Rethinking Reform in Higher Education

From Islamization to Integration of Knowledge

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ZIAUDDIN SARDAR & JEREMY HENZELL-THOMAS

IIIT Books-In-Brief Series

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Abridged by C Scott Jordan

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The IIIT Books-in-Brief Series is a valuable collection of the Institute's key publications written in condensed form designed to give readers a core understanding of the main contents of the original. Produced in a short, easy to read, time-saving format, these companion synopses offer a close, carefully written overview of the larger publication and it is hoped will stimulate readers into further exploration of the original.

Rethinking Reform in Higher Education is in sum a paradigm shift in perspective driven by important considerations including the aims of education itself. It may require reforming existing disciplines, innovating new ones, as well as working in conjunction with current knowledge(s) and discourses by taking effective account of the ethical, spiritual norms of Muslim society, the guiding principles that it operates under, which in turn mark the underlying basis of its makeup and spiritual identity. Rather than creating divisions, reform of Higher Education in Muslim Societies recognizes the plurality and diversity of the modern networked world, and seeks to replace sterile and uniform approaches to knowledge with a broader and more creative understanding of reality as lived on different soils and different cultures. Moderation, balance and effective communication are paramount features of the underlying philosophy.

Introduction to the Original Book

Muslim societies are experiencing a crisis of education at all levels. A plethora of recent studies has highlighted just how ruinous the situation has become. The 2003 Arab Human Development Report pointed out that the 'knowledge deficit' in Arab societies was 'grave' and 'deeply rooted;' a similar inference could be made about other Muslim nations. More recently, a number of research papers and other publications have reported similar findings.

Early in the 1980s, IIIT stated in its *Work Plan* that the 'centuries of decline have caused illiteracy, ignorance and superstition to spread among Muslims' and 'these evils have caused the average Muslim to withdraw into the bliss of blind faith, to lean toward literalism and dogmatism.' The Institute identified 'intellectual and methodological decline' as the core cause of this malaise, and we could go further in seeing it as a failure of both mind and heart.

Over the last few years, the IIIT has held a number of meetings to discuss the state of education in Muslim societies and to chart a viable way forward. Following this a Two-Day Symposium on Reform of Higher Education in Muslim Societies was held on 9th-10th December 2013 jointly with the Wilson Center.

Further intensive deliberations took place at IIIT meetings in the UK and led to a number of conclusions. It was noted that the social sciences in general have come under severe criticism for fragmenting reality as though the political, social, economic and psychological human being were a different species to be studied in compartmentalized fashion. It was also realized that the crisis of education, including Higher Education, is not limited to Muslim societies. Higher Education in the West is also facing a predicament – although the crisis here is of a

different nature. The former Dean of Harvard College, Harry R. Lewis, has dealt with this in his book *Excellence Without a Soul: Does Liberal Education Have a Future?* Many other concerns have been raised in books and papers.

Another conclusion was that the overall problems of Higher Education are epistemological and ethical in nature. The way forward requires us to meet those challenges through the integration of knowledge – which necessitates rethinking disciplinary identities and a new mode of thought that would integrate Revealed knowledge with human efforts in knowledge production. In other words, we need a new paradigm rooted in the Qur'anic worldview and an epistemology based on the doctrine of *tawhid* (the Oneness of God) and on responsibility to God, one's own soul, humankind, all created beings, and the natural world. This paradigm accords importance to Revealed and human knowledge, and recognizes the diversity and plurality of our societies, as well as the accelerating pace of new technologies and innovations that are transforming the world.

Following the intensive UK meetings Professor Abdelwahab El-Affendi was requested to write a concept paper on Education Reform. The paper he produced was commented on by Dr. Jeremy Henzell-Thomas. Both papers were then synthesized and developed in a paper entitled "From Islamization to Integration of Knowledge: Rethinking Reform in Higher Education" by Professor Ziauddin Sardar. The resulting paper was circulated for discussion at the conference on Reform of Education in Muslim Societies organized in Turkey by IIIT jointly with the Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University, and MAHYA, on 18th-19th March 2016. The discussion paper is included in this publication, in addition to three other papers. This volume represents the first publication of the IIIT Reform of Higher Education in Muslim Societies Project (RHEMS), and is being jointly published with The Center for Postnormal Policy and Futures Studies.

The Reform of Education in Muslim Societies conference held in Istanbul was structured around four major themes:

- The Nature and Characteristics of Islamic Legacy and Ethics of Islam in Education
- Issues in Integration of Knowledge and Legacy of IIIT
- Issues and Currents in the Dominant Paradigms of Education
- The Future of Education in a Globalized World

Following the conference a number of roundtable meetings were convened in Istanbul, Konya, Washington, London, Brussels, Cape Town and elsewhere. The purpose was to initiate further in-depth discussion on a number of key issues, share recommendations as well as examples of good initiatives and practices, and ultimately chart an effective way forward. One-to-one discussions were also convened with university rectors, faculty deans and members in different countries. In addition to the current abridged edition, as well as the original unabridged edition, we are producing a publication entitled *The Postnormal Times Reader* aspects of which will focus on education, to be published in cooperation with The Centre for Postnormal Policy and Futures Studies.

This reform project is in sum a paradigm shift in perspective driven by important considerations including the aims of education itself. It may require reforming existing disciplines, inventing new ones, as well as working in conjunction with current knowledge(s) and discourses by taking effective account of the ethical, spiritual norms of Muslim society, the guiding principles that it operates under, which in turn mark the underlying basis of its makeup and spiritual identity. Rather than creating divisions, reform of Higher Education recognizes the plurality and diversity of the modern networked world, and seeks to replace sterile and uniform approaches to knowledge with a broader and more creative understanding of reality as lived on different soils and different cultures. Moderation, balance and effective communication are paramount features of the underlying philosophy.

We hope the ideas and thoughts offered in this volume will act as a catalyst to stimulate further debate and discussion on the issues explored. The aim is to generate refreshing, workable and practical proposals in all areas of Higher Education that could enrich and support the Reform of Higher Education in Muslim Societies Project. We invite researchers and experts to join this brainstorming exercise by submitting their ideas, critique and original contributions.

January 2018

Mapping the Terrain

By Ziauddin Sardar

Education is at a turning point; it has reached a moment where it is incapable of healing itself with its current conceptual, intellectual, moral and organizational capabilities. Education is in crisis. But a crisis does not emerge in isolation. It is a product of and connected to a host of other crises: *Crisis Economics*,[1] the crisis of social democracy,[2] *Crisis of Moral Authority*,[3] the environmental crisis, and the crisis of faith. To fully appreciate the dimension of the crisis in higher education, we need to see it as one particular node in a web of multiple, inter-connected, crises. All of which suggests that conventional ideas we have been relying on are broken.

Higher education is in crisis because the nation state itself is broken, promoting and protecting national culture is no longer important for many, and the economy of globalization means that the university is no longer called upon to train citizen subjects. As a result, universities are turning into corporations, and culture is being replaced with a discourse of excellence.

The underlying argument of most of the literature on the crisis of education is that, thanks to the rise of neoliberalism, universities have become big businesses. Leading universities of the world now behave as multinational corporations with global partners, joint ventures, and liaisons with the corporate and investment banking communities. They have been 'deconstructed' and now package their programs and modules to cater for a celebrity obsessed public.[4] The traditional role of universities of acquiring, transmitting and preserving knowledge has been eroded and replaced with the role of service providers catering to their clients and consumers.

