

A Critique of Modernist Synthesis in Islamic Thought: Special Reference to Political Economy

Masudul Alam Choudhury

Is it the realm of theoretical constructs or positive applications that defines the essence of scientific inquiry? Is there unison between the normative and the positive, between the inductive and deductive contents, between perception and reality, between the micro- and macro-phenomena of reality as technically understood? In short, is there a possibility for unification of knowledge in modernist epistemological comprehension? Is knowledge perceived in conception and application as systemic dichotomy between the purely epistemic (in the metaphysically *a priori* sense) and the purely ontic (in the purely positivistically *a posteriori* sense) at all a reflection of reality? Is knowledge possible in such a dichotomy or plurality?

Answers to these foundational questions are primal in order to understand a critique of modernist synthesis in Islamic thought that has been raging among Muslim scholars for some time now. The consequences emanating from the modernist approach underlie much of the nature of development in methodology, thinking, institutions, and behavior in the Muslim world throughout its history. They are found to pervade more intensively, I will argue here, as the consequence of a *taqlid* of modernism among Islamic thinkers. I will then argue that this debility has arisen not because of a comparative modern scientific investigation, but due to a failure to fathom the uniqueness of a truly Qur'anic epistemological inquiry in the understanding of the nature of the Islamic socioscientific worldview.

The author is professor of economics and director of the Centre of Humanomics, University College of Cape Breton, Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada. At the time this article was written, the author was Visiting Professor of Economics at the Faculty of Economics, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia. This paper was prompted by the author's growing unease with publications in some Islamic scholarly journals that espoused a modernist interpretation to Qur'anic roots without first invoking a direct methodology from the Qur'anic epistemology itself.

Qur'anic Epistemology

Qur'anic epistemology is differentiated here from the historical legacy of epistemological pursuits in the sciences by Muslim scholars. The difference arises in terms of the domain of the former being independent of any originary leaning to Greek roots of thinking, which, contrarily, has been shared by many Muslim scholars since the age of Islamic scholasticism. Qur'anic epistemology is premised on the derivation of rules of life and thought (*aḥkām*) emanating in originary form in the text itself and then lending itself to other intellectual pursuits. Thus, reason is seen as the subsequent cognitive product of the originary field of revelation. An originality of scientific investigation, rather than a synthesis of extra-Qur'anic epistemologies, characterizes the essence of Qur'anic epistemological endeavor.

Although my review of literature in this paper is not exhaustive, I will dwell on three primal foci of the modernist approach in Islamic sciences. I will then connect them to a similar pattern of inquiry that had evolved among Muslim rationalists and that is in sharp contradistinction to the ideas propounded by the religious philosophers (the *mutakallimūn*). I will direct my critique simply to three premises of the modernist query that they consider to be an Islamic approach to the sciences. These are: a) the concept of a modernist integration through an epistemological approach based on a theory of language; b) the acceptance of the idea of pluralism in an otherwise unified Islamic world view; and c) the profuse use of utilitarian and neo-classical methodology embedded within a disparate mix between Islamic ethics and utilitarian behavior. Although my focus here is on political economy, the inference can be generalized to all areas of the sciences.

I would like to point out that all such methodological trends have deepened the process of *taqlīd* (the uncritical acceptance of authority) in the midst of an unquestioned acceptance of the prevalent modernist views. Thus, authentic development of Islamic sciences has regressed—not progressed—over the years. The net result can be seen in a) a global reflection of Islamic scholarly obscurity, and b) the failure of the modernist approach, even at its best, to yield any prominence. Such an odd combination of “Islamicism” with modernism has not been able to create either of these unmixable entities by means of the *taqlīdī* approach.

Although this section is not meant to be a detailed critique of Hellenic-influenced Islamic epistemology,¹ here we will refer to the cosmological theories of Muslim scholars. These are found to have been premised on the idea of natural liberty and a physical concept of the unity of the universe, which is seen to arise either from a set pattern of the cosmological order or to be governed by the anthropic observation of scientific reflections. Thus either a rationalist approach or a benign reference to divine unity was invoked in such investigations. The Ikhwān al Safā', Ibn Sinā', al Fārābī, and Ibn Rushd are among those who belong to this earlier Cartesian type and Greek views of cosmology. The same reflection is seen to reappear with Thomas Aquinas' theory of the natural liberty of the universe. In Ibn Khaldūn, such a natural liberty is reflected in his understanding of how human societies change over time: the central factor was 'aṣabīyah (nationalism, communalism). A reference to divine law is made as a precept of finality of sorts, rather than as a purposeful dynamics underlying a philosophy of history, which otherwise the Qur'an bestows on its precept of historicism.

In the Ash'arī school following the Mu'tazilī debate on the nature of Qur'an and the originary order of creation, which, in turn, was followed by al Ghazzālī's philosophy of self and goodness, one finds a reductionist approach to individualism in the order of ethical well-being and moral upliftment. This was a forerunner of the utilitarian attitude to self-consciousness, whether for the individual or for society at large. It was this fear of creeping utilitarianism in Islamic thinking that became the root of the debate among the early fuqahā (interpreters on the Qur'an and sunnah) on the concept of public purpose (*al maṣlaḥah wa al istiḥṣān*).

The extraneous Hellenic roots of epistemologies are still to be found in the modern orientation to Islamic thought. Current developments in Islamic economics are heavily dependent on neoclassical economic methodology or its macroeconomic sounding in Keynesianism and post-Keynesianism. One such direction referred to in this paper as a ground for critique is the monetarist developments by Tobin, Brainard, and others (see below) that is now emulated by Islamic economists.

¹ Some of these early thoughts are expounded by S. H. Nasr, *Introduction to Islamic Cosmology* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1978), 1-18. See also O. Bakar, *Tawhid and Science* (Pinang: University of Science Malaysia: Secretariat of Islamic Philosophy and Science, 1991), part I, 1-39. On the subject matter that follows here, see C. A. Qadir, *Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World* (London: Routledge, 1990), 42-69.

Defining Modernism as Occidental Philosophy

The philosophy of modernism is the outlook based on the structure of a society's progress through stages of development beginning with the primitive community and culminating in the modern state. In this process, modernism carries its instruments of change: thought, institution, and power. Modernization's dominant pattern has been liberal reformism, which, taken in whatever sense, marks the heyday of a Eurocentric model of capitalistic transformation within a pluralistic vision of a democratic electorate. This has been the historical observation of the advance of liberalism.² It can be seen, as time advances, in an "embedded liberalism"—the extensive use of state power to seek domestic stability and international economic adjustment, "a strained and uneasy balance, mediated by the pressures of democratic politics."³ Liberalism is seen to be embedded in the evolution of postcapitalist society⁴ and as the inevitable convergence of civilizations and peoples as the last unity of mankind in western eyes.⁵

A Critique of Islamic Scholarship Based on an Occidental Theory of Knowledge as an Epistemological Root

I now refer to a methodology that has been used in some recent publications on Islamic economics. The authors use a theory of

² J. H. Mittleman, "Sources of Received Ideas about the Third World," in *Out From Underdevelopment* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 27-86; O. H. Taylor, "Philosophies and Economic Theories in Modern Occidental Culture," in *Economics and Liberalism: Collected Papers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 191-223.

³ T. R. Callaghy, "Vision and Politics in the Transformation of the Global Political Economy: Lessons from the Second and Third Worlds," in *Emerging Global Economic Interrelationships*, eds. R. O. Slater, B. M. Schutz, and S. R. Dorr (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publication, 1993), 163.

