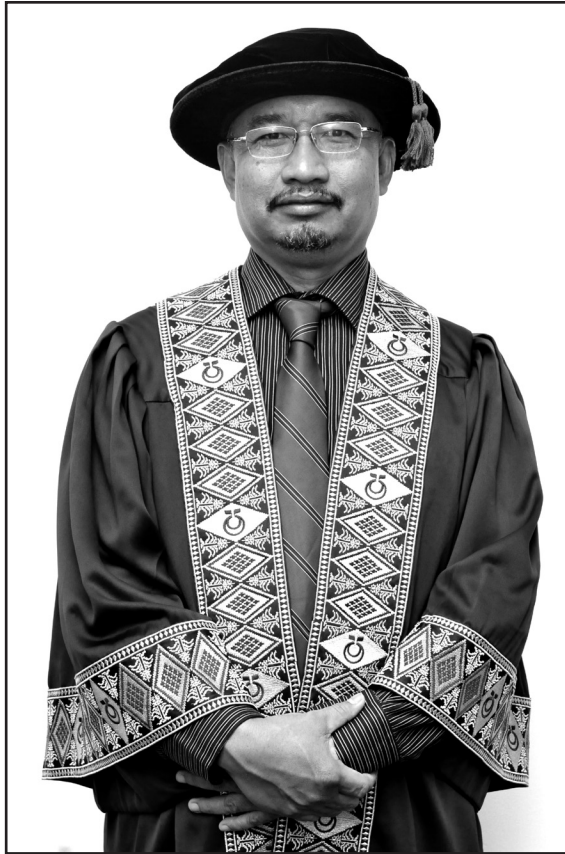




**ISLAMIZATION OF CONTEMPORARY KNOWLEDGE
AND THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY
IN THE CONTEXT OF DE-WESTERNIZATION
AND DECOLONIZATION**

Professorial Inaugural Lecture Series

Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud



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INTRODUCTION

In this lecture I will explain the architectonic and strategic importance of higher learning institutions in the proper development of Muslim individuals and societies worldwide. As Westernization and colonization in various forms are still influential in the present context of globalization, I will also argue that the efforts of some Muslim scholars for the Islamization of contemporary knowledge, with the related discourses on education and the university in Islam, are not only justifiable attempts to retain their religious and cultural identity, but they also offer a possibly better alternative to Western modernity, which has been shown to have grave deficits at the global level. It will be shown that the realization of these deficits cuts across religious, cultural, and national boundaries when many non-Muslim scholars and policy makers argue for the de-westernization, decolonization, and indigenization of the knowledge framework. The de-westernization and Islamization of contemporary knowledge--with their related key concepts of Islamic university and *adab*--is one of these attempts; although it is more spiritual, comprehensive, universal and compelling, compared to the others, as will be explained later.

I shall reaffirm the traditional epistemological framework, the one understood and practiced by the Sunni school of thought, which, on most of the metaphysical and epistemological aspects, are shared also by the Shiites. My philosophical and methodological framework is based largely on that propounded by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, who is regarded as one of the most authoritative thinkers in the contemporary Muslim world, and who also founded and directed a renowned higher institution of Islamic learning, the

International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1987-2002.¹

The Architectonic and Strategic Importance of Higher Education

Education is indubitably the most important vehicle for personal and societal well-being and development. The purpose of education, like many other fundamental human activities, is a reflection of a particular worldview—whether personal or societal—which, in turn, is implanted in the educational content and methods as well as criteria of evaluation. A worldview is generally shaped by religion and/or philosophical orientation coupled with socio-historical circumstances in various degrees of very complex interaction.² For decades, the international Muslim community has been stressing on the importance of primary and secondary education. However, when university scholars argue for the importance of the university, they are regarded by some as having a vested interest.³ The architectonic and strategic importance of higher education have been better recognized quite recently and became more intensified with globalization and the knowledge economy.⁴ Some scholars have rightly acknowledged that higher education does play a role, albeit a small one, in the struggle for world supremacy.⁵ Leading academicians such as Clerk

¹ See Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas: An Exposition on the Original Concept of Islamization* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1998); Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud and Muhammad Zainiy Uthman, eds. *Knowledge, Language, Thought and the Civilization of Islam: Essays in Honour of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas* (Skudai; UTM Press, 2010); Ali A. Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), Chap. 4; and Mohd Zaidi Ismail and Wan Suhaimi Wan Abdullah, eds. *Adab dan Peradaban: Karya Pengi'tirafan untuk Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas* (Kuala Lumpur: MPH, 2012).

² For a comprehensive and philosophical treatment on the exposition of the worldview of Islam, see Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995); for an attempt to relate this specifically to Muslim higher education, see Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Educational Philosophy*, especially pp. 33-69; also Alparslan Acikgenc, *Scientific Thought and Its Burdens* (Istanbul: Fatih University Publications, 2000), Chap. 2.

³ Roger Dale, "Repairing the Deficits of Modernity: The Emergence of Parallel Discourses in Higher Education in Europe". In D. Epstein, R. Boden, R. Deem, F Rizvi and S Wright, eds. *Geographies of Knowledge, Geometries of Power: Framing the Future of Higher Education*. World Yearbook of Education 2008 (New York and London: Taylor and Francis, 2007), p. 15.

⁴ See, for example, Rajani Naidu, "Higher Education: A Powerhouse for Development in a Neo-Liberal Age?", In *Geographies of Knowledge*, pp. 248-261; for an interesting discussion on the framework of knowledge and its relationship to economy and geopolitics, see Vinay Lal, *Empires of Knowledge: Culture and Plurality in the Global Economy*. New and Expanded Edition (New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, 2005), especially Chapters 4 and 5. See also Phillip G. Altbach, *Higher Education in the Third World: Themes and Variations* (Singapore: Maruzen Asia/Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development, 1982), Chapter 4, "Servitude of the Mind? Education, Dependency, and Neocolonialism."

⁵ Phillip G. Altbach and Gail P. Kelly, *Education and Colonialism* (New York and London: Longman, 1978) p. 31.

Kerr more than half a century ago have emphasized that nations aiming for international influence would establish excellent centers of learning of the highest level.⁶ Its strategic importance is such that Philip Coombs, former Undersecretary of State during the John F Kennedy Administration, has stated that education and culture are “a fourth dimension” of foreign policy, besides economy, diplomacy and military.⁷ The Cold War episode elevated the strategic importance of higher education when it is understood that modern warfare depends a lot on scientific knowledge than on the conventional size of the armies and quantity of military equipment.⁸

Ideas and concepts articulated by scholars pertaining to higher learning institutions and think tanks continue to shape geo-political strategies. Thomas Farr, who was in the American Foreign Service for more than 16 years, argues for the de-secularization of diplomacy. He suggests that religious freedom should be made a centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy that will have a broad spectrum of benefits. Some of these would be the strengthening of American national security by undermining Islamist transnational terrorism and extremism, stabilizing struggling democracies throughout the Muslim world and beyond, and encouraging a transition to political reform without domestic upheaval in nations such as China. Such policy could also reduce the perception abroad that America is imperialistic, hedonistic, and peddling (an intrinsically) value-free form of democracy. In addition it would encourage a broadening of U.S. interest group advocacy and promote cooperation among U.S. religious groups.⁹

The strategic importance of higher education is more apparent nowadays especially in the Arab world, where although most of its population perceive US foreign policy initiatives negatively, they nevertheless overwhelmingly appreciate US higher education programs. This has resulted in the establishment of many branches of US universities in the Arab World.¹⁰ The Americanization of higher educational institutions in the Arab world focuses on the ideas and values of the liberal arts program. According to Peter Heath, Provost of the American University of Beirut, the oldest American university in the region, American universities in the Arab world should educate the whole person with a concern for liberal arts: “When they do that, then even if they are not very good academically,

⁶ See Clerk Kerr, “The Frantic Rush to Remain Contemporary” *Daedalus. Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*. Volume 94, No. 4 Fall 1964, p. 1051. See also Wan Mohd Nor, *Masyarakat Islam Hadhari: Suatu Tinjauan Epistemologi dan Kependidikan ke Arah Penyatuan Pemikiran Bangsa* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2006), p. 19-23.

⁷ Philip Coombs, *The Fourth Dimension of Foreign Policy: Education and Cultural Affairs* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

⁸ Roger Dale, “Repairing the Deficits of Modernity”, p. 18.

⁹ Thomas F. Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom: Why International Religious Liberty is Vital to American National Security* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p. 26.

¹⁰ Shafeeq Ghabra with Margreet Arnold, “Studying the American Way: An Assessment of American-Style Higher Education in the Arab Countries”. Policy Focus #7 June 2007. Washington DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2007).

they have my respect. Because they are on the right path.”¹¹ Shafeeq Ghabra, President of the American University of Kuwait, states that Americanizing higher education means employing English, using educational, strategies and models, textbooks, communal life, and extracurricular activities that are popular in the American educational system.¹² In the *Arab Knowledge Report 2009*, the paramount importance of freedom, as one of the most important requirements in developing a knowledge society and human well-being, is emphatically and consistently emphasized: “knowledge is freedom and development and that there can be neither knowledge nor development without freedom.”¹³ Although the *Report* cautions that may be relevant even today this linkage is neither mechanical nor inseparable¹⁴, yet in another place, it categorically asserts that “it is a fact freedom and knowledge are inseparable as are knowledge and development”, and that it should not be limited to the economic and political spheres, but “in all its manifestations.”¹⁵ In the most recent *Arab Knowledge Report 2010/2011*, it is acknowledged that the revolutions and protests in the Arab world from the late 2011 onwards were motivated significantly by the youth in the middle and upper classes. Later, the youth of other classes joined in, helped by information and communication technology. Most of these youth in the middle and upper classes “have similarities with respect to the principles, convictions and concerns about social and political problems in their local reality....(which are also helped by) globalization of the principles of participation, citizenship, and civil society.”¹⁶

From the perspective of Islam, this relatively new awareness of the far-reaching importance of higher education is most accurate. Islam’s stress on the importance of childhood education is rooted in the Qur’an and traditions of the Prophet. Children are a trust from God, and that it is their parents that turn them into Jews, Christians, or Zoroasterians.¹⁷ In the Malay-Indonesian world, this wisdom is turned into a very popular proverb: *jika mahu melentur buluh, biarlah diwaktu rebungunya* (bamboo is best shaped when its shoot is young).

What is not stressed in these often-cited traditions is that it is the adults, especially

¹¹ Quoted in Gordon Robison, “Education: An American Growth Industry in the Arab World”. A Project of the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, Middle East Media Project, Los Angeles, July 2005, pp. 7-8. Robison was the Senior Fellow of USC Annenberg School of Communication.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹³ *Arab Knowledge Report 2009: Towards Productive Intercommunication for Knowledge*. Produced by Mohammad bin Rashid al Maktoum Foundation and United Nations Development Program/Regional Bureau for Arab States. Dubai, p. 220.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 225-226.

¹⁶ *Arab Knowledge Report 2010/2011: Preparing Future Generations for the Knowledge Society*. Produced by Mohammad bin Rashid al Maktoum Foundation and United Nations Development Program/Regional Bureau for Arab States. Dubai, p. 2.

¹⁷ Al-Bukhari, *Sahih sv: kitab al-Jana’iz*, No. 1319 (1292); also Muslim, *Sahi sv: kitab al-Qadar*, no. 2138 (2658).

the parents and teachers, who are the most instrumental in this process. Prophets were sent to all levels of society, but directly to mature thinking adults (*bulugh*) who alone will be held accountable.¹⁸ The best of the earliest generation of Muslims--the Companions of the Prophet—were born and raised in a pre-Islamic, and in fact, intense anti-Islamic environment, yet the profound ability of the adult molder, the Prophet Muhammad, succeeded in Islamizing their worldview, ethics, and humanity. Most of them were already adults when they accepted Islam, and later made very important and lasting contributions to not only the Muslim Community but also to others.

This shows that effective education at the adult level, namely the higher learning institutions in the modern sense, can overcome the philosophical and ethical weaknesses at the lower levels of education. Furthermore, the success of the primary and secondary levels is largely dependent on the prior success and effectiveness of the higher learning institutions, where the policy makers, curriculum designers, teachers, senior administrators, and even parents were educated and trained. Additionally, a critical number of those in non-formal fields of education such as mass and electronic media, religious institutions, and politics are products of institutions of higher learning. All these individuals, directly or indirectly, influence the contents and methods of formal and non-formal education at the lower levels.

Recognizing the architectonic and strategic importance of higher education, ambitious nations have established not only networks of top universities but also various Institutes for Advanced Studies that seriously seek to extend intellectual and scientific boundaries in all fields of knowledge. The earliest of such advanced institutes and centers was established in Princeton University, USA in 1930; then followed by the one in Bielefeld (1968) and Berlin (1980) Germany. Others were established in Wassenaar, the Netherlands (1971); Kansai, Japan (1984); Uppsala, Sweden (1985); and Helsinki, Finland (2002). These establishments, in fact, are provided with considerable funds and have highly credible academic and research staff as well as a flexible administration that abides by very strong academic and research culture.¹⁹

As China is emerging as one of the most dominant global economic and military powers, it too wants to have greater influence in the nature of the new world order heretofore shaped almost entirely by the Western socio-economic and cultural perspective. It emphasizes the importance of the soft approach, which centers on the ideas and various modes of cooperation. Recently, Fudan University (est. 1905) launched a new institution, *Center*

¹⁸ This seems consistent with international classification such as that by UNESCO, which regards adults as those above 15 years old. See *Arab Knowledge Report 2010/2011*, p. 4. It needs to be said however, that the Islamic criteria of entrance in the age of responsibility (*taklif*), adulthood (*bulugh*), is not necessarily chronological, but experiential, and gender specific: first menstruation for women, first sexual dreams for men.

¹⁹ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Budaya Ilmu dan Gagasan 1Malaysia: Membina Negara Maju dan Bahagia* (Kuala Lumpur: CASIS/BTN, 2012), p. 30-31.

for the *Study of Chinese Culture and Values in the Global Context (SCCV)* and held an international conference with the theme, “*Revitalizing Chinese Culture: Values and Virtues for a Global Age*” held from 26-27 June 2011. Among others, the conference sought to study how China could revitalize its cultural values and virtues to face the challenges of modernization and globalization and to contribute its ‘soft power’ for global future. It intends to share its vision and play a leading role in the shaping of the new world and to “*share its vision with the world and assume leadership in the shaping of the newly global times*”.²⁰

Decolonization and de-Westernization of Knowledge and Education

European globalization began with the voyages of “discovery” in the late 15th century. This was followed by imperialism, which was characterized by conquest and direct political control from the European metropolis. From the 17th century onwards, this imperialism was succeeded by colonization—with the establishment of immigrant communities in colonized territories, mimicking the metropolis, and supported by slavery and indentured labor—resulting in colonialism—a condition that refers to the systematic subjection of colonized people.²¹ These interrelated developments, which were made possible by a Eurocentric worldview that projected a certain epistemic perspective, had perpetrated great sufferings and political, economic, as well as socio-cultural losses on the indigenous populations.

Western domination became intensified—with the participation of the USA from the mid-20th century in the form of neocolonialism—especially through the concepts of modernization and development, and later, through the concepts of democracy, freedom, and human rights.²² Throughout these centuries, globalization has become, in reality, fundamentally linked to the spreading out, and inculcation of a particular view of truth and reality of the world, or in the words of sociologists, the “universalisation of a set of assumptions and narratives”, through formal and informal channels of education and communication, to all parts of the globe. Globalization, especially when linked to a knowledge framework, has transcended its socio-geographic, cultural, and economic processes and becomes “an excuse and a justification for the continuation of some very destructive forms

²⁰ Please refer to the online conference brochure at <http://www.crvp.org/conf/2011//fudan.htm>, downloaded 18/5/2011; *see also*, Wan Mohd Nor, *Budaya Ilmu*, p.31.

²¹ Peter Cox, “Globalization of What? Power, Knowledge and Neo-Colonialism”. Paper for Implications for Globalisation: Present Imperfect, Future Tense. 17-19 December 2003. Annual Conference. Department of Social and Communication Studies, University College Chester. P. 5. Downloaded 6/14/2005; also Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, “Dewesternisation and Islamisation: The Epistemic Framework and Final Purpose”. In N. Omar, W. Che Dan, Jason S. Ganesan and R. Talif, eds. *Critical Perspectives on Literature and Culture in the New World Order* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp. 1-7.

²² Ramon Grosfuguel, “Decolonizing Political-Economy and Post Colonial Studies: Transmodernity, Border Thinking, and Global Coloniality”. In Ramon Grosfuguel, Jose David Saldivar and Nelson Maldonado Torres (eds). *Unsettling Postcoloniality: Coloniality, Transmodernity and Border Thinking* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007) Internet version, pp. 7-8.

of exploitation.”²³ Neo-colonialism—via its hegemony of the project of modernity—deepens the myth of the superior West in all dimensions of economic, cultural, scientific, and social-political arrangement.²⁴ The hegemonic hold reaches even the religious interpretations of the non-Western societies, whereby the nature or limits of religious tolerance, moderation, pluralism, and human rights are significantly determined from the Western and secular perspective, articulated and inculcated predominantly at the higher learning institutions.

