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Review of doctoral dissertation: *Responsibility. Between Al-Jabri's Deconstruction of the Arabic-Islamic Tradition and Hans Jonas's Ethical Theory. Parallels and Discord* – by Issam Khirallah; supervisor: prof. dr hab. Adam Chmielewski

1. Content of the work. The paper submitted for review consists of *General Introduction* and ten chapters; the work has a total of 264 pages.

The chapters are contained in two parts, with the first chapter (*Preliminary chapter Ethics of responsibility a matter of worldviews* [here and elsewhere the original form, often grammatically incorrect, has been preserved]) not contained in any of them, preceding both main parts of the work.

In the introduction, the author outlines his research plan and describes his methodology. In the first chapter he refers to the critical - in his opinion - state of "our societies and our planet" (p. 20), which is associated with the ecological crisis, the increase in incidence of various diseases, poverty, etc. In addition, in this chapter the author presents in a rather sketchily way the responsibility in other Western philosophers and researchers' thought, apart from Jonas: in E. Levinas, H. Arendt, some existentialists and M. Weber.

The first part, entitled *The imprints of responsibility: the socio-economic and environmental problem*, consists of five chapters, and is preceded by a short introduction. In the first chapter the author refers to the so-called *kalam*, i.e. to various currents of dialectical (unorthodox) Muslim theology using the methodology and concepts of philosophy - including Mutazilites and Ashashites. The author presents the opinion that the concepts and solutions proposed by representatives of these currents have significantly shaped the way responsibility (crucial for his considerations) is approached in Arab-Muslim culture. In the second chapter, entitled *Responsibility in Islam through the prism of al-Jabri's obedience*

paradigm, the author (somewhat contrary to the title of the chapter) does not focus so much on Islam, but rather on the Arab-Muslim tradition, broader understood, which he describes as *turath* (the word in Arabic means tradition, legacy, heritage), relying - as in other chapters of the first part - primarily on Al-Jabri's research. In chapter three, entitled *The Sufi ethics of annihilation and responsibility for Sufism*, the author explores how Sufi, *i.e.* mystics of the Muslim world, addressed all issues related to responsibility. The conclusion expressed by Mr. Khirallah includes a repetition of Al-Jabri's opinion: Sufism and the values it promoted led to a "weakening of freedom and responsibility" (p. 105). The fourth chapter is entitled *Responsibility: between the pre-Islamic values and the scripture?* In this chapter the author states, among others - also repeating after Al-Jabri - that in relation to Arabic culture before Islam, one can speak of two particularly important values: *muru'a* and *futuwwa*. These are ambiguous terms. The first of these means in Arabic a sort of dignity or nobility associated with having good manners and good character traits, while *futuwwa* is a certain moral code (possibly also: moral efficiency, virtue, bravery, etc.), resulting from human activity (p. 130). The one who owns them is regarded a perfect Arab man. In chapter five, the author focuses on medieval Arab-Muslim philosophy, paying particular attention to various concepts of responsibility. He discusses here, among others, views of Al-Kindi (the first Arab and the first Muslim philosopher), mentioning also the ethical considerations of Ar-Razi (Lat. Rhazes) and Ibn al-Haytham (Lat. Alhazen), as well as Al-Farabi, Ibn Bajja (Lat. Avempace), Ibn Rushd (Lat. Averroes) and Ibn Sina (Lat. Avicenna).

In the second part, entitled *Jonas's theory of responsibility as a matrix for a unified Arabic-Islamic concept of responsibility*, the author focuses on the views of Hans Jonas. In the first chapter, entitled *The metaphysical foundations and the role of religion In Jonas's responsibility*, he draws attention to Jonas's clearly anti-nihilistic attitude, as well as his aspiration to base ethics on premises derived from metaphysics. In the second chapter, entitled *Jonas's new ethics of responsibility and its practical implications*, the author mainly discusses Jonas's "new imperative", his new approach to ethics and the practical implications of such an approach.

