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Table of Contents

Volume: 49	Iqbal Review: April 2008	Number: 2

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL UNITY1

Dr. Rowan Williams

ABSTRACT

If you believe what some commentators have to say, one of the major factors provoking conflict in our world is the sheer fact of different religious convictions: in our own Country, it seems to be assumed by many that if we could only get the relation between 'faith communities' right, social harmony would inevitably follow. And conversely, any expression of a belief that one's own religious loyalty is absolute, any statement of the belief that I, as a Christian or a Muslim or a Buddhist or whatever, am speaking the truth, is regarded as threatening and unacceptable. Surely the problem lies with this contest over the truth; surely, if religious people would stop speaking about truth and acknowledge that they were only expressing opinions and conditional loyalties, we should be spared the risk of continuing social conflict and even violence.

But what this hopeful fantasy conceals is an assumption that talking about truth is always less important than talking about social harmony; and, since social harmony doesn't seem to have any universal self evident definition, it is bound to be defined by those who happen to hold power at any given time which, uncomfortably, implies that power itself is more important than truth. To be concerned about truth is at least to recognise that there are things about humanity and the world that cannot be destroyed by oppression and injustice that no power can dismantle. The cost of giving up talking of truth is high: it means admitting that power has the last word. And ever since Plato's *Republic* political thinkers have sought to avoid this conclusion, because it means that there is no significance at all in the witness of someone who stands against the powers that prevail at any given time; somehow, political philosophy needs to give an account of suffering for the sake of

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1 A lecture given in Singapore at the conclusion of the Building Bridges seminar (6th December 2007)

conscience, and without a notion of truth that is more than simply a list of the various things people prefer to believe, no such account can be given.

So the fact of disagreement between religious communities is in fact crucially important for the health of our common human life. Because these communities will not readily give up their claims to truth in response to the appeal from the powers of the world around to be at one for the sake of social harmony, they testify that power, even when it is apparently working for the good of a majority, cannot guarantee that certain values and visions will remain, whatever may happen. But does this concern for truth mean that there is always going to be damaging conflict wherever there is religious diversity? What about the cost of religious diversity to 'social cohesion'– to use the word that is currently popular in British political rhetoric? Does disagreement about truth necessarily mean the violent disruption of social cooperation? I shall be arguing that it does not, and that, on the contrary, a robust view of disagreement and debate between religious communities may (unexpectedly?) playa major role in securing certain kinds of social unity or cohesion.

The first point I want to make is about the very nature of religious language. To believe in an absolute religious truth is to believe that the object of my belief is not vulnerable to the contingencies of human history: God's mind and character cannot be changed by what happens here in the world. And the logic of this is that an apparent defeat in the world for my belief cannot be the end of the story; *God* does not fail because I fail to persuade others or because my community fails to win some kind of power. Now if I believe for a moment that my failure or our failure is a failure or defeat for God, then my temptation will be to seek for any means possible to avoid such an outcome; and that way lies terrorism and religious war and persecution. The idea that any action, however extreme or disruptive or even murderous, is justified if it averts failure or defeat for my belief is not really consistent with the conviction that my failure is not God's. Indeed, it reveals a fundamental lack of conviction in the eternity and sufficiency of the object of faith. In plain English, religious violence suggests religious insecurity. When different communities have the same sort of conviction of the absolute truth of their perspective, there is certainly an intellectual and spiritual challenge to be met; but the logic of belief ought to make it plain

that there is no defence for the sort of violent contest in which any means, however inhuman, can be justified by appeal to divine sanction. The divine cannot need protection by human violence. It is a point uniquely captured in the words of Jesus before the Roman governor: 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight' (Jn 19.36).

So the rather paradoxical conclusion appears that the more religious people are utterly serious about the truth of their convictions, the less they will sanction all out violence; they will have a trust that what truly *is* will remain, whatever the vicissitudes of society and history. And they will be aware that compelling religious allegiance by violence is tantamount to replacing divine power with human; hence the Qur'anic insistence that there can be no compulsion in matters of religious faith. It is crucial to faith in a really existing and absolute transcendent agency that it should be understood to be what it is independently of any lesser power: the most disturbing form of secularisation is when this is forgotten or misunderstood. And the difficult fact is that it has been so forgotten or misunderstood in so many contexts over the millennia. It has regularly been confused with cultural or national integrity, with structures of social control, with class and regional identities, with empire; and it has been imposed in the interest of all these and other forms of power. Despite Jesus' words in John's gospel, Christianity *has* been promoted and defended at the point of the sword and legally supported by extreme sanctions; despite the Qur'anic axiom, Islam has been supported in the same way, with extreme penalties for abandoning it and civil disabilities for those outside the faith. There is no religious tradition whose history is exempt from such temptation and such failure

Like others, I have sometimes been very critical of the heritage of the European Enlightenment where it has been used to appeal to timeless and obvious rational truths which are superior to the truths claimed for revelation and imparted in the historical processes of communal life. But it should be granted that the Enlightenment had a major role in highlighting some of the inner contradictions of religious language and behaviour in the wake of an age when so much violence had been justified by the rhetoric of faith. After the wars of religion in Europe, it was plausible and important to challenge those habits of thought which had made it seem natural to plunge whole societies– indeed, the greater part of a whole continent– into murderous

chaos on the pretext of religious dispute. For the major thinkers of the Enlightenment, the contrast was between absolutes that could be defended only on the basis of arbitrary religious authority and absolutes that were established by universal reason; and it was obvious that the latter promised peace because they did not need any reference to authorities that, in the nature of the case, could be accepted only by certain groups. By forcing religious authorities to acknowledge that they could not have the legal and civic right to demand submission, Enlightenment thinkers in a sense obliged believers to accept what was in fact an implication of their own religious faith that power in this worldly terms was an inappropriate vehicle for faith.

But the enlightenment dream of a universal rationality proved in the event as vulnerable and questionable as any religious project. It became entangled in theories and discourses of racial superiority (supported by a particular reading of evolutionary biology) and the economic determinism of capitalist theory and practice; it developed a complex and unhealthy relationship with nationalism, which was, increasingly, seen as the practical vehicle for emancipation and rationalisation; and its own account of universal reason was (as I noted in a lecture here in Singapore some months ago) undermined first by Marxian and Freudian theories, then by the structuralist and postmodemist revolutions. European rationality– and its American manifestations in the Declaration of Independence and the political philosophy flowing from that– came to seem as local and arbitrary as any other creed; in the world of global politics, it depended on force as much as argument. And if you come to believe that the values of a certain culture– whether Western democracy or any other– are absolute and impossible for rational people to argue about, then, when some groups resist or disagree, you have a theory that licenses to suppress them; what is more, because you have no transcendent foundation for holding to these values, you may come to believe that any and all methods are justified in promoting or defending them, since they will *not* necessarily survive your failure or defeat.

Thus the Enlightenment hope of universal harmony on the grounds of reason can become a sophisticated version of the priority of force over everything else, a journey back towards the position that Plato exerted all his energy to refute in the *Republic.* If the power of argument proves not be universal after all, sooner or later we are back with coercion; and when that

happens it becomes harder and harder to hold firm to the classical liberal principles that are at the heart of the Enlightenment vision, harder and harder– for example– to maintain that torture or the deliberate killing of the innocent in order to protect the values of society can never in any circumstances be right. It is one of the great moral conundrums posed by the experience of recent years: what if the preserving of civil liberties and the preserving of the security of a liberal society turn out not always to be compatible?

The reality of religious plurality in a society declares, as we have already seen, that some human groups hold to their convictions with an absolute loyalty, believing they are true and thus non negotiable. If they thought otherwise about these convictions, they might be involved in negotiations about merging or uniting in some way; there would be no ground for holding on to a distinct identity. Yet they do hold to their claims to truthfulness, and so declare to the society around that certain things are not liable to be changed simply because of to changes in fashion or political theory or political convenience. The lasting plurality of religious convictions is itself a mark of the seriousness of the convictions involved. Some things are too important to compromise. *But* if a religious community is as serious as it ought to be about its beliefs, this refusal to compromise is accompanied by the confidence that, whether or not these particular beliefs prevail in any society, they will still be true, and that therefore we do not have to be consumed with anxiety about their survival. The religious witness is able to confront possible political failure, even social collapse, in the trust that all is not and cannot be lost, even when the future becomes unimaginably dark; what it will not do is to sanction any policy of survival at all costs (including the cost of basic humane conventions and moral boundaries).

Thus my first point about the role of plural religious communities in society is that they both underpin the notion that there are values which are not negotiable, and that at the same time they prohibit any conclusion that such values can ultimately be defended by violence. They challenge the drift from Enlightenment optimism to the postmodern enthronement of power and interest as the sole elements in political life; that is, they allow societies as well as person to fail with grace and to find space beyond anxiety. That is not at all the same as saying that they require passivity, resignation to the

unprincipled power of others. But they allow human beings the dignity of accepting defeat in certain circumstances where the alternative is to abandon the moral essence of a society in order to win: they suggest the subversive but all important insight that failure might be preferable to victory at the cost of tolerating, say, torture or random military reprisal as normal elements in political life. By being absolute and thus in a sense irreconcilable, they remind society that a unity imposed by force will always undermine the moral substance of social and political life. There is no way of finding a position outside or beyond diverse faith traditions from which to broker a union between them in which their convictions can be reconciled; and this is not bad news but good– good because it does two things at once. It affirms transcendent values; and *by insisting that no other values are absolute,* it denies to any other system of values any justification for uncontrolled violence. Transcendent values can be defended through violence only by those who do not fully understand their transcendent character; and if no other value is absolute, no other value can claim the right to unconditional defense by any means and at all costs. Thus the rationally irreconcilable systems of religious belief rule out any assumption that coercive power is the last resort or the ultimate authority in our world.

And if that is the case, we can see how religious plurality may serve the cause of social unity, paradoxically but genuinely. If we are prohibited from claiming that social harmony can be established by uncontrolled coercive power– that is, if we are obliged to make a case for the *legitimacy* of any social order– but are also prohibited from solving the problem by a simple appeal to universal reason, we are left with a model of politics which is always to do with negotiation and the struggle for mutual understanding. Politics is clearly identified as something pragmatic and 'secular', in the sense that it is not about absolutes. As the world now is, diverse religious traditions very frequently inhabit one territory, one nation, one social unit (and that may be a relatively small unit like a school, or a housing cooperative or even a business). And in such a setting, we cannot avoid the pragmatic and secular question of' common security': what is needed for our convictions to flourish is bound up with what is needed for the convictions of other groups to flourish. We learn that we can best defend ourselves by defending others. In a plural society, Christians secure their religious liberty by advocacy for the liberty of Muslims or Jews to have the same right to be heard in the

continuing conversation about the direction and ethos of a society that is characteristic of liberal polity in the broadest sense of the word.

Diverse religious communities thus approach each other in these social units with a powerful interest in finding what sort of values and priorities can claim the widest 'ownership'. This is not an effort to discover the principles of a generalised global ethic to which different traditions can sign up, tempting as this vision is; the work is more piecemeal and less concerned with programmatic agreed statements though it is certainly a significant moment when diverse communities can take responsibility for common declarations of some kind. The Alexandria Declaration was one such, laying down the limits of what could be defended in the name of religion within the conflicts of the Holy Land; in the same context, more recently, the declaration made by the Chief Rabbis of Israel and the representatives of the Church of England in October of this year outlined the protocols which both sides believed to be essential in defending each other– and other religious bodies– against physical attack or malicious misrepresentation. It is highly desirable that communities of faith continue to work at joint statements of witness about the environmental crisis (still an area that needs far more interfaith collaboration). And the levels of joint witness over matters around bioethics, for example, are significant wherever a narrowly and aggressively non religious rationality presses for certain kinds of change. At the same time, where each community recognises that no one religious tradition can claim to control the processes of public life, this may bring a realism about what the state can and cannot be expected to take for granted and thus a willingness to find, once again, strategies that can win maximal rather than ideal levels of ownership.

A certain pragmatism about what can be agreed as common moral 'property' combined with a strong advocacy of each community's freedom both to practise its faith and to express and argue it in public– this is what religious plurality in a contemporary society may look like. It suggests and helps to secure a state of affairs in which the definition of public policy is never carried through in abstraction from the variety of actual convictions that is evidenced in society– not because anyone of these asserts its right to dictate, but because all claim the freedom to join in public argument in ways that insist on the need for what I have been calling maximal ownership. So, if

a society seeks to legislate for euthanasia, for the absolute equivalence of marriage and any other kind of partnership, for discrimination against minorities in the name of social cohesion, religious bodies may be expected to argue, not for their right to settle the matter, but for a settlement that manifestly respects their conviction to the extent that they can defend it as legitimate even if not ideal. The notion that social unity can be secured by a policy of marginalising or ignoring communities of faith because of their irreducible diversity rests on several errors and fallacies, and its most serious and damaging effect is to give credibility to the idea of a neutral and/or self evident set of secular principles which have authority to override the particular convictions of religious groups. And, as 1 have argued at length in other places, this amounts to the requirement that religious believers leave their most strongly held and distinctive principles at the door when they engage in public argument: not a good recipe for lasting social unity.

Religious diversity in the modern state can thus be seen as a standing obstacle to any enshrining of a state absolutism (even a purportedly liberal variety) in ways that could pretend to legitimise coercion in the name of (non–religious) values; and it can be seen as a guarantor of the fullest argument and consultation in a democratic society, insisting that communities of faith have a stake in the decisions of the state and its moral direction. This last is important not only in the largely negative instances I have quoted but also in the pressure that communities of faith can bring to bear in order to persuade the state to act beyond some of its normal definitions of self interest– for example in addressing international debt and poverty, securing the best possible deal for refugees and migrants, and setting itself some clearly moral aims in foreign policy. This sort of thing will only happen, of course, if religious groups can persuade an electorate to 'own' such a vision. Governments in democratic societies have to be responsive to what electorates want; and if no religious group in a religiously plural context can insist on its preferences as of right, it is still true that the organs of debate in democratic society allow people of faith to be heard in pubic argument and thus to attempt persuasion.

But there is one more aspect of the plurality of religious presences that is important for social integrity and harmony (a harmony which includes, as mature political harmony must, the processes of honest disagreement and

negotiation). Plural religious traditions are a reminder that for most of the human race the values of society are still shaped by one or another history of religious belief. The narrowly 'modern' approach which takes it for granted that social values and priorities are timeless turns its back on the history that forms our convictions. All religious practice declares that we *inherit* certain kinds of insight and perspective, and that to understand why we think as we do, we need to be aware of history. So much is true of any society in which there is a strong and visible cultural presence of religion. But when this is a diversified presence, with distinct convictions and practices in evidence, it turns the argument in fresh directions. A society in which religious diversity exists is invited to recognise that human history is not one story only; even where a majority culture and religion exists, it is part of a wider picture. And very frequently the engagement of different religions in dialogue and cooperation will open up and highlight the many ways in which diverse traditions share a heritage at various points in history. The histories of religion intersect, in their texts and their social development and their political encounters.

Religious diversity when studied with care and sympathy shows us a historical world in which, whatever we say about the claims of diverse religions to truth, there is no possibility of claiming that every human question is answered once and for all by one system. Religions have defined themselves in dialogue and often intellectual conflict with each other; but that very fact implies that there will always be other ways of posing the fundamental questions that human beings confront. Diversity of faith points us towards a past in which there is a kaleidoscope of human perceptions, sometimes interacting fruitfully, sometimes in profound tension. Yet the encounter in history of these diversities shows that diversity cannot help being interactive; and that is in itself can prompt us to think of social unity as the process of a constantly readjusting set of differences, not an imposed scheme claiming totality and finality. Religious diversity becomes a stimulus to find what it is that can be brought together in constructing a new and more inclusive history– to find some fuller sense of the ways in which apparently divergent strands of human thought and imagination and faith can weave together in the formation of each other and of various societies.

Thus in what has been historically a majority Christian culture in the UK, the present diversity of religions within a mostly fairly secular social environment means that the UK has had to think through its history again in the consciousness of how it has engaged with those others who are now on its own doorstep or within its walls which means recognising how even a majority Christian culture has been affected by the strand of mathematical and scientific culture stemming from the Islamic world of the early Middle Ages and how aspects of mediaeval Christian discourse took shape partly in reaction to Islamic thought. The apparently alien presence of another faith has meant that we have had to ask whether it is after a11 as completely alien as we assumed; and as we find that it is not something from another universe, we discover elements of language and aspiration in common. The fuller awareness of a shared past opens up a better chance of shared future, a home that can be built together, to borrow the compelling image used by the British Chief Rabbi in his most recent book. Indeed Dr Sacks offers a very helpful framework for understanding the kind of social unity I have been imagining in this lecture. As he points out, the truth of many contemporary societies is that there is no straightforwardly prevailing religious position dominating society, and– with migration and growing ethnic diversity– no ready made shared history to which everyone can look in the same way. In such a world, a stable and robust social unity comes from the sense of a common project which all can learn to inhabit equally. Diverse communities resolve to enter a kind of 'covenant' in which they agree on their mutual attitudes, and thus on a 'civil' environment, in every sense of the word; and they build on this foundation a social order I which all have an investment. They build a society governed by law– law as a system in which strangers can become partners by accepting the same context of duty and entitlement in the common project of constructing their social world.

And this happens most fruitfully, so Dr Sacks argues, when we begin from acknowledging what he has elsewhere called 'the dignity of difference', from taking seriously the experienced diversity of conviction– not from a utopian and potentially even oppressive set of assumptions that boil down to the belief that everyone who is 'reasonable' is bound to have the same view. Throughout this lecture I have been arguing that different religious convictions all held in depth and with passion, give a necessary human fullness to the moral practices of a society. They give the resources needed to

preserve the idea that some principles are non negotiable and they also declare as plainly as possible to the society around them that there are therefore elements of the human condition which cannot be ignored or sidelined in the search for lasting human welfare and justice. To extend and alter the scope of my title a little, religious diversity tells us that the unity of actual human beings, the integration of their experience into a meaningful whole that takes in all aspects of their reality, is impossible without reference to the relation of human beings to the sacred without reference to the 'image of God' in Jewish and Christian terms. Any society that marginalizes religious communities or denies them the liberty to share honestly in public debate is fragmenting the human subject not only human society by demanding that we ignore one overwhelming dimension of what it is to be human.

In conclusion, then, I would maintain that the presence of diverse religious groups in a society, allowed to have a voice in the decision making processes of society without embarrassment, is potentially an immense contribution to a genuinely active and interactive social harmony and a sense of moral accountability within the social order. It is not something to be afraid of. This argument, of course, does not directly address the details of interfaith dialogue or its methods; but it does suggest that when honest and careful dialogue is going on, this will be for the ultimate good of any society. As I have said, none of this implies for a moment that dialogue entails the compromise of fundamental beliefs or that the issue of truth is a matter of indifference; quite the opposite. But there is a proper kind of humility which, even as we proclaim our conviction of truth, even as we Christians proclaim that all human beings are called to union with God the Father in Jesus Christ by the gift and power of the Spirit, obliges us to acknowledge with respect the depth and richness of another's devotion to and obedience to what they have received as truth. As we learn that kind of respect for each other, we remember that we have none of us received the whole truth *as God knows it;* we all have things to learn. And it is that expectant and positive attitude to our mutual encounter that makes the relation between passionately convinced Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, whatever else, finally a gift and not a threat to a thoroughly contemporary and plural society and its hopes for coherence, justice and peace.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN EDUCATION

William Stoddart

ABSTRACT

The spiritual life has been described as the "interiorization of the outward" (*khalwa*) and the "exteriorization of the inward" (*jalwa*)'. Education is an aspect of the latter process; the very etymology of the word *(e-ducare,* of lead out") is an indication of this. As a "leading-out", education is a rendering explicit of the immanent Intellect (*Intellectus* or *Nous*), the seat of which, symbolically speaking, is the heart. As Frithjof Schuon has said more than once: "The Intellect can know everything that is knowable". This is because "heart-knowledge" *(gnosis) is* innate, and thus already fully present within us, in a state of virtuality. This virtuality[2] has to be realized, and this realization is education. This corresponds to the Platonic doctrine of "recollection" (*anamnesis*), which in the last analysis is the "remembrance of God" (*memoria Dei*). "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you."

Man is constituted by the ternary: Spirit, soul and body (*Spiritus, anima, corpus);* only the last two are exclusively individual or human, the first being supra-individual or universal. The Intellect (*Intellectus*) is identifiable with the Spirit: Intellect and Spirit are but two sides of the same coin, the former pertaining to the theoretical or doctrinal and the latter to the practical or realization. They pertain respectively to the objective (or discriminatory) and the subjective (or unitive) modes' of knowing.

It is easy to see how education, both etymologically and philosophically, is an "exteriorization of the inward". But it is also an "interiorization of the outward", for an important function of education is precisely to ensure that the myriad of impressions coming from the outside be "inwardly digested" and reduced to. unity. Thus education is both "exteriorization of the inward" (intellectuality) and "interiorization of the outward" (spirituality). It is both *jalwa* and *khalwa.*

The following summary of terminology may be useful:

English	Latin	Greek	Arabic
Spirit	*Spiritus*	*Pneuma (Nous)*	*Ruh ('Aql)*
(Intellect)	(*Intellectus*)		
soul	*anima*	*psyche*	*nafs*
body	*corpus*	*soma*	*jism*

In modern parlance, "intellectual" is often wrongly taken as a synonym of "mental" or "rational". In fact, unlike the Intellect, which is "above" the soul, the mind or the reason is a content of the soul, as are the other human faculties: will, affect or sentiment, imagination, and memory. The spiritual or intellectual faculty, on the other hand– because of its higher level– can be categorized as "angelic". The operation of the Intellect is referred to as "intellectual intuition" or "intellection". Let it be said right away that there is no impenetrable barrier between Intellect and mind: the relationship of the former to the latter is like the relationship of the pinnacle of a cone to its circumferential base. Metaphorically speaking, the majority of philosophers, since the end of the Middle Ages, have concerned themselves solely with the circumferential base, with little or no transcendent content in their thought. Henceforth the transcendent (previously known to be accessible either through revelation or intellection) has been regarded as mere "dogma", "superstition", or arbitrary imagining. The result has been the tumultuous *degringolade,* from Descartes to the present day, known as the "history of philosophy"! One miraculous exception to this cascading down-wards were the Cambridge Platonists of the 17th century. The words of Virgil were never more applicable: *Facilis descensus Averni; sed revocare gradum, hic labor est!*

In the light of the foregoing, we are also able to see that the error, in a nutshell, of psychologists such as Jung, is completely to confuse Spirit and soul and so, in the last analysis, entirely to "abolish" Spirit (the only truly supra-individual, "archetypal", or "objective" element). It is not difficult to

see the chaos - and the damage - that results from this fatal and anti-Platonic act of blindness.

The linking of education with spirituality may cause some surprise; but the parable of the talents applies to the mind as well as to every other faculty. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul . . . and *with all thy* **mind."** It is at our peril that we neglect the need for "a well-stocked mind"; for it is surely obvious that, from a purely spiritual point of view, the mind cannot be allowed to lie fallow. This would allow it to become a playground for the devil, and *si monumen turn requiris, circumspice.*

Use of the phrase "a well-stocked mind" makes it necessary immediately to specify (and never more so than in the "reign of quantity" that is the present age) that, as far as true education is concerned, it is nevertheless a question, not of quantity (however intoxicating), but of quality; not of shadows (however beguiling), but of substance; not of trivia (however intriguing), but of essentials. In the present age, more than in all previous ages, the grasping of a true and permanent principle is infinitely more precious than the piling up of a hundred undigested and un-understood contingencies. In addition, there is no greater joy.

Since education, by definition, is a thing of the *mind,* we can do no better than cite here the injunction of St. Paul:

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, *think* on these things. (Philippians, 4, 8.)

One might say: whatsoever things are true, good, and beautiful; or whatsoever things manifest or reflect the absolute, the infinite, and the perfect.

All civilizations– for example, the Chinese, Hindu, Greco-Roman, Christian, and Islamic– manifest the central or cardinal role of learning, at least for those classes or individuals capable of it. In this connection, it might be objected that the North American Indians– who possessed a daunting

spiritual tradition if ever there was one– were not educated. In the light of the considerations expressed above, however, it is clear that the Red Indians too, in their own fashion, were "educated". To regard the Indians as uneducated because they were un-lettered, would be like regarding the Buddhists as atheistic, because they envisage Ultimate Reality as a supreme State (*Nirvana* or *Bodhi*) rather than as a supreme Being. Just as the Buddhists are manifestly different from the superficial and arrogant atheists of modern times, so the Indians are manifestly different from the technologically-trained but culturally-uneducated and mentally-immature people of modern times. The Indians' Book is Nature herself, and none have ever known this book better.

Education has many forms and, in any case, has in view only those classes and individuals who are capable of receiving it. Indeed the type of literacy resulting from the non-discriminating "universal" education of the last hundred years may even be inimical to culture, as Ananda Coomaraswamy has so trenchantly pointed out in his important work *The Bugbear of Literacy*. Coomaraswamy demonstrates beyond any dispute how the new-found capacity of the immature mind to read modern printed material - now always to hand in such staggering quantity' - has killed the rich traditional culture (largely oral for the mass of the people) in many societies, including European ones. This is the opposite of true education, which is depth, subtlety, and finally, wisdom.

The European tradition consists of two currents: the Greek and the Christian, or the Classical and the Medieval. The Greek current is evoked by such names as Homer, Pythagoras and Plato; the Christian current is evoked not only by such figures as St. Gregory Palamas and Meister Eckhart ("apophatic" and "gnostic" metaphysicians respectively), but also by St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas (whose viewpoints represent two important strands, amongst others, of Western Christian thought). Christianity is also epitomized by that "second Christ", St. Francis of Assisi, and by the great epic poet of Christendom, Dante Alighieri. In practical terms, education in Europe has obviously to take account of both the Classical and the Medieval currents.

In English-speaking countries, a good education must start with the Christian catechism and attendance at Divine Worship, as well as the study of the Bible and the most celebrated Christian authors, such as the great names just mentioned. It must include the study of Greek and Latin, coupled with some Homer, Plato, Virgil, Cicero and other ancient authors. The "history of philosophy" (an understanding of the relative "stability" of Ancient and Medieval philosophy as contrasted with the innovative nature and "instability" of Modern philosophy) is obviously necessary. Likewise, some notion of the "philosophy of science"– especially as regards the differing conceptions of science on the part of Ancient and Medieval times on the one hand and Modern times on the other– is also desirable. In present circumstances, some "comparative religion" is no doubt essential, but this must be of high quality and taught from a conservative and believing point of view, which is not lethal to the student's faith in his own religion.

Also essential are subjects such as English and European (and perhaps world) history and literature– within the limits of the reasonable and the possible. It should be stressed that this proviso applies throughout, as does also the frequently forgotten principle that formal or "scholastic" education is only intended for those fit to profit by it. The need for the study of modern languages, above all French and German, is apparent. A study of these two languages, coupled with the study of Greek and Latin, has the additional merit of facilitating access to other modern European languages, such as Italian and Spanish. Obviously all aspects of mathematics must be available, and the essentials taught to all.

In the modern situation, modern science and technology are inescapable, since, in some branch or other, they will be indispensable for most, from the point of view of earning a livelihood. Modern science and technology, however, are alien to culture and consequently do not pertain to education as defined in this paper.

1 These "alchemical" definitions come from Frithjof Schuon. In Arabic, *khalwah* means "spiritual retreat" and *jalwah* means "spiritual radiance", the former being logically prior to the latter. The two processes are symbolized respectively by the colours black and gold.

2 Examples (immediately apparent, and built into the human substance) of this innate and objective knowledge are our sense of logic, our capacity for arithmetic, our sense of justice, and our sense of right and wrong.

3 As Lord Northbourne has said (referring to the industrialized countries): "We live in an age of plenty; but what use is plenty of rubbish?" *(Look to the Land,* London, Dent, 1940.)

