

An Appraisal of the Constitutions of the Islamic Republic of Iran: before and after the Khomeini's Revolution

Shahzad Iqbal Sham*

A Short Constitutional History of Iran:

Upon adoption of the American Constitution by 12 states of the continent in September 1787, a dire need emerged in many other countries to have a written constitution. Some countries, like France, followed the American pattern immediately, others measured it up gradually, and with the passage of time they were able to have their own canon. Iran, like a number of other sovereign states of the world, was run by the *Shahinshah*, viz., it was without a written constitution, and remained in the latter category until 1906. A change occurred in 1906 when the *Zil-i-subhani* (the shadow of God, the King), on 5 August, 1906 directed the Prime Minister to constitute an Assembly of delegates and issued a *Firman* (decree) in which the basic parameters for establishment of the Assembly were pronounced. The sovereign demanded, "and we do enact that an Assembly of delegates elected by the Princes, the Doctors of Divinity (*'Ulama*), the Qajar family, the nobles and notables, the landowners, the merchants and the guilds shall be formed and constituted, by election of the classes above mentioned, in the Capital Tehran". Obviously, as the construction of this decree unveils that the assembly, unlike the present one, was not constituted on the basis of an authorization granted by the adult population of the state and, therefore, its mandate was, besides others, limited to "submit (their proposal to us)[the King], so that these having been duly ratified by Us"⁽¹⁾.

Subsequently, in December 1906, upon establishment of the National Assembly, the Shah issued another decree stipulating the principles and articles of the Fundamental law. The composition of the assembly was not in accordance with democratic norms as for the selection of 162 members, according to the Electoral Law of September 1906, neither the people were consulted nor the members were from amongst the general public, but were from amongst categories; the

*Associate Professor, Shariah Academy, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

- A.I. Sabra "Science, Islamic." In: *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. J.R.S. Strayer, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Vol. XI (1988)
- Al-Attas, SMN, *Prolegomena to The Metaphysics of Islam, an exposition of The Fundamental element of the Worldview of Islam*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISAC), 1995
- Alparsalan Acikgenc, *Islamic Science, Towards a Definition*, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1996.
- Alparslan Acikgenc, *Scientific Thought and Its Burdens, An Essay in the History and Philosophy of Science*, Istanbul, Fatih University Publication, 2000
- Arthur, W.H.A., et al., *Reading in Western Civilization*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- Coplestone, Frederick J.A, *A History of Philosophy*, New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1962.
- Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture, The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Sociey (2nd-4th/8th-10th centuries*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Edwards Grant, *The Foundation of Modern Science in the Middle Ages, Their religious, Institutional, and Intellectual Context*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant, The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*, Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1970.
- Holmes, George, *The Oxford history of medieval Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- John Marenbon, *Early Medieval Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 1991.
- Jones, W.T.C. *A History of Western Philosophy, The Classical Mind*, Chicago: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publisher, 1970.
- Josep Puig, "The Transmission and Reception of Arabic Philosophy In Christian Spain Until 1200", in Charles E. Butterworth et al, *The Intoduction of Arabic Philosophy into Europe*, Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1994.
- Marenbon, John, *Early Medieval Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 1988.
- Martin, C.J.F, *An Introduction of Medieval Philosophy*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.
- Mircea Eliade, (ed) *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, MacMillan Publishing Company, New York, London: Collier Macmillan Publisher.
- Onians, R.B. *The Origin of European Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Peter, F.E. *Aristotle and The Arabs, The Aristotelian Tradition in Islam*, New York: New York University Press, 1968.
- Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1992.
- Sharif, M.M. (Ed), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Delhi: Low Price Publication, 1995.
- Allen Walker (Chairman of Editor) *The New International Webster Comprehensive Dictionary of The English Language, Defux Encyclopedic Edition*, New York: Trident Press International, 1996.
- William McNeill, *The Rise of the West*, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1996.
-

