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وبینار گفتگو با
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زنان فلسطین



Monthly Newsletter Since Dec 2021

Issue 24
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HAYATI

M Y L I F E



A N O V E L

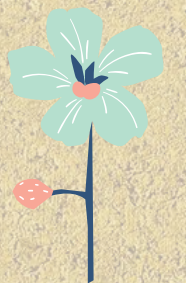
miriam cooke

Hayati, My Life

Miriam Cooke. Syracuse University Press, \$22.95 (160pp)
ISBN 978-0-8156-0671-0

Cooke (*Women and the War Story*) details the lives of three Palestinian women in this delicately crafted novel, juxtaposing their personal struggles with their experience of the volatile world around them. Various first-person accounts of events from 1947 to 1990 begin in 1960, with 12-year-old Maryam, whose history homework requires her to interview her parents about the war, questioning her mother, Assia. "Which war?" is Assia's annoyed response. In 1948, Samya, the family matriarch and survivor of the British Mandate, welcomes her daughter, Assia, with her husband, Basil, home to Jerusalem, following the massacre

A Novel about Palestinian Women





Miriam Cooke is an American academic in Middle Eastern and Arab world studies. She focuses on modern Arabic literature and critical reassessment of women's roles in the public sphere. She was educated in the United Kingdom, and is co-editor of the *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*.

of Deir Assin. The couple were supporters of the Palestinian Resistance, and their infant son, Usama, was shot in Basil's arms while the two fled the fierce fighting. In Jerusalem, Assia struggles to make ends meet by starting a day-care center while raising her two daughters, Maryam and the mute Afaf, with the help of her mother and troubled, often-unemployed husband. Maryam and Afaf struggle to comprehend their parents' complicated relationship, while coping with their own sibling rivalries. The short, multivoiced chapters inhibit narrative flow, and an abrupt ending mars the tale, but Cooke compels with complex character relationships. At times an unabashed commentary on what the author sees as Israeli tyranny, this novel will be better understood by those who have more than a passing knowledge of the Jewish/Muslim struggle and pertinent dates in its history. (Nov.)

