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The Impasse of Modern Psychology: Behaviorism, Psychoanalysis, Humanistic, and Transpersonal Psychology in the Light of the Perennial Philosophy

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> [T]he requirement imposed on anyone who wants to practice psychoanalysis as a profession of being first 'psychoanalyzed' himself . . . so from what source did the first psychoanalyst obtain the 'powers' that they communicate to their disciples, and by whom were they themselves 'psychoanalyzed' in the first place?[1]

The above quotation by René Guénon (1886-1951),[2] a pre-eminent exponent of the "Traditionalist" or "Perennialist" school of thought, has framed the most decisive question regarding the entire theme of psychology in relation to the perennial philosophy: from what source did modern psychology first originate? This question touches upon the very kernel of the issue raised in the title of this piece. The traditional or perennial method draws upon the universal principles underlying all modes of knowledge, from sensible perception of the contingent to the direct or non-dual perception of the Absolute via intellectual intuition (*noesis*).[3] These metaphysical principles, being eternal and immutable, provide the criteria for the discernment between "sacred science" and "profane science"—yet because they are for the most part absent from modern psychology, it is left in a precarious situation.[4] "[W]e have no clear exposition of

[1] René Guénon, "The Misdeeds of Psychoanalysis," in *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, trans. Lord Northbourne (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), pp. 233-234.

[2] Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950), a spiritual paragon of the twentieth-century, reverently referred to Guénon as "the great Sufi" (Roger Maridot, "Foreword," to René Guénon, *Miscellanea*, trans. Henry D. Fohr, Cecil Bethell, Patrick Moore and Hubert Schiff [Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001], p. xviii); "He [René Guénon] probably did more than any other person to awaken Western intellectuals to their lost heritage by reminding them that there is a Goal and there are paths to the Goal" (Arthur Osborne, "Guidance and Orthodoxy," in *For Those with Little Dust: Selected Writings of Arthur Osborne* [Sarasota, FL: Ramana Publications, 1990], p. 76); "In my own education, no writer has been more helpful as an example of keen, spiritual discrimination than the French Sufi, René Guénon" (Theodore Roszak, "Introduction: Pico's Chameleon and the Consciousness Circuit," in *Unfinished Animal: The Aquarian Frontier and the Evolution of Consciousness* [New York: Harper & Row, 1975], p. 15); "Certainly no other writer [René Guénon] has so effectively communicated the absoluteness of truth" (Jacob Needleman (ed.), *The Sword of Gnosis: Metaphysics, Cosmology, Tradition, Symbolism* [London: Arkana, 1986], p. 12); see also Samuel Bendeck Sotillos, "Book Review: The Essential René Guénon," *Parabola: Myth, Tradition, and the Search for Meaning*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Fall 2010), pp. 114-121.

[3] "[I]n civilizations of a traditional character, intellectual intuition lies at the root of everything" (René Guénon, "Sacred and Profane Science" in *The Crisis of the Modern World*, trans. Arthur Osborne, Marco Pallis and Richard C. Nicholson [Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis et Universalis, 1996], p. 61).

[4] "Modern civilization, by its divorce from any principle, can be likened to a headless corpse of which the last motions are convulsive and insignificant" (Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" in *The Bugbear of Literacy* [Bedfont, Middlesex: Perennial Books, 1979], p. 15.

guiding principles,"[5] says Carl Jung (1875-1961). This then leads us to the following dilemma: "What we call consciousness without an object, oneness, doesn't exist for modern psychology."[6]

No Psychology or Science of the Soul without Metaphysics

If it is the sacred or spiritual domain that, according to the perennial philosophy, not only situates the psycho-physical domain but balances and heals it, then an authentic and integral psychology needs *a priori* to be rooted in and intrinsically connected to a spiritual tradition in order to be effective. This is what allows for the *metanoia* or integral transformation known as *cura animarum*, or "cure of souls", the goal of what has been termed the "science of the soul" in the ancient sense.[7] While we acknowledge that each orthodox spiritual tradition contains a corresponding integral psychology, we are not suggesting that spirituality is psychology as such, for Spirit simultaneously supersedes the psyche and includes it. The reverse is not true for psychology, however, as the psyche is always subordinate to what is higher than it, namely the Spirit. We recall an illuminating point that speaks to the unanimity of all integral psychologies that correspond to their traditional spiritualities before the rupture of the modern world: "There is no science of the soul [psyche] without a metaphysical basis to it and without spiritual remedies at its disposal."[8]

Modern psychology for the most part has not only radically abandoned but negated its metaphysical origin.[9] It now seeks to cure the mind or cognition taken in isolation, rather than recognizing the separation of the soul from the spiritual domain as the root of the problem.[10] "The word 'mental' is often used to indicate the domain which has been explored by Western psychologists and which is often expressed by the word 'psyche,' so as to avoid metaphysical

[5] C.G. Jung, "Psychotherapy and a Philosophy of Life," in *Essays on Contemporary Events: The Psychology of Nazism*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 45. The same could be mentioned of William James's *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), considered by many to be a monumental work within modern psychology: "his *Principles* are not in any sense a system; but rather a collection of chapters that do not hang together" (Mortimer J. Adler, "The History of Psychology," in *What Man Has Made of Man: A Study of the Consequences of Platonism and Positivism in Psychology* [New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1957], p. 86); "It is doubtful if any thinker can claim to have provided psychology with a fundamental set of concepts" (Robert Thomson, "The Achievements and Limitations of Psychology," in *The Pelican History of Psychology* [New York: Penguin Books, 1968], p. 426).

[6] Jean Klein, "London November 1982," in *The Ease of Being*, ed. Emma Edwards (Durham, NC: The Acorn Press, 1998), p. 68.

[7] Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "On Being in One's Right Mind," in *What is Civilization? And Other Essays* (Ipswich, UK: Golgonooza Press, 1989), pp. 33-41, included in this anthology.

[8] Frithjof Schuon, "The Contradiction of Relativism," in *Logic and Transcendence*, trans. Peter N. Townsend (London: Perennial Books, 1984), p. 14.

[9] See Albert G. A. Balz, "The Metaphysical Infidelities of Modern Psychology," *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 33, No. 13 (June 1936), pp. 337-351.

[10] See James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975); Erich Fromm, "The Problem," in *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 6; Frederic Wiedemann, "Soul: The Mediator," in *Between Two Worlds: The Riddle of Wholeness* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1986), pp. 68-85; Georg Feuerstein, "The Changing Fortunes of the Soul: A Generation without Soul," in *Lucid Waking: Mindfulness and the Spiritual Potential of Humanity* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1997), pp. 31-46; Edward S. Reed, *From Soul to Mind: The Emergence of Psychology, from Erasmus Darwin to William James* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

and religious inferences suggested by the word 'soul'."[11] By distorting the original meaning of the term psyche or "soul," modern psychology has disabled itself and has only recently begun to realize this. In fact the entirety of modern psychology's enterprise could be astutely summarized in a few brief words underscored by one of its well-known proponents: "Psychology is the Science of Mental Life, both its phenomena and of their conditions."[12] The official beginnings of modern psychology—as an autonomous field of science separate from philosophy and physiology—is thought to have commenced in 1879 with Wilhelm Wundt's (1832-1920) establishment of the first experimental psychology laboratory at the University of Leipzig, Germany.[13] Some have suggested that modern psychology's inception began with John Locke (1632-1704), one of the most influential thinkers of the Enlightenment to whom was attributed, among other things, the formulation of the doctrine of empiricism.[14]

The complete disconnection of modern psychology and modern science from integral metaphysics, which has always brought order to the psycho-physical domain, has had catastrophic effects upon the world we live in; very few would argue against this. The origins of the perennial philosophy, quite to the contrary, are inseparably connected to the sapiential revelations. As René Guénon remarks:

> [W]hat is the origin of these traditional metaphysical doctrines from which we have borrowed all our fundamental ideas? The answer is very simple, although it risks raising objections from those who would prefer to consider everything from an historical point of view, and the answer is that there is no origin—by which we mean no human origin—that can be determined in time. In other words, the origin of tradition, if indeed the word "origin" has any place at all in such a case, is as "non-human" [supra-human or supra-individual] as is metaphysics itself. Metaphysical truth is eternal.[15]

Since modern psychology can trace neither its origins nor the continuity of its transmission[16] to what is sacred and transcendent—"[Modern] psychology, and indeed modern science itself, are historical products"[17]—it is undeniably at a profound impasse which it cannot go beyond

[11] Jean Klein, *Be Who You Are*, trans. Mary Mann (Salisbury, UK: Non-Duality Press, 2006), p. 94.

[12] William James, "The Scope of Psychology," in *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1913), p. 1.

[13] "Metaphysics should confessedly, as it does really, rest upon psychology instead of conversely" (Granville Stanley Hall, *The Founders of Modern Psychology* [New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1912], p. 320).

[14] ". . . Locke, the founder of modern psychology" (René Guénon, "The Postulates of Rationalism," in *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, p. 92).

[15] René Guénon, "Eastern Metaphysics," in *Studies in Hinduism*, trans. Henry D. Fohr, ed. Samuel D. Fohr (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), p. 100.

[16] "[T]ransmission serves as a kind of 'quality control' to insure that a given teacher does not distort the teachings for his own personal gain" (John Welwood, "On Spiritual Authority: Genuine and Counterfeit," in *Spiritual Choices: The Problem of Recognizing Authentic Paths to Inner Transformation*, eds. Dick Anthony, Bruce Ecker and Ken Wilber [New York: Paragon House, 1987], p. 290).