Due to its global technological, scientific, military, and economic dominance for the last three centuries, it is understandable, though not necessarily desirable, for the West to regard the rest of the world as lagging behind it in all the major criteria of human progress and development that it has selected, and where all others must undergo a similar sequence of spiritual, social, and political developments as that of the West in order to catch up with, and to be a part of the developed community of mankind.²⁵ The linear and evolutionary conception of history and human progress from the Western center would tolerate no dissenting and contesting notions from others, without these notions being either dismissed as reactionary, anti-modern, anachronistic, traditional, unreasonable, radical, anti-human, or packaged into idioms and categories that are acceptable to the dominant views and interests of the center. Non-Western views of Truth and Reality, and their forms and perspectives of knowledge and human development are regarded as local and particular, and hence devoid of universality.²⁶ Thus, humanity will face no future except that which is conceived within the worldview and knowledge framework of the European liberal democracy. In fact, the Protagorean call, which underlines the secular humanistic framework since the Hellenic age—“A man is the measure of all things....”,²⁷ is now practically considered as: “*Western man* is the measure of all things, things that are that they are; things that are not, that they are not....”

Hence the languages, societies, cultures, economies, and technologies of China and the Far East, India and the Sub-Continent, the Malay World and the Pacific, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa have been significantly changed, in some cases, irretrievably. To be modern and civilized and to be accepted as a Western equal, is essentially to be

²³ Cox, “Globalization for What?”, p. 3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁵ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Petaling Jaya: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, 1978), p. 25. Hereafter will be cited as *IS*. Martin Jacques writes almost 40 years later, “Hitherto the world has been characterized by Western hubris—the Western conviction that its values, belief systems, institutions and arrangements are superior to all others. The power and persistence of this mentality should not be underestimated.” Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), p. 167.

²⁶ Ninay Lal, *Empires of Knowledge*, Introduction and Chap 1; See also Syed Farid Alatas, *Alternative Discourses in Asian Social Sciences: Responses to Eurocentrism* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006).

²⁷ James L. Jarrett, *Educational Philosophy of the Sophists* (New York: Teachers College/Columbia University Press, 1965).

westernized, a dubious requirement which many non-Western and Muslim nations have apparently accepted. Alexander Solzhenitsyn is perhaps correct when he observed, in his Convocation Address at Harvard University in 1978, that even if Japan still retains some of its Eastern features, it is, nevertheless, becoming no longer a Far East, but rather a Far West (*A World Split Apart*).²⁸

Colonization played a significant role in the conception and nature of the university in all newly independent states in the sense that even though many were established prior to Independence, their continuing existence—and the establishment of new ones—serve the interest of modernizing new nation states in the mold of the “proper” Western ones. The economic development of these “under-developed” nations were compelled to follow closely all the possible Rostowian stages of modernization including the adoption of all the institutions that enabled such achievement in the West, including the universities.²⁹ Since the 1950s, some scholars in various nations such as Franz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Jalal Ale Ahmad, in *The Occidentosis: Plague from the West* (1952), Aime Cesaire, in *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955), Albert Memmi, in *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1957), to cite just four, have documented how the rise of Western perspectives have simultaneously impoverished others, and thereby doing a disservice to overall human progress and development in various parts of the world. The worst aspect of these effects is what the late Syed Husin Alattas has aptly described as the “captive mind”.³⁰ Since the 1970s there have been many serious discussions to de-westernize, and in former colonies of the West—Latin America, India, Africa and the Muslim world as a whole—to decolonize, a process which is still in its infancy.³¹

Since the 1970s, the Indigenous Knowledge movement, especially in North America, which attempted to offer an alternative system of knowing and educating to those of the European ones, received international recognition and validation. In the 1990s, this movement has generated a decolonizing discourse and rethinking of education for indigenous peoples. Conceptually, indigenous knowledge underscores the theoretical and methodological orientations of the Eurocentric framework and re-conceptualizes the resilience and self-reliance of indigenous people, and gives due importance to their own religious, philosophical, and educational orientations. Thus it fills the ethical and knowledge gaps in Eurocentric education and research, and also creates a new, balanced and a fresh

²⁸ Alexandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *A World Split Apart* (London: Harper and Row, 1978).

²⁹ Roger Dale, “Repairing the Deficits of Modernity”, p. 18.

³⁰ Syed Husin Alattas, “The Captive Mind and Creative Development”. *International Social Science Journal*, (36) 4: 691-700, 1974. His other works, *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (1977), and *Intellectuals in Developing Societies* (1977) are equally relevant.

³¹ For the context of Malaysia, see for example, Mohamad Daud Mohamad and Zabidah Yahya, (Compilers), *Pascakolonialisme dalam Pemikiran Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2005), and Rahimah A. Hamid, *Fiksyen Pascakolonial: Yang Menjajah dan Dijajah* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2010); for Indonesia, see Nyoman Kutha Ratna, *Postkolonialisme Indonesia: Relevansi Sastra* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2008).

vantage point from which to analyze Eurocentric education and its pedagogies.³² Among the First Nations people, in Canada at least, this has played a significant role in shared capacities that can alleviate poverty and create sustainable development.³³

Many scholars in the 1990s, such as the Subaltern Study Group (SSG) on Latin America, developed intellectual critiques of the Western-centric view of knowledge and all that goes with it, but their framework is still essentially taken from, and influenced by the post-structuralist and post-modern analysis which are intellectual products of the West, while another influential group, which is influenced by the works of Ranujit Guha, tries to critique the Western knowledge perspective from a non-Western and largely Indian perspective, by providing a post-colonial critique. By post-modern critique, the SSG meant a Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism, and by post-colonial critique they mean a critique of Eurocentrism from subalternized, and silenced knowledge frameworks. However, there are still voices, such as those of Ramon Grosfuguel, who calls for “the need to decolonize not only the Subaltern studies, but also post-colonial studies”.³⁴ Others, such as Nelson Maldonado-Torres, calls for a radical diversity and a decolonial geopolitics of knowledge, while some, such as Vinay Lal, proposes a Gandhian perspective in dealing with intellectual dissent against the West.³⁵

Africa and China

African scholars have analysed the westernizing role of African universities and offered certain insights in dealing with the pervasive challenge. Ali Mazrui, for example, observed that the African University since the 1960s has functioned as a multinational corporation. This development has become more intensified and pervasive.³⁶ He argues for an agenda of decolonization of the process of modernization but not terminating it.³⁷ He observes,

³² Marie Battiste, “Indigenous Knowledge: Foundations for First Nations”, *World Indigenous Higher Education Consortium Journal* 2005, p. 2-3. <http://www.win-hec.org/=node/34>. See also Evangelia Papoutsaki, “De-Westernizing Research Methodologies: Alternative Approaches to Research for Higher Education Curricula in Developing Countries”. Presented at *Global Colloquium of the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge*. Paris, 29 Nov-1 Dec 2006.

³³ Marie Battiste, “Indigenous Knowledge”, p. 3; See also McConaghy, Cathryn, *Rethinking Indigenous Education: Culturalism, Colonialism and the Politics of Knowing*. (Flaxton, Qld: Post Pressed, 2000).

³⁴ Grosfuguel, “Decolonizing Political-Economy”, p. 3.

³⁵ Nelson Maldonado-Torres, “The Topology of Being and the Geopolitics of Knowledge: modernity, Empire, Coloniality,” *CITY*, Vol. 8, No. 1 April 2004; Ninay Lal, *Empires of Knowledge*.

³⁶ Ali A. Mazrui, “The African University as a Multinational Corporation: Problems of Penetration and Dependency.” In Philip G. Altbach and Gail P. Kelly, eds. *Education and Colonialism* (New York and London: Longman, 1978).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 333, and 341.

with a surprise, that “most analysts of African development have emphasized economic dependency; little attention in the literature or in policy forums has been paid to issues of *cultural dependency* (italics in original)”.³⁸ He argues that even though African university graduates played key roles in national political liberation from Western imperialists, they, unwittingly, perpetuate cultural and intellectual dependency, after independence.³⁹ He urges that “hard new thinking is required” to deal with the various aspects of dependency.⁴⁰

A university is a cultural institution dealing with skills and values, and must continuously re-examine itself regarding the practical and cultural relevance of its programs and orientations. Admittedly some improvements have been made in the technical aspects, but not so in the social sciences (which have changed some of the contents although not the methodology), especially in recognizing local elements such as the use of oral traditions.⁴¹ He warns: “Until Africans drastically change foreign methodologies to fit the conditions of African societies, they cannot move further along the path of cultural import-substitution.”⁴²

Mazrui suggests that African thinkers should develop a three-pronged strategy to deal with the cultural challenges of Western modernity and to embark on Africanization. First, the domestication of modernity in three key areas such as university admission requirements and their implications for lower educational levels, criteria for academic staff requirements, and university organization. All these must reflect indigenous non-formally qualified talents and needs. However, he criticizes the Negritude Movement of Leopold Senghor, the former President of Senegal, who glorified the emotive and non-scientific African traditions, and the African Marxist scientism. Secondly, a diversification of the cultural content of modernity to include both local and non-local, non-Western content such as that from the East and Middle East; and thirdly, a counter-penetration of African elements and ideas into Western civilization itself. He stressed that domestication and diversification will not be fully successful until Africa itself can influence the West. He suggested that this can be done by establishing linkages with the Arab World through the latter’s petrol dollar influence on the West, and through Africa’s engagement with the Afro-Americans, which form the second largest African community in the world.⁴³

Mazrui concludes his important essay that the full maturity of African education will come only through independent innovative capacity, which involves three tasks: balancing Western influence with its own culture; permitting non-Western civilizations to be appreciated by African educational elites; and transforming its own educational and intellectual climate to produce genuine creativity. Then modernity can not only be decolonized, or participated

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 334, 338-341.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 342, 344.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 344.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 346-352.

in, but also be defined for future generations.⁴⁴ Later African scholars and philosophers have been actively engaging these subjects for some time, as can be seen from the works of, for example, Okot p'Bitek, Thing'o, Chinwenzu and Wiredu.⁴⁵ Wiredu, since 1980, for example, has been advocating a program he calls, a "conceptual decolonization of African philosophy" which involves "domestication of disciplines".⁴⁶

This serious discourse and concerns continue in the publication of numerous works, as indicated by the publication of a special issue on "African Philosophy of Education", in the recent issue of the journal, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, wherein all the contributors argue for the need for, and relevance of some elements of traditional African philosophy in modern African education. Phillip Higgs describes this ongoing discourse and attempts at Africanization in the field of education, thus maintains:

"The centuries-old subjugation of Africa to colonial exploitation, ranging from slavery to the creation of socio-economic structures during the colonial era which were singularly designed to achieve maximum extraction and exportation of raw materials, wreaked serious damage that remain palpable years after the demise of colonial rule. This was accomplished...by a whole range of arrangements including educational philosophies, curricula and practices whose context corresponded with that of the respective colonial powers. In order to address this state of affairs, indigenous African knowledge systems have as their objective the goal of recovering the humanistic and ethical principles embedded in African worldviews, and more particularly in the concepts of *communality* and *ubuntu*. (These) systems also... constitute an attempt to develop both a vision and a practice of education that lays the basis for African people to participate in mastering and directing the course of change and fulfilling the vision of learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together as equals with others. A discourse of this kind in education, views knowledge and minds not as commodities, not just as human resources to be developed and exploited, and then cast aside, but as treasures to be cultivated to improve the quality of life of both persons and societies."⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ See also N. wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1986), *Chinweizu, Decolonizing the African Mind* (Lagos: Pero, Press, 1987), N. wa Thiong'o, *Moving the Centre: the Struggle for Cultural Freedom* (London: James Currey, 1993), Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996).

⁴⁶ Kwasi Wiredu, "Toward Decolonizing African Philosophy and Religion". *African Studies Quarterly*. The Online Journal for African Studies. Html file://G:\Decolonizing%20African%20Philosophy%20and%20Religion.mht. downloaded 21 July 2008.

⁴⁷ Phillip Higgs, "African Philosophy and the Decolonisation of Education in Africa: Some Critical Reflections". In *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. Special Issue. *African Philosophy of Education*. Guest editors, Yusef Waghid and Paul Smeyers. Vol. 44, No. S2, Sept. 2012, pp. 48-49. I wish to thank Prof. Yusef Waghid for sending me a copy of this journal.

Like Africa, China and India too have long intellectual and scientific traditions, albeit with different religious philosophical worldviews. Their higher educational developments have been impressive; but, as observed by a world expert on International Education, Philip G. Altbach, "In common with most developing countries, both countries (i.e., China and India), have largely not taken advantage of their extraordinarily rich indigenous intellectual and cultural traditions."⁴⁸ In communication theory, a relatively recent social science field, it has been suggested that "...Asian scholars could make a significant contribution to universalizing communication/social science by explicating complexity science in relation to the insights embedded in Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism and Hinduism, among others."⁴⁹

Modern China, the largest country in the world, and a leading global economic and political power, has always been aware of the special role of higher education for its national and global interests. In Project 211 launched in 1995, which is "the largest key higher education construction program ever undertaken in the history of the People's Republic",⁵⁰ and later in the Action Plan for Rejuvenating Education for the 21st Century launched in 2001, the accelerated improvements and strategies of higher education were always linked to economic development, social progress, and national security/defense.⁵¹

While Chinese higher education seeks to develop high technological capacities to the highest levels, the emphasis on the promotion of research in philosophy and social sciences was given an "urgent strategic task."⁵² Various large-scale proposals and plans were put into effect to construct "socialism with Chinese characteristics".⁵³ He states:

"The Proposals require strengthening the development of the traditional, new and inter-disciplines, and basic and applied research....call for research projects that have a bearing on the overall development of philosophy and social sciences, and those that have a critical influence on the innovations of disciplines, on the progress of national culture and spirit, on socio-economic development, and on national security."⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Philip G. Altbach, "One-third of the Globe: The Future of Higher Education in India and China", *Prospects* (2009), Vol. 39, p. 13.

⁴⁹ Shelton A. Gunaratne, "De-Westernizing Communication/Social Science Research: Opportunities and Limitations". *Media, Culture & Society*. Vol. 32, No. 3, 2010, pp. 474-475. Downloaded from MCS Sagepub.com at University of Colorado on August 25, 2011. See also S. A. Gunaratne, "Buddhist Goals of Journalism and the News Paradigm". *Javnost-The Public*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 61-75; C.Y. Cheng, "Chinese Philosophy and Contemporary Human Communication Theory", in D.L. Kincaid, (ed) *Communication Theory: Eastern and Western Perspectives*. (San Diego: Academic Press, 1987), pp. 23-43; and Y. Ito, "Mass Communication Theories from a Japanese Perspective", *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol. 12, 1990, pp. 423-264.

⁵⁰ Zhou Ji, *Higher Education in China* (Singapore: Thomson, 2006), p. 37. Mr Zhuo Ji was the Minister of Higher Education China.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

China wants to be an all-round affluent society by 2020 and “it is the job of higher education to achieve this goal by accelerating comprehensive social and human development and turning the pressure of the huge population into advantageous human resources.”⁵⁵ In the early parts of the 21st century, Chinese universities have developed different “uniquely Chinese modes of combining education, research, and industry”⁵⁶ such as establishing cooperation with “local enterprises to contribute to local economic development”; setting up science and technology development organizations to manage cooperative projects with enterprises; introducing venture capital to incubate and develop further universities’ research results; promoting and disseminating research results through various research centers; developing university high-tech enterprises to maximize research results; and building university science and technology networks to encourage cooperation between universities and enterprises.⁵⁷

Another indication of the unique features of Chinese University education is that the moral and mental health development of students are monitored closely—at least in the undergraduate years. Each class has an appointed class advisor and a class assistant to monitor and supervise the students’ study and life, their thinking, and psychological tendencies and health.⁵⁸ Zhuo Ji states that Chinese universities have become disseminators of Chinese culture at home and abroad.⁵⁹ More than 292 Government sponsored Confucius Institutes, which provide Chinese language instruction and cultural programs to foreign students, have been established. As of 2007, there were more than 200,000 foreign students in China, and these institutes will increase to 1000 by the year 2025.⁶⁰

China’s increasing influence in the world, especially in Africa, has caused concerns in the West—especially in the United States. Hillary Clinton, the former US Secretary of State, recently warned against “new colonialism” in Africa when she spoke in Lusaka Zambia during her recent state visit. She warned Africans about the new economic interests and activities of China in the Continent.⁶¹

It has been correctly argued that it is important for the citizens of the European liberal democracies to understand the alternative and even dissenting voices from the others, which will not only slow down the wheels of neo-colonialism, but more importantly, will make the Western man understand how the myth of their superiority has damaged themselves so that as they seek to make a better world they may start addressing their own excesses, question their own institutions and lifestyles, before deciding on the proper

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

⁶⁰ Philip G. Altbach, “The Future of higher Education in China and India”, pp. 18—19.

