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HUMANITIES FUTURES: MEANING, MAN AND WORLDVIEW

Abstract: Can science and the humanities meet? Or is science part of the humanities? Is there a future for the Humanities? The questions are not new. Some would see it as muted, a set of 'non-question'. This is because the affair between science and the arts and humanities has always been a non-affair. This paper proposes that the Humanities form the whole that makes Science as a part. The paper observes that apart from the undeclared war between science and the humanities scholar, organized along field and disciplines, and faculties and departments, and among universities, there is the occasional public outburst unraveling the conflict. This, fused with the ever shifting *zeitgeist*, in turn creates gods of progress and development, obfuscating us from center of the humanities tradition. What is significant to this paper is that instruments of mass indoctrination makes the illusion a reality, hence de-consecrating the humanities and modes of knowing, prose and interpretation.

Key words: *Humanities, science, dehumanizing, corpus, sacred*

INTRODUCTION

Scientists have dismissed literature (and the arts) as invalid subjectivism, with no educational value. This generally perceived invalidity of the arts have seen many nations bearing misplaced importance to science and technology. Walk into any school in Malaysia, for example, geography and history takes a back seat, and art and music are dismissed as obsessions of profanity and illiteracy, incapable of placing oneself for gainful employment. To the many who regard themselves as non-science and engineering scholars and researchers – those in the social sciences, or across the humanities such as history, languages and linguistics, and art, the conditioning from the other culture makes them apologetic as to the (false) need to pepper their papers with what would appear as scientific so much so that the definition and conception of research and methodology have been narrowed, extricating itself from the abstract. The very mention of methodology brings to it a fear of

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having to conform to ‘theory’, quantification and being made to appear ‘scientific’. Hence, such a naïve conception of research and methodology only kills complex abstract language and thought. It nullifies thinking. There is no concept, interpretation and argument. This paper develops implications on two ways of knowing, ‘transmitted’ and ‘intellectual’. It attempts to argue for the harmonization of thought and theory. In so doing, it makes reference to faith and paradigms, perhaps much loathed by scientists, but loved by historians and philosophers. Such produce stories narrating essences and lives. The argument is that such narration overcomes the two-cultures syndrome. In introduce this paper by way of the story of the elephant and the blind men.¹ I first encountered the problem of generalizing ‘the whole beast’ from a book published in 1973 with the title *The Rest of the Elephant: Perspectives on the Mass Media*.² In the parable, the 13th century poet, sage and philosopher, Jalaluddin Rumi tells us of the impossibility of seeing an elephant in the dark.

Some Hindus put an elephant on show in an unlit room. Many people came to see it, but because it was impossible to the elephant in the dark, they felt it with the palms of their hands. One put his hand on the elephant’s trunk, and exclaimed, ‘This creature is like a drainpipe’.

Another put her hand on its ear, saying, ‘it’s shape like a fan’.

A third who felt its leg, commented, ‘It’s like a pillar’.

A fourth placed his hand on its back, and said, ‘Really, this elephant is shaped like a throne’.

In like manner, everyone described the elephant from the part he had touched, and their descriptions differed depending on their particular standpoint, with one describing it as being crooked like an ‘s’, another straight like an ‘I’. if they had each held a candle, their descriptions would not have differed. Knowledge gained through our senses is comparable to knowledge obtained with the palm of a hand: a palm cannot extend over the hold elephant (*Mathnawi* III: 1259–71)³

¹ See ‘Mevlana Rumi, the Story of Man and Human Thought: Lessons on Modern Notions and Practices of Development’ presented to the International Conference on Mevlana: Present and Past, East and West (Commemorating the 804th birthday of Mevlana), The Centre of Civilizational Dialogue and the Cultural Centre, Embassy of the Republic of Iran, Kuala Lumpur, 22th September 2011.

² By John D. Stevens and William Earl Porter. I was studying journalism in the later 1970 s through the early 1980 s. Then it was not known to me that the rest of the elephant parable originates from the *Mathnawi* III (1259–71). I cited this in an earlier article “Rumi and the Rest of the Elephant Parable,” *New Sunday Times/Learning Curve*, August 28, 2011, p. H 5.