Increased use of advancing technologies complements the corporatization of universities, as well as creating the illusion of progress. However, 'in a wired world, the cost per bit of information is getting cheaper, yet the cost per useful bit is become dearer.' An illiterate person with computer and coding skills is still illiterate. Students remain semi-literate even when they have acquired highly specialized technological skills and higher degrees. This assembly line of under educated, highly skilled, and highly credentialed graduates is expanding at an exponential rate; and setting off more and more complex chain reactions. Change is not just rapid but rapidly increasing. All of this leads to one, undeniable, conclusion: institutions of higher education are out of sync with the contemporary world and are now way past their 'sell by' dates. There is an urgent 'need to change the educational paradigm.'[5]

Rethinking Universities (or Not)

The crisis has not stopped the field of higher education from growing and expanding. This growth has been attributed to internationalization and globalization as two distinct trends with different consequences.[6] Internationalization has led to the growth of international cooperation, including student and staff mobility, cooperative research, and the diversification of curriculum. Globalization, a more complex and 'ideologically more suspect' process, imposes a neoliberal market framework and undermines the authority of the state over higher education. These trends led to cuts in government funding,[7] student numbers and fees have increased, curriculum changes have been forced and tenured faculty have been forced out,[8] while there is constant pressure to introduce more and more online and distant learning courses. This drive to expand and expedite the educational process aimed ultimately at monetary gain has left universities in a complex state of confusion.

This confusion is well illustrated by the EU's 'European Higher Education at the Crossroads' project. Most of the solutions offered for moving forward are standard and derivative, however, a couple of policy recommendations are somewhat original. First: a transformation from course structures to academic cultures, with emphasis on both skills and employability 'as a response to the challenges facing Europe within the global knowledge economy,' and social inequality in Europe. Second: an emphasis on foresight (also known as futures studies) as a consequence of the changing dynamic between Europe and the world, recognition of the economic interdependence and decisive political

action, and cultural perils of Eurocentrism.[9] However, despite an awareness of the changing landscape and concerns for social justice, universities are still reframed within the dominant (failing) economic paradigm.

The overall emphasis of the Crossroads project is not too far removed from what the World Bank and the IMF, both major investors in higher education in Muslim and developing countries, have been advocating. Thus, the accent has remained on monetarist economic model that underpins the philosophy and work of the World Bank and IMF. However, the IMF has acknowledged that the neoliberal agenda of the past thirty years has turned universities into supermarkets catering to venture capitalists who are interested in 'liberal studies majors, because the arcane art of his practice could be mastered in 30 days on the job' and the core of traditional education is 'being pushed progressively over the edge and off the table, like coins in a penny arcade game.'[10] The dominance of intuitions such as the World Bank means that higher education reform is often imposed from above rather than organically emerged from below.

One potential path out of this impasse is to move towards interdisciplinarity. America's Arizona State University (ASU) provides us with an example of how interdisciplinarity can be used both to redesign the curriculum and as a philosophy of the university. Facing steep budget cuts following the 2008 financial crisis, ASU initiated an aggressive plan to reimagine itself. It involved 'interdisciplinary reconfiguration' of the university and establishing a number of innovative multidisciplinary centres of excellence. A record number of joint-appointments in Art History, Computer Science and such emerging fields as social dynamics and complexity were made with a focus on sustainability. This has been achieved because ASU embraces its cultural, socioeconomic and physical setting; catalyses social change by being connected to social needs; uses its knowledge and encourages innovation; creates knowledge by transcending disciplines; connects with communities through mutually beneficial partnerships; engages with people locally, regionally, and internationally; commits to the success of each unique student; and hence its research has purpose and impact. ASU does still retain its dependence on corporate interests and the paradigm of neoliberalism,[11] but provides us with a stepping stone. To expand this model onto European universities, first we must address Europe's own identity crisis.

The main problem for the confusion surrounding European higher education and its reform is that we do not know what a university is for. The modern European universities developed in three different countries, with three different traditions, each with a different notion of what a university is for. The German tradition, developed by Wilhelm von Humboldt (1807), sees the university's purpose as the advancement of science and scholarship. Humboldt's model focusses on basic research; and the academics themselves govern the universities in collegial fashion. The French Napoleonic model (1806) sees the purpose of the university as providing knowledge and expertise needed by the nation. The main aim of the university is the training of the professionals who manage and run society and government. In the model of Cardinal John Newman (1852), the British tradition sees the university's purpose as to provide expertise and trained professionals to run both the nation and the Empire. The emphasis is on the development of character and competence of individual student and the governing structure is professional management of the university. These traditions 'have merged, creating tensions within European universities, and indeed all over the world where universities operate based on the European model.'[12] Accelerating technological change, growing global interconnections and complexity has transformed this lack of vision into an acute identity crisis.

We need to see and understand a university as 'a conversation, a place where people, who are trying to understand the world and their own existence within the context of a common pursuit for knowledge, come together to converse and exchange ideas.'[13] As a community actively engaged in conversation, a university need not be physically located in a particular place but can easily be globalized – not least with the help of modern communication technologies. Cooperation and collaboration flourishes in this international and cross-cultural conversation. The ethical mission of the university is thus to reflect continuously and systematically on our ideas and work for their advancement in a rapidly changing world.

Knowledge Societies and Knowledge Production
The inadequacy of conventional ways of knowing, and the university as a repository of knowledge, is increasingly being questioned by Generation Z, the tech savvy cohort growing up with digital technologies.[14] These Western ways of knowing are organized into disciplines and departments which have become increasingly irrelevant to the context of non-Western societies. Disciplines are like burgers and

coke: just because they are eaten and drank everywhere does not mean they are universal and were made in heaven. Disciplines 'do not exist out there in some "reality" but are socially constructed and develop and grow with specific world views and cultural milieux.'[15] The conventional knowledge production around disciplines has been changing for some time now and is being replaced by the emergence of a distributed knowledge production that tends to be interdisciplinary, diffused, complex, and often has high levels of uncertainty. The emerging realization is that higher education, learning and research must shift toward creating new knowledge that has relevance in a particular context, to a particular community, in a particular situation.[16] The mission of the universities must change 'from gatekeepers of knowledge to curators, creators, connectors, certifiers and codifiers of knowledge.'[17]

One particular approach to new knowledge is the 'extended peer community' framework, which includes not just academics and experts but also critics, activists, and lay persons. Different parties bring their own 'extended facts' – that may include local knowledge, indigenous knowledge, leaked documents, and other material not on the radar of the experts; the end product is a polylogue that leads to a 'democratization of expertise.' A polylogue involves multiple and often contradictory perspectives where positions and assumptions are challenged and interrogated from different viewpoints, and a synthesis emerges through contestation as well as appreciation of all outlooks. This gradually makes dents and cracks in the edifice of the dominant paradigms.

Paradigms: Old and Not Necessarily New

A change in paradigm ought to involve a change in the basic set of beliefs, metaphysics and worldview. New methodologies within the existing paradigms are not going to take us to a new paradigm. The discourse on new paradigms is thus caught in a bind; it seeks to create a new paradigm using methods based on the old paradigm, which does not permit jettisoning of the metaphysical structure that sustains it.

