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Epilogue

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In an age where the social sciences find themselves intellectually ghettoized, isolated not only from the broader society within which they function and study, but also from other forms of science and philosophical inquiry into the nature of reality, existence, and existential meaning, there comes thinkers that are able to bridge the gaps between not only the academic disciplines, but the sacred and secular, spirit and matter, East and West, etc., illuminating the elusive wholeness of existence that is so shattered in everyday perception.

In the thirteenth century, it was the Persian scholar/mystic Shams-i Tabrizi, who through his living wholeness, reconciliation of the spiritual and temporal, his mastery of the knowledge of the totality of the human condition – it's fragility, its temporality, its majesty, and it's purposivity – led a young conventional scholar Mevlana Jalaludin Rumi to transcend his *everydayness*, his compartmentalized mental and spiritual existence, until he became the greatest living poet of mystical union; a union not only of man and the divine, but man and himself.

In the 20th century, it is another Tabrizi, Allama Muhammad Taqi Jafari, that has demonstrated the possibility of a way of understanding reality, the human condition, and the meaning of human existence through a comprehensive and inter–connected orientation of sociological study; a method of study that takes seriously the metaphysical and spiritual dimensions of human life – a area of uneasiness for many Western scholars.

Allama Jafari points to the integrated wholeness of 'human being' – the *tawhid* of human existence with a form of communication–reason that takes into account the repositories of human spirit, values, metaphysical assumptions, and religious sensibilities, and humanistic frailties.

For Allama Jafari, no sociological study that systematically neglects, rejects, or fails to comprehend and consider the human being within his totality can be adequate in penetrating into the human condition; in

effect, Jafari calls for a profoundly onto-humanistic approach to the study of man that does not systematically distort or deny man's non- physical dimension of being nor his spiritual-religious longings.

Science, Secularity, and Deficiency

Allama Jafari is very aware of the condition that modern man finds himself when he is surrounded in a de-mythologized, technocratic, sterile, and meaningless secular world. Ever since Nietzsche had the courage to announce that which was already becoming obvious to those whose eyes could see, that the rationalization, bureaucratization, and secularization of the lifeworld had caused the "death of God", that life was becoming increasingly meaningless outside of the individual's limited projection of relative meaning into his / her life, and that as Dostoevsky said, "if God is dead, all things are possible," man has been faced with the realization that science and the capitalist market, those tools that were originally meant to liberate him from his irrationality and his oppressive chains to nature, had actually left in him an existential void.

If God is dead, as Nietzsche's madman exclaimed to the men of the market, then not only is everything permissible, it is permissible precisely because it is meaningless. This meaninglessness is the true specter that not only haunts Europe, but the secularized world as a whole.

The pervasive detachment and disenchantment with the world that secularity birthed into existence has not only become a problem for the everyday man in his lifeworld, but has become a driving undercurrent in the way we approach human existence through the social sciences. As society has devalued the sacred, *Das Heilige*, the metaphysical meaningfulness of life and existence, it left mankind with little left but a thick description of what is the case.

The Vienna school, better known as "positivism," is a scientific method that is a symptom of this demystified, de- sacralized, and meaning deprived way of approaching the world. It is rooted in the instrumental rationality of efficiency, calculation, techno-reason, detachment, and mathematization of all sphere's of life – its erasure is meaning, spirit, eschatology, metaphysics, and all things unaccounted due to their non-physicality.

Allama Jafari reads this diminished existence as if it were a horror story written by a depraved author bent of updating Dante's religiously inspired inferno for a modern secular audience who no longer find themselves religiously literate. Like those unable to escape the burning in Dante's hell, modern man finds himself somehow feeling trapped within what the bourgeois sociologist Max Weber described as the "iron cage" – it may not be burning on the outside, but the inner torture of perpetual prison burns from within.

The "dungeon of necrophilia," as Seyed Javad Miri describes it, is not an imaginary nor metaphysical speculation, but a state-of-being within the modern mode of existence; it is an all pervasive ethos of "death- friendliness," a seemingly inescapable system of hatred, competitiveness, aggressiveness, and

violence (both direct and systemic), that modern man finds himself thrown into (*befindlichkeit*) and made the victim of.

