

CHAPTER 15

Time and the body in the Greco-Islamic seas: Qur'ānic recitation as the conduit to embodied knowledge of time

Hani Zewail [[University of California Santa Barbara]

Abstract: Heraclitus wrote: 'No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man' (Kahn, 1995). The flow of the river provides a powerful metaphor for describing the *aporia* that reveals time's duality in identity, as both same and different in each moment. Both common to everyday life and an object for philosophical reflection, rivers, seas, and oceans became the subject of aesthetic expression of time not just for Greek but also for Islamic philosophers and mystics. The Ikhwan al-Safa theorized human finitude, temporality, and the body/soul relationship as the passage of ships along seas. Ibn al-'Arabī rooted his conceptualization of the limit of time as the *barzakh*, an intermediary realm between the eternal and the temporal (Bashier, 2004). A metaphysical concept that is spatially represented in the Qur'ān as the meeting between the saltwater ocean and the freshwater river. In this paper, I will argue that Qur'ānic recitation makes these types of mimetic representations corporeal, where embodied aesthetic experience harmonizes the complex resonances between the poeticity of the text and the rules of recitation (*tajwīd*). Epistemologically, that the body's production of acoustic consonances, pharyngealizations, and durational alterations becomes the conduit for an embodied knowledge of temporality through orality.

Introduction

The primary quotation given in the abstract wherein I have cited Heraclitus 'No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man' is in full disclosure, not a speech fragment spoken by Heraclitus; it is a misattributed quotation (Kahn, 1995).¹ Notwithstanding, philosophers have deduced a profound conclusion from the fragment. Namely, according to a subset of philosophers, a certain species of objects retains their identity, insofar as they remain in a constant state of change, flux, or flow. Ostensibly, Heraclitus' conclusion, reduced to its simplest *formulae*, can be understood as a philosophy of transience.

Heraclitus is not alone in comparing time to a river; Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor, a committed Stoic, also compared time to a river;² the latter sharing the conviction of the former's brilliance, and a kind of *paradoxical* worldview that can hold contradictory ideas as coherent. The *co*-herence or the grouping/ grasping together is only given by the *Logos*; a representation of cosmic and universal order given by Divine providence or activity. This provides the contours of the other side of the debate, where some authors have ascribed, the world of *paradoxical, iconoclastic, solitary* Heraclitus as one of being in becoming,³ wherein the riverbed supplies the formal constant for the ever-changing and dynamic waters – the *logos* or the universal order provides the framing, or the fixed form, where ever-flowing time is subsumed by everlasting eternity.⁴

So, herein lies the tension within the dialectic of being and becoming, described by the ideas of time and river; an set of ideas which are an expression of a powerful metaphor: a poetic verbal *figure* that gives us an *ana-logical* expression of *logoi* (Brann 2011). Aristotle points out in the *Poetics*, that metaphor by analogy is a species of metaphor which is predicated upon relationships, wherein he uses the example of designating old age

as the *evening* of life (Aristoteles, Demetrius, and Aristoteles 2007). With respect to the metaphor above, the key analogical feature that holds this relation is that of the passage or flow of time. This powerful metaphor finds currency in contemporary discussions concerning the nature of time, primarily through its activity of passage, and whether such an ascription can be applied to an A-theory or a B-theory of time, temporal becoming or temporal being.⁵ J.J.C Smart has articulated a B-theory view, in his article, *The River of Time*, of the ‘river’ metaphor as one that spatializes time; a conceptualization that rejects any sense of a literal flow of time (Smart 1949).⁶ However, proponents of the dynamic theory or A-theory of time, argue that the literal flow of time designates the passage of time employing metaphor and therefore, serves to articulate the reality of objective temporal becoming (Craig 2002). Still, the issue of authentic temporal becoming is a position that needs to be properly defended, especially since it postulates an existing, real, and objective present.

In this brief paper, I will be arguing that Qur’ānic recitation makes the time of becoming sensible, where embodied aesthetic experience harmonizes the complex resonances between the poeticity of the text and the rules of recitation (*tajwīd*). Epistemologically, the body’s production of acoustic consonances, pharyngealizations, and durational alterations becomes the conduit for an embodied knowledge of temporality through orality. Furthermore, the *teleology* of oral recitation is found in its productivity, giving the sacral tools for inscribing objective time; it is a ‘making-present, appresenting,’ that relates to the cognitive ability of human consciousness to instantiate atemporal ideals through ‘the temporal variance of intentional acts’; what Husserl identified as a psychic apprehension *vel* ‘*attunement*’ – of an internal time that makes possible the constitution of objective time’ (Husserl qtd. in Wolfson 2006).