In chapter three, entitled *The merits and critique of Jonas's theory*, the author of the reviewed dissertation focuses on the advantages and weaknesses of Jonas's ethical position and the idea of responsibility Jonas proclaims, mainly repeating the opinions of his

supporters and critics such as. G. Hottois, M. Hauskeller, S. Lindberg, Ch. David, D. Röpcke and others. In chapter four, entitled *Responsibility in Jonas's theory and Arabic Islamic Tradition Convergences, intersections and contrasts*, the author proceeds to discuss some formal convergences and similarities combining Jonas's ethical theory and certain areas of the Arab-Muslim thought. In this chapter, he also discusses how Jonas's thoughts could influence Arab-Muslim societies and culture in their contemporary shape.

Next, *General Conclusion* to his work is inset.

2. Substantive assessment. Mr. Khirallah's research goal was to conduct a comparative analysis of the ethical position of Hans Jonas and Arab-Muslim thought in terms of Al-Jabri, with particular emphasis on how to understand responsibility. When Mr. Khirallah writes about Arab-Muslim thought he has in mind a traditional, mainly medieval thought: first of all, classical Islam, then *kalam* (discursive, rationalist Muslim theology divided into several basic currents or schools), Sufism (mystical current in the Muslim world, also diverse and divided into many branches) and Arab philosophy of the Middle Ages, which was clearly influenced (among others sources) by classical Greek philosophy. It should be emphasized that the author does not compare Jonas's position with the so-understood Arab-Muslim thought as such, but with the results of research and with opinions of prof. Mohamed Abed Al-Jabri.

At the beginning, it is necessary to examine the justification for conducting such a comparative analysis; what is the reason for undertaking this research? Secondly, how do possible research results contribute to increasing our academic knowledge and understanding – including the issue of responsibility, Jonas's ethical theory or Arab-Muslim thought? The author addresses the justification of this research plan in the introduction, in the paragraph entitled *Reasons for undertaking the study*. In this paragraph, he states that Jonas is probably one of the most influential theoreticians dealing with the issue of responsibility (p. 7), and that it is worth looking at how Jonas's theory and traditional Arab-Muslim thought interact with each other. This is extremely surprising - and, of course, wrong - because medieval, traditional Arab-Muslim thought and the theories of Hans Jonas (1903-1993) could not interact in any way; there can be no question of "interaction" or "mutual communication". Even if we are dealing with a certain (partial, in relation to certain areas of

thought) convergence, it is only a formal convergence (formal similarities) and nothing more. The author goes on to say that the choice of Jonas's theory makes sense, because his methodology is one that "should be followed in an Arab-Muslim context, where the renewal of the idea of responsibility is something extremely necessary" (p. 9). Mr. Khirallah's argument that the Arab world now needs a new concept of responsibility, and that Jonas's theory should be used for this purpose, which in turn will allow Arab societies to break free from stagnation, is not only unconvincing, but also naive. The complicated situation of Arab countries and societies, including social and cultural stagnation, is a fact, but this is founded primarily in certain important historical developments and geopolitical relations, and not in the absence (in Arab-Muslim culture) of a proper theory of responsibility. The new theory of responsibility is therefore not a panacea for all Arab problems, contrary to Mr. Khirallah's belief. The situation is a bit more complicated.

Undoubtedly, the research plan, which should be described as ambitious and necessary, would be to conduct a comparative analysis of the ethical position of Hans Jonas (and even better, of selected representatives of contemporary Western thought, not only Jonas) with particular emphasis on various concepts of responsibility, and Arab-Muslim thought as such, not only from the perspective of a selected, contemporary Arab researcher. However, the author does not do this. As for the aforementioned Arab-Muslim tradition, his study is based mainly on the results of research conducted by Al-Jabri, a Moroccan professor of philosophy and Islamic studies (died in 2010), which is obviously much simpler than conducting own research and referring to source texts from the area of Muslim/Arabic thought (classical and other, such as theology, philosophy or social thought, for instance).

