

REPORT

REFORM OF EDUCATION IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES

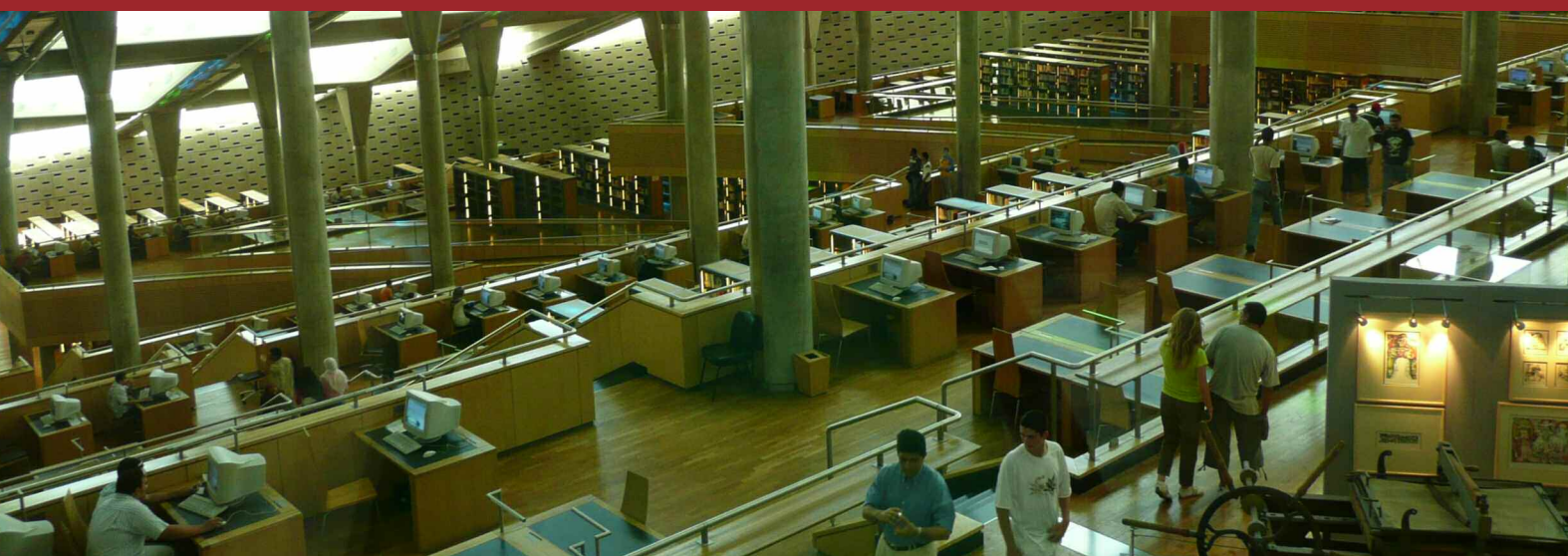
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Organised by

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY, ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY

in cooperation with

MAHYA



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), in partnership with Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University, organized the Reform of Education in Muslim Societies conference on March 18-19, 2016, in Istanbul, Turkey.

More than 50 scholars were invited to submit abstracts and proposals in a letter signed by Dr. Jamal Barzinji and Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman. A total of 26 abstracts were received from scholars worldwide, including Turkey. Eighteen abstracts were accepted by a panel of reviewers that consisted of Dr. Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali, Dr. Iqbal Unus, Dr. Abubaker al-Shingieti, Dr. Ermin Sinanović, Dr. Ahmet Alibasic, Dr. Ziauddin Sardar, Dr. Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, and Dr. Murteza Bedir. In the end, 10 papers were submitted and accepted for presentation at the conference.

The conference opened with welcoming remarks by the Director of MAHYA and the Vice President of Istanbul University followed by memorial lectures by Dr. Hisham Altalib and Dr. Fathi Malkawi for Dr. Jamal Barzinji and Dr. Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, respectively. The first session of the conference focused on establishing context: the shift from Islamization to integration of knowledge, the obstacles facing education reform, and an emphasis on the need to understand terminology both in their literal meanings as well as connotations they have adopted over time.

The next four sessions were composed of paper presentations which highlighted existing scenarios in education in the Muslim world, persistent challenges, innovative methodologies, linguistic complexities, the importance of fostering critical thinking, and ways to overcome intellectual dependency in the Muslim world. The final session in the conference encouraged the participants to make recommendations and offer feedback in an effort to outline next steps in the Reform of Education project. After concluding remarks by Dr. Omar Kasule, Dr. Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali and Dr. Hisham Altalib thanked and offered gifts to individuals at Istanbul University along with colleagues in UK, USA, and Turkey. In turn, Dr. Murteza Bedir and Prof. Dr. Recep Guloglu (Vice President, Istanbul University) recognized Dr. Anas and Dr. Iqbal with mementos.

Prof. Mahmut Ak, President of Istanbul University, addressed the conference participants at dinner on the first day of the conference. Prof. Bekir Karliga, Senior Advisor to the Turkish Prime Minister on the Alliance of Civilisations and Head of the International Civilizations Research Centre, Turkey, sent his assistant to deliver his keynote address at lunch on the second day of the conference.

The successful execution of the Reform of Education in Muslim Societies conference was made possible by continuous and diligent collaborations between IIIT officials and offices as well as tireless outreach resulting in key partnerships, by the Grace of Allah, *subhanahu wa ta'ala*.

Friday, March 18, 2016 (Day 1)
Venue: Istanbul University Congress Centre

Opening Session

The Reform of Education in Muslim Societies conference began with the recitation of the Qur'an by **Ismail Tavman** on the afternoon of March 18, 2016.

The Opening Session of the conference was chaired by **Dr. Yaqub Mirza, President and CEO of Sterling Management Group, Inc.**, who recalled his conversation with the late Dr. Jamal Barzinji on reform of education back in November, 2013. He quoted Dr. Barzinji: "Our education system should inspire students to be critical, reflective thinkers, innovators, ethical and compassionate citizens. Students should be trained to make creative contributions within a community, a nation and the world." These words truly inspired Dr. Mirza and he committed himself to the project, which resulted in several workshops in Washington, D.C., London, and Istanbul, culminating in this conference, he explained.



Figure 1 Birth of the Reform of Education Project, Nov. 2, 2013, Woodstock, VA.
(L-R) Dr. Jamal Barzinji and Dr. Yaqub Mirza

Then, Dr. Mirza invited **Sebahattin Ihvan, Director of MAHYA**, to give welcome remarks on behalf of MAHYA. Mr. Ihvan spoke about the importance of initiatives such as this conference and asked God to have mercy on those who've lost their lives for rehabilitation as well as for those who are left behind.



Figure 2 (L-R) Sebahattin Ihvan and Prof. Dr. Recep Guloglu giving Welcoming Remarks at the beginning of the conference

Next, Dr. Mirza asked **Prof. Dr. Recep Guloglu, Vice President of Istanbul University**, to extend his greetings. Prof. Dr. Guloglu said, “You’ve honored us by being here. Istanbul University is an international university, the oldest university with 17,000 employees and 22 different faculty departments. It is the only university in Turkey with two Nobel Prize winners.” He offered a warm welcome to IIIT and the conference participants, affirming that such discussions help bring about change. **Dr. Anas al-Shaikh Ali, Director of London Office of IIIT**, presented a gift to Prof. Dr. Guloglu along with IIIT books translated in Turkish as a token of gratitude for Istanbul University’s partnership and hospitality.

Prof. Dr. Guloglu’s speech was followed by the **Jamal Barzinji Memorial Lecture**, delivered by **Dr. Hisham Altalib, Vice President, IIIT**, whom Dr. Mirza called “my longtime associate and teacher.” Dr. Altalib shared his lifelong friendship with Dr. Barzinji which started when they were both in high school in Mosul, Iraq. Together, they traveled to the United Kingdom for further education, continuing on to the United States and eventually settling in the Washington, D.C., metro area. Dr. Barzinji passed away on Sept. 26, 2015.

“Jamal was extremely smart and intelligent. He was very ambitious,” Dr. Altalib recalled fondly. “He loved reading. He inherited it from his father, who used to come home with a bag of books every day.” Dr. Barzinji’s father was an imam in Mosul who taught his son a love of Islam and the Arabic language.



Figure 3 Dr. Hisham delivering the Jamal Barzinji Memorial Lecture during the Opening Session of the conference

“He affected and was affected by his surroundings in all areas. He combined Islam with science, and tradition with renewal. He had the heart of a spiritual Sufi but the mind of a philosopher. He excelled in academia as well as da’wah work,” stated Dr. Altalib, extolling his excellence in listening skills, analysis, and strategic planning. Even so, Dr. Altalib emphasized, he was generous and humble, always concerned with the angst of the Ummah.

“When he talked about education reform, he did not confine it to Islamically minded people. He believed all sectors of the society must cooperate for this effort, whether they are Islamists, socialists, secularists, or nationalists – to come into common agreement and carry on this reform. He argued that one party or one section will never be able to deliver on this reformation,” Dr. Altalib recounted.

Dr. Barzinji received many awards and gave speeches at major events, such as the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC). He contributed to the establishment and organization of 30 institutions, firmly believing that they will give the next generations the opportunity to complete the work. “Often people say now is not the time, let’s hunker down. He always said, ‘Now’s the best time to work!’ He was very optimistic,” Dr. Altalib said. “If it weren’t for Jamal Barzinji, we wouldn’t be having this conference!” Dr. Altalib concluded.

Dr. Fathi Malkawi, IIIT’s Regional Director, Arab World, then, took the stage to express his thoughts on the recent demise of **Dr. Taha Jabir Al-Alwani** on March 4, 2016. “His death is a great loss for his family, colleagues, disciples, and IIIT. His key interests in life were teaching and learning. He continued to teach in his house despite his ailing health in the last few years. As for learning, he always introduced himself as a student of knowledge and didn’t limit himself to certain disciplines, but made use of any opportunity to increase himself in knowledge. He was keen to develop and elaborate on his ideas, even change them when necessary.”

Dr. Malkawi commended Dr. Taha’s courage to speak out and differ with other scholars. He felt that the Ummah’s decline and stagnation stemmed from scholarly reluctance to reinterpret and disagree with one another, resulting in the weakening of the vitality of Muslim thought and scholarship. “Dr. Taha was always eager to consult other scholars in forming a fatwa and his fatwas were closer to collective ijihad,” Dr. Malkawi added, mentioning the wealth of legacy he has left behind in the form of books he wrote.

While leading the session, Dr. Mirza humorously yet effectively raised important concerns in education: too much classroom-based learning and not enough outdoor activity, schools becoming more like factories systematically churning out identical products, and teachers who talk so much they exclude student engagement. Citing Ken Robinson, Dr. Mirza stressed that “education should be personalized to every student's talent, passion, and learning ability.” He said he looks forward to discovering how to reform education during the conference.

Session I: Contemporary Ethics of Islam: Nature and Characteristics

Dr. Murteza Bedir, Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University, moderated this session.

Dr. Ziauddin Sardar, Chair of the Muslim Institute in London, presented his synthesis paper, **“Education Reform: From Islamisation of Knowledge to Integration of Knowledge,”** which was also available to all participants of the conference in their folders. He firstly mentioned **Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim**, one of the main forces behind the education reform project, who was unable to attend the conference due to his imprisonment. Dr. Sardar read out three points that Datuk Seri Ibrahim sent him to share at the conference on his behalf: 1. Crisis of education is universal, not just limited to the Muslim world; 2. We should confidently engage with the West on equal terms, and 3. We need to broaden the discussion of reform of education to all levels of society and not keep it restricted to educationalists.

Then, Dr. Sardar delved into the crux of his paper: the shift from Islamisation of Knowledge to Integration of Knowledge. He acknowledged that he was really excited when he first saw the Islamisation of Knowledge (IoK) project. After all, Western disciplines are inherently biased towards Western values and cultures and, as a consequence, Muslim societies promote Western ideas. “So, the concept of introducing Islamic values and ethics really excited me,” he recognized.

However, the project did not recognize that the disciplines are socially constructed and imbibe the worldview from where they originate and thrive. “So, yes, the bias is there but it cannot truly be ‘Islamicised.’ We cannot just put a Islamic label on something and make it Islamic,” he stated, giving the example of IoK books on Sociology and Anthropology, which only added Islamic terminology to existing texts.

At the same time, if knowledge is socially constructed and it has ideological baggage, then it must be true for both the West as well as the Muslim world, he countered. Hence, the best way to move forward is to integrate what’s best in both cultures. This is something that requires critical engagement with both sides of the equation – without this, we cannot figure out what aspects of each side can integrate. We cannot engage equally when one side has a huge production and the other side has deficiency, he said, referring to Datuk Seri Ibrahim’s second point. “That would mean assimilation of the weak into the strong,” he explained.

Dr. Sardar emphasized that the shift will successfully take place if we are critical about ourselves just as we are critical of others. We must critically engage with our own traditions, history, and concepts, and at the same time have knowledge of Western disciplines at the highest levels, so that we do not “speak from a place of ignorance.”

As a result of this analytical exercise on both sides of the equation, we will be able to identify what is best in both the Western and Muslim world, and then begin to produce new syntheses, which will lead to new paradigms, new systems of education, tools, texts, etc. “This will take a very long time – it is a multigenerational project,” he cautioned.

Therefore, this whole exercise must take place in a “futuristic perspective,” he advised. Not only should we be aware of what the emerging trends are, we must understand that what we want to reform is also dynamic. In order to be successful, we need a network of scholars from a variety of disciplines so that they can work on different aspects to create new knowledge, which is the growing trend among scholars. In this way, we will move from a dichotomy model to a holistic approach, from a parochial standpoint to a human dimension, he proclaimed.

“The first stage of critical thought is admission of being wrong. IIIT has taken this very courageous and wonderful step, and I am now as excited as when I first was for Islamisation of Knowledge!” Dr. Sardar exclaimed.

Next, **Dr. Abdelwahab El-Affendi, Head of the Political Science Department at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies in Qatar**, spoke on the topic of **“Obstacles Facing Education Reform.”** He began his talk by saying that he was really touched by Dr. Hisham’s tribute to Dr. Jamal Barzinji and that he wishes to see Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim among them again.

He said one of the conundrums facing Muslim societies is that they send their children to international schools which, in addition to being very expensive, rely on English as the medium of instruction and teach Western values. Hence, children are being brought up as citizens of the international community and one of the implications is that, eventually, we will lose our identity, our heritage. “That’s not progress,” he stated.

“How do we bring the Muslim world forward?” he asked. “Without substantial intellectual resources, all movements end in chaos. We cannot Islamicize what’s produced by others. We need to produce knowledge and everyone else should be able to see it as such.”



Figure 4 Dr. El-Affendi on "Obstacles Facing Education Reform"

Dr. El-Affendi clarified some of the obstacles he faces as the Head of the Political Science Department at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies are not about resources, which are plentiful. Instead, the struggle comes when they are looking for Arabic references in the disciplines of political science and international relations. “Muslim ancestors had their own knowledge production. Where is the intellectual activity in the Muslim world with world class scholarship?” he demanded. “We can’t keep teaching our children texts in English and French and hope someday they will produce material in Arabic.”

Another challenge is finding quality students as many prefer to go to the West as opposed to the Arab world. There is also a lot of competition in terms of money and prestige with international universities when it comes to lecturers and staff. Lastly, he highlighted the poor health of research in Muslim countries. “We do not have a good environment for research sustenance. In the West, there are multiple committees that support research. In the Muslim world, this structure is missing,” he explained.

The last speaker in this session, **Dr. Jeremy Henzell-Thomas**, of **Centre of Islamic Studies at Cambridge University**, gave a glimpse of the need for and his efforts in creating a detailed glossary of important terminology, titled, “**Towards an Expanded Glossary of Key Terms.**” He introduced his subject matter by sharing the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel which essentially depicts the formation of multiple languages as a punitive measure. When we look to the Qur’an, however, languages, cultures, races, and religions, are illuminated as signs of beauty and diversity among humans, he shared.



Figure 5 Dr. Jeremy speaking about the importance of comprehensively defining key terms

He went on to explain the various connotations words take on with time and how understanding is hindered by common definitions of words, but also by multiple usages. For instance, the Latin root of secularism, *saeculum*, has a very neutral sense of ‘this age’ or ‘present time,’ but today this term “can be demonized for all ill or glorified for all good,” he said. On the one hand, it professes “equal rights for all, but on the other, it excludes, marginalizes, controls religious voices.” As such it has become a “loaded term and needs to be navigated with care.”

He emphasized the need to achieve common understanding of meaning of terms as well as a realignment of definitions resulting from more probing and expansive explorations of the changing meanings of terms and concepts. He called for a “compass that helps us to avoid the stripping away or degeneration of positive senses of so many key terms.”

Dr. Henzell-Thomas remarked that landscapes are changing just as words do. We now acknowledge that there are many different types of intelligences and ways of thought. There is a great need to focus on developing creative and critical thinking skills among students in both the Western as well as Muslim worlds and he warned against pitching Western education as a panacea for critical thinking.

“We require an inclusive, interconnected approach, not just a new model, but a radical shift in perspectives and worldviews, a new kind of consciousness,” he declared. He recommended that the efforts for reform of education must be rooted in core Islamic concepts yet go beyond the “cozy coma of isolation and the lame duck mentality of playing endless catch-up with the West.”

An introduction of Dr. Henzell-Thomas’ project was distributed at the conference in the form of a 64-page booklet with the same title. In it, he explains the conceptual foundations and guiding principles of the project, with examples of five entries directly connected to reform of education: education, excellence, rank, reform, and integration.

After the presentations, the floor was opened for questions. Some of the points highlighted during this part of the session were:

- ❖ Authoritarianism is a major problem in Muslim societies in terms of both political and religious terms; however, there is ideological authoritarianism in the West which is far more sophisticated and leads of colonization of the minds.
- ❖ The ultimate power is the power to define; otherwise, we will keep adding ‘Islamic’ to something and it will always be a subcategory. For example, ‘human rights’ defines what it means to be a human, which implies there’s only one kind of human, which is Western. This is the challenge.



Figure 6 (L-R) Dr. Anas, Prof. Guloglu, Dr. Hisham, and Dr. Murteza on Day 1 of the conference



Figure 7 (L-R) Dr. Deborah Boehm-Davis, Dr. Jan Arminio, Dr. Timothy Reagan, and Kevin Augustyn on Day 1 of the conference

Session II: Higher Education in the Muslim World: Models and Modalities

The second session of the Reform of Education conference was moderated by **Dr. Abubaker Al-Shingieti, Executive Director of IIIT, USA.**

Dr. M. Kamal Hassan, former Rector of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), shared his experiences in a talk titled, **“Islamisation of Human Knowledge as Understood in the Context of IIUM: Keeping the Sacred Mission Alive and Relevant.”**

Dr. Hassan spoke about IIUM’s decision to not become a secular university and how they managed to achieve it with IIIT support, highlighting the integral role played by Dr. Jamal Barzinji. He also acknowledged AbdulHamid AbuSulayman’s guidance in shifting IIUM from a British-oriented system to the American credit system.

He explained that IIUM has been doing “integration in our own way,” utilizing various approaches to education. They have adopted flexibility in curriculum development, depending on the nature of discipline. At times, they have taken a comparative approach where students are given knowledge of the conventional system and then presented the Islamic alternative. Other times, they have adopted “harmonization” (between civil law and Islamic legal system), “complementarization” (requiring students to take classes on Islamic Studies along with their professional coursework), or “non-integration coexistence” (when both Islamic and Western teachings are taught side by side without any attempt to compare, harmonize, or integrate).

Dr. Hassan emphasized that from the beginning they were clear that Islamization also meant integration, so in his opinion, there is “no need to abandon Islamization.”

Dr. Mbaye Lo, Assistant Professor of the Practice of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies at Duke University, presented his research called **“Muslim University Models in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities.”** He surveyed Islamic higher educational institutions in the 21st century in Africa and the Arab world as well as the socio-political developments that contributed to their existence. He cited the rapid growth in numbers of universities in both Africa as a whole and the MENA region: from a handful of institutions in the 1940s and 1960s to more than 200 by the 21st century, with many of the Islamic universities established after 1980.

He named two trends in Islamic higher education, namely the Islamic Revival Movement of the 1980s and the Islamization of Knowledge approach, and traced their trajectories. Dr. Lo highlighted the problems with Islamization of knowledge in an increasingly globalized world. For instance, he mentioned that two-thirds of the universities in the Middle East are private and most of them are branches of Western institutions. “If Islamization of Knowledge is about re-erecting and reconstructing boundaries, ideas and aspirations, current forces of globalization seldom respects any boundaries,” he remarked.

Dr. Lo added that Islamization of Knowledge approach “sees educational deficiencies of the Muslim world as a political problem, but stops short of offering a political and ethical solution beyond theorized Islamic epistemologies.” As a result, it tends to blame external factors instead of looking within, testifying to lack of critical thinking and multiculturalism.

Dr. Sari Hanafi, Professor of Sociology and Chair of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Media Studies at American University of Beirut, was the last presenter in this session. Titled, **“The Janus-like Face of Higher Education and Research in the Arab World: Internalization and Local Relevance,”** he diligently made a case for knowledge production that is visible. “We should always ask two questions: Knowledge for whom? Knowledge for what?” Dr. Hanafi urged.

Social science in the Arab world is delegitimized, and due to the “major rupture between religious groups and social scientists, it is doubly delegitimized,” he said. In comparing South Africa with the Arab world, he showed that while the former devotes its major chunk of research to professional social science issues, the latter is primarily preoccupied with policy matters with academia hardly interacting with the public or policy.

“Our Arab knowledge is invisible,” he declared, adding that the Arab world is currently suffering from the malaise of “publish locally, perish globally, and vice versa.” There is no research portal in the Arab world and the most cited people are Western – “those who have never been in the Arab world except as tourists! Why? Because their work is *visible*!” Dr. Hanafi concluded by suggesting, “If we want to integrate knowledge, we should create *visible* knowledge.”

The paper presentations were followed by comments by three discussants. **Prof. Recep Kaymakcan, Professor of Religious Education,** wondered how the ratio of international students at IIUM might have changed from 1990 to 2010. He also mentioned that the International Islamic University in Turkey has recently been established and, considering that Turkey is a secular state, they do not have any model for an Islamic university. Lastly, he recommended that we need an indexing system in the Muslim world.



Figure 8 Discussants sharing their remarks on the papers in Session II

Dr. Ismail Demirezen, member of the Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University, said that Islamic higher education needs to contend with the post-modern environment. “Pure Islam is present, accessible, but how we can achieve it is the fundamental question,” he stated. He advised that knowledge reduced to its context is the first step towards reform.

Alpaslan Durmus, a PhD. student at Marmara University, pointed out that there is “no one monolith on either side,” adding that integration can also be internationalization, especially with the growth of Western universities in the Gulf region. Instead of being nostalgic and melancholic, we must recognize that the world is changing and “reconstruct new things.”

Afterwards, an open discussion took place, during which the following points were highlighted:

- ❖ We cannot criticize the dominant system without being a part of the dominant system
- ❖ By focusing so much on “Islam” and “Islamic,” we are actually minoritizing knowledge
- ❖ We must put the Muslim house in order
- ❖ Islamic university does not share the agenda of creating the Islamic state – that’s the agenda of the Islamic party



Figure 9 Conference participants having dinner at Istanbul University at the end of Day 1 of the conference

After dinner on Day 1 of the conference, March 18, Prof. Mahmut Ak, President of Istanbul University, graciously welcomed IIIT and its conference participants; he also shared a brief history and description of Istanbul University. Dr. Hisham Altalib and Dr. Anas al-Shaikh-Ali reciprocated by thanking him and his colleagues for hosting IIIT and for their partnership in this conference. They also discussed closer cooperation between IIIT and Istanbul University. Prof. Recep Guloglu, Vice President of Istanbul University, was present as well.



Figure 10 (L-R) Dr. Hisham, Prof. Mahmud Ak, and Dr. Anas at the dinner after Day 1 of the conference

Saturday, March 19, 2016 (Day 2)

Venue: Istanbul University Rectorate Building in Beyazıt

Session III: Islamic Legacy in Education: Problems and Potentials

Dr. Ermin Sinanović, Director of Research and Academic Programs, IIIT, USA, moderated this session.

Dr. Marodsilton Muborakshoeva, Lecturer at the Department of Graduate Studies, Institute of Ismaili Studies, was the first presenter of the day. Her talk was titled, **“Challenges in Higher Education and the Role of Muslim Cultures and Civilizations in Developing a New Paradigm in Education.”**

Dr. Muborakshoeva conducted qualitative research in examining the challenges Muslim scholars face in reconciling current methodologies with educational approaches from the past as they struggle to create a “new paradigm of learning in education.” One of these obstacles is the fact that knowledge has been passed down orally traditionally whereas today, there is great emphasis on literacy – hence, an acceptance of various ways of learning is necessary. Further, the need to understand Western methodologies is acknowledged, but when they are applied in the local context, they are not appreciated, she explained.

In charting a way forward, she suggested that using the “Islamic” label in everything should be avoided. Since, historically, Muslim scholars have had little trouble reconciling reason with revelation, present scholars need to delve into history to learn how to do so successfully. She gave the example of Ibn Rushd who was able to harmonize the two, asserting that “both philosophy and revelation have a unity of purpose and both stem from virtue.” In addition, Ibn Sina held that the ultimate goal of education is to attain perfection spiritually. Dr. Muborakshoeva contended that this holistic approach to knowledge helps create a well-rounded individual and allows for diverse educational methodologies.

Next, **Dr. Mehmet Pacaci, Ambassador of the Turkish Republic to the Holy See**, presented his paper **“Can Muslim Higher Education have a True Goal?”** He began his talk with the same premise as the previous presenter: “We established strong schools, universities, and madrassas in the past – why can’t we do it now?” He answered that there was a genuine goal behind our past success: to run Muslim societies on the basis of principles of Islam. As a result, we produced theologians, scholars, *qadis*, *mudarris*, as well as administrators. The class of the *‘ulema* was separate from the state at the time, with various duties such as implementing law, running schools, providing religious service in mosques, and administering social service/charitable foundations.



Figure 11 Dr. Mehmet Pacaci presenting his paper on Day 2 of the conference, followed by remarks by Dr. Fathi Malkawi

“In modern times, this social structure collapsed with the establishment of nation states. Now, law fell in the hands of secular jurists and teachers were trained by secular schools,” Dr. Pacaci explained. As a result, Muslim education lost its goal. “We need to rethink who we are and redefine our goals within the modern situation,” he summed up, the challenge being how to internalize the useful and reject the unnecessary.

Two discussants commented on the papers. **Dr. Fathi Malkawi, IIIT’s Regional Director, Arab World**, agreed that we need to figure out why our ancestors were able to achieve excellence in education and why we are not able to do so now. Yet, he mentioned that while scholars and rulers operated separately and scholars sometimes exerted more influence over the people, it nonetheless “didn’t save the Muslim society from collapsing in the end.” As for the future, he remarked, we need to devise a strategy and have a plan.

Dr. Selim Argun, member of the Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University, made a case for the independence of university endowments from the state apparatus. Funding and success are linked and decentralization of *anqaf* is a key ingredient to achieve the latter. He appreciated Dr. Pacaci’s emphasis on utilizing the four major sources of jurisprudence *together* in producing practice (Qur’an, Sunnah, *qiyas*, and *ijma*), adding that “we suffer from literalist movements who act without keeping all of them in mind.”

A discussion followed and here are some points from it:

- ❖ We need to problematize (instead of simply glorify) our Muslim ancestors
- ❖ Western universities borrowed the idea of endowments from Muslims and we forgot it
- ❖ When the state takes over an institution, it is no longer free
- ❖ We need to develop methodological tools based on usul sciences and apply them today
- ❖ *Anqaf* were not forgotten, they were colonized and looted

Session IV: Future of Higher Education: Concepts and Context

Dr. Ismail Latif Hacinebioglu, faculty member at Istanbul University, moderated this session.

Dr. Keri Facer, Professor of Educational and Social Futures at the University of Bristol, UK, was not able to attend the conference. Her paper, **“Reimagining Higher Education: Collaborations within a Diverse Knowledge Landscape,”** was presented by **John Sweeney**, Deputy Director of the Center for Postnormal Policy and Futures Studies at East-West University in Chicago, IL.

Dr. Facer’s paper outlined her extensive, well-funded, interdisciplinary project called “Connected Communities” in which lines between the university and community are blurred, allowing for extended research and enabling arts and humanities to be involved in a dialogue with the hard sciences and mathematics. This results in “responsible innovation that fulfils the needs of the communities, not feed off of them,” he explained. As a result, projects are co-designed and the university may not have full ownership.

When it comes to integration, Dr. Facer cited various factors to be considered, such as governance (who makes decisions and how), representation (which voices are heard), ontology (how reality is understood), epistemology (ways of knowing and creation of knowledge), and ethics (sustenance of values).

He listed four models of integration from the paper: Divide and Conquer (work together but separately), Relational Expertise (understanding another viewpoint, inhabiting and creating space), Remaking Identities (hybrid stage; creating new identities), and Colonization and Confusion (unsettling traditional identities). “None are preferred but serve as provocation for integration of knowledge,” he stated. “The aim is to disrupt assumptions, ask new questions, and generate ‘strategic knowledge.’”

Recep Senturk, Director General and Dean of Graduate Studies at the Alliance of Civilizations Institute at Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Istanbul, presented his paper, **“How to Overcome Intellectual Dependency in Education: A Call to Multiplexity.”**

He introduced his topic by highlighting our reliance on the West for not only technologies and automobiles, but also “theories, concepts, and methodologies.” So much so that of all the texts being studies in the universities, practically none are produced by Muslims, he said. “That means we’re not using our minds to address our issues,” he exclaimed, giving the example of a university in Ghana which did not change at all once it was transferred back to the local people by the British. “We voluntarily took over intellectual colonization.”

Dr. Senturk suggested several ways to overcome this conundrum: understanding the purpose of education (to achieve the idealized individual); integration of *ta’alim* with *tazkiya*; adopting a multilayer worldview of Islamic education; restructuring the teacher-student relationship based on the interaction between Prophet Muhammad (saw) and his companions; reexamining our relation with Islamic heritage in order to create an open civilization; interpret modern science from an Islamic perspective; revive the *awqaf*, and maintain the tradition of *isnad*.

Next, **Dr. Amaarah DeCuir, Adjunct Professor at the George Washington University and Northern Virginia Community College**, presented her research titled, **“Our Place at the Table: Women’s Roles in Higher Education in the Muslim World.”**

Dr. DeCuir highlighted two key elements of her paper: 1. The application of a critical feminist lens to look at power structures that can explain why women’s realities should be defined by women and how realities of women’s lived experiences can stand on their own, and 2. The influence of Alice Eagly’s social role theories; in particular, the communal attributes of women.

Women are wholly underrepresented in Muslim higher education, whether in terms of research or leadership, she stated. Some factors that impede their access are doctrinal (cultural misunderstanding of texts), filial (lack of family support), social (leading to isolation), and governmental (absence of fair labor practice policies), she expressed.

Then, Dr. DeCuir focused on the same elements to frame her recommendations: application of faith-based concepts in modern day context, multi-pronged approach to shift family and societal views towards positivity, active recruitment of women in higher education, and establishment of fair labor practice regulations.

Afterwards, three discussants shared their feedback. **Dr. Jan Arminio, Director of the Higher Education Program at George Mason University**, acknowledged that finding a model of reform is a time-intensive process, requiring much unlearning, dialogue, and structure in order to “remove barriers, create opportunities and provide incentives.” She encouraged the participation of students in exploring reform of higher education. In addition, she conceded that while we cannot return to an earlier era, we must seek to adapt previous cultural legacies to today’s needs.

Dr. Ovamir Anjum, Imam Khattab Endowed Chair of Islamic Studies at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Toledo, said that Dr. Facer’s paper unsettles any easy path for integration, reminding us that there is “no recipe for integration.” He added that the paper made him realize that the techniques of human interaction make this a situated, localized effort. With regard to Dr. Senturk’s paper, he agreed that an approach that recognizes continuity of Islamic traditions equips us much more for reform projects, although it is worth thinking about points of discontinuity and rupture at various stages of history. He asked Dr. DeCuir to explore links between feminism and colonialism and urged her to engage more thoroughly with Islamic literature, which will enable her to cite Islamic scholars when making claims related to Islamic traditions.

Dr. Ahmet Temel, faculty member in the Department of Islamic Law at Istanbul University, recommended that the topics under discussion should be further deliberated in follow-up conferences and accepted that the entire process of reform will take time. He endorsed the idea of complementing *ta’alim* with *tazkiya* and suggested that “we should theorize in a more general perspective what should be changed in the present educational system” instead of merely supplementing it. Regarding greater women’s engagement in higher education, he said in talking about reforming Islamic law, we need to explore “in which way and based on what.”

A brief discussion ensued in which the following points were made:

- ❖ Community-based research goes back to the 1960s
- ❖ We need a greater ethical context for the “models” shared in Dr. Facer’s paper
- ❖ Islamic education is both for the elite as well as the masses, and its purpose is not to produce professionals. Islam is not a career path, it is a religion

Prof. Bekir Karliga, Senior Advisor to the Turkish Prime Minister on the Alliance of Civilisations and Head of the International Civilizations Research Center in Turkey, was scheduled to give the keynote address at dinner on March 19, 2016. However, due to his inability to come, his lecture was read aloud by his assistant, Cuneyt Ozpilavci, at lunch. In it, he acknowledged that there is a mindset problem due to the political, social, cultural, and economic crisis in the Muslim world. The steady deterioration of *Madrasahs* and the onslaught of modern education have contributed to the problem. He called for drastic educational reform to amend the present conditions which will take serious efforts and a long commitment.



Figure 12 Dr. Ahmet Alibasic on Day 2 of the conference

Session V: Dominant Paradigms in Higher Education: Issues and Currents

Dr. Aydın Topaloglu, member of the Faculty of Theology, Philosophy, and Religious Studies, Istanbul University, was the moderator for this session.

Martin Rose, British Council officer since 1988 and a Visiting Fellow at the Waleed bin Talal Center for Islamic Studies at Cambridge, was unable to attend the conference due to health reasons. However, he had sent a recorded presentation of his paper which was played during this session. His research was titled, **“Universities, the Job-Market, and the Jihad.”**

Mr. Rose’s paper is based on a recent research that shows that amongst graduates recruited for jihad in MENA, about 44% are engineers and very few from the social science and humanities disciplines, with the exception of Islamic Studies. He clarified at the beginning that his paper is about education, not about engineers. Another interesting point to note is that we often connect unemployment with radicalization, he said. However, “unemployment is low for engineers and high for social scientists,” he stated.

He offered a different explanation for this trend. He said while questioning and opinions are encouraged in the social sciences and humanities, engineering and scientific disciplines are more matter of fact, given to binary thinking. Such “black and white” thought processes can explain why students of engineering would be more prone to extremist movements. By way of solutions, he suggested that engineering and sciences should be taught more like the social sciences whereas the teaching of social sciences itself needs to be revitalized.

Overall, we need to let go of “models of colonial times where the teacher is the center of gravity,” he remarked. And, instead of memorization, we need to encourage questioning and critical thinking. In short, new learning paradigms are required to escape the current conundrum, he concluded.

Dr. Timothy Reagan, Dean of the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Maine (Orono), shared his research in a paper titled, **“Islam and the Challenge of Language in Education: Why *Tawhid* is not Simply ‘Monotheism.’”** Dr. Reagan introduced himself as a linguist with a strong interest in education and epistemology.

He began by stating that language plays multiple, essential roles, including the means through which we learn about and conceptualize the world around us. Yet, language is not neutral, a fact that is often overlooked. English, for instance, has developed over centuries in a fundamentally Christian social order which is represented in its vocabulary, metaphors, and analogies, Dr. Reagan said. “The dominance of the English language can be seen as a boon to scholarly discourse or a threat to the diversity of thought necessary for scholarly endeavors,” he reflected.

He mentioned the concept of linguistic relativity, whether language determines thought or merely influences it. In listing the various aspects of linguistic relativity, he focused on domain-centered which could be further broken down to “sacred language” and “use of language for religious purposes,” the latter being most relevant to his paper. He illustrated how the use of equivalent terms between Arabic and English present problems. *Tawhid* is not simply monotheism and such usage can, in fact, distort meaning. Similar obstacles arise when we try to define Allah, halal/haram, and

jihad using English which inevitably portray them in misleading terms, such as ‘impersonal God,’ narrowly used only for food or beverage, and ‘religious war,’ respectively.

The very fact that the Qur’an has remained fixed in Arabic and any attempts at translation are actually considered “interpretations” speaks to the “powerful and unusual place of the Qur’an among other sacred literature,” and thus makes it difficult to express it in another language in conventional ways, Dr. Reagan asserted. On the other hand, he wondered, what risks and challenges might arise in the teaching of classical Arabic to native and non-native speakers. In conclusion, he emphasized that “language matters and makes a huge difference” and should be an integral component of any effort for reform of education.

Three discussants gave remarks on the two papers. **Dr. Jeremy Henzell-Thomas**, who had earlier presented a glimpse of his research in creating an expanded glossary of key terms, agreed that a discussion on linguistic relativity and the exploration of the interaction between language and thought are most relevant. At the same time, he cautioned that we do not want to overstate the differences between English and Arabic because this is a common problem between various languages – the need to use several words in a language to express a one-word concept in another language. Lastly, he offered some food for thought in the form of a query: Doesn’t the divine endowment of the names from Allah given to all human beings give humans the potentiality to recognize these elemental concepts in his/her language?

Dr. Deborah Boehm-Davis, Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and Professor of Psychology at George Mason University, recalled an experience in team-teaching between the departments of psychology and engineering. Afterwards, the feedback reflected that the psychology students were upset when technology didn’t work as expected whereas the engineering students “were frustrated that the several psychology faculty members on the teaching team didn’t always agree about how to interpret a specific piece of work,” she said. She also noted the different usage of “jihad” in both papers, the first dealing with only the warfare aspect of it whereas the second attempted to encompass a more comprehensive meaning. She further advised Martin Rose to incorporate more tangible recommendations and asked Dr. Reagan to consider how native or non-native speakers of a language might change the way it is taught.

Dr. Hamit Er, Professor in the Department of Religious Education, Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University, agreed that it is difficult to translate one language into another. When it comes to the Qur’an, we face similar problems in Turkey, so the difficulty isn’t only with English, he said. “Language makes us human or we can say, language is alive like a human,” he expressed. It has the capacity to transform and adapt given different contexts.

Due to lack of time, only one comment was made afterwards:

- ❖ There is lack of critical thinking in the humanities whereas there is excessive weight given to applied thinking in sciences and mathematics
- ❖ Medium of instruction in many schools in the Muslim world is in English, which leads to the teaching of texts in English Literature as a linguistic exercise, with the emphasis being on understanding and not on seeking the deeper meaning of text

Session VI: Discussion and Recommendations

In the interest of time, this two-part session was condensed into one. After the exchange of ideas in the earlier sessions, the objective of this session was to discuss next steps and specific actions, as articulated by **Dr. Iqbal Unus, Coordinator of the Reform of Education Project at IIIT, USA.**

Dr. Ermin Sinanović co-chaired the session with Dr. Unus. “Taking stock of Islamization of Knowledge project is very important. It was a catchy phrase but it became a burden. With Integration of Knowledge, we are still retaining the larger paradigm: reading the revealed knowledge, looking at contemporary knowledge, and seeing how the two fit,” he stated. “We have reached a point of reconstruction and the time is right for a more inventive, innovative construction.”



Figure 13 Dr. Ermin and Dr. Iqbal heading the last session on Day 2 of the conference

He further highlighted the need to create an inventory of reforms in education both in the Muslim world and elsewhere to track successes and failures. “Our heritage is also very important, how to study and understand it historically and then to see what needs to be kept, discarded, or amended,” he asserted. “We at IIIT are committed to preserve our heritage, and not just in Arabic, but also in Turkish, Swahili, Urdu, and other languages. These languages are not being taught in our higher education institutions but they give access to our legacy.”

In addition to the mega approach to reform, he asked his fellow scholars to think of the micro perspective as well, such as tangible pedagogical issues and funding concerns. He also summarized the importance of keeping an eye on future trends as well as significance of linguistics. With regard to students as a crucial component of this project, he gave the example of IIIT’s Student Programs in various locations where they select some of the best students and teach them Islamic Studies, creating intellectual capital.

He then opened the floor for conference participants and presenters to share their input for the way forward.

Dr. Fathi Malkawi encouraged everyone to look at themselves and ask what they can achieve for this project. “What matters is what you are remembered by 100 years after your death. In each of your own expertise, do something. We must continue to produce knowledge, individually and as teams,” he urged.

Dr. Sari Hanafi suggested, “We need to establish a basic infrastructure; one of these could be a paradigm shift from ranking universities to ecology-based indicators that include whole cycle of knowledge.” He added that we should have summer schools for graduate students in the Muslim world and that curricula about introductory courses in multiple languages should be available online.

Dr. Murteza Bedir stated that we tend to be very theoretical and not data-driven. He also commented, “We cannot separate schooling from higher education. Although we have amalgamated *madrasa* and European education successfully in some Turkish schools, we’re not there yet with respect to higher education. We do not have any models we’re fully comfortable with from around the world either. We need more research and more data on such efforts.” Moreover, referring to Ibn Khaldun’s categorization of knowledge in two parts, Shari’i (transmitted) knowledge and rational knowledge which doesn’t belong to any one civilization, he stressed that we should not underestimate the role of tradition, the Shari’i knowledge, in the reform of humanities and social sciences.

Dr. Ziauddin Sardar explained that there isn’t a need to completely reinvent the wheel; criticism is not meant to destroy, he said. “We need to look at the outcomes of Islamization of Knowledge and not simply discard everything,” he elaborated. He also mentioned the series of International Islamic Education conferences, from which emerged a journal, *Muslim Education*, that hasn’t survived. Although it was weak, it would be worthwhile to resurrect that journal. “Just because there is criticism doesn’t mean the subject of criticism cannot be enhanced,” he concluded.



Figure 14 (L-R) **Dr. Hisham, Dr. Omar Kasule, John Sweeney, and Dr. Ziauddin Sardar** in the last session on Day 2 of the conference

Dr. Amaarah DeCuir wondered if the ideas being shared were mutually understood and desired by Muslim majority countries or a minority viewpoint. If it's the former, then there is merely a need organize passions into an action plan. For the latter, she said it's important to communicate them so societies can start adapting, but research must be done first and data should be collected so that there can be a shared vision. She listed a variety of research areas: leadership, policies, pedagogies, research agendas, organizational climate, Islamic identity, societal context, among others. In the end, she volunteered her services for such case study research.

John Sweeney predicted, "Islam is the future, it is at the forefront of opportunities and challenges. We need to create spaces for those who will be voices of the future to help define what reform is." He suggested that we think of uncommon allies and gave the example of muslimgirl.net. At the same time, he said the "payoff may not be immediate."

Dr. Jeremy Henzell-Thomas recommended that there is a need for a polyglot glossary, incorporating languages other than Arabic and English, but he acknowledged that the scope and limitations need to be assessed so that it is manageable.

Dr. Ovamir Anjum advised that an evaluation of what has succeeded and to what extent should be the subject of dissertations. Regarding Islamization of Knowledge v. Integration of Knowledge, he asked, "Do we now know even less about Integration than we did of Islamization when it started? What might we have gained in just changing of this nomenclature? What is this integration and

where is it going? Or, is this a graceful way of ending a project?” He cautioned that criticism should be balanced by reverence, “otherwise you become a reformist, an incorrigible reformer, who is constantly trying to fix without actually understanding, and in the end, doesn’t inspire.”

Dr. Sadia Mahmood, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at Habib University in Karachi, Pakistan, emphasized the need to work on a micro level, to document heritage, and to expand the network to include the experiences of women academics and students within the project. “We need translation projects. We should redefine education and knowledge for the sake of this project and to explore the difference between education and knowledge,” she stated.

Dr. Mbaye Lo said he has been involved in the research of Muslim institutions of higher education, and mentioned his recently published book on MENA. He said, “Islamization of Knowledge was based on empirical research, but we need to look at practice.” As such, he recommended that case studies should be done of universities across the Muslim world.

Jordi Serra, an associate of Dr. Ziauddin Sardar, remarked that it will be best to start with “something small that can be escalated; university might a good place to start, but lower levels must be considered too.” After all, he warned that when someone is not used to thinking for 14 or 16 years, and they are asked to think, “it’s not only difficult but unfair.”



Figure 15 Dr. Amaarah DeCuir providing her recommendations, with Jordi Serri and Dr. Marodsilton Muborakshoeva on her left and right, respectively

Concluding Remarks

After these scholars made their contributions, **Dr. Omar Kasule, Secretary General of IIIT**, offered **Concluding Remarks**. He began by saying, “Our departed leader, Dr. Jamal Barzinji, considered this a most important project and started working on the conference. I am very happy that we have kept his memory alive by actually holding this conference and carrying out the things from this conference that will keep the project going. We are fulfilling his wishes, it gives me a lot of contentment.” He went on to thank the President of Istanbul University, the Vice President, Dean of the Faculty of Theology, MAHYA, Prof. Bekir, the teams that have worked on the conference, the presenters, and the discussants.

He reiterated IIIT’s vision and commitment to renewal in the ummah with a focus on education and reform. “IIIT began in 1981 and it was a time of reawakening, *tajdid*, renewal and *islah*, and everybody was doing something about it. At IIIT, we said we’re only going to take part of this renewal which is *fikr* (thought) and *ma’arifa* (knowledge). But even within those, we focused on the issue of education and knowledge,” he explained. “We specifically focused on the areas of curriculum and paradigm. Islamization of Knowledge was an effort to change paradigms of knowledge – from parochial to universal. Our belief is that the Islamic worldview is for everyone, not just Muslims. It’s not been easy but the process is becoming clearer. We need to look at basic paradigms and see where they agree with the Islamic worldview. Most of the time they will agree but where they don’t agree, we need to make adjustments. The final thing we need to get at is the production of textbooks.”

He further highlighted that the regions IIIT works in and the roles they can play in the project. “The Europeans and Americans are organized and have quality structures and output. The Arab World has people that have direct access to the Qur’an and Sunnah. The Afro-Asia region has the most Islamic universities,” he asserted. “In the end, we will all need to pull together and help one another.” Regarding the role of the Integration of Knowledge project, he said, “we can produce policy papers that can guide others” who are working on diverse areas of reform of education.

Then, **Dr. Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali**, together with **Dr. Hisham Altalib**, thanked and recognized individuals from the Faculty of Theology at Istanbul University, Turkish and British colleagues, and the IIIT UK, Turkey, as well as US teams with gifts. In turn, **Dr. Murteza Bedir, Dean of Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University**, and **Prof. Dr. Recep Guloglu, Vice President of Istanbul University**, offered souvenirs to Dr. Ali and Dr. Unus in the form of ornate Turkish ceramic plates with ‘Istanbul University’ written on them. And with these exchanges, the conference on Reform of Education in Muslim Societies, March 18-19, 2016, came to an end.



