

ISMET KASUMOVIĆ

ON THE CREATION THEORY AND THE ISSUE OF NIHILISM
IN ARABIC-ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY*

The question *Why something at all, and not nothing on the contrary* has been significant in the philosophy ever since the ancient Greeks (Parmenides, Teetet, as well as the Eleans). It was formulated in this way by Leibniz and re-addressed in Heidegger's fundamental ontology and in efforts to overcome the metaphysics.¹ Since this question is the foundation of human fascination on reality and truth, or the rational for the existence as well, this question encroaches upon very foundation of philosophy and religion and it could be regarded as a question which contains our contemporary *Why this, and not that?*

The answers and solutions to this question, however, have been different throughout the history of human thought. Thus the Eleans, discussing the problem of Existence, considered the claim that nonexistent exists as false, and that there was something that, according to Parmenides, could only be spoken of. The analytic A-A position, which is the essence of our inter-subjective discourse and overall metaphysics from Aristotle to Heidegger and Ayer, was addresses even by ancient Ionians and questioned by some other contemporary philosophers as well (Hegel, Wittgenstein, and others).²

Posing such questions within Arabic-Islamic philosophy, or to be more specific addressing the issue of nihilism within Arabic-Islamic Medieval period, however, seem to be problematic at first, since this is a milieu based on the Revelation, i.e., on the belief that excludes philosophic "overreaching" and assumptions (*az-zann*), at least when it comes to its basic principles. This emerged after certain level of stability and social relations was reached and it was a result of confrontation of Islam with the remains of pre-Islamic cultures in that area (Hellenic and Indo-Iranian in the first place). Already in the first period, namely, applicative understanding of the Book became an issue, so the belief itself was established not as a sort of convenience and covenant with oneself but as a viewpoint based on the logical assumptions emerging from rationalistic discussions, or in other words, it was brought

* See: "O teoriji stvaranja i problemu nihiliteta u arapsko-islamskoj filozofiji". In: *POF* 32-33/1982-83, Sarajevo, 1984, pp. 87-107.

¹ See M. Hajdeger, *Uvod u metafiziku* (M. Heidegger, Introduction to Metaphysics), translated by Vl. Đaković, Beograd, 1976, pp. 19-22.

² Compare B. Šestić, *Filozofske studije* (Philosophic Studies), Beograd, 1971, p. 80.

down to naked form in some instances. The most deserving for that are, in the first place, *the mu'tazilits*,³ a group who represented the first radical turning point towards philosophy in such environment. They also posed question of hermeneutic approach to the Book, soliciting for abstract monotheism and righteousness according to which *a perpetrator of a great sin* should be somewhere in-between belief and non-belief. This resulted in turmoil within the cultural circles and induced more dynamic development of philosophy in those circles⁴ including emergence and development of the school of *kalam*,⁵ a school which adopted Greek dialectics methods and used them to defend religious viewpoints and school of *falāsif*, i.e., the Sufism which incorporated elements of Hellenistic and Indo-Iranian tradition, at the same time preserving the integrity of *at-tawḥīd* monotheistic principle.

In the wide range of issues this philosophy addressed and the issues regarded as significant for establishment of Islamic ontological realism, special place belongs to the theory of creation whose understanding and articulation many times shaped viewpoints on other issues. This theory is on the boundary between Arabic-Islamic philosophy⁶ and *tasawwuf*⁷ on one side and the school of *kalam* on the other.

According to most of the Qur'an surahs and their interpretation by eminent interpreters (*al-mufasssīrūn*), i.e., members of *Kalam*, the World (*al-'ālam*) was created from Nothing. Postulate of creation from Nothing (*al-ḥalq min al-'adam – creation ex nihilo*) is, therefore, imbedded into Islamic cosmology and it is opposite to the metaphysics viewpoint *ex nihilo nihili fit*. Therefore, the world and the integrity of the being have their beginning and the end, they are not forever as it is indicated in the surah "*Huwallaḍī ḥalaqa s-samawāti wa l-arḍa wa mā baynahumā*"⁸ (Allah is He Who created the heavens and

³ Name of the group which emerged in the first period of Islam. They felt there was a difference between belief and practice and they believed that an act is not part of belief and that belief comes only from heart. Some scientist believe that the name *mu'tazila* derives from verb *i'tazala*, to separate oneself, and it is related to Wasil ibn Ata, the first *mu'tazilit* who left one of the lectures presented by distinguish Hasan al-Basri professing that "a perpetrator of a great sin" was a believer regardless of that act.

⁴ For details see *A history of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. by M. M. Sharif, Otto Harrassovits, Wiesbaden, 1966.

⁵ We consider the term Arabic-Islamic philosophy as the most appropriate because this is a philosophic thought that emerged within Islamic environment and it was written in Arabic.

⁶ Arabic language term for Islamic mysticism, known as Sufism.

⁷ The word *kalām* means speech, logos, argumentation. In Islam that is the name for teaching of mutakallimun school which was established after in early 9th century AD the orthodox clerics, al-Ash'ari in the first place, separated from above school of "liberalism," or *mu'tazilits*. As an apologia for the orthodox Islam, this school used methods of dialectic philosophy, especially Hellenic ones, and it represented expression of realistic endeavours in Islamic Medieval period.

⁸ Qur'an, XXXII, 4.

the earth and what is between them) and “*Kullu man ‘alayhā fān wa yabqā waḡhu rabbika ḡu l-ḡalāli wa l-ikrām*” (Everything that is on the Earth is temporal. Only the face of you, Lord, shall remain, magnificent and magnanimous).⁹ Nothing, thus, remains forever. The Nothing here is denial of integrity of Existence, at the beginning and at the end and that is what all denials depend upon. Therefore, only Allah is at the beginning. Only He is eternal. He is the first and the last (*Huwa l-‘awwal wa l-āḡir*).¹⁰ He is the Creator who creates from nothing and shapes everything. His are the most excellent names...¹¹ In accordance to that, the creation in Islam is achieved by the most simple word *Be!* This is clear from the surah “*His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: Be, so it is*”.¹² By such creative command, God creates every single thing, including all the beings in time and space as well as time and space themselves. Time and space are relative and they represent dimensions of ontological world. The Formation, or the Creation, is, therefore, the first act of God, His first activity attribute for only He can create (*Hel min ḡaliqin ḡayrullāh*).¹³

Here, however, noteworthy is the fact that the school of *kalām* members completely adopted such viewpoint, with the remark that, as they believed, everything in the world, except God, is either a substance (*al-ḡawhar*) or an accident (*al-arḡ*) and that they are created as such. They developed their teachings on Existence through the theory of finiteness, i.e., the transience of the world (*ḡudūtu l-‘ālam*) and affirmation of the Essential Existence (*wāḡibul l-wuḡūd*) as opposed to the “world of existence,” also known as the Potential Existence (*mumkinu l-wuḡūd*) which is finite. Therefore, the problem of creation is here closely connected to the notion of nonexistent (*al-ma‘dūm*), as well as to the features of Essential Existence.

PROBLEM OF EXISTENT AND NONEXISTENT

The notion of nonexistent in the Old Greek metaphysics is addressed in a sense of non-being, or “unshaped substances that cannot shape themselves into a form which could result in appearance (*eidōs*). A being is a form which is shaped and as such it is reflected on an image (appearance). The origin, the right and the boundaries for such understanding of existence are addressed as seldom as the Nothing itself. Christian dogmatism, on the contrary, denies the truth stated in the phrase *ex nihilo nihili fit* and by doing that, it gives modified meaning to the Nothing in the sense of complete absence of extradivine being: *ex nihilo fit-ens creatum*. The Nothing now becomes contraction to the existing being, *ens*, to god as an *ens increatum*. Also the pres-

⁹ Ibid. LV, 25 and 26.

¹⁰ Ibid. LVII, 3.

¹¹ Ibid. LIX, 24.

¹² Ibid. XVI, 40, XXXVI, 82.

