

## SUFISM AND CHALLENGES OF MODERN AND SECULAR PHILOSOPHY: NASR'S PERSPECTIVE\*

Modern ve Seküler Felsefenin Tasavvuf ve Zorlukları: Nasr'ın Bakış Açısı

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### Abstract

If the universe is defined as a manifestation (Tajallî) of the Divine in the Alevi and Bektashi and other Sufi thoughts, what are their responses to modern dominant world view and science that is fundamentally secular and leaves no space for Sacred? With the dominance of such a secular world view, can one conclude that the Sufi claim of the Divine's presence in the cosmos is refuted? This paper will study the question of philosophical assessment of modern science and technology from a Sufi perspective. It will particularly examine the phenomenon of modern science and technology from the perspective of the Sufi and the Traditionalist school. For a Sufi-philosophical thought, it will assess the idea of reviving sacred or religious science that is mainly elaborated in Nasr's works. As a prominent figure of the Traditionalist School, also a Sufi of the Shadhilî order, Nasr emphasizes throughout his works the necessity of recovering "Religious and Sacred Science" from the Traditionalist and Sufi point of view. Embedded in this suggestion lies a critique of modern science and technology as well. The mentioned view, according to him, is religious, and the term "sacred science" in his works is juxtaposed to modern science.

In other words, Nasr suggests that a revival of Sacred science can cure the various crises of modernity, whether it is environmental or technological, or spiritual. This claim will be assessed in this paper. Furthermore, this paper will investigate Nasr's critiques of modern science's fundamental philosophical principles as determining its secular nature in opposition to the notion of sacred science and worldview in Sufism. This paper aims to outline and examine the question of Sacred in the confrontation of Secular in the context of Sufism and philosophy.

**Keywords:** Alevi and Bektashi, Sufism, Modern Science, Traditional Science, Sacred Science, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Secular Science.

### Öz

Evren, Alevi ve Bektâşî ve diğer Sufî düşüncelerinde İlahî bir tezahür (Tajallî) olarak tanımlanırsa, Alevî/Bektâşîlerin ve Sufîlerin modern egemen dünya görüşüne ve temelde seküler olan ve kutsal için yer bırakmayan bilime verdikleri yanıtları nelerdir? Böylesine seküler bir dünya görüşünün egemenliğiyle, Sufî'nin evrendeki İlahî varlığı iddiasının çürütüldüğü sonucuna varılabilir mi? Bu makale, modern bilim ve teknolojinin felsefî değerlendirmesi sorusunu Sufî perspektifinden inceleyecektir. Özellikle Sufî ve gelenekçi ekol perspektifinden modern bilim ve teknoloji olgusunu incelenecektir. Tasavvuf-felsefî bir düşünce için, esas olarak Nasr'ın eserlerinde detaylandırılan kutsal veya dinî bilimi yeniden canlandırma fikri bu makalede değerlendirilecektir. Gelenekçi ekolün önde gelen isimlerinden biri olan ve aynı zamanda Shadhilî tarikatının bir Sufî'si olan Nasr, eserleri aracılığıyla "Dini ve Kutsal Bilimi" gelenekçi ve Sufî bakış açısıyla ele almanın gerekliliğini vurgulamaktadır. Bu önerinin içinde modern bilim ve teknolojinin bir eleştirisi de yatmaktadır. Ona göre söz konusu görüş dinseldir ve eserlerindeki "kutsal bilim" terimi modern bilim ile yan yana getirilmiştir.

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Bir başka ifadeyle, Nasr, kutsal bilimin yeniden canlanmasının ister çevresel ister teknolojik ister ruhsal olsun, modernliğin çeşitli krizlerini iyileştirebileceğini öne sürmektedir. Bu iddia bu makalede değerlendirilecektir. Ayrıca, bu makale Nasr'ın tasavvufta kutsal bilim ve dünya görüşü kavramına karşı laik doğasını belirleyen modern bilimin temel felsefi ilkelerine yönelik eleştirilerini araştıracaktır. Bu makale, tasavvuf ve felsefe bağlamında seküler ile yüzleşmede kutsal sorununu ana hatlarıyla araştırmayı ve incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Alevi and Bektaşî, Tasavvuf, Modern Bilim, Geleneksel Bilim, Kutsal Bilim, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Seküler Bilim.

