Reversing the colonial warp in education: A decolonial encounter with Muhammad Iqbal

Introduction

Though we are happy with the progress of the young,
But some complaint from the happy lips also comes with it,
We had thought Western education would bring worldly progress,
We did not know that atheism would also come with it. Iqbal (1924)

As evident from this verse by the philosopher-poet, Muhammad Iqbal (1878-1938), scholars from the Indian subcontinent have pointed out the problems and incompatibilities inherent in the wholesale import of Western education with its categories of thought and, most importantly, its inherent value propositions. Despite their warnings, social studies education has succumbed to blind imitation of Western paradigms even after independence and 'management education' is no exception (Mughal, 2020). It is, as if, a time warp is created by historical forces of colonialism which caused an impetuous movement of the colonized from the pre-modern to a modern state. This movement, however, destroyed native traditions and reconceptualized education as fundamentally existing outside those traditions (Williams, 2019; Yang et al., 2019). The warp also injected a kind of 'intellectual captivity' (Alatas, 1974) in education that not only alienates native students from their local customs but also perpetuates Euro-American cultural imperialism (Walker & Martinez-Vargas, 2020). For example, management concepts, theories and best practices, taught in the MBA/BBA programs, are embedded in a universal modernist discourse (Heyck, 2017) and are internalized as a superior knowledge system. In this system, local managers are dependent on Western ideas and logics and are considered 'effective' only as long as they can (re)produce the neoliberal capitalist order (Jammulamadaka, 2017). Despite a clear evidence of non-universality of Western management education (Jaya, 2001; Varman & Saha, 2009), the business schools keep on harking back to the same scientistic ideas about the relentless pursuit of efficiency while marginalizing its social and moral costs. There is hardly any space for local ideas promoting alternatives to corporate performativity (Dey & Steyaert, 2007) or academic capitalism (Sigahi & Saltorato, 2020), especially if these ideas show colonial roots of the management discipline (see Cooke, 2003 for an example).

In this paper, I use decolonial theory and Iqbalian poetry to decenter this Western orientation in management education of Pakistan and offer alternative ways of thinking about education. I strive to reclaim epistemological space for, hitherto ignored, theological perspectives on education emanating from the Islamic tradition and move one step closer in reversing the colonial warp in the field of education. I draw on the educational philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal who, as an activist poet of the Indian subcontinent, was deeply concerned with the uncritical acceptance of Western ideas by the indigenous population (Khan & Koshul, 2011) and its adverse effects on their moral, social and political development. The philosophical theorization of the anti-colonial resistance that one finds in Iqbal makes his oeuvre an exemplar of the 'literature of combat', to use a term of Frantz Fanon. While explaining the meaning of this term, Fanon (1963) wrote:

It is a literature of combat, because it molds the national consciousness, giving it form and contours and flinging open before it new and boundless horizons; it is a literature of combat because it assumes responsibility, and because it is the will to liberty expressed in terms of time and space. (p. 240)

Before proceeding, there is a need for some reflexivity on my metatheoretical commitments. The fact that I am trained in the Western knowledge system and speak the language of contemporary Western management academy is one aspect of my subject position. I am also cognizant of the binary tendencies inherent in my work in terms of oppositions between the Western and the indigenous/Islamic or modernity/tradition. My anxieties are somewhat ameliorated by the fact that my training does not preclude attempts to produce critical work exploring the relationship between academic production and power/knowledge. Moreover, although my paper is structured around an East/West binary logic, I am employing what Spivak calls 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak, 1988) in order to generate resources for radical critique. Nevertheless, I believe that slippages to bridge the binary disjunctions are possible in an Iqbalian worldview.

In the next sections, I provide a brief overview of decolonial theory and its implications for management education. This is followed by a detail of Iqbal's educational philosophy drawn from his poetic works. Afterwards, I apply this Iqbalian lens to contemporary management education in Pakistan in order to tease out the dynamics of inauthenticity present in this landscape. I conclude by pointing out some emancipatory avenues for developing a critical yet creative attitude towards management education.

Decolonial theory and education
Decolonial theory seeks to provide a critique of Eurocentrism from the perspective of those who have historically been marginalized (Walker & Martinez-Vargas, 2020; Burford et al., 2021) while also taking into account how these hegemonic tendencies have continued. For instance, the Latin American decolonial theorist, Anibal Quijano, distinguishes between *colonialism* as a set of concrete practices of domination and *coloniality* as an ideological strategy, originating from colonialism, that has now permeated contemporary consciousness (Quijano, 2010). Coloniality serves to redefine relations including economic, racial, social, cultural and historical in ways that construct and naturalize the colonizer's superiority. These redefinitions favoring Western habits of thought gradually become invisible and institutionalize a particular grammar of meaning that functions as a form of internal colonialism.

Although the decolonial literature is spread across many thematic domains, one can discern its three principal axes which include the coloniality of being, of power and of knowledge. Coloniality of being critically examine ways that ensure that those deemed 'other' are dehumanized to the extent that their full humanity is denied (Maldonado-Torres, 2010). In other words, it lays bare the mechanism that generates a state of human exception from the order of normal being as represented by the colonizer. On the other hand, coloniality of power refers to an entanglement of global hierarchies of gender, political, economic, spiritual, linguistic and racial forms of domination and exploitation where the exploitative hierarchy of master/slave structures all global power configurations (Grosfoguel, 2007; Quijano, 2010). Hence, oppression operates at multiple levels simultaneously and therefore, any analysis that seeks to explore the experience or reality of marginalization must acknowledge its global complexity. An important part of this coloniality of

power is predominance of capitalism as the hegemonic ideology of economic relations. This was central to maintaining colonial control and exploitation (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Although one can cite many geographical instances of the colonial history of capitalism, a striking example can be found in the Indian subcontinent (Wallerstein, 1986).

