UNIVOCISM AND MONODOLOGY IN POST-AVICENNAN IRANIAN PHILOSOPHY
(ŞADRA AL-SHIŻAZİİ’S ISHRÂQİ HERMENEUTICS OF IBN AL-‘ARABI’S GNOSIS AND HIS DISCUSSION OF AVICENNAN ONTOLOGY)

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Abstract: «One» and «Many» have been many times studied both from a theological and from an ontological viewpoint. In the realm of Eastern Islamic Philosophy and in the background of its Neoplatonic basic directives, Sadrâ al-Shîrâzî (ob. 1640) develops an ontological analysis of this traditional topic which differs from the one formerly displayed by Muslim Peripatetics. By adopting and continuing Ibn al-‘Arabî’s gnosis and al-Suhrawardî’s Oriental wisdom he discusses Avicenna’s distinction between a Necessary Being and a multiplicity of possible beings, as well as Avicenna’s tendency to consider existence as accidental. Based upon the coimplication of three main concepts: išâlat al-wujûd (priority of being), wa dat al-wujûd (unity of being) and tashkîk (intensive differentiation of being), Sadrâ’s monadological univocism, and in general Post-Avicennan Iranian philosophy may help us to revaluate some philosophical issues which nowadays attempt to appear in a new light.

Key-Words: Eastern Islamic Philosophy – Unity and Plurality of Being – Monadology – Mullâ Sadrâ Shîrâzî


is its rigorous philosophical reception, which must be considered mainly in the light of the Ishráqi school founded by Shaykh al-Ishráq. What leads us to the extraordinary synthesis undertook by Sadr al-Dīn Mu ammad al-Shírázî, commonly known as Mullâ Sadrâ, in the XVIth-XVIIth Centuries.

As S.H. Naṣr indicates, «Mullâ Sadrâ knew intimately the tradition of Persian Sufi poetry, in one of whose centers, Shiráz, he had in fact been raised... Within the Persian cultural world it is the Mathnawî of Mawlânâ Jalâl al-Dīn Rûmî that is quoted most often by him... [But] despite the significance of Rûmî and other masters, however, it is the Sufism of the school of Ibn ‘Arabî that had left the most profound mark upon Sadr al-Dīn, whose works contain literally hundreds of references to the Andalusian master of Islamic gnosis... [So much so that] Mullâ Sadrâ would be inconceivable without Ibn ‘Arabî, and one of the most important radii of influence of the teachings of Shaykh al-Akbar as Ibn ‘Arabi is known in Islam] must be sought in Mullâ Sadrâ and his school... [Forsooth] few intellectual masters of Islam knew Ibn ‘Arabî as well as Mullâ Sadrâ and it is mostly through his writings that the influence of Ibn ‘Arabî reached later generations of Persian sages and gnostics».

Nevertheless, Mullâ Sadrâ’s thought shall not be considered merely eclectic, for this would only bring a rash answer concerning its material genealogy, and thus an elliptical silence regarding what subsists beyond the confluence of the sources and dispose them within a common realm in agreement with a certain theoretical structure. Hence we may say that Sadr al-Muta’llihiin, as Mullâ Sadrâ is known in Iran, recieves both the influence of Ibn al-‘Arabî and al-Suhrawardî (as well as the influence of their respective schools) by readjusting and developing in his own way some of their specific theoretical and spiritual contents. As someone sometime said, the power and the competence of


2 Literally: «the Master of Illumination».
3 Which do correspond to the Xth-XIth Islamic Centuries. Sadrâ al-Shírázî was born around 1570-1572, and died in 1640.
4 Literally: «the Greatest Master» (Doctor Maximus).
6 More or less literally: «the Prince of Theosophers».
a philosophical system consists not only in its inherent ability to create new concepts and ideas, but also in the way it renews those already given. Let us recall again S.H. Nasr. «While gradually in the West the possibility of the experience of Being nearly disappeared and the vision of Being gave way to the discussion of the concept of being and finally to the disintegration of this very concept in certain schools—he writes—, in the [Eastern] Islamic world philosophy drew even closer to the ocean of Being itself until finally it became the complement of gnosis and its extension in the direction of systematic exposition and analysis».