## 1. Introduction

Sufism is a broad and diverse movement within the history of Islam. It nevertheless represents a Divine-centric cosmology in which God -through His creation- is invisibly visible, and he is at the same time, the eternal and inward reality of the external and visible world. In other words, God is the eternal meaning of everything.<sup>1</sup> Anatolia, among the other Eastern and Western Muslim lands from China to North Africa and Spain, has been home to many Sufi orders such as Alevi and Bektashi, Rûfâ'î, Khalwatî, and others. All the mentioned order played significant roles prior to and during the Ottoman Empire and up to the modern era.<sup>2</sup> It is clear that facing the Modern and secular world view, at least epistemologically challenged all Sufi orders. Such a considerable shaking encounter raises questions about the relationships between Sufi creeds and modern secular philosophy and world-view. Sufism maintains that certain "knowledge" (*'ilm*, *Ma'rifa*) of *Tawhîd* is an essential foundation in the Spiritual path. This knowledge has been an ongoing tradition in Sufi circles. The mentioned modern philosophy and world view, however, challenged the above-mentioned Sufi cosmology and world-view.

The profound debates on the relationship between religion and science have been raised in the intellectual history of any major religion. Efforts of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish scholars to examine the question of reason and revelation are well documented. Such efforts are even more substantive in the modern era in which an extraordinary expansion of science and technology in various dimensions is evident. These relationships are characterized in different ways, from depicting harmony between science, religion, and reason, to describing the conquest and ultimate collapse of religion by modern science, to a more nuanced interactive understanding of religion and science. Besides the general endowments, it is more substantial to see how a Sufi order encountered the modern secular philosophy and world view. If Secularism is to cut off from the Devine, then the question is how Sufism responds to a destructive claim of modern philosophy.

To understand one of the common responses to the modern philosophy and its consequential secular science, this paper aims to benefit from the philosophical school of "Perennialism" or what is also called the Traditionalist School in its claim to restore "Sacred Science" versus "Secular Sciences." One could refer to René Guénon (1886-1951), Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), Frithjof Schuon

(1907-1998), and Seyyed Hossein Nasr (b.1933) as the key figures to develop the Traditionalist school. All of the mentioned individuals, in one way or another, have had Sufi affiliations. The approach of this school to the question of the role of modern secular science has been to provide a critique of its philosophical foundations based on metaphysics, epistemology, and worldview. The ground and found that these scholars applied in their understanding of the cosmos and the Divine is in a very close affinity with the Sufi world-view and its Divine-Centric cosmology.

Thereupon, this paper aims to outline and examine the question of Sacred in the confrontation of Secular in the context of Sufism and philosophy. For a Sufi-philosophical thought, it will assess the idea of reviving sacred or religious science mostly elaborated in the works of Nasr. As a prominent figure of the Traditionalist School, also a Sufi of the Shadhilī order, Nasr emphasizes throughout his works the necessity of recovering “Religious and Sacred Science” from the Traditionalist and Sufi point of view. Embedded in this suggestion lies a critique of modern science and technology as well. The mentioned view, according to him, is religious, and the term “sacred science” in his works is juxtaposed to modern science.

## **2. Reflection on the meaning of “Tradition,” “Traditionalist,” and “Traditionalism”**

It is essential to elucidate the implications of Nasr’s view of “tradition” on the one hand and illustrate his usage of the term in his works on the other. Nasr proposes that tradition is the Sacred, and it is the transmission of the Sacred in various civilizations. A traditional civilization, according to him, retains the perfume of archetypal reality that issues from the Divine source. This is almost exactly a Sufi world view. In other words, tradition is the continuation of Sacred or Divine reality in temporal sequence within that civilization. This continuation appears in art, thought, life, and different aspects of man’s existence on the earth. Tradition, for Nasr, has both spiritual and corporeal dimensions and exists both within historical time and outside it. In Nasr’s philosophy, the term tradition is mainly used in contrast with modern, which holds characteristics that are opposite to the Sacred. In this sense, modern civilization is described by the Traditionalist School as detached from its divine roots and has lost the aura of the Sacred. In another way, this is the awakening claim that Sufi orders represent.

