

PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY AS A CRITIQUE OF MODERN EPISTEMOLOGICAL EXCLUSIVISM IN THE THOUGHT OF SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze perennial philosophy as a critique of modern epistemological exclusivism in the thinking of Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Modern epistemology, which is related to rationalism and empiricism, tends to place empirical reason as the only valid standard of truth. Thus, it limits the sources of knowledge to dimensions that are scientifically verified and objectively measured. This paradigm gives rise to epistemic reductionism and encourages the desacralization of knowledge by disregarding the metaphysical, intellectual-spiritual, and revelatory dimensions of the epistemic structure. In this context, modernity not only brings technological progress, but also a crisis of meaning rooted in the severing of the relationship between science and transcendent reality. This study uses a qualitative approach based on literature review with descriptive and philosophical-critical analysis methods, focusing on the major works of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, especially his book *Knowledge and the Sacred*. The results of this study show that perennial philosophy in Seyyed Hossein Nasr's thinking serves as a corrective critique of modern epistemological exclusivism. Through the concepts of *scientia sacra* and the hierarchical structure of knowledge, Seyyed Hossein Nasr offers a reintegration between reason, metaphysical intellect ('*aqil*'), and revelation as the ontological foundation of knowledge. The concept of *scientia sacra* is sacred science or sacred knowledge rooted in metaphysical reality and sourced from enlightened intellectual revelation ('*aqil*'). Therefore, perennial philosophy does not reject modern science, but rather corrects its epistemic reductionism and proposes the resacralization of science as a solution to the epistemological crisis of contemporary modernity.

Keywords: Perennial Philosophy; Modern Epistemology; Exclusivism; Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis filsafat perennial sebagai kritik atas eksklusivisme epistemologi modern dalam pemikiran Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Epistemologi modern, yang berkaitan dengan rasionalisme dan empirisme, cenderung menempatkan rasio empiris sebagai satu-satunya standar kebenaran yang valid. Sehingga, membatasi sumber pengetahuan pada dimensi yang terverifikasi secara ilmiah dan diukur secara objektif. Paradigma tersebut melabirakan reduksionisme epistemik serta mendorong proses desakralisasi pengetahuan dengan mengesampingkan dimensi metafisik, intelektual-spiritual, dan wahyu dari struktur epistemik. Dalam konteks tersebut modernitas tidak hanya menghadirkan kemajuan teknologis, tetapi juga krisis makna yang berakar pada terputusnya relasi antara ilmu dan realitas transenden. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan metode analisis deskriptif dan filosofis-kritis, terhadap karya-karya utama Seyyed Hossein Nasr, terutama pada buku *Knowledge and the Sacred*. Hasil penelitian tersebut menunjukkan bahwa filsafat perennial dalam pemikiran Seyyed Hossein Nasr berfungsi sebagai kritik korektif terhadap klaim eksklusivisme epistemologis modern. Melalui konsep *scientia sacra* dan struktur hierarkis pengetahuan, Seyyed Hossein Nasr menawarkan reintegrasi antara rasio, intelek metafisik ('*aqil*') dan wahyu sebagai fondasi ontologis pengetahuan. Konsep *scientia sacra* merupakan ilmu yang suci atau pengetahuan sakral yang berakar pada realitas metafisik dan bersumber pada wahyu intelek ('*aqil*') yang tercerahkan. Oleh karena itu, filsafat perennial tidak menolak sains modern, melainkan mengoreksi reduksionisme epistemik serta mengusulkan resakralisasi ilmu sebagai solusi atas krisis epistemologis modernitas kotemporer.

Kata Kunci: Filsafat Perennial; Epistemologi Modern; Eksklusivisme; Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

Introduction

The development of modern epistemology, which emerged during the Enlightenment, has established empirical rationality as the primary foundation for determining the validity of knowledge. Throughout the history of human civilization, the concept of epistemology or the theory of knowledge has undergone significant advancements in the Western world. This development was heavily influenced by the legacy of classical Greek philosophy. From this influence emerged major schools of thought in the West, such as rationalism, empiricism, and critical theory. Rationalism holds that reason is the primary source for acquiring knowledge. According to this school of thought, truth can be attained through logical thinking and systematic reasoning. Meanwhile, empiricism holds that knowledge stems from sensory experience. This means that something is considered true if it is based on what can be directly observed and experienced. The critical school, pioneered by Immanuel Kant, seeks to synthesize the two by emphasizing the active role of reason in processing empirical experience.¹

Unlike Western traditions, they emphasize reason and experience. Epistemologically, Western scientists limit the sources of knowledge to the realm of reason and the senses, thereby excluding revelation from the definition of science. This reductionism restricts the scope of science to physical objects alone and disregards the metaphysical dimension. Without the integration of the revelatory values, science and ethical systems become unstable and vulnerable to constant change, given that human reason, as the sole determinant of policy, lacks an absolute foundation of values.² Islam, on the other hand, views the sources of knowledge as encompassing revelation, reason, and the intuition of the heart. Revelation occupies the highest position because it serves as both the foundation and the guide for the use of human reason and experience. Therefore, truth is inseparable from divine guidance. Islam also recognizes three ways of acquiring knowledge: *bayani*, which is derived from texts; *burhani*, which relies on logical reasoning; and *irfani*, which is derived from spiritual experience. These three approaches complement one another in building a comprehensive and balanced system of knowledge.³

Several previous studies have examined topics relate to this research. For example, the study by Clarisa Dwi Apriliana et al., which discusses a comparison of Islamic epistemology is more comprehensive because it integrates revelation as a source of knowledge.⁴ Furthermore, a study by Sofia Azzahra and Srisuyanta specifically examines Seyyed Hossein Nasr's

¹ Clarisa Dwi Aprillia, dkk., "Epistemologi Islam dan Perbandingannya dengan Epistemologi Barat", *Jurnal Media Akademik (JMA)*, Vol. 3, No. 11 (2025): 3–4.

² Muhammad Zaqi Almadani, dkk., "Penjelasan Epistemologi Islam dan Perbandingannya dengan Epistemologi Barat", *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 3, no. 5 (2025): 17–27.

³ Clarisa Dwi Aprillia et.al., "Epistimologi Islam dan Perbandingannya Dengan Epistimologi Barat", 7.

