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CHAPTER 28

Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī: founder of the Illuminationist school

Hossein Ziai



THE MASTER OF ILLUMINATION

Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥabash ibn Amīrak Abu'l-Furūḥ Suhrawardī is well-known in the history of Islamic philosophy as the Master of Illumination (*Shaykh al-Ishrāq*), a reference to his accepted position as the founder of a new school of philosophy distinct from the Peripatetic school (*madhhab*, or *maktab al-mashshā'ūn*). Suhrawardī was born in the small town of Suhraward in north-western Persia in the year 549/1154. He met a violent death by execution in Aleppo in the year 587/1191¹ and therefore is also sometimes called the Executed Master (*al-Shaykh al-Maqtūl*).

Although the circumstances surrounding Suhrawardī's death are a matter of speculation, as I will touch upon further, information on his life is fairly extensive. The influential philosopher lived only thirty-eight lunar (thirty-six solar) years.² In the year 579/1183, he travelled to Aleppo,³ where he completed his major work *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* ("Philosophy of Illumination") in 582/1186.⁴ His main biographer, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Shahrzūrī, states in his *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ* ("Pleasure of Spirits") that Suhrawardī was thirty years old when he completed another of his major philosophical works, *al-Mashāri' wa'l-mutārahāt* ("Paths and Havens") (completed c. 579/1183).⁵

Suhrawardī first studied philosophy and theology with Majd al-Dīn al-Jīlī in Maragah, then travelled to Isfahan (or Mardin) to study with Fakhr al-Dīn al-Mārdīnī (d. 594/1198),⁶ who is said to have predicted his student's death.⁷ It is also known that Zāhīr al-Fārsī, a logician,

introduced Suhrawardī to the *al-Baṣā'ir* ("Observations") of the famous logician 'Umar ibn Sahlān al-Ṣāwī (*fl.* 540/1145).⁸ This fact is significant, in that the latter work is among the first to depart from the standard nine-part division of logic – the nine books of the *Organon* – in favour of a two-part division: formal and material logic. Suhrawardī later employed this simpler system within his three-part logic, consisting of semantics, formal logic and material logic.

Suhrawardī composed most of his major treatises over a span of ten years, which is not long enough for him to have developed two distinct styles of philosophy – a Peripatetic style followed by an Illuminist one – as some scholars have suggested.⁹ In fact, in each of his major works Suhrawardī makes ample references to his other treatises. This indicates that the writings were either composed more or less concurrently, or that they were revised when taught with a consideration of the others.¹⁰

Soon after his arrival in Aleppo, Suhrawardī entered the service of Prince al-Malik al-Zāhir Ghāzī, governor of Aleppo – also known as Malik Zāhir Shāh, son of Sultan Ayyūbid Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. The sultan is well known in the West as Saladin, the great champion of the wars against the Crusaders. Suhrawardī won the prince's favours, became his tutor and began a life at court. There, in extended private sessions, the young philosopher reportedly informed the prince of his new philosophy. No doubt Suhrawardī's rapid rise to privileged position met with the usual medieval courtly jealousy and intrigue. That the judges, viziers and jurists of Aleppo were displeased with the distinguished tutor's increasing status could not have helped his case.¹¹ Letters written to Saladin by the famous judge Qāḍī al-Fāḍil arguing for Suhrawardī's execution sealed the young thinker's fate.¹² The sultan ordered the prince to have his tutor killed.¹³

Medieval historians cite "heresy", "corrupting religion" and "corrupting the young prince, al-Malik al-Zāhir" as charges against Suhrawardī. The validity of these accusations is controversial, however.¹⁴ As I have substantiated in publication elsewhere, the more plausible reason for Suhrawardī's execution is based on the philosopher's political doctrine revealed in his works on the Philosophy of Illumination, a political philosophy which I have termed the "Illuminist political doctrine".¹⁵ The year of Suhrawardī's execution was turbulent with political and military conflict. England's King Richard the Lionheart had landed in Acre,¹⁶ and major battles were taking place between Muslims and Christians over the Holy Land. The great sultan Saladin clearly had more pressing matters at hand than to bother with the execution of a wayfaring mystic, had he not been deemed to be a clear threat to political security.¹⁷

Controversial though Suhrawardī's life may have been, one fact is certain: he had a major impact on subsequent philosophical thought, a fact on which all biographers concur.

❧ SUHRAWARDĪ'S WORKS ❧

Suhrawardī was a prolific author who wrote many works on almost every philosophical subject, including, for the first time in the history of Islamic philosophy, a substantial number of Persian philosophical symbolic narratives. Not all of his works have survived nor have all of the existing ones been published. His major published works are indicated here.

The most important texts in the Philosophy of Illumination are Suhrawardī's four major Arabic philosophical works: the *al-Talwīḥāt* ("Intimations"), the *al-Muqāwamāt* ("Apposites"), the *al-Mashārī' wa'l-muṭārāḥāt*, ("Paths and Havens")¹⁸ and the *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* ("Philosophy of Illumination").¹⁹ Based on textual evidence, I have found these works to constitute an integral corpus presenting the details of the Philosophy of Illumination.²⁰ Though of lesser philosophical significance, the Arabic treatises, *al-Alwāḥ al-'imādiyyah* ("Imāidian Tablets") and *Ḥayākil al-nūr* ("Temples of Light"), and the Persian *Partaw-nāmah* ("Epistle on Emanation") may also be added.²¹

Based on Suhrawardī's own explicit statements, the four major works mentioned above were to be studied in a designated order: (1) the *Intimations*, (2) the *Apposites*, (3) the *Paths and Havens*, and (4) the *Philosophy of Illumination*.²² Among all of Suhrawardī's works, the "Introductions" of only two of them, the *Paths and Havens* and the *Philosophy of Illumination*, include specific statements concerning the methodology of the Philosophy of Illumination. In the "Introduction" to the *Paths and Havens*, Suhrawardī indicates that the book contains an exposition of the results of his personal experiences and intuitions, and further stipulates his view of how knowledge is to be obtained. Suhrawardī's account of the same methodological question in his "Introduction" to the *Philosophy of Illumination* is more elaborate and detailed but is essentially the same as the account given in the *Paths and Havens*.

Next in order of significance after Suhrawardī's major works and the treatises named above are his Arabic and Persian symbolic narratives. These include *Qiṣṣat al-ghurbat al-gharbiyyah* ("A Tale of the Occidental Exile"); *Risālat al-ṭayr* ("The Treatise of the Birds"); *Awāz-i par-i Jibrā'īl* ("The Sound of Gabriel's Wing"); *Aql-i surkh* ("The Red Intellect"); *Rūzī bā jamā'at-i ṣūfiyān* ("A Day with a Group of Sufis"); *Fī ḥālat al-tufūliyyah* ("On the State of Childhood"); *Fī ḥaqīqat al-ishq* ("On the Reality of Love"); *Lughat-i mūrān* ("The Language of Ants"); and *Ṣafīr-i sīmurgh* ("The Simurgh's Shrill Cry").²³ In these writings Suhrawardī, as in Ibn Sīnā's Arabic tales before him, uses the symbolic narrative to portray philosophical issues, though usually simple ones intended for the novice. The tales are more significant in their use of language than in their philosophical content. But all are indicative of long-established views that the symbolic and poetic mode of discourse both elicit interest from readers

and may also convey a certain experiential, subjective sense lost in purely discursive texts.

The next group of works by Suhrawardī consists of devotional prayers and invocations. Other minor treatises, aphorisms and short statements may also be grouped here.²⁴ Of specific interest in terms of both language and content are two prayers and invocations composed in an especially rich symbolic and literary style, where Suhrawardī addresses “the great Heavenly Sun, Hūrakhsh”,²⁵ and invokes the authority of “the Great Luminous Being” (*al-nayyir al-a‘zam*), praying to it for knowledge and salvation. The symbolism of such short prayers has led some scholars to believe them to contain an ancient Persian element of reverence for luminous astronomical bodies such as the sun.²⁶

AN OVERVIEW OF SUHRAWARDĪ'S PHILOSOPHY OF ILLUMINATION

Suhrawardī chose the title *Philosophy of Illumination* (*Hikmat al-ishrāq*) to name his major Arabic work, and also to distinguish his philosophical approach from that of the established Peripatetic works of his time, predominantly the doctrines of Ibn Sīnā, the great Islamic scientist and master of *mashshāʾī* or Peripatetic philosophy. While Suhrawardī states that the *Intimations*, for example, is written according to the “Peripatetic method”,²⁷ this should not be considered an independent work written about Peripatetic philosophy. Rather, it indicates that the Philosophy of Illumination includes but is not defined by accepted Peripatetic teachings, parts of which Suhrawardī accepted and parts of which he rejected or refined.

Throughout his works Suhrawardī uses terms such as “Illuminationist theorem” (*qāʾidah ishrāqīyyah*); “Illuminationist rules” (*dawābīʿ ishrāqīyyah*); “Illuminationist lemma” (*daqīqah ishrāqīyyah*) and similar phrases, to identify specific problems of logic, epistemology, physics and metaphysics – areas of thought which he reconstructs or otherwise reformulates in an innovative manner. These new terms indicate the essential components of the Philosophy of Illumination and distinguish Illuminationist methodology from the Peripatetic.

Suhrawardī adds the word “Illuminationist” (*ishrāqī*) as a descriptive adjective to selected technical terms as a means of signifying their specific use in his system. For example, “Illuminationist vision” (*mushāhadah ishrāqīyyah*) specifies the epistemological priority of a primary mode of immediate cognition distinguished from the more general use of the word vision as applied to mystical experience. “Illuminationist relation” (*idāfah ishrāqīyyah*) specifies the non-predicative relation between subject and object, and is a new technical term signifying the Illuminationist

position in the logical foundations of epistemology. "Illuminationist knowledge by presence" (*al-'ilm al-huḍūrī al-ishrāqī*) signifies the priority of an immediate, durationless, intuitive mode of cognition over the temporally extended essentialist definitions used as predicative propositions; and it also distinguishes the Illuminationist position from the Peripatetic view of "acquired knowledge" (*al-'ilm al-huṣūlī*). Many other similar technical terms are also defined and used by Suhrawardī for the first time in an Illuminationist philosophical sense to distinguish them from specific Peripatetic terms or from the general non-philosophical vocabulary of mystical and theological texts. Suhrawardī's attempt to attribute specifically chosen meanings to known expressions by adding qualifiers, and to coin new terms as well, is a basic characteristic of his philosophical reconstruction of previous modes of thought.