Figure 16 (L-R) Dr. Anas receiving a gift from Prof. Dr. Recep Guloglu at the end of the conference

APPENDIX



International Conference

Toward Integration of Knowledge: Reforming Education in the Muslim World

Date: March 18-20, 2016 Venue: Istanbul, Turkey

Organized by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), in partnership with: the Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University

Dear Respected Colleague,

The Muslim world is 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 made similar points.

Early in the 1980s, the International Institute of Islamic Thought (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 'the intellectual and methodological decline' as the core cause of this malaise.

Over the last few years, the IIIT has held a number of meetings to discuss the state of education in the Muslim world and to chart a viable way forward. A number of discussion papers were presented at these meetings, held in London, Istanbul and at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, DC. The papers and deliberations of these meetings have now been summarized in a synthesized paper, 'Education Reform: From Islamization of Knowledge to Integration of Knowledge'.

The deliberations at the IIIT meetings led to a number of initial conclusions. It was 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 Lewis, has described it as "excellence without a soul". Social sciences have come under severe criticism both for their Eurocentrism and for fragmenting reality as though the political, social, economic and psychological human being were different species.

Another conclusion was that the overall problems of higher education are epistemological and ethical in nature. The way forward requires us to meet the epistemological and ethical challenges through integration of knowledge – which necessitates rethinking disciplinary identities and a new mode of thought that would integrate revealed knowledge with human efforts at knowledge production. In other words, we need a new paradigm rooted in the Qur'anic worldview and a *tawhidic* epistemology – based on the Islamic doctrine of *tawhid* (monotheism), and on responsibility to God and humanity. This paradigm accords importance to revealed and human knowledge, and recognizes the diversity and plurality of our societies, as well as the needs of the environment and the planet and the accelerating pace of new technologies and innovations that are transforming the world.

The IIIT is organizing a two-day conference to explore a roadmap leading towards a new notion of knowledge and education, where knowledge, creation, life and humanity are perceived as integrated within a *tawhidic* framework and serve the whole of humanity.

The conference has two key objectives: to deconstruct the definitional power of the modern knowledge system – complete with its disciplines, institutions and processes – and its dominant western-based worldview; and to explore the Qur'anic worldview and *tawhidic* paradigms of knowledge formation, that are based in the histories, legacies and traditions of Islam and offer a more humane and values-based appreciation of what constitutes learning and its advancement.

The conference will address a number of questions, including:

- How do we position *tawhid* as the Qur'an-based worldview and basis for integrated approaches to knowledge?
- What is the role of the legacy of Islam in the development of a new paradigm of learning at all levels of education?
- How can we ensure that the process of integration of knowledge is based on convincing epistemology and methods and leads to objectively valid results?
- What is required to make education, at all levels, appropriate to the diversity, complexity and chaotic nature of the contemporary world, an educational system that can deal with intricate and mutual interdependence of all forms of life?
- How do we create new knowledge based on ethical concerns such as social justice and public interest, environment and ecology, as well as reverence and humility?

With the above objectives in mind, the conference will be structured around four major themes:

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

We are inviting proposals for scholarly papers that explore these themes within the overall framework of developing a new discourse of knowledge and education that is inclusive and has meaning for us all, and through which we can deconstruct power and ideologies, engage and change the world for the common good, along with shaping pluralistic and viable futures. Each potential author is asked to send an abstract of their paper (ca.500 words) and an academic CV to: Dr. Iqbal Unus (iqbalunus@iiit.org) and cc:

Saulat Pervez (saulat@iiit.org). Selected papers will be published in an edited volume after the conference.

We would like to register our warm thanks and appreciation to Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for his participation in the project from its initial stages to its current development, and for taking part in all the meetings held in different countries to date. We also thank him for his invaluable intellectual input evolving ideas relating to the conference. For their critical work in providing initial papers and for helping develop the project, framework and ideas which have now been synthesized into a paper, we deeply thank our colleagues, Dr. Abdelwahab el-Affendi, Dr. Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, and Dr. Anas al-Shaikh-Ali. Finally, we express our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Professor Ziauddin Sardar for his intellectual input and his outstanding work in expertly producing the attached synthesized paper.

CONFERENCE TIMELINE

Abstract Deadline:	September 30, 2015
Abstract Acceptance Notification:	October 15, 2015
First Draft of the Paper Due:	December 15, 2015
Comments on the Paper Sent By:	January 15, 2016
Revised Conference Paper Due:	February 15, 2016
Conference:	March 18-20, 2016
Final Paper for Publication Due:	May 1, 2016

The organizers retain the right to cancel participation in case these deadlines are not honored.

HONORARIUM, TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

The authors will be compensated \$2,000 per paper: \$1,000 upon submission and acceptance, and \$1,000 after finalization for publication. Travel and accommodation will be provided by the organizers, within a reasonable limit.

DOCUMENTS AND MATERIALS

The papers, documents, and list of books referred to in this invitation letter are available at: <http://www.iiit.org/Research/ReformofHigherEducation/tabid/376/Default.aspx>


Dr. Jamal Barzinji


Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman

Reinventing Ourselves

From Islamization of Knowledge to Integration of Knowledge

AT THE 1744 Treaty of Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, between the Government of Virginia and the Six Nations, the Commissioners from Virginia, motivated to improve the conditions of the indigenous people, expressed their wish to establish a Fund for Educating Indians youth at Williamburg College. If the Six Nations would send down half a dozen of their young lads at our college, the Government spokesman said: “we would provide for them and ensure that they are educated in the ways of the modern world.” The Indian spokesman thought for a moment, and then replied:

We know that you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in those Colleges, and the maintenance of our young men, while with you, would be very expensive to you. We are convinced, therefore, that you mean to do us good by your proposal; and we thank you heartily. But you, who are wise, must know that different nations have different conceptions of things; and you will therefore not take it amiss, if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same as yours. We have had some experience of it. Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the Colleges of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your sciences, but, when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods, unable to bear either cold or hunger, knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, or kill an enemy, spoke our language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, nor counsellors. They were totally good for nothing. We are however not the less obliged by your kind offer, though we decline accepting it. And to show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them.

Different nations have different conceptions of things; and, we can add, after Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*. It is through education that a nation, a society, or a civilisation, 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. It furnishes a worldview within which the society seeks to solve its problems, delineates its social relations and economic activity, makes sense of itself, pushes the frontiers of knowledge, and continues as a living entity.

It is through education that a nation, a society, or a civilisation, 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. It furnishes a worldview within which the society seeks to solve its problems, delineates its social relations and economic activity, makes sense of itself, pushes the frontiers of knowledge, and continues as a living entity.

relations and economic activity, makes sense of itself, pushes the frontiers of knowledge, and continues as a living entity. The Indians realised that the education offered by the Government of Virginia did not equip their young with the skills and knowledge they needed to survive; worse, it threatened the very existence of their culture and society.

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 colonised 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. Thus, education is not simply a process through which knowledge is imparted; it is also, in the shape of higher education, the mechanism through which knowledge is actually generated. Even if Muslim societies have values to share, without a thriving education system, as Abdelwahab El-Affendi notes, 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.’ But it was not simply worldly knowledge that evaporated from Muslim societies. The decline of great Muslim educational institutions, described so aptly by George Makdisi in *The Rise of Colleges*, also eroded the appreciation of Muslim heritage and legacy, and led to the erosion of Muslim norms and values, and perversion of religious knowledge.

But the ‘Six Nations’ anecdote also points towards a predicament. As El-Affendi points out, “while the Indians were right about the inappropriateness of the new knowledge to their societies at the time,” and thus shunned the new knowledge, “this choice did nothing to preserve their cultures or save them from colonialism and subjugation.” We are thus faced with a fundamental paradox: “to what extent can the capacity to absorb knowledge within an existing cultural paradigm assume a certain level of knowledge acquisition to start with?” The Indians, like the Muslims who followed a similar path later on, did not help themselves by remaining ignorant; “the resulting power differential drove the former to extinction and the latter to subjugation.” Therefore 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,” hence some appreciation and excellence in contemporary knowledge is essential.

The function of this paper is to synthesise our extensive deliberations on reform of higher education in the Muslim world; and to present a more coherent picture of our arguments and positions. I have used various papers presented at meetings (including those by Abdelwahab El-Affendi, Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, Anwar Ibrahim, Abdulkader Tayob, and Abdulaziz Sachedina), commentaries on papers, our correspondence on e-mail, and supplementary conversations as my raw material. Of course, the synthesis is infused with my own arguments, critique and perspective, as one would expect. Finally, I have tried to integrate various recommendations and suggestions into an overall framework that moves the project forward in a contemporary and meaningful way.

I begin by retracing some relevant history.

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. Much like the Six Nations, 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. The products of this system were alienated from their own societies, were often poor counterparts of their western contemporaries, and seldom contributed to the positive development of their own countries. Westernised 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 emphasise the material aspect of education at all levels. Even if the graduates of modern educational institutions displayed a sense of independent inquiry and intellectual curiosity, which was rarely the case, they patently lacked, to use the words of Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, the Qur’anic notion of “consciousness and knowledge” – “that is the discernment of truth, which, at its highest level, is knowledge of God.”

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.

Given all the criticism that the ‘Islamization of Knowledge’ project has received, including my own, what need is there to revisit it? It is important to have a sense of history. No attempt at reform can take place in total vacuum. We always build on previous projects through critiquing them and move forward by learning from their successes and failures. Moreover, no attempt at reform is totally devoid of merit even though it may have been discredited by later criticism based on hindsight.

Indeed, the ‘Islamization of Knowledge’ project was itself a product of criticism of early attempts at tackling ‘the malaise of the ummah’ – even though it was not explicitly stated. In his initial paper that started our discussions, El-Affendi pointed out that:

by the end of the nineteenth century, perceptive minds like Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Kayr al-Din al-Tunisi began to notice the barren nature of the new school system set up in Istanbul and Cairo... Afghani noted the failure of the new schools, sixty years after the first were established, to produce any self-sustaining system of autonomous knowledge production. His prognosis at the time was that it was because those schools did not teach philosophy. There was a sense in which he was right, since teaching fragments of knowledge and technical expertise without an over-arching framework and vision of the world is not likely to produce knowledge in any meaningful sense of the world. He himself gave an example of the fundamental ‘philosophical’ transformation the Quran brought about in the Arab frame of mind as the galvanising and decisive factor which brought the Islamic civilisation into existence. Although he did not say this, but the implication was that in Europe, the radical philosophical transformation, in this case the Enlightenment, was the decisive factor in creating the new framework of knowledge production and acquisition.

In his comments on El-Affendi, Anwar Ibrahim quotes Muhammad Iqbal: “knowledge itself, without the requisite virtues such as humility, generosity, the love of truth and justice, will be ‘but cold as death’, like ‘Satan’s progeny...but if it blends with love, it joins the ranks of high celestial spirits.’” Al-Faruqi and his fellow travellers, including AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, Taha Jabir Alalwani, Mona Abdul-Fadl and others were

building on the works of Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Kayr al-Din al-Tunisi, Muhammad Iqbal, Malik Bennabi, Muhammad Asad, Ali Shariati and numerous others one can mention.

The most obvious thing that jumps out of the pages of *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (hitherto referred to 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” and “these evils have caused the average Muslim to withdraw into the bliss of blind faith, to lean toward literalism and dogmatism;” every Muslim state is “divided against itself;” and the core cause of this malaise is “the intellectual and methodological decline of the ummah.” Faruqi’s criticism is largely directed towards the West. He felt that the latter’s imposition of a “secular system of education” undermined the foundations of faith and culture in Muslim societies.

Ibrahim sees “a host of issues that cumulatively give the distinct picture of the state of education in Muslim countries” as “catastrophic.”

If the diagnosis was correct in 1982, when the project was initially launched and *Work Plan* first published (the second edition published in 1989), it is even more pertinent today. The *Work Plan* described “the malaise of thought and methodology,” and the state of education in Muslim societies, as a “crisis.” The 2003 *Arab Human Development Report: Building a Knowledge Society*, talked of a “knowledge deficit” that was “deeply rooted” and “grave.” Now Ibrahim sees “a host of issues that cumulatively give the distinct picture of the state of education in Muslim countries” as “catastrophic.” The language itself suggests that we are on a sharp decline.

Another aspect of the *Work Plan* that can be read between the lines is its concern for meaning. The discussion about the ossification of “traditional methodology,” the issues of *ijtihad* that were restricted “to those who saw no need of it” and were convinced that all was “absolutely adequate” and “the problem of the Muslim world was merely one of human reluctance to realise the value of Islam” is essentially about meaning. The basic argument here is that *fiqh* and its methodology as well as Islam itself has been drained of meaning, resulting largely in Muslim societies lack purpose and a sense of direction. Without meaning, there can be no purpose in the lives of Muslims; and without purpose the western or traditionally educated Muslim, can neither be an agent who adopts some ends, nor become the means to an end. Muslims could thus hardly be expected to devote themselves to the achievement of something. Again, this insight is not explicitly stated but has to be teased out from the text.

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.

Just how relevant and contemporary is this framework can be judged by the wide-ranging criticism in the academic literature on the fragmentary nature of knowledge and the reductive mode of education in the institutions of higher learning. The ‘first principles’ also answer a question frequently raised by Henzell-Thomas: “don’t we need

to get beyond the attachment to competing paradigms and models (which are usually inherently dichotomous and adversarial) and realise that the way forward is a new mode of consciousness which is integrative and inclusive?" Henzell-Thomas suggests that this is in fact the message of the Qur'an as well as a great deal of contemporary thought, for example in philosophy and futures studies, which emphasises the "integral" approach to knowledge production and education. He cites the work of the philosopher Jean Gebser who argues that humanity is at the stage of transition from the "Mental" to the "Integral" structure of consciousness. Gebser described "the deficient form of the 'Mental' structure as the value-free ontology of rational materialism," but upheld that "this moribund 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 the like." In futures studies, there is a distinct methodology called 'integral futures' that explicitly seeks to integrate a different perspective as well as the Self and the Other. The 'first principles' provide just such an integral framework which emphasises 'unity in multiplicity.'

So the *Work Plan* does offer us something concrete to build upon. Far from reinventing the wheel, the 'first principles,' the quest for meaning, and the diagnosis of the 'crisis,' which has turned into a 'catastrophe,' facing Muslim societies should be our starting point for any future endeavour.

Problems arise when the *Work Plan* attempts to answer the question posed by Afghani, and reframed by El-Affendi: "why aren't our institutions generating original knowledge?" The answer provided by the *Work Plan*, to put it briefly, is that western knowledge does not provide Muslim society with real meaning; for it to be meaningful to the ummah knowledge has to be 'Islamised.' 'Islamization' is posited as an anti-thesis to 'westernisation' and 'modernisation'; and 'Islamization of knowledge' is presented as a process that "reflects the objectives, norms and ultimate purpose of revelation." The *Work Plan* proposes that we start by mastering contemporary disciplines of social sciences and the legacy of Islam and – essentially – 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. The exact relevance to the philosophy of Islam and the method and objective of each discipline needs to be determined. A new way in which the reformed discipline can serve the ideals of Islam must be determined and a new trail must be blazed." This is where the basic misconception occurs: there is 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. The *Work Plan* also assumes that new knowledge will be created simply by creating new institutions devoted to Islamization as a linear process. But as El-Affendi points out the problem is circular in nature: "to produce new knowledge we need new institutions, but institutions cannot be produced without new forms of knowledge." Moreover, despite its emphasis on integration of knowledge, the 'Islamization' agenda, as Henzell-Thomas suggests, "actually perpetuate unhelpful and obstructive aspects of the secular/religious dichotomy." And, Henzell-Thomas asks further, "how is 'Islamization' to be guarded from the negative connotations attached not only to the term itself but also to the perceived spectre of 'Islamification'" – the spectre that is haunting the Muslim world today?

The issues of the legacy of Islam raised by the *Work Plan* are also pertinent and relevant to our discussions. It is our historical legacy that provides us with a sense of continuity

Bennabi who “attributed what he called ‘civilizational bankruptcy’ (particularly within Muslim societies) to the dearth of new ideas, and the concomitant tendency to keep on harking back to the achievements of the ‘golden age of Islamic civilisation’ built by their forefathers instead of examining how the values and principles which gave rise to such a civilisation can be renewed, re-interpreted and applied in the contemporary world.”

and identity – where we are going, and want to go, depends to some extent on where we are coming from. To have any inkling of our future, we need to have some understanding of our past. Our view of history shapes how we see the present and envisage a future – as demonstrated by this project – and thus it dictates what answers we produce for our current and future problems. As Henzell-Thomas notes, “the intellectual history of Islam grappled with some fundamental issues on knowledge, ethics, self and society. I see these debates as resources for critical reflection in Islamic educational reform.” Our legacy has deep roots in liberal arts, liberalism and humanism that we need to re-examine. However, the *Work Plans* presents ‘the legacy’ as a singular entity, something which could be processed, classified and mastered once and for all – not as pluralistic histories that we read, re-read, interpret and reinterpret and constantly revisit. This notion reflects Henzell-Thomas’ frustration, articulated with reference to Malik Bennabi who “attributed what he called ‘civilizational bankruptcy’ (particularly within Muslim societies) to the dearth of new ideas, and the concomitant tendency to keep on harking back to the achievements of the ‘golden age of Islamic civilisation’ built by their forefathers instead of examining how the values and principles which gave rise to such a civilisation can be renewed, re-interpreted and applied in the contemporary world.” 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 (‘the ulama have solved all our problems, brother’). Our historical 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.

How we need to engage with history, and how it demonstrates relevance to our current problems, is well illustrated by Abdulkadar Toyab. Through a critical engagement with Rumi, Toyab shows that his thought provides us with acute insights into identity and explorations of self and Other – a problem not just for Muslim societies but for all societies. As Toyab tells us, “identity and authenticity are critical issues in modern societies, endlessly debated in philosophy, the humanities and the social sciences. I have identified it as a problem in modern educational reform programmes and discourses of Muslims in the last hundred years.” Of course, Rumi does not provide us with all the answers but his works do provide “a radically new perspective from modernist and postmodernist readings of identity” – and indicate the general direction of travel we need to undertake.

Our future direction of travel thus involves basing our analysis both 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 never produced in a vacuum; it 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. Physical and social reality is not neatly laid out in a pattern exemplified by disciplinary structure of western knowledge system. The idea that reality is compartmentalised as ‘physics’ and ‘chemistry,’ ‘sociology’ and ‘anthropology,’ ‘religion’ and ‘politics,’ ‘law’ and ‘ethics’ 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.' Each academic discipline has emerged within a particular cultural context; and each has its own specific history that defines its contours. Modern disciplines, as we know and understand them, began when such fields of study as geography, sociology, anthropology and history became professions. Geography acquired prominence during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the European 'age of discovery' when the rapid expansion of colonial powers in Asia and Africa and the need for collection of revenues made it necessary to survey the land. The desire to manage and control the natives Europe conquered gave rise to anthropology. While the function of anthropology was to study the exotic Others with the aim of proving the inalienable superiority of Europe, the objective of sociology was to inquire into the lifestyles of the underclass, the Other within Europe. The function of History, which in its modern reincarnation emerged at about the same time as the nation state, was to put all the pieces together and demonstrate that the History of Europe was in fact Universal History – histories of all other cultures and civilisations were mere tributaries that naturally flowed into the great river of European achievements. Other disciplines, such as Orientalism, psychology, political science and economics, emerged after the Enlightenment, each embedded in its materialistic worldview. All these disciplines developed within this intellectual heritage, and evolved to solve the particular physical, material, mental and intellectual problems of this tradition. Whatever the discipline, the overall narrative was the same: to perpetuate the worldview of the West. This narrative still informs all disciplines. Just because these academic disciplines are accepted and practised throughout the world, and universities everywhere structure their departments according to them, does not mean that they are universally valid or that we are duty bound to work within and perpetuate them. As I have written elsewhere, "burgers and Coke are eaten and drank throughout the world but one would hardly classify them as a universally embraced and acceptable food: what the presence of burgers and Coke in every city and town in the world demonstrates is not their universality but the power and dominance of the culture that has produced them. Disciplines too are like burgers and Coke: they are made neither in heaven nor do they exist out there in some 'reality' but are socially constructed and develop and grow within specific worldviews and cultural milieu." As such, disciplines do not have autonomous existence of their own but have meaning largely in the worldview of their origins and evolution. It is hardly surprising then, as the *Work Plan* rightly postulated, the modern disciplines have little meaning for Muslim cultures.

There are three other aspects of academic disciplines that we need to appreciate. First, disciplines not only represent a presumed structure of knowledge, they also *discipline* – that is, they punish and correct. They perform, writes Indian historian Vinay Lal, "the work of disciplining recalcitrant elements of society, endorsing and justifying inequality, creating new forms of oppression, and stifling dissent. The academic disciplines have so disciplined the world – one has only to think of the extraordinary legitimacy granted to 'economic science' and the role of economists as the pundits of our times, whose very word, when dispensed through such conduits of the imperial financial architecture as the World Bank and the IMF, is law to beleaguered developing countries – that any intellectual, social, cultural, or economic intervention outside the framework of modern knowledge appears to be regressive, a species of indigenism, the mark of obdurate primitives, and certainly futile."

Second, they colonise the future. The time dimension of the West is not limited to the past and the present: the West is also the future. The West was not just in history; it is

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remade in the present and reconstructed in the future by academic disciplines. As disciplines developed and are internalised more and more by other cultures, perpetuated by universities everywhere, they become an integral part of the global consciousness. As such, much of the immediate and near future has already been colonised by the western worldview. When the *Work Plan* was first produced, the colonisation of the future was known as ‘westernisation.’ Now it goes under the rubric of ‘globalisation.’ It may be naïve to equate the former with the latter, but the end product is the same: the process that is transforming the world into the proverbial ‘global village,’ rapidly shrinking distances, compressing space and time, is also shaping the world in the image of a single culture and civilisation.

Third, academic disciplines provide the West with its ultimate power: the power to define. The real power of the West, its worldview with all its axioms and assumptions, is not located in its economic muscle (which is still considerable), its military prowess (no other power on the planet can challenge the military might of the US), and technological ability (which has escalated considerably with the emergence of the Internet). Rather, it resides in its power to define. The West defines what is, for example, freedom, progress, civilisation and civil behaviour; democracy and human rights; law, tradition and community; reason, mathematics and science; who is a dictator or a terrorist or a moderate person; what is real and what it means to be human. Academic disciplines provide learned, scholarly and rational legitimacy to the defining concepts. The non-western cultures and civilisations have simply to accept these definitions or be disciplined by disciplines and be defined out of existence! Something that is clearly happening to Islam and Muslim societies – this is the real catastrophe.

These three aspects of academic disciplines relate to power; and without addressing and dissecting the issues of power we are not going to make any real progress of reform – however we imagine or plan it. Given this power framework of modern knowledge and its disciplinary structure, which operate like a sophisticated, hydraulic vice, one can legitimately question the recommendation to “establish centres of excellence in a variety of fields, prioritising the social sciences” as El-Affendi suggests. Even though we may emphasise ‘excellence’ we will end up in the very fields that undermine and marginalise Muslim cultures. What exactly is this ‘excellence’ anyway? As Henzell-Thomas playfully suggests “we can talk about a professional hit man, but would it not be rather strange to say that Mario is an *excellent* hit man, unless we were members of the Mafia”; excellence is not simply about personal mastery of a domain of activity or skill or effectiveness in accomplishing a task but includes excellence of human character, and that has a moral and ultimately a spiritual dimension. There is evidence from the world of sport that amateurs often have much better ethical values than professionals, probably because their objective is not typically to ‘win at all costs.’ Even a ‘centre of excellence,’ focussed on existing disciplines of social sciences, is still a transplant if it is located in the Muslim world; and if it is situated in a western institution it simply preserves the dominance of the West. Either way, it contributes to what Henzell-Thomas describes as a sense of cultural “homelessness” of Muslim societies.

Thus the problem we face in thinking about the reform of higher education in Muslim societies is not simply that “the secular academic model is not ideologically neutral” and “perpetrates the materialist-consumerist worldview,” as suggested by Henzell-Thomas – a realization that echoes the *Work Plan*. The problem is that values and assumptions of the “secular academic model” actually constitute the paradigm – they are the paradigm, as well as the actual building blocks of the disciplines. So one cannot eject the ideological and cultural bias of the ‘the secular academic model’ if one works

within them, within the paradigm. Even if you are a dissenter, or wish to approach the subject from a radically different perspective, the paradigm knows how to discipline and domesticate you. For without these ideological assumptions and cultural values there will be no academic disciplines.

A couple of examples to illustrate this somewhat dense argument would be useful. Consider the nineteenth century discipline of eugenics. It was rightly condemned by right minded and well-meaning academics and thoroughly disgraced. But it did not disappear; it re-emerged as 'development,' which deployed exactly the same evolutionist assumptions and framework to categorise non-western nations, societies and cultures: under-developed, developing, 'emerging' (as though from the proverbial slime), developed, or highly developed. Indeed, development has been no less insidious in its effect on non-western people than eugenics. Think of anthropology, which ashamed of its role as the handmaiden to the colonial enterprise, tried desperately to reinvent itself as 'reflexive anthropology,' 'postmodern anthropology,' 'radical anthropology' – indeed, there are journals totally devoted to 'rethinking anthropology.' Yet, the axioms and assumptions of the discipline remain intact and despite all the promises to be responsive and responsible to the people it studies, anthropology is hardly a humane discipline. The recent record of anthropologists working amongst the Amazon tribes – where blood has been stolen and sold to corporations for DNA research, viruses have been introduced to test immunity, and tribes have been encouraged to be violent for the benefit of the cameras – amply demonstrates that all the colonial assumptions and cultural prejudices of the discipline are alive and well. Many of the anthropologists today work for corporations, where they help develop culturally sensitive products that could be sold to 'emerging markets.'

The task of reforming education in Muslim societies is thus much more profound than we have hitherto imagined. It has two basic components: to deconstruct the definitional power of the modern knowledge system – complete with its disciplines, institutions, and processes – and its western worldview; and to produce alternative paradigms of knowledge formation, that take into account the histories, legacies and traditions of Islam 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 hence the defining power of the West – and calling for more humane paradigms that consider the diversity and plurality of our societies and take the needs of the environment and planet as a whole into consideration. Changes in the contemporary context, and the accelerating pace of new technologies and innovations that are transforming the world 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 world has changed drastically since the days the original *Work Plan* was produced. It has become more globalised and more interconnected. The old paradigm of America leading the world is being undermined as power shifts to China, India and Brazil, and a re-emergent Russia (known as BRIC countries). Serious cracks are beginning to emerge in academic disciplines themselves, for centuries a bastion

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of stability. The capitalist economic system is not working; or working just for one percent of the world populations who are accumulating the bulk of its wealth at the expense of increasing inequality. Economic theory is under attack from within and without academia. A plethora of recent books have attempted to dethrone it, not least Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* which shows that inequality is intrinsic in economic progress. Development theory lies in tatters. In the age of google maps, Geography is not what it used to be. In fact, no one studies 'geography' any more – they study cities, spatial cognition, urban landscapes, tourism, environment, anything and everything under the rubric of geography. Epistemologically, the Enlightenment idea of Modernity, as it is now widely recognised, has failed. The failure of modernity is attributed to a single Western paradigm which dictated its view of change without regard to other cultures. Modernity, and its associated concepts of progress, efficiency, and development, transformed vast swathes of our planet into disaster zones – of which climate change is the most evident example. The 'modern man' is deeply implicated in changing the planet itself: human behaviour and its impact on Earth's atmosphere has become so significant as to constitute a new geological epoch – leading to the concept of the Anthropocene, a new geological epoch measured from the time when human activities began to have a global impact on the Earth's ecosystem. The notion of postmodernism, a reaction against the destructive impact of modernity, has also run its course. Its emphasis on absolute relativism has led to the fragmentation of the world, increasing strife and discord. While rejecting all Grand Narrative, it presented liberal secularism as a Grand Theory of Salvation; and turned out to be a new form of imperialism. Postmodernity has arrived at a globalized levelling of differences which threatens the extinction of culture altogether in terminal post-culture; and has generated an acute crisis of identity that is a major source of so much conflict in today's world. The theory and process of globalisation which sees globalisation as a one-way street where the flow of ideas is essentially from West to the rest, where Western culture, political institutions and 'free market' are seen as a panacea which has to be imposed, willingly or unwilling, on the rest of the world, is nothing short of disastrous. Even the concept of multiculturalism, rooted in modernity and postmodernity, has become hollow and vacuous and drained of any notion of power. It has turned difference into a fetish. Basically, all these narratives – modernity, postmodernity, globalisation, multiculturalism – privilege liberalism, secularism and hence the domination of western culture and western ways of being and doing. This is why China and India appear to be more western than the West itself. The old paradigms, it is being increasingly argued, have really passed their 'sell by' dates!

So the crisis, in all its social, cultural and intellectual dimensions, we face is not limited to Muslim societies. The West is also in a state of acute crisis. Indeed, the crisis is global in nature. It is a product of a number of developments over the last few decades. The rate of change, for example, has accelerated rapidly. The processing power of computers has continued to double every two years – as predicted by Moore's law. A smart phone now has more computing power than all the computers used to put a man on the moon. It took 36 years to map the genome of a fly, 13 years to map the human genome, and now you can have your gnome mapped within a day. The noted futurist Jim Dator has pointed out we are facing a 'tsunami of change.' As the world becomes more and more globalised, we become more and more interconnected. Indeed, the whole world is a network criss-crossed by networks of individuals, groups, communities, institutions, corporations, nations, constantly connected to each other by Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, e-mails, e-lists, internet newsgroups, mobile phones, text, video conferencing, and blogs. Global television channels broadcast 24-hour news. When things are networked they tend to become more complex. Most of the problems

we face are global in nature, connected to a web of networks, entrenched in an environment of accelerating change, and are thus highly complex. There is nothing simple about ‘fixing the economy’ or solving problems of energy shortage, or fighting pandemics (as the Ebola epidemic demonstrates) or doing something about poverty and illiteracy, or changing social, educational or cultural institutions. Complex issues are generally described as ‘wicked problems’ – that is, to solve one problem one has to solve a plethora of other interconnected problems in relation to each other. A complex system has many positions that are logically inconsistent; problems that require conflicting ideas to understand let alone solve; and numerous groups with irreconcilable views. Contradictions thus become the norm.

It is natural for a networked complex system, full of contradictions and experiencing rapid change, to generate positive feedback and accelerate towards the edge of chaos. We are thus constantly on the verge of crisis and catastrophes ranging from ‘market failure,’ turbulent political change, social unrest, pandemics, mass migration of refugees, ‘the crisis of European higher education’ to irreversible climate change, mass extinction of species and even the crisis in the ‘standard model’ of physics!

Elsewhere, I have described the current turbulent and changing times – where the accent is on complexity, contradictions and chaos (the 3Cs) – as ‘postnormal times.’ The function of the theory is to emphasise that normal paradigms that have so far guided the West and the rest are collapsing. Here, it should suffice to state that it includes the conventional notions of the production of knowledge, the disciplinary structures, and the institutions and processes that sustain and promote it. For any reform to be meaningful, we have to shape paradigms that are ‘post’ – that is go above and beyond existing ‘normal’ paradigms.

A complex, interconnected world requires an integrated, unified perspective on knowledge and education – one of the ‘first principles’ of the *Work Plan*: ‘the unity of knowledge.’ But the current paradigm intrinsically divides knowledge into smaller and smaller isolated segments: science is separated from social sciences, social sciences are isolated from humanities, humanities are detached from arts; and each discipline within this artificial division is kept in air-tight compartments, jealously guarding its power and territory. Each discipline may thus produce greater refinement but is unable to tackle complex problems, interconnected to a host of other problems in a network. Garry Jacob, CEO of the World Academy of Art and Science (an international organisation of 500 intellectuals, of which, it has to be said in the interest of full disclosure, I am a Fellow), describes the current system of knowledge production and higher education as “akin to driving 1914 Model T Fords down modern superhighways.” “Modern secular, scientific education,” he writes, “has increasingly restricted the conscious transmission of values to mental, organizational and work values, leading the transmission of core human values to informal social learning. The effort to be purely objective has stripped education of its most valuable essence.” Thus, today we have “arrived at a critical juncture where perpetuation and extension of the existing paradigm in education and other fields are grossly inadequate to meet the needs of humanity”; and “there is a pressing need to move beyond existing concepts and models to conceive and implement a system capable of tapping the rich human potential that remains largely underdeveloped and neglected in the existing system.”

The social sciences in the ‘existing system’ are one of the main culprits in the current paradigm. In social sciences, notes another study by the World Academy of Art and Science, which has spent decades researching the problems of knowledge production:

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consistency and unification between and across disciplines are a rare exception. The theories governing each discipline exist in airtight compartments, each in its own separate world of principles and phenomena. It is almost as if the political, social, economic and psychological human being were different species, each with its own unique characteristics, rather than multiple roles and fields of expression common to all human beings. With few exceptions, each of the social sciences seeks to understand and describe a particular dimension of social reality with minimum reference to the action or interaction with other dimensions. Micro economic theories assume a set of specific conditions rarely found in the real world and regard all variations as intrusive externalities rather than natural and inevitable facts of the interrelationship between the economic, political, social and psychological dimensions of reality. This tendency reaches its acme in the neoliberal concept of free or unregulated markets, based on the premise that law and regulation are external factors interfering with the normal equilibrium-seeking movement between supply and demand. In reality, few markets – other than the black variety and the underworld – could exist at all in the absence of the legal and regulatory framework that defines and protect property rights and contractual relationships. Moreover, economics ignores the large non-monetarized part of human activity, all that we people do without exchange of money, the vital core of our existence without which no society or culture could survive and function, which represented around 80% of value added at the time of Adam Smith. Division and fragmentation of reality are the governing rules and *modus operandi* in the social sciences. Disciplinary and conceptual boundaries don't just focus attention; they also inhibit the discovery and study of processes that transcend those boundaries and bias public policy development in certain directions.

Thus neither Muslim societies nor the West need more social sciences, which cannot meet the challenges of postnormal times that “defy comprehension and resolution based on the prevailing principles and specialized knowledge developed by separate social science disciplines.” To be viable as future enterprises, the study argues, social sciences have to deal with complexity and intricate and mutual interdependence of “all forms of life with one another and their physical environment; the social complexity of myriad interactions and interrelationships between human beings, their institutions and cultures; and the psychological complexity of conscious and subconscious thoughts, feelings, attitudes, needs, desires, sensations, and impulses which confront us with the insoluble mystery of our own personalities and of all those we relate to.” What ‘wicked problems’ demand is an approach that emphasises 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, the abode of our terrestrial journey (‘unity of life’). So the first principles, the axioms mistakenly described by the *Work Plan* as a “methodology,” 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 first principles do not focus solely on ‘Muslims’ or ‘Muslim societies’ but on the whole of humanity. Moreover, a natural corollary of these axioms is that human society and individuality cannot be properly understood in terms of modernity, postmodernism, secularism, positivism, reductionism, formalism and naturalism and numerous other ‘isms’ that have brought us to the edge of chaos in the first place. Human beings are purposeful. We create social, economic, political and cultural institutions not just to

meet certain needs, achieve certain objectives, but also to realize certain values. We pursue knowledge not only to acquire greater understanding and more effective action in the real world but also to promote certain principles that integrate knowledge with our cherished values, emphasise the interdependence of creation, unite humanity, promote equity and justice, and preserve and enhance life. Henzell-Thomas refers to this when he constantly emphasizes “holistic education” and insists that “we should be talking about education in a more universal sense.”

Any meaningful attempt to integrate knowledge must include science and technology – something that has been seriously neglected in our discussions. Henzell-Thomas expressed concern about “the widespread over-emphasis on the applied sciences over the social sciences and humanities in higher education” but also presented the counter-argument “that the corrective emphasis on science and technology has become unavoidable in view of the indisputably backward state of scientific research in Muslim societies.” A study of 20 member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference has found that these countries spent only one-seventh of the global average on scientific research from 1996-2003. This equates to 0.34 percent of their gross domestic product. El-Affendi thought that “the basic needs of society in technical skills are largely being met.” Ibrahim pointed out that some rich Arab states have “pumped huge sums into science and technology but what is there to show for the research output? This begs the question: was the oil money invested by way of R&D and higher education or was it used to purchase science and technology?” He suggested our reform efforts should be “broadened to attract more scholars and participants from the physical sciences.”

There are some basic points to be made about science and technology. As Isaiah Berlin pointed out over half a century ago, science and technology, have “above all others, shaped human history” in our time. It is “certainly the greatest success story of our time”; and requires great and mounting attention from all quarters. But science cannot take indigenous root in a society where philosophy is shunned and there is a conspicuous absence of culture of curiosity, inquiry and scientific enterprise. Whatever the statistics say or do not say, the fact is that no meaningful science is done, or has been done for over a hundred years, in Muslim societies. Without a thriving scientific and technological culture, Muslims cannot play any part in shaping human history. Moreover, separating science from other aspects of knowledge, as though it was a totally neutral endeavour, as Tayob notes, is to “disingenuously separate technique from culture, creating binary relations between form and content, means and ends. The approach assumes that there is nothing that links (science), technology and ethics, form and content. In our times, this approach provides a justification for turning to the West, and reinforces dependency whilst appearing to be independent.” At the very least, science and technology, as the driving forces of the future, also need to be critiqued and deconstructed from the perspective of the ‘First Principles.’ If, “Muslim culture identifies true knowledge with moral rectitude,” as Henzell-Thomas states, then should we not be exploring the moral and ethical consequences of scientific and technological advances? Integration of knowledge would make little sense if we left an important part of the equation out of the reform agenda. How could we meaningfully promote the unity of creation, humanity or life while allowing science and technology to undermine these very principles?

Tayob goes on to say that those who suggest that social and human sciences could be separated from the technological sciences argue that “the former would be exclusively drawn from the intellectual legacy of Islam, while the latter as techniques would be

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imported and developed from the advances made by the laboratories and factories outside (mainly in the West).” But the intellectual legacy of Islam furnishes us with both: a great heritage of scientific works and an equally prodigious inheritance of social and human sciences. We need both to sustain our future endeavours. However, it is not a question of going back to the classical Islamic framework – even though, as Ibrahim notes, “we know the Bayt al-Hikmah of the Golden Age of Islam gave birth to not just philosophers but eminent scientists as the holistic pursuit of knowledge saw the genesis of ‘philosopher-scientists’ competent in a wide spectrum of intellectual disciplines” Our classical heritage was a product of another period, over a thousand years ago where change was slow if not quasi-static and society operated on a different scale and levels of complication. Our classical thought had its own problems, particularly with plurality and diversity. By anchoring ourselves with classical thought we risk the danger of overlooking plurality and diversity within Islam and may end up denying viable alternative paradigms that are not totally in sync with the classical outlook. But we do need to learn from, and build on, the heritage, revisit the works of our great thinkers to discover the contemporary relevance of their ideas, and, as Ibrahim once said, instead of preserving the ashes of their fire move forward with its flame.

New paradigms do not emerge over night; nor do they displace existing paradigms suddenly and quickly. Paradigm shifts take decades of sustained thought and effort. Often the new emerges under the shadow of the old. Once again we face a paradox: to generate a new paradigm we need expertise and excellence in the old one! “Most research bodies currently encourage inter-disciplinarity and cross-disciplinary work,” El-Affendi writes: “Some universities, such as Arizona SU, are experimenting with reconfiguring disciplines (thus abolishing Anthropology altogether in favour of a science of human exploration; that brings together biology, archaeology, geography, history, etc.). Some other ventures have gone even further, doing away with disciplines altogether, and forcing all staff to work together.” However, in such outfits you still need someone to be good at the old basic disciplines, understand the latest thinking in discourse analysis, and be fully aware of new methodologies. “Not only that, but sub-specialisations also need to be catered for. No one these days can master all branches of physics and chemistry, let alone be good at all medical specialisations. Thus it is impossible to do away with many sub-specialisations in disciplines, let alone whole disciplines for simple practical reasons. But even if we decide to do away with disciplines, the entity undertaking such a move must include those who are competent in all the relevant disciplines to ensure that nothing is lost and much is gained by such moves. Otherwise, it could be like the Mongols chucking books into the Tigris without the slightest idea about what they contained.” So the old paradigms linger on while the new develop and grow until they become the dominant paradigms – and the old may still continue in some functional way. Our project of reform should thus be seen in multi-generational terms. The seeds we sow in our times will only bear fruit in some not-so-distant future.

The Question of Language

Once we have determined what we wish to talk about, we need to decide how we talk about it. That is why we have devoted considerable time to the issues 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, shape our perceptions of the world around us, and engage with the world to change it. Yet, language is full of ambiguity

and in a fertile ground for misinterpretation or misunderstanding. Language is the preeminent tool of culture; and like culture, language has a history, layered like a vast archaeological site, the repository of acquired meaning. “Language is like a maze of little streets and squares,” wrote Wittgenstein, “of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses.” Like an old but thriving city, such as Fez or Istanbul, language is alive, lived in, adapting the old to new purposes. But the relationship between language and social change is not, and has never been, direct and uniform. As I have written elsewhere:

Text is always subject to context and context provides for differential rates of change and usage in language and its multiple meanings. And society, like our language, is always a work in progress where ideas and attitudes as well as behaviours preserve, conserve, adapt, progress, liberalise and change according to the diversity of backgrounds and beliefs of the population at large.

The more complex society becomes, the more specialised contexts it develops. This gives rise to more and more specialised groups, professions, disciplines of learning, as well as interest groups and subcultures, each of which can develop their own language to discuss their own business amongst themselves. At different rates and with varying affects these specialised languages and meaning can pass into the mainstream or affect the rest of society hardly at all. Complexity means different, even contradictory, meanings of words can continue to exist side by side or be used by different groups simultaneously. As new meanings and implications of language are being developed there is no inflexible law decreeing that old implications, associations or evocative import disappear.

We thus need to be precise in our use of language: we have to say what we intend to say, and ensure we say what we mean. Or, as Henzell-Thomas put it, “one of our pivotal objectives needs to be the marshalling of a level of terminology which provides orientation and balance in the way we navigate concepts.” We have to distinguish authentic concepts from their distortions and counterfeits, their historic meaning and the new meaning we may wish to give them to “avoid being taken in or manipulated by ideological labels.” So 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.”

At the very least, a concise terminology will help us avoid absurdities like ‘Islamicity,’ raising the connotations of ferocity and causticity. Indeed, during our discussion we came across an ‘Islamicity index’ described as “a measure which encompasses laws and governance, human and political rights, international relations, and economic factors,” but which create the spectre of Islam globalising the world. The countries that topped the list and are seen as the most faithful to the values of the Qur’an – Ireland, Denmark, Sweden and the UK – would in fact be horrified to know that they have islamicity being pumped into their societies like electricity.

This task begins with the very description of what we have resolved to do, what we wish to talk about. I have used the term ‘reform’ but is it a process of reform, reconfiguration, revitalization, re-envisioning or transformation? The quest for the answer, according to Henzell-Thomas, is “a search for the Golden Mean, the ‘due measure and proportion’ invested in creation. A high objective, but are we not talking about ‘higher’ education”?

Henzell-Thomas generously provided a list of terms that have been used in the literature that we may consider:

1. *Reform* has been widely used. It was used, for example, in U.S.-Islamic World Forum paper 'Higher Education Reform in the Arab World,' co-convened by the Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World and the State of Qatar; and in the conference on 'Reforms in Islamic Education,' held at the Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge, 9-10 April, 2011. It might be noted that there are potentially negative connotations (for traditionalists) in the concept of reformation which may suggest a radical, even revolutionary, departure from traditional norms or orthodox teachings.
2. *Reconfiguration* has the sense of remodelling, restructuring, changing the shape. This is certainly one of the important challenges, as for example in the need to reform governance structures and effect major structural changes to address the problems of accommodating the massive influx of students who seek to enter the tertiary system in many Muslim societies. However, there is also an obvious need not only for *restructuring* but also for *revitalization* of content and values.
3. *Revitalization*, the term (along with "reform") used in AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman's occasional paper *Revitalizing Higher Education in the Muslim World* (IIIT Feb 2007) and in subsequent papers by the same author. Such revitalization involves, according to Ibrahim, the "revivification of Islamic knowledge and thought."
4. *Revision*, the term used in the 2002 *Arab Human Development Report*, which called for a "radical revision of education systems in the Arab world" and "a program for education reform at the pan-Arab level."
5. *Re-envisioning* and *Revisioning*, the first was used in 'Re-envisioning the Future: Democratic Citizenship Education and Islamic Education,' a paper presented by Professor Paul Smeyers (Ghent University and K.U. Leuven) at the annual conference of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain at New College Oxford, 30 March-1 April, 2012. The second can have the general sense of re-evaluation, but it also has potentially pejorative connotations by association with Revisionism, a term which may not only refer to critical re-examination of historical facts or existing historiography, including the revision of fundamental ideological premises, but may also have the negative sense of denial of facts generally accepted by mainstream historians, or (as in the case of fictional revisionism) the making of substantial alterations to the characters or environment of a story. It should be noted that neither of these terms are used in future studies, where the simple term *visioning* – to create a vision of the future – is normally used.
6. *Reinventing*, the title of an October 2012 international conference in Madrid: 'Reinventing Higher Education,' where it was argued that higher education in Muslim countries needs a 'radical reinventing.'
7. *Regeneration*, a term often used in the sense of religious 'revival' and 'revivalism,' or in urban planning for developing and gentrifying a community.

8. *Transformation*, the term largely associated with genetics where it refers to the natural or artificial alteration of cells, has also been used to refer to large scale changes such as in Dale F. Eickelman June 1999 Templeton Lecture on Religion and World Affairs entitled 'The Coming Transformation of the Muslim World.'
9. *Revolution*, a term much favoured by radicals and those seeking to overturn the status quo is also sometimes used in relation to education. As an article in *University World News* reported: 'Saudi Arabia is an academic leader among Arab and Islamic countries and is joining the international scientific and higher education revolution.'

All these terms come wrapped with their particular histories, have positive and negative connotations, and are thus problematic. Further problems arise when we talk about 'authority' and returning to 'original sources.' For if we accept the authority of those who 'know' then we are back to square one: this is where legitimacy for authoritarianism is derived. When Henzell-Thomas urges us to "distinguish authentic concepts from their distortions and counterfeits," what does he mean by "authentic"? Who defines what is authentic? Can we pin something down as 'authentic' in history? Has the 'authentic' remained static in history or has it changed? Can we pin down the 'original essence' of things if they are often defined and redefined and lose their 'original' meaning?

