

MODERN SCIENCE AND SCIENTISM

A PERENNIALIST APPRAISAL

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Abstract

There have been significant critiques of scientism and certain elements of modern science inspired worldview from various quarters. But perhaps the most thoroughgoing, most uncompromising and most devastating critique that is based on alternative vision of Science and Epistemology and Metaphysics has come from the perennialists. In the present paper modernist scientific worldview shared by the dominant majority of scientists and philosophers of science has been critiqued from the perennialist perspective of Frithjof Schuon. Modern science's commitment to positivist reductionist naturalist evolutionist worldview and methodology cultivated in transcendence denying secularist framework has been forcefully critiqued by the perennialists. The perennialist critique of scientism has largely gone unnoticed in academic circles. This paper highlights the limitations of orthodox scientific worldview from the traditionalist perennialist perspective on methodological, epistemological and metaphysical grounds.

Keywords: scientism, transcendence, intellectual intuition, symbolism, traditional science

1. Introduction

Modern age has been called as the Age of Reason and the Age of Science. Its dominant metanarratives have attempted to appropriate modern science or scientific spirit. One could well declare that Science is the dominant paradigm or framework of modern outlook. It needs no arguing that the decline of religious worldview in the modern West is attributable to the rise of secular sciences. Modern epistemology is heavily affected by the claims of scientific orthodoxy. Though with the rise of postmodernism all metanarratives including the metanarrative of Science have been questioned secular character of both modernity and postmodernity is there to stay and is a legacy of scientific worldview that has been with us from last few centuries. Scientism has been highly influential ideology and in some sense it continues to be articulated as an article of faith of secular man.

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Theology has most often been apologetic while encountering modern science. It has been in an awkward position which is often embarrassing. One modern scientist and critic of Theology has observed that Theology has fought a losing battle with Science and it has almost retreated its forces on all major fronts. It has countenanced demythologizing and other reductionist enterprises. There is not that sure footedness in its defence and of offence as a strategy it has little use. It is difficult to find a very respectable counterattack from Theology in modern times. In such a scenario it is very interesting to note the writings of perennialists who have deployed traditional Metaphysics against the rival claims of modern science in such a forceful tone that it is difficult to ignore for any official spokesperson of modernity and modern science such as Weinberg or Dawkins. However, for certain reasons perennialists have not been figuring in most anthologies of Philosophy of science and Philosophy of religion. Both theologians and scientists have largely ignored them. It is to correct this indifferent approach and in order to foreground a very provocative alternative and corrective to modern epistemologies that this paper is directed.

There have been significant critiques of scientism and certain elements of science inspired worldview from various quarters. But perhaps the most thoroughgoing, most uncompromising and most devastating critique that is based on alternative vision of Science and Metaphysics has come from the perennialists. The perennialists have exposed as hollow almost every pillar of modern scientific worldview; not only methodology and philosophy but also the fruits of Science have been subject to a searching critique. There is fundamental disagreement with scientific orthodoxy on almost all accounts; they find hardly anything worthy of praise and glorification in scientific worldview. The perennialists hardly concede any major epistemic or cognitive claim of modern scientific worldview which may be roughly characterized as reductionist-naturalist-evolutionist-secularist-rationalist. For them modern science is a biased enterprise and a dogmatic belief system resting on an unexamined epistemology. Its exclusivist and dictatorial claims are unfounded. It is not science or knowledge at all or at best a thoroughly limited perspective on reality that leaves the more important things by its very methodology. To make a case for the perennialist critique of scientism and Science inspired secular worldview of modernity we need to be clear regarding the dominant or orthodox perception of scientific community of traditional knowledge and existence claims of religion. We need to foreground dominant claims of scientific orthodoxy vis-à-vis religion. A religious or metaphysical critique of the metanarrative of modern science will be made after pointing out the divergence between the religious/traditional metaphysical worldview and the secular scientific worldview. We will attempt to present the picture that is most commonly held by the most influential scientists and philosophers of modern science.

2. The thesis of conflict

Paton in his Gifford lectures *The Modern Predicament* has presented a very comprehensive picture of the state of affairs in the relation between modern science and religion. His formulation of the case has been generally followed here. All religions offer us a doctrine of man, a doctrine of history, a doctrine of the Universe and a doctrine of God. Doctrines or dogmas necessarily claim to be true and this means that it enters into competition with other doctrines also claiming to be true. And these are the doctrines of Science with which religion so far as it is doctrinal, may and does come into conflict. Here science includes “not only the natural science, but also the mental; and social sciences such as Psychology and Anthropology. It covers also the modern methods of historical and literary criticism - the development of all these disciplines in the last 400 years has brought religion face to face with a situation very different from any that existed before”[1].

The great story of conflict between Theology and Science that White in his famous narrative documented begins with the eclipse of symbolist view of Cosmos after the Copernican revolution. The latter threatened to submerge religion. Modern Physics and Astronomy has proved inimical to religion. The Book of Genesis (and the Quranic story of genesis is essentially similar to it) is no longer literally interpreted and non-literal interpretations don't convince many sceptical physicists. Man is no longer seen at the centre of Universe or microcosmos or created in the image of God. This Universe hardly seems to have been designed keeping man in view. As Paton says the main impediments to religion arise from two things – from the character of scientific method and from the conception of world as governed throughout by unvarying law [1, p. 104]. Russell's oft quoted pessimistic estimate of modern scientific outlook logically follows from the loss of transcendence or the death of God. Much of the pessimistic and absurdist character of modern literature and Philosophy is attributable to influence of modern science. Camus' is a case in point. Nietzsche's famous claim that 'God is dead' was partly made under the influence of modern science. Modern science and its philosophy have been instrumental in global secularization and displacement of religious worldview. The challenge to religion from Biology has especially been widely noted. The Darwinian evolution is perhaps the most important factor that has caused modern man to turn away from God.

Another significant challenge has come from Psychology. Mainstream psychology has proved more or less hostile to traditional religion. Although there have been attempts to make use of it in the interests of religion it produces an emotional and intellectual background so different from that of religious tradition that the combination of the two becomes very difficult. Freud – the most significant psychologist of the 20th century – is very hostile to religion. His *Future of an Illusion* is so well known that we hardly need to comment [2]. He has proved very influential and his views are part of modern scientific

orthodoxy vis-à-vis religion. Jung – another great name in modern psychology – too is agnostic with respect to metaphysical truth of religious beliefs. His psychologizing of religion is hardly reconcilable with traditional religious worldview. The Realm of the Spirit hardly figures anywhere; it is crudely appropriated in terms of the Realm of the Psyche. Erich Fromm, one of the most influential humanist psychoanalysts, is convinced that all theistic religions are destined to disappear. Skinner's behaviourist psychology too is hostile to religion. Lacanian view of religion too is not the traditional one. There are other human sciences besides Psychology, and their influence has also tended to be psychologically, if not logically, unfavourable to religion. Anthropology, coloured by evolutionary worldview has been instrumental in perpetuating the view expressed in the words, 'from the subhuman to the human'. It finds parallels for the most sacred mysteries in the heathen superstitions. It suggests that religion is a survival of something primitive in the experience of the race. All these human sciences, among which Sociology also may be included, have the common characteristic of treating man as one object among other objects. They tend to explain his thoughts, his actions, his beliefs and his emotions as the effect of forces outside himself, forces whose influence can be determined and even controlled in accordance with ascertainable scientific laws. There is no such thing as soul or spirit and no opening to transcendence or Infinite. Coulson has summed up this thesis of conflict: "Science has shown religion to be history's cruellest and wickedest hoax" [3].

