

Alhassanain (p) Network for Islamic Heritage and Thought

Islam and Greek Philosophy

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I. Introduction

In this talk I'll present an idea about the beginning of the Islamic philosophy under the influence of the Greek Aristotelian and Platonian thought, and how Avicenna and Averroes have embodied it. We will see how this thought had not eventually been accepted by other Muslim thinkers especially Al Ghazali and finally how this very Islamic philosophy will influence the Western thought through the translations of the Muslim philosophers in the Middle Ages.

II. The Formation of Islamic philosophy

Philosophy began in the Muslim world in the third/ninth century, with the translation of Greek philosophical texts into Arabic.

1. The Peripatetic school

The first Muslim philosopher was Al Kindi, the Latin Al Kindus, called the philosopher of the Arabs. He knew Syriac (language of the Nestorians) and perhaps some Greek and was well acquainted with Greco-Hellenistic scientific and philosophical works. He was the first of the Muslim philosopher-scientists. He initiated the process of formulating a technical philosophical vocabulary in Arabic and of rethinking Greek philosophy in terms of Islamic doctrine. He was followed in both these respects by Al Farabi. Through them the basis for peripatetic philosophy were established in Islam. The Alexandrian and Athenian Neoplatonists and commentators on Aristotle, were familiar to the philosophers of this school who viewed the philosophy of Aristotle through Neoplatonic eyes.

The main tendency of the Islamic Peripatetic school, which found its greatest exponent in Avicenna, was toward a philosophy based on the use of the discursive faculty and relying essentially on the syllogistic method. With Averroes, the most purely Aristotelian of the Muslim Peripatetics, the rationalistic aspect of this school reached its terminal point. He rejected those Neoplatonic and Muslim elements that had entered into the world view of the Eastern Peripatetics, such as Avicenna.

2. The Illuminationist school

The other major school of Islamic philosophy, or "theosophy" in its original sense, came into being in the sixth/twelfth century. Suhrawardi, founded this school known as the Illuminationist (Ishraqi) school, as contrasted with the Peripatetic school (Mashshā'i). While this latter leaned most heavily upon the syllogistic method of Aristotle and sought to reach truth by means of arguments based on reason, the Illuminationists, who drew their doctrines from both the Platonists and the ancient Persians as well as the Islamic Revelation itself, considered intellectual intuition and illumination as the basic method to be used side by side with reason.

The rationalist philosophers gradually became alienated from the orthodox elements, both theological and gnostic, and, after their "refutation" by Al Ghazzali, they exercised little influence upon the main body of Muslim opinion. The illuminationist school combining the method of ratiocination with that of intellectual intuition and illumination, came to the fore during that very period generally but erroneously-considered as the end of Islamic philosophy. In fact, along with gnosis, it occupied the central position in the intellectual life of Islam.

While in the West, at that time Augustinian Platonism (which considered knowledge as the fruit of Illumination) was giving way to thomistic Aristotelianism (which turned away from this doctrine of illumination), the reverse process was taking place in the Islamic world.

III. Sunni and Shii reactions to philosophy

The Sunni and shii reactions to philosophy were not the same. The Sunni world rejected philosophy almost entirely after Averroes, except for logic and the continuing influence of philosophy on its methods of argumentation, as well as some cosmological beliefs that have remained in the formulations of theology and certain Sufi doctrines. In the Shii world, however, the philosophy of both the Peripatetic and Illuminationist school have been taught continuously as a living tradition through the centuries in the religious schools. It is not accidental that it was in the predominant Shii atmosphere that philosophy found its most congenial habitat after the time of Averroes. Here, logic and the Peripatetic philosophy which was based on it, have become a preparation for undertaking the study of the doctrines of the Illuminationist school, and this study in turn became a ladder for rising to the comprehension of the doctrines of pure gnosis.

IV. Avicenna

With Avicenna came the perfection of the philosophy of Al kindi and Al Farabi. He was not only a Peripatetic philosopher combining the doctrines of Aristotle with certain elements of the Neoplatonists, and a scientist who observed Nature within the framework of the medieval philosophy of Nature; he was also one of the precursors of the metaphysical school of Illuminationism.

In the Logic of the Orientals, belonging to a larger work, most of it lost now, Avicenna repudiated his own earlier works, chiefly Aristotelian, as being suitable for the common people; instead, he proposed to present, for the elite, the "Oriental philosophy".