The eternality of tradition does not make it old or outdated. In other words, it is the presence of the eternal and everlasting Sacred within the traditional civilization. It is in this sense that a Traditionalist view sees the world as one and many at the same time. It is one for the unity of the Divine Being, and it is many for the multiplicity and diversity of its continuation in the phenomenal world. The many, in this sense, is rooted in the One and also is the expansion of the One. Whitehall Perry defines this idea in the following way:



### 3. Modern Science and Traditional Science

Clearly then, a critique of modern science lies at the heart of Nasr's philosophy. In his philosophy, modern science has been secularized and cut off from its Divine roots in opposition to the sacred science of tradition. In other words, modern philosophy and, consequently, science is set against tradition, in which the sense of the Sacred was ever-present. A look back at the history of philosophy and science makes Nasr conclude that something went wrong in the historical emergence of modern philosophy and science. Cartesian dualism<sup>5</sup> is one of the critical points which, Nasr argues, led modern philosophy and science in a new and dangerous direction, which would ultimately lead to secularization and the loss of the Sacred sense. Cartesian dualism, Nasr asserts, presupposes a complete separation between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, viz., between the knowing subject and the object to be known.<sup>6</sup> One of the conspicuous results of this separation is the epistemological and spiritual alienation of man from his natural environment and, in fact, from everything that may become the object of his knowledge.

Accordingly, the most profound consequence of Descartes' dualism for Nasr is the absolute separation of the knowing subject and the object to be known. The problem of the relation of the knower to the known has a long pedigree in traditional philosophy and, in particular, in the Islamic intellectual tradition. A standard Avicennian answer to the problem defines the highest state of human awareness as the mind's unification with the first intellect (in philosophical terms), which is nothing other than the Muhammadan reality (in religious terms).<sup>7</sup> Such a union, which happens on both the ontological and the cosmological levels, results in the unity of the subject who intellects and the object of intellection (*Ittihād al-'āqil wa al-ma'qūl*). Mulla Sadra Shirazi (ca. 1571–1636), in his *Al-Hikma al-mutā'alīya fī-l-asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a*, articulates this unity as follows:

The intellect is all things intelligible. This does not mean that it is all those things in their extra-mental individual modes of existence collected together as this is impossible. Rather it means that all essences that exist in extra-mental reality through many different existences exist in the intellect through multiple intelligible existences in a singular intelligible existence that in its unity and simplicity is all those meanings (Mulla Sadra, 2001-5) As quoted in (Rizvi, 2019).

Descartes upended this conventional identity of knower and known by radically separating the subject and object of knowledge. Thereupon, in opposition to the traditional understanding of knowledge, Cartesian dualism alienates man from the cosmos, which, Nasr argues, ultimately results in a loss of the Sacred sense and the undermining of the traditional understanding of epistemology and metaphysics. That is why the term “modern” conjures a specific meaning in the wake of Cartesian dualism to which Traditionalists aim. Nasr defines his particular usage of the term “modern” as neither contemporary nor outdated. Instead, “modern” means;

which is cut off from the Transcendent, from the immutable principles which in reality govern all things, and which are made known to man through revelation in its most universal sense. Modernism is thus contrasted with Tradition...; the latter implies all that which is of Divine Origin along with its manifestations and developments on the human plane while the former by contrast implies all that is merely human and now ever more increasingly subhuman, and all that is divorced and cut off from the Divine source (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1983: 164-165).

In this way, Nasr identifies Cartesian dualistic philosophy as the grounds for the separation of the modern from the traditional worldview. Moreover, Traditionalists maintain that modern science supports and protects a secular worldview and a value system that is established on its secular philosophical principles. Accordingly, as Kalin puts it, the emergence of modern science is the primary cause of the secularization and desacralization of the order of nature (Kalin, 2001).