⁴ Clarisa Dwi Aprillia et al., "Epistemologi Islam dan Perbandingannya dengan Epistemologi Barat", 3.

epistemological views on science. It found that Nasr emphasizes the importance of sacred science as the foundation of knowledge.⁵ Meanwhile, a study by Nurul Pratiwi and Mustari Mustafa analyzes Al-Faruqi and Nasr's perspectives on Islam and science. It explains that both agree that science must be grounded in the values of tawhid.⁶ In their study, Dwi wahyuni et al. Examined the relationship between perennial philosophy and interfaith dialogue from the perspective of Nasr's perennial philosophy. They concluded that perennial philosophy serves as a harmonious bridge between religious traditions.⁷ The study by Theguh Saumantri examines religious moderation from the perspective of Nasr's philosophy of the perennial. It concludes that the philosophy of the perennial promotes an inclusive approach to religion.⁸

However, these studies have not yet analyzed the epistemological exclusivism of modernity in depth and comprehensively from the perspective of Nasr's perennial philosophy. Most research still focuses on general comparative epistemology, or merely touches upon Nasr's thought as a small part of a broader discussion. No specific study has yet examined how Nasr's perennial philosophy offers a systematic critique of modernity's epistemological exclusivism, while simultaneously proposing a solution in the form of the resacralization of knowledge. In fact, the issue of epistemological exclusivism is one of the greatest challenges in contemporary scholarly discourse, particularly in efforts to integrate spiritual and metaphysical dimensions into the framework of modern science. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by specifically examining Nasr's critique of modernity's epistemological exclusivism through the lens of perennial philosophy, thereby hopefully making a significant contribution to the development of contemporary Islamic epistemology.

Epistemological exclusivism can be understood as a tendency within a knowledge system to recognize only a single source or specific method as a valid standard of truth. In the context of modernity, this exclusivism is evident in the dominance of empirical rationality as the sole criterion of knowledge validity. The primary strength of this perspective lies in its consistency in upholding claims of absolute theological truth. Through exclusivism, a religion's identity becomes unambiguous and beyond doubt. This provides its adherents with certainty regarding values and clear guidelines for living. Furthermore, this perspective helps preserve the purity of doctrine and strengthens commitment to faith. Exclusivism also often serves as a powerful

⁵ Sofia Azzahra dan Srisuyanta, "Pemikiran Epistemologi Ilmu Menurut Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *Teologis: Jurnal Agama Dan Pemikiran*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2025): 66.

⁶ Nurul Pratiwi and Mustari Mustafa, "Analisis Perspektif Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi Dan Seyyed Hossein Nasr Tentang Islam Dan Sains" *Al-Ubudiyah: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Studi Islam* Vol. 4, No. 1 (2023): 71.

⁷ Dwi Wahyuni et al., "Filsafat Perennial dan Dialog Agama: Studi Pemikiran Seyyed Hossein Nasr" *Jurnal Al-Aqidah*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2017): 109.

⁸ Theguh Saumantri, "Construction Of Religious Moderation In Seyyed Hoessin Nasr's Perennial Philosophy Perspective" *Kanaz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism*, Vol. 9 (2023): 91.

source of spiritual motivation in the practice of religion. Within the internal sphere of religion, this paradigm is generally viewed as the stance most faithful to the teachings of sacred texts and orthodox tradition.⁹ The exclusivism of modern epistemology, as explained by Seyyed Hossein Nasr in his book *Knowledge and the Sacred*, is considered problematic because it causes knowledge to lose its sacred value by separating human reason from spiritual understanding (*divine intellect*). This has caused science to become trapped in a positivist paradigm that recognizes only material reality, thereby neglecting the transcendent dimension that should serve as the ethical foundation and primary purpose of the pursuit of truth itself.¹⁰

It is in this context that the thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr becomes relevant for examination. As one of the leading figures in contemporary perennial philosophy, Nasr offers a fundamental critique of the structure of modern epistemology, which he views as having led to the desacralization of science and nature. Consequently, modern humans tend to view nature as a mechanistic and fragmented object devoid of sacred meaning. That is, modern humans view nature merely as something that functions like a machine, in isolated parts, and no longer possessing spiritual value. Nasr, as a contemporary Muslim philosopher, asserts that the universe is a manifestation of the sacred (God) and must be understood holistically, hierarchically, and integrally as an interconnected unity.¹¹ Through works such as *Knowledge and the Sacred*, Nasr argues that the crisis of modernity is not merely a moral crisis, but a crisis of knowledge rooted in the severing of the connection between science and metaphysical reality. For Nasr, when empirical reason is posited as the sole standard of truth, knowledge becomes reductive and loses its transcendent dimension.

The perennial philosophy proposed by Nasr offers an alternative epistemological structure that is hierarchical and integrative. Nasr does not reject rationality or modern science, but he criticizes their exclusive claims that negate other sources of knowledge, such as the metaphysical intellect (*'aql*) and revelation. From a perennial perspective, reality is layered and transcendent; thus, an adequate epistemological approach must be capable of reaching those dimensions. Consequently, perennial philosophy serves as a corrective critique of modern epistemological exclusivism and as an effort to reintegrate reason, metaphysics, and the sacredness of knowledge.

Against this backdrop, this article aims to analyze how perennial philosophy in Nasr's thought serves as a critique of modern epistemological exclusivism, as well as how concepts such

⁹ Edi Setiawan et.al, "Kebenaran Beragama dan Kebebasan Beragama", *Madrassa: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Teknologi*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2026): 80.

¹⁰ Seyyed Hoessin Nasr, *Knowlage And The Sacred* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 1-5.

¹¹ Sofia Azzahra dan Srisuyanta, "Pemikiran Epistemologi Ilmu Menurut Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *Teologis: Jurnal Agama Dan Pemikiran*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2025): 66.

as *scientia sacra* and the hierarchy of knowledge are offered as solutions to the epistemological reductionism of modernity. *Scientia sacra* is a key concept of Seyyed Hossein Nasr that positions religion as the fundamental foundation for understanding the universe. As an antithesis to secular science, *scientia sacra* presents absolute knowledge that bridges the transcendent dimension with material reality. Nasr asserts that this knowledge not only reinforces theological aspects but also provides a holistic understanding of all worldly phenomena through the integration of philosophy, science, and artistic traditions, in order to restore the sanctity of knowledge amidst the crisis of modernity.¹²

Research Methods

This study is a qualitative study employing a literature review approach. A literature review was chosen because the subject matter of this study consists of texts and philosophical thought, which requires an in-depth analysis of various relevant written sources. This approach is considered the most appropriate for examining the abstract ideas found in the works of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, particularly those related to perennial philosophy and his critique of modern epistemology. The data sources in this study are divided into two categories: primary and secondary sources. The primary source is Seyyed Hossein Nasr's work, particularly *Knowledge and the Sacred*, which serves as the main reference for analyzing the concept of perennial philosophy and his critique of the exclusivism of modern epistemology. Additionally, Nasr's other works, such as *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man* and *The Need for a Sacred Science*, are also utilized as supporting primary sources to strengthen the analysis. Secondary sources, such as books, scholarly journal articles, and other relevant academic works, were used to broaden the context of Nasr's thought and to strengthen the interpretation of the ideas under examination. Data collection was conducted through a literature review, which involved a series of activities including gathering, reading, noting, and analyzing relevant research materials.¹³ The collected data was then selected based on its relevance to the focus of the study, namely the epistemological exclusivism of modernity and Nasr's perennialist philosophical perspective as a critical response to it.