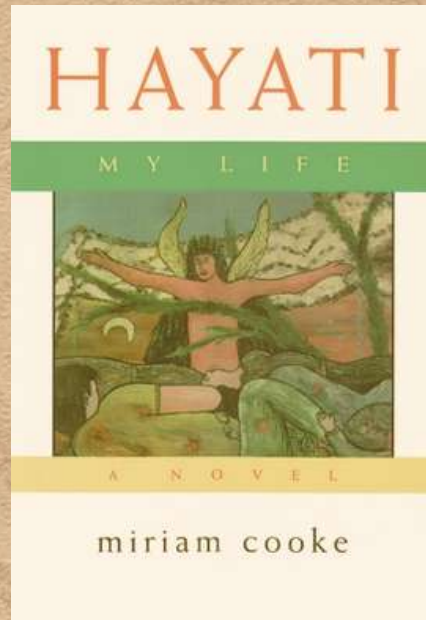


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Nadia Maftouni

A Novel about Palestinian Women

Miriam Cooke

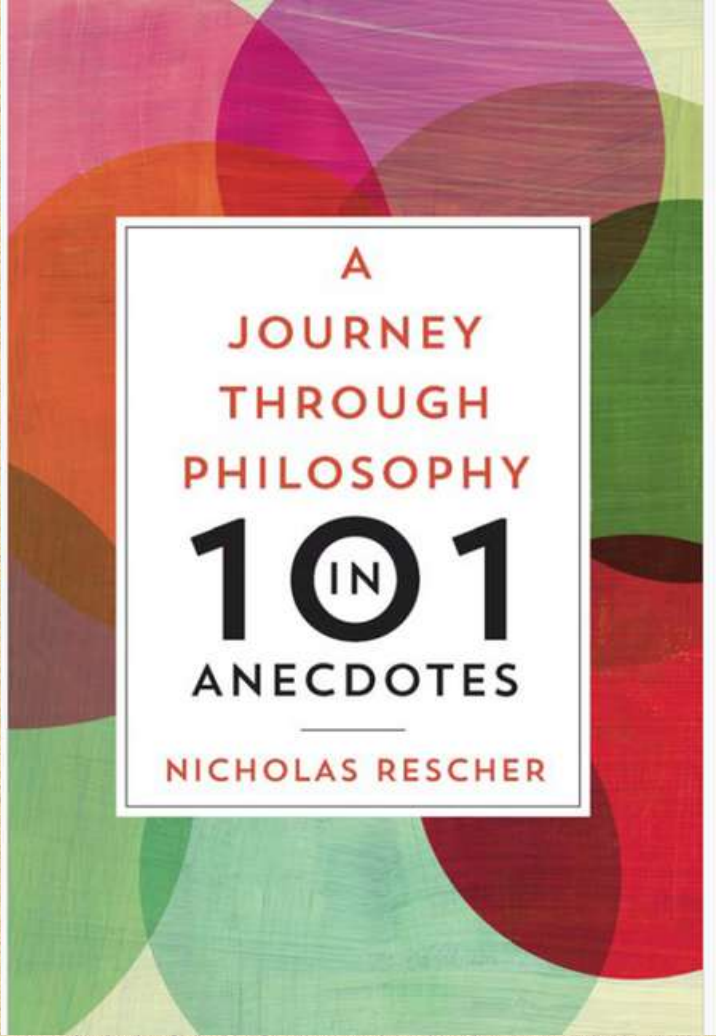
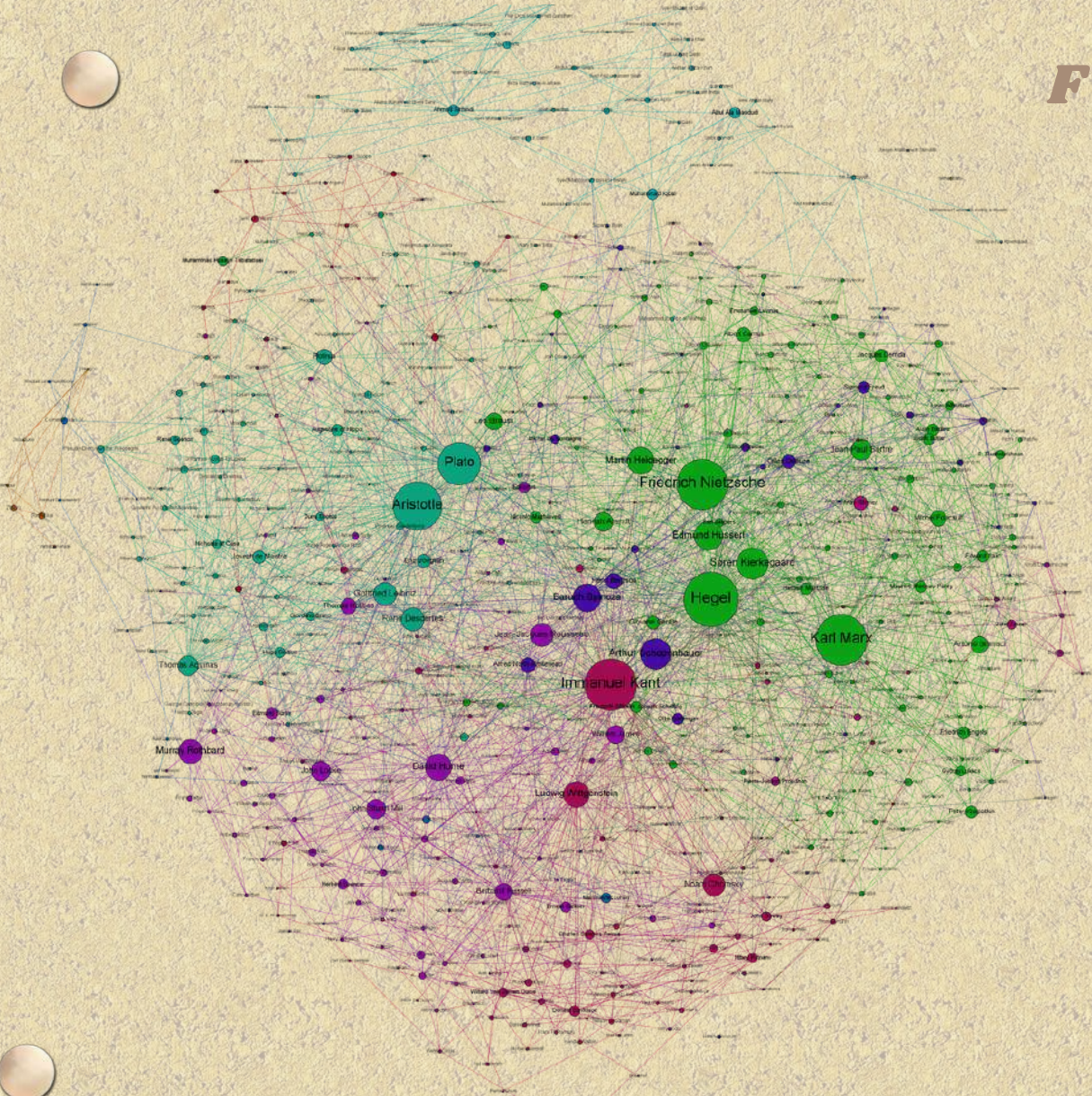


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ساعت 17 تا 19





NICHOLAS RESCHER

January 5, 2024

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette | Obituaries

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Obituary

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RESCHER
NICHOLAS

Nicholas Rescher, an internationally renowned philosopher who helped establish the University of Pittsburgh's philosophy program as one of the world's best, died on Friday, January 5, 2024 at the age of 95.

