



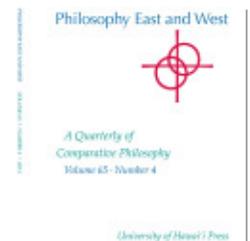
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Philosophy East and West, Volume 65, Number 4, October 2015, pp.
1052-1081 (Article)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press
DOI: [10.1353/pew.2015.0084](https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2015.0084)



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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ILLUMINATIONIST PHILOSOPHY: SUHRAWARDĪ'S *NŪR* *MUJARRAD* AND HUSSERL'S REDUCTION



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It has been said many times that every system of knowledge needs to be understood in its own terms.¹ This brings up the question of whether textual studies conducted along the lines of the history of ideas, that is, studies of ideas *per se*, are sufficient for understanding postclassical Islamic philosophy. In this essay, I propose a strategy that would complement and clarify the findings of a historical approach (in a manner similar to the semiotic analyses, for example, by Andrei Smirnov and Ian Netton²). This strategy consists of the phenomenological analysis of philosophical meaning as generated by a particular philosopher, including his or her use of philosophical evidence.³

Translations *per se* are not philosophically neutral.⁴ As I will show, translations of the work of the founder of Illuminationism, Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, contain implicit rationalistic and idealistic misinterpretations. An idealistic perspective can be traced in Henry Corbin's (1986) translations of *Hikmat al-Ishrāq*. The new translation by John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai (Suhrawardī 1999), which was intended to counterbalance Corbin by emphasizing Suhrawardī's peripatetic reasoning, shows a rationalistic bias. Both translations received criticisms from Dimitri Gutas (2002, 2003); however, these criticisms did not address philosophical biases in the translations. Since idealistic and rationalistic perspectives converge,⁵ a reading of Suhrawardī as an heir to peripatetic logic, to Neoplatonism, or to Zoroastrian symbolism of light, turns him into an idealist. As I will show, we do not find idealistic suppositions in Suhrawardī's treatment of philosophical evidence; rather, he comes through as a phenomenologist (see section 2 below). Together with a hermeneutic reinterpretation of earlier ideas, Suhrawardī's use of evidence coupled with his epistemology of direct intuition⁶ led to ideas of his own—a process that can easily be overlooked by an external, especially culturally etic, observer, as is a problem with much of the contemporary evaluation of Suhrawardī.⁷

Since the time when rationalistic distinctions between philosophy and mysticism were established by the ancient Greeks, philosophy has redefined itself. On the heels of the Kantian critique of reason, the Neo-Kantian egology of Natorp, and Bergson's studies of intuition, Husserl showed that logic is not a product of pure reason, but of eidetic⁸ intuitions of logos in the philosophical evidence.⁹ Phenomenology resolved the spirit-matter and intuition-reason aporia by winding philosophy back to its origins in lived experience. Therefore, in order for Illuminationism to be understood as

philosophy proper, it should be considered on a scale wider and more contemporary than the traditional views of ancient Greek philosophy, or seventeenth-century enlightenment with its emphasis on reason.

Suhrawardī in *Hikmat al-Ishrāq* built his argument on the analysis of the two kinds of philosophical evidence: natural observations (Part 1) and observations of first-person consciousness (Part 2). While he combines analysis of natural observations with thorough examinations of peripatetic logic, with regard to Part 2 we know only that Suhrawardī uses epistemology of knowledge-by-presence;¹⁰ his specific analytic process was never examined. A nod to possible antecedents in Neoplatonism does not help in this case because we do not know what kind of method was used in Neoplatonism to generate the possible idea-antecedents for Suhrawardī, such as ideas of hierarchies of light or the immaterial soul, and whether the Neoplatonic negation should be considered as such a method.¹¹ Along with the rationalistic or idealistic assumptions embedded in the translations, this is a situation in which misinterpretations are likely, as I believe happened to the key term of Suhrawardī's philosophy, *nūr mujarrad*.

1. *Nūr Mujarrad in the Translations*

In Part 2 of *Hikmat al-Ishrāq*, we find a passage that was translated by Walbridge and Ziai as follows:¹²

[Five] a general section
[Showing that whatever perceives its own essence is an incorporeal light
(*nūr mujarrad* in the Arabic text—O.L-S.)]

(114) Nothing that has an essence of which it is not unconscious is dusky, for its essence is evident to us. It cannot be a dark state in something else, since even the luminous state is not a self-subsistent light, let alone the dark state. Therefore, it is a nonspatial pure incorporeal light (*nūr maḥd mujarrad*—OLS).

This passage appears in the context of Suhrawardī's so-called "symbolism of light," with "incorporeal light" as its central principle. The term translated as "incorporeal light" or "immaterial light" is in Arabic *nūr mujarrad*. The same term was translated by Corbin as *la lumière immatérielle*, immaterial light.¹³ The idea that the term *nūr mujarrad* is metaphorical and refers to an ideal entity has become widely accepted in present scholarship,¹⁴ despite Suhrawardī's explicitly stating quite the opposite:¹⁵

(109) I do not use these [light and luminosity] in a metaphorical way, as when light is used to mean what is evident to mind (Arabic *'aql*),¹⁶ though even such usages do at the last derive from this light.

Suhrawardī begins his examinations of the nature of *nūr mujarrad* in (112) and (113):

A rule [stating that incorporeal light (*nūr mujarrad*)
cannot be pointed out by sensation]

(112) Since you know that any light that can be pointed to is an accidental (*'ārid*—OLS) light, then if there is a pure (*maḥḍ*—OLS) light, it cannot be pointed to, nor be located in a body, nor have spatial dimensions.

(113) Accidental light is not light in itself, since its existence is in another. Thus, it can only be light due to another. The incorporeal pure light (*nūr maḥḍ mujarrad*—OLS) is light in itself. Therefore, everything that is light in itself is incorporeal pure light (*nūr maḥḍ mujarrad*—OLS).¹⁷

The translation of the term *nūr mujarrad* as “incorporeal light” may appear warranted by the reference to the physical body in (112). However, the adjective *mujarrad*, which is a past participle of the verb *jarrada* (“to strip away, remove the outside covering, peel off the shell”) neither means “incorporeal” nor does it indirectly suggest the idealist philosophical meaning of incorporeality.¹⁸ Why does Suhrawardī choose this interesting term, and what are its philosophical implications? To answer this question, we need to examine his treatment of the evidence: that is, his approach to the primary data from which he derives the argument.

2. An Approach to Philosophical Evidence in Part 2 of *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*

In Part 2 of *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*, Suhrawardī shifts from natural observations and reasoning to reflective analysis of first-person consciousness.¹⁹ This new epistemology begins with an examination of the evidence—that is, data that will be used as a platform for this new analysis:

(107) Anything in existence that requires no definition or explanation is evident.²⁰ Since there is nothing more evident than light, there is nothing less in need of definition.