The third axis is the coloniality of knowledge (Lander, 2006), which is arguably the most important in terms of the aims of this paper. It refers to the ways in which knowledge from colonized subjects has been made historically invisible. The colonizers followed a systematic process to destroy indigenous knowledges in order to abort the possibility of generating emancipatory knowledge formations – what is also known as 'epistemicide' (de Sousa Santos, 2014). In other words, there is an 'underside of modernity' (Dussel, 1996) which is constituted by indigenous knowledges and worldviews that are silenced and disqualified to the point that they have either become invisible or totally forgotten. The decolonial scholars seek to redress this invisibility through 'epistemic disobedience' (Mignolo, 2011) that offers alternative economic, political and social modalities. The motto of decolonial thinking is *desprendimento total* (total detachment) which is explained by the decolonial theorists as:

> …decolonial thinking and decolonial option are always delinked from modernity and postmodernity. It brings to the foreground a silenced and different genealogy of thought (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012, p. 33)

I believe that the Islamic tradition provides such a different genealogy of thought (Author, 2012) which has been silenced by Western mechanisms of knowledge production (Grosfoguel, 2013). Investigating educational philosophy of Islamic tradition is important as it encourages one to rethink familiar notions of knowledge or what is it that needs to be imparted in an educational institution. Such alternative philosophies have been suppressed by Western modernity and colonialism and a striking example of this suppression is the education system of Pakistan. During the colonial rule, many British administrators were keen to build an English-speaking Indian intellectual elite that would help carry out the work of the colonial authorities. Consider, for example, the statement of Lord Macaulay[1] on Indian education of 1835:

> It is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of population (Macaulay as quoted in Young, 1935)

The historical colonization of knowledge production and pedagogy is evident from the above quote. The indigenous knowledges are consistently precluded from the constitution of knowledge worthy of action. Moreover, this system generates a class of local pseudo-intellectuals, Frantz

---

[1] President of the Council on Education in India

Fanon's 'free slaves' (Fanon, 1967), that preserve the fundamental spirit of the colonial order. Homi Bhabha describes them as 'mimic men' (Bhabha, 1984) who learn to act English but do not look English nor are accepted as such. These Westernized elites were the carrier of enlightenment ideals of freedom and progress through reason and science. With the backing of the colonizer, the elites changed the language of instruction to English and made structural transformations in the institutions of learning in order to disseminate Western knowledge (Rahman, 2020). This new system continued even after independence with minor modifications and gradually the diverse landscape of local knowledges, educational institutions and pedagogies were replaced by a 'modern' education system (Tschurenev, 2019). Within this system, elite Western business schools constitute a dominant pole (Abreu-Pederzini & Suarez-Barraza, 2020) while schools from Pakistan are simply imitating the standards set by these elites (Mughal, 2020).

In this paper, I aim to use decolonial theory and Iqbalian ideas to challenge this colonial tradition as practiced in Pakistani business schools. As a powerful discourse, decolonial theory can shed light on the broader structural and cultural processes which shape management research and education. Its ability to delve into these processes and question the reproduction of ideologies and values in management knowledge production makes it a suitable theoretical paradigm. This allows us to attempt to retrieve the wide range of subjugated knowledges present in the subcontinent and reconstruct these for modern times. The goal is to decenter Euro-American ideology as the hegemonic cultural system and move towards a polycentric worldview.

To understand an indigenous theological conceptualization of knowledge and education, I draw on Iqbal's philosophy of education.

Iqbal's philosophy of education

Muhammad Iqbal was a leading Muslim thinker, a philosopher-poet and a decolonial visionary (Majeed, 2009). He studied in Europe just prior to the First World War and infused his poetry, in Persian and Urdu, with philosophical ideas which gave clarity of purpose and foundational strength to the voice of Indian Muslims' anti-colonial struggle for freedom from British rule in India. As a thinker, Iqbal's ideas are encapsulated in his poetry and his book, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought* (1934). His poetic imagination and the ability to create similes and metaphors from the elemental forces of Nature and History is spiritually regenerative (Schimmel, 1954). Although his philosophical concepts are transcendental in their intention but their language and structure reflect the varied and complex problematics of modern man.

For Iqbal, education is a process of instilling or correctly transferring a particular view of knowledge that is actionable and compatible with man's religious consciousness. Let me explain the meaning of different terms used in this definition. Iqbal considers the essence (*mahiyya*) of man to be spiritual as *Allah* (God) endowed man with a soul (*ruh*) which distinguishes him/her from other creation and also made man His vicegerent (*khalifa*). In other words, man is not simply a biological organism or a cognitive machine but first and foremost a moral and spiritual being.

Hence, the main purpose of knowledge in Islam, according to Iqbal, is "awaken in man the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and the universe" (Iqbal, 1934: 8). The etiquette of such relations insist that man feels responsible for his actions as he is answerable to God in terms of acting on His commandments. These commandments range from the purification of man's soul to positive change in society to betterment of mankind and other creation by virtue of man's

vicegerency. This responsibility implies that man has the capacity to act and is capable of distinguishing truth from falsehood, right from wrong and useful from harmful or useless based on the guidance provided by Quran (revealed text) and sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him). His rational mind allows him to make these typological distinctions, interpret events and phenomena, formulate meanings and articulate his responsibility and action in language and speech. When Iqbal refers to someone being educated, he is pertaining to this spiritual reality of man.