The wave of historical method and historical criticism has also been highly significant scientific movement in recent times that has contributed heavily to erosion of much of traditional religion. Although it is the Bible that has received the most critical attention in this regard, the Quran too hasn't been spared from this attack. Certain orientalist have much exploited this mode of inquiry.

Orthodox scientific establishment is strongly resisting religious appropriation of Science. It is usually agnostic if not atheistic in orientation. In the name of truth, facts and objectivity it has launched a crusade against the 'superstition' called religion. A leading spokesperson (Julian Huxley) has vetoed against religious explanation of the world by saying that if events have natural cause, they don't have supernatural causes [4]. The naturalist framework of modern science to which it is committed by its very methodology can't be but antagonistic towards religion's existence claims. Richard Dawkins, a famous evolutionary biologist who wrote *The Blind Watchmaker* rejecting fashionable 'way of two compartments' thesis i.e., positing separate domains for faith and Science to avoid head on conflict between the two, says, "It is completely unrealistic to claim, as Gould and many others do, that religion keeps itself away from science's turf, restricting itself to morals and values Religions make existence claims and this means scientific claims" [5]; and thus as a scientist he must oppose religion tooth and nail but Science only can make existence claims and religion's existence claims conflict with it. He is echoing Freud in this connection. Freud in his *New Introductory Lectures on*

Psychoanalysis concludes with a statement of what he calls 'scientific *Weltanschauung*' which represents more or less the official attitude of the Church of science. In essence, he thinks, "it asserts that there is no other source of knowledge of the universe but the intellectual manipulation of carefully verified observations, in fact, what is called research and that no knowledge can be obtained from revelation, intuition or inspiration"[6]. Freud makes the drastic implications of this statement quite explicit. He writes: "It is inadmissible to declare that science is one field of human intellectual activity and that religion and philosophy are other at least as valuable and that science has no business to interfere with the other two, that they all have an equal claim to truth and that everyone is free to choose whence he shall draw his convictions and in which he shall place his belief". [6, p. 875]

He goes on to declare in a tone reminiscent of some ecclesial authority that "such an attitude is considered particularly respectable, tolerant, broad minded and free from narrow prejudice. Unfortunately, it is not tenable; it shares all the pernicious qualities of an entirely unscientific *Weltanschauung* and in practice comes to much the same thing. The base fact is that truth can't be tolerant and can't admit compromise or limitations, that scientific research looks on the whole field of human activity as its own and must adopt an uncompromisingly critical attitude towards another power that seeks to usurp any part of its province". [6, p. 875]

Religion is incompatible with Science according to Freud because it too makes truth claims and can't surrender them. He asserts that Science alone can correspond to reality and "it is these correspondences with the real external world we call truth" [6, p. 879]. He then goes on to declare that when religion claims that it can take the place of Science and this because it is beneficent and ennobling, it must therefore be true, that claim is, in fact an encroachment, which, in the interests of everyone, should be resisted. Not only religion but also Philosophy, doesn't seem to Freud to offer man a genuine alternative to scientific truth. Insofar as it parts company with science by clinging to the illusion that it can produce a complete and coherent picture of the Universe, Philosophy must be regarded as an impostor in the halls of knowledge [6, p. 875]. The positivist philosophy of science has been so influential in the 20th century in usurping the place of all philosophy. Freud gives his verdict that Philosophy any more than religion can't be a substitute of Science. Both together fall under Freud's interdict. The outlines of philosophy that can stand in the postscientific age are prescribed by Russell, arguably the most influential interpreter of modern physics, in his oft quoted summing up of the general effect of the modern scientific outlook. "That man is the product of causes which had no provision of the end they were achieving ; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system and that

the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of Universe in ruins - all these things – if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundations of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.” [1, p. 104]

Albert Einstein, the giant of 20th century Physics and most often quoted by modern religionists for his sympathetic views on the issue couldn't keep his faith in personal God and traditional religion in the face of modern scientific outlook. He had no religious beliefs and had only a vague notion of mysterious ground of existence that is in no way identifiable with God of religion who demands our worship. Weinberg has quoted Einstein's remark to his assistant that “What really interests me is whether God any choice in the creation of the world” in almost Spinozian vein [7]. Stephen Hawking refers to the laws of nature as the ‘mind of God’. This pantheistic God isn't the God of theism or traditional religion. This is not even the God of panentheism. Einstein once described the aim of enterprise of Physics as to know why nature is thus and not otherwise. “Thereby one experiences, so as to speak, that God Himself couldn't have arranged these connections in any other way than that which factually exists. This is the Promethean element of the scientific experience... Here has always been for me the particular magic of scientific effort.” [7]

The development of secular theology is largely a response to modern scientific outlook. Weinberg is sceptical of possibility of finding an interested God in the final laws of nature. He notes that “all our experience throughout the history of science has tended in the opposite direction, towards a chilling impersonality in the laws of nature.” He elaborates: “Judging from the historical experience, I would guess that though we shall find beauty in the final laws of nature, we will find no special status for life or intelligence” [7, p. 200]. But Gould's view - that religion and Science don't come in conflict - is widespread today among scientists and religious liberals. This seems to him “to represent an important retreat of religion from positions it once occupied. Once nature seemed inexplicable without a nymph in every brook and a dryad in every tree. Even as late as the nineteenth century the design of plants and animals was regarded as visible evidence of a creator. There are still countless things in nature that we cannot explain but we think we know the principles that has to look to Cosmology and Elementary particle physics. For those who see no conflict between Science and religion, the retreat of religion from the ground occupied by Science is nearly complete.” [4, p. 200]

Modern science is built on the dogma of denial of hierarchy of existence and the symbolist spirit of traditional sciences, the two defining claims of traditional religions.

