Marmaduke Pickthall

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Marmaduke Pickthall

Islam and the Modern World

Edited by

Geoffrey P. Nash

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Foreword: Pickthall after 1936

By Peter Clark

Marmaduke Pickthall died on 19 May 1936 at the age of sixty-one. His widow, Muriel, invited Mrs Anne Fremantle, to write a biography.[1]

Anne Fremantle was born Anne Huth Jackson, the daughter of a wealthy banker and his wife, a daughter of the some time Liberal Member of Parliament, junior Minister and proconsul, the grandly named Sir Elphinstone Mountstuart Grant Duff. The Huth Jacksons had a London house and a massive country estate at Possingworth near Uckfield in Sussex. Mrs Huth Jackson was well-connected socially, and familiar with the political and literary elite of the capital. Anne, born in 1909, was a precocious child. At the end of the First World War the Pickthalls lived at Pond House, a cottage on the Possingworth estate. The young Anne and Marmaduke, then in his early forties, got to know each other and became great friends. We have only Anne's account of the friendship, but it seems Pickthall treated her as a young adult, and played the role of substitute father. Her own father had been busy and distant, and died in 1921, by which time the Pickthalls had moved to India. She was enchanted by his memories of his early travels in Palestine and Syria and the stories and legends he had picked up. She claimed to have become a Muslim as a young girl.[2] When he went to India, it appears he regularly wrote to her with news of his life and encounters. She saw him on his periodic visits to Britain. He attended her marriage in London (conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury), and during the last year of his life they saw each other after he had returned to England after ten years in Hyderabad.

Anne Fremantle was widely read and had already written a book on George Eliot at the age of twenty-three. She was active politically and stood as Labour candidate against Duff Cooper in a parliamentary election. She also, in 1961, wrote a history of the Fabian Society.

Although Muriel had asked Anne Fremantle to write the biography, Anne did not have a high opinion of Muriel. "She shared neither his faith nor his talents – he was a gifted and successful novelist – and seemed a meowing person, not happy in Sussex or later in India", she wrote uncharitably in her own autobiography.[3] It was as if Anne wanted to have exclusive possession of Marmaduke and was the only woman to understand him.

1 Anne Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy* (London: Hutchinson, London, 1939).

2 Anne Fremantle, *Three-Cornered Heart* (London: Collins, 1971), 197.

3 Fremantle, *Three-Cornered Heart*, 168.

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Anne Fremantle destroyed many of the most personal and most interesting of the letters Pickthall wrote to her, on the insistence of her husband. She had difficulties in gathering further material. She wrote to a relation of Pickthall that "Marmaduke is a most elusive person to get facts or material about".[4]

Her book, *Loyal Enemy*, was published by Hutchinson in January 1939. It was widely reviewed. Harold Nicolson[5] did not agree with most of Pickthall's public views but recognised that Anne Fremantle's "girlish hero-worship" was not misplaced. Pickthall, in spite of alienation from Britain and Christianity, "remained sweet, selfless and unassuming to the end". A G MacDonell reviewed the book in *The Observer,*[6] acknowledging Pickthall's "extraordinary character". But the significance of the book and the memory of Pickthall were probably smothered by the more pressing concerns of the war. A more sensational review in *The Sunday Dispatch*,[7] opened with the words, "He was a small, mild, moustached, quietly-spoken Englishman, but Mr Marmaduke Pickthall had a cause which made him a lion among men". None of these reviews reflected on the significance of an Englishman throwing himself so unreservedly into the world of Islam.

The book was long – 441 pages – and is an intimate personal portrait of a modest, shy man who was able to communicate with a bright child who, in turn, hero-worshipped him. However it seems to have been hastily written. It sprawls and, although letters and articles are quoted – sometimes at length – there are no references. The book is poorly edited and proofread. Jaffa and Jedda are mixed up. The transliterations of Arabic are sometimes erroneous, sometimes eccentric.

Anne Fremantle mentions that she was given the original manuscript of *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran.* Indeed he had translated some of its verses for her when she was a child. Anne Fremantle lived for another sixty years after *Loyal Enemy*, much of the time in the United States. When in the early 1980s I was preparing my book on Pickthall, I wrote to her asking about any letters and papers. She replied to me in October 1983 saying she had sent them to "Hyderabad because I thought they may be included in a collection of his works". She was unable to help about the location of other personal papers of the man she described to me as "my greatest friend from my father's death when I was 12 until his own death".[8]

4 Anne Fremantle to Mrs Beasley, 8 August 1936, in possession of Sarah Pickthall.

5 "From an English Vicarage to the Moslem Faith," *The Daily Telegraph*, January 6, 1939.

6 *The Observer*, 8 January 1939.

7 *Sunday Dispatch*, 8 January 1939.

8 Anne Fremantle to Peter Clark, 17 October 1983.

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In 1992, six years after the publication of my own book,[9] I was in Hyderabad. One of Pickthall's Hyderabad friends had been a historian, Farouk Sherwani. When Pickthall finally left Hyderabad in 1935 Farouk went with Pickthall to the station, accompanied by his young son, Mustafa. It was Mustafa who was my guide in Hyderabad and we called on other elderly gentlemen who had known Pickthall. I asked about personal papers. "Pickthall had no interest in personal possessions", Mustafa told me. "He would have arrived in Hyderabad with one suitcase; he would have left with one suitcase".

Pickthall is rightly best remembered as the author of *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*. First published by Knopf in New York in 1930 it has gone through many reprints in various countries. In 1938 the Government Central Press, Hyderabad, brought out an edition with the Arabic text and the English alongside each other. This is how Pickthall wanted his work to appear. In 1970 a Delhi publisher produced a three language version[10] with Urdu, Arabic and English. Ten years later, under the patronage of the Ruler of Sharjah, Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, a series of cassettes was made of Pickthall's translation, recited by Gai Eaton (Hasan Abdul Hakim).

The lectures on Islam that Pickthall delivered in Madras (Chennai) in 1925 have also been reprinted periodically in both India and Pakistan.[11]

*

I first became fascinated in the life and work of Marmaduke Pickthall in the late 1970s. I had lived in Jordan and Lebanon and knew Damascus; when I read *Saʿid the Fisherman* I was bowled over by it. I could not put it down. Every page scintillated with insight. I liked the way he used dialogue, translating colloquial Syrian Arabic literally into English. I appreciated the way he seemed to create a distinctive language in which he described the lives of unspectacular Syrians and Palestinians, without sentimentality or romance. His realistic and sympathetic word-portraits of ordinary people reminded me of the writings of Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Hardy. I read Edward Said's *Orientalism* when it was published in 1978 and was appalled that Pickthall's work was dismissed alongside that of Pierre Loti as "exotic fiction of minor writers".[12] I wondered

9 Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (London: Quartet, 1986).

10 *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, with Urdu translation by Fateh Muhammad Jallendhri, (Delhi: Kutubkhana Ishaat-ul-Islam, 1970).

11 For example, as *Islamic Culture* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1958), and as *The Cultural Side of Islam* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1981).

12 Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 252.

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whether Edward Said had actually read any of Pickthall's Middle Eastern fiction.

I looked out for more of his novels and soon came across *The Children of the Nile*, *Oriental Encounters* and *The Valley of the Kings*. They all had a similar quality of empathetic realism. I then made a determined effort to find the rest of his work, including those novels of his that were located in England. One book-seller told me that they were unsellable and some dealers just pulped them as they blocked up valuable shelf-space. I succeeded in collecting them all and read them. I had been lucky in my introduction to Pickthall's novels for the first four I bought and read were also his best. I also acquired *Loyal Enemy* and although a vivid and loving personal portrait of the man comes through, I thought Anne Fremantle had missed Pickthall's literary and political significance. I thought there was something gushing and jejune about her approach. Here was a man whose work was celebrated by such a varied range of demanding critics as H G Wells, D H Lawrence and E M Forster, had a best-seller with *Saïd the Fisherman*, but was overlooked in the standard works of twentieth century literary history. I also thought Anne Fremantle did not appreciate Pickthall's significance as a twentieth century Muslim intellectual. So I decided to write my own book about him.

I wrote it while working as a Director of the British Council in Yemen and Tunisia. I advertised for information on any personal papers, wrote to the Osmania University and the Andhra Pradesh State Archives in Hyderabad, but drew a blank. I also wrote to the Karachi (Pakistan) newspaper, *Dawn*. (I knew many old Hyderabadis had migrated to Karachi after the "Police Action" that absorbed the Nizamate into independent India.) I had several answers which I used in my own book. Anne Fremantle told me that she did not think Marmaduke's brother Rudolph had any descendants. In this she was wrong. In 1983 I did write out of the blue to a Pickthall in London but never had a reply. The letter was, however – I learned thirty-two years later – passed on to a granddaughter in law of Rudolph. She never replied to me and her daughter, Sarah Pickthall, showed me the letter in 2015. Of the twelve children begotten by Pickthall's father, only three had children of their own. Apart from Rudolph's only son, there were two grand-daughters, both of whom were childless. One was Marjorie Pickthall, whose father had emigrated to Canada: Marjorie became a well-known Canadian novelist. The other was a historian of Lincolnshire, Mrs Dorothy Rudkin, who died in 1984. She had kept some family photographs and, by the kindness of her executor, Dr Robert Pacey, I was able to use three of these in my book. The other major source I used – which Anne Fremantle did not to the same degree – was Pickthall's own journalism, especially articles he wrote for *Islamic Review*, *New Age* and *Islamic Culture*. There were many

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autobiographical allusions in these articles, and many links with his fiction. Sometimes an event in the journalism was transposed into one of his novels.

In many ways my book complemented *Loyal Enemy.* When I reread it I think the terse style reflects the kind of extended writing that was part of my training. It has the flavour of both a PhD thesis and a civil service minute. There is a terseness in style, a shunning of ornamental or superfluous prose. My aim was to draw attention to an outstanding (but neglected) twentieth century writer. Pickthall was a man I hugely admired, though I shared none of his intellectual positions. I did however appreciate his insight into the Arab Middle East and knew of no other English writer to match him. He lacked the self-centredness of Burton and Blunt; he was more accessible than Lane. I did not have the resources of university support or academic networks. I was either too busy, too idle or too impatient to pursue lines that may have led to greater information. If anyone was interested in Pickthall they would read both Anne Fremantle's book and mine.

As well as publishing my book, Quartet Books also reissued Pickthall's best novel, *Saïd the Fisherman*. Both were published in May 1986 on the fiftieth anniversary of his death. On the same day I inserted an In Memoriam notice in *The Times*.

There were some reviews in the London papers. W B Hepburn, in *The Daily Telegraph*,[13] thought the book "too laconic" though I showed an "infectious partiality" for Pickthall. Malise Ruthven in the *Times Literary Supplement*[14] noted that in "his Eastern novels he weaves Arabic words and sentence-constructions into a language which is stylized, though less mannered than Doughty's. Drawing on a vast repertoire of folklore and anthropological observation, he seems to enter effortlessly into an Eastern vernacular and into the skins of his Eastern characters without sentimentality or condescension".

There was more notice of the book in specialist journalism, relating to Islam or the Middle East. Michael Adams, in *Middle East International,*[15] thought Marmaduke Pickthall had "disappeared into undeserved oblivion" and hoped my book would "put him back on the literary map". Asaf Hussain in *The Crescent*,[16] in a long and generally appreciative article, was critical of Pickthall's views on the Prophet Muhammad and war, and also thought that I – apparently – believed "like all westerners…that man is born out of sin and that no good can come out of him without some ulterior motive". It was wrong

13 *The Daily Telegraph* 19 September 1986.

14 *Times Literary Supplement* 5 September 1986.

15 *Middle East International*, 20 February 1987.

16 *The Crescent*, 16–31 August 1986.

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to think that Pickthall's fascination with the Middle East and his ultimate conversion was the result of personal failure. There were also reviews in the English language newspapers of the Gulf and Israel.

Three years after the publication of *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* in 1986, Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* was published. If my book had been published that year it might have added to an informed discussion about the ethics of the Muslim as novelist or the novelist as Muslim. But my book was already being remaindered.

My book was occasionally quoted, and Pickthall's significance was recognised in works such as *"The Infidel Within": Muslims in Britain since 1800* by Humayun Ansari[17] and the work of Geoffrey Nash.[18] The former acknowledges him as a Muslim intellectual, the latter as a writer.

But it has been in the last ten years that there has been a steady acceleration of interest in the life and work of Marmaduke Pickthall; this volume is a climax of that growing interest. He is now getting into reference works. Muhammad Shaheen contributed an article for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (*ODNB*) published in 2007. *ODNB* is now published on-line. Pickthall has many references on the worldwide web. He is celebrated in the British Muslim community and there is a Pickthall Academy in Camden in London.

In 2012 the BBC made a film about Pickthall and two of his contemporaries who also embraced Islam – Lord Headley and Abdullah Quilliam.[19] Marmaduke's great great niece, Sarah Pickthall, took part in that film (as I did). Her family had regarded the man with a mixture of pride and reticence, but Sarah is doing what she can to celebrate his name. The film was shown late at night during Ramadan and there were 700,000 viewers. It was later transmitted on BBC international channels. Friends in Dubai and Vancouver told me they had seen it. In 2014 two books had extended chapters on Pickthall. Andrew C Long in *Reading Arabia: British Orientalism in the Age of Mass Publication 1880–1939*[20] places Pickthall as a travel writer in the context of his contemporaries. Jamie Gilham in *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam, 1850–1950*[21] has worked through papers at the Public Records Office and letters Pickthall wrote to Aubrey Herbert to give a good account of Pickthall's First World War activities.

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17 Humayun Ansari, *"The Infidel Within": Muslims in Britain since 1800* (London: Hurst, 2004).

18 Geoffrey P. Nash, *From Empire to Orient: Travellers in the Middle East 1830–1926* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005).

19 *Great British Islam*, 18 July 2012.

20 Andrew C Long, *Reading Arabia: British Orientalism in the Age of Mass Publication 1880–1930* (Syracus: Syracuse University Press, 2014).

21 Jamie Gilham, *Loyal Enemies, British Converts to Islam 1850–1950* (London: Hurst, 2014).

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In 2010 the Muslim Academic Trust reissued *The Early Hours*, the Turkey novel, first published in 1921, with a thirty page biographical sketch by Abdal Hakim Murad, the imam of the University of Cambridge. (As Tim Winter he had helped me with my book.)

The Saudi scholar, Ahmad al-Ghamari, wrote a thesis on Pickthall for a United States university and is currently translating my book into Arabic. The thesis assesses him as a novelist and was registered in a Literature faculty.

The British publisher, Beacon Books, is reprinting some of Pickthall's Middle Eastern novels and also, in one volume, the twenty-eight Middle Eastern short stories. The same publisher is reprinting *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim*.

The revived interest in Pickthall has been stimulated by a new twenty-first century identity politics. The terrorist events of 11 September 2001 in New York and of 7 July 2005 in London, committed in the name of Islam, have challenged Muslims. It has been regrettably easy to demonise Islam, to the anger and distress of most Muslims. Islam is presented in some of the British press as a violent alien creed. But Pickthall was quintessentially English, conservative in behaviour as well as in politics. He was passionate in his commitment, an intellectual leader. His story challenges the negative stereotypes of much popular press comment. Although rooted in Britain he was a man of a global perspective. Moreover in his writings he was liberal, seeing Islam as open, tolerant and progressive – again in contrast to many of the stereotypes. And as the reviewers of Anne Fremantle's book in 1939 observed, he had an extraordinary life. In his 1923 essay, "Salute to the Orient", E M Forster wrote in praise of Pickthall's Near Eastern fiction. He was, Forster said, "a writer of much merit who has not yet come into his own."[22] It may be that Pickthall's time at last has arrived.

Dr Peter Clark OBE
June 2016

22 E M Forster's essay appears in *Abinger Harvest*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967, 275–91. (The book was first published by Edward Arnold in 1936.).

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Introduction: Pickthall, Islam and the Modern World

Geoffrey P. Nash

The present volume, a commissioned collection of essays from specialists in the field of British Muslim studies, was originally intended as a commemoration of two of the important anniversaries connected to one of its outstanding figures – Marmaduke Pickthall. 2016 marks the eightieth anniversary of his death and the thirtieth since the publication of Peter Clark's groundbreaking study: *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim*. The present volume owes much to this biography's pioneering scholarship. While not serving as a blueprint its divisions – the arrival of a writer, Pickthall and Turkey, Pickthall and Islam, servant of Islam, Quran translator, writer of fiction – could not but exert a salient influence over the topics addressed in these pages. Peter Clark's work also includes a bibliography of Pickthall's writings that has proved invaluable to later scholars. As we have seen in his "Foreword" to the present volume, his work was preceded by Anne Fremantle's pioneer biography of Pickthall, a tome that remains a mine of information for Pickthall scholars. This is especially the case given that he left behind him no personal papers. However the broader topic of Pickthall's place among British Muslims of the early twentieth century had to wait until Jamie Gilham's masterful *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam, 1850–1950* was published in 2014. Gilham's study confirms that Pickthall's exploits did not occur in a vacuum. For a long time he was an obscure figure known chiefly as an English translator of the Quran. Gilham focuses the Muslim community which he joined as a convert during the First World War quickly becoming an important representative of a new form of "British" Islam. Nowadays he is increasingly in the spotlight along with such contemporaries in the British Muslim community as Abdullah Quilliam, Lord Headley, Lady Evelyn Cobbold, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din and Abdullah Yusuf Ali. Pickthall's putative status as a "loyal enemy" in relation to British foreign policy in the Muslim world, and his mission in the field of political journalism as a passionate advocate of Turkey has received a lot of attention too. However, there is still a great deal more to say about him. This volume therefore has two main focuses. Firstly, there is Pickthall himself, a standout Muslim convert, and the factors behind his conversion to Islam, how they were inflected by his personality, background and the context of the period in which he lived. Second, but equally important is Pickthall's broader significance as a Muslim in the world

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of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, variously designated as the period of late colonialism, the modern liberal age, or a turning point in the longer engagement between the Islamicate world and Western Christendom/ the secular West.

