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Editorial Note

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Philosophizing *Tasawwuf*: The Postmodern Cult of Sufism

Dr. Iftikhar Shafi

Abstract

The paper is a critical study of some relatively recent Western approaches to *tasawwuf*. These so-called post-structuralist approaches, the deconstructionist being chief among them, seem to extend the earlier orientalist attempts, as that of Henry Corbin, Reynolds Nicholson or Pervez Morevidge, of philosophizing *tasawwuf*, thus turning it into one among various other 'isms' conveniently available to the Western critical understanding. Reviewing Ian Almond's *Deconstruction and Sufism* and *The New Orientalists,* the paper argues that in their preoccupation with tracing apparent affinities between the deconstructive/ post-structuralist and the Sufi positions on the so-called 'metaphysics of presence', what such studies often overlook is the epistemological difference between these two discourses. It remains a matter of some detailed discussion, which the paper does propose to attempt, to see that these recent critical approaches in the West, despite their avowed project of announcing the demise of philosophy, still somehow remain essentially complicit with the tradition of thought they look to dismantle.

I

There is a band of neo-orientalists around. And in their impressive presentation of *tasawwuf*, they are committing what I would term here as a 'violent' act of 'literary terrorism'. Lest my use of the terms 'violent' and 'terrorism' be confused with their more popular and prevalent political, militant and physical connotations these days, let me make a clarification right away. I have borrowed both these terms from a couple of the most representative postmodern thinkers, namely, Jacques Derrida and Jean-Francois Lyotard. The purpose of such a borrowing is manifestly to restrict the connotations of these terms to a strictly intellectual domain. Without any intention whatsoever of anyway belittling the enormity of slaughter, blasts, hijackings and wars, 'violence' and 'terrorism' in the physical domain, one could say that the two acts, in their intellectual, that is, literary and philosophical manifestations, may be far more subtle, insidious and penetrating than their physical counterparts. '*Fitnah* is worse than slaughter', the Quran tells us (2: 191). *Fitnah*, Abdullah Yousuf Ali points out, can signify trial, temptation, tumult, sedition, oppression, even persecution as the 'suppression of some opinion by *violence…*' (n. 239, 89, my italics).

As one aim of this paper is to refresh in our hearts and memories the insistence of our Sufis that *tasawwuf* is *not* philosophy, it is significant to note that Derrida opens his essay *Violence and Metaphysics*, even before ruminating on the probable *death* of philosophy in the West, with a caption form Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*. The quoted passage epitomizes the agony the West has gone through, and

as I will argue, is still going through, in trying to deal with the 'unholy matrimony' of religion and philosophy, "the revelational and the rational", in Arnold's terms, Hebraism and Hellenism. The caption is worth quoting again: 'Hebraism and Hellenism—between these two points of influence moves our (the Western) world. At one time, it feels more powerfully the attraction of one of them, at another time, of another; and it ought to be, *though it never is*, evenly and happily balanced between them' (parenthesis and italics mine).[1]

Through this caption, Derrida invokes and exploits Arnold's acknowledgement, referred to in the passage through my italics, of the unhappy encounter of the two legacies, the genesis of one being in Jerusalem and of the other in Athens, two genetically different and incompatible, heterogeneous, histories of philosophy and 'non-philosophy' in the West. 'Violence' for Derrida is the way philosophy 'opens history by opposing itself to non-philosophy',[2] much in a similar gesture through which Samuel Johnson termed the Metaphysical poets' practice of 'yoking together heterogeneous ideas' as *violent*. Violence understood in a Derridian sense would be philosophy's attempt at dealing with problems which '[B]y right of birth … (are) problems philosophy cannot resolve'.[3] 'These questions', he writes, 'are not *philosophical*, are not *philosophy's* questions'. However Derrida, in his characteristic adamantine irony considers such questions as 'the only questions capable of founding the community… (of) philosophers'.[4]

So philosophy's meddling with issues even beyond its legitimate purview goes on. Thus in this paper we will see the ongoing attempt of philosophy at encroaching upon *tasawwuf* as a perpetuating act of 'violence', to use Derrida's phrase, as an act of 'militant theoretic'.[5] If *tasawwuf* is non-philosophical, if it is not philosophy, then philosophizing *tasawwuf* must be taken as 'violence', 'as the necessity that the other not appear as what it is, that it not be respected except in, for, and by the same…'[6]

Jean-Francois Lyotard (1926-98), in *The Postmodern Condition* (1979), arguably the most famous philosophical formulation of postmodernism, considers terror as an 'efficiency' which is derived 'from a "say or do this, or else you will never speak again"…':

> By terror I mean the efficiency gained by eliminating, or threatening to eliminate, a player from the language game one shares with him. He is silenced or consents, not because he has been refuted, but because his ability to participate has been threatened (there are many ways to prevent

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[1] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, quoted here from Jacque Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (henceforth referred as *W & D*), (London: Routledge, Third Indian Reprint, 2007) 97.
[2] Derrida, *W & D*, 97.
[3] Ibid., 98.
[4] Ibid. , 98.
[5] Ibid. , 109.
[6] Ibid. , 165.

someone from playing). The decision maker's arrogance…consists in the exercise of terror. It says: 'Adapt your aspirations to our ends—or else'.[7]

Before I go on to further establish the current neo-orientalist philosophizing of *tasawwuf* as 'terrorism' in Lyotardian terms, and also why I call this act of 'violent terrorism' as 'literary', let me address the question of the addressees, my own, and the likely and probable addressees of these new orientalists. My own addressees I deem to be those on the peripheries, people occupying or patrolling the border-lines, people for whom it has become necessary, perhaps obligatory in a sense, to know and understand modernity and postmodernity. They can't seem to live peacefully without this knowledge, for whom it is a part of their vocation to get familiar with every new 'ism' originating from the occident every now and then, people who, so to say, can not be content with a Keatsian 'that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know'. These are, myself included, the ones who would want to be seen in 'intellectual' gatherings (the question of motivation for such presences I deliberately leave open).

As for the neo-orientalists, their 'beautifully crafted postmodernist idiom' (that's how S. Nomanul Haq characterizes Ebrahim Moosa's language), remains attractively inaccessible to even some of our most aspiring graduate, postgraduate students and research scholars, let alone a Sufi in a *khanqah*. These neo-orientalists, almost invariably all of them, seem to be crafting their idiom from a certain jargon that is prevalent among the Western intellectual community. This jargon is basically drawn from a host of theoretically intricate formulations in the disciplines of psychology, sociology, anthropology, primarily philosophy, and what not! The ones who feel to be 'absolutely' familiar with this jargon, I mean the postmodern neo-orientalists themselves, give only that much damn about 'Sufism' (their own 'terrorist' reduction of the term *tasawwuf*, again in a strictly Lyotardian sense of 'terrorism'), as Ian Almond argues, as is *useful* for their own purposes of either critiquing modernity[8] or proving *tasawwuf* to be aligned with the postmodernist harangue against the notion of an absolute center.

For those who are 'awfully' familiar with this 'beautifully crafted postmodern idiom', this highly philosophized presentation of *tasawwuf* offers a seductively deferred promise of meaning, the reader caught up in kind of suspense of expectation that one would experience in reading fiction (that's probably why most of these publications appear under the category of philosophy/literature given on the blurb!), waiting for a Godot who would never come, the point of meaning always deferred, and also differed (for as I attempt to do it, it is not difficult to point out the inner contradictions within these works). In other words the philosophical

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[7] Jean-Francois Lyotard, 'The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge', in *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology*, (ed.) Lawrence E. Cahoone (Malden: Blackwell, 1996) 502.

[8] Ian Almond, *The New Orientalists, Postmodern Representations of Islam From Foucault to Baudrillard* (London: Tauris, 2007) 4.

reductions of *tasawwuf* seem to be deliberately crafted on the Derridian model of *differánce*.

I am alive to the fact that by now my reader would be ready to accuse me of an attempt at using the same kind of jargonized language, the stylized postmodernist idiom, elliptically truncated expressions, long sentences with loosened grammatical structure, that I am using the same terms, playing according to the same rules of the game I intend to critique. And I accept the allegation. I don't want to play a 'terrorist' here. I am not writing *primarily* on *tasawwuf* but on a certain violent attempt at reducing *tasawwuf* to philosophical categories. What I am attempting here is, in Lyotard's words, 'a renunciation of terror', by observing and respecting the principle 'that any consensus on the rules defining a game and the "moves" playable within it *must* be local…agreed on by its present players…'[9] I repeat, I am not *primarily* talking about *tasawwuf* here, but a certain representation of it. I must frankly admit my incompetence for any such ambitious attempt. Were I to do that, I would certainly be more cautious of playing into the hands of postmodernism. And whenever in this paper I try to do that, that is, directly say anything on behalf of *tasawwuf*, I will take every possible care to do this *via* those who have an established identity as Sufis. But the practice of playing into the postmodern hands, I am afraid, seems to be too rampant these days, characterizing in one way the postmodern condition itself: that people too small in stature dare talk about men too great for them.

'Rumi is relentless in his constant emphasis on the irreducibility of inner meanings to their contextual and relational representation. However, whether he himself is entirely successful in always transcending his cultural context is a matter of debate'.[10] When a Mahdi Tourage is seen thus questioning the claims to universality of Rumi instead of relating to Rumi in Rumi's own terms, forcing upon the *Mathnawi* a reading couched in Foucault's or Lacanian 'hermeneutics of eroticism', that is where the postmodernist take on *tasawwuf* becomes 'terrorist' in a Lyotardian sense. Such Foucaultian, Lacanian or Derridian hermeneutics, no matter how much it tries to locate itself in an anti-platonic, anti-philosophical stance, ultimately remains, as Paul Ricoeur would have it, a 'hermeneutics of suspicion', as the only hermeneutics available to philosophy. One should heed Rumi himself on such philosophical hermeneutics of suspicion and its incompatibility with any interpretation in *tasawwuf*:

> The philosopher in his (vain) thought and opinion becomes disbelieving: bid him go and dash his head against his wall!

> The philosopher who disbelieves in the moaning pillar is a stranger to the senses of the *aulia*.

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[9] Ibid. , 504.

[10] Mahdi Tourage, 'Hermeneutics of Eroticism in Rumi', in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* (Duke University Press, vol. 25, no. 31, 2005) 616.

Whoever hath doubt and perplexity in his heart, he in this world is a secret philosopher.

He is professing firm belief, but sometime or other that philosophical vein will blacken his face.

Take care, O ye Faithful! For that (vein) is in you! In you is many an infinite world. For fear of this, anyone who has the fortune of (holding) this Faith (Islam) is trembling like a leaf.

The *Abdal* have certain terms of which the doctrines of reason are ignorant.[11]

II

You are judging from (the analogy) of yourself, but you have fallen far, far (away from truth). Consider well.

Do not measure the actions of holy men by (the analogy of) yourself, though *sher* (lion) and *shir* (milk) are similar in writing.

<div align="right">Rumi, The Mathnawi, I/ 246, 264</div>

Perhaps it would be more meaningful to begin reading Ian Almond's *The New Orientalists* from the last sentence of his book (in any case it does not really make much of a difference if one approaches any text written in 'beautifully crafted postmodern idiom' either from its beginning or from its end—one remains, as the postmodern slogan goes, 'always in the middle', in Ebrahim Moosa's terms, in the *dihlizian* space).

The concluding sentence, as expected, summarizes the thesis of the book, but rather unexpectedly perhaps also for the writer also contains a confession:

That in attempting to write about the other, we invariably end up writing about ourselves has become a cliché of Oriental's studies—'extending the Empire of the same', as Levinas called it;

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[11] Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Mathnawi*, (ed. & trans.) Reynold A. Nicholson, (Karachi: Darul Ishaat, 2003) I/ 3278, 80, 85-87, 89, 3409, pg. 178-185. The last line here in Nicholson's edition reads *aqwal*, as the rhyme of *abdal* in the first line. In the texts of *Kaleed* [see Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi, *Kaleed-e-Mathnawi*, (Multan: Idarah Taleefat-e-Ashrafiyah, n. d.) vol. 1, 547], *Miftah al-Ulum* [see Muhammad Nazir Arshi, *Miftah al-Ulum*, (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali, n. d.) vol. 4, 132], *Ilham-e-Manzum* [see Maulawi Ferozuddin, *Ilham-e-Manzum*, (Lahore: Feroz Sons, n. d.) vol. 1, 396), the rhyme reads *uqqal*. The text of Haji Imadadullah Muhajir Makki, asa in Nicholson's edition, also reads *aqwal*, but in the margin Haji Sahib in parenthesis interprets *aqwal* as *uqqal*, that would translate as 'the people of reason' [see *Mathnawi Mawlawi Maanawi*, (Quetta: Amir Hamza Kutubkhanah, n. d.) vol. 1, 306). Nicholson understands *aqwal* as 'doctrines' and adds a parenthetical interpretation: 'of external religion', which betrays an orientalist tendency of considering *tasawwuf* as something transcending the boundaries of *shariah*, the Islamic law.

> *what remains surprising is that so many of the figure responsible*
> *for delineating and delivering and demonstrating this situation of*
> *epistemological finitude so visibly fail to escape it in their own*
> *work*.[12] (my italics)

Nothing could be truer for Almond himself. The book obviously is neither about Islam nor about *tasawwuf*. It is about a certain 'representation of Islam in postmodern texts', both literary and philosophical, from Foucault to Baudrillard. When Almond tells us that 'Nietzsche says very little about what Islam *is*, but only what it is *not*'[13], or Orhan Pamuk is actually using the Sufi tradition 'to illustrate his own secular beliefs concerning the illusion of the self … and to undermine tradition, employing one aspect of Islam to deconstruct another'[14], he actually makes his own writing open to a similar sort of criticism. This he implicitly acknowledges in the introduction of the book by saying that '[O]ne of the main effects of this examination (of the new orientalist postmodern depiction of Islam and *tasawwuf*) will be to culturally re-locate and delimit the critique of modernity much the same way such a critique historicized modernity itself'[15]. So if the postmodern 'new orientalists' are *using* Islam and *tasawwuf* for their own critique of modernity, Almond could be said to be *using* Islam and *tasawwuf* to critique the critique of modernity itself.

And what to say about my own paper? Having already acknowledged that I am not *primarily* writing on *tasawwuf*, but on a certain representation of it, am I not *using tasawwuf* to critique a critique of a critique? Am I not 'caught in … (the same philosophical) circle'[16]? to use Derrida's words (with my own parenthetical insertion), and making also myself vulnerable to the postmodern borrowings that would allow, as Derrida points out, 'to destroy each other reciprocally'[17]? To step 'outside philosophy', one must argue after Derrida, 'is much more difficult to conceive than is generally imagined by those who think they made it long ago…and who in general are swallowed up…in the entire body of discourse which they claim to have disengaged from it'.[18]

But for me, I would still wish to disengage myself, despite my present venture, from this vicious circle of 'the destroyers and the destroyed', not by any ambitious claims to thorough knowledge, but by humble concessions of a few acknowledgements. To acknowledge firstly, that every critique that *uses* a certain discourse as an underlying thematic to talk about a certain other discourse, necessarily contains at least an *implicit* understanding of the *used* discourse, even if that implicit

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[12]Almond, *The New Orientalists,* 203
[13] Ibid., 15.
[14] Ibid., 121.
[15] Ibid. , 4.
[16] Derrida, *W & D*, 355.
[17] Ibid., 356.
[18] Ibid., 359.

understanding does not appear in the critique explicitly, even if it can be seen only through the marginal crevices, through the *unconscious*, of the text. This *implicit* understanding can also be made explicit through an inter-textual approach, that is, by relating a given text of the critique to the context of other texts around it, in Derrida's words, within a 'syntax and a system' of that critique.[19]

Secondly, to acknowledge that what we call the 'use of terms' must be understood, as Derrida points out for the discourse of philosophy (he uses the word 'concepts' instead of terms), 'within the inherited concepts of metaphysics. Since these concepts (read terms) are not elements or atoms, and since they are taken from syntax and a system, any particular borrowing brings along with it the whole of metaphysics'.[20] A 'term' is not simply a word, a sign *positive* in a Saussurian sense, but gives its meaning only within the syntax or a system (called metaphysics by Derrida). It must be pointed out that many have been relating *tasawwuf* to Platonism or neo-Platonism simply because they find a similar vocabulary employed here and there, without properly acknowledging the distinct 'universe of discourse' within which these terms operate. In his commentary on Rumi's line, 'the *abdal* have certain terms…', Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi points out that the word *istilah* (term) here does not mean 'term' in a 'terminological' sense, for it is neither difficult nor a matter of knowledge to understand it thus, like words in a dictionary these terms are also given in the books related to the art (of *tasawwuf*) , rather what is meant by terms here are those realities of excellence which these dictionary or terminological words refer to. Since these (excellences) are a matter of taste (experience/ *dauq*) that is why reason is insufficient to understand their reality…for instance somebody heard from an *arif* about the love of Allah, and understood it as a certain tendency of heart that is already there in him, so he counted himself (in his own understanding) among the lovers (of Allah). Actually the referent was to a certain condition that cannot be known without being had. Or for example, a child not having reached adulthood considers the pleasure of sexual intercourse as that of eating a sweet, and starts considering himself as experiencing the pleasure of intercourse…[21] Syed Shah Muhammad Zauqi in *Sirr-e-Dilbaran* also mentions that 'there also exists in this world a group of people who have only a bookish relationship with *tasawwuf*. They are self-styled Sufis. They make exaggerated use of the terms of the Sufis, needed or unneeded. They are still incarcerated in their senses, haven't even stepped into the path. They are caught up in the futile attempt at flying through their bookish information and rational indulgences. These people are…incapable of understanding the true meaning and subtleties of these terms. Actually most often, their futile attempts prove to be too harmful for them.

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[19] Ibid., 355.
[20] Ibid., 355-56.
[21] Ashraf Ali Thanawi, *Kaleed-e-Mathnawi*, vol. 1, 547.

Tasawwuf is a unity of theory (*ilm*) and practice (*amal*). Unless one steps into the domain of practice, nothing could be had either from *tasawwuf* or from its terms'.[22]

The final acknowledgement is that of being on the periphery, of being 'in the middle'. But one can only be in the middle *of* something, some polarities, of *inside* and *outside*. This space of in-between-ness, in Ebrahim Moosa's terms, the *dihlizian* space, is not neutral. Seeming to be in such a space, my fellow occupants and I have the vantage point to look at both the sides, the *inside* and the *outside*, and looking at the former we say, to evoke the Qur'anic call of 'the men on the Heights', 'Peace on You' (7: 46), looking at the latter, 'Our Lord! Send us not to the company of the wrong-doers' (7: 47). Living in a complex and 'mobile force field', to use Ebrahim Moosa's words, of modernity, post-modernity, and Islam, we would like to be associated with those who, in the words of the Quran, 'acknowledge their wrong-doings', who have 'mixed an act that was good with that was evil' (9: 102), hoping for Allah's mercy and forgiveness. Being on the peripheries, we would desire to 'enter Islam whole-heartedly' (2: 208), to be the *insiders*.

But our neo-orientalists do not seem to entertain any such acknowledgements. Their implicit understanding of *tasawwuf*, as it comes out either through an inter-textual reading or through the 'unconscious' of their texts, suggests a violent subordination of *tasawwuf* to philosophy. Secondly, they freely confuse the terms of *tasawwuf* with philosophical terms. Ian Almond, for instance, actually considers 'confusion' in its etymological sense of 'flowing together' or 'removing the boundaries/borders/ distinctions' as something very desirable and common in both deconstructive and Sufi thought.[23] Despite apparently acknowledging their postmodern positioning of 'in between-ness', they still make unwarranted statements about *tasawwuf* with an air of an *insider*'s authority.

Before going ahead, let us go a little backwards

It has been mentioned earlier that the thesis and conclusion of Almond's *The New Orientalists* as given in the last sentence of his book is that the writers he has discussed from Foucault to Baudrillard, whom he calls the 'new orientalists', actually *use* Islam and *tasawwuf* for their own postmodernist critique of modernity without attempting to understand these by themselves, while the people who point out this postmodernist error, like Almond himself, are ultimately caught up in the same reductionist web. This last remark from Almond could still have been taken as a belated realization, as a confession, as some kind of a 'growth' in Almond's own approach towards *tasawwuf* that he betrayed years back in his 2004 book *Sufism and Deconstruction*, had it not been the case that there are copy-pasted passages from the earlier to the later work, and also that the more recent of the two works still

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[22] Syed Shah Muhammad Zauqui, *Sirr-e-Dilbaran* (Lahore: Al Faisal, 2005) 35. English translation from original Urdu is mine.

[23] Ian Almond, *Sufism and Deconstruction, A Comparative Study of Derrida and Ibn Arabi*, (London: Routledge), 39.

betrays the retention of his earlier opinion that *tasawwuf* can be related to the postmodern philosophy *via* Christian mysticism. Let us go into some detail of these neo-orientalist traces.

Copy-pasting from an earlier work may not be objectionable in itself. Any intellectual growth, after all, may have some kind of a link with an earlier opinion. But the passages under reference here reveal that the questions they raise are still left under-answered in their more recent appearance as they were left thus earlier. The series of copy-pasted questions are 'inspired' by the fact that Derrida refuses to talk about *tasawwuf*, while he talks a lot about Christian mysticism:

> [W]hat exactly is the difference between the Greek/Christian negativity Derrida is willing to talk about and the… Islamic version…he feels he cannot? Is Derrida hinting at a certain deconstructive success in … Sufi mysticism, a success not to be confused with (its) Greek/ Christian counterparts and all their Hellenized dependency on logos and the *epekeinia tes ousia*…

> [W]hat is the real reason for Derrida's decision 'not to speak of … Islamic tradition … in his counter-deconstruction of negative theology …? Why does Derrida choose to stay in Christian Europe?[24]

In both the books, without ever dealing squarely with the significance of any of these important questions, Almond offers another series of speculative 'perhapses' and 'may be's' as probable reasons for Derrida staying away from meddling with *tasawwuf*, and for Almond all these probable reasons are 'only straight forward' and 'not complex':

> [M]ay be Derrida simply does not know enough about…Ibn Arabi or Maulana or Suhrawardi. Perhaps he can't read Arabic… Perhaps he was too enticed by the possible genealogy of three figures such as Pseudo-Dionysius, Eckhart and Heidegger (each of whom has read his predecessor) to wander off into the strange deserts of … Persian esotericism. There even may be a possibility that Derrida, in distinctly under-constructed moment of political correctness, was more attracted by the deconstruction of a European Christian tradition than a non-European Islamic … one; after all his talk of 'a Europe united in Christianity' and the 'logo-centric impasse of European domesticity', perhaps Derrida more pressing need to deconstruct Euro-Christian logo-centrism than their Islamic … equivalents.[25]

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[24]Ibid., 4, *The New Orientalists*, 43-44.
[25] Ibid., 4-5, *The New Orientalists*, 44.

Interestingly, Almond does not seem to be much bothered about determining the reason for Derrida's hesitation to talk about *tasawwuf*. In both the books, the question of the significance of the reasons behind Derrida's reluctance receives an offhand dismissal: 'Whatever be the reasons... ', thinks Almond, and then continues to observe that Derrida's is a 'mystical' silence on the issue. The implication would be that the mystic cannot talk about the other, and since *tasawwuf* is 'far too radically *autre*' for Derrida, he remains silent about it.[26] In *The New Orientalists*, Almond draws a conclusion pertinent to his immediate project, that is, Islam remains at the margins of Derrida's discourse: 'Derrida's faint anxiety at not having talked of ... Islamic mysticism betrays an awareness of Islam's marginal status ... ',[27] a conclusion too obvious even to be stated.