As the author writes that his study of the idea of responsibility - in various areas of Arab-Muslim thought - is based (dependant) on prof. Al-Jabri's work and accomplishment (p. 10). Perhaps it would not be worth mentioning if it were not for the fact that the analysis of the concept of responsibility in various areas of Arab-Muslim thought (which here means, in practice, repetition after Prof. Al-Jabri) is the main research goal of the first part of the reviewed work. This remark shows - in my opinion, clearly - the excessive facilitation at the expense of the quality of academic work undertaken. In this case, instead of independently examining traditional Arab-Muslim thought (how responsibility was understood and referred to), the Mr. Khirallah is essentially repeating results and opinions expressed by someone

else, *i.e.* by Al-Jabri. Conducting a comparative analysis in such a way does not allow us to better understand neither traditional Arab-Muslim thought, nor its possible connections with Jonas's thought; in other words, it adds nothing new to academic research.

The author of the reviewed dissertation believes that it would be worthwhile to make a general review of Arab-Muslim thought - in order to then move on to Jonas's thought; he expresses this thought directly. This is demonstrated, for example, in the passage from p. 16, where the intention to analyze "different components of Arabic-Islamic tradition" is mentioned. Also in other passages Mr. Khirallah writes about "an attempt to provide a general overview of how the Arabic-Islamic tradition viewed responsibility from an ethical perspective" (p. 48). However, the author does not prepare present such a review of Arab-Muslim thought, at least not by himself. Instead of using source texts, he uses Al-Jabri's books, and if he refers to source texts, it is most often repeating after those who, (like Al-Jabri) independently analyzed and/or criticized source texts.

The author tries to justify it somehow, *e.g.* in the fragment *The structure of thesis* (pp. 9-15), but his argumentation is completely unconvincing. First, he states (repeating after Al-Jabri) that historically speaking, there is no separate research on ethics in Arab thought, no separate publications on it, etc. This is not true. Even the first Arab philosopher, Al-Kindi, despite focusing mainly on metaphysics and epistemology, was keenly interested in ethics. He wrote about ten works devoted to ethics, in which he referred in particular to Socrates, but also to stoicism. Successive, "classical" Arab-Muslim philosophers, such as Al-Farabi, Avicenna or Al-Ghazali devoted a lot of attention to ethical issues. Similar statement should also be made regarding other areas of traditional Arab-Muslim thought: classical Islam, Sufism or *kalam*. All issues related to ethics are an important element in these currents of thought; you only need to read the source texts, *i.e.* (in this case) the work of Arab-Muslim philosophers, Quran and hadiths (*i.e.* accounts of the teachings of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad); Sufi works (*e.g.* Ibn al-'Arabi) etc. These works are available to anyone who wants to read and study them. Here, however, we come to the most important issue, namely the lack of willingness or commitment. Trying to justify why he does not reach for the sources - and therefore, why does not conduct independent selection, analysis and possibly criticism of source texts, letting his research (in the first part of his work) be based mainly on the considerations of prof. Al-Jabri - Mr. Khirallah states that it would be

"arduous" (or tiresome, difficult) to look for source texts that refer responsibility in the Arabic tradition (p. 10). In the next passage, the author goes a little further, stating simply: "For the sake of convenience and due to limited sources, as well as due to the limited time I have, I will be using second sources to quote first sources [...]" (p. 19). Apart from the very low level of expression in English, in the sentence just quoted, the author has one thing in mind: his work will be based on the studies of other researchers, instead of studying the source texts independently, because there is not enough time and because the latter would be too tiresome (p. 19).

Perhaps the author should be praised for writing that directly. However, on the other hand, in the case of a doctoral dissertation such an explanation - that one will not reach for the source texts, because there is not enough time, and in addition it is troublesome and tiring - is at least surprising and inappropriate, and in my opinion also scandalous. When it comes to academic effort, maximum reliability should be sought and all the requirements for this type of dissertation should be met. It has to be regarded as a very disrespectful attitude to the source texts; and it is in the work in the field of humanities (in this case: in the field of history of philosophy, social thought and - partly - oriental studies). Let me remind that in traditional Arabic-Muslim thought we can easily find many works on ethics, as well as on philosophical or religious anthropology. Such works - as on p. 125 the author himself recalls, clearly contradicting what he wrote earlier - began to appear already in the XI century. Reaching for them, one should simply examine whether and how their authors relate to the issue of responsibility. The author does not do this.