ON THE WAY OF POETRY AND NATURE

Arthur Versluis

ABSTRACT

Within a traditional culture everything is potentially a religious discipline, and in few places has this been made clearer than in Japan prior to modernity, for there the way of the sword, the way of tea, the way of flower arranging, all were, and to a most limited degree now are still, modes of religious expression, and indeed are in general well known outside Japan even today. To be a tea master for instance is, still, a matter of great prestige, but more than this, is a manifestation of religious discipline–it is a demonstration of active *samadhi,* of total absorption in the moment, in one's activity, and this it is which infills the ceremony with so much dignity and power.[2] Time seems suspended; everything is condensed into a single fluid movement. This dignity and power is common to all the initiatory disciplines– for that is what these all are, and indeed what all the traditional arts are– but there is one discipline which is traditionally not limited to one or another class, nor is it indeed even limited to any single initiatory transmission, as are the various other arts. We speak of course of poetry, of the *ars poetica,* and it upon this we shall centre.

At one time virtually everyone in Japan participated in this discipline, and indeed there were even night–long 'capping' parties, in which *renga* formed the center of the evening. And even though this discipline is, now, very nearly forgotten by most in that country, save by those familiar with the

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[2] We were privileged, in this regard, to have witnessed a tea ceremony of the highest order as part of an anniversary celebration for Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji; by highest order we mean that the master was, in the context of this particular ceremony, freed to act spontaneously within the ritual moves of tea making. This highest combination of spontaneity and ritual is rarely seen, even by long–time students of the tea master; and the witnessing of it gives proof once again that the only true freedom is that of absolute mastery–for were a neophyte to attempt the same 'spontaneous' ceremony it should become a mere mockery. The traditional arts possess a dignity which in the modern world, with its factories and its focus upon quantity, can scarcely imagine. The reader is, in this regard, advised to read Marco Pallis, *Peaks and Lamas,* (London:1948).

ancient traditions, nonetheless it remains today, as always, open to everyone, and indeed forms a religious discipline itself, a means toward religious manifestation and understanding. To see how this is so, we shall turn back to examine the origins, cognates and function of poetry as– religious discipline, focusing upon Japanese tradition.

We have chosen to focus upon the Japanese *ars poetica* because the most traces remain of it; the same things which we shall observe of it are true also of Taoist Chinese poetry, as for that matter of Amerindian songs and poetry– all retain that primal simplicity and closeness to nature which characterises the primordial cultures. But the Japanese poetical disciplines became the most refined of these, and the most traces of its poetical creations exist–and hence we will in the main concentrated upon Japanese *waka, haiku* and *renga* while drawing upon other traditions, and while keeping in mind that this is by no means a phenomenon confined to Japan, by any means, but rather is, each according to its own way, universal amongst traditional cultures.

Probably, though, to focus upon the Japanese way of poetry, it would be best to begin with mention of Shinto, for Shinto, like Taoism and like the Amerindian traditions, represents a connexion with an earlier epoch, one closer to the primordial world itself, and far closer to the natural world than later times.

Shinto is certainly one of the purest natural religious traditions, insofar as it represents precisely this connexion with primordiality, entailing worship of the spirits which are to be found everywhere in the natural world, amongst groves, waterfalls, animals, rocks, mountains, and concentrated in certain shrines which are most simply indicated by means of flags and ropes.[3]

This recognition of the divinity incarnate in the natural world, and the profound rituals it engendered– clapping, bowing to the ancestors and to the spirit beings, offering incense and water– is absolutely pure and simple, indeed primal purification. Attachment to the past, in the form of guilt, and to the future, in the expectation of a future life, are absent here. Rather, there

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[3] See the essay 'On Ropes and Flags' in our *Entering the Gate: Essays in Traditional Studies,* (London: 1989).

is simply the sound of the clap, the silent bending of the ritual bow, the recognition of the inherent beauty and incarnate Divinity of that place, and the ceremony is through.

The connection here with the absolute simplicity of *haiku* is, as R. H. Blyth pointed out in his study of the subject[4] is clear– in both one sees the absolute beauty and simplicity of the natural world, shining forth in clarity, as in the poem of Bashitsu:

The bright autumn moon:

The shadows of trees and grass– And those of men!.[5]

The first line refers to transcendent truth, of which the moon is symbolic; the next line refers to the shadowy phenomenal realm, and the third line refer– to the human realm, which stands between these two, perceives the former, but like the latter is still immersed in the shadow– realm, the *saha–world* of temporality. The human, the trees and the grass are here correlated with one another, distinguished only by the human cognizance of the moon. The natural world is indivisible from the Divine, and this theophanic capacity is precisely what makes traditional poetry so powerful religiously, for truly the natural and the Divine are not separable. None of this is to say that *haiku* is a 'product' of Shinto, but rather to point out the deep affinities between the two, as deep as that between Taoism and the ancient Chinese poetry, particularly of the 'recluse' kind. And with that aside, we will consider the nature of poetry as religious discipline itself, using *haiku, waka* and *renga* as our focus, beginning in more general terms, and moving toward the specific.

Poetry functions particularly well as a religious discipline because its centrum is the word, which is to say the *mantra* or *dharani,* in sacred terms. Now a *mantra* or a *dharani* is a sacred chant, untranslatable, really, and its 'function' is the invocation or manifestation of the Divine power with which it is resonant.

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[4] See R.H. Blyth, *Haiku,* (Hokkuseido: 1949) Vol. I, 160, 'Eastern Culture.' 4).
[5] Ibid, I.I 96.

Even though ultimately there is only the Divine Unity, nonetheless there are various aspects or functions as it were of the Divine resonant within certain ancient syllables, words and tones which embody the harmonic vibration most consonant with certain deities or Divine powers. By repetition of those phrases, which have been transmitted from antiquity, or revealed in conjunction with a certain era, one is able to place oneself in consonance with the power which is a deity, a transcendent being or force.[6] In the former case, we refer to the traditional religious *mantra* or *dharani,* which though strictly speaking are atemporal, transcendent, nonetheless due to the nature of our world appear to us as having been 'passed down' from primordiality–hut in the latter case one finds the definition of sacred chant expanded so that indeed it may even include poetry of a certain kind, referring here to 'revelation' in a more or less individual sense.

But let us first consider what the *mantra* or *dharani* 'does,' that we can see how poetry may also become mantraic. The *mantras* and *dharanis* are traditionally seen to have emanated from the sacred letter A, which is the primal sound, the primordial vibration as it were, to which all words return, and from which they emanate; A is the principal Origin itself. The Word is the emanation of this Origin; all words emanate from and reflect it, and if followed to their source, are one with it. This last is traditionally expanded in esoteric Buddhism to say that 'Everything spoken by the tongue is a mystic formula (*dharani*).[7]'

This is in essence a Tantric saying–it is cognate with the realization that everything in phenomenality is one's teacher, a recognition which poetry

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[6] It is because such phrases or syllables are themselves indivisible from the force which is the deity or Divine itself, that traditionally there has been such emphasis upon the retention of the primordial language in its most perfect form. This is, naturally enough, particularly emphasized in Western tradition as in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis,* in the *Corpus Hermeticum,* and in Plato's *Phaedrus,* towards its end–for the Western tradition has most nearly lost its connections to primordiality; similar strictures enjoining the retention of language in its ancient perfection obtain in the East, but there the continuity has been maintained. The loss of a sacred language– as the loss of Latin in the Roman Catholic Church– is a major step toward the destruction of the tradition as a whole, for language, the means of communication, is the tie that binds man to man, and man to the Divine.

[7] Quotation taken from the 'Commentary on the Great Wisdom Sutra,' quoted by Muji in his *Shasekishu,* translated as *Sand and Pebbles,* R. Morrell, trs. (New York: 1985), 5A:12.

certainly is eminently suited to express, and indeed one may say that this is the fundamental understanding 'behind' *haiku* and traditional poetry in general, for in it evil is given its place in the sacred order of the cosmos.

In any event, *mantra* and *dharani,* by means of repetition, offer entry into a station of consciousness termed 'word *samadhi;'* it is the same station no doubt briefly entered by Tennyson when he, as a youth, would wander about repeating his own name to himself until its significance vanished and, later, he was filled with a sense of great, inexplicable bliss. 'Word *samadhi'* is the 'internal' reflexion of the 'external' realization that all beings are one's teachers– both are the manifestation of a deep inward fusion, the *conjunctionis oppositorum;* the realisation of primal unity. Poetry, if it is composed in a certain fused state of mind, may also allow one to partake in these understandings, but it must emanate from, allowing entry into a station of invocational unity, and offering insight into the Divine nature of a given situation, place, event, or being, insight into 'instantaneity.' This is the power of *dharani–mysterious* beyond all human understanding, they bring into play'forces beyond, far beyond the human realm; and the power of poetry is a reflexion of these powers, a reflex ion of the dharanic power.

But poetry is not so concentrated, so pure as *dharan{or mantran* for these are transmitted precisely because of their efficacy, their mysterious power to invoke given beneficent forces; whereas poetry, while arising from a correlate realisation of unity, is more individual, and this 'individualised' aspect of poetry gives it that fleeting, ethereal, sad quality, for there is always in poetry a cognisance of human transience which in *mantras* or *dharani* is non–existent, the human realm *per se* being in truth of no consequence whatever to the Divine; the Divine functions within it without reference to this or that individual or situation–it is impersonal, absolute.

This is not to say, though, that poetry is not also a kind of Divine revelation–its sheer beauty, its manifestation of human transience, of insubstantiality, of the suffering which is existence, not to mention its transmission of religious truths all attest to its revelatory nature, its power, though of course on a lower level than that of the revealed *dharani,* being more limited and 'individualistic.'

Yet at times, when from the pen or lips of a truly religious being, poetry may indeed verge upon the dharanic–which is to say a series of words which act to relieve suffering, as for instance the poem of Kiyomizu Kanzeon, the bodhisattva particularly affiliated to the sufferings of our own tormented era:

Although your pain be as the burning moxa on Shimeji's fields

Still trust in me while yet I remain in this world.[8]

The power of *waka,* of this kind of religious poetry, is that its few words are able to bestow serenity, able to still the mind, and offer an insight into the very nature of existence, as does the following poem by a page overheard by Eshin, a priest:

To what shall I Compare this human life?

To the white wake

Of a boat rowing away

At the break of dawn.[9]

Images like this are so beautiful that one's mind is naturally calmed, in a different way than that by which it is calmed in the poem of Kanzeon Bosatsu, to be sure, the former being truly a *dharani,* transcendent, the latter being a poetical insight into the nature of existence.

Then, too, poetry is able to set forth the way by which man ought live, as in the case of Goethe's poem:

Life I never can divide/ Inner and outer together you see.

Whole to all I must abide;/ Else I cannot be.

[8] *Shinkokinshu* XX: 1917; see *Sand and Pebbles,* op. cit, 5A: 12.
[9] *Ibid,* 5A: II.

Always I have written/ What I feel and mean to say

And thus my friends although I split/ Yet still I remain one.

Hence we can see here what we might well call a triple order: the poem of Kyomizu Kanzeon is wholly transcendent, being indeed an irruption of the Divine into the phenomenal realm so to speak; the poem of Eshin belongs to a slightly lesser order, being aesthetically powerful, but not transcendent; and the poem of Goethe belongs to the discursive or prosaic variety, useful for moral exhortation. This is not to say that these three poems are not all engaged in the same revelation, only that they present different aspects of what may well be called theophany (using the term without specific monotheist connotations).

The poem of Eshin, above, is a *waka,* the thirty–one syllable poetic form characteristic of Japanese poetry, the *waka* traditionally having been said to have been initiated by Susanno, the storm and oceanic God, brother of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess. The first poem of this type was said to be on the occasion of Susanno's marriage to Kushinada Hime, the full poem being

A many– layered fence

At Izumo, where clouds billow–

I build a fence

To live therein with my wife.

Ah, that many–layered fence![10]

It is interesting that the *waka–form* continues a triplicity throughout, this first poem repeating the word 'fence' three times, in conformity with the three worlds or realms (physical, subtle, sidereal) of the cosmos, this being the symbolism of thirty as well, which consists in three sets of ten, ten being

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[10] That is, in Japanese: Yakumo tatsu / Izumo yaegaki / Tsumagome ni / Yaegaki tsukuru / Sonoyaegaki (w)e.

the number of perfection, the *waka* having an extra' one attached to signify the transcendence of the triplicity.

Now there are different degrees of transcendence, of course, and these degrees manifest in poetry as well; in the *Jodo Wason,* the Pure Land Hymn Collection, we find references to 'birth in the Palace,' to the 'Transformed Land' (*Kedo*), also called the 'Border Land,' (*Henji*), and the 'Castle of Doubt,' (*Gijo*).[11] That is: for those beings who doubt the Inconceivable Vow, but who nonetheless recite the Name, enter into a 'trajectory' toward the Pure Land by virtue of the invocation, but because of their lack of faith, enter info a 'palace,' or 'heavenly state' in which they see the *Hoben keshin,* the expedient transformed body of the Buddha, but not the true Transcendent Body *(dharmakaya),* nor do they enter into the transcendence which is the Pure Land itself a transmuted but not utterly transcendent state.[12] It is said that those born into the 'Transformed Land' stay in the imaginal Palace for Five Hundred years, a stay which though perhaps from a human perspective would be a delight, nonetheless from a more transcendent view would be clearly a delimitation as it were.

Now this same is to be seen in the poetical 'hierarchy' which we mentioned above: Goethe's poem is primarily discursive, intellectual; Eshin's poem is aesthetical, beautiful; and the poem of Kanzeon is indeed transcendent, leading beyond the world of suffering. Poetry, in brief, is capable of expressing a wide range of truth–all these are true, to be sure, but the latter is more transcendent than the former nonetheless.

Poetry is also able to express the highest truth–though at this point, like the dharani of Kanzeon, it is very nearly no longer poetry at all, but something utterly beyond the phenomenal world. Yet even so, it employs the imagery of this world, conformably with the indivisibility of *samsara* and *nirvana,* and with the fact that one; as Dionysius the Areopagite said, must necessarily speak of the Divine in phenomenal terms, else the human mind cannot comprehend it.

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[11] See the *Jodo Wasan,* (Kyoto: 1965) 1.2, p. 27.
[12] *Ibid*, 35, p. 63. One may say that the Pure Land is the principial Reality of which the phenomenal. is a reflection; hence as Hakuin Zenji said, 'the Pure Land is near to hand.'

Said Sillman, in a song:

The attainment of Equal Mind

Is called the One–Child Stage;

The One–Child Stage is Buddha–nature;

One realises it in the Land of Serene Sustenance.[13]

The poem is based upon a passage from the *Nehan Gyo,* which reads as follows:

'Buddha-nature is *Tathagata.* Buddha nature is called the One–Child stage. Why? Because in the nature of the One– Child stage, Bodhisattvas attain the mind of equality toward all beings. All beings will eventually attain this station; hence it is said all beings possess Buddha-nature. The One–Child stage is Buddha-nature; Buddha-nature is *Tathagata.*[14]'

The attainment of Equal Mind, or Equanimity, is the regarding of all beings equally, not being prejudiced against one or another, but seeing all with the Eye of Insight; it is primordial vision, seing each being anew in each instant–it is pure openness. Consequently it is called the one–child station, for one views every being as one's own child, with compassionate regard, being the manifestation of Avalokitesvara. This regarding is indeed the Buddha-nature itself, indivisible from all beings, though they know it not.

This is poetry at its most transcendent, but even so it is phrased in part in natural terms; the love of a mother for child is expanded to include all beings in this 'Land of Serene Sustenance.' Traditional poetry has as its forte the conjunction of natural and transcendent truth, if we may so speak– indeed, it is most powerful when these are indisseverable, and it is significant that the waka takes its origin mythologically from the marriage of the storm God and the celestial maiden, for so it is also in every poem, that it contains at once a

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[13] *Ibid*, 92, based on a passage from the *Nehan Gyo.*
[14] *Ibid.*

nature and a sidereal, transcendent aspect. Let us consider in this regard some poems of Soen Nakagawa Roshi, for this contemporary Zen Buddhist teacher was also a recognised poet in the traditional sense. He wrote:

\kite kono   Alive!
Aoba wakaba no   The light of the Sun
Hi no hikari [15]   In new green leaves

Now this poem, like so many of Nakagawa Soen's poems, is directly related to *zazen,* or Zen Buddhist meditation– it in fact narrates as it were the miraculous experience of one coming out of deep *Samadhi like* 'crawling out of the dead sea'[16] in which one realises first the primal fact, that one is 'alive!', then the phenomenal mark of this is the light of the sun which denotes existence in the cosmos–and then the new green leaves of the trees. Hence in this single poem we have as it were the birth of the being, the 'entry' into the phenomenal world, the realm of multiplicity. Generally speaking, a *haiku* poem has within it a line referring to the Transcendent, and a line referring to the 'puncture' of that image by movement in the immanent; and in any case the poem typically manifests the union, the syzygy of the Divine and the mortal. And so it is in this case: the light of the sun is simultaneous with the Divine light, which is 'in the new green leaves' of life, the connections of samsaric existence, indivisible from the nirvanic Divine. The light is in the new green leaves and indeed they could not even be seen without it. The light remains the Transcendent, the leaves ever-changing, and yet the two are indisseverable.

Something of the same is true in the following poem as well:

Nanatsu boshi   In winter
Juhyo no ueo   The seven stars
Ariku na ru   Walk upon a crystal forest.[17]

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[15] See *The Soen Roku,* (New York: 1986), p. 68.

[16] *Ibid*, p. 71.

[17] *Ibid.*

This poem begins with a general state: winter, a state of privation, the world white, pure, a state externally barren, but internally alive, a state of withdrawal in internalisation; 'winter' is in the poem followed by the 'seven stars,' which refers of course to the Pleiedes, that hazy circle of seven sidereal sisters which marks the coming rains; like the sunlight in the previous poem, though, the seven stars are 'eternal,' 'nirvanic' so to speak, and the 'crystal forest' of the last line suggests again the multiplicity of existence, 'walking' here come late to the light implicitly penetrating the new green leaves in the other poem– there is movement, interpenetration. Yet the reference is to a crystalline, frozen world, to the shimmering beauty of the winter forest which denotes also an inward state–the stellar, distanced objectivity of the wintry mind, everything seen in absolute clarity. The seven stars, incidentally, also may be seen to refer to the six previous Buddhas, prior to Sakyamuni, who is the seventh of this present world–cycle. In any even, we can see that metaphysical truth is indivisible from the natural–the imagery and the meaning are conjunct in these *haiku,* which with their brevity and simplicity is nonetheless by no means devoid of religious meaning, though in a form so condensed that the undiscerning reader may never catch it at all. This 'condensation' is precisely what makes *haiku*–o amenable to Zen Buddhist praxis, for Zen itself is the condensation of the religious path into its very crystalline essence–not for nothing is Zen Buddhism called the 'short path.' But that 'shortness' carries with it a correlate steepness, and consequently is not for all, though it is open to all.

And in fact one finds *haiku* and *waka,* whilst primordially connected to Shinto and, throughout conjunct with the natural world, very much intertwined with the Buddhist tradition as well, in which intertwining we can see also the primal relation between poetry and religious praxis, the former providing a kind of vehicle for the expression of the latter. In truth, poetry is fundamentally not 'secular' at all, the very word having came into existence only in the present era, but rather is inherently religious, or spiritual in origin, thereby being indivisible from the natural world, the source of which it reflects.

Nowhere is the Buddhist recognition of the unitariness of *samsara* and *nirvana* more evident than in poetry, for poetry is and must be reflective of the phenomenal realm, yet at the same time reflects the transcendent verities,

Transcendent Reality, by means of phenomenal images. That 'below' is indivisible from that 'above,' to employ the Hermetic formulation, though geometrical symbolism is quite out of place here, since we are indeed speaking of unities. It is in this very world that we can see the Divine; the Pure Land is nowhere else than here, in this very moment, and poetry's power consists in the revelation of this truth in beautiful, intoxicating words.

This can be seen in the *koan* cases not only of the *Mumonkan* and of the *llekiganroku,* which are traditionally accompanied by the verses of Setcho, but in the *Zenrin kushu* as well, the latter being in fact a collection of traditional and popular poetic lines and phrases which are employed in Rinzai Zen practise during *sanzen–one,* when given a *koan,* and having attained realisation of that station which it represents, then needs to find the proper 'capping verse' for the *koan, koan* literally meaning a kind of government record, appropriate in this case especially because the Zen Buddhist student is on a path toward that transcendent state which is 'master of heaven and of earth,' the regal state, the state of kingship. In any case, the verses which enter into the canon of the *Zenrin kushu* are thereby transmuted, their meaning become permeated with subtle spiritual implications, whatever the verse's origin.[18]

The same is true in fact of the *koan* cases themselves, which are hardly unpoetic: take this case from the *Hekiganroku,* without introduction, accompanying verses, or commentary: 'A monk asked Haryo: "What is the sword against which a hair is blown?" Haryo said: "Each branch of the coral embraces the bright moon." The original text reads *sui mo ken,* or 'blow hair sword,' meaning the sword of Zen practise which cuts through even a hair blown against it, through even the subtlest of delusions. And as to the corresponding line: 'Each branch of the coral embraces the bright moon,'– the branches refer to the ten thousand things of the cosmos; which is to say, *samsara,* and the bright moon refers to the fullness of nirvanic wisdom–every being is one's teacher puts this same understanding another way. But the sheer beauty of the line is, as Katsuki Sekida points out, intended to foster a 'language *samadhi'–one* repeats it again and again until the line transcends itself, or rather one transcends the line. And listen to Engo's introduction for case ninety–nine, Chu Kokushi and the Tenbodied Herdsman:

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[18] See *The Book of the Zen Grove,* Zenrin Robert Lewis, trs., (New York: 1984).

'When the dragon calls, mists and clouds arise; when the tiger roars, gales begin to blow. The supreme teachings of the Buddha ring out with a silvery voice. The actions of Zen masters are like those of absolutely expert archers, whose arrows, shot from opposite directions, collide in midair. The truth is revealed for all ages and places. Tell me, who has ever been like this? [19]

The dragon calling forth the clouds and rain refers here to the traditional Buddhist use of clouds and rain as symbolic of *upaya,* the skillful means of the Buddha for the liberation of beings, means as omnipresent as rain. Then too the dragon, like the *naga,* is affiliated with the waters, with coldness and wet, symbolic of ignorance; and hence it is a poetic reversal to use this as an image of the ultimate truth, a typical Buddhist reversal The roaring of the tiger which has the force of gales refers to the instantaneous, absolute power available to the Zen student, to one who is in control of himself, who can draw upon the absolute resources of his tempering in the dragon's cave of deep *samadhi.* Dragon and tiger are images which have their origin in Taoism, the dragon referring to the cold, watry yin–quality, the tiger having a dry, yang quality[20]. These of course are related to certain directions, and to various properties; but at this point we pass outside the scope of the present enquiry.

To continue the commentary then: the silvery voice of the Buddha refers to the moon, the full moon being symbolic of nirvanic Buddhahood; and the two archers whose arrows collide in mid air has several symbolic implications.

First, we may note that it is traditionally said in Buddhism that it is extraordinarily unique to attain human form, much less to be able, in that form, to hear the Dharmic truth; and the difficulty of two arrows striking in midair corresponds to this difficulty, to the rarity of this good fortune. But second, we might point out another, more esoteric aspect to this simile, that being, the two arrows collide in midair and all force ceases. They no longer are carried on their courses, but rather their arc ceases and they fall away. Likewise, the *dharma* manifests as the falling away of the karmic obstructions,

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[19] See Setcho's verses and the traditionally appended commentary to case ninety–nine, *Hekiganroku,* translated by Katsuki Sekida, (New York: 1977), as *Two Zen Classics.*
[20] See *Taoist Yoga,* Lu K'uan Yu, (New York: 1970), Ch. 7.

of the forces which impell the being in samsaric delusion, in order that Reality may manifest.

The first line, 'Tell me, who has ever been like this?' is ironic, and also possesses a dual meaning. On the one hand, one may say that no one has ever been like this–for who is it that one could say 'is like this?' From the Buddhist perspective, the personality consists in a concatenation of parts or elements, and there is ultimately no single individual, no permanent being. Then, too, on the other hand one may indeed say that some really are 'like this,' for it is without question possible to attain to the truth, to realise liberation, though who it is that realises, that is another matter.

And so we can see that the original poetry of this *koan,* like that which is found throughout Zen Buddhtst writings, is conjunct with metaphysical implications so profound that one can scarcely fathom them; with all its beauty, the koan is also simultaneously wholly manifesting its transcendent meanings and origin. And because it employs so much natural imagery, to transcendent ends, we can say that the traditional poetic form indeed 'marks' the centre of Zen Buddhist transmission, being the means of 'regulating' or of 'examining' the student, testing him to see if he has attained the subtleties of transcendent understanding marked by the poetic mode of discourse.

In fact, one can think of no other religious tradition which entails such a reliance on poetry as means of religious practise; this is true in the Chinese transmission, but becomes truly pivotal within the Japanese, in conjunction with the Japanese *haiku* and *waka* tradition as part of the cultural .inheritance from Shinto. But poetry has been inherent ill Zen Buddhism since its beginning; it is true that the Buddha enjoined the avoidance of poetry as an activity in itself, but we are not here talking about poetry as entertainment merely nor in any modem sense. In Zen Buddhism, poetry is in truth a Way, like the various Mystery disciplines in the West: it is a democratic means of entry and of manifestation in some respects–anyone may enter–but at the same time it is truly aristocratic, for only a few are really brilliant. Brilliance is not a matter of words, though, of fluency in expression; it is rather a matter of transcendent realisation which shines through it so to speak, and of the ways in which that realisation manifests. Certainly there are certain qualities which 'condition' that realisation in its permeation into the phenomenal

realm, as it were; it may possess a quality of rigour, or of mercy, of absolute clarity or of natural, hence indirect references. But in any case it is symbolical, for the symbolic is the means of 'communication' in our world with the 'archetypal,' the transcendent.[21]

It is in fact precisely for this reason that modem poetry is, in many different ways, so profoundly anti–symbolic: it must be so, for, emerging out of a mind divorced from religious practise which is originally the heart of poetry, one can only expect that many inferior possibilities might be realised in the name of poetry, among them being infatuation with words themselves, various forays into the realms of greed, anger, ignorance, self-infatuated displays and even dare one say it?– demonic outbursts. But all of this has nothing to do with the way of poetry as a means of initiatory discipline, and since this is our focus in this essay, we will skip modem incongruities in the name of poetry, and return to our central consideration, concluding our discussion with the words of National teacher Daio on Kanzeon Bodhisattva, an initiatory poem *par excellence* the sphere of perfect communion is clear everywhere the pitcher water is alive, the willow eyes arc green there are also cold crags and early green bamboo why are people these days in such a great hurry? the cliffs are high and deep, the waters rush and tumble the realm of perfect communion is new in each place face to face, the people who meet her don't recognise her when will they ever be free from the harbour of illusion? lotus blossoms always in her hands, she stands alone, magnificent a boy comes to call wordless, eyes resemble eyebrows know that outside of joining the palms and bowing the head how could this thing be explained to him? the sound of the rushing spring is cool and subtle the colours of the mount– in crags are deep but distinct in every field the realm of perfect communion how can Sudhana know? the dense crags jut forth precipitous the waterfalls spew an azure loom in each land the sphere of perfect communion those who go right in are rare the clouds are thin, the river endless the universal door appears without deception questioning the boy, he doesn't 'yet know it exists he went uselessly searching in the cold of mists and waves in a hundred cities

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[21] We speak here in figural terms, *of* course, but it is necessary to do so when referring to the contingent human perspective. Our use of the word 'archetypal' has nothing whatever to do with modem psychologising implications lent it.

