

# The Perennial Psychology and the Search for a Common Lexicon

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We have wished to emphasize that the doctrine of the *Philosophia Perennis*, in which our psychology is included, is stated in different areas and at different times not only in cognate words, but often in the same idioms and in terms of the same symbolism.... We have sometimes dwelt on etymologies with a view to showing that the doctrines referred to are implicit in the very structure of the sacred languages in which they are stated.<sup>1</sup>

(Ananda K. Coomaraswamy)

A central challenge in discussing or writing about sacred psychology is “what to call it?” A significant part of this dilemma is that philosophy, psychology and religion prior to the European Enlightenment of the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries were interconnected and anchored in the Sacred, in contradistinction with how they are viewed in the modern world as autonomous and eclipsed of their sacred function. Modern psychology and psychiatry for that matter, seek to treat the human psyche in a way that is devoid of its original meaning—“science of the soul”—which recognized the ultimate source of the human psyche’s health and well-being by what transcended it. What is ‘above’ the human psyche brings it balance and peace, and for this reason the human psyche is subordinate to what

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<sup>1</sup> Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, “On the Indian and Traditional Psychology, or Rather Pneumatology,” in *Coomaraswamy, Vol. 2, Selected Papers: Metaphysics*, ed. Roger Lipsey (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 378.

transcends it. The integral psychology of the perennial philosophy originates *in divinis* and expresses itself through the sacred and unanimous science of the psyche.

Several key authors within the traditionalist or perennialist school have made significant headway in outlining such an integral psychology based upon the perennial philosophy. Perennialist philosopher and art historian, Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), referred to this sacred psychology in his landmark posthumous essay “On the Indian and Traditional Psychology, or Rather Pneumatology” as “traditional psychology”, “perennial psychology” and “pneumatology”.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Titus Burckhardt (1908-1984), art historian and philosopher of religion, referred to this sacred psychology as “traditional psychology”.<sup>3</sup> Whitall N. Perry (1920-2005), Seyyed Hossein Nasr (b. 1933) and Laleh Bakhtiar (b. 1938) have also used the term “traditional psychology” in their writings.<sup>4</sup>

While these designations are very clear and suitable for those informed about what ‘Tradition’ or the perennial philosophy signifies in this context, such is not the case with audiences outside this

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<sup>2</sup> Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, “On the Indian and Traditional Psychology, or Rather Pneumatology,” in *Coomaraswamy, Vol. 2, Selected Papers: Metaphysics*, ed. Roger Lipsey (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 333-378.

<sup>3</sup> Titus Burckhardt, “Traditional Cosmology and Modern Science: Modern Psychology,” in *Mirror of the Intellect: Essays on Traditional Science and Sacred Art*, trans. and ed. William Stoddart (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987), pp. 45-67; Titus Burckhardt, “Traditional and Modern Science: Modern Psychology,” in *The Essential Titus Burckhardt: Reflections on Sacred Art, Faiths, and Civilizations*, ed. William Stoddart (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2003), p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> Whitall N. Perry, “The Zodiac of the Soul: Observation on the Differences between Traditional and Empirical Psychology,” in *Challenges to a Secular Society* (Oakton, VA: Foundation for Traditional Studies, 1996), pp. 200-228; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Sufism and the Integration of Man,” in *Sufi Essays* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1972), pp. 43-56; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “The Science of the Cure of Souls,” in *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam’s Mystical Tradition* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), pp. 118-124; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “The Integration of the Soul,” in *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, ed. William C. Chittick (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2007), pp. 73-84; Laleh Bakhtiar, *Traditional Psychoethics and Personality Paradigm* (Chicago, IL: Institute of Traditional Psychoethics and Guidance, 1993); Laleh Bakhtiar, *Moral Healer’s Handbook: Psychology of Spiritual Chivalry* (Chicago, IL: Institute of Traditional Psychoethics and Guidance, 1994); Laleh Bakhtiar, *Moral Healing Through the Most Beautiful Names: The Practice of Spiritual Chivalry* (Chicago, IL: Institute of Traditional Psychoethics and Guidance, 1994).