The totality of Avicenna's work presents a clear example of the hierarchy of knowledge within Islamic society. He was an observer and an experimenter in geology and in medicine; a philosopher of the Peripatetic school, more Neoplatonic than Aristotelian; and the author of gnostic texts which were to become the source of many commentaries by later Illuminationists.

The philosophy of Avicenna, especially in its symbolic and cosmological aspects, continued to be studied and cultivated in the Shii world, while in the Sunni world the rationalistic view inherent in the Peripatetic philosophy was being refuted in the name of the tenets of Islamic revelation. Sunni theology sought to fight against certain elements of rationalist Greek philosophy by means of reason itself.

V. Muslim theology

Muslim theology began as the result of an attempt to defend the tenets of Islam against attacks by followers of other religions, especially the Christians, armed with the tools of Greek logic. The Mutazilites dominated in the beginning, and were followed by the Asharites. They did not follow any particular Greek school, but they used the Logic developed by Aristotle and his school, for their own different ends.

The dominant school of Sunni theology, the Asharite one named after its founder Abul Hassan al Ashari who lived in the third/ninth century, arose in the fourth century, in response to various currents of rationalistic thought based on Greek philosophy.

The central idea which dominates the many aspects of Sunni theology is a "conceptual atomism", which breaks the apparent continuity of the world and of its matrices, time and space, and makes God the direct agent in all events. This "atomism" has its roots in the specific character of Islam, which asserts the absolute transcendence of the Divine and the "nothingness" of all beings before that Principle. This "atomism" is dependant of the Arab mind, for whom the concrete discontinuity of things and actions predominates over any abstract continuity of cause and effect, established by examination of the relations existing between all things. The Asharites are thus rejecting the Aristotelian notion of causality. For them, everything is caused directly by God. Every cause is the Transcendent Cause. The coherence of the world is due to the "Vertical" bond which connects each concrete entity or "atom" with its ontological cause, God, and not to the "horizontal" relation between things, or between various causes and effects. The Asharites based their views on that aspect of "nothingness" before the Infinite, while the philosophers following the Neoplatonists based their view on the continuity between the universe and its ontological cause. It remained for the Sufis to formulate the doctrine which contains the synthesis of these "contradictory" relations as two aspects of the same reality.

VI. Al Ghazali's and the Philosophers

1. Mastering the Greek thought

Al Ghazali (1090 c.e) carried on a critical examination of the method and doctrines of the philosophers. He was the first instance of a theologian thoroughly schooled in the ways of the philosophers; the Muslim theologians before him either had a dread of philosophy, considered a dangerous study, or studied it just to qualify themselves for polemics against the philosophers.

He studied assiduously the entire Greek philosophy current in his time and produced one of the best compendia of it in Arabic entitled *Maqasid al Falasifah* (The Intentions of the Philosophers). This work contained such a faithful exposition of Aristotelianism that when it came to be known to the Christian scholastics through the Latin translation made in 540/1145 by Gondisalvus, the Spanish philosopher and translator, it was taken to be the work of a genuine Peripatetic. Albert the great (d.679-1280), Thomas Aquinas (d.673/1274), and Roger Bacon (d.694/1294) mentioned Al Ghazali along with Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd as the true representatives of Arab Aristotelianism. (The confusion among the thirteenth-century scholastics came from the fact that the Latin translation did not contain the short introduction in which Al Ghazali was speaking disparagingly of the Philosopher's metaphysics and was making it clear that his ultimate purpose by making an objective and dispassionate study of it was to refute it in *Tahafut al Falasifah* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers))

In reality never did Arab Aristotelianism find a more vigorous foe than Al Ghazali. His compendium in philosophy was just a propaedeutic to his *Tahafut al Falasifah* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers) in which he carried on a devastating attack on the doctrine of the Muslim Peripatetics.

Al-Ghazali divided the Philosophers into three main groups: the materialists, the naturalists and the theists. The materialists completely dispensed with the idea of God and believed that the universe has existed without a creator, was a self subsisting system that operates and develops by itself, has its own laws, and can be understood by itself. The naturalists or the deists struck by the wonders of creation and informed of a running purpose and wisdom in the scheme of things while engaged in their manifold researches into the science of phenomena, admitted the existence of a wise creator or Deity, but rejected the spirituality and immortality of the human soul. They did not believe neither in heaven, hell, resurrection nor judgment.

Al-Ghazali listed Socrate, Plato and Aristotle as theists and concentrated on Aristotle who had criticized all his predecessors.