CULTURE, HOSPITALITY AND RELATIONAL ETHICS: SOME PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS

Marc Colpaert

ABSTRACT

This paper is an adaptation of a lecture on Culture and Hospitality, given in Bournemouth after 9/11. 9/11 made it clear that groups of people did not or did badly understand each other. It made it clear that there are– worldwide– tremendous misunderstandings in the communication between groups and within groups of people; especially when they think their worldviews, values, norms and ethics are at stake. Sometimes the conflict was articulated as a confrontation between the American (Western) way of life and the Islamic Way of Life. After 9/11 something 'fundamental' changed our common world. The dominant (western) culture could not longer impose their creeds, their methodologies, their political strategies on other cultures. There is– not only in the Muslim world, but worldwide– a lot of resistance. The dominant culture has to analyse its own self image and must mpare it with the image which the other has of him. Respect for the self and respect for the other has to be brought in balance. This article starts from the necessity to reflect about the more essential features of an intercultural dialogue. Reflection and dialogue are necessary because of the increasing violence between individuals and groups on earth and because of tremendous migrations. For his analysis the writer uses the ideas of philosophers like Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas and the psychiatrist Ivan Boszormenyi Nagy. The article distinguishes between multicultural and intercultural and invites the reader to make a choice for intercultural dialogue and relational ethics. The consequence of such choice is the acceptance of an ongoing transformation within and between persons and groups. At the same time the reader is alerted to the need for inter-religious and inter-confessional dialogue proposed by Raimon Parulekar, for intercultural dialogue is not possible without inter-religious dialogue.

Keywords: intercultural, inter-religious dialogue, relational ethics, hospitality

Introduction

On all levels of our society we are confronted with diversity and with the need to deal with differences. Health Care and education will have to playa key role in the guidance of transformation processes. Educational institutions must take the lead to prepare the coming generations for the hybridisation of our societies. That implies that students must be equipped to be able to accept, to cope with and to live in a constantly (inter)cultural changing and transforming society. The fear to lose identity should be guided towards and turned into the experience of the richness and the humanising aspect that a deeper and broader understanding of the diverse cultures can deliver. But this is not possible without pain and without the feeling to lose aspects of what is 'common sense,[22] .Therefore, an intercultural dialogue is always an experience of finiteness, of death and loss. Only afterwards one can say that the existential changes were gains. Nurses and teachers will increasingly meet people who cannot bear the culture shocks. Depression and aggression will increase.

People should be guided with regard to the fear for new socialisation processes. We can see the future in a defensive way, but we can also think of it in terms of a tremendous chance to experience the relativity of our way of life and to deepen our own cultural attitudes and values. Therefore we do not plead for a multicultural society in which each individual or each group would live in a kind of a ghetto. We opt for an inter-cultural dynamism that

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[22] Common sense is about self understanding that is always - implicit - present in our actions and linguistic expressions. P. Bourdieu ('Le S ns Pratique, Editions de Minuit, Paris, p 113, 115) writes about 'the silent and spontaneous acceptance of the world',, a practical belief, imprinted by basic learning processes whereby the body is used as a living reminder.' Common sense refers to unproblernatic patterns of interpretation, immediate familiarity with a particular social and natural world. Common sense has an association with eternal truth, but on closer acquaintance an important part of it seems to be local understanding of normality and acceptability. Common sense can differ in each culture. Common sense has a dialogical structure (your common sense is recognised and acknowledged from outside) and is connected with the social and cultural context. That makes cultural contact a possible destabilizing experience. It's this common sense that is challenged: for the newcomers as wen as for the original inhabitants.

makes questioning and 'mutual fecundity' (Panikkar 1999°) possible. Intercultural dialogue is about meeting the other so that changes can occur. Nobody knows where this will bring us, nor how and where it will end. And it includes of course the willingness to listen to each other's life story and to each other's memories. This process of listening should be fair and bring in the ethical dimension of relationships (Krasner 1995, Nagy 1986). The history of our memories and lives are always interweaved and marked by meaningfulness. The desire to be meaningful for ourselves and for others is always present. In our view the intercultural dialogue is a means to recognize the other in what be/she would like to be in the deepest sense and within the own culture. Acknowledgment is the keyword in the relational ethics of Nagy (1986) and Krasner (l995). The philosophers Buber (1994) and Levinas (1966) say more or less the same: to be human means to address and to be addressed by the other. Maybe this is what hospitality Cacceuil') and freedom is all about. And those who invite us to be hospitable are always and first the most vulnerable, the poorest, the weakest, the least healthy...

Intercultural challenges are what the expression itself already indicates. Life takes place *'inter culturas',* between cultures, and this brings along challenges. Living together is not just a natural event. It is above all a 'cultural' event. And living together is not living apart together in a kind of a ghetto. That would construct a multicultural society: a society with many groups, and every group apart in a ghetto. But this is not what we have in mind.

The word 'between' (cultures) is a striking starting point. The first one to mention this in the last century was Martin Buber (1994). He drew our attention to the fact that an isolated 'r, a detached identity, does not exist, and that life itself comes into being, transforms and makes sense by what happens between people, and between people and things. An 'I' that sees everything as an object misses the essence of reality and goes under *in* a well of loneliness and scantiness. A culture that acts and looks in the same way will meet the same fate. On the other hand, an '1' that sees the other (person/thing) as a 'you' ('du'), will come to life and transform. The key to any human life is the other (thing/person), the Other (Levinas 1966) that gives the 'I' the opportunity to formulate an answer, to give account.

Dominant answers

Apparently strange answers have been and still are being given to the cries of distress in life. These cries of distress are always linked to unwanted and wanted suffering, traumatic experiences, material and physical shortcomings. They cry harder every day. With each passing day, it is harder to hide or deny these things. Sadly, the answers given by dominant groups of humanity are not very innovative. They prefer sending the questions back to the ones that asked them, like, to cite examples, sending the asylum seeking refugees back to the place of conflict, or like tracing the cause of hunger and misery in the (other) poor and. not in failing structures.

Intercultural 'learning' has everything to do with dialogue, with meeting one another. You initiate a meeting, but you never know where it will end. That is rather annoying for a culture which is keen on knowing everything beforehand, working efficiently, wanting immediate results, and short term performances. Fortunately, this is not the case for over eighty percent of the planet's population. And if we want future generations to be able to survive, we are obliged to initiate a dialogue with those eighty percent, people without white skin.

The mono-cultural tragedy

'Become like us, adapt to our ways, assimilate' ceased to be the solution long ago. These are, by the way, mono-cultural thoughts which were tried out for centuries. According to the editor in chief of *'Le Monde Diplomatique'* (Ramonet 1997), our only chance to avoid chaos is to see the individuality of the other, to take him or her seriously and come to a dialogue. To accomplish this, you have to meet him or her. We know that the western project of modernity lies under heavy criticism (Moreels 1999). There are more and more questions concerning this model of thought. But so far, nobody has a ready answer. We have to trust the fact that cultures are strong enough to learn from each other without killing each other. Anthropologist Rik Pinxten (1997) emphasizes that cultures only die slowly, earning that they can transform themselves slowly, because they do not easily yield up their time-honoured 'wisdom'.

Philosophical fundaments: Buber and Levinas

"'I' exist by the grace of my "being related to life, i.e. related to the other(s)... When searching for your identity, it is not so much the differences with the other that come to mind, but your ability to enter into relation with the other." (Benoit Standaert 2000).

J. Sperna Weiland and others (1999) said that for Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, there are basically only two ways to give such relation with the other a shape. Either the 'I' creates distance and objectifies the other, and enters into an 'ich-es' relation. Or the 'I' links up with the other, and enters into an 'ich-du' relation. For Levinas, 'ich-es' equals 'Totalite' (and war). In contrast, 'Ich-du' means the Infinite (and possibility of peace).

The war of each totalitarian system (regime) wants to be put to an end or broken through by the 'Infini', the Infinite, the eschatology of peace. Something inside of us, no matter where we are on this small planet, tells us: 'Thou shall not kill'. Something inside of us asks us to allow encroachment, even though we are unable to capture, describe, objectify or quantify it. And this something tells us: put off war, set up peace. War is an impossible issue for all of us, yet it exists. Initially, peace seems always far away, yet it is possible, sometimes, for a short period. And apparently, this is what every culture strives for.

'Ich -es' reduces life

In 1923, Duber (1994) already pointed out an increase in the 'ich-es' relation. He warned us about its dangerous consequences, about how an increase of an objectifYing 'I-it' relation automatically brings along a diminishing capacity to enter into an 'I-you' relation. And this, in turn, brings along more 'system', more 'totalitarianism' which reduces reality. Every educational system, every political system, every welfare system, every interpretational system is always under the threat of becoming a 'Totalite', which does not allow and even banishes every form of being different. For life to continue and be fertile, a continuous 'breach' of the 'Infini'(Infinite) or the 'du' in each totality or system is necessary. Consequently, the perfect system that Western philosophy and sciences have been ftantically looking

for during centuries does not exist, and can and shall never exist. A so-called perfect system will always create war and needs to be inter rupted.

Strangely enough, the 'Infini' (Infinite) always penetrates us trom the outside. And it is always linked to something/someone unknown and wlnerable: the poor, the orphan, the widow, the refugee, the ill, the dying, the prisoner, the Other...

About family and the dimension of relational ethics

Ivan Boszonnenyi-Nagy (1986, 1987) discovered that a family system through generations is potentially a system of 'totalite', where people – with good intentions – try to put things 'in order'. Nevertheless, loyalties and connections signal time and again, and sometimes unexpectedly, pain and injustice inside this system. They communicate a lack of balance in giving and receiving. People try to bring order to reality, but this order never corresponds to the' human order'. In each relation, there is an ethical dimension present that tells us: this is good, that is not good; this is just, that is not just; here is 'earned merit' or not. 'Earned merit is gained through contributions, care, and direct address offered to another – whether or not they are acknowledged or reciprocated. Merit is an attribute of relationship, coinage through which entitlement is gained and indebtedness is balanced.' (B. Krasner, 1995).

And just like for Buber and Levinas, for Nagy, there is only one way to find out if justice in the relationship is done: communicate, enter into dialogue. It is the other one that can tell me if I have taken notice of his/her appeal in a just way. It is me who will tell the other if his or her offer or intervention answers my real need, necessity and desire. Communicating puts off war; and preserves me from betrayal that consists of not doing the good.

Hospitality

Each meeting invites us not to commit betrayal. It means we have to keep on fighting the urge to make the different other equal ('Ie meme', the same) to ourselves. If we fight this urge, peace will emerge. If we do not fight it,

war threatens and we lose the opportunity to experience life as the *Joyeuse force qui va'* (Levinas 1966), life as a joyful force, an energy that makes me walk.

One of the basic skills that contribute to happiness is hospitality and a warm 'welcome'.You could almost say the other is there to give me the opportunity to practise and put into practise hospitality. And the best exercise to accomplish this is to temporarily become a kind of nomad *yourself,* so you know what it feels like to be the 'unknown', the stranger, and learn ftom it to be a host.

Violence versus 'desir metafysique' (metaphysical desire)?

It will be necessary in the future to investigate whether the mechanisms of the micro (family) world can be partly extrapolated to the macro world. To say the least, we have to examine to what extent the shortcomings of our micro-world relations cause effect (and affects) in our surroundings and the macro world. What are the consequences of a worldview, where quantities, control distance and objectivity are common place? How do people feel when they have been misled in their need to connect and meet *with* one another? How does a planet evolve when part of its population can no longer trust the other part, due to traumas, piled up grief, and violated trust? And how can peace be 'restored' in such a place? And, in that context, what does the intemationalisation and globalisation mean? Is intemationalising a new act of violence, following in the steps of all previous forms of colonisation, but this time– as an Indian Jesuit told me– a colonisation of the mind?

Or is there a depth factor in this irrepressible intemationalisation? Does it not hide especially among the youth the 'desitmetafysique' (Levinas 1987), i.e., a desire for the unknown, the Infinite, a desire for what does not control, dictates or orders to death? In other words, a desire, an attraction towards the (o/O) ther, as well as a desire to be desired by the (o/O) ther. It is the desire to be peace for the other; the longing for the strange unknown. It is not the desire to grasp the existence of the other, but the wish not to make war. It is the relationship of a subject to an absolute different other, to *the face* (Levinas 2003a) of the other, It is the face of the other that is looking at me ('autrui me regarde') The other is a human being and therefore I am there for

himlher. Levinas' philosophy is about the 'humanism of the other man' (Levinas 2003[b]).

According to Levinas all human beings have a desire, a longing for peace beyond all wars, a longing for the infinite, for the other. It makes us think of dissatisfaction with everything we have, the restlessness that can be suppressed but will not disappear, the invisible threshold from 'to have' towards 'to be'.

If this is the case, an intemationalisation– that is not based on war and competition– can offer an enormous opportunity to 'learn how to communicate' (=dialogue) and not to remain in silence (=war). It would be a good path to follow, away from 'world apartheid' and terrorising everything that is different. *Only then can the conversation be about 'doing' justice.*

Intercultural dialogue and doing justice

Globalisation today is, at its worst, the not-always clear demand of one dominant culture owards other .cultures to economically adapt themselves to the dominant culture, to utter the same words, to read reality and the world in a mostly neo-liberal economical way. The world is already paying for this demand.

A better attitude would be – and is luckily gaining grounds all the time – to no longer see people as objects that need to be helped out, but listening to how they interpret our centuries-old relationships and how they translate them into economic terms. This means that our democratic demand as a standard for 'development' needs to be converted into a democratic conversation. Anthony Giddens (1994) even talks of an 'emotional democracy of the dialogue'. This means that we need to listen, in a compassionate and curious manner, to the other's association with life and death, with fear and sadness, with everyday 'sense', in other words, having respect for the diversity in the cosmos where everyone is part of This also means that international cooperation should never start from an urge to keep oneself 'busy' with the other; that this cooperation does not serve to (exotically) fill one's emptiness by the other; that one's travelling to learn does not mean travelling to gather knowledge and convert this knowledge

into 'power'. The only sense internationalising makes, the only way in which it is worth the cost is to create peace, i.e. to put offwar, i.e. allowing and tolerating the o/Other. Because in one way or another, we are all foreigners. Dorothee SolIe (1996) adds: every man 'der Sehnsucht', everyone who knows such 'homesickness' is a foreigner, everywhere.

'Interculturalising' then means bringing up that homesickness internationally. This asks for mutual understanding and . *melanoid* or radical change, what philosopher and theologian Panikkar (1999[23] means by 'arise/resurrect'.

Transformation of and emancipation from patriarchal rules

According to Giddens (1994), it all comes down to this: appropriating traditional values in a non-traditional way. Western man is a modem man who has known the Enlightenment (' Aufldarung'). He will never have the same personality again as people in ancient civilisations. This man can honour his acquisition of being an individual. He has become used to no longer living under a social tyranny. But now man has to decide about nature: what are we trying to preserve, what will be sifted out? He refers to marriage as a training school, in which partners both have to learn to live with the 'unknown', and work hard to set up an emotional dialogue, i.e. extending the antennas that discover and determine which urgent needs in society should keep politicians busy. This type of democratic functioning requires an emancipation trom patriarchal rules of life, both the pre-modem and the modem ones with organisational patterns from above. Social innovation can only exist when pressure groups from the base ask attention for the 'diversity', for those whose rights are threatened to be trampled upon. So, it all comes to handling tradition judiciously, taking on the parts that innovate and get rid of the ones that oppress (G. De Schrijver 1998).

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[23] 2 Born into two major traditions, Catholic-Christian and Hindu, Raimon Panikkat has concerned himself since his earliest years with the interplay of traditions and disciplines. He is a philosopher and a theologian, with doctorates in chemistry, philosophy and theology. He was for many years professor of religious studies at the University of California in Santa Baroara.

Decoding the other and the nomadic truth

Migrants and immigrants, foreigners, and refugees are not in the first place a 'problem'. They are here, just like life is here, they announce themselves, just like life announces itself They announce themselves for various reasons. It is our duty to decode and interpret these announcements. And this process of decoding brings about a lot of feelings, both to us and to the other. The other one says: 'I am sick', 'I am hungry', 'I am scared', 'I have been kept captured', 'I have killed', 'I have raped', 'I have lost all my loved ones', And as I say the same things to himlher, I am the other one for himlher.

Granted, there is a lot to be learned during this process of decoding: the language of the other, the religious world of the other, the history of the other, the 'mould' in which he or she has been born. It goes without saying that the' other' is being symbolised by the Moroccan, or the Turk, or the African. And the higher the number of others we see appear the more ftightening this Other seems to approach us. Nevertheless, there is no reason for worries or despair, since there is one truth (the 'verite nomade', nomadic truth) that each and every one of us carries inside. This (nomadic) truth says: 'Thou shall not kill'. It is the basis of every culture, because each human being wants to be treated with respect for his or her life.

This is something we have to take into account as well through education every human being deserves respect and like Buber says– want to be treed of dullness, apathy, blindness, depressing moods, sickness of the soul, so that he or she may shine and be happy. The main point is to create justice in relationships. But this justice will only appear if I allow myself to be addressed by the difference of the other.

There is more to tell than 'what is better?'

Intercultural dialogue has nothing to do with altruism, idealism, or being nice to the migrants, the others. On the contrary, intercultural dialogue starts with the acceptance of the fact that everyone is influenced by the other. Secondly, it is a pragmatic experience of the basic human value that you cannot kill the other. Or even symbolic: you cannot eat the other. A society

collapses, if it is reduced to the attitude: 'it's me or him'. Groups of people organise themselves everywhere with the best intentions in order 'not to be lost'. And when a group can feel or see the benefit of it, it will not avoid the conversation with the other, the new one, the stranger. Even assimilation takes place, if there is internal and external agreement about what is better.

But most of the time there is no definitive agreement because the conversation and communication deals with more than material things. Apart from the gap between the rich and the poor, apart from the scandalous forms of neo-colonialism, there is more to tell about a living society. You need the other, even to become aware of what is 'better' for yourself.

Therefore it is possible that the confrontation with the migrants will save us and will save our culture. But it can mean that this economical, psychological, sociological transformation or 'mutation' will cause enormous loss and grief, for both, for 'us' and for 'them'. The 'third' –the result of this transformation and the meeting of I and Thou– is what will come.

Religiosity and relational ethics

The debate (Colpaert, 2002) about what is 'better' and the agreement that follows belong to the intercultural dialogue. It is impossible to get through this process, when there is no ground from which you can communicate with the other. This ground is always a ground of trust. This ground is in a sense also always a religious one.

There is no dialogue without commitment, no commitment without being open for everything strange. But there is one condition: there should be 'earned merit' or 'merited trust'. And in order to know whether there is 'merited trust', you have to inform (= speak). If you want to know whether there is no rust at all, you have to ask why (= speak again). The number of people who did not speak with each other is tremendous. That means that the self-willed silence on earth is enormous. It becomes therefore very difficult to have an intercultural dialogue if one of the partners is living isolated, fragmented, in decay with him/herself. The pathology of not being able to communicate with the other can end in diseases and absence of well-being.

The whole question of 'religiosity' is de facto a question of relational ethics. There should be an in-built willingness to relate with the other without the effort to make him/her equal to me, in the sense of: 'be my mend, so that we can get along.' The mission is not to become mends, but to live together in a way that we can deepen our own lives. This assignment (order) to discover the deeper sense of our own and common life sounds sometimes strange for western people. But the refusal to do it can hurt nonwestern people.

Interreligious dialogue

'We lost the plot as far as religion is concerned', said Karen Armstrong (2001). Talking in Europe about religion or religiosity is not without danger. We should not mix up the personal beliefs and the (public) matters of the state, it is said. Being religious is something reserved for the believers. During the historical process and context of the last centuries we arranged ourselves in camps: Protestants, Catholics, New Age people, Hindus, Muslims... and non-believers. And some of us concluded that if the newcomers do not understand or accept our tfames of references, our thoughts, then they should leave. But this is not beneficial and a lost opportunity. I cannot enter into dialogue when I refuse to try to listen, to know, to see, to understand the meaning of life for the other. And meaning of life is always about life and death. By listening to the other, I can come closer to my own (meaningful) experiences of life and death. A human being will always try to connect and to be connected with her own life, with the life of the other, with the lives of animals, plants, with nature, with the cosmos.

This urge to relate and to connect is indicated as *'religare'* or *'religere'* J. Latin *religare* means to connect. Latin *'religere'* means try to read, lay your puzzle, explain. Each person wants to connect and to read her own life story. Therefore she needs the other. We need each other. In that sense there is also religious atheism, and religiosity is not reserved only for the 'believers'.

As a consequence the real intercultural dialogue will always be at the same time an inter religious one, because the questions arise: who is the other, who am I for him/her, and why did he/she come on my path. All human beings – especially in times of grief and suffering, in times of existential crisis, in times

of physical vulnerability would like to reveal the depth of our existence, the deeper reason why we are here for each other. In that case the dialogue will have to do with acknowledgment and this acknowledgment is about 'justice; especially justice in the relationships, thus about relational ethics. Theologian and philosopher Raimon Panikkar (1999) advocates: a more evangelic, ecumenical, and mystic religiosity.

A more evangelic religiosity

This is about the joy to live. The Sermon on the Mount proposes a radical change of culture: not the agriculture of the past, not the technological culture of the present, but the culture of the mind, the echo of humanity and the whole *cosmotheandric* reality, i.e. the affect of cosmos-God-human. We find ourselves in a moment of mutation of humankind. Without a new and authentic religiosity, inertia will drag us into catastrophe. We have to continue tradition, but without necessarily repeating it. We have to create it anew, but in a way it has not existed yet throughout the processes of the resurrection.

A more ecumenical religiosity

Panikkar fills this in a more feminine than masculine way, more passive than active. Ecumenical means changing oneself by opening up towards the other, by being influenced and fiuctified by the other. I renounce myself: in a way deny myself, in order to transform. Christianity renounces itself and resurrects. If we lose the sense of things' quality and only retract ourselves in a quantitative vision, and only interpret the universal in a quantitative way, theological difficulties and political calamities will rise. If we cannot observe and receive the sense of the unity of things, if a mend is not unique to me, or if a religion, or a son, or a country is not unique, then I lose the sense of each thing's uniqueness. One can only learn if knowledge is essentially one with love. You do not want to change your son in another one, even if the other one is more beautiful, better, richer because you love your own son.

The problem is not Muslim, Hindu, Orthodox. The problem is enjoying the rainbow and seeing that without green there is no red, and without red there is no green; every colour is unique. It is the man from the Age of

Reason who thought he could judge all religions. That is how comparative religious studies originated. *'La Deesse Raison'* (the Goddess of Reason) could then judge all religions and classify them. But in life, some things can just not be classified and categorised. Religiosity does not express completely in one single religion. And each religion will be' more itself if it develops its personality better. *Diversity is universality's form itself.* Nicolaus con Cues talks about one single religion with a diversity of rites, *'religio una in rituum varietate.'* I participate in the others by deep acceptation of this diversity. An ecumenical religiosity means a deeper religiosity. Universality is the expression of the uniqueness of what each one of us discovers. What is needed is mutual fecundity. Ecumenism means precisely to open oneself to the other.

A more mystic religiosity; transformation

Every moment has a *'gout d 'etemite* t, a taste of eternity. It is not about mysticism. It is about a third dimension. A third eye: the experience, the loss of fear, because I live my life to the fullest every single moment. Simeon the New Theologian says: He who does not live the eternal life now, will never live it afterwards. That is the experience of Easter. Every moment – as in a symphony by Beethoven – has its beauty and its sense. That is surpassing of time. A mystical religiosity lives in real hope because it has the experience that that hope is not from the future: hope is from the invisible. Hope makes us live that other dimension, and allows us to live in peace. The Christian message is: do not puzzle your head over things, do not suffer, live to the fullest, with more joy, more depth.

Religious mystics also have a practical and immediate conscience: politics. It is in action that mystical life cultivates, grows, and finds its criterion of authenticity. Mystics find their criterion for authenticity in social and political engagement.

We have to surpass cultural schizophrenia in which religion is one case and politics another, as if they were two separate worlds. Intellectual distinction is not the same as existential separation. A mystic dimension is present in all things. According to Panikkar, it is transformation that is

lacking. And that is a task of the mind: 'People of Galilea, why are you staring at the sky. Do not fear!'

Conclusion

Intercultural dialogue is not altruism nor idealism, but a very realistic attitude that can save human beings on this planet earth, if it is exercised in a good manner. *'Inter'* doesn't mean *'multi'*. The inter-cultural dialogue assumes that all human beings need each other and that they are transforming continuously. But the dialogue about that transformation takes place with respect for rhythm, time, space, and the history and memories of the other and his or her loyalty within his/her own culture. The dialogue will – in a sense confront the mono–cultural traditions, because it is obvious that no single dominant culture can rule the planet anymore. All of us have to talk together – in solidarity – about the future of the planet, the future of our children and grandchildren.

Over intercultural dialogue, this article finds a deeper vision and reliable philosophical and psychological thoughts with Buber, Levinas, Nagy and Krasner. Raimon Panikkar links these ideas with the religious dimension. He pleads for more ecumenism and for more feeling for the mystical aspects of life.

Essential for the possibility of an intercultural and inter-religious dialogue is the fundamental recognition or acknowledgment of the different other. Our meaning of life, even the reason for our existence, depends on that.

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CONNECTING EAST AND WEST: A DISCOURSE ON THE SYNTHETIC INTERPRETATION OF CULTURE

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<div align="center">ABSTRACT</div>

This paper undertakes a socio-philosophical critique of the concept of culture. It is argued that centrality of the notion of culture owes its theoretical legitimacy to the peculiar cultural and historical developments which took place in the Western Europe connected with French revolution, Enlightenment and Industrial revolution. The modern culture as understood and interpreted in contemporary texts of cultural sciences happens to be the direct philosophical consequence of these intellectual developments. The concept of culture replaced the philosophical primacy of medieval Christian worldview and in turn was established to explain and interpret social reality for the modern Western societies in particular and the rest of the world societies in general. These societies although deeply rooted in religious foundations of culture, nontheless, were influenced and shaped by the Western philosophical discourse through the political and technological forces of colonization and modernization.

The philosophical discourses commonly originate in questions of different sort and their answers. This questioning began with Socrates of ancient Greece. His illustrious disciple and seminal thinker, Plato, preserved his method in his classic collection of philosophical literature, namely, "Dialogues." This method came to be known as 'dialectics.' Since then 'dialectics' have become the modus operandi of major philosophical discourses in the history of human thought.

Dialectics, thus, constitute a line of thinking invented by a great mind. It also became the culture of philosophical discourses and almost all major philosophers of ancient and modern times employed 'dialectical' technique in the formulation of their philosophical discourses. This dialectical technique

goes a long way in shaping the content as well as forms of structures of human thought. Arguments and counter-arguments are initiated by deploying this technique. This technique also constitutes 'cultura intellectus' of philosophical discourses and right opinion about different problematic can be inferred by using it. Furthermore, the interaction of different minds is made possible through it.

Dialectical technique acts not only as a cultura intellectus in philosophical discourses, it also operates as a point of interaction of minds of contradictory values. In short, to apply a Wittgensteinian phrase, philosophical discourses provide intellectual battleground for conflicting 'forms of life,'[24] or in Husserlian terms a clash of encountering 'lebenswelt'[25] or in Max Scheler's words a 'cultura amini'[26] of mankind. In this way, dialectical activity becomes a disclosure of discourses in mind, history, life, strategy, action, symbols; a kind of texture of human thought expressed in pure forms as well as concrete shapes.

Dialectical activity thus, becomes 'por soi'[27] of individual as well as collectivity of individuals, in a movement of discourses, of point of views encountered, inferred, explained, validated or refuted. Therefore, dialectical activity divulges us not only ontology of intuitions about good, justice, mathematics or music but also an epistemology of experience, in which knowledge of objects, artifacts, nature and history are contested and demonstrated. Plato displays the classic application of dialectical activity in his famous 'analogy of cave,'[28] as a pre-condition of 'cultura intellectus' and also a sui-generis of human condition, without which, no knowledge is possible and hence no culture is envisioned.