circle.<sup>5</sup> There are certain words that trigger something within the contemporary mind which stop it in its tracks; it is as if the contemporary mind has become impermeable to anything beyond its prejudices. This appears to be the case with words such as 'religion' or 'tradition' as they are both *de facto* interpreted in the narrowest sense conceivable, and sadly this is also the case with many in the fields of humanistic and transpersonal (the 'third' and 'fourth' forces of) modern psychology.

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<sup>5</sup> "Tradition is the continuity of Revelation: an uninterrupted transmission, through innumerable generations, of the spiritual and cosmological principles, sciences, and laws resulting from a revealed religion: nothing is neglected, from the establishment of social orders and codes of conduct to the canons regulating the arts and architecture, ornamentation and dress; it includes the mathematical, physical, medical, and psychological sciences, encompassing moreover those deriving from celestial movements. What contrasts it totally with our modern learning, which is a closed system materially, is its reference of all things back to superior planes of being, and eventually to ultimate Principles; considerations entirely unknown to modern man." (Whitall N. Perry, "The Revival of Interest in Tradition," in *The Unanimous Tradition: Essays on the Essential Unity of All Religions*, ed. Ranjit Fernando [Colombo: Sri Lanka Institute of Traditional Studies, 1999], p. 4); "It will already be apparent to the reader that by tradition more is meant than just custom long established, even if current usage has tended to restrict it in this way. Here the word will always be given its transcendent, which is also its normal, connotation without any attempt being made, however, to pin it down to a particular set of concepts, if only because tradition, being formless and supra-personal in its essence, escapes exact definition in terms of human speech or thought. All that can usefully be said of it at the moment is that wherever a complete tradition exists this will entail the presence of four things, namely: a source of inspiration or, to use a more concrete term, of Revelation; a current of influence or Grace issuing forth from that source and transmitted without interruption through a variety of channels; a way of 'verification' which, when faithfully followed, will lead the human subject to successive positions where he is able to 'actualize' the truths that Revelation communicates; finally there is the formal embodiment of tradition in the doctrines, arts, sciences and other elements that together go to determine the character of a normal civilization." (Marco Pallis, "Preface," to *The Way and the Mountain* [Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2008], pp. xxvii-xxviii); "It is all that has its origin in Heaven, in revelation in its most universal sense, along with its unfolding in a particular spatio-temporal setting determined by the Source from which the tradition originates. It applies not only to this truth of celestial origin, but to the application of the principles contained therein to realms as disparate as law and art, as methods of meditation and the manner of cultivating a garden." (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Introduction," to *The Essential Frithjof Schuon*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr [Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2005], p. 6); see also Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Recovery of the Sacred: Tradition and Perennialism in the Contemporary World," *Sacred Web: A Journal of Tradition and Modernity*, Vol. 19 (Summer 2007), pp. 15-37; René Guénon, "Tradition and Traditionalism" in *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, trans. Lord Northbourne (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), pp. 208-214; Reza Shah-Kazemi, "Tradition as Spiritual Function: A 'Perennialist' Perspective," *Sacred Web: A Journal of Tradition and Modernity*, Vol. 7 (Summer 2001), pp. 37-58.