[17] Rollo May, "Social Responsibilities of Psychologists," in *Psychology and the Human Dilemma* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1967), p. 207.

by its own efforts. In fact, the father of American psychology reached the following conclusion regarding the limitations of modern psychology: "[Psychology] a nasty little subject—all one cares to know lies outside."[18] The integral psychology of the perennial philosophy differs fundamentally from this perspective since it recognizes the sacred as infused into all domains of reality. This is underscored in the following passage from Whitall Perry (1920-2005), which speaks to what is designated by the term "Tradition" in this perspective:

> Tradition is the continuity of Revelation: an uninterrupted transmission, through innumerable generations, of the spiritual and cosmological principles, sciences, and laws resulting from a revealed religion: nothing is neglected, from the establishment of social orders and codes of conduct to the canons regulating the arts and architecture, ornamentation and dress; it includes the mathematical, physical, medical, and psychological sciences, encompassing moreover those deriving from celestial movements. What contrasts it totally with our modern learning, which is a closed system materially, is its reference of all things back to superior planes of being, and eventually to ultimate Principles; considerations entirely unknown to modern man.[19]

The Margins of the Human Psyche

The perennial philosophy insists that "the higher cannot emanate [proceed] from the lower,"[20] which is to say that the human psyche or the empirical ego cannot transcend itself—"the psychic cannot be treated by the psychic"[21]—without the agency and benediction of what is higher than itself. It is apropos of this that Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) described the empirical ego as "the true seat of anxiety,"[22] unconsciously highlighting its epistemological and ontological limitations—for only what is integrally spiritual can act as the true antidote for the modern and postmodern malaise, marked as it is by unequivocal relativism, the notion that *any opinion is as good as another*. It will thus be no surprise to find the following example of the relativism within which modern psychology is imprisoned: "The only reality I can possibly know is the world as *I* perceive and experience it at this moment. . . . And the only certainty is that those perceived realities are different. There are as many 'real worlds' as there are people!"[23]

[18] Henry James (ed.), *The Letters of William James*, Vol. II (Boston, MA: Atlantic Monthly, 1920), p. 2.

[19] Whitall N. Perry, "The Revival of Interest in Tradition," in *The Unanimous Tradition: Essays on the Essential Unity of All Religions*, ed. Ranjit Fernando (Colombo: Sri Lanka Institute of Traditional Studies, 1999), p. 4.

[20] René Guénon, "The Social Chaos," in *The Crisis of the Modern World*, p. 106.

[21] Titus Burckhardt, "Traditional Cosmology and Modern Science: Modern Psychology," in *Mirror of the Intellect: Essays on Traditional Science and Sacred Art*, trans. and ed. William Stoddart (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 50, included in this anthology.

[22] C.G. Jung, "Psychological Commentary," in W.Y. Evans-Wentz (ed.), *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. xlvii; "ego is the real locus of anxiety" (Sigmund Freud, *The Problem of Anxiety*, trans. H.A. Bunker [New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1963], p. 19).

[23] Carl R. Rogers, "Do We Need 'A' Reality?" in *A Way of Being* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995), p. 102. This outlook is quite similar to the following, which is a prime example of flawed New Age thought: "you create your own reality" (Susan M. Watkins, "Togetherness in Space: Class Dreams and Co-Creations," in *Conversations with Seth: Book Two* [Needham, MA: Moment Point Press, 2006], p. 41).

No matter what theory or methodology the modern psychologist or therapist employs, although it might appear at first glance to be genuinely insightful or helpful, it is still bound to what is axiomatically relative and subjective because limited to the domain of individual interpretation, which consequently has nothing to do with intellectual intuition or the spiritual domain. Thus it can be affirmed that "We are in many ways the prisoners of a psychology based on Cartesian principles."[24]

Traditional Cosmological Perspectives on Health and Well-Being

Numerous individuals within varied disciplines have pointed out that the primordial norms of the past have cascaded into unprecedented disorder, establishing abnormality as a new norm. As Roberto Assagioli (1888-1974) has affirmed: "Humanity today is in a state of serious collective and individual crisis. . . . We could say that 'normal' people now live 'outside themselves' from a psychological or spiritual point of view—this expression, once used to refer to people who were mentally ill, is now quite an apt description of modern [and postmodern] humankind!"[25] Carl Jung (1875-1961) concurs when he says that "our age is afflicted with a blindness that has no parallel."[26]

What is altogether missing from the modern diagnosis and treatment of mental illness is the understanding of time and the human psyche in light of traditional cosmology.[27] The unfolding of time, contrary to contemporary schemas of "evolution" and "progress," was unanimously perceived in pre-modern times to be cyclical. Time begins with human individuals living in proximity to the sacred, but by its passing individuals become farther and farther removed from it; the psychological implication of this is that the human psyche, disconnected from Spirit, becomes farther and farther removed from its source *in divinis*. It is this distance from the spiritual domain that causes the human psyche to become deregulated, fragmented, and imbalanced. The present-day disequilibrium is firmly and unavoidably contextualized within what the Hindu tradition has termed the *Kali-Yuga* ("Dark Age"),[28] or what in the Buddhist tradition is known as *mappō* ("the decadent age of the *Dharma*").[29]

It is interesting to note that the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, better known as the *DSM* (soon to be in its fifth edition), attempts to diagnose the very illness

[24] Rama P. Coomaraswamy, "The Problems that Result from Locating Spirituality in the Psyche," *Sacred Web: A Journal of Tradition and Modernity*, Vol. 9 (Summer 2002), p. 111.

[25] Roberto Assagioli, *Transpersonal Development: The Dimension Beyond Psychosynthesis* (Forres, UK: Smiling Wisdom, 2007), pp. 38, 82.

[26] C.G. Jung, "The Type Problem in Poetry," in *Psychological Types*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 185.

[27] See Titus Burckhardt, "Traditional Cosmology and Modern Science: Cosmologia Perennis," in *Mirror of the Intellect*, pp. 17-26.

[28] Traditional sources such as the *Vishnu-Purāna*, dating to the third century A.D., confirm the entropic trajectory of the present decline; see especially William Stoddart, "Progress or the '*Kali-Yuga*'?" in *Remembering in a World of Forgetting: Thoughts on Tradition and Postmodernism*, eds. Mateus Soares de Azevedo and Alberto Vasconcellos Queiroz (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2008), pp. 5-6; René Guénon, "The Dark Age," in *The Crisis of the Modern World*, pp. 10-30; and Martin Lings, *The Eleventh Hour: The Spiritual Crisis of the Modern World in the Light of Tradition and Prophecy* (Cambridge, UK: Archetype, 2002).

[29] See William Stoddart, "The Original Vow and the Pure Land School," in *Outline of Buddhism* (Oakton, VA: Foundation for Traditional Studies, 1998), p. 64.

that it itself is a byproduct of—the materialistic science of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, which gave birth to modern psychology. From this perspective the *DSM* could arguably be characterized as describing the many psychological disorders and pathologies that are part and parcel of the *Kali-Yuga*. If the spiritual domain is the only antidote for a human existence devoid of the sacred, then any true and authentic psychology requires that we recognize it and conform to it.

> Man can be truly human only when he is mindful of his theomorphic nature. When he ignores the divine in himself and in other existences he becomes subhuman. And when this happens not merely in the case of a single individual but in the case of society as a whole, then that society disintegrates through the sheer rootlessness of its own structure or through the proliferation of psychic maladies which it is powerless to heal because it has deprived itself of the one medicine capable of healing them.[30]

We cannot easily brush aside the fact that the *Kali-Yuga* has played a central role in diminishing the rightful place of religion or spirituality in today's secular milieu, which is marked by systematic dehumanization and chaos in all spheres of the human condition. In fact even the spiritual traditions themselves are not safe from the onslaught of these decadent times: "The *Kali Yuga* is not only the time when there is no longer anything but problems without solutions, nor the time when the sacred ceases to exist. It is the time when everything that fundamentally opposes the spiritual passes itself off as spiritual."[31] That psychology or therapy has blurred or even usurped the role of traditional spirituality—"it has been said that if science is the new religion, then psychotherapy is its place of worship"[32]—is a sure sign of the *Kali-Yuga*. "[P]sychoanalysis is one of those mass movements which are both a cause and consequence of spiritual decay."[33] The therapeutic age of today that endorses the empirical ego or self above all else has forgotten the crucial directive of one of its most celebrated figures, who unintentionally affirms tradition and thus the perennial philosophy: "Everything new must have its roots in what was before."[34] And the following statement is equally significant: "the history of psychol-

[30] Philip Sherrard, "The Desanctification of Nature," in *The Rape of Man and Nature: An Inquiry into the Origins and Consequences of Modern Science* (Ipswich, UK: Golgonooza Press, 1991), p. 100.

[31] Jean Biès, "Sacredness," in *Returning to the Essential: Selected Writings of Jean Biès*, trans. Deborah Weiss-Dutilh (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2004), pp. 136-137.

[32] Robert E. Mogar, "Psychedelic (LSD) Research: A Critical Review of Methods and Results," in *Challenges of Humanistic Psychology*, ed. James F.T. Bugental (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 143; "[Modern] Psychology, in a certain sense, is a secular religion: It has its own belief system, its own practices, its own rituals. Psychologists do not speak of 'heresy'; they talk about 'pathology'" (Daniel Goleman, "The Impact of the New Religions on Psychology," in *Understanding the New Religions*, eds. Jacob Needleman and George Baker [New York: The Seabury Press, 1978], p. 113.

[33] Werner Kraft, quoted in Thomas Szasz, "Karl Kraus Today," in *Karl Kraus and the Soul-Doctors: A Pioneer Critic and his Criticism of Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), p. 93.