Culture is a 'state of knowledge,'[29] a dialectical shift between knowing and not knowing, between action and thought, between labyrinth and surface; a

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[24] Wittgenstein, L. (1981), Philosophical Investigations, Oxford, Basil and Blackwell Publishers.

[25] Bell, D. (1991), Husserl, London, Routledge Press.

[26] Scheler, F.Max. (1958), Husserl, Boston, Beacon Press.

[27] Sartre, J.P. (1956, Being and Nothingness, tr.Barnes, H., University of Colorado Press.

[28] Kaplan, J.D. (Ed). (1955), Dialogues of Plato, New York, Pocket Book Company.

[29] Cassirer, E. (1965), The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms (vol,1-3),Yale University Press.

Malquidian 'parchment'[30] bordering on signs and their (un)decipherability. One can see, here, (inter)courses of fact and imagination mingling in the heart of philosophical discourses; epistemological and ontological dimensions intersperse in the 'dasien'[31] of dialectical activity. Now discourse in philosophy can take on subtle and variegated dialectical forms. All these (dis)courses are about concepts, in different configurations, in different contexts and employed for different usages. For example, what is number? What is beauty? What is truth? What is life? In addition to that, what is society and culture? These are some of the questions, which lead to dialectically engaging discoveries of philosophical discourses.

Let us perform our philosophical analysis of the question; what is number? The adequate reply to this question assumes some sort of primitive awareness of the concept of number on the part of the inquirer. The satisfactory analysis shall depend upon a number of complementary factors such as its root, usage, context, relationship, succession, etc. Points of view of inquirer intrinsically have profound influence upon his construction of adequate concept of number. For example, when one says, what is the concept of number in modern (Western) arithmetic? and what is the concept of number in Mayan arithmetic? Notwithstanding, the fact that one is inquiring about a common concept, *i.e.* number in both questions, but one's reply may not satisfy the epistemic quest of inquirer. Therefore, one can safely state that a single answer cannot be supplied for both the questions.

This in any way, does not, endanger the rational foundations of modern mathematical knowledge of the West and its practitioners all around the world, rather, on the contrary it proves the *latent* complexities of human mind and its rational functions. Only perhaps a human being can simultaneously talk about rational / irrational numbers. Prof. Heisenberg has given a characteristic description of pluralistic uses of reason deployed to describe an aspect of physical reality and the imaginative *thirst* quenched by the humans by doing it. He says:

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[30] Marquez, G.Garcia. (1970), One Hundred Years of Solitude, Harper and Row, New York.
[31] Heidegger, M. (1967), Time and Being, New York, Simon and Schuster.

The most important new result of nuclear physics was the recognition of the possibility of applying quite different types of natural laws, without contradiction, to one and the same physical event. This is due to the fact that within a system of laws which are based on certain fundamental ideas only certain quite definite ways of asking questions make sense, and thus, that such a system is separated from other which allow different questions to be put.[32]

This remark by Heisenberg, clearly demonstrates the pluralistic paradigm of rationality, employed by theoretical physicists, for studying a *physical* event, what to speak of a *cultural* event? Moreover, what is important, in a characteristic anti-Kantian sense, to ask 'different questions' for a single physical system, just by moving away from the *fundamental* ideas, about that 'event' grounded in older physical theories? 'Different questions' are in fact different points of views, different *'cultural'* worlds, or to employ a Gadamerian concept, "prejudice against prejudice"[33] about a single interpretation of physical and cultural reality. The theoretical *prejudices* of quantum mechanics are positive prejudices against the Newtonian mechanics and a clear demonstration of epistemological *de javu* in relation to the hard and fast Kantian 'a priorism' of universalized interpretation of postulates of classical mechanics or mathematics.

However, to have a philosophically satisfactory reply to the question: What is number? It is necessary on the part of the inquirer to be clear about threefold but interconnected condition.

He/She should be clear about the point of view or *cultural* paradigm from which he is inquiring about the concept of number (or one may replace number with any other concept).

He/She should carry out proper *context* analysis of his question.

He/She should try to understand the concept of number historically as well as etymologically.

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[32] Calhoun, C. (1995), Critical Social Theory, Oxford, Blackwell, pp.8.
[33] Gadamer, H.G. (1989), Truth and Method, Sheed and Ward, London.

Ostensibly, point of view or cultural paradigm is very important and basic in our understanding of our relationship with reality or 'multiple realities,' as Carlos Castaneda has asserted. Let us state two different philosophical discourses from two leading philosophers of our times; Russell and Wittgenstein. This is to show how point of view or cultural paradigm influences the dialectical conditions of their respective discourses and the logical preferences deployed by them. In characteristic logical style, Russellian discourse is thus reflected in the following passage taken from the Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy. Russellian point of view or cultural paradigm shall be evident by a close reading of this discourse. Russell writes,

> The questions what is number? Is one that has been often asked, but has only been correctly answered, in our time? Frege gave the answer in 1884, in his 'Grundlagen der Arithmetick.' Although this book is quite short, not difficult, and of the very highest importance, it attracted almost no attention and the definition of number which it contains remained practically until it was rediscovered by the present author in 1901…[34]

After this historical-etymological brief, Russell then moves on with an unequivocal tone to next phase of his discourse. He thus writes:

> In seeking a definition of number, the first thing to be clear about is what we may call the grammar of our inquiry. Many philosophers, when attempting to define number, are really setting to define plurality, which is quite a different thing. Number is what is characteristic of men. A plurality is not an instance of number, but of some particular number. A trio of men, for example, is an instance of the number 3, and the number 3 is an instance of number; but the trio is not an instance of number. This point may seem elementary and scarcely worth meaning; yet has it proved too subtle for the philosophers, with few exceptions. [35]

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[34] Castenada, C. (1962), Don Yuan: The Yaqui Way of Knowledge, California, Granta Press.
[35] Russell, B. (1978), Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy, London, Allen and Unwin, pp.11.

After outlining, his 'grammar of inquiry'[36] (or we may term it as *cultural* paradigm on his concept of number). Russell attempts at length the analysis of the concept of number; this is only at the termination of his discourse, that a definition of number is formulated and given to the reader.[37] He, thus, defines number after classifying and interconnecting such notions as 'collectives', 'similar,' 'symmetrical,' 'reflexive,' 'converse domain,' and 'class' etc. in the following manner:

A number is anything which is the number of same class."[38] Suppose, we change the Russellian 'grammar of inquiry' and replace it with another 'grammar of inquiry,' say Mayan 'grammar of inquiry' or Islamic 'grammar of inquiry'; or we may shift theoretical paradigm from 'logical atomism' to 'intuitionism.' While defining the concept of number, our conclusion would be entirely different from that of Russell but equally valid, under conditions of cultural paradigm reflecting a particular 'grammar of inquiry' employed for the said purpose.

The pluralistic theoretical constructions of concepts are perfectly legitimate and equally valid, but one must be on guard against the relativistic strain present in the pluralistic sensibility. Even Russell was unable to override the existence and influence of pluralistic *cultural* paradigm– in defining the number, although, he excluded the very mirage of 'plurality' in the beginning of his discourse.[39]

In the dialectical movement of concepts in discourse, two activities are very important and play a significant role in constructing an image of physio-cultural reality. These are:

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[36] Ibid, pp.11.

[37] This definition may not satisfy those who conceptualize number from intuitionist point of view. See Cassirer, E., The Problem of Knowledge; Philosophy, Science and Religion since Hegel.

[38] cf. Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy, pp.10-11.

[39] Ibid, pp.19. Russell further comments, " In Christian countries, the relation of husband to wife is one-one. In Mahometon countries it is one to many; in Tibet it is many to one. The relation of father to son is one to many; that of son to father is many to one, but that of eldest son to father is one to one".

The linguistic structures of discourses.

The hermeneutical principle employed for intellectual-cultural '*versthen*.'

Thus linguistic-hermeneutic dialectical activities of discourses pervade almost all forms of philosophical stylistics. The consistent and continuous movement of dialectical strategy– lying deep in textual complexes– inner and outer form of discourses; hyperbole, punctuations, hyphens, commas, gestures, dresses, etiquettes, all acoustic signs mould into a mode of life– or a culture. Thus, leading us to a kind of creative ecstasy of experiencing our 'selves' as part of a 'lebenswelt,'[40] which is simultaneously a residue of and expose of life-forms, cultures and cosmologies. This linguistic-hermeneutic dialectical strategy, characterizing discourses of 'lebenswelt' is rooted in what Wittgenstein has described as 'grammatical difference.'[41]

Let me illustrate what this 'grammatical difference' means from a characteristic Wittgensteinian discourse in 'Philosophical Investigations' (p. 193: 1981). He writes,

> We are interested in the concept (of cube) and its place among the concepts of experience. You could imagine the illustration appearing in several places in a book, a textbook for instance. In the relevant text something *different* is in question every time; here a glass cube, there an inverted open box, there a wire frame of that shape, there three boards forming a solid angle. Each time the *text* supplies the interpretation of the illustration. But, can also see the illustration now as one thing now as another. So we *interpret* it, and see it as we interpret it. [42]

Not only 'seeing' an object (or perhaps 'seeing' a concept like 'Flag,' or 'Church' or 'Mosque') is basic to our epistemic '*versthen*' but also 'seeing' objects / concepts *differently* and 'interpreting' each 'seeing' *differently* constitute the hermeneutical principle of acute generality of concepts and objects. However, every 'seeing' and *hermeneutical* principle used to explain it

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[40] Husserl,E. (1989), On Phenomenology,
[41] Wittgenstein.L. (1981), Philosophical Investigations, Oxford, Basil and Blacwell, pp.185.
[42] Ibid, pp.193.

is covered by the *internal* structures of the text– and human discourses. Such is the richness of Wittgensteinian imagery that one finds language liberated spontaneously from the singularities of monolithic epistemological squabbles about concepts and the grounds of ontological-psychological cognizance of their non-difference from each other. In Wittgenstein, at last, Western epistemology realizes it's most basic relationship with language– manifest tool of discourses in literature, philosophy, science and society– by comprehending the centrality of text in human culture and its *intrinsic* hermeneutic variability while in the process of understanding it. Language becomes self-conscious as a mode of discourses *pluralistically*, differentially, non-conformistically according philosophical legitimacy to different or *non-Western* epistemologies and critiquing the rational foundations of modern Western texts of Kantian *type* and thus exposing their '*kulturpsyche'* and the destruction they wrought for the acquisition of knowledge – or recognition of different forms of knowledge and the '*kulturpsyche*' they support.[43]

II

Immanuel Kant posited the problematic of modern theory of knowledge in *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, wherein he announced his 'Copernican Revolution,' by establishing the unquestionable rule of 'discipline of pure reason,' in the domain of epistemological construction of the grounds of human experience. By employing a singular methodological sweep, Kant successfully places 'pure reason' at he centre of modern texts of science, literature, politics, history, life and world – and thus a uniform discourse of modern Western culture is achieved by him.[44] He discloses the dialectical

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[43] Rorty, R. (1980), Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, pp-3. He writes, "Philosophy can be foundational in respect to the rest of culture because culture is the assemblage of claims to knowledge, and philosophy adjudicates such claims. It can do so because it understands the foundations of knowledge, and it finds these foundations in a study of man-as-knower, of the "mental process", or the "activity of representation" which make knowledge possible. To know is to represent accurately what is outside the mind. So to understand the possibility and nature of knowledge is to understand the way in which mind is able to construct such representations. Philosophy's central concern is to be a general theory of representations, a theory, which will divide culture up into areas which represent reality well, those which represent it less well, and those which do not represent it all despite their pretense of doing so".

[44] Ibid, pp.475.

processes of 'pure reason' in subtle and lucid style that one is magically drawn to them, because his discourses and its textual complexities not only present a technique of acquiring and critiquing claims of knowledge independently of one's subjective considerations; but also constructs before our eyes the image of man, interrelationships, values system and outlook to cosmos and society. Let us reproduce one of his discourses from '*Kritik*'; which clearly demonstrates dialectical structure of his texts and the world it constructs – or represents to us.

> Allow, therefore, your opponent to speak in the name of reason, and combat him only with weapons of reasons. For the rest, have no anxiety as to the outcome in its bearing upon practical interests, since in a merely speculative dispute they are never in any way affected. The conflict serves only to disclose a certain antinomy of reason, which is as much due to the very nature of reason, must receive a hearing and scrutinized. Reason benefits by the consideration of its object from both sides, and its judgment correlated in being thus limited. What are in dispute are the practical interests of reason but the mode of their reproduction. For although we have to surrender the language of knowledge, we still have sufficient ground to employ, in the presence of the most exacting reason, the quite legitimate language of a firm faith. [45]

In this fashion, Kantian point of view becomes the standard view or valid *weltanschauung* of modern Western culture. Kant thus presented the problematic of epistemological project to modern mind to mould all kinds of epistemic inquiries on the model of Newtonian classical mechanics. Every phenomena (excluding only the Kantian noumena or a *priori* status of geometrical, arithmetical axioms), be it biological, physical, geological, historical, cultural, has to be explained in subjective / objective epistemic categorization; a description of timeless, ordered, given and objective pattern of natural and social world. This 'Newtonian world-view,'[46] pervaded every domain of inquiry, wherein man, the knower with his discipline of 'pure reason,' operate upon the impure domains of phenomena; and by virtue of this intellectual operation, he achieved the representation of true reality. This

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[45] Kant, I. (1920), Critique of Pure Reason, .Tr, N.K.Smith, London, Macmillan, pp-597.
[46] Prigogine, I. (1984), Order out of Chaos, Chicago, Chicago University Press.

intellectual operation is completely objective, devoid of personal likes / dislikes of known, his moral and ethical consideration; in short, a thorough mental autonomy, which produces 'real' knowledge for humankind is achieved. For physics, physiology, morphology, ethics, sociology, economics, culture, history, and anthropology, *objectivity* became the criterion for scientific and positivistic accounts of knowledge.[47] This universalization of 'objectivity' of knowledge and logical grounds, on which it stood, was the dialectics of political polemics of 'philosophies' of the Enlightenment. Therefore, Enlightenment was not only the *'l'ecraze le'infame'* of political edifice of monarchy in Europe, but also the *'l'ecraze le'infame'* of scholastic epistemology and the Christian theology which gave *raison'd'etre* to the 'culture' (dogma!) of *'la'regime ancien'*. The polemics of philosophies was directed tirelessly to the dismantling of church and its principles.[48] and the power which it exercised as a 'world view' on the society, economy, morality, attitudes, and politics of men of *'la'ancien regime.'* The 'philosophies' led by Voltaire, Diedrot, Kant and others ceaselessly rejected and refuted the claims of Christian 'lebenswelt' to social-cultural legitimacy and politico-moral authority, condemned it ruthlessly; all ills of European man and society were attributed to Christianity. They were not simply denying Christianity, its politico-moral hold over 'ancien regime'; in fact denial and refutation was more perverse and manifold; it was rejection of Christian discourses as *modus operandi* of interpretation of culture, a complete and systematic refutation of religious foundations of man, society, morality, and nature.[49] This was the

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[47] Cassirer, E. (1978), The Problem of Knowledge; Philosophy, Science and religion since Hegel.

[48] Gay,P. (1967), Enlightenment: an Interpretaion,

[49] Ibid; Gay writes, "The French took perverse pleasure in the opposition of Church and state to their campaigns for free speech and a human penal code, and to their polemics against 'superstition'."(Overture,pp.4) He further captures the culture of Enlightenment in these significant words, "The Enlighetnement, then, was a single army with a single banner, with a large central corps, a right and left wing, doing scouts and lame strugglers--- but the cohesion among the philosophes went deeper than this: behind their tactical alliances and personal fellowship there stood a common experience from which they constructed a coherent philosophy. This experience- which marked each of the philosophes with greater or lesser intensity, but which marked them all- was dialectical interplay of their appeal to antiquity, their tension with Christianity, and their pursuit of modernity. This dialectic defines the philosophes and acts them apart from other enlightened men of their age; they, unlike others, used their classical learning to free from their Christian heritage, and then, having done with ancients, turned their face toward modern world view. The Enlightenment

birth of culture of modernity. The *weltanschauung* of modern culture was thus characterized after the works of Newton, Locke, Hume, Voltaire, Kant, Diedrot, and Rousseau, as secularism, democracy, scientific knowledge, moral autonomy and individualism as the articulation of new world order.[50]

We now see that Kant posited the problematic of modern culture epistemologically as well as morally and historically. In Enlightenment, Kant perceived both newfound liberation of 'modern' man and his imminent predicament of alienation. He thus articulated the project of modernity as unfolded in Enlightenment in his characteristic style. He stated that Enlightenment was a man's emergence from his self-imposed tutelage, and offered, as its motto, *Sapereaude* – "Dare to know: take the risk of discovery, exercise the right of unfettered criticism, and accept the loneliness of autonomy."[51] This Kantian dialectics of modern culture works as the foundation of newfound post-Enlightenment Western worldview. Kantian discourse on dialectics of modern culture thus becomes arch-discourse linguistically and hermeneutically. This universalization of rationality as a paradigm of theory of knowledge as well as theory of culture becomes the grounded point of view of Western societies.[52]

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was a volatile mixture of classicism, impiety, and science; the philosophes, in a phrase. were Modern pagans.

[50] Cf;Gay,P, " Shaftsbury himself, with his optimistic,worldly,aesthetic,almost feminine Platonism,excersied immense power over his readers: over the young Diderot; over Moses Mendelssohn, Wieland,and Kant; over Thomas Jefferson; all in search of a philosophy of nature less hostile to the things of this world than traditional Christian doctrine."Furhtermore he writes about the common values of Enlightenment in these words, "The men of the Enlightenment united on a vastly ambitious programme, a programme of secularism, humanity, cosmopolitianism, and freedom, above all freedom in its many forms—freedom from arbitrary power, freedom of speech, freedom of trade, freedom to realize ones' talents, freedom of aesthetic response, freedom, in a word of moral man to make his own way in the world".

[51] Kant,I., Beantwortaung der Frage:Was Ist Aufklarung,worke IV.169,cf; Peter Gay (1967),The Enlightenment: An Interpretation, pp-3.

[52] Kantian philosophical discourse in 'Kritik' became the culture of modern thought and a discourse for modern culture. Will Durant has vividly explored the centrality of Kantian text in Western culture in these words, "Never has a system of thought so dominated an epoch as the philosophy of Immanuel Kant dominated the thought of the nineteenth century. After three-core years of quiet and secluded development, the uncanny Scot of Konigsberg roused

Henceforth, Kantian dialectic of modern culture based Western societies on a practical interpretation of pure reason; a 'rational' theology of ethical behavior purged of repressive Church and dogmatic Christian theological disputes and an egalitarian society designed on equitable and just principle for all human beings.

Kant propounded a conception of civil society where citizens enjoyed 'freedom' and 'autonomy' as a logical corollary of common code of conduct rooted in a universal moral rational law of inner voice and rational distribution of opportunity – to live a free life. As he witnessed French Revolution (1789), unfolding before his eyes and the tremors it sent down the spine of all monarchies of Europe; he saw in it a hope of realizing a vision of a new rational civil and political order based on freedom and equality to all citizens. In posing freedom and autonomy as the fundamental forms of modern culture, he affected the nature and outcome of cultural discourses of Western moral and political make up. The Kantian notions of 'freedom' and 'autonomy' are essentially rationally construed concepts, defined for the construction of new civil society in Europe. Therefore, we see in Kantian discourse a conception of individual psychologically (as the question of autonomy pertains to this domain), elaborated as well as anthropologically and historically dilated (the question of freedom). The subsequent epistemological forms of cultural phenomena thus revolve around the dialectics of these two questions; what is freedom? And what is autonomy? The panacea, which Kant offered to these questions, was the establishment of a just and equitable democratic system, wherein people themselves decide about their destiny. "Every man is to be respected as an absolute end in him; and it is a crime against the dignity that belongs to him as a human being, to use him as a mere means for some external purpose."[53] Thus reason and instinct were synthesized by Kant in his discourse and he constructed an image of man as a free creature of his own rational *versthen* of his being and knowledge, which he possesses of it. The cultural contradiction

the world from its 'dogmatic slumber', in 1789, with his famous critique of pure reason: and from that year to our own the 'critical philosophy' has ruled the speculative roost of Europe. The Story of Philosophy, 1971.pp-194. See also Richard Rorty's Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, on the centrality of Kantian text in Western culture, but from a different point of view than that of Will Durant.

53 Kant, I., cit, in Will Durant, The Story of Philosophy, pp- 217.

of Enlightenment was thus philosophically posited by Kant to wonder about and resolve it. Man an end-in-himself became the reason's new invention of modern world.[54]

<center>III</center>

Immanuel Kant thus precipitated '*Kulturbomerdgung*' by positing dialectic of '*Aufklarung*' (Enlightenment) in a tripartite structure of freedom, autonomy and liberal spirit of modern man.[55] He also propounded a discipline of 'reinen vernuft' to investigate the metaphysical (or transcendental to use Kant's phrase) conditions of this tripartite structure, its historical-cultural significance for modern '*weltanschauung*' and the culture it gave birth. 'Kulturbomerdgung' of Kant and its 'dialectic' produced comprehensive tremors in the cultural life of Western societies,[56] which was unprecedented and remains central to the discourses of 'Kulturwissenschaften' even today.[57] He influenced the philosophy of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and above all Hegel. It was in Hegel, that the clearest cultivation of 'dialectics' as a fundamental philosophical discourse became autonomous vis-à-vis an elaborate hermeneutical strategy to unlock the riddles of human mind, history, politics, aesthetics, science, and religion. His method was unique; he transformed Kantian 'dialectic' of propositions and judgments into a 'dialectics' of concepts, whereby a more true concept is generated from inadequate beginnings, through overcoming the oppositions intrinsic to them. Roger Scruton thus captures Hegelian dialectical methodology in these words

> The dialectical process unfolds, and then as follows, a concept is posited as a starting point. It is offered as a potential description of reality. It is found at over that, from the standpoint of logic, this concept must bring its own negation with it: to the concept, its negative is added automatically, and a 'struggle' ensues between the two. The struggle is resolved by transcending to the higher plane from which it can be

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[54] Gay, P.,(1967), The Enlightenment: An Interpretation.

[55] Ibid, pp-3.

[56] Scruton, R., (1991), A Short History of Modern Philosophy, London, Routledge, pp-138.

[57] Adorno and Horkheimer, M. (2002), The Dialectic of Enlightenment.tr.by.Edmund Jephcott, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

comprehended and reconciled: this ascent is the process of 'diremption' (Aufhebung), which generates a new concept and of the ruins of the last. This new concept generates its own negation, and so the process continues, until by successive applications of the dialectic the whole of reality has been laid bare.[58]

The most powerful expression of this dialectical unfolding of reality is to be found in historical process. The best possible forms of cultural experience are reflected in the '*zeitgeist*' of historical process. History is a dialectical movement almost a series of revolutions, in which people after people and genius after genius, become the instrument of the Absolute. Such a philosophy of history seems to lead to revolutionary conclusions. The dialectical process makes change the cardinal principle of life; no condition is permanent; in every stage of things there is a contradiction which only the 'strife of opposites' can resolve. The deepest law of politics, therefore, is freedom – an open avenue to change; history is the growth of freedom and the state is, or should be, freedom organized.[59] This way, Hegel, propounded the most effective interpretation of history and society, in the dynamic process of dialectical movement of ideas and cultural forms. The Hegelian world-spirit (Zeitgeist) became transparent and unfolded in the rational processes of objective spirit of historico-political and religio-ethical struggles of mankind. The dialectical movement of ideas laid bare the rational structure of historical growth and forms of political organization. His dialects generated a permanent revolution in the social thought of Europeans. Intellectuals and revolutionaries alike become hostage of Hegelian method.

Now, if we look at the cultural existence of European societies, in the aftermath of Enlightenment and French Revolution, three distinct conceptions of forms of cultural existence can be clearly discerned. These are

Rousseausian conception of society and culture

Comtean conception, and

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[58] Scruton, R., (1991), A Short History of Philosophy, London, Routledge, pp-168.
[59] Durant, Will, The Story of Philosophy, pp-226.

Marxian conception

Jean Jacques Rousseau, author of 'Discourse on the Origin of Inequality,' and 'Social Contract' conceived of absolute freedom and liberty for man and espoused the cause for the creation of such a society. He rejected the chorus of civilization, science, letters and progress. He viewed all these as chains of bondage for men. He pleaded for complete freedom from laws and controls. He propounded the romantic idea of a 'savage man'[60] who was completely free from cultural bondage. He said freedom for men could only be realized if he returned to his 'natural state', free from control and laws. This 'natural state' of raw culture can be realized through a radical overthrow of present state of social and cultural existence, thereby liberating man from bondage and enslavement. Rousseau propagated the revolutionary action as the *sine gua nine* for creating a free society of men, in which life is led by instinct and emotion instead of rigid and stale reason.[61] He advocated a kind of hedonistic-naturalistic state of raw culture in which men enjoy freedom without sanction and lead a life of pleasure, instinct and self-indulgence. The 'irrationalism' of some post-modernist and the notion of 'unconscious' in Freud as a repository of psychological make-up of modern man can be traced back to this Rousseauian romanticization of forms of natural state of cultural existence.

Presumably, it was August Comte, who can be ranked as the most important social thinker, who lived and worked in the Post revolutionary France. He displayed the perfect application of Enlightenment rationality in his studies of forms of socio-cultural existence. He outlined a *positivistic* interpretation of the science of society, which became a dominant paradigm in the studies of socio-cultural phenomena in European academic world. He proposed that a positivistic study of socio-cultural phenomena is possible just as it has been achieved in the methods of natural sciences such as physics, chemistry, and biology. He thus states,

Science, in the sense of exact knowledge had spread from one subject matter to another..., and it was natural that complex phenomena of social

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[60] Ibid, pp-186.
[61] Ibid,pp-186-187.

life should be the last to yield to scientific method. In each field of thought the historian of ideas could observe a law of three stages: at first the subject was conceived in the theological fashion, and all problems were explained by the will of some deity – as when the stars were gods, or the chariots of gods; later. The same subject reached the metaphysical stage, and it was explained by metaphysical abstractions – as when the stars moved in circles because circles were the perfect figure. Finally the subject was reduced to positive science by precise observation, hypothesis, and experiment, and its phenomena were explained through the regularities of natural cause and effect.[62]

This is how Comte tried to explain the development of scientific method and its uses in the interpretation of socio-cultural phenomena. He claimed that socio-cultural phenomena could be studied as objectively and scientifically as physical or chemical phenomena. Rather, he pleaded the case for a positivistic interpretation of social phenomena. He claimed that objective, observable, generalized, and natural laws governing the course of socio-cultural phenomena can be discovered by applying scientific techniques. Social facts/laws can be discovered and established as natural facts/laws can be discovered or established. His threefold categorization of human consciousness in interpreting and discovering general laws and patterns in nature, society, and other forms of cultural existence constitute a very significant tool for understanding forms of emerging social reality. This threefold theoretical categorization can help us study the forms of socio-cultural existence and the level of development they have achieved. By analyzing the conditions of different socio-cultural worlds of mankind, we can easily determine its state of development, i.e. whether the socio-cultural world is in theological state, metaphysical or positive state of affairs. This positivistic Comtean conception became almost the dominant paradigm for the studies of forms of cultural existence in the Industrial Europe and outside Europe. We find the influence of positivistic hermeneutic of Comte on the works of British Social theorists such as Radcliffe Brown, Malinowski, J.S.Mill, and on Emile Durkheim etc.

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[62] Ibid, pp-270.

