

ملخص البحث

الشراكة المعرفية بين «الأنا» و «الآخر»

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صغير وفيه انطوى عالم واسع غني ومتنوع. وفيما ينسب للإمام علي كرم الله وجهه:

وتحسب أنك جرم صغير وفيك انطوى العالم الأكبر والمتأمل في تاريخ الحضارات الإنسانية يتبين أنها وإن حملت أسماء وصفات تنتمي إلى لغة ما (الحضارة اليونانية)، أو أمة ما (الحضارة الصينية)، أو قارة ما (الحضارة الأوروبية)، أو دين ما (الحضارة الإسلامية)، فإنها جميعاً حضارات مؤتدة تدين بوجودها لإسهام الأمم الأخرى، وأنها في الحقيقة مؤسسة على شراكة معرفية تتجاوز حدود اللغة، والأرض، والأمة، وغيرها.

ومعنى هذا أن المعرفة الفردية والجمعية قائمة على شراكة ضمنية بين الـ «الأنا» والـ «الآخر» على المستوى الفردي وبين «نحن» و«هم»، على المستوى الجمعي. وقد أن الأوان للانتقال بهذه الشراكة من الشكل الضمني إلى الشكل الصريح، وذلك بغية إنتاج معرفة أكثر موضوعية، تهدف إلى الارتقاء بالإنسان وشروط حياته، بغض النظر عن لونه أو جنسه أو وطنه أو دينه؛ مثلما أن الأوان لنبيذ مقولة «احتكار المعرفة» أو توظيفها لاحتواء «الآخر» وتدجينه والهيمنه عليه. فلا كانت معرفة إن لم تكن لخير الإنسان.

«الناس أعداء ما جهلوا»، هذا ما يقوله المثل العربي. ذلك أن الجهل فيما يبدو يوئد العداوة، وحتى يزيل المرء هذه العداوة بينه وبين محيطه فإنه يلجأ إلى المعرفة: معرفة نفسه؛ ومعرفة العالم من حوله.

ولكن كلتا المعرفتين بحاجة إلى «الآخر»، فدون «الآخر» «rehto ehT» لا يمكن أن يعرف المرء نفسه، حتى أن ثمة أجزاء من جسمه كراسه، ووجهه وتعايبه، وظهره وغيرها لا يراها دون الاستعانة بالآخر، أو ب مجموعة من «المرايا». ودون «الآخر» لا يستطيع المرء تحديد هويته التي لا تتضح له إلا من خلال اختلافها عن هوية «الآخر». ومثلما تحتاج الهوية إلى «آخر» تتميز إزاءه، فإنها بحاجة إلى اللغة الطبيعية (egagnal larutan) وسيلة للإفصاح عن هذه الهوية، واللغة الطبيعية مؤسسة إنسانية لا توجد إلا بوجود «الآخر».

وفضلاً عما تقدم فإن الهوية الفردية لأي منا ليست في الحقيقة غير مزيج معقد من الهويات الجمعية (seititnedi evitcelloC) التي تأتلف في النفس الإنسانية على نحو عجيب يمكنها من أن تسمح لواحدة منها بالسيادة على سائر الهويات الأخرى في ظرف زمني ومكاني محدد. والغريب أن الإنسان يحسب أنه جرم

* أكاديمي سوري، متخصص بالنقد الأدبي والأدب المقارن في جامعة دمشق.