Questions such as these raise some big issues. But the main issue is the obvious tension between the difficulty of pinning down what is supposedly 'authentic' (and thus defining our terms in relation to current conditions) and being as true as possible to the 'original essence' of things. Many young Muslims nowadays are trying to discover what they see as 'authentic Islam,' even returning to 'original' primary sources, yet end up with a literalist approach. Indeed, they often accept the 'authority' of those who 'know' in arriving at their literalist interpretation of what it means to be a Muslim in the twenty-first century. As Henzell-Thomas explains, "authenticity" and "authority" are connected in that the original meaning of "authentic" in English was "authoritative." "The word comes from Greek *authentikos* and its essential meaning is 'having the authority of the original creator,' that is, stamped (or 'signed') as coming from that 'source,' not a fake." So we are faced with a paradox here: "how to give space to both shifting and stable meanings, which is also the essential mission of avoiding the perils of, on the one hand, chronic rootlessness and disorientation, and, on the other hand, the aridity and fixity of authoritarian dogma."

There is also a clear link between "authentic" and "original." To be original, in the Greek sense, is to be "in accordance with our nature." As everyone has this innate capacity – even "simple" illiterate persons have the ability to understand universal principles – everyone could be "original." "It all goes back," writes Henzell-Thomas, "to a prehistoric Indo-European root which was the source also of English 'same, similar, and single.' This passed into Latin as *simplus*, 'single.' The 'simple' person is a 'single' undivided person, a person who is always 'the same,' true to himself or herself (Shakespeare: *This above all, to thine own self be true*). Simplicity is like a mirror which reflects the divine unity at the core of every human being." An original person can thus be authentic and hence authoritative (albeit not authoritarian) because he or she is stamped with the attributes of the ultimate *authority*, the original Creator. This connects us directly with the first principle of the unity of life and its foundation, the Islamic notion of the human being as *khalifa*, 'vicegerent' or 'representative' of God.

The overall aim here is to guard against ideological constructions of Islam as well as absolute relativism promoted so eagerly in postmodernist thought – and move towards some notion of plurality. The original French notion of ideology saw it as science of ideas and their truth and error but the term rapidly came to signify a total system of thought, emotion and attitude to humans, society and everything. Many Islamic movements, have often constructed Islam as an all-embracing ideology, a total and totalistic system that allows for no dissent, alternative perspectives, or plurality of any kind to flourish. Relativism is valuable when it promotes different viewpoints, perceptions and considerations, and even when it suggests that different views may not necessarily have absolute truth or validity. But it becomes a problem when it suggests, as in postmodernism, that there are no truths at all or nothing that can provide us with meaning. “So just as we might distinguish the creative world of ideas from the abstract constructs of ideology,” notes Henzell-Thomas, we must also be aware of “the potential trap of a brand of relativism which abolishes all stable meaning.”

Indeed, Henzell-Thomas provides us with an important list of terms that have to be clearly distinguished from each other:

identity from *tribalism* and *sectarianism*, *diversity* from *division*, and *unity* (in diversity) from *uniformity* and the curse of standardised *mono-cultural* attitudes which dichotomise reality into competing *unilateral* or *unipolar* worldviews and ultimately into the isolating pathologies of civilizational *narcissism* and cultural *autism*. At the same time we need to distinguish the *authority* of divine revelation which liberates the human soul from the *authoritarianism* imposed by narrow human formulations which imprison it; and the existence of *absolute* and timeless truths from the tyranny of an *absolutism* which obliterates all context. The process can be carried further to distinguish *community* from *communalism* (or *communitarianism*), *relationship* from *relativism*, and *individuality* from *individualism* and *solipsism*; and between *secularism* as an ideology seeking to marginalise or exclude religious voices in the public square and *secularity* in the procedural sense which assures religious freedom and gives a voice to all minorities.

Similarly, the qualities of *individuality* need not be conflated with the *individualism*, which gives man no point of reference beyond his own ego and the gratification of his own individual desires. The expression of individuality, which is nothing more than the realisation and expression of the personal uniqueness of each human being, is not in opposition to the needs of the community. Quite the contrary, in an age of increasingly sterile conformity, uniformity and standardisation, the contribution of creative individuals who are realising their individual potential has never been needed more as a means of enriching and revitalising communities. *Communalism* will always suspect the individual of individualism, but a living *community* will respect and nurture individuality as a valid expression of diversity while being able to balance individual needs and modes of expression with collective rights.

The guiding principle in delineating the meaning of our terms, El-Affendi has suggested, should be balance; and we should remember, as the Qur’an tells us, that those who do not know are not equal to those who know and heed the warning of the Sacred Text not to follow our forefathers and classical scholars blindly. But under postnormal conditions, knowing itself is limited; or rather, it is intertwined with three varieties of ignorance – so wonderfully popularised by the great neo-liberal warmonger Donald

Rumsfeld – known knowns, known unknowns and unknown unknowns (what we may call the Unthought). We need a whole array of different and multiple perspectives to counter these varieties of ignorance – rather than assume that those who know actually know anything! Moreover, we must assume that each perspective is valid within its own domains – in other words, it is a known known. But even here there are elements of ignorance that we may have to tackle. Reaching a balanced position on an issue is thus not as easy as it may appear. There is also the issue of distinguishing between balance and compromise, as Henzell-Thomas suggests and illustrates the distinction by comparing balance to moderation: “we might well understand it in its authentic Qur’anic sense (or indeed in al-Ghazali’s use of the concept of the golden mean as the ideal of human character) but we presumably would not want to accept it as meaning a dull compromise or in the sense it is often applied in public discourse and the media, where a ‘moderate Muslim’ is a good (not too religious) Muslim who is silent and invisible in the public square, effectively neutered and untroublesome.”

Any worthwhile effort at reform must acknowledge and be aware of these distinctions. For it is through such a process – including semantic analysis of Islamic terms such as *khalifa*, *amanah*, and numerous others that we have not mentioned such as *shura*, *istislah*, *zulm*, *ahsan*, etc. – we will move forward to the pluralistic Qur’anic vision of unity within diversity. Plurality is not simply the acknowledgement of the mere existence of a diversity, or simply tolerating the Other, but following the injunction to “‘know one another,’ to explore the best of all traditions through respectful co-existence, mutual recognition, active engagement, and transforming love,” as Henzell-Thomas put it.

One term we did embrace is polylogue, used for a wide-ranging conversation involving different traditions, perspectives and viewpoints. It emphasises the fact that more than two (dialogue) voices, perspectives and positions are involved in the resolution of a complex problems; and that we need to appreciate other ‘truths,’ however unpalatable, other positions, even though they may be unpleasant to us, to arrive at a consensual position that can meaningfully be described as ‘unity with diversity.’ As Henzell-Thomas notes, “polylogue is nothing if not about relationship. And I think it’s so important to emphasize that this is not only about speaking but also about listening, a wide-ranging listening exercise.” Polylogues, to which we shall return shortly, are one way of handling the contradictions and dichotomies we constantly encounter.

Contradictions and Dilemmas

It was repeatedly pointed out in our discussions that to build a solid conceptual framework for envisioning the reform of higher education, we need to resolve the fundamental dichotomies which consistently and persistently confront us such as tradition and modernity, text and context, stability and dynamism. The tree of reform should not only have its branches reaching into the sky, but also its roots firmly in the ground. On tradition and modernity, for example, it was pointed out that we should take a balanced approach – both have good and bad points, and we need both. We should, for example, move beyond the traditionalist paradigm, so entrenched in Muslim societies, that regards modernity in total disdain; or to use the words of Henzell-Thomas, “which harps on about the ‘myth of progress,’ the horrors of ‘individualism,’ ‘secularism’ and ‘modernity,’ and sees all human history as a downward trajectory of cumulative entropy, by which man becomes further and further removed from his ‘primordial’ and ‘pristine’ nature.” But at the same time we need to acknowledge that modernity denigrates tradition, undermines the cultural heritage that sustains tradition,

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“In search for an alternative paradigm with indigenous integrity,” Henzell-Thomas argued, “Muslims must channel the desire for some universality in Islamic values to establish the foundation of Islamic humanism, because it identifies something central to all humanity.”

and seeks to replace tradition with modern secularism. Not surprisingly, the very social fabric of daily Muslim life is under threat of extinction. Similarly, we should not romanticise tradition and assume that everything based on tradition, or history and legacy, is by definition good. “In search for an alternative paradigm with indigenous integrity,” Henzell-Thomas argued, “Muslims must channel the desire for some universality in Islamic values to establish the foundation of Islamic humanism, because it identifies something central to all humanity. Accordingly, the viability of the tradition rests upon its universal integrity that can affirm the belief that such a Muslim tradition is able to generate necessary confidence in its application and, at the same time, provide a model for expanded universal justification in conversation with secular or any other tradition that seeks Muslim attention.”

Henzell-Thomas furnished a short list of contradictions and dichotomies, with additions from Ibrahim, that we must wrestle with:

- Knowledge and Values
- Secularism and Religion
- Utilitarianism and Usefulness
- Quantity and Quality
- Relativism and Transcendent Reality
- Efficiency and Moral Excellence
- The Rational and the Animal
- Justice to one’s Self and Injustice

Many of these dichotomies are related to each other. For example, the challenge of reconciling knowledge and values can also be conceptualised as the challenge of doing equal justice to efficiency and moral excellence or quantity and quality. But a basic point about contradictions, which often emerge in complex systems, is that they are by definition opposing, irreconcilable views, which cannot be resolved: they can only be transcended. In other words, contradictions have to be synthesised in a new position that incorporates most of the incongruous elements of different positions. As Henzell-Thomas explained: “within the Western discipline of developmental psychology, K. Riegel identifies the ability to accept contradictions, constructive confrontations and asynchronies as the highest stage of cognitive development, and James Fowler associates dialectical thinking with the development of faith. It goes without saying that the dialectical process is not one either of compromise or loose relativism, but one of creative tension which ultimately transforms contradictions into complementarities, releasing the open-minded thinker from ingrained habits and conditioned patterns of thought, established affiliations, fear of change and instability, and reluctance to approach anything which may be threatening to one’s own sense of ‘self.’ False certainties derived from such conditioning are not the same as the ‘certitude’ (*yaqin*) which al-Ghazali sees as the product of ‘tasting’ (*dhawq*) or direct experience.”

In our journey towards transcending contradictions and reaching ‘the highest stage of cognitive development,’ we start out with the biggest contradictions of all: the contradiction between ‘Us’ and the ‘Others,’ so perceptively and well-articulated by Tayob. It begins, as Tayob notes, “with a neat division between what is called Islamic and what is called un-Islamic,” and ends with the politics of identity. All historic attempts at reform of education, including that of the *Work Plan*, Tayob argues agree on the conception of identity: “they see the self as distinct from the Other. The Other was identified as utterly different, either a source of threat or value. For some, the self was threatened by an alien philosophy and humanity, which called for radical action in

one form or another. For others, the self could benefit from the other. Generally, a politics of identity supported these projects. And that politics was founded and rooted on the self and Other that were basically different from and incommensurable with each other. There was little common ground between self and Other: no common history, common values or common destiny.” This sense of superiority over the Other – not just ‘the West’ but also Hindu India, indigenous cultures and languages, not just other sects but also other ways of knowing – has been a hallmark of Muslim thinking. Those who reject modern education, Tayob notes, see no value in the Other at all; some would happily kill the Other presumably to demonstrate the superiority of their own version of Islam! “The list of Others,” writes Tayob, “keeps on expanding” – it begins with the *kuffar*, goes on to Shi’ites, but also then includes intimate allies who differ on minute issues. Those who support bifurcation also police the boundaries between self and Other on a continual basis. The irony and even tragedy, of course, lies in the fact that the unity of humanity would have been forgotten. And those who propose integration grapple with the underlying unity of the human condition, set against the particular self. They emphasize the value of the Other as a source of value – but not the Other as Self.’

Tayob suggests that meaningful reform requires a more inclusive and bolder approach to identity. Muslims often assume that they face unique problems and create research programmes and institutions that are exclusively suited for Muslims. This is a truncated approach to a complex, interconnected world. The problems of religion and secularism, as well as ethical and technological issues, that we witness in the West are also problems of Muslim societies – they are a mirror reflection of our own problems. The way religion has been turned into an instrument, for example, is not simply a problem of colonial history and western societies, as many Muslim scholars have argued. Muslim societies too have turned religion into an instrument. An evaluation of religion, its meaning, values and worldview thus has to be a part of educational reform. Similarly, all the problems we face at global levels are also Muslim problems – they will affect Muslims as much as any other group of people on the planet. The new paradigms have to be based on the axioms that the self is not just reflected in the Other but is also a projection of the unintegrated self, or in Jungian terms, of the ‘shadow,’ unexplored or unconscious aspects of the self, hence ‘dark,’ and thus fuel for demonization of all those who are different from us. 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.

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It is interesting to note that Tayob uses insights from Rumi to develop arguments similar to those in postnormal times theory which are based on analysis of trend extrapolations, complex emergent systems, chaos theory, foresight and futures studies. A clear indication that our heritage has a great deal to say to us and our epoch. Given that power is now shifting from the West, or as Tayob puts it, “tomorrow is going on in India, Brazil, China,” we need to develop partnerships with those “who are worried about the future of humanity and about life on earth.”

Rankings and Futures Generations

In the light of this synthesis of our deliberations and the overall analysis offered here, our discussion on university ranking appears rather superfluous. It is clearly not the case, as El-Affendi suggests that “in established industrialised societies” most of the “important debates about the overall general direction of society” have “been

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the West and the
Muslim world – produce
a new paradigm of
education that not only
promotes critical
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of inquiry but also
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truth, meaning,
purpose and what it
means to be human in
our complex and
interconnected world.

resolved.” Rather these debates have resurfaced with increased vigour as a plethora of new books suggests; and the direction in which western societies are leading themselves, the rest of the world, and the planet is now being seen as detrimental to all life on Earth. This raises a number of questions on, to use Ibrahim’s words, the “glaring issue” of “the global rankings” where Muslim universities consistently do exceptionally badly. Thus, we need to do something to improve our ranking and catch up. But what are we catching up with? An already crumbling higher education system? A system that fragments knowledge, perpetuates disciplinary structures that justify the dominant paradigm, and that has generally contributed to the planetary crisis that we all face? Do we want to compete with this system on its own terms and within its paradigm so that our universities rise up on the ranking ladder? Would catching up with the ‘quality of education’ in the West in a world dominated by a monolithic paradigm of cultural domination eradicate a sense of cultural homelessness experienced by Muslim students? And where would we end up if we ‘catch up’? In a place where, to use the words of Harry Lewis in *Excellence Without a Soul* (much cited in our discussions) colleges and universities are “afraid to talk about truth, meaning, purpose and what it means to be human”; and where the “ideal of a liberal education lives on in name only” and no one teaches “the things that will free the human mind and spirit.” Of course, to eschew the ranking system does not mean that one is endorsing the existing state of affairs in higher educational institutions of the Muslim world. As repeatedly pointed out in our discussion, the quality of education in Muslim universities is exceptionally poor, there is no freedom of inquiry, and, as a consequence, most of our brighter students seek post-graduate studies in the West almost as a routine. We begin with acknowledgment of the current reality but take in critiques of western institutions because, as Henzell-Thomas states, they are “important correctives to the assumption that the panacea for education in the Muslim world is the uncritical emulation of Western models, as if the main criterion for ‘success’ in ‘catching up’ amongst ‘lame-duck’ Muslim institutions is improvement in their global ranking as defined by international ranking systems and criteria.” The point is how do we collectively – the West and the Muslim world – produce a new paradigm of education that not only promotes critical thought and the spirit of inquiry but also dares to talk about truth, meaning, purpose and what it means to be human in our complex and interconnected world.

There was a more enlightening discussion on inclusiveness and the young generation. El-Affendi hinted that our work should be empirically grounded, which presumably means we need to engage with the current cohort of students. In his response to El-Affendi, Henzell-Thomas was more explicit: “we may need a guiding paradigm but it is concrete empirical engagement which will provide the evidence that will enable us to refine our provisional hypotheses through the ensuing process of dialectic. From my own point of view, that absolutely requires that I have some insight into what young people (men and women) have to say about their own experiences.” A basic maxim of futures studies, and hence all efforts at reform that are by nature future oriented, is that “the young people themselves *are* the future” (the irony is that very little futures works actually incorporates futures generations). Reformers themselves never live to enjoy the fruits of their reforms (or experience the nightmares they may have unleashed). It is the next generation that has to deal with the reforms and take them forward. That is why it is essential that we not only bring young people in our discussion but make them an integral part of our overall project.

But to be truly inclusive we need to involve all potential stakeholders in our discussions; our “empirical approach” should include, as Henzell-Thomas says, “a wide-ranging

listening exercise.” There are two basic reasons for this. One, if we are working on the basis of unity of life and humanity, it is obviously necessary that we have as many representatives of humanity as practically possible in our deliberations. Two, given that we are dealing with complex issues and situations, it is important to realise that we can only grasp their multifaceted dimensions through complex perspectives. In emergent complex systems, this is known as Ashby’s Law of Requisite Variety: a complex system needs another complex system to understand and navigate it. In postnormal science research (PNS), where sophisticated scientific issues with complex ethical, social, cultural and environmental consequences are being analysed, a mechanism called ‘Extended Peer Community’ is used. It involves wide ranging consultation with all those who may be affected by the outcome of science – including critics who do not share the paradigm, journalists, protesters, environment activists, bloggers, clergy, business interests, housewives and lay people. In postnormal times theory we call it Polylogue, where experts, critics, feminists, students, young researchers and scholars, as well as lay people are consciously and deliberately chosen within a structured discussion to arrive at a pluralistic synthesis. Things do not change positively with an ‘all-male cast of older men,’ when others, who probably have more at stake and certainly have as much to contribute, feel excluded. Positive, desirable change, we have learned during the last decades, is only ushered through inclusive, open and transparent deliberations. 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 as stakeholders. At the very least, 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.

Moving Forward

So what are we talking about when we are talking about reform of higher education? The answers that emerge from our deliberations so far can be stated in turning the “awkward questions,” asked by Henzell-Thomas at the end of his long commentary on El-Affendi’s paper, into positive statements. We are talking about ‘holistic education’ in a more universal sense. Our goal is to create a new paradigm based on the first principles, as outlined in the *Work Plan*, where knowledge, creation, life and humanity are perceived as integrated within a universal framework. As such, we intend to go beyond the attachment to existing paradigms and models (which are usually inherently dichotomous and adversarial) in the realisation that the way forward is a new mode of consciousness which is integrative and inclusive and involves embracing the Other. In this endeavour, we aim to guard against the degeneration of valuable concepts and critiques into crippling ideologies and fixed frames of thought – so as not to repeat the mistakes of our predecessors. We aim to excavate the achievements of Islamic civilisation, demonstrate their contemporary relevance, and differentiate them from archaism and nostalgia which characterise civilizational bankruptcy. We aim to balance critical thinking with ethical values. As we aim to be a beacon of excellence for all humankind, we are aware of the need for such a potentially transformational contribution to be couched in terms which are generally accessible to a wider audience. Hence, we conceive this as a contribution to educational development in all societies, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. But our more specific objective is to generate a thought process with which Muslims can think as Muslims and think their way out of the contemporary crises. We aim to initiate a process that will usher a revival of thought and spirit of inquiry in Muslim societies, shift Muslim societies away from a politics of identity

We aim to excavate the achievements of Islamic civilisation, demonstrate their contemporary relevance, and differentiate them from archaism and nostalgia which characterise civilizational bankruptcy. We aim to balance critical thinking with ethical values.

towards aspirational values, encourage Muslim engagement with the contemporary world with all its complexity and contradictions, and create an informed citizenry fully equipped to take leadership role in the modern world.

Yet, we might make mistakes. But, at least, they will be new mistakes!

What Do We Need to Do to Achieve Our Vision?

We need to tackle the issue of reform in higher education from a number of different standpoints. We need empirical work as well as a theoretical analysis, including as Henzell-Thomas put it, “systematic mapping of current discourses, philosophies and theoretical positions to inform the development of a paradigm rooted in empirical inquiry.” We need to revisit our philosophical and intellectual heritage and rediscover the ideas and notions that have contemporary relevance. We need to understand the fabric of modern knowledge production and appreciate the forces that are shaping the contemporary world: “it is precisely by recognising and understanding the condition of the world at this particular time that the challenge of religious and cultural pluralism can be met,” says Henzell-Thomas. We need to be constantly on our guard against what might be called “terminological entropy,” that degradation and running down of meaning within conceptual vocabularies: “this is not to give precedence to the temporal world over the spiritual world, nor to set one against the other, but 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.” We need to distinguish between disorientated intellectual curiosity (no matter how ‘open-minded,’ ‘original’ and ‘creative’) and the intellectual endeavour grounded in the highest ethical and spiritual values which characterises a truly great civilisation. We need to be inclusive, involve young scholars, have more appropriate representations of gender and sects, and engage in wide-ranging listening exercises. And we need to explore the full range of methodologies by which the mind can be liberated from fixed frames of thought that are resistant to modification and change.

We are thus aiming to create a new discourse: 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.

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 based on the axiom and principles we cherish. And through the process of creating a new world we come to understand ourselves, our history, our relationship to each other and Others, and our place in relation to Others in the world. We are thus aiming to create a new discourse: 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.

The project conceived by the *Work Plan* thus now shifts gear and moves from ‘Islamization of Knowledge’ to become a discourse on ‘Integration of Knowledge.’ For the new, emerging discourse to become an on-going multi-generational endeavour, rather than simply a one-time effort, it needs a thriving discourse community that shares its axioms and principles, works collectively to develop and expand the discourse using its concepts and terminology and communicates its achievements and goals. One cannot exist without the other: this is where we meet and resolve El-Affendi’s “circular problem”: “in order to generate new knowledge, we need viable institutions; but in order to have viable institutions, we need a new form of knowledge and

knowledge-producing and knowledge-absorbing capacities. So where and how do we start?” We work from both ends simultaneously.

I propose we start with a network of discourse community which we build from the ground upwards. As the network – and hence the community – come together and develops, it will produce new knowledge, and the new knowledge will feed into the discourse and propel it. We need to create a formal, global network of individual scholars, intellectuals, postgraduate students, and activists who accept our premise that an ‘Integration of Knowledge’ discourse is urgently needed. It is important to realise that the members of the network cannot just be Muslims; we also need input from other cultures; and not just from the West but also from India, China and Latin America. Although in the initial stage, when the contours of the discourse are being established, it would probably be better for most of the members of the network to be Muslim. The network is ‘formal’ in the sense that its members are selected on the basis of certain criteria, it is coordinated and funded, all collectively work within the discourse, and everyone participates in sustaining and developing the discourse. The researchers work in groups, local or international, as – what in network theory is called – nodes. Each node, an interdisciplinary team, tackles specific topics within an overall framework – using the same terminology and concepts as the building blocks of their research. Each node selects its own Chair who is responsible for the work of the Node and communications with the coordinators. During the year, members of the network discuss their work and seek input from other nodes via digital technology. However, all the nodes are brought together once a year to present the fruits of their research, to be assessed and critiqued by their peers, and to set the agenda for the following year. The annual Conference, probably a week long affair, also serves as a training ground for future scholars with specific workshops and lectures on methodology, critical analysis of emerging issues, and challenges of the future. Every member has access to the entire Integration of Knowledge project, its research output and its scholarly community. The output of the project is shared with Muslim and western institutions of higher education on a periodic basis to seek their views and criticism as well as to address their issues and concerns. The nodes eventually become El-Affendi’s cherished “Centres of Excellence,” located in “several locations in the Muslim world and in the West,” but they focus not on social sciences but specific subjects that are an integral part of the ‘Integration of Knowledge’ discourse. Moreover, these centres are not imposed from the top, based on some plans that have been drawn, but evolved and mature organically to thriving sites of thought and knowledge production.

From our deliberations so far, we can identify four potential nodes that ought to be set up during the first phase of the project.

First, as Tayob has argued so forcefully, we need to begin with values, which means 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.” The first principles provide us with an overall framework of very general values but to go beyond into specific issues we need to work out what values we are actually talking about and promoting within what contexts. There is no fixed answer to the question ‘what is goodness’: a fresh water lake is good and provides a wholesome drink but the same lake becomes ‘bad’ when environment and other factors pollute its water. When Tayob asks, “what values should be promoted in our contemporary world marked by science, capitalism, diversity, mediatisation and globalization? What values should be promoted in educational institutions in relation to the Other as the enemy, the neighbour, the stranger and as the environment?,” he is asking wicked questions that have complex

answers, which may themselves change with new advances in science, the emergence of new technologies, shifts in the nature of capitalism, and as accelerating change transforms society and social relations. Even the question, ‘are these values fully determined by revelation,’ requires a great deal of complex thought. Part of our problem is that philosophy has virtually disappeared from the Muslim world – which was one reason amongst others for the decline of Muslim civilization – and as a result we do not have a tradition of engaging with deep philosophical and ethical issues. Moreover, in a complex, interconnected, globalised world, often at the edge of chaos, it is not easy to determine, even for cultures with a vibrant philosophical tradition, what is good, better or best. The problem is pushed further into complexity in times of accelerating change when what is good may not actually remain good for long. So the problem will not be solved simply by looking back into *kalam* or the philosophical tradition of the Mutazalites or the Sufis. In some cases, we may find relevant and vibrant answers, as Tayob shows with Rumi. But the Great and Good of Muslim civilization did not solve all the problems of humanity; not all our contemporary questions of ethics and morality, which are deep, complex and have dynamic answers, can be discovered by interrogating our intellectual and spiritual heritage. Hence, we need to do both: revisit the philosophical heritage of Islam and develop a contemporary philosophical tradition of Islam, by engaging with contemporary philosophical trends of other traditions which are also struggling with complex issues of ethics and attempting to grapple with the moral and ethical issues we face today. Thus the accent has to be on the contemporary context and the group has to be truly interdisciplinary with representatives from other cultures.

Second, we need a node that works to deconstruct the definitional power of the modern knowledge system, including as Henzell-Thomas puts it, “systematic mapping of current discourses, philosophies and theoretical positions” and examines 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 and the exploration of contemporary Muslim values carried out by the first node.

Third, the issues of legacy, heritage and our intellectual history have been raised again and again. For example, Sachedina asserts that “Muslim thinkers must engage in retrieving the original impulse of Islamic tradition, namely, to seek different forms of intellectual and spiritual engagement of Islamic heritage in multi-faith societies.” However, he limits the exercise to “the long forgotten Islamic theological discourse that undergirded the renowned legal-ethical methodology” which “needs to be revived as a public religious discourse to increase the necessary applicability of theory to practice, of text to context and concrete space.” Of course, the “public role of religion is not limited to public rituals that are performed individually as well as collectively”; but it cannot, surely, be limited to theology either. (I would venture to say that much of our classical legacy is part of our current problem). We need to see our heritage in all its sophisticated diversity – including the historical discourses on knowledge and its classification, philosophical debates and disputes, history and historiography, scientific and technological accomplishment, educational developments, city planning, environmental and ecological concerns, social and political criticism, art and literature, and other human accomplishments. In other words, we need to see the Muslim civilisation as a human civilisation – as, for example, portrayed by Marshall Hodgson, and not simply as a truncated entity obsessed with theological issues. 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. Or, as Hodgson would put it, as universal “world history” and not just as history of Islam. The function of this node is to provide relevant analysis of the legacy that feeds into nodes one and two.

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. The new paradigms we aim to develop and evolve, the change we seek, can only occur in the future. We thus need to have some understanding of the kind of world we may find ourselves in ten, twenty years from now: what new arrangements of power will mean for Muslim societies, what new demands will confront Muslims cultures, and what would Muslims need to survive an even more complex and interconnected world of the future. The exercise involves both: understanding the dynamics that are shaping the contemporary world and appreciating the forces of change that are ushering a more colonising or a more liberating future. And equally important: how do the different pieces of research come together in an overall discourse, and how will the new paradigm we are aiming to develop and evolve fit the frameworks that alternative futures may produce. If one were to capture what we are aiming to do in one sentence, it would be: shaping a more viable future of Islam and Muslims and the world. Thus this node uses the outcomes of the first three nodes to develop a positive vision of Muslim societies and shapes policies, strategies and procedures that take us from here – the crisis ridden present – to there, a viable and thriving future.

If one were to capture what we are aiming to do in one sentence, it would be: shaping a more viable future of Islam and Muslims and the world.

While the four nodes have their own subject areas, they work in an interdisciplinary and integrated fashion to shape the new discourse of Integration of Knowledge. Of course, other subject areas for research and exploration, and with them new nodes, will emerge as we proceed with our work. But I would suggest that this is the bare minimum we need to initiate an Integration of Knowledge network and discourse community. A great deal of the work of the network can revolve around the re-launched *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*: a discourse community needs a journal which in turn becomes a platform around which the community evolves and matures. It would take time to find suitable scholars for our initial nodes; I would suggest that we allow at least two years to identify the individuals, seek their consent, and bring them together for an inaugural conference.

However, the time in between is important for doing some ground work. There are three specific projects that need to be undertaken to ensure that the ‘Integration of Knowledge’ network has some basis to work from; and they should be initiated now.

1. To learn from recent history, and as El-Affendi says, to have some ideas about “what went wrong,” we need a critical study of the experiences of IIUM in Kuala Lumpur as well as other experiments such as Turkey’s Gülen Movement, which has established a string of universities, and numerous Ismaili initiatives spearheaded by the Agha Khan, who has established Chairs in various western universities, built institutions of higher education in Pakistan and elsewhere. The study can also examine successful experiments in related contexts (selected institutions in Singapore, India and South Korea, for example) where some relative success appears to have been achieved. This is a task that can be undertaken by a couple of researchers and can be done within a year.

2. We need every member of the network to use the same concepts and terminology, hence the same language, in developing the discourse. This requires a detailed lexicon of both English and Islamic terms and concepts to avoid confusion and distortion (by Muslims and non-Muslims), as well as to define them in our own specific way, give them a contemporary meaning, and incorporate them within the 'Integration of Knowledge' discourse. What, for example, do we mean by freedom, human rights, democracy, secularism and so on? What is the contemporary relevance of Islamic terms like *khalifa*, *shura*, *ijma*, *istislah*, or *ihsan*? The physicist Niels Bohr once told his colleague: "No, no, you're not thinking; you are just being logical." This is because we don't just think logically; we also think with and through concepts. Terms and concepts are the basic building blocks through which a worldview is shaped and which shape the world. Raymond Williams knew this well: his *Keywords*, not only developed, as the subtitle suggests, *A Vocabulary for Culture and Society* but laid the foundations of the disciplines of cultural studies, media studies, postcolonial studies and had a major influence on the emergence of postmodernism. Thus we need more than a glossary or a dictionary. The lexicon has to be an exploration of the changing meaning of terms and concepts, a historical and moral critique, and an attempt at contemporary formulation that has meaning within our first principles – a tool for developing a more nuanced understanding of indispensable terms and concepts that become the building blocks of the Integration of Knowledge discourse. It's function is to lay the foundation of a new integrative and inclusive 'mode of consciousness' that moves us toward the new paradigm. It is a task that can be performed by a single scholar, with expertise in linguistics; but the lexicon has to be discussed, debated and critiqued by a collective for it to be widely accepted.
3. To ensure that all the members of the 'Integration of Knowledge' network are aware of the essential works of our intellectual and literary legacy, as well as to infuse an appreciation of our rich heritage in the young generation, we need a text on the Muslim canons. These are works of universal significance, produced within an Islamic purview that we need to read and re-read, over and over again. The canons serve as a repository of our memory: they do not only enlighten us about the past but also provide hope for the future. Therefore, we need something more than a mere list of authors of the canons – we also need to know something about their universal and timeless content as well as their contemporary significance. What do they say to us *now*? At this juncture, it is interesting to note the impact Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon* had on academia. It was deliberately produced at a time when questions began to be raised about the status and use of the corpus of mostly American philosophical and literary texts that had to be read by undergraduates – not just in the US but almost everywhere. Multiculturalism was in vogue and issues about world literature and philosophical traditions of the non-West had come to the fore; and demands were being raised that non-western classics should also be taught in western universities. Indeed, many institutions were changing their curriculum. Bloom's work was a product of his concern that the philosophical ideals, historical accomplishments, and literary classics of Western civilisation were being abandoned. But it was not just a question of what the students should read but also, more importantly, an issue of power. Almost single-handedly he corrected the course and brought everyone into alignment! Twenty years later, the emerging shifts in global power are once again transforming the shape of culture, art and literature and the way they are conceived and studied. So it is an

opportune moment to produce a volume that provides an integrated perspective on Muslim canons, demonstrates their universal significance, ensures that members of the 'Integration of Knowledge' network are aware of them, and encourages students to read and engage with them. Bloom toiled for years on his volume; but this project can be accomplished within a couple of years by an interdisciplinary team of scholars.

4. It has been emphasised repeatedly in our deliberations that we should listen to the young and bring them into our discussions. Steps have already been taken towards this goal and our future meetings and conferences are planned to coincide with the Summer Schools organised by IIIT in Istanbul, Sarajevo and other places. Participants from both meetings can engage with each other and the young scholars could be brought in to take part in our debates as equals. However, we should also take a more specific step: commission an 'age cohort' study to discover the problems, needs, anxieties, aspirations, and hopes of this generation, and see what kinds of values and concerns they will bring with them regarding higher education when they move into positions of power and influence in a decade or so. It need not be an elaborate exercise, although it can be. A structured survey of a representative population should do the job!

The king is dead: 'Islamization of Knowledge,' like most ideas, has moved on. It was a product of its time and context. But it has left a legacy: not least in articulating concerns about the dire state of Muslim thought and education, drawing attention to the Eurocentric nature of social sciences and enunciating the first principles. We move forward with 'Integration of Knowledge.' Long live the king. We hope that the new king is suitably attired.

The king is dead:
'Islamization of
Knowledge,' ... We move
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Two-Day Symposium on Reform of Higher Education in Muslim Societies

December 9 & 10, 2013

Wilson Center and the IIIT Washington, D.C. & Herndon, VA

BACKGROUND PAPER

Introduction – Statement of the Problem

To say that higher education in Muslim societies is in need of extensive reform is an understatement. The recent uprisings in the Arab world underscored elementary problems related to governance, economics, education, and employment, among other issues. In spite of being challenged by the growing gap in educational standards and achievements between highly industrialized nations and Muslim countries, most Muslim societies continue to produce mediocre results in higher education, as is only too apparent in the latest world university rankings. Notwithstanding some justifiable reservations regarding these rankings, one could at least agree that they provide a widely recognized and largely reputable measure of the quality of education at university level. According to the QS World University Rankings 2013/2014, the highest-ranking university in a Muslim-majority country is Universiti Malaya (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) in 167th place. Next is King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals (Saudi Arabia) in 216th place. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2013/2014 have Boğaziçi (Bosphorus) University in Turkey as the highest-ranking university in a Muslim-majority country in 199th place. More than a billion Muslims in Muslim-majority societies do not have a single university in the top 150 universities in the world. In comparison, Singapore with its 5.4 million inhabitants has two universities in the QS top 50 and Times Higher Education top 100, respectively.

Other data on higher education are equally depressing. A series of recent reports on the Arab world by the United Nations Development Program paints a picture of seriously underdeveloped societies at every level. In terms of higher education and knowledge development, the statistics are so damning that it

would not be an exaggeration to say that they represent nothing short of national emergencies. According to the 2003 UNDP report on knowledge societies, in the period 1981-1985 the Arab world translated 4.4 books per one million people. The corresponding number in Hungary was 519, and in Spain 920 books per million inhabitants. During the period 1980-2000, nine Arab countries registered the combined total of 370 patents. The number in Israel was 7,652, while South Korea registered 16,328 patents in the same period. Similar discrepancies exist in terms of citations in scientific journals – another important measure of academic output. The UNDP reports focused solely on the Arab world, so the same questions might be asked about other Muslim-majority societies. While it is true that Turkish and Malaysian universities in particular tend to foster better research and are ranked higher than Arab universities, they are still well behind the universities in the West, or in Japan, China, Taiwan, and South Korea. A recent splurge on education in some oil and gas-rich Gulf countries – especially Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar – is too recent to assess its impact on higher education and their societies in general. What is clear in these efforts is that they are distinctly imitative in nature in their adoption of Western-style philosophies of education and curricula, and lacking in Islamic grounding and values. Students from the Gulf have been studying in the West for decades without any meaningful scientific output once they returned to their countries of origin transplanting Western-style universities to the countries of the region is not going to solve the problem by itself. *The crisis of higher education is systemic in nature and needs to be addressed as such.*

About the Symposium

The symposium aims to address the main issues underlying the crisis in higher education in Muslim societies and explore possible pathways toward reform. The three main areas of focus are:

1) The root causes of the crisis of higher education in Muslim societies

Poor governance and inadequate government policies lie at the root of the crisis. Too much centralized planning, lack of support to explore and innovate, outdated approaches to education and deficient curricula, corruption and lack of transparency, and – above all – lack of freedom to think, express, and act are some of the major problems plaguing Muslim societies. But misguided policies only go so far in explaining the crisis; one also has to take into consideration pervasive social and political cultures that are steeped in compliance, acquiescence, intolerance of different opinions, conspiratorial tendencies, blame-game and victimhood, and many other negative cultural traits that have become mainstream in many Muslim countries. Compounding the problem is the obstinate inability to extract from Muslim

history and traditions what is best in them and connect the Muslim past with the present. Left without historical and value-based guidelines, Muslim educators, administrators, and students often lack spiritual and intellectual conviction which is necessary in order to develop highly effective and innovative systems of higher education. This is where rooting higher education in a *tawhidic* civilizational approach – based on the Islamic doctrine of *tawhid* (monotheism), and on responsibility to God and humanity – can provide the required high level of conviction, leading to regeneration and innovation.

On top of this, pedagogical approaches are still rooted in memorization of facts, with little emphasis on analytical or interpretive skills. Lecturing and note taking are the predominant classroom activities. Group activities, giving individual attention to students, field trips, and hands-on educational activities are rare. Criticism, experimentation, and self-discovery are seldom practiced. Teachers and government-issued textbooks are seen as absolutely authoritative and unquestionable sources of knowledge. In Islamic studies courses, students are required to memorize facts and rules, but do not usually engage in moral and ethical reasoning and in open discussions on a range of issues. They are instructed that there is only one correct answer to any given question, which only breeds a culture of intolerance and compliance. The Symposium therefore aims to discuss and examine the following issues: government policies and governance; social and political culture; the role of values and history in education; the *tawhidic* approach to education; and the regressive, imitative and ineffectual culture of teaching and learning

2) Current manifestations of the crisis and its implications for socioeconomic development

Some of the manifestations of the crisis – such as those mentioned in the introduction– are apparent in educational outcomes. Others impact socioeconomic development in adverse ways. The 2003 UNDP Report on knowledge society in the Arab world mentions ‘rentier’ economies, lack of competition, scarcity of medium-sized and large companies, low GDP growth, low productivity, migration, and brain drain as some of the major symptoms of the deeper educational crisis in the Arab world. Much of this applies to many other Muslim-majority nations and societies today.

An important function of higher education is the creation of a knowledgeable and skillful workforce that is capable of meeting the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century globalized world. Richer Muslim nations still depend overwhelmingly on foreign, expatriate labor for a variety of reasons: foreigners are better skilled, are less well paid than domestic workers, and can be fired with relative ease. Poorer Muslim nations often cannot afford to pay foreign expatriates, thus relying on ill-equipped

domestic workers which results in lack of competitiveness. There is often a definite mismatch between educational outcomes and market demands, which gives rise to a nominally educated workforce that is unable to enter the job market. Lack of quality higher education, combined with systemic political problems, also leads to relatively higher levels of poverty. Even in countries that are relatively wealthy in GDP terms, HDI (human development index) lags behind their wealth, exposing another important manifestation of the crisis.

3) Policy recommendations to governments and to institutions of higher learning

The main outcome of the two-day Symposium will be a set of policy recommendations to governments and institutions of higher learning. It is our hope that the Symposium deliberations will result in clear and realistic recommendations. The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) plans to hold seminars and workshops in 2014 to expand on the Symposium's main conclusions and recommendations.

Special Topics

While the Symposium will cover a variety of topics related to reforming higher education in Muslim societies, the following issues will be given special attention:

- **The traditional system of education.**

This is a mainstay of classical Islamic education in Muslim societies, which is often articulated through Islamic schools (*madrasah*, pl. *madāris*; often Anglicized as *madrasahs*). The traditional system has been on the receiving end of much criticism, some of it warranted, and some of it rather unjustified. There are many virtues to the traditional system of education and its role in transmitting religious and ethical values. Yet, the question could legitimately be asked if this system is sufficiently well-equipped and responsive to the needs of contemporary Muslim societies. It also needs to be asked what happens when this traditional system of learning is carried over into higher education. In order to understand this, the Symposium will discuss, debate, and examine experiences in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, as well as traditional schools and universities in the Arab countries.

- **The impact and challenges of globalization.**

With the highly globalized world we all live in today, it is important to assess the impact and challenges

of globalization on higher education in Muslim societies. What are the implications of the rise of the English language as the *lingua franca* of the 21st century and its dominance in scientific output for Muslim higher education? Current globalization favors rich countries and sometimes disproportionately disadvantages developing nations and indigenous communities, many of which are in the Muslim world. What is the effect of this on higher education in Muslim societies? How do modes of production, global distribution of wealth, and the favoring of certain types of knowledge over others influence and impact higher education? Can Muslim societies harness the power of globalization in their favor and use it to benefit their educational systems? What does this all mean for state-owned and state-administered universities in the world in which powerful multinational corporations dictate labor laws and markets? Conversely, what is the impact of the recent wave of new private universities in Muslim societies on the quality of higher education? Would the privatizing moment tilt the scale in favor of bigger, transnational entities at the expense of the needs of Muslim societies?

- **The economics of education and issues of governance.**

The public-private partnership is essential in advancing R&D at non-governmental, national, and international levels. This partnership is also central to education and training systems. The public-private sector relationship, however, is inextricably related to issues of governance. The pervasiveness of authoritarianism, state patrimonialism, weak rule of law, lack of representation, corruption, and weaknesses in other areas of governance create an atmosphere where cooperation within the public-private-NGO sectors is either done in order to support official state ideologies or to advance foreign interests with little benefit for the local population. Education expenditure also suffers due to misplaced priorities in many Muslim societies where spending on the military far outweighs spending on education at every level. What are the ways of improving governance, economics of education, and private-public partnerships in order to achieve better education outcomes? Are there success stories in the Muslim world and how can these benefit other Muslim societies?

- **Science and technology, innovation and entrepreneurship.**

While the statistics show that scientific publications in the Arab world are at the level of advanced developing nations, most of the publishing activity is in applied sciences with only a small fraction of publications being in basic sciences, implying a low level of innovation. The issue of innovation is inseparable from wider social and political trends in Muslim societies where freedom of expression, association, and religion are often severely curtailed. Engendering innovation through the educational system requires deep cultural and political change. Universities and other institutions of higher learning

need to foster critical pedagogical approaches in education which stimulate creative thinking, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

- **The status and role of women in higher education.**

Studies show that unemployment rates for women in the Arab region are higher than in any other region in the world. This is partly due to the nature and quality of higher education, but mostly because of the demand-side in employment. As such, the problem is related in greater measure to governance and economics rather than to education. Yet, there is a whole set of issues that stem from inequalities in higher education. Even though women participate in higher education in unprecedented numbers – in the 2006/2007 academic year, women comprised 57.76% of all students in Iranian universities – they are still severely under-represented in higher administration, both in ministries of education as well as at the level of university governance. There are exceptions to this norm, however. In 2011, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) appointed Prof. Dr. Zaleha Kamaruddin as the first woman Rector of the University. The Symposium will explore both the deficiencies in the status and role of women in higher education, as well as the good examples and practices in order to derive lessons for policymaking.

Outcome

After the Symposium, the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) will issue a report which will summarize the discussions held, lessons learned, and include policy recommendations to governments and institutions of higher learning. The report will also suggest the list of priorities in terms of reforming higher education in Muslim societies. Based on this report, the IIIT will convene a workshop/seminar in 2014, which will examine issues contained in the report in greater depth by bringing together leading scholars, administrators, politicians, practitioners and activists in the field of education.

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About the IIIT

The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) is a private, non-profit, academic, cultural and educational institution. The headquarters of the Institute is situated in Herndon, Virginia, in the suburbs of Washington DC. The Institute is an intellectual forum working on educational, academic and societal issues from an Islamic perspective to promote and support research projects, organize intellectual and cultural meetings, publish scholarly works, and engage in teaching and training.

The International Institute of Islamic Thought is dedicated to the revival and reform of Islamic thought and its methodology in order to enable the Muslims to deal effectively with present challenges, and contribute to the progress of human civilization.

The Institute promotes academic research on the methodology and philosophy of various disciplines, and gives special emphasis to the development of Islamic scholarship in contemporary social sciences. The IIIT aspires to conduct courses in order to promote its objective to reform Islamic thought, and to bridge the intellectual divide between the Islamic tradition and Western civilization. In its teaching and selection of teachers and courses, the IIIT activities promote moderation, inter-faith dialogue and good citizenship. To date, the IIIT has published more than 600 books on Islamic thought in 22 languages.

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Guidelines for Presenters

REFORM OF EDUCATION IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES - 18-19 March 2016, Istanbul, Turkey

These guidelines are aimed at structuring discussions during presentation of papers in such a way as to maximize constructive engagement and effective use of time.

Presenters

- You only have 15 minutes to speak. Keep to the time allocated.
- Please do not read out your paper, you will not be able to do so in 15 minutes.
- Instead, inform the audience of your main topic, argument(s), evidence, and major findings.
- Summarize your findings – what do we know now that we did not know before? What did you reinterpret that we ought to now understand differently? How is your work changing the debate, if at all?
- Pre-empt opposition – how would those you disagree with respond?
- Are there any unresolved issues/tensions in the paper? Please point them out so that you may receive positive feedback from the audience.
- Avoid lengthy introductions or any personal back-story; there is no time for this. Focus only on your core thesis.
- Prepare well and time yourself.



Guidelines for Moderators

REFORM OF EDUCATION IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES - 18-19 March 2016, Istanbul, Turkey

These guidelines are aimed at structuring discussions during presentation of papers in such a way as to maximize constructive engagement and effective use of time.

Moderators

- Start and finish on time. If one presentation is allowed to run late all other sessions will be affected within an already heavy and closely timed schedule.
- Ensure proper timekeeping. Limit each speaker to present for 15 minutes, not a minute longer.
- Moderate respectfully but firmly.
- Do not summarize each paper. There is no time for this and it is the purview of the speaker.
- Remind the audience to keep their comments/questions brief and to the point. Feel free to interrupt if someone is going on for too long.
- Be firm but gentle with the audience.



Guidelines for Discussants

REFORM OF EDUCATION IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES - 18-19 March 2016, Istanbul, Turkey

These guidelines are aimed at structuring discussions during presentation of papers in such a way as to maximize constructive engagement and effective use of time.

Discussants

- You only have 10 minutes to analyze the papers.
- Present the main message of the papers and summarize main points.
- Find commonalities and differences between the papers; discuss their common themes and how they differ.
- Analyze how the papers contribute and fit into existing literature, and whether or not they are missing any important references.
- Discuss how these papers are unique in their approach to the topic and their contributions to the field.
- Discern the quality of the argument and whether or not it can be further developed.
- Suggest ways the paper can be improved and be specific in your comments.
- Make constructive comments with substantiated evidence.
- Provide a holistic analysis by identifying larger themes and describing how the paper improves our understanding of the themes.
- Keep the audience stimulated, interested, and engaged.
- Write your comments down, 1-2 pages for each paper is enough, then present them to the authors following the discussion.



