



Research Article

A Critique of Modern Materialist Philosophy from the Perspective of Islam

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Received : July 13, 2025

Revised : August 15, 2025

Accepted : September 17, 2025

Available online : October 17, 2025

How to Cite: Ahmad Hisyam Syamil, & Amir Reza Kusuma. (2025). A Critique of Modern Materialist Philosophy from the Perspective of Islam. *MAQOLAT: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 3(4), 420-445. <https://doi.org/10.58355/maqolat.v3i4.193>

Abstract. This paper offers a critical analysis of modern materialist philosophy from an Islamic perspective. It argues that the spread of materialist thought—emerging prominently in the 19th century with ideologies like positivism, evolutionism, Marxism, pragmatism, and logical positivism—has fundamentally reshaped global intellectual discourse, often at the expense of metaphysical and spiritual values. The authors contend that these philosophies, while presenting themselves as “scientific” and “rational,” are unified in their denial of divine revelation, their reduction of reality to material phenomena, and their promotion of atheism. Drawing from the works of influential Western thinkers such as Karl Marx, Ernst Haeckel, and others, the paper highlights how materialism became the philosophical backbone of modern secular ideologies, particularly in education, politics, and economics. In contrast, the Islamic worldview maintains that reality encompasses both the seen and unseen, and that true knowledge must integrate reason, revelation, and empirical observation. The authors also reference contemporary Muslim scholars who have critically engaged with these ideologies, proposing methodological reforms in Islamic theology to better respond to the epistemological challenges posed by materialist philosophies. Ultimately, the paper asserts that modern materialism not only contradicts core Islamic tenets about God, man, and the universe but

also leads to moral and existential crises by excluding transcendental values. Thus, a comprehensive Islamic critique is essential not only to defend the integrity of Islamic thought but also to contribute constructively to global philosophical debates

Keywords: Materialism, Atheism, Islamic Philosophy, Modernity, Secularism, Metaphysics, Islamic Worldview.

Abstrak: Makalah ini menawarkan analisis kritis tentang filosofi materialis modern dari perspektif Islam. Makalah ini berargumen bahwa penyebaran pemikiran materialis—yang muncul dengan jelas pada abad ke-19 dengan ideologi seperti positivisme, evolusionisme, Marxisme, pragmatisme, dan positivisme logis—telah secara mendasar mengubah diskursus intelektual global, sering kali dengan mengorbankan nilai-nilai metafisik dan spiritual. Para penulis berpendapat bahwa filosofi ini, meskipun menyajikan diri mereka sebagai "ilmiah" dan "rasional," bersatu dalam penolakan mereka terhadap wahyu ilahi, pengurangan kenyataan menjadi fenomena material, dan promosi ateisme. Dengan mengambil dari karya-karya pemikir Barat yang berpengaruh seperti Karl Marx, Ernst Haeckel, dan lainnya, makalah ini menyoroti bagaimana materialisme menjadi tulang punggung filosofis ideologi sekuler modern, terutama dalam pendidikan, politik, dan ekonomi. Sebaliknya, pandangan dunia Islam menegaskan bahwa kenyataan mencakup yang terlihat dan yang tidak terlihat, dan bahwa yang benar. penulis juga merujuk pada cendekiawan Muslim kontemporer yang telah terlibat secara kritis dengan ideologi-ideologi ini, mengusulkan reformasi metodologis dalam teologi Islam untuk lebih baik menanggapi tantangan epistemologis yang diajukan oleh filosofi materialis. Pada akhirnya, makalah ini menegaskan bahwa materialisme modern tidak hanya bertentangan dengan pokok-pokok ajaran Islam tentang Tuhan, manusia, dan alam semesta, tetapi juga mengarah pada krisis moral dan eksistensial dengan mengecualikan nilai-nilai transendental. Oleh karena itu, kritik Islam yang komprehensif sangat penting tidak hanya untuk membela integritas pemikiran Islam tetapi juga untuk berkontribusi secara konstruktif dalam debat filosofis global.

Kata Kunci: Materialism, Atheism, Islamic Philosophy, Modernity, Secularism, Metaphysics, Islamic Worldview.

INTRODUCTION

Since Western colonialism in the nineteenth century, the foreigner has imposed on us the very subject of thought itself, dragging us into problems that are alien to our environment. He leads us into mazes where we forget our religion, our history, and all the foundations of our identity—or he deliberately ignores them.¹ At times, we ourselves abandon them in defiance, striving even to persuade others among us to turn away from them. Secularism has been imposed upon us in our education, our legislation, our thinking and behavior, our politics, and our economy.² A separation was enforced between Islam and the governance of the state, pushing Islam out of public life and confining it to the mosque and to the hearts of individuals

¹ Smith, Ian. "Misusing Canonical Intertexts: Jamaica Kincaid, Wordsworth and Colonialism's 'Absent Things.'" *Callaloo* 25, no. 3 (2002): 801–20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/330018>; Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, & Helen Tiffin, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, Routledge, London & New York, pp. 45–52.

² Asgharzadeh, Alireza. "CHAPTER 9: Secular Humanism and Education: Reimagining Democratic Possibilities in a Middle Eastern Context." *Counterpoints* 322 (2008): 177–94. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45178340>.

as a mere belief—only to be practiced personally, and prevented from being applied in real life.³

In all cases, it is impossible to isolate the economic doctrine alone and separate it from the comprehensive worldview from which it emerged, or from the accompanying social, political, and intellectual conditions. This is not exclusive to communism; rather, it is inherent in the nature of every worldview and the circumstances that arise from it. ⁴It is self-evident that the communist conception of divinity, the universe, and the human being is purely materialistic. They refer to their general theory as ‘dialectical materialism,’ and their interpretation of history as the ‘materialist interpretation of history.’ Among their well-known statements are: ‘There is no deity; the universe is matter. The unity of the world lies in its materiality. Matter precedes thought in existence. There has never been a time when matter did not exist, nor will there ever be a time when it ceases to exist. The human being is a product of matter, thought is a product of the brain, and the brain is matter.’ ⁵

From this standpoint, the author focused on defending against the ideology of atheists, represented by modern materialist thought. The author began this path with Muḥammad ‘Uthmān’s book titled *"Juhūd al-Mufakkirīn al-Muslimīn al-Muḥdathīn fī Muqāwamat al-Tayyār al-Ilḥādī"* ⁶ In it, the author presented the manifestations of atheism in the Islamic world, the reasons behind its emergence and spread, as well as various perspectives on how to address the issue.⁷

The next step on this path was taken by Muhammad ‘Utman, in which he presented his perspective on the issue. First, he emphasized the importance of defending Islamic beliefs with evidence. Second, he addressed the nature of contemporary problems and the methodology that should be adopted to tackle them. He stated, “New problems have emerged that had not been previously raised, and the issues that existed before are now being presented in a different manner. Moreover, the methodology with which all the problems of classical kalām (Islamic theology) were addressed in the past — and which was accepted even by the opponents — is no longer accepted today. Therefore, it is necessary to exert appropriate effort in response to the new issues, and to address the evolving problems with a modern approach. This requires us to adopt an entirely new methodology that is compatible with the nature of these problems on the one hand, and is not rejected by the opponent on the other.”⁸

Since modern materialist thought did not emerge and dominate human thought abruptly, but rather had causes and preliminary stages, and because modern materialist thought began asserting itself in the first half of the 19th century —

³ al-Bahī, Muḥammad. *al-‘Ilmānīyah wa al-Islām bayna al-fikr wa al-taṭbīq*. al-Qāhirah: Maṭba‘at al-Azhar, 1976, p. 13.

⁴ Quṭb, Muḥammad. *Madhāhib fikriyyah mu ‘āshirah*. al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Shurūq, 2001, p. 259.

⁵ Quṭb, Muḥammad. *Madhāhib fikriyyah mu ‘āshirah*. al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Shurūq, 2001, p. 262.

⁶ Maḥmūd ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm ‘Uthmān, *Juhūd al-Mufakkirīn al-Muslimīn al-Muḥdathīn fī Muqāwamat al-Tayyār al-Ilḥādī*, Maktabat al-Ma‘ārif li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī‘, Riyadh: 2008, 37-49.

⁷ ‘Uthmān, Muḥammad. *al-Fikr al-māddī al-ḥadīth wa mawqif al-Islām minhu*. al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Anjlū al-Miṣriyyah, 1984, p. 5.