Finally, Suhrawardī introduces the term "the Illuminationists" (*al-ishrāqīyyūn*), subsequently adopted by commentators and historians, to describe thinkers whose philosophical position and method are distinguished from "the Peripatetics" (*al-mashshā'ūn*). It is clear, therefore, that the young philosopher intended his works to be recognized as incorporating a different system from the Peripatetic works of his time as manifest by language, method and meaning. All of the major Illuminationist commentators – Shams al-Dīn Shahrāzūrī, Ibn Kammūnah and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī – agree that Suhrawardī's philosophical position is markedly different from that of the Peripatetic school.²⁸

An older Orientalist tradition, however, asserts that the Philosophy of Illumination is not essentially new, and considers Ibn Sīnā's short remarks concerning Oriental Philosophy (*al-ḥikmat al-mashriqīyyah*) to precede it. In this view, Ibn Sīnā's polemic or even politically motivated statements were not intended to reconstruct Aristotelian philosophy systematically but to garner wider acceptance for Greek philosophy by giving it more commonly accepted epithets. The same Orientalist tradition, moreover, does not consider Illuminationist philosophy to be essentially distinct from the Peripatetic and has, usually without careful examination of Illuminationist texts, generalized it as Ibn Sīnā. This position is not altogether valid, however, as it does not take post-Ibn Sīnā Arabic and Persian texts into account, considering them to be devoid of new and fresh philosophical arguments.

My position concerning the Philosophy of Illumination, which I have delineated here and elsewhere,²⁹ is that it is a distinct, systematic philosophical construction designed to avoid the logical, epistemological and metaphysical inconsistencies which Suhrawardī perceived in the Peripatetic philosophy of his day. While Suhrawardī quite obviously was deeply aware of the Ibn Sīnā philosophical corpus, his Philosophy of Illumination cannot be totally attributed to Ibn Sīnā, nor can it be deemed to be merely its allegorical restatement. Suhrawardī does use Ibn Sīnā

texts, terms and methods, but he employs many other sources, as well. Although he was deeply influenced by the great Peripatetic master al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs, in my view the philosophical intention underlying the composition of works designated as "Illuminationist" is clearly Suhrawardī's own. It will be a challenging task for future researchers to determine if the Illuminationist plan is well defined and philosophically sound or given more to polemics. One thing is clear, however: a failure to examine actual Illuminationist texts, the majority of which remain unpublished and accessible only to a few specialists, has blurred the origins of Illuminationist philosophy. By briefly examining a few relevant passages here, I hope to put an end to these historical generalizations.

SUHRAWARDĪ'S CRITIQUE OF IBN SĪNĀ'S POSITION

In numerous places in his writings Suhrawardī argues against Ibn Sīnā's philosophical position while carefully delineating his own. In a few instances he even attacks the Peripatetic master directly. In perhaps his most bitter attack on Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī emphatically rejects the alleged position of Ibn Sīnā as a so-called Oriental (*mashriqī*) philosopher. The implications of this passage are also significant for an understanding of the trends and schools of thought in the history of Islamic philosophy in general. The controversy concerns Ibn Sīnā's claims that he had plans for composing an Oriental philosophy more elevated in rank than his other, strictly Peripatetic works. Suhrawardī begins the passage by quoting texts by Ibn Sīnā concerning problems relating to the definition of simple things, with which he at first agrees – namely that simple, non-composite essences can only be "described" and not defined.³⁰ Suhrawardī here refers to a book titled *Karārīs fi'l-ḥikmah* ("Quires on Philosophy"), attributed by Ibn Sīnā to the method of "Orientals" in philosophy.³¹ It is not clear what the *Quires* are, but the statement in question can be traced to Ibn Sīnā's *Logic of the Orientals*.³²

Suhrawardī's initial remarks concerning Ibn Sīnā's thought are matter-of-fact. His attack against it begins rather abruptly and is directed towards the essential distinction between Peripatetic philosophy and Oriental philosophy. First, Suhrawardī casts doubt on Ibn Sīnā's claim that the *Quires* is based on Oriental principles. Then, he goes on to refute intensely Ibn Sīnā's assertion that the *Quires* constitutes a new Oriental philosophy in a twofold argument, as follows. Firstly, no supposedly Oriental philosophy existed prior to Suhrawardī's own reconstruction of the Philosophy of Illumination, which should not be considered Oriental in a cultural or geographic sense, but rather as incorporating an "Illuminationist" (*iṣhrāqī*, not to be confused with *mashriqī*)³³ emphasis on intuitive, inspirational and

immediate modes of cognition. (These philosophical issues should not be confused with the contemporary reading of an allegedly medieval nationalist ideology that is, at best, difficult to substantiate textually.)

Secondly, Suhrawardī takes pains to demonstrate that the *Quires* were, in fact, composed solely in agreement with established Peripatetic laws (*qawā'id al-mashshā'īn*), comprising problems included only in what he specifies as *philosophia generalis* (*al-hikmat al-āmmah*). At best, as Suhrawardī is careful to indicate, Ibn Sīnā may have changed an expression or slightly modified a minor point, but the *Quires* is not significantly different from the standard Peripatetic texts. Suhrawardī concludes that simple modifications made by Ibn Sīnā do not make him an Oriental philosopher. Here is another instance at which Suhrawardī turns to polemics, perhaps for political reasons, as he invokes the authority of the "ancients" by claiming that his own principles of Oriental philosophy (*al-aṣl al-mashriqī*) reflect the earlier "wisdom" of Persian Khusrawānī sages and many other figures.³⁴

It is necessary to bear in mind Suhrawardī's own philosophical intention in composing systematic works structurally distinct from the Peripatetic and that were specifically titled to emphasize the difference. Suhrawardī claims that his new system triumphs where the Peripatetic fails, that it is a sounder method for probing the nature of things, and is, above all, capable of "scientifically"³⁵ describing non-standard experiences (widely believed to be real in his time), such as "true dreams", "personal revelations", "intuitive knowledge" of the whole, "ability to foretell the future", "out-of-body experiences", "reviving the dead" and other "miraculous" extraordinary phenomena.³⁶ The underlying intention for Suhrawardī's Philosophy of Illumination is to prescribe a clear path towards a philosophical life that is at once a more "scientifically" valid means of probing the nature of things and attaining happiness, and ultimately a way of reaching more practical wisdom that can and should be employed in the service of just rule.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUHRAWARDĪ'S WORK IN ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

A significant methodological principle is established by Suhrawardī when, for the first time in the history of philosophy, he clearly distinguishes a bipartite division in metaphysics: *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis*.³⁷ The former, as the new philosophical position holds, includes standard discussions of such subjects as existence, unity, substances, accidents, time, motion, etc.; while the latter is said to include a novel scientific approach to analysing supra-rational problems such as God's existence and knowledge; "true dreams"; "visionary experience"; creative

acts of the enlightened, the knowing subject's "imagination"; the "proof" of the real; the objective existence of a "separate realm" designated *mundus imaginalis* (*'ālam al-khayāl*); as well as many other similar problems. In fact, Suhrawardī's division of the subject matter of metaphysics, as well as his attempt to demonstrate the epistemological primacy of an objectified experiential mode of cognition, are among the distinguishing methodological and structural characteristics of Illuminationist philosophy. Since Suhrawardī's time, these principles have been employed by many commentators and historians to accentuate the differences between the Peripatetics and the Illuminationists.³⁸

Another area in which Illuminationist principles have had an impact is in the realm of semantics (*'ilm dalālat al-alfāz*). Suhrawardī, perhaps inspired by a Stoic-Megaric minor trend in Islamic philosophy up to his time, restates a number of problems in a different manner than the way in which they are named and discussed in the Ibn Sīnan logical corpus.³⁹ Problems in this area of logic include: types of signification; relation of class names to constituents (members) of the class; types of inclusion of members in classes (*indirāj*, *istighrāq*, *indikhāl*, *shumūl*, etc.); and, perhaps most significantly from the standpoint of the history of logic, a fairly well-defined theory of supposition (the restricted and unrestricted use of quantification).⁴⁰

In the domain of formal logic Suhrawardī proves himself to be a remarkable logician. To a lesser or greater extent, Suhrawardī influenced a number of works on specific problems of logic in Persia. These include: iterated modalities; the construction of a super affirmative necessary proposition (*al-qadīyyat al-darūriyyat al-battātah*); the question of negation (*al-salb*), especially in the conversion of syllogism (*al-'aks*); reduction of terms; construction of a single "mother" figure for syllogism (*shakl al-qiyās*) from which all other figures are to be derived; temporal modalities (*al-qadāyā al-muwajjahah*); especially non-admittance of an unrestricted validity of the universal affirmative proposition (*al-qadīyyat al-mūjibat al-kulliyyah*) in obtaining certain knowledge (*al-'ilm al-yaqīnī*) because of future contingency (*al-imkān al-mustaqbal*); as well as many others.

Another major area of Suhrawardī's influence is his theory of categories, to which most later philosophical works in Persia refer, especially within the later major non-Ibn Sīnan philosophical synthesis known as Transcendent Philosophy (*al-hikmat al-muta'āliyah*). Suhrawardī discusses the categories at great length in his major Arabic and Persian systematically philosophical works. He attributes his influential categorical theory to a Pythagorean scholar (*shakhṣ fīthāghūrithī*) by the name of Arkhūṭus.⁴¹ What is later designated by Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī as "motion in the category of substance" (*al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah*), translated as "substantial motion" and "transubstantial motion", is a direct corollary to Suhrawardī's theory.⁴² Briefly the theory states that

“intensity” (*shaddah wa daʿf*) is a property of all categories which are reduced to five: substance (*jawhar*), quality (*kayf*), quantity (*kamm*), relation (*nisbah*) and motion (*ḥarakah*).⁴³ This concept is in direct agreement with Suhrawardī’s special theory of being as continuum, as well as with his theory known as “theory of future possibility” (*qāʿidat imkān al-ashraf* – literally, theory of the possibility of the most noble).

