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Philosophy in the Islamic World

MAY 25TH-26TH | VIRTUAL ON ZOOM

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Princeton Philosophy in the Islamic World Online Incubator

SCHEDULE

Wednesday May 25

9:30am – 10:15am: Aysenur Guc (Princeton University), "An Approach to Environmental Ethics through a Qur'anic Epistemology of Divine Names."

10:20a – 11:05a: Reza Akbari (Imam Sadiq University, Teheran), "God's Knowledge of Creatures: Direct or Indirect."

11:10a – 11:55a: Khadija Kamal J. (American University, Cairo), "Concept of will in al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār bin Aḥmad."

12:00p – 12:45p: Saliha Shah (Government College for Women, Srinagar, Kashmir), "Iqbal the Stranger: Selfhood, Community and Modes of Unbelonging."

12:45p – 1:45p: BREAK

1:45p – 2:30p: Michael Lessman (Yale University), "The Logical Account of One (waḥda) in Najāt 11.1 and its Role in Avicenna's Metaphysics."

2:35p – 3:20p: Aseel Alfataftah (Yale University), "The Science of the Cosmos and the Soul and the emergence of an uber-rational Sufism."

3:25p – 4:10p: Hashem Morvarid (University of Illinois-Chicago), "Avicenna and Contemporary Challenges to Divine Simplicity Thesis"

4:15p – 5:00p: Mohammad Mahdi Fallah (Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran), "Revisiting Divine Impassibility through Tabatabai's Notion of Perfect Human."

Thursday May 26

9:30am – 10:15am: Ataollah Hashemi (Saint Louis University), "The epistemic value of arguments and theodicies in natural theology."

10:20a – 11:05a: Bilal Ibrahim (Providence College), "The Epistemological Turn in Islamic Philosophy: The Theological and Scientific Motives of Ash'arite Anti-Essentialism."

11:10a – 11:55a: Elena Comay del Junco (University of Connecticut), "Divine and human love in Ibn Sina."

12:00p – 12:45p: Ferhat Taskin (Indiana University – Bloomington), "A Problem for Avicenna's Account of Divine Simplicity and Freedom."

12:45p – 1:45p: BREAK

1:45p – 2:30p: Scott Doolin (University of Chicago), "A Hidden Argument for Double Agency in Ibrahīm al-Madhārī's Gleam of Light?"

2:35p – 3:20p: Seniye Tilev (Kadir Has University, Istanbul), "Religious Universalism: Kant & Ibn Arabi."

3:25p – 4:10p: Doha Tazi-Hemida (Columbia University), "Sovereignty and Possession: Baqillani and Bodin."

4:15p – 5:00p: Yidi Wu (Boston University). "Socrates and Madness of Perfection in Alfarabi's The Philosophy of Plato"

ABSTRACTS

Wednesday May 25

"An Approach to Environmental Ethics through a Qur'anic Epistemology of Divine Names."

Environmental ethics is concerned with how humans use and relate to the environment, including its conservation and protection. In recent decades, works on Islamic environmentalism have increased with efforts to ground an ethics based on the resources of the Islamic scholarly tradition. In this paper, I offer an approach to environmentalism that is based on a Qur'anic theology of divine names. Utilizing Said Nursi's (d.1960) commentary, the Risale-i Nur, I argue that the epistemic meaning conveyed by all aspects of creation mandates a meaning-based approached mediated through theological contemplation (tafakkur). Moreover, I focus on how Qur'anic terms like israf (waste) and rizq (provision) should not be understood to refer to only material realities but also ones of epistemic significance. In this sense, I contend that an Islamic environmentalism grounded in the Qur'anic interpretative framework should look to an interaction with the physical world in light of how it conveys meaningful speech-content through the manifestation of divine qualities.

Aysenur Guc (Princeton University)

Aysenur Guc is PhD student at Princeton University in the Religion Department. Her research interests include Islamic theology and philosophy as well as Qur'anic hermeneutics.

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"God's Knowledge of Creatures: Direct or Indirect."

