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# **SELF-DISCLOSURE AND THE VESTIGE OF GOD**

## **(Cosmology in Ibn al-`Arabi and Bonaventure )**

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# SELF-DISCLOSURE AND VESTIGE OF GOD (Cosmology in Ibn 'Arabi and Bonaventure)

## I. Introduction

God, man and the universe are of the major themes in Ibn 'Arabi mystical writing. It is also theme in Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*. Indeed, cosmology is not limited to scientific accounts; even until recently most cosmologies have been religious, philosophical or mythical.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the contemporary scientific view of reality is not monolithic (there is more than one interpretation) and that it is a view (a picture, not a set of permanent, absolute facts). One philosopher of science, speaking of science and religion, puts it, "neither cosmology nor doctrine claim definitive descriptions of reality."<sup>2</sup>

The study of the cosmos and its component part is also not only valid but a necessary step toward the knowledge of Divine realities. "The world is nothing but the work of Allah and the study of it becomes incumbent on the believers as part of their religious duty."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>David Tracy and Nicholas Lash define the term in the following way: " 'Cosmology' may mean many things. The term can refer to theological accounts of the world as God's creation; or to philosophical reflection on the categories of space and time; or to observational and theoretical study of the structure and evolution of the physical universe; or, finally to 'world views': unified imaginative perceptions of how the world seems and where we stand in it". See *Cosmology and Theology*, ed. David Tracy and Nicholas Lash, New York: Seabury Press, 1983, vii

<sup>2</sup>Mary Hesse, "Cosmology as Myth," *Cosmology and Theology*, ed. David Tracy and Nicholas Lash, New York: Seabury Press, 1983, 50. She goes on to say: "In our account of interaction of cognitive systems of different kinds. . . we need a quite different story of truth which will be characterized by *consensus* and *coherence* rather than correspondence, by *holism* of meanings rather than atomism, by *metaphor* and *symbol* rather than literalism and univocity, by intrinsic judgments of *value* as well as of fact", 54

<sup>3</sup>Yusuf Ibish, "Ibn al-'Arabi's Theory of Journeying," *Contemplation and Action in World Religions*, edited by Yusuf Ibish and Ileana Marculescu, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1977/1978, 205

This paper will expound Christian and Islamic cosmological doctrine, specifically described by Bonaventure, which represents the trend of Franciscan school of philosophy<sup>4</sup> and Ibn ‘Arabi, the Great Master in Islamic Mysticism, which does not describe details of physics or chemistry but a total science of the cosmos through which human being discover where he is in multiple structured cosmic reality and where he should be going. It will focus on the theory of the universe as God’s self disclosure, God’s self—manifestation (*tajalli*), and ventige or traces of God, which is one of the important teachings of Mysticism and Sufism (Islamic mysticism), especially Bonaventure and Ibn ‘Arabi. In Islamic mysticism, it is based on sacred saying<sup>5</sup> (*hadith qudsi*), which is summarized the Sufi conception of creation and its purpose. The Sacred saying is as follows: “God says, ‘*Kuntu Kanzan Makhfiyyan, wa uridu an u’rafa, fa khalaqtu al-khalqa li’arafuuni*’ (I was a Hidden Treasure and I desired to be known. Therefore I created the creatures so that I might be known).” In Bonaventure Christian mysticisms, it is based on his *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, which is “the result of his ability to fuse together the intense experience of his own prayer life, the theological training that he had received at Paris, and the Christocentric spirituality that was the legacy of Saint Francis to the Order and the Christian world at large”.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See, Conrad John O’Leary, *The Substantial Composition of Man According to Saint Bonaventure*, A Dissertation, Washington DC: Catholic University of America, 1931, 3

<sup>5</sup> By sacred saying (*hadith qudsi*) in Islam is meant that body of utterances of the Prophet which are of direct Divine inspiration and in which God speaks in the first person through the mouth of the Prophet. This kind of tradition, or hadith is thus somewhat similar to the Qur’an although not a part of the Sacred Book. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages, Avicenna– Suhrawardi– Ibn ‘Arabi*, Delmar New York: Caravan Books, 1976, 166

<sup>6</sup> Bonaventure, *The Mind’s of Journey to God, Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, (Trans. By Lawrence S. Cunningham), Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979, front flap.

*Tajalli*, usually is translated by Self-disclosure, self-revelation, self-manifestation, theophany and manifestation. This model of God's self—disclosure is used as the way of interpreting everything. It is a way to think about, reflect upon divine transcendence in immanent way, or to think of God as immanent in our world while retaining, magnifying God's transcendence. It can be called as unites immanence and transcendence. The Qur'an says, "God is closer than the jugular vein." It means that God is closer to us than we are to our selves. God is the Breath and spirit that gives life to the billions of different bodies that make up God's self-disclosure. But God also is the power and goal of everything. This blinding *coincidentia oppositorum* will always present in every religious thought that God is both immanent and transcendent, for the entire universe is at once He and not-He (*Huwa la Huwa*). Abu Sa'id al-Kharraz, a celebrated Sufi master, when he was asked, "Whereby do you know God?" he replied: "By the fact that He is the *coincidentia oppositorum*."<sup>7</sup> This concept is also implicit in Bonaventure's thought. In the *Itinerarium* he speaks that, "the Divine Being is both the first and last, eternal and most present, most simple and greatest or uncircumscribed, wholly everywhere and nowhere contained, most actual and never moved."<sup>8</sup> The model also suggests both anthropology and theology. Understanding the universe as the self-disclosure of God may move us not only toward a more biocentric and cosmocentric perspective but also toward a more inclusive sense of justice for the need of all human beings. If we realize that everything in the universe is the self—disclosure of God, we will acknowledge that something other than ourselves is really real, then, it might follow that we would have to

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<sup>7</sup>Quoted in Ibn 'Arabi, *al-Futuh al-Makiyyah*, Cairo, 1911, repr. Beirut: Dar Sadir, n. d., Ed., O. Yahia, Cairo: al-Hay'at al-Misriyyat al'ammah li'l Kitab, 1972, II, 379

<sup>8</sup> *Itinerarium*, c. 6, n. 5 (V, 311)

acknowledge the reality of the many, all others. On this basis we might build an ecological ethic – “a way of being in the world that respects the intrinsic value of the many different beings that comprise our planet” – and begin to see as well where we human beings, as special family of beings with special gifts and limitations, fit in to the scheme of things.<sup>9</sup>

## II. Biographical accounts

### a. *Ibn 'Arabi*

Ibn al-'Arabi, whose full name Muhammad Ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-'Arabi al-Ta'i al-Hatimi is a greatest Sufi Andalusia. He was born in Murcia, Andalus, Spanyol 17 Ramadhan 560 H or July 28 1165.<sup>10</sup> According to lunar calendar, this date was the first anniversary proclamation of "Great Resurrection" at Alamaut Iran by Imam al-Hasan, which is instituting the pure spiritual Islam of reformed Iranian Ismailism.<sup>11</sup> His father was a civil servant, working for Muhammad Ibn Sa'id Mardanish, the ruler of Murcia. His family has a high social status, as his mother's uncle was the ruler of Tlemcen in Algeria and he himself was closely related to local rulers in his end of life. In addition, his family was well known as devout people. His father and his three uncles were Sufis. At the age of eight Ibn 'Arabi went to Seville where he studied and grew to adolescence, leading the happy life made possible by his noble, well-to-do family. Seville was a center of important Sufism, with the amount of great Sufi there.<sup>12</sup> It was there that

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<sup>9</sup>See Sally McFague, *The Body of God*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993

<sup>10</sup>Khalil ibn Aybak Safadi, *al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat*, Weisbaden, 1966, vol. 4, p. 178

<sup>11</sup>Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn al-'Arabi*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, p. 38-39

<sup>12</sup>T. Izutsu, "Ibn al-'Arabi", *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Ed., Mircea Eliade, New York and London: Macmillan and Collier Macmillan, 1987, p. 553

he entered into a first married with a girl called Maryam, “of whom he speaks in terms of respectful devotion, and who seems indeed to have influenced him in his orientation to Sufism.”<sup>13</sup>

When Almohad dynasty conquered Murcia in the year 576/ 1172, his family moved to Seville, where his father come to involved again in the government. Ibn al-'Arabi himself in his first career was a secretary of the governor.

In 590/ 1193, when he was 30 years old, Ibn al-'Arabi left Spain for the first time and went to Tunis. Seven years later, there was a vision gave him an instruction to go to the East. He went to pilgrimage to Mecca in 599/ 1202, and from there he went around to many Islamic world. He stayed quite a long time in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Turkey, but he never been in Iran. In 620/ 1223 he stayed in Damascus, where he and his students stayed till his died at 638/ 1240.

Ibn 'Arabi spent his time for studying, writing and teaching. In the same time he also involved in the socio-political life in his society. He has a very good relationship with at least three local leaders one of them became wellversed with his writings.

Ibn al-'Arabi gave his detail personal biography in his book, and we are grateful that the scholarship task to collect and analyze it has been done perfectly by Claude Chodkiewicz-Addas. The English account has described autobiographically about Ibn 'Arabi's meeting with several of his teachers in the book *Sufis of Andalusia*, with the introduction of translation. The readers will realize that Ibn 'Arabi lived in the world which was strange for us where all the miraculous events occurred everyday.

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<sup>13</sup>Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination*, 39

One of the great miracles of career of our Great Master was his book. Osman Yahia, in the two volumes on the biography of Ibn al-'Arabi and the classification of his writings, accounted that Ibn al-'Arabi might wrote 700 books, short articles, and collections of his poetry which 400 of them still available. *Futuh al-Makiyah* itself will contain 17, 000 pages in Yahia's critical edition. One thing the most scared by scholars is reading all *Futuh al-Makiyah*, without mentioning others, either in the printed edition or manuscript. The problem was not in the thickness of his book, but it was in its content which is difficult and demanded high understanding of Islamic knowledge. This will help to understand why *Shaikh al-Akbar* (the Great Master), while his intrinsic attraction from his books and his influence was world wide, but relatively he was forgotten by modern scholarship.

*Futuh al-Makiyya* is encyclopedic encyclopedia of Islamic knowledge in *tauhid* context, that is believe in one God, which is the core of Islam. This book has 560 chapters, and each chapter will become a big or thick book if publish separately.

Ibn al-'Arabi discussed a lot about Al-Qur'an, al-Hadits, the life and event of the Prophet, the role of Shari'a, its principles, the names and attributes of God, the relation between God and the Universe, the structure of the cosmos, the improvement of human being, many types of human, the way of perfection, stages toward God, hierarchy and the types of angel, the reality of jin, characteristic of time and space, role of politics, symbolism of writings the reality of the interworld between death and resurrection, ontological status of paradise and hell, etc.

When he was young, Ibn 'Arabi met Ibn Rusyd (Averrous), so far because his father was Ibn Rusyd's close friend. By several reasons, it was said that his father has

sent Ibn 'Arabi to Ibn Rush's house, who has known about him and his eagerness to meet him.<sup>14</sup>

The socio-religio and politic causes Ibn 'Arabi to leave his own country, Spain, and North Africa. In the North Africa it was Muwahhidun ruler who threatened to torture Sufis. Sufis were accused for leading *thareqa* (Sufi group) movement to oppose and fight against the ruler regime. From this time Ibn 'Arabi begun to got around the Islamic world, especially in the East, as stated before. He went to Tunis and Mecca. Corbin said, "His stay in Mecca was the beginning of his extraordinary productivity. His mystic life became more intense; his circumambulations, real or imagined, of the Ka'aba internalized as a "cosmic center," nourished a speculative effort to which inner visions and theophanic perceptions lent experimental confirmation."<sup>15</sup>

He died in Damascus, 22 Rabi al-tsani 638 or November 1240.

b. *Bonaventure*

Bonaventure, who was known as Giovanni da Fidanza, was born in Bagnoregio Italy, a small town with the physical beauty and the structure of the setting, which reflects the structure of Bonaventure's thought.<sup>16</sup> He was a disciple of Alexander Hales, a doctor of the University of Paris, Minister General of the Order and a Cardinal Bishop of the Roman Church.

There is no certainty about the date of his birthday, but traditionally and generally accepted that Bonaventure was born in the year 1221. Nothing or little is known about his

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<sup>14</sup>Ibn al-'Arabi, *Kitab Futuhat al-Makiya fi Ma'rifat al-Asrar al-malikiya wa'l Mulkiya*, Cairo, 1329/1911, p. 153

<sup>15</sup>Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination*, 52

<sup>16</sup> Ewert H, Cousin, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978, 29



boyhood, except one event recorded by Bonaventure himself in his own *Legenda Sancti Francisci*, namely his miraculous cure through Francis of Assisi; he was preserved from death by the intercession of St. Francis.

He was a child when he was become so ill and his mother vowed him to St Francis of Assisi on condition of his recovery. According to J. Guy Bougerol, it is because of his miraculous cure, made Bonaventure bow to the request of the General Chapter of Narbonne and write the life of St Francis known as the *Legenda Major*.<sup>17</sup> He received his early education with the Franciscan in the same city in 1482.

Bonaventure went to Paris and entered monastery after completing the course for master of art. He became a pupil of Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle. In 1248 he was licensed as a Biblical Bachelor and begun his biblical commentary and then as a Bachelor of Sentences he produces his *Commentary on Sentence* by lecturing on the sentences of Peter Lombard.

Bonaventure is considered to be the second founder and the chief architect of Franciscan spirituality. He also holds a central position in the history of western spirituality and played a significant role in the evolution of forms of religious life.<sup>18</sup>

He was elected Minister general of the order when he was forty years old. For seventeen years he served as general. He was taking an active part in the struggle between the secular clerics and the friars for teaching rights at the university of Paris and other intellectual controversies at the time.

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<sup>17</sup> J. Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure* (trans. By Jose de Vinck), New York: St Anthony Guild Press, 1964, 4

<sup>18</sup> See Ilia Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, New City Press, 2001

Two years of being a Minister General, Bonaventure visited the mountain retreat of La Verna, a place where St Francis had received the Stigmata and he himself stayed in meditation and solitude that produced *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*.

Bonaventure's name is named in the enormous amount of literature, which is according to Dobbins, stands as proved of the widely prevalent of interest in mysticism.<sup>19</sup>

Bonaventure's works included Dogmatic works, such as *Comentarii in quattuor libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, *Breviloquium*, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*; scriptural Commentaries, such as *Commentarius in Librum Ecclesiastes*; and works pertaining to the Order, such as *De Perfectione Evangelica*, *Legenda minor S. Francisci*. It is the *Opuscula* which is naturally gathered together under the title *Mystica*. His ideas on mystical theology can be found in this work, such as *De Triplici Via*.

Bonaventure died on July 15, 1274. Two centuries later in 1482 he was canonized under Pope Sixtus IV, and a century later in 1588 was declared a Doctor of the Church.

