Mutahhari's Conception of Public Reason: Concepts, Sources, and a Brief Note on Turkish Reception

Hasan Hüseyin GÜNEŞ*

Abstract

This article examines the intellectual positioning of Murtaza Mutahharī, a key twentieth-century Iranian thinker, across historical and theoretical registers. It focuses on his intellectual identity, deliberate linguistic strategies, and public interventions to argue that he pursued a dialogical bridge between the classical Hawza tradition and modern academic discourse. A second axis maps the post-1980 reception of his works in Türkiye, showing how translations circulating through journals, publishers, and intellectual platforms operated as discursive interventions that reshaped Islamist debates rather than remaining private reading material. Methodologically, the study combines qualitative discourse analysis, close conceptual textual interpretation, and reception history. Intertextual readings situate Mutahharī's arguments within Islamic intellectual history, while a reception-study strand traces Turkish translation channels, venues, and actors. The corpus encompasses his primary texts in original and translated editions; triangulation across these sources distinguishes dialogical "exchange" from one-way "reception" and specifies criteria for each. The article argues that Mutahharī's intellectual practice constitutes a transnational form of public reason whose effects reached beyond Iran. It concludes that the ethical use of language, strategic institutional repositioning, and the polemical uptake of his writings in Türkiye together illuminate new possibilities for public reason and intellectual representation in contemporary Islamic thought.

Keywords: Islamic Intellectual History, Mutahharī, Türkiye, Iran, Public sphere, Islamist public sphere.

Sınırları Aşan İslamî Kamusal Akıl: Murtaza Mutahharî'nin İran ve Türkiye Arasındaki Diyaloğa Dayalı Düşüncesi

Özet

Bu makale, yirminci yüzyıl İranının en etkili düşünürlerinden Murtaza Mutahharî'nin entelektüel konumlanışını tarihsel ve kuramsal düzlemlerde inceler. Çalışma, Mutahharî'nin entelektüel kimliğine, kasıtlı dil stratejilerine ve kamusal müdahalelerine odaklanarak, klasik havza geleneği ile modern akademik söylem arasında diyalojik bir köprü kurma arayışını ortaya koyar. İkinci eksen, 1980 sonrası Türkiye'de eserlerinin alımlanışını izleyerek, çevirilerin dergiler, yayınevleri ve entelektüel platformlar üzerinden yalnızca bireysel okuma metni değil, İslamcı tartışmaları yeniden çerçeveleyen söylemsel müdahaleler olarak işlediğini gösterir. Yöntemsel olarak çalışma, nitel söylem analizini kavramsal metin çözümlemesi ve alımlama tarihiyle birleştiren çok katmanlı bir tasarım benimser. Metinlerarası okumalar Mutahharî'nin argümanlarını İslam entelektüel tarihi içine yerleştirirken, alımlama odağı Türkiye'deki çeviri kanalları, mecralar ve aktörleri haritalandırır. Bulgular, Mutahharî'nin entelektüel pratiğinin, etkileri İran sınırlarını aşan ulusötesi bir kamusal akıl biçimi olarak kavramsallaştırılabileceğini ortaya koyar. Makale, dilin felsefî titizliği korurken erişimi genişletmeyi amaçlayan etik bir araç olarak ele alınması ve seminerden üniversiteye uzanan kurumsal yeniden konumlanış üzerinden, çağdaş İslam düşüncesinde kamusal akıl ve entelektüel temsil tartışmalarına yeni bir çerçeve önerir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İslam Düşünce Tarihi, Mutahharî, Türkiye, İran, Kamusal alan, İslamcı kamusallık

* Doç., Dr., Bartın Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Tarih Bölümü, Osmanlı Müesseseleri ve Medeniyeti Anabilim Dalı, Bartın/Türkiye, hasan.h.gunes@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000 0002 1797 3605

Introduction

This study is neither a translation nor an eclectic compilation. Its foundation rests directly on the works authored by Murtazā Mutahharī himself. In addition, in order to demonstrate how Mutahharī has been received in Turkey, the analysis incorporates discussions and references found in Turkish Islamist journals. Thus, the article is structured as an original research paper that both examines Mutahharī's own ideas through his texts and analyzes their intellectual circulation within the Turkish context.

The aim of this article is to investigate how Murtazā Mutahharī's thought, particularly his revolutionary ethics, can be read as a contribution to the formation of a public reason in modern Islamic contexts. Rather than limiting the analysis to Mutahharī's epistemological discussions, the study highlights how his ethical and pedagogical interventions enabled reason to function as a shared, collective capacity with public relevance. Methodologically, the article combines two dimensions: first, it examines Mutahharī's own writings to trace the ways in which he reconceptualized knowledge, ethics, and responsibility in terms of their social and public implications; second, it analyzes the reception of Mutahharī in Turkish Islamist journals to show how his ideas were circulated, reinterpreted, and integrated into broader debates on public reason in Turkey. By adopting this dual method, the article demonstrates the transnational resonance of Mutahharī's thought and its role in shaping discourses of public reason beyond the Iranian context.

The originality of this study lies in its dual focus and analytical framing. First, by combining textual analysis of Mutahharī's writings with a reception analysis of Turkish Islamist journals, it offers a transnational perspective rarely addressed in existing scholarship. Second, it advances the concept of "public reason" as a lens through which Mutahharī's ethical and pedagogical interventions can be reinterpreted, thus moving beyond conventional portrayals of him as merely a revolutionary ideologue. Third, it highlights the pedagogical dimension of his thought, situating him within broader debates on intellectual agency and resistance. Finally, by examining the Turkish reception of his works, the study demonstrates how translation served as a vehicle for rearticulating Shi'i thought in a Sunni-majority context, thereby contributing to both the sociology of translation and the study of transnational Islamic intellectual history.

Throughout this article, key terms are employed with contextual precision. Expressions such as ʿaql-e Shiʿī (Shi'i reason), taʿaqqolī (rational/intellectual), and baṣīrat (philosophical insight or discernment) are retained in transliteration to underscore their conceptual specificity within the Shi'i intellectual tradition. When terms like "public reason" or "pedagogical resistance" are invoked, they are not meant as simple transpositions of Western philosophical categories, but as analytical tools that highlight how Mutahharī's own terminology intersects with broader discourses of knowledge, ethics, and resistance. This clarification aims to ensure terminological consistency and conceptual accuracy across the study.