Out of all the possibilities of experience, Suhrawardī distills the most evident, *zāhir*. *Zāhir* can be translated “exterior,” “evident,” “apparent,” “obvious,” “fully exposed,” “exoteric,” as opposed to *bāṭin*, “hidden,” “veiled,” “implicit,” and “esoteric.” The focus on *zāhir* shows that Suhrawardī draws a line between the logic of definitions or explanations and things as they appear to us in recognized or acknowledged being, that is, the givenness of things.²¹ This signifies a transition from logical analysis to the analysis of phenomenological evidence. We will see that Suhrawardī’s further argument concerns things understood phenomenologically, as presentations in direct intuition, and not as the elements of pure logic or the objects of the natural world that he would examine or explain.

Along with delineating the nature of evidence, the passage (107) also commences an attitude, an analytic perspective within which the evidence will be treated. Suhrawardī’s focus on that which is most evident in existence indicates a departure from the natural attitude.²² Where Suhrawardī’s predecessors such as Avicenna or Ibn Ṭufayl view knowledge as progressing from sensory, to conceptual, to mystical self-knowledge, they operate in the natural attitude;²³ when in Part 2 of *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* Suhrawardī derives knowledge and, further, the beingness of things from how things present themselves to us, and not from their assumed physicality or mys-

tical self-explorations, he is operating in the phenomenological attitude. In reliance on the way things themselves and not their sensory representations appear for us, Suhrawardī is close to Brentano and Husserl with their idea of intentional objects (i.e., those constituted by consciousness; this notion bridges subject-object polarities and indicates a special ontological status of consciousness).²⁴ Suhrawardī himself would not put it this way, but what he is doing in (107) is building a platform for inquiry that is rooted neither in the observations of the natural world nor mystical insights of introspective consciousness, but in a coherent intentional world in which the existence of things is evident, and understood, via their participation in this intentional world. This intentional world is known by *idrāk*, “an intuitive mode of cognition, a direct knowledge,”²⁵ which is also translated as “perception” by Ziai (2004). We have to keep in mind, however, that *idrāk*-perception in Suhrawardī has the same connotation as *la perception* in Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*, that is, a faculty of the consciousness *per se* by which it apprehends its contents.

In phenomenological philosophy, the ontological status of intentional objects, which constitute the contents of consciousness, is distinguished from the status of both representations and abstractions. The understanding of (107) along the lines of phenomenological philosophy is very important because it paves the way to understanding the central category of Suhrawardī’s philosophy, *nūr mujarrad*, which I will examine in section 3 below.

As I will prove in section 5, for Suhrawardī, light (both visible light and light understood as perception or awareness) serves as the root cause of the presence of things; therefore, it cannot be subject to definitions.²⁶ This is exactly what we have in (107), whereby Suhrawardī transitions from the traditional metaphysical speculations of Part 1 to the original ontology of presence in Part 2.

Two analytic steps are contained in (107). First, Suhrawardī isolates the subject matter of examination as pure phenomena, which is analogous to phenomenological reduction, and second, in a completely original move he analytically isolates light as the most evident phenomenon and the indispensable principle that makes other phenomena visible. These philosophical proclivities do not fit within ancient Greek or later rationalistic perspectives. Perhaps there is a similarity between Suhrawardī’s “light” and Heraclitus’ “fire,” with the latter being a principle apparently given in direct intuition (Louchakova-Schwartz 2011). However, closest in philosophical position to Suhrawardī are the new phenomenological ontologies of the twentieth century,²⁷ in which philosophical concepts are generated from the data of presentive intuition in a variety of interpretive modes.²⁸ For Husserl, the study of the constitution of the world in pure consciousness introduces a proper philosophical dimension into the problem of being, and not vice versa. Likewise, Suhrawardī derives his metaphysics from the analysis of presence, whereas the presupposed materiality or ideality of things is not a primary concern for him. It is the presence of things, that is, their relationship with light, which brings up considerations of their existence and reality, and not vice versa.

In the phenomenological attitude, things are neither sensory representations nor pure ideas. On the contrary, sensory representations, mental imagery, psychological

contents of the mind, and pure ideas are all treated as phenomena. Most of the phenomenal field, including mental imagery, is visual.²⁹ Even though visual cognition was always important to philosophy and science, it has hardly been questioned why our world is dependent on the presence of light, and what the philosophical implications of this are.³⁰ Perhaps Suhrawardī is the only philosopher who has dealt with this question by linking the self-evident visibility of light to the irreducible nature of awareness (see the further argument below). It was questioned whether an analysis of first-person consciousness can produce true metaphysics and the solution to the mind-body problem.³¹ Husserl deals with this question in the notion of constitution and the concept of lifeworld, Merleau-Ponty in his thesis of the intertwining, and Tymieniecka in her concept of the unity-of-everything-there-is-alive.³² Suhrawardī finds a completely original solution to the problem of unification of the mind and the world via the reflective analysis of light in the phenomenal field. Present both in the self as *nūr mujarrad* and in the world as the light in objects, phenomenologically understood light is the agent of ontological unification. This argument, as constructed in the phenomenological attitude, requires a *descriptive*, and not a metaphoric language³³—this should be taken into consideration in the translation of Suhrawardī's terms.

The term *nūr mujarrad* is expected to be a description, a *signification* to a referent intended directly, and not a metaphorical indication of something that reminds us of some properties of visible light. From the general characterization of light in (107), Suhrawardī proceeds to a description of self-subsistent light, *nūr mujarrad*, in (112), followed by an examination of other kinds of light that come from *nūr mujarrad*. Were he to have found that there is no self-subsistent light in existence—that is, no self-subsistent light that can be captured in presentive intuition—he would have told us so. He does not. On the contrary, after he indicates light as the most evident in (107), a direct signification of self-sustained light appears, first in (112) as a negation,³⁴ and then in (113) as an affirmation.

What does this signification refer to—an ideal essence, or something else in experience? We can answer this question by following the analytic method of Suhrawardī himself; this method should reveal the *nūr mujarrad*.³⁵ Next, we can use phenomenological analysis (sections 5 and 6 below) to trace how the principle of *nūr mujarrad* that we have uncovered participates in the constitution of philosophical meaning³⁶ and affects the translations of other important terms, such as *dhāt* and *barzakh*.

3. Tajrīd: A Path to Pure Subjectivity

Suhrawardī's analytic method is spelled out in passage (112).³⁷ Suhrawardī groups together entities that *can be pointed to* and opposes them to something that *cannot be pointed to*, located in the body, or have spatial dimensions. While the presence of the body and spatiality indicate that the process of discrimination takes place in the embodied first-person consciousness, this discrimination is of course the action of the mind.³⁸ For discrimination to take place, attention has to be directed away from

the objects of consciousness that we refer to as “this,” to the subject of awareness, which is pure self-presence and cannot be objectified. This reduction removes sensory objects, everything in the body, and all contents of the mind—everything we can refer to as “this.” As indicated by Merleau-Ponty, the body has phenomenological reversibility: in the motion toward pure subjectivity, the elements of the body become reversed, from their subjective status as the self to being the objects of awareness.³⁹ In (112) the body is discarded together with all its bodily elements such as body schema, body density, sense-data, particular thoughts and abstract ideas, and feelings and imaginings. Notably, all these objects of consciousness are either constituted spatially or have boundaries—Suhrawardī discards all dimensions. “This”-objects are impermanent presences, that is, accidental lights.