⁶¹ Reuters. Saturday, June 11th, 2011. Clinton warns against “new colonialism” in Africa.

course of action for others.”⁶² This awareness of the fact that the Western interpretation of reality may not be the only valid one is reflected in the important document in modern American public discourse, the Williamsburg Charter, signed in June 1988, which admitted of “a growing philosophical and cultural awareness that all people live by commitments and ideals, that value-neutrality is impossible in ordering society, and that we are on the edge of a promising moment for a fresh assessment of pluralism and liberty.”⁶³

That every important human activity is grounded in a certain set of religious, philosophical and cultural orientation has become more acceptable. Of equal importance, if not more, as indicated by various discourses of de-westernization and decolonization above and elsewhere, is the fact that the Western conception of modernity and everything it entails has been vigorously contested. A greater challenge to the West, after the Cold War, is not Islamic terrorism, but an era of what Martin Jacques called, “an Era of Contested Modernities” producing a world of multiple modernities.⁶⁴ Among many key issues, Jacques argues that ideas related to the meaning of advancement, development, and civilization will no longer be synonymous with the West.⁶⁵ One prominent contemporary Chinese scholar, Huang Ping, confidently stresses the fundamental differences between Chinese Civilization and the Western one and argues that, “China’s own practice is capable of generating alternative concepts, theories, and more convincing frameworks.”⁶⁶ Ulrich Beck, a sociologist at the University of Munich and the London School of Economics, in a recent interview, talks about how the great success of the first European Modernity from the 18th century to the 1960s and 1970s have now produced unanswerable consequences, such as climate change and the financial crises. He adds, “The financial crisis is an example of the victory of a specific interpretation of modernity: neo-liberal modernity after the breakdown of the Communist system, which dictates that the market is the solution and the more we increase the role of the market, the better. But now we see that this model is falling and we don’t have any answers.” To him, “...European modernity is a suicidal project... Reinventing modernity could be a specific purpose for Europe.”⁶⁷

The Arab World

As discussed earlier, the Arab world is aggressively embarking upon modernizing its higher

⁶² Peter Cox, “Globalization of What?”, p. 6.

⁶³ The Williamsburg Charter: A Celebration and Reaffirmation of the First Amendment. In Os Guinness, *The Case for Civility and Why our Future Depends on It*. HarperCollins e-books, 2008, p. 178.

⁶⁴ Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, pp. 166-167.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁶⁶ Quoted from *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁶⁷ Ulrich Beck, “Germany Has Created An Accidental Empire”, *Social Europe Journal*, 25/3/2013, accessed 30/3/2013.

educational institutions by adopting Western educational models, especially the Anglo-American. Intimately related to this is the Arab project of trying to reduce the knowledge gap deficits between that part of the world and the more developed regions by creating and nurturing enabling environment (and institutions), and indigenization of knowledge. *The Arab Knowledge Report 2009* acknowledges, though apparently without any distinctive pride: “As is the case with the other peoples of the world, the Arabs over the course of their history have built up a vast stock of knowledge that expresses their ways of life and their skills in work and production.”⁶⁸ But this does not help them to benefit from technological progress, nor to indigenize new media and mechanisms that would enable them to access new forms of knowledge.⁶⁹ The *Report* suggests that Arabs transfer and indigenize all modern products of the knowledge society by “the development of the Arabic language, revitalization of Arab thought and the adoption of the historical and comparative prerequisites of modern thought.”⁷⁰ Indigenization “is a composite operation that combines transfer, translation, education, training and all activities that transform what is transferred... into a well-rooted action...(which requires) the nurturing of new mentalities capable of adapting to the new mechanisms of labor and production.”⁷¹ It involves the transcribing of local, specific, and the intrinsic Arab character onto what is transferred, both during and after the process so that the transferred information becomes organically integrated to the structure of the accepting society.⁷² This requires the mental attitude of openness and intercommunication. This presupposes cultural and educational reform. It claims that the conceptual pre-requirements of knowledge revolution on the nature of man and nature are still lacking in the Arab world.⁷³

In the entire text of the *Arab Knowledge Report 2009*, it is not explained how the Arab cultural and epistemological heritage, which is influenced by the religion of Islam, could help the indigenization process and development of a knowledge society. In a rather interesting contrast to African scholars and thinkers cited above—despite the greater diversity among Africans—Arab scholars and thinkers do not appear to be concerned with utilizing the Arab-Islamic traditional epistemological and educational elements in their human development. On the contrary, in the latest *Report 2010/2011*, it is clearly suggested that in order to develop a knowledge society through educational development, “What is needed is to make a quantum leap from the ‘traditional pedagogy’ prevailing in the educational systems in the Arab region and which is based on memorization and dictation into ‘constructivist pedagogy’.”⁷⁴ This alternative pedagogy has four identifiable components, namely student

⁶⁸ *Arab Knowledge Report 2009*, pp. 223-224.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 232.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

⁷⁴ *Arab Knowledge Report 2010/2011*, p. 43.

centered learning, comprehensive student evaluation, employment of information and communication technology in teaching and learning, and a flexible approach in teaching and learning in accordance with contemporary education and scientific fields, students' lives, and their societal environment.⁷⁵

The *Report of 2010/2011* admits the important role of religion in shaping personal and social life, and divides religious sensibilities into two contrasting perspectives; the extremist and the ethically enlightened. The extremist perspective "resists science, denies tolerance, refuses relativity, [which leads to the]...rejection of scientific methods and the undermining of science, which limits freedom of thought, creativity, priority of dialogue, and experience as generators of knowledge."⁷⁶ On the other hand, the ethically enlightened perspective stresses on building the ethics of science, developing and reforming religious discourse, and instilling the values of research, scientific integrity, objectivity of evaluation, and hard work. It supports 'methodical doubt' in examining and evaluating knowledge based on creativity and critical thinking. A new religious educational system is required at all stages, where theoretical and scientific and research activities comply with the requirements of the age. The *Report*, without any cautionary qualification, urges families and all modern mass media "to adopt certain patterns of upbringing based on respect for intellectual and religious pluralism, and beliefs and ethics of knowledge society: freedom, co-existence, justice, safety, trust, and ethics of the environment, information, internet, technology, and respect for human rights and freedom."⁷⁷ This situation is in stark contrast to the development in Turkey in this decade, and in Malaysia since the last five decades, which has remarkably been successful in projecting modernity with a moderate religious influence. Fethullah Gulen, one of the most influential contemporary Turkish thinkers, who also helped to inspire the establishment of hundreds of educational and humanitarian projects, including more than 20 universities worldwide, reflects this educated confidence when he says:

"its [i.e. our system of thought] origins are definite and known, that is luminous and which is based on and related to the truth of being created. If such an interpretation is comprehended within its own spirit and essence, it will be possible even at the present time to put forward and realize our own system of thought, which consequently will bring about serious renewals world-wide, opening up much richer ways and routes for all."⁷⁸

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁷⁸ M. Fethullah Gulen, *The Statue of Our Souls: Revival in Islamic Thought and Revivalism* (New Jersey: Tughra, 2009), p. 139.

Islamization of Contemporary Knowledge

Some serious Muslim thinkers—especially those led by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas—who have understood the basic ontological, epistemological, ethical and cultural differences between Islam and the dominant secular West—have launched a serious discourse of de-westernization and decolonization through an intellectual project of Islamization of contemporary knowledge, which is centered at the University.⁷⁹ The intellectual conception of the Islamization of present-day knowledge is indeed one of the most revolutionary and seminal contributions in modern Muslim thought. This is so because modern Muslim thought has been trapped in an intellectual quagmire and caught in a debilitating dilemma between the wonderful appearance of the result of modern and pervasively secular knowledge and technology, and the apparent rigidity and bankruptcy of its own traditional thought, as conceptualized and presented by the jurists and theologians. Even though the conception of the Islamization of contemporary knowledge as an intellectual idea and an epistemological method is a recent achievement, the actual practice of Islamizing knowledge began with the first revelation of the Islamic message and continued throughout the centuries, albeit with different degrees of success.⁸⁰

The formal intellectual conceptualization of this process of Islamization, by which Muslims may critically benefit from other cultures and civilizations, has never been done until this century. It seems that the realization that modern Western science is atheistic by nature and therefore needs to be Islamized, first occurred, in the early 1930s, to Sir Muhammad Iqbal, who neither explained nor defined the idea.⁸¹ S. H. Nasr, in 1960, implicitly pointed to the method of Islamizing modern science by suggesting that the latter should be interpreted and applied within the “Islamic conception of the cosmos”.⁸² Ismail R. al-Faruqi—who benefitted from the writings of al-Attas—and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT)—popularized the agenda of Islamization to many parts of the Muslim

⁷⁹ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *IS*, Chap. v: De-Westernization of knowledge. This seminal book is so widely read that it has been translated into various languages such as Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Benggali, Malayalam, Serb-Croatian, Kosovan, and Indonesian. This chapter was included in Jeniffer M. Webb, *Powerful Ideas: Perspective on Good Society*. 2 Vols (Victoria: The Cranlana Programme, 2002), 1: 229-240. For a more detailed discussion on the subject of Islamization of contemporary knowledge as expounded by al-Attas and Ismail R. al-Faruqi, Seyyed Hossein Nasr and others, see Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy*, Chaps 6 and 7.

⁸⁰ For a good exposition of the process of development of various religious and non-religious sciences in Islam from the Islamic conceptual framework from the earliest times, see Alparslan Acikgenc, *Scientific Thought and Its Burdens*, esp. Chaps. 4 and 5; and *idem*, *Islamic Scientific Tradition in History* (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia, 2012); and also Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Educational Philosophy*, pp. 316-369.

⁸¹ Cited from K. G. Saiyidain, *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1942), p. 99

⁸² S. H. Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, Revised Edition (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), pp. xxi-xxii.

world.⁸³ However, Islamization was first, and most cogently defined, by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas as:

“...the liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition, and then from secular control over his reason and his language. The man of Islam is he whose reason and language are no longer controlled by magic, mythology, animism, his own national and cultural traditions opposed to Islam and secularism....It is also liberation from subservience to his physical demands which inclines toward the secular and injustice to his true self or soul, for man as physical being inclines towards forgetfulness of his true nature, becoming ignorant of his true purpose and unjust to it. Islamization is a process not so much of *evolution* as that of *devolution* to original nature....Thus in the individual, personal existential sense Islamization refers to what is described above in which the Holy Prophet represents the highest and the most perfect Example; in the collective, social and historical sense Islamization refers to the Community’s striving towards realization of the moral and ethical quality of social perfection achieved during the age of the Holy Prophet (may Allah bless and give him peace)...”⁸⁴

From the above definition, it should be understood that even though Islamization of contemporary knowledge involves selective de-westernization, it is fundamentally a process of returning to the metaphysical worldview, epistemic framework, and ethical and legal principles of Islam. Unfortunately, Islamization has often been reduced to legalization or to the establishment of some socio-political entities, and knowledge has been wrongly equated with mere facts, skills and technology. Knowledge, as units of interrelated meanings pertaining to sensible and intelligible things that arrive in the human soul, or that the soul arrives at, is necessarily not neutral, for meaning is related organically to the quality and capacity of the human soul and to his worldview.⁸⁵ Yet, the *real essences* of things or the true facts that constitute the units of meanings are not figments of his imagination; rather they are objective and universal realities existing independently of his mind.⁸⁶ It is for this reason that “facts”, skills and technologies *per se*, are *potentially* good or bad, or true or false, and thereby directly useful, if *properly* interpreted and applied in accordance with the Islamic framework, which makes it meaningful, just, and wise.⁸⁷

⁸³ Ismail R al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (Washington DC: IIIT, 1982). For a more recent discussion on al-Faruqi’s conception of religion and knowledge, see Imtiaz A. Yusuf, *Al-Faruqi’s Concept of Religion in Islamic Thought* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2012).

⁸⁴ Al-Attas, *IS*, pp. 41-42.

⁸⁵ Al-Attas, *IS*, p. 154, also idem, *The Concept of Education in Islam* (Petaling Jaya: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, 1980), p. 17. Hereafter, it will be cited as *CEII*.

⁸⁶ Al-Attas, *Islam and the Philosophy of Science* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1989), pp. 18-25; hereafter, cited as *IPS*.

⁸⁷ On the relationship between “fact” and “truth”, see al-Attas, *IPS*, pp. 23-24; on various definitions or characterizations of knowledge by Muslim scholars, see Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), pp. 46-69.

However, most of the present-day knowledge is basically that which is primarily conceived and interpreted by the West and those strongly influenced by it among the Easterners. The dominant characteristics of the Western worldview and spirit are basically based on four main pillars, namely secularism, dualism, humanism, and tragedy; which pervade all aspects of Western life and thought, and through them, most of the educated world.⁸⁸ Thus the de-Westernization and Islamization of present-day knowledge refers to the dual process of isolating and removing these unIslamic, mostly Western elements and concepts, and simultaneously infusing key Islamic elements and concepts into the new or foreign elements and concepts. Some of the key Islamic elements and concepts are those pertaining to religion (*din*), man (*insan*), knowledge (*'ilm* and *ma'rifah*), wisdom (*hikmah*), justice (*'adl*), and right action (*'amal as adab*), which are, in turn, grounded in, and linked to the concept of God, His Essence and Attributes (*tawhid*); and the meaning and message of the Holy Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the *Shari'ah*.⁸⁹

Although much of what has been discussed here is mainly related to the human sciences, it also impinges upon the natural, physical and applied sciences, especially in interpreting facts and formulating theories.⁹⁰ In other words, the de-Westernization and Islamization of present-day knowledge is a dual process of selecting, evaluating, interpreting and judging ideas and facts as well as creating and producing relevant meanings – both individual and social – in accordance with the metaphysics of Islam, its epistemic, and ethical-legal principles, but not by merely grafting or transplanting these onto the present body of knowledge or sciences which are products of the secular worldview and epistemic framework.⁹¹

Human development in Islam, in a fundamental sense, hinges on the inculcation of its worldview, the epistemic framework, and ethical-legal principles. Islam regards knowledge as being fundamental in its conception of man. Adam, the first historic man and Prophet, was taught “the names of all things” by God Himself, making him, thereby, even superior to angels. This epistemologically positive attribute of Man in Islam is a direct reflection of his *raison d'être* as God's servant and vicegerent on Earth, which necessitates man having the possibility of attaining sufficient knowledge of himself, God, and the universe. Hence in the Creed of the Muslims, which is derived from the Holy Qur'an and teachings of Prophet Muhammad, the possibility of attaining certain knowledge as opposed to mere opinions (*ra'y*), doubts (*shakk*), and conjectures (*zann*), is deeply embedded. The Creed of Islam also clearly states the various channels through which knowledge can be established and which reflect the unitary view, namely sense-perception, sound reason, and trustworthy reports. Certainty (*yaqin*) can be attained; that is, by reason (*ilmul yaqin*), by sight (*'ainul*

⁸⁸ Al-Attas, *IS*, chaps. 1 dan 2; idem, *CEII*, pp. 45-46

⁸⁹ Al-Attas, *IS*, chaps. 3,4 dan 5; idem, *CEII*, pp. 39-46

⁹⁰ Al-Attas, *IS*, p. 155 ; idem, *CEII*, pp. 20-25

⁹¹ See also Al-Attas, *IS*, p. 156; Nasr, *An Introduction*, p. xxii

yaqin) and by experience (*haqqul yaqin*).⁹²

Human knowledge is naturally possessed by a particular person who is gendered, socio-historically located, and with certain spiritual strengths and weaknesses. This reality, however, does not necessarily imply a relativity of knowledge according to a specific gender, socio-historical condition, and spirituality; which denies any possibility of universality that crosses gender and socio-historical and spiritual boundaries. This point is fundamental and must be adequately appreciated, because in Islam, human knowledge (*'ulum*), is not entirely a human product: it is a gift, a light, from God the Almighty, as evidenced from these verses from the holy Qur'an: (God teaches Man that which he knows not; God taught Adam the names of all things; and when the Prophet was asked to pray: Oh, My Lord, increase me in knowledge).⁹³ Hence it is a universally accepted position among all Muslim scholars—before the impact of certain Western thoughts, especially of post-modernism and post-structuralism—to reject epistemological relativism. From its inception, Islamic epistemology recognizes that knowledge which is equivalent to certainty and truth—stripped of opinions, doubts, and conjectures, as well as the negative influences of various human interests, generally termed as *hawa'*—is indeed permanent and universal.⁹⁴

Dynamic Stabilism

Good intention reforms instituted by modernizers in all traditional societies, including in the Muslim world, which tried to integrate contemporary, particularly Western thinking with their own indigenous religious or traditional ideas, have often resulted in disruptions of many long-established traditions and practices, causing further confusion and weakening of their peoples' identity and institutions. These activities are dynamic but destabilizing. The speedy and marvelous successes of East Asian economies also involved continuous changes, as admitted by one of the most successful Taiwanese cyber entrepreneurs, Hung Tze Jan: "We have had to change our value system so many times in such a short space of time."⁹⁵ In the case of the East Asian experience, these changes may appear not to be too disruptive, perhaps because of the fact that their worldviews and conceptions of truth and reality are not based on a Divine Book, containing a number of absolute principles, as in the case of Islam. Furthermore, it can be argued that East Asian religions and moral

⁹² For further discussion and the various references from the Qur'an and other sources, see Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Concept of Knowledge in Islam: Its Implications for Education in a Developing Country* (London and New York: Mansell, 1989), esp Chaps. 2, 3 and 4; idem, *Educational Philosophy*, Chap. 2.

⁹³ *Al-'Alaq* (96): 1-5; *al-Baqarah* (2): 31; *Ta Ha* (20): 114.