When an intellectual struggle occurs between different visions within a field which is losing legitimacy, internal and external doxa are imposed to provide much needed legitimacy. To challenge this kind of methodological doxa means confronting the long traditions in the field. Researchers cannot think outside of their methods because these methods define the reality they perceive. The nature of change itself is

daunting, perplexing and complex, and it is being driven by what appear to be uncontrollable capitalist and technological forces. Paradigm wars are just wars in disciplines. The old disciplines may fall and new ones rise, or morph in an interdisciplinary fashion, but the old paradigm remains. However, there is general consensus amongst the reform minded scholars that the journey towards new paradigms should take account of sustainability and transdisciplinarity, emerging complexity, and be firmly focused towards the future.

Sustainability and Sustainable Futures
The advent of sustainability sent shockwaves throughout almost all educational disciplines and academic fields; and sustainability, often used synonymously with 'sustainable development' has now become a 'normal' discourse. The Brundtland Commission Report defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'[18] Sustainability itself is not a new paradigm.

Sustainable development has been criticized for being subservient to capitalism, which has led to the emergence of the new discourse of 'sustainable futures.'[19] As the name suggests, it is more future oriented, but it is also more grounded in ecology and ethics, and more focussed on producing pragmatic pedagogic methods.

There is a great deal of emphasis on how ethics can be incorporated within university courses, how priority can be given to diversity and cultural concerns, and how a critical questioning attitude can be inculcated in students and professors alike. Students have to be ushered away from the doctrinaire aspects of higher education. A sustainable-democratic curriculum is based on ethos, consciousness, discomfort and conversation and co-learning of students and professors in cooperation, collaboration and competition.[20]

This is done by highlighting the importance of systems thinking – the process of understanding how a set of interconnected or interdependent components, influence one another – 'collaborative academic work' and 'the skills of community participation and community-making' for students. The importance of visioning – a planning process that centres on defining the parameters of one's preferred future – must be emphasized.[21] Rather than devising a step-by-step plan, visioning acts as a tool for navigation and offers guideposts to keep one moving in preferred directions. The overall emphasis in sustainable futures,

however, is not on breaking disciplines but working within inter- and transdisciplinary frameworks.

Transdisciplinarity: Shaping New Paradigms

Different types of disciplinarities are illustrated in the diagram below. Intradisciplinary research is simply working within a single discipline; crossdisciplinary inquiry views one discipline from the perspective of another; multidisciplinary research has 'people from different disciplines working together; interdisciplinary methods aims at 'integrating knowledge and methods from different disciplines, using a synthesis of approaches;' 'creating a unity of intellectual frameworks beyond the disciplinary perspectives.'[22]

Intradisciplinary ▶ Multidisciplinary ▶ Crossdisciplinary ▶ Interdisciplinary ▶ Transdisciplinary
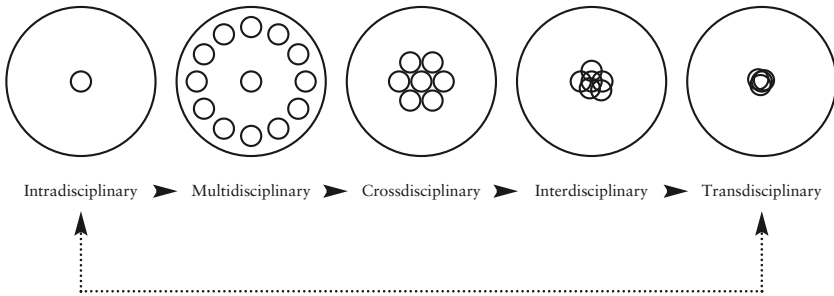
Transdisciplinarity, seen as a method rather than paradigm is widely regarded as a strength, if only to keep it from being reified and consumed by existing modes of inquiry within higher education. Maintaining a recalcitrant ambiguity – one that offers a cogent challenge to business-as-usual academics – transdisciplinarity is essential for navigating complex systems.

Complexity and Complex Systems

To begin with we ought to differentiate between what is complicated and what is complex. A complicated system is like a knotted ball of wool: it may take time and considerable effort, but the knots can eventually be undone. Complex systems present us with a totally different phenomenon. A complex system is like an intricate and elaborate web in which everything is connected to everything else. It is impossible to detangle the web; the more you struggle the more entangled you become. The world itself is becoming more complex.[23]

Complexity is not just an important theory. It is the way our world is structured and now functions. In regard to knowledge and higher

education, complexity thrusts upon us certain insights that we cannot afford to ignore. Complexity tells us that: our world is globalized and interconnected; change can only be studied meaningfully in a trans-disciplinary framework; knowledge is generated within communities and is constantly expanding; education requires open-ended questions; learning is all about being a certain person; and reforms in higher education cannot be reduced to prescriptions, fixed plans and agendas.

Complexity, then, has the potential to open up new possibilities and take us towards a new paradigm – in the real sense of radically changing dominant sets of beliefs, conventional structures, and modes of knowing, being and doing. But the results cannot be known in advance. By definition, emergence cannot be predicted or predeter-mined. However, it could lead to new elements and insights and hence to unlimited possibilities. It is as much changing others and other things as changing our expectations and selves.

Future and the Question of Values

Futures studies implicitly works with multiple perspectives; its basic assumption is that there is not one but many futures. It incorporates both complexity and transdisciplinarity as its key pillars; and aims at pluralizing knowledge as well as the very means by which knowledge is produced. Futures studies cannot ignore the complexity of the world, or its continuing complexification that is always occurring. Futures cannot be managed or controlled by predications or strategic plans, but must remain open and subject to radical change.

'It is absolutely essential to determine first what the futures of society generally might be before deciding what the futures of education should be.' In relation to society, there are two factors to consider: what the futures of society *might* be given the current trends; and what the futures of society *ought* to be given our hopes and aspiration. The ought question is, of course, a question of values. We need to navigate away from might to ought; which means we need to have a good grasp of what values we want to project on, and a viable vision of the society we wish to create in the future.[24]

The knowledge produced by futures thinking is based not just on trends and issues in the external world, but also connected to culture, tradition, the world of human subjectivity, analysis of issues of power and agency, and essentially includes a system of values and meaning that goes beyond data and facts. Meaningful futures thinking and

research should aim to reconceptualize higher education as a human moral enterprise that promotes equality, diversity, and social justice.

A New Awareness

In the absence of new, clearly defined paradigm of higher education, a number of themes are clearly evident:

1. Higher Education is entangled in uncertainty, rapid technological change, and a crisis of aims, values, and epistemology.
2. Attempts to rethink universities do not amount to much.
3. Alternatively, we should think of universities as moral and intellectual entities independent of political and economic authority.
4. The modes of knowledge production are changing.
5. Our globalized world is becoming more interconnected and complex, to remain relevant, higher education needs a greater awareness of complex and unknowable possibilities.
6. No one discipline can resolve, let alone study, complex problems and issues.
7. Complex subjects require complex and collaborative approaches.
8. The world is becoming less and less sustainable; and education must embrace sustainability.
9. Futures Studies must be incorporated into higher education examining current knowledge as well as creatively navigating towards new and alternative ways of producing and transmitting knowledge.
10. Many of our assumptions about the aims of higher education, curriculum development, learning, knowledge production, the function of universities, employment opportunities for graduates, and career paths, though may not be necessarily wrong, have now become irrelevant.