[34] Sigmund Freud, "If Moses was an Egyptian. . . ," in *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. Katherine Jones (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 22.

ogy is the history of forgetting."[35] What has been forgotten is that the human psyche has at all times and places been situated within the spiritual domain:

> The image of man presented to us by modern psychology is not only fragmentary, it is pitiable. In reality, man is as if suspended between animality and divinity; now modern thought—be it philosophical or scientific—admits only animality, practically speaking.
>
> We wish, on the contrary, to correct and perfect the image of man by insisting on his divinity; not that we wish to make a god of him, *quod absit;* we intend simply to take account of his true nature, which transcends the earthly, and lacking which he would have no reason for being.
>
> It is this that we believe we can call—in a symbolist language—the "transfiguration of man."[36]

The Critique of Modern Psychology

Though modern psychology is far from being homogeneous and most psychologists or therapists identify themselves as "eclectic" in their orientation, it can be divided into four general phases that are often described as "forces"—behaviorism, psychoanalysis, humanistic psychology, and transpersonal psychology, including their various schools. These "four forces" in modern psychology encompass a broad spectrum of approaches; most psychologists or therapists do not exclusively identify themselves with one of them, often availing themselves of more than one school within the "forces" themselves.[37]

The overarching traditionalist or perennialist critique of modern psychology has been termed *psychologism* by its exponents; however we would suggest that this critique also might include *scientism*, *evolutionism*, *syncretism*, and *New Age thought*. It is important to point out that all of these various ideologies of modernism, which extend into postmodernism, are not separate from one another; they often intersect and complement one another, while all of them share the error of *reductionism* or *relativism* which is inseparable from the loss of the sense of the sacred in the contemporary world:

> Relativism sets out to reduce every element of absoluteness to a relativity, while making a quite illogical exception in favor of this reduction itself. In effect, relativism consists in declaring it to be true that there is no such thing as truth, or in declaring it to be absolutely true that nothing but the relatively true exists. . . . In short, every idea is reduced to a relativity of some sort, whether psychological, historical, or social; but the assertion nullifies itself by the fact that it too presents

[35] Russell Jacoby, "Revisionism: The Repression of a Theory," in *Social Amnesia: A Critique of Conformist Psychology from Adler to Laing* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1975), p. 44.

[36] Frithjof Schuon, "Foreword," *The Transfiguration of Man* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1995), p. vii.

[37] Due to spacial constraints, we cannot delve into contemporary research in fields such as neurophysiology, biological psychiatry and neuroscience; however, it will suffice to point out that while they attempt to study consciousness or the complexity of the human psyche, they often do so by reducing it to the brain or its physical structures. In contrast, the traditional understanding of the psyche evades such attempts to limit it to the psycho-physical order and emphasizes that it cannot be properly understood unless it is situated in the spiritual domain. See Wolfgang Smith, "Neurons and Mind", *Sophia: The Journal of Traditional Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Winter 2004), pp. 15-41.

> itself as a psychological, historical, or social relativity. . . . [I]ts initial absurdity lies in the implicit claim to be unique in escaping, as if by enchantment, from a relativity that is declared alone to be possible.[38]

This analysis encompasses a host of other reductions that have occurred and continue to perpetuate themselves in the modern and postmodern mindset, including the reduction of integral psychology to psychologism: "[P]sychologism attempts to explain the greater in terms of the lesser and excludes all that goes beyond its own limits."[39] These can be summarized as follows: the confusion of the Absolute with the relative, the Spirit with the psyche, the Intellect or *Intellectus* with reason or *ratio*, the Self with ego, and the Personality with individuality.[40] Modern psychology and the subject of the human psyche are by definition circumscribed by the relative or horizontal domain: "Psychological realities represent relative truth."[41] We might even say that in the contemporary era spiritual realization has been reduced to the attempt to attain mental health and well-being as "the practice of psychoanalysis . . . has come to replace religion in the lives of many people."[42] Of course we are not suggesting that there is something problematic in seeking psychological health and well-being, so long as it is not mistaken for spiritual realization; they are situated on two different levels. The higher spiritual includes the lower psycho-physical. Nonetheless, seeking *happiness for happiness' sake*, devoid of any deeper significance, is essentially pathological: "The soul, like every other domain of reality, can only be truly known by what transcends it."[43]

Psychologism: Hostage to the Empirical Ego

Psychologism is defined as the reduction of the spiritual to the psychological—the objective to the subjective—which is to say the psychologization of the spiritual domain. Within modern psychology itself psychologism has been defined as "An approach that reduces transcendental or spiritual events and experiences to the level of purely *psychological* explanation."[44] Without the inclusion of the spiritual domain the human individual must be defined or understood by the most superficial and whimsical criteria: "by their own theories of human nature psychologists have the power of elevating or degrading this same nature. Debasing assumptions debase

[38] Frithjof Schuon, "The Contradiction of Relativism," in *Logic and Transcendence*, trans. Peter N. Townsend (London: Perennial Books, 1984), p. 7.

[39] Harry Oldmeadow, "The Not-So-Close Encounters of Western Psychology and Eastern Spirituality," in *Journeys East: 20th Century Western Encounters with Eastern Traditions* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2004), p. 314, included in this anthology.

[40] René Guénon, "Fundamental Distinction Between the 'Self' and the 'Ego,'" in *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta*, trans. Richard C. Nicholson (New York: The Noonday Press, 1958), p. 28; see also Martin Lings, "Intellect and Reason," in *Ancient Beliefs and Modern Superstitions* (Cambridge, UK: Archetype, 2001), pp. 51-60.

[41] John Welwood, "Realization and Embodiment: Psychological Work in the Service of Spiritual Development," *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1999), p. 177.

[42] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Modern Western Philosophy and Schools of Thought," in *A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World* (Chicago, IL: KAZI Publications, 1994), p. 174.

[43] Titus Burckhardt, "Traditional Cosmology and Modern Science: Modern Psychology," p. 47.

[44] Michael Daniels, "Glossary," in *Shadow, Self, Spirit: Essays in Transpersonal Psychology* (Exeter, UK: Imprint Academic, 2005), p. 304.

human beings; generous assumptions exalt them."[45] This underscores the implicit and operative unbridled subjectivity upon which modern psychology—whether behavioristic, psychoanalytical, humanistic, or transpersonal—is circumscribed. "Psychologism can be described as the assumption that man's nature and behavior are to be explained by psychological mechanisms which can be laid bare by a scientific and empirical psychology."[46] This reductionism cannot avoid confusing the spiritual with the psychic, denying what is higher than itself, and replacing it with the psychological. It must not be forgotten that Carl Gustav Jung, Freud's foremost disciple, considered to be seminal in the development of transpersonal psychology, unequivocally articulates the fundamentals of his own psychologism: "One cannot grasp anything metaphysically, but it can be done psychologically. Therefore I strip things of their metaphysical wrapping in order to make them objects of psychology."[47] The process of psychologizing can be so subtle that it sometimes occurs without the psychologist or therapist even being aware of it—"the real danger is that of mixing them [the spiritual domain and the psychological] without realizing it."[48] We need to emphasize, however, that there are also those within various schools of modern psychology who have challenged the phenomena of psychologism and what has been astutely identified as the "confusion of levels"[49]—the confusion of the psychic with the spiritual domain, the relative with the Absolute. "What I am protesting," says Rollo May (1909-1994), "is the confusion of religion and psychology which I believe does not do service to either."[50] We might add the often quoted passage: "Psychosynthesis [transpersonal psychology] does not aim nor attempt to give a metaphysical nor a theological explanation of the great Mystery—it leads to the door, but stops there."[51] A similar statement on "the decisive boundary" is mentioned by Viktor Frankl (1905-1997): "Logotherapy does not cross the boundary between psychotherapy and religion. But it leaves the door to religion open and it leaves it to the patient whether or not to pass the door."[52] With these cautions in place we still need to be mindful of the real boundaries that do indeed exist between the psychic and spiritual domains.

> [I]ts error consists in reducing the spiritual to the psychological and in believing there is nothing beyond the realm of psychology—in other words, that this very limited science can attain to all inner realities, which is absurd. This view would imply that psychology, or even psychoanalysis, could comprehend *Satori* or *Nirvāna*. Modern science, like modern civilization as a whole, is thoroughly pro-

[45] Gordon W. Allport, "The Fruits of Eclecticism: Bitter or Sweet," in *The Person in Psychology: Selected Essays* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1968), pp. 3-27.

[46] Harry Oldmeadow, "The Not-So-Close Encounters of Western Psychology and Eastern Spirituality," p. 313.

[47] C.G. Jung, "Commentary," in *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, trans. Richard Wilhelm (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), p. 129.

[48] Paul Tournier, "Psychology and Spirit," in *The Meaning of Persons* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 108.

[49] Roberto Assagioli, "Spiritual Development and Neuro-Psychological Disturbances," in *Transpersonal Development: The Dimension Beyond Psychosynthesis* (Forres, UK: Smiling Wisdom, 2007), p. 112.

[50] Rollo May, "Transpersonal or Transcendental?" *The Humanistic Psychologist*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Summer 1986), p. 89.

[51] Roberto Assagioli, "Introduction," *Psychosynthesis* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), pp. 6-7.

[52] Viktor E. Frankl, "Conclusion: Dimensions of Meaning," in *The Will to Meaning: Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy* (New York: Meridian, 1988), p. 143.

> fane, having lost all sense of the sacred, reducing everything to merely individual and trivial dimensions.[53]

Scientism: Imprisonment in the Domain of the Five Senses

William Chittick underscores how predominant scientism is within the contemporary paradigm, even though many may be oblivious to its presence: "It is very difficult to characterize the modern worldview with a single label. One word that has often been suggested is 'scientism,' the belief that the scientific method and scientific findings are the sole criterion for truth."[54] And if we probe further into how this affects the human individual we arrive at the following: "The universe of scientism is a world devoid of consciousness and purposefulness."[55] Through deductive analysis of the above statements it is not difficult to discern their logical consequences, including the intrinsic relationship between scientism and psychologism, since they both seek to reduce reality and the psyche to their own measure: "The modern psychological and psychoanalytical point of view tries to reduce all the higher elements of man's being to the level of the psyche, and moreover to reduce the psyche itself to nothing more than that which can be studied through modern psychological and psychoanalytical methods."[56] Such methods of inquiry halt at the isthmus that divides the spiritual domain from the psychic and cannot delve further: "The metaphysics of scientism encourages man to stop his search for inwardness at the level of psychic contents."[57]

Scientism does not and cannot *ipso facto* affirm the existence of what is beyond the measurement of the five senses; it is thus cut off from what is sacred and transcendent: "As a science, [modern] psychology can neither prove nor disprove religion's claim to truth."[58] It will suffice to say that psychologism can be viewed as a prolongation of scientism; as Theodore Roszak (1933-2011) states: "Science is our religion because we cannot, most of us, with any living conviction *see around it*."[59] The quintessence of the contradiction of scientism has been wonderfully summarized as follows: "the contention that there are no truths save those of [modern] science is not itself a scientific truth; in affirming it scientism contradicts itself."[60] Scientism's denial of and antagonism to the sacred science of the perennial philosophy explains why it is

[53] Frithjof Schuon, "Appendix," in *Light on the Ancient Worlds: A New Translation with Selected Letters*, trans. Deborah Casey, Mark Perry, Jean-Pierre Lafouge and James S. Cutsinger, ed. Deborah Casey (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2005), p. 136.