This is, indeed, what we would like to examine here by confronting both the concept of wa dat al-wujúd developed in the Akbarian school and the concept of tashkik that complements and determines it in a higher degree according to Sadrá Shírází's ontology. We may translate the former by the current formula: «unity of being», and the last one by the two-dimensional notion of «intensive differentiation and gradation (of being)», as we shall see.

We will mainly remit, on the other hand, to Sadrá al-Shírází's Kitáb al-mashá'ir, an ontological essay originally written in Arabic by the Persian philosopher. Most of Sadrá's treatises are in fact written in Arabic language, despite the large number of Persian writings that are to be found in Iranian philosophy from the XIth Century onwards. Some thirty six years ago, Henry Corbin, to whose memory we would like to dedicate this article, translated into French the Kitáb al-mashá'ir as the Book of Metaphysical Penetrations, a title by which it has become already well known in many Western philosophical circles. It consists of eight chapters or mashá'ir in which Sadr al-Muta'Uihín summarizes some of the ontological theses previously set forth by him throughout the first safár of his opus magnum, the Kitáb al-īkmat al-muta'áliyyah fī'l-asfār al-'aqliyyat al-arba'āh (briefly known as Asfār), discussing thoroughly the fundamental assum-
tions of Avicennan or mashshâ‘i ontology, to whose distinction of wujûd (being) and mâhiyyah (quiddity) he opposes isâlat al-wujûd (priority of being), wa dat al-wujûd (unity of being) and tashkik.

It is true that Mullâ Sadrâ received, among other theoretical influences as those of Shi‘ite and Sunnite theology (kalâm), some of Ibn Sînâ’s philosophical directives, both through the teachings of Mîr Dâmâd, with whom he studied in Isfahân, and through the works of such Mashshá‘i authors as Abû-l-'Abbâs al-Lûkârî, Abû'l-Barakât al-Baghdâdî, Naṣîr al-Dîn al-Êúsî, Quţb al-Dîn al-Shîrâzî (who is also a relevant Ishrâqî), Dâbirân Kâtibî al-Qazwînî, Athîr al-Dîn al-Abharî, Sadr al-Dîn and Ghiyâth al-Dîn Manşûr al-Dashtakî, and of course Ibn Sînâ, all of which he knew in detail. But this would be the subject of a different study. Here we shall only present their ontological discrepancies, for it is in account of his objections towards mashshâ‘i ontology that Sadr al-Muta‘Uihín reassesses and pursues Akbarian speculative mysticism (named in Persian ‘îrfân-i nazârî) and Ishrâqî illuminative wisdom.

To begin with, and in order to make clear the difference between the two concepts mentioned above, we must say that whereas wa dat al-wujûd indicates both the reality and the divinity of being (which is perceived by shuhûd al-wâ‘irî or presentational knowledge), tashkik foreshadows its effective expression, in which ontological diversity plays a main role. Thereof we may speak, when referring to the science of being achieved throughout Sadrâ’s ontological master-pieces (a science that is called in Persian hastî shinâşî), about a «monadological» prosecution of the ontology developed in the Akbarian gnostic school, both in the light of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s theory of the Divine Names and in the light of Ishrâqî wisdom. This shows up to be evident not only with regard to Mullâ Sadrâ’s own thought, but also with regard to its profound theoretical and spiritual legacy, that is to be observed in the works of his disciples along the past three hundred and fifty years. Yet we may also find tashkik, at least to a certain extent, in Sadrâ’s Persian sources.