As science developed self-consciously in opposition to superstition, many traditional sciences and beliefs were dismissed as illegitimate.<sup>8</sup> Positivism dismisses traditional metaphysics as unscientific because its claims are not amenable to experiment and thus irrefutable; from a positivist's point of view, only testable claims can count as scientific hypotheses.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, the Traditionalist school rejects such severe restrictions on what should count as "scientific." Refutability, along with mathematization and reductionism generally, limits science too narrowly, particularly for addressing complicated issues like morality or spiritual salvation.

#### **4. The Differences**

While acknowledging the necessity of rediscovering Sacred Science, Nasr notes some of the differences between modern and traditional science. Those differences could be summarized in terms of unity, consciousness, and harmony on the one hand and lack of them on the other. Nasr suggests that there is a "unity" to the cosmological concepts of traditional science and religion (even though he maintains the traditional sciences were distinct from religion), which was presented and dominated at the time, while there is no such "unity" between modern science and religion. Secondly, traditional sciences are based upon metaphysical principles and presuppositions, which, to a large extent, differ from the presuppositions of modern science. Thus, in contrast to those historians of science who claim a continuity between pre-modern and modern science (e.g., Pierre Duhem and Edward Grant), Nasr believes that modernity marks a violent and undesirable break with traditional science. He also maintains that modern science is not the continuation of traditional science.<sup>10</sup>

The universe in traditional cosmology that is the continuation of Sacred is conscious, while modern science views such a non-materialist viewpoint as absurd.<sup>11</sup> In other words, such consciousness cannot be measured by empirical science and modern physics. Moreover, modern science recognizes the physical aspect of nature as an independent entity and autonomous domain of reality with fixed laws of its

own. Nasr's viewpoint here opposes Hawking's controversial "the universe had no beginning" creation theory that extrapolated into theology with the consequence of there is no need to God for there is no beginning for the universe.<sup>12</sup>

Modern science, contrary to traditional science, studies the phenomena of nature only as facts, not as signs of God, or even as symbols. Thereupon, modern science reduces the cosmos from a conscious being to pure matter. If in traditional philosophy, the goal of learning was becoming, and intellectual inquires made for knowing things as they are, modern science assembles facts to develop testable theories in order to expose underlying order and universal laws, probably regardless of those principal attitudes.<sup>13</sup>

There has been a shift in the foundational questions. While traditional philosophy asks "why" such a phenomenon happens, modern science changes the question of "why" to "what" or "how." This leads us to yet another difference in which existence itself in the view of the traditional science is not an accident but a reflection of a divine plan. For its bias, modern science is not neutral, for when it enters a society, such as a traditional one, it will bring its value system. All this causes Nasr to state that;

Modern man has burned his hands in the fire, which he himself has kindled by allowing himself to forget who he is. Having sold his soul, in the manner of Faust, in order to gain dominion over the natural environment, he has created a situation in which the very control of the environment is turning into its strangulation, bringing in its wake not only ecocide but also ultimately suicide (Sayyed Hossein Nasr, Sivin, and Smith, 1973: 93-94).

Eventually, Nasr generally characterizes modern science after the 16-17th century as extreme rationalism mixed with atomism. The dominance of nominalism in the later periods of medieval ages and the emergence of humanism resulted in a science and technology which is anthropomorphic, evolutionist-progressive, and rejecting traditional metaphysical principles.

### 5. What is to be done: Nasr's perspective

We know that Nasr, as both graduate of M.I.T and a scholar of traditional sciences, did not blindly reject science and technology. His critique is against the foundations of modern science and the culture it creates. Nevertheless, it is essential to ask if Nasr introduces any suggestion or solution on what precisely is meant by the revival of traditional science for the Perennialism School. As mentioned earlier, the Traditionalist School sets out to revive sacred knowledge. Nasr, in his works, addresses two categories of readers: Muslims and general readers.