[54] William C. Chittick, "The Rehabilitation of Thought," in *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul: The Pertinence of Islamic Cosmology in the Modern World* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld, 2009), p. 48.

[55] Jacob Needleman, "Magic and Sacred Psychology," in *A Sense of the Cosmos: The Encounter of Modern Science and Ancient Truth* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1976), p. 138.

[56] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Western World and its Challenges to Islam," in *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man, Revised and Enlarged Edition* (Chicago, IL: ABC International Group, 2001), p. 215.

[57] Jacob Needleman, "A Brief Note on Jungianism," in *A Sense of the Cosmos*, p. 130.

[58] Gordon W. Allport, "The Religious Sentiment," in *Becoming: Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 98.

[59] Theodore Roszak, "Idolatry and Damnation," in *Where the Wasteland Ends: Politics and Transcendence in Postindustrial Society* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1972), pp. 134-135.

[60] Huston Smith, "The Way Things Are," in *Forgotten Truth: The Common Vision of the World's Religions* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), p. 16.

incapable of providing an integral psychology, since it lacks the fundamental principles that are needed. And yet it is in a serious quandary due to the fact that all "four forces" of modern psychology rest on its foundations: "That is why modern psychology stands out among the sciences as a sort of strange disfigurement. The whole enterprise of modern, scientific psychology is rooted in an impossible contradiction: the attempt to subsume one level of reality under laws that govern a lower level."[61]

Evolutionism: The Greater Cannot Derive from the Lesser

We must not underestimate the contemporary mindset that attempts "to claim to derive the 'greater' from the 'lesser' . . . [which is] one of the most typical of modern aberrations."[62] It is important to note that evolutionary theory is deeply embedded in the theoretical outlook of all four "forces" of modern psychology.[63] As Charles Darwin (1809-1882) remarked: "[Modern] psychology will be based on a new foundation, that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation."[64] That man is said to be only an animal, and furthermore that he is seen as a product of accidental evolution, demonstrates Darwin's profound influence not only upon psychoanalysis but upon the whole of modern psychology, since these ideas are fixed *a priori* in its orientation. Transpersonal psychology, which along with humanistic psychology, acknowledges the spiritual domain, nonetheless still makes use of evolutionary doctrine. Evolutionary theory has been projected onto the spiritual domain via Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), Ken Wilber (b. 1949), Andrew Cohen (b. 1955), or even their forerunners such as Madame Blavatsky (1831-1891). Evolutionism, falsely coupled with spirituality, has put forward a suspicious hybridization that reaches its zenith in New Age spirituality—"evolutionary enlightenment"[65] or "evolutionary spirituality."[66] "[E]volutionism . . . pervades the New Age movement as a whole."[67] This is axiomatically in conflict with the perennial philosophy and all sapiential traditions. As René Guénon avers: "We do not believe in 'evolution' in the sense the moderns have given the word."[68] Evolutionism is part and parcel of scientism, of which it is a direct derivative; thus the perceptive reference to "the

[61] Jacob Needleman, "Magic and Sacred Psychology," in *A Sense of the Cosmos*, p. 138.

[62] René Guénon, "Materia Signata Quantitate," in *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, p. 20.

[63] "[T]he scientific basis of psychoanalysis was evolutionary biology" (Otto Rank, *Beyond Psychology* [New York: Dover, 1958], p. 28).

[64] Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1866), p. 576; "The implications of evolutionary theory for [modern] psychology have been profound" (L.S. Hearnshaw, *The Shaping of Modern Psychology* [London: Routledge, 1989], p. 115); see also James Rowland Angell, "The Influence of Darwin on Psychology", *Psychological Review*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (May 1909), pp. 152-169.

[65] See Andrew Cohen and Ken Wilber, "The Guru and the Pandit: The Evolution of Enlightenment," *What is Enlightenment?* Issue 21 (Spring/Summer 2002), pp. 38-49, 136-143; and Andrew Cohen, "Awakening to Evolution," *EnlightenNext: The Magazine for Evolutionaries*, Issue 42 (December 2008/February 2009), pp. 110, 112.

[66] Tom Huston, "A Brief History of Evolutionary Spirituality," *What is Enlightenment?* Issue 35 (January/March 2007), pp. 77-84.

[67] Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "The Evolutionary Perspective," in *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), p. 159.

[68] René Guénon, "Eastern Metaphysics," in *Studies in Hinduism*, p. 96.

great idol of scientism, *evolution*."[69] The entire discussion could conclude with the concisely stated principle: "There is no spiritual evolution."[70] This is not to say that there is no spiritual development of the individual soul, as this is a definite possibility and an imperative; yet the spiritual evolution of the macrocosm is a fiction. The perennialist position differs greatly from the position of the creationists and they should not be confused with one another.[71]

Syncretism: The Parody of Synthesis

The confusion of "synthesis" with "syncretism" might at first appear to be irrelevant to the theme of modern psychology. When inquired into further, its significance becomes more apparent and its pervasive influence upon the modern and postmodern mindset irrefutable.

> "Syncretism" in its true sense is nothing more than a simple juxtaposition of elements of diverse provenance brought together "from the outside" so to speak, without any principle of a more profound order to unite them. . . . Modern counterfeits of tradition [or authentic spirituality] like occultism and Theosophy [i.e. the New Age Movement] are basically nothing else, fragmentary notions borrowed from different traditional [spiritual] forms, generally poorly understood and more or less deformed, are herein mixed with ideas belonging to philosophy and to profane science. . . . Whatever is truly inspired by traditional [or authentic spiritual] knowledge always proceeds from "within" and not from "without"; whoever is aware of the essential unity of all [spiritual] traditions [i.e. the perennial philosophy] can, according to the case, use different traditional forms to expound and interpret doctrine, if there happens to be some advantage in doing so, but this will never even remotely resemble any sort of syncretism.[72]

Again, we find ourselves confronting the isthmus that divides modern or profane science from the sacred science based upon metaphysical principles. The following definition by Ken Wilber illustrates the lack of discernment that often expresses itself as a confusion of syncretism with synthesis:

> *Integral*: the word means to integrate, to bring together, to join, to link, to embrace. Not in the sense of uniformity, and not in the sense of ironing out all the

[69] Charles Upton, "Religion, Evolution, and UFOs," in *Cracks in the Great Wall: The UFO Phenomenon and Traditional Metaphysics* (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2005), p. 41.

[70] Jean Klein, "The Progressive and the Direct Approach," in *Who Am I?: The Sacred Quest*, ed. Emma Edwards (Salisbury, UK: Non-Duality Press, 2006), p. 136.

[71] "What both the Darwinians and most creationists have failed to grasp is that the corporeal universe in its entirety constitutes no more than the outer shell of the integral cosmos, and that the mystery of origins needs to be resolved, not at the periphery, but precisely at the center of the cosmic circle." (Wolfgang Smith, "Bell's Theorem and the Perennial Ontology," in *The Wisdom of Ancient Cosmology: Contemporary Science in Light of Tradition* [Oakton, VA: Foundation for Traditional Studies, 2003], p. 80); see also Frithjof Schuon, "The Message of the Human Body," in *From the Divine to the Human*, trans. Gustavo Polit and Deborah Lambert (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1982), p. 88.

[72] René Guénon, "Synthesis and Syncretism," in *Perspectives on Initiation*, trans. Henry D. Fohr, ed. Samuel D. Fohr (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), pp. 38, 41.

> wonderful differences, colors, zigs and zags of a rainbow-hued humanity, but in the sense of unity-in-diversity, shared commonalities along with our wonderful differences: replacing rancor with mutual recognition, hostility with respect, inviting everybody into the tent of mutual understanding.[73]

Syncretism—like its counterpart, New Age thought—often appears as a heterogeneous mixture of elements that are not genuinely reconcilable: "A truly integral psychology would embrace the enduring insights of premodern, modern, and postmodern sources."[74] Quintessential syncretism might initially appear to be harmless but over time erodes spiritual sensitivity: "One day, to open a seminar, I had two photographs which I'd juxtaposed. It was the head of Ramana Maharshi on the body of Frank Zane! I held it up in front of the group, and then I said, 'Well, this is what I want to talk about, folks.'"[75] Again the mixture of error with truth, however, cannot result in any true theory. In contrast to this example of syncretism we offer another insightful perspective on synthesis:

> Synthesis, on the contrary, will exist when one starts from unity itself and never loses sight of it throughout the multiplicity of its manifestations; this moreover implies an ability to see beyond forms, and an awareness of the principial truth which clothes itself in forms in order to express and communicate itself in the measure in which this is possible.[76]

While the syncretism present in behaviorism and psychoanalysis is more visible, Abraham Maslow (1908-1970), a key figure at the foundation of humanistic and transpersonal psychology illuminates the syncretism found within them: "It can be emphasized that the whole humanistic synthesis resembles a smorgasbord."[77] Some might not grant much importance to this disclosure and some might suggest that the establishment of both humanistic and transpersonal psychology could not have occurred without its essentially eclectic outlook; however, this does not remedy the difficulty at hand as the very definition of the "fourth force" in modern psychology is another example of syncretism. The dangers of syncretism should not be underestimated especially as they appear to be gaining tremendous traction: "The religion of mankind will be syncretistic."[78] However, we must not lose sight of the fact that "Syncretism is never something substantial: it is an assembling of heterogeneous elements into a false unity, that is, a unity without real synthesis."[79] And for those who mistake the perennial philosophy with this approach we offer

[73] Ken Wilber, *Boomeritis: A Novel That Will Set You Free* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2002), p. 15.