¹³ Ibid. XXXV, 3.

entation of the Nothing here indicates the fundamental understanding of being,¹⁴ i.e., it has the sense of voidness which God replenishes with His creative command (*verbum Dei*). By this, a word as *reality* modifies into its manifestation, into a thing whose reflection it is, in the course of causeless creation of the world from the God's will. In this way Christianity resolves the fundamental problem of the beginning of the world. It actually exists for God decided it would exist; it is such for God wanted it to be such. Such freedom of creation of His points out, however, more vigorously the issue of theodicy by which the world cannot be evil for it was created by God and permeated by His spirit.¹⁵ Therefore, transcendence of God into the world is not physical necessity, but ethical freedom and "eternal unchangeableness of the God's being requires, on the contrary, that He is to be the creator from the beginning to the end of time, that He can never be without the creation, that He creates out of time." This creation of the eternal will, however, is such that it only refers to the eternal existence,¹⁶ whereas the history of the world remains dominated by the relationship between the finite spirit and divine as the history of Eastern sin and redemption. Metaphysical understanding of the existence remains, however, on the same plane as the issue of the Nothing. Heidegger believes that issues of the existence and the Nothing are both absent here. Therefore, here "the difficulty that God, creating from nothing, must relate exactly to the Nothing does not create any concern and god, if he is the god, cannot have knowledge on the Nothing if it absolutely excludes from itself every nothingness."¹⁷ The Something, however, is different from the Nothing because the Something has its existence. In accordance to that, valid is the definition by which the Nothing (lat. *nil*, emerged from *ne-hilum*), is not something special besides the existence but it is the lack of the existence and, therefore, such a notion is form by denial of existence. Therefore, we need to differentiate the absolute or the negative nothing from the relative and positive nothing, of which the former is "denial of not only the determined reality but the possibility itself and the later is denial of only the reality but not the possibility of that being."¹⁸ Therefore, in a logical sense, existence and nothing are contradicting terms, whereas the existence itself is confronted by nonexistence, i.e., the pure Nothing which is in fact denial of existence.

In the Islamic Medieval period, however, teachings on existence and non-existence were developed through the analogy of existence. The goal of such teachings was primarily to establish a way in which relationship between

¹⁴ M. Hajdeger, "Šta je metafizika?" (M. Heidegger, What is Metaphysics?), Selected papers *Uvod u Hajdegera*, BC, edition "Pogled u savremenost", translated by B. Despot, Zagreb, 1972, pp. 55-56.

¹⁵ Also see W. Windelband, *Povijest filozofije*, with Appendix *Filozofija u 20. stoljeću* (Philosophy in 20th Century) by H. Heimsoetha, translated by Nada Šašel, D. Grlić, and D. Pejović, Kultura, Zagreb, 1957, p. 297.

¹⁶ Origen de princ, I, 2, 10; III, 4,3, according to Windelband, Ibid. p. 297.

¹⁷ M. Hajdeger, "Šta je metafizika?", The collection *Uvod u Hajdegera*, p. 56.

¹⁸ G. Petrović, *Filozofija. Uvod u filozofsko mišljenje*, Naprijed, Zagreb, 1973, p. 69.

God as the eternal being and the created world of transience (*ḥawādiṯ*) would function. However, in order to understand the notion of nonexistence (*al-ma'dūm*), it is necessary to shed some light on the general principle that was adhered to and used as a point of departure by first supporters of discursive thought in Islamic cultural world, the most radical in the first Islamic period – the *mu'tazilits*. They were, namely, the first who addressed the issue of famous postulate *creatio ex nihilo*, establishing it only by negative predications, whereas the nonexistence was determined as an intelligible essence which is the archetype, the paradigm of reality. The principle that was widely accepted by other members of *kalam* as well is as follows: Participation in the attribute of eternity is identical to the participation in divine.¹⁹ In other words, the attribute of eternity is *diferencia specifica* of the Essential Existence, which furthermore means that the world, or materiality, regardless of whether it is organic or inorganic, is furnished by the properties of divine and essentiality if it is assigned by attribute of eternity. The *mu'tazilits* believed that the existence of multiple eternal entities at the beginning, i.e., the existence of *eternal by other* (*aeternum ab alio*), was logically inconsistent. Adopting the Essential Existence which is on the beginning of everything also means avoiding to be trapped by *regresus ad infinitum*. It also means the attempt to resolve problem of creation based on requirements of the logic which many see as the only “courtroom” and it is the only guarantee for the truthfulness of these viewpoints. The Essential Existence is, therefore, the only existence in which there is no difference between essence and existence, whereas everything else from the world of *transience* exists based on that difference, i.e., a cause external to the essence is required for existence to be produced. In that sense, it would be possible to understand the notion of the creation as addition of existence (*al-iḡād*) and nonexistence as the Aristotle's *privatio*, i.e., insufficiency. Such an understanding of precept *creation ex nihilo*, however, violates the fundamentals of religious belief. As such it was unacceptable for the majority of the members of *kalam* and members of Islamic philosophic circles and it led to different interpretations, as well as the condemnation of the *mu'tazilits*. Thus, for example, for Al-Razi the world of nonexistence had two layers: it was either a world of Potential Existence (*al-ma'dūmātu l-mumkin*), which suggest to Aristotle's definition of matter as *dinamey on*, or the existence in possibility, or it is absolutely impossible (*al-ma'dūm al-muḥlaq*). Thus, for example, the tomorrow's sunrise, as a focus of thought, is potential existence, although it in fact does not exist. The focus of realistic desire is *al-ma'dūmātu l-mumkin* as well, although it is not existent. For a human being, as a finite being, to create the world, really comes under the impossible (*al-ma'dūm al-muḥlaq*).²⁰ Similarly to Al-Razi, At-Tusi recognizes that the

¹⁹ This principle was for the first time used by Ḡahm ibn Safwān (died 745/1344 AD). However, other *mu'tazilits* used it as well.

²⁰ See al-Rāzī, Muhammad ibn Umar, *Muhaṣṣalu afkārī l-mutaqaddimīna mi-na l-'ulamā'i wa l-mutakallimīn*, al-Qāhira, 1905, p. 8

nonexistence is something common to the modality of possibility and impossibility,²¹ whereas for Bakilani and al-Ġuvayni, between these two is something in the middle, a modus (*al-hāl*) which is neither existence nor nonexistence. Everything, however, to which intellect suggests is either possible or impossible, al-Razi believes. Therefore, the middle as a modus exists only in the allegorical sense.²² *The Nothing* itself is here the nonexistence of existence, the potential existence or the absolute denial, not the positive thing for which mu'tazilites were blamed. One of the most prominent members of this movement, Hisham ibn 'Amral-Futi, also supports this viewpoint. For others, however, this is a thing (*shay'un*) more in the ideal sense and it can be supported by the Qur'an surah: "And indeed the earthquake, when the Judgment Day comes, a great event (a thing) it shall be."²³ However, such interpretation of this surah for Ibn Hazim is result of ignorance. Nonexistence (*al-ma'dūm*) is, namely, as he believes, a name without a content (*Laysa lahū musammā*) and it is, as he claims, the position that in harmony with the postulate *creatio ex nihilo* and, therefore, it is a general position which must be accepted and defended. The thing (*shay'un*) is created (*maḥlūq*), therefore, as such it is existent. If the Something is a being, it is logical that the Nothing is non-being regardless of all the attempts of the scholastic substantiation.²⁴ Therefore, the world as a sum of substances and accidents became temporal as well. It was created from the Nothing which is pure emptiness, absolute nothingness according to surah "I created you, and before that there was nothing," (*Wa qad ḥalaqtuka wa min qablu lam taku shay'an*),²⁵ or according to "He created everything and gave it a measure." (*Ḥalaqa kulla shay'in wa qaddarahu taqdīran*).²⁶ This also, at the same time, confirms a general position of orthodox Islam followers (*ahli s-sunna wa l-ḡamā'a*). Every opposite understanding would, however, imply equation of existence and nonexistence and inauguration of the thesis on the eternity of the world which conflicts the basic principle of monotheism. This principle excludes notion of the eternal world as *existing by itself* (*esse a se*) and confirms the Nothing as the emptiness and pure nothingness.