The temporal aporetic: a primer

Augustine of Hippo, in his aporetic meditations on the nature of time, posited the ontological question: *quid est enim tempus* (‘What, then, is time’) (Augustine 2002). At first blush, a simple question, but one that only feigns such innocence, its magnitude is immense, and its answers challenge the most fundamental *paradigms* established in disciplines as diverse as the physical sciences to the core of theology, and even music. In his theological science on time, Augustine’s inquisitive method centers on time’s quiddity, an investigation that is predicated upon its existence.⁷ In other words, in asking, what is time, Augustine asks us *is* time.⁸ The question of the being or the non-being of time determines the contours of Augustine’s reflections, one which is articulated against the backdrop of his skepticism. Ontically, he cogitates upon the substance of the past, present, and future --- a *prima facie* argument for time’s non-existence. Ostensibly, the past doesn’t exist since it is no longer here, the future doesn’t exist since it is not yet, and the present cannot subsist within itself. However, human beings have the remarkable capacity to speak of time, our speech concerning time is meaningful, and as such, we locate within language the primary *aporia* that impels us into ontology.⁹ As the philosopher Paul Ricoeur writes, ‘How can we speak of that which doesn’t exist? Or perhaps more centrally, how can we measure that which doesn’t exist?’ (Ricoeur 1990).

Herein we have set the stage to return to another philosopher, Aristotle, who identifies the same paradox within the problem of time, namely, that of the temporal aporetic. In Chapter 10 of the *Physics*, Aristotle speculates on the following questions: (1) whether time is of things being or nonbeing, as well as (2) its quiddity (or essence). Both Aristotle in his exteriorized investigation and Augustine in his interiorized musings begin their investigation of time by attempting to ascertain the answer to time’s basic existence. In Aristotle’s language, he asks whether the parts of time: the past and the future, or as Greek syntax gives us the ‘*this* of what has happened and does not be’ and the ‘*that* which comes along and does not be yet,’ can truly be said to exist in the same manner as any other physical existent (trs. Manchester 2005).

Aristotle and the now

The Aristotelian now serves as an evidentiary piece to substantiate the central premise of this paper. Namely, ‘the now’ is present and non-conceptualized, wherein it subsists within a principle of embodied performance *praxis*. The Aristotelian ‘now’ can be theorized as participating in the substance of recitation; for it is both empirically present within the vocal phenomenon of nasal articulation (*ghunna*),¹⁰ as well as the transcendent aspect of meaning that is conditioned by its aesthetic experience.

Let’s take a walk with Aristotle and his analysis of the now, to properly illustrate how it is that the *now* gives us *knowledge of time*.¹¹

In his exploratory remarks, Aristotle focuses upon the phenomenal features of the now, specifically its *aporetic* nature.

(1) ‘the now appears to divide the past and the future, whether it is always remains one and the same or is other and other... For it is always different and different’

(2) Mendell’s articulation of Aristotle’s mathematics gives a straightforward and preliminary way to understand Aristotle’s *paradox* of the now (Mendell 2019).

(3) Suppose I have a line *AB* and cut it at *C*. The lines *AC* and *CB* are distinct. Is *C* one point or two?

(4) *C* is one point in number.

(5) *C* is two points in its being or formula (*logos*).

Notwithstanding, there is a slight problem in representation, as the ‘now’ shares certain *analogical* (expression of *logos*) features with a point on a line; however, it is unlike said point because time and change in Aristotle’s words ‘never stop,’ which means we are not able to divide time into its actuality, only in potentiality.¹² In John Philoponus’ commentary, he writes: ‘the nows are not like points which actually divide a line, because such points have a certain position which remain, whereas change and time are *always* in the process of becoming, and are *always* flowing, so the now cannot actually divide them into parts’(trs. Lettinck 1994).

The analysis gives us the dual nature of the ‘now’ as being, in a qualified sense, both one and two; one in number and two in being (*logos*). The quiddity of the secondary aspect, two in being, is located in the fact that different phases of a *particular* motion identify the intervals of change (*kinēsis*), which exists in relation to different nows.¹³¹⁴

Furthermore, Aristotle insists that perceptual awareness of motion and its passage- a function of our mind- is necessary to be aware of time. To demonstrate the mental dependence of motion and subsequently of time on it, Aristotle uses the example of the heroes of Sardinia, the same story that we find in the Qur’ān in Surat al-Kahf.