We can contribute to the emergence of new paradigms as well as play an active part in shaping them. However, this cannot be achieved through a single megaproject. It requires a reiterative process that constantly adjusts to rapidly changing circumstances. The map is not the territory. There are innovative discourses, new transdisciplinary modes of inquiry, fresh understanding of how new knowledge is produced in a complex, uncertain, networked, globalized world, and not-so-emerging paradigms in a state of gestation. But the terrain of reform in higher education and shaping of new paradigms is wide open.

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From Islamization to Integration of Knowledge
By Ziauddin Sardar

It is through education that a nation, a society, or a civilization, consciously passes on the accumulated skills, knowledge and wisdom of the past to future generations. Education not only preserves the cultural identity and historical legacy of a society but ensures its survival as a distinct entity. A society without its own sophisticated education system, designed to preserve and transmit the values and cultural traits that ensure its survival, will either be colonized or lose the distinct elements of its worldview. Both the individual and society suffer from the absence of appropriate educational institutions. The individual is denied the social instrument through which a positive sense of religious values and cultural identity can be developed. The society is deprived of its human capital with the result that almost all spheres – from values and skills to governance, law, commerce, finance, industry and cultural production – go into irreparable decline.

Even if Muslim societies have values to share, without a thriving education system it 'does not have much knowledge to share.' This is 'the crisis' that has confronted Muslim societies since the seventeenth century onwards when 'almost all the knowledge Muslims possessed became worthless overnight in terms of worldly value.'[1] So we need to balance the other side of the equation: 'we need to admit that our spiritual values cannot survive without the power to protect our societies from subjugation.'

Revisiting Histories
Our concerns and criticism about knowledge and education are not too far removed from those that led Ismail Raji al Faruqi and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) to embark on the 'Islamization of Knowledge' project. Al Faruqi and his colleagues

understood that the modern education system, transferred and imposed wholesale from the West complete with its basic assumptions and dogmatic conceptions, was corrosive to the value system of Muslim societies. Westernized universities in Muslim countries tend to exemplify middle-class Western culture, and the norms and values that go with it. The education they provide either overlooks or undermines the spiritual development of the individual as well as emphasize the material aspect of education at all levels.

The most obvious thing that jumps out of the pages of Al Faruqi's *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (hitherto referred as *Work Plan*) is its pain and anger. There is an all too evident acute agony at the plight of the Muslims: 'the centuries of decline have caused illiteracy, ignorance and superstition to spread among Muslims.' The anger is largely directed towards the West: it has 'successfully fragmented the ummah;' imposed, both by force and persuasion, 'a secular system of education' that has undermined 'the very foundations of the faith and culture' of Muslim societies; and through 'a well-thought out and well-planned strategy' ensured that 'the Islamic components of the curriculum remain out of touch with reality and modernity.'

However, there is something that is explicitly stated: 'first principles of Islamic methodology.' I would suggest that it is not so much an overt methodology but the basic axioms of the worldview of Islam. Starting from the Unity of Allah, 'the first principle of Islam and of everything Islamic,' the *Work Plan* systematically leads us to the unity of creation (cosmic order, and the interconnection of everything), the unity of knowledge, unity of life (human existence is an *amanah* from God, and human beings are trustees, or *khalifah*, of the abode of our terrestrial journey), unity of humanity, and finally the complementary nature of revelation and reason. Collectively, these axioms offer us an excellent framework both for the pursuit of knowledge and for the reform of Muslim education.

The *Work Plan* proposes that we start by mastering contemporary disciplines of social sciences and the legacy of Islam and infuse the two. Muslim scholars must, it states, integrate the new (Western) 'knowledge into the corpus of the Islamic legacy by eliminating, amending, reinterpreting, and adapting its component as the worldview of Islam and its values dictate. This is where the *Work Plan* becomes problematic.

The *Work Plan* reveals a lack of awareness about how knowledge is produced in contemporary society, how disciplines have evolved and the functions they perform, and about the relationship between knowledge and worldview. One must also note the tendency amongst certain traditional and conservative Muslims to see Islamic history, particularly the formative phase of Islam, as offering neat and complete solutions to all our ills. Our historic legacy 'consists of contradictions and radical alternatives,' and deserves to be appreciated as 'a record of thinking about human experience' in a particular time and context.

Our future direction of travel thus involves basing our analysis on the first principle of the *Work Plan*, the creative use of our intellectual history, and a much more advanced understanding of how knowledge is produced, maintained and used in contemporary society.

The Fabric of Knowledge
Knowledge and worldview are intimately related. Knowledge is always embedded within the axioms and assumptions of the culture and worldview within which it is produced. The structure of 'modern knowledge,' and its divisions into various disciplines, is a direct product of the Western worldview. The idea that reality is compartmentalized is not based on some objective and universal axiom; rather, it is a construction designed according to how a particular culture sees 'reality' and how it seeks to understand, manage, control and subjugate all that is 'out there.' Disciplines developed and evolved to solve the particular physical, material, mental and intellectual problems of Western society and tradition. Whatever the discipline, the overall narrative was the same: to perpetuate the worldview of the West.

There are three other aspects of academic disciplines that we need to appreciate. First, they discipline, that is punish and correct knowledge. Second, they colonize the future. Third, they provide the West with its ultimate power, the power to define. The West defines what is freedom and progress; law, democracy, and human rights; what is real and what it means to be human. To reform education is to strike at the very pillars of power and definition in the contemporary world.

The task of reforming education in Muslim societies is thus much more profound then we have hitherto imagined. It has two basic components: to deconstruct the definitional power of the modern knowledge system and its Western worldview; and to produce alternative paradigms of knowledge formation, that take into account the Islamic

tradition and offer a more humane and value based appreciation of what constitutes learning and its advancement. The need for new paradigms is not simply a Muslim concern. Indeed, a growing number of scholars, West and East, are now questioning the dominant paradigms and calling for more humane paradigms. Changes in the contemporary context, and the accelerating pace of new technologies and innovations, have given urgency to these demands.

The Contemporary Context
Reform, by its very nature, is a future oriented exercise. But it begins in the present; without appreciating the context within which we live and operate meaningful reform is not possible. The old paradigm of America leading the world is being undermined as power shifts to China, India, Brazil and a re-emergent Russia. Serious cracks are beginning to emerge in academic disciplines themselves, for centuries a bastion of stability. So the crisis, in all its social, cultural and intellectual dimension, we face is not limited to Muslim societies. The West, indeed the globe, is also in a state of acute crisis.

Elsewhere, I have described the current turbulent and changing times – focused on complexity, contradictions and chaos (the 3Cs) – as 'postnormal times.' The function of the theory is to emphasize that normal paradigms that have so far guided the West and the rest are collapsing. Postnormal times approach underlines the interconnection of everything ('the unity of creation'), the multi-dimensional political, economic, ecological, social and cultural challenges confronting us all, East and West ('unity of humanity'); and the fact that we are all living interdependent lives on the earth ('unity of life'). So the first principles turn out to be essential both for navigating postnormal times and for the future survival of all humanity. Any attempt at knowledge production that begins with these axioms, even though they are rooted in Islamic thought and worldview, is intrinsically universal.

