

- Partners in Thought -

Hum Khayal

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Spring 2012



Building a Global Learning Community

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From the Editor's Desk



The story of Habib University begins with a vision of healing Pakistan; of creating tolerance, mutual respect and appreciation for diversity in a nation ridden with conflict; and of helping people realize their hidden potentials. We are strongly prescribing to the philosophy of *yohsin*, which stipulates that the worth of every human being is in the good that he or she does. These aspirations resonate strongly with individuals at both national and international levels, and they are generously guiding and supporting us in making Habib University a reality.

During our interactions with higher education institutions around the world, we heard seasoned scholars, budding academics and university administrators alike speak of their interest in Pakistan, and their longing for opportunities to learn more about the country and its people. And so unfolded another important aspiration for Habib University – that of a facilitator for global academia to engage with Pakistan and to connect both the country and the region with the rest of the world.

Hum Khayal (Partners in Thought) is an initiative that aims to create a means for sharing ideas, stimulating intellectual discourse and disseminating knowledge about Pakistan with national and international audiences. It also seeks to narrate the story of a nation-changing institution and the country that it is located in, while acknowledging the individuals and institutions who have been contributing towards its creation.

Since this is the first issue of Hum Khayal, we have given considerable space to introducing Habib University from our own perspective. The first article, "Creating a Center of Excellence in Pakistan" locates the University in the larger context of the country and explains its genesis. The next few sections are permanent features of the magazine. "Unfolding *Yohsin*" elaborates on the University's philosophy. "A Global Institution in the Making" highlights the contributions of our partner institutions, Carnegie Mellon University and Texas A&M at Qatar, as well as other universities and individuals with whom we are engaging. "Partners in Profile" provides recognition and acknowledgement to the people who have played a critical role in the project, while "Straight from Doha" offers an opportunity to partner faculty, staff and researchers to share their reflections and present their academic endeavors. The next two components of the magazine bridge the gap in knowledge about Pakistan and Karachi, while the final segment notes the progress and key updates about the University project.

Hum Khayal will thus allow you to view Pakistan and Karachi from a different lens and enable you to learn more about this diverse and rich country. We welcome your suggestions in enriching the magazine.

Hum Khayal Partners in Thought

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Establishing a Center of Excellence in Pakistan

Committed to academic innovation and creativity, indigenous wisdom and western tradition, Habib University will respond to the needs of the contemporary Pakistani society and the demands of the twenty-first century.

Habib University will be a first-of-its-kind liberal arts and sciences university in Pakistan, offering holistic, innovative and contextualized education. It is being established under the patronage of the House of Habib, a leading business and philanthropic group of Pakistan. Habib University's mission is to provide the highest quality of liberal and professional education, by creating and fostering a stimulating intellectual community built upon interactive dialogue and inquiry among students, faculty and staff. The underlying philosophy influencing Habib University originates from the Arabic word *yohsin*, a beautiful, intricate word carrying multiple meanings that together represent the worth of a person. This philosophy is elaborated in the following section, "Unfolding *Yohsin*". The University's commitment to this philosophy forms the basis for it to become a learning space for socially responsible citizens and national leaders who can respond effectively to the needs of the contemporary Pakistani society and the demands of the twenty-first century.

Habib University's educational model is rooted in academic innovation and creativity, indigenous wisdom and western tradition. It is heavily inspired by the liberal arts and sciences model practiced in leading American universities. Through its

core curriculum, Habib University aims to develop a sound understanding in students about Pakistan and the wider South Asian context. We aim to do so through an intensive focus on the study of history, language, religion, and politics. Our goal is to instill in students: (i) an appreciation of their own culture, (ii) a belief in their own self-worth, and (iii) the skills and knowledge needed to make the best use of the many opportunities for self-advancement offered in contemporary Pakistan. Through this academic model, the University will train students in effective leadership and decision-making as well as the core values of development and progress as they may apply to Pakistan. Apart from a robust academic portfolio, Habib University will offer its students a vibrant student life, providing a multidimensional and transformative learning experience, both within and outside the classroom.

Habib University has formed multi-faceted partnerships with leading North American universities - Carnegie Mellon University and Texas A&M University at Qatar. These partners have been instrumental not only in the development of Habib University's academic programs but also in the design of academic spaces, faculty acquisition and defining the student-life program. More importantly, their recent experience in establishing regional



Ground floor of Information Commons



200-seat lecture hall



Aerial view of campus



Front façade of Habib University

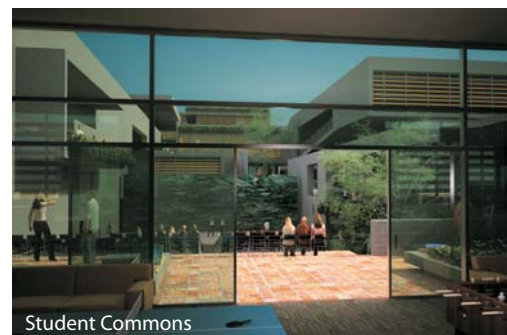
campuses has made the complex task of starting a new university in different and varied socioeconomic and cultural settings easier. They have also provided the University with an astute insight of high quality private and public American universities. This has opened the way for multiple possibilities for building linkages with US institutions, such as i) mutual exchange of information; ii) joint research in science and engineering, arts, humanities and social sciences; iii) joint degree programs; and iv) faculty and student exchange programs. These partnerships are a great start in putting us on course to establish a global institution and an active facilitator of knowledge for international academia.

Through this academic model, the University will train students in effective leadership and decision-making as well as the core values of development and progress as they may apply to Pakistan.

Habib University has also established a dynamic Board of Trustees comprising of academics and academic managers from leading universities, and societal leaders from within Pakistan and abroad. The University will be a commuting campus reflecting traditional and modern architecture. It will house technology-enhanced classrooms, state-of-the-art labs, workshops, discussion rooms and a futuristic library that will offer students a multitude of ways to expand their minds. Thus, Habib University will be the institution of choice for promising students from all backgrounds, for faculty who are passionate about teaching, research and service and for university administrators who want to make a difference.



Central courtyard



Student Commons



Evaluating a person or a person's worth is not judged by professional committees or official bodies, or by measures that claim to be objective and universal, but by the five meanings embedded in the word yohsen.

Yohsin: An Alternate **Worldview**

By Dr. Munir Fasheh

Dr. Munir Fasheh elaborates on a unique vision of life and learning which creates the possibility of a world that can embrace many worlds.

In 1998, when I first established the Arab Education Forum within the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, I came across a statement in Arabic that had a profound impact on me. It is in relation to the source and meaning of the worth of a person. The statement was articulated by Imam Ali 1,400 years ago. It says in Arabic: qeematu kullimri'en ma yohsenoh. **قيمتة كل امرئ بما يحسنه**. According to it, the worth of a person is what s/he *yohsen*. *Yohsen*, in Arabic, has

several meanings, which together constitute the worth of the person: the first meaning refers to how well the person does what s/he does, which may require technical knowledge and skills; the second refers to how beautiful and pleasing what s/he does (the importance of the senses, the aesthetic dimension); the third refers to how good it is for the community, from the perspective of the community (i.e. not doing harm to the community); the fourth refers to how much one gives of self; and

the fifth refers to how respectful (of people and ideas) the person is in discussions. Thus, according to the statement, evaluating a person or a person's worth is not judged by professional committees or official bodies, or by measures that claim to be objective and universal, but by the five meanings embedded in the word *yohsen*.