Aristotle writes:

‘the story is told that they sleep among heroes, when they awaken. For they synapse the Now beforehand with the Now afterward and make them one, cancelling the in-between [*to metaxy*] through anaesthesia’ [trans. Manchester 2005]

The narrative of the heroes of Sardinia provides us with an initial clue as to what will give us the proper means of knowing time or giving it an identity.¹⁵ Aristotle indicates that one needs a soul/ mind to perceive the changes in motion. A conclusion that would resonate

with modern trends of psychology, such as the author William James' conclusion, who writes 'there exists no reason to suppose that empty time's own changes are sufficient for the awareness of change to be aroused'¹⁶ (James qtd. in Zuckerkandl 1973). Aristotle remains committed to the sensations of physical bodies and motion, in tandem with psychological sensation to bring the awareness of time. Fundamentally, Aristotle is giving us a precursor to the necessary components in time's *formulae*. The necessary formula requires the preservation of both the external (before-now and after-now), as well as the metaxy or in-between. Without all three of these components, there would be no way to horizon time.¹⁷

Later on: Aristotle identifies time, by means of the now, as follows:

'We identify (define, embrace in view) time when given some 'other and other' we entertain both them and something in between them and something in between different from them; for when we apprehend the extremes as different from the middle, and the soul says the Nows two, the one beforehand, the other afterward, then and this we affirm to be time. For what is defined/ horizon(ed) by the Now seems to be time.' [trans. Manchester 2005]

Within this formulation, Aristotle's remarks retain the two-fold 'monad of motions necessary to know time. This *knowledge* of the appearance of time will give us our second touchstone to the Qur'ān; however, in this case, it will be on the level of sound and orality, specifically through the technique of *ghunna*.

Peter Manchester provides the lighthouse for how we can actualize this comparison productively. Specifically, Manchester tells us that 'saying the Nows two' can be illustrated in the Greek word for Now, *nun*. *Nu*, *Upsilon*, *Nu* (Manchester 2005). To 'say Now' and to have knowledge of time, one is required to pronounce both the exterior (*two N's*), as well as the interior aspect of the sound, the *Upsilon* in-between. The profundity of Manchester's example is powerful, as it provides a real philosophical way to demonstrate the exact correlation between Aristotle's definition of the recognition of time and Islamic religious expressive culture. The Islamic temporal recitative profile manifests in the technique of *ghunna* which is described by reciters as the nasalization of two beats; it is the geminate consonants (n/u/n)¹⁸. In light of our central thesis, I am arguing that the technique of *ghunna* is a non-conceptualized and embodied way of expressing the definition of time; it is the literal sonic recitation of the interval 'Nows two.' Furthermore, this knowledge of time can only be discovered through orality, the act of recitation.

The Qur'ānic reciter is asked to assume the prowess of what Deleuze writes of 'making time sensible'. [Deleuze, quoted in Wolfson 2006] The responsibility given to the reciter is to recall the reality of *time*; ergo bring forth the reality of the *Real* that is situated within the divine text. The species of time the reciter is asked to manifest is the '*time* of Aeon' or what the Qur'ān notes as *Dahr*, a name which God calls himself in the Islamic tradition. Eliot Wolfson tells us it is 'in this formless time, the strict linear chronology is disrupted and disintegrated' it is 'a space where a temporal doubling may occur, wherein it occupies a liminal space where beginnings end and endings begin'. [Wolfson 2006] Such a conceptualization would be synonymous with Aristotle's understanding that 'time will therefore never exhaust itself since it is always at a beginning' – for Aristotle does not understand time as a series of instants or 'nows' along a timeline, which has been attributed to his understanding, but more thoroughly the now which gives knowledge of time is in a 'continuous ongoing existential movement, which is always both at a beginning and at a culmination'. [Manchester 2005] To which, the formal interval is given as nun/metaxy/nun—a temporal doubling with a *metaxic* in-between.¹⁹

Such a conceptualization would fit well with Voegelin's identification, originally derived from Plato, of the metaxy as the philosophical experience, which we are transposing into

the recitational, wherein the abutment of two poles maintains their discrete natures: “Neither does eternal being become an object in time, nor is temporal being transposed into eternity. We remain in the ‘in-between,’ in a temporal flow of experience in which eternity is nevertheless present... The concept most suitable to express the presence of eternal being in the temporal flow is flowing presence” (Voegelin cited in Wolfson 2006).

To summarize part one, of the Aristotelian now, I want to invoke Ibn al-‘Arabī’s near proximate conclusion foreshadowing the next section of this paper, he articulates the idea utilizing God’s divine injunction, manifest through the word *K[u]n*, or (Be!), which in the Arabic language is comprised of three ‘letters’, (Kaf), (Waw as a Dumma), (Nun), through which God spoke the reality of existence through sound. Ibn al-‘Arabī writes: he brought three letters, two of which are manifest – the *kaf* and the *nun* – and one of which [the waw] is non-manifest and hidden... in the existent things, which are entities of divine words, there is priority, posteriority, and order. This is made manifest by the Aeon, and the Aeon is God, according to an explicit text. The Prophet said, “Do not curse the Aeon, for God is the Aeon” (Bashier 2004). Most simply, when reciters say N/w/N, they recall God’s K/w/n, a reality, which can only be revealed through orality.