When he talks to Muslims, he reminds them of their past civilization. He describes the magnificent contribution of Muslim scholars to the progress of science; nonetheless, he suggests that Islamic sciences did not embrace the same attitudes and aims as modern science does. He disagrees with historians of science who argue that modern science is the continuation of the medieval Islamic civilization.<sup>14</sup> In his *Islam*,

*Science, Muslims, and Technology*, Nasr suggests to Muslims that a blind following of the steps of modern Science results in destroying their traditional values:

If the Muslim world indiscriminately also tries to join the camp of confusion and the process of the destruction of the environment in the name of being in the twenty-first century, I believe such a step will be suicidal (Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Iqbal, 2007: 51).

He asks Muslims to study modern sciences in-depth and, on their terms, and then try to understand it according to the Islamic worldview/tradition to be able to understand it according to the Islamic worldview/tradition in order to find what is in accordance with traditional Islamic science. In Nasr's view, this process will make Muslims understand the difference between Islamic philosophy and thought and modern science and how to discover what is worth preserving and what needs to be discarded.

If Islamic civilization wants to continue to be a living civilization, it is imperative for its representatives to examine the foundations of modern science at the theoretical level. They must initiate a process that will reinterpret, reintegrate, and accept or reject various aspects of modern science in light of Islam's own worldview and metaphysical vision of the nature of Reality. And on the practical level, it must try to evolve independent criteria of what to accept and what not to accept (Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Iqbal, 2007: 52).

Nasr suggests that where Muslims have no choice but to accept modern technology, they must take what is "absolutely essential" and then create their own technology. It is crucial to note, however, that here he makes a substantial distinction between science and technology, believing the latter can be severed from the former and transplanted into Islamic soil. A question here, however, is that how one can define the criteria based on which a choice is made or privilege is given to one and taken from another technology.<sup>15</sup>

When Nasr addresses the general public, he reminds them of the crisis that is caused by modern technology. Among these is the environmental crisis, which in Nasr's view is the consequence of the application of modern science in the form of technology. He suggests that the European industrial revolution changed the nature of technology. The modern technique is a tool of human power over nature to corrupt and manipulates it. Although the philosophy behind such intentions in Nasr's philosophy is not neglected, such philosophy creates a culture in which man feels superior to everything and attempts to possess everything in a way that allows him to manipulate it. On the other hand, we use science to create modern technology and use technology to replace the human. That is to say that the machine has taken the place of man in making things. In this view, pre-modern technology was an artistic work, whereas modern technology has removed the sense of art from technology. It is in this sense

that Nasr suggests that pre-modern life was surrounded by art and beauty that is lost now.

The solution that emerges from Nasr's philosophy is more epistemological, though. He argues that the very first thing to do in this field is to understand the

difference between traditional technologies, which were an extension of our hands, senses, and other parts of our bodies as well as our souls and which, like the body, were subservient to the soul, and the modern machine, which dominates over the human being (Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Iqbal, 2007: 94).

In his writings, Nasr articulates and attributes two sorts of damaging effects to the modern. One is in the external environment, and the other one is within the human itself. The external damage results in the destruction of jungles, rivers, and ecosystems, air pollution, and so on. The internal one includes the hormonal effects of modern agricultural products, not to mention the spiritual and psychological effects.

It seems that Nasr's traditional view disregards solving the environmental crisis by finding new technological fixes for the disastrous consequences of older technology. He instead suggests that the solution is to revive the Sacred view of nature.<sup>16</sup> If people understand the spiritual importance of nature, then they are not going to abuse it for whatever purpose they may have. The environmental crisis, according to Nasr, is an outcome of the severing of deep spiritual, philosophical and religious roots. Without a return to these roots, the crisis will continue to get wider.

One may not view kindly the idea of turning our back on technology to find a way to solve the global climate crisis, but seen in another way, Nasr's suggestions may not seem so absurd. The very recognition of the environmental crisis might be considered a vindication of Nasr's ideas. Because environmentalists and climate scientists themselves have begun to recognize the harm that can result from a modern, "objective" view of nature, they are already some way towards accepting Nasr's urging us to return to a view of nature as Sacred.