The reduction performed by Suhrawardī is very similar to Husserl’s transcendental reduction, in which, getting mentally rid of the objects of consciousness, he uncovers consciousness as such. This reduction in Suhrawardī is indicated by the Arabic verb *jarrada*, “to strip away, remove the outside covering, peel off the shell,” of which *mujarrad* is the passive participle. For the process designated by *jarrada*, I shall henceforth use *tajrīd*, the Arabic action noun of *jarrada*.⁴⁰ The residue of *tajrīd* in (112) is pure subjectivity of the self, which cannot be discarded—that is, pure, objectless awareness, which Suhrawardī finds to be “the incorporeal pure light [that] is light in itself” (113).

Pure subjectivity has no dimension, and it cannot be pointed to, because it is *the origin* of the vector of intentionality. It is important that we distinguish this principle as tacit *cogito* present in all our ideas, from an idea *per se*. *Tajrīd* is an action of the mind; however, *nūr mujarrad* is not a pure idea as the two have different ontological status⁴¹ (see below, section 5).

As shown in contemporary philosophy of mind, consciousness is an irreducible feature of reality in any credible worldview; its specific ontological status makes it into a subject of special sciences, such as phenomenology or cognitive science.⁴² Despite the fact that differentiation between the objects and the subject of consciousness is readily available to the mind, it remains unclear whether there is such a thing as pure consciousness, that is, if living consciousness can indeed be pure of all objects, or whether it always comes as a package with the ongoing thought of negation.⁴³ Since pure subjectivity is not further reducible, both Husserl and Suhrawardī treat it as the essence of presences: Husserl instead in the notion of *noēsis*, Suhrawardī as light. With regard to his analysis of *nūr mujarrad*, which is lived reality outside the domain of the senses or reason, Suhrawardī maintains it to be present, in (113) and elsewhere.

3.1. *Nūr Mujarrad in Pre-reflective Experience*

Since *nūr mujarrad* is revealed as pure subjectivity in first-person consciousness, we can investigate what kind of psychological effects reduction toward pure subjectivity entails. As reported to me directly, and described by other authors, these experiences have a number of distinctive perceptual and affective features that are independent of social, cultural, or religious settings, as opposed to philosophical or religious interpretations of experience, which are contextual.⁴⁴

In experience, pure awareness appears at the core of the self, having no qualities or boundaries. This, however, does not make it inert; rather, it produces an impression of aliveness and nonvisual, yet radiant, “dark” self-luminosity.⁴⁵ The distinctly recognizable empirical “aftertaste” of pure subjectivity is memorable and affectively positive, including impressions such as a sense of freedom (as in Poonja 1992), a sense of powerful intensity and radiance (as in Guenther 1992), and the sense of certainty, truth, or ontological primacy (as in Louchakova 2007).

Once the reduction toward pure subjectivity and the first conscious recognition of experience took place, pure subjectivity is available as a background of all perceptions, which causes the reconstitution of the whole phenomenal field (Louchakova 2007, 2008). Empirically, this reduction does not cause an altered state of consciousness but is a state of sharpened, expanded, and open awareness. In order to neutralize potential speculations that such experiences can be epiphenomenal (i.e., fantasies or creative imaginings that do not involve the actual structural transformations of consciousness) rather than phenomenal, I refer here to the recent studies of neural correlates of such experiences. They include changes in neuroactivity, neuroplasticity, and hemodynamics demonstrated by brain-imaging techniques.⁴⁶ With no reductionism intended, these findings nevertheless show that the human brain is equipped to experience pure subjectivity directly (as opposed to the capability of only thinking about it).⁴⁷ Thus, Suhrawardī’s claim that *nūr mujarrad* is present in the plurality of living selves in (114) should be taken quite seriously because human consciousness does indeed generate such experience. We shall now apply phenomenological analysis to demonstrate how direct apperception of *nūr mujarrad* inspires the formulation of philosophy.

4. A Note on the Method of Phenomenological Analysis

Phenomenological analysis provides us with an understanding of how philosophical ideas are constituted, be it diachronically in the course of history, or synchronically from the matrix of one’s experience.⁴⁸ Diachronic analysis of Suhrawardī’s philosophy doesn’t seem a plausible enterprise, for the reason that we cannot be certain as to what the exact antecedents of his thinking are, and whether his understanding of these ideas was the same as that of his predecessors. In fact, the analysis in section 2 above suggests quite the opposite. The synchronic, that is, static phenomenological analysis is what is necessary in this case, to address exactly what was missing in the present interpretations of Illuminationism, that is, the precise analysis of Suhrawardī’s work with philosophical evidence in the generation of philosophy. After clarification of the roots of Suhrawardī’s thought in the essential structures of first-person human consciousness, the next stage of work should involve the phenomenological examination of hermeneutics in the transmission of ideas from the precedents of the use of the terms *nūr* and *mujarrad* in Neoplatonic, classical, and postclassical Arab-Persian, and perhaps also Vedantic, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian philosophical literature. I will leave this to other researchers; in the present analysis I will limit myself to working with two convergent data streams, the text and the evi-

dence in first-person experience. I will trace the generation of Suhrawardī's concept of light in two ways: by explicating the implicit meaning in passages (113) and (114), and by reflecting on the evidence, that is, on the apperception of *nūr mujarrad*.

5. Pure Subjectivity as Light: Philosophical Reflections on *Nūr Mujarrad*

Passage (113) addresses the properties of *nūr mujarrad* which were uncovered by *tajrīd* in (112). Passage (114) gives rise to further reflections on the relations between *nūr mujarrad* and the world, with the purpose of the discovery of the unity in the absolute. The tersely encapsulated philosophical statement in (112) and (113) appears in even more condensed form in a rule that is related to the passage:

A rule [stating that *nūr mujarrad* cannot be pointed out by sensation]

(112) Since you know that any light that can be pointed to is an accidental (*ārid*—OLS) light, then if there is a pure (*maḥḍ*) light, it cannot be pointed to, nor be located in a body, nor have spatial dimensions.

The logic of argument in these passages reflects the natural relationships in the phenomenal field of consciousness. Akin to statements in Buddhist *sūtras* or Vedantic *shlokas*, these passages induce understanding of these relationships (cf. Husserl's *Verständigung* [understanding]), which is a different kind of knowledge than is discursive knowledge.⁴⁹ The density of meaning in such texts requires unpacking it through commentaries; it is possible that such commentaries were provided orally.⁵⁰ Together a rule, a passage, and the underlying pre-reflective structure of first-person consciousness formulate a gestalt.⁵¹ The organization of meaning in the mental space of such a gestalt may be imagined as a layered structure: the base layer consists of the pre-reflective apperception of *nūr mujarrad* in first-person experience (transmitted from the author to the reader in [112]). This is followed by a primary reflective act creating an understanding of what *nūr mujarrad* is and of its basic properties. Further reflection and reductions generate the contents of a passage, toward a final reduction, which formulates the rule. As opposed to this generating sequence, in the written text the rule precedes the passage. This, however, is not a problem because gestalt reveals the whole system of relations at once.