Dear Nicholas,
Just now I realized that you have passed away, when I was preparing my slides including some lessons of your invaluable book: A journey through Philosophy.
I am teaching your books in my courses.
Your knowledge was more than your virtues and your virtues, more than your knowledge.
I love you and my sincere condolences to your family.
Rest in peace,

Nadia Maftouni
University of Tehran, Iran

Nadia Maftouni
February 09, 2024

FTIS FOUNDATION GAZETTE

10 April, 2021 A Test Session for Tomorrow's Webinar



Nicholas Rescher 1928-Jan 5, 2024
Dorothy Teresa Henle Rescher 1941-September 18, 2023

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette | Obituaries

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react reply report

The photo of this lovely couple, Nicholas and Dorothy Rescher in a test session with me on 10 April, 2021 for tomorrow's webinar, I love you both, Rest in peace and happiness,
Nadia Maftouni
University of Tehran
Iran

Nadia Maftouni
February 09, 2024

An Interview with Nicholas Rescher Curated by Nadia Maftouni

Nadia Maftouni: My primary acquaintance with Nicholas Rescher's work was through Farabi. Your book *Al-Farabi: An Annotated Bibliography* as well as *Developments of Arabic Logic* are still among your most well-known books in Iran. But your more recent contemplations like *A Journey Through Philosophy* In 101 Anecdotes are also available here and subject to philosophical debate. I'm very glad and honored to meet you today Nicholas.

Nicholas Rescher: Thank you! Well, I am deeply honored that my colleagues in Iran have decided to hold this webinar in relation to my work. And I'm grateful to Nadia Maftouni for organizing this event and making it possible to participate in it. I am particularly grateful because Iran has a noble and distinguished history of contribution to scholarship and to be in touch with colleagues there is a very happy development for me. If it's all right, I will ramble on a little bit about my history and my work. But if at any point someone has a particular issue they would like to raise I would be perfectly content to be interrupted and we can discuss what that issue might be.

Let me begin with a few biographical preliminaries. I was born in 1928 in Germany in Hagen in a bourgeois family of people of scholarly inclination, though none of my immediate antecedents were scholars. My father was an attorney. His father was a merchant and his father was a doctor. So the scholarly impact in the family and a considerable influence on me came through my father's first cousin called Oscar Rescher, or as he changed it ultimately to Osman Reşer when he lived in Istanbul for many years.

He was a distinguished Arabist, also a student of Persian and Turkish history and literature and was very active in mediating between holdings of manuscript material in the near east and in western institutions. There are still considerable collections that he helped to organize in Yale, in Germany, in Bochum, at the Staats Universität, in Berlin, in Yale and Princeton. Many libraries in the western countries owe much of their strength in manuscript material of near eastern interest to his intervention now. He left Germany for Istanbul prior to World War I and in the passage of time, his German relations, his parents and other relations had died and my father was the last person in the family with whom he was in correspondence and when my father died in 1953, I inherited the correspondence with this gentleman. And for about 20 years we corresponded quite regularly and he got me interested a bit—or the contact with it got me interested a bit—in Arabic contributions to philosophy in the Middle Ages. And as I got more into that, I realized that considerable contributions had been made in the area of logic and that this was substantially unknown, or at least substantially unknown in the west. There were few books and few articles of any substantial nature on contributions that had been made in Arabic, often of course by non-Arab Scholars and Persians—prominent among them—and I also realized that there was one area of logic, namely modal logic in its temporal aspect, that was generally unknown. And I was able to find enough material to reconstruct what this had been, to my considerable satisfaction.

It got to the point where I reached a crossroad that was difficult. I had done at that point all of the things that I could readily do with the material at my disposal. I was at one of the major universities that had extensive holdings in near eastern material. And those things which I could work on readily with material at my disposal I had more or less exhausted. And in any event I felt I had to make a choice which way I was going to go: Was I going to become an Arabist and stop being a philosopher? Or was I going to put aside the Arabic interest and turn to philosophy? And as it happened, I did that. So that most of the work that I had done on Islamic philosophy came during the decade from about 62 to 75 or so. My personal interest had been from the very start in Leibniz, this remarkable polymath and many-sided scholar. And I had written my doctoral dissertation at Princeton on his cosmology. By strange developments his manuscripts survived and were enormously and unusually extensive in nature. So we are able to ongoingly do research in Leibniz that opens up new fields of endeavor. And one of my points of pride was reconstruction of a very sophisticated cipher machine that he envisioned and planned out with considerable care. So from that stage on, from the middle 70s, I concentrated my efforts largely on classical western philosophical issues.

The Islamic influences that remained with me were—given largely to a kind of humanistic perspective on philosophical issues—metaphysical modes of categorization that had some theological influences but also a good many Greek influences, anthropological concerns that had to do with nature of the human mind and human thought, pragmatic emphasis on man-made resources for resolving our questions.