Taken as a whole, Suhrawardī’s aim is directed towards theoretical as well as practical and achievable goals, first to demonstrate fundamental gaps in the logical foundations of Aristotelian epistemology and metaphysics, and then to reconstruct a system founded upon different, more logically consistent, epistemological and metaphysical principles. Although further analytic studies are required to evaluate the philosophical side of Suhrawardī’s thought, one fact is widely accepted by the traditional Islamic philosophers: the Philosophy of Illumination – its ideas, language and method – had a major impact on all subsequent thought in Islam, covering philosophical, mystical and even political domains. The influence of this philosophical system has been most widespread in Persia followed by Muslim India, where it has also helped define the notion of poetic and philosophical wisdom as the principal means by which generations of Muslims have sought solutions to essential intellectual and existential questions.

A REVIEW OF WESTERN SCHOLARSHIP ON SUHRAWARDĪ

Despite Suhrawardī’s monumental impact on the development of post-Ibn Sīnā philosophy in Islam, evidenced by the widespread use of the epithet “Illuminationist” (*ishrāqī*) to distinguish it from the Peripatetic approach, only a few analytical works (none comprehensive) are available on Suhrawardī’s systematic philosophical works. Lack of serious interest in studying the philosophical dimension of Suhrawardī’s thought has been due partially to, firstly, a misconception among some historians that Islamic philosophy did not develop beyond Ibn Sīnā in the East, and terminated in the West with Ibn Rushd; and, secondly, misrepresentation of Suhrawardī’s ideas by a number of scholars who have described the Philosophy of Illumination (and other non-Aristotelian philosophical endeavour) as “theosophy”, “*sagesse orientale*”, “transcendent theosophy” and the like.⁴⁴ While the Islamic Peripatetic tradition has been studied from a philosophical perspective, the dominant focus of scholarly attention on post-Ibn Sīnā thought has been on a presumed “spiritual” dimension of selected Arabic and Persian texts of Islamic philosophy covering the five centuries after Ibn Sīnā, including Suhrawardī’s *Philosophy of Illumination* (“Ḥikmat al-ishrāq”), Mullā Ṣadrā’s *al-Asfār*

al-arba'at al-'aqliyyah ("The Four Intellectual Journeys") and other similar texts. This type of emphasis has led some historians to categorize thinkers such as Suhrawardī as "esoteric" Sufis, which is a misleading designation to say the least. The more serious limitation of emphasis on the esoteric dimension of post-Ibn Sīnan philosophical texts, appropriately stated by Fazlur Rahman, has been "at the cost . . . of its purely intellectual and philosophical hard core, which is of immense value and interest to the modern student of philosophy".⁴⁵

Western interest in Suhrawardī has a long history. Since the early decades of the twentieth century Orientalists and historians of philosophy have noticed Suhrawardī to be an important figure in the formation of post-Ibn Sīnan philosophical thought. Carra de Vaux⁴⁶ and Max Horten⁴⁷ wrote short essays on him. In the late 1920s, Louis Massignou gave a classification of Suhrawardī's works.⁴⁸ Otto Spies edited and translated a few of his philosophical allegories a decade later;⁴⁹ and Helmut Ritter clarified a prevalent Orientalist confusion by distinguishing Suhrawardī from three mystics who bore the same attribution "Suhrawardī".⁵⁰ It was, however, Henry Corbin's text editions of many of Suhrawardī's philosophical writings, as well as his interpretations, that started a new wave of infatuation with Illuminationist philosophy.⁵¹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr has also devoted a number of studies to the spiritual and religious dimension in Suhrawardī's teachings.⁵² Still, however, too few studies of the logical and epistemological foundations of the Philosophy of Illumination from a philosophical point of view are available. The few pages in Muhammad Iqbal's *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* constitute one of the few general accounts of Suhrawardī's philosophical thought.⁵³

Some recent scholars, notably Henry Corbin and Mohammad Moin, have further imagined Suhrawardī to be the reviver of some form of ancient Persian philosophy, which, however, cannot be substantiated. There is simply no textual evidence for an independent Persian philosophical tradition. The fact that Suhrawardī (as well as other thinkers in Islam) mentions names of Persian kings and heroes, and makes reference to Persian mythological events, is indicative more of an intention to invoke the authority of ancient, well-known Persian symbols, than to recover some lost systematic philosophy. Suhrawardī's critique of certain problems of logic, epistemology, physics, mathematics and metaphysics in his Philosophy of Illumination draws upon established Peripatetic texts. No other textual source can be presumed to have been available to him. The fact that he reformulates philosophical problems, rejects some or redefines others is indicative of his own philosophical intention to reconstruct a metaphysical system that aims, among other things, to establish the primacy of an intuitive mode of cognition. It is not indicative of a philosophical tradition known to him but lost to us.

PROBLEMS, STRUCTURE AND
 METHOD OF THE PHILOSOPHY
 OF ILLUMINATION

The most obvious but too readily dismissed principal component of Suhrawardī's Illuminationist philosophy is his use of a special technical language. This distinct vocabulary uses the symbolism of light to describe ontological problems, and especially to depict cosmological structures. For example, the Peripatetic Necessary Being is called "Light of Lights"; the separate "intellects" are called "abstract lights"; and so on. It is important to note that these linguistic innovations are not just new terms but are also indicative of philosophical intention. Thus the light symbolism is deemed more suitable to convey the ontological principle of equivocal being, since it is more readily understood that lights may differ in intensity while remaining of the same essence. Also, it is deemed more acceptable to discuss "proximity" (*qurb*) and "distance" (*bu'd*) from the source as indications of degrees of perfection when light symbolism is used. For example, the closer an entity is to the source, the Light of Lights, the more luminous the light entity (*al-shay' al-mustanīr*) will be.

The use of symbolic language is a significant and distinguishing characteristic of the Philosophy of Illumination as a whole. Symbolism is also applied to the epistemological primacy of the creative act of intuition, which proposes as a primary axiom that the soul's knowledge of itself – here a light entity – is the foundation and starting point of knowledge. This knowledge is described as an abstract light generated (*hāsil*) from the source of light. The argument is that any light is observed to propagate itself once lit and is not emanated (*fayd*) either by will or at discrete intervals in time. This means that all light entities are obtained or generated from the source not in time but in a durationless instant once the source is lit, whenever that may be.

From the textual perspective, the Philosophy of Illumination begins in the *Intimations*, especially where Suhrawardī recollects a dream-vision in which Aristotle appears. This allegorical device allows Suhrawardī to present several important philosophical issues. Aristotle informs Suhrawardī through this dream-vision that the Muslim Peripatetics have failed to achieve the kind of wisdom achieved by mystics such as Abū Yazīd al-Bastāmī and al-Ḥallāj. This is due, the narration continues, to the mystics having achieved union with the Active Intellect by going beyond discursive philosophy and relying on their personal experience.⁵⁴ The truths (*ḥaqā'iq*) obtained in this way are the results of a special intuitive, experiential mode of knowledge, this text states.⁵⁵ Thus the first critique of Peripatetic philosophy is uttered through no less an authority than Aristotle, who informs Suhrawardī that true knowledge can only be

based on self-knowledge and obtained through a special mode designated as "knowledge by illumination and presence".

What this epistemological mode means and how it is obtained must rest first on demonstrating the logical gaps in the Peripatetic system. This is achieved as Suhrawardī undertakes an elaborate critique of the Aristotelian concept and formula of definition. This critique, which will be examined here in some detail, is the first significant attempt to show a fundamental gap in the Aristotelian scientific method, and indicates the first step in the reconstruction of the Philosophy of Illumination. The next major methodological step is to present an alternative epistemological foundation for constructing a holistic metaphysics. These are the primacy of intuition and the theory of vision-illumination – considered in Illuminationist philosophy to be the means for obtaining principles to be used in compound deductive reasoning.

SUHRAWARDĪ'S CRITIQUE OF THE ESSENTIALIST THEORY OF DEFINITION⁵⁶

The problem of definition is fundamentally related to how the Philosophy of Illumination is constructed. Perhaps the most significant logical problem, which also has epistemological implications, is Suhrawardī's negation and thus rejection of the Aristotelian view of an essentialist definition, *horos*, and of an Ibn Sīnan complete essentialist definition, *al-hadd al-tāmm*, which considers definition to be the most prior and thus the significant first step in the process of philosophical construction. The impact of Suhrawardī's critique of Peripatetic methodology on this issue is so direct and has had such a widespread impact on the subsequent development of philosophy in Persia that I am tempted to call it the triumph of Platonic method over the Aristotelian in Persia. The Platonic approach to definition seeks the unity of the thing defined in its Form, which is fully defined only as a person realizes what-is-to-be-defined (the *definiendum*) in his or her own self-consciousness.

Suhrawardī's critique of Aristotle's theory is marked by a combination of logical and semantic arguments. It begins by asserting that it is impossible to construct an essentialist definition, and that even Aristotle himself admits this.⁵⁷ Thus, Suhrawardī points out a critical gap in the Peripatetic system, thereby undermining Aristotle's basis of philosophical construction. Suhrawardī's analysis of the essentialist definition is in itself of major philosophical value. In a celebrated passage in book 2 of the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle stipulates the position of definition to be that of the first step in science,⁵⁸ and the premiss for demonstration.⁵⁹ Therefore, only if a definition is obtained, or constructed, may one proceed to scientific knowledge. Thus if essentialist definition does not

lead to unrestricted, primary knowledge of essence – as it must in the Illuminationist position – then the entire philosophical system has to be reconstructed based on other means of achieving knowledge of essence.