Let's take as an example (113) and its rule:

A rule [that anything that is light in itself is *nūr mujarrad* (—OLS)]

(113) Accidental light is not light in itself, since its existence is in another. Thus, it can only be light due to another. The *nūr maḥḍ* ('pure') *mujarrad* (—OLS) is light in itself. Therefore, everything that is light in itself is *nūr maḥḍ mujarrad* (—OLS).

The text of the passage and the rule are two consecutive levels of reflection-reduction of the same pre-reflective experience of *nūr mujarrad*. The passage is an eidetic structure; the rule consists of further reduction and a dialectical synthesis of all the meanings in the passage. As proposed above, the logic of the passage and the rule reflect the relations in the gestalt of *nūr mujarrad*, and are not mere abstract logical

speculation. Notably, unless one delves into the pre-reflective experience that the passage summarizes, the rule appears arbitrary, theoretical, or symbolic—a characteristic error in the contemporary reading of Suhrawardī.

I shall illustrate the relationship between the levels of meaning in the internal experience of *nūr mujarrad*, a passage and a rule, by comparing the whole structure to an iceberg: the rule is like the sheen on the surface, the passage is like the shape, and the pre-reflective data are like the mass of the iceberg. The rule (the sheen) depends on both the explicitly articulated passage (i.e., the surface) and the pre-reflective data (i.e., the mass of the ice). The sheen, the surface, and the mass alone do not make the iceberg: the mass of ice should carry some internal organization, some tensegrity, to be arranged in the form of an iceberg. This internal architecture is not apparent, but without it the whole thing would fall apart. While the mass of ice and the shape of the surface are explicit, the underlying tensegrity is implicit. Likewise, even though all the immediate connotations of the internal unveiling of *nūr mujarrad* are not spelled out by Suhrawardī, they are implicit in the direct experience, and essential for the integrity of the cognitive architecture of the passage. In order to access such implicit themes, one performs a formalized reflection and imaginal variations on experience.⁵² The explicated themes are in table 1; these themes lead from (112) to (113), and, further, to the metaphysics of Part 2.

In addition to the explication from the pre-reflective layer, the thematic contents of the gestalt can also be explicated from the passage and the rule. These “bottom-up” and “top-down” derived themes should connect. We shall first take a “top-down” approach, deducing the themes by analysis of the rule and the passage in table 1. Then we shall identify the themes “bottom-up” as they emerge through reflections on the experience of *nūr mujarrad*, in sections 5.1.1–3. In this way, we shall arrive at a full picture of Suhrawardī’s phenomenological approach, as based on the reduction of first person consciousness, *tajrīd*.

As table 1 shows, the implicit themes are clustered around the realization of pure awareness as the substratum of all particular existences, as the substratum of all knowledge, and as self-subsistent being. These themes lay the ground for the forthcoming argument in Part 2, whereby the indivisible unity of the self and the world is established via the sameness of subjective awareness/light and light in objects, and the multiplicity is investigated in terms of particularization of light and its presence in many selves. The idea that awareness and light are the same principle is central to this argument. We shall now trace the emergence of this idea through the bottom-up approach, working our way to reflection from the connotations of pure awareness in pre-reflective experience.

5.1. Signification of Awareness as Light

Pure subjectivity,⁵³ which is obtained as a result of reduction, that is, *tajrīd*, is different in its ontological status from pure ideas: first, awareness has ideas as its objects; second, ideas are many, and pure subjectivity is unique; third, pure subjectivity of awareness is indivisible and self-transcendent and therefore limitless, and ideas are limited. In relation to the body, *tajrīd* has affective connotations (as shown in section

Table 1. Implicit themes in 113 and 114

The Text	Explicit Meaning	Implicit Themes
(113) A rule that anything that is light in itself is incorporeal light (<i>nūr mujarrad</i> in the Arabic text).	As in the quotation.	Reference to self-subsistence of <i>nūr mujarrad</i> : pure awareness has to be realized as “light in itself.” Theme of identity of awareness and light, and of identity between awareness and self-subsistent existence.
Accidental light is not light in itself, since its existence is in another.	Semantically, looks like a logical statement; however, this logic is reflecting the data of presentive intuition.	Underlying the logical statement there is a theme of identity between light and existence.
Thus, it can only be light due to another.	At first glance, this looks like a reference to natural observations of visible light; however, it is not so. This statement is derived from internal observations spanning the intersubjective and intrasubjective domains of perception (i.e., the self and the world and others), where one finds the self-subsistent (as pure subjectivity of the self) and dependent (the objects of the world) lights.	Juxtaposition of dependent and independent existence; the theme of identity of light and existence and theme of the absolute nature of <i>nūr mujarrad</i> (i.e., of pure subjectivity).
The incorporeal pure light (<i>nūr maḥḍ mujarrad</i> in the Arabic text) is light in itself.	As in the passage.	Reference to the identity of <i>nūr mujarrad</i> and existence as such (a.k.a. pure being), and to the absolute nature of <i>nūr mujarrad</i> (i.e., pure subjectivity).
Therefore, everything that is light in itself is incorporeal pure light (<i>nūr maḥḍ mujarrad</i> , Arabic).	Semantically, this looks like a logical statement; however, this is not pure logic but the logic grounded in presentive intuition.	Reference to <i>nūr mujarrad</i> as absolute, the self-subsistence of <i>nūr mujarrad</i> (i.e., pure subjectivity).
(114) Nothing that has an essence of which it is not unconscious is dusky, for its essence (<i>dhāt</i> in the Arabic text) is evident to us.	As above.	Reference to self-awareness.
It cannot be a dark state in something else, since even the luminous state is not a self-subsistent light, let alone the dark state. Therefore, it is a nonspatial, pure, incorporeal light.	As above.	Contingency of all particular existences on the existence (being) of the self as the absolute. <i>Nūr mujarrad</i> as the absolute.

3.1), and pure mental negation (i.e., pure idea) does not. Last, the content of pure awareness is just pure awareness, not meaning. Suhrawardī needs a term that would adequately reflect these features in philosophical argument. Two readily available types of languages, ordinary language and the mystical language of unsaying,⁵⁴ do not provide the means for such signification: ordinary language refers to the world of objects, and the language of unsaying can differentiate awareness from what it is not but does not provide the means for direct positive signification of awareness.⁵⁵ The remaining options are either to neologize (as done by Heidegger), or to reify the meaning of ordinary language so that it invokes the appropriate semiotics (as done by Husserl). Suhrawardī comes up with the generic term for his essential principle by reification of the ordinary word for light, *nūr*, widely used in Arabic and Persian Neoplatonic texts.⁵⁶ Below, I demonstrate that the emerging connotations of the pure subjectivity of awareness not only meet the themes in the passages (table 1) but also match the semiotics of *nūr*.

5.1.1. Pure Awareness as Light. Devoid of qualities and internal divisions, pure awareness is nonsymbolic and always identical to itself. Devoid of spatiality and temporality, with sentience as its only property,⁵⁷ it is also nonlocal or self-transcendent: every object and distance are known by it, while by itself it is found in the core of the embodied self. The term “light” refers to this self-effulgence of awareness.

