
On Arabic-Islamic Logic and Philosophy: Some Notes and Interview with Charles E. Butterworth

Arap-İslam Mantığı ve Felsefesi Üzerine: Bazı Notlar ve Charles E. Butterworth ile Bir Söyleşi

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Charles E. Butterworth, emeritus professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland, is known for his research and writing on Arabic-Islamic philosophy and logic. He graduated from Michigan State University with a B.A. and received his M.A. and PhD from the University of Chicago. He prepared his PhD dissertation about Ibn Rushd's *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric* with Prof. Leo Strauss and Muhsin Mahdī in 1966 at the University of Chicago in Political Science. He has also received a PhD from the University of Nancy in France for his dissertation on Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Prof. Butterworth also studied at the University of Ain Shams in Egypt. He has taught political philosophy, including Arabic-Islamic philosophy, at different universities like the University of Chicago, Federal City College, St. John's College, Harvard University, Georgetown University, Marmara University, the University of Bordeaux, the University of Grenoble, the University of Paris I (Sorbonne), the University of Paris X (Nanterre), and the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. He is a member of several organizations and

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past-president of the American Council for the Study of Islamic Societies (ACSIS) as well as of the Société Internationale pour l'Étude de l'Histoire de la Philosophie et la Science Arabe et Islamique (SIHSPAI).¹

Prof. Charles E. Butterworth has made significant and important contributions to the Arabic and Islamic logic and philosophy studies. He has written many articles, editions, translations and books in that field. Prof. Butterworth focused on Arabic logic and political philosophy. He has studied especially on the philosophy of Alfārābī, Ibn Rushd, Maimonides, al-Rāzī and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. We can mention here some of those works. He edited Ibn Rushd's six of middle commentaries on Aristotle's logical works,² translated three of them into English³ and he edited and translated into English Ibn Rushd's three of short commentaries on logic,⁴ *Faṣl al-Maqāl fīmā baina al-Sharī'ah wa-al-Hikmah min al-Ittiṣāl* and *Damīmāh*.⁵ He also translated Alfārābī's *Fuṣūl Muntaza'a, Iḥṣāu al-Ulūm, Kitāb al-Millāh, al-Jam'u baina Ra'yai al-Hakīmāin*,⁶ *al-Siyāsa al-Madaniyya, Jāmi'u Nawāmīs Aflāūn*.⁷ Prof. Butterworth was also interested in French philosophy and translated some works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Death of Lucretia*⁸ and *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*.⁹

¹ For his CV, see: <https://gvpt.umd.edu/sites/gvpt.umd.edu/files/cv/Ceb-CV.pdf> (10.12.2018)

² See: Ibn Rushd, *Talkhīṣ Kitāb al-Maqūlāt* (eds. Maḥmūd Qāsim, Charles E. Butterworth and Aḥmad 'Abd al-Majīd Harīdī, al-Qāhirah: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1980); *Talkhīṣ Kitāb al-'Ibārāh* (eds. Maḥmūd Qāsim, Charles E. Butterworth and Aḥmad 'Abd al-Majīd Harīdī, al-Qāhirah: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1981); *Talkhīṣ Kitāb al-Qiyās* (eds. Maḥmūd Qāsim, Charles E. Butterworth and Aḥmad 'Abd al-Majīd Harīdī, al-Qāhirah: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1983); *Talkhīṣ Kitāb al-Burbān* (eds. Maḥmūd Qāsim and Charles E. Butterworth, al-Qāhirah: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1982); *Talkhīṣ Kitāb al-Jadal* (eds. Charles E. Butterworth and Aḥmad 'Abd al-Majīd Harīdī, al-Qāhirah: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1979); *Talkhīṣ Kitāb al-Sbīr* (eds. Charles E. Butterworth and Aḥmad 'Abd al-Majīd Harīdī, al-Qāhirah: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1985).