But in his earlier work *Sufism and Deconstruction*, Almond seems to ignore even such a tautological conclusion. *Sufism and Deconstruction* is a book 'worth reading' (166 pages cost £ 105 on Amazon.com) in which Almond scatters bezels of his own wisdom in Ibn Arabi's name (please recall the caption of this section of my paper as a comment). *Tasawwuf* and philosophy are finally brought to be 'confused' (in Almond's etymologically desirable sense), finally brought to gel together 'as different fragments belonging to the same, long-shattered vase'[28] (just like Henry Corbin earlier informed us that along with *Sheikh-e-Akbar*, *Ibn Aflatun* was also one of Ibn Arabi's surnames, but never bothers to say whoever called him so, Almond does not explain how this 'long-shattered vase' must have looked like!)

Here he seems to be using Derrida's 'mystical' silence as some kind of a relationship with *tasawwuf* Derrida can be forced into. What if Derrida never meddled with *tasawwuf*, he did in any case with Christian mysticism. This problematic premise seems to suffice for Almond to trace similarities between deconstruction and 'Sufism'. In doing so, he even refuses to give the terms of *tasawwuf* any special status. Utterly disregarding the need for any exclusive treatment of Sufi language, he informs us that Ibn Arabi's work 'far from being some obscure Sufi esotericism encrypted in mystical Eastern terminology, actually asks the *same* (my emphasis, recall Almond quoting Levinas' phrase, 'extending the Empire of the same'!) questions and moves in some similar directions as a number of familiar figures in the West'.[29]

Completely forgetting, as if, his earlier question as to 'what exactly is the *difference* between the Greek/Christian negativity, Derrida is willing to talk about and the … Islamic version … he feels he cannot' (my italics),[30] Almond is quickly attracted by the *similarities* between Ibn Arabi and 'key figures in the Western philosophical

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[26]Ibid., 5, *The New Orientalists*, 45.
[27]Almond, *The New Orientalists*, 46.
[28]Almond, *Sufism and Deconstruction,* 2.
[29]Ibid. , 5.
[30] Ibid., 3-4.

tradition'.[31] The chief among these key figures in the Western philosophical tradition (it is revealing that Almond does not see any point in distinguishing between the Christian mystical and the Western philosophical tradition!) is Meister Eckhart, who, in Almond's words, 'makes itself felt throughout … as a phantom third figure in …comparative study of Derrida and Ibn Arabi.[32]

Henry Corbin earlier called Ibn Arabi *ibn Aflatun* (Plato's son) on God knows whose authority. For calling Ibn Arabi 'Meister Eckhart of the Islamic tradition' Almond conjures up mainly two (but essentially one) authorities, first a group of neo-orientalists like R. Netton, Dom Sylvester Houdehard and Ralph Austin, and secondly himself. Almond thinks that even if you have not read a single word from these neo-orientalists, 'it is not difficult to see why so many scholars link them (Ibn Arabi and Eckhart) together' (my parenthesis).[33] What *is* difficult to see though for these neo-orientalists is the basic difference between any figure from Sufi tradition and one who represents the Western philosophic-mystical tradition, a difference whose acknowledgement would subsequently render all the apparently 'striking resemblances' meaningless. Rumi reminds us:

> Consider hundreds of thousands of such likenesses and observe that the distance between the two is (as great as) a seventy years' journey.
>
> If both resemble each other in aspect, it may well be (so): bitter and sweet water have (the same) clearness.
>
> Who knows the difference except a man possessed of (spiritual) taste? Find (him): he knows the sweet water from the brine.[34]

The main difference between the Sufi tradition and the Western philosophic-mystical tradition is the Sufis' unflinching, uncompromising belief in *al-tawhid*, the unity and oneness of Allah, as Imam Qusheri discusses in detail in his *Risalah Qushayriyyah*. In *Tasawwuf aur Sirriyat* (Tasawwuf and Mysticism), one of the highly readable books on the topic, the late Professor Latifullah points out that in Ekhart's work there is an amalgamation of the Aristotelian philosophical elements and the mysticism of Pseudo-Dionysius. With his existentialist tendencies (that is probably why Heidegger was so fascinated by him) Eckhart held the belief that God created his Son as a partner in His eternity. The Son is equal to God. The Son created the universe. Professor Latifullah thinks that Eckhart is not even aware of the difference between *tawhid* (unity) and *shirk* (ascribing partners to God).[35]

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[31] Ibid., 5.
[32] Ibid., 5.
[33] Ibid., 5.
[34] Rumi, *The Mathnawi*, I/ 271, 275, 276.
[35] Latifullah, *Tasawwuf aur Sirriyat*, (Lahore: Idarah Saqafat-e-Islamiyyah, 2005) 84-85. The English paraphrase from original Urdu is mine.

One wonders why Hossein Nasr, who acknowledges that 'the several intellectual perspectives cultivated in Islam all conform(ed) to the doctrine of unity (*al-tawhid*)', still thinks that one can see in 'Plato and Pythagoras a confirmation of the Islamic doctrine of *al-tawhid*'.[36] A more elaborate and frank account of the Platonic 'confirmation' of belief in the sense of revealed religions can be found in the writings of the Archdeacon of Westminster, Adam Fox, and this should also help throw some light on Christian mysticism's turning to 'Greek/Christian negativity' (Almond's term). In his book *Plato and the Christians*, Adam Fox presents an astonishing definition of a believer *via* Plato:

> Plato's temperament was religious, and he probably accepted all these different divinities without much reserve. He slides from writing of 'God' to 'a god', from 'a god' to 'the gods', and back again very easily … In one of the letters ascribed to him there is a curious sentence where he is made to say that at the beginning of his serious letters he will put the word 'God', but 'gods' at the beginning of his less serious ones (Epistles, XIII 363 B). This suggests that he thought, or was thought to think, a belief in gods subsidiary to a belief in God … He admits without any precise definition the power and authority of God, of gods, of demons kind and cruel, of fortune, and of the Good. He sees nothing inconsistent in being theist, monotheist, and polytheist at the same time.

After making these honest acknowledgements, the Archdeacon comes up with a remarkably astonishing conclusion: '… of such a man we should probably have to be content to say that he was a believer'.[37]

Agar inast rasm-e-doost dari, Iqbal would say on this, *be divar-e-haram zan jam-o-mina* (If these are the terms of friendship/ then break the cup and the goblet against the wall of the *harem*).

But Nasr would insist that '[W]hen Iqbal calls Plato "one of the sheep", he is following more the interpretation of Platonism by Nietzsche than by the Islamic philosophers themselves…'[38] Why would Iqbal, one could ask Mr. Nasr, for his opinion on Plato, rely more on Nietzsche, one who in his frequent associations between the Prophet Muhammad and Plato offers to us, as Almond points out, the Prophet Muhammad as an Arab Plato, 'who had always considered Plato' to be an 'instinctive Semite' (*Semite von Instinkt*) and a 'symptom of decadence' (*Verfall-Symptom*).[39] Why shouldn't one trace the origin of Iqbal's opinion to the Sufis

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[36] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 'The Teaching of Philosophy', in *Philosophy*, *Literature and Fine Arts*, (ed.) Seyyed Hossein Nasr, (Jeddah: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982) 5-7.
[37] Adam Fox, *Plato and the Christians* (NY: Philosophical Library, 1957), 21.
[38] Ibid. ,7.
[39] Almond, *The New Orientalists,* 18-19.

themselves, who are not exactly 'Islamic philosophers', to Shams, Rumi's master, who would contemptuously reject Plato's claims to love: 'the perfect philosopher was Plato. He lays claim to love…Are these the words of the accepted? Fire should come down over your head and face',[40] or to Rumi himself who would consider Plato 'still outside the palace' (*D* 5141), 'if love's pulse does not beat within a man, let him be Plato, he is but an ass' (*D* 12330).

For Nasr it is only modern Western philosophy that may be un-Islamic, but the ancient is not. He thinks that '[T]he study of Greek thought according to the Islamic intellectual tradition and independent of its Western interpretation is crucial for the Islamic confrontation with modern Western philosophy itself'.[41] He analogizes the doubt and skepticism which for him *only* modern Western philosophy, and not the ancient classical, is capable of generating among the educated Muslims, as 'snake bite', but thinks that 'the cure for the snake bite is the poison of the snake itself…The best anti-dote against the errors (of philosophy) can be found in the criticisms made in the West itself'. Rumi rather would think otherwise:

> In the plain where this fresh (virulent) poison grew, there has also grown the antidote, O Son.
>
> The antidote says to you, 'Seek from me a shield, for I am nearer than the poison to thee.
>
> Her (philosophy's?) words are magic and thy ruin; my words are (lawful) magic and the countercharm to her magic.[42]

The best antidote to philosophy is not philosophy itself, rather for Rumi it would be the words of the Sufis, what he calls *sukhan-e-naqd* (the immediate/cash speech). These are the people with a firm belief in the oneness of Allah and the finality of the Prophet-hood of Muhammad. These are the people who are the servants of God. 'A single one of God's servants', says Shams Tabrizi, 'can empty Plato of all those sciences. He can do it in a minute'.[43] The essential aim of every Muslim, one should say, is to become a true servant of Allah, and any 'confrontation with the Western philosophy', any apologetic or defensive discourse should at the most be taken as removing any possible hindrances towards achieving this goal. Should I even ask this question what would be more conducive towards strengthening one's faith, sitting in a philosophy class, or being in the company of the servants of Allah, the *aulia*? If one could agree with Nasr's apparent tendency of considering Islamic perspectives as merely 'intellectual', then philosophy could certainly be encouraged to take a more integral role in the matters of faith and belief.

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[40] Shams Tabrizi, *Maqalat*, (Me and Rumi) trans. William Chittick (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2005), 64.
[41] Nasr, 'The Teaching of Philosophy', 8.
[42] Rumi, *The Mathnawi*, III/ 4076-78.
[43] Shams Tabrizi, *Maqalat*, 68.

Coming back to Almond, one observes a similar connivance from the essential epistemological distinction between *tasawwuf* and philosophy, between knowledge and an experience coming out of faith in unity, and those coming out of a confused diversity of sources, divinities instead of the Divine. One could imagine the crooked and cracked edifice of 'striking resemblances' (and also what part of one's being these resemblances mostly strike) between *tasawwuf* and philosophy that is built upon an awry foundation.

III

Let us feel for some protruding parts of this edifice, some examples outstanding for their audacity.

In a characteristic neo-orientalist gesture of subordinating *tasawwuf* to philosophy, Almond seems to maintain that not only Ibn Arabi can teach us how to read Derrida but the possibility is also the other way round (he says this in the form of a rhetorical question).[44] The desire to present Ibn Arabi in particular, and by default *tasawwuf* in general, as non-conformist, iconoclastic, anti-traditional seems to be so strong that it eclipses for Almond a more obvious and a more plausible idea, already pointed out by other critics, of relating deconstruction to the Jewish thought itself, especially its mystical side of Kabbalah, on which Derrida, just like his refusal to talk about *tasawwuf*, also refuses to speak.

This desire of yoking together heterogeneous discourses allows Almond to make critically and even factually and historically incorrect statements: 'Neither of the two (Ibn Arabi and Derrida) seems willing to attach their writings to a particular school of thought or tradition'. This certainly may be considered as an outrageously bold statement for Ibn Arabi, but even for a philosopher like Derrida this cannot be said to be entirely true. No matter how much deconstruction poses to be a departure from the Western philosophic tradition, it still retains the intellectual and rational strain of this tradition. Here is Derrida's own way of relating deconstruction to the history of Western philosophy: 'This moment of doubling commentary (deconstruction) should no doubt have its place in a critical reading. To recognize and respect all its classical exigencies is not easy and requires all the instruments of traditional criticism'.[45] Herman Rapaport quotes Derrida to support the view that 'deconstruction is a critical method within the philosophical tradition': 'without this recognition and this respect, critical production would risk developing in any direction at all and authorize to say almost anything'.[46]

As for Derrida, Almond tries to sequester him even for the critical lineage Derrida suggests for himself as a deconstructionist. As Almond rightly points out, Derrida considers 'even the trinity of Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger … the initiators of the

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[44] Almond, *Sufism and Deconstruction,* 3.
[45] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 158.
[46] Ibid., 158.

dissolution of Western metaphysics' remaining 'trapped in a kind of circle'.[47] But the question is whether by pointing out of the complicity of the critique of metaphysics with metaphysics itself, Derrida is claiming for himself a place for standing outside the earth to overturn it with a lever?

In a bid to prove Ibn Arabi being outside the tradition, Almonds quotes a passage from Ibn Arabi that nowhere suggests the derived conclusion, and ironically he takes this passage as 'probably the best example' of Ibn Arabi critiquing 'practically every thinker … (he) encounter(s)':

> O Muhammad, I created my creatures and summoned them to Myself, but they differed among themselves with regard to Me. One group among them claimed that Ezra was my Son (IX: 30), and that My hand is fettered (V: 64-69). These are the Jews. Another group claimed that the Messiah is My Son (IX: 30), that I had a wife and child. These are the Christians. Another group gave Me partners. They are the idolaters. Another group gave Me a form. They are the corporealists (the Mujassima). Another group made Me limited. They are the Mushabbiha. Another group made Me non-existent. They are the Mu'attila. And there is another group who claim that I shall not be seen in the hereafter. They are the Mu'tazilites.[48]

A conspicuous example of 'violence' and 'terror' is Almond's confusion of Derrida's term *differance* and Ibn Arabi's term *al haqq*. The issue problematic in such a comparison is that despite giving lip-service to the fact that Derrida's philosophical and Ibn Arabi's spiritual gestures are not identical, Almond in the same breath insists that these gestures 'evolve according to the same structure'[49] and despite their different 'constitution' they result in a similar sort of 'confusion'.[50]

I must repeat that what matters is not simply the pointing out of the 'uncanny' (as Almond calls them) similarities between the philosophical and the Sufi expressions (one can always compare apples and oranges for that matter) but the *significance* and *implications* of those comparisons. As for the apparent similarities one can find passages not only in Ibn Arabi but also in other Sufis like Rumi who would at times talk about God in a way that would look 'uncannily similar' to Derrida's exposition of *differance*. Here is such an example, first a passage from Derrida on *differance*. According to Derrida *differance* is

> … a structure and a movement which can not be conceived on the basis of the opposition of presence/absence. *Differance* is the

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[47] Ibid., 9.
[48] Ibid., 8.
[49] Ibid., 10.
[50] Ibid., 37.

systematic play of differences, of traces of differences, of the spacing [es pacement] by which elements refer to one another.[51]

In *Fihi ma Fih* Rumi says:

> He (God) can not be qualified by presence or absence, for it would necessarily follow that an opposite proceeds from an opposite in that it would be necessary in the state of absence for Him to be the creator of presence, and presence is the opposite of absence. So also in the state of absence. Opposite can not be said to proceed from opposite, and God can not be said to create His like, because He says, 'He has no like'. If it were possible for like to create like, then a state would exist without there being a cause and a thing would have created itself. Both propositions are untenable.[52]

Immediately after saying this, Rumi announces what one may call here the epistemological break, a point from where, despite its apparently close resemblances with Derrida's notion of *differance*, the Sufi discourse takes off to a domain where the deconstructionist critical categories lose their operational efficacy: 'when you have come this far, stop and apply your self no more. Reason has no further sway: when it has reached the edge of the sea, let it halt'.[53]

Derrida, as Almond himself points out, was himself never aware of the possibility of such comparisons, but in Almond's own words, Derrida thought that 'we should not be deceived by' such apparent similarities.[54] And rightly so. One could think that Derrida understood philosophy much better than its neo-orientalist users. But Almond does not look like taking even Derrida on his word, let alone Ibn Arabi. Despite Derrida's own warnings, Almond continues to trace similarities. As has been pointed out, this irresistible impulse to confuse philosophy and religion might have been more plausibly accommodated in tracing the origins of such expositions as that of *differance* in onto-theological systems, that is, religious systems infected already by philosophy, like the Jewish Kabbalah. But whenever such an echo comes, and it comes rarely in Almond, he quickly rejects such comparison between deconstruction and the Jewish mystical thought as a 'temptation', and in such cases prefers to keep Derrida to philosophy proper only: 'Although one might be tempted here', he talks about the *unnamability* of *differance*, 'to think of the Hebrew unnamable … Derrida is actually alluding to Heidegger'.[55]

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[51] Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981)
[52] Rumi, *Fihi ma Fih*, trans. W. M. Thackston Jr., *Signs of the Unseen*, *The Discourses of Jalaluddin Rumi* (Boston: Shambala, 1999), 207.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 30.
[55] Ibid., 31.

Harold Bloom, an eminent and influential Jewish contemporary critic, one among five major Yale critics along with Derrida, de Man, Hartman and Hillis Miller, in his book *Kabbalah and Criticism* writes:

> Western literary criticism has followed the paradigm provided by Aristotle and Plato, with later modifications of Christian Aristotelianism and Christian Platonism, down to the recent models provided by theories as diverse as those of W. K. Wimsatt and Northrope Frye. Out of an amalgam of Nietzsche, Marx and Heidegger, Freud, and the linguists, another paradigm is now coming from France, moving upon us like that apocalyptic crimson man of Edom that Blake both celebrated and feared.[56]

Bloom calls this new paradigm in Western literary criticism (which can to a large extent be taken as a philosophical subjugation of literature) as a 'Kabbalistic model'. If one objects here that relating deconstruction in particular and postmodernism in general to the Jewish thought somehow legitimizes their comparison with Islamic *tasawwuf*, for the Jewish thought is comparatively more rigidly monotheistic than Christian mysticism's Trinitarian compromise on monotheism on the basis of which Christian mysticism's mediation between *tasawwuf* and philosophy was earlier questioned in this paper, one could point out Bloom's thinking that 'Kabbalah went out and away (even) from the main course of Jewish religious thought (whatever may be the status of the Jewish religious thought's claim to monotheism is another matter)'.[57] Kabbalah, Bloom informs us, is basically 'a blend of Neoplatonism and Gnosticism',[58] that is, it is a highly philosophized discourse (and in that at least should not be considered much different from Christian mystical thought). In Bloom's opinion, it is 'more of an interpretative and mythical tradition' and it 'differs … Eastern mysticism in being more a mode of *intellectual speculation* than a way of union with God'[59].

Bloom further tells us that Kabbalah is 'a way of an interpretation of Scripture that depends overtly upon an audacious figuration … Kabbalah seems to me unique among religious systems of interpretation in that it is, simply, already poetry, scarcely needing translation into the realms of the aesthetic…More audaciously than any development in recent French criticism, Kabbalah is a theory of *writing* …[60]

With figures like Marx, Freud, Lacan, Althusser, Bloom, Derrida, just to mention a few, Jewish contribution to the unfolding of the Western postmodern thought can hardly be more emphasized. It would be far more legitimate and meaningful; critics like Almond should be told, to relate concepts like *differance* to a Kabbalistic model

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[56] Harold Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism* (NY: Continuum, 1975), 87.
[57] Ibid., 16, parenthetical insertions mine.
[58] Ibid., 62.
[59] Ibid., 47, italics mine.
[60] Ibid., 52.

rather than to *tasawwuf*. Seen in this perspective, the violence in relating *differance* and *al haqq* should become clear enough.

Kabbalah, we are told, is a theory of writing, so is it an attitude towards death, a characteristic Jewish avoidance of death, of keeping it somehow at bay all the time, and the same might be said about Derrida's notion of *differance*, as the paper will argue. It is 'a power of mind', writes Bloom, 'over the universe of death'.[61] For Bloom Kabbalah is an 'apotropaic litany … warding off, defending against death'.[62] Bloom clearly relates Kabbalah as a theory of *writing* to Derrida's theory of *writing*:

> Kabbalah speaks of writing before writing (Derrida's "trace") … Derrida, in the brilliance of his *Grammatology* argues that writing is at once external and internal to speech, because writing is not an image of speech, while speech is already writing, since the trace it follows "must be conceived as coming before being". Derrida says that "all Occidental methods of analysis, explication, reading or interpretation" were produced "without ever posing the radical question of writing", but this is not true of Kabbalah, which is certainly an Occidental method, though an esoteric one.[63]

Whenever in the book Almond examines the thinkers who have related Derrida's thought to Kabbalah, the aspect of considering Kabbalah, *differance*, and Derrida's whole theory of writing as a characteristic Jewish attitude towards death is neglected. This Jewish attitude towards death, the paper argues, in its contrast from the corresponding Sufi approach to the notion of death can serve in one way as establishing the epistemological difference between Derrida's neo-Kabbalistic postmodern notions and *tasawwuf*. When examining, for instance, Thomas Altizer's emphasis on 'the Jewish theological thinker in Derrida', Almond is reminded of the 'risks one always takes in offering religious interpretations of avowedly secular thinkers'[64], (what about relating Ibn Arabi and Derrida for creating 'an awareness of the theological provenance of some of its (deconstruction's) gestures'?).[65]

In order to see why Derrida's notion of *differance* should be related more to the Jewish/ Kabbalistic attitude towards death instead of Sufi understanding of *al haqq*, let us have a look at Derrida's theory of *writing*.

The emphasis we put on the word *writing* whenever talking about Derrida's theoráy is to suggest the special and unusual sense in which Derrida understands the process. For Derrida the process of writing as he describes it, rather becomes a metaphor for the whole human experience, what he calls 'experience-in-general', the experience of human consciousness. This is why Derrida's essay that can be

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[61] Ibid., 47.
[62] Ibid., 52.
[63] Ibid., 52-53.
[64] Almond, *Sufism and Deconstruction,* 77.
[65] Ibid. , 131.

taken as an announcement of the advent of postmodernism and the demise of whatever may be called humanism, modernity, traditional thought, 'metaphysics of presence', is titled as 'The End of the Book and the Beginning of Writing', where the Book becomes a metaphor for a certain way of traditional thinking and Writing stands for a way of thought that debunks and dismantles this traditional thought.

Derrida's account of writing, and hence of experience-in-general, differs from the classical accounts of writing in the West, chiefly in Derrida's inclusion in the debate of the issue of 'the possibility of death' of the addressee. The Western philosophical tradition, the metaphysics of presence as Derrida calls it, conceives writing, as in Condillac's account, as a means of communication to those who are absent. But this absence, Derrida points out, is ever determined in the classical accounts of writing as 'a progressive extenuation of presence' and 'is not exhibited as a break in presence'[66] (this is probably why when we teach writing to our language students we advise them to keep the audience, *even if they be imaginary*, always in mind). Derrida argues that for writing to be writing, it should function beyond 'the absolute disappearance of every determined addressee in general'.[67]

> All writing … in order to be what it is, must be able to function in the radical absence of every empirically determined addressee in general. And this absence is not a continuous modification of presence; it is a break in presence, 'death', or the possibility of 'death' of the addressee …[68]

The same holds true for the writer himself: 'For the written to be written, it must continue to 'act' and to be legible even if what is called the author of the writing no longer answers for what he has written'.[69]

Until this condition of the absolute absence or 'death' of the addressee or the addresser is met, the classical preference of speech over writing can not be accepted. But this very condition is untenable within the confines of rationality, in other words, philosophical thought itself. Speech in classical accounts, like that of Plato in the *Phaedrus*, occurs in the presence of 'the fullness of intentional consciousness' as compared to writing, the bastard son of logos or rationality according to Plato, that is physically detached from its producer and acts in the form of *external* marks. The question is whether this fullness of intentional consciousness is ever possible. Just as the classical Western metaphysics suppresses the possibility of death for its conception of writing, its notion of consciousness and self knowledge is also ever conceived as a repression of death. The *Cogito* as consciousness bears within itself its own destruction for its fullness to exist:

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[66] Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 313.
[67] Ibid., 315.
[68] Ibid. , 315-316.
[69] Ibid., 316.