⁸ ‘Uthmān, Muḥammad. *al-Fikr al-māddī al-ḥadīth wa mawqif al-Islām minhu*. al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Anjlū al-Miṣriyyah, 1984, p. 6.

primarily in the form of French positivism or realism — the author dedicated the second chapter to “Hegel and the Dialectic,” and the third chapter to “Positivism or Realism.”⁹ However, in the second half of the nineteenth century, modern materialist thought came to dominate the intellectual landscape on its own. At that time, it was assertive in nature, maintaining a belief in the existence of certain truths, but restricting the path to those truths solely to the method of empirical observation based on the senses.¹⁰ The intellectual activity of deriving conclusions was primarily overseen by secular or atheist thinkers. Thus, it can be said that these currents are the ones truly deserving of the label “contemporary,” and academic attention should be directed toward them. In summary, the contemporary intellectual trends addressed in this study are not those that merely claim to be based on reason or revelation, but rather those that claim to be grounded in “empirical science”—and it is these very trends that ultimately lead to atheism.¹¹

Chapter Four was dedicated to the “Theory of Evolution,” which has had a clear impact on various branches of human thought. Chapter Five focused on “Marxism,” which has drawn equal attention from both its proponents and its critics. As for the second stage, attention was given to “Pragmatism” and “Logical Positivism,” which were allocated to Chapters Six and Seven, respectively. The former imposed itself on educational systems worldwide, while the latter represents a contemporary philosophical attempt that openly and explicitly reflects materialist thought.¹²

While each of these modern materialist ideologies possesses its own distinctive features, which will be discussed in due course, they all share certain common characteristics. For this reason, Chapter Eight was devoted to “Modern Materialist Thought and the Islamic Perspective,” in which these general features are examined alongside Islam’s position regarding them.

The Emergence and Development of Contemporary Western Philosophy

The intellectual life of the nineteenth century was more complex than in any previous era.¹³ *First*, the scope related to it was broader than ever before: America and Russia made significant contributions, and Europe became more aware than ever of Indian philosophies—both ancient and modern.¹⁴ *Second*, science—which had been a primary source of innovation since the seventeenth century—achieved new

⁹ Muhammad ‘Utman, *Modern Materialist Thought and Islam’s Position Towards It* (Cairo: Anglo-Egyptian Library, 1984), p. 9.

¹⁰ Muhammad ‘Utman, *Modern Materialist Thought and Islam’s Position Towards It* (Cairo: Anglo-Egyptian Library, 1984), pp. 5–6, 9.

¹¹ Farghal, Yahya Hashim Hassan. 1998. *Al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir fī Ḍaw’ al-‘Aqīdah al-Islāmiyyah* [Contemporary Thought in Light of the Islamic Creed]. United Arab Emirates: United Arab Emirates University Press, 7.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 10.

¹³ Osterhammel, Jürgen, and Patrick Camiller. *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton University Press, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hhqn4>; Spengemann, William C. “Three Blind Men and an Elephant: The Problem of Nineteenth-Century English.” *New Literary History* 14, no. 1 (1982): 155–73. <https://doi.org/10.2307/468963>.

¹⁴ Tarandeep Singh Kang, “The Place of India in Enlightenment and Post-Enlightenment Philosophies of History.” *A Dissertation: Doctor of Philosophy*, Cornell University, Aug. 2012, pp. 86–116.

triumphs, especially in geology, biology, and organic chemistry.¹⁵ *Third*, the rise of machine production deeply transformed the social structure and gave people a new perception of their capacities in relation to the material environment.¹⁶ *Fourth*, a profound revolution—both philosophical and political—emerged against the traditional systems of thought in politics and economics, leading to attacks on many beliefs and systems that had previously been considered unquestionable.¹⁷ This revolution had two fundamentally different forms: one romantic, and the other rational-liberal. The romantic revolution spanned from *Byron* and *Schopenhauer* to *Mussolini* and *Hitler*.¹⁸ Meanwhile, the rational revolution began with the philosophers of the French Revolution, gradually made its way—more moderately—through the radical philosophers of England, assumed a deeper form in *Marx*, and flowed into Soviet Russia.¹⁹

A group of materialists—comprising physicians and natural scientists—supported evolutionary materialism, denied metaphysics, and launched fierce attacks on religion.²⁰ Moleschott (1822–1893), a Dutch physiologist who taught in Heidelberg and Rome, stated: “*There is no thought without phosphorus.*”²¹ Carl Vogt (1817–1898), a zoologist, declared: “*Thought relates to the brain as bile does to the liver.*”²² Büchner (1824–1899), a physician, authored a book entitled “*Force and Matter*” (*Kraft und Stoff*), which Dr. Shibli Shumayyil considered to be the final word of philosophy and translated into Arabic. Büchner's main argument was that matter is the reservoir of all natural forces, including those commonly referred to as spiritual.²³

Ernst Haeckel (1824–1919), a professor of zoology at the University of Jena (since 1865), supported the theory of evolution and traced the origin of humans back

¹⁵ Secord, James A. “Knowledge in Transit.” *Isis* 95, no. 4 (2004): 654–72. <https://doi.org/10.1086/430657>.

¹⁶ Lorella Cannavacciuolo, Giovanna Ferraro, Cristina Pongsiglione, Simonetta Primario, & Ivana Quinto, “Technological Innovation-Enabling Industry 4.0 Paradigm: A Systematic Literature Review.” *Technovation*, 124 (2023), pp. 8–10.

¹⁷ Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism & Democracy*, Routledge: London and New York, 2003, p. 18.

¹⁸ Browne, C. (2009). Democracy, Religion and Revolution. *Thesis Eleven*, 99(1), 27–47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513609345373> (Original work published 2009); Wolloch, N. (2022). “Chapter 13 Romanticism, Nationalism, and Liberalism”. In *Moderate and Radical Liberalism*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004508040_015; Henry Heller, *Introduction: French Revolution and Historical Materialism*, 2017, pp. 1–23. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004345867_002

¹⁹ Bartrānj Rassil, *Tārīkh al-falsafah al-gharbiyyah*, al-Kitāb al-thālith: al-falsafah al-ḥadīthah, tarjamah Muḥammad Faṭḥī al-Shanṭī, (al-Iskandariyyah: al-Maṭba‘ah al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1977), p. 336.

²⁰ Yūsuf Karam, *Tārīkh al-falsafah al-ḥadīthah*, (Dār al-Ma‘ārif: al-Qāhirah, 1979), p. 425.

²¹ Mielewicz, M. and Moll, J. 2016. Spinach in Blunderland: How the myth that spinach is rich in iron became an urban academic legend. *Annals of the History and Philosophy of Biology*. 21, pp. 61–142.

²² Rainer Bromer, *Annals of the History and Philosophy of Biology*; Vol. 12 (2009), p. 27. Cattaneo-Vietti, R., & Russo, G. F. (2019). A brief history of the Italian marine biology. *The European Zoological Journal*, 86(1), 294–315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24750263.2019.1651911>

²³ Burford, Mark. “Hanslick’s Idealist Materialism.” *19th-Century Music* 30, no. 2 (2006): 166–81. <https://doi.org/10.1525/nmc.2006.30.2.166>.

to animals even before Darwin.²⁴ In his famous book *The Riddle of the Universe* (1899), he presented a mechanistic form of materialism, asserting that the only necessary existent is matter, and that life originates from a single source—the Monera, which he claimed came into being by chance through a combination of nitrogen, hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon. From this origin, he proposed that all living beings evolved in a sequential manner. Haeckel outlined twenty-two transitional stages between the Monera and human beings, describing them using remnants of organisms found in the earth's geological strata.²⁵ To reinforce the idea of evolutionary gradation, he modified the structures of certain organisms and filled the gaps by imagining living forms that had never existed. Had a religious believer attempted to fabricate such evidence in support of religion, atheists would not have ceased to mock and condemn it. Lange, a materialist philosopher, authored *The History of Materialism* (1866), a well-known reference in the history of philosophy. He is also noted for his theory of emotions, which is similar to that of William James, and often cited in psychology literature.²⁶

Karl Marx (1818–1883) was the prophet of modern communism who fanned its flames until it ignited a global revolution. He was born to Jewish parents who had converted to Protestantism four years prior. When he studied philosophy, he was impressed by Hegel's dialectic.²⁷ However, he rejected Hegel's excessive idealism and adopted materialism. He taught philosophy at the University of Bonn, then immersed himself in social and political activism beginning in 1841. He became a journalist and revolutionary advocate. In Brussels, along with his friend Friedrich Engels, he co-authored *The Communist Manifesto*. He attempted to organize the Socialist Party in Germany but was forced to take refuge in London in 1848, where he wrote his major works: *A Critique of Political Economy* (1859), *An Appeal to the Working Classes of Europe* (1874), and his most famous book, *Das Kapital* (1867). At the same time, he continued his revolutionary advocacy under the slogan: "Workers of the world, unite!" In 1866, he founded the First Socialist International, which remained active until 1870. However, the war between Germany and France, along with the failure of the communist uprising in Paris, greatly weakened its influence. Internal divisions among its members ultimately led to its collapse. In 1874, the Russian anarchist Bakunin established a rival organization, while Lassalle in Germany founded a non-Marxist party. The socialist movement continued, increasingly relying on trade unions and professional associations. At the International Congress held in

²⁴ Kutschera U, Levit GS, Hossfeld U. Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919): the German Darwin and his impact on modern biology. *Theory Biosci.* 2019;138: 1–7. doi:10.1007/s12064-019-00276-4.

²⁵ Werneburg I, Hoßfeld U, Levit GS (2022) Discovery of rare lecture notes from 1866 provides exceptional insights to the conceptualization and visualization of paleontology by Ernst Haeckel. *Vertebrate Zoology* 72 577–597. <https://doi.org/10.3897/vz.72.e84983>

²⁶ Yūsuf Karam, *Tārīkh al-falsafah al-ḥadīthah* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1979), pp. 425–426.

