Tu also addresses the same question that was raised by Murata in her introduction about the Islamicity of Liu’s work in view of the absence of “Islamic markers” and gives a similar response by saying that in Liu’s present work “revelation and devotional spirituality are veiled ... whereas self-realization ... is accentuated” (Ibid., 592). He, however, brings out a key concept which would have convinced Liu of the Islamic-Confucian uniformity and made the task of explaining it to his readers very easy: the concept of “immanent transcendence” rather than “radical transcendence.” The readers familiar with the thought of Ibn ‘Arabī can understand that this immanent transcendence is nothing other than *tanziḥ ma’ al-tashbīḥ* (transcendence alongwith immanence) emphasized by him. A Muslim cosmology based on this concept which synthesizes the identity and difference in the relationship of God, humanity and the universe squares nicely with the anthropocosmic vision based on the idea of *tiānrenheyi* i.e., the unity of Heaven and humanity.

In addition to being an indispensable resource for those doing research in the history of Chinese Islam and Islamic Confucian dialogue, there are numerous reasons for making it commendable to readers interested in Islam in a general way. The life and present work of Liu Zhi reveal a very interesting and important possibility of relating normative Islam to any socio-intellectual context in which it happens to find itself. This work demonstrates that to find place into the hearts and minds of a people, it is not always necessary or beneficial for Islam to do so by condemning indigenous traditions of those people in a puritanical way. There is always a room for being genuinely accommodative, without being syncretic or eclectic, of appreciating the uniformity of metaphysical principles underlying those traditions. Liu Zhi’s contribution also demonstrates that the talk of an essential metaphysical and spiritual unity underlying theological and formal differences is not just empty talk but it can be put to use in bringing into dialogue traditions as diverse and mutually removed, for a number of reasons, as Islam and Confucianism.

Qaiser Shahzad

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M. A. Sherif, a system analyst and an unusually versatile writer, has excelling number of biographies to his credit. He is currently exploring history of London-based Muslims and their social and political activism coupled with Muslim institutional archives. Sherif presided the chair of Muslim council of Britain’s Research & Documentation Committee, of which he is still a member. He is also the author of a classical biography on Abdullah Yusuf Ali, titled, Searching for Solace (IBT, 1994).

The central insight and thematic dimensions of Pickthall and Philby’s biography indicate its inherent connection with Yusuf Ali’s biography. Both expose the Western motives of taking hold of the earth, by any means from those who have different origin and complexion. The sole objective of the author to write constantly on such issues is to bring about the unity of Muslim ummah through developing a collective consciousness towards elimination of all kinds of racial, regional and religious differences. He is strongly convinced that the revival of Muslim ummah inevitably requires the understanding of contemporary issues and current debates through scholarly essays and research papers, as well as through acknowledgement of the chivalrous souls like Marmaduke Pickthall and Abdullah Philby.

Accordingly the author recognizes them as men of distinction and courage, who traversed the Muslim world and ultimately came to empathize and felt identity with their own people. The crucial issues of the time, with which they came across, were the intriguing events which led to the World War I, emergence of the new nations in the Middle East, and menacing dilemma of the Zionist project in Palestine. They bluntly opposed and agitated against the anti-Muslim policies of their own government and embraced Islam by perceiving it the only way of salvation which guides men to spend their lives according to the Divine precepts. In this context, the author traces what they uttered and practically experienced because it is associated with our contemporary quest to challenge the power relations and (re)construct and establish integrity cum solidarity of the Muslim ummah.

The author provides a remarkable account of the life of two erudite scholars and their revolutionary contribution in the decisive events of the time they witnessed, the span of which encompasses the period of five decades, viz. 1890 to 1940. Pickthall undertook the support of Ottoman Turkey prior to and after the Great World War I (1914–18), whereas Philby demonstrated his true concerns for the independence of Arabs by challenging western

\[1\] The famous English translator of the Holy Qur’an in the twentieth century, whose translation is much valued for the plenteous footnotes that he provided to explain the terms containing multi-embedded meanings, which indicate his wide-ranging knowledge of myriad subjects.
hegemony and their oppressive attitude towards the ‘others’ (the Arabs). At one end, the text narrates their political and religious ventures as well as the spiritual journey from the abyss of darkness into the heights of truth. At another end, it continuously furnishes a vital testimony of the ‘othering’ of the ‘others,’ i.e., the exploitation and extermination of the so-called brutes (the Ottomans and the Arabs), by the civilized imperialists, i.e., their Western lords. From this undertaking, we can clearly see the heroic adventures of Pickthall and Philby, viz., their pledge to challenge unconscious processes, imperialists’ ideologies, power relations and other expressions of dominance that entail privileging of western interests over the ‘others.’ The essay is not only divided but virtually falls into four sections. Each section carries its own perspectives, which are as follow:

1. It exhibits their love and fascination for the Muslims and yearning to live with them;
2. It reinforces their constant protest and opposition against the prevailing policies of the British government in Muslim Lands;
3. It portrays their migration, i.e., both physical and spiritual, from ambivalence into the heart of the truth;
4. Section four manifests their analysis of the Muslims’ predicament and hopes for the better future.