Nevertheless, the realm of consciousness is different from the external world and both are part of an ultimate reality (*haqeeqat*). This reality divides itself into two categories: the visible (*zahir*) and the unseen (*batin*). Knowledge of the visible world can be derived from sense experience through a particular psychological movement. On the other hand, the unseen reality, or the noumenal world of Kant, is all pervasive but overstep sensory experience and cannot be perceived through rational dialectic; rather, one needs to cultivate his soul through good deeds and virtuous behavior in order to come in intimate contact with the unseen reality through religious/intuitive experience. In this manner, Iqbal challenges the rationalistic and empiricist theories of consciousness by making the intuitive experience central in the development of religious consciousness (Iqbal, 1934).

It is clear from this discussion that any conceptual knowledge or system based on sense-experience alone is, in the best case, incomplete or partial, and in the worst, plain wrong. This generates a certain confidence problem in any epistemological system, such as Western/modern system of thought (Kohanski, 1984), that privileges man's reasoning capacity to generate knowledge and establish truth. Paradoxically, the skeptics can use tools of the same system to demonstrate its inadequacy. The lack of certitude in one's knowledge inhibits man to explain and order his relation to the universe at any level as lurking in this endeavor is an incipient skepticism. Hence, for Iqbal, the way out of this paradox is faith or belief in the unseen God based on confidence in prophetic reports and revelation. Therefore, one fundamental difference between Iqbal's philosophy and Western is the focus on God (external authority) versus the focus on man (subjective authority) as the center and definer of everything. The focus of Western culture on man as a foundation for all knowledge has led to various forms of doubt and uncertainties which cast suspicion over the power of this knowledge to reveal any level of reality (Foucault, 1973; Rodl, 2014).

Similarly, Iqbal thinks that the source of all knowledge is God and therefore knowledge *arrives* from Him and is received by the spiritual man as the meaning and interpretation of a certain created object. The object itself has no independent existential reality; rather it serves as a symbol or a sign – pointing to the ultimate reality. Hence, studying objects of natural or social sciences for their own sake and assuming a mind-independent reality of those objects will not constitute reliable knowledge. In fact, the scientific worldview of modern Western societies is based on, for the most part, these assumptions (Solovyov, 1996) and as such is a deviation from true knowledge of these objects. At best, such a way of organizing knowledge can represent the social nature of objects and the historical locatedness of the knower (Harding, 2004).

Further, knowledge is not simply a conceptual scheme or an arrangement of propositions or the learning of a new skill as any knowledge producing activity need to be justified based on empirical evidence, spiritual intuitions as well as have a use value for society as a whole. In other words, any case for knowledge that is built on downplaying the evidentiary and experiential (both sense experience and spiritual intuition) is problematic as it only endeavors to arrange disconnected and

isolated propositions together. Such knowledge cannot be accepted by religious consciousness as propositions alone cannot provide *confidence* in making the right moral choice. These choices are the central concern of religious consciousness which are made in a teleologically and morally governed universe and the choice becomes more important in a colonial context. As Iqbal says,

In slavery, neither swords or plans are effective,

But when the taste for certainty is created, then the chains are cut

At an abstract level, knowledge has three broad categories. The first category is close to the Delphic maxim of know thyself (*gnothi seauton*) where self-knowledge is the key to having direct and immediate access to reality. This maxim has served as the guiding paradigm of Western philosophy since Descartes. However, the famous French philosopher, Michel Foucault (2005), pointed out that the philosophy of 'know thyself' replaced the spiritual, 'care of the self' (*epimeleia heauton*). The latter is based on the assumption that the subject needs to undergo transformation in its being before accessing the truth. For Iqbal, the concept of selfhood or *khudi* is crucial to understanding religious consciousness since for him consciousness is not a state of mind but a *state of being*. It is that state of being which, at the most basic level, makes man's self or ego realizable. This is achieved through perceptions of man's exoteric and esoteric states, the purification of his soul and the purgation of morals. This world of consciousness, being a system of acts, endures in non-mathematical time where the causal laws do not operate, which provides it a certain freedom. Iqbal affirms,

The form of existence is an effect of the self,   *Whatever you see is a secret of the self,*

When the self awoke to consciousness,   *It revealed the universe of thought*

A hundred worlds are hidden in its essence   *self-affirmation brings not-self to light*

Nevertheless, the growth of *khudi* or selfhood consists of three levels: I amness (intrapersonal), universe (interpersonal) and God (transpersonal). Hence, after knowing oneself, man moves to the next level which is to know the mechanics of the universe (physical and social sciences in Western terminology). The myriad of systems that are present in this complex and ever-expanding universe and the mutual interactions of their highly entangled elements is essential for human flourishing. This knowledge of the natural world can then be used to achieve the perfection of collectivity or humanity as a whole. The last level is knowledge of God where man's consciousness is still a state of realization but now the realized entity is *Allah* (God). No knowledge of any object can be attained without creating a relationship with this realized entity. In other words, at this level, *khudi* or selfhood becomes the container of a meta-narrative; an idea which makes everything conceivable, perceivable and definable. It is important to note the link between the three categories as the first two serve as a symbol for the third. Due to this link, the usual Western dichotomous separations of sacred/profane, spirit/matter, this/other worldly (McDannell, 2012) do not make sense in the Iqbalian framework. As Iqbal says,