How should a definition be constructed? Suhrawardī asks his Peripatetic adversaries for their answer. Let us assume we want to define a thing, *X*. This thing must be constituted in relation to its attributes, both essential and non-essential, such as concomitants, accidents and so on. We may designate these attributes as constituents of *X*, say x_1 . Not considering simple, non-composite (*basīṭ*), entities, we must, Suhrawardī argues, see whether x_1 is real or only ideally known, and how it is known in relation to *X*. The next question pertinent in the Illuminationist position is that of priority (*taqaddum*). That is, in order to define *X* we must be able to know *Y*, itself consisting of y_1 constituents, in relation to which *X* may be defined. And *Y* must be necessarily prior to *X* in respect to knowledge. Also, as with *X*, the question whether *Y* can be known through y_1 will also have to be examined. Therefore, the definition of *X* will depend on what is known prior in knowledge. Thus, how the definition is obtained is, according to Suhrawardī, the primary philosophical step and first constructivist step in science.

Suhrawardī insists that the Peripatetic position on definition is reduced to: “A formula [*qawl*] which indicates the essence of the thing and combines [*yajma*] all of its constituent elements [*muḡawwimāt*]. In the case of the principal realities, it [the formula] is a synthesis [*tarkīb*] of their genera and differentiae.”⁶⁰

So far, this formula of definition is in conformity with Ibn Sīnā’s writings.⁶¹ Suhrawardī’s novel position is his insistence that all constituents of a thing must be combined in the formula, a requirement not specified by the Peripatetic formula.⁶² Also, the formula must be a synthesis (*tarkīb*) of the multiple genera and differentiae.⁶³ This means that, from the Illuminationist position, things cannot be defined as such because of the impossibility of discretely enumerating all the essentials of a thing. Thus there must be some other prior Illuminationist foundation for knowledge.

Suhrawardī’s use of terms such as all (*kull*), combination (*jamʿ*) and synthesis (*tarkīb*), as applied to the manner in which the attributes or constituents of the thing to be defined must come together in the essentialist definition, indicate a new approach to the problem. In this respect he is also presenting a position which is in opposition to Ibn Sīnā’s views that conform to the standard Peripatetic ones. Suhrawardī’s critique of definition also draws on the semantic options he had worked out regarding signification (*dalālah*), of meaning (*al-maʿnā*) or idea, by the utterances (*al-lafẓ*) said of the things (*al-ashyāʾ*) to be defined.⁶⁴ For the complete essentialist definition of “What is *X*?”, according to the Peripatetics, is “the *summum genus* of *X* plus its differentiae”. For

Suhrawardī, this formula is inadequate. As he states, the Peripatetic formula for the complete essentialist definition of man is “rational animal”, which only implicitly states the essence of animal, and adds nothing to our knowledge of the idea “man” (*al-insāniyyah*). The formula *qua* formula does not indicate the idea, “animal” (*al-ḥayawāniyyah*) and the utterance “rational” only indicates “a thing that has a soul”. By Aristotelian definition, then, only rationality is established, and not the essence of “man”.⁶⁵

The Peripatetics’ position allows the essential to be more known than the thing defined, whereas Suhrawardī holds that the essentials are as unknown as the thing itself. Suhrawardī’s own theory of unity is implied when he states: “[One can obtain a definition only] by recourse to sensible or apparent things in another way [i.e., other than the Peripatetic formula of definition], and [only] if [and when] the thing pertains specifically to the sum total of the [sensible and apparent things] as an organic whole.”⁶⁶

In the last paragraph of his argument, Suhrawardī attacks the Peripatetic formula of definition from yet another point of view which is related to his critique of induction.⁶⁷ Suhrawardī’s view in this regard holds that: to know something by means of its essentials, one must be able to enumerate each and every one of them, which is possible only if the sum total of the essentials is known. Suhrawardī explicitly states here for the first time that such knowledge of the total essentials by the method of enumeration is not possible. This is because the thing to be defined may have a multiplicity of non-apparent (*ghayr zāhir*) attributes, the set of essentials may be limitless and the elements of the set may not be discretely distinguishable from the set itself. Also, although knowledge of the set implies knowledge of the elements, it is not possible to know what the set itself is by knowing the elements separately.

Suhrawardī concludes from his arguments that the constituents of a thing (*muqawwimāt al-shay*) are not separate from the thing, neither “really” (*‘aynan*) nor “mentally” (*dhīman*). Therefore, an essentialist definition cannot be constructed, since that would require separating the constituents of a thing into genera and differentiae; but a thing can only be described as it is seen, which then and only then determines its reality. To define something according to the Illuminationist position, it has to be “seen” as it is. As Suhrawardī explicitly states, these are his own additions to the Peripatetic method.⁶⁸

Does the definition of *X* simply rest on an intuition of it or of something else prior to placing its formula in some constructed structure? This problem will be discussed below. The emphasis here is on Suhrawardī’s insistence that only “the collectivity of the essentials of a thing is a valid definition of it”.

THE ILLUMINATIONIST THEORY OF DEFINITION⁶⁹

From a formal standpoint, Suhrawardī's theory elaborates upon the earlier one and also includes a Platonic component; as it requires that by definition we ultimately strive to know the Forms, or to obtain knowledge of them through vision-illumination. Suhrawardī's theory is, therefore, fundamentally experiential. It is based on the immediate cognition of something real and prior in being, which he identifies as "light" – the fundamental real principle of Illuminationist metaphysics. For Suhrawardī, light is its own definition; to see it – i.e., to experience it – is to know it: "If, in reality, there exists a thing which need not be defined nor explained, then that thing is apparent, and since there is nothing more apparent than light, then more than anything, it is in no need of definition."⁷⁰

Suhrawardī contends that the essentials may be ascertained only when the thing itself is ascertained, and this is the basis for his critique of the Peripatetic theory. It also serves as the impetus for his formulation of an alternate theory, as follows: "We obtain a definition only by means of things that pertain specifically to the totality (i.e., organic whole [*al-ijtimā'*]) of the thing."⁷¹

In contrast to the Peripatetic view, the Illuminationist system begins by accepting the absolute validity of an atemporal, primary intuition of the knowing subject (*al-mawḍū' al-mudrik*), who is necessarily and always cognizant of its "I-ness" (*al-ana'iyah*) prior to spatial extension. In Illuminationist philosophy, self-consciousness and the self-conscious entities are depicted as lights and cover all of reality. Thus, for example, an abstract, non-corporeal light represents pure self-consciousness. Other corporeal entities are less "lit" but are also self-conscious, albeit to a lesser degree. Every thing is also potentially self-conscious, except for the purely "dark", which represents total privation of light.

Admittedly, one aspect of Suhrawardī's theory, namely the insistence on complete enumeration of the essentials of the thing synthesized in unitary formula, is, to say the least, enigmatic. However, considering the works of modern philosophers such as Bertrand Russell and Alfred J. Ayer clarifies the problem. Russell's theory is reduced to a distinction between definition by extension (a definition that seeks to enumerate the members of a "class")⁷² and definition by intension (a definition that mentions a defining property or properties).⁷³ The Illuminationist theory can be seen as combining elements both of a definition by extension and of a definition by intension. Ayer distinguishes Aristotelian explicit definition from definition in use. This reduces to a set of symbols which, in turn, are translatable into symbolic equivalents.⁷⁴ This translatability must necessarily include, as an integral component, the experience of the truth underlying the symbol. Thus, the Aristotelian

essentialist definition of "man" as symbol for a "rational animal" is only an explicit definition, and so becomes a tautology in the strict non-mathematical sense.

According to Illuminationist theory, the essence of man, which is the truth underlying the symbol "man", is recoverable only in the subject. This act of "recovery" is the translation of the symbol to its equivalent in the consciousness or the self of the subject. Since the soul is the origin of the thing by which the idea of humanity is ascertained, and since the soul is the "closest" (*aqrab*) thing to humans, it is therefore through the soul that one may first realize the essence of the human being and ultimately of all things.⁷⁵ Subsequently, based on the subject's self-knowledge, the real sciences are constructed by employing the method of demonstration.⁷⁶

ILLUMINATIONIST EPISTEMOLOGY

Perhaps the most widespread impact of Suhrawardī's philosophy has been in the domain of epistemology. A basic Illuminationist principle is that to know something is to obtain an experience of it, tantamount to a primary intuition of the determinants of the thing. Experiential knowledge of a thing is analysed only subsequent to the intuitive total and immediate grasp of it. Is there something in a subject's experience, one may ask, which necessitates that what is obtained by the subject be expressed through a specifically constructed symbolic language? The answer to this question will be examined from multiple points of view, but it is clear, even at this juncture, that Suhrawardī's "language of Illumination" is intended as a specific vocabulary through which the experience of Illumination may be described. It is equally clear that the interpretation of the symbolism of Illumination and its implications, as detailed by Suhrawardī in the *Paths and Havens*, are the central aspects of the controversy over the basis of Illuminationist philosophy.

The Philosophy of Illumination, as described in Suhrawardī's works, consists of three stages dealing with the question of knowledge, followed by a fourth stage of describing the experience. The first stage is marked by preparatory activity on the part of the philosopher: he or she has to "abandon the world" in readiness to accept "experience". The second is the stage of illumination, in which the philosopher attains visions of a "Divine Light" (*al-nūr al-ilāhī*). The third stage, or stage of construction, is marked by the acquisition of unlimited knowledge, which is Illuminationist knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ishrāqī*) itself. The fourth and final stage is the documentation, or written form of that visionary experience. Thus, the third and fourth stages as documented in Suhrawardī's writings are the only components of the Philosophy of

Illumination, as it was practised by Suhrawardī and his disciples, to which we have access.

The beginning of the first stage is marked by such activities as going on a forty-day retreat, abstaining from eating meat and preparing for inspiration and "revelation".⁷⁷ Such activities fall under the general category of ascetic and mystical practices, though not in strict conformity with the prescribed states and stations of the mystic path or *ṣūfi tariqah*, as known in the mystical works available to Suhrawardī. According to Suhrawardī, a portion of the "light of God" (*al-bāriq al-ilāhī*) resides within the philosopher, who possesses intuitive powers. Thus, by practising the activities in stage one, he or she is able, through "personal revelation" and "vision" (*mushāhadah wa mukāshafah*), to accept the reality of his or her own existence and admit the truth of his or her own intuition. The first stage therefore consists of (1) an activity, (2) a condition (met by everyone, since we are told that every person has intuition and in everyone there is a certain portion of the light of God) and (3) personal "revelation".