Time and water in Ibn al-‘Arabi:

For Ibn al-‘Arabī, time most profoundly expresses itself through the metaphor of the *barzakh*, which has multiple indexes, including natural and ecological phenomena, as well as the imagination. The *barzakh*, as a term, comes to stand for that which is an intermediary between two separate bodies, parts, or aspects of being. The term itself is located in its ecological and aquatic dimension within the divine text of the Qur’ān, by means of the application of rivers or bodies of water. The appearance of the *Barzakh qua* water appears in two verses.²⁰ I would like to draw attention to within the Qur’ān, in the Verse of the Logos [Rahman], wherein the *barzakh* is mentioned as an ecological phenomenon -- within the repetitive structure of the verses indicating God’s creative activity in organizing the larger cosmos, as well as in a narrative structure that takes place within the proverbial meeting between Khidr, the ‘the Verdant One’ and the Prophet Moses. In its first manifestation, in Surat al-Rahman, Ibn al-‘Arabī is providing commentary on the following verse: ‘He merges the two bodies of ‘fresh and salt’ water, yet between them is a barrier they never cross, Then which of your Lord’s favours will you both deny?, Out of both ‘waters’ come forth pearls and coral (55: 20-22)’. The ‘in-between’ or metaxic nature of the *barzakh*, serves as a theological center piece for Ibn al-‘Arabī’s mystical philosophy. Wherein, he translates the *barzakh* into the activity of God’s divine attribute as the All-Merciful, which is related subsequently to the divine effects of time and temporality: manifest in the everlasting and eternity ecological aquatic bodies.

His commentary is as follows:

“He has let free the Two Seas, meeting together: between them there is a *barzakh*, which they do not transgress. Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny? Will you deny the Sea that He attached to Himself and concealed from the Entities, or the Sea that he detached from Himself and named Worlds, or the *barzakh* upon which the All-Merciful (al-Rahmān) sat? Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny? He extracts from the Sea of Eternity pearls and from the Ever-lasting Sea He extracts coral. Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny?” [trans. Bashier 2004]

Deciphering all the intended meanings given in this quotation, remains outside the scope of this paper; however, one can plausibly argue that there remain two distinct bodies of water, the salt-water body, that can be considered as eternity -- a body at rest, while the flowing or fresh river characterizes the ever-lasting sea, a body in motion or flow. Furthermore, the chair of God, remains as an intermediary entity, one that unifies these two distinct rivers under the activity of the Divine – a unity of dualities: identifying the monad of reality. Martin Lings, has argued the point that these two bodies of water, in Surat Rahman, refer

to the duality between the manifest and non-manifest, symbolizing transcendence and immanence of the All-Merciful or the Rahman (Infinite Beatitude) (Lings, n.d.). Additionally, Lings argues, that the very constitution of the treasures of water are generated by All-Merciful (*ibid*). Ibn al-‘Arabi ostensibly articulates the same form of language as his comprehension of letters in the creative activity of God’s creation of the cosmos, insofar as he makes use of similar terminology, such as ‘concealed’ ‘hidden’ ‘manifest’ etc. If taken together with the quotation given concerning the *divine fiat*, one can plausibly conclude that the (K and N), manifest letters become stand-ins for eternity, whereas the (w) typifying what is non-manifest comes to stand-in for what is flowing or everlasting. In this rendering, Ibn al-‘Arabī, gives us a poetical device for translating the creative activity of God’s relationship to the effects that are a part of his divine attributes. Namely, he is proceeding to explain the time of *Dahr*, or the time of *Aeon*, through recourse to aquatic bodies that represent species of time, that are encompassed within God’s attribute ‘Al-Rahmān.’ To restate the central argument of this section, Ibn ‘Arabī’s portrayal of ‘Al-Rahman’ as the *barzakh* presents a similar ‘flowing presence’ or the ‘flowing now’ in the ‘God’s eye-view’ of time to that of the ‘now’ as enunciated by the reciter.