### **III. Creation and The Goal**

#### *a. Creation and the goal according to Ibn 'Arabi*

Creation plays a prominent role in all aspect of religious thought of Islam, including mystical thought. The Qur'an uses the word *khalaqa* for creation. In Arabic, the word, *khalaqa* has two basic meanings. First, it means to determine (*taqdir*), that is to give "measure" (*qadar*) to something or to take something's measure. Second, it means

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<sup>19</sup> See Dustan Dobbins, *Franciscan Mysticism, A Critical Examination of the Mystical Theology of the Seraphic Doctor, with Special Reference of the Sources of His Doctrines*, New York: Joseph F. Wagner, 1927, *Franciscan Studies*, No. 6, September, 1927, 18

to give existence to something (*ijad*). Thus, Creator has two meanings, “the one who determines, and the one who gives existence.”<sup>20</sup>

Self-disclosure or self—manifestation is the most basic concept of Ibn ‘Arabi’s ontology, as mentioned before. According to him everything exists in the world is after all nothing but the self-manifestation of the Absolute, and “no event whatsoever occurs in the world except self-manifestation. In this sense, ‘creation’ which means the coming into being of the world is naturally identical with self-manifestation.”<sup>21</sup> And the cosmos is the locus in which the Hidden Treasure is known by creatures. “Through the universe God comes to be known.”<sup>22</sup>

This model says that God is to reveal itself through itself its Mystery. In *Fusus al-Hikam* (Ring Settings of Wisdom), Ibn ‘Arabi describes the myth of creation as follows:

when the real willed from the standpoint of its most beautiful names  
which are countless to see their instantiations, or you could say when it willed to see its own  
instantiation, in an encompassing entity, qualified with existence, that would contain it order entire  
to reveal to it (self) through it (self) its mystery . . .  
And when the real had brought into being  
the world entire as a shape form without spirit  
the world was like unpolished mirror  
for the divine providence never shapes a form  
unless it received divine spirit  
which is called the ‘inspiring’  
which is the activation of the potential of that shaped image  
to receive the overflowing, the eternal manifestation  
That always was and always will be outside of which there is only vessel. . . <sup>23</sup>

From these passages, it is clear that the divine revealed it self or were actualized through the world which is its mirror and through human being who is the polishing of

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<sup>20</sup>William C. Chittick, *The Self Disclosure of God*, State University of New York Press, 1998, 47

<sup>21</sup>Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism, A comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983, 197

<sup>22</sup>Sachico Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, State University of New York Press, 1992, 11

<sup>23</sup>Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fusus al-Hikam*, Ed., A. Afifi, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Arabi, 1946, I: 50-51, also cited by Michael Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsayings*, The University of Chicago Press, 1994

that mirror. Thus, “the Real (God) creates the world as its mirror and reveals to itself through the polished mirror its mystery.”<sup>24</sup>

Thus, the universe is the mirror of God, and by this mirror He knows and introduces His face. As said in the hadith above that He is a “Hidden Treasure,” He could not be known unless through the universe. This Hadith implies that God desires and loves to be known and for this reason He creates the universe. In other words, creation is the way for God to be known. Thus, creation is His *tajalli* (Self Disclosure), His self-manifestation, His revelation, or if we might say, His form or face.

The Hidden Treasure is *al-Butun* (the inside, interior, inner portion, depth, concealed), the Essence (*dzat, al-Haqq, Godhead, Gottheit*), which is beyond all dualism, all names, and all quiddity, and eternal. *Al-Haqq* in His Essence never be known and always the Hidden Treasure. But in His names and attributes that manifested in the universe He can be known. *Al-Haqq* on the level of Hidden Treasure is totally transcendent, and cannot be known. Here the Hiddenness, which can be translated as the Mystery and causes loneliness, makes *al-Haqq* desires and loves (*ahbabtu*) to be known in order not to be hidden anymore. The way to be known, as said before is by creating the universe. This activity can be called *tajalli* (self disclosure). Thus, *tajalli al-Haqq* is God’s self-disclosure by creating the universe; and the universe is the locus of His Self disclosure.

Self-disclosure also can be called revelation. Thus, it is God revealed itself. A Divine Being is alone in Its unconditioned essence. This primordial solitude makes it yearn to be revealed in being which can manifest it to itself. The hadith Hidden Treasure

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<sup>24</sup>Sells, *Mystical languages*, 73

mentioned above represented the sadness of the divine Names and Attributes suffering anguish in non knowledge because no one names them. “And it is this sadness that descended in the divine Breath (*tanaffus*) which is compassion (*Rahmah*) and existentionation (*ijad*) and in which in the world of the Mystery is the Compassion of the Divine Being with and for Himself.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, creation is essentially the revelation of God (Divine Being). In other words, *tajalli* is a Self-disclosure of *al-Haqq* (God), which is absolutely unknown, into some thing more concrete. This *tajalli* is called ‘*ta’ayyun*’ (entification), to be or become an entity.

When God decided to bring something into existence or when He decided to be known, He simply says to it, ‘Be!’ and it is. The notion of *creatio ex nihilo* seems hold true.<sup>26</sup> But the difference between his principle from the ordinary Islamic *creatio ex nihilo* is that for Ibn ‘Arabi, “nihil is not a total unconditional ‘non-existence’, but ‘non-existence’ in the particular sense of something being as yet non-existence as an empirical or phenomenal thing.” “His nihil is the ‘possible’ (*mumkin*), i.e., something that has the power (or possibility) to exist.”<sup>27</sup> This teaching is based on his view that all things have enough power to come out from the concealment into the field of existence in response to the ontological Command of God. The Divine Breath (*Nafas al-Rahman*) gives beings their forms, which is actually ‘show Himself’ to Himself by manifesting to Himself the virtualities of His Names and Attributes.

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<sup>25</sup>Henry Corbin, *Alone with the Alone, Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabi*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997, 184

<sup>26</sup>Corbin argues that there is no place in Ibn ‘Arabi’s thinking for a *creatio ex nihilo*, an absolute beginning preceded by nothing. “The existentionation of a thing which had no existence before, a creative operation which took place once and for all and is now complete is for him a theoretical and practical absurdity.” See Corbin, *Alone with the Alone*, 200

<sup>27</sup>Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 201



According to the self-disclosure model, cosmos is essentially a set of mirrors which the Divine realities are reflected. It is a theophany of Divine Names and attributes. It is also

an ever-flowing river whose water is renewed at every moment but which preserves its general form determined by the structure of its bed. The water is a symbol of the light of Being which emanates at every moment throughout the Universe, and the bed of river symbolized the archetypes which determine the general direction of the flow.<sup>28</sup>

It is for this reason that Ibn 'Arabi argues that, creation or self-manifestation of the Absolute (God) is a perpetual process, a never-ending process. He says that "the world goes on being created anew at every single moment. This he calls 'new creation' (*al-khalq al-jadid*)."<sup>29</sup> He bases his opinion on the Qur'an, "Every day He is (engaged) in some affair". . . "We shall attend to you, O you two classes (jin and man)!".<sup>30</sup> The word new here means 'ever new' or which is renewed from moment to moment. Thus, the new creation means the process of an everlasting and ever new act of creation.<sup>31</sup> "It is annihilated at every moment and recreated at the next, without there being a temporal separation between the two phases . . . it is renewed at every moment without being repeated identically."<sup>32</sup>

This concept of the continual re-creation of the cosmos becomes a mainstay of Islamic cosmological thinking. The continual re-creation can be interpreted as an interplay of the diverse divine names. At each instant, the divine mercy and gentleness

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<sup>28</sup>Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, 112

<sup>29</sup>Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 205

<sup>30</sup>The Qur'an 55: 29 and 31

<sup>31</sup>Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 205

<sup>32</sup>Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, 112

create all things in the universe. "At each instant Gods reaffirm His similarity with things and His presence in the cosmos. But God is also incomparable and other. Hence, just as His mercy creates, His wrath destroys . . . At each instant, the divine gentleness brings the world into existence, and at each instant the divine severity destroys it."<sup>33</sup>

Ibn 'Arabi also uses the Plotinian term 'emanation' (*al-fayd*) as a synonym of the term *tajalli*. "But 'emanation' here does not mean, as it does in the world-view Plotinus, one thing overflowing from the Absolute one, then another from that first thing, etc. in the form of chain. Emanation for Ibn 'Arabi, simply means that the Absolute itself appears in different, more or less, concrete forms, with a different self-determination in each case."<sup>34</sup>

Here Ibn 'Arabi differentiates between twofold of emanation: the Most Holy emanation (*al-fayd al-aqdas*) and the Holy emanation (*al-fayd al-muqaddas*).<sup>35</sup> The Most Holy emanation is also called 'essential self-manifestation (*tajalli dhatiy*) and 'self manifestation in the Unseen (*tajalli al-gayb*), while the second emanation is called 'sensuous self-emanation' (*tajalli shuhudiy*). The Most Holy emanation is the first decisive stage in the self-disclosure of *al-Haqq* (The Absolute). Here, as mentioned in the Hadith, the Absolute which is absolutely unknown, desires to leave the state of being the Hidden Treasure, and desires to be known. In this stage *al-Haqq* (the Absolute) manifest itself not to others but to itself. It is to be remark here the word 'in potentia' (*bi al-quwwah*). It indicates that *al-Haqq* is not yet actually manifest into many; it still

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<sup>33</sup>Sachico Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, State University of New York Press, 1992, 11

<sup>34</sup>Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 154

<sup>35</sup>Ibn 'Arabi, *Mir'at al-'Arifin*, Maktabah Rafiq Hamdan al-Khassah, Damascus, See also Ibn 'Arabi *Fusus al-Hikam*, I: 49

maintains its original unity. This emanation is the first of entifications (*ta'ayyunat*), but philosophically is pure intelligible, and not yet real concrete existence. "On this level, there is as yet nothing existent in actuality. The world itself is not existent."<sup>36</sup> This first *tajalli* is to Himself and for Himself in the archetypal essences which aspire toward their concrete manifestation.

The second type of emanation, the Holy emanation (*al-fayd al-Muqaddas*) is usually called 'existential self-manifestation' (*al-tajalli al-wujudi*) and 'sensuous self-manifestation' (*al-tajalli al-shuhudi*). This emanation is the manifestation or epiphany of the Absolute in the infinitely various form of the Many in the world of concrete Being. It is the manifestation of the permanent archetype, which have been brought into being by the most holy emanation, from the philosophically intelligible only into sensible things (*min al-'alam al-ma'qul ila al-'alam al-mahsus*), or the manifestation from the potentiality into actuality and thus, causes the sensible world to exist in actuality.<sup>37</sup> In Aristotelian terminology, "it means the ontological process of the transformation of things in *potentia* into corresponding things in *actu*."<sup>38</sup> This twofold of emanation (*tajalli*) is typified in the divine Names "the Hidden and the Revealed, the First and the Last," which Ibn 'Arabi offers experiential verification in his theosophical practice of Prayer.<sup>39</sup>

Ibn 'Arabi usually says that creation in the sense of giving existence is exclusively a divine attribute, while the creation of determination is a shared attribute. Nevertheless, he also speaks of human participation in the divine existence-giving. He

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<sup>36</sup>Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 155

<sup>37</sup>Ibn 'Arabi *Fusus al-Hikam*, Ed., A. Afifi, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabi, 1946 2: 9

<sup>38</sup>Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 156

<sup>39</sup>Corbin, *Alone with the Alone*, 195



refers to a hadith in which the Prophet describes how God will send a letter to the people of paradise in which it is written, “From the Living, the Everlasting, who never dies, to the living, the everlasting, who will never die: I say to a thing ‘Be!’ and it is. I give to you to say a thing ‘Be!’ and it will be.”<sup>40</sup> Then, God would be understood as continuing creator, and we as human beings might be seen as partners in creation, as the self-conscious, reflexive part of the creation that could participate in furthering the process.

Creation also can be called the actualization of the Names and Attributes. Before creation, the Names and Attributes were unactualized. It can be actualized only through the entities of the cosmos. Thus, the process of creation is called by Ibn ‘Arabi, “the breath of the compassionate” (*nafs al-Rahman*).<sup>41</sup> The breath of the Compassionate (*nafs al-Rahman*) externalizes the divine possibilities in the form of external objects, and everything in existence emanated from an articulated ‘breath of Him’ *kun fayakun* (Be! And it was).

b. *Creation and the goal according to Bonaventure*

According to Zachary Hayes, creation “stands as the foundation for all true religion”.<sup>42</sup> Indeed creation has become a discussion both among the scientists and theologians. The main discussion is about the *creatio ex nihilo* or *no creatio ex nihilo*. In the Catholic faith (and also in other faiths as well) it is a dogma that universe was created by God from nothingness (*creatio ex nihilo*). Nevertheless there are interpretations about the meaning of “from nothing.” According to Michael J. Gruenthaner, “from

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<sup>40</sup>Ibn ‘Arabi, *al-Futuh al-Makiyyah*, III 295.16, also cited by William C. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds, Ibn ‘Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity*, State University of New York Press, 1994, 107

<sup>41</sup>Sell, *Mystical Languages*, 66

<sup>42</sup> Zachary Hayes, *The General Doctrine of Creation in the Thirteenth Century*, Munchen, 1964, ix

nothingness” signifies two things: 1). That the creation of the universe was preceded by a state of non-existence, 2) that there was no antecedent material put into the creation of the universe.<sup>43</sup>

Bonaventure uses the language of emanation to deal with the origin and end of creation.<sup>44</sup> But unlike ‘Arabi, who did not agree with the world-view of Plotinus, that one thing overflowing from the Absolute one, then another from that first thing, etc. in the form of chain, Bonaventure seems to hold emanation of Plotinus, that is the Son emanates or incarnates from the Father, as the perfect expression of the Father, then, all things are created through him (the Son).

According to Bonaventure creation is not a mere external act of God but it is “rooted in the fecundity of God.”<sup>45</sup> There is a connection between Trinitarian and Creation and this connection is the background for Bonaventure’s doctrine of the vestige-image, which he developed in *Itinerarium*. Creation is an act springs from the eternal fecundity of the Father and it is an overflow of that fecundity.<sup>46</sup>

Bonaventure’s thought has two major poles, the Trinity and Christocentricity. However, it is the doctrine of Trinity, which is foundational, as it gives the basis of all other element of the system of his thought, such as the doctrine of creation, of the relation of God to the world, of man as the image of God, of the universe as His vestige. According to Cousins, it is also the foundation for the coincidences of the opposite in his

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<sup>43</sup> Michael J. Gruenthaner, “The Scriptural Doctrine on First Creation,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 9.01, 2001, 48

<sup>44</sup> See Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center, Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure*, New York: Paulist Press, 1981, 12

<sup>45</sup> Ewert H. Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence*, 57

<sup>46</sup> Ewert H. Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence*, 57

thought. “The Trinity constitutes the primordial and archetypal coincidence of opposites, and as such, is the source of polarities within Bonaventure’s system.”<sup>47</sup> And the characteristic of Bonaventure’s Trinity is that it is dynamic. Creation is the act imparted from this dynamism of Trinity. This dynamic Trinity is also important for understanding Bonaventure’s notion about God’s relation to creation. In this notion also will appear Bonaventure’s coincidence of opposite thought, that is God as self-sufficient absolute in one hand but he is also self-communicating in the other hand.<sup>48</sup> Thus, although God is transcendent in his being, but he is immanent in the world. This coincidence of the transcendent and immanent, according to Bonaventure is achieved through the Son as medium. It is the Son who mediates between the infinite (God) and the finite (creature).

