Reactualization of Al-Farabi's Philosophy

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Abstract—The intellectual heritage of Abu Nasr Al-Fârabî' (870-950 AD) just received public recognition in Muslim world in the last fifty years and has not sufficiently been exploited within scientific studies and inquiries. For more than one millennium, Al-Fârabî was forgotten since some of his works were not properly assembled while few others were almost lost. This condition requires reactualization efforts to establish the eminent position of Al-Fârabî's philosophy within the comprehensive treasures of Islamic thoughts. This present study aims to explore Al-Fârabî's philosophy in terms of his creativity as an original Muslim philosopher. The analysis was carried out through the ideological critique. In this context, ideological critique is defined as the functional aspect of ideology like that of the socio-political, cultural, and economic system, surrounding the founder of a philosophical thought, which in turn influence the thought itself. Some of Al-Fârabî's ideas are closely related to the ideological critique that he developed, such as the initiation for the project of translating Greek classical texts in Islamic world, the solution for the harmony between philosophy and religion, his tendency towards logic established by Aristotle, and the ideas of the Ultimate State.

Keywords: reactualization, ideological critique, philosophy and religion

I. INTRODUCTION

Islamic philosophy is one scope of Islamic studies whose existence has raised pros and cons. Various groups of people who are progressive, rational, critical, and open-minded give recognition to Islamic philosophical thought while others give their cynical view on this matter. Like Islamic philosophy with its prevailing controversy, the similar situation also occurs in the philosophical tradition of Al-Farabî (870-950 AD). The intellectual tradition of this Peripatetic philosophy lacks appreciation and is almost forgotten. According to Ibrahim Madkour, Al-Fârabî's philosophical tradition was supposed to have been well appreciated fifty years ago or more. This tradition has not yet obtained proper discussion, inquiry, and research. For a long time, Al-Fârabî'Philo-sophy was forgotten.[1] Some of his works were not properly compiled while others were almost lost. In fact, people who lived in his day just ignored them without making any critical efforts on them[2].

This situation lasted for almost ten centuries, from the 10th century AD until the 19th century AD. In the mid-nineteenth century, between 1890 and 1895 AD, an institution located in Leiden Nether-lands published two Al-Fârabî works, *Al-Tsamrah al-Mardiyyah* and *ArâlAhl al-Madînah al-Fadhîlah*. Similar effort was then made in the 20th century AD by *Dâirah al-Ma'ârif al-Utsmâniyyah* in Haidar Abad through the publication of several Al-Fârabî's works previously scattered everywhere[3]. Although the publication did not seem to be methodologically appropriate and tended to in rush, these efforts have awakened Muslims' awareness of their ownership on Al-Fârabî's philosophical heritage. It is evident through the emergence of various studies, seminars, research, and publication of Al-Fârabî's other works.

II. METHOD

This study is a library research (library research) conducting using various available literatures in the form of books, journals, and results of previous research. The first step taken was to classify the data related to the research and then described as well as unfolded the meaning contained in the subject being examined in accordance with the objective facts. Furthermore, data analysis was carried out by distinguishing one concept from other concepts in order to obtain the desired data. Data sources of this research are primary and secondary one. The primary sources include Al-Fârabî's work related to this research while secondary sources are other works about Al-Fârabî's philosophy especially *Nahnuwa al-Turats* by Muhammad Abid Al-Jâbirî[4].

III. DISCUSSION

A. Al-Fârabî's Short Biography and Intellectual Map

Al-Fârabî's full name is Abu Nashr Muhammad IbnTharkhanIbnAuzalaq[5]. He was born in 870 AD / 257 AH from a Persian father and a Turkish mother in a small village called of Wasij,Farab, an area near Jaxartes river Transoxiana within the administration of the Turkistan region [6]. At the age of 40, this Muslim philosopher known in the West by the name of Alpharabius went to Baghdad to study Arabic to Abu Bakar Al-Sarraj as well as to study logic and philosophy to Abu BisyrMattius. He also studied to YuhannaIbnJailan[7]. In 945 AD / 330 AH, Al-Fârabî moved to Damascus and became acquainted with Saif al-Dawlah al-Hamdani, Sultan of the Hamdan Dynasty in Aleppo. The Sultan was very pleased with Al-Fârabî's wisdom and intellect-tual attitude, which later gave him the position of a royal *ulema* (cleric) with a very large allowance. The large amount of salary he earned was contradictory with his simple,

zuhd (ascetic) and quiet life [8]. From Aleppo, he went to Cairo, and finally died in Damascus at the age of 80 years precisely in December 950 AD. Al-Fârabî was buried in *bab al-Shagir*, and his funeral ceremony was led directly by the highest authority in the country[9].

