



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

*by*

Professor Dr. Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud

#### 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.<sup>1</sup>

## 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> The architectonic and strategic importance of higher education have been better recognized quite recently and became more intensified with globalization and the knowledge economy.<sup>4</sup> Some scholars have rightly acknowledged that higher education does play a role, albeit a small one, in the struggle for world supremacy.<sup>5</sup> Leading academicians such as Clerk

<sup>1</sup> 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).

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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."

<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> 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,

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<sup>6</sup> 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), pp. 19-23.

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

<sup>8</sup> Roger Dale, “Repairing the Deficits of Modernity”, p. 18.

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

<sup>10</sup> 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.”<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> 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 there can be neither knowledge nor development without freedom.”<sup>13</sup> Although the *Report* cautions that it may be relevant even today this linkage is neither mechanical nor inseparable<sup>14</sup>, 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.”<sup>15</sup> 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.”<sup>16</sup>

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.<sup>17</sup> In the Malay-Indonesian world, this wisdom is turned into a very popular proverb: *jika mahu melentur buluh, biarlah diwaktu rebungnya* (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

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<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> *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.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 225-226.

<sup>16</sup> *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.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Bukhari, *Sahih sv: kitab al-Jana’iz*, No. 1319 (1292); also Muslim, *Sahih 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

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*

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<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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”.<sup>20</sup>

## **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 17<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> 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

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<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> 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.”<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup> 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....”,<sup>27</sup> 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

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<sup>23</sup> Cox, “Globalization for What?”, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> 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).

<sup>27</sup> 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*).<sup>28</sup>

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.<sup>29</sup> 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 Alatas has aptly described as the “captive mind”.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup>

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

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

<sup>29</sup> Roger Dale, “Repairing the Deficits of Modernity”, p. 18.

<sup>30</sup> Syed Husin Alatas, “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.

<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup>

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”.<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup>

## 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.<sup>36</sup> He argues for an agenda of decolonization of the process of modernization but not terminating it.<sup>37</sup> He observes,

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<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> 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).

<sup>34</sup> Grosfuguel, “Decolonizing Political-Economy”, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> 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*.

<sup>36</sup> 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).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 333, and 341.

# 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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