It is only in relation to the first meaning – technical knowledge and skills – that professionals and institutions may be



needed. The five dimensions of the word *yohsen* naturally embody pluralism, humility, contextual meanings (personal, cultural, and community), and interaction. However, they do not constitute another “super system”. It compels us to take a stance in the effective presence of others, without dehumanizing comparison along a vertical measure. I strongly believe that the world cannot survive if we continue to measure people and cultures along a vertical line that claims to be objective, neutral, and universal. As long as one’s worth comes from outside the person and outside the community, one’s inner world would be fragmented and shattered, and the social fabric in the community torn. Universalism and fragmentation go hand in hand: every universal claim shatters the possibility of building a universe within each person and tears apart the social fabric in communities. Within this perspective, the term ‘underdevelopment’ is not only inappropriate but it also blinds us to the richness and uniqueness which are true of every culture and every person.

Every time I reflect on Imam Ali's statement, I am amazed at how relevant it is to today's world, especially in healing us from many modern superstitions. Such healing is embedded in its meaning, in the source of a person's worth, in its respect for every person and for diversity, in perceiving people as incomparable and incommensurable, in the fact that it gives us radically different meanings for progress and learning and knowledge. I think it is important for each of us to find aspects in the modern world which the statement dismantles and heals us from, so we can regain our human and natural sensibilities as well as regain sanity and wellbeing in a world that is moving very fast into self-destruction due to the values that govern our perceptions and actions - just like a bus going downhill without a driver; it will surely crash with everyone vanishing. I believe the statement is crucial in stopping this disastrous path and redirecting us along a much wiser one.

Universities around the world focus on issues and matters that are shallow and technical, such as evaluation, competition, and analysis and ignore serious issues such as: values that govern actions; existence of multiple incommensurable knowledge types; fact that sciences have created many more problems than those they solved; and the inhuman practice of equating the worth of a person to a number. A person’s career is what really counts in universities and what determines one’s actions and relations. What characterizes students most is their readiness to follow instructions. What they learn


The five dimensions of the word yohsen naturally embody pluralism, humility, contextual meanings (personal, cultural, and community), and interaction.

fast is what leads to success and failure, and that confronting those who control their careers, is to be avoided. Our universities copy “area studies” (such as Middle Eastern studies) and ignore studying societies that have torn us apart – ignore studying the roots and tools that Europe used to rob us of abilities, capabilities, and resources. We need, for example, to find alternatives to instruction and certification as the privileged forms of learning. This is not a call to abolish universities in their current form but to end the monopoly of the dominant form of learning.

It is crucial that we do not confuse tools with values. Science, education, creativity, rights, excellence, democracy... are tools, not values. They can serve very diverse values: power, control, destruction, and corruption or they can inform and deepen wisdom. Science without wisdom ends up being destructive. We bring wisdom into science and living by protecting and regaining the ability of regeneration. In Palestine today, for example, there is hardly a cucumber seed that can regenerate itself; every year peasants have to buy new seeds; it is the same with many plants and animals.

During the ten years I worked at Harvard University, I visited Mexico, Balochistan in Pakistan, and India. These places made me aware of the diversity that still exists in a lively way in communities and cultures. We need to protect them from the onslaught of ‘progress’, from monopolies of big corporations, and from the seduction of competing along a path that is presented as the only path. In spite of appearances to the contrary, the age that is unfolding is one of hope, revitalization, and regeneration. The main source of hope lies in rural communities; it lies in people, communities, and cultures. Caring for the soil of the land and of culture is crucial. Continuing interactions and building friendships across our worlds and cultures is our real strength. Friendship, hospitality, generosity and faith (which exist in our cultures) are basic elements in building “a world that can embrace many worlds”; they are universal within a different and more human globalization. These form an integral part of the vision and the means to go forward.

Dr. Munir Fasheh holds an Ed.D. in administration, social policy, and planning from Harvard University. Dr. Fasheh has over 40 years of experience in education, in Palestine and the wider Arab world as well as the USA.



Habib University's commitment to yohsin comes with a call for a rejoining of the question of the past, i.e., the call for an indigenous liberal arts. At the heart of this inheritance is our inheritance of hikma, of philosophy now restored to its pre-modern valence and value: the love of wisdom, of thoughtful action, the very need of our historical moment.

The Pedagogy of *Yohsin* and the Shape of the Future

By Dr. Nauman Naqvi

Dr. Naqvi interprets yohsin as the philosophy of thoughtful self-cultivation and describes the impetus it provides in exploring our potentiality

At this critical moment in both national and human history, Habib University's pedagogical commitment to the charter of *yohsin*, or 'thoughtful self-cultivation' – avowed in its motto, 'Every human being's real worth is in the measure of their *yohsin*' – is both a promise to deliver to the student the key to his or her highest potential, and a valiant attempt to take charge of the question of value, the question of historical freedom in its relationship to knowledge and truth today. It declares, in effect, that the heart of the pedagogical project is, once again – as it was until the recent past of a civilization whose defining characteristic the Islamicist, Franz Rosenthal, identified

in his classic, *Knowledge Triumphant*, as its divinely ordained obsession with knowledge, thought of as crucial to ethical action at its limit – once again to learn virtuosity in living through knowledge, to learn that is, to teach ourselves the quality of the human being who can measure up to the task of meaningful, significant action today. As an anthropologist, one might say that the covenant of *yohsin* implies a definitive pedagogical intervention in the anthropology of the historical subject. For the freedom of history necessarily implies that at any given moment, many paths of action and becoming, many possible worlds, present themselves to the potential

agent of history, the individual who harbors – in a variable measure yet to be cultivated or determined – the potentialities corresponding to those possible paths and worlds. If how and what to be, or not to be, is the essential question of historical freedom and value, then historical time (and if history is not time in its significance, what is it?) contains all of that which is, has been, is not and may be.

Paradoxically, historians, whose very enterprise rests on the postulate of historical freedom, and whose contribution to our knowledge of the past and task of freedom is indispensable, are ill-equipped, by the very protocol of knowledge given



in their profession, to dwell on this freedom, to address this essential potential of the historical subject. For potential does not present itself as a positivity, on which the historian is enjoined to exclusively rely: by definition, it is not actual. It implies that history is not only that which does come to pass; it is also that which could, but might not actually come to pass – a fact given in the sense that history is not just that which succeeded, but that which failed, not just the victorious, but the lost. History is not only that which was, that which did happen, but that which might have been, that which (alas or thankfully, as the case may) did not happen, or again, in terms of the historical present, that which has not yet happened, that which could happen, i.e., both the apocalyptic and utopic moments of present historical experience. Historical time, in short, contains not only all actuality, but all potentiality.

'Potentiality' is the harbinger, the name of freedom as delicate, difficult, an imperiled, a perishable commodity, which like all of life and being, freedom always is. In the language of historians, the 'evidentiary basis' for potentiality is thus, not to be found on the surface of the historical archive, or in the chain of events, but in the inward dimension of history, i.e., in the thought, imagination, passions and ethical stature (all qualities given to cultivation, of course) – in a word, the *yohsin* of the finite historical agent.