[74] Ken Wilber, *Integral Psychology: Consciousness, Spirit, Psychology, Therapy* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2000), p. 5.

[75] Andrew Cohen, "Integrating the Big Bang: An Interview with Michael Murphy," *What is Enlightenment?* Issue 15 (Spring/Summer 1999), p. 94.

[76] René Guénon, "Preface," *Symbolism of the Cross*, trans. Angus Macnab (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis et Universalis, 1996), p. xi.

[77] Abraham H. Maslow, "The Unnoticed Psychological Revolution," in *The Unpublished Papers of Abraham Maslow*, ed. Edward Hoffman (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996), p. 125.

[78] Gerald Heard, "The Future of Mankind's Religion," in *Vedanta for the Western World*, ed. Christopher Isherwood (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), p. 445.

[79] Frithjof Schuon, "The Universality and Timeliness of Monasticism," in *Light on the Ancient Worlds*, p. 104.

the following clarification: "[I]t is one thing to manufacture a doctrine by assembling scattered ideas as best one can and quite another to recognize, on the basis of what we willingly call the *Sophia Perennis*, the single Truth contained in various doctrines."[80]

New Age Thought: Counterfeit Spirituality

The New Age movement gives voice to the serpent's promise that "Ye shall be as gods" (Gen. 3:5); it fundamentally overlooks that "Though the Kingdom of God is within us, it is not *all* that is within us."[81] It is only by participating in one of the world's revealed traditions that the human individual can achieve wholeness *in divinis*. New Age thought, like its counterpart, the Human Potential Movement, is almost inseparable from humanistic and transpersonal psychology in that they both share a common origin, not to mention a shared social milieu from which they emerged. "From the germinal thoughts of humanistic psychology grew more developed perspectives, forming what is now called the human potential movement, a prime component of the New Age."[82] The reductionistic paradigm of New Age thought is summarized by Rama Coomaraswamy (1929-2006): "The new age movement has been well characterized as the secularization of religion and the spiritualization of psychology."[83] And, as Wouter Hanegraaff (b. 1961) remarks: "New Age [thought] shows a strong tendency towards a *psychologizing of religion combined with a sacralization of psychology*."[84] Theodore Roszak outlines a piercing and comprehensive critique of the various pitfalls within the humanistic and transpersonal approaches:

> The techniques and theories of Gestalt, Encounter, Transactional, Psychodrama, Transpersonal differ in many ways, but all the schools are united in asserting the essential health and innocence of human nature. They are the therapies of a narcissistic culture, and unapologetically so.[85]

At first glance, when presented with a behaviorism that eradicates the human psyche or soul and a psychoanalysis that pathologizes religion, the comparison with "New Age" thought does not necessarily appear fitting for the first two "forces" of modern psychology; yet if we look at some of the disciples these two "forces" have produced, we could make a case for the contrary. "Freudian renegades . . . have made a significant impact on the development of the New Age, in particular on that aspect known as the Human Potential Movement."[86] And the same is unfortunately not the case with the later two "forces" in modern psychology: "[T]he

[80] Frithjof Schuon, "Introduction," *Logic and Transcendence*, p. 2.

[81] Theodore Roszak, "Ethics and Ecstasy: Reflections on an Aphorism by Pathanjali," in *Unfinished Animal*, p. 222.

[82] Douglas R. Groothuis, "Exploring Human Potential in Psychology," in *Unmasking the New Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), p. 78.

[83] Rama P. Coomaraswamy, "Foreword," to Charles Upton, *The System of Antichrist: Truth and Falsehood in Postmodernism and the New Age* (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), p. 30.

[84] Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Meta-Empirical and Human Beings," in *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, pp. 196-197.

[85] Theodore Roszak, "Narcissism Revisited," in *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press, 2001), p. 275.

[86] Paul Heelas, "Developments," in *The New Age Movement* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), p. 47.

primary psychological source for New Age was humanistic psychology, and most especially Abraham Maslow, clearly a key force in conceptualizing humanistic psychology [including transpersonal psychology]."[87] We can track the theoretical continuity between psychoanalysis and humanistic psychology and transpersonal psychology through the following illustration: "New Age belief has its background in psychoanalytic theories of repression and projection, adapted to a spiritual worldview."[88]

> Although humanistic psychology has contributed significantly to a more balanced and open-minded approach to psychic welfare, in its pioneering fervor it has succumbed to the error of advancing values and goals of human existence that properly belong to the realm of religion. Therapists have widely assumed roles once reserved for priests and religious counselors. Thus, the schools of the human potential movement have ended up as surrogate religions, without God, but with their own idiosyncratic doctrines and methods of "salvation." In this role they are now, arguably, slowing down the blossoming of genuine spirituality.[89]

Due to its lack of discernment and lack of commitment to both the inner and outer dimensions of religion, humanistic and transpersonal psychology have not been able to avoid the "New Age" label, "transpersonal worldview . . . qualifies as 'New Age'."[90] While humanistic and transpersonal approaches have strong reservations regarding religion as opposed to spirituality, there is also a misguided notion that tradition can be added to or created, which is a signature mark of pseudo-spirituality: "[T]he New Age approach seems to exemplify a phenomenon known as the 'invention of tradition'."[91]

Although there are myriad errors with the New Age movement, one core issue is that it holds modern science in high regard and strongly relies on it for its own validation, yet it paradoxically does not take account of the fact that modern science's origins are *de facto* reductionistic in essence. The attempt to establish a "new paradigm" upon this truncated foundation in order to escape the trappings of reductionism appears to be an impossible task.

The Noetic Function of the Intellect

From the traditional perspective modern or profane science cannot create *in vacuo* a psychology that facilitates the integration of the tripartite structure of the human microcosm: Spirit/Intellect, soul, and body.

[87] Paul C. Vitz, "Psychology and the New Age Movement," in *Psychology As Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), p. 117.

[88] Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Matters of the Mind," in *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, p. 221.

[89] Georg Feuerstein, "The Humanistic Way of Self-Actualization," in *Holy Madness: The Shock Tactics and Radical Teachings of Crazy-Wise Adepts, Holy Fools, and Rascal Gurus* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), p. 192.

[90] Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "New Age Science," in *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, p. 70.

[91] Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Historical Religions versus Universal Spirituality," in *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, p. 324.

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

It is only at the level of the transpersonal or the Absolute itself—what is above and higher and simultaneously at the center, both transcendent and immanent—that an authentic integration can be established.

Some might be curious and even challenge the definition of the Intellect as equivalent to the Spirit, but we need to stress that the Intellect in this context is not the discursive faculty of reason but what subsumes this lower faculty and transmutes it into a transcendent faculty. This spiritual organ, also known as the "Eye of the Heart" is illuminated by Hehaka Sapa or Black Elk (1863-1950), a remarkable sage of the Lakota Sioux:

> I am blind and do not see the things of this world; but when the Light comes from Above, it enlightens my heart and I can see, for the Eye of my heart (*Chante Ista*) sees everything. The heart is a sanctuary at the center of which there is a little space, wherein the Great Spirit dwells, and this is the Eye (*Ista*). This is the Eye of the Great Spirit by which He sees all things and through which we see Him. If the heart is not pure, the Great Spirit cannot be seen, and if you should die in this ignorance, your soul cannot return immediately to the Great Spirit, but it must be purified by wandering about in the world. In order to know the center of the heart where the Great Spirit dwells you must be pure and good, and live in the manner that the Great Spirit has taught us. The man who is thus pure contains the Universe in the pocket of his heart (*Chante Ognaka*).[92]

We can even see the faculty of the Intellect present within the anti-intellectual tradition of Zen, however hidden it may be to the superficial observer; consider the following *mondō* or Zen dialogue between Yakusan (Chinese: Yao Shan) and a visiting monk:

> Once Master Yakusan was sitting in deep meditation, when a monk came up to him and asked: "Solidly seated as a rock, what are you thinking?"
>
> Master answered: "Thinking of something which is absolutely unthinkable (*fu-shiryō*), 'not-to-be-thought-of'."
>
> The monk: "How can one think of anything which is absolutely unthinkable?"
>
> Master: "By the a-thinking thinking (*hi-shiryō*), 'thinking-which-is-non-thinking'."[93]

While some representatives of humanistic and transpersonal psychology have tried to affirm the role of the Intellect, the body, and the psyche, they usually do not have in mind the

[92] Frithjof Schuon, "The Sacred Pipe," in *The Feathered Sun: Plains Indians in Art and Philosophy* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1990), p. 51.

[93] Toshihiko Izutsu, "The A-thinking Thinking," in *Toward a Philosophy of Zen Buddhism* (Boulder, CO: Prajñā Press, 1982), p. 158.

same transcendent function that the perennial philosophy designates by that term.[94] What these representatives of humanistic and transpersonal psychology appear to be acknowledging is reason or *ratio* not Intellect or *Intellectus;* the former has a horizontal function and the latter a vertical function. The horizontal function addresses the psycho-physical domain while the vertical function addresses the spiritual or transcendent domain.

> In fact, most of modern psychology, of which traditional [Freudian] psychotherapy is a part, denies the possibility of intuition in the strict sense: knowing by means other than the sensory pathways. Intuition in academic psychology means unconscious inference, not direct knowing. Yet the entire spiritual enterprise is based on the possibility of intuitive access to the transcendent.[95]

It is through the traditional spiritual practice—what is known as the "science of the soul"—that authentic integration of the psychic faculty can occur: "In a traditional discipline the psychic can be reintegrated with the spiritual but without the necessary metaphysical framework and religious supports psychism becomes wholly infra-intellectual and anti-spiritual."[96]

The "Four Forces" of Modern Psychology in the Light of the Perennial Philosophy

> Psychoanalysis and behaviorism thus laid the foundations of clinical and experimental psychology, which they dominated for most of the first half of the twentieth century, becoming known as the first and second forces of [modern] Western psychology.[97]

We cannot readily overlook the "psychologism with which Freud and his followers began"[98] nor the scientism of John Broadus Watson (1878-1958) and his followers, as it had a pervasive influence upon modern psychology as a whole. It is certain that what the perennialist school has termed *scientism* and *psychologism* apply to the first two "forces" within modern psychology: behaviorism and psychoanalysis. The first reduces the human individual to what is most external and outward: his behavior; the second reduces him to what is most superficial and base: his animalistic impulses.[99] And what can be said about the other two "forces" of modern psychology, the humanistic and the transpersonal? The preliminary thoughts of those familiar with both the works of the traditionalists or perennialists, and also with the writings of humanistic

[94] See John Rowan, "The Intellect," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Winter 1991), pp. 49-50.