Karl Marx is another important social thinker in the aftermath of Enlightenment. He twisted the Hegelian method of 'dialectical idealism' by applying Feurbachian materialism to it and thus invented a new hermeneutic of explaining the modes of cultural existence. He stated that forms of socio-cultural existence are reflections of the state of material conditions of a particular society. He argued that forms of human culture develop through class-wars and class-conflicts; in which state of material condition of a culture (or modes of production) determines the outcome of such struggle. He asserted that economic conditions determine the discourse of human culture, viz. attitudes, morality, religion, art, emotion, and value system etc. The prevalence of a form of cultural existence is the dialectical expression of state of economic or material modes of productions and the control over different material resources by different classes. Marx argued that, through the revolutionary *praxis* of proletariat; revolutionary consciousness can be organized, and subsequently, the capitalist society, its bourgeoisie values and dehumanized modes of production can be overthrown and replaced by a just socialistic mode of production and giving birth to a socialistic culture, a real human culture. In this way Marxist 'historical materialism' became a practical methodology for transformation of existing forms of cultural existence and creating new modes of cultural experiences. Marx thus retrieved the Hegelian 'dialectical idealism' from becoming a method in pure speculation in philosophy and history, to a revolutionary *praxis* of changing the oppressed masses of capitalist-industrialist society. In George Lukacs words, Marx identified the cultural existence of a 'reified,'[63] and 'dehumanized' man in an oppressive capitalist society, and showed a practical method of socially transforming this condition.

In addition to these cultural-theoretical developments in Western social thought; one important intellectual transformation is to be noted, which had basic role in shaping the values of modern culture and social system. This was the 'theory of evolution' formulated by Charles Darwin. Although his domain of inquiry was primarily biology; the results of his research were widely used in cultural and philosophical sciences, an evolutionary account of culture and cultural developments was undertaken by Herbert Spencer in the

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[63] Lukacs, G., (1971), History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialects, London, and Marlin Press.

first place. Subsequently, social scientists such as Leslie White and Gordon Childe, [64]tried to formulate an evolutionary interpretation of cultural phenomena. According to 'social darwinianism,' social-cultural forms developed from simple ones and gradually transformed into complex one. The level of technological sophistication indicated the corresponding level of socio-cultural complexities. All these intellectual currents of Western social thought precipitated the most urgent question of defining the autonomous intellectual domain of the concept of culture, man and cultural reality.

The earliest manifestations of autonomous studies in 'Kulturwissenschaften'(cultural sciences) were undertaken by E. B. Taylor in England, Witheim Dilthey and Max Weber in Germany, Franz Boas in US, and Emile Durkheim in France. The cultural theoretical discourses generated by '*Aufklarung*' become more articulated in these social scientists. However, '*Aufklarung*' remained and remains a basic cultural-philosophical backdrop of modern conceptions of culture and 'cultural sciences.' It is a point of view of modernity and different from 'ancien regime' and the 'weltanschauung' which legitimized it.[65] Once, the significance of '*Aufklarung*' (Enlightenment) is clearly understood which constitute a pivot of modern world; the conception of an autonomous '*Kulturwissenschaften*' (cultural sciences) becomes totally clear. These new cultural sciences became a battleground of defining the identity of 'new' man; de-mystified, secularized and rationalized and grounded in the 'new' web of 'lebenswelt,' which he comes to live in and survive.

In this way, for Western social scientists and philosophers, the question of defining their own 'modern culture' became a question of paramount importance. Similarly the relationship of this 'modern culture' and its worldview with the other cultures, *viz.* Islamic or Japanese and Latin American also became politico-historically significant. This twofold

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[64] White, L., (1945), The Science of Culture, and see also, Gordon, V.Childe, What Happened in History?

[65] Aufklarung (Enlightenment), as a cultural product of Western society, was also exported to the rest of the world. For example, Japan, encountered it as "Westernization", during Meiji Era and Islamic Societies, in India, Turkey and Egypt, etc, through colonialism. In a certain way it became universal in its philosophical and cultural impact on non-western societies in Asia and Africa.

intellectual necessity led to an array of theoretical points of views emerging in the West and thus trying to provide explanatory ground to modern mind to cope with newfound world of experiences.

The concept of 'culture' was initially employed by German culture historians, such as Herder, Lanprecht, and Klemm, English anthropologist, E. B. Taylor and his American counterpart Franz Boas et al, as a unifying and central concept in the domain of 'cultural sciences.'[66] The concept was used not only to understand and interpret sources of Western culture but also the dynamics of non-Western cultures.

Prof. Hans Georg Gadamer has underscored the importance of this point in the following words:

> We must certainly admit that there are innumerable tasks of historical scholarship that have no relation to our own present and to the depths of its historical consciousness. But it seems to me there can be no doubt that the great horizon of the past, out of which our culture and our present life, influences us in everything we want, hope for, or yearn in the future. [67]

IV

Now what constitutes this 'great horizon of the past,'[68] in the context of modern Western culture and its counterpart in the eastern hemisphere, that is, the Islamic culture (especially in the South Asian Subcontinent) in the wake of post-enlightenment period? Generally speaking enlightenment has become a universalized cultural paradigm for the contemporary *world-outlook* for both the Western and the Islamic world, with subtle variations and degrees of impact on each one of them. In the West European cultural systems, it brought about radical transformations at political, social, moral,

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[66] Bagby, Phil, (1958), Culture and History: Prolegomena to a Comparative Study of Civilizations, London.
[67] Gadamer, G., cit., in the Continental Philosophy Reader, Keary, R and Raiawater, M (Eds), (1996), London, Routledge, pp-155.
[68] Ibid, pp-155.

and technological levels. Christian dogma was rejected as a *culture* to fulfill the *needs* of new social-cultural order in West European societies. Complete freedom and autonomy of the individual was espoused as a ground for a new modern civil society in the Western world. Ecclesiastical and monarchic controls were ridiculed and subsequently replaced by political democracy. Man has been given a *free* reign to rely upon his reason and critical spirit to design his cultural, moral and material life. Rationalism, science and technology became the new cultural *symbols* of a dominant culture in the Western world.[69] The profound Kantian synthesis of empirico-rationalism in his 'Copernican Revolution' provided new epistemological grounds for a modern Western *weltanschauung* replacing and substituting the traditional Christian theology and Church as interpretative source and a foundation for a radical democratization and industrialization of 'medieval' religious Western culture. Modern culture then crystallized from the critical interpretations of Kantian '*Kritik*' that viewed modernization as a movement of knowledge and freedom from self-imposed tutelage of man over man. In this way, Western man found a new purpose to advance historically and culturally in a universal march. This led him to 'colonize' and 'civilize' the entire humanity with his newfound destiny of liberation, freedom and democracy, and especially his immediate neighbors, the Islamic East.

At the time when Western world was undergoing through a new cultural experience of Enlightenment, industrial revolution, political democracy, civil liberty and *laissez faire* economy, all indicators of the birth pangs of a new civil society in the West; its counterpart in the East, the Islamic societies were also undergoing cultural changes of their own *type*. These changes were mainly *religious* in essence and outlook,[70] and all of which claimed to reinvigorate a disintegrating, dividing Islamic culture in the East. All the leading Ulemas of this new cultural *movement* in the Islamic East perceived the onslaught of new and *dynamically* emerging Western societies with their newfound desire to

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[69] See for example, Phil Bagby's (1958), Culture and History: Prolegomena to the Comparative Study of Civilizations, London, Longman, pp-124. He observes, " The rise of the bourgeoisies, the development of nationalism, the decline of religion and family, the growth of science and individualism, all these are changes—and perhaps interrelated changes—in the various branches of Western European culture in relatively modern times."

[70] Qureshi, I. H (1992), A Short History of Pakistan (Vol.1-4), pp-622-623Karachi, Bureau of Composition, Compilation and Translation, University of Karachi.

direct and re-mould the course of world-history. In Indian sub-continent, Shah Waliullah of Delhi led the change of this *religious* reinvigoration[71] of a socially degenerate Islamic India. In Arabia it was Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab, [72]in North Africa it was Muhammad bin Ali Alsunassi Altunnisi, a Sufi-Alim, who inspired and guided the cultural movements of religious revnewal.[73] In the Ottoman Empire, it was the ottoman bourgeoisie who embarked on a process of change in the prevalent cultural state of affairs.[74] However, the impact of modern Western worldview was already well-advanced in the Islamic world through 'colonization' and consequent 'modernization' of these cultures by their new political masters when these Ulema undertook efforts of reinvigoration. Western 'enlightenment' and its incumbent political-cultural system was thus exported to Islamic India and elsewhere, through rapid 'colonization' of Islamic east; and in turn India, Arabia, Egypt, and North Africa, were exposed to a new and second biggest intellectual-cultural challenge to these societies.[75] This new cultural challenge, subsequently changed the social-cultural structure of these societies very profoundly. For example, in Islamic South Asia, there were two different responses to the colonization and westernization; one was radical and militant response of *traditional* Ulemas and the second was a liberal, moderate response of such 'modern' Muslims like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Syed Amir Ali. The response of these 'modern' Muslims became the dominant cultural paradigm of Islamic South Asia. Their intellectual response also provided new philosophical and moral legitimation for establishing a closer cultural linkage with the Western cultures and their 'modernization' projects.[76]

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[71] Iqbal, M. (1982) The Reconstruction of Religious Thought inIslam, Sh.Muhammad Ashraf& Sons, Lahore.

[72] Ibid,pp-153

[73] .Ibid,pp-153

[74] Fatma, M.G. (1996), Rise of Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change. Oxford University Press, N.Y.pp-37-39.

[75] Crusades being the first major Western political and military challenge during 12th centaury A.D.

[76] Saeed, J. (1994), Islam and Modernization: A Comparative Analysis of Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey, Praeger, Westport, Conneticut. Pp- 80-90.

Eventually, this led to the radical transformation in the *traditional* Islamic culture in South Asia, which was until that time (mid-19th century) mainly a repository of a medieval-agrarian society and thus a social representation of moral, political, technical resources and values rooted and legitimatized by an agricultural society...

The modern cultural contact with the Western political, social, moral, scientific and technological ideas initiated a 'wave' of reinterpretation and rethinking in the Islamic culture in South Asia and its future historical role and destiny vis-à-vis the emerging dominant Western world-culture. The cultural legitimation of 'modernity' by Muslim thinkers such as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his colleagues at Aligarh Muslim University, India, led to a fresh wave of cultural *reorientation* of the Islamic society in South Asia in particular and the other parts of the Islamic world in general. The realist thesis of 'modern' Muslims, who never compromised on the 'core' notions of their Islamic culture which was its *religious* essence, led to the birth of such revolutionary thinkers and leaders as Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Inayatullah Khan Al-Mashriqui, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Muahmmad Ali Johar, Mualana Zafar Ali and Chuadary Rehmat Ali.They created a new politico-cultural consciousness amongst the Muslim masses of Islamic South Asia. This eventually made possible the genesis of a modern Muslim *identity* in the form of a new Muslim State, namely Pakistan. Each one of them put forward a 'modern' discourse on the philosophical, moral, social, cultural, and historical criticism of the 'great horizon' of the cultural past in Islamic South Asia. They also put forward a modern strategy to advance the course of Islam in a completely industrialized and technologically forward-looking world.[77]

All these intellectuals and leaders thus formulated, or helped in formulating a *contemporary* world-view of Islamic South Asia, which is liberal, modern, technological, affirmative, democratic and socially just without compromising on the foundational principles of Islam on all matters and core *religious* structures of Islamic social organization. Thus providing the contemporary Muslims to cope well with the demands of the modern world, without letting the 'spirit' of Muslim culture becoming hostage to the designs

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[77] Ibid, pp-74-75.

of any autocratic, dictatorial or reactionary cultural force in their society, in the name of Islam or religion.[78]

Following in the footsteps of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Iqbal and Jinnah, intellectuals like Akbar S. Ahmad and Ziauddin Sardar in U.K and Ismail Al-Faruqi, in USA and Fetullah Gulen in Turkey have continued their studies in furthering the understanding of Islamic culture for the Western world. Not only the project of 'islamization'[79] of secular sciences of the West and its liberal-democratic values but also a continuous 'dialogue'[80]and diffusionistic exchanges of Western and Islamic cultures have been proposed by these writers. Their common theme is the preservation of Muslim identity in the wake of modern, 'mediaized' and 'globalized,' Western cultural-environments.[81]

Contrary to Fukuyama's 'End of History' thesis and Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilization' theory, these Muslim thinkers keep on promoting a *'humanistic'* image of Islamic culture and the mutually beneficial historical relationships which both Western world and the Islamic East can enjoy. The prototypical trumpeting of 'clash' of Islamic and Western civilizations would not make the globalization secure and the world a politically safe place to live both in the Islamic East and the Secular West.

Human societies have reached to a new epoch of historical-political maturation of a global culture, which may be based upon the technological *exterior* of the Western world and the spiritual *interior* of the Islamic East. This would be a ground unification of the two divergent cultural paradigms into a single fold of a true and authentic *humanistic* culture, ushering well into the

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[78] Ibid, pp-75-76.

[79] Faruqi, Ismail (2008) Islam: Movement for World Order. Available at http://iiit.org/Portals/0/faruqi/Islam-movementforworldorder.pdf (Accessed on 07/02/08).

[80] Carroll, B.J. (2007). A Dialogue of Civilizations: Gulen's Islamic Ideals and Humanistic Discourse. The Light, Inc.

[81] Mona,AbulFadl (2008) She writes, " Any attempt therefore to influence the course of civilization must rely on the modes of interaction that occur between a dominant West and the emerging power centers all over the globe. In essence, these modes need to be seen as a function of culture and not merely as politics". Available at; http://www.muslimwomenstudies.com/cultural_imperative.htm. (Accessed on 07/25/08)

next millennium free of genocide, ethnic cleansing, religious persecutions and social-economic injustices.[82]

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[82] Iqbal, M (1982), in his Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, particularly speaks about working towards 'mutual harmonies' between science and religion thus providing a programme for convergent intellectual discourse between Islamic East and Secular West. See Preface.

RETHINKING THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE IN AN ERA OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Prof. Dr. Nevad Kahteran

ABSTRACT

If it had been the Lord's will, they would all have believed – all who are on earth!

Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!

(Qur'an, 10:99)

After reading ayats like the one taken as the motto of this paper, it is definitely not easy to claim that the Qur'an encourages an exclusivist approach towards other religions. In our rethinking this Islamic pluralistic perspective and what it means today, we should take into consideration the very definition of religious pluralism by David Ray Griffin in the first chapter of his *Deep Religious Pluralism* ("Religious pluralists do not believe that their own religion is the only legitimate one. They believe that other religions can provide positive values and truths, even salvation – however defined – to their adherents," p. xiii). Taking this definition of religious pluralism into consideration, then, it is very important to show that Islam generally adhered to a pluralistic position from its very beginnings, i.e. the Prophet of Islam created a single community where citizenship for and cooperation with non-Muslims were essential, which is diametrically opposed to today's prevailing interpretations of Islam and the actual state of affairs. The author firmly believes that in this year of 2008 and the 70th anniversary of Shaykh Allama Muhammad Iqbal's death it is possible to reconsider this pluralistic society created in Medina, according to which an Islamic community or state should essentially be pluralistic, without allowing any kind of oppression, or without falling into so called U-turned Islam, intellectual myopia and parochialism.

This is the same dilemma expressed in S.H. Nasr's article "To Live in a World with No Center – and Many" in which, for Nasr, every religion and culture is based on a centre from which stem moral, social, intellectual, and artistic values. Moreover, the real task for us is how to live in a way that appreciates the value and importance of these various religions and cultures without falling into the dangers of debilitating relativism and nihilism. In this era of crisis of value orientation at every level, it is important to emphasize that the main reason for holding a pluralistic position lies in his consideration that a centreless world possesses the greatest danger for future generations.

Finally, still on the tracks of these two thinkers (notwithstanding the fact that Iqbal was criticized by S.H. Nasr), it is possible to reconsider significant possibilities that can lead to the reconstruction of a more plausible Islamic pluralistic position today, and with some distinctions in comparism with other contemporary and classical Muslim thinkers as well, the author believes that their views can be taken as good "flucht lienen" for reconstructing a more plausible and adequate Islamic pluralistic position vs. today's prevailing exclusivist one, which is really a great sin against God and people alike.

In recent years, philosophers in the Balkan region have begun to show a keen interest in learning the current discourse on religious pluralism. I do believe that our Bosnian translation of Iqbal's *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, as well as several books by S. H. Nasr and the work by David Ray Griffin that is referred to, would provide philosophers and theologians in this region with a secure foothold from which to embark on a study of the issue of religious pluralism in the wider field of Islamic and Western philosophy.

Key words: Ibn 'Arabī and the emergence of a more pluralistic consciousness, religious pluralism, philosophical cross-cultural dialogue in Islam, comparative philosophy.

I

Philosophy, as Socrates demonstrated, is not something that simply gets taught – it is something one does. Philosophy that is not an instrument of social change is not philosophy. This view of philosophy, of course, is entirely compatible with today's prevailing philosophy of pragmatism – one

with which I could agree as a disciple of the *philosophia perennis et universalis* – while duly remarking that from the perspective of the perennial philosophy itself, practical benefit is not an end in itself, but the outcome of following the Truth of tradition. Clearly, if we study Ibn 'Arabi's teachings in depth, as has been done many times through this Society's endeavours and its annual symposia, there is a possibility we will find pluralist terms for life in the civil order onto which fate has launched us. It is not our intention here to go any deeper into the aesthetics of the cyber-world and the effects of derealization, the dubious reality-show mentality of today's generations to which I shall make only passing reference and which is a barrier to a comprehensive understanding of the Muslim model of thought in general and that of Ibn 'Arabi in particular, since it is still relatively unknown and has been but little studied in the western theoretical architecture of the twenty-first century, even here in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Let us then ask ourselves who, of the existing historical actors of today, would find the time, the will and the motive to reflect on the possibility of the relationship between essentially different cultural entities that are nonetheless familiar with on-going active dialogue as the conceivable future of human life on this earth? Personally, I see this kind of readiness for a genuine conceptual opening up to the experience of the truths of non-European cultural circles, primarily those of south and south-east Asia and the far East, and in particular in dialogue with the Muslim model of thought, through the existing projects of great families such as the Goethe Institut,[83] the Fulbright Visiting Specialist Program,[84] the British Council's Open Europe Programme[85], Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies (Center for Islamic Area Studies at Kyoto University – KIAS) and others of which I am a

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[83] For example, the periodical "Fikrun wa Fann/Art and Thought" for culture and the promotion of dialogue with the Islamic world, on www.Goethe.De, or www.Qantara.De where one can find information on discussions on politics, culture and social issues in German, Arabic and English. Then there are *Zenith Online* and *The Ifa-Forum Dialogue*, which cover the Muslim world in 83 countries in a measured critical manner.

[84] Fulbright Visiting Specialists Program: Direct Access to the Muslim World on www.Cies.Org/Visiting_Specialists/, a programme dedicated to establishing inter-religious dialogue with the Muslim world.

[85] A newly-launched programme, headed by Guido Jansen, Open Europe Programme British Council in Berlin, a colleague whom I recently had the opportunity to meet in Sarajevo with his team.

member, in which Ibn 'Arabi's teachings should have a presence in a relationship with modern thinking.[86] I would agree, therefore, with Professor Chittick that his influence is spreading, both within the Muslim world and in the West, and that the activities of the Ibn 'Arabi Society is one of the many signs of renewed interest in his teachings,[87] even if that interest is still far from sufficient.

<div align="center">II</div>

Ibn 'Arabi should be, and without doubt already is, regarded as among the enduring contributors not merely to Islamic but to world civilization and religious understanding. Our on-going task in an era of globalization is to render this central dimension of Ibn 'Arabi's thought more widely acceptable, thereby countering the prevailing exclusivist approach to and interpretation of Islam with its pluralist outlook and model of thought within an Islamic pluralist position that is a powerful bulwark against the intellectual myopia and narrow-mindedness of our own times and their obtusities.

When I first crossed the threshold of the Ibn 'Arabi Society in Oxford, almost a decade ago, and met Martin Nottcutt and his wife Caroline, followed by James Winston Morris at Hawick (Bashara School), I never imagined that I would become a member of that great family of admirers of the Shaykh al-Akbar, or that by publishing Morris's series of public lectures in Sarajevo I would provide the kick-start for an outstanding bilingual publication,[88] which was reprinted later in English and translated into a number of other languages – I refer to his *Orientations: Islamic Thought in a*

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[86] See, e.g., Peter Coates, *Ibn 'Arabī and Modern Thought: The History of Taking Metaphysics Seriously*, Anqa Publishing, 2002. This book is an appeal to reflect on some central ideas of modernity in the light of Ibn 'Arabī's teachings. For Akbarian studies and the way in which they are applied and transformed in the modern world, see the interesting study by Suha Taji-Farouki, *Beshara and Ibn 'Arabī: A movement of sufi spirituality in the modern world*, Anqa Publishing 2007.

[87] See online article: Ibn al- *'Arabī*, by William C. Chittick (State University of New York).

[88] James Winston Morris, *Orientations: Islamic Thought in a World Civilization*, which I have translated in association with R. Hafizović and A. Silajdžić as *Orijentacije: islamska misao u svjetskoj civilizaciji*, El-Kalem, Sarajevo, 2001, pp. 193 (separate Bosnian and English versions).

World Civilisation.[89] After almost a decade of keeping steady track of the contribution this Society makes to the study of Ibn 'Arabi world-wide, I must agree with our friend and colleague Morris, who said in Sarajevo that anyone who wants to be involved in translating and studying this leading thinker and Sufi, particularly in the dramatic development of the world of academic research into the scope of his profound influence on every aspect of the Islamic religion and the Islamic humanities, must consult past and present editions of the *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* (Oxford, now in its fourth decade). Truly, as a wholehearted co-signatory to this view of Morris's and to his assertion that if by chance Ibn 'Arabi were alive today he would no doubt be a film director, we must say that this *Journal* has helped to create an active global network of scholars, researchers and translators whose influence is ever more visible at the numerous international conferences dedicated to the Shaykh al-akbar and his later Muslim interpreters, including some of our countrymen such as 'Abdullah Bosnawi, who is already a classical thinker, and others, as well as modern scholars such as my colleague Rešid Hafizović of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, who has gathered quite a flock of young researchers around himself.

For as Morris would say, „This world-wide collective effort to rediscover the profound influences of Ibn Ibn ' Arabī and his teachings on central dimensions of Islamic culture from W. Africa to China and Indonesia is not just an academic project of historical 'archaeology': those involved, in each country and region concerned, are well aware of the contemporary and future significance of Ibn ' Arabī 's understanding of the roots of Islamic spirituality and tradition for any lasting effort of renewal and revivification within Islam and the emerging global civilisation"[90]. At this very point, with the reference to the enduring existential reflection on the central issues and perspectives of all Ibn 'Arabi's available writings, with views and emphases that are radically different and yet ultimately astonishingly complementary, I should like to

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[89] *Orientations: Islamic Thought in a World Civilisation*. London, Archetype Press, 2004. (Arabic, Urdu and French translations in preparation or already in print).
Yonelimler: Bir Dunya MedeniyetindeIslam Dusuncesi. Istanbul, Insan yayinlari [Humanities Press], 2006. (Turkish translation by Prof. Mahmud Erol Kiliç.)
Sufi-Sufi Merajut Peradaban. Jakarta, Forum Sebangsa, 2003. (Indonesian translation by B. Harun.)
[90] See his „Orientations", Archetype, Cambridge, 2004, p. 125.

address some questions of Selfhood in the context of the Islamic perspective in this age of religious and philosophical pluralism.

The purpose of this short paper, then, is to draw the attention of this valued audience once again to the universal elements of classical Islamic thought and spirituality, which are explicitly based on the universal dimensions of human experience. I am of the firm belief that these elements will supply the badly-needed foundations for the creation of genuine communication and a real community– the foundations for enduring cultural creativity, individual realization and collection transformation in the evolving global civilization. However, it is our misfortune that we are unable to perceive that they have already once prompted this far-reaching form of creativity, leadership, and political and spiritual insights, which gave rise to the great multi-cultural and multi-confessional civilizations of 'Abbasid Baghdad (al-Farabi), Andalusia (Ibn Tufayl, Averroes and Ibn 'Arabi) and the Ottoman, Mughal and Safavid empires.

This raises the question of what the Islamic position actually is–one of exclusivism, of inclusivism, or even of religious and philosophical pluralism and what shape it is given by its advocates.

III

We in Bosnia and Herzegovina are in the process of constructing and raising the profile of our European, plural identity, with all the familiar difficulties and obstacles we necessarily encounter on the way. In this often chaotic context, the religious perspective, when it degenerates into a clash between different fundamentalisms instead of opposing the dominance of technology, operates as the veritable twin to competitive, conflictual logic, which it actually enhances. It is vital that we understand that diversity is a corrective factor for globalization and that diversity of cultural models is the only guarantee of respect for the human race.[91] In fact, we rediscover the secret of European success in which the whole idea of the EU is based on the notion that you may be German and French, or Swedish and European,

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[91] Julia Kristeva, „My motto is diversity" in: *Diversity and Culture*, Collection Penser l'Europe, p. 20.

or British and German, at the same time, which was achieved through inter-religious contacts in Bosnia as long ago as the mid tenth century. The very notion of cultural homogeneity is a denial of reality, and the real standards of Europeanness lie in the answer to the question: What will make Europe more European? The answer, of course, is a more cosmopolitan Europe, where national identity becomes less and less exclusive and more and more inclusive on the way to creating a genuinely plural society. Things are exclusive from the very outset in the blinkered nature of the ethnic model of thinking, and I maintain that it is perfectly possible to be a Muslim and a democrat, just as it is possible, for instance, to be a socialist and a small businessman. We in Bosnia are learning this territorial ontology of identity with considerable difficulty on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration, endeavouring to embrace both sides of the Atlantic in our reflections, since we never lose sight either of the United States, as the current "third Rome" of the globalized world.[92]

Bosnia, like Europe and the USA, is equally synonymous with the differences that the insanity of ethnicity and intellectual myopia have made immense efforts over the past fifteen years to abolish, and this paper is an attempt to imagine the future of its cultural diversity and polyphony in the context of an Islamic perspective in this age of religious and philosophical pluralism, basing itself on the traditional thinkers who follow Ibn 'Arabi's teachings in their way of thinking.[93] Personally, I am very close to the

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[92] See, in particular: Brighouse H. & Brock G., *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005;
Burawoy M et al., *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000;
Delanty G. & Rumford C., Rethinking Europe. Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization. London/New York, Routledge, 2005;
Huntington S.P., *Who are we? The Challenges to America's National Identity*. New York. Simeon & Schuster, 2004.
[93] On inter-religious Akbarian studies see, in particular: *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn Al-'Arabī and the Problem of Religious Diversity* (Suny Series in Islam) by William C. Chittick; J.W. Morris, *Ibn 'Arabī and His Interpreters: Historical Contexts and Contemporary Perspectives*, 226 pp. There is a free downloadable version of this in .pdf format at: www.Ibnarabisociety.Org/Ibnarabi; idem, *Understanding Religion and Inter-Religious Understanding: Four Classical Muslim Thinkers.* Monograph: Kuala Lumpur, Center for Civilisational Dialogue, 2003; idem, *Rhetoric and*

mindset, or the proposition, that sees Islam as genuinely offering a model for universal citizenship, despite all the distortions of this idea and the stereotypes that have been established through an entire nexus of different interests and groups on various grounds, and I would be delighted if, somewhere along the way, we could manage to shed all our apprehensions over the awkward position of the Islam world in regard to this question, even if only momentarily.