³ All citations from Rumi are taken from John Baldock. 2005. *The Essence of Rumi*. London. W. Foulsham;

William C. Chittick. 2007. *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*. Oxford: Oneworld; and also Chittick’s 1983 work, *The Sufi Path of Love. The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi*. Albany: SUNY.

The story of the elephant reflects much of what was to happen to the Humanities. This is the problem of reductionism which rules modern epistemology, agonomizing body and soul. The meaning of the Humanities can be found in the corpus of Rumi. We may learn from Rumi in that “Speech that rises from the soul, veils the soul.” Here Rumi voices the paradox which lies at the heart of his poetry: the inability of words, of language, to convey reality. This also reminds me of the tenets and belief of those residing in schools of communication and media studies. The very belief of the communication academic fraternity including students that words and language empirically observed, convey reality is subverted by the structure of Rumi’s epistemology.

DEHUMANIZING THE FUTURE: DESACRALIZING WORLDVIEWS

The Humanities are embedded in the modern project. It is broadly agreed that modernity is a humanistic worldview of the human being and his environment. It is a concept of an ‘open society’. This concept has changed over time, initially focusing upon a ‘human measure’ mirrored in the self-centered confidence of the “new citizen” of the second half of the 18th century, and eventually becoming the ‘positive fragmentation’ of the actively ‘de-centered’ subject of the post-industrial late 20th century. Despite these changes, modernity has always kept a certain continuity, and a relatively stable center of gravity. Commonly considered as ‘modern humanism’, the concept affirmed “the dignity and worth of all people, based on the ability to determine right and wrong by appealing to universal human qualities, particularly rationality (Benedikter, Giordano and Fitzgerald, 2010: 1102–1109). The transmission of rationality creates a commonality of the human condition.

In other words, modern humanism has invested significant effort in working toward a rational self-awareness of the universal ‘logos’ in its individualized form, stating that the ‘essence’ of the human being must be seen in the unity of the subject (individual) with the objective (universal) ‘logos’. These two dimensions of logos constitute an ontological unity that at its core can be regarded as the ‘human being’. The ‘human being’ is viewed as the only known ‘place’ in the world where both subjectivity and objectivity meet and merge; thus, the human being enjoys a privileged status based on the fact that it is conscious of itself. Accordingly, every individual must enjoy a ‘proto-sacred’ status of inviolability and mutual respect, ‘untouchable’ as a unitary ‘event, and there of value in and of itself (*Ibid*).

Rationality is imbued with a self-determined capacity. The mind is assumed to be superior over matter, and of the self-conscious ‘spirit’ over the biological body. The material world was seen as a tool to be manipulated by the hands of the ‘logical’ mind of a human individual. History itself is the continuous striving for increased self-consciousness. Technological progress and ‘humanism’ are not divided, but form a single entity. Hegel’s worldview see the phenomenon as ‘societal morality’. Or the ‘ethics’ of modern rationality (Hegel, 1998).

The ‘modern’ concept of the ‘essence’ of the human being was decisively tied to ideas originating in the Renaissance and antiquarian Greece and Rome. It fos-

tered a self-perception of humanity that accompanied the development of modernity, morality and dignity through the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries that accounted for – if not upheld – all of the inherent contradictions, dialectics, and implicit and explicit oppositions. It can be said that the ‘humanistic’ self-concept of the human being in European-Western modernity established the groundwork for what has been during the past three centuries in the name of freedom, equality and individualism, and for the representation pluralism and libertarianism. From the perspective of the history of (scientific) ideas, a sort of ‘guiding image’ of man, closely connected with some image of what a ‘good life’ and a ‘good society’ could be, was always at the center of modernity. It acted to legitimize individual self-empowerment behind the curtains of societal and political events, and it was crucial in both keeping the ideals that were determined to build a ‘rational civilization’ (Popper, 2006). Modern science is centered on the intertwining principles of modernity and the self-concept of man, one informing the other. These are the manifestation of European-Western civilization.

