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The Incoherence of the Intellectuals: Ibn Rushd, al-Ghazali, al-Jabari, and Tarabichi in Eight Centuries of Dialogue Without Dialogue

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The Incoherence of the Intellectuals: Ibn Rushd, al-Ghazali, al-Jabari, and Tarabichi in Eight Centuries of Dialogue Without Dialogue

by

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Dedication

For my ~~family~~ tribe; to use the term "supportive" would rank among the world's greatest understatements.

But family doesn't end with blood, so this is also for Kelly, Uri, Geffen, Esther, Rebecca, Max, Tom, David, Nick, Jane, Drew, Judy, Ali, Mika, Bridget, Tina, Chris, and at least a dozen others. Thank you for making sure that I stuck around long enough to complete this project.

(I would be remiss if I did not also credit certain Eldritch Abominations who cheered me along, tried their best to lure me into madness, but never once asked me to feed the Shoggoth.)

Finally, this is for Spalding Gray, Hunter S. Thompson, and Neil Gaiman, who taught me that all history is personal, but that's okay, because that's what makes it relevant. (And extra special thanks to Neil, who doesn't know it, but who wrote to me out of the blue on just the right night and gave me the encouragement and confidence to see this through to the end.)

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The Incoherence of the Intellectuals: Ibn Rushd, al-Ghazali, al-Jabari, and Tarabichi in Eight Centuries of Dialogue Without Dialogue

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Scholars, philosophers, and theologians have debated the compatibility of Hellenic Philosophy with Islam since the eighth century CE. In his book *Averroes et l'Averroisme (*1852), Ernst Renan identified Tahāfut al-Falsifa by al-Ghazali and Tahāfut al-Tahāfut by ibn Rushd as the two key texts resolving the issue: the Islamic world accepted al-Ghazali and fell into decline, while Europe accepted ibn Rushd (Averroës) and experienced the Renaissance and Enlightenment. Renan's argument has endured among Arab liberal intellectuals over the past one-hundred sixty years, but using ibn Rushd as the mascot for Arab Rationalism has failed to inspire anything resembling a second *Nahda*. Two contemporary Arab intellectuals, Mohammad ʿAbed al-Jabari and George Tarabichi, have engaged in their own dialogue about the works of al-Ghazali's and ibn Rushd's and whether or not Averroism can effect real change in the modern Arab world. This paper examines the works of al-Ghazali, ibn Rushd, Renan, al-Jabari, and Tarabichi in their historical, cultural, and geographical contexts to conclude that the solution to the problems of the modern Arab world, if one exists, does not lie solely within the works of ibn Rushd.

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Introduction: Standing on the Threshold

"La exacta geografía de los hechos que voy a referir importa muy poco."[1]

-Jorge Luis Borges, "El Hombre en el Umbral," *El Aleph*, 1949

For eight hundred years, there has been no lack of study or discussion about the writings, works, and ideology of ibn Rushd (520/1126 – 595/1198),[2] known to medieval Europe as Averroës. The precise geography of that discourse – not to mention the precise language or even the precise subject of that discourse – has varied widely. Contrary to what Borges – a somewhat unreliable translator and writer who favored unreliable narrators[3] – may or may not have us believe, however, the precise geography – and language, and subject – of the facts that I am about to relate truly does matter. Given the vast corpus of academic, philosophical, scientific, and literary papers dedicated to analyzing ibn Rushd's life, philosophy and contributions to Western and/or Islamic and/or world civilization, attempting to understand even one facet of the man's role in scholarly discourse (including dialectics, debates, and as often as not, *ad hominem* attacks and feuds) is an overwhelming task. After all, over 20,000 pages of writing, including approximately sixty-seven original works and his voluminous commentaries on Aristotle and Plato, have been attributed to ibn Rushd, a genuine polymath. Philosophical commentary was technically a hobby he conducted during his spare time while also serving as the personal physician to Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb al-Manṣūr, the reigning Almohad Caliph during most of ibn Rushd's life, and as the chief *qadi* in Seville and eventually Cordoba.[4]

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[1] "The precise geography of the facts that I am about to relate hardly matters." (translation is mine)

[2] Full name given by the Encyclopedia of Islam (2nd Ed) as "Abu 'l-Walīd Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Rushd, al-ḤafīdAḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Rushd, al-Ḥafīd Ibn Rushd," so as not to confuse him with his paternal grandfather nor his son, both of whom were also notable legal scholars and authors.

[3] Ian Almond, "Borges the Post-Orientalist: Images of Islam From the Edge of the West," *MSF* - *Modern Fiction Studies* 50, no. 2 (2004): 435–459. pp 436.

[4] Roger Arnaldez, "Ibn Rushd, Abu 'l-Walīd Muḥammad B. Aḥmad B. Muḥammad B. Rushd, al-Ḥafīd.," ed. P. Bearman et al., *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Brill, 2011).

Thanks to his enormous output and the chance preservation of most of his works, in Hebrew and Latin translations if not in the original Arabic, ibn Rushd was and remains a divisive but nonetheless important figure in history, religious studies/theology, philosophy, and, at times, politics. Indeed, his influence and ideology appear to be more durable than St. Augustine. Although interest in ibn Rushd may fade in one corner of the globe or one field of study – or be banned by religious and philosophical opponents as pure heresy, as the climate of time and geography dictates – somehow, within a century or so, his works are once again invariably revived and proclaimed as relevant, modern, and forward-thinking in another place and time. In this way, it can be said that ibn Rushd has attained the rare immortality and influence generally reserved for canonical religious texts, the *magna opera* of philosophers, and the occasional epic poet, novelist or playwright in the pantheon including Homer, Luo Guanzhong, and Shakespeare. The very timelessness which grants these authors and their texts such remarkable endurance, however, also endows them with an inescapable weakness: such works can (and will) be quoted and interpreted by later writers in order to say and support almost any position. The content is, more often than not, never invoked quite so carefully or so forcefully as is the perceived authority which time has bequeathed upon the author and/or his works.

This concept – that the figure of ibn Rushd the Philosopher is not nearly so important to modern Arabs as is the concept of ibn Rushd the Arab Rationalist – is growing to dominate the current Euro-centric/continental academic historical and political discourse regarding ibn Rushd, particularly in texts directed at English and German-speaking scholars. This argument has been well-researched and supported in the works of German-speaking but English-writing authors including Anke von Kügelgen and Stefan Wild.[5] The position is certainly not without its merits and follows with the general post-structuralist axiom first formulated by Roland Barthes as "The Death of the

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[5] Stefan Wild, "Islamic Enlightenment and the Paradox of Averroes," *Die Welt Des Islams* 36, no. 3, New Series (November 1996): 379–390; Anke von Kügelgen, *Averroes Und Die Arabische Moderne: Ansätze Zu Einer Neubegründung Des Rationalismus Im Islam*, Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science v. 19 (Leiden [The Netherlands] ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1994); Anke von Kügelgen/ آنكی ڤۇن كوغيلغين, "A Call for Rationalism: 'Arab Averroists' in the Twentieth Century/ دعوة للعقلانية: الرشديون العرب في القرن العشرين," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 16 (1996): 97–132.

Author." Even Mohammad ʿAbed al-Jabari,[6] one of the most vehement contemporary Arab Averroists and one of the main subjects of this paper, admits that "the cognitive content of a philosophy, no matter which one, lives only once, then dies forever, without any hope of resuscitation… It is quite another thing for the ideological content of philosophy: it is in itself an ideology, and the time of ideology is a 'possible-future,' a future which ideology lives in the present… When the present expires, it eliminates itself to be born again in a new current present."[7] In other words: it does not matter that ibn Rushd (and, as will be seen, his unwitting eternal opponent, al-Ghazali) lived and wrote in an Aristotelian universe governed and bounded by 'scientific' axioms that have long since been discarded through observations made possible by the development of superior tools. What matters is that when they approached that world, they sought to understand it using particular methods of observation, thought, and logical synthesis that remain relevant and competitive regardless of time or place.

This returns us to Borges and to the question of whether the precise geography of these facts matters. Though al-Jabari seems to answer that question with a hearty 'no' in the above quotation, even a cursory examination of his writings reveals that questions of geography are central to the underlying thesis of his *magnum opus*, the four-part *Naqd al-ʿAql al-ʿArabi* (*A Critique of Arab Reason*[8]). Twenty years of work and thousands of words written by al-Jabari can be fairly and simply condensed to a single sentence: ibn Rushd's enduring ideology was the rejection of *mashriqi* (or Eastern) mysticism in favor of *maghribi* (Western) rationalism, and consequently, he believed that in order for the

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[6] محمد عابد الجابري (1936-2010) authorized this particular transliteration of his name on all works of his that were translated into English (or on which translation began) during his lifetime; in respect to him, that is how he will be referred to in this paper. The legions of alternate transliterations used to refer to him in quotations and citations from secondary sources, however, will be left unaltered. The same holds for جورج طرابيشي, who publishes in French as George Tarabichi but is often referred to as "Tarabishi" in secondary sources.

[7] Muḥammad ʿĀbid Jābirī, *Arab-Islamic Philosophy: A Contemporary Critique*, Middle East Monograph Series no. 12 (Austin: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1999), 122.

[8] "Reason" has variously been translated as "Thought" or "Mind," but in the early stages of the 2011 English, translation of the first volume, *The Formation of Arab Reason*, al-Jabari and his translator indicated a specific preference for translating *ʿaql* in this context as reason. See the extensive footnote #1 on page 31 of that text for their explanation.

Arab world to compete and thrive in contemporary global society and economy, Arabs must follow this rationalist, Averroist, western ideal. This argument is fundamentally geographical and while I hesitate to ascribe any particular ulterior motives to this thesis (as will be seen below, George Tarabichi is more than willing to do that for me), it should be noted that al-Jabari was a Moroccan (or, in Arabic, *Maghribi*) and associates Western Arab philosophers with the Western philosophical tradition.[9]

This paper understands 'geography' as referring not only to a person, group, or event's physical and temporal position, but also to position regarding exposure to certain texts, theories, and references, as may be determined not only by time and place, but also by personal academic field, background and language. I used the term "facet" (of understanding) earlier, because during the course of my research I discovered contemporary discourses and dialectics regarding ibn Rushd and al-Ghazali taking place simultaneously in different languages and in different journals that appeared to exist in complete isolation from one another, with virtually no cross-citations between the discourses save for primary source documents and a few very old secondary sources. For example, there is a lively dialectic on the relevance and compatibility of ibn Rushd's ideology versus al-Ghazali's in contemporary philosophy and science occurring in English-language journals and books, often published by Oxford or Stanford University Presses, but written by academics teaching and tenured within the geographic boundaries of Scandinavia and other Baltic-area nations.[10] This entire corpus of work earned a

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[9] Mohammed Abed al-Jabri, *The Formation of Arab Reason : Text, Tradition and the Construction of Modernity in the Arab World* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 48.

[10] A selection of a few of the primary articles and texts in this dialogue, as well a demonstration of the variety of publications in which they appear, see: Taneli Kukkonen, "Plenitude, Possibility, and the Limits of Reason: A Medieval Arabic Debate on the Metaphysics of Nature," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 61, no. 4 (October 1, 2000): 539–560; Taneli Kukkonen, "Averroes and the Teleological Argument," *Religious Studies* 38, no. 4 (December 2002): 405–428; Ilai Alon, "Al-Ghazālī on Causality," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 100, no. 4 (October 1, 1980): 397–405; Ruth Glasner, *Averroes' Physics: A Turning Point in Medieval Natural Philosophy* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Dag Nikolaus Hasse, "Influence of Arabic and Islamic Philosophy on the Latin West," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2008., 2008, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/arabic-islamic-influence/;; Simo Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy*, Topics in Medieval Philosophy (London ; New York: Routledge, 1993); Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (Ed. di Storia e Letteratura, 1956).

single footnote within Ahmad Dallal's *Islam, Science, and the Challenge of History*.[11] The near-complete rehabilitation of the theories and works of al-Ghazali that has taken place within the Scandinavian philosophical discourse is essentially unacknowledged by the aforementioned Anglo-American-Germanic contemporary history and political science discourse in which von Kügelgen, Wild, and Kassab, among many others, take part. Meanwhile, Arab scholars who participate in the English-language discourse, including Fauzi M. Najjar, Mokdad Arfa Mensa, and S.M.A. Shahrestani appear to be biting their tongues at von Kugelgen's and al-Jabari's (somewhat paternalistic) argument regarding cognitive versus ideological content, as they argue for the relevance of many particulars of ibn Rushd's works in modern Islamic society.[12]

It is at this point where it feels most relevant to note that, regardless of the discourse, the single constant is that *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (generally translated as *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*) is treated as ibn Rushd's central and most important work. According to Hans Wehr's Arabic-English Dictionary, the term "*tahāfut*," has shifted to mean "breakdown" and in particular, "nervous breakdown." Seen in this light, it should come as less of a surprise that the subject of ibn Rushd has caused such a confusion and a near-schizophrenic state of affairs amongst scholars across such a wide range of disciplines and locations.