Murtaza Mutahharī should be regarded not merely as a theologian in modern Iranian thought but as an intellectual agent striving to construct the theoretical foundations of social transformation. His discursive universe is shaped by an effort to reinterpret the classical Hawza tradition through a critical lens, while simultaneously undertaking the epistemological interventions required by societal change. In this respect, Mutahharī's intellectual identity gains significance within Antonio Gramsci's conceptualization of the "organic intellectual" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 5-23).[1] According to Gramsci, the organic intellectual is not only a producer of knowledge but also an actor who interrogates hegemonic structures and seeks to construct a new form of collective consciousness. Mutahharī assumes such a role by transcending both the dogmatic boundaries of the Hawza and the compartmentalized logic of the academic sphere.

When considered through the lens of Habermas's theory of the public sphere (Habermas, 1962/2007), one of Mutahharī's primary objectives becomes the reconstruction of the public domain in which social consensus is formed. His aim is to fortify this space with Islamic references on linguistic and ethical grounds. In this context, Habermas's notion of the "ideal speech situation" is particularly functional in understanding Mutahharī's emphasis on ethical priorities in public communication. For him, freedom becomes possible only within a communicative framework where equal participation, transparency, and critical engagement are guaranteed (Habermas, 1962/2007, p. 135).

Mutahharī's intellectual orientation may also be linked to Michel Foucault's concept of *parrhesia*—the courageous act of speaking truth (Foucault, 1980). Rooted in ancient Greek philosophy, Foucault's formulation underscores that truth-telling entails a confrontation with power. In this light, Mutahharī exercised this risky mode of truth-speaking as an ethical imperative of intellectual responsibility, challenging dominant discourses within both religious and academic circles. He approached the epistemic boundaries of the Shi'i seminary as well as the growing influence of Western thought on young minds with critical scrutiny.

Edward Said's concept of the intellectual as an exilic and disengaged figure provides a framework to understand Mutahharī's marginalization within both the seminary and the public sphere (Said, 1994). Rejecting traditional ʿulamaʾ conformism, he addressed younger audiences by rearticulating Islamic discourse in philosophical terms. Language was central to his method—serving as both a vehicle for accessibility and a site of resistance. In this, his work aligns with Bourdieu's notion of "linguistic capital," (Bourdieu, 1982/1991) as he sought to create new cultural capital through discursive innovation beyond normative linguistic conventions.

This article explores Murtaza Mutahharī's intellectual identity, linguistic innovation, and public discourse through historical and theoretical lenses. It argues that

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[1] Although Gramsci's concept of the "organic intellectual" was developed in relation to class-based knowledge production, it remains highly functional for analyzing the modes of public intervention employed by religious intellectuals.

his positioning resonated regionally, especially via translation movements in Turkey, and examines how intellectual intervention—embodied in Mutahharī's case—takes shape within historically and theoretically contingent public spheres.

Within Tradition, in Pursuit of Truth: Mutahharī's Intellectual Positioning

An intellectual is not merely a transmitter of knowledge, but a moral agent who assumes responsibility in a society's pursuit of justice, freedom, and truth. In this context, Edward Said underscores that one of the key tasks of the intellectual is to "break down stereotypes and reductive categories that constrain human thought and communication" (Said, 1994, p. 13). Murtaza Mutahharī's intellectual identity follows a trajectory that resonates precisely with this definition. Although he was nurtured within the Islamic tradition, Mutahharī did not treat religious knowledge as solely a theoretical construct; rather, he situated it as a transformative praxis embedded within social and historical contexts.

A defining feature of Mutahharī's writings and public interventions is his sustained critique of the structural veils—such as religious dogmas, nationalist reflexes, and traditionalist rhetorics—that shape individual consciousness. In this sense, he is not simply a religious scholar but aligns with Said's notion of the "detached intellectual," one who dares to speak truth against entrenched structures of power. Unlike those intellectuals who retreat into ivory tower abstractions or collude with existing political regimes to turn knowledge into an instrument of domination, Mutahharī transforms thought itself into a form of resistance.

Gramsci's distinction between traditional, organic, and critical intellectuals helps situate Mutahharī as a counter-hegemonic figure. Unlike conventional ʿulamaʾ or those aligned with political authority, he operated as a critical intellectual—actively challenging dominant power structures and discursive formations through his thought and practice.[2] (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 5-23).[3]

Mutahharī's thought was not limited to abstract theorization but reflected a historically grounded praxis, especially in his critiques of religion's instrumentalization.[4] He exposed both the dogmatism of the ʿulamaʾ and the technocratism of secular academia as forms of depoliticizing opiates. For him, truth was an ethical and political stance, not

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[2] Gramsci's distinction between traditional, organic, and critical intellectuals helps situate Mutahharī as a counter-hegemonic figure. By "critical", I draw on Gramsci's philosophy of praxis—his development of Marx's thesis on the unity of theory and practice—where intellectual work is inseparable from organized action in civil society through hegemony, the historical bloc, and the role of organic intellectuals. In this sense, Mutahharī's sermons, public lectures, and programmatic texts operated as interventions aimed at reshaping consent within religious and political fields, placing him in a counter-hegemonic position.

[3] According to Gramsci, the organic intellectual is defined not merely by class consciousness but by producing new forms of knowledge and awareness responsive to that class's specific needs. Mutahharī's engagement with youth, particularly through his philosophically rich and accessible language, reflects his assumption of such a role.

[4] The reference to Gramsci is not intended to import Marxism's doctrinal commitments, but to conceptualize the public/ideological dimension of 'praxis'; the study's normative-theological content is justified independently and does not rely on that framework.

just an epistemic claim. His intellectual identity thus defied confinement within either religious or academic institutions, instead occupying a liminal space of moral and intellectual resistance.

Understanding Mutahharī's intellectual identity requires evaluating him not merely as a figure of his time but as a voice of conscience and critical awareness with universal resonance. He defended truth and justice not only in the abstract but also through the lived integrity of his life. His discourse transcends national affiliations and embodies a form of universality that centers the human condition. In this respect, Mutahharī acted in accordance with Edward Said's assertion that "if the task of the intellectual is to speak the truth to power, then the intellectual must be prepared to face hatred" (Said, 1994, p. 101). He deliberately distanced himself from populist or nationalist currents, choosing instead to root his thoughts in ethical responsibility.