Pickthall was born in Suffolk in 1875; aged five on the death of his clergyman father he moved with his family to London. After Harrow, he attempted unsuccessfully to pass the Foreign Office exam. Still under eighteen, seeking a consular job in Palestine, he travelled to Egypt and Jerusalem with introductions to European residents and missionaries who he shocked by donning Arab clothing and travelling around Palestine with local guides. His partially fictionalised account of this adventure, *Oriental Encounters*, was published in 1918. In Damascus he was tempted to convert to Islam but returned to England and married Muriel Smith in September 1896. Adopting a writing career, Pickthall's most successful piece of oriental fiction *Said the Fisherman* was published by Methuen in 1903; *The House of Islam* (1906) and *Children of the Nile* (1908) followed. The same year the latter was published Pickthall welcomed the Young Turk revolution and when the Balkan Wars broke out in 1912 he embarked upon a journalistic crusade on Turkey's behalf that led to a four-month sojourn in Istanbul in the spring of 1913. *With the Turk in War Time* appeared on the eve of the outbreak of the Great War, during which Pickthall maintained his pro-Turk position by calling for a separate peace with Turkey. Also during this period he drew ever closer to faith in Islam eventually making public declaration of this in November 1917. He now entered the London and Woking Muslim community, acting as Imam and preaching Friday sermons. After the war he continued to invest in Muslim causes and was invited by leaders of the Khilafat movement to come to India and edit the *Bombay Chronicle*. He arrived there in 1920 and continued the paper's nationalist position; collaborating with Gandhi he addressed large meetings and played his part in what has been described as the largest Muslim-Hindu agitation against British rule since the 1857 Mutiny. When the newspaper lost a government-instigated court case and received a huge fine Pickthall resigned, but he soon found employment as an educator and later editor of the journal *Islamic Culture* in the "native" state of Hyderabad ruled by the Muslim Nizam. Under the prince's patronage he found time to complete a ground breaking English translation of the Quran, published in 1930. Pickthall retired from service in Hyderabad in 1935, returned to England, and died the following year. He is buried in the Muslim cemetery at Brookwood, Surrey.

This volume probes different facets of Pickthall's life, personality and career, and in addition places him with respect to his own time. It was as a fiction writer, who between 1900 and 1922 wrote three volumes of short stories, fourteen

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novels and one fictionalised memoir, that he first became known.[1] His journalist's career, which began around 1908, consisted for several years of publishing unsigned reviews of volumes of fiction and travel writing, often with eastern subjects, before exploding into life over a foreign policy issue: Turkey's perilous position in the first Balkan War that broke out in 1912. Suddenly, he became fixated on a distinct current of his time, a subject in which Islam played a major role. However, the journalism that arose out of Pickthall's personal interest in eastern politics cannot easily be disentwined from his earlier experiences as a traveller, which also provided the aliment for his oriental fiction. His contribution to the genre of travel writing, long viewed as a sub-set of both fictional and journalistic writing, is nonetheless significant when viewed as part of the canon of western travel literature on the East. All these aspects were progressively infused by his engagement with the cultures of belief of those Muslims he interfaced with and his growing personal interest in and eventual commitment to faith in Islam. His renditions into English of verses from the Quran, begun before his conversion and carried on for a decade after, until he considered publishing a complete English version of the holy book, was the product of innate linguistic abilities joined to his faith-interest, and until recently was marked by posterity as the major achievement of his life.

Placing Pickthall in the context of his time requires inquiry into his connections to movements contributing to new developments in Islam both in Britain and the wider world, and exploration of his various depictions of Muslim identity within colonial and anti-colonial contexts. It was frequently reiterated in the last quarter of the nineteenth century how Britain was the first among empires as far as ruling the largest Muslim population was concerned. "As the 'great Muhammadan Power'" she "could not be seen to act against the interests of Islam".[2] Recent research has emphasised the commonalities in the treatment of their Muslim populations by the respective European empires. David Motadel's introduction to *Islam and the European Empires* stresses the ways in which Muslims were integrated into the colonial state, often by actively employing existing Islamic structures.[3] However the British, alongside officials in the French, Russian and Dutch colonial administrations regarded the hajj with suspicion as a means of spreading pan-Islamic ideas which brought home by pilgrims had the potential to prove subversive. The danger that some

1 He resumed fiction writing very much on a part time basis in India during the last fifteen years of his life, producing several short stories and an unpublished novel.

2 John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 296.

3 David Motadel, ed., *Islam and the European Empires* (Oxford: Oxford Unversity Press, 2014).

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imperialist administrators believed Islam constituted to India could create a paranoiac fear of Muslim "fanaticism" that in the Victorian period was fed by the Mutiny, the reverses in Afghanistan, continuing problems on the North-West frontier and Gordon's fate at Khartoum. In the great late-Victorian battles over the fate of the Ottoman Empire Conservatives and Liberals took it for granted that the last significant Muslim power was on the way out; in broader terms, "British opinion, whether sympathetic or not, tended to regard Islam as a culture of decline".[4]

However, besides Britain's and other European empires' policies towards the Muslim world, the colonial context with respect to Muslims coming to Europe and establishing new intellectual networks has also exercised recent scholarship. In particular, the missionary momentum created by the Indian Ahmadiyya movement has exercised a major part of this, especially as to how individuals from the Lahori-Ahmadi anjuman succeeded in providing institutional consolidation of the impetus that led native Britons' to convert to faith in Islam. It is noticeable, on the one hand, that the latter consisted for the most part of "a few, rich mostly well-educated Europeans" who "adopted Islam as a new faith as a result of their search for spiritual pathways beyond their original culture and beliefs".[5] On the other it is apparent that the Indian missionaries utilised colonial networks and were mostly assiduous in declaring their loyalty to Empire. While heterodox to mainstream Sunni Muslims, Ahmadi missions in London, Berlin and other European centres, were held up more widely by Muslim thinkers as proof that the Christian missionaries in Islamic lands had failed.[6] Jamie Gilham's detailed in-depth case studies of British Muslim converts – featuring a strong portrayal of Pickthall himself – confirm their disaffection toward Christianity as well as the many imperial tie-ins that helped bring them to Islam.

Four major areas of Pickthall's involvement in Muslim life are relatively easy to demarcate. The Arabic-speaking world of Egypt and Greater Syria, which after his youthful journey of 1894–6 he returned to quite regularly up to 1908, was a theatre acted upon by the West into which he threw himself, at the same time, as Peter Clark noted,[7] observing with great care the behaviours

4 Darwin, *Empire Project*, 296.

5 Umar Ryad, "Salafiyya, Ahmadiyya, and European converts to Islam in the Interwar Period", in Bekim Agai, Umar Ryad and Mehdi Sajid, eds., *Muslims in Interwar Europe: A Transhistorical Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 47.

6 Ryad, "Salafiyya, Ahmadiyya", 53, 63.

7 Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (London: Quartet Books, 1986).

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and customs of its peoples and its currents of change, while mainly accepting the status quo. On the other hand, the heart of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul, to which his attention switched at the beginning of the Young Turk revolution, and where he visited in the spring of 1913, became the focus of almost all his spiritual and intellectual aspirations. It set into rotation the previously settled view Pickthall had of the Islamic world in which Britain's provenance was largely benign if magisterial – when embodied in consular officials – but sometimes odious when it took the form of bigoted individuals like missionaries. A Conservative by upbringing, he oriented his world view according to an ultimately unworkable because discarded formula which he ascribed to Benjamin Disraeli, according to which it was the British Empire's destiny to protect Muslims the world over. Marked out as special recipients of this favour on account of the huge number of Muslim subjects they ruled were the Ottoman Turks. However, the Young Turks became in Pickthall's eyes the pivot of Islamic activism as reformers first of Ottoman Turkey, and thence potentially of the wider Muslim world. As a Muslim people they now acquired an agency they had never possessed in the Victorian scheme of things.

Two other areas in which Pickthall became active by then as a fully signed up Muslim also turned out to be innovative. Missionised by a few apostles of modernist Islam from South Asia, Britain, or more narrowly Woking and London, was a newly emerging centre of Muslim activity. However Pickthall's path to Islam, it needs to be emphasised, was one he had already forged almost entirely on his own. (Jamie Gilham writes in Chaper Three of Pickthall's already "deep study and experience of Islam" at the time of his conversion). It seems adventitious that the opportunity arose soon after his conversion for him to develop leadership skills in the British Muslim community around the end of the Great War. Chance also took a hand in Pickthall's move to India in 1920, where he assisted in a new ferment, an expansive anti-colonial movement which would spark one of the notable trends of later twentieth-century Islamic revivalism.

Central to all of these activities was Pickthall's identity as a Muslim. Contributors to this volume tackle a variety of questions linked to this:

> What kind of Muslim was he?
> What factors lay behind his attraction to Islam?
> Which brand(s) of Islam did he espouse and how were these inflected by his experience of the Muslim world?

Assuming this faith starting point, and its essential connection with culture and politics, more specialised questions follow:

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How did Islam mould, and how was it expressed in, the various modes of activity Pickthall performed during his lifetime?
How should we assess him as novelist, traveller, and translator of the Quran?
What was the significance of his Islamic politics?
How is his speech and writing to be situated with respect to contemporary and later developments in the interface between Islam and the modern world?

Pickthall and Islam

The first thing to note is that those of his writings on the East that pre-date his conversion to Islam are of equal importance for his stance as a writer on Islamic themes as those that came from the pen of a declared believer. His engagement with Islam stretches at least as far back as his two years of travel in the Levant as a young man, highlighted by the story he later told of his stalled would-be conversion in Damascus.[8] We can safely say that from the time of his early manhood and for the rest of his life, taking in such milestones as the publication of his most admired novel, *Saïd the Fisherman* (1903), his journalism on Turkey's behalf, the publication of his English translation of the Quran (1930), and his review articles in *Islamic Culture*, Pickthall's world-view was lighted by the torch of Islam. This being the case, some questions arise concerning the time and nature of his conversion. The first factor to consider is when precisely this took place. In line with a report in the *Islamic Review*, Peter Clark states that "he declared openly and publicly his acceptance of Islam" on 29 November 1917. However, Anne Fremantle gave an earlier date, December 1914. Jamie Gilham believes his conversion was protracted "although he edged towards Islam at the beginning of the war [he] continued to resist conversion" until November 1917.[9] This leaves matters open as to why, if he privately considered himself a believer in 1914, it took him three years to make this public. As he was a private man who left few if any personal papers, we might never know the answer to this question.

8 Marmaduke Pickthall, *The New Age* [hereafter cited as *NA*] XII (5 December 1912), 103; Peter Clark, "A Man of Two Cities: Pickthall, Damascus, Hyderabad", *Asian Affairs*, XXV (1994), 284.

9 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 38; Anne Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy* (London: Hutchinson, 1938), 252; Jamie Gilham, *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam, 1850–1950* (London: Hurst, 2014), 153.

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Inextricably linked with the dates is the larger matter of Pickthall's motivation for becoming a Muslim. What led someone from a very conventional, upper middle-class British background (steeped in connections with the Church of England) to become a Muslim, and in his later years interact mainly with peoples from the East? One line of thinking that Fremantle's biography favoured is that Pickthall simply became severely disaffected from Christianity on account of Christians in Britain supporting the Balkan states in their wars against the Ottoman Empire. Another way to look at the matter is to compare him to other nineteenth-century travellers who journeyed to the East. It has been suggested, not only did they do so because they were interested in cultures and peoples other than their own, but some appear to have been on a search to fill lacks within their own personalities and backgrounds.[10] Like Charles Doughty – while not handicapped to the same degree – Pickthall was through his sensitivity and introvert character ill-suited to making a successful career within the caste into which he was born, though not inheriting wealth he certainly felt the need to do so. At the same time however, he did not in the least lack the confidence, resource, or inclination for maintaining friendly relations with the likes of Lord Cromer, Aubrey Herbert, and George (later Lord) Lloyd. Nevertheless, with the exception perhaps of his brief period working with the Islamic Information Bureau in London, he invariably got on very well with and may even have preferred the company of people of oriental backgrounds, as is clear from reports of people who knew him.[11] From the moment he set foot in Egypt in 1894, evidenced by his fictionalised account of his travels in *Oriental Encounters* (1918), as well as in his novels and short stories, Pickthall displays a facility, which E. M. Forster was the first to note, of creating writing which saw the East from the inside.[12] There can therefore be little doubt that his initial attraction to Islam was closely connected to the "happy people" he met on his journeys in the Levant whose way of life he contrasted with that of Europeans.[13] The faith that helped inform the lives of these warm people impacted on a young man released from the stifling norms of his own land. It is also clear from his later writings that the spiritual and intellectual power of

10 Kathryn Tidrick, *Heart-beguiling Araby: The English Romance with Arabia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1989); Geoffrey Nash, "Politics, Aesthetics and Quest in English Travel Writing on The Middle East", in Tim Youngs, ed. *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces* (London: Anthem): 55–69.

11 Clark, "Man of Two Cities", 288–89.

12 "Islam is indeed his spiritual home [...] He does not sentimentalize about the East, because he is part of it, and only incidentally does his passionate love shine out", E.M. Forster, *Abinger Harvest* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), 279.

13 Fremantle, *Loyal,* 30; Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 12.

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Islam which he was able to access directly through the Arabic he acquired as a traveller played an essential part and enabled him to perform the function of imam of the Notting Hill mosque in London and edit Muslim periodicals.[14]

What kind of Muslim was Pickthall?

Three streams of Islamic thought and culture impacted intimately upon the thought and writings of Pickthall the English Muslim convert, each one mediated through direct, personal life experience. These were: the traditional Arab Islam practised in *al-bilad al-Sham* that he encountered as a young man in the 1890s; the modernising form he scrutinised during his short stay in Istanbul in 1913; and the versions of modernist and revived Islam he encountered among Muslims of South Asia with whom he interacted under the special conditions surrounding the emergence of the British Muslim community of the first few decades of the new century, and during his long period in India from 1920 to 1935.

It is not obviously the case that any one strand in particular predominated in Pickthall's statements concerning Islamic belief and doctrine. On the contrary, together each one made an important contribution to his particular style of Muslim faith. While the early contacts with a traditional Arab Muslim world (there is little evidence to suggest that the Egyptian reformers had any impact on him as a young man) were foundational in helping to form his knowledge of Islam and the Quran, the Turkish and Indian influences brought him into contact at first hand with two of the major thrusts of Islamic modernism. The Indian trend in modern Islam had started with Syed Ahmad Khan's Aligarh movement, moved on in the writings of Syed Ameer Ali, and came to a peak in the thought of Muhammad Iqbal.[15] This broad development in Islam largely infused the Muslims of South Asian extraction who Pickthall met first in Britain and later in India. For their part, the Turkish reformers who directed the Young Turk revolution – some of whose leaders he met in 1913 – took their cue from

14 The Woking *Islamic Review*, *The Muslim Outlook* and the Hyderabad *Islamic Culture*. See Haifaa A. Jawad, *Towards Building a British Islam: New Muslims' Perspectives* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 66–7.

15 A detailed survey of the thought of these figures, of particular interest because it was written relatively close to the period Pickthall was in India, is found in Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islām in India: A Social Analysis* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1946). On the impact of modernist Indian Muslims in Britain in the early 1900s, see Humayun Ansari, *"The Infidel Within": Muslims in Britain since 1800* (London: Hurst, 2004).

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the long heritage of the Tanzimat, Midhat Pasha and the Young Ottomans, and endeavoured to blend Islamic and modern European currents in a manner that clearly engaged Pickthall's attention. (The impact Indian and Ottoman modes had upon Pickthall's thought is discussed in K. Humayun Ansari, Mohammad Siddique Seddon, M.A. Sherif and Geoffrey Nash's chapters).

Contributors to this volume adduce a variety of perspectives on Pickthall that lay claim for his belonging to strands ranging through traditionalist, modernist and revivalist Islam. Seminal authority on the history of Muslims in Britain, Ansari stresses the modernist aspects of Pickthall's Islam, which Gilham echoes with reference to his sermons at the London Muslim Prayer House. He writes about Pickthall delivering (in 1918) "a bold lecture on 'Islam and Modernism', once more demonstrating his deep knowledge and engagement with the Islamic sources". He goes on to emphasise how quickly after his conversion to Islam in November 1917, at the age of forty-two, Pickthall stepped into the role of imam to the fledgling London Muslim community. He also opines that Pickthall "always felt at ease with and mixed freely in Britain with Muslims from overseas". Nonetheless Ansari detects colonial overtones in his relationship with South Asian Muslims at the Islamic Information Bureau before his departure for India in 1920, and believes Pickthall was "never able entirely to move away from assumptions about the 'Orient'...deeply embedded during the formative period of his life". Given the significant role played by Lahori-Ahmadi Muslims in the foundation of the British Muslim community in London the question of Ahmadi influence on Pickthall himself has been very much a topic of discussion for researchers. As Eric Germain has accurately documented, the early English Muslims were in part beholden to the missionary activities of Lahori-Ahmadis, most notably Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din for his leadership role at the Woking Mosque.[16]

Leading expert on Quran translations in English, A.R. Kidwai speaks in his chapter from a now mainstream Muslim point of view when he considers Pickthall at the very least too lenient towards the Ahmadi leader and Quran translator Maulana Muhammad Ali. It is certainly the case that advertisements for Ahmadi publications and praise for the Maulana are evident in successive volumes of *Islamic Culture*,[17] indicating an earlier stage of tolerance (at least

16 Eric Germain, "The First Muslim Mission on a European Scale: Ahmadi-Lahori Networks in the Inter-war period", in Natalie Clayer and Eric Germain, eds. *Islam in Inter-War Europe* (London: Hurst, 2008), 89–118.