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[11] Ahmad S Dallal, *Islam, Science, and the Challenge of History* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2010), 211. Footnote number 44.
Please note that Dr. Dallal is one of the more enterprising and cross-disciplinary scholars in this regard (his excellent bibliography mentions in passing nearly every contemporary discourse regarding ibn Rushd, but even he did not notice the largely Franco-phone discourse (save for a few papers by S. Montgomery Watt) on the influence that the political and religious climate that the Almohad court may have had ibn Rushd's writings), which I only stumbled across accidentally after two years of research.
Then there is the curious case of A.J. Wensinck (d. 1939), a French scholar and one of the editors of the First Edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, who wrote a monograph on al-Ghazali's thought, *Pensée de Ghazali* (1933) that argued for al-Ghazali as both a Mutazlite and a neo-platonist. A few positive reviews are published (some as late as 1948) and then the book disappears from ALL bibliographies until and is not cited again positively until 1991. See Madeleine Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology Which Relies on Logic," *Numen* 38, no. 1 (June 1, 1991): 110–127.
[12] Fauzi M. Najjar, "Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and the Egyptian Enlightenment Movement," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 31, no. 2 (November 2004): 195–213; *Averroës and the Enlightenment* (Amherst, N.Y: Prometheus Books, 1996); "Averroës and the Rational Legacy in the East and the West," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 16 (January 1, 1996).

So as to avoid yet another personal *tahāfut* brought on by the sheer overload of information, this paper confines itself to examining a pair of dialectics between two pairs of men, with a single intervening actor. The first dialectic regards the compatibility of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, (or, at least, the Avicennan interpretation of it) with Islam, as seen in the works *Tahāfut al-falsifa* by Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī al-Ghazālī (450/1058-505/1111) and the responding *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* by ibn Rushd. The intervening actor is Ernst Renan, whose work, *Averroes et l'Averroisme* (*Averroës and Averroism*) creates the dominant narrative explaining the supposed death of philosophy and rationalist thought in the Arab world.[13] He states that the reason why Europe produced the Enlightenment and then proceeded to global dominance while the Islamic world went into a spiral of decline was because Europe embraced the works of ibn Rushd while the Islamic world chose al-Ghazali. This narrative establishes the hero and the villains of the story for the next century and half. The second dialectic began in the early 1980s as a discussion about the relevance of ibn Rushd's ideology to the Arab world in the aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War, the collapse of Nasserism and the rapid decline thereafter of Marxism between al-Jabari and Tarabichi. But the discourse later devolved into a number of ad hominem attacks regarding each other's methods and ethical and moral integrity. If these two dialectics (and the context of the intervening actor) are examined and understood in light of their precise geographies, then Renan's simplistic and unproductive narrative collapses. The genuine underlying problematic – that the Arab world continues to struggle to become a competitive and productive member of the global social, political, commercial, and intellectual community – can then be approached through new and hopefully, much more productive theories and strategies.

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[13] Dimitri Gutas, "The Study of Arabic Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: An Essay on the Historiography of Arabic Philosophy," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 29, no. 1 (May 2002): 6.

Chapter One: The Classical Philosophers and the First Dialectic

All we have to believe with is our senses, the tools we use to perceive the world: our sight, our touch, our memory. If they lie to us, then nothing can be trusted. And even if we do not believe, then still we cannot travel in any other way than the road our senses show us; and we must walk that road to the end.
<div align="right">- Neil Gaiman, American Gods, 2001</div>

AL-GHAZALI: CONFLICT AND TRANSIT BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT

Thanks to the influence of the many articles and books that link al-Ghazali and ibn Rushd's careers together so intimately and consistently, it is easily forgotten that al-Ghazali died fifteen years before ibn Rushd was born and that it is generally accepted that they never set foot on the same continent as each other. Al-Ghazali was born in Khurasan, on the Eastern side of the Abbasid Empire, and never traveled further West than Mecca.[14] Depicted by so many post-Renan narratives (and, at times, by ibn Rushd himself) as the uncontested and acclaimed father and spokesman of Ashʿarite Sunni orthodoxy, a brief overview of al-Ghazali's biography reveals a man who was one voice amongst a clamorous din, and whose opinions regarding Hellenic philosophy, demonstrable science, and the growing prominence of *kalam* agreed with ibn Rushd's as often as they did with those of his contemporary Ashʿarite scholars. That al-Ghazali achieved any lasting prominence at all is a testament to his brilliance and his prolific work, but also probably owed a great deal to pure luck.

Part of the reason that al-Ghazali's biography and career is less documented than ibn Rushd's (and that so much of his bibliography is either lost or of contested-attribution) stems from the fact that al-Ghazali lived, wrote, and taught in heart of the Abbasid Empire during an era wherein the balance of power in that empire was in a constant state of flux. Also, unlike ibn Rushd, for parts of his life al-Ghazali traveled constantly, teaching in Baghdad, Damascus, and Mecca/Medina among other places. His departures were motivated by threats to his career and/or life as shifts in power put him in favor or disfavor in one region or another, by his personal dissatisfaction with the

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[14] W. Montgomery Watt, "al-G̲H̲azālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad B. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī," ed. P. Bearman et al., *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Brill, 2011).

philosophical and theological positions of his youth, by and apparent nervous breakdown, and by invitations to return to Baghdad as he came back to favor at court despite a twelve year absence.

During al-Ghazali's lifetime, the Sunni Abbasid Empire faced challenges both internal and external: Shi'i Zaydis threatened the empire on two fronts, from Khurasan as well as Yemen on the peninsula, where Kharajites continued to rebel against Abbasid legitimacy. Since the early tenth century and throughout the eleventh, the North African Fatimid Ismaili Caliphate rivaled the Abbasids, holding Egypt and the Levant and threatening Abbasid control over the *Hijaz*. Meanwhile, within Baghdad, the caliphate retained some nominal political power, but the vast majority of it had been transferred to the position of the sultanate, held at that time by the Turkish Seljukids. This transfer in political power at the highest levels of the Abbasid Empire mirrored a transition in theological and philosophical power. Whereas the early Abbasids had largely embraced and encouraged Mutazalite[15] jurists and scholars, by the middle of the eleventh century CE Ashʿarite *ʿulama* and their *madhahib* would cement their position as the backbone of Sunni orthodoxy. Al-Ghazali, an orphan educated by Shafi'i instructors and whose main patron at court was a paternal uncle held in esteem by the caliphate but not the sultanate, made his own name and gained power and position through his own merits and maneuverings. While he was politically and, in some ways, theologically flexible and pragmatic, al-Ghazali's firm and outspoken positions on particular issues, especially his criticism not only of Mutazlites but also of the Maliki *madhab*, as well as his increasing advocacy for Sufism as he grew older made him a controversial figure throughout his life. The following biography is based on the least contested records of al-Ghazali's life and provides a context for the conditions under which he wrote *Tahafut al-Falsifa*.

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[15] A term loosely used to unite scholars in the classical period who placed more emphasis on *ijtihad* and *qiyas* as well as knowledge obtained from Hellenic philosophy (It is derived from a root that means to set apart, isolate, or separate). It is unclear whether this was their name by choice or a derisive epithet). Compare to the "Ashʿarites" (named for al-Ashʿari (260/873 – 324/935), Sunni thinkers who emphasized the importance of the *hadith* and traditionalism, and many of whom considered any *jahiliyya* texts suspect at best and heresy at worst.

As stated earlier, al-Ghazali was an orphan with few connections; as such, the majority of his early teachers were obscure figures or scholars of little note with the exception of al-Juwainy, who appears to have been a rather combative Ashʿarite from the Shafi'i *madhab.* He familiarized himself and his students with Mutazalite theories and methods in order to better refute them—or support them.[16] By the time al-Ghazali came of age, the Ashʿarite *madhabhib,* particularly Hanbali and the slightly more liberal Shafi'i, had gained a great deal of influence within the empire and were on the cusp of being declared the official Sunni orthodoxy.[17] From what little is known of al-Ghazali's first instructors, it appears that his early studies included some *kalam* and legal training, most likely from the tradition of the Shafi'i *madhab,* though there is evidence that he was exposed to and may have, in part agreed with some of the methods and theories of the Hanbali schools.[18] His harsh criticism of the Maliki *madhab* gained him the admiration ibn-Tumart, the spiritual leader of the Almohad movement which displaced the Maliki Almoravid dynasty in al-Andalus during ibn Rushd's lifetime, quite possibly inspiring the conditions that enabled ibn Rushd's career.[19]

Judging by the texts he frequently cites in his writings on philosophy, al-Ghazali's diverse curriculum included reading the commentaries on Aristotle by the early Muslim neo-platonists and Mutazlite scholars including ibn Sina (Avicenna) and al-Farabi as well as works by more conservative *mutakallimun*, but did not include the original translations of Aristotle only the commentaries. Many of ibn Rushd's most direct criticisms of al-Ghazali stem from allegations that he quoted only Arab commentators on Aristotle, not

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[16] *God's Rule: Government and Islam: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, New ed., New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 223, 234; W. Montgomery Watt, "al-G̱Hazālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad B. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī"; Muḥammad ʿĀbid Jābirī, *Arab-Islamic Philosophy: A Contemporary Critique* (Austin: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1999), 43. Note that al-Jabari's statement that "Juwayni, the most prominent Ashʿarite theologian of his time" contradict's Crone's assertion that al-Juwayni often agreed with Mutʿazlite positions against Ashʿarites ones, albeit using different methods.

[17] Duncan B. MacDonald, "The Life of al-Ghazzālī, with Especial Reference to His Religious Experiences and Opinions," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 20 (January 1, 1899): 71–132. pp 92; Albert Habib Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber, 2002). pp166.

[18] Richard M. Frank, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ashʿarite School* (Duke University Press, 1994). pp 4-6.

[19] Roger Arnaldez, *Averroes: A Rationalist in Islam* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000). pp 6.

the works of Aristotle himself.[20]   But al-Ghazali's criticism of ibn Sina and other Mutazalites, in addition to the theology of certain Kharajite and Zaydi sects show that he was highly literate and well-informed in both their theories and their writings.[21]

Al-Ghazali must have shown an early aptitude for his studies as following the death of Juwainy in 478/1085 he gained admission to a special academy in Baghdad set up by the vizier Nizam al-Mulk. Possibly the most influential power-broker of his time, al-Mulk acted as a sort of mediator between the sultanate and the caliphate though in general he actively assisted in shifting power into the sultanate.[22]   Al-Ghazali distinguished himself from his peers well enough to be appointed as the chief professor of a *madrasa* endowed by Nizam al-Mulk in Baghdad. During his tenure there, he wrote a number of legal treatises, most of which have since been lost, as well as his defense of Hellenic philosophical methods, *Maqasid al-Falsifa*. He also began work on *Tahafut* at this time.[23]   That al-Ghazali felt comfortable enough to deal with and, in part, defend works increasingly condemned by fellow Sunni 'ulama as pure heresy indicates the security of his position both professionally and politically during this period of his life. The lost legal works, judging by their titles, may have extended his project of encouraging jurists and scholars in his Shafi'i *madhab* towards a methodology influenced more by Hellenic-inspired logic than by the scholars' Hanbali and Maliki rivals, as he expressed in *al-Iḳtiṣād fi 'l-iʿtiḳād*.[24]   The absence of any notable writings on Sufism

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[20] Ibid. pp 98.

[21] Averroës, *The Attitude of Islam Towards Science and Philosophy: A Translation of Ibn Rushd's (Averroës) Famous Treatise Faslul-Al-Maqal*, 1st ed. (New Delhi: Sarup, 2003). pp 44-45. Please note that this comes from the preface "Al-Ghazzali and Ibn Rushd – Conflict and Concord," written by Dr. Rafiabiadi. While this text will be referred to throughout this paper, the first section, a biography of ibn Rushd contributed by Rafiabadi's co-author/translator Dr. Aadil Amin Kak appears to have plagiarized, without any form of attribution whatsoever, Roger Arnaldez's 1985 Encyclopedia of Islam (2nd Edition) article on ibn Rushd (compare especially pages 9-12). As such, most citations to this book will come from Dr. Rafiabadi's section, as he provided in text citation for his sources and thus appears a more reliable and ethical scholar than his collaborator.

[22] Watt, "al-G̲H̲azālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad B. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī."

[23] George F. Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104, no. 2 (April 1, 1984): 289–302. pp 292.

[24] Watt, "al-G̲H̲azālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad B. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī"; Ahmad Dallal, "Ghazali and the Perils of Interpretation," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122, no. 4 (October 1, 2002): 773–787; Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings," 291.

could stem from a need to avoid further controversy and criticism, but it is more likely that he did not yet consider himself capable of writing on the subject with any real authority.

Al-Ghazali's criticism in his legal works of those 'ulama and jurists who he believed had fallen into *taqlid,* or thoughtless imitation of tradition attracted some negative attention, but his political mis-steps in the negotiation of power between the caliphate and the sultanate, would cause al-Ghazali the most grief. The death of his patron and ally al-Mulk in 1092 cut off al-Ghazali's main source of support from the sultanate rather than with the caliphate. An additional threat to al-Ghazali's position came from the probable assassination of al-Ghazali's uncle, his last remaining connection to the caliphate, by partisans of the sultanate in 1095. Perhaps in response to the assassination, al-Ghazali began *al-Mustazhiri*, in which he argues strongly for the secular power of the Turks while maintaining his allegiance to the Abbasids as the true spiritual leaders of the Sunnis, much like the various Shi'i imams extant at that time.[25] Coincidentally, this made al-Ghazali one of the first Ashʿari intellectuals to imply not only that 'separation of church and state' within Islam was possible, but also that it already existed.