The Question of Language
Language is the basic tool through which we learn, teach, adapt to change and advance knowledge. It is an inseparable part of how we articulate our worldview, how we conceive ourselves as individuals and societies, and engage with the world to change it. Yet, language is full of ambiguity and a fertile ground for misinterpretation or misunderstanding. Language, like culture, has a history, layered like a vast archaeological site, the repository of acquired meaning. We thus need to be precise in our use of language.

Our first task in moving forward towards new paradigms is the development of 'a balance and nuanced terminology based on different levels of description,' which is 'a key means in itself of resolving facile dichotomies.' The terms we use come wrapped with their particular histories, have positive and negative connotations, and are thus problematic. The overall aim here is to guard against ideological constructions of Islam as well as absolute relativism promoted so eagerly in postmodernist thought – moving towards plurality. Many terms require this analysis to insure this goal.

In perceiving our context and developing our lingua franca of reform we need to also resolve the fundamental dichotomies which consistently and persistently confront us such as tradition and modernity, text and context, stability and dynamism. These contradictions have societies at an impasse. Contradictions, which often emerge in complex systems, are by definition opposing, irreconcilable views, which cannot be resolved: they can only be transcended.

Muslims often assume that they face unique contradictions and create research programmes and institutions that are exclusively suited for Muslims. This is a truncated approach to a complex, interconnected world. The contradictory problems of religion and secularism, as well as ethical and technological issues, that we witness in the West are also problems of Muslim societies. Thus, the major moral, ethical, political, social, scientific, technological and cultural challenges facing the world have to be an integral part of a programme of reform.

But to be truly inclusive we need to involve all potential stakeholders in our discussions. This means we have to consciously bring people of different backgrounds, ages, genders, sects, and perspectives into our meetings – and then provide them enough space to state their viewpoints. We must nurture the young through a direct understanding of their needs, anxieties and aspirations. The lack of such respect and engagement with young voices is surely one of the main reasons for many of the problems besetting Muslim societies. Instructing the global youth in this new language, contextualized and future oriented, will boost our efforts and the overall mission of developing a new paradigm for the Integration of Knowledge.

Moving Forward
Our goal is to create a new paradigm, based on the first principles, where knowledge, creation, life and humanity are perceived as integrated

within a universal framework. As such, we must realize that the way forward is a new mode of consciousness which is integrative and inclusive and involves embracing the Other. We aim to initiate a process that will usher a revival of thought and spirit of inquiry in Muslim societies, shifted away from a politics of identity towards aspirational values, encourage engagement with the contemporary world with all its complexity and contradictions, and create an informed citizenry fully equipped to take leadership roles in the modern world.

A more holistic picture emerges when we combine what we wish to achieve with what we need to achieve it. In essence, what we are saying is that the world is not just there to be talked about; it has to be brought into being. We are thus aiming to create a new set of discourses: a system of knowledge, new paradigms, concepts, terminology, canons, statements that have meaning for us, through which we deconstruct power and ideologies and engage and change the world.

I propose we start with a network of discourse community which we build from the ground upwards. As the network – the community – come together and develops, it will produce new knowledge, and the new knowledge will feed into the discourse and propel it. First, we need to begin with values, which mean we have to 're-open the questions raised first in theology (*kalam*) in reaction to the challenge of rationalism in the history of Islamic thought.' Second, we need to deconstruct the definitional power of the modern knowledge system and examine the current paradigm of knowledge and education in Muslim societies with the aim of producing alternative paradigms of knowledge formation. The goal is to produce alternatives that are more inclusive and humane but also rooted in both the intellectual history and tradition of Islam. Third, we need to see our heritage in all its sophisticated diversity. We need to see the Muslim civilization as a human civilization. We need a group of scholars, including of Islam and Islamic history but also historians and philosophers of science and technology, artists and novelists as well as literary critics and art historians, to produce a more coherent and integrated picture of our legacy as human achievements. Fourth, we need a group of sociologists, critics and futurists to work on contemporary trends – how they are affecting Muslim societies, changing social, economic and cultural behaviour, and creating desires and aspirations – and explore their impact on future generations of Muslims. Meaningful work of reform can only be done with an eye to the future.

Notes

1 Quotations from Abdelwahab El-Affendi, Abdulkader Tayob, Abdulaziz Sachedina and Anwar Ibrahim are taken from their contributions to 8 October 2014 IIIT meetings on 'Reform in Higher Education:' Abdelwahab El-Affendi, 'The Reconfiguration of Muslim Higher Education: Some Points for Reflection;' Abdulkader Tayob, 'Identity and Islamic Educational Reform,' Abdulaziz Sachedina, 'Reform of Education in the Muslim World;' and Anwar Ibrahim, 'Reflections on Abdelwahab El-Affendi's "The Reconfiguration of Muslim Higher Education: Some Points for Reflection" and Jeremy Henzell-Thomas's Comments.' Citations from Jeremy Henzell-Thomas are from his extensive email comments.

The Integration We Seek

By Jeremy Henzell-Thomas

The natural tendency in Western culture is to warn, help, teach, instruct and improve instead of allowing learning from experience. Perhaps the modern world needs more of the skills so prized by the Native American – running, living in the woods, and survival. These along with such skills as counselling were needed for the preservation of their culture and also of high demand to the contemporary world, so fraught with mental health problems.[1] A balance of these styles can provide us with a view of the new vista that I desire.

The concepts which guide us towards this new vista of integrated knowledge need to be both a broad panoramic vision, seeing on all sides and far into the distance, and a depth of field which gives us sharp focus when we need it. To do so, we need, above all, to understand that there are different though complementary levels of description in a multi-layered and multi-faceted reality where the diversity of forms is infinite and ever-changing, but which, nevertheless, has an origin and a centre, an immutable essence which is the source of everything and where all diversity and multiplicity find ultimate unity and reconciliation.

To encompass this unity in diversity within the field of education, we need to critically examine the massive impediment caused by the human tendency to divide reality into competing, mutually exclusive ideas, approaches, and paradigms of thought which generate and sustain adversarial positions.

I suggest that binary thinking and dichotomization are embedded in us as one of the chief features of the simple 'narrative' which gives us the means to judge and act quickly and decisively. 'Us' and 'them' is a powerful call to incite action, judgement, and hostility. By contrast,

the armchair philosopher who scrutinizes the logical minutiae of every proposition and agonizes over every minor dissonance and nuance may never get out of his chair. This paralysis of indecision is of course the extreme of one end of the spectrum, just as the conditioned reflex of the instant opinion or ingrained prejudice lies at the other extreme, reflecting as it does our propensity for the 'narrative fallacy,' the simple story that makes comforting sense of an increasingly complex world. We are vulnerable to rapid thinking, and the dichotomization which is so often a key feature of such thinking can so easily tend to the norm and become habitual and mainstream.