Further, if we negate the mental mode of subject-object differentiation, awareness loses its intentional vector and turns into “knownness”: it is not “knowledge of” or “known to,” but simply “known.” Suhrawardī says in (116): “When you have made your careful inquiry into yourself, you will find out that what you are made of as ‘yourself’ is nothing but that which knows its own reality.” Besides sentience, the only other characteristic of “knownness” is that it *is*, both in itself and in every instance of presentive intuition in all objects of knowledge, as the light, that is, presence, by which objects appear to us. Awareness and light appear as the same principle of presence manifesting in the subject and in the objects, and therefore unifying the perceptual field. Rather than viewing the phenomenal field as a *mélange* of pure ideas conjoint with the adumbrations of sensory images,⁵⁸ Suhrawardī highlights the indivisibility of presence. Therefore, the term for pure awareness-presence cannot proceed from mental negation, but only from reduction of lived experience. Positive naming of the residue of the negation *nūr mujarrad* opens important cognitive possibilities, by invoking the unification of the self and the world, the self-transcendence of pure awareness, and the identity of awareness and being.

5.1.2. Being as Light, and the Identity of Awareness and Being. Since pure awareness cannot be further negated, it is also pure being. All phenomena come into being, “borrow” it to appear existent, and then come out of being. In (114), Suhrawardī contrasts *nūr mujarrad* with the “dusky substances,” which are not independently existent. Each object, including ideas, *is*—by the same presence of awareness. Suhrawardī offers a variety of reflections on this fact throughout his discourse.

For example, in (128), the aliveness (sentience) of *nūr mujarrad* is inferred from its bestowal of presence-existence on the barriers; this implies also the self-subsistence of pure awareness:⁵⁹

(128) Since *nūr mujarrad* (—OLS) bestows on the ensemble of barriers (*wāhib jamī ‘al-barāzikh*—OLS) their lights and existence, that light must be alive and aware of its self/essence (*mudrik li-dhātihi*—OLS), since it is a light in itself.⁶⁰

The logic in this passage seems “circular” unless/until we recognize it as a multidimensional gestalt with a Möbius-ring-like topology of meaning.⁶¹ The scaffold of the gestalt consists of multidimensional coemergent (not causal) relations. Every object *is known* by awareness, every object *is* by awareness, and therefore awareness has to be sentient, self-aware, and self-subsistent. By the same token, awareness is sentient by itself, constant, and self-aware; therefore it is self-subsistent. Such gestalt structures appear throughout *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*. For example, a similar tension between the semantics and logical organization of meaning is found in (113):

Accidental light is not light in itself, since its existence is in another. Thus, it can only be light due to another. *Nūr mujarrad* is light in itself. Therefore, everything that is light in itself is *nūr mujarrad*.

The passage is predicated on itself. This is so because this predication refers to presentive intuition, not logic. The realization of the sameness of being and knowledge takes the form of a unified gestalt with several connotations, knowledge as the self-effulgence of pure awareness, as the identity of pure being and pure knowledge, and as the being-knowledge by which all objects appear to us.

5.1.3. *Ontological Primacy and Unification: Nūr Mujarrad as the Absolute*. Since pure awareness is self-transcendent and nonspatial, no gaps are possible between pure awareness, awareness of objects, and awareness in other selves. These instances of awareness create a foundation for Suhrawardī’s hierarchical ontology of lights: throughout, these lights are the instantiation of *nūr mujarrad*, indivisible, one of a kind, and universal as the absolute (145):

The true King is He who possesses the essence of everything but whose essence is possessed by none. He is the Light of Lights.

This theme of unification is present in (113) and (114) and develops thereafter in several modes of unification. First, *nūr mujarrad* is the self in all selves, as in (127) below.⁶²

Second, since *nūr mujarrad* is the self-evident substratum of every self, it is the ontological ground of all cognitions (as in 114).

Third, since *nūr mujarrad* is self-effulgent and trans-spatial, it unifies the subject and objects, as well as the self and the world:

(127) (With *mujarrad* substituted for the translators’ “incorporeal,” and with “your I-ness” for *‘anā’iyyatak*, the translators’ “ego”—OLS) [I]t has been shown that your I-ness is a *mujarrad* light that is self-conscious, and that the *mujarrad* lights do not differ in their realities. Thus, all the *mujarrad* lights must apprehend their own essences, since that which is necessarily true of a thing must also be true of that which has the same reality.

Presented in (127) is a gestalt of the plurality of selves defined by the sameness of their essences, which leads to the further assertion that there is only one reality of light by which everything is present.

We started our phenomenological investigations with the analysis of the themes of (113) in table 1 (top-down approach) and proceeded to an analysis of emerging connotations of *nūr mujarrad* in experience (bottom-up approach) in sections 5.1.1–3. Clearly the themes in sections 5.1.1–3 meet the themes in (113); moreover, these themes pervade Part 2 of the *Hikmat al-Ishrāq*. This suggests that the discourse in Part 2 is largely generated by reflections on *nūr mujarrad*, where *nūr mujarrad* is a direct signification of the pure subjectivity of consciousness. Both parts of the phrase—*nūr* and *mujarrad*—signify the phenomenological reality of the pure subject with its numerous ontological connotations. The empirically limitless, affectively positive, ontologically certain, alive, and self-effulgent pure subjectivity of the self is found to be the self-subsistent ontological ground, the absolute.

6. Nūr Mujarrad in Philosophical Contexts

The phenomenological connotations of *nūr mujarrad* call into question the translation of other important terms, such as *dhāt* and *barzakh*. For example, in (114) *dhāt* can be translated both as “essence” and as “self.” Walbridge and Ziai indicate that they “tend to use ‘essence’ whenever there is any doubt”:⁶³

(114) Nothing that has an essence (*dhāt* in the Arabic text) of which it is not unconscious is dusky, for its essence (*dhāt*—OLS) is evident to us.

In (114) Suhrawardī contrasts something that contains the *dhāt* of which it is conscious with the “dusky substances.” Is *dhāt* essence, or self? The essence of consciousness is the indwelling awareness at the core of one’s being, which is uncovered by *tajrīd* as pure subjectivity. Therefore, *dhāt* is not just a psychological ego-self (*naḥs* in Arabic) but the essential core-self; hence the double meaning in Arabic, “self” and “essence.” For the verse to make sense, both connotations have to be retained; if “self” is not mentioned, the “essence” may refer to any kind of idea-essence, or an unspecified esoteric essence of some kind.

It can be argued that the ideal thought-essences also pertain to consciousness, not to inert objects. However, (114) contrasts consciousness and inertness, and consciousness is associated with self, not with idea-essences. The term “self” also connects (114) with the upcoming argument that *nūr mujarrad* is the absolute in all selves. Thus, the proposed translation becomes:

Nothing that has a self-essence of which it is not unconscious is dusky, for its self-essence is evident to us.⁶⁴

Another important concept that is influenced by the translation of *nūr mujarrad* is *barzakh*, “barrier”;⁶⁵ for example (128):

A principle [stating that that which gives existence to the barriers must apprehend its own essence].

