



Henry Corbin's Theory of Iranology Reading the History of Iranian Thought Under the Theory of the Iranian Spiritual World

Mohammad Javad Khazrai[✉] 

1.PhD of Anthropology, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran (Corresponding Author). Email: m.j.khazrai@ut.ac.ir

Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article type: Research Article</p> <p>Article history: Received: 26 August 2024 Received in revised form: 15 September 2024 Accepted: 20 September 2024 Published online: 22 September 2024</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Henry Corbin, Imagination, Iranology, Spiritual world, Tawil.</i></p>	<p>The theoretical formulation of Iran has been one of the most important lines of thought in the last hundred years. It started with the research activities of orientalists and has occupied many Iranian researchers. In the meantime, Professor Henry Corbin is considered among the pioneers of this field. His research about Iran has a special and unique feature. He has always inspired the younger generations after himself. Corbin avoids merely listing field reports about Iran. He reaches the depth of Iran's constructive framework. This issue helps him to put the components of Iranian identity in a coherent system. These components have deep connections with each other in the innermost elements of their life. This approach has given a special face to Corbin research regarding Iran. The following article presents a report of the research activities of this great researcher and Iranologist and deals with the core of his research and presents a theoretical formulation of this researcher and shows its place among the theories of Iranology and then criticizes his theory about Iran. Therefore, dealing with the issues of such a thinker is beyond the scope of an article and is the only entry point. Also, this article focuses on his theory of Iranology and will discuss his other intellectual aspects only to the extent of necessity.</p>
<p>Cite this article: Khazrai, M. J. (2025). Henry Corbin's Theory of Iranology Reading the History of Iranian Thought Under the Theory of the Iranian Spiritual World. <i>Journal of Social Theories of Muslim Thinkers</i>, 14(3): 20 - 36. https://doi.org/10.22059/jstmt.2024.380341.1732</p>	
<p> © The Author(s). Publisher: University of Tehran Press.</p> <p>DOI: https://doi.org/10.22059/jstmt.2024.380341.1732</p>	

1. Introduction

In this article, Henry Corbin's theory of Iranology is examined. Henry Corbin is one of the famous orientalist of the last century. He has traveled to Iran many times and observed Iran closely. Corbin was trained in the tradition of phenomenology, but his familiarity with Suhrawardi made him interested in Islamic philosophy. Corbin's scientific activities in this field continue. He introduces Suhrawardi both in the West and in Iran itself. Before his activities, Suhrawardi was not well known in Iran itself. One of the most important aspects of Henry Corbin's work is his theory of Iranology. He follows a different path in oriental studies than other orientalists. Other orientalists before Corbin have mainly had a Europe-centric view, and some have engaged in orientalist work with colonial goals. But based on the phenomenological point of view, Corbin does not agree with the existing Orientalism and does not consider it sufficient, but believes that Iran should be studied closely. Therefore, he himself goes along with the Islamic and Iranian philosophical tradition as much as possible and tries to put aside the previous mentalities. The result of Corbin's activities lead to new discoveries about Islamic philosophy. He realizes that the modern West has not properly understood Islamic philosophy. Corbin considers the reason for this to be the acquaintance of the modern West with Islamic philosophy through the methods of Ibn Rushd. While Corbin believes that Islamic philosophy was not continued by Ibn Rushd, but by Suhrawardi. By referring to Suhrawardi, Corbin also finds a way to understand the ancient philosophy of Iran. Through this, he achieves a theory about Iran. In this article, this theory is called the Iranian spiritual world. In fact, the spiritual world of Iran is the point of connection between Islamic philosophy and ancient Iran. Such a discovery revealed new layers of Iran and Islamic philosophy. However, Corbin's theory of Iranology still has problems, including that he failed to examine the political aspects of Iran. The elements of the theory of Corbin Iranology and the criticisms that have been made on it have been examined in this article.

2. Problem Statement

So far, many theories have been presented about the nature of Iran. One of the famous theorists among them is Henry Corbin. Henry Corbin's theory has significant differences from other theories both in method and content. Corbin has used the tradition of phenomenology in the method, and in the content, he has tried to deal with the deep aspects of Iran and avoid a linear narrative. This article is trying to analyze Henry Corbin's theory of Iranology and examine the dimensions of his theory and the criticisms he has made on it.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this article is to find out Henry Corbin's theory of Iranology and the differences between this theory and other theories. Also, this article will examine the weaknesses of Henry Corbin's theory.

4. Questions

1. What is Henry Corbin's theory of Iranology?
2. What will be the results of this theory?
3. What are the criticisms on it?