³ See: Averroes, *Averroes' Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione* (trans. Charles E. Butterworth, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

⁴ Charles E. Butterworth, *Averroes' Three Short Commentaries on Aristotle's "Topics", "Rhetoric" and "Poetics"* (ed. and trans. Charles E. Butterworth, Albany: Suny Press, 1977).

⁵ Averroes, *The Book of the Decisive Treatise: Determining the Connection between the Law and Wisdom & The Epistle Dedicatory* (trans. Charles E. Butterworth, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2001).

⁶ Alfārābī, *The Political Writings: Selected Aphorisms and Other Texts* (trans. Charles E. Butterworth, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

⁷ Alfārābī, *The Political Writings: "Political Regime" and "Summary of Plato's Laws"* (trans. Charles E. Butterworth, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Death of Lucretia (The Collected Writings of Rousseau: Letter to D'Alembert and Writings for the Theater*, vol. 10, ed. and trans. Charles E. Butterworth, Al-



He also translated Maimonides' *Ethical Writings*.¹⁰ Those can be some examples of his works. The problem of how a text can be understood and how much of the authors' intentions we can understand is much discussed in the modern period as we know. This problem has been raised in the context of understanding the Arabic-Islamic philosophy texts. There are those who think that it is not possible to analyze and interpret classical texts independently from religious, philological and historical circumstances, situations and influences. If this approach is correct then we have to accept the philosophical texts may be objects of the history only. On the other hand, there are some scholars who think that we can read and understand those text if we try to do that. We can say Prof. Butterworth is within the second group. He tries to grasp the original text and to translate them. We can see that precision in his translations.¹¹ Because of that, he was criticized by some scholars in the West. For example, Prof. Dimitri Gutas wrote an article and criticized Prof. Butterworth's approach in 1990¹² and Prof. Butterworth wrote an article to respond that criticism in 1994.¹³ Yes, philosophy comprises throughout history but its nature is to try to get out of the history.

There are also different approaches to Arabic and Islamic philosophy as it is known. We can see those approaches in general Arabic-Islamic studies as well as studies on works of particular philosophers. Perhaps one of the most prominent of that case is about Alfārābī's philo-

Ian Bloom and Christopher Kelly, Hanover: University Press of New England, 2004).

⁹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (trans. Charles E. Butterworth, New York: NYU Press, 1979).

¹⁰ Maimonides, *Ethical Writings of Maimonides* (trans. Charles E. Butterworth and Raymond L. Weiss, New York: NYU Press, 1975).

¹¹ He translates adhering to texts. For instance we may look at his translation of Ibn Rushd's *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics*. He usually writes the literal meanings of the Arabic words at the footnotes. That can be seen even in the first footnote. See: *Averroes' Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics*, p. 58. Sometimes he pays attention even to the conjunctions, see: p. 119, footnotes 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

¹² Dimitri Gutas, "On Translating Averroes' Commentaries" (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, v. 110, no. 1, (1990), p. 92-101).

¹³ Charles E. Butterworth, "Translation and Philosophy: The case of Averroes' Commentaries" (*International Journal of Middle East Studies*, v. 26, no. 1, (1994), 19-35). For this discussion, see also: Anna Akasoy, "Was Ibn Rushd an Averroist: The Problem, The Debate, and Its Philosophical Implications" (*Renaissance Averroism and Its Aftermath: Arabic Philosophy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anna Akasoy and Guido Giglioni, Dordrecht-Heidelberg-New York-London: Springer, 2013, p. 337-47).



sophy. Some scholars claims as if Alfārābī is a theologian and his philosophy is a theology. Massimo Campanini's attitude can be evaluated in this context.¹⁴ Prof. Charles E. Butterworth does not accept that Alfārābī's political thoughts can be interpreted in any theological perspective and he says Alfārābī is a philosopher, not a theologian. If we read Alfārābī's text we can see his approach to political presence area.¹⁵