There is one reality for everything, be it of earth or fire;

The above discussion now enables us to understand what in Iqbal's view is the purpose/intention of generating knowledge. He believes that there is no act or event that is not the direct result of intentional choice. This choice is linked with our knowledge of the means of achieving specific purposes and for humans the purpose is to know God. Hence, the intention actively guiding all epistemic modes of knowledge production is to evaluate which action will bring us closer to God and improve our relationship with Him and what would do the opposite. In other words, the intentionality criterion in affinity with truthfulness and logical criticism become the primary conditions of any epistemological system. In a poem, Iqbal writes:

Empire, sainthood, the knowledge of things which holds the world in its sway –

What are they all? Only commentaries on one small point of faith

In this aesthetic verse, Iqbal uses his artistic imagination and treats faith as a central point in religious consciousness. The three levels of *khudi* revolve around this center in a circular motion and this circling is made possible through sense-experience, spiritual intuition and philosophical criticism. This movement enables the arrival of knowledge: knowledge of God, knowledge of the power of character and knowledge of the universe. This implies that man cannot progress in physical or social science or metaphysics without exercising the powers provided by this center. If there is any psychological movement not emanating from the center, then, it is not a valid movement of knowledge but a movement of ignorance and falsehood.

Owing to his radically different view, Iqbal had a cautious attitude towards Western knowledge & institutions and he resented any utilitarian movement to Anglicize Indian society. In this vein, he critiqued his contemporary, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, for his predilections towards Western education as means of Muslim enfranchisement (Minault & Lelyveld, 1974). The new Western style educational institutions, such as the Aligarh University, were, for Iqbal, a tool of establishing colonial master's superiority and hegemony (Sevea, 2011).

Although critical management scholars have described the hegemonic tendency of managerialism in their discipline (Abreu-Pederzini & Suarez-Barraza, 2020), much of this description has emerged from the Western epistemological standpoint. This has led to the elision of processes that create un-reflexive and dependent subjectivities in the global South. Let me now use the Iqbalian philosophical lens to evaluate contemporary management education.

Iqbal and contemporary management education

Management education is generally understood to have emerged in tandem with modern industrialization in the West in the late 18th and early 19th century, subsequently diffusing into the rest of the world (St. John, 1986; Bowden, 2018). Nevertheless, in the postcolonial nations, this emergence happened in the midst of the colonial encounter when the factory system gradually replaced the home-based cottage enterprises and capitalism replaced feudalism (Srinivas, 2020). History informs us that from 16th century onwards, the most potent form of work and organization was the colonial institution of slavery. Many early ideas of the current management theory were developed in the context of slavery in the similar manner of managing a large-scale global organization (Cooke, 2003). Moreover, the earliest instances of a joint stock company and a joint venture were colonial: the former was set up by Genoan merchants to run plantations and the latter

was a venture between the Queen of England and a slave trader (Mir et al., 2003). The traditional organizational structure closely resembled guilds operating in a bazaar which are now being replaced by bureaucracy and the market system for exchange. Nevertheless, these historical facts and their implications are totally absent from business class rooms and the research interests of Pakistani management academics.

As business schools developed across the world, the elite Western schools were successful in imposing their belief and ideology of what constitutes management education (Abreu-Pederzini & Suarez-Barraza, 2020) on postcolonial nations such as Pakistan. This global inequality seduced local business schools to simply imitate the privileged group and play by their rules of the game. Although there are some critical voices raising red flags about the incompatibility of contemporary management education with local history, culture and/or traditions (Jammulamadaka, 2020), most are happy mimicking disciplinary powers and institutionalized knowledges (Memon et al., 2014).

The desire to follow the colonizer grew under the modernizing aspirations of the newly independent Pakistan struggling with developmental challenges. Business schools developed in the country as early as 1950s with the help of US Agency for International Development (USAID). For example, Wharton business school lent support in 1955 to the development of the Institute of Business Administration in Karachi, Pakistan. However, management education offered was heavily influenced by powerful scientific/Tayloristic discourses prevalent at that time. Management was considered as a science of building models, organizing routines, habits and technologies to produce obedient and efficient workers. Further, due to American influence, management education emerged with a strong association with the English language (Mughal, 2020) and the management vocabulary gradually entered the local vernacular (Birla, 2009). Although there were local attempts at technological development (McEwan, 2009) which could have evolved into a different industrialization reflecting the social and moral social fabric but these efforts never materialized.

In this scenario, management education started with a focus on technical training which was deemed to be practical as compared to the study of individual psychology, sociology or ethics; something totally theoretical or superfluous. The objective is to produce 'managers' for the local industry who can organize and coordinate work, discipline workers and/or market products/services in order to pursue the single goal of shareholder wealth maximization. This is entirely different from pre-colonial times when aesthetics and ethics constituted an important part of traditional artisan work which was deeply embedded within traditional moralities (Jammulamadaka & Sharma, 2019). Hence, management education adopted the functionalist paradigm where the object of management knowledge is essentially utilitarian. Increasing firm profits and relentlessly pursuing growth are the primary goals and all values of the lifeworld are subservient to these goals. These conditions can produce what Alatas (1974) has termed as 'the captive mind'. The cognitive processes of local MBAs are dominated by Western thought in an uncritical fashion in the neo-colonial world. This accurately captures the current state of management educators and researchers in Pakistan. It is interesting to note that the genealogy of Western management and 1400 years of Islamic tradition have become invisible to these captive minds.