Suhrawardi sees God as a light source with radiation and an illuminating relationship with all beings. So, he believes that God knows all things directly and that every being has the attribute of being known to God. Accordingly, there is no intermediate such as a mental image, as one can see in Avicenna. Although Mulla Sadra copiously appreciates Suhrawardi, he indicates his discontentedness with this theory by exposing at least eight deficiencies. According to Mulla Sadra, accepting this theory requires disallowing God's foreknowledge, rejecting correspondence as a criterion for truth, approving sensory knowledge for God, accepting God's poorness toward His creatures, and agreeing that God can directly know sensory beings. The central question is whether Mulla Sadra is correct. According to Tabatabaei's commentaries on al-Asfar, these objections are ineffective because they stem from a different paradigm in which God has indirect knowledge of beings. This article shows that Tabatabei is correct. The author tries to achieve this goal by presenting Suhrawardi's theory, formalizing Mulla Sadra's objections, and describing Tabatabaei's criticism of Mulla Sadra. These steps will bring me to the last part, showing that the disagreement comes from the inward and outward notions of God's knowledge in these two philosophers.

Reza Akbari (Imam Sadiq University, Teheran)

Reza Akbari is a faculty member in the Islamic philosophy and theology department at Imam Sadiq University in Iran. For over 25 years, he has taught Islamic philosophy, Kalam, logic, and comparative philosophy. He is the author of Immortality and Fideism in Persian. He has been the editor-in-chief of Philosophy of Religion Research since 2007.

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"Concept of will in al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār bin Aḥmad."

In the Muʿtazilite's encyclopedia, al-Muġnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-l-ʿadl, al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār ibn Aḥmad 937–1025 differentiated between human will and divine will. According to his doctrine, the essence of the divine will is different from the essence of the human will. Upon speculating the divine will, al-Qāḍī describes it as a divine attribute

which could be manifested as a doing, a command, or a judgment. Upon speculating the human will, al-Qāḍī describes it as a necessary knowledge which a human being could necessarily know and experience. He defined it as a human experience akin to human psychic states such as content, love, and wilaya. He also explained how the necessary human experience of will is distinct from other human experiences such as lusting, wishing, hatred, and movement.

In my proposed paper, I will look if there is a general essence of the will which could apply to both human will and divine will according to al-Qāḍī. Then, I will investigate the difference between human will and divine will delving into the origin of differentiation in al-Qāḍī's thought.

Khadija Kamal J. (American University, Cairo)

Khadija Kamal J. holds an MA in Philosophy from the American University in Cairo, 2016 where she studied the problem of free will and freedom in the thought of the German philosopher, Hannah Arendt. She also holds an MA in Islamic Philosophy from Cairo University in 2021 where she studied the historiography of Islamic Philosophy in the twentieth century. In her intended PhD project, she is planning to study the problem of Will in Muʿtazilite thought and bring them into conversation with an akin philosopher from modern western philosophy.

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"Iqbal the Stranger: Selfhood, Community and Modes of Unbelonging."

This paper examines the self-portraitures of Muhammad Iqbal, an important twentieth-century South Asian poet-philosopher and how they function as avowals of strangerhood – both his own and that which his work seeks to produce. The only positive self-description Iqbal offers in his huge poetic corpus is that he is a stranger - "a stranger in the city", "a stranger amidst friends", "a stranger under the heavens."

In identifying himself as a stranger, Iqbal frees the notion of strangerhood from its association with exile, migration, alienation or withdrawal from a community and foregrounds the ordinary sense of the word stranger (gharib in Arabic, Persian and Urdu) as a means by which newness breaks into a closed system. The paper explores how Iqbal is drawing upon, without explicitly alluding to, the major figures in Islamic philosophical, poetic and mystic traditions - Ghazali, Ibn Arabi, Rumi, Hafiz, Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadhānī, Mansur Hallaj - to name a few, whose work offers a positive valuation of the strange and the stranger. My key concern here is to show how Iqbal in his self-portraitures casts himself as a liminal figure - unassimilable, indeterminate, intractable

Rind who presents himself to the world as the enigma of his own his strangerhood, wearing his own difference openly and unapologetically, thereby interrupting his homogenous and homogenising community with his heterogenous being. The stranger and selfhood function in Iqbal's work as each other's mirror images - self-differentiating, heterogeneous, intractable, indocile, individuating forces that resist assimilation to any larger whole, and always already irreducible to representations and significations given to them.

Saliha Shah (Government College for Women, Srinagar, Kashmir)

Saliha Shah is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Government College for Women, Srinagar, Kashmir. She received her PhD from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. She has published in an edited volume on Heidegger in the Islamicate World (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019).