²⁷ Hegelian dialectics, or simply *dialectic*, is a term used to describe a philosophical method of argumentation that involves a kind of contradiction or opposition between opposing sides. For example, the ancient Greek philosopher Plato presented his philosophical arguments in what is considered the most classical form of dialectic—namely, in the form of dialogical or debate-based exchanges. These typically took the form of a conversation between Socrates, on one side, and an individual or group of interlocutors, on the other.

Paris in 1889, Marx's disciples (including the Germans Bebel and Liebknecht) established the Second International, headquartered in London. It remained active into modern times, while the Soviets in Moscow have managed the Third Communist International since 1917.²⁸

Communism is not merely an economic doctrine, as many people might assume upon hearing the term. While it certainly encompasses a distinct and well-defined economic system, it is, in fact, a comprehensive worldview—a holistic conception of the universe, life, humanity, and even the question of divinity.²⁹ From this overarching perspective emerges its economic doctrine. Moreover, communism represents an interwoven and interconnected economic, social, political, and intellectual ideology, the components of which cannot be separated from one another.³⁰

In all cases, the economic doctrine cannot be isolated or separated from the comprehensive worldview from which it arises, nor from the accompanying social, political, and intellectual structures.³¹ Likewise, it cannot be grafted onto a different worldview or onto political, social, and intellectual contexts that diverge from its own. This is not something unique to communism; rather, it is inherent to every worldview and to the systems that emerge from it.³² Marx and the communists, generally speaking, were not the originators of the materialist tendency; rather, they represent its culmination and final expression. Nor were they the inventors of "dialectics" as a means of interpreting human life. What can be regarded as their unique contribution is *dialectical materialism*—or *materialist dialectics*—which constitutes their specific innovation.³³

The Concept of Modern Materialist Philosophy

Contemporary atheistic doctrines often present themselves under the guise of science. Yet, they frequently share a common outlook in their view of matter (*al-māddah*) as the fundamental origin of existence. The reluctance of some of these doctrines to identify themselves explicitly as "materialist" stems, as Professor John Somerville notes, from cultural resistance to the term. He states:³⁴ "*The mere labeling*

²⁸ Karam, Yusuf. *The History of Modern Philosophy (Tārīkh al-Falsafah al-Ḥadīthah)*. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1979, p. 426.

²⁹ Marcello Musto, "Communism." Trans. by Patrick Camiller, in Book: *The Marx Revival*, Jun. 2020, pp. 24-26. DOI:[10.1017/9781316338902.003](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316338902.003)

³⁰ Qutb, Muhammad. *Contemporary Intellectual Doctrines (Madhāhib Fikriyyah Mu'āṣirah)*. Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1968, p. 259.

³¹ Ruth Wodak & Michael Meyer, *Methods of Discourse Studies*, 3rd ed. SAGE Publications, London, 2014, pp. 7-8; BAHLIEDA, ROBERT. "Chapter 1: THE LEGACY OF PATRIARCHY." *Counterpoints* 488 (2015): 15-67. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45136330>; Seong Hwan Cha, "Myth and Reality in the Discourse of Confucian Capitalism in Korea." University of California Press, 2003, pp. 485-506.

³² Qutb, Muhammad. *Contemporary Intellectual Doctrines (Madhāhib Fikriyyah Mu'āṣirah)*. Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1968, p. 259.

³³ Rustam Singh. "Status of Violence in Marx's Theory of Revolution." *Economic and Political Weekly* 24, no. 4 (1989): PE9-20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4394305>.

³⁴ *Falsafah al-'Ishrīn* [The Philosophy of the Twentieth Century], trans. 'Uthmān Nūyah, *Majmū'at al-Alf Kitāb*. p. 258.

of a philosophy as 'materialist' is, within our cultural context, usually enough to provoke aversion and to shut the doors against it. The word 'materialism' is typically used in a pejorative sense, not merely as a neutral descriptor." Somerville continues: "For this reason, they tend to adopt terms such as empiricism, naturalism, humanism, or realism—and similar labels—for philosophies that would more accurately be called materialist."³⁵

Marxism has come to be specifically associated with the name of modern materialist philosophy only because, as noted, "Soviet thinkers follow in the footsteps of Marx and Engels in their strong aversion to any attempt to avoid using the term *materialism*, and thus they boldly adopted the word *matter* (*al-māddah*) as their central term."³⁶ From this perspective, we may affirm that the present study responds to the foundational principles underlying the various philosophical schools of thought, rather than addressing certain philosophies while excluding others. It encompasses them all, insofar as our inquiry concerns the shared triad among these ideologies: reliance on science as the ultimate source of knowledge, rejection of religion, and belief in matter as the foundation of existence.

It is essential to define both *matter* (*al-māddah*) and *materialism* (*al-māddiyyah*) in order to clearly delineate the foundations of modern materialist thought.³⁷ The importance of defining these two terms lies in their original meanings as found in classical Arabic lexicons. The word *māddiyy* (material) is derived from the root *mada* (مدى), and its plural forms include *māddāt* and *mawādd*. The term *māddah* (matter) denotes anything that serves as a supply or extension (*madd*) for something else. For example, in the Qur'anic verse: "And the sea would be replenished by seven seas besides it" [Qur'an, 31:27], the term implies a substance like ink that extends or supports writing. Another verse states: "And We provided them with wealth and children" [Qur'an, 74:12], where the term "*amdadnāhum*" (We provided them) reflects the same root. The word *maddad* signifies "that which extends or supports," as noted by *Sībawayh* (a foundational grammarian), with its plural being *amdād*. He observes that the term is not extended beyond this grammatical pattern. Similarly, *istamadda* means "he sought support or reinforcement." The noun *maddad* is also used to refer to military reinforcements (*ʿasākir*) that join battles fought in the path of God (*fī sabīl Allāh*).³⁸

³⁵ Parsons, Howard L., and Ronald E. Santoni. "John Somerville 1905-1994." *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 67, no. 6 (1994): 52-54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3130532>

³⁶ Farghal, Yaḥyā Ḥashim Ḥasan. *Al-Fikr al-Muʿāṣir fī Ḍawʿ al-ʿAqīdah al-Islāmiyyah* [Contemporary Thought in Light of Islamic Creed]. UAE: Publications of the United Arab Emirates University, 1998, p. 7; Barner-Barry, Carol, and Cynthia Hody. "Soviet Marxism-Leninism as Mythology." *Political Psychology* 15, no. 4 (1994): 609-30. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3791623>.

³⁷ Warren Montag, "Materialism, Matter and Materiality in the Work of Althusser." Dec. 2021, *Sintesis Revista de Filosofia*, 4(2): 19-33. DOI:[10.15691/0718-5448Vol4Iss2a357](https://doi.org/10.15691/0718-5448Vol4Iss2a357); Derin, O.E., Baytaş, B. The Architecture of Relational Materialism: A Categorical Formation of Onto-Epistemological Premises. *Found Sci* (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10699-025-09977-0>

³⁸ Ibn Manẓūr, Jamāl ad-Dīn. *Lisān al-ʿArab*, vol. 12. Beirut, Lebanon: Dār Ṣādir, 3rd ed., 1993, p. 565.

The term *mādiyy* (material) is a singular adjective derived from *māddah* (matter) and *māddiyyah* (materiality). It stands in opposition to *rūhī* or *ma'nawī* (spiritual or immaterial), which refers to what is not perceivable through known material means. The immaterial (*ghayr al-māddī*) is without body, form, or dimensions. When a person is described as *mādiyy*, it means that they are deeply immersed in what is tangible, sensory, and measurable.³⁹ The precise technical meaning of the term “materialism” (*al-māddiyyah*) refers to the consensus views and propositions put forth by thinkers and scholars regarding the concept of matter (*al-māddah*), with the purpose of constructing intellectual and rational criteria derived from it.⁴⁰ The technical meaning of matter encompasses the sensory perception of the world and all its components, creatures, and existents. It is a method for understanding the diverse and vast phenomena of life and nature, based on specific, scientifically and objectively defined principles.⁴¹

Materialism also represents the approach to comprehending all aspects of social life, economic activities, and the scientific outcomes related to the human individual within the context of their interaction with both subjective and objective environments. This materialist worldview remains valid under all circumstances and conditions, insofar as it adheres to the material determinants that its proponents have established as an autonomous materialist philosophy. It forms the foundation for numerous sciences concerned with the human individual. Accordingly, materialism serves as a general explanation of the world and an epistemological perspective that views reality as it is, thereby providing a solid basis for global actions. Thus, materialism functions as a theory, and the focus of this study is to define the foundational basis of materialist theory.⁴²

Materialism, in its technical sense, is an intellectual orientation and philosophical tendency that did not crystallize as a rigorous and normative philosophical epistemic current in Western thought until relatively late historical stages. This development followed an accumulation of philosophical reflections and foundations, beginning from the era of Greek heritage up to the European Renaissance in the seventeenth century.⁴³

Marxist philosophy—or the Marxist philosophical tendency—was formulated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the latter of whom believed that “*the materialist*

³⁹ Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Rāzī. *Mukhtār aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ*. Beirut, Lebanon: Maktabat Lubnān, 1986, p. 225.