- ³⁹ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1992, p.1059-1060.
- ⁴⁰ Acikgenc, Alparslan, *Islamic Science*, p. 15.
- ⁴¹ Eugene A Meyers, *Arabic Thought*, p. 85
- ⁴² Peter, F.E. *Aristotle and The Arabs, The Aristotelian Tradition in Islam*, New York: New York University Press, 1968, p.57.
- ⁴³ Josep Puig, *The Transmission*, p.28. O'Leary also mentioned that this mode of transmission was the characteristic Middle Ages intellectual. See O'Leary, *Arabic Thought*, p. 277.
- ⁴⁴ Brown, Thomas, "The Transformation of the Roman Mediterranean", 400-900, in George Holmes, *The Oxford History of Medieval Europe*, pp.50-51. He also noted that the remarkable success and the strength of Islam was due mainly to their ability "to evolve an original and durable synthesis". They took over the more effective and appealing tenets of other faiths and retained viable elements of Graeco-Roman administration and urban culture while maintaining the distinctiveness and vitality of their own culture. See also p. 11.
- ⁴⁵ Mozarab was originally Spanish derived from Arabic *musta'rab* meaning 'arabized', or would-be-Arab, but the term is used for one who claims to be an Arab without being so. Mikel said that it is originally a pejorative term for Christian of Arabic origin living in the medieval Christian kingdom, particularly Toledo. But it also refers to a member of Christian congregation in Spain that maintains a modified form of its religion after the Muslim conquest. See Mikel De Eplaza, Mozarab, "An Emblematic Christian Minority in Islamic Andalus", in Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *The legacy of Muslim Spain*, pp.149-170. Cf. Allen Walker (Chairman of Editor) *The New International Webster Comprehensive Dictionary of The English Language*, Deluxe Encyclopedic Edition, New York: Trident Press International, 1996. p. 833
- ⁴⁶ Morris, Rosemary, *Northern Europe invades the Mediterranean, 900-1200*, in George Holmes, *The Oxford...*, *Ibid.*, pp.194-195
- ⁴⁷ Alparsalan Acikgenc, *Islamic Science*, p. 15

- ¹⁶ Al-Attas, SMN, *Prolegomena to The Metaphysics of Islam, an exposition of The Fundamental element of the Worldview of Islam*, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISAC), Kuala Lumpur, 1995, p. 2
- ¹⁷ Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant, The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*, Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1970, p 70
- ¹⁸ For detail exposition on the rise of scientific activities in Islam see Alparslan Acikgenc, *Scientific Thought and Its Burdens, An Essay in the History and Philosophy of Science*, Fatih University Publication, Istanbul, 2000, especially Chapter Four and Five.
- ¹⁹ Michael Marmura, dalam *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, London & New York: MacMillan Publishing Company & Collier Macmillan Publisher, p. 268, s.v. "Falsafah"
- ²⁰ William McNeill, *The Rise of the West*, p. 418.
- ²¹ Josep Puig, "The Transmission and Reception of Arabic Philosophy in Christian Spain Until 1200", in Charles E. Butterworth et al, *The Intoduction of Arabic Philosophy into Europe*, Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1994, p.28
- ²² A. Sabra "Science, Islamic." In: *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. J.R.S. Strayer, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Vol. XI(1988), pp. 81-88.
- ²³ McNeill, William, *The Rise of the West*, p.441.
- ²⁴ Eugene A Myers, *Arabic Thought*, p.133
- ²⁵ Josep Puig, "The Transmission" pp. 12-13. See also O'Leary, *Arabic Thought and Its Place in History*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922, pp.276-277.
- ²⁶ Eugene A Myers, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 79-80.
- ²⁷ Sharif, M.M. (Ed), *A History of Muslim Philosophy, Low Price Publication, Delhi*, vol. II, 1995, p. 1367
- ²⁸ Eugene A Myers, *Arabic Thought*, pp.78-83.
- ²⁹ Sharif. M.M., *A History*, p.1367.
- ³⁰ Eugene A Myers, *Arabic Thought*, p. 85.
- ³¹ Sharif, MM, . (Ed), *A History*, p.1368.
- ³² Burnett, Charles, "The Introduction of Arabic Learning into British School", in Charles E. Butterworth. et al. *The Introduction*, p.40.
- ³³ Sharif, MM, . (Ed), *A History*, p.1368.
- ³⁴ Burnett, Charles, *The Introduction*, pp. 51, 53, 56.
- ³⁵ Sharif, MM, (Ed), *A History*, p.1380.
- ³⁷ Edward Grant, *The Foundation*, p. 172.
- ³⁸ Alparslan Acikgenc, *Islamic Science*, 10