17 Muhammad Ali was a contributor to *Islamic Culture* [hereafter *IC*]; see for example his article "Universality of Islam", *IC*, II (1928), 444–52. Pickthall favourably reviewed his book *The Religion of Islam* in "The Perfect Polity", *IC*, X (1936), 659–62 where he wrote: "We

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among some modernists, since *Islamic Culture* is undeniably a modernist periodical) before condemnation of Ahmadis became general among Sunni Muslims. A Christian observer of the 1920s Woking Mosque in London emphasises its non-sectarian character:

> Writing in 1927 […] the acting Imam of the mosque at Woking declares that "the Woking Mosque deprecates in very strong terms the idea that the late Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a Prophet of God". Moreover, in the published works of British converts, few, if any references to Ahmad are found. In other words, whatever its pedigree, the Lahori party is now simply a modern liberal missionary group […] The student will note its likeness to the liberal group represented by Ameer Ali, to whose influential work it is undoubtedly indebted.[18]

Gilham states that orthodox Sunni as he was, Pickthall "tolerated the liberal Lahori Ahmadis" but "was critical of their rivals, the Qadiani Ahmadis". For his part, as Gilham points out: "Kamal-ud-Din appreciated and exploited" Pickthall's deep knowledge for what we might nowadays call *da'wa* purposes. Re-emphasising this and the liberal, modernist orientation of the two Lahoris, Jeremy Shearmur has pointed out the non-denominational, tolerant outlook of the very much minoritarian English Muslim community centred on the Woking Mosque circa 1919.[19]

Another influence on Pickthall was the Turco-Egyptian aristocrat, politician and sometime Ottoman grand vizier, Prince Saïd Halim Pasha, who the Englishman met in Istanbul in 1913, but whose thought he only discovered later in India. An individualistic Muslim usually termed "Islamist" or "revivalist", Saïd Halim according to Ismail Kara, was "an original thinker but without influence" on the Turkish Islamist writers of his era.[20] Nonetheless he seems an

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do not always agree with Maulana Muhammad Ali's conclusions upon minor points – sometimes they appear to us eccentric – but his premises are always sound, we are always conscious of his deep sincerity; and his reverence for the holy Quran is sufficient in itself to guarantee his work in all essentials. There are some, no doubt, who will disagree with his general findings, but they will not be those from whom Al-Islam has anything to hope in the future".

18 James Thayer Addison, "The Ahmadiyah Movement and Its Western Propaganda", *The Harvard Theological Review*, 2, 1 (Jan 1929), 1–32, 24.

19 Jeremy Shearmur, "The Woking Mosque Muslims: British Islam in the Early Twentieth Century", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 34, 2(2014), 165–73.

20 Quoted in Michelangelo Guida, "The Life and Political Ideas of Grand Vezir Said Halim Pasha", *Turkish Journal of Islamic Studies*, 18 (2007), 101–18, 104.

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apt mentor for the equally individualistic English convert. Writer on Pickthall and Abdullah Yusuf Ali's biographer, M.A. Sherif, in his chapter on Pickthall's Islamic politics, tracks Pickthall's somewhat chequered interest in Saïd Halim and demonstrates key similarities between their thinking on *Islamlaşmaq* (islamise). Of Saïd Halim's article in the first number of *Islamic Culture*, Sherif states, "it was directly responsible for bringing Halim Pasha to an Urdu-reading public". Other Islamic strands are animated by Adnan Ashraf, who tests the possibility that several of Pickthall's novels embed Ghazalian codifications of human personality, and Faruk Kökoğlu who probes his fiction to find and articulate reforming ideas surrounding treatment of women. Overall, Jeremy Shearmur's emphasis is correct: Pickthall's Islam was "self-taught",[21] and drew inspiration from a variety of Islamic sources.

Pickthall's Islamic Politics and the Modern World

In addition to his significance as member of the earlier twentieth-century British Muslim community and first British Muslim to translate the Quran into English, Pickthall straddles one of the major imagined boundaries of the modern world: between Islam and the West. The positions we might claim for him as a Muslim – modernist, reformer, revivalist – should be seen within the broader context of this interface which in the period he lived was a colonial one. The British context in which Pickthall's contribution to Islamic politics should be viewed has already been amplified by studies on other prominent Muslim contemporaries, of the British Muslim community collectively and as a collective of individuals. (Humayun Ansari has pointed out homogenous British Muslim identity did not then exist.)[22]

It was as an individual with British upper-class connections that the young Pickthall moved in the modern world. Although these connections have already been mentioned as personally sustaining (and of course privileged), any cursory reading of his Arab fiction cannot fail to reveal the tensions between

21 Shearmur, "Woking Mosque", 171. According to Addison, ("Ahmadiyya Movement", 25) Pickthall stood out from the other British converts and as a Muslim polemicist was on a par with Maulana Muhammad Ali and Kamal-ud-Din who were "excellent controversialists".

22 See Ansari, *"The Infidel Within"*; see also *Ron Geaves, Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam* (Markfield: Kube, 2010); Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*; M.A. Sherif, *Searching for Solace: A Biography of Abdullah Yusuf Ali Interpreter of the Quran* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 1994) and *Brave Hearts: Pickthall and Philby, Two English Muslims in a Changing World* (Selangor, Malaysia, Islamic Book Trust, 2011); Jawad, *Building a British Islam*.

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this elite British identity and "a love for Arabs which [he] was made to understand, was hardly decent".[23] Pickthall scholarship thus far has had little to say about the background environment in which his youthful travels were made. By close textual analysis of Pickthall's own take on these in *Oriental Encounters*, James Canton's chapter brings out perhaps more clearly than has been done before the author's awareness – looking back – of choices to be made. In the first instant the English youth had the problem of in whom to put his trust – his Arab co-travellers or an English missionary?

Pickthall's presentation of a clash of two cultures – the one local and in spite of the writings of western travellers like himself, as yet still to be deconstructed by the modern world, the other colonial, racially segregating, and hegemonic in intent – gains extra resonance when viewed alongside recent scholarship on Victorian British activities in Palestine. For example, Lorenzo Kamel's examination of the activities of the Palestine Exploration Fund argues the values its members derived from reading the Old Testament did not so much favour Zionism as exalt the superiority of the European; in fact they envisaged for the Holy Land a *British* Israelite dispensation (i.e. considering their own nation to be the spiritual descendants of the original chosen people). A corollary of this was to validate the Christian and invalidate the local Muslim populations. For example, in one of the Palestine Exploration Fund's publications, *The Surveys of Western Palestine*, a section titled "The peasantry of Western Palestine", provides a telling example of the atmosphere created by the propaganda of the PEF whose founders included "prominent evangelists" and "well-known imperialists":

> the physical and mental degeneration of the women, who are mere animals, proletaires, beasts of burden cannot but have a most injurious affect upon the children […] the fellaheen are, all in all, the worst type of humanity I have come across in the East […] the fellah is totally destitute of all moral sense[24]

The young traveller's decision to stay with his Arab friends and turn his back on the contemptuous missionary is, as Canton's reading argues, not merely an instance of youthful romanticism, but a considered declaration of allegiance

23 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters: Palestine and Syria* (*1894-5-6*) (London: Collins 1918), 7.

24 Quoted in Lorenzo Kamel, "The Impact of 'Biblical Orientalism' in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Palestine", *British Journal of Middle East Studies*, 4 (2014): 1–15, 6, 11.

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made in retrospect by the mature Pickthall, who had recently become a Muslim. Around the same time (1917) he was arguing that he "should regard it as a world-disaster if that country [Palestine] should be taken from Muslim government".[25]

The Great War period was the moment when Pickthall's Islamic politics led him to earn his "loyal enemy" sobriquet. Writer on Muslim Affairs Mohammad Siddique Seddon's chapter provides an overview of the sequence of events and incidents that fuelled this disaffection centred on his dissident position as a defender of Ottoman Turkey. Seddon emphasises his connection immediately before and during the First World War with the radical pan-African, pan-Islamist activist, Dusé Mohamed Ali. Whereas a figure such as Lord Headley could keep his faith as a Muslim and his membership and allegiance to the British establishment more or less in tact, Pickthall found this much more difficult.[26] The fracture the Young Turk revolution brought about in his erstwhile colonial political outlook was not a unique occurrence – on the outbreak of war in September-October 1914, as a white British Muslim he found himself potentially aligned with a huge number of ethnically non-British citizens of the British Empire, the very people his Disraelian formula imagined him sharing a notional brotherhood with. Ansari's chapter confirms that with the outbreak of war Pickthall did indeed grow closer to the South Asian Muslims in Britain, particularly the politically active ones. In fact he came closer to their pan-Islamic view than he had been before. Gilham's *Loyal Enemies* brings this orientation down to reality in its documentation of the cat and mouse game between British intelligence and "politically-minded [Muslim] converts and their associates" (with Pickthall at the forefront).[27] He shows how on key issues – most notably the conclusion of a separate peace between Britain and Turkey, but also cognate ones such as the creation of a Zionist state in Palestine – Pickthall proposed initiatives with "enemy" aliens, and/or wrote articles and letters in newspapers and delivered speeches at public meetings creating considerable irritation if not anxiety for the authorities.

Another figure in the British Muslim community with whom Pickthall invites comparison is Abdullah Quilliam/Henri de Léon. Quilliam's biographer Ron Geaves suggests together they were arguably the most significant British converts of the late Victorian/early twentieth-century period. His chapter addresses the commonalities and divergences in their positions on Ottoman

25 Quoted in Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 221.

26 See ibid., ch.6.

27 Ibid., 221; "As the main voice of dissent within the British Muslim community, Pickthall was considered by the authorities to be the most troublesome convert in this period", 222.

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Turkey, which although these did not precisely define their allegiances to Islam, underpinned their respective conceptions of its place in the modern world. They were united in their disquiet at the direction British foreign policy had taken, in reality since the Congress of Berlin in 1878, progressively dismantling Britain's previous protection of the Ottoman Empire. Quilliam ran effectively a one-man campaign against this, becoming the Sultan's most conspicuous ally in England while Pickthall was still a young man travelling around the Levant. The latter caught up in 1912 when he started his own pro-Ottoman agitation in journals like *The Nineteenth Century and After* and *New Age*. According to Mohammad Seddon, Pickthall "understood nationalism (*qawmiyyah*) as being distinctly un-Islamic and, unlike his modernising Turkish reformer allies, saw Islam, and not nationality, as the prime marker of Muslim identity". However, Geaves suggests whereas Quilliam supported the caliphate as an article of his Sunni faith Pickthall's support for Turkey at this stage was mainly cultural. Quilliam blamed the Young Turks for steering Turkey into the arms of the Axis powers in 1914 and this held him aloof from Pickthall's continuing public stance in favour of a separate peace with Turkey.

Turkey had overwhelmingly been the focus, and with the evaporation of the Young Turk project Pickthall channelled his reformist political dream through his novelist's imagination in *The Early Hours* (1921), "present[ing] the case for the Young Turks that [he] had been making for the previous eight years elsewhere".[28] There was a danger that the trauma of the defeat of Turkey would sour the last two decades of his life if his bitter invective against the Armenians at the time is anything to go by. When Pickthall had failed to convince Britain, with its perceived tradition of toleration and fair play and – as he had so frequently argued in the past – its imperial disposition to protect Muslim peoples, what purchase could his pro-Turk idea carry with the newly emerging (albeit limited) United States presence in the Middle East? A 1919 article in *New Age* titled "America and the Near East" presents the views of two Americans, a missionary and a vice-consul general. Both have experienced living in the region, in Anatolia and Syria respectively. The missionary presents the prognosis that: "'Barbarism and fanaticism will retreat before the inexorable advance of civilisation'(!)". As for the consul, Pickthall writes: "I cannot share in Major Powell's enthusiasm for the notion of a Constantinople, 'neither Turkish nor Teuton, but a free city under the Stars and Stripes,' if these two articles are typical of American understanding of the problems of the Near East. For

28 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 104.

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the world's peace I would pay America whatever sum she asked to keep away from Asia".[29]

The long fifteen years spent in India, sketched out in some detail in Fremantle's biography appeared to start with a short blaze of political activity before in the last decade of Pickthall's life dying down to the embers. He arrived in India at the moment when British control was growing more tenuous. Taking up a pro-Nationalist stance that went with his position as editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, he worked with Gandhi and alongside the Ali brothers in the Khilafatist movement. M.A. Sherif's meticulously researched chapter adds new detail to the picture presented by Fremantle, including amplification of connections with opposite ends of a political continuum – liberal E.M. Forster on the one hand and rising Islamist Maududi Abul A'la on the other – both of whom however pronounced the impending close of British imperialism in India. Sherif proposes a limit to the qualifier in the sobriquet ("loyal"), drawing by no means tenuous links between the anti-colonial positions Pickthall took up in India and the nascent revivalism of Maududi. His chapter closes with a fascinating and thought-provoking comparison of Pickthall with Abdullah Yusuf Ali, a figure whose uneasy relationship with British imperialism provides an intriguing foil to his own.

It was however for financial rather than any ideological reasons that Pickthall took up employment under the Nizam of Hyderabad. He had been required to sign a pledge of non-involvement in politics by the Resident, but the Nizam's domain was hardly a hotbed of Islamic radicalism; he followed strictly in the long line of his ancestors going back to the time of James Kirkpatrick in being emollient towards the British. According to Nehru, "the premier [Princely] state, [Hyderabad] still carrie[d] on with a typical feudal regime supported by an almost complete denial of civil liberties". However, visiting in the autumn of 1921, Forster considered Hyderabad "more enlightened and progressive" than Dewas where he had worked as private secretary to the Maharajah.[30]

> If the [...] Nizam lived frugally for one reputed to be the richest man in the world, the legend of his parsimony has nevertheless been grossly exaggerated.[...] [H]e was second to none [among Indian princes] in spending money on schools, hospitals and other projects that would benefit his people.[31]

29 *NA*, XXV (15 May 1919), 36–37.

30 G.K. Das, *E.M. Forster's India* (London: Macmillan, 1977) 17, 66.

31 Mark Bence-Jones, *Palaces of the Raj: Magnificence and Misery of the Lord Sahibs* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973), 107.

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The figure of a mature Pickthall moving gracefully around the native state of Hyderabad playing his part in some of these projects while appearing to hold himself with splendid detachment aloof from the political fray, is one snapshot of the last stage of his engagement with the Muslim world.

Legacy as Novelist and Translator of the Quran

In his groundbreaking study of Marmaduke Pickthall, Peter Clark took care to rehabilitate Pickthall the writer of novels and shorter fiction as well as the prominent Muslim. The present volume also attempts to do justice to this side of his career, which was after all the source of his livelihood for nearly two decades. Literary critics Andrew C. Long and Faruk Kökoğlu together probe a handful of the novels in order to articulate aspects such as travel, sexuality, gender and Orientalism, which have become the stock in trade of recent postcolonial and cultural-theory-inflected approaches to literature. Adnan Ashraf adopts a "Ghazalian" approach testing out the possibility that by his knowledge of Arabic, Pickthall might have constructed several of his characters with Al-Ghazali's categorisation of different stages of the soul in mind. In a footnote he raises a topical issue of today concerning figural representation of the Prophet in *Saïd the Fisherman*. By extension, this brings out the question of faith and art, albeit retrospectively since Pickthall was not a Muslim when he wrote *Saïd*. From a technical point of view the narrative at this point is focalised upon Saïd and, as Ashraf's chapter intriguingly argues, the eponymous anti-hero, a reprobate who possesses very little regard for Islamic moral character, can be read as an embodiment of *nafs*, the lowest type of desiring soul in Ghazali's schema. (Kökoğlu suggests "the word 'fisherman' in the title of the novel seems to be a euphemism for a womanizer since we never see Saïd fishing at sea and the only time he is on board he is dreaming of a school of women"). Saïd dreaming of the Prophet in the manner he does could well make extremely upsetting reading for a committed believer, but it might also be argued that as far as Saïd is concerned such a sequence is "in character". Coming from the pen of a European author, the novel as a whole could be classified as an unexceptional exercise in naturalism. However Ashraf's point – "one can infer, since he became a Muslim, that the author might have later regretted writing this description" – certainly warrants scrutiny. It seems, for instance, highly unlikely that such a passage could have featured in Pickthall's later, engaged Muslim fiction – in *The House of War*, *The Early Hours*, or *Knights of Araby*, (discussed respectively by Kökoğlu and Ashraf). What we can say is Pickthall clearly did not choose to edit the dream

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out of later editions of Saïd, but that his later fiction clearly proclaims where his loyalties lay.

Andrew Long, on the other hand, makes a reading of *Valley of the Kings* that contextualises the novel according to Cooks' tours and nineteenth-century travel writing, and of *Veiled Women* that places it alongside the subgenres of harem literature, captivity tales and conversion narratives. Seen through these frames, Pickthall's novels are distinctive though not *sans pareille*, nor out of sync with the times in which they were written, which we should not find surprising given the appeal they obviously held for certain types of readers in their day. One of the points these chapters raise is that Pickthall's novels continue to be worthy of further critical analysis, and not only in the context of their "Muslimness". Indeed Long's conclusion connects the novels to problems still very much with us today:

> [...] we can accept these two novels in the religious spirit with which Pickthall intended them, and still find something here which is refreshing and (still) new and, in a productive sense, disturbing and unresolved. [...] [They], and Pickthall's other Near Eastern fiction is meaningful today because he takes on [...] intractable problems, in a sense, more than he can handle. Indeed, Pickthall is most authentic in the way he presents his readers with characters and plot dilemmas which offer no "way exit" in the usual acceptable sense.