REFORM OF EDUCATION IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES

18-19 March 2016

Conference Programme

Organised by

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY, ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY

in cooperation with

MAHYA



VENUE | Istanbul University Congress Centre

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Conference Programme

Friday 18 March 2016 • Day 1

14:00–14:30 *Registration*

14:30–15:45 **OPENING SESSION**

- MC
M. Yaqub Mirza
- **Welcome Remarks**
IIIT, Faculty of Theology, MAHYA
- **Hisham Altalib**
Jamal Barzinji Memorial Lecture

15:45–16:00 *Break & Asr Prayer*

16:00–18:00 **SESSION I: CONTEMPORARY ETHICS OF ISLAM: NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS**

MODERATOR
Murteza Bedir

SPEAKERS
Ziauddin Sardar
Education Reform: From Islamisation of Knowledge
to Integration of Knowledge
Abdelwahab El-Affendi
Obstacles Facing Education Reform
Jeremy Henzell-Thomas
Towards an Expanded Glossary of Key Terms

18:00–18:30 *Break & Maghrib Prayer at 18:15*

18:30–20:15 **SESSION II: HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE
MUSLIM WORLD: MODELS AND MODALITIES**

MODERATOR

Ermin Sinanovic

SPEAKERS

M. Kamal Hassan

Islamisation of Human Knowledge as Understood in the
Context of IIUM: Keeping the Sacred Mission Alive
and Relevant

Mbaye Lo

Muslim University Models in the 21st Century:
Challenges and Opportunities

Sari Hanafi

The Janus-like Face of Higher Education and Research
in the Arab World: Internationalization and Local
Relevance

DISCUSSANTS

Ismail Demirezen

Alpaslan Durmus

Recep Kaymakcan

Saturday 19 March 2016 • Day 2

08:30–10:00 **SESSION III: ISLAMIC LEGACY IN EDUCATION: PROBLEMS AND POTENTIALS**

MODERATOR

Abubaker Al-Shingieti

SPEAKERS

Marodsilton Muborakshoeva

Challenges in Higher Education and the Role of Muslim
Cultures and Civilisations in Developing a New Paradigm
in Education

Mehmet Pacaci

Can Muslim Higher Education have a True Goal?

DISCUSSANTS

Fathi Malkawi

Ziauddin Sardar

Selim Argun

10:00–10:15 *Break*

10:15–12:00 **SESSION IV: FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION: CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT**

MODERATOR

Ismail Latif Hacinebioglu

SPEAKERS

Keri Facer

Reimagining Higher Education: Collaborations within a
Diverse Knowledge Landscape

Recep Senturk

How to Overcome Intellectual Dependency in Education:
A Call to Multiplexity

Amaarah DeCuir

Our Place at the Table: Women's Roles in Higher
Education in the Muslim World

DISCUSSANTS

Jan Arminio

Ovamir Anjum

Ahmet Temel

12:00–13:30 *Lunch Break & Zuhr Prayer*

13:30–15:00 **SESSION V: DOMINANT PARADIGMS IN
HIGHER EDUCATION: ISSUES AND CURRENTS**

MODERATOR

Aydin Topaloglu

SPEAKERS

Martin Rose

Universities, the Job-Market and the Jihad

Timothy Reagan

Islam and the Challenge of Language in Education:
Why Tawhid is not Simply 'Monotheism'

DISCUSSANTS

Jeremy Henzell-Thomas

Deborah Boehm-Davis

Hamit Er

15:00–15:15 *Break & Asr Prayer*

15:15–16:45 **SESSION VI (PART I):
DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

CO-MODERATORS

Ermin Sinanovic and Ahmet Alibasic

16:45–17:00 *Break*

17:00–18:30 **SESSION VI (PART II):
DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

CO-MODERATORS

Iqbal Unus and Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali

18:30–19:00 *Break & Maghrib Prayer at 18:15*

19:00–19:15 **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Omar Kasule

19:15–20:15 **DINNER WITH KEYNOTE SPEECH**

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Bekir Karliga

Presenters, Discussants, Moderators

In alphabetical order

Abdelwahab El-Affendi

Abdelwahab El-Affendi is a political scientist, student of Islamic Thought, and writer on topics dealing with Islam and Modernity, Islam and Politics, Islam and Democracy, Multiculturalism, Islam in the West, Muslim Intellectuals and Sudanese and Middle Eastern Politics. He is currently working at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies in Qatar. Educated at the Universities of Khartoum, Wales, and Reading, Dr El-Affendi is also author of *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (1991), *Who Needs an Islamic State?* (1991 - 2008 second edition), and numerous other works including *About Muhammad: The Other Western Perspective on the Prophet of Islam* (2010). He is also contributor or co-author of works including: *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1998). Dr El-Affendi was Reader in Politics at the Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster and co-ordinator of the Centre's Democracy and Islam Programme, and member of the core team of authors of the 2004 Arab Human Development Report: Towards Freedom in the Arab World and is member of the Advisory Board and a contributor to the 2005 report. In addition, he is co-author of the report: *Contextualising Islam in Britain: Exploratory Perspectives* (2009). He is also member of the Advisory Council of Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal Centre for Contemporary Islamic Studies, University of Edinburgh, member of the Board of Directors of Inter-Africa Group (Addis Ababa), and a trustee of the International Forum for Islamic Dialogue (UK). Dr El-Affendi has been a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Islamic Studies at Cambridge University, and a Visiting Fellow/Professor at the Christian Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway (1995 and 2003), Northwestern University (2002), and the International Centre for Islamic Thought and Civilization, Kuala Lumpur (2008).

Ahmet Alibasic

Ahmet Alibasic holds a PhD in Political Science and was educated in Kuala Lumpur and Sarajevo. Currently he is Assistant Professor at the University of Sarajevo teaching Islamic culture and civilization courses. He is also director of the Center for Advanced Studies in Sarajevo and actively involved in inter-religious dialogue. He has authored a book on Islamic opposition in the Arab world, written several articles and edited books dealing with Islam in Europe, democratization of the Muslim World, human rights in Islam and the Muslim world, and church-state relations. Most recently he is one of the editors of *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* (Brill, 2009-2016) and *Journal of Muslims in Europe*.

Hisham Altalib

Hisham Altalib was born in Mosul, Nineva, Iraq. He holds a BSc in electrical engineering from Liverpool University, and a PhD in electrical engineering from Purdue University. He has held several positions in various Islamic organizations, including the Muslim Students Association and the International Islamic

Federation of Student Organizations. He is a founding member of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, and author of *A Training Guide for Islamic Workers*, which has been translated into over 20 languages, and *Parent-Child Relations: A Guide to Raising Children* (IIIT, 2013).

Ovamar Anjum

Ovamar Anjum is Imam Khattab Endowed Chair of Islamic Studies at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Toledo. He obtained his PhD in Islamic Intellectual history in the Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison, a Masters in Social Sciences from the University of Chicago and a Masters in Computer Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the author of *Politics, Law and Community in Islamic Thought: The Taymiyyan Moment* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). He is near-completing a decade-long project to translate a popular Islamic spiritual and theological classic, *Madarij al-Salikin (Ranks of Divine Seekers)* by Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 1351).

Selim Argun

After starting his BA in Theology at Selcuk University, Selim Argun continued his undergraduate education at the Islamic University in Madinah. He obtained his MA degree from Johannesburg University, South Africa, where he also taught courses in the departments of Islamic Studies and Semitic languages. He studied at McGill University, Montreal, Canada for his PhD degree, also teaching courses at the Institute of Islamic Studies. Selim Argun's areas of interest include Ottoman history, the history of institutions in Ottoman civilization, and Ottoman Africa. He speaks English, Arabic and French.

Jan Arminio

Jan Arminio is professor and director of the Higher Education Program at George Mason University. She received her doctorate at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her scholarship has focused on the study of the integration of new populations in higher education through trustworthy qualitative research methodologies. Examples of her work include the co-authored books *Student Veterans in Higher Education* (2015) and *Negotiating the Complexities of Qualitative Research* (2014). She served as first editor of *Why Aren't We There Yet: Taking Personal Responsibility for Creating an Inclusive Campus* (2012). Recent articles include *Waking up White* (2013), *A Narrative Synthesis of Understanding Addictions, Surrender, and Relapse* (2013), and *Synergistic Supervision* (2012). Prior to coming to Mason she served as an administrator at Mills College, Santa Clara University, and Colby College, and a faculty member and department chair at Shippensburg University in the Department of Counseling and College Student Personnel. From 2004-2008 she served as President of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). She is the 2011 recipient of the Robert H. Shaffer award for excellence in graduate teaching and the current Associate Editor for the *Journal of College Student Development*.

Murteza Bedir

Murteza Bedir, is Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University. He holds a PhD in Islamic Studies from the University of Manchester (UK), a BA in Islamic Theology and an MA in Law. His specialty is Islamic/Hanafi legal theory, and he teaches law and society in Islamic civilization, new approaches in Islamic law, and the philosophy of Islamic law. He has been a visiting researcher at Harvard University (USA), edited several journals and produced books on Islamic legal theory.

Deborah Boehm-Davis

Deborah Boehm-Davis is Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and a University Professor of Psychology at George Mason University. She was trained as an experimental psychologist who studies limitations on our ability to process information and perform tasks. Since graduation, she has worked on human factors issues, taking what is known about processing limitations and applying that knowledge to the design of systems that people use in order to improve their decision making. She has worked on human factors research for the past 35 years at General Electric, NASA Ames Research Center, Bell Laboratories and now at George Mason University. She also served as a Senior Policy Advisor for Human Factors at the Food and Drug Administration. She has served as President of the Applied Experimental and Engineering Psychology Division of the American Psychological Association, and of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society. She has also served as associate editor for two journals and on the editorial board for several other journals. She is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society and the International Ergonomics Association.

Amaarah Decuir

Amaarah Decuir is an aspiring scholar in the field of Education Leadership. Her research interests include gendered interpretations of leadership, faith-based school leadership, and effective organizational culture. She conducts research in P-12 public and private schools, and non-profit organizations. Amaarah completed her doctoral research as a gendered interpretation of the roles and responsibilities of women leading American Islamic schools. She is currently teaching and researching at The George Washington University and Northern Virginia Community College as an Adjunct Professor. Amaarah previously served as the Principal of Al Fatih Academy, a well-regarded Islamic School in Northern Virginia. She was a classroom teacher in DC Public Schools and Fairfax County Public Schools. Amaarah holds an Ed.D. from The George Washington University in Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy Studies; an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from Howard University; and a BA degree in History from the University of California, Berkeley.

Ismail Demirezen

Ismail Demirezen is currently serving as faculty member at the Department of Sociology of Religion, Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University. He holds a PhD in the Sociology of Religion, and an MA in Religious Studies and Sociology, both from The Catholic University of America (Washington DC). He has also taught at the University of Maryland-College Park (Maryland). In 2012, he conducted post-doctoral research at Universidade da Coruña, Spain, in Faith Tourism. He was a visiting professor at the University of Reading, UK, and the University of Corunada, Spain. He has presented papers at John Hopkins and Columbia Universities, USA, and has also received awards of success from the University of Maryland and the University of Notre Dame. His fields of specialization are social movements, sociology of politics, social theory, comparative sociology, sociology of religion and hermeneutics.

Alpaslan Durmus

Alpaslan Durmus is currently studying for a PhD at Marmara University, Institute of Educational Sciences where he obtained an MA in the field of Education Management with a thesis titled “The Reflections of Globalization On Education”. He is also currently the president of the board of trustees of the Association of Publishing Agencies in Turkey. After working as a teacher and principal at several secondary schools, he

founded EDAM (Educational Consultancy and Research) in 2000 of which he is the General Director. He has also served as a writer, editor, director of publications and consultant to the following institutions: Ministry of Family and Social Policies, Presidency of Religious Affairs, Türkiye Diyanet Foundation and several publishing houses.

Hamit Er

Hamit Er is a Professor in the Department of Religious Education, Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University. He holds a PhD looking at the educational institutions of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries focusing on the modernization process of education. He has conducted research at Luton University, UK, in the department of Ethnology. He also holds a BA from Marmara University, Theology Faculty, and an MA at the Institute of Social Sciences, Marmara University. He received his degrees of professorship with work specializing in Ottoman *madrasas* and other works related to education. He co-edited a book entitled *Balkans and Islam* published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, and has published several articles, papers and books.

Keri Facer

Keri Facer is Professor of Educational and Social Futures at the University of Bristol, UK. Her work is concerned with understanding the role of universities and schools in the context of environmental, economic and technological disruptions. Since 2012 she has been Leadership Fellow for the UK Research Council's 'Connected Communities' Programme, a unique £30m+ experiment in bringing together academics and civil society groups to co-produce research in areas ranging from health and wellbeing to sustainability and cultural heritage. Prior to this, she was Research Director at Futurelab, bringing together creative, digital, academic and practitioner expertise to innovate with new models of education exploiting everything from early stage augmented reality to brain-computer interfaces. In 2009, she led the Beyond Current Horizons programme for the UK government to consider critical trends and challenges facing education over the next two decades. She has worked with organisations ranging from UNESCO and the BBC to the Baltic Contemporary Art Gallery, Microsoft and Electronic Arts. Her most recent books are *Learning Futures* (2011) and *Towards a Critical Politics of Education and Technology* (2013).

Bilal Gokkir

Bilal Gokkir is currently teaching at the Theology Faculty of Istanbul University. He holds a PhD and MA in Islamic Studies, a BA in Islamic Theology, and an MA in History. His PhD dissertation focused on "Western Attitudes to the Origins of the Qur'an – Theological and Linguistic Approaches" and his research centres on Qur'anic studies and approaches to *Tafsir* in the Western and Turkish context. He was a visiting Professor at Oxford University, and has published works including *Sura Maryam: A Study of Text and Interpretation*.

Ismail Latif Hacinebioglu

Ismail Latif Hacinebioglu is a faculty member at Istanbul Theology. He is also visiting professor at the University of Wales, UK, and at IIUM, Malaysia. He received his BA from Izmir Dokuz Eylül University, Faculty of Theology, and pursued his PhD study at the University of Wales. He served in the Philosophy department at another Turkish university before working at Istanbul University's Theology Faculty, Department of Logic. Logic bases its scope on the methodological and problematic relations in the common field of discussion that Islam, the philosophy of religion and the history of philosophy share in common.

To that end, Logic researches the problems of Islamic and Western histories of philosophy comparatively, in the framework of epistemology, ontology and metaphysics. Hacınebioglu's books include: *Does God Exist: The Logical Foundations of Cosmological Arguments*, *Informal Mantık Felsefesi: Budist Mantık İncelemesi* (Philosophy of Informal Logic: A Study of Buddhist Logic), *Argümanda Kavramsal ve Yargısal Açidan: Mantıksal Analiz*.

Sari Hanafi

Sari Hanafi is currently a Professor of Sociology and chair of the department of sociology, anthropology and media studies at the American University of Beirut. He is also the editor of *Idafat: the Arab Journal of Sociology* (Arabic). He is the Vice President of both the International Sociological Association and the Arab Council of Social Science. He is the author of numerous journal articles and book chapters on the political and economic sociology of the Palestinian diaspora and refugees; sociology of migration; transnationalism; politics of scientific research; civil society and elite formation and transitional justice. Among his recent books are: *From Relief and Works to Human Development: UNRWA and Palestinian Refugees after 60 Years* (edited with L. Takkenberg and L. Hilal, Routledge); *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in The Occupied Palestinian Territories* (edited with A. Ophir & M. Givoni, 2009, English and Arabic, New York: Zone Book; Beirut: CAUS); *The Emergence of A Palestinian Globalized Elite: Donors, International Organizations and Local NGOs* (with L. Taber, 2005, Arabic and English). His last book is *Knowledge Production in the Arab World: The Impossible Promise* (with R. Arvanitis, in Arabic, Beirut: CAUS and in English with Routledge, 2016).

M. Kamal Hassan

Distinguished Professor M. Kamal Hassan was the 3rd Rector of the International Islamic University Malaysia from 1999-2006, succeeding Prof. Emeritus Dr AbdulHamid AbuSulayman. He obtained his MA and PhD from Columbia University, New York, in 1970 and 1976, respectively. His field of specialization is contemporary Islamic thought in Southeast Asia. He was appointed as the first Chair of Islam in Southeast Asia at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., from 1997-1999 and also taught at the College of Islamic Social Sciences, Leesburg, Virginia, during the same period. His recent book is, *The Voice of Islamic Moderation in the Malay World* (2013). In the press is his latest book as chief editor, *Natural Science from the Worldview of the Qur'an*, scheduled to be out in May 2016.

Jeremy Henzell-Thomas

Jeremy Henzell-Thomas is Faculty Member, Centre of Islamic Studies, Cambridge University, UK. He holds degrees in English and Linguistics, and a PhD in the Psychology of Learning. He is former Executive Director of the Book Foundation and former first Chair of FAIR (Forum against Islamophobia and Racism, UK). He has also served as a member of the Executive Committee and the Advisory Board of the AMSS (UK).

Bekir Karlıga

Bekir Karlıga is Senior Advisor to the Turkish Prime Minister on the Alliance of Civilisations, and Head of the International Civilizations Research Centre, Turkey. He holds a BA, MA and PhD in Philosophy. For thirty years he taught Islamic philosophy, comparative East-West philosophy, history of civilization and intercultural dialogue courses at the Faculty of Theology, Marmara University, Turkey. Retiring from the University in 2008 he established Bahçeşehir University's Civilization Studies Center. He was also appointed

as head of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations National Coordination Committee. A prolific author Professor Karliga has published more than 50 books. He is mostly known for the production of the outstanding documentary *The River Flowing Westward*. The documentary filming took place in 16 countries with nearly 200 experts working on it. He was awarded the AMSS (UK) Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011.

Omar Kasule

Omar Hasan Kasule graduated from Makerere Medical School and subsequently obtained his postgraduate training in public health including a doctorate in epidemiology from Harvard University. Additionally, Dr. Kasule had obtained a certification in Arabic and Islamic studies from Bilal Institute. From 1987-1995, Dr. Kasule worked in the USA involved in managing development projects involving education and health in North America and the Caribbean and clinical epidemiology as a Quality Assurance Consultant in several states in the USA. After working in the USA, Dr. Kasule accepted a position at the international university in Malaysia (1995-2005) where he held the appointments of Professor of Medicine, Deputy Dean for Research and Post Graduate, founding Chief Editor of the *International Medical Journal* www-e-imj.com. During 2005-2008, Dr. Kasule was a professor on the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Brunei where he taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses on epidemiology, biostatistics, and medical ethics. He has been at the Saudi Ministry of Health since 2009 holding positions of professor of epidemiology and bioethics and head of international collaboration at the faculty of medicine, chairman of the institutional review board and ethics committee at the King Fahad Medical City, and a member of the Scientific Advisory Board at the Ministry. Dr. Kasule is a consultant for many hospitals and faculties of medicine in the South East Asia and Western Asia regions on Islamic Medicine and integration of Islam in medical practice and teaching. Besides his medical professional career, Prof Kasule has been involved in the field of epistemological and knowledge integration starting in the 1970s when he worked on integrating values in school curricula in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and North America. He then worked on integration of values in leadership and management training starting in 1989. Since 1995 he has been working on integrating values in the medical education curricula in East Asia and Africa. He extended this effort to other university faculties starting in 2010 with the organization world wide of workshops on integration of knowledge followed by writing of integrated textbooks. His writings on these disciplines can be accessed at omarkasule.tripod.com.

Recep Kaymakcan

Recep Kaymakcan is a professor of religious education, and an advisor to the Minister of Youth and Sports in Turkey. He served in the department of Religious Education at Sakarya University for years. Kaymakcan published and co-edited books in the areas of religious and values education, pluralism in teaching and he is also the editor-in-chief of the Turkish Journal of Values Education. His main research areas include comparative religious education, pluralism, human rights and religious education, youth and values, policy development in religious education, and teaching Islam and Christianity in schools.

Mbaye Basir Lo

Mbaye Basir Lo is an Assistant Professor of the Practice of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies at Duke University. Dr. Lo's research interests include the sociology of Islam, Arabic language and literature in Africa, and theories of civil society. He has served for seven years as faculty director for DukeEngage Egypt, a student civic engagement programme in Cairo. He is also the co-founding director and current director of

Duke in the Arab World academic program. His books include *Muslims in America: Race, Politics and Community Building*, *Civil Society-Based Governance in Africa: Theories and Practices*, and *Understanding Muslim Discourse: Language, Tradition and the Message of Bin Laden*. His Arabic books include *Qadaya al-Luqa Wa al-Deen fi al-Adab al-Ifriqi*, & *Ishkaliyatu Intiqalu al-Sultah fi-Ifriqiyya*. He is the co-editor of *Muslim Institutions of Higher Learning in Post-colonial Africa*, Palgrave 2015.

Fathi H. Malkawi

Fathi H. Malkawi, Jordanian born Educationist and University Professor holds a PhD in Science Education and Philosophy of Science, from Michigan State University, USA, 1984. He served at the Ministry of Education of Jordan, as a teacher, instructor, curriculum developer, lecturer in teacher training institutes, and educational supervision during 1966-1978. He has also held the posts of University Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education and Faculty of Shariah, Yarmouk University, in Jordan from 1984-1996, and a visiting professor and lecturer at universities in many countries. He has authored or co-authored 25 books in school and university education, in science education and research methodology. He has also published numerous research and studies in academic journals. Among his latest published books are *Classical Foundations of the Islamic Educational Thought*, co-authored with Dr. Bradley Cook, and published by Bingham Young University, Utah, USA, in 2010, in Arabic and English; *Epistemological Integration: Essentials of an Islamic Methodology*, published by the IIIT in 2012 in Arabic, and in English 2014; and *Thought Building: Concept, Importance and Intellectual Maps*, January 2015, by IIIT. He is currently a Regional Director of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, the Editor in Chief of *Islamiyat al-Marifah*, the Journal of Contemporary Islamic Thought, and a member of the Jordan Academy of Arabic Language.

M. Yaqub Mirza

M. Yaqub Mirza is President and CEO of Sterling Management Group, Inc. Dr. Mirza is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Amana Mutual Funds, the largest Islamic Fund with \$3.3 billion in assets. Dr. Mirza is also a member of the Board of Directors, University Islamic Financial Corporation, which provides Islamic Financing. Dr. Mirza is a member of the Board of Trustees, George Mason University Foundation, Inc. In addition, he serves as advisor to the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, George Mason University. He is also a member, Board of Trustees, Finance, Investment and Endowment Committee of Shenandoah University. He holds a PhD in Physics and an MA in Teaching Science from the University of Texas at Dallas. He is the author of *Five Pillars of Prosperity: Essentials of Faith-Based Wealth Building* (White Cloud Press, 2014).

Marodsilton Muborakshoeva

Marodsilton Muborakshoeva obtained both her Masters and PhD degrees in Educational Studies from Oxford University, Department of Education under the supervision of Professor Richard Pring. Her research interests are comparative education, education in the developing world, teacher education, research methods, history and philosophy of higher education in Muslim contexts, and reform initiatives in education and heritage of Muslims. Her recent publications include a book entitled *Islam and Higher Education: Concepts, Challenges and Opportunities* (<http://tiny.cc/nybiex>), and articles such as “Islamic Scholasticism and Traditional Education and their Links with Modern Higher Education and Societies”; “Impediments to Enhancing Research at the Universities in Developing Contexts: The Case of Pakistani Universities”; and “Universities in Muslim Contexts”. Marodsilton is a lecturer of the Secondary Teacher Education Program (STEP), a joint programme of the Institute of Ismaili Studies and the Institute of Education, University College London.

Mehmet Pacaci

Dr. Mehmet Pacaci is currently the Ambassador of the Turkish Republic to the Holy See. He defended his PhD dissertation titled “Eschatological Beliefs in the Qur’an and in the Bible” (Kur’an’da ve Kitab-ı Mukaddeste Ahiret İnancı) at Ankara University in 1989. He is specialized in *Tafsir* (exegesis of the Qur’an), and is interested in hermeneutical problems of interpreting the Qur’an, as well as the historical setting of the Qur’an, modern approaches in the commentary of the Qur’an in comparison to classical Islam. His recent publications are “How Much Historical are the Qur’an and I?” and “What Happened to the Qur’an and *Tafsir* in the Modern Age?” He has taught at different universities internationally.

Timothy Reagan

Timothy Reagan has held senior faculty and administrative positions at a number of universities, including the University of Connecticut, the University of the Witwatersrand, Central Connecticut State University, Roger Williams University, Gallaudet University, and most recently, Nazarbayev University in Astana, Kazakhstan. His primary areas of specialization are applied and educational linguistics, education policy and comparative education. Prof. Reagan is the author of a dozen books, including *Comparative case studies in educational policy analysis* (2012), *Language planning and language policy for sign languages* (2010), *Language matters* (2009), *Nonwestern educational traditions* (2005), *Critical questions, critical perspectives: Language and the second language educator* (2005), *Language, education and ideology* (2002). He is also the author of more than 125 journal articles and book chapters, and his work has appeared in such international journals as *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, and *Semiotica*. He is currently the Editor of *Language Problems and Language Planning*.

Martin Rose

Martin Rose has been a British Council officer since 1988, after shorter careers in banking and academic publishing. He was educated at Oxford University (BA, Modern History at Magdalen College, 1973-76; M Phil, Oriental Studies, St Antony’s, 1982-84). He has lived in Egypt and Jordan, and his British Council postings have included Baghdad (1989-90), Rome (1991-96), Brussels (1999-2002), Canada (2006-10) and Morocco (2010-14). He founded the British Council’s in-house think-tank, Counterpoint, as well as the Anglo-Italian Pontignano Conference (1992-the present) and in 2008 took an international student expedition to the Canadian Arctic. Now a senior consultant on MENA to the British Council, his recent publications include *Bavures and Shibboleths: the Changing Ecology of Culture and Language in Morocco* (2014); six reports on *Education in North Africa Since Independence* (2015) and *Immunizing the Mind: How Can Education Reform Contribute to Neutralising Violent Extremism?* (2016). He is a Visiting Fellow at the Waleed bin Talal Centre for Islamic Studies at Cambridge.

Ziauddin Sardar

Ziauddin Sardar is Chair of the Muslim Institute, London, former Professor of Law and Society at Middlesex University, UK, and Editor of the quarterly journal *Critical Muslim*. He is also the Director of the Centre of Postnormal Policy and Futures Studies, East West Chicago, and the editor of its journal *East West Affairs*. Considered a pioneering writer on Islam and contemporary cultural issues, he is author of some fifty books, including his classic studies, *The Future of Muslim Civilisation* (1979) and *Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to Come* (1985). His other books include *Postmodernism and the Other* (1998), *Orientalism* (1999), and the international bestseller *Why Do People Hate America?* (2002). A collection of his writings is available as *Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures: A Ziauddin Sardar Reader* (2003) and *How Do You Know? Reading*

Ziauddin Sardar on Islam, Science and Cultural Relations (2006). His two volumes of autobiography, *Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of a Sceptical Muslim* and *Balti Britain: A Provocative Journey Through Asian Britain*, have received wide acclaim. His latest books are *Reading the Qur'an* and *Muhammad: All That Matters*. Sardar has written and presented a number of programmes for the BBC and Channel 4. *Prospect* magazine named him as one of Britain's top 100 public intellectuals and *The Independent* newspaper calls him: "Britain's own Muslim polymath". He also worked for five years at King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, becoming an authority on the hajj.

Recep Senturk

Recep Senturk is the director general and dean of graduate studies at the Alliance of Civilizations Institute at Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Istanbul, where he also serves as the chair of the Department of Civilization Studies. He is also founder and president of International Ibn Khaldun Society. He holds a PhD from Columbia University, Department of Sociology (1998), and specializes in sociology, human rights, and Islamic studies with a focus on the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and Turkey. He is the author of (in English) *Narrative Social Structure: Hadith Transmission Network 610–1505* (Stanford University Press, 2005) and (in Turkish) *Open Civilization: Towards a Multi-Civilizational World and Society* (Istanbul 2010, 2014), *Sociology of Turkish Thought: From Fiqh to Social Science* (Istanbul 2008); *Islam and Human Rights: Sociological and Legal Perspectives* (Istanbul 2007); *Malcolm X: Struggle for Human Rights* (Istanbul 2006); *Social Memory: Hadith Transmission Network 610–1505* (Istanbul 2004); *Sociologies of Religion* (Istanbul 2004); and *Modernization and Social Science in the Muslim World: A Comparison between Turkey and Egypt* (Istanbul 2006). He is the editor of *Civilization and Values: Open Civilization* (Istanbul 2010), *Ibn Khaldun: Contemporary Readings* (Istanbul 2009), *Economic Development and Values* (Istanbul 2008).

Anas al-Shaikh-Ali

Anas al-Shaikh-Ali CBE, FRSA, has an MA in English Literature (AUB) and a PhD in American Studies (Manchester University) and has taught Literature and Translation at universities in the Middle East. He is founding member and current Chair of the AMSS (UK), Academic Advisor, Director of Translation and London Office of the IIIT and Vice-President of the Institute for Epistemological Studies (Europe) in Brussels. Dr. Ali is joint Editor with Shiraz Khan of the IIIT Occasional Papers, the IIIT Books-in-Brief, and the AMSS UK Zaki Badawi Memorial Lecture series. His recent published paper is "Killer Narratives in Western Popular Culture" in *Genocidal Nightmares: Narratives of Insecurity and the Logic of Mass Atrocities*, edited by Abdelwahab El-Affendi (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015). His expert advice was instrumental for the production of the joint British Council / AMSS UK pioneer publication *British Muslims: Media Guide*. Dr. Ali is former member of the Management Board of the Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and listed in *The Muslim 500: The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims* (2009-2014). As Chair of AMSS (UK), he initiated two annual prestigious awards: the **Building Bridges Award** and the **Life Achievement Award** which have been presented to leading Muslim and non-Muslim politicians, academics, scholars, and theologians.

Abubaker Al-Shingieti

Abubaker Al-Shingieti is Executive Director of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, USA. He has been a Research Associate at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. He has also served as Vice President at the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD). In addition, he was the editor of *Islamic Horizons*, a monthly magazine of the Islamic

Society of North America and was a founding member of the Society for Islamic Thought and Culture in Khartoum, Sudan. Dr. Shingieti earned a BSc (Honors) in Architecture from the University of Khartoum and a PhD in Communications from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Ermin Sinanovic

Ermin Sinanovic is Director of Research and Academic Programs at the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). Before joining IIIT, he was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD, where he was also a faculty affiliate with the Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies. In 2011, he became a Faculty Associate in Research at Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University. Dr. Sinanovic studied for an MA and a PhD in Political Science at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University. He obtained two BAs (one in Qur'an and Sunnah Studies, the other in Political Science) from the International Islamic University Malaysia, and an MA in Islamic Civilization from the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), also in Malaysia. His work has been published in Politics, Religion & Ideology, Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations, and Intellectual Discourse. He is the author of a monograph, *Singapore's Muslim Minority: A Moral Voice? Comparative Perspectives on Integration in a Global Age* (Singapore: Centre for Research on the Islamic and Malay Affairs, 2013).

Aydin Topaloglu

Aydin Topaloglu holds a BA in theology and philosophy from Eylül University, an MA with a thesis entitled "Al-Farabi's and St. Thomas Aquinas's God", and a PhD on "The Problem of Atheism in Contemporary British Philosophy." After a year of research at the University of Cairo and the University of London, he was a fellow for the Centre for Islamic Studies (ISAM). He has been a philosophy Lecturer for the Higher Islamic Institute of Sofia (Bulgaria) and has also served as a Vice-Rector. Professor Topaloglu has been a Faculty Member at Istanbul University's Theology Faculty, Philosophy and Religious Studies Department, for almost a year, and a visiting lecturer at Ahmet Yesevi University since 2010. He has authored books on theistic belief, critiquing atheism, as well as articles on the fundamental problems of philosophy on Logic, Ethic and Politics. Among his main interests are medieval philosophical interactions among Muslims, Jews and Christians (Abrahamic traditions) and also contemporary philosophical problems between Islam and democracy, human rights, globalism, and pluralism.

Iqbal Unus

Iqbal Unus is a former director of The Fairfax Institute (TFI), the instructional division of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), where he has also served as director of human development and director of administration since 1989. Prior to joining IIIT, Dr. Unus served as secretary general of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). Between 1980 and 1982, Dr. Unus taught in the applied sciences and nuclear engineering departments at King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Some of the offices he has held include president of the Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada (1975), several offices including president of the Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers (AMSE), and a trustee of All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS). His major area of interest is non-profit management and leadership studies. He has conducted numerous training programs in leadership skills and facilitated strategic planning retreats for Muslim community organizations. Dr. Iqbal Unus holds two Master's degrees in physics and nuclear engineering and a PhD in nuclear physics (1977).

Abstracts

In alphabetical order

AMAARAH DECUIR

Our Place at the Table: Women's Roles in Higher Education in the Muslim World

Contemporary research in education reform positions leaders as the primary conduits of change. Leaders set agendas for change, they wield influence on the people charged with the authority to enact change, and identify resources necessary to sustain change over time. In order to establish significant reform within higher education in the Muslim world, leaders must ensure that there is a place for women as educational change-makers. Centuries of exclusion due to institutional policies, family demands, cultural ideologies, and misinterpretations of religious doctrine have prevented women from accessing leadership positions that can contribute to reform processes. Women must be provided a place at the table to fully participate in leading educational reform across the Muslim world.

KERI FACER

Reimagining Higher Education: Collaborations within a Diverse Knowledge Landscape

A critical question facing contemporary institutions of higher education is: what is the distinctive nature and value of research and scholarship conducted within the academy as compared with the multiple and plural ways of knowing that exist beyond its walls? Understanding the future of higher education will require a careful articulation of the many different ways of knowing in contemporary pluralist societies, including those of traditional scholarship, and a detailed examination of how they might productively encounter, inform and develop each other. The paper draws upon the growing literature on interdisciplinary collaboration as well as upon the significant UK Research Council Programme 'Connected Communities'. In this programme, for which I am Leadership Fellow, over 330 projects have brought together academics with civil society actors to collaborate in the production of shared knowledge. The paper explores the tensions, strengths and latent possibilities evident in these projects, and their potential insights into how we might imagine a higher education that is open to the multiple forms of knowledge that exist in contemporary societies. The paper also argues that addressing urgent social challenges – from population aging, to environmental degradation and destruction – will necessarily require a more plural and collaborative mode of knowledge production that nonetheless recognises the distinctive and non-commensurate contributions that are made by different ways of knowing.

SARI HANAFI

The Janus-like Face of Higher Education in the Arab World: Internationalization and Local Relevance

Knowledge production cannot be understood without investigating both the locus of research (institutions) and the researchers themselves. As far as Arab countries are concerned, research is very much concentrated in universities. Previous studies I have conducted show that these universities have produced compartmentalized elite even within a state: those who publish globally and perish locally, and others who publish locally and perish globally. This paper unfolds the Janus-like face of higher education in the Arab World between internationalization and local relevance, echoing Ziauddin Sardar's call for integration of knowledge (instead of its Islamisation). The paper focuses on three points:

First, internationalization requires measurement and indicators universally recognized. Yet what I will demonstrate that the indicators of concepts such as "Knowledge Economy" and "Global University Ranking" yield little meaning when they are applied on the Arab World. This measurement needs to move from creating hierarchy between states and universities into a reflection in how an institution (such as university) fit into its environment; ie. having a paradigm shift from the "best" to "ecology". Second, the "blind" application of research ethics promoted by the American Institutional Research Board (IRB) has major consequences on the social science produced by some institutions in the region, such as the American University of Beirut. Finally, the local relevance of research needs knowledge translation. There is a fear of being normative among many academics in the name of the positivism of science. This often hinders the translation of academic research into public awareness and policy relevance.

This paper is the outcome of a long reflection on the status of knowledge production in the Arab world by the use of not only empirical observations but also historical-structural analyses. In addition, of bibliometric, empirical and desk research (interviews with 210 academics mainly in Lebanon and Jordan but from other Arab countries, 240 CVs), I have longstanding experience in this field as a researcher and participant observer. Some of the results of this reflection will be published in a book *Arab Research and Knowledge Society: The Impossible Promise* (with R. Arvanitis).

M. KAMAL HASSAN

Islamisation Of Human Knowledge As Understood In The Context Of IIUM: Keeping The Sacred Mission Alive And Relevant

The Islamic intellectual and educational reform agenda known as "Islamisation of Knowledge" (IOK) or "Islamisation/Islamicisation of Human Knowledge" (IOHK in IIUM) which emerged in the second half of the 20th century and championed by the leading scholars and intellectuals of IIIT since the time of the late Dr Ismail Raji Al Faruqi, has been the subject of heated debates between the proponents and the opponents of the discourse. The aim of the paper is to show that in an international Islamic university based in Malaysia (IIUM), the agenda and the discourse are very much alive and gaining more attention, in spite of the existence of skeptical or negative perceptions from some international intellectuals regarding the conceptualisation of the discourse. The experience in IIUM shows that the combination of several

positive factors is crucial to the survival, progress and sustainability of the agenda – a) the way IOK is defined, justified and understood; b) the approval and appreciation of the Ministry of Education; c) the commitment of the Rector, the top management of the university and the academic leaders of the different faculties; d) existence of a clear policy and guidelines on Islamisation/Islamicisation, Integration and Relevantisation provided by the university; e) the element of realistic idealism and flexibility provided by the exponents of IOHK to accommodate the diversity of curricular and professional requirements of the natural sciences, medical sciences, engineering sciences, architecture and environmental design sciences, law, economics, other social science disciplines, humanities and Islamic revealed knowledge program; f) the support of ISESCO, OIC and IIIT given to the university over the years. Avoiding a rigid or doctrinaire approach to be imposed on the academic staff, IIUM has come up with its own developmental and incremental perspective of IOHK efforts which are classified into four major categories: low necessity, medium necessity, high necessity and highest necessity. The academic staff are encouraged to plan their IOHK efforts to move over the years from the low necessity level to the high or highest levels.

MBAYE LO

Muslim University Models in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities

A major change in traditional Muslim education is the rise of Muslim institutions of higher learning in the 21st century. The two Muslim credentialing centers are the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FUIW) in Rabat and the League of Islamic Universities in Cairo. Each organization maintains a membership of nearly two hundred institutions of higher learning. Although these institutions are playing a much-needed role in educating Muslims about their faith and providing them with crucial life skills, *many important questions remain to be answered* about the pedagogical vision of these institutions: If Islamisation of Knowledge constitutes the **epistemological** borders of Muslim education (Al-Faruqi, 1982), then how does it fare with its nemesis, the globalization movement, which characterizes the trends of modern universities? Similarly, what qualifies an institution to be labeled 'Islamic'? Is it its Muslim majority or its Islamic content? Furthermore, what are the developing models in these institutions and how does that fit into their roles and functions? This paper examines these questions by analyzing the processes as well as discourse through which model institutions have evolved to the 21st century.

MARODSILTON MUBORAKSHOEVA

Challenges in Higher Education and the Role of Muslim Cultures and Civilisations in Developing a New Paradigm in Education

This paper explores the challenges modern Muslim scholars face when acquiring and producing knowledge and when thinking about what they can borrow and revive from the educational approaches of Muslim scholars of the Middle Ages in order to come up with a new paradigm of learning in education. Some of these challenges are the gaps between secular and religious education, marginalisation of various types of learning and the dominance of one mode of learning - especially the dominance of western-based epistemology and ethical principles in education, struggling to choose between competing and often contradictory paradigms, not knowing much about one's own cultural and civilizational legacy and what

it could offer to resolve these issues, etc. Some scholars started researching these challenges, yet it is very rare that a combined library research and field work is conducted to examine such issues. In this research, drawing on the analysis of relevant literature and qualitative interviews conducted with prominent scholars, we aim to shed light on some of these challenges and provide solutions to them. The seriousness of these challenges and searching for ways to resolve them compels us to look back and critically examine what educational approaches were used by Muslim scholars and pedagogues in the Middle Ages and what happened to those approaches in the modern times. Critical examination of such legacy is very important so that we avoid the temptation of just regurgitating those achievements in terms of Muslims' world view about education and epistemology in the past and creatively revive those according to the needs of modern times.

MEHMET PACACI

Can Muslim Higher Education Have a True Goal?

After *halaqas* in mosques and *kuttabs* in the line of *suffah* of the Prophet, in a later period, a more developed institution of education i.e. *madrasa* appeared and it educated the human resources that the classical Muslim world view and social structure required. The main produce of the education was the *ulama* class as a civil society. The members of *ulama* were essentially in charge of running the intellectual and social life. The ideologues or *mutakallims* of classical Muslim societies were also from the same community. *Ulama* were the professors or *mudarrises* of *madaris* from primary to the higher levels, the *qadis*, i.e. the judges of a *shariah* court who were in charge of the application of Islam in day-to-day reality and the *muftis*, specialists in *shariah* who give authoritative legal opinions. The members of *ulama* also exercised a supervisory function in every step of running *awqaf*.

Muslim society had a drastic paradigmatic change in 19th and 20th centuries with the establishment of nation states after one another in whole Muslim geography. The traditional social structure of Muslim World collapsed and instead totally a different one was introduced on the basis of modernity. All three main areas, i.e., jurisprudence, education, service to the society through charitable foundations, of *ulama* were nationalized, centralized and secularized. *Ulama's* function was lessened only to religious service at the mosque. The class of *ulama* was simply redundant and almost all functions of *ulama* have been conducted by different secular and national ministries. Since then Islam itself has been represented by Islamist leaders, who are originally grown as journalists, writers, engineers or sociologists of the new social structure rather than *ulama* of the old one. The Islamism has been mainly the new *kalam* for Muslim societies and, with different ideological leanings, the Islamist leaders have been the new *mutakallims* and even *fuqaha* for the Muslim communities now.

New nation states of Muslims immediately demanded especially white collar human resources to govern their countries taking after the modern West. In order to do so, they either tried to replace their education system with a modern one or until they have their own national institutes they sent their youths to the so called civilized West to have a strong and sufficiently westernized new generation as a new model figure of the education. The immediate results were a profound alienation to the original Muslim society and an uneasy tension in the Muslim life.

Against the above mentioned background the following issues and questions can be studied: Today, the higher education of Muslim countries suffers from insufficient funding, lack of freedom of expression, inefficient curricula and outdated education programs beside many other ones. Can Muslims, however, overcome their own problems that are caused by a fragmented conscience of theirs? Can they produce any solution to them in this state of the alienation to their own selves? Can they overcome the tension between the so called secular and religious spheres of knowledge that was created by the partial modernization of Muslim societies? Patching the religious disciplines on the natural sciences or humanities can take us to a kind of integration of mind. Is it enough for us to have pious engineers, lawyers and teachers or assumedly open minded *ulama* as target figures of Muslim education? What is the role of *pseudo ulama* who are raised by the remainder of obsolete *madrasas* in deepening the tension in Muslim mind? What would be the target individual and society of Muslim education?

TIMOTHY REAGAN

Islam and the Challenge of Language in Education: Why *Tawhid* Is Not Simply ‘Monotheism’

As Ziauddin Sardar has observed, “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, shape our perceptions of the world around us, and engage with the world to change it” (p.14). The centrality of language to human society, and to the intellectual endeavour, cannot and must not be overrated:

Language makes us human Whatever we do, language is central to our lives, and the use of language underpins the study of every other discipline. Understanding language gives us insight into ourselves and a tool for the investigation of the rest of the universe. Proposing marriage, opposing globalization, composing a speech, all require the use of language; to buy a meal or sell a car involves communication, which is made possible by language; to be without language – as an infant, a foreigner or a stroke victim – is to be at a devastating disadvantage. Martians and dolphins, bonobos and bees, may be just as intelligent, cute, adept at social organization and morally worthwhile, but they don’t share our language, they don’t speak ‘human’. (Smith, 2002, p. 3)

In the educational context, language plays multiple essential roles: as medium of instruction, as content itself for the native speaker, as a learning objective for the foreign language learner, and, not least of all, as the means through which we conceptualize the world. Although most linguists would reject an extreme linguistic relativism that suggested that our thoughts and understandings are limited or even determined by the language that we speak, many would be far more sympathetic to a somewhat weaker form of relativism based on the idea that language influences the way in which we make sense of the world around us (see Lee, 1996). In fact, as Roman Jakobson noted, “Languages differ essentially in what they *must* convey and not in what they *may* convey” (quoted in Deutscher, 2010, p. 151). The lexicon of any language also inevitably reflects the social, cultural and historic context of the language, and can impact the understanding of particular terms and phrases.

The implications of language and language differences in discussions about education and the integration of knowledge are, then, vast. The growing dominance of English, for instance, can be seen either as a boon

to scholarly discourse, or a threat to the diversity of thought necessary for scholarly endeavours. The language in which ideas are presented is not a neutral matter; it is a profoundly important one, and one that is all too often completely overlooked – especially by those for whom the dominant language happens to be their first language.

The title of this presentation offers an example of why language matters so much in scholarly discourse: English developed over centuries in a fundamentally Christian social order, and its vocabulary, metaphors, analogies, and so on, reflect that background. In reflecting on non-Christian epistemological concerns, this presents a huge problem. *Tawhid* does, of course, refer to monotheism, but to a monotheism far stronger than that in the English term – the absolute, indivisible oneness of Allah is not simply the notion of ‘one God’ (let alone that of the Trinitarian Christian view of God), but is a core, fundamental aspect of Qur’anic epistemology, reflected in the *Shahada*. In other words, even the use of the equivalent English term inevitably results in distortion. The focus of this presentation will be on the role of language in both the construction and integration of knowledge, as well as in the role and place of language in the educational process.

MARTIN ROSE

Universities, the Job-Market and the Jihad

A startling finding of recent research is that amongst graduates recruited to jihad in MENA (some 48.5% of jihadis recruited from within the region have some exposure to Higher Education), no fewer than 44% are engineers, and a negligible proportion are social scientists and students of the humanities, with the single exception of graduates in Islamic Studies. This should give cause for very careful and uncomfortable thought about education at all levels in the region, but particularly Higher Education. What is it about the education of engineers (and to a slightly lesser extent natural scientists and doctors) that appears to predispose them to the simplicities of doctrinaire violence? And what is it about the social sciences that seems to provide a degree of immunity?

Naturally, there are factors beyond the intellectual formation that these disciplines give to their students. The sociology of the engineering and medical professions provides one set of explanations: massive expansion in the immediate post-colonial period and disappointed hopes in the period of economic liberalisation. In addition, of course, the fierce selectivity of education in these fields and the prestige of the *muhandis* and the *tabib* in modern Middle Eastern societies and governments provides a strong incentive for the intelligent and the ambitious to follow these paths. It doesn’t, though, account for their disproportionate open-ness to recruitment either to Islamism or to jihad.