Prof. Charles E. Butterworth and his predecessors have made important contributions to the classical philosophy with the editions, translations and studies of that philosophical text from a philosophical perspective and commented on them in this purpose. To understand the world and the life philosophically and the history of philosophy we need to study on those classical texts forever. Although we have many important studies in Arabic and Islamic philosophy there are many works that still waiting to be unearthed. Prof. Charles E. Butterworth has many editions and translations as we said above. He has been editing and translating Alfārābī's *the Book of Letters* and Ibn Rushd's all of *Short Commentaries on Logic* and we wait for those studies to read and comment. To learn about him and his experiences and studies we talked with Prof. Charles E. Butterworth about his academic journey and Arabic-Islamic logic and philosophy. The interview was done on July 27, 2018, at Georgetown University Lauinger Library, Washington, D. C. We hope this interview is going to be useful and helpful for those who study on Arabic logic and philosophy.

Interview with Charles E. Butterworth

The Interview was done on July 27th, 2018 at Georgetown University Lauinger Library, Washington, D.C. (Photo by Dilek Tekin).

Ali Tekin: Dear Professor Butterworth, first, I would like to thank you so much because you accepted the interview about Arabic-Islamic logic and philosophy. First of all I want to ask about your academic past. Would you like to tell us a little bit about your academic journey?

¹⁴ Massimo Campanini, "Alfarabi and the Foundation of Political Theology in Islam" (*Islam, the State, and Political Authority: Medieval Issues and Modern Concerns*, ed. Asma Afsaruddin, New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2011, p. 35-52).

¹⁵ See: Charles E. Butterworth, "Alfarabi's Goal: Political Philosophy, Not Political Theology" (*Islam, the State, and Political Authority: Medieval Issues and Modern Concerns*, ed. Asma Afsaruddin, New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2011, p. 53-74).





Charles E. Butterworth: I graduated from Michigan State University with a BA (Bachelor of Arts) degree and then had the opportunity, thanks to a Fulbright grant, to study in France at the University of Bordeaux. Because I knew French, faculty members there suggested that I pursue advanced studies for a doctorate. So I set about to write a dissertation on Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The professor at Bordeaux with whom I was working, François Bourricaud, was not a Rousseau specialist; he was a sociologist, a student of Raymond Aron and, indirectly, of Émile Durkheim. So he suggested that I go to the University of Nancy to study with Robert Derathé; that allowed me to stay another year. All of this was possible because of the Fulbright grant or fellowship. I wrote my doctoral thesis on Jean Jacques Rousseau, that is, in philosophy. But I still wanted to study political philosophy, and everyone said that the best place to do that was at the University of Chicago with Leo Strauss. Fortunately, I was able to obtain a fellowship to do that. When I arrived at Chicago and showed them my degree from France, the faculty members said “Yes, what you have done is very good, but we prefer that people who are going to teach in the United States have degrees from the U.S.” So I began all over again with doctoral program. I was then in Political Science. I did my MA and my PhD at Chicago, in Political Science, specializing in Arabic and Islamic civilization. Thus, I worked primarily with both Prof. Leo Strauss and Prof. Muhsin Mahdī -- he being my, so to speak, entry-way to the world of the Middle East

Tekin: Learning different classical and modern languages is very im-



portant to be able to focus on this area as is known. And you have studied different languages. Can I ask you which languages you learned in this process?

Butterworth: Yes, I had studied French and learned some German, Italian and Spanish, all modern languages; but while I was at Chicago, it became clear that if one were going to work with Arabic philosophy, knowledge of Greek and Latin was important. So I tried to learn those as well.

Tekin: After that, I guess you learned Arabic.

Butterworth: I studied Arabic at Chicago and have continued the study ever since. I didn't do any work in Arabic until I got to Chicago.

Tekin: So you studied Arabic when studying for your MA and PhD degrees.

Butterworth: Right, after one year at Chicago there was a possibility of going to Harvard for summer and doing intensive Arabic and then I continued to do Arabic all year long as well as in the summer and then spent a year in Egypt in 1964-1965 studying at 'Ain al-Shams University with 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī and Muhammad 'Abd al-Hādī Abū Rīda. Then, after I graduated with my PhD, I had do my military service. So that was a hiatus in my academic life. But ever since then, and once I started to teach, I have been able to go to the Middle East almost every year. At one point I was able to spend many months a year in Egypt, at least two months every summer and a month and a half every winter, plus longer periods of time whenever possible -- a year, even two years... That was when I did the work on Ibn Rushd-Averroes, the logical project.

