

Introduction

How could local thinkers be globally presented? Is there any specific mechanism to carry out such a task? Of course, I do not mean that thinkers such as Allama Jafari are not globally significant but the matter of the fact is that in despite of the global significance of his thought the paradigm of Allama Jafari is not known globally.¹ The question of “relevance” in the global context could be approached in two different but interrelated sense, i.e. substantially and formally.²

Here the question of relevancy is not related to the substantial dimension of Allama Jafari as this aspect could be intellectually appraised and critically assessed by anybody who knows the Persian language and is well-versed in human sciences and philosophy. On the contrary, the question is of formal significance as it seems the disciplinary rationality by being the dominant mode of reflexivity it does inhibit the presence of other forms of wisdom which struggle against reductionism of soft or hard kinds.

In other words, to present the body of Allama Jafari’s thought is not only a matter of translation or interpretation of parts or all aspects of his writings into globally significant languages such as English, French, German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese or Japanese and so on and so forth. Because the act of translation may at its best convey the epistemological dimensions of Allama Jafari’s thought and concerns but it cannot transmit the pre- epistemological concerns of his traditions across the cultures which are of crucial importance in re-presenting a scholar of his caliber in a global stage.

Generally speaking, the frame of Allama Jafari’s discourse is consisted of seven broad streams of philosophy, jurisprudence, mysticism, art, literature, natural and social sciences, and poetry.

In other words, to understand the landscape of Allama Jafari’s body of thought one need to take into consideration these complex dimensions within the Irano-Islamic context in a multicultural fashion. In addition, the incessant dialog of Allama Jafari with other global traditions such as European, Russian, Indian and Chinese philosophies and literary discourse should not be disregarded as the totality of what he has left behind is inseparable from all these various streams. Anyhow, to know all these intricate issues will not enable us to fathom the very spirit of Allama Jafari and the traditions which have come to be materialized in the body of his thought as the *ethos* is very different than *logos* and both seem to be not very close to *pathos* and *mythos*.

One could argue that the question of translation is impossible if we do not adopt a hermeneutic approach to the world of Allama Jafari which is a conceptualized text embedded in a textualized “conceptic universe” of complex structures. In addition, one could ask about the prospected concept where the body of Allama Jafari’s thought is supposed to be transmitted in a meaningful fashion.

If we have chosen the English as the medium of dialog then we have tacitly accepted the rules of engagement which are operating in the context of modern worlds. In other words, the four dimensions of ethos, logos, pathos and mythos within the modern world should be taken into consideration and contrasted before we can think of a conceptual re–presentation of Allama Jafari’s intellectual system in a global context which is not based on the background assumptions of *religio perennis*.

There are many concepts which we use very carelessly across intellectual traditions without realizing the pre–conceptual textures of these concepts which may be similar lexically but different pre–conceptually. One of those crucial concepts which has been incessantly employed by Allama Jafari is the concept of “human being” and, as a matter of fact, constitutes the very ground of pre–epistemological concern of his thought.

When the translation is based on the “lexical accuracy” without realizing the “pre– conceptual truthfulness” the result will be a transmission of words without worlds which lie at the heart of any systematic discourse that is aimed at restoration of humanity as a universal reality.

Why do we speak? What happens when we are unable to talk? It seems we speak because we need to establish relationships and when we are unable to talk the process of relating gets disrupted. The disruption of relation does not only affect the flow of words but distorts the constitution of worlds in the minds of those who are engaged in the dialog.

When you are incapable of getting your message across the “other” then the world between you and the “other” becomes completely other in a conflicting sense which may lead to a totally incomprehensible state of incommunicado – where communication with the ‘other’ (who is now turned into an out–sider) is not possible.

To translate a text in a lexical sense without taking into consideration all those fundamental aspects would lead to incommunicado which is the opposite of communication where a sense of communion may be achievable. In other words, if a sense of unity between the text and the reader is established then we may hope to reach to some kind of relationship where the message of Allama Jafari along with the universe of his thought reach across at a global stage.