3. Evolutionism

The process of evolution has appeared to be mechanical rather than purposive, blind rather than intelligent, and so to render nugatory the argument from design, which was commonly regarded as the most cogent proof for God's existence. The evolution, from a human point of view, seems wasteful and even cruel and the main qualities making for survival appeared to be lust and violence and deceit. It has given less than no support to belief in the wisdom and benevolence of the Creator or to the view that the end of creation was the furtherance of virtue, and as Paton notes: "perhaps the greatest shock of all came from the discovery that man, far from having been specially created in the image of God, was himself the product of this unintelligent process of evolution and must look back to a long line of ape like ancestors" [1, p. 104].

It is evolutionism that puts the whole problem of conflict between Science and religion in such a sharp focus. Dominant scientific orthodoxy argues that Science has falsified Christianity (and religion in general which in sharp contrast to modern scientific naturalism postulates higher orders of existence) on various doctrinal commitments in particular or at least Science has shown that religious explanation of the Universe is either false if taken literally or it is non cognitive discourse. Philosophical naturalist Wilfred Sellars puts it thus: "in the dimension of describing and explaining the world; Science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is, and of what isn't that it is not" [8]. Nowhere is this attitude more prevalent than in the discourse of creation and evolution. George Gaylord Simpson, a famous evolutionary naturalist, says: "there is neither need nor excuse for postulation of non-material intervention in the origin of life, the rise of man, or any other part of the long history of the material cosmos" [9]. Contrary to what theistic evolutionists assert, there is a conflict between the religion and Science on this vital issue. Philip E. Johnson rightly points out: "The conflict between the naturalistic worldview and the Christian supernaturalistic worldview goes all the way down. It can't be papered over by superficial compromises.... It can't be mitigated by reading the Bible figuratively rather than literally ...there is no satisfactory way to bring two fundamentally different stories together although various bogus intellectual systems offer a superficial compromise to those who are willing to overlook a logical contradiction or two. A clear thinker simply has to go one way or another." [10]

Many leading scientists and popularizers of science such as Richard Dawkins and Carl Sagan have used evolution as shorthand for scientific naturalism. Traditional religion is based on the thesis of transcendence which evolutionist naturalism can't countenance.

We now come to a perennialist appraisal of modern scientific orthodoxy and its scientism. We will focus on the foremost spokesperson of perennialism Frithjof Schuon.

4. Perennialist counterperspective on modern science

Criticisms of modern science and scientism have increasingly been launched from various quarters. Perennialist critique converges on certain important points with certain postmodern critiques though it is based on different presuppositions. Science as a problem solving enterprise that doesn't pretend to scan God or supplant discoveries of intuition and revelation, that doesn't reduce itself to an ideology of scientism, that doesn't see its jurisdiction extending on everything, that doesn't proceed to build up a worldview in total ignorance of evidence from equally empirical mystical experiences and that doesn't substitute the mental faculty of reason (*ratio*) for *Nous* or Intellect (the supra-individual supramental faculty that breaches subject-object duality and of which reason is a reflection at mental plane), that is respectful of its limitations is not questioned by perennialists. It is when certain ideologues of rationalist/positivist worldview appropriate Science to the end of destruction of Theology or Metaphysics that perennialists marshal their sharp critiques against them. In one word it is scientism rather than modern science as such that is the object of their critique. Respect for the evidence of experience is differentiated from empiricism that denies *ab initio* any supra-formal or suprasensory realm. We have chosen Schuon, a representative perennialist, to discuss perennialist view of modern science. His is one of the most forceful presentations of traditional metaphysical viewpoint that takes modern science (more precisely ideological/ philosophical appropriations) to task.

Schuon is the best known advocate of traditional metaphysics. He has written prolifically on metaphysical, spiritual and ethnic themes and has been a regular contributor to journals on comparative religion in both Europe and America. Schuon's writings have been consistently featured and reviewed in a wide range of scholarly and philosophical publications around the world.

The traditionalist perennialist perspective began to be enunciated in the West at the beginning of the twentieth century by the French metaphysician Rene Guenon, although its precepts are considered to be timeless and to be found in all authentic traditions. It is also known as Perennialism, or Perennial Philosophy or *Sophia Perennis*, or *Religio Perennis* or sometimes simply referred to as the traditionalist or metaphysical school. The term *Philosophia Perennis* goes back to the Renaissance, while the Hindu expression *Sanatana Dharma* - Eternal Doctrine -and the *Islamic expression* the *javidani khird* or *al-hikmat al-khalidah* has precisely the same signification. The other founding figures of the Traditionalist School were the German philosopher Frithjof Schuon and the Ceylonese scholar Ananda Coomaraswamy. Other important figures in the traditionalist school include Titus Burckhardt, Martin Lings, Marco Pallis, Whitall N. Perry, Syed Hussain Nasr, Lord Northbourne, Leo Schaya, Philip Sherrard, Rama Coomaraswamy, J.E., Brown and Charles le Gai Eaton. There are, apart from the traditionalists themselves, several scholars and thinkers whose work exhibits, in varying degree, a strong traditionalist influence. Mention may be made of Huston Smith, T. Izutsu, Elemire Zolla,

Katheleine Raine, Brian Keble, William Chittick, James Cutsinger, E.F. Schumacher. Other major figures of the twentieth century have been profoundly influenced by the school, including T.S. Eliot, the Romanian historian of religions Mircea Eliade, British author Aldous Huxley, and the Italian Julius Evola. Thus it has respectable though restricted following among the academic and intellectual elite in the modern West and it is this paper's contention that there is urgent need to reckon with its claims and its explore its resources for providing a solution to certain nagging problems that modern science and Western philosophy as well as their modernistic and post-modernistic appropriations encounter. It provides the much needed bridge between the East and the West. As such it demands our serious attention and we need to redress the criminal indifference and ignorance displayed by most academicians in the field towards it.

We will here present without much comment on our part his critique of positivist, naturalist, reductionist, demythologizing, and evolutionist framework – in short what he calls its antitraditional character. His is a sharp rejection of most of scientific claims that we have recounted. His is a wholesale rejection of Science inspired antitraditional project of modernity. Lengthy passages from his works are quoted so as to foreground a perspective that rejects scientific and theological modernism on almost all grounds.

The perennialist critique of modern scientific narrative is based on intellectual (as distinct from rational) metaphysical perspective that is shared by all the premodern civilizations. Both the subjective pole and the objective pole of reality are differently construed by them. For them there is transpersonal Subject or Self that perceives Truth or Principles or essences of all things. There is no ultimate dualism of thought and being, subject and object. God is Reality, the totality of existence (both transcendent and immanent). Reality is hierarchical. Sensorial-empirical realm that modern science takes for the whole reality constitutes only a lowest rung of the ladder of reality. Both Intellect and Revelation are sources of knowledge. Traditional sciences believing in the sacred character of knowledge operated with diverse methodologies undergirded by the symbolic vision of the Cosmos. Knowledge is connected to gnosis or realization and no such thing as knowledge for knowledge's sake is envisaged in their sacral perspective. Rationalism and rationalist philosophical grounding of modern science are forcefully questioned. The secular transcendence-denying scientific worldview (both post-Newtonian and modern versions) has no place in the traditional metaphysics though the latter doesn't take theistic God as the First Principle but the Absolute that is transtheistic and posited by all the traditional religions including transtheistic Buddhism and theistic Islam. Syed Hussain Nasr in his *Knowledge and the Sacred* and *The Need for a Sacred Science* has lucidly put forward the case of traditional metaphysics and science and highlighted the limitations of modern science. Here we have focused on the treatment of modern science in Schuon's writings.