Potentiality, of course, is an eminently – indeed, the essential – pedagogical theme. For the undertaking of pedagogy begins with the assumption that potential, unlike actuality, is not given once and for all: it can be created, cultivated, or abandoned, dissipated. Presented by a certain historical conjuncture, the subject of history chooses not only what to do, but in doing that, chooses what potentiality to develop – or indeed invent, for not being actual, potential may be summoned into existence: one never knows one's potential once and for all, it remains an abstraction, even as it is the very concrete call to action that propels our freedom. No doubt, this invented potential will be determined by a past. But the past, even as it is particular to us, is given to us as a field of determinations, a field of great, perhaps fathomless, expanse: there is much to choose in the past and its shape that will

then determine who we become in the future, the shape of things yet to come.

It is thus, by the inner logic of *yohsin* itself that Habib University's commitment to it comes with a call for a rejoining of the question of the past, i.e., the call for an indigenous liberal arts. In the domains of both knowledge and action today, in this catastrophic hour of national and human history, we cannot undertake a thoughtful cultivation of ourselves without revisiting our inheritance, so rudely and summarily banished from our historical life. At the heart of this inheritance, as at the heart of a liberal arts education, is our heritage of *hikma*, of philosophy – philosophy now restored, that is, to its premodern valence and value: the love of wisdom, of thoughtful action, the very need of our historical moment. As the category of 'philosophy' opens up again – thanks to the work, for instance, of Pierre Hadot, who in reminding us that for the ancients, philosophy was a way of life, a spiritual exercise, has shaken the edifice of modern Western 'philosophy' – the great philosophical inheritances of humanity have once again begun to come into view. And at the forefront of this emerging horizon, is the specter of Islamic philosophy.

The very essence of the tradition of Muslim philosophy – as recently shown for example, in Mohammad Azadpur's *Reason Unbound: On Spiritual Practice in Islamic Peripatetic Philosophy* – is the question of *yohsin*, of thoughtful self-cultivation. Nor has the passionate Muslim pursuit of philosophy, in South Asia as in other regions, been limited to the genre of discursive philosophy. Since the domain of intuitive knowledge, subject to cultivation and refinement of course, is at the heart of this tradition, the genres are heterogeneous – philosophical discourse brimming with literature and poetry, and vice versa. The mere mention, for instance, of such household names as the poet-saints, Bulle Shah, or Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, of Kabir and Amir Khusro, suffices to indicate the philosophical height of the everyday temperament of our peoples.

In short, for the formation of a liberal arts curriculum committed to *yohsin* we have here in Muslim South Asia, in one of the most philosophically dense regions of the world historically, an embarrassment of riches.

Given our extraordinary conjuncture, it is also historically significant that the call for (an indigenous) liberal arts comes from a Muslim Third World country when such a conception of education is, as Frank Donoghue for instance, has recently shown in his seminal *The Last Professors: The Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities*, under unprecedented, potentially fatal attack in the vanguard of the West, under attack from what increasingly looks like the final phase of the domination and execution of life by the disastrously shrunken reason of capital, reason all but entirely reduced to its calculative, strategic dimension, to making money and technology, reason enslaved to the ego's insatiable hunger for self-inflation – a far cry from the expansive, glorious inheritance of reason as humanity's affinity for divinity, its capacity to master not others, but above all its sovereign potential, its most sovereign power, to master itself for the other, for that which transcends the empirical ego's phenomenal prison, the ego trapped in the world as it is but momentarily given in the present shape of phenomena, with no sense of its own finitude and potential, let alone the world's. I do not believe it is an exaggeration to say that everything is at stake in such a pedagogical project – not just for the Muslim world, where the hole left by the lost arts of knowledge and reason genial to our civilization is a gaping wound for all to see, but for the world at large, whose very existence now depends on our capacity to recover the expansive sense of reason and knowledge that may, once again, orient us towards the task of *yohsin*, of a thoughtful cultivation of beauty, peace and truth simultaneously within ourselves and in the world.

Dr. Nauman Naqvi is an Assistant Professor in Habib University's School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. He has a PhD in anthropology from Columbia University, and has been a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Comparative Literature at Brown University, as well as at the Center for International Studies and Liberal Arts at Connecticut College. Earlier, Dr. Naqvi was a producer at the BBC World Service, worked on the editorial board of Newline, Karachi, and at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad.



Yohsin Lecture Series

Creating a platform for intellectual debate, a canvas for meaningful expressions and a space for open ideas

Habib University Foundation (H.U.F.) has been holding academic lectures in Karachi since November 2011. These are creating a much-needed impetus for intellectual conversation in the city. Centered on the philosophy of *yohsin*, these lectures are geared towards a number of issues impacting local and global society including the economy, politics, social relations, culture and religion. With an erudite audience, brilliant speakers and a liberal and respectful ambience, these lectures provide an uncensored field for freedom of expression, thought and contact and are fast becoming a firm fixture of Karachi's cultural landscape.

Inaugural Lecture on "Yohsin in Higher Education"

Dr. Munir Fasheh gave the inaugural *Yohsin* Lecture on November 22, 2011. He introduced the philosophy of *Yohsin* and its significance for the goals of higher education. Using parables and real life examples, Dr. Fasheh demonstrated that the education grounded in the philosophy of *Yohsin* is the way forward and a means of creating a better world. He related how he became aware of the richness of his illiterate mother's world in the mid-1970s. "With her understanding of math, religion, raising children, managing daily affairs, and creating an environment at home full of love and happiness, my mother became a main source of healing from a lot of what I acquired in schools and universities; I never stopped talking and writing about her world, which has been the biggest source of inspiration and wisdom for me."

He also discussed how his experiences enabled his life in three respects: "I lived most of my life without a "national" government; mostly before development; and my best teacher was an illiterate person (who taught me without words). These aspects made it possible for me to see and understand the world through my experiences, interactions, and reflections rather than through institutions."



Dr. Munir Fasheh discussing yohsin and higher education

New Perspectives on the Mughals: The Case of Dara Shikoh

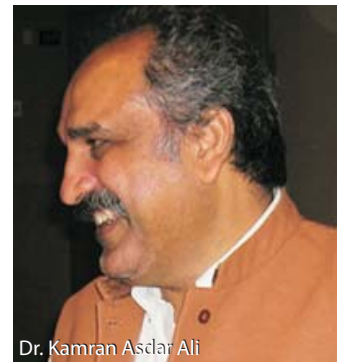
The second talk of the *Yohsin* Lectures shed light on the political and theological implications of Dara Shikoh's scholarly work on the Upanishads. Dr. Munis Faruqi, Assistant Professor at the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkley delivered this talk. He noted that the life and death of Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb--the first and third sons of the Emperor Shah Jehan (reign 1628-58)--have been shrouded in controversy. He informed the audience that Dara Shikoh (1615--1659) was the heir apparent to the throne of the Mughal Emperor, when the crown was usurped by his younger brother Aurangzeb. He said that even though both brothers were not seemingly different in talents, it was Dara's theological studies and declarations which alienated the power structure and caused him to be viewed as an unfavorable candidate for one of the most powerful thrones in the world -- the Mughal empire.