In the view of many thinkers, Muhyī al-Dīn ibn ʻArabī (1165-1240) is the most influential thinker of the latter half of Islamic history and philosophy, whether in the Muslim or the classical meaning of the word, and philosophy constitutes the framework for his world view. Philosophy in this sense is, of course, identical with the wisdom of which the Qur'an speaks (2:269), that same wisdom which features in a narrative in the very middle of the Qur'an (18:65). I am not referring, of course, to the secular understanding of the term, of philosophies that are constructed and then deconstructed by new ones, with each one merely the expression of the fragility of human insights and cognition, of the contingency and temporality of the human being. It is important to emphasize this at a time of trendy insanity and philosophies that preach the separation of man from connection with anything Higher, and hence the entirely reasonable concern over just how sensitive we really are to Ibn ʻArabi's teachings on the perception of God in the concepts of *tashbīh* and *tanzīh*, where we discern the alterity (*ghayriyyah*) of all things through the affirmation of that which is first, and in affirming alterity we recognize the Divine testimony (*maʻiyyah*, [57:4]). In fact, this true cognition depends on seeing everything "with the eye of the imagination and the eye of the intellect," where this type of intuitive cognition, far from denoting the sub-rational, is actually cognition of a supra-rational character, and where rational cognition is merely a solid preparation on the way to scaling the "cliffs of the Spirit" or the "Himalayas of the soul," like those ladders of Wittgenstein that, once climbed, we no longer need.

Sadly, the harmony we need to establish between reason and the capacities of the imagination has been demolished for all time by profane

philosophies and professional philosophers (philosophers *von beruf*), by doctrines that take for granted the mental knowledge of concepts and juggle with them without any particular commitment to their being given preferential treatment in our lives. What is more, the place of the imaginal has been occupied by the imaginary world of the virtual, artificial intelligence of computer games, while as for Ibn 'Arabī's Oneness of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), the world of the imaginal ('*ālam al-khayāl*) and the perfect man as the ideal and paragon (*al-insān al-kāmil*) the central tenet of Ibn 'Arabi's teachings nowadays, instead of these numerous degrees of perfection leading to the ability to see God with both kinds of eye and perception, we are becoming increasingly familiar with violent, monodimensional man in his frenetic schizophrenia. Well might we ask, therefore, whether today's generations are in a position once again to lend an ear to the teachings of this great Teacher and to attune their understanding to his most characteristic theoretical framework, the specific path of "verification" (*taḥqīq*), so as to become "verifiers" (*al-muḥqqiqūn*), to take on the "cloak of investiture" known to later generations as the *khirkat al-akbariyyah*, which they should indeed introduce into the educational curriculum of the third millennium. As is well known, here we finally come to the certainty we seek through our philosophical and theological training, knowing that among those who turned their hand to this was our own 'Abdullah Bosnawī (d. 1644), who made a valuable contribution to the philosophical exposition of Ibn 'Arabī's ideas.[94] However, this position

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[94] Islam came to the Balkans in the 15th century, and is now an integral part of the culture and identity of a number of countries in south-eastern Europe, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania. For more see:

Abulafia, David, *Italy, Sicily and the Mediterranean 1100-1400*, London, Variorum Reprints, 1987.

Ibid., *Frederick II. A Medieval Emperor*, London, The Penguin Press, 1988.

Ahmad, Aziz, *A History of Islamic Sicily*, Edinburgh, University Press, 1975.

Amari, Michele, *Storia dei Musulmani de Sicilia*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 2002.

Bausani, Alessandro, *Notes on the History of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Italy during the Middle Ages*, Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, III, 1995., pp. 174-185.

Bresc, H. – Bresc-Bautier, G., *Palermo 1070-1492*, Paris, Autrement, 1993.

Del nuovo sulla Sicilia musulmana, Roma, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1995.

Lewis, Bernard, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, London, Phoenix Press, 1982.

Mack, Smith, *A History of Sicily. Medieval Sicily 800-1715*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1968.

of Ibn 'Arabi's, denoted as *madhhab al-taḥqīq* ("the school of verification") is all the harder in that it signifies realizing these concepts in our lives, literally tasting (*dhawq*), instead of merely knowing them mentally; hence this paper, our "editorial."

<center>IV</center>

The idea that Islam offers a model for universal citizenship is present in particular in the thinking of two Muslim pluralist thinkers: Muhammad Iqbal, in the first half, and S. H. Nasr in the latter half of the 20th century and, God willing, on into the 21st. This year is the seventieth anniversary of Iqbal's death,[95] and this month we have celebrated Nasr's seventy-fifth birthday. Despite the differences between them, both dedicated themselves to the study of Sufism and are profoundly steeped in it.

Professor Nasr explains in one of his works[96] that pluralism is widely regarded as the only alternative to this world view of a world without a centre. One of the principal reasons why pluralism was so important, particularly in recent times, is that, given the way the world is today, we cannot isolate ourselves from exposure to other religious, cultural and ethnic differences. His exposition helps us to understand and evaluate the true nature and value of the Other. On the other hand, in Iqbal's mind, Islam was not a monopoly on the basis of which some people who regard themselves as virtuous should sit in judgment on the spirituality of others. "God is the birthright of every human being[97]," he said in one of his works. There still

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Mehren, M.A.F., *Correspondance du philosophe soufi Ibn Sab'in Abdoul-Haqq avec l'Empereur Frederick II de Hohenstaufen*, Paris, 1879.

Montgomerry Watt W., *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*, Edinburgh, University Press, 1972.

Salierno, Vito, *The Muslims in Italy*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2007.

Id., *Biblioteca Arabo-Sicula*, Leipzig, 1857.

Udovitch, Abraham L., *New Materials for the History of Islamic Sicily*, Roma, 1995.

[95] The "Iqbal in Europe" conference is due to be held in London on 17 June this year.

[96] See S.H. Nasr, "To Live in a World with No Center – and Many".

[97] Khurram Ali Shafique, *Iqbal: An Illustrated Biography*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2007, p. 77.

remains the question of how we are to live in the midst of this kind of multiplicity and diversity without falling into mere debilitating relativism.[98]

This anticipation of the events of our times is very typical of Iqbal, and I should therefore like to quote another passage: "All nations accuse us of fanaticism. I admit the charge – I go further and say that we are justified in our fanaticism. Translated in the language of biology fanaticism is nothing but the priciple of individualisation working in the case of group. In this sense all forms of life are more or less fanatical and ouguht to be so if they care for their collective life. And as a matter of fact all nations are fanatical. Criticise an English-man's religion, he is immovable; but criticise his civilisation, his country or the behaviour of his nation in any sphere of activity and you will bring out his innate fanaticism. The reason is that his nationality does not depen on religion; it has a geographical basis – his country. His fanaticism then is justly roused when you criticise his country. Our position, however, is fundamentally different. With us nationality is a pure idea; it has no material basis. Our only rallying points is a sort of mental agreement in a certain view of the world. If then our fanaticism is roused when our religion is criticised, I think we are as much justified in our fanaticism as an Englishman is when his civilisation is denounced. The feeling in both cases is the same though associated with different objects. Fanaticism is patriotism for religion; patriotism, fanaticsm for country"[99]

It follows from what Iqbal says about Islam and patriotism that Muslim solidarity as a community is based on our perseverance in maintaining the religious principle, and that at present this is regarded as loosened and that we are nowhere, as if we shall probably suffer the same fate as the Jews, since we do not understand the difference between Islamism, which constructs

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[98] Iqbal's position on Sufism long caused a problem for the study of his thinking, which began with his *Asrar-i Khudi* (*Secrets of the Self*) in which *waḥdat al-wujud* was wrongly interpreted and translated as pantheism, since Iqbal had no direct access to Ibn 'Arabī's works – a stance that was later altered by his profound respect for Ibn 'Arabī, and Iqbal's works on Sufism from this period should be approached with extreme caution, since his position was defined in later works. Finally, this was the reason for S. H. Nasr's criticism of Iqbal: even though Iqbal had great respect for tradition, he was an almost fanatical adherent of the principle of human development and progress.

[99] Idem, op. cit., quote from his *Stray Reflection* on page 61.

nationality from a purely abstract idea– religion– and the "westernism" of the existential moving force of which the concept is nationality based on a specific thing– a country. Regardless of whether one agrees with this postulate of his or not, this interpretation of Islamic philosophy as a living religious tradition, not as the mere knowledge of concepts– the need, that is, for the living spiritual testimony of Islam and the system of Islamic philosophy and the meaning of the teachings of Sufism in practice and in Islamic thought– is invariably inseparable from the inner experience of the spirit of Islam. Fortunately, as Iqbal himself put it,[100] "the burning simoon of Ibn Taymiyya's invective could not touch the freshness of the Persian rose"– his metaphor for the living Sufi teachings. We must thus be personally committed to the practice of Sufi teachings, and not merely to our own contemplative or speculative testimony to the Supreme Truth, though post-modern man is unusually ready to seek short-cuts in matters of spirituality, as though it could be achieved with a double-click on the keyboard. The state of Akbarian studies, or to put it better their ostracism, is now the best indicator of the distortion of the Islamic model of thought in the world's intellectual myopia and tunnel vision which, sad to say, prevail today in what we now call the Muslim world.

Furthermore, new insights into comparative and world philosophy should encourage western philosophers and analysts of Islam to cultivate their interest in Islamic philosophy as an aid to setting priorities for their own deeper studies and creative philosophical work, or a framework conducive to understanding and a programme of complexity and diversity, especially Ibn 'Arabi's thinking – that thinker, poet and, above all, Sufi, who has brought us all together today around his spiritual spread or symposium.

By this I mean to advocate an articulation of religious and philosophical pluralism through the study of the Muslim model of thinking in general and

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[100] M. Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy* . The work has been translated and published in Bosnia as a bilingual edition with the Bosnian title *Razvoj metafizike u Perziji: prilog historiji muslimanske filozofije*, trans. N. Kahteran, Connectum, Sarajevo, 2005, p. 71: "but the burning simoon of Ibn Taymiyya's invective could not touch the freshness of the Persian rose. The one was completely swept away by the flood of barbarian invansions; the other, unaffected by the Tartar revolution, still holds its own."

Akbarian studies in particular, for this is the reason why it is so important, even from the practical standpoint that I referred to in my foreword, that we do not oppose Sufism, but rather defend it, and seek to remove the obstacles that are currently erected against it and the spread of its ideas.[101] Ultimately, what stands in the way of such efforts is the "ulema of evil", which has been best defined by one of the finest religious leaders of the Bosnian Muslims (Čaušević).[102]

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[101] See: S.H. Nasr, *Sufism and the Integration of the Inner and Outer Life of Man*, The Singhvi Interfaith Lecture for the Year 1999, The Temenos Academy, 2004.

[102] Džemaludin Čaušević was installed as Reisu-l-ulema on 26 March 1914 on receipt from Istanbul of a *manshur* or decree of appointment, and continued to hold the post until 1930 when he retired at his own request. He was honoured and appreciated by all the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina and by many other friends. As translator of the Qur'an, he came under attack from the periodical "El-Hidaja"; rejecting these attacks, he made reference to Shakib Arslan (*Ḥadir al-'ālam al-islami*, vol. IV, p. 44), who wrote:

"The class known as the 'ulama' bears the greatest responsibility before God and the people for the decline and degeneration of Islam. With few exceptions, they have used religion as a means of acquiring earthly goods, and have made it a rule to make overtures and pay court to the rulers to facilitate all their dealings, to which end they make use of a range of Shari'a arguments and fatwas (legal decisions). Whenever someone intended to commit an act of violence against some absolutist ruler or statesmen, they would issue fatwas, seeking to determine the meaning of the verses of the Holy Qur'an by resorting to weak arguments, in order to win favours and rewards from the power-holders. They persisted in this fallacy as long as Muslims remained unaware of the games they were playing, and even began to use such means to make overtures to non-Muslim authorities in various matters that have led to the decline and fall of Islam. Whenever a Muslim country fell into the hands of a foreign country, or a Muslim nation rose up to defend itself from foreign aggressors and usurpers, the foreign government would find its most loyal servants among the ulama, who would serve its ends and issue fatwas at its bidding. Suffice it to cite just one instance among many, that of the Syrian ulama, who issued a fatwa during the war to the effect that the Sharif of Mecca, Hussain, was to be pronounced an apostate, simply in order to curry favour with Jamal Pasha, Syria's military commander. After the Allies won the war and occupied Syria, this same ulama later pledged its loyal allegiance to the very same Sharif Hussain whom they had so recently regarded as an apostate Caliph. When the French entered Damascus, they repudiated Hussain for the second time, issued a fatwa at the bidding of the French, and declared Hussain an alien. The majority of the ulama change their views to suit changing circumstances, and if reproached on that account, they reply: 'It is a precaution, intended to save ourselves from violence.' In fact, this excuse is unacceptable, and their conduct is contrary to the Shari'a and in contradiction with the Qur'an and Sunnah.

I am, of course, fully aware that we are increasingly not part of a traditional culture, but of a scientific one, or a civilization of the image, where instead of the image remaining at its proper level in the world and retaining its symbolic role it simply tends to be reduced to the level of sensory perception, thereby ultimately being devalued.[103] In Henry Corbin's opus in particular, whose reference to the "trahison des clercs" in Sunni Islam I call as witness, the image of a world emerges that manages to avoid the trials and temptations of socialization and historical materialization,[104] those dangerous traps of historicism. What is more, his oeuvre is another moving testimony to the consequences of– to use his own words once again– the "socialization of the spiritual" in the lands of Sunni Islam, the creation of a false boundary between the sacred and the profane or secular. Corbin's allusions here vividly demonstrate that this phenomenon of the "socialization of the spiritual" conceals the sense of traditional cultures of being targeted by the emergence of what he calls the "trahison des clercs." Corbin was a resolute and eminent

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Their claim that they were anxious to dispel violence is false, a cloak for their hidden agenda. One wanted to be a qadi, another a mufti, and some aspired to be Reisu-l-ulema. Some among them wanted to make good money from their signature. We do not know how long Syria (only Syria, we ask ourselves? *sic*) will tolerate these turbaned ignoramuses, and will look at people with strong will, not at the ahmediyya turban."

As this quotation from Shakib Arslan shows, one of the chief culprits for the degeneration of Islam is "ulama-su" ("the ulama of evil"), as the great scholar Zamakhshari called them no less than nine centuries ago.

(Quoted from E. Karić, *Tefsir: uvod u tefsirske znanosti* (Tafsir: an introduction to the science of Qur'anic commentary), Knjiga bosanska, Sarajevo, 1995, pp. 276-7).

[103] In his own day Henry Corbin, that eminent French philosopher, Islamist and one of the greatest names in western European oriental studies, as well as the leading interpreter of illuminationst philosophy in the West and of the esoteric approach to it, to say nothing of Akbarian studies, focused on the religious heritage of the Persian and Arabic world to rediscover the forgotten tradition that we find in his studies on Sufism, Shi'ism and the pre-Islamic religions of Persia. He reveals to us the vast area that exists between the three-dimension world of our everyday experience, which has yet never belonged to the "consensual hallucination" of cyberspace, as William Gibson, who coined the phrase, calls it. Corbin gives it various names in his works, depending on the specific features of the culture or philosophical personality under consideration:*'ālam al-mithāl*, *mundus imaginalis*, *barzakh*, *the inner world*, the land of *Hurqalya*, the imaginal world or the creative imagination. However, whatever term we use to describe it, it features in Corbin's works as a categorically *real* space.

[104] See, in particular, Pierre Lory, "Henry Corbin: his work and influence" in: *History of Islamic Philosophy*, vol. II (Routledge History of World Philosophies), ed. By S.H. Nasr and Oliver Leaman, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, p. 1149-1155.

scholar who strove so earnestly to restore to the light of day reflections on this imaginal dimension, a dimension that is so often sidelined these days in academic circles.

I believe we are now in a better position to understand the task of comparative philosophy and of renewed reflections on the Islamic position in a age of religious and philosophical pluralism. The task of comparison is on a solid footing, since the subjects before it have common roots in the mystical theosophism with which the sages of the three great communities of the Abrahamic tradition have been engaged, as have all the religious traditions of the world. I should like to say that the great responsibility for the effort to understand and eliminate this dangerous situation into which we have sunk falls in large part upon comparative philosophy, while the thinkers I have referred to, Iqbal and Nasr, whatever their differences, are pluralist thinkers, and I cannot take pleasure in the way they are represented in M. Ruzgar's contribution to an otherwise fine study, *Deep Religious Pluralism*, edited by David Ray Griffin,[105] which I have recently translated in the conviction that it could help us to promote religious and philosophical pluralism here in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I must say that Griffin has done an excellent job as editor in presenting and organizing this series of essays, which presents for our consideration every world religious tradition and focuses on the potential of "deep religious pluralism" based on Whitehead's philosophy, which is just one attempt of the kind. Add to this the fact that philosophers and theologians in the Balkans have shown keen interest in recent years in the theological and philosophical grounds for a comprehensive pluralization of all aspects of society, and it is clear that such writings are more than welcome.

Finally, where Ibn 'Arabi himself is concerned, the modern vocabulary to which our younger scholars in particular are accustomed, in the work by Peter Coates already referred to, *Ibn 'Arabi and Modern Thought: The History of Taking Metaphysics Seriously*, and Suha Taji-Farouki's *Beshara and Ibn 'Arabi: A movement of sufi spirituality in the modern world*, as well as the works of today's leading scholars of Ibn 'Arabī's thinking and writings, William Chittick and

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[105] David Ray Griffin (ed.), *Deep Religious Pluralism*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville-Kentucky, 2005.

James Morris, so well-known to all of us and so dedicated (both of whom have visited Bosnia and Herzegovina), has found its way to our philosophical and theological seminars.

<center>V</center>

In conclusion, I should like to say that comparative philosophy is the ambitious but historically necessary project of establishing a critical discourse between different philosophical systems and the thinkers belonging to those diverse cultures and traditions, with the aim of broadening philosophical horizons and the possibility of understanding among our students involved in the study of comparative philosophy. Another of its specific tasks is to establish international peace and deeper understanding in a specific, practical and yet intellectual venture within multicultural societies. As a result, comparative philosophy– or what one might more appropriately these days call "cross-cultural," "transcultural" or simply "global" philosophy– has manifested a wealth of different aims, methods and styles throughout its history and evolution. One of the enduring aims of comparative or cross-cultural philosophy was to bring to light the foundations of the cognitive and evaluative postulates of traditions that are different from our own, in the expectation of greater clarity and a better understanding of the postulates that inform us in a given tradition. We thereby begin to know ourselves better, it is thought, within and through the recognition of other alternative conceptual frameworks, values and modes of organizing and finding meaning in human experience. The principal Eastern traditions are being studied, as are now many other non-Western ones, discovering how they reveal different "modes of thought," and how they could be contrasted with one another and with various western forms. This would be comparative philosophy in its broadest cultural modality (E. Deutsch), and could be regarded as part of a greater comparative undertaking that one might call a problem-based approach. Whether it is in ethics, metaphysics, aesthetics, or any other philosophical discipline, the idea is that we can identify philosophical problems running through various traditions, and that we could use the resources of those traditions to help us deepen and broaden our own philosophical understanding and impact. In fact, scholars should be able to study Eastern philosophy in order to enrich their own philosophical background, which in turn would help them to wrestle more effectively with

the philosophical problems that interest them. What is more, we have begun to understand that the very idea of *philosophy* may denote quite different things in different cultures, and that we have much to learn from these other concepts– which leads us directly to comparative philosophy as creative philosophy. The assumption is that this enquiry could lead us to open up to new and better forms of philosophical understanding.

Finally, in this age of globalization this type of study is now a mega-trend in philosophy, and the aim of the XXII world congress of philosophers being held this year in Seoul is to redefine philosophy and to call attention to the need to introduce inter-traditional, cross-cultural, cross-systematic, more integrative and more global studies. Hence our hope that the insanity in the prevailing cult of ethnicity, of the nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina will not impede us in such efforts. To move in the opposite direction would be to maintain the continuity of ostensible alterity, of mutual ignorance, between Muslims and non-Muslims, with its distrust, isolation and extremism on both sides. Even now, Ibn 'Arabi helps us in the European community to become aware of ourselves and others and to build modern national and cultural identities and new cross-cultural leadership and skills, as well as answers to the question of how to be a Muslim in today's European, USA and global world of knowledge. *Wa mā tawfīqī illā bi'Llāh!*

THE OBJECTIVE OF METAPHYSICS IN IBN SAB'ĪN'S: ANSWERS TO THE SICILIAN QUESTIONS

Yousef Alexander Casewit

ABSTRACT

'Abd al-Ḥaqq Ibn Fatḥ Ibn Sab'īn's (1217-1270)[106] followers called him *Quṭb al-Dīn*, that is, "Pole of the Religion." Yet most reports about him by pre-modern Muslim scholars, hagiographers and Sufis are derogatory. Why was this Andalusian mystic and philosopher, who was hailed by Pope Gregory IX (d. 1241) as "the living Muslim with the greatest knowledge of God,"[107] portrayed as a bitter and despicable philosopher by so many of his critics? If, as some claim, his thought was trite, unworthy of attention and "unoriginal,"[108] why would Frederic II von Hohenstaufen (r. 1215-1250), the Christian monarch of Sicily, turn to Ibn Sab'īn for answers to timeless philosophical questions? Did he merit the grand title of *Quṭb al-Dīn*, or was he merely an ill-famed heretic? In short, who was Ibn Sab'īn?

Ibn Sab'īn has recently received renewed scholarly attention by Vincent Cornell[109] and Anna Akasoy.[110] On the whole, however, his works have yet to be examined in detail, and as a result, he remains a largely misunderstood and

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[106] His full name is: 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn Mohammad Ibn Nasr Ibn Fatḥ Ibn Sab'īn al-'Akkī. See Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khatīb, *Al-Iḥāta fī Akhbār Gharnātah*, Vol. 4, p. 31, Maktaba al-Khānijī. Cairo, 1977.

[107] Ibid. Pp. 34-35.

[108] M. A. F. Mehren, "Correspondance du Philosophe Soufi Ibn Sab'īn Abd Oul-Haqq avec L'Empereur Frédéric II de Hohenstaufen," *Journal Asiatique*, p. 342. Paris, 1879.

[109] See Vincent J. Cornell's two articles to which I am greatly indebted: "The Way of the Axial Intellect, The Islamic Hermeticism of Ibn Sab'īn," Journal of *The Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabī Society*, Vol. XXII, 1997. (Henceforth "*The Way of the Axial Intellect*") And: *The All-Comprehensive Circle (al-Iḥāta): Soul, Intellect, and the Oneness of Existence in the Doctrine of Ibn Sab'īn* to be published by Edinburgh University Press. (Henceforth *The All-Comprehensive Circle*).

[110] Anna Ayse Akasoy, *Philosophie und Mystik in der Späten Almhadenzeit Die Sizilianishen Fragen des Ibn Sab'īn*. Herder Verlan. Freiburg, 2005.

misrepresented figure in Islamic thought. The only way to assess this mystic philosopher and to truly understand him is by studying his writings. [111]As a step toward judging this notorious tree by its fruits, this paper will examine certain relevant aspects of Ibn Sabʿīn's doctrine as seen through his exposition of the prerequisites and the supreme objective of metaphysics (*al-ʿilm al-ilāhī*) in *al-Kalām ʿalā al-Masāʾil al-Siqilliya*, or "The Answers to the Sicilian Questions."[112] This dialogue between the mystic and the King of Sicily[113] is one of Ibn Sabʿīn's earliest works, and illustrates certain key

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[111] Ibn Sabʿīn's most famous works are:

- *Al-Kalām ʿalā al-Masāʾil al-Siqilliya* (Answers to the Sicilian Questions) This work is published in two different editions. See ʿAbd al-Haqq ibn Sabʿīn, *Correspondance Philosophique avec L'Empereur Frederic II de Hohenstaufen*, Serefettin Yaltkaya, ed., Études Orientales. Paris, 1941, and idem, *Al-Kalām ʿalā al-Masāʾil al-Siqilliya*, Istanbul, 1943. See also, Louis Massignon, *Recueil des Textes inédites Relatifs à la Mystique en Pays d'Islam*,, pp. 123-34. Paris, 1929.

- *Budd al-ʿArif wa ʿAqīdat al-Muhaqqiq al-Muqarrab al-Kāshif wa Tarīq al-Sālik al-Mutabattil al-ʿĀkif* (The Prerequisite of the Gnostic, the Doctrine of the Proficient Seer and Intimate of God, and the Way of the Pure Seeker and Devotee), George Kattourah, ed., Dār al-Andalus & Dār al-Kindī. Beirut, 1978.

- Ibn Sabʿīn has also written a number of treatises, many of which have been compiled in *Rasāʾil Ibn Sabʿīn*, (The Treatises of Ibn Sabʿīn) ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Badawī, ed. Cairo, 1965.

- There are also a number of Ibn Sabʿīn's manuscripts in various libraries. For details, see Vincent Cornell's *The Way of the Axial Intellect* pp.51-53.

[112] I am fully aware of the summary and incomplete nature of some of my observations, and hope that they will be understood as a challenge to further more serious discussions of an unduly neglected figure in Islamic history.

[113] Anna Akasoy remarks that Ibn Sabʿīn's *Answers to the Sicilian Questions* were probably not triggered by a real inquiry from Frederick II, and that they might have been a literal fiction created by Ibn Sabʿīn. This doubt seems somewhat undue since such exchanges occurred with relative frequency during the thirteenth century. Moreover, the noted Egyptian scholar Maḥmūd ʿAlī Makkī has pointed out that Ibn Sabʿīn's hometown, Murcia, was a great center of inter-religious dialogue that was fostered by king Alfonso X. (See Makkī's article *Maqāmāt al-Harīrī wa Iʿjaz al-Qurān fī Ḥiwār Masīḥī Islāmī fī al-Andalus* p. 145. This article was presented at a conference in Morocco in 1994, and can be located in *Khizāna Al-Malik Fahd Ibn ʿAbd Al-ʿAzīz*, Casablanca.) It is also telling that an entire treatise on optics ensued in response to Frederick II's questions by Ibn Sabʿīn's Egyptian contemporary, Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al ʿAbbās al-Sanhājī Al-Qarāfī (d. 1285), who was both a Malikite jurist and an optician. Al-Qarāfī's treatise, entitled *Kitāb al-Istibṣār fīmā Tudrikuhu al-Abṣār*, that is, "The revelation of what the eyes may perceive," includes an extensive discussion of the causes of the colors and of the circular shape of the rainbow. The manuscript can be found in *Al-Khizana al-ʿAmmah* in Tetouan, Morocco. See also Aydin M. Sayili, "Al-Qarāfī and His Explanation of the

intellectual trends in the late Almohad Arab West.[114] More importantly, this text also reveals important dimensions of the author's worldview which was shaped not only by Sufi doctrines, but also by Hellenistic and Hermetic teachings. Before dealing in more detail with *The Answers to the Sicilian Questions*, however, let us look at Ibn Sab'īn and his critics more closely.

Ibn Sab'īn has been accused– among many things– of disregard for the Prophet Mohammad and Islamic Law.[115] In his famous *fatwa* on Sufism, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) calls Ibn Sab'īn a radical monist (*sāḥib al-waḥda*) and charges him with "overt heresy, unwarranted innovations, and the most extravagant of detestable interpretations of orthodox doctrine."[116] Other detractors, such as 'Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Bādisī (*ca.* 1311) attack Ibn Sab'īn on a personal level, calling him a plagiarizer of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's works, a deviant who tried to merge Sufism and philosophy, and an arrogant man who "believed that no one before him had understood Sufism correctly."[117]

Many accusations of this sort are invalidated by Ibn Sab'īn's own writings, and suggest that some of our author's critics were not even familiar with his works. For example, Ibn Sab'īn's alleged dismissal of the *Sharī'a* and disregard for Muhammad is contrasted by his reverent prayers on behalf of the Prophet.[118] In one letter, Ibn Sab'īn implores his disciples to diligently

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Rainbow," *Isis*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 16-26, 1940. (*Isis* is currently published by The University of Chicago Press.).