B. Reactualization of Philosophy

In this section, two important terms, reactualization and tradition (*turâts*) needs to be clearly defined. First, the term reactuali-zation is derived from the word actual meaning existing in fact and the word actualize meaning to realize something. These two roots derives into reactulize and reactualization meaning to revive or re-realize. The word reactualizatiaon is translated into Arabic with *i'âdah al-bina* (rebuilding). In this article, the term reactual-ization is used as a technical term equivalent to *Tajdîd al-Fahm* (renewal of understanding) or reconstruction. Mulyadhi defines reactualiza-tion in this context as portraying the traditions of Islamic philosophy to uncover the secrets behind its glory in the past and to be a stepping stonee in the present context[10]. Hence, reactualization in this paper is intended as an effort to renew the understanding or as a hermeneutical process of understanding *al-maqru* (text) for *qari* (Reader), which in this case is related to the philosophical tradition of Al-Fârabî.

Second, the term tradition (*turâts*) also needs to be identified. This term is found in the Quran once exactly in Surah Fajr verse 19, "*Wata'kulûna al-Turâtsaaklanlamma*" (And ye devour inheritance - all with greed (QS. Al Fajr: 19) *Turâts* in this verse means the inheritance left by the deceased for those who live after their death[4, p. 22][11]. According to Arkoun, tradition has three main elements in related to text and criticism. They are socio-historical, structural element of a text and thought[12]. These traditional elements are present and accompany our existence, which comes from our past or others'. Hence, the traditions is a crossing point between the past and the present[13]. Any work always has its history and sociology -which can be elaborated by the next generations of thinkers. From the above explanation of these two terms, the concept of reactualization of Al-Fârabî's philosophy is important in rebuilding Muslims' awareness by unfolding each issue in its historical position. In this case, the obviously urgent issue is how to rethink and criticize the concept on the historicty of Al-Fârabî'sphilosophy, which symbolizes the emblement of Muslim awareness as well as the affirmation for the identity of Islamic civilization[4, pp. 9–10][8].

C. Ideological Critique of Al-Fârabî's Philosophy

The word ideology comes from Greek word *idea* and *logia*. Idea is derived from *idein* meaning "to see". According to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, an idea means something existing in the

mind as a result of the formulation of an opinion, a plan or the like[14]. Meanwhile, the word logic comes from the word *logos* meaning word. The word logos is derived from *legein* meaning to speak and *logia* meaning science or theory [15]From this root, De Tracy concludes ideology as the study of ideas in the broadest sense namely all reality of consciousness such as socio-political-economic awareness, the nature and its law, and interaction with similar aspects[16, p. 158]. From this lexical understanding, ideology is defined as weltanschauung (world view) which gives humans the norms of right-wrong, reward-punishment, and legal-prohibition in their socio-logical sense[17].

Within the discourse of Al-Jâbirî's thoughts, the term ideology becomes very important because it is the implication in the use of the methodology. The term ideology in this context represents the elements that scaffold and integrate the building blocks of the thoughts. He mentions that in the tradition of Islamic philosophy two substantial categories need to be actualized namely knowledge materials (*mâddah al-Ma'rifiyyah*) and ideological sub-stance (*al-Madman al-Ideôlogi*). Knowledge materials in Islamic philosophy as well as in any philosophy, both classical and contemporary, are reflected through knowledge that is allegedly relevant in certain contexts[10]. The knowledge materials of Islamic philosophy or also called the products of Islamic philosophy are static, limited to certain time and period, and are unable to be reactualized. As in its nature, a scientific theory always develops and changes. If it lives, it only lives once and if it dies, it dies once and for all[4, p. 48].

Meanwhile, ideological substance is different from that of knowledge. This substance is ideology in itself. As said by Al-Jabiri, ideological substance is mainly related to the functions of ideology (*wadhîfah al-Ideôlogia*) like those of the socio-political and economic system surrounding the founder of a philosophical thought, which in turn influence the thought materials[4][18]. In addition, ideology has a futuristic orientation, so it will live in the future as it lived in its time. However, the futuristic life of the ideology is obviously in the form of a dream (*fi sûrah al-hilm*). In fact, the nature of the dream itself is not bound to space and time.

