

**De-colonizing psychology:
Some remarks from a marginalized perspective**

*Muhammad Suheyl Umar**

Wherever people live, whenever they live, they find themselves faced with three inescapable problems: how to win food and shelter from their natural environment (the problem nature poses), how to get along with one another (the social problem), and how to relate themselves to the total scheme of things (the religious problem). If this third issue seems less important than the other two, we should remind ourselves that archaeologists have never found an archaeological site that was without the remains of a place of worship and religious artifacts are the oldest that have been discovered. One can also add to it the fact that probably between 6 and 7 billion of the world's more than 8 billion people are directly involved with a religion today, and this picture seems unlikely to change a great deal during the rest of the twenty-first century. The world today, is *massively religious*, and it is anything but the secularized world that had been predicted (be joyfully or despondently) by so many analysts of modernity.

Religion is relevant to the chief concerns of our century. It can no longer be assumed with impunity that religion was a primitive superstition outgrown by civilized, rational man. The religious instinct is extremely powerful: It should be understood and its manifestations must be examined, not only in our own society but also in other cultures. In the words of Peter Berger "Homo Sapiens have always been homo religiousus" and "a human existence bereft of transcendence is an impoverished and finally untenable condition."¹ Turning its back on transcendence— the rift between science and religion— has finally brought modern science (both hard and soft sciences) in the midst of its present predicament: its profound, paradigmatic crisis which stems from the fact that "modern science has become radically incoherent, not when it seeks to

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understand things and subhuman organisms and the cosmos itself, but when it seeks to understand man, man *qua* man, man when he is peculiarly human.”² This has far reaching implications beyond the academic world, leading to the crises in modern physical sciences, modern social sciences and modern culture.

The three inescapable problems mentioned above are obvious, but they become interesting when we align them with the three major periods in human history: the traditional period (which extended from human beginnings up to the rise of modern science), the modern period (which took over from there and continued through the first half of the twentieth century), and postmodernism (which Nietzsche anticipated, but which waited for the second half of the twentieth century to take hold). Each of these periods poured more of its energies into, and did better by, one of life’s inescapable problems than did the other two. Specifically, modernity gave us our view of nature— it continues to be refined, but because modernity laid the foundations for the scientific understanding of it, it deserves credit for the discovery. Postmodernism is tackling social injustices more resolutely than people previously did. This leaves worldviews—metaphysics as distinct from cosmology, which restricts itself to the empirical universe— for our ancestors, the Wisdom Traditions of the world or the World Religions, whose accomplishments on that front have not been improved upon.

The just-entered distinction between cosmology and metaphysics is important so an added remark may not come amiss. Cosmology is the study of the physical universe—or the world of nature as science conceives of it—and is the domain of science. Metaphysics, on the other hand, deals with all there is. (The terms worldview and Big Picture could be used interchangeably with metaphysics) In the worldview that holds that nature is all there is, metaphysics coincides with cosmology. That metaphysics is named naturalism. The question we wish to pose here is straightforward: Does modern psychology endorse naturalism? Is it reductionist? Has it been colonized by Modern Natural Sciences? I would come to it in a minute but let me bring in a caveat for my perspective.

In terms of its mindset or worldview we presently live in what has been called the *Age of Anxiety*. There is something wrong with the presiding

paradigm or worldview that our age had come to espouse, as Iqbal's following remark clearly registers:

The modern man with his philosophies of criticism and scientific specialism finds himself in a strange predicament. His Naturalism has given him an unprecedented control over the forces of Nature, but has robbed him of faith in his own future.³

The crisis that the world found itself in as it swung on the hinge of the 20th century was located in something deeper than particular ways of organizing political systems and economies. In different ways, the East and the West were going through a single common crisis whose cause was the spiritual condition of the modern world. That condition is characterized by loss— the loss of religious certainties and of transcendence with its larger horizons. The nature of that loss is strange but ultimately quite logical. When, with the inauguration of the scientific worldview, human beings started considering themselves the bearers of the highest meaning in the world and the measure of everything, meaning began to ebb and the stature of humanity to diminish. The world lost its human dimension, and we began to lose control of it. In the words of F. Schuon:

The world is miserable because men live beneath themselves; the error of modern man is that he wants to reform the world without having either the will or the power to reform man, and this flagrant contradiction, this attempt to make a better world on the basis of a worsened humanity, can only end in the very abolition of what is human, and consequently in the abolition of happiness too. Reforming man means binding him again to Heaven, reestablishing the broken link; it means tearing him away from the reign of the passions, from the cult of matter, quantity and cunning, and reintegrating him into the world of the spirit and serenity, we would even say: into the world of sufficient reason.⁴

If anything characterizes the modern era, it is a loss of faith in transcendence, in God as an objective reality. It is the age of eclipse of

transcendence. No socio-cultural environment in the pre-Modern times had turned its back on Transcendence in the systematic way that characterized Modernity.⁵ Transcendence means that there is another reality that is more real, more powerful, and better than this mundane order. The eclipse of transcendence impacted our way of looking at the world, that is, forming a worldview? Whatever transpires in other domains of life— politics, living standards, environmental conditions, interpersonal relationships, the arts— was ultimately dependent on our presiding world view. This is what was wrong with the presiding paradigm or worldview that his age had come to espouse (crisis of the present age *فتنة عصر* *in Iqbal's words*). Modern Westerners, forsaking clear thinking, allowed themselves to become so obsessed with life's material underpinnings that they had written science a blank cheque; a blank cheque for science's claims concerning what constituted Reality, knowledge and justified belief. They continue to honour science for what it tells us about nature or the natural order/natural world, but as that is not all that exists, science cannot provide us with a worldview— not a valid one. The most it can show us is half of the world, the half where normative and intrinsic values, existential and ultimate meanings, teleologies, qualities, immaterial realities, and beings that are superior to us do not appear.⁶ If we put ourselves a question “Does Science deal with all of Reality or part of Reality?” the way it is answered in modern science and in the traditional perspectives in very different from each other. *Modernity* was born when a new source of knowledge was discovered, the scientific method. Because its controlled experiment enabled scientists to prove their hypothesis, and because those proven hypotheses demonstrated that they had the power to change the material world dramatically, Westerners turned from revelation to science for the Big Picture. Intellectual historians tell us that by the 19th century Westerners were already more certain that atoms exist than they were confident of any of the distinctive things the Bible speaks of.

In his second lecture, “The Philosophical Test of the Revelations of Religious Experience”, in *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam* Iqbal has made a very perceptive remark:⁷

There is no doubt that the theories of science constitute trustworthy knowledge, because they are verifiable and enable us to predict and control the events of Nature. But

we must not forget that what is called science is not a single systematic view of Reality. It is a mass of sectional views of Reality— fragments of a total experience which do not seem to fit together. Natural Science deals with matter, with life, and with mind; but the moment you ask the question how matter, life, and mind are mutually related, you begin to see the sectional character of the various sciences that deal with them and the inability of these sciences, taken singly, to furnish a complete answer to your question. In fact, the various natural sciences are like so many vultures falling on the dead body of Nature, and each running away with a piece of its flesh. Nature as the subject of science is a highly artificial affair, and this artificiality is the result of that selective process to which science must subject her in the interests of precision. The moment you put the subject of science in the total of human experience it begins to disclose a different character. Thus religion, which demands the whole of Reality and for this reason must occupy a central place in any synthesis of all the data of human experience, has no reason to be afraid of any sectional views of Reality. Natural Science is by nature sectional; it cannot, if it is true to its own nature and function, set up its theory as a complete view of Reality.

Where, then, do we now turn for an inclusive worldview? Postmodernism hasn't a clue. And this is its deepest definition.⁸ The generally accepted definition of Postmodernism now that Jean-Francois Lyotard fixed in place decades ago in *The Postmodern Condition* is, "incredulity toward metanarratives".⁹ Having deserted revelation for science, the West has now abandoned the scientific worldview as well, leaving it without replacement. In this it mirrors the current stage of Western science which leaves *nature* unimaged. Before modern science, Westerners accepted Aristotle's model of the earth as surrounded by concentric, crystalline spheres. Newton replaced that model with his image of a clockwork universe, but Postmodern, quantum-and-relativity science gives us not a third model of nature but no model at all. Alan Wallace's *Choosing Reality* delineates eight different interpretations of quantum physics, all of which can claim the support of physics' proven facts.¹⁰ A contemporary

philosopher described the situation as “*the Reality Market Place*”– you can have as many versions of reality as you like.