To put it differently, what we need to do is the recreation of ingenious creativity which has grown in the soil of tradition and embedded in the textures of Allama Jafari’s thought. However, a thinker is not only confined by his words and the words cannot express the worlds of a scholar in an integrated fashion. In other words, the appropriate question is how to bridge between the world of theory and the context of praxis? To work out the broken bridge when the world of the author has broken into myriad pieces and

only kept intact in the body of words is not an easy task.

This is where the question of multiple readings and interpretations set in. In other words, at the global stage, what kind of Allama Jafari or what type of tradition we would like to present and re-present? Where does our allegiance lie? To what direction does our heart aim? Are we trying to exegete Allama Jafari or the task is to recreate a tradition in a new global context where the audience could establish a meaningful relationship with the message?

What is the message of religio perennis tradition? If you are looking at human existence from the heights of the wings of Gabriel then the message is to realize the potentials of intellect in the bosom of human self. But the wings of Gabriel have lost its mythos within the global context where religio perennis is not the dominant modality of relevance as well as relatedness.

In other words, what should be done in a context where Gabriel is not present in the textures of cogito? Maybe a detour on history of civilization would be appropriate in order to understand the complexities of ideas and the nature of social theories at metatheoretical levels.

Through late 14th century Old French *magique*, the word "magic" derives via Latin *magicus* from the Greek adjective *magikos* used in reference to the "magical" arts of the Magicians i.e. the Zoroastrian astrologer priests. This is the etymological background of the term which goes back to the land of Iran. In the modern context, magic has been conceptualized in contrast to science and by certain scholars as an extension of religion.

In other words, this concept in current English refers to the art of manipulating aspects of reality either by supernatural means or through knowledge of occult laws unknown to science. It is in contrast to science, in that science does not accept anything not subject to either direct or indirect observation, and subject to logical analysis, whereas practitioners of magic claim it is an inexplicable force beyond logic.

Magic has been practiced in all cultures, and utilizes ways of understanding, experiencing and influencing the world somewhat akin to those offered by religion, though it is sometimes regarded as more focused on achieving results than religious worship.

This is what is claimed by modern historians who view the scientific rationality as the criterion of reasonability. In other words, the land of magic is Iran. Magus resided in Iran. Iran is the locus of incantation or enchantment. The world has been disenchanted in the Occident. Orient is where the sun rises. The enchantment of the world comes from Iran.

How could one distinguish between styles of thought? In the contemporary context, one could make a distinction between paradigms which fall within either the parameters of 'disenchantment paradigm' or 'enchantment paradigm'. What does these terms mean within the context of sociology? By disenchantment, we refer to *Entzauberung* which is a term in the social sciences that describes the cultural rationalization and devaluation of *Das Heilige* apparent in modern society.

The concept was originally coined by Max Weber to describe the character of modernized, bureaucratic, secularized Western society, where scientific understanding is more highly valued than intellectual knowledge, and where processes are oriented toward rational goals rather than eschatological significance. (Bell, 1997) The disciplinary sociological imagination is the map whereby we can trace the disenchantment of the world which has confined us to the walls of the 'Iron Cage'.

But the term 'enchantment' which is used less in the context of disciplinary sociology refers to an existential approach that enlivens the sense of 'wonder' or *wunder* in the contemporary world. The word enchantment is related to incantation and magic and both

are etymologically related to the ideas of Iran (the land of incantation) and Magus (practitioners of wonder). Allama Jafari belongs to a tradition which could be classified as the seer of enchantment. As Max Weber lays out the contours of the disenchanted world of "Iron Cage", the work of Allama Jafari could be seen as the roadmap towards how to redeem humanity from the "Dungeon of Necrophilia".