*

Presenting in the early 1990s a reordered version of J.M. Rodwell's 1909 Quran translation, Professor Alan Jones of the Oriental Institute in Oxford listed four important translations by non-Muslim scholars and over thirty by Muslims, mainly from the Indian sub-continent, and concluded that Pickthall's was "the best and most influential".[32] Pickthall's effort certainly has to be judged according to the context in which it was written, and he himself provided a quite lengthy and engaged account of his struggle against traditionalism as embodied by authorities at Al-Azhar in Cairo who embargoed his project tout court.[33] The first translation by an English Muslim, to who was Pickthall's diplomatically entitled *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* addressed? What was

32 Alan Jones, Foreword and Introduction, *The Koran*, trans. J.M. Rodwell, London: Phoenix, 2001, xxvi.

33 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Arabs and Non-Arabs and the Question of Translating the Koran", *IC*, V (1931), 422–33.

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its purpose? Why did the translator write an introduction but, unlike Abdullah Yusuf Ali, add no explanatory notes? Where did he stand in relation to Quranic commentary? Did he adopt a modern reading of the miracles related in the Quran, or retain the literal sense? These questions are raised and deliberated upon by A.R. Kidwai, an outstanding authority on English translations of the Quran, in the final chapter of this volume. He demonstrates, among other things, how in his employment of archaic language Pickthall appears to have exceeded the early twentieth-century rendition of churchman Rodwell;[34] and how, while translating verses literally, he occasionally leaned towards modernist interpretation. Overall, Kidwai emphasises the faithfulness of Pickthall's translation – "he adheres closely to the Quranic text in his rendering and succeeds largely in avoiding the pitfall of offering a literal, soulless version" – and records the debt Muslims have felt they owe him as deliverer from the Quran translations of Western Orientalists.

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34 "While Pickthall's work was popular in the first half of the twentieth century and, therefore, historically important, its current demand is limited by its archaic prose and lack of annotation". Khaleel Mohammed, "Assessing English Translations of the Qur'an", *Middle East Quarterly* 12, 2 (2005), 58–71.

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PART 1

Pickthall and the British Muslim Community

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CHAPTER 1

Pickthall, Muslims of South Asia, and the British Muslim Community of the Early 1900s

K. Humayun Ansari

Marmaduke Pickthall, as is well known, had a lengthy personal connection with India – from September 1920 he spent most of the rest of his life there (he died in 1936) and it was in India that he carried out his authoritative translation of the Quran. Pickthall's links with South Asian Muslims, however, predated his time in the subcontinent itself. Instead these began in earnest in the years leading up to the First World War when he interacted with Indian Muslims based in Britain when they – like him – became increasingly involved in issues that concerned the fate of the Ottoman sultan-caliph. Although he did not formally announce his conversion to Islam until November 1917, he had been working closely with Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din (1870–1932), the Imam of the Shah Jahan Mosque at Woking, and other South Asian Muslims connected with the Woking Muslim Mission (established in 1913) since the beginning of the war. This interaction brought him into contact with a wider network of Muslims in London, many of whose concerns resonated with his own. From this perspective, Pickthall's engagement with this particular collection of transnational Muslims hailing from the subcontinent might seem unproblematic.

The reality, however, was rather less straightforward, for behind it lay a more complex set of interactions, which – it could be argued – brought together what may have seemed like an odd set of bedfellows: on the one hand, there was Pickthall, with his strong belief in monarchy, empire and "one-nation" conservatism, and, on the other, groups of Indian Muslims who possessed a more ambiguous – even challenging-relationship with the British Raj. And yet in 1920 Pickthall found himself accepting the editorship of the *Bombay Chronicle*, the leading Indian nationalist newspaper of its day, a decision that he acknowledged would very much "shock" his close friend, the Conservative MP Aubrey Herbert, "for going so far from the direction you would chose for me, but believe that I still preserve the straight path of Islam and mean to keep it".[1]

This chapter accordingly explores how and why Pickthall – a self-confessed supporter of "Empire" – moved during the period spanning the First World War to a position in which he was able to collaborate closely with those Muslim

1 Anne Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy* (London: Hutchinson, 1938), 314–15.

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interests in India that by 1920 were actively challenging Britain's imperial role in the subcontinent. It asks why and how this relationship came about, what it was based on, and the part that it played in Pickthall's own longer-term intellectual and political evolution, which resulted in him – perhaps unexpectedly – accepting this opportunity to work in India.

Making Contact

Pickthall is likely to have first come into closer contact with South Asian Muslims in the years leading up to the First World War. London, which he visited regularly from 1909 onwards, was home to various overlapping and interacting networks of Muslims, many of whom had come from India: Syed Ameer Ali (1849–1928) had settled there with his English wife, likewise Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1872–1953), I.I. Kazi (1886–1968), M.H. Shairani (1880–1946) and Mushir Hussain Kidwai (1877–1937). Belonging in the main to elite backgrounds, their interests drew them together to pursue common Muslim causes. Whether faith-oriented, empire-loyalist or Pan-Islamic radical, they were sympathetic to the Ottoman Empire in varying degrees. Pickthall's own interest in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire had been growing. It had been stimulated by his fascination with Islam and Muslim societies which began with his sojourns and experiences of Egypt and the Levant at the end of the 1890s and during the first decade of the twentieth century. As his concern for the Ottoman Empire expanded, so did his involvement in London's Muslim networks.

But Pickthall's interaction with Muslims of South Asia, especially the leading members of London's Muslim networks, was not entirely unproblematic. Their differences stemmed from how they interpreted the position of Muslims within and outside the British Empire. While Kidwai, for instance, as a "colonial" subject, saw Pan-Islam as a way of promoting the independence of Muslims from Western imperial rule on a transnational scale, Pickthall, who had been brought up a Tory,[2] considered British rule beneficial for Muslims. Hence, for Kidwai, it was imperative that Muslims combined "to present a strong front to the merciless blows of united Christendom":[3] Moreover, a Muslim, he affirmed,

> would by his very nature prefer to live even in a semi-civilised country with his self-respect, dignity and equality of rights established, than live under even *Pax Britannica* with a brand of "native" on his forehead

2 Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (London: Quartet Books, 1986), 20.

3 Mushir Hosain Kidwai, *Pan-Islam* (London: Luzac, 1908), 12.

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> and a constant shriek in his ears telling him that "the conquerors" have more rights than the "conquered", that the colour gives more dignity and privileges to a person than any other colour, the policy of coercion is the best policy for Asiatics, and that the Christian civilisation is the only civilisation that can be respected. A Muslim cannot bear ignominious treatment … This is the secret of the Egyptians disliking British predominance and their want of appreciation of the benefits that have accrued to them through it.[4]

Pickthall, by contrast, remained a great admirer of Cromer's twenty-year "autocratic but benevolent and upright reign" in Egypt.[5] His pro-imperial attitude was made amply clear in his reflections on the Denshawai Incident of 1906 that had resulted in the public hanging of four peasants and life imprisonment and lashes for others. Kidwai, writing in 1908, criticised the punishments meted out to the villagers on what amounted to fabricated charges as "inhuman"; for him, they testified to the "barbarous fanaticism of Christian, white and 'civilised' people", which he viewed with "great disgust and abhorrence".[6] Pickthall, in contrast both to Kidwai and to liberal opinion in England outraged by the executions, absolved Cromer of any wrong-doing:

> English rule in Egypt at the time stood for things which did not exist in neighbouring lands – things like religious toleration, personal security and some attempts at even-handed justice. The uniform symbolised British rule; its prestige had to be "jealously" guarded and its authority unreservedly upheld; it could not be allowed to be "violently insulted with comparative impunity". The villagers of Denshawai were perfectly aware, when they attacked those pigeon-shooting officers [though others contradicted this account, claiming that it was the officers who fired shots at the villagers first, provoking their response] that they were committing an unheard-of crime for which unheard-of punishment might be exacted.[7]

In Pickthall's view, the villagers' actions were not unpremeditated and so while the "punishment, awarded by a Special Court [may have been] extraordinarily

4 Kidwai, *Pan-Islam*, 28.

5 *Athenaeum*, 4503 (14 February 1914), 222.

6 Kidwai, *Pan-Islam*, 22–3.

7 *New Age*, XIV (26 February 1914), 520.

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severe, [it was] not excessive, when one considers that British officers were in uniform".[8]

Nevertheless, in 1908, as the Young Turks first took hold of the Ottoman Empire, and then again after the counter-coup in 1909 when their regime came under attack from European powers, Pickthall demonstrated increasing unhappiness with its treatment, especially by Britain. In this response his views converged with those of many Muslims hailing from South Asia. Together they were concerned about the threat to the Ottoman Empire posed by European powers, though not necessarily for the same reasons. As conflicts intensified during the Tripolitania and Balkan campaigns, anti-Muslim sentiment reached a new peak in Britain. Islam along with the Ottoman caliph were subjected to unrestrained popular and official ridicule and insults, issued from pulpits and platforms no less than in the print media. Under popular pressure, British foreign policy moved away from its nineteenth-century support for the Ottomans as a bulwark against Russian expansion. However, this fast-growing antagonism towards Islam and Muslims began – perhaps not surprising under such circumstances – to galvanise opinion among many Muslims living in Britain in defence of the sultan-caliph as the key symbol of the *umma*.

In 1908, Kidwai, by now one of the most active Indian Pan-Islamists based in Britain, complained that "England has done nothing to appeal to the sentiments of the Musalmans and to win over their fiery enthusiasm for her glory. On the contrary her statesmen […] and her officials in India and Egypt have very often hurt their feelings […] the best way to win over the Muslim world to her side will be for England to revert to her old policy – the policy of Lord Beaconsfield [Disraeli], towards Turkey".[9] For Muslims of his political persuasion, Pan-Islamism and Indian nationalism could be complementary, but Pickthall firmly disparaged the activities of Syrian and Egyptian nationalists. It was thanks in large part to the First World War that these differences would gradually make way for support for a common cause.

The War Years

What drew Pickthall into closer contact and collaboration with Indian Muslims in the early twentieth century, therefore, was a shared concern for the survival of the Ottoman Empire. But their support was based on quite different perspectives. Pickthall viewed the 1908 revolution as bringing progressive Muslims to

8 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 141.

9 Kidwai, *Pan-Islam*, 28–31.

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power, who wanted to extend and deepen what he viewed as traditional Ottoman values of toleration. The Turks, he thought, "alone of all Mohammedans [had] stepped out of the Middle Ages into modern life".[10] He had hoped that the British government would welcome the Young Turks' modernist reforms – after all, a constitution had been established, despotic rule had been replaced, and Muslim and non-Muslim peoples had been given charters of freedom. These were measures that he felt Britain would view favourably, because they very much embodied the values that the country stood for itself. Instead, fearing that the successes of the Young Turks might inspire Muslims in Egypt and India to call for similar constitutional changes, the British government did little to prevent the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire in the years before 1914.[11]

South Asian Muslim support for the Ottoman Empire, meanwhile, stemmed from quite different motives to Pickthall's, though there was some overlap. While there was not total consensus – some were more radical than others – on the whole it formed part of the wider Pan-Islamic view that resistance to European dominance of Muslims and their struggle for liberty required unity. Consequently their support for the independence of the Ottoman caliphate formed an important part of their aspiration to free themselves from Western imperial control. Even pro-establishment and empire-loyalist South Asian Muslims such as the Aga Khan and former judge Syed Ameer Ali now found it possible to join forces with co-religionists such as Mushir Hussain Kidwai who took a more uncompromising pro-Ottoman stand.

Like Pickthall, these influential transnational Muslims warned that Britain's policy was changing Muslim sentiment in India, and elsewhere, towards Britain for the worse and that this would prove harmful not only to British relations with Muslim states but also expose its strategic position in Asia to its dangerous rival Russia. Again, in a fashion similar to Pickthall, Indian Muslim activists back in India and Britain appealed to the London authorities to intervene on Turkey's side. Given that the British Empire ought to be representing the largest number of Muslims under her control, they felt that this policy would be most likely to facilitate the working of "their own territorial loyalty and extra-territorial patriotism […] in the same direction".[12] These appeals went unheeded.

10 *The Nineteenth Century and After*, LXXII (December 1912), 1147.

11 Feroz Ahmed, *From Empire to Republic*: *essays on the late Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey* (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi University Press, 2008), 143; see also Azmi Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, The Ottomans and Britain* (*1877–1924*) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 131.

12 *Comrade*, 14 October 1911.

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Instead, Prime Minister Asquith, in a speech in November 1912, declared that "The map of Europe was to be recast [...] that the victors [the Balkan League] are not to be robbed of the fruits".[13] The British government's apparent indifference towards "the atrocities of [Turkey's] enemies", instigated these Muslims to inquire, "If Britain owes no responsibility to [...] the Musalman subjects of His Majesty, we do not know on what scale [...] the Musalmans are thought to recognise their responsibilities to the Empire".[14]

Pickthall, like his South Asian Muslim counterparts, was similarly horrified by the devastating attacks mounted against the Ottoman Empire, and in particular Britain's indifference to its European dismemberment. He too was exasperated by Britain's policy of non-intervention in the Balkans where, in his view, "sheer acts of brigandage encouraged by the Powers" were being perpetrated against a Muslim state, and this "dastardly and cruel war acclaimed as a Crusade by Christian Europe".[15] He was equally frustrated by the popular sympathy in Britain for European Christians: "when one hears (as I did lately) in an English church, the Turks compared to Satan, the Bulgarian advance to that of Christian souls assailing Paradise, one can only gasp".[16] In early 1913, "sickened" by the atmosphere in Britain which resounded with the cry of a crusade against the Turk, from the press and public alike, Pickthall, visited Constantinople and returned shocked, having learnt first-hand about the scale of the massacre of the Turks committed by Britain's Balkan allies.[17] He immediately became involved with all those who were campaigning on behalf of the Ottoman cause.

His first move was to assist with setting up "The Ottoman Association Committee" with the objective of "helping in the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire".[18] Then he became even more closely involved with the Anglo-Ottoman Society (AOS), a body comprising a range of Muslim and Christian members, which "in British and Continental political and Press circles [... called] for a European defence of Turkey".[19] It was here that he came into close contact with South Asian Pan-Islamists who had established a number of lobbying bodies of their own – the London Moslem League (LML), the Islamic Society/Central Islamic Society (IS/CIS) and the Woking Muslim Mission

13 Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, 163.

14 Ibid., 165.

15 *New Age*, XII (14 November 1912), 32.

16 *New Age*, XII (7 November 1912), 8.

17 Marmaduke Pickthall, *With the Turk in Wartime* (London: J.M. Dent, 1914).

18 *Manchester Guardian*, 22 January 1914.

19 *The Near East*, 6, 145 (1914), 475.

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(WMM) – with over-lapping objectives, activities, patronage and memberships. Increasingly, they began to participate in all of these organisations to varying degrees. Their shared motives for supporting the short and long-term future of the Ottoman Empire brought them together to interact politically and socially, and to develop appreciation of each other's reasons for doing so. They collaborated in organising pro-Ottoman protest meetings, public debates and lectures; numerous resolutions and memorials were passed to the Foreign and India Offices; letters were sent to national newspapers and journals; pamphlets and books were published highlighting Turkish attributes and warning against Russia's malign designs. The AOS supported by South Asian Muslims in London but run almost single-handedly by Pickthall provided him with an opportunity to write and speak critically on British attitudes and policies towards Turkey's "progressive" Muslims. But from the amount of "public ridicule and private abuse"[20] that he received, Pickthall must have known that he was "defending an unpopular cause". All the same, he asserted that in being critical he was actually being, at heart, patriotic:

> As an Englishmen who has the interests of the Muhammedan at heart, I am a pro-Turk until the balance is adjusted. Any sentimentality [...] I may have felt or betrayed when writing of the Turks, is for the British Empire, which some men deride. I confess that I cannot see England in a mean and, at the same time, ruinous course of policy without emotion of a most decided kind.[21]

As this reflection suggests, it would appear that Pickthall wanted to sustain the Young Turks fundamentally because he considered a strong Turkey to be in Britain's best interests. At a meeting of the Ottoman Association that the *Islamic Review* reported in February 1914, he demanded, seething with anger, to know why England did not enable Turkey to do the work that was necessary to maintain her integrity; why "we" did not "secure to Turkey fair financial treatment, which is all she needed to become again the strongest bulwark of our Indian Empire". He lamented a greatly missed opportunity: "the Young Turks had remained fanatically pro-British. England virtually had the offer of a virtual protectorate of the whole of the Ottoman Empire [... if only Britain would] return to the old, solid, Oriental policy on the past principle of the integrity of Turkey".[22]

20 *The Near East*, 6,133 (1913), 75.

21 *The Near East,* 6,137 (1913), 233.

22 *Islamic Review,* February 1914, 63.