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"The Logical Account of One (waḥda) in Najāt 11.1 and its Role in Avicenna's Metaphysics."

Avicenna's predecessors had taken unity (or "the one" or wāḥid) as a principle of existence (Kindī), the first cause (Proclus), the constitutive element of being (Pythagoras), and even a guarantee of God's triune nature (Yaḥya Ibn ʿAdī). In this paper I argue that part of Avicenna's metaphysics is to show how oneness does not do any of these things. Avicenna gives unity a structure that implicitly claims to be uncontroversial; his goal in describing one as a primary notion is to circumvent the claims of both al-Kindī and Ibn ʿAdī, both of which thought that oneness in itself can tell us something about God. Avicenna will argue that the above positions fails to distinguish the one qua one and the one qua predicate. I wish to show that in doing so Avicenna makes an even further departure from the Kindian school than the Baghdad Peripatetics: his move is to show that an account of one and account of God are entirely separate divisions within a first philosophy founded on primary notions.

Michael Lessman (Yale University)

Michael Lessman is a PhD candidate at Yale University in Religious Studies and Philosophy. He completed an MA in Medieval Studies at Catholic University of America and an MA in Philosophy at MUSAPh, Ludwig-Maximillian University. He is particularly interested in the work of Avicenna, his reception of Greek philosophy, and Avicenna's impact on later figures like Abū'l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī and Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī.

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"The Science of the Cosmos and the Soul and the emergence of an uber-rational Sufism."

The Science of the Cosmos and the Soul and the emergence of an uber-rational Sufism

The seventeenth-century philosopher Mullā Ṣadrā describes the science of the cosmos and the soul in Risālat al-uṣūl al-thalātha as a Sufi discipline that corresponds to cosmology and psychology within falsafa. He defines its subject matter as studying existence in as much as it guides to knowing the divine and criticizes his contemporaries for neglecting its methods. Ṣadrā maintains that this Sufi science represents a form of true knowledge that leads to certainty in divine matters and felicity in the afterlife untenable to the followers of other traditions. In this contribution, I reconstruct the intellectual genealogy of the science of the cosmos and the soul and explore the role the writings of Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdadī (d.ca. 560/1165) and Afḍal al-Dīn al-Kāshānī, aka Bābā Afḍal (d.ca. 610/1213-4) played in its formation. I also examine a treatise entitled the Science of the Cosmos and the Soul by the Māturīdī theologian Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 722/1322), evaluate it as an example of this uber-rational Sufi tradition, and analyze the reasons behind its limited reception in the following centuries.

Aseel Alfataftah (Yale University)

Aseel Alfataftah is a 5th year Ph.D. student in Yale's Department of Religious Studies. She works on the philosophical and mystical traditions in Islam with a particular focus on prophetology, epistemology, and gender.

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"Avicenna and Contemporary Challenges to Divine Simplicity Thesis"

In his Aquinas lecture, Alvin Plantinga has raised two influential objections against the Divine Simplicity Thesis (henceforth DST): (1) it leads to the absurdity that God is an abstract entity and so cannot be a person, and (2) it conflicts with the obvious fact that divine attributes are multiple. According to Plantinga, DST leads to the absurdity that God is an abstract entity because DST entails that God is identical with His properties, and properties are abstract entities. Also, DST conflicts with the multiplicity of divine attributes because, Plantinga argues, it entails that God's properties are identical with one another. Plantinga's objections are directed mainly against Christian medieval philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas. However, almost all medieval philosophers of all Abrahamic religions,

including Avicenna, endorsed some form of DST. In this paper, I aim to examine whether Avicenna's version of DST is subject to Plantinga's objections. I argue that Avicenna's version is not susceptible to the objections because (i) the objections rest on certain metaphysical assumptions about essence and existence that are not shared by Avicenna, and (ii) Avicenna's account differs, in important ways, from how the thesis is presented by Plantinga.

Hashem Morvarid (University of Illinois-Chicago)

Hashem Morvarid is a PhD candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His main research areas are Islamic philosophy and analytic metaphysics. His publications have appeared in Philosophical Studies, Religious Studies, Synthese, and Acta Analytica.

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"Revisiting Divine Impassibility through Tabatabai's Notion of Perfect Human."