The worst aspect of this dungeon of death– friendliness it that it deprives the imprisoned from the possibility of fathoming that another existence based on Eros and Agape, *Taqwa* (Piety) and *Tawhid* (Unicity), is even possible. He abandons his longing for an alternative state of existence and reconciles himself to the reified daily chaos–catastrophe. He accepts his fate – a negative *fana'* (passing away, melding) into that which is the case.

This pervasive state-of-being redefines the meaning of human life by aggressively dictating man's coordinates of life; his ultimate worth is as a "consumer," a "a producer of surplus value," a "cog-in-the-machine," a "functionary" of a system that allows no true liberating self-determination but regulates by way of law, custom, culture, and duty – a lifeworld divorced from his own existential, ontological, and eschatological concerns.

For Allama Jafari and others within the Primordial School of Social Theory, the "dungeon of necrophilia," the "iron cage," the "Golgotha history," and the "history as slaughter bench," cannot be the last word within the poetic epic of human existence. It is the goal of Allama Jafari, as Seyed Javad Miri discusses, to help build a framework or roadmap from which humanity can find a way out of this twisted maze of confusion and spiritual nothingness that we've weaved ourselves into.

If we are going to find another way-of-being within the world, we must rethink our dominate mode of reason and how it is deployed with the social sciences. It must take into account the spiritual and metaphysical nature of human existence, and not define that which cannot be calculated as absurd, mere speculation, obscurantism, or irrational wish fulfillment.

We must begin to rethink and reevaluate what it means to be human; what are the essential qualities of human existence, what metaphysical and psychological dimension make us a "humane" and not just physically human.

Allama Jafari is right, a social science that cannot account for the "essence" of humanity – the non-physical yet existentially essential aspects of human existence – is not a science that achieves its goal of gnosis, but only one that describes that which is the case within very limited parameters. It settles for the truthfulness of "protocol sentences" – small statements of verifiable facts, that when all brought together, describe a limited dimension of life, but not nearly human existence in all its meaningful totality.

Jafari's thought calls for us to analyze and critique the catastrophic results of instrumental rationality within how dominate forms of social sciences and lifeworld. The positivist, scientistic, ideology of materialism or the metaphysics of "what is the case," has led us to approach all of existence in such a bifurcating way; that the properties of human life that are not somehow able to be calculated or are able to be the subject of scientific experiments are unimportant, irrelevant, or non-existent.

If Freud could not subject his *psyche* to rigorous lab experiments then it most certainly does not exist, the positivists proclaimed – allowing them to ignore the fact that is the psyche / mind that animates the human, not the organ we call the brain. This scientific reduction of the human existence to its material basis has become the dominant mode of reason that has served as the basis for our (Western) social sciences and has, by virtue of its latent values, skewed the way we understand the human being.

Seyed Javad Miri is correct in his skepticism about a value free sociology, as the dominant mode of sociological research operates under the presupposed value system of material positivity – that what is metaphysical, conceptual, or spiritual cannot be considered in a scientific study of man.

However, man is simply not physicality, but spirituality and metaphysically as well. In fact, it is the symbiotic relationship between the physicality and mentality, spirituality and metaphysicality of man that allows him to be what he is – a comprehensive cognitive being that operates both within the world of material and the world of metaphysical speculation and ideas.

Social sciences, especially Western forms of sociology operate under the illusion that man can be studied without taking into account that which animates his existence, provides meaning, directs his ultimate concerns, and connects him / her to the mystical connection with world and people, and leaves those "obscurantist" questions to the non-scientific philosophers and theologians.

Yet, our dominate mode of instrumental rationality neglects precisely that aspect of human being — leaving us a distorted and broken picture of what it means to be human. Human existence is left in a fragmented state in our daily life due to the all–encompassing nature of instrumental–reason and profit driven motivations within politics, economy, popular culture, and civil society.

This same distorting rationality has become the guide, from which the social sciences have followed, leaving the humanities, the unscientific studies of human existence, to be the academic voice of a humanity left undisturbed in its wholeness.

The social sciences, especially sociology, or what has been describes as "disciplinary sociology," which distinguishes it from critical sociology or primordial sociology, have suffered from a legitimation crisis from the beginning, starting with its progenitor Auguste Comte.

Wanting to be "scientific" in method, but taking the subject matter of mankind and his society, a subject of analysis that cannot even in the most remoteness of thought be considered as purely physical being or phenomenon, left sociology with an inherent problem; the problem of a method of inquiry appropriate for natural sciences but ill equipped to study phenomenon that have both materiality and metaphysics.