Tekin: I was wondering: your PhD dissertation was about Ibn Rushd's *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric* (*Rhetoric and Reason: A Study on Averroes' Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*) in the Department of Political Science, the University of Chicago. Why and how did you decide to study Arabic-Islamic philosophy? You could study, for example, Latin philosophy, German philosophy, French philosophy or any other philosophical tradition in the West; but you chose this area, Arabic-Islamic philosophy, specializing in Ibn Rushd. Can I ask, do you have any special reason for studying in this area?



Butterworth: What happened is, very early on, Prof. Leo Strauss in a lecture said something like this: “One cannot really study the history of philosophy unless one understands the history of philosophy in the Arabic-Islamic as well as in the Jewish (both Hebrew and Arabic) traditions.” By that, he meant the classical period of Islam first and by Arabic-Jewish, especially Maimonides-Ibn Maymūn, but also some of the other authors who wrote in Arabic with Hebrew letters. When I asked about that, he said the best thing to do was to talk to Prof. Muhsin Mahdī. So that is when I met Muhsin Mahdī, and it became clear that (a) it was necessary to learn Arabic and (b) that, as important as it was, this area had been completely neglected by most western scholars -- very few people read this material. Or if they did read the philosophy of this period, they focused on the Christian-Latin tradition. But they had nothing to do with the other two traditions -- the Arabic-Muslim and the Jewish, both Hebrew and Arabic. And why Averroes? When I came to focus on a dissertation topic, Muhsin Mahdī had been working on Alfārābī, and was very involved in Alfārābī, so it was clear that it would not be a good idea for me to try to imitate him by working on Alfārābī. So I looked for a different author. Averroes-Ibn Rushd seemed to be the most interesting philosophy, especially because in some of his writings he did look at practical philosophy, what we think of as political philosophy, ethics and political philosophy.

Tekin: Yes, and you wrote about this topic and got your PhD, I guess, in 1966.

Butterworth: Yes.

Tekin: You mentioned some of your professors, Leo Strauss and Muhsin Mahdī. I think those people are very important for your academic life and do you have other teachers, professors inspired you in this area? Or can we say most important people for your academic career are Leo Strauss and Muhsin Mahdī?

Butterworth: I had the very good fortune while I was an undergraduate to have people who understood how important, serious study was and who were willing to push a young student who appeared to be promising. Among these at Michigan State University were Robert Horwitz and Stanley J. Idzerda. Their interests were somewhat different than what I



had in mind. Idzerda was interested in intellectual history, the history of ideas; and Horwitz, who had studied with Leo Strauss, was interested in political philosophy but not in the Arab or Muslim world. He was the one who pushed me most to think about studying with Leo Strauss. He had written on John Dewey, a twentieth century American philosopher of education, especially important for democracy and for popular education. So they were important and marvelous teachers but they didn't have anything to do with the Middle East. Then, in France, the man who is most important was François Bourricaud at the University of Bordeaux. He, too, appreciated that I was a serious younger student and tried to guide me when it became clear that I wanted to work, not in sociology, but in philosophy. So he pointed me in the direction of Robert Derathé, who was the most prominent figure in France at that time for the study of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. At Chicago, there are a number of very important people with whom I studied or by whom I was influenced. But of them all, the most influential were Leo Strauss and Muhsin Mahdī. And Muhsin Mahdī urged me to go to Egypt and spend a year gaining a grasp of spoken Arabic. What I did, at his pushing and instigation, was to go to spend the time in Egypt as a student at 'Ain al-Shams University and I had the good fortune of studying with 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī and with (Muhammad 'Abd al-Hādī) Abū Rīda. Abū Rīda was mainly interested in Kalām and was a remarkable teacher; and, as everybody knows, Badawī was primarily interested in philosophy. I can't remember if during that time, I met Father Anawātī. If not then, then certainly on a later trip to Egypt I did. I was very impressed by him. And I also, of course, somewhere along the line met Mahmūd Qāsim – it is from him that I got the idea of carrying on the work on Ibn Rushd that he had begun. That is what led to the editions of the middle commentaries on Aristotle's logic.