Such philosophy is concerned on man-made issues and issues of artifice and invention; not only on the natural and physical aspects of a metaphysical concern. Farabi and Avicenna were important for me in this regard, especially Avicenna because the works on logic opened up a good view of the temporalization of modality. The Greek modals of modality, of necessity and possibility, were based largely on considerations of mathematics and physics. And the idea of time and temporal process and human activity within the temporal framework had been neglected by the Greeks and became prominent in this development that the medieval Islamic logicians developed. It's a theme which has been largely neglected even among modern logicians. The ordinary language philosophers like to stress that the verb “to be” and its cognates and the idea of what is the case has two very distinct aspects, one of them is completely atemporal. “Three is a prime number” or even “Socrates is mortal” is something that holds without specific reference to time, whereas “Socrates is standing” and verbs of temporal presentness are equally significant and to some extent neglected. The only European language I know of in which this distinction is fairly explicit is Spanish where the difference between “ser” and “estar” is critical, between what is timelessly and what is the case but ongoingly right now. And Aristotle, of course as many theorists have complained, tended to look on the issues in an atemporal way; and the Arab logicians, Avicenna above all, focused on the temporal aspect. So that's perhaps the main connection between my interest in logic and the developments in Islamic philosophy.

But I've gone on enough. I'd be happy to react to anything you wanted to follow up along those lines.

Maedeh Rahmani: One of our guests has a question.

Guest 1: Professor Rescher, fascinating talk! It's a privilege to even virtually meet you. I just wanted to ask if these two senses of "to be" are they both referred to as copula?

Nicholas Rescher: Yes, yes; the grammatical role is that of a copula, actually.

Guest 1: I wanted to know if the common sense of it when we use the term copula; are we referring to both the senses of the verb "to be" or only the atemporal sense.

Nicholas Rescher: Well, I think we have to distinguish between the grammatical and the systemic or logical use of the term. Grammatically, the copula is there regardless of whether it's temporally or atemporally construed. But from the functional point of view, it makes a great deal of difference.

And the interesting thing about the work of the medieval Islamic logicians was their careful concern for temporal relationships; so that they differentiated not only between "what is now" and "what is always" but "what is sometimes" and "what is most of the time".

So that "Socrates is breathing" is true it doesn't necessarily mean that "he's breathing right now". It might mean that he's a breathing creature. But even to be a breathing creature means that you have to be breathing some of the time, but not necessarily all of the time. And some of the time can be up once in your life, when you make a transition from youth to maturity, or it can mean most of the time in your life or it can mean intermittently and they had the ways of characterizing all of these differentiations in a very cogent and complicated way.

Guest 1: Thank you!

Maedeh Rahmani: Well, I think what you explained consists of your work until the mid-90s. So is it possible to hear the evolution of your work until recent years?

Nicholas Rescher: Well, let me respond a little bit to your concern about the evolution of my work. It's a little hard to give it good temporal characterization because they're often several strains going on at the same time. It isn't that we can divide many philosophers temporally into the early Wittgenstein and the late Wittgenstein or the early Kant and the late Kant. I at least find it hard to divide myself into the early Rescher and the late Rescher! Because it isn't that as with Kant; he worked first on epistemological and metaphysical issues—that are in the 'Critique of Pure Reason'—then went on to practical issues, and then went on to sort of more political and social issues. So you can do a periodization.

With me, I'll be interested in something, I'll work on that a while, put it his way, go to other things and come back to it. So it goes back and forth rather than temporally. The main themes have been, of course, logic in many of its sort of non-standard and more applied dimensions; and pragmatism, that is to say the attempt—in the tradition of the American philosopher Peirce—to put issues of practice and the management of human affairs, give them a central role in the development of philosophical ideas, in semantics for example, to make issues of use and mention significant issues like deduction and logical inferential connections.

So I'm trying to say that it's a little hard to get a unified treatment of the historical development. The main thing, I think, that one can do is to say these and these are issues that he's been interested in, and he's done just a bit of it over here and that bit of it over there. It's a more thematically-than-chronologically-oriented-kind-of representation of what the person's work consists in.

But the main themes that are there are logic on the one hand, ethics and moral philosophy on the other, and metaphysics and philosophy of nature on the other hand.

The general tendency of all of these various themes has been to look for connections, and to try to integrate and systematize into a kind of organic organization; how commitments that we have in logic, say, impinge on commitments that we have in ethics? Or in epistemology can bear on ethics?

So the systematic interrelation of these different ideas is what intrigues me particularly. Just to give to one sort of example, suppose that—as with many recent epistemologists—you operate a very skeptical epistemology with respect to what goes on in the world, what was actually happening.

You say, well, the way in which things happen, particularly in the generalities that connect them, are—in one way or another—beyond the reach of adequate understanding. So you're a skeptic; you don't believe that empirical statements can be consolidated. But if you don't allow that to happen, then what about ethics? Then what about condemning certain modes of action? What about saying that certain kinds of interventions in the lives of people are painful and should be avoided and others are necessary and should be encouraged?