- 7 Norman Daniel , Islam and the West : The Making of an Image (One World Publications, Oxford, 1993) , p. 9
- 8 Ibid , p.9
- 9 Aziz Al-Azmeh, Ibid ., p. 127
- 10 See for example Bernard Lewis , The Muslim Discovery of Europe (W.W. Norton & Company, New York , 1982) and Aziz Al-Azmeh, Al- Arab wa al-Barabirah: al-Muslimun wa al-Hadarat al-Ukhra (Arab and Barbarians) (Riad EI-Rayyes Books , London , 1991).
- 11 The Quran , 49: 13
- 12 Pam Morris, ‘ Introduction ‘, in The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev Volshinov. Edited by Pam Morrison (Edward Arnold , London , 1994) p 6
- 13 M.M. Bakhtin, Art and Answerability : Early Philosophical Essays by M.M. Bakhtin, Edited by Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, translation and Notes by Vadim Liapunov , Supplement translated by Kenneth Brostrom (University of Texas Press, Austin , 1990) p 23.
- 14 Stuart Hall, ‘ Introduction : Who Needs ‘ Identity’? in Question of Culture Identity , edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (Sage Publications , London , 1996) pp. 4-5.
- 15 Ibn Tufayl’s Hayy Ibn Yaqzan : A Philosophical Tale , translation with Introduction and Notes by Lenn Evan Goodman (Twayne Publishers, Inc., New York , 1972) p. 159 .
- 16 Anthony D. Smith, ‘ The Formation of National Identity , in Identity , Edited by Henry Harris (Oxford University Press , Oxford , 1995) p. 130
- 17 Jorge Luis Borges , Collected Fictions , Translated by Andrew Hurley (Penguin Books , New York , 1999) , pp. 411-17 .
- 18 Ibid . p. 412
- 19 Ibid. p. 417
- 20 The Rt. Rev. Dr. Michael Nazir - Ali , ‘ Jaw - jaw not war- war : Face to Faith ‘ , The Guardian (London) , Saturday - August 7 , 1999, p. 18 .
- 21 H.R.H. The Prince of Wales , Islam and the West (Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies , Oxford 1993) , pp. 17-8.
- 22 The Rt. Rev . Dr. Michael Nazir - Ali , ibid , p. 16 .
- 23 Tzvetan Todorov , The Conquest of America , translated from the French by Richard Howard (Harper Perennial New York , 1984) , p. 3 .
- 24 Wald Godzich , The Culture of Literacy (Harvard University Press , Cambridge , Ma , 1994) p.263.
- 25 Clifford Geertz , Local Knowledge (Basic Books , New York , 1983) p. 16
- 26 Tzvetan Todorov , ibid. p 3 .
- 27 Paul Ricoeur , Oneself as Another , translated by Kathleen Blamey (The University of Chicago Press , Chicago , 1992) , 3 .
- 28 Wald Godzich , ibid , p . 226.

that of a comparison (oneself similar to another) but indeed that of an implication (oneself inasmuch as being other) .²⁷

Once we see the ‘ other ’ as ‘ one-self ’ ,we become prepared to acknowledge his contribution to , or rather his participation in the production of , the knowledge of ourselves and the world around all of us together . Then there is a great hope that our attitude towards this other would change. Rather than feeding the notion of clash or conflict between the self and the other or between peoples , nations and civilizations , we should , as a matter of fact , call for partnership at all levels to produce , advance and disseminate a better class of knowledge of ourselves , of other peoples history , culture and

society , and of the world around us . The resulting knowledge of the world and its inhabitants should be employed to serve mankind irrespective of race , color , religion , sex or age , and never be used ‘ as an instrument of domination ; in fact , it must renounce mastery as such . ’²⁸

Finally , this notion of partnership in the realm of knowledge between peoples from east and west , south and north takes for granted that no one should have a monopoly over any part of human knowledge . As Abu al- ‘Ala al-Ma’ arri once prayed :

‘ May rain never fall on me or my land
Unless it covers the whole country.

Postscript :

Some readers of the present paper might think that it was intended as an answer to Samuel Huntington’s notorious conclusion that conflict between the world’s leading civilizations is inevitable . However , the notion of partnership in the realm of knowledge suggested by the present writer was the result of his , now almost thirty years old , engagement with the question of orientalism . Having considered the pros and cons of both the knowledge produced by the orientalists about the East and that which is produced by the Orientals themselves about their own history, culture and society , the present writer reached the conclusion that only a genuine partnership between the two parties could produce a batter class of knowledge about the East - a knowledge which would solve the crisis of Orientalism .