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11 Which may be designed as well as tawîd al-wujûd.
12 Ibn Sînâ is Avicenna’s name transliterated according to its Arabic pronunciation.
If we open for instance ʿaydar al-Āmulī’s glosses upon Ibn al-ʿArabī’s *Fusūḥ al-ikām*, §§ 842-843, we will read that the ʿārif (the gnostic) must both, according to him, «integrate and differentiate». «Thou shalt unite both perspectives—he writes—, for only he who links them may be called a muwa id aqlī», that is, someone that affirms and practices tawḥīd, unity, in a truthful way. «To link them both—he goes on—is the same as to reach jamʿ al-jamʿ [the «integration of integration»]. Know that to differentiate (tafriqah) means to contemplate the creatures [and thus multiplicity] without contemplating at the same time the Divine Being [the Unique]. And that to [merely] integrate means to contemplate Divine Being without contemplating at the same time the creatures. He who limits himself to this last option will never reach the vision of Divine Being within Its epiphanic forms, throughout which It manifests Itself, though in another sense they differ from It... Hence one must have at the same time both the vision of the Divine Being linked to the vision of the creatures and the vision of these linked to the vision of the former. In other words, one must be able to see multiplicity in its unity. This total vision is called jamʿ al-jamʿ» 14. ʿaydar al-Āmulī lived in the XIVth Century. Some three hundred years later a pupil of Mulla Sadrā, Hussayn al-Tunkābūnī, asserts that «Unity of being goes hand in hand with the multiplicity of its theophanies (tajalliyāt), and thus limited existences are not to be considered illusory or without consistence, as certain sufis pretend» 15. Finally, one of Mulla Sadrā’s contemporary Persian interpreters, S. J. ʿAshṭyānī, writes: «It is according to its own limit (bisājat) and measure (andāzih) how each thing comprehends the first Truth ( aqq-i taʿāli) » 16.

Let us now briefly refer to Shaykh al-Ishrāq Shīb al-Dīn Yaʿā al-Suhrawardī, by whose writings and teachings Sadr al-Muṭāḥīhin was no less deeply influenced, inasmuch we may say that he is a true Ishrāqī philosopher despite the fact that he submits Ishrāqī wisdom to an outstanding revision by means of introducing the ontological principle concerning ʾiṣālat al-wujūd (priority of existence) there where the young Shaykh al-Ishrāq (who was murdered at the age of thirty six by some Sunnite jurists) sustains the priority of essences over

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being. Both Ibn al-'Arabi and al-Suhrawardi had been meanwhile, as well as Ibn Sīnā though in a complete different way, the most determinant figures upon Iranian philosophy from the XIIth to the XVIth Centuries. Shaykh al-Shahīd Shi āb al-Dīn reinterprets Plato's Ideas both in an active way, refusing to consider them as mere concepts, and by adding a «latitudinal» order of Immaterial Lights to Ibn Sīnā's «longitudinal» one, an issue on which he recalls Zoroastrian noetical angelology, revaluating hence intelligible multiplicity 17. According to al-Suhrawardi's *ikmat al-ishrāq*, each thing tends towards and expresses its own Intelligible Light, which is to be considered as a specific grade of Divine Light 18. Once again we are forced to carefully observe, therefore, what in Arabic is called *al-kathrah fi'l-wa dah wa'l-wa dah fi'l-kathrah*, «multiplicity in unity and unity in multiplicity» 19. And we are forced to observe the terms of such a relationship as non-external to the relationship itself, that is, in a rigorous «synchronic» mode. In other words, none of them has an existential priority over the other, although unity is axiologically prior to multiplicity, for every multiplicity participates of, tends towards and expresses in some way unity.