Evidence suggests that the way in which engineering and the sciences are taught, not just in the MENA region but also in Europe and North America, is conducive to binary understandings of *correct* and *incorrect*, and of *right* and *wrong*, the practical, ethical and spiritual all too easily eliding into each other. And the opposite seems also to be true: that something in the social sciences and the way they are taught (however defectively) encourages a much more nuanced and critical approach to received wisdom. The social sciences, and the humanities, seem to confer a sort of immunity.

This is a conundrum for many of the authoritarian regimes in the region, autocratic or theocratic. Critical thinking is not a comfortable commodity, and has been in many cases discouraged, often aggressively. But the young crave the opportunity to think. A recent survey amongst students in Saudi Arabia reveals that 91% of women students and 87% of men agree with the statement that “Teachers should let us develop our own opinions and not push us in certain directions.” This is a clear sign of resistance to the binary approach that is too often foremost in science and engineering teaching, as also in the teaching of religion - the approach that offers certainties of fact underwritten by authority that are beyond critical dissection.

This paper suggests that engineering and the sciences need to be taught more like the social sciences; and that the whole approach to the social sciences needs to be invigorated, rethought and re-emphasized. That the philosophy and sociology of science are at least as important to engineering and science graduates as the Gradgrindian facts and certainties that they are too often offered. The failure to understand the need for critical thinking across the board, which is a failure to trust the young to think independently, far from supporting a universe of certainties, undermines faith as well as reason, and accounts for a large part of the intellectual crisis of the Arab world today. This crisis is rooted in a catastrophic failure of self-confidence, and of confidence in young Muslim students to think for themselves. It can and must be changed, through confidence in uncertainty.

RECEP SENTURK

How to Overcome Intellectual Dependency in Education? A Call to Multiplexity

The Muslim world is intellectually dependent on the Western world. It imports concepts, ideas, theories and methods in every academic field from the West because it is unable to produce them itself. This is a result of westernization and modernization, which has been presented as a great progress but resulted in intellectual dependency. Islamic civilization had always been characterized by openness to other cultures but with self-reliance and self-confidence, which they lost since the last two centuries due to the misguided interaction with the Western civilization. Today, the most pressing question in the field of education is how to regain self-confidence and self-reliance while also remaining open to interaction with the Western and other civilizations. But how? This presentation will argue that we need to revive multiplex worldview and reasoning at the philosophical level in such fields as ontology, epistemology, methodology, hermeneutics, and norms by deriving from Islamic heritage. In practice the multiplex worldview and reasoning need to be revived and re-applied in the three domains of science: humanities (language and literature), social sciences (including law) and natural sciences. I argue that reviving multiplexity at the philosophical and scientific levels will help Muslims to overcome intellectual dependency and empower them to contribute to human civilization, which suffers from reductionist monolithic thinking, with a fresh and rather different way of reasoning on global issues.

CONFERENCE THEMES

- Contemporary Ethics of Islam: Nature and Characteristics
- Higher Education in the Muslim World: Models and Modalities
- Islamic Legacy in Education: Problems and Potentials
- Future of Higher Education: Concepts and Context
- Dominant Paradigms in Higher Education: Issues and Currents



Jeremy Henzell-Thomas

Towards an Expanded Glossary of Key Terms

Introduction and Five Model Entries

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Towards an Expanded Glossary of Key Terms

Introduction and Five Model Entries

Introduction

The Tower of Babel

I am sure most of us know some version of the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel from the Book of Genesis (11:1-9) 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.

Some of us, too, will be familiar with at least one of the many depictions of the building of the Tower of Babel in Western art, of which the two surviving oil paintings (c. 1563) by Pieter Bruegel the Elder are perhaps the best known. Bruegel’s depiction of the Tower is deliberately modelled on the Roman Colosseum as a symbol of overweening pride and arrogant self-confidence (Rome as the ‘eternal city’ built to last forever). According to the Biblical account, the Tower of Babel was erected by the descendants of Noah (Nuh) led by Nimrod, King of Shinar, in a presumptuous attempt to reach up to heaven. As a punishment for their hubris, God confounded them by making the builders unable to understand each other’s speech; hence, according to legend, the ‘confusion of tongues’ – the fragmentation of human speech into the various languages of the world – and the scattering of mankind over the face of the earth.

The Qur’an, however, does not support the idea that the diversity of languages and races is a punishment for presumption and vainglory, or an intolerable burden placed on mankind, 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. As Mahmoud Ayoub explains, ‘Humanity began as one and must remain one, but it is unity in diversity. This diversity, moreover, is not due to the gradual degeneration of human society from an ideal or utopian state. Nor is it the result of a lack of divine guidance or human understanding. Rather, religious diversity is a normal human situation. It is

the consequence of the diversity of human cultures, languages, races and different environments'. And in the words of Rabbi Abraham Heschel, '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'. The Prophet Muhammad himself is reported to have said: 'The diversity of my people is a blessing' (*ikhtilaf ummati rahmah*).

The key verses in the Qur'an which uphold pluralism and the value of diversity are well known, but cannot be repeated enough:

And among his wonders is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colours: for in this, behold, there are signs indeed for all who are endowed with knowledge! (30:22); And never have We sent forth any apostle other than in his own people's tongue, so that he might make the truth clear unto them (14:4); Unto every one of you have We appointed a different law and way of life. And if God had so willed, He could surely have made you all one single community: but He willed it otherwise in order to test you... Vie, then, with one another in doing good works! (5:48); We have made you into nations and tribes so that you may come to know one another (49:13).

Ziauddin Sardar, commenting on two of these verses, adds that 'the diversity of human languages, cultures, races and nations is part of the intention of creation' and Muhammad Asad notes other verses which uphold that, in his words, 'the unceasing differentiation in men's views and ideas is not incidental but represents a God-willed, basic factor of human existence'. In short, the Qur'an tells us that diversity is a gift, an element of man's primordial condition, a sign for the intelligent, an opportunity to know one another and to vie with one another in doing good works.

In his discussion of 'Adam to *Confusio Linguarum*' in *The Search for the Perfect Language*, Umberto Eco refers to Jürgen Trabant's view of the story of the Tower of Babel: 'This story is a gesture of propaganda, in so far as it provided a particular explanation of the origin and variety of languages, by presenting it *only* as a punishment and a curse. Since the variety of tongues renders a universal communication among men, to say the least, difficult, it was certainly a punishment. However, it also meant an improvement of the original creative powers of Adam, a proliferation of that force which allowed the production of names by virtue of divine inspiration'.

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. Commenting on the first verses of the Qur'an to be revealed – *Read in the name of thy Sustainer, who has created – created man out of a germ-cell! Read – for thy Sustainer is the Most Bountiful One who has taught man the use of the pen, taught man what he did not know!* (96:1-5) – Muhammad Asad notes that the pen, the use of which has been taught to man by God, 'is a symbol for all knowledge recorded by means of writing. Man's unique ability to transmit, by means of written records, his thoughts, experiences, and insights from individual to individual, from generation to generation, and from one cultural environment to another endows all human

knowledge with a cumulative character; and since, thanks to this God-given ability, every human being partakes, in one way or another, in mankind's continuous accumulation of knowledge. As Sardar succinctly puts it: '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'.

And this advancement is also dependent to a large degree on a variety of sources and strands of human knowledge and their exchange, confluence and synergy in the development of human civilisation. A striking historical example is the invention of the Proportioned Script by the vizier and master scribe Ibn Muqla in 10th century Baghdad. Why did three centuries have to elapse after the death of the Prophet of Islam before the advent of a 'prophet of handwriting' (Ibn Muqla) whose legacy in providing the geometrical foundation for the construction of the Arabic letter shapes would determine what has ever since been regarded as the acme of penmanship, the finest manner of committing the sacred text of the Qur'an to writing? Ahmed Moustafa and Stefan Sperl provide the answer: 'The invention of the Proportioned Script had to await a time when the horizon of knowledge encompassed by the proponents of Islamic culture, and with it the scientific terminology of the Arabic language, had expanded sufficiently to include and absorb the advances of other, earlier civilisations'. This expansion of course encompassed and built on the achievements of the Greeks in the science of geometry. 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). Muhammad Asad interprets this verse to indicate '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', and Moustafa and Sperl explain that 'the term horizons (*afaq*) may be understood as referring both to the expanding range of human perception and to the varying domains of human knowledge, whatever their source may be'. That such deepening understanding can only come after a period of growth and maturation of consciousness the Qur'an stresses repeatedly.

It is noteworthy that Asad explicitly attributes the spirit of inquiry associated with 'expanding horizons' to the spirit of the Qur'an itself:

'Through its insistence on consciousness and knowledge, it engendered among its followers a spirit of intellectual curiosity and independent inquiry, ultimately resulting in that splendid era of learning and scientific research which distinguished the world of Islam at the height of its cultural vigour; and the culture thus fostered by the Qur'an penetrated in countless ways and by-ways into the mind of medieval Europe and gave rise to that revival of Western culture which we call the Renaissance, and thus became in the course of time largely responsible for the birth of what is described as the "age of science": the age in which we are now living'.

The second episode of the BBC2 TV series, *The Story of China*, screened in January 2016, relates the remarkable story of Xuanzang at the time of the Tang Dynasty. From the year 629-645 (a time exactly contemporary with the birth of Islam in Arabia) he travelled thousands of miles mostly on foot to make the arduous and perilous journey to India and to bring back to China 657 scrolls of Sanskrit Buddhist texts loaded on 22 horses, and all this after spending ten years in China studying Buddhism in the company of monks. Michael Wood, the presenter, points out that

his subsequent translation of these Buddhist scriptures into Chinese was a project in the history of civilisations equivalent to the Arabic translations out of Greek. Describing Xuanzang's letters from China to his former friends in India, he said that these letters 'tell you what a civilisation really is, written by a member of one culture who had lovingly and totally immersed himself into another'.

It is that openness to the 'other' in cross-border exchange and confluence which is surely one of the energizing roots of the transformation and renewal of the self, of societies and of civilisations, whether in the Chinese embrace of Buddhism, or the Western embrace of that 'spirit of intellectual curiosity and independent inquiry' transmitted by the Arabs in the Middle Ages, or simply in the individual embrace of another faith in the personal spiritual journey towards greater meaning and purpose.

The Power of Dialectic

A crucial driver of the advancement of knowledge and the maturation of consciousness is the process of dialectic. Let us contrast this with the human propensity for dichotomisation which is at the root of so much misunderstanding and conflict. Dichotomous or binary thinking is often marshalled to divide reality by adopting a polarised and oppositional posture which rejects the 'other' and can find no commonality or convergence between competing positions. Dialectic, on the other hand, 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 civilisation 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. I say 'ideally' because 'discussion' in general is clearly a continuum. At one end, there is the polarised 'debate' in which each 'side' seeks to defend its 'position', proposing or opposing a 'motion', and relying as much (or more) on emotional impact and rhetorical manipulation as reasoned argument and evidence. As such, 'debate' may do little more than bolster the preference for dichotomisation and cement an existing position. At the other end of the continuum lies an advanced mode of thought, the committed endeavour of 'dialectic', at once rigorously logical and openly relational. Within the Western discipline of developmental psychology, dialectic is often regarded as the highest stage of cognitive development, encompassing the ability to accept contradictions, constructive confrontations, paradoxes, and asynchronies. It goes without saying that the dialectical process is not one either of compromise or loose relativism, but one of creative tension which ultimately transforms contradictions into complementarities, releasing the open-minded thinker from ingrained habits and conditioned patterns of thought, established affiliations, fear of change and instability, and reluctance to approach anything which may be threatening to one's sense of 'self'. Within the orbit of Muslim societies, it has been argued that there is a pressing need for the reclamation and implementation of the proper Islamic ethics and etiquette (*adab al-ihktilaf*) for engaging in respectful debate and disagreement in a plural world and a plural Islam. This includes the need for humane discussion of those contemporary issues which may provoke controversy and disagreement but nevertheless fall within the ambit of plural discourse in which diverse opinions can be legitimately expressed.

A recently published book entitled *Tetralogue* by the philosopher Timothy Williamson 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 realise that they need to reframe what they think about certain key concepts, including truth, falsehood, dogma, relativism, science, and superstition. And in relation to this active process of moving beyond fixations on ‘right answers’, we might take on board Ronald Barnett’s 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’.

But there is another story too. Recent research at the University of Chicago has also 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’. In other words, it could be said that polylogue activates the discriminating faculty, that criterion or standard (*furqan*) which enables us to distinguish truth (*haqq*) from falsehood (*batil*), and right from wrong. This, however, raises some difficult questions, not least what is meant by the word ‘authentic’, or, in the famous words which open Francis Bacon’s essay on Truth: ‘What is Truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer’. 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 research from the University of Chicago, however, seems to suggest that the direction of travel powered by dialectic is towards a destination which can be labelled as ‘truth’, and which has the stamp of ‘authenticity’. To extend the contrast to its extremes, we have a perpetually negotiable, relativistic or equivocal reality at one end, and an absolute, authoritative and unequivocal distinction between truth and falsehood on the other. And in this context, we might factor in another note by Muhammad Asad on the role of the Pen in which he affirms the pivotal role of Divine Revelation (and of the Qur’an as *Al-Furqan*) in the spiritual and moral education of mankind: ‘Furthermore, God’s teaching man signifies also the act of His revealing, through the prophets, spiritual truths and moral standards which cannot be unequivocally established through human experience and reasoning alone: and, thus, it circumscribes the phenomenon of divine revelation as such’.

The Tension Between ‘Authority’ and ‘Interpretation’

Sardar correctly identifies one of the main issues before us as ‘the obvious tension between the difficulty of pinning down what is supposedly “authentic” (and thus defining our terms in relation to current conditions) and being as true as possible to the “original essence” of things’. He makes the important point that ‘many young Muslims nowadays are trying to discover what they see as “authentic Islam”, even returning to “original” primary sources, yet end up with a literalist approach. Indeed, they often accept the “authority” of those who “know” in arriving at their literalist interpretation of what it means to be a Muslim in the twenty-first century’.

This issue raises one of the most critical questions we need to address in our exploration of terminology. How can we resolve the potential dichotomy between, on the one hand, what is ‘original’, ‘authentic’ and ‘authoritative’, and, on the other, what is open to interpretation and contextualisation? 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’? We will need to return to this question from various angles, and in due course I will suggest some principles which might be useful in indicating the way forward.

Both the confusion of tongues and the deeper underlying lesson of unity in diversity are beautifully illustrated in Rumi’s story of the travellers and the grapes. Four travellers, a Persian, a Turk, an Arab, and a Greek, are quarrelling about how best to spend a single coin, which was the only piece of money they had between them. They all want grapes, but they do not realise this because each of them has a different word for the fruit. A traveller hears them quarrelling, realises that they all want the same thing, and offers to satisfy all their needs with the one coin they possess. He goes off and buys them a bunch of grapes, and they are all astonished to discover that their different words were referring to the same thing.

Now, like many parables, this is a multi-layered story. On the surface, the confusion is caused by language differences, and it takes a multi-lingual traveller, a translator, to unravel the confusion of tongues. And this literal level is the level represented by the conventional interpretation of the Tower of Babel story, where mutual incomprehension is the result of everybody speaking different languages. The meaning of the parable of course goes much deeper than this. We all yearn to remember the divine unity (*tawhid*, the single coin) but we give it different names and have different conceptions of what it is. Only the sage, represented here by the traveller-linguist, can show us that what we yearn for is, deep down, the same thing.

Language, Conceptualisation and Responsibility

The context of Sardar’s reminder of the divine purpose enshrined in the diversity of human languages is the story in the Qur’an of God imparting to Adam ‘the names of all things’ (2:30-39), and this introduces another key idea in our introductory exploration of the range, power and function of human language. In his note to Qur’an 20:31, Muhammad Asad, referring to the *Arabic-English Lexicon* of E.W. Lane, explains that the Arabic word for ‘name’ (*ism*) implies, according to all philologists, an expression ‘conveying the knowledge of a thing’ and denoting ‘a substance, accident or attribute, for the purpose of distinction’ – or, as Asad explains, ‘in philosophical terminology, a concept’. He adds that ‘from this it may legitimately be inferred that the knowledge of all the names denotes here man’s faculty of logical definition and, thus, of conceptual thinking’. One might add that this faculty is also denoted on one level by the term ‘*aql* (reason, intellect), whose root meaning is to ‘bind’ or ‘withhold’, indicating the human capacity for separating, defining and differentiating meanings so as to arrive at precise and distinct concepts. Indeed, by virtue of his ability to think conceptually through the medium of ‘the letter’, man is superior in this respect even to the angels, who possess only the knowledge imparted directly to them by God, and who are commanded by God to prostrate before Adam in recognition of his appointment as *khalifah*, the one who shall ‘inherit the earth’.

But this sacred trust places on mankind a heavy burden of responsibility. The divine gift of language, allied to free will (*ikhtiyar*), 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. The parable of the Good Word in the Qur’an (14:24-26) makes this very clear: the good word is *like a good tree, firmly rooted, reaching out with its branches towards the sky, yielding its fruit at all times by its Sustainer’s leave*, but the corrupt word is *that of a corrupt tree, torn up*

from its roots onto the face of the earth, wholly unable to endure. The literal meaning of the word *qarar* is ‘having no permanence whatever’, unstable and ephemeral, no matter how powerful and persuasive its original impact on the minds of people who fall prey to it. The right use of language is also integral to many of the ethical principles set out in other verses of the Qur’an. It can *invite unto all that is good, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong* (3:104) and, in one’s relationships with people of different faiths, one should *argue with them in the most kindly manner* (16:125). On the other hand, *man is, above all else, always given to contention* (18:54), a formidable arguer with an urge to quarrel for its own sake and to defend a ‘position’ rather than to engage in constructive discussion that is receptive to different perspectives and leads to the advancement of knowledge; he is prone to disputing over things about which he knows nothing at all (3:66); he is easily drawn into *indulging in scurrilous talk* which brings no benefit to anyone (9:69); he is given to mockery, derision, defamation, and insult (49:11), and to the hypocrisy of *uttering with the tongue that which is not in the heart* (48:11).

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. The ‘names’ are not simply tools for logical thinking, for making fine distinctions. From an Islamic perspective, letters and words are the very substance of the created universe, emanating from the Divine Word which is the origin of all creation and in which all concepts find unity and reconciliation. 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’. In this conception of language, the letter is not an inanimate component of an abstract concept, but is a living entity, and the words which are formed from these letters, the phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs, have the power to diminish or enhance our humanity. The word is in fact a deed, an act in itself, which carries the same responsibility as that taken in doing and acting. We have the expression ‘in word and in deed’ and this encapsulates this wisdom, this convergence between speech and action.

The best speech transcends mere eloquence, for just as ‘the devil has the best tunes’, so he may also use the smartest or most glittering words. After all, the word *dajjal* (‘impostor’ or ‘false prophet’) comes from the Arabic root which has the concrete sense of ‘spreading tar on a mangy camel’ so as to hide what is rotten beneath a sound appearance, and make it more saleable. Fine discourse is not covering, spinning or embellishing the truth, and least of all is it a means of inciting harm. Being meticulous in our use of words is not only a matter of intellectual precision and conceptual clarity, but is responsible social action in the service of humanity. In a detailed study of the various components of the faculty of *‘aql*, appropriately titled ‘Between wisdom and reason’, Karim Douglas Crow refers to current reappraisals of the notion of human intelligence in the field of cognitive psychology and notes the re-appearance of the term ‘wisdom’ connoting ‘a combination of social and moral intelligence, or, in traditional terms, that blend of knowledge and understanding within one’s being manifested in personal integrity, conscience, and effective behaviour’. He concludes that one of the key components of the concept of ‘intelligence’ expressed by the term *‘aql* was ‘ethical-spiritual’.

The Paradox of Unity and Multiplicity

At this point we need to pay homage to a compelling paradox. It is not the Prophet Muhammad’s ‘literacy’ which qualifies him for his prophetic role; it is his ‘unlettered’

status and his purified heart which ensures that he does not embroider or corrupt the Divine Message, but conveys it with unerring fidelity and clarity. The 10th century mystic Al-Niffari contends that ‘the letter’ – including its sense of conceptual thinking governed by the power of speech (*nutq*) – is a veil that separates us from the ‘Throne’ precisely because it is a tool of endless proliferation, diversification and multiplicity calling our attention away from Divine Unity (*tawhid*) to what is ‘otherwise’, conjectural and ephemeral. Ibn Arabi has much to say, too, on how one’s awareness of the revelation of the nature or activity of God in the world is a continually unfolding discovery of new implications, and through this one comes to realize, in his words, that ‘this matter has no end at which it might stop’. The Qur’an expresses this limitless divine creativity, through which Divine Revelation is continually renewed in every moment, in a striking metaphor: ‘And if all the trees on earth were pens, and the sea were ink, with seven more seas yet added to it, the words of God would not be exhausted...’ (31:27). Paradoxically, as the Shaykh al-Akbar explains, the immutable Divine Essence (*huwiyah*) ‘cannot be made manifest’ and is beyond circumscription; it is, nevertheless, ‘the Spirit (*ruh*) of every theophany’. The ‘letter’, as visible manifestation of the Divine Presence, therefore simultaneously veils and unveils. It is a barzakh, an isthmus between the ‘two seas’ of essence and form, the inner and the outer, the transcendent and the immanent. To put it another way, the outer without the inner is vacuous, a husk without a kernel, and conversely the inner without the outer, though full of potential, is mute, having no form, no vehicle, no sphere of action, no comprehensible language in which to clothe itself.

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, for this paradox is the very crux of the challenge before us. It mirrors too the critical questions raised earlier: how to resolve the potential dichotomy between, on the one hand, what is ‘original’, ‘essential’, ‘authentic’ and ‘authoritative’, and, on the other, what is open to inquiry, interpretation and contextualisation; and how to accommodate in the language we use both the divine and the human, revelation and reason, unity and multiplicity, certainty and uncertainty. 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. Within that practical sphere, how do we encompass stable and shifting meanings? 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 sterile disputes about the law, its interdictions, prescriptions, rulings, prohibitions and taboos, and ultimately the reduction of Islam to the beard and the scarf and to the mountain of details which has been likened to looking at Islam through the wrong end of opera glasses.

Passing Through the Clashing Rocks: The Perils of Binary Thinking

The metaphor of shipwreck evokes the mythological quests of two ancient Greek heroes, Jason and Odysseus. Among the greatest dangers faced by Jason and the

Argonauts on their quest for the Golden Fleece were the Clashing Rocks, or Symplegades, which guarded the entrance to the Black Sea like a gigantic pair of sliding doors, smashing together and crushing ships between them. Ananda Coomaraswamy tells the story like this: ‘As the Argonauts rowed along the Bosphorus, they could hear the terrifying clash of the Rocks and the thunder of surf. They released a dove and watched it fly ahead of them. The Rocks converged on the dove nipping off its tail feathers, but the bird got through. Then, as the Rocks separated, the Argonauts rowed with all their might. A well-timed push from the divine hand of Pallas Athene helped the ship through the Rocks just as they slammed together again, shearing off the mascot from Argo’s stern. Argo had become the first ship to run the gauntlet of the Rocks and survive. Thereafter the Clashing Rocks remained rooted apart’.

Many other examples of the same motif could be chosen from other cultures and traditions – that is, the motif of the ‘Active Door’ dividing the known world from the unknown Beyond, and through which the hero or seeker must pass to succeed in the quest, which is none other, in essence, than the return to his or her original home. To pass between the Rocks is to pass through the ‘strait gate’ or the ‘needle’s eye’ between the contrary pairs of opposites and beyond the polarity which necessarily characterises the conditioned world. It is to be guided by the *lamp lit from a blessed tree – an olive-tree that is neither of the east nor the west* (Qur’an 24:35). In terms of our own quest towards the integration of knowledge, it is to strive to resolve the ingrained dichotomies and stark dualisms which characterise binary thinking in all its forms, and which underlie those potent adversarial paradigms which sustain tribalism. The ‘Clash of Civilisations’ is a prime example. We might frame this in terms of the long-standing discourse of Orientalism which, as Sardar explains, promotes a sense of fundamental difference between the West and the East, between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and ‘is not just a way of knowing the Orient but also a way of maintaining power over it’. This is a very good example of way in which the West cements its own sense of civilisational superiority through what Sardar identifies as its ‘ultimate power’ – the ‘power to define’. Elaborating this important insight, he points out that ‘the real power of the West, its worldview with all its axioms and assumptions, is not located in its economic muscle (which is still considerable), its military prowess (no other power on the planet can challenge the military might of the US), and technological ability (which has escalated considerably with the emergence of the Internet). Rather, it resides in its power to define. The West defines what is, for example, freedom, progress, civilisation and civil behaviour; democracy and human rights; law, tradition and community; reason, mathematics and science; who is a dictator or a terrorist or a moderate person; what is real and what it means to be human. Academic disciplines provide learned, scholarly and rational legitimacy to the defining concepts. The non-western cultures and civilisations have simply to accept these definitions or be disciplined by disciplines and be defined out of existence! Something that is clearly happening to Islam and Muslim societies – this is the real catastrophe’.

At the same time, the definitions which feed the us-and-them mentality of the Clash of Civilisations are reciprocal; they work both ways, even if the Western definitions hold sway to a large extent and bolster Western hegemony. Strong versions of the discourse of ‘Westophobia’, for example, include not only the prejudice that all global ills are caused by Western influence and that solutions must rest on rejection and even vilification of the West, but also the idealisation of non-Western cultures.

Nevertheless, it is an awkward fact that one-dimensional thinking bestows tangible survival benefits. The idea of the ‘narrative fallacy’ introduced by the trader-

philosopher-statistician Nassim Taleb in his popular book, *The Black Swan*, provides a valuable insight. Referring to this at the beginning of the chapter entitled 'The Illusion of Understanding' in his book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Nobel Prize winning economist Daniel Kahneman refers to narrative fallacies as 'flawed stories of the past' which 'shape our views of the world and our expectations for the future'. They are simple (even simplistic) but compelling explanatory stories which arise from our continuous attempt to make sense of the world.

In the same way, we know from the psychology of perception that the human mind tends to see what it wants or expects to see. It is well attested that even the very 'rational' scientific community is susceptible to confirmation bias. When presented with visual illusions which have two possible and equally logical explanations, subjects prefer to disambiguate them on the basis of their familiar knowledge of the world. Thus, a picture depicting a staircase which could, according to strict spatial logic, be interpreted as either a normal ascending staircase or an upside-down descending staircase (suitable only for flies) will typically be interpreted by subjects as the former. Such perceptual preferences are of course necessary and understandable. Without the rapid automatic routines generated by top-down processing we would not be able to function in the world, for we would have to analyse everything laboriously from the bottom-up as if we were encountering it for the first time.

The survival advantages of the rapid processing facilitated by simple stories, fixed frames and scripts, and other constructs of the conditioned mindset are obvious. By contrast, the armchair philosopher who scrutinises the logical minutiae of every proposition, absorbs every qualification, respects every position, and agonises over every minor dissonance and nuance may never get out of his chair. But we surely have to distinguish between the positive dynamics of familiar 'stories' which help us to bestow coherence and order on the world and their negative repercussions in the ingrained human tendency to espouse partisan bigotry and prejudice.

Realigning Our Definitions to Create a New Paradigm

As for Odysseus, our other Greek hero, he is the epitome of the hero who combines courage and daring with that particularly Greek quality of shrewd sagacity (or discerning intelligence). He too has to steer a perilous course, in his case through the Straits of Messina between two mortal dangers, that of Scylla, the hideous monster with twelve feet and six heads (each with three rows of teeth) which will inevitably devour some of his men, and Charybdis, the whirlpool, which can destroy them all. In his care to avoid the whirlpool, he necessarily drifts nearer to Scylla and some of his men fall victim to its snapping heads.

The phrase 'to fall from Scylla into Charybdis' means to go out of the frying-pan into the fire. I always prefer to think that Odysseus made the conscious decision to steer closer to Scylla, rather than inadvertently drifting towards the monster, because he was bent on avoiding the greater danger of the whirlpool. Whatever the case, his course involved a minor inclination towards one side so as to avoid catastrophe.

We might reflect on whether this image symbolises for us the same need at the present time in our quest to develop a conscious language of orientation which will enable us to define our position and navigate our course in such a way that we can honour the best of the old and the new, the traditional and the progressive, whether of the East or the West. By looking both forwards and backwards, like Janus, we hold to

that paradox which protects us from capitulating either to a fundamentalism stripped of humanity or a progressivism emptied of the sacred. In one sense, we are the ‘community of the middle way’ (Qur’an 2:143) who take the ‘straight path’, but in another sense we need to have the shrewd discernment of Odysseus in recognising when we need to incline more deliberately towards one side as a corrective to what is out of balance. It can be argued that the Charybdis of fundamentalism, regression, stagnation and intolerance is an even greater danger than the Scylla of ‘modernism’. That is not to say, of course, that we should veer so dangerously close to Scylla that we buy into uncritical and servile genuflection to the myth of ‘progress at all costs’ or sell out to an unprincipled ‘anything goes’ mentality devoid of ethical values, but it does mean that we have to negotiate that encounter in such a way that enables us to recapture the original spirit of Islam and its progressive vision for humanity.

Thus far, we have attempted to identify (often with reference to key verses of the Qur’an) those features of language which can generate axioms to guide further discussion: the divine purpose enshrined in the diversity of tongues; the role of language as the medium of conceptual thinking and the cumulative expansion of knowledge; the importance of cultural exchange in the evolution of civilisation; the sacred trust imposed by the gift of language to use words wisely and well as ethical and responsible social action in the service of humanity; and the power of discussion and dialectic in the forging of relationship and the refinement of knowledge and understanding. At the same time, we have highlighted the self-evident fact that language can not only be used for positive ends – to clarify, instruct, enlighten and inspire to do what is right and good – but also to veil, divide, obscure, confuse, deceive, corrupt, and incite to strife and harm. We have also seen how its power to define can be misused through the misappropriation of terminology to give disproportionate clout to a particular paradigm, worldview, ideology, or civilisational perspective, and how this tendency to emphasise a narrow range of meaning in the deployment of terms and concepts, often in the interest of cultural supremacy of one kind or another, seems to be ingrained in the way humans think. To challenge it is to swim against the tide. Sardar homes in on the pressing need to challenge the dominant narratives and prevailing discourses:

‘The task of reforming education in Muslim societies is thus much more profound than we have hitherto imagined. It has two basic components: to deconstruct the definitional power of the modern knowledge system – complete with its disciplines, institutions, and processes – and its western worldview; and to produce alternative paradigms of knowledge formation, that take into account the histories, legacies and traditions of Islam 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 hence the defining power of the West – and calling for more humane paradigms that consider the diversity and plurality of our societies and take the needs of the environment and planet as a whole into consideration. Changes in the contemporary context, and the accelerating pace of new technologies and innovations that are transforming the world have given urgency to these demands’.

How Discourse Shapes Understanding

In his book *Future*, Sardar discusses the overall objective of the methodology of causal layered analysis (CLA) as a means of highlighting ‘the parochial and brittle nature of current social practices so they are not projected into the future as universal truths and practices’. CLA, he explains, ‘seeks to “undefine” the future in an attempt to ensure that it is not taken as *a priori* given, that trends and projections are not taken for granted, that non-western cultures, epistemologies and modes of being are appropriately represented, and a wide range of metaphors and images are used to think creatively about potential alternatives’. The role of discourse is of course central to shaping our understanding of the world. ‘A discourse’, says Sardar, ‘is a strongly bounded area of social and cultural knowledge, a system of assumptions, statements, disciplines and ideas’, and he goes to say that ‘it is through discourses that the world is brought into being’, which is another way of expressing the fundamental insight gained from the discipline of critical discourse analysis (CDA) that attitudes and prejudices are learnt through ‘text and talk’, even at the subliminal level.

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. The relationship between language and cognition is not a one-way street. Thoughts and feelings are created and reinforced by discourse, as much as discourse is used to express them. Two examples come to mind. In his investigation of the representation of Islam in the British press, Costas Gabrielatos, drawing on his meticulous work in the field of corpus linguistics, has revealed the insistent drip-feed of collocations, both explicit and implicit (as, for example, between Islam and ‘terrorism’) in the British press which inevitably conditions public attitudes. It is a sad fact that if you repeat something enough times like a mantra, it becomes a ‘script’, a formulaic structure so embedded in the mind that it becomes highly resistant, and even impervious, to modification. The effectiveness of rhetorical manipulation through repetitive phrases is of course well-known by politicians and spin doctors, in the same way as slogans and jingles are the stock-in-trade of advertising. Repetition is one of a variety of discursive moves and ploys identified in the field of critical discourse analysis. Teun van Dijk has rigorously examined how discourse promotes and sustains racism by promoting prejudiced social representations shared by dominant groups (usually white, European) and based on ideologies of superiority and difference. An example is his detailed analysis of some fragments of a book misleadingly entitled *The End of Racism* by Dinesh D’Souza, a book which embodies many of the dominant Eurocentric supremacist ideologies in the USA, and which specifically targets one minority group: African Americans. This book is one of the main documents of conservative ideology in the USA and has had considerable influence on the debates on affirmative action, welfare, multiculturalism, and immigration, and on the formulation of policy to restrict the rights of minority groups and immigrants. Such work reflects one of the key objectives of CDA noted by Sardar – its examination of ‘power relationships that are created by discourse in an attempt to give voice to those who have been marginalised from and within the discourse’.

Disentangling Muddled Terminology

Four hundred years ago, Francis Bacon, philosopher, statesman, essayist, and champion of empiricism and scientific methodology, appealed for a radical move

away from the scholastic tradition imprisoned by arguments and reliance on authority. To do so, he says, 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. Amongst the more specific examples of hindrances to understanding included in Bacon’s ‘idols’ are: trying to make things fit into patterns, seeking evidence to support preconceived notions, seeing what one expects to see, believing what one wants to believe, generalizing, favouring one outlook or perspective over another (e.g. antiquity over novelty, the part over the whole, differences over similarities, or *vice versa*), and failing to understand that words may have more than one meaning. This is a remarkable list which has such a modern ring to it, converging as it does so strikingly with many of the key modern findings in cognitive psychology and related disciplines about the nature of conditioning, prejudice, confirmation bias, and other impediments to learning.

While all Bacon’s revolutionary psychological, philosophical, scientific and linguistic insights have much to tell us, we might select from his list of ‘idols’ those that are directly relevant to our undertaking to create a lexicon or glossary that can begin to promote some clarity in the definition of key terms. These are the ‘Idols of the Marketplace’ (*idola fori*), described by Bacon in *Novum Organum* (1620) as ‘the most troublesome of all’, and which, he says, ‘have crept into the understanding through the alliances of words and names. For men believe that their reason governs words; but it is also true that words react on the understanding; and this it is that has rendered philosophy and the sciences sophistical and inactive’. Here, Bacon explodes the popular belief or myth that thoughts are formed into words in order to communicate ideas and opinions to others, pointing out that words actually often arise as substitutes for thoughts. Although ‘learned men’ were normally careful about definitions and explanations, setting the matter right ‘in some things’, it was also the case that ‘words plainly force and overrule the understanding, and throw all into confusion, and lead men away into numberless empty controversies and idle fancies’. We may be reminded here of Al-Niffari’s depiction of ‘the letter’ as a tool of endless proliferation and conjecture, calling our attention away from Divine Unity (*tawhid*).

We can already see very clearly Bacon’s anticipation of the modern science of semantics, but also one of the foundational concepts of critical discourse analysis within the wider field of cultural studies – the way that text itself is instrumental in creating and sustaining power relationships. His elaboration of the confusion caused by words is worth quoting in full:

‘Now words, being commonly framed and applied according to the capacity of the vulgar, follow those lines of division which are most obvious to the vulgar understanding. And whenever an understanding of greater acuteness or a more diligent observation would alter those lines to suit the true divisions of nature, words stand in the way and resist the change. Whence it comes to pass that the high and formal discussions of learned men end oftentimes in disputes about words and names; with which (according to the use and wisdom of the mathematicians) it would be more prudent to begin, and so by means of definitions reduce them to order’.

In other words, understanding is not only hindered by the common (i.e. ‘vulgar’) definition of words but also (even among the more learned) by disputes over their multiple meanings. This confusion and ambiguity is even more marked in today’s increasingly complex world, as Sardar rightly points out:

‘The more complex society becomes, the more specialised contexts it develops. Complexity means different, even contradictory, meanings of words can continue to exist side by side or be used by different groups simultaneously. 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 – as Sardar recommends in the synthesis paper which sets the direction for the Integration of Knowledge project – to start from the guiding premise that ‘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, shape our perceptions of the world around us, and engage with the world to change it’. We therefore need, he concludes, 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. What, for example, do *we* mean by freedom, human rights, democracy, secularism and so on? What is the contemporary relevance of Islamic terms like *khalifah*, *shura*, *ijma*, *istislah*, or *ihsan*?

It is important to emphasize at this point that the intention to define words ‘in our own specific way’ does not entail a blinkered disregard or dismissal of the way in which they might be defined by others. As Ibn Rushd argued, there exists a continuum of different views on a particular issue, and a variety of language available to describe it. Equivocation in language, he upheld, is not something to be challenged or deplored; rather it is to be accepted and respected as a natural feature of our lives as diverse people living in a community with a wide range of ends and purposes. Throughout his philosophy, Ibn Rushd tries to show how it is possible for one thing to be described in a variety of ways, and how apparently contradictory views can be reconciled if one sees them all as different aspects of one thing. This message of unity in diversity is precisely the message of Rumi’s story of the Travellers and the Grapes to which I referred earlier. Umberto Eco takes up Ivanov’s point that ‘each language constitutes a certain model of the universe, a semiotic system of understanding the world, and if we have 4,000 different ways to describe the world, this makes us rich’.

Awareness of polysemy (multiple meanings) need not, however, be opposed to the ‘rebalancing’ process by which we seek to find semantic orientation in the contemporary context to fulfil our own purposes and objectives.

Orientation, Balance and Integration

Bacon had already seen that having agreed definitions to start with involves a circular reasoning conundrum: ‘Yet even definitions cannot cure this evil in dealing with natural and material things, since the definitions themselves consist of words, and those words beget others’. Awkwardly, 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.

Clearly, this conundrum cannot be resolved through the medium of a glossary, which, by definition, cannot be a means of excavating meanings not couched in words. Yes, the ‘letter’ can be a ‘veil’, a source of confusion and distraction, ‘a fertile ground’ as Sardar contends, ‘for misinterpretation and misunderstanding’, but this is precisely why we need a glossary which provides orientation and balance in the way we navigate concepts, ‘a tool for developing a more nuanced understanding of indispensable terms and concepts that become the building blocks of the Integration of Knowledge discourse’.

Three terms introduced here – orientation, balance and integration – provide, I believe, the essential matrix for our endeavour. And the deconstruction and realignment of definitions rooted in such a matrix requires more than a straightforward lexicon or glossary of terms. It has to be a deeper ‘exploration of the changing meaning of terms and concepts, a historical and moral critique, and an attempt at contemporary formulation that has meaning within our first principles’. Most importantly, ‘its function is to lay the foundation of a new integrative and inclusive mode of consciousness that move us towards the new paradigm’. Sardar’s reference here to an ‘integrative mode of consciousness’ echoes the work of the philosopher Jean Gebser in describing the structural changes or transformations in human consciousness over time.

Truth, Justice and the Middle Way

Holding to our guiding principles of orientation, balance and integration will enable us to apply much-needed correctives to definitions without succumbing to the wholesale espousal of any one-sided paradigm of thought. And in that process of realignment, we must not, I believe, shy away from the belief that we are also engaged in the pursuit of ‘truth’. In discussing the way in which words ‘betray their own purpose, obscuring the very thoughts they are designed to express’, Bacon affirms the need to excavate ‘true meanings’: ‘The constant impact of words variously used without attention to their true meaning only in turn condition the understanding and breed fallacies’. Our vision must surely extend beyond the postmodernist rejection of any objective explanation of reality. While we might share ‘postmodernist’ scepticism of monolithic explanations which claim to be valid for all groups and cultures, and might acknowledge the valuation of concrete experience over abstract principles and the necessity for interpretation, historicity and contextualisation, this does not mean we need to abolish any conception of ‘truth’ which is not merely a construction of the individual human mind, eternally fallible, relative, and rootless. We need to avoid the rudderless relativism which admits of nothing certain or universal as much as we need to steer well clear of the crushing absolutism which obliterates all context. In this, we follow the Middle Way in our search for the Truth, which, as Boethius put it, is a ‘mean between contrary heresies’.

The Middle Way is not to be conceived of as a dull compromise any more than ‘moderation’ should be confused with half-heartedness or ‘mediocrity’. Rather, it is the Golden Mean, an aspect of the *due measure and proportion* with which everything is created (Qur’an 54:49). In his exposition of Islamic ethics, Al-Ghazali owes much to Aristotle’s formulation of this concept which positions the perfection of human virtues between ‘excess’ and ‘defect’. The English word ‘moderation’ comes from Latin *modus*, ‘keeping within due measure’, which is related to another word which is also the source of English ‘modest’. Etymologically, moderation has the same inherent meaning in English as modesty, a connection which is also truly Islamic. The

Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: ‘Every religion has a distinctive feature and the distinctive feature of Islam is modesty’, and ‘True modesty is the source of all virtues’.

The mention of ‘measure’, ‘proportion’ and the Golden Mean (and other related concepts such as ‘ratio’ and ‘symmetry’) alerts us to the underlying conceptual ‘geometry’ which needs to govern our approach to the definition of words. In the same way as the Proportioned Script in Arabic penmanship is derived from a unifying geometric grid which governs the execution of all 28 Arabic letter shapes, 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, a principle in which aesthetic and moral strands of meaning are intertwined, in the same way as the deepest sense of ‘beauty’ in Arabic (*husn*) combines both beauty and moral excellence. The root meaning of the Arabic word for ‘justice’ (*adl*) includes the concepts of fairness, equity, non-discrimination, counterbalance, rectification, and proportion. In much the same way, the English word ‘fair’ denotes not only what is just, equitable and reasonable, but also what is beautiful by virtue of its proportionality. Its original Germanic root is ‘fitting’, that which is the right size, in the correct ratio or proportion. The range of meanings of this word reflects a truly Islamic concept, the idea that to be just is to ‘do what is beautiful’ (*ihsan*), to act in accordance with our original nature (*fitrah*), which God has shaped in ‘just proportions’ (Qur’an 82:7) as a ‘fitting’ or ‘appropriate’ reflection of divine order and harmony. It is noteworthy, too, that the word ‘decency’ has exactly the same underlying meaning as ‘fairness’. It comes from Latin *decere*, ‘be fitting or suitable’, and is closely related to the word ‘dignity’. To be fair and decent, and hence to act with dignity (and also with ‘decorum’) is to behave proportionately, to do what is balanced and appropriate in the circumstances, and to abide by values which guide us to what is right and good.

The connotation of ‘beauty’ in the word ‘fair’ is now somewhat archaic, as in the sense ‘the fairest maiden’, which is referring to more general beauty rather than just to hair colour in its sense of ‘blonde’. Even so, the word has retained the sense of proportionality in its connotation of ‘moderation’. Fair weather is pleasantly warm and dry, but always falls short of a heat wave; to have a fair chance of success is to have a reasonable chance, and even a fair bit of work, though considerable, is never extreme. The range of connotations, both archaic and modern, directs us to a semantics of ‘justice’ which supports our vision of the clarification and ‘redefinition’ of meanings, and all those elements of conceptual ‘geometry’ which this entails – realignment, repositioning, counterbalance, proportionality, moderation and balance.

The striking convergence of such meanings within one semantic field in Arabic and English might also remind us that an integrative approach to a glossary of terms needs to include the recognition of what is best in every culture and civilisation. As such it might also be regarded as including the reclamation of a ‘primordial’ language of universal concepts (the ‘Names’ taught to Adam) which permeate all human languages, the underlying unity within the diversity represented by the Tower of Babel. This is not to say, however, that all ‘authentic’ meanings are generalised as being located in an archaic past and only retrievable through specialised etymological excavation, nor that all subsequent shifts in meaning are the result of a negative process of semantic entropy by which ‘original’ meanings have become corrupted over time. After all, prehistoric Indo-European roots have to be reconstructed as hypothetical forms from known forms in cognate languages using phonetic rules; equally, the seminal concepts represented by these roots can only be hypothesised.

Nevertheless, as Sardar recommends, our approach to language needs to include ‘a deeper exploration of the changing meaning of terms and concepts’.

The transmission and further evolution of key concepts through the confluence of civilisations is well illustrated in the thought of Francis Bacon’s namesake, the thirteenth-century philosopher Roger Bacon, who, according to the late President of Bosnia, ‘Alija ‘Ali Izetbegovic, ‘set the entire structure of English philosophical thought’ on the pivot of the Middle Way, encompassing many dimensions – political, social, moral, and spiritual. This stream of thought has at its heart the principle of balance: balance between reason, empirical observation and faith; between individual freedoms and wider responsibilities within society; between pragmatism and the highest ideals; and between a practical concern with the immanent condition of mankind and a hunger for transcendence. Izetbegovic adds that there is ‘another important fact about Roger Bacon which has never been sufficiently studied and recognised: the father of English philosophy and science was a student of Arabic’. Indeed, he lectured at Oxford in Arab clothes. He was strongly influenced by Islamic thinkers, especially by Ibn Sina, and to this influence can be attributed the character of Bacon’s thought and, through him, the origin of the middle way as ‘the single most important guiding principle in English life’.

Distinguishing Positive and Negative Connotations

Our examination of the range of meanings thrown up by the concept of ‘justice’ and ‘fairness’ in Arabic and English has pointed to various principles of investigation and analysis which might inform an expanded glossary. These include the exploration of the range of meanings of selected words, whether concurrent in modern day usage, or changing over time, and can take in the diverse connotations which can be extracted from the typically triliteral consonantal root system in Arabic (as a Semitic language) as well as etymological excavation in the case of English (as an Indo-European language). We need to be aware that the *same* word may be used with different meanings or emphases in current usage (e.g. tolerance, secularism, radical, conformity, multiculturalism, integration), and that a similar divergence in meaning may also apply to related words (radical/radicalisation, moderation/mediocrity, morality/moralism, and so on). Within both these categories, we need to distinguish positive and negative connotations. We may find that the positive meanings tend to lie at the golden mean, and the negative ones at the extremes. A good example is the word ‘straight’. Muslims follow the Qur’an in praying to be guided on the straight path (1:6) and not to swerve from it (3:8). Following the ‘straight’ path, however, does not have to be an excessively narrow path, a strait-jacket, a situation of ‘dire straits’. The root of the word ‘straight’ (and ‘strait’) is Latin *strictus*, and it gives us many words expressing strictness, including ‘stricture, stringent, constrain, stress, distress, and distraught’. There is a message here for all those who push the beneficent sense of words beyond boundaries, either to excess or defect. If the excess of straightness is the strait-jacket, its defect is the crookedness or deviousness which has lost any sense of moral compass or orientation. A ‘bent copper’ is a corrupt policeman, and to ‘go straight’ is to get back on the right track after a stretch in prison.

