

Nazif Muhtaroglu

Curriculum Vitae

Work Address: Bahçeşehir University, Genel Eğitim Birimi, Çırağan Caddesi
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Areas of Specialization: Islamic Philosophy & Theology, Early Modern Philosophy,
Philosophy of Religion

Areas of Competence: Medieval Philosophy, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of
Science, Interdisciplinary Critical Thinking, Intercultural Philosophy, Public Philosophy

Languages

Turkish (native), English (fluent), Ottoman Turkish (reading), Arabic (reading), German
(reading), French (reading)

Academic Positions

2021	Associate Professorship, Turkish Higher Education Council
2015-Present	Bahçeşehir University, Lecturer
2019-Present	Mimar Sinan University, Lecturer
2014-2016	Boğaziçi University, Philosophy Department, Research Fellow

Education

- 2012-2014 Harvard University, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations,
Post-Doctoral Fellow
Supervisor: Khaled El-Rouayheb
- 2006-2012 University of Kentucky, Philosophy, Ph. D.

Dissertation: *Islamic and Cartesian Roots of Occasionalism*
Committee: Brandon Look (chair), John Walbridge,
David Bradshaw, David Hunter, Daniel Breazeale, Jeremy Popkin
- 2006-2009 University of Kentucky
M.A. in Philosophy
- 2004-2007 Boğaziçi University (Istanbul, Turkey)
M.A. in Philosophy

Master's Thesis: *The Knowledge of Contingent A Priori
Truths, Performatives and Pragmatic Inferences*
Committee: İlhan İnan (chair), Stephen Voss, Ali Karatay
- 1999-2004 Boğaziçi University (Istanbul, Turkey)
B. A. in Philosophy
-

Awards and Fellowships

- Kalam Research & Media Center and John Templeton Foundation, Conference and Workshop Organization Grant (\$15.000), 2015
- Kalam Research & Media Center and John Templeton Foundation, Book Writing Grant (\$20.000), 2014-2015
- Tübitak (Turkish Academy of Sciences) Bideb-2232 Research Fellowship, 2014-2016
- Philosophy Department & Science, Religion and Culture Program at Harvard University, Conference-Organizing Support, 2013
- World Phenomenology Institute, Conference-Organizing Support, 2013
- University of Kentucky, Academic Year Fellowship, Graduate School, 2011
- University of Kentucky, Graduate School Conference Support, 2007-2011, (five times)
- University of Kentucky, Commonwealth Research Award, 2007
-

Supervision of Student Research

Co-chair: Zahra Karandish. *A Critical Assessment of Hume's and al-Ghazālī's Views on Critique of Causation*. MA Thesis. Boğaziçi University, 2018.

Co-chair: Ahmet Halil Oğuzhan Gül. *Leibniz's Criticism of Occasionalism and a Response through a Reconstruction of al-Ghazālī's and Malebranche's Arguments*. MA Thesis. Boğaziçi University, 2019.

Publications

Books

1. Nazif Muhtaroglu. *Aklın Üç Yüzü: Eleştirel, Çok-Yönlü ve Yenilikçi Düşünce*. [Three Aspects of Reason: Critical, Multifaceted and Innovative Thinking, in Turkish]. Istanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat Yayınları, 2022.

Edited Books

1. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka and Nazif Muhtaroglu. *Classic Issues in Islamic Philosophy and Theology Today*, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010).
2. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, Nazif Muhtaroglu and Detlev Quintern. *The Logos of Life and Cultural Interlacing*, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014).
3. Nazif Muhtaroglu. *Occasionalism Revisited: New Essays from the Islamic and Western Philosophical Traditions*. Abu Dhabi: Kalam Research and Media, 2017.
4. Ali Sedad. *Kavâidü't-Taḥavvülât fî Ḥarekâti'z-Zerrât*. (ed. and prepared by Nazif Muhtaroglu and Bilal Ayan). Konya: Çizgi Yayınevi, 2020.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