Dr. Munis Faruqi elaborating on the life of Dara Shikoh

Progressives and Perverts: A Conversation with Kamran Asdar Ali

The third lecture was given by Dr. Kamran Asdar who teaches anthropology at University of Texas, Austin, where he is also the Director of the South Asia Institute. The talk focused on the life and times of Saadat Hasan Manto, a controversial writer who witnessed the traumatic partition of India and wrote scathingly on the hypocrisies of his time. Due to his bold writings Manto was heavily persecuted by the conservative members of the societies of pre-partition India and post-partition Pakistan. The talk highlighted the difficulties faced by Manto and other writers of his ilk such as the feminist writers Ismat Chughtai and Quratulain Haider and poets Majaz and Meeraji.



Dr. Kamran Asdar Ali

Changing Sociology of Karachi: Causes, Trends and Repercussions

The fourth *Yohsin* lecture was titled Changing Sociology of Karachi: Causes, Trends and Repercussions and was given by Mr. Arif Hassan, a successful architect and urban planner. Mr. Hassan's talk highlighted Karachi's transformation from a cosmopolitan colonial port city to a multi-ethnic, multi-class megacity creating massive social change which led to a conflict between emerging behavior patterns and traditional social values. Reflecting on the changes he has witnessed in the city over a period of four decades, he said: "Karachi is transforming from a cosmopolitan colonial port city to a multi-ethnic, multi-class megacity, so it is natural for it to witness a social change and the conflict between emerging behavior patterns and traditional social values."



Mr. Arif Hassan

Yohsin Lectures are a means to create a space for public discourse to take place and to allow individuals to discuss, research and publish on various topics that may be deemed controversial. These lectures are bringing together outstanding intellectuals from around the globe and within Pakistan to give talks on issues of relevance for the region, and can serve as a platform for our partner faculty and administrators to talk about topics related to higher education and/or present their own research.



Habib University has a long-term vision to be recognized nationally and internationally as an institute of academic excellence and a hub for global academia to engage as a partner in mutual learning, research and knowledge creation.



By the Editor

Connecting global academia, advancing research and scholarship, embracing mutual exchange of ideas – that is what makes a truly global institution.

Creating a new university is a rare and difficult experience regardless of the environment it is being built in. However, in a country such as Pakistan, the task becomes much more challenging and requires great passion, ambition and inspiration. The Habib group, with its legacy of educational philanthropy in the country, set out to create a nation-changing institution in late 2007 from the platform of Habib University Foundation (H.U.F.).

Habib University is being established as a world-class liberal arts and sciences university that will address the challenges presented by the twenty-first century, while serving as a bridge for intellectual, research and academic exchange between

Pakistan and international universities. For sound planning of this University, it was important to interact with leading universities worldwide to understand how they became world leaders in higher education, and draw insights from their experiences. Therefore, the Foundation sought advice from international universities to facilitate Habib University in adopting the best practices in higher education, while adapting them successfully to the Pakistani context.

Furthermore, in order to provide broad-based education that would prepare students as full and effective lifelong learners and not just for a specific career, Habib University also needed to be rooted

in the liberal arts and sciences tradition. Research on international higher education institutions pointed to the fact that the institutional model of high quality American universities was worth emulating. Another important consideration was to link with newly established reputable institutions that could help the planning team understand the complexities of university building in the current era.

Two elite international universities at Qatar Education City – Carnegie Mellon University and Texas A&M University at Qatar not only shared H.U.F.'s vision for higher education, but also understood the urgency for creating an institution like





Carnegie Mellon University

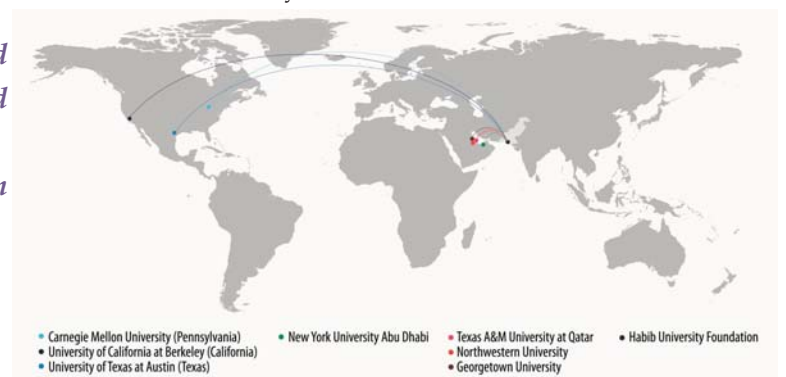


Texas A&M at Qatar

Habib University in Pakistan. They had the additional experience of building new branch campuses in a country harboring some similarities with Pakistan. Both institutions signed symbiotic partnerships with H.U.F. in 2010 for mutual exchange of knowledge and experiences. Partnership features include the following: curriculum and research design, student life and learning; faculty recruitment and mentorship, space and laboratory design, with opportunities for student and faculty exchange, joint research and joint degree programs in the long-term.

Two elite international universities at Qatar Education City – Carnegie Mellon University and Texas A&M University at Qatar not only shared H.U.F.'s vision for higher education, but also understood the urgency for creating an institution like Habib University in Pakistan.

Habib University's planning team has been collaborating closely with these partner institutions and they continue to play a phenomenal role in helping the project move closer towards becoming creating a nation-changing institution. The project has also received generous support and encouragement within other universities at Qatar Education City as well, such as Northwestern University, Georgetown School of Foreign Service, Virginia Commonwealth University and Cornell University. Other international universities with whom Habib University has past or present interactions include the University of Texas at Austin, University of California at Berkeley, Stanford University, and New York University Abu Dhabi.





With the planning process for Habib University well underway, H.U.F. is exploring ways to deepen existing partnerships and forge new ones. As a first-of-its-kind institution in Pakistan to actively seek international collaborations and an interdisciplinary liberal arts and sciences model, multiple possibilities exist for cross-cutting programs and initiatives with liberal institutions around the world.

Habib University's core curriculum and undergraduate degrees offer a wide scope of learning for external partners. Each of the four majors, i.e. Social Development and Policy, Communication Studies and Design, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, reflect an important area of the country and can address a wide range of critical issues such as societal imbalances, urban planning, power shortage, sustainable development, conflict resolution, etc. These problems are prevalent in many countries of the world and Pakistan can, in effect, become a case study for other nations. Furthermore, we are striving for international accreditation and ensuring that the University adheres to the merit, quality and standards that are internationally understood and recognized. This will also facilitate international linkages including study abroad programs, student and faculty exchange, joint courses and joint degrees.

The University also provides an exciting opportunity for international and local scholars to conduct their research on a country of great geopolitical importance and produce new knowledge in the sciences, humanities and social sciences. Specifically, being based in Karachi, a megalopolis of 18 million people and one of the largest metropolitan cities of the world, Habib University will benefit from a rich diversity of socioeconomic contexts. Aside from its significance as the economic hub, Karachi is also a center of large businesses, government institutions, and a thriving civil society- all of which can provide excellent case studies of successful and failed development approaches and initiatives. Furthermore, they also offer the ideal circumstances for bridging the gap between academia, industry and community. Karachi has key urban and social planning issues and innovations that can serve as an excellent laboratory for academics, policymakers, practitioners, researchers and students in terms of problem analysis and identification of sustainable and cost-effective solutions, for progress and future development.

Henceforth, just like other global institutions, Habib University can facilitate meaningful research with possible worldwide impact. Habib University thus has tremendous potential as an institution that can connect global academia, advance global inquiry and produce new knowledge.