How can you operate a constructive system of approbation and condemnation without being able ever to determine what it is that people are doing? So you can't separate these distinct areas of philosophical endeavor in a reasonable way.

We live in an age of specialization. There is so much work, especially in philosophy, that we split things apart.

We have not only Kant's scholarship but nowadays the annual production of Kantian scholars in terms of extent is bigger than Kant's corpus. All these people are out there writing books about Kant. So much so that even to master the whole of it is virtually impossible. So we have experts on the early Kant, the pre-critical Kant, the Kant of the practical philosophy, and so on.

This kind of specialization, though inevitable in a field where many people are working with a limited range of issues, nevertheless is philosophically tremendously counterproductive. Because you cannot, I think, reasonably lay apart these, cut apart these philosophical areas of concern.

So we're in a difficult situation that we have to try for systematization and integration in an era of specialization. And that's a tremendous challenge, but it's one which—in a very imperfect way—I have taken hold of and cultivated, so that, perhaps more than most of my colleagues, I work in different areas, try to keep them related to one another.

Maedeh Rahmani: I think there's another question from one of our guests.

Guest 2: Thank you for your words, Professor Rescher. The subject of my dissertation is related to the possibility of the Kant's permanent peace. While reading 53rd anecdote of your book, *A Journey Through Philosophy in 101 Anecdotes*, which you have devoted to Kant's peaceful view, a question came to my mind. Do you consider Kant's permanent peace an achievable goal in real world or not?

Nicholas Rescher: Well, Kant as I understand him was concerned very much to clarify the relation between “what is” and “what ought to be”. And he was, I think, perfectly clear that we have to draw a distinction between morals and mores; “mores” being what people tend to do actually in the real world, and what they ought to do in an ideal order as it were, where that ideal order is defined and characterized by what it would make sense to lay down as a general universal rule for how people ought to behave always.

So that moral appropriateness hinges on universalizability, on making sense to say if I could have my way, as it were, and if I could arrange for things in the world to have a certain order—if I could lay it down a law, this is the legal type of approach—that people would be doing it in that kind of way.

So an order in which any sort of morally inappropriate way of behaving—murder, theft, lying, and so on—were to take place, as a general rule, would be untenable. It would not issue in a feasible arrangement for human affairs. So we have to judge the acceptability of what people really do in terms of an idealized standard. And so there is this disconnection between what we find people doing in reality, in the real world; and what they ought ideally to be doing, or they ought morally to be doing, which involves this dichotomy between what we find empirically and factually happening in nature, and what happened in an ideal order which we have to construct in idealization of some sort.

Nadia Maftouni: I’d like to say a comment about your book, *Journey Through Philosophy 101 Anecdotes*. I think it's one of your important books. At first glance it might seem easy to write, but at least in philosophy it's easy to write in a complicated style and it's hard to write the simple, clear, and readable fashion. I believe this is a successful framework to reach a broader audience in the field.

Nicholas Rescher: I appreciate you saying that. Most philosophers—especially analytic philosophy in the sort of Anglo-American tradition—write for their colleagues! Really! The only people who are going to be interested in them are the fellow specialists. And, again, I think it's very important that philosophy—if it's going to survive—make it outreach into people who are not going to be professional philosophers, but who have a normal, ordinary, intelligent person's interest in basic issues. And, yeah, so I felt it was constructive.

The French for ‘popularization’ is ‘vulgarization’ and it has a negative aspect which I don't believe in! I think popularization is by no means the only task of scholars, but if we don't connect outside the range of scholarships to what people are interested in, we ultimately isolate ourselves from society. And it's not constructive.

Maedeh Rahmani: That raises an issue in my mind, if I may ask something about philosophy of art in the medieval philosophy. I'm sure you're familiar with Plato's view towards the artists and he is notorious for that...

Nicholas Rescher: He is a bad guy, yes! That would be very cruel to Iran to condemn poetry!

Maedeh Rahmani: Yes! And as you know, Farabi and Avicenna have an optimistic view towards poetry, in the very same system that Plato created. They see artists as people who can shape the imagination of people and move it towards the good deeds.

Nicholas Rescher: Yes.

Maedeh Rahmani: In fact, Nadia has done an expensive work on that. Now, do you find the view of Farabi and Avicenna a practical in the modern world?

Nicholas Rescher: I think that there is something rather general at work behind the question that you raised. And that is—if we look at any of the massive figures of the history of philosophy ranging from Plato and Aristotle onwards, to my hero Leibniz, to Kant, to Descartes, to any major landmark figure in the history of philosophy—the question, it seems to me, is never quite “can we take this on board as fixed, gospel, canonical truth for our own purposes? Are we going to be Platonists or Aristotelians or Leibnizians?” And I incline to say that this is not the case for two reasons. One, that there are two important ways of making a contribution to philosophy. One way is simply to raise a question, to put on the agenda of concern a certain kind of issue. You know, what is justice? How are we even to become clear on what justice is all about? Plato put that on the agenda. If he'd done nothing else that would be valuable. So we have to, I think, consider two kinds of contribution: Doctoral contributions that answer questions; and imaginative contributions that raise questions and put them before us for consideration. I must say that of all the branches of philosophy that I have written about, philosophy of art is the smallest. I have the least to say on it. Because I think it is, in a way, the most difficult. It's frighteningly complex! What a philosopher ought to do about the strictly imaginative aspect of artistic productivity?