[95] Arthur J. Deikman, "Spirituality Expands a Therapist's Horizons," *Yoga Journal*, Issue 88 (September/October 1989), p. 49.

[96] Harry Oldmeadow, "The Not-So-Close Encounters of Western Psychology and Eastern Spirituality," in *Journeys East*, p. 317, included in this volume.

[97] Roger N. Walsh and Frances Vaughan (eds.), "Introduction," to *Paths Beyond Ego: The Transpersonal Vision* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1993), pp. 1-2.

[98] Ira Progoff, "Sigmund Freud and the Foundations of Depth Psychology," in *The Death and Rebirth of Psychology: An Integrative Evaluation of Freud, Adler, Jung and Rank and the Impact of Their Insights on Modern Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 45.

[99] See Maurice Friedman, *Contemporary Psychology: Revealing and Obscuring the Human* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1984).

and transpersonal psychology, might suggest that the latter two forces are extensions, although much less narrow in scope, of the same scientism and psychologism.[100] Former professor of psychology at Harvard University, Richard Alpert, known as Ram Dass (b. 1931) describes the inherent limitations of some representatives and pioneers of humanistic and transpersonal psychology:

> Psychotherapy, as defined and practiced by people like Erikson, Maslow, Perls, Rogers, the neo-Freudians, or the neo-Jungians does not in the ultimate sense transcend the nature of ego structure. They really seem to be focused on developing a functional ego structure with which you can cope effectively and adequately with the existing culture. . . . The psychological world is primarily interested in worldly adjustment, happiness and pleasure.[101]

The third and fourth "forces" are nonetheless marked by what in essence is a breach in the metaphysical principles of sacred science: "Humanistic and transpersonal psychologies try to include the concept of Essence or Being, plus the idea of inner development, in their formulations; however, as far as we can tell, the attempts are merely the addition of the spiritual perspective to the psychological one."[102] Yet the question still arises: does the perennialist critique of psychologism still apply to these more recent developments in modern psychology? Are humanistic and transpersonal psychology free of psychologism? Or is the very critique of psychologism itself outdated as some contemporary humanistic and transpersonal thinkers might suggest? Some peculiar attempts have been made to graft spirituality onto psychology, which is obvious in paradoxical terms such as "transpersonal behaviorism"[103] or the even more misleading "Zen Behaviorism"[104] that attempts to reconcile and fuse the first and the last "forces" of modern psychology—behaviorism and transpersonal psychology—with the transcendent domain. We could point out a similar example in the case of gestalt therapy, which is generally considered to be a humanistic psychology heavily influenced by Taoism and Buddhism, but which is interestingly termed "gestalt-transpersonal,"[105] when it is quite clear that Fritz Perls (1893-1970) was as hostile to orthodox spirituality as his seminal master Sigmund Freud.

[100] "Not Freud but Fromm, Maslow and Rollo May are the psychological gurus of the present day. And in certain respects their doctrine is very much opposed to the orthodox Freudian teaching which is not at all concerned with offering consolations. Nonetheless, it is clear that these later authorities are still following in the footsteps of the master, and that if it were not for the breach achieved by Freud, they could not have exerted any comparable influence upon society" (Wolfgang Smith, "The Ego and the Beast," in *Cosmos & Transcendence: Breaking Through the Barrier of Scientistic Belief* [Peru, IL: Sherwood Sugden & Company, 1990], p. 104).

[101] Jack Kornfield, Ram Dass (Richard Alpert), and Mokusen Miyuki, "Psychological Adjustment is not Liberation: A Symposium," in John Welwood (ed.), *Awakening the Heart: East/West Approaches to Psychotherapy and the Healing Relationship* (Boston, MA: New Science Library, 1985), pp. 34-35.

[102] A.H. Almaas, "Identity," in *The Pearl Beyond Price, Integration of Personality into Being: An Object Relations Approach* (Berkeley, CA: Diamond Books, 1998), p. 265.

[103] Charles T. Tart, "Science and the Sources of Value," *Phoenix: New Directions in the Study of Man*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Summer 1979), pp. 25-29.

[104] Deane H. Shapiro, "Zen Behaviorism: When the Zen Master Meets the Grand Conditioner," in *Precision Nirvana* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978), pp. 117-119.

[105] Lynn Williams, "Spirituality and Gestalt: A Gestalt-Transpersonal Perspective," *Gestalt Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2006), pp. 6-21.

> [Fritz] Perls was actually much closer to Freud than to Buddha (and Freud and Buddha had precious little in common). . . . [M]ost people, to this day, still don't realize that Perls was basically pop-Freud; brilliant pop-Freud, surely, but pop-Freud nonetheless. Perls's entire setup operated with introjection, projection, and retroflection (repression), reactivated in the client through group transference, manifested by resistance-avoidances, and countered by the therapist via working-through—all Freudian concepts, appropriately modified and streamlined for instant therapy.[106]

And when we turn to the transpersonal psychology of C.G. Jung, we must be highly suspicious of those portraying him as free of psychologism, even though it is recalled time and time again that "for Freud religion is a symptom of psychological disease, [whereas] for Jung the *absence* of religion is at the root of all adult psychological disease."[107] The transpersonal psychology of Jung is paradoxically a continuation of Freud's anti-spiritual psychoanalysis and other exponents within modern psychology: "I prefer to call my own approach 'analytical psychology.' I wish the term to stand for a general conception embracing both [Freudian] 'psychoanalysis' and [Adlerian] 'individual psychology,' as well as other efforts in this field."[108] Marco Pallis (1895-1989) frames the impasse of both Freudian and Jungian "depth psychology" in the light of the spiritual traditions:

> The latest and in many ways deadliest addition to this process of subversion is the psychological interpretation of religion, of which the Freudian and Jungian schools provide two representative forms, the one being avowedly materialistic and hostile, while the other affects a sympathetic attitude on the strength of a deftly nurtured system of equivocations, as between things of a spiritual and of a psychic order.[109]

Abraham Maslow, a pioneer of both humanistic and transpersonal psychology, remarked of Freud: "I consider him to be the greatest psychologist by far who ever lived, & I feel myself to be epi-Freudian (*not* Freudian) & to be carrying on the best of the tradition, but without being a loyalist."[110] Viktor Frankl could equally say of the founder of psychoanalysis: "[T]he greatest spirit in psychotherapy [is] Sigmund Freud. . . . Logotherapy in no way invalidates the sound and sober findings of such great pioneers as Freud, Adler, Pavlov, Watson, or Skinner."[111]

[106] Ken Wilber, "Odyssey: A Personal Inquiry into Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Winter 1982), p. 61.

[107] Victor White, "Freud, Jung and God," in *God and the Unconscious* (Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), p. 47.

[108] C.G. Jung, "Problems of Modern Psychotherapy," in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, trans. W.S Dell and Cary F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1933), p. 28.

[109] Marco Pallis, "Considerations on the Tantric Alchemy," in *A Buddhist Spectrum: Contributions to Buddhist-Christian Dialogue* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2003), p. 90.

[110] Abraham H. Maslow, *The Journals of Abraham Maslow*, ed. Richard J. Lowry, abridged Jonathan Freedman (Brattleboro, VT: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1982), p. 195.

[111] Viktor E. Frankl, "Preface," to *The Unheard Cry for Meaning: Psychotherapy and Humanism* (New York: Touchstone, 1978), pp. 14, 17.

In what has been regarded a standard work on transpersonal psychology we find the following statement: "However ambivalent most contemporary practitioners of transpersonal psychology may be about Freud, it is safe to say that there would be no transpersonal psychology as we know it without Freud's influence. Freud might be considered the grandfather of the entire movement."[112] It is then no surprise that within humanistic psychology, or the "third force" in modern psychology, the Freudian psychoanalytic identity of the human individual is accepted: "logically as well as psychologically we must go behind the ego-id-superego system and endeavor to understand the 'being' of whom these are different expressions."[113] Less zealous or more moderate apologists for psychologism might argue that "Freud's therapeutic formula is correct but incomplete."[114] Likewise a loyalist would voice the following with regard to behaviorism: "mechanistic science . . . which in [modern] psychology takes the form of behaviorism . . . [is] not incorrect but rather too narrow and limited to serve as a *general* or comprehensive philosophy."[115] The final result of this psychologism reaches its apex in this kind of statement: "[I]n broad terms, we want to integrate Freud and Buddha, we want to integrate lower 'depth psychology' with 'height psychology.'. . . If you don't befriend Freud, it will be harder to get to Buddha."[116] Finally, irrespective of the inherent contradictions within the reductionistic leanings of modern psychology, there appears to be an overwhelming appeal toward syncretism: "I have long supported all four forces of [modern] psychology, and I will continue to do so,"[117] says Ken Wilber. With this indiscriminate blending of truth and error one is left in a psychic wilderness devoid of any spiritual compass, a psychological no-man's-land if you will; this being the case, one can distort the world's spiritualities and the perennial philosophy and use them for one's own ends.

It will suffice to point out that:

> One of the most insidious and destructive illusions is the belief that depth psychology . . . has the slightest connection with spiritual life, whose teachings it persistently falsifies by confusing inferior elements with superior. We cannot be too wary of all these attempts to reduce the values vehicled by [spiritual] tradition to the level of phenomena supposed to be scientifically controllable. The spirit escapes the hold of profane science in an absolute fashion.[118]

[112] Mark Epstein, "Freud's Influence on Transpersonal Psychology," in *Textbook of Transpersonal Psychiatry and Psychology*, eds. Bruce W. Scotton, Allan B. Chinen and John R. Battista (New York: Basic Books, 1996), p. 29.