Most of the members of *Kalam* agree upon this viewpoint and, therefore, for them the Something is realistic-existent, i.e., a being (*al-mawḡūd*), whereas the Nothing is non-being (*al-ma'dūm*) which is emptiness and pure nothingness. The Existence (*wuḡūd*) is truth and denial of existence represents denial of the truth as well. Reality of things is identical to existence and certainty and since a nonbeing is not a thing, it cannot be certain as well (*al-īḡi*).²⁷

²¹ See at-Tūsī, Nasiruddīn, *Talḥīsu l-muḥaṣṣal*, al-Qāhira, 1905, p. 38.

²² Ibid., p. 39.

²³ Qur'an, XXII, 1.

²⁴ Ibn Hazm, Abū Muhammad, 'Alī ibn Ahmad, *Kitābu l-fisāl fī l-milal wa l-'ahwāli wa n'niḥal*, al-Qahira, 1905, p. 43.

²⁵ Qur'an, IX, 19.

²⁶ Ibid. II, 25.

²⁷ Al-Īḡī, Abdurrahmān ibn Ahmad, *al-Mawāqif fī 'ilmi l-Kalām*, al-Qahira, 1907, p. 38.

MODUS AS THE MIDDLE BETWEEN BEING AND NON-BEING

Unlike the other members of *kalām* and *falāsif* groups, *ash'arī*'s imam *al-Haramayn al-Ġuwaynī* and *Qāḍī al-Bāqilānī*, as well as the *mu'tazilī* Abu Hashim, established some sort of middle (*al-wāsita*) between being and non-being which they identified as modus (*hāl*). Namely, existence (*wuġūd*), as they believed, was neither identical to being (*al-mawġūd*), because that would understand identity for both being and existence, nor it was identical to non-being (*al-ma'dūm*), because that was opposite to being. The essence is either existent or nonexistent, whereas non-being is existence which is nonexistent if it possesses features such as, for example, feature of gender. Existence (*wuġūd*) is a notion more specific than the notion of certainty (*tubūt*), whereas the being is every existing essence. The modus (*al-hāl*), however, is a condition of the essence which is characterized by neither existence nor nonexistence (logical essence).²⁸ Therefore, the common feature of all beings is that they possess essence. Unlike them, the *mu'tazilīs* believe that the existence (*wuġūd*) is an attribute and as a consequence, many people believe, this leads to identification of nonbeing with the Something, i.e., with a thing.

Above stated points of view, however, are in the focus of severe criticism by both Al-Rāzī in his *Muḥaṣṣal* and al-Ġī in his *Mawāqif*, who both deny establishment of the modus. Being is, as they believe, something realistic, something existing, whereas non-being is its opposite, thus it is nonexistent. Therefore, nonbeing is unreal and negative. Similarly, in the logical sense, something in the middle does not exist between affirmation and negation (*al-iḥbāt wa n-nafy*). That is the reason why, as they believe, establishment of the middle is the pure Sufism.²⁹

However, if the middle is understood as something special, different from being and nonbeing, something which is not realistically existent, than the dispute is formal as it is related to the use of terms which have no identical semantic notion. Also this is what caused a misunderstanding in interpretation of essence and non-essence that impinges on the very core of the issues.

Putting this issue in this context, however, suggests to the certain viewpoints in the Greek philosophy and it can be noted in the contemporary philosophy as well. Although it was against his teachings, in his *State* Plato, namely, provides so called argument on the third human (*trios anthros*) who is neither pure being nor non-being, neither idea nor phenomenon. Polyxen was the first to deduce such an argument and it was directed against the theory of numerous ideas because it identified difficulties that are underlying the multiplicity of ideas as well as participation in those ideas. The Megarians employed this argument with a desire to preserve the uniqueness of the Eleatic being. Therefore, if the idea of human being exists, then the every single

²⁸ Al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣalu afkārī l-mutaqaddimīna mi-na l-'ulamā'i wa l-mutakallimīn*, al-Qāhira, 1905, p. 38.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 38, al-Ġī, *al-Mawāqif fī 'ilmi l-Kalām*, p. 109.

human being is exactly what they are in relation to participation in the ideal form. That, furthermore, means that a third human being exists as well, not in relation to participation but only in relation to idea as a paradigm.³⁰

In the same way, Aristotle identified the existence as an occurrence middle: *genesis metaxi tu einai kai me einai* – the existence stands in the middle of the existence and nonexistence,³¹ i.e., it is existence by itself.³² The creation in that sense is austerity (*steresis*), whereas the matter (*hyle*) precedes the creation; it is the object of creation. The creation in fact is genesis (*genesis*), the only divine in everything mortal which can never really be or simply non-be. It is in the middle (*to metaxi*) of that what, in fact, is and the nothing. It is in the middle (*en mezo*) and “it is never actually the non-future and, therefore, significantly indigent, but nevertheless striving only to the whole essence, it really years for that, and, therefore, in its need it is wealthy every day, every moment. The more it blooms, the more it lives to at some point instantly die in that and be born again. And whatever it acquires for itself, it loses it instantly again and again.”³³ This is a way occurs, as Marx believed, the genesis of a human being that not only is, but it is, as a sensual, a substantial, a physical, an instinctive, a natural, a suffering being which, going out of itself constantly, losing and reaffirming itself, relating to a being and itself, re-born itself again and again. Such human being belongs to the modus, the middle in which they become true human being.³⁴ An extensive analysis is required, however, in order to understand these viewpoints and this excursion represents only note on the possible ways to understand the middle an the modus based on the ontological comparative. The reason for this was the fact that the above thinkers addressed the issue the modus in order to set foundation for and defend the postulate *al-halq min al-‘adam* which was questioned by introducing the Aristotle’s logic in the discussions on the basis of monotheism.

PROBLEMS OF THE CREATION AND THE TEACHINGS ON NONEXISTENCE IN THE SCHOOL OF *FALĀSIFS*

Concurrent with the emergence and development of *kalam*, who many regard as the true Islamic philosophy,³⁵ in Islamic cultural world there was also the school of *falāsifs* which was from the very beginning heavily influenced by the ancient Greek and Indo-Iranian philosophic traditions, in the first place

³⁰ S. Žunić, “Elejska teorija bića”, *Filozofske studije*, Beograd, 1972, p. 200.

³¹ Aristotel, *Metafizika*, Beograd, 1971, p. 994a.

³² Ibid. *Topica*, p. 139b.

³³ Compare *Symposion*, p. 302e, D. Barabić, *On Lies in Life*, Dialog, 6, Sarajevo, 1978, p. 182.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 182.

³⁵ *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju XXIV*, Orijentalni institut, Sarajevo, 1974, p. 114.

Neoplatonism and Aristotle. Therefore, here the postulate *creatio ex nihilo* is addressed in relation to the issues of unity and multiplicity, i.e., in relation to the issue of primordial matter (*hayūlā*) discussed in the metaphysics of Aristotelianism. In that sense, they often resorted to allegorical interpretation of several Qur'an *surahs* seeking compromise between the Greek philosophy points of view and the Qur'an, or in other words, attempting to think this philosophy through the *surahs* of the Clear Book.