The approach used in this study is a philosophical-critical one. This approach was chosen because the study aims to systematically and critically analyze the structure of Nasr's arguments, particularly in examining key concepts such as the desacralization of knowledge, *scientia sacra*, and the resacralization of science. Through this approach, the researcher not only describes

¹² Zein Muchamad Masykur, dkk., "Scientia Sacra Seyyed Hossein Nasr Perspektif Filsafat Lingkungan dan Kontribusinya Pada Pengembangan Kajian Ekologis," *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 25, no. 2 (2023): 170.

¹³ Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan*, cetakan ke (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014), 3.

Nasr's thought but also identifies the philosophical foundations underpinning his critique and evaluates its relevance within the context of contemporary epistemology.

The data analysis method employed is descriptive-analytical. This analysis is conducted in stages: first, by presenting an explanation of modern epistemology along with its characteristics of exclusivism; second, by conducting an in-depth examination of Nasr's critique of this paradigm; and third, by identifying the conceptual solutions offered through perennial philosophy. Thus, this study is expected to yield a comprehensive understanding of the contribution of Nasr's thought to the discourse of contemporary Islamic epistemology, while also opening up further discussion regarding the possibility of integrating modern science with spiritual-metaphysical dimensions within a more comprehensive epistemological framework.

Results And Discussion

Epistemological Exclusivism In Modernity

The modern era has introduced new perspectives on knowledge. The term “*epistemology*” derives from the Greek word *episteme*, meaning “knowledge.” According to Robert Audi, epistemology is the theory of knowledge and justification. In his analysis, perception is viewed as one of the primary sources of knowledge, which can be distinguished between imaginative experiences such as dreams and sensory experiences such as seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting.¹⁴ This type of knowledge is acquired in two ways: knowledge gained incidentally, without any intention, desire, or effort; and knowledge driven by curiosity, which is particularly important because it is based on logic and empirical evidence.¹⁵ Epistemology is the discipline that examines what knowledge is and how it is acquired; thus, it can be understood that epistemology addresses the methodology of applying scientific knowledge, specifically the process of the Islamization of science.¹⁶ According to Ali Sariyati, valid knowledge can only be produced through a correct mindset, and that correct mindset is itself determined by the proper method of thinking. This view aligns with that of Hasan Hanafi and Muhammad Baqir al-Sadar, who assert that epistemology or methodology is a key element that determines the vitality and direction of a line of thought; without adequate mastery of method, the process of scientific development will not proceed in a structured or in-depth manner. In the realm of the philosophy of God, this epistemological dimension becomes particularly crucial, as the way a person

¹⁴ Robert Audi, *Epistemology A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, (London: Routledge, 1998), 1.

¹⁵ Hardiono, “Epistemologi Poststrukturalisme Objek Pemikiran Islam Abed Al-Jabiri” , *TAJIDID*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2020): 111.

¹⁶ Sirajudin, “Integrasi Agama dan Sains; Islamisasi Sains di Tengah Arus Modernitas” *Jurnal Qolamuna*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2016): 80.

understands God and transcendent reality is greatly influenced by the framework of thought they employ, both in rational and spiritual aspects.¹⁷

In this way of thinking, reason and science are regarded as the primary sources for discovering truth. This view leads to the belief that knowledge which cannot be scientifically tested is invalid. This mindset fosters a closed attitude toward other sources of knowledge, such as revelation, religious experience, and spiritual knowledge, which are no longer seen as valid means of discovering truth. This shift in epistemology emerged in the modern era through the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution. The rapid development of modernity has drawn the attention of Muslim scholars, particularly due to the various life challenges that accompany it.¹⁸

One of the challenges facing Muslims is the advancement of science, which is seen as contributing to the erosion of ethical values, moral conduct, and good manners. This situation has raised concerns among Muslims, as religious values and their role in the development of science are increasingly being marginalized. Science is no longer developed from a divine (*Ilahiyah*) perspective, but is instead based on the secular perspective of science itself.¹⁹ Modernity emphasizes empiricism and the scientific method as the sources of knowledge validity. Such knowledge must be testable through experience, measurable, and reproducible under identical conditions. The scientific method has become the universal standard for testing truth, and rationality is understood within an empirical context. According to Descartes, this movement began with the meaning of “*cogito*,” but in modern epistemology it evolved toward positivism, which rejects metaphysical and theological dimensions as epistemic sources. This model of modern epistemology places great emphasis on objectivity and empirical testing.²⁰

One of the fundamental assumptions in the epistemology of modern science is the notion that science is *value-free*. Within this framework, values are considered to be excluded from scientific reasoning, meaning that values are not allowed to influence the process of reasoning and drawing conclusions in scientific activities.²¹ The implication of this view is the exclusion of the ethical, metaphysical, and spiritual dimensions from the framework of scientific development. However, claims regarding the neutrality of science are increasingly facing criticism from contemporary philosophers of science. A number of studies indicate that scientific practice

¹⁷ Chrisnadius Djaga dan Albri Labaka, “Filsafat Dan Teologi: Menemukan Persenyawaan Epistemologi Melalui Gagasan Filsafat Keilahian”, *Jurnal Teologi Rai*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (2025): 246–247.

¹⁸ Nazar Naamy, “Modernisasi dan Pembaharuan; Analisis Epistemologi Ilmu Islam Klasik dan Kontemporer” *Palapa: Jurnal Studi Keislaman dan Ilmu Pendidikan*, Vol.11, No. 4 (2023): 631.

¹⁹ Nazar Naamy, “Modernisasi Dan Pembaharuan; Analisis Epistemologi Ilmu Islam Klasik dan Kontemporer”, 631.

²⁰ Muhamad Ibnu Malik et al., “Evolusi Epistemologi Ilmu dari Yunani Hingga Posmodernisme dan Implikasinya Terhadap Paradigma Pendidikan Kontemporer”, *Mendidik: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan dan Pengajaran* 12, no. 1 (2026): 44–45.