[113] Rollo May, "The Emergence of Existential Psychology," in Rollo May (ed.), *Existential Psychology*, 2nd edition (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 35.

[114] Wilhelm Reich, "Sexual Stasis: The Source of Energy of the Neurosis," in *The Function of the Orgasm*, trans. Theodore P. Wolfe (New York: The Noonday Press, 1970), p. 89.

[115] Abraham H. Maslow, "Mechanistic and Humanistic Science," in *The Psychology of Science: A Reconnaissance* (South Bend, IN: Gateway Editions, 1966), p. 5.

[116] Ken Wilber, "Freud and Buddha," in *A Brief History of Everything* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1996), p. 155.

[117] Ken Wilber, "Waves, Streams, States, and Self: A Summary of My Psychological Model (Or, Outline of An Integral Psychology)," in *The Eye of the Spirit: An Integral Vision for a World Gone Slightly Mad* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2001), p. 285.

[118] Frithjof Schuon, "No Activity Without Truth," in *The Betrayal of Tradition: Essays on the Spiritual Crisis of Modernity* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2005), pp. 11-12.

In broadly reviewing the literature of both the third and fourth "forces" of modern psychology, we can point out that as long as a materialistic science is intricately embedded in its outlook, it is *ipso facto* marked by scientism and thus unavoidably limited in its efficacy:[119] "The perennial crisis of . . . [modern] psychology is due to the fact that it does not see that the problem lies in the meaning of science it adopted."[120] Modern psychology is embedded *in toto* in this materialist worldview, and though it adamantly proposes a "new" paradigm beyond the Cartesian-Newtonian outlook, it has not been able to establish one.[121] Even Jung is not free of the materialistic science of the Enlightenment, which is none other than scientism. As Josef Goldbrunner remarks:

> "What God is in Himself" is a question beyond the scope of psychology. This implies a positivistic, agnostic renunciation of all metaphysics. It is possible that metaphysical objects have their share of existence, but "we shall never be able to prove whether in the final analysis they are absolute truths or not." In saying this Jung clearly stands—as he himself admits—"on the extreme left wing in the Parliament of the Protestant spirit." One might therefore think of Jung as a positivist since in his view only the natural sciences lead to positive knowledge. But it must be added at once that he has penetrated and extended brutal positivism and fought for the "reality of the psyche." He has acquired a new province for empirical knowledge.[122]

The same certainly cannot be said for the integral and traditional psychology of the perennial philosophy; it does not belong to scientism but rather originates in *scientia sacra*, which "is none other than metaphysics if this term is understood correctly as the ultimate science of the Real."[123] We can therefore logically deduce that as both humanistic and transpersonal approaches are extensions of the Cartesian-Newtonian mechanistic worldview that endorses scientism and evolutionism, not to mention the fact that they often confuse the psychic and spiritual domains, they are still susceptible to the critique of psychologism. Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998), in his noteworthy essay titled "The Psychological Imposture," frames this theme with eloquent precision:

> Psychoanalysis [or modern psychology] doubly deserves to be classed as an imposture, firstly because it pretends to have discovered facts which have always been known and could never have been otherwise than known, and secondly and

[119] Rama P. Coomaraswamy, "Psychological Integration and the Religious Outlook," *Sacred Web: A Journal of Tradition and Modernity*, Vol. 3 (Summer 1999), pp. 37-48.

[120] Amedeo Giorgi, "The Crisis of Humanistic Psychology," *The Humanistic Psychologist*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring 1997), p. 19.

[121] José Segura, "On Ken Wilber's Integration of Science and Religion," *Sacred Web: A Journal of Tradition and Modernity*, Vol. 5 (Summer 2005), pp. 71-83, included in this volume.

[122] Josef Goldbrunner, "Religion," in *Individuation: A Study of the Depth Psychology of Carl Gustav Jung*, trans. Stanley Godman (London: Hollis & Carter, 1955), pp. 161-162.

[123] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Scientia Sacra," in *Knowledge and the Sacred* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 132.

> chiefly because it arrogates to itself functions that in reality are spiritual, and thus poses practically as a religion.[124]

The truth of the Absolute is not awaiting empirical or observable proof that it exists, and this is what modern psychology, and the modern and by extension the postmodern outlook as a whole, entirely fails to comprehend. The integral psychologies of the perennial philosophy, being grounded in metaphysical principles, cannot be reduced *a priori* to empirical or statistical data, as they lie outside the psycho-physical domain which is verified by one of the earliest sapiential traditions of this temporal cycle, known as the *sanātana dharma*: "There is no empirical psychology in India. Indian psychology is based on metaphysics."[125]

> One could show, for instance, that psychology as it is understood to-day, that is to say the study of mental phenomena as such, is a natural product of . . . empiricism and of the attitude of mind of the eighteenth century, and that the point of view to which it corresponds was so negligible for the ancient world that even if it happened sometimes to be taken incidentally into consideration, no one would have dreamed of making a special science of it, since all that it might contain of any value was transformed and assimilated in higher points of view.[126]

Even if, by an unlikely chance, modern science were to arrive at similar conclusions as the ancient traditional sciences, it would be immaterial to the perennial philosophy because it and modern science belong to very different orders of reality that cannot be placed on equal terms. Both humanistic and transpersonal approaches to modern psychology continue to draw upon the spiritual domain, but in so doing they have blurred the essential distinctions between therapist and spiritual guide. That is *de facto* another facet of psychologism, not to mention a significant sign of the times:

> More and more therapists are reaching out to absorb methods and concepts from the ancient religious traditions of the Orient. As a result more and more troubled people no longer know whether they need spiritual or psychiatric help or both. In the personal crisis of my life, how far can psychotherapy take me? How far do I wish to be taken? Is there a line that separates the spiritual path from therapeutic progress? What will result from the current effort of Western psychotherapists to make use of teachings of the East—Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sufism? Can these efforts bring an expanded understanding of our human predicament, or will they result only in a reduction of the spiritual to the conventionally therapeutic? What

[124] Frithjof Schuon, "The Psychological Imposture," *Survey of Metaphysics and Esoterism*, trans. Gustavo Polit (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1986), p. 195.

[125] Jadunath Sinha, *Indian Psychology: Volume I Cognition* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986), p. xviii. "[I]n [the integral] metaphysics [of the perennial philosophy] there is no empiricism; principial knowledge cannot stem from any experience, even though experiences—scientific or other—can be the occasional causes of the intellect's intuitions" (Frithjof Schuon, "Preface" to *Roots of the Human Condition* [Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1991], p. vii).

[126] René Guénon, "Sacred and Profane Science," in *The Crisis of the Modern World*, pp. 72-73.

> actually takes place in [modern] psychotherapy when seen against the background of the vision of human nature offered by sacred tradition?[127]

The Decisive Boundary: The Confusion of the Psychic with the Spiritual

Modern psychology finds itself in a quandary arising out of its own *naïveté* with regards to what has been identified as "the decisive boundary"[128]—the separate domains of the spirit and soul—which either goes undetected or is altogether ignored. On the one hand, it appears that certain advances have been made in that the spiritual dimension is now acknowledged in both humanistic and transpersonal psychology, while on the other hand this development is impeded by a science that cannot fully implement its vision or substantiate its reality, not to mention a "spirituality" that is often blinded by New Age thought or a syncretistic fusion of one kind or another. We are reminded that the operative principles of the perennial philosophy are metaphysical in nature, and that metaphysics is *a priori* its own authority because it is higher than the psycho-physical domain; integral metaphysics is not limited to what is psychic, but the psychic is inherently limited and is thus fundamentally subordinate to the spiritual domain.

However, both humanistic and transpersonal psychology acknowledge the spiritual domain as an indispensable facet of human existence.[129] An unavoidable question then arises: for a psychology to participate in the transcendent sphere, is it enough to acknowledge the spiritual domain? And if the scientific paradigm itself has now changed, as has been suggested by some representatives of both humanistic and transpersonal psychology,[130] wouldn't this necessarily change the very scientific underpinnings of modern psychology as well? The following proposal is thus made:

> For western students of [modern] psychology and science, it is time to begin a new synthesis, to "translate" some of the concepts and ideas of the traditional psychologies into modern psychological terms, to regain a balance lost. To do this, we must first extend the boundaries of inquiry of modern science, *extend our concept of what is possible for man.*[131]

Although this approach is very appealing to contemporary minds, especially with all of the discussion generated by what has been termed the "new physics,"[132] all too often it is forgotten that while such a "synthesis" proposes to bridge the gap between traditional spirituality and

[127] Jacob Needleman and Dennis Lewis (eds.), "Preface," to *On the Way to Self Knowledge* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), pp. x-xi.

[128] See Martin Lings, "The Decisive Boundary," in *Symbol & Archetype: A Study of the Meaning of Existence* (Cambridge, UK: Quinta Essentia, 1991), pp. 13-18.

[129] Samuel Bendeck Sotillos, "Humanistic or Transpersonal? *Homo Spiritualis* and the Perennial Philosophy," *AHP Perspective*, August/September 2010, pp. 7-11.

[130] John R. Battista, "Contemporary Physics and Transpersonal Psychiatry," in *Textbook of Transpersonal Psychiatry and Psychology*, eds. Bruce W. Scotton, Allan B. Chinen and John R. Battista (New York: Basic Books, 1996), pp. 195-206.

[131] Robert E. Ornstein, "The Traditional Esoteric Psychologies," in *The Psychology of Consciousness* (New York: The Viking Press, 1972), p. 99.

[132] See Wolfgang Smith, *The Quantum Enigma: Finding the Hidden Key* (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2005).

modern science, it is quite obvious to the discerning mind where this must eventually lead—to the undermining of the sapiential traditions. If we wish to "extend the boundaries" of what man is in the light of what transcends him, we cannot turn a blind eye to the crucial lack of discernment between "synthesis" and "syncretism" which is all-too-evident in humanistic and transpersonal psychologies, and also for that matter in the "new physics." We can summarize this so-called more inclusive orientation within modern science as follows: "'new physics' is no more than the old physics in a new guise."[133] From the perspective of the perennial philosophy it is not enough to simply acknowledge the spiritual domain; the sacred science itself needs to be sanctioned through a revealed or orthodox spiritual tradition in order for the transcendent domain to be accessible. The Absolute provides grace (*baraka*) to what is below, yet the terrestrial cannot bypass the Absolute in order to make itself something other than what it is.