References

- ¹ Acikgenc, Alparsalan, *Islamic Science, Towards a Definition*, Kuala Lumpur : ISTAC, 1996, pp.29-31.
- ² Jones, W.T.C, *A History of Western Philosophy*, Chicago: The Classical Mind, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1970, p.2.
- ³ Onians, R.B. *The Origin of European Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- ⁴ Arthur, W.H.A., et al., *Reading in Western Civilization*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- ⁵ Couplestone, Frederick J.A, *A History of Philosophy*, New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1962, p. 11
- ⁶ Holmes, George, *The Oxford history of medieval Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp, vi, ix.
- ⁷ Couplestone, *A History of Philosophy*, p.11
- ⁸ These subdivisions were popularized by Belgian historian Henri Pirenne and Dutch historian Johan Huizinga in the early 20th century.
- ⁹ Martin, C.J.F, *An Introduction of Medieval Philosophy*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996, p.10. William McNeill also put the year of 1000 as the beginning of vigorous civilization of the western Europe. See William McNeill, *The Rise of the West*, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1996, p.484.
- ¹⁰ John Marenbon, *Early Medieval Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 1991, pp. xvi; 27
- ¹¹ Brown noted that in the areas of Latin west and in the Greek east literary production suffered a crisis between the late sixth and eighth centuries. See Brown, Thomas, "The Transformation of the Roman Mediterranean", in George Holmes, *The Oxford history*, p. 52
- ¹² Holmes, George, *The Oxford history*, pp., vi, ix.
- ¹³ Edwards Grant, *The Foundation of Modern Science in the Middle Ages, Their religious, Institutional, and Intellectual Context*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 , p. 26.
- ¹⁴ Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture, The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th centuries*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p.21-22,
- ¹⁴ Acikgenc, Alparsalan, *Islamic Science*, pp.14-15.
- ¹⁵ Marenbon, John, *Early Medieval Philosophy*, London : Routledge, 1988, p.17.

translate, rearrange the passage and find the link of conception by which they build a system and claimed as their own.⁴³ This strange manner of Western intellectuals could suggest the lucid indication that the West silently 'adopted' the Islamic thought or Greek thought which had been appropriated by the Muslims. In other words the West understood Greek thought through the Muslims' worldview.

Moreover, the transmission of Islamic worldview into the West could also be marked out by pinpointing socio-cultural communication in Spain. During the Muslim occupation Spain and other areas like Levant became the brightest spot on the cultural map of the Christian West and the most dynamic cultural life. Scientifically, the Study of science, philosophy and medicine were maintained at a high level.⁴⁴ Socially, Spain as a Muslim territory and predominant Muslim cultural environment was a meeting place for Christian, Muslim and Jewish culture. Historical fact suggests that in Spain the Christians evolved what the so called Mozarabic culture.⁴⁵ Morris states that the Christian and Jewish' contact and conflict with Muslims stimulate not only ideology and intellect of medieval Europe but also its imagination.⁴⁶ It is true that when the Westerners realized that the Muslim possessed a sophisticated mind or scientific worldview more than what is available in Latin their curiosity aroused.

In conclusion, the most pivotal factor that brought about the rise of Western civilization is Islamic scientific worldview. The mode by which the Islamic worldview was transformed to the West is similar to the way of worldview formation,⁴⁷ which was through cultural, scientific, religious channels. It is also developed via speculative idea by means of education or conscious effort to acquire knowledge. Lucid example of the place of such formation is Spain, the place where the West absorbed scientific worldview from the Muslims, or to say the least the place where the West utilized their encounter with Muslim to enrich their own worldview.

were then translated by monks. *Sixth* the Christian kings established the school for translators in Toledo following the Christian conquest of that city in 1085 AD, with the purpose of digesting the Muslim knowledge which was accumulated in the great libraries of the former Muslim sovereigns.³⁹

It is worth noting that the modes of communication in general were colored by Muslims' religious tolerance and good political will, and cultural interests of the West. These modes of communication were conducive not only for enhancing the appreciative attitude of the West towards the sophisticated culture of the Muslim, but also in realizing the importance of transmitting the Islamic worldview for the West. Thus, Jayyusi's findings imply that the West transmitted Islamic worldview in three main ways: through cultural transformation, through religious dialogue, and through conscious effort to transmit the knowledge by translation. These three ways, in Alparslan's theory,⁴⁰ are three major factors that play most important role in the formation of any worldview, including the West. Regarding this last point Eugene A Myers infers that the awakening of Europe, begun in the last half of the eleventh century, was sparked by the translation of Constantine the African in the field of medicine.The reawakening of Europe was decisively helped by translations, and translations served as a continuum in the revival of Europe.⁴¹