In addition to the insufficiently justified research plan and the disregarding attitude towards the source texts, the reviewed dissertation is characterized by the lack of independence of its author. In nine (out of ten) chapters of his work, the author essentially limits himself to repeating and reporting someone else's views, thoughts, conclusions, opinions, etc. In the first part of the work, as it has already been mentioned, this means mainly research results and opinions expressed by Al-Jabri, in the second - Jonas's position and the opinions of researchers and critics interested in his thought. The lack of independence is sufficiently evidenced by the fact that for about first 230 pages, the author makes almost no independent analysis, limiting himself to reconstructing; first, various areas

of traditional Arab-Muslim thought in the first part (here he follows mainly Al-Jabiri) are reconstructed, then Jonas's ethical views, in Part Two.

It is only starting from page 228 (in a work consisting of 264 pages in total) that we meet - more or less - independent analyzes and reflections of Mr. Khirallah. He proves himself to be intellectually more or less independent only in the last chapter of the reviewed dissertation: *Responsibility in Hans Jonas Arabic Islamic Tradition Convergences, intersections and contrasts*. In that chapter he points out that a comparison of Jonas's theories and Arab-Muslim thought may be regarded as something that is irrelevant and does not lead to anything (p. 232). However, as the author claims, there are some convincing reasons for undertaking such research; for example that Jonas, despite the secular nature of his reflection, assigned certain role to religion. Such an argument (from p. 232) is not convincing in any way, because for many modern researchers, religion was something important, in a very different way. The same may be stated regarding the opinion expressed by the author of the reviewed work that Jonas bases his ethics on the foundation of metaphysics and, to some extent, religion (p. 232). These remarks by no means incline to conduct such comparative analysis, which is carried out (or rather: should be properly carried out) as justified from an academic point of view.

The similarities that link the two compared areas of thought (Jonas and traditional Arab-Muslim thought), mentioned and discussed in more detail by Mr. Khirallah in the last chapter of his work, are - let us emphasize again - similarities only formally. This is because Jonas's ethical position and traditional Arab-Muslim thought arose from completely different sources (except maybe medieval Arabic philosophy, referring, among others, to Greek philosophy), from different cultural backgrounds and from different historical experiences. While for the authors of the Muslim world main impulse for the considerations was the emergence of a new religion, Islam - at the beginning of the seventh century - which the Arabs finally adopted, the key issues for Jonas were the following points: the development of technical civilization and the many threats associated with it, as well as the concept of "God after Auschwitz" to use the title of one of his articles, published in "The Journal of Religion" in 1987. The comparative analysis thus covers two areas of thought which - in terms of being rooted in a certain traditions or in a certain historical experience - generally do not match. There can be no question of Jonas and medieval Arab-Muslim thought dependence,

continuation, discourse, mutual critical attitude, etc. In this way, of course, one can compare, for example, Kant with traditional Chinese thought, but it is difficult to say what, in principle, such a comparison would serve - apart from demonstrating some formal similarities or differences.

Furthermore, some of these (only) formal, postulated similarities raise some doubts. The author of the dissertation writes, for example (on p. 236), that although the central value in the "Arab ethical system" (is there really one ethical system common to all Arabs?) is obedience, while in Jonas's it is responsibility, both ethical systems have in common that they are "focused on survival" (*ibid.*). Well, Darwinism is also focused on survival, so why not include Darwinism, too? In this chapter, the author also writes about 'al-Jabri's paradigm', *i.e.* about Al-Jabri's analysis of traditional Arab-Muslim thought, while at other times Mh. Khirallah mentions Arab and Muslim thought in general (p. 237), apparently not noticing the differences between one and the other. According to him, asceticism is another formal similarity. However, asceticism is also present, for instance, in Christian thought, in Schopenhauer, in Buddhism, etc. So why compare Jonas with a Muslim thought only; the more so because (contrary to Sufism) asceticism is in Jonas's mind a kind of counterargument directed against modern, consumerist-oriented, capitalist society (p. 242)?