The stress of political instability as well as a crisis of conscience in his philosophical affiliation may have prompted an apparent nervous breakdown in 1095. Al-Ghazali chose to leave his position in Baghdad as well as his family and took an extended two year pilgrimage and retreat to Mecca and then Medina.[26] Few reliable accounts of these years exist, but judging by his writings, al-Ghazali became increasingly disillusioned with the 'sciences' of *fiqh, tafsir,* and *kalam.*[27] His brief experimentation with Philosophical Skepticism are usually connected with these two years. After he left

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[25] Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings." pp 298. Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought*; Carole Hillenbrand, "Islamic Orthodoxy or Realpolitik? Al-Ghazālī's Views on Government," *Iran* 26 (January 1, 1988): 82. pp 237, 248.

[26] Watt, "al-GHazālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad B. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī"; Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought*.

[27] Dallal provides the most pithy but umbrella-like definitions of these terms, as 'jurisprudence,' 'Qur'anic exegesis' and 'speculative theology' respectively; see *Islam,* 116-117

the *Hijaz* in 1096 he entered into a ten year period as a reclusive vagabond in the Levant. Reports that he may have at one point travelled to and taught in Egypt or Cairo were contested and have not been given credit in the last century.[28]

While the records become even less reliable, there are a few touchstones available. Al-Ghazali himself states that he began *Ihya' 'alum al-Din*, his decisive and severe critique of the trajectory of thought and ideology among *mutakallimun* and within Sunni *madhahib* at that time while in Jerusalem. His critique used as its methodology pure Aristotelian logic.[29] According to Arnaldez, al-Ghazali singled out the Maliki school for his harshest attacks against its then-recent habit of issuing manuals of judgment, the *Muwatta*, which he considered to be the worst form of *taqlid*. This led to his work being declared heretical and selected for burning by Almoravid Maliki 'ulama.[30] This portion of al-Ghazali's life, from 1096 until 1105, is likewise poorly documented, partially due to his withdrawal from society while he gained personal experience as an ascetic and mystic. He claims to have written at least five books in the interim and he may have lectured privately in Damascus,.[31] What had begun as a flight from political persecution but had turned into a kind of self-imposed exile.

Al-Ghazali reappeared in history in 1105 after the Seljukid vizier invited al-Ghazali to return and teach in Baghdad, where he remained until his death in 1111. Al-Ghazali taught only reluctantly and may have accepted the invitation only in the hope of spreading a higher truth he had found in Sufi mysticism.[32] His non-commissioned

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[28] Watt, "al-G̲H̲azālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad B. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī."

[29] Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings," 296. The completion date, however, is much more difficult to place – it was finished at the latest in 1105.

[30] Watt, "al-G̲H̲azālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad B. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī"; Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings"; Arnaldez, *Averroes*; Alternatively, "The Almohad Tawhīd," 116–117Dominique Urvoy has al-Ghazali switching allegiances at least three times in her book: as a founding ideologue, the antithesis of, and as ibn Tumart's greatest inspiration, *Ibn Rushd, Averroes*, Arabic Thought and Culture (London ; New York: Routledge, 1991), 26, 74, 83. This apparent schizophrenia of opinions led me to label this as a source of suspect reliability which is cited only when; it is included here as an example of the way that al-Ghazali is often condemned as an enemy of rationalism, despite the content of his writings.

[31] Howard Kasimow, "The Harmony of Mysticism and Rationalism in the Religious Philosophy of Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali," *Mystics Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (December 1, 1992): 117; Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings," 297.

[32] Watt, "al-G̲H̲azālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad B. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī."

writings following his return to Baghdad focus increasingly on Sufism.[33] Numerous reports from early biographers of ibn Tumart, the spiritual founder of the Almohad movement and dynasty, that al-Ghazali met ibn Tumart at some point during this period to report the burning of *Ihya'ʿalum al-Din,* upon which he received al-Ghazali's endorsement to conquer the Almoravids are almost certainly apocryphal.[34] But it is not the elder, mystic al-Ghazali with whom ibn Rushd takes issue (Ernst Renan and al-Jabari will do that service), but rather the youthful al-Ghazali who had attempted to reconcile Hellenic philosophy with Islam as best he could.

In short, the career and writings of al-Ghazali reflect the evolving views and opinions of a man who faced intense political pressures and an extended period of mental instability, philosophical despair, and poverty, but also a man of remarkable literacy, even for his time. Contemporary inquiries into al-Ghazali's seek to understand an ideology that defies the Orientalist taxonomy of the Classical period: unlike many Ashʿarites al-Ghazali tended to discount the *hadith* in favor of rationalism, but unlike the Mutazalites, he considered the Qur'an an authoritative source of all knowledge.[35] It is difficult to justify the frequent characterization of al-Ghazali as an enemy of scientific inquiry who sought to eliminate rationalism by declaring it a sign of disbelief: if anything he condemned *kalam* more harshly than *falsifa*.

ibn Rushd: A More Focused Narrative

As remarked above, ibn Rushd's life and works are remarkably well-documented, especially in contrast to al-Ghazali. This may be the result of Ernst Renan's intense interest in ibn Rushd—he is credited with piecing together the essentials of biography

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[33] Taneli Kukkonen, "Plenitude, Possibility, and the Limits of Reason: A Medieval Arabic Debate on the Metaphysics of Nature," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 61, no. 4 (October 1, 2000): 560. pp 6.

[34] JFP Hopkins, "Ibn Tūmart," ed. P. Bearman et al., *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Brill, 2011). Hopkins states that this is true because by 1106, al-Ghazali had left Baghdad and retired to Khurasan, which is contradicted by Arnaldez. However, given that Hourani states that *Ihya* was completed in 1105, the likelihood of it being transmitted to al-Andalus, declared heretical, and burned before Tumart left Spain in 1107 is small.

[35] Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawhīd," *Numen,* 38:1, 110-127: 116–117. Fletcher declares al-Ghazali a Mutazalite

still used by scholars today.[36] Alternatively, the difference stems from the fact that ibn Rushd's life and career follow a much more linear trajectory. Ibn Rushd was born into privilege and maintained the favor of his caliph throughout his life until only three years before his death. Ibn Rushd's exile would have been blip in his biography—the Caliph Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb al-Manṣūr rescinded it in 1098—but unfortunately ibn Rushd died before he could return to court. His comparative position of privilege and security allowed him to produce the massive corpus of writings mentioned in the introduction; the consistency in his life allows me to provide much less biographical context for his writings: in general, life was good.

While ibn Rushd enjoyed more privileges and faced fewer political obstacles to his completing his work than al-Ghazali, ibn Rushd lived in al-Andalus and al-Maghreb, distant from separated from the Sunni intellectual and philosophical discourse going on in the Levant and the heartlands of the Abbasid empire and lacked the access that al-Ghazali had to contemporary texts. Ibn Rushd bemoaned his scholarly isolation and noted that many more Ashʿarite texts found their way to Spain than did Mutazalites. Those texts that he *did* read led him to believe that Mutazalites and Ashʿarites used similar methods.[37] This odd conclusion can be explained by the fact that the vast majority of the Eastern texts that ibn Rushd cited (and, thus we can be confident of his familiarity) were written by al-Ghazali, warping ibn Rushd's perception of Ashʿari methodology.

As stated in the introduction, ibn Rushd was an advocative philosopher. He came from a well-respected and prominent family. Both his father and his grandfather had served as Maliki *qadis*, albeit relatively liberal ones.[38] His grandfather (d. 1126) had also acted as the imam at the Great Mosque of Cordoba, a position that gave rise to one of ibn-Rushd's epithets is "The Grandson". Though the Almoravid-Almohad transition (1146) occurred during ibn Rushd's lifetime, his family suffered no apparent persecution for their previous legal, political, and religious alliances.

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[36] Wild, "Islamic Enlightenment and the Paradox of Averroes," 383.
[37] Averroës, *The Attitude of Islam Towards Science and Philosophy*, 45.
[38] Arnaldez, *Averroes*, 8.

Records of ibn Rushd's early education indicate that he had also intended to focus on law, and he excelled in his studies, which included Maliki *kalam* and memorization of the Muwatta.[39] All evidence shows that he followed his grandfather and father into the Maliki *madhab (*and would also eventually serve as the chief imam of the Great Mosque of Cordoba).[40] For reasons unknown, ibn Rush began to study medicine under Abū ḎjaʿfarHārūn al-Taḏjālī (possibly his education with al-Tadjali began because he was considered an expert at *hadith* transmission as well). It was through his studies of medicine, most likely via Galen, that ibn Rushd encountered and began to study Hellenic philosophy. As his tutor was also closely connected to al-ʿArabi, the man who brought *Tahafut al-Tahafut* to Spain, this may have been the time when ibn Rushd first encountered al-Ghazali.

All of this occurred before ibn Rushd was twenty-seven years old. We know this because by 1153, a mere seven years after the Almohad conquest of Spain, ibn Rushd was helping to found schools in Marrakesh under the patronage of the new caliph. He was also making astronomical observations and beginning to write his first commentaries. During his travels and studies in North Africa (there is no evidence he ever made a *hajj* or traveled so far East as then-Fatimid Egypt), he gained the favor of two of the most important figures in his life: ibn Tufayl, and the Almohad Crown Prince, Abū Yaʿḳūb Yūsuf. All three held similar views regarding Hellenic philosophy (following the death of ibn Tumart, the royal family grew distant from the Almohad religious movement), and felt that it should become part of the general curriculum for the educated. Soon after, the Crown Prince requested that ibn-Tufayl, his personal physician, amend and correct the existing translations of Aristotle. Ibn-Tufayl, who believed himself too old to complete such an ambitious project, delegated the work to ibn Rushd, lending some professional legitimacy to ibn Rushd's commentary hobby.[41]

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[39] Ibid., 9.
[40] Ibid., 10.
[41] Arnaldez, "Ibn Ru_sh_d, Abu 'l-Walīd Muḥammad B. Aḥmad B. Muḥammad B. Ru_sh_d, al-Ḥafīd.";

Ibn Rushd's life proceeded without any notable obstacles to his writing. After completing a number of short commentaries of Aristotle in the course of his translations, ibn Rushd's interest shifted towards composing original texts which he felt would reconcile Aristotle's teachings with the infallibility of the Qur'an. From 1174 to 1180 he wrote five books on the subject, including the notorious *Tahafut al-Tahafut* as well as the *Fasl al-Maqal* which almost reads as an apology to al-Ghazali for the earlier work; he makes sure to praise al-Ghazali by name for his dedication to Sufi asceticism and for sharing the opinion with ibn Rushd that access to Gnostic and dialectic interpretations of the Qur'an and philosophical texts should be restricted to people with the capability to understand them. The educated should only share with the general public those interpretations that can be physically demonstrated (*burhan)* to the common man.[42] In looking at those sections directly addressed to al-Ghazali, it becomes clear that ibn Tufayl, while a great influence on ibn Rushd, did not believe the notion that al-Ghazali and other 'Eastern' philosophers were influenced by a secret *mashriq* mysticism.[43]

Ibn Rushd wrote these books under the protection of a succession of Almohad caliphs willing to shelter him from his critics, namely the other Maliki jurists as well as the remaining Almohad zealots. But in 1195, facing a growing threat from Spanish Christians and seeking the support of those groups, Caliph al-Mansur caved to pressure and stripped ibn Rushd of his titles before ordering him into exile—all the way to Lucena, a small town just south of Cordoba. It was by his own choice that ibn Rushd fled all the way to Marrakesh. Al-Mansur also permitted the Maliki and Almohad critics to burn copies of ibn Rushd's works as anathema.[44] In this case, however, ibn Rushd could thank the few Almohad principles that the royal family had embraced: persecution of religious minorities. A steady migration of Andalusians to Egypt had carried with them copies of ibn Rushd's work, helping to preserve it during this brief and quickly reversed

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[42] Averroës, *The Attitude of Islam Towards Science and Philosophy*, 160–164.
[43] Gutas, "The Study of Arabic Philosophy in the Twentieth Century," 7.
[44] Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd, Averroes*, 34/35.

persecution. Had ibn Rushd not traveled so far, he might have resumed his position as chief Qadi.

The case of ibn Rushd offers one possibility for the supposed 'end of rationalism' within the Islamic world, even if the said 'end' did not coincide with his death.[45] Philosophers in the Arab world who rejected religious funding relied on royal and other wealthy patrons to allow them to do their work, much like philosophers in every other culture. Religious leaders tend to accept a far more populist worldview and hence are able to motivate large groups of people when necessary. While the Ash'arites solidified their position as the orthodoxy of Sunni Islam, the mutakallimun and their institutions also benefited from the funding derived from various *awqaf* that had been granted to them in perpetuity as signs of piety—al-Azhar comes to mind as a prime example. Sacrificing funding and support of philosophers became no more than a matter of political expediency.

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[45] As al-Jabari wrote his doctoral thesis on ibn Khaldun (732/1332 – 808/1406), it seems odd that he embraces Renan's date of 1198 to mark the end point of Arab rationalism and philosophy.

Chapter Two: *Tahāfut al-Falsifa* versus *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*

LET ME PUT FORWARD ANOTHER SUGGESTION. THAT YOU ARE NOTHING MORE
THAN A LUCKY SPECIES OF APE THAT IS TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE
COMPLEXITIES OF CREATION VIA A LANGUAGE THAT EVOLVED IN ORDER TO
TELL ONE ANOTHER WHERE THE RIPE FRUIT WAS?
<div align="center">-Death to the Philosopher, Sir Terry Pratchett, "Death and What Comes Next," 2004</div>

Comparing the views of al-Ghazali and ibn Rushd on Aristotelian logic as it was understood by earlier and their contemporary Arab commentators is made remarkably simple as ibn Rushd's quotes al-Ghazali's text nearly line for line before inserting his counter arguments. Amusingly enough, Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* has been accused of being nothing more than a plagiarization of *both* books.[46] But perhaps these accusations are worthy of more serious consideration: if both *Tahāfuts* are composed of content which has been interpreted as the direct progenitor of Kant's *Critique—* one of the fundamental texts of modern Western philosophy, written by the man who *defined* Enlightenment—how is it possible to support a narrative which accuses al-Ghazali's text of destroying any chance the Arab world had of experiencing an Enlightenment of their own?