It's made complex because art has become, certainly over the last few centuries, a moving target. No significant artist wants to do things in exactly the same way that anybody else did it earlier. They all want to do it their own way and have to be their own type of thing.

So it's very hard to catch something that's flitting across the landscape. The minute you say, well, art exists for gaining deeper insight into the nature of human relations, or deeper insight into the nature of our experience of the world we live in, or it exists to break the bounds of reality and to open up our vistas into what is possible rather than what is actual—there are any number of slogans you can have about what the prime aim of artistic endeavor is; but in the first place none of them is exclusive, because while art, or some art, may be endeavoring to do that kind of thing, others are different; but the other thing is that—the minute you lay down “this is what art should be!” somebody comes along and puts a urinal in a museum! I mean, what?! What does that? What it does is something philosophical. It raises questions. It says why does it shock us that that thing should be considered a notable artwork that is worth exhibiting.

It makes a contribution in the question-raising dimension, and not in any other way. But it also breaks the pattern of normativity that goes with, say, well art ought to be this kind of thing, or art properly construed has to serve this kind of function.

Even that question, whether art serves the function or not, is up for grabs.

So the philosophical theory of art is very difficult. Because philosophers want to generalize and the nature of the subject resists generalization.

Mahmoud Nuri: May I ask something trivial? Do you have a particular interest in cinema in relation to your philosophy?

Nicholas Rescher: I'm rather a Philistine when films are concerned. Because I tend to look to films for entertainment, in large measure. Of course television documentaries are something else, they are for information. But to go to a film theater, I like to be entertained. The sort of films that win international film festivals are often too serious and depressing for my taste! I think life can be challenging enough and difficult enough without taking on one's shoulders also the travails and burdens of fictional characters! So I'm a Philistine when films are concerned, I look to them for entertainment.

Mahmoud Nuri: That was an insightful note, I will remember that.

Nicholas Rescher: I should be ashamed of it! But we are what we are!

Mahmoud Nuri: No no no! We are on the same page!

Nicholas Rescher: OK! Good!

Maedeh Rahmani: One of our guests has sent a note, saying it's a pleasure to virtually meet one of the professors of the university he was a student of 50 years ago. He mentions that we consider the paradigms underpinning ontology and epistemology into four groups: positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, and post-structuralism. Where would you fit pragmatism? As you are within the society where pragmatism was developed, would you consider pragmatism as a different category, or you would see it a combination of two or more of those four categories?

Nicholas Rescher: The place of pragmatism in the scheme of things is—as virtually all else in philosophy—complicated. For one thing, there are many different versions of pragmatism. And they range from basically philosophically nihilistic versions that would say, well, philosophy's traditional theoretical concerns are impractical, and have pick up the wrong end of the stick as it were, and we ought to replace philosophical speculation of its traditional sort with something quite different, more geared to sociology; social sciences really replace philosophy.

The other version of pragmatism is much more realistic. It says, the questions of traditional philosophy make sense, we have to keep them on the agenda, and the way in which we have to pursue those questions is to ask ourselves what sorts of answers to them work out best in relation to fundamental problems? Which are the best problem solutions that are at our disposals.

The movements that you mentioned, in large measure, are movements against construing the philosophical project in its traditional form, and wanting to replace philosophy with something else. Pragmatism is one of these. It wants to replace philosophy with, if you like, empirically informed study of human affairs.

Other tendencies, like my former colleague Richard Rorty, would like to see philosophy replaced by a mode of endeavor that doesn't really try to answer questions but that it tries to present insights. And that is much more literary. The point of course is that different approaches in philosophy take different branches of investigation and concern as paradigmatic. So there are those philosophers who, like Bertrand Russell, would like to assimilate philosophy to mathematics; those who would like to assimilate, like Reichenbach, philosophy to natural science; those who like to assimilate it to humanistic science; some to literature. It's a different way of saying what sort of intellectual endeavor ought to be paradigmatic or philosophical inquiry. And pragmatists have not one version, but several different versions, which take different approaches on that question.

Maedeh Rahmani: Another guest has sent us her big question, as she put it, saying as a physical chemist who has studied quantum science she's been long wondering whether philosophy is science, or science is a philosophy. She's been confused about this and maybe about the quantum science and about where should she seek the answer to all scientific questions about the world and issues like physics, chemistry, biology, and mathematics. Can one trust in philosophy for such answers? Or philosophy's answers are merely imaginative?