> If the possibility of my disappearance in general must somehow be experienced in order for a relationship with presence in general to be instituted, we can no longer say that the experience of the possibility of my absolute disappearance (my death) affects me, occurs to an I am, and modifies a subject, The I am, being experienced only as an I am present, itself supposes a relationship with presence in general, with being as presence. The appearing of the Ito itself in the *I am* is thus originally a relation with its own possible disappearance. Therefore, *I am* originally means *I am mortal*.[70]

This is all rational, quite logical stuff, one could say. But one thing that the argument makes clear is that any claim to self-knowledge within a philosophical and rational paradigm is bound to remain illusory. What we locate through Derrida in the Western understanding of writing, and also of consciousness, is a certain repression of an anxiety towards death. The necessary condition of death, so to say, is suppressed in order to claim presence in speech and self-knowledge through consciousness. *Differance* in such a context can be seen as a possibility of death that can never be actualized for the idealized fullness of self's consciousness, or for any certainty of meaning in language. Meaning in other words, is death. Just like death, one's own death keeps deferring in one's own consciousness, similarly meaning in language, or in consciousness is ever in a state of deferring and differing, that is, characterized by *differance*.

Differance as an attempt to overcome a certain anxiety of the fear of death can be related to the understanding of anxiety in another Jewish thinker, Sigmund Freud, whom Derrida acknowledges as one of his predecessors in contributing towards the advent of deconstruction and postmodernism. Anxiety for Freud, 'the fundamental phenomenon and main problem of neuroses' is the fear of the *otherness* within the self. The fear of death is the fear of the absence or death of the desired other. In Henry Staten's words:

> No one can experience his own death: only others can experience one's death. The death we know, the death that is truly *ours*, is the death of the other, the one who dies while we live on.
>
> Yet this death that is known is one that is somehow outlived. The other death, the one which is not outlived—our 'own' death, as it is improperly called—is not known. It can be imagined perhaps, but the death imagined can only be imagined as non death, as though our consciousness had survived the moment of cessation and could know what this cessation looked like.[71]

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[70] Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 54.
[71] Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 153-154.

The *Cogito*'s definitional inability to experience death, the absolute absence, restricts any possibility of full self-knowledge, the knowledge of absolute presence, of absolute meaning. The man who imagines his own death, says Lucretius, does not 'oust and pluck himself root and branch out of life, but unwittingly makes something of himself linger on'. Pity for one's own death means that he 'does not banish himself from the scene nor distinguish sharply enough between himself and that abandoned carcass. He visualizes that object as an on looker … He does not see that in real death there will be no other self alive to mourn his own decease'[72].

But one could always ask how Lucretius himself would ever come to know that 'in real death there will be no other self alive to mourn'. This kind of a claim submits to a Cartesian epistemology that claims knowledge without actually having it. And this is where deconstruction should only be seen as only a critique of claims to universal validity and not a separate epistemology, one as *tasawwuf* would claim for itself. *Differance* as an unending differing and deferring of death or meaning can at the most be seen as a corrective to such claims as that of Lucretius of treating phenomena that evade apprehension in rational terms as though fully comprehended through reason. *Differance*, itself a rational exposition, exposes the limits of rational epistemology through opening an arena of uncertainty without any claims otherwise. Death is neither to come nor is it not to come, meaning is neither there nor is it not there. This indeterminacy, an uncertainty in the face of illegitimate certainty, one must acknowledge, is purely a product of reason and philosophy itself.

If *Differance* is the possibility of death as it exists in human consciousness, this possibility is always uncertain. And this is the only possibility philosophy can offer. In what sense can such a term be attached to a term that within the Sufi tradition signifies absolute certainty? Rumi voices again the epistemological break of *tasawwuf* from philosophy:

> The way of him that has passed away is another way
>
> Because sobriety/ self consciousness is another sin.[73]

Differance corresponds to death and meaning in the same way, as Blooms observes '…Kabbalah can teach contemporary interpretation … that meaning … is always wandering meaning, even as the belated Jews were a wandering people. Meaning wanders, like human tribulation, or like error, from text to text, and within a text, from figure to figure'. This uncertainty and attitude of avoidance of death, the Qur'an, the Book that regulates all Sufi epistemology, associates as a characteristic feature with the Jews:

> 'Say: "O ye that stand on Judaism! If ye think that ye are friends to God,
> to the exclusion of (other) men, then express your desire for Death, if ye

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[72] Lucretius, *On The Nature of the Universe*, trans. R. E. Latham, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971), 122-123. Quoted here from Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida*, 153-154.
[73] Rumi, *The Mathnawi*, I/ 2200.

> are truthful!" But never will they express their desire (for death), because of the (deeds) their hands have sent before them! And God knows well those that do wrong. Say: "The death from which you flee will truly overtake you: then will ye be sent to the Knower of things secret and open: and He will tell you (the truth of) the things that ye did!"(62: 6-8)

Death in the Qur'an, in contrast to the postmodern deconstructive/Judaic gesture of deferring and uncertainty, has been associated with *yaqin* (certainty). In the last verse of *Al Hijr* (And serve thy Lord until there comes unto thee the Hour that is certain), and in the forty seventh verse of *Al Muddassir* ["until there came to us (the Hour) that is certain"] the word *yaqin* (certainty) has invariably been interpreted as Death. Not only that, but the term in Ibn Arabi, *al haqq*, that Almond so fondly associates with Derrida's *Differance*, the Qur'an uses in association with death: 'And the stupor of death will bring truth: "This was the thing thou was trying to escape"' (50: 19). If one agrees that *tasawwuf* draws its epistemology from the Qur'an instead of philosophy, then one can imagine why and how Almond would see the effects of both *differance* and *al haqq* resulting in a similar sort of 'confusion'.

Ignoring the proper epistemological contextualizing of both the terms, Almond inevitably reaches 'confusion'. It is certainly a measure of Almond's confusion that he can be convinced of the 'contradiction' and 'disparity between the theory and practice' of Ibn Arabi (along with Derrida). He comes up with this astonishingly remarkable observation that 'the words "literal sense" in Ibn Arabi do not possess any real meaning'[74]. As far as Derrida is concerned, this may be true in placing him within his proper epistemological context, as we will presently show. If we are to agree with William Chittick, Almond tells the readers, that 'Ibn Arabi displays tremendous reverence for the literal text', then 'an entirely new notion of "literality" has to be constructed…'

Let us put here a notion of literality which might be something new for Almond, for we missed its mention in his book. This new notion of literality will certainly help determine whether Ibn Arabi would have any reverence for the literal sense. For this 'new' notion of the literal let us refer to Herald Bloom again:

> Every poetic trope is an exile from literal meaning, but the only homecoming would be the *death* of figuration and so the *death* of poetry, or the triumph of literal meaning, whatever that is … the trope defends against literal meaning in the same way that psychic defenses trope against *death*. Literal meaning, where belated is so acute in poetic consciousness, is synonymous with repetition-compulsion, and *so literal meaning is thus seen as a kind of death,*

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[74] Almond, *Sufism and Deconstruction,* 85.

even as death itself seems the most literal kind of meaning.[75] (My italics)

If literal meaning is 'a kind of death', then the Sufi approach to it can be measured from the Sufi approach to death. Rumi tells us that *aulia*, the friends of Allah, are the people who 'have died before death … without an iota of being left in them'[76]. He further says in the *Mathnawi* that what he means by death is 'not such a death that you will go into a grave/ (But) a death consisting of transformation, so that you will go into a light'.[77] If literal meaning is a kind of death, then this kind of death is not so literal, rather it destroys the usual distinction between the literal and the figurative, between *zahir* and *batin* and accommodates both in the unitary simplex of the Sufi experience. This might again seem a deconstructive gesture, but the neo-orientalist and postmodernist tendency towards the figurative at the expense of the literal remains the differentiating factor between the two epistemologies.

Almond finds contradiction in Ibn Arabi because in theory, Ibn Arabi seems to him to be rather faithful to the literal, whereas in his *practice,* Almond finds him committed to the tropological. This is Almond's own reading of Ibn Arabi which can be put against other readings producing rather different conclusions. But Almond links Ibn Arabi with deconstruction on the basis of his *practice* and passes a bold judgment on him to side him with the non-literalists. This is a characteristic postmodern gesture that bears the traces of modernity: if Muslims are lacking in *practice*, there must be something wrong with the *thought*, that is, on the basis of a certain instance of practice, and even that in Ibn Arabi's case, Almond has treated with considerable critical callousness (for example, claiming to give 'real' meanings of what Ibn Arabi said)[78], the whole paradigm of placement has to be changed. This attitude is in total contrast with the attitude of the Sufis themselves, like Mujaddid Alf Thani, who only express 'surprise' at the presence of unacceptable contradictions and accept the Sheikh among the *maqbulin* (the accepted).[79]

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[75] Harold Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism*, 89-90.

[76] Rumi, *Fihi ma Fih*, trans. W. M. Thackston Jr., *Signs of the Unseen*, *The Discourses of Jalaluddin Rumi*, 76.

[77] Rumi, *The Mathnawi*, VI/ 739.

[78] See an example of this authoritative treatment of the Sheikh: '… when Ibn Arabi quotes the hadith "O Lord, increase my perplexity concerning you"… what he is *really* asking is : O Lord, confuse and confound the simplistic limitations I have attempted to cage You within'. Almond in doing this is not only interpreting Ibn Arabi on his own authority but is claiming to interpret the *hadith* itself. *Sufism and Deconstruction*, 42.

[79] Ahmed Sarhindi Mujaddid Alf Thani, *Maktubat Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Thani*, trans. Mawlana Syed Zawwar Hussein Shah, (Karachi: Idarah Mujaddidyah, n. d.), letter no. 266, vol. 1 part 2, 251.

Genealogy and Objectives of Economic Science

Zahid Siddique

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to explain the relationship between subjective elements of social sciences and the framework in which they have evolved and found their research program. We have been encouraged to undertake this exercise by the call for Islamization of social sciences, especially economics, among Muslim scholars. Most of these efforts have begun within the framework of maximization hypothesis. Islamic Economics within neoclassical framework is justified only if neoclassical economics provides some value neutral framework for analyzing economic behavior of an individual which is not the case. Attempts towards Islamization of social sciences fail to understand that social sciences especially economics, offer justification for the capitalistic order overlooking its socio-political agenda. This paper explains that all social sciences relate the liberal philosophy to society through symbolic abstract models.

1. INTRODUCTION

The last few decades have seen an increasing trend of Islamization of social sciences among Muslim scholars (Rehman, 1988 and (Ma'ruf, 1986). The extent to which modern social sciences reflect a set of subjective values of enlightenment thinkers, instead of objective facts, and the context in which they operate are usually neglected by the Muslim scholars. Social sciences relate liberal philosophy to society through the symbolic creation of abstract models. This paper attempts to explain the links among the subjective traits of social sciences, especially of economics, and the framework in which they have evolved and conducted their research. We are of the view that a two-fold agenda have been the research program of modern economic science: (1) to provide technology in order to legitimize the capitalist social order according to the liberal values and thereby, (2) justify the liberal ideals of political philosophy. Thus, we strictly reject the claims of value-neutrality regarding economic science. Economics represents the liberal society by a model in which each individual exists in an isolated cell of self-interest maximization connected to the rest of society only through the *voluntary relationships* based on exchange of goods and services. Self-interested individuation and social harmony are seen as mutually reinforcing and, hence, harmonious. The body is seen as the primary instrument dedicated to the only legitimate objective of accumulation for its own sake. On the basis of such a model,

perfect competition finds justification as a system that most nearly meets the desire for accumulation. The formation of government to organize society is undertaken by the infallible *general-will* of the citizens of a society. Government is supposed to provide a *neutral framework* within which people can pursue their *own* preferences based on their *own* conceptions of good. The questions of 'right preferences' and 'origin of production technology' are deliberately kept aside. Policies are advocated to move the actual world towards the ideal world of perfect competition where everybody is involved in the quest for accumulating more and more.

The objective of this paper is to highlight the link between this ideal of social organization and its broader framework, called liberalism. It is argued that this theoretical link is not accidental, but relates closely to an individualistic ideology which systematically eschews questions of moral values regarding right and wrong ends of life. Furthermore, results presented in social sciences have moral implications and are not purely abstract information. Social sciences, if, studied in complete abstraction from all human values would be insubstantial disciplines. For example, it is not possible for an economist to maintain that he is merely studying the techniques of adapting limited means to multiple ends without taking account of the *source* and *justification* of these ends at the first place. Therefore, a paradigmatic restatement of modern social sciences, especially of economics, is necessary for their proper understanding. Section 2 briefly explains the general framework applicable to all social sciences while Section 3 spells out the special role of Economics in providing a justification for liberal social order. Given the fact that there are a number of distinctive economic schools of thoughts, the reference point of our inquiry of economics will be neoclassical economics.

2. DEFINING PARADIGMS

The Enlightenment is a fallout of modernity[80] emerging in Europe and North America during the 17th and 18th centuries. Philosophers were convinced that religion offers a secondary type of reasoning presuming something as dogmatic, such as its belief system. Science, to them, on the other hand, was a methodology through which we can discover some absolute universal truths without any arbitrary presumption.[81] The Enlightenment is defined as a condition of the '*maturity of human intellect*' from external reliance for its guidance[82] just like when a child grows mature, he needs no external reliance for himself. Similarly, to these philosophers, man had now grown

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[80] Modernity may be defined as a historical era (roughly beginning in the third quarter of the sixteenth century in some parts of Western Europe) when human self-determination is socially accepted as a self-evident end in itself and reason is dedicated to the pursuit of human self-determination. 'Humanity' is the central theoretical construct of Enlightenment (Modernist) epistemology as well as ontology (see Habarmas 1989, introduction p. x-xiv)

[81] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reasoning*, (trans.) J. M. D. Meiklejohn, (Columbia University, 1787)

[82] Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?", in *Kant on History* (USA: MacMillan Library of Liberal Arts, USA, 1989)

enough mentally to feel himself free to use his intellect for his guidance without any external control. However, it was until the 1960's when Kuhn (1970) explicitly explained the role of the belief system, what he calls *Paradigm*, in any scientific research program with these words: "A *scientific community* cannot practice its trade without some set of *received beliefs*"[83]. These beliefs form the foundation of the "educational initiation that prepares and licenses student for professional practice"[84]. *Research*, to him, is "a strenuous and devoted attempt to force nature into the conceptual boxes supplied by professional education"[85]. A *shift* in professional commitments to shared assumptions takes place when an *anomaly*[86] "subverts existing tradition of scientific practice."[87]

These shifts are what Kuhn describes as *scientific revolutions*—"the tradition-shattering complements to the tradition-bound activity of normal science"[88]. A new paradigm requires reconstruction of prior paradigms leading to reevaluation of prior facts, reframing of old problems and finding new pathway for evolutionary change.[89] This is difficult and time consuming. It is also strongly resisted by the established community. When a shift takes place, "a scientist's world is qualitatively transformed [and] quantitatively enriched by fundamental novelties of either fact or theory"[90]. Paradigms gain their status because they are more successful than their competitors in solving problems. Thus, Kuhn correctly recognizes the revolutionary role of a paradigm in the direction of development and scope of any scientific research. Key reason for this fact is that no observation can be independent of the conceptual framework, language and theoretical system of the observer. 'Neutral' and 'objective' empirical work, where facts speak for themselves is an impossible dream.[91] Popper recognized the importance of theory-bound interpretation of observations as, "they are interpretations in the light of theory".[92] We find that social sciences are also paradigm-bound as they have flourished within a certain type of mind-set about the world and have worked for the promotion of their particular world-view.

Elements of Social Science Paradigm

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[83] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1970), 4.

[84] Ibid., 5.

[85] Ibid.

[86] An empirical result is called *anomaly* if it is difficult or if implausible assumptions are necessary to "rationalize" it within the existing paradigm.

[87] Thomas Kuhn, 6.

[88] Ibid., 7.

[89] Hazel Henderson, *Paradigms in Progress* (USA: Knowledge System Inc., 1991)

[90] Ibid.

[91] Geoffrey Hodgson, *Economics and Institutions* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1988), 35-36.

[92] Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London & New York: Routledge, 1959), 107.

A social science paradigm can be built upon the presupposed answers to two questions. There have been two prominent paradigms in the history of mankind that claim to answer these questions. Table 1 lists the questions along with the answers given by these two major paradigms. It is important to note that the Western paradigm is only a representative of the Humanistic paradigm dating from the antiquity. The Islamic paradigm is taken to be a representative of religious world-view.

It is apparent that the direction of any social science crucially depends on answers of these two questions. These questions form a constellation of concepts, values and practices which are shared by a community that forms a particular view of reality according to which the community organizes it. In fact, the first question is related to the *conception of human self* while the second is concerned with the epistemological foundations of the *conception of good*. Differences in the sources of discovering the truth has resulted in the differences of scope and progress of knowledge within the two paradigms; that is one seeks to explain the universe in the light of revelation while the other tries to work it out through reason and observation. We will briefly discuss the origins of social sciences within the Enlightenment before taking on the special role of economics within social sciences.

Table 1: Structure of a Social Science Paradigm

	Questions	Western Paradigm	Islamic Paradigm
1.	The Concept of Human Being		
	a. His status in the universe	Sovereign/Indepen-dent/autonomous	Subservient to God
	b. Concept of his life	Related to this world only	Created by God for a specific time in the world, along with life *after death* (*akhirah*)
	c. Telos	Seeking pleasure/self-fulfillment	Seeking the approval of God through His obedience.
2.	Source of Knowledge	Reason and experience	*Revelation* [specifically in the form of Holy Quran and *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (SAAW)[93]]

Enlightenment and Social Sciences

To understand the objectives of social sciences, one must remind oneself of the cultural changes that took place under the name of *Enlightenment* at the times of Kant and Hegel. This intellectual movement, that also went under the name of *liberalism*,

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[93] SAAW stands for *Sallalla ho A'laihi Wa Alehi Wa Sallam*, meaning 'Peace Be Upon Him and His followers'.

emphasized 'freedom' as the ultimate goal and the individual as the 'ultimate entity' in the society.[94] The nature of this transformation is summarized by Tawny as:

> "Dr Figgis has described the secularization of political theory as the most momentous of the intellectual changes which ushered in the modern world….The political aspects of the transformation are familiar. The theological mould which shaped political theory from middle ages to the seventeenth century is broken; politics becomes a science, ultimately a group of sciences, and theology at best one science among others. Reason takes the place of revelation, and the criterion of political theory is expediency, not religious authority. Religion, ceasing to be the master interest of mankind, dwindles into a department of life with boundaries which it is extravagance to overstep."[95]

Thus, after rejecting God in practice, the new deity was defined in terms of *freedom*, the core concept of Enlightenment. Freedom is the rejection of the religious ideals of the ultimate authority, and this is exactly how Kant defined Enlightenment:

> "Enlightenment is man's exodus from his self incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding *without the guidance of another person*. This immaturity is self incurred if its cause lies not in the weakness of the understanding, but in (the) indecision and lack of courage to use mind without guidance of another. Dare to know! *Have the courage to use your own understanding; this is the motto of Enlightenment.*"[96]

Thus, with an emphasis on reason, "the Enlightenment philosophers were inclined to reject beliefs in traditional (religious) authority. … *The mission of the practical and change-oriented philosophers of the Enlightenment was to overcome these irrational systems."*[97] Having rejected the authority of religious (Christian) epistemology (Bible), these philosophers were faced by the challenge to answer the question 'how society should be regulated by public (government) policy'.

The answer that social scientists developed in response to this question can be traced back to two major presumptions. First, their minds were struck by the belief that the physical world was governed by *natural* laws, so there might also be natural laws governing human beings. A large number of European scholars including Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), August Comte (1798-1857), Karl Marx (1818-1883), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) were indeed convinced that such laws existed and they tried to seek the *secret* of human motivation (Baradat, 2000). The greatest inspiration regarding *scientific determinism* was brought about by Isaac Newton (1642-1727); with his theories of

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[94] G. Hodgson, *Economics and Institutions* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1988)
[95] Richard Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (Harmondsworth Penguin, 1959), 23.
[96] Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment", 1.(emphasis added)
[97] George Ritzer, *Sociological Theory* (McGraw Hill, 2000), 11. (emphasis added)

universal gravitation, mass and movement; and Charles Darwin (1809-1882), with his biological theory of natural selection. The effect of this *scientific determinism* went so deep in the minds of scholars that Comte, one of the pioneering sociologists, developed *social physics*, which he later termed *sociology*, following the hard sciences[98]. Therefore, the enlightened philosophers set themselves the task to discover those *natural laws* and tendencies using reason and research that govern society, as stated by Walras (1874), a pioneer of neoclassical economics:

> "In fact, the whole world may be looked upon as a vast general market made up of diverse special markets where social wealth is bought and sold. *Our task then is to discover the laws to which these purchases and sales tend to conform automatically*. To this end, we shall suppose that the market is perfectly competitive, just as in pure mechanics we suppose to start with, that machines are perfectly frictionless." [99]

Walras clearly understood the task before the social scientists; i.e. to give a *conceptual framework* that governs the society. Such conceptual framework is necessary because the question of appropriate public policy for regulating society could not be addressed without having a model of the formation of society on the basis of freedom, the ultimate value. It is only after having this conceptualization of social formation that these philosophers could address the question of the wise and legitimate government of the state for the common good of the whole society. *The major objective of social sciences was to provide this conceptualization of society*, (that is, what society is and how it works).

The second factor that played crucial role in the development of social sciences was *social evolution* which came from the Darwinian view of the process of 'natural selection' in the physical world. An important influence in this regard on sociology was the work of Comte who developed his evolutionary theory with *the law of three stages*. According to this theory, the world has undergone three intellectual stages throughout human history. The first one he calls *Theological* stage (prior to 1300 AD), which emphasizes that the belief in supernatural powers and religious figures modeled for human kind (prophets) is the root cause of everything. The second stage is *metaphysical* stage (1300-1800) characterized by the belief that abstract force like nature, instead of personalized gods, explain everything. Finally, the world entered the *positivistic* stage defined by belief in science when people left the quest for absolute good, and concentrated on observation of physical and social world in the search for laws governing them. Spencer (1820-1903) went a step ahead of Comte and applied the idea of the 'survival of the fittest', which he extracted from Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection, to society, called *Social Darwinism*[100]. It proposes that if unhampered by external intervention (like government), people who

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[98] Ibid.

[99] Leon Walras, *Elements of Pure Economics,* 84.

[100] G. Jones, *Social Darwanianism and English Thoughts*: *The interaction between Biological and Social Theory* (N.J: Atlantic Highlands, Humanities Press, 1989)

were 'fit' would survive and prosper whereas the 'unfit' would eventually die out.[101] Spencer suggested that the wealthy were so favored because they were biologically superior to the poor; therefore, the possession of great wealth set the owner apart as a particularly worthy individual. With this, he endorsed Adam Smith's idea of *laissez-faire,* i.e. government must not intervene in the individuals' sphere of actions, which is controlled by the independent reality of the market, except for their protection. The idea of social evolution was so deeply rooted in Karl Marx's thoughts that Engels made a comparison between Darwin and Marx as: 'As Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the developmental law of human history'.[102] Thus, the belief in the presumption of scientific determinism and social evolution was the deriving force behind the intellectual quest of social scientists in their search for the conceptualization of society.

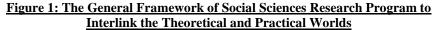**Broader Framework of Social Sciences Research Program**

The above commentary shows that the justification of social conceptualization depends upon the presumption about the conception of human being (his status and objective in this world) and belief in the behavior of society in the course of history. The formal relationship between individual, society and state is depicted by the diagram on the next page. This also shows how practical world policies interact with theoretical models of society. To begin with, the theoretical world starts with the presumed *value-laden* conception of human being that allows social scientists to work out the theoretical models of society. Those models justify both, particular form of government and public policy recommendations. However, the practical world moves the other way round (look at the outer-dotted arrows emanating from government policies). Here, the social institutions are used to implement the model-derived public policies which raise and sustain the presumed individuality so that the society can be directed towards the theoretical model. The more society works in accordance with the model, the more the policies are legitimized. Nevertheless, we can see that the presumed individuality, that allowed policies in the theoretical world, is not justified on rational grounds, rather accepted as belief system. It is in the acceptance of this particular individuality where the values of the society are grounded. Any change in the conception of individuality leads to changes in social values as well as forms of government and recommended public policies.