5. Rejection of symbolism

We start by alluding to the fundamental difference between traditional science and modern science, viz., rejection of symbolist view of Cosmos by the latter. On modern science's rejection of symbolist spirit (exemplified in Copernicus-Galileo vs. Christian theology case) of traditional sciences, Schuon says: "It is normal for humanity to live in a symbol, which is a pointer towards Heaven, an opening towards the Infinite. As for modern science it has pierced the protecting frontiers of this symbol and by so doing destroyed the symbol itself; it has thus abolished this pointer, this opening, even as the modern world in general breaks through the space-symbols constituted by traditional civilizations; what it terms 'stagnation' and 'sterility' is really the homogeneity and continuity of the symbol." [11]

Commenting on the significance of traditional symbolism of the sky he observes, "Even if we know that space is an eternal night sheltering galaxies and nebulae, the sky will still stretch blue above us and symbolize the realm of angels and of Bliss" [11, p. 112].

Modern science prides itself on being free from presuppositions or dogmas of any kind. Its promise of objectivity and methodology (inductionist/empiricist) of discovering truth has been formulated in contradistinction to traditional character of traditional sciences. But it has failed to understand tradition or its metaphysical core that itself has been discovered/revealed in the most objective manner possible. Schuon remarks: "Modern science blithely rejects the traditional without being aware of the fact that this rejection comes up against the unlikely disproportion between the intelligence of the believers and the hypothetical absurdity of their beliefs, or also against the no less impossible disproportion between the intelligence of the Sages and the supposed absurdity of their convictions and their inmost motives. Man is intelligence, therefore wisdom and contemplation and consequently tradition; to detach man from the latter, far from rendering him independent, is to deprive him of his human quality." [12]

6. Science as a metanarrative

On the attempt from certain quarters to project modern science as *the* science and thus constructing a metanarrative from it – its absolutistic, universalistic and imperialistic claims that negate existence and knowledge claims of revelation and intuition and pretending to provide the Theory of Everything, to enclose all Existence in a set of mathematical formulas, to discover the Mind of God, as Hawking in true Faustian spirit asserts, or to determine how much freedom God had in creating the world as Einstein, in Promethean spirit that characterizes modern project, would say, he observes that the foundations of modern science are false because it replaces Intellect and Revelation by reason and experiment and lays claim to totality on an empirical basis and because it replaces the universal Substance by matter alone and denies

transcendence [13]. For perennialists modern empiricism is a rejection of objective evidence collected by the numerous explorers of consciousness from all ages, in all civilizations. The transcendent is posited not as an abstract principle by speculative reason but as a result of discoveries of experience.

Metanarrative formation involves commitment to a certain explanatory framework and certain fundamental assumptions to create a world view. Schuon attacking these fundamental assumptions of scientism observes that modern scientist has not enough knowledge of the underlying nature of Existence to be able to integrate the facts of Science in a total view of the world [13, p. 36]. That Science alone can form a coherent and comprehensive worldview has been challenged by many philosophers and philosophers of science. The primary aim of Science, according to perennialists, is awakening of God-consciousness and if one accepts this criterion to distinguish modern and traditional sciences one can agree with his following assertion: “...it is a thousand times better to believe that God created this world in six days and that the world beyond lies beneath the flat surface of the Earth or in the spinning heavens, than it is to know the distance from one nebula to another without knowing that phenomena merely serve to manifest a transcendent Reality which determines us in every respect and gives to our human condition its whole meaning and its whole content” [11, p. 31].

On the contingent nature of modern science and against its universalist claim, he agrees with Brunner’s following observations: “Neither India nor the Pythagoreans practiced modern science, and to isolate where they are concerned the elements of rational technique reminiscent of our science from the metaphysical elements which bear no resemblance to it is an arbitrary and violent operation contrary to real objectivity. When Plato is decanted in this way he retains no more than an anecdotal interest, whereas his whole doctrine aims at installing man in the supra-temporal and supradiscursive life of thought of which both mathematics and the sensory world can be symbols. If, then, peoples have been able to do without our autonomous science for thousands of years and in every climate, it is because this science is not necessary; if it has appeared as a phenomenon of civilization suddenly and in a single place, that is to show its essentially contingent nature.” [14]

He critiques scientism for its denial of hierarchy of existence and compares its position to that of a man who could grasp only two dimensions of space and who denied the third because he was incapable of imagining it. Elaborating the same point he remarks: “Modern science, with its denial in practice or in principle of all that is really fundamental, and its subsequent rejection of the ‘one thing needful’, is like a planimetry that has no notion of the other directions. It shuts itself up entirely in physical reality or unreality, and there it accumulates an enormous mass of information, while at the same time committing itself to ever more complex conjectures. Starting out from the illusion that nature will end by yielding its ultimate secret and will allow itself to be reduced to some mathematical formula or other, this Promethean science everywhere runs up against enigmas which give the lie to its postulates and

which appear as unforeseen fissures in this laboriously erected system. These fissures get plastered over with fresh hypotheses and the vicious circle goes on unchecked, with all the threats we are aware of. Some of its hypotheses, such as the theory of evolution, in practice become dogmas by reason of their usefulness, if not of their plausibility; this usefulness is not only scientific, it can just as well be philosophical or even political, according to circumstances.” [14, p. 67]

According to Schuon modern science’s impotence in explaining many phenomena is attributed to its ignorance of higher modes of consciousness and objective reality. “In view of the fact that modern science is unaware of the degrees of reality, it is consequently null and inoperative as regards everything that can be explained only by them, whether it be a case of magic or of spirituality or indeed of any belief or practice of any people; it is in particular incapable of accounting for human or other phenomena of the historic or prehistoric past, the nature of which and the key to which are totally unknown to it as a matter of principle.” [15]

Modern man nurtured in modern scientific environment will hardly understand Schuon. The traditionalist jargon is quite difficult to comprehend in modern terms. Schuon has been critiqued for his use of obscure language. Traditional metaphysics and traditional sciences such as traditional cosmology are quite alien to modernistic spirit. However Schuon will not use modern scientific language to appeal his addressees. He will not care if he will not be understood on his own terms. A typical passage runs as follows: “Scientific philosophy is unaware, not only of the ‘Divine Presences’, but also of their rhythms or ‘life’ ; it is ignorant not only of the degrees of reality and the fact of our imprisonment in the sensory world, but also of the cycles, the universal *solve et coagula*; that is to say it knows nothing either of the ‘gushing forth’ of our world from an invisible and effulgent Reality, or of its re-absorption into the ‘dark’ light of this same Reality. All the Real is in the Invisible; it is this above all that must be felt or understood before one can speak of knowledge and effectiveness. But this will not be understood, and the human world will continue inexorably on its course.” [15, p. 158]

He declares that it is a most pernicious abuse of language to call modern scientists ‘sages’ because they ignore everything that transcends the physical world and so everything that constitutes wisdom [15, p. 154].