Another analogy can pull together all that we have just said and summarize the difference alluded to in these remarks. If we think of traditional peoples as looking out upon the world through the window of revelation (their received myths and sacred texts), the window that they turned to look through in the modern period (science) proved to be stunted. It cuts off at the level of the human nose, which (metaphysically speaking) means that when we look through it our gaze slants downward and we see only things that are inferior to us.¹¹ As for the Postmodern window, it is boarded over and allows no inclusive view whatsoever. In the words of Richard Rorty, “There is no Big Picture.” This analogy is drawn from the works of one of the traditionalist writers, namely, Huston Smith, who is by far the easiest to understand. It is fascinating to note that Iqbal not only mediates between these conflicting views in exactly the same manner by pointing out to the shortcomings and achievements of all the three paradigms objectively but– and that is remarkable– uses the same analogy. Smith or Iqbal never met or read each other! Iqbal agrees that there is a Big Picture and his writings give us to understand that the Postmodern view of the self and its world is in no way nobler than the ones that the world’s religions proclaim. Postmoderns yield to their dilapidated views, not because they like them, but because they think that reason and human historicity now force them upon us. Iqbal would argue that it is not necessarily the case and the present predicament is the result of a tunnel vision that we have adopted but which really is not the only option for us. Here is Iqbal’s depiction of the conceptual shift that the enlightenment project and modernity’s world view had brought in the human thought, the damage that it had done to the academia. Cultures and their world-views are ruled by their mandarins, the intellectuals and they, as well as their institutions that shape the minds that rule the modern world are unreservedly secular. The poem is addressed to our present day intellectual mandarins, the leaders of the academia.¹²

شیخ مکتب سے
شیخ مکتب ہے اک عمارت گر جس کی صنعت ہے رُوح انسانی

نکتہ دل پذیر تیرے لیے کہ گیا ہے حکیم قآنی
 ”پیش خورشید برکش دیوار
 خواہی ار صحن خانہ نورانی“

To the Schoolman
 The Schoolman is an architect
 The artefact he shapes and moulds is the human soul;
 Something remarkable for you to ponder
 Has been left by the Sage, Qā'ānī;
 “Do not raise a wall in the face of the illuminating Sun
 If you wish the courtyard of your house to be filled with light”

What does the metaphor of خورشید (the illuminating Sun) in this analogy try to convey which, in the parallel analogy used by Huston Smith, is depicted by the stunted/slanted window of Modernity that resulted in a truncated, tunnel vision and the Postmodern window, boarded all over, thus precluding the possibility of any world view what so ever! And this is intimately connected to our initial remarks about (فتنہ عصر روان), the challenge posed by the modern age of secular modernity and materialism.

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کرا جوئی چرا در پیچو تابی کم او پیدا است توزیر نقابی
 تلاش او کنی جز خودنبینی تلاش خود کنی جز او نیابی¹³

It has been very pertinently observed that, “*The Reconstruction*, in its entirety, represents the detailed working out of a single master idea, tersely expressed by Iqbal in the phrase ‘the immanent Infinite’ (I. 5).”¹⁴ The basic question is “What does it mean to be human?” What is a human being? A body? Certainly, but anything else? A personality that includes mind, memories, and propensities that have derived from a unique trajectory of life-experiences? This, too, but anything more? Some say no, but Iqbal, in the vein of all spiritualities, disagrees. Underlying the human self and animating it is a reservoir of being that never dies, is never exhausted, and is unrestricted in consciousness and bliss. This infinite center of every life, this hidden self, is no less than the Godhead. Body, personality, and this infinite center— a human self is not

completely accounted for until all three are noted. That was not only Iqbal's fundamental position, as reflected in this quatrain, but the shared "anthropocosmic" vision of all wisdom traditions of the world.¹⁵ This hidden self, the Infinite within, is called by many names but all point to a single Reality. Hindus call it Brahman that is "End of all love-longing," vouchsafing the "unshakeable deliverance of the heart" in Buddhism which Christianity terms as "Beauty so ancient and so new," For the Jews it is "Eternal" which, in Islam, is "closer to us than our jugular veins." If soul is the element in man that relates to God, Spirit is the element that is identical with Him— not with his personal mode, for on the celestial plane God and soul remain distinct, but with God's mode that is infinite. Spirit is the *Atman* that is Brahman, the aspect of man that is the Buddha-nature, the element in man which, exceeding the soul's full panoply, is that "something in the soul that is uncreated and untreatable" (Eckhart). It is the true man in Lin Chi the Ch'an master's assertion that "beyond the mass of reddish flesh is the true man who has no title".

The soul, as Ibn 'Arabi remarks, is an ocean without shore. Awareness of this shoreless ocean can have no end. But the only way to be aware of it in any coherent fashion is to turn away from the multiplicity of the waves and foam and to focus on the unarticulated water itself, which is nothing but the ocean of awareness. To grasp the soul's fullness and integration, one must grasp the principle of all souls— the divine spirit that was blown into Adam's clay, or the divine image that embraces human unity and is refracted endlessly in human diversity. Any method of dealing with the unity and coherence of human selfhood— any true "psychology"— has to be explain how each human being can at once be human, unified with others through humanness, and, at the same time, unique.

The supra individual dimensions of human personality as well as the cosmic order is linked up with the concept of reality itself: reality as a multistory building or as a mansion that has no upper story. This in turn is connected to the microcosmic reality of the human self, of which we have two models. One regards the human self as the point of intersection where the Divine touches the human realm, and this view situates the human microcosm in a hierarchical relationship with other levels of being. This model and its governing concept of reality are the shared heritage of all the known spiritual, metaphysical and religious traditions of mankind. Lord

Northbourne summarizes the two approaches to the question, “What is Man?” in a simple and straightforward manner:

Are you in fact a being created by God in His own image, appointed by him as his representative on earth and accordingly given dominion over it, and equipped for the fulfillment of that function with a relative freedom of choice in thought and action which reflects the total absence of constraint attributable to God alone, but at the same time makes you liable to err? Are you essentially that, and only accidentally anything else?

Or, alternatively, are you essentially a specimen of the most advanced product so far known of a continuous and progressive evolution, starting from the more or less fortuitous stringing together of a protein molecule in some warm primeval mud, that mud itself being a rare and more or less fortuitous product of the evolution of the galaxies from a starting point about which the physicists have not yet quite made up their minds?”¹⁶

In other words, the two models suggest that man could either be a Viceroy, Vicegerent or Pontiff or else a cunning animal with no destiny beyond the grave.¹⁷

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Writing his philosophic magnum opus, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, in 1929, Iqbal had lamented, among other issues, about the shortcomings of “the tunnel view of modernity” that plagued modern psychology in its understanding of the human self, psyche or human subjectivity and traced it back to the single common crisis that stemmed from the spiritual condition of the modern world (of his day), characterized by the *Loss of Transcendence* by Reductionism that was the malady of Modernity’s Paradigm—“the tunnel view of modernity”. In the third Lecture of *The Reconstruction*, “The Human Ego— His Freedom and Immortality”, he had initiated the question by making the following remarks:¹⁸ My recognition of a place or person means reference to my past experience, and not the past experience of another ego. It is this unique interrelation of our mental states that we express by the word ‘I’, and it is here that the great problem of psychology begins to appear. What is the

nature of this 'I'?

As William James was the foremost authority on the subject. Iqbal turned towards him for an answer.

Let us, therefore, turn to modern psychology and see what light it throws on the nature of the ego. William James conceives consciousness as “a stream of thought”— a conscious flow of changes with a felt continuity.¹⁹ He finds a kind of gregarious principle working in our experiences which have, as it were, “hooks” on them, and thereby catch up one another in the flow of mental life.²⁰This description of our mental life is extremely ingenious; but not, I venture to think, true to consciousness as we find it in ourselves. Consciousness is something single, presupposed in all mental life, and not bits of consciousness, mutually reporting to one another. This view of consciousness, far from giving us any clue to the ego, entirely ignores the relatively permanent element in experience. There is no continuity of being between the passing thoughts.²¹

I am, however, firmly of the opinion that the controversy between the advocates of Mechanism and Freedom arises from a wrong view of intelligent action which modern psychology, unmindful of its own independence as a science, possessing a special set of facts to observe, was bound to take on account of its slavish imitation of physical sciences. The view that ego-activity is a succession of thoughts and ideas, ultimately resolvable to units of sensations, is only another form of atomic materialism which forms the basis of modern science. Such a view could not but raise a strong presumption in favour of a mechanistic interpretation of consciousness. There is, however, some relief in thinking that the new German psychology, known as Configuration Psychology,²² may succeed in securing the independence of Psychology as a science, just as the theory of Emergent Evolution may eventually bring about the independence of Biology. This

newer German psychology teaches us that a careful study of intelligent behaviour discloses the fact of ‘insight’ over and above the mere succession of sensations.²³ This “insight” is the ego’s appreciation of temporal, spatial, and causal relation of things– the choice, that is to say of data, in a complex whole, in view of the goal or purpose which the ego has set before itself for the time being. It is this sense of striving in the experience of purposive action and the success which I actually achieve in reaching my “ends” that convinces me of my efficiency as a personal cause. The essential feature of a purposive act is its vision of a future situation which does not appear to admit any explanation in terms of Physiology.