The first stage leads to the second, and the Divine Light enters the being of the human. This light then takes the form of a series of "apocalyptic lights" (*al-anwār al-sāniḥah*), and through them the knowledge that serves as the foundation of real sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ḥaqīqiyah*) is obtained.

The third stage is the stage of constructing a true science (*ʿilm ṣahīḥ*). It is during this stage that the philosopher makes use of discursive analysis. The experience is put to the test, and the system of proof used is the Aristotelian demonstration (*burhān*) of the *Posterior Analytics*.⁷⁸ The same certitude obtained by moving from sense data (observation and concept formation) to demonstration based on reason, which is the basis of discursive scientific knowledge, is said to prevail when visionary data upon which the Philosophy of Illumination rests, are "demonstrated". This is accomplished through a process of analysis aimed at demonstrating the experience and constructing a system in which to place the experience and validate it, even after the experience has ended.

The impact of the specifically Illuminationist theory of knowledge, generally known as "knowledge by presence" (*al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī*), has not been confined to philosophical and other specialist circles, as Illuminationist logic has been, for example. The epistemological status given to intuitive knowledge has fundamentally influenced what is called "speculative mysticism" (*irfān-i nazārī*) in Persia as well as in Persian poetry. By looking briefly at a paradigm concerning the poet-philosopher-mystic's way of capturing and portraying wisdom, this point will be made evident.

The paradigm involves a subject (*mawḍūʿ*), consciousness (*idrāk*) in the subject as well as relating to it, and creativity (*khallāqiyah*). The

transition from the subject (*al-mawḍūʿ*) to the knowing subject (*al-mawḍūʿ al-mudrik*) to the knowing-creating subject (*al-mawḍūʿ al-mudrik al-khallāq*) marks the transformation of the human being as subject in a natural state to the human as knowing subject in the first state where knowledge transcends simple knowing and the spiritual journey begins. This leads finally to the state of union, when the knowing subject enters the realms of power (*jabarūt*) and the Divine (*Lāhūt*), and the human being obtains the reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of things and becomes the knowing-creating subject. What are finally created are "poems".

In my view, the most significant distinguishing characteristic of Persian poetry taken as a whole is its almost existential perspective regarding the outcome of philosophy (especially non-Aristotelian philosophy, equated with Ibn Sīnā's Oriental philosophy, as well as with Suhrawardī's Philosophy of Illumination). From this viewpoint, the end result of philosophy, which is wisdom, can be communicated only through the poetic medium. Innate poetic wisdom thus informs the human being – the philosopher-sage; the sage-poet; and, ultimately, simply the poet – of every facet of response to the total environment: the corporeal and the spiritual, the ethical and the political, the religious and the mundane. The ensuing perception of reality and historical process is constructed (as in the Persian *shi'r sākhṭan*) in a metaphysical form – an art form, perhaps – that consciously at all stages employs metaphor, symbol, myth, lore and legend. The consequence is that Persian wisdom is more poetic than philosophical, and always more intuitive than discursive. This, in my view, is clearly the more popular legacy of Illuminationist philosophy and of its impact.

The way Persian poetic wisdom (or Persian poetic *ishrāqī* wisdom) seeks to unravel even the mysteries of nature, for example, is not by examining the principles of physics, as the Aristotelians would, but by looking into the metaphysical world and the realms of myth, archetypes, dream, fantasy and sentiment. This type of knowledge forms the basis of Suhrawardī's views of Illuminationist knowledge by presence.

A SYNOPSIS OF ILLUMINATIONIST KNOWLEDGE BY PRESENCE⁷⁹

In his introduction to the *Philosophy of Illumination*, Suhrawardī discusses the way in which the foundation of Illuminationist knowledge was obtained by him as follows: "I did not first obtain [the Philosophy of Illumination] through cogitation, but through something else, I only subsequently sought proofs for it."⁸⁰

That is, the principles of the Philosophy of Illumination (tantamount to the very first vision, and to the knowledge of the whole), was

obtained by Suhrawardī not through thinking and speculation but through “something else”. This, as we are told by Suhrawardī and by the commentators Shahrāzūrī (seventh/thirteenth century), Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (eighth/fourteenth century) and Harawī (eleventh/seventeenth century), is a special experiential mode of knowledge named “Illuminationist vision” (*al-mushāhadat al-ishrāqiyyah*).⁸¹ The epistemology of this type of vision is worked out in great detail by Suhrawardī. It is the subject of much discussion by all later commentators and is also reformulated and re-examined by one of the leading twentieth-century Muslim Illuminationist philosophers, Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm ‘Aṣṣār, in his study of ontological principles and arguments *Waḥdat-i wujūd va badā’*.⁸²

Suhrawardī’s reconstructed theory of knowledge consists of intuitive judgments (*al-ahkām al-ḥads* – resembling the Aristotelian notion of *agkhi-noia*) and what he holds to be the dual process of vision–illumination (*al-mushāhadah wa’l-ishrāq*), which together serve as the foundation for the construction of a sound, true science (*al-‘ilm al-ṣaḥīḥ*). These aspects also form the basis for a “scientific” methodology (*al-ṭariq al-‘ulūm*) which is at the core of Suhrawardī’s concept of knowledge by presence. The visionary experience, which leads to knowledge not obtained by cogitation (*fikr*), takes place in a special realm called *mundus imaginalis* (*‘ālam al-mithāl*). The philosopher’s experience in the realm of the imaginary determines what things are, which may ultimately be communicated only through non-ordinary language, such as poetic language or other symbolic modes of metalanguage. Thus poetry, which encompasses a metaphysics of metaphor and symbol, is theoretically given the status of the “most real”.

Suhrawardī uses a favourite analogy to describe his view of knowledge. He compares physical astronomical observation (*irṣād jismānī*) with spiritual astronomical observation (*irṣād rūḥānī*), and states that the same kind of certitude observed from the world of sense data (*al-maḥsūsāt*) is obtained from observing or “seeing” the non-corporeal.⁸³ He uses this analogy in its various forms in many places in his writings, and his commentators also use it to illustrate the fundamentals of the Illuminationist theory of knowledge.⁸⁴

Mundus imaginalis is in a sense an ontological realm. Beings of this realm, though possessing the categorical attributes – in other words, “having” time, place, relation, quality, quantity, etc. – are independent of matter. In Suhrawardī’s theory of categories, he considers substance, quality, quantity, relation and motion in terms of degrees of intensity as processes rather than as distinct ontic entities. Thus an ideal being, or a being in the *imaginalis* sense, has a substance which is usually depicted symbolically as light. This substance differs from that of another being only in respect to the degree of its intensity, which is in a continuous state (*muttaṣil*) of, firstly, being connected to its substances, or light-

monads, and, secondly, being part of the continuum, which is the Illuminationist cosmos. The being also has shape, which is imaginal, or ideal. Motion is a category and is an attribute of substances as well. Light entities in this realm move, and their movements are in relation to their degrees of intensity, or luminosity.

What enables the novice to gain such knowledge is the guide figure of this realm who serves a similar function as that of the Peripatetic *nous poietikos*. But while the Active Intellect of the Ibn Sīnan cosmology, for example, is stationary and discretely distinct from the other nine intellects above it in rank, the guide in this clime (*al-nūr al-isfahbad* in *Hikmat al-ishrāq*) – which is equated in activity with a *dator spiritis* (*rawān bakhsh*) or *dator scientis* (*wāhib al-‘ilm*) and a *dator formarum* (*wāhib al-ṣuwar*) – is a light entity which is continuously moving and propagating its essence. This essence, which is a degree of light intensity, impregnates the imagination of the philosopher–sage with the imaginal forms.

The visionary experience, which provides knowledge in this realm, is due and related to the substantial (*al-ṣuwar al-jawhariyyah*) that have taken ideal, or imaginal, forms. They may appear as different forms, as they are in a state of continuous transubstantial motion, although they do not actually change their singularity. Thus, a vision of *al-Isfahbad al-nāsūt* may appear as Gabriel to one, as *Surūsh* to another, and so on. This phenomenon serves as a metaphor for what the Peripatetics call “connection with the Active Intellect” (*al-ittiḥād, aw al-ittiṣāl bi’l-‘aql al-fa‘āl*). The result is the same: knowledge of the unseen, leading to Illumination, culminating in becoming a knowing-creating subject (*al-mawḍū‘ al-mudrik al-khallāq*).

The story of Aristotle appearing to Suhrawardī in a dream-vision is an allegory through which the philosopher exemplifies his own view of knowledge.⁸⁵ This story has a number of characteristic components which may be analysed briefly as follows. Firstly, in the vision, which is a state accompanied by overwhelming pleasure (*ladhdhab*), flashes (*barq*) and a glittering light, stated to be one of the intermediary stages of Illuminationist visionary experience,⁸⁶ Aristotle, the “master of philosophy” and “one who comes to the aid of souls”, appears to Suhrawardī, who asks a question concerning knowledge (*mas‘alat al-‘ilm*), how it is obtained, what it is made of and how it is recognized. Aristotle’s response is: “return to your soul (or self).”⁸⁷ Self-knowledge is a fundamental component of the Illuminationist theory of knowledge. Knowledge as perception (*idrāk*) of the soul is essential and self-constituted, because an individual is cognizant of his essence by means of that essence itself.⁸⁸ Self-consciousness and the concept of “I” – the self-as-self, or its ipseity, its selfhood – are the grounds of knowledge. What is ultimately gained through the initial consciousness of one’s essence is a way to knowledge,⁸⁹ called the “science based on presence and vision” (*al-‘ilm al-ḥudūrī*

al-shuhūdī). For Suhrawardī, this is a higher type of knowledge than that obtained by the Peripatetic philosophers, who rely on union with the Active Intellect.⁹⁰

Concerning his views of the foundations of knowledge, Suhrawardī writes: "Should a thing be seen, then one can dispense with its definition [*man shāhadahu [al-shay'] istaghmā 'an al-ta'rif*]", and in that case "the form of the thing in the mind is the same as its form in sense-perception" (*ṣūratuhu fi'l-'aql ka-ṣūratihī fi'l-ḥiss*).⁹¹ This view of knowledge is a fundamental principle in the Philosophy of Illumination.⁹²

The Illuminationist's method of obtaining knowledge by means of a special mode of perception based on intuitive knowledge is said to be higher and more fundamental than predicative knowledge because the subject has an immediate grasp of the object without the need for mediation.⁹³ His or her position is based on the unity of the subject and object by means of the "idea" of the object being obtained in the consciousness of the subject. Thus, the subject's immediate experience of the "presence" of the object determines the validity of knowledge itself, and the experience of such things as God, the self, separate entities, etc., is the same as knowledge of them.