Unlike many of his religious or secular contemporaries, Mutahharī resisted collective hysteria and ideological opportunism. He regarded thinking itself as a moral field of action and fulfilled this responsibility with philosophical and ethical seriousness. The concepts frequently found in his writings—justice, freedom, tawḥīd, and responsibility—function not only as theoretical categories, but also as ontological and practical imperatives. In this regard, Mutahharī occupies a position closely aligned with Said's notion of the "universal intellectual"—one who claims no allegiance to a single identity group but instead aspires to serve as the conscience of all humanity (Said, 1994, p. 23). His stance articulates a discourse that resonates not only with Shi'i Iranians but with all who seek truth and justice. His critiques of authoritarian regimes, dogmatic religious interpretations, and secular forms of domination transformed him into a figure of intellectual significance not just locally but on a global scale.[5]

Pushing the Limits of Language: Mutahharī's Strategy of Discursive Transformation

One of the most distinctive aspects of Mutahharī's intellectual profile was his development of an innovative linguistic approach. Unlike most scholars preceding him—who tended to present religious knowledge through ritualized, classical formulations without pursuing a discursive renewal capable of guiding societal transformation—Mutahharī sought to reshape the very language of religious engagement. At the same time, intellectuals within the university environment largely remained confined to the conceptual boundaries of their own academic circles, producing a form of communication that failed to reach wider segments of society. As Pierre Bourdieu has observed, this condition results in the reproduction of distinct "epistemic habitus" within both groups, with little effort to transcend them (Bourdieu, 1982/1991, pp. 50-51).[6]

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[5] Mutahharī's universalist stance displays a rare degree of discursive openness within contemporary Shi'i thought. In this regard, his writings are not confined to Shi'i theology alone, but exhibit a conceptual clarity that appeals to broader Muslim publics and even secular intellectual circles.

[6] Bourdieu's concept of the "linguistic market" illustrates how each social group operates according to its own internal linguistic norms, which in turn can reproduce social exclusion. Mutahharī recognized this dynamic and sought to develop a "trans-epistemic" mode of language.

In response, Mutahharī aimed to construct a discursive bridge between these two epistemic communities—namely the *ʿulamaʾ* and the academic intelligentsia. He placed particular emphasis on engaging with younger generations in an effort to cultivate public awareness in the face of the intellectual crises of his time. His language was marked by a rare combination of philosophical depth and social accessibility. In this respect, as articulated within Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1984), Mutahharī produced a discourse centered on public rationality, wherein meaning is not restricted to expert circles but becomes intelligible and shareable within broader public domains.

Mutahharī's decision to take up a position at the University of Tehran can be seen as a practical extension of his broader strategic orientation. Although some traditionalist members of the *ʿulamaʾ* interpreted this move as an abandonment of the seminary, for Mutahharī it represented a natural outcome of his quest for broader educational and societal engagement. This position is best understood through Antonio Gramsci's notion of the "organic intellectual," which defines the intellectual not merely through knowledge production, but through their commitment to transformative social praxis (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 10-13).

His departure from the traditional career path within the Qom seminary and transition to Tehran University should be seen not simply as a change in institutional affiliation, but as a reflection of his evolving intellectual trajectory. This move provoked criticism in some religious circles, particularly due to his direct engagement with younger generations and his preference for the academic public sphere, which challenged conventional assumptions about seminary loyalty. Yet this choice did not signal a retreat from scholarly rigor; rather, it reflected Mutahharī's desire to expand the scope of his intellectual responsibility and embed it within a more inclusive and accessible framework. One of the most salient features of Mutahharī's intellectual praxis is his conscious rejection of the *lingua franca* used within epistemic communities—technical languages that become increasingly exclusive and intelligible only to insiders. This linguistic refusal should not be viewed merely as a semantic choice but as an ethical stance against social exclusion. At this juncture, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *linguistic capital* (Bourdieu, 1982/1991, pp. 55-56)[7] becomes particularly relevant: Mutahharī did not simply reproduce the linguistic capital held by both the seminary and the academy; rather, he reconfigured it in ways that enabled broader public engagement.

Within this framework, Mutahharī's central concern was to bridge the fragmented realms of public discourse—namely, the discursive disconnect between academic and religious spheres. The discourse he developed in his written work was shaped by a linguistic strategy aimed at linking technical conceptualization with the cognitive horizon of lay audiences. In this sense, his thought embodies what Edward Said referred to as the "intellectual's intervention in language (Said, 1994, p. 23)." For Said, the intellectual

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[7] Bourdieu's concept of "linguistic capital" analyzes the power and exclusivity embedded in the use of language across different social fields. Mutahharī sought to redistribute this capital horizontally in order to enhance public accessibility.

must treat language not only as a medium of meaning-making but also as an ethical tool for confronting hegemonic structures.

Another defining element of Mutahharī's intellectual identity is his distinctive conception of language, which diverges sharply from the classical traditions of the *Hawza*. One of the key concerns he highlights is the necessity for those with the ethical awareness and critical consciousness to recognize *when* and *how* to intervene in discourse. These imperative positions language not merely as a technical medium but as an ethical and historically situated site of responsibility. In this regard, Mutahharī stands out as a thinker who did not overlook the normative dimensions of language, but rather grounded communicative meaning in moral judgment.

Historically, both the seminary and intellectual circles have been shaped by dominant modes of expression and entrenched discursive patterns—conditions that have rendered language structurally immune to critique. Yet language, as Mutahharī understood it, is not merely a vehicle of signification but also a field of power. Influenced by his mentors Ayatollah Khomeini and Allāmeh Ṭabāṭabāʾī, Mutahharī developed a critical stance toward the discursive conventions embedded in the *Hawza*. Khomeini's effort to render Islamic teachings politically intelligible to the public, and Ṭabāṭabāʾī's attempt to extract philosophical concepts from scholastic jargon and rearticulate them in a more functional form, both served as direct inspirations for Mutahharī's own approach to language.

Mutahharī's intervention in language must be understood not only at the semantic level, but also as a strategic effort aimed at transforming institutional practices. In this context, his proposal regarding the controversial issue of *taqlīd*—the emulation of a jurist (*mujtahid*)—within the Shi'i world is particularly noteworthy. Mutahharī questioned the necessity of absolute emulation in all legal matters and instead advocated for a model in which each jurist would specialize in a specific domain of Islamic law, and laypersons (*mukallafs*) would follow the rulings of that jurist only within that area of expertise (Mutahharī, 1995, p. 53). To illustrate this argument, Mutahharī drew an analogy with the medical field: just as there are different specialists for cardiology, ophthalmology, or neurology, he argued, jurisprudence too should reflect a similar structure of specialization. In his view, the complexity of modern social life and the intensification of knowledge production necessitate a critical reassessment of the traditional *mujtahid-as-generalist* model within the seminary.[8]

Moreover, Mutahharī emphasized that this idea was not entirely novel; it had previously been articulated by Ayatollah ʿAbd al-Karīm Ḥāʾirī Yazdī, the founder of the Qom seminary, and later supported by Sayyid Aḥmad Zanjānī in his work *al-Kalām Yujarriru'l-Kalām*. This acknowledgment underscores that Mutahharī's intellectual

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[8] Mutahharī's proposal offers a paradigm of "functional taqlīd,", privileging domain-specific specialization over the classical model of the "absolute mujtahid" embedded in traditional Islamic jurisprudence. In this sense, it constitutes not an epistemological rupture, but a methodological call for transformation.

position was not an individual rupture, but rather a call for intra-seminary renewal grounded in existing traditions of critical reform.