With regard to the “followers of Freud”²⁴ he had had already observed in his First Lecture of *The Reconstruction*, “Knowledge and Religious Experience”:

I cannot help saying that the main theory of this newer psychology does not appear to me to be supported by any adequate evidenceA purely psychological method, therefore, cannot explain religious passion as a form of knowledge. It is bound to fail in the case of our newer psychologists as it did fail in the case of Locke and Hume.

Three years later, in December 1932, while delivering his Lecture, “Is Religion Possible?”²⁵ to the Aristotelian Society, London, he visited the problem again. This time C. G. Jung, being the leading authority, had to bear the brunt of his criticism.

...our modern psychology has given us quite a plethora of new theories which proceed on a complete misunderstanding of the nature of religion as revealed in its higher manifestations, and carry us in an entirely hopeless direction. The implication of these theories, on the whole, is that religion does not relate the human ego to any objective reality beyond himself; it is merely a kind of well-meaning biological device calculated to build barriers of an ethical nature round human society in order to protect the social

fabric against the otherwise unrestrainable instincts of the ego. That is why, according to this newer psychology, Christianity has already fulfilled its biological mission, and it is impossible for the modern man to understand its original significance.....This is the reason why I say that modern psychology has not yet touched even the outer fringe of the subject. Personally, I do not at all feel hopeful of the present state of things in either biology or psychology. Mere analytical criticism with some understanding of the organic conditions of the imagery in which religious life has sometimes manifested itself is not likely to carry us to the living roots of human personality....If, therefore, the science of psychology is ever likely to possess a real significance for the life of mankind, it must develop an independent method calculated to discover a new technique better suited to the temper of our times.²⁶

The point would have been lost on the readers that Iqbal's criticism was based on a view of human subjectivity that is a shared heritage of all humanity which maintains that there is a dimension of ourselves that exceeds even the stratosphere, an essence no universe, subtle or gross, can contain. The ancients called it soul (*psyche*, *anima*, *sharira* or *jiva atman*, *nephesh*, or *nafs*) and though on the cosmological map it lies beyond the reach of the strongest telescope, we can join it in a twinkling once we learn its register. For it is closer to our essence by far than is the mind with which we usually identify. The soul is the final locus of our individuality. Situated as it were behind the senses, it sees through the eyes without being seen, hears with the ears without itself being heard. Similarly it lies deeper than mind. If we equate mind with the stream of consciousness, the soul is the source of this stream; it is also its witness while never itself appearing within the stream as a datum to be observed. It underlies, in fact, not only the flux of mind but all the changes through which an individual passes; it thereby provides the sense in which these changes can be considered to be *ours*.

The reason that Iqbal paid serious attention to the theories propounded by Jung was simply that Jung had breached certain strictly materialistic frameworks of modern science and refuted parts of Freud's materialist

view of the psyche. But this fact is of no use to anyone, to say the least—one wishes one could have rejoiced over it—because Jung was responsible, more than anybody else, for what Rene Guenon had termed as the “confusion between the psychic and the spiritual” and the influences that filtered through this breach come from lower psychism and not from the Spirit, which alone is true and alone can save us. This is a subject which is of great importance for psychology and it was for a reason that the greatest scholar of religion of our times Dr. Huston Smith has termed it as “The Best Kept Secret of Twentieth Century America” but that is for another day. For the purposes of the present talk I would like to focus on the issue of “strictly materialistic frameworks of modern science” that I have just mentioned and, though it may sound strange to some of you, would like to ask you the question whether psychology, like other disciplines of Humanities, had fallen a victim to the Colonizing effect of Modern Science, or to be more exact, the scientistic reductionism? Iqbal had presaged that the view “which modern psychology, unmindful of its own independence as a science, possessing a special set of facts to observe, was bound to take on account of its slavish imitation of physical sciences. The view that ego-activity is a succession of thoughts and ideas, ultimately resolvable to units of sensations, is only another form of atomic materialism which forms the basis of modern science.” Has the predicament come true? Has the condition which Iqbal had termed *slavish imitation* and which we call the Colonizing effect of Modern Science become an actuality? If it has who was guilty of colonizing Humanities in the first place? Theology, psychology and philosophy, like other disciplines of Humanities had fallen a victim to the Colonizing effect of Modern Science, or to be more exact, the scientistic reductionism, and so was the case of Religious Studies. The pull of science on other disciplines—Philosophy, Religious Studies, Sociology and Humanities in general—had made them suffer from *Loss of Transcendence*: the Reductionism that is the malady of Modernity’s Paradigm “the tunnel view of modernity”. Let us take the cases one by one before reaching psychology. That warrants a digression here.

The Pull of Science on other Disciplines

Because magnetic attraction is strongest at close range, it is not surprising that among other divisions of the university it is the social sciences that feel the pull of the natural sciences most strongly. As a social scientist himself, Robert Bellah has had to live with that pull throughout his career,

and since he is exceptional in the clarity with which he recognizes the pull in question and the courage with which he protests it, we cannot do better than to turn to him directly.

The Social Sciences

Bellah writes:

The assumptions underlying mainstream social science can be briefly listed: positivism, reductionism, relativism and determinism. I am not saying that working social scientists could give a good philosophical defense of these assumptions, or even that they are fully conscious of holding them. I mean to refer only to, in the descriptive sense, their prejudices, their pre-judgments about the nature of reality. By positivism I mean no more than the assumption that the methods of natural science are the only approach to valid knowledge, and the corollary that social science differs from natural science only in maturity and that the two will become ever more alike. By reductionism I mean the tendency to explain the complex in terms of the simple and to find behind complex cultural forms biological, psychological or sociological drives, needs and interests. By relativism I mean the assumption that matters of morality and religion, being explicable by particular constellations of psychological and sociological conditions, cannot be judged true or false, valid or invalid, but simply vary with persons, cultures and societies. By determinism I do not mean any sophisticated philosophical view, but only the tendency to think that human actions are explained in terms of “variables” that will account for them.

Bellah goes on to add,

Most social scientists, do not think of these assumptions as conflicting with the assumptions of religion. The assumptions are so self-evidently true that they are beyond contradiction. Religion, being unscientific, could have no reality claim in any case, though as a private belief or practice it may by some be admitted to be psychologically helpful for certain people. “Yet these assumptions conflict,

and conflict sharply with every one of the great traditional religions and philosophies of mankind.”

Bellah continues,

Social science embodies the very ethos of modernity, and for it there is no cosmos, that is, no whole relative to which human action makes sense. There is, of course no God, or any other ultimate reality, but there is no nature either, in the traditional sense of a creation or expression of transcendent reality. Similarly, no social relationship can have any sacramental quality. No social form can reflect or be infused with a divine or cosmological significance. Rather, every social relationship can be explained in terms of its social or psychological utility. Finally, though the social scientist says a lot about the “self,” he has nothing to say about the soul. The very notion of soul entails a divine or cosmological context that is missing in modern thought. To put the contrast in another way, the traditional religious view found the world intrinsically meaningful. The drama of personal and social existence was lived out in the context of continual cosmic and spiritual meaning. The modern view finds the world intrinsically meaningless, endowed with meaning only by individual actors, and the societies they construct, for their own ends.

Because Bellah says with the authority of a respected insider—I will let him complete this section:

Most social scientists would politely refuse to discuss the contrasts just mentioned. They would profess no ill will toward religion; they are simply unaware of the degree to which what they teach and write undermines all traditional thought and belief. Unlike an earlier generation of iconoclasts, they feel no mission to undermine “superstition.” They would consider the questions raised above to be, simply, “outside my field,” and would refer one to philosophers, humanists, or students of religion to discuss them. So fragmented is our intellectual life, even in the best universities, that such questions are apt never to be

raised. That does not mean that they are not implicitly answered.

The Humanities

Advocates of the human spirit, the humanities were traditionally the heart of higher education. Today they are neither its heart nor its centre. Having been replaced at the centre by professionalism and science, the humanities are now outlying provinces—in enrolments, budgets, and prestige, all three. A 1998 article in *Harvard Magazine* noted that the number of undergraduate degrees given in the humanities has plummeted since 1970, both absolutely and proportionally. On average, humanists receive the lowest faculty salaries by thousands (or tens of thousands) of dollars, their teaching loads are the heaviest, and their time allotted for research is the least!

Let us have a look at three of the disciplines of humanities separately.

Philosophy

Outside the Western world, philosophy and theology can hardly be separated, and in the West too they were partners through and beyond the Middle Ages. Clement described Christianity as the confluence of two rivers, Athens and Jerusalem, and Thomas Aquinas forged the medieval synthesis by adding Aristotle's metaphysics to the foundations of Christian theology. In the Middle Ages, philosophy was the handmaid of theology, and (with Hume as the lone dissenter) God remained the kingpin in the great modern metaphysical systems down through Hegel. Hegel's was the last important theistic philosophy, however, for though German idealism and nineteenth-century romanticism slowed the advance of the scientific worldview temporarily, early in the twentieth century logical positivism swept the two aside. Linguistic philosophy slowed positivism in the third quarter of that century, but the century closed with its materialistic premise back in place. John Searle's asserted that professionals in philosophy now accept some version of materialism because they believe that it is the only philosophy consistent with contemporary science.