The author, in the final paragraph of the last chapter of his work, tries to show that Jonas theory and methodology are "relevant in the Arab-Islamic context and discourse on ethics" (p. 245), but here, too, his argumentation is completely unconvincing. The author argues that adopting a kind of "secular religiosity" (an idea taken from Jonas) for the needs of Arab societies will enable the emergence of a "new Arab ethical system" (p. 245), and ultimately lead to "ethical revival" in Arab countries (p. 246). He even formulates (on pp. 247-248) the principles of the most appropriate ethical system that should replace the traditional Arab-Muslim perception of ethics. According to Mr. Khirallah, the most important elements of such a "new Arab ethical system" should be: responsibility, freedom, rationalism, secularity, inclusion of the natural environment in the area of human responsibility, as well as freeing societies and people from tradition. According to the author of the reviewed work, only practical adoption of these principles can be a guarantee of social progress and moral improvement of Arabs (p. 248). In order to implement these principles, the author proposes

to organize open debates (in Arab countries), during which representatives of different traditions or schools of thought could speak freely (p. 249).

The last chapter of the reviewed work deserves the most attention, because - as already mentioned - unlike the previous ones, it contains some independent thoughts of the author, even if these are very naive ideas (organizing debates will overcome internal animosities and social divisions). However, since only one of the ten chapters can be considered as containing original, own thoughts, the question should be asked, what about the others?

Do they contain anything that their readers would not be able to find out for themselves by studying whether Al-Jabri, source texts from the area of broadly understood traditional Arab-Muslim thought, Jonas, or his supporters and critics? Does the content of these nine (out of ten) chapters enrich our understanding of responsibility; of socio-political *status quo* of Arab countries (to which the author also refers) and their stagnation; of Jonas's ethical stand? These questions should be answered in the negative. To learn about traditional Arab-Muslim thought in Al-Jabri, one can reach Al-Jabri (and it is even better to research that tradition of thought by analyzing the source texts). An analogous remark can be made for almost the entire second part of the reviewed dissertation: to learn about Jonas's ethical stand, all you need to do is to study the work of Jonas, and possibly the works of his supporters and critics. The aforementioned lack of independence of Mr. Khirallah is evidenced by the almost complete lack of critical approach, both in relation to the views of Al-Jabri (first part) and Jonas (second part). Even if he publishes a critique of Jonas's views in his work, it is usually a criticism presented by other authors (such as Anders, Achterhuis or Hottois), not his own.

The above-mentioned, serious substantive deficiencies - *i.e.* poor explanation and justification of own research plan, a disrespectful attitude to the source texts and a clear lack of independence, and in particular lack of own a critical approach - are sufficient for a clearly negative assessment of the reviewed work. Let us move on to other substantive errors, however.

In addition to the naivety mentioned above, expressed by the author in the reviewed dissertation, one can also mention a certain - unnecessary, in my opinion - pathos. The author, in the first chapter of his dissertation, writes for instance (on p. 20) about the "catastrophic state of our societies and our planet". Some of the threats of our time, which

the author mentions, are quite vague. For instance, in addition to the collapse of environmental balance, Mr. Khirallah also mentions hydraulic fracturing, which in his opinion "is associated with the problem of energy" (maybe this is the problem of the lack of access to energy, because energy alone is probably not a problem?; p . 20).

In addition, Mr. Khirallah wrongly identifies Islam with all traditional currents of thought in the area of Arab-Muslim culture, such as *kalam*, Sufism etc. That traditional Arab-Muslim thought - of course very heterogeneous and using various inspirations - is often mentioned by the author as *turath*. In Arabic, the word means legacy, tradition or (cultural) heritage, but it is unacceptable to identify it with Islam in a narrow, precise sense. In addition, when writing about classical Islam, especially in the second chapter of the first part, the author refers only to selected fragments of the Qur'an and hadith (and, of course, to the opinion of Al-Jabri), while forgetting about mentioning the opinions of Muslim scholars (or *'ulema*, also: *alims*, i.e. traditional Islam's lawyers and theologians). This, too, should be considered a factual error, since the opinions of the *alims* constitute in Islam the third source (after verses of the Qur'an and hadith) of religious law, as well as the third source for preparing opinions concerning theological issues and issues related to religious praxis.