For Iqbal, understanding the Muslim *khudi* or selfhood is essential for the process of decolonial thinking to begin. In his own words,

Are you a mere particle of dust?

Why have you not tighten the knot of your ego?

Hold fast to your tiny being!

How glorious to burnish one's ego

And to test its luster in the presence of the Sun! Re-chisel,

then, your ancient frame;

And build up a new being.

Such being is a real being,

Or else your being is a mere ring of smoke!

Hence, from an Iqbalian perspective, management education has failed to generate an authentic being and instead have produced a 'ring of smoke' or a mask which hinders students from discovering their true holistic selves or to develop their religious consciousness.

In recent years, management education in Pakistan, at the undergraduate level, is offered by more than 550 public and private schools as a BBA degree while at the Masters' level, there are 200 schools offering an MBA degree. Nevertheless, the undergraduate programs are adopting aspects of the MBA curriculum despite the lack of professional experience of students. Most of the existing management theories being taught in premier business schools by teachers, researchers and industry experts are predominantly Western. There is a drive to make the courses, institutional structures and the pedagogy more global (Meyer et al., 2007; Zou et al., 2020). Although some differences exist between universities, general templates of management education linked with belief structures, pedagogical models and curricula content are mainly modeled on the NorthAmerican template (Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003; Kipping et al., 2008). This model is premised on an objective, complete and universal representation of management that can be conveniently detached from its circumstances leaving the messiness inside or around these models (Chia & Holt, 2008). This model is then transported to the business schools of Pakistan where it is taught to misdirected minds willing to be immersed in the art of spoon feeding (Raelin, 2009). The neoliberal managerialism inherent in this education frames all local alternatives as inefficient, idealistic or nostalgic. This knowledge is not only about certain 'natural and true' ideas but it also serves to create new selves. As rightly pointed out by Michel Foucault, "the history of knowledge constitutes a privileged point of view for the genealogy of the subject" (Foucault, 2015: 23). However, this blind imitation of the colonizer does not result in an authentic self as the object of knowledge becomes an end in itself. In the words of Iqbal,

Your existence is totally the dazzle of the West,

For you are an edifice constructed by the builders there

In this contemporary zeitgeist of utilitarianism, there is no intellectual space for the concerns, specificities and peculiar characteristics of the individuals on whom management 'talents' will be applied. This is reflected in the course structure and contents of management programs whereby most of the books and notes are all written by Western authors. The course of Organizational Behavior, for example, uses the famous mainstream text by Stephen Robbins & Timothy Judge (Robbins & Judge, 2016). This book is in its 17th edition now; an indication of its wide acceptability and suitability for the undergraduate and graduate programs. Robbins was declared as the world's top selling textbook author in the area of Organizational Behavior by Financial Times[2]. However, Robbins, born in Canada and educated in the US, is squarely wedded to the positivist paradigm (Summers et al., 1997) which is also the case of most contemporary OB writers[3]. The text informs its readers about the grand story of OB and its immensely powerful role in global organizations despite the fact that all OB theories, discussed in the text, are developed by "Americans using American subjects" (Robbins, 1993: 79). Hence, by his own admission, other subject positions are totally ignored. Moreover, the text is not sensitizing students to some of the inherent contradictions, dilemmas and predicaments of local managerial situations. Rather, it advances a linear thinking platform of logic, analysis and cause-effect predictability rather than purposes and meanings of managerial action. This is unsuitable for the complex, turbulent and uncertain businesses embedded in social norms and Pakistani history.

The text presents Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, Virginia Rometty, Richard Branson, Elon Musk, Lloyd Blankfein and others as gurus, celebrities and legends that are worthy of imitation. All these corporate chieftains embody a particular virtue, the virtue of success in the North-American industry. Hence, the students are encouraged to capitalize on their management thinking, most of which is anyway implicit, and emulate their practices and ideas to motivate and train Pakistani workers. As a direct result of this, the students know very little about the managerial practices of prominent Pakistani businessmen such as Mian Mansha, Rafiq Habib, Nasir Schon, Hussain Dawood etc. except for the assertion that they also follow Western ideals. Management students are expected to get maximum benefit from applying the same theories that are the reason of incessant crises in the West (Kindleberger & Aliber, 2005). The complaints of graduates about the inapplicability of these theories outside their classrooms are largely ignored. In this sense, textbooks on management are instruments of hegemonic colonial ideologies aiming to legitimate Western capitalist forms such as the free global market system and managerialism. Some empirical studies have also highlighted the difference between Western theories of human behavior and local workplace realities. For example, Khilji & Wang's (2006) multilevel study in the banking industry of Pakistan showed major discrepancies between HRM theories and practice. Similar results were obtained by Khilji (2003) when she analyzed and compared the local and multinational firms in Pakistan.

---

[2] http://www.ftpress.com/authors/bio.aspx?a=6BC7FA7F-6B39-4DB7-8680-36F3B4CFEAF2
[3] Even where Indian or Pakistani authors have written textbooks on management, the content is entirely based on Western theoretical frameworks. Only the examples have been adapted to reflect the local context.