For Schuon there is hardly any reason to admire modern science on any account whatsoever. He is least impressed by its ‘grand achievements’ in the field of human knowledge or even betterment of quality of human life through technology. Science is crass ignorance and has hardly anything to do with intelligence and knowledge. Here he is in complete disagreement with modernists and even many Islamists and advocates of Islamisation of knowledge. He dismisses all the grand claims of priests of modern science and its appropriations by most modernists. He says: “There is certainly no reason to admire a science which counts insects and atoms but is ignorant of God; which makes an avowal of not knowing Him and yet claims omniscience by principle.

It should be noted that the scientist, like every other rationalist, does not base himself on reason in itself; he calls 'reason' his lack of imagination and knowledge, and his ignorance are for him the 'data' of reason." [16]

Schuon points out that modern science does not know what man is, what life or Existence is. It knows nothing of the Origin and the End, of the Principles or of Substance.

"Modern science, which is rationalist as to its subject and materialist as to its object, can describe our situation physically and approximately, but it can tell us nothing about our extra-spatial situation in the total and real Universe.... Profane science, in seeking to pierce to its depth the mystery of the things that contain - space, time, matter, energy - forget the mystery of the things that are contained: it tries to explain the quintessential properties of our bodies and the intimate functioning of our souls, but it does not know what intelligence and existence are; consequently, seeing what its 'principles' are, it cannot be otherwise than ignorant of what man is." [13, p. 111]

The limitations of modern science and scientism are foregrounded by him at various places.

"Science is supposed to inform us not only about what is in space but also about what is in time. As for the first-named category of knowledge, no one denies that Western science has accumulated an enormous quantity of observations, but as for the second category, which ought to reveal to us what the abysses of duration hold, science is more ignorant than any Siberian shaman, who can at least relate his ideas to a mythology, and thus to an adequate symbolism.

....It is not surprising that a science arising out of the fall – or one of the falls- and out of an illusory rediscovery of the sensory world should also be a science of nothing but the sensory, or what is virtually sensory, and that it should deny everything which surpasses that domain, thereby denying God, the next world and the soul (he clarifies in a footnote that though not all scientists deny these realities, but science denies them, and that is quite a different thing), and this presupposes a denial of the pure Intellect, which alone is capable of knowing everything that modern science rejects. For the same reasons it also denies Revelation, which alone rebuilds the bridge broken by the fall". [13, p. 34]

Schuon is at his best in his critique of positivist rejection of metaphysics or ignorance of it. Modernism is very critical of traditional metaphysics and attempts to build a worldview that bypasses metaphysics, independent of revelation. Schuon elevates Metaphysics to the status of primary science and exact science. He would deny Science the power of building a worldview as it can't define the World All. It is the prerogative of revelation and Metaphysics alone. Science divorced from them is blind and simply ignorance. He rejects what he calls the common illusion of an 'absolutely real' within relativity as it "breeds philosophical sophistries and in particular an empiricist and experimental science wishing to unveil the metaphysical mystery of Existence" [12, p. 41].

Schuon argues why Science ignorant of Metaphysics is dangerously distorting medium through which to look at Existence. He explains why modern science is unable to solve certain fundamental problems in its own domain and he warns why they can't be solved at all at the level where modern science stands.

“In all this wish to accumulate knowledge of relative things, the metaphysical dimension – which alone takes us out of the vicious circle of the phenomenal and the absurd - is expressly put aside; it is as if a man were endowed with all possible faculties of perception minus intelligence; or again, it is as if one believed that an animal endowed with sight were more capable than a blind man of understanding the mysteries of the world. The science of our time knows how to measure galaxies and split atoms, but it is incapable of the least investigation beyond the sensible world, so much so that outside its self-imposed but unrecognized limits it remains more ignorant than the most rudimentary magic.” [12, p. 42].

Elaborating the same point he argues why Science can't be accepted as or provide a theory of everything: “A science, to truly deserve that name, owes us an explanation of a certain order of phenomena; now modern science, which claims to be all-embracing by the very fact that it recognizes nothing outside itself as valid, is unable to explain to us, for instance, what a sacred book is, or a saint or a miracle; it knows nothing of God, of the hereafter or the Intellect and it cannot even tell us anything about phenomena such as premonition or telepathy; it does not know in virtue of what principle or possibility shamanistic procedures may cure illnesses or attract rain” [12, p. 43].

7. Critique of pragmatic defense of Science

Schuon highlights mortal effects of what may be called as fact-fetish and informationalism and critiques background pragmatic assumptions of modern science. To quote him: “In the opinion of most men today, experimental science is justified by its results, which are in fact dazzling from a certain fragmentary point of view, but one readily loses sight not only of the decided predominance of bad results over good, but also of the spiritual devastation inherent in the scientific outlook, a priori and by its very nature, a devastation which its positive results – always external and partial can never compensate. In any event, it savours of temerity in these days to dare to recall the most forgotten of Christ's sayings: ‘For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?’ (Mark viii. 36)” [13].

For Schuon there is hardly any reason to admire modern science on any account whatsoever. He is least impressed by its ‘grand achievements’ in the field of human knowledge or even betterment of quality of human life through technology. He dismisses all the grand claims of priests of modern science and its appropriations by most modernists. He says: “There is certainly no reason to admire a science which counts insects and atoms but is ignorant of God; which makes an avowal of not knowing Him and yet claims omniscience by principle.