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Mushir Hussain Kidwai's support for the Ottoman Empire differed from Pickthall's in that his was not concerned with safeguarding the British Empire but instead was underpinned by the principle that the struggle for the freedom of colonised Muslims required solidarity with the few remaining independent Muslim powers. Among these, the most pre-eminent was the Ottoman Empire. Hence, Kidwai was intensely exercised by Britain's role in the erosion of Ottoman sovereignty. In taking this stance, he was echoing the sentiments of Pan-Islamists back in India such as Zafar Ali Khan (1873–1956), editor of the Indian newspaper *Zamindar*; writing in the *Islamic Review* in February 1913, he stressed the need for Britain's "friendly relations with the surviving Muslim states, which in his case – such is the constitution of the Muslim mind – supply the void created by the absence of a free and unfettered Muslim sovereignty in India".[23]

While Pickthall conducted his campaigns through more mainstream channels, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din's monthly journal, the *Islamic Review*, also warned of the grave apprehension caused by "the variance between the proclamation of the Government [which was broadly supportive of Ottoman territorial integrity] and the tone of the organs of public opinion with regard to the conflicts in the Balkans, which was proclaimed by the Bishop of Oxford 'a Holy War of Cross against Crescent'".[24] In the run up to the First World War, the *Islamic Review* continued to make trenchant criticisms of British policy viz-à-vis the Ottoman Empire. Kamal-ud-Din's open letter to the Prime Minister, published in several parts during 1913, fulminated against European (imperial) greed, its boundless "usurping of other's life and property" through imperialist expansion, justified by the doctrine of the "survival of the fittest" and the notions that the European "is the best of the human race and the coloured races were created simply to bear the white burden".[25] In the process, Kamal-ud-Din argued, Islam was being devastated and that the desire of Muslims was that the British government should change its policy and use its good offices against European imperial ambitions. But just before the outbreak of war, though Pickthall's argument in support of the Ottoman Empire clearly differed from that being made at the same time by South Asian Muslims in London, the Ottoman cause proved sufficient to unite them in their – unsuccessful – attempts to persuade the British government to secure Ottoman neutrality in the likely conflict ahead.

The entry of Turkey in the war on the side of Germany and its proclamation of jihad in November 1914, calling on Muslims all over the world to rise

23 *Islamic Review*, February 1913, 28.

24 Ibid., 36.

25 *Islamic Review*, May 1913, 128.

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up against its enemies, lent much intensity to complex questions of the relationship of Muslims within the empire and the British state. As the conflict progressed, the awareness that Muslims belonging to Britain's empire were fighting against their co-religionists caused considerable unease and debate, particularly on ethical questions with regard to loyalty and patriotism; indeed, the war and its aftermath would cruelly test the limits and frailties of the embryonic British Muslim identity.

Pickthall's position during the war contrasted in varying degrees with that of the more patriotic British converts and indeed some empire-loyalist Indian Muslims. For instance, the well-known convert Lord Headley was full of admiration for "the heroism and devotion" of the "sons" of "a grand Empire", who were "freely pouring out their life blood in defence of honour for the love of truth and justice".[26] He had no truck with the Ottoman caliph's call for a global jihad against the Entente powers, asserting that this was not a religious war and together with Maulvi Sadr-ud-Din (d.1981), the Imam of the Woking Mosque, unhesitatingly adopted a resolution at a meeting of the recently established British Muslim Society, on 20 September 1914, which stated:

> We desire to offer our wholehearted congratulations to our eastern brethren now at the front, and to express our delight to find that our co-religionists in Islam are fighting on the side of honour, truth, and justice, and are carrying into effect the principles of Islam as inculcated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad.[27]

Likewise, he lambasted the "few misguided and unpatriotic persons, calling themselves British who would willingly hand over our glorious Empire to the modern Huns". Britons who opposed the war were, he argued, only traitors, and "their seditious utterances [were] drowned in universal acclamations coming from [...] India and other portions of the Empire".[28]

Another influential convert, Abdullah Quilliam, similarly repudiated his earlier rhetoric about religion taking precedence over patriotism: "Our Holy Faith enjoins upon us to be loyal to whatever country under whose protection we reside".[29] He wrote to Sir Grey, the Foreign Secretary, pledging his absolute

26 *Islamic Review*, October, 1914, 421–22.

27 Ibid., 421.

28 *Islamic Review*, November 1914, 493.

29 R.A. Quilliam [Abdullah Quilliam's son] to Grey, 28 August 1914, FO371/2173, 44432, TNA. For a detailed study of Abdullah Quilliam's conversion to Islam and his career thereafter, see *Jamie, Gilham, Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam, 1850–1950* (London: Hurst & Company, 2014), in particular, Chapters 2 & 3.

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loyalty to the British crown and, moreover, offered his services to the government so as to promote "loyalty amongst the Muslims throughout the Empire".[30] To convey the genuineness of this loyalty, he resigned as Vice-President of the Anglo-Ottoman Association (by then under suspicion for "undesirable activities" in relation to Turkey) and offered to help the British authorities to instil a greater sense of loyalty among the empire's Muslims.[31]

As the conflict against Turkey intensified so did anti-Muslim sentiment in the British press and wider society. Fearing the backlash, Lord Headley, though he lamented the fact that Turkey was now an enemy, cautioned his fellow believers to refrain from "taking part in any political discussions and controversies [...] for if we do so we shall be certain to come to grief either through internal dissensions or through collision with some outside-authority".[32] Khalid Sheldrake (d. 1947), another convert and stalwart of the British Muslim community, went further and wrote to assure the Foreign Secretary of Muslim "support, co-operation and loyalty".[33] Along with other converts he joined the army in 1917, and, as attempts to foment rebellion among Muslims came to light, offered – like Quilliam – assistance in galvanising Muslim loyalty to the Crown.[34] While Turkey's entry into the war on the opposing side caused unease for some, converts such as John Yehya-En-Nasr Parkinson(1874–1918) (vice-president of the British Muslim Society) affirmed that:

> as a Britisher I would support my country in the contest by every honourable means in my power, to bring matters to a victorious ending [...] Yet, while doing so, I would regret the necessity that compelled me to fight against Turkey, a people with whom I sympathise on many national ideals and to whom I was bound. Those of us who have long stood by [Turkey] in weal and woe, in good and evil days, will still stand by to help by every means in our power, so long as that help does not interfere with our greater duty to our own Empire, to our native land.[35]

Pickthall was equally grappling with the dilemma facing Muslim subjects of the British Empire. He, like South Asian Muslims, was opposed to the war

30 Leon [the name Quilliam adopted on his return to England] to Grey, 6 November 1914, FO371, 2146, 68803, TNA.

31 "Activity of Ottoman Association and Anglo-Ottoman Society", FO 371/2488, 1915, TNA; "Moslems in Turkey", FO 371/2146, 1914,TNA.

32 *Islamic Review*, January 1915, 12.

33 FO371/1973, 85051, TNA.

34 L/PS/1/125, 3273, BL.

35 *Islamic Review*, December 1914, pp. 588–89.

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against Turkey and as the conflict dragged on he, like them, became steadily more Pan-Islamic in outlook, arguing that Pan-Islam was "the conscious effort for the united progress made by educated Moslems". For him, Pan-Islam was now "the most hopeful movement of our day, deserving the support of all enlightened people, and particularly the British Government, since a British Government inspired it in the first place".[36] So, while deeply sympathetic to the Ottoman cause and having vowed "never [to] serve against the Turks", he made it quite clear that he was "in no sense anti-British".[37] Indeed, he was not unwilling to contribute to the war effort locally, helping to recruit soldiers in his small village, while his wife spent her time in "making and collecting things" for the Belgian army. Pickthall did not himself volunteer, but he wrote admiringly of those who were enlisting, happy to participate in fêtes organized at their "send-off". At one point, he expressed great disappointment at not being able to secure a "military interpretership".[38] In May 1916, when Sir Mark Sykes rejected his request for a passport to travel to Switzerland to meet Turkish representatives there, possibly to initiate a peace process between Britain and Turkey, he admitted to being "hurt by the imputation [...] that his motive in applying [...] might be to evade military service".[39] In fact, when eventually called up in early 1918, he joined as a private in the 17th Hampshires.[40]

But Pickthall's underlying loyalty to his country did not prevent him from doing all that he could to check, if not completely prevent, the demise of the Ottoman Empire. Pickthall was drawn to the community of Muslims in London because, for him, as for these South Asian Muslims, the key attraction of the Young Turks was their modernist approach to social and political reform in their empire and to Islam more broadly. Like him, London-based Muslims had enthusiastically welcomed the new constitutional government as suffusing Muslim polities everywhere with the ideals of democracy. In his view, this gave the "sick man of Europe" its best chance at recovery. While it is unlikely that Pickthall and the pro-Turk South Asians would have personally known each other to any great extent before the war, each were undoubtedly well-acquainted with influential Young Turks and had become well-attuned to their thought and politics. Pickthall and Syed Ameer Ali, for instance, both knew Halil Halid, the Turkish Consul General, well. Ameer Ali's liberal and rational "interpretations of the text of the Qur'an [had seemingly] enabled the Turkish reformers to convince the *Sheikh-ul-Islam* that the grant of a constitution by the head of a Muslim State

36 *New York Times*, 30 April 1916.

37 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, pp. 286, 276.

38 Ibid., 257.

39 Ibid., 272.

40 Ibid., 289.

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was not opposed to the precepts of the Koran, and that the Caliphate would not suffer in prestige by admitting non-Muslims to civil equality and rights with Moslems in the Courts of law".[41] It was, therefore, not surprising that, with their views converging, Pickthall and some of the South Asian Muslim activists in London came together to campaign for Turkey's defence.

Social, cultural and intellectual similarities also helped to bring them together politically. Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din (barrister and founder of the Woking Muslim Mission), Syed Ameer Ali (who was the first Indian member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council), and Mushir Hussain Kidwai (barrister and radical writer on pan-Islam) were among the leading lights of the emerging Indian professional upper middle and landed classes based in London thanks to its role as the capital of the British Empire. While there, they moved in elite social circles having adopted many aspects of the requisite lifestyle. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (translator of the Quran in the 1930s) and Kidwai were both members of the National Liberal Club. They worked closely with pro-Turk members of the British imperial establishment, even if they fell marginally short of becoming part of it. Belonging to the elite backgrounds themselves, they found it relatively easy to make contacts among the upper and middle classes, persuading them to adopt more sympathetic views and policies in respect of South Asian Muslim concerns.

These Muslims were equally accommodating in their social behaviour. Much of their work was conducted with a light touch in a convivial atmosphere with due regard for the social etiquette, conventions and customs, modes of conduct and practices current at the time. Pickthall gravitated towards these Muslims because he found much in common between his Christianity and their thought and practice of modernist Islam – both sets of interpretations affirmed tolerance of other faiths, consonance between God's law and natural law, and the necessity of reasoning and scientific exploration to reveal it. He and these South Asian Muslims viewed the reforms enacted by the Young Turks as the practical unfolding of "modern" Islam; and they needed defending because they were being severely threatened by European powers. By the end of 1914, Pickthall was well and truly involved in the cultural activities of the newly-established British Muslim Society set up with Kamal-ud-Din's encouragement by the prominent convert Lord Headley.[42] Then, according to his biographer Fremantle, "[i]n December 1914 he at last became a Mohammedan [...] His profession of this faith was a witness, a protest against the

41 Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, 128.

42 Humayun Ansari, *"The Infidel Within": Muslims in Britain Since 1800* (London: Hurst & Company, 2004), pp. 130–136.

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hysterical hate preached in the name of the Christ [with Turkey as its prime target] he had served and loved so long".[43]

During the remainder of the war, Pickthall's interactions with Muslims in London deepened both on the religious and the political level. In January 1917 he gave an address at the Prophet's Birthday celebration. His series of articles, "Islam and Progress" were published in *New Age* during 1916, in which he elaborated modernist understandings of Islam, on tolerance, equality of women, and war. These were reproduced in two parts in August and September 1917, reflecting the convergence of his views with those of South Asian Muslims such as Ameer Ali, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Kamal-ud-Din and Kidwai. Then, in November 1917 (somewhat later than mentioned above) he formally and publicly declared his conversion to Islam to an ovation at a packed meeting of the Muslim Literary Society after he had given his lecture on "Modernism and Islam".[44] Thereafter, his religious association with other Muslims became much more visible. He gave sermons at Friday prayers at the London Prayer House in Notting Hill; he led *Taraveeh* prayers during Ramadan, and, when he took over as Imam in Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din's absence in early 1919, he led the Eid congregations at the Woking Mosque. He edited and regularly wrote in the Muslim Mission's monthly *Islamic Review* and ran the Islamic Information Bureau's weekly journal *Muslim Outlook*.

Politically, Pickthall now found himself at the head of an ambitious pro-Turk public campaign involving Muslims, both British and South Asian, in London. Their aim was to win over hearts and minds in government circles and more widely in order to secure a separate peace agreement between Britain and Turkey. Their efforts were generally channelled through the AOS, the IS/CIS (of which Mushir Hussain Kidwai was the president for much of this time) and the London Moslem League (LML) that had been founded (and headed up) by Syed Ameer Ali in 1908. Individually – in his capacity as a polemical journalist – as well as through these organisations, Pickthall together with South Asian Muslims, and along with mutual Young Turk friends and sympathetic members of the British establishment, campaigned passionately for the Ottoman cause. As a leading figure – among British Muslims, he took on a variety of religious and political roles and responsibilities, ardently seizing every possible means of

43 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 252. There is little other evidence to substantiate Fremantle's statement regarding Pickthall's conversion in 1914. However, Pickthall writing to Aubrey Herbert in January 1915 hints that he was close to converting in that when Lady Evelyn Cobbold met him at Claridge's the first time in 1914 she "wished [him] to declare [himself] a Muslim there and then […] before two waiters for witnesses". Ibid., 257.

44 *Islamic Review*, January 1918, 3–4.

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propaganda – he conducted interviews, spoke in public debates, gave lectures, wrote letters to national newspapers, sent resolution after resolution to the Foreign and India Offices and organised protest meetings – to drive home the Muslim message.

In common with other prominent Muslim activists in Britain at this time, Pickthall was marked out as a security risk. The intelligence agencies kept a close watch on them all, dubbing the Indian Muslims among them as "fanatics". They were suspected of being involved in "undesirable activities", writing "more or less violently worded resolutions in favour of the Turk".[45] Another report branded them "hirelings of the Committee of Union and Progress", and others such as Pickthall for never being "weary of enlarging in the daily papers on the merits of the Turk".[46]

As the conflict spread from Europe to the Middle East, like most South Asian Muslims, Pickthall was horrified at British machinations in Ottoman territories. The news of the Arab Revolt in June 1916, for instance, crystalized their emotional and political commonality. Rather than assuaging pan-Islamic sensitivities within the empire, the British believed that the setting up of an Arab caliphate at Mecca or even Cairo would counter the Ottoman threat. But the vast majority of Indian Muslims immediately condemned the Arab Revolt which the British had conspired to foment. They instead regarded Sharif Hussain of Mecca as a traitor, a puppet who was being manipulated into betraying the Pan-Islamic cause. For them it was an intrigue on the part of the British government designed to alienate the sympathies of the Indian Muslims from the Ottoman caliph-sultan and his Turkish subjects. Writing in *The Nation* (London) on 29 July 1916, Mushir Hussain Kidwai fumed, "The Sherif of Mecca, if he has revolted against the Khalifa, doubly deserves the same fate [i.e. execution], and perhaps even worse than the Irish leaders who revolted against their sovereign. Islam does not encourage rebellion and revolts".[47] Pickthall himself added: "It never seems to have occurred to the inventors [of the Arab scheme] that the majority of Muslims might resent the removal of their centre from the most progressive Muslim country in close touch with Europe, to one of the most backward countries of the world".[48] In late 1917, a letter from him was published in the *Saturday Review*, which, according to the Foreign Office, was likely to create bad feeling between Britain and its Arab allies, especially

45 See, for example, FO371/2486, 34982 (1915); FO371/2488, 50954 (1915); FO371/3419, 199619; 4 December 1918; 197557 (1918), TNA.

46 Foreign Office letter, 1 July 1916, FO371/2777, 122654, TNA.

47 Y.D. Prasad, *The Indian Muslims and World War I* (New Delhi: Janaki Prakashan, 1985), 113.

48 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 261.

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the Kingdom of Hejaz or the Holy Places of Islam (Mecca and Medina) by insinuating that "our ally King [Sharif] Hussein [then ruler of the Hijaz and key British ally] is a venal traitor [...]; set[s] the Arabs at variance [...]; suggests that we have violated the holy territories [... and] goes in for pure Turcophilism [love of the Turks]". Pickthall's writings, according to one contemporary intelligence report was "a masterpiece of enemy propaganda".[49]

Three months later, Pickthall again courted controversy when in a challenging piece published in the radical anti-war newspaper *The Workers' Dreadnought* he accused "our present rulers" of attempting to "pit the Arabic-speaking Muslims against the Turkish-speaking Muslims" on "our false ideal of nationality and patriotism". In his view, "the great division in Islam is that between Progressive and Reactionary; and we at present are supporting the reactionaries" [i.e. the Grand Sharif of Mecca Hussain]. Then, in concert with South Asian Muslims, when the British government set out the proposal to create a Jewish state in Palestine under the tutelage of a Christian power, Pickthall once more intervened likening this taking of territory from the Muslim government to "a world-disaster".[50]

After the First World War ended, with the Ottoman Empire defeated, the tension between competing loyalties should have ended, at least in theory. But it did not thanks to the continuing uncertainty over the ultimate fate of the Ottoman sultan-caliph – an outcome in which Britain played a key role. Pickthall now joined other British Muslims to call on the government for a sympathetic hearing for and response to Turkey, pleading for the preservation of the Ottoman caliphate and opposing the hereditary Arab alternative that was being mooted by Britain: the latter, British Muslims insisted, ran the risk of rousing very angry feelings in the Muslim world and so would not be in Britain's best interests. This controversy thus kept alive the question of loyalty long after the war had ended because Muslims who argued Turkey's case seemed to be continuing to support strongly and energetically, particularly in India through the Khilafat Movement (1919–24), the state that had so recently been Britain's explicit, and defeated, enemy. Pickthall, alongside a number of prominent Indian Muslims, was in the vanguard of this campaign in London; he was considered as troublesome enough by the British authorities to be kept under surveillance – along with the so-called "Woking Mosque gang", a network of agitators connected in various ways with the long-established mosque,

49 Eastern Report XVLI (1917), FO395/144, 239516, 238406, TNA.

50 M. Pickthall, *Muslim Interests in Palestine* (Woking/London: Central Islamic Society, 1917), 1; *Islamic Review*, August 1917, 319–22.