One of the most significant statements made by Suhrawardī on this matter is his insistence on a complete correspondence between the idea obtained in the subject, and the object. In his view, only such a correspondence shows that knowledge of the thing as-it-is has been obtained.⁹⁴ This means that, to obtain knowledge, a kind of "unity" has to be established between the subject and the object, and the psychological state of the subject is a determining factor in establishing this unity. For the Peripatetics, knowledge is ultimately established by a kind of "union" (*ittiḥād*) or "connection" (*ittiṣāl*) with the Active Intellect after an initial separation or disjunction (*infisāl*). Suhrawardī vehemently opposes the idea of disjunction, arguing that the unity of the subject and object is obtained in the knowing person by an act of self-realization, and that this can take place because there is no disjunction in reality, but only gradations of the manifestation of essence.

Suhrawardī refers in a number of his works to "judgments of intuition" (*aḥkām al-ḥads*, *ḥukm al-ḥads*) which are used as valid forms of inference.⁹⁵ In each instance, the validity of the judgment of intuition is unquestioned and is given the rank of demonstration, so with intuitive judgment, constructing demonstrations is no longer necessary.⁹⁶ Intuition, in the sense used here by Suhrawardī, is most probably an elaboration of the Aristotelian "quick wit" (*agkhinoia*),⁹⁷ but Suhrawardī incorporates this particular type of inference into his epistemology. Using a modified Peripatetic technical terminology, he identifies intuition first as an activity of the "habitual intellect" (*'aql bi'l-malakah*)⁹⁸ and, secondly, as the activity of the "holy intellect" (*al-'aql al-qudsī*);⁹⁹ but he considers

the most important act of intuition to be the subject's ability to perceive most of the intelligibles quickly without a teacher.¹⁰⁰ In such a case, intuition grasps the middle term (*al-ḥadd al-awsaṭ*) of a syllogism, which is tantamount to an immediate grasp of an essentialist definition – in short, of the thing's essence.

The twofold process of vision–illumination (*mushāhadah-isbrāq*) acts on all levels of reality, according to Suhrawardī. It begins on the human level, in outward sense-perception, as sight (*ibṣār*). The eye (*al-baṣar*, or the seeing subject, *al-bāṣir*), when capable of seeing, perceives an object (*al-mubṣar*) when that object is illuminated (*mustanīr*) by the sun in the sky.¹⁰¹ On the cosmic level, every abstract light sees the lights that are above it in rank, while instantaneously at the moment of vision the higher lights illuminate those lower in rank. The Light of Lights (*Nūr al-anwār*) illuminates everything, and the Heavenly Sun, the "Great *Hūrakhsb*", enables vision to take place. In effect, knowledge is obtained through this dual activity of vision–illumination, and the impetus underlying the operation of this principle is self-consciousness. Thus every being comes to know its own degree of perfection, an act of self-knowledge which induces a desire (*shawq*) to see the being just above it in perfection, and this act of seeing triggers the process of Illumination.¹⁰² By means of the process of illumination, light is generated from its highest origin to the lowest elements.¹⁰³

Illumination is also the principle by means of which celestial motion is regulated.¹⁰⁴ Illumination is propagated from the Light of Lights to the human level by means of certain intermediary principles. These are the "controlling lights" (*al-anwār al-ghāhirah*) and "managing lights" (*al-anwār al-mudabbirah*).¹⁰⁵ Among the latter, the principal lights which directly affect the human soul are the *isfahbad* lights.¹⁰⁶

The Light of Lights controls everything.¹⁰⁷ It is the most apparent to itself, and thus it is the most self-conscious being in the Universe.¹⁰⁸ All abstract lights are illuminated directly by the Light of Lights, whose luminosity (*nūriyyah*), Essence (*dhāt*) and power are all one and the same.¹⁰⁹ The Light of Lights is self-emulating (*fayyād bi'l-dhāt*), and its attributes and Essence are one.¹¹⁰ When the "heavenly illuminations" (*al-ishrāqāt al-'ulwiyyah*) reach the human soul through the intervention of the *isfahbad* lights, all knowledge is given to the person. Such moments are the visions of the apocalyptic lights (*al-anwār al-sānihah*), which are the foundation of visionary experience, and means of obtaining unrestricted knowledge.¹¹¹ Human souls who have experienced the apocalyptic lights are called "souls separated from matter" (*al-nufūs al-mujarradah*), because they have torn away from the physical bondage of body. They obtain an "idea of the light of God" (*mithāl min nūr Allāh*), which the faculty of imagination imprints upon the "tablet of the *sensus communis*" (*lawḥ al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*). By means of this idea, they

obtain control over a "creative light" (*al-nūr al-khāliq*) which ultimately gives them power to know. The moment of illumination, which is experienced by the Brethren of Separation from Matter (*ikhwān al-tajrīd*)¹¹² and the Masters of Vision (*ashāb al-mushāhadah*),¹¹³ is described by Suhrawardī as a gradual experience of "light" in fifteen steps, starting with the experience of the "flashing pleasurable light" (*al-nūr al-bāriq al-ladhīdh*) and ending with the experience of a light so violent that it may tear the body apart at the joints.¹¹⁴

Suhrawardī's theory of vision applies to physics as well as to metaphysics. The analysis of the theory begins with a discussion of external vision (*ibṣār*), what is called "vision, or seeing, by means of external senses" (*mushāhadah bi'l-hiss al-zāhir*). In physics, Suhrawardī rejects the corporeality of rays (*jismiyyat al-shu'ā'*)¹¹⁵ and the view that holds rays to be colours (*lawniyyat al-shu'ā'*).¹¹⁶ Next, he rejects the theory of external vision which holds that "vision [*ibṣār*] takes place solely because rays leave the eye and meet [*yulāqī*] objects of sight".¹¹⁷ Suhrawardī also rejects the view that the act of sight (*ru'yā*) takes place when the form of the thing (*ṣūrat al-shay'*) is imprinted in the "vitreous humour" (*al-ruṭūbat al-jalīdiyyah*).¹¹⁸

For Suhrawardī, the fact that vision has no temporal extension, and that there is no need for a material relation (*rābiṭah*) between the seer and the thing seen, means that sight or vision exists prior to thinking and is superior to it. This is because any enumeration of essential attributes, of the genera and the differentiae requires time. The construction of dialectical syllogism and induction also takes time. Vision, however, takes place in a durationless instant (*ān*), and this is the "moment" of Illumination.

The theory of vision, as developed by Suhrawardī and portrayed in the metaphysics of the *Philosophy of Illumination*, is an application of his general theory of knowledge. Suhrawardī restates the conclusions reached in his theory of physics: "Theorem: [On Vision] You have now learnt that sight does not consist of the imprint of the form of the object in the eye, nor of something that goes out from the eye. Therefore it can only take place when the luminous object [*al-mustanīr*] encounters [*muqābalah*] a sound [healthy] eye."¹¹⁹

Thus, external vision takes place in accordance with Suhrawardī's general theory of knowledge, namely that the subject (the sound eye) and the object (the luminous thing) are both present and together necessitate the act of vision.¹²⁰ For the act of vision to be consummated, the following conditions must be satisfied: (1) the presence of light due to the propagation of light from the Light of Lights, (2) the absence of any obstacle or "veil" (*hijāb*) between the subject and the object,¹²¹ and (3) the Illumination of the subject as well as the object. The mechanism which allows for the subject to be illuminated is a complicated one, and

involves a certain activity on the part of the faculty of imagination. When an object is seen, the subject has acted in two ways: by an act of vision and an act of Illumination. Thus, vision–illumination is actualized when no obstacle intervenes between the subject and the object.

In summary, one of the foundations of the Philosophy of Illumination is that the laws governing sight and vision are based on the same rule, consisting of the existence of light, the act of vision, and the act of Illumination. Thus, in Suhrawardī's Illuminationist philosophy, light, illumination, sight, vision, creative acts – and by extension all things – may be explained through the existence of light emanated by the Light of Lights.