What Myers means by translation in the foregoing quotation was from Arabic into Latin, rather than from Latin into French, Celtic into Latin, or Hebrew into Latin, because it was the most important than all the others. However, behind the whole process of translation is the absorption of scientific spirits as well as scientific worldview. Scientific inquiries in the West emerged as soon as they encountered with the sophisticated civilization of the Muslims. It was because during the period of the Muslims cultural leadership from the 7th until the 15th century the West transformed not only Greek thought from the Arab to Latin but also absorbed their sophisticated intellectual mechanism. Jayyusi's depiction on the mode of Islam-West communication is an ample evidence of Western attempt to develop their scientific conceptual scheme within their worldview. After having developed their worldview the Christian West did not hesitate to translate any Greek text as ever before, especially from the text that has been synthesized in the Muslim doctrine.⁴² Thus, the rise of philosophy and sciences in the West was owed much not only to the work of translators of Greek into Arabic or Arabic into Latin but also to the Islamic worldview.

In fact, the influence of Islamic worldview into the Western minds was imbedded in the fashion of the transformation. The Latin scholars blended the translation with transmission i.e. translating the text and transmitting the thought at once. Sometimes the translators make translations and at the same time they also claimed to be the original writers. Some scholars simply

Orthodox Christianity and therefore in 607H/1210 the Council of Paris banned the Averroism and Aristotle's Natural History.³⁶

From the translations and transmission of Islamic thought from Arabic to Latin, the emerging universities were able to construct a ready-made curriculum that comprised primarily of the exact science, logic and natural philosophy. For the Baccalaureate and the Master of Arts degrees in the arts faculty, the universities offered the courses of logic, natural philosophy, geometry, arithmetic, music and astronomy. According to Grant science and natural philosophy were a 'permanent fixture' of the curriculum in the medieval universities of Western Europe for about four hundred fifty to five hundred years.³⁷

Thus, the transmission of Islamic thought through universities which was carried out by thinkers associated with that universities had resulted in the emergence of new theories. It should be realized that in spite of their intellectual manner in translation and transmission, the West were able to establish scientific tradition and later became a foundation of modern science. Later development was characterized by the intensive studies on particular field of philosophy and sciences. The building of intellectual network among the universities and the establishment of some new universities were the necessary consequences of that transmission. From Italy the Muslims' works were transmitted to France, England, Germany and other European countries.

Transmission of worldview:

Theoretically worldview is formed in our mind through culture, technology, scientific, religious and speculative ideas by way of education or conscious effort to acquire knowledge.³⁸ Islamic worldview itself provides diversified concepts that pervade into all walk of Muslims life and therefore the mode of their penetration into the Western minds could be through more than one channel, similar to the mode of worldview formation. An excellent picture of the mode of such a penetration is to be found in Spain. In his extensive research entitled "the Legacy of Muslim in Spain" Jayyusi arrived at six conclusive modes of transformation, they are: *First*, that the Western people transmitted the Arab stories and poetry orally. *Second*, that there were Europeans travelling to Andalusia in search of Arab Islamic cultural lore during which direct contact exist necessarily. *Third*, that there were frequent trade relation and political contact through diplomatic embassies and as consequence there must have been some cultural transformation. *Fourth*, that there were political refugees from Europe such as *Mozarab* who emigrated in time of intransigence and religious fanaticism to the north of the Peninsula and naturally intermingled with their co-religionist. *Fifth*, that the scriptoria of the monasteries in the peninsula, especially of Santa Maria de Ripoll, in the 12th and 13th centuries, acquired a large number of Arabic scientific works which

activities were from the Book of Aristotle and the Muslim works, although the translation activities were still underway. From this seminary the Books of Aristotle and the Muslims commentaries were brought to Italy. Emperor Frederick of Sicily who was known as a patron of Muslim sciences ordered that Aristotle's book be translated from Arabic into Latin and then founded another university in Naples. At the same time some other universities were also established at Padua, Toulouse and later in Leon.³²

The transmission of Islamic thought in Britain leading to the establishment of Oxford and Cambridge University occurred in gradual manner. Burnett divided the process of transmission including the establishment of those universities into three stages, *first stage* which was happened at the end of the twelfth century, concerns the mathematical science and medicine. In the first year of twelfth century, which is the first stage, the English knew for the first time the Arabic numerals in Spanish form known as "ghubar" numerals. The other texts studied was from Adelard of Bath's translation on the astronomical tables of al-Khawarizmi and later on the astronomical table of al-Zarqali. The *second stage* that took place at the 13th century dealt with the studies of Islamic philosophical texts, especially the works of Ibn Sina and then followed by the works of Ibn Gabirol, al-Farabi, al-Ghazzali and others. This stage is closely related to the rise of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, circa 1198. The *third stage* which was also occurred at the end of thirteen century concern the introduction of the philosophy of Ibn Rushd.³³