Allah is claimed to be impassible, due to His/Her necessary being. However, the Quran attributes consent as well as wrath to Him/Her. Based on some quotes conveyed by the Infallibles, theologians came up to deal with this paradox by dividing God's attributes into two categories: (a) that of his essence, (b) that are abstracted from his deeds; claiming that the second category is only relational and placed on the contingent. They also considered His/Her attributes only with their consequence - i.e. wrath as punishment and consent as a reward. However apparently, this does not solve the paradox; If Allah gets wrathful or content, he has been affected by outside of Himself/Herself and this is not compatible with His/Her impassibility. Mohammad Hossein Tabataba'i (1904-1981) recognizes the problem, and by referring to some other quotes from the Infallibles, claims that the "Perfect Human" (Ensān al-Kāmel) has a mediatizer role in ascribing these attributes to God. The doctrine of the "Perfect Human" in Shi'a theoretical mysticism sets forth that through annihilating the self, a human can reach a state where Allah hears with his/her ears, speak with his/her mouth and see with his/her eyes. This article intends to articulate this argument and check out whether it's sound in the context of the theoretical mysticism of Shi'a itself.

Mohammad Mahdi Fallah (Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran)

Fallah studied Islamic philosophy and theology during his MA and Ph.D and is interested in an intercultural philosophy of religion.

Thursday May 26

"The epistemic value of arguments and theodicies in natural theology."

Some epistemologists believe that knowledge of God does not necessarily require evidence. Hence, it is possible that one has knowledge of God even on the absence of convincing philosophical arguments in defense of theism in natural theology. In contrast, underlining the epistemic value of arguments in natural theology, some philosophers argue that private evidence, like religious experiences or communal testimony, does not suffice for one to form a rational religious belief. Instead, theists ought to provide public evidence (i.e., philosophical arguments and theodicies) to justifiably acquire knowledge of God.

From a theistic point of view, the former strategy is appealing since, in Abrahamic religions, knowledge of God does not necessarily belong to intellectual people. Nevertheless, as the latter view states, theists cannot ignore the epistemic role of philosophical arguments and theodicies. Some people form their beliefs only based on such arguments. In addition, only strong evidence and defensible theodicies can remove the counterevidence or defeater.

These two strategies, prima facia, seem contradictory. However, I attempt to reconcile them. Upholding the distinction between knowledge and understanding as two different epistemic achievements, I argue that arguments and theodicies in natural theology are essential for forming religious understanding rather than knowledge of God.

Ataollah Hashemi (Saint Louis University)

I am an Iranian Ph.D. student of Philosophy at St. Louis University. My research interests in philosophy lie in metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of religion. I am also interested in philosophy in Islamic medieval and early modern times.

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"The Epistemological Turn in Islamic Philosophy: The Theological and Scientific Motives of Ash'arite Anti-Essentialism."

This paper explores a view of the relation of Islamic theology to philosophy and science that radically differs from received narratives of approaches in premodern traditions. As we now know, philosophical and scientific inquiry in the Islamic world did not end with Ghazali's critique of the proponents of Greek philosophy (falasifa). Rather philosophical inquiry continued unabated, and perhaps even accelerated, for approximately 700 years after Ghazali. What is less known is that a central shift in lines of debate emerges, which moves from questions of ontology that exercised thinkers like Ghazali (e.g., natural or

secondary causation, the eternity of the world, God's will and attributes, etc.) to questions of epistemology and language (e.g., essentialism, the nature of extramental versus external reality, and linguistic versus ontological truth). This latter view was advanced by the dominant tradition of theology in the Islamic world, the Ashʿarites, who develop a novel approach that connects the most advanced developments in the Islamic scientific tradition (e.g., mathematical astronomy and optical theory) with their own view of the relation of reason to the sources of religious belief. This framework not only serves as the epistemological counterpart of Ghazali's metaphysical occasionalism; it also explains why and how Islamic philosophical theology becomes inextricably linked to the kind of mathematical and empirical science rejected by Aristotelians.

Bilal Ibrahim (Providence College)

Bilal Ibrahim is Assistant Professor in Global Studies, Providence College. His research focuses on developments in, and connections between, philosophy, theology and science in the premodern Islamic world.

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"Divine and human love in Ibn Sina."