5. Background

In general, so far, not much research has been done on Henry Corbin's theory of Iranology, and his view on Iran has been placed under other headings such as philosophy and theology. The collection of essays collected in the conference commemorating the 100th anniversary of Henry Corbin's birth and published in the form of a book titled "Pilgrim to the East" is one of the best narratives about this character. Also, two of the translators of his works, Seyyed Javad Tabatabai and inshallah Rahmati, also made an important

contribution to the publication of his thoughts by translating Corbin's books. They also had independent writings that explored different aspects of Corbin's view. Currently, Mehdi Fadaei Mehrabani is researching the thoughts of Henry Corbin and has published a book in this field entitled "Standing on the other side of death: Carbone's answers to Heidegger from the perspective of Shia philosophy".

6. Methodology

Analytical method was used in this research and by referring to documentary and library sources, it sought to extract Henry Corbin's theory of Iranology, so this research can be considered a descriptive exploratory type based on referring to first-hand documents and references. .

7. Findings

In this article, the dimensions of Henry Corbin's theory of Iranology are examined. This article named his theory "Iranian Spiritual World". In this theory, various dimensions of Iran, including philosophical dimensions, ancient tradition, as well as religious fields, especially Shia, have been artistically considered together, and therefore it is a complete and comprehensive theory, however, this theory still has flaws. The sentence of not paying attention to politics in Iran can be mentioned as a criticism of this theory.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Ethical Considerations: Complied with.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Ardakani, Reza (2015). "Corbin and the importance of Islamic philosophy in today's world" (interview). *Information newspaper*, 9th of January.
- Awani, Gholamreza (2006). "Satiety in the Opinions of Henry Corbin", *Pilgrim of the East*. Tehran: scientific and cultural.
- Corbin, Henry (1958). "Three discourses on the history of Iran's spirituality", translated by Isa Sepahbodi and Seyyed Ziauddin Deshiri. *Journal of the Faculty of Literature, University of Tehran*, p. 6, p. 1.
- Corbin, Henry (1964). "The status of Mulla Sadrai Shirazi in Iranian philosophy", translated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *Journal of the Faculty of Literature, University of Tehran*, Q. 12, No. 1.
- Corbin, Henry (1977). "Three philosophers of Azerbaijan", translated by Mohammad Gharavi. *Journal of Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Azarabadgan University*, p. 29, p. 122.
- Corbin, Henry (1990). *Iranian philosophy and comparative philosophy*, translated by Seyyed Javad Tabatabai. Tehran, Tos.
- Corbin, Henry (2013). *Iranian Islam*, translated by Inshallah Rahmati. Tehran, Sofia, p. 134.
- Corbin, Henry (2013). *The relationship between wisdom and philosophy of ancient Iran*, translated by Ahmad Fardid and Abdulhamid Golshan. Research Institute of Hikmat and Philosophy of Iran.
- Corbin, Henry (2013). *The spiritual and philosophical perspectives of Iranian Islam*, translated by Inshallah Rahmati. Tehran, Sofia.
- Corbin, Henry (2014). *From Heidegger to Suhrawardi*, translated by Hamed Foladvand. Tehran, Organization of Printing and Publishing of Culture and Islamic Guidance.
- Corbin, Henry (2015). *Creative imagination in the mysticism of Ibn Arabi*, translated by Inshallah Rahmati. Tehran, Jami.

- Corbin, Henry (2017). *History of Islamic Philosophy*, translated by Seyed Javad Tabatabai. Tehran, Kavir.
- Fadaei Mehrabani, Mehdi (2015). "About Henry Corbin and Iranian philosophy". *Farhikhtegan newspaper*, 24th of December.
- Heidegger, Martin (2008). *what is called thinking*, translated by Siavash Jamadi. Tehran, Ghoghnoos.
- Kaufer, Shtefan and Anthony Chamro (2018). *Phenomenology*, translated by Nasser Momeni. Tehran, roozegar no.
- Nasiri Hamed, Reza (2022). "The Refusal of Politics in Henry Corbin's Intellectual Project". *Political and International Approaches Quarterly*, No. 69.
- Rahmati, Inshallah (2016). "Hermeneutics (interpretation) as a spiritual junction of Iranian identity according to Henry Corbin's point of view". *Islamic mysticism*, p. 14, p. 53.
- Shaygan, Dariush (2004). *Henry Corbin, Horizons of Spiritual Thought in Islam*, translated by Baqir Parham. Tehran, Forozan.