This clearly shows that a conceptualization of society cannot be value-neutral because it has to presume the nature of human being for its ultimate foundation. And if the conceptualization cannot be neutral at the first place, the claims of the neutrality of public policies are dismissed thereby. Thus, we find the claim of value-neutrality regarding modern social sciences as unrealistic. It will be explained in the next part that the primary concern of the Enlightenment social scientists was to

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[101] Ibid.
[102] Leon Baradat, *Political Ideologies* 7th ed., (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000), 163.

think what we should do *on the earth right now*, rather than what we might do to reach the heaven in the future, that 'the essential purpose of the invention of (neoclassical) economics and sociology is to realize the Enlightenment objectives of self fulfillment and material progress' where 'man is seen not a part of creation and servant of God, but a potential creator and a master of nature' who is free to make the world as he wishes to.[103] The only relevant authority was the self's desire as put by Bentham[104] (1789): 'Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point* out what we ought to do as well as to determine what we shall do", (emphasis added) or by Mill as: 'Over himself, over his own body and mind, the *individual is sovereign.*'[105]

Figure 1: The General Framework of Social Sciences Research Program to Interlink the Theoretical and Practical Worlds

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[103] Javed Akbar Ansari, "Rejecting Freedom and Progress: The Islamic case against Capitalism", *Jareedah* 29 (2004): 62. University of Karachi Press

[104] Geremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principle of Morals and Legislation*; reprinted (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1948).

[105] J. S. Mill, *On Liberty* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1865), 6.

3. Conceptualization of Society in Economics

We would now explain the appropriate role of neoclassical economics, as the reference point for social sciences, in providing the *technology to legitimize* a particular type of social order, called *Capitalism* (which is based on *laissez-faire* doctrine), that emerged after the decline of feudalism and patronage in England which generated new divisions in society and economic relationships; that of wage-earner to employer. The means of production were *owned* by a new class of capitalists, who employed labor, and not by the craftsmen themselves. The economic surplus was appropriated by the capitalists through contract in the form of profit and used to put more laborers at work enhancing output largely which necessitated the active search for markets. The demand of this rising capitalist class was that of free trade. The political motivation of such a movement came from the emergence of a distinctive class of manufacturers, whereas its theoretical rationale came from Adam Smith (1723-1790), the unanimously accepted Father of Economics.

Smith's Vision and Modern Economics

In order to understand the appropriate role of economics within capitalism, we need to look into Smith's vision of an ideal society.

Five-aspects of Smithian Discourse

'Vision' is the ideology which presents a picture of things as 'we want to see them'.[106] Smith's vision of things as they ought to be in the socioeconomic order originated from the ideology of the Enlightenment. In the *Wealth of Nations*, Smith was fundamentally concerned with the question, 'what is a *just* economy?' He characterized the just society by these features: (1) a well governed state (to be explained below) in a country that has reached a high level of affluence, (2) a community committed to social justice (explained below), (3) perfect liberty for individuals to make their own decisions, (4) a world order in which all nations are parts of a liberal system of free trade.[107]

In the *Wealth of Nations*, Smith argues that the poor society existing in eighteenth century Britain could be transformed into his ideal state through appropriate policies. Smith identified *physical productivity*, the ability of labor to produce surplus product, as the main instrument for achieving the ultimate goal of the 'affluent society'. If we presume the five books of *Wealth* as five aspects of Smith's thesis, we will see that all of these lead to a single underlying idea; that is productivity. In *Book I*, Smith talks about the determinants and impact of the division of labor on the wealth of nations; the central idea of *Book II* is justification of the 'virtue' of savings, investment and capital formation; *Book III* argues that the natural order of productivity growth runs from agriculture to manufacturing to foreign commerce. In *Book IV*, Smith lists the forces that motivate individuals to

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[106] J. A. Schumpeter, *A History of Economic Analysis*", (ed.) E. B. Schumpeter (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954), 41-42.

[107] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (New York, 1971), 350, 354. & Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (New York : 1973), 56, 78-79, 462, 464, 506, 509.

undertake productive activities; and *Book V* explains the role of the state in enhancing productivity growth through the provision of defense, 'justice' and public goods. The whole Smithian discourse focuses on the idea that physical productivity is the foundation on which the wealth of nations can be built.

Central Argument of Economics for Capitalist Order

Neoclassical economics sees social order as founded on economic, not on political or religious, foundations that define their own moral order subordinate to the economic rationality of *accumulation*. The formal economic justification of such a social order begins with the assumption of scarcity, that is, we don't have all of the resources we *think* we want. Scarcity arises due to a mismatch between our *desires* and *talents* to satisfy those desires. The economic notion of *scarcity* is *not* that something is 'rare', but rather that it is *perceived as rare* by consumers. Since any single resource can be put to alternative uses, the allocation problem requires it to be used where it produces maximum utility. In fact, *subjective scarcity* is the crux of the Neo-classical theory of value. Given the set objective of utility maximization, economics starts its analysis with the assumption of a rational utility maximizing individual as the basic element of society, called *methodological individualism*, the view that the basic element of analysis in social sciences should focus on the individual decision makers and that all economic phenomena can be ultimately explained by aggregating over the behavior of individuals.[108] Someone must be making decisions, and for Neo-classical economics, it is the individual.[109] The individual is assumed to have *taste and talent and he/she computes benefits and costs at the margin to maximize his/her personal gains or satisfaction, called utility*. The taste of the individual, as summarized by utility, indicates his preferences between alternative consumption patterns including leisure. His talent determines his ability to satisfy these preferences using his productive abilities. Given a constraint on his available resources, the individual is left free to choose any combination of the goods that satisfy this constraint and provides him the maximum level of individual satisfaction according to his *own* preferences. The presence of general scarcity and competitive society will put pressure on each individual to choose a point where his personal valuation of a good is in line with the objectively determined valuation of that good by the market.

The important question for a theoretical foundation of society on the basis of individual as the basic entity is this: since each individual is in pursuit of his own freedom (wants), it is possible that the freedom (wants) of one may erode the freedom (wants) of another. This is put by Friedman (1982) as: "The basic problem of social organization is how to co-ordinate the economic activities of large numbers of people… The challenge *to the believer in liberty* is to reconcile this widespread interdependence with individual liberty."[110] Why reconciliation of

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[108] Lawrence A. Boland, *The Foundations of Economic Methodology* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982) & G. Hodgson, *Economics and Institutions* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1988)

[109] Kant (1787) terms this ability of a person to make free, rational choices a person's *autonomy*.

[110] Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1982), 11-12. (emphasis added)

individuals' activities be addressed at all? It is important because, given equal freedom to each individual to pursue his objectives/preferences in his own way, the society as a whole can reconcile individual interests only when there is no conflict of interests among individuals within society. To Smith, the answer to this question was the *division of labor*. Smith argues that wealth is determined by the physical productivity of laborers, which in turn depends upon the *division of labor*. But the problem is that as individuals get more and more specialized in their talents, their mutual dependence on each other also increases for satisfying their particular taste. The extension of division of labor is possible when individuals enter into exchange to obtain goods they want for their use. And the expansion of these exchange relationships allows more people to specialize and, therefore, have more goods for consumption in total.[111] The division of labor is determined by the size of the market and the size of the market is dependent upon the amount of goods and number of people willing to engage in exchange. Will people feel it in their interest to come together to exchange? Yes: since each individual has different taste for different units of consumption, including the opportunity cost of supplying inputs, and he has different talents, any single individual, most likely, will not be able to satisfy his own taste using his specific talents alone. It is for this reason that individuals will gain advantage by specializing in the field of production. As a result, in order to maximize utility, individuals are willing to supply particular inputs for the production of a variety of goods for the satisfaction of the taste of other people expecting the exchange of goods he desires. Hence, social relations are the relations of exchange based on voluntary contracts between individuals where everybody feels that there is a personal benefit from their particular role in exchange. Smith (1776) speaking on how the cooperation between humans is motivated says:

> "…..man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favor, and show them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he required of them…..We address ourselves not to their humanity but to their self-love…"[112]

Thus, the readymade answer to the problem of harmonizing the individual's activities is *free exchange*, also called *voluntary exchange*, because each individual is entirely selfish and is the best judge of his own welfare. It follows that all interactions among individuals must be based on free choice[113] and, thus, voluntary contract provides sufficient conditions for the attainment of an economic based social system where no individual enters into a contract to buy or sell unless it is in his/her own interest and where complex interrelationships among individuals can exist. *Given the independence of individuals to make decisions in their own*

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[111] It is in this sense that individual gains cannot be taken apart from social prosperity for Smith.

[112] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 14.

[113] Yair Aharoni, *The No Risk Society* (New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, 1981)

interests, the society is seen as the sum total of the individuals who compose it. The beauty of this whole process is, as defined by Cole, Cameron and Edward (1983):

> "*no* conscious agent is needed to choose a price for a good, and that sum total of individual tastes and talents is sufficient to determine a price, and that such a price will guide resource allocation towards efficiency, equity and stability"[114]

Thus, we find that *after accepting* the underlying assumptions about the nature of human existence (utility maximization), we reach the unavoidable conclusion that a society always has a possible situation in which a set of prices exist *that link all members of the society through voluntary contracts or exchange*. No violation of *freedom* is necessary to produce cooperation among individuals all of whom can benefit.[115] Such a working model of society organized through voluntary exchange among *free individuals* acting in response to an acquisitive *self-interest*, unhampered by governmental regulation and restrained by the forces of an effectively-functioning *competitive market* is a 'free private enterprise exchange economy', called capitalism.

Starting with a pre-social and individual economic rationality (utility maximization) and the dissolution of authority on a hierarchical structure (equal freedom to all to pursue their preferences), the question of the formation of society is addressed through free operation of market whereby people with different, but morally equal, preferences come across each other in the market under mutually beneficial social contracts so as to obtain means or resources to satisfy their own preferences (or wants or objectives) respecting those of others. The underlying basis for making these social contracts, as demonstrated above, is their capacity to facilitate individuals to accumulate as much resources as possible in order to realize their sovereignty; that is their ability to exercise their own conception of the good. Indeed, this sovereignty could only be exercised with the help of resource accumulation; the more means you have, the more freedom you enjoy to pursue your preferences or wants. Thus, it is the market that becomes the corner stone of a society, or society becomes a market under such a social organization. A *market society*, also called a *civil society*, is one where self-interest seeking individuals get involved in the social contract in order to accumulate maximum resources to realize their freedom. The mutually beneficial and binding social contracts in the market establish the necessary conditions that lead to the attainment of maximum individual freedom, and this freedom, in turn, can be materialized only through the accumulation of maximum resources. Self-interestedness and social harmony are seen as mutually harmonizing and 'social harmony requires that the individual be oriented to the pursuit of his self-interest.' This 'self-interest commits the individual to accumulation' of resources, i.e. 'to a continuous never ending amassment of means for realizing one's ends. Accumulation is therefore the only' rational 'end in itself in capitalist order and necessarily becomes the basis for ascribing value to all practices.'[116] In Smithian commercial society, the only moral

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[114] Ken Cole, John Cameron, and Chris Edwards*, Why Economists Disagree*, *The Political Economy of Economics* (London: Longman group limited, 1983), 70.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ansari.

commitment is the 'growth of capital' which is seen as an end in itself. The economic value is determined by the relative assessment of each individual's act in the contribution of capital accumulation. Values, such as a definitive conception of *good*, are no longer given meaning with adherence to some transcendental *religious moral conception* because capitalism defines all such norms with reference to *accumulation*, the sole merit of capitalism. Thus, capitalist society is justified on the bases of *material progress* and acceleration in the rate of accumulation is the necessary requirement of social justice.

Therefore, '(neoclassical) economics is not a positive science in any sense. It is not a technology applicable to *any end*. It presumes *equal triviality* of *all ends* and preference orderings. Without accepting this presupposition, the claim that economic rationality enables the optimization of preference fulfillment is meaningless. This is so because economic rationality structures transactions to prioritize accumulation and such a society necessarily articulates preference for preference.'[117] Schumpeter's (1954) description of political economy as 'an exposition of a comprehensive set of economic policies that its author advocates on the strength of certain unifying (normative) principles such as the principle of economic liberalism, of socialism and so on'[118] confirms the normative nature of modern economics. All institutions of markets and state are theorized as technical instruments that enable free utility and profit maximizing individuals to practice their rationality.

Role of Government

Government, says Friedman (1982), is a form of voluntary cooperation, a way in which people choose to achieve some of their objectives through governmental entities because they believe that is the most effective means of achieving them. With this interpretation, the best government is the representative form of government as stated by Jefferson, "The will of the people... is the only legitimate foundation of any government, and to protect its free expression should be our first object."[119] &[120] Through such a government institution, each individual votes in favor of his or her preferred option that best suits his/her own objectives.

The existence of free markets working efficiently does not rule out the need for government. However, the role of market is to minimize greatly the range of issues to be decided through political means and thereby reduces the need for direct government intervention in the society. The advantage of the market is that it permits wide diversity whereas the major feature of political channel is that it enforces substantial uniformity. Actions through the government channel require substantial conformity, that is most of the issues at hand have to be decided in 'yes' or 'no' form. The number of separate groups that can be represented and the provision that can be made become fairly limited with governmental course of action. Most importantly, the final outcome reached takes the form of a 'law' that is

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[117] Ansari, 77.(emphasis added)

[118] J. A. Schumpeter, *A History of Economic Analysis*", (ed.) E. B. Schumpeter, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954), 38.

[119]Thomas Jefferson,"Declaration of Independence", *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* Memorial Edition (ME) (Lipscomb and Bergh, ed. (Washington, D.C., 1903-04) 10: 236

[120] Also see Locke (1956) for the similar analysis.

mandatory to all groups instead of separate legislative enacted for each party, which could destroy any possibility of consensus on which *unanimity without conformity* can be based. Political version of proportional representation, in this sense of neglecting unanimity without conformity, bends towards ineffectiveness and disintegration. Therefore, the use of political channels put strain on social cohesion that is essential for a stable society. If the number of issues that require joint agreement for an action on which people have common views is limited, the strain on the delicate threads that hold society together will be least. The widespread use of market reduces the pressure on this social fabric by letting conformity unnecessary with respect to all activities that are rendered by the market. "The wider the range of activities covered by the market, the fewer are the issues on which explicit political decisions are required and hence on which it is necessary to achieve agreement. In turn, the fewer the issues on which agreement is necessary, the greater is the likelihood of getting agreement while maintaining a free society."[121]

Market in this sense is viewed as a system of proportional representation where each man can vote for the goods he wants and get it without worrying what the majority wants. It is this feature of the market that is held responsible for providing 'economic freedom' to the individuals. Thus the goal of individual freedom held by the liberals as the ultimate criterion for judging the social arrangements, according to Friedman (1980), is realized by free private enterprise society. Such a social system is also compatible with the political thoughts of liberals that require minimum government intervention in the freedom of individuals.[122] It is this framework that outlines the role of a government in a society whose participants desire to achieve the *greatest possible freedom to choose their own interests as they see them* as individuals, as families, as members of voluntary groups and as citizens of an organized government. The market must, therefore, be allowed to operate unfettered by state intervention except when intervention is necessary to prevent the exercise of monopoly power, to mediate market failures or to preserve an orderly monetary framework. The state is supposed to be an instrument for the protection and promotion of the moral sentiments and property forms that are appropriate to the capitalist form of social order characterized by: (1) Capitalist individuality dominated by accumulation and competition, and (2) Capitalist Property that organizes production and exchange with the objective of continuous expansion of capital and the subjugation of all valuation to the logic of capital accumulation.[123] Since self-interestedness is assumed to be *self-enforcing* and *harmonious*, and each individual is assumed to be the best judge of his own welfare, the government has little role to help individuals achieve their *own*

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[121]Rose Friedman & Milton Friedman, *Free to Choose* (New York & London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 24.
The objective of preserving human liberty to make choices can be traced back to the second formulation of Kant's categorical imperative according to which the essence of immorality is to subvert the ability of a person to make free, rational choices, named *autonomy*. Thus, the fundamental duty of a government must be to respect individual's autonomy if it is to be a *moral* government.
[122] Stephen Mulhall & Adam Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians* (Oxford: Blackwell publishers, 1992)
[123] Ansari, 71.

objectives. The government is supposed to remain *neutral*. Since the power of the state derives from the amount of freedom each individual is willing to sacrifice, democratic governments are justified so long as they correctly interpret the general will and design policies consistent with the universal objective of accumulation of capital. The only legitimate interpretation of the public freedom by the political intelligentsia takes the form of public *economic policy*, and nothing more. The problem of economic policy is to ensure that the tastes of individuals can be expressed freely and that each individual can exercise his talent independently. This whole theoretical agenda of economics, from utility maximization to the role of government, is shown in figure 2 which is directly comparable to our general framework in figure 1.
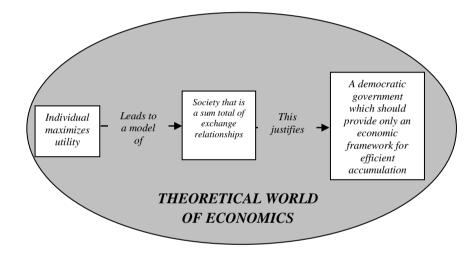
Figure 2: The Theoretical Agenda of Economics in the General Framework

Conclusion

The social sciences, especially economics, are not positive sciences in any sense, rather built upon the premises, assumptions and postulates that are diametrically opposed to those of Islamic thoughts. For social sciences, e.g. in anthropology, even religion along with everything else concerned with human beings, like culture, values, beliefs, even the concept of God, is a product of some natural and social evolutionary process. The evolutionary paradigm, after Darwin, has become a universally accepted paradigm for all behavioral sciences in the Western world. This paradigm sees no weight in Prophethood and revelation as determining factors of civilizations over the history of mankind. Social sciences offer an epistemological justification of society and state without any reference to God and revelation.

Economics endorses self-interested, greedy and competitive individuation as natural, negates love-based social organizations in favor of social-contract, legitimizes market-oriented liberal state policies and articulates society based on material grounds—not religious. Justifying economic science means legitimizing liberal capitalist values and transaction forms on Islamic grounds. Therefore, we believe that no formula can serve as a magic stick whose swing can turn an atheistic system into a theistic one, much less than an Islamic one. Attempts towards the Islamization of social sciences fail to see the underlying conceptualization of society that social sciences offer for the justification of capitalist order; that is they overlook the socio-political position of social sciences. This negligence of researchers, regarding the departure of Western paradigm of moral and political philosophies from those of Islamic, allows them to portray Islamic social content in an extended form of the social sciences framework and, thus, to provide theoretical justification to treat Islam as a special case of capitalist social order [for detailed discussion of this issue, see (Siddique, 2005)]. It is the fact that such attempts incorporate social sciences framework that naturally restricts their scope to create any revolutionary impact through their policy implications on the justification of capitalist society based on methodological individualism.

Scope of Mutual Transformation of Western and Non-Western Civilizations in Foucault's Analysis

Dr. Zulfiqar Ali

Abstract

Both Hegel and Marx believe that non-Western world is not the natural part of dialectical process as non-Western cultures don't seem to take part in the process of historical development. So, the only way to turn the non-Western as Western and vice versa is through an arbitrary process as might have serious implications. Foucault also believes that discourse developing within the Western civilization does not follow rules shared by all civilizations. The Western discourse is not the result of practical necessity, but of some historical rules called historical 'a priori" only operative in the Western civilization. Modern historical a priori characterized by Foucault as "man", is providing order to the things in the West. "Man" conceived as a pre-requisite for contemporary Western discourse has its implications. This argument runs through The Order of Things. However, we also find an internal problem within Foucault's presentation which at the end provides a new platform for interpreting Foucault within the Foucaultian paradigm, with reference to the new notion of Western civilization. This gives a glimpse of hope for mutual transformation of the Western and the non-Western civilizations.

Classical Historical a *Priori*

If one intends to understand Western thought on the model of *what factors make human thought possible,* one would note two different, in some sense opposing, trends in it. On one hand, human thought is understood in relation to the external world irrespective of its conception and on the other hand, the structure of human mind in itself, without in relation to the world, is taken to be the source of human thought. Kant, in an attempt to reconcile both trends, shows that both the external world and the world of human mind play an important role in the formation of human thought. For Kant, there are transcendental *a priori* categories of human understanding that make, from the point of view of subject, human thought possible. These categories as not informed by any form of human experience are universally shared by all human beings. Human thought, as far as the constitutive role of categories is concerned, by consequence, must appear to be functioning on the lines drawn by human reason throughout human history. In other words, in the historical development of human discourses, no matter in what time or space human thought has originated, it must show the discourses are following the presumed Kantian form of human reason. History may, therefore, be a battle ground to establish or to deny the truthfulness of the Kantian categories.

Foucault, from the very start of his academic career, with the Kantian background, attempted to understand the historical development of human discourses with a view to identifying what *really* makes human thought possible. After approximately twenty years' academic struggle, from *Madness and Civilization* to *The Order of Things,* he comes to the conclusion that the Kantian categories, though being too abstract, fail to give satisfactory account of the relativity of human discourses in history. He, in *The Order of Things*, specifically identifies the

classification of Chinese encyclopedia as an example to show the stark impossibility, for a Western man, of thinking that[124].

The denial of the Kantian categories makes human thought open to a new and different interpretation. It may either be understood that it goes through a never ending process of becoming where no principle or aim has any role but some crude contingencies of culture, traditions or history govern it, or within history, some rules being temporal in character, condition the possibility of human thought. The rejection of the Kantian categories never leads Foucault to absolute relativism regarding discourses though he accepts the relativity of human thought. He observes within history the function of some rules, called historical *a priori*, at the background of the formation of Western discourses that I would like to explore by analyzing Locke's analysis of language and thought as a point of reference and verification.

For Locke, the objects in the external world affect human body in order to furnish it with ideas. The ideas, for Locke, are the object of thinking as the idea of whiteness or coldness received by mind when human body is in touch with ice[125]. According to Locke, the idea is whatever is employed by mind for thinking. It is something that exists in human mind, specifically in the part of human mind that is responsible for thinking. It seems that, for Locke, thinking without ideas is not possible, as thinking always needs ideas to function. However human mind does not always think. It is possible for man to have ideas but may not be involved sometimes in the process of thinking. In Lockean philosophy, the possession of ideas does not guarantee thinking as Descartes suggest in *Meditations*.

Moreover, Locke makes a distinction between simple and complex ideas in terms of division. An idea is simple if it is not *further* divisible into more ideas like heat or soft whereas complex ideas are further divisible like the idea of a chair[126]. Keeping the distinction of simple and complex ideas in mind, a simple idea, being property of human thinking, cannot be developed by thinking in itself. It has to depend upon sense-experience as far as simple ideas are concerned[127]. Human mind no matter how strong it is, cannot generate a single simple idea.

The nature of idea, for Locke, seems to be intellectual or mental as it is an *exclusive* object of human thinking. Being mental in nature, the idea, though it is an affect of external world upon human mind, appears to have its own property and place which is totally different from the nature of objects in the external world. The mind being *non-physical* reality in Locke's philosophy is a seat of ideas which shows that the ideas are conceived as non-physical entities[128]. Locke maintains dualism between the properties of physical and mental entities; though he does not directly address the problem of mind and body, as on a number of occasions, he separates the things of material and mental nature and importantly leaves intact distinction between brain and mind. Further, like Descartes, he also considers mind as a transparent

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[124] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, (trans.) (United States, Vintage Books, 1994), xv.

