion] that there must be for existence a principle that is necessary in its existence; [(b)] that renders [it] impossible for [the latter] to be in [any] respect multiple and changing; and [(c)] that necessitate [the conclusion] that [this principle] is the principle of the whole [of the other existents] and that [this] whole is necessitated [by the principle] according to the order [possessed by] the whole.”

85 Avicenna, *al Esharat wha Tanbihat*, p.130. Avicenna says, in the same page, that “Existence as such testifies the existence of the First Principle and that it is one.”

86 A point we discussed above.

87 *Al Esharat wha Tanbihat*, pp. 122-124.

88 Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, translated, introduced, and annotated by Michel E. Marmura, p. 277.

89 Al-Isfarâyini Fakhr al-Din, *Commentary on Metaphysics of Ibn Sinâ's Kitâb al Nagât*, edited by Dr. Hâmed Nâjî Isfâhanî, Tehran 2004, p. 18.

90 *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, p. 8.

91 Avicenna, *al Esharat Wha Tanbihat*, p. 130, Inati's translation.

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- ١٢ - هل تقرأ الحوليات بانتظام؟ ☐ نعم ☐ لا
- ١٣ - هل تقرأ الحوليات فقط إذا كان موضوعها له علاقة بتخصصك؟ ☐ نعم ☐ لا
- ١٤ - هل تقرأ الحوليات فقط إذا كنت ستستعين بمادتها كمرجع لبحث؟ ☐ نعم ☐ لا
- ١٥ - هل تحتفظ بالحوليات بعد قراءتها؟ ☐ نعم ☐ لا
- ١٦ - اقترحاتك لتطوير الحوليات وتطوير خدماتها للقارئ:

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الملخص

تدور ورقتنا هذه حول السؤال عن إمكانية بناء فهم نظري موضوعي للوجود بحيث يكون حاكيا عن مصداقه الأتم. إجابتي على هذا السؤال هي بالنفي، لأن البناء الفلسفي لمضمون تصور الوجود قائم، من وجهة نظري، على فهم ابتدائي زمني غير نظري لمعنى الوجود وحقيقته.

في سبيل دعم وجهة نظري هذه أجريت مقارنة بين قراءتين فلسفيتين لمعنى وحقيقة الوجود: قراءة أرسطو، وقراءة ابن سينا. خلاصة هذه المقارنة، أن كلا من هذين الفيلسوفين بنى تصوره النهائي عن المصداق الأتم و"الأصيل" للوجود على فهم معين له ولما ينبغي عليه أن يكون مصداقه؛ وهو فهم سابق على المرحلة النظرية من البحث.

إلى جانب النتيجة السابقة، استنتجت أيضا أن كلا من المعنيين الأوليين للوجود يعكس موقفا محددا من عالم الخبرة الإنسانية وقيمه العلمية، أحدهما (المبسوط من قبل أرسطو) يعلي من قيمته، والآخر (المطروح من قبل ابن سينا) يقلل منها. وهنا، من وجهة نظري، تكمن المشكلة في تعاطي ابن سينا مع مسألة الوجود؛ أي في عدم اعتباره عالم الخبرة الحسية طريقا مناسباً يستطيع الذهن من خلاله تكوين صورة "علمية" عن حقيقة الوجود. لقد حان الوقت، في نظري، لإعادة النظر في الطريقة التقليدية العقلية التي تعاطى بها ابن سينا مع مفهوم الوجود، والتعامل مع هذا المفهوم من منظور آخر ربما يكون أكثر اخبارا عن طبيعة الوجود.

المؤلف:

د. حسين حيدر علي إسماعيل.

– دكتوراه في الفلسفة اليونانية عن أطروحتي «إمكانية الحوار الفلسفي في محاورة ثييتيتوس لأفلاطون».

كلية بوسطن، ٢٠٠٥.

– مدرس للفلسفة اليونانية في قسم الفلسفة، جامعة الكويت.