A brief reflection on some of the terms inherent to our narrative can equip our minds for the task of balancing concepts and of navigating towards an integrated knowledge. Dichotomization and dialectic, for instance stand on different ends of the continuum of the great discussion before us. On one end, dichotomy creates opposition and alienation, and on the other dialectic brings the two distinctions together advancing the debate within logical and openly relational parameters. A synthesizing polylogue ideally can result. Cultural relativism can also be seen in this continuum. Instead of solely being the buzz word of moral laxity, it can also gradate from an 'anything goes' mentality to the more positive ability to form 'relationship.' The placing of such diametrically opposed definitions in this continuum allows for a polylogue to occur recognizing all viewpoints on various issues, including but not limited to multiculturalism and the troublesome term modernity.

It is precisely by recognizing and understanding the condition of the world at this particular time that we can meet the challenge of religious and cultural pluralism. To understand that human minds are conditioned differently in each age, and that tradition must be dynamically self-renewing and responsive to new conditions and new questions if it is to remain a living tradition. In other words, time, place and people cannot be ignored in the development of human understanding.

The Circumference of Integration
To advance the development of human understanding clear distinctions in the use of terminology is needed. I introduced the phrase 'integral perspective' in considering how we might transform apparent opposition into complementarity and I would like to take the term 'integral' (and its relations 'integration' and 'integrity') as the key pointers to the new vista we need to open up.

Jean Gebser believed that humanity is at the stage of transition from the 'Mental' to the 'Integral' structure of consciousness. He described the deficient form of the 'Mental' structure as the value-free ontology of rational materialism, but this structure could not be renewed through a return to 'values;' rather, a transition was needed to an 'Integral' mode of consciousness which was not fixated on dualistically opposed categories, one-sided perspectives, fixed frames, and competing paradigms.[2] Yet, the convergence between the dialectical process as an advanced mode of human thought and the idea of an emerging integral mode of consciousness is only partial. The question remains as to the way in which any putative emerging 'integral' mode of consciousness can carry further the degree of synthesis which can be attained through a methodology based largely on analytical tools.

Beyond Dichotomies

How can we expand our view beyond the dichotomy of seeing either 'Westernization' or 'Islamization' as a panacea? How can we go beyond the 'lame-duck' mentality which frames the answer only in terms of 'catching up' with Western models of knowledge production and all other factors which seem to ensure the dominance of Western universities? Ultimately, how can we create an educational culture for all humanity?

We need to have the humility to realize that we can indeed reclaim and revive forgotten or stagnant aspects of Islamic tradition through dynamic contact with other intellectual and pedagogic traditions which have partially carried the underlying Qur'anic spirit of inquiry into the modern age. But this 'reclamation' must be a truly creative process, and not the tedious harking back to the achievements of the golden age of Islamic civilization. It must examine how the values and principles which gave rise to such a civilization can be renewed, re-interpreted and applied in the contemporary world.

'We have made you into nations and tribes so that you may come to know one another,' says the Qur'an. And it is that saving grace of 'relationship' which is, for me, the heart of the matter. As we reach for an integral perspective, whether we conceive of it as an emerging consciousness, a shift to a new 'mental structure,' or simply as a new paradigm, we need to see that this requires the totality of human faculties, 'the hearing, sight and hearts.'

The Holistic University

How then can we extend the function of a university as a 'critical institution?' To include not just conventional analytical tools of rationality or 'critical thinking' but capacities and virtues such as intellectual insight, the imagination, inquisitiveness, risk-taking, social responsibility and the struggle for justice as well as the liberation of the human mind and spirit, the search for deeper meaning and purpose, and a vision of what it means to be a human being. Let us add creativity, independent thinking, and that expansiveness and receptivity of the open heart and mind which can listen as well as talk and reaches out to the 'other' not only through dialogue and discussion, but also through transforming love.

I deliberately include the 'heart and mind' in my approach to the extended range of faculties (and hence a truly integral perspective) because it is the composite organ of 'mind-heart' (*fu'ad*) which is indicated by those Qur'anic verses which exhort us to be grateful for the faculties with which we have been endowed. The intellectual and spiritual element of knowledge converges usefully with modern advances in the field of cognitive psychology which question the conventional reduction of human intelligence to a single unitary or a factor for 'general intelligence' and point instead to 'multiple intelligences.' The combination of knowledge and understanding, and of emotional, social and moral intelligence, is also traditionally suggested by the term 'wisdom' and is manifested in 'personal integrity, conscience and effective behaviour.'[3]

In reclaiming its higher purposes from corporatization or any other corruption in ideals, higher education might embrace some of those advanced critical faculties and socially responsible virtues. A good teacher should be not only be a *mu'allim*, a transmitter of knowledge but also a *murabbi*, a nurturer of souls and developer of character.

But let us return to the vista we might hope to reach through educational reform founded on integration of knowledge, values, and the transforming power of relationship. Rumi's appreciation of both unity and multiplicity in the world, and his profound perception that 'the road to the self passes through the other,'[4] opens a path to modern educational reform which can transcend the attachment to distinction and difference. Attachment to dichotomization is only too evident in the dispositions of anti-Western 'rejectionism' and the 'bifurcation' which led to the disconnection between religious and secular education,

but it is also present in the 'Islamization' movement. Though ostensibly 'integrationist,' this 'takes one step in the direction of universality and unity' only to 'retreat as quickly with another step towards distinction and difference.' The approach of Islamization might be characterized as a false dawn which purports to lead to integration but which ultimately focuses only on the self and does not learn any of Rumi's lessons. Islamization's unintended cultivation of fear in the other has led to extreme global xenophobic expression.

Both these insights are immensely valuable, and one way to move towards a resolution of any seeming contradictions is to take 'radical' in its sense of relating to the 'root' or origin, and not in its later subsidiary sense as referring to political activism or innovative reform and change. It is only too evident how terminological entropy has further truncated the term in its sense of 'radicalization' applied to extremists. In the same way we might refer to the root of the word 'identity.' Its original sense is best preserved in its derivative 'identical' which reflects the meaning of Latin identitas, literally 'sameness,' derived from Latin idem, 'same.' There is a common 'identity' in all human beings residing in the essential nature with which we have been divinely endowed.

In all of these semantic excavations, we might discern a primordial language which articulates the fundamental unity and interconnection at the root of everything that exists. That 'radical unity' in its deepest sense must be at the heart of the radical educational reform needed in all societies. Rooted in living relationship between the 'self and the other,' our diverse identities, orientations and values find a common origin and centre which dissolves the rigid oppositions erected by dualism. Now, we 'move forward' with 'Integration of Knowledge' but also with that panoramic integral perspective which can only be encompassed by the totality of human faculties.

Notes

1   Peat, F. David. 1994. *Blackfoot Physics: A Journey into the Native American Worldview* (London: Fourth Estate), 57.

2   Jean Gebser's description of structural changes in human consciousness is set out in his *The Ever-Present Origin*, authorized translation by Noel Barstad with Algis Mickunas (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1985).

3   Crow, Karim Douglas. 1999. 'Between Wisdom and Reason: Aspects of 'Aql (Mind-Cognition) in Early Islam,' *Islamica*, 3:1.

4   For Jalaluddin Rumi's distinction between the two types of intelligence, see *Mathnawi* III, 2527-2528 and IV, 1960-1968. On 'd-mode' and 'practical intelligence,' see Guy Claxton, *Hare Brain Tortoise Mind: Why Intelligence Increases When you Think Less* (London: Fourth Estate, 1997).