During the seventh/thirteenth century the Oxford school became a centre of the activities of translation and interpretation. Among the outstanding figure of this school were Alexander Neckham or Nequam, Roberst Grosseteste, and Roger Bacon.³⁴ At this time the works of Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd were translated and studied intensively. These two Muslim figures were quite well known in the West and regarded as torch bearer of the roots of rationalism in the West. Oxford is often related to English Avicennist. It is because in the last decade of 12th century and the first decade of the 13th century the earliest citation of Avicenna in England appeared in the works written by scholars closely connected with Oxford. By the time when Grosseteste became the first chancellor of Oxford university Ibn Rushd's commentary of Aristotle was studied in this university.³⁵

In almost the same period, in 1200 shortly after the works of translation projects had been completed, the University of Paris was established and at almost the same time Koln university in Germany was also founded. Like in Oxford, at this time the philosophy of Ibn Rushd had become popular, particularly among the whole school of philosophers represented first by the faculty of Art at Paris. But on the other hand, it was also became a menace to

century was Robert of Chester (1141-1150), Adelard of Bath (1116-1142), Herman Dalmatian (1138-1145), Hugh of Santalla (1119-1151), Plato Tivoli (1133-1150), Stephen of Antioch (c.1128), James of Venice (1128-1136) and others. Robert of Chester was a Christian English who translated the first time the Qur'an into Latin at the request of Peter the Venerable for the purpose of refuting it. He also translated for the first time al-Khawarizmi's algebra and was considered as the mark of the beginning of algebra in Europe.²⁹

Besides, in France and especially in Normandy, scientific trend appeared first among the monks. Robert, the King of France of the Capetian dynasty was quite familiar with the Muslim scientific endeavors. He also invaded southern Italy, and Sicily where the Muslims were a ruler from 902 to 1091. Here Robert observed the seminaries in Sicily and Naples, and borrowed many Arabic masterpieces from them.³⁰ These two cities acted as the important transmission media of Islamic sciences to the West.

Thus the Western interest towards Islamic philosophy and sciences that begun by the end of 5th / 11th century can be considered as the result of those efforts carried out by the Christian West in Toledo, in France, in Sicily and other places. Spain, however, was the most important place of translation, which mostly done in Toledo. As we have illustrated above the cultural and religious feature of Spain, was the major factor that encouraged the translation work so that the role played by Archbishop Raymond I and other churchmen in these works were so great.

So, after long historical process of transformation and absorption from Arab into Latin West, the Western scholars under the leadership of Christians Bishops in the middle of the thirteenth century the translated knowledge from Muslim works became available in Europe, from which they started to develop their philosophy and sciences. By the closing of fifteenth century their concept or ideas concerning the universe and the nature of human knowledge became matured and paved the way to the progress of philosophy and sciences in the West. So, Myers' conclusion is right that the awakening of Europe was decisively helped by those translations.³¹

The impact of translation:

After having translated major texts and obtained adequate knowledge to be studied, the West took further step in transmitting the Islamic thought by establishing universities. The first Western University was founded in 12th century (6th of Hijrah), in the kingdom of Naples called Salerno seminary. At that period perhaps it was called seminaries rather than universities, for the reasons that the style of architecture of these universities, the curricula, and their method of instruction were exactly like those in the seminaries. In this university the courses offered were grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and cosmography. The source materials used for the teaching

employed by McNeill is nothing else than Muslim's scientific worldview projected by the revelation. It is this worldview that the West took the benefit from the Muslims and developed it into the so-called "modern scientific worldview" that predominantly prevailed after the Dark Ages, yet the mode by which this worldview was transformed into the Western mind is subject to further clarification.