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and "in communication with the most dangerous conspirators in this country and abroad".[51]

As the Khilafat agitation intensified so did the vilification of Pickthall and his collaborators. Critics denounced him as "an enemy of Christendom" and the organisations in which he participated most frequently with South Asian Muslims were labelled "anti-British". As intelligence reports explained, "[T]he only reason for tolerating Kidwai and Pickthall is that we have never had sufficient ground on which to put a stop to their activities, though they make a practice of sailing very close to the wind".[52] But interestingly, as these reports explained, while Kidwai could "be looked upon as an enemy to this country", Pickthall, in contrast "may be regarded as somewhat of a crank, but in all probability, at heart he is a loyal British subject".[53]

Pickthall himself remained troubled by the aspersions that were cast on his loyalty. He was acutely aware that some people regarded him as a traitor to his country, and while these accusations caused him no small personal distress, he defended his position on Turkey:

> It is possibly because I care so much about the British Empire in the East, and from the circumstances of my life can see things from the Muslim point of view [...] I realised the terrible effect which such a policy [a partition of the Turkish Empire] [...] could have upon my Oriental fellow-subjects. And in my small way I have been trying to make England realise it.[54]

Indeed, one reason offered for why he strove single-mindedly for the preservation of the Ottoman caliphate was because "he wanted to have the Mohammedan East solidly on our side, for he was terrified of any challenge to the route to India".[55] For Pickthall, Soviet Russia still posed the biggest threat. His deeply-held suspicion of Russian imperial expansion remained, "although he was relieved and delighted at the Bolshevik renouncement of territorial aims and at their refusal to accept the proposed Allied plans for a peace settlement".[56] For him, as for many others in the British establishment, whether Russia was Bolshevist or Tsarist, the danger would always be the same. They believed that

51 FO371/4233, 110154, TNA.

52 FO371/4154, 163700, TNA.

53 FO371/4155, 169869,TNA.

54 *Saturday Review*, 124, 3241 (December 1917), 461–62.

55 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 231.

56 Ibid., 288.

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"the existence of a strong Turkey would form a barrier against this ever-present danger the value of which would be the greatest mistake to overlook".[57]

Pickthall's mind set, in many ways, remained that of "an imperialist in that he believed that it was the mission of the British Empire to be Asia's and Africa's guide in their awakening towards 'modern progress'".[58] He "wished England to become the benefactress of the East, its guide to freer life and more enlightened institutions". It seemed that even once the war was over he still held the view "that this great work could be achieved only by the intermediary of a strong and independent eastern State. No better for this purpose could be found than the Ottoman Empire with the headship of the Muslim world".[59] In contrast, many South Asian Pan-Islamists welcomed the Bolsheviks' broad support for Muslim peoples, especially those who were politically oppressed; they had been encouraged by pronouncements in favour of the "wakening nations of the East" and the Bolsheviks' appeal for solidarity in the "fight against International Imperialism".[60] They were further reassured by the Bolsheviks' support for the Afghan ruler, Amir Amanullah Khan's resistance against British efforts to reassert their dominance over his kingdom, as well as for Atatürk, whom they had helped with money and military hardware in Turkey's war of independence against Greece and the Allies.

Britain's policy with regard to Turkey sharply contrasted with that of the Bolsheviks. When the British government, in 1920, refused to countenance the demands of the Indian Khilafat Delegation, the Bolshevik declaration on the rights of all peoples to self-determination and specifically their support for India's freedom gave Pan-Islamists such as Kidwai little option but to become more favourably disposed to seek their help.[61] For such individuals – whether in India or in London – participation in the Khilafat Movement rapidly formed part of the broader anti-imperialist struggle in India. Pickthall's priority, however, still seemed to be how to sustain the British empire in the East, in particular in view of the threat that, he believed, it faced from Russia:

> The only way to avert the Red peril is to solve the Turkish question instantly in a manner to satisfy Asiatics – for one Muslim who desires the

57 *Islamic Review*, January 1920, 10.

58 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 231.

59 *New Age*, 21 January 1915, XVI, 305.

60 K.H. Ansari, *The Emergence of Socialist Thought among North Indian Muslims* (*1917–1947*) (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2015), 22.

61 Accordingly, they declared "every sympathy with the Bolshevik Movement so far as it is consistent with the principles of Islam", see Ansari, *The Emergence*, 57.

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> triumph of the Bolsheviks, there are millions who would be against them if they could feel assured that the Turkish Empire and the Khilafate were safe and protected by England. It is not the love of the Bolsheviks, but the hatred and distrust of England (fast becoming general) which constitutes the real danger.[62]

Turning towards India

However, receiving the news streaming out of India at the beginning of 1919, Pickthall began to realize the tremendous solidarity of Muslim feeling there. He acknowledged their loyalty towards the Ottoman caliph was demonstrated daily in an unprecedented volume of protest; as the British intelligence reported, the "sheaf of telegrams [...] addressed to the Prime Minister [bore] testimony to the extent of the pro-Turkish agitation in India".[63] He heard that Indian soldiers (who by now had returned from war), the civilian population of India (which had given its best as a contribution to the victory of the Allies), and the princes (who had placed their resources at the disposal of their sovereign), all were horrified at the proposals of the Turkish Treaty, which, if carried into effect, would involve – they unhesitatingly declared – a breach of faith, a reneging of the pledge given by the British Prime Minister in January 1918. Writing to his friend Aubrey Herbert, Pickthall conveyed this concern in no uncertain terms: "Our Empire is in a most unhappy state [...] in Asia we could till very lately command a good deal of devoted loyalty. Now that is changed to horror and disgust, fast crystallizing into bitter and enduring hatred".[64]

When a Khilafat Day was organized in London in 17 October 1919 to coincide with mass protests in India, Pickthall led the prayer for the preservation of the Ottoman Empire and the "undiminished power and authority" of the Turkish sultan. Resolutions were passed on the occasion affirming the Ottoman sultan as the caliph of the Muslim world and emphasized his political independence. As chairman of the meeting Pickthall signed the telegram sent to the Sultan-Caliph expressing the London congregation's "devotion to [his] Majesty as Caliph".[65] In December 1919, along with the Aga Khan, Syed Ameer Ali, Lady

62 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 310.

63 But in its "opinion [this] Pan-Islamic agitation [was] being engineered from this country by Sheikh Kidwai and his associates", see FO371/4154, 145162, TNA.

64 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 303.

65 *Islamic Review*, November 1919, 408.

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Evelyn Cobbold () (a Scottish aristocrat who had converted to Islam[66]), M.H. Ispahani, Mushir Hussain Kidwai and Maulvi Sadr-ud-Din, Pickthall was one of the more than fifty British and British Indian signatories of the memorial reminding the Prime Minister of his pledge on the sovereignty of Turkey and urging him to pursue a policy of appeasement towards Turkey.[67] When the Indian Khilafat delegation arrived in London in February 1920 to canvass support on the "Turkish Question", its leader Mohamed Ali was immediately so impressed by Pickthall that he offered to put him in charge of the dissemination of the delegation's views as well as the management and organisation of its meetings and other activities.[68]

But it was probably Lloyd George's speech in which the Prime Minister waxed lyrical about General Allenby's conquest of Palestine as winning "the last and most triumphant of the crusades" that marked the turning point in Pickthall's emotional relations with Indian Muslims and his understanding of the sense of humiliation they felt at the hands of the British. He was utterly appalled given that the victory had been accomplished in no small measure through the sacrifices of thousands of Indian Muslim soldiers. As his comment in the January 1920 edition of *Islamic Review* bitterly observed: "If the words of Mr. Lloyd George are to be regarded as authoritative, I can have henceforth neither part nor lot in England. We [Muslims] have been deceived, made use of, then insulted. For the sake of all our brethren who have fought and died for England, in the belief that England stood for justice, we cannot let this cruel insult pass". And yet, he still added, "For the sake of England we must try to stop such mischievous and foolish talk".[69]

Conclusion

In September 1920 Pickthall left for India with much trepidation. What was causing him anguish was that, on the one hand, he wanted to continue the struggle for the Ottoman Khilafat as the Indian Muslims were doing even after

66 See the Introduction by William Facey, Miranda Taylor, Ahmad S. Turkistani to *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, by Lady Evelyn Cobbold (London: Arabian Publishing Ltd., 2009).

67 *Islamic Review*, January 1920, 7–11.

68 Mohamed Ali to Shaukat Ali, 6 May 1920, encl. Chelmsford to Montagu, 3 June 1920. See M. Naeem Qureshi, *Ottoman Turkey, Ataturk, and Muslim South Asia: Perspectives, Perceptions, and Responses* (Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2014) 90. See also Undated Memo, 1921, FO371/6549, E1013, TNA.

69 *Islamic Review*, January 1920, 17.

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its partition had been agreed at the Treaty of Sèvres in August 1920, but he also realised that these Indian Khilafatists had now started working with Indian nationalists to challenge the Raj. There were other matters that were similarly causing him anxiety. His relations with South Asian Muslims, while generally proper and correct, seemed to lack warmth and empathy.

By the end of the war, although he had developed a collaborative working relationship in the political sphere with a number of South Asian Muslims, their temperamental differences had exposed the difficulties in sustaining the effective organisation of their combined efforts. This became apparent in the workings of the Islamic Information Bureau (IIB), viewed as the principal source of Pan-Islamic "propaganda" in Britain after 1918. The Central Khilafat Committee in India set up in Bombay that year, of which Kidwai was a founding member, had been impressed by Pickthall's efforts on behalf of Turkey. He was duly invited and appointed to run the IIB and its weekly newspaper, *Muslim Outlook*, both of which were financially supported by M.H. Ispahani and the Aga Khan.

Pickthall's time at the Islamic Information Bureau was not happy, however. Towards the end of 1919, seeking help from his close friend, the Conservative (Turcophile) MP, Aubrey Herbert, to get him out of the Bureau, he expressed his discontent:

> I would get out of it like a shot if I could see my way to do so without damaging the show. But I do not at present. The work is exceedingly distasteful to me, and the atmosphere more so [...] it is quite possible that I may be "self-ejecting" before long, the more so that I have made myself objectionable all around by insisting on certain little matters which appeal to Englishmen rather than to Orientals.[70]

So, while Pickthall felt morally compelled to continue his work at the IIB, he had expressed his discomfort with his Indian Muslim colleagues' apparently more strident style. The Director of Intelligence, who had been keeping a careful watch on the activities of the Bureau, reported "a divergence of opinion between Sheik [sic] Kidwai and Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall – the latter has been expressing his opinion that Kidwai is becoming indiscreet and his articles have become dangerous".[71] Apparently, Pickthall was now complaining of "Kidwai's interference and intimated [sic] Ispahani, that unless Kidwai was kept in check he would leave". On 2 December 1919 Marmaduke severed his connection with

70 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 306.

71 FO371/4155, 169869 (10 January 1920), TNA.

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the Islamic Information Bureau,[72] but (according to his biographer Fremantle) in a manner that was sufficiently amicable for Yakub Hassan (1875–1940) to write to him that "The Indian Muslim community is grateful to you for your disinterested and devoted work".[73] Fremantle suggests that, "[a]lthough he was glad to leave the Islamic Information Bureau, he remained friends with Kamal-ud-Din to the end".[74]

Despite these personality clashes, Pickthall was nevertheless held in high regard by both British and Indian Muslims – in general, they respected his erudition, his religious scholarship and his command of the scripture. However, given their awareness of the imperial/colonial dynamics at work, informal social mingling and deeper bonding remained elusive. While Pickthall's understanding of Islam resonated with his Indian associates, when it came to working in close proximity to each other, there were "little things about the Oriental" that still seemed to cause him irritation, things that he could not abide, that would from time to time cause their communications to breakdown. The result was that he resigned himself to "living amongst … cranks and second-raters. It was the price he paid in Europe for becoming a Muslim and defending an enemy […] and Marmaduke, in spite of the companionship he found in Islam, was in Europe, very much alone".[75]

This relative lack of personal friendship and emotional warmth with the diasporic South Asian Muslims whom he encountered may have been at least in part because much of Pickthall's life – punctuated as it was with trips to the Middle East and Turkey where the romance, the pageantry and the unthreatening exoticism of these places and people proved immensely attractive to him – before the war and to an extent during and after it, was spent as a writer and journalist living in rural Suffolk and Sussex. So it is possible that his more intimate social circle was unlikely to have been anything other than the culturally rural middle English, a circle typically imbued with a sense of imperial superiority and "Orientalist" condescension. Those individuals with whom he did establish long-term personal relationships were non-Muslim but, crucially, from culturally similar backgrounds to his own – T.W. Hickes, a clergyman, "who was to become one of his greatest friends";[76] Aubrey Herbert, with whom

72 Director of Intelligence, 5 March 1920, FO371/5202, 1073, TNA.

73 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 307.

74 Ibid., 309–10.

75 Ibid., 309. It is a moot point whether – even among his Muslims associates - he considered people such as Kidwai (described by British intelligence as "sane but not sensible"), a crank. See L/P&J (S)/416, 1916, BL.

76 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy,* 92.

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he would share his more political inner thoughts and views; the aristocratic Lady Valda Machell, a lifelong friend, apparently always at hand when needed to help out with issues such as housing; the Fremantle family including his biographer Anne; and Arthur Field, a fellow political campaigner (and conscientious objector during the war) who remained throughout his adult life "one of his greatest friends".[77] With Lord Cromer (1841–1917), Consul General of Egypt for twenty years, he continued to share his view of an essential distinction in mentality and character between the European and the Oriental and whom he very much respected as an "autocratic, but benevolent and upright" ruler.[78] On the other hand, Anne Fremantle's biography of Pickthall, which offers much interesting detail and penetrating insight into his personal relations, provides little indication that there was anyone at all among London's South Asian Muslims with whom he found such companionship or ever became similarly intimately and affectionately connected.

For much of his time in England, Pickthall seems to remain wedded to a highbrow English lifestyle, with walking, gardening and recreation abroad as his main pastimes. Take, for instance, the following description of his appearance by Fremantle: "close-cropped his hair, excellent his tailor, correct his footwear [...] Harrow haloed him in the eyes of the British ruling class, and even to men like Lord Lloyd, he was, though sometimes an enemy, yet always a man – indeed a gentleman".[79] Indian Muslim cuisine, such as "Pulao and Qurma"[80] – the usual fare at largely Indian Muslim gatherings – would be very unlikely to have been served up for supper by Muriel, his wife.

Pickthall also seemed often to struggle in his attempts to escape his "Orientalist" mental frame. Despite his romanticist intimacy as a young man with ordinary "Orientals" on his trips to Egypt and Syria, whose apparently unthreatening exoticism appears to have been immensely attractive to him, he was never able entirely to move away from assumptions about the "Orient" that would have become deeply embedded during the formative period of his life. For him still, the so-called "Oriental" world constituted a distinct type in terms of civilisation, cultural essence and core values – these he believed shaped a different consciousness, mind set and behaviour. For instance, Egypt, as far as Pickthall was concerned, was the home of a race "whose mentality", he once declared, "is so different from us that it is impossible for them to understand us perfectly".[81] Likewise, "[I]t is a fact which cannot too often be emphasized", he

77 Ibid., 228.

78 *Athenaeum*, 14 Feb 1914, 4503, 222.

79 Ibid., 309.

80 *Islamic Review*, August 1918, 298.

81 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 47.

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wrote before the war, "that what people in Europe are accustomed to regard as high ideals – humanity, philanthropy, patriotism, the thirst for abstract liberty, and so on – have no growth in the East; for the Oriental they are pure illusions [...] Fact, our idol, is for him a senseless stone. He worships fiction... he only appreciates truth in story form, authority in the display of power, and justice in the guise theatrical[...] He dwells contentedly under cruel tyranny [...] the Oriental, in his soul, admires despotic action".[82] He claimed that he knew "that the Oriental loves a keen, enthusiastic worker in authority, even though ill-tempered, brutal, or a martinet [...] The languid type, which lets things take their course does its duty merely, he does not admire".[83] Fremantle in a similar vein observed that Pickthall "never cared for India as he cared for the Near East, for the Indian mind was alien to him".[84] Turkey, on the other hand, was much more appealing for it was "a country in close touch with Europe, was the head of the progressive movement in the East, the natural head, the sanest head that could be chosen; for the Turk was capable of understanding Europe and acting as an interpreter to those behind him".[85]

Brought up as a conservative Englishman, Pickthall was imperially minded, albeit in the Disraeli mould; for him the preservation of the Ottoman empire was in Britain's best military, strategic and commercial interests. He was content with the world of empires, whether they were British, French, Russian or Ottoman, so long as the balance of power among them ensured peace and benevolence. Still wanting to keep the East within the imperial frame, he was dismayed after the war by Britain's stubborn rejection of the Khilafatists' demands because he saw in this refusal the thin end of a wedge that would drive Indian Muslims into an alliance with Gandhi's mounting Non-Co-operation Movement, creating a popular united front of Hindus and Muslims in opposition to British rule in India.

As Pickthall was about to depart for India in 1920, some of this mental turmoil was reflected in a letter that he wrote to his old friend Aubrey Herbert:

> This is to tell you (what I fear will shock you very much) that I have accepted the editorship of the *Bombay Chronicle*, an Indian nationalist newspaper. If you want to know the primal reason for my taking such a step, it is simply economic pressure. [...] I cannot afford to live in England, and the offer of a salary of 1400 rupees a month came to me as a positive godsend at the moment of almost of despair' [...] It will quite

82 Ibid., 145–47.

83 *New Age,* XV (8 October 1914), 544.

84 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 320.