Al-Ghazali wrote his pair of treatises dealing with *al-Falsifa*—first *Maqasid*, then *Tahāfut,* between 1091 and early 1095.[47] He admitted to spending nearly as much, if not more, time contemplating the subjects than he did writing about them. This contemplative period coincides with the end of his early, secure career as a student, jurist and teacher in Baghdad. While al-Ghazali was defending Aristotelian demonstrative and empirical methods, al-Ghazali's patron and protector at court was assassinated; as he finished critiquing Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, another assassination took away his remaining defender. Finishing *Tahāfut* may have coincided with the alleged nervous breakdown that caused him to resign his positions, abandon his family, and embark on a

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[46] Kukkonen, "Averroes and the Teleological Argument," 422–424. Paul Edwards (1973), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, MacMillan Publishing Company, Volume 3-4, p. 327
[47] Hourani, "A Revised Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings," 292–293.

twelve year career as a mendicant and ascetic.[48]   Al-Ghazali's rapidly deteriorating personal and professional life in this period do not appear to have had any particular effect on his writing, but it should be noted that he had not read Aristotle, only his commentators. While ibn Sina and others wrote their commentaries in Arabic, they were working from the early Arabic translations of Aristotle deemed so inadequate and inaccurate by Ibn Rushd in the twelfth century.

While reading the *Tahafuts*, there was one particular word which I read along with the modern translations in order to know how it had been translated from Greek to Arabic: the phrase τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ βιβλία, which was quickly Latinized and reduced to a single word, μεταφυσικὰ, or *Metaphysics*. The English word is the result of one of the finest examples of mistranslation, mistransliteration, and *a posteriori* definitions created to justify the error.[49]   Most modern Arabic texts referring to the subject use a straight transliteration of the Latinized term. However, as the first Arab and Syriac translations were taken from the original Greek, they were slightly more successful: the first (lost) translation of the text by al-Kindi was catalogued as *Kitāb fī al-Falsafa al-ūlā* "Book on First Philosophy".[50]   This early correction by way of translation, however, apparently did not continue to the body of the texts or the commentary about them. Both al-Ghazali and ibn Rushd use the translation "*alūm al-'ihilliyya*" to refer to metaphysics, which would be slightly less problematic if *'ihilliyya* did not derive from the same root as God/god and thereby encouraging unconscious associations (similar to the English mistranslation)

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[48] Once again, the modern meaning of Tahafut makes an appearance in the Classical period – leading me to wonder if there is some eldritch, madness-inducing alien geometry inherent in the word.

[49] S. Marc Cohen, "Aristotleś Metaphysics," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2009., 2009, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/aristotle-metaphysics/. Aristotle himself referred to the subject now termed metaphysics as First Philosophy. When Aristotle's works were finally collected, catalogued, and edited together, the editor, (most likely Andronicus of Rhodes), took the essays referring to or vaguely related to the First Philosophy and bound them together in a volume that was then entered into the catalogue. It just so happened to be the final volume in the collection and Andronicus, failing to note a unifying subject for all of the writings, gave up and named the collection by its position in his catalogue: τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ βιβλία, or "The books that come after the books on Physics." Retroactive definitions began to appear almost immediately, generally referring to these being a higher form of knowledge, or to the fact that μεταφυσικὰ can also be translated as "supernatural"

[50] Amos Bertolacci, "On The Arabic Translation of Aristotle's Metaphysics," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15 (2005): 257.

because the term actually translates closer to 'theology' than the Arabic term *kalam*. This association definitely appears to influence some of al-Ghazali's arguments and possibly his decision to assert that people holding three particular beliefs were *kafirun*.

With those handicaps in mind, *Tahafut al-Tahafut* is a relatively simple read when compared to its peers on the subject of metaphysics. Al-Ghazali's attraction to Skepticism is evident in his preference for using demonstrable (i.e. empirical) explanations when possible, and helps him avoid Spinozan explorations into the definition of the being of substance. Sadly, the same cannot be said of ibn Rushd, whose responses get rather dense, circular, and repetitive – while both of them include information from earlier chapters in later arguments, al-Ghazali is much better at reminding the reader exactly when this information had been introduces. While al-Ghazali's tone tends to be pedantic – he was working as a professor throughout the period – his close adherence to a clearly laid-out structure and organization helps even the most distractible reader to follow through his arguments.

Al-Ghazali states outright that he is not criticizing mathematics, geometry, logic, or any of the physical sciences, and that seventeen of his twenty problems are simply examples of the philosophers (presumably al-Kindi, ibn Sina, and other early neo-Platonists) being internally inconsistent according to Aristotelian logic or adopting positions which they cannot prove but which are in defiance of the Qur'anic position on that question.[51] Nonetheless, ibn Rushd seems to take every objection as a personal affront, responding to an early remark by stating, "All this is the work of one who does not understand the exalted natures of the heavenly bodies and their acts of wisdom for the sake of which they have been created, and who compares God's knowledge with the knowledge of ignorant man."[52]

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[51] al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al-Falasifa*, trans. Sabih Ahmad Kamali (Lahore: Pakistan Philosophical Congress, 1963), 1–6.

[52] ibn Rushd, "Tahafut al-Tahafut," trans. Simon Van Den Bergh, *Http://www.muslimphilosophy.com*, 1978, sec. First Discussion, Concerning the Eternity of the World, First Proof, http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ir/tt/.

This sort of name calling does not originate from al-Ghazali's text, and he singles out only three Hellenic philosophical positions as inherently heretical:

- the problem of the eternity of the world, where they maintained that all the substances are eternal
- their assertion that Divine knowledge does not encompass individual objects.
- their denial of the resurrection of bodies[53]

While interesting thought exercises, none of these disagreements are particularly important questions in terms of inspiring a Scientific Enlightenment. Thus, al-Ghazali is not, as sometimes depicted, a religious zealot threatening any aspiring scientists with damnation.

The critics' usual retort would be that, in section seventeen, al-Ghazali *does* deny the absolute rule of cause and effect. The selection from his explanation most frequently cited (without context) is reproduced below in full:

> viz., the burning of a piece of cotton at the time of its contact with fire. We admit the possibility of a contact between the two which will not result in burning, as also we admit the possibility of the transformation of cotton into ashes without coming into contact with fire. And they reject this possibility.
>
> There are three points from which the discussion of the question can be started
>
> Firstly, the opponent may claim that fire alone is the agent of burning, and that being an agent by nature (not by choice), it cannot refrain from doing what it is its nature to do — after it comes into contact with a subject which is receptive to it.
>
> This is what we deny. We say that it is God who — through the intermediacy of angels, or directly — is the agent of the creation of blackness in cotton; of the disintegration of its parts, and of their transformation into a smouldering heap or ashes. Fire, which is an inanimate thing, has no action. How can one prove that it is an agent? The only argument is from the observation of the fact of burning at the time of contact with fire. But observation only shows that one is with the other, not that it is by it and has no other cause than it.[54]

This is probably the most well-known statement by al-Ghazali in the Western world and is the one most often used to condemn him as totally irrational and as the

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[53] al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al-Falasifa*. 249.
[54] Ibid., 186.

villainous murderer of scientific inquiry within the Arab world.[55] Reading the rest of the chapter, however, shows that al-Ghazali is using Aristotelian logic to reconcile the *appearance* that cause must always lead to effect with the Qur'an's insistence on an omnipotent God; insisting that God abides by the rule of cause and effect implies a limit on God's powers. However, God's interference in the apparent course of cause and effect is rare, so rare that instances of interference are deemed miracles.

> Now, if in extraordinary times, God breaks the Norm by causing such a thing to happen, then our cognitions (that a certain possible thing 'does not happen') will slip out of our hearts and will not be recreated by Him. Therefore, there is nothing to prevent us from believing that:
>
> (a) something may be possible, and may be one of those things to which God's power extends;
>
> (b) in spite of its being possible, it might have been known as a rule in the past that God would not do it; and
>
> (c) God may create for us a knowledge that He would not do it in this particular instance.
>
> So the philosophers' criticism is nothing but obstinate fault-finding.[56]

Al-Ghazali's theory of the true mechanics of the universe has a name in modern Western philosophy: occasionalism. While the concept did originate with al-Ash'ari and al-Ghazali, it spread to Europe much as ibn Rushd's works did, and it failed to stop its adherents from engaging in scientific inquiry. Notable proponents of this argument include Enlightenment philosophers Nicholas Malebranche (1638-1715) and David Hume (1711-1776)—among enlightenment thinkers, these two were classified as both *empiricists* and *skeptics*.[57] But ibn Rushd, beginning with his constant refrain of calling the argument "sophistry", argues that denying cause and effect renders logic useless by

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[55] Ahmad, Jamil (September 1994), "Ibn Rushd", Monthly Renaissance 4 (9), retrieved 2008-10-14; That Medieval Islamic Culture was Inhospitable to Science" in Ronald L. Numbers (ed.): Galileo Goes to Jail and Other Myths About Science and Religion, Harvard University Press, 2009, esp. pp. 39-40

[56] al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al-Falasifa*, 190.

[57] William F. Vallicella, "God, Causation and Occasionalism," *Religious Studies* 35, no. 1 (March 1, 1999): 3–18.

reciting the core tenets of Philosophical Skepticism, as established in the fourth century BCE: [58]

> Logic implies the existence of causes and effects, and knowledge of these effects can only be rendered perfect through knowledge of their causes. Denial of cause implies the denial of knowledge, and denial of knowledge implies that nothing in this world can be really known, and that what is supposed to be known is nothing but opinion, that neither proof nor definition exist, and that the essential attributes which compose definitions are void. The man who denies the necessity of any item of knowledge must admit that even this, his own affirmation, is not necessary knowledge.[59]

If ibn Rushd is at all aware that he is parroting Skeptic philosophy or of al-Ghazali's associations with it, he gives no acknowledgement. The bulk of his remaining response admits that if philosophers did apply these rules to miracles in the Qur'an, they would be considered heretical, but that this would never happen because philosophers do not apply the axioms of their knowledge to the Qur'an.

Despite the above presentation which makes ibn Rushd's argument appear rather weak, it is nonetheless a productive discussion for Islamic philosophers. Herein we find two different models for the reconciliation of empirical investigations of *burhan* (observable and demonstrable phenomena) with the many unnatural occurrences described within the Abrahamic tradition. Al-Ghazali chooses to insist on God's omnipotence, with the caveat that God only rarely intervenes to contradict the usual natural laws, which we may continue to observe and analyze. Ibn Rushd makes a somewhat simplified case for the separation of philosophy/science from theology as the only way for philosophers to avoid any chance of heresy.

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[58] Peter Klein, "Skepticism," ed. Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Autumn 2010 Edition)* (Palo Alto: Stanford University, 2011). It particularly echoes a far less formal explanation given to me by my Philosophy Professor at Hamilton College:
 "Since no one can observe or otherwise experience causation, the external world, or concepts like the meaning of life, justice, divinity, soul, etc., there's no need to believe in such things. A Skeptic denies other philosophers' claims that awareness of various competing dogmas regarding concepts was necessary, as people "ignorant" of the questions often live happier lives learning about them. Science does not require belief and faith in intelligible realities is different from pragmatic convention for the sake of experiment. Faced with a philosopher, Skeptics would immediately contradict any opinion they heard. Consensus indicates neither truth nor even probability. For example, the Earth is round, and it would remain so even if everyone believed it were flat. Unless, of course, it is flat, and we all simply believe it is round."
[59] ibn Rushd, "Tahafut al-Tahafut," sec. THE FIRST DISCUSSION: The denial of a logical necessity between cause and effect.