Marco Pallis has stated as follows about ‘Tradition’ in the sense that readers of this journal will be familiar with:

Tradition, because of its universal character, defies definition; but a few indications may make it clearer. It embraces the whole of a civilization, in all its modes and departments, so that it cannot be said of any element that it exists independently of the traditional influence; there is no place for a “profane” point of view. A traditional civilization has its roots set in a doctrine of the purely metaphysical order, from which all the other constituents of the tradition, whether ethical, social, or artistic, down to the most petty activities of daily life, derive their sanction. Metaphysical ideas are the cement that binds every part together. The whole body of thought and action must be viewed as a hierarchy, with pure metaphysics at the head.... No set boundaries can be recognized by Tradition as a whole; it can only be taken as the equivalent of [Transcendent] Knowledge itself.<sup>6</sup>

In view of this special understanding of ‘Tradition’, Perry states the following as regards its relationship to psychology and how it differs from modern psychology:

Traditional psychology—the term itself is a misnomer, since the concept of psychology as a scientific discipline for the study of mental phenomena in the sense used today did not take root before the 18th century; using this expression, then, with all due reservations—traditional psychology can be said to begin with the crucial distinction, so often insisted on by René Guénon, between the psychic and spiritual domains. This is a differentiation known to all the great world cultures save our present one.<sup>7</sup>

The two most recent ‘forces’ of modern psychology—humanistic and transpersonal—often refer to behaviorism and/or psychoanalysis as ‘traditional psychology’ due to their reductionistic outlooks. For this reason ‘traditional psychology’ is often referred to in a pejorative manner.<sup>8</sup> Philosopher, poet, artist and preeminent exponent of traditionalist thought Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998),<sup>9</sup> together with other perennialist authors such as William Stoddart (b. 1925) and John Herlihy (b. 1945),

<sup>6</sup> Marco Pallis, “Introductory Notes,” to *Peaks and Lamas: A classic Book on Mountaineering, Buddhism and Tibet* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2005), p. xv.

<sup>7</sup> Whitall N. Perry, “The Zodiac of the Soul: Observation on the Differences between Traditional and Empirical Psychology,” in *Challenges to a secular society* (Oakton, VA: Foundation for Traditional Studies, 1996), pp. 201-202.

<sup>8</sup> We need to note that Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), who popularized the notion of the timeless truths at the heart of all the world’s religions, known as the perennial philosophy, was not unfamiliar with key authors of the Traditionalist or Perennialist school, he referred to the integral psychology of the perennial philosophy as “traditional psychology”. Huxley writes: “[T]raditional psychology—the most important, the most emphatically insisted upon by all exponents of the Perennial Philosophy and, we may add, the least psychological. For the doctrine that is to be illustrated... belongs to autology rather than psychology—to the science, not of the personal ego, but of that eternal Self in the Depth of particular, individualized selves, and identical with, or at last akin to, the divine Ground.” (Aldous Huxley, “That Art Thou,” in *The Perennial Philosophy* [New York: Harper & Row, 1970], p. 1).

<sup>9</sup> “Schuon is a master of the traditional science of psychology” (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Introducing the Writings of Frithjof Schuon,” in *The Essential Frithjof Schuon*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr [Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2005], p. 10).

have employed the less confusing terms, 'spiritual psychology'<sup>10</sup> and 'sacred psychology',<sup>11</sup> yet these designations have unfortunately also been abused by less scrupulous individuals who lean toward the so-called New