2. Attacking Islamic philosophers

Al Ghazali came finally to concentrate on that Islamic philosophical thought of his day which had emerged from the writings of Ibn Sina and Al-Farabi, as the most faithful and capable commentators of the Greek thought.

He divided the philosophical sciences into mathematics, logic, physics, politics, ethics and metaphysics. He wanted to see if there were anything false or untenable. He was ready to accept whatever he would find to be based on the evidence of factual data or susceptible of proof by argument in conformity with the principles of reason.

Al- Ghazali accepted as true much of what the philosophers taught with regard to their sciences of mathematics, logic, and physics, even politics and ethics. He had already rejected the materialists and naturalists as being founded on an unacceptable metaphysics, considering his Islamic belief in one God, in the Resurrection and final Judgment. For the theistic philosophers, he found their errors consisting in their metaphysical views which, unlike mathematical natural sciences, were not grounded in compelling reason or positive inquiry but on conjecture and fanciful speculations. To his dismay, Al Ghazali saw that the philosophies of Al Farabi and Ibn Sina did violence without any philosophic warrant or justification to the principles of religion as enunciated in the Quran. His empirical and theological spirit revolted very strongly against this. According to him the positive facts of religion should not be neglected for sheer metaphysical speculations, nor could they be interpreted externally from the point of view of a preconceived system of philosophy. The Muslim philosophers had been slow in realizing that notwithstanding the great breadth of outlook the study of Greek philosophy had brought to the Muslims there was quite a gulf between the inspiration of the Qur'anic teachings and the spirit of Hellenism, especially the dichotomy between the empirical and the transcendental, the secular and the spiritual.

In Al Ghazali's view, the two philosophers Al Farabi and Ibn Sina, carried away by their enthusiasm to bring reconciliation between philosophy and religion, compressed the dogmas of Islamic religion within the moulds of Aristotelian and Platonian systems. They thus had fallen either into inconsistencies or heretical positions. All this is brought out in *Tahafut al Falasifah* (Incoherence of the Philosophers) which called, a century later, for a rejoinder from Averroes. Al Ghazali (*Tahafut al tahafut - The Incoherence of the Incoherence*) epitomized the essential problems arising from the impact of classical philosophy on the teachings of Islam. He found that the teaching of the philosophers was so ruinous to the religious and moral life of the masses that he revolted against it and he dedicated himself to an open warfare against the philosophers.

Al Ghazali assails the philosophers on twenty points (beginning with creation and ending with the last things) and shows that their dogmas of the eternity and the everlastingness of the world are false; their assertion that God is the creator of the world is dishonest for it is flagrantly inconsistent with their dogma of the eternity of the world ; that they fail to prove the existence, the unity, the simplicity and the incorporeity of God, God's knowledge either of the universals or of the particulars; that their views with regard to the souls of the celestial spheres, and the sphere's knowledge of the particulars and the purpose of their movement are unfounded; that their theory of causation which attributes effects to the very nature of the causes is false; and that they cannot establish the spirituality of the soul, nor prove its immortality; and, finally, that their denial of the resurrection of the bodies in the life hereafter is philosophically unwarranted.

Al Ghazali charges the Philosophers with infidelity on three counts:

- 1- Eternality of the world
- 2- Denial of God's knowledge of the particulars

3- Denial of bodily resurrection

Eternality of the world

The first point, the eternity of the world, was the most challenging and uncompromising problem in the conflict between religion and philosophy. The advocates of orthodoxy considered the eternity of the universe to be the most pernicious thesis of the philosophers and vehemently combated against it. For them, there is nothing eternal but God; all else is created. To make anything co-eternal with God is to violate the principle of monotheism. A theologian like Al Ghazali could not accept the position affirming the world to be an independent Universe, a self subsistent system which develops by itself, and can be understood by itself.

The philosophers like Ibn Sina and Al Farabi did not deny that God is an eternal creator of the universe, but as true Aristotelians believed that God's activity consists merely in bringing forth in the state of actuality the virtual possibilities inherent in the prime matter which was alleged to be co-eternal with Him. He did not create the universe out of sheer nothingness at a definite time in the past so God as an eternal creator constantly combines matter with new forms. As a corollary they believed in the infinity of time.