Thus, from the above formulation, creation in Bonaventure’s notion is an inundation of divine prolificity and still relies deeply in the Son (Word). Creature then, is like a mirror reflecting God. It is also vestige of the Trinity, as it is reflecting divine power, wisdom and goodness. Thus, according to Bonaventure the universe points to God like every effect point to its cause, and like every works of artist point to the artist.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, according to Bonaventure, God the great artist who gives form to the things he produces.

In discussion the problem of *creatio ex nihilo*, Bonaventure entertained that God is not only the origin and the goal of creation, but he is also the *ratio exemplaris*.

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<sup>47</sup> Ewert H. Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence*, 98

<sup>48</sup> See Ewert H. Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence*, 102

<sup>49</sup> I *Sentence*, d. 3, p. 1. According to Zachary Hayes, here Bonaventure sees the universe in Franciscan point of view, which sees God’s being in the universe. See Zachary Hayes, *The General Doctrine of Creation in the Thirteenth Century*, Germany: Paderborn, 1964, 8

Creature came out of God not *per naturam* but rather *per artem*.<sup>50</sup> In creating the universe, God is acting intelligently and freely. Thus, it is not by necessity that God has to create the universe no by chance. God produces by means of form that are ideas in His mind, analogue to an artist produces a work of art. According to Bonaventure, the act of creation brings about an ontological mutation, the emergence into existence something that had no prior existence.<sup>51</sup>

Furthermore, in dealing with the notion of creation, he elaborates that creation has not so much of being or existence. It entails of becoming, that is a passing from the state of non-existence to existence. Thus, it needs the process of producing out of nothing.<sup>52</sup> Although creatures do possess certain operative potencies, but they necessarily claim an intrinsic dependence upon an external agent, because of their contingent character. Bonaventure expands it further:

The creature is essentially mutable and empty, and both for the reason that it is produced out of nothing. Because the creature is, and received its being, from another, who caused that to be which earlier had no being, and thus is not pure act, but is mutable. For this reason it is changeable and variable, and lacks stability. Thus it can exist only through the presence of that which gave it being. A clear illustration of this is the impression that a seal makes in water: it cannot last for a moment unless the seal is present.<sup>53</sup>

Creation is the first relationship between God and the creatures. This relationship necessarily continues as long as the creature exists. The eminent of the divine power and the indigence of creatures is the reason for the continued dependence of creatures upon the Creator. The degree of dependency depends on the diversity of creatures. And as

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<sup>50</sup> *I Sentence*, cited by Zachary, *The General*, 25

<sup>51</sup> *III Sentence*, d. 1, p. 1, a.3, q.1: *Utrum creatio mutationem dicat*, a question that receives a positive answer.

<sup>52</sup> See *II Sentence*., d. 1, p.1., a. 3, q. 2, cited by Harold Niedzwiecki, *The Human Person His Dignity and Role in the World According to Saint Bonaventure*, A Dissertation, 1

<sup>53</sup> *I Sentence*, d. 37, p.1, a. 1, q. 1, resp.

stated before, creation is the overflowing of God omnipotent, wise and good. Thus, if God is good, He could never have been inactive, because goodness tends to self-communication. It can be said that God never stop creating. And because God is good, so he will to communicate himself, which necessarily involves an act of creation.<sup>54</sup>

Although God never stop creating, but Bonaventure maintains that the universe or the world must be temporal not eternal. The reason is that the world was created for human being, and because human being is not eternal, so then the world should. In addition, creature must be temporal, because it received its being through a divine act of creation.

In addition, Bonaventure considers eternal creation totally contrary to truth,<sup>55</sup> thus the world has its beginning. Contrary to Thomas Aquinas, who holds that creation can be either temporal or eternal, Bonaventure entertains that the world is necessarily temporal and impossibly eternal. Creation is a production from nothing. According to Francis J Kovach, he uses six arguments for this thesis “one is used once in purely philosophical form and once as a partly philosophical and partly theological argument, another, the sixth listed in the main text, is the one on the basis of which Bonaventure consider eternal creation so totally contrary to truth and reason that he would not have believed even the poorest philosopher would advocate it.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Sentence II, d. 1, p.2, dub.1(II: 51)

<sup>55</sup> Bonaventure in *II Sentence*, concl. (II, 22)

<sup>56</sup> Francis J. Kovach, “The Question of Eternity of the World in St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas – A Critical Analysis,” in *Bonaventure and Aquinas, Enduring Philosophers*, Ed. with Intro. By Robert W. Shahan and Francis J. Kovach, University of Oklahoma Press, 1976, 163. For the six arguments, see, Bernardino M. Bonansea, “The Question of an Eternal World in the Teaching of St. Bonaventure,” *Franciscan Studies*, 34, 1974

Nevertheless, it should be noted that when Bonaventure talking about the impossibility of eternal creation, it does not mean to the act by which God decided to create, or active creation. Bonaventure maintains that such an act is eternal, just as God himself is eternal.<sup>57</sup>

In sum, God created the world, as he wants to communicate His goodness, manifest his power and reveal His wisdom. These are three divine attributes. In other word, the purpose of creation is a manifestation of Creator, or God want to introduce Himself. God purpose in creation was a manifestation of Himself, self-manifestation, a theophany.

Bonaventure's strong focus on creation as divine self-expression enable him to go beyond the language of Father-Son in his trinitarian theology. For him the title 'Word' has wider meanings than "Son" and even "image." In his *Sentence* we can see how he contrast "Word" with "Son" and "Image" by showing how "Word" brings out the relationship between the first and the second person and between the second person and all creation. "As the Word is the internal self-expression of God's overflowing goodness, so creation is the external expression of the Word."<sup>58</sup> The word is the mediator between the Trinity and creation.

Nevertheless, although creation is self-expression of God, God himself does not need to create in order to be God. God is a supreme love. If there is creation, it is not because God have to create. "God, who is the purest love within, create not out of any

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<sup>57</sup> Bernardino M. Bonansea, "The Question of an Eternal World in the Teaching of St. Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies*, 34, 1974, 11

<sup>58</sup> Denis Edward, "The Ecological Significance of God-Language," *Theological Studies*, 60, no. 4, 1999, 708-22



need, but out of pure love so as to manifest something of the mystery of the divine truth, goodness, beauty outwardly, and to bring forth creatures capable of participating in the splendor of the divine life thus conceived.”<sup>59</sup>

In another place, Bonaventure described of creation as a kind of representation of the Wisdom of God, and a kind of Sculpture.<sup>60</sup> In a very marvelous passage, he reflects on a light coming through a stained glass window as an image for the way Wisdom is reflected in the creatures. “As a ray of light entering through a window is colored in different ways according to the different colors of the various parts, so the divine ray shines forth in each and every creature in different ways and in different properties.”<sup>61</sup>

#### **IV. God and The Cosmos**

##### *a). God and Cosmos in Ibn ‘Arabi Teaching*

The predominant tone in the Qur’an is an invitation to marvel at and investigate the mysteries and wonders of the cosmos and human being. The Qur’anic text frequently describes the universe as the book of God. It is said that everything that exist, every phenomenon, every event is ‘sign’ (*ayat*) of God, which means that everything gives news of God’s nature and reality.

Ibn ‘Arabi, the sufi master, employs the term *dalil* to refer the fact that the cosmos points to God. “The term means guide, directive, pointer, indication, signifier, evidence, proof, denotation.”<sup>62</sup> He said, “Every thing in engendered existence is a sign of Him.”<sup>63</sup> “All possible things are signs.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Zachary Hayes, *Bonaventure, Mystical Writings*, New York: Crossroad, 1999, 112

<sup>60</sup> *Hexaameron* 12

<sup>61</sup> *Hexaameron* 13.14

<sup>62</sup> Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, 3

The fact that the whole cosmos signifies and names God explains its beauty and goodness. The cosmos has an innate eminence (*sharaf*), so it must never be condemned. The model of the cosmos as God's self-disclosure as described above will prevent the action. All beings are the epiphanies of the Divine, and all serve as the gateway to the Infinite, or as the Persian poem by Hatif of Isfahan states. "If you dissect the heart of an atom you shall behold a sun within it."<sup>65</sup> With this model we might say that the cosmos is the body of God (if we may use the human language). "As the body of God, the cosmos is wondrously, awesomely, divinely mysterious."<sup>66</sup> The Qur'an says that on seeing God's "waymarks" (*sha'a'ir*), those who possess "godwariness" (*taqwa*) – an attribute that is constantly praises – should "magnify" (*ta'zim*) these waymarks, which is to say, in Ibn 'Arabi reading, that they should acknowledge the majesty and greatness of everything that signifies God, not because of its own worth, but because of what it signifies.<sup>67</sup>

It is also the model the Prophet gave Muslim to follow, that he honor each of God's sign of grace, even though it might be small, and never found blame in anything.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Ibn 'Arabi, *al-Futuhāt*, IV 411.20, also cited by Chittick, *Self Disclosure*, 3

<sup>64</sup>Ibn 'Arabi, *al-Futuhāt*, III 492.11, also cited by Chittick, *Self Disclosure*, 3

<sup>65</sup>Cited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Contemplative and Active Lives in Islam", *Contemplation and Action in World Religions*, edited by Yusuf Ibish and Ileana Marculescu, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1977/1978, 196

<sup>66</sup>McFague, *The Body of God*, vii, See describes how the model of universe as the Body of God in her book which focus on embodiment, think about God and the body.

<sup>67</sup>Chittick, *Self Disclosure of God*, 10

<sup>68</sup>Abu 'Isa Tirmidhi, *Shama'il al-Mustafa*, with the commentary of Ibrahim al-Bajuri, Bulaq: Dar at-taba'a al-'amira, 1276h/1859-60, 176; Tor Andrae, *Die Person Muhammads in Lehre und Glaube seiner Gemeinde*, Stockholm: P.A. Vorstedt og soner, 1918, 200-201, cited by Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger, The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety*, Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985, 47



He also had known for his love of animals. He even had special liking for cats.<sup>69</sup> The Prophet says, “He who does not show mercy will not receive mercy.”<sup>70</sup>

Nevertheless, according to Ibn ‘Arabi, although the cosmos signifies and proves God, this means that it signifies His “level” (*martaba*), not His Essence. In other words, it gives us knowledge of God’s names and attributes, but God Himself remains forever unknown.<sup>71</sup>

Ibn ‘Arabi argues that God (in essence/ *mahiyah*) is absolutely incomprehensible and inapproachable. God in this sense is unknowable because it transcends all qualifications and relations that are humanly conceivable.<sup>72</sup> In fact, according to Ibn ‘Arabi, there are two modes of the real (God), or that God is a name that has two basic meanings. The first mode is the *dzat* (the essence)<sup>73</sup>, which is the ultimate reality that is the fountainhead of all other realities, the absolute unity beyond all relation. The essence cannot be known in a positive term, it can only be known in a negative way, or apophatic way.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>He did cut the sleeve from his coat when he had to get up for prayer and yet did not want to disturb the cat that was sleeping on the sleeve. One of his cats give birth to kittens on his coat and special blessings were extended to Abu Huraira’s cat, who killed a snake that tried to cheat the Prophet and sting him despite the kindness he had shown it. Also because he petted this cat’s back, cat never fall on their backs; and because his five fingers left a mark on her forehead, every cat has some black stripes over her eyes. See, Ahmad ibn Muhammad Aflaki, *Manaqib al-‘Arifin*, edited by Tahsin Yazici, 2 vols., Ankara: Ankara Universitesi yayinlarindan, 1959-60, 478, chapter 3, para453, with the closing remark, “Show love, and be it to a cat, “ta’ashshaqu wa lau bi’l-hirra.

<sup>70</sup>Badi’uzzaman Furuzanfar, *Ahadith-i Mathnawi*, Tehran: University, 1334sh/1955, no. 15

<sup>71</sup>Chittick, *The Self Disclosure*, 11

<sup>72</sup>Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 23

<sup>73</sup>It means beyond all dualism, all names, and all quiddity. In Meister Eckhart’s language, it is called Godhead (*Gottheit*). See Robert K. C. Forman, *Meister Eckhart Mystic as Theologian*, Rockport, Massachusetts: Element, 1991, 209

<sup>74</sup>In Christian tradition this way of understanding of God is not unknown. Augustine (354-430), bishop of Hippo in North Africa, for example often wrote of the inexpressibility of God and that one cannot

The second mode consists of the divine names (*asma'*) or attributes, that is the name God designates. Ibn 'Arabi calls the level, that is God's specific position in relation to any other realities that we might want to take into account.<sup>75</sup>

Those concepts are in accordance with traditional Islamic teaching that God is infinitely beyond the cosmos (*tanzih*), which means to "declare God incomparable" with everything that exist. In Islamic term, the cosmos can be also defined as "everything other than God" (*ma siwa Allah*). From this point of view, God is completely inaccessible to His creatures and beyond their understanding.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, God which is unknowable and incomprehensible will transform himself into something known and knowable. As in the hadith mentioned above, "the Hidden Treasure" unveils himself because it "desires to be known." "Self manifestation must mean nothing other than the Absolute becoming knowable and known."<sup>77</sup>

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know God but only what God is not (via-negativa), "So what are we to say, brothers, about God? For if you fully grasped what you want to say, it isn't God. If you have been able to comprehend it, you have comprehended something else instead of God. If you think you have been able to comprehend, your thoughts have deceived you." See, Augustine of Hippo, Sermon 52. 16, *Sermons*, Edmund Hill (trans.), New York: New City Press, vol. 3, 57, cited by, Steven Fanning, *Mystics of The Christian Tradition*, London and New York: Routledge, 2001, 76. Other mystic, like Meister Eckhart said that, "God being is transcendent, he is beyond all knowledge." See, Meister Eckhart, *Selected Writings*, Oliver Davies (trans.), London, New York, Victoria, Toronto, Auckland: Penguin, 1994, 236-237, furthermore he said, "God is nameless, for no one can speak of him or know him. ...Accordingly, if I say that "God is good," this is not true. ...If I say again that "God is wise," then this too is not true. ... Or if I say that "God exists," this also not true. He is being beyond being, he is a nothingness beyond being. Therefore St Augustine says: "The finest thing that we can say of God is to be silent concerning him from the wisdom of inner riches." Be silent therefore, and do not chatter about God, for by chattering about him, you tell lies and commit a sin. ... If you wish to be perfect and without sin, then do not prattle about God. Also you should not wish to understand anything about God, for God is beyond all understanding. A master (Augustine, sermon 117) says: If I had a God that I could understand, I would not regard him as God." See, Eckhart, *Selected*, 129

<sup>75</sup>Chittick, *Self Disclosure*, xvii

<sup>76</sup>Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, 8

<sup>77</sup>Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 32

The creation, as mentioned above is the everlasting process. This means that the Absolute (God) is continually manifesting himself in the infinity of possible things. This world-view employs that “nothing remains static; the world in its entirety is in fervent movement.”<sup>78</sup>

In the other passages Ibn ‘Arabi also emphasizes that the particular aspect of the new creation in which the concretely existent things in the phenomenal world are after all infinitely various forms of divine manifestation and are ultimately reducible to the One.<sup>79</sup>

b). *God and Cosmos in Bonaventure*

Bonaventure’s doctrine of God was drawn from the Greek tradition of the Fathers, that is Trinitarian, which sees the Father as the source of dynamism and unity in the God. He also emphasizes the divine transcendence. He deals with the mystery of the Divine Being in *the First Book of Sentences*. The supreme nature of God consists in two things: the most sublime – inspiring emanations, namely generation and procession; and the most noble qualities, which are the highest wisdom, omnipotent, and perfect love.<sup>80</sup>

According to him, God does not need the world for his being. Nevertheless, although God is transcendence, He also is immanent in the world. Bonaventure affirms God’s immanence without threatening his transcendence. God is both the light by which we see and the preminent source of the forms we discern.