[125] John Locke, *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke*: *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (United States, Oxford University Press, 1975),130-134

[126] *Ibid.,*421.

[127] *Ibid.,*104.

[128] *Ibid.,* 305.

entity within itself as nothing that lies in mind may remain hidden from it. There is nothing uncovered or unconscious part of mind[129].

According to Locke, the mind remains transparent to itself until it coveys its ideas through language. The problem is not with the mind but the language in which the ideas are to be expressed[130]. This shows that the language does not enjoy *natural relationship* with ideas but through convention that is based on human needs and desires. Man conveys ideas through words. The word that connotes an idea is an arbitrary imposition given by man. The word, in the first stage, does not refer to an object but to an idea. Therefore, the primary signification of a word is not a thing but an idea though an idea is an effect of an object upon human mind. And primary signification of an idea unlike a word is an object as there is no intermediary between idea and object.

As far as the representational capability of an idea is concerned it, without corrupting, represents the object as Locke observes natural connection between an idea and a thing. The entrance of language that establishes *conventional* relation simultaneously to an idea and to a thing at the second stage, breaks the transparency between the idea and an object. Locke, no doubt, considers language as a conventional, importantly not historical, tool to represent the ideas. On one side, the language being conventional, has social orientation and the ideas being inside the human mind, always remain inaccessible to others as private character. Because of this, the language is always liable to error that can be corrected with better use of words.[131]. This is an important point that Foucault shows in *The Order of Things* while explaining the classical historical *a priori. Here,* one can also note that Locke does not consider language as a historical entity but just a conventional tool which according to Foucault is maintained throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century till the rise of modern historical *a priori.*

Locke conceives the properties of objects in terms of primary and secondary qualities. The primary qualities of an object like number, shape, motion, or rest are the qualities that are not dependent on but rather existing by themselves whereas secondary qualities have no *substantial* existence but are just powers, by virtue of primary qualities, to produce sensation in human minds like color or taste[132]. These qualities existing in external world furnish us with ideas. The ideas being non-physical in the external world consisting of physical objects, cannot represent qualities by content. The idea of color has no qualities similar to those of a colorful object in the world. Both, by content, are different despite having natural connection between them. By implication, the natural link that Locke observes between an idea and an object can only be conceived not in terms of content but in an abstract form. Thus, an idea in mind and an object in the external world share the *same form,* making possible for an idea, not for a word, a *representation* of an object in the external world. The *representation* is possible not because of content but because of form that is common to both an idea and to an object like a map with just colorful lines of different length and shapes that *represent* the network of roads, bridges, rivers and houses in the external world. It is possible for a map to

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[129] *Ibid.,* 49.
[130] *Ibid.,* 405.
[131] *Ibid.,*476-477.
[132] *Ibid.,*134-135.

represent the external world not because it has exact roads or bridges but it shares *abstractly* the form with the external world. In Locke's philosophy, the relationship between an idea and an object is structured in a way to make possible *representation,* otherwise the possibility of *representation* cannot be entertained. The representation of object guaranteed by direct relation between an idea and an object can also be communicated with other people by the conventional use of language provided that the use of words is appropriate[133].

The whole discourse of Locke, including Berkeley, Hume, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz or generally the discourse developed from seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century, may be seen as developing in response to the theoretical or practical issues of that era. This, of course, cannot be denied as one also observes the appreciation and rejection of these thinkers like the rejection of Cartesian innate ideas by Locke or of Locke by Berkeley. We often find, at times without names, and at other times with specific names, the reply and criticism among thinkers of the same era which *apparently* shows that thought is the result of dialogical process among thinkers. Does this really show that the weakness or strength in the arguments of thinkers, at least to some degree, made possible the thought of other thinkers as Kant was awakened by Hume from dogmatic slumber[134]? For Foucault, this is not the case that went within the Western civilization. Hume could not have played, mistakenly acknowledged by Kant, and can never play any kind of role, as a condition of the possibility of discourse, in the formation of the Kantian thought. Kant is made possible by the shift in the grounds of the condition of the possibility of discourse.

When, says Foucault, we look at the development of thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, we notice that all thinkers during the seventeenth century *unconsciously* seem to construct thought in order to make possible *representation* as already shown in the case of Locke here. No matter how different the thinkers are like Descartes and Locke, they *unintentionally* thought to make possible *representation*. Is this a *coincidence* or there was some force within the seventeenth century discourse that governed the development of thought?

Before Foucault, Kant also made similar attempt, though with different aim and methodology, to identify the conditions of the possibility of human judgment. In *Critique of Pure Reason,* he surveys all possible judgments with a view to discover *inevitable* presumptions of judgment. Kant notices that all judgments *necessarily* presume quantity (unity, plurality and totality), quality (reality, negation, and limitation), relation (inherence and subsistence, causality and dependence, and reprocity) and modality (possibility and impossibility, existence and nonexistence, and necessity and contingency). It is not possible for a human being to give judgment without involving quantity, quality or modality[135]. The impossibility of judgment without quantity, quality or modality shows that a judgment is made possible by these. For Kant, the condition of the possibility of discourse is something *through* which the judgment is possible. He classifies these as transcendental a prior categories of human understanding.

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[133] *Ibid.,* 476-477.
[134] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* trans. Paul Guyer, Allen W. Wood, (London, Cambridge University Press 1998), 23.
[135] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 9, 212, 275.

Almost in a similar fashion, Foucault develops the same Kantian question: what is that *through* which the discourse in the seventeenth century is possible. Surveying the formation of discourse in the classical age, Foucault realizes that it is not just coincidence but rather the work of *Representation,* as a condition of the possibility of Western discourse, to have constituted a world view through which the things are conceived. *Representation*, in the classical era, conditions Locke including Descartes, Leibniz or Berkeley to conceive the objects in terms of qualities and the mind in terms of ideas.

In Renaissance (sixteenth century), the sign was not taken in terms of representation but resemblance. In the sixteenth century, things already bore the meanings (sign) that the man in process discovered, not imposed upon them whereas in the classical period the signs were man made[136]. Looking at the nature of sign in sixteenth century Renaissance, as Foucault observes, seems to maintain triple system of sign. A sign, in the first stage, was that which was marked (like object in the external world), in the second stage, that which did the marking (the word or idea) and in the final, but most important, stage, that which made it possible to see the mark of the marked (resemblance). In Renaissance signs were not directly connected to a thing in the world but through resemblance, common to both sign and a thing, it linked with world[137]. When the shift at the condition of the possibility of the Western discourse occurred towards the end of the sixteenth century, it totally changed the nature of sign. From seventeenth century onwards, a sign was seen in binary relation, taking away the role of resemblance, not in triple formation. The thing in itself, apart from the human mind, during the seventeenth century, did not hold sign. In other words, without human mind the possibility of idea and of word was not conceivable. In binary system, as discussed above in the case of Locke, an idea depending upon mind is conceived to be representing not resembling an object, whereas in triple system, a sign by definition did not *represent* but *resemble* something.

By consequence, in classical period, there was no possibility of unknown signs as the signs were conceived in relation to human mind. But signs in Renaissance as ontologically separated from human beings, would exist even if there was no human being in the world. The fundamental difference between Renaissance and classical signs lies in the way to determine the nature of relationship between a sign and signified: how a signifier is conceived to be linked with the signified. In Renaissance, it is linked through resemblance between an idea and object, whereas in classical age it is directly related with an object. Probably because of this reason, Foucault classifies the condition of the possibility of discourse in the sixteenth century in terms of *Resemblance* and of Classical as *Representation.* Why does he characterize *Representation* or Resemblance as historical *a priori* of Western discourse in the seventeenth century? The reason seems to be the same as given by Kant. *Representation* in seventeenth century, as Foucault's analysis of sign shows, is the point through which things are conceived. Throughout the seventeenth century, in Western discourse, the sign is understood in terms of representation that seems to be a break with Renaissance where it is taken as resemblance. All thinkers

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[136] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. (United States, Vintage Books, 1994), 58.
[137] *Ibid.*, 64.

from Bacon to Kant, according to Foucault appear to be thinking on the lines of *representation*. Although Locke and Descartes belong to different traditions, both consider *idea* in binary terms and it remains the same till Kant.

This way, till Kant, signification never constituted a problem in classical age as things are represented through representation by a sign. A sign, having no intermediary between thing and itself, represents a thing by sharing its form. Neither exterior nor interior meanings are conceived with signs as signs are what they represent. By consequence, in classical era, according to Foucault, one can never observe the development of disciplines like hermeneutics but general grammar that only deals with meanings (ideas) associated with words[138].

The Nature of Historical a *Priori*

Foucault, as stated earlier, characterizes the condition of the possibility of discourse as historical *a priori*. It is historical in dual sense. First, it is not beyond time as historical *a priori* appears to change with the passage of time such as *Representation* replaced Resemblance at the end of the sixteenth century, and secondly, it is also understood that it is operative in the Western civilization only. Although the condition like *Representation* is historical, Foucault simultaneously claims that these rules are *a priori*. For Foucault, *a priori* nature of these rules signifies that these conditions of possibility of Western thought are not conditioned by Western experience but these seem to make Western experience possible. It is not through the experience of Locke we come to conceive a sign in terms of representation but specifically Locke's experience itself, and generally of seventeenth century is itself made possible by *Representation*. These conditions functioning as rules do not refer to the world, instead, the Western world refers to them.

Unlike the Kantian categories, historical *a priori* rules are *non-subjective* both in terms of place and role as these temporal rules making Western thought possible do not reside in human subjectivity but the location of these rules lies within discourse itself. In one perspective, these rules are the part of discourse as they make discourse possible; in the other perspective, the rules may not be taken part of discourse as they cannot be identified like the discourse itself. These rules never appear at the surface of discourse; no matter how strong the attempt is, as the attempt itself presumes the function of rules. In view of these characteristics of rules, Foucault characterizes them as *positive unconsciousness* of Western thought in the following way.

"What I would like to do, however, is to reveal a *positive unconsciousness*: a level that eludes the consciousness of the scientists and yet is part of scientific discourse, instead of disputing its validity and seeking to diminish its scientific nature[139]".

Here, Foucault does not wish to question the epistemic worth of historical *a priori* as there is no possibility and *never* will be of an external standard to measure its strength because the condition of the possibility of standard is itself guaranteed by those rules to which one *unfortunately* wishes to question them.

According to Foucault, the different discourses developed in the Western world in a particular space and time do not follow multiple historical *a priors*, as a single rule

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[138] *Ibid.,* 65-66.
[139] *Ibid.,* xi.

governs the formation of the Western thought. Plurality or multiplicity in discourses of the same period is made possible by the singularity of the rule. At the bottom of the formation of discourses, there is singularity governing multiple facets of discourses and making them possible to emerge in different and opposite ways, and at times, discourses contradict one another as well. Contradiction, opposition, refutation or reconciliation among different discourses or the difference between truth and falsehood do not seem to be contradiction or synthesis of two or more opposite forces belonging to different historical *a prior,* rather the apparent differences or opposition, for Foucault, is grounded upon *singularity.* On the basis of this singularity, Foucault classifies the formation of discourses as Classical and Modern. And importantly, the nature of this singularity is neither practical or social nor economical or normative. It is *purely epistemological* in character both in terms of its very nature and functioning. This singularity identified as historical *a priori* is discursive in its nature as it is *positive* unconscious part of discourse and in addition, it plays its role of constituting Western discourse independently of all process of society. The political, social or even economical powers of society, for Foucault, seem to have their own *independent* domain, not affecting or conditioning the discursive function of historical *a priori*. As he explains:

"The human sciences (discourses) did not appear when, as a result of some pressing rationalism, some unresolved scientific problem, some practical concern, it was decided to include man (willy-nilly and with greater or lesser degree of success) among objects of science- among which it has perhaps not been proved even yet that it is absolutely possible to class him; they appeared when *man* constituted himself in Western culture as both that which must be conceived of and that which is to be known[140].

In other words, the condition of the possibility of discourse is not the socio-political or economical process of society but is something that cannot be characterized in these terms. It has its own domain existing apart from non-discursive process of society though having relation with them. Foucault does not mean to establish that the process of the formation of discourses in a Western society has no relation with society. Of course, the discursive formation, for Foucault, occurs only within society, even being a part of society. All these forces of society and the utilization of its recourses can only play their role when historical *a priori* has already made the ground for them to play any kind of role in the formation of discourse. Non discursive forces can influence only to the extent that historical *a priori* lets them influence. The historical *a priori* determines the role of other forces of society as much as the formation of discourse is concerned. In brief, the condition of the possibility of discourse lies within discourse itself, not in eco-political forces of society[141].

The nature of relationship between discursive and non-discursive forces of society cannot be understood in causal or in binary terms, such as, in terms of "cause and effect" or "determine and determined" "governing and governed". The terms of cause and effect presume that cause exists prior to an effect in a way that a thing or an event causes the development of another thing or event that does not exist before as for example, fire causes heat. Here, heat does not exist prior to fire. Secondly,

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[140] *Ibid.,* 344-45.
[141] *Ibid*., 307-312.

the effect, at least, shares some, though in lesser degree, attributes of fire as a thing cannot make something red unless it has property of redness. Keeping these attributes of cause and effect in mind, I would like to establish that Foucault cannot maintain causal relationship between discursive and non-discursive forces of society because the "principle of causality'', for Foucault, itself presumes a particular historical *a priori* in which it became possible, in particular space and time, to see things in terms of cause and effect. He does not reject "causality'' as a principle of Western understanding as such but rejects its role in terms of *priority* over historical *a priori*.

Historical a *Priori*: Classical and Modern

Foucault, surprisingly, argues that in the classical period neither *language* nor *man* existed. Apparently, this claim seems to be contradicting the fact that there is *language* being spoken and understood by *man* in the seventeenth century. Of course, Foucault cannot deny this as he himself builds the analysis of signs developed during the seventeenth century. Foucault's claim seems absurd only when one does not realize the discontinuities appearing through an in depth analysis. Things at their surface look similar and so familiar to us. But as one goes deep into the very core of things, *archaic*, one will discover that there was no language and man in the seventeenth century. The methodology that leads one to go beyond and simultaneously to the bottom of things is called *archaeology*. In other words, only through *archaeological* analysis, not simply the analysis of discourses, one may be able to see things in their true nature, otherwise the surface of discourses may lead to wrong conclusions just as some people in Western civilization, according to Foucault, still maintain that man or woman as well as language existed before the eighteenth century.

Through archaeological survey of discourses in the seventeenth century, Foucault shows that the idea represents the object through form. As far as representation of an object of thought is concerned, no language is required as communication is thought to be the only function of language. The language being *conventional and practical* in nature has no influence in the representation of the object of thought as the very idea of representation was conceived not in linguistic but through idea. The language that was not conceived *historical* but *conventional* throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century shows the possibility that through better and careful use of words the representation can be communicated to others. This aspect of seventeenth century's thought attracts Foucault's attention. Emphasizing the very idea of representation through language, he claims that there is no language before the end of the eighteenth century as the very conception of language that is presumed by modern discourse, in contemporary world was totally missing during the seventeenth century. Human thought, in modern discourse is never conceived, first, independently of language and secondly, the language is conceived as historical. The discourse from Bacon to Kant, (only referring to Philosophy), through Foucaultian spectacle, seems to be a break from modern tradition, from Kant, as these traditions enjoy two different conceptions of language.

According to Foucault, the break between classical and modern views regarding language is because of the shift at the conditions of the possibility of Western discourse. The Western discourse, at the archaic level, went through a fundamental shift at the order of knowledge that appears in the form of the Kantian thought. Kant, for the first time in Western history, raised the question that was

unconceivable during the seventeenth century in regard to direct link *between* an idea and an object. For Kant, the idea of representation through representation is questionable as he looks for the conditions of the possibility of representation itself. Kant looks beyond representation to see how human judgments are possible. He, in consequence, discovers the forms of sensibility and transcendental *a priori* categories as the conditions of the possibility of human discourse. For Foucault, the discourse developed during the seventeenth century and the discourse after Kant onwards, despite their similarities, are, at the bottom, made possible by different historical *a priori* as modern discourse does not accept Representation as a condition of the possibility of human thought but attempts to ground representation beyond representation itself. The subject, in the Kantian view, with formal conditions replaces the classical *Representation* as the condition of the possibility of knowledge.

As the *idea*, for Foucault, in the classical age enjoys natural relation with the object, the relation between the idea (mind) and the object (world) was not taken to be problematic as far as representation is concerned. With this aspect of the classical era, Foucault claims that there was *no* language in the seventeenth century. Of course, during the seventeenth century, people reflected upon the words and their associated meanings (which Foucault does not deny as he himself refers to Berkeley when he explains the idea of *Representation)*. Importantly, Foucault does not consider it as reflection upon language. For Foucault, the demise of the classical historical *a priori* gives birth to language as it was the first time the language is taken as historical entity with which both thought, relation with the external world and communication is bound. In this way, the language appears an object of discourse after the mid of eighteenth century[142], when not only communication but thought bound with language being conceived as historical and practical, it developed the need to either purify language (leading to logical positivism), or to understand the background, both in depth and on surface, so as to work out the closest possible meaning inside the word, of which hermeneutics is the result. For Foucault, the techniques of formalization and of interpretation that are apparently opposed to each other, are made possible by the same historical *a priori*.

Modern historical *a priori* that looked beyond the representation to see the condition of the possibility of Western discourse not only gave birth to language as historical reality but to man as well. According to Foucault, man like language is a recent invention and he (man) did not exist before the end of the eighteenth century[143]. As the *Representation* in classical era was clubbed with a question regarding its origin and constitution, it gave birth to man as *subject and object of knowledge*. According to Foucault, for the first time in Western discourse at the beginning of nineteenth century, man saw the *limits* of knowledge, not *Representation*, as conditions of the possibility of knowledge itself. Man, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, *questioned* the power of *Representation* that had been unquestionable during the classical era. Here, man *like Representation* in classical period when it remains unquestioning, seems to provide foundation to Western discourse. By virtue of this role that man plays for the first time in

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[142] *Ibid.,* 296.
[143] *Ibid.,* 308.

Western history, Foucault, emphasizing this role, characterizes it as birth of man. Of course, man existed before the nineteenth century as a biological, social or economical being. The point that Foucault wants to make, though in a dramatic way, is to expose man's role in providing foundation to Western knowledge. More than this, man, because of this role, also made himself as an object of knowledge. Foucault considers this as something *unique* as far as Western formations of discourses are concerned. Throughout Western history, the conditions of the possibility of knowledge like *Resemblance* or *Representation* never became an object of knowledge as it appears to be *in* contemporary age when man simultaneously provides foundation to knowledge and also becomes an object of that knowledge itself. In other words, man seems to be master and slave at the same time. On one hand, he determines the formation of knowledge and on the other hand, is determined by that knowledge itself. Foucault emphasizes this basic characteristic of modern man in these words:

"When natural history becomes biology, when analysis of wealth becomes economics, when, above all, reflection upon language becomes philology and classical *discourse*, in which being and representation found their common locus, is eclipsed, then, in the profound upheaval of such an archaeological mutation, man appears in his ambiguous position as an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows: enslaved sovereign, observed spectator, he appears in the place belonging to the king, which was assigned to him in advance by *Las Meninas*, but from which his real presence has for so long been excluded[144].

This is a unique position that man enjoys for the first time in Western civilization. As man itself becomes an object of knowledge, in turn, it also produces *human sciences* like philosophy, psychology, sociology, criminology, or psychiatry. These human sciences, according to Foucault, are not the result of some pressing rationalism, some unresolved scientific problem, or of some practical concern but rather the birth of man at the end of the eighteenth century made them possible[145]. These human sciences are different in their approach and orientation from other sciences like economics, philology and botany. Of course, for Foucault, these sciences like human sciences are also made possible by modern historical *a priori*. The sciences, not including human sciences, generally consider man from the perspective in which *he* is conceived as a being determined by economic, physical, cultural forces, such as in economics man is treated as an economic agent unlike in philology where he is taken as a speaking being. Human sciences do not take man as an empirical object, rather these conceive man from the perspective of a subject who actively contributes representations in the formation of knowledge. For example, in physiology, human being like any kind of living species is conceived as an organism determined by physical laws whereas in psychology the life of the human being is interpreted from the perspective of representations that he contributes in the formation of knowledge[146]. Of course, there are overlapping relationships between human and empirical sciences which Foucault does not deny. Foucault here only wants to point out the orientation of these disciplines.

The Order of Things: *Need for Reinterpretation of Foucault*

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[144]*Ibid.,* 312.
[145] *Ibid., 3*44,345.
[146] *Ibid.*. 352.

I will try to establish, being within and without challenging the main argument of *The Order of Things,* that modern historical *a priori* being classified as *man* cannot be shared by non-Western culture.

The way Foucault sketches the formation of discourses in Western civilization takes away the possibility to see *commonality* as far as the discursive formation is concerned, at any stage, between Western and non-Western civilizations as the development of discourses are not seen as the result of practical necessity or as a rational critique, rather these are the result of cultural specific governing rules that outright exclude the cultures outside Western civilization. If the formation of discourses was conceived in terms of practical necessity or the product of rational critique presuming some form of the universality of human beings, the discourses, though they may exclusively be developed in the Western society, can be shared with the non-Western world as the idea of practical necessity or of rational critique that does not reject the very possibility of discourses. Modern historical *a priori*, like all historical *a priori*, that provides ground to the order of things in contemporary Western world, according to Foucault, is functioning through discourses. It plays its role until it is not called in question from within the same civilization as the discourses don't develop or change from outside influences and conditions. No civilization outside the Western discursive boundaries can, by implication, transform or influence the development of thought within the West as the discourse is exclusively subject to the rules only operating in the Western culture.

Secondly, *man* as the subject and the object of knowledge providing the condition of the possibility of discourse has changed the orientation of modern sciences. Modern sciences being developed with the background of *man, almost* exclude the role of God in providing *order* of things. Because of taking man as a condition of the possibility of knowledge, modern sciences are not ready to give active role to religious symbols in the formation of knowledge. Knowledge, in modern world, seems to be exclusively forming in human categories, which is the consequence of taking man as a condition of the possibility of modern discourse. This realization raises an important question. Are people either free to take *man* or other than man as a condition of the possibility of discourse? In other words, is one free, living outside the Western world, not to presume *man* as a condition of the possibility of knowledge?

In the Foucaultian world, this is not possible theoretically, though practically there may be some cases. Foucault elaborates it in detail in *Archaeology of Knowledge* that I will discuss here in brief. According to Foucault, the formation of discourses in the Western cultures is simultaneously the formation of subject and object, including strategies, of discourse. The subject or the individual does not approach the object from the outside of discourse as he himself is an *element* within discourse. The discourse cannot be discourse technically until it has developed the individual capable of understanding and developing it. The formation of discourse necessarily implies the formation of subject as well[147]. By consequence the subject

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[147] See, Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. Alan Sheridan (United States, Pantheon Books 1972), 41-49.

cannot go outside of discourse and to ground the formation of discourses at his own will. The formation of discourses is not at the will of an individual even though he *specifically* knows the conditions of the possibility of discourse. The individual outside the Western culture, as far as the fundamental argument in *The Order of Things* is concerned, cannot *just* take the discourse while putting aside man as a condition of the possibility of discourse. One cannot be part of the formation of discourse either through introducing Western based discourses in non-Western cultures or by the political process. In the Foucaultian world, the discourses emerge as *racial* belonging to a particular culture without providing ground to link with non-Western cultures at any stage.

Here, therefore, I feel the need to reinterpret *The Order of Things* not just because it leads to a dead end but *The Order of Things* itself implicitly, though differing from the   main argument, offers a ground to reshape the argument.