Walbridge and Ziai translate (128) as:

Since an incorporeal light gives all the barriers their lights and existence, that light must be alive and self-conscious, since it is a light in itself.

In my revised translation, (128) reads:

Since *nūr mujarrad* bestows on (*wāhib*) the ensemble of the barriers (*jamī ‘al-barāzikh*) their lights and existence, that light must be alive and aware of its self/essence (*mudrik li-dhātihī*), since it is a light in itself.

This passage indicates the specific relationship between the limitless *nūr mujarrad* and the *barzakhs*, which are both the principles of inertness and of limit. The paradox is that the limitless, indivisible, ontologically primary light cannot mix with the *barzakhs*, which without light have no being and are finite and dimensional; the relationship will be rather that of superimposition. So, *wahaba* is translated as “give,” but there is no transaction of giving and receiving possible here. For a transaction, a passing of something from the light to the object, the term could have been *‘aṭā*, “to give.” However, Suhrawardī uses the verb *wahaba*, which means “to give” but also “to bestow, to grant, to donate,” which is closer in its meaning to superimposition. In the relationship of ontological primacy and dependency, or self-subsistence and contingency, there is a bestowal of existence from the self-subsistent greater to the deficient with that regard lesser.⁶⁶ The dependent nature of the lesser does not change in this process, because the existence-light can be withdrawn. Their presence of *barzakhs* now can be considered with regard to two aspects, the absolute being, which underlies them, and their apparent existence. Their accidental existences are what we experience, but being *per se* is visible only in pure subjectivity and is obscured in objects. One may accordingly say that objects obfuscate *nūr*, and therefore that the *barzakhs* are the barriers to light.

The phrase “alive and aware of its self-essence” refers to *nūr mujarrad*’s being both pure and in relation with inert (dusky) substances.⁶⁷ In this brief passage Suhrawardī captures the unified nature of consciousness, which appears to the intellect as tripartite: (a) transcending itself and intending on something other than itself; (b) being reflective self-awareness; and (c) being the *sui generis* light of pure awareness–known-ness. Such a passage also concerns the proactive, intelligent nature of consciousness shining forth its light on objects, which by themselves are inert and nearly nonexistent.

Because *nūr mujarrad* is the key term, the way it is translated creates a “domino effect” in Part 2 of *Hikmat al-Ishrāq*, as well as consequences for understanding Suhrawardī’s contributions to philosophy. For example, the reduction to pure subjectivity dooms Western philosophy to dualism (e.g., Cartesian dualism). By conceptualizing the absolute as light, Suhrawardī completely overcomes all dualisms and develops a unique argument of unification, novel then and remaining original in contemporary philosophy.⁶⁸ As Suhrawardī himself admits in (280):

He who studies it [my book—OLS] will learn that what escaped the Ancients and Moderns God has entrusted to my tongue.

The analysis of light in Illuminationism occupies a place similar to that of phenomenological investigations in phenomenological philosophy: it delivers the evidence necessary for the development of traditional philosophical themes. From this standpoint, three tiers can be distinguished in *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*: phenomenological investigations of consciousness, the egological argument concerning the nature of the self, and philosophical ontology.

In the succession of these stages of inquiry, Suhrawardī appears to be guided by the same logos of interrogation as Husserl: we see a progress from the analysis of logic to the epistemology of intuition, and first-person examinations leading to formulation of ontology. However, the similarities of the process of inquiry do not warrant the same philosophical conclusions: whereas Suhrawardī emphasizes the egological character of consciousness, Husserl defends the thesis of non-egological consciousness;⁶⁹ his absolute is not a substance or being but a process of concrete self-temporalization of consciousness in the process of constitution, et cetera.

Despite the preceding and other similarities, Suhrawardī does not completely fit within any group of philosophers of the past or of the present. To understand him, we must approach afresh the structures of experience as he examined them, and then follow the emergent eidetic intuitions. In *nūr mujarrad*, we find the irreducible, necessary being as a living principle that is ideal only with regard to it being an essence of all presences. The translation of such a term is challenging at the least. The present translation, “incorporeal light,” is incorrect linguistically and creates an erroneous impression that Suhrawardī dissociates the mental from the physical, including the bodily. An alternative translation that I wish to propose here is “denuded light” or “light made bare.” However, an even better choice may be to use the Arabic term itself.

7. Conclusions

Comparative analysis of *tajrīd* in Part 2 of *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* and Husserl’s phenomenological and transcendental reduction shows that Suhrawardī uses a systematic philosophical method. This method enables Suhrawardī to address traditional ontological questions of the unity of being. Therefore, his philosophy can be viewed as a phenomenological ontology in its own right, conceived eight centuries before phenomenology was articulated in continental philosophy.

Phenomenological analysis shows that the term *nūr mujarrad* is descriptive and not metaphoric; the referent of *nūr mujarrad* is an essential structure of living consciousness and not a pure idea. The participle *mujarrad* refers to a philosophical methodology of reduction to pure subjectivity. As a result of this reduction, the pure subjectivity of consciousness is available for reflective analysis and ontological conclusions.

In attempts to understand Ishrāqī philosophy that are based exclusively on intertextuality and historical contexts, conclusions land exactly in the area that researchers are trying to avoid: that is, the loss of philosophical meaning (to rationalistic interpretations). On the contrary, within the frame of the phenomenological philo-

sophical approach, what is attained is exactly what we desire: that is, adequate understanding of the Illuminationist philosophy on its own ground.

Notes

The author thanks Alexandre Roberts for his help with Arabic and his probing questions.

- 1 – Sabra 1987, Shweder 1991.
- 2 – Netton 1992; Smirnov 1993, 1998.
- 3 – For more on the problem of evidence in philosophy, see Bostar 1987, M. C. Dillon 1997, Öktem 2009, Steinbock 2009, Luft 2011.
- 4 – For a reexamination of what should be considered philosophy in the Islamic context, see Adamson and Taylor 2005. For the criticism of the purely textual approach to philosophy, that is, a “microscopic analysis, indifferent to meaning and significance,” see Hanafi 2010.
- 5 – For an extensive argument concerning commonalities between rationalism and idealism in philosophy, see Merleau-Ponty 1962.
- 6 – For more on Suhrawardī’s epistemology of direct intuition, see Marcotte 2005. For direct intuition in philosophical phenomenological interrogations, see Louchakova-Schwartz 2013a.
- 7 – For the sources of Suhrawardī’s work, see Lewisohn 1992, Walbridge 2000.
- 8 – The term “eidetic” is used here in a Husserlian sense, to denote direct intuition of the essential structures of experience.
- 9 – For more on logic, see Hanna 2008, Husserl 2000, Tymieniecka 2009.
- 10 – Ha’irī Yazdī 1992; see also note 9 above.
- 11 – For negation in Neoplatonism interpreted as mental abstraction, see Corrigan and Harrington 2011. The specifics of Neoplatonic influences on Suhrawardī is not known; we can only speculate that such influences took place, based on Suhrawardī’s account of his mystical vision (see Hā’irī Yazdī 1981), which emphasizes the epistemological role of direct intuition, and the fact that Plotinus and Pseudo-Dionysius were translated into Arabic (as shown in Lewisohn 1992, Treiger 2005).
- 12 – Suhrawardī 1999, p. 79. Hereafter I use this translation by Walbridge and Ziai, with my insertions of Arabic words, and explanations in parentheses with my initials “OLS.”
- 13 – Suhrawardī in Corbin 1986, p. 101.
- 14 – For symbolism of light in Suhrawardī, see Marcotte 2012, Razavi 1997. For symbolism of light in Neoplatonism, see John Dillon 1992.