Such a position is elucidated by Ibn al-‘Arabī’s version of the temporal aporetic:

‘In respect to newly arrived things, this is “time,” but in respect to the Eternal, it is “eternity without beginning.” What the rational faculty understands from time is something imagined, extended, and lacking the two sides. We judge that what has passed away within it is “the past,” we judge that what will come in it is “the future,” and we judge that what is within it is “the [present] state” [‘āl]. This last is called “the instant” [al-‘ān]. Although the instant is a time, it is a limit for what is past in time and what is future. It is like a point that we suppose on the circumference of a circle. Wherever we suppose the point to be origin and end are designated for the circumference. “Eternity without beginning” and “eternity without end” are the nonexistence of time’s two sides, for it has no first and no last. Rather, it has perpetuity [dawām], and perpetuity is the time of the [present] state, while the state possesses perpetuity. Hence the cosmos never ceases to be under the ruling property of the time of the [present] state, and God’s ruling property in the cosmos never ceases to be in the ruling property of time.’ [trans. Bashier 2004]

I believe this is indeed the best proof, for Ibn al-‘Arabī’s position, that in fact time and more specifically, God’s metaphysical time can be most authentically represented as temporal becoming or flux. The ‘first’ and ‘last’ or to use the Aristotelian language the ‘before’ and ‘after’ that become stand-ins for various versions of eternity, have no real existence. What is truly manifest is that which is unmanifest, the perpetuity or enduring nature of God’s time; it is the flowing now or the ‘perpetuity of the [present] state’ that most properly describes God’s relationship to time and the cosmos. It is a restatement that I had identified earlier in Aristotle’s *aporia* of time, that of its absolute simultaneity. Ibn al-‘Arabī seems to be in agreement with Plato and the later Neoplatonic commentators that there are at least three temporal kinematic propositions (1) time flows, (2) time is a kind of movement and (3) the now flows (McGinnis 2003). McGinnis (2003) tells us Plato and his Neoplatonic followers clearly appealed to a doctrine of temporal becoming, as well as John Philoponus’ interpretation of Aristotle. Remembering John Philoponus’ commentary of the nature of the now as temporal becoming, he gives a prior articulation of its simultaneity: ‘The now is one and the same thing if it is considered to be a moment which “generates” time by its flowing, just as a point generates a line and a moving object generates a motion by its flow’ (Lettinck 1994). Philoponus seems to imply in this way the present, past, and future, are put together in the one form of time, while they are unfolded in becoming -- recalling our *aporia*, that which is always proceeding to being is called the present while that which has perished is the past, and that which is not yet is the future (McGinnis 2003). Thus, the whole time is constantly flowing, just like motion and just like water²¹.

Conclusion

Let me conclude this paper by introducing a moment of disciplinary self-reflexivity. In the concluding verses of Surat al-Kahf, God tells us the following: ‘Say, ‘O Prophet,’ “If the ocean were ink for ‘writing’ the Words of my Lord, it would certainly run out before the Words of my Lord were finished, even if We refilled it with its equal” (18:109). Dr. Timothy Winters, a.k.a, Shaykh Abdul Hakim Murad, has commented that this verse is, in fact, a profound commentary in its implication of the nature of orality; a kind of expression that is necessitated by the Qur’ān in both its recitative components and its linguistic form (*tajwīd*), as the means of comprehending the metaphysical reality of its message (St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology 2024).

I have attempted to demonstrate this principle, in some degree, by demonstrating how exactly recitation can bring us into the world of God, by providing the believer some sense of Divine reality, manifest through His metaphysical time. The comprehension of orality in Islamic circles is self-evident, as the very phenomenology of Islam tells us that the central miracle given to the Prophet Muhammed was the Qur’ān as the direct speech of God. Unlike the Old Testament, the Prophet Muhammed didn’t receive a commandment predicated upon a written text, like Moses, nor based on the performance of bodily miracles, like Jesus. The divine system was transduced from God’s Preserved Tablet to the Angel Gabriel by means of recitation, the proper and correct reproduction of Qur’ānic language (McMurray 2019). Put in other words, the sacred text becomes transduced into the temporal world through the alphabets of the Qur’ān, which inscribe the sacred into the contingencies of the material world (*ibid*).

The intrinsically recitative character of the Qur’ān has been the quintessential reason why Western Orientalists have been misled in their reading, interpretation, and understanding of the Qur’ān (Kermani 2015; Nelson 1985). Kermani (2015) adds that literary aesthetic techniques such as *parallelismus membrorum*,²² *clausula*²³ verses, and scattered meditative passages may appear unnecessary and superfluous to the Western reader, but to the ear of listeners who lie in prostration, this liturgical structure delivers a sense of continuity and coherence to the whole.²⁴ This is where I point, whereas Nelson (1985) tells us that the ‘modern’ West considers *tajwīd* to be a fundamentally arbitrary system of a conventionalist nature (Nelson 1985); I argue that instead, the sacred system helps to reveal and manifest the fundamental reality of God’s nature *qua* His relationship to time.