²¹ Kevin C Elliott, *Values in Science*, ed. first published (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022)1-2.

is never entirely free from epistemological assumptions, social interests, and specific value orientations that help shape the process of knowledge production. Therefore, the neglect of values in an epistemology that touches on how science understands reality and establishes truth is evident. This is reflected in the tendency of modern science to prioritize productivity, technical efficiency, and pragmatic utility over efforts to reflect on the meaning and purpose of knowledge itself.²²

This epistemological reduction not only affects the way science understands reality but also gives rise to a crisis of meaning in modern civilization. When reality is limited to only those aspects that can be empirically observed and measured, the metaphysical, symbolic, and transcendent dimensions are excluded from the horizon of knowledge. Consequently, modern science tends to lose its ontological orientation and is no longer directed toward the search for the deepest meaning of reality, but is limited to instrumental functions and moral ethics. Knowledge is understood primarily as a means to master nature and improve technical efficiency, not as a path toward understanding the essence of human existence and the universe.

Modern epistemological exclusivism reveals its own internal limitations, even though it has succeeded in explaining natural phenomena empirically and producing significant technological advancements. This epistemology is unable to answer fundamental questions regarding the meaning, value, and purpose of human life. The ethical, metaphysical, and spiritual dimensions that are inherently embedded in human experience lie precisely beyond the scope of the modern epistemological framework. This situation raises the awareness that the claim of modern epistemology's universalism is problematic, as it is unable to explain reality in a complete and comprehensive manner. The exclusivism in modern epistemology lies in the privileging of reason and empirical experience as the sole legitimate sources of knowledge, while simultaneously rejecting the validity of revelation, intuition, and the spiritual dimension as sources of truth.²³ The fundamental flaws of modern epistemology include at least three points. *First*, epistemic reductionism that is, reducing reality solely to things that can be measured and verified empirically.²⁴ *Second*, desacralization. The discipline that separates knowledge from transcendent values and divine sources.²⁵ *Third*, the crisis of meaning. That is, the inability of modern epistemology to answer fundamental questions about the meaning, value, and purpose

²²Maharani dan Salahuddin Harahap, "Reduksi Nilai Dalam Epistemologi Ilmu Modern Sebagai Opsi Epistemik" *Jurnal Budi Pekerti Agama Islam*, Vol. 3, No. 6, November (2025): 376.

²³Clarisa Dwi Aprillia et al., "Epistemologi Islam dan Perbandingannya dengan Epistemologi Barat", 3–4.

²⁴Nurul Pratiwi and Mustari Mustafa, "Analisis Perspektif Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi Dan Seyyed Hossein Nasr Tentang Islam Dan Sains", 71.

²⁵Seyyed Hoessin Nasr, *Knowledge And The Sacred*, 16.

of human life.²⁶ This is because modern epistemology recognizes only truths that can be empirically and rationally proven as the sole source of truth.²⁷ Consequently, existential questions such as the meaning of death, the purpose of life, the nature of good and evil, and the problem of evil in human life lie beyond the scope of modern epistemology. As a result, despite rapid advances in science and technology, modern humans are experiencing a deepening spiritual void and a crisis of life's purpose.

Perennial Philosophy In The Thought Of Seyyed Hossein Nasr

Seyyed Hossein Nasr is one of the contemporary Muslim thinkers known as a leading representative of the perennialist school of philosophy within the Islamic tradition. He was born on April 7, 1933, in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. He is an Islamic intellectual and professor who has had a significant influence among Muslim students. Like Fazlur Rahman, Seyyed Hossein Nasr's thought is considered to offer a new perspective on intellectual development in modern civilization, both in the East and the West. Nasr is known for his ability to make profound observations on intellectual and spiritual dynamics, particularly drawing from his experience living in Western countries, which greatly shaped his way of thinking. Nasr's father, Seyyed Valilullah Nasr, was a renowned scholar in Iran who also served as a teacher and physician in the royal court during the Qajar Dynasty. The title "Seyyed" is an honorary noble title bestowed upon his family by King Shah Reza Pahlavi. Meanwhile, the name "Nasr" was given by the Persian king to Professor Nasr's grandfather. In addition to coming from a distinguished family, Nasr was also born into a Sufi family environment.²⁸

Nasr received a traditional education in Iran through both formal and informal channels. His informal education came primarily from his family, particularly his father. Nasr was introduced to philosophy and theology at an early age, as his father sought to provide an education that blended traditional and modern approaches; by the age of 10, Nasr was already familiar with Western philosophy.²⁹ The intellectual and spiritual legacy of perennial philosophy in the 20th century was greatly influenced by three key figures who served as interpreters and disseminators of classical ideas: René Guénon, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, and Frithjof Schuon. Unlike other perennialist philosophers, these three emphasized *sophia perennis* or *religio*

²⁶ Dwi Wahyuni et al., "Filsafat Perennial dan Dialog Agama: Studi Pemikiran Seyyed Hossein Nasr", 109.

²⁷ Syafruddin Muhtamar, "Dikotomi Moral dan Hukum Sebagai Problem Epistemologis dalam Konstitusi Modern," *Jurnal Filsafat* 30, no. 1 (2020): 146–47.

²⁸ J. Sambas, "Islamisasi Sains Menurut Sayyed Hossein Nasr," *Edukatif* VI, no. 2 (2020): 122-123.

²⁹ Nurul Pratiwi and Mustari Mustafa, "Analisis Perspektif Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi Dan Seyyed Hossein Nasr Tentang Islam Dan Sains", 71.

perennis the universal and eternal core of wisdom and spirituality that serves as the foundation for religious traditions.³⁰

Nasr began the process of re-educating himself in the *Isbraqi* (hikmah) philosophical tradition. In this process, he was greatly influenced by three key figures in Islamic philosophy and Sufism: Sayyid Muhammad Kazim Assar, who taught theoretical Sufism, Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, who guided him through various texts on Islamic philosophy, Sufism, and comparative philosophy including works from other traditions such as Taoism and Hinduism and Sayyid Abu'l-Hasan Qazwini, who introduced him to the philosophy of Mulla Sadra, particularly the work *Al-Asfar al-Arba'ah* (The Four Journeys). While in Iran, Nasr also forged close intellectual ties with Henri Corbin and collaborated on various studies of Islamic philosophy, as well as with Toshihiko Izutsu, who introduced him to Far Eastern philosophy and the beauty of Japanese culture.³¹