Within and Beyond the Seminary: Mutahharī's Dialogical Public Reasoning

In his efforts to address the structural problems of the seminary, Mutahharī sought not only institutional reform but also a transformation in modes of communication. At this juncture, the parallels with Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action are particularly illuminating. One of Mutahharī's core intellectual objectives was to construct an ethically grounded public sphere—one not limited to the production of theoretical knowledge but oriented toward enabling individual freedom and meaningful social participation. In this respect, his thought closely aligns with Habermas's notions of "communicative action" and the "public sphere." According to Habermas, the public sphere is a space where individuals, under conditions of equality, can engage in rational deliberation, freely express ideas, and pursue social consensus. Mutahharī maintained that authentic socialization is impossible in a context where individual freedom is suppressed. Therefore, he argued that the formation of free individuals depends first and foremost on the establishment of a free and open public sphere. It is precisely here that communicative ethics becomes crucial. For Habermas, communicative ethics demands that dialogue be based on principles of rationality, openness, and reciprocity (Habermas, 1984, pp. 85-90).

This ideal can only be realized in a context where individuals seek to persuade one another "without coercion," within a discursive space marked by egalitarian exchange. Mutahharī's approach to language—developed in resistance to the dogmatic and exclusionary discourses emanating from both the *Hawza* and the academy—can be understood within this ethical framework.[9] His aim was not only to transform public discourse but also to embed communication itself in a moral foundation. This, then, constitutes not merely an epistemic intervention, but an ethical and political one as well. In this light, Mutahharī places the notion of the free individual at the center of his intellectual vision, emphasizing that genuine public consensus can emerge only within a discursive environment that welcomes plurality and criticism—conditions foundational to a truly free public sphere (Habermas, 1962/2007, p. 135).

A central concern at the heart of Mutahharī's intellectual orientation is the fragmentation between two spheres of knowledge production in modern Iranian society: academic intellectualism and traditional religious scholarship. In his view, university-based intellectuals and *Hawza*-trained scholars cannot function meaningfully in the public realm so long as they remain confined within the boundaries of their respective epistemic communities. This critique aligns with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of "fields," (Bourdieu, 1982/1991, pp. 114-115) which posits that knowledge is produced within distinct social arenas governed by their own internal logics and only limited cross-field interaction. Mutahharī, however, rejected this compartmentalization and emerged as a

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[9] Communicative ethics determines not only the quality of dialogue between individuals but also the very terms on which power relations are established. Accordingly, in Mutahharī's discourse, communication functions both as a vehicle for truth and as a practice of liberation.

public intellectual who sought to construct bridges between these fields. For him, the public significance of knowledge lies not only in its production but also in its circulation. Once epistemic content—*episteme*—is written and disseminated, it enters the public domain. Thus, not only the knowledge itself, but also its producer—the intellectual or religious scholar—assumes a public identity in the process. From this perspective, language and narrative must correspond not only to standards of technical accuracy but also to the needs and registers of the public domain they seek to address.

It is precisely at this intersection that Mutahharī situates communicative ethics as an imperative. As in Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action, genuine publicity can only be constructed through discourse that is meaningful and conducted under conditions of equality (Habermas, 1990, pp. 58-93). This implies that the intellectual must be not only a possessor of knowledge, but also an agent of its social transformation. Edward Said similarly describes the task of the intellectual as not only to produce knowledge, but to share it with public responsibility and to intervene ethically. Mutahharī's understanding of publicity is a direct extension of this theoretical trajectory (Said, 1994, p. 34).[10] Accordingly, Mutahharī calls on knowledge producers in both the academy and the *Hawza* to transcend insular epistemic structures and to participate in a public sphere that is open, pluralistic, and critical. For him, the ultimate task of the intellectual or scholar is to create spaces that enhance individual freedom and expand the capacities of public understanding.

At the heart of Mutahharī's intellectual vision lay the conviction that the *Hawza* ought to play a central role in constructing a free and pluralistic public sphere. His initial engagement with the Qom seminary reflects this strategic orientation. However, when it became apparent that his vision for a seminary-centered transformation of public life would not materialize, Mutahharī likely shifted toward a university-centered model. His subsequent academic work at the University of Tehran should thus be seen not merely as a spatial relocation but as an epistemic and strategic realignment (Habermas, 1962/2007).[11] One of the strongest indications supporting this interpretation is the absence of a coherent intellectual circle within the *Hawza* that carried on Mutahharī's legacy in a systematic way. The lack of identifiable disciples or institutional successors within the seminary reflects not a personal shortcoming on Mutahharī's part, but rather the structural limits of the *Hawza* itself. Historically, the seminary has functioned as an inward-looking institution, resistant to theoretical innovation and reluctant to relax its doctrinal boundaries.

This cognitive resistance was not unique to Mutahharī; it had manifested earlier in responses to other prominent intellectuals as well. For instance, Ayatollah Khomeini was

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[10] Edward Said's definition of the intellectual serves as a key theoretical reference for situating figures in modern Islamic thought—such as Mutahharī—who center their work on independence and moral responsibility.

[11] The public sphere is a discursive site of contestation. In this context, Mutahharī's choice to engage with the University of Tehran reflects a search for a more open space in which epistemic discourse could circulate more freely.

subjected to *takfīr* at the Fayḍiyya Madrasa, and Allāmeh Ṭabāṭabā'ī was reportedly forced out of a rented house due to his hosting of philosophy lessons (Nasr, 2006). Such incidents underscore how traditional structures have historically responded with suspicion—if not hostility—to philosophical, theoretical, and critical modes of inquiry.

In this sense, one may draw a structural parallel between the fear the Pahlavi regime expressed toward the 1979 Revolution and the anxiety that some segments of the *Hawza* harbored toward the teaching of philosophy. In both cases, the central object of concern was the potential disruption of the established order's intellectual foundations. Mutahharī welcomed this disruption as a means to render knowledge production more open, systematic, and publicly accessible. However, the institutional resistance of the seminary to such transformation prompted him to redirect his efforts toward the university as a more viable platform for intellectual engagement.

Mutahharī possessed a deep awareness of the historical development of the Islamic philosophical tradition. In his view, the philosophical corpus available to Muslim thinkers was not merely a continuation of pre-Islamic Greek, Hellenistic, or Indian legacies; rather, it represented a reconfiguration of those traditions through the interpretive frameworks provided by the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the original contributions of Muslim philosophers themselves. Within this framework, Mutahharī reinterpreted classical philosophical concepts through an Islamic epistemological lens—maintaining continuity with earlier traditions while simultaneously establishing a critical distance from them (Mutahharī, 1996, p. III).