That God has no place in such philosophy goes without saying, but what counts more is the fact that God's absence is now so taken for granted that it is hardly noticed. It used to be that while theists and atheists differed in their conclusions, both sides considered the question important, but that common ground has collapsed. The confrontational iconoclasm of Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre has given way to the atheism of apathy, indifference, and unconcern.

With respect to the human spirit, philosophy's compliance with the gravitational pull of science is only half of the story. The other half is its reinforcement of that pull by actively pushing itself away from religion. As long as metaphysics and moral philosophy were high on its agenda, it allowed itself to be housed in departments of philosophy and religion, but when logic displaced those priorities, cohabitation became uncomfortable. As Bertrand Russell's dictum that logic is the essence of philosophy took hold, the ability to follow completeness proofs for formal systems via symbolic logic replaced foreign languages as a graduate requirement, and increasingly philosophy has found itself with less and less in common with religion.²⁷

Religious Studies

When state universities and colleges in the West were created, it was initially assumed that the constitutional separation of church and state prohibited the teaching of religion in public institutions. Around the middle of this century, however, a distinction was drawn between teaching objective facts about religion and proselytizing for it, and this paved the way for religious studies departments to spring up on most campuses.

This has not served the human spirit as much as might have been expected, for when higher education adopted the European model of the university, it took over its way of studying religion, which was as positivistic as its way of studying other subjects. Auguste Comte had laid down the line: religion belonged to the childhood of the human race. It is good to know facts about childhood, but retention of its outlook shows that you are childish yourself. This did not get religious studies off to a promising start. The discipline's founding fathers, who continue to be revered as its giants—linguist Max Müller, anthropologist Emile Durkheim, and sociologist Karl Mannheim—were either agnostics or

atheists. Müller confessed to being religiously “unmusical,” and Mannheim pretty much spoke for the crowd when he said, “There is no Beyond. The existing world is not a symbol for the eternal. Immediate reality points to nothing beyond itself.” Max Weber, however, cannot be classified either among the agnostics or the atheists. He is a different case but this is not the place to go into its details.

These early prejudices remain in place. Once the world was divided up along scientific and non-scientific lines, sociology became (as Peter Berger has pointed out) a more formidable enemy of religion than science is, for it claimed jurisdiction over “social man,” defined as people in the totality of their experience. History had paved the way for the takeover by insisting on religion’s historical character: religions arise not from divine incursions into the world but from historical circumstances, and they are therefore relative. Freud spun out the psychological variant of this theme by arguing that religion is a projection of human needs and desires, a view all the more sinister because of the unedifying character of the needs and desires Freud postulated.

Sacred myths and texts are the heart of religion, and its adherents accept them as revealed. Having fallen from heaven, so to speak, they bring news of a reality that exceeds and surpasses our everyday world. Religious studies (whose methodologies are of a piece with those of the humanities and social sciences generally) cannot accept this claim at face value. I will let two biblical scholars tell the story—one as it bears on the New Testament, the other as it applies to the Torah. For the New Testament, Marcus Borg writes:

To a large extent, the defining characteristic of biblical scholarship in the modern period is the attempt to understand Scripture without reference to another world. Born in the Enlightenment, which radically transformed all academic disciplines, modern biblical scholarship has sought to understand its subject matter in accord with the root image of reality that dominates the modern mind. “Rational” explanations—that is, “rational” within the framework of a one-dimensional understanding of reality—are offered for texts which speak of “supernatural” phenomena.

The major sub-disciplines which have emerged in biblical scholarship are those which can be done without reference to other levels of reality: studies of the way the biblical writers redacted the tradition which they received, the form and functions of various literary and oral genres, the rhetorical development of early Christian tradition expressed in the texts, etc. All share in common the fact that they focus on the “this worldly” aspects of the texts.

For the Hebrew Bible, Arthur Green has this to say:

The emergence of *Wissenschaft* [the science of history, in the broad, European meaning of the word science] brought forth the bifurcation between the study of Torah as a religious obligation and the forging of scholarly research into a surrogate religion of its own. We are forced to “bracket” for the purposes of teaching and research our faith in God. The methods by which religion is studied in the university are those of history and philology (in the humanities) and anthropology, psychology, and sociology (in the social sciences). Their impact has been to discount Torah as a divine creation. A scholar who submitted an article to the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* or the *Journal of Biblical Literature* assuming that Scripture was quite literally the Word of God would be a laughing stock.

Colonizing Theology

Naturalistic Theology, the reigning perspective of Iqbal’s times, held that this world is all that exists and God is the most important “entity in it”. Relying on scientific facts, Naturalistic Theology taught that the processes of God are simultaneous with the processes of nature, and that those processes are natural rather than supernatural, physical rather than metaphysical. In this view, evolution by natural selection is simply the process by which God created the various species, and with regard to ‘God’ himself, there is no exception to natural principles; God is a force existing within those principles. From this position of Naturalistic Theology “God is not omnipotent, but like everything in this world is limited”.

Naturalistic Theology grew out of the work of the Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776), who maintained that all explanations whether of the cosmos or of the human mind, must be based exclusively on observations taken from the natural world, with no consideration for anything supernatural, since supernatural for him was a term synonymous with “false” or “non-existence”. Naturalistic Theology argued that nothing— no phenomena of any kind— can resist explanation by the sciences and no explanation beyond science is feasible. It is true that it is impossible to have any knowledge “of the infinity transcending the cosmos”, if we rely exclusively on the tools of empiricism, but that did not prove that knowledge could not come from elsewhere or that other sources of knowledge did not exist. With modest help from John Dewey, Henry Nelson Wieman was the founder of that school of theology. While recognizing the need for some modicum of metaphysical undergirding Wieman was generally sceptical of its validity.

In the West, Wieman’s liberal naturalistic theism was giving its conservative rival— neo-orthodoxy, as founded by the Swiss theologian Karl Barth and captained in America by Reinhold Niebuhr— a run for the Protestant mind. Niebuhr won that round, but with Whitehead and his theological heir, Charles Hartshorne, naturalism has returned as Process Theology. Its philosophy of organism (as Whitehead referred to his metaphysics) is richer than Wieman’s naturalism, and Whitehead’s and Hartshorne’s religious sensibilities were more finely honed, but Process Theology remains naturalistic. Its God is not an exception to principles that order this world, but their chief exemplar. As Whitehead remarked, “Thus a process must be inherent in God’s nature whereby his infinity is acquiring realization”.²⁸ God is not outside time as its Creator, but within it. And God is not omnipotent, but like everything in this world is limited. “God the semipotent” is the way Annie Dillard speaks of this God. Do we not see the hand of science— which process theologians point to proudly— in this half-century theological drift?

Let us now turn to psychology. Since Iqbal’s critiques a lot of water has flowed under the bridges. Has the situation changed for psychology in any sense?

Psychology

Psychology has become fractured. Experimental psychology comes close to being an exact science, but most of our minds and selves are beyond its pale, and this leaves clinical, or depth, psychology to pick up the residue. Whereas experimental psychology deals with people as objects, clinical psychology approaches them as subjects. The differences in methodology that these approaches require are so great that the two camps have difficulty communicating with each other and must be considered separately here.

In experimental psychology, Pavlov's salivating dogs, J. B. Watson's behaviorism, and B. F. Skinner's updated version of the two are obviously within the gravitational pull of the hard sciences. To these can be added stimulus-response theory generally: in holding that actions followed by rewards are repeated, Thorndike's pacesetting Law of Effect is thoroughly mechanical. Every decade or so it gets a facelift, but its explanatory limitations are built into it, so the spotlight has moved to cognitive psychology. We shall come to it in a minute.

Perhaps the most telling fact here is the university's stonewalling of models of the self that make more room for the human spirit than the orthodox Freudian view does. The chief of those alternative models are the ones proposed by first, C. G. Jung; second, humanistic and transpersonal psychology; and third, Asian religions, all of which have proven so useful to practicing therapists that they have spawned Jungian Institutes, the existentially oriented Association for Humanistic Psychology, and the Association for Transpersonal Psychology (not to mention the ESLAN type of numerous projects). All three entities are flourishing and have led to the founding of accredited programs for training therapists outside the university. (The California Institute for Professional Psychology, Saybrook Institute, and Pacifica Institute in Santa Barbara are just three example.) But their proven usefulness has not gained them entrance to the university.