Among all the figures in perennial philosophy, Seyyed Hossein Nasr is a figure whose contributions are particularly well-known and influential; notably, Nasr serves as a spokesperson for the ideas of perennial philosophy, which have gained recognition in the United States and Europe. Furthermore, Nasr is a writer on perennial philosophy who is closely identified with the Islamic religious tradition and has received intensive and advanced academic training in the modern sciences. Directly, Nasr is able to scientifically examine the fallacies of science that are disconnected from metaphysical principles. It is through these methods that Nasr has brought perennialist ideas into the contemporary world.³²

Perennial philosophy is one of the approaches frequently used to understand religion in a modern context. Generally speaking, perennial philosophy is used to refer to themes that have remained relevant throughout the history of philosophy. Linguistically, "perennial" derives from the Latin word *perennis*, which was later adopted into English to mean "eternal" or "everlasting." Therefore, perennial philosophy can be understood through at least three approaches: epistemological, ontological, and psychological. From an epistemological perspective, perennial philosophy addresses the meaning, nature, and source of religious truth, as well as how that truth originates from God as the absolute, then manifests in human consciousness and is realized in various religious traditions throughout history. Meanwhile, from an ontological perspective, perennial philosophy explains that all entities in the universe share the same source: God as the true essence of existence. Everything that exists is fundamentally

³⁰ Dwi Wahyuni et al., "Filsafat Perennial dan Dialog Agama: Studi Pemikiran Seyyed Hossein Nasr" *Jurnal Al-Aqidab*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2017): 109.

³¹ Haifaa Jawad, "Seyyed Hossein Nasr and the Study of Religion in Contemporary Society," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 22, no. 2 (2005), 54.

³² Dwi Wahyuni et al., "Filsafat Perennial dan Dialog Agama : Studi Pemikiran Seyyed Hoessin Nasr, 109-110.

relative and is merely a creation, a reflection, or a trace of God, whose essence cannot be fully grasped by the human mind.³³

Humans can only comprehend the signs of His existence through His attributes and names, but cannot provide a truly perfect definition of God, for a definition essentially implies setting limits, whereas God is limitless.³⁴ This approach affirms the existence of a universal dimension in religion that transcends the boundaries of specific cultures or traditions. It also emphasizes the importance of interfaith harmony and an awareness of the reality of diversity. Within the framework of religious moderation, truth is not monopolized by a single group; rather, it is acknowledged that other groups also possess truth within their respective spheres of belief. This perspective stems from the assumption that every religion, by its very nature, contains teachings about truth and salvation.³⁵

Perennial philosophy in Nasr's thought refers to the recognition of a universal and eternal metaphysical truth, which constitutes the deepest core of all authentic religious traditions. According to a quote from Schuon, perennial philosophy offers a broad perspective on the Islamic tradition. In his view, the core of the Islamic tradition can actually be found in the essence of other traditions. Nasr also argues that the various spiritual and existential crises experienced by modern humans arise from humanity's rebellious attitude toward God specifically, when people prioritize their own existence over submission to God. As a result, modern humans drift away from the center of their existence and become increasingly trapped in the periphery of existence. Furthermore, their understanding of freedom as quantitative and horizontal actually causes them to become increasingly detached from transcendent values.³⁶

The central theme of Nasr's thought is that modernity causes people to lose sight of eternal essentials, as they become trapped in various pseudo-intellectual ideologies, such as modernism, secularism, rationalism, evolutionism, humanism, materialism, and imperialism. Nasr describes modernity as a wave sweeping across the Islamic world that has influenced the fields of economics, astronomy, and nearly every aspect of Muslim life. As a result, modern Muslims face chaos born of materialism and humanism, which form the main foundations of modernity. Over

³³ Oyondri, "Menangkap Makna Pendidikan Bagi Perennialisme," *Jurnal Madania* 4, no. 2 (2014): 222–223.

³⁴ Oyondri, "Menangkap Makna Pendidikan Bagi Perennialisme, 222–223.

³⁵ Theguh Saumantri, "Construction Of Religious Moderation In Seyyed Hoessin Nasr's Perennial Philosophy Perspective" *Kanz̄ Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism*, Vol. 9 (2023): 91.

³⁶ Fitri Siska Supriatna and Salman Husain, "Kontribusi Filsafat Perennial Sayyed Hossein Nasr Terhadap Sains Modern", *Prosiding Konferensi Integrasi Interkoneksi Islam Dan Sains*, Vol. 2 (2020): 178.

time, the steadfastness of faith has been increasingly eroded as modernity has become the dominant trend in daily life.³⁷

The philosophy of the perennial tradition developed by Seyyed Hossein Nasr emerged as a response to the profound crisis he observed in modern human life. According to him, modernity has created a civilization that actually shackles humanity within a value system that is spiritually barren. Therefore, the central idea in his thought focuses on efforts to liberate humanity from a culture and civilization built solely on rationalism and secularism. Nasr summarizes this thought within the framework of perennial philosophy, which is closely related to the Sufi tradition and traditional schools of thought. As a response to the spiritual problems of contemporary society, Nasr offers perennial philosophy as a relevant and profound approach. This philosophy is grounded in the belief that there is a universal and eternal truth within all the major religious traditions of the world. Although each religion has different forms, symbols, and teachings, at the deepest level they all stem from the same metaphysical reality, namely the One God. Thus, religious diversity does not negate the unity of the essence of truth, but rather demonstrates different expressions of a single divine source.³⁸

Nasr views this perennial philosophy as playing a role not only in fostering mutual respect among religions but also as a foundation for a deeper understanding of the spiritual essence of humanity. Nasr asserts that the search for true truth is not limited by space and time. Across different eras and cultures, humans share the same fundamental drive: to seek God and to grasp the deepest meaning of life and the universe. From this perspective, perennial philosophy offers a path to overcoming the crises of identity, loss of meaning, and spiritual emptiness frequently experienced by modern society, which tends toward materialism and secularism.³⁹

Perennial philosophy has a conceptual structure known as the philosophy of eternity; as Frithjof Schuon stated, perennial philosophy is a universal mystical knowledge that has always existed and will always exist. Perennial philosophy tends to be deeply influenced by spiritual nuances, due to the theme it addresses the wisdom of eternity which is meaningful only when discussed within a religious context. Adolf Huxley popularized the term perennial philosophy by writing a book titled *The Perennial Philosophy*, in which he states that perennial philosophy encompasses three core principles. *First*, a metaphysics that reveals the divine essence of reality

³⁷ Fitri Siska Supriatna and Salman Husain, "Kontribusi Filsafat Perennial Sayyed Hossein Nasr Terhadap Sains Modern", 178.