85 M. Pickthall, *With the Turk in Wartime* (London: Dent, 1914), 155, xii.

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> possibly end in my cursing the whole crowd and throwing back their money in their teeth as I have done before [...] Forgive me if you can for going so far from the direction you would choose for me, but believe that I still preserve the straight path of Islam and mean to keep it.[86]

Even at this late stage, what comes across from this correspondence is a total absence of the kind of fellow-feeling and comradeship that could be expected to have accumulated through prolonged involvement at various levels for a cherished cause. Instead, it seems that Pickthall's motives for taking on this latest role were primarily utilitarian and expedient. Little did he know how radically his experience of India would transform him, especially in respect of his perceptions of the Muslims there and his relations with them.

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86 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 314–15.

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CHAPTER 2

Marmaduke Pickthall and the British Muslim Convert Community

Jamie Gilham

This chapter considers Marmaduke Pickthall's connections and relationships with other converts to Islam in Britain from the period immediately prior to the First World War to his death in 1936. During those last twenty-five years of his life, Pickthall fought tirelessly to defend the Ottoman Empire, converted to Islam and became a leading figure in the British Muslim community. The chapter first documents Pickthall's early encounters with other British Muslim converts, then focuses on the four years between Pickthall's own conversion to Islam in 1917 and his emigration to India in 1920, and finally considers his latter years as an émigré. It explores Pickthall's interactions and relationships with other British Muslim converts who belonged to the contemporary "mainstream" British Muslim community, which was organised through the Woking Muslim Mission (WMM) at Woking, Surrey, and in nearby London.[1] As is the case for most "Woking" converts, there is no evidence that Pickthall visited or corresponded with the well-established, immigrant-led Muslim communities outside of the metropolis – in, for example, South Shields and Cardiff, where local white women converted to Islam and married predominantly Arab and South Asian Muslims.[2] Rather, Pickthall's small circle of British Muslim friends and acquaintances before and after 1920 were mostly to be found in and around London. They included both high-profile converts such as William Henry/Abdullah Quilliam (1856–1932; generally known in this period as Professor Henri M. Léon), Lady Evelyn/Zainab Cobbold (1867–1963) and Lord Headley/Al-Farooq (1855–1935; Rowland George Allanson Allanson-Winn), and lesser-known co-religionists such as Bertram/Khalid Sheldrake (1888–1947) and Dudley/Mohammad Sadiq Wright (1868–1949).[3]

1 On the WMM, see Humayun Ansari, *"The Infidel Within": Muslims in Britain since 1800* (London: Hurst, 2004), 126–34.

2 For more on these communities, see Richard I. Lawless, *From Ta'izz to Tyneside: An Arab Community in the North-East of England during the Early Twentieth Century* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1995); Fred Halliday, *Arabs in Exile: Yemeni Migrants in Urban Britain* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1992); and, in relation to conversion, Jamie Gilham, *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam, 1850–1950* (London: Hurst, 2014).

3 For biographical sketches and further details of these converts, see Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*.

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Examining Pickthall's relationships with other converts is not an easy task because of the paucity of surviving, accessible personal papers of these people, Pickthall included. Consequently – and notably – there is frustratingly little documentation of, or comment on, Pickthall's interactions and relationships with other British Muslims in either of his biographies.[4] Rather, we must look instead to contemporaneous published sources, many written by the converts themselves (Pickthall left a vast corpus of written work) as well as documents written about these Muslims – from both "insiders" (such as Muslim missionaries from India) and "outsiders" (such as journalists who visited Woking mosque). Additional to these sources are the few private papers and official documents (such as Foreign Office records) relating to Pickthall and his contemporaries, Muslims and non-Muslims. Cumulatively, these offer insights and allow interpretations which enable this documentation and assessment of Pickthall's connections, relationships, reputation and position in the early twentieth-century British Muslim community.

Strange to say, perhaps, for a man who has been the subject of two lengthy biographies and, in recent years, numerous other studies,[5] but evidence of Pickthall's character and details of his private life are scarce. This seems to be indicative of the man – one who, as his friend and first biographer, Anne Fremantle (1910–2002), noted in the preface to her biography of him, "kept few records even of his outward life",[6] and who had no direct heirs to embellish the rare documented character sketches and anecdotes. It is also, perhaps, no coincidence that only a handful of portrait photographs survive, and just one of Pickthall at the Woking mosque.[7] What we do know is that, although he was networked and a politically astute and outspoken man, he was also, as Fremantle highlighted, "shy" and, according to his good friend in India, the scholar and poet Professor Ernest E. Speight (1871–1949), an essentially "private man".[8] Pickthall always felt at ease with and mixed freely in Britain with Muslims from overseas, including the Indian scholar Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1872–1953) and the charismatic Sufi musician and publisher Inayat Khan (1882–1927), perhaps more comfortable with them than with the many British converts who

4 Anne Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy* (London: Hutchinson, 1938); Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (London: Quartet, 1986).

5 For example, Geoffrey Nash, *From Empire to Orient: Travellers to the Middle East 1830–1924* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), Chapter 6; M. A. Sherif, *Brave Hearts. Pickthall and Philby: Two English Muslims in a Changing World* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2011); Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, Chapters 4–6.

6 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 6.

7 Frontispiece, *The Islamic Review* [hereafter *IR*] 10, 12 (1922).

8 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 6; E. E. Speight, "Marmaduke Pickthall", *Islamic Culture* X (1936), iv.

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congregated around the Woking mosque and Mission during and after the First World War. It is well known that, when overseas, he was uneasy mixing with other Britons and Europeans. In a letter to a family friend from Switzerland in 1905, he reported that his hotel in Montreux "was full of pig-dog English [...] and I was glad to get on [to Valais]".[9] When the young Pickthall landed in Egypt for a tour of Palestine, Lebanon and Syria in 1894 – his first trip to Muslim lands – he shunned European society and found a dragoman who helped him "to throw off the European and plunge into the native way of living".[10]

Politics and the Path to Islam

Pickthall's conversion to Islam was protracted (he had first toyed with converting during his 1894–5 trip to the Middle East[11]), but became more likely in the period immediately prior to the First World War. His early travels to the Middle East and return to Egypt in 1907 and 1908 forged a strong emotional attachment to and intellectual and political engagement with Muslims and Islam. Moreover, Pickthall's interest in Islam and admiration for Ottoman lands and its Muslim peoples made him a committed Turcophile who saw Turkey as the hope of the Islamic world. As Ron Geaves shows in Chapter Four of this book, it was over the issue of the Young Turks that Pickthall and Quilliam/Léon differed, though there is little evidence to suggest that their disagreement got out of hand, and they remained friends throughout their lives. The traditionalist Quilliam, who had converted in the 1880s, had always championed the Ottoman sultan-caliph, even when, during the mid-1890s, the British press and politicians launched vitriolic campaigns against the Sultan (Abdul Hamid II, 1842–1918) in the wake of the massacre of "dissident" Armenians by Ottoman troops.[12] Quilliam would never accept the legitimacy of the Young Turk revolution which, in 1908, had deposed the Sultan. But, for the modernist Pickthall, the Young Turks promised an age of reform – in matters of education, social improvement and enhancement of the status of women – and from this he anticipated an improved and educated, modernised Islam.[13]

9 Author's Collection, Marmaduke Pickthall to "Fred", 28 January 1905.

10 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters: Palestine and Syria* (*1894-5-6*) (London: Heinemann, New Edition, 1929), ix.

11 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 81–2.

12 See Ron Geaves, *Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam* (Markfield: Kube, 2010), Chapter 7.

13 See Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 26–8.

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Alarmed at the imminent collapse of the Ottoman Empire during the first Balkan War of October 1912 to May 1913, Pickthall wrote furiously in British newspapers and journals about the integrity of the Turks and the strategic importance of their ailing Empire. He decried the British government's distancing itself from its pledge at Berlin in 1878 to guarantee the independence of the Ottoman Empire. In November 1912, Pickthall began a series of articles in the *New Age* magazine entitled "The Black Crusade", which condemned the intrigues of "Christian Powers" in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire and proclaimed the Turks, "by far the most advanced of Moslem races [...] mentally capable of attaining to the highest civilisation".[14] In contrast to the views of Quilliam/Léon, Pickthall claimed in the December 1912 issue of the respectable *Nineteenth Century and After* journal that Turkish massacres of Christian subjects were the fault of "Abdul Hamid II., a Sultan whom the Turks themselves deposed with ignominy. Moslems of the better sort are not bloodthirsty".[15] Writing in the *Times* at the beginning of 1913, Pickthall pointed to the alleged "butchery" of Muslim Macedonians by Christians, and complained about British silence over the massacres. The letter emphasised that Pickthall adhered to a Disraeli-inspired English foreign policy fearful of Russian interests threatening the territorial integrity of Turkey and, in the long term, British India: "The evident desire of our English Government to hush the matter up is causing bitter indignation [...]. To persons like myself, who had imagined the promotion of good feeling between Christian and Mahomedan to be a part of England's standing policy, it is inexplicable".[16] Days later, Pickthall travelled to Turkey to see the beleaguered capital for himself. Writing in the *New Age* in February 1913 on the failure of the Great Powers to permit the Turks an international commission to investigate alleged "Macedonian horrors", he admitted that, "I am heartily ashamed of being a European and a Christian at this juncture".[17] Unsurprisingly, Pickthall returned to England four months later more politicised. He was determined to prevent the partition of the Ottoman Empire and explain to his compatriots that, if Britain did not befriend Turkey, then Germany – who made no secret of her desire for a Turkish alliance – would take the initiative.

14 Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Black Crusade", *The New Age* 12, 1 (1912), 8.

15 Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Outlook in the Near East: for El Islam", *The Nineteenth Century and After* 72, 430 (1912), 1145.

16 Marmaduke Pickthall, "A Protest", *The Times* 18 January 1913, 5.

17 Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Fate of the Mohammedans of Macedonia", *The New Age* 12, 16 (1913), 389.

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On his return to England, and despite being based in rural Sussex (until 1916), Pickthall was drawn into the orbit of the London-based Turcophile movement which, in turn, introduced him to a few British converts to Islam. These included Quilliam, who had permanently relocated from Liverpool to London, where he was masquerading as "Professor Léon" by the time Pickthall met him in c.1913.[18] Most of the other converts Pickthall knew at this time had been linked to Quilliam's Liverpool Muslim Institute (LMI), the first Muslim missionary organisation in Britain, which had collapsed in 1908: John Yehya-en Nasr Parkinson (1874–1918), who converted in c.1901 was LMI Vice-President;[19] Khalid Sheldrake, who converted in 1904 and became "London correspondent" for the LMI journal, *The Crescent*; and Dudley Wright, an Islamophile who had written for the *Crescent* and later converted to Islam. Quilliam/Léon, Parkinson, Sheldrake and Wright were also all members of Abdullah Suhrawardy's (1870–1935) London-based Islamic Society. Suhrawardy had established the "Pan-Islamic Society" in 1903 to stem the decline of the *umma* (worldwide Muslim community) by pursuing broadly pan-Islamic objectives. The Society was renamed the Islamic Society in 1907 and, in 1916, it became known as the Central Islamic Society. Sheldrake was Vice-President of the Islamic Society when Pickthall first joined its meetings in c.1912.[20]

One member of the Islamic Society not connected with Quilliam's LMI was Lady Evelyn Cobbold who, like Pickthall, had a strong emotional attachment to Muslims and Islam through early travels to the Middle East. In 1914, with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and a European conflict looming, Cobbold's admiration of Muslims and Islam developed an increasingly political dimension. Further independent study persuaded Cobbold that Islam was the religion, "most calculated to solve the world's many perplexing problems, and to bring to humanity peace and happiness".[21] Pickthall and Cobbold did not meet until 1914, when they were introduced in London by a mutual friend, the former Grand Vizier (Prime Minister) of the Ottoman Empire, Ibrahim Hakki Pasha (1882–1918). Pickthall had first met Hakki in Berlin *en route* to Turkey the year before, when Hakki was an Ottoman Ambassador. At their first meeting, Pickthall was not impressed by the direct and rather eccentric, aristocratic Cobbold. He later told his close friend, the Turcophile Conservative MP Aubrey Herbert (1880–1923), that he "didn't like her much"; but, at their second

18 On Quilliam's London life, see Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 75–86.

19 For more on Parkinson, see ibid., Chapter 3.

20 On the Islamic Society, see Central Islamic Society, "The Central Islamic Society" [Booklet] (London: Central Islamic Society, 1916).

21 Lady Evelyn Cobbold, *Pilgrimage to Mecca* (London: John Murray, 1934), xiv.

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meeting – a "private talk" over lunch in Claridge's Hotel (Cobbold's favourite London haunt) in January 1915 – Pickthall was charmed and revelled in her gossip.[22] In fact, they remained life-long friends: when Herbert suggested to Cobbold during the war that Pickthall's lobbying for the Turks made him "England's most loyal enemy", she returned that the "'only one thing I deplore about him [...] is his absurd name'".[23]

Back in London in the autumn of 1913, Pickthall and Quilliam/Léon, alongside the radical pan-Islamic and Pan-African journalist Dusé Mohamed Ali (1866–1945) and the Turcophile Arthur Field (an atheist whom Pickthall, his great friend, described to Fremantle as, "'in reality, a faithful servant of Allah'"[24]), helped establish an Ottoman Committee to defend Turkish interests. By the end of 1913, the Committee had split into two organisations, both of which Pickthall joined. He briefly sat on the Ottoman Association's Executive Committee, which comprised, "British subjects of European descent [with ...] special knowledge of Turkey" and was designed to influence policy for, "maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire [and ...] promot[ing] a cordial understanding between Great Britain and Turkey".[25] Pickthall became much more closely involved with the second organisation, the Anglo-Ottoman Society (AOS), which, in contrast to the Ottoman Association, claimed to be a popular and international formation, composed of all nationalities, Muslim and Christian, proposing "a united movement in British and Continental political and Press circles [...] calling for a European defence of Turkey".[26] Pickthall worked so hard for the AOS that Fremantle commented that he, "did everything for it except bath the members".[27] In addition to sometime AOS Vice-President Quilliam/Léon, the membership included Parkinson and some of Quilliam's Muslim family, the most active of whom was his eldest son Robert Ahmed Quilliam. In April 1914, the Society organised "A public conversazione and meeting" at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, with one of Quilliam's daughters, Harriet Hanifa, in "conversazione" and Pickthall joining the company as a main speaker.[28] Other social and intellectual networks bound this small group of politically-minded converts and Turcophiles in these years. For example,

22 Quoted in Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 257.

23 Quoted in ibid., 7.

24 Quoted ibid., 228.

25 Anon, "The Ottoman Association", *The Near East* 6, 142 (1914), 391.

26 Arthur Field, "Turkey", *The Near East* 6, 145 (1914), 475.

27 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 230.

28 Anon, "Anglo-Ottoman Society", *African Times and Orient Review* [New Series] 1, 4 (1914), 96.

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Pickthall, Quilliam/Léon and another "Woking" convert, Dr Ameen Neville J. Whymant, were members of Inayat Khan's Sufi Publishing Society. Quilliam/Léon also established the Société Internationale de Philologie, Sciences et Beaux-Arts for the "advancement and encouragement of all branches of Philology, Science, Literature, Music and the Fine Arts",[29] and a London College of Physiology, which addressed the relationship between religion, spirituality and modern sciences:[30] Pickthall, Whymant, Parkinson, Sheldrake, Wright, Cobbold and Headley joined these organisations and took part in their lively debates and social events.

Pickthall's main focus and business, however, was political. As he explained in the letters pages of the *Near East*, he and other Turcophiles at this time were, "defending an unpopular cause. [We] have had to fear, and have encountered, public ridicule and private abuse".[31] The AOS gave Pickthall the platform to write and speak out publicly against British policy and attitudes towards "progressive Turkey" and its Muslims. But, despite their efforts, Pickthall and other Turcophiles were unable to persuade the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey (1862–1933), to keep the peace with Turkey or encourage Turkish neutrality and independence in 1914. This traumatised Pickthall, who felt that Christian Europe had neglected and abused Turkey, and he was furious that little was done to prevent her from turning to Germany. Pickthall still did not rush into adopting Islam, but he began to abandon Christianity when, he felt, Christianity had failed and abandoned him. Writing in the 1930s, Fremantle suggested that Pickthall converted to Islam in December 1914 as, "a protest against the hysterical hate preached in the name of the Christ he had served and loved so long".[32] However, though he edged towards Islam at the beginning of the war, Pickthall resisted conversion. As he told Herbert, Cobbold tried but failed to get him to publicly convert during their lunch at Claridge's in January 1915 (she proposed using two bemused waiters as witnesses).[33]

After Turkey entered the war, Pickthall led a hugely ambitious pro-Turk public campaign to win hearts and minds in Whitehall and beyond, and secure a separate peace agreement with Turkey. His efforts were generally channelled through the AOS and Islamic Society/Central Islamic Society, which organised protest meetings, public debates and lectures; forwarded countless resolutions

29 *The Philomath* 17, 201 (1913), Front Cover.

30 *The Physiologist* 1 [New Series] (1917), Front Cover.

31 Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Ethics of Aristotle", *The Near East* 6, 133 (1913), 75.

32 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 252.

33 Somerset Archive and Record Service, Aubrey Herbert Papers, DD/HER/52, Marmaduke Pickthall to Aubrey Herbert, 15 January 1915.

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to the Foreign and India Offices; sent letters to national newspapers and journals; and published articles, pamphlets and books promoting the merits of the Turks and warning of the pernicious influence and ambitions of Russia.