NOTES

- 1 The major biographical sources on Suhrawardī are: Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, *'Uyūn al-anbā' fi ṭabaqāt al-a'ābbā'*, ed. A. Müller (Königsberg, 1884), vol. I, 1: 168, and the edition (used here) edited by N. Ridā (Beirut, 1968), pp. 641–6 (hereafter cited as *Ṭabaqāt*); Yāqūt, *Irshād al-arīb*, ed. D. S. Margoliouth, 6: 269; al-Qiftī, *Tārīkh al-ḥukamā'*, ed. Bahman Dārā'ī (Tehran, 1929): 345; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, ed. I. Abbās (Beirut, 1965), 6: 268–74 (hereafter cited as *Wafayāt*); Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shahrazūrī (d. c. 687/1288), *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ wa rawdat al-afrah fi tārīkh al-ḥukamā' wa'l-falāsifah*, ed. S. Khurshīd Aḥmad (Hyderabad, 1976), 2: 119–43 (hereafter cited as *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ*); the eleventh/seventeenth-century Persian translation of *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ* by Maqṣūd 'Alī Tabrīzī has recently been published by M. T. Daneshpajouh and M. S. Mawlā'ī (Tehran, 1986); this differs (considerably at times) from the Arabic text. Part of the commentary on Suhrawardī in this text has been translated into English by W. M. Thackston, Jr in *The Mystical and Visionary Treatises of Shihabuddin Yahya Suhrawardi* (London, 1982): 1–4. Thackston's translation is based on the partial edition of S. H. Nasr in *Shihaboddin Yahya Sohrawardi, Oeuvres Philosophiques et Mystiques: Opera Metaphysica et Mystica III* (reprinted: Tehran, 1970): 13–30. This edition includes the Arabic text as well as the Persian translation of Tabrīzī. The following works may be consulted for information on Suhrawardī's life and thought: Carra de Vaux, "La philosophie illuminative d'après Suhrawardi Meqtoul", *Journal asiatique*, 19 (1902): 63–4; Max Horten, *Die Philosophie der Erleuchtung nach Suhrawardī* (Halle an der Saale, 1912); Louis Massignon, *Recueil de textes inédits* (Paris, 1929): 111–13; Otto Spies, *Three Treatises on Mysticism by Shihabuddin Suhrawardī Maqtul* (Stuttgart, 1935); Helmut Ritter, "Philologika IX: Die vier Suhrawardī", *Der Islam*, 24 (1937): 270–86; and 25 (1938): 35–86; H. Corbin, *Suhrawardī d'Alep, fondateur de la doctrine illuminative* (Paris, 1939); *Les Motifs zoroastriens dans la philosophie de Sohrawardī* (Tehran, 1946); *L'Homme de lumière dans le soufisme iranien* (Paris, 1971); *En Islam iranien* (Paris, 1971), 4 vols (the second volume, *Sohrawardī et les Platoniciens de Perse*, is devoted to a detailed study of Suhrawardī's life and works); as well as other works by Corbin especially his *Prolegomènes* to each

- of his following critical editions of Suhrawardī's works: *Opera metaphysica et mystica I* (Istanbul, 1945, hereafter cited as *Opera I*); *Opera metaphysica et mystica II* (Tehran, 1954, hereafter cited as *Opera II*); *Opera metaphysica et mystica III* (Tehran, 1970, hereafter cited as *Opera III*). Special mention must also be made of Corbin's translations of Suhrawardī's works: *Archange empourpré, Quinze traités et récits mystiques traduits du persan et de l'arabe, présentés et annotés par Henry Corbin* (Paris, 1976); and *Le Livre de la sagesse orientale, Kitāb hikmat al-ishrāq*, traduction et notes par Henry Corbin, établies et introduit par Christian Jambet (Paris, 1986); and other works such as: S. H. Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), chapter 2; and especially the excellent summary of illuminationist doctrine, "Suhrawardī", in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M. M. Sharif (Wiesbaden, 1963) I: 372–98; and *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (London, 1978), chapter 12; also of interest for the study of the impact of Suhrawardī's thought in India I refer the reader to Muḥammad Sharīf al-Harawī, *Anwārīyya: an 11th Century A. H. Persian Translation and Commentary on Suhrawardī's Hikmat al-Ishrāq*, edited with introduction and notes by Hossein Ziai (Tehran, 1980). Finally I should inform the reader of my study of the logical foundations of illuminationist epistemology, where most of the brief discussions of Suhrawardī's analytical thought here are presented in greater detail. See Hossein Ziai, *Knowledge and Illumination: a Study of Suhrawardī's Hikmat al-Ishrāq* (Atlanta, Brown Judaic Studies, 97, 1990).
- 2 Shahrāzūrī, *Nuzhat al-arwāh* (MS Istanbul, Yeni Cami, 908), fol. 233v. Shahrāzūrī's work is the only extensive source of Suhrawardī's biography. See also Shahrāzūrī, *Nuzhat al-arwāh wa rawdat al-afrah fi tarikh al-hukama' wa'l-falāsifah*, ed. Seyed Khurshid Ahmed (Hyderabad, 1976), 2: 124ff.
 - 3 See Abī Uṣaybī'ah, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 168; and Yāqūt, *Irshād*, 6: 269. This work has been translated by Henry Corbin as *The Theosophy of the Orient of Light*.
 - 4 Suhrawardī, *Opera II*: 258.
 - 5 Shahrāzūrī, *Nuzhat al-arwāh*, 2: 125–7.
 - 6 Yāqūt, *Irshād*, 6: 269.
 - 7 Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'ah, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1: 299–301.
 - 8 Suhrawardī, *Opera I*: 146, 278, 352. Sāwī wrote a Persian commentary on Ibn Sīnā's *Risālat al-ṭayr*, a symbolic treatise which was re-composed in Persian by Suhrawardī, translated in *The Mystical and Visionary Treatises of Suhrawardī*, trans. Thackston: 21–5).
 - 9 Recent scholars have too readily accepted Suhrawardī's works such as the *Intimations*, the *Apposites* and the *Paths and Havens* as purely Peripatetic. See Louis Massignon, *Recueil de textes inédits* (Paris, 1929): 111–13; Carl Brockelmann, *GAL*, 1: 437–8, *GAL*, 1: 481–3; Henry Corbin, "Prolégomènes", *Opera II*; Seyed Hossein Nasr, "Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī Maqrūl", in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M. M. Sharif (Weisbaden, 1963): 374; as well as others who have followed the same classification of Suhrawardī's works as these authors.
 - 10 E.g., Suhrawardī, *Opera I*: 59, 121, 128, 131, 146, 183, 185, 192, 194, 195, 278, 340, 361, 371, 401, 484, 506. Suhrawardī himself stipulates that all of the major texts are related.
 - 11 See my "The Source and Nature of Authority: a Study of al-Suhrawardī's

- Illuminationist Political Doctrine”, in *Islamic Political Aspects of Philosophy*, ed. Charles Butterworth (Cambridge, Mass., 1992): 294–334.
- 12 *Ṭabaqāt*: 642: “*ba’atha Ṣalāh al-Dīn ilā waladīhi al-Malik al-Zāhir bi-Ḥalab kitāban fī ḥaqqīhi bi-khattī al-Qādī al-Fādīl*”. The *qādī* had been a trusted counsellor of Saladin (H. A. R. Gibb, *Life of Saladin*, p. 49).
- 13 Shahrāzūrī states that Saladin, who had been urged by the “jealous” jurists of Aleppo, wrote a letter to his son asking for Suhrawardī’s execution lest he corrupt religion (*afsada al-dīn*), but al-Malik al-Zāhir refused, so the sultan wrote to his son a second time warning the young prince that he would take away the rule of Aleppo from him unless he complied (*Nuzhat al-arwāḥ*, 2: 125–6).
- 14 The biographers differ in their opinions regarding Suhrawardī’s execution. For example, Ibn Khallikān states: “I saw people differ concerning his affair . . . some attributed him with heresy [*al-zandaqa wa’l-ilḥād*], while others were of the opinion that there was good in him and that he was from among the people blessed with miraculous powers” (*Wafayāt*, 6: 273). Shahrāzūrī states: “I saw people differ concerning his execution” (*Nuzhat al-arwāḥ*, 2: 125). Muḥammad ‘Alī Abū Rayyān has discussed the circumstances of Suhrawardī’s execution in Aleppo at some length. He refers to the debates between Suhrawardī and the jurists of Aleppo, and cites al-‘Imād al-Iṣfahānī, who in his *al-Bustān al-jāmi’ li-tawārīkh al-zamān* reports that the jurists of Aleppo, especially two brothers, Ibnay Jahbal, had engaged Suhrawardī in a debate on the question of prophethood and God’s powers. During the debate Suhrawardī’s position, that God can create anything He wants at any time, was considered blasphemous which is why they sought his execution. See Muḥammad Abū Rayyān, *Uṣūl al-falsafat al-ishrāqīyyah* (Beirut, 1969): 25–6; “Kayfa ubīḥ damm al-Suhrawardī al-ishrāqī”, *Majallat Thaḳāfah*, 702 (1952). S. H. Nasr briefly discusses the circumstances for Suhrawardī’s execution in “Shaykh al-Ishrāq”, in *al-Kitāb al-tadhkārī Shaykh al-Ishrāq*, ed. Ibrahim Madkour (Cairo, 1974): 17–36. Nasr states that while during the Fāṭimid period Syria had been “among the great Shi‘a centers”, when the Ayyubids triumphed over them, and also because of the Crusades, the Sunnī *madhhab* became dominant, and he then attributes anti-Bāṭinite sentiments to have been a factor in Suhrawardī’s demise. This may not, however, be substantiated solely by recounting the debate between the jurists of Aleppo and Suhrawardī concerning the question of prophethood and its seal. Nasr’s view that Suhrawardī had believed in “guardianship” (*al-wilāyah*) (pp. 20–1) is not supported by the evidence in Suhrawardī, who never refers to *wilāyah* in any of his works.
- 15 See my “Source and Nature”.
- 16 See, for example, G. Slaughter, *Saladin* (New York, 1955): 221ff.
- 17 See my “Source and Nature”.
- 18 Published in *Opera I*.
- 19 Published in *Opera II*.
- 20 See my *Knowledge and Illumination*: 9–15, where I argue that, based on Suhrawardī’s own explicit statements, these works together make up a corpus in which he carefully and systematically presents the genesis and development of the Philosophy of Illumination. And since Corbin’s editions of *al-Talwīḥāt* and of *al-Mashāri’* do not include the sections on logic and on physics, I refer