Recent Partnership Activities

Information Technology workshop held in Doha

H.U.F.'s Information Technology team visited Texas A&M University at Qatar to understand technology needs (both hardware and software) of Habib University. They conducted focus groups at Texas A&M University at Qatar with both students and faculty to enhance their knowledge about the role technology plays in higher education. The team also attended the Technology in Higher Education 2012 Conference which was hosted by Texas A&M at Qatar centered on Mobile Learning: Challenges and Opportunities. The findings from this visit will be instrumental in creating the right technology environment for Habib University.

Academic planning workshop

The Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences team at HU visited Qatar Education City to discuss and review the University's core curriculum, Communication Studies and Design and Social Development and Policy programs. Over a course of four days, the H.U.F. team met with several academics and academic managers from our partner institutions, Georgetown School of Foreign Service and Northwestern University.

Workshop held in Qatar to refine specialized labs

Habib University's architectural team scheduled a three-day workshop at Qatar Education City in November 2011 to seek input from Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) and Texas A&M University at Qatar on the design and layout of HU's specialized laboratories prepared by Research Facilities Design (RFD), an US company that has designed labs for Harvard and MIT. The visit was a valuable learning opportunity for the team, as they interacted with and gained input from faculty members, laboratory specialists and other experienced professionals at Qatar Education City.

“IF MAMA AIN’T HAPPY, AIN’T NOBODY HAPPY!”

If you spend enough time with Habib University’s Academic Planning team, you will hear them echoing the quote above. They have Dr. Charles Todd Kent of Texas A&M University at Qatar to thank for this piece of wisdom which refers to the paramount importance of having a happy and contented faculty body. Even though this catchy phrase is unlikely to feature in a faculty recruitment handbook, it is one of the primary reasons behind the success of prominent universities worldwide.

With over a decade of academic experience in a prestigious institution such as Texas A&M, Dr. Kent has sound knowledge of faculty management. He has been the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs at Texas A&M’s Qatar campus since January 2010, and strongly believes that good faculty is the cornerstone for any institution and a huge factor in its performance.

With his accommodating style and helpful demeanor, Dr. Kent made his

presence felt right from the beginning when he contributed enthusiastically in the development of Habib University’s core curriculum. In the more recent past, he played a critical role in helping the University’s planning team understand the distinction between the role of the Office of Academic Affairs and the University’s Human Resources department. He also sifted through dozens of resumes, and conducted numerous interviews to help find the right match of talented individuals to join Habib University’s School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

We are grateful to him and appreciate his helpful nature, boundless energy and unending commitment towards the University. For all this and more, we thank Dr. Todd Kent and wish our association with him continues to grow.



Dr. Todd Kent has an extensive background in public opinion research, political consulting, and working with campaigns, and has conducted hundreds of research studies for corporate and political clients. His background in politics and experience in political polling allows him to use real-life situations to enhance students' classroom experiences.

THE INVISIBLE ANCHOR

In the 1980s, a young American man visited Pakistan, taking away with him strong memories of a rich and diverse place. His fondness for the country led to fruition several decades later, when he became a strong supporter of a nation-changing project—a unique liberal arts and sciences university in Karachi.

This man, G. Richard Tucker, Paul Mellon University Professor of Applied Linguistics at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) and Interim Dean at Carnegie’s international campus in Qatar (2010-2011) has been an invisible anchor for us—he was instrumental in engendering support for Habib University project in Pittsburgh, and proved to be a linchpin in carrying the partnership onwards after it was initiated by Dr. Charles E. Thorpe, Founding Dean of CMUQ.

In an interview with HU’s planning team last year, Dr. Tucker said, “We are completely open to the various ways in which the partnership will develop and will emerge over the years”. He further stated that he believed Habib University would have a regional impact similar to that created in the Gulf by the Education City. “My impression is that Habib University will be an intellectual nexus for

the region that will contribute to the development of the next generation of scholars, who will participate in what we refer to as the knowledge-based economy. They will be able to interact across time and space with people of different languages and ethnicity to solve problems of tomorrow that we did not know existed yesterday. I think Habib University will make a tremendous contribution to Pakistan and to the region.”

Mr. Rafiq M. Habib, Chairman of H.U.F., has fond memories of the partnership signing ceremony in November 2010, when the bonds between HU and CMU were formalized. Dr. Tucker was a key member during this process and was present at the ceremony along with Dr. Thorpe and Dr. Mark Kamlet, Provost of CMU.

We feel privileged to have garnered support at such esteemed levels, and it gives us a tremendous sense of pride and confidence to be working alongside these outstanding individuals.



Dr. G. Richard Tucker did his Ph.D. from McGill University and during the past forty years, has directed or co-directed numerous large-scale research projects. He also serves on a number of editorial advisory boards for scholarly journals in diverse areas of language education and has a special interest in contributing toward a greater awareness of the role of language in education and national development in the United States and abroad.



In my mind, the main lesson is that Habib University is coming on line at the right location and right moment in Asian Educational history.

Asia and “A True Liberal Arts Education”

By Dr. Benjamin Reilly

Dr. Benjamin Reilly makes a strong case for a liberal arts education and why it is increasingly important for Asia.

Like most Chinese college students, Yongfang Chen struggled to make the transition from high school to college. However, Chen was not like most high school students. Unlike the majority of his peers, Chen opted against joining a professional program and instead joined Bowdoin College, a small liberal arts school in Maine. Chen’s difficulty at Bowdoin was not caused by language, but rather by the radically different intellectual environment he encountered there. “Coming from a culture in which a ‘standard answer’ is provided for every question,” Chen remembers, “I did not argue with others even when I disagreed. However, Bowdoin forced me to re-consider ‘the answer’ and reach beyond my comfort zone.”¹

Despite the potential discomfort that a liberal education can cause – or perhaps, because of it – liberal education is becoming an increasingly common choice for college-age Chinese. Youngfan Chen is himself partially to blame for this trend. Chen recently co-authored *A True Liberal Arts Education*, a guide book for Chinese

students interested in pursuing American liberal arts degrees. Although the authors agree that liberal education is not for everyone, they do assert that a liberal education greatly improves “the power of thinking --- how to read, write, speak, listen critically, and how to qualify and quantify things effectively in order to predict and produce,” thus giving students a “fundamental ‘toolbox’” for solving problems. As a result of this intellectual preparation, Chen and his co-authors assert, Chinese employers are coming to realize that liberal arts degree holders “perform better over the long term” than their more narrowly educated counterparts.²

The publication of *A True Liberal Arts Education* has given further momentum to an ongoing movement: a slight but growing shift in Chinese universities towards the liberal arts. Fudan University in Shanghai, for example, has incorporated liberal arts-style education into its curriculum, including allowing students to wait to select their major until their sophomore year. Peking University

recently introduced the Yuanpei Honors Program, designed to teach creative thinking by exposing students to an interdisciplinary core curriculum. Not to be outdone, Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou has created a separate liberal arts college within the University where students study courses ranging from “the Chinese classics, Greek, and Latin” to “science and economics”³. According to international education expert Richard C. Levin, the impetus behind these programs is concern by the Chinese that their students “lack the independence and creativity necessary for their countries’ long-term economic growth.” Levin argues that Asian universities have traditionally focused on mastery of content rather than “development of the capacity for independent and critical thinking,” which a liberal education can better provide.⁴

Other evidence suggests that growing Asian interest in liberal education is by no means limited to China. In a story strikingly similar to that of Yongfang Chen, Indian college student Vedika Khemani recently opted against the standard

¹Serena Golden, “A True Liberal Arts Education.” *Inside Higher Education*, Oct. 16, 2009.