It takes no great feat of mental gymnastics to recognize the hand of Freudian orthodoxy in this closure. Daniel Goleman, former behavioural science editor for the *New York Times*, says that Freud's depiction of the human self is the closest the West comes to having a model, and he does not think well of it. It is more pessimistic than the alternative models that

the extramural psychologies work with. (Psychiatrists Roger Walsh and Dean Shapiro have pointed out that the index to the collected works of Sigmund Freud contain over four hundred entries for pathology and none for health.) It is also more deterministic—existential psychology emerged to challenge this aspect of Freudianism. But because Freudianism is uncompromisingly materialistic and purports to be scientific, (in the face of Adolph Grunbaum's and Frederick Crews's demonstrations to the contrary) it fits better with the prejudices of today's university. P. B. Medawar may have gone too far in calling Freudianism the greatest hoax of the twentieth century, but Adolph Grunbaum and Frederick Crews have shown how little there is by way of reason and hard evidence to require us to accept his self-admittedly loveless view of human nature. This calls for a few words about Freud. Freud's letters make clear that part of the reason he had framed his theories in such confined terms was so that they would appeal to his materialist colleagues in the academy, who would have accepted his theories in no other way. If he wanted psychology to be viewed as a legitimate 'science of the mind' Freud had to let go of any metaphysical mumbo-jumbo. And so, for instance, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, he dismisses the mystical experience of Oneness with Reality as a misinterpreted "infantile longing" of the subject for the unity he or she once felt in the womb and while at the mother's breast, and there was nothing more to it than that. One can understand Freud's concern that Psychology should be taken seriously, but as had happened with Freud's student C.G. Jung, many psychologists no longer are willing to ignore evidence that contradicted Freud's materialist view of the psyche. In fact, they don't believe they can do so and still call themselves empirical scientists. There are positive aspects of the human unconscious that were overlooked by Freud. Freud believed the unconscious to be largely comprised of repressed desires and repressed traumas from childhood, and that, if not properly dealt with, these repressed contents of the mind result in neuroses and psychoses. Freud's view of the unconscious was too narrow. We have beneath us not only darkness from our past but also light—light from the archetypal material of what C.G. Jung termed the "collective unconscious," and especially from Mind-at-Large, the Divine Ground of Being at the root of our existence. For instance, "the only unconscious they ever pay attention to is the negative unconscious, the garbage that people have tried to get rid of by burying it in the basement. Not a single word about the positive

unconscious. No attempt to help the patient to open himself up to the life force or the Buddha Nature, the Divine Spark.

The case of C.G. Jung is perhaps more sinister. “The object of psychology is the psychic; unfortunately it is also its subject”, Jung had written.²⁹ According to this opinion, every psychological judgement inevitably participates in the essentially subjective, not to say passionate and tendentious, nature of its object; for, according to this logic, no one understands the soul except by means of his own soul, and the latter, for the psychologist, is, precisely, purely psychic, and nothing else. Thus no psychologist, whatever be his claim to objectivity, escapes this dilemma, and the more categorical and general his affirmations in this realm are, the more they are suspect; such is the verdict that modern psychology pronounces in its own cause, when it is being sincere towards itself.

It was starting from the analysis of dreams that C. G. Jung developed his famous theory about the ‘collective unconscious’. His observation of the fact that a certain category of dream images could not be explained simply on the basis of their being residues of individual experiences led Jung to distinguish, within the unconscious domain whence dreams are fed, between a ‘personal’ zone whose contents represent basically the other face of individual psychic life, and a ‘collective’ zone made up of latent psychic dispositions of an impersonal character, such as never offer themselves to direct observation, but manifest themselves indirectly through ‘symbolic’ dreams and ‘irrational’ impulsions. At first sight, this theory has nothing extravagant about it, except its use of the term ‘irrational’ in connection with symbolism. It is easy to understand that the individual consciousness centred on the empirical ego leaves on the margin or even outside itself everything which, in the psychic order, is not effectively attached to that centre, just as a light projected in a given direction decreases towards the surrounding darkness. But this is not how Jung understands the matter. For him, the non-personal zone of the soul is unconscious as such; in other words, its contents can never become the direct object of the intelligence, whatever be its modality or however great its extension.

Just as the human body displays a common anatomy, independently of racial differences, so also the psyche possesses, beyond all cultural and mental differences, a common substratum, which I have named the collective

unconscious. This unconscious psyche, which is common to all men, is not made up of contents capable of becoming conscious, but solely of latent dispositions giving rise to certain reactions that are always identical.”³⁰

And the author goes on to insinuate that it is here a question of ancestral structures that have their origin in the physical order:

The fact that this collective unconscious exists is simply the psychic expression of the identity of cerebral structures beyond all racial differences . . . the different lines of psychic evolution start out from one and the same trunk, whose roots plunge through all the ages. It is here that the psychic parallel with the animal is situated.³¹

One notices the plainly Darwinian turn of this thesis, the disastrous consequences of which show themselves in the following passage: It is this that explains the analogy, indeed the identity, of mythological motives and of symbols as means of human communication in general.’³² Myths and symbols would thus be the expression of an ancestral psychic fund that brings man near to the animal! They have no intellectual or spiritual foundation, since

from the purely psychological point of view, it is a question of common instincts of imagining and acting. All conscious imagination and action have evolved on the basis of these unconscious prototypes and remain permanently attached to them, and this is especially so when consciousness has not yet attained a very high degree of lucidity, in other words, as long as it is still, in all its functions, more dependent on instinct than on conscious will, or more affective than rational³³

This quotation clearly indicates that, for Jung, the ‘collective unconscious’ is situated ‘below’, at the level of physiological instincts. Many of the errors of ‘depth psychology’, of which Jung is one of the chief protagonists, result from the fact that it operates with the ‘unconscious’ as if it were a definite entity. One often hears it said that Jung’s psychology has ‘re-established the autonomous reality of the soul’. In truth, according to the perspective inherent in this psychology, the soul is neither

independent of the body nor immortal; it is merely a sort of irrational fatality situated outside any intelligible cosmic order. If the moral and mental behaviour of man were determined behind the scenes by some collection of ancestral 'types' issuing from a fund that is completely unconscious and completely inaccessible to the intelligence, man would be as if suspended between two irreconcilable and divergent realities, namely that of things and that of the soul.³⁴

The Contemporary Scene: Cognitive Psychology

If physics is the fundamental and oldest science, cognitive psychology is the youngest. At first glance it looks like a throw back to crude materialism, for neuroscience (the cornerstone of cognitive psychology) is in its adolescence, and the field is drunk with its dizzying growth and the prospect of limitless horizons. This has brought the return of mental materialism. Not only is it back; it is back with a vengeance, in an unapologetic, out-of-the-closet, almost exhibitionistic form. What makes cognitive psychology interesting is what is happening on another flank, the mind-body problem. Colin McGinn's book *The Mysterious Flame* presents it most engagingly.

The mind-body problem was foisted on the world by René Descartes, who split the world into mind and matter. He used God to bridge the two halves, but that resource is not available to scientists (or philosophers) anymore, and the residual bridgeless gap between mind and brain constitutes the mind-body problem. The problem itself is easily described. We have minds (consciousness) and we have bodies (in this context, brains), neither of which can be converted into the other. Equally obvious is the two-way relationship that exists between them. If my mind orders my right forefinger to type the letter *J*, it obeys; from the other side, if my brain grows tired from obeying such orders for several hours, I *feel* tired. The problem is, how can neuron firings in my brain give rise to things as different from them as are my thoughts and feelings? And vice versa.

The scientists and philosophers I am considering (McGinn's, Thomas Nagel and Stephen Pinker, who heads the cognitive science program at MIT) give their position on the mind-body problem the awkward name *mysterianism*. That label reflects the frank admission that in the three centuries since Descartes set the problem in place, not one iota of

progress has been made toward resolving it. McGinn dramatizes the impasse by quoting a clever excerpt from a science fiction story by Terry Bisson.

An alien explorer, just returned from an earth visit, is reporting to his commander:

“They’re made out of meat.”

“Meat?” . . .

“There’s no doubt about it. We picked several from different parts of the planet, took them aboard our recon vessels, and probed them all the way through. They’re completely meat.”

“That’s impossible. What about the radio signals? The messages to the stars?”

“They use the radio waves to talk, but the signals don’t come from them. The signals come from machines.”

“So who made the machines? That’s what we want to contact.”

“They made the machines. That’s what I’m trying to tell you. Meat made the machines.”

“That’s ridiculous. How can meat make a machine? You’re asking me to believe in sentient meat.”

“I’m not asking you, I’m telling you.

These creatures are the only sentient race in the sector and they’re made out of meat.” “Maybe they’re like the Orfolei. You know, a carbon-based intelligence that goes through a meat stage.”

“Nope. They’re born meat and they die meat. We studied them for several of their lifespans, which didn’t take too long. Do you have any idea of the life span of meat?”

“Spare me. Okay, maybe they’re only part meat. You know, like the Weddilei. A meat head with an electron plasma brain inside.”

“Nope, we thought of that, since they do have meat heads like the Weddilei. But I told you, we probed them. They’re meat all the way through.”

“No brain?” “Oh, there’s a brain all right. It’s just that the brain is made out of meat!”

“So . . . what does the thinking?”

“You’re not understanding, are you? The brain does the thinking. The meat.