⁴⁰ Derin, O.E., Baytaş, B. The Architecture of Relational Materialism: A Categorical Formation of Onto-Epistemological Premises. *Found Sci* (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10699-025-09977-0>; Javier Perez-Jara, Gustavo E. Romero, and Lino Comprubi, *What is Materialism? History and Concepts*. <https://philpapers.org/archive/PREWIM.pdf>. 2, 69.

⁴¹ Hans-Peter Durr, “Episteme: The Meaning of Knowledge in the Natural Science and our Experience of Reality.” *WORLD AFFAIRS*, Vol. 6, No. 3, (Jul.-Sep. 2002). https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/wa/wa_julo2_duhoi.html

⁴² Politzer, G. (n.d.). *Uṣūl al-falsafah al-Mārksiyyah* [The Foundations of Marxist Philosophy] (Trans. Sha‘bān Barakāt). Ṣaydā, Lebanon: Maktabat al-‘Aṣriyyah, p. 136.

⁴³ Ṣāliḥ, N. ‘A. (2018). *Al-Māddah: Muqāranah Naqdiyyah fī al-Bunyah wa al-Manhaj* [Matter: A Critical Comparative Study in Structure and Methodology]. Karbalā’: Al-Markaz al-Islāmī li al-Dirāsāt al-Istrāṭijyyah, al-‘Atbah al-‘Abbāsiyyah al-Muqaddasah, p. 20.

view of the world is the view of nature as it is, without any external additions." ⁴⁴In this sense, materialism (*al-māddiyyah*), as a concept derived from *matter* (*al-māddah*), is a philosophical proposition and worldview that signifies objective, concrete reality, which exists independently and is reflected in human consciousness. ⁴⁵Marxist materialist philosophy, which emerged as the highest stage of philosophical materialism, is described in the texts of its founding thinkers ⁴⁶as the science that studies the material laws governing the development of nature and society. It is also the science that analyzes the revolution of oppressed and exploited classes, the science that outlines the victory of socialism in all countries, and ultimately, the science that instructs us on how to build a communist society. ⁴⁷

The atheist philosopher, expressing the dissolution of the material concept of matter, states: "*Matter has gradually become transparent, like the Cheshire Cat, until nothing remained but the smile—seemingly mocking those who still believe it exists.*" ⁴⁸ Bertrand Russell, in his analysis of matter—reducing it to "a series of events"—remarks: "*All I know about matter is what I can deduce with the aid of certain abstract postulates of a purely logical nature, which are spatially and temporally biased. These do not immediately inform me of any inherent properties of matter. Moreover, the same reasons that prevent me from acknowledging the concept of the self in the case of the mind, are precisely those that prevent me from acknowledging the concept of substance in the case of matter.*" ⁴⁹

Thus, Descartes' notion of the *mind* has been reduced to a series of events—and we must do the same with the *body*. A piece of matter is nothing but a series of events connected by specific natural laws—laws that are approximate and imprecise. ⁵⁰ The individuality that material particles retained in classical physics vanishes in modern quantum physics. Even before the emergence of quantum theory, particles had become outdated concepts, as they led to the metaphysical idea of *substance*. ⁵¹

Having discussed *matter*, we must now speak of *dialectics*. We stated earlier that matter is intrinsically tied to motion; now we assert that the world evolves from

⁴⁴ Politzer, G. (n.d.). *Uṣūl al-falsafah al-Mārksiyyah* [The Foundations of Marxist Philosophy], Vol. 1 (Trans. Sha'ban Barakat). Ṣaydā, Lebanon: Maktabat al-'Aṣriyyah, pp. 14–15

⁴⁵ 'Imārah, M. (n.d.). *Ma'rakat al-Muṣṭalahāt bayna al-Gharb wa al-Islām* [The Battle of Terminologies between the West and Islam], 2nd ed. Cairo: Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr, p. 51.

⁴⁶ **Poltzer, Georges.** *Foundations of Marxist Philosophy*. Translated by Sha'ban Barakat. Vol. 1. Saïda, Lebanon: Al-Maktabah al-'Asriyya, n.d., p. 15.

⁴⁷ Dian Misesani, Ali Mustofa, "Marxist Philosophy and the Themes of Materialism and Capitalism in Dickens's *Hard Times*." *Ahmad Dahlan Journal of English Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 37–52. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26555/adjes.v9i1.37>

⁴⁸ Russell, B. (1959). *My Philosophical Development*. London: Allen & Unwin, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Farghal, Y. H. H. (1998). *Al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir fī Ḍaw' al-'Aqīdah al-Islāmiyyah* [Contemporary Thought in Light of Islamic Creed]. Al-Ain: United Arab Emirates University Press, p. 88.

⁵⁰ Berlin, Isaiah. "History and Theory: The Concept of Scientific History." *History and Theory* 1, no. 1 (1960): 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2504255>.

⁵¹ Gilby, Emma. *Descartes and the Non-Human of Elements in Environmental Humanities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025; Richard Davies Gill, *Arrangements in Science and Mind: A Philosophical and Scientific Exploration*, 2022, pp. 43–75.

lower to higher forms. The task of dialectics is to study the world in its perpetual motion—revealing its development and transformation.⁵² Dialectics is, therefore, the science of the general laws of motion, whether in the external world or in human thought. ⁵³On this basis, dialectics attempts to uncover the principles of development, and this is expressed through three core laws: 1). The unity and struggle of opposites; 2). The transformation of quantitative change into qualitative change; 3). The negation of the negation.⁵⁴

Before elaborating on these laws, some preliminary observations must be noted: First, dialectical materialist laws describe the world as an interrelated whole.⁵⁵ Second, through uncovering these laws, one can come to know the laws of the material world—laws whose significance and necessity for human activity have become evident. Third, in Marxist theory, a law refers to a consistent, essential, necessary, and universal relationship between phenomena in the material world.⁵⁶ : Fourth, such a law is objective—not created by God or an Absolute Spirit. Since it is objective, it operates independently of human will and desire. Thus, the idea of predestination (*al-qadar*) is excluded, as it contradicts the natural or social law.⁵⁷

The Law of the Unity and Struggle of Opposites. This law identifies the eternal source and cause of motion, as well as the dynamic force behind the development of the material world.⁵⁸ It posits that everything contains opposites—whether it is a natural entity or a social phenomenon. These opposing elements cannot coexist peacefully; inevitably, conflict arises between them. However, this conflict does not destroy the unity of the thing itself. Rather, it leads to the triumph of the element that represents progress over the opposing element. The essence of this law is that every entity encompasses opposing forces, and although these contradictions coexist within a single entity, they inevitably enter into conflict. This internal struggle drives necessary transformation. The second law will clarify the *mode* by which this transformation occurs.

⁵² Popper, Karl R. "What Is Dialectic?" *Mind*, 49, no. 196 (1940): 403–26. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2250841>; Ollman, Bertell. "Why Dialectics? Why Now?" *Science & Society* 62, no. 3 (1998): 338–57. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40403726>; Francesco Berto, "Hegel's Dialectics as a Semantic Theory: An Analytic Reading," *European Journal of Philosophy* 15:1 ISSN 0966-8373 pp. 19–39 r 2007 The Author. Journal compilation r Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2007, pp. 1–21; E. Peravalov, "What is Information after all? How the Founder of Modern Dialectical Logic could help the Founder of Cybernetics answer this Question." pp. 181–242. <https://philarchive.org/archive/PERWII-3>

⁵³ Marx, K. *The Achievements of Marxism*, p. 15.

⁵⁴ T. Jayaraman, "Dialectical Materialism and Developments in Contemporary Science," *The Marxist*, XXVI 4, Oct.-Dec. 2010, pp. 62–63; Andrey A. Gribkov, "Contradiction Epistemology in the Context of the Law of Unity and Struggle of Opposite." November 2023, [Общество философия история культуры](https://obshchestvo-filosofiya.ru/istoriya-kul'tura), DOI:10.24158/fik.2023.11.1

⁵⁵ Engels, F. (1886). *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, p. 68.

⁵⁶ Aris Sappoudis, *The Concept of Law in the Marxist Method*, Utrecht University Student Theses Repository, 2023, pp. 4–5.

⁵⁷ John L. Esposito & Emad El-Din Shahin, *Key Islamic Political Thinkers*, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 240–243.

⁵⁸ *The Law of The Unity and Conflict of Opposites*, pp. 133–144. <https://marxist.com/reason-in-revolt-marxist-philosophy-and-modern-science/3.-dialectical-materialism.htm>

The Law of the Transformation of Quantity into Quality. The objective of this law is to explain how transformation takes place. It states that change initially occurs in *quantity*, gradually and incrementally. That is, the properties or attributes of a given thing undergo alterations—either increasing or decreasing. When this quantitative accumulation reaches a certain threshold, it triggers a *qualitative* change, meaning that the essential nature of the thing itself transforms and becomes something else entirely. Quantitative change represents gradual evolution, whereas qualitative change is a sudden revolutionary leap that alters the core nature of the entity—resulting in the transition from one state or essence to another.⁵⁹

The Law of the Negation of the Negation. This law explains development in the material world. It posits that the *new* negates and supersedes the *old*—a process referred to as “negation.” Once the new formation matures and reaches a transformative stage, it is in turn negated by another newer formation, which is termed the “negation of the negation.” This is based on the premise that every entity contains within itself internal contradictions, which lead to conflict and thus to development. Change, in this conception, continues indefinitely: each new form is subsequently negated by another, more advanced form, thereby elevating it to a higher stage of development.⁶⁰

This process of development occurs not in a straight line but in a spiral—a dialectical progression that does not simply repeat past stages, but builds upon and transcends them. The *spiral development* resulting from the law of the negation of the negation manifests itself both in the organic world and in social life.⁶¹

The Islamic Viewpoint Regarding Materialist Philosophy

Each school of modern materialist thought has its own distinctive features, and we have discussed Islam's position regarding some of these characteristics, which differentiate materialist philosophies from one another.⁶² We have also explored Islam's stance on certain aspects that require clarification of the common traits shared among materialist doctrines and Islam's response to them. The general features of modern materialist thought can be summarized in three key points:⁶³ 1).