<sup>10</sup> Additionally Burckhardt and Nasr also utilize the term "spiritual psychology", see, Frithjof Schuon, "Preface" and "Contours of the Spirit," in *Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts: A New Translation with Selected Letters*, ed. James S. Cutsinger (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2007), pp. xi, 65; Frithjof Schuon, "The Complexity of Dogmatism," in *The Fullness of God: Frithjof Schuon on Christianity*, ed. James S. Cutsinger (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2004), p. 78; Titus Burckhardt, "Branches of the Doctrine," in *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, trans. D.M. Matheson (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2008), p. 26; Titus Burckhardt, "Liturgy and Art," in *Chartres and the Birth of the Cathedral*, trans. William Stoddart (Ipswich, UK: Galgonooza Press, 1995), p. 122; Titus Burckhardt, "Metaphysics and Virtue in Sufism," in *The Essential Titus Burckhardt: Reflections on Sacred Art, Faiths, and Civilizations*, ed. William Stoddart (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2003), p. 17; William Stoddart, "Titus Burckhardt: An Outline of his Life and Works," in *Mirror of the Intellect: Essays on Traditional Science and Sacred Art*, trans. and ed. William Stoddart (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 6; William Stoddart, "Titus Burckhardt and the Perennialist School," in *The Essential Titus Burckhardt: Reflections on Sacred Art, Faiths, and Civilizations*, ed. William Stoddart (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2003), p. 6; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Cosmology, Geography, Natural History," in *Science and Civilization in Islam* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1992), p. 95; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Alchemy and Chemistry," in *A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World* (Chicago, IL: Kazi Publications, 1994), p. 98; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Islamic Education, Philosophy and Science: A Survey in Light of Present-Day Challenges," in *Islam in the Modern World: Challenged by the West, Threatened by Fundamentalism, Keeping Faith with Tradition* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), p. 146; Samuel Bendeck Sotillos, "The Spiritual Psychology of the *Religio Perennis*: Interview with John Herlihy," *AHP Perspective*, December 2009/January 2010, pp. 8-12. It is worth mentioning that Professor William C. Chittick who also affiliates himself with the traditionalist perspective additionally utilizes the term "spiritual psychology" in his writings, see William C. Chittick, "Forward to the 2008 Edition," in *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, trans. D.M. Matheson (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2008), p. x; William C. Chittick, "Introduction," to *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, ed. William C. Chittick (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2007), p. xiv; William C. Chittick, *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul: The Pertinence of Islamic Cosmology in the Modern World* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> See John Herlihy, *Near and Distant Horizons: In Search of the Primary Sources of Knowledge* (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2005); John Herlihy, *Borderlands of the Spirit: Reflections on a Sacred Science of Mind* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2005); John Herlihy, *Wisdom's Journey: Living the Spirit of Islam in the Modern World* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2009); John Herlihy, *Wisdom of the Senses: The Untold Story of their Inner Life* (San Rafael, CA: Sophia Perennis, 2011); Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr also utilizes the term "sacred psychology" in his writings, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Spiritual Needs of Western Man and the Message of Sufism," in *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man*, Revised and Enlarged Edition (Chicago, IL: ABC International Group, 2001), p. 93; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Eschatology and Sacred Psychology," in *Islamic philosophy from its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), pp. 229-230; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Science of the Cure of Souls," in *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), p. 118; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Islamic Spirituality," in *Islam in the Modern World: Challenged by the West, Threatened by Fundamentalism, Keeping Faith with Tradition* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), p. 111.

Age pseudo-spirituality, and this has led to confusions over terminology. Schuon has noted,

[T]hat which calls for suspicion and for an implacable vigilance is the reducing of the spiritual to the psychic, a practice which has become a commonplace, to the point of characterizing Western interpretations of traditional doctrines. This so-called “psychology of spirituality”—or this “psychoanalysis of the sacred”—is the breach through which the mortal poison of modern relativism infiltrates the still living Oriental traditions.<sup>12</sup>

While recognizing this reductive tendency, Schuon has also observed as follows about the relationship of the Spirit and the psyche:

[S]pirituality, though essentially determined by supra-individual factors, comprises secondary modalities of a psychic order owing to the fact that it necessarily sets in motion all that we are. But a “psychology of the spiritual” is a contradictory notion that can only end up in the falsification and negation of the spirit; one might just as well speak of a “biology of truth” and indeed one can be certain that someone has already done so.<sup>13</sup>