Mode of transmission:

In order to see the process of transmission, which was predominantly by way of translation we shall examine the historical chain of translation of Muslim works from Arabic into Latin and its related issues. According to Myers the process of translation went on throughout the eleventh and the first half of fourteenth century, but the most important period of translations according to Myers were three: the second half of the eleventh century, the first half of the twelfth century, the second half of twelfth century.²⁵

The translation during the 11th century was marked by the establishment of translation bureau in many places. A translation bureau was established as soon as the Christians conquest of Toledo in 1085 AD. The Archbishop Raymond de Sauvetat (1126-1151) and his successor Juan (1151-1166) had committed the work of translation there. Besides, there were also two teams at work: the *first* was Dominicus Gundisalvus (or Gundissalinus) (1133-1190) and Ibn Dawud, a Jewish converted to Christianity. The former translated from Arabic to Latin and the later from Arabic to Old Spanish. The *second* was a team consisted of Gerardus of Cremona (1114-1187) and A *Mozzarab*, Gallipus or Galib. These two teams had carried out most of the philosophical translation.²⁶ It was also reported that Gundisalvus collaborated his translation with John of Seville (1126-1151) and resulted in the translation of Arabic works in philosophy and science. At the end of the 12th century, Europe including Christian Kingdoms of the peninsula could read al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and even al-Ghazzali in Latin. Myers even regards that the philosophical writing of these Muslim philosophers as a revelation to the Latin world and deeply influenced the development of scholastic philosophy.²⁷

Although translation project was institutionalized in the West, there were also individual endeavors to study mathematics, philosophy, medicine, cosmography and other subjects and in due course became candidates for professorship in the Western universities that would be established later. For that purposes there were many students from Italy, Spain and southern France who attended learning activities of the Muslims. An example for this was Constantine (born in Carthage), who by the end of 5th / 11th century traveled all through the East and then made translation from the Arabic into Latin the work of Hippocrates and Galen, and other original works of Muslim scholars in medical sciences.²⁸ Another important translators in the first half of the 12th

Muslim or from the Muslim experts, but also made commentary or modified the ideas in order to assimilate them with Islamic teaching. Lucid example was in the case of *falsafah*, in which the Muslims did not simply copy the Greek legacy but creatively modified them in order to be fit with Islamic teaching. Marmura's statement below is quite instrumental in understanding this matter:

Thus, the *falsafah* did not simply accept ideas they received through the translations. They criticized, selected, and rejected; they made distinction, refined and remoulded concepts to formulate their own philosophies.²⁰

Certainly, Islamic worldview in the Muslims' mind was an important tool for their criticism, selection, rejection, refinement, and modification of foreign ideas and concepts by which Muslim scholars could produce their own ideas and concept. As a result by the twelfth century the Muslim savants had mastered the learning of their Greek and Indian predecessors and finally came up with new fresh theory or doctrine and numerous details of new principles of science including bodies of fresh knowledge such as mathematics, medicine, chemistry and optic. Commenting this achievement William McNeill infers that Islamic science "went beyond anything known to these ancient preceptors".²¹ In addition, Josep Puig conceded the originality of the Muslim thought and identified three fresh and new Muslims thought contributed to the West, they are: *First* is the nature or the essence of the soul, *second*, the process of reality of knowing and *third* is the creation of ontology.²² These three issues were neither present in Aristotle's metaphysics nor in Neoplatonist teaching but were ascribed to Ibn Sina.

So, Muslims' contribution to sciences after the process of modification is manifest. A. Sabra provides a very good sketch of these contributions in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* 11:81-88.

Islamic astronomy is a good illustration of the relationship between Islamic and Greek science. Muslim astronomers produced a great deal of very sophisticated astronomical work. The work was carried out largely within the Ptolemaic framework (though we must acknowledge early Hindu influences on Islamic astronomy, largely displaced by subsequent access to Ptolemy's *Almagest* and other Greek astronomical works). Muslim astronomers sought to articulate and correct the Ptolemaic system, improve the measurement of Ptolemaic constants, compile planetary tables based on Ptolemaic models, and devise instruments that could be used for the extension and improvement of Ptolemaic astronomy in general." Whatever their role of disciples might involve, Muslim scientists made important contributions to medicine, astronomy, optics, and mathematics.²³

From the foregoing illustration we may posit our basic assumption based on William McNeill's statement in his work *The Rise of the West* that "West took great benefit from the material as well as the spirit of scientific activities from the Muslim minds."²⁴ The term "spirit of scientific activities"

sun. This is based on clear statement of the Christian Bible that the sun revolves around the earth. The result was that for centuries the important of astronomical discovery that the sun was the center of the universe was deliberately suppressed by the church, with proponents of the non-Christian theory being persecuted for their endeavors. Another famous suppression of scientific advance created by the church was the belief that the earth was round. The Bible talks very clearly of the four corners of the earth. Therefore, the church argued, it must be square. This dogmatic belief was quietly dropped only when the voyages of discovery finally proved beyond debate that the earth was round: despite this fact having been known by the non-Christian Classical Greeks since the time of Alexander. For the Muslim such a kind of discovery has nothing to do with the theological doctrine, and should be dealt with rational thought without abandoning the guidance of revelation. Thus, Christian worldview cannot be deemed as the main factor for the rise of scientific worldview of the West. If one assumes the other way around then philosophy and sciences must have been flourished during the third and the fifth centuries. Now we shall turn to discuss the Muslim factor that based on their worldview.