²Duncan Hewitt, “Liberal Applications.” *Newsweek*, Feb 10, 2010.

³*Ibid.* ⁴Richard C. Levin, “Top of the Class: The Rise of Asia’s Universities.” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 3 (May/June 2010), pp. 70-72.



“engineering, medicine, or commerce” degree choices that dominate the academic scene in India and chose instead to attend Harvey Mudd College, a small liberal arts college in California. In Khemani’s opinion, most Indian college degrees are far too driven by the job market, “creating a college experience much more akin to ‘technical training’ rather than intellectual exploration.” In such programs, students excel at memorizing textbooks, but Khemani asserts that “real world problems rarely ever have textbook solutions.” In contrast, a Harvey Mudd offers a liberal education that teaches students “how to think critically and what questions to ask,” creating “resilient people who can invent creative solutions,” skills essential in an era of global economic integration.⁵

Habib’s students will be immersed in an interdisciplinary educational environment designed to cultivate problem solving, critical thinking, community responsibility, and appreciation of human diversity.

As in the case of Youngfan Chen, Vedika Khemani’s story is indicative of a wider trend. Champions of liberal education in India today argue that a liberal degree can help overturn a “cultural tradition of deference... to authority” that severely inhibits critical thinking in Indian higher education.⁶ With this objective in mind, a number of Indian institutions of higher education have begun to offer liberal arts degrees. Case in point

is the Foundation for Liberal and Management Education (FLAME), which offers a liberal education degree as well as business, communication, and performing arts degrees that are all “anchored” to a liberal education model.⁷

So what can we friends of Habib learn from the experiences of Youngfan Chen and Vedika Khemani? In my mind, the main lesson is that Habib University is coming on line at the right location and right moment in Asian Educational history. Habib University shares Chen and Khemani’s deep-seated belief that only a liberal education can fully prepare students for the opportunities and challenges of our increasingly globalized world. Habib’s students will be immersed in an interdisciplinary educational environment designed to cultivate problem solving, critical thinking, community responsibility, and appreciation of human diversity. Best of all, Pakistani students seeking a liberal arts degree will no longer need to travel to distant Maine or California. Rather, with the opening of Habib University, a “true liberal arts education” will be as close as Karachi.

Dr. Benjamin Reilly is Visiting Assistant Professor at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar. Dr. Reilly conducts teaching and research in the fields of European/Islamic relations, travelogues as historical sources, and environmental history. He has written a number of journal articles, as well as two books on environmental history, with a particular focus on the interplay between human beings, their environment, and “natural” disasters. Dr. Reilly is also the lead author of Habib University’s core curriculum.

⁵Vedika Khemani, “Why a Liberal Education Matters.” *The New York Times/International Herald Tribune*, Feb. 2, 2012.

⁶Amrit Dhillon, “More than a billion people but where are the thinkers.” *Times Higher Education*, 14 April 2010.

⁷<http://www.flame.edu.in/index.php>

The ideal university cannot be only a science or arts or engineering university; it has to be a university teaching all known human knowledge

“The Idea of a University”

By Dr. Tariq Rahman

Dr. Tariq Rahman talks about his vision of a university as an institution bound only by the imagination of the intellectuals learning and working in it.

The above is the title of Cardinal Newman’s (1801-1890) collection of lectures, sermons and speeches delivered from the 1850s. But, of course, the ideal university in Newman’s mind did not exist and the ideal in my mind does not exist either. But some of Newman’s thinking did go into the British ideal of a university and –if miracles happen sometimes– possibly some of my ideas of an ideal university will go into the project called ‘the university’ in Pakistan.

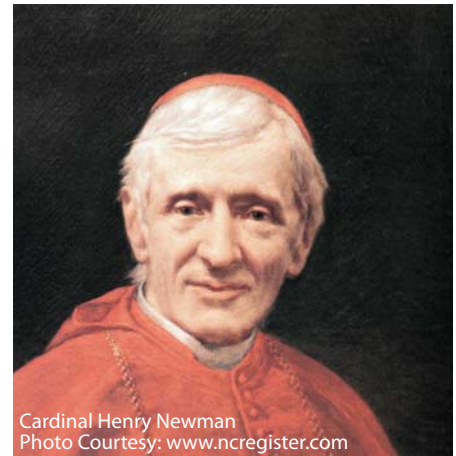
I and Newman agree that a university must promote all human knowledge and students should become generalists before they become specialists. This means that the ideal university cannot be only a science or arts or engineering university; it has to be a university teaching all known human knowledge. Moreover, subjects of the humanities and the social sciences should have a prominent position in the syllabus. That is why the 1988 Bologna declaration, called the ‘Magna Carta of the European Universities’, calls for the preservation of the humanist tradition.

If these values are undermined by the state in the name of nationalism, the military in the name of security or the religious pressure groups in the name of the sacred as they define it, then we are in danger of losing what I consider the most precious aspect of the university tradition. That is why academics make the demand that governments or private entrepreneurs should fund the university and then have nothing to do with its governance leaving it to the professorate.

The medieval university in northern Europe was an intellectual space situated between the two powerful institutions of that time – the state and the church. It did not escape the domination of either but even so, many intellectual movements, not approved by Church authorities, were born and sustained in the universities. My ideal is that the university should remain a space free for intellectual enquiry. In Pakistan this is threatened by the state, pressure groups invoking the name of religion to gain popular support and, most paradoxically, the managerial revolution.

The Bologna Declaration emphasized academic autonomy. This is taken as the freedom to teach whatever courses academics want and to design them themselves rather than have bureaucrats design them for them. But it means far more. It means the freedom to pursue one’s own research agenda and get funding for it. And, above all, it means the freedom to be a public intellectual like Noam Chomsky who can write popular newspaper articles and appear in the media in order to shape public opinion with broad humanist objectives in mind.

Out of these three types of freedoms, the first is usually granted by the authorities though lack of funds and utilitarian needs means a decline for departments of philosophy, history, literature and the humanities in general. Research funding is controlled by donors who have their own agendas. The corporate sector pays for research which increases profits; the military that which helps in killing people more efficiently.



Cardinal Henry Newman
Photo Courtesy: www.ncregister.com

The state makes it incumbent upon the academics to pursue research in the broad national interest or, as they put it generously, ‘for the welfare of the community’.

This leaves out that pure research which is done primarily to gratify the intellectual curiosity of the scholar or the scientist. This concept of applied research for some purpose other than just the gratification of mental curiosity makes pure researchers clothe their research proposals in whatever language is fashionable at the time. As the language of nationalism is in currency these days, people have to pretend that they are out to serve some national interest or are working for the welfare of the community. Yet, the history of science tells us that the greatest minds worked for their own pleasure; to gratify their intellectual curiosity.

The freedom of being an anti-establishment public intellectual is what

all authoritarian governments are afraid of. When the British established the colonial university in India in 1858 they gave vast powers to the Chancellor who was the viceroy or a governor. Not content with this they chose former judges and civil servants, obviously loyal to the aims of the colonial power in India, as vice chancellors. And even so, they kept the professors low-paid and lower in prestige than the rulers (the military and the Indian Civil Service). Thus, academics could not have emerged as formidable public intellectuals but, even so, some of them did.