Of course we may say that the One is the transcendent efficient cause of multiplicity by adopting either a creationist or an emanationist derivative approach which would present its unity and reality as being radically (in the first case) or at least partially (in the second one) separated 20, but we would then remain in the view that according to the school of Ibn al-'Arabi characterizes merely -as Corbin points out with vigour 21- *taw Ḣ al-ulũḥi*, that is, «theological» or exoteric *taw Ḣ*, which places God above all comparison. Although necessary, this procedure may nevertheless become, if applied in an unilateral way, the premise of what Ibn 'Arabi himself calls «spiritual indisposition», and even the rudiment of a more or less explicit «dualism». Thus we may by contrast assert 22 that the One is underneath multiplicity, in the sense of Greek

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19 See for the application of this crucial principle in the realm of Muslim art T. BURCKHARDT, *The Art of Islam*, London, 1976, chapter IV, § 3.
20 As Muslim theologians and Muslim peripatetic philosophers do.
21 *Cf.* among other texts *Le paradoxe du monothéisme*, pp. 11-49.
22 As many Sufis have done.
hypokeimenon or Latin substratum, by adopting a reductive approach which would identify its unity as a «substantial» (and therefore as a material) unity, but here again we may ask if by doing such we would not deny al-kathrah fi'l-wa dah wa'l-wa dah fi'l-kathrah, at least in the above mentioned «synchronic» form, which, by contrast, does not consider ontological differences to be merely accidental. And so we may at last suggest, recognizing both its «immanence» and its «trascendence», that the One multiplies itself without dividing itself throughout multiplicity by adopting a «monadological» or «pluri-seriea-lized» approach that would positively preserve both terms of the structure as being complementary. The same task goes for being, being it unique.

Certainly the three hypotheses, of which the two initial ones are the most extended in both Islamic and non-Islamic thought, differ. And it must be said that Mullā Sadrā al-Shirāzī adopts the third one, which as the second one has to do with taw ʾid al-wujūd or «ontological» taw ʾid rather than with taw ʾid al-ulūhī. Inasfar as tashkik is for him the necessary complement of wa dat al-wujūd.

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And now we may finally draw our attention towards Sadrā’s Kitāb al-mashāʾīr. We will only examine here an excerpt of its four initial chapters, which correspond to §§5-68. And we will do so by dividing some of its contents into three short Sections throughout which we will intend to show out how Sadr al-Mutaʾīlīhin discusses Avicennan metaphysics and settles the context in which the three ontological principles formerly referred (iṣālat al-wujūd, wa dat al-wujūd and tashkik), to which he does not however explicitly refer as such, become intelligible. We have named these Sections as follows:

— On being’s reality, knowledge and self-determination (Section I, §§ 5, 6, 10, 16 & 30).

— On how being is not, with regard to its effective reality, accidental, nor it merely updates logical possibility (Section II, §§ 10, 13, & 19)

23 «Monadology» may be defined as «a metaphysical system that interprets the world as a harmonious unity encompassing a plurality of such self-determining simple entities» (L.E. Loemker, «Monad and Monadology», in P. Edwards, (ed.), The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, New York, 1967, vol. V, p. 362) which are to be considered as different expressive modes of the One (cf. Leibniz’s Discours de métaphysique, § 9).
And, finally, on being's unity and multiplicity as well as on the reciprocity between being and essence (Section III, §§ 12, 14, 24, 51-52, 53 & 55).

Notice that Section I deals mainly with being's self-evidence and simplicity, its active immanence within the realm of plurality and its unity. Section II deals basically, meanwhile, with being's priority over the quiddities, and, inasmuch as these are not to be taken as accidental secondary characters with regard to being itself, with being's internal differentiation. Section III deals altogether with the three above mentioned notions: isâlat al-wujûd, wa dat al-wujûd and tashkîk; the last one may be as well deduced from the union of being and essence thus quoted.

Section I. On being's reality, knowledge and self-determination

«The reality (anniyya) of being—writes Mullâ Sadrâ—is the most evident (ajlâ) of all things with regard to its presence (hûdûr) and discovery (kashf)» (§ 5), «none of which may be understood but through presential knowledge» (§ 30). Here we find an essential topic of Ishráqi wisdom.