God in Bonaventure’s theology is as fruit full being or as supreme goodness. Thus, God is not being, but the Good. God is supremely self-communicative. “It is a

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<sup>78</sup> Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 207

<sup>79</sup> See Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fusus al-Hikam*, 124-125

<sup>80</sup> Timothy Johnson, *Bonaventure, Mystic of God’s Word*, New City Press, 1999, 54

consequence of God nature as the *Good* that it continually overflow itself, and it is this overflowing of the divine being that produces a plurality of persons in God.”<sup>81</sup> Thus, according to Zachary, “it is understandable that the inner –divine emanation should be seen as the full expression of that fruit fullness and goodness.”<sup>82</sup>

All creatures are shadows reflecting God as their cause. All creatures are also vestiges of the Trinity, reflecting the divine power, wisdom, and goodness. Bonaventure divided creature into various levels of representing God: shadow, vestige, image, and similitude.<sup>83</sup>

As stated before, creation is the “free overflow of God’s necessary, inner-divine fruitfulness.”<sup>84</sup> This vision can be said as the basis for ecological theology, that every creature is an aspect of God’s self-disclosure in the world. It is “a revelatory word written in the great Book of Creation.”<sup>85</sup>

On the relation of God and cosmos, Bonaventure represents a strand of the classical tradition. As a follower of St. Francis, he asserts an intimate relation between God and universe, “employing his doctrine of exemplarism to give a metaphysical underpinning to Francis’s awareness of the presence of God in the universe. In and through the Word, the exemplar of all creatures, God is in the world and the world in

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<sup>81</sup> David Carpenter, *Revelation, History, and the Dialogue of Religions, A Study of Bhartrhari and Bonaventure*, New York: Maryknoll Orbis Books, 1995, 93

<sup>82</sup> Zachary Hayes, “Christology and Metaphysic in the Thought of Bonaventure,” *Journal of Religion*, Vol. 58, Supplement, 1978, S88

<sup>83</sup> *Sentence*, d, 3, p. 1, a. un., q. 2, ad 4 (I: 72-74)

<sup>84</sup> Zachary Hayes, “Incarnation and Creation in the Theology of Bonaventure,” *Studies in Honoring Ignatius Charles Brady, Friar Minor*, ed. Romano Stephen Almagno and Conrad L. Harkins (St. Bonaventure, NY.: Franciscan Institute, 1976, 315, cited by Denis Edwards, “The Ecological Significance..., *Theological Studies*, 60, no. 4, 1999, 707-22

<sup>85</sup> Denis Edward, “The Ecological ..., *Theological Studies*, 60, no. 4, 1999

God.”<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, although the world reflects God in enumerable symbols, it never melts into the sea of the divinity. “The phenomenal world never fades into illusion before the Absolute.”<sup>87</sup>

According to Bonaventure, God is pure act, so he is infinite.<sup>88</sup> A creature received its being from outside other than its self, thus, it cannot be pure act or infinite. In *Commentary on Sentence* Bonaventure also inquires about the infinity of the essence of God. It is infinite because it is one with God’s power. Even he said, “Essence” is equivalent to “power of being.”<sup>89</sup> In *the Prologue of the First Book of Sentences* he quotes the Book of Job: “Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know? (11: 7-8)

Inheriting the tradition of Christian Neoplatonism, which richly elaborated by Augustine, the Pseudo—Dionysius, the Victorines, and his teacher Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure develops the concept of creation into the Franciscan tradition. It contains three principles: emanation, exemplarity, and knowledge by participation and

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<sup>86</sup> Ewert H. Cousins, “Response to Zachary Hayes,” *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 58, supplement, 1978, S103

<sup>87</sup> Ewert H. Cousins, “Francis of Assisi and Bonaventure: Mysticism and Theological Interpretation,” in Peter L. Berger, (Ed.), *The Other Side of God, A Polarity of World Religions*, Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1981, 78

<sup>88</sup> See for example *I Sentence*, d. 8, p. 1, a. 2, q. 1

<sup>89</sup> *II Sentence*, d. 8, a. un., q. 3

illumination. "This is our entire metaphysics: emanation, exemplarity, fulfillment, that is to be illuminated by spiritual rays and led back to highest reality."<sup>90</sup>

By situating the concept of emanation at the center of the doctrine of Trinity, Bonaventure develops his notion of the Father as the fountain—fullness of the divinity (*fontanis plenitudo*). This concept of emanation leads to the principle of exemplarity. When the father overflows from his fecundity generates the Son as His image and Word, he produce within the Son the *rationes*, ideas, or archetypes of all that he can create. "The Father generated one similar to himself, namely the Word, co-eternal with himself: and he express his own likeness and as a consequence express all the thing that he could make."<sup>91</sup> This theory of exemplarity affords him the foundation for the doctrine of the vestige, namely that creature are the footprint, representation of the Father:

For these creatures are shadows, echoes and pictures  
of that first, most powerful, most wise and most perfect  
Principle,  
of that eternal Source, Light and Fullness,  
of that efficient, exemplary and ordering Art,  
They are  
Vestiges, representation, spectacles  
Proposed to us  
And signs divinely given  
So that we can see God.  
These creatures, I say, are  
Exemplars  
or rather exemplifications  
presented to souls still untrained  
and immersed in sensible things  
so that through sensible things  
which they see  
they will be carried over to intelligible things  
which they do not see  
as through sings to what is signified."<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *Hexaameron*, I, 17, (Vol. 332), cited by Ewert H. Cousin, "Francis of Assisi and Bonaventure: Mysticism and Theological Interpretation," in Peter L. Berger, (Ed.), *The Other Side of God, A Polarity of World Religions*, Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1981, 95

<sup>91</sup> *Hexaameron*, I, 16 (V. 332), cited by Ewert H. Cousin, "Francis of Assisi and Bonaventure, 96

<sup>92</sup> *Itinerarium*, II, 11



It is obvious from quotation above, that according to Bonaventure, creatures are the vestiges of God, God-self expression. They are the exemplars of God. Nevertheless, God remains distinct from the creatures. In means that Bonaventure is not a pantheist.

## **V. God and Human Being**

### *a). God and Human Being in Ibn 'Arabi's Thought*

Among all the created things, human being is the one to which is attached so great an importance in the Qur'an that it attracts at least the same amount of our attention of God. Human being "his nature, conduct, psychology, duties and destiny are, in fact as much the central preoccupation of Qur'anic thought as the problem of God Himself."<sup>93</sup> Thus the concept of human being is crucial in the Qur'an, as well as the concept of God.

In Sufi's (mystic) tradition there is a saying, "*man 'Arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabbahu*," means he who knows himself knows God. Thus, knowing himself is the station man should pass to go to the higher station in order to know God. Knowing himself also means knowing what it means to be human.

The crucial problem that we face now, as admitted by psychologist, philosopher and other thinker in general, is that today man is getting more and more difficulties to know his nature. By the development in science and technology, and also development in specialties, differentiation of the profession in living, makes the portrait or concept of human being becomes more partial and not integral. The integrity of what is the nature of human being becomes more difficult to address. Almost all the discipline of sciences, such as psychology, sociology, biology, physics, politics, economy, anthropology, theology and so on, all take human being as the object for their studies, but all has

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<sup>93</sup>Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in The Koran, Semantic of the Koranic Weltanschauung*, Salem, New Hampshire, 1987, 75

different approaches and goal. The differentiation of methods or approaches, although the object is the same (human being), will have different conclusions about who and what is the nature of human being. Thus, human being always has a mystery in himself and this mystery has called the curiosity of the thinkers to get the answer for it. The more a thinker goes to deeper one side of human being, the more he prison himself in the cave he enters, which means the more he gets off from a comprehensive understanding of human being. Explicitly Ernst Cassirer argues this crisis of the nature of human being as follows:

Nietzsche proclaims the will to power, Freud signalizes the sexual instinct, Marx enthrone the economic instinct. Each theory becomes a Procrustean bed in which the empirical facts are stretched to fit a preconceived pattern. Owing to this development our modern theory of man lost its intellectual center. We acquired instead a complete anarchy of thought.<sup>94</sup>

The crisis about the nature of human being is not only felt by Western modern thinkers, but also in Islamic environment. The ideologyzation of the science of religion, be it is realized or not, has led to the segregated perception in viewing human being and his relation with God. In the *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence in Islam) tradition, this science indirectly tends to present the face of God as a wrathful God and warn constantly about hell and the Terrible in Punishment (*shadid al-'Iqab*). He is distant, dominating and powerful ruler whose command must be obeyed, while human being is the subject which tends to go astray and should be ready to receive punishment from the wrath of God, the powerful ruler, or conversely, human being eventually will demand reward for his devotion in following and performing His decrees.

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<sup>94</sup>Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, London, 1978, 21



Thus, if *fiqh* tends to introduce God as the Wrathful God, and theology has underlined the image of God as the most Rational, then, Sufism projected God as a Beloved, whose mercy precedes His wrath.

Those differences arose in human thought because in essential he who has God, where he was born, grew up, and developed are formed and influenced by many factors they faced in their lives. If, as stated above, the first step to know God is by knowing oneself correctly, so the first step that we should undertake is how to know ourselves correctly. This is the problem I will discuss in the coming pages. Ibn ‘Arabi said, “why it is possible to learn more in ten minutes about the Crab Nebula in Taurus, which is 6,000 light-years away, than you presently know about your self, even though you’ve been stuck with your self all your life.”<sup>95</sup> But, he also said that “the self is an ocean without shore. Gazing upon it has no end in this world and the next”.<sup>96</sup>

According to Islamic cosmology, especially Ibn ‘Arabi’s teaching, God created the human being as the last creature, having employed all the other creatures to bring him into existence. “Human beings embrace all the hierarchy of all things within existence, from the most luminous to the darkest.”<sup>97</sup> Not only do they have mineral, vegetal, and animal components, they also replicate the invisible and visible cosmic hierarchy, beginning with the First Intellect and including the Universal Soul, Prime Matter, the Universal Body, the Throne of God, God’s Footstool, the starless sphere, the sphere of constellations, the seven planets, and the four elements. In some mysterious way, every

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<sup>95</sup>Cited by William Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, State University of New York Press, 1998, xiii

<sup>96</sup>Ibn ‘Arabi, *Futuhat al-Makiyya*, IV 68.9, cited by Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure*, xiii

<sup>97</sup>Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 17

human being contains everything in the cosmos.<sup>98</sup> They were created from God's Spirit breathed into the clay of this world,<sup>99</sup> thus, "they combine the most intense light of existence and awareness with the dullest and most inanimate dust of the universe."<sup>100</sup>

It is said in the Hadith, "God created Adam in His own form". It means that He created them in the form of all the divine names, including All Merciful, Forgiving, Just, Creator, Generous, Powerful, Exalter, Abaser, and so on. He placed within human being every one of His own attributes. This is one of the interpretations that God taught Adam All Names.<sup>101</sup> As a result, human beings display an indefinite variety of divine aspects or "faces" (*wajh*)<sup>102</sup> It is precisely this human all-comprehensiveness that allows for the existence of every sort of human possibility, every imaginable attribute, every conceivable act, whether good or evil, noble or base, just or unjust, compassionate or cruel.

If Adam had been created not in the form of God, but in the form of All Compassionate, no human being could be angry or cruel. If he had been created in the form of Vengeful, no one would ever forgive his enemy. If he had been created in the form of the Almighty or the Inaccessible, no one would ever obey God or any or else. But since human beings were created in the form of all names, they can make manifest any conceivable attribute.<sup>103</sup>

Thus, since human beings comprehend all names, each human individual reflects every divine attribute to some degree. But during their lifetime, the divine names manifest themselves in all sorts of intensities, combinations, and interrelationships. The

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<sup>98</sup>Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 31

<sup>99</sup>The Qur'an 15: 28-29, 32: 7-9, 38: 71-72

<sup>100</sup>Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 17

<sup>101</sup>The Qur'an 2: 30

<sup>102</sup>Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 32

<sup>103</sup>Chittick, *Imaginal World*, 32

result may or may not be harmonious and balanced personality. Thus, the mode in which the names display their properties will determine human destinies in this world and the next.