It should be noted that the scientist, like every other rationalist, does not base himself on reason in itself; he calls 'reason' his lack of imagination and knowledge, and his ignorance are for him the 'data' of reason." [16]

8. Critique of modernist religion

Against the modernist attitude towards traditional claims of religion and their reinterpretations and reconstructions and demythologizations and their very defensive attitude and sometimes their embarrassment in their encounter with modern science and their conciliatory arguments he reserves pungent satire and has his counter-claims to make which he puts forward with such surefootedness that one can't afford to complacently dismiss. He attributes religionist's embarrassment and weak apologetic to the absence of metaphysical or esoteric knowledge on the one hand, and the suggestive force emanating from scientific discoveries as well as from collective psychoses on the other hand. Against modernist pleading for reformulation or demythologization of religious doctrines he maintains unflinchingly his position that scientific discoveries prove nothing to contradict the traditional positions of religion but laments that there is no one at hand to point this out and sarcastically remarks that "too many 'believers' consider that it is time that religion should shake off 'the dust of the centuries', which amounts its 'liberation' from its very essence and from everything which manifests that essence". Weinberg receives a fitting reply. To quote him: "One of the effects of modern science has been to give religion a mortal wound, by posing in concrete terms problems which only esoterism can resolve; but these problems remain unresolved, because esoterism is not listened to, and is listened to less now than ever. Faced by these new problems, religion is disarmed, and it borrows clumsily and gropingly the arguments of the enemy; it is thus compelled to falsify by imperceptible degrees its own perspective, and more and more to disavow itself. Its doctrine, it is true, is not affected, but the false opinion borrowed from its repudiators corrode it cunningly 'from within'; witness, for example, modernist exegesis, the demagogic leveling down of the liturgy, the Darwinism of Teilhard de Chardin, the 'worker-priests', and a 'sacred art' obedient to surrealist and 'abstract' influences.... a world fabricated by scientific influences tends everywhere to turn ends into means and means into ends, and that it results either in a mystique of envy, bitterness or hatred, or in a complacent shallow materialism destructive of qualitative distinctions [13, p. 338].

9. Convergence with postmodern critiques of Science

Schunon's critique of Science converges at certain points with certain postmodern critiques of the same. Such executioners of scientism as Feyerabend are sometimes echoed in his writings although the background philosophies of postmodernists and Schunon are as divergent as possible. He denies logic and reason the power of building a metanarrative and argues so convincingly how

and why Science can't penetrate the mystery of existence. However on the basis of metaphysical grounds he avoids (post)modernistic relativism and epistemological anarchism. The supra-rational faculty of Intellect and intellectual intuition perceive everything, the total Truth as such. Traditional sciences and the science of *scientia sacra* are not foundationless or groundless or mere language games. It is due to lack of principial knowledge that modern and postmodern philosophies of science are committed to the view that Truth cannot be vouchsafed to man. There is absolute certainty of truth in that grand metaphysical vision, in gnosis and all those sciences which are grounded in the principial knowledge. Modern scientism is bedeviled by contradictions and its grand narrative has lost credibility. This is argued forcefully by Schuon without committing himself to postmodern skepticism and absolutizing relativism. He razes to the ground the claims of scientism and its positivism and empiricism and its claim of objectivity and rationality. The following quotes show how modern science's grand claims could be problematized from the perennialist perspective and also show the way of transcending postmodern skepticism and thus providing unproblematizable foundations to Science and making Science truly a science of Reality or Truth. Impotence and limitations of scientific logic and its inability to appropriate contradictions could hardly be more succinctly and forcefully pointed out and foregrounded.

“Science claims to be characterized by its refusal of all purely speculative premises (the *voraussetzungsloses Denken* of the German philosophers) and at the same time by a complete liberty of investigation; but this is an illusion since modern science, like every other science before it moreover, cannot avoid starting out in its turn from an idea: this initial idea is the dogma concerning the exclusively rational nature of the intelligence and its more or less universal diffusion. In other words, it is assumed that there exists a unique and polyvalent intelligence (which in principle is true) and that this intelligence is possessed by everybody and furthermore that this is what allows investigation to be entirely 'free' (which is radically false).

There are truths which intuitive intellection alone allows one to attain, but it is not a fact that such intellection lies within the capacity of every man of ordinarily sound mind. Moreover the Intellect, for its part, requires Revelation, both as its occasional cause and as vehicle of the 'Perennial Philosophy,' if it is to actualize its own light in more than a fragmentary manner.” [17]

The following lines are almost in postmodern vein though his background assumptions and those of postmodernists are quite divergent.

“Wanting to believe only what they see, scientists condemn themselves to seeing only what they believe; logic for them is their desire not to see what they do not want to believe. Scientism in fact is less interested in the real as such - which necessarily goes beyond our limitations - than in what is non-contradictory, therefore in what is logical, or more precisely, in what is empirically logical; thus in what is logical *de facto* according to a given experience, and not in what is logical *de jure* in accordance with the nature of things.

In reality the 'planimetric' recording of perceptions and the elimination of the apparently contradictory only too often give the measure of a given ignorance, even of a given stupidity; the pedants of 'exact science' are moreover incapable of evaluating what is implied by the existential paradoxes in which we live, beginning with the phenomenon, contradictory in practice, of subjectivity.

Subjectivity is intrinsically unique while being extrinsically multiple; now if the spectacle of a host of subjectivities other than our own causes us no great perplexity, how can it be explained 'scientifically' - that is, avoiding or eliminating all contradiction - that 'I alone' am 'I'? So-called 'exact' science can find no reason whatever for this apparent absurdity, any more than it can for that other logical and empirical contradiction which is the limitlessness of space, time and the other existential categories. Whether we like it or not, we live surrounded by mysteries, which logically and existentially lead us towards transcendence. " [18]

Rejecting scientism's attempt to explain the real without the help of that first science or metaphysics, and which does not know that 'only the science of the Absolute gives meaning and discipline to the science of the relative' he observes: "The absurdity of scientism is the contradiction between the finite and the Infinite, that is, the impossibility of reducing the latter to the former, and the incapacity to integrate the former into the latter; and also the inability to understand that an erudition which cuts itself off from initial Unity can lead only to the innumerable, hence to the indefinite, to shattering and no nothingness..." [18].

10. Critique of rationalism

His critique of scientific rationalism is multipronged. He demonstrates not only with great logical acumen but also with what may be called as empirical approach limitations and exposes grandiose pretensions of rationalism vis-à-vis modern science.

"There is close relationship between rationalism and modern science; the latter is at fault not in concerning itself solely with the finite, but in seeking to reduce the Infinite to the finite, and consequently in taking no account of Revelation, an attitude which is, strictly speaking, inhuman; our quarrel with modern science is that it is inhuman, or infra-human, and not that it is ignorant of the facts which it studies, even though through prejudice it ignores certain of their modalities... And what is to be said of the pretentiousness which sets out to 'discover' the ultimate causes of existence, or of the intellectual bankruptcy of those who seek to subject their philosophy to the results of scientific research? A science of the finite cannot legitimately occur outside a spiritual tradition, for intelligence is prior to its objects, and God is prior to man; an experiment which ignores the spiritual link characterizing man no longer has anything human about it; it is thus in the final analysis as contrary to our interests as it is to our nature; and 'ye shall know them by their fruits'." [19]

He denies the claim that scientist is a sage or has greater share of intelligence [19, p. 38]. He points out the singularities that scientific rationalism encounters at deeper levels because of its crass ignorance of transcendence or the sacred, due to its *a priori* rejection of everything that transcends reason. Scientists like Weinberg assert that the more the Universe becomes comprehensible the more it seems pointless. This statement is incomprehensible or simply absurd from the traditionalist perspective as it also reflects utter failure of scientific intelligence to know 'one thing needful'. Meaning comes only from above, from transcendence and modern science's attempt to find it at the level of sensory world or the world of *Maya* is doomed. Science encounters only darkness at the end as Stace and Russell have pointed out as it chooses to be blind to God, the Light of the World.