⁵⁹ William Thomas Worster, “The Transformation of Quantity into Quality: Critical Mass in the Formation of Customary International Law.” *Boston University International Law Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2013, pp. 1-48; Vera M. Kolb, “On the Applicability of the Principle of the Quantity-to-Quality Transition to Chemical Evolution that led to life.” *International Journal of Astrobiology*, 4 (3& 4): pp. 227-232. (2005).

⁶⁰ Joost Kircz & Marcel van der Linden (2021) Complicating the quantity-quality transition, *Critique*, 49:3-4, 177-190, DOI: 10.1080/03017605.2021.2000605

⁶¹ Alexander Spirkin, *Dialectical Materialism*, trans. by Robert Cymbala, 1993, pp. 143-151; Jon Stewart, “Hegel's Doctrine of Determinate Negation: An Example from ‘Sense-certainly’ and ‘Perception’,” *Idealistic Studies*, 26(1): pp. 57-78.

⁶² Muttaqin, “The Emergence of Materialism and Islamic View Point.” *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Literature and Muslim Society*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Jul-Dec. 2016, ISSN: 2528-1194 (p); 2528-1224, pp. 149-163. DOI: 10.22515/islimus.vi12.499; Khurshid Ahmad, “Islam: Basic Principles and Characteristics.” *International Islamic University Malaysia*, <https://www.iium.edu.my/deed/articles/bpsc.html>

⁶³ Asa Ismia Bunga Aisyahrani, Lina Handayani, Maya Kusuma Dewi, & Mastura Muhtar, “A Concept of Materialism and Well-Being.” *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, Vol. 9, No. 1, March 2020, pp. 62-88. ISSN: 2252-8822, DOI: 10.11591/ijere.v9i1.20424

The sole sources of knowledge are the external senses and imagination. 2). Nothing exists except matter: Knowledge is confined to sensory perception, and existence is limited to what is tangible. These two premises must be addressed together, given their interconnectedness in philosophical discourse. 3). Religion is excluded from guiding human behavior, both at the individual level and in the structuring of human societies. Science is posited as a complete substitute, deemed fully sufficient to explain all mysteries. Religion is thereby rendered obsolete, unnecessary, and ultimately dismissed—whether through outright denial or suspension of judgment. This perspective confines human aspirations for happiness to the material world alone and to the pursuit of worldly pleasures and material comfort.⁶⁴

This was the prevailing view among those who placed their faith in modern science during the 19th century—those who believed it capable of uncovering the unknown mysteries of the unseen that had remained unresolved until then. Their conviction was based on the notion that all beings are subject to scientific laws governed by a blind, deterministic causality that is not preordained.⁶⁵ This determinism, they believed, was not limited to future outcomes but extended equally to past events. Moreover, this necessity was not attributed to any supernatural cause but was instead derived from the natural laws themselves.

This worldview—one that restricted the means of acquiring knowledge to the senses and limited existence to the tangible—persisted forcefully until the end of the 19th century. During that time, science was persistently urged to replace religion as the guiding force for human conduct.⁶⁶ However, by the close of the century, a shift in perspective began to emerge. Signs of doubt and reconsideration appeared, as the previous justifications for denying religion lost their intellectual foundation. New scientific discoveries challenged earlier assumptions, leading to a transformation in scientists' understanding of matter and the determinism of scientific laws. Ultimately, science failed to provide a universally accepted framework that could replace religion in directing human life.⁶⁷

In summary, matter—once understood in the 19th century as being composed of indivisible, tangible, elementary particles or atoms—came to be interpreted differently. It is now described as consisting of immaterial wave functions that represent mere probabilities. The behaviour of particles can no longer be predicted with certainty but only through probabilistic models. This probabilistic framework

⁶⁴Muhammad 'Utman, *al-Fikr al-Madi al-Hadith wa Mawqif al-Islam Minhu* (al-Qahira: Maktabat al-Anglo al-Misriyya), p. 486; Martin Mahner, *Democratizing Science from Non-Science*, Handbook of the Philosophy of Science: General Philosophy of Science-Focal Issues, 2007, Elsevier, pp. 540-541.

⁶⁵ H. Floris Cohen, *How Modern Science Came into the World: Four Civilizations, One 17th-Century Breakthrough*, Amsterdam University Press, 2010, pp. 722-739.

⁶⁶ Abdelwahab Elmessiri, "The Gate of Ijtihad: An Introduction to the Study of Epistemological Bias." In: *Bias: Epistemological Bias in the Physical and Social Science*, The International Institute of Islamic Thought: London, 2006, pp. 1-76.

⁶⁷ John H. Evans, "The Religion and Science Advocates in the Academic Debate," in: *Morals Not Knowledge: Recasting the Contemporary U.S. Conflict between Religion and Science*, University of California Press, pp. 42-43. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt2204r5c.5>

has thus replaced the strict determinism that once underpinned 19th-century scientific laws.

Moreover, whereas matter had been considered indestructible by 19th-century physicists, this view changed in light of scientific experiments conducted in the 20th century⁶⁸. Since matter—originally thought to be composed of tangible entities—is now understood to arise from immaterial waves, it follows that matter itself can return to immateriality, and thus it is no longer eternal.⁶⁹ The fundamental elements of modern materialist thought remain: confining existence to the tangible, restricting knowledge acquisition to the senses, and excluding religion from guiding human beings—both individually and collectively—in the pursuit of happiness. Science is placed in religion's stead. These developments lead us to three significant conclusions:⁷⁰ 1). Reason affirms that existence is not limited to what is perceptible by the senses, and that the means of acquiring knowledge are not restricted to sensory perception alone. 2). Science has failed to guide humanity; rather than bringing happiness, it has contributed to increasing human misery. 3). Religion is a necessity for mankind in achieving true happiness, both in this life and the hereafter.

Islam's position regarding these issues is fully consistent with the sound conclusions reached by human reason when the aim of inquiry is the pursuit of truth, free from prejudice and personal desire.⁷¹ This alignment is evident in the Qur'anic texts, the spirit of Islam, and Islamic intellectual tradition. Islam requires, as a condition of faith, that a person must believe with certainty in the unseen (al-ghayb). It also affirms multiple epistemological sources: the senses, reason, and revelation, as well as inspiration (ilhām) and its equivalents.⁷²

The Qur'anic stance on the unseen and certainty (yaqīn) is made clear in numerous verses. For instance, in *Surah al-Baqarah*, God describes the pious believers—those guided by the Book in which there is no doubt (the Qur'an)—as those who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend from what God has provided them. They believe in what was revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon him) and what was revealed to the messengers before him. They are also certain of the Hereafter, which includes belief in resurrection, judgment, paradise, hell, accountability, and the scales—all considered as part of the Hereafter following this worldly life. Allah says:

(اَلَمْ . ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ

⁶⁸Feinberg, Gerald. "ORDINARY MATTER." *Scientific American* 216, no. 5 (1967): 126–35. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24931501>.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Muhammad 'Utman, *al-Fikr al-Madi al-Hadith wa Mawqif al-Islam Minhu* (al-Qahira: Maktabat al-Anglo al-Misriyya), p. 548

⁷¹ Zafar Ishaq Ansari & Isma'il Ibrahim Nawwab, *The Different Aspects of Islamic Culture*, Vol. 1, Foundation of Islam, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO): France, 2016, pp. 139, 610–611.

⁷² Mohd. Farid Mohd Sahran, "The Priority of Rational Proof in Islam: The View of Fakr al-Dīn al-Rāzī." *TAFHIM*, 8, (2015): pp. 1–18.

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ أُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ.))⁷³

Among such verses is the statement of Allah, the Exalted:

((طَسَ تِلْكَ آيَةُ الْقُرْآنِ وَكِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ هُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ.))⁷⁴

Likewise, in Surah Luqman, Allah says:

((الَمْ تِلْكَ آيَةُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ أُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ.))⁷⁵

These are the clear Qur'anic texts and the spirit of Islam, which together illustrate Islam's epistemological stance: that human knowledge is capable of attaining certainty regarding the realities of existence, even those that lie beyond sensory perception.⁷⁶ From all of this, it becomes evident that Allah, Exalted be He, has linked faith and piety with firm belief in the unseen, as conveyed through authentic revelation. Furthermore, He described these unseen matters as objective truths of absolute certainty.