> Among the relatively old works that have come down to us, the greatest and most valuable are those belonging to the powerful and determined schools of Greek philosophy and science, dating back some 2,600 years. For from that time until today, there has not been an age of decline severe enough to cause the complete disappearance of these works. The intellectual movements seen in Central Asia and in Greece were also pursued in Alexandria. However, as the intellectual centers of Alexandria and Athens were on the verge of decline and total extinction, the Eastern Roman Emperor Justinianus (529 CE) ordered the closure of the higher schools and academies in Athens and Alexandria. As a result, scholars fled in fear and dispersed, and the system of teaching and learning fell into disarray. At precisely such a moment in history, in another part of the world, a new intellectual movement began with the rise of Islam, laying the foundations for a new and profound civilization. Through the encouragement and guidance of the great leader of Islam and its spiritual guides, and through their exaltation of science and the scientist's status, the pursuit of knowledge was reignited, hearts were enlightened, and what emerged was the vast and magnificent "Islamic Civilization." In many fields, sciences were codified and systematized. Works were translated from various languages, especially from Greek. Intellectual centers and universities were re-established; libraries were founded; and the major cities of the Islamic world became cradles of knowledge, vibrant with the comings and goings of eager seekers. Later, students and seekers from Europe and other parts of the world also flocked to the Islamic lands. Eventually, a few centuries later, new transformations and changes appeared in Europe as well, and the scientific advances with which you are familiar came to pass.

The resulting synthesis, therefore, was not a mere reproduction of translated knowledge, but a novel philosophical structure grounded in Islamic references. Islamic philosophy, in this light, differs significantly from its predecessors in both subject matter and conceptual architecture. Notably, Misbāh Yezdī emphasized Mutahharī's central role in countering materialist philosophy, portraying him as a thinker who safeguarded the metaphysical and theological foundations of Islamic thought against reductionist currents. In this sense, Yezdī's appreciation of Mutahharī reflects not only his significance within twentieth-century Islamic philosophy but also his broader impact on shaping intellectual responses to modern ideological challenges. (Yezdī, 2025).

Mutahharī's first major contribution to this field was his ability to articulate philosophical thought in clear and accessible Persian prose, thereby reaching a wider audience beyond the confines of specialized academic or seminary circles. This stylistic clarity facilitated the circulation of philosophical discourse at the public level, expanding its reach and relevance. Second, by systematically comparing Islamic philosophy with Western philosophical traditions, Mutahharī sought to dispel doubts related to atheism (*ilhād*) and to defend the rational foundations of Islamic thought. This comparative approach not only reinforced confidence in Islamic philosophy but also rendered it more intellectually defensible within broader epistemological debates. Third, Mutahharī introduced new problematics into philosophical discourse and proposed alternative solutions to long-standing issues. His arguments in areas such as ontology, moral philosophy, and epistemology contributed significantly to the renewal and reinterpretation of the traditional Shi'i philosophical heritage.[12]

Murtaza Mutahharī did not conceive of philosophy merely as a theoretical enterprise, but as a cognitive tool essential to the internal transformation of religious thought. In this regard, his philosophical orientation aligns with what Misbāḥ Yezdī refers (Yezdī, 2021) to as *philosophical insight* (*basīrat-e falsafī*)[13]—a depth of conceptual understanding that Mutahharī sought to cultivate within the Qom *Hawza*, following the intellectual legacy of his mentor, Allāmeh Ṭabāṭabāʾī. His objective was to promote an understanding of philosophy not solely as a discrete field of knowledge, but as a mode of inquiry that reveals the foundational role of reason in the interpretation of religion.

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[12] Mutahharī's approach was not merely one of transmission, but rather constituted a hermeneutical, transformative, and critical philosophical intervention. This orientation marks one of the key distinctions between his work and a mere repetition of classical texts.

[13] Mutahharī's intellectual framework is not only subversive of inherited doctrines but also generative, inquisitive, and open to critique. His integration of philosophy with basīrat—a Qur'anic term evoking ethical and mystical awareness—deserves particular attention. In bridging this concept with the theoretical universes of Habermas, Foucault, and Kant, it may be productive to interpret basīrat as critical reasoning or critical rationality. However, for Mutahharī, the concern is not merely reaching knowledge but the ethical and purposeful use of that knowledge. In this sense, basīrat entails not just "seeing" but "orienting" —thus making intellectual orientation or epistemic direction plausible translations. The term encapsulates one's theoretical stance and epistemological positioning while also signifying epistemic awareness. Indeed, Mutahharī's synthesis of knowledge and belief, tradition and philosophy, reason and spirituality finds its fullest articulation in this concept. Moreover, since basīrat emphasizes the relationship between knowledge and justice, it may also be associated with ethical consciousness or value-based reason. In this light, Mutahharī's epistemology may be understood within the broader scope of moral epistemology.

Mutahharī was acutely aware that in Shiʿi thought, reason occupies a position subordinate to revelation and the *Sunnah* within the epistemological hierarchy. However, he argued that the issue was not the presence or absence of reason per se, but the need to elevate reason from a repository of information (*maʿlūmāt*) to a level of conscious awareness (*maʿrifat*).[14] Philosophical consciousness, in this sense, entails not only intellectual comprehension but also the ability to critically interpret one's historical context, social conditions, and religious texts through the faculty of reason.

Mutahharī's objective was not to reintroduce or popularize rationalist traditions already present in the *Hawza*, but rather to elevate rational inquiry to the level of epistemological awareness. In other words, he emphasized a reflexive mode of consciousness that allows thought to reflect upon itself. At this juncture, Michel Foucault's distinction between knowledge and consciousness becomes illuminating: for Foucault, knowledge is not merely the aggregation of objective data, but a formation intimately intertwined with the subject's self-knowledge (Foucault, 2000, p. 256). In a similar vein, Mutahharī aimed for the philosophical knowledge produced in the *Hawza* to be internalized as a lived consciousness, both individually and socially. His philosophical teaching, therefore, was not merely the transmission of theoretical texts, but a pedagogical project designed to cultivate intellectual construction within the individual. In this respect, Mutahharī should be regarded not only as a transmitter of knowledge but also as a transformative intellectual agent.