Islamic Worldview Factor:

The Islamic worldview factor should be discerned not only through its source i.e. revelation but also its application in social and scientific activities. Islamic worldview which is projected by the revelation, according to Naquib al-Attas is:

the vision of reality and truth that appears before our mind's eye revealing what existence is all about; for it is the world existence in its totality that Islam is projecting".¹⁷

This definition implies that the Muslims had developed their worldview initially from mere understanding of revelation that encourages the search of knowledge into an organized concept of belief and scientific thought. Just as the worldview is about the vision of reality and truth it is not surprising that Franz Rosenthal, in his *Knowledge Triumphant* clearly infers that "Knowledge is Islam."¹⁸ This means that the worldview projected by revelation is so sophisticated that the door for any scientific inquiries is widely opened for Muslims. In other words, it was because of the conceptual structure within the revelation and sophisticated vision of reality projected by their worldview scientific activities during the Umayyad and later the Abbasid period from seventh to fifteenth centuries underwent rapid development.¹⁹ Therefore, the Muslims scholars had no restriction to translate philosophy and sciences from foreign culture, such as Greek, Persia and India.

However, Muslims scholars had not only translated the foreign text or appropriation of Greek learning by employing the linguists, either from non-

Ages) was the total dominance of Christianity. In the first six centuries, the Christianity had spread outward from its cradle-land Palestine into Europe, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Caucasus, Nubia and Abyssinia. In the area where Christianity was spread there was no reliable record of a significant intellectual achievement, namely philosophy and sciences. It was because during these Ages, knowledge survived only in monasteries, and there were very few schools. Very few people could read and write and nobody expected conditions to improve.

However, there are some who claimed that Syriac Christian had transmitted most of Greek intellectual heritages before they were translated into Arabic. They also contended that Greek-Latin translations available in the West, especially on Aristotle, are more than Arabic-Latin translation.¹³ This claim, according to Demitri Gutas is erroneous. The reason was that there were relatively few secular Greek works that had been translated into Syriac before the Abbasid period. The works done by Sergius and Boethius in the sixth century, for example were not as successful as the Muslim in the ninth and tenth century.¹⁴ The lack of translation of the Greek speculative thought in the early Middle Ages (5th century) as was asserted by Marenbon could be traced back from Peter's statement is that the Christians cannot complete, for example, the translation of Aristotle's organon assuming that it would jeopardize their faith.¹⁵ In other words they did not dare to synthesize the Greek thought with their Christian doctrines. This implies that they could not absorb the sophistication of Greek thought due to the unavailability of 'a sophisticated mechanism' for the production of scientific knowledge or 'scientific conceptual scheme' in their world view. Since the translation of Greek speculative thought into Syriac at Middle Ages was considerably few, the extent to which the Greek Fathers contributed to the development of early medieval philosophy in the West was consequently so limited,¹⁶ or at least their role were replaced by the Arab Muslims translations and appropriations.

Therefore, Gutas' inference seems tenable, since historical facts suggested that Christian scholars absorbed Greek philosophy only within the boundary of theological discourses and therefore Marenbon described philosophy in this period as theology. Consequently, big thinkers of the early medieval ages (450 AD to 1085 AD) were theologians, who were interested in understanding the makings of the spiritual universe and our place within it, rather than the details of the physical universe. In other words, the Christian worldview for absorbing Greek thought was not as sophisticated as that of the Muslims whose intellectual adventure covered almost the whole subject, whereas in Christianity all scientific thought including art, science and progress that contradicted the Bible was suppressed. The most legendary example concerns about the church belief that the earth revolved around the

ancient period during Aristotle's (384-322 BC) or Plotinus' (204-270) period at the latest, there was no significant development in Greek civilization, especially in philosophy and science. From this period throughout the sixth or the eighth century, no significant development in philosophy and science, both in Greek as well as in the West. This implies an obvious break of continuity from Greek to the West and hence, in line with Coupleston's theory to single out Greek thought as historical source of Western civilization is untenable.