But we have to be very careful here, because the association one can make between a lack of straightness and the concept of ‘deviation’ or ‘deviance’ raises other tricky issues, not least the problems caused by the disproportionate fear of deviation or ‘going astray’ in some communities. The beneficent matrix of ‘community’ is not the

same as the rigid ‘communitarianism’ which oppresses and dehumanizes the individual by imposing shame and stigma on those who are seen not to conform to group norms. Much harm and anguish is caused by this kind of oppression – on those suffering from mental health problems, on those who have fallen foul of the law, and on those whose sexual orientation is stigmatised as deviant. Deviation does not have to signify deviance in its sense of the brazenly bizarre, the grotesquely twisted or the absolutely forbidden, but may simply refer to ‘divergence’ in its more positive sense of branching out from established modes of thought and suspending judgement so as to remain open to multiple creative possibilities. Studies of creativity have shown how optimal creativity may result from an interplay between convergent and divergent approaches, with the former utilising familiar and well-established standards and criteria to make judgements and come up with the single-best or ‘right’ answer, while the latter is more open to exploring unexpected connections and remaining open to ambiguity. This echoes my earlier remarks about the importance of one of the vital outcomes of the process of dialectic – its release of the open-minded thinker from rigid affiliations, fear of change and instability, false certainties, and reluctance to approach anything which may be threatening to one’s sense of self.

Excavating the Best Meanings

We have seen how the excavation of meanings through etymology, the historical origin of words, can help us explore the conceptual landscape, and it is worth noting that in a language like English, which has a mainly dual linguistic heritage – Germanic and Latin (through Norman French) – there may be important differences between words which may be used interchangeably but which actually have quite different underlying connotations depending on their original meanings. A suggestive example is the difference between ‘freedom’ and ‘liberty’. The former is an Anglo-Saxon word, rooted in the Teutonic *frei* (cognate with the Sanskrit *priya*) meaning to hold dear or to love. It goes back to the Indo-European root *pri-*, ‘to love’ or *prai*, meaning ‘beloved’, hence ‘precious’, and also ‘at peace with’. The name Godfrey means ‘peace of God’. Norse Freya or Frija is the Goddess of love. ‘Freedom’ is also a sister-word to ‘friend’, whose source (Old English *freond*) meant more than ‘friend’ – also ‘lover’. This sense still survives in the way the Sufis refer to the Divine Beloved as ‘The Friend’. The original meaning of ‘free’ was a term of affection uniting the members of a family in a common bond, but explicitly excluding their servants or slaves (those who were not ‘free’). Later, the meaning shifted from ‘affection’ to ‘freedom’.

‘Liberty’ is a French word, inherited from the Romans. Although its original Indo-European root *leudh*, still intact in ancient Greek *eleutheros* ‘free’, may have denoted the sense of ‘being a member of a free people’ as opposed to ‘being a slave’, its Latin root, *liber*, means to do what you want to do, to ‘do your own thing’. The same root gives us *libertarian* (and *libertarianism*), *libertine* (a rake or debauchee), *libido*, an urge, *libidinous*, given to indulging one’s urges, and (borrowed from the Greek) *libation*, an outpouring. For arch-conservatives, even the word *liberal* can carry the connotation of licentiousness and lawlessness, as well as the disparaging sense of ‘bleeding-heart liberal’, although its earlier sense in English was ‘generous’ and ‘appropriate to the cultural pursuits of a free man’, as in the liberal arts or a liberal education. These connotations have survived to some extent in modern usage, and the term ‘liberal democracy’ still holds a generally positive connotation across a broad spectrum of political persuasions. While there is, in the case of the word ‘liberty’, a continuum of connotations ranging from generosity, breadth of education and cultural enrichment through to the self-indulgent individualism of ‘doing whatever

you like', it can be argued, as Bert Hornback does, that a basic conceptual contrast between 'freedom' and 'liberty' is still retrievable. 'Freedom', he says, might be defined essentially as a social word and 'liberty' as a selfish, anti-social, irresponsible word. Thomas Jefferson was emphatic about the responsibility which came with liberty, the 'price' of which, he said, is 'eternal vigilance' and he would no doubt have questioned John Stuart Mill's assertion that 'liberty consists in doing whatever one desires', an opinion which Hegel was to dismiss as one of utter immaturity of thought.

It has to be said at this point that that it would of course be impossible and undesirable to expect a categorical distinction between 'freedom' and 'liberty' to be embraced in public discourse, for language use develops organically over time and cannot effectively be controlled by decree or legislation, as we know from the largely impotent efforts of the Academie Francaise to stem the flow of borrowings from English into French. I have explored the varied connotations of 'freedom' and 'liberty' in some detail because this case is doubly instructive. It illustrates the conceptual richness which emerges from the understanding that English does not have a monolingual heritage, but 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. Thus, in using the word 'freedom' or 'liberty', we would be referring to a composite sense which balances a recognition of both the needs of the individual and the importance of communal responsibility. After all, just as the over-valuation of individual needs can lead to selfish individualism, so the over-valuation of shared social bonds can lead to tribalism and communitarianism. We should not idealise the social dimension of 'freedom' any more than we should idealise the individual dimension of 'liberty'. Such considerations have pressing contemporary relevance, as in the ongoing debate over 'freedom of speech' and what this means in a 'liberal democracy'.

'Original' Meanings, Semantic Change and Terminological Entropy

We have observed various instances of the way in which the meaning of words changes over time. 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. Ideological influence can be readily observed in semantic change, as for example in the shift in the meaning of the word 'craft'. The original meaning was 'power, strength', as in Old English, and in German and Swedish *kraft* to this day. The sense of 'skill, trade, profession' also developed in Old English, and there is an evident semantic relationship between power and skill, since skill enables and empowers. The negative sense of 'craft' may have developed because of the influence of the church in teaching that the only 'true' power resided in Christian teachings alone, and any power or skill derived from pagan culture was a Satanic and heretical deviation from the truth, hence devious, or 'crafty'. The same shift can be observed in the radical change in the meaning of 'cunning'. Derived from the Indo-European root *gno-*, the source of 'gnostic' and 'knowledge', it originally meant 'learned'. The development of its negative sense of 'skillfully deceitful' towards the end of the 16th century mirrors the development of the word 'crafty'.

In both cases, the original meanings survive to a greater or lesser extent – in the case of ‘craft’ in its positive sense of skilful workmanship, and in the case of ‘cunning’ in its parallel formation ‘canny’ which still carries the positive sense of shrewd discernment.

However, it is obvious that when the words ‘crafty’ and ‘cunning’ are used today, they invariably mean ‘devious’, and a more positive spin on them cannot be engineered by artificially resurrecting lost connotations. The case of ‘freedom’ and ‘liberty’ is different in a very important way, because, as we have shown, they can be defined and used to incorporate the best of the historical meanings carried by both.

The same applies to a group of related words which have seminal significance for us in our navigation of key concepts. These are ‘originality’, ‘simplicity’, ‘identity’, ‘orientation’, ‘authenticity’ and ‘authority’. The original Greek sense of ‘originality’ was not ‘inventiveness’ but ‘in accordance with our original nature’. Originality was not seen as a special gift of ‘creative thinkers and artists’ but as an ordinary, innate capacity common to all human beings, such that, for the ancient Greeks, even a ‘simple’ illiterate person was imprinted with an innate understanding of universal principles. Thus, the essence of, say, geometry (as a symbolic system representing archetypal order, and hence virtue) was embedded in the human soul. Etymologically, the word ‘simple’ itself denotes ‘same-fold’ – that is, not multifarious. It goes back ultimately to a prehistoric Indo-European root which passed into Latin as *simplus*, ‘single’ and was the source also of English ‘same, similar, and single’. The ‘simple’ person is a ‘single’ undivided person, a person who is always ‘the same’, true to himself or herself. Simplicity is like a mirror which reflects the divine unity at the core of every human being.

The concept of singularity is also embedded in the word ‘identity’, whose essential meaning is best preserved in its derivative ‘identical’ which reflects the meaning of Latin *identitas*, literally ‘sameness’, derived from Latin *idem*, ‘same’. The sense of ‘individuality’ or ‘set of definitive characteristics’ arose from the notion of something always being the same or always being itself (rather than something else). We speak of varied ‘identities’ and ‘ways of belonging’ and the search for ‘identity’ is a pressing contemporary concern. The origin of the word reminds us that even though we may hold ‘multiple identities’ (‘British’ and ‘Muslim’, for example) 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’. Both the English words ‘origin’ and ‘orientation’ come from a common source, Latin *oriri*, ‘rise’, and the verb ‘orient’ originally meant ‘turn the face to the east’, the direction of the rising sun. Whether, as Muslims, we face Mecca or, as Christians, we face the East, or, indeed, wherever we face, we have within us a *qiblah* and criterion (*furqan*) or compass that orients us to our origin, a touchstone that shows us the way to be true to be our essential nature, in effect to be an ‘authentic’ human being. The word ‘authentic’ comes from Greek *authentikos* and its essential meaning is ‘having the authority of the original creator’. Its original meaning in English was ‘authoritative’. There is a clear intersection between the underlying Greek senses of ‘authentic’ and ‘original’. The authentic person is ‘authoritative’ (which is not to say ‘authoritarian’) only because he or she is stamped with the attributes of the ultimate ‘authority’, the original Creator. This accords completely with the Islamic concept of the human being as *khalifah*, ‘vicegerent’ or ‘representative’ of God.

The Ideological Lure of 'isms'

Perhaps the most prominent example of the contrast between positive and negative concepts is the way in which the abstract noun 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. Differences in meaning in pairs of related words are not only indicated by the '-ism' suffix, but by other suffixes: one might distinguish, for example, between religion and religiosity, unity and uniformity, idea and ideology. The word 'ideology' first appears in 1796 borrowed from French 'idéologie', the study or science of ideas or the political or social philosophy of a nation. The French coined the word during their secularizing Revolution. John Adams (in some writings of 1813) mentions the usage of the word by Napoleon Bonaparte himself to mean 'impractical theorising'. Its definition as a set of ideas, doctrines or beliefs was first recorded in English in 1909.

Thus far, we have already encountered various instances of the shift in meaning effected by the '-ism' suffix and its ideological import: community/communitarianism, liberty/libertinism, and we have also touched on many other 'isms' which point to other contrasting pairs: tradition/traditionalism, progress/progressivism, modernity/modernism, fundamental/fundamentalism, morality/moralism, scripture/scripturalism, 'the letter'/literalism, form/formalism, duality/dualism, relativity/relativism, law/legalism, orient/orientalism, and totality/totalitarianism. We have argued for the need to distinguish the *authority* of divine revelation which liberates the human soul from the *authoritarianism* imposed by narrow human formulations which imprison it; and the existence of *absolute* and timeless truths from the tyranny of an *absolutism* which obliterates all context. At the same time we need to distinguish *identity* from *tribalism* and *sectarianism*, *diversity* from *division*, and *unity* (in diversity) from the *uniformity* of mono-cultural attitudes which dichotomise reality into competing unilateral or unipolar worldviews and ultimately into the isolating pathology of civilizational supremacism.

Similarly, the qualities of *individuality* need not be conflated with the *individualism* which gives man no point of reference beyond his own ego and the gratification of his own individual desires. The expression of individuality, which is nothing more than the realisation and expression of the personal uniqueness of each human being, is not in opposition to the needs of the community. Quite the contrary, in an age of increasingly sterile conformity, uniformity and standardisation, the contribution of creative individuals who are realising their individual potential has never been needed more as a means of enriching and revitalising communities. *Communitarianism* will always suspect the individual of individualism, but a living *community* will respect and nurture individuality as a valid expression of diversity while being able to balance individual needs and modes of expression with collective rights.

Other important distinctions can be made between reason and rationalism, intellect and intellectualism, synthesis and syncretism, science and scientism, and so on. Reference was made earlier to Muhammad Asad's tribute to the modern 'age of science' which he attributes to the spirit of 'intellectual curiosity and independent inquiry' ignited by the 'insistence on knowledge and consciousness' in the Qur'an. He does not, however, intend this to be taken as an endorsement of the reductionism and materialism entailed in dogmatic scientism, which overstretches the ability of the scientific method to encompass all of reality and 'explain' it through quantitative means, even to the extent of upholding that observable reality is the only reality. On

the contrary, the limitations of the scientific method are clearly noted with reference to the term *al-ghayb* in the Qur’anic verse stating that *This Divine Writ – let there be no doubt about it – is a guidance for all the God-conscious who believe in the existence of that which is beyond the reach of human perception* (2:1-3). Asad comments as follows: ‘*Al-ghayb* is used in the Qur’an to denote all those sectors or phases of reality which lie beyond the range of human perception and cannot, therefore, be proved or disproved by scientific observation or even adequately comprised within the accepted categories of speculative thought. Only a person who is convinced that the ultimate reality comprises far more than our observable environment can attain to belief in God, and, thus, to a belief that life has meaning and purpose’. In his commentary on the first two verses of *Surat At-Takathur* in the Qur’an (*You are obsessed by greed for more and more until you go down to your graves*), Asad also draws attention to the damage wrought by ‘the tendencies which have come to dominate all human societies in our technological age’. These verses, he notes, denote ‘man’s obsessive striving for more and more comforts, more material goods, greater power over his fellow-men or over nature, and unceasing technological progress. A passionate pursuit of such endeavours, to the exclusion of everything else, bars man from all spiritual insight and, hence, from the acceptance of any restrictions and inhibitions based on purely *moral* values – with the result that not only individuals but whole societies gradually lose all inner stability and, thus, all chance of happiness’.

Not all ‘isms’ are necessarily negative, even though, as Sardar observes, there are many of them that ‘have brought us to the edge of chaos’. Idealism may not necessarily imply an ideological frame of mind, which may also be usefully tempered by pragmatism. The extent to which one sees any of them as relatively positive or negative of course depends on one’s perspective, and our own preferences will inevitably emerge as our glossary expands. We will want to emphasize, for example, the positive role of pluralism and multiculturalism in the Integration of Knowledge. At the same time, we will need to question whether other ‘-isms’ which tend to be demonised can be conceptualised in a more nuanced way. A good example is the word ‘relativism’ which we have already encountered. This is a useful bugbear of traditionalist ideologues and cultural supremacists, as well as some religionists, suggesting both chronic disorientation and moral laxity. As Jacques Barzun has pointed out in his monumental survey of modern Western civilisation, the bogey word ‘relativism’ has become ‘a cliché that stands for the cause of every laxity’, and ‘a slippery slope of cunning justifications and satanic whisperings, taking us further and further away from the certainty of eternal truths and absolute values’. But the root of the word might be more usefully seen as a continuum ranging from a value-free ‘anything goes’ mentality which may indeed be rootless in a negative sense, to a very positive ability to form ‘relationship’, whether with ideas or with people. Awareness of relativity and concern for relationship need not imply a degree of relativism that totally abolishes all immutable laws, eternal truths and absolute values. As Diana Eck, the Director of the Harvard Pluralism Project, points out, ‘A thoughtful relativist is able to point out the many ways in which our cognitive and moral understandings are relative to our historical, cultural and ideological contexts’ and, to that extent, the thoughtful relativist is a close cousin of the pluralist, someone who is able to relate to and engage in a positive and respectful way with people of other communities and able to show how absolutism can give rise to bigotry.

In conceptualising the Integration of Knowledge project, Sardar navigates the related issues of ideology, relativism, and pluralism as follows:

'The overall aim here is to guard against ideological constructions of Islam as well as absolute relativism promoted so eagerly in postmodernist thought – and move towards some notion of plurality. The original French notion of ideology saw it as science of ideas and their truth and error but the term rapidly came to signify a total system of thought, emotion and attitude to humans, society and everything. Islamic movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-e-Islami, have often constructed Islam as an all-embracing ideology, a total and totalistic system that allows for no dissent, alternative perspectives, or plurality of any kind to flourish. Relativism is valuable when it promotes different viewpoints, perceptions and considerations, and even when it suggest that different views may not necessarily have absolute truth or validity. But it becomes a problem when it suggests, as in postmodernism, that there are no truths at all or nothing that can provide us with meaning'.

In short, 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.

Problematic Terms in Topical Discourse

It can hardly have escaped our notice that certain terms crop up again and again in political discourse and the media. Many of these are used as repetitive mantras, which can be either vacuous or loaded with implications. What, for example, is a 'moderate' Muslim'? What does it mean to be 'civilised'? What is 'terrorism'? What is 'the International Community'?

Let us take six examples of the way in which our glossary might deal with problematic terms: 'multiculturalism', 'pluralism', 'tolerance', 'integration', 'radical', and 'secularism'.

In recent years, some European leaders have lamented what they see as the 'failure' and even the 'death' of multiculturalism. This word, however, might refer to at least three different notions: first, the existence of plurality or diversity ('multiculturality'); second, the model of multiculturalism which promotes tolerance between separate communities within plural societies (sometimes referred to as 'plural monoculturalism'); and third, multiculturalism as an active process of constructive engagement between different communities (sometimes called 'interculturalism').

The phrase 'passive tolerance' has also been used to express disapproval of the 'plural monoculturalism' or 'cosmopolitanism' which tolerates the existence of 'minority' communities in separate enclaves but does not actively seek to 'integrate' them into wider society and promote 'social cohesion' through a common narrative or set of agreed national values. Furthermore, according to this view, 'passive tolerance' which turns a blind eye to 'extremist ideology' and the 'radicalisation' it promotes should not just be disapproved of but actively countered. In other words, there should be 'intolerance of intolerance'.

While there may be many valid reasons to critique 'passive tolerance', it is nevertheless profoundly misleading to appear to suggest that multiculturalism in its critically important sense of active intercultural engagement is dead. Lack of care in distinguishing such concepts can have profoundly negative consequences not only for

minority communities but also for wider society. After all, Anders Breivik, the Norwegian ideologue who killed 69 people in a mass shooting on the island of Utøya in 2011 was motivated by hatred of the multiculturalism which he saw as an assault on racial and cultural purity and which raised for him the hideous spectre of the 'Islamification' of Europe.

In advising us that we have been made into *nations and tribes so that we may come to know one another* (49:13), the Qur'an itself implies that we must go beyond the unchallenging mediocrity of mere tolerance and engage in active and open-hearted dialogue with other cultures. Now, we cannot truly know one another if our relationship with each other is little more than a kind of sullen tolerance, or in the words of Diana Eck 'a passive form of hostility', a 'shaky truce', or, as is sometimes the case, an 'expression of privilege'. Omid Safi reminds us that the connotations of 'tolerance' are deeply problematic. The root of the word comes from medieval toxicology and pharmacology, marking how much poison a body could 'tolerate' before it would succumb to death. He asks: 'Is this the best that we can do? Is it our task to figure out how many "others" we can tolerate before it really kills us? Is this the most sublime height of pluralism we can aspire to?' Like him, I don't want merely to 'tolerate' my fellow human beings, 'but rather to engage them at the deepest level of what makes us human, through both our phenomenal commonality and our dazzling cultural differences'. And this level of engagement is not a kind of wishy-washy or contrived syncretism devoid of commitment or a dose of comforting platitudes about common ground served up at an interfaith breakfast. It is a truth-seeking encounter, a process of mutual transformation which goes further than simply trying to understand the 'other' but reaches out to a new level of mutual self-understanding. This is the process of seeing the self in the other, which Rumi describes in one of his discourses as integral to the attainment of wisdom, and which Abdulkader Tayob sees as integral to educational reform. The rejection of 'passive tolerance' can never merely be synonymous with 'intolerance of intolerance' but must include the higher ambition of active intercultural engagement.

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-understanding 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. After all, as the Qur'an tells us, *God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in their inner selves* (13:11). In our political and media culture, the word 'integration', however, is often bandied about with an implied meaning which is little or no different from that of 'assimilation' which effectively means 'making something the same as something else'. Integration, on the other hand, comes from a root which gives us the words 'integer' (whole or complete) and 'integrity'. To integrate is certainly to become a law-abiding and socially responsible citizen, but it is not to be cloned as someone else, totally absorbed into a monoculture, with all traces of one's own heritage extinguished.

As for the word 'radical', we have in Britain an honourable 'radical' tradition of reforming liberalism, intelligent social activism and legitimate dissent which has historically guided our national evolution towards a free, just and tolerant society, but 'radical Islam' and 'radicalisation' when applied to Muslims, invariably has the connotation of extremism, and even violent extremism. Yet, the sense of 'radical' as 'root and branch change' (Latin *radix*, root) or decisive and even drastic departure

from customary norms need carry no necessary negative connotation when applied to other spheres. The remedy to counter ‘radical Islam’ is often proposed as being in the hands of ‘moderate’ Muslims, never in the hands of those who can reclaim a truly ‘radical’ vision of Islam which is in harmony with the underlying humanity of core Islamic principles and values. The final paragraph of the *Contextualising Islam in Britain II* report compiled by the University of Cambridge Centre of Islamic Studies for the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in 2012 frames this positive sense of radicalism:

‘The excavation of the higher ethical principles by which the Islamic polity was constituted in its most original forms implies a vibrant and confident social activism in support of an open-ended and dynamic radical politics for the continued progressive transformation of our societies. A renewed Islamic public theology offers rich resources for a broad alliance of citizens to develop inclusive and collective responses to the many interconnected and deepening crises in the contemporary world’.

In such a way, Muslims might aspire to be a creative minority within our societies to power such a vision. The fact that any reference to ‘radicals’ amongst them is invariably couched in terms of violence, extremism and fundamentalist religiosity is a telling example of the one-sided distortion of terminology which our glossary needs to address.

Finally, the word ‘secularism’ is often bandied about with either strongly negative or positive connotations which reflect polarised ideological positions. Like ‘relativism’ and ‘modernism’ it can be demonised by religious traditionalists as the cause of every ill, and conversely it can be sanctified by ideologues as the source of all the benefits enjoyed by ‘advanced’ societies. Once again, we need to be clear about what kind of secularism we are talking about. We need to distinguish between ‘procedural’ and ‘ideological’ secularism. The former is sometimes also referred to as ‘passive’ and ‘pluralist’, and the latter as ‘assertive’ and ‘corporatist’. Procedural secularism protects the equal rights of all citizens, while freely allowing religious citizens to participate fully and robustly in open debate in the public sphere. As such, it has brought many benefits to humanity, ensuring religious and political freedoms for minorities. Ideological secularism, on the other hand, attempts to exclude, marginalise or rigorously control religious voices and institutions in the public (and even the private) sphere.

The importance of procedural secularism in defending liberty of conscience was discussed in some depth in the first *Contextualising Islam in Britain* report (*Exploratory Perspectives*) compiled in 2009:

‘There is a web of misunderstanding, not confined to Muslims, regarding the true origin, nature and intent of secularism. The core of the idea of the secular state is not anti-religious, for the historical separation of the powers of church and state in the West actually guaranteed the status of religion and the freedom of the church from state control, ensuring that neither should interfere in each other’s domain of government. Secularism is therefore essentially a contract, ensuring religious freedom, tolerance and peace within a shared political space. An important aspect of the separation of powers is the fundamental principle of liberty of conscience, a principle ardently advocated by Martin Luther, the father of

Protestantism. Insisting that God requires voluntary and sincere religious beliefs, Luther sets out the principle that forbids human authorities from compulsion or coercion in matters of faith, since any such compulsion would render faith insincere. The role of the civil government is simply to maintain peace and order in society’.

And the principle of liberty of conscience is absolutely in accord with the Qur’anic injunction that ‘there shall be no coercion (*ikrah*) in matters of faith’ (2:256).

The term ‘secular’ comes from the Latin *saeculum*, which means ‘this age’ or ‘the present time’, and the concept refers to the condition of the world at this particular time or period or age. It can be argued that it is precisely by recognising and understanding the condition of the world at this particular time that the challenge of religious and cultural pluralism can be met. This is not to give precedence to the temporal world over the spiritual world, nor to set one against the other, but 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. Whilst it is important to guard against modernism and secularism as uncompromising ideologies which are essentially inimical to the spiritual quest, it is equally important to take account of the reality of contemporary conditions and to remain open to discover what contemporary life has to offer in supporting that quest.

In relation to education, it is often held that ‘secular’ education systems provide a ‘neutral’ space which guards against religious ‘indoctrination’. It can be argued, however, that all education systems are based on particular conceptions of human nature, faculties, ideas and beliefs, even if underlying ideologies may not be made explicit. It has been claimed that in the wider context of the debate about faith schools, secular schools (as opposed to faith schools) are not ideologically free zones. Secularism as an ideology has its own assumptions about the human person, the ideal society, the ideal system of schooling and the meaning of human existence. While these assumptions may not be formally codified into a curriculum subject designated ‘secular education’ as an alternative to ‘religious education’ it can be argued that they characteristically permeate the ethos and culture of state-provided secular schools and form a crucial part of the hidden curriculum.

‘Secularism’ is a good example of a loaded term which we need to navigate with care, taking due account of all its connotations. While we might well agree with Ibn Rushd that we should respect the different uses of the same word because they represent different points of view and show how it is possible for one thing to be described in a variety of ways, we also need to take fully on board Francis Bacon’s insight that understanding is not only hindered by the common definition of words but also (even among the more learned) by disputes over their multiple meanings. And it is this fundamental problem which drives our intention, as Sardar puts it, to define a set of key terms in our own specific way and incorporate them within the Integration of Knowledge discourse.

Five Model Entries

Education

Education carries a double sense, as indicated by the entry for ‘educated’ in Williams’s *Keywords*. The word originally referred to the ‘bringing up’ or ‘rearing’ of children, from Latin *educare*, ‘rear, foster’, an intensive form of *educere*, ‘educate, lead forth, draw out, develop’. Williams explains that ‘the wide sense has never quite been lost but it has been specialized to organized teaching and instruction since the 17th century and predominantly so since the 18th’. He adds that the strong sense of class superiority in the use of the word educated may be related to the surviving general sense of ‘bringing-up’, as in ‘properly brought up’.

The wider sense of education as ‘rearing, fostering’ is also included in the orbit of ‘holistic education’ and enshrined in the concept of *tarbiyah* in Islamic education. This is rooted in the Arabic word *rabb*, which occurs almost a thousand times in the Qur’an, and is rendered by Muhammad Asad not as ‘Lord’ (as in most translations) or ‘Master’ but as ‘Sustainer’. While the word carries the sense of having ‘authority’ as one of its various connotations, Asad wished to capture its sense of ‘rearing, sustaining and fostering anything from its inception to its final completion’. In the Qur’an, its form *ar-rabb* is applied to God alone as the sole cherisher, nourisher, nurturer and sustainer of all creation, and therefore ‘the ultimate source of all authority’. The Prophet said, ‘My Lord educated (*addabah*) me, and so made my education most excellent’. The English word *nurse*, which originally meant ‘suckle’, is also etymologically related to the English words *nourish* and *nutrition*. The word *nursery* still retains its associations with children, and by extension with young plants.

Many exponents of Islamic education emphasize that it is ideally a holistic process concerned not only with the instruction and training of the mind and the transmission of knowledge (*ta’lim*) but also with the education of the whole being of men and women (*tarbiyah*). As Nasr contends, ‘the Islamic educational system never divorced the training of the mind from that of the soul’ and the ideal teacher is therefore ‘not only a *muallim*, a transmitter of knowledge, but also a *murabbi*, a trainer of souls and personalities’.

Al-Attas, however, rejects the characterisation of Islamic education as *tarbiyah*. He maintains that this word (which is actually not found in any of the great Arabic lexicons) reflects the Western concept of ‘education’ derived from Latin *educare*/*educere*. Such education, he claims, is ‘intellectual and moral training geared to physical and material ends pertaining to secular man in his society and state’ and cannot therefore describe Islamic education. He prefers to regard Islamic education as *ta’dib*, a word related to *adab*. He claims that *ta’dib* is a superordinate concept encompassing not only, ‘instruction’ (*ta’lim*) and ‘rearing, nurturing’ (*tarbiyah*), but also ‘knowledge’ (*ilm*). He defines this term in what he regards as its authentic sense, before its ‘restriction and debasement of meaning’ to mere ‘cultural refinement and social etiquette’.

Thus, *adab* in its ‘true’ sense, according to Al-Attas, should be conceived of as ‘discipline of body, mind and soul’ which enables man to recognise and acknowledge his ‘proper place’ in relation to God, his own self, his family and his community. This order, he contends, is ‘arranged hierarchically in degrees (*darajat*) of excellence based

on Qur'anic criteria of intelligence, knowledge and virtue (*ihsan*)'. Thus, within the dual nature of man's own self the *adab* of his lower animal soul (*al-nafs al-hayawaniyyah*) is to recognise and acknowledge its subordinate position in relation to his higher rational soul (*al-nafs al-natiqah*). In relation to God, mankind has made a covenant (*mithaq*) and recognised and acknowledged God as his Lord (*al-Rabb*). His *adab* in relation to his Lord is to recognise and acknowledge that Lordship and to behave in such a way as to be worthy of approaching nearer to Him. He is motivated by *taqwa* (consciousness and awe of God) and *ihsan*, defined by the Prophet *as to adore God as though you see Him, and if you do not see Him, He nonetheless sees you*. This spiritual dimension of *adab* is an 'Islamisation' of the original meaning, 'an invitation to a banquet', where the host would be a man of distinction and standing and the guests would be worthy of the honour of invitation by virtue of their refined character and upbringing, expressed in their speech, conduct and etiquette.

Where Al-Attas sees Western contamination in the convergence of *tarbiyah* with the Latin sense of *educere*, and also claims that *tarbiyah* is in any case subsumed under the over-arching concept of *ta'dib*, it can be argued that it is important not to marginalize *tarbiyah* as a fundamental principle of education in Islam. An inherent contradiction may also be discerned in subsuming *tarbiyah* under *ta'dib* and yet, at the same time, regarding it as a defective concept 'tinged with modernism'. Defining Islamic education so strictly in terms of *ta'dib* and its imperative to 'know one's proper place' in the hierarchical order could lead to an under-valuation of two vital aspects of education which are enshrined in the concept of *tarbiyah*: its 'nurturing' function and its role in 'drawing out' latent potential.

It is worth noting that the Islamic concept of education as *tarbiyah*, 'nurturing, rearing', is consistent with Latin *educare and educere*, and with the underlying meaning of the English word *development* from Old French *des-voloper*, 'unveil' or 'unwrap'. This concept of drawing out latent potential points to an educational process which includes remembering, activating, awakening, eliciting or bringing to light innate capacities. These capacities reflect the essential nature or primordial disposition (*fitrāh*) with which the human being has been imprinted by God, endowing him or her with the potential to become His representative or steward (*khalifah*) on earth. The origin of the English word for 'character' is from a Greek word meaning a 'stamp', 'impression' or 'engraving', from which the sense of 'character' as a scribal mark is derived. Authentic human character is engraved or etched on the soul, having been created by God 'in the best conformation' (Qur'an 95:4). The development of character is thus the unfolding of the divine imprint.

Al-Attas himself points out that the qualitative emphasis of *tarbiyah* is mercy (*rahmah*) rather than knowledge (*'ilm*), whereas *ta'dib* emphasises knowledge rather than mercy. Rather than set up a dichotomy between mercy and knowledge, a holistic vision of Islamic education, as in any system of holistic education, will strive to find balance between the two, so that neither is emphasised over the other, for just as mercy without knowledge can foster weakness, delusion, ineptitude and foolishness, so knowledge without mercy can lead to egotism, self-aggrandisement, arrogance, intolerance and high-handedness. It is not difficult to see that knowing one's place or rank in the 'human order', regarded by Al-Attas as an integral aspect of *adab*, can, if over-emphasised, produce and sustain repressive autocratic and authoritarian societies which stifle and actively suppress the realisation of individual human potential and inculcate a mentality of passive compliance. In the same way, unquestioning submission to authority in educational settings is no way to foster the

spirit of ‘intellectual curiosity and independent inquiry’ among students. As Muhammad Asad eloquently reminds us, it was that spirit, rooted in ‘the insistence on consciousness and knowledge’ in the Qur’an which gave rise to ‘that splendid era of learning and scientific research which distinguished the world of Islam at the height of its cultural vigour’.

In discussing educational administration, Aref Atari has shown how the implementation of both the Christian model of Service-Stewardship and the Islamic *khalifah* model point to ‘a radical transformation in management, thought and practice’ away from hierarchically organised bureaucratic systems to a what he calls a ‘caring and sharing spirit’. In this climate, trust, love, sympathy, mercy, cooperation, tolerance and altruism are at least as important as efficiency, effectiveness, competition, professional ambition and achievement. The outcome is an organisation which is both ‘virtue-based and excellence-oriented’. Consultative *Shura*-based management, empowering and working with others, replaces a top-down approach which manipulates, controls and works through others.

The need for balance is also indicated by the way in which the over-emphasis on *ta’lim* at the expense of *tarbiyah*, can compromise the integrity of the educational experience, producing a system of schooling or instruction characterised by a top-down, teacher-centred ‘Transmission of Information’ model of learning. The Harvard educator Roland Barth has aptly labelled this model as ‘Sit ‘n Git’. It is important to realise that many critiques of instructional or schooling regimes are directed not only at authoritarian approaches to education in Muslim schools but also at the utilitarian priorities of the secular education system in the West. Various indictments have been made of the assumptions and structures which underlie modern state schooling in the USA, exposing the same deadening utilitarian agenda which is also held by many critics to inform British educational policy. John Taylor Gatto, critiquing this schooling regime in the USA, sees it as geared to turning children into cogs in an economic machine, children who are dependent, conforming, materialistic, and lacking in curiosity, imagination, self-knowledge and powers of reflection. Neil Postman, the prominent American social critic has lamented the way in which today’s schools promote the false gods of economic utility, consumerism, and technology.

It might also be upheld that a truly integrated and balanced concept of Islamic education needs to include not only *ta’lim*, *tarbiyah* and *ta’dib* (the acquisition of knowledge, personal and social development, and moral and spiritual discipline) but also *ta’aruf*, learning from one another in that spirit of critical openness and respect for diversity which is ordained in the Qur’anic vision of pluralism: *We have made you into nations and tribes so that you might come to know one another* (49:13).

The question also arises as to the extent to which any description of Islamic education should include the dimension of *tazkiya*, which encompasses knowledge and practices directed to the purification of the soul, or the cleansing of the heart, from vices such as egotism, pride, envy, greed and heedlessness. The source of such spiritual education and transformation is firmly rooted in the Qur’anic call to *Consider the human self, and how it is formed in accordance with what it is meant to be, and how it is imbued with moral failings as well as with consciousness of God! To a happy state shall indeed attain he who causes this self to grow in purity* (9:7-9). The Prophet Muhammad also spoke of the greater struggle (*al-jihad al-akbar*) as the struggle to conquer the lower self, and he himself prayed to God not only to increase him in knowledge but also to improve his character.

It might legitimately be argued that *tazkiya* can be incorporated within a broad definition of *ta'dib*, that moral and spiritual discipline which also encompasses *akhlaq*, the cultivation of virtue, morality and higher values. All of this might also be included in a comprehensive view of 'character education' in the Western sense, as long as this includes the totality of personal, social, moral and spiritual development. These four dimensions, along with the acquisition of knowledge and skills, are embedded in the stated goals of the National Curriculum in England and Wales, although the extent to which they are actually fostered and realized is a matter of debate. Many would maintain that little more than lip service is paid to them, and least of all to 'spiritual development', even though it may figure in standardised mission statements.

Derek Melleby, reviewing Harry Lewis's *Excellence Without a Soul* (see the entry on EXCELLENCE), identifies the lack of higher values and loss of deeper meaning and purpose underlying the crisis in higher education in America represented by even such a premier institution as Harvard College.

'According to many scholars and experts, higher education in America is in crisis. Often, we see that crisis played out in the lives of students. College campuses have become perpetual parties and many people blame the students themselves, suggesting that this generation is lazy, entertainment driven and doesn't care about anything other than themselves'.

Lewis believes that 'colleges in America (Harvard included) have forgotten that the fundamental job of undergraduate education is to turn teenagers into adults, to help them grow up, to learn who they are, to search for a larger purpose for their lives, and to leave college as better human beings'.

Imam Dr. Zijad Delic, discussing the role of education in Islam for individuals and society, regards the 'three inter-woven terms' of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim* and *ta'dib* as expressing 'the multivalent concern for individuals, the environment and society as a whole, thus representing the comprehensive scope of both formal and informal education in Islam'. He maintains that 'if the goal of education in Islam is the balanced growth of human character, the soul should receive equal attention with the intellect', and he refers to Ashraf's warning that 'the separation of human spiritual development from the rational and temporal aspects of personality is the main cause of psychic degeneration and loss of identity'. He also acknowledges the personal inspiration he has gained from Wendell Berry, poet, environmental activist, and cultural critic, who defines education as 'a continuous process of transmitting knowledge and values in order to promote the intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical development of the pupils, enabling them to cope with challenges of modern society and grow up as balanced and motivated individuals'.

Berry elaborates as follows:

'It is about the harmonious development of mind, body and soul. On the one hand, education helps equip human beings with the required skills and experiences needed to meet the challenges of a competitive society; on the other hand, it prepares them ... to live as caring human beings in a diverse society. With effective dissemination of these roles they attain peace in life and the pleasure of God'.

The common paradigm we might derive from the foregoing approaches, whether rooted in Islamic or broadly Western terminology, is that of holistic education – a balanced, integrated and inclusive process entailing the activation and development of the full range of human faculties with which men and women have been endowed. David Orr believes H.G. Wells ‘had it right when he said that we are in a race between education and catastrophe. This race will be decided in all of the places, including classrooms, that foster ecological imagination, critical thinking, awareness of connections, independent thought, and good heart’. We need not be surprised by the degree of convergence between the vision of two Western environmentalists (Berry and Orr) and the essentially holistic paradigm of education in Islam, defined by Al-Attas as a comprehensive and integrated approach to education which ‘strives to produce a morally good and well-rounded person through balanced training of the spirit, the intellect, the rational self, the emotions and the bodily senses’. This approach, one involving ‘the complete personality’ and embracing one’s ‘rational, spiritual and social dimensions’ is, according to Al-Attas, ‘wholly coherent with Islamic educational theory, in which the objective of gaining knowledge is attained through striving for perfection of all dimensions of the human being’.

To the sensory, intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual dimensions normally identified in such descriptions, I would also highlight the creative, imaginative, aesthetic, ecologically aware, inter-culturally engaged, collaborative, cross-disciplinary, and communicatively competent dimensions which are germane to an integrated, sensitive, humane and pluralistic personality and outlook in our increasingly interconnected world.

Now, it is true to say that even the best Western articulations of the higher purposes of education may not often include the ‘spiritual dimension’, and it is that omission which also motivates anti-secularist critics of Western education like Al-Attas to label it as ‘intellectual and moral training geared to physical and material ends pertaining to secular man’ and therefore incompatible with the purposes of education in Islam. As he says, ‘the purpose of seeking knowledge in Islam is to produce a good man, and not – as in the case of Western civilization – to produce a good citizen’. Nevertheless, as Rosnani Hashim admits in a paper on the ‘Islamization of the curriculum’, secular Western curricula are, in a sense, ‘more well rounded than Islamic curricula’, because they have ‘the goal of producing an educated man [and, let me add, woman] who is able to think and write effectively; to have a critical appreciation of the ways in which one gains knowledge and understands the universe, society and himself; to be informed of other cultures and other times; to have some understanding and experience concerning ethical and moral problems; and to have attained some depth in a particular field of knowledge’. Going further, Western models of ‘higher learning’ invariably emphasize the development of advanced thinking skills, including (as listed, for example, by the UK Council for Academic Awards) the development of ‘understanding’, ‘independent judgement’, ‘problem-solving skills’, ‘an enquiring, analytical and creative approach’ and ‘critical self-awareness’. The importance of all of this can hardly be denied, and we might take it even further by endorsing Roland Barnett’s contention that ‘genuine higher learning’ is necessarily ‘subversive’ and ‘unsettling’, because the student comes to see that ‘there are no final answers’ (see EXCELLENCE).

It is relatively easy to assemble a trenchant critique of Western ‘reductionism’ in the weight it attaches to cognitive skills for pragmatic and utilitarian ends, and for personal ‘effectiveness’, but there are also very positive developments in approaches to thinking skills education in the Western sphere. Unlike so many ‘critical thinking’

approaches which focus almost exclusively on techniques of reasoning, Robert Fisher includes some aspects of the moral dimension as a key element of teaching thinking. Ideal critical thinkers, he contends, display a number of intellectual virtues which include seeking out evidence, being honest with oneself and others, and listening attentively and with respect to the views of others. Barry Schwartz also highlights the set of intellectual virtues which go beyond functional cognitive skills such as ‘quantitative ability, conceptual flexibility, analytical acumen, and expressive clarity that make good students, good professionals, and good citizens’. Such virtues include love of truth and the courage and integrity to stand up for it; the intellectual honesty and humility which enable students to face up to the limitations of what they themselves know, to own up to their mistakes and to acknowledge uncomfortable truths; fair-mindedness and resistance to the confirmation bias that hoodwinks us into seeing what we want to see, believing what we already believe, and ignoring counter-evidence; the perseverance and effort on which talent depends for its meaningful actualisation and maturation; good listening and empathy; and, above all, wisdom – ‘the manager of the other intellectual virtues’.

It is notable that such inventories, even those given a moral compass through the recognition of ‘intellectual virtues’, tend to steer clear of a ‘spiritual’ dimension’. If the supreme function of higher education is held to be the sharpening up of that subversive questioning, relentless inquiry and committed excavation of evidence which enable one to resist the lure of false certainties, it might be legitimately upheld that it falls short of the even higher function of leading the student to the realisation of spiritual ‘certitude’ (*yaqin*), the activation of higher spiritual faculties, or the attainment of consciousness of God (*taqwa*). There is no hint of such ‘spiritual’ attainments in the ‘50 Characteristics of an Educated Person’ listed on a popular website, and derived partly from the lists drawn up by Harvard and Princeton Universities. The majority of these attainments are cognitive, while a few have ethical connotations. Such an ‘educated person’ can for example, ‘reason analytically and critically’, ‘think inductively and deductively’, ‘think clearly and independently’, ‘distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information, and between the important and the trivial’, ‘make productive use of knowledge’, ‘question assumptions’, seek out truth for themselves rather than ‘blindly accept what they are told’, ‘solve problems’, ‘handle ambiguity’, ‘pursue lifelong learning’, and ‘communicate thoughts and ideas clearly and concisely’. He or she also has aesthetic appreciation’, ‘a broad liberal-arts education’ with a good overview of a range of subjects, including ‘the natural sciences, the social sciences, history, geography, literature, philosophy, and theology’, and ‘depth of knowledge in a particular field’. Other skills include the ability ‘to see connections among disciplines, ideas and cultures’, ‘to cross disciplinary boundaries and explore problems and their solutions from multiple perspectives’, ‘to resolve conflict with others’, to have ‘equal esteem for everyone, without regard to gender, race, religion, country of origin, and so on’, ‘to know how to establish rapport with others and how to get others to trust and respect them’, and ‘to understand their obligation to leave the world a little better than they found it’.

An integrative approach to education must transcend the misleading dichotomy which has arisen from pigeon-holing Islamic education as a faith-based alternative to the secular conception of education based on the humanist ideals of Western modernity. As Abdullah Sahin has argued, there is a pressing need for a radical realignment of the one-sided and polarised mentalities underlying much entrenched thinking within contemporary Islam and the secular humanism of late modernity so that they can interact more intelligently. Promising signs that this process is underway can be observed in the way the West has begun to question the supremacist assumptions

within its rhetoric of ‘rational enlightenment’ and the corresponding way in which the Muslim world is gradually reconsidering and recontextualising the meaning of being faithful to Islam in the light of contemporary needs.

Excellence

While there is a tendency in recent times to frame the concept of excellence in terms of outstanding personal achievement or performance, the word has a much deeper underlying range of meanings, encompassing not only outstanding mastery of a domain of knowledge and/or skills (and the success and eminence that confers) but also the attainment of moral virtue. In short, in its fullest sense, the word connotes not only being ‘good at’ something, but also being ‘good at something intrinsically good’, and this composite sense is conveyed in the definition in the Oxford Dictionary: ‘possession chiefly of good qualities in an eminent or unusual degree; surpassing merit, skill, virtue, dignity, eminence’.

Excellence is therefore much more than what is implied by ‘professionalism’, or ‘accomplishment’. After all, we can talk about an accomplished fraudster or a professional hit man, but would it not be rather strange to say that Mario is an excellent hit man, unless we were members of the Mafia? The difference is that the heart of excellence is not simply about personal mastery, or effectiveness in accomplishing a task, but includes excellence of human character, and that has a moral and ultimately a spiritual dimension. There is evidence from the world of sport that amateurs often have much better ethical values than professionals, probably because their objective is not typically to win at all costs. Nevertheless, the close association between professionalism and excellence (in one sense of being the ‘best’) is widespread in statements of business principles and is included in those of the investment banker Goldman Sachs: ‘We take great pride in the professional quality of our work: We have an uncompromising determination to achieve excellence in everything we undertake. Though we may be involved in a wide variety and heavy volume of activity, we would, if it came to a choice, rather be best than biggest’. What this means in practice may perhaps be judged by the resignation in 2012 of Greg Smith, from the company. Smith, an executive director and Head of US equity derivatives businesses in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, attributed his decision to resign to the ‘decline in the firm’s moral fiber’ and its ‘toxic and destructive’ culture which attached far more importance to making as much money as possible out of clients than taking care of clients’ interests with integrity.

The reclamation of the full scope and standing of excellence is also of particular importance at a time when it has become little more than a mere buzzword in educational discourse. Kathryn Allan describes the process by which an element (or elements) of the meaning of a word is lost, weakened or ‘bleached’ over time. This semantic entropy is a common feature of semantic change, especially with positive terms. How often do we hear words like ‘brilliant’ or ‘fantastic’ to describe trivial accomplishments. A striking example is the word *cunning*, which now has the sense of ‘skilfully deceitful’ or ‘crafty’ (from the 16th century), but originally had the sense of ‘learned’. Its root also links ability and knowledge in such derivations as *can* and Scots *ken*, ‘know’. In this case, the driver of change might well have been the influence of the church in stigmatising all knowledge and skills derived from pagan sources as the work of the devil, and hence ‘devious’. Ideological, cultural and institutional factors clearly play an important role in shifting the meanings of words over time, and we need to be very alert to these influences.

Allan argued in 2007 for the status of excellence as a modern ‘keyword’ not only because of its ‘semantic ambiguity’ but also because it offers access to ‘current perspectives’ in an important area of culture and society. It can be argued that this status is now warranted more than ever. Allan reports an 86% increase in the use of the term in educational journals in the JSTOR collection in the twenty years from the period 1976-1980 to 1996-2000. The increasing prominence of the word in modern educational discourse and in the mission statements churned out by educational institutions and government initiatives has attracted a degree of ridicule by some commentators on education. Allan refers to one who refers (in a book suggestively entitled *The University in Ruins*) to the current usage of the word excellence as an ‘empty notion’, and to another who has suggested that the frequency with which the word is used by a university in promotional materials is an indicator of whether that institution is third-rate. She also reveals that only four out of 21 randomly selected British universities (a mixture of pre- and post-1992 institutions, including both Russell Group members and ex-polytechnics) do not use the word ‘excellence’ (or its relatives like ‘excellent’ and ‘excel’) in their mission statements.

