

Dr Dunja Rašić

Philosophical Sufism and Philosophy in Conversation: Ibn 'Arabī's Critique of Pure Reason

My presentation will focus on the doctrine of *tawḥīd* and the notions of the Divine nature and the laws of nature Muḥyī d-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240) attributed to the group of scholars he referred to as “philosophers” (*falāsifa*). Ibn 'Arabī proudly stated that none of his works contains direct quotes from philosophical treatises. Even so, his writings include numerous references to the works of Plato (d. 347 BCE), Isaac Israeli the Elder (d. 932), al-Fārābī (d. 950), al-Baṭalyawṣī (d. 1052), Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), Ibn Bājjā (d. 1138) and Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) – among others. Ibn 'Arabī defined philosophy as the love for wisdom. He furthermore maintained that each person who is endowed with intelligence must also love wisdom as a result of their intelligence. Philosophers were, however, said to be vulnerable to the machinations of evil spirits and Iblis the Devil. Philosophical theories and systems chiefly rest on rational inquiries and the power of the human mind. Not only did Ibn 'Arabī believe that evil spirits like to meddle in rational inquiries and scientific endeavours of human beings – but he also maintained that the Devil has power over imagination. As a result, philosophical treatises often bear the mark of Iblis and his kin. Ibn 'Arabī was nonetheless adamant that not all philosophical theories and concepts are untrue. Our first task will be to enumerate the surviving references to philosophical treatises in Ibn 'Arabī's writings and refute the oft-repeated premise that Ibn 'Arabī only ever analysed the works of Muslim philosophers. We will furthermore point out the perceived strengths and weaknesses of philosophical speculations on God and the world in Ibn 'Arabī's works – with the intention of offering an innovative perspective on capacities of the human mind and the reception of Hellenistic philosophy in Akbarian Sufism.



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Dunja Rasic earned her Ph.D. in Islamic Studies at the Free University Berlin. Her primary research field is medieval intellectual history, with a focus on Akbarian cosmology, philosophical Sufism and the Islamic philosophy of language. She is currently working on her second book, which is focusing on jinn doppelgangers and the problem of evil in Akbarian Sufism.