Therefore, it is necessary to first point out to some of the Plotinus' viewpoints related to his teachings on the One and the emanation theory which was acceptable to *falāsifs* since it represented the principle that from one transpires only one. His teachings on emanation solves, as they believed, the problem of pluralization and modalization by preserving the simplicity of the Essential Existence, its depth and transcendentness and also strict principles of monotheism – *at-tawhīd*. According to his emanation theory and notion of creation or establishment of *the being (the world)*. Plotinus, namely, does not allow for the world to transpire neither by Plato's Demiurge from the matter in the form of idea, i.e., as the creation from the Noting according to the Christian cosmogony model, nor through "the development of the potential in the eternal present," as Aristotle depicted. He depicts the creation in the form of images in which the Other transpires from One as light transpires from the Sun and the Sun does not lose anything. The more it drifts away, however, the light becomes weaker until it disappears into the emptiness, i.e., to the nothingness which represents the world of matter. Plotinus, therefore, believes that the matter is an absolute negative, pure austerity (*steresis*), complete absence of existence, absolute nonexistence. He relates to the One as the darkness towards the light, as the emptiness towards fullness. It is very important, however, how the multiplicity transpires from the one. "Since it is everywhere, there would not be a place where it could not be. That is how it permeates everything; thus that is multiplicity, the Everything, in fact. Namely, if the One is everywhere, then it would only be Everything; but since it is not nowhere, everything becomes from the One if the One is everywhere but the Everything is different from the One if it is not nowhere. Yet why the One does not have to be everywhere but it have to be, above all, nowhere (*andanoid*)? Because before and above all it has to be the One; that is how its relationship towards Everything must be, the relationship between the realization and the formation (*poiein*) and it does not also have to be only Everything that it formed (*on einai ta panta e poiei*)."³⁶

Avoiding to address these issues in such way was acceptable by for majority of thinkers of school of *falāsif*, whereas some of them adopted the emanation theory with certain modification that correspond to the postulate *creatio ex nihilo*. This mostly applies to Al-Farabi, Ibn-Sina and the members of The Pure Brotherhood, who all accepted the theory on creative develo-

³⁶ Compare *Plotins Schriften*, Band Ia, Neubearbeitung mit griechischen – Lesetext und Ammerkungen MCMLVI, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg, pp. 284, 285.

ment of the world in the subsequent degrees and its sustainability by God's providence. The One, therefore, is not the existence (*wuġūd*) but it is a principle of the existence, i.e., the absolutely perfect Essential Existence. As Al-Farabi believes, the One is absolute and in it contains in itself the Everything; it uses emanation to produce intelligence which itself creates the Universal Soul (*an-nafs*) and the Universal Soul gives life to Universe and inspires human soul. In his work '*Uyūnu l-masā'il*', Al-Farabi establishes ontological difference between Essential Existence and existence as opposed to the Potential Existence whose essence is separated from the existence.³⁷ This gap between the existence (*aḥadiyya*) and the being ('*ayniyya*) in Al-Farabi's works will later on have significant influence on Arabic-Islamic philosophy which would in different ways attempt to cross this gap. While according to the Plato's "mythos, the lights of the existence are established as a primordial lights which in carry in their essence the light of existence and from which the true existence radiates into the lower world creating the earthly things as weakened reflection of the primordial light," in Islam the idea of nonexistence can be compared to mythos of the darkness whose 'substances' are dark patterns which the light of survival reaches from some other source."³⁸ Thus in that way a notion of relative nonexistence of substantial patterns is established here (or eidetic phantoms in the sense of Husserel's eidetics) and it is a substitute for the platonic idea which led Dr. Veljačić to entitle this theory manifestation theory. This theory emerged, as he believes, under the Indian influence, although it is different from the classical emanationism, both Indian (*sainkhyah*) and Hellenic (Neoplatonism), and it is remarkably important in the Islamic mysticism (*taṣawwuf*).

Likewise, the 'Arab philosopher' Al-Kindi was under great influence of the Greek philosophy, and since he felt a profound harmony between philosophy and religion, he harmonized his philosophy with Islam. Adopting the postulate *creatio ex nihilo* from the very start, he regarded the creation of the world as an act of God, not as a mere emanation as regarded by Plotinus. Therefore, this is a creation of the Something ('*ays*) from the Nothing (*lays*) by the true act of God. That especially pertains to the Al-Kindi's early period. Later in his work, however, his positions will be far closer to Neoplatonism and its idea of emanation of hierarchic intelligence.³⁹

Also, distinguished Abū Ali ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) thought along the same lines as Al-Farābī and al-Kindī. He adopted Al-Farābī's theory on ten types of intelligence with certain modifications and adjustments to Islam. He uses emanation theory, namely, to explain genesis of the multiplicity from the

³⁷ al-Farābī, Abū Nasr Muhammad ibn Muhammad, *At-tamratu l-murdiyya fī b'adi r-risālāti l-fārābiyya*, Leiden, 1890, p. 56.

³⁸ M. Horten, *Die Philosophie des Islam*, München, 1924, based on to Č. Valjačić, *Filozofija istočnih naroda, II*, Zagreb, Matica Hrvatska, 1958, p. 64 and *Razmeđa azijskih filozofija, II*, Liber, Zagreb, 1978, p. 337.

³⁹ *Rasā'ilu l-Kindi l-falsafiyya*, sharh Abū Ridā, al-Qāhira, 1950, p. 182.

One. Since he believes that oneness of the Essential Existence represents the first and the inviolable principle, he professes that transpiration, the emanation (*fayḍ*) from the One preserves the oneness of the Essential Existence. Therefore, the immediate creation of the multiplicity from the One is in conflict with this monotheistic principle. In his work *An-Nağāt*,⁴⁰ he states the following: 'Essential Existence is absolutely simple and one, i.e., it is not composed neither of parts, nor types, nor gender, i.e., matter and form because then it would depend on its components and as such it would be dependant. The oneness here has, as Ibn Sina believes, not only theological, but also a special, metaphysical sense. In Islam the oneness (*waḥdāniyyat*), however, in the first place means that there is only One and He has no companion (*šarīk*), whereas for Ibn Sina, as presented in this viewpoint, it means simplicity and inseparability and, by that, perfection as well. Such an approach enables him to claim that the multiplicity cannot emanate from the One, both materialistically or spiritually, in the same way a complex body, a body composed of substance and accident, cannot emanate.

Therefore, a first emanant from the One is the one which is nonmaterial and that is the intellect (*al-'aql*). It emanates from the One as a result of its self-cognizance. By that the knowledge is equated the creation which implies production of existence in an intellect. The first intelligence is the one for itself, whereas the multiplicity by its causes leads to the pluralism (it the first, abstract form). Similarly, not even the intellect here has the simplicity attributed to the One. Since the intelligence is not essential by itself, it is possible and that possibility is actualized through the means of the one. That is where the possibility that the multiplicity emanates from intelligence derives from, i.e., the second intellect (*al-'aqlu t-tānī*), a soul (*an-nafs*), and a body (*al-ġism*). The intellect emerges by the cognition of the First Principle, the soul by the self-cognition and the body by the cognition of its possibilities.

The second intellect extends as the First one. There is emanation from it also: an intellect, a soul and a body. The triadic cycle, as in Al-Farabi's work, continues until ten types of intellect are emanated, whereas the tenth intelligence, as an active one (*al-'aqlu l-fa' aāl*), governs the sublunary world and it gives the forms to the matter. Therefore, it is, in fact, *dator formarum* with Medieval Western scholastics and as such it is the creator (the shaper) of the world.⁴¹

Ibn Sina believes that existence (*wuġūd*) is composed of three spheres: intellectual, spiritual, and materialistic. Intellectual sphere is on the first place in the hierarchy of beings, then comes spiritual and the last one is material sphere. These spheres, as stated in one of the *Nine Discussions on the Wisdom* by Ibn Sina, are driven by the Desire (*aš-šawq*) for the First Intellect. That desire represents a sort of spiritual attraction by which the inferior intellect is

⁴⁰ Ibn Sīnā, Abū 'Alī Ḥusayn ibn 'Abdillāh, *Kitābu n-nağāt*, al-Qāhira, 1938, p. 273.