Renan makes much ado about the fact that al-Ghazali's book was very well received within the Muslim world while ibn Rushd's had first a lukewarm reception, before being declared heresy several hundred years later. But one reason for the poor reception of ibn Rushd's book among Muslim intellectuals may be that ibn Rushd's book is not a very powerful or convincing refutation al-Ghazali's thoughts unless the reader is extremely well-versed not only in the writings of ibn Sina and Aristotle, but also in theories of existence that originated in Greece and were discussed by dozens of different Greek philosophers who arrived at different conclusions, such as monadism and atomism. Ibn Rushd's most effective criticisms on al-Ghazali and ibn Sina have to do with their misunderstanding of Aristotle's strange and non-intuitive middle position between monadism and atomism, hylomorphism. Unfortunately, at no point in this book does ibn Rushd attempt to explain hylomorphism and how al-Ghazali and others misunderstand it Ibn Rushd, having edited Aristotle's *Physics,* would have been extremely well-informed on the topic and felt that readers should either already have the same knowledge, or that by reading his critique, they would be inspired to find the same knowledge. But I have intentionally left monadism, atomism, and hylomorphism unexplained so that the following paragraph may be read without the truly requisite background:

> The philosophers' answer is that they assert that they have proved that the world is composed of five bodies: a body neither heavy nor light, i.e. the revolving spherical body of heaven and four other bodies, two of which are earth, absolutely heavy, which is the centre of the revolving spherical body, and fire, absolutely light, which is seated in the extremity of the revolving sphere; nearest to earth is water, which is heavy relatively to air, light relatively to earth; next to water comes air, which is light relatively to water, heavy relatively to fire. The reason why earth is absolutely heavy is that it is farthest away from the circular movement, and therefore it is the fixed centre of the revolving body; the reason why fire is absolutely light is that it is nearest to the revolving sphere; the intermediate bodies are both heavy and light, because they are in the middle between the two extremes, i.e. the farthest point and the nearest. If there were not a revolving body, surely there would be neither heavy nor light by nature, and neither high nor low by nature, and this whether absolutely or relatively; and the bodies would not differ by nature in the way in which, for instance, earth moves by nature to its specific place and fire moves by nature to another place, and equally so the intermediary bodies. And the world is only finite, because of the spherical body, and this because of the essential and natural finiteness of the spherical body, as one single plane circumscribes it.' Rectilinear bodies are not essentially finite, as they allow of an increase and decrease; they are only finite because they are in the middle of a body that admits neither increase nor decrease, and is therefore essentially finite. And, therefore, the body circumscribing the world cannot but be spherical, as otherwise the bodies would either have to end in other bodies, and we should have an infinite regress, or they would end in empty space, and the

impossibility of both suppositions has been demonstrated. He who understands this knows that every possible world imaginable can only consist of these bodies, and that bodies have to be either circular-and then they are neither heavy nor light-or rectilinear-and then they are either heavy or light, i.e. either fire or earth or the intermediate bodies; that these bodies have to be either revolving, or surrounded by a revolving periphery, for each body either moves from, towards, or round the centre; that by the movements of the heavenly bodies to the right and to the left all bodies are constituted and all that is produced from opposites is generated; and that through these movements the individuals of these four bodies never cease being in a continual production and corruption. Indeed, if a single one of these movements should cease, the order and proportion of this universe would disappear, for it is clear that this order must necessarily depend on the actual number of these movements -- for if this were smaller or greater, either the order would be disturbed, or there would be another order – and that the number of these movements is as it is, either through its necessity for the existence of this sublunary world, or because it is the best .

Do not ask here for a proof for all this, but if you are interested in science, look for its proof, where you can find it.[60]

If the reader is not already aware of hylomorphism, then ibn Rushd's repeated statement throughout the entire text that al-Ghazali and the "theologians" do not understand what substance is, thus rendering their objections invalid, makes no particular sense and therefore has very little impact. As he refers back to this misunderstanding in almost every other section of the book, it renders those arguments less convincing because they are based on a proof of a theory that may or may not make any particular sense to the reader, and without understanding the given information in an argument, it is impossible to understand the ultimate syllogism; without knowing what ibn Rushd knows, his entire argument is, to use one of his favorite words, sophistic.

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[60] Ibid., sec. The First Discussion, The First Proof Concerning the eternity of the world. Incidentally, though ibn Rushd implores readers to look for this proof, he does not tell them where they can find it.

Chapter Three: Ernst Renan

It is difficult at times to repress the thought that history is about as instructive as an abattoir.
                                                              - Seanus Heany, Nobel Lecture, 1995

In the main Continental/Arab Liberal dialogue about ibn Rushd (in which the dialectic between al-Jabari and Tarabichi takes place), it is a truth universally acknowledged that the narrative of how ibn Rushd inspired the Western Enlightenment while al-Ghazali effectively murdered scientific inquiry comes from the 19th century thinker Ernst Renan, and in particular, is made clear in his book *Averroes et l'Averroisme.* Unfortunately, it has become such common knowledge that few authors provide any citation for this fact, and those that do, provide page numbers without specifying their edition. What is worse for English-speakers interested in the debate is the fact that *Averroes* has never been translated into English.[61] For future reference and the convenience of non-Francophone scholars of ibn Rushd, let it be known that Renan first formulated his accusation as such:

> It is above all against Ibn-Sina that Gazzali directed his Destruction of the Philosophers. Gazzali is, indisputably, the most original mind of the Arab school. He has left us, in a curious book, his philosophical confessions, and the narrative of his voyage across the different systems of his time. No system having satisfied him, he concluded with skepticism; skepticism being unable to retain him, he rushed into asceticism, and called on the mystical dances of the Sufis for the euphoria of his thought. Having arrived there, he stops on death and annihilation. Those who, after having philosophized, embrace mysticism as their last resort, are usually the most intolerant enemies of philosophy. Gazzali, having become a Sufi, undertook to prove the radical powerlessness of reason, and, by a maneuver that has always seduced minds that are more impassioned than wise, to establish religion over skepticism. He deployed in this struggle a truly astonishing perspicacity of the mind. It is above all by the criticism of the principle of cause that he opened his attack against rationalism… We perceive nothing but simultaneity, never causality. The causality is nothing more than the will of God making it so that two things would usually follow each other. The laws of nature don't exist, or express no more than a habitual fact; God alone is immutable. It was, one sees, a negation of all science. Gazzali was one of those bizarre minds who embrace religion only as a way to taunt reason. Besides, unfavorable rumors were being spread about the honesty of his [Gazzali's] feelings. Ibn-Roschd claims that he attacked philosophy to please the theologians, and to remove the suspicions that had arisen against his orthodoxy…

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[61] With only a vague knowledge of French and using the (unreliable) index of the Second Edition published in Paris in 1861 by Michel Levy Freres and available on Google Books, I was unable to find the exact place and phrasing of the original accusation. I was forced to resort to the much appreciated translation abilities of Lidiya Petrova, a friend with a B.A. in Romance Languages and Literatures. She found the original text (it appears on pages 96-99) and created a comprehensible English translation.

…Gazzali exercised a decisive influence over Arab philosophy. His attacks produced the ordinary effect of contradictions, and introduced into the opinion of his adversaries a thitherto unknown precision… Gazzali had humiliated science, and claimed that man only achieves perfection when he renounces the exercise of his rational faculties.[62]

Not only does access to Renan's original phrasing permit comparison to al-Jabari's account, but it also allows us to add nuance to Renan's narrative. Renan's belief that "those who, after having philosophized, embrace mysticism as their last resort, are usually the most intolerant enemies of philosophy," indicates that he actually blamed al-Ghazali's attacks on his Hellenic Skepticism and his Sufism, rather than on his Ash'arism, as has often been assumed. It also clarifies that, of all of al-Ghazali's writings, Renan believes that al-Ghazali's attack on cause and effect was the single most damaging attack ever made on Arab reason. But the most curious phrase is Renan's allegation that "Gazzali was one of those bizarre minds who embrace religion only as a way to taunt reason."[63] This implies not only a sort of pre-meditated malicious intent on al-Ghazali's part to destroy reason/rationalism, but also paints al-Ghazali as a sort of psychotic trickster figure.

Also of note is that Renan's notorious opinion that most Semetic minds were entirely incapable of reason or Western rationalism, while found in abundance in the rest of the book, is absent in this passage.[64] Indeed, al-Ghazali's voyage of personal philosophy, which Renan (accurately) depicts at the beginning of this extract is an accurate sketch of the progression of Western philosophy, which concluded with nihilism. This is especially impressive given that nihilism had not yet been fully formulated in 1855.[65] However, Renan's argument does not take into account the evidence that, even when al-Ghazali adopted a nihilistic/skeptical worldview, he never once abandoned his belief in *burhan* or empirical observation, the keystone of modern

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[62] Ernest Renan, *Averroès et l'averroïsme: essai historique* (Michel Lévy Frères, 1861), 96–99. Original French text and Lidiya Petrova's complete translation can be found in Appendix A.

[63] Originally "Gazzali fut un de esprits bizarres qui n'embrassent la religion que comme une manière de narguer la raison." 98.

[64] Wild, "Islamic Enlightenment and the Paradox of Averroes," 384–385.

[65] Nietzsche was eleven at the time of this book's publication and his full description of Nihilism would not be published until the 1880s.

science if not modern philosophy. This omission drastically weakens Renan's depiction of the death of al-Ghazali as the man who murdered the Arab Rationalism championed by ibn Rushd. Nevertheless, Renan's narrative has remained the basis of most Arab discourse regarding ibn Rushd ever since.

Chapter Four: The Contemporary Philosophers

All true histories contain instruction; though, in some, the treasure may be hard to find, and when found, so trivial in quantity that the dry, shrivelled kernel scarcely compensates for the trouble of cracking the nut.

- Anne Brontë, Agnes Grey, 1847

MOHAMMED 'ABED AL-JABARI & GEORGE TARABICHI

Walid Harmaneh's introduction to *Arabic-Islamic Philosophy: A Contemporary Critique,* while inaccurate (it is not the first of al- Jabari's works to be translated into English: Jabari's half of the UN *Human Development in the Arab World: The Cultural and Societal Dimensions* preceded it by three years[66]), remains correct in stating that al-Jabari has been largely ignored by the English-speaking world despite his central position in Arab debates since the mid-1970s.[67] With the exception of one translation of al-Jabari's works into German, it appears that al-Jabari and Tarabichi's dialogue takes place almost exclusively in Arabic and French.[68] Meanwhile, though George Tarabichi has reportedly translated more than two hundred books from French to Arabic while composing dozens of original works, he has only one publication available in English.[69] The lack of availability of al-Jabari's and Tarabichi's works in other languages is one of the reasons (along with its connection to the classical dispute) that the dialogue between these two scholars is the chief contemporary case study of this paper.

This dialectic, these arguments and suggestions, are written by Arabs and intended for an Arab audience. Unlike many of his fellows who studied for some time in the West, al-Jabari was educated in his native Morocco and taught in Damascus and several universities in Morocco; though he incorporated a great deal of European thought

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[66] Muḥammad 'Ābid Jābirī, United Nations, and United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development in the Arab World: The Cultural and Societal Dimensions*, Human Development Studies Series no. 2 (New York: United Nations, 1995).

[67] al-Jabri, *The Formation of Arab Reason*, vii.

[68] Hegasy, "Pioneering Figure in a New Arab Enlightenment."

[69] Jūrj Ṭarābīshī, *Woman Against Her Sex: A Critique of Nawal El-Saadawi with a Reply by Nawal El-Saadawi* (London ; Brooklyn, NY: Saqi Books, 1988); Samir Abuzaid, "George Tarabishi - Arab Philosopher," *Arab Philosophers*, 2010, http://www.arabphilosophers.com/Arabic/aphilosophers/acontemporary/acontemporary-names/Tarabishi/A_Tarabishil.htm.

into his work, his instruction came largely through the filter of Arab instructors. Syrian-born George Tarabichi received both his bachelor's degree and his master's from the University of Damascus (where he and al-Jabari were "colleagues, not friends," according to his eulogy for al-Jabari)[70] and worked in journalism with various Arab magazines and radio stations from the 1960s until he permanently moved to Paris after the Lebanese Civil War.[71]   Their dialogue is as close as I can come to examining the Arab intellectual perspective on ibn Rushd.[72] Authenticity is a major issue when describing al-Jabari and Tarabishi's works, because the question of 'authenticity' had been an obsession within the Arab world for much of their adult lives.[73]

The conventional historical narrative as painted in broad strokes by writers like Kassab and George Tarabichi[74] is, that the Arabs' humiliating defeat in the 1967 Six Day War caused a crisis in Arab intellectual and political thought, both in popular and intellectual circles, throughout much of the Arabic speaking world.[75] This defeat forced Arabs to admit that neither the Arab world nor any individual Arab nation could be considered a true military power or a major competitor in global commerce. The war marked the decisive failure only of Nasserism for Arabs in Egypt, many points East, but also of almost all other ideologies of modernization imported from Western/European society, not to mention any faith Arabs may have had in the reliability of Soviet manufactured weaponry.   Popular opinion, already suspicious of the West in the aftermath of colonialism, became hostile towards almost any idea that originated in

[70] George Tarabishi, "Muhammad 'Abed al-Jabari and Critical Thinking: A Quarter of a Century of Dialogue Without Dialogue," *Www.alawan.org*, May 6, 2010, http://www.alawan.org/ربع-قرن-من-حوار-بلا

[71] Abuzaid, "George Tarabishi - Arab Philosopher."

[72] Mohammed Abed al-Jabri, "CV - Mohammed Abed al-Jabri" (http://www.aljabriabed.net, 2008), http://ibn-rushd.org/pages/int/Awards/2008/documents/cv-en.pdf.

[73] Elizabeth Suzanne Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective*, Kindle. (Columbia University Press, 2010), 65, 82, 133. (Please note that the Kindle edition lacks page numbers; these are estimations based on a copy of the index available online).

[74] Hasan Salman, "George Tarabishi: I Do Not Consider Myself a Philosopher and There Are No Arab Philosophers," *Asharq Al-awsat* (Damascus, January 23, 2008), http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=19&article=455262&issueno=10648.

[75] Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought*, 2–4.

Europe or the West (though this rejection did not include new technologies). Liberal secularists scrambled to find and iterate any form of compelling ideology at all, especially following the death of Marxism as a reputable ideology in the 1980s.[76] Without any compelling competing ideologies available, Islamism spread throughout the entire Muslim world, causing the rise of theocratic regimes like Hezbollah and the persecution of non-Muslim Arabs.[77] The efforts of the Islamists were aided by continuing economic stagnation that left a plurality of all Arabs unemployed since the 1980s. This produced multiple generations of young men, many of whom lacked higher education, but did have an abundance of spare time and no way to gain independence or start their own families; in other words, an ideal recruiting pool for any quasi-military force that might attract their attentions.[78] The growing threat of violent Islamism in turn gave rise to the current 'Holy Grail' for liberal Arab intellectuals: a historical and political narrative that attempts to make modern liberal ideals (e.g. human rights, democracy, pluralistic secularity, and uncensored intellectual and scientific inquiry) appear to be an organic outgrowth of Arab culture without being tainted by any Western influences.[79] Both al-Jabari and Tarabichi would tender their own theories.