- to the following manuscripts: *al-Takwīhāt*, Berlin MS no. 5062, and *al-Mashāri'*, Leiden MS no. Or. 365.
- 21 The Arabic text of *al-Alwāh al-'imādiyyah* has been edited by Najaf 'Alī Ḥabībī in *Si risālah az Shaykh-i ishrāq* (Tehran, 1977): 1–78; the Persian version of the same has been edited by S. H. Nasr in *Opera III*: 109–95; the Arabic text of *Hayākil al-nūr* has been edited and published by Muḥammad 'Alī Abū Rayyān (Cairo, 1957), and the Persian version by S. H. Nasr in *Opera III*: 83–108; the Persian text of *Partaw-nāmah* has been edited by Nasr in *Opera III*: 1–81.
 - 22 Suhrawardī, *Opera I*: 124.
 - 23 *Qissat al-ghurbat al-gharbiyyah*, published in *Opera II*: 274–97, trans. Thackston, *op. cit.*: 100–8. The other treatises are published in *Opera III*, and are translated by Thackston, *op. cit.*
 - 24 Most of the aphorisms had been collected by Shahrzūrī in his *Nuzhat al-arwāh*, 2: 136–43.
 - 25 The invocations have been published by M. Moin in *Majalā-yi āmūzish wa parwarish* (Tehran, 1924). One of the two has been reprinted in *Si risālah az Shaykh-i ishrāq* (pp. 18–19).
 - 26 The invocation starts thus: “Greetings upon the most luminous, alive [*al-hayy*] speaking [*al-nāziq*] and most manifest being [*al-shakhṣ al-azhar*]”, and goes on to attribute the qualities royal authority [*al-salṭah wa'l-haybah*] and perfect power [*quwwah*] to this being. As *Hūrakhsh* shines in the heavens so does the *kīyān kharrāh* of kings on earth (cf. Suhrawardī, *Opera I*: 494; *Opera II*: 149–50).
 - 27 Suhrawardī, *Opera II*: 10.
 - 28 See Chapter 29, below, “The Illuminationist tradition”.
 - 29 See my *Knowledge and Illumination*: 20–39.
 - 30 *al-Mashāri'*, *op. cit.*, i.e., *Paths and Havens: Logic*, fol. 15v.
 - 31 *Ibid.*: “*ṣarrāḥa'l-shaykh Abū 'Alī, fī karārīs, yansubuhā ila'l-mashriqiyyīn*”.
 - 32 See Avicenna, *Manṭiq al-mashriqiyyīn* (Cairo, 1910): 1–4.
 - 33 While the two terms are morphologically related – *ishrāq* is the verbal noun of Form IV of the triliteral root *sh-r-q*, and *mashriq* the locative noun – the former is used as a technical epistemological term, and the latter in a general sense of “East”.
 - 34 *Paths and Havens: Logic*, fol. 15r: “*wa hādhihi'l-karārīs, wa in yansubahā ila'l-mashriq fa-hiya bi-'aynihā qawā'id al-mashshā'in wa'l-ḥikmat al-'ammah, illā annahu ghayyara'l-'ibārah, aw taṣarrafah fī ba'd al-furū', taṣarrufan ghariban lā tubāyīn kutubuhu'l-ukhrā . . . wa lā yataqarraru bihi'l-aṣl al-mashriqī al-muqarrar fī 'ahd al-'ulamā' al-khusrawāniyyah*”. Corbin has discussed Suhrawardī's view of Khusrawānī philosophers and of ancient Iranian wisdom. See, for example, *Opera II*: vi; and *ibid.*, *Prolégomène*: 24–6.
 - 35 Suhrawardī's clearly stipulated intention is to provide scientific proof for all “observed” phenomena. He does this by employing his new method of “the science of lights” (*ilm al-anuwār* and *fiqh al-anuwār*). See Suhrawardī, *Opera II*: 10.
 - 36 Suhrawardī's elaborate discussions on such themes are to be found in the last sections of his major philosophical works. Examples can be found in the following chapters: *Philosophy of Illumination*, 2.5: “On resurrection, prophecy

- and dreams”, especially 2.5.5: “On explaining the causes of divine admonitions and knowledge of the unseen”; *Intimations*, 3.4: “On prophecy, signs, dreams and other such matters”, especially 3.4.2: “On the causes of extraordinary acts”; *Paths and Havens*, 3.7.3: “On how unseen things may appear”; and 3.7.6: “On the spiritual journey [*sulūk*] of the divine philosophers”; and in addition the last section of *Parāw-nāmāh* (“Epistle on Emanation”), entitled: “On prophecy, miracles [*mu’jizāt*], miraculous powers [*karāmāt*], dreams and other similar things”.
- 37 For a discussion of the divisions as they are employed in Latin philosophy as distinguished from Aristotle’s see Philip Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism* (The Hague, 1975): 70–84.
- 38 See Chapter 29, below, “The Illuminist tradition”.
- 39 I have shown elsewhere that Suhrawardī’s theory may have been influenced by the Stoic theory of *lekton*. See my *Knowledge and Illumination*: 42 n. 2; 59 n. 3.
- 40 Alexander Broadie in his *Introduction to Medieval Logic* (Oxford, 1987) traces the history of these problems only to fourteenth-century Latin logic.
- 41 Suhrawardī, *Opera I*: 12.
- 42 Mullā Ṣadrā in his *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*, ed. J. Āshṭiyānī (Mashhad, 1965) in the section entitled “Fourth Witnessing: First Illumination”, argues for his theory of substantial motion [*ithbāt al-ḥarakat al-jawhariyyah*], mostly based on the re-examination and refinement of Suhrawardī’s earlier doctrine.
- 43 See, for example, *Opera I*: 1–12; *Opera III*: 113; *Opera I*: 146–8. The great logician ‘Umar ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī, whose *al-Baṣā’ir* Suhrawardī had studied, also reduces the categories, but to four: substance, quality, quantity and relation, not including motion. See Ja’far Sajjādī, *Suhrawardī* (Tehran, 1984): 98–9.
- 44 For example, Corbin translates *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* (the title of the book, and the system) as *sagesse orientale*, which overlooks the analytical value of the Philosophy of Illumination. See, for example, Shihāboddīn Yahya Sohravardī, *Le Livre de la sagesse orientale*, traduction et notes par Henry Corbin, ed. Christian Jambet (Paris, 1986).
- 45 Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany, 1975): vii.
- 46 See Carra de Vaux, *op. cit.*
- 47 See Max Horten, *op. cit.*
- 48 See Louis Massignon, *op. cit.*: 111–13.
- 49 See Otto Spies, *op. cit.*
- 50 See Helmut Ritter, *op. cit.*
- 51 See H. Corbin, *Suhrawardī d’Alep; Les Motifs zoroastriens; L’Homme de Lumière*.
- 52 See S. H. Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages: “Suhrawardī”*. Nasr has pointed out in his pioneering work the religious significance of Suhrawardī’s life and teachings, as well as the religious dimension in his cosmology. See, in this regard, his *An Introduction*, *op. cit.*: chapter 12.
- 53 See Muḥammad Iqbāl, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (London, 1908): 121–50. In his analysis of *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, Iqbāl draws on Muḥammad Sharīf al-Harawī’s Persian commentary available in Berlin at the Königlischen Bibliothek (part of the *Bibliotheca Orientalis Sprengeriana*, Spr. 766).
- 54 Suhrawardī, *Opera I*: 70–4.

- 55 *Ibid.*: 58.
- 56 For a detailed discussion of Suhrawardī's critique see my *Knowledge and Illumination*: 77–114.
- 57 Suhrawardī, *Opera II*: 21.
- 58 Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 2.3.90b1–24.
- 59 *Ibid.*, 90b24. On Aristotle's view regarding the relation between definition and demonstration, see *Posterior Analytics*, 1.2.72a19–24; 1.8; 1.10; 1.22; 1.33. This problem is treated at length by Anfinn Stigen in his philosophical study, *The Structure of Aristotle's Thought* (Oslo, 1966), chapter 4, and p. 78 n. 2.
- 60 Suhrawardī, *Opera II*: 21ff.
- 61 See Avicenna, *Livre des définitions*, sec. 18. Cf. Avicenna, the *Healing: Logic: Demonstration*: 233–7.
- 62 Suhrawardī's theory of definition is related to his critique of induction. He makes a distinction between complete and incomplete induction [*al-istiqrā' al-zāmm wa'l-nāqis*]. E.g., *Opera III*: 5. See also William Kneale, *Probability and Induction* (Oxford, 1966): 24–110.
- 63 This point, though mentioned by Ibn Sīnā, is not explicitly required by him in the formula. See Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifā': al-Manṭiq: al-Burhān* 4.4.217–24.
- 64 See Suhrawardī, *Opera II*: 14; Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ II*: 35: 13–38.
- 65 *Paths and Havens: Logic*, fol. 17v.
- 66 Suhrawardī, *Opera II*: 21.
- 67 See Suhrawardī, *Paths and Havens: Logic*, fol. 98v.; *Opera III*: 5.
- 68 *Paths and Havens: Logic*, fol. 15r.
- 69 For a detailed discussion of the Illuminationist theory of definition see my *Knowledge and Illumination*: 114–27.
- 70 Suhrawardī, *Opera II*: 106.
- 71 Suhrawardī, *Opera II*: 21.
- 72 Other terms, such as “collection”, “set”, “aggregate” and “manifold”, are also used, and may mean what Suhrawardī intends by *al-ijtimā'*.
- 73 Bertrand Russell, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (New York, n.d.): 12. Cf. Irving Copi, *Symbolic Logic* (New York, 1965), chapter 6; Moritz Schlick, *General Theory of Knowledge* (New York and Vienna, 1975): 31–9.
- 74 Alfred J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (London, 1950): 59–71. Cf. Paul T. Sagal, “Implicit Definition”, *The Monist*, 57(3) (July 1973): 443–50.
- 75 Suhrawardī's *Gedankenexperiment* indicates a more detailed analysis than Ibn Sīnā's, and is incorporated fully into a comprehensive view of psychology. See *Opera III*: 10–14. Cf. Fazlur Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology* (London, 1952): 31.
- 76 Suhrawardī, *Opera II*: 40–6.
- 77 *Ibid.*: 248.
- 78 *Ibid.*: 40–6.
- 79 For a detailed discussion of the Illuminationist theory of knowledge by presence see my *Knowledge and Illumination*: 129–45.
- 80 Suhrawardī, *Opera I*: 11.
- 81 See, for example, *Anwāriyyah*: 6–7.
- 82 Muḥammad Kāzīm 'Aṣṣār, *Wahdat-i wujūd wa badā'*, ed. Jalāl Āshtiyānī (Mashhad, 1970).
- 83 Specific reference is made to the science of astronomy, implying that just as