⁹⁴ On the rejection of relativism, see Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy*, pp 84-96; and on *hawa'* as one of the antonyms of knowledge in Islam, see Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Concept of Knowledge in Islam*, Chap. 4.

⁹⁵ Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, p. 126.

philosophies, being rather vague regarding the forms of afterlife, are secularly spiritual in the sense that their spiritual teachings are mostly intended for success and happiness in this worldly life. This can be discerned from the famous teaching of Confucius who is recorded to have said, in relation to the foundational importance of truly good men and women (*chun-tzu*), that internal righteousness of the mind will lead to beauty in the character leading to harmony in the home and order in the nation, which will culminate in a peaceful world.⁹⁶

However, religious conservatism, particularly in the Arab world, the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent and parts of Africa, may also be sincere and seek to protect their people from being corrupted by some modern ideas, thereby maintaining very strict traditional ideas and form of social existence.⁹⁷ Their conservatism is no doubt stabilizing, but deprives their people from rightfully benefitting from the numerous useful scientific, intellectual, and cultural developments offered by the contemporary world.

In the larger portion of Islamic history, truly influential intellectual, religious, and cultural and scientific transformations reflect a process which I have called *dynamic stabilism*,⁹⁸ which continuously incorporates, adopts, and adapts various external ideas, concepts, and practices according to the well-established religious worldview, ethics, and laws of Islam. This process of assimilation and enculturation also applies to all non-Muslim thinkers *vis a vis* their religions and traditions. To a significant extent, the East Asian modernity in Japan, South Korea, and China reflects this dynamic stabilism as well. Despite Soltzhenitsyn's thoughtful observation of the westernization of Japan (and other Eastern societies), most fundamental aspects of Japanese society such as social and family relations, institutional operations, and political culture, remain un-westernized.⁹⁹ A similar situation is also

⁹⁶ Confucius, *The Great Learning: A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. Translated by W.T. Chan (Princeton: Princeton University Press,), Chap. 1, p. 86; for greater details, see Tran Van Doan, *Ideological Education and Moral Education*. Ineds. Trans Van Doan, Vincent Shen and George F. McLean, *Chinese Foundations for Moral education and Character Development* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1991), pp. 113-153.

⁹⁷ On the Arab world, see for example, AKR 2010/2011, pp. 54-56; generally, and from a largely US perspective, see also Christopher M. Blanchard, CRS (Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress) Islamic Religious Schools, *Madrasas: Background*. Order Code RS21654 Updated January 23, 2007. This report was originally written by Febe Armanios. It has been updated by Christopher Blanchard to include information relevant to the first session of the 110th Congress. Christopher M. Blanchard in an analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division.

⁹⁸ I have defined this concept in the introduction to the book, *Language, Thought, Education and the Civilization of Islam: Essays in Honour of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas*, by Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud and M Zainiy Uthman (eds.) (Skudai: UTM Press, 2010), pp, 50-51. As a comparison, pls see also the excellent work on Gulen by Mehmet Enes Ergene, *Tradition Witnessing the Modern Age: An Analysis of the Gulen Movement* (New Jersey: Tughra, 2009) especially pp. 106-113.

⁹⁹ Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, p. 130.

observed in China, and other East Asian societies.¹⁰⁰

The works of all creative traditional Muslim thinkers and reformers are dynamic in the sense that they reflect continuous mental and physical activities, which seek to solve some historical, conceptual, and practical problems. Their solutions are largely or wholly new, yet these do not fundamentally alter but elaborate, refine, and strengthen the metaphysical, ethical, legal, and social frameworks and principles of Islam. Hence they are stabilizing.

Islamization is the process of such transformation. In the context of de-westernizing and decolonizing higher education in the Muslim societies in the modern era, especially since the early 1970s, most discourses on the end products of Islamization of education deal with the writing of textbooks, reforming academic disciplines, and creating or reforming social-cultural and economic institutions. What seemed to be forgotten or taken for granted is the fact that the final purpose of the de-westernization, de-colonization, and Islamization of contemporary knowledge and education should actually focus on the creation of the right kind of human being who will perform his or her various roles in society. The project of de-colonization, de-westernization, and Islamization is not a mere reaction to external un-Islamic circumstances; but more importantly, and essentially, a returning to Man's original purpose and Nature which brings us to the purpose of the acquisition and transmission of knowledge and the meaning and purpose of education.

Human capital development in Islam is centrally rooted in education, whose purpose, as will be elaborated later in this lecture, is not merely to produce a good citizen of a nation-state nor a good worker of a corporation, but more fundamentally, a good man, a man of *adab*.¹⁰¹ A good citizen or worker in a secular state or organization may not necessarily be a good man; but a good man, however, will definitely be a good worker and citizen.¹⁰² It is obvious that if an employer or state is good as defined from the holistic Islamic framework, then being a good worker and citizen may be synonymous with being a good man. But an Islamic state presupposes the existence and active involvement of a critical mass of Islamically-minded men and women. Stressing the individual implies knowledge about intelligence, virtue, and the spirit, and about one's ultimate destiny and purpose. This is so because intelligence, virtue, and the spirit are elements inherent in the individual, whereas stressing society and state opens the door to legalism and politics. The primary focus on the individual is so fundamental because the ultimate purpose and end of ethics in Islam is

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 119-162.

¹⁰¹ S.M.N al-Attas, *IS*, p. 141.

¹⁰² S.M.N. al-Attas, *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin* (Message to Muslims). A long manuscript dictated to his secretary in March 1973, para 14, pp. 51-52. This work was later published with the same title by ISTAC in 2001 idem, *Islam: The Meaning of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality* (Petaling Jaya: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, 1976), pp. 33-34; idem, editor. *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education* (London: Hodder & Stoughton/King A. Aziz University, 1979), pp. 32-33, also idem, *CEII*, p. 25. I have elaborated this idea of al-Attas in my article, "Insan Baik Teras Kewarganegaraan" (The Good Man as the Core of the Good Citizen), *Pemikir*, January-March 1996, pp. 1-24.

the individual.¹⁰³ It is because of this notion of individual responsibility and accountability as a moral agent that in Islam it is the individual that shall be rewarded or punished on the Day of Judgment. Since higher learning institutions, especially the university, is the most architectonic and strategic institution to educate and train critically important individuals and reform society—where the process of Islamization should be best articulated and discussed—the proper conception of the university in Islam should first be understood.

The Concept of the University in Islam

The vision for a modern Islamic university capable of responding to the challenges of modern Western epistemological, cultural, social-political and economic ideas and influences was well understood by some of our most insightful thinkers who understood that the real crux of the problems arising in Muslim nations is the problem of knowledge. It was proposed that an Islamic University be established whose structure, conception of what constitutes knowledge, aims and objectives of education are different from those of modern secular Universities. The purpose of higher education is not to produce the complete citizen, but rather, to produce the complete man, or the universal man. A Muslim scholar is a man who is not a specialist in any one branch of knowledge but is universal in his outlook and is authoritative in several branches of related knowledge.¹⁰⁴

The concept of a university, just like any other key concepts in Islam, reflects the spirit of dynamic stabilism, in the sense that although it has certain permanent foundational features, it also contains principles and methods that allow for transformations, and adaptation to new situations.¹⁰⁵ These conceptual and intellectual foundations, developed by authoritative scholars, were among the most important aspects of higher educational institutions supported by the generous patronage of wealthy individuals and rulers in the past. The great Muslim higher educational institutions, whether they be *Jamiah*, *madrassah*, *khaniqah-zawiyah*, or *tekkes*, or in the Malay world, *pesantrens* or *pondoks*, built their vision and programs around prominent, charismatic scholars.¹⁰⁶ It can be safely

¹⁰³ *IS*, p. 70; refer also to the *hadith* of the Prophet in Muslim, *Sahih: kitab 'amr bil ma'ruf wa nahy 'anil munkar*, (70) 49: "Whosoever sees an evil action (*munkar*), he should change it with his hand, if not with his tongue, if not with his heart, and the latter is the weakest in faith."

¹⁰⁴ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Letter to the Islamic Secretariat, dated 15th May 1973, pp. 1-2. For a detailed discussion on the idea and reality of the Islamic University, see Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Educational Philosophy*, Chap 4.

¹⁰⁵ Compare this to educationism, the fixed and unchanging concept of the University and its sector, in Roger Dale, "Repairing the Deficits of Modernity", p. 15.

¹⁰⁶ On traditional Muslim higher learning, see Ahmad Shalaby, *History of Muslim Education (Beirut: Dar al-Kashshaf, 1954)*; Bayard Dodge, *Al-Azhar; A Millenium of Muslim Learning* (Washington, D.C. The Middle East Institute, 1961); idem, *Muslim Education in Medieval Times* (Washington D.C; The Middle East Institute, 1962); Mehdi Nakosteen, *History of Islamic Origins of Western Education A.D. 800-1350* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1964); Munir ud-Din Ahmed, *Muslim Education and the Scholar's Social Status Up to the 5th Century Muslim Era (11th Century Christian Era) in the Light of Tarikh Baghdad* (Zurich: Verlag der Islam 1968); Gorge Makdisi,

asserted that Islamic education at its apogee, centered around scholars, who became institutions. Prospective students were strongly advised to choose their teachers carefully based on their learning, character, and experience.¹⁰⁷ A similar trend could also be seen in the age of antiquity in the Western world and in the early period of the growth of some medieval Western universities in Spain, Italy, France and England.¹⁰⁸ Although this practice continues into the modern age, where individual academic stars are sought after by universities and students, the corporate nature of the academic institution has largely replaced the individual authority of scholars.

Conceptually, the establishment of the Muslim institution of higher learning as a microcosm of an ideal Islamic university depended on the vast experience and multi-disciplinary abilities of its highest and organizational academic leader. The philosophy of a Muslim higher educational institution pertaining to education and research "... is based on the scientific concept that knowledge is universal (*kulliy*), i.e. knowledge possesses a universal characteristic that encompasses all aspects of life and creation. Knowledge should reflect the universal; and research in specialized areas should be done not only to understand the specifics but also to understand their relationship vis-à-vis the whole".¹⁰⁹ Organizationally, the university should not be divided into separate and mutually exclusive departments as is commonly done in academic faculties of most modern universities.¹¹⁰

There are a few fundamental structural, epistemological, and teleological differences between an Islamic "university" and a secular Western university. It is quite unjustified

The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981); Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islam Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); A. Chris Eccel, *Egypt, Islam and Social Changer: Al-Azhar in Conflict and Accomodation* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1984); Mahmud Yunus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Mutiara, 1966), Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement 1900-1942* (Singapore: OUP, 1973); Mehmet Ipsirli, "Scholarship and Intellectual Life in the Reign of Suleyman the Magnificent", in Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Turkish Republic, *The Ottoman Empire in the Reign of Suleyman the Magnificent*. 2 parts in 1 (Ankara: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 1988), 2:15-58.

¹⁰⁷ Burhan al-Din al-Zarnuji, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim: Tariq al-Ta'allum* (Instruction of the Student: The Method of Learning). Trans, and Intro. By G. E. Von Grunebaum and T. A. Abel (New York: King's Crown Press, 1947), pp. 28-29.

¹⁰⁸ On the rise of higher education in Antiquity, and in the Medieval West, see H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*. Trans. George Lamb (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1982); Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*. Edited by F.M. Powicke and A. B. Emden. 3 Vols. New Edition of 1936. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Charles Homer Haskins, *The Rise of Universities*. Reprint of 1923 ed. (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univesity Press, 1957).

¹⁰⁹ See "Dasar dan Matlamat", in *Rencana Pengajian Lanjutan Serta Luasan Penyelidikan dan Dasar Ilmiah Institut Bahasa. Kesusasteraan dan Kebudayaan Melayu*, Univeristi Kebangsaan Malaysia. N.d, p. 3.

¹¹⁰ See *Buku Panduan Jabatan Bahasa dan Kesusasteraan Melayu*, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1972, p. 37. This catalogue contains a 32-page introduction on the rationale of the academic program and vision of the Institute, written by Prof. al-Attas.

to equate the early Muslim institutions of higher learning, such as the *madrasah*, with the term “university” viewed generally with the Western, and particularly secular, conception.¹¹¹ However there have been attempts to make the early Western university conceptually and historically *totally different* from Islamic institutions of higher learning (*madrasah* or *jami’ah*) and thereby to erase the influences of the latter on the former. It is true that the Western term “university” from the Latin *universitas*, in some respects, differs greatly from the Islamic *Jami’ah* or *madrasah*. Conceptually, and as understood in its original Western sense, “university” means a number, a plurality, and an aggregate of persons. In the context of education, the term “university” meant either a guild or corporation of masters; as in Paris, or of students; as in Bologna, both of which flourished at the end of the 12th Century A.D. These two universities are regarded as archetypal Western universities. According to Rashdall, the medieval Western university never meant a school in which all faculties or branches of knowledge were represented. In fact, the term, which most closely corresponds to the vague and indefinite English notion of a university, is not *universita*, but *stadium generale*; which pertains not to a place where all subjects are studied, but to a place where students from all parts are received. These two distinct terms and concepts later became inseparable and synonymous.¹¹² Makdisi, by analyzing the similarities in organization and financial aspects, equates the Muslim *madrasah* with the Western colleges, which were funded by personal or family-based charitable trust (sing, *waqf*, pl: *awqaf*) and which were relatively independent of state control.¹¹³

Despite these, and many other fundamental differences, especially after the spread of secular ideologies in Western universities, there remain many important parallels between Islamic institutions of higher learning and those of the medieval West, the forms of which are still evident today. These forms are rightly considered indicative of the influence of the former on the latter.

It is argued that the term *universitatem* clearly reflects the original Islamic *kulliyah*, which refers to a concept conveying the idea of the universal. *Kulliyah* also refers to a system of order and discipline pertaining to the organization, inculcation, and dissemination of knowledge.¹¹⁴ This does not mean, however, that all sciences are taught at one place. Another important feature of the Western university, which was most possibly influenced by Islam, is the concept of the *faculty*, which is the Latin translation of the Arabic *quwwah*. The Islamic concept of *Quwwah*, which refers to a power inherent in a human soul and his bodily organs, had inspired the Western concept of *faculty* due to the early and great

¹¹¹ George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1981) Appendix A, pp. 292-293.

¹¹² Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities*, 1: 4-20; also James B. Mullinger, “Universities”, in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 32 Vols. 13th ed. 1926. Vol. 27-28, pp. 748-779; also Haskins, *The Rise of Universities*, pp. 1-25.

¹¹³ Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges*, p. 225 and many other places.

¹¹⁴ S.M.N. al-Attas, *IS*, pp. 146-147.

influence of Islamic medicine in the West. This relationship also demonstrates that “since the concept ‘faculty’ refers to a human being in whom ‘knowledge’ subsists, and that this knowledge is the governing principle determining his thought and action, the university must have been conceived in emulation of the general structure, in form, function and purpose, of man. It was meant to be a microcosmic representation of man – indeed, of the Universal Man (*al-insan al-kulliy*).¹¹⁵

Another major aspect in which the Islamic influence showed its permanent impact on the Western university is the practice of issuing the licence of expertise, or the licence to teach, known as the *‘ijazah*; which was never a part of higher education in ancient Greece or Rome or in the Eastern Christian Byzantine tradition.¹¹⁶ Another significant influence is in the methods of education; particularly the lecture (*qira’at*), note-writing, or report of courses by students (*ta’liqat*), and disputation (*tariqat an-nazar*); and also in the scholastic methods, which include dialectics (*jadal*), discourse (*munazara*), and lecture (*qir’at*).¹¹⁷ The institutionalization of the academic “Chair”, currently common in major Western universities, is a direct translation of an Islamic institution, which, in Arabic, is termed *al-kursi*. The apparent conceptual and organizational differences cited by Rashdall and Makdisi and others between the Islamic *madrasah* and the medieval university indicated above do not necessarily show that the two were totally different. For in some ways, these two institutions were similar: both were generally effectively independent of political control, and both accepted teachers and students from all parts who were willing to abide by the prevailing standards. Similarly, but for different reasons, not all the sciences were taught in the *madrasah* even in its most glorious period. However, with the hierarchy of knowledge scheme and the decentralization of educational and professional activities, people acquired higher education and training in various formal and informal institutions, such as the mosque (*jami’*), the *maktab* and *madrasah*, the *bayt al-hikmah* and *dar al-ulum*, the gatherings of scholars and students (*majalis*), the *zawiyah* of the Sufi fraternities, as well as the hospitals, observatories, and privately owned centers of arts and crafts.

So when we use the term “Islamic university” to refer to our concept of a university, we certainly do not mean a mere replica of the secular Western conception of the university, even though the latter’s corporate nature is not inherently unacceptable to the higher educational framework of Islam. Thus, for example, a modern Islamic university may issue degrees (*‘ijazah*) based on the institutional standards agreed upon by the collective authority of masters, and may be organizationally supported by funds from sources other than *awqaf* or charitable trusts, as commonly done in the West.