⁴ P. F. Drucker, *Post-Capitalist Society* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 181-210.

⁵ A leading work in this area is by F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York and Toronto: Free Press & Maxwell Macmillan Canada, 1992). For a postmodernist critique, see J. S. Abdullah, "The New World Order—On the Threshold of Postmodernity," Inaugural Lecture at Universiti Sains Malaysia, School of Social Sciences, 1993, 31 pages; I. M. Abu-Rabi', "Beyond the Post-Modern Mind," review article, *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 7, no. 2 (1990): 235-56.

knowledge that is premised on the epistemology of deriving the meaning of terms from a cause and effect interrelationship between subject and predicate in a sentence construction. In such a theory of knowledge, causality necessitates that meaning is seen distinctly to abide with the cause–effect interrelationships between subject and predicate if the sentence construction is to be theoretically acceptable. Hence, for example, the statement “*tawhīd* means the oneness of God” does not provide a sufficient cause–effect relationship for Islamic epistemology, for although the oneness of God is universally acclaimed by all religions, it is not operationally reflected in the order of the other epistemologies. The predicate does not convey the desired meaning—the unicity of God as Allah—to the subject. The contrary statement, “*tawhīd* is oneness and divine unification premised in God” makes more sense. The predicate “oneness and divine unification premised in God” is a substantive difference from the simple concept of divine oneness as otherwise held by all religions.

One such theory of language premised in logical sentence construction was propounded by Wittgenstein in order to convey logical inferences in scientific thinking. This language theory is now shown to have its own tilted biases, which have escaped notice by Muslim economists who use it to interpret economic phenomena from an Islamic perspective, toward occidental epistemology.

Wittgenstein’s Theory of Language Games Used in Works on Islamic Economics

Within this modernist philosophy of cultural transformation, what is the context of a theory of language as a construction of scientific epistemology? Wittgenstein’s formalization of language games turns bounded rationality around, in the sense that the primal foundation of religion, ideology, and science may be axiomatically prescribed by descriptions inherent in these closed systems of their own. Such a limited rationality thus becomes an independent method of its own self-legitimation and escapes criticism. In this perspective, in which a theory of language is made to transcend into societal phenomena, individuated systems are made to capacitate rational explanation in isolation from any underlying worldview.

The substantive concept of a worldview here embodies a globally (universally) interactive–integrative nexus of relations in which certain rules remain invariant as regards both axiomatic (*a priori* or purely epistemic) as well as descriptive (*a posteriori* or purely ontic)

content. A worldview is thus polar to the notion of perception, which is a subjective invocation of the individuated state of mind, matter, and self. The concept of worldview also contrasts with the independently constituted concept of the bounded or limited rationality of closed subsystems presented by the language game.⁶

In the modernist approach to a theory of language as an epistemological game in the construction of scientific knowledge, the very methodological result of limited rationality in individuating the complex systems by means of internal rationality causes a unique primal rationality of that particular system. Systems thus become individuated by their internal rationalities. As a result, primal rationality as an *a priori* content of a system becomes complete in itself, although it remains incomplete relative to all other similar systemically differentiated *a priori* rationalities. This consequence of individuation is the soul of the contradiction between perception and reality in the full length and breadth of non-Islamic science. It forms the part and parcel of modernism. I will dwell upon this point further as we go along.

According to Wittgenstein:

At the foundation of well-founded belief lies belief that is not founded Giving grounds . . . justifying the evidence comes to an end; . . . but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e., it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language-game. The language game is . . . not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable).⁷

Norman Malcolm, Wittgenstein's student, clarifies his teacher's statements further in respect to the language game and limited rationality⁸: "The framework propositions of the system are not put to the test." These propositions are rational only within the system itself,

⁶ M. A. Choudhury, *Comparative Development Studies: In Search of the World View* (London: Macmillan & New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 1-44.

⁷ W. W. Bartley, III, "Theories of Rationality," in *Evolutionary Epistemology, Rationality, and the Sociology of Knowledge*, eds. G. Radnitzky and W. W. Bartley, III (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1988), 209.

⁸ N. Malcolm, "The Groundlessness of Belief," in *Reason and Religion*, ed. S. C. Brown (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 143-57.

not necessarily outside it, wherein limited rationality becomes instrumental in explaining the intersystemic language incomprehensibility in Wittgenstein's language game. Wittgenstein tried to extend this precept of language to the social order. Indeed, Khan tries to adapt this notion to markets and commodity pricing.⁹

The Vienna Circle is an example of a scientific association that espouses Wittgenstein's views to defend the Circle's stand on the emptiness of the metaphysical elements of beliefs. Only in science, it was argued, could the irrationality of the formation of beliefs describing certain events be either cognitively realized or mentally experienced. Carnap took up logical positivism, in its Wittgensteinian content, in the narrow field of science and used it as a premise of the Circle's liberal Jewish opposition to the Catholic Church at the time.¹⁰

The above points relating to the language game are adequate enough to show that, methodologically speaking, individuation negates the notion of universality, wherein phenomena can be instantaneously experienced and sensed. This drives the intellection process forward ceaselessly. This kind of inner conflict, within the body and soul of an otherwise unified reality, founded the personal conflict of Wittgenstein himself as well as the length and breadth of all non-Islamic philosophy of science, knowledge and life.

This kind of dualistic conflict finds its roots in the Kantian metaphysics of *a priorism* and in the notion of *a posteriorism* in their separate constructions of reality. Such a notion was also held by Descartes, Hume, Heidegger and, later, by Russell. Here, even the intermediate notion of a synthetic region between pure and analytic reason does not help.¹¹ There exists no process whereby the purely epistemic can be transformed interchangeably into an ontic form and

9 A. Khan, "On the Languages of Markets," (mimeo) Department of Political Economy, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, 1990.

10 D. Gillies, "Is Metaphysics Meaningless? Wittgenstein, the Vienna Circle, and Popper's Critique," in *Philosophy of Science in the Twentieth Century: Four Central Themes* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 153-88.

11 I. Kant, "Critique of Pure Reason," in *The Philosophy of Kant: Immanuel Kant's Moral and Political Writings*, trans. C. J. Friedrich (New York: Random House, 1977), 24-39. See the chapter entitled "Causality and Determinism" in R. Carnap, *Philosophical Foundations of Physics*, ed. M. Gardner (New York: Basic Books, Inc. 1966), for an address on the synthetic question of pure reason.

an ontic form into a bedrock of further knowledge. Ontology, as pointed out by Sherover, simply becomes a reprieve of Kant.¹²

The circularly evolving knowledge formation through a dynamic interactive-integrative process was desired by Marx and Husserl.¹³ Yet Marx's epistemology ended up with a limited view of economism. In Husserl, the circularly interactive-integrative phenomena of reality self-destructs by its exclusion of the relevance of divine unity as the core of epistemological reduction. The cognitive form thus is subjected to the rational language games process incited by perceptions.¹⁴

The evolution of western science, society, and thought results from this distinct dichotomy and plurality between cognitive forms and mental constructs.¹⁵ Thus, although Kant's moral law was considered the principle of his concept of universal history, it could not assume that unifying essence across and within systems and remained exogenous from the behavior of systems that became separately endogenous. We find this nature of dichotomy in Kant's words:

... phenomena, and we proved that these phenomena could only be known as objects of experience by being brought under categories in accordance with these [pure practical] laws, and that consequently, all possible experience must conform to these laws. But I could not proceed in this way in deducing moral law. For moral law is not concerned with knowledge of the properties of objects which may be given to reason from some other source, rather, it is concerned with knowledge which can itself become the grounds for the existence of objects, and [with knowledge by means of] which reason has causality in a rational being.¹⁶

¹² The idea of the ontic as an *a posteriori* phenomenon is brought out by C. M. Sherover, *Heidegger, Kant and Time* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1972), 15-36.