Despite wartime censorship and an increasingly anti-Turk and anti-Muslim sentiment in British society during David Lloyd George's (1863–1945) premiership from 1916 until 1922, Pickthall lobbied furiously through the AOS and alongside a few Muslim converts, especially Sheldrake, Robert Ahmed Quilliam and Parkinson.[34] In the months before his conversion, he became more avowedly Pan-Islamic. Pickthall wrote in the *New York Times* in 1916, for example, that Pan-Islam – "the conscious effort for united progress made by educated Moslems" – was the "cornerstone" of "Disraeli's great constructive Eastern policy". For Pickthall, Pan-Islam was, "the most hopeful movement of our day, deserving the support of all enlightened people, and particularly the British Government, since a British Government inspired it in the first place".[35] Pickthall inevitably met other pan-Islamic, mainly Indian, Muslims during his regular trips to London. Importantly, these included the lawyer and Muslim missionary, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din (1870–1932), who had arrived in Britain from India in 1912. Kamal-ud-Din was a convert to the Ahmadiyya, an unorthodox Muslim sect founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (c.1835–1908). Following a series of visions that drew upon the Islamic belief that a Messiah and a Mahdi would come to lead Muslims against the unbelievers, Ahmad had personally assumed both roles. In 1889, he inaugurated the Ahmadiyyat (Ahmadiyya community) by accepting the allegiance of his first followers – namely those who affirmed standard matters of Islamic belief and swore specific allegiance to Ahmad.[36]

The Woking Muslim Mission and Conversion to Islam

Once in England, Kamal-ud-Din abandoned his legal career and took it upon himself to promote a fairer hearing of Islam through propaganda written and inspired by Ahmad. In doing so, Kamal-ud-Din was keen to downplay the differences between Ahmadi and orthodox Islam. His main vehicle for this was

34 See, for example, Anon, "More Anti-War Protests", *Daily Herald* 6 August 1914, 5; The National Archives [hereafter TNA], Foreign Office Records, FO 371/3015/147160 (1917), "Russia and Turkey".

35 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Moslem Civilization after the War", *The New York Times* 30 April 1916, 18.

36 See Simon Ross Valentine, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama'at: History, Belief, Practice* (London: Hurst, 2008).

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the public lecture hall and, from February 1913, the publication of a monthly journal, the *Muslim India and Islamic Review* (renamed *Islamic Review and Muslim India* in February 1914). Kamal-ud-Din quickly realised the value of propagating Islam through the example of "native" converts and therefore early contributors to the *Islamic Review* included Quilliam/Léon, Parkinson, Sheldrake and Wright. In August 1913, Kamal-ud-Din moved from London to nearby Woking in Surrey to take charge of Britain's first purpose-built mosque (1888–89), which had fallen into a state of disrepair. Kamal-ud-Din quickly established the mosque and adjoining buildings as a centre of education, support for Muslims and missionary activity, formally constituting it as the "Woking Muslim Mission" during the war. He converted several white Britons to Islam, most notably, in November 1913, Lord Headley, whose conversion was reported in newspapers throughout Britain and the Empire.[37]

The number of converts swelled sufficiently during 1914 for Kamal-ud-Din to establish a British Muslim Society under the Presidency of Headley, with Parkinson his Vice-President and Sheldrake the Hon. Secretary. The WMM and British Muslim Society met regularly at Woking and in London. Closer than ever to conversion to Islam, Pickthall first joined meetings at the Mission's "London Muslim Prayer House" in Lindsay Hall, Notting Hill Gate in c.1916. Pickthall's deep study and experience of Islam was evident in his first article for an explicitly Muslim journal, Kamal-ud-Din's *Islamic Review*, which he submitted in late 1916. The article, entitled "The Prophet's Gratitude", set out the virtues of the Prophet Muhammad, who, "unlike all other prophets, whose proper likeness is concealed from us in mists of reverence, […] is a clear historical character". Correcting popular misconceptions about Muhammad, Pickthall elaborated on his humanity and reverence for women.[38] The article was published in the January 1917 issue of the *Islamic Review*. On the 6th of January, he accompanied Kamal-ud-Din to the Central Islamic Society's annual "Prophet's Birthday Celebration", held at the grand and fashionable Hotel Cecil in central London. Following prayers recited by Kamal-ud-Din, Pickthall addressed the audience with another short account and defence of Muhammad's life and character, admitting that, "I have come to love him as one loves a friend", and also arguing that the Quran "remains a wonder of the world". Crucially for Pickthall, Muhammad "preached the brotherhood of all believers". The theme of "brotherhood" was central to both Pickthall's and Kamal-ud-Din's interpretation of Islam. The address was immediately published in the *Islamic Review* and also

37 See Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 130–6.

38 Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Prophet's Gratitude", *Islamic Review and Muslim India* [hereafter *IRMI*] 5, 1 (1917), 35–9.

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translated into Urdu for republication as a booklet by the office of the Ahmadi magazine *Ishaat Islam* in Lahore.[39]

In June 1917, Pickthall delivered his first Central Islamic Society lecture, on "The Muslim Interests in Palestine", again in the company of Kamal-ud-Din and undoubtedly several British Muslims.[40] The following month Kamal-ud-Din republished Pickthall's influential "Islam and Progress" essays in the *Islamic Review* (the series had originally been written for the *New Age* and, in French, for *La Revue Politique Internationale*).[41] The essays confirmed Pickthall's position as a leading commentator and interpreter of Islam in Britain: he was at ease quoting the *hadith* (report of the sayings/doings of Muhammad), *sunna* (custom, or practice, of Muhammad and the early Muslim community) and Quran (in both Arabic and English), and also cited other Islamic scholars (the first "Islam and Progress" essay offers a rare example of Pickthall quoting another British Muslim – in this case, "Professor Léon" in the context of a discussion about "Oriental folk-lore"[42]). By September 1917, the WMM had republished Pickthall's "Islam and Progress" in booklet form for wider distribution.

Supported by Kamal-ud-Din, Pickthall converted to Islam in November 1917. He made a public profession of his new faith alongside Kamal-ud-Din during a function of the WMM's Muslim Literary Society at the London Muslim Prayer House's new venue, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, on the 29th of November. Pickthall then delivered a bold lecture on "Islam and Modernism", once more demonstrating his deep knowledge and engagement with the Islamic sources. He argued that, unlike Jesus, who proclaimed that his Kingdom was not of this world, Muhammad stressed the concerns of this world and prescribed rules for them, enshrined in the "uncorrupted" Quran, *hadith* and *sunna*. Pickthall believed that this made Islam an advance on Christianity and other religions, and agreed with Cobbold that it was, therefore, the natural and best-equipped faith to tackle the problems of the post-war world.[43] A report of the event published in the *Islamic Review* noted that:

> The Lecturer was listened to in rapt silence. His intonation of suitable verses from the Holy Qur-an in the original text to illustrate the beauties

39 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Address by Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall on the Prophet's Birthday", *IRMI* 5, 2–3 (1917), 53–9.

40 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Muslim Interests in Palestine* (Woking and London: Central Islamic Society, 1917).

41 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Islam and Progress", *IRMI* 5, 8 (1917), 337–52 and 5, 9 (1917), 368–84.

42 Ibid., 340.

43 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Islam and Modernism", *IRMI* 6, 1 (1918), 5–11.

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> of Islam, with which he frequently punctuated his most learned discourse, threw those who were not used to listening to such recitations from a Western's lips, into ecstasies. From start to finish Mr. Pickthall held his audience as if in a spell by his erudition, by his deep thinking, and lastly by the most genuine and rock-like faith which every word of his breathed into the splendour and beneficence of Islam.[44]

After the lecture, Sheldrake "rose and congratulated Mr. Pickthall on behalf of British Muslims, who, he added, looked upon him as a tower of strength".[45] Indeed, what is striking is that, already known and well-regarded for his public speaking and prose, and a mature forty-two years old at the time of his conversion, Pickthall was immediately adopted by other Muslims, especially converts, as an intellectual leader. Other influential converts like Headley, Sheldrake and the, by now, semi-reclusive Quilliam/Léon, could not match Pickthall's intellectual range. Kamal-ud-Din appreciated and exploited this. Tellingly, just days after his "Islam and Modernism" lecture, Pickthall was asked to chair a lecture by Kamal-ud-Din, attended a Central Islamic Society lecture by Headley, and accepted the position of Vice-President of the Muslim Literary Society (Yusuf Ali was President). Although, in the final months of the war, he was conscripted and posted to rural Suffolk to help defend the East coast, where he stayed until 1919 (and then moved back to Sussex), Pickthall published regularly in the *Islamic Review* throughout 1918 and joined WMM events in London. He was also one of the first and few converts to give an address and deliver sermons at the London Muslim Prayer House in the summer of 1918.[46] He visited Woking mosque occasionally, including the *eid al-fitr* (feast to end Ramadan) celebrations in July 1918, along with Headley, Wright and other converts.

Sectarianism

Like many British converts (Quilliam/Léon included), Pickthall identified as an orthodox Sunni Muslim of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence. This was typical of the early "Woking" converts because Kamal-ud-Din and his missionaries always downplayed the differences between Ahmadi and orthodox Islam and, in contrast to the Christian Church from which most British converts came,

44 Anon, "Notes", *IRMI* 6, 1 (1918), 4.

45 Ibid.

46 Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Kingdom of God", *IRMI* 6, 7 (1918), 279–90; Marmaduke Pickthall, "Concerning Religious Truths", *IRMI* 6, 8 (1918), 328–37.

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promoted the Mission as non-sectarian and apolitical.[47] The converts were offered a liberal, modernist Islam; they pledged their allegiance to Muhammad and all other prophets including Jesus, and converted to Islam rather than the Ahmadiyya/Ahmadiyyat. After Kamal-ud-Din's death in 1933, Pickthall wrote that he "differed from him on some matters",[48] but he had a deep respect for Kamal-ud-Din and was generally tolerant of the Lahori Ahmadiyya who ran the WMM. The only known photograph depicting Pickthall at Woking is a group portrait in which he sits next to Kamal-ud-Din and is surrounded by Lahori missionaries.[49] He was so at ease with these Muslims and trusted by Kamal-ud-Din that, when the latter left England for India due to ill-health in early 1919, Pickthall was effectively given control of the WMM. Pickthall was appointed acting imam and editor of the *Islamic Review* until Kamal-ud-Din's successor, Maulana Sadr-ud-Din (d.1981), arrived in England in the autumn.

Whilst Pickthall tolerated the liberal Lahori Ahmadis, he was critical of their rivals, the Qadiani Ahmadis, who in 1914 had broken away from the Lahoris by declaring Mirza Ghulam Ahmad a prophet and claiming that his successors would also have the gift of prophecy.[50] For Pickthall, the conservative Qadianis were too far removed from the mainstream of Islam. Most contemporaries agreed with Pickthall, though Quilliam/Léon and Sheldrake were more sympathetic to the diversity of Islam to be found on British shores and anxious to avoid the sectarianism they had found in Christianity. Sheldrake also had a troubled relationship with Kamal-ud-Din and the WMM, eventually breaking away permanently in 1926 to establish his own Western Islamic Association.[51] Quilliam/Léon became a patron of Sheldrake's new organisation. It is not clear if Pickthall was asked, and although he did not join the WIA, he remained friends with Sheldrake and, as is related below, they continued to meet in London. Meanwhile, whilst Pickthall stayed away, both Quilliam/Léon and Sheldrake visited the Qadiani mosque, which was formally opened in Southfields (south London) in 1926.[52] Conversely, Pickthall welcomed the efforts of the "London Mosque Fund" Trustees, among them his good friend from the AOS, the former Governor of Bombay Lord Lamington (1860–1940), to build

47 See Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 128–9.

48 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Correspondence", *IR* 21, 4–5 (1933), 140–1.

49 Frontispiece, *IR* 10, 2 (1922).

50 Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement: A History and Perspective* (Delhi: Manohar, 1974).

51 See Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 200–2.

52 Ibid., 140.

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"a fitting Mosque in the Metropolis of the British Empire".[53] In the 1930s, the Trustees sought patronage from Pickthall's then employer, the Nizam of Hyderabad, Asaf Jah VII (1886–1967), for the building of a mosque and religious school in the East End, to be named after the late Anglophile judge and Muslim leader, Syed Ameer Ali (1849–1928). Although he was based in India in this period, Pickthall became Hon. Secretary to the Board of Management of the "Amir Ali Mosque, London" in 1931.[54] Pickthall corresponded with the Trustees, apologising for the constant delays with decisions from Hyderabad (in fact, the donation was never given) and deeply regretting the impact it would have on the "many poor Moslems" in the deprived East End.[55] He also discussed this with Sheldrake who had visited the area (perhaps on Pickthall's behalf) in 1932 and was proposed (but not accepted, for reasons unknown) as a member of the London Mosque Fund Committee.[56]

Pickthall's temporary position as *imam* for the WMM was timely: the war had ended and he was preparing to be demobbed from the army; moreover, the pro-Turkish campaign had been a complete failure: the Ottomans had concluded an armistice with the Allies and agreed to a complete suspension of hostilities, the immediate demobilisation of the Ottoman armed forces and the occupation of any part of Turkey deemed necessary to Allied security. The capitulation of the Ottomans not only marked the end of the war in the Middle East, but also the end of the Ottoman Empire itself.[57] The fight was not over, but Pickthall threw himself into the role of WMM imam. He gave a number of authoritative talks on "The Quran" and "Worship", and delivered a series of five sermons on "The War and Religion" at the London Muslim Prayer House in early 1919. Keen to involve other converts, he encouraged Wright and Headley to deliver sermons across the year. As editor of the *Islamic Review*, Pickthall published these sermons as well as numerous other articles by converts. In spring 1919, Pickthall officiated at Friday prayers at the London Muslim Prayer

53 "London Mosque Fund Report [1931]", in *The Making of the East London Mosque, 1910–1951: Minutes of the London Mosque Fund and East London Mosque Trust Ltd*, ed. Humayun Ansari (Camden Fifth Series, Vol. 38, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press/Royal Historical Society, 2011), 144.

54 Syed Hashimi to Abdeali Shaikh Mahomedali Anik, 24 March 1931, in ibid., 152–3.

55 East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre Archive Collections [hereafter ELM&LMCAC], East London Mosque Trust Papers, ELMT/CR/0002, Marmaduke Pickthall to Abdeali Anik, 17 February 1931, 3 March 1932 and 16 June 1931; and correspondence in Ansari, *The Making of the East London Mosque*, 155–61.

56 See correspondence in ibid., 159–62.

57 See A. L. Macfie, *The End of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1923* (Harlow: Longman, 1998).

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House. A contributor to the *Islamic Review* noted that, "His sermons have been characterized as much by his great scholarship and erudition as by his skilful and masterly elucidations of the popular Quranic themes".[58] The *Islamic Review* also reported an account of the Eid al-Fitr festival at Woking in June 1919, when Pickthall was imam:

> Punctually at 11.30 the "Takbir" [(term for the Arabic phrase which translates as "God is Great")] for Eid prayers was called, and there followed a scene the thrill of which will linger for years to come in the hearts of those present. That the Imam, Mr. Pickthall, was a native Englishman imparted a wonderful inspiration to the worshippers which was manifest from their faces. Mr. Pickthall led the service in a beautiful and his characteristically devotional manner. His recitations of the verses of the Holy Al-Quran during service was extremely edifying. Prayers over, he delivered an instructive sermon bearing upon the times through which the world was passing, and held the audience entranced for over an hour. In the purity of style and loftiness of interpretation the address of the Imam was an unsurpassed effort.[59]

Typically for Pickthall, who remained committed to the Turkish cause, after his sermon, a resolution was passed urging the Allied Powers and the President of the Peace Conference at Paris to guarantee Turkish sovereignty.[60]

Pickthall was characteristically humble as acting imam in 1919, which cemented his position in the British Muslim community. He told fellow Muslims during one of his "Friday Sermons" that, "There is no reason why I should lead your prayer to-day more than any other member of this congregation, except that I possess more Arabic than some of you, and that I have been chosen to act as your Imam during the illness of a much more worthy man".[61] But he was also bold in his mission, seizing every opportunity to emphasise and expand his thoughts regarding Muslim modernisation and revival: "The course of our Jehad is clearly indicated: first for the healing, re-uniting and uplifting of the Muslim brotherhood, so as to set a great example to the world, and secondly by that means to spread Islam throughout the world".[62]

58 Anon, "Notes", *IRMI* 7, 4 (1919), 122.

59 Malik, "The Celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr at the Mosque, Woking", *IRMI* 7, 7–8 (1919), 242–3.

60 Ibid., 243.

61 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Friday Sermons", *IRMI* 7, 7–8 (1919), 297.

62 Ibid., 305.

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The Interwar Years

When Sadr-ud-Din assumed responsibility for the WMM in August 1919, Pickthall continued to visit the London Muslim Prayer House and, occasionally, Woking mosque, but he was free to concentrate on his campaigning for Turkey. Encouraged by Pickthall's leadership and freed by wartime censorship, a few more British Muslims connected with the WMM were drawn to the Turkish cause in 1919 than had been the case during the war. Pickthall had shown them that the peace negotiations involved the future of the (Ottoman) caliphate, which was integral to the *umma* and therefore deeply affected all Muslims. For its part, the British government and press sought to convince the millions of Muslims within the Empire that they were not duty-bound to owe allegiance to the Ottoman caliphate. However, following a massacre of peaceful protestors campaigning against the Raj by British soldiers in Amritsar in April 1919, the Khilafat Movement (1919–24) was established to maintain the authority of the caliph at Constantinople and Muslim control of the holy places of Islam, and also end British rule in India. In October 1919, "a large congregation" assembled at the London Muslim Prayer House on the day appointed by the All-India Muslim Conference in Lucknow the previous month, to pray for the preservation of the Ottoman sultan-caliph, or "Khalifa".[63] Chairing the subsequent meeting, Pickthall passionately argued that attempts by Christians to persuade Muslims that the caliphate should be hereditary in Muhammad's family