⁴¹ Compare *Ibid.* pp. 273-279.

always attracted by the superior one. Similarly to Leibniz's opinion, this is a process of the spiritual dynamism, despite its dependency on unequal spiritual capabilities.⁴² Essential Existence is here the creator of all the beings (*maḥlūqāt*), founder of everything, the essence which is the simple one and which is not measured by neither space nor time, i.e., it is out of space and time. It is "the pure essence (*al-wuḡūd al maḥd*), the pure truth (*al-ḥaqqu l-maḥd*), the pure good (*al-ḥayru l-maḥda*), the pure life (*al-ḥayātu l-maḥda*). This reasoning, however, suggests to the Western philosophy viewpoints in which, ever since Plotinus, the essence and the existence are same as good, i.e., same as true. All the stated attributes have critical significance and are important for determination of the Absolute. They belong neither to materiality nor potentiality and, therefore, the Essential Existence is absolutely perfect.⁴³

According to this teaching, the creation has three, that is four forms. The notion of the creation in the sense of *al-ibidā* is related to the intellectual sphere, the creation in the sense of *al-amr* to the spiritual, whereas the notion *al-ḥalq* refers to the higher and *al-takwīn* to the lower beings in the sublunary world.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the above:

1. Everything that emanated from the One as less perfect and lower on the hierarchical scale of beings strives to approximate the One. This actually suggests, as Fathullah Hulayfa believes, to the Aristotelian significance of the creator who is separated from the world and distant, or to the teachings on primariness of *causa finalis* over *causa efficiens* and personification of the Aristotle's *to ti en einai* (the thing which had been being).
2. The world is here interpreted in the theological-philosophical sense. Ibn Sina, namely, wants to use this in order to interpret the notions used by members of *Kalam* members in their creation theory which has its roots in the Qur'an. The intellectual sphere, therefore, quite resembles to the world of angels and the terms used describe notion of the creation such as *al-ibidā*, *al-amr*, *al-ḥalq* and *al-takwīn* are borrowed from the Qur'an, i.e., from the *Kalam*.

Additionally, in this teachings we also find interesting the semantic analysis of the verb to create. Ibn Sina, as well as the members of *Kalam*, understands the verb *ṣana'a* or *īḡād*, as the creation of the Something from the Something Else by the act of the Subject who is the only active (*al-fā'il*). That is the reason why the verb *al-īḡād* is not used for the spontaneous creation of something such as, for instance, a fall of a rock in nature which represent only the change of a state. The verb *ḥalaqa*, however, carries the notion of to determine, to shape, to form, whereas the

⁴² I. Madkur, al-Farabi, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, edited by M. M. Sharif, p. 459.

⁴³ Ibn Sīnā, *Tis'a rasā'il fī l-ḥikma*, al-Qāhira, 1908, pp. 135, 137.

meaning to create from the Nothing is contained in it only when assigned as to the Absolute Subject an attribute. For the members of *ash'arizm*, however, the notion of the creation in the sense of *al-halq* implies permanent creation and maintenance of the world which suggest to the occasionalism in the scholastics.

In the same way, the object of the creation, i.e., object of the act (*al-maf'ūl*), was differently understood in Islamic Medieval period. Unlike the majority of the Kalam members, members of *Falāsifa* establish the object as possible (*al-maf'ūlu l-mumkin*) and it is, therefore, also temporal as opposed to what is created (*al-muḥdata l-ibdā'iyy*) and it is not preceded by anything. For members of *Kalam*, the modalities of the essence and the possibility are, therefore, equivalent to the notions of *qidam* and *hudūt* which, amongst other things, gave way for Ibn Sina's harsh criticism of members of Kalam. Namely, if God is the only one who is eternal (*qādim*), whereas everything else was created in the time and as such it is accidental (*ḥādīf*) because it was preceded by the nonexistence as a pure nothingness, there had to be, prior to that, as he believed, a moment in which the Essential Existence, i.e., Absolute Subject, was not active. With that, as Ibn Sina believes, goodness of the Essential Existence is denied. Additionally, this way of establishing the world conflicts with the viewpoint that the power, will, and knowledge are eternal attributes for they are in the immediate relation with the act of creation. Therefore, he posed a question: How it is possible that the eternal will related to the creation of the world exists and then it ceases to exist? If the will is eternal, it is essential that the world be eternal as well. With modalities of the essence and the possibility, however, such aporias are avoided.

Additionally, discussed points of view affirm the One which is assigned the status of an eternal being, whereas they deny possibility of pluralism of any sort. As Ibn Sina believes, that means that the One was not an activity subject and then it became that, it did not create and then started to create, which would imply changes in the essence of the eternal being and denies its attribute of perfection. If God, namely, created the world in a certain moment, the question is why did he do it exactly than, why did he chose that very moment? What is of the principle of differentiation of divine eternal choice of the special moment for the creation the world? How it is possible to chose between the equal things?⁴⁴ Eleans would say: Even if something emerged from the Nothing, why it emerges in a certain moment and not in the other?

It seem that above theses on emanationism, however, inaugurate the theses on eternity of the world, whereas the determinism implied in them directly conflicts the theistic voluntarism of *ash'arizm*, as well as the theses on the creation from nothing (*al-halq min al-'adam*) which is contained in foundations of all the monotheistic religions. Although the relationship be-

⁴⁴ Parmenid, fr. VIII, vv 9-10 (based on S. Žunjić, "Elejska teorija bića", *Filozofske studije*, 1972, p. 200).

tween the Essential Existence and the world of contingency does not imply any addition of existence, as it is the case with some *mu'tazilits*, that relationship is characterized by knowledge and goodness, i.e., identity of the existence and opinion, which prepares ground for well-known ontological evidence and, at the same time, opens possibility to discuss the nonbeing as well, i.e., is to express a meaning, something meaningful as opposed to a discourse that proves nothing. In this way, a thing as an object of knowledge always existed, although it is not identical to a realistic essence attributed by the existence which is something often imputed to the *mu'azilits*. Also, it seems to us that emanation theory gained certain characteristics of Aristotelianism, whereas the thing (the Something) emerges from potential into actuality by an act resulting from the necessity, not the will of the One. By that, the Essential Existence is also unconsciously assigned with a label Prime Mover which is separated from the world and placed above it.

Therefore, by the re-elaboration of the Greek philosophy, Ibn Sina succeeded, as well as his predecessors, to devise a rational system in which he attempted to integrate Islamic tradition and with that to avoid possible conflicts with the authorities. In that sense, his teachings on the essence and the existence represents attempt to meet both religious and materialistic needs as well as to supplement for Aristotle, as Fazlur Rahman notes.⁴⁵

Unlike the Essential Existence, which is simple and whose essence is identical to the existence, all the things will, therefore, have dualistic nature. Their existence will only be possible if emerged from the Necessary existence. Since form and matter are not sufficient for a concrete existent to become, as Aristotle believes, there needs to be, as Ibn Sina professes, something else. That is reason why he replaces traditional dyadic scheme with a triadic one, whereas the existence, which is not the constituting element of the things but the relationship towards the One, is characterized as an accident. Therefore, the existence is something added to the essence and the everything is, whether it exists or not, *the Something* which can be discusses and judged of both affirmatively and negatively. By that, thus, even and nonexistence becomes the Something, since it can be discussed of, i.e., it is the object of speech. Positive individual existent is, however, more than the mere Something. Therefore, when the existence is added to the essence in the predicative opinion, it is equal to "is something" but it does contribute anything new. However, the opinions on existents are meaningful and fruitful because they contribute something new to the essence. Additionally, God – giver of the existence is here a principle of individual existence.⁴⁶

When it comes to the creation theory, similarly to Ibn Sina, the members of the Pure Brotherhood (*Iḥwāni ṣ-ṣafā*) were under the strong influence of Al-Farabi, i.e., Neoplatonism, as well. Their emanation theory and hierarchi-

⁴⁵ Fazlur Rahman, Ibn Sīnā, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. by M. M. Sharif, p. 486.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 486.

cal scale of beings is quite similar to both Al-Farabi's and Ibn Sina's in which the creation means the eternal emanation and emergence of the world as a unchangeable rational necessity. It exists eternally in the way that the matter and form eternally transpire from the Essential Existence. The Essential Existence is, therefore, inflow and outflow of the entire being and it consigns all the existents with the essence. This teachings, however, even beside the attempts to avoid discrepancy with the Book and with efforts to integrate itself into the official teachings of Islam, would later on have great impact to future philosophy currents in Arabic-Islamic world, and it would eventually lead to "the self-destruction" (*tahāfut*) and harsh discussions within this philosophy.