“Thinking meat! You’re asking me to believe in thinking meat!

“Yes, thinking meat! Conscious meat! Loving meat. Dreaming meat! The meat is the whole deal!”

The mysterians, having gotten us where they want us—which is to see that science has made no progress at all in allaying the absurdity of the concept that squishy grey matter in our heads (“thinking meat”) can cause mental life whereas similar-appearing liver meat cannot—they then unload on us their surprise: we may be stuck with this problem for as long as we human beings are around to ponder it. For what do we think we are, they ask—omniscient? Every day we discover anew that the world is more strange, more complicated, and more mysterious than we had suspected. This leads *mysterians* to speculate that the mind-body problem may be just too big for us to get our finite minds around.

This is a new note to hear from science. It gives us not just a novel answer to a problem, but a novel *kind* of answer—one that is refreshingly different from the standard “Give us time and money and we’ll deliver the goods.” I must not press the difference too far. McGinn and company are not throwing up their hands in despair. What they are intent on doing is uncovering the deep reasons for our bafflement regarding the problem at stake.

The question here is whether the *mysterian* thesis bears on the issue of light at the end of the tunnel. Toward the close of *The Mysterious Flame*, McGinn says that his book cannot escape the conclusion that “a radical conceptual innovation is a prerequisite for solving the mind-body problem. ...It requires two new concepts, one for the mind and one for the brain.” To which I will myself add that (given the way that parts reflect the wholes they are parts of) those two new concepts require a new worldview—which is to say, one that differs from the scientific one we now have.

Thomas Nagel himself said as much in his contribution to the conference that the CIBA Foundation convened in London in 1992.

The apparent impossibility of discovering a transparent connection between the physical and the mental should give us hope, for apparent impossibilities are a wonderful stimulus to the theoretical imagination. I think it is inevitable that the [search for the link between mind and brain] will lead to an alteration of our conception of the physical world. In the long run, therefore, physiological psychology should expect cosmological results. Physical science has not, heretofore, tried to take on consciousness. Now that it is doing so, the effort will transform science radically.

One may consider to raise a second possibility that seems not to have occurred to the mysterians: If the human mind is mysteriously endowed with an innate talent for science (the mysterians' field), what rules out the possibility that it is equally mysteriously endowed with a talent for knowing the Big Picture(religion's field)!

A Last Word

It is not common knowledge that the latest research in Frontier Physics also carries significant materials that impact the prevalent ideas about the nature of consciousness. "*Reality has a physical and as a metaphysical aspect.*" This statement could be safely considered as the epitome of David Bohm's findings endorsed by his research in frontier physics that spanned well over five decades. David Bohm, physicist and close colleague of both Oppenheimer and Einstein, was a theorist whose work was an advance on Einstein's theory and greatly impacted the scientific worldview, opening new vistas that led towards a viable model for a splice between science and religion. Bohm was making such interesting claims about the nature of reality one couldn't think of anyone whose theories had deeper ramifications for religion and philosophy, an unexpected ally in the fight against dogmatic, scientistic, materialism that had prevailed in the academy and was responsible for the colonizing effects of science on humanities.

In all the metaphysical doctrines of the East and (Premodern) West, there was the premise that the physical world, the realm of change and impermanence, rises out of an unmanifest reality, and that Reality itself is also non-local.³⁵ Bohm was arguing,³⁶ that all of reality is interrelational,³⁷

and it is to be noted that Bohm didn't leave the phenomenon of consciousness out of his theory regarding this interconnectedness. In fact, Bohm had devoted two full chapters of his book to a discussion of the nature of consciousness, arguing that as matter and energy were once treated as separate entities, along with space and time, perhaps nothing, including consciousness and matter, is ultimately separate from anything else. Reality merely comprises varying densities of one infinitely self-referential and all-inclusive phenomenon (Iqbal's parallel with Bohm's formulation, which he termed as the "*ultimate ground of all experience* [read: phenomenon], despite Bohm's non-theological scientific terminology, would not have been lost on the readers!) Where Newtonians and strict materialists had argued that consciousness is an epiphenomenon of matter (consciousness having developed slowly as a by-product of increasingly sophisticated stages of biological evolution), Bohm wondered if it might not be the other way around. Perhaps material creation is actually an epiphenomenon of consciousness. And this compels us to think, what if, in terms of another context altogether, it could be that people are all connected on a deeper level of reality (which different theories of psychology/neuroscience, like Jung's and Campbell's *collective unconscious* and their later day variants, had been grappling to understand) because that level of physical existence retains more of the absolute interconnectivity endemic to the deepest level of Being? Could the collective unconscious exist closer to the Pure Consciousness from which all superficial levels of our psyches (and all other things in the world) arise?

Bohm was arguing that there is a facet of reality that science (read: Neuroscience) cannot see. Bohm, like Schrodinger, was saying that the best understanding of the universe necessitated the acceptance of the view that reality has a metaphysical aspect, an aspect that by definition could never be directly quantified or measured, though its effects in the realm of time and space could be. And this is precisely what Iqbal had proposed to with reference to the Qur'anic verse "*He is the First (Al-Awwal) and the last (Al-Ākhir) and the Outward (Al-Zāhir) and the Inward (Al-Bāṭin)*."³⁸

It was ironic that at this time when metaphysics had been barred from philosophy and psychology and couldn't be taken seriously in the academic study of religion, it was being legitimately considered in the

discipline of Physics, the hardest of the hard sciences. Einstein had suggested changes in Newton's view³⁹ of a three-dimensional universe floating in linear time with a four-dimensional space-time continuum where matter and energy are transposable. History shows that even though the Newtonian worldview may be spurious—indeed a “myth” in the pejorative sense of this equivocal term— it has nonetheless functioned brilliantly as a scientific paradigm. It appears that error, too, has its use!⁴⁰ Suffice it to say that the Newtonian scheme had extended its sway beyond the bounds of mechanics, as commonly understood, to include electromagnetism, which, as it turns out, cannot be pictured in grossly mechanical terms.⁴¹ However, the luck of the Newtonian paradigm began to run out with the advent of quantum mechanics, which strictly speaking is not a mechanics at all. The whole, it now turns out, is no longer reducible to its infinitesimal parts. At the same time, and indeed as a consequence of this irreducibility, the new so-called mechanics proves not to be deterministic: the rather odd and philosophically difficult notion of probability has now entered the picture in a fundamental and irreplaceable way.⁴² This is not to say that our present ideas about physics will prove to be the last word; but whatever the future may bring, it is safe to conclude that a return to mechanism is not in the cards.

Quantum mechanics had suggested that the universe isn't built out of atoms or any other absolute or indivisible particles, but rather is a complex interaction of energetic processes arising from pure potentiality (the “*Treasures*” of the Qur'an, the *Hidden Treasure* of Hadith, the *Divine Ground of Being*, the *Brahma*⁴³ and, “*the ultimate ground of all experience of Iqbal*). The universe, composed of interrelational vibratory events, is more like a cosmic interference pattern than a structure comprising discrete material objects. In fact, with reference to objects, quantum physics was— and is— entirely undermining the materialists' viewpoint, and so Bohm was simply adding support to this position. Even he came to see that his views had a definite resonance with certain ancient viewpoints, and later in his life he would discuss these similarities with mystics of several traditions.⁴⁴ The similarity between Bohm's views and certain tenants of the traditional metaphysical doctrines suggests that science was bringing metaphysics out of mothballs.

Now that metaphysics (read: God) had been returned to physics perhaps it could also be returned to philosophy and psychology and the academic

study of religion! Strict materialism had had its day, and the next step in the development of the hard sciences suggested that the ancient traditions hadn't been as wrong as the modernists had supposed. Iqbal had said about the Newtonian view of reality in 1929,⁴⁵ "Classical Physics has learned to criticize its own foundations. As a result of this criticism the kind of materialism, which it originally necessitated, is rapidly disappearing; and the day is not far off when Religion and Science may discover hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies."⁴⁶ It resounds in a contemporary review of the intellectual milieu, "The developments in science have undercut a kind of crass Newtonian view of reality as consisting of ultimate little atoms that are unrelated to other things— our century has undercut that. The interrelation between the parts of being— which David Bohm⁴⁷ emphasizes with his concept of implicate wholeness— clearly is a move back toward the unity which traditional philosophies, those of Asia included, emphasized."