1. "An Occasionalist Approach to Miracles" *Turkish Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 22, (Istanbul: İsam Yayınları, 2009), 71-93. [Invited]
2. "What is Wrong with Concurrentism?" *Kaygı*, 23 (2014): 129-144.
3. "Al-Bāqillāni's Cosmological Argument from Agency" *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 26, no: 2 (2016): 271-289. [AHCI-indexed]
4. "The Miraculousness of the Qur'an: A Response to Oliver Leaman" in *Kalam: Journal of Islamic Theology*, no: 1 (2018): 45-58. [Invited]
5. "Tanrı'nın Tekliğine Dair Modal Argüman" (A Modal Argument for the Uniqueness of God), *Felsefe Arkivi*, no: 51 (2019): 179-186. (in Turkish)

6. “Tanrı’nın Tekliği’ne Dair Tartışmalar” (Discussions on the Uniqueness of God), *Tasavvur: Tekirdağ İlahiyat Dergisi (Tekirdağ Theology Journal)*, Aralık no:6/2 (2020): 1153-1164. (in Turkish)

7. “Plantinga and Ash‘arites on Divine Simplicity”, *Kader (Kalam Araştırmaları Dergisi/Journal of Studies for Muslim Theology)*, no.18/2 (2020): 488-499.

Book Chapters

1. “A Linguistic Analysis of the Omnipotence Puzzle” in *Logic, Language and Metaphysics: Selected Papers from the 1st SIFA Graduate Conference*, ed. by Vittorio Morato and Massimiliano Carrara. (London: College Publication, 2009), 197-211. [Invited]

2. “An Occasionalist Defense of Free Will” in *Classic Issues in Islamic Philosophy and Theology Today*, edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka and Nazif Muhtaroglu, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 45-62.

3. “The Christian and Islamic Roots of a Holistic Rhetoric” in *Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue vol. 6: Sharing Poetic Expressions*, ed. by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 139-148.

4. “Nicolas Malebranche” in *Düşüncenin Serüveni*, 10 vols., ed. by Bayram Ali Çetinkaya, (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2016), vol: 3, 115-124. (in Turkish)

5. “Ebu’l-Hasan El-Eş‘arî” in *Düşüncenin Serüveni*, 10 vols., ed. by Bayram Ali Çetinkaya, (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2016), vol: 5, 169-182. (in Turkish)

6. “Ali Sedad Bey’s (d.1900) *Kavâidü’-t-Taḥavvülât fî Ḥarekâti’z-Zerrât (Principles of Transformation in the Motion of Particles)*” in *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Khaled El-Rouayheb & Sabine Schmidke, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 586-606. [Invited]

7. “Al-Mâtūrîdî’s View of Causality” in *Occasionalism Revisited: New Essays from the Islamic and Western Traditions*, ed. Nazif Muhtaroglu, (Abu Dhabi: Kalam Research and Media, 2017), 3-21.

8. “Ash‘arites, Cartesians and Occasionalism” in *Occasionalism Revisited: New Essays from the Islamic and Western Traditions*, ed. Nazif Muhtaroglu, (Abu Dhabi: Kalam Research and Media, 2017), 105-138.

9. “Late Ottoman Occasionalists on Modern Science”, (with Ozgur Koca), in *Occasionalism Revisited: New Essays from the Islamic and Western Traditions*, ed. Nazif Muhtaroglu, (Abu Dhabi: Kalam Research and Media, 2017), 83-102.

Book Reviews

1. Hamidreza Ayatollahi, *The Existence of God: Mulla Sadra’s Seddiqin Argument versus Criticisms of Kant and Hume*, in *Philosophy East and West*, vol: 58, no: 2 (2008): 283-285.

[AHCI-indexed, Invited]

2. Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, ed. *Theodicy and Justice in Modern Islamic Thought: The Case of Said Nursi*, in *Philosophy East and West*, vol: 62, no: 3 (2012): 608-610. [AHCI-indexed, Invited]

3. Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and Maghreb*, in *Nazariyat*, vol: 2, no: 4 (2016): 193-197. [Invited]

4. Mehmet Bulgen, *Criticisms of Atomism in Classical Islamic Thought*, in *Cumhuriyet Theology Journal*, vol: 22, no:1 (2018): 743-746. [Scopus-indexed]

Magazine Articles

1. “Özel Adların Anlamı Hakkında Bazı Notlar” (Some Notes on the Meaning of Proper Names), *Öncül Analitik Felsefe Dergisi (Öncül Analytic Philosophy Journal)*, February 2021. Link: <https://onculanalitikfelsefe.com/ozel-adlarin-anlami-hakkinda-bazi-notlar-nazif-muhtaroglu/> (in Turkish)