Al Ghazali, on the other hand, in accordance with the teachings of the Quran, firmly holds the position that the world was created by God out of absolute nothingness at certain moment in the past which is at a finite interval from the present. He created not only forms but also matter and time along with them which had a definite beginning and hence is finite. Al Ghazali's stand point is that God arbitrarily had chosen one particular moment rather than another for world's coming into being, for God's will is completely undetermined. His will does not depend upon distinctions in the outside world, for it is itself the producer of all the distinctions therein. This creating of distinctions is the true significance of God's will. God had chosen a particular moment for the creation of the universe as He chooses a particular direction for the movement of the spheres (of the Ptolemaic heaven), in some cases from East to West, in others from West to East (as described in the Aristotelian astronomy), even when the reversal of directions would have made no difference. There is no way to explain God's choice either in one case or the other.

The difficulty posed by the Philosophers arises because of their misguided attempt to understand the nature of divine will altogether in the terms of man's will. God's will is not like man's, as God's knowledge is not like man's knowledge. So far as God's knowledge is concerned, the Philosophers avowedly admit that it differs from man's knowledge in so many respects that in their final position it becomes indeed an inexplicable mystery. God, in their view, possesses the knowledge of all the universals without this knowledge necessitating plurality, without its being additional to His essence and without its multiplying in proportion to the multiplicity of the objects known. Some of them assert, after Aristotle, that God is the knower, the knowledge and the known, and that the three are one.

While the Philosophers admit that God's knowledge cannot be compared with man's knowledge, they insist upon drawing a comparison between God's will and man's will. This is exactly what Al-Ghazali calls the "incoherence of

the Philosophers”, and, in his views, their thought- system, taken as a whole, reveals quite a number of such incoherences. Indeed, the philosophers' very notion of eternal creation is self- contradictory and meaningless. How can one speak of the creation of what exists eternally? If God and the prime matter are both eternal existents, does it make sense to say that one is the cause of the other?

Theory of emanation

The entire argument of the philosophers with regard to the eternity of the world is, thus, full of contradictions and unproved assumptions, but the most manifest of their inconsistencies and the sheer baselessness of their assumptions become conspicuous when they come to explain the origination of the world from the being of God in the terms of the plotinian Theory of Emanation. Plotinus considers the world to be a necessary outflow from the being of God like light from the sun. (Plotinus uses the light metaphor, for he conceived light to be incorporeal after Posidonius of Rhodes (c.135-50B.C) who is perhaps the first to propound the notion of emanation). Muslim philosophers' subscription to this view according to Al Ghazzali is the clearest evidence that their verbal avowal of creation is a mere dissimulation and duplicity. The Philosophers elaborated an ingenious theory of emanation which contrives to erect a cosmological staircase between the stable stillness of God's unity and the changing and varied multiplicity of the world. This staircase is constituted of a finely graded series of intelligences and souls of celestial spheres, each emanating from the other in a hierarchical fashion. The view that the celestial spheres are perfect and have souls and intelligences superior to that of man had the overwhelming authority of Aristotle and further it was possible and even fascinating to conceive of them in terms of angel as described by the theologians.

Al Ghazzali strictures against this grand cosmological construction made out of so many various imported ideas are very strong and bitter. He finds that all this is arbitrary reasoning and idle speculation, a wild guess work, darkness piled upon darkness. According to him if someone says he saw things of this kind in a dream, it would be inferred that he was suffering from some disease. Even an insane person could not rest satisfied with such postulates.

God's knowledge of the particulars

Al Ghazzali does not hesitate to level a charge of infidelity against Ibn Sina for his saying that though God knows all the particulars, He knows them only in a universal way. This means that God cannot have the perceptual knowledge of particular things but knows them by way of a universal knowledge. Ibn Sina realizes the difficulty of his position and so adds that the understanding of it needs great intellectual subtlety. Ibn Sina adopted the Aristotelian conception that God has only self-knowledge but adds emphatically that His self-knowledge necessarily implies knowledge of all the existent things in the universe in so far as He is the principal or the ultimate source of them all. The coming into existence of particular events and objects is due to the action and interaction of the various causes but ultimately all these have to be traced back to the First Cause. God, the First Cause, knows the particular events even when they occur to a single

individual in so far as they are fully explicable in terms of general laws and all-pervasive causal nexus.

Denial of bodily Resurrection

This point is completely opposed to what the biggest part of humanists in the Islamic world believes. Bodily Resurrection is one of the basic tenets of Islam and to deny it is to deny a very basic principle of Islam.