Sociologists wanted the authority that the natural sciences can provide for their pronouncements and findings based on their empirical experimentation and observations, but at the same time the subject of sociological study remained at minimum partly metaphysical and conceptual. In order to gauge, calculate, observe, and describe the social phenomenon that was the subject of sociological study, they

had to systematically distort that phenomenon by isolating it from its historical context, its contemporary associations, and its potentiality and or becoming nature.

In essence, the positivist sociologist had to artificially construct the phenomenon before he could measure it. The result of which is that the phenomenon so constructed does not exist in the way that it is being studied, i.e. divorced from the qualities that cannot be measured. What then is the subject or object of the sociological study? At best, a distorted "semblance" of the original object of study, at worst a completely new phenomenon that has little to no true connection to the original.

The scientific method for studying the social was to originally bring the kind of legitimation and objective proof that the natural sciences enjoy, only to find itself completely without legitimacy as the method was ill equipped for the task.

The scientific method of the natural sciences proved to be very limited in ascertaining truth about society when deployed within the social sciences. What philosophers argued, accepted, and moved on from, only decades later is positivist sociology attempting to "prove" beyond a shadow-of-a-doubt, only to find that such purely objective proof is not possible within the methods they employ.

What's worse, is that when the distorted "proof" they produce is understood to be incontrovertible evidence, they are wittingly engaged in ideology (in the best Marxian sense of the term); a false construction of reality based on their ideological commitments that hides and conceals certain social, political, and economic interests. In the face of this distorted form of sociological analysis, Allama Jafari calls for a non– disciplinary perspective that is not susceptible to the pathology of instrumental reason that the positivist sciences have fallen victim to.

Reason, if it is to be a tool from which humanity understands the world, the physicality of its existence, the metaphysics of his / her being, it's conceptual commitments, and it's process of becoming, must operate with a form of reason that doesn't systematically distort that which it wishes to comprehend and understand.

A form of reason that is capable of addressing human frailty, ecological degradation, inter-subjectivity, metaphysics, and the longing for the totally other, is desperately needed as the dominance of instrumental reason leads us closer to nuclear catastrophe, ecological apocalypse, and existential meaninglessness.

Sociological Gharbzadegi

The dialectic of the enlightenment has directed the Western world since the early years of the 18th century, both liberating it from its infantile irrationalism rooted in a christological rejection of reason (Think of Luther's statement that "reason is a whore"), the radical de- hellenization of Christianity – which includes the exorcising of the Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, and other Islamic theo-

philosophers out of Christian thought, and its racist and theological hatred of the "other."

The Enlightenment project emancipated the Jews from their European ghettos, gave birth to the natural sciences that looked to natural causation for natural phenomenon, produced the industrial revolution, and the modern nation–state.

However, as the West progressed through the enlightenment project, it also liberated itself for existential meaning, made it crasser towards human suffering, and learned how to perfect efficient weapons of killing which allowed it to conquer greater territories with ease. As it began to understand the how's of the human mind, social actors learned how to manipulate the masses better – ultimately replacing the totalitarian regimes with their explicit dictatorial powers with hidden persuaders.

Now the dictatorial powers operate tacitly, through popular culture, the market, and the psychological neurosis of "keeping up with the Jones'." The dialectic of enlightenment emancipated humanity from its fetishistic and fearful relationship with nature, which diminished it to inanimate material objects and meaningless natural occurrences.

However, those objects in nature that once engendered respect due to their mythological sacredness are now seen as bundles of meaningless atomic material that are viewed as a resource to be exploited for profit – to inflict damage on nature is not a sin or a crime against the spirit of nature that dwells within the forest, but is now a admirable act as it will create an enormous amount of wealth for the shareholders of the corporation who have an invested interest in the destruction of that once sacred space.

Enlightenment not only demythologizes, it desacralizes, and allows wholesale atrocities on nature and mankind. That which was meant to liberate now dominates and distorts human connectedness to the world around us and to those who inhabit that world as well.

The Euro-centricity of the Enlightenment, as it was objectively different from the enlightened age in classical Islamic civilization, is apparent. As Europe and European civilization's faith in that which isn't physically manifest diminished, so too did its new faith in science increase.

It is clear that a sociological project such as Allama Jafari doesn't fall victim to the distorting nature of Euro-centric instrumental reason, but preserves and promotes a reason that understands its own limitations, but refuses to reject that which it cannot *completely* comprehend via its own method of analysis.