The present review probes into the text in two ways, i.e., at one end knocks at the linguistic form and at another end maintains dialectical interaction with the content of the text. In the context of its linguistic form, the author’s use of circumlocutions and redundant expressions need to be commented upon, which mark a radical departure from the precise and succinct expressions and serve to camouflage the immediate insight of the text. As for instance, the repetition of the possessive pronoun, i.e.: ‘Alert to the growing support in government for a declaration supporting a Jewish homeland, he spoke at a meeting of the Central Islamic Society in June 1917, several months prior to his public declaration of his Islamic faith’ (p. 19). The phrase can be precisely formulated by using the personal pronoun only once: ‘[…] several months prior to his public declaration of Islamic faith.’ Similarly, the comparative approach is prevailing throughout the text to highlight their distinctive instincts, attributes, depositions, quests and level of identity cum empathy with the Muslims. Here it is pertinent to mention that the essay enormously contains excerpts from the original text to prove the adventures undertaken and accomplished by the audacious scholars. The text throughout
reveals the crooked Western motives and their desire to appear as supernatural beings to the Muslims and simultaneously exert unlimited power over them. The recency and currency give any text immortality, so according to this leitmotif, the topic discussed in the essay is very sensitive and its absolute understanding is crucial for the Muslims in all times and climes but the use of author’s difficult vocabulary and redundant expressions created a hitch in the comprehension and communication of the meanings and message to the ‘common receptors.’ But contrary to its form, it simultaneously carries an elegant and lofty content which is the prime focus of the review in hand.

The content of the text reveals that in the outset the author exposed Pickthall’s mental and spiritual fascination to see and empathize with the eastern culture which tacitly reveals his inherent connection with them. Sherif aptly brings to the fore his eastern allure by articulating through his tongue, as for instance:

I was eighteen years old, and, having failed in one or two adventures, I thought myself an all-round failure, and was much depressed. I dreamed of eastern sunshine, palm trees, camels, desert sand, as of a paradise which I had lost by my shortcomings. What was my rapture when my mother one fine day suggested that it might be good for me to travel in the East, because my longing for it seemed to indicate a natural instinct, with which she herself, possessing Eastern memories, was in full sympathy.²

The deep inspirations which Pickthall bore for the Eastern culture invited him to move towards an innovative and transformative way of looking into the things to understand the bestiality of the Europeans towards the ‘others.’ The same kind of rapport is noted about Philby where he expressed that he fell in love with the Arabs. The converging testimony of both the reports reinforces the idea that the Muslim society even under the influence of colonialism, can well-preserve its own vitality and stimulate thought of even those who are associated with the British Empire or enjoy nuptial trust in the castle of Pharoah.

The hierarchy of events revealed that initially both Pickthall and Philby were quite oblivious of the treacherous instinct of the Orientalists, but after

² M. A. Sherif, *Brave Hearts Pickthall and Philby: Two English Muslims in a Changing World* (Kuala Lumpur: IBT, 2011) p. 4. It would be of great interest as well as significant to mention about Pickthall’s early childhood enchantment about the eastern norms and culture and his enriched imagination of them as told by Sherif in the essay. His unprecedented love indicates his inherent connection with the Muslim world, which inspired him to undertake the heroic adventures to defend them and finally convert to Islam.
witnessing the malevolence and tyranny that emanate from them, they were forced to look into their own souls and reassessed their values which led them to become vocal critics of their own government. They not only opted for a physical migration from Britain to India and Arabia, alternatively, but also have taken the spiritual flight from the chasm of obscurity and uncertainty to the pinnacles of truth and certainty. Among other intrigues, i.e., scheme behind the formulation of Sykes-Picot agreement and post war conferences, Pickthall aptly perceived that they meant to dismember the Ottoman’s land, viz., Palestine, Arabian Peninsula and Mesopotamia, thus making a tawdry effort to leave the caliphate impotent and powerless. These conspiracies led him to articulate about the reality of the Europeans:

Europe’s greatest scoundrels think themselves supreme, and are behaving like a gang of robbers, shamelessly, with no thought of Allah and of their duty towards humanity, with no thought of the Judgment which awaits them. They think themselves the Lords. They are in truth the scum.  

Such events coupled with the soaring rumours that the Muslim world can no longer control its own destiny in matters of political autonomy are the root causes which led him to leave Britain and permanently settle in India to work for the self-determination and sovereignty of the Muslims. The same kind of incidents worked behind the relocation of Philby from Britain to Arabia and made him an advocate of Arab national autonomy, who was ever-ready to remind British policy makers of their past deceits. Such concerns invoked his detention and strict observation over his movements and activities. Even then he bitterly censured Britain and France on their malignant plotting to get hold of the earth.

Last but not least, after losing the world war I, they both were anxious on the Muslims’ predicament, and realized that their true salvation lies only in following the Qur’ān and fundamental precepts of Islam, which provide a complete code of life including comprehensive political cum social system. The book ends with author’s profuse gratitude to the esteemed scholars, their critical outlook towards their self-will, who were the products of Edwardian Britain but discovered Islam and felt amity within its bosom. Their consciousness did not let them to stay silent when they observed the Western

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1 Ibid., p. 32. It is quite fair to say that Pickthall and Philby felt futility, and degradation in what the Europeans called the ‘civilization,’ which meant the exploitation of the Muslims by every variety of cruelty and treachery known to the despicable imperialists. As both drew nearer to them, they find their practices so abhorrent to all their notions of decency, honour, and humanity, which led them to declare the Europeans ‘the greatest scoundrels.’
exploitation towards the unprivileged ‘others.’ Thanks to this thorough, systematic and probing exploration coupled with the Sherif’s intellectual legacy including his acute observations and pungent thoughts which enable us to see and experience with our naked eyes the daring people with life and movement cum practical demonstration of the bold expeditions undertaken by them. We ought to acknowledge and reflect over the momentous adventures of such gallant souls and retain their audacious sketches in our mental threshold to anticipate and dream for a promising future.

Fahmeeda Malik

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