¹³ D. Howard, *From Marx to Kant* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1985), 9-47.

¹⁴ M. Hammond, J. Howarth, and R. Keat, *Understanding Phenomenology* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 14-43.

¹⁵ W. C. Dampier, *A History of Science and Its Relations with Philosophy and Religion* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 455-99.

¹⁶ I. Kant, "Critique of Pure Reason," 239.

A Critique of Methodological Individualism in Economic Knowledge: Consequence of the Language Game

A prominent example of this perceptual dichotomy is seen in methodological individualism, which grounds the mainstream relationship between markets and polity, ethics and economics. Here we will engage the axiomatic approach, in order to bring out the interplay of dualism and individuation, by using the idea of endogenous and exogenous preferences. Such preferences are centrally instrumental in all market-based or all polity behaviors, responses, and actions relating to prices, interest rates, equilibrium, institutions, and policy.

One starting point for describing this preference system is the type of language-based legitimation of Wittgenstein, which endows neo-classicism with a true worth of its own. In a perfectly competitive market equilibrium, a mix of ethics and hedonism is incompatible. Ethical prerogatives form preferences for social good. They are guided, administered, enforced, and, at times, also expressed by altruistic human responses. Market preferences reflect wants and needs driven by price structures and exchange. The competitively determined plummeting commodity prices do not reflect the ethical prerogative of the developing countries' right to economic progress and survival. The consequential reflection of free trade, in this context of competitively determined low commodity prices and dependency syndrome, further negates the ethical relevance of free trade. Targets and goals of attaining economic efficiency in a globally privatizing market apply a wait-and-see game for the alleviation of poverty.

These are the results of the scientific language game of economics, as defended within its own systemic rationality and separated from the notion of ethical rationality. Consequently, either of two consequences prevail in this unhappy admixture of ethical and economic preferences in the competitive market order. First, all ethical preferences in the competitive market order. First, all ethical preferences are assumed to be washed away by market consequentialism.¹⁷ This is the classical economic view. Second, ethical preferences exist independently of economic preferences. In both of these cases, the axioms of conflict, independence, and dualism in the nature

¹⁷ A. Sen refers to this morally benign functionalism of the market as "market consequentialism." See A. Sen, *Ethics & Economics* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 74-78.

of human beings, who are divided between self and society, prevail as accepted norms and not as situations that can be ethically corrected.¹⁸

On the other hand, institutions and polity become subservient to these same types of preferences. Either they are guided by the constitutional game of rational choice (i.e., public choice theory) or they are embedded in rational expectations and social choice theoretic deposits of a new neoclassicism. One outgrowth of such a preference theory is the Phillips Curve, the equity–efficiency trade-off, an exogenously driven concept of money, which, in turn, is a precondition for the existence of an interest rate.

The very concept of economic equilibrium is benign of ethical relevance in the perfectly competitive nature of classicism or neoclassicism. Now equilibrium and its results on Pareto-optimality, the general equilibrium *tatonement* process, and the treatment of *numeraire* do not reflect the nature of the conflict between ethical and economic preferences. The invisible hand of the market establishes this order without any description. As Shackle points out,¹⁹ the abnormality of such enforced behavior as the language of perfectly competitive markets is compounded further by the absence of any postknowledge of economic exchange. That is, we are not even sure whether an equilibrium, which is not of our making, exists at all.

Hence, what we find through market consequentialism in mainstream economics is a gain of the scientific urge for the language game at the expense of reality and goodness. The Wittgensteinian,

¹⁸ E. S. Phelps, "Distributive Equity," in *Social Economics: New Palgrave*, eds. J. Eatwell, M. Milgate, and P. Newman (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 31-34.

¹⁹ G. L. S. Shackle, *Epistemics and Economics: A Critique of Economic Doctrines* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 108-51. A description is defined here as a totality of strings of relational histories that link back and project forwards by inference and epistemological reference. A process, then, is a subset of description as a locally interactive chain integrated to the totality of histories, that is, description. This definition of description by Russell is of microessence, for any element of a class of logical relations comprises a descriptive space. In our case, the totality of the descriptive spaces forms a description. See B. Russell, "Descriptive Geometry," in *Principles of Mathematics* (New York: Norton, n.d.), 393-403. Likewise, our meaning of process as coordinated between the micro- and macrocosmic universes is an organic unity. The macrocosmic derives its meaning from the integrated totality of the microcosmic nexuses, but the essence of interactive-integrative relationships remain invariant in either of these existences. In Whitehead, the idea of a process is differentiated between its microcosmic and macrocosmic essences. In the microcosmic sense, Whiteheadian process is a potential to attain actuality through the medium of attaining what is real. In the macrocosmic sense, Whiteheadian process is the devolution from the actual to the real. The future is real, whereas the past (history) is "a nexus of actualities." See A. N. Whitehead, "Process," in *Process and Reality*, eds. D. R. Griffin and D. W. Sherburne (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 208-15.

Carnapian, and other forms of rationality based on language games are thus seen to compartmentalize systems at the expense of a globally (universally) integrated ethical relevance. Now all of the notions of economic equilibrium (i.e., Walrasian general equilibrium, Lindhal equilibrium, Hahn-Arrow, Arrow-Debreu equilibrium, and even temporary equilibrium) become futile analytical games.²⁰

On the other hand, the nature of institutions presented by Hayek, Buchanan, Harsanyi, Hammond, and the rational expectation hypothesists, to name a few, apply the language of methodological individualism to institutional behavior.²¹ Hence, ethical preferences themselves become a form of neoclassicism and utilitarianism. These repeat the same type of exogenously altruistic preferences as we found to be true of purely economic ones.²²

The result of such conflicts, independence and exogeneity of ethical relevance from economic preferences and vice versa, is the notion of marginalism and resource substitution. This notion is at once instrumental to the kind of interactions-benign, predetermined equilibrium conditions, and notions of human behavior envisaged by a neoliberal order. Together, they leave a false notion of stability, equilibrium, and optimality in both market order and polity. The results of substitution are human toil and tribulation at the behest of a notion of long-run pricing that is, at best, *a priori* surmised but not *a posteriori* observed. Finally, due to the cause and effect of any systemic order of interrelationships, the entire concepts of the *numeraire*, the principle of exchange and the resulting pricing and allocations, precepts of development and structural change, human

²⁰The various concepts of general equilibrium are the subject matter of the following books: J. Quirk and R. Saposnik, *Introduction to General Equilibrium Theory and Welfare Economics* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1968) and J. Eatwell et al., eds., *General Equilibrium: New Palgrave* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989).

²¹Important works in these areas are by F. A. Hayek, *Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), 160-77; F. A. Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980 reprint), 6-32; J. M. Buchanan, *The Limits of Liberty, Between Anarchy and Leviathan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 17-34 (see his discussion on such efficient contracts); and G. R. Feiwel, *Arrow and the Foundations of the Theory of Economic Policy* (London, UK: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1987), 179-221.