Works cited

- Adigüzel, Nuri. 2018. “The Concept of ‘Nature’ in Peripatetic Islamic Philosophers [Meşşâî İslam Filozoflarında ‘Tabiat’ Kavramı]”, July. <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.1421981>.
- Aristoteles, Demetrius, and Aristoteles. 2007. *Poetics*. Ed. Stephen Halliwell. Repr. der Ausg. 1999. Aristotle 23. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- “Aristotle’s Concept of Nature: Traditional Interpretation and Results of Recent Studies.” n.d. Accessed November 22, 2024. <https://www.pas.va/en/publications/acta/acta23pas/berti.html>.
- Augustine, Saint. 2002. *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. E.B. Pusey. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3296>.
- Bashier, Salman H. 2004. *Ibn Al-‘Arabī’s Barzakh: The Concept of the Limit and the Relationship between God and the World*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Brann, Eva. 2011. *The Logos of Heraclitus*. First paperback print edition. Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books.
- “Clausula | Latin, Figures, Speech | Britannica.” n.d. Accessed 2 December 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/art/clausula-rhetoric>.
- Craig. 2002. *Time And Eternity*. <http://archive.org/details/craig-time-and-eternity>.

- Craig, William Lane. 2000. *The Tenseless Theory of Time*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-3473-8>.
- Emery, Nina, Ned Markosian, and Meghan Sullivan. 2024. "Time." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, Fall 2024. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2024/entries/time/>.
- Graham, Daniel W. 2023. "Heraclitus." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, Winter 2023. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2023/entries/heraclitus/>.
- Heidegger, Martin, and Werner Brock. 1988. *Existence and Being*. Washington, D.C. : [U.S.]: Regnery Gateway ; distributed by Kampmann.
- Henderson, Jeffrey. n.d. "Aristotle the Metaphysics: Book I: Chapter I." Loeb Classical Library. Accessed July 26, 2023. https://www-loebclassics-com.proxy.library.ucsb.edu/view/aristotle-metaphysics/1933/pb_LCL271.3.xml.
- Kermani, Navid. 2015. *God Is Beautiful: The Aesthetic Experience of the Qur'an*. trans. Tony Crawford. 1st edition. Cambridge: Polity.
- Lettinck, Paul. 1994. *Aristotle's Physics and Its Reception in the Arabic World: With an Edition of the Unpublished Parts of Ibn Bajja's Commentary on the Physics ... 7*. Leiden ; New York: Brill Academic Pub.
- Lings, Martin. n.d. "The Qoranic Symbolism of Water."
- Lizzini, Olga. 2021. "Ibn Sina's Metaphysics." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2021. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/ibn-sina-metaphysics/>.
- Manchester, Peter. 2005. *The Syntax of Time: The Phenomenology of Time in Greek Physics and Speculative Logic from Iamblichus to Anaximander*. Leiden ; Boston: Brill Academic Pub.
- McGinnis, Jon. 2003. "For Every Time There Is a Season: John Philoponus on Plato's and Aristotle's Conception of Time." *KronoScope* 3 (1): 83–111. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156852403322145397>.
- McMurray, Peter. 2019. "Qur'an Alphabetics and the Timbre of Recitation." In , 92–120. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190637224.013.1>.
- Mendell, Henry. 2019. "Aristotle and Mathematics." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2019. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/aristotle-mathematics/>.
- Nelson, Kristina. 1985. *The Art of Reciting the Qur'an*. Cairo ; New York: The American University in Cairo Press.
- Ricoeur, Paul. 1990. *Time and Narrative*, Volume 1, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/T/bo5962044.html>.
- Smart, J. J. C. 1949. "The River of Time." *Mind* 58 (232): 483–94.
- St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*, dir. 2024. *Prof. Tim Winter - ITC Video Keynote: "Klossowski's Reading of Nietzsche from an Islamic Viewpoint."* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wC8YJfyOkOY>.
- Sterne, Jonathan. 2011. "The Theology of Sound: A Critique of Orality." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 36 (2): 207–26. <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2011v36n2a2223>.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. 2009. "Vertical Grammar of Parallelism in Hebrew Poetry." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128 (1): 167–81. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25610173>.
- Wagner, Michael F. 2008. *The Enigmatic Reality of Time: Aristotle, Plotinus, and Today*. Leiden ; Boston: Brill Academic Pub.

Wolfson, Elliot. 2006. *Alef, Mem, Tau: Kabbalistic Musings on Time, Truth, and Death*. First Edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Zuckerandl, Viktor. 1973. "Sound and Symbol. 1: Music and the External World." In , 2. print. Bollingen Series 44. Princeton, NJ: Univ. Press.

NOTES

¹ The text is a read-in from Plato: 'Heraclitus, I believe, says that all things pass and nothing stays, and comparing existing things to the flow of a river, he says you could not step twice into the same river. (Plato *Cratylus* 402a = A6)'; for a more thorough discussion see: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Heraclitus, 3.1 Flux* (Graham 2023)

² "Time is like a river made up of the events which happen, and a violent stream; for as soon as a thing has been seen, it is carried away, and another comes in its place, and this will be carried away too."