2. “Taş Paradoksu: Gazzâlî ve Aquinas Üzerinden Bir Çözüm Önerisi” (Stone Paradox: A Solution from Al-Ghazâlî and Aquinas), *Öncül Analitik Felsefe Dergisi (Öncül Analytic Philosophy Journal)*, April 2021. Link: <https://onculanalitikfelsefe.com/tas-paradoksu-gazzali-ve-aquinas-uzerinden-bir-cozum-onerisi-nazif-muhtaroglu/> (in Turkish)

3. “Kategori Hataları, Paradokslar: Husserl ve Russell” (Category Mistakes, Paradoxes: Husserl and Russell), *Öncül Analitik Felsefe Dergisi (Öncül Analytic Philosophy Journal)*, July 2021. Link: <https://onculanalitikfelsefe.com/kategori-hatalari-paradokslar-husserl-ve-russell-nazif-muhtaroglu/> (in Turkish)

Presentations

1. “Muslim and Christian Views on Miracles in the Medieval Period”, *Western Michigan University, 42nd International Congress on Medieval Studies*, Kalamazoo, May 2007.

2. “Omnipotence Puzzle: A third Option” *Padua University & Italian Analytic Philosophy Society, 1st International Graduate Student Conference: Knowledge, Language and Metaphysics*, Padua-Italy, September 2007.

3. “Şadr al-Sharī‘a on Free Will” *Fordham University, 4th International Conference on Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, New York, October 2007.

4. “The Development of the Notion of Free Will in the Medieval Sunni Islamic Thought” *Loyola University, 2007 Annual Meeting of the Louisiana Consortium for Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, New Orleans, October 2007.

5. “Aquinas’s and al-Ghazālī’s Intuitions regarding Omnipotence”,
Marquette University, Summer Conference, Philosophy in the Abrahamic Traditions,
Milwaukee, June 2008.
6. “Between Justice and Mercy: The Case of Abraham”,
Georgetown College, Kentucky, October 2010. [Invited]
7. “An Occasionalist Picture of the Universe: Islamic and Cartesian Approaches”,
Centre College, Kentucky, April 2012. [Invited]
8. “An Occasionalist Approach to Science”,
University of Massachusetts-Lowell, Massachusetts, April 2013. [Invited]
9. “Al-Māturīdī’s View of Causality”,
Harvard University, Occasionalist East and West Conference, Boston, May 2013.
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AX17-60pu3E>
10. “A Logical Analysis of the Teleological Argument”,
Istanbul University, Istanbul, November 2013. [Invited]
11. & 12. “Metaphysical Dimensions of Occasionalism, A Comparative Study of Muslim
and Cartesian Occasionalists”,
Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, November 2013. [Invited]
Uludağ University, Bursa-Turkey, November 2013. [Invited]
13. “Ali Sedad Bey’s *Kavâidü’-t-Tahavvülât fî Harekâti ’z-Zerrât*”,
Niagara University, Turkish Studies Workshop, Upstate New York, March 2014.
14. & 15. “Ali Sedad: An Ash‘arite View on Modern Science”,
*Süleyman Demirel University, 8th International Conference of Asian Philosophical
Association*, Isparta, April 2015 &
Isar Conference on ‘Ilm al-Kalām in Ottoman World, Istanbul, December, 2015.
16. “Malebranche’s Occasionalism and British Philosophy”,
Boğaziçi University, Occasionalism and Causality Workshop, Istanbul, June 2015.
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4TSvTSYL4U>
17. “Hume, Kant and Al-Ghazālī on the Universal Principle of Causality”,
Boğaziçi University, Occasionalism and Causality Conference, Istanbul, June 2015.
18. “Al-Bāqillāni’s Cosmological Argument from Agency”,
Boğaziçi University, Arda Denkel Festival, Istanbul, December 2015.
19. “The Islamic Background of Descartes’s Laws of Nature”, *Oxford University,
Workshop: Early Modern Laws of Nature: Secular and Divine*, Oxford, July 2016.