Thus, we understand why a major portion of the Qur'an is devoted to addressing the deniers and skeptics concerning three foundational beliefs and their corollaries:⁷⁷ 1). The Oneness of God (Tawhīd). 2). The Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him). 3). The Resurrection after death. In all of this, the Qur'an affirms both the senses and reason as valid sources of knowledge, each capable of producing certainty when employed within its appropriate domain.

Having now clarified Islam's response to the first two features of materialist thought—namely, restricting existence to the tangible and knowledge to sensory data—we turn to the third feature: the attempt to replace religion with science as the guiding force for individuals and societies.⁷⁸ Our previous discussion has shown that religion is an existential necessity for humanity, and that Islam in particular represents that necessity in its most complete form. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Qur'anic texts command the application of divine law (*Shari'ah*) in the

⁷³ QS 2:1-5.

⁷⁴ QS. 27: 1-3.

⁷⁵ QS. 31: 1-5.

⁷⁶ Fathi Hasan Malkawi, *Epistemological Integration: Essentials of an Islamic Methodology*, trans. by Nancy Roberts, International Institute of Islamic Thought, London, (2015) pp. 9-15.

⁷⁷ Muhammad 'Utman, *al-Fikr al-Madi al-Hadith wa Mawqif al-Islam Minhu* (al-Qahira: Maktabat al-Anglo al-Misriyya), p. 565.

⁷⁸ E. Swyngedouw, "Dialectical Reasoning and Dialectical Materialism." *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, 2009, pp. -137-142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-008044910-4.00679-9>; M. Din Syamsuddin, "War and Violence: A Muslim Perspective." *CISMOR: International Workshop*, 2003, pp. 33-43.

guidance of human life, and issue stern warnings against abandoning it in favour of man-made legislation. Such abandonment is considered an act of disbelief (kufr), for in Islam, there is no legislator but Allah. The role of the mujtahid (jurist-scholar) is not to create law but to diligently seek the divine ruling based on established evidences, and to articulate it according to the strength of the proof he has reached.⁷⁹ Islam, in its scriptural texts and theological tradition—especially in the thought of the classical Muslim theologians (*mutakallimūn*)—holds that belief in the unseen is essential, and that multiple epistemological tools are recognized as valid, including the senses, reason, and divine revelation or inspiration. Each of these sources leads to certainty within the scope appropriate to it.

A Critique of Modern Materialist Philosophy

This chapter attempts to present, examine, and analyze the philosophical critique offered by Sayyid al-Sadr against contemporary philosophical schools and trends that adopt materialist perspectives and propose philosophical theories concerning the nature of the world and existence.⁸⁰ Al-Sadr diverges significantly from these schools, to the point of fundamental disagreement and epistemological disjunction.⁸¹ A review of the history of materialist philosophy reveals that many materialist thinkers have taken a decisive intellectual stance regarding religion as a persistent epistemological problem. Given the theoretical knowledge and intellectual efforts available to them, they have been unable to conclusively resolve the religious question—whether in favor of belief or disbelief.⁸² This indecisiveness is further complicated by the eruption of numerous questions and inquiries—seemingly logical on the surface yet structurally incoherent—that are often directed toward religion, its scholars, and its intellectual elites. These doubts and ambiguities, which even religious authorities themselves may have failed to adequately address through logical and rational argumentation, have continued to challenge religious thought. Rather than undermining religion entirely, such challenges have served as a stimulus, urging scholars and thinkers to further investigate, refine, and critically examine these issues with greater intellectual rigor.⁸³

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Ahmed Fernanda Desky, “The Controversy of Muhammad Baqir Ash-Sadr’s Thoughts (Eastern Capitalist) with the Thoughts of Karl Marx and Max Weber (Western Capitalists) in the Context of Global Islamic Economic System.” *International Journal Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Din*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2022), pp. 15-30. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21580/ihya.24.1.7914>; Paya, Ali. “Islamic Philosophy: Past, Present and Future.” *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 74 (2014): 265–321. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246114000113>.

⁸¹ Tariq Rafeeq Khan & Mudasir Ahmad Tantray, *Concepts in Muslim Philosophy*, Rudra Publications: India (2023), pp. 22-23, 170-176; Quadri, Junaid. “Moral Habituation in the Law: Rethinking the Ethics of the *Shari‘a*.” *Islamic Law and Society* 26, no. 3 (2019): 191–226. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26739966>; <https://al-islam.org/iqtisaduna-our-economics-volume-1-part-1-sayyid-muhammad-baqir-al-sadr/chapter-1-marxism-theory>

⁸² Muhammad Junaid Mughal, Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, Muhammad Tahir, “A Critical Study of the Views of Seyyed Hossein Nasr on the Philosophical Foundations of Islamic Science.” *TRAMES*, 2022, 26(76/71), 2, 141–156, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3176/tr.2022.2.02>.

⁸³ Nabil ‘Ali Saleh, *al-Madiyya: Muqarana Naqdiyya fi al-Bunya wa al-Manhaj* (Markaz al-Islami li al-Dirasat al-Istratijiyya – al-‘Ataba al-‘Abbasiya al-Muqaddasa, 2018/1439), 48

This chapter will elucidate, from a critical perspective, the philosophical divergences concerning the worldview—a divergence that the critic articulates through philosophical debate and intellectual engagement with contemporary philosophical schools and trends. One of the most prominent of these is Marxist philosophy, which receives particular attention in the critique. We are presented with a textual passage from the critic that underscores the importance of constructing a coherent philosophical worldview. He states:

"Our primary aim in this study is to determine the methodological approach adopted in the second issue, because formulating a general worldview fundamentally depends on identifying the principal mode of thought and the general standard by which correct knowledge is assessed and valued. Hence, the first issue is in fact a preparatory inquiry for the second one, and it is the second issue that represents the central concern of the book—one to which we direct the reader's attention in particular."⁸⁴

The critic outlines several key corrective points in his work *Falsafatunā (Our Philosophy)*, most notably: 1). The confusion of concepts by some authors, particularly their conflation of divinity with idealism—treating the divine worldview as synonymous with philosophical idealism.⁸⁵ Consequently, they assert that the philosophical worldview must be either idealist or materialist. According to the critic, this is a fundamental misunderstanding that does not correspond to reality. Realism, he argues, is not exclusive to the materialist perspective, nor is idealism the only alternative to it. There exists a divine realist worldview that acknowledges both the external reality of the world and a deeper, transcendent cause behind matter and spirit.⁸⁶ 2). The divine worldview does not, as its opponents claim, undermine the principle of scientific inquiry or negate the natural laws discovered through science. On the contrary, it maintains a positive stance toward science and its discoveries. What distinguishes the divine worldview is that it ultimately attributes the chain of natural causes to a higher cause—God. Science, in this perspective, retains its legitimate domain and continues its pursuit of uncovering the mysteries of the natural world.⁸⁷ 3). The spiritual character of the theistic worldview is fundamentally different from that of philosophical idealism. Contrary to the assumption made by

⁸⁴ Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, *Falsafatuna [Our Philosophy]*, (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1961), 7.

⁸⁵ Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, *Our Philosophy-Falsafatuna*, trans. by Shams C. Inati, Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, pp. 72-74, <https://www.al-islam.org/our-philosophy-falsafatuna-sayyid-muhammad-baqir-al-sadr>

⁸⁶ Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, *Falsafatuna*, pp. 180-181. There are contemporary Marxist thinkers who affirm that the materialist or, more precisely, the realistic materialist concept is the sole concept opposing idealism. Among these texts is that of Maurice Cornforth, the British communist, who in his book *An Introduction to Dialectical Materialism* (1968) states: "The materialist method of interpreting events and conceiving things and their interrelations conflicts with the idealist method of interpretation and conception. Materialism opposes idealism, and in every matter there exists both a materialist and an idealist way of interpretation, a materialist and an idealist way of attempting to understand them." See the cited source, p. 24.

⁸⁷ Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, *Falsafatuna [Our Philosophy]*, (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1961), p. 181; Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, *Our Philosophy-Falsafatuna*, trans. by Shams C. Inati, Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, pp. 51-57., <https://www.al-islam.org/our-philosophy-falsafatuna-sayyid-muhammad-baqir-al-sadr>.

many writers, they are not one and the same. A clear distinction must be made between these two notions of 'spirituality.' In idealist philosophy, spirituality refers to a domain that stands in contrast to the material and tangible realm—namely, the domain of consciousness, perception, and the self (the 'I'). However, in the theistic worldview, spirituality represents a comprehensive mode of viewing reality as a whole, not merely a separate domain set in opposition to the material.⁸⁸

In a previous chapter, we examined the materialist perspective that generally characterizes Western philosophies and intellectual trends. There, we clarified what is meant by materialism—perhaps its most prominent definition being the belief in the material nature of the world and of life itself, that is, the assertion that everything in existence is material, with no room for the immaterial or abstract. Marxist philosophy stands out as one of the most significant and influential materialist philosophies in both the modern and contemporary worlds.⁸⁹ This is a point acknowledged by Marxists themselves. For instance, Maurice Cornforth unequivocally affirms the materialist nature of Marxist philosophy. He outlines the core doctrines of materialism as follows:⁹⁰ 1). The world is material in its essence, and everything that exists is grounded in material causes. 2). Material reality is objectively real, existing outside and independent of the human mind; all mental phenomena are the result of material processes. 3). The world and its laws are knowable; there is no reality beyond the material world that is unknowable or inaccessible to human understanding.