As the ancient Greeks did not understand the paradigm of illuminated magus in Iran by ascribing to them acts of hocus pocus the modern scholars have not comprehended the enchanting character of intelligibility which is aimed at reviving the *Das Heilige* by making the "Iron Cage" a passé. In other words, to re-present the world of Allama Jafari in the context of modern mind is a challenging task as the boundaries of modern imagination is based on the textures of disenchantment rather than enchantment.

To put it otherwise, *Verzauberung* in the world of Allama Jafari is a mental construction which is reflected in his work solely. This mental construction which is based on the poetical union between realms of body, mind and spirit is not accessible to everyone who has no access to the world beyond the confines of disenchanted cage.

In other words, the act of translation needs to go beyond lexical transmission of concepts by opening novel avenues. Of course, I should add that by Iran, I do not refer to the political reality on the contemporary world map but to the idea that does not distinguish between the path of intellect and the course of incantation where word (*Logos*) and world (*Kosmos*) merge into a united reality in the heart of human self. In brief, disciplinary rationality could be concluded as an attempt to reduce the self into an index of the 'social' while the primordial intelligibility is aimed at elevation of the self as a mirror of the 'cosmos' without disregarding the 'social' *per se*.

What does 'transplantation' as a concept mean? What does philosophic transplantation mean? Is it possible to transplant an idea? By transplantation I refer to the act of removing something from one location and introducing it in another location. To put it otherwise, in the very texture of transplantation there are two momentous episodes of "removal" and "introduction".

The first one refers to the spatial dimension while the second episode refers to the mental aspect. In order to be able to transplant an idea within the mental location of the

“other” the totality of the *stranger* should be recognized and this recognition cannot be realized if the cognition is not involved in a comprehensibly intersubjective fashion. Although it is a hard task but the transplantation of ideas has repeatedly happened in the course of human history. For instance, Locke’s ideas were transplanted to America by Madison and Jefferson.

To put it differently, the doctrines of the Socinians represent a rational reaction to a medieval theology based on submission to the Church’s authority. Though they retained Scripture as something *supra rationem*, the Socinians analyzed it rationally and believed that nothing should be accepted *contra rationem*.

Their social and political thought underwent a significant evolutionary process from a very utopian pacifistic trend condemning participation in war and holding public and judicial office to a moderate and realistic stance based on mutual love, support of the secular power of the state, active participation in social and political life, and the defense of social equality. They spoke out against the enslavement of peasants, and were the first Christians to postulate the separation of Church and state.

The spirit of absolute religious freedom expressed in their practice and writings, determined, more or less immediately, all the subsequent revolutions in favor of religious liberty. The precursor ideas of the Socinians on religious freedom later were expanded, perfected, and popularized by Locke and Pierre Bayle. Locke’s ideas were transplanted to America by James Madison and Thomas Jefferson who implemented them in American legislation.

The rationality of the Socinians set the trend for the philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment and determined the future development of many modern intellectual endeavors. (Hillar, 1994. Pp 22–57)

In other words, the transplantation of Allama Jafari’s episteme is possible provided one is conscious about the differences between disciplinary and primordial epistemes or textures of disenchantment paradigm and enchantment framework. To put it otherwise, if we attempt to reconstruct the image of Allama Jafari as a scientist then we are playing in a ground which is constructed by architects of disenchantment and additionally is not what Allama Jafari intended to achieve.

Said differently, we need to resuscitate the *imago magus* as Allama Jafari is a contemporary magus which in the context of Islam is equivalent to “Hakim”. Last but not least, it should be emphasized that there is no specific mechanism in globalizing local thinkers as what is needed is a recreation of magical poetry or *magikos poiesis* embedded in the universe of *religio perennis* which targets the inner tapestry of human soul as its subject-matter in re-presenting *perennial ideals*.

Said differently, we cannot solely rely on translation of ideas based on lexical accuracy without realizing the poetry of intellection which is the fundamental principle of coherency in the body of background assumptions underlying Allama Jafari’s universe.