On the other hand, he says too, «being consists in the [effective] determination (ta’ayûn) and individuation (tashakhkh-hasiln) [of all there is]... being self-individuation and self-determination by means of its essence (dhât)» (§ 5). Thus its reality cannot be expounded by description, for there is no other thing as manifest or notorious as being itself is and by which it could be then described (cf. § 6). At last, he notices, «being is [to be considered] simple (basît)» (§ 10) or indivisible, and hence one and unique.

«The reality of a certain thing—he explains further on—consists in nothing but its specific act of being, from within which it follow its effects (âthârah) and virtues (a kamah).... Being is therefore the reality (aqîqah) of all those things that do possess reality, not needing of any other reality» (§ 16).

Let us recall that Ibn Sînâ had distinguished wujûd and mâhiyyah (being and quiddity), and that he had regarded the former as being almost accidental, or in other words as a so to say idle attribute. Yet such a dangerous deva-
luation of being into what simply updates a certain logical possibility (what
something may be according to its quiddity) obscures the reliant conection
that is to be found between being's activity and its determination in concreto,
what leads us to the next Section.

Section II. On how being is not, with regard to its effective reality,
accidental, nor it merely updates logical possibility

«Being which is said to be accidental ('aradî) with regard to the existent beings
-writes Sadr al-Muta'llihîn- is an abstraction (intizâ') attained by the mind, and
thus not real being» (§ 10), which being as we have seen the principle of every
concrete determination cannot be therefore accidental.

«How can it be one (itta adah) with the quiddities, and how can they be true
with regard to it [if we consider them both] externally (fi'l-khârij) -he adds-,
whereas for the mind (fi'dhihn) that abstracts (ta lil) its concept (mashûm) being
is [on the contrary perceived as] accidental?» (§ 13). Hence we may infer that
«upon that which only in addition accompanies the quiddities as something added
to them (indimân) or as a way of considering them (i'tibár) [in the Mashshâ'i
perspective] depends by contrast their reality» (§ 19), and thus speak of the prior-
ity of being over the quiddities.

Ibn Sîná had introduced the difference between wujûd and mâhiyyah in
order to explain the gap that he believed to be existent between the Necessary
(wâjib) Being: God, and the possible (munkin) beings: the creatures. Within
the former they both coincide, whereas within the possible beings they differ.
Mulla Sadrâ does not accept the «delay» thus settled between the two. And this
may show us why îsâlat al-wujûd and wa dat al-wujûd are deeply connected
for him.

if he was not only thinking logically but also in an ontological manner (as the ulterior Mashshâ'i
tradition does in Sadrâ's view), which on the other hand is as an issue quite difficult to precise.
Cf. M. CRUZ HERNÁNDEZ, «La distinción aviceniana de la esencia y de la existencia y su inter-
pretación por la filosofía occidental», in AA.VV., Homenaje a Millás Vallicrosa, Barcelona, 1954,
vol. I, pp. 331-347, where Avicenna's distinction is also regarded from the Western historical
viewpoint; and, on Avicennan metaphysics in general, R. RAMÓN GUERRERO's very complete
essay «Sobre el objeto de la metafísica según Avicena», in Cuadernos de Pensamiento de la
Fundación Universitaria Española, no. 10, pp. 59-75.
But what would happen if we were now to regard, once established that \( \text{wuj\=ud} \) is not accidental, that essences deserve an analogous accidental treatment? Briefly, we would remain in the view of \( \text{wa dat al-wuj\=ud} \), and we would be right enough to comprehend in such a way the reality of being, which is undoubtedly unique, but we would nevertheless ignore its effective expression \( \text{in concreto} \) within multiplicity. Sadr\={a} rebuffs this too much indifferentiated «monistic» view by setting forth the principle of \( \text{tashkik} \).