11. Critique of demythologization

The oft repeated modernist assertion that Science has pointed out errors in revelation and demonstrated their primitive or mythic character is subject to devastating criticism by Schuon. In fact he makes counter-assertions and defends all revelations, including the much maligned Bible against the scientific critics. He defends traditional cosmology that puts the Earth at the 'centre' on symbolist grounds. He argues that this blue sky, though illusory as an optical error and belied by the vision of interplanetary space, is "none the less an adequate reflection of the heaven of the angels and of the blessed and that therefore despite everything it is this blue mirage, flecked with silver clouds, which was right and will have the final say" [11, p. 114]. He elaborates traditional understanding of the Biblical flat Earth thus: "If the Bible does not specify that the Earth is round, it is simply and solely because it is normal to man to see it as flat, and because collective man cannot even tolerate the notion of a spherical Earth, as history has proved to satiety. Science is natural to man but it is important above all else to choose between the different levels, in the light of the axiom: 'My kingdom is not of this world'; all useful observation of the here below expands Science, but the wisdom of the next world limits it, which amounts to saying that every science of the Relative which does not have a limit which is determined by the Absolute, and thus by the spiritual hierarchy of values, ends in supersaturation and explosion." [14, p. 34]

He clarifies the relation between Theology and religion in a footnote to this passage with reference to famous Galileo case: "If Galileo had been sensitive to the fundamental intention of the Christly message, there is no reason why he should not have taken cognizance of the fact that the Earth turns, assuming that he would still have discovered this in such a case; but he would never have had the idea of demanding that the Church should forthwith insert this fact into Theology, before it had a chance of imposing itself upon the learned world of his time, or a fortiori upon the people. However that may be, one must neither seek to inflict on Theology the movement of the molecules nor pretend to 'leave God outside the laboratory'; what one must do is to prevent

the molecules from becoming a religion, and Science from being left outside God.” [14, p. 34]

Against all those who have critiqued pre-modern traditional cosmology on positivist and other grounds and are ignorant of the underlying symbolism, he is there to defend Ptolemy’s medieval cosmology and points out what Copernicus has missed. Discoveries of Copernicus could have no effect on the veracity of traditional symbolism. Indeed it is modern cosmology that comes under attack for missing the real import of what science of cosmology should be all about. Lest it be thought that traditional symbols have no ‘cognitive import’ or no ontological reference or are too vague he clarifies with regard to the above referred to symbolism of the sky that though from a purely observational or empirical viewpoint it is right to maintain that ‘the home of the blessed does not lie up there’ but nevertheless “it would be a great mistake to assert that the association of ideas between the visible heaven and celestial Paradise does not arise from the nature of things, but rather from ignorance and ingenuousness mixed with imagination and sentimentality; for the blue sky is a direct and therefore adequate symbol of the higher and supra-sensory degrees of Existence; it is indeed a distant reverberation of those degrees, and it is necessarily so since it is truly a symbol, consecrated by the sacred Scriptures and by the unanimous intuition of peoples” [11, p. 112].

About the charges of naivety leveled against scriptural existence and knowledge claims and the claim that modern science is enlightened – in sum the claims of progressivism, Schuon asserts: “It is said that Einstein, for example, revolutionized the vision of the world as Galileo or Newton had done before him, and that the usual conceptions which he overturned – those of space, time, light and matter - are ‘as naive as those of the Middle Ages’; but then there is nothing to guarantee that his theory of relativity will not be judged naive in its turn, so that, in profane science, it is never possible to escape the vicious circle of ‘naivety’.

Moreover, what could be more naive than to seek to enclose the Universe in a few mathematical formulae, and then to be surprised to find that there always remains an elusive and apparently ‘irrational’ element which evades all attempts to ‘bring it to heel’?” [19]

Schuon is so emphatic and uncompromising in his rejection of secular worldview that leans upon modern science because he sees irreconcilable contradiction between it and objective truth or reality as known to traditional metaphysics and religion. He dismisses religious modernist position that modern science is not synonymous with irreligion, that we could make peace between Science and Islam, that hitherto unsuspected harmonies could be discovered between them.

“There is scarcely a more desperately vain or naïve illusion – far more naïve than is Aristotelian astronomy! – than to believe that modern science, in its vertiginous course towards the ‘infinitely small’ and the ‘infinitely great’ will end up by re-joining religious and metaphysical truths and doctrines.” [15, p. 156]

12. Critique of Positivism

Alluding to parapsychologists who study paranormal through scientific empirical laboratory methods he says in a footnote to this passage: “There is a singular irony in the indignation of those who consider that belief in sorcerers and ghosts is incompatible with the science of the ‘atomic age’, whereas this age is precisely - and utterly - ignorant of what said ‘beliefs’ mean. Only what can be verified ‘with laboratory clarity’ is held to be true, as if it were logical and objective to demand, in the name of truth, conditions which may be contrary to the nature of things, and as if it were a proof of imagination to deny the very possibility of such incompatibilities.” [12, p. 43]

This will answer all those apologists of modern science who in the name of verifiability, control, repeatability etc. refuse to concede reality or empirical character to everything that they find irreconcilable with the official secular naturalistic version of science.

13. Deep rooted divergences

Modern science’s very terminology, its fundamental notions are problematic for the perennialists. As Schuon notes, “Where the perennial philosophy says ‘Principle, emanation, substance’ modern science says ‘energy, matter, evolution’” [12, p. 43]. Religious modernists and advocates of demythologization are unable to appreciate the real import of traditional cosmology. This is illustrated in Ziauddin Sardar’s critique of Nasr in his *Explorations in Islamic Science* [20]. The elaborate references to the higher realms of existence in scriptures that simply defy all naturalistic scientific appropriations can’t be explained by modernists.

The empiricist, reductionist and demythologizing enterprise of modern science is thus argued to be absurd and doomed: “The man who wishes to know the visible – to know it both in entirety and in depth – is obliged for that very reason to know the Invisible, on pain of absurdity and ineffectualness; to know it according to the principles which the very nature of the Invisible imposes on the human mind; hence to know it by being aware that the solution to the contradictions of the objective world is found only in the transpersonal essence of the subject, namely in the pure Intellect” [18, p. 143].