Many argue that this reduction of excellence to a buzzword, or, at worst, to meaningless mantra, is the inevitable outcome of a competitive, market-led university recruitment and evaluation system geared to massively increased enrolment. With government funding increasingly linked to the demonstrable ability of universities to ‘deliver’ standards, meet quantifiable targets and provide evidence that they are doing so, traditional internal methods of quality assurance and accountability for reliably maintaining established standards are under increasing pressure from the oppressive and elaborate ‘systems’ embedded in rampant managerialism. This can not only stifle creativity, original thought, and diverse insights, and the like, but also create a culture of uniformity, compliance and mediocrity in which inspired leadership cannot flourish. There is mounting concern, as noted by Allan, that ‘changes in teaching practice and assessment have not upheld the level of quality that was previously the norm in universities’. As Morley notes, ‘in the age of global capitalism universities have been reduced to a technical ideal of performance within a contemporary discourse of excellence’.

The restriction and even debasement of meaning entailed in that contemporary discourse can best be challenged by recapturing not only its sense of genuinely outstanding mastery but also its somewhat forgotten moral dimension. To do so, a look at the root of the word is the most fertile starting-point. Its underlying sense is of physically ‘rising above’ others. It came into English via Old French from Latin *excellere*, ‘to rise above, raise up, elevate, be eminent’, formed from *ex* -(out) + the hypothetical verbal element *cellere*, assumed to mean something like ‘rise, be high’. The source of the Latin word is the Indo-European base *kol-* or *kel-*, ‘be prominent’, which also produced English *column*, *culminate*, and *hill*, although in Latin the metaphorical sense of *excellere* as being ‘outstanding’ superseded its concrete physical sense at an early stage. Including the word *colonel* (leader of a column) in his list of derivations from the root, Shipley notes that in the southern states of America in the 19th century, any gentleman over forty was addressed as ‘colonel’. Though apparently a rather quaint reference, this is of unexpected significance in the light of the verse in the Qur’an which refers to ‘man’ (Arabic *insan*, and hence denoting both men and women) attaining maturity at the age of forty (46:15). Muhammad Asad comments that the age of forty is here identified as ‘the age at which man is supposed to attain to full intellectual and spiritual maturity’, as also indicated by the fact that it was the age at which the first revelations came to the Prophet Muhammad. The point here is not any literal or automatic significance attached to the age itself but the important

idea within the Islamic conception of human development that human excellence is intertwined with intellectual and spiritual maturity.

It is revealing here to probe the meaning of the Greek word *areté*. Usually translated, as ‘virtue’, it was nevertheless not a specifically moral term. It was used to refer not only to human skills but also to inanimate objects, natural substances and domestic animals. A good knife had the virtue (*areté*) of being able to cut well ‘by virtue of’ its sharpness. The term denoted any sort of excellence, distinctive power, capacity, skill or merit, rather like Latin *virtus*, which, like the Greek, also had the sense of bravery and strength. The Italian word *virtuoso* preserves the sense of exceptional skill. The connotation of excellence in the word *areté* also comes through in the related word *aristokratia*, ‘rule by the best people’. Such an ideal need not be equated with its debased realization in the form of government in which power is held by a hereditary ruling class of aristocrats or other privileged ‘elite’ rather than by people of real merit or, indeed, by people elected or formally chosen in line with the original meaning of the word ‘elite’ from Latin *electus*, ‘chosen’.

Useful convergence can be found here with Confucian ethics, in which the most frequently discussed ideal is that of the *junzi* (or *chun-tzu*). David Wong explains that the Chinese word originally meant ‘son of a prince’, a member of the aristocracy, ‘but in the *Analects* of Confucius it refers to *ethical* nobility. The first English translations rendered the term as ‘gentleman’ but the more appropriate terms ‘superior man’ or ‘exemplary person’ have been suggested in more recent times. Wong also notes that ‘before Confucius’s time, the concept of *ren* referred to the aristocracy of bloodlines, meaning something like the strong and handsome appearance of an aristocrat. But in the *Analects* the concept is of a moral excellence that anyone has the potential to achieve’. He adds that the sense of *ren* as ‘all-encompassing moral virtue’ is explicitly conveyed by some translators through use of the translation ‘Good’ or ‘Goodness’, although it is also commonly translated as ‘benevolence’ or ‘humaneness’. It might be noted here that the Prophet Muhammad’s reaction to boasts of ancestral glory was to warn those steeped in the arrogance of pre-Islamic pagan ignorance (*jahiliyyah*) that Islam had abolished such tribalism (*‘asabiyyah*), and that all human beings are descended from Adam. The Qur’an (49:13) advises that there is no superiority of one over another except in *taqwa*, that consciousness of God which inspires us to be vigilant and to do what is right.

Homer often associates *areté* with courage, but more often with effectiveness. The person of *areté* uses all their faculties to achieve their objectives, often in the face of difficult circumstances, hardship or danger. One heroic model is Odysseus, not only brave and eloquent, but also wily, shrewd and resourceful, with the practical intelligence and wit (in the sense of quick thinking) of the astute tactician able to use a cunning ruse to win the day. Although the Latin word *virtus* comes from *vir*, ‘man’ (source of *virility* or manliness), itself originally from the Indo-European base *wi-ro*, ‘man’, Homer uses the word *areté* to describe not only male Greek and Trojan heroes but also female figures, such as Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, who embodies *areté* by showing how misfortune and sorrow can be stoically endured to an excellent degree. Such is the virtue of *sabr* (patient endurance) in Islamic tradition, in the same way as the aesthetic sense of refinement the Greeks also associated with *areté* converges at one level with that of *ihsan*, ‘doing what is good and beautiful’, behaving in an excellent manner’. In Islamic ethics and spirituality, *ihsan* embraces the aesthetic, moral and spiritual dimensions of a beautiful and virtuous character (*akhlaq* and *adab*). In the same way, the concept of ‘beauty’ expressed by the word *husn* encompasses not only the aesthetic sense of beauty in its homage to the ‘due measure

and proportion' with which all of creation is endowed by the Creator, but also the intimate equation between what is beautiful and what is good. Beauty is thus inseparable from the attributes of Divine Perfection, and from the goodness, moral virtue, spiritual refinement and excellence of character which are the human reflections of those holy attributes. This integrated and elevated conception of beauty is fundamental to a proper understanding of what is meant by excellence in the domain of aesthetics.

In the original Greek of the New Testament, *areté* is included in the list of virtues for cultivation in Christian moral development, and is associated primarily with the moral excellence of Jesus. It figures in the celebrated 'Admonition of Paul' in *Philippians* 4:8: 'Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence (*areté*), if there is anything worthy of praise, think on these things'. Other virtues in the New Testament include faith, knowledge (*gnosis*), godliness (*eusebeia*), brotherly affection (*philadelphia*), the highest form of love (*agape*) as the love of God for man and man for God, self-control (*enkrateia*) and steadfastness (*hypomone*).

Returning to the field of education, John Terry, in a book entitled *Moral Education*, provides an example of the right balance between the pursuit of knowledge and the attainment of goodness and 'noble character'. This balance was the avowed aim of the founders of Philips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. In the original *Deed of Gift* of 1781, John Phillips wrote:

'But above all, it is expected that the attention of instructors to the disposition of the minds and morals of the youth under their charge will exceed every other care; well considering that though goodness without knowledge is weak and feeble, yet knowledge without goodness is dangerous, and that both united form the noblest character; and lay the surest foundation of usefulness to mankind'.

Yet, as Terry points out in relation to contemporary education, 'Most secondary schools do much better in knowledge than in goodness – particularly those engaged in the uncompromising pursuit of academic excellence'. Although he is referring here to the situation in America, an incomplete and often one-sided view of excellence is widespread (though in different ways) in educational systems at all levels and in all societies. In the UK, for example, in line with the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, 'moral and spiritual development' is often specified on school mission statements as an essential component of a broad and balanced curriculum, an indispensable dimension of its commitment to 'delivering' excellence. In reality, it may often receive little more than lip service. As for Muslim societies, it hardly needs repeating that deficits in knowledge production, independent enquiry, and critical thinking are repeatedly lamented, with the establishment of 'centres of excellence' often regarded as an important element in any strategy for educational reform.

If 'higher education' is to be truly 'higher' (and thus reflect the original etymological sense of excellence as 'elevated' or 'rising above others'), we might endorse the view of the University of Oxford Institute for the Advancement of University Learning that 'higher education and higher learning' entail 'the pursuit of higher-order cognitive capabilities in the context of disciplinary knowledge'. However, it needs to be noted that such a vision is normally framed as an essentially 'cognitive' endeavour entailing the development, above all, of intellectual powers, with little, if any, reference to moral or spiritual development. For instance, the UK Council for National Academic

Awards (now defunct) conceives of excellence within a model of ‘higher learning’ which values the development of ‘understanding’, ‘independent judgement’, ‘problem-solving skills’, ‘an enquiring, analytical and creative approach’ and ‘critical self-awareness’. The importance of all of this can hardly be denied, and we might take it even further by endorsing Roland Barnett’s contention that ‘genuine higher learning’ is necessarily ‘subversive’ and ‘unsettling’, because the student comes to see that things could always be other than they are, and ‘there are no final answers’. Intellectual excellence is therefore embodied in one form in the philosophical, social and moral critic who asks difficult and relentless questions, even to the extent of being perceived as a dangerous freethinker. The truly visionary thinker, the one capable of bringing that degree of illumination which can transform lives and change the world for the better is operating at a level of ‘intellect’ which is not merely ‘rational’ or ‘logical’ (Latin *ratio*, Greek *dianoia*) but capable of insight arising from reflection and contemplation (*tafakkur*) and other higher intellectual, intuitive and moral faculties denoted by the Arabic term ‘*aql*’ and also by the Greek term *nous*. Aristotle connects happiness (*eudaimonia*), as an activity of the soul, with *areté*, of which the highest realization is the contemplative life (*theoria*). He also equates *areté* with the ‘mean’ between excess and defect, a principle which converges with the Qur’anic description of Muslims as ‘a community of the middle way’ (2:143) and one which is central to Al-Ghazali’s exposition of Islamic ethics.

Abdelwahab El-Affendi affirms that institutions of higher education have a ‘central role to play in ensuring that the production of knowledge does not become divorced from the higher values of society’.

‘For as specialisation evolves, students tend to concentrate on minute details of their particular field and may lose sight of overall objectives, guiding principles and interdisciplinary connections. Already in ancient Athens the so-called ‘Sophists’, the first dedicated professional teachers, were being satirised as unprincipled seekers of utility. Like modern day lawyers, they became notorious for teaching the skills of how to win an argument, regardless of the intrinsic value of the position staked. At the time of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, similar accusations were being made against professional jurists (fuqahah), who were ready to serve the highest bidder and seek lucrative employment and gain at the expense of lofty Islamic values. Regrettably, this remains the case for many even today’.

The failure of even the most prestigious universities to promote excellence in the full sense of the word has been highlighted in *Excellence Without a Soul*, a critique of Harvard College by its former Dean, Harry Lewis. Reviewing this work, David Melleby relates how many scholars and experts believe that higher education in America is in crisis:

‘For better or worse, Harvard is looked to as one of the premier colleges in America and around the world’. Yet, ‘according to Lewis, colleges in America (Harvard included) have forgotten that the fundamental job of undergraduate education is to turn teenagers into adults, to help them grow up, to learn who they are, to search for a larger purpose for their lives, and to leave college as better human beings. Lewis believes that because colleges have failed to offer students reasons for education – which forces students to wrestle with deeper questions of meaning and purpose – they are failing students and a country that desperately needs a well-educated citizenry’.

Lewis pleads with colleges and universities to not be afraid to talk about truth, meaning, purpose and what it means to be human. In his own words: ‘The old ideal of a liberal education lives on in name only. No longer does Harvard teach the things that will free the human mind and spirit’.

The mention of freedom here might also remind us that with so much emphasis in management-speak on ‘delivering’ policies and practices, the word *deliver* is actually derived from Latin *de-liberare*, meaning to ‘set free’. Excellence in education entails the ‘liberation’ or ‘deliverance’ of the full range of human faculties and capacities, yet teachers are increasingly required to ‘deliver’ a prescribed curriculum or a policy. There is a need to resist not only the kind of language which reduces education to a kind of soulless managerialism, but also the kind of language which equates education with the postal service. Are teachers only there to ‘deliver’ programmes of study, as if they were pre-packaged one-way parcels, mere items of content to be transmitted into letter-box brains? A complete, comprehensive and integrated concept of education requires that the teacher is not only responsible for the instruction and training of the mind and the transmission of knowledge (*ta’lim*) but also with the education of the whole being and the nurturing of the soul (*tarbiyah*), the cultivation of moral discipline (*ta’dib*), and how to learn from one another in the spirit of critical openness and respect for diversity (*ta’aruf*).

To that end, the best education in all societies, the real measure of excellence, is the degree to which it addresses the totality of human faculties. It is nothing more nor less than the full realization of human potential. It can be discerned in the earliest Greek conception of *areté* as the fulfillment of purpose or function; and it comes through in many forms and ways in the wider cultural and linguistic landscape we have traversed. Aspects of excellence have been realized in all societies and at all times, and no culture or civilisation has ever had a monopoly, even if some have attained to relative eminence in certain fields. That is surely why the Qur’an advises us to *vie with one another in doing good works* (2:148, 5:48) and to realize that we have been made into nations and tribes *so that we may come to know one another* (49:13). The attainment of excellence is a cumulative process which depends on the sharing of knowledge and skills, and on the respect for higher knowledge wherever it may be found.

Integration

The words ‘integration’, ‘integral’ and ‘integrity’ come from the Indo-European base *tag-*, ‘touch’, the source of Latin *tangere* and many English derivatives, including ‘attain, contagious, tactile, tangent, and tangible’. The related word ‘intact’ has the sense of untouched or untainted, pure, free from adulteration, corruption or contamination by mixing or contact. The words ‘entire’ (‘whole, complete’) and ‘integer’ (‘whole number’) are from the same root. Something which is integral is an essential, intrinsic, or fundamental constituent of the whole. The underlying sense of ‘wholeness’ and freedom from taint comes through in the various connotations of both integration and integrity. Integration has the sense of unification, combination, harmonisation, blending, fusing, or amalgamation and can apply to various domains – social, racial, economic, political, philosophical, educational, environmental. Integrity denotes undivided wholeness, coherence or cohesion, and – in relation to human character – uprightness, probity, rectitude, unwavering commitment to the truth, and strong moral principles which are resistant or immune to dilution, corruption or deflection.

Another sense of integration is the developmental process by which the constituent elements of personality become integrated over time into a well-functioning, co-ordinated and harmonious whole. An integrated person, in this sense, is someone who has achieved psychological maturity, and who is not in a state of disintegration or fragmentation. Such a person is centred in a holistic sense of self, with all facets of the self (mental, emotional and moral) working together in a balanced and complementary way. Although one of the most common connotations of the word touched is to be ‘moved, or emotionally stirred’ (as with gratitude or sympathy) it also carries the far less positive sense of being mentally or emotionally unbalanced, even slightly crazy. Integration therefore also carries the sense of sanity and responsibility. It can be identified to some extent with ‘self-actualisation’, the highest level in Maslow’s 5-stage hierarchy of needs. Self-actualising individuals are not only psychologically robust but also highly creative as they strive to solve problems, resolve dichotomies and go beyond prejudice in their search for meaning, purpose, moral values and transcendence. An integrative principle is clearly germane to this process of personal growth through ‘dialectical transcendence’. By its very nature, the ‘whole’ cannot be encompassed through entrenchment in a ‘position’ within a binary mindset, but can be approached through the progressive refinement of provisional ideas through critically receptive engagement with alternative perspectives, as in the process of dialogue, polylogue, and dialectic. Integration can also be associated in another specialist sense with ‘individuation’ in Jungian (or analytical) psychology, the transformational process of integrating the conscious with the personal and collective unconscious.

At its highest level, personal integration can be identified as a psycho-spiritual process in which the full range of human faculties (sensory, cognitive, perceptive, affective and moral) is activated and mobilised for the conscious realization of the Oneness of God (*tawhid*). The Qur’an repeatedly refers to this totality of faculties as the ‘hearing, sight and hearts’ with which the human being is endowed, and for which we have ‘cause to be grateful’ (16:78, 23:78, 46:26, 67:23). The stupendous range of our faculties encompasses all that makes us human: at the very least, the senses which enable us to learn by direct observation and experience; the language-based deliberative or rational faculties which enable us to think, inquire, analyse, define, discriminate, conceptualize, speculate, theorize, and argue (*fikr*, *‘aql*); our capacity for memory; the higher intellectual faculties of deep pondering, reflection, insight, intuition, creative imagination, and contemplation, combining mind and heart (*tafakkur*, *albab*, *basirah*); the moral faculties which provide a criterion (*furqan*) for distinguishing truth from falsehood and right from wrong, and, ultimately, the superordinate faculty of consciousness or mindfulness of God (*taqwa*). An integrated vision of human faculties does not separate the rational powers from that of empirical observation, direct experience, moral valuation and spiritual consciousness.

The Qur’an makes it clear that the transformation of society and the wider world must rest above all on personal transformation: *Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves* (13:11). The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: *He who knows himself knows his Lord*, and also (though not in the authoritative collections) to have described the greater jihad (*al-jihad al-akbar*) as the struggle against one’s lower self. The Ancient Greek aphorism ‘Know Thyself’ (*gnothi seauton*) was one of the Delphic maxims inscribed in the forecourt of the Temple of Apollo and also a guiding precept of Plato’s Academy. For Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk, writer and social activist, societal or cultural transformation is dependent, first and foremost, on personal integration and he warns of the dangers of activism which is not rooted in inner personal development:

‘Those who attempt to act and do things for others or for the world without deepening their own self-understanding, freedom, integrity and capacity to love, will not have anything to give others. They will communicate to them nothing but the contagion of their own obsessions, their aggressiveness, their ego-centered ambitions, their delusions about ends and means, their doctrinaire prejudices and ideas... We have more power at our disposal today than we have ever had, and yet we are more alienated and estranged from the inner ground of meaning and of love than we have ever been’.

In the light of the foregoing brief survey of the range of meanings of integration, it is clear that there are many possible dimensions to the development of an integrative or holistic paradigm which can be applied to education. One important question is the extent to which such a model distinguishes between the concept of ‘unification’ and that of ‘amalgamation’ or ‘combination’. This reflects, to some extent, the difference between ‘synthesis’ and ‘syncretism’ or ‘eclecticism’. If synthesis is the combination, merger, blend or fusion of two or more elements that together form a new and connected whole, syncretism can often refer to an artificial medley, concoction or conglomeration of different, discrete and often disparate ideas, beliefs, practices, or traditions. The potential incoherence and dissonance arising from a syncretic or eclectic approach has often led to its rejection in the name of piety, purity, authenticity, or orthodoxy. From this standpoint, it is seen to be a muddle or mishmash, a bogus ‘synthesis’ or hybridisation, a graft or splice from one species onto another, a cobbling together which devalues or compromises genuine distinctions, or incorporates dangerously deviant ‘innovations’. At the same time, this defence of ‘purity’ can generate, authenticate, and reinforce a sense of blinkered and uncompromising unity, which can harden into tribal partisanship (*‘asabiyyah’*), ethnocentricity, exclusivism, puritan ideology, and bigotry, whether in minority or majority communities. All too often, the **integrity** which, at its deepest level, refers to an inner condition of the soul, is reduced by religious literalists to the mere observance of external religious duties and prohibitions, by exclusivists to the belief that only one kind of observance is correct, and by cultural separatists, supremacists and colonisers to the ‘communalism’ and narrow identity politics which isolate and separate people into homogenous communities.

To address such reservations, it is important to distinguish between the processes of synthesis/integration and syncretism which can be historically observed in various domains, including religion. Overt syncretism can be identified in many religions, such as the blending of Shinto beliefs with Buddhism, but there are clearly many examples of inter-civilisational encounters which can better be described as integrative in their impact. The influence of Greek philosophy and ethics on the development of Islamic thought was profound, as was the application of Greek geometry in the development of the Proportioned Script in Islamic calligraphy. In the same way, many of the ideas of Plato and Aristotle were absorbed into Christian doctrine.

Although integration can be observed and ‘modelled’ in terms of dynamic cultural exchange and confluence, another way of looking at it is in terms of human consciousness. In describing the structural changes or transformations in human consciousness over time, and basing his conclusions on evidence from a wide-ranging study of human endeavour, the Swiss philosopher Jean Gebser has theorized that humanity is at the stage of transition from what he called 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 upheld that this moribund

structure could not simply be renewed through a return to 'values'; rather, he believed, a radical transition was needed to an 'Integral' mode of consciousness which was not fixated on competing categories and systems of thought which tend to fragment the 'whole'. This idea of a new, emergent, consciousness has taken hold in many progressive contemporary movements, both in counter-culture and increasingly in the mainstream. Richard Tarnas writes eloquently of what he sees as 'an epochal shift in the contemporary psyche' which can be discerned in 'the increasing sense of unity with the planet and all forms of nature on it, in the increasing awareness of the ecological and the growing reaction against political and corporate policies supporting the domination and exploitation of the environment, in the growing embrace of the human community, in the accelerating collapse of long-standing and ideological barriers separating the world's peoples, and in the deepening recognition of the value and necessity of partnership, pluralism, and the interplay of many perspectives'. Relationship and inter-connectedness are the hallmarks of this new mode of developing consciousness.

The word integration has taken on some problematic connotations because of its widespread and repetitive use (and misuse) in contemporary political discourse. Its absence from WILLIAMS shows how issues of integration in relation to immigrant communities and religious minorities (and especially Muslims) did not occupy such a prominent place in public discourse at the time of its publication in the mid-1970s. While integration has the underlying sense of 'unification', it also has connotations of 'incorporation' and 'homogenisation'. This creates the potential for it to be confused with 'assimilation' by which a distinctive minority identity or culture is submerged or lost by being fitted or absorbed into the dominant or mainstream national 'identity' and system of values. The etymological association of integration with 'purity' and lack of 'taint' or 'contamination' also has the potential to connect it with the disapproval and even eradication of 'alien' cultural elements which are perceived to be dissonant or not consistent with an idealized, indigenous 'way of life'. The same ambiguity tends to apply to the concept of 'social cohesion', which might refer either to a positive state of integration in which various communities blend, interact and contribute to wider society, the common good, and shared human values, or to a process akin to 'assimilation' in which minority communities are expected to conform to the imposition of a doctrinal, 'purist', mono-cultural definition of national values and 'way of life'.

This ambiguity around the term integration is reflected in the noticeable shift in emphasis in public discourse in some quarters in recent times on the themes of pluralism and national identity. Concerns about loyalty, citizenship and social cohesion have generated an ongoing critique of the long-standing model of multiculturalism ideally based on co-existence and tolerance between separate communities. This model is perhaps most strongly associated with the situation in Britain. Many influential scholars, religious leaders, politicians, policy makers, and commentators are increasingly questioning whether such a model successfully reduces friction between communities. They argue instead that, at its worst, it produces a divided society of conflicting ghettos, isolated encampments and defensive fortresses, adversarial and self-interested pressure groups, non-intersecting lives, and a Tower of Babel of mutually exclusive and incomprehensible perspectives and belief systems. This shift in perspective has come to a head in explicit statements about the failure of state multiculturalism, the need for a stronger national identity and espousal of core 'British values' to prevent 'radicalisation' and extremism, and the need for a more active 'muscular liberalism' instead of the passive 'hands-off' tolerance of recent years.

A growing critique of disconnected communities has been advanced by some prominent intellectuals, philosophers and theologians. Some characterise it not as multiculturalism, but as ‘plural monoculturalism’. Others who had previously argued that we must make space for difference now advocate the need for Britain to construct a national narrative as a basis for identity and identify shared interests among different groups. This entails a new model of citizenship based on responsibility to a society connected by the ideas of giving and belonging instead of individual rights. The building of the good society is seen as a joint enterprise bringing the distinctive gifts of different groups to a reinvigorated and integrated concept of the common good, and moving beyond an adversarial culture inhabited by distinct pressure groups. This shift in perspective is notably represented in consecutive books by Jonathan Sacks, the British Chief Rabbi, philosopher and scholar of Judaism. The titles speak for themselves: the first, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilisations* (2002), followed by *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society* (2007).

Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406 CE) recognised the equivocal nature of social bonding in his use of the term ‘*asabiyyah*’ (tribal partisanship). On the one hand, it can be a source of solidarity and social cohesion. It recognises that co-operation and community spirit are hard wired into humanity, and social organisation and community pride are necessary for civilisation to flourish. This positive sense of community also accepts that the validity of one’s own understanding and practice of universal values does not justify looking down on other ways in which such values may be realised or articulated in other communities. In its negative form, however, it is that crudely jingoistic or ethnocentric mentality which endorses tribal prejudice and parochial self-interest. We do not have to look very far in the world today to see the debilitating and even devastating outcome of exclusivism, tribalism, triumphalism, and narrow identity politics in the distortion and misappropriation of doctrines and values for cultural, ethnic, religious, national or civilisational superiority.

At the root of a balanced view of integration is the conceptualisation of ‘unity’ not as sterile or divisive ‘uniformity’, nor as a syncretic medley lacking any overarching holistic principles, but as ‘unity in multiplicity’ or ‘unity in diversity’. This implies not the mere existence of plurality but active intercultural engagement, a mutual truth-seeking encounter. In the field of education, a balanced view also directs us to be wary of the two opposing tendencies of seeing the state of education in the Muslim world either as a ‘lame duck’ or as a ‘cosy corner’. In its strong form, the ‘lame duck’ approach tends to see uncritical and subservient emulation of Western models as a panacea, as if the main criterion for ‘success’ in ‘catching up’ is global standing as defined by international ranking systems and criteria. The ‘cosy corner’ stance prefers to stick with the ‘Islamization of Knowledge’ and its application to educational philosophy and practice, setting itself apart from other traditions which it may see as contaminated by ‘secularism’ or other foreign concepts. Navigating between these two extremes, both beguiled by panaceas of one kind, follows a course which directs us to seek, respect and incorporate right knowledge wherever it is found, ‘even as far as China’ as the Prophet Muhammad advised. As Sardar has stated, ‘Islamization of Knowledge’, was ‘a product of its time and context’ which left an enduring legacy, ‘not least in articulating concerns about the dire state of Muslim thought and education, drawing attention to the Eurocentric nature of social sciences and enunciating the first principles’. But now ‘we move forward’ to articulate a fresh vision and a new model – ‘Integration of Knowledge’.

Rank

The word ‘rank’, in its sense of ‘row, line’, and hence position of seniority, came into English from Old French *ranc*, itself derived from Frankish *hring* (‘circle, ring’). The same source produced ‘range’ (set in a line), ‘arrange’, and ‘rung’ (as of a ladder).

There have been various determinants of rank or social status throughout history, including birth, class or caste membership, land ownership, and others, but in modern societies rank has generally come to be associated with occupation or merit. Social stratification still exists, however, in various guises. The leading French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, for example, has shown how, in contemporary France, one’s position in the social hierarchy is closely related to aesthetic taste in food, culture and presentation. Such stratification based on ‘taste’ is not confined, of course to the French bourgeoisie examined by Bourdieu, but may exist in some form in many societies. In English, for example, the terms ‘lowbrow’, ‘middlebrow’ and ‘highbrow’ point to a hierarchy of ‘taste’ and level of cultural preference, often in relation to music or literature. These terms are particularly suggestive, derived as they are from the pseudo-science of phrenology, which ranked intelligence according to the height of the forehead.

There is widespread interest in, and reliance on, rankings, ratings, league tables, indices, performance indicators, standardized test scores, statistics, targets, polls, and others measures, both quantitative and qualitative (including many related to comparative performance and attainment) in a host of areas of modern life. Though ‘a relatively recent phenomenon’, as Hammad Ahmed Khan points out, ‘rankings consciousness has increased considerably, congruently amplifying its influence on academia, students, parents, business leaders, and policy-makers’.

WILLIAMS included the word ‘standards’ in his book of Keywords (but not ‘rank’) and included a reference to the derogatory sense of ‘standardisation’ when applied beyond its acceptable usage in science and industry to ‘matters of mind and experience’ where it has been ‘widely resisted’. In 1976, when his book was written, ‘standardisation’ had not yet become as problematic as it has become today, especially in the field of education, and neither had the rankings culture taken off. The prevalence of ranking in our time, however, suggests that the word ‘rank’ has an important place in any contemporary list of keywords, especially one with a major focus on education. This is all the more important in view of the widely divergent views, disagreements and controversies provoked by rankings. While they may be accepted uncritically in some quarters, in others they may be seen as broadly reliable indicators even though various reservations may be held (as, for example, the selection and use of criteria and variables). At worst, they may be held in great suspicion and even derided as an unhealthy and misleading ‘obsession’.

The ‘obsession’ with **rankings** can be gauged from the fact that one website displays 526 **ranking** tables under major categories such as Future Projections, Health, Environment, Crime, Population, Education, and Economics. In the field of education they cover such things as the Best Universities, Student Performance on Reading, Science and Maths, and National IQ scores, and they also provide rankings and indices on such diverse subjects as Adherents of Major Religions, Muslim Population, Gender Equality, Happiness, and a host of others matters from Carbon Footprints to Freedom of the Press, Poverty, Prison Population, Privacy and the movement of Refugees.

One might learn, for example, from this and other websites and publications on rankings that in the field of Gender Equality, out of 130 countries listed in the *Global Gender Gap Report 2008*, 8 of the top 10 places were taken by European countries, 4 of which are Scandinavian. The USA ranked 27, and Muslim-majority countries occupied 15 of the bottom 20 places. The variables selected were economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment, health and survival. Of 156 countries ranked in one index measuring Happiness, 8 of the top 10 places were again occupied by European countries, of which 5 are Scandinavian, with Denmark and Norway taking the top two places. The USA ranked 17, and the UK 22, just below Oman and just ahead of Qatar. The top Muslim-majority country was the UAE at 14, with Malaysia ranked 56 and Turkey 77. The Index was compiled using three main types of variables to measure subjective well-being: measures of positive and negative emotions, and evaluation of life as a whole. As for Peace, the Global Peace Index, the leading measure of national peacefulness according to 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators, ranked Iceland and Denmark in the top two places in 2015 out of 162 countries. The USA was ranked 94, between Peru and Saudi Arabia, a slight improvement on its 2014 ranking of 101, between Benin and Angola.

A striking example of Misperceptions is provided by an Ipsos MORO poll widely publicized in 2014. Over 11,000 people in 14 countries were asked various questions, including ‘What percentage of people in your country are immigrants? What percentage are Muslims? and What percentage of girls aged 15 to 19 give birth each year? The fairest guesses were provided by the Swedes, with the UK in 5th place, Italy in bottom place and the USA second to bottom. For example, in response to the question about the number of Muslims, the average guess in the USA was 15% of the population, when the actual figure is 1%. As for teenage girls giving birth, the average guess in Italy was 17%, whereas the actual figure is 0.5%. In view of such wild misperceptions, it is not surprising that the poll has been appropriately subtitled ‘The Ignorance Index’.

As for the ranking of Health Care, the WHO report on World Health Systems in 191 countries reveals that in 2000 (the year this report was last produced), European countries occupied 17 of the top 20 places, with France and Italy in 1st and 2nd place. The UK was ranked 18 and the USA 37. The top Muslim-majority countries were Oman (8) and Saudi Arabia (26). According to another ranking system, in 2014 Singapore was ranked the most efficient health system out of 51 countries, with the USA in 44th place. ‘Efficiency’ was here defined to include life expectancy and health care costs per capital.

Some typical problems associated with rankings are identified by an American academic commenting on the WHO report. ‘These rankings’, he writes, ‘have been widely cited in public debates about health care, particularly by those interested in reforming the U.S. health care system’. He complains that ‘those who cite the WHO rankings typically present them as an objective measure of the relative performance of national health care systems. They are not. The WHO rankings depend crucially on a number of underlying assumptions— some of them logically incoherent, some characterized by substantial uncertainty, and some rooted in ideological beliefs and values that not everyone shares’.

The existence of logical fallacies, uncertainties, and ideological biases exposed by complaints of this kind need to be taken very seriously and could be applied to any number of ranking systems, including those purporting to measure comparative educational standards. Anyone wishing to derogate any nation can easily select a

series of tables in which it has a lowly rank, or, indeed, a high rank in a category perceived as negative. Antipathy to the United States, for example, might provoke not only the exposure of its relatively lowly ranking in various measures, but also its top position, by a huge margin, in Prison Population. According to the World Prison Brief, which details the number of prisoners in 224 countries, there are 2,228,424 prisoners in the United States, with China in second position with 1,701,344. 1 in 144 people in the USA is in prison, compared to 1 in 658 in England and Wales. Similarly, data on comparative global wealth published in 2015 expose the lofty ranking of America in inequality: only Kazakhstan, Libya, Russia, and Ukraine have worse inequality than the United States. Of the half-billion poorest adults in the world, one out of ten is an American. In other words, nearly 50 million of America's 243 million adults are part of the world's poorest 10%. In contrast, over 110 million American adults are among the world's richest 10%.

Yet, just as we should strive not to overstate perceived patterns, so we should endeavour not to deny, explain away or understate robust findings. The dominance of Scandinavian countries, for example, in the rankings in so many categories has much to say about the quality of life in those countries. In the same way, comparing the number of Muslims in prisons in France with the corresponding percentage in England and Wales doubtless points to something of significance. In France, it is estimated that 70% of the prison population are Muslim, even though Muslims account for only 8% of the French public. In England and Wales, the corresponding percentages are 14% and 5%. In both cases, Muslims are disproportionately represented in prisons, but the extraordinary number of incarcerated Muslims in France might well be seen as having something desperately important to say about endemic racism and Islamophobia in that country. The troubling position of the USA in various rankings also clearly points to issues of valid concern and it would be profoundly misleading to suggest that it is only those 'anti-American' people with axes to grind who seek to publicize them.

That said, disagreements about the validity of ranking systems, as well as the way biases might be reinforced or perceptions manipulated by selective use of data, remind us of the importance of balance as one of the guiding principles in our approach to terms and concepts. In the field of education, this means that we need to avoid not only naïve idealization and blind belief in the veracity and usefulness of rankings but also the opposite extreme of succumbing to a cynical mindset which totally rejects them, or, as is more often the case, retreating into denial. In short, we need to be aware of both pros and cons.

In the field of education, the two extremes of 'idealization' and 'denial' (or 'rejection') might be characterised as the two opposing tendencies, either to see the state of education in the Muslim world as a 'lame duck' or as a 'cosy corner'. In its strong form, the 'lame duck' approach tends to see uncritical emulation of Western models as a panacea, as if the main criterion for 'success' in 'catching up' is global standing as defined by international ranking systems and criteria'. The 'cosy corner' stance prefers to idealize the 'Islamization' of knowledge and its application to educational philosophy and practice, setting itself apart from other traditions which it may see as contaminated by 'secularism'. These two extremes, both beguiled by panaceas of one kind or another, direct us not only to the mean, in its Aristotelian sense of avoiding both excess and defect, as expounded in the Islamic ethics of Al-Ghazali (see EXCELLENCE), but also to the guiding principle of Integration by which we seek, respect and incorporate right knowledge wherever it is found, 'even as far as China' as the Prophet Muhammad advised.

Turning now to rankings in education, the OECD global school rankings based on test scores in Maths and Science at age 15 in 76 countries, reported in May 2015, place Asian countries in the top five places (Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan). The UK is ranked 20 and the USA 28, overtaken by Vietnam. The top Muslim-majority countries are Turkey (41) and UAE (45), while Oman and Morocco are ranked 72 and 73, amongst the bottom five. According to Pearson's Global Education Index, Asian countries (South Korea, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong) are also the top 4 in 'cognitive skills and educational attainment'. Of the 40 countries included, the United States ranked 14, confirming the relatively 'poor performance of the US' as noted in the OECD report.

As expected, opinion is divided as to the validity of these rankings. The writers of the report claim that the standard of education measured by such scores is a 'powerful predictor of the wealth that countries will produce in the long run', but Sir Anthony Seldon, a leading headteacher in the UK, believes they may 'do more harm than good' by 'skewing school and national education systems away from real learning towards repetitive rote learning'. The difference in opinion here is partly determined by differing conceptions of the purposes of education, whether seen in utilitarian terms as a key driver of economic growth or as the ground of 'real learning'.

A 2013 study commissioned by the Sutton Trust on international education league tables concluded that ranking performance by raw scores resulted in league tables being inconsistent, 'misleading' and 'riddled with error'. The study examined several international rankings, such as the PISA survey (maths, science and reading levels among 15-year-olds), TIMMS (performance in maths and science at ages nine to 10 and 13-14, and PIRLS (reading among 10-year-olds). While the PISA study appeared to show a decline in England's performance, the TIMMS suggested the opposite. The study also pointed out that some countries may participate in one survey but not in another, and excessive emphasis may be placed on small differences between countries' test scores. Different aspects of literacy, numeracy and science may also be tested in international surveys. The report admitted, however, that there were lessons to be drawn from the fact that some Asian countries were consistently outperforming the UK, in the same way that Chinese pupils are achieving the highest standards in UK schools (and more widely in the Western world), and concludes that there is a need 'to see whether we can learn from them so we can compete more successfully as a nation'. It advises, however, that the differences in performance indicated by comparative league tables should not necessarily be laid at the door of education systems. In the case of the 'superior performance of Asian pupils', it may be more appropriate to attribute this to 'a culture of hard work and effort', committed parental engagement, and distinctive 'personality traits' such as 'quiet persistence'.

In the case of national school league tables, research suggests that, 'for any given year, England's secondary school league tables poorly predict schools' future performances' and that 'they are unreliable and misleading guides for school choice'. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) in the UK claims that 'stark statistics cannot and do not reflect the whole work of a school', and amongst many defects, they 'perpetuate educational inequalities' and 'undermine the spirit and practice of inclusion'. According to a survey by the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) of 10,000 parents in 2009, 75% of parents believed that league tables based on Key Stage 2 tests should be abolished. They did not feel that league tables assess the quality of teaching in a school or the development of an individual child.

In the world university rankings for 2015-2016, the customary dominance of US and UK universities in the top echelon continues, although the advance of Asian universities is noticeable. In the top 25 positions in the THE, the US has 17 universities, and the UK six. In the QS rankings, there are 11 US universities in the top 25, and six again from the UK. In both tables, 9th position is occupied by ETH Zurich, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. However, it is noteworthy that in the QS rankings, two Asian universities have broken through into the top 20, both from Singapore – the National University in Singapore (NUS) in 12th place, and the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore (NTU) in 13th place. These universities were ranked 26 and 55 respectively in the THE rankings. The QS rankings also revealed strong progress for leading universities in China.

For the same year, there was no university in a Muslim-majority country in the top 250 positions in the THE rankings and none in the top 100 in QS. In QS, The best was Universiti Malaya (UM) at 146 (although it did not figure in the top 400 in THE), and the next best were two universities in Saudi Arabia – King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (199) and King Saud University (237). Ranked 394, Bilkent University was the only Turkish university in the top 400. In THE the best were both ranked in the 251-300 range – King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia, and Koç University in Turkey. Universiti Malaya did not figure in the top 400 in THE. The International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) sank to 551-550 in QS, down from 501-550 in 2013 and 2014, and 401-450 in 2012.

Commenting on the THE and QS World University rankings for 2013-2014, a background paper by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) acknowledges that there are ‘some justifiable reservations regarding these rankings’; it nevertheless concludes that ‘one could at least agree that they provide a widely recognised and largely reputable measure of the quality of education at university level’.

It is, however, vitally important to explore such ‘reservations’ in the same way as I have drawn attention to reservations about other ranking systems, ranging from health care to school league tables. For example, there has been criticism of the relative weight assigned to the various parameters used in arriving at the rankings and the one-size-fits-all standardised system of evaluation applied to universities in diverse cultures where different weighting of evaluation criteria may be more appropriate. The standing of some Indian universities, for example, rises sharply from their relatively low position in the rankings if the weighting of faculty-student ratio is decreased and reputation with employers is increased. Several statistical measurement issues have been identified in the THE rankings (2013-2014). For instance, multiple regression analyses call into question the validity of the overall rankings due to the use of overlapping and non-contributing indicators to calculate the overall ranking scores. A paper aptly entitled *The Obsession with Rankings in Tertiary Education: Implications for Public Policy* presented in 2015 by Professor Ellen Hazelkorn, Policy Advisor to the Higher Education Authority (Ireland) and Director of the Higher Education Policy Research Unit (HEPRU), emphasizes the imperative to ‘understand the limitations of rankings, and the unintended consequences’. She gives clear advice on how rankings should and should not be used. They should not be used in the following ways: ‘as a stand-alone evaluation tool’; to ‘inform policy or resource allocation decisions’; to ‘incentivise perverse behaviour by the choice of indicators’; or to ‘direct resources to a few elite universities and neglect the needs of the wider tertiary education sector and society’. Rather, rankings should be ‘aligned with national values and objectives’ and ‘have a clear purpose; they should be used to ‘recognize the diversity of higher education institutions’ and to ‘take

different missions and goals into account'. There is also a clear need to ensure that 'indicators are fit-for-purpose' and that 'outcomes' are measured in preference to 'inputs' whenever possible.

At an extraordinary meeting of ministers of higher education and scientific research from 57 countries of the OIC in Riyadh from 4-5 October, 2011, concern was expressed about some of the flaws in the world university ranking systems and the ministers urged OIC countries to review rankings critically in view of 'the growing criticism from many educationists and decision-makers around the world'. The meeting heard that key performance indicators should include not only research output but also good governance, academic freedom, adequate facilities, continued funding, quality of faculty, international collaborations, multidisciplinary programmes and socio-economic impact. The Riyadh meeting followed the 5th Islamic Conference of ministers of higher education and scientific research held in Kuala Lumpur the year before from 19-20 October 2010, which had prepared a document, 'Key performance Indicators: Guidelines for Assessment, and Quality Enhancement for Universities in the Islamic World' in order to 'reorient universities' procedures and mechanisms to best suit international standards'.

Notwithstanding all these reservations, one may still choose to agree with the thrust of the background paper by IIIT that global ranking systems still 'provide a widely recognised and largely reputable measure of the quality of education at university level'. This conclusion is reinforced in the paper by other 'depressing' data. For example, 'a series of recent reports on the Arab world by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) paints a picture of seriously underdeveloped societies at every level. In terms of higher education and knowledge development, the statistics are so damning that it would not be an exaggeration to say that they represent nothing short of national emergencies'. To illustrate this dire state of affairs, the paper looks at comparative numbers of translations and patents. According to the UNDP's Arab Human Development Report 2003, in the period 1981-1985, the Arab world translated 4.4 books per million inhabitants, as against 519 in Hungary and 920 in Spain. In the 1,000 years since the reign of the Caliph Mamoun, it concludes, the Arabs have translated as many books as Spain translates in just one year. As for inventiveness, between 1980-2000, nine Arab countries registered the combined total of 370 patents compared with 7,652 in Israel and 16,328 in South Korea. There are similarly massive discrepancies in citations in scientific journals – another important measure of knowledge production and academic output. One study found that, in 2005, Harvard University alone produced 2,000 more scientific papers than the total number produced by 17 member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (IOC). Data collected by the World Bank and UNESCO has revealed that IOC nations spent only one-seventh of the global average on scientific research from 1996-2003. This equates to 0.34 percent of their gross domestic product. Those Muslim countries also have fewer than 10 scientists, engineers, and technicians for every 1,000 people, compared with the world average of 40, and 140 for the developed world.

The findings in the UNDP report and other sources have been well publicized and paint a bleak picture of Arab societies crippled by isolation from the world of ideas, the stifling of creativity, weak or non-existent research, dormant science and technology, and an intellectually stultifying, if not necessarily repressive, political and social environment. The UNDP report adduces, in addition to a dearth of translations, low use of the internet, declining filmmaking, and a severe shortage of new writing. Book production in Arab countries was just 1.1 per cent of world production, although Arabs constitute 5 per cent of the world's population. Comparative statistics

from other sources also reveal that only 53 newspapers per 1000 citizens are published in the Arab region compared with 285 in developed nations.

Lamentations over the intellectual stagnation suggested by such figures are widely voiced and not without justification. But we might for a moment consider another unfashionable (and even dissonant) point of view, one that is not bullied or bamboozled by the insistent marshalling of comparative rankings and negative statistics. In its strong form, so as provoke the kind of dialectic which is surely needed, we might want to question whether the quality of a civilisation should be quantitatively measured by the number of books it translates, or by the number of TV channels it provides, rather than by their quality. The explosion of creativity and scholarship in the world-class universities of classical Islamic civilisation at its height cannot of course be attributed to a mere count of the number of books translated but was based as much on critical discernment and evaluation of material as it was on open-mindedness. Above all, it was based on a higher intellectual and spiritual impulse derived from the divinely revealed teachings of the Qu'ran, which, as Muhammad Asad eloquently reminds us in the Foreword to his translation, 'gave rise to that revival of Western culture which we call the Renaissance, and thus became in the course of time largely responsible for the birth of what is described as the age of science: the age in which we are now living'. And as he further explains, this dynamic impulse was not merely one of 'independent inquiry and intellectual curiosity', crucially important as that is, but reflected the Qur'anic insistence on 'consciousness and knowledge' – that is, the discernment of truth, which, at its highest level, is knowledge of God. This provokes an insistent question in relation to rankings and the extent to which they measure 'excellence', for it might well be contended that no higher civilisation is worthy of the name if it fails to distinguish between disorientated intellectual curiosity (no matter how 'open-minded', 'original' and 'creative', and no matter how many libraries of books it creates and how many translators it gainfully employs) and the intellectual endeavour, grounded in the highest ethical and spiritual values, which characterises a truly great civilisation.

Scepticism about rankings provoked by such a point of view might be reinforced by a critical look at the standing of Harvard University. For 2015-2016, Harvard was ranked in second place in QS and 6th in THE, and in the previous year in second place in THE and 4th in QS. It has a seemingly assured position amongst the top ten most prestigious universities which also include the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the California Institute of Technology, and Stanford in the USA; Cambridge, Oxford, and Imperial College London in the UK, and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich). Yet, as noted in the entry on EXCELLENCE, the perceived failure of Harvard to promote excellence in the fullest sense of the word is the subject of a trenchant critique by its former Dean, Harry Lewis, and one which applies to all higher education institutions. In his book *Excellence Without a Soul*, Lewis contends that colleges in America have forgotten that the fundamental goal of higher education is to help students to search for truth, meaning and deeper purpose, and to leave college as better human beings. In his own words: 'The old ideal of a liberal education lives on in name only. No longer does Harvard teach the things that will free the human mind and spirit'.