Being is not an accident, nor the essences mere concepts or logical quiddities. As we have already indicated, «univocity» explains the reality of being, whereas its intensive differentiation explains its effective (or in other words its active and intensive) expression. There is an intensive «gradation» of being (as there is an intensive gradation of light) inasmuch as being’s activity is sometimes reached and expressed either in a higher degree or, by contrast, in a lower one. And there is an intensive «differentiation» of being (as there is an intensive differentiation of light) inasmuch as here and there being is not equally unified, reached and expressed. \( \text{Tashkik} \) (literally «oscillation», \( \text{dubitatio} \)) and thus «monadology» have to do with such complex meaning, both «longitudinal» and «latitudinal», so to say. «According to Sadr\={a} -writes hence \=Ashty\={a}n\={i}-, being is the one and only truth [of existence], but it presents numerous divisions and grades (mar\=atib-i moti\=adidi-yi motikathir) in the light of tashkik.»

«Tashkik is interpreted in the school of Mulla Sadr\={a} to mean that a single universal is predicable in different degrees and grades of its particulars —writes S.H. Na\={s}r—... If we ponder the concept of tashkik we will discover, however, that there is not one but two kinds of gradation: the first one is one in which what causes the difference... in various degrees of something partaking of gradation is the same as that which these degrees or grades share in common..., for example numbers or light. Both the number two and three are grades of the 'universal' number. Moreover, what they have in common is numerality and what separates them is also numerality. The same holds true for light. This type of gradation is called tashkik kh\=ass\=i or particular gradation. The second is one in which what various

\(^{26}\) Being is to be regarded as intensive for the very simply reason that it is here approached despite any extensional or quantitative paradigm, which means that it is comprehended as being active and thus pure activity according to its essence. Light’s intensive reflection model may help us once again to clarify this and other similar questions.

\(^{27}\) S.J. \=Ashty\={a}n\={i}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 26 (OT).
grades share in common is not what separates them from each other, such as the existence of Abraham and Moses. What these two prophets share in common is existence but what separates them is their separation in time as well as other factors. This second type of tashkīk is called tashkīk āmmī or general gradation. When this analysis is applied to existence -he adds-, it becomes clear that the notion of existence partakes of general gradation whereas the reality of existence partakes of particular gradation. When we think of the existence of A and the existence of B in our mind, the notion of the existence of A and the notion of the existence of B share the notion of existence in common, but they are separated by other factors. Yet the reality of existence is a single reality partaking of grades -he concludes-, so that what distinguishes the existence of A from the existence of B is the reality of existence and what unites them is also the reality of existence. This is the basis of the doctrine of the 'trascendent unity of being... which crowns Mullâ Sadrâ's metaphysics' 28.

Section III. On being’s unity and multiplicity as well as on the reciprocity between being and essence

«The reality of being -writes Sadr al-Muta’llihîn- does not include all things in the way the universal concept (ma’nî al-kullî) comprises particular cases» (§ 12). In other terms: «The reality of being involves differentiated realities (mukhtalafat al- aqâ’iq) by means of the differentiation of quiddities, each one being one (mutta idah) and linked to a certain grade (martabah) and to a certain plan (darajah) of being» (§ 14).

«Unless the quiddity is initially considered to be reciprocal to the act of being (mutta idat bi-l-wujûd), as we sustain; unless it is considered to be non-accidental [i.e. the subject to which being is added as such], as Mashshâ’t philosophers defend; or unless it is added to being itself, as certain Sufis proclaim -argues Sadrâ-, it is not possible for it to be existent» (§ 24). But «if being [simply] qualifies the quiddity, this one would be [regarded as] its receptacle. And inasmuch as the receptacle must exist before its fulfilment, we would be then forced to admit that the quiddity exists before being [which is certainly absurd]. Although being cannot occur without a quiddity, this does not allow us to see in the quiddity a receptacle,

since their reciprocity expresses an union (itti ādiyyah) and not a copulation (irtibātīyyah)» between the two (§§ 51-52).