There is still another critical question regarding Nasr's critique of modern science. How should "Sacred science" be considered science if the positivist definition of science is not accepted? That is, if "science" is not identified with modern science, then to what does this term refer. Then what definition of science should we embrace such that Nasr's Sacred science fits the definition? On the other hand, there are those who would turn science into religion.<sup>17</sup> Do Nasr and other traditionalists view, turns religion into science, or his position is to attribute and add sacredness to sciences.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper explored the science-religion or sacred-secular relationship from a Sufi-Traditionalist viewpoint and Nasr's thoughts. The foundational thought and question of this paper, in other words, was assessing the Sufi responses to the

crisis of modern secular philosophy as it opposed the Sufi traditional Divine-centric philosophy and cosmology. There have been a variety of criticisms of modern science in the twentieth century in the West, especially starting in the 1960s. Nasr's "*Science and Civilization in Islam*" (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1968b), for instance, was published in 1968, a particularly potent moment for anti-modernists.

Nasr suggests that a revival of Sacred science can cure the various crises of modernity, whether it is environmental or technological, or spiritual. The term Sacred science could be confusing and contradictory for many people who are mostly involved in modern science and are unfamiliar with traditional ways of thinking. For a student of modern science, it seems absurd to talk about the Sacredness of science. For such a reader, science is a set of practices that creates legitimate knowledge regardless of whether the practitioner would embrace the sanctity of nature or not. This point needs clarification.

It appears that Nasr is not targeting scholars of math or chemistry; for instance, he is pointing to the philosophical foundations of science that desacralized the way man understands nature and himself. His critique of Cartesian dualism can help us to understand the spirit of his broader critique. On the other hand, the scientific discipline that Nasr most targeted for criticisms is modern physics for its claims that touch both the theoretical and the practical. Modern physics' danger comes from the universe it describes mostly in terms that appear most firmly in contrast to traditional ideas. It is the science that most targets the Sacred view of the universe.

There is no philosopher in the history of philosophy to have not been criticized. This is the nature of philosophy and philosophical reflections to build an idea, reflect on it and criticize it. Nasr is not an exception in this regard. There are critiques of his philosophy. One frequent accusation of the critics is that his philosophy is nostalgic to the past. Nasr, however, rejects this view by stating that the Sacred is neither old nor new in the sense understood by modern scholars. It is not a return to the past but a reconnection to the view that was especially alive among traditional civilizations. His goal, rather, is to regain the sense of the Sacred, which was present in traditional societies and has been obscured by modernity. What must be rediscovered is not the past but the sense of the Sacred.

For those who care about the future of humanity and nature, as Sufis claim to do, ignoring critiques of the traditional school as a whole is not wise. This view, even if we are not devoted to it, can assist us by reminding us of the crisis happening around us. Those environmental or ethical crises cannot be ignored. It is the role of intellectual contemplation and Sufism to make its follower aware of themselves and the world surrounding them. Nasr's appeal to Traditionalism and Sufi cosmology does just that.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Sufi literature and poetic language in its totality is representing this reality. Turabi Dede of the Bektashi order express this reality as follows:

O Turabi! "praise to God" at every moment for your state (Türabi haline şükreyle herdem)  
Consider and look for God's satisfaction (Rıza-yı Hak gözet olağör ebsem)  
If a man faces disgrace in the outer (Surette zilletle görünürse adem)  
its inner meaning is a blessing of God for us! (Manada, Huda'da nimet bizimdir)  
(Sari, 2016, pp. 578-581)

<sup>2</sup> For more on the Sufis development, roles and history see Barkan Ömer Lütfi, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Bir İskân ve Kolonizasyon Metodu Olarak Vakıflar ve Temlikler, I. İstila Devirlerinin Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri ve Zâviyeler", Vakıflar Dergisi, Ankara 1942; Ocak, Ahmet Yaşar, Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler (15.-17. Yüzyıllar), Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 2014. Also, for more on the relationships between Qizilbaşhs of Anatolia with the Safavid order in Ardabil and their interaction with the Safavid Empire in 15-16 centuries see: (Baharlu, 2020)

