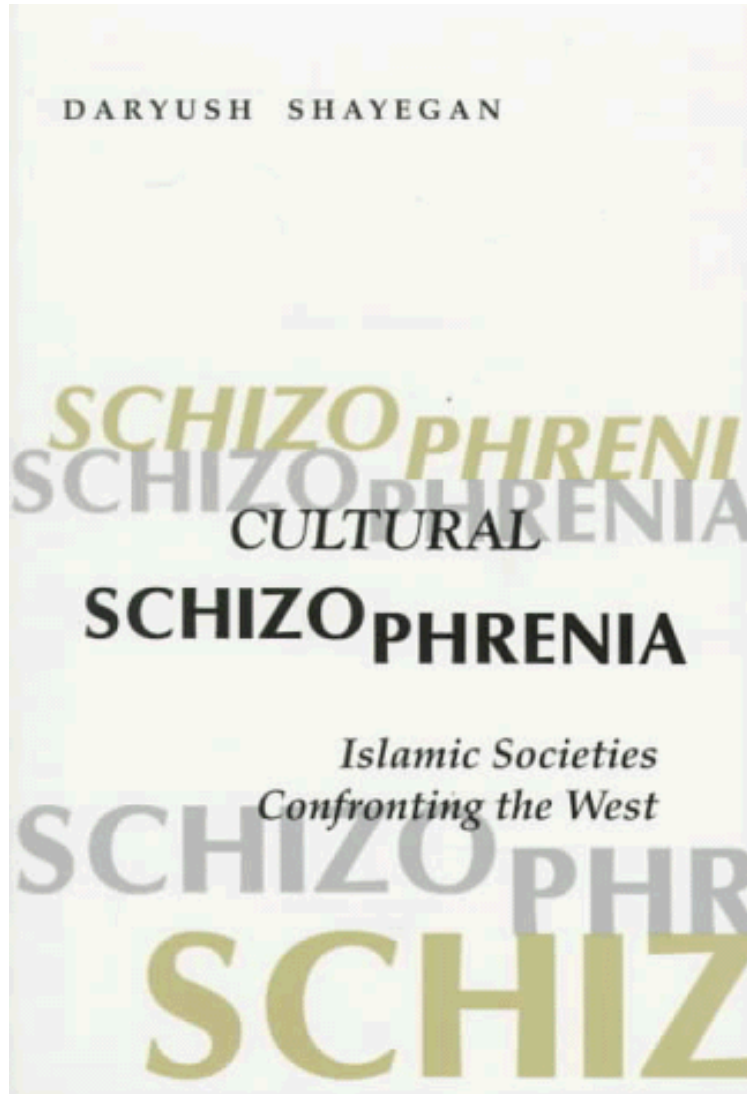


[Download pdf] Cultural Schizophrenia: Islamic Societies Confronting the West

## Cultural Schizophrenia: Islamic Societies Confronting the West

*Daryush Shayegan*

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**Daryush Shayegan : Cultural Schizophrenia: Islamic Societies Confronting the West** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cultural Schizophrenia: Islamic Societies Confronting the West:

2 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Islamist schizophrenia By William Garrison Jr. "Cultural Schizophrenia" Islamic Societies Confronting the West" by Daryush Shayegan (translated from the French by John Howe) [1997]. Former professor of comparative philosophy and Indology at Tehran Univ., former director of the Institute for Ismai'li Studies in Paris. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Prof. Islamic Studies, George Washington Univ.): "He

brilliantly sheds new light on a number of issues that have been superficially glossed over in much of the current literature."Given the title of the book, I thought that the book would discuss, well, you know, schizophrenia. I don't recall seeing the word appearing after the third page. I thought that the author would analyze the works of Psychologist A and compare thoughts with those of Psychologist B, C, D... at least. But, NO.The author provides a couple of paragraphs of thoughts from about 50 or so philosophers, and other thinkers. You know, the usual: Jung, Kant, Nietzsche, Horkheimer, strong on Michel Foucault, a German or two, a Frenchman, some Brits, Chinese, Hindu, even someone from Peru (or was it Paraguay?).The author banters about concepts like the "Hemiplegic Outlook" and "Egocentric consciousness" in trying to bring together some joint-philosophy of modernism, which is alien to the stuck-in-the-mud Islamists. The author wrote: "Other thinkers, such as the Egyptian Abduh, the Syrian al-Kawakibi and the Indian Muhammad Iqbal (1876-1938), explored the themes of backwardness (ta'akhur) and inertia (jumud), opposing them with the ideas of evolution (tatawwur) and progress (taraqqi) acquired from the West. The idea of innovation (bid'a), condemned by Islam as 'the worst of things', was re-evaluated; there was even talk of reopening the long-closed door of ijihad (individual power of decision) [p. 52].The author concluded: "The [Iranian] mullahs are putting their most unhinged fantasies into effect, giving free rein to their unbridled imagination, whipping the cult of martyrdom from frenzy to paroxysm, reducing timeless myths to their most flatly operational allude: and they are innovating in all directions. They have given concrete form to hallucinatory possibilities that once seethed harmlessly in the formless magma of our collective unconscious" [p. 174].I believe the author could have condensed this 188-page book down to about 30 pages of relevancy. Not amongst the first books that I would grab to investigate the concept of Islamist schizophrenia.

Professor Daryush Shayegan's book is a major contribution to what is perhaps the most critical debate within the Muslim world today: the relationship between its own culture and the influence of Western modernity. Based on examples ranging from Iran to Morocco, the author portrays a society he defines as peripheral - bound by a slavish adherence to its own glorified history, its "Tradition" - yet facing an external reality that derives from the West. The meeting of these two incompatible worlds leads to a profound distortion not only in how the Muslim world sees the West but, more importantly, in how it sees itself. Shayegan draws on a vast range of cultural experiences (from China and Japan to India and Latin America) in analyzing the type of mentality that is chained to its history. Sources as diverse as Jung and Octavio Paz widen the scope of this illuminating text.

'The book sparkles with interesting ideas.' --Middle East International 'The work impresses on two levels: style and substance. Shayegan's vision is a persuasive one.' --International Affairs ' . . . an intelligence and a clarity that are utterly convincing.' --Le Nouvel Observateur 'This scholarly but accessible study is an analysis-from-within of the tearing apart of a whole people . . . rigorous and courageous.' --L'Express