One science that has debased the human being and that of humanity is Psychology. Tracing the growth of science and knowledge over the last 100 years, all branches are expanding and transforming at an unprecedented rate. There is one notable exception. And this is Psychology,⁴ “which seems to lie plunged into a modern version of the dark ages (Koestler, 1989: 5). By Psychology, Koestler means the context of an academic or ‘experimental’ psychology, as taught in contemporary universities, both in the Euro-American world as well as in Asia and Africa.⁵ Freud, and to a lesser degree Jung, are immensely influential, but their influence is more strongly felt in the Humanities – literature, art and philosophy – than in the citadel of official science. Koestler describes Behaviorism as a pseudo-science. It determines the climate of all other sciences of life (p. 5).

Koestler traces the beginnings of behaviorism to John Broadus Watson at Johns Hopkins University before the outbreak of the First World War. Watson had published a paper in which he proclaimed: “the time has come when psychology must discard all reference to consciousness...Its sole task is the prediction and control of behavior; and introspection can form no part of its method (Watson, 1913. Cited in Koestler, p. 5). By ‘behaviour’ Watson meant observable activities, what physicists call ‘public events’. According to Koestler, since all mental events are private events which cannot be observed by others, and which can only be made public through statements based on introspection, they had to be excluded from the domain of science. And so, on the strength of the doctrine, the Behaviourists proceeded to purge psychology of all ‘intangibles and unapproachable’.

The terms ‘consciousness’, ‘mind’, ‘imagination’, and ‘purpose’, together with a score of others, were declared to be unscientific, treated as dirty words, and banned

⁴ I have cited Psychology as an example of how man is degraded to social animal.

⁵ Koestler distinguishes this from clinical psychiatry, psychotherapy or psychosomatic medicine. See Arthur Koestler (1967). *The Ghost in the Machine*. Reading: Arkana, p. 5

from the vocabulary. In Watson's words, the Behaviourist must exclude 'from his scientific vocabulary all subjective terms such as sensation, perception, image, desire, purpose, and even thinking and emotion as they were subjectively defined (Koestler, p. 6).

Almost a century has passed. Watsonian Behaviorism is much alive and a configured in our psyche. While psychology, in European, American and Asian academia used to be defined in dictionaries as the science of the mind; Behaviourism did away with the concept of mind and put in its place the conditioned-reflect chain. The consequences were disastrous not only for experimental psychology itself; but also felt in clinical psychiatry, philosophy, the humanities, social science. In fact, it dominated the outlook of scholars and students alike.

Watsonian Behaviourism became the foundation of a more sophisticated and immensely influential neo-Behaviorist systems – such as that of B. F. Skinner. Skinner had proclaimed even more extreme form of the same views. Having based his doctrine on Watson's 1913 *Behaviourism*, Skinner of Harvard University expressed his influence through his standard work *Science and Human Behaviour*. In the 1953 work, Skinner told the world that 'mind' and 'ideas' are non-existent entities 'invented for the sole purpose of providing spurious explanations... Since mental or psychic events are asserted to lack the dimensions of physical science, we have an additional reason for rejecting them (Skinner, 1953: pp. 30–1)

Art, Language and Science and their practice are deemed to be observable, predictable and controllable. Skinner's two best-known books, *The Behaviour of Organisms* and *Science and Human Behaviour* are based on experiments with rats. But nothing in their resounding titles indicates that the data in them are almost exclusively derived from conditioning experiments on rats and pigeons – and then converted by crude analogies into confident assertions about the political, religious and ethical problems of man (Koestler: pp. 9–10). According to Skinner

Behaviour which as been strengthened by a conditioned reinforce varies with the deprivation appropriate to the primary reinforce. The behavior of going to a restaurant is composed of a sequence of responses, early members of which (for example, going along a certain street) are reinforced by the appearance of discriminative stimuli which control later responses (the appearance of the restaurant, which we then enter). The whole sequence is ultimately reinforced by food, and the probability varies with food deprivation. We increase the chances that someone will go to a restaurant, or even walk along a particular street, by making him hungry (Skinner, 1953: p. 50).