What Ibn Sina has to say about love (ʿišq) will immediately be relevant to the now long term, and quite intractable, debate over the question of his "mysticism" or sufism. The "Epistle on Love" (Risalah fi māhiyyat al-ʿišq; hereafter Risalah), often cited as one of Ibn Sina's main sufi-mystic texts, shall be our primary object of attention. But it will be particularly fruitful to read this alongside his commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda, where the prime mover is described as an "object of erōs" (hōs erōmenon) for the rest of the cosmos.

For Aristotle, accounting for the relationship between the divine and the world in terms of erōs was precisely a way to insist on a radically asymmetrical dependence of the world on the divine principle. But in both his commentary on Lambda and the Risālah, Ibn Sina suggests the need to amend this account in order to capture not only the radical transcendence of God, but also the possibility of reciprocal ʿišq between the divine and the world. We shall see that the specific focus on ʿišq is not merely a way of presenting standard peripatetic arguments in sufi idioms, but rather stems from identifying a point of contact wherein those traditions, often seen as opposed, can be made to work together.

Elena Comay del Junco (University of Connecticut)

Elena Comay del Junco is assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Connecticut. Her historical research focuses on Ancient Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle, the reception of Greek philosophy in the Arabic tradition, and later Islamic-Arabic philosophy.

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"A Problem for Avicenna's Account of Divine Simplicity and Freedom."

Avicenna holds that since God has existed from all eternity and is immutable and impassible, he cannot come to have an attribute or feature that he has not had from all eternity. He also claims for the simultaneous causation. A puzzle arises when we consider God's creating this world. If God is immutable and impassible, then his attributes associated with his creating this world, are unchanging. So, God must have been creating the world from all eternity. But then as al-Ghazali, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, and Aquinas have pointed out, God's creative act seems to be no different from a matter of natural necessity. This is a threat to divine freedom, for God would then have no choice concerning his creative action. Ruffus and McGinnis argue that this puzzle can be solved in such a way that Avicenna can consistently affirm divine freedom. I claim that God's omnirationality is a threat to their interpretation.

Ferhat Taskin (Indiana University – Bloomington)

Ferhat Taskin is a PhD candidate at Indiana University Bloomington in the Department of Philosophy and his research interests include metaphysics, Islamic philosophy, and philosophy of religion.

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"A Hidden Argument for Double Agency in Ibrahīm al-Madhārī's Gleam of Light?"

In this paper I present a reading of 18th century Ottoman philosopher Ibrahīm al-Madhārī (d.1090/1776)'s argument for free will. I argue that throughout his compendium The Gleam of Light, Madhārī develops an argument that resembles Thomas F. Tracy concept of "double agency" as a solution for understanding the relationship between and omniscient God and free human actions. In light of Tracy's analysis, my main argument will show that by juxtaposing a number of traditions in Islamic philosophy, Madhārī builds an ontological edifice defending the proposition that human beings remain free in their actions even as God is understood as the direct cause of every occurrence in the universe. He achieves this task through three presuppositions: an ontological doctrine based upon the primacy of absolute being (wujūd muṭlaq), alongside an ontology of pure quiddity and his engagement with the 16th century philosopher Mīr Dāmād's three-fold division of the origin of the

universe (ḥudūth). It is from this basis that Madhārī affirms something resembling the notion of double agency: that because God's actions and the actions of human beings are ontologically distinct, they can be considered both simultaneously and independently of one another depending upon the perspective.

Scott Doolin (University of Chicago)

Scott Doolin, University of Chicago Divinity School Ph.D. student, Islamic Studies with a focus in post-classical Islamic Philosophy and Theology.

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"Religious Universalism: Kant & Ibn Arabi."

Kant argues that in the course of history "true universal religion" of moral faith shall triumph over ecclesiastical differences and the whole human race will gather then in the invisible church of the moral religion. Accordingly, "the pure religion of reason will have all right-thinking human beings as its servants". Kant's discussion of Christianity provides the criteria of how and on what conditions teachings of a particular faith is reconcilable with morality and with morally oriented idea of a universal rational faith. Ibn Arabi is also considered as one of the pioneers of religious universalism by perennial philosophy. The perennial reading of religious traditions argues that the various manifestations of different traditions and practices emanate from the same single transcendent source. Even though different religions adopt different doctrines, practices, and rituals their essence share the same core regarding the "Truth, Prayer, Virtue and Beauty" (Minnaar, 2007, xxi). Kantian religious universalism and perennialism share the claim that despite the variety of religious traditions, the religious faith in a Divine Moral Creator (a personal God) has a form, or essence beyond historical and cultural variations. In my study comparing the Kantian and perennial approaches (focusing on Schoun's interpretation of Ibn Arabi) to religious universalism, I explore the possibility of taking religious universalism seriously in practice.