Apart from the question of incommensurability which may exist when the coherency principle is based on

rationality vis-à-vis intelligibility there is the issue of dialectics of temporality and spatiality in Allama Jafari. In other words, if we assume that each thinker formulates her/his thought in accordance to a context and the text is defined in regard to an audience then what is left for future?

Futurologists argue that humanity will enjoy increasing political and economic liberty, as well as increasing freedom from ignorance and superstition. Humanity will enjoy increasing prosperity and steady progress within the limits defined by the laws of physics. Effective immortality may result from technology allowing the human mind to sustain its brain or perhaps reincarnate itself as an intelligent artifact.

Human civilization will experience neither salvation nor extermination by nature, machines, aliens, or gods. Humanity will spread throughout the Solar System and into the Milky Way, and be enriched by contact with other intelligent species and artifacts. Eventually humanity's descendants will so improve their genes and minds that Homo sapiens will exist primarily as a revered memory.

Religion will decline due to the ongoing loss of faith. In other words, world religions such as Christianity will be hollowed out and diluted into a bland mysticism. Islam will follow along the same track but about 150 years behind. Being already more mystical, Hinduism and especially Buddhism will linger as phenomena more ethnocultural than religious, much like Judaism and Shintoism already are.

The interesting issues in these predictions are the concepts of “liberty”, “immortality”, “humanity”, “human being”, “sapience” and “religion” which in the eyes of futurologists would lose their essential connotations. Now the question in relation to religio perennis, enchantment paradigm and the universe of Allama Jafari is what could be offered to a world that has lost its soul? In other words, if the future of *homo sapiens* is ominous as predicted by futurologists then is there any chance the flapping of Gabriel's wings

will not fall on deaf ears of reincarnated intelligent post-human artifacts? To answer this question, we need to write another long treatise but the short answer is:

... that man can have nothing but what he does ... and his deeds will be seen. Then he will be recompensed with a full and the best recompense ... and to your Lord is the End (Return of everything). (Koran, Chapter 53. Verses 39–42)

¹. In a private talk that I had with my Irish colleague (Peter Stone at the Department of Political Science at Trinity College in Dublin–Ireland he rightly emphasized that

... Allama Jafari's work, no doubt deserves a serious attention ... [but] I am pretty confident that most English-language speakers [are] unfamiliar with [Allama] Jafari.

We are responsible for this state of affairs as Iranian scholars and intellectuals have not taken any step in presenting the works of such celebrated contemporary thinkers to non-Iranian audience in a systematic fashion. This is, as stated earlier, my second work on Allama Jafari in English but these kinds of projects require the efforts of a team of scholars who discern the destructive challenges of market-driven corporative imperialistic ideologies of global oligarchies – and seize the

opportunities in mobilizing conscientious souls across the world in working for the establishment of a sane society (a la Erich Fromm) or intelligible world (a la Allama Jafari). To those who argue that word cannot change the world, I should tell that

... in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1).

Or

... surely we belong to God and to God shall we return. (2: 156)

[2.](#) In the course of his extensive research into the nature of social reality, human action, and social interaction, Alfred Schutz returned repeatedly to the phenomenon of relevance. Any attempt to analyze Schutz's crucial concepts (e.g. the Life-world, Intersubjectivity, Typification, Meaningful Action, and Ideal Types) or to use those concepts in the course of phenomenological social-scientific research will similarly call for an understanding of this underlying phenomenon. Schutz's theory of relevance is one of the most paradoxical concepts which reflect the nature of social reality in a very paradoxical fashion. (Cox, 1973) Here I have not been concerned with this aspect of phenomenological research as such but touched slightly upon the "relevance" of Allama Jafari's

relevance in a global context. In other words, the relevance of Allama Jafari's relevance itself could be a relevant problematique which may be examined by phenomenologist scholars who are interested in relevance of non-Eurocentric social theories in a Eurocentric context in Europe and America.

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