ENDNOTES

- 1- Peter L. Berger, "Secularism in Retreat", *The National Interest*, 1996/1997; 46, pp. 3-12.
- 2- Walker Percy, *Signposts in a Strange Land*, NY, 1991, p. 271.
- 3- "Is Religion Possible", *Reconstruction*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan/Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1989, pp. 147.
- 4- F. Schuon, *Understanding Islam*, reprinted, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 2004, pp. 26.
- 5- Dr. Martin Lings (Shaikh Abū Bakr Sirāj al-Dīn) while speaking of the Arabs forgetting that all human character traits are rooted in God, hence ignoring transcendence, remarked: "No socio-cultural environment in the pre-Modern times had turned its back on Transcendence in the systematic way that characterized Modernity."
- 6- This important point is not generally recognized, so I shall spell it out. The death-knell to modernity, which had science as its source and hope, was sounded with the realization that despite its power in limited regions, six things slip through its controlled experiments in the way sea slips through the nets of fishermen:
 - i- *Values*. Science can deal with descriptive and instrumental values, but not with intrinsic and normative ones.
 - ii- *Meanings*. Science can work with cognitive meanings, but not with existential meanings (Is X meaningful?), or ultimate ones (What is the meaning of life?).
 - iii- *Purposes*. Science can handle teleonomy— purposiveness in organisms— but not teleology, final causes.
 - iv- *Qualities*. Quantities science is good at, but not qualities.
 - v- *The invisible and the immaterial*. It can work with invisibles that are rigorously entailed by matter's behaviour (the movements of iron filings that require magnetic fields to account for them, e.g.) but not with others.

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- vi- *Our superiors, if such exist.* This limitation does not prove that beings greater than ourselves exist, but it does leave the question open, for “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence”.
- 7- Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (referred to as *Reconstruction*, here after), Iqbal Academy Pakistan/Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1989, p. 26.
- 8- Ernest Gellner defines Postmodernism as relativism—“*relativismus über Alles*” (*Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*)— but relativism is not an easy position to defend, so Postmoderns do everything they can to avoid that label; Clifford Geertz’s “anti-antirelativism” is a case in point. The T-shirts that blossomed on the final day of a six-week, 1987 NEH Institute probably tell the story. Superimposed on a slashed circle, their logo read, “No cheap relativism”. By squirming, Postmoderns can parry crude relativisms, but sophisticated relativism is still relativism. Postmoderns resist that conclusion, however, so I shall stay with their own self-characterization.
- 9- Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, Minneapolis, Minnesota University Press, 1984, pp. xxiv, 3ff.
- 10- Alan Wallace, *Choosing Reality*, Boston and Shaftsbury, Shambala, 1989.
- 11- No textbook in science has ever included things that are intrinsically greater than human beings. Bigger, of course, and wielding more physical power, but not superior in the full sense of that term which includes virtues, such as intelligence, compassion, and bliss.
- 12- “Shaykh i Maktab” *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 494
- 13- *Payām i Mashriq*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 223/47.
- 14- M. Mir, *Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1989, p. 98.
- 15- This hidden self, the Infinite with in, is called by many names but all point to a single Reality. Hindus call it Brahman that is “End of all love-longing.”, vouchsafing the “unshakeable deliverance of the heart” in Buddhism which Christianity terms as “Beauty so ancient and so new,” For the Jews it is “Eternal” which, in Islam, is “closer to us than our jugular veins.”
For further references on the point see Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, IAP, *op. cit.*; Created Order as the infinite wealth of God’s Being/ Countless Variety of Living Forms, pp. 70; thought and deed, the act of knowing and the act of creating, are identical in, pp. 62; universe only a partial expression of the infinite creative activity of, pp. 52.
- 16- Lord Northbourne, *Looking Back on Progress* Lahore, Suhail Academy, 1983, 47.
- 17- On the traditional conception of man, see G. Eaton, *King of the Castle*, Islamic Texts Society, 1993; “Man” in *Islamic Spirituality*, ed. S. H. Nasr, vol. I (New York: Crossroad, 1987, 358-377; Kathleen Raine, *What is Man?* (England: Golgonzoa Press, 1980, S. H. Nasr, “Who is Man...”, *The Sword of Gnosis*, ed. Needleman (England: Penguin, n.d.), 203-217; S. H. Nasr (ed.) *The Essential Writings of Frithjof Schuon* (New York: Amity House, 1986, 385-403. Of special importance in this regard is René Guenon’s *Man and his Becoming According to the Vedanta*

- (Delhi: 1990), which presents the concept of man in Hindu terminology, which, nevertheless, is shared by the other traditions as well.
- 18- M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, IAP, Lahore, 1987, pp. 57
 - 19- William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, chapter ix, especially pp. 237-48.
 - 20- *Ibid.*, p. 340.
 - 21- M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, IAP, Lahore, 1987, pp. 57
 - 22- More generally known as Gestalt Psychology, this German school of psychology was the result of the combined work of M. Wertheimer, K. Koffka and W. Köhler during 1912-14. It came as a reaction against the psychic elements of analytic or associationistic psychology, insisting upon the concept of gestalt, configuration, or organized whole which, if analyzed, it was averred, would lose its distinctive quality. Thus it is impossible to consider the phenomenon of perception as in any way made up of a number of isolable elements, sensory or of any other origin, for what we perceive are 'forms', 'shapes' or 'configurations'. From 'perception' the gestalt-principle has been extended throughout psychology and into biology and physics. Important for Iqbal scholars are the suggestions recently made to discern some 'points of contact' between the Gestalt and the philosophies of J. C. Smuts (holism) and A.N. Whitehead (philosophy of organism); cf. K. Koffka, 'Gestalt', *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, VI, 642-46; also J. C. Smuts, 'Holism', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XI, 643.
 - 23- The concept of 'insight' was first elaborately expounded by W. Köhler in his famous work: *The Mentality of Apes* (first English translation in 1924 of his *Intelligenzprüfungen an Menschenaffen*, 1917); cf. C. S. Peyser, 'Köhler, Wolfgang (1887-1967)', *Encyclopaedia of Psychology*, II, 271.
 - 24- M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, IAP, Lahore, 1987, pp. 57
 - 25- Lecture was delivered in a meeting of the fifty-fourth session of the Aristotelian Society, London, held on 5 December 1932 with Professor J. Macmurray in the chair, followed by a discussion by Professor Macmurray and Sir Francis Young Husband— cf. 'Abstract of the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society for the Fifty-Fourth Session', in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (New Series), XXXIII (1933), 341. The Lecture was published in the said *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, pp. 47-64, as well as in *The Muslim Revival* (Lahore), I/iv (Dec. 1932), 329-49. It now forms the "Seventh Lecture" of Iqbal's *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1986.
 - 26- M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, IAP, Lahore, 1987, pp. 152.
 - 27- Self-esteem entered the picture also, for religion's low status in the university caused philosophers to resent being associated with it and to demand their own departments. Richard Rorty suggests that present-day philosophy may be playing out the gloomy vision of Henry Adams, who (a century or so ago) regarded the new religion of science as being as self-deceptive as the old-time religion had been, and believed that

its “scientific method [was] simply a mask behind which lurk[ed] the cruelty and despair of a nihilistic age.” The recent founding of the Society of Christian Philosophers may seem like a counterexample to what I am saying, but the advice that aspiring members hear from their mentors is, Don’t write your dissertation on philosophy of religion. Write it on something else. When you get a job, *then* you can do philosophy of religion.

28- A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, pp. 330 and 357.

29- C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (New Haven, Yale, 1938) p. 62

30- C. G. Jung, *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (New York, 1931), Introduction

31- *Ibid.*

32- *Ibid.*

33- *Ibid.*

34- For all modern psychology, the luminous point of the soul, or its existential summit, is the consciousness of the ‘I’, which only exists to the extent that it can disengage itself from the darkness of the ‘unconscious’. Now, according to Jung, this darkness contains the vital roots of the individuality: the ‘collective unconscious’ would then be endowed with a regulatory instinct, a kind of somnambulant wisdom, no doubt of a biological nature; from this fact, the conscious emancipation of the ego would comprise the danger of a vital uprooting. According to Jung, the ideal is a balance between the two poles—the conscious and the unconscious a balance that can be realized only by the help of a third term, a sort of centre of crystallization, which he calls the ‘self’, a term borrowed from the doctrines of Hinduism. Here is what he has written on the subject:

With the sensation of the self as an irrational and indefinable entity, to which this is neither opposed nor subordinated, but to which it adheres and round which it moves in some sort, like the earth around the sun, the aim of individuation is attained. I use this term ‘sensation’ to express the empirical character of the relationship between the and the self. In this relationship there is nothing intelligible, for one can say nothing about the contents of the self. The is the only content of the self that we know. The individualized feels itself to be the object of a subject unknown and superior to itself. It seems to me that psychological observation here touches its extreme limit, for the idea of a self is in itself a transcendent postulate, which one can admittedly justify psychologically, but cannot prove scientifically. The step beyond science is an absolute requirement for the psychological evolution described here, for without the postulate in question I could not sufficiently formulate the psychic processes observed from experience. Because of this, the idea of a self at least possesses the value of a hypothesis like the theories about the structure of the atom. And if it be true that here too we are prisoners of an image, it is in any case a very living image, the interpretation of which exceeds my capacities. I scarcely doubt that it is a question of an image, but it is an image that contains us.³⁴

Despite a terminology too much bound up with current scientism, one might be tempted to grant full credit to the presentiments expressed in this passage and to find in it an approach to traditional metaphysical doctrines, if Jung, in a further passage, did not relativize the notion- of the self by treating it this time, not as a transcendent principle, but as the outcome of a psychological process:

One could define the self as a sort of compensation in reference to the contrast between inward and outward. Such a definition could well be applied to the self in so far as the latter possesses the character of a result, of an aim to reach, of a thing that has only been produced little by little and of which the experience has cost much travail. Thus, the self is also the aim of life, for it is the most complete expression of that combination of destiny we call an 'individual', and not only of man in the singular but also of a whole group, where the one is the complement of the others with a view to a perfect image.