<sup>3</sup> (Guénon, 1987, p. 236) For more on Guén(Guénon & Herlihy, 2009) Guenon's on see most effective work targeted the crisis for humanity caused by modern philosophy and its attendant worldview; see (Guénon, 1946) Also translated into English (Guénon, 2001)

<sup>4</sup> For an overview on the history and development of the Sufi interpretation of the Quran which goes in line with Nasr's view, see (S. A. Asghari, 2016)

<sup>5</sup> While Descartes is known as the "father of modern philosophy" for his radical distinction of the thinking self from the phenomenal world (as argued in The Discourse on Method and the Meditations), the critiques of his dualism from materialists may have had an even more profound effect in undermining traditional ways of thinking by rejecting the idea of the separate thinking self altogether. For more on Cartesian dualism see (Descartes & Maclean, 2006)Also; (Descartes, Cottingham, & Williams, 2017) For some of the critiques on Cartesian dualism in different branch of science see (Mehta, 2011; Spicker, 1994)

<sup>6</sup> For more on his stand on science and dualism see (Kalin, 2001) Mehta Neeta provides a critique on dualism from a health perspective: (Mehta, 2011)

<sup>7</sup> For perception of the intellect in Islamic intellectual and religious tradition see (S. Asghari, 2017); Also, (S. Asghari, 2020)

<sup>8</sup> Some, such as Mathew Melvin-Koushki, argue that some traditional sciences should count as "scientific" since they are mathematicised and testable. He writes that "Islamicate occult science cuts to the quick of what it means to be modern, to be Western, to be scientific. Yet nowhere else are nineteenth-century colonialist metaphysics and materialist cosmology more firmly entrenched." See (Matthew, 2017, 2019; Melvin-Koushki, 2020)

<sup>9</sup> Talking about positivism following the Cartesian dualism may raise the question of the historical sequence of ideas here. In the traditionalist view of the history of modern science, if Cartesian dualism is a turning point from tradition to secular, then positivism is its result. This is not to say, however, that positivists endorsed Cartesian dualism. Rather, over the course of the 19th century, a unitary materialism arose, denying the Cartesian res cogitans. Thinking therefore, is not an act of soul, rather of the enmattered brain. Thereupon, in opposition to Aristotelian and Avicennan psychology with respect to the questions of how we know and how we sense, modern psychology attempted to establish a scientific, i.e. materialistic, epistemology.

<sup>10</sup> I assume that this in most part targets the philosophy of science and the intention for which the science and technology is used. Chittick discusses this issue in the first and second chapters of his Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul.

<sup>11</sup> For more on the consciousness of the universe see (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 2006)

<sup>12</sup> Of such opposition to the modern way of explaining the universe one might consider comparing Nasr with the cosmic mysticism discussed by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) who responded to the challenges faced by religion from evolutionary theory and the larger conflict between religion and science. For more on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin see (Deane-Drummond, 2017)

<sup>13</sup> The goal of education is an intriguing question in all intellectual traditions. For a study of this question in the Islamic tradition see (Chittick, 2012)

<sup>14</sup> This is a big debate within the history of science: continuity or revolution? Thomas Kuhn in his extremely influential Structure of Scientific Revolutions argues that there are major disruptive moments in which old "paradigms" are discarded and new ones embraced.

<sup>15</sup> Presumably a good Muslim can live without computers, say. But a good Muslim government would need to be able to feed its people, and so depend on agricultural technology. One may not think devising this criterion would be easy or straightforward.

<sup>16</sup> This might remind reader Native American indigenous tradition in which earth is mother and man belongs to it, not the other way around. In response to the US President's attempt to buy Native American lands, Chief Seattle in his historical letter in 1854 indicates the sacred view of nature for his people. He clarifies that "The President in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. But how can you buy or sell the sky? the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of the earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every meadow, every humming insect. All are holy in the memory and experience of my people." For more on this historic letter see (Seattle, 1854)

For more on the Sacred view of nature see (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1996) The Sacred view of nature is an integral part of traditional society and civilizations. Nature is seen alive. For more on this see (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1968a)

<sup>17</sup> For more on attempts to transform nature and/or science into religion see (Sideris, 2018)

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