The dominant narrative of the first waves of post-1967 Arab scholarship must take into account the shared experiences of the generation that wrote it: a tumultuous age marked by numerous shared cultural moments of disappointment and disillusionment. Although the experiences and responses no doubt differed somewhat in Morocco and in Syria, these can all be considered events in 'Arab' history of their generation. Al-Jabari

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[76] *Ibid.*, 2   It should also be noted that both al-Jabari and Tarabichi have made unequivocal statements renouncing Marxism: see al-Jabri, "CV - Mohammed Abed al-Jabri," 3; Elie Chalala, "Elie Chalala Reports on the Tarabishi -- al-Jabberi Debate," *Al Jadid Magazine*, 1997, http://www.aljadid.com/content/elie-chalala-reports-tarabishi-al-jabberi-debate.

[77] Jābirī, United Nations, and United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development in the Arab World*, 7–11.

[78] Muḥammad ʿĀbid Jābirī, United Nations, and United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development in the Arab World: The Cultural and Societal Dimensions*, Human Development Studies Series no. 2 (New York: United Nations, 1995), 11; Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought*, 11–12; Najjar, "Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and the Egyptian Enlightenment Movement," 199.

[79] Michaelle Browers, *Political Ideology in the Arab World: Accommodation and Transformation* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.

was born in 1936 and Tarabichi in 1939, which meant that they experienced the failed aftermath of the experiments of the first *Nahda*.[80] As young adults they witnessed the Algerian war for independence, the birth of Nasserism, and documented the earliest stages of post-colonial literature, politics, and cultural reactions. In their thirties, they cheered on Pan-Arabism and mostly straddled the fence in the Cold War. They watched or listened in horror for six days in June 1967, and accepted the death of Nasserism. After that, they accepted the reality of auto-cratic regimes in Libya, Tunisia, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt, and the rise of a Muslim theocracy in Iran; they witnessed the collapse of Lebanon (supposedly one of the most successful post-colonial Arab states) into civil war, and bemoaned the continuing lack of economic development in almost all Arab nations.[81] In their old age, the much touted Iraqi army suffered a miserable defeat at the hands of a coalition led by the United States (twice), Palestinians engaged in two *intifadahs*, and Arabs who chose the Islamist alternative committed dozens of acts of terrorism that killed thousands.[82] Al-Jabari did not live to see the Arab Spring, but in the discourse since then, his books have remained popular and a powerful influence.[83] Tarabichi has grown more reclusive since 2010, but continues to publish and lecture.

Examining the bibliographies and curricula vitae of both al-Jabari and Tarabichi is a dramatic illustration of the effect that the 1967 War had on Arab intellectuals. Prior to the war, al-Jabari had been a primary and secondary school teacher and an active Marxist demonstrator; by 1970 he completed a doctorate in philosophy. During the 1970s he wrote books about the philosophy of science and math and gradually withdrew from the National Union Party. Over the next few years he formulated the argument he

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[80] Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought*, 2–3.

[81] James L Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 183.

[82] Salman, "George Tarabishi: I Do Not Consider Myself a Philosopher and There Are No Arab Philosophers."

[83] Hegasy, "Pioneering Figure in a New Arab Enlightenment." a For further tributes (and critiques) on al-Jabari in Arabic, refer to the news aggregator alawan.org, which has archived 147 articles on him by various authors, including their own thirteen part original series, "Mohammed 'Abed al-Jabri and critical thinking." [http://www.alawan.org/spip.php?page=recherche&recherche=محمد+عابد+الجابري&x=0&y=0 and http://www.alawan.org/spip.php?page=recherche&recherche=محمد+عابد+الجابري+والفكر +النّقديّ&x=0&y=0, respectively.]

would advocate for the rest of his life and published the first volume of *Naqd al-'aql al-'arabi*. He presented his theory publicly for the first time at the Cairo Conference of 1984 – "Heritage and the Challenges of the Age in the Arab Homeland: Authenticity and Contemporaneity,"[84] – and proceeded to elaborate on the theory in four more volumes.

Tarabichi's initial response was similar to al-Jabari's; after a decade spent writing about Marxism, he seemed to abandon Marx completely and shifted his allegiance to Freud. He spendt the rest of the seventies and much of the eighties writing literary criticism using Freudian frameworks, culminating in his single English-language publication, a psychoanalytic critique of Nawal al-Saadawy's fiction. Then Tarabishi shifted course again, and began to psychoanalyze Arab intellectuals' sudden obsession with their cultural heritage (*turath*). He diagnosed this phenomenon as a collective post-traumatic reaction to the 1967 War, with Arabs as a culture retreating from the rest of the world and adopting a contrarian, self-obsessed attitude as a defense mechanism that would allow them to ignore the aftermath of their trauma. When forced to discuss the event they denied their own role in the disaster: it had been the fault of their ancestors, not theirs.[85]

Tarabichi's post-1967 diagnosis integrates neatly with the pre-existing dominant historical narrative in the Middle East. Since the advent of the so-called 'modern period' in the Middle East, marked by Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798, Orientalists and Arab intellectuals have operated almost exclusively within the 'decay' or 'decline' theory of Middle Eastern history. This theory posits that the Islamic world experienced a golden age, in cultural, technological, intellectual, and artistic senses, that peaked at some point prior to the fifteenth century. Following the rise of the Ottoman Empire, Arab-Islamic society entered a period not only of stagnation, but also of actual literary, artistic, and intellectual *regression* that lasted for the next four centuries while European society and culture surpassed them in every way.[86] While in the last forty years many scholars have

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[84] al-Jabri, "CV - Mohammed Abed al-Jabri"; Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought*, 154.
[85] Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought*, 170–172; Abuzaid, "George Tarabishi - Arab Philosopher."
[86] Dallal, *Islam, Science, and the Challenge of History*, 150–151.

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challenged the "decay" narrative, it remains a dominant theory and since the last half of the nineteenth century, has provided a sort of "cultural inferiority complex" for the Arab world.[87]

Tarabichi's investigation into the Arab world's complicated relationship with its own past culminates in his encyclopedic fifteen-year criticism of al-Jabari's work. The first volume, *Nazaria al-'aql: naqd naqd al-'aql al-arabi,* was published in 1996, marking the beginning of a fourteen year passive-aggressive non-dialectic. After a brief flurry of veiled insults and allegations in 1997 failed to draw al-Jabari into a direct response, Tarabichi's interests shifted again. Since 1998, all of Tarabichi's books have focused on themes related to religion, secularism, and democracy (the thematic creep even trickles into some of his later critiques of al-Jabari). By 2008, he declared that he is not a philosopher and he has no real philosophy, and he entered a period of relative seclusion.[88]

"A QUARTER OF A CENTURY OF DIALOGUE WITHOUT DIALOGUE"[89]

Returning to Tarabichi's diagnosis of the Arab psyche, the reaction of a victim becoming obsessed with an idealized period before her traumatic experience (referred to as *prisca theologia* [90] when it occurs as a group phenomenon) is a common cultural response to periods of societal unrest and upheaval in *any* society.[91] Most Western

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[87] Ibid., 156.

[88] Abuzaid, "George Tarabishi - Arab Philosopher"; Salman, "George Tarabishi: I Do Not Consider Myself a Philosopher and There Are No Arab Philosophers." Also, at some point during all of this, he translated more than 200 books from French to Arabic.

[89] Tarabishi, "Muhammad 'Abed al-Jabari and Critical Thinking: A Quarter of a Century of Dialogue Without Dialogue."

[90] The belief that humans once received true and perfect knowledge from God or some other higher power, but that this knowledge and thus, society, has decayed ever since. *Prisca theologia* is a major theme in one of al-Jabari's favorite epithets for irrational thought: hermetics.

[91] *Prisca theologia* has been observed in Islamic writings as early as the 18th century. Ahmad Dallal, "The Origins and Objectives of Islamic Revivalist Thought 1750-1850," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113, no. III (1993): 341–359. For examples in other cultures, see Carl Edwin Lindgren, "The way of the Rose Cross; A Historical Perception, 1614–1620," *Journal of Religion and Psychical Research*, Volume 18, Number 3:141-48. 1995 for an Italian example and James D. Heiser, *Prisci Theologi and the*

scientists choose to ignore that, in between running the Royal Mint and redefining the mathematical and physical laws of the universe as it was known, Sir Isaac Newton spent the bulk of his energy and time pursuing the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life.[92] In the wake of 1967, many Arabs, secularists, socialists, Islamists, and other miscellaneous scholars, including al-Jabari, looked to an idealized past for answers. A trained scholar of medieval philosophy (his dissertation subject was ibn-Khaldun), al-Jabari looked at the modern problem and found a medieval solution.

As is often the case, the diagnosis dictates the cure. Al-Jabari believes that the reason that the Arab world cannot modernize organically, in a way that fits their culture and society so that it is a legitimate, authentic Arab Modernization, is that Arab culture for the last eight hundred years has been based on an epistemological theory that is incompatible with the greatest benefits of modernization, including the scientific method, human rights, and democracy. As stated in the introduction of this paper, al-Jabiri's argument *strongly* resembles that of Ernst Renan, though al-Jabari rarely cites or even mentions Renan.[93] The main difference is that, in al-Jabari's iteration of the 'Westerners are rational, Easterners are mystical' theory, Arabs in Morocco and medieval al-Andalus are Western rather than Eastern.[94] Al-Jabari believes that an epistemological system derived largely from Eastern sources which he refers to as 'resigned reason', renders Arab logic entirely formal and based on *bayan* (Qur'anic explication) and *'irfan* (illumination) rather than *burhan* (rational proof). This esoteric and irrational epistemology spread throughout the Arab world as a direct result of the rejection of

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Hermetic Reformation in the Fifteenth Century, Repristination Press, 2011 for a later German-French revival.

[92] Chris Oxley, "Newton's Dark Secrets," *Nova* (Boston: PBS, 05 2005),
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/physics/newton-dark-secrets.html.

[93] Exactly once, on page 290, and he quotes Meirhoff quoting Renan.

[94] al-Jabri, *The Formation of Arab Reason*, 48. The Amazigh are conspicuously absent throughout all four volumes of *Naqd al-'aql*, but this is likely for the best. For an introduction to al-Jabari's problematic history with the Amazigh and their language in particular, see Ibrahim Arzwal's two part article published at alawan.com, "Mohammad 'Abed al-Jabari and Critical Thinking: His Arabism is in fact his obstruction... Criticism of al-Jabari's Depiction of the Almazigh"
[http://www.alawan.org/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-
%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%AF-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A,7845.html]

logical Western Arab philosophers like ibn Rushd and ibn Khaldun and the acceptance of Eastern Arab Sufi mystics masquerading as philosophers like al-Ghazali, ibn Turmart, and (to a lesser degree) ibn-Sina. Al-Jabari provides his commentary on the al-Ghazali/ibn Rushd dialectic and the *Tahafuts* in the final two chapters of *Takwīn Al-'aql Al-'Arabī,* the first volume of *Naqd al-'Aql al-'Arabi*.[95] Furthermore, this is the volume which Tarabichi does not address in the first volume of *Naqd naqd al-'aql al-'arabi: Nazaria al-'aql*, enabling me to use his methods of critique on a separate section of al-Jabari's work.[96]

When *Naqd al-'aql al-'arabi* was first published in 1984, George Tarabichi (according to multiple interviews since) has stated that "At the time what I wrote about [the book] in an article for the magazine *"al-Wahida [Unity]"*, was that this book not only educates you, but it also changes you. From then on, you cannot return to reading the way that you read before reading [this book]."[97] But upon rereading it, he soon began to notice major problems with the book: from his concerns with the underlying ideologies to a few irregularities he had noticed in the quotations.[98] In his eulogy for al-Jabari, Tarabichi said that, soon after the article was published, he invited al-Jabari to his Paris home and they met for the first time since they had been students together at Damascus. After dinner they drank whiskey together while Tarabichi explained every problem he had with the examples al-Jabari had used in the book. When al-Jabari failed to respond

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[95] It also built on the work he began in *Naḥnu Wa-Al-Turāth.*, particularly chapters 3 and 9. Further, *Takwīn* happens to be the only volume of *Naqd* that has been translated into English. Though I did read the Arab original two years ago, I have opted for time's sake and for consistency (I read both *Tahafuts* in English as well and it was simpler to recognize arguments when the terms were in the same language.) Furthermore,

[96] Jūrj Ṭarābīshī, *Naẓarīyat Al-'aql: Naqd Naqd Al-'aql Al-'Arabī*, al-Ṭab'ah 1. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Sāqī, 1996), 9.