Although it is true that human being is a theomorphic entity made upon the form of all the divine names, as stated in the quotation above, but there is a right way and a wrong way to assume the divine traits. The wrong way is exemplified by the sin of Satan who perceived that the light within himself was more intense than in Adam and to say as a result, “I am better than he– thou created me of fire and him of clay.”<sup>104</sup> The result is that he claimed the a greatness which did not in fact belong to him.<sup>105</sup> For this pride, Ibn ‘Arabi says, “he came to manifest the divine name Magnificent outside of its proper limits within the created world. He claimed incomparability for himself and as a result came face to face with the Divine Wrath.”<sup>106</sup>

Just like human being, the cosmos also was created in the form of God, so He also placed all of His attributes within the cosmos. Both are similar in this sense, but “in the cosmos they are scattered and dispersed, while in man they are gathered and concentrated. In the cosmos the divine names are relatively differentiated (*mufassal*) while in man they are relatively undifferentiated (*mujmal*).”<sup>107</sup> As a result, each and every divine name displays its properties and effects in the cosmos singly or in various

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<sup>104</sup>The Qur’an 7: 12; 38: 76

<sup>105</sup>This false pride is practically what the Qur’an terms equated to. It is also said that because of the hastiness of man, that he becomes so full of pride. See the Qur’an 21: 37; 17: 11

<sup>106</sup>Cited by Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 24

<sup>107</sup>Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 17

combinations with other names or group of names.<sup>108</sup> Fazlur Rahman said, “the only different is that while every other creature follows its nature automatically, man *ought* to follow his nature; this transformation of *is* into *ought* is both the unique privilege and the unique risk of man.”<sup>109</sup>

If the Qur’an says, “Verily, We created man in the best mold”<sup>110</sup>, it means that, to man God gave the purest and the best nature, and man’s duty is to preserve the pattern on which God has made him. It does not mean that God created man in the best mold/ form, physically, for here the Qur’an uses the word *insan*, not *bashar*. Unlike *bashar*, which always related to the biological character of human being, such as eating, drinking, walking, the word *insan* is related to human privilege in three categories. The first is *insan* as related to human privilege as *khalifah* (vicegerent) or the one who bore *amanah* (Trust); second is *insan* as related to the predisposition of the negativity of human being, and third, related the psychological and spiritual characters. We will discuss later in the principle d’etre of human being.

But if we come back to the model of the universe as God’s Self disclosure, we will say that every thing, not only human being, in the universe has its intrinsic meaning, they all are embraced God in them. The model of God’s self disclosure also will remind us that human beings are in the universe together, human beings are not aliens or tourist on earth, human beings evolved on this earth with other creatures. Thus, the universe, the place we live is not the hotel but the home, that we belong here, and we, human being

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<sup>108</sup>Chittick, *Imaginal World*, 33

<sup>109</sup>Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of Islam*, Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1989, 24

<sup>110</sup>The Qur’an, 95: 4

with our privileges and limitedness have responsibilities to preserve the pattern on which God has made him, as said before.

Each and every creature, including human being is, for good or for evil, intertwined with the life and death of the others. We are locked together on this earth into a common destiny. We are radically interrelated with and dependent on everything else in our earth. But we also realize that all creatures need space for the basics of life, and we all exist together in one space, that is our finite earth.

Each creature also has their own intrinsic value in and for itself, for one another and for God. Thus, “other creatures as well as our planet as whole were not created for our own benefit. Some parts are not merely means for the purpose of other parts, for all parts are valued by God and hence should be valued by us”<sup>111</sup> The other creature is also our relative, they are not something to be misused or even just used, for each and every attribute of God manifest itself in varying intensities within the things of the Cosmos. We are a part and with each creature we can see them, many different beings that comprise our earth as valuable in themselves and to God. The difference between us and other creatures is that we share responsibility with God for the well being of our planet.

We, human beings also are part of the cosmos. In order that, the cosmos is not a complete divine form without them. But human being knows the cosmos and can shape it to his own end, while the cosmos does not know human being and cannot shape him except to the extent that it is a passive instrument in the hand of God.<sup>112</sup> Beside that, although human being shares with the animal, for example, in possessing the attributes of

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<sup>111</sup>McFague, *The Body of God*, 185

<sup>112</sup>Chittick, *Imaginal World*, 34

life, knowledge, desire and power, but these attributes can be found in human being with much greater intensity than in the animal. Moreover, only human being can manifest the remaining attributes, such as speech is specifically human quality; generosity and justice cannot be ascribed to animals.

Beside that, creation of which we are a part is an ongoing, dynamic story that we, human beings alone understand, and hence have potential to help continue and thrive or let deteriorate through our destructive, greedy way. For this partnership creation, the Qur'an mentioned either for the welfare or the '*fasad fi'l ard*' (corruption on the earth).

Thus, human being has privilege over other creatures. The reality that the microcosm (human beings) dominates over the macrocosm (the universe) leads Ibn 'Arabi to write at the beginning of the *Fusus al-Hikam* that the human being is the spirit of the cosmos, while the cosmos without the human being is like the proportioned and well-balanced body, ready and waiting God to inhale His spirit into it, but lifeless as long as the human being is not appeared. Similarly he wrote in *Futuhat* as follows:

The whole cosmos is the differentiation of Adam, while Adam is the all-comprehensive book. In relation to the cosmos he is like the spirit in relation to the body. Hence human being is the spirit of the cosmos, and the cosmos is the body. Through bringing together all of this the cosmos is 'the great human being', so long as the human being is within it. But if you look at the cosmos alone, without human being, you will find it like a proportioned body without a spirit. The perfection of the cosmos through the human being is like the perfection of the body through spirit. The human being is 'blown into' the body of the cosmos, so he is the goal of the cosmos.<sup>113</sup>

From the quotation above, it is obvious that human being is higher than other creature, in this case the cosmos. He is the spirit and the goal of the cosmos. Nevertheless, what is important for theological anthropology is, that the so-called higher levels depend on the lower ones rather than vice versa. This is obviously the case with

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<sup>113</sup> Ibn 'Arabi, *Futuhat al-Makiyyah*, II 67.28, cited by Chittick, *Imaginal World*, 34



human beings and plants; the plants can do very nicely without us, in fact better, but we would quickly perish without them. So “The higher and more complex the level, the more vulnerable it is and dependent upon the levels that support it.”For theological anthropology, this is a very sobering thought, especially for tradition that has been accused of advising human beings to subdue and has dominion over all other created beings. It has profound implications for reconceiving the place of human beings in the scheme of things.<sup>114</sup>

Just as the interdependent among all creatures in the earth, the interdependent between human beings themselves is also can be inferred from the model of God’s Self-disclosure. And just like we feel profoundly connected with all other form of life in a realistic way, we also feel deeply related to all other human beings, our closest relatives. Together we need to learn to live responsibly and appropriately in our common home. The Qur’an assumed, affirmed, and confirmed this equality of the entire human race, which is the essence of all human rights. It obliterated all distinctions among human beings except the goodness and virtue (*taqwa*):

“O you who believe! Let not one group of men among you deride another, for they may be better than them; nor one group of women deride another, for they may be better than them, nor slander each other, nor call each other names— how bad it is to call (each other) by bad names after all of you became Believers. Whoever does not desist (from this), they are the unjust ones. O you who believe! Avoid most suspicion, for some suspicion is sinful, and do not pry into other’s affairs and do not backbite each other; would anyone of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?— how distasteful would it be to you! So fear God— indeed God is forgiving and merciful. O people! We have created (all of) you out of male and female, and We have made you into different nations and tribes (only) for mutual identification; the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one most possessed of *taqwa* (not one belonging to this or that race or nation); God knows well and is the best informed.”<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>McFague, *The Body of God*, 107

<sup>115</sup>The Qur’an, 49: 11-13

Here the Qur'an emphasizes essential human equality with the reason that "the kind of vicious superiority which certain members of this species assert over other is unique among animals. This is where human reason appears in its most perverted forms."<sup>116</sup>

According to Ibn 'Arabi, there is no creature better than human being. Allah makes him alive, knows, leads with power, has desire, speaks, hears, sees and decides, and those are divine attributes (*sifah rabbaniah*)

The Qur'anic Weltanschauung sees the human being as the biological, psychological and social creature. There are three key concepts, as mentioned before, denotes to the essential meaning of human being: *Bashar*, *insan*, and *al-nas*. Human being as *bashar* is related to the material component, symbolized by the clay component. In all the verses *bashar* refer to human being as a biological creature.<sup>117</sup> The word *bashar* always relates to the biological character of human being. In this condition, human being is automatically surrendered to God's law in the universe, the same as the sun, animal and plant surrender to the law. He is *musayyar* (directed, controlled, not endowed with free will). But human being as *insan* and *al-Nas* is related to the breath breathed by God. God introduces him with the rules and laws, but God also gives him the power to follow/obey or astray. He becomes *mukhayyar* (having the choice or option) creature. He observed the divine attributes, as Ibn 'Arabi marks, like *bashar*, *kalam*, *qadar*. He bore the divine realm, thus, he is demanded to be responsible.

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<sup>116</sup>Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1989, 45

<sup>117</sup>See for example 3: 47; 18: 110; 41: 6; 33: 33; 25: 7; 25: 20; 12: 31



Ibn 'Arabi, considers human being on two different levels. First is the cosmic level. On this level, human being is treated as a cosmic entity. In other word, here human being is as a species. On this level also, human being is the most perfect of all beings of the world, for he is *imago dei*. Here human being himself is perfect; human being is the 'perfect man', which is viewed as a perfect epitome of the universe, the very spirit of the whole world of Being, a being summing up and gathering together in himself all the elements that are manifested in the universe. Human being is the microcosm.<sup>118</sup>

At the second level, man as an individual. On this level, not all men are equally perfect. Only view of them deserves the appellation of the Perfect Man. The majority of man is far from being perfect.

As I describe of the *principe d'être* of human being, so I will only concern will the perfect man in the first level, that is human being as microcosm.

Ibn 'Arabi describes the mysterious process by which the self manifestation of the Absolute is activated by the inner requirement of the Divine Names, leading toward the creation of the world, and in particular the creation of man as the being who sums up in itself all the properties that are diffused in the whole universe. The passage begins with the following words:

When the Absolute God, at the level of His beautiful Names that exceed enumeration, wishes to see the (latent) realities of the Names – or if you like, say, His inner reality itself– as (actualized) in a 'comprehensive being' which, because of its being qualitief by 'existence', contains itself the whole universe, and (wished) to make manifest to Himself His own secret through it (i.e., the 'comprehensive being') . . .<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 218

<sup>119</sup>Ibn al-'Arabi, *Fusus al-Hikam*, 48, cited also by Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, 219

Firmly in the Qur'an, Allah says that human being is the last creation which is created in the most perfectness and uniqueness compare to other creatures( 95: 4). Allah, however, says that his human quality is incomplete, unfinished, thus he has to struggle for his own perfection (91: 7-10). This process of perfection is possible due to his nature as *fitri*, *hanif* and rational. In addition, for Muslim, he has another thing, that is the coming of Prophets with their scriptures as the guidance for their life (4: 174)

b). *God and Human Being in Bonaventure's Thought*

If his doctrine of God was derived from the Greek tradition, his doctrine of man was ascribed from Augustine.<sup>120</sup> According to Bonaventure, human being is the image of God, and the world is as vestige of the Trinity. "By reflecting the divine power, wisdom, and goodness, all creature are vestiges of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."<sup>121</sup>

Bonaventure's doctrine of God can be found in his *Libri Sententiarum*, where he treats of the subject in strict scholastic form. According to him angel cannot understand God naturally (immediately) neither human being. Even when human being is in the state of innocent he cannot know God immediately. It means that God can only be known or seen through creature. "God is known through the creature, and moreover the soul requires to know Him through the creature."<sup>122</sup>

Bonaventure's epistemology contained the notion that man is seen as the image of the Trinity, reflecting through the coincidence of opposites the divine power, wisdom, and goodness. But to be an image of Trinity is both man's glory and his tragedy, for he is

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<sup>120</sup> Ewert H. Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 44

<sup>121</sup> Ewert H. Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 45

<sup>122</sup> Vincent Mayer, "The Doctrine of St. Bonaventure, Concerning Our Knowledge of God," *Franciscan Studies*, No. 2, July, 1924, 42

a fallen image. He speaks of man of having fallen and lying on the ground, in need of someone to give him his hand to raise him up.<sup>123</sup>

After the fall man is still an image of God; he has lost contact with God because he has turned from him, but he still bears his image stamped on his soul. He still has the desire for God, the appetite for the infinite; for this remains even in hell. He wanders about the world, never at rest, in an infinite search for the infinite good he has lost. He has fallen into the fragmented finite world, with a thousand desires, a thousand questions. Bonaventure said, “Man has been mad anxious in his searching. And because nothing created can compensate for the good he has lost, since it is infinite, he desires it, he searches for it and he is never at rest.”<sup>124</sup>

Among the creatures, man is the highest. He is higher than other creatures. But other creatures can be considered as things, which are inferior to man, and as signs, which are means of departure for him. Through creatures man can arrive at God. It can be inferred that human being is in need of other creature.

In *Commentary on Sentence*, Bonaventure divided man into a twofold manner: as a being in itself and as outside itself. Man as a being in itself cannot arrived at God by him self, but man as outside himself he can, that is though cognition of creatures he is recollected in himself and elevated above himself toward the cognition of God.<sup>125</sup>

Because of his high status (excels among the other creatures), man could “by understanding of (his) mind perceive the invisible things of God and/ or did also perceive

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<sup>123</sup> Itinerarium c. 4, see also Ewert Cousin, *Bonaventure and The Coincidence of Opposite*, 126-127

<sup>124</sup> *Sentence* 5.

<sup>125</sup> *I Sentence*, d. III, q. 3. See also *I Sentence*, d.3, p.1, ch. 1

(them) through those things which have been made, that is through creature visible and/or invisible.”<sup>126</sup>

In Bonaventure’s vision, Universe is a book, which can be read, a book that reveals God. “From this we may gather that the universe is like a book reflecting, representing and describing its Makers, the Trinity, at three different levels of expression: as a trace (*vestigium*), an image, and a likeness. The aspect of trace is found in every creature; the aspect of image, in the intellectual creatures or rational spirits; the aspect of likeness, only in those who are God-conformed.”<sup>127</sup>

For human being, because of the sin, the apprehension of God’s self-communication in creation is veiled. If not by sin, human being would be able to read the book of creation and understand Wisdom. Bonaventure said: “In the state of innocence, when the image had not yet been distorted but was confirmed to God through grace, the book of creation suffice to enable humanity to receive the light of divine Wisdom.”<sup>128</sup> It was because of sin that human being become illiterates and with the very little appreciation of the book of Universe. In order that, human being needs both the book of Scripture to read the book of Universe and the grace of God, to have a full apprehension of what lies before him.

Like any other creature, the creation of man has a goal to achieve. In order to examine his role in creation we have to examine his essence. Bonaventure describes this problem in his *De Scientia Christi*.

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<sup>126</sup> *I Sentence*, d., 3, p. 1, ch. 1

<sup>127</sup> *Breviloquium* 2.12. The works of Bonaventure 2: *The Breviloquium*, trans. Jose de Vinck, Peterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild, 1963, 104

<sup>128</sup> *Breviloquium* 2.12, 104

Bonaventure places human being over the material creation, as stated before. In his *Sentence*, Bonaventure shows that man's destiny implies the necessity of equally proportionate perfections.<sup>129</sup> He also entertains that all things were created wisely, but the creation man exhibit special wisdom because he approaches the divine exemplare more than any other creature.<sup>130</sup>

## VI. Human Being and the Process of Self-Perfection

### a. *The Process of Self-Perfection in Ibn 'Arabi*

The issue of human perfection is for human being to be fully human. Humans are different from other creatures because they are forms of the whole, while other creatures are parts. "God creates Adam in His form," and He likewise created the cosmos in His form. Both the cosmos and the human being are integral forms of God.<sup>131</sup> To be perfect human being also to live up and realize his true role in this world as *khalifah* (vicegerent) on earth, reflecting the Divine Names and Attributes.

