

Two Interpretations: Reformist and Denying – A Comparative Study of Contemporary Approaches to Mulla Sadra's Theory of Universal Perception

*Vahid Davari Chahardeh **

*Mansour Imanpour ***

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Abstract

The problem of perceiving universals in Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Theosophy (Hikmat al-Muta'aliyah) is confronted with a novel theory based on the soul's direct, presential intuition (*shuhud huduri*) of the pure intelligible essences (the *Muthul* or Forms). This theory posits that universality arises from the soul's ontological transcendence and its union with these essences. In the contemporary era, this theory has faced two distinct interpretations and critiques. Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, adopting an intra-school, reformist approach, accepts the core of the theory while aiming for its refinement. By precisely differentiating between "presential knowledge" (*ilm huduri*) and "conceptual knowledge" (*mafhum hulūli*), and by presenting a model of "abstracting the universal concept from presential intuition," as well as distinguishing between the "ontological aspect (individuation)" and the "relative aspect (universality)" of the *Muthul*, he seeks to enhance the internal consistency and epistemological precision of the theory. In contrast, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, employing an extra-school, denying approach, likens this view to Humean sensationalism, regarding universality merely as a product of the "weakness and ambiguity

* PhD in Philosophy and Theology, Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, Iran. (Corresponding Author).
Email: v.davari110120@gmail.com

** Professor, Department of Islamic Philosophy and Wisdom, Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, Iran.
Email: man3ima@yahoo.com



of perception," and deems Sadra's explanation unfounded and destructive to metaphysical principles. This research, using an analytical-comparative method, demonstrates that these two engagements serve distinct yet complementary functions: Javadi Amoli's intra-school critique symbolizes the repair, deepening, and enhancement of the defensive capability of Transcendent Theosophy, while Mesbah Yazdi's extra-school critique symbolizes a warning, a call for reconsideration, and an obligation to clarify its interpretive boundaries. The outcome of this discourse is the revelation of the inherent capacities, challenges, and self-dynamics of this theory within the arena of contemporary Islamic thought.

Keywords: Cognition of Universals; Transcendental Wisdom; Archetypes; Direct Intuitive Knowledge; Universal of Effort; Vague Particular Idea.

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