الرسالة ٥١٣

يجري في أرسطو وابن سينا: من تعدد الجوهر إلى وحدة الوجود

د. حسين حيدر علي إسماعيل

قسم الفلسفة - كلية الآداب

جامعة الكويت

حوليات الآداب والعلوم الاجتماعية - الحولية التاسعة والثلاثون - ١٤٣٩هـ / ٢٠١٨م

في هذا العدد، جاءت ستُّ رسائلَ متنوّعة من حيثُ التَّخصُّصُ، فقد جاءت الرسالة (٥٠٩) لتناقش دراسةً ميدانيةً إعلاميةً عن دور تلفزيون أبو ظبي في التثقيف الصحي للمرأة الإماراتية، والتي جاءت من قبل الباحثين عزام عنانزة ومريم عدنان من جامعة اليرموك في المملكة الأردنيّة الهاشمية. أما الرسالة (٥١٠)، فهي دراسة لغوية عن ظاهرة الافتراضات المسبّقة عند النحاة العرب، وهي مقدّمة من قبل الباحث عمرو خاطر وهدان من جامعة طيبة في المملكة العربية السعودية. وجاءت الرسالة (٥١١) عن آليات العولة والهويّة الذاتية في إدراك الأهمية والرغبة وقوّة الدافع لتعلّم اللغة الإنجليزيّة لدى طلاب الجامعة، وهي من إعداد الباحث أحمد محمد زايد من جامعة سوهاج في جمهورية مصر العربية. وجاءت دراسة نحوية ودلالية بلاغية في الرسالة (٥١٢)، وهي الإشارة إلى هاء السكّت في ضوء القرآن الكريم من إعداد محمد قاسم حسين من دولة الكويت، والباحث في وزارة التربية. أما الدراسة في الرسالة (٥١٣)، فقد جاءت فلسفية باللغة الإنجليزيّة، وجاءت تحت عنوان يجري في أرسطو وابن سينا: من تعدّد الجواهر إلى وحدّة الوجود، وهي من إعداد حسين حيدر من جامعة الكويت. وأخيراً الرسالة (٥١٤) والتي جاءت أيضاً من الكويت، ومن باحث في وزارة التربية عبد الله غليس، وهي عن البنية الإيقاعيّة في شعر وهبي التل (عرار).

ففي ظلّ هذا التنوّع في المواضيع الخاصة بمجالَي العلوم الاجتماعية والإنسانية، نرجو أن يكون قد حقّق العدداً أهدافه المرجّوة، وأن يكون إضافةً إلى الأعداد السابقة من حوَلِيّات الآداب والعلوم الاجتماعيّة. أ.د. يعقوب يوسف الكندري

افتتاحية الإصدار الثاني من الحولية التاسعة والثلاثين

بقلم رئيس التحرير: أ.د. يعقوب يوسف الكندري

تمرّ المنطقة بتحديات متعدّدة، وهناك ملفاتٌ عدّة تحتاج إلى معالجة ومراجعة، وهناك مخاطرٌ تمرّ بها منطقة الخليج العربي تحديداً في ظل وجود عديد من المتغيرات التي طرأت مؤخراً تهدّد كيان هذه المنطقة ومنظومة مجلس التعاون لدول الخليج العربية. فقد حذر صاحب السموّ الشيخ صباح الأحمد الجابر الصباح من عدم استقرار للمنطقة وحذّر كذلك من تدخلات خارجية، سواء كانت إقليمية أو دولية. فقد أشار سموه إلى أنّه «علينا أن نكون واعين إزاء مخاطر احتمال تصاعد عدم الاستقرار؛ لأنها تمثّل دعوة صريحة لتدخلات إقليمية ودولية»، وهذا بلا شك سوف يؤثّر في الخليج وأمنه. وقد ركّز سموه أيضاً على أهمية منظومة دول مجلس التعاون لدول الخليج العربية، حيث أشار إلى أن «مجلس التعاون الخليجي هو بصيص أمل ونموذجٌ جدير بالحاكاة»، وأدرك سموه ما يؤدّيه هذا المجلس في تحقيق الأمن والاستقرار. فهو نموذجٌ يمكن تبنيّه على مستوى الدول العربية لما شكّله من قوة وقدرة على مواجهة الأزمات؛ مؤكّداً أنّ الذي يجمع دول الخليج أكبر ممّا يفرّقها، وذلك انطلاقاً من فهم سموه للعوامل المشتركة التي تجمعهم ضمن تاريخ مشترك وواحد. وقد اعتبر سموه مجلس التعاون رمزاً للافتخار، وهو مصدر أيضاً للأمن والرخاء. ولقد أكّد سمو الأمير في هذه الكلمة التي تم تسجيلها في التقرير الاقتصادي عن الكويت عام ٢٠١٨، وأصدرته مجموعة أكسفورد بزنس البريطانية، على تجنب وتفادي «الحرب الكلامية السخيفة». ولذلك، وفي وجود مثل هذا التحذير من شخصية سياسية احترّمها وقدرها العالم أجمع، لا بدّ من التفكير جيّداً في الخطوات القادمة التي يُفترض أن تعزّز من هذه المنظومة، والمتمثلة في منظّمة دول مجلس التعاون لدول الخليج العربية. فلا استقرار ولا شعور بالأمان إلّا من خلال هذه المنظومة التي تُعتبر أنموذجاً يُفترض الاحتذاء به، راجين أن يُقفل ملفّ الأزمة الخليجية إلى الأبد، وأن تستمرّ العلاقات بين هذه الدول لما يحقّق من المصالح المشتركة، وأن يعكس هويّة خليجية مشتركة.