[97] Salman, "George Tarabishi: I Do Not Consider Myself a Philosopher and There Are No Arab Philosophers." Translation my own: originally (أنه ليس كتابا وقد كتبت عنه في حينه في مجلة «الوحدة» يُثقف بل هو أيضا كتاب يغيّر، فمن يقرأه لا يعود بعد قراءته كما كان قبل قراءته)

[98] Ṭarābīshī, *Naẓarīyat Al-'aql*, 12.

to the criticism, they cut off all academic and personal friendships. Tarabichi claims this was one of the great to disappointments of his life.[99]

After Tarabichi published the first volume of his critique, al-Jabari gave an interview to the Moroccan socialist paper, *al-Itihaad al-Ishtiraki,* in February of 1997 in which he responded to Tarabichi but refused to name him. "Until now, I am fully assured that everything I wrote does not include any scientific, epistemological or methodological errors. In this regard, I am fully satisfied with what I have written."[100] Unfortunately, the full text of the interview is unavailable to me, because Chalala quotes other statements that make al-Jabari's response appear possibly delusional and paranoid. He makes accusations about conspiracies against him and his work by groups consisting of Muslims, non-Muslims, people whom he will not name because it "will reveal their religious affiliation" as well as "…Leftists and Communists [who] gathered during a symposium in Tunisia. There they held a separate meeting and concluded that [al-Jabberi's] epistemological writings are dangerous and threaten Marxist and progressive thought."[101] A few writers, including Hazem Saghieh, attempted to arrange for a direct confrontation, but the controversy sputtered out quickly as al-Jabari refused to address Tarabichi directly, and Tarabichi insisted that his work spoke for itself.[102] Tarabichi's eulogy for al-Jabari received general acclaim for putting an amicable end to the enmity.[103] Nonetheless, Tarabichi continues to lecture on the faults in al-Jabari's work to this day.[104]

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[99] Tarabishi, "Muhammad 'Abed al-Jabari and Critical Thinking: A Quarter of a Century of Dialogue Without Dialogue."

[100] Chalala, "Elie Chalala Reports on the Tarabishi -- al-Jabberi Debate."

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibrahim al-Ariss, "George Tarabishi on His Book, Al Jabberi, and Theory of Rethinking Turath Studies | Al Jadid Magazine," *Al Jadid Magazine*, 1997, http://www.aljadid.com/content/george-tarabishi-his-book-al-jabberi-and-theory-rethinking-turath-studies.

[103] Khaled al-Harb, "مغرس : مثقف المروءة: جورج طرابيشي مقدراً عابد الجابري", News Aggregator, *The Maghress*, June 13, 2010, http://www.maghress.com/marayapress/3385.

[104] Ahmad Al-Sheedi, " جورج طرابيشي يشن هجوما عنيفا على محمد عابد الجابري ويتهمه بخيانة مصادره التراثية (George Tarabishi Makes Strong Argument Against Mohammed 'Abed al-Jabari and Accuses Him of Betraying His Traditional Sources)," News, *Oman Daily*, March 25, 2012, http://main.omandaily.om/node/89427.

In *Nazaria al-'aql,* Tarabichi sets out the basic premises of his entire critique:

1. Al-Jabari's argument ignores all of the philosophical and scientific changes that have occurred between ibn-Rushd's death and the twentieth century.
2. Al-Jabari refers to Greek philosophers and philosophies that he does not understand correctly, resulting in arguments based on those philosophies that are completely mistaken.[105]
3. The content of al-Jabari's bibliography is suspect (including failing to credit earlier theorists like Renan and Lalande).[106]
4. His citations are questionable (to the point where Tarabichi questions whether or not al-Jabari fabricated evidence), and his use of quotations is misleading.[107]
5. Furthermore, al-Jabari's central premise is fanatically adherent to what Tarabichi calls Western [or possibly in this context, Moroccan] rationality and bigoted against Eastern reason, and for the Sunni statements against the knowledge of the Shi'i, and for political Islam against spiritual Islam.[108]

As *Nazariya al-'aql* focuses largely on the contents of the third volume of *Naqd al-'aql,* the rest of this paper applies Tarabichi's critique to the final two chapters of *Takwīn al-'aql.* Even within that excerpt, Tarabichi's critique appears to be quite accurate.

Tarabichi's claim that al-Jabari was inherently biased towards Western rationalism is seen in the *names of the chapters* of *Takwīn.* Al-Jabari, though described by von Kugelgen as a Marxist, had resigned from the National Union party in 1981, and by the time he began *Naqd al-'aql,* he had become a Moroccan nationalist, and his critique of the *Tahafut* reflects that.[109] He introduces al-Ghazali in a chapter titled, "The Crisis of Fundamentals and the Fundamentals of Crisis", while the chapter titled "A New

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[105] Ṭarābīshī, *Naẓarīyat Al-'aql,* 116–118.

[106] Jūrj Ṭarābīshī, *Naẓarīyat Al-'aql: Naqd Naqd Al-'aql Al-'Arabī,* al-Ṭab'ah 1. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Sāqī, 1996), 13–15.

[107] Ibid., 25–28.

[108] Ibid., 8–9.
Ṭarābīshī, *Naẓarīyat Al-'aql,* 8–9.

[109] Anke von Kügelgen/ آنكى ڤون كوغيلغين, "A Call for Rationalism," 113; al-Jabri, "CV - Mohammed Abed al-Jabri," 2.

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Beginning… However!" focuses exclusively on philosophers from al-Maghreb and al-Andalus.[110]

Al-Ghazali, an Easterner and worse, a Sufi mystic, suffers from some of the al-Jabari's harshest criticisms, many of which appear to be based on selective use of sources, manipulation of quotations, and a complete misreading of the Stoics and Skeptics. Al-Jabari first provides a brief biography of al-Ghazali in which he emphasizes al-Ghazali's nervous breakdown by titling it "Walking out of Baghdad: al-Ghazali's Crisis."[111] He also accuses al-Ghazali of being one of the main sources of 'resigned reason' because of the widespread availability of his works.[112] Two earlier chapters described 'resigned reason,' which appears at least to be an original concept of al-Jabari's, but one he seems hesitant to define. The clearest definition I could find appears in chapter eight:

> Yet, including [Manicheism, Hermetism, and Neo-Platonism] as part of what we have termed the 'irrational of the reason' is justified, as they all confirm the inability of human reason to achieve awareness of God through contemplation of the universe, which implies that human awareness ought to occur through direct contact/communion with the absolute truth: Allah (God). It is the 'resigned reason' (al-'aql al-mustaqil).[which we will locate in] Arabic-Islamic culture and recogniz[e] forms of its presence there.[113]

When reading this definition, it also must be noted that al-Jabari uses "Hermetism" in a broad sense that also includes the Greek schools of Stoicism,[114] and Skepticism.[115] As an example of al-Jabari's failure to understand Greek philosophy, he includes the Stoics and the Skeptics among the great enemies of reason and rationalism despite the fact that their epistemology was based on experimentation and empirical evidence, i.e. the *burhan* he otherwise rhapsodizes about.[116] Al-Jabari also neglects to mention that al-Ghazali

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[110] al-Jabri, *The Formation of Arab Reason*, 365.

[111] Ibid., 348.

[112] Ibid. 234, 360, 403-405, 407.

[113] al-Jabri, *The Formation of Arab Reason*, 192.

[114] Ibid, 234.

[115] Ibid, 204, 419.

[116] Brad Inwood and Donald M. Borchert, "Stoicism," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 206AD); Klein, "Skepticism"; Alvin Reines, "Skeptics and Skepticism," ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, *Encyclopaedia Judaica.* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 207AD).

identified himself as a Skeptic for two years during his biography, which would otherwise be an error by omission.

His critique of *Tahafut* takes up the bulk of the remainder of the chapter. However, before he addresses the contents of the book al-Jabari inserts a lengthy tangent questioning al-Ghazali's motives for writing *Tahafut* at all. He begins *that* tangent by writing a branching tangent questioning what al-Ghazali meant when he said that logic was necessary. Al-Jabari first defines al-Ghazali's concept of 'logic' by allowing that al-Ghazali felt that logic was needed to respond to philosophy (a statement on which he does not further elaborate). He then provides evidence that al-Ghazali felt that logic was necessary for jurists and theologians to reconcile their decisions. However, in order to show this, al-Jabari mixes brief quotes from a number of al-Ghazali's early texts including *Jawahir al-Quran, Miyar al-'ilm,* and *Mafassil al-Khilaf,* and alternates between quotations and his own statements without clear boundaries.[117] He concludes the paragraph by stating, "Obviously, then, what al-Ghazali desired by logic was 'debate' (*al-jadal*) and not 'demonstration by inferential evidence' (*al-burhan*).[118] This contradicts one of the quotes he took from al-Ghazali in *the same paragraph*. "And logic is also necessary for *fiqh* because 'discernment/speculation' [on the basis of **evidence**] - *al-naza*[119] - is not in contradiction with *al-nazar*[120] in matters of reason'...:".[121] It also

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[117] al-Jabri, *The Formation of Arab Reason*, 351–352.

[118] Ibid., 352.

[119] This is one of two Arabic words that isn't followed by a translation on this page. (See note 95 for the reason I cannot find the original Arabic word myself) I cannot make sense of it: the root is definitely ن-ز-ن not ن-ز-ع or ن-ز-ى –while my transcription does not contain them, the text always uses diacritic marks and the symbol ʻ to indicate an 'ayn and ' to indicate aleph. I have consulted Lane's (classical), and Wehr's dictionaries and even Google translate. The root ن-ز-ن relates to a number of things: seeping, vibrating, swiftness, fickleness, (sensuous) passion, lust (the meaning of نزة to Wehr and Lane), perambulating, and tramps (in the vagabond sense, not the lusty female sense). None of them make any sense to me in context.

[120] Pettiness.

[121] Emphasis mine. Also note that the beginning of my quotation (And logic is also necessary) is al-Jabari's voice; al-Ghazali's quote starts with 'discernment'. As to the quote itself, al-Jabari cites the 1961 edition published by Sulayman Dunya. (footnote 64, page 363) I have access to the 1965 edition of the book by S. Dunya and printed by the same Cairene publisher.I would gladly have pulled the original quote, except al-Jabari provides no page number in this citation. He cites the book twice more, but only one has a quotation (66) and the quote isn't even an entire clause ('the text [of the Qur'an], the *sunnah,* and the

contradicts al-Ghazali's *and ibn Rushd's* own writings regarding al-Ghazali's opinion of *burhan*, as noted above on pages 12 and 17.

Carrying over onto the next page, al-Jabari's imposed definition of logic as 'debate' is combined with the fact that al-Ghazali wrote a clear explanation of how to compose syllogisms when acting as a judge to come to a possibly even more precarious conclusion:

> In other words, logic for al-Ghazali is 'debate' according to the terminology of Aristotle, namely 'inductive reasoning positively or negatively in one same issue, avoiding falling into contradiction, and defending the positive and negative result. This is precisely what interested al-Ghazali in logic, and thus, he did not tend towards the production of knowledge, but to defend one kind give of it to destroy the other."[122]

However, al-Jabari's labyrinth of oblique conclusions is almost forgotten when al-Jabari asserts (without citation) later on this page that there was no need for al-Ghazali to rebut the philosophers because, "There were *no* philosophers in [al-Ghazali's] time *at all*."[123] 'Umar Khayyam (1048-1131), who was born and lived in al-Ghazali's native Khurasan ten years *before* al-Ghazali, who taught and wrote at least seven books in Arabic about ibn-Sina's philosophy, and who outlived al-Ghazali by twenty years, apparently does not count.[124] As al-Jabari has a doctorate in philosophy and counts himself as an expert on Arab-Islamic culture, this statement is unmistakably an error by omission.

Finally, he concludes that, as al-Ghazali had no rational reasons to write *Tahafut*, it must have been written for one of two reasons. The first is that al-Ghazali felt the need to defend Ash'arite doctrine, which is an interesting argument given that *within Tahafut,* al-Ghazali rebuts philosophical statements with verses from the Qur'an alone (which would make it a defense of the Qur'an itself, not merely the Ash'arite interpretation).[125]

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consensus'), while the other (67) is from a different chapter where al-Jabari explains how to build a syllogism.

[122] al-Jabri, *The Formation of Arab Reason*, 352–353. Emphasis his.

[123] Ibid., 353. Emphasis his.

[124] Mehdi Aminrazavi and Glen Van Brummelen, "Umar Khayyam," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2011., 2011, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/umar-khayyam/.

[125] al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al-Falasifa*, 190.

The other explanation al-Jabari provides is that *Tahafut* may have been an early manifestation of al-Ghazali's nervous breakdown, written as a paranoid reaction to the assassination of Nizam al-Mulk. Al-Jabari writes, "Consequently, could this assassination and the subsequent terror and turmoil in the Seljuq state and among its men, of whom al-Ghazali was one, have been what he termed the 'difficulties' which had stimulated him to compose The Incoherence of Philosophers?" further impugning al-Ghazali's mental state and reliability as an intellectual while composing this work.[126] Thus, in a mere five pages of *The Fundamentals of Arab Logic*, al-Jabari commits four of the five major errors that Tarabichi enumerated, several of them repeatedly.

As cataloguing every instance of these errors would truly be an encyclopedic project (and I now have an even greater appreciation of the fact that it only took Tarabichi fifteen years to complete his critique), I shall confine the rest of *my* examination to only the most egregious errors in the pages regarding ibn-Rushd. Al-Jabari's idealized vision of ibn Rushd's Andalus includes a mass persecution of the Malikis and public burning of their works during the reign of Yaʿqub al-Mansur.[127] Al-Jabari cites ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *al-Muʿjib fī talkhīs akhbār al-Maghrib*. However, he Encyclopedia of Islam articles on Yaʿqub al-Mansur in both the Second and Third editions mention the Caliph's relative tolerance of the Malikis as compared to that of his father and that he often surrounded himself with religious advisors both Almohad and Maliki.[128] More importantly, the Third edition article also cites ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *al-Muʿjib fī talkhīs akhbār al-Maghrib*. If there had been widespread persecution of the Malikis mentioned in that text, it seems doubtful that Mr. Fromherz would fail to include it when he also mentioned that the largest internal threat that al-

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[126] al-Jabri, *The Formation of Arab Reason*, 354.
[127] Ibid., 395.
[128] Miranda A. Huici, "Abū Yūsuf Yaʿḳūbb. Yūsuf B. ʿAbd al-Muʾmin al-Manṣūr," ed. P. Bearman et al., *Encyclopedia of Islam* (Brill Onlinr, 2012); Allen J. Fromherz, "Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf al-Manṣūr," ed. Gudrun Krämer et al., *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Brill, 2012).