Beyond being a producer of ideas, Mutahharī also assumed a critical stance toward the intellectual tradition to which he belonged. His critiques of the *Hawza's* limitations in terms of intellectual production clearly expose his reformist dimension. These critiques were articulated not in the form of polemic alone but also through the reinterpretation of classical texts. His study on *Nahj al-Balāgha*, for instance, draws particular attention to the text's contributions to the development of philosophical reasoning within Shiʿi thought. According to Mutahharī, *Nahj al-Balāgha* offers more than moral teachings or historical narratives; it functions as a catalyst in the evolution of Shiʿi consciousness toward a rationalist orientation. This interpretation constitutes a direct intellectual intervention against the dominant tradition within the *Hawza*, which often privileges transmitted (*naqlī*) knowledge over rational inquiry. Frequently criticized by traditional scholars for this approach, Mutahharī not only rejected such criticisms but also insisted that philosophical reasoning was neither an innovation (*bidʿa*) nor an external imposition upon Islam. Rather, he maintained, "This is not a new invention or a heresy in Islam. It is the path that the Qur'an has shown to Muslims" (Mutahharī, 1998, p. 45).

Mutahharī's call for epistemic consciousness was aimed not only at individual transformation but also at institutional awareness. His critique of the stagnation within the *Hawza* tradition was grounded in the view that the difficulty in grasping Qur'anic

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[14] Foucault's redefinition of "knowledge" as inherently bound to the subject's relationship with truth is crucial for understanding Mutahharī's aspiration not merely to "introduce reason," but to transform it into an internalized form of maʿrifa (gnosis). Within this framework, the gap between knowledge and consciousness lies at the heart of intellectual transformation.

truths did not stem from the Qur'an itself, but from the inadequacy of the interpretive frameworks[15] used to engage it. In his view, what was needed was a greater epistemological space for rational methods in the interpretation of revelation. With this argument, Mutahharī defended the legitimacy of philosophical reason within Islamic thought, advocating for a complementary—not antagonistic—relationship between revelation and reason.

Murtaza Mutahharī's engagement with the Islamic philosophical tradition was not confined to classical thinkers such as Ibn Sīnā, al-Fārābī, and Shaykh Ṭūsī; it also extended to modern Western philosophy, with which he cultivated a deep intellectual dialogue. In his work *Fiṭrat* (Human Nature), Mutahharī critically examined key figures of the Western philosophical canon (Mutahharī, 2014). His discussions were not merely descriptive but offered a sustained critique of their epistemological and ethical assumptions.

Mutahharī's philosophical method combined critical engagement with Islamic tradition and modern thought, particularly during the rise of Marxism in Iran (Mutahharī, 2014, pp. 123-144). Addressing issues often neglected by the Hawza—such as property and surplus value—he examined them not only through Islamic jurisprudence but also via ontological and epistemological analysis, ultimately rejecting Marxist economics as incompatible with an Islamic worldview (Mutahharī, 1997c, pp. 51-90). Mutahharī critiqued Western philosophy for generating epistemic and theological confusion, particularly among youth, and attributed this to the Hawza's inability to respond critically to modern challenges. Arguing that inherited Islamic concepts required philosophical scrutiny, he advocated a dynamic reinterpretation of classical texts through rationalist methodologies to restore intellectual relevance (Mutahharī, 2014).

The seminary's failure to support his reformist proposals and its institutional resistance to critical engagement prompted Mutahharī to relocate his intellectual mission to a broader public platform. His academic work at the university level, therefore, should not be interpreted solely as a disciplinary shift but as a manifestation of his commitment to public intellectual responsibility. Mutahharī identified the entrenched nature of the seminary curriculum as a key obstacle to reform. Though still tied to the tradition, the curriculum lacked the flexibility needed to engage with emerging social and intellectual challenges.[16] The Hawza's resistance to developing what Mutahharī called *philosophical insight* (*baṣīrat-i falsafī*) was, in his view, symptomatic of a broader epistemological inertia. Rather than adopting a combative stance, however, Mutahharī employed a

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[15] The term "rationalism" here should not be confused with the post-Cartesian philosophical current of Western modernity. What Mutahharī refers to is an orientation that highlights the legitimacy of reason, grounded in the Qur'an, and emphasizes the use of ʿaql in theological and philosophical matters as an intrinsic feature of the Shi'i Uṣūlī tradition.

[16] The critique implied here does not call for a wholesale rejection of traditional epistemic frameworks within the ḥawza. Rather, it emphasizes the necessity of restructuring these frameworks to address contemporary intellectual and societal demands. Mutahharī's position reflects a reform-oriented appeal grounded in transformation, rather than a call for radical rupture.

language of gentle critique—choosing to work within tradition while challenging its limitations through elegant and nuanced prose.

His criticisms of traditional kalām (Islamic theology) illustrate this rhetorical subtlety. Rather than rejecting the kalām tradition outright, Mutahharī approached it as a field requiring philosophical clarification. In particular, his treatment of the concept of life demonstrates this dialectical engagement. He argued that the primary distinction between classical theologians and materialist thinkers lies in their ontological assumptions about the origin of life: while the former asserted a metaphysical source beyond matter, the latter insisted that matter itself was the origin of life (Mutahharī, 1997b, pp. 26-27).

Mutahharī highlights a critical epistemological gap between theological discourse and the Qurʾānic perspective on life. While acknowledging their surface similarities, he contends that kalām's treatment of divine creation lacks the Qurʾān's holistic and nuanced approach to the phenomenon of life.[17] Mutahharī contends that if theologians could grasp the subtleties embedded in the Qurʾānic discourse, they could liberate themselves from the epistemological influence of materialist claims. Furthermore, he suggests that such an understanding might also help materialists free themselves from their "doubts, conjectures, and illusions." This statement represents not only an exercise in intellectual self-critique but also an open and inviting posture toward engagement with opposing worldviews (Mutahharī, 1997b, pp. 26-27).

To better contextualize Mutahharī's critique of classical kalām, it is helpful to recall Michael Bauer's analysis of traditional Qurʾānic studies. Bauer observes that within Islamic intellectual history, there is no singular, unified discipline of "Qurʾānic science" (ʿilm al-Qurʾān); instead, there exists a pluralistic and fragmented tradition of "Qurʾānic sciences/ʿulūm al-Qurʾān" (Bauer, 2011/2018, pp. 126-127). The former implies a holistic field of knowledge, while the latter reflects a more diversified collection of disciplinary contributions to the understanding of the Qurʾān.

In this regard, al-Suyūṭī's *al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān* is considered a key reference point. While al-Suyūṭī systematically categorizes Qurʾānic sciences under headings such as tafsīr (exegesis), asbāb al-nuzūl (occasions of revelation), qirāʾāt (recitations), iʿjāz (inimitability), majāz (figurative language), and nasikh-mansūkh (abrogation), he does not explicitly list kalām as a core Qurʾānic discipline. Bauer draws attention to the fact that the incorporation of kalām into Qurʾānic studies as a foundational methodology is a relatively late historical development, not an inherent or original feature of the tradition.[18]

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[17] The distinction Mutahharī emphasizes here lies in the Qurʾānic conceptualization of "creator," which goes beyond a mere agent-act relationship. Instead, it points to a divine logic that stresses immanence and continuity in God's creative power. This represents a mode of thinking that surpasses the classical kalām-based understanding of causality.