[114] See *Philosophie und Mystik in der Späten Almhadenzeit Die Sizilianishen Fragen des Ibn Sab'īn*.

[115] Shams al-Dīn Mohammad al-Dhabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, Vol. 17 pp. 89. Maktaba al-Tawfīqiya. Cairo, 2002. See also: Samīḥ 'Ātif al-Zīn, *Ibn Sab'īn*, Pp. 16-21. Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī. Lebanon, 1988.

[116] Ibn Khaldūn, *La Voie et la Loi, ou Le Maitre et le Juriste: Shifā' al-Sā'il li-Tahdhīb al-Masā'il* (Cure for the Questionner in Elucidating the Issues) pp. 183-4, 189, 252, Reé Rérez, trans, Sindbad. Paris, 1991. Ironically, Ibn Khaldūn himself was accused of heresy for being tolerant of Sufis and for his philosophical leaning. He was killed in prison whilst awaiting a formal verdict.

[117] 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Ibn Ismā'īl al-Bādisī, *Al-Maqsad al-Sharīf wa-l-Manza' al-Latīf fī al-Ta'rīf bi Sulaḥā' al-Rīf*, p. 32-36, Sa'īd Aḥmad A'rāb, ed., second edition, al-Matba'a al-Malakiyya. Rabat, 1993.

[118] *Al-Iḥāta fī Akhbār Gharnāta*, Vol. 4, Pp. 35-6. See also: Abū al-Wafā al-Ghanīmī al-Taftazānī's *Ibn Sab'īn wa Falsafatuhu al-Sūfiyya* p. 269, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī. Beirut, 1973.

observe the *Sharīʿa* and the *Sunna* of the Prophet.[119] Moreover, a close analysis of al-Bādisī's disapproval of Ibn Sabʿīn's famous work, *Budd al-ʿĀrif*, that is, "The Prerequisite of the Gnostic," [120] clearly reveals that the critic never read his object of criticism.[121] "This empty polemic," explains Cornell, "is typical of the *ad hominem* arguments against Ibn Sabʿīn that one finds in Islamic texts. In many cases, 'scare' tactics are used to prevent the reader from ever approaching Ibn Sabʿīn's writings in the first place."[122]

Largely as a result of these defamations, modern western scholars such as Henry Corbin and Louis Massignon have called Ibn Sabʿīn, respectively, a "bold and tormented philosopher,"[123] and "a bitter and tormented spirit."[124] Others, such as the noted Spanish scholar Miguel Asín Palacios, mistakenly present him as the student and mirror of the great mystic who was born one generation before Ibn Sabʿīn, Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabi.[125] At first glance, this assertion seems tenable: both traveled the same North African routes, frequented the same towns in Andalusia and North Africa, and believed in the overriding ontological "Unity of Existence," *waḥdat al-wujūd*.[126]

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[119] See for example *Wasiyyat Ibn Sabʿīn li Aṣḥābih* in *Rasāʾil Ibn Sabʿīn* pp. 312-315, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī, ed.

[120] Cornell has translated *Budd al-ʿĀrif* as "The Prerequisite of the Gnostic" and most recently as "The Idol of the Gnostic."

[121] *The Way of the Axial Intellect*, p. 47. It must be admitted, however, that Ibn Sabʿīn's writings are abstruse. This is attested by the notable fourteenth century Sufi scholar Ibn ʿAbbād al-Rundī, who relates deferentially that he spent seventy days and nights striving to understand *Budd al-ʿĀrif* to no avail. See Ibn ʿAbbād, *Lettres de Direction Spirituelle, Collection Majeur: Al-Rasāʾil al-Kubrā*, Kenneth L. Honerkamp, ed., Dar el-Machreq Sarl. Beirut, 2005.

[122] *The Way of the Axial Intellect*, p. 47. In *ʿUdat al-Murīd al-Ṣādiq*, Ahmad Zarrūq says that "the feeble-minded" should avoid the Ibn Sabʿīn's writings. See: Idrīs ʿAzzūzī, *Al-Shaykh Ahmad Zarrūq: Ārāʾuhu al-Islāḥiyah, Taḥqīq wa Dirāsa li-Kitābih ʿUdat al-Murīd Al-Ṣādiq'* p. 516 Matbaʿa Fidālah, 1998.

[123] Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Liadain Sherrard and Philip Sherrard, trans., p. 264. London, 1993.

[124] Louis Massignon and Aldophe Faure, 'Ibn Sabʿīn', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. 2 (3), p. 921.

[125] Ángel González Palencia, *Historia de la Literatura Arábigo-Espanola*, 2nd ed. Madrid 1945. Hussein Muʾnis trans., *Tārīkh Al-Fikr Al-Andalūsī* p. 24 Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriya. Cairo, 1955.

[126] According to Vincent Cornell, Ibn Sabʿīn may have been the first Muslim thinker to use the term *waḥdat al-wujūd*. See *The All-Comprehensive Circle*, p. 34.

However, neither figure mentions the other in their writings, nor is there evidence of the two great mystics ever having met or having read each other's works. Moreover, a comparison of their doctrines reveals significant differences between the two. For example, while expounding on his esoteric doctrines, Ibn 'Arabi clearly laid a greater emphasis than Ibn Sab'īn on Islamic formulations and used Qur'ānic terminology with greater frequency. Furthermore, Cornell writes, "Ibn Sab'īn goes out on the doctrinal limb by taking the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* literally. The text of *Kitāb al-Iḥāta* makes it clear that for him, Existence really is one, and the One, while not limited by Existence, is more than just the Maker or Producer of Existence."[127] Thus it is reasonable to postulate in passing that Ibn Sab'īn's conception of *waḥdat al-wujūd* is more radical than that of Ibn 'Arabi.

The life of Ibn Sab'īn:

Biographical reports on Ibn Sab'īn are nearly as conflicting and puzzling as the above mentioned allegations. He was born into a prominent Murcian family around 1217 in Ricote, a town bordering the Segura River, north-west of Murcia. Ibn Sab'īn traces his lineage to the Prophet Mohammad through 'Alī Ibn Abī Tālib.[128] Ibn Sab'īn received a thorough Andalusian education in Murcia, acquiring extensive knowledge of Arabic, the Islamic sciences, Greek philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, the natural sciences, literature, and Christian and Jewish theology. [129]He was reported to be an outstanding calligrapher and a man of great virtue and patience, enduring hardship and having deep knowledge of prophetic traditions.[130] One of his biographers, Ibn Al-Khaṭīb, relates that as a young man, he was "royally arrayed, self-assured, and upright."[131] His deep knowledge of medicine and alchemy was

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[127] *The All-Comprehensive Circle*, p. 44

[128] Others say that he was of Visigoth origin, but this assertion is much less likely.

[129] Ibid, p. 148.

[130] In fact, a small amount of his poetry has survived, and continues to be chanted in Moroccan Zawiyas such as the *Zawiya Siddiqiya* of Tangier. I interviewed members of the Andalusian music group *Ensemble Ibn 'Arabi* who told me that they chanted Ibn Sab'īn's poetry in 1997.

[131] *Al-Iḥâta fī Akhbār Gharnāta*, Vol 4, p. 387.

highly respected as well, and he even treated a head injury of Abū Numay Ibn Abī Saʿīd, the Sharīf of Mecca (r. 1254-301).

Although fortune first favored him, Ibn Sabʿīn's lofty days in Murcia ended in his early-twenties when his overt declarations of the Oneness of Existence and statements such as "I am He, and He is I"[132] earned him the ire of influential jurists (*fuqahāʾ*). He fled to Sabta where, according to certain reports, he was initiated into Sufism by Isḥāq Ibn al-Marʾa Ibn al-Dahhāq. In this town on the tip of North Africa, he had a large following, especially among the poor, and led an ascetic life while enjoying the protection of the Sabta governor, Ibn Khalāṣ (r. 1238-46). It was during this period that the young and brilliant thinker was put in charge of answering Frederick II von Hohenstaufen's (r. 1254-1301) philosophical questions.

In Sabta, Ibn Sabʿīn also authored *Budd al-ʿĀrif*, or "The Prerequisite of the Gnostic" which was addressed to a jurist rather than to one of his Sufi followers. In this book, Ibn Sabʿīn expounds on his spiritual method and the importance of reason, and he provides a critique of the epistemologies of the Islamic world at the time.[133] However, after his patron was replaced by ʿAlī al-Saʿīd (r. 1242-8), he was again forced to flee the aspersions and threats of both the jurists and the Sufis who found his doctrine to be too radical. Ibn Sabʿīn left with his disciples for the maritime town of Bijāya– in modern day Algeria– stopping on his way at Bādis. In a catalogue of scholars who lived in Bijāya during the thirteenth century, Aḥmad al-Ghubrīnī praises Ibn Sabʿīn and says that he was devoted to the Sacred Mosque of Mecca and made the *Hajj* pilgrimage every year where he was "sought out like no one else."[134] In Bijāya, Ibn Sabʿīn also met the famous Sufi poet Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī (1213-1269) who, recognizing the mystic's eminence, became his faithful disciple. Al-Shushtarī, who was some four years older than his master,

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[132] Samīḥ ʿĀtif al-Zīn, *Ibn Sabʿīn*, p. 12.

[133] See *The Way of the Axial Intellect*, p. 62.

[134] Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad al-Ghubrīnī, *ʿUnwān al-Dirāya fī man ʿUrifa min al-ʿUlamāʾ fī al-Miʾa al-Sābiʿa bi Bijāya*, p. 209, ed. Rābiḥ Būnār, al-Sharika al-Waṭaniyya li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ. Algiers, 1970.

dedicated three poems to him in which he refers to himself as "Ibn Sab'īn's slave" and describes him as "the magnet of souls" (*maqnāṭīs al-nufūs*)[135].

As Ibn Sab'īn's drove of disciples swelled, so did his reputation as a heretic and a sophist. He was exiled to Tunis, and thence to Egypt, and finally settled in Mecca. Ibn al-Kathīr relates somewhat bitterly that Ibn Sab'īn was able to captivate the mind of Mecca's governor, the Sharīf Abū Numay Ibn Abī Sa'īd (r. 1254-1301), and lived peacefully as his protégé.

There are various reports about Ibn Sab'īn's death. Some allege that he fled to India where he ended his days[136]. Ibn Shākir, however, relates in his *Fawāt al-Wafāyāt*: "I heard that Ibn Sab'īn committed suicide in Mecca by slitting his wrists."[137] Regarding his alleged suicide, al-Bādisī and some of Ibn Sab'īn's disciples report that Ibn Sab'īn did not commit this act rather, he lived out his days as an adviser to Abū Numay Ibn Abī Sa'īd, and was poisoned by political enemies. His alleged suicide seems untenable firstly because it was related by one of Ibn Sab'īn's foes, and secondly because suicide is wholly contrary to both Islamic law and Ibn Sab'īn's philosophical beliefs.

Aspects of Ibn Sab'īn's Metaphysics as seen through *The Answers to the Sicilian Questions*:

When studying *The Answers to the Sicilian Questions*, one may very well ask why Frederick II, a Christian monarch of German and Norman origin who expelled the Muslims from Sicily, would seek the wisdom of a Muslim philosopher? To begin with, Frederick II descended from the famous so-called "turbaned kings" of Sicily, and was greatly attracted to Islamic thought, culture and science. Despite his resentment of Muslim presence within Sicily,

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[135] Samīĥ 'Ātif al-Zīn, *Ibn Sab'īn*, p. 46.

[136] See Idrīs 'Azzūzī's *Al-Shaykh Aĥmad Zarrūq: Ārā'uhu al-Islāĥiyah, Taĥqīq wa Dirāsa li-Kitābih 'Udat al-Murīd al-Sādiq'*, p. 277. For more biographical information on Ibn Sab'īn, see Ibn Khathīr, *Al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya* Vol. 13, p. 261 Maktaba Al-Ma'ārif. Beirut, 1966. Ibn Al-Mulaqan, *Tabaqāt al-Awliyā'*, p. 442 Dār al-Ma'rifa li al-Tibā'a wa al-Nashr, 1986. Ibn 'Imād Al-Ĥanbalī, *Shadharāt ad-Dahan li-Akhbār min Dhahab*, Maktaba al-Muqaddisī. Cairo, 1940.

[137] Ibn Shākir Al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafāyāt*, Vol XXI, p. 517. Muhyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ĥamid, Cairo, 1951.

the monarch adopted Islamic Arab attire, hired Muslim counselors, patronized scholars from Syria and Baghdad, and had an extraordinary command of Arabic and a deep knowledge of Islamic philosophy. Of all the Arabized Norman Sicilians, Frederick II was particularly drawn to scientific and philosophical discussions, acquiring the title of *Stupor Mundi* or "Wonder of the World" during his lifetime. In fact, Thomas Aquinas was educated at his court, and it is through Frederick II that Michael Scot made several translations of Ibn Rushd, or Averroes into Latin.

Frederick II sent out four questions to scholars in many parts of the Muslim world, including Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. These questions addressed topics that were being debated by philosophers of the period: the eternity of the world; the prerequisites and object of metaphysics; the categories of existence; and the nature of the soul, in addition to an appendix inquiring about the points of divergence between Aristotle and his commentator Alexander of Aphrodisiac. Not satisfied with the responses of scholars from the East, the monarch turned to scholars from North Africa and Andalusia, and he was referred to Ibn Sabʿīn. Frederick II sent a letter to the Almohad ruler Abū Muhammad al-Rashīd (r. 1232– 1242) who passed on the message to Sabta's governor Ibn Khalās with instructions to depute the young mystic. While waiting for the answers, the emperor sent out a shipment of gifts to Ibn Sabʿīn, who turned them down: "I will answer your questions for God's sake and for the triumph of Islam." He added the following Qur'anic verse: "Say: I ask of you no fee therefore, save loving kindness among kinsfolk."[138]

One of the salient features of Ibn Sabʿīn's responses to Frederick II's question of the prerequisites and object of metaphysics– as well as his writings in general– is his insistence on the supremacy of the "Intellectual-Principle" (*al-ʿaql*).[139] This doctrine is rooted in Hermetic teachings which assert that the Intellectual-Principle is the Primary Cause of existence, and that this universal Substance (*jawhar*) underlies or penetrates all things. In some of Ibn Sabʿīn's writings, the Intellectual-Principle is described as "the

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[138] M. A. F. Mehren, *Correspondance du Philosophe Soufi Ibn Sab'in Abd Oul-Haqq avec l'Empereur Frédéric II De Hohenstaufen*, p. 345. Qur'an 42:23, Mamaduke Pickthall, trans.
[139] *The All-comprehensive Circle*, p. 36.

foundational attribute of the universe and the axis around which the existential order revolves" (*uss ṣifat al-ʿālam, wa-al-quṭb alladhī yadūru ʿalayhi al-tadbīr*).[140]

Like other Hermetists, Ibn Sabʿīn proclaimed that the essence of the human Intellect is derived from the Intellectual-Principle. The human Intellect, however, cannot be reduced to the rational faculty and discursive thought. Rather, it is a "supra-rational" or intuitive organ within man, and, as he says in his discourse, the only faculty which "is capable of grasping the other-worldly realities." [141]Ibn Sabʿīn considers the human Intellect to be man's *raison d' être* and "the necessary prerequisite to human perfection [which] completes the meaning of being human."[142] The author corroborates his doctrine of the Intellect by citing a hadīth that is often referred to by Sufis and Muslim philosophers alike: "the first thing that God created was the Intellect."[143]

Ibn Sabʿīn also asserts that the Intellect "emanates from God," a notion which has clear parallels in the writings attributed to Hermes:

> The Intellect (*nous*) derives from the substance (*ousia*) of God, in so far as one may speak of God having a substance; of what nature this substance is, God alone can know exactly. The Intellect is not a part of the substance of God, but radiates from the latter as light shines forth from the sun. In human beings, this Intellect is God…[144]

This idea of the supremacy of the human Intellect– by virtue of its link with the Intellect-Principle– is by no means unique to Hermeticism. However, there is no doubt that it is emphasized and expounded with

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[140] Ibn Sabʿīn, *Budd al-ʿĀrif* p. 182 (As cited by Vincent Cornell in *The Way of the Axial Intellect* p. 64).

[141] *Al-Kalām ʿalā al-Masāʾil al-Siqilliya*, p. 36.

[142] Ibid, p. 25.

[143] Ibid, p. 34. Despite its popularity, this tradition is not to be found in the major hadīth collections.

[144] *Corpus Hermeticum*, translated by A.-J. Festugière, Paris, 'Les Belles Lettres', 1945. Chapter entitled: *D'Hermès Trismégiste: Sur l'intellect commun, à Tat*. Trans. Titus Burckhardt.

distinctive clarity in the writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus,[145] as well as followers of such teachings like Ibn Sabʿīn.

When judging Ibn Sabʿīn's intellectual affiliations, pre-modern and contemporary scholars often overlook his own claims. In his introduction to *Budd al-ʿĀrif*, Ibn Sabʿīn professes himself to be a follower of the "Impeccable Teacher" Hermes Trismegistus: "I petitioned God to propagate [through me] the wisdom (*al-ḥikma*) that Hermes Trismegistus (*al-harāmisa*) revealed in the earliest ages."[146] Furthermore, in a poem of his disciple al-Shushtarī, Hermes is considered to be the patron of both Sufi and Greek sages. Therefore, no understanding of Ibn Sabʿīn will be complete without examining the influence of Hermeticism on his thought. In fact, this point is corroborated by Ibn Khaldūn who describes Ricote, Ibn Sabʿīn's birthplace, as a center of Hermeticism in Andalusia.[147]

Here it will be useful to make a short digression in order that the reader may obtain, if not a complete view, at least some glimpses of the Hermetic tradition in Andalusia. Hermeticism in medieval Spain– and Europe– was followed by eminent Muslim, Christian and Jewish mystics.[148] In late

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[145] *Corpus Hermeticum* (chapter on Poimandres) describes how the Universal Intellect revealed itself to Hermes: '…with these words, He looked me long in the face, so that I trembled before his gaze. Then, as He raised His head again, I saw how in my own spirit (*nous*) the light which consists of a numberless number of possibilities, became an infinite All, while the fire, surrounded and so contained by an almighty power, had attained its immobile position: such is what I was able to grasp rationally of this vision…while I was so completely out of myself, He spoke again: thou hast now, in the intellect (*nous*), seen the prototype, the origin, and the never-ending beginning…" As cited in Titus Burckhardt's *Alchemy: Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*, Fons Vitae. Kentucky, 1997.

[146] *Budd al-ʿĀrif*, pp. 29-30, Vincent Cornell, trans.

[147] *La Voie et la Loi,* pp. 279-80.

[148] - Muslim Hermetists: Among the Sufi Hermetists we find Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Shūdhī of Seville, Ibn Mutarrif the Blind of Murcia, Muhammad Ibn Aḥlā of Lorca and al-Ḥājj Yāsīn al-Maghribī. In *La Voie et la Loi*, (pp. 279-80) Ibn Khaldūn notes that "a large group of people from eastern Spain and the Ricote valley" were followers of Hermeticism.
- Christian Hermetists: A number of Christians of the Middle Ages, including Saint Albert the Great, considered the writings of the Corpus Hermeticum as the pre-Christian "seeds" of the Logos.
- Jewish Hermetists: Cornell points that "some scholars believe that Hermetic doctrines can also be found in *Kitāb al-Hidāya ilā Farāʾid al-Qulūb* (Guide to the Duties of Hearts), by the

antiquity, Hermes was understood to be a wise Egyptian sage and priest, and was identified as the god Thoth. Hermes was also associated with the Islamic prophet Idrīs, and the Jewish prophet Enoch.[149] Interestingly, many Muslims also identified the Hermetic tradition with that of the Sabians mentioned in the Qur'an, and Hermetic doctrines were therefore seen as compatible with Qur'anic teachings.[150] Regardless of inevitable historical discrepancies, it is important to understand that the Hermetic tradition, which persisted throughout all ages and extended into the Christian and Islamic worlds, was seen by figures such as Ibn Sabʿīn as a "primordial revelation" (*al-ḥikma al-qadīma*) underlying the three Abrahamic religions. Furthermore, it is reasonable to assert, as certain scholars have done, that this understanding of the Hermetic heritage opened the door to genuine inter-religious dialogue. However, despite the importance of understanding the interactions between the three Abrahamic religions in medieval Spain, information on this subject remains surprisingly scanty.[151]

Aside from its philosophical and intellectual aspects, Hermeticism in Andalusia is more noted for its development and practice of the various "occult sciences" such as alchemy, astrology, and magic. When trying to understand figures such as Ibn Sabʿīn, this "occult" side of Hermeticism

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Jewish mystic Baĥya Ibn Paqūda…The presence of Hermetic teachings among the Jews of Spain is further attested by Moese Maimonides, who, in a letter to his translator Samuel Ibn Tibbon, calls it an 'ancient philosophy' that interferes with Aristotle's more rigorous and intellectually satisfying system of thought." (*The Way of the axial Intellect* p. 58)

[149] See Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *Islamic Life and Thought*, p. 103, ABC International Group, Inc. Chicago 2001.

[150] *The Way of the Axial Intellect* p. 54

[151] According to Steven M. Wasserstrom "the figure of Hermes stood for a trans-confessional wisdom, a universal revelation, which doctrine further endorsed Muslim study of Jewish works." Furthermore, it provided "an elite interconfessionalism in which terminology and mythical constructs are shared across religious boundaries." See Wasserstrom's "Jewish-Muslim Relations in the Context of Andalusian Emigration," unpublished paper for the conference "Christians, Muslims and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Change," Notre Dame University, South Bend, Indiana, February 1994. This stands in sharp contrast with Chris Lowney's assertion that "Uncomfortable necessity, rather than some higher-minded ideal of tolerance, first spurred the accommodation that scholars hail as Spain's era of *convivencia* "common life" (See Chris Lowney's *A Vanished World Medieval Spain's Golden Age of Enlightenment*, p. 189, Free Press. New York, 2005).

cannot be neglected, since Ibn Sab'īn himself was reported to be a practitioner of theurgy and alchemy. He also had a great attraction to *'ilm al-ḥurūf*, or the science of letters, which has its counterpart in the Kabalistic tradition. *'Ilm al-ḥurūf* aims primarily at decoding the symbolic meanings of the various disconnected letters in the opening of numerous chapters of the Qur'an.

After this parenthesis about the complex Hermetic tradition, we may now return to the second part of *The Answers to the Sicilian Questions*. In the outset of his discourse, Ibn Sab'īn distinguishes between the Greek and the Sufic definitions of the science of metaphysics. "Know that the science of metaphysics (*al-'ilm al-ilāhī*) for the [Greek] ancients meant the contemplation of [both] the reality which transcends the visible order and the ultimate causes of human existence…"[152] For the Sufis, however, "This supreme science, which is called metaphysics, is divided into two categories: the first is knowledge of the Divine Unity of God Exalted, and the second is knowledge of God's Attributes, such as His Omnipotence, Wisdom [and] Power."[153] In other words, Sufi metaphysics consists both of an in-depth understanding of the Islamic doctrine of divine Unity, *tawḥīd*, and insight into how the Divine attributes are reflected in the cosmos.

Ibn Sab'īn then explains how Sufis view the objective of metaphysics in light of the other sciences.

The objective of metaphysics is the perfection of man, the attainment of true happiness, and the full development of the Intellect….[By contrast] the other branches of human science seek to refine the human intelligence […] and to point to the Path that leads to an exclusive conception of God, who is the First Principle of existence.[154]

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[152] *Al-Kalām 'alā al-Masā'il al-Siqilliya*, p. 25
[153] Ibid, p. 36.
[154] Ibid, p. 25.

Metaphysics, in Ibn Sab'īn's view, is the supreme science, while the other sciences serve as its basis.[155]

Having defined metaphysics and its objective in general terms, Ibn Sab'īn explains how the Greeks understood its goal. He clarifies that "the Sufis regard total union with God as the objective of metaphysics"[156] In other words, they regard the total realization of God's Absolute Unity, which absorbs all objects of knowledge unto Itself as the supreme objective of this divine science. The author considers this Sufi understanding of metaphysics to be superior to that of the Greeks, because to truly know the Divine is to die in it, so that it may be born in us. This identification with the Divine must be total because if "the goal of the gnostic and lover of God is to attain His object of knowledge and love, then he has not reached it if anything lies between him and his beloved."[157]

While, on the one hand, these "other-worldly realities" are grasped by focusing the intelligence on the realities that "transcend the world," Ibn Sab'īn believes that "the science of metaphysics resides in the soul."[158] Therefore, the process of spiritual realization is nothing more than awakening or actualizing the latent knowledge we bear "within" ourselves. Here, one clearly sees the influence of the Platonic doctrine of *Anamnesis*– or literally: a lifting up of the mind– on Ibn Sab'īn's thought.[159]

Nevertheless, the seeker of truth must master certain sciences before obtaining direct knowledge and realization of God. Ibn Sab'īn devotes a surprising portion of his discourse explaining the various necessary branches of knowledge, and lists nine categories of logic that must be mastered before

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[155] At the same time, this order is reversed because for Ibn Sab'īn, the metaphysical principles manifest themselves and trickle down, as it were, from the highest to the lowest levels of reality.

[156] Ibid, p. 26.

[157] Ibid, p. 26.

[158] Ibid, p. 45.

[159] Full, or even adequate illustration of this subject is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is worth pointing out Vincent Cornell's remark that the Platonic and Neo-Platonic texts that most clearly parallel Ibn Sab'īn's thought are libellus II, Krater (libellus IV), and libelli V-VII, VII (Peri Psychis), IX, X (Kleis, 'The Key'), and XI of the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

seeking divine inspiration. Why study logic? Because, according to Ibn Sabʿīn, by identifying the diverse premises, forms of analogy and demonstration, we come to a full understanding of the soul. Here again, Ibn Sabʿīn cites a hadīth that is often quoted by Sufis: "He who knows himself knows his Lord." (*man ʿarafa nafsahu faqad ʿarafa rabbahu*)

Like Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 1191), Ibn Sabʿīn used logic as a means toward spiritual realization. Although Ibn Sabʿīn certainly emphasizes logic more than many other mystics, he is far from being a rationalist in the modern sense of the term.[160] A full exposition of Ibn Sabʿīn's understanding of logic is beyond the scope of this paper, but suffice it to say that for Ibn Sabʿīn, logic has an intuitive element that points to the transcendent. Furthermore, he renders Aristotle's theories into what Philip Merlan coins "Neoaristotelianism."[161] Ibn Sabʿīn was in fact very critical of philosophers and strictly Aristotelian thinkers such as Ibn Rushd.[162] He even describes such philosophers as contradicting revelation, and ranks the value of their knowledge below Islamic jurisprudence, *fiqh*.[163] In short, he contended that Aristotelian philosophers generally failed to understand the importance of the Intellect, which is inextricably linked to the universal Intellect-Principle and thus the very basis of creation.[164]

Having emphasized the importance of mastering logic, Ibn Sabʿīn states that according to the Islamic revelation:

The preliminaries of metaphysics [can be divided into both] theoretical and practical components. The basis of metaphysics is the Mighty Book,

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[160] See *The Way of the Axial Intellect*, p. 62.

[161] As cited by Cornell. See Merlan, *Monopsychism, Mysticism, and Metaconsciousness*, pp. 2-20.

[162] In *Budd al-ʿĀrif* (p.143) Ibn Sabʿīn is very critical of Ibn Rush and other Muslim philosophers. He impugns Ibn Rush for being too "obsessed with Aristotle" (*maftun bi-Aristu*): "If he heard that [Aristotle] had said that a person could be standing and sitting at the same time, he would believe it and would have transmitted it." At the same time, Ibn Sabʿīn was very fond of Al-Farābī whom he calls: 'the lord of philosophers of Islam, their imam, and their spokesman."(See *The Way of the Axial Intellect* p. 58).

[163] Ibid, p. 98.

[164] *The Way of the Axial Intellect*, p. 71.