One of the most effective and powerful Muslim critiques of the modern secular university, is by al-Attas, who says that the modern university no longer reflects the true man but the state; or at best, the secular man. The modern university has no abiding vital center

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges*, p. 272.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 241-245; see also Munir ud-Din Ahmad, *Muslim Education*, pp. 55-84, end 93-99.

and no permanent underlying principle establishing its final purpose. Not recognizing and acknowledging the existence of the spirit or the soul, it concerns itself primarily with the administrative functions of social maintenance, financial and physical development, and espouses a relativistic principle urging on incessant research with no absolute end in view, resulting in perpetual change, and even skepticism.¹¹⁸ The lack of a vital center and permanent principle, which seems to pervade all aspects of modern secular education in the USA, may be generally true everywhere else:

“...Our educational establishment has no clear idea of its direction and its goals; it has no unifying and ordering conception of itself or its purpose. The component parts of the system are each going separate ways. The high school is directed towards a mass egalitarian conception of a literate democracy; the college of liberal arts is torn between general education and early specialization; the graduate and professional schools are moving steadily towards complete specialization and vocationalism. There is little cooperation between the parts at present...”¹¹⁹

The more traditional conception of the modern Western university, containing positive emphasis on the development of the intellect as well as service to society can be seen from the often-quoted statement of Sir Eric Ashby:

“...the word university stands for something unique and precious in European society: a leisurely and urbane attitude to scholarship, exemption from the obligation to use knowledge for practical ends, a sense of perspective which accompanies the broad horizon and the distant view, and opportunity to give undivided loyalty to the kingdom of the mind. (At the same time)...the university is an institution with urgent and essential obligations to modern society; a place to which society entrusts its most intelligent young people and from which it expects to receive its most highly trained citizens: a place which society regards as the pace-maker for scientific research and technological progress”.¹²⁰

New Public Management of Universities

The philosophy and practice of the modern university everywhere since the beginning of 20th century has been based on the Western model, which has evolved from the religious-philosophical idealist orientation to that of national-development, and now, to the economically pragmatic institutions in various shades. Such development had already spread in the US public schools in the 1900s when the larger educational goals were

¹¹⁸ See also Al-Attas, *IS*, p. 147-148.

¹¹⁹ William C. Devanne, “The College of Liberal Arts”. *Deadalus*, Vol. 94, 1964, p. 1035; see also an excellent article by W. Allen Wallis, “Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces in University Organization” in the same issue of *Deadalus*, pp. 1071-1082.

¹²⁰ E. Ashby, *Technology and the Academics* (London: MacMillan & Co, 1958) pp. 69-70, quoted from W. Allen Wallis, “Forces in University Organization” *Deadalus*. Vol. 94, No. 4. Fall, 1964, pp. 1073-1074.

sacrificed to the demands of business industry.¹²¹ Clark Kerr's observation, made some 40 years ago, is quite correct that modern universities no longer reflect their eponymous origin as understood by Cardinal John Henry Newman, and hence should be called multiversities; as they reflect multiple perspectives united only by certain bureaucratic and financial procedures. He observed that modern universities are no longer organisms but mechanisms.¹²² In 1998, Bill Readings talked about the culture wars within the university that wracked the ideals of the university and confounded the public in the last several decades. The University is now "an autonomous bureaucratic corporation", and is more responsive to the idea that what really matters today is "economic management" rather than dealing with social and cultural conflicts.¹²³

The prevailing philosophy and governance of modern universities and the higher education sector since the 1990s as a whole, has become increasingly financially pragmatic. This is the result of "another phase of the re-constitutive management of the deficits of modernity as providing the institutional base for neoliberal capitalism".¹²⁴ The universities are perceived as ineffective and inefficient and thus not fit to serve the purposes of neoliberal politics; and the neoliberal conception of globalization, especially in the form of the Knowledge economy, regards universities' mandate and capacity as inadequate to meet this new demands. Hence government funding was cut and universities were asked to find alternative funding from new stakeholders while at the same time increased government monitoring of allocated resources was instituted through processes known as New Public Management, which was later succeeded by a form of New Managerialism taken largely from profit-based private sector successes.¹²⁵

Higher education and knowledge production is a lucrative industry, although its economic and social benefits favor mostly American, British, and English-speaking nations. About a decade ago, international student mobility provided huge economic incomes for many countries, comprising 3.9% of the global services market, and generating revenues of more than USD\$30 billion in 1998. In 2003-2004, 'export education' formed Australia's fourth largest export, generating USD5.9 billion to its economy.¹²⁶ Even within these nations,

¹²¹ See Raymond E. Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency: A Study of the Social Forces that Have Shaped the Administration of Public Schools* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

¹²² See Craig Howard, *Theories of General Education* (Basingstoke/London: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 64-74.

¹²³ Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹²⁴ Roger Dale, "Repairing the Deficits of Modernity", p. 20.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

¹²⁶ Britez and Peters, "Internationalisation and the Cosmopolitical University." In D. Epstein, R. Boden, R. Deem, F. Rizvi and S. Wright, eds. *Geographies of Knowledge, Geometries of Power: Framing the Future of Higher Education*. World Yearbook of Education 2008 (New York and London: Taylor and Francis, 2007), p. 362.

there exists gross differentiation between universities that seems to be monopolized by the already prestigious academic and commercial institutions. In the most important area of publishing, the financial intrusion into scholarly communication hurt the free and low-cost transmission of knowledge by universities, which may ultimately affect public good. About a decade ago, seven multinational companies earned 45% of the USD\$11 billion global market in science, technology, and medical journals; the price of which had risen by 600% between 1985-2002. It is reported that a few of these companies may merge into the biggest global publishing house. The profitability of these companies will surely increase exponentially because its growing market is closely tied to the properly articulated ideology of professional excellence of the academics and the ranking of their universities.¹²⁷

Strengthening a nation's research and publications industry is closely linked to its success in competing for global knowledge and information.¹²⁸ Global competitiveness in the present-day and in the future will most probably be significantly determined by the control of information and expertise as prophesied by an influential French academician, Francois Lyotard almost four decades ago.¹²⁹

Neo-liberalism in the context of higher education, and the new managerialism that is connected with it, regard students, especially international students, as consumers; and university institutions articulate discourses and expectations of global mindedness, which equates cosmopolitan experiences with consumption. This unintentionally may lead to various forms of exclusion and marginalization for large portions of the world population, on the one hand, and on the other, breed a lack of concern or responsibility towards the others.¹³⁰

Harry Lewis argues that Harvard and other universities have lost their purpose and should have taught its students how to be better human beings in a world that is becoming more religious. Professors are becoming more narrowly specialized, and are interested only in their research, and students study what they want without direction. It is not concerned about values, or even about proper thinking. It is just a market for the production, exchange,

¹²⁷ Penny Ciancanelli, "(Re)producing universities: Knowledge dissemination, market power and the global knowledge commons," In D. Epstein, R. Boden, R. Deem, F. Rizvi and S. Wright, eds. *Geographies of Knowledge, Geometries of Power: Framing the Future of Higher Education*. World Yearbook of Education 2008 (New York and London: Taylor and Francis, 2007), p. 68-73.

¹²⁸ Philip G. Altbach, *Higher Education in the Third World*, Chapter 5: "The Distribution of Knowledge in the Third World."

¹²⁹ Lyotard wrote: "It is conceivable that nation states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory, and afterwards for control of access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labour. A new field is open for industrial and commercial strategies on the one hand, and political and military strategies on the other." Francois Lyotard, *The Post Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated from the French by G. Bennington and B. Massumi. Introduction by F. Jameson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 5; see also Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, "Reflections." In National Institute of Public Administration, *Malaysian Development Experience: Changes and Challenges* (Kuala Lumpur: National Institute of Public Administration, 1994), p. 868-869.

¹³⁰ Brites and Peters, "Internationalisation and the Cosmopolitical University," p. 366-367.

and consumption of information useful for those who provide them grants and finances such as corporations, governments, and present and prospective employers.¹³¹

Conscientious critics of the instrumentalization of knowledge in contemporary university culture do not deny the importance of the commercial or economic dimensions of the modern university, but they are concerned about the lack of balance between the humanistic and the instrumental. They are more concerned about the declining spirit of humanity. The fundamental challenge of modern universities is to fulfill what Roger Dale identifies as two distinct sets of roles, namely the global knowledge-economy and innovation, and social cohesion; especially at the national level.¹³² Echoing similar trends, and realizing the significant dehumanization of contemporary universities, Jon Nixon observes:

“Universities have become increasingly dominated by a language which fails to acknowledge the rich unpredictability of learning: a language of cost-efficiency, value for money, productivity, effectiveness, outcome delivery, target-setting, and auditing. The language of inputs and outputs, of clients and products, of delivery and measurement, of providers and users, is not just a different way of talking about the same thing. It radically alters what we are talking about. It constitutes a new way of thinking about teaching and learning. Ultimately it affects how we teach and how we learn. It has designs upon us and upon what we understand by academic practice....Universities need to restore a public language of education and learning which has the capacity to affirm and construct an educated citizenry.”¹³³

The dehumanization of the university's function has turned universities into diploma factories and high-end academic super-markets where anybody with minimal qualities and necessary financial means can acquire the object of their desire, dictated mostly by immediate socio-economic and national considerations.¹³⁴ It has been suggested that universities, particularly in developing nations, which purport to satisfy the needs of the society or state and the immediate requirements of economic development, may actually be hiding their academic mediocrity.¹³⁵ Concern regarding increasing commercialization

¹³¹ Harry Lewis, *Excellence Without a Soul: Does Liberal Education Have a Future?* (Philadelphia: Public Affairs, 2007).

¹³² Dale, “Repairing the Deficits of Modernity”, p. 26.

¹³³ Jon Nixon, *Towards The Virtuous University: The Moral Bases of Academic Professionalism* (New York and London, Routledge, 2008), p. 11.

¹³⁴ See Eli M. Oboler, *Ideas and the University Library: Essays of an Unorthodox Academic Librarian* (Westport, Conn, and London: Greenwood Press, 1977), p. 14; and see also Ronald Dore, *The Diploma Disease: Education, Qualification and Development* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976).

¹³⁵ See for example, Jon Lauglo, “The ‘Utilitarian University’, the ‘Centre of Academic Learning’ and Developing Countries”, and Asbjorn Lovbraek, “Experience and Future Prospects for North-South University Co-operation”, both in Atle Hetland (ed.) *Universities and National Development. A Report of the Nordic Association for the Study of Education in Developing Countries* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksel International, 1984), pp. 74-84 and pp. 164-165, respectively.

of contemporary British universities has motivated a group of about 65 prominent British public intellectuals, thinkers and astronomers to launch a new campaign called, The Council for the Defense of British Universities (CDBU), which was officially launched on the 13th of November 2012 at the British Academy, London. It seeks to defend academic values and institutions against the interference from governments and politicians, and from excessive commercialization.¹³⁶

Recently, Jon Nixon argues quite compellingly for the establishment of the Virtuous university by attempting to define the moral bases of academic professionalism in four key areas of teaching, research, and scholarship, and collegial relations. These activities are “not merely contingent, but necessary, since these activities comprise a moral unity based on their shared goods.”¹³⁷ The four virtues which he advocated to be deliberated and practiced within these four activities are Truthfulness: Accuracy and Sincerity; Respect: Attentiveness and Honesty; Authenticity: Courage and Compassion: and Magnanimity: Autonomy and Care, interpreted from the Greek philosophers, especially Aristotle, with a modern democratic bent.¹³⁸ Recognizing the increasingly international and global nature of contemporary universities, and the need for humanizing them, Brites and Peters share “a vision of a cosmopolitical project of university.”¹³⁹ Contrary to being merely abstract, ethical, or normative on the one hand, and economic on the other, this project aims at applying the practice of diversity. It offers “opportunities for the development of intellectual, social, and life skills in their graduates, of the practice and experience of being a cosmopolitan citizen and something more than mere accreditation or perfunctory training for entrance into transnational labor markets and into a form of ‘world citizenship’.”¹⁴⁰

The Perfect Man and the Islamic University

As stated earlier, the Islamic system of education, particularly the university, should reflect a good man, and not the state or business corporation as envisaged by secular philosophy.¹⁴¹ Man, in Islam, is of a dual nature---wherein his body and the spirit are integrally united---and who represents a microcosm of the whole universe.¹⁴² On this, early Muslim spiritual authorities stated:

¹³⁶ *The Guardian* (London). Thursday 8th November 2012. See also the website of the Council for the Defense of British Universities. www.cdbu.org.uk.

¹³⁷ Jon Nixon, *Towards The Virtuous University*, p. 2.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Brites and Peters, “Internationalisation and the Cosmopolitical University”, p. 356.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

¹⁴¹ Al-Attas, *IS*, 144; also his *CEII*, p. 39.

¹⁴² Al-Attas, *IS*, pp. 135-136; idem, *CEII*, p. 40; and idem, *A Commentary on Hujjat al-Siddiq*, pp. 367-372. For a more detailed discussion on this, see Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Educational Philosophy*, pp. 174-224.

“In the composition of man are united all the meanings (*ma’ani*) of the existents, both simple and compound...because man is the compound of the coarse body and the single spiritual soul. Because of this, sages named man the microcosm and the universe the big man. When man really knows himself in terms of the marvels of the composition of his body, fineness of its structure, and the manner of the actions of the powers of the soul in it, and the manifestations of the actions of the soul through it, namely firm works and perfect crafts, then he is ready to judge (*qiyas*) all the meanings (*ma’ani*) of the sensible by analogy with it, and infer from it all the meanings of the intelligible of the two worlds altogether.”¹⁴³

The relationship between the concept of Man as a microcosmic representation (*‘alam saghir*) of the universe (*al-‘alam al-kabir*), the various branches of knowledge, and the organization, instruction, inculcation, and dissemination of knowledge in the university has been compellingly argued by al-Attas.¹⁴⁴

The man that is reflected in all aspects of the university, as indicated above is not just any man, but a good man, the best of whom is the Universal or Perfect Man (*al-insan al-kulliy* or *al-kamil*). The idea of the Universal Man or the Perfect Man has a long history in the Islamic intellectual tradition, particularly as understood, practiced and disseminated by the higher Sufis such as Ikhwan al-Safa’, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, Muhyi al-Din Ibn ‘Arabi, Sadr al-Din al-Qunyawi, ‘Abd al-Razzaq al-Qashani, ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Jami, ‘Abd al-Karim al-Jili, Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi (Mulla Sadra), Nur al-Din al-Raniri, and others.¹⁴⁵ The Universal Man has been identified with the Prophet Adam, and culminated in its perfect manifestation with the Prophet Muhammad (May the blessings of God be upon them); both of whom are God’s vicegerents on earth. Other human beings, such as prophets, saints, and those who are deeply rooted in knowledge and spiritual discernment are also qualified to be God’s vicegerents.¹⁴⁶ Therefore an Islamic university should reflect the Holy Prophet in knowledge and action in its duty to produce Muslim men and women who reflect the qualities of the Holy Prophet as much as possible according to their respective potentialities and abilities.¹⁴⁷ This normative position is based on the Qur’anic dictum that

¹⁴³ Ikhwan al-Safa, *Rasa’il*, 3:188 quoted from Masataka Takeshita, *Ibn ‘Arabi’s Theory of the Perfect Man and Its Place in the History of Islamic Thought* (Tokyo: Institute For the Study of Language and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1987), pp. 90-91.

¹⁴⁴ Al-Attas, *IS*, p. 144., also his *CEII*, p. 39.

¹⁴⁵ Al-Attas, *A Commentary on Hujjat al-Siddiq of Nur al-Din al-Raniri* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture, 1986), p. 44.

¹⁴⁶ See R. A. Nicholson, *The Idea of Personality in Sufism* (Lahore: Sh., Muhammad Ashraf, 1970) Reprint of 1964: pp 70-85; idem, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* 1974 edition s.v. “*al-Insan al-Kamil*”; Masataka Takeshita, *Ibn ‘Arabi’s Theory*, Chaps, 2 and 3; and Ibn ‘Arabi, *The Bezels of Wisdom*. Trans, and intro. By R. W. J. Austin. The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York, Ramsey, Toronto: Paulist Press, 1980), Introduction, pp. 32-38.