Tekin: In this process, in the 1970's, you worked and edited Ibn Rushd's *Middle Commentaries* on Aristotle's logic, *Organon*. You edited and translated three of Ibn Rushd's *Short Commentaries* on logic and I guess you have been working on all of those short commentaries nowadays.

Butterworth: I did three of them. The work is *Jawāmi' fī'l-Mantiq*, and some people call it *al-Darūrī fī'l-Mantiq*. All told, it comprises twelve treatises. So I have published three and have now edited and translated



the others. Hopefully, as soon as I finish the project on Alfārābī's *Kitāb al-Hurūf*, I will return to that. The text is already typed in Arabic and English. There are errors in the type-script, to be sure; so the typescript will need to be corrected before sending it to the publisher.

Tekin: After those *Middle Commentaries* and *Short Commentaries*, you focused on Alfārābī's works like *al-Siyāsa al-Madaniyya*, *Fusūl Muntazā'a* and *Jāmi' Nawāmis Aflātūn* and translated them into English. You also have written on other philosophers like Ibn Sīnā, Maimonides, al-Rāzī. But I think you especially focused on Alfārābī and Ibn Rushd. What do you say about Alfārābī and Ibn Rushd? Can we mention some differences between those two philosophers?

Butterworth: Everybody knows that Alfārābī is very, very important; he is known as al-Mu'allim al-Thānī; and he has covered the whole of philosophy in his writings in a very appealing and also a very elusive manner. So the more one studies Alfārābī, the more one learns about many things. One learns, and one learns that there is more to learn. The way I put it is that Alfārābī remains consistently a philosopher looking at the major questions central to philosophy and thinking solely at a philosophic level. He is not engaged with any community. First of all, this might be because he really is a foreigner. He comes from somewhere in the East or Northeast, maybe Kazakhstan, who knows, but certainly the East; and he was introduced to Aristotelian philosophy by Nestorian Christian monks; the order was well-known in those days. So here he is an outsider in one respect because he is coming from the East. His mother tongue is not Arabic, but Darī or Persian; and maybe he knows Turkish; but he never speaks about Turkish. He never writes in any language but Arabic. And we really do not know his precise origins; people from Turkey and Iran would like to claim him as their own. He comes to Baghdād and becomes part of the group of teachers somehow attached to the center of culture, maybe even to the court. But he remains aloof from all that. Ibn Rushd, on the other hand, was fully immersed in the practical politics at his day. First of all, before he becomes known as a philosopher, he is a qādī (judge), and then he becomes qādī al-quḍāt, a supreme judge. I think the closest parallel to Ibn Rushd is Ibn Maymūn (Maimonides): both Ibn Rushd and Ibn Maymūn are focused on philosophy, to be sure, but also



on the community. And they trying to address the questions their fellow believers (Muslim or Jewish) may have with respect to philosophy and also, especially for Ibn Rushd, to try to speak to the need the community has of philosophy. This is not Alfārābī's concern.

Tekin: Yes, Alfārābī is very interesting; it seems like he lives in another world; he was thinking one hundred percent philosophically, not about the community.

Butterworth: I mean his concern is not with the daily needs of the people. That is a topic he never addresses.

Tekin: He was trying to understand the social life philosophically and he claims that he uses logic in order to understand the realm of existence of social life. In this context, how must we understand classical logic and philosophy today?

Butterworth: Logic is the introduction. It is the way to approach philosophy. Ideally it should be the beginning step; and then one goes on. What is happening now in academia is that we have lost our way, because we are faced with so many other problems. The major issue today is that many people see no reason to study logic; or, since all philosophy is analytic, we don't need logic. For this reason, the case for Aristotle and Aristotle's approach must be made more strongly. That is the big issue.