D. Translation of Greek Works

The process of translating Greek manuscripts into Arabic during the Caliph Al-Ma'mun was a big scientific enterprise laden with ideological content[19]. At a glance, a series of "accidental elements" (*'anâshir al-shudfah*) were seen in the form of the Caliph's initiative to preserve Greek astronomy, logic and philosophical thoughts. Besides, it was also seemingly accidental that they found books and explanations that allow them to integrate the problems of Greek with Islamic aqeedah (belief system). After observing such elements, a questions

arise as why the accidental elements were systematically repeated? This question does not mean that "coincidence" is denied, but the systematically repeated "coincidence" means a law; a strong motivation that drives the process.

The Abbasid Caliphate aware of the ideological attack defended its country with Mu'tazila rationality that reinforced the position of reason as the most authoritative source of knowledge. To strengthen the position of such rationality, the Caliph Al-Makmûniniatiated the translation of Greek philosophical works[20][19]. Thus, the proliferation of Greek manuscripts in the Arab world at that time was based on an attempt to confront the Gnostic ideology of the Ancient Persia.

E. Harmony Between Philosophy and Religion

The issue of the harmony of between philosophy and religion can be traced through the philosophical question, "Is this harmony a *result* or a *cause*? In other words, was the translation of Greek philosophy motivated by the 'harmonization' effort, or were there other aspect motivating the Abbasid state to translate the Greek intellectual heritage and to harmonize the Islamic thoughts?[21][22]

The answer to this question can be traced back to Al-Fârabî himself. He was a person who studied Greek philosophy and transformed it into Arabic. There is no doubt that he received Islamic education, upheld the Islamic religion, was exposed to the spirit of Arab-Islamic civilization, and lived in political, social and cultural golden age of Islamic civilization. Thus, it can be deduced that Al-Fârabî possessed highly material, spiritual and intellectual qualifications that anyone could give their perfect attention to the work he did. Therefore, the reader of the Greek manuscripts was not Al-Fârabî personally but the whole Islamic Civilization with all its dimensions of social, political, historical, spiritual, and thought that manifested in Al-Fârabî's personality. [23, pp. 30–31]

F. Aristotelian Logic

Another cause of the extensive involvement of Aristotelian philosophy in Islamic thought is that Islamic philosophers, especially Al-Fârabî[24][25], were impressed with the logic, so what lies behind Aristotelian logic? According to Al-Jâbirî, the phase of Islamic civilization during Al-Fârabî's time was similar to the natural phase of Greek civilization during Aristotle's time. The phase experienced by Aristotle was a dramatic change in Greek civilization from *mythos* to *logos*, from the mythical religion to the religion of reason, and from the tribal community to the urban community as well as imperial community[23, pp. 22–23][26].

Similarly, the phase experienced by Abu Nasr Al-Fârabî was a transition from mythos to logos, from idol worship to monotheism, from the *fitrah* (innate)

religion at the time of the emergence of Islam to the religion of Mu'tazila rationality and from tribal community to Mecca urban community to *Dawlah* (Caliphate) Islam state community [4, p. 64]. To clarify the ideological aspect of Al-Fârabî's involving of Aristotelian logic in Islamic thought, the following table is given:

Table 1: Muhammad 'Âbid Al-Jâbirî's Analogy on the Similarity of Greek Civilization and Islamic Civilization

Social Structure of Greek Community	Tribal Community	Urban Community	Imperial Community
Social Structure of Islamic Community	Tribal Community	Urban Community (Mecca-Medina)	**Dawlah Community**
Political System of Greek Community	Tribal System	Urban System	**Dawlah System (Alexander the Groot)**
Political System of Islamic Community	Tribal System ('Ashabiyyah)	Urban System (Mekkah-Madinah)	**Dawlah Syatem (Caliph Al-Makmun)**
Greek Thought	Mythos (Idol worship/mythic)	Logos (Dominated by reason)	
Islamic Thought	**Mythos (Jahiliyyah/idol worship)**	**Logos (Tawhid religion-Mu'tazila rationality)**	

G. The Problem of Happiness

Al-Fârabî's discussion on the topic of happiness can be found in his two works entitled *Tahsil al-Sa'adah* (achieving happiness)[27] and *al-Tanbih al-Sa'adah*(Building Happiness)[28]. In the first book, Al-Fârabî suggests that happiness is achieved through the attainment of moral and intellectual virtues while in the latter book he refers to happiness as the desire to good deeds for the good itself not because of certain motives but because of the desire itself. For him, happiness is the ultimate goal of every action. It implies that someone who does any activities or actions will attempt to achieve goal of happiness. Similarly, individuals who are honest, sincere, diligent, helpful, and humble want to achieve this ultimate happiness[29]. This is in line with the purpose of the creation of human by Allah, i.e. to get happiness. God provides humans various resources on this earth to make it easier for them to achieve happiness. Thus, if they are unhappy despite such provision from God, humans have indirectly offended the "feelings" of God [30].