Finally, discussing the substantive errors we encounter in the reviewed work, it is necessary to mention a certain type of Arabic ethnocentrism which characterizes a significant part of the Arab elite since the so-called *An-Nahda*, i.e. the "Arab Renaissance" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This approach is clearly present in the work of Al-Jabri, and therefore also in the work of Mr. Khirallah - his uncritical follower. Namely, Al-Jabri, in search of "native Arabic values", states that these are pre-Islamic values. Particular attention is paid to the values (and terms) such as *muru'a* and *futuwwa* (pp. 124-131). In addition, Al-Jabri - as well as Mr. Khirallah, after him - believes that some of the "native Arab values", e.g. *amanah* (Arabic, trust, entrusting to someone; here: moral responsibility resulting in fulfilling one's duties) or *khilafa* (being "governor" or the "deputy" of God on Earth, an idea taken directly from the Qur'an), have become "degenerated" as a result of the Persian influence on Arab culture in certain historical conditions (pp. 108-110). This means that "native Arabic values", at least in their original, "non-degenerated" form, were simply the best values; certainly better than the values of different origin. Here, also, the author refers to such views uncritically; but perhaps in an academic work one should not

divide values into, for example, "Arab" and "Persian" (or other), and then positively refer only to the former, while contemptuously to the latter. In a doctoral dissertation, perhaps, it would be more appropriate to demonstrate greater neutrality.

3. Formal assessment. The reviewed doctoral dissertation contains a huge number of all kinds of formal errors, which is indicative of one of two possibilities: either the lack of a proper workshop (that is being able to prepare formally accurate academic texts), or the enormous and unacceptable carelessness of its author, Mr. Khirallah.

There is probably not a single page in the reviewed work that would be completely free of these errors. The most important formal errors include:

- a) The page numbers in the *Table of Contents* do not always match those in the dissertation.
- b) Text formatting: line spacing - the distance between adjacent lines, *e.g.* when a new paragraph begins, once it is larger, once smaller; no consistency.
- c) Sometimes different font sizes are used on the same page (once bigger, once smaller); no consistency.
- d) Incorrect use of uppercase and lowercase letters. For example, some English nouns are often capitalized for no reason.
- e) Incompetent and incorrect use of punctuation marks. For example, footnotes sometimes end in a full stop, sometimes they do not. Numerous errors in chapter titles, paragraphs, publication titles etc; *e.g.* [here, kept incorrectly for a purpose] *Preliminary chapter Ethics of Responsibility a matter of worldviews*; should be: *Preliminary chapter. Ethics of Responsibility - A matter of worldviews.*
- f) Incorrect use of italics. Sometimes unjustified use of it, or lack of italics where it should be used - especially in transliterating terms derived from the Arabic language, but also in misspelled publication titles.
- g) Incorrect footnotes. The author makes a lot of mistakes in footnotes, *e.g.* incorrectly writing the titles of works he refers to, not using italics properly, not using quotation marks, as well as required punctuation marks (period, comma), etc. In the reviewed work, there are not many pages on which all footnotes would

be formally correct. Titles of publications are sometimes in italics, and sometimes not. The author is sometimes using quotation marks, and sometimes not. Titles sometimes include capital letters, and sometimes not. The same applies to publisher names: sometimes there are capital letters, and sometimes not.

- h) Citing the opinions of authors without stating the sources from which these opinions were taken. For example, on p. 230 the author gives the opinions of Jonas's critics - such as Anders, Achterhuis or Hottois - without any explanation as to where exactly (which studies, monographs, articles) these opinions were taken from.
- i) Incorrect and incompetent citation of the text in your work; including: quotes in the quote.
- j) Incompetent and very erratic use of Arabic transliteration. In addition, the author does not explain anywhere what transliteration rules he applies (e.g. ISO-compliant, simplified ? And if simplified, based on what principles?). For example, sometimes the Arabic word ending with the phoneme 'a' is written with '-ah' (this is how it is done in English-language publications), but sometimes it is spelled '-a' (this is how it is done in works published in Polish, or elsewhere). This shows, firstly, that there is no consistency here. Secondly, Mr. Khirallah is carelessly rewriting titles from other publications and at the same time not even harmonizing them (not based on any single pattern). Further, when transliterating Arabic terms, the author sometimes begins with a capital letter, sometimes not; sometimes he uses italics, and sometimes not. In addition, the author, when transliterating, does not use Latin characters that should be used. For example, to write the Arabic letter 'ayn, the sign ' is used, not the sign '. The use of the second of these characters refers to the letter/character *hamza*, not the letter 'ayn. These are details well known to specialists, but not to Mr. Khirallah.
- k) Incompetent and incorrect writing of Arabic first names and surnames, especially the names of the authors and historical figures.
- l) Structure of the text: I also consider the already mentioned unnecessary introductory chapter, i.e. the *Preliminary chapter*, as a mistake. The considerations contained there, in that chapter, should be included in the *General Introduction*,