«Being must be either placed before the quiddity or after it -he explains further on-; alternatively, they may be considered to be at the same time [as said and discussed above]. The first hypothesis takes for granted that being is independent from the quiddity. The second one presumes that the quiddity is before properly being. The third one settles, finally, that they are both at the very same time, but being the quiddity not by means of being itself, what finally leads us towards the second hypothesis. Being such consequences clearly false, the premise must also be so... To consider that being is accidental has only some sense if the quiddity is abstracted from within the act of being that corresponds to it. An this is the same as to say that being is extrinsic (khārij) with regard to the quiddity... Whereas their effective reciprocity is intended to mean, on the one hand, that being is essentially not separated from its specific determination, and, on the other hand, that the quiddity is linked to it and that it is on account of it» (§§ 53, 55).

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One and Many are thus for Sadrâ two different names that name a single thing according to the process by which it becomes manifest. Hereby and as Corbin quotes, «determination shows up to be [for him] the law of being» 29. The same goes for Ibn al-‘Arabi if we examine the role that Divine Names play in his gnosis: «They all remit to an unique Named -precises Corbin-, but each one refers to an essential determination, thus different from other possible ones... To merely stop in front of the unity of the One [differently] Named would mean to stop in front of the Divine Being as a Self (dhât) independently from the world and from the relations that are to be found between its Names and the Names of the world,... forgetting therefore that the Divine Being is only revealed to us throughout... [its specific] configurations... And this would mean not to perceive unity in multiplicity» 30. And the same goes too for al-Suhrawardi’s Light ontological complicatio.
Now and to end with, let us suggest that Sadrâ's *monadological univocism* continues a certain Ancient Neoplatonic tradition, as well as Akbarian and Ishrâqî theories do. But Neoplatonic does not necessarily mean Plotinian. Indeed, Sadr al-Muta'llihîn's «henology» is much closer to Proclus' thought than to Plotinus' one. A brief explanation will be perhaps useful.

As the French specialist in Neoplatonic thought J. Trouillard expounds, «whereas for Plotinus reality is divided in hierarchical orders, going from the One down to matter, in Proclus' works a different tendency is outlined as far as it compels us to consider all orders, even the inferior ones, as radii immediately born from within the universal center. Thus they all become, although not equally, direct modes of the One. In other words, whereas for Plotinus their division is either transcendent or descendent, for Proclus it is compensated by a circular distribution. No other shows up to be the meaning of his serial theory, which introduces each being or character in a chain whose principle is [each time] a self-determination of Unity. Being full expression of the One», which communicates its oneness and its simplicity each time in a different way, «and thus capable of self-determining itself... on account of its own law, this principle is called by Proclus after Syrianus henad (henâs). According to this specific viewpoint everything is submerged in the One and comes out of it in its own and proper mode,... since the One does not establish but [different] 'henads' (or henâdes), that is, simple [or indivisible] unités that place those serial characters which constitute the infinite variety of things. Hereof Proclus 'henads' must be said to be -says Trouillard- not productions but 'manifestations' (hekphânseis) of the One».

$1 \times 1(a) \times 1(b) \times 1(c) \ldots \times 1(n)$ may be settled as a possible formula to express it. Notice however that we are not only saying, for this would mean to still say very little indeed, that the center of the circumference is to be found in each concrete point of its periphery (or that «Deus est sphaera infinita cuius

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31 Yet his ontology is somehow Porphyrian—we follow here P. Hadot's remarks in «Dieu comme acte d'être dans le néoplatonisme» (an article to be find in *Dieu et l'Être*, Paris, 1978, pp. 57-ss.), for the One is for him nothing but Being itself (esse, not ens).


33 See H. Corbin's *Le paradoxe du monothéisme*, loc. cit., where he writes $1 \times 1 \times 1$, etc., in order to differentiate the non-arithmetic multiplication of the «One», that by multiplying itself does not become divided, from the multiplicity of the «many» ($1 + 1 + 1$, etc.)
centrum est ubique, circumferentia nusquam», as the second proposition of the Liber viginti quattuor philosphorum establishes\(^{34}\), but that from within each point a new circumference may be drawn, and this ad infinitum (since «Deus est sphaera cuius tot sunt circumferentiae quot puncta»)\(^{35}\).