Nicholas Rescher: The field in which you work, field of quantum phenomena, is of course perhaps the most challenging part of philosophy of science in the present era. Because the questions that we raise in philosophy are questions that we pose within the framework of ordinary language, within the framework of discourse that people in general can employ in dealing with the phenomena of everyday life experience. So the philosopher has terms at his disposal like matter, or wave, or position, which we understand in the ordinary, everyday, context of where things are placed. You put the fork away in the drawer in the kitchen, and you expect to find it there the next day. It has a position, it maintains that position, it has stability. The range of quantum phenomena, how nature behaves in the very very small, is very complicated, of course. We can't even put it in material terms. Even its electromagnetic—with respect to those kinds of things that we're familiar with in ordinary life, like heaters, or light fixtures and so on—is discontinuous with what happens here. We don't have a vocabulary that we can borrow, from the ordinary language domain, that we can adequately use to characterize quantum phenomena. So that's what makes it very hard to connect the physics of the very small with the world of experience that we ordinarily occupy.

Now, what does that mean? What does that signify that there is this kind of discontinuity, conceptually, between these different ranges of experience? And you have very different sorts of reactions to that. There are people who think that there is simply no way in which there can be a quantum philosophy, because quantum phenomena resists the sort of conceptual devices that philosophers have at their disposal for dealing with things.

I'm not sure that helps any; because it simply suggests that there is room for fundamental conceptual innovation if we're going to relate those two domains. But that is still very much up in the air. Largely because our experience in the world of macro objects is based on continuities which are just absent at the level of the very small.

Maedeh Rahmani: Another one of our guests has a question about your view on the rise and fall of civilizations. He suggests there are many theories about the rise and fall of the Islamic golden age and he believes the rise and fall lies in philosophy of science of Muslim thinkers. He believes the importance of this view goes beyond the Islamic world and Islamic thinkers and says: I'm sure you're familiar with the theories of civilization or collapse from Jared Diamond's 'Guns, Germs, and Steel' to Ian Morris's geography theory. But perhaps more important than all these factors is the philosophy of science prevailing in a civilization. That is, where does a people search for answers to the great questions and threats they face? What do they consider legitimate sources and methods of finding answers, which we nowadays may call science, and what do they consider illegitimate or which we today call superstition and dogma? That's what determines its fate. He likes to know your opinion about this.

Nicholas Rescher: The advantage of the natural sciences is that there is a fundamental uniformity with respect to the kinds of questions that get asked. So the questions that are asked in physics are the same, regardless of what the culture context happens to be. There are other conceptual frameworks of consideration that are discontinuous with that. Part of those discontinuous frameworks relate to considerations of cultural context that comes from other domains of human concern. What are we going to do to bring science and philosophy together? That concerned the best minds of eastern and western thought for a long time in the middle ages. How do we get Greek science to coordinate with Islamic conceptions of the religious domain of man. How do we get it to coordinate with Christian conceptions of the domain of man, right? The great philosophers of the day in all traditions—in Christianity Saint Thomas, in Islam a considerable number of important thinkers, Averroes among them, in Judaism also—there were figures that worked on these problems. How do we get these things to fit together? And they arrived at solutions satisfactory to many people. But never uniformly satisfactory even within their own tradition, let alone across the boundaries of traditions.

Then there are other problems even within a given scientific domain. Because there are other kinds of concept frameworks within which those issues can be looked at. Maybe the best example is medicine. Islamic medicine, of course, is uniform—because of its ultimately Greek origin—with medicine in the Western tradition. But Chinese medicine is not. Chinese medicine has its own concept framework, its own history, its own considerable array of successes.

How do we fit these things together? That is to say, you have a dentist who practices anesthesia by hypnosis. You go into the dentist's office, he puts you under, he tells you to stop your gums from bleeding. How do you stop your gums from bleeding?! You have no idea, and yet you do it. You go to the Chinese practitioner and he tells you we're going to operate on you, we're going to anesthetize you by sticking a few needles into key points in your body. You say, what's happening here?! He can't tell you what's happening. He can tell you stories about this. He can tell your stories about the flow of the Chi within the system and its crossing in various points and intersections and intervening in those intersections. So he has things to say but you cannot get them into your mind because your whole thought framework is discontinuous from that.

So where there is a commonality of concept framework—with respect to the questions that get asked, in respect to the kinds of answers one can look for—there can be communication across cultural divides. Where that's missing, it gets hopelessly difficult. And you have to say to yourself what is happening is that there is a fragmentary understanding, that if only we pushed our modes of medicine further and the Chinese practitioners refine their mode of explanation, we could ultimately tie these things together. Because nature is one, and nature has to obey its own set of uniform laws all across the board. Incidentally, that of course is a deep conviction that we have within the tradition of mediterranean theory. There is no guarantee that these things can ultimately be reconciled, but we have a natural inclination and a rational inclination to think that ultimately there must be a reconciliation. Where there are genuine phenomena, the different ways of explaining must ultimately be developable.