TAHAFUT OF EMANATIONISM

Result of the Al-Farabi's and Ibn Sina's emanationism was the emergence of al-Ghazali's work entitled *Tahāfutu l-falāsifa* (Self-destruction of Philosopher)⁴⁷ in which he attacks Hellenically inspired philosophers together with, as he says in the Introduction, their teachers Plato and Aristotle. Carried by the desire to create a compromise between the Greek philosophy and the religion, they, as he believes, "entered the dangerous waters" of establishing principles of Islam within the Plato's and Aristotle's molds which inevitably led to inconsistency and heresies as to the fundamental religious issues.

Problem which Al-Ghazali sees as the most important, and thus dedicates to it almost one quarter of his essay, is, in fact, the problem of the eternity of the Universe (*qidamu l-'ālam*). That was, nevertheless, one of the most sensitive problems in relationship between religion and philosophy.

Opposite to the mentioned philosophers who, as he believes, did not deny the thesis that God is eternal creator of the Universe but they, Aristotelians maintained that His activity is only conversion into condition of reality that belongs to the realistic possibilities inherent to the primary matter (*hayūlā*), i.e., to the matter which is the product of emanation from the First Principle, he re-affirms the viewpoint *creation ex nihilo* (*al-ḥalq min al-'adam*) in a certain moment in past which is finite time interval of present.⁴⁸

Employing the means of speculative dialectics, along with the sharp-wittedness and knowledge of the Greek philosophy manifested in his work *Maqāṣidu l-falāsifa* (Philosopher's Intentions),⁴⁹ he evaluates truths of the philosophical assumptions pointing out to the philosophers' incoherence in space and time related assumptions, parametric teachings (*hayūlā*), and he criticizes the emanation theory whose determinism is opposed to theistic voluntarism under which the First Principle is "almighty and willing agent.

⁴⁷ Al-Ġazālī, Abū Ḥāmid, *Tahāfutu l-falāsifa*, al-Mataba'atu l-a'lāmiyya, al-Qāhira, 1884, p. 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 24.

⁴⁹ Al-Ġazālī, *Maqāṣidu l-falāsifa*, al-Qāhira, 1936, 2nd edition.

He does what he wants to do and he commands in a way in which he wants.” Therefore, He is above the human recognition, whereas “the *modus operandi* of his creative power is completely inexplicable for it is beyond human activity and as such it excludes every analogy. Should it be, by any chance, explicable,” as Saeed Shaikh writes, “than it would not be creative.”⁵⁰ Aristotle’s notion of God is also, as Al-Ghazali believes, unacceptable because *noesis noesos* cannot very well be identified with the notion of Allah. These are his basic objections to the emanation theory and the Arab Aristotelianism which does not allow for the Essential Existence to be called the subject, notwithstanding whether it is the First Principle or the Prime Mover since it does not understand the will and the knowledge, two attributes implied by the notion of the Subject (*al-fā’il*). From the other hand, understanding of the notion of the act (*al-fi’l*) is also the problem which, for the Subject, when it comes to the Absolute Subject, has a meaning of production of the Something from the Nothing. If, however, the Universe is eternal, the act in this sense does not exist and the existence not preceded by nonexistence cannot be an act of the Subject.⁵¹ The conditions for subjectivity are, therefore, the will and the knowledge, and it is wrong to judge God’s will by standards of human will as it would be wrong to make any sort of analogies in that sense.

Therefore, the world is “the created world” (*al-mahlūq*) which was preceded by the absolute nothingness, the pure Nothing from which the Something emerged according to its eternal will (*irāda qadīma*) and almightiness (*qudra*). Only He is self-existent, whereas everything else exists by him, not by its own essence. Differentiating principle for the selection of moment in which from the Nothing the Something is created is the mater of the Will and the time, as an determinant of the existence, is also created.⁵² The area of nonexistence is, therefore, transtemporal as opposed to the existence of created world which is temporal, i.e., we would rather say that it is the area of relative existence.

Al-Ghazali, however, supported the above viewpoints only in early stage of his life to eventually retreat into asceticism and find safe haven in intuitive experience of transcendence, believing that God is both transcendent and immanent at the same time. The Universe is, however, created from the Nothing by act of the eternal Will, whereas all the actual is permeated by existence of the Unutterable.

NONEXISTENCE CHARACTERIZED BY THE POTENTIALITY

In order to better understand Islamic cosmology and earlier ontological problems as well as the destiny of Aristotelianism in Islamic Medieval period, we should briefly present the creation theory in Ibn Rushd (Averoes) philosophy

⁵⁰ Saeed Shaikh, Al-Gazali, *Metaphysics, A History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 607.

⁵¹ Al-Ġazālī, *Tahāfut...*, p. 27.

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 8

as well. He was one of the most eminent philosophers in the Arab Magrib, the man who disagreed with Al-Ghazali and stood up to defend the philosophy. As a prominent philosopher and reviewer of Aristotle and as a member of Islam as well, he did not support Al-Ghazali's theses so he wrote his famous rebuttal *Tahāfutu t-tahāfut* (Self-destruction of the Self-destruction)⁵³ focusing on the very issue of the creation. The evidence of the creation as one of the two true paths towards God is, as he believes, cosmological evidence based on two principles: that all the beings are created and that everything created has its creator. The existence of things and beings such as life, inorganic substances, tactile beings, and intellect, are the evidences of creation.⁵⁴ That is, he believes, act of the Subject which created the Universe by his will and in it he established causality laws which come down to the four following: efficient, material, formal, and final cause. The Active Subject created everything from the potentiality into actuality, from the nonexistence into existence and it is transcendent itself and it cannot be compared to our understanding of the subject in the world of phenomena (*aš-šahāda*). He is the creator of all the causes and, as such, he is the ultimate cause.⁵⁵ The words *al-ḥudūt* and *al-ḥalq* are differently used in the Qur'an and they do not have the same meaning we often assign to them in the ontic sense. This is, as Ibn Rušd believes, usually the case of allegoric use of these two verbs and that is the reason why in the analysis of the *ash'aritic* notion of *the creation by the eternal will* we can find contradiction to the Qur'an. In the Book, however, we cannot find something like that so the opinions of such Qur'an interpreters are covered by veil of traditionalism and they are not result of the immanent analysis of the Book.

For him the notion of the essence has two meanings: logical and realistic, whereas for him the Aristotelian modality of possibility is Potential Existence (*al-ma'dūmu l-mumkin*) which is not possible by the fact it is actual but its possibility is based on potentiality. Therefore, for him nonbeing (*al-ma'dūm*) is also an essence but not realistic but potential essence in the logical sense. The object (the thing) has the disposition for possibility and changes thus it was created, i.e., it transformed from the Nothing into the Something (*min al-'adam ilā l-wuḡūd*). That is *hayūlā* (the primary matter) which is the pure potency as a possibility in the world of transcendence (*al-ḡayb*), significantly different from the world of phenomena (*aš-šāhid*) which is the object of rational cognition and measured by the categories of action and space. The first substance is, therefore, either potential or actual (*bi l-fi'l wa bi l-quwwa*) and as the potentiality it is the focus of the Pure Act, i.e., the creation. Similarly, the first substance as potency belongs to the world of non-existence, that is the world of Potential Existence (*al-ma'dūmu l-mumkin*),

⁵³ Ibn Rušd, Abū l-Walīd Muhammad ibn Muhammad, *Tahāfutu t-tahāfut*, Bayrut, 1938, al-Qāhira, 1964.