The structure of knowledge about man then and now does not make man different from the lower animals. The unique attributed of man, verbal communication and written records, science and art are considered to differ only in degree, not in kind, from the learning achievement of the lower animals. (Pavlov, 1927; Skinner, 1953; Hull, 1952). It is the 'prediction and control' principle. This is also the principle behind the theory of information (Shannon and Weaver, 1948) which subsequently became the root theory for the whole gamut of the social and human sciences ranging from Philosophy to Psychology to Art and Language. How

the Humanities have operated is through the principle of Behaviourism – based on ill-defined verbal concepts which willingly lend themselves to circular arguments and tautological statements. It is based on *S-R theory* (stimulus-response theory) as first defined by Watson.: The rule or measuring rod, which the Behaviourists put in front of him always is: can I describe this bit of behavior I see in terms of ‘stimulus and response’” (Watson 1928: p. 6). Koestler suggests that if the R for ‘response’ were eliminated from the terminology, the chain (of behavior) would fall to pieces and the whole theory collapse (p. 12).

The ghost of mechanistic physics is still with us. By the same logic, the physicist may reject the existence of radio waves, because they are propagated through a so-called ‘field’ which lacks the properties of ordinary physical media. We may ask: if mental events are to be excluded from the study of psychology – what is there left for the psychologists to study?

But the modern concept on the essence of man is still with us, tied to and having its origins in the Greek, Roman and Renaissance crucible. To use the Attasian argument on Islam and secularism, modes of knowing in the Social and Human Sciences have been disenchanting, desacralized and desecrated.⁶ The Humanities would have to be reproduced against the scenario of secularization. Here it is critical to view what has happened to the Humanities. Relying on Harvard theologian Harvey Cox’s *The Secular City* (1965), al-Attas defines secularization as the deliverance of man “first from religious and then from metaphysical control over his reason and his language (Cox, p. 13, note 1. Cited in al-Attas, p. 15). It is “the loosing of the world from religious and quasi-religious understandings of itself, the dispelling of all closed world views, in the breaking of all supernatural myths and sacred symbols... the ‘defatalization of history’, the discovery by man that he has been left with the world on his hand, that he can no longer blame fortune or the furies for what he does with it...; [it is] man turning his attention away from worlds beyond and toward this world, and this time (Cox, pp. 2 and 17. In al-Attas, p. 15). Secularization encompasses not only the political and social aspects of life, but also inevitably the cultural, for it denotes “the disappearance of religious determination of the symbols of cultural integration.” (Cox, p. 20). It is a “liberating development,” and the end product of secularization is historical relativism (Cox, pp. 30–36). History is then a process of secularization and History as a discipline taken as such in the Humanities as a mode of knowing is rooted and integral to the secularization.

According to al-Attas, there are three integral components in the dimensions of secularization. These are the disenchantment of nature, the desacralization of politics, and the deconsecration of values. Borrowing the term ‘disenchantment’ from sociologist Max Weber – they mean the freeing of nature from its religious⁷ overtones; separating it from God and distinguishing man from it, so that man

⁶ See Syed Muhammad Al-Naquist Al-Attas I (1978). *Islam and Secularism*. Kuala Lumpur: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia.

⁷ Also involves the dispelling of animistic spirits and gods and magic from the natural world. See al-Attas, p. 16.

may no longer regard nature as a divine entity, which thus allows man to act freely upon nature, to make use of it according to his needs and plans, and hence create historical change and development (al-Attas, p. 16). All forms of knowledge – the Humanities and the Sciences are also political in the sense that its epistemological constituents inform on the political, which in turn constitutes a complimentary component. The configuration between politics and political life and the humanities can be seen in the institutions, authority and values present in modern societies. As such, the second component of the ‘desacralization’ of politics mean the abolition of sacral legitimation of political power and authority, which is the prerequisite of political change and hence also social change allowing for the emergence of the historical process. Finally, by the ‘deconsecration’ of values we mean the rendering transient and relative all cultural creations and every value system which includes religion and worldviews having ultimate and final significance. As such, “history, the future, is open to change, and man is free to create the change and immerse himself in the ‘evolutionary’ process. Al-Attas reminds us on the process of the consciousness of man from the ‘infantile’ to the ‘mature’ states (p. 16).