the more so because there are no rules according to which one cannot write an introduction of, for example, thirty or forty pages.

- m) In my opinion, quite a serious formal defect is the lack of summary, recapitulation or partial conclusion for each of the two main parts of the work. The considerations carried out in both Part One and Part Two are quite extensive and end without any summary or partial conclusion. The author decides only to give conclusions for all his considerations (at the end of the reviewed work), and that is not very extensive containing only about four pages (for the dissertation of 264 pages).
- n) Also, individual chapters are usually devoid of summary or recapitulation, and even if they contain such (*e.g.* a chapter devoted to Arab-Muslim philosophy), it is not in any way separated from the main text, *i.e.* it is not a separate paragraph for instance. In the aforementioned chapter (p. 160), the author finishes discussing Avicenna's views, and then proceeds smoothly to a summary of the entire chapter devoted to Arabic philosophy, not only to Avicenna himself.
- o) The author sometimes uses sources that should not be used when preparing this type of dissertation. For example, on p. 29 we have a link to Wiktionary, *i.e.* to Wikipedia's "sister project". In his work, the author also refers to fragments of the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (an online encyclopedia; entries on Avempace and Al-Farabi). Perhaps it would be more appropriate to read and rely on articles published in academic journals; there are dozens of such articles.
- p) It is also very surprising that the author relied almost exclusively on texts and studies published in English. In modern Arabic, for example, many works by Arab philosophers, studies on Islamic theology and *fiqh*, Sufism, *kalam* etc. have been published. Generally, the author does not refer to that richness. In addition, Mr. Khirallah, having started procedures to obtain a doctoral degree in Poland, at the Polish university, completely ignored the results of Polish authors' research (some of them were written and published in English, the language which the author uses after all).

- q) The work does not contain an index of terms or a personal index. There is also a lack of even a simple list of the most important Arabic terms that appear in the text.
- r) Bibliography: The author does not use all the source texts and studies that should be used for such a dissertation. The fact that he does not (independently) use the source texts (in the first part of the work, devoted to traditional Arab-Muslim thought) has already been mentioned above. However, even when it comes to the source text or studies he refers to, one can easily prove quite large deficiencies. It is true that for the first part Mr. Khirallah refers to the studies of recognized authors publishing their work in the West, *e.g.* M. Fahry, H. Corbin or P. Adamson, but he only gives some of the papers, ignoring the latest studies of some of them (*e.g.* Adamson). Regarding Jonas's philosophy, some recent publications are missing (*e.g.* Theresa Morris, *Hans Jonas's Ethic of Responsibility: From Ontology to Ecology*, SUNY Press, New York 2013, where there is a large chapter on Jonas's responsibility). As for monographs, only two of those given in the Bibliography are recent publications (in 2017 and 2018); of the remaining, few were published in the first decade of the present century, and quite a lot earlier, in the sixties, seventies and eighties. In other words, the latest research results hardly included. A similar note applies to the articles in the Bibliography: only two of them have been published recently, the others are older. The author should be aware that there are many valuable publications recently published, devoted to Jonas or Arab-Muslim thought.
- s) The issue of proficiency in English, or rather the lack of such proficiency: The reviewed dissertation was written entirely in English, but the actual level of language proficiency is not high. The author makes many mistakes in his work. Some of them are associated with the required form, for example certain words in the text unnecessarily start with a capital letter, appropriate punctuation marks are used or not, etc. Here we are dealing with the already mentioned issue: considerable carelessness of the author preparing the dissertation to be read and reviewed in the Academia. Quite a big problem for Mr. Khirallah is using uppercase and lowercase letters in English text, for instance in relation to chapter