¹⁴⁷ Al-Attas, *CEII*, p. 39-40

the Holy Prophet is the best model for Muslims (*uswah hasanah*)¹⁴⁸ and is, by virtue of his knowledge and model actions, the most God-fearing, and therefore the most honored.¹⁴⁹

Several Christian educational thinkers such as Cardinal John Henry Newman and Jean Jacques Maritain may also subscribe to the idea that an ideal university should be a place where universal knowledge is taught, and that the purpose is to educate for manhood and womanhood,¹⁵⁰ but they—and in fact other traditions as well—neither possess nor stress the model of a universal man from whom such knowledge is reflected.¹⁵¹ It is perhaps because of this that their conception of universal knowledge is limited to the emphasis on humanistic and liberal education rooted in faith as opposed to narrow specialization. Rodrigo Britez and Michael A Peters, in their argument against narrow vocational and specialized training in the universities in a globalized setting, suggest the “cultivation of a specific type of cosmopolitan self” that concentrates on “projects of organization of difference that cultivate a perspective that seriously engages with the values of diversity.”¹⁵² The culture of the institutions would be not merely to increase academic products but more importantly, to exemplify diversity as the core apparatus of the university culture. This ethical aspect is also critically related to the social and political roles of the universities, which are still not adequately answered.¹⁵³ The curricular content suggested for the cultivation of this cosmopolitan self at the universities, currently dominated by the Enlightenment modernity project, should be based on the liberal arts and humanities that are free from traditional and local frameworks of reference, broadened to include claims of local autonomy made by various indigenous, ethnic, linguistic, and social minorities. This humanistic view of cosmopolitanism, at the political level, as suggested by Derrida, would incorporate ancient concepts of friendship, the ethics of hospitality, forgiveness, and the gift and the invitation of mutual responsibility.¹⁵⁴

The idea that an Islamic institution of higher learning should reflect a universal man also means that the very academic, social and, if possible, even the physical structure of the institution itself will have to be different from what is generally known in practice. The priorities, powers, functions and deployment of faculties and departments within it—if the institution has these structures—as well as its administration, will also not be similar to

¹⁴⁸ *Al-Ahzab* (33): 21

¹⁴⁹ *Al-Hujurat* (49): 13

¹⁵⁰ Jacques Maritain, *Education at The Crossroads*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1943) pp. 75-84. Also Jean-Louis Allard, *Education For Freedom: The Philosophy of Education of Jacques Maritain*. Tran, by R.C. Nelson, (Notre Dame and Ottawa: University of Notre Dame Press and Univ. of Ottawa Press, 1982), pp. 96-102.

¹⁵¹ Al-Attas, *IS*, pp. 1 147-148.

¹⁵² Rodrigo Britez and Michael A Peters, “Internationalisation and the Cosmopolitical University.” In *Geographies of Knowledge*, p. 368.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 367-369.

what is currently in practice.¹⁵⁵ The implications of this idea—that the institution of higher learning should reflect the universal man—will entail the following:

Firstly, it must be led by an academic leader who possesses the requisite knowledge of, and commitment to, the religious-philosophical and social-cultural dimensions of education—besides his specialized training in other fields—as well as his ethical integrity and leadership experience. He must be given the trust to appoint his staff and to develop the institution according to his knowledge and wisdom in consultation with his colleagues. The success of his leadership should be determined by the quality of institutional ethos, teaching, and research and publications in *fardu ain* and *fard kifayah* sciences, which contribute to the holistic development of the students, their nation, and the world community. The administrative and financial divisions of an institution that reflect such a conception of a human being should be wholly supportive of its intellectual and moral activities. They should be creative and innovative and not obstructive by creating bureaucratic red-tape and un-necessary documentations in the name of transparency.

Secondly, the academic program must be based on a hierarchical scheme, which, at the same time, emphasizes the unity of knowledge. The choice of subjects for students must be determined by both the students (and their parents or sponsors) and teachers based on the Islamic hierarchy of knowledge; the interests, intellectual capacities, and moral equipment of each student; and the justified needs of the Community and Nation. The concept of an Islamic institution of higher learning, which reflects a universal man, also means that its educational scope should be comprehensive and multi-disciplinary and not limited by narrow specialization. It does not recognize the contemporary dualistic notion of research and teaching as if the former is more worthy and therefore more prestigious than the latter. Its intellectual approach integrates harmoniously the traditional or textual (*naqli*), the rational (*aqli*), and the empirical (*tajribi*); according to requirements of the objects of study. This is described by al-Attas as the *Tauhid* method.¹⁵⁶ The purpose of research and writing is to make an original contribution, to complete the works of earlier scholars that were not completed, to correct what is deemed erroneous, to make commentaries, to summarize longer works without leaving out important parts, to compile information from various sources, to synthesize and arrange various information into a unified and coherent whole, and to translate important and meaningful works from other languages into the national language and vice versa.¹⁵⁷

A Universal Man is authoritative in several fields. Hence, Islamic higher educational institutions should offer broad-based, and not narrow, specialized programs. Broad-based specialization is important for several deeply humane and spiritual reasons. First, specialization is an extension, and an acknowledgement, of an aspect of reality that

¹⁵⁵ Al-Attas, *CEII*, p. 45

¹⁵⁶ Al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, p. 113; Wan Mohd Nor, *Educational Philosophy*, pp. 265, 268-271.

¹⁵⁷ See also Ibn Hazm, *al-Akhlaq wal Siyar*. In *Pursuit of Virtues: The Moral Reasoning and Psychology of Ibn Hazm*. Translation by Muhammad Abu Laylah (London: Ta Ha, 1998), p. 21.

is unique and different. It is only in such a condition that the meaning, and ultimately, the knowledge of a thing can be possible.¹⁵⁸ Second, it is only through specialization that cooperation and mutual respect among diverse human roles becomes natural and necessary. Third, specialization enables the execution of ontological or natural justice, a condition where every thing is in its right and proper place.¹⁵⁹ And fourthly, as indicated implicitly by Ibn Khaldun, narrow specialization, whether in academic matters or in crafts, develops deeply rooted habits and qualities in the soul; which, with rare exceptions, would prevent a person from equally mastering another science or craft.¹⁶⁰ The rise of a newer form of barbarism in Europe and the West, according to Ortega Y. Gasset, is due largely to the profusion of narrow specialization in higher education. Christian thinkers such as Maritain seem to concur with this when they characterize modern specialized education as animalistic.¹⁶¹

It is also for these very reasons that the courses offered should not be organized into strict and mutually exclusive departmental structures, for this will not only be a wastage and duplication of resources but also harmful to the holistic growth of students' intellectual development. Rather, each student should be required to take courses according to the moral, and mutually connected, categories of *fard 'ain* and *fard kifayah*, respecting his unique capacities and interests, thus doing justice to each individual, and to the (projected) needs of the Community. *Fard 'ain* knowledge is religiously obligatory—it is to be studied and mastered by all mature and free Muslims, whereas *fard kifayah* is obligatory not for all, but for a sufficient number of such Muslims in the Community. Great scholars such as Ibn Sina, have long recognized that the feverish attempts to level all students—in pursuit of utopian and imaginary equality—have produced great injustices and harm.¹⁶²

Contrary to some opinions, *fard 'ain* knowledge is not limited to the basic Islamic knowledge learned at the primary and secondary school levels, but is a dynamic and ever-expanding field depending on the maturity and capacity of a person, as has been brilliantly explained by al-Ghazali more than 900 years ago; followed by Burhan al-Din al-Zarnuji and restated in our times by al-Attas.¹⁶³ In a proper Islamic University, *fard 'ain* knowledge which represents the permanent intellectual and spiritual needs of the human

¹⁵⁸ Al-Attas, *CEII*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁵⁹ Al-Attas, *IPS*, p. 34, and other earlier writings.

¹⁶⁰ 'Abd-al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*. Trans, Franz Rosenthal. 3 Vols. (New York: Pantheon / Bollingen, 1958), 2: 354-355.

¹⁶¹ Jose Ortega Y. Gasset, *Mission of the University*. Translated and edited by Howard L. Nostrand (New York: W. W. Norton, 1944), pp. 38-39; Jacques Maritain, *Education at the Crossroad* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1943).

¹⁶² M.N. Zanjani, *Ibn Sina wa tadbir-I manzil*, cited from S. H. Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (London and New York: KPI, 1987), note 13, p. 161.

¹⁶³ Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihya 'ulum al-Din*. Trans, Nabih Amin Faris. *The Book of Knowledge*, Reprint of 1962 edition (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1974), pp. 30-36; al-Zarnuji, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, pp. 21-22; al-Attas, *CEII*, p. 41.

soul—should form the core curriculum, and should be made obligatory to all students. *Fard kifayah* knowledge—reflecting societal needs and global trends—is not obligatory to all, but must be mastered by an adequate number of Muslims to ensure the proper development of the Community and to safeguard its proper place in world affairs. The *fard ‘ain* knowledge shall include knowledge of the traditional Islamic sciences such as the Arabic language, metaphysics, the Qur’an and Hadith, ethics, the shari’ah sciences, and the history of Islam. Consonant with our position that these *fard ‘ain* sciences are not static but dynamic, they should be continuously studied, analyzed, and applied in relation to the *fard kifayah* sciences; i.e. the fields of their specialization. Therefore the metaphysical and philosophical foundations and the socio-historical origins of the various *fardu kifayah* sciences and technologies as well their religio-moral, socio-economic, and ecological implications will be studied as part of the *fard ‘ain-fard kifayah* unity.¹⁶⁴ Therefore for those who choose a particular *fard kifayah* field as a specialization, it then becomes *fard ‘ain* for him to excel in that field and to ensure that its theory and practice be in accordance with Islamic teachings, or at least not contradictory to them. It is only at this level of attainment that the *raison d’être* of the servanthood (*‘ubudiyah*) and vicegerency (*Khilafah*) of man can be organically related and realized.

Thirdly, the human-relationships within the institution should be of mutual love and respect based on one’s love for, and contribution to knowledge and moral standing. Presently, such relationships in many educational institutions are very confused and are largely based on narrow bureaucratic positions and pragmatic motives. It has been suggested that many university lecturers and professors today—as a necessary result of the dehumanization of educational purpose—are acting more like bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, and politicians than as serious scholars and teachers.¹⁶⁵ The traditional teacher-student relationship, which historians regard as “one of the best features of Muslim education” must be resuscitated.¹⁶⁶ This suggestion may raise the eyebrows of some, who may opine that we are planning to revive the autocratic role of the teachers of old. What is being suggested is that the teachers—or lecturers—will be guides, mentors, and parents to each of their students, dealing with them with kindness, wisdom and justice, as elaborated upon by great teachers and scholars.¹⁶⁷

Finally, the fourth implication is reflected in the physical landscape, structure and décor of the building of an Islamic university. An Islamic man would be sensitive to the symbolic meaning of things and events and thus would choose spiritually meaningful dates and times, for example, in building his house, contracting marriage, or beginning a long journey.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Attas, *IS*, p. 150-152; Idem, *CEII*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁶⁵ W. Allen Wallis, “Forces in University Organization”, p. 1076.

¹⁶⁶ Dodge, *Muslim Education in Medieval Times*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya ‘Ulum al-Din*, pp. 145-153 al-Zarnuji, *Ta’alim al Muta’alim*, p. 36; Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, 3: 300 and 305-307.

A Man of Adab

An educated man is a good man, and by 'good' we mean a man possessing *adab* in its full inclusive sense. A man of *adab* (*insan adabi*) is "the one who is sincerely conscious of his responsibilities towards the true God; who understands and fulfills his obligations to himself and others in his society with justice, and who constantly strives to improve every aspect of himself towards perfection as a man of adab [*insan adabi*]"¹⁶⁸ Education, is thus *ta'dib*: the instilling and inculcation of *adab* in man.¹⁶⁹

The concept of *ta'dib*, if properly understood and competently explicated, is the correct concept of education in Islam, and not *ta'lim* or *tarbiyah*, which are currently in vogue among Muslims all over the world. This is because *ta'dib* already includes within its conceptual structure the elements of knowledge (*'ilm*), instruction (*ta'lim*), and good breeding (*tarbiyah*).¹⁷⁰ Although the Qur'an does not use the word *adab* or any of its derivatives, the word itself and some of its derivatives are mentioned in the traditions of the Holy Prophet and the Companions, in poetry, and in the works of later scholars, where *adab* had a wider and more profound meaning. Then it became restricted to only a few of its many significations, namely *belles-lettres* and professional and social etiquette.¹⁷¹

The content (*maudu'*) of *ta'dib*, according to early scholars, is *akhlaq* (ethics and morality).¹⁷² From the earliest Islamic times, *adab* was conceptually fused with right knowledge (*'ilm*) and proper and sincere action (*'amal*), and became significantly involved in the intelligent emulation of the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet.¹⁷³ *Adab* can be defined as follows:

¹⁶⁸ *Risalah*, para. 15, p. 54.

¹⁶⁹ *Aims and Objectives*, p. 37; see also Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, "Al-Attas' Concept of Ta'dib as the True and Comprehensive Education in Islam". In Marietta Stepanyants, ed. *Comparative Ethics in a Global Age* (Washington, DC: Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences/The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007), pp. 243-258.

¹⁷⁰ *CEII*, p. 34

¹⁷¹ There are at least 18 entries on *ta'dib*, *addaba*, and *adab*, many of which occur in more than one *Hadith* collection. See A. J. Wensinck and J. P. Mensing, *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane*. 7 Vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1943), 1: 26; Nasrat Abdel Rahman, "The Semantics of *Adab* in Arabic", *Al-Shajarah*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1997, pp. 189-207. In this paper Prof. Abdel Rahman painstakingly analysed the various shades of meanings of the term *adab* and its various derivatives, especially *ta'dib*, from about 50 major Arab authorities, and has generally confirmed the interpretation of al-Attas. F. Gabrieli, in his brief yet succinct exposition of *adab*, explains that in the first century of the hijrah, *adab* carried within it an intellectual, ethical, and social meaning. Later it came to mean a sum of knowledge which makes a man courteous and 'urbane', and by the time of al-Hariri in the 10th century C.E., in the meaning of *adab* had become restricted to a discipline of knowledge, namely *adabiyat* or literature. See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New Edition (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986) s.v. "*adab*".

¹⁷² Mahmud Qambar, *Dirasat turathiyyah fi 'l-tarbiyah al-islamiyyah*. 2 Vols. (Dhoha, Qatar: Dar al-Thaqafah, 1985), 1: 406.

¹⁷³ *CEII*, p. 35; cf. Nasrat Abdel Rahman, "The Semantics of *Adab*", pp. 2-18.

Recognition and acknowledgement of the reality that knowledge and being are ordered hierarchically according to their various grades and degrees of rank, and of one's proper place in relation to that reality and to one's physical, intellectual and spiritual capacities and potentials.¹⁷⁴

Recognition can be understood as *knowing again* (to re-cognize) one's Primordial Covenant with the Lord and everything that follows from it.¹⁷⁵ It also means that matters and things are already in their respective proper places in the various orders of being and existence, but that man, out of ignorance or arrogance, "makes alterations and confuses the places of things such that injustice occurs."¹⁷⁶ Acknowledgement is a requisite action in conformity with what is recognized. It is the 'affirmation' and 'confirmation' or 'realization' and 'actualization' in one's self of what is recognized. Without acknowledgement, education is nothing but mere learning (*ta'allum*).¹⁷⁷ The significance of the above meanings of *adab* as they relate to the education of a good man is further underscored when it is realized that the recognition, which involves knowledge, and acknowledgement, which includes action, of proper places explained in the section above, are related to other key terms in the Islamic worldview, such as wisdom (*hikmah*) and justice ('*adl*), and reality and truth (*haqq*). Reality and truth (*haqq*) are defined as both the correspondence and coherence with the right and proper place.¹⁷⁸

Several examples of how the notion of *adab* is manifested in the various levels of human existence can be cited. To put God in His proper place is to understand well His Attributes, Names, and Acts, without having to know His innermost essence; and to practice His religion in the right way, and as exemplified by His Prophet; and to leave behind those that God has forbidden and to constantly improve oneself and ask for His forgiveness. *Adab* towards one's self starts when one acknowledges one's dual nature, namely the rational and the animal. When the former subdues the latter and renders it under control, then one has put both of them in their proper places, thereby placing one's self in the right place.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ *CEII*, p. 27. Based on this definition of *adab*, al-Attas ingeniously elaborates on the statement of the Holy Prophet quoted above (God has educated me) in this manner: "My Lord made me recognize and acknowledge, by what [i.e., *adab*] He progressively instilled into me, the proper places of things in the order of creation, such that it led to my recognition and acknowledgement of His proper place in the order of being and existence; and by virtue of this He made my education most excellent." *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

¹⁷⁵ The Primordial Covenant which is cited by all *Sufis* is derived from the Qur'an 7:172: "When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam---from their loins---their decedents, and made them testify concerning themselves (saying): "Am I not your Lord?"---they all said: "Yea! We do testify!"

¹⁷⁶ *CEII*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Risalah*, para. 55, pp. 186-188; *idem*, *IPS*, p. 22.

¹⁷⁹ Al-Attas, "Address of Acceptance of Appointment to the al-Ghazzali Chair of Islamic Thought", in *Commemorative Volume on the Conferment of the al-Ghazzali Chair* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1994), p. 31.

Such a state is justice to one's self; otherwise it is injustice (*zulm al-nafs*). When *adab* is referred to human relationship, it means that the ethical norms which are applied to social behaviour would follow certain requirements based on one's standing in say, the family and society. One's standing "is not formulated by the human criteria of power, wealth, and lineage, but by the Qur'anic criteria of knowledge, intelligence and virtue."¹⁸⁰ To put Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in his proper place is to understand his most elevated stature, to follow his example without worshipping him, and to protect the rights of his companions and descendants. To put leaders in their proper place is to think honorably of them and their families, to support their policies and to advise them, and not to bring them down because of their mistakes or errors, which may affect public interest and national stability. However, we are never to obey or aid them in unjust or sinful acts. If one displays sincere humility, love, respect, care, charity, etc., to one's parents, elders, children, neighbors, and community leaders, it shows that one knows one's proper place in relation to them.