DISTRUSTING KNOWLEDGE

In the epigram in one of my books⁸ published in 2005. I cited Rumi as saying “Every one who is left far from source wishes back the time when he was united with it” This is indicative of Rumi’s devolutionist thinking. We live and in turn create both the tangible and the intangible environments. We create words and structures. We allow our epistemological and cultural space to be invaded. Subconsciously we extend that knowledge in our lives. We trust it. But our trust (of knowledge) is created and justified by what we have built. In other words we have looked at the intellect from our perspective, not that of God’s, whereas in our covenant, we have vowed to return to God. The goal of what we know and of our existence and that of the knowledge that we called the Humanities is to remember God – to phrase Chittick, “by recollecting the divine image within the self and awakening the intellect” (2009: 126).

Rumi calls for a distrust of the knowledge that have come to us, and that we have extended to our environments which in turn becomes the environment itself. It is like building skyscrapers until it surrounds and overwhelms us, blocking the light from the sun. We are cloistered in the shadows. We are obliterated from our source.

Knowledge comes from God and to Him it returns. To Rumi, knowledge raises the dignity of Man through refining his character and improving his life. The need of knowledge by Man is related to intelligence (‘aql) and character (adab). On account of Man’s intelligence and aptitude for knowledge, Rumi first singles out human beings among all other creatures and then subjects them to further hierarchi-

⁸ See *Media History: Worldviews and Communication Futures*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press

cal classifications within themselves. He assigns the highest position to those who have mastered the knowledge of the heart (Kuspinar, 2010: 135–162). Is the present corpus in the Humanities embedded in the knowledge of the heart?

The mind, then, is assumed to be superior over matter, and of the self-conscious ‘spirit’ over the biological body. The material world was seen as a tool to be manipulated by the hands of the ‘logical’ mind of a human individual. History itself is the continuous striving for increased self-consciousness. Technological progress and ‘humanism’ are not divided, but form a single entity. Hegel’s worldview see the phenomenon as ‘societal morality’. Or the ‘ethics’ of modern rationality. (Hegel, 1998).

The ‘modern’ concept of the ‘essence’ of the human being was decisively tied to ideas originating in the Renaissance and antiquarian Greece and Rome. It fostered a self-perception of humanity that accompanied the development of modernity, morality and dignity through the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries that accounted for – if not upheld – all of the inherent contradictions, dialectics, and implicit and explicit oppositions. It can be said that the ‘humanistic’ self-concept of the human being in European-Western modernity established the groundwork for what has been during the past three centuries in the name of freedom, equality and individualism, and for the representation pluralism and libertarianism. Man is then conceived as a social being, subsequently forged by the 18th century French philosophes. Among the features that characterized the philosophes from earlier intellectuals in Europe were that they developed a doctrine of anti-clericalism; and a belief in the pre-eminence of empirical, and materialist knowledge. This mode of thought about man and society, having its roots in the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century and the subsequent diffusion from about 1700 onwards of scientific concepts and methods, led to the creation of a small group of ‘moral sciences’ as David Hume called them (Hamilton 1995).

From the perspective of the history of (scientific) ideas, a sort of ‘guiding image’ of man, closely connected with some image of what a ‘good life’ and a ‘good society’ could be, was always at the center of modernity. It acted to legitimize individual self-empowerment behind the curtains of societal and political events, and it was crucial in both keeping the ideals that were determined to build a ‘rational civilization’ (Popper, 2006). Modern knowledge is centered on the intertwining principles of modernity and the self-concept of man, one informing the other. These are the manifestation of European-Western civilization.

Man has a soul, a spirit and a heart (*Mathnawi* 5: 3342). Not just the body. Not only a material existence. In studying the disciplines in the Humanities, the heart is a window opening to the realm of spirituality and heavenly knowledge. Rumi advises us to liberate ourselves from the world of forms and remove the veil that hinders our vision from seeing reality. The body as an accident cannot guide the heart which is the substance (Kuspinar, 2010: 135–162). In the non-Western Humanities, ignorance is also an integral structure of knowing. If there is no ignorance, then Man would have vanished. It is both complimentary and opposite.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL WARS

An outcome of the epistemological conflict can be seen in C. P. Snow's cry in the afternoon of 7 May 1959. Can science and the humanities meet? Certainly the question is not new. Some would see it as muted, a 'non-question' where only pretentious fools would dare venture mindless thought. This is because the affair between science and the arts and humanities has always been a non-affair. Both consumes the other in eternity. But Sir Charles Snow, later to be Lord Snow, and universally known by his initials, as C. P. Snow, had done (or undone) several things that day. Stefan Collini, in the 'Introduction' to Snow's *The Two Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959) narrates that Snow did at least three things: he had launched a phrase, perhaps even a concept, on an unstoppably successful international career; he had formulated a question that needs to address; and he had started a controversy which was to be remarkable for its scope, its duration, and its intensity.