Given the challenges faced by anyone who attempts to articulate a common lexicon, Charles Upton’s term ‘principal psychology’<sup>14</sup> is apt because it does not carry a connotation of behaviorism or psychoanalysis, two fundamentally reductionist approaches within modern psychology. The first is an expression of *scientism* ‘par excellence’; the second promotes *psychologism*, the tendency to translate the objective metaphysical order and the human consciousness designed to know it into purely subjective terms.<sup>15</sup> While there is much criticism of the dehumanized science underlying the first two forces of modern psychology—behaviorism and psychoanalysis—it is all too often overlooked or ignored that the latter two forces of modern psychology—humanistic and transpersonal psychology—also rest upon the same truncated science. Nor does the perennial psychology have any affinities with pseudo-spirituality. In fact principal psychology is more congruent with transpersonal psychology or the ‘fourth force’ in modern psychology than any of the other forces as principal psychology not only acknowledges the spiritual domain but primarily focuses on issues pertaining to spirituality. The following briefly describes what the traditional pneumatology of the perennial philosophy is:

<sup>12</sup> Frithjof Schuon, “A Defense of Zen,” in *Treasures of Buddhism* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1993), pp. 68-69.

<sup>13</sup> Frithjof Schuon, “A Defense of Zen,” in *Treasures of Buddhism* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1993), p. 69.

<sup>14</sup> See Charles Upton, *The Science of the Greater Jihad: Essays in Principal Psychology* (San Rafael, CA: Sophia Perennis, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> See Maurice Friedman, *Contemporary Psychology: Revealing and Obscuring the Human* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1984).

Principial Psychology, elements of which are to be found in the various spiritual ways embraced by the great world religions and wisdom traditions, is based on a “pneumatic anthropology” that, in its simplest form, sees the human being as composed not of body alone, or of body plus soul/psyche, but as essentially tripartite: body (*soma*), soul (*psyche*) and Spirit (*Pneuma* or *Nous*).<sup>16</sup>

The paramount function of the transcendent Principle and its relationship not only to sacred psychology, but to all modes of knowledge, which in fact unifies them, is discussed by René Guénon as follows:

There can be nothing that does not have a principle; but what is this principle? and is there in actual fact only one Principle of all things? If the entire universe is considered, it is certainly obvious that it contains all things, for all parts are contained within the whole. On the other hand, the whole is necessarily unlimited, for if it had a limit, whatever exceeded that limit would not be included within the whole, and this supposition is absurd. That which has no limit can be called the Infinite, and since it contains everything, this Infinite is the principle of all things. Moreover, the Infinite is necessarily one, for two Infinities that are not identical would exclude one another. Hence there is only one unique Principle of all things—and this Principle is the Perfect, for the Infinite can only be such if it is the Perfect.<sup>17</sup>

Readers may contend that contemporary approaches such as humanistic and transpersonal psychology already acknowledge the “body, soul and Spirit” schema. While true to a degree, inasmuch as the third and fourth forces in modern psychology validate the tripartite structure of the human individual, nevertheless they misrepresent it by blurring the distinction between the Spirit and the psyche<sup>18</sup> and they also tend to

<sup>16</sup> Charles Upton, “Introduction,” to *The Science of the Greater Jihad: Essays in Principial Psychology* (San Rafael, CA: Sophia Perennis, 2011), p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> René Guénon, “The Demiurge,” in *Miscellanea*, trans. Henry D. Fohr, Cecil Bethell, Hubert Schiff and Patrick Moore (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> “[I]t is impossible to be too mistrustful of every appeal to the ‘subconscious’...in a sort of ‘cosmic consciousness’ that shuts out all ‘transcendence’ and so also shuts out all effective spirituality...but what is to be said of someone who flings himself into the ocean and has no aspiration but to drown himself in it? This is very precisely the significance of a so-called ‘fusion’ with a ‘cosmic consciousness’ that is really nothing but the confused and indistinct assemblage of all the psychic influences...these influences have absolutely nothing in common with spiritual influences....Those who make this fatal mistake either forget about or are unaware of the distinction between the ‘upper waters’ and the ‘lower waters’; instead of raising themselves toward the ‘ocean above’, they plunge into the abyss of the ‘ocean below’; instead of concentrating all their powers so as to direct them toward the formless world, which alone can be called ‘spiritual’, they disperse them in the endlessly changeable and fugitive diversity of the forms of subtle manifestation... with no suspicion that they are mistaking for a fullness of ‘life’ something that is in truth the realm of death and of a dissolution without hope of return.” (René Guénon, “The Confusion of the Psychic and the Spiritual,” in *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, trans. Lord Northbourne [Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001], pp. 239-240).