قواعد النشر

في حَوَلِيَّاتِ الآداب والعلوم الاجتماعية

- ١- تنشرُ الحَوَلِيَّاتُ البحوثَ والدِّرَاسَاتِ الأَصِيلَةَ باللغَتَيْنِ العربيَّةِ والإنجليزيَّةِ في مجال العلوم الاجتماعية والعلوم الإنسانية والآداب.
- ٢- أن تُمثَّلَ الدِّرَاسةُ إضافةً جديدةً في حقل التَّخَصُّصِ.
- ٣- لم يسبقَ نُشْرُ الدِّرَاسةِ بأيِّ صورة كانت، ولم يسبقَ أيضًا تقديمُها للنَّشرِ إلى جهة أخرى في أثناء وُرودها إلى الحَوَلِيَّاتِ. ويلتزم الباحثُ بكتابة إقرارٍ وتعهُّدٍ بأنَّ البَحْثَ المُقَدَّم لم يسبقَ نُشْرُه في أيِّ وعاءٍ نُشر، أو أُرسِلَ إلى جهة أخرى.
- ٤- ألا يقلَّ عَدَدُ كلماتِ الدِّرَاسةِ عن (١٥٠٠٠) كلمة، شاملة المراجع والهوامش والجداول، (بحدود ٥٠ صفحة). وألا يزيدَ عَدَدُ الكلماتِ عن (٦٠٠٠٠) كلمة (في حدود ٢٠٠ صفحة).
- ٥- يُقدِّمُ البَحْثُ بالبريد الإلكتروني: (aass@ku.edu.kw) مكتوبًا بواسطة مُعالِج النُّصوص Microsoft Word وعلى مسافةٍ ونصف، وينط (١٤) Arabic Simplified. في حالة البُحوثِ باللُّغة العربيَّة، وعلى مسافتَيْن، وينط (١٢) Roman New Times في حالة البُحوثِ باللُّغة الإنجليزيَّة.
- ٦- يُرفِّقُ الباحثُ ملخَصًا للبَحْثِ، مطبوعًا باللغَتَيْنِ العربيَّةِ والإنجليزيَّةِ، في حدود (٢٠٠) كلمة. على أن يحتويَ ملخَصُ البَحْثِ على: هَدَفُ الدِّرَاسةِ وأسئلتها، ومُنْهَجُ الدِّرَاسةِ المُسْتخدَم، وأبرزُ النَّتائِجِ المُسْتخلَصَةِ، وأهمَّ الاستنتاجات.
- ٧- يُرفِّقُ الباحثُ مع البَحْثِ سيرةً علميَّةً مُختصرةً، مطبوعةً باللغَتَيْنِ العربيَّةِ والإنجليزيَّةِ، تشمل أهمَّ مؤلَّفاته وأبحاثه.
- ٨- تُقدِّمُ الخرائطُ والأشكالُ والرسومُ (إن وُجدت) بأصولها الصَّالحة للطَّباعة بصيغة JPG، وبمستوى دَقَّة ٨٠٠*٦٠٠.
- ٩- في حالة رغبة الباحثِ بنَشْرِ الصُّورِ أو الخرائطِ أو الأشكالِ البيانيَّةِ الملونة، يلتزمُ بدفع تكاليفها.
- ١٠- يراعي الباحثُ عند كتابة البَحْثِ الالتزامَ بأحدث نسخة من أحد النُّظامين:
أ - Modern Language Association MLA
ب - American Psychological Association APA
يستخدم في البحوث والدِّرَاسات في مجال العلوم الإنسانية والآداب نظام MLA، والبحاث في مجال الدِّرَاسات الاجتماعية نظام APA، من حيثُ كتابة المراجع والهوامش في مَثْنِ البَحْثِ، أو في قائمة المراجع.
- أولاً: في الدِّرَاسات في مجال العلوم الإنسانية والآداب، يمكن كتابة المرجع على نظام MLA على الوجه الموضَّح أدناه:
١ - الهوامش: - توضع الهوامش في نهاية البَحْثِ في حالة عدم وجود فصول.
- تُرتَّبُ أرقامُ التَّوثيقِ بطريقة متسلسلة حتى نهاية كلِّ فصل، أو حتى نهاية البَحْثِ في حالة عدم وجود فصول.
- تنبثق الهوامش عند ذِكْرِها لأوَّلَ مرَّةٍ كاملةً على النَّحو الآتي: اسم المؤلف، عنوان الكتاب (بالبنط الأسود)، رَقْمُ الجزء، رَقْمُ الطَّبعة، اسم النَّاشِر، مكان النَّشر، سنة النَّشر، رَقْمُ الصَّفحة.
مثال: (ابن حزم، الإحكام في أصول الأحكام، جزء ٢، ط ١، دار المعارف، القاهرة، ١٩٦٦، ص ١١٦).
٢- المراجع:
(فؤاد زكريا، آراء نقدية في مشكلات الفكر والثقافة، ط ١، الهيئة المصريَّة العامَّة للكتاب، القاهرة، ١٩٧٥، ص ١١).