VII. Islamic influence on the Western thought

The end of the eleventh century marks the development of European interest in Muslim philosophy. The presence of Muslims in Spain, the Crusades, the seminaries in Sicily, the inadequacy of the old Western scholastic and scientific systems necessitated relation of the West with the world of Islam. In Toledo, Raymond I, the Archbishop established a translation bureau to render Arabic culture into Latin. When Robert, the King of France, invaded Sicily, southern Italy and Calabria, he borrowed from the Italian seminaries the Islamic sciences taught there. The transmission of Muslim thought to the Medieval West passed through the following phases:

The first one began when some scholars went to Muslim countries to make studies. Constantine the African and Adelherd were the first ones to make that kind of studies. The former translated into Latin the Arabic translations of Hippocrates and Galen's books as well as the works of Muslim scholars on medical science. Later on, more students from Italy, Spain and southern France attended Islamic schools in order to study Mathematics, philosophy, medicine, cosmography, etc... In due course, they became candidates for professorship in the first Western universities which were beginning to be established after the pattern of Islamic ones. Emperor Frederick of Sicily founded the Salerno Seminary and Aristotle's books were translated from Arabic into Latin by his order. Books of Aristotle and those on the interpretation of his philosophy written by the Muslim scholars were brought to Italy by way of Salerno.

In the thirteenth century the University of Paris (1215), Bologna, Montpellier, Oxford and Koln were founded. The Oxford University became a center of the activities of translation and interpretation. Neckam translated from Arabic Aristotle's books "on Heaven" and "on Soul". Michael Scot translated books of al Bitruji (Albatragius) on cosmography and several books for Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd. Robert Grosseteste translated Greek and Muslim's philosophical works. Roger Bacon (1214-1292) was the most important member of this group. This great scholar, one of the founders of empiricism, was particularly influenced by Ibn Sina, (Avicenna). While the trends initiated by Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) constituted the roots of Western rationalism, Muslim naturalists like Al-Razi and Ibn Al Haitham influenced the empirical thought of England.

In the University of Paris, since the day of its establishment, Aristotle's texts and their interpretations in Arabic were given much importance. The Pope Gregory (in 1231) renewed the decree forbidding the instruction of Aristotle and his texts. Bacon, Duns Scotus and Nicholas of Autrecourt were convicted in the following years. Averroists were convicted and circulation of their books prohibited. These severe measures originated from fanaticism

and ideological roots. In general, they embodied the reaction of the tendency of Platonism and dialecticism against Aristotelianism and experimentation.

By the end of the fifteenth century, the extensive printed publication of books translated from Arabic into Latin made the priests's decree ineffective and the books were spreading every where.

The translation into Latin by Gerard of Cremon, Constantine the African and Faraj Ben Salim of the works of Al Razi, founder of the philosophy of nature in Islam, was an important step in the transmission of Muslim philosophy to the West. Al Kindi was translated and known in Europe as a faithful disciple of Aristotle. Al Farabi's psychology, metaphysics and logic were translated into Latin and had a penetrating influence on the philosophers of the medieval West and on Christian scholastic philosophy, and especially on St-Thomas and Albert the Great. Al Farabi and, following him, Ibn Sina added the third form of the famous cosmological proof of God based on the conceptions of possibility and necessity, the first two being based on the ideas of motion and potentiality as formulated by Aristotle. Maimonides, the Jewish philosopher, took it from Ibn Sina, and St-Thomas took it from Maimonides and passed it on to Spinoza and Leibniz.

The idea of definite determinism based on a metaphysical foundation came from Al-Farabi. This led to the distinction between psychological necessity and physical necessity. According to him, God is the Necessary Being (wajib al wujud) and takes necessity from himself. All other beings take their necessity from God. The conception of God understood as universal and Necessary Being is substituted in this way for the conception of God as the "efficient autonom" of the theologians.

The world which takes its necessity from God and is as necessary as God Himself depends no longer, as in Aristotle, on the subtle laws of beauty and habit. It is not dependent on the autonomous will of God either. Thus physics found a stronger and more unshakable foundation in Al-Farabi than in the Greeks. This foundation is the metaphysical conception of necessity.

The Latin translations of some of Ibn Al Haitham books written during his empiricist and skeptical periods were instrumental to the development of Roger Bacon's ideas. In addition to this, Western science profited by Ibn Al Haitham's detailed research on optics. Ibn Al Haithm marks the beginning of physics as well as the movement of empiricism in the West. He explained the role of induction in syllogism and criticized Aristotle for the meagreness of his contribution to the method of induction which he considered as superior to syllogism and being the basic requirement for true scientific research.

Ibn Sina was very influential upon the West. His influence was directly felt through the Latin translation of his works done in the eleventh century and indirectly through the works of scholars influenced by him like the Jewish philosophers Salomon Ben Gabriel known to the Latins as Avencebrol and Maimonides.