Towards a Language of Integration
By Jeremy Henzell-Thomas

I am sure most of us know some version of the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel and even those of us who do not may be familiar with the metaphorical application of the word 'Babel' to denote a confused medley of sounds or the din of mutually incomprehensible speech. The Qur'an, however, does not support the idea that the diversity of languages and races is a punishment, a fall from monolithic identity and monolingual and monocultural purity and cohesion. On the contrary, it divinely ordains unity in diversity, not only in terms of culture, language and race, but also in religion.

Religious diversity is a normal human situation. It is the consequence of the diversity of human cultures, languages, races and different environments. 'Revelation is always an accommodation to the capacity of man. No two minds are alike, just as no two faces are alike. The voice of God reaches the spirit of man in a variety of ways, in a multiplicity of languages. One truth comes to expression in many ways of understanding.'[1] The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: 'The diversity of my people is a blessing.'

The Expanding Horizons of Human Knowledge

The golden opportunity for the advancement of knowledge and understanding bestowed by diversity is also implied in the symbolism of the Pen in the Qur'an. 'We are created with the capacity to be knowledgeable beings with the ability to learn. Learning and knowledge are by their very nature cumulative, so I take it as axiomatic that we have the potential as well as the responsibility to progress in understanding.'[2]

And this process of growing awareness is suggested in the Qur'anic

verse 'We will show them Our signs in the furthest horizons of the universe and within their own souls so that it will become clear to them that this revelation is indeed the Truth.' (41:53) This verse indicates 'a progressive deepening and widening of man's insight into the wonders of the universe as well as a deeper understanding of his own psyche.'[3] That such deepening understanding can only come after a period of growth and maturation of consciousness.

A crucial driver of the advancement of knowledge and the maturation of consciousness is the process of dialectic. Dichotomous or binary thinking is often marshalled to divide reality by adopting a polarized and oppositional posture which rejects the 'other' and can find no commonality or convergence between competing positions. Dialectic is the talking and thinking process which emerges from an understanding that all human knowledge is provisional. Through it, one seeks to refine an existing hypothesis or position and advance knowledge and civilization through critical engagement with a range of evidence and a plurality of alternative views, arguments, perspective and paradigms of thought, and through open and respectful dialogue and polylogue with a wider community of interlocutors.

Timothy Williamson's book, *Tetralogue*, has the subtitle 'I'm Right; You're Wrong.' Modelled on the tradition of Socratic dialogue, it is an extended discussion between four people on a train. Each of them starts off convinced that he or she is right, but as the conversation develops, ranging from cool logical reasoning to heated personal confrontation, they all come to realize that they need to reframe what they think about certain key concepts.[4] And in relation to this active process of moving beyond fixations on 'right answers,' we might take on board the insight that a genuine higher learning is 'unsettling' in the sense of 'subverting the student's taken-for-granted world,' and 'disturbing because, ultimately, the student comes to see that things could always be other than they are. A higher education experience is not complete unless the student realizes that, no matter how much effort is put in, or how much library research, there are no final answers.'[5]

Recent research has revealed that group discussion confers the remarkable and almost mysterious power to detect falsehood and 'sniff out what is authentic.' In fact, people in a group are 'more likely to identify lies than even the best trained individual.'[6] In other words, it could be said that polylogue activates the discriminating faculty, that criterion or standard which enables us to distinguish truth from falsehood.

This raises some difficult questions, not least what is meant by the word 'authentic.' The tetralogue between the travellers on the train does not come to any conclusions about who is right and who is wrong, but leaves it up to the reader to decide. The direction of travel powered by dialectic is towards a destination which can be labelled as 'truth,' and which has the stamp of 'authenticity.'[7]

One of the main issues before us is 'the obvious tension between the difficulty of pinning down what is supposedly "authentic" and being as true as possible to the "original essence" of things.' It raises a critical question we need to address in our exploration of terminology. How can we resolve the potential dichotomy between what is 'original,' 'authentic' and 'authoritative,' and what is open to interpretation and contextualization? How can we accommodate in the language we use both the divine and the human, revelation and reason, unity and multiplicity, what is 'complete' and 'incomplete,' 'certain' and 'uncertain'?

Language is at the root of so much of what we think and do, and absolutely germane to the higher ethical and spiritual dimension of our endeavours. From an Islamic perspective, letters and words are the very substance of the created universe. It is therefore a sacred trust to use words which are fair, fitting, balanced, equitable and just, words which are 'in due measure and proportion.' The divine gift of language, allied to free will, has given us a stick with two ends; it can either veil, obscure, confuse, deceive, corrupt, and incite to harm, or it can clarify, enlighten, and inspire to do what is right and good.

In trying to express the inexpressible, the language of the mystics may be profoundly subtle, abstruse and even impenetrable, but we should not shy away from the tension between essence and form. It mirrors too the critical questions raised earlier: how to resolve the potential dichotomy between what is 'original,' 'essential,' 'authentic' and 'authoritative'? Meeting this challenge is integral to our intention to find what might best be described as a seminal language to activate, shape and drive forward a new and dynamic discourse on the integration of knowledge for the revitalization of education in Muslim societies.

How do we adhere to a principled compass in our quest for knowledge which avoids the peril of chronic rootlessness and disorientation and yet also steers us away from the fixity and aridity of the false certainty bestowed by the closed mind in its narrow understanding of the closed

book? Either way leads to shipwreck. If the former is a whirlpool of relativism which gives us no foothold, the latter is the crushing rock of authoritarian dogma and 'scripturalism,' the study of texts subject to human interpretation yet cast in stone and divorced from context and circumstance, shackling us to unbending formalisms and rigid conservatism, to disputes about the law, its interdictions, prescriptions, rulings, prohibitions and taboos, and ultimately the reduction of Islam to the details which has been likened to looking at Islam through the wrong end of opera glasses.

By looking both forwards and backwards, we hold to that paradox which protects us from capitulating either to a fundamentalism stripped of humanity or a progressivism emptied of the sacred.

The role of discourse is central to shaping our understanding of the world. 'A discourse is a strongly bounded area of social and cultural knowledge, a system of assumptions, statements, disciplines and ideas. It is through discourses that the world is brought into being."[8] If the strategic action of discourse is dependent to some extent on the psychological disposition of the audience, this is also a reciprocal process in that the psychological disposition is itself conditioned by the discourse. Thoughts and feelings are created and reinforced by discourse, as much as discourse is used to express them.

Disentangling Muddled Terminology

Francis Bacon appealed for a radical move away from the scholastic tradition imprisoned by arguments and reliance on authority. To do so we must reconnect knowledge with action for 'the use and benefit of man' by purging the mind of prejudice, conditioning, false notions, and unquestioned authority – those fixations which he called the 'idols of the human mind' and which distort and discolour the true nature of things and rely instead on direct experience, perception, observation, and 'true induction' as methods of gaining sound knowledge. We can clearly see one of the foundational concepts of critical discourse analysis within the wider field of cultural studies – the way that text is instrumental in creating and sustaining power relationships.