ويمكن الرجوع إلى العديد من المواقع التي توضح عملية استخدام المراجع، منها:

<http://quickguide/mla/com.libguides.irs>

ثانياً: في مجال العلوم الاجتماعية، يمكن كتابة المراجع على الوجه الموضح أدناه (APA):

١- كتابة المرجع في المتن: اسم العائلة للمؤلف متبوعاً بفاصلة، ثم سنة النشر. (يرجى الرجوع إلى دليل التوثيق وفقاً لنظام APA لمزيد من التفاصيل)

مثال: (Cortois, 2001)

٢- قائمة المراجع: يرجى الرجوع إلى دليل التوثيق وفقاً لنظام APA للتفاصيل.

مثال:

Jones, J. (2005). Writing with style. Style Writing Journal, 12 (6), 1433-.

<http://www.apastyle.org>

ويمكن زيارة موقع:

لمعرفة القواعد الخاصة بهذا النظام.

١١- يجب أن تشمل جميع البحوث على قائمة المراجع كاملة في نهاية البحث، على أن يكون بنط الكتابة بالنص الروماني (Roman Script).

١٢- لمعرفة قواعد وأخلاقيات النشر رجاء مراجعة موقع الحوليات الإلكتروني.

شروط قبول البحوث في الحوليات:

أ - لا تقبل الحوليات البحوث التي سبق نشرها بأي طريقة.

ب - لا تقبل المجلة نشر أبحاث الماجستير أو الدكتوراه أو أي مستلآت منها.

ج - لا تُرد ولا تُسترجع أصول البحوث المقدمة للنشر، سواء نُشرت أم لم تُنشر.

د - لا يجوز نشر البحوث في جهات أخرى بعد موافقة الحوليات على نشرها. وإذا ثبت ذلك؛ فستتخذ إدارة الحوليات الإجراءات القانونية المتبعة بهذا الشأن.

هـ - يمكن للباحث نشر بحثه في جهات أخرى، بعد الحصول على إذن كتابي سابق من رئيس التحرير، وبعد انقضاء ثلاث سنوات - على الأقل - على نشره في الحوليات.

و - يُعرض البحث الذي تتوافر فيه القواعد المذكورة سابقاً، بعد موافقة هيئة التحرير، على مُحكمين لتقرير مدى صلاحية البحث للنشر في المجلة.

و- تمنح المجلة للباحث خمسين نسخة من بحثه المنشور، كإهداء.

تُرسل البحوث وجميع المراسلات الخاصة بالحوليات إلى رئيس التحرير عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني للمجلة.

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الهيئة الاستشارية

أ. د. منى بيكر

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الجامعة الأمريكية - الشارقة

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د. ليلي محمد المالح

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها

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Hussain H. A. H. Esmail, Ph.D.

Department of Philosophy - Faculty of Arts

Kuwait University



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