⁵⁴ Ibn Rušd, *al-Kašf 'an manāhiḡi l-'adilla fi 'aqā'idi l-milla*, al-Qāhira, 1902, p. 36.

⁵⁵ Ibn Rušd, *Tahāfutu...* p. 255.

whereas the transition from potentiality into actuality means genesis (*al-ḥudūt*) caused by the Prime Mover (*al-muḥarriku l-awwal*).⁵⁶ In that way, the Pure Act becomes an act of putting the Universe in motion and the act which leads to transition of potentiality into actuality, in a way which Aristotle described as well. That is, after all, indicated by Ibn Ruṣd making reference to Aristotle's viewpoint provided in the review of *Metaphysics*, chapter on creation of the world, 3rd part, p. 1498.⁵⁷ Therefore, here the emanation of being and its sustainment are also realized through the act of creation from Nothing (*Inna fi'la l-fā'il la yata'allaqu bi l-wuḡūd illā fi hāli l-'adam*)⁵⁸ which represents potential existence (*wa huwa l-wuḡūd allaḏī bi l-quwwa*).⁵⁹ The act of the active subject refers, therefore, neither to the absolute non-existence, because it does not exist, not to the existence, because that is redundant, but it refers to the non-existence which is incomplete existence (*al-wuḡūd an-nāqis*). It represents the source, the primordial origin of the world which by that receives the full meaning.

Therefore, it would be wrong to conclude that Ibn Ruṣd as an *ash'arizm* and Al-Ghazali reviewer supports the point of view that the eternity of the Universe is *esse a se* and with that to deny the existence by other (*eaternum ab alio*). On the contrary, it would be rather appropriate to say that his position is somewhere in the middle, because he introduced differences between essential and nonessential time, as well as the action and movement inducing causes into his interpretation of Aristotle in the area of differentiation between finite causal and infinite time sequence.⁶⁰ In that sense he quotes several surahs of the Qur'an which allow for interpretation on existence of primordial matter and time as the eternal entities significantly different from the form, i.e., from the potencies. Those are the following surahs: "Then He directed Himself to the heaven and it is a vapor" (*Tumma-stawā ilas-samāi wa hiya duḥān*)⁶¹ and "And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods and His dominion (extends) over the water" (*wa huwa l-laḏī ḥalalaqa s-samāwāti fi sittati ayyāmin wa kāna 'arṣuhu 'ala l-mā'i*).⁶² As Ibn Ruṣd believes the words *vapor* and *water* signify the Something and their allegorical interpretation itself could suggest the creation from the Nothing. However, this does not necessary suggests that the world is eternal and uncreated. The world is, as he believes, nonetheless created but out of the *non-essential time* which is projected into the space as a unit of movement and as such it could be possible horizons for understanding of the essence. That is

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 85.

⁵⁷ Ibn Ruṣd, *Tafsīru ma b'ada t-ṭabī'a*, Bayrut, 1938, III, p. 1498.

⁵⁸ Ibn Ruṣd, *Tahāfutu...*, p. 279.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 274.

⁶⁰ Č. Veljačić, *Filozofija istočnih naroda*, II, p. 99 and *Razmeđa azijskih filozofija*, II, p. 370.

⁶¹ Qur'an, XLI, 11.

⁶² Qur'an, XI, 7.

the reason why he criticised the ash'arites for their presentation of this and the similar issues to the public resulting in factions within the community (*umma*).

Therefore, non-existence (*'adam*) is counter-notion to existence (*wuġūd*) and existences emerges from the non-existence by something third and that is the Essential Existence which allows for potentiality to transform into actuality and vice versa. The very notion of existence and disappearance implies existence of the Active Subject which makes possible all that. It is not happening by itself (*bi ṭ-ṭabī'a*), for which Dr. Tayyib Tizini criticises Ibn Rushd, but by other which is, in fact, the Active Subject.⁶³ Additionally, for Ibn Rushd the non-existence is nonetheless the pure nothingness and his notion of "Potential Existence" (*al-ma' dūmu l-mumkin*) functions only as a logical category used to confirm harmony between the philosophy and the fundamental religious principles, despite the fact that the logic cannot be accepted for arbitration purposes in religion since the notion of *belief* itself questions something like that. So this is, nevertheless, the case of two different approaches to the world and issue of segmentation of the existence, i.e., the issue of the Nothing assists in understanding what is it that provides for the being to be or not to be, and as such it reveals its theological fabric.

SUFI TEACHINGS ON THE WORLD

Unlike the school of *falāsif*, dominated by ontological realism and attempt to rationalize fundamental principles of Islam, in Sufism the notion of *at-tawḥīd* has the meaning of all-embracement, i.e., the meaning of unity of the Subject and the Object, whereas the nonexistence (*al-ma' dūm*), implying denial of everything phenomenal and ontological, assumes the meaning of the fundamental insight in to the existence. The Universe is here, namely, the reflection of the divine essence manifestation (*taġallī ḡ-dāti l-ilāhiyya*) and as such it is a lower form of essence, whereas the survival is, similarly to the Heidegger's point of view, "absorption in to the Nothing." To have a clear picture, we need to point out, at least in brief, to the differences between the two Sufi theories on the world: the manifestation theory (*naẓariyyatu t-taġallī*) and the already mentioned emanation theory (*naẓariyyatu l-fayḍ*).⁶⁴ It is known that the former one presumes an inter-world, a world of intellect (*nus*) as a mediation spirit between divine spirit which is the One and the pluralism of the created being. Taking the principle *Ex uno non fit nisi unum* as a departure point on which the famous Ibn Sina's Neoplatonic scheme is based, the philosophers established an inter-world, *Animae caelestis*, finding in Holly

⁶³ Dr. Tayyib Tizīnī, *Mašrū'u ru'yatin ġadīda li-fikri l-'arabiyyi fi l-'aṣri l-wasīṭ*, Dāru Dimašq, Dimašq, 1971, pp. 368, 399.

⁶⁴ For details see Dr. Yahyā Huwayadī, *Muhāḍarātun fi l-falsafati l-islāmiyya*, al-Qāhira, 1965, pp. 170-181.

Qur'an an analogon entitled '*ālamu l-malakūt* in order to resolve the relationship between the One and the multitude and to avoid confrontation with the official *tawhid* teachings. The Sufi theory on merging (*nazariyyatu l-ittiṣāl*) is based on this theory of which goal is merging of human being with the spiritual world of the world through "the uniqueness of vision" (*waḥdatu š-šuhūd*) and "the fire of *tejrīda*" which leads to alienation (*al-infirād*) as the highest level of experience. This integration and alienation represents, in fact, a denial of everything sensory, non-existence which does not possess ontological density of the spiritual world existence and as such it, therefore, represents the burden for the Sufis. The non-existence is here, therefore, as it is the case with the emanation theory, the matter which a gnostic, through the specific Sufi experience, would like to overcome.