I have reservations about academics being evaluated by the students. I do not claim that it is wrong or useless. It may well be accurate and help the organization get rid of incompetent lecturers. But it comes at a cost. And that cost is, once again, the lowering of the prestige of the university professor. I believe that this is a greater evil than some incompetent people not getting weeded out of the system. If evaluation is to be done, then I insist that the principle should be applied across the board. This means that patients

and nurses should evaluate doctors; clerks, junior officers and so on. But they will not submit to being evaluated by their juniors so I propose a compromise. Lecturers should not be made permanent for five years until they are rigorously evaluated both by their colleagues and the students. After that, evaluation should be optional though it may be given points to encourage it for people who may not be able to earn as many points by research.

Most of the universities will always be teaching universities but the ideal university will always be a research university. For this, the model I prefer is the Humboldtian model. The name comes from Wilhelm von Humboldt, a German scholar, who was the pioneer and leading light of the University of Berlin established in 1810. In such a university, research takes lead over teaching. Professors are not merely teachers, they are scholars and scientists. Such people are rare so they have to be paid highly, given leisure, autonomy and prestige. But such a university is elitist in nature.

There is a political problem with establishing them. After all, only a few

governments can state clearly that they will establish just a few elitist universities giving them a well-paid faculty with leisure for their own research as well as prestige and freedom. Political opponents will accuse them of elitism and of promoting the urban centers where the universities are established. So, for such narrow political and economic short-term gains, Pakistan has not established the ideal university – and political realities being what they are, there is doubt if such universities can be established. Unless, of course, the public demands them.

Dr. Tariq Rahman is HEC Distinguished National Professor Emeritus and Dean, School of Education, Beaconhouse National University, Islamabad. He is the recipient of the HEC Lifetime Achievement Award for research as well as the Humboldt Research Award (2012) which is a rare honor for a Pakistani social scientist since most awards are given to natural scientists.



Humboldt University
Photo Courtesy: www.panaromio.com



Merewether Tower, Saddar, Karachi

Noman Baig explores the different moods, sentiments and attitudes of a metropolitan city.

Writing about a city is a difficult task. Italian novelist and writer, Italo Calvino, in his book *Invisible Cities* describes Venice in fifty-five imaginative ways; each explaining the city from a unique lens. Karachi, with a population of more than 18 million people divided along culture, class, gender, and religious identities, renders the task of writing a daunting exercise. The predominant way of describing Karachi has been through the category of violence. Journalistic accounts are filled with violent stories that have characterized the city as a fearful place. Although the sense of fear contributes to form the city's texture, Karachi possesses a structure of feelings that gesture towards a complex and intertwined human

experience of the urban space. In order to avoid understanding Karachi through the pre-given categories, I seek to begin by exploring the ethos of Karachi. The Oxford dictionary defines ethos as the "characteristic spirit, the prevalent tone of sentiment, of a people or community."

While there may be many officially assigned prevalent "sentiments" emanating from the city's commercial activities, these do not fully capture Karachi's temperament (*mizaaj*). To talk of *mizaaj* is to reveal a sense of humor, joy, anxiety, mourning, nostalgia and fear that forms Karachi's temperament. Commonly used to describe people's condition, I would prefer to use the word *mizaaj* to sense the city's mood, and to acquire an intimate sense of the place and

its people. Exploring the affective dimensions of the city also shows how animate and inanimate objects of Karachi are entangled within the urban *mizaaj*. It is not people alone who generate the city's ethos; rather the inanimate objects, such as the urban landscape, also contribute towards forming the urban spirit. The things that circulate in Karachi or the objects that stay still speak the city's story. Without these objects, the biography of Karachi remains incomplete.

Karachi discloses its *mizaaj* sometimes as a fear and anxiety. However at other times, it opens itself as a joyous and humorous place. The mood does not stay static; it vibrates across multiple temperaments. People also interact with the movements of *mizaaj* and they usually

conceals its rhythms and vibrations. It is these vibrations that form the city's texture, and these rhythmic movements make Karachi an irreducible place.

Since a large number of migrants in Karachi came from India after the Partition, nostalgia has been one of the prevalent sentiments of the city. Among the older generation of Karachi that migrated from India after the Partition in 1947, the sense of nostalgia forms the very first experience of their life in the new city. Imagine more than half of the city's population, who were violently uprooted from their ancestral homes, lived by reminiscing the past and at the same time experienced the uncertain future. The sets of activities, behaviors and dispositions that these newly arrived migrants brought to an alien place gestured towards the deep nostalgia of the lost home. This tense mixture of nostalgia and uncertainty shapes the early ethos of postcolonial Karachi.

People in Karachi are well aware of the word tension as a lived feeling. It is common to hear from the people that "there is a tension in the city" (aaj shehr mein tension hey) indicating some kind of political-sectarian conflict tearing apart the city's fabric. Knitted in various relationships and activities and in structures of feelings, the people of the city feel that the tension rips the very texture that allows them to function normally in their everyday life. Tension as a general feeling often times grips the people's sensibility and also helps them to navigate through certain spaces. That is, the feeling of tension offers people an impromptu sense of direction in order to avoid tense localities and neighborhoods while also benefits them to take less tense paths to their destination.

The impromptu nature of life in Karachi drives a number of activities in the city. If one tries to identify the defining activity of the people of Karachi, the word *jugaad* comes to my mind. *Jugaad* can be translated as a creative improvisation that people deploy in their everyday lives. Sometimes used in a pejorative way, *jugaad* is a useful and casual activity that allows a person to rethink its given position and to imagine new potentialities that can be actualized and deployed to get things done.

The impromptu nature of life in Karachi drives a number of activities in the city. If one tries to identify the defining activity of the people of Karachi, the word jugaad comes to my mind. Jugaad can be translated as a creative improvisation that people deploy in their everyday lives.

Given the limited economic resources, it becomes necessary for people to creatively improvise means to continue their survival strategies. For instance, people extract gold and silver from computers and mobile phones' parts and then sell it to a local jewelry shop or improvise a television from a dysfunctional computer monitor. To offer another example of *jugaad*, local shopkeepers in Pakistan wrap snacks and make paper bags from the used/unused phonebooks imported from North America, Europe and Australia. These ways of improvising did not exist as a set technological infrastructure, rather people creatively improvised to make new technologies. It is not unusual to hear people using the word *jugaad*, especially those living at the margins more so than by the people who are economically stable and possess a privileged form of social and cultural capital. In fact, often times, *jugaad* is the only way for informal labor to earn their daily wages in a city that is rapidly being pressurized by forces unleashed by the economic system. The concept and practice of *jugaad* is becoming increasingly popular internationally by urban designers and planners who are searching for new ways of imagining cities and a city life.