²²The endogenous and exogenous preference ideas are contrasted in detail by M. A. Choudhury, *A Theory of Ethico-Economics* (Hull, UK: Barmarick Publications, 1993), 15-37. Altruism, or the Aristotelian notion of capacity for happiness as human welfare, has been treated as an ethical value in utilitarianism. See A. Quinton, *Utilitarian Ethics* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1989), 1-23.

development and systems-integration for harmonizing preferences—all of these become scientific language games as opposed to realities for human betterment.

An Islamic Synthesis of Language Games: *Ribā* and Price

In a recent article, Khan takes up Wittgenstein's language game methodology and applies it to the subject of *ribā* in the Qur'an.²³ Following the idea of the systemic closedness of Wittgenstein's limited rationality concept, Khan wants to bring out the meaning of *ribā* totally in the Qur'anic context. He searches for the definition of *ribā* not solely in terms of the ethical context, which he admits is true. However, it is his economic analysis of prices in the perfectly competitive market equilibrium endowed by exogenous private ownership, technologies, efficient prices, and allocations that describes the relationship between such exogenously set prices based on assumed consumer preferences and interest rates. The author then goes on to justify or forbid interest rates in accordance with its moderateness or exorbitance, respectively. Such relations, he claims, have to do with the issue of just or unjust prices, which, in turn, determine the levels of interest rates.

The analytical flaw in Khan's treatment of interest rate determination arises precisely from the benignity of equilibrium prices in the perfectly competitive system. In this system, no exorbitant prices can exist. Consequently, there is no possibility of interest rates. Even in the intertemporal resource allocation sense, the efficiency price of capital equates with the marginal efficiency of investment, which are rates of return, not *ribā* rates. However, even with this academic innocence, such rates remain unobserved and are instrumental only in the theoretical analysis of intertemporal resource allocation.

Khan's application of Wittgensteinian language game to the economic theory of *ribā* separates it from the question of ethical relevance. The subject matter is thus compartmentalized in a closed economic order—the perfectly competitive market order. Upon referring to the Qur'anic meaning of *ribā* as increment out of waste and injustice, we find the following inference (*aḥkām*): *ribā* is exogenously speculative in the cost of production and distribution (allo-

²³A. Khan, review of *Theoretical Studies in Islamic Banking and Finance*, by Mohsin S. Khan and Abbas Mirakhor, eds., *Journal of King Abdulaziz University: Islamic Economics*, no. 4 (1992): 51-79.

cation) either of financial assets or real assets/goods. Its actual magnitude is not at point here to categorize *ribā* as moderate or exorbitant. The very existence of a *ribā* mechanism is intrinsically distortionary as an analytical variable. Thus, the methodology of an ethico-economic analysis becomes part and parcel of the Qur'anic treatment of *ribā* *simultaneously* as an ethical and an analytical problem in question. Furthermore, these two conditions are coterminous processes in the determination of any socioeconomic reality in the Islamic order.

The inference from the integrated treatment of ethical and economic issues as *simultaneously* coterminous ones is the essence of universals in Qur'anic epistemology. Such universals pervade inter-systemically. The theory of language games thus loses its relevance by dint of its individuating character. All subsequent consequences of methodological individualism, independence, exogeneity of preferences, and noninteractions in the underlying language game of the economic model, now pervade the kind of inference on *ribā* proffered by such a methodology.

Rejecting Wittgenstein's Epistemology of Language Game by Qur'anic Epistemology

The Wittgenstein type of language game can now be extended to prove its utter epistemological emptiness in the understanding of Qur'anic social-scientific order. The terminology of an order is used here to mean the unifying knowledge premise presented by the unification (*tawhīdī*) epistemology.²⁴

The unification epistemology, otherwise termed as "*tawhīdī* epistemology" or the "unicity precept" and "unicity field," has been developed at length in recent works.²⁵ We will simply take a cursory look at its summary elements. The Qur'anic originary roots premised in unification (*tawhīdī*) epistemology mark a methodology based on the endogenization (also intra- and intersystemic integration by interactions or cause and effect) of relations among agents and variables

²⁴ M. A. Choudhury, *The Unicity Precept and the Socio-Scientific Order* (Lanham, MD: The University Press of America, 1993), 1-7.

²⁵ S. M. D. Al-Edrus, *Islamic Epistemology: An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge in Al-Qur'an* (Cambridge, UK: Islamic Academy and Pinang, Malaysia: Secretariat of Islamic Philosophy and Science, 1992).

inter- and intrasystems. Thus, it is not differentiation among specific system oriented problems that causes individuation between systems. Essentially, even in the midst of problem diversity, the laws, methodology, and epistemological treatment of these problems remain unique. Such a unique methodology, by virtue of its limiting irreducibility, explains reality by means of interactions and integration within and among systems, using circularly continuous and evolving cycles of *a priori* and *a posteriori* relations.

The methodology has been termed elsewhere the “epistemic-ontic circular causation and continuity model of unified reality.” In such a methodology, the distinguishing mark of the unification epistemology emerges from the possibility of comprehending reality on the order of the originary knowledge-induction of cognitive phenomena, and thus renders the universe to a uniquely knowledgecentered unity-unification. The knowledge centrality can only be attained by interrelating the evolving *a priori* realms of theory constructions to the *a posteriori* consequences and vice versa, as the cycles of interactions between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* proceed.

The Qur’anic methodology explains this by the interactions, continuity, and interrelationships that perpetuate between the divine laws, the “signs of God,” and the enhancing levels of knowledge advancing to a greater comprehension and application of the divine laws. The gap between the mentalistic and the cognitive events is thus evaporated by the principle of incessant interactions and continuity. Knowledge and hence its consequences—cognitive phenomena—evolve as bubble universes, one from the other, as interactions continue.

We call the incessant evolutionary nature of a knowledge, centered universe and its sensitized cognitive forms by cause and effect the “principle of global complementarity.” This principle becomes the contrasting basis to the idea of marginal substitution, particularly of neoclassical economic theory, and, broadly speaking, of the entire individuating nature of occidental sciences.

To take an example from economics, in the case of resource allocation, distributional and equity-efficiency developmental questions, the unifying and continuity principle of evolutionary knowledge by interactions, defines the principle of global complementarity. It replaces the interaction-benign concept of marginalism and substitution in neoclassical economics.²⁶

²⁶ M. A. Choudhury, “The Epistemic-Ontic Circular Causation and Continuity Model of Socio-Scientific Reality: The Knowledge Premise,” *International Journal of Social Economics* 20, no.1 (1994): 3-18.

Khan relents on Wittgensteinian language game to point out that scientific results inevitably reveal unique “concepts of truth and reality.” He remarks: “Technology is technology, two-plus-two equals four, water is or is not necessarily H₂O, a point is or is not the limit of shrinking concentric circles, and I cannot see how these conventions can be given Islamic imprints.”

A similar view is expressed by Khalil:

One can best judge the above facts and overcome any resultant confusion or misconception with regard to the pure sciences if one remembers that Islamization does not mean—for a start—making rules about mathematical or chemical equations or interfering with laws of physics or biology, or amending the atomic theory.

Scientific activities such as the above are neutral, whether they take place within a materialistic, secular or spiritual context. Basically, the Islamization of this kind of science and knowledge is concerned with the attitudes and practices that are related to these activities, their relationships with the general trend of scientific and cultural activity, and ethical framework within which their theoretical and practical results are applied. Thus it will be clear that in absolute terms chemistry, physics, mathematics, geology, etc. can escape the scope of Islamization.²⁷

There is a fundamental flaw in such explanations of the precept of unification epistemology that underlies all scientific facts in Qur’anic perspectives. The essential difference lies in the analytical substance of scientific statements, analysis, and methodology between the Qur’anic worldview and the occidental treatment.