H. Precedence of Philosophy Over Religion

In addition to religious continuation, Al-Fârabî also mentions the precedence of philosophy over religion. In his book *Kitab al-Millah* (Book on Religions)[31], Al-Fârabî provides an analogy

between the division of philosophy and religion. He used this analogy to compare Greek developments to that of Islamic thought. Al-Fârabî wrote: "Religion is composed of theory and practice similar to philosophy. Theory in religion has two components. One is the certain theory that applies customarily and shows the religious substance of religions while the other is the theory that portrays the religion itself. Religion consists of false religion (*al-Millah al-Dhallah*) and ultimate religion (*al-Millah al-Fadhilah*). The false religions are those that do not include elements to enable humans to believe in it whether in substance, arguments, or examples. Meanwhile, the main religion resembles philosophy, which is also composed of two components, namely theory and praxis. If humans know the theoretical philosophy, it is not possible for them to practice it[32]. Meanwhile, if they know the practical philosophy, it is possible for them to carry it out. In the context of religion, practices are those contained in practical philosophy, so the main religion is the overall picture of practical philosophy[33].

The above quotation implies that religion is the appeal for all human beings and the basis for the formation of the state, which came later from philosophy. Therefore, religion to provide guidance for people is similar to the theoretical and practical content of philosophy, which is certainly displayed in easily understandable forms. This Al-Fârabî's view stresses the fundamental understanding of the harmony of philosophy and religion. This view is often used as one of the arguments to counter the ideology and thought that consider the contradiction of philosophy and religion[34].

I. The Ultimate State

Abu Nasr Al-Fârabî established his thoughts through the head of the state and relied all his interests on him. In his book *Arâ' al-Madînah al-Fadlîlah*, Al-Fârabî wrote a separate article entitled *fîkhishâl Râis al-Madînah al-Fadlîlah*[35, p. 127], on the Conditions of Leadership of The Ultimate Countries[36]. In this article, Al-Fârabî suggests the leadership quail-fications as follows: descending from a good generation of people, possessing perfect physical potentials as well as perfect understanding and knowledge, intelligent, agile, good memory, good in speech, loving science, honest, trustful, defender of justice, optimistic, big-hearted, and avoiding carnal pleasure. These qualification are complemented by a certain criterion that distinguish it from Plato's proposed qualification model. This criterion suggests that that the head of the state must be able to rise to the degree of *akalfa'al* (actual intellect) from which revelation and inspiration are derived[37]. In addition to Al-Fârabî's concept as an Islamic leadership qualification, *akalfa'al* (actual intellect) is one of the ten intellects in cultivating the nature. It is the point that connects the servant with their God. It also serves as the laws needed for moral and social life. This

qualification is sufficient proof of the creative force of Al-Fârabî's intellectual compared to his predecessors

There are several conclusions about reflexivity to create the universe:

1) The only equation to explain the creation of the universe that is integrated into Islam and modern science is Hahslm 472319, known as the H theory.
2) The H Theory can be used in every single creation in the universe because these elements come from different dimensions.

This recommendation is that Islamic scholars should use the H Theory hahshlm to integrate conventional studies. And the theoretical implication is that mainstream theories about the universe and life should refer to H theory.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

From the above description, it can be concluded that Al-Fârabî's intellectual heritage with its various concentric circles is a legacy of rationality and spirituality that integrates humans to make the stepping stone for the future. Ideological critique of Al-Fârabî's philosophy can provide a positive space and a more comprehensive understanding of his philosophical context. Some of his thoughts teach us about solving life problems and integrating the ideological functions to face them. It is through ideological critique that the interaction with Al Farabî's philosophy enables us not only trace the roots of his thoughts but also plan for the better future.[37] This is because Al-Fârabî's philosophical tradition is not a symbol of exclusivism and applies to a particular era but rather becomes a medium for constructive philosophical dialogue to be appreciated in the present context with its own challenges and problems. It is at this point that readers of Al-Fârabî's philosophical tradition can understand, appreciate, and imagine his works as a scientific legacy that is always present in the midst of contemporary life.

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