Referring to the domain of knowledge, *adab* means an intellectual discipline (*ketertiban budi*) which recognizes and acknowledges the hierarchy of knowledge based on the criteria of degrees of perfection (*keluhuran*) and priority (*keutamaan*), such that the ones that are based on revelation are recognized and acknowledged as more perfect and of a higher priority than those based on the intellect; those that are *fard 'ain* are above *fard kifayah*; those that provide guidance (*hidayah*) to life are more superior to those that are practically useful (*kegunaan amali*). *Adab* towards knowledge would result in the proper and correct ways of learning and applying the different sciences, where the metaphysical worldview, ethical-legal principles and concerns shape and guide the study and development of the humanities, social sciences, and natural and applied sciences. In conjunction with this, proper respect towards scholars, researchers, and teachers in various fields is one manifestation of the *adab* towards knowledge. It is a clear sign of the loss and confusion of *adab* towards knowledge in general and towards the religious and humanities in particular, if the methods of research and of evaluating professional excellence in the natural sciences and technological fields are employed to judge those in religious studies and the humanities. Likewise, it is an indication of the loss of *adab* if religious studies on Islam, which are based on Revealed Sources, are categorized under the humanities and social sciences.

For the natural world, *adab* means the discipline of the practical intellect (*akal amali*) in dealing with the hierarchical program that characterizes the world of nature such that a person can make a proper judgement concerning the true value of things as God's signs, as sources of knowledge, and things useful for the spiritual and physical development of man. In addition, *adab* towards nature and the natural environment means that one should put trees and stones, mountains, rivers, valleys and lakes, animals, and their habitat in their proper places. And *adab* towards language means the recognition and acknowledgement of the rightful and proper place of every word in a written or uttered sentence so as not

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

to produce a dissonance in meaning, sound, and concept. Literature is called *adabiyat* in Islam precisely because it is seen as the keeper of a civilization and the collector of teachings and statements that educate the self and society with *adab* such that both are elevated to the rank of the cultured man (*insan adabi*) and society.

For the spiritual world, *adab* means the recognition and acknowledgement of the degrees of perfection (*darajat keluhuran*) that characterize the world of the spirit; the recognition and acknowledgement of the various spiritual stations (*makam keruhanian*) based on acts of devotion and worship; the spiritual discipline which rightly submits the physical or animal self to the spiritual or rational self.¹⁸¹ No wonder then, that *adab* is also the spectacle of justice (*'adl*), as it is reflected by wisdom (*hikmah*).¹⁸² Therefore, by synthesising the meaning of knowledge, meaning, and *adab*, the complete definition of Islamic education is understood as the process of instilling the right *adab*, which includes the ultimate purpose, content, and method of education.¹⁸³

It is thus clear that education as *ta'dib* is different from mere instruction or professional training, which are most predominant in all of our higher educational systems. The distinction between education and training is also being made by many serious educationists in the West. They seem worried that modern education is more concerned with the training of students for different professions but not with respect to their education. While training can be performed on man and animals, education, properly speaking, can only be carried out for human beings.¹⁸⁴ The intellectual and professional excellence produced by world renowned higher learning institutions as a result of this type of training have been regarded as soulless.¹⁸⁵ Many parties have neglected the fundamental distinction between education and mere training because they have consciously or unconsciously erased the ontological boundary between man and animal, a condition which is at cross purposes with the Islamic worldview. It is heartening that Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) despite its highly technological nature, has shown a deep appreciation of the need to ground scientific and technical education and training on sound philosophical bases, reflecting our worldview and intellectual history. To indicate its seriousness and commitment to this tremendous task, in February 2011, it established the *Center for Advanced Studies on Islam, Science and Civilization* (CASIS).¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ *Risalah*, para. 47, pp. 155–157. Cf. *Acceptance Speech*, p. 31.

¹⁸² *CEI*, p. 23.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁸⁴ Marjorie Reeves, *The Crisis in Higher Education: Competence, Delight and the Common Good* (Milton Keynes, U.K: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press, 1988), pp. 2-3

¹⁸⁵ Harry R. Lewis, *Excellence Without a Soul: How a Great University Forgot Education* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006). Prof. Lewis was the Dean of Harvard College.

¹⁸⁶ Zaini Ujang, *New Academia: UTM as a Global Brand* (Johor Bahru: UTM Press, 2012); idem, *Revitalizing the Soul of Higher Learning* (Johor Bahru: UTM Press, 2013). In both volumes, he

The creative reintroduction of *ta'dib* as the comprehensive concept of Islamic education in an integrated and systematic manner is of great significance not only for the fact that it appears for the first time in the contemporary Muslim world, but more significantly, it provides an authentic, integrated, and comprehensive concept and powerful framework for our educational thinking and practice; especially at the University. Among contemporary Muslim thinkers, M Fethullah Gulen, besides al-Attas, has regularly and unapologetically emphasized the centrality of *adab* and overall human personality development as the central purpose of higher education. He stresses the development of Muslim personalities who are heroes of thought and action, and who transform themselves and their communities and seek to help mankind globally. In other words, the true purpose of his spiritual reform is to create universal men and women. They are what he terms, the "inheritors of the earth" (*warithun al-ardh*),¹⁸⁷ which he derives from the Holy Qur'an.¹⁸⁸ It should be stressed that Fethullah Gulen equates *adab* with true Sufism.¹⁸⁹ *Adab* is a very comprehensive spiritual, epistemological and ethical concept rooted in, first, *adab* towards with God, and spread to oneself, and everything else. I surmise that this *adab* is the one that creates and pervades all the attributes of the *warithun al-ardh* (inheritors of the earth).¹⁹⁰

Modern Western scholars who try to understand the great educational ideas of several civilizations concur that the Greek notion of *paideia* or cultural education and their understanding of an educated man remain among the most comprehensive and profound ever developed by the human race; yet the meanings contained in the concept of *paideia* clearly lacked the much needed spiritual element. It has been observed that Christian educational philosophy does have a clear spiritual root, but as evidenced in a larger part of its intellectual history, it did not show widespread and consistent inclination toward the non-religious sciences. Modern scholars have found a better integration of the religious and so-called secular sciences in the Muslim conception and practice of *adab*. Some have even suggested that the many advantages of *adab* as education par excellence can help solve some of the crises in modern education.¹⁹¹ Others have suggested the inculcation

speaks passionately about UTM's efforts to inculcate a profound and comprehensive knowledge culture, and to evaluate academic performance and contributions both on the tangible and intangible factors.

¹⁸⁷ The title of the Chap. 2 of his book, *Statue*, pp. –5-10.

¹⁸⁸ *Surah al-Anbiya* (21): 105—the promise which God gave to Moses, and to all Prophets (*wa laqad katabnafi'l-z-Zabur min ba'di-zikri annal al-ardha yarithuha 'ibadiya al-salihun* (Indeed We wrote in the Zabur (Psalms) that my Servants, the righteous, shall inherit the Earth.)"

¹⁸⁹ M. Fethullah Gulen, *Key Concepts in the Practice of Sufism: Emerald Hills of the Heart*. 4 Vols. Revised edition. (New Jersey: Fountain, 2004), 2: 14.

¹⁹⁰ Gulen, *Sufism*, 2: 13-17.

¹⁹¹ Peter Brown, "Late Antiquity and Islam: Parallels and Contrast," in Barbara Daly Metcalf, ed., *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 23-27. For a comprehensive and profound exposition of the Greek idea, see Werner Jaeger's classic work *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*. English translation

of mindfulness¹⁹² and civility¹⁹³. The advocates of the increasingly popular notion of global citizenship, as opposed to the national one, admits a dilemma of either perpetuating the long history of Western cultural imperialism if the Western liberal-democratic values are made to dominate in defining global cosmopolitanism than the non-western ones, or losing the West's own distinctive set of values if a broad range of cultural pluralism is accepted.¹⁹⁴ The age-old wisdom of Confucius concerning the foundational importance of truly good men and women (*chun-tzu*) in the creation of a peaceful world may be relevant even today.¹⁹⁵ African thinkers have been arguing for the inculcation of *Ubuntu*, a very fundamental concept in African philosophy and worldview, which is regarded as “a kind of human interconnectedness and dignity one has towards others, firstly in a cultural group to which one belongs, and secondly to all other human beings.”¹⁹⁶

Societal Development

The educational philosophy of Islam, especially at the higher level of the university and beyond, clearly emphasizes the comprehensive development of the individual; yet it is inseparably social in the manner and context of its fulfillment. The inseparability between the individual and society and of human brotherhood is derived not only from any historically documented social contract, but more fundamentally, from the Primordial Covenant (*surat al-A'raf* (7): 172) and from the meanings inherent in the concept of *din*. The first person plural employed therein (*bala shahidna!* Yea! We do bear witness!) means that each soul realizes its individuality as well as its relationship to each other and to their Lord.¹⁹⁷ That the purpose of knowledge in Islam is to produce a good man, does not necessarily imply

by Gilbert Highet, 3 Vols., 2nd Edition (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945).

¹⁹² Jeffery Sachs, *The Price of Civilization: Reawakening Virtue and Prosperity After the Economic Fall* (London: Vintage, 2012), pp. 161-184.

¹⁹³ See Os Guinness, *The Case for Civility and Why our Future Depends on It*. Harper Collins e-books, 2008.

¹⁹⁴ Rodrigo Britez and Michael A. Peters, “Internationalisation and the Cosmopolitical University”, p. 365.

¹⁹⁵ Confucius, *The Great Learning: A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. Translated by W. T. Chan (Princeton: Princeton University Press,), Chap. 1, p. 86; for more details, see Tran Van Doan, Ideological Education and Moral Education. In Tran Van Doan, Vincent Shen and George F. McLean, eds. *Chinese Foundations for Moral Education and Character Development* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1991), pp. 113-153.

¹⁹⁶ Y. Waghid and Paul Smeyers, “Reconsidering Ubuntu: On the Educational potential of a Particular Ethic of Care”, in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. Special Issue. *African Philosophy of Education*. Guest editors, Yusef Waghid and Paul Smeyers. Vol. 44, No. S2, Sept. 2012, p. 11; see also in the same journal, the article by Peter A. D. Beets, “Strengthening Morality and Ethics in Educational Assessment through *Ubuntu* in South Africa”, pp. 79-81; and by Lesley Le Grange, “*Ubuntu, Ukama* and the Healing of Nature, Self and Society”, pp. 56-67.

¹⁹⁷ *Risalah*, para. 13, p. 40, and para. 29, pp. 195-106; *IS*, pp. 69-70.

that it does not give importance to the production of a good society; for since society is composed of people, making everyone or most of them good produces a good society. A good individual is the fabric of society.¹⁹⁸

An individual is only so when he realizes simultaneously his unique individuality and the commonality between himself and other persons close to him and surrounding him. An individual is meaningless in isolation, because in such a context he is no longer an individual, he is everything. As seen from our brief exposition of the meaning of *adab*, it is clear now that a man of *adab* (*insan adabi*) is an individual who is fully conscious of his individuality and of his proper relationship with himself, his Creator, his society and other visible and invisible creatures of God. Therefore, in the Islamic sense, a good individual or a good man must naturally be a good servant to his Lord and Creator, a good father to his children, a good husband to his wife, a good son to his parents, a good neighbor to his neighbors, and a good citizen to his country. It is instructive to note that another term for *civilization* in the Malay language, besides *tamadun*, is *peradaban*, which denotes the comprehensive and multi-generational contributions of men and women of *adab*.

Although a society consists of individuals, the education of society cannot happen unless sufficient individuals are properly educated. Yet society, which is the whole, is greater than the sum of its parts.¹⁹⁹ Having said this, no Muslim who understands even a general worldview of the Qur'an would negate or neglect his societal duties, for he knows that even though God's judgment in the Hereafter is strictly individual in nature,²⁰⁰ yet His judgment in history is societal. This judgment of God in history generally does not affect the good men and women, except as trials, but sometimes even they may have to suffer if they do not perform their duties as required.²⁰¹ Without doubt, such an integration of the spiritual and ethical qualities is the highest end of the meaning of citizenship and vocation.²⁰² Furthermore, the proper understanding and implementation of *fard 'ain* (obligation towards the Self) and *fard kifayah* (obligation towards Society) categories of knowledge, would

¹⁹⁸ *CEII*, p. 25.

¹⁹⁹ Al-Attas, *Comments on the Reexamination of al-Raniri's Hujjat al-Siddiq: A Refutation* (Kuala Lumpur: Museum Department, 1975), pp. 104-106.

²⁰⁰ In *al-An'am* (6): 164, God commanded the Prophet to proclaim: "Every soul draws the meed of its acts on none but itself: no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another."

²⁰¹ *Hud* (11): 116. See also Fazlur Rahman's explanation on the Qur'anic concept of judgement in history, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Minneapolis and Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), pp. 52-56.

²⁰² J. Douglas Brown, in the concluding paragraph of his book, writes to underline the integral social nature of liberal arts education at producing a whole man thus: "...an education aimed at enhancing the understanding of human response, the powers of analysis, judgement, and communication, a sense of history, and intellectual and moral integrity is indeed vocational in the highest sense." *The Liberal University: An Institutional Analysis* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1969), p. 237. Similarly Tonsor concurs that "the best kind of citizenship training I know is that education which enables its holder to perform his function in society well". S. Tonsor, *Tradition and Reform in Education* (Virginia: Open Court, 1974), p. 105

ensure the realization of personal and societal welfare. While it is obvious that the latter category of knowledge is socially relevant, the role of the former is generally thought to be significant only in an indirect manner. On the contrary, the mastery and practice of the *fard 'ain'* -- which is not the rigid enumeration of disciplines as commonly thought -- will ensure the proper success of *fard kifayah* sciences, for the former provides the necessary guiding framework and motivating principles for the latter. It has been suggested that the assessment of what courses and areas to be taught and offered under the *fard kifayah* category must not be a matter of personal choice only, but rather, should involve a just consideration of societal and national needs.²⁰³ In fact, according to Tibawi, the succinct personal objective of traditional Islamic education, which is the attainment of happiness in this world and the next, is more concrete and more beneficial to individual citizens compared to the vague general goals of society formulated by modern national governments.²⁰⁴

The discussion thus far indicates the ultimate purpose of Islamization as the comprehensive nature of human development centering on the inculcation of *adab*, producing thereby a truly civilized man, as opposed to a barbarian. From the Islamic point of view, the rise of barbarism (*kebiadaban*) among the Muslims is due to two factors; external and internal. The external ones are caused by the religio-cultural and socio-political challenges from Western culture and civilization,²⁰⁵ while the internal ones are manifested in three interrelated phenomena; namely, epistemic confusion (*kekeliruan serta kesilapan mengenai faham ilmu*), the loss of *adab* (*keruntuhan adab*), and the rise of unqualified and false leaders (*tiada layak memikul tanggungjawab pimpinan yang sah*) in all fields.²⁰⁶ However, it is the loss of *adab* that must be effectively checked and corrected if Muslims are to solve the confusion and error in knowledge and the rise of false leadership in all fields. It is necessary that the problem of the loss of *adab* be addressed first because knowledge cannot be taught to, or inculcated in, the learner unless he shows proper *adab* towards knowledge, its various categories, and its legitimate authorities.²⁰⁷

Since *adab* is an integral part of wisdom and justice, the loss of *adab* would naturally entail the prevalence of stupidity (*humq*), secular and religious extremism, injustice, madness (*junun*), and even terrorism.²⁰⁸ It is a truism that the world is increasingly functioning

²⁰³ al-Attas, *Aims and Objectives*, p. 45. For further discussion on this, see my book, *Educational Philosophy*, Chap. V.

²⁰⁴ A. L. Tibawi, *Islamic Education: Its Tradition and Modernization into the Arab National Systems* (London: Luzac & Co., 1972), p. 207.

²⁰⁵ *Risalah*, paras. 7-9, pp. 12-27.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 153, pp. 178-180.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 53, pp. 180-183; al-Attas, *Aims and Objectives*, p. 3.

²⁰⁸ *Op. cit.*, para. 55, pp. 186-187. See also Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, "Address of Acceptance of Appointment to the al-Ghazzali Chair of Islamic Thought", in *Commemorative Volume on the Conferment of the al-Ghazzali Chair* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1994) p. 31. According to al-Ghazzali, stupidity (*humq*), is the deployment of wrong methods to arrive at right goals or ends, while madness (*junun*) is the struggle to attain false or wrong aims or goals. Cited by

like a global village where education for intrinsically good men and women, i.e., men and women of *adab*, will definitely be more useful than education merely for useful citizenship. This is because the most important projects, whether economic, educational, or political, are increasingly international in nature and significance, while the narrow nationalistic agenda of multinational participants will undermine the proper success of such projects. Fast and efficient international travel has enabled good citizens of unjust regimes or organizations to extend their pernicious activities with greater speed and scope, and with more efficient ability to escape. Exciting developments in information technology have rendered national boundaries meaningless, conveying a virtually limitless amount of information of various degrees of utility--good and evil. The potentially useful information explosion and its almost instantaneous global reverberations have caused innumerable confusion, not to mention the ethically, culturally, and socially harmful contents. These developments require, more than ever before, that individual men and women be intrinsically good in the sense of *adab*. The intricately intertwining nature of the global economy would destroy the economies and millions of lives if citizens of powerful and influential economies sought mainly to profit from their own short-term personal or national interests.²⁰⁹

Conclusion

The loud and shining promises of the positive effects of Western modernity and globalization should not detract us from evaluating their many adverse effects—not only on non-Western societies such as ours but also on the West itself. When numerous non-Western thinkers and nations have been exerting tremendous efforts to create arguably better frameworks—if not for the world, but at least for their own societies—Muslim counterparts and nations should be more than encouraged to offer their own authentic contributions of decolonization and de-Westernization through the process of Islamization; manifesting the spirit of dynamic stabilism. Muslim thinkers, policy makers, and professionals in all fields should not be apologetic or defensive in recovering their relevant religious and civilizational

Muhammad Umaruddin, *The Ethical Philosophy of Al-Ghazzali*. Reprint of 1962 edition (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1970), p. 166. It is indeed madness if the very purpose of seeking knowledge is other than the attainment of true happiness or the love of God (*mahabbah*) in this world according to the dictates of the true religion, and the attainment of His vision (*ru'yatullah*) in the Hereafter; see Al-Attas, *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993) p. 1; see also Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, "Containing Muslim Extremism and Radicalism". *Sari: International Journal of the Malay World and Civilization*. 28 (1) 2010: 241-252.