Tekin: If we think Islamic philosophers claim that their political theories depend on logical bases, how can we interpret the theories of *al-madīna al-fādila* according to Alfārābī and Ibn Rushd especially? Are those philosophical theories utopia or may we say those theories are constituted from the real political life in your opinion?

Butterworth: First of all, there are two of Alfārābī's books that have to be read side by side, *Kitāb al-Siyāsa al-Madaniyya*, and *Mabādi Ārā Ahl al-Madīna al-Fādila*. I think that is the really important thing – reading them side by side. The book that we usually call *al-Madīna al-Fādila* is really *the Principles of the Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City*. Alfārābī is trying to show what one needs to believe or what kind of opinions are necessary in order to have a virtuous city. And that is the major point. The book is not telling you how to construct a city; it is really talking about what the background of such a city is. And as you read you



notice that more important than the positive construction of opinions is the destruction of erroneous opinions; he is trying to show, just as he did in the *al-Siyāsa al-Madaniyya*, what it is about the opinions of the day that keep people from good life or good government. We prize the wrong things we aspire to do wrong things... Today in the United States the only thing that seems to count is money.

Tekin: Money and power... In history, maybe can we say that is the real, the reality is money and power in the real politics?

Butterworth: That and, even more so in the case of the present regime, is this notion that only a certain kind of Americans are important; so there is an exclusion of all other people. We have no idea what somebody like Alfārābī looked like, but it is reasonable to assume that he looked different than the people who were in Iraq at that time. And was he to be rejected because he looked different? Of course not. The problem with what is happening in the United States today is the prevailing notion that there is only one kind of people who are good and that you can tell that by looking at their external characteristics. That is completely false, and it is hurting us.

Tekin: Can we say philosophers just analyze and criticize the political issues in the real life?

Butterworth: Alfārābī certainly does not. He doesn't look at particular issues. When Ibn Rushd writes his *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, he does point to a couple of particular things and he refers again and again to what is going on "in our time," what is going on "in these cities in our time," what is going on "in these cities of ours," and things like that. So he is definitely intent upon criticizing the people of his time for their concern, undue concern, excessive concern with their own and with trying to protect their own from other people. What he criticized is selfishness; it is the selfishness that hurts the community. Alfārābī doesn't say that but what he does say it is that the desire for wealth, the desire for pleasure, the desire for power. All of these things will not help. And that if one understands the natural order correctly, one looks to improve one's character so that the mind is able to rule all things. That is the whole goal: on is to try to live a completely intellectual, a completely rational life.



Tekin: Yes. So I want to open the subject of the commentary in philosophy. As known, many philosophers wrote different kinds of commentaries on Aristotle and Plato, especially on Aristotle's works about two thousand years. What is the importance of writing commentaries in philosophy?

Butterworth: In a way, we are always doing this, no matter how we present it. We can come back to that, but the truly important thing is that people come to understand or to discover in one way or another that the fundamental questions were raised by Plato and the people one finds in Plato's *Dialogues* and by Aristotle. Excellent answers are given to these various questions, but those answers are unclear. So what students of Plato and Aristotle like Alfārābī and Ibn Rushd are trying to do is to show how to address these issues and also why these issues are important. That is the reason for the commentaries.

Tekin: Yes. They try to understand the problems in their contexts in different ways. For example Ibn Rushd says he uses Aristotelian methodology in order to comment Plato's *Republic* in his commentary. They write the commentaries by using different ways according to their opinions. Because of that they may use those books to explain their opinions. And can we read those commentaries according to our contexts?