Seniye Tilev (Kadir Has University, Istanbul)

Dr. Seniye Tilev. Faculty at Core Program, Kadir Has University (Istanbul). Her areas of expertise are Kant's ethics, aesthetics and philosophy of religion.

https://core.khas.edu.tr/akademisyenler/lecturer-dr-seniye-tilev-179

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"Sovereignty and Possession: Baqillani and Bodin."

This paper aims to undertake a comparative study of the concepts of sovereignty and possession in the thought of the tenth-century Muslim jurist-theologian Abu Bakr al-Baqillani and the sixteenth-century French jurist and political philosopher Jean Bodin. For Bodin, sovereignty is the absolute and perpetual power of a commonwealth. If such a power is not perpetual, then the 'sovereign' is not sovereign, he is merely a trustee. Bodin distinguishes the perpetual ownership of power, true sovereignty, from power defined by Roman civil law as a mere loan for a limited term. Here, the exclusive and perpetual possession of power is the central 'mark' of sovereignty. The problem of the possession of power is equally central to Ash'ari jurist-theologians like Abu Bakr al-Baqillani, who formulated a theory of the Imamate, a synonym of the Caliphate. However, the Muslim 'sovereign' is conceived as a mere custodian over that which God, in his exclusive and all-encompassing sovereignty, possesses. God's absolute sovereignty is not 'expressed' in an absolutist theory of the state but rather results in a clear demarcation of political rule from divine possession and sovereignty. This paper explores the political implications of Baqillani's voluntarist theological atomism and his "metaphysics of impermanence." It further delves into the problem of sovereignty and possession in Islamic natural and political philosophy (in kalām and siyāsa shar'īya) in relation to Bodin's "marks of sovereignty."

Doha Tazi-Hemida (Columbia University)

Doha Tazi Hemida is a PhD candidate at the Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies department at Columbia University. Her work cuts across across religious studies, Islamic and comparative political theory and the philosophy of nature (primarily classical Arabic, French and Persian texts). Her dissertation examines the relation between occasionalism and theories of sovereignty in medieval Islam and early modern Europe.

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"Socrates and Madness of Perfection in Alfarabi's The Philosophy of Plato"

The Philosophy of Plato that my paper focuses on is in a trilogy called The Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. It consists of two other interrelated essays—The Attainment of Happiness and The Philosophy of Aristotle. It is the only writing that Alfarabi dedicates to the legacy of his predecessors. The Philosophy of Plato is at the center of the trilogy, which also happens to be the shortest and densest one. As Alfarabi intentionally speaks in the voice of Plato, he may say what he cannot say elsewhere in his own name. Thus, how Alfarabi uses Socrates in the text is essential for understanding its relation to Platonic philosophy and Alfarabi's own enterprise. In this paper, I argue that Socratic philosophy and way of life are incompatible with the Alfarabian project to save both

philosophy and the city. Socrates' relentless inquiry of truth and uncompromising pursuit of perfection make him an antithesis to the city. His persistence in perfection is a madness in the eyes of Alfarabi that detaches him from the city, since his philosophy and way of life transcend the city. Thus, the city and Socrates cannot tolerate each other, which is precisely the tension Alfarabi tries to unravel in his enterprise. Alfarabi's philosophy is rooted in the city, so it is in harmony with the city. Therefore, Alfarabi cautions against Socratic philosophy that aims at its own happiness regardless of the happiness of the city. Instead, Alfarabi sees the streak of hope for reconciling philosophy with religion in Plato, where philosopher becomes the legislator of the city.

Yidi Wu (Boston University)

Yidi Wu is a doctoral student in the Religion in Philosophy, Politics, and Society specialization under the direction of Prof. Michael Zank. His areas of interest include medieval Islamic and Jewish thought, theological and philosophical roots of modernity, and Jewish intellectual history, with a particular focus on the thought of Leo Strauss. Yidi has a BA in Classics from the Renmin University of China, an MA in Classics from the University of Arizona, and an MA in Political Science at Boston College.