³⁸ Hayatun Thoyyibah, "Kritik Modernitas Dan Tawaran Filsafat Perennial Dalam Pemikiran Seyyed Hossein Nasr", *Turabian: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2025): 36.

³⁹ Hayatun Thoyyibah, "Kritik Modernitas Dan Tawaran Filsafat Perennial Dalam Pemikiran Seyyed Hossein Nasr", 36-37.

in all things. *Second*, a psychology that reveals the existence of something within the human soul. *Third*, an ethics that places humanity's ultimate purpose in transcendent knowledge. Regarding the explanation of perennial philosophy or eternal wisdom according to Huxley, these principles can be found within the legends and ancient myths that developed in primitive societies across the globe.⁴⁰

In the context of epistemology, perennial philosophy offers a perspective that is fundamentally different from modern epistemology. While modern epistemology recognizes only reason and empirical experience as the sole valid sources of knowledge, perennial philosophy holds that true knowledge can be obtained through three levels. First, sensory knowledge, which is knowledge obtained through direct observation and experience of physical reality. Second, rational knowledge, which is knowledge obtained through systematic and logical reasoning. Third, and highest, is intuitive-transcendental knowledge, or what Nasr calls *scientia sacra* sacred knowledge obtained through intellectual intuition illuminated by divine light.⁴¹ Thus, perennial philosophy does not reject modern science, but rather complements it with the spiritual and metaphysical dimensions that have long been neglected, thereby making human knowledge more complete, holistic, and meaningful.

Perennial Philosophy As a Critique of Modern Epistemological Exclusivism

Modern epistemology developed on the foundations of rationalism and empiricism, which regard discursive reason and empirical verification as the primary standards of truth. Knowledge itself is deemed valid to the extent that it can be tested through observation, experimentation, and logical analysis. Within this framework, the metaphysical and revelatory dimensions are no longer positioned as authoritative sources of knowledge but are narrowed down to the realm of subjectivity or personal belief. Consequently, the structure of modern knowledge tends to be exclusive because it limits the criteria of truth solely to what can be reached by empirical reason and sensory experience. This paradigm ultimately gives rise to a reductionist tendency in understanding reality, as the spiritual and transcendent dimensions no longer find a place within the structure of modern knowledge. Consequently, science develops in material and technological terms but often loses its ethical and sacred orientation in human life.⁴²

In Seyyed Hossein Nasr's view, this trend indicates a reduction in the meaning of knowledge within modern civilization. According to Nasr, modern knowledge is no longer

⁴⁰ M. Arfan Mu'ammam, "Perennialisme Pendidikan (Analisis Konsep Filsafat Perennial dan Aplikasinya dalam Pendidikan Islam)," *Nur El-Islam* 1, no. 2 (2014): 17.

⁴¹ Syarif Hidayatullah, "Konsep Ilmu Pengetahuan Syed Hussein Nasr: Suatu Telaah Relasi Sains Dan Agama," *Jurnal Filsafat* 28, no. 1 (2018), 125.

⁴² Seyyed Hoessin Nasr, *Knowledge And The Sacred*, 66.

understood as a means to attain ultimate truth, but merely as an instrument for mastering nature and fulfilling human material needs. Consequently, the spiritual and sacred dimensions that previously formed the core of religious intellectual traditions have begun to be marginalized from the structure of modern science. Nasr's critique of modern epistemology is fundamentally not directed at the development of science itself, but at the secularist paradigm that separates knowledge from metaphysical and transcendent values. Furthermore, perennial philosophy offers a critique of modern epistemological exclusivism by asserting that the sources of knowledge are not limited to empirical reason alone. From a perennial perspective, true knowledge can also be obtained through revelation, intellectual intuition, and human spiritual experience. Therefore, perennial philosophy seeks to restore the sacred dimension to modern intellectual life, which tends to be materialistic and reductionist. This view is significant because the crisis of modernity is not only related to technological progress but also to the loss of spiritual orientation in modern human life.

The epistemological crisis in the modern world is often linked to the direction of scientific development, which places greater emphasis on practical and material interests. Many argue that science advances without considering ethical aspects or transcendental dimensions. Science is then positioned as something that stands on its own, detached from religious values, and is considered morally neutral. Such views are seen as contributing to various problems in society, ranging from moral decline and social inequality to environmental degradation.⁴³

For Sayyed Hossein Nasr, the problem with modernity does not lie in the existence of the scientific method itself, but rather in its absolutist epistemological claims. When empirical rationality is positioned as the only path to truth, the structure of knowledge becomes reductive and partial. Nasr observes here that modernity has narrowed the horizon of reality to the material dimension alone, thereby excluding the transcendent and metaphysical dimensions from the epistemological horizon. This is what Nasr refers to as the process of the desacralization of knowledge the severing of the connection between science and the divine source upon which it is founded. Nasr maintains that one of the primary characteristics of modern thought is the loss of awareness of the sacred. According to him, modern humans are influenced by the rise of humanism and secularism, which focus solely on humanity. Consequently, the metaphysical aspect which addresses reality beyond the physical and empirical is now sidelined, even though reality is not limited to things that can be sensed or thought of rationally.⁴⁴

⁴³ Enden Siti Nur Fathonah et.al, "Epistemologi Islam dan Rekonstruksi Paradigma Ilmu di Era Modern" 10, *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2025): 275.

⁴⁴ Moh. Anas, "Kritik Hossein Nasr Atas Problem Sains Dan Modernitas", *Kalam: Jurnal Studi Agama dan Pemikiran Islam*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (2012): 34.

Modernity, which elevates empirical science to the sole authority of knowledge, ultimately gives rise to what Nasr calls *scientism* the belief that only the modern scientific method is capable of producing valid truth. Within this paradigm, reality is narrowly understood as limited to material aspects that can be measured and verified. Consequently, the spiritual, symbolic, and sacred dimensions of human life have gradually been marginalized from the structure of modern consciousness. Nature is no longer viewed as a manifestation of God's signs, but merely as a material object to be exploited for human benefit. According to Nasr, this perspective is the root cause of the ecological crisis, spiritual alienation, and the void of meaning in modern human life. Technological progress has indeed succeeded in providing material comfort, but at the same time, modern humans have lost the metaphysical orientation that previously formed the center of their spiritual and intellectual lives.