Unlike the above path, the manifestation theory (*nazariyyatu t-tağallī*), however, got its expression in Ibn Arabi and his followers' "path of identification" (*al-ittihād*). The contingent world is here only the reflection of divine essence and the human spirit is the immediate emanation of that "un-created essence." This is where, as Anawati and Gadet note, Plotinian monism of the Aristotle's *Pseudotheology* and the ash-aritic claim that God is one existence and the Mover illusionary unite.⁶⁵ The Empirical Existence is, therefore, specific divine essence manifestation form but without human being it is incomplete resembling to "an unpolished mirror" (*al-mir'ā-tu ḡayru l-maḡuwwa*) and it has neither the ontological density nor depth. That is exactly why it is subject to the process of absorption and cancellation (*al-fanā*) in the Existence, which is the only eternally viable process. According to this theory, creation of the world is a dynamic process of divine essence manifestation in the forms of beings that are potential and capable to receive *al-faydu l-muqaddas*, the sacred emanation of the absolute essence manifested in the world of phenomena (*aš-šāhid*). The existential, or the essential Reality, is, therefore, the one as "the unity of existence (*waḥdatu l-wuḡūd*), whereas the difference between the contingent beings and the essence is only difference in opinion, i.e., it is product of senses. In that sense, Jami once also wrote the following: "The eye of the Adored, seeing what was out there, beheld the nonexistent as the existent. Even though He observed his attributes and virtues as a perfect unity in His own essence, He nonetheless desired to see them reflected in different mirror and that is why He represented every one of His different, eternal attributes in a different form. That is why He created green fields of the Time and Space and the living garden of the World so that every tree branch and leaf and fruit could show of His various sorts of perfection."⁶⁶ With this, the notion of *at-tawḥīd* extends to the meaning of all- encompassment, that is to the unity of the Subject and

⁶⁵ Anawati, G. C. Gardet, *Le Mystique Muslimane*, (see collection *Klasična kultura islama*), I, edited and written by N. Smailagić, Zagreb, 1973, p. 224.

⁶⁶ *Delo*, XXIV, 7, Beograd, 1978, p. 68 (based on the Nicklsons' translation of the work *Tarḡumānu l-ašwāq*).

the Object, whereas the nonexistence represents the Noting which is "The Reality in the Appearance" (*al-ḥaqq fī z-zuhūr*). The issue on the Nothing here also serves as to the understanding of the issue on the Existence which is the foundation of Islamic metaphysics, the inflow and the outflow of life.

O TEORIJI STVARANJA I PROBLEMU NIHILITETA U ARAPSKO-ISLAMSKOJ FILOZOFIJI

SAŽETAK

U širokom rasponu pitanja kojima se bavila arapsko-islamska filozofija, odnosno tesawwuf, teorija stvaranja zauzima značajno mjesto. Budući da je sam pojam stvaranja u osnovi svih religija, a tijesno je vezan i za učenje o bitku i nebitku, u arapsko-islamskoj sredini došlo je vrlo rano do njegova problematiziranja, bilo iz razloga hermeneutičkog pristupa Knjizi čije se aplikativno razumijevanje nametalo kao nužda određenih društveno-historijskih uvjeta i prakse, bilo predmet polemika sa predstavnicima drugih kultura, odnosno ideologija. Način elaboriranja ovog problema, te njegova artikulacija u arapsko-islamskoj filozofiji, međutim, bio je specifičan, s obzirom na to da su mislioci iz ovog kruga izrasli na tradiciji heterogenog predislamskog nasljeđa, s jedne strane, i prakse utemeljene na monoteističkom principu *at-tawhīd*, s druge strane. Stoga se i teorija stvaranja ovdje temelji na poznatom stavu *creatio ex nihilo* (*al-ḥalq mina l-'adam*) nasuprot stavku metafizike *ex nihilo nihil fit*. Da bi razriješili tu osnovnu aporiju i doveli do sklada između religije koju su slijedili i filozofije čiji su gorljivi pobornici bili, mislioci iz ove sredine prihvatili su, pod uticajem drevne grčke misli, pored stava Objave i logiku kao "sudilište" i potvrdu vlastitih ideja.

U ovom radu prati se geneza ideje stvaranja počevši od najranijih pokušaja u tumačenju stavaka Knjige, preko rasvjetljivanja iste kroz učenje o bitku i nebitku kod mu'tazilita, učenje o modusu kao sredini u djelu al-Ġuwajnija i al-Baqilanija, izbjegavanje popredmećenja u skladu sa Plotinovom teorijom emanacije kod al-Kindija, al-Farabija i Ibn Sinā'a, do elaboriranja ovog problema kroz učenje o potencijalitetu i aktualitetu Ibn Rušda, te teoriju emanacije i očitovanja u tesawwufu.

Budući da je većina gornjih nastojanja bila utemeljena na principu *at-tawhīd*, a problematizirana u cilju iznalaženja logičkog utemeljenja i racionalnog opravdanja navedenog principa, može se reći da u osnovi svih stoji pokušaj koji je rezultirao inauguracijom Nužnog bitka koji je vječan, nasuprot mogućstvenog bitka iz svijeta prolaznosti (*al-ḥawādīṭ*) koji je stvoren iz Ništa i predstavlja odraz, odnosno djelo božanske biti. Time se i pitanje o bitku i nebitku, odnosno razložnosti bitka kao i teorija stvaranja stavlja u službu navedenog principa.

ON THE CREATION THEORY AND THE ISSUE OF NIHILISM IN
ARABIC-ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

SUMMARY

In the broad scope of issues considered in Arabic-Islamic philosophy of *ta-ṣawwuf*, issues thought to be significant for the establishment of "Islamic ontological realism", the creation theory occupies an important place. Occupying the middle ground between Arabic-Islamic philosophy on the one hand, and the members of *Kalām* school on the other, the issue of the creation was in this environment subject of polemic and differentiation amongst the philosophers (the works of Al-Ghazali, for instance) usually resulting in radical approaches to the Book's appreciative understanding which came as a necessity in certain social and historical circumstances and practice.

The way in which this issue developed and was articulated in Arabic-Islamic philosophy was, however, highly distinctive and varied from thinker to thinker although for the point of departure most of them used the same monotheistic principle of *at-tawhīd* which was of the basic principles of their scholastic and philosophical efforts. The reason for this can usually be found in the opposing influences worked upon them by the ancient Greek and Indo-Iranian philosophy as well.

Because the creation theory in Islam is based on the well-known viewpoint of *creation ex nihilo* (*al-ḥalq mina l-'adam*), as opposed to the metaphysical viewpoint of *ex nihilo nihili fit*, these thinker attempted to solve that logical dilemma in a painless way by bridging the gap between religion and philosophy, as well as by providing a logical justification to religious attitudes. These attempts are, in fact, the subject of investigation of this essay whose purpose is to examine the emergence of the creation theory from the earliest endeavors as to interpretation of the Qur'an on the part of the pioneers of the hermeneutic approach to Qur'an. In the further analysis, our purpose was to shed the light on the *mu'tazilīts*, the issue of rationality of being and the teachings on being and nonbeing which was, amongst other things, the rational for their disqualification and the factions within the school of *Kalām*.

This is followed by the Al-Ġuwayni and Al-Baqilāni's elaboration of their teachings as to the modus as the middle between being and nonbeing, or the state of emergence and linguistic analysis of the notion of the creation. In the school of *Falāsifa*, however, this issue was articulated through the avoidance of objectification according to Plotinus' theory of emanation which was, in somewhat modified form though, supported by Al-Kindī, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and other philosophers who established a middle-ground theory corresponding to the Qur'anic notion of *'alamu l-malakūt* as opposed to Al-Ghazali who represented the viewpoint of *creatio ex nihilo* in accordance with the eternal will in which the area of nonbeing appears as transtemporal unlike the world of being which is temporal. Ibn Rushd's attempts are, however,

based on the same attitude although with him this problem was founded on the Aristotelian teachings on potentiality and actuality so nonbeing was understood as a possibility eternally inherent to the primordial matter (*hayūlā*), or the Aristotelian *privatio*.

Unlike Ibn Rushd, the members of *tasawwuf* solved this problem by means of the emanation and demonstration theories in which the creation was regarded as a continuous process and flow in the hierarchical scale of beings from the One towards the world which is the only reality in appearance (*al-ḥaqq fī ẓ-zuhūr*).

As the majority of above-mentioned attempts were based on the primary principle of at-tawhid scale and also regarded as a problem as to the seeking the rational justification of the above principle, we can say that fundamental for all of these attempts is the effort resulted in inauguration of Essential Existence, which is eternal, as opposed to the Potential Existence which belongs to the world of transience (*ḥawādith*) created from the Nothing and it only represent a reflection of the divine existence. This poses a question of rationality of existence and the creation theory serves as to the understanding of the above-mentioned principle.