Mansur faced, the Banū Ghāniya, were Malikis, and that al-Mansur banished ibn-Rushd in an attempt to appeal to the Malikis.[129]

Continuing on, al-Jabari devotes not quite an entire page to *Tahafut al-Tahafut*, mostly quoting portions of *Tahafut* where ibn Rushd chastises al-Ghazali directly, and adds very little independent commentary[130] Then he states that ibn Rushd attempted to excuse al-Ghazali by placing the blame on ibn Sina using a number of quotes from al-*Kashf 'an manahij al-'adla fi 'aqaid al-mil,* which seems to contradict his earlier argument that the Avicennan tradition helped keep Persian culture vibrant much longer than Arab culture.[131] For reasons unclear to me, al-Jabari chooses to focus on the portion of the dialectic between al-Ghazali and ibn Rushd which took place in *Fasl al-Maqal.* He notes that the text is a response to al-Ghazali about how using logic is a legal duty, but fails to note that it is a text wherein ibn Rushd explains the many ways that he *agrees* with al-Ghazali, particularly in regards to *burhan*.[132] The entire section (a mere two pages) is highly confused and al-Jabari quickly concludes the section and moves on to describe how 'resigned reason,' Sufi mysticism, and orthodox 'ulama killed all sense of scientific or intellectual curiosity in the century immediately following ibn Rushd's death.

[129] Fromherz, "Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf al-Manṣūr."

[130] al-Jabri, *The Formation of Arab Reason*, 397.

[131] Ibid., 399.

[132] Ibid., 396; Averroës, *The Attitude of Islam Towards Science and Philosophy*, 160–164.

Conclusion

We constitute a narrative species, we humans. We like to tell one another that we're a rational species, but given human behavior in places such as Cambodia, that idea has become more of a bitter joke. A narrative species is something else, and closer to the mark. We learn by stories, live by stories, evolve by telling the story of ourselves in the half-vain, half-beautiful hope that one day we may get our story right.
-Roger Rosenblatt eulogizing Spalding Gray*, Swimming to Cambodia,* 2005

Since the theory of ibn Rushd being the ideal role model and mascot for Arab rationalism and modernization was proposed in the mid-nineteenth century by Ernst Renan, a notoriously racist Orientalist, the idea has permeated Arab liberal thought. This occurred in spite of the fact that, if al-Ghazali and ibn Rushd are read together and in context, they largely agree on the issues most relevant to how Renan defined both rationalism and modernization. They both supported scientific empiricism, experimentation, and intellectual curiosity; they both defended the rules of formal logic; and they both even supported early formulations of the concept of the separation of church and state. The topics about which they disagreed – the eternity of the universe, the nature of existence, whether or not there will be a true bodily resurrection at the Day of Judgment—are things about which scientists, philosophers, and theologians continue to disagree to this very day. As mentioned in the introduction, ibn Rushd and al-Ghazali are still used as model references in contemporary Western philosophical debates.

Meanwhile, in the Middle East, ibn Rushd has been trotted out by scholar after scholar as the key to modernization: Farah Antun, Salama Musa, Mahmud Qasim, and Muhammad 'Ammara, just to name a few. Famed Egyptian director Yusuf Chahine even made a Bollywood-esque major motion picture, *La Destin* (1997), supposedly a biography of ibn Rushd (it took a number of 'artistic liberties' with some facts) and idolized ibn Rusdh so much that he admitted in interviews that ibn Rushd was an

analogue for his own, poor, persecuted self.[133] But as of yet, the Averroiest or Rushdiyya movement has failed to produce any appreciable results.

If there is anything to learn from the dialectic between al-Jabari and Tarabichi, it is that this theory has not only been exhaustively explored, but has also been exhaustively *debunked*. Two of the finest Arab minds of their generation spent a quarter of a century exploring this topic from every possible angle. They produced a remarkable record of how idolization of ibn Rushd (or really, any figure from the idealized Classical period) would not lead the Middle East into a true *Nahda*, but they did not produce any theory of how the Middle East actually *could* achieve an age in which intellectual, artistic, and scientific endeavors flower. Al-Jabari spent twenty years on his project; Tarabichi spent fifteen years on his. What else could they have been researching during all that time?

Prisca theologia is a common cultural response to periods of turmoil and unrest, but it being a common response does not mean that it is an effective response. Earlier I stated that the diagnosis of a problem is what dictates the cure. Using the method of differential diagnosis, I believe that this paper has established that rejecting ibn Rushd and embracing al-Ghazali did not cause Arab culture's current problem. The time has come to investigate alternative diagnoses.

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[133] Youssef Chahine and Joseph Massad, "Art and Politics in the Cinema of Youssef Chahine," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28, no. 2 (January 1, 1999): 77–93.

Appendix A

… Ces favoris de Dieu sont les prophètes. En général, Ibn-Sina parait philosopher avec une certaine sobriété. Ibn-Roschd lui reproche amèrement de ne pas savoir-prendre un parti, et de tenir toujours le milieu entre les théologiens el les philosophes. Il admet que la personnalité humaine se conserve après la mort, et il cherche à s'arrêter sur la voie du panthéisme, en mettant le monde dans la catégorie du possible. Cette distinction du possible et du nécessaire est le fond de la théorie d'Ibn-Sina, et la base sur laquelle il cherche à établir la personnalité divine. Ibn-Roschd ajoute toutefois que, suivant d'autres, Ibn-Sina n'admettait l'existence d'aucune substance séparée, el que sa vraie opinion sur Dieu et l'éternité du monde devait être cherchée dans la Philosophie orientale, où il identifiait Dieu avec l'univers.

C'est surtout contre Ibn-Sina que Gazzali dirigea sa *Destruction des philosophes*. Gazzali est, sans contredit, l'esprit le plus original de l'école arabe'. Il nous a laissé, dans un curieux livre, ses conCessions philosophiques, et le récit de son voyage à travers les différents systèmes de son temps. Aucun système ne l'ayant satisfait, il conclut au scepticisme; le scepticisme n'ayant pu le retenir, il se precipite dans l'ascèse, et demande aux danses mystiques des soufls l'étourdisllement de sa pensée. Arrivé là, il s'arrête dans la mort et l'anéantissement. Ceux qui, après avoir philosophé, embrassent le mysticisme en désespoir de cause, sont d'ordinaire les ennemis les plus intolérants de la philosophie. Gazzali, devenu souft, entreprit de prouver l'impuissance radicale de la raison, et, par une manœuvre qui a toujours séduit les esprits plus ardents que sages, de fonder la religion sur le scepticisme. Il déploya dans cette lutte une perspicacité d'esprit vraiment

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[134] Renan, *Averroès et l'averroïsme*.

étonnante. C'est surtout par la critique du principe de cause qu'il ouvrit son attaque contre le rationalisme. Hume n'a rien dit de plus. Nous ne percevons que la simultanéité, jamais la causalité. La causalité n'est autre chose que la volonté de Dieu faisant que deux choses se suivent ordinairement. Les lois de la nature n'existent pas, ou n'expriment qu'un fait habituel; Dieu seul est immuable. C'était, on le voit, la négation de toute science. Gazzali fut un de ces esprits bizarres qui n'embrassent la religion que comme une manière de narguer la raison. Des bruits défavorables coururent, du reste, sur lé droiture de ses sentiments. Ibn·Roschd prétend qu'il attaqua la philosophie pour complaire aux théologiens, et écarter les soupçons qui s'étaient élevés contre son orthodoxie. Moïse de Nàrbonne nous apprend qu'il avait composé pour ses amis un petit écrit secret où il donnait ia solution des objections qu'il avait présentées au public comme insolubles; cet écrit s'est en effet retrouvé en hébreu à la Bibliothèque de Leyde. Ibn·Tofaïl relève ses perpétuelles contradictions, et prouve avec évidence qu'il avait composé des ouvrages ésotériques, où il professait des doctrines fort différentes de celles qu'il jetaitau vulgaire. << Accepte ce que tu vois, disait·il, et laisse là ce que tu as entendu; lorsque le soleil se lève, il te dispense de contempler Saturne.>>

Gazzali exerça une influence décisive sur la philosophie arabe. Ses attaques produisirent l'effet ordinaire des contradictions, et introduisirent dans l'opinion des adversaires une précision jusque-là inconnue. Ibn-Bâdja (Avempace) fut le premier qui s'efforça de réhabiliter contre lui l'autorité de la raison. Gazzali avait humililé la science, et prétendu que l'homme n'arrive à la perfection qu'en renonçant à l'exercice de ses facultés rationnelles. Ibn·Bâdja, dans son célèbre traité du *Régime du solitaire*, esaaya de prouver que c'est par la science et le développement successif de ses facultés que l'homme arrive à s'identifier avec l'intellect actif. Il joignait à cette théorie psychologique une théorie politique, une sorte d'utopie ou de modèle idéal de société où l'homme

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arriverait sans effort à l'identification. Le triomphe de l'âme rationnelle sur la partie animale est le but des efforts de la vie morale. L'acte de à l'intelligences'opère parles formes intelligibles qui arrivent à l'intellect matériel ou passif; là, elles reçoivent de l'intellect actif la forme et la réalité. Quand l'homme, par l'étude et la spéculation, est arrivé à la pleine possession de sa conscience, alors c'est *l'intellect acquis*; le cercle de l'évolution humaine est achevé, et l'homme n'a plus qu'à mourir.

Lidiya Petrova's English Translation

Those favored by God are the prophets. In general, Ibn-Sina appeared to philosophize with a certain sobriety. Ibn-Roschd criticizes him bitterly for not knowing how to make a choice, and for always holding the middle ground between the theologians and the philosophers. He admitted that the human personality is preserved after death, and he seeks to stop himself at the path of pantheism, in putting the world into the category of the possible. This distinction of the possible and the necessary is the seat of Ibn-Sina's theory, and the foundation on which he seeks to establish a divine figurehead/personality. Ibn-Roschd adds however that, according to others, Ibn-Sina didn't admit the existence of any separate substance, and that his true opinion about God and the eternity of the world should have been sought in the Oriental Philosophy, or he identified God with the universe.

It is above all against Ibn-Sina that Gazzali directed his Destruction of the Philosophers. Gazzali is, indisputably, the most original mind of the Arab school. He has left us, in a curious book, his philosophical confessions, and the narrative of his voyage across the different systems of his time. No system having satisfied him, he concluded with skepticism; skepticism being unable to retain him, he rushed into asceticism, and called on the mystical dances of the Sufis for the euphoria of his thought. Having arrived

there, he stops on death and annihilation. Those who, after having philosophized, embrace mysticism as their last resort, are usually the most intolerant enemies of philosophy. Gazzali, having become a Sufi, undertook to prove the radical powerlessness of reason, and, by a maneuver that has always seduced minds that are more impassioned than wise, to establish religion over skepticism. He deployed in this struggle a truly astonishing perspicacity of the mind. It is above all by the criticism of the principle of cause that he opened his attack against rationalism. Hume has said nothing more. We perceive nothing but simultaneity, never causality. The causality is nothing more than the will of God making it so that two things would usually follow each other. The laws of nature don't exist, or express no more than a habitual fact; God alone is immutable. It was, one sees, a negation of all science. Gazzali was one of those bizarre minds who embrace religion only as a way to taunt reason. Besides, unfavorable rumors were being spread about the honesty of his [Gazzali's] feelings. Ibn-Roschd claims that he attacked philosophy to please the theologians, and to remove the suspicions that had arisen against his orthodoxy. Moise de Narbonne tells us that he had created for his friends a small secret piece of writing/document where he gave the resolution of the objections that he had presented to the public as insolvable; this document has in fact been found in Hebrew in the Leyde Library. Ibn-Tofail picks up his perpetual contradictions, and proves with evidence that he had put together from esoteric works, where he [Gazzali] professed doctrines widely differing from those that he threw to the wind. "Accept what you see, he said, and leave there that which you have understood; when the sun rises, it excuses you from contemplating Saturn."

Gazzali exercised a decisive influence over Arab philosophy. His attacks produced the ordinary effect of contradictions, and introduced into the opinion of his adversaries a thitherto unknown precision. Ibn-Badja (Avempace) was the first who

strove to rehabilitate against him [Gazzali] the authority of reason. Gazzali had humiliated science, and claimed that man only achieves perfection when he renounces the exercise of his rational faculties. Ibn-Badja, in his celebrated treatise of The Regimen of the Hermit, tried to prove that it is by science and the successive development of his faculties that man comes to identify himself with active intellect. He attached to this psychological theory a political theory, a sort of utopia or of an ideal model of society where man came without effort to the identification. The triumph of the rational soul/spirit over the animal part is the goal of the efforts of the moral life. The act of intelligence is produced by the intelligible forms that come to a material or passive intellect; there, they receive from the active intellect a form and a reality. When man, for study and speculation, comes to a full possession of his awareness, then it is the acquired intellect; the circle of the human evolution is completed, and man has no more to do than to die.

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