titles or paragraphs, as the mere analysis of the *Table of Contents* proves, but not only. The author met such problems in every chapter of his dissertation. Also, quite often some bizarre wording may be found in the reviewed text; for example, the title of the last chapter of the second part: *Responsibility in Hans Jonas Arabic Islamic Tradition Convergences, intersections and contrasts* [should be: *Responsibility in Hans Jonas's Thought. Arabic-Islamic Tradition: Convergences, Intersections and Contrasts*; the combination of the words "Hans Jonas Arabic Islamic Tradition Convergences", without using any punctuation, does not mean anything at all. A similar remark also applies to the title of the third chapter of the first part: *The Sufi ethics of annihilation and responsibility for Sufism* [should be: *The Sufi Ethics of Annihilation and Responsibility in Sufism*]; and there are many more such examples. In addition, the author - creating a possessive form (Saxon Genitive) sometimes writes: "Jonas'", and sometimes "Jonas's", which indicates inconsistency. There are many more errors in the field of English grammar and wording.

- t) Misunderstanding and incorrect definitions of the Arabic terms - crucial for considerations in the field of either Arabic philosophy and Islamic theology. These include terms such as *khilafa* (man as God's governor on Earth, term of Islamic provenance) or *kalam* (according to the author of the reviewed dissertation - "science of discourse", also: "fundamental theology"). Very surprising is especially the "definition" of the term *kalam* (various unorthodox currents of Muslim discursive theology) - as "fundamental theology" or "science of discourse", whatever the latter would mean. This is misleading and completely incorrect.
- u) In some cases, the author uses Arabic terms (*e.g. jahiliyya* - in the basic, though not the only meaning: pre-Islamic period in Arab history), without explaining them or commenting on their meaning at all; even if, as in this case, these are ambiguous terms.

4. Conclusion. Dissertation by Mr. Issam Khirallah - *Responsibility. Between Al-Jabri's Deconstruction of the Arabic-Islamic Tradition and Hans Jonas's Ethical Theory. Parallels and Discords* - is a work characterized by a significant degree of research dependence. Instead of

exploring, analyzing and possibly criticizing the most important currents of this thought, the author - in the first part of the work, devoted to traditional Arab-Muslim thought - relies (uncritically) on the studies of primarily one author, a Moroccan professor of philosophy and Islamic studies, prof. Al-Jabri. As stated by Mr. Khirallah (on p. 19), for him it would be difficult, inconvenient and time-consuming to search and analyze source texts by himself. This does not mean that in the first part of the work he does not refer to the source texts at all - but most often he does it indirectly, referring to them by using the fragments of source texts contained in selected works by other authors. There is also doubt as to the very idea of the research plan: What exactly could the comparison of Hans Jonas's ethical theories with the "deconstruction of Arab thought" by Al-Jabri actually serve, in academic terms? After all, traditional Arab-Muslim thought (classical Islam, Sufism, *kalam*, Arabic philosophy, etc.) and Jonas's thought originated under completely different socio-cultural conditions, in different periods of history, based on different theoretical inspirations. The similarities "linking" Jonas's thought with the Arab-Muslim thought are, therefore, purely formal ones. Performing such a comparative analysis does not provide us with better understanding of neither traditional Arab-Muslim thought, nor Jonas's. In other words, it adds nothing new to academic effort and does not expand our academic knowledge regarding those issues. Mr. Khirallah's argumentation that the Arab world now needs a new concept of responsibility, and that Jonas's theory should be used for this purpose, which in turn will allow Arab societies to break free from social and cultural stagnation, is not only unconvincing but also naive. The reviewed work contains a lot of serious formal errors, too. The actual level of language proficiency is also quite low (for English, in which the dissertation was written).

Having regard to all the critical remarks expressed above, I am asking not to proceed with Mr. Issam Khirallah's doctoral dissertation.

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