> . . . the power to tell the greater from the lesser reality, the sacred paradigm from its copies and secular counterfeits. . . . [W]ithout it, the consciousness circuit will surely become a lethal swamp of paranormal entertainments, facile therapeutic tricks, authoritarian guru trips, demonic subversions.[134]

Under the "new" scientific paradigm—which continues to be reductionistic, though more subtly so—the psyche is still left in a closed system, trapped in the cul-de-sac of its own subjectivity, due to its inability to realize what is higher than itself: "Profane man never attains the essence of things by the operations of his thought [*ratio* or ego]."[135] The fact that modern psychology is in a sense imprisoned within the landscape of the empirical ego is not a minor issue nor is it one that is easily corrected.

> All [modern] psychological therapies, psychoanalysis among them, are based on a point of view which, for *Vedanta*, is the very cause of what one might call a fundamental neurosis, a metaphysical neurosis, which is the arising of an ego believing itself to be separate.
>
> The aim of psychoanalysis is to restore health and balance to this separate ego which it considers as a justified reality. The psychoanalyzer wishes to restore a balanced and harmonious ego, an ego in harmony with its surroundings and with other creatures. This ideal appears on second thoughts to be entirely naïve. When we wish to be a balanced self we, in fact, wish to prolong an imbalance under the best possible conditions by appealing to energies which may reinforce, fix and establish an egotistic state which is really the basic imbalance, the source of all others. This is just as absurd as fighting the symptoms of an illness without applying oneself to the illness itself. The psychoanalytical cure is therefore not really a cure. It does not rid the sick man of his sickness, it helps him to live it, with the ego. His sickness is an imaginary one.[136]

[133] Philip Sherrard, "Modern Science and the Dehumanization of Man," in *The Rape of Man and Nature: An Inquiry into the Origins and Consequences of Modern Science* (Ipswich, UK: Golgonooza Press, 1991), p. 75.

[134] Theodore Roszak, "Introduction: Pico's Chameleon and the Consciousness Circuit," to *Unfinished Animal,* p. 13.

[135] Tage Lindbom, "Objectivity," in *The Tares and the Good Grain or the Kingdom of Man at the Hour of Reckoning*, trans. Alvin Moore, Jr. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), p. 51.

[136] Jean Klein, *Be Who You Are*, p. 46.

C.G. Jung makes a crucial confession exposing perhaps the quintessence of the traditionalist critique of psychologism in the following declaration, which in theory could perhaps alter or dispel the very notion that Jung was putting forth a complete spiritual psychology. This brings up many questions regarding transpersonal psychology as well, since he has been recognized as one of its pioneers:

> All conceivable statements are made by the psyche. . . . The psyche cannot leap beyond itself. It cannot set up any absolute truths, for its own polarity determines the relativity of its statements. . . . In saying this we are not expressing a value judgment, but only pointing out that the limit is very frequently overstepped. . . . In my effort to depict the limitations of the psyche I do not mean to imply that *only* the psyche exists. It is merely that, so far as perception and cognition are concerned, we cannot see beyond the psyche. . . . All comprehension and all that is comprehended is in itself psychic, and to that extent we are hopelessly cooped up in an exclusively psychic world.[137]

The question thus remains: is it possible for modern psychology to construct a *bona fide* spiritual psychology? And what benefit can come of utilizing spiritual practices outside an authentic spiritual tradition as has been the case with humanistic and transpersonal psychology?

> Another question that arises frequently is whether techniques from the domain of spiritual practice should be introduced into the psychotherapy situation. My own view is that they should not—unless the psychotherapist is also qualified as a spiritual teacher. Although a variety of procedures such as meditation, chanting, and visualization can be used to provide calmness and relaxation, the mystical literature indicates that such benefits are secondary. The sages who invented these techniques emphasized that they should be used as part of an integrated, individualized teaching system requiring the supervision of a [spiritual] teacher.[138]

And the same could be said with regards to offering "spiritual guidance" outside a traditional spiritual context.

> Both in theory and treatment [modern] psychology is replacing religion. Those who understand the ancient Guru-disciple tradition see that psychology is a truncated counterfeit of it. Just as physical science can attain only to Prakriti without Purusha, so psychology can only [attain] to the subconscious without the superconscious. Some psychologists are indeed coming to suspect and some even to admit openly that there is a superconscious, but that is not enough. What is needed is to have access to it, to have traversed it in oneself and to be able to guide the aspirant in doing so.[139]

[137] C.G. Jung, "Late Thoughts," in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. Aniela Jaffé (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), pp. 350-352.

[138] Arthur J. Deikman, "Spirituality Expands a Therapist's Horizons," *Yoga Journal*, Issue 88 (September-October 1989), p. 49.

[139] Arthur Osborne, "Modern Idolatries," in *Be Still, It Is the Wind That Sings* (Tiruvannamalai: Sri Ramanasramam,

The Disunity within Modern Psychology

Another mark of psychologism that cannot be overlooked is the mass of disagreements and critiques within modern psychology and its numerous ever-growing schools that have not seen eye-to-eye on many key points vital to its integrity. As Frithjof Schuon remarks: "Relativism engenders the spirit of rebellion and is at the same time its fruit."[140] It could be argued, and rightfully so, that there are wide divergences within the religions; however, the *philosophia perennis* would suggest that these only reflect differences in points of view (*darshanas*), which do not fundamentally deny the "transcendent unity of religions"; in their widely differing ways, each religion recognizes the same Absolute Reality. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for modern psychology.

> Modern psychotherapy is plagued by an amazing lack of agreement among its different schools about the most fundamental questions concerning the function of the human psyche, nature and dynamics of symptoms, and the strategy and technique of psychotherapy. This does not apply only to the schools based on entirely different philosophical assumptions, such as behaviorism, psychoanalysis, and existential therapy, but also the various branches of depth psychology that evolved historically from the same source, the original work of Sigmund Freud (the Adlerian, Rankian, Jungian, Kleinian, Reichian, and Lacanian schools, ego psychology, and many others). The world of modern psychotherapy resembles a large busy marketplace, in which it is difficult to orient oneself. Each of the many schools offers different explanations for the same emotional and psychosomatic problems and a different therapeutic technique. In each case this will be accompanied with the assurance that this is the scientific way to treat this condition, or the "method of choice." It is difficult to envision a similar degree of disagreement in one of the hard sciences. Yet in psychology, we have somehow learned to live with this situation and do not usually even question it or consider it strange.[141]

This lack of agreement between the different schools and "forces" of modern psychology also makes one question the efficacy of such psychologies altogether.[142] It has been asserted that the particular orientation utilized is insignificant, which makes one wonder what need there is for so many different types of contemporary psychology, implying that this variety is not only perplexing to the layperson and professional alike, but actually unnecessary.

In summary, while both humanistic and transpersonal psychology were founded with good intention—and we are most grateful for their efforts to expand the scope of modern psychology as a whole and particularly for their attempt to transcend the reductionistic outlook of behav-

2003), p. 378.

[140] Frithjof Schuon, "The Contradiction of Relativism," in *Logic and Transcendence*, p. 16.

[141] Stanislav Grof, "Healing Potential of Non-ordinary States of Consciousness: Observations from Psychedelic Therapy and Holotropic Breathwork," in Seymour Boorstein (ed.), *Transpersonal Psychotherapy*, Second Edition (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 515.

[142] See Martin E.P. Seligman, "The Effectiveness of Psychotherapy: The Consumer Reports Study," *American Psychologist*, Vol. 50, No. 12 (December 1995), pp. 965-974.

iorism and psychoanalysis—they nonetheless unavoidably demonstrate a high level of *naïveté* due to the indiscriminate inclusion of behaviorism and psychoanalysis into their framework, which are irreconcilable with the spiritual dimension that they purport to affirm. The integral psychology of the perennial philosophy does not seek to purpose a new *theoria* or *praxis* outside what it itself is and has always been. The central need is to restore the psyche or soul to its rightful position, which has been known to traditional peoples of all times and places; it is only through the events of the so-called Enlightenment that the human psyche has become misplaced and dissociated from the spiritual domain.

Behaviorism was for the most part a reaction against psychoanalysis (especially introspectionism and mentalism); psychoanalysis was a reaction to the prevailing psychology of the time, yet it is more challenging to pinpoint because it is intimately allied with several other key revolts of historical import that in many ways catalyzed the modern world itself; humanistic psychology in turn was a response to both behaviorism and psychoanalysis, and while it recognized the noteworthy role of spirituality, its place was not always clear or agreed upon; transpersonal psychology however sought to definitively include the spiritual domain and by doing so, became the fulfillment of all three "forces," thus establishing itself as the "fourth force" in modern psychology. Yet the spiritual psychology of the perennial philosophy situates the human microcosm—Spirit/Intellect, soul, and body—*in divinis*, and does not need developmental phases nor an evolutionary trajectory for its completion; it was complete in principle and reflects its origin in what is transcendent and divine. This however, does not mean that the human individual does not go through developmental phases in life or on the spiritual path—recalling that in the premodern or traditional world the sacred was the center and origin of everything and human development along with spiritual development supported one another and were inseparable as they functioned for one and the same end: human completion—however spiritual psychology was complete upon its origin. As long as the discernment between the psychic and spiritual domains and presence of integral spiritual forms and their practice are missing from psychology in all of its "forces" and schools, the impasse of modern psychology will persist. "In conclusion, let us emphasize again that the perennial psychology is not a science for its own sake, and can be of no use to anybody who will not practice it."[143]

[143] Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "On the Indian and Traditional Psychology, or Rather Pneumatology," in *Coomaraswamy, Vol. 2, Selected Papers: Metaphysics*, ed. Roger Lipsey (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 378.