In classical Islamic thought, reason is understood to be a gift from the divine, a tool that the ultimate sovereign bestowed upon his creation as a way of understanding the natural world around them and by consequence the author of that nature. It would be a grave mistake to fall prey to a social–scientific "garbzadegi" (westoxification) within the Muslim world when the negative consequences of such a method of research are so blatantly visible in much of the world.

A form of reason that dehumanizes the human being to a conglomeration of protoplasmic material – a reduction of "being" to the mere physical – must be rejected by those who can still affirm metaphysics and their inherent importance in human existence.

The "objectification" of Western social sciences bears the hallmarks of the objectification of man within his own society – his "beingness," his spiritual life, his metaphysical commitments, are reduced to irrelevancy, as his worth and value is not within his "being," but in his "having," a mode of existence that only recognizes the individual for what he possesses, not what he is (his commitments, his deeds, his spiritual excellence, etc.).

When mankind is reduced to the level of an object, he/she is discarded on the level of an object as well. In a consumer society, where the "new" gleefully replaces that which was just "new" yesterday, it becomes precarious to be in the position of being a human-object that was "new" just a day before; as soon as one "is," the storm cloud of replacement is on the horizon to render him a "was."

His very subjectivity, that sacredness of the individual that Immanuel Kant respected in his ban on ever treating a human as a "means" as opposed to an "ends," is denied. It is that subjectivity of the man and woman that differentiates them as something living from something non–living. The de–subjectivizing nature of positivist sciences and instrumental reason has ended in the destruction of millions of individuals in the 20th century, and prepares the way for the same possibility in the 21st.

To argue against a "gharbzegadi" orientation of sociology within the Muslim world is not to say that all positivist accomplishments must be rejected. That would be just as intellectually reactionary as the rejection of all metaphysics by positivists themselves. It is clearly the case that the positivist sciences have produced profoundly important discoveries in the fields of medicine, physics, biology, cognitive sciences, geology, etc.

However, skepticism concerning positivism is rooted in the recognition of the socially destructive or distorted side of our scientific advances as well as the perils of reductionistic social sciences that treat man as an object.

To appreciate the accomplishments of the "hard sciences" is warranted, but one must never neglect to recognize the dialectical nature of those accomplishments, i.e. the more knowledgeable we become about ourselves and our environment, the more destructive capacity we yield towards them, and what's more, the more we operate within a world dominated by instrumental rationality, the more it permeates our interpersonal relationships, whether they be within the family, community, nation, or international.

To abandon this skepticism is to abandon the future of humanity to a method that cannot account for that which makes us human outside of our physicality. In maintaining this skeptical appreciation, Allama Jafari points us to a possible alternative.

Integrated Wholeness – Integrated Method

In the thinking of Allama Jafari, the integrated wholeness of human existence warrants an integrated method of analysis that remains sensitive to the question of human totality – the various realms of human life and their inter–connectedness. A method of inquiry that fractures the human being into compartments, that approaches each one of these apartments as independent phenomenon within a individual, that brackets out their relatedness of other realm of human life, cannot adequately address the human condition.

Furthermore, as the structures of modern society are imposed on the modern individual, his / her psyche and lifeworld finds itself already compartmentalized, fractured, and deformed, as his or her moral, ethical, and religious commitments are so often set in abeyance as they conflict with the political–economy of the state and civil society in which they procures their means of living.

Modern man too often lives in a schizophrenic bifurcated world of public secularity and private religiosity / spirituality, which leaves him without a firm ethical grounding; often times leading to existential and ontological confusion – a perpetual state of personal inner–suffering.

This schizophrenic and in some ways sociopathic society emphasizes the supreme value of competitiveness and aggressiveness rooted in the *Aristocratic Law of Nature*, often thought to be our "first nature," while at the same time imparts religious and philosophical moral imperatives of cooperation, solidarity, non-possessive love, charity, and selflessness, often identified with our "second nature," leaves many in a wanderlust of moral vagary or an unquestioned acceptance of the dominant ideology of the ruling class.

The spiritual, religious, and philosophical traditions that once gave meaning to life and offered a moral vision via a theory and code of ethics, are no longer able to resist and or conquer the current virtues of vice, avarice, selfishness, greed, and violence.