It is evident from the above discussion that Western management theories are mostly devoid of historically-informed cultural explanations. The emergence of these theories is itself a cultural phenomenon springing from particular values and norms of secular rationality (Kedem & Bar-Lev, 1983). In other words, the theories reflect the socioeconomic circumstances and social relations in the Western industrialized countries. Values and culture of a traditional country like Pakistan constrain the universal application of these theories and call for an indigenous approach to business education. The contemporary failure to develop and recognize alternative ways of managing has instituted a mode of thought and action that produces a tunnel vision. The need to create space for an indigenous approach, such as Iqbalian perspective, might unsettle this tunnel vision and equip students to deal effectively with their local realities.

Some sub-continental management scholars have criticized the use of these Western theories (Parikh, 1990; Gopinath, 1998; Virmani, 2007). However, their criticism is mainly premised on the relevance of Western management education to local circumstances and only a few try to explore alternatives (Sinha & Kanungo, 1997; Author, 2012). Nevertheless, these alternatives are not integrated into a coherent theoretical program which can subsequently be developed and tested. I do recognize, however, that the task of theoretical development in the managerial landscape of Pakistan is daunting due to the fact that it represents an amalgam of Western practices which are overlaid with the local values and cultures that are still extant. Due to this complexity in the form of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994), there is an urgent need to perform indigenous theory building. Currently the postcolonial captive minds are only interested in extending and refining Western theories (White, 2002). Even where the Western scholars have collected data from the subcontinent, it is refracted from Western epistemology which renders its uniqueness obsolete. Syed Hussein Alatas's comment on this phenomenon is relevant here:

> "The data from this region, the raw data on specific topics are collected and subsequently processed and manufactured in England in the form of books and articles, and finally sold here" (Alatas, 2000: 25).

Since contemporary management scholars are using Western lenses and measurements to create distorted research, we need to create an alternative paradigm of indigenous research based on decolonial thinking. This alternative paradigm needs to inspire the youth with a larger-than-life purpose which resonates with our aspirations and longings. It needs to provide them with their own reflection and with the theoretical tools for them to build up their religious consciousness manifesting the rhythm of divine metaphysics. The world of business needs to be understood in categories of meaning with the ultimate aim of maximizing God's pleasure. We need to push for Iqbalian responsible doubt instead of Western skeptical doubt about management knowledge to come up with an ethics of belief which garners us with conviction and certainty.

Conclusion

We have much to preserve, especially our conviction, moral philosophy, spaciousness and above all the Eastern enchantment. Our unsung heroes and thinkers like Iqbal are not merely objects of study but a source of inspiration for us. Most importantly, we have to emancipate our minds from the shackles of Western intellectual imperialism. This will be a decisive factor in the development of a creative and alternative management theory & praxis in Pakistan. However, this requires a paradigm shift in our thinking about theorizing, researching and teaching management. We need

to continuously rethink questions which have previously been obscured owing to the interests embedded in the dominant forms of knowledge. As Foucault famously declared:

> "…knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all" (Foucault, 1985: 8)

This is not a minor change since it entails a change in our normative understandings and our worldview. A shifting of tectonic plates of immense proportion is required to alter this impoverished intellectual landscape. This shift is likely to be messier and imprecise at times but it is a step in the right direction. This paper is a small step in reversing the time warp caused by Western knowledge systems.

Based on the above discussion, I also aim to contribute to critical educational theory by problematizing the knowledge formations that it uses to assess the philosophical basis of pedagogy and curriculum (also see George Mwangi et al., 2018). Iqbalian philosophical lens is a distinct way of critiquing educational philosophy which allows us to better recognize the parochial character of critical educational theory. To challenge systems of oppression, as the tradition of critical pedagogy aims to do, implies confronting the conceptual-cultural matrix of coloniality which makes the ramification of these systems possible. Nevertheless, we do not find much literature exploring this matrix or exploring the theological alternatives which presumably can provide access to a higher mode of certainty and knowledge. The decolonial theorists can be of help here as they propose an 'ecology of knowledges' (de Sousa Santos et al., 2007: xx) or 'pluriversality' (Mignolo, 2011) in contrast to a monocultural form of knowledge about education. The pluriversal approach is an attempt to embrace the diversity of different knowledge traditions in the world where Western epistemology exists alongside these traditions (Selvaratnam, 1988). This requires a reimagining of philosophy of education in order to provide space for a dialogue between knowledge traditions which are currently hermetically sealed from one another. We don't simply need a technical adjustment of theory but a fundamental epistemological displacement filled with love, passion and purity of intention. In Iqbal's words:

Firm certainty, eternal action, the love that conquers the world

These are the swords of men in the holy war of life

What else does man need but a lofty spirit and pure character,

A warm heart, a pure-sighted eye and a restless soul

References

Abreu-Pederzini, G., & Suárez-Barraza, M. (2020). Just let us be: Domination, the postcolonial condition and the global field of business schools. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *19*(1), 40-58.

Alatas, S. (1974). The captive mind and creative development. *International Social Science Journal*, *36*(4), 691-699.

Alatas, S. (2000). Intellectual imperialism: Definition, traits and problems. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, *28*(1), 23-45.

Bhabha, H. (1984). Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse. *October*, *28*, 125-133.

Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.

Birla, R. (2009). *Stages of capital: Law, culture, and market governance in late colonial India*. Duke University Press.

Bowden, B. (2018). *Work, wealth, and postmodernism: The intellectual conflict at the heart of business endeavour*. Palgrave.

Burford, J., Eppolite, M., Koompraphant, G., & Uerpairojkit, T. (2021). Narratives of 'stuckness' among North–South academic migrants in Thailand: interrogating normative logics and global power asymmetries of transnational academic migration. *Higher Education*.