Being as *khalifah* on earth, and the theater where in the Divine Names and Attributes are reflected, human being can reach felicity only by remaining faithful to this nature, that is by being truly himself. It will imply that human being should become integrated. God is one so human being must become whole in order to reflect the One.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> *III Sentence*, d. 2, a.1, q. 1

<sup>130</sup> See *Commentarius in Evangelium S. Lucae*, XII: 34, cited by Harold Niedwiecki, *The Human Person, His Dignity and Role in the World According to Saint Bonaventure*, A Dissertation, 1961, 30

<sup>131</sup> Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, xiii

<sup>132</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sufism and the Integration of man", *God and man in Contemporary Islamic Thought*, ed., with an introduction by Charles Malik, Centennial Publication: American University of Beirut, 1972, 144

This concept is based on the view that Islam is the religion of *tawhid* (unity), thus, all veritable aspect of Islamic doctrine and practice should reflect this central principle. And in fact the whole program of Islamic spirituality is to make human being whole, for only by being whole that man can become holy. In other words, the goal of Islamic spirituality is “the integration of man in all the depth and breadth of his existence, in all the amplitude which is included in the nature of the universal man (*al-insan al-kamil*).”<sup>133</sup>

Every human being is born and bound to be an aspirant to know God. It is said in the famous Hadith, “Everyone who is born is born with a ‘pure nature’ (*fitrah*), that is, an innate disposition to seek and know God.”<sup>134</sup> Thus, hunger and thirsty to be close with God is not the result of the culture but it is the deepest nature of human being. However, its development is often blocked by the vegetative and animality in him. In other words, the divine spirit which has been a driver for his body’s vehicle, sometime forget him self, thus he loss his autonomy as a master. For this mater he may commit sin.

Moreover, while human beings are pre-existently endowed with heart (*qalb*), spirit (*ruh*), and intellect (*‘aql*), he receives the principles of his lower self (*nafs*), the negative psychic force within man, at the moment of creation.<sup>135</sup> This lower self (*nafs*), which also his carnal soul always incited to evil (*al-‘amarah bi’s-su’*), is his worst enemy. The view of nasf that “habitually incites to evil (*al-ammarah bi’s-su’*)” can be

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<sup>133</sup>Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Sufism and the Integration of Man”, 144

<sup>134</sup>See, Ali Issa Othman, *The Concept of Man in Islam, In the Writings of Al-Ghazali*, Cairo, 1960i

<sup>135</sup>Gerhard Bowering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*, Berlin, New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1980, 253



inspired by the temptation of Qur'anic figure of Joseph (Yusuf) who is solicited by Potiphar's wife.<sup>136</sup>

Thus, the soul of human being can be perceived as the theater of a struggle between a God-oriented force and self-centered tendency within himself. Then the task of human being consists in "overcoming the carnal and egoistic drives of his lower self (*nafs*) which militates against the impulses of the heart (*qalb*) that direct man totally to God."<sup>137</sup> In this world human beings have to overcome his instinctive nature, to realize the sacred of his identity which is his inmost being.

In general, there are three stations for Muslim to increase his soul's quality. First, *zikr*, or *ta'alluq*, remembrance of Allah, that is, trying to remember and bound his heart and intellect to God. Anywhere a Muslim has been, he should not get off his thinking and *zikr* to Allah( 3: 191). This *zikr* led to the second station, *takhalluq* (character traits), which means assuming the character traits of God, the process whereby human comes to manifest the divine attributes. This process can also be called internalization of the attributes of God into ourselves. In this context Sufi usually based on the Hadith, "*takhallaq bi akhlaqi Allah*" (assume the character traits of God!). The third station is *tahaqquq*, the capability to actualize his consciousness and capacity as a Mu'min (believer) who is dominated by God's attributes which then is expressed into action. This station is in accordance with the Hadith, which says that, anyone who attains the state of the closest to God; God will see His servant closeness. God says in the famous hadith qudsi: "My servant draws near to Me through nothing I love more than that which I have

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<sup>136</sup>Cf, the Qur'an 12: 23ff

<sup>137</sup>Bowering, *The Mystical Vision*, 260

made obligatory for him. My servant never ceases drawing near to Me through supererogatory works until I love him. Then, when I love him, I am his hearing through which he hears, his sight through which he sees, his hand through which he grasps, and his foot through which he walks.”<sup>138</sup>

By those stations, *ta'alluq*, *takhalluq* and *tahaqquq*, the believer will attain status of *khalifah* Allah (the vicegerent), with his overwhelming capacity but at the same time full of love and peace. The good God's servant is also His *khalifah* to build image of the paradise in the earth.

In the mystical language, as human being is created in God's form, hence every attribute of God is found in the innate disposition (*fitra*) of human being. The part to perfection then, “bringing these attributes out from hiddenness to manifestation.”<sup>139</sup> However, because of *tanzih* ( that God is different with the creation), it is utterly impossible for people to understand their own innate disposition, made in the form of God, without God's help. This help comes as prophetic guidance. Thus, the only way to reach perfection is to follow the authority of the prophets.<sup>140</sup>

In order to achieve full humanity, human being must move toward the mercy, light, and unity which stand at the center of the circle of existence. Guidance or *hidayah* which is presented by the prophets in the form of divine messages, is the only door which lead in that direction.

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<sup>138</sup>W. Graham, *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam*, The Hague: Mouton, 1977, 173-74

<sup>139</sup>Chittick, *Self Disclosure of God*, xxiii

<sup>140</sup>Chittick, *Self Disclosure*, xxiii

Ibn ‘Arabi sums up his position on the end of contemplation is a masterly way: “Thus God is the mirror in which you see your self, as you are His mirror in which He contemplates His Names; now His Names are not other than Himself, so that the analogy of relations is an inversion.”<sup>141</sup>

According to him, although reason cannot grasp the full significance of God’s reality on its own, it provide the essential support for understanding His Unity. In order to understand God, human being also need God’s help. Thus, in the Koran God commands the Prophet to pray, “My Lord, increase me in knowledge!”<sup>142</sup> And true and useful knowledge is knowledge of God. It is this meaning when God commands “to worship me”.

Ibn ‘Arabi illustrates the seeker of knowledge as “like him who drinks the water of the sea. The more he drinks, the thirstier he becomes.... And he who has no knowledge of himself has no knowledge of his Lord.”<sup>143</sup>

If in the Qur’an, God viewed as “the Light of the heavens and earth”, for Ibn ‘Arabi, His light becomes manifest not only through existence itself but also through knowledge.<sup>144</sup>

In another passages in his *Futuhāt*, Ibn ‘Arabi describes about reaching the goal safely for human being. When human being come to the stages of unveiling in his mystical experience, he will be tempted by Satan and his own caprice to depend upon himself rather than follow the Prophet. If it happened he has to move forward to the scale

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<sup>141</sup>Titus Buckhardt, *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, Lahore, 1959, 142

<sup>142</sup> The Qur’an: 20: 144

<sup>143</sup> *Futuhāt Makiyya* II, 552. 12

<sup>144</sup> See, Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 196

of knowledge derived from the revealed Law. Thus, during his journey to God the traveler needs to keep a clear head and not be misled by the swirling forces which lie just beyond the horizon of stability and balance. Here, according to Ibn ‘Arabi the Law which governs the inward realm as much as it governs the outward, provides the essential framework for entering into imaginal world. “Without it the traveler will be thrown about by every blast of deceiving wind.”<sup>145</sup>

Like many Sufis before and after him, Ibn ‘Arabi also describes about stations of the path to perfection. Nevertheless, he differentiates between station and state. “Every station in the path of God is earned and fixed, while every state is bestowal, neither earned nor fixed. The state is like the flashing of lightning. When it flashes, it either disappears because of its contrary, or it is followed by similars. But if it is followed by similars, its possessor will suffer lost.”<sup>146</sup>

The station of the path represents every positive human attribute that the travelers strive to achieve. Through this station the travelers come to embody the divine realities embrace by the name of Allah. Although human being is made in the form of all the names of God, but he does not actualize these names until they become an established and deeply rooted part of his character. It is in this state that human being must “assuming the traits” of the names of God (*takhalluq bi akhlaqi Allah*). According to Ibn ‘Arabi, when Sufis speak of *takhaauq bi akhlaqi Allah*, they mean the same as philosophers mean, that is *al-tashabbuh bi'l-ilah*, gaining similarity to the God.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Chittick, *The Sufi Path*, 263

<sup>146</sup> *Futuhat* II 176. 10, cited by Chittick, *The Sufi Path*, 279

<sup>147</sup> *Futuhat* II, 126. 8

In discussing the problem of perfection, Ibn 'Arabi considers two kinds of perfections, one related to the man's essential reality as a form (*sura*) of God and the other to the attributes and qualities which he manifest in his specific functions in this world and next. For the first perfection, all perfect man are identical and one with God. In respect to the second perfection, each perfect man has a specific function to play in the cosmic hierarchy. It is for this reason that there are many perfect men. Thus, perfect man acts as God's deputy and vicegerent in every situation.

In traveling to God, when human being followed the spiritual path, he passes from station to station, and never losing attribute after gaining it. One by one he assumes the traits of divine attributes. Having this he now manifest the names of Allah himself. Hence, Ibn 'Arabi called the highest station by "no station"

b. *The Process of Self-Perfection in Bonaventure*

In Bonaventure's point of view, God is an infinite primordial mystery of self-communicative love. The Father is the source and goal of all creatures as the immanent emanation of the Trinity. Thus, creatures as the overflowing of the Father will also return to the Father. This pattern of thought as the idea of metaphysical circle, that creature exist in relation to God and will return to God, is described by Zachary Hayes:

Flowing from that fountain as something willed and loved by God is the immense river of creation. The world of nature is vast expression of a loving will. Such a world is not one dimensional, but like water, it has many qualities and dimensions. Like the water of the ocean, the world has an overwhelming fullness as it flows from the depths of God. Like the ocean, it is deep and contains many levels of meaning. Like the water of a river, the world flows in such fluidity and richness that it cannot be contained in any one form or category. And as—according to Ecclesiastes 1: 7—rivers return to their place of origin, so the river of creation circle back on its place of origin. Emanation is simultaneously a movement toward the return or reduction of creation to God. Created existence, therefore, is a dynamic reality, directed in its inner core to a fulfillment and completion which is to be the mysterious fruit of its history.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure*, St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1992, 13, cited by Ilia Delio, *Simply Bonaventure, An Introduction to His Life, Thought, and Writings*, New City Press, 2001, 13

As only human being is created in the image of God, so it is him alone who can attain a true relationship with God. God revealed the way, but human being has freedom to do.

Like in Islamic spirituality, prayer in Christianity holds a prominent place for the perfection of life. Jesus called people to prayer, and all aspects of life to be mark by prayer. In his *Commentary on Luke*, Bonaventure elaborates the important of Christ's example of prayer by referring that every dimension of Jesus life was permeated by prayer. "In all situation the Lord is found praying...."<sup>149</sup>

Since human being suffer sin<sup>150</sup> the assistance of grace is needed to for reaching perfection. After sin, man spiritually dead. This state provides him an opportunity to experience the grace of God. It is God mercy which cleanses human being from sin and liberate them from misery.<sup>151</sup> According to Bonaventure God's mercy and grace is given in proportion to the soul's disposition for it, not according to the gravity of the need itself. If God decides to call human being to conversion freely, so too human being freely decide to turn back to God in prayer, to prepare for reception of sanctifying grace. "There is no preparation for receiving divine grace than the petition of devout prayer."<sup>152</sup> In *Commentarius in Evangelium S. Lucae*, Bonaventure sum up the call for conversion and prayer in the parable of prodigal son.<sup>153</sup> There are four elements of conversion, namely

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<sup>149</sup> *Commentary on Luke*, c. 3, n. 50, cited by Timothy J. Johnson, *The Soul in Ascent: Bonaventure on Poverty, Prayer, and Union With God*, Franciscan Press, Quincy University, 2000, 57

<sup>150</sup> This possibility of sin according to Bonaventure was engraved in the depths of human nature as created from nothing. See *Breviloquium*, p. 3, c. 1

<sup>151</sup> *IV Sentence*, d. 46, c. 4

<sup>152</sup> Timothy J. Johnson, *The Soul in Ascent*, 32

<sup>153</sup> See, *Commentary on Luke*, c. 15, n. 21- 52



divine invitation, human assent, the reception of God's gifts and perseverance in grace. The parable is as follows. The prodigal son assents to divine inspiration by considering his poverty as the sinner, remembering his father's goodness, by deciding to pray in order to receive mercy. Then, he intend to come back to his father's home by forsaking sin in order to choose good works. While the father mercifully gives him grace, he also continues to ask the love of father.<sup>154</sup>

In the discussion of prayer, Bonaventure also includes contemplative speculative prayer. According to him, "the ascent into God means a new perception of God' accordingly, it means an elevation of our intellect to God, proceeding step by step from the consideration of creation to consideration of the Creator."<sup>155</sup> It can be inferred that creation is a mean for contemplation, namely the ascent to God begins amidst the beauty of creation. This vision is by influence of St Francis, who considered creature as witnesses to the Most High God. It is a ladder to ascend to God. Bonaventure said, "we can see that all creature in this visible world lead the soul of the wise contemplative to the Eternal God. ... The creatures of this visible world manifest the invisible things of God."<sup>156</sup>

In addition, from Bonaventure's *Evangelical Perfection*, we noted that, like what Ibn 'Arabi said, human being come to full understanding of God only by understanding himself, that is his nothingness. Thus, "the one who comes to God must first come to his

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<sup>154</sup> *Commentary on Luke*, c. 15, n. 31 and *Comm Lc*, c. 15, n. 36, cited by Timothy J. Johnson, *The Soul in Ascent*, 34

<sup>155</sup> *III Sentence*, d. 17, a. 2, q. 1, concl. Ad 3

<sup>156</sup> *Itinerarium*, 49

own nothingness.”<sup>157</sup> In addition he also said in his third chapter of *Itinerarium*, that we are “to enter into ourselves, that is into our mind, where the divine image shines forth.”<sup>158</sup>

There are two approaches to God. The first, considers the essential attributes of God as Being. Second, ponders the manifestation of God as Goodness. And there are steps or stages in Bonaventure’s mystical way of ascension to God. It is based on Bonaventure’s interpretation of the wings of the Seraph. The six stages symbolized by the six wings which leads to the seventh final chapter in *Itinerarium*.