20. “The Mātūrīdite View on Human Will and Contemporary Cognitive Psychology” *Kalam Research and Media*, Amman-Jordan, October 2017.
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2CeyFPB3tQ>
21. “Olmayana Erginin Hayatımızdaki Yeri”, (*The Place of Reductio ad Absurdum in Our Life*), Bülent Ecevit University, 8. *Mantık Çalıştayı*, Zonguldak-Turkey, May 2018.
22. “An Analysis of Strong Artificial Intelligence in terms of Two Ontologies”, Cambridge Muslim College, *Artificial Intelligence Conference*, Cambridge-UK, September 2018.
Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21y_Nnf3uSE
23. “Education in the 21st Century”, *Mimar Sinan University* (Istanbul), December 2019. [invited]
24. “Homo Deus: İnsan Tanrı olabilir mi?” (*Homo Deus: Could Humans Become Gods?*) *ICAR Uluslararası Akademik Araştırmalar Kongresi*, Bolu-Turkey, February 2020.
25. “Kötülük Problemi ve Mümkün Dünyalar: Gazzali ve Leibniz üzerinden Bir Çözümleme” (*The Problem of Evil and Possible Worlds: An Analysis based on the ideas of Al-Ghazālī and Leibniz*) *USVES (Uluslararası Sosyal ve Eğitim Bilimleri Sempozyumu)*, Istanbul, February 2020.
26. “Maturidism, Occasionalism and Free Will”, 2 parts, interview with Shoaib A. Malik for Academic Access, May 2020.
Link for Part I: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAXfARzjLHE>
Link for Part II: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjN_I0qj4P8
27. “A Modal Argument for the Uniqueness of God”, *The American Society of Islamic Philosophy and Theology-Harvard University*, 2nd Annual Islamic Philosophy Conference, Online, December 2020.
28. “Plantinga, Ash‘arism, and Divine Simplicity”, interview with Shoaib A. Malik for Academic Access, January 2021.
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TzCmMY8OpE>
29. “The Existence of God and Other Deities”, Nazif Muhtaroglu (Islam), with Jessica Frazier (Hinduism), Sam Lebens (Judaism), Motsamai Molefe (African Religion), *Birmingham Center for Philosophy of Religion-University of Birmingham*, Closer To Truth Panel Discussions-Panel II, The Global Philosophy of Religion Project Online Conference, June 2021. Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPg_bj0SnBU [Invited]
30. “The Meaning of ‘God’: A Kalamīc Approach”, *The American Society of Islamic Philosophy and Theology-Harvard University*, 3rd Annual Islamic Philosophy Conference, Online, December 2021.

31. “Bağlamsallık Açısından İformel Mantık-Formel Mantık İlişkisi”, (“Contextualism and The Relationship Between Informal Logic and Formal Logic”) Kastamonu University, *11. Mantık Çalıştayı*, Kastamonu-TURKEY May 2022.

32. “Revisiting Kalam Foundationalism in Response to Contemporary Challenges” Cambridge Muslim College, *Imagining Islamic Epistemology for the 21st Century* Conference, Cambridge-UK, July 2022.

Work in Progress

Books

- 1) *Islam and Science: A Sunnī Kalāmīc Framework*, Shoaib Ahmed Malik, David Solomon Jalajel, Hamza Karamali ile birlikte (under review by Routledge)
- 2) *Divine Action in Science and Religion: A Comparative Analysis of Ghazālian Occasionalism and Thomist Concurrentism*, with Shoaib Ahmed Malik (in progress)

Articles

- 1) “Islamic Ethics: A Survey of Major Approaches,” forthcoming in *The Bloomsbury Sourcebook on Islamic Ethics*, ed. by Jafar Amir Mahallati.
 - 2) “Qādī ‘Abd al-Jabbār” with Mehmet Bulgen for *Islamic Science: Eight Perspectives* edited by Shoaib A. Malik (Routledge, under contract)
 - 3) “God’s Existence and The Uniqueness Claim” a chapter in *Islamic Analytic Philosophy*, ed. by Saleh Zarepour (Routledge under review)
 - 4) “An Ash‘arī Perspective on Theology of Nature” with Shoaib A. Malik (*European Journal of Analytic Philosophy*, under review)
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Teaching

Critical Thinking

Modern Logic

Classical Logic

Ethics

Islamic Philosophy

Philosophy of Religion

Medieval Philosophy

Cartesian Tradition

Ghazālian Synthesis

Main Intellectual Traditions in Islam

Seminar: Occasionalism in Islamic and Western Philosophy

Leadership

Founder of *International Society for the Study of Occasionalism* (www.occasionalism.com)

Professional Service

Conference secretary,
University of Kentucky: “Islamic Philosophy and Theology Today,” 23-24 September.