Chia, R. C. H., & Holt, R. (2008). The nature of knowledge in business schools. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 7(4), 471-486.

Clegg, S., & Ross-Smith, A. (2003). Revising the boundaries: Management education and learning in a postpositivist world. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 2(1), 85-98.

Cooke, B. (2003). The denial of slavery in management studies. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(8), 1895-1918.

de Sousa Santos, B. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. Paradigm.

de Sousa Santos, B., Nunes, J. A., & Meneses, M. P. (2007). Introduction: Opening up the canon of knowledge and recognition of difference. In B. de Sousa Santos (Ed.), *Another knowledge is possible: Beyond Northern epistemologies* (pp. xixlxii). Verso.

Dey, P., & Steyaert, C. 2007. The troubadours of knowledge: Passion and invention in management education. ***Organization***, 14(3): 437-461.

Dussel, E. (1996). *The underside of modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the philosophy of liberation* (E. Mendieta, Trans.). Humanities Press.

Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth* (C. Farrington, Trans.). Grove Press.

Fanon, F. (1967). *Black skins, white masks* (C. Markmann, Trans.). Grove Press.

Foucault, M. (1973). *The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences*. Vintage.

Foucault, M. (1985). *The history of sexuality, volume 2: The use of pleasure*. Pantheon Press.

Foucault, M. (2005). *The hermeneutics of the subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-1982* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Picador.

Foucault, M. (2015). *About the beginning of the hermeneutics of the self: Lectures at Dartmouth College, 1980* (G. Burchell, Trans.). University of Chicago Press.

George Mwangi, C., Latafat, S., Hammond, S., Kommers, S., S. Thoma, H., Berger, J., & Blanco-Ramirez, G. (2018). Criticality in international higher education research: A critical discourse analysis of higher education journals. *Higher Education*, 76(6), 1091-1107.

Gopinath, C. (1998). Alternative approaches to indigenous management in India. *Management International Review*, 38(3), 257-275.

Grosfoguel, R. (2007). The epistemic decolonial turn: Beyond political-economy paradigms. *Cultural Studies*, *21*(2/3), 211-223.

Grosfoguel, R. (2013). The structure of knowledge in Westernized universities: Epistemic racism/sexism and the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century. *Human Architecture*, *11*(1), 73-90.

Harding, S. G. (2004). Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is "strong objectivity"? In S. G. Harding (Ed.), *The Feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies* (pp. 127-140). Routledge.

Heyck, H. (2017). Administrative science. In M. Bevir (Ed.), *Modernism and the social sciences: Anglo-American exchanges, c.1918–1980* (pp. 155-181). Cambridge University Press.

Iqbal, M. (1924). *Bang-i dara (The sound of the caravan bell)* (R. A. Nicholson, Trans.).
Iqbal, M. (1934). *The reconstruction of religious thought in Islam*. Oxford University Press.

Jammulamadaka, N. (2020). Indian management(?): A modernization experiment. In B. Bowden, J. Muldoon, A. M. Gould, & A. J. McMurray (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of management history*. Palgrave MacMillan.

Jammulamadaka, N. (2017). A postcolonial critique of Indian's management education scene. In M. Thakur & R. Babu (Eds.), *Management education in India* (pp. 2342). Springer.

Jammulamadaka, N., & Sharma, R. (2019). Death of the artisan: An indigenous view on marginalization. In N. Jammulamadaka (Ed.), *Workers and margins: Grasping erasures and opportunities* (pp. 89-110). Palgrave MacMillan.

Jaya, P. (2001). Do we really 'know' and 'profess'? Decolonizing management knowledge. *Organization*, *8*(2), 227-233.

Kedem, P., & Bar-Lev, M. (1983). Is giving up traditional religious culture part of the price to be paid for acquiring higher education? Adaptation of academic Western culture by Jewish Israeli University students of Middle Eastern origin. *Higher Education*, *12*(4), 373-388.

Khan, F., & Koshul, B. (2011). Lenin in Allah's court: Iqbal's critique of Western capitalism and the opening up of the postcolonial imagination in critical management studies. *Organization*, *18*(3), 303-322.

Khilji, S. (2003). `To adapt or not to adapt': Exploring the role of national culture in HRM - A study of Pakistan. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, *3*(1), 109-132.

Khilji, S., & Wang, X. (2006). 'Intended' and 'implemented' HRM: The missing linchpin in strategic human resource management research. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *17*(7), 1171-1189.

Kindleberger, C., & Aliber, R. (2005). *Manias, panics and crashes: A history of financial crises* (5th ed.). Wiley.

Kohanski, A. (1984). *The Greek mode of thought in Western philosophy*. Dickinson University Press.

Lander, E. (2006). Eurocentrism, modern knowledges, and the "natural" order of global capital. In S. C. Dube & I. Banerjee-Dube (Eds.), *Unbecoming modern: Colonialism, modernity, colonial modernities* (pp. 189-210). Social Science Press.

Majeed, J. (2009). *Muhammad Iqbal: Islam, aesthetics and postcolonialism*. Routledge.

Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007). On the coloniality of being: Contributions to the development of a concept. *Cultural Studies*, *21*(2-3), 240-270.

Maldonado-Torres, N. (2010). On the coloniality of being: Contributions to the development of a concept. In W. D. Mignolo & A. Escobar (Eds.), *Globalization and the decolonial option* (pp. 94-124). Routledge.