## VII. Conclusion

From the studies above, eventually I will sum up this paper by saying, whether affected by Muslim Spain influences or not, the celebrated Seraphic Doctor Bonaventure taught a form of Christian mystical theology that in certain respects bears a striking resemblance to the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabi. In the concept of creation for example, both are consider creation as God-self expression, self- disclosure of God. Creature is the properties and effect of God names and attributes. And human being is the highest creature. And the goal of creation for both is theopany, or God self-manifestation. Thus, the world is like a mirror reflecting God. All creatures are symbols and vestige of God.

Although they have the same language to use for creation, that is emanation and *creatio exnihillo*, but there is different between them in understanding those concepts. Unlike Ibn ‘Arabi, who does not follow Plotinus emanation, Bonaventure’s understanding of emanation, more or less is more Plotinian.

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<sup>157</sup> Wayne Hellmann, “Poverty: The Franciscan Way to God,” *Theology Digest*, 22, 1974, 344

<sup>158</sup> *Itinerarium*, c. 3, n. 1

In addition if Ibn ‘Arabi entertains that the vital link between the Divine Absolute and the World, or between transcendency and immanency is the divine attributes (*sifat*), Bonaventure holds that it is the Son as a mediator between God and the Universe.

On the problem of journey to God, Both entertain that human being come to full understanding of God only by understanding himself, that is his nothingness. Thus, “the one who comes to God must first come to his own nothingness.”

From the discussion above also can be concluded that, both Ibn ‘Arabi and Bonaventure are very rooted in great old traditions, then, they tried to broaden, expand, renew and reconstruct. Indeed scripture is the prominent source for their spirituality. Ibn ‘Arabi for example always maintain even the term used in the Qur’an on every concept, such as the concept of creation as a continuing process (*fi huduts daimin*). Scripture also play a prominent role in Bonaventure spirituality. Thus, we can say that both are scriptural interpreter, Ibn ‘Arabi as Qur’anic interpreter and Bonaventure as Biblical interpreter. Both are also theologians and mystics writing in theological and mystical concept according to their era. Both are mystics who tried to express their mystical teaching, presented them in the form of comments and interpretations of their respective Scriptures. While Bonaventure did it by interpreting the Bible, Ibn ‘Arabi did it by interpreting the Qur’an. This different foundation seems to be the reason for their differences.

At last, from the studies above we may learn that spirit-experience is the fundamental level on which religions meet. “Spirit-experience is not something

incommunicable, silent experience; it can be thoroughly discussed and understood, though not perfectly expressed.”<sup>159</sup>

An approach focused on comparative spirituality or comparative mysticism has the advantage of placing primary emphasis on various modes of religious experience rather than on expressed doctrinal formulations. This is an advantage because while experience is something to which most religious people can relate in a very immediate way and something which has not traditionally been used to erect barriers between different traditions, the finer points of doctrine are sometimes difficult to understand and in any case have generally been used as the very means of making absolute and exclusivist truth claims, and therefore of alienating the believers of one tradition from another. The spiritual experience approach can find the core of the relationship between various religious traditions, while comparative approaches between various formulations of doctrines often find obstacles which arises from the ineffable differences.

Theological anthropologically speaking, I can say that it is incorrect to define human being as ‘rational animal’. The capacity to think is not his utmost character that differentiate him with other creature. He is called by human being, for he carries divine form, he is *imago dei*. It is for this reason that human being who do not actualize their own divine form remain less than human, no matter what kind of great deeds they may accomplish in the current world. “The station of perfection is the mark of true humanity”. Cosmologically speaking, we might say that the corruption and decay of the natural and

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Thomas A. Aykara (Ed.), *Meeting of Religions*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publication, 1978, 177.  
See also, Mary Lou van Buren, "Spirituality in the Dialogue of Religions" in Hinson E. Glenn (ed.), *Spirituality in Ecumenical Perspective*, 51. In Islam, according to Seyyed Hossein Nasr, it is Sufism in its nature that has qualification to investigate the problem of the hidden unity of all religion, See, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1973, 123

social environment in the current times is one of the outward signs of the diminishing number of perfect human being in the earth.

Wallahu a'lam (Allah knows best)

May 4, 2006

Syafa'atun Almirzanah

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on Medieval Studies  
May 4–7, 2006**

**Wednesday, May 3**

12:00 noon	<b>Registration begins and continues daily</b>	Eldridge-Fox Lobby
12:00 noon–5:00 p.m.	<b>COFFEE SERVICE</b>	Eldridge-Fox Lobby
5:00–6:00 p.m.	<b>Director's Reception for Early Arrivals</b>	Valley III 313
6:00–7:00 p.m.	<b>DINNER</b>	Valley II Dining Room
7:00 p.m.	<b>TEAMS (Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages)</b>	Valley III Stinson Lounge
	Board of Directors Meeting	
8:00 p.m.	<b>A Medieval Film Fest</b>	Fetzer 1005
	<i>Les visiteurs du soir (The Devil's Envoys)</i>	
	Sponsor: Medieval Institute, Western Michigan Univ.	
	Organizer: Virginia Blanton, Univ. of Missouri–Kansas City; Alan Lupack, Univ. of Rochester; and Kevin J. Harty, La Salle Univ.	
	Presider: Virginia Blanton	
	Popcorn will be served.	
10:00 p.m.	<b>Centre for Tuscan Studies, Univ. of Leicester</b>	Fetzer 1045
	Reception with open bar	

**Thursday, May 4**

7:00–8:00 a.m.	<b>BREAKFAST</b>	Valley II Dining Room
7:30–10:30 a.m.	<b>COFFEE SERVICE</b>	Valley II and III,

Bernhard, and Fetzer

8:00 a.m.

**TEAMS (Consortium for the Teaching  
of the Middle Ages)**

Valley III

Stinson Lounge

Executive Committee Meeting

8:00 a.m.

***Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture (SASLC)*** Bernhard

Business Meeting

President's Dining Room

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302**

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Presider: Stephen Dumont, Univ. of Notre Dame

**Conscience and Self-Reflection in Aquinas**

Carl N. Still, St. Thomas More College

**Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus on Conscience**

Martin Pickavé, Univ. of Toronto

**Ockham on Conscience**

Peter Eardley

**Session 2  
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Valley II  
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**Medieval Masculinities I**

Sponsor: Medieval Studies Certificate Program, Graduate Center, CUNY



Organizer: Pamela Sheingorn, Baruch College and Graduate Center, CUNY

Presider: Thomas Head, Hunter College and Graduate Center, CUNY

**Masculinity in *Christ I***

Lee Fulton, Graduate Center, CUNY

**“Atchíu fer Find”: Male Beauty and the Gaze in Early Irish Saga**

Sarah Sheehan, Univ. of Toronto

**Masculinity and Renovatio Imperii: The Case of Adalbertus of Prague**

Chris Petit, Graduate Center, CUNY

**Session 8  
Valley II  
205**

**Otherness and Othering: The Hybridization of English Mythology and Identity I**

Organizer: Wendy Marie Hoofnagle, Univ. of Connecticut

Presider: Kathleen M. Davis, Princeton Univ.

**“Never since Arthur Went Away”: Hybrid Identities and Anglo-Norman Imperialism**

Wendy Marie Hoofnagle

**Retrojecting a National Hero: Gawain and *De ortu Waluuanii***

Peter Larkin, Independent Scholar

**Nationalizing Mythology: Trojan Hybridity in Chaucer’s *House of Fame* and**

***Troilus and Criseyde***

Wolfram R. Keller, Philipps-Univ. Marburg

**Session 9  
Valley II  
207**

**The Political Culture of Late Medieval England**

Sponsor: Society of the White Hart

Organizer: Douglas Biggs, Waldorf College

Presider: Douglas Biggs

**Parliament’s Secret Members: The Representatives of the Clergy**

Allison McHardy, Univ. of Nottingham

**The Politics of Mercy: The Use of Royal Pardons in Fourteenth-Century England**

Helen Lacey, Univ. of Durham

**Curiouser and Curiouser: Even Further down the Rabbit Hole with Alice (Née?)**

**Perrers**

Candace Robb, Independent Scholar

**Session 10  
Valley II  
Garneau  
Lounge**

**Literary Representation and the Historical Referent: Context, Causality, Resonance**

Organizer: Jason Jacobs, Univ. of California–Santa Cruz

Presider: Anne Latowsky, Univ. of South Florida

**Texts and Contexts: The Allure of Disciplinary History**

Mark Burde, Univ. of Michigan–Ann Arbor

**Miracles, History, Experience, Authenticity**

Peggy McCracken, Univ. of Michigan–Ann Arbor

**Sixteen Guillaumes: Medieval Textuality and the Historical Variant**

Jason Jacobs

**Session 11  
Valley II  
LeFevre  
Lounge**

**Philip the Good, His Texts and His Textile**

Presider: Louis B. Haas, Middle Tennessee State Univ.

**An Historico-Literary Approach to the Mises-en-Prose in the Ducal Library of**

**Philip the Good of Burgundy (1419–1467)**

Helen M. Hathorn, Indiana Univ.–Bloomington/Indiana Univ.–South Bend

**How an “Old” Conquest of England Tapestry (Possibly the Bayeux) Was Owned by the Rulers of France, England, and Burgundy, 1396–ca. 1430**

George T. Beech, Western Michigan Univ.

**Session 12  
Valley I  
100**

***La corónica* 2005 International Book Award: H. Salvador Martínez, *Alfonso X, el Sabio, una biografía* (A Panel Discussion)**

Sponsor: *Corónica: A Journal of Medieval Spanish Language, Literature, and Cultural Studies*

Organizer: George D. Greenia, College of William and Mary

Presider: E. Michael Gerli, Univ. of Virginia

A panel discussion with the author: Joseph F. O'Callaghan, Fordham Univ.; Samuel G. Armistead, Univ. of California–Davis; and Jesús D. Rodríguez Velasco, Univ. of California–Berkeley.

**Session 13  
Valley I  
101**

**Middle English Religious Texts**

Presider: Paul F. Reichardt, Northern Kentucky Univ

**Differences of Opinion: Apocalyptic Interpolations in Two Middle English Texts**

Anna Lewis, Univ. of Ottawa

**Transmitting the Past: Carthusian Textuality and Female Visionary Experience**

Paul J. Patterson, Univ. of Cincinnati

**The Unprinted Versions of *A Schort Reule of Lif***

Mary Raschko, Univ. of North Carolina–Chapel Hill

**Session 14  
Valley I  
102**

**Chaucer after Historicism I**

Organizer: Maura Nolan, Univ. of California–Berkeley

Presider: Maura Nolan

**The Lack of Interest in *The Shipman's Tale*: Chaucer, Bourdieu, and the Limits of Value Theory**

Robert Epstein, Fairfield Univ.

**"A Love of Form": Language and Loss in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess***

Rebekah Long, DePauw Univ.

**Claiming and Reclaiming History**

Elizabeth Scala, Univ. of Texas–Austin

**Session 15  
Valley I  
105**

**Hiberno-Latin Texts and Manuscripts: Bengt Loeffstedt (1931–2004) and Hiberno-Latin Studies**

Sponsor: Society for Hiberno-Latin Studies

Organizer: Denis Brearley, Univ. of Ottawa, and Martin McNamara, Milltown Institute–Dublin

Presider: Denis Brearley

**Bengt Loeffstedt's Contributions to the Study of Hiberno-Latin Philology**

Michael Herren, York Univ./Centre for Medieval Studies, Univ. of Toronto

**Bengt Loeffstedt's Edition of the Commentary on Matthew by Sedulius Scottus**

Jean Rittmueller, Independent Scholar

**Session 16  
Valley I  
106**

**Philosophical Themes and Issues in Malory's *Morte Darthur***

Organizer: Felicia Nimue Ackerman, Brown Univ.

Presider: Felicia Nimue Ackerman

**Patterns of Loyalty in Malory's *The Great Tournament* and *Slander and Strife***

Janet Jesmok, Univ. of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

**C. S. Lewis, the English Prose *Morte*, and Vinaver's Response: Constructing Malory's Christianity in Postwar Britain**

Stephen Atkinson, Park Univ.

***The Tale of Sir Gareth: The Proving or the Making of a Hero?***

John B. Marino, Missouri Baptist Univ.

**Letters of Gold: The Status of Inscription in Malory's *Morte Darthur***  
Sarah M. Anderson, Princeton Univ.

**Session 17  
Valley I  
107**

**Early Tudor**

Sponsor: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, St. Louis Univ.

Organizer: Antony J. Hasler, St. Louis Univ.

Presider: Antony J. Hasler

**"To Tumble My Tubbe": Utopia as Cock and Bull?**

Sarah C. McCollum, Univ. of Tennessee-Knoxville

**"Since in All Our Speaking We Never Be Heard": Interpreting John Heywood's *Play of the Weather***

Elizabeth M. Human, St. Louis Univ.

**The Matter of Enclosure in Early Tudor Ploughman Literature**

Annemarie Thijms, Trinity College, Univ. of Dublin

**The Dutch Acrobat and the New Queen: Queen Mary's Royal Entry, ca. 1553**

Scott Oldenburg, Univ. at Buffalo

**Session 18  
Valley I  
109**

**Medieval to Modern Humanisms: A Roundtable Discussion**

Sponsor: BABEL Working Group

Organizer: Eileen A. Joy, Coastal Carolina Univ.

Presider: Christine Neufeld, Eastern Michigan Univ.

A roundtable discussion with Craig Dionne, Eastern Michigan Univ.; Eileen A. Joy;

Myra J. Seaman, College of Charleston; Michael E. Hoenicke-Moore, Southern

Illinois Univ.-Edwardsville; Robin Norris, Southeastern Louisiana Univ.; and J. Justin

Brent, Presbyterian College.

**Session 19  
Valley I  
110**

**Critical Approaches to *The Pricke of Conscience***

Organizer: Hoyt S. Greeson, Laurentian Univ.

Presider: Guy Trudel, Univ. of St. Michael's College, Univ. of Toronto

**Semiotics in Book 5 of *The Pricke of Conscience***

Jean E. Jost, Bradley Univ.

**Shades of Death in *The Pricke of Conscience***

Hoyt S. Greeson

**Session 20  
Valley I  
Shilling  
Lounge**

**Middle English Epic and Romance**

Presider: Michael A. Faletta, Univ. of Vermont

**The Otuel Group: Speech and Silence in the Discourse of Christian Empire**

Elizabeth A. Williamsen, Indiana Univ.-Bloomington

**"By You Came All My Sorrowe": The Sultan's Children and the Problem of Conversion in Middle English Romance**

Sarah Torpey, Hofstra Univ.

**Diomedes and the Possibilities of Epic in *Troilus and Criseyde***

Timothy D. Arner, Pennsylvania State Univ.