Thus Schuon emerges as a critic of modernity and its key belief structures. Speaking for the rights of transcendence he shows why modern science has created problems for itself at the most fundamental levels. He argues for a reorientation of Science although his view of Metaphysics is quite different and not susceptible to usual positivist critiques as it has nothing to do with any empirical investigation. It is the knowledge of the supraphenomenal. Like his mentor Rene Guenon he is for the independence of scientific and religious realms. However he is very smart in noting metaphysical claims or philosophical appropriations of Science. If Science means investigation of phenomena and induction taken as one of the methodologies rather than the

exclusivist methodology he has no quarrels with it. His critique is directed against what he calls another perennialist has called the superstition of facts and the myths of evolution, biologism and psychologism. He upholds traditional sciences and is not a theologian with a system of beliefs or propositions to which Science must conform. Discoveries of sages and revelations of prophets leave the empirical world as it is and they talk of a different world which Science can't investigate.

14. Appraisal of Schuon

There have been very influential religious appropriations of modernity and modern science. Modern spirit is not to be out rightly dismissed as Faustian and Promethean. There is at its heart a respect for objectivity and truth. It is antiidolatrour in its very principles. It rejects representations and images of the divine that it finds revolting or fails to understand. If it is devil-inspired movement it hardly matters as the devil is ultimately in the service of God and nothing is outside God taken as Totality, as Reality. Scandals must come as Schuon often reminds us of the Biblical verse and modern science with its great ambitions may be seen as a scandal. It is thanks to the modern science that we have been able to decipher so many subtleties and beauties of nature and life. We can better appreciate divine wisdom through the help of these discoveries. Consistent nondualism takes a more liberal view of Science and its 'misadventures' than Schuon would grant. Symbolism is not the concern of Science *qua* science; it can be grafted to it. Science has not revealed a godless world and world as a desert that has no purpose. It is an interpretation imposed on it. For many it has revealed richer, profounder, more glorious, more beautiful and more purposeful Cosmos and life. None of the scientific discoveries impinge on the realm of the numinous or Spirit. If the world is manifestation of divine attributes or realization of some possibilities contained in the infinitude of All-Possibility it is laudable to scan every atom and cell. There is no god out there but all the worlds are contained in man. *Atman* is nondifferent from *Brahman*. God is equally immanent as He is transcendent. In fact for traditions God is Reality, All that there is. He is the inward and the outward, the hidden and the manifest. Transcendence need not be understood as inaccessible, utterly remote or alien category. It shows through the world of immanence. It can be understood as the mystery of existence as Stace has argued in his *Time and Eternity* [21]. Zen view of transcendence, of eternity here and now is quite understandable to the modern mind. Science's search for harmony, simplicity and order is in line with the traditionalist proposition that all that is real is knowable. A mystic too is a Faustus in a sense. His ambition extends far higher than that of a scientist. He is satisfied by nothing less than God and asserts 'I am the Truth' and 'Glory to Me' though he transcends the principle of separation which is the lower self. The Self he searches for is the whole Universe. Prometheus as understood by certain esotericist scholars has very positive role to play in the divine scheme. The devil is ultimately the servant of God as

nothing happens contrary to divine will. Science as such is not demonic though the ideology of secular humanism that takes such a surface view of life and human destiny and fails to account for its deeper things, for beauty, for goodness, for meaning and the Infinite that grounds and permeates everything debases life and man.

One can grant Schuon's point that modern man has mistaken appearances for reality and modern science is impotent to crack the mystery of existence. But if we analyze deeply we see that the symbolist view doesn't crack the mystery either. It leaves mystery as it is and lives it and names it as God. 'Life is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be lived' is the final answer that sages give. There is no answer to the riddle of existence and recognition of this truth is what Socrates called wisdom. It is vanity on the part of theologians which leads them to conclude that God can be understood in any other terms than mystery. Beauty is mystery and so is our appetite for it. Love is not explainable in any rational terms. All that makes life worthwhile and all that goes by the name of the sacred is mysterious. The lowest insect or a protozoan will never be exhaustively known in neat logical or rational terms. Even an atom is a universe far more mysterious than once imagined by rationalists. Life in its depths and heights is inaccessible to reason. "Put reason into life and life is gone" as Tolstoy has observed in his epilogue to the great work *War and Peace*. In fact God is Mystery or He is nothing as Stace has observed [20, p. 9]. Where Science errs is not in disregarding the mysterious – it has of late learnt to be humble and respectful towards the deep mystery that grounds and wraps everything – but in believing that we can tap it in rational categories, can use it to serve our human ends. Moderns did claim to exclude all 'mystery' from the world as they see it, in the name of Science and a philosophy characterized as 'rational' as Guenon has noted [22]. Since the time of 18th century encyclopaedists, the most fanatical deniers of all supra-sensible reality have been particularly fond of invoking 'reason' on all occasions and of proclaiming themselves as rationalists. Science has now learnt that reason can't go very far and conceptual schemes which it imposes can't squarely face the essentially paradoxical and mysterious world. The exclusivist and imperialistic claims of reason that is divorced from intellect have been challenged from various quarters. Perennialists have joined in this crusade with fresh weapons. The role of preconceived ideas or ideological factors and subjectivity in the formulation of scientific theories or construction of scientific facts is now increasingly recognized, especially since the advent of postmodernism. We can no longer simplistically believe that scientific discovery turns upon the use of a method analogous to and of the same logical stature as deduction, namely the method of induction — a logically mechanized process of thought which, starting from simple declaration of fact arising out of the evidence of the senses, can lead us with certainty to the truth of general laws. Modern science has learned to be humble and reject high sounding claims to truth and certainty. It no longer claims finality, objectivity and even rationality. It is learning to respectfully treat alternative methodologies and perspectives in Science. The metanarrative

of modern science rudely challenged. Some of the most important scientists have abandoned the inductive method and have formulated theories on the basis of qualitative factors like symmetry, harmony and search for unity. Thus modernity's great faith in modern science and its inductive methodology and rationalist credentials is too simplistic and not shared by postmodern science and a significant number of philosophers of science.

Schuon rightly criticizes rationalist's hubris and pretensions. In fact modern science had become a religion for modern man and its problematization from various quarters should be viewed in the positive light, not as a rejection of scientific enterprise but as contributing to its better appreciation with its limitations and strengths. Traditional sciences are a treasure that modern man could explore for his benefit and perennialist advocacy of the same is a much needed contribution. In medicine alternative or marginalized sciences have already shown great worth and we are terribly in need of a more holistic science and more inclusive Theology which perennialists seek to identify and explore.

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