We have indicated above that the One communicates its oneness and its simplicity each time in a different way. But of course it does not communicate its Uniqueness, and this is the reason for which we must distinguish, as Ibn al-'Arabi does, between Divine \textit{a adiyah} and Divine \textit{wā idiyya}, or, in other words, between Divine «Uniqueness» and Divine «Oneness», inverting therefore -as P. Beneito, the relevant Spanish specialist in Ibn al-'Arabi has both lucidly seen and explained- the usual translation of both terms\(^{36}\). With regard to the former one we may only say, as Mullâ Sadrâ notices in his \textit{Kitâb al-mashâ'ir} reminding us of a Qur'ânic verse, that «faces bow themselves in front of the Eternally Living, the Subsistent (al-çayy, al-Qayyûm)» (Qu'rân, 20:111). For «negative» theology (\textit{tanzih}) begins there and only there where «positive» theology (\textit{tashbih}) necessarily ends; and both are, as well as in another sense «one» and «many», the two different aspects of a single truth and a of single reality.

Thus we may say that Sadrâ distinguishes four different but deeply related orders: \textit{a main asymmetrical difference in being's unity, its univocity} (which is not in contradiction with the former), \textit{the multiplicity of its different expressions} (i.e. a second realm of difference within its unity) \textit{and the difference of each difference}. Or in other words, that he considers «asimetry», «univocity» and «analogy» (that we often think separately by thinking that asimetry means equivocity and by opposing the concepts of univocity and analogy) as its three definitory characters\(^{37}\). Yet the question of Divine \textit{a adiyah} held by the first cate-

\textsuperscript{34} Haydar al-Ámulí gives a few examples of this model in his \textit{Nas( al-nusús, where he studies the reflection of the One upon the mirror of the many.


\textsuperscript{37} Let \textit{E} be existence, \textit{U} Unity as being’s supreme principle, \textit{D} Difference as a second ontological principle, \textit{u} any concrete unity thus reached by any particular being and \textit{d} any concrete difference thus simultaniously expressed. From within the general principle \textit{E(x) = Ax (x\textepsilon U \land x\textepsilon D)}, which may be considered as a variant of the platonic principle \textit{E(x) = Ax (x\textepsilon U \land x\textepsilon U)}, cf. H. Krämer, \textit{Platone e i fondamenti della metafisica}, Milano, 1982, III, 1, D, where
gory was not thoroughly explored, in the realm of Post-Avicennan Iranian philosophy, by Sadr al-Muta'allihin's *muta'allî* philosophy (although he spoke of it too[^38]), but by the school of another extraordinary relevant figure: Rajab 'Alî al-Tabrizî, who died between 1669-1670, the very same years in which Spinoza published his *Tractatus theologicopoliticus* and in which appeared Pascal's postume *Pensées sur la religion et sur quelques autres sujets*.

[^38]: Cf. the three distinctions that he observes within «absolute being» (*wujûd al-muţlaq*): *là bi-shart* (without condition), *bi-sharti-là* (with negative condition) and *munbasit* (disclosed). Let us simply recall it.

\[ \mathcal{U} \] represents Multiplicity as a principle and \( \in \) each being's = \( x \) *méthexis* both in Unity and Multiplicity, four principles can be hereof settled according to Sadrâ's view: 1) \( \Lambda u \) (\( u \in U \land u \neq U \)), i.e. \( U > u \); 2) \( \Lambda d = d(U) \); 3) \( \Lambda u = d(U) \); and 4) \( \Lambda x \) (\( x = d(D(U)) \)). Of course we are not here infront of Plato's thesis concerning the coimplicatiomn of the One (\( \text{hén} \)) and of the Indefinite Dualitude (\( \text{atristos duás} \)) as two original principles, for Neoplatonic thought develops Hermodorus' view, that tends to place the One as the single principle of reality. But we are closer to it than in any other form of Neoplatonism.