Snow, through the annual Rede lectures provoked the world with the title 'The Two Culture and the Scientific Revolution'. The two cultures he identified were those of 'the literary intellectuals' and of the natural scientists'. But was his concern the world, or just Britain? Snow's observations are as follows. In Britain, literary intellectuals control the reins of power, both in government and in the higher social circles. This means that only people with a knowledge of classics, history; and/or English literature were felt to be educated. Such people do not know much about science, not unlike the Malaysian humanities or social science graduates or secondary school students streamed into Arts.

They do not know much about science and Snow thought that the ignorance was disgraceful, dangerous, and when applied to government, it failed Britain. Surely, he was thinking of Europe and the Western world too, in the post-World War II and the Cold War period. Then, Japan was reeling from its defeat, and former colonies were emerging as new nations from older (and wiser) civilizations and societies. Snow may have seen these as a challenge to the scientific might and technological power of the West. The force of science is greater when bred with the Humanities. Snow thought scientists have dismissed the Humanities – such as Literature, Philosophy and History as invalid subjectivism, with no educational value. This generally perceived invalidity of the Humanities have seen the nations like Malaysia bearing misplaced importance to science and technology.

Also as commonly encountered in the academic world as evidenced from thesis formats and conference paper requirements, any research and paper must include some quantitative data. When there are no numbers, the research result and the subsequent papers are not seen as academic, scientific, scholarly, and therefore worthy to be part of the corpus and literature. To the many who regard themselves as non-science and engineering scholars and researchers – those in Humanities such as history, languages and linguistics, and art, the conditioning from the other culture makes them apologetic as to the (false) need to pepper their papers with statistics so much so that the definition and conception of research and methodol-

ogy have been narrowed, extricating itself from the abstract. The very mention of methodology brings to it a fear of having to conform to 'theory', quantification and being made to appear 'scientific'. Hence, such a naïve conception of research and methodology only kills complex abstract language and thought. It nullifies thinking to the extent that the papers end up like score boards with numbers and percentages. No concept, interpretation and argument.

The P. C. Snow's two cultures appear to be alive and well in the Malaysian university landscape. Once I encountered in a university campus, a schoolmate who is a professor in one of the life sciences. He enquired on the conference that was going on then and was told that it was on the history and philosophy of science. 'Ah, those philosophers', he retorted, without doubt and with much certainty. He was indeed responding to his own kind who organized the conference – biologists, zoologists, mathematicians, physicists, etc., who move beyond laboratories and experiments and see science much through the lens in the likes of Michael Polanyi and Thomas Kuhn,

Conventional scientists do not see science in terms of faith and paradigm. The historians and philosophers of science are in essence those who tell stories about science – those who investigate and contextualize about atoms, for example, and not those who study the properties of atoms in itself. In other words, one measures and quantifies atoms, like my schoolmate professor; his 'philosopher' colleagues investigate *who* measures and evaluate the ruler used in context. Two cultures within science itself? Who values 'literary intellectuals?' In Malaysia, shades of C. P. Snow began to cast its shadow in academic climate for more than four decades now. Apart from the undeclared war between science and humanities scholars, organized along fields and disciplines and faculties and departments, and even among universities, there is also the occasional public outbursts unraveling the conflict.

What we have see in discourses at the popular level are occasional discussions, debates and polemics related to science, technology and society; science and religion, science and culture, technology and values, the role of scientists, science journalism, science policies, the politics of science, science and ethics, the history and philosophy of science, and popularizing science, and science writing and narration. Other forces were also instrumental in inducing the discourse, such as the consciousness and movement within Muslim intellectuals at challenging the epistemology and domination of Western and modern science, and the growing interest at that time – especially from the 1960 s and 1970 s of Asian and orientalist traditional modes of knowing.