There is a prevailing notion in modern philosophy that Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was the one who laid the foundations of modern dialectical logic, in which dialectical contradiction serves as the central principle. The roots of dialectical thought, which had appeared intermittently throughout the history of human reason, were fully crystallized in his work.⁹¹

According to Hegelian dialectics, existence is understood through a dynamic triadic process: an initial thesis (affirmation) gives rise to its antithesis (negation), and the resulting contradiction is resolved in a synthesis (unification), owing to the internal tension inherent in all things. This synthesis then becomes a new thesis, which in turn gives rise to a new antithesis, and the cycle repeats infinitely—driving the evolution of reality forward.⁹² Marxism adopted the fundamental structure of Hegelian dialectics, though it replaced Hegel's idealist foundation with a materialist one. Marxism applied this logic across all domains of life and existence to formulate

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 258-260

⁸⁹ Md. Khairul Islam, "Karl Marx's Contribution to Social and Political Philosophy," *Philosophy and Progress*, Vol. LXXIII-LXXIV, Jan.-Jun, Jul.-Dec. 2023, pp. 1-21. ISSN 1607-2278 (Print), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3329/pp.v73i1-2.75235>

⁹⁰ Maurice Cornforth, *Madkhal ila al-Madiyya al-Jadaliyya* (1968), pp. 24-32.

⁹¹ Gawzia Rawisi, *Ruh al-Falsafa al-Haditha*, Tarjama Ahmad al-Ansari, Muraja'a Hasan Dafi (al-Mashru'al-Qawmi li al-Tarjama, 2002), 276-278; Maurice Cornforth, *Madkhal ila al-Madiyya al-Jadaliyya* (1968), p. 191.

⁹² 'Abd al-Rahman Badawi, *Mawsu'at al-Falsafa*, Jild 2, p. 580.

what it claimed as a new logic and a new methodology for interpreting the world—Marxist dialectics.⁹³

Criticism of Marxism arises from a range of ideological, political, and academic perspectives, including general criticisms regarding internal inconsistencies, as well as more specific objections to historical materialism, such as its deterministic outlook, its tendency to suppress individual freedoms, challenges related to the implementation of communism, and economic issues like distorted or absent price signals and weak incentives.⁹⁴ More generally, democratic socialists and social democrats reject the notion that socialism can only be achieved through class struggle and proletarian revolution. Many anarchists also reject the idea of a necessary transitional state phase. Furthermore, several thinkers have criticized the foundational premises of Marxist theory, such as historical materialism and the labor theory of value, while still expressing strong critiques of capitalism and advocating for socialism through alternative theoretical frameworks.⁹⁵

Some contemporary Marxist sympathizers acknowledge the enduring relevance of several aspects of Marxist thought.⁹⁶ However, they argue that the Marxist corpus remains incomplete or inadequate in addressing certain modern developments in economic, political, and social theory. Consequently, they often seek to synthesize Marxist concepts with the ideas of other theorists, such as Max Weber—the Frankfurt School being a prominent example of this intellectual tendency.

Historian Paul Johnson wrote: *"In fact, even the most cursory examination of Marx's use of evidence must lead one to doubt the accuracy of everything he wrote concerning factual data."* He gives an example: *"The entire Chapter Eight of Capital is a systematic and deliberate falsification intended to support a thesis that collapses under objective scrutiny of the facts."* Historical materialism remains a foundational pillar of Marxist ideology. It holds that technological leaps in the means of production inevitably trigger changes in the social relations of production. This economic "infrastructure" of society, in turn, both influences and is influenced by the ideological "superstructure"—including culture, religion, politics, and all facets of

⁹³ Imam 'Abd al-Fattah Imam, *al-Manhaj al-Jadali 'inda Hegel* (Dar al-Ma'arif, Misr, 1969), 316–400.

The author cites a statement by Lenin in which he highlights the influence of Hegel on Marxist philosophy, saying: *"In my opinion, the editors and contributors of the journal Under the Banner of Marxism should organize themselves into a group called 'The Materialist Friends of Hegelian Dialectics.' If natural scientists discover the right path of inquiry—and if we know how to assist them—they will find in the materialist interpretation of Hegelian dialectics a set of answers to the philosophical problems raised by the revolution in the natural sciences."* p. 318.

⁹⁴ See M. C. Howard and J.E. King, 1992, *A History of Marxian Economics: Volume II, 1929–1990*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press; Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals: From Marx and Tolstoy to Sartre and Chomsky*, revised edition (New York: Perennial, 2007 [originally published 1988]).

⁹⁵ Juwaini, Taslim HM. Yasin, Cut Siska Safira, "Materialism and Religious Perspective: An Analysis of Karl Marx's Thought." *Abrahamic Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Mar. 2024, pp. 84–97. E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722 DOI: 10.22373/arj.v4i1.22800

⁹⁶ Jacques Bidet and Eustache Kouvelakis, *Dictionnaire Marx contemporain*. C. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 2001. *Critical Companion to Contemporary Marxism*, BRILL, Leiden-Boston, 2008, p. 90.

human social consciousness. As a result, historical materialism seeks the causes of human historical development and change primarily in economic, technological, and, more broadly, material factors, focusing particularly on conflicts of material interest between tribes, social classes, and nations.⁹⁷

This provides insight into two key points: first, the extent of the psychological and intellectual devastation caused by the Church's long history of authoritarianism; and second, its role in transforming materialism in Europe from a latent inquiry into a solid, systematic epistemological framework—ultimately paving the way for materialism to emerge as a dominant school of thought.

In contrast, religion—particularly in Islam—does not close human minds to questioning. On the contrary, Islam, as a message of guidance and rational contemplation, calls upon humans to question everything in their search for truth.⁹⁸ Indeed, it neither condemned nor punishes those who doubt the existence of God, the Prophet, or the message itself—so long as such doubt stems from an honest pursuit of truth and decisive answers, rather than from skepticism for its own sake.⁹⁹

The epistemological dimension of materialism, as emphasized by thinkers like Abdelwahab El-Messiri,¹⁰⁰ lies in the ease with which material phenomena can be measured, quantified, and correlated in an observable, empirical manner. However, materialist philosophy—particularly Marxism—insists that movement is self-caused, and that material reality can only be comprehended through dialectical contradiction, which underpins historical materialism.¹⁰¹ Materialist thought is therefore more than a scientific outlook; it constitutes a philosophical framework with internal principles that govern its adherents' intellectual conduct and interpretation of reality. Within this view, the universe is seen as self-caused and eternal, independent of any transcendent cause. Consequently, it seeks to explain life, humanity, and existence through a purely empirical, material lens—whose assumptions we have already critiqued in earlier sections for their overreliance on sensory perception and experimental data.¹⁰²

This reductionist interpretation negates the spiritual and moral dimensions of existence, viewing them through a nihilistic, utilitarian perspective. As the Qur'an states: "*Who created and proportioned, and Who destined and guided*" (Al-A'la: 2–3). The separation between matter and the higher energies of life leads to philosophical

⁹⁷ Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals from Marx and Tolstoy to Sartre and Chomsky*, revised edition (New York: Perennial, 2007 [1988]), ISBN 978-0061253171.

⁹⁸ Jamal Ahmed Badi, Salah Machouche and Benaouda Bensaid, "Questioning Styles in the Qur'an and Their Impact on Human Thinking: A Conceptual Analysis." *Intellectual Discourses*, Special Issue (2017), pp. 553–574. International Islamic University Malaysia <http://journals.iium.edu.my/intdiscourse/index.php/islam>

⁹⁹ Nabil 'Ali Saleh, *al-Madiyya: Muqarana Naqdiyya fi al-Bunya wa al-Manhaj* (Markaz al-Islami li al-Dirasat al-Istratijiyya – al-'Ataba al-'Abbasiyya al-Muqaddasa, 2018/1439), p. 48

¹⁰⁰ Abd al-Wahab al-Misiri, *al-Falsafa al-Madiyya wa Takfiq al-Insan* (Dimashq: Dar al-Fikr, Taba'a al-Thaniya, 2003), pp. 25–26, 185.