McDannell, C. (2012). Scrambling the sacred and the profane. In G. Lynch, J. P. Mitchell, & A. Strhan (Eds.), *Religion, media and culture: A reader* (pp. 135-146). Routledge.

McEwan, C. (2009). *Postcolonialism and development*. Routledge.

Memon, Z. A., Wei, Y.-M., Robson, M. G., & Khattak, M. A. O. (2014). Keeping track of 'corporate social responsibility' as a business and management discipline: Case of Pakistan. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *74*, 27-34.

Meyer, J., Ramirez, F., Frank, D., & Schofer, E. (2007). Higher education as an institution. In P. Gumport (Ed.), *The sociology of higher education: Contributions and their contexts* (pp. 187-221). Johns Hopkins University Press.

Mignolo, W. D. (2011). *The darker side of Western modernity: Global futures, decolonial options*. Duke University Press.

Minault, G., & Lelyveld, D. (1974). The campaign for a Muslim University, 1898–1920. *Modern Asian Studies*, *8*(2), 145-189.

Mir, R., Mir, A., & Upadhyaya, P. (2003). Toward a postcolonial reading of organizational control. In A. Prasad (Ed.), *Postcolonial theory and organizational analysis* (pp. 47-73). Palgrave Macmillan.

Mughal, F. (2020). When global meets local: Action learning, positionality and postcolonialism. *Management Learning*.

Parikh, I., & Garg, P. (1990). Indian organizations: Value dilemmas in managerial role. In A. Jaeger & R. Kanungo (Eds.), *Management in developing countries* (pp. 175-190). Routledge.

Quijano, A. (2010). Coloniality and modernity/rationality. In W. D. Mignolo & A. Escobar (Eds.), *Globalization and the decolonial option* (pp. 22-32). Routledge.

Raelin, J. (2009). The practice turn-away: Forty years of spoon-feeding in management education. *Management Learning*, *40*(4), 401-410.

Rahman, T. (2020). Pakistani English. In K. Bolton, W. Botha, & A. Kirkpatrick (Eds.), *The handbook of Asian englishes* (pp. 279-296). Wiley Blackwell.

Robbins, S. (1993). *Organizational behavior: Concepts, controversies, and applications* (6th ed.). Prentice Hall.

Robbins, S., & Judge, T. (2016). *Organizational behavior* (17th ed.). Pearson.

Rodl, S. (2014). Finite knowledge. In J. Conant & A. Kern (Eds.), *Varieties of skepticism: Essays after Kant, Wittgenstein, and Cavell* (pp. 123-143). Walter de Gruyter.

Schimmel, A.-M. (1954). Muhammad Iqbal 1873-1938: The ascension of the poet. *Die Welt des Islams*, *3*(3/4), 145-157.

Selvaratnam, V. (1988). Higher education co-operation and Western dominance of knowledge creation and flows in Third World countries. *Higher Education*, *17*(1), 41-68.

Sevea, I. (2011). Schooling the Muslim nation: Muhammad Iqbal and debates over Muslim education in colonial India. *South Asia Research*, *31*(1), 69-86.

Sigahi, T., & Saltorato, P. (2020). Academic capitalism: Distinguishing without disjoining through classification schemes. *Higher Education*, *80*(1), 95-117.

Sinha, J., & Kanungo, R. (1997). Context sensitivity and balancing in Indian organizational behaviour. *International Journal of Psychology*, *32*(2), 93-106.

Solovyov, V. (1996). *The crisis of Western philosophy (against the positivists)* (B. Jakim, Trans.). Lindisfarne Press.

Spivak, G. (1988). Subaltern studies: Deconstructing historiography. In R. Guha & G. Spivak (Eds.), *Selected Subaltern Studies*. Oxford University Press.

Srinivas, N. (2020). False binaries in management history, and the scope for a postcolonial project. *Journal of Management History*, *34*(11), 1655-1674.

St. John, E. (1986). Postsecondary policy and management in the Far East: A comparative study. *Higher Education*, *15*, 523-545.

Tschurenev, J. (2019). *Empire, civil society, and the beginnings of colonial education in India*. Cambridge University Press.

Varman, R., & Saha, B. (2009). Disciplining the discipline: Understanding postcolonial epistemic ideology in marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *25*(7-8), 811-824.

Walker, M., & Martinez-Vargas, C. (2020). Epistemic governance and the colonial epistemic structure: Towards epistemic humility and transformed South-North relations. *Critical Studies in Education*, 1-16.

Wallerstein, I. (1986). Incorporation of Indian subcontinent into capitalist worldeconomy. *Economic and Political Weekly*, *21*(4), PE28-PE39.

White, S. (2002). Rigor and relevance in Asian management research: Where are we and where can we go? *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, *19*(2), 287-352.

Williams, H. (2019). A neocolonial warp of outmoded hierarchies, curricula and disciplinary technologies in Trinidad's educational system. *Critical Studies in Education*, *60*(1), 93-112.

Yang, R., Xie, M., & Wen, W. (2019). Pilgrimage to the West: Modern transformations of Chinese intellectual formation in social sciences. *Higher Education*, *77*(5), 815829.

Young, G. (1935). *Speeches of Lord Macaulay with his minute on Indian education*. Oxford University Press.

Zou, T., Chu, B., Law, L., Lin, V., Ko, T., Yu, M., & Mok, P. (2020). University teachers' conceptions of internationalisation of the curriculum: A phenomenographic study. *Higher Education*, *80*(1), 1-20.