³ Philosopher Eva Brann points out that one should be careful in attributing to Heraclitus the position of flux as a becoming. Heraclitus was quite clear that the *logos* as being remains the ultimate frame that encompasses and therefore defines temporal relations (Brann 2011). Levinas' too, has written to the effect of comparing the river in its initial form as a means of deducing being and not becoming. Pg. 49, Levinas 'if it were necessary to compare the notion of the *there is* with a great theme of classical philosophy, I would think of Heraclitus. Not to the myth of the river in which one cannot bathe twice, but to Cratylus' version of the river in which cannot bathe even once, where the very fixity of unity, the form of every existent, cannot be constituted; the river wherein the last element of fixity, in relation to which becoming is understood, disappears.'

⁴ I have borrowed this phrasing from a later author, one central to our study: Ibn al-'Arabī.

⁵ Generally, philosophers of time consider two positions which exhibit an absolute sense of contrariety. This schism with respect to time's most fundamental nature was neatly divided by John McTaggart's distinction of the A-theory or tensed theory of time, and the B-theory or tenseless theory of time. The former which argues that we necessitate a nomenclature of change that articulates the modalities of time into past time, present time, and future time. It argues for an ontology of time, as a profoundly real feature of our physical world. Rephrased, objects truly begin or come into being, subsist, and therein pass out of being; in other words, it is the authentic foundation of temporal becoming (Craig 2000).

The B-theorists of time, or the tenseless philosophers hold that all change can be described in terms of the before-after. Typically, they depict the nature of spacetime as a spread-out manifold with events occurring at different locations in the manifold... To say that a certain autumn leaf changed color is just to say that the leaf is green in an earlier location of the manifold and red in a later location' (Emery, Markosian, and Sullivan 2024 qtd. in Craig 2000). The B-theory tends to be regarded as the theory of physicists; succinctly put that events relate to one another tenselessly.

⁶ 'Substances exist in space; they are related to one another in a 3-dimensional order. Events are in time; they are related to one another in an order of earlier and later. Now if we think of events as changing, namely in respect of pastness, presentness, and futurity, we think of them as substances changing in a certain way. But if we substantialise events, we must, to preserve some semblance of consistency, spatialise time. " Earlier than "becomes " lower down the stream ". It is thus easy to see how there arises the illusion of time as a river down which events float'(Smart 1949).

⁷ The distinction between essence and existence is one that I am borrowing from the Islamic philosopher Ibn Sina in his *Metaphysics*, who distinguishes two areas of being: existence that pertains to the mental or real properties i.e. *in intellectu* or *in re.*, and quiddity or the proper existence of a thing, i.e. its essence (Lizzini 2021).

⁸ The importance of proving the ‘what-is’ of time is highly entangled in the medieval Christian theological apparatus to the notion of truth (*veritas*). Heidegger tells us in his lecture *On the Essence of Truth*, that the phrase *Veritas as adaequatio rei ad intellectum* is not related to the Kantian transcendental conception of man’s subjectivity that objects conform to our perception. Rather, that in Christian theology ‘that things are only what they are, if they are’(Heidegger qtd. in Brock 1988).

⁹ Continuing in the vein of the above footnote on Ibn Sina, it appears he was similarly aware of this paradox in the realm of ontology. Consider Lizzini’s remarks: ‘if the analysis of a thing i.e. of its quiddity or proper existence- were to inform me positively of its existence (by knowing what a thing is, I also know *that* it is), this would be because a thing is in itself necessarily existence and therefore in itself existent. Paradoxically, however... the ‘thing’ in question is only necessary existence, it has no quiddity... and is not, properly speaking, a ‘thing’(Lizzini 2021).

¹⁰ A part of the formal rules that guide sound production and performance in Qur’ānic recitation, i.e. tajwīd,

¹¹ To have knowledge of time is distinct from its predicative definition. To have knowledge of something appearance is not the same things as its essence. This is an epistemological distinction, between giving something an identify, horizon and a definition; definitions identify essences: identities can provide me indirect knowledge of the existence of something. For example, to define God is distinct then to know Him by means of religious experience; however, one can give knowledge of His appearance.

¹² In Aristotle’s words: “The analogy between now and point is not complete: a point may also be regarded as dividing a line into two parts, and then the point could be regarded as two coinciding ones, sc. the end of one part and the beginning of the other part; such a division may actually occur. But in the case of change and time such a division cannot actually occur, because change and time never stop”(Lettinck 1994).

¹³ Motion (*kinēsis*), for Aristotle, exists at the level of principle and can be found, explicitly, in the definition of nature (*phusis*) itself (Ricoeur 1990). Though motion and time are not *coterminous* they exhibit a similitude, time is dependent on motion and *insofar* as time and motion are alike or contingent, time is brought nearer to nature.