²⁰⁹ For further elaboration on this subject see my article, "Insan Baik Teras Kewarganegaraan", pp. 1-24; For a thoughtful discussion on the positive role of religion in multicultural education from a prominent Russian scholar, see Marietta Stepanyants, "Challenges for Education in the Age of Globalization." In Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud and Muhammad Zainiy Uthman, eds. *Knowledge, Language, Thought and the Civilization of Islam*; pp. 221-235.

heritage needed to guide them in dealing with the numerous challenges posed by Western Modernity without depriving themselves of the beneficial qualities from not only the West but also from the other parts of the world. Islamization is no doubt a partial, and not a total, process of decolonization, de-Westernization, and indigenization; because not all aspects of colonial and Western religious, cultural, and civilizational elements are in accord with Islam. Similarly, it is not a total indigenization; because not all aspects of traditional culture and practices are in full accord with Islam as well. More importantly, Islamization, as al-Attas has poignantly explained, is a dual process of Man's individual and social liberation from his own narrow nationalistic, mythical and mythological traditions; and a return to his original Nature and Purpose to be His willing and knowing Servant and responsible Vicegerent of God. At the personal level, Islamization is thus a person's transformation of himself through the intellectual-spiritual-ethical educational process of *ta'dib*, which includes *tazkiyyah al-nafs*, *tahzib al-akhlaq*, *muhasabah*, and *mujahadah*. The person of *adab* that it produces is one that can harmoniously deal with the socio-economic and cultural diversity of a globalized world. A person of *adab* is certain of his values and identity, and yet understands the existential and cultural rights of others as found in the Holy Qur'an and exemplified in the teachings of the Prophet and the illuminated leaders in all fields. A person of *adab* can deal successfully with a pluralistic world without losing his identity; or deprive the due rights of others despite differences in worldviews and epistemic frameworks. Dealing with various levels of realities in the right and proper manner would enable him to attain the spiritual and permanent state of happiness here as well as in the Hereafter.

Higher education is the most architectonic and strategic place of Islamization, which implies that the planning, contents, and methods of higher education should reflect a strong and consistent emphasis on the right *adab* towards the various orders of realities. The soul of our higher educational institutions must be revitalized correctly. When most of our higher learning institutions can inculcate within ourselves the right *adab*, and to impart this and the other necessary skills to all our students and others, then we would have done our duties, and the re-flowering of our civilization, or *peradaban*, would be in good progress. If our universities, professional training institutions, think tanks, and advanced research centers fail to undertake this task, then they would be contributing to the loss of *adab* in the most comprehensive sense, contributing to the rise of technically qualified experts and leaders in all fields but defective in their humanity. In this sense, these institutions would be guilty of the greatest betrayal of not only the *ummatic* trust, but that of the whole world when the dominant framework has been found gravely wanting and suicidal. Perhaps it is due to the leveling and thereby misplacing of various ideas, sciences, and peoples from their proper places that has made al-Attas suggest that the modern secular university everywhere is the epitome of man in a condition of *zulm* (injustice), which is maintained by the encouragement, elevation, and legitimization of doubt and conjecture as epistemological tools of scientific enquiry.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Al-Attas, *IS*, p. 148

Our education system, including the higher learning institutions, has achieved various levels of success, which we should be rightly proud of. However, this should not stop us from making meaningful changes.²¹¹ The discourse and implementation of Islamization at the higher level of education should not be limited to the International Islamic University Malaysia, the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), and others with specific Islamic nomenclatures but also to all our public higher education institutions, including those under the Government linked-companies (GLCs); with the caution that these must be carried out ethically and responsibly, and in moderation. Our cultural history, civilizational heritage, and the Constitutional provision of Islam as the religion of the Federation are sufficient arguments to expand this project. We should not waste any more time and resources.

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²¹¹ On the dilemma of managing the success of our education and that of some other countries in the Asia Pacific, see Philip G. Atlbach, *Higher Education in the Third World: Themes and Variations* (Singapore: Maruzen Asia/Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development, 1982), pp. 25-44. For the latest overview on several recent efforts on the framework and programmes in institutions of higher learning, see Khaled Nordin, *Pengajian Tinggi and Jaminan Masa Depan Negara* (Putrajaya: Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi, 2010).

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Prof. Dr. Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud is a scholar, educational administrator, intellectual activist and motivator, and poet. He is well known nationally and internationally through his academic writing and activities on various aspects of Islamic education and epistemology. From Feb 2011 he has been founder and director of the Center for Advanced Studies on Islam, Science and Civilization (CASIS), a post graduate center of excellence at the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), International Campus, Kuala Lumpur.

He was born in Tanah Merah, Kelantan on 23rd Dec 1955 and had his early education at National Type English School in his home town and secondary education at Sultan Ismail College in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. Obtained his B.Sc.(Hons) Life Sciences and M.Sc.Ed. (Curriculum and Instruction), both from Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, Illinois, and his Ph.D. in Islamic Thought from The University of Chicago under the tutelage of the renowned Professor Fazlur Rahman.

During his studies in US, he was active in Islamic student affairs and was elected the President of the National Malaysian Islamic Study Group (MISG), and also the national President of the Muslim Students' Association (MSA) of USA and Canada. After returning from the United States he lectured at the Islamic Studies Faculty, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), and served as an Assistant Director at the Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education Planning and Research Department.

He was formerly the Deputy Director, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) when ISTAC was led by its Founder-Director and one of the most creative scholars in the contemporary Muslim world Prof. Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. There he assisted Prof. al-Attas in all aspects of curricular planning and instruction, student development and supervision, library acquisition, publication, seminars, public relation and significantly contributed towards making ISTAC as Islamic research and post graduate centre of highest international repute. As Deputy Director, his rank was equivalent to that of Deputy Vice Chancellor of a public university in the country. From 2008-2010 he was a Principal Research Fellow at the Institute of the Malay World and Civilization, the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM),

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Prof. Dr. Wan Mohd Nor has written more than 16 books and monographs as well as more than 40 academic articles in local and international journals, of which the major ones are *The Concept of Knowledge in Islam: Its Implications for Education in a Developing Country* (New York and London, 1989); *The Beacon on the Crest of a Hill* (ISTAC, 1991); *Penjelasan Budaya Ilmu* (A Commentary on the Culture of Knowledge) (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1990 and the second edition published by Pustaka Nasional Singapore 2003 has two additional chapters); *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas: An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization* (ISTAC, 1998); *Pembangunan di Malaysia: Ke Arah Satu Kefahaman Baru yang Lebih Sempurna* (Development in Malaysia: Towards a Holistic Understanding (ISTAC, 2000); *Mutiara Taman Adabi: Sebuah Puisi Mengenai Agama, Filsafat dan Masyarakat* (Pearls from the Garden of Adab: A Philosophical and Historical Poem on Religion and Society) (Dian Darulnaim, 2003); and *Dalam Terang: Sebuah Puisi Mentafsirkan Amanah Insan* (Under the Light: An Interpretation of Human Destiny) (Tradisi Ilmu, 2004); *Hadhari Muslim Society: An Epistemological and Educational Approach Towards National Unity* (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2006). He also co-authored a book with Prof. Dr. Syed M Naquib al-Attas, *Leadership Competency Model: An Islamic Alternative*, published by the International Centre for Leadership in Finance ((ICLIF) KL, 2007); co-edited with Muhammad Zainiy Uthman, *Knowledge, Language, Thought and the Civilization of Islam: Essays in Honour of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas* (UTM Press, 2010); his other books are *Rihlah Ilmiah Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud: Dari Neo-Modernisme to Islamization* (An Intellectual Journey: From Neo-modernism to Islamization (Kuala Lumpur/Jakarta: CASIS/ INSIST, 2012); and *Knowledge Culture and Concept of 1Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Prime Minister's Department/CASIS, 2012).

Several of his books, articles and monographs have been translated into Malay, Indonesian, Turkish, Japanese, Persian, Russia, Bosnian, Arabic, Mandarin, and Macedonian.

Prof. Dr. Wan was an International Advisor of the Graduate Programme for Islamic Studies, University of Melbourne, Australia, and is member of the Advisory Council for the Center for Strategic Middle Eastern Studies (CSMES), Zirve University, Gaziantep, Turkey. He is also the Consulting Editor for the *ISTAC Journal al-Shajarah*, *AFKAR* (Akademi Islam, Universiti Malaya); *Editorial Board of the International Journal of Pesantren Studies* (Jakarta); *Editorial Board of Tsaqafah: Journal for Islamic Sciences and Culture*, Jakarta); consulting editor of *Beytulhikme* (Adiyaman University), Turkey.

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Prof. Dr. Wan Mohd Nor had been invited to lecture on various topics dealing with Islamic thought, educational philosophy, comparative ethics, development issues, and dialogues between civilizations and participate in various national and international conferences and seminars in countries such as USA, United Kingdom, Russia, Iran, Turkey, South Africa, Pakistan, Sudan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Japan, Indonesia, Bosnia, Singapore and etc.

Since 1990 Prof. Dr. Wan Mohd Nor has been actively involved in special lectures for, and training of senior secondary school teachers and administrators, state directors of education and their deputies, as well as directors of Community Colleges organized by various agencies under the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Higher Education. He was also involved in the training of political and community leaders in programs conducted by the Prime Minister's Department.

Since 1994, Prof. Dr. Wan Mohd Nor has been lecturing to very senior government officers on Ethics and Values in Public Administration, mostly at its the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) in Kuala Lumpur as well as at its various regional branches.

In 2006, he attended Global Leadership Development Program organized by the International Centre for Leadership and Finance (ICLIF). Since 2007 he has conducted several half-day seminars organized by ICLIF on the various themes of the book to leaders of various financial institutions in the country.

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Dari tahun 1979-1987, Wan Mohd. Nor bertugas sebagai tutor dan pensyarah di Fakulti Pengajian Islam UKM. Pernah bertugas di Bahagian Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Pendidikan (EPRD), Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. Semenjak tahun 1988 sehingga 2002, beliau merupakan seorang perintis dan bekas Timbalan Pengarah *International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization* (ISTAC) yang membantu Pengarah-Pengasasnya Prof. Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas dalam hal ehwal akademik, mahasiswa, penerbitan dan perpustakaan di ISTAC sehingga menjadi salah sebuah pusat pengajian Islam yang ulung.

Beliau memperoleh ijazah B.Sc. (Hons) Kaji-hayat dan M.Sc.Ed. (Kurikulum dan Pengajaran), kedua-duanya dari *Northern Illinois University*, Dekalb, Illinois dan Ph.D dari *The University of Chicago* di bawah seliaan Fazlur Rahman. Ketika di Amerika Syarikat, beliau aktif dalam kegiatan pelajar-pelajar Islam dan merupakan satu-satunya anak Asia Tenggara yang diamanahkan sebagai Presiden Kebangsaan Persatuan Pelajar Islam Amerika Syarikat dan Kanada (*Muslim Students Association of US and Canada*). Pada tahun 2008-2011, beliau bertugas sebagai Felo Utama di Institut Alam dan Tamadun Melayu (ATMA), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia dan memimpin Kumpulan Pembinaan Teori dan Epistemologi Melayu.

Prof. Dr. Wan Mohd. Nor telah menghasilkan lebih daripada 16 judul buku dan monograf serta berpuluh-puluh makalah dalam jurnal tempatan dan antarabangsa. Antara bukunya yang terkenal ialah *The Concept of Knowledge in Islam: Its Implications for Education in a Developing Country* (New York and London, 1989); *The Beacon on the Crest of a*

Hill (ISTAC, 1991); *Penjelasan Budaya Ilmu* (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1990); dan edisi keduanya yang mengandungi dua bab tambahan diterbitkan oleh Pustaka Nasional Singapura (2003); *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas: An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization* (ISTAC, 1998); *Pembangunan di Malaysia: Ke Arah Satu Kefahaman Baru yang Lebih Sempurna* (ISTAC, 2000); *Mutiara Taman Adabi: Sebuah Puisi Mengenai Agama, Filsafat dan Masyarakat* (Dian Darulnaim, 2003); *Dalam Terang: Sebuah Puisi Mentafsirkan Amanah Insan serta Peranan Ilmu dan Akhlak dalam Masyarakat* (Tradisi Ilmu, 2004); *Masyarakat Islam Hadhari: Satu Tinjauan Epistemologi dan Kependidikan Ke Arah Penyatuan Pemikiran Bangsa*, Cetakan kedua (DBP, 2007); merupakan penulis bersama Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Leadership Competency Model: An Islamic Alternative* (Kuala Lumpur International Center for Leadership in Finance (ICLIF), 2007); penyunting bersama Muhammad Zainiy Uthman, *Knowledge, Language, Thought and the Civilization of Islam: Essays in Honour of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas* (Penerbit UTM Press, 2010); *Budaya Ilmu dan Gagasan 1Malaysia: Membina Negara Maju dan Bahagia* (Akademi Kenegaraan/CASIS, 2011); serta *Rihlah Ilmiah Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud: Dari Neo-Modernisme to Islamization (An Intellectual Journey: From Neo-modernism to Islamization)* (CASIS/ INSIST, 2012).

Beberapa hasil karyanya termasuklah buku, monograf, dan makalah telah diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Malaysia, Indonesia, Turki, Jepun, Farsi, Rusia, Bosnia, Arab, Mandarin, dan Macedonia. Beliau juga aktif dalam membenteng kertas-kerja serta memberi ceramah dalam pelbagai seminar dan persidangan di peringkat kebangsaan dan antarabangsa seperti di Amerika Syarikat, United Kingdom, Rusia, Iran, Turki, Afrika Selatan, Pakistan, Sudan, Oman, Arab Saudi, Mesir, Jepun, Indonesia, Bosnia Herzegovina, dan Singapura.

Prof. Dr. Wan Mohd. Nor juga adalah penasihat kepada Graduate Programme for International Studies, University of Melbourne, Australia dan ahli Majlis Penasihat untuk Center for Strategic Middle Eastern Studies (CSMES), Zirve University, Gaziantep, Turki. Selain itu, beliau juga merupakan penyunting kepada *ISTAC Journal al-Shajarah*, AFKAR (Akademi Islam, Universiti Malaya); Lembaga Editor *International Journal of Pesantren Studies* (Jakarta); Lembaga Editor *Tsaqafah: Journal for Islamic Sciences and Culture* (Jakarta); dan *Beytulhikme* (Adiyaman University), Turki.

Sejak tahun 1990, Prof. Dr. Wan Mohd Nor terlibat secara aktif dalam menyampaikan kuliah khas, program latihan untuk guru-guru kanan dan pentadbir sekolah menengah, pengarah dan timbalan pengarah Jabatan Pendidikan, serta pengarah Kolej Komuniti yang dianjurkan oleh pelbagai agensi di bawah Kementerian Pendidikan. Beliau juga terlibat dalam program latihan untuk pemimpin politik dan komuniti yang dianjurkan oleh Jabatan Perdana Menteri.

Sejak tahun 1994, Prof. Wan Mohd Nor juga terlibat dalam memberi syarahan kepada pegawai kanan kerajaan mengenai Etika dan Nilai dalam Perkhidmatan Awam, yang dianjurkan oleh Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara (INTAN) di Kuala Lumpur dan di beberapa cawangannya di seluruh negara.

ISLAMIZATION OF CONTEMPORARY KNOWLEDGE AND THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF DE-WESTERNIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION

This lecture argues that the discourse on the Islamization of contemporary knowledge is one of many articulated by non-Western thinkers and scholars in responding to the various challenges elicited by colonization and westernization with examples from Africa, China, the Arab World, and other places. However, it also shows the deeply spiritual, humanistic and more comprehensive aspects of Islamization vis a vis the other discourses on de-Westernization and decolonization. The process of Islamization is argued not as a static and conservative exercise but rather, a dynamically stable one (*dynamic stablism*). The uniquely architectonic and strategic role of higher learning institutions, especially the University, is presented together with the concept of the university and education in Islam; including its personal and societal aspects. The continuing challenge posed by the New Public Management of modern universities is also discussed. In this connection the centrality of the comprehensive concept of the Universal Man, *adab*, *fardu 'ain* and *fardu kifayah* is thus articulated. Wherever relevant, certain ideas and trends from non-Muslim thinkers and sources are cited.



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