- 15 – Suhrawardī in Suhrawardī 1999, p. 77.
- 16 – Walbridge and Ziai translate *‘aql* as “the mind”; however, the term “mind” in this context is not specific enough. In Islamic psychology with peripatetic influences, there are different kinds of *‘aql* (e.g., see the discussion in Versteegh 1977, p. 36). Suhrawardī does not specify what kind of *‘aql* he means here; instead, he uses the generic term. Generic *‘aql* means, broadly, “mind,” but also “reason” or “intelligence,” that is, a form of mental activity with logic and semantics as its primary tools, and not emotional or intuitive intelligence, and not presentive intuition, that is, awareness of, as in phenomenology. Suhrawardī’s reference to the metaphorical use of the term “light” points precisely to the semantic, linguistic aspect of the mind, not to the whole of the mind or perception. Consequently, I propose the translation “intellect,” which is more of a primary meaning of the word, in the sense of the part of the human being that makes rational judgments, and not “the mind.”
- 17 – Roberts (personal communication): “This ‘in’ has a causal sense: ‘in itself’ is *li-nafsihi*, in parallel to the phrase *li-ghayrihi*, translated as ‘due to another’; so perhaps a more literal translation would be ‘Accidental light is not light due to itself. . . .’ This echoes the logical notion of ‘that which stands on its own’ (*al-qā’im bi-dhātihī*).”
- 18 – Cf. Walbridge and Ziai’s glossary in Suhrawardī 1999, p. 199: “incorporeal (*mujarrad*). Not embedded in matter.” This reading is not warranted by the preceding passage (112). See sections 2 and 3 below for the further analysis.
- 19 – For more on reflective analysis, see Embree 2006.
- 20 – Roberts (personal communication): “There is nothing in the Arabic text which actually corresponds one-to-one to the English phrase ‘anything in existence.’ This is not to say that the translation is faulty here in the slightest, only that it translates the *sense* rather than the literal meaning. A literal translation would be: ‘If there is in existence that which is not in need of its being defined or its being explained, then it is evident.’ In other words, Suhrawardī does not say that *anything* (an English word which, in this context, implies ‘everything’) in existence is partially *zāhir*; rather, he is simply defining the word *zāhir* by saying that it means that which requires no definition or explanation.”
- 21 – For more on givenness, see Steinbock 2009, 2010; cf. also James and Kallen 1911, p. 38, for the philosophical problem of presentability articulated succinctly by William James: “How comes the world to be here at all instead of the nonentity which might be imagined in its place?”
- 22 – In referring to “the natural attitude,” I adopt the Husserlian categorization of perceptual faith and consequent commonsense beliefs in the separateness of the self and the world, as opposed to the phenomenological attitude in which such beliefs are bracketed out of analysis. For explanations of natural attitude and perceptual faith, see Luft 2011, Merleau-Ponty 1968.

- 23 – For knowledge in Islam, see Hawi 1974.
- 24 – For intentional objects, see Mohanty 2009.
- 25 – Ben-Zaken 2010, p. 148. For more on *idrāk*, see Ziai 2004, p. 26, on *idrāk* as knowledge by presence in Illuminationism, and further, see Ziai 2004, p. 41 n. 18, in which Ziai refers to the difficulty of translating the term *idrāk*. This difficulty concerns the philosophical understanding of what is meant by perception when this term indicates immediate apprehension of objects in awareness. Another name for this philosophical principle would be, of course, “direct intuition.”
- 26 – For the problem of definitions, see Kennedy-Day 2003.
- 27 – For new phenomenological ontologies, see M. C. Dillon 1997, Lévinas 1995, Luijpen 1965, Merleau-Ponty 1968, Mohanty 2009.
- 28 – For the generation of philosophical concepts from pre-reflective intuition, see M. C. Dillon 1997, Luijpen 1965.
- 29 – Synesthesia always includes visuality, and even blindness has its own internal visual world.
- 30 – For visual light in early Islamic science, see Belting 2011; Alhazen, cited in Alhazen and Sabra 1989; El-Bisri 2010.
- 31 – See more on the ontological phenomenology in Luijpen 1965.
- 32 – For more on ontological unity in phenomenology see M. C. Dillon 1997; Husserl 1954 [1970], pp. 109, 121, 127–128, 132, 133, 139, 142, 343; Tymieniecka 2009.
- 33 – For language in phenomenology, see M. C. Dillon 1997, Merleau-Ponty 1964, Giorgi 2009.
- 34 – For the languages of negation, see Sells 1994.
- 35 – For other invariable, i.e., essential structures of living consciousness, see Husserl 1980, 1999; Zahavi 2005.
- 36 – For the method of phenomenological analysis, see Husserl 1980, Giorgi 2009, Steinbock 1995.
- 37 – As it was pointed out to me by Alexandre Roberts, the term “accidental,” *‘ārid*, is Aristotelian. Prior to final phenomenological reduction in (112), Suhrawardi uses logic to distinguish between the accidental and self-subsistent light in (108)–(110), building it up to the conclusion that if there is accidental light, there should be pure light. Further, the final reduction in (112) has to transcend all objects of awareness, i.e., accidental lights, including ideas and the body; therefore, reduction happens not as a pure idea, but as an intentional act of the mind in living consciousness.
- 38 – For more on reduction and *epoché*, see Depraz 1999, Husserl 1980, Luft 2011, Mohanty 1997, Zahavi 2003.

39 – Dillon 2007.