The Christian Factor :

If Greek thought and worldview cannot be singled out as a factor for the rise of the West, we shall shift to dissect another factor, the most significant of which is Christianity. The trace of the Christian element in the worldview of the West is to be found in the so-called the Middle Ages (adjectival form: medieval or medieval). Another nomenclature for this Christian period was the Dark Ages. This is a period in the European history after the fall of Western Roman Empire and usually set arbitrarily from the 5th century through the 15th century and preceded the Early Modern Era. This era was subdivided into three intervals, the Early Middle Ages (476-1000), the High Middle Ages (1000-1300), and the Late Middle Ages (1300-1453).⁸

The exact date of the beginning and the end of the Middle Ages or the Dark Ages is a matter of controversy among the historians. With regard to the beginning of the Middle Ages, Martin assumes that in general it started in 800 A.D, in the time of Charlemagne or 1000 AD when "the assault" on Western European civilization had lasted.⁹ John Marenbon believes the year of 1000 or 11th century as the beginning of Late Middle Ages, while the early one started in 480 which was marked by the advent of Boethius.¹⁰ However, for Thomas Brown to set-up the beginning of the Middle Ages before 8th century is unreliable, since the fact is that before the sixth century or the eighth century at the latest the West had not begun to rise yet.¹¹ It seems that 8th century or after is the most reliable date for the beginning of High Middle Ages or the Dark Ages. However, apart from the above controversy the fundamental issue behind it is the assumption that the Middle Age or the Dark Ages was the time for the early creation of Western civilization.¹² The fact is that in the 1000s, Europe began to slowly recover from its artistic darkness. The lost knowledge of the ancient Greeks and Romans was found again. There was a new interest in learning, and the richer life of the Middle Ages began.

Thus, to put the date before six century as the beginning of the Middle Ages and at the same time the root of Western civilization is untenable. It seems more reasonable to posit 11th century as the beginning of the Middle Ages and of the rise of the West, as was assumed by Marenbon. Historians' denial of the sixth century as the beginning of Middle Ages seems to be based on the fact that the common thread throughout this period of history (the Dark

largely shared by Semitic, Indo-European and Anglo-Saxon. At this stage Greek philosophy was buried deep but it had been grown in the thought of individual or schools theories. Nevertheless those individual philosophers or school theories are simply criticism and improvement, and are not likely to be understood aright except in relation to it. What apparent in this framework is an attempt to link up the Greek with Indo-European thought on the ground of the similarities of conceptions. But this framework seems confusing and would consequently imply that any conception on some fundamental questions in the whole world similar to Greek thought is originated from Greek, whereas similarity does not always entail origination.

One of the exponents of the *second* approach is Couplestone, who regards Ionia as the cradle of the Western thought, but he is not in favor of saying that the West borrowed the idea from the Greek. He even posits that whenever two succeeding contemporary thinkers or bodies of thinkers hold similar doctrine, one must not always borrow from the other.⁵ Similarly, Holmes does not use the term "beginning" or "origin" to refer to the Greek, but says that the Western Europe had naturally "look back" to the Greek civilization of the fifth century BC.⁶ This indicates that although the Western thought was born in Greek it does not start from there. It likely grows in different manner and different place.

From these two approaches we can discern that Greek philosophy is one factor and the West is another. The two were actually linked up through a long historical process or natural assimilation grounded particularly on intellectual activities involving some foreign factors. If the Greek legacy was deeply buried for centuries, as they said, it cannot be single out as the determinant factor of the rise of the West and even not as the 'source' of Western civilization. In this respect Coupleston states:

It is absurd, as it is, to suppose that if some Christian custom or rite is partially found in Asiatic Eastern Religion, Christianity must have borrowed that custom or rite from Asia. So it is absurd to suppose that if Greek speculation contains some thought similar to that appearing in Oriental philosophy the latter must be the historical source of the former. After all human intellect is quite capable of interpreting similar experiences in a similar way.... though the dependence of Roman School of philosophy on Greek predecessor is undeniable, we cannot afford to neglect the philosophy of the Roman world.⁷

This implies that Greek philosophy and Western philosophy cannot be deemed as continuum. The latter is not necessarily rooted in the former or in terms of Couplestone's theory we cannot consider Greek philosophy as the source of Western sciences. Now if Ionia, where Greek thought started, is considered as the cradle of Western civilization, it should begin from there and continuously grow until the modern period. In fact, Greek civilization had stopped growing or died for long time ago, because right after the end of