- 1 Albert Hourani , Islam in European Thought (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge , 1992), p 8
- 2 R.W. Southern , Western Views of Islam in the Middle Age (Harvard University Press , Cambridge , Ma 1978) pp. 1-33
- 3 Ibid , pp. 14-5
- 4 Ibid p 25
- 5 Ibid , pp. 27-8
- 6 Aziz Al- Azmeh , Islams and Modernities (Verso Books , London , 1993) pp. 124-25

influenced by India ; Indian reform movements were , on the other hand , often influenced by Islam and Christianity. ' ²²

In short , whatever achievement accomplished by humanity at any time or in any area of the world , it was the outcome of a partnership among the diverse peoples and nations of humankind . In fact this long - standing partnership is still practiced nowadays , albeit in a different form and within different environments , in the various international and national research and academic institutions , where scholars , belonging to different races , nations , and creeds , work together in the various projects which aim at advancing human knowledge . Although such a partnership is formed at the expense of the developing countries and to the advantage of the developed world , it is nonetheless a further proof of the interdependency of the human civilizations throughout the ages .

Our knowledge of ourselves , our identities and our civilizations stems from an implicit partnership between ' I ' and ' you ' on the individual level and between ' we ' and ' they ' on the collective level . This partnership has always aimed at producing , advancing and disseminating knowledge of ourselves and of the world .

It is high time that this implicit partnership became explicit . But this

can be achieved only when the ' self ' acknowledges the ' other ' as a subject, comparable to what the self is. ²³ The problem with the West is that its 'thought has always thematized the other as a threat to be reduced , as a potential same-to-be , a yet-not-same.' ²⁴ This has to undergo a radical change . For we must rethink ourselves and the others . We must see ourselves among others , ' a case among cases , a world among worlds.' ²⁵ As Tzvetan Todorov has rightly pointed out :

' We can discover the other in ourselves , realize we are not a homogeneous substance , radically alien to whatever is not us : as Rimbaud said, *Je est un autre* . But others are also 'I's : subjects just as I am , whom only my point of view - according to which all of them are *out there* and I alone am *in here* - separates and authentically distinguishes from myself . ' ²⁶

In fact , we must recognize that we are just as others , and that , to use the title of Paul Ricoeur's book , *Oneself as Another*. This suggests in Ricoeur's words that :

' the selfhood of one self implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other , that instead one passes into the other , as we might say in Hegelian terms . To ' as ' I should like to attach a strong meaning , not only

the spirit of mutual appreciation among peoples and nations . As H.R.H. The Prince of Wales has rightly pointed out in his *Islam and the West* (1993) :

‘ If there is much misunderstanding in the West about the nature of Islam, there is also much ignorance about the debt our own culture and civilization owe to the Islamic world. It is a failure which stems , I think, from the straightjacket of history which we have inherited . The medieval Islamic world , from Central Asia to the shores of the Atlantic , was a world where scholars and men of learning flourished . But because we have tended to see Islam as the enemy of the West , as an alien culture, society , and system of belief , we have tended to ignore or erase its great relevance to our own history . For example , we have underestimated the importance of eight hundred years of Islamic society and culture in Spain between the eighth and fifteenth centuries . The contribution of Muslim Spain to the preservation of classical learning during the Dark Ages , and to the first flowerings of the Renaissance, has long been recognized . But Islamic Spain was much more than a mere larder where Hellenistic knowledge was kept for later consumption by the emerging modern Western world . Not only did Muslim Spain gather and preserve the intellectual content of ancient Greek and Roman civilization, it also inter-

preted and expanded upon that civilization , and made a vital contribution of its own in so many fields of human endeavor - in science , astronomy , mathematics , algebra (itself an Arabic word) , law , history , medicine , pharmacology , optics , agriculture , architecture, theology , music , Averroes and Avenzoar , like their counterparts Avicenna and Rhazes in the East , contributed to the study and practice of medicine in ways from which Europe benefited for centuries afterwards . [...]