To address humans from a methodologically compartmentalizing perspective is to further enforce the already fragmented and confused state in which much of humanity finds itself. Seeing the chaotic and catastrophic state of modern human existence— the diminished and nearly defeated soul of "human being," in its despair over the accepted inevitability of what is the case — Allama Jafari reemphasizes the "indivisible whole and indissoluble totality" of human being, and therefore calls for a re–humanizing of social sciences and the humanities; making them an appropriate method of sociological study of mankind.

The "essence" of what is mankind, the "I", "conscience," and "self," must be considered in our understanding of what it means to be human, as without that consideration, the human object of study ceases to be human and can only truly be "human–like." What is a human without the "I", "conscious", and "self"? It is a corpse.

Although a corpse appears human, anyone who has ever been in close contact with their deceased loved one knows that although their physicality is present, that which is their "I", consciousness," and "self," is not. Why then should we study humans as if they were corpses? Allama Jafari's serious challenge to the dominant way we do sociological research, i.e. his insistence of reintroducing "wholeness" and "integratedness" back into the study of man, should be taken seriously by Western scholars, even if it means a radical rethinking of scientific methodology within the social sciences.

The hyper-rationalization of society, that which is assumed to be progress, has left man in a vulnerable position. For the first time he can experience himself as having the capacity to destroy all of humanity; a thought that was prior to modernity the sole power of the divine.

It is scientific power divorced of moral sensibilities that have led to such a state of being and is rooted in the dialectic of the enlightenment's disconnect of man and his essences. In the face of this possibility, we must ask: what kind of progress is the absolute negation of human life?

Identity, Crisis, and Wholeness

As globalization continues to weave itself into the fabric of every society, the instrumental reason by which it operates continues to fundamentally challenge, change, and overturn traditionally held beliefs, values, religions, philosophies, and ways-of-being-in-the- world that are rooted in a different form of reason; a form of reason that emphasizes the communicative nature of human social relations.

The *biophilic* ethos of traditional societies, rooted in community and non-possessive love, are being replaced by the logic of profit accumulation, resource acquisition, labor exploitation, and a necrophilic ethos of material gain as the supreme value in life. Traditional societies, especially the Islamic world, have seen their values, principles, and ways-of-being disintegrate within a couple generations. Islam's insistence on the theologically mandated duties to the poor is giving way to the virtues of being wealthy – a *Calvinization* of the Islamic civilization.

For many scholars, who are sensitive to the social upheavals that are occurring in the heart of the Islamic civilization, an identity crisis at the heart of what it means to be both modern and Islamic is identified. What does it mean to be Muslim in the 21st century? Will Islam survive the modernization, secularization, and capitalization of the world? Does fundamentalist reaction to globalization preserve the Islamic identity, or further erode it – especially in light of the fact that fundamentalism is a modern phenomenon itself?

A similar identity crisis has been brewing in Europe for decades, as post–World War II insistence of "multi-culturalism," which some view as cultural suicide for the benefit of non–European immigrants, as well as the comprehensive secularization of the life–world, has brought many secular philosophers and theologians together to discuss the "awareness of what's missing" in European identity.

In the past, to be European meant to be Catholic; then it meant to be Christian (whether Catholic or Protestant), then it meant to be German, Italian, a Frenchman, etc., but now, after the fall of religion and nationalism, to be European means to be what? The identity of Europeans is so fragmented as not to understand anymore who and what one is.

For many scholars who are sensitive to the suffering of the individual in their "everydayness," the mental confusion and existential emptiness that comes from the failure to take seriously the "I", "consciousness", and the "self", as Allama Jafari has purposed, is seen in the faces of the lost as they fade into the *das mann* of the secular–capitalist life– world. European philosophers and theologians are unwittingly beginning a precursory rethink of our social–scientific values, as the civilizational price of losing the essence of humanity on the altar of *rational progress* is becoming ever more apparent.

In this reevaluation of the dominance of instrumental reason, the abandonment of metaphysics, and possible transvaluation of all capitalist and market values, Western philosophers, theologians, and sociologists may find themselves in agreement with the holistic and organic sociological orientation of Allama Jafari. The grounds for agreement are within the essence of mankind – the soul of what makes us human, the recognition of these shared qualities and the inter– subjectivity of cultures and civilizations – and can be the stage in which our sciences re–humanize so that we may once again ground ourselves in our individual and species wholeness.

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