[18] Bauer implies that the central position eventually granted to kalām within the Qurʾānic sciences represents a historically external intervention into the interpretive methodologies of the Qurʾān. Over time, this intervention came to constrain the Qurʾān's inherent potential for direct meaning-making.

In this context, Mutahharī's critique targets the elevation of *kalām* to a primary methodological framework for interpreting the Qur'an. He finds it problematic that the divine truths articulated in the Qur'an are often confined within *kalām*-based formulas and rigid logical structures. For Mutahharī, one of the underlying motives behind his efforts to reestablish the relationship between philosophical reasoning and the Qur'an lies precisely here: understanding the Qur'an should not be predicated on reducing its meanings to *kalāmī* constructs. Rather, it requires engaging directly with the textual context, rational intuition, and contemporary issues as interpretive lenses.

Translating Islamic Reason: Mutahharī Between Revolutionary Ethics and Turkish Readership

The issue raised here is intended to demonstrate that Mutahharī's conception of Islamic reason (ʿaql) should not be confined solely to the framework of revolutionary ethics in Iran, as discussed in the previous section. His thought, while serving a functional role in shaping the moral-political formation of the post-revolutionary context, also found a distinct resonance in Turkey through the translation of his works. This process of transmission repositioned his emphasis on reason within a new cultural and intellectual milieu, thereby revealing both the internal dimension of "Islamic reason" (deeply rooted in the Shi'i-Usūlī tradition) and its external dimension (the manner in which it entered other socio-political contexts via translation). In this sense, a direct continuity emerges between revolutionary ethics in Iran and intellectual reception in Turkey: Mutahharī's thought, grounded in the same theoretical current, assumed different functions in each geography. On the one hand, it contributed to the construction of revolutionary consciousness; on the other, it nurtured for Turkish readership an intellectual orientation in which the rationalist aspect of modern Islamic identity was emphasized. Thus, these discussions should not be seen as disjointed, but rather as interconnected manifestations of a shared theoretical lineage, articulated across different historical and cultural settings.

Contemporary political Islam, often conceptualized under the term "Islamism," is commonly examined in three historical phases. The first phase is marked by the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*) in Egypt, shaped significantly by the theoretical contributions of Sayyid Qutb. This phase advocated the reintegration of Islam into the heart of sociopolitical life as part of a broader reconstructionist vision. The second phase corresponds to the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which inaugurated a radically reconfigured model of theocratic governance. The third phase, emerging in the aftermath of the First Gulf War during the 1990s, reflects the globalization of Islamist movements beyond regional boundaries (Kurt, 2014, p. 63). The Iranian Revolution marked a global shift in political Islam, shaped not only by religious leadership but by intellectual collaboration. Within this milieu, Mutahharī stood out as a pivotal figure whose mastery of Eastern and Western thought, responsiveness to contemporary issues, and accessible yet rich language enabled him to act as both a

seminary scholar and a public intellectual. His collaboration with Ali Shariati further strengthened the revolution's theoretical foundations.[19]

Mutahharī's intellectual reach extended beyond the seminary through his engagement with both Eastern and Western philosophy and his accessible articulation of complex ideas. His collaboration with Ali Shariati helped shape the ideological groundwork of the Iranian Revolution, while the subsequent translation of their works played a pivotal role in stimulating theoretical discourse on Islamism in countries like Turkey and across the Muslim world (Kurt, 2014, pp. 123-144).

In the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Turkish Islamist circles displayed growing interest in its ideological foundations, prompting a wave of translations that evolved into a broader cultural and ideological dialogue. This process, later termed "Iran-oriented Islamism" in the literature, contributed to the formation of a new public sphere that both interpreted and endorsed the revolution (Elhan, 2016, p. 41).

A key driver of "Iran-oriented Islamism" in Turkey was the emergence of a Khomeinist public sphere—an institutional network of publishers, journals, and intellectuals that disseminated revolutionary texts. Within this translational field, Mutahharī's writings held a central place, reinforcing the ideological transmission of the revolution (Elhan, 2019, p. 722). A key example of Mutahharī's reception in Turkey is the journal *İstiklal*, launched in 1985 with the subtitle "Universal Islamic Politics and Culture," which featured in its inaugural issue the Turkish translation of his essay "The Philosophy of History in the Islamic Worldview" (Mutahharī, 1985a, pp. 7-8). This series continued in the second (Mutahharī, 1985b, pp. 6-9) and third issues (Mutahharī, 1985c, pp. 21-22). The selection of this essay was undoubtedly motivated by Mutahharī's distinctive philosophical approach and his interpretive engagement with dialectical reasoning. Rather than treating dialectics as an exclusively Western intellectual product, Mutahharī sought to reconfigure it in harmony with Qurʾānic epistemology. His attempt to relate historical processes to Islamic values reflects a broader effort to articulate an indigenous Islamic intellectual framework capable of engaging modern philosophical discourse on its own terms.[20]

The serialization of Mutahharī's essay "Islamic Worldview and the Philosophy of History" in *İstiklal* in the mid- 1980's held particular relevance, as it aimed to present an Islamic epistemological alternative to the dominant Marxist and dialectical ideologies then prevalent in Turkey. The essay was serialized across the first three issues of *İstiklal*: the first part appeared in October 1985 (Mutahharī, 1985a, pp. 7-8), the second in November 1985 (Mutahharī, 1985b, pp. 6-9), and the third in December 1985; and in the

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[19] Mutahharī's pre-revolutionary writings on philosophical and social issues provided not only a theological framework but also a theoretical foundation for political and sociological transformation.

[20] Mutahharī's approach not only critiques Marxist dialectics but also offers an alternative conception within Islamic thought—one centered on historical agency, moral consciousness, and individual will rather than deterministic material forces. In this respect, his writings have resonated within discussions of post-Islamist intellectual transformation in Turkey.

same December issue, another translated article titled *"Islam and the Evolution of the Human Being"* was also published (Mutahharī, 1985d, pp. 21-22). Its continuation appeared in the combined January/February 1986 issue (Mutahharī, 1986c, pp. 31-37). In March 1986, the journal featured a further translation entitled *"On the Revival of Islamic Thought"*, (Mutahharī, 1986a, pp. 16-22) which was simultaneously published in another journal, *Şehadet*, under the same title and date (Mutahharī, 1986b, pp. 16-22).