Butterworth: Yes, I was thinking about one way of reading the *Republic* is to read it as a book of education. And Ibn Rushd does that. He places enormous emphasis on education in music and education in what is called "gymnasium" – actually in moral education. These two things are important: somehow, when you study the harmonies in music, you learn how to balance your soul; then, once you do that, you can begin to study the other kinds of harmonies, the ones we find in mathematics, in the cosmos, and things like that. So he does that, and what is fascinating is that this question of education remains a very big question. If you look at the history of Western philosophy, a number of people addressed the question of education. Perhaps the most important book is that by Jean-Jacques Rousseau called the *Emile* where he lays out a whole new idea of education, an anti-Platonic kind of education. So people keep coming back to this over and over. Today, we would like to say philosophy that has to find new questions and new answers. Are there new questions and



new answers? Or are we faced constantly with the old questions, namely, how should we live, what is the best way of life, and so on.

Tekin: Thank you so much, Dear Prof. Butterworth. And I want to ask you about Arabic and Islamic philosophy studies in the United States and Islamic world today. How do you see the works and the studies in the U.S. and Islamic world?

Butterworth: There is not a lot of study of Arabic philosophy in the West. There are a few people here and there who study it, and it seems to center around a number of scholars who think that Alfarabi and Averroes are very very important and another small group of scholars who think Avicenna-Ibn Sina. And that is too bad; that has happened, it seems to me for purely human reasons. I doubt today that it can be remedied. I don't see anybody is able to overcome this. There was somebody in Canada who was very, very good at this. A professor by the name of Michael Marmura, a Palestinian; and he did a lot of excellent work on Ibn Sina and also on al-Gazali. And one would want to see more of that sort of thing. The other possibility of somebody coming along – well, someone who is already quite well established is Richard Taylor at Marquette University. Taylor works primarily on Averroes-Ibn Rushd and tries to explain what is going on with Ibn Rushd, but he is most interested in the question of the soul, *Kitab al-Nafs*, and the metaphysics.

There are, of course, places in the Arabic world where this kind of study has been done very well, Tunisia and Morocco above all. It was being done very well in Egypt in the past, but that seems not to be going on today. There was a big movement, and now I just don't know what has happened; but it does not continue. Lebanon is very important. And, of course, because of the current problems, we do not know whether there is anything happening in Syria and Iraq. Jordan is very important. I can't think of any particular person who is doing philosophy in Jordan, but they are trying to improve education on the whole. And of course in Turkey, you have a number of interesting people. And in the East, in the Gulf, in the Emirates there are very good people even though they are having trouble today. I think Qatar is very very important. I have warmth in my heart for Saudi Arabia, but they are not interested in philosophy.

Tekin: In Turkey, there are many, hundreds of academicians and re-



searchers who are interested in Arabic and Islamic logic and philosophy in Theology Faculties and Departments of Philosophy. But the problem is, I guess, language, Turkish. Professors who study on that area in the world, most of them in general, they don't know Turkish, and because of that they don't know the studies about Arabic and Islamic logic and philosophy in Turkey. That is also our problem because we, Turkish academicians, don't usually write our works in English or Arabic and those important works in Turkish are not known by the academicians from the West and the East. We have also many students who want to study classical philosophy, Arabic and Islamic logic and philosophy in Turkey. What would you like to recommend young researchers who will study on this area?

Butterworth: I think that it is the same need that everybody has. We have to familiarize ourselves with the sources and we have to try to understand these authors as they themselves wrote, not force them to speak in ways that they did not speak, – that is, we need to learn how to understand them on their own terms. That means, of course, learning the language in which they wrote; but it also means not having prejudices or presuppositions such that we try to make them modern and things like that.

Tekin: Is it very important to know Ancient Greek or Latin for that?

Butterworth: I think, to the extent that we are trying to understand what they took from the Greeks, of course we have to be able to read the Greek text; but we can get away from that now because we can really do something different, namely, read these authors on their own terms. What is absolutely necessary is having a good grasp of the texts themselves. So that is what we need to do.

Tekin: Yes, the first one is Arabic and then we can study on other classical languages. Thank you so much for those recommendations. And, Dear Prof. Butterworth, I want to thank you very much again for this important interview. It is a pleasure for me to listen to you, your thoughts and recommendations about classical logic and philosophy.

Butterworth: You are very welcome.