The influence of the translations from Arabic into Latin of Avicenna begun in the eleventh and continued through the fourteenth century has been classified in two groups:

1. The influence beginning with Ibn Sina- Avicenna and Al Farabi and leading to the development of the trend of Avicennism.

2. The continued influence exercised by Al Ghazali's summaries of Al-Farabi's and Ibn Sina views.

Ibn Sina's system served as an appropriate base in the reconciliation carried in the thirteenth century of St-Augustine's ideas with those of Aristotle. This led to the movement called Augustinian-Avicennism. William of Auvergne was the most important witness of Latin Avicennism, and was inspired by the ideas of the Muslim philosopher: he benefited from Ibn Sina's definitions, his classification of science, and many of his ideas on theology. He took over with some modifications Avicenna's idea that "the celestial sphere is a living being", and that one on the immortality of the soul. However, William attacked Ibn Sina for such ideas as the eternity of the universe, the necessity of creation, and the separate active intellect taken as the efficient and final cause of all souls, etc. It was for these reasons that, according to the decrees issued in 1210 and 1215, the teaching of Aristotle's interpretations and Ibn Sina's books were prohibited by the Church. But while William was criticizing Aristotle and Ibn Sina there were other thinkers of his time, real Avicennists, following him in all respects. We observe the highest development of this trend in Roger Bacon's Illuminism. Bacon was well informed on all the works of Ibn Sina, translated in Latin or not. He was well acquainted with his books on philosophy, astronomy, medicine, alchemy, social ethics; he benefited from Ibn Sina's researches and did not stick to the limited view of the scholastics concerning him.

St-Thomas was also influenced by Ibn Sina; he developed his own philosophy by giving new meaning and direction to Aristotle while explaining and criticizing Ibn Sina's and Ibn Rushd's theories.

By the middle of the thirteenth century, almost all the works of Ibn Rushd, were translated into Latin. His commentaries on Aristotle's works were translated into Latin by Michael Scot, Hermann the Dalmatian, and others.

It was through Ibn Rushd's interpretations and commentaries on Aristotle that this Greek philosopher became widely known in Europe. Those who were looking for the real Aristotle and had a glimpse of him from those preceding Ibn Rushd became enthusiastic Averroists.

Ibn Rushd was the Muslim thinker to have influenced the most the Medieval West. The main ideas for which he was vehemently opposed by the scholastics of the East and the West and most enthusiastically welcomed by the radicals in thought from the twelfth to the fourteenth century and which opened the door to the European Renaissance were:

1. Allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures
2. The theory of two truths (rational truth and revealed truth)
3. Pan-psychism which implied immortality of the universal soul of humanity and mortality of the individual soul
4. Eternality and potentiality of matter
5. Emancipation of women.

In 1215, Frederic II became the Emperor of Rome. He was a great admirer of Muslim thought in general and of Ibn Rushd in particular. (He had been educated at Palermo under Muslim teachers). In 1224 he established a university at Naples, which introduced Muslim philosophy and science to the people of the West. St Thomas received his education there. Christians,

Jewish and Muslims were engaged for rendering Arabic works into Latin. The works of Aristotle and Ibn Rushd were used not only in the curriculum of this university but were sent also to the universities of Paris, Padua and Bologna.

Averroism became rapidly the ruling mode of thought in the West. Scholars of medieval Europe were agitated by Ibn Rushd's Aristotle as by no other author. To the sixteenth century Averroism remained dominant and that in spite of the orthodox reaction it created first among the Muslim in Spain, then among the Jewish and finally among the Christian clergy.

Ibn Rushd became more famous in the Latin world than in the Muslim one because of the special interest the Latin world got in Aristotle.

Montgomery Watt suggests that this central position given to Aristotle in philosophy and science may be understood as one aspect of the European assertion of distinction from Islam. The purely negative activity of turning from Islam, especially when so much was being learnt from Arab science and philosophy, would have been difficult without a positive complement. This positive complement was the appeal to Europe's classical (Greek and Roman) past discovered through the Arabs. (Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*, p. 79).

VIII. Conclusion

We have thus got a rapid idea about the first steps in the formation of Islamic philosophy under the influence of the Greek one, in its Aristotelian and platonian forms. We have also seen why this Islamic philosophy has not been accepted by the Muslim scholars and theologians as opposed to the profound tenets of Islamic Monotheism and Absolute Divine Power.

Finally, we have gone rapidly through some of the great influence of Islamic philosophy on the Western thought.

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