This publishing overlap illustrates that Mutahharī's ideas circulated not through a single platform, but across multiple venues, contributing to a broader public intellectual engagement.[21] Moreover, this translation movement was not limited to journal articles; various book-length works by Mutahharī were also translated into Turkish. Evidence from contemporary periodicals indicates that this process became an active form of cultural production. Several journals featured promotional content and cover images announcing the publication of his works in Turkish. These visual materials underscore the extent to which interest in Mutahharī's thought extended beyond the realm of theoretical discourse into the domain of popular and visual culture.

Some translated texts circulated through direct excerpts from books or other journals. For example, the article titled *The Real Face of the Veil Controversy* (*Tesettür Sorununun Gerçek Yüzü*), published in *İnsan* magazine in 1989, was derived from Mutahharī's book *The Veil* (*Hicâb*), translated by Yeni Dünya Press (Mutahharī, 1987, 1989, pp. 39-45). Similarly, *What Is Philosophy?* appeared in the November-December 1997 issue of *Evrensel Kadın* magazine (Mutahharī, 1997a, pp. 6-14.). These examples indicate that his writings continued to be translated and published in Turkey into the early 2000s.[22] By the early 2000s, journal-based translations of Mutahharī's works declined as professional publishing expanded and Turkish Islamism's sociopolitical landscape evolved. Full-length book editions became the dominant medium, some even published directly under the auspices of the Islamic Republic of Iran, such as *Introduction to Islamic Sciences*. (Mutahharī, 2020a).

Throughout the 1990s, various publishing houses continued to release Mutahharī's works in Turkish. His *Revelation and Prophethood: The Islamic Worldview I* and *The Philosophy of Imamate and Leadership* (Mutahharī, 1991) were published by Endişe Press, while *Philosophy Lessons* volumes 1 and 2 were published by İnsan Press. In the early 2000s, Kevser Press intensified its translation initiatives, releasing key texts such as *Divine Justice* (Mutahharī, 2005), *Ten Speeches by Mutahharī* (Mutahharī, 2008a), *The Human in the Qur'an* (Mutahharī, 2008a) and *The Peace of Imam Hasan* (Mutahharī, 2020b). More recently, Önsöz Publishing has undertaken the project of rendering Mutahharī's corpus into Turkish as a comprehensive collection. The three-volume

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[21] The parallel publication of Mutahharī's translated works across different journals indicates that his ideas were not confined to elite intellectual circles but instead became part of a broader, multilayered public discourse. This multiplicity of platforms suggests that his writings were not merely read in isolation but served as catalysts for collective intellectual engagement and deliberation.

[22] This process should not be viewed merely as a "translation activity" but rather as a broader cultural transmission practice that reveals how and through which intellectual mediums Mutahharī's ideas found resonance within the Turkish intellectual public sphere.

series *Introduction to Islamic Sciences* exemplifies this ongoing translation initiative (Mutahharī, 2020a).

Conclusion

The findings derived from textual analysis reveal that Mutahharī consistently framed reason in terms of epistemic responsibility and public accountability, thereby linking knowledge to collective ethical action. Complementing this, the reception analysis of Turkish Islamist journals shows how these themes were reinterpreted in a different socio-political context, often recast as debates on justice and social responsibility. In this way, the twofold methodology directly grounds the findings: Mutahharī's own writings articulate the conceptual foundations of public reason, while the Turkish reception demonstrates its transnational circulation and contextual rearticulation.

Mutahharī's intellectual identity, discursive innovation, and ethical engagement were not isolated dimensions but constituted a unified praxis. This integrative approach positions him beyond the role of a conventional scholar: he emerges as a public intellectual, moral agent, and dissident voice. His involvement in the Iranian Revolution cannot be reduced to ideological endorsement; rather, he acted as an architect of its intellectual discourse, simultaneously critiquing the entrenched orthodoxy of the seminary. In this sense, his marginalization did not stem from rupture, but from his reformist project to reconstruct tradition from within—a stance resisted by the institutional structures of the Hawza. Echoing Edward Said's reflections on the "intellectual in exile," Mutahharī combined estrangement with engagement, embedding his thought within the lived struggles of his society.

Within this framework, Mutahharī's ethical engagement with Palestine exemplified the transformation of local struggles into paradigms of shared human conscience. For him, baṣīrat denoted epistemic responsibility and the imperative to convert knowledge into public good. Palestine thus became a site of pedagogical resistance, through which he disrupted the insularity of curriculum-driven seminary pedagogy and redirected attention toward global justice. His discourse illustrates how revolutionary ethics, once linked to pedagogical practice, assumes a transnational significance.

This dual orientation—resistance to both authoritarian rule and institutional orthodoxy—reveals Mutahharī's commitment to cultivating alternative epistemic and pedagogical paradigms. Viewed in Foucauldian terms, his project of subjectivation constituted resistance from within the very sites where power seeks to inscribe knowledge. What distinguished him from many contemporaries was not rhetorical militancy but his sustained effort to articulate philosophical insight (baṣīrat) as the core of ethical pedagogy.

The Turkish reception of Mutahharī further substantiates this dynamic. The translations of his works in the 1980s did not function merely as regime propaganda but served as vehicles for philosophical, ethical, and mystical engagement. They shaped youth-oriented intellectual projects seeking to counter Marxism by framing an Islamic philosophical discourse, thereby reflecting parallel ideological tensions between Iran and

Turkey. Through this process, his writings facilitated new encounters with Shi'i thought, enabling Sunni readers to engage with Shi'ism as a serious intellectual tradition rather than through sectarian stereotypes. The shift of these translations into digital platforms extended their reach, transforming textual transmission into broader public dialogue.

In this light, the trajectory of Mutahharī's translations in Turkey should be understood as part of a larger intellectual and discursive struggle, one that fostered the formation of public reason. By linking close textual analysis of his writings with reception history in Turkey, this study has demonstrated how Mutahharī's legacy functions not only as a set of philosophical propositions but also as a transnational practice of knowledge production, ethical resistance, and public engagement. Ultimately, his thought reveals how revolutionary ethics, once translated and recontextualized, contributes to the emergence of a multi-layered public consciousness that transcends both sectarian boundaries and national borders.

The findings presented here should be read not merely as descriptive observations but as interventions into broader debates on intellectual agency and public reason. Mutahharī's emphasis on baṣīrat illustrates how ethical knowledge becomes a mode of resistance, resonating with Foucault's theorization of subjectivation as resistance within the domain of power. Similarly, the Turkish reception demonstrates how these ideas were mobilized to construct a rational Islamic discourse vis-à-vis Marxism, reflecting Gramscian notions of counter-hegemony. In both contexts, the findings converge on a central point: Mutahharī's thought cultivated a form of public reason that operated across national and sectarian boundaries. Thus, the analysis contributes not only to the understanding of Mutahharī himself but also to the larger question of how intellectual traditions are translated, contested, and rearticulated in transnational settings.

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