To talk of *mizaaj* is to reveal various registers of life. Humor or *mazaq* (in Urdu) is one of that registers that expresses human sociality, and the city's character, in a profound way. The Urdu word *mazaq* which literally means 'to become fluid, to melt' shows the function of humor at the surface of the language. Humor suspends the literal meanings; it liquefies given logical understanding in order to open up

a different possibility. Karachi's neighborhoods, with closely knit communities and their subaltern public culture, are intimate sites of humor. The predominately Urdu-speaking town of Liaquatabad, where I was born and raised, for instance, is a place famous for its sociality of humor. The famous Pakistani comedian Omar Sharif, humorously valorized the people of Liaquatabad in his stage shows, popularizing the town as Lalukhet and its residents as Lalukheti. The wit and humor in Liaquatabad, especially among its youth, are so prevalent that in Karachi the term Lalukheti, when used by the "cultured" elite symbolizes people with "uncivilized" and "uncultured" social behavior. Liaquatabad and other working class neighborhoods in the city express their unique character and spirit differently from the officially assigned notions of locality and space.

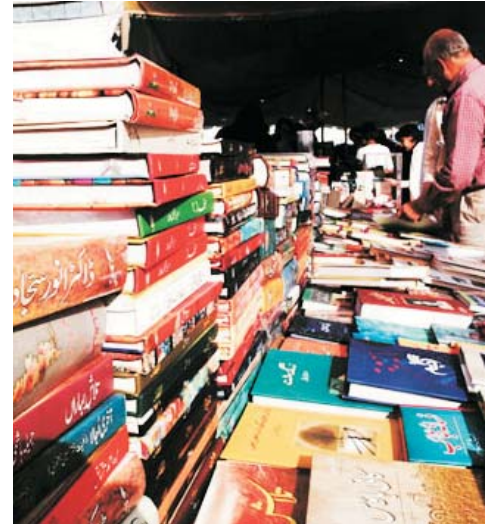
Mizaaj of the city is formed by a mixture of multiple senses such as mourning, nostalgia, humor, and other such states that unfold in rhythmic nature and express Karachi's fluid character. I unveiled few dimensions of Karachi's *mizaaj* and the ways in which it shapes certain activities. These aspects are only glimpses inside the city's complex and amorphous nature, much can be written of its tragedy, which I hope to write one day.

Noman Baig is part of the Habib University Academic Planning Team. Noman is a doctoral student at University of Texas at Austin and is conducting researching on the connections of divinity and the financial markets in Pakistan.



Karachi Literature Festival

By Sibtain Naqvi



The Karachi Literature Festival was inaugurated in 2010, and in three years has become one of the largest literary events and one of the leading cultural occasions in Pakistan.

Carlton Hotel in Karachi, Pakistan is a quiet place. During the day one can often hear the rustling leaves as they blow across the parking area. Set in an unfrequented nook of the teeming megalopolis, it is usually the setting for exclusive weddings and parties. However, for two days in the year, it undergoes a metamorphosis. The wedding festivities are replaced with witty quotes and lyrical verses and the crowd throngs in to sample the intellectual offerings. This transformation is due to the Karachi Literature Festival (KLF), an event which has fast become a firm fixture of Pakistan's cultural scene.

KLF is the brainchild of Aameena Saiyad, Managing Director of Oxford University Press, Pakistan and Asif Farrukhi, writer and one of the leading literary critics of Pakistan. Due to strong public interest, excellent media coverage and enthusiastic response from the literary community, KLF has now mushroomed to include most of Pakistan's writers, poets, media personnel as well as prominent literary figures from across the world. These include notable personalities such as Karen Armstrong, William Dalrymple, Vikram Seth and Anatol Lieven.

KLF provides an opportunity to put Pakistan on the map as a country rich in culture and creativity and is a reflection of Pakistan's historical roots as expressed in a multiplicity of languages and in various forms of writing with past and contemporary context. Taking advantage of interest in writing from and about Pakistan, the Festival also seeks to broaden the picture and counter-balance the negative depiction of society in Pakistan by celebrating the diversity and dynamism of this society. Ms. Aameena Saiyid said, "The aim of the Karachi Literature Festival is to promote and project Pakistan writers and to get people reading. The author, the poet, the playwright, the biographer have a great contribution to make to our society and we are organizing this Festival to honor our writers, raise their profile and bring them closer to their readers."

KLF is also a reflection of Pakistan's societal resilience and self-belief which is instrumental in holding large events like this one. The tenacity of Karachi's society makes a successful case for the international community to ignore the negativity that pervades the country, and they fly in droves to interact with an audience hungry for cultural expressions.

The festival comprises of hour-long sessions which often include a question and answer sequence. The program formally starts at 10 in the morning, and runs well past sunset. While rushing from one session to the next, the visitor experiences constant cognitive dissonance about the missed sessions, and cannot escape the feeling that the word 'festival' is a key part of the name and thus the most prominent persona of the event. The Festival is not only about interacting with writers or books or listening to debate: it's about story-telling that brings audiences to the edge of their seats, and rooms heaving with disbelief, anger and laughter.

KLF, while being a worthy effort, has a few glitches. One of them is that its scope is so broad that it is difficult to digest it as a purely literature festival. With a packed schedule and multiple sessions, there seems to be a noticeable shortage of speakers who can do justice to the varied topics. While the organizers have made an effort to encourage local writings and provincial literature, these sessions are few and far between. Indigenous writers need to be further encouraged to showcase their work on this platform.

Nevertheless, KLF is an important step in the right direction and has the potential to become a major cultural event for the entire region.

Sibtain Naqvi is part of the Partnerships and Networking team at Habib University Foundation. He holds a degree in finance and marketing from the Institute of Business Administration, Karachi.

Latest Developments and News from Habib University



Foundation work in progress at the University site

Construction of Habib University well under way

A small ceremony was held on Sunday, March 4, 2012 at the construction site of Habib University to mark the commencement of concreting. At the event, lean concreting was initiated by Mr. Rafiq M. Habib, Chairman Habib University Foundation (H.U.F.) to prepare the ground of Habib University's basement. The event was attended by Wasif Rizvi, CEO of H.U.F. and key members of the Foundation.

H.U.F.'s CEO presents at an International Conference

Mr. Wasif Rizvi gave a presentation on 'Chronicles of Higher Education in Pakistan' at the 2012 National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). He narrated the historical journey of tertiary education in the country and highlighted how higher education institutions were held hostage to authoritarianism and religious fundamentalism till the 1990s. He also spoke about the positive intervention of the private sector in the 1980s. He then introduced Habib University and its philosophy of *yohsin*.

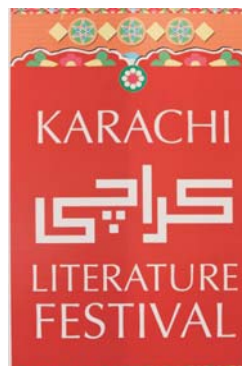


Obio Ntia with the Student Affairs team

Habib University invites Director of College Counseling

The Student Affairs team invited Obio Ntia, Director of College Counseling, Zhenhai High School to assist in framing Habib University's admissions philosophy and framework. Obio is a former admissions officer for Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, USA with seven years of professional experience in international education. Reflecting on his experience in Karachi, Ntia said, "I am very pleased that I had a chance to share my undergraduate admission office background and knowledge with the team in order to develop a worthy new institution for the local Karachi population."

Faculty presence at Karachi Literature Festival



Dr. Nauman Naqvi, Habib University's founding faculty member, moderated a session at this year's Karachi Literature Festival, titled "Conversation with Siddhartha Deb: author of The Beautiful and the Damned". The book explores the disturbing realities behind the Indian economic boom. Dr. Naqvi helped bring out the critical aspects of the book and spoke about the issues in developing nations specifically in India and Pakistan.



Habib University Foundation

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