Reinterpretation of Foucault

In *The Order of Things,* Foucault employs the concept of the Western culture or civilization to link different historical a priori to it. He writes, "Now this archaeological inquiry has revealed two great discontinuities in the episteme of *Western culture* the first inaugurates the classical age (roughly half-way through seventeenth century) and the second, at the beginning of nineteenth century, marks the beginning of the modern age"[148]. Foucault does not divide the periods into classical or modern just for the sake of understanding but he observes some fundamental discontinuities that totally changed the formation and the development of discourses in those periods. These discontinuities, for Foucault, do not just show disagreements regarding language or man but rather the periods roughly divided into eighteenth and seventeenth centuries are the periods governed by different historical *a priori*. When discourses change at their foundation, such as in the classical and modern periods, they, by implication, leave no *common ground* to link them especially in a case when discursive formation is simultaneously seen as the formation of *subject* and of *object*. The concept of the Western culture that Foucault employs to identify the discontinuities is a concept with theoretical (discursive) background. It is not external or outside of discourse but rather within certain discourse it is understood and quiet applicable. Because of its *discursive nature,* one may often find disagreements regarding the exact meaning of being a part of Western civilization. As the concept of the Western civilization cannot be given in isolation from a particular theory and time or space, by the implication of the main argument of *The Order of Things*, it has to be governed by historical *a priori*. On the face of the argument, there are three distinct historical *a priori* classified in *The Order of Things* (Resemblance, Representation, Man) which shows that each concept, including the concept of the Western civilization as well, is to be linked with historical a priori. If the notion of the Western civilization is presuming a particular historical a priori, it, by necessity, cannot transcend and link different historical *a priori* with itself. With these arguments, I think that Foucault's use of Western civilization as a unity that connects different historical a priori in *The Order of Things* is not justifiable.

The notion of the Western culture, though it creates apparently some kind of tension within his thought, shows a glimpse of hope to me. This hope gets further strength when I see Foucault's remarks on Kant in *The Order of Things*.

According to Foucault, Kant was the first thinker who specifically broke away from classical historical *a priori* by looking beyond *Representation* to see what makes, including *Representation*, knowledge possible. Kant, in the process of investigation, realized that there are some forms of sensibility and transcendental *a priori* categories of understanding that make judgment possible. Kant's critique of representation and its acceptance in philosophical circles shows that there is *common ground* between the Classical and Modern *a prior*, though Foucault does not explicitly acknowledge it, which makes possible for Kant to understand the very idea of representation and to develop a critique of it otherwise there is no other way to understand the Kantian critique. The *common ground* which Foucault, on surface, rejects as he maintains the formation of discourse in relation to specific

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[148]*Ibid.,* xii emphasis added.

historical *a priori*, though he, in writings, accepts when he develops Kant's critique of representation on the basis of modern historical *a priori*. So far as the argument of *The Order of Things* is concerned, Kant's critique of empiricism and rationalism based upon *modern historical a priori* can never be reasonably conceived until one believes that there is some kind of common discursive ground between the classical and modern conditions of the possibility of knowledge that make the Kantian critique of *Representation* applicable. This ground cannot be other than the Western civilization that Foucault implicitly presumes.

Conclusion

The common ground for Foucault, which he implicitly affirms is the Western civilization as he, on a number of occasions, relates distinct historical *a priori* that constitutes different discourses with different truths and methodologies with it. We find some sporadic comments or hints from Foucault to identify the fundamentals of Western civilization that may explain the birth of distinct historical *a priori* that he thoroughly explored from *Madness and Civilization* to the *History of Sexuality*. According to Foucault, the Western Civilization may be marked with the notion of ''*Will to Truth*'', which may be taken as a discursive principle explaining the formation of different and conflicting discourses[149]. Therefore, the link that connects, though implicitly acknowledged by Foucault, classical and modern historical *a priori* through Kant is *Will to Truth.* By virtue of this *will,* the Western civilization has gone through different, in some sense, conflicting formation of discourses over the last two and half thousands years during which Greek, Christian and Modern sciences and disciplines partake[150]. It is encouraged that Foucault not *only* sees the formation of discourses in Greek and Modern sciences with respect to *Will to Truth* but also includes the middle period dominated by Christian ideals with the same notion as well. This way, Foucault does not create *epochal* character of Western civilization in which periods *qualitatively* emerge to be distinct from one another as ancient, feudal, capitalist or socialist. The fundamental problem with the epochal view of the Western civilization is that it perceives the past or the tradition as qualitatively inferior; therefore it is not worthy to have an appeal to it. Foucault's notion of *Will to Truth* does not consider the development of Western civilization in a linear plane though he observes periodical divisions based upon discursive formulations. This, I think, is the most positive character of the Foucaultian thought as it creates possibility for the Western civilization to return back to the tradition. Of course, the notion of the Western civilization marked by *Will to Truth* cannot *simultaneously* be maintained with the concept of historical a priori as the concept of historical a priori is purely formal and epistemological whereas the notion of *Will to Truth* is practical in orientation. Importantly, the practical orientation *Will to Truth* shows that the individual enjoys some form of

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[149] Here, I disagree with Béatrice Han as she locates the shift, Foucault makes in *Discourse on Language* published as appendix in *Archaeology of Knowledge*. As I have shown that there is tension in *The Order of Things* that was later realized by Foucault as mentioned by Béatrice.
Han Béatrice, *Foucault's Critical Project: between the Transcendental and the Historical*, trans. Edward Pile (California, Stanford University Press, 2002), 7, 77.92-93
[150] Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (London/New York, Routledge 1997), 224.

freedom in developing discourses that is denied by the notion of historical *a priori* in which the individual itself appears as an element of discursive formulation.

The incommensurable division between Western and non-Western civilizations only emerge in Foucault's philosophy when one reduces Western civilization to particular historical a priori. But if one broadens the perspective and to see the things from the notion of *Will to Truth* that is the mark of Western civilization, the Western and non-Western world may, *if* at any level, share the same notion; the possibility of mutual transformation cannot be denied that I think Foucault offers to the people living inside or outside of the Western civilization.

Islam and Modernity---A Selective Influence of the Capitalistic Set-up

Dr. Sobia Tahir

Abstract

Modernity is a term referred to the complex trends of thought which led mankind to the present age with far reaching consequences. The socio-cultural milieu, we are living in, is, nonetheless, a product of modernity. Though as per experts and critics of the field, modernity ended by the beginning of the later half of the 20th century and is no more relevant now. Currently the real topic to be discussed is post-modernity, which is also perhaps in the last phase(s). We, however, may not claim to be surviving in the post-modern era, because we are still at pre-modern stage of history especially in the context of Islam and the Muslim World. Hence, for us this topic still bears vital significance though outlived by the contemporary world.

Generally speaking, modernity started from the 17th century and lasted till fourth decade of the 20th century. It appeared as a markedly visible and dominant trend by 18th century and Industrial Revolution of the 19th century practically converted it into the 'Spirit of the Age'. It held this position firmly till World War II, which once again played havoc not only with human lives, but also with existing thinking patterns and left question marks on accepted wisdom and changed the intellectual perspectives of mankind.

Modernity brought with it a host of fresh ideas and new horizons to be explored which collectively influenced every aspect of life ranging from socio-political thought to cultural standards. No field of organized knowledge, be it Sociology, Psychology or Natural Sciences and Technology could escape its overwhelming effects. On the other hand, it conferred novel meanings on art, literature and allied disciplines, leading them to yet unexplored dimensions.

Among others, Liberalism, Democracy, Representative Government, Socialism, Industrialization, Urbanization, Healthcare, Child Survival, High Literacy, Mass Media and Sophisticated Weaponry are the direct products of modernity. Like every field of life, modernity impinged on religion too and brought noticeable changes in the outlook and methodology of religion itself. Modernity, no doubt appeared as the strongest challenge for the very existence of religion. The most radical idea launched by it was the separation of religion from state and political affairs. Hence it had to face tough resistance from every religion. Despite confrontation, every religion absorbed the effects of modernity in its specific manner. Islam is no exception.

The Muslim World, at the beginning, accepted modern thought with all its corollaries warmly, though cautiously. Why did it later turn to revivalism and fundamentalism? This has reasons to be explored beyond the scope of this study

although we may briefly mention these. We may list a number of scholars in Iran, Turkey, Egypt, India and other parts of the globe who wholeheartedly desired and tried to bring Islam at par with modern trends. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, and Muhammad Iqbal from India, Jamal-al-Din-Afghani from Afghanistan, Ishak Efindi and Kudsi Efindi from Turkey, Mirza Malkom Khan from Iran, Mohammad Rashid Rida, Qasim Amin and Muhammad Abduh from Egypt are only a few amongst the large and brilliant galaxy. And, then who can forget the invaluable services of Indonesian Achmad Dachlan!

The zeal and fervor however, was dampened after WWI because of the fall of the Ottoman Empire and shift of the centre of power. This was the point where, according to some analysts, the Muslim World "lost faith in the culture of Science and Materialism."[151] This has been explained by Dr. Mohammad Khalid Masud in the following words:

".......This is probably because modernity came to be known in the Muslim world in the wake of colonialism when Muslims found themselves on the defensive. To the Western colonial regimes, Islam was not compatible with modernity and hence it was to be reformed or modernized or else marginalized. Muslims, therefore, generally conceived modernity, modernism and modernization not only as Western and alien but also hostile and threatening".[152] Hence, the Muslim World has been struggling against modernity till today in one way or the other. (This will be elaborated in Part II of this paper).[153] Similar views have been expressed by Francis Robinson in one of his essays on the topic. He writes:

"Muslim domination came to an end as Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution transformed Europe from within. The first signs of changing power relationships came when on 12 September 1683 the Ottomans were forced to lift their siege of Vienna. Further defeats followed, and the tripping point came when in 1798 the French invaded Egypt and in 1799 the British defeated the forces of Tipu Sultan, the last significant Muslim Power in India. From this moment, Western power surged across the Muslim world with the British, the Russians, the French and the Dutch in the van. By 1920 almost the whole of Muslim world was under Western rule or powerful Western influence. The only areas free from it were North Yemen, Central Arabia and Afghanistan"[154].

Iftikhar H. Malik, an eminent scholar of the contemporary Muslim scenario, agrees with the above quoted thinkers. In his recent work, *Islam and modernity: Muslims in Europe and the United States*, he writes:

"Muslims have usually accepted modernity, though not always willingly, and, in several cases, the haphazard nature of modernising efforts has increased anxieties and tensions, generating violent and fundamentalist reaction. In some cases,

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[151] Peter Watson, *Modern Mind: An Intellectual History of the 20th Century* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 1096.
[152] Muhammad Khalid Masud, " Iqbal's Approach to Islamic Theology of Modernity",(Paper presented in Iqbal Memorial Lecture organized by the Department of Philosophy, University of the Punjab, Lahore, April 10, 2008).
[153] See P. 11 below.
[154] Francis Robinson, "Islam and Modernities", Pakistan Vision 8, no. 2 (2008): 2.

modernising yet non-representative regimes have themselves coopted and promoted fundamentalist reaction[155]."

(This point will be discussed in Part II of this paper)[156].

The Muslim world has a selective approach towards the issue which is the focal point of this paper. The Muslim intelligentsia appreciated some aspects of modernity according to their own taste, intellectual orientations and interests too. Therefore, we find a sort of perplexity and confusion throughout the Muslim world with numerous brands of Islam. Today's Islam is doubly divided; on the basis of sects and due to piecemeal and fragmentary adoption of some characteristics of modernity and rejecting their other related features and logical consequences.

In support of the above assertion, I would like to quote an example from Iqbal. He, in the first lecture of his famous collection, '*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*', highlighted the importance of fresh interpretation of faith in the light of Modern Physics in the following words, "With the advance of scientific thought even our concept of intelligibility is undergoing a change. The theory of Einstein has brought a new vision of the universe and suggests new ways of looking at problems common to both religion and philosophy. No wonder that the younger generation of Islam in Asia and Africa demands a fresh orientation of their faith. With the reawakening of Islam, therefore, it is necessary to examine, in an independent spirit, what Europe has brought and how far the conclusion reached by her can help us in the revision and, if necessary, reconstruction of theological thought in Islam."[157] However, the same Iqbal who has been so fond of modernity that he was keen to reinterpret the tenets of religion with the help of Einstein,[158] appears as a staunch opponent of modernity when the allied issues raise their head. These are definitely interlinked and can be solved only with the help of modernity alone.

Industrialization and rise of capitalism made the problem of Muslim identity more acute and serious. It was not possible for the Muslim World to escape both but again Muslim thinkers detested the inter-linked change with various tools for various reasons. For instance, Natini Natranjan is of the opinion that Iqbal was critical of colonial and capitalistic modernity. He turned to Islamic tradition for the critique of colonial modernity and in search of *alternative modernity.*[159](Italics by the author).

This tension between Islam and modernity was at its peak in the subcontinent during the first half of the 20th century. The tussle was most pronounced and visible

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[155] Iftikhar H. Malik, *Islam and Modernity: Muslims in Europe and the United States* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 1.
[156] See P. 11 below.
[157] Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 2006), 6.
[158] Einstein was not a religious thinker, nor does Physics deal with theological subjects. (Author)
[159] Natini Natranjan, (ed.) *Handbook of Twentieth Century Literature* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 337.

in the field of education. In this connection, Fazlur Rahman's revealing observations will make a valuable reading:

"A further complicating factor was that this new education has been transplanted from another living organism in Europe, with its own cultural background and its own internal structure and consistency. Although this had happened earlier to Islam with the influx of Greek Philosophy and science……………, but the Islamic civilization confronted modern Western Sciences at a multiple disadvantage---- psychological as well as intellectual---because of the political domination, economic aggression, and intellectual hegemony of the West…………Both the old and the new types of education suffered from the absence of mutual integration, but the new one was damaged most, at least in the short run. Because of its foreign provenance and lack of roots in the new culture, the new education had its harmful effects for several generations…………………Sayyiad Ahmad Khan himself described the early products of Aligarh as "Satans". As for their lack of originality and usefulness to their societies, this idea was strongly expressed by Hali, Shibli Nu'mani and Iqbal. The derogatory term *maghrib zada* (west-stricken) was applied to the modern educated and Westernized classes by many writers, the most prominent of them being Azad, Zafar Ali Khan and Mawdudi"[160].

Every such controversy, in some form or the other, does lead to clash of economic interests and class-conflict. This aspect of Islam vs. Modernity in the field of education has been beautifully analyzed by Javed Majeed in his enlightening essay, "Nature, Hyperbole and Colonial State, Some Muslim Appropriations of European Modernity in Late Nineteenth Century Urdu Literature". Following is a relevant quote from the same, strengthening the observations presented above:

" Broadly speaking, the Aligarh movement represented the interests of an Urdu-speaking elite and of Muslim service gentry in late nineteenth century India……The prime mover behind the Aligarh movement was Sayyid Ahmad Khan……….Sayyid Ahmad Khan was also a key figure in defining what has been called , ' Islamic Modernism' in India"[161].

Due to these area-specific internal differences and disagreements in the Muslim World, the emphasis was laid on modeling *'alternatives'* of modernity

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[160] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago & London, The University of Chicago Press: 1984), 71-72.
[161] *Islam and Modernity: Muslim Intellectuals Respond*, ed., John Cooper, Mohamad Mahmoud, Ronald Nettler (New York & London: I.B. Taurus and Company, 2000), 10.
This is a fine book on the topic with six highly academic essays, interested readers may like to see the following too:

   i)   "The limits of the Sacred: The Epistemology of Abdul Karim Soroush", John Cooper;
   ii)   "Mahmud Muhammad Taha's Second Message to Islam and his Modernist Project", Mohamad Mahmoud;
   iii)   "Mohamed Talibi's Ideas on Islam and Politics: a Conception of Islam for the Modern World", Ronald L. Nettler;
   iv)   "Islamic History, Islamic Identity and the Reform of Islamic Law: The Thought of Husayn Ahmad Amin", Nadia Abu -Zahra

.Unfortunately these alternatives were neither strictly Islamic in spirit nor truly modern.

The same treatment was meted out to capitalism by the Muslim intelligentsia, their masses and governments. The rise of capitalism was the most important feature of modernity which influenced its future course of action decisively. Capitalism had/has its pros and cons like any other system. It is perhaps the most misinterpreted system with a negative connotation and unpleasant undertones. It is considered a symbol of reaction and synonym of exploitation. It is often said that religion provides a cover and protection to this system.

In the later half of the present paper, we would critically examine these issues in the context of Islam. However, at the beginning, we would discuss the role of capitalism in shaping modernity along with political, social, economic and cultural repercussions.

I

What is Capitalism?

Growth and Evolution of Capitalism and its Implications

The Roman Empire is considered the birthplace and hometown of capitalism. With the growth of the Roman Empire, the capitalistic economy also flourished in Europe. However, with the collapse of the Empire, mercantilism was almost replaced by feudalism in Europe, while the former managed to survive in Arabia by the 6th century. The 7th century brought with it the advent of Islam, with which mercantilism once again expanded itself to Europe, Asia and Africa as the far off lands came under the influence of Islam very soon. Abraham L. Udovich has mentioned in his work, "*Partnership and profit in Medieval Islam"* that merchant capitalism was founded by Muslim/Arab traders during the 9th-12th centuries. The monetary system established was based on a strong and stable currency, that is, *Dinar*, carrying a high value. This monetary market economy introduced these concepts which are still in vogue, such as, 'limited partnership (*mudaraba*), and 'partnership' (*mufawada*). The allied and relatively advanced concepts of credit, profit, capital *(al-ma*l) and accumulated profit (*Nama al-mal*) were transported to medieval Europe from 13th century onwards through Arabs.[162]

The passage below explains this point in regard to history and inter-linkage of mercantilism, capitalism and spread of Islam: "the medieval Europeans essentially learned mercantilism from their Islamic neighbors, evidenced in large part by a number of economic terms in European languages, that are derived from Arabic, such as 'tariff' and 'traffic'. From 1300's, Europeans would begin expanding their mercantile practices, resulting in social mobility hitherto unknown in European culture as well as in pushing Europeans as it did the Muslims, to explore distant

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[162]Maya Shatzmiller, *Labour in the Medieval Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 1994), 402-403.
See also: Jarius Banaji "Islam, the Mediterranean and Rise of Capitalism", *Journal of Historical Materialism,* (2007): 47-74.
Subhi Y. Labib, "Capitalism in Medieval Islam", *The Journal of Islamic History* (1969), 79-96.

parts of the globe. The voyages of discovery were entirely driven by mercantile ambition."[163]

Capitalism passed through several phases and stages before reaching its present form. All of these may not be covered here in detail due to limited space. However, these include commercialism, monopolism, industrialization and globalization. The last two bear a special significance not only for capitalism but also for the history of mankind. Industrial Revolution of 18th and 19th centuries, according to *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics,* literally revolutionized human life; it is one of the major developments of the recorded human history. It is the 'machine' that has not only transformed the production but also the environment, institutions, relations, outlook, philosophy, science, culture, almost every thing under the sun. The scientific advancement brought comfort, health, long life and prosperity with it, but on the other hand it 'gifted' humanity with imperialism, colonial rule, new modes of slavery and subjugation, horrific wars, deadly weapons and innumerable other curses. The Industrial Revolution provided capitalism with wings with whose help it invaded the entire world with unmatched speed. The inventions of post-industrial age converted the world into wonderland. The logical corollary of such scientific advancement, break through in communication and transportation is definitely globalization. Some thinkers consider globalization as prolongation of imperialism. It can be argued that globalization which is a purely 20th century product has reduced the world to a small village with fast modes of traveling, on-line transactions and latest information technology. Globalization has brought with itself new modes of exploitation, social, cultural, political challenges and novel forms of identity crises. This we would discuss in the next section on selective influence and choice of Islam in the capitalistic set-up.

However, before moving ahead, it would be quite relevant to study the political off-shoots of capitalism. The political institutions in any form around us are direct outcome of capitalism. There is nothing wrong in this seemingly sweeping statement. For a long time the world has remained divided in two poles or camps along with its entire set-up, that is, capitalistic and counter capitalistic.

Capitalism, though fundamentally an economic system, has given birth to a number of liberal political movements and institutions based on individual liberty and rights including that of private property. History tells us that economic stability is ambitious enough and always strives for political power. Political power, in turn, desires expansion and assumes the role of imperialism. Actually these are economic interests that hide themselves under the garb of political outfits. We would discuss this aspect before going ahead.

The Age of Enlightenment in fact is marked by the rise of two phenomena, i.e. Capitalism and Liberalism. Some theoreticians do not see any relationship between the two and just consider it an example of a non-concomitant occurrence. However, it has been debated on strong arguments that both are not only interrelated, rather capitalism is a fore-runner of liberalism, as the latter insists on individual liberty, rights and opportunities. Among the most prominent thinkers and theorizers of the

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[163]The European Enlightenment Glossary, "Capitalism".
 http://www.wsu.edu./---dee/GLOSSARY/CAPITAL.HTM

Age of Enlightenment, it was John Locke who first of all spoke for *State of Nature*, *Natural Law, Social Contract,* and *Rights of Man* including *Right to Private Property*. Bertrand Russell, in his famous *History of Western Philosophy* has written about Locke, capitalism and liberalism , " ……………..That is to say , men should be prudent. Emphasis on prudence is characteristic of liberalism. It is connected with the rise of capitalism, for the prudent became rich while the imprudent became or remained poor"[164].

Locke defined political power in the following words, "Political power I take to be the right of making laws, with penalty of death, and consequently all less penalties for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of community in the execution of such laws, and in the defence of the commonwealth from foreign injury, and all this only for the public good"[165]. Property is very prominent in Locke's Political Philosophy, and is, according to him, the chief reason for institution of civil government: "The great and chief aim of men uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property; to which in the state of nature there are many things wanting".[166] He further asserts that, "The supreme power cannot take from any man any part of his property without his own consent".[167]

The related ideas of liberalism are: political freedom, individualism, *laissez-faire*, liberal democracy, open society, mixed economy and market economy. Besides Locke, its chief exponents include Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Hill Green, Alfred Marshall, John Maynard Keynes, Ludwig Von Mises, Freidrich Von Haykes, Milton Friedman, Robert Nozick and John Rawls.

Liberalism has many shades and nuances and has been broadly sub-divided into Classical, Social and Modern. We would however, confine our discussion to the last named which flourished in the Age of Enlightenment and rejected a number of in-vogue and prevalent concepts such as, i)Divine Rights of the Kings, ii) Hereditary Status of the Kings, iii) Established Religion, iv) Foundational Principles and v) Protectionism. The modern liberals advocated free market economy. These subjects will be discussed in detail with reference to Islam a little later.

All these brands of liberalism however have a consensus on freedom of thought, belief, action and speech. All these principles invariably lead towards the rule of law, transparent system of government based on open and free elections with complete equality among the citizens. Perhaps we are all familiar with this system called 'Liberal Democracy'. The gradual evolution of liberalism from capitalism and representative dispensation from liberalism is, nonetheless, inevitable. All the rights envisaged by liberalism may be secured only through this system of government. This point has been emphasized in the Oxford Manifesto of Liberal International in the following words, "These rights and conditions may be secured

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[164] Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1979), 593.
[165] *Ibid.*,607
[166] *Ibid.*, 604
[167] *Ibid.*, 609

through true democracy. True democracy is inseparable from political liberty and is based on the conscious, free, and enlightened consent of the majority, expressed through a free and secret ballot, with due respect for the liberties and opinions of minorities".