The surprise is the extent to which Islam has been a part of Europe for so long , first in Spain , then in the Balkans, and the extent to which it has contributed so much towards the civilization which we all too often think of , wrongly , as entirely Western . Islam is part of our past and our present , in all fields of human endeavour . It has helped to create modern Europe . It is part of our own inheritance , not a thing apart. ’²¹

If the West is indebted to the Islamic world for mediating the ancient knowledge of Central Asia , India , the Middle East , Greece and Rome to it , as well as for the contribution of the Muslims from all over the ancient world during the medieval times (or the Dark Ages in Europe) Islam , in turn , acquired this knowledge through the various communities of the Middle East . ‘ Islamic civilization was also significantly

young man and so on , thinking that they are stages in our development and growth . But they are historical selves that belong to the same name and title we carry throughout our life. Jorge Luis Borges captures an encounter between two historical selves perfectly in his story ‘ The Other ’¹⁷ , in which the 1969 Borges, living then in Cambridge , north of Boston , meets the other Borges , who was living several decades ago in Geneva .

“ In that case ,” I resolutely said to him , “ your name is Jorge Luis Borges . I too am Jorge Luis Borges . We are in 1969 , in the city of Cambridge .” “ No, “he answered in my own , slightly distant , voice, “I am here in Geneva , on a bench , a few steps from the Rhone . ”

Then , after a moment , he went on: “ It is odd that we look so much alike , but you are much older than I , and you have gray hair . ”¹⁸

Although the two characters share the same name and the same physical features , they feel that they have two distinct personalities and their encounter , at least for one of them , was real . Thus Borges concludes his story , writing :

‘ I have thought a great deal about this encounter , which I’ve never told anyone about . I believe I have discovered the key to it . The encounter was real , but the other man spoke to

me in a dream , which was why he could forget me ; I spoke to him while I was awake , and so I am still tormented by the memory . ’¹⁹

In short , it is in the overwhelming presence of other and through this rather implicit partnership between the self and the other that man knows himself , constructs his identity and later articulated it through the medium of natural language , whose very existence is indebted to the other .

In addition to this partnership between the self and the other , there is a long - standing and far- reaching form of partnership which transcends all linguistic , national , regional and temporal boundaries . This form is the translinguistic , transnational , transregional and transtemporal collective form of partnership among the diverse nations , peoples and ethnicities of the human kind . Civilizations may be named after one language , one nation , one people , one region , one continent or one age. But they are the product of the partnership between different nations , peoples, areas and ages . There is no single civilization in human history that is not indebted to other civilizations . Hybridity has been the governing force of all human achievements . Ignoring this fact , or what the Right Reverend Michael Nazir - Ali calls the ‘ historical perspectives on how civilizations have become interdependent , and have learned from each other ’²⁰ is not helpful in spreading

learn the natural language only when 'Absal came to his deserted island , or when some 'other ' came to share his life with him :

'Absal had studied and gained fluency in many languages , so he tried to speak to Hayy, asking him about himself in every language he knew . But 'Absal was completely unable to make himself understood . Hayy was astounded by this performance, but had no idea what it might mean unless it was a sign of friendliness and high spirits . Neither of them knew what to make of the other.'¹⁵

So they both realized that only natural language can salvage their relationship and consequently 'Absal started teaching it to Hayy .

Yet, when we examine our identity we soon discover that it is a complex mixture of several collective identities .

' Human beings have a wide variety of possible collective affiliations-economic and occupational groups , leisure and welfare associations , age and gender categories , territorial and political organizations, as well as families and cultural communities. With all of these individuals can simultaneously identify , moving with relative ease from one to the other , as circumstances demand. We may be wives or husbands , manual

workers, members of a religious community , ethnic group , regional association , or whatever , each of which may become relevant in certain situations and for certain purposes . As a result , we have multiple identities , ranging from the most intimate family circle to the widest , the human species .'¹⁶

In fact , human identity is so inclusive as to embrace within itself a multitude of many selves, any of which may dominate at a particular moment and certain circumstances, exercising a focussing function , ruling , determining and transforming the other selves in such a way as to preserve the integrity and unity of this multi-component structure which we call our identity .