As new meanings and implications of language are being developed there is no inflexible law decreeing that old implications, associations or evocative import disappear. To disentangle this muddle, and set a navigable course which can begin to meet our objectives, we need to start from the guiding premise that 'language is the basic tool through

which we learn, teach, adapt to change and advance knowledge….' We therefore need to define a set of key terms 'in our own specific way, give them a contemporary meaning, and incorporate them within the Integration of Knowledge discourse….'

Our orientation must begin with definition. Paradoxically, the words used in any definition must in turn be defined, an unending process which can never generate an exact understanding of the meaning of the words. Yes, the 'letter' can be a source of confusion and distraction, misinterpretation and misunderstanding,' but this is precisely why we need a glossary which provides orientation and balance in the way we navigate concepts, the building blocks of the Integration of Knowledge discourse. Three terms – orientation, balance and integration – provide, I believe, the essential matrix for our endeavour.

In this integration towards a new paradigm, we must not shy away from the belief that we are also engaged in the pursuit of 'truth;' and we must follow the Middle Way in our pursuit of truth. It is the Golden Mean, an aspect of the 'due measure and proportion' with which everything is created. So the most fitting use of words in any language needs to be based on a creative geometry of concepts. And this is a matter of 'justice' in its deepest sense in the same way as the deepest sense of 'beauty' in Arabic (*husn*) combines both beauty and moral excellence.

An integrative approach to a glossary of terms needs to include the recognition of what is best in every culture and civilization. As such it might also be regarded as including the reclamation of a 'primordial' language of universal concepts which permeate all human languages. In reclaiming the lost, we must remain cognisant of the evolution of these terms, and be creative at how we look towards the future.

Excavating the Best Meanings

English, having a dual linguistic heritage, allows for important differences to exist between words which may be used interchangeably but have very different meanings based on their contextual usage and origin. Freedom and Liberty are two such words that come about from very different origins but have developed, over time to be readily used interchangeably in contemporary speech. Language evolves organically over time and cannot be radically changed on demand. Language is a process and a process must be followed to change or reclaim it. A conceptual richness emerges from the understanding that English is

itself the product of a polylogue. It also illustrates the important principle of the continuum of meanings, and, within that, the positive and negative meanings we need to navigate. Rather than set up a quibbling and judgmental dichotomy between 'freedom' and 'liberty,' it is far more useful to focus on the underlying concepts, so that whichever word we use, we are investing it with the best and most beneficent of the senses derived from the range of meanings associated with both words.

Understanding earlier connotations can be useful in shaping the rounded definitions we aspire to use in the creation of a discourse which can serve as a suitable vehicle for the Integration of Knowledge. The origin of the word reminds us that even though we may hold 'multiple identities' we can still be faithful to an integrative vision of unity in diversity which perceives the Divine Singularity as the 'original' core of our 'identity.'

Perhaps the most prominent example of the contrast between positive and negative concepts is the way in which the abstract suffix -ism, when added to a word, so often fundamentally changes its orientation, tending to indicate an abstract ideology or system of thought rather than a concrete experience. Just as we might distinguish the creative world of ideas from the abstract constructs of ideology, we must also be aware of the potential trap of a brand of relativism which abolishes all stable meaning.

All these considerations might prompt us, no matter what our ethnic, cultural or religious affiliation, to wish to define our own vision of multiculturalism and pluralism as going well beyond the bog standard of mere tolerance and aspiring to that level of mutual self-under-standing and transformation. This involves a process of 'integration' which first and foremost refers to the personal integration which comes about through psychological, moral and spiritual development.

In conclusion, it is fundamental to begin the creation of a glossary of key terms defined in our own specific way to serve as the building blocks for the Integration of Knowledge discourse.

Notes

1   Rabbi Abraham Heschel's affirmation of the creativity inherent in human diversity is quoted by Prince Hasan Bin Talal in his Introduction to *Talking to the Other: Jewish Interfaith Dialogue with Christians and Muslims* by Rabbi Jonathan Magonet (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), vii.
2   Sardar, Ziauddin. 2013. *Future: All That Matters* (London: Hodder and Stoughton), 97-101.
3   Asad's comments on the Qur'anic roots of the 'age of science' are from his Foreword to *The Message of the Qur'an*, vi.
4   *Tetralogue* is by the philosopher Timothy Williamson and published by Oxford University Press (2015).
5   For ideas about the purposes of higher education, see R. Barnett, *The Idea of Higher Education* (Open University Press and SRHE, Buckingham, 1990).
6   The research by the University of Chicago which revealed the role of group discussion in distinguishing truth from falsehood was referred to by the Rt Reverend Graham James, Bishop of Norwich, in 'Thought for Today' on BBC radio 4 on 29/05/2015.
7   Ibid.
8   Sardar, Ziauddin. 2013. *Future: All That Matters* (London: Hodder and Stoughton).

The Authors

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Ziauddin Sardar, writer, broadcaster, futurist and cultural critic, is an internationally renowned scholar and public intellectual. Formerly, Professor of Law and Society at Middlesex University, he is author of over 50 books, including *Reading the Qur'an*; and *Mecca: The Sacred City*, and two volumes of the highly acclaimed autobiography: *Desperately Seeking Paradise* and *Balti Britain: A Provocative Journey Through Asian Britain*. Two collections of his writings are available as *Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures: A Ziauddin Sardar Reader* and *How Do You Know? Reading Ziauddin Sardar on Islam, Science and Cultural Relations*. Professor Sardar has worked as a science journalist for *Nature* and *New Scientist*, as reporter for London Weekend Television and Channel 4 and has made numerous television and radio programmes, including *Battle for Islam*, a documentary for the BBC. A former columnist on the *New Statesman*, and long-standing Editor of the monthly journal *Futures*. Currently, he is Editor of the quarterly magazine *Critical Muslim*, and Director of the Centre for Postnormal Policy and Futures Studies.

JEREMY HENZELL-THOMAS

Jeremy Henzell-Thomas is a Research Associate (and former Visiting Fellow) at the Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and a member of the executive committee of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS UK), he was the first Chair of the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR), and is the Founder and former Executive Director of the Book Foundation, a registered UK charity which works with partner institutions in the UK and the USA to improve understanding of Islam in the West. Currently an Associate Editor of *Critical Muslim*, he has also written regular columns over the years for *Islamica* and *Emel* magazines, and the Credo column in *The Times*. A former lecturer in Applied Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh, he endeavours to apply his academic specialisms of philology and psycholinguistics to contemporary issues affecting public perception of Islam and Muslims, and to the advancement of critically aware dialogue and polylogue in a range of socio-cultural and educational contexts.

IIIT Books-In-Brief Series is a valuable collection of the Institute's key publications written in condensed form to give readers a core understanding of the main contents of the original.

The Reform of Higher Education in Muslim Societies is in sum a paradigm shift in perspective driven by important considerations including the aims of education itself. It may require reforming existing disciplines, inventing new ones, as well as working in conjunction with current knowledge(s) and discourses by taking effective account of the ethical, spiritual norms of Muslim society, the guiding principles that it operates under, which in turn mark the underlying basis of its makeup and spiritual identity. Rather than creating divisions, reform of Higher Education in Muslim Societies recognizes the plurality and diversity of the modern networked world, and seeks to replace sterile and uniform approaches to knowledge with a broader and more creative understanding of reality as lived on different soils and different cultures. Moderation, balance and effective communication are paramount features of the underlying philosophy.