The subject of rankings is clearly a complex and controversial one, but in the spirit of our own stated principles, we should try to search for balance in how we draw useful implications and conclusions from the plethora of research available. To do so, we must guard against polemics driven either by one-sided advocacy or by intemperate criticism.

Hammad Ahmed Khan, referring to research by Ellen Hazelkorn, acknowledges that ‘rankings can serve an important evaluation purpose. They may also correlate with the drive for increased public transparency and accountability in an opaque system’ and ‘incentivize institutions and academics to build up their research output; in the process, the knowledge-creation positively impacts the larger society, especially in the developing countries, where the correlation between economic and research performance is often desirable’.

Nevertheless, while accepting that globalization of higher education may have necessitated the standardization of competition and the signal of comparative quality provided by rankings, ‘they have also been used by academics and policy-makers for rather narrow prescriptions for improvements’. ‘Worst of all’, he contends, ‘is the tendency to “play the rankings game” whereby Universities try to influence those variables that are only considered important for rankings without regard to the actual needs of the institution’, nor the society in which it exists. As an example, he cites the 2013 Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities which featured five Arab universities, including four from Saudi Arabia and one from Egypt. He warns that encouragement by the rankings to undertake ‘focused improvement against specific indicators’ could lead university administrations to adopt ‘possibly manipulative tactics’. He notes, for instance, that KAUST, Saudi Arabia’s graduate-level research university of science and technology, ‘has actively sought top-ranked researchers from different scientific disciplines – all on the Institute for Scientific Information’s (ISI’s) highly cited list, even on an adjunct basis, in order to boost their position in the rankings’. Such strategies may improve rankings, but ‘they hardly lead to holistic and comprehensive prescriptions to achieve diverse and indigenous excellence in universities’.

Hazelkorn is concerned that the pursuit of ‘world class excellence’ has become a mantra, but ‘the history of rankings shows us that measuring the wrong things can produce distortions and perverse actions by governments’. She warns that by focusing attention on as few as 100 universities (or less than 1% of the more than 17,000 postsecondary institutions worldwide), the rankings may prompt governments to funnel money disproportionately to those institutions jockeying for world-class eminence (usually research universities that are already well-endowed and securely established) rather than colleges that may need the money more or serve needier students. She accepts, however, that for all their flaws, rankings are unlikely to fade in importance as long as countries are concerned about how they stack up against each other.

Under the heading ‘Perverse Incentives’, Khan also criticizes the over-reliance on research capacity as a criterion for ranking. While ‘knowledge-creation and its dissemination remains one of the fundamental purposes of a university’, the prioritisation of ‘research at the expense of quality instruction’ sidelines one of its primary duties of ‘training and producing competent and responsible citizens. It negatively impacts teaching institutions and actively dis-incentivizes focus on teaching’.

Khan’s conclusion, under the heading ‘More Questions than Answers’ is worth quoting in full:

‘Universities in the Muslim world, generally, do not fare well in global university rankings. However, in some instances, such institutions have responded constructively to the challenge, seeking to improve their R&D

capacity and output, employing internationally competent faculty, improving student-faculty ratio, and upgrading university facilities. As the developing societies invest in higher education, the question stands as ever relevant: should the Western-centric education model, the one university rankings implicitly propagate, be the definition of competitiveness? Should the process of standardization be prioritized over diversity of educational vision? Does an increase in research output necessarily translate into quality research and instruction? To hand ourselves more question marks about the conventional and ideological wisdom in these matters would be the first step in improving the competitiveness of universities across the Muslim world’.

Reform

The word ‘reform’ comes from Latin *reformare* (*re-*, ‘back’, + *forma*, ‘shape’). The Latin *forma* is most likely an alteration of the Greek *morphé*, ‘form, shape’, although another possibility, according to Ayto, is that it comes from *ferire*, ‘strike’, giving the idea of ‘an impression, image or shape created by beating’. Assuming the former derivation, the Indo- European base is *merbh*, ‘shine, appear, take shape’.

WILLIAMS draws attention to ‘two latent senses’ in early usage in English: ‘to restore to its original form’, and ‘to make into a new form’. He adds that ‘in many contexts the idea of changing something for the better was deeply bound up with the idea of restoring an earlier and less corrupted condition’. The word *amend*, from Latin *emendare*, ‘to free from fault’, was often interchangeable with reform. It ‘has continued to carry implications of amending an existing state of affairs in the light of known or existing principles, and this can move towards *restoration* as often as towards *innovation*’. The religious Reformation of the 16th century had a ‘strong sense of purification and restoration’.

There is an obvious tension, an awkward but immensely creative paradox, between the two senses of ‘restoration’ and ‘innovation’, which in their most positive combined sense suggest a progressive process of constructive, contextualising change with roots in established knowledge and essential principles, intentions, or purposes. In an Islamic context, the word *maqasid* is used to refer to such foundational goals. The idea of ‘innovation’ need not be seen here as something destructively ‘revolutionary’, ideologically ‘rejectionist’, or as mere novelty, wild conjecture, or fantasy. In the same way, creativity can perhaps best be characterised not as overturning all that has gone before, but as finding new avenues of expression by extending traditional forms. The idea of ‘radical reform’ may however, carry connotations of ‘root and branch change’ (Latin *radix*, root) or decisive and even drastic departure from customary norms. In Islam, in its ultra-conservative form as Salafism, the idea of restoring pure and original principles is associated with the emulation of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions and early followers (*al salaf al-salih*, ‘the pious forefathers’). This approach also requires strict adherence to shar’iah law, full command of the methodology of *usul al-fiqh* (‘fundamentals of jurisprudence’) needed to interpret all the primary texts that have bearing on a particular question, and rejection of innovation (*bid‘ah*). Words such as ‘literalist, fundamentalist, puritanical, retrogressive or regressive’ are often used by critics of Salfism, in which the two senses of reform as ‘return to original principles’ and ‘innovation’ are clearly irreconcilable.

Many who advocate reform in relation to Islam and Muslim societies may still be wary of the idea of ‘radical reform’ suggested by the term reformation in the sense that it is used to describe the religious reformation in 16th century Europe and the extreme turbulence, violence and even civil war it engendered. The term is however openly used by scholars advocating the need for an ‘Islamic reformation’, such as Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, who argues against the use of the term ‘Islam is the solution’ (*al-islam huwa-l-hal*) to mean that ‘the entirety of life is molded into a fundamentally Islamic character’. Dismissing this as an ‘empty slogan’ used by ‘fundamentalist leaders to harness popular support for political gains’, he contrasts the ‘norms and methodological presuppositions that underlie the Islamic system’ with the ‘international secular legal system in the areas of constitutional law, criminal justice, international law and human rights’, concluding that this should be the ‘ideal norm towards which the Islamic reformation should be directed’ as opposed to the system of shari’ah law which he considers ‘deficient’ and ‘in need of reform’.

It is important to note the ‘radical’ connotation of the word reform. Parliamentary reformists in the late 18th and early 19th centuries were often stigmatised as ‘violent’, with the word ‘ardent’ commonly applied to them as ‘hot-headed zealots’. The ambiguity of the word ‘radical’ is striking in this context. We have in Britain, as in many countries, an honourable ‘radical’ tradition of progressive, reforming liberalism, social philanthropy, ethically rooted activism and legitimate dissent. This tradition has historically guided our national evolution towards a free, just and tolerant society, but ‘radical Islam’ and ‘radicalisation’ when applied to Muslims, invariably has the connotation of extremism, and even violent extremism. This is very good example of the way in which the same word can be deployed with different connotations to express either positive or negative perceptions connected to ‘identity’, group ‘superiority’, and the like.

Various terms have been used in recent times to express the perceived need for educational reform in Muslim-majority societies (see Citations below for detailed sources). In addition to the word reform, other terms include the following:

1. ‘Reconfiguration’, which like reform, has the sense of restructuring, changing the shape, remodelling. There is wide acknowledgement, for example, of the need for major structural changes in relation to governance and how to address the problems of accommodating the massive influx of students who seek to enter the tertiary system in many Muslim societies.
2. Several words expressing the sense of reinvigorating or bringing life back into stagnant or moribund systems. These include ‘revitalization’, ‘regeneration’, ‘revivification’ and ‘revival’.
3. Several words expressing the sense of creative re-evaluation, renewal, and the formation of new concepts, including ‘revision’, ‘revisioning’, ‘re-envisioning’, ‘reinventing’ and ‘re-imagining’. Of these, ‘revision’ has potentially pejorative connotations by association with ‘revisionism’, a term which may not only refer to critical re-examination of historical facts or existing historiography, including the revision of fundamental ideological premises, but may also have the negative sense of denial of facts generally accepted by mainstream historians, or (as in the case of fictional revisionism) the making of substantial alterations to the characters or environment of a story.

4. Several words expressing sweeping and comprehensive change, including ‘transformation’, ‘revolution’ and ‘reformation’, as well as phrases which include the word ‘radical’, such as ‘radical reform’, ‘radical reinventing’, etc.

Although the focus of the foregoing discussion has been largely on educational reform in Muslim societies, it cannot be emphasised enough that this need is a universal one which applies to all educational systems in all societies. All such systems require continuous re-examination in the light of properly informed analysis of the effectiveness of prior reforms and the revision and revitalization of principles in relation to the changing needs of the individual and society. For example, no one would suggest that the Education Reform Act of 1988 (applicable to England, Wales and Northern Ireland) was the last word in educational reform after the Education Act of 1944. Most, if not all, of the key reforming measures introduced by the 1988 act have been the subject of continuous debate to this day, including the National Curriculum with its prescribed programmes of study and system of levels and attainment targets in relation to Key Stages, as well as the foundation of colleges independent of local authority financial control. One highly respected critic of the way the National Curriculum has been implemented in primary schools is Robin Alexander, founder and leader of the Cambridge Primary Review Trust. This has accumulated a massive evidence base to support its emphasis on the need for a broader curriculum with increased emphasis on the arts and humanities in an educational system disproportionately focused on a narrowly prescribed curriculum with uninspiring utilitarian objectives designed to produce a conforming workforce to serve national economic development.

In relation to higher education in the ‘West’, numerous books, articles and reports regularly appear on the subject of reform. One example, a collection of papers entitled *Reform of Higher Education in Europe* published in 2011, has this as the first line of the editors’ introduction: ‘Nowhere today is higher education undergoing more substantial change than in Europe’. Furthermore, they see the aim of this process of reform as ‘to ensure long-term European pre-eminence as both a knowledge producer and transmitter’. To that end, the European Union’s Lisbon Strategy (2000) sought to ‘reform the continent’s still fragmented higher education systems’ through quality of education, research, innovation, modernisation, and appropriate governance and financial structures. Sacha Garben draws attention to the way in which reform of higher education is regarded as a priority in tackling national economic problems and driving recovery: ‘In times of economic crisis, higher education becomes a central part of the political discussions’. It is regarded as ‘a key factor in finding a way out of the crisis, and in creating a stable and competitive knowledge economy’.

The idea of reform not as the sustainer of excellence (in all its senses — practical, intellectual, moral and spiritual) but as the driver of national or cultural dominance and economic power needs of course to be rigorously questioned by all societies in the light of an educational philosophy which values the higher purposes of higher education (see EXCELLENCE). It perhaps raises particularly pressing issues for Muslim societies, given the intellectual stagnation responsible for the current dearth in the production of original knowledge. As Abdelwahab Al-Effendi points out, if Muslims still have values to uphold, they nevertheless ‘do not have that 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’. But, as Sardar elaborates, ‘it was not simply worldly knowledge that evaporated from Muslim societies’, for ‘the decline of great Muslim educational institutions also eroded the appreciation of

Muslim heritage and legacy, and led to the erosion of Muslim norms and values, and the perversion of religious knowledge'. While higher education institutions have, as Al-Affendi contends, 'a central role to play in ensuring that the production of knowledge does not become divorced from the higher values of society', there is a need to take heed of both sides of the equation in the dictum of John Philips that 'though goodness without knowledge is weak and feeble, yet knowledge without goodness is dangerous'. The emphasis here might be usefully inverted so as to demonstrate the impotence of values without knowledge: 'though knowledge without goodness is dangerous, yet goodness without knowledge is weak and feeble. As Sardar puts it, 'we need to admit that our spiritual values cannot survive without the power to protect our societies from subjugation', which means we need to achieve a degree of excellence in contemporary knowledge.

CITATIONS

General

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Introduction

On the etymology of the word 'Babel', AYTÖ points out that that 'the word has no etymological connection with language or noise. The original Assyrian *bāb-ilu* meant 'gate of god' and this was borrowed into Hebrew as *bābel*'. The later Greek version of the name is *Babylon*. Popular etymology, however, links the word to a similar Hebrew root *balal*, 'confusion' or 'mixing'. Chambers *Dictionary of Etymology* observes that the English word *babble*, which folk etymology has connected with Babel and thus probably influenced its sense of 'meaningless or confusing chatter or prattle', does have a direct connection with language, in that 'the various forms of this word in Indo-European languages are all probably formed on the repeated syllables *ba*, *ba*, or *bar*, *bar*, sounds typically made by infants and used to express childish prattle'. 'Adam to *Confusio Linguarum*' is the title of the first chapter of Umberto Eco's *The Search for the Perfect Language*, translated by James Fentress (Fontana Press, London, 1997). His quotation from Jürgen Trabant is *from Apeliotes, oder der Sinn der Sprache* (Fink, Munich, 1986).

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Edward William Lane's monumental *Arabic-English Lexicon* was first published in 1863 by Williams and Norgate, London.

On the Proportioned Script of Ibn Muqla see Ahmed Moustafa and Stefan Sperl, *The Cosmic Script: Sacred Geometry and the Science of Arabic Penmanship* (Thames and Hudson, London, 2014), and Jeremy Henzell-Thomas's Epilogue to this work (pages 626-659). Muhammad 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.

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For a detailed study of 'aql, see Karim Douglas Crow, 'Between wisdom and reason: Aspects of 'aql (Mind-Cognition) in Early Islam', *Islamica* 3:1 (1999), 49-64.

For Al-Niffari's reflections on the 'letter', see *The Mawaqif and Mukhatabat of Muhammad Ibn 'Abdi 'l-Jabbar al-Niffari*, translated and edited by A. J. Arberry (CUP, Cambridge, 1935), 111-116. Ibn 'Arabi's concept of continually unfolding implications is from the chapter of *al-Futuhat al-Makkiyyah* concerning 'the people of spiritual bewilderment' (*hayrah*) translated by James Winston Morris in his *The Reflective Heart: Discovering Spiritual Intelligence in Ibn 'Arabi's Meccan Illuminations* (Fons Vitae, Lousville, 2005), 81.

For Ziauddin Sardar's thoughts on causal layered analysis (CLA) and discourse analysis see his *Future* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 2013), 97-101. See the same chapter for his thoughts on Orientalism, and for a more detailed discussion, his *Orientalism* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1999). His thoughts on the purpose and form of a glossary to shape a new discourse are set out in 'Reinventing Ourselves: From Islamization of Knowledge to Integration of Knowledge'. As he explains in that paper, its function is 'to synthesise our extensive deliberations on reform of higher education in the Muslim world; and present a more coherent picture of our arguments and positions. I have used various papers presented at meetings (including those by Abdelwahab El-Affendi, Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, Anwar Ibrahim, Abdulkader Tayob, and Abdulaziz Sachedina), commentaries on papers, our discussions on e-mail, and supplementary conversations as my raw material. Of course, the synthesis is infused with my own arguments, critique and perspective, as one would expect. Finally, I have tried to integrate various recommendations and suggestions into an overall framework that moves the project forward in a contemporary and meaningful way'.

The quotations from Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum* (1620) are largely from Aphorism LIX. An accessible version of Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum* (1620) is the one translated and edited by Peter Urbach and John Gibson (Open Court, Chicago & La Salle, Illinois, 1994). I also consulted Manly P. Hall, 'The Four Idols of Francis Bacon & The New Instrument of Knowledge' at <http://www.sirbacon.org/links/4idols.htm> (accessed 18/6/15) and the Wikipedia entry on *Idola fori* ('Idols of the Marketplace') at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idola_fori (accessed 19/6/15). *The Four Idols* (from *Novum Organum*) appears in James D. Lester (ed.), *Plato's Heirs: Classic Essays* (NTC Publishing Group, Lincolnwood, 1996), 53-63. Bacon's *Meditationes Sacrae* (1597) can be read in a facsimile edition published by Kessinger Publishing Co., 1996 and 2010. I have referred to <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ir/art/ibn%20rushd-rep.htm> (accessed 3/7/15) for Ibn Rushd's views on language. The reference to Ivanov's point about the richness of linguistic diversity is from Vja eslav Ivanov, 'Reconstructing the Past', *Intercom* 15:1 (1992), 1-4.

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On narrative fallacies, see Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable* (New York: Random House, 2007) and Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 199.

Costas Gabrielatos's analysis of collocations in the field of corpus linguistics was included in his keynote lecture at the Postgraduate Symposium on Muslims in the UK and Europe at the Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge, 17 May 2014. For a critical analysis of Dinesh D'Souza's *The End of Racism* (The Free Press, 1995) see Teun A. Van Dijk, *News as Discourse* (Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, N.J., 1988).

Jean Gebser's description of structural changes in human consciousness is set out in his *The Ever-Present Origin*, authorised translation by Noel Barstad with Algis Mickunas (University of Ohio Press, Athens, 1985). For further discussion of Gebser's work, see the entries on INTEGRATION.

For Al-Ghazali's exposition of Islamic ethics based on the Golden Mean, see Tim Winter's translation of Books XXII and XXIII of Al-Ghazali's *Ihya 'ulum al-din* (*Revival of the Religious Sciences*): *Kitab Riyadat al-nafts*, 'On Disciplining the Soul', and *Kitab Kasr al-shahwatayn*, 'On Breaking the Two Desires' (Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge, 1995), 21-22. 'Alija 'Ali Izetbegovic's discusses the 'middle way' with reference to Roger Bacon in his *Islam Between East and West* (American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, 1994), 271-286.

The distinction between 'freedom' and 'liberty' was made in a letter to *The Independent* on 10 August, 2004, by Professor Bert Hornback (now Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Michigan). The misuse of the term 'relativism'

is highlighted by Jacques Barzun in his monumental survey *From Dawn to Decadence. 1500 to the Present: 500 Years of Western Civilisation* (HarperCollins, London, 2001), 760-61. Diana Eck's remarks about relativism, pluralism and tolerance are from her *Encountering God* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1993), 192-198. For the application of Rumi's insights to educational reform, see Abdulkader Tayob, 'Reforming Self and Other', *Critical Muslim* 15 (2015). For the distinction between ideological and procedural secularism see successive reports by the Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge: *Contextualising Islam in Britain: Exploratory Perspectives* (2009), 28, and *Contextualising Islam in Britain II* (2012), 94. Martin Luther's ideas on liberty of conscience are from his *On Secular Authority: To What Extent It Should be Obeyed* (1523). The hidden curriculum of secular ideology embedded in the education system is discussed in G. G. Grace, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality* (Routledge-Falmer, London, 2002), 14.

Education

The following works have been referred to in this entry:

WILLIAMS, 109-110; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (Kegan Paul International, London, 1987), 123; Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *The Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1979) and *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education* (ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1999), 12-32; Rosnani Hashim, 'Islamization of the Curriculum', *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 16:2 (1999); Aref T. M. Atari, 'Christian Service-Stewardship and Islamic Khalifah: Emerging models in educational administration', *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 17:2 (2000), 29 ff.; Roland S. Barth, *Learning by Heart* (Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2001), 49-50; John Taylor Gatto, *Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling*, (New Society Publishers, 1992); Neil Postman, *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School* (Vintage Books, New York, 1996); *Contextualising Islam in Britain II* (report by the Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge, 2012), 81-83; Harry Lewis, *Excellence Without A Soul: Does Liberal Education Have a Future?* (PublicAffairs, 2007) and Derek Melleby's review on the CPYU (Center for Parent/Youth Understanding) website; R. Barnett, *The Idea of Higher Education* (Buckingham: Open University Press and SRHE, 1990), 155; David Orr, 'The Learning Curve', *Resurgence*, 22, 2004, quoted in Pamela Mang, 'What is Education For?' *Independent School* (Journal of the National Association of Independent Schools), *Connecting Learning with Sustainable Living*, Spring 2005, accessed on 15/2/16 at http://regenesisgroup.com/wpcontent/uploads/2015/02/Independent_School.pdf; Imam Dr. Zijad Delic, 'The Role of Education in Islam for Individuals and Society', accessed on 15/2/16 at <http://www.saowt.com/forum/showthread.php?t=29505>; S. Ashraf, 'The role of Muslim youth in a multi-religious society', *Muslim Educational Quarterly* 11, 1:3 (1993), 3-13.

On the misleading dichotomy between religious and secular education, see Abdullah Sahin, 'The Contribution of Religious Education to Social and Community Cohesion; an Islamic Educational Perspective', in Michael Grimmitt (ed.), *Religious Education and Social and Community Cohesion* (McCrimmon Press, Grate Wakering, 2010), 166.

Imam Delic's quote from Wendell Berry does not identify the precise source, only indicating the date (1992).

On 'intellectual virtues', see Barry Schwartz, 'What 'Learning How to Think' Really Means', *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 2015. <http://chronicle.com/article/What-Learning-How-to-Think/230965> summarized in 'Learning to Think – A Virtue Approach' in the Daily Nous, <http://dailynous.com/2015/06/18/learning-to-think-a-virtue-approach/> (accessed 19/9/15). See also Robert Fisher, *Teaching Thinking: Philosophical Enquiry in the Classroom* (Continuum, London, 1998). 'The 50 Characteristics of an Educated Person' were accessed on 16/2/16 at <http://daringtolivefully.com/educated-person>

Excellence

The distinction between professionalism and excellence was made by Jeremy Henzell-Thomas in a keynote address entitled 'Islam and Human Excellence' at Goldman Sachs, London, 30 September 2010. Goldman Sachs's business principles can be accessed at <http://www.goldmansachs.com/who-we-are/business-standards/business-principles/index.html>. Greg Smith's statement on why he resigned from the company was reported in the *New York Times* on 14 March, 2012 and can be accessed at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/14/opinion/why-i-am-leaving-goldman-sachs.html?_r=0

On the weakening and 'bleaching' of the term 'excellence in educational discourse, see Kathryn L. Allan, 'Excellence: A New Keyword for Education?' *Critical Quarterly*, 49/1 (Spring 2007), 54-78. The author's pre-final copy of this article can be accessed at <http://keywords.pitt.edu/pdfs/excellence.pdf>. See also <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8705.2007.00749.x/abstract>. See also B. Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA., 1996), 39, and L. Morley, 'The Micropolitics of Quality', *Critical Quarterly* 47:1-2 (2005), 84.

As noted in AHD, 39, there are six distinct hypothetical *kel-* bases in Indo-European, of which the base with the meaning of 'be prominent' is listed as the fourth type (*kel-IV*). For the reference to *colonel* see the entry for *kel-IV* in SHIPLEY, 165.

On the changing meanings of the word 'elite', see the entry for this word in WILLIAMS, 110.

On the Greek word *areté* I have found useful material in Andrew Lawless, *Plato's Sun: An Introduction to Philosophy* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2005), and Michael Pakaluk, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5. On Odysseus's shrewdness, see Jeffrey Barnouw, *Odysseus, Hero of Practical Intelligence: Deliberation and Signs in Homer's Odyssey* (University Press of America Inc., Lanham, Maryland, 2004), 250.

On the concepts of *junzi* and *ren* in Confucian ethics, see David Wong, 'Chinese Ethics', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2013 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-chinese/>

On virtues included in the New Testament, see Allen Verhey, *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1984), 141.

On the balance between ‘knowledge and goodness’, see Charles L. Terry, ‘Moral Education’, in *Respecting the Pupil: Essays on Teaching Able Students*, edited by Donald B. Cole and Robert H. Cornell (Phillips Exeter Academy Press, Exeter, N.H., 1981), 112-113.

For Harry Lewis’s critique of Harvard College, see *Excellence Without A Soul: Does Liberal Education Have a Future?* (PublicAffairs, 2007) and the review by Derek Melleby on the CPYU (Center for Parent/Youth Understanding) website. See also Abdelwahab El-Affendi, ‘The Reconfiguration of Muslim Higher Education: Some Points for Reflection’, a paper circulated for discussion in 2014 amongst participants in the ‘Integration of Knowledge’ project.

The vision of higher education articulated by the Oxford University Institute for the Advancement of University Learning can be accessed at http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/media/global/wwwadminoxacuk/localsites/oxfordlearninginstitute/documents/supportresources/lecturersteachingstaff/resources/resources/Higher_Education_and_Higher_Learning.pdf. On the purposes of higher education, see also R. Barnett, *The Idea of Higher Education* (Buckingham: Open University Press and SRHE, 1990), 155, and Richard Pring, *The Changing Nature of Universities: economic relevance, social inclusion or personal excellence?* at <http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/iaul/ProfPring.pdf>.

Integration

On integration as a guiding principle in educational reform, see Ziauddin Sardar’s synthesis paper, ‘Reinventing Ourselves: From Islamization of Knowledge to Integration of Knowledge’ circulated prior to the conference on educational reform in Istanbul in March 2016. See also Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, ‘The Integration We Seek’, Introduction to *Critical Muslim 15, Educational Reform*, July-September 2015.

On Maslow’s ‘hierarchy of needs’, see A.H. Maslow, *A Theory of Human Motivation. Psychological Review*, 50:4 (1943), 370-96. On the process of individuation in analytical psychology, see the works of C. G. Jung, e.g. *Symbols of Transformation: An analysis of the prelude to a case of schizophrenia*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Harper & Brothers, New York) 301, 433.

Thomas Merton’s reflections on healthy activism are expressed in his *Seeds*, selected and edited by Robert Inchausti (Shambhala Publications, Boston, MA., 2002), 131, originally published in *Contemplation in a World of Action* (Doubleday, Garden City, NY., 197), 164.

Jean Gebser’s description of structural changes in human consciousness is set out in his *The Ever-Present Origin*, authorised translation by Noel Barstad with Algis Mickunas (University of Ohio Press, Athens, 1985). On the emergent ‘holistic’ consciousness, see Richard Tarnas’s Epilogue to his *The Passion of the Western Mind* (Pimlico, London, 1996), 442-443. See also Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, ‘Listen to the Feminine’, *emel Magazine*, May 2006.

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On the shift in emphasis from respect for ‘difference’ to the need for a ‘shared narrative’, see Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilisations* (Continuum, London, 2002) and *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society* (Continuum, London, 2007).

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Rank

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On ranking of Happiness, see *Sustainable Development Solutions Network* (a UN global initiative), 2010-2012.

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On ranking of Health Care Efficiency, see <http://www.bloomberg.com/infographics/2014-09-15/most-efficient-health-care-around-the-world.html> (accessed 13/10/15).

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The study on international education league tables commissioned by the Sutton Trust was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* on 1 Feb, 2013. See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/9841599/International-education-league-tables-are-misleading.html>

On the high achievement of Chinese pupils in Western schools, see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-29544986> and <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/feb/07/chinese-children-school-do-well> (accessed 15/10/14).

On the limitations of school league tables, see George Leckie and Harvey Goldstein, ‘A note on “The limitations of school league tables to inform school choice”’, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 174, Part 3 (2011), 833–836. <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/cmm/migrated/documents/predicting-vaeffects>. See also various press releases on the website of the UK National Union of Teachers at www.teachers.org, e.g. <http://www.teachers.org.uk/node/23198>

The QS and THE World University Rankings for 2013-2014 were referred to in *The Reform of Higher Education in Muslim Societies*, background paper for the symposium organised by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT, Herndon VA), Wilson Centre, Washington D.C., 9-10 December, 2013. See <http://iiit.org/NewsEvents/News/tabid/62/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/341/Default.asp>

On controversial and misleading aspects of world university rankings, see S. Kaycheng, ‘Multicollinearity and indicator redundancy problem in world university rankings: An example using Times Higher Education World University 2013-2014 data’. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 69 (2015), 158-174, (see <http://www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/CollegeRankings/CounselorsCorner/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=63>). See also various publications by Ellen Hazelkorn, including *Rankings and the Reshaping of Higher Education: The Battle for World Class Excellence*, Palgrave MacMillan. 2011), 6; ‘Striving for World Class Excellence: Rankings and Emerging Societies’, in Daniel Araya and Peter Marber (eds.), *Higher Education in the Global*

Age: Policy, Practice and Promise in Emerging Societies, Routledge Studies in Emerging Societies (Routledge, New York, NY, 2014), 246-270; and 'The Obsession with Rankings in Tertiary Education: Implications for Public Policy', Council for Higher Education Accreditation's international forum, Washington, D.C., January 2015 (https://hepru.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/the-obsession-with-rankings-in-tertiary-education_wb_0115.pdf). Her paper is reviewed by Doug Lederman, 'You Think We're Rankings-Obsessed?', *Inside Higher Ed*, 1 Feb 2010 at <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2010/02/01/rankings>

The OIC meeting in Riyadh from 4-5 October 2011 was reported in *University World News*, 8 October 2011, Issue No.192. See <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20111008144624430&query=muslim>

The Arab Human Development Report 2003 can be accessed at http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/rbas_ahdr2003_en.pdf

On the dearth of scientific research and publications in the Arab world, see Steve Paulson, 'Does Islam stand against science?' *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 24 June 2011 (http://chronicle.com/article/Does-Islam-Stand-Against/127924/?sid=cr&utm_source=cr&utm_medium=en). This article reviews a symposium on Islam and science at the University of Cambridge, sponsored by the Templeton-Cambridge Journalism Programme in Science & Religion, in May 2011.

Reform

On the various senses of the word 'reform', see Williams, 258-260.

Examples of the use of the word 'reform' in relation to Muslim societies include:

1. *The Reform of Higher Education in Muslim Societies*, a symposium organised by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT, Herndon VA), Wilson Centre, Washington D.C., 9-10 December, 2013. See <http://iiit.org/NewsEvents/News/tabid/62/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/341/Default.asp>
2. The U.S.-Islamic World Forum paper 'Higher Education Reform in the Arab World' (the third of the five working group papers from the 2011 forum, an annual forum co-convened by the Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World and the State of Qatar). This forum, drawing together educators, specialists, and public sector officials from the US and the Middle East, focused on three key challenges: Quality, Governance, and Educational Outcomes and Development. See <http://www.brookings.edu/t/media/research/files/papers/2011/8/education%20reform%20>
3. The conference on *Reforms in Islamic Education* held at the Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge, 9-10 April, 2011. A 49-page report on this conference by Paul Anderson, Charlene Tan and Yasir Suleiman can be accessed at http://www.cis.cam.ac.uk/assets/media/report_-_reforms_in_islamic_education_fv.pdf

On the need for an Islamic 'reformation', see Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights and International Law* (Syracuse University Press, 1996). See also the review of this work by Abdulaziz

Sachedina in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 25:1 (Feb., 1993), 155-157, accessible in part at http://www.jstor.org/stable/164182?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

The term 'reconfiguration' is used by Abdelwahab El-Affendi in 'The Reconfiguration of Muslim Higher Education: Some Points for Reflection', a paper circulated for discussion amongst a group convened by IIIT to conceptualise the issues and the way forward in the reform of education in Muslim societies.

The term 'revitalization' is used in AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman's occasional paper 'Revitalizing Higher Education in the Muslim World' (IIIT, Feb 2007) and in subsequent papers by the same author.

The term 'revivification' is used by Anwar Ibrahim in the IIIT Symposium, 2013, op.cit.

The term 'revision' is used in the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Arab Human Development Report (2002) which called for a 'radical revision of education systems in the Arab world' and 'a program for education reform at the pan-Arab level'.

The term 're-envisioning' is used in 'Re-envisioning the Future: Democratic Citizenship Education and Islamic Education', a paper presented by Professor Paul Smeyers (Ghent University and K.U. Leuven) at the annual conference of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain at New College Oxford, 30 March-1 April, 2012; see also 'Women Imams: Re-envisioning Islamic Leadership', article of March 12, 2013, accessed at <http://www.islawmix.org/women-imams-re-envisioning-islamic-leadership/>

The term 'reinventing' is used in *Reinventing Higher Education*, the title of an international conference in Madrid in October 2012. According to Dr Mahmoud Ezzamel, professorial fellow at Cardiff University, who spoke at the conference, higher education in Muslim countries needs a 'radical reinventing'.

The term 'transformation' is used in an article in AMIDEAST Impact Newsletter of April 2011 stating that 'higher education reform is central to the eventual success of the social, political, and economic transformation underway in the [Arab] region today and must be made a priority'. (See <http://www.amideast.org/news-resources/announcements/us-islamic-world-forum-considers-challenges-facing-arab-higher-education>). See also the Templeton Lecture on Religion and World Affairs entitled 'The Coming Transformation of the Muslim World' delivered on 9 June, 1999 by Dale F. Eickelman, Professor of Anthropology and Human Relations at Dartmouth College (<http://www.fpri.org/articles/1999/08/coming-transformation-muslim-world>).

The term 'revolution' is used in an article describing how Saudi Arabia is 'joining the international scientific and higher education revolution'. See Wagdy Sawahel, 'Rapid progress in developing higher education', *University World News*, 4 May, 2013 (<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=201305031245392>).

For the Cambridge Primary Review Trust, see <http://cprtrust.org.uk/>

On the reform of higher education in Europe, see J. Enders, H.F. de Boer, and D.F. Westerheijden (eds.), *Reform of Higher Education in Europe* (Sense Publishers,

Rotterdam, 2011). See also Sacha Garben, *The Future of Higher Education in Europe: The Case for a Stronger Base in EU Law*, LSE ‘Europe in Question’ Paper Series, No. 50 (2012), 1.

On John Phillips’ dictum on the need for both knowledge and goodness, see the entry on EXCELLENCE.



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Conference, Symposium, and Panel Reports

Reform of Education in Muslim Societies

The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), in partnership with Istanbul University's Faculty of Theology, organized the Reform of Education in Muslim Societies conference on March 18-19, 2016, in Istanbul, Turkey. The conference opened with memorial lectures by Hisham Altalib (vice president, IIIT) and Fathi Malkawi (regional director, Arab World) for Jamal Barz-inji (d. 2015) and Shaykh Taha Jabir Al-Alwani (d. 2016), respectively. This session was moderated by Yaqub Mirza (president and CEO, Sterling Management Group, Inc.).

Session I: Contemporary Ethics of Islam

Ziauddin Sardar (chair, Muslim Institute, London) began his "Education Reform: From Islamisation of Knowledge to Integration of Knowledge" by relaying three remarks from the imprisoned Anwar Ibrahim, a main force behind the education reform project: (1) the crisis of education is universal, (2) Muslims should confidently engage with the West on equal terms, and (3) the discussion of reforming education needs to involve all of society. The crux of his paper was the shift from the "Islamization of Knowledge" to the "Integration of Knowledge." Contending that western disciplines are inherently biased toward western values and cultures because they are socially constructed and reflect their originators' worldview, he said that the best way to progress is to launch "a multigenerational project" to integrate the best of both cultures.

Abdelwahab El-Affendi (head, Political Science Department, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Qatar) spoke on the "Obstacles Facing Education Reform." He pointed out that Muslims send their children to very expensive international schools that conduct their classes in English and teach western values. We cannot teach "our children texts in English and French and hope [that] someday they will produce material in Arabic," he proclaimed.

Jeremy Henzell-Thomas (Centre of Islamic Studies, Cambridge University) discussed his "Towards an Expanded Glossary of Key Terms." Citing the need for a common understanding of modern terms and concepts, he remarked that our recognition of various types of intelligences and ways of

thought compels us to focus on developing creative and critical thinking skills among all students and to realize that such efforts must be rooted in core Islamic concepts yet go beyond the “cozy coma of isolation and the lame duck mentality of playing endless catch-up with the West.”

Murteza Bedir (dean, Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University) moderated.

Session II: Higher Education in the Muslim World

M. Kamal Hassan (former rector, International Islamic University Malaysia [IIUM]), shared his experiences in “Islamisation of Human Knowledge as Understood in the Context of IIUM.” He explained that IIUM has been conducting “integration in our own way”: being flexible in terms of curriculum development, sometimes taking a comparative, harmonization (between civil law and the Islamic legal system), complementarization (requiring students to take Islamic studies classes along with their professional coursework), or non-integration coexistence (teaching Islamic and western courses separately) approach. He emphasized that “Islamization” had always meant “integration,” and thus it is not necessary to drop the former.

Mbaye Lo (assistant professor, Practice of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, Duke University) presented “Muslim University Models in the 21st Century.” After surveying African and Arab Islamic higher educational institutions and explaining how and why they were established, he concentrated on the Islamic Revival Movement during the 1980s and the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) approach. He pointed out that two-thirds of the universities in the Middle East are private, that most of them are branches of western institutions, and that the people of the region habitually blame all of their problems on external sources, which is indicative of their own lack of critical thinking and multiculturalism.

Sari Hanafi (professor and chair, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Media Studies, American University of Beirut) spoke on “The Janus-like Face of Higher Education and Research in the Arab World,” in which he made a strong case for producing “visible” knowledge. He declared that “Arab knowledge is invisible” because the Arab world has no research portal and the most cited researchers are westerners – “tourists” in the Arab world – because they are producing “visible” knowledge.

Recep Kaymakcan (professor of religious education, Sakarya University), Ismail Demirezen (member, Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University), and Alpaslan Durmus (PhD student, Marmara University) commented. Abubaker Al-Shingieti (executive director, IIIT USA) moderated.

Mahmut Ak (president, Istanbul University) welcomed IIIT and its conference participants during the dinner session and gave a brief talk on the uni-

versity. Altalib reciprocated by thanking him and his colleagues for hosting IIIT and for partnering with the institute to organize the event.

Session III: Islamic Legacy in Education

Marodsilton Muborakshoeva (lecturer, Department of Graduate Studies, Institute of Ismaili Studies) spoke on “Challenges in Higher Education and the Role of Muslim Cultures and Civilizations in Developing a New Paradigm in Education.” After stressing that handed-down oral knowledge should not be discounted and that western methodologies need to be understood, she suggested that Muslims avoid attaching “Islamic” to everything, that contemporary scholars re-learn how classical-era scholars reconciled reason with revelation, and that such a holistic approach to knowledge helps create well-rounded individuals and permits diverse educational methodologies.

Mehmet Pacaci’s (Ambassador of the Turkish Republic to the Holy See) “Can Muslim Higher Education have a True Goal?” questioned why Muslims could establish such great schools, universities, and madrassas in the past but not today. He contended that those societies’ ultimate goal was to govern themselves according to Islam’s principles, and thus individuals qualified to hold the necessary positions had to be produced. According to him, this is no longer the case because the modern nation-state is secular in nature.

Fathi Malkawi and Selim Argun (member, Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University) served as discussants. Ermin Sinanović (director, Research and Academic Programs, IIIT USA) moderated.

Session IV: Future of Higher Education

Keri Facer (professor, Educational and Social Futures, University of Bristol, UK), was unable to attend. John Sweeney (deputy director, Center for Post-normal Policy and Futures Studies, East-West University, Chicago) presented her paper: “Reimagining Higher Education.” In it, she outlined her Connected Communities project and discussed the four models of integration: divide and conquer, relational expertise, remaking identities, and colonization and confusion. He remarked that “none are preferred, but serve as provocation for integration of knowledge. The aim is to disrupt assumptions, ask new questions, and generate ‘strategic knowledge.’”

Recep Senturk (director general and dean of graduate studies, the Alliance of Civilizations Institute, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Istanbul) presented “How to Overcome Intellectual Dependency in Education.” He declared that the Muslims are so reliant on the West for “theories, concepts, and methodologies” that they are producing practically no university texts. “That means we’re not using our minds to address our issues,” he exclaimed.

Amaarah DeCuir (adjunct professor, George Washington University and Northern Virginia Community College) presented her research paper “Our Place at the Table: Women’s Roles in Higher Education in the Muslim World.” She focused on two key elements: (1) applying a critical feminist lens to look at power structures that can explain why women’s realities should be defined by women and how realities of women’s lived experiences can stand on their own, and (2) the influence of Alice Eagly’s social role theories, particularly women’s communal attributes. Stating that women are wholly underrepresented in Muslim higher education and exploring why this is the case, she closed by making several recommendations.

Jan Arminio (director, Higher Education Program, George Mason University), Ovamir Anjum (Imam Khattab Endowed Chair of Islamic Studies, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Toledo), and Ahmet Temel (faculty member, Department of Islamic Law, Istanbul University) served as discussants. Ismail Latif Hacinebioglu (faculty member, Istanbul University) moderated.

Due to his inability to attend, Bekir Karliga’s (senior advisor to the Turkish prime minister on the Alliance of Civilizations) keynote address was read aloud by his assistant, Cuneyt Ozpilavci, at lunch. In it, he stated that the Islamic world is suffering from an ongoing “mindset problem” in the political, social, cultural, and economic spheres. After tracing its origins, he remarked that the only solution is to undertake a radical educational reform. But according to him, Muslims have neither taken this matter seriously nor are they willing to invest the hard work and the necessary time. These are the real roots of the problem.

Session 5: Dominant Paradigms in Higher Education

Martin Rose (officer of the British Council; visiting fellow, the Waleed bin Talal Center for Islamic Studies at Cambridge), who was unable to attend, sent a recorded presentation of his paper, “Universities, the Job-Market, and the Jihad.” In it, he made the following points: (1) Recent research shows that about 44% of MENA’s “jihadis” are engineers and that very few come from the social sciences and humanities, with the exception of Islamic studies; (2) unemployment is often connected with radicalization, although “unemployment is low for engineers and high for social scientists”; and (3) that whereas questioning and opinions are encouraged in the social sciences and humanities, engineering and the scientific disciplines are more matters of fact and thus given to “black and white” thought processes.

Timothy Reagan (dean, College of Education and Human Development, University of Maine (Orono), shared his research in a paper entitled “Islam

and the Challenge of Language in Education.” A linguist with a strong interest in education and epistemology, he stated that language plays multiple, essential roles, including the means through which we learn about and conceptualize the world around us; however, it is not neutral. After discussing the concept of whether language determines or merely influences thought, he mentioned the fact that all attempted translations of the Qur’an are considered as no more than “interpretations” speaks to the “powerful and unusual place of the Qur’an among other sacred literature.”

Henzell-Thomas, Deborah Boehm-Davis (dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences; professor of psychology, George Mason University), and Hamit Er (professor, Department of Religious Education, Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University) served as discussants. Aydin Topaloglu (member, Faculty of Theology, Philosophy, and Religious Studies, Istanbul University) moderated.

Session VI: Discussion and Recommendations

In the interest of time, this two-part session was condensed into one. It was co-chaired by Iqbal Unus (coordinator, Reform of Education Project, IIIT US) and Ermin Sinanović. Among the recommendations were the need to create an inventory of reforms in education worldwide to track successes and failures, create intellectual capital, produce knowledge, resurrect the Muslim Education journal, ensure that all participants share the same vision, evaluate what has been done so far, include female academics and students, and undertake translation projects.

After these scholars finished, Omar Kasule (secretary general, IIIT) delivered concluding remarks. He recalled how important this project was to “our departed leader, Jamal Barzinji” and thanked all of the individuals and teams that worked on the conference, as well as the presenters and discussants. He reiterated IIIT’s vision and commitment to the ummah’s renewal via education and reform.

Anas al-Shaikh Ali (director, IIIT London Office) and Hisham Altalib thanked and recognized individuals from Istanbul University’s Faculty of Theology, Turkish and British colleagues, and the IIIT UK, Turkey, and US teams. On behalf of Istanbul University, Bedir and Recep Guloglu (vice president, Istanbul University) offered tokens of appreciation to Ali and Unus. The exchange of gifts and souvenirs signaled the end of the conference.

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Photos







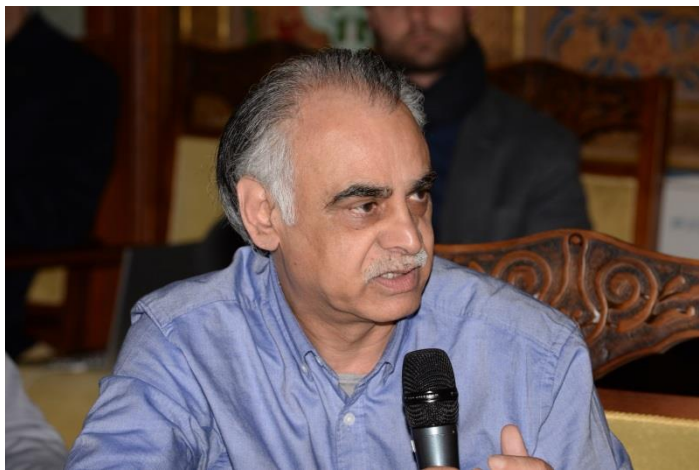


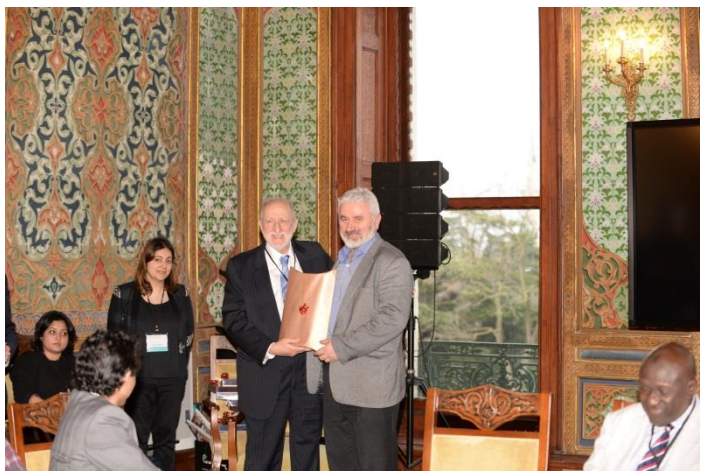


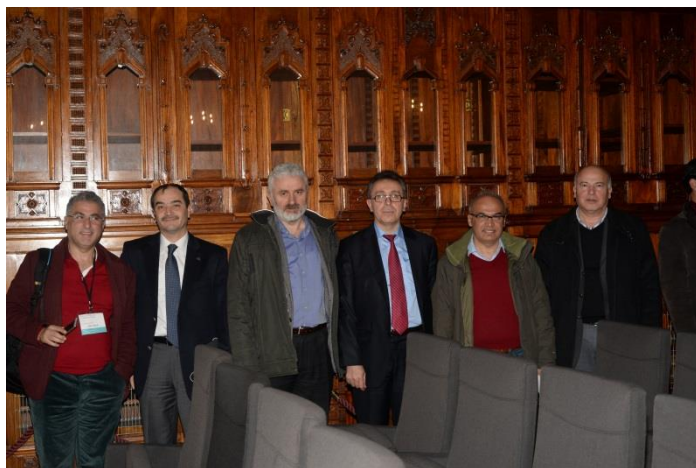














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