Let me explain this fact on two grounds. First, take the examples of the Qur’anic narrations of Moses’ wand swallowing up Pharaoh’s snake, the tempering of the fire’s heat for Ibrahim at Pharaoh’s court, the immaculate birth of Prophet Jesus, and the flight of the Prophet into the realm of perfect knowledge (*sidrathan muntaha*). These are out-of-the-ordinary conceptions of natural properties of matter,

²⁷ Imad al Din Khalil, *Islamization of Knowledge: A Methodology* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1991), 7-8. See also my review of this book, which appeared in *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 8, no. 3 (1992): 410-15.

reproduction, and timetravel. Yet they cannot be left aside as unique and unimportant events, for they bear a deep import that conveys central meaning to the knowledge process and its creative power in the most pervasive of situations. These effectuals would otherwise be looked upon as impossibilities or absurdities in the occidental view.

The extension of the epistemological domain of the Qur'an is made possible by this text and by comprehending reality not in a material order primarily, as in occidental thought. Rather, the domain of Qur'anic reality is primordially nonmaterial and hence, in mathematical terms, manifold-like. From this nonmaterial or revelatory ordinary premise emanates the order of cognitive forms, but only by relations and not by any touch of pantheistic perception.

On these grounds of the primacy of knowledge as the cause and effect of the interactive-integrative systemic model of unified reality, the explanation of the number system is taken up on the basis of reducing all subsystems (rational, irrational, natural numbers, and complex numbers) to binary forms (addition, subtraction; hence, multiplication and division; unions and complementation). It is then on the basis of such binary forms that the unification epistemology is made to work out by interactions (limiting process) and integration (well-definition). One can simply refer here to the theory of numbers based on the *tawhīdī* precept that was given by al Kindī, of the preference for finite systems by Muslim mathematicians, and, finally, by the importance of ethical and Islamic relevance in all mathematical inquiries for al Ghazālī when he revolted against those Muslim mathematicians who used this science to create futile abstruseness. The binary form has also been used to explain *taqwā*-based decision-making models of polity-market/ecology interactions in an Islamic economy.²⁸

Second, there is now a field theory in physics that explains infinite-but-closed universes and warped spaces, where the usual universal laws of natural science fail to apply. Renormalization techniques are being developed here to explain additions not in terms of the lateral aggregation of numbers, but as the unification of structures

²⁸ A discussion of al Kindī's *al Tawhīd min Jihat al 'Adad* (Divine Unity on the Theory of Numbers) is given by A. Hakim, "The Arabs and Mathematics" (Ph.D. diss., University of Calcutta, 1946). For a discussion on the attitude of the *mutakallimūn* on Muslim mathematicians imitating Greek mathematics for esoteric futility, see J. L. Berggren, "Islamic Acquisition of the Foreign Sciences: A Cultural Perspective," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1992): 310-37. Binary in Banach spaces with *taqwā* parameters are used by M. A. Choudhury and U. A. Malik, *The Foundations of Islamic Political Economy* (London, UK: Macmillan Press Ltd and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 19-61.

known as superstrings. Godel's incompleteness theorem in mathematics is yet another provocative field that defies the truthmachines of Whitehead and Russell.²⁹

Thus, all such mathematical and scientific structures are finally governed by the kind of interrelationships that define the systemic whole. The result may yet be the same or not—many old scientific facts would be replaced by new ones. But this is not the important analytical substance, for the important point is to recognize the centrality of knowledge as both the output and the input of uniquely interactive-integrative systemic interrelationships explaining reality and to do this through a simultaneity of the epistemic and ontic continuity of processes.³⁰

One thus reaches the inexorable conclusion that the kinds of language games in occidental modernism have an inherent methodological debility in them. Due to this, the kinds of academic innocence mistakenly claimed for scientific facts and for the closed nature of limited rationality cannot be defended. Qur'anic epistemology has its own distinctive unification epistemology that discards such pluralistic perceptions—not reality.

The implications of the above discussions is seen in the fact that unification epistemology is distinct from modernist synthesis among Islamic thought by virtue of the interactive-integrative worldview of this order. This contrasts with the individuated worldview of occidental epistemology. The effects emanate from the fact that since *tawhīd* is both the oneness of God as essence and unification by means of the divine laws, therefore the occidental epistemology of the type: *a priori* → *a posteriori* (Kantian) or *a posteriori* → *a priori* (Humean) is replaced substantively with systemic and mathematical content by the order of reality: *a priori* → *a posteriori* → *a priori* → *a posteriori* → and so on in similar cycles. The latter methodology is equivalently that of cause and effect, interaction-integration, and circular causation and evolution.

This is substantively methodological. Any Islamic inquiry not taken up in the framework of this intrinsic methodology of Qur'anic

²⁹R. Rucker, *Infinity and the Mind: The Science and Philosophy of the Infinite* (New York: Bantam New Age Books, 1983), 168-202. See also R. M. Sullivan, *Godel's Incompleteness Theorems* (New York: Oxford University Press, n.d.), 5-13.

³⁰M. A. Choudhury, *The Epistemological Foundations of Islamic Economic, Social and Scientific Order*, forthcoming. This work consists of six volumes and a preliminary booklet and will be published in Ankara, Turkey, by the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries.

epistemology runs the risk of being extraneous to the creative, purposeful, felicitous, and evolving order unravelled by the Qur'anic essence. This is the implication being derived from the above discussions on the domain of reality that broadens outward with the Qur'anic epistemology.

Modernist Synthesis in Islamic Concepts of Money and Finance

In studies on Islamic monetary and financial systems, Keynesian and neoclassical methodologies and all of their axiomatic foundations have persisted thoroughly. The exogeneity of agent-specific preferences underlying a preconditioned utility function, the Tobin-like liquidity preference behavior, and economic stabilization by means of mechanically replacing interest rates by profit rates in the financial valuation models pervade such studies.³¹ The result has thus been a *Qur'anic non sequitur*. The fundamental questions remain: How does money become endogenous in the Islamic financial model/order so as to relate with both prices and endogenous preferences founded upon an interacting institutional-behavioral world of money and finance? Such a question has not been treated axiomatically in any of the Islamic studies dealing with money, banking, finance, and economics. The result thus has been a continued adaptation of Keynesian and neoclassical models and their latter-day prototypes.

The Endogenous Theory of Money and Prices for Islamic Financial Order: Yet Another Problem of the Modernist Synthesis of Islamic Economics

On the other hand, the endogenous theory of money, prices, and preferences is an area that remains new and unique to Islamic economics by virtue of its premise in unification epistemology. In this context, preferences are formed by interactions and integration (i.e., cooperation and consensus/agreement, respectively). The value of

³¹ See, for such papers, M. S. Khan and A. Mirakhor (eds.), *Theoretical Studies in Islamic Banking and Finance* (Houston, TX: The Institute for Research and Islamic Studies, 1987); I. Zaidi and A. Mirakhor, "Stabilization and Growth in an Open Islamic Economy," *Review of Islamic Economics* 1, no. 2 (1991): 1-20; J. Tobin, "A General Equilibrium Approach to Monetary Theory," *Journal of Money, Credit and Banking*, no. 1 (February 1969): 15-29; and W. C. Brainard and J. Tobin, "Financial Intermediaries and the Effectiveness of Monetary Controls," *American Economic Review* 53, no. 2 (May 1963): 99-122.

money is reflected in the prices of goods in monetary transactions. Profit rates and rates of returns thus become the logical yields on such real transactions. All money is held for the valuation of a fundamental *numeraire*. Such a *numeraire* is not primarily financial in nature, because of the volatility in monetary assets. It is rather denominated in terms of an intrinsically stable value. I used land and an ethical *numeraire* elsewhere.³² Hence, money is never subject to trade if so held. Only the goods and services transacted by money become the objects of trade, exchange, and valuation.