- 35- For Hindus, information about the totality of the universe is contained in each discrete moment of creation, which they then describe with the visual analogy of the "Jewel Net of Indra." Reality is depicted in the analogy as an expansive net created by the god Indra, and at each junction in the threads of the net there is a highly reflective jewel. Each of these jewels can be seen reflected in all the other jewels, and the reflections of all of the jewels are contained in each jewel. So in the Vedantic conception, each discrete moment of creation contains the blueprint of the entire universe—or, to mix metaphors, the entire creation is contained in the 'DNA' of each moment of creation. For Vedantists, the entire universe can be— as it were— cloned from any aspect of the universe, though it is also, and somewhat enigmatically, a discrete moment in the jewel net of Indra.
- 36- In accord with Advaita ('non-dual,' or even 'non-local') Vedanta.
- 37- A differentiation must be made between interconnectedness and interrelatedness. Suffices to say here that while interconnectedness relates to the subtle though corporeal domain, interrelational signifies the unmanifest and the metaphysical aspect of reality.
- 38- "Now experience, as unfolding itself in time, presents three main levels— the level of matter, the level of life, and the level of mind and consciousness— the subject-matter of physics, biology, and psychology, respectively. Let us first turn our attention to matter. In order exactly to appreciate the position of modern physics it is necessary to understand clearly what we mean by matter. Physics, as an empirical science, deals with the facts of experience, i.e. sense-experience. The physicist begins and ends with sensible phenomena, without which it is impossible for him to verify his theories. He may postulate imperceptible entities, such as atoms; but he does so because he cannot otherwise explain his sense-experience. Thus physics studies the material world, that is to say, the world revealed by the senses. The mental processes involved in this study, and similarly religious and aesthetic experience, though part of the total range of experience, are excluded from the scope of physics for the obvious reason that physics is restricted to the study of the material world, by which we mean the world of things we perceive." M. Iqbal, "The Philosophic Test of the Revelations of Religious Experience", Lecture II, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, IAP, Lahore, 1987.
- 39- One of the three "presiding paradigms" the Newtonian, upheld the notion of a mechanical world or clockwork universe. What exists, supposedly, is "bare matter," the parts of which interact through forces of attraction or repulsion, so that the movement of the whole is determined by the disposition of the parts.

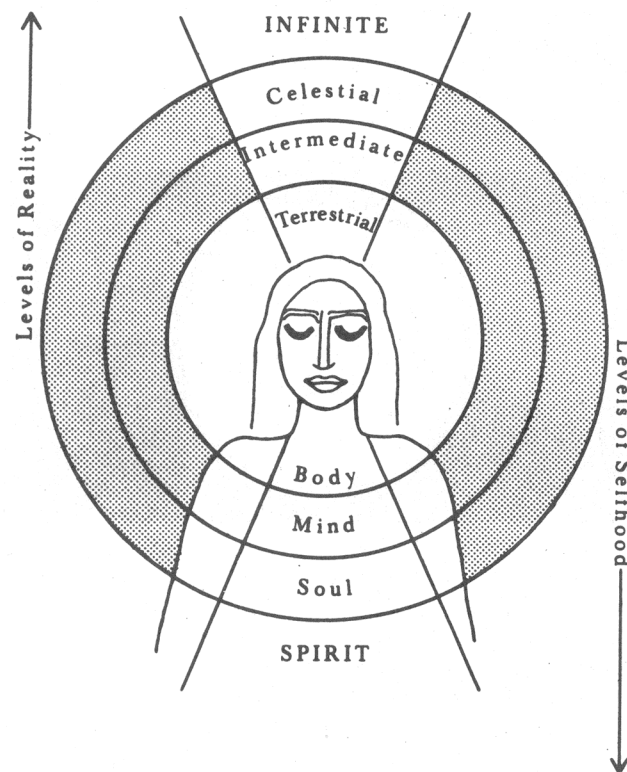
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- 40- Science in the modern sense would never have “gotten off the ground” without the benefit of a worldview which is drastically oversimplified. The success of this dubious paradigm has been spectacular and unprecedented. From the publication of Newton’s *Principia* in 1687 to the beginning of the 20th century, it was regarded, not simply as a paradigm, but indeed as the master key which in principle unlocks all the secrets of Nature, from the motion of the stars and planets to the functioning of her minutest parts. I will not recount the triumphs of Newtonian physics which seemingly justified this grand expectation; the list is long and singularly impressive.
- 41- Yet even here, in this “aetherial” domain, the notion of a whole rigorously reducible to its infinitesimal parts has proved once again to be the key: the famous Maxwell field equations testify to this fact. What is more, even the revolutionary proposals of Albert Einstein, which did break with some of the basic Newtonian conceptions, have left the foundational paradigm intact: here too, in this sophisticated post-Newtonian physics, we are left with a physical universe which can in principle be described with perfect accuracy in terms of a system of differential equations. In a vastly extended sense, the Einsteinian universe is still mechanical. It is mechanical, in fact, precisely because it conforms to what we have termed the Newtonian paradigm, which captures the very essence of mechanism.
- 42- It is no wonder that Albert Einstein— the greatest and loftiest among the advocates of mechanism— was profoundly dismayed, and staunchly refused to accept quantum theory as the fundamental physics. Yet everything we know today does point to that conclusion.
- 43- In order to avoid all confusion it should be observed that the word *Brahma*, without an accent, is neuter while the word *Brahma* is masculine ; the use, current among orientlists, of the single form *Brahman*, which is common to both genders, has the serious disadvantage of obscuring this essential distinction, which is sometimes further marked by expressions such as *Pāra-Brahma* or the “Supreme Brahma,” and *Apāra-Brahma* or the “non-supreme; Brahma:”
- 44- Most notably with Jiddu Krishnamurti, the Indian holy man.
- 45- M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, IAP, Lahore, 1987, pp. xxii.
- 46- “Science can prove nothing about God, because God lies outside its province. But ... its resources for deepening religious insights and enriching religious thinking are inexhaustible.” (Huston Smith, *Why Religion Matters*, p. 137.)
 “We must be careful here,” Smith says in *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*, “for science cannot take a single step toward proving transcendence. But what it proves in its own domain in the way of unity, inter-relatedness, the ‘immaterial,’ and the awesome makes it one of the most powerful symbols of transcendence our age affords.”
 Religious triumphalism died a century or two ago, and its scientistic counterpart seems now to be following suit. Here and there diehards turn up—Richard Dawkins, who likens belief in God to belief in fairies, and Daniel Dennett, with his claim that John Locke’s belief that mind must precede matter was born of the kind of conceptual paralysis that is now as obsolete as the quill pen— but these echoes of Julian Huxley’s pronouncement around mid-century that “it will soon be as

impossible for an intelligent or educated man or woman to believe in god as it is now to believe that the earth is flat” are now pretty much recognized as polemical bluster. It seems clear that both science and religion are here to stay.

E. O. Wilson would be as pleased as anyone to see religion fail the Darwinian test, but he admits that we seem to have a religious gene in us and he sees no way of getting rid of it. “Skeptics continue to nourish the belief that science and learning will banish religion,” he writes, “but this notion has never seemed so futile as today.” With both of these forces as permanent fixtures in history, the obvious question is how they are to get along. Alfred North Whitehead was of the opinion that, more than on any other single factor, the future of humanity depends on the way these two most powerful forces in history settle into relationship with each other, and their interface is being addressed today with a zeal that has not been seen since modern science arose.

(Huston Smith, *Why Religion Matters*, p. 72-73.)

- 47- It's important to note that Bohm wasn't the first quantum physicist to allow metaphysics back into the discussion or to suggest that mystics of the ancient world had had accurate intuitions about the nature of reality.



Abstract

People face with three inescapable problems: the problem nature poses; the social problem and the religious problem. This third issue seems less important than the other two. This article aims at explaining that religion is relevant to the chief concern of our century. It can no longer be assumed with impunity that religion was primitive superstition outgrown by civilized, rational man. The religious instinct is extremely powerful. The rift between science and religion has finally brought modern science in the midst of its present predicament. Modern science has become radically incoherent, not when it seeks to understand thing and subhuman organisms and the cosmos itself but when it seeks to understand man, man qua man. This has far reaching implication beyond the academic world leading to the crises in modern physical sciences, modern social sciences and modern culture.

Keyword: Religion and science, marginalized perspective, Colonizing psychology