Maedeh Rahmani: Professor Rescher, many thanks for your contributions today. It was a great chance for Iranian scholars to communicate with you directly.

Nicholas Rescher: I very much welcome the chance to be in touch with Iranian colleagues. I think one of the wonderful things about scholarship and science is the fact that we're all colleagues. I have a bit of an advantage because we're doing this in English. I congratulate all of you on the splendid mastery you have of this language. If we were doing this in Persian, I would be completely tongue-tied and couldn't say anything! But we can overcome, to some extent, these differences in language. And when we do so, the materials that we deal with in philosophy, and in scholarship generally, is something that binds us together in a very constructive way. And I'm very happy to participate on that place.

Nadia Maftouni: Thank you Professor Rescher!

Nicholas Rescher: Thank you!

Maedeh Rahmani: Thank you so much and have a great day! It was a pleasure for all of us.

Rescher: So was for me. Thank you and bye!



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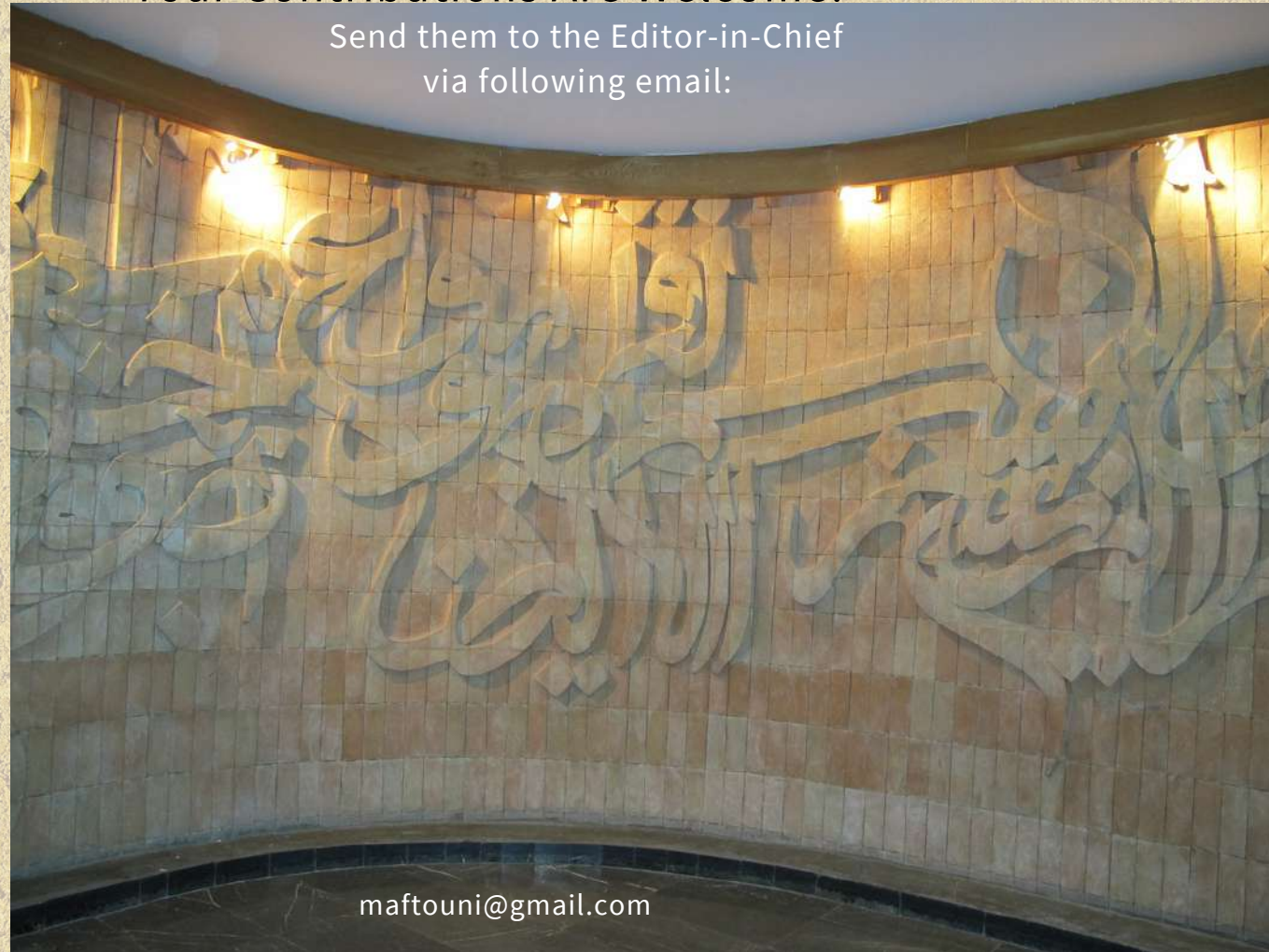
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