Nothing would probably capture such a conception of human self and identity as the Arabic verse :

' You think that you are merely a small planet , while the whole great cosmos is folded within you . '

Upon reflection on our past life , we realize that we do not only have a multitude of diverse selves , but we also have had over the years so many selves , each of which belonged to a particular stage of our past life and development . We explain these past selves by talking about the changes in our personality as a result of the passage of time . We even label these selves as the baby , the boy , the

Whatever people think about the act of knowing , they would all agree that knowing must start with the self . Knowing oneself is the best way to achieve inner peace. But can one know oneself without the active participation of the other in the very act of knowing ? The answer to this question is a big ‘ No’ For it is impossible to see one’s face, head and back without the help of a set of mirrors . It is only with the mediation of another person that one can form a more rounded picture of oneself . By the same token, the ‘ other ’ needs someone else to acquire knowledge of himself . ‘ A single consciousness could not generate a sense of its self’¹² No one ever articulated such an interdependency between the ‘ self’ and the ‘ other ‘ in the act of knowing better than Bakhtin when he wrote:

‘ When I contemplate a whole human being who is situated outside and over against me ,...I shall always see and know something that he , from his place..., cannot see himself : parts of his body that are inaccessible to his own gaze (his head , his face and its expression) , the world behind his back , and a whole series of objects and relations, which in any of our mutual relations are accessible to me but not to him .’¹³

Similarly , only someone situated outside can offer me a unified and complete image of myself , of may

personality . This means that a partnership can be formed between myself and the other , which will help us both to gain a more complete picture of ourselves . This exchange of knowledge between the ‘ self’ and ‘ other’ can create a strong bond between the two of us . It would help, no doubt, in building a relationship that is based on equality and in providing an ample human space whereby each party’s existence, wellbeing , safety and prosperity are secured .

Thus knowing oneself is impossible without the active participation of the other . Furthermore, establishing one’s awareness of oneself and construction one’s identity as some thing different and distinct from other identities are only possible in the overwhelming presence of the other . For identity is always defined by difference ‘ It is only through the relation to the Other , the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks , to what has been called its *constitutive outside* that the ‘ positive ‘ meaning of any term - and thus its ‘ identity’ can be constructed ,’ writes Stuart Hall.¹⁴

The two processes of coming aware of one’s identity and of articulating it can only be realized through the medium of natural language , which is in fact a social institution that can only exist in a human space that combines both the self and the other . Hayy Ibn Yaqzan needed to

accidentally true . Its authors luxuriated in the ignorance of triumphant imagination ' ⁵

Commenting on this type of Western view of Islam and Muslims during age of ignorance, Aziz Al-Azmeh writes :

' It appears that Crusaders and others who were in direct contact with Muslims learnt nothing about them , and only borrowed the arts of gracious living. For the rest , the Islamic orient was a source of fantasy, the Land of Cockaigne , and the source of military antagonism . It is not the individual contents of knowledge that matter, but the confrontation of contents , and this was oriented to a specific warring fantasy . [...] The overriding need was to speak ill , and knowledge of Islam was a kind of defensive ignorance. ' ⁶

Thus the late Norman Daniel find himself obliged to defend his pursuit of the image of Islam in Western thinking in his " forward " to his classic *Islam and the West : The Making of an Image* (1960 & 1993), as he writes :

' I hope the Muslim readers will not be scandalized by some of the things in this book , or consider that I have been wrong to revive the memory of, among other things , certain silly and unpleasant libels of their religion and their Prophet . ' ⁷

Although his primary purpose has been the scientific one of establishing a series of facts , his secondary purpose , he adds , ' has been to see what is implied by his unpleasantness and ignorance in men's attitudes towards those they suppose to be their enemies . ' ⁸

The saddest thing about this state of ignorance and the ensuing enmity , conflict and confrontation between Islam and the West , is its peculiar resistance ' to time , change , rationality or progress ' ⁹ as well as mutuality ¹⁰ . Hence the urgent need to remove this enmity from the relationship between the two parties and to replace it by a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect . After all, God has created mankind ' from a single pair of a male and female ' ¹¹ , and made them into nations and tribes in order that they may know each other not that they may despise each other , hate each other and fight each other . But how can man remove this enmity from his life and how can he reconcile himself with the rest of the world?