Furthermore, the dominance of modern epistemology has also given rise to a secularist mindset that separates science from ethical and transcendent values. Knowledge is thus understood as something neutral and value-free, so that moral considerations are no longer an inherent part of scientific development. In this context, Nasr argues that modernity has transformed the function of science from a means of understanding the nature of reality into an instrument of domination over nature. Consequently, scientific progress does not always align with the moral development of humanity. Phenomena such as environmental degradation, excessive exploitation of nature, and modern humanitarian crises demonstrate that scientific advancement without a spiritual foundation can, in fact, lead to the destruction of human life itself.

Nasr's critique of modernity essentially stems from the view that true knowledge cannot be separated from the sacred dimension. In the Islamic intellectual tradition, knowledge serves not only to understand empirical reality but also to lead humanity to the recognition of God as the source of all existence. Therefore, when modern epistemology severs the connection between science and metaphysics, knowledge loses its ontological and spiritual purpose. This is where the philosophy of the Hadith serves as a critique of the reductionism that separates reason, revelation, and intellectual intuition in comprehending reality in its entirety.

Through perennial philosophy, Nasr offers a hierarchical and integrative epistemological framework. Reason retains an important place, but it does not stand alone. Above discursive reason lies the intellect (*'aql*), which is capable of intuitively grasping universal truths, as well as revelation as the highest, transcendent source of knowledge. From this perspective, reality is not merely empirical but also metaphysical. Therefore, true knowledge must be able to encompass both dimensions in an integrated manner. The perennial philosophy's critique of the exclusivity

of modern epistemology centers on three main points: *First*, a critique of the absolutization of empirical reason as the sole standard of truth; *Second*, a critique of ontological reductionism that limits reality to the material dimension; and *Third*, a critique of the desacralization of science that separates knowledge from its transcendent source. Perennial philosophy’s critique arises because modern epistemology tends to limit the sources of knowledge solely to empirical reason, thereby neglecting its metaphysical and transcendent dimensions in understanding reality. The implication is that we must reconstruct our perspective on knowledge by integrating reason, metaphysical aspects, and revelation, so that knowledge is no longer partial but becomes more holistic and comprehensive.

Perennial philosophy does not reject science, but corrects its universal claims and re-situates it within a more comprehensive structure of knowledge. In this context, perennialism functions as an effort to reintegrate reason, metaphysical intellect, and revelation, so that knowledge is no longer fragmented but returns to its ontological unity. As a response to the exclusivism of modern epistemology, Nasr offers a solution that is reconstructive rather than destructive. He proposes the resacralization of knowledge by restoring the metaphysical foundation as the ontological basis of science. Within this framework, empirical rationality is still acknowledged, but it is situated within a broader hierarchy of knowledge that encompasses the rational intellect (*‘aql*) and revelation as the highest sources of truth. Through the concept of *scientia sacra*, which views these aspects of cosmic existence as reflections in various fields of manifestation of the highest hypostasis the absolute, the infinite, and the good that characterize reality itself.⁴⁵ Nasr seeks to restore the spiritual dimension to the way humans understand knowledge, so that knowledge is not fragmented and narrow, but rather reunites the human realm with the absolute.

Based on the above discussion, it is evident that Seyyed Hossein Nasr’s perennial philosophy differs fundamentally from modern epistemology, both in terms of the sources of knowledge, the way of understanding reality, and the very purpose of science itself. Modern epistemology tends to regard empirical reason as the sole standard of truth, whereas perennial philosophy holds that true knowledge must involve the integration of reason, the metaphysical intellect (*‘aql*), and revelation. This difference in paradigms is illustrated in the following table:

Modern Epistemology	Nasr’s Perennial Philosophy
- Empirical evidence as the primary source of knowledge	- Revelation, metaphysical intellect (<i>‘aql</i>) and reason as sources of knowledge
- Materialistic and positivistic in nature	- Metaphysical and spiritual in nature

⁴⁵ Seyyed Hoessin Nasr, *Knowledge And The Sacred* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 123.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Science is viewed as value free - Reality is limited to empirical aspects - Knowledge aims to master nature - Nature is viewed as a material object 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge imbued with sacred value - Reality is hierarchical and transcendent - Knowledge aims to understand the essence of existence - Nature is viewed as a manifestation of God's avatars.
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The table above shows that Nasr's perennial philosophy does not entirely reject rationality or modern science, but rather critiques the reductionist and secularist tendencies of modern epistemology. In modern epistemology, reality is understood primarily through empirical and materialistic approaches, thereby excluding the metaphysical dimension from the structure of knowledge. In contrast, perennial philosophy views reality as having a hierarchical dimension that encompasses not only the physical but also the spiritual and transcendent. Therefore, knowledge cannot be understood merely as the result of empirical observation, but also as a path to understanding the nature of existence and humanity's relationship with God.

Etymologically, *scientia sacra* means sacred knowledge, while *Al-Hikmah Al-Khalidah* means eternal wisdom. This concept refers to an understanding of universal truths that can be found in various traditions due to their perennial or eternal nature. This idea is often referred to as traditionalism, with a primary focus on tradition. However, the meaning of traditional according to Seyyed Hossein Nasr differs from the common understanding that merely views tradition as an ancestral heritage simply passed down from the past. In Nasr's view, the primary object in *scientia sacra* is *Dimul Haq*. This term is not interpreted as the formal religion known in Islamic sharia through the Qur'an, but rather as a deeper and more universal essence of religion. This concept is also related to the Sunnah in the sense of God's eternal decrees. Because it is continuously passed down from generation to generation, this tradition of wisdom is also understood as a spiritual lineage. This view aligns with the thought of Ibn Arabi, who believed that there are always saints who safeguard and inherit this treasury of sacred wisdom. It is these saints who are considered to hold the great secret known as *scientia sacra*.⁴⁶

The primary focus of *scientia sacra* is metaphysics, which in the Islamic tradition is known as *Al-Falsafah Al-Ula* or hikmah. This concept stems from perennial philosophy, which holds that there is a universal, transcendent knowledge that transcends the boundaries of religion and history. According to perennial philosophy, there is a single universal truth that is

⁴⁶ Agung Nurcholis dan Mamluatul Hasanah, "Gagasan Scientia Sacra Seyyed Hossein Nasr Dan Implikasinya Dalam Kebijakan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab," *International Conference on Islam, Law, and Society (INCOILS)* 1, no. 1 (2021): 87–88.