However, like any other system, capitalism is not without inherent flaws due to which it has been criticized in all ages by religious and non-religious circles alike. It is considered a source of exploitation and monopoly, wars, unrest, strife and many other evils of socio-political life. Its most loathsome feature is interest or usury, condemned by all religions, especially Islam. Its prominent critics include Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Lenin, Mao Zedong, Leon Trotsky, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Rosa Luxemburg and amongst the contemporary thinkers Naom Chomsky. Globalization has further added to the strong critics of capitalism. Even liberalism and democracy have their opponents.

After this introduction of modernity, capitalism, liberalism and democracy, it is time to switch over to Islam and to examine Islam's original standpoint about all these and subsequent attitude/reaction regarding these trends and movements.

II

Muslim World's Response --- A Selective Assimilation

Islam being the last great monotheistic religion of the Semitic chain has a very broad, deep and comprehensive set-up of its own. To a large number of its believers, it is not a religion in ordinary sense of the word; not a collection of rites and rituals only but a complete code of life. It is wide enough to cover all the aspects of life. It is a SYSTEM. Now what is a system, it is an intricate complex of all-inclusive and clear-cut rules and regulations regarding all fields of life; from dietary principles to family laws, from social norms to cultural ideals, and, from political models to economic guidelines. And this structure is organized, well-built, fixed and inflexible.

To some experts on the other hand, Islam is not a hard and fast system; it is an ethical code only that provides mankind with some axioms and guiding principles. It is flexible enough and has room for picking and lifting, adjustment and adaptability. According to this school of thought, Islam is capable of absorbing and accommodating modern trends without any undue friction. These groups within the framework of Islam are known as fundamentalists and liberals respectively. However, there are a number of internal rifts and contradiction in both. As there is no categorical consensus on what Islam actually is, the phrase chosen for this paper is 'Muslim World' rather than Islam. The various brands of Islam with which we are familiar are definitely not true Islam, but they, nonetheless, are the representative shades and hues of Muslim opinion and mode of action.

This paper intends to show that Muslim World (not Islam) partly accepted modernity and partly resisted it. Its attitude remained *selective. This* selection, however, was based on the interests of the ruling classes. Unfortunately, Muslim world always remained in the iron grip of dictators, who manipulated Islam according to their own whims and desires. Same is the case with capitalism. Being an economic system, it was welcomed by the ruling elite as it provides room for private property and unlimited accumulation of wealth. For this purpose again,

Scripture was interpreted *'selectively'*. In our own times, Islam was used as a synonym of capitalism, so much so that the proxy war of capitalist bloc against former USSR was fought in the name of Islam; while communism stood as a synonym of atheism.

Though going too far for the promotion and support of capitalism, the Muslim World assimilated it only partly and strongly rejected its logically necessary derivatives, that is, Liberalism and Democracy. As a consequence, despite large human and natural resources, the Muslim World is still groaning under extreme poverty, rigid conservatism and worst dictatorship. This selective rather vested-interests-based approach has practically kept Muslim World at a pre-modern level till today and earned a negative impression for Islam as an opponent of modernity and incompatible with the liberal tradition and democracy.

To exploit capitalism for keeping the masses deprived and backward, certain Qur'anic concepts were specifically highlighted and brought into prominence, for instance, fate (*taqdeer*) and promised or pre-ordained subsistence (*rizq-e-mauood*). Since poor and illiterate people may be easily shackled into the yoke of dictatorship, hence for the very purpose, it is essential to suppress liberal thought and education as far as possible. The above mentioned concepts may serve competently to justify poverty, thus promoting backwardness and illiteracy.

Let us briefly look at the capitalistic orientations of Islam. As far as sustenance is concerned, it is categorically stated in the Quran that Allah is responsible for provision of food for every living organism. For instance, the Quran says: "There is no creature that moves in the earth but it is for Allah to provide it with sustenance. And He knows its lodging and its home. All (this is recorded) in a clear Book"[168].

The Quranic verse established two things: i) Sustenance is promised *(mauood)* by Allah, ii) Sustenance in either quantity is pre-determined (*muqaddar*) by Allah, as it has already been written in the Divine Record. This idea has been persistently exploited not by upholders of capitalism as such but by those who want to justify unequal or unfair distribution of resources. Another relevant verse follows as, "………and that you kill not your children for (fear of) poverty--- it is We Who provide you for and for them….."[169] (It is one of the verses quoted frequently by opponents of family planning and birth control). At times Allah provides you from where you do not expect, "And will provide for him from where he expects not".[170]

At different places, the Qur'an rationalizes the economic disparities and inequalities in human society. For instance, "Is it they who distribute the mercy of thy Lord? It is We, Who distribute their livelihood in the present life, and We exalt some of them above others in degrees (of rank) so that some of them may make others subservient (to themselves). And the mercy of thy Lord is better than that which they amass".[171] Another verse reads, "And Allah has favored some of you above others in sustenance. But those who are more favored will not restore (any

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[168] *Al-Qur'an*, 11: 7.
[169] *Ibid*., 6: 152.
[170] *Ibid.,* 65:4.
[171] *Ibid*., 43: 33.

part of their worldly) gifts to whom their right hand possesses, so that they may be equal (sharers) in them. Will they then deny the favor of Allah"?[172]

Lest it is misunderstood, this paper does not aim at portraying Islam as an instrument of reaction or exploitation. What is being argued is that Islam is through and through capitalistic in its economic approach, and has not stressed on equal distribution of resources. However, it lays emphasis on charity and sympathy for the under-privileged again and again as will be discussed later. The underlying principle of *Zakat* is of taking wealth from the rich and giving it to the poor. One of its functions is to purify the money being utilized by the rich. However, eradicating poverty is not the Divine design, because classes have been produced by Allah Himself through uneven distribution of sustenance. Allah gives to some without measurement and to some He gives in small measured quantities as is evident from the following verses.

"………Allah bestows sustenance on whomsoever He pleases without reckoning"[173].

"……….Surely Allah gives to whomsoever He pleases without measure".[174]

"……….Allah does provide whomsoever He pleases without measure"[175]

"Allah enlarges provisions for whomsoever He pleases and straitens (it for whomsoever He pleases)".[176]

"Surely thy Lord enlarges provisions for whomsoever He pleases and straitens (it for whomsoever He pleases)".[177]

"………..It is indeed Allah Who enlarges the provision for such of His servants as He pleases and straitens it (for whom He pleases)".[178]

"Allah enlarges (the means of) sustenance for such of His servants as He pleases and straitens (them) for whom (He pleases). Surely Allah has full knowledge of all thing".[179]

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[172] *Ibid.*,16:72.

These verses were extensively quoted by Islamic political parties of Pakistan against Z.A. Bhutto when he adopted Socialism as economic system of Pakistan in early 1970s. Socialism was painted as atheistic because it rebelled against 'divine disparities' and opted for equality not ordained by Islam. Later this argument was developed to its logical limits and culminated in overthrow of Bhutto regime through a reactionary religious movement in 1977, subsequent Afghan Jihad in 80s and dissolution of Soviet Russia in 1991.

[173] *Ibid.*, 2:213.
[174] *Ibid.*, 3:38.
[175] *Ibid.*, 24:39.
[176] *Ibid.*, 13:27.
[177] *Ibid.*, 17:31.
[178] *Ibid.*, 28:83.
[179] *Ibid.*, 29: 63.

"Have not they seen that Allah enlarges His provision to whomsoever He pleases, and straitens (it to whomsoever He pleases)? In that truly are the Signs for those who believe"[180].

"Say verily my Lord enlarges the provision for (whomsoever) He pleases, and straitens (it for whomsoever he pleases); but most men do not know". [181]

"Say, 'Surely my Lord enlarges the provision of such of His servants He pleases and straitens (it) for such of them as (He pleases). And whatever you spend, he will replace it; and He is the best of Providers".[182]

"Know they not that Allah enlarges the provision for whomsoever He pleases and straitens (it to whomsoever He pleases)? Verily, in that are the Signs for a people who believe".[183]

"To Him belong the keys to the heavens and the earth. He enlarges the provision to whomsoever He pleases, and straitens (it to whomsoever He pleases). Surely He knows all things full well".[184]

"Allah is Benignant to His servants. He provides for whom He pleases. And He is the Powerful, the Mighty".[185]

"And if Allah should enlarge the provision for His servants, they would rebel in the earth; but He sends down according to a (proper) measure as He pleases. Indeed He is All-Aware and All-seeing with regard to His servants".[186]

In the face of the abundant evidence above, there is no doubt that economic inequality is part of the Divine scheme and sustenance is measured and pre-determined for every soul by the sweet will of the Lord. However, since Allah has to fulfill His promise of provision, the rich are enjoined to give charity to their less fortunate brethren. This will purify their wealth; otherwise they will have to burn in the hellfire eternally. Moreover, those whose sustenance has been straitened are exempt from many religious duties with pecuniary implications. The following verse explains this: "Let him who has abundance of means spend out of his abundance. And let him whose means of subsistence are straitened spend out of what Allah has given him. Allah burdens not any soul beyond what He has given him, Allah will soon bring forward ease after hardship".[187]

This is known as 'trickle down' or 'spin off' effect in modern capitalistic economics of which the roots and foundations may be traced within Islam. Hence the capitalistic nature of Islam is established beyond any reasonable doubt.

In support of the above assertions, following contention of Syed Abu Ala Maudoodi is most relevant:: "The economic scheme presented in Qur'an is based

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[180] *Ibid*., 30: 38.
[181] *Ibid.,*34:37.
[182] *Ibid*., 34:40.
[183] *Ibid*., 39:53.
[184] *Ibid*., 42:13.
[185] *Ibid*., 42:20.
[186] *Ibid.,* 42:28.
[187] *Ibid.,* 65:8.

entirely on the idea of individual ownership in every field……..The mere fact that it mentions in one place that 'the earth belongs to God (7:129)" is not enough to conclude that it either denies or forbids private ownership of land and sanctions nationalization."[188]

He goes on to say, "It is equally erroneous to draw from verse xIi, 10 the inference that Qur'an desires to distribute all the means of livelihood in the earth *equally* among all men……….For the purpose of this interpretation the verse is wrongly rendered to mean that 'God has put in the earth its means of sustenance proportionately in four days, alike for those who seek'. But even this wrong translation does not serve the purpose".[189]

" The fact that as in other things , all men do not enjoy equality in sustenance and means of earning, is described in the Qur'an as a feature of God's providence. Extravagant disparities devised by various social systems aside, natural inequality, as it goes, is described as the outcome of His wise apportionment, issuing from His own dispensation. The idea that this inequality is to be leveled up and substituted by dead equality is alien to the Book of God".[190] Another verse of the Qur'an on this point reads, "……And He it is Who has made you successors (of others) on the earth and has exalted some of you over others in degrees (of rank)…….."[191]

Thus far, Islam is in complete harmony with capitalism. But same is the point of divergence where Islam comes in contrast with Western tradition of the same as well as modernity. And, this is the stage to show how Islam has selectively assimilated some aspects of modernity including capitalism and left the other. Unfortunately this selective attitude was /is basically a defensive shield and safeguard for the interest of the non-representative ruling classes and the reactionary forces. We have seen earlier that liberalism and democracy are logical corollaries of capitalism. These liberal and democratic traditions have flourished in the West and led to free, open, egalitarian and welfare oriented societies in spite of unequal distribution of resources and economic disparities. But this could not happen in the Muslim World and we know what treatment was meted out to liberal and democratic thought in the Muslim World. Till today, out of 57 independent Muslim states of the world, a vast majority is in the grip of monarchies or military dictators whereas some so-called democracies are also completely dependent on the West.

Here I would like to refer back to a statement made earlier in this paper which may now be read again in the light of above discussion:

"…….This is probably because modernity came to be known in the Muslim world in the wake of colonialism when Muslims found themselves on the defensive. To the Western colonial regimes Islam was not compatible with modernity and hence it was to be reformed or modernized or else marginalized. Muslims, therefore,

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[188] Abul Ala Maudoodi, "Economic and Political Teachings of the Qur'an", *in A History of Muslim Philosophy*, vol. I, ed. M.M. Sharif (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1983), 179.
[189] *Ibid.,*179.
[190] *Ibid*., 180
[191] *Al- Qur'an*, 6: 166

generally conceived modernity, modernism and modernization not only as Western and alien but also hostile and threatening".[192]

The reality is rather different and bitter, because Islam neither was, nor is incompatible with modernity, nor is modernity threatening, hostile or alien to Islam. Actually, modernity is hostile to the Muslim rulers' interests as are incompatible with the interests of Muslim masses. Hence to keep their people subjugated, submissive, compliant and docile, the elite have always propagated that modernity is incompatible with Islam. They accept such aspects of modernity including capitalism as serve their class interests but reject those as are pro-masses, and a very shrewd and opportunist intelligentsia has very successfully helped them in this *selective approach*. See the later part of the quote from Iftikhar H. Malik once again which reads, "In some cases modernising yet non-representative regimes have themselves coopted and promoted fundamentalist groups"[193]. Why? Because enlightened, liberal, modern and pro-masses thought does not suit them. Moderate intellectuals have never found favor with non-representative Muslim regimes. He goes on to say, "……..while issues of political marginalization, economic adversity and warfare in all Muslim regions continued to be ignored. The Muslim ruling elite—monarchs, dictators and pseudo-democrats--sat aloof, biding the time, while the fundamentalists offered a reductionist palliative to mundane hardships"[194]. He states categorically, "For example, on one hand, political Islam may stipulate resistance to western hegemony; but at the same time many of its current forms are equally totalitarian"[195].

Fazlur Rahman in chapter 'Contemporary Modernism' of his famous book has analyzed these points more critically with much focused approach. He writes, "But in the situations where masses were ignorant and illiterate and a relatively small modern-educated elite claimed to be working on their behalf for their material prosperity, political freedoms were often curtailed both in 'socialistic" and "liberal" countries, since the rulers felt that political games would thwart quick economic development and in some cases threaten the "security of the state".

" The salient features of this new situation from our present perspective are 1) that the governments of these countries, whether democracies or dictatorships, socialist-oriented or "free-economy"-oriented, are largely self-styled brokers on behalf of their masses; 2) that the governments consider themselves agencies of development; 3) that by "development" is meant exclusively "economic progress"; ………….6) that the masses in these countries are uneducated, ignorant and extremely conservative……….there is, in this respect at least, hardly any effective communication between their broker governments and themselves. Finally and most important, 7) this political, social and moral situation is aggravated and made

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[192] See P. 2 above
[193] See P. 2 above
[194]   Iftikhar H. Malik, *Islam and Modernity: Muslims in Europe and the United States* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 4.
[195] *Ibid.,*5.

far more pernicious by the extremely low priority given to education because of the myopic vision of progress as being purely material.[196]"

Thus, we see how Muslim regimes have been exploiting some principles of capitalism against liberalism and democracy quite in contrast with Western liberal democratic traditions. I slightly differ from Fazlur Rahman; the vision of Muslim governments is not "myopic", it is very sharp. They have deliberately kept their masses illiterate because an educated, enlightened and aware public is deadly to their own interests. This "far-sightedness" hidden in this agenda is to keep the masses backward in the field of education. The greatest evidence being that no university in the Muslim world falls in the first 500 advanced academic institutions of the world!!

As another interesting observation, communism had always been declared un-Islamic because it ensured economic equality which is against Divine order! Thus, capitalism was accepted with great zeal but its off-shoots of liberalism and democracy were ruthlessly crushed as these did not suit Muslim regimes, hence *incompatible* with Islam.

Before concluding this study, it would be fruitful to have a short appraisal of the proposed political system of Islam in the words of Syed Maudoodi. The political system of Islam is generally known as Caliphate (vicegerency), which though not strictly democratic, is not as autocratic and authoritarian as depicted by the vested–interests groups. The major rules of the Caliphate are as under:

a) All the powers that man possesses in this world are in fact not his own, but have been endowed on him by God Almighty………..Man is thus not an independent master but a vicegerent of the real Sovereign;

b) Every nation that acquires the power and authority to rule over any part of the world is in reality a vicegerent to God in its domain;

c) This vicegerency, however, cannot be rightful or lawful unless it is subservient to the commandments of the real Sovereign. Any state independent of Him and not subservient to His commands is not a vicegerency. It is really a revolt against the Lord. (Al-Qur'an, 24:55, 35:39);

d) The powers of a true Caliphate do not vest in any individual nor in any clan, class or community, but those who believe and do good. The text of xxiv, 55 that '" God has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them His vicegerent on the earth…." is quite clear on this point. According to this verse, every good Muslim is fit to hold the position of a caliph. It is this aspect of Islamic caliphate that distinguishes it from a kingship, oligarchy, and a theocracy. It is different even from a modern democracy. There is a basic difference between the two. The edifice of democracy is raised on the principle of popular sovereignty; while in Islamic caliphate the people themselves surrender their independence to the sovereignty of

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[196] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984). 88-89.

God and of their own accord limit their power within the four corners of the Divine Law and the promise of vicegerency has been held out to them only if they are morally good.[197]

An oft quoted verse in Qur'an reveals Almighty Allah's sovereignty in regard to bestowing His caliphate upon any one He pleases. The verse reads as: "Say, 'O Allah, the Lord of Sovereignty, thou give sovereignty whomsoever Thou please; and Thou take away sovereignty from whomsoever Thou please. Thou exalt whomsoever Thou please and Thou abase whomsoever Thou please. In Thy hand is all good. Thou surely have power to do all things."[198] This is the most frequently used verse of the Qur'an by autocratic dictators, authoritarians and totalitarian Muslim rulers who usurp worldly power through fair and foul means and then declare it as the Divine Will..

Another misinterpreted verse is as follows, "O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those of you who are in authority…..'[199] This verse seems to give license to the ruling classes to demand absolute obedience from their subjects whereas the case is entirely different as is evident from this passage of Syed Maudoodi: "The government of a State established with a view to running an Islamic Caliphate cannot claim an absolute or unlimited obedience from the people. They are bound to obey it only in so far as it exercises its powers in accordance with the Divine Law revealed in nature and the Sacred Book. There can be neither obedience nor cooperation in sin and aggression" (5:3)[200].

Moreover, the Caliphate is not a dictatorial institution as envisaged by those whom we call vested-interest groups. A number of eminent political thinkers and scholars such as Al-Mawardi , Abu-Yala and al-Baghdadi have spoken of elections by notables (Abu Bakar's case), designation by the incumbent (Umar's case), nomination by Electoral College (Uthman's case) and direct election by people (Ali's case) as valid forms of instituting a Khalifa.[201]

This proves that unfortunately, the Muslim World's attitude is *selective* not only towards modernity or capitalism but also towards Islam and the Qur'an.

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[197] Abul Ala Maudoodi, "Economic and Political Teachings of the Qur'an", *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Vol. I, ed. M.M. Sharif (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1983), 193-94.
[198] *Al-Qur'an*, 3: 27.
[199] *Ibid*, 4:60.
[200] Abul Ala Maudoodi, "Economic and Political Teachings of the Qur'an", *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Vol. I, ed. M.M. Sharif (Karachi: Royal Book Company,1983), 194.
[201] Dr. Mohammad Shah, *Pan Islamism in India & Bengal* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 2002), 21-22.

III

Conclusion

The above analysis shows that the Muslim World has accepted modernity and its related features only spartly and partially. Of course, no trend, idea, scheme or plan can be accepted *in toto and one* has to tailor or adjust it to some extent. Therefore, if Islam has not fully embraced modernity, capitalism, liberalism or democracy, it is not a major objection *per se*. The problem lies with the selectors who have not made the selection pragmatically or in the larger interest of Islam as the sole criteria of their selection was to watch their personal and class interests. The autocratic Muslim rulers did not hesitate from arbitrary and out –of- context interpretations of Qur'an for their tendentious designs; liberalism and democracy being their worst targets. Muslim states rarely allowed/allow freedom of speech, opinion, belief and expression, equality of opportunity, gender equity, political rights, open society and individualism to their subjects (not citizens).

The Post World War I & II situation, the decline of Turkey, lack of power, occupation of territories and resources robbed Muslim masses of their self-esteem and dignity, making their rulers heavily dependent on US and the West for support. This propaganda was supported, promoted and strengthened by the world powers that Islam is incompatible with modernity, liberal tradition and specially democracy.

The topic of this discussion precisely was Islam and capitalism. At the end, we can sum up by saying that: Islam is in perfect harmony with capitalism; rather its foundations and roots may be traced inside the earlier Islam. Hence there is no question of its rejection by Islam. However, most unfortunately, the Muslims watered capitalism very diligently and painstakingly as a nascent sapling but refused its ripe fruit in the form of the liberal outlook and representative democratic institutions. Islam accepted its waste and harmful by-products or one may say, least useful elements. This situation has led to the Muslim world to the situation where it stands today. Poverty, illiteracy and backwardness are its fate. Oil rich Gulf and Arab states are not poor, but, nonetheless, backward in technology and education besides being highly authoritarian.

In brief, it may be stated that the fault does not lie with Islam or with capitalism, it lies with the hopeless attitude of the Muslim World, specially its so-called leadership.

Reformation: Religious, Political and Social Consequences for Western Society

Humaira Ahmad

Abstract

Reformation was a theological movement in 16th century Europe to reform the Catholic Christianity. Luther, Calvin and Zwingli questioned the authority of dogma and supremacy of the pope in Rome. This led to the formation of hundreds of sects in Western Christianity. Salvation was sought outside the church. Consequently, church was excluded from the cultural life of Western societies. Reformation also gradually established the role of political authority in religious matters.

'Reformation' emerged as a theological movement during 16th century in Europe which attempted to change and improve the Catholic Church, and resulted in the establishment of the Protestant Church. This movement was a revolt against the authority of medieval Catholic Church aimed at reforming the church of Christendom and removing its tribulations.[202] The Reformation was not a sudden upsurge or a reaction to any particular incident. It was the outcome of the Church's excesses spread over decades and numerous factors played important roles in this respect.

The Reformation emerged as a historical consequence from the interaction of many complex cultural forces of Western history. Renaissance was an important factor in creating a fertile soil for Reformation. The spirit of the time even when intending to be hostile, proved friendly. The Renaissance that had raised the ancient classical world from its grave, was not itself opposed to the Catholic Church, but the reason it educated and the temperament it formed, the literature it produced and the languages it loved, the imagination it cultivated and the new sense of beauty it created, there were forces of subtle hostility to the system that had been built upon the ruins of classical antiquity. [203]

The renaissance leaders rejected many of the attitudes and ideas of the Middle Ages. They emphasized people's responsibilities and duties to the society in which they lived, rejecting the older beliefs of praying to God. Renaissance thinkers paid more attention to the study of humanity than to theology. [204]

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[202] Johan Herman Randall, *Making of the Modern Mind* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), 143.

[203] A. W. Ward, G.W. Prothero., Stanley Leathes, (ed.) *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol:2 The Reformation (London: Cambridge University Press,1902), 342

[204] Lewis W. Spitz, *The Renaissance and Reformation Movements* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1972) & Charles B. Schmitt, Quentin Skinner & Eckhard Kesssler (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1988), *The Renaissance : Essays in Interpretation*, (ed.) (New York: Methuen & Co. Ltd.), 34, 155,

The invention of movable type in the mid 1400's helped to spread learning and an increased number of people outside the clergy gained education during the Renaissance. The study of scriptures allowed the people to know about the Church in which changes had been made through centuries.[205] The scientific discoveries of this period patently contradicted both the Bible and the teachings of the Church further weakened papal and clerical authority.[206]

Reformation movement was the historical outcome of Renaissance, primarily aimed at reviving the coalition of religion and politics which was characteristic of the Middle Ages and weakened during the Renaissance period.[207] To put an end to the dominance of popes was among the major themes of Reformation. Individual interpretation of the Bible was allowed and was used as the tool to express personal opinion.[208] In order to free the state from the influence and dominance of the church, the term 'divine right of the king' was introduced.[209]

The foundation stone for political authority and 'divine right of king' was laid down long before the Reformation. During the Renaissance, Dante raised voice for the supreme authority of monarchs.[210] Marsiglio of Padua, William of Ockham, John Wycliffe and John Hus were also among early thinkers, who questioned the absolute political realm of the Roman Catholic Church.