Developments in Malaysia were reflected in the establishment of the History and Philosophy of Science program at University of Malaya back in 1975 by Royal Professor Ungku Aziz, who was the university's vice-chancellor then. Now referred to as Science and Technology Studies in the academic mainstream, the field has established itself in the country. Beyond the Science and Technology Studies Department at the University's Faculty of Science, there has not been much developments in terms of academic programs. However, research and advocacy initiatives and efforts are carried out individually or by interest groups at several universities and

scientific organizations in the country, ranging from bridging the gap between arts and science in theorizing across the disciplines, to science and technology and its various cognates from the ethnic and cultural perspectives and contexts, variably under the label of ethnoscience, indigenizing science, or Islamizing science, or Malay science, much classified as developing an alternative discourse looking at science in a transdisciplinary mode. These are not necessarily the same or similar to discourses structured along the lines of countering Eurocentrism, postcolonialism, anti-colonialism, reverse orientalism or Occidentalism.

CONCLUSION: MAN AND THE ENVIRONMENT CONSTRUCTED

Our ideas on development – the ideology that has woven itself into the epistemology of the Humanities and thereby usurped our very being, has obliterated us from the sacred worldviews. The developmentalist ideology, embedded in a Social Darwinist paradigm has governed practically every policy at the national and organization levels. The universities are no exception, so much so that the modern university is seen to be subscribing to many gods in the name of quality and standards. In so doing, meaning is lost. Instead of conceptualizing development as a linear process attending to materialistic growth, we reflect on the ever existing process of returning, in extending Rumi's philosophy, We begin our definition by asking "If to *velope*, as explained in *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary: Complete Text Reproduced Micrographically* (1981, 897) is "to wrap up" as in a garment or outer covering, therefore, to *de-velope* (OED, 651) is to unwrap, to open, to expose what is wrapped inside. And something is usually wrapped up not for hiding but for care, for protection.

Thus, this process of *development*, this process of *de-wrapping* is either to expose the seed within the clime and season of growth, or to expose the pearl, the diamond, the beauty within, to light to let shine, sparkle, and dazzle. Another definition explains *develop* as "to unfold, unroll (anything folded or rolled up); to unfurl (a banner) to open out of its unfolding cover." The same dictionary explains *development* as such:

1. A gradual unfolding, a bringing into fuller view.
2. Evolution or bringing out from a latent or elementary condition.
3. The growth and unfolding of what is in the germ.
4. Gradual advancement through progressive stages, growth from within.
5. A developed or well-grown condition; a state in which anything is in vigorous life or action.
6. The development result of or product; a developed form of some earlier and more rudimentary organism, structure, or system.

The analogy for the process of 'development' is that of a tiny seed, when exposed to the proper clime and condition, will grow, and grow in peace and security into a huge, healthy and magnificent tree, grateful and glorious in the light of the sun. Since man is the apex of God's creation, there is in man the seed, valuable be-

yond measure, carefully and lovingly wrapped – ‘veloped’ – and always eager and ever-ready, awaiting the *de-wrapping* process, awaiting ‘de-velopment’.

This spiritual dimension is embedded in the spiritual seed. The ‘seed’ as being mysterious and ‘unknown’. ‘To know’ is to understand the Laws intrinsic, embedded in the very nature of the thing. And as such inherent is the devolution of oneself to the Center. The aim of development in this context is the devolution of man toward his primordial state of being.

We are nothing but thought but our destiny is dependent on our consciousness. Devolution brings us toward remembrance from forgetfulness. Rumi reminds us of thought’s primacy when he says:

Brother, you are this very thought –
the rest of you is bones and fiber.
If roses are your thought, you are a rose garden,
if thorns, you are fuel for the furnace.
If rosewater, you will be sprinkled on the deck,
if urine, your will be dumped in the pit (*Mathnawi*, II: 277–9).

In a more empirically grounded front, the meaning of the Humanities and the worldview it evokes lie in our own specific cultures and norms. Our tribal instincts create illusory boundaries. The Humanities is within and without our culture. Both the Malay *pantun and syair* (verse) and the nineteenth century English poetry, we find the repositories of themes and imagery exploring the nature of the universe. The Humanities does not live in separate boxes in our daily lives. Past, present and future are fluid. They unify piece of existence. The meaning is in us.

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