subsequently understood and interpreted differently according to time and place, giving rise to various forms of tradition and religious diversity. The mistake of modern society, according to Nasr, is the severing of the connection with the universal source of this knowledge. Nasr places *scientia sacra* above all other forms of knowledge. For him, knowledge of substance is the core of all knowledge, while knowledge of origins and sources is the source of all sciences. *Scientia sacra* is obtained through direct experience and contemplation, not merely through rational speculation, so that its truth can be known with certainty. In Islamic epistemology, this level of knowledge is equivalent to *haqq al-yaqin*, which is knowledge that reaches the highest level of certainty. The sources of *scientia sacra* include revelation, intellectual intuition, and reason. This knowledge is primarily obtained through intellectual intuition that resides in the human heart and is under God's guidance. Meanwhile, reason functions only as a supporting tool, not as the primary source of knowledge.⁴⁷

Nasr chose the concept of *scientia sacra* as a solution because it directly addresses the root of the problem of modern epistemological exclusivism, namely the separation of science from the sacred dimension and transcendent values. Unlike other concepts that merely reform the scientific method, *scientia sacra* touches upon the ontological foundations of science itself by returning the source of knowledge to the absolute divine reality. Nasr offers the concept of *scientia sacra* as a solution to modern epistemological exclusivism. From an epistemological perspective, *scientia sacra* is knowledge obtained through a deep understanding of religious teachings. Knowledge of the universe can, in fact, be obtained not only through modern science but also through a deep understanding of religious teachings that reveal the true nature of the universe and all its contents.⁴⁸ From an axiological perspective, *scientia sacra* is knowledge that holds great value and significance for human survival, as it helps people understand the meaning of what occurs in the universe, thereby enabling them to experience true blessings and the continuity of life.⁴⁹

Based on the above discussion, it is evident that the concept of *scientia sacra*, as proposed by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, differs fundamentally from modern epistemology whether in terms of the sources of knowledge, the methods of understanding reality, or the very purpose of science itself. Modern epistemology tends to place empirical reason as the primary standard of truth validity, whereas *scientia sacra* holds that true knowledge cannot be separated from the

⁴⁷ Agung Nurcholis dan Mamluatul Hasanah, "Gagasan *Scientia Sacra* Seyyed Hossein Nasr Dan Implikasinya Dalam Kebijakan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab, 87–88.

⁴⁸ Zein Muchamad Masykur, dkk., "Scientia Sacra Seyyed Hossein Nasr Perspektif Filsafat Lingkungan dan Kontribusinya Pada Pengembangan Kajian Ekologis, 172.

⁴⁹ Zein Muchamad Masykur, dkk., "Scientia Sacra Seyyed Hossein Nasr Perspektif Filsafat Lingkungan dan Kontribusinya Pada Pengembangan Kajian Ekologis, 173.

spiritual and metaphysical dimensions. This difference in paradigms can be seen in the following table:

Aspect	Modern Epistemology	<i>Scientia Sacra</i>
- Sources of knowledge	- Rational and empirical	- Revelation, metaphysical intellect (<i>'aql</i>), intellectual intuition, and reason
- The nature of reality	- Material and empirical	- Imbued with sacred values
- Views on science	- Science is value-free	- Understanding the nature of existence
- The purpose of knowledge	- Mastering nature - Material objects	- Manifestations of God's verses
- Views on nature		

The table shows that the fundamental difference between modern epistemology and the concept of *scientia sacra* lies in how the sources and purposes of knowledge are understood. Modern epistemology tends to limit knowledge to purely rational and empirical aspects, thereby marginalizing the metaphysical and spiritual dimensions from the epistemological framework. Meanwhile, the concept of *scientia sacra* proposed by Seyyed Hossein Nasr holds that true knowledge must be connected to sacred values, revelation, and transcendent reality. Thus, the concept of *scientia sacra* serves as a critique of modern epistemological reductionism while simultaneously representing an effort to restore the unity between science, spirituality, and the essence of human existence.

Conclusion

Modern epistemological exclusivism is rooted in the absolutization of empirical rationality as the sole standard of truth. This paradigm, while yielding significant advancements in science and technology, tends epistemologically to limit the horizon of knowledge solely to dimensions that are empirically and logically verifiable. Consequently, the metaphysical and revelatory dimensions are sidelined from the modern epistemic structure, leading to a process of desacralization and ontological reduction of knowledge. In this context, the thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr emerges as a corrective critique of this exclusivism. Nasr does not reject science or modern rationality, but he criticizes their universal claims that negate other sources of knowledge beyond empirical reason.

Through the concept of *scientia sacra* as explained in *Knowledge and the Sacred*, Nasr offers a hierarchical and integrative epistemological structure, in which reason is situated within a broader order that encompasses the metaphysical intellect (*‘aql*) and revelation as the highest sources of truth. The solution offered is the reintegration of reason, metaphysics, and revelation into a single, unified ontological whole. Within this framework, perennial philosophy demonstrates that the crisis of modernity is fundamentally an epistemological crisis requiring the restoration of the sacred dimension within the structure of human knowledge. The epistemological exclusivism of modernity, which prioritizes empirical rationality as the sole standard of truth, has limited the scope of human knowledge. Although this paradigm has succeeded in driving significant progress in the fields of science and technology, it tends to neglect the metaphysical and revelatory dimensions, causing knowledge to lose its spiritual depth of meaning and leading to a narrowing of our understanding of reality.

In this context, Seyyed Hossein Nasr's thought serves as both a critique of and a proposed solution to the exclusivist tendencies of modern epistemology. Through the concept of *scientia sacra*, Nasr proposes an integrative and hierarchical framework of knowledge, in which reason is not rejected but is placed proportionally alongside metaphysical intellect and revelation as sources of higher truth. Thus, knowledge is understood not only as the result of empirical observation but also as a means to comprehend reality in a more holistic and meaningful way. The implications of this thought highlight the importance of restoring the sacred dimension within the structure of human knowledge, particularly in Islamic studies. An approach that relies solely on empirical reason must be complemented by an awareness of the role of revelation and the metaphysical dimension so that knowledge does not become narrow and reductive. Thus, the reintegration of reason, metaphysics, and revelation becomes a crucial step in constructing a more balanced epistemological paradigm. Consequently, Nasr's thought is not only relevant as a critique of modernity but also as a foundation for developing knowledge that is not only intellectually advanced but also possesses spiritual depth..

Further research is recommended to examine Seyyed Hossein Nasr's thought in greater depth, particularly regarding the application of the concept of *scientia sacra* in the context of contemporary scholarship. Additionally, comparative studies with other thinkers are also important to assess the position and uniqueness of Nasr's ideas within the discourse of modern Islamic epistemology. Future research could also focus on practical applications, such as the integration of reason, metaphysics, and revelation in educational practice or exegetical studies, ensuring that the concepts proposed are not merely theoretical but also practically relevant..

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