40 – As one of the reviewers pointed out to me, *tajrīd* is a common term of Islamic philosophy, often translated as “abstraction” (which is not an exact translation; cf. the basic meaning in *Lisān al-‘arab* [Ibn Manẓūr, new edition, p. 588, col. 2, line 12]: “*tajrīd* is causing [someone] to be naked of [his] clothing”). The present phenomenological analysis of Suhrawardī’s work with philosophical evidence indicates that in a uniform translation of the term as “abstraction,” the important philosophical nuances are certainly missed. Further, under “abstraction,” different kinds of processes may be meant. For example, a mental process by which one abstracts the notion of a triangle out of the shape of a pear and other conical objects is not same as a mental motion from dimensional objects to pure subjectivity of awareness. A similarity between Suhrawardī’s reduction, and the negation found in the *Theologia Mystica* of Dionysius the Areopagite makes it possible that Suhrawardī borrowed the method of reduction from Neoplatonic negative theology. It is generally assumed, correctly or not, that negation in Neoplatonism happens in the context of the preconceived idea of God, who transcends other ideas and mental properties. The present analysis of Suhrawardī’s reduction suggests that he derives the being of the absolute out of *tajrīd*, and not vice versa. Getting rid of preconceived definitions in (107) followed by *tajrīd* (p. 112) in living consciousness, i.e., embodied experience, leads to the reality that Suhrawardī calls “light,” which he further discovered to be the essence of all selves and the principle responsible for the being of the world. It is worth mentioning that a similar reduction, i.e., differentiation between the seer and the seen in living consciousness, is found in *Advaita Vedānta*. This type of reduction leads to purification of awareness from objects, i.e., to consciousness as such, and not to ideal nothingness or reality beyond the reach of knowledge. It is possible that Neoplatonic negation was interpreted incorrectly in research as a mental reduction vs. operation in living consciousness; also Suhrawardī, as a Sufi practicing embodied introspection, might have modified this reduction for his own purposes or absorbed this method from traditions other than Neoplatonism. His personal familiarity with this reduction is proved by his statement of it being the action of the mind (*Bustān al-Qulūb*, pp. 365–366 of the Arabic text given in Sohrawardi 1977b), where the role of *mujarrad* as an action of the intellect (*‘aql*) is described in terms related to our present passages, and in another text (see Sohrawardi and Corbin 1976, Index, p. 514, s.v. [the somewhat misleading terms] *anachorèse spirituelle* and *anachorètes spirituels*. Those attestations will be discussed later). For philosophical reduction in general, see Wiley 1994. For Neoplatonism viewed with regard to the goal of attaining the “true self,” see Remes 2008, Sweeney 1992. For influences of *falsafa* on Sufism, see Lewisohn 1992, Treiger 2012. For the comparisons between reduction in Husserl and in *Advaita Vedānta*, see Louchakova-Schwartz 2011.

41 – Husserl 1980, Steinbock 1995. For more on the problem of pure consciousness, see Forman 1990.

- 42 – For more on the epistemological and ontological status of consciousness, see Nagel 1986; Searle 1983, 2004.
- 43 – If *nūr mujarrad* is constituted by negation, it may be viewed as an abstraction, but not in the sense of an abstract idea that has been stripped of all object-qualities in order to reveal a generic essence, for example a generic tree versus all particular trees. As opposed to an idea, the subjectivity is not many, it is only one of a kind and cannot be reduced beyond itself. For an interpretation of *nūr mujarrad* as an abstraction, see Ha'irī Yazdī 1992, p. 203 n. 21.
- 44 – For the contextuality of religious or spiritual experiences, see Katz 1978. For the spontaneous emergence of experience of pure subjectivity, and for experiences of transcendence, see Louchakova 2007, Louchakova-Schwartz 2014c.
- 45 – For this specific component of experience, see Wangyal 1993, 2012; also 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn et al. 1995 and Corbin 1978. For the discussion of awareness, intentionality of consciousness, and sentience, which are the closely related terms, see Louchakova-Schwartz 2013a, 2014a.
- 46 – For the effects of the states of pure consciousness and introspectively absorbed consciousness on neuroactivity, see Travis and Shear 2010; for neuroplasticity, see Grant et al. 2012. For the neural correlates of the sense of pure subjectivity, the sense of self and pure consciousness, see Balasubramanian 2011, Schmidt 2008, Lamme 2004, Travis and Pearson 1999, Birx 2011, and Josipovic et al. 2011. For the correlates of the experience of internal luminosity in the marked changes in encephalographic and hemodynamic brain patterns, see Beauregard, Courtemanche, and Paquette 2009.
- 47 – For non-reductive treatment of the facts of neural correlation, see the approach of non-reductive physicalism in Murphy 1999.
- 48 – For the method of phenomenological analysis, see Embree 2006; Giorgi 2009; Husserl 1980, vols. 1 and 2; Merleau-Ponty 1964; Sokolowski 1964; Steinbock 1995.
- 49 – For more on Husserl's concept of understanding, see Drummond 2008.
- 50 – For the possibility of oral transmission of Suhrawardī's teachings, see Bakar 1998, p. 240.
- 51 – For a communicological analysis of reading a metaphysical text, see Louchakova-Schwartz 2014b.
- 52 – For more about the pre-reflective experience and the process of reflection, see Embree 2006. For imaginal variations in phenomenological analysis, see Husserl 1980, *Ideas Book I*; Giorgi 2009.
- 53 – For phenomenological investigations of pure awareness, awareness as such, or pure ego, see Merleau-Ponty 1962, Lévinas 1995, Zahavi 2005.
- 54 – For mystical languages of unsaying, see Sells 1994.

- 55 – For the problem of the articulation of philosophical meaning, see Merleau-Ponty 1964, Nöth 1990.
- 56 – For examples of the word *nūr*, light, in Arabic literature, see Sura *Al-Nūr* in the Qurʾān (Asad 1964, p. 532, Sura 24), and Avicenna and Marmura 1968. However, experience includes different kinds of light, such as visual external light; internal luminosity associated with focused attention (Goleman 1988), with near-death experience (Beauregard, Courtemanche, and Paquette 2009); different lights of introspection (Uspenskii 1950); internal imaginal light (Corbin 1978); and the “clear light” of pure awareness (Wangyal 1993, 2012). Metaphorically used, the term “light” refers to the realities of the intellect (Suhrawardī 1999, p. 77, quoted in note 10 above). Therefore, the meaning of *nūr* is contextual; in the present analysis, I demonstrate how Suhrawardī uses the word *nūr* in a particular context.
- 57 – For the analysis of sentience, see Louchakova-Schwartz 2013a.
- 58 – For more on adumbrations, see Husserl 1980, Merleau-Ponty 1962.
- 59 – Modified from Suhrawardī 1999 by Olga Louchakova-Schwartz.
- 60 – From here on, I substitute *nūr mujarrad* for the “incorporeal” in the translations by Walbridge and Ziai, and introduce my own translations of the Arabic words in parentheses.
- 61 – The topology of meaning addresses relationship between the elements of a gestalt. See further Rosen 2006.
- 62 – In discussing the universality of *nūr mujarrad*, Suhrawardī does not “depersonalize” consciousness-light; rather, he keeps using the language indicating its selfhood.
- 63 – Suhrawardī 1999, p. 181 n. 9, to Part 2, “The first discourse.”
- 64 – More investigation is necessary on this extremely interesting passage, which resonates with the insights of the modern theory of mind.
- 65 – For *barzakh* as a principle of limit, see Bashier 2004.
- 66 – For more on the relationship of ontological primacy and dependency in Islamic thought, see al-Attas 1990.
- 67 – Cf. in Husserl’s view, consciousness is consciousness *as such* and is *intentional*.
- 68 – For more on Suhrawardī’s originality, see Azadpur 2011, Nasr 1964.
- 69 – In Husserl’s later works the ego appears as an irreducible element present in all acts of constitution. For more, see Husserl 1980, Zahavi 2005. For the absolute in Husserl, see Zahavi 2010.

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