THE LABYRINTH OF PHILOSOPHY IN ISLAM

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Abstract
This paper focuses on the methodological issues related to the obstacles and potential horizons of approaching the philosophical traditions in Islam from the standpoint of comparative studies in philosophy, while also presenting selected case-studies that may potentially illustrate some of the possibilities of renewing the impetus of a philosophical thought that is inspired by Islamic intellectual history. This line of inquiry is divided into two parts: the first deals with questions of methodology, and the second focuses on ontology and phenomenology of perception, by way of offering pathways in investigating the history of philosophical and scientific ideas in Islam from the viewpoint of contemporary debates in philosophy. A special emphasis will be placed on: (a) interpreting the ontology of the eleventh century metaphysician Ibn Sina (known in Latin as: Avicenna; d. 1037 CE) in terms of rethinking Heidegger's critique of the history of metaphysics, and (b) analyzing the philosophical implications of the theory of vision of the eleventh century polymath Ibn al-Haytham (known in Latin as Alhazen; d. ca. 1041 CE) in terms of reflecting on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception.

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Aristotle's philosophy of mind in Islamic philosophy is a combination of what we would today call psychology and physiology, and is not limited to investigations of our rational faculty. However important, the "mind" or intellect, with its practical and theoretical aspects, is only part of the falâsifa's "science of the soul." Their main sources are found in three Aristotelian treatises: On the Soul (De anima), On Sense and Sensibilia (De Sensu et Sensibili), and On Memory and Recollection (De Memoria et Reminiscentia). The last two belong to a series of nine short physical treatises.