According to Arabic culture and society , the answer to this question seems obvious : the key which opens the door wide to healthy and amicable relations between man and his surroundings is ' to know ' The question is whether ' knowing ' can be carried out individually or collectively, and whether it is a one-way street.

700 ; the second was the creation and characteristic attitude of the forty years from 1100 to about 1140 . [...]

To turn first to the ignorance of confined space . This is the kind of ignorance of a man in prison who hears rumors of outside events and attempts to give a shape to what he hears , with the help of his preconceived ideas . Western writers before 1100 were in this situation with regard to Islam . They knew virtually nothing of Islam as a religion. For them Islam was only one of a large number of enemies threatening Christendom from every direction , and they had no interest in distinguishing the primitive idolatries of Northmen , Slavs , and Magyars from the monotheism of Islam , or the Manichaeian heresy from that of Mahomet . There is no sign that any one in northern Europe had even heard the name of Mahomet . Yet , despite their ignorance , Latin Writers were not left entirely without a clue to the place of the Saracens in the general scheme of world history. This clue was provided by the Bible.³

The view of Islam which was developed :

‘ Was a product of ignorance , but ignorance of a peculiarly complex kind. The men who developed this view were men writing of what they had deeply experienced, and they related their experience to the one

firm foundation available to them - the Bible . They were ignorant of Islam , not because they were far removed from it like the Carolingian scholars, but for the contrary reason that they were in the middle of it . If they saw and understood little of what went on round them , and if they knew nothing of Islam as a religion , it was because they wished to know nothing . ’⁴

When we turn to the ignorance of a triumphant imagination during the first forty years of the twelfth century, we notice that the first Crusade , which brought Christendom and Islam into a new round of confrontation , did not bring knowledge of Islam .

‘ Quite the contrary . The first Crusades and those who immediately followed them to Palestine saw and understood extraordinarily little of the Eastern scene . The early success discourage and immediate reactions other than those of triumph and contempt . But they also made the religion and founder of Islam for the first time familiar concepts in the West . Before 1100 I have found only one mention of the name of Mahomet in Medieval literature outside Spain and Southern Italy . But from about the year 1120 everyone in the West Had some picture of what Islam meant , and who Mahomet was . The picture was brilliantly clear , but it was not knowledge , and its details were only

Partnership in the Realm of Knowledge

Abdul - Nabi Isstaif *

There is an Arabic proverb , which reads: ‘Man is enemy of that of which is ignorant.’

Ignorance leads to enmity , and human history testified to this fact of our life . To take only one obvious example , one can refer in this context to the relationship between Islam and the West which has been dominated by conflict , confrontation and , of course , misunderstanding . Scholars from both East and West agree that this state of affairs between the two can be attributed to a significant degree to the ignorance which dominated their views of each other . For the nature of any human relation is always determined by the conception which each party involved in this

relationship has of the other . If we pursue the Western thinking about Islam we soon realize that :

“ with few exceptions , Christians in Europe who thought about Islam , during the first thousand or so years of the confrontation , did so in a state of ignorance . ” ¹

Confirming Albert Hourani’s conclusion, R.W. Southern calls the first four and a half centuries of Western thinking about Islam “ The Age of Ignorance ” ² - an ignorance which he classifies into two types ; the ignorance of a confined space and that of a triumphant imagination .

‘ The first was the predominant note of the Western attitude to Islam during the four centuries after A.D.

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