[that is,] the Qur'an, and the *Sunna* [or practices] of the Prophet. In addition, faith and sound conviction are indispensable preconditions."[165]

This assertion once again clearly puts into question the claims of detractors who accuse Ibn Sabʿīn of dismissing the Islamic *Sharīʿa* and the *Sunna* of the Prophet.

Having emphasized the importance of not only mastering logic, but also conforming to religious norms, Ibn Sabʿīn mentions that the spiritual path consists of:

Meditation, invocation of the Divine Name which is the channel of celestial graces, repressing sensual desires, conforming human actions to the truth revealed in the heart, purification of the soul through the invocation of God, orienting all of man's actions toward his ultimate goal… and spiritual ardor.[166]

Ibn Sabʿīn's spiritual practices in this treatise seem to conform to mainstream Sufism. However, he is speaking as a Platonic philosopher and therefore emphasizes, perhaps more than other Sufis, that spiritual practices are primarily a means of awakening knowledge that is latent in the heart.

The author then discusses the various stages that the seeker goes through as he approaches God.[167] "In the beginning [of the spiritual path,] the servant [of God] yearns for a Referent that has no likeness (*mushār laysa kamithlihi shay'*). Then he demands to reach this Referent…"[168] Ibn Sabʿīn explains that as the aspirant advances spiritually, he comes to understand that all things are derived from the exalted Object of his quest, and that "the world is only real through the grace of his Referent."[169] Realizing that all the preliminary knowledge that he had acquired amounts to naught,

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[165] *Al-Kalām ʿalā al-Masāʾil al-Siqilliya*, p. 37.

[166] Ibid, p. 27.

[167] See M. A. F. Mehren, *Correspondance du Philosophe Soufi Ibn Sabʿin Abd Oul-Haqq avec L'Empereur Frédéric II De Hohenstaufen*, p. 386-90.

[168] *Al-Kalām ʿalā al-Masāʾil al-Siqilliya*, p. 42.

[169] Ibid, p. 42-3.

Reality as such speaks [to him]: 'Everything is bound to perish, save His [eternal] Self.'[170] The spiritual traveler has been revived and inspired by God. The first thing he utters is 'He is The First and The Last, The Visible and The Hidden, He is The Omniscient'[171]

Ibn Sabʿīn adds that "the man who sees with [the Eyes of] God says: 'I see nothing but God!'"[172] He clarifies that such a statement can only be uttered by one who has renounced the world, his soul, and speculation itself. At such a station, man realizes that ultimately "there is no multiplicity"[173] and that "there is no true life except the Absolute [life]" (*lā ḥayāt ḥaqīqatan illā al-muṭlaqah*).[174]

For Ibn Sabʿīn, the spiritual path consists of dissolving all things that pose themselves as real– most notably the sense of individuality– since God is the only Absolute Reality. This ego-centered mirage of individuality, which instinctively regards itself as an autonomous reality, dissolves as the seeker approaches the Real. Furthermore, it is clear from this discourse that the ego and worldly matters are not transient simply because they are destined to perish. Rather, phenomena of this world are perishing here and now; they have never been real. Thus for the advanced Sufi, the world becomes transparent: in its appearances he sees the reflection of God. This corroborates with other Sufi teachings, suggesting that not all of that our author's doctrines fall outside mainstream Sufism.

For Ibn Sabʿīn, the end of the spiritual journey is a pure beatific vision of the Divine which "cannot be contained in books."[175] One must know this state experientially in order to understand it, since it is something which "no [physical] eye has seen, no [physical] ear has heard, and no heart has desired."[176] Ibn Sabʿīn adds a common analogy often cited by Sufis that if

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[170] Qur'an verse 28:88, Mamaduke Pickthall, trans.

[171] *Al-Kalām ʿalā al-Masāʾil al-Siqilliya*, p. 43. Qur'an 58:3, Mamaduke Pickthall, trans.

[172] Ibid, p. 43-4.

[173] Ibid, p. 42-3.

[174] Ibid, p. 44.

[175] Ibid, p. 41.

[176] Ibid, p. 41. This is from a ḥadīth describing paradise.

one were to describe the pleasure of sexual intercourse to a child, it would be impossible. He adds that:

> If it is impossible to describe natural phenomena, then how could he describe a different level of reality?... Know that not a single philosopher, Sufi, Ash'arite theologian, or dialectician is capable of describing this condition nor of indicating Its character or Its Essence. Only by delving into the mystical science (*'ilm as-safar*) and plumbing its depths can one grasp it."[177]

In other words, forms imply boundaries and therefore limitation. Consequently, no form, including words, can adequately describe God[178] or successfully portray the supreme station of spiritual Union with Him.

One of Ibn Sab'īn's concluding thoughts is that, if on the one hand, the soul only attains divine knowledge through meditation and by exerting the will, on the other hand, there are certain chosen people who reach the Truth without initial instruction or meditation: these are the Prophets and the elects of God. Moreover, while man marches along the spiritual path by means of his will, it is ultimately God who decides, since He is the source of all blessings and guidance. "There is no attainment without [the grace of] God. He is the Giver, the Delayer, the Inspirer, the Bestower, the Guide, the Benefactor, 'He is Allah, [other] than Whom there is no other God.'"[179]

Or again, the will plays an essential role in the unfolding of our destiny on the human plane. However, on a higher metaphysical plane, it is God who ultimately decides. Ibn Sab'īn stops at the threshold of this timeless debate between predestination and free will, and suggests that if the monarch sought to truly ascend the spiritual path, that he come study at his feet. He adds rather sarcastically, as if to humble the monarch, that the commonplace metaphysical topics mentioned in his treatise are not worthy of the attention of a sage of the author's caliber. Moreover, Ibn Sab'īn says that in his province, there are souls as sharp as swords who would chide him for

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[177] Ibid, p. 41-2.
[178] One of the "Ninety-nine Divine Names" is *al-Wāsi'*, that is, "The All-Embracing."
[179] Ibid, p. 45. Qur'an 59:22, Mamaduke Pickthall, trans.

bothering to address such trivial matters! Although there is no evidence to suggest that Frederick II ever met Ibn Sabʿīn or sent other questions, it is reported that the monarch expressed his appreciation for the philosopher's insights by sending a lavish load of gifts, which Ibn Sabʿīn once again turned down.

So who was Ibn Sabʿīn? Perhaps the closest description of him would be that he was Hermetic philosopher who was attached to Islam and Sufism. Yet, he is not easily classified under a specific intellectual school because, unlike the *Shaykh al-akbar* who relied almost exclusively on primary Islamic sources such as al-Ghazali, Ibn Sabʿīn drew heavily from Greek thought, the teachings of Hermeticism, logic and mystical dialogue to develop an emanationist and monistic worldview that was centered on the Intellectual-Principle. In the vein of Suhrawardi, Baba Afdal and Mulla Sadra, Ibn Sabʿīn saw certain philosophical schools– and the Hermetic corpus– as originating from the "niche of prophecy" and therefore in harmony with the Qur'an and *Sunna*, but at the same time he ultimately sought to transcend theology, philosophy, religion and even Sufism. Because of being overshadowed by Ibn ʿArabī, and due to his infamy and his conspicuously non-denominational writings, he remains among the least understood and most disparaged figures in Islamic history.

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IQBAL'S IDEALIST CRITIQUE OF HAWKING'S MATERIALIST CONCEPT OF TIME

Asad Shahzad

ABSTRACT:

Hawking's materialist and sectional concept of time has been assessed by Iqbal's concept of real time. A fundamental agreement between the approaches of Iqbal and Hawking has also been shown. It has been argued that Hawking has not succeeded to develop a concept of time based on "the whole of human knowledge", i.e. on the unified application of physics and philosophy. Iqbalian assessment reveals that Hawking's approach is not holistic and integrated but sectional and segmented and therefore inadequate. So, Hawking's psychological arrow of time is essentially physical time rather than psychological time. Hawking's claim that psychological arrow of time is determined by thermodynamic arrow has been analyzed and it has been maintained that Hawking's claim is unconvincing and is rooted in the essentially sectional character of his approach to the problem of time.

Introduction:

The secret of time is so entangled and at the same time so captivating that even though the philosophers, scientists and theologians have very thoroughly and meticulously scrutinized and explored the nature of time for some 2,500 years– that is since the time of the Greek theoretical scientists and philosophers to the scientists and philosophers of our time– but they have not yet fully succeeded in giving satisfactory and categorical answers to all questions and mysteries relating the reality of time. However with the "passage" of time the reality of time has become far more comprehensible than before. The problem of time is both physical and philosophical; and it has been analyzed and investigated by the geniuses of both physics and philosophy. This article considers some very significant aspects of Iqbal and

Hawking's concepts of time. It basically gives Iqbalian assessment of Hawking's psychological arrow of time.

Hawking's Concept of Time:

Hawking has striven to unite the philosophical and scientific concepts of time in his work. It is in this spirit that he has not restricted his study of time to its physical aspect only; he has also investigated the psychological aspect of time which in fact is the core of the reality of time. He theorizes that, "There are at least three different arrows of time", namely, thermodynamic arrow of time, psychological arrow of time and cosmological arrow of time. These three arrows imply the "movement" of time in three particular directions. Direction of these arrows is related to the expansion and contraction of the universe, which is central in his conception of time. The psychological arrow of time, "is the direction in which we feel time passes, the direction in which we remember the past but not the future", the thermodynamic arrow is, "the direction of time in which disorder or entropy increases", and the cosmological arrow is, "the direction of time in which the universe is expanding rather than contracting" (IX. 153). The thermodynamic and cosmological arrows of time are essentially aspects of physical time, whereas the psychological arrow of time is rooted in human consciousness.

Iqbal's Concept of Time:

Iqbal asserts that physical time[180] (or clock time) is unreal time. He holds the opinion that psychological time[181] is real time. For Iqbal, the secret of time

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[180] Physical time, which is serial in nature, is that time which is "formulated" by the movement of the earth and revolutions of the sun and other celestial bodies; this is objective time and is noted with hourglass and clocks and calendars. It is also called mathematical time, or serial time, or clock time or, public time, or quantitative time, or homogeneous time, or false time or dead time. Some scientists

[181] Psychological time, which is real time, is related to the consciousness. It is qualitative and heterogeneous; it is indivisible as it cannot be divided into present, past and future. Unlike physical time it is subjective time. For instance, consider a person, fond of tourism, enjoying his vacation with his best friend somewhere in the lap of overflowing natural beauty, and another one imprisoned for one month in a jail. Psychological time for these two persons will not be homogeneous. Each one will have his own subjective time. The subjectivity of time is also manifested when we compare our conception of time in dreams to our

does not lie in stars, moons, and galaxies; it lies within human consciousness. He does not reject the usefulness of serial time as he says, "a purely objective point of view is …. partially helpful in our understanding of the nature of time" (III. 76). But, to unravel the mystery of time we have to explore the inner recesses and various stages of our consciousness. He maintains, "The right course is a careful psychological analysis of our conscious experience which alone reveals the true nature of time" (III. 76). He very eloquently declares in Secrets of the Self:

Our Time which has neither beginning nor end,

Blossoms from the flower-bed of our mind.

He says in Gabriel's Wing:

Our days are illusion, our nights are a dream;

A current of time in which there is neither day nor night.

In the almanac of love, besides the time that passes,

Are myriad other ages, untold and unnamed.

Two Points of Agreement between Iqbal and Hawking:

We can discover at least two main agreements between the approaches of Iqbal and Hawking. Both Iqbal and Hawking are found to have unanimity on the significance of holistic interpretation of reality. Let us see a text from Iqbal:

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 ___

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conception of time in waking state. Sometimes what we dream seems to last for several hours while in terms of physical time it lasted for no more than a few minutes. In Iqbal's verse we find, for instance, a comparison between the speed of the psychological time of a slave and that of a free man:

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 (II. 41-42).

A passage from Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* reads:

In the eighteenth century, philosophers considered the whole of human knowledge, including science, to be their field and discussed questions such as: Did the universe have a beginning? However, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, science became too technical and mathematical for the philosophers, or anyone else except a few specialists. Philosophers reduced the scope of there inquiries so much that Wittgenstein, the most famous philosopher of this century, said, "The sole remaining task for philosophy is the analysis of language." What a comedown from the great tradition of philosophy from Aristotle to Kant!" (XI. 185).

One can raise a question that the history of philosophy has produced philosophers of science even in twentieth century like Karl Popper, for instance, (whose name Hawking mentions on page 11 of his book), but has the history of natural science,

A free man's breath can match a subject's year,

How slowly moves the time of serfs, is clear!

Contains the whole eternity a free person's breath,

But slaves are every instant prone to sudden death. (The Rod of the Moses)

Since Newton, produced any scientist who has in-depth knowledge of philosophy and theology from Aristotle to Wittgenstein, on the basis of

which who can explain that how are "matter, life and mind mutually related"? However, we see a major agreement in Iqbal and Hawking; Iqbal wants "a single systematic view of reality" and Hawking admires those philosophers who explore "the whole of human knowledge." In harmony with the above-mentioned statement, Hawking says, "If everything in the universe depends on everything else in a fundamental way, it might be impossible to get close to a full solution by investigating parts of the problem in isolation" (p. 12). In formulating his concept of time, Hawking himself has tried to consider the whole of human knowledge. In his, *A Brief History of Time*, he considers, for example, Kant and Augustine's approaches to the problem of time. One can notice the impact of Zeno's paradox of motion in Hawking's analogy of arrow for the forward and backward movement of time. Thus we see that, he has not restricted his exploration of time to cosmological and thermodynamic arrows of time; he has also studied psychological arrow of time.

The second agreement between Iqbal and Hawking is that they both believe that psychological time is the time which is related to feeling. Pure time or real time, according to Iqbal is, "time as felt and not as thought and calculated" (II. 49). The psychological arrow of time, according to Hawking is, "the direction in which we feel time passes……." (IX. 153).

Sectional Character of Hawking's Approach:

Hawking hugely appreciates those who, in search of reality, considered the whole of human knowledge but he himself does not seem to be very successful to study Reality as one organic whole. Since Newton, scientists have created a gulf between mind and matter by the sectional study of nature. Hawking seems to have keenly noticed this bifurcation of mind and matter and has striven to bridge this gulf; but in spite of his efforts to study Reality as one organic whole, the sectional character of his approach starts emerging. We shall see that Hawking's psychological arrow of time does not exist independently but is basically an effect of thermodynamic arrow of time. He does want the unity of mind and matter but he sees, so to speak, the shades of matter in mind also. In order to comprehend psychological arrow of time, he does not delve into the psychological states of human mind; instead, he says, "I shall therefore discuss the psychological arrow of time for

computers. I think it reasonable to assume that the arrow for computers is the same as that for humans" (IX. 155). It appears that by likening the psychological arrow of time for humans with the psychological arrow of time for computers he, in fact, reduces the real psychological arrow to mechanical arrow of time. On the one hand, Hawking says that the psychological arrow of time, "is the direction in which we feel time passes………." while on the other hand, he equates the psychological arrow of time for human with the psychological arrow of time for computers. If psychological arrow of time, as Hawking says, "is the direction in which we feel time passes……….", then computers should also be able to feel time passes or otherwise, I think, one cannot reasonably say, "I think it reasonable to assume that the arrow for computers is the same as that for humans." Hawking's time in fact is not time as psychologically and intuitively felt but rather time as mechanically and electronically remembered; this time can be remembered even by inanimate objects like computers and digital clocks that are totally devoid of consciousness. But the felt time which is the real time is organically united with consciousness and cannot be felt by computers or clocks.

The sectional character of Hawking's approach is revealed more when we investigate what he basically means by the arrow of time. He says, "an arrow of time, something that distinguishes the past from the future, giving a direction to time" (IX. 153). It means that Hawking implies that both physical time and psychological time are divisible in past, present and future, or at least in past and future, while in real time (that is psychological time) past is not distinguished from future; they are both organically and inextricably interpenetrated. Hawking's very concept of arrow of time as something that distinguishes the past from future is objectionable. In fact, no time can legitimately be called psychological time if it is based on the division of present, past and future in three different times. To elucidate this point I am referring only to Ouspensky[182], Augustine and Iqbal. Ouspensky declares,

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[182] **Peter D. Ouspensky (1878–1947)** was a major contributor to Twentieth century ideas. He anticipated many of the key questions in philosophy, psychology and religion that have driven and informed us throughout the century. His extensive travels, personal studies, and a quest for the miraculous resulted in the publication of his brilliant *Tertium Organum* in 1912. Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum*, written in 1911, was published in New York in 1922 and within a few years became a best-seller in America and made him a world-wide reputation. Intended to supplement the *Organon* of Aristotle and the *Novum Organum* of Francis Bacon,

"The past and the future cannot *not exist*, because if they do not exist then neither does the present exist. Unquestionably they exist *somewhere* together, but we do not see them" (IV. 42). He adds, "The past and the future are equally undetermined, equally exist in all their possibilities, and equally exist simultaneously with the present" (IV. 45). According to St. Augustine, the conception of past and present is not possible unless they are conceived in present. He identifies past with memory and future with expectation; memory and expectation are both present facts, so the past can not be distinguished from future. Augustine conceives, as Bertrand Russell has mentioned, three times, but they are essentially one: "a present of things past, a present of things present and a present of things future" (p. 352). They are one in present. And let us now refer to Iqbal. Iqbal holds the opinion that, "Pure time, then, as revealed by a deeper analysis of our conscious experience, is not a string of separate, reversible instants; it is an organic whole in which the past is not left behind, but is moving along with, and operating in, the present. And the future is given to it not as lying before, yet to be traversed; it is given only in the sense that it is present in its nature as an open possibility" (II. 49). And the force that unites future with present and past is purpose. Iqbal gives a very cogent description of the role of purposes in the organic interpenetration of past, present and future. He says, "Purposes colour not only our present states of consciousness, but also reveal its future direction. In fact, they constitute the forward push of our life, and thus in a way anticipate and influence the states that are yet to be. To be determined by an end is to be determined by what ought to be. Thus past and future both operate in the present state of consciousness and the future is not wholly undetermined……" (II. 53). To Iqbal, pure time, which belongs to a higher state of consciousness, is non-successional change, while physical time is, "a measure of non-successional change" (III. 77). In the light of what we have discussed it appears that Hawking's time is not psychological time; it appears that he has presented physicalim in the guise of psychological arrow. Thus, Hawking's approach does not appear to be holistic. It is essentially scientific and sectional that presents psychological time as mechanical time.

Tertium Organum is based on the author's personal experiments in changing consciousness; it proposes a new level of thought about the fundamental questions of human existence and a way to liberate man's thinking from it's habitual patterns.

Inadequacy of Hawking's Essentially Scientific Approach:

Hawking's mechanical psychology cannot be the equivalent of the free creative consciousness that human beings possess. Hawking says, "the psychological arrow is determined by the thermodynamic arrow" (IX. 153). This presentation of independent creative mind in the form of dependant mechanical matter seems to be the continuation of Newtonian bifurcation of mind and matter. Hawking's approach at the core, is in line with that of Newton's and Darwin's, in interpreting matter and mind in the mechanical terms and therefore does not fulfill the conditions of holism. Let us see how Iqbal sees this approach; he says, "The discoveries of Newton in the sphere of matter and those of Darwin in the sphere of Natural History reveal a mechanism. All problems, it was believed, were really the problems of physics. Energy and atoms, with the properties self-existing in them, could explain everything including life, thought, will, and feeling. The concept of mechanism - a purely physical concept– claimed to be the all-embracing explanation of Nature" (II. 41). By declaring that psychological arrow is determined by the thermodynamic arrow, Hawking reduces the free creative consciousness to mechanical and artificial consciousness which is entirely dependant on the increasing or decreasing entropy of the universe. Hawking's approach implies that human beings are no more than a very sophisticated form of automata; this approach does not offer deep insight into the reality of psychological time. To him, the consciousness can only accidentally grasp the reality of the physical world while the physical world determines the shape of the consciousness. Our point here is that mind (psychological arrow) is not determined by matter (thermodynamic arrow). Iqbal pointed out, "To describe it (consciousness) as an epiphenomenon of the processes of matter is to deny it as an independent activity, and to deny it as an independent activity is to deny the validity of all knowledge which is only a systematized expression of consciousness" (II. 40-41). All the investigations and conclusions of Hawking himself are the outcome of his creative consciousness. If he believes that the working of his consciousness is dependant on the operation of expanding or contracting external world on his mind then what is the foundation of the validity of his conclusions? In Hawking's psychological arrow of time, man is 'bound by the fetters of time'; in this concept of time every psychological activity becomes mechanical activity. To exist in Iqbal's real time is totally different; as he says, "To exist

in real time is not to be bound by the fetters of serial time, but to create it from moment to moment and to be absolutely free and original in creation.

In fact all free activity is creative activity" (II. 50). Hawking's essentially mechanistic approach denies the spontaneity of life. Iqbal's objection to Hawking's essentially scientific approach is more lucidly expressed in the following words:

> Creation is opposed to repetition which is a characteristic of mechanical action. That is why it is impossible to explain the creative activity of life in terms of mechanism. Science seeks to establish uniformities of experience, i.e., the laws of mechanical repetition. Life with its intense feeling of spontaneity constitutes a centre of indetermination, and thus falls outside the domain of necessity. Hence science cannot comprehend life (III. 50)

Henri Bergson[183] is also one of the philosophers of time that find scientific approach inadequate to grasp the reality as a whole. He believes that mechanistic interpretation of time renders time unreal and dead. Let us see what Bergson[1] says about the insufficiency of mechanistic approach:

> The mechanistic explanations, we said, hold good for the systems that our thought artificially detaches from the whole. But of the whole itself and of the systems which, within this whole, seem to take after it, we cannot admit *a priori* that they are mechanically explicable, for then time would be useless, and even unreal. The essence of mechanical explanation, in fact, is to regard the future and the past as calculable functions of the present, and thus to claim that *all* is given (p. 187).

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[183] Henri Bergson (1859-1941): French philosopher who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1927. Bergson argued that the intuition is deeper than the intellect. His *Matter and Memory* (1896) and *Creative Evolution* (1907) attempted to integrate the findings of biological science with a theory of consciousness. Bergson's work was considered the main challenge to the mechanistic view of nature. While such French thinkers as Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Lévinas explicitly acknowledged his influence on their thought, it is generally agreed that it was Gilles Deleuze's 1966 *Bergsonism* that marked the reawakening of a wide and growing interest in Bergson's work. Therefore, due to Deleuze's realization, a kind of revitalization of Bergsonism has been going on since around 1990.

Thus, Hawking's concept of time is sectional and mechanical, which, contrary to true psychological interpretation, almost entirely avoids the subjectivity and heterogeneity of psychological time. In Hawking's approach, time becomes a function of the space, whereas Iqbal thinks that time is like a boundless ocean in which the space is no more than a fish; and it is the human consciousness that is "spacious" enough to contain the sea of time. Iqbal declares in his verse:

This world of ours, stretched out infinitely,

Is drowned like a fish in the sea of Time.

But look into your mind, and you will see

The sea of Time contained in a small cup.

(Message from the East)

Conclusion:

In Hawking's concept of time we find a comprehensive effort to formulate a holistic theory of time, but we discover that the spirit of his theory of time is scientific and sectional. His equation of the psychological arrow of time for humans to that for computers and then his hypothesis that psychological arrow is determined by thermodynamic arrow show the neglect of psychological analysis which is necessary to comprehend the reality of psychological time. In contrast to the time presented by the philosophers of time who have studied the psychological aspect of time, Hawking's psychological time is embedded in matter. Iqbal's concept of time reveals the sectional character of Hawking's approach that, in fact, is based on physicalism that presents the creative psychological arrow as mechanical arrow of time. To grasp the reality of psychological time what is needed is the analysis of dynamics of mind and not the subtle transformation of mind into matter.

Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1877—1938)[184]

Iqbal is a pre-eminent poet and philosopher of the East. He is known for his philosophy of the self. Like his philosophy of the self, his philosophy of time has also found eloquent expression in both his poetry and prose. Maulana Jelal-ud-Din Rumi was a great source of inspiration for him.

In Europe, he acquired three degrees from three prestigious institutes in three years. He got his B.A from Cambridge in June 1907, PhD from Munich University in November 1907, and was admitted to the bar in London in July 1908. At Cambridge, he met with the philosophers John McTaggart and Alfred North Whitehead and attended their lectures on Western thought. His first book of poetry was the Persian *Asrar-i-Khudi* (1915). Nicholson's English translation of the work, Secrets of the Self (1920) introduced Iqbal in the West as a major literary and philosophical writer. Reviewing the English version, Herbert Read compared Iqbal to the famous American poet Walt Whitman (1819—92).

He was awarded knighthood at Lahore in 1923. His *Javed Namah* is a reply to Dante's Divine Comedy, while *Payam-i-Mashriq* was written in response to Goethe's West-östlicher Divan. His major philosophical work, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam (1934) originally consisted of six lectures delivered in several Indian cities; a seventh lecture, written at the request of London's Aristotelian Society, was later added. Many consider it the most important philosophical work of modern Islam. He was invited to give the Rhodes lectures in 1934, but ill health prevented him from traveling to England.

In 1931 and 1932, as a representative of India's Muslims, Iqbal participated in the London Round Table Conferences held to decide India's political future. He visited Paris in 1932 and met French philosopher Henri Bergson. Bergson was astonished to hear his remark on the Islamic concept of time. In 1933 he met Mussolini in Rome after Mussolini expressed his interest to meet him. His works have been translated into English, Arabic,

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[184] Iqbal's introduction has mainly been derived from Mustansir Mir's, *IQBAL*, published by Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2006. Mustansir Mir is one of the scholars of Iqbal Studies.

Turkish, German, French, Latin and Indonesian. Although he did not live to see the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Iqbal is revered as its spiritual father and as its national poet. The anniversary of his birth on November 9 is a holiday in Pakistan.

Iqbal's introduction has mainly been derived from Mustansir Mir's, *IQBAL*.

Mustansir Mir is one of the scholars of Iqbal Studies.

STEPHEN WILLIAM HAWKING (1942—)[185]

Hawking is considered one of the most influential and important theoretical physicists of the twentieth century. His theories on black holes and his search for a grand unification theory, which would link the theories of relativity with those of quantum mechanics, have propelled him into the scientific ranks of Sir Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein. He has attracted widespread public interest through his best-selling work *A Brief History of Time (*1988).

Hawking was born on the 300th anniversary of Galileo's death, January 8, 1942, in Oxford, England. In 1965, he completed his dissertation on black holes and received his Ph.D. He received a fellowship in theoretical physics at Cambridge and continued his work on black holes. At the age of thirty-two, Hawking was named a fellow of the Royal Society and in 1978 he received the Albert Einstein award of the Lewis and Rose Strauss Memorial Fund, the most prestigious award in theoretical physics. The next year he was named Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, a position he continues to hold and one which was once occupied by Newton. While a student, Hawking was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), commonly referred to as "Lou Gehrig's Disease," a degenerative disease of the nerve cells that control muscular movement. Hawking eventually became unable to move except for his fingers, and in the early 1980s he also lost the ability to speak; he now communicates with the aid of a talking computer.

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[185] Hawking's introduction has been drawn from websites.

In his most popular work, *A Brief History of Time*, which reached the best-seller list in both America and Britain, Hawking related the discoveries and implications of his lifetime of work. Written for the layman, *A Brief History of Time* offers a survey of historical and modern developments in physics, and addresses various cosmological theories. In this work Hawking develops a concept of time which is his own. One of his latest books, *The Universe In A Nutshell* is winner of The Aventis Prizes for Science Books 2002. It is generally considered a sequel and has been created to update the public of developments since the multi-million-copy bestseller A Brief History of Time. Stating the goal of his scientific and intellectual pursuit Hawking says, "My goal is simple. It is complete understanding of the universe, why it is as it is and why it exists at all."

[1] Hawking's introduction has been drawn from websites.

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