¹⁴ Aristotle’s definition: Aristotle defines nature as a source of motion and rest (192b14). Enrico Berti of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences translates in Book V of the *Metaphysics* as ‘it is plain that nature in the primary and strict sense is the substance of things which have in themselves, as such, a source of movement; for the matter is called nature because it is qualified to receive this, and processes of becoming and growing are called nature because they are movements proceeding from this. And nature in this sense is the source of the movement of natural objects, being present in them somehow, either potentially or actually’ (“Aristotle’s Concept of Nature: Traditional Interpretation and Results of Recent Studies,” n.d.). Moreover, the definition and the link between nature and motion was carried into the Islamic world by philosophers such as Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd. The former who defines nature as not the sign ‘but personally the first principle of any movement or rest in a body,’ the latter who defined ‘nature’ as a thing that is ‘the first principle of motion and rest (in natural bodies) (Adıgüzel 2018).

¹⁵ Prof of Philosophy Michael Wagner tells us that taken alone, the argument demonstrated above, is relatively absurd. How can the lack of consciousness concerning time be equivalent to the unreality of time. Rationally, we have knowledge of the motion of physical existents, which exists outside of our minds when we sleep (Wagner 2008). Yet, the depth of the analysis arrives by means of our understanding of the dependence of the perceptual awareness of time on motion.

¹⁶ Unlike, perhaps, a ‘Descartian’ view that attempts to empty consciousness of all into a kind of pure cogitation,

¹⁷ There is some debate, as to whether one can assign the Nows a number, as to say two now, or whether these nows exists most primarily as a single monad.

¹⁸ Literally, the same sounds as the Greek now, as well as (m/e/m).

¹⁹ Plato's idea of metaxy, the "in-between," which is neither time nor eternity but the erotic tension of lingering betwixt the poles of temporal becoming and eternal being.¹⁷ In this state, which Voegelin identifies as the "philosophical experience," the two poles endure in their autonomy: "Neither does eternal being become an object in time, nor is temporal being transposed into eternity. We remain in the 'in-between,' in a temporal flow of experience in which eternity is nevertheless present. The flow cannot be dissected into a past, a present, and a future of world-time, for at every point of the flow there persists the tension toward eternal being transcending time. The concept most suitable to express the presence of eternal being in the temporal flow is flowing presence."

²⁰ In the Qur'ān, the term *barzakh* is also mentioned in the context of a barrier between death and resurrection, as is given by the example of Surah al-Mu'minun (23:100).

²¹ Neoplatonists most vividly captured this conception of time as the unfolding of what is with the imagery of "flowing time" or the "river of time." Damascius offers, perhaps, the clearest statement of this metaphor. For each river is a static form (eādoſ Ƴsthkñw), from which the flow of the river is sustained, receiving the form in flow

²² The term arrives from the study of Biblical traditions, coined by Robert Lowth, Bishop of Oxford and Professor of Poetry, in his 1788 book, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrew Nations*. Boodberg (1959) discusses the idea of *parallelisms* as a phenomenon that supersedes the stylistic device of formulistic syntactical duplication; but in the superimposition of two syntactical images one is given solidity and depth, the repetitions of specific patterns underscoring the binding or bonding effect in the syntagmatic order (Tsumura 2009). More simply, the definition of such parallelism can be understood as expressing a single thought in two lines (*ibid*).

²³ The term *clausula*, has two meaning one in regards to music, the other with respect to rhetoric. In terms of the current inquiry, it is with respect to Greek and Latin concept in rhetoric, by which rhythmic poetry follows a specific pattern that avoids specific types of endings. Therefore, the quantity of syllables becomes based on regular metrical sequences, and endings are codified as strong and weak ("Clausula | Latin, Figures, Speech | Britannica," n.d.).

²⁴ A similar critique has been echoed by sound studies scholars such as Jonathan Sterne, Sobchack, Gitelman, Khesthi, and Robinson, who argue that the Western philosophical tradition has been dominated by 'ocular-centrism'²⁴. 'The primacy of vision over all the other senses is a tradition that is said to have begun with Aristotle whose *Metaphysics* argues 'all men naturally desire to know. An indication for this is our esteem for the senses... most of all... we prefer sight... the reason of this is that... sight best helps us to know things, and reveals many distinctions' (Henderson, n.d.). Yet, sound as a life-giving entity has its roots in Plato and is continued by Neoplatonists and theologians as a form of 'ontotheology'. In any case, the trend of 'ocular-centrism' can be seen as continued by recent post-modernist philosophers like Jacques Derrida, whose deconstructionist project critiques the sounded nature of the world arguing for vision, writing, difference, and absence. (Sterne 2011)