reduce the traditional idea of the soul or *psyche* to the 'mind',<sup>19</sup> ignoring that the *psyche* is composed of the three primary faculties of thought, will and emotion, as well as various the derivative and composite faculties such as memory and imagination. These unfortunate and critical errors arise from the shadow cast upon humanistic and transpersonal psychology by the Human Potential Movement, which inextricably influenced the emergence and development of both humanistic and transpersonal psychology. This influence also brought in many ideas from the New Age movement.<sup>20</sup> Significantly, it is modern science that has influenced the reduction of the human *psyche* to the mind in the domain of modern psychology. Both humanistic and transpersonal psychology wish to appeal and validate themselves to the scientific

<sup>19</sup> See James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975); see also Frederic Wiedemann, "Soul: The Mediator" in *Between Two Worlds: The Riddle of Wholeness* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1986), pp. 68-85.

<sup>20</sup> "The techniques and theories of Gestalt, Encounter, Transactional, Psychodrama, Transpersonal differ in many ways, but all the schools are united in asserting the essential health and innocence of human nature. They are the therapies of a narcissistic culture, and unapologetically so." (Theodore Roszak, "Narcissism Revisited," in *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press, 2001], p. 275); see also Theodore Roszak, *Unfinished Animal: The Aquarian Frontier and the Evolution of Consciousness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975); Theodore Roszak, "Ethics, Ecstasy, and the Study of New Religions," in *Understanding the New Religions*, eds. Jacob Needleman and George Baker (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), pp. 49-62; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Healing and Personal Growth," in *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), pp. 42-61; Peter Marin, "The New Narcissism," *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 251, No. 1505 (October 1975), pp. 45-56; Nevill Drury, *The Elements of Human Potential* (Shaftesbury, UK: Element Books, 1989); Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s* (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1980); Jeffrey J. Kripal, *Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion* (Chicago, NJ: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Kay Alexander, "Roots of the New Age," in *Perspectives on the New Age*, eds. James R. Lewis and J. Gordon Melton (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992); Georg Feuerstein, "The Humanistic Way of Self-Actualization," in *Holy Madness: The Shock Tactics and Radical Teachings of Crazy-Wise Adepts, Holy Fools, and Rascal Gurus* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), pp. 191-193; Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978); Albert Ellis and Raymond J. Yeager, *Why Some Therapies Don't Work: The Dangers of Transpersonal Psychology* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1989); Edwin Schur, *The Awareness Trap: Self-Absorption Instead of Social Change* (New York: Quadrangle, 1976); Andrew Malcolm, *The Tyranny of the Group* (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams & Company, 1975); William R. Coulson, *Groups, Gimmicks, and Instant Gurus: An Examination of Encounter Groups and their Distortions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology As Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002).

mindset, and they are equally guilty of this error. However, it serves to remember that sacred psychology is pre-modern in essence and its efficacy does not derive from scientism but from its inseparable connection with the Spirit. Modern psychology itself has limited efficacy. As Seyyed Hossein Nasr notes,

[T]he whole question of the crisis in the way the human psyche is being studied in various schools of modern psychology. After the debacle of Freudianism and the realization of the limitations of the ultimately agnostic views of Jung, there is now a frantic effort on behalf of many psychologists to try to create a psychology which would not encounter all of the problems and the dead ends that psychoanalysis and other modern schools of psychotherapy and psychology have faced. Again, people here and there are now turning to the Sufi, Hindu, or Buddhist psychotherapy. Tradition alone can provide a whole and holistic science of the soul, which is urgently needed.<sup>21</sup>

We emphasize that the integral metaphysics of the perennial philosophy has nothing whatsoever to do with the pseudo-spiritualities of the New Age; if the reader delves into the vast *corpus* of the traditionalist or perennialist writings this will become readily apparent.<sup>22</sup> Humanistic and transpersonal psychology is predicated on an incomplete vision of

<sup>21</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr with Ramin Jahanbegloo, "Psychology," in *In Search of the Sacred: A Conversation with Seyyed Hossein Nasr on His Life and Thought* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012), p. 196.