Marsiglio of Padua questioned the authority of the Pope and supported autonomous political unit, and was of the view that law was ultimately derived from the people or from the more influential of them rather than the church. He was one of the first to raise the voice for secular government elected by the legislative authority. His criticism of papacy and of canon law was corrosive. He was of the view that the state is the source of law and its law has to be obeyed not only because it is the only rule to be endowed with coercive power but because it is in itself the expression of justice.[211]

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305. & Marvin Perry, et'al (ed.), *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics & Society*, vol: 1 (Geneva: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989), 264-274.

[205] Ibid. & De Lamar Jensen, *Renaissance Europe: Age of Recovery and Reconciliation*, (Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1981), 7-37.

[206] Ibid. & *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics & Society*, 267-270.

[207] Reformation created a new World order as Toby Huff has written that, "The Reformation claimed to replace a corrupt modern order by the true primitive order… It proved to have many new elements, different in structure not only from those which had prevailed in the Middle Ages, but also from those which had characterized the apostolic community of the early church in Benjamin Nelson, "Conscience and the Making of Early Modern Cultures: Beyond Max Weber", in *On the Roads to Modernity,* ed. Toby E. Huff (New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1981), 75.

[208] Johan Herman Randall,166.

[209] Lawrence C. Wanlass, *Gettel's History of Political Thought* (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1924),157.

[210] Ernest Bresiach, *Renaissance: Europe 1300-1517* (New York: McMillan Publishing, 1973), 25. & *Gettel's History of Political Thought,* 127.

[211] Vivian Hubert Howard Green, *Renaissance and Reformation: A Survey of European History Between 1450-1660* (London: Edward Arnold Publishing, 1974), 23.

William of Ockham put theological questions deviating from earlier beliefs and doctrines of Christianity. He emphasized the limitations of papal power and developed the principle of political freedom and toleration.[212]

By providing his countrymen with an English translation of the Bible, Wycliffe enabled them to see for themselves the great differences between the simplicity of early Christianity and the power and wealth of the church of the late middle ages. He attacked the indulgences of popes and demanded that church property be seized and managed by the secular governments. Supporting Marsiglio that the Church was originally a community of equals, he denied the authority of the pope over all Christendom and preached instead a religion of personal piety and the universal priesthood of believers.[213] He was known as the man who gave the concept of bringing religion directly to the people and for this he translated the Bible. He denounced the pope as antichrist and challenged a number of accepted beliefs.[214] John Hus was a follower of John Wycliffe and was burned to death due to his revolt against the church. He was also of the view that the property of the Church must be reduced and that the church has no right to own property.[215]

Martin Luther of Germany (1483–1546), John Calvin of France (1509-1564) and Ulrich Zwingli of Switzerland (1484-1531) were the main advocates of the Reformation.[216]

Martin Luther was a German priest and the originator of the Reformation movement. He declared that popes are the ones who corrupted the Church.[217] His primary concern was the religious one and that he wanted to reform the society as a whole only by preaching the gospel and making man aware of his ethical duties.[218] However, the dark side of his philosophy was that he considered man as wicked and prone to sin.

> "We are the children of wrath and all our works and intentions and thoughts are nothing at all in balance against our sins… no amount of good works could atone for the sins--each an insult to an infinite deity--committed by the best of men. Only the redeeming sacrifice of Christ--the suffering and the death of the Son of the God--could atone for man's sins; and only belief in that divine atonement can save us from hell. It is this faith, that "justifies" –-makes a man just despite his sins and eligible for salvation."[219]

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[212] Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reforms 1250-1550* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980),18

[213] Harold .J. Grimm, *The Reformation Era 1500-1650,* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), 43. & Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization, "The Reformation: A History of European Civilization from Wyclif to Calvin 1300 – 1564* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), 11. & John H. Randall, 146.

[214] V.H.H. Green, 20, & Will Durant, 11.

[215] Will Durant, 14.

[216] Vivian Hubert Howard Green, Steven Ozment, Will Durant, Harold .J. Grimm.

[217] Ibid., 351.

[218] Harold .J. Grimm, 90.

[219] Will Durant, 373.

He developed a new theology on the issue of Salvation. He arrived at the conclusion that man is justified by faith alone, that God freely forgives sins, without taking man's merits into consideration.[220] This highly significant interpretation, that grew out of Martin Luther's own experience and which he found substantiated in the writings of St. Augustine, marked the turning point of his career, and eventually brought him in conflict with the church.[221]

Luther did not intend the gradual reform within the old faith but a fundamental recasting of traditional doctrines and practices. Luther also revived the dark debates and narrow theological interests of the middle ages.[222] For Luther, to endow man with complete freedom of will in morality and religious matters ascribing truly divine powers to him.[223]

He believed that the faith of a Christian had nothing to do with politics. The duty of a Christian was simply to obey constituted authority. Turning to the princes, Luther confirmed the righteousness of their power.[224] He was not a political thinker and his limited experiments in this field were best regarded as an attempt to accommodate the political realities of his time. For consolidation of the Reformation movement, the full support of German princes and magistrates was essential and his confirmation in the righteousness of princes in their powers enabled him to get that support.[225] He had drawn a distinction between the spiritual and the worldly government of society. According to his theory, God's worldly government is effected through kings, princes and magistrates through the use of the sword and the civil law. Popes have no authority concerning the affairs of the world.[226]

Following points can be identified that underlie Luther's confused political theology:

> Christian ethics is grounded in the doctrine of justification by faith alone

> All Christians have a civic and social responsibility to perform. Some Christians may discharge these responsibilities by holding public office

> The state has been divinely ordained to achieve certain purposes, which the church can not and should not attempt to achieve. In other words, their spheres of influence and authority are different and must not be confused

> God rules the church through Gospel but is obliged to rule the sinful world through law, wisdom, natural law and coercion[227]

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[220] *Ozment*, 375.
[221] Grimm, 91.
[222] *Ozment, 1250-1550,* 292.
[223] Ibid.,301.
[224]   Lutheran Reformation resulted in an alliance of state and church in which former was subservient to the latter. In effect, therefore Lutheranism, made a total surrender of the practical life of the individual to the state control. J. Bronowski, *The Western Intellectual Tradition* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1960,) 89.
[225] Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: an Introduction* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, MA: B, Blackwell, 1988), 146.
[226] Ibid., 142.
[227] Ibid., 145-146.

Luther's political theory clearly supported the monarchy.[228]As Machiavelli freed the state from the consideration of moral law, Luther likewise freed it from control of the Church. Is it not the duty of the state, he argued, to check and control all forms of domination injuring the welfare of the people? Thus he won the sympathy of the multitude by his stern attitude to capitalism, luxury and immorality.[229] In Luther's words, "neither Pope, nor Bishop, nor any man has a right to dictate even a syllable to the Christian without his own consent; any other course is pure tyranny."[230]

John Calvin, who belonged to Geneva, was the founder of the Reformation movement in France and other European countries. John Calvin adopted austerity against extravagance in dress and entertainment. Drama, art and drunkenness were censored.[231]

For him, the Church and state were both divine and designed by God to work in harmony as the soul and body of one Christian society. The Church should regulate all details of faith, worship and morals. The state as the physical arm of the church should enforce these regulations. The ideal government would be a theocracy and the reformed church should be recognized as the voice of God. All the claims of the popes for supremacy of the church over the state were renewed by Calvin.[232]

Ulrich Zwingli also contributed to the reformation. He believed that ultimate ecclesiastical authority is the Christian community and the local assembly of believers under the sole lordship of Christ and the divinely inspired scriptures that bear witness to redemption through him. This authority is exercised on behalf of the community through the duly constituted organs of civil government acting in accordance with the scriptures. Only that which Bible commands or for which distinct authorization can be found in its pages is binding or allowable.[233]

Zwingli formulated his doctrine while agreeing with Martin Luther that man can earn salvation by good works, but must believe in redeeming efficacy of Christ's sacrificial death.[234] He also laid great emphasis upon providing the people with the Bible in their native language.[235]Zwingli identified the word of God with the scriptures when he held to be inspired and infallible. The word of god is certain and cannot fail; it makes itself plain and illumines the human soul with all salvation.[236] He ordered that marital matters which were previously settled by a special court

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[228] Ibid., 145-146. & John H. Randall, 182.

[229] R. H. Murray, *The Political Consequences of the Reformation Studies in Sixteenth Century Political Thought* (Ernest Benn Limited, 1926)

[230] Ibid., 58.

[231] Vivian H.H. Green, 175-176. &   Williston Walker, Richard A Norris, David W. Lotz, Robert t. Handy, *History of the Christian Church (*New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 470-481.

[232] Will Durant, 465.

[233] *History of the Christian Church,* 443

[234] Will Durant, 408.

[235] Harold J. Grimm, 189.

[236] V. H. H. Green, 164.

under the administration of the church, be transferred to civil court consisting of representatives of both state and Church. Gradually all matters concerning private morals were referred to this court.[237]

He was more interested in political reforms than religious reforms. The ideas of Zwingli were put into legal reforms in Switzerland. Accordingly, he upheld the right of the community to regulate its religious as well as civil life. In this way, Church and state were merged into a single system controlled by its political agencies. Zwingli believed that he was God's prophet for spreading the faith, and was prepared to use political means for carrying out the divine will in Zurich and whole of Switzerland.[238]

All these reformers grounded the authority of scripture in its relation to the words of God. The reformers insisted that the authority of popes must be subordinate to the scripture. Luther declared that the distinction between the spiritual and temporal powers must be abolished and every believing Christian must have the right to interpret the scripture. He said:

> "Their claim that only the pope may interpret scripture is an outrageous ancient fable. The Romanists must admit that there are many among us good spirit, understanding word, and mind of Christ. Why then should we reject the word and understanding of good Christians and follow the pope, who has neither faith nor the spirit"[239].

Reformation movement with its different objectives, worked at three levels. The first was the purely religious one. For Luther, this meant that everyone had to decide in his own conscience how the words of God should be read. The second level was the revolt against the splendor with which papacy had come to surround itself. And the third level was the development of political and social ideas.[240]

The impact of the Reformation movement was manifold. Europe was divided religiously. The division of the Western Christendom into several churches was the foremost consequence of the Reformation. The centrality of the Catholic Church was destroyed, and the universal Church gave way to national churches.[241] While the political authorities precluded the formal recognition of more than one church, the existence of several religious perspectives (bitterly opposing one another) surely curtailed the public as well as private significance of religion in Europe.[242]

In the words of Bronowski, "It gave to Europe as a result of the religious wars which stemmed from it, the political shape which more or less, has kept ever since. And it supplied the European mind with a new ethos, a whole new sensibility and a stock of novel political, social and economic ideas."[243] Concluding the discussion on Reformation Will Durant is of the opinion that, "The reformation rendered two

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[237] Harold. J. Grimm 189.

[238] *Ibid.,* 206.

[239] McGrath, 111.

[240] J. Bronowski, 85-86.

[241] J. Bronowski, 87. & John Herman Randall, 165.

[242] Will Durant, 938

[243] J. Bronowski,76.

services to the Enlightenment: it broke the authority of the dogma, generated a hundreds sects that would formerly have died at the stake and allowed among them such virile debate that reason was finally recognized as the bar before which all sects had to plead their cause unless they were armed with irresistible physical force. In that pleading, that attack and defense, all sects were weakened, all the dogmas; and a century after Luther exaltation of faith Francis Bacon proclaimed that knowledge is power. In that same 17th century thinkers like Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza and Locke offered philosophy as a substitute or basis for religion. In the eighteenth century Helvetius Hollbach proclaimed open atheism, and Voltaire was called a bigot because he believed in God. This was the challenge that Christianity failed in a crisis far more profound than the debate between the Catholic and the Protestant version of the medieval creed."[244]

The exercise of political authority in the realm of religion was more firmly established at the end of the sixteenth century than it had been at the beginning. The support provided by Luther to the princes resulted in an alliance of church and state in which the former was subservient to the latter.[245] Therefore, Luther made a total surrender of the practical life of the individual to the state control. Luther himself declared, "Our teachings have accorded to secular sovereignty the plentitude of the rights and powers and thus doing what the popes have never done nor wanted to do."[246]

The political theology of Martin Luther was clearly about religious freedom. According to him ethics is grounded in the doctrine of justification by faith alone, the state has been divinely ordained to achieve certain purposes, which the church cannot and should not attempt to achieve. In other words, their spheres of authority are different and must not be confused.[247]

The fundamental doctrine of the Reformation movement led to the growth of marked individualism which resulted in grave social, political, and economic conflicts. It led ultimately to the growth of individual liberty and democracy. The reformers preached the equality of man to follow his conscience and to attain salvation in his own way. This individual freedom from a religious point of view had its political repercussions too and led to the growth of democracy.[248] Salvation was sought outside the church. Priesthood was made unnecessary in finding supreme authority in Bible[249] and the rational interpretation of the scripture was allowed.

Reformation broke down the authority of universal church and political tyranny was promoted by Luther which ultimately led to nationalism. In the next upcoming events, thirty years war and religious wars helped to define the future political shape of Europe on the basis of independent and sovereign nation states.[250] Toleration and the recognition of the authority of the individual reason and

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[244] Will Durant, 939.
[245] J. Bronowski, 89.
[246] Ibid., 89.
[247] Alister E. McGrath, 145-146.
[248] *The Reformation Era 1500-1650,* 124.
[249] J. Bronowski, 90.
[250] Ibid., 106.

conscience did spring from the Reformation. It fostered both political and economic individualism and allowed greater freedom of interpretation of the faith and, perhaps because of this, it helped the slow drift from religious to secular individualism.[251]

Finally, Reformation, while adding nothing to the content of education, contributed greatly to its spread. It led Europe to learning and in fostering the new science. Leiden in Holland and Geneva University are the products of Reformation.[252]

Reformation was a step forward towards modern times. Martin Luther laid down the foundations of ethos of modernity, "Reformation was a movement which originated in a desire to purge a unified church torn asunder and divided against itself existing a new world…Martin Luther and his followers, intending return to the old , helped to create a new world, a new world not so much in space as in time------the world of modern times."[253]

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[251] Ibid & Vivian H.H Green, 124.
[252] John Herman Randall, 169.
[253] J. Bronowski, 106.

Proceedings of Conference
on 'Islam and Modernity' held at UMT on March 30, 2009

The Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization at the University of Management and Technology, (UMT), Lahore, organized a conference on "Islam and Modernity", on March 30, 2009 at the University campus. A large number of intellectuals, academicians and educationists from all over the country attended the conference.

In the inaugural session, Dr. Muhammad Amin, Chairman, Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization welcomed the delegates. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Anis Ahmed, Rector, Riphah Int'l University, Islamabad. Dr. Hasan Sohaib Murad, Rector, UMT, gave the concluding remarks.

The Conference had three working sessions during which noted educationists and scholars presented their papers. Dr. Absar Ahmed, former Head of the Department of Philosophy, Punjab University, chaired the first working sessions on "Western Philosophical Thought". The second session on "Western Ideologies and Movements" was presided over by Dr. Basit Bilal Koshal from Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) while the last session on "Islam, Modernity and the Muslim World", was chaired by Mr. Ahmed Javed from the Iqbal Academy, Lahore. All the working sessions were followed by question and answer sessions during which the participants raised thought provoking issues in regard to the challenges before the Muslim world. Shields and souvenirs were presented to the speakers at the end of every session. A brief summary of the conference proceedings is given here.

Dr. Anis Ahmed, in his keynote address, said that in the common use, modernity refers to post 18th century industrial society with unprecedented role of economic growth and technology. Conceptually, modernity in the West stands for individualism, empiricism, secularity, globalization, glamorization of life and ethical relativism as its pillars of faith. Secularism liberates the mind from religious dogmatism, i.e. papacy, accepting Christianity without any questioning.

Islam stands for peace within and without and the term *Tauheed* (unionism) is a basic paradigm as Islam doesn't call itself a religion, it calls itself a matter of accepting supremacy of Allah, not only as a creator, but as the ultimate source of knowledge. Therefore, the first pillar of Muslim thought is not a dogma but knowledge. Allah's conscious acceptance as sovereign power and ultimate judge brings unity in life and prosperity and humanity in societies. *Tauheed* becomes the basis for social integration and for political sovereignty. The Quran and the *Sunnah*, being comprehensive, authentic and universal, provide explicit commands, directions and general principles for resolving emerging issues and problems of our society. Therefore, we don't need to suppress some Quranic verse or Ahadith of the Holy Prophet (SAW) in the name of modernity. The key resolution of relatively modern problems and morality lies in the application of Quran and the *Sunnah,* itself. *Ijtihad* is the key and the methodology for resolving the problems of modernity, political, economic, legal, etc. It is a misconception that *Ijtihad* has been invented by Iqbal or Mawdudi or anyone else. *Ijtihad* is the methodology of the Prophet (SAW), in his life time. However, it requires a direct study of Islamic sources. Islam is unique in its nature and successfully responds within the parameters of universal *Shariah* to the emergent threats and challenges in a

dynamic, innovative and creative manner. The term "universal *Shariah*" means that the objectives of the *Shariah* are not confined to the Muslims alone. Islam does not need reformation and reconstruction because the Quran provides guidance till eternity, and the Holy Prophet (SAW) is the model for the entire humanity and not for the Muslims alone. Islam can't be compared with man made ideologies such as capitalism. Islam does accept role for human efforts but it also provides a big space for Allah to contribute. Islam and Modernity are not two different realms. Islam is as modern today as it was in the 7th century or even much before. Islam also permits Enlightenment as it is the only faith that talks about Enlightenment based on divine guidance and free thought of human beings under that. Islamic thought and Islamic culture / civilization contain elements of modernity and a modern age. The Quran and the *Sunnah* paradigm can produce a society that would be able to sustain and progress, and to come up with psychological innovation, philosophical contribution and social thought inspired by the Quran and the *Sunnah*.

Dr. Hasan Sohaib Murad, Rector, University of Management and Technology, in his concluding remarks at the opening session, highlighted the point that Islam is the most misunderstood religion these days and Islam and the Muslims are under siege from within and without. "We are facing more innovative and newer forms of inquisition, which means persecution - intellectual, cultural and political, coercion, displacement and rejection by some communities. There are attempts to relegate Islam to the dustbin of history as no more relevant. There are three major responses from the Muslim communities to this onslaught from the West. First is the Defeatist group. Intellectually, this group lies outside the axis of Islam. They have been won over by the other side. To some of them, Islam only concerns certain individual rituals and rites and does not bother about public life. The second group is of Interpreters, it looks for compromises, and the middle course. The third are the Constructionists. It includes people who really want to explore the richness of Islam, its relevance, evolution of time and space. They believe in interaction and co-existence on the basis of fundamentals. This third group can do justice to Islam. There will be revival of creative thinking within the paradigm of Islam on the basis of the Quran and the *Sunnah*, so that Islam gets a strong conviction not only from its adherents but also from non-believers. The objective is to understand Islam, to engage intellectual resources to understand Islam in current times, and also to experiment Islam. We can prove that Islam is better, Islam is superior, in fact, it is outstanding and it can meet all challenges."

Working Sessions

The first working session titled 'Western Philosophical Thought' was chaired by Dr. Absar Ahmed. Four papers were presented in this session. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali from the University of Karachi read his paper on "The Possibility of Mutual Transformation of Western and Non-Western Civilizations in Foucault's Analysis". Mr. Waqar Aslam of Bahauddin Zakaria University, Multan presented his paper on "Western Enlightenment and Structure of Religious Thought: A Study of Incommensurability". The third paper entitled "Reformation: Religious, Political and Social Consequences for Western Society" was a joint venture by Dr. Muhammad Hammad Lakhvi from the University of Punjab, Lahore and Humaira Ahmad from UMT, Lahore. Fourth paper, on "Anguish and Human Predicament in Existentialism," was by Ms. Ambreen Salahuddin from UMT, Lahore.

In his comments, the Chair said that Islam does not denounce rationality and logical argumentation; rather it advocates the use of rationality providing it divine epistemology. It is no wonder that a high percentage of modern intellectual giants turned religious and even Einstein stated that "Science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind," he pointed out. Commenting on Existentialism, the Chair observed that Existentialist philosophy is focused on the idea that man is condemned to be free. Existentialist concept of anguish though, a reality in a sense to be criticized because it results from a deep sense of forlornness. Dr Absar said that a merely anguished person cannot contribute positively towards the betterment of society at large. So according to him, solutions have to be found in Islam.

The second working session on 'Western Ideologies and Movements' was chaired by Dr. Basit Bilal Koshal from LUMS. A paper on "Mirror up to Existentialist and Constructionist Approaches in Leadership Studies" was presented by Rana Zamin Abbas from University of Management and Technology, Lahore. The second paper on "Islam and Modernity - A Selective Influence of Capitalistic Setup" was presented by Dr. Sobia Tahir (Government College University, Lahore). The third paper entitled "Muslim Response to Modernity" was the joint attempt of Dr. Amjad Waheed and Dr. Muhammad Amin (UMT). The last paper of the second session was on Genealogy and Objectives of Economic Science" and was presented by Mr. Zahid Siddique from FAST, Karachi. In his comments, the Chair disagreed with the view that Modernity is the result of the death of classical civilization. Instead, he said, Modernity is a particular interpretation; it is the actualization of the potential within classical civilization or religious civilization. So, it is not a break from the past. Modern economics, modern science, modern politics, are the result not of some secular atheist philosophers sitting around, thinking about these things. Instead, these are the results of a particular religious interpretation of the Christian tradition. Capitalism, liberal democracy, and modern science all go back to the Protestant Reformation.

The third working session on 'Islam, Modernity and the Muslim World' was chaired by Mr. Ahmed Javed of Iqbal Academy, Lahore. Three papers were presented at the session. The first paper on "Philosophizing Tasawwuf- the postmodern cult of Sufism" was presented by Dr. Iftikhar Shafi from the University of Karachi. The Chair appreciated the paper for taking the right position on *Tasawwuf* and postmodernity. The second paper on "Western Worldview based on modernity as compared to the Islamic World view" was presented by Dr Abdur Rauf from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. The third paper on "The Secularist Modernist Bias of the Western Social Sciences" was written by Dr. Muhammad al Ghazali from the International Islamic University, Islamabad (currently Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan) and read out by Mariam Murad. Commenting on the paper, the Chair said that modernity is a kind of neo-religiosity. It has not invented new ideals, rather it has actualized the existing ideals in the new situation to fulfill the demand of the present age. It has given preference to rationality on revelation. He also observed that modernity has produced greatest minds of the world and a popular critique of the West with cursory knowledge would be of no use. Hence, a serious study of Western Thought is essential to acquire complete knowledge of that evil challenge in order to compete it.

International Conference on

"Islamic Civilization - Potentials & Challenges"

March 28-29, 2011

The Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization of University of Management & Technology, Lahore, Pakistan is holding an international conference on "Islamic Civilization - Potential and Challenges" on March 28-29, 2011, Insha Allah at Lahore, Pakistan.

Major themes of the Conference are:

1. Origin, development and dynamics of Islamic civilization

2. Distinguishing features of Islamic civilization and its impact on other major civilizations of the world

3. Unity and diversity of Islamic civilization

4. The intellectual contribution of Islamic civilization in the fields of religious thought, social and natural sciences, international relations, art, culture, architecture, law and jurisprudence

5. Future of Islamic civilization: emerging issues and new horizons (globalization, technology, post-modernity, Islamic movements, etc.)

6. Interaction, clash and dialogue with contemporary civilizations.

For registration please contact

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1. An abstract of 150-200 words supplied with key words.

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3. References should be given in Chicago Manual style in author-date format.

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