**Session 21  
Fetzer  
1005**

**Text and Image in the Manuscript Context**

Presider: Cheryl Goggin, Univ. of Southern Mississippi

**Inscribing Order: The Didactic Function of Schemata in Walters Art Museum MS W. 73**

Jennifer Feltman, Florida State Univ.

**Allegorical Images, Intrusive Texts: Germanic Representations of the Three**

**Living and the Three Dead**  
Christine Kralik, Univ. of Toronto

**Picturing Wisdom: Catherine of Siena and the Art of Epistolary Meditation**  
Stephanie M. Green, Univ. of California–Berkeley

**Session 22**  
**Fetzer**  
**1010**

**Folk- and Fairy- Tale Motifs in Medieval Literature**

Sponsor: Robbins Library, Univ. of Rochester

Organizer: N. M. Heckel, Univ. of Rochester

Presider: N. M. Heckel

**Fairies and Dreams in Middle English Romance**

James Wade, Magdalene College, Univ. of Cambridge

**Towers of Love and Marriage: The “Imprisonment in a Tower” Motif in Medieval Lais and Romances**

Silvie Saskova, Univ. of Canterbury

**The Maiden King: A Study of Folklore Motifs in the Middle English and Old Norse Versions of *Partonopeu de Blois***

Sif Rikhardsdottir, Washington Univ. in St. Louis

**From Iron Hans to Robert the Devil**

Laurence Erussard, Hobart and William Smith Colleges

**Session 23**  
**Fetzer**  
**1035**

**The Medieval in Motion: Approaches to Neomedievalism in Film and Television**

Sponsor: Medieval Electronic Multimedia Organization (MEMO)

Organizer: Sarah E. Gordon, Utah State Univ.

Presider: Carol L. Robinson, Kent State Univ.–Trumbull

**Neo-Bushido: Writing Japanese Ideology into the Neomedieval Anime Genre**

Jennifer de Winter, Univ. of Arizona

**“What’s in Your Wallet?”: Searching for the Authentic Middle Ages in Michael Crichton’s *Timeline***

Alison Tara Walker, Univ. of California–Los Angeles

**Reality TV as Auto-da-Fé**

Jason Skonieczny, Univ. of California–Los Angeles

**Session 24**  
**Fetzer**  
**1040**

**Cistercian Temporalities**

Sponsor: Institute of Cistercian Studies, Western Michigan Univ.

Organizer: E. Rozanne Elder, Western Michigan Univ.

Presider: E. Rozanne Elder

**The Nuns of Bival in the Thirteenth Century**

William Chester Jordan, Princeton Univ.

**The Chequered History of Bégard Abbey’s English Properties**

Claude Evans, Univ. of Toronto–Mississauga

**Margaret of Constantinople, Countess of Constantinople, and the Abbey of Flines**

Geertruida de Moor, Catholic Univ. of America

**Session 25**  
**Fetzer**  
**1055**

**Devotional Geographies: Space, Time, and Body in Medieval Art**

Organizer: Daniel K. Connolly, Augustana College

Presider: Daniel K. Connolly

**Theaters of Flesh: The Mapping of the *Vièrges Ouvrantes***

Elina Gertsman, Southern Illinois Univ.–Carbondale

**Jan van Eyck’s *Virgin in a Church* and the Imagined Pilgrimages Contained within Its Architectural Space**

Laura D. Gelfand, Univ. of Akron

**Gender, Space, and Boundaries in the Digby Mary Magdalene Play**  
Joanne Findon, Trent Univ.

**Session 26**  
**Fetzer**  
**1060**

**The Eastern Part of the Republica Christiana**

Sponsor: Institute of East Central Europe; the Medieval Institute, Western Michigan Univ.; and the Diether H. Haenicke Institute for International and Area Studies, Western Michigan Univ.

Organizer: Pawel Kras, Katolicki Univ. Lubelski

Presider: James R. Palmitessa, Western Michigan Univ.

***Pietas Jagiellonica: The Religious Life of the Four Jagiellonian Generations***

Urszula Borkowska, Katolicki Univ. Lubelski

**The Golden Ages of the Polish Culture**

Agnieszka Januszek, Katolicki Univ. Lubelski

**Continuity and Change: Piety and Religious Practices in Poland and Bohemia in the Pre-Reformation Period**

Pawel Kras

**Session 27**  
**Fetzer**  
**2016**

**In Honor of Penelope D. Johnson I: Engendering Place through the Vitae of Holy Women**

Organizer: Scott Wells, California State Univ.–Los Angeles, and Katherine Allen Smith, Univ. of Puget Sound

Presider: Jill Claster, New York Univ.

**Living with a Saint: Relations between an Exemplar and Her Community in the Hagiography of a Composite Saint**

Diane Peters Auslander, Graduate Center, CUNY

**A Tale of Two Dioceses: Prologues as Letters in the Female-Centered Vitae of Jacques de Vitry and Thomas de Cantimpré**

Christina Roukis Stern, LaGuardia Community College, CUNY

**Space and the Visual in the Life of Umiliana de Cerchi (1219–1246)**

Anne M. Schuchman, New York Univ.

**Session 28**  
**Fetzer**  
**2020**

**Women in Mediterranean Society: In Memory of Elka Klein**

Sponsor: Medieval Club of New York

Organizer: Matthew Boyd Goldie, Rider Univ.

Presider: Emily Sohmer Tai, Queensborough Community College, CUNY

**Re-Gendering Law in the Medieval Mediterranean: The Case of a Catalan Materfamilias**

Marie A. Kelleher, California State Univ.–Long Beach

**Beautiful Unbelievers: The Glassmaker's Wife and Other Jewish Women in Christian Art**

Sara Lipton, Stony Brook Univ.

**Jewish Women in the *Cantigas de santa María***

Connie L. Scarborough, Univ. of Cincinnati

**Session 29**  
**Fetzer**  
**2030**

**Medieval Song**

Organizer: Vincent Corrigan, Bowling Green State Univ.

Presider: Vincent Corrigan

**Joy in a Troubled World: Music as Blessing in Old English Poetry**

Lori A. Wallach, Graduate Center, CUNY

**Challenging the Exceptional Nature of Troubadour Language**

Thomas Field, Univ. of Maryland–Baltimore County

**Reading Robin and Marion: Genre and Voice in the Pastourelle-Motet**

Anna Grau, Univ. of Pennsylvania

**From Monophony to Polyphony and Back: Renart le Nouvelle's Refrains and Their Relationship to Contemporaneous Motets and Rondeaux**

Matthew Steel, Western Michigan Univ.

**Session 30  
Schnieder  
1140**

**Sympathy in Chaucer**

Sponsor: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, California State Univ.–Long Beach

Organizer: Britt Mize, California State Univ.–Long Beach

Presider: Britt Mize

***Allegory and Sympathy in Chaucer's Complaint unto Pity***

Ad Putter, Univ. of Bristol

***Manipulating Sympathy in The Knight's Tale: How Chaucer Changes the Story So We Like Palamon Better***

Peter G. Beidler, Lehigh Univ.

***Unlikely Sympathies: The Rapist of The Wife's Tale***

Kathryn Jacobs, Texas A&M Univ.–Commerce

***Cures, Cares, and Cons: Manipulating Sympathy in Fragment VI of The Canterbury Tales***

Michael Crafton, Univ. of West Georgia

**Session 31  
Schnieder  
1220**

**Gender and Innovation in Medieval Women Writers**

Organizer: Jane Chance, Rice Univ.

Presider: Laurie A. Finke, Kenyon College

***"Estreitement Bende": Erotics of Tight Dress in Marie de France's Lai de Guigemar***

Nicole D. Smith, Univ. of North Texas

***"Entendez la Glose": Painting Subversion of the Scholastic Tradition in Guigemar and Le Mirouer des simples ames***

Jill Delsigne, Rice Univ.

***Marguerite Porete's Mirror of Simple Souls as Gendered Narrative***

Josh Cooley, Rice Univ.

***Marguerite Porete's Feminized Fantasy of an Inverted Church***

Jane Chance

**Session 32  
Schnieder  
1280**

**Jewish-Christian Studies I: Covenant: Enduring or Abrogated?**

Sponsor: Academy of Jewish-Christian Studies

Organizer: Lawrence E. Frizzell, Seton Hall Univ.

Presider: Lawrence E. Frizzell

***Apocryphal Texts on Covenant in the Middle Ages***

Jennifer A. Harris, Univ. of Toronto

***Rabbinic Views of Christianity and the Noahide Covenant***

Asher Finkel, Seton Hall Univ.

***Sacraments under Which Covenant? Revisiting the Liber juratus and the Liber visionum***

Claire Fanger, Independent Scholar

**Session 33  
Schnieder  
1360**

**Chartier at Kalamazoo: Debating Chartier in Medieval and Modern Contexts**

Organizer: Emma Cayley, Univ. of Exeter



Presider: Ashby Kinch, Univ. of Montana

**Sleepless Knights in Chartier's *Debat de resveille matin* and *Le Resveillé qui dort***

Emma Cayley

**Spinning a Story: Narrative Function in Chartier's Debate Poems**

Joan E. McRae, Hampden-Sydney College

**Gendered Response to Medieval Warfare in Chartier's *Quatre dames***

Barbara K. Altmann, Univ. of Oregon

**Session 34  
Bernhard  
105**

**Female Mystics**

Presider: Maiju Lehmijoki-Gardner, Loyola College in Maryland

**World-Weary Men, Rejuvenating Women: Gendered Desires in Female Mystical Texts**

Heather Hill-Vásquez, Univ. of Detroit Mercy

**Saint Birgitta of Sweden: Visions and Visualizations**

Jasmin W. Cyril, Independent Scholar

**Session 35  
Bernhard  
157**

**Spenser's Poetics**

Presider: Scott D. Vander Ploeg, Madisonville Community College

**Spenserian Alliteration: On Reading Spenser's *Faerie Queene* as an Alliterative Poem**

Romuald Ian Lakowski, Grant MacEwan College

**Diminished Metaphor in the Proems in *The Faerie Queene***

Dan Mills, Georgia State Univ.

**To Build a Stanza: Spenser's Poetic Development from *The Shepherdes Calender* to *The Faerie Queene***

Paul J. Hecht, Wake Forest Univ.

**Session 36  
Bernhard  
159**

**The *Tournoi de Chauvency* by Jacques Bretel: Music, Art, and Courtly Life in a Thirteenth-Century Romance**

Organizer: F. Regina Psaki, Univ. of Oregon

Presider: Caroline Jewers, Univ. of Kansas

**The Rhetoric of Heralds in the *Tournoi de Chauvency***

Nancy Freeman Regalado, New York Univ.

**Performing Lyric in the *Tournoi de Chauvency* and *Guillaume de Dole***

F. Regina Psaki and Stephen McCormick, Univ. of Oregon

**A New Performance Version of the *Tournoi de Chauvency* by Anne Azéma and Shira Kammen**

Shira Kammen, Independent Musician

**Session 37  
Bernhard  
204**

**Wonder Drugs of the Middle Ages**

Sponsor: Medica: Society for the Study of Healing in the Middle Ages

Organizer: Gerard NeCastro, Univ. of Maine–Machias

Presider: Linda Ehlsam Voigts, Univ. of Missouri–Kansas City

**Wonder Drugs in German Medico-Pharmaceutical Treatises of the Thirteenth through Sixteenth Century**

Francis B. Brévar, Univ. of Pennsylvania

**The Mandrake: Medicine or Magic in Medieval Europe**

Anne Van Arsdall, Univ. of New Mexico

**The Search for Miracle Drugs in the Late Middle Ages and the Reason for It**

John Riddle, North Carolina State Univ.



**Exile as a Form of Coercion in Late Antique Gaul**

Angela M. Kinney, Univ. of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign

**Flavius Valila qui et Theodobius and the Charta Cornutiana**

Daniel Abosso, Univ. of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign

**The Unexpected Influence of Roman Stereotypes about the Good Barbarian Practices**

Naomi Janowitz, Univ. of California–Davis

**Session 43  
Bernhard  
213**

**The Crusades I**

Sponsor: Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East

Organizer: Thomas F. Madden, St. Louis Univ.

Presider: James M. Powell, Syracuse Univ.

**The Italian Maritime States: Naval Crusading as a State Enterprise, 1095–1124**

J. Mark Nicovich, William Carey College

**Eurasian Artistic Contacts: Crusaders, Mamluks, Mongols**

Jaroslav Folda, Univ. of North Carolina–Chapel Hill

**Hybrid Devotion: The Melisende Psalter's Latin Prayers and Byzantine Icons**

Naomi Ruth Pitamber, Univ. of Texas–San Antonio

**Session 44  
Bernhard  
215**

**Mysticism of the Later Middle Ages**

Sponsor: *Mystics Quarterly*

Organizer: Robert Hasenfratz, Univ. of Connecticut

Presider: Liz Herbert McAvoy, Univ. of Wales–Swansea

**“Botte for I Am a Woman”: Julian of Norwich, Medieval Jewish Mysticism, and the Evolution of the Divine Feminine**

Rachel Edlow Frier, Catholic Univ. of America

**Self Disclosure and the Vestige of God**

**(Cosmology in Ibn 'Arabi, and Bonaventure)**

Syafa'atun Almirzanah, Catholic Theological Union

**Mystical Writers, Carthusian Scribes, and Modern Editors**

Michael G. Sargent, Queens College, CUNY

**Session 45  
Bernhard  
Brown &  
Gold  
Room**

**Verbal and Visual Glosses in Manuscripts and Printed Books I**

Sponsor: Early Book Society

Organizer: Martha W. Driver, Pace Univ.

Presider: Martha W. Driver

**Glossing the Ages: Translatio Visualized in Frontispieces to *Des faits et dits memorables***

Joyce Coleman, Univ. of Oklahoma

**Friars, Blacksmiths, and Verbal Glosses on the Common Good**

Jenny Adams, Univ. of Massachusetts–Amherst

**Poets, Poachers, and Printers: Glossing the Pastoral in Early Modern England**

Mike Dzanko, Ashland Univ.

**Session 46  
Bernhard  
Faculty  
Lounge**

**The Arts of Meditation**

Sponsor: Worldwide Universities Network (WUN) and the Program in Medieval Studies, University of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign

Organizer: Valerie M. Wilhite, Univ. of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign, and Carolin Esser, Univ. of York

Presider: Carolin Esser

**A Virginal Model: A Foray into the Devotional Practice in Female Monastic Life of Iberia**

Emily Kelley, Cornell Univ.

**An Artistry of Body and Word: Contemplative Practice in Richard Rolle and  
*The Cloud of Unknowing***

Glenn Young, Univ. of Missouri–Kansas City

**La encarnación del oído del alma en Teresa de Cartagena**

María Auxiliadora Alvarez, Miami Univ.