<sup>22</sup> See Charles Upton, *The System of Antichrist: Truth and Falsehood in Postmodernism and the New Age* (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001); Frithjof Schuon, "The Sense of the Absolute in Religions," in *Gnosis: Divine Wisdom, A New Translation with Selected Letters*, trans. Mark Perry, Jean-Pierre Lafouge and James S. Cutsinger, ed. James S. Cutsinger (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2006), pp. 3-16; William Stoddart, "Forward," to *Ye Shall Know the Truth: Christianity and the Perennial Philosophy*, ed. Mateus Soares de Azevedo (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2005), pp. ix-xii; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The *Philosophia Perennis* and the Study of Religion," in *The Need for a Sacred Science* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 53-68; Huston Smith, "Is There a Perennial Philosophy?" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Fall 1987), pp. 553-566; Harry Oldmeadow (ed.), "Counterfeits of the Wisdom of the Ages," in *Frithjof Schuon and the Perennial Philosophy* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2010), pp. 257-275; Rama P. Coomaraswamy, "The Desacralization of Hinduism for Western Consumption," *Sophia: The Journal of Traditional Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Winter 1998), pp. 194-219; Whittall N. Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971); recently reissued as: *The Spiritual Ascent: A Compendium of the World's Wisdom* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2008); Martin Lings and Clinton Minnaar (eds.), *The Underlying Religion: An Introduction to the Perennial Philosophy* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2007); William Stoddart (ed.), *Invincible Wisdom: Quotations from the Scriptures, Saints, and Sages of All Times and Places* (San Rafael, CA: Sophia Perennis, 2008); Jacob Needleman (ed.), *The Sword of Gnosis: Metaphysics, Cosmology, Tradition, Symbolism* (New York: Arkana, 1986).

the self: “Much of contemporary psychology has no practical access to, and almost no theory of, such principal objectivity.”<sup>23</sup>

In our search for a common lexicon of psychology, we need to reconnect it to transcendence, to the integral psychology of the pre-modern or traditional world. Modern psychology for the most part has not come to terms with the essential fact that “The human psyche is not designed to be self-sufficient; it is designed to reflect, and conform itself to, the light of the Spirit.”<sup>24</sup>

In determining a common lexicon for psychology—“science of the soul”—we may be able to restore the rightful place of psychology *in divinis*. While there is some acknowledgement within modern psychology about the importance of the spiritual domain, it is unfortunately afflicted by reductionist theories that also obstruct its legitimacy and efficacy. Like all sacred psychologies which are derivatives of the sapiential traditions, they cannot be of use unless the individual participates in an integral spiritual path. From our vantage it is difficult, if not almost impossible, to imagine an age when the world recognized that it reposed within the Sacred and where it seemed redundant to require qualifying adjectives such as “traditional”, “perennial”, “spiritual”, “principal”, “transpersonal”, “integral” or the “sacred” to explain its humanity or selfhood. For everything in the human microcosm reverberated with the sense of another world, a world more real than this one, yet present in this world.

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<sup>23</sup> Charles Upton, “Introduction,” to *The Science of the Greater Jihad: Essays in Principal Psychology* (San Rafael, CA: Sophia Perennis, 2011), p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Charles Upton, “Dimensions of Alchemy,” in *The Science of the Greater Jihad: Essays in Principal Psychology* (San Rafael, CA: Sophia Perennis, 2011), p. 124.