¹⁰¹ Kolja Lindner, Urs Lindner. How Marx Got Rid of Historical Materialism. From Marx to Global Marxism: Eurocentrism, Resistance, Postcolonial Criticism, 2021. [halshs-03165910](https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03165910v1) <https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03165910v1>

¹⁰² Nabil 'Ali Saleh, *al-Madiyya: Muqarana Naqdiyya fi al-Bunya wa al-Manhaj* (Markaz al-Islami li al-Dirasat al-Istratijiyya – al-'Ataba al-'Abbasiyya al-Muqaddasa, 2018/1439), p. 122.

errors, such as Plato's theory of anamnesis, which posits the descent of the soul from the realm of forms into matter. Modern science has also affirmed the impossibility of creating life from non-living matter, challenging the notion that human consciousness is the product of mere material evolution.¹⁰³ If there is no transcendent origin, then humanity is reduced to a mechanistic construct. Yet experimental science still fails to identify the guiding hand or initial force behind life—though it implicitly admits that such a force is not reducible to material composition as we currently understand it.¹⁰⁴

Undoubtedly, life and death can be understood as forms of expansion and contraction. However, this expansion and contraction transcend the physical domain of nature; they emerge from and return to a metaphysical realm beyond empirical reality.¹⁰⁵ As the eminent scholar Murtadha Mutahhari notes, this contraction originates from the unseen (*al-ghayb*) and ultimately returns to it. God Almighty is the originator of movement—the essential cause of all dynamism in existence—the Giver of life, the source of being, and the Creator of matter itself. As stated in the Qur'an: "My Lord is the One who gives life and causes death" (al-Baqarah 2:258), and "[He] who created death and life" (al-Mulk 67:2).¹⁰⁶

Abdelwahab El-Messiri offers a critical assessment of the foundations of materialist philosophy, arguing that it is fraught with several conceptual problems.¹⁰⁷ The first critique he raises concerns the claim often made by proponents of materialism that it is not an ideology but rather a branch of natural science. This assumption implies that materialist philosophy has succeeded in encompassing all material and objective variables, mapping their intricate interrelations, and empirically verifying its propositions—a task that is, in fact, scientifically impossible.¹⁰⁸ According to El-Messiri, scientific integrity requires the identification and accounting of all variables, elements, causes, and their interrelationships, with an acknowledgment of the dominant factors and their causal precedence. This comprehensive process must be repeated every time an assertion is made—an

¹⁰³ Andrulis ED. Theory of the origin, evolution, and nature of life. Life (Basel). 2011 Dec 23;2(1):1-105. doi: 10.3390/life2010001. PMID: 25382118; PMCID: PMC4187144; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, *Plato's Middle Period Metaphysics and Epistemology*, First published Mon Jun 9, 2003; substantive revision Mon Jul 14, 2014, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-metaphysics/>

¹⁰⁴ Murtada Mutahhari, *Asalat al-Ruh: Muhadarat fi al-Din wa al-Ijtima'* (Tehran: Munathammat al-I'lam al-Islami, 1992), p. 31.

¹⁰⁵ Abdulkarim Soroush, *The Expansion of Prophetic Experience: Essays on Historicity, Contingency and Plurality in Religion*, / edited with analytical introduction by Forough Jahanbakhsh; translated by Nilou Mobasser. BRILL: Leiden-Boston, 2009, p. 77.

¹⁰⁶ Nabil 'Ali Saleh, *al-Madiyya: Muqarana Naqdiyya fi al-Bunya wa al-Manhaj* (Markaz al-Islami li al-Dirasat al-Istratijiyya – al-'Ataba al-'Abbasiya al-Muqaddasa, 2018/1439), p. 136.

¹⁰⁷ Heggag Ali, "Modernity in the Discourse of Abdelwahab Elmessiri." *INTELLECTUAL DISCOURSE*, 19, 2011, IIUM Press, pp. 71-96

¹⁰⁸ Laucif Fares, "The Criticism of Western Modernity Abdel Wahab El-Messiri as a Patter." *Thesis*, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research University of Khider, Biskra, Jun. 2022, pp. 38-40.

endeavor that is scientifically unfeasible.¹⁰⁹ The second critique is that empirical science is inherently limited and incapable of addressing the full spectrum of human experience and its qualitative dimensions. The empirical method itself is an approximate tool, yielding conclusions that reflect general tendencies or averages, rather than absolute or exhaustive truths.¹¹⁰

Third, developments in quantum theory—particularly Heisenberg's uncertainty principle—and the theory of relativity have significantly undermined key materialist assumptions, such as determinism, causality, and the absolute nature of space and time.¹¹¹

Fourth, materialist philosophy initially claimed that the material is what can be perceived by the senses. However, the scientific notion of the eternity of matter has increasingly been brought into question. Modern physics shows that matter can transform into energy and vice versa. This convertibility implies that matter's continued existence in any specific form is dependent on external conditions; once those conditions cease, that form ceases as well.¹¹² Fifth, the idea that the universe was created purely by chance is nothing more than a speculative assumption, not a scientifically established fact.¹¹³ El-Messiri ironically notes that the probability of atoms randomly forming a complex being such as the human is even more improbable than the chance of a monkey randomly typing out a classical Arabic poem on a typewriter.¹¹⁴

El-Messiri also critiques those who claim that matter, through chance alone, gave rise to realities that transcend materiality—such as human consciousness, rationality, intentionality, and teleology.¹¹⁵ Ultimately, such a view attributes non-material capacities to matter itself, thereby contradicting the very foundations of materialist philosophy. According to El-Messiri, this stance amounts to no more than a stubborn, childish speculation that enables its adherents to maintain their

¹⁰⁹ Abdelwahab M. Elmessiri, "The West and Islam: Clash Points and Dialogues, Features of the New Islamic Discourse: Some Introductory Remarks." Trans. by Azzam Tamimi, Ain Syams Univeristy: Cairo, 15-23 Feb. 1997. <https://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/21-cen.htm>

¹¹⁰ Abd al-Wahab al-Misiri, *al-Falsafa al-Madiyya wa Takfiq al-Insan* (Dimashq: Dar al-Fikr, Taba'a al-Thaniya, 2003), p. 25.

¹¹¹ H. J. Spencer, "Problems of Quantum Mechanics: (A Natural Philosophical Critique)." *UET7B*, 2017, pp. 5-6.

¹¹² Chian Fan, "The Relationship Between the Theory of Everything and the Constants of Nature (English Version), Jan. 2004, p. 37; McDermott, John M. "Matter, Modern Science, and God." *Angelicum* 88, no. 2 (2011): 481-508. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44618319>; <https://www.socialistworld.net/2010/12/26/science-quantum-mechanics-and-dialectical-materialism/>

¹¹³ Herbert Spencer & John Watson, "The World as Force." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Apr. 1879, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 151-179; Paolo Di Sia, "About the Existence of the Universe among Speculative Physics, Metaphysics and Theism: An Interesting Overview." *International Letter of Social and Humanistic Science*, ISSN: 2300-2697, Vol. 50, pp 36-43; doi:10.18052/www.scipress.com/ILSHS.50.36 © 2015 SciPress Ltd., Switzerland

¹¹⁴ Abd al-Wahab al-Misiri, *al-Falsafa al-Madiyya wa Takfiq al-Insan* (Dimashq: Dar al-Fikr, Taba'a al-Thaniya, 2003), p. 26.

¹¹⁵ Woltering, Robbert A.F.L. "ENCOMPASSING JUDAISM: ELMESSIRI AND THE 'ISLAMIC HUMANIST' SELF." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50, no. 2 (2018): 233-46; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26852651>.

simplistic materialism while simultaneously offering explanations for the complexity, consciousness, and purposiveness evident in the world around them.¹¹⁶

Finally, Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr's critique of modern materialist philosophy—especially as articulated in *Falsafatunā*—exposes the epistemological and ontological shortcomings of reducing reality to purely material causes. He argues that Marxism and other materialist schools fail to account for the metaphysical and spiritual dimensions essential to a comprehensive understanding of existence. Al-Sadr presents the Islamic worldview as a theistic rationalism that integrates empirical knowledge with divine revelation, affirming human freedom, moral responsibility, and a purposeful universe. In line with thinkers like Abdelwahab El-Messiri and Murtadha Mutahhari, al-Sadr maintains that any philosophy detached from transcendence ultimately leads to reductionism and existential emptiness. The researcher agrees with this assessment and affirms that a purely materialist epistemology is inadequate for addressing deeper questions of morality, meaning, and purpose. By engaging al-Sadr's critique, the researcher asserts that a return to a metaphysically grounded and revelation-guided rationality is necessary to challenge the philosophical crisis of modernity and to restore an integrated understanding of the human being and the cosmos.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing analysis, it becomes evident that Western materialist philosophies, despite their claims to scientific objectivity and intellectual rigor, fall short in addressing the essential and transcendent dimensions of human existence. Their reductionist approach, grounded in the primacy of matter and empirical determinism, proves inadequate in providing coherent explanations for phenomena such as consciousness, moral agency, teleology, and the human quest for meaning—realities that clearly transcend material causality.

Abdel Wahab El-Messiri's critique highlights this philosophical shortcoming, particularly the contradictions inherent in attributing non-material capacities to matter through random chance. Such perspectives inadvertently step outside the boundaries of materialist doctrine, thereby undermining their own epistemological foundations. Moreover, by neglecting the metaphysical and spiritual dimensions of human life, materialist worldviews fail to offer existential hope, moral purpose, or a comprehensive account of the human condition.

In contrast, the Islamic worldview presents a more integrated and epistemologically robust framework. It affirms the legitimacy of multiple sources of knowledge—reason, sensory experience, divine revelation, and spiritual intuition—while grounding human dignity and meaning in belief in the unseen (*ghayb*). This holistic perspective not only aligns with the complexity of human nature but also offers a morally and spiritually coherent vision of reality, one capable of addressing both the seen and the unseen dimensions of existence.

¹¹⁶ Abdelwahab Elmessiri, "The Gate of Ijtihad: An Introduction to the Study of Epistemological Bias." In: *Epistemological Bias in the Physical and Social Sciences*, *International Institute of Islamic Thought*, 2013, pp. 3-5.

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