Conference secretary,
Harvard University: “Poetic Expressions: Saying the Same in Different Ways,”
13-14 August 2009.

Conference organizer,
Harvard University: “Occasionalism East and West,” 4-5 May 2013.

Conference and Workshop organizer,
Boğaziçi University: “Occasionalism and Theories of Causality,” 2-7 June 2015.

Workshop co-organizer,
Boğaziçi University: *Arda Denkel Festival*, Istanbul, 19-20 December 2015.

Referee for

Zygon, (2021)

Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, (2015)

European Journal of Analytic Philosophy, (2021)

Kader (Kelam Araştırmaları Dergisi/Journal of Studies for Muslim Theology), (2019-2021)

Tasavvur (Tekirdağ İlahiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi/Tekirdağ Theology Journal), (2020)

İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi/Turkish Journal of Islamic Studies (2015)

References

Brandon Look (look@uky.edu)
University Research Professor and Chair
Philosophy Department at the University of Kentucky

Jeffrey K. McDonough (jkmcdon@fas.harvard.edu)
Professor of Philosophy
Philosophy Department at Harvard University

Khaled El-Rouayheb (kel@fas.harvard.edu)
James Richard Jewett Professor of Arabic and of Islamic Intellectual History
Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations Department at Harvard University

Chryssi Sidiropoulou (sidiropu@boun.edu.tr)
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Philosophy Department at Boğaziçi University

Dissertation Abstract: Islamic and Cartesian Roots of Occasionalism

Committee: Brandon Look (chair), John Walbridge, Daniel Breazeale, David Bradshaw, David Hunter, Jeremy Popkin

Occasionalism is commonly understood as a theory that ascribes all causal power to God on the one hand and treats cause-effect relations in nature as occasions indicating the manner of divine creation. As research on the historical background of David Hume's critique of causality has progressed, western scholars have been increasingly interested in occasionalism. Yet current discussions of occasionalism have given rise to several paradoxes that make the doctrine appear to be inconsistent. The paradoxes I have critically examined concern substantiality, causality, modality, omnipotence, determinism, free will, the mind-body problem and miracles. In my opinion, the puzzles pointed out in the literature arise from misinformation and historical inaccuracies about occasionalism. Its Muslim roots are largely unknown, and its early modern origins have not been studied sufficiently. As a result, the ordinary reader may be familiar with certain ideas about occasionalism, but they are often mixed with inaccurate characterizations of the theory.

In my dissertation, I explore the roots of occasionalism and attempt to clarify it as a metaphysical theory. I show that a close reading of Islamic sources and critical comparison of early modern theories provide some answers to the many questions that have arisen in contemporary research on occasionalism. I bring resolution to these problems by carefully studying the historical roots of occasionalism. I examine its historical development chronologically, and comparatively to clarify the similarities and differences between different schools of thought. My dissertation falls mainly into two parts.

The first part of the dissertation focuses on the Islamic roots of occasionalism. This theory was propounded first by the Muslim *mutakallimūn* mainly within an atomistic cosmology. I examine the Mu'tazila, the Ash'arite and the Māturīdite schools and particularly al-Ghazālī's view in relation to occasionalism. I argue that occasionalism lies in the foundation of the *Sunni kalām*. Al-Ghazālī and the *Sunni kalām*, both the Ash'arite and Māturīdite schools, uniformly embraced occasionalism though the descriptions of their cosmologies differ to a certain extent.

The second part deals with the early modern roots of the theory by considering René Descartes', Louis de La Forge's, Géraud de Cordemoy's, and Nicolas Malebranche's contributions to it. In this part, I argue that Descartes and La Forge settled the general framework in which Cordemoy and Malebranche developed an occasionalist metaphysics. Cordemoy presented his occasionalism in an atomistic cosmology although influenced from Cartesian philosophy, and Malebranche produced the most systematic version of occasionalism that is based on Cartesian metaphysics.

By examining the historical roots of occasionalism, I show that it is a serious metaphysical theory fully capable of dealing with problems in traditional epistemology and metaphysics.