A careful differentiation of the Islamic endogenous theory of money from the quantity theory of money is needed here. Although quantity theory was a real bills theory and formulated as such by Fisher, Hume, and the social credit theorists, yet its form runs into the problem of causality.³³ If the quantity of money is interpreted as the supply of monetary aggregates, then the equilibrium equation points out that prices would rise and vice versa. Both of these are distortionary effects for an Islamic economy, which is guided, as it must be, by simultaneity between social (distributive) justice and economic efficiency. Economic stabilization and social welfare are parts of this integral whole in the Islamic framework. This is yet another example of the underlying precept of unification epistemology pervading all Islamic systems. Such systems, therefore, cannot lend themselves to the inherently individuated forms emanating from language games, now seen in the case of a language of money markets. Here the Keynesians and monetarists speak differently between themselves on their scientific language games.³⁴

By the argument based on Wittgenstein's closed and limited rationality concept, all these languages on money are independently supported by their own optimal rationalities. But they cease to be

32 M. A. Choudhury, "Money and Islamic Financial Institutions," *Middle East Business and Economic Review* 7, no. 1 (July 1995) (forthcoming); M. A. Choudhury, "The Ethical Numeraire," *International Journal of Social Economics* 19, no.1 (1992): 60-72.

33 D. Laidler, "The Quantity Theory is Always and Everywhere Controversial—Why?" *Atlantic Canada Economic Association Papers*, no. 18 (1989): 98-122; M. Desai, "Endogenous and Exogenous Money," in *Money: New Palgrave*, eds. J. Eatwell et al., 146-50; and M. A. Choudhury, "The Endogenous Theory of Money and Islamic Capital Markets," *Journal of Economic Cooperation among Islamic Countries*, no. 12 (1991): 75-96

34 For various perspectives on monetary theory, see J. Eatwell et al. *Money: New Palgrave*.

authentically "true" when their monadic independence is abandoned and interrelations are mooted.

Money, Islamic Banks, and Political Economy in Islamic Perspectives: A Critique Using Unification Epistemology

In the absence of an endogenous theory of money and financial institutions in an Islamic political economy, we find that, to date, there has not been any intellectual breakthrough in an area in which Islamic thinkers should have had a considerable wealth of knowledge to contribute. If the structural transformation in an Islamic political economy means the Islamicization of the ummah, a globally cooperative and integrative effort is needed. This is to be achieved, pursued, and sustained in a milieu of institutional change fired by the essentially Islamic epistemological roots. The intellectual and institutional processes are to be such that they convey learning experience to both the Islamic and non-Islamic worlds. Thus, Islamic thinkers must be able to convey to all a socio-scientific worldview, in the sense of this term as earlier explained, out of this wealth of epistemological possibility.

Islamic banks, which are mushrooming throughout the world today, have proven to be exclusively commercial institutions that promote short-term profitability. Their idea of *muḍārabah*—*mushārahah* (profit and loss sharing) has been relegated to the naivete of a simple contractual relationship between depositors and financial institutions without the broader cognizance of such contractual relations to be embedded in ummah-wide socioeconomic cooperation, trade, development, and social welfare. Paradoxically, even the concept of *muḍārabah*—*mushārahah* does not carry with it the coterminous definitive requirement of cooperation. Thus there cannot be even a distant impact of Islamic financial institutions on economic, political, and social change when such banks are initially established and succored by private capital in capital-rich Muslim countries.³⁵ Hence a learning process and a resultant ummatic consciousness of the

³⁵ These facts are pointed out in the following books: V. Nienhaus, "Conceptual and Economic Foundations of Islamic Banking," in *Banche Islamiche in Contesto Non Islamico* (Islamic Banks in a Non-Islamic Framework), ed. G. M. Piccinelli (Rome, Italy: Istituto per L'Oriente, 1993); A. Ahmad, *Development and Problems of Islamic Banks* (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Islamic Research and Training Institute, Islamic Development Bank, 1987); and T. Wohlers-Scharf, *Arabs and Islamic Banks* (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1983).

important role of Islamic monetary and financial institutions remain to date simply a private affair with marginal impact on the well-to-do and the religious devotees.

In contrast, the rise of banking and financial institutions in the western world was the result of powerful intellectual and institutional thinking by such economists and philosophers as, Fisher, Hume, Cantillon, Walras, Keynes, the New Classics, the New Keynesians, and the monetarists today.³⁶ Financial institutions and policies, external sector balances, and global trade are now all controlled by the institutional impacts of such an intellection process. In recent times, we find American hegemony, European currency units, European currency (EC) monetary union, and the impact of special drawing rights (SDR) in Eastern Europe's and Russia's economic transformation.

Yet we do not find a dinar-denominated basket of currencies and operations in the Muslim world through an emergent authentically Islamic monetary and financial order. The traditional ways of fitting the Islamic banks in the neoclassical, Keynesian, and monetarist perceptions of money, finance, and financial institutions have made these banks and their national economies subservient to the dominant modernist views and policies of money and financial institutions. The development of an Islamic capital market and its important consequence on self-reliant development of the Muslim world has thus failed to date.

A Critique of Islamic Synthesis of Cultural Pluralism as Occidental Political Philosophy

Finally we come to discuss yet another form of perceptual debility that has entered the "Islamicization" process: the notion of cultural pluralism borrowed from a political philosophy with a non-Islamic essence. The question posed here is whether democracy, as an occidental political philosophy, along with its supportive institutional forms of capitalism and the related intellection process, can be taken up as a means of objective and effective Islamic futures. If the answer is affirmative, then it would appear obvious that Muslims are ominously entering a protracted period of political, social, economic, and intellectual subservience to forces that are foundationally inimical to Islam. Here the question of cultural pluralism is the key to the debate.

³⁶ For a discussion of these monetary histories, see J. A. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 276-334, 1074-1135.

Cultural pluralism, as a non-Islamic concept, is the obverse of the precept of universalism erected upon unification epistemology in all of life and thought. It defines the artifact of theoretical constructs founded in neoclassicism, the micro-macro differentiations in economics, and a similar noninteractive, nonintegrating difference between quantum physics and relativity physics. Earlier, we showed that the underlying methodological individualism emanating from the pluralistic individuation process forms institutions and the corresponding conflicting man-environment relationships. Pluralism here is not simply of a socioeconomic and scientific essence. It also founds the differentiated relationships between the divine laws and the worldly laws. Thus, there is no semblance of logical interactions and integration among systems whereas, on the contrary, each of these must be essentially subject to the Qur'anic laws in the eyes of unification epistemology.

The rejection of pluralism by convergence to the divine order of reality in unification epistemology does not mean the rejection of the diversity of paths toward the roots of Qur'anic knowledge. Diversity is brought out emphatically in many Qur'anic verses. It is the essence of unification that is inexorably revealed in the inescapable nature of unity, rather than a multiplicity of the originary root, its end, and the interactions made possible in the flows of knowledge, as thought and experience reinforce these from beginning and end. Hence, both the methodology as well as its consequence, continued further by the "signs of God" into the realm of higher confirmation of His unity and unification, are the precise convergence of all systems in unification epistemology. This is as much the result of the creatively sustainable micro-universe as well as the balance of the macro-universe premised in this epistemological origin.

Occidental science rejects this not by means of its hegemony in politics, institutions, economy, and society. It uses a dominant model to enforce a unified view of its own. But the difference between this methodology and that of unification epistemology is the essence of independence, individualism, and conflict that embodies all of occidental life, thought, and experience. This is the idea of methodological individualism in the occidental order as a whole. Thus, the idea of pluralism in the occidental order applies to the individualization and individualizing process of knowing, not to the dominant model of its own concept of convergence of divergent systems.

Muslim scholars of early and modern times accepted this inherent philosophy of the occidental methodology when they took up the classical Greek roots of synthesis with or without the Qur'an, or,

today, when they use neoclassical, Keynesian, and most Keynesian models in economics, conflict models in politics, the preference formation model of the individual and family in sociology and psychology, and the reason-materiality basis of the occidental understanding of science.

Thus pluralism, as expressed by the liberal order and entrenched in the theories of social justice, property rights, and entitlements posed by Nozick, Rawls, Hobbes, Locke, and others, are either skewed toward power or toward extreme and meaningless benevolence. We have seen, in regards to the latter case, how Kant's theory of the moral law fails to explain reality as an interactive-integrative whole. In all of the others mentioned above, property distribution, social welfare, and progress become a conflicting movement between distributive justice and economic efficiency.

If, therefore, pluralism is a foreign element of Islam in the face of the naturally convergent cause and effect of unification epistemology, then the generic political philosophy of democracy and its supportive institution of global capitalism cannot mark the Islamic political transformation process. The evidence against the pluralistic doctrines of western democracy and capitalism is right before our eyes. In the West, we have a frantic move toward global integration through the premise of capitalism. Democracy is played upon to achieve this end. In Central Asia, the same is seen to establish IMF-World Bank hegemony for the area's reconstruction and economic transformation on the pattern of western capitalism and democracy. In southeast Asia, it is seen as an imitation of the western model through the doors of Japanese hegemony. Yet over all of these is the ruling fist of the predominant neoclassical, Keynesian, and monetarist paradigms in their operational forms, which define a scientific and institutional acceptance of Eurocentricity.³⁷

Mazrui invokes a challenge to Fukuyama's thesis on *The End of History and the Last Man* on grounds of a new age of democracy and capitalism in the Muslim world.³⁸ He recommends relentless innovation in Islamic thinking in the tradition of figures such as 'Abduh, the

37 O. Mehmet, "Alternative Concepts of Development: A Critique of Euro-Centric Theorizing," *Humanomics* 6, no. 3 (1990): 55-67.

38 A. A. Mazrui, "Islam and the End of History," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 10, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 512-35. Is Islamic liberalism the same as the *shūrā* endowed by the spirit of the *shuratic* process? See P. Manzoor, "Islamic Liberalism and Beyond," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 7, no. 1 (March 1990): 77-88.

Mu'tazilites, Jamāl al Dīn al Afghānī, and Muḥammad Iqbāl, whose ideas remain controversial to the development of the Shari'ah. Cultural pluralism becomes Mazrui's inevitable instrument consequential to his superimposing prescription of democracy and capitalism for Islamic change in the Muslim world.

The Political Economy of the *Shuratic* Process as Opposed to Democracy

Instead of repeating the individuating and conflicting perspectives of democracy as an occidental political philosophy, I will point out here that in the Islamic social-scientific worldview, the notion of democracy as a pluralistic institution and capitalism as its market and distributional (allocative) order are replaced by the interactive-integrative system of cause and effect interrelationships that emanate from and, in turn, evolve knowledge around unification (*tawḥīdī*) epistemology.

This generates the type of polity-ecology/market interactions through the entirety of what I term the *shuratic* process. This refers to the embryonic process that belongs to the principle of a continuously creative order as the permanent consequence of interactions between the divine laws and the signs of God (experiences or cognitive forms that further enhance knowledge of the divine laws). Thus an epistemic-ontic circular causation and continuity model of unified reality is established. This is also the substantive methodology underlying the circularly continuous interrelationship: *a priori* → *a posteriori* → *a priori* → and so on, which we referred to earlier. This indeed is the embryonic and pervasive essence of the universal consultation process and is not to be taken as the narrow meaning the *shūrā* and its process delimited as a political institution. The derivation of the embryonic essence, its methodology as defined above, and the centrality of the knowledge-based worldview in the *tawḥīdī* epistemology all arise from the Qur'an, *sūrah* al Shūrā: 50-52.

The *shuratic* process is thus an equivalent expression for the pervasively embryonic structure that interacts and integrates through revelation-reason simultaneity and continuity. Hence, in its realm all momentary epistemologies become evolutionary ones, and knowledge is acquired incrementally in this steadily progressive form. Thus, the *shuratic* process is as much a feature of reality in explaining scientific systems as sociopolitical systems. Hence, it becomes the universally foundational methodology of the whole socio-scientific

worldview of Islam.³⁹ It is important to note here the central role of this concept of the *shuratic* process in Qur'anic epistemology, because it summarily describes and uniquely configurates, in the Islamic worldview, the essence of circular continuity and evolution embodying the whole. We have stated before that any methodology and inference derived away from this unique recognition defeats the study as a viable Qur'anic one. Hence the contrast between the methodology of this precept of the *shuratic* process and occidental epistemologies is the core of the critique of a modernist synthesis of Islam.

Yet limiting our attention now to the use of the *shuratic* process to the institution of the Islamic political-economic order, we take it up to develop our critique of democracy and the modernist synthesis that has been built around this occidental political philosophy. The cultural pluralism of democracy founded on methodological individualism is replaced, in the *shuratic* process, by discursion, first among those who are knowledgeable in the Shari'ah and its evolutionary process of extensions. This knowledge is acquired, affirmed, and transmitted through intra- and intersystemic interactions (participation and cooperation) and integration (*ijmā'* = consensus or agreement) with the market/ecological/scientific order. The agents of the *shuratic* process are drawn from decentralized segments of society to enable society-wide participation. The irreducible finality of unification epistemology defines the invariant axiomatic premise of the *shuratic* process. Yet the discursive body, an example of which in political life is *shūrā*, cannot enforce an order (*aḥkām*) by coercion, although the Islamic state will defend it to the utmost. *Shūrā* simply formulates an *aḥkām*, which can be subsequently accepted, revised, or rejected for better ones in the continuing discursion process as *ijtihād*, that remains permanent. Above all, the strength of the *shuratic* process rests upon its veracity for acquiring and implementing rules according to truth statements.⁴⁰ The expanding participatory nature and its embryonic pervasiveness by the centricity and uniqueness of unification epistemology makes the *shuratic* process the unifying approach to knowledge formation, away from the differentiating nature of cultural pluralism, individuation, and hegemony caused by the language game.

³⁹ See M. A. Choudhury, *The Knowledge-Based World View* (lectures given to the Faculty of Economics, The National University of Malaysia, April-August 1994).

⁴⁰ M. A. Choudhury, "Syllogistic Deductionism in Islamic Social Choice Theory," *International Journal of Social Economics* 16, no. 6 (1990): 4-20.

The relevance of the *shuratic* process as the sole replacement to the cultural pluralism of democracy and capitalism, to the methodological individualism in the length and breadth of the occidental language game and its socioeconomic and scientific consequences, as well as the attainment of the endogenous worldview of ethical and economic preferences, make this process a normative-positive and deductive-inductive continuity. Thus, any inquiry in the development of Islamic socio-scientific worldview must bring to fruition these two parts—the theoretical construct premised on unification epistemology and the treatment of a problem in the light of theory through a broadly defined empirical situation. The consequence of this intrinsic character of the *shuratic* process integrates it with the grassroots and useful scientific priorities serving the grassroots in concert with the total hierarchy of intellectual connections that must interact and integrate with this grassroots focus.⁴¹

The *shuratic* process, by virtue of its decentralized and extensively participatory nature, its embryonic pervasiveness inter- and intra-systems in the whole of Islamic socio-scientific order, totally negates the coercive behavior of today's feigned political *shūrās* in many Muslim countries and communities. The distance occurs because of the petrified role of such institutions in the interactive-integrative domain of knowledge formation. The human worth and potential are not realized (and much worse) are bonded. The grassroots are not integrated.

Recent History of Political *Shūrā* as a Sign of Islamic Greatness and Its Downfall

The last great political *shūrās* that upheld the spirit of Islamic brotherhood, and through this spirit defined its well-coordination, decentralization, and human connection across the Muslim world was found in the Ottoman Empire (1326-1909). This is not to say that Ottoman rule was Islamically immaculate. A strong central authority was maintained because of the extensive size of the Ottoman world. "To understand the political conditions in the Balkans in the Ottoman era, it is first necessary to emphasize that the conquering power was a

⁴¹M. A. Choudhury, "Integrating the Grassroots with World Development," *Bangladesh Observer, Daily Newspaper*, 30 December 1993; M. A. Choudhury, "Social Choice in an Islamic Economic Framework," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 8, no. 2 (September 1991): 259-74.

Muslim and not a Turkish national state. The Ottoman leaders regarded their peoples as divided by religious faith rather than by nationality. Any individual could join the ruling group by converting to Islam."⁴²

Due to its distance from the universal precept of the *shuratic* process—a purely Qur'anic derivation—the narrow precept of political *shūrā* is today a manifestation of inter-Muslim nationalism and power plays. In this regard, the Gulf war was a debacle of regressive magnitude on the scale of the height of world Muslim power under the Ottomans. This clearly proved the gross misconception about the political *shūrā* found in so many petty Muslim countries today. These are glaring examples of the onslaught against Muslim peoples and their futures by the imitative modernist synthesis of pluralism and occidental thought in the body and soul of Islam in the modern age.⁴³

Extension of the Neoclassical Critique to Imperfectly Competitive Market Systems

In this paper, we will not cover this other extensive aspect of a critique of neoclassical economic theory for reasons of which neoclassical methodology cannot be applied to Islamic political-economic methodology. For a detailed discussion, the reader may refer elsewhere.⁴⁴ In short, although market imperfection must lead to loss of information, which, in turn, must negate an optimization objective function, neoclassical methodology continues to apply optimization to all such forms of economic objectives. Thus, although prices must be distortionary in resource allocation in incomplete markets, an optimization behavior of neoclassical agents in imperfect markets ignores this incompleteness. Any equilibrium emanating in the second best sense is, therefore, still a stable and exogenously determined

42 "History of the Balkans," *Encyclopaedia Britannica Macropaedia*, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981): 611-40; J. A. Garraty and P. Gay (eds.), "The Ottoman Empire," in *The Columbia History of the World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981, 604-19.

43 M. A. Choudhury, "Islamic Futures after the Desert Storm," *Hamdard Islamicus* 14, no. 4 (1991): 5-21.

44 M. A. Choudhury, "Why Cannot Neoclassicism Explain Resource Allocation and Development in the Islamic Political Economy?" Paper presented at the International Islamic Economics Conference, International Institute of Islamic Thought and the World Bank, Washington, DC, 9-10 October 1993 (forthcoming in the Proceedings).

condition of preference allocation among agents prior to economic exchange. And so none of the requirements of codetermining micro-economic decisions and of endogeneity of such decisions via preference formation enter the imperfectly competitive analysis in ways distinct from those conceptualized for perfectly competitive markets.

Islamic political economy, if guided and simulated by discursions through the *shuratic* process, yields an explicit description of evolving and changing social contracts in response to ongoing interactions and integrations. Thus, equivalently, the primacy of knowledge, as an input and output of the *shuratic* process, makes the objective function of polity-market/ecology interrelationships a simulational one. This substantive divergence rejects the preconditioned datum of stability, uniqueness, and equilibrium envisaged by the neoclassical imperfect economic theory.

In the simulational context of Islamic political-economic objective function, equilibrium is taken up as expectational contingencies in the sense of evolutionary epistemologies emanating, converging, and revolving around unification epistemology. While this provides the gravitating meaning to evolutionary epistemology and thus negates pluralism and unrealism, it also sets in the learning process on the divine laws in connection with their inseparable relationship with the signs of God. Thus, dynamic evolution and explanation remain the permanent features of the *shuratic* process in contrast to the methodologically nondescriptive essence of neoclassicism, its language games, and pluralism in all forms.⁴⁵

Conclusion

We have shown that, as with the former Muslim rationalists who copied classical Greek thought into an Islamic synthesis and thus distorted the unique essence of the Qur'anic world-view, modern Islamic scholarship appears to be moving into that same form of *taqlid*. This is evidenced in all current fields of learning. There is a strong inclination among Islamic scholars toward adapting Islamic thinking to the major innovations and discoveries of occidental

⁴⁵ The nonevolutionary nature of neoclassical economic models is shown in the critique of a paper by S. N. H. Naqvi on optimal control and economic growth and the statement of *ribā* in this context as shadow price. See M. A. Choudhury, "Interest Rate and Intertemporal Allocative Efficiency in an Islamic Economy: The Issue Revisited" (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: International Centre for Research in Islamic Economics, King Abdulaziz University, Discussion Paper, 1981).

science and vice versa. This futile effort is like sewing a new cloth onto an old one—they subsequently rend asunder.

The results have been twofold: 1) no authentically Islamic scholarship has arisen. Hence, scientific supremacy has been due to occidental science, to which Islamic modernist synthesis has become subservient and marginalized and 2) there remains a methodological contradiction between reality and perception in the dualistic/pluralistic approach of Islamic scholarship that borrows from occidental culture.

Unification epistemology defines unified reality (*ḥaqq* = truth and *iṣlāḥ* = goodness), whereas pluralism defines perception as the lower category of mental cognition. Thus, in the midst of this intrinsic pluralism, individuation, and conflicting independence, knowledge cannot be possible in any of the non-Islamic perceptions.⁴⁶ On the contrary, therefore, it is logical to conclude that if the claim of science rests upon explaining universal relations by a minimal number of most-reduced axioms of logical validity and experimentation, then this must not rest on pluralism or language games. This objective can only be attained by unification epistemology by virtue of its attribute of sharing in a normative, positive, deductive-inductive, interactive-integrative simultaneity premised upon a single unitary and irreducible axiom: that of divine unity. The essence of divine unity continuously regenerates knowledge-based processes in purposive balance and justice. This is the nature of what we referred to in this paper as the *shuratic* process in terms of its embryonic and pervasive nature across and within all systems. Evolutionary knowledge is then the cause and effect of the underlying interactive-integrative globalizing interrelationships.

⁴⁶M. A. Choudhury, "Muslims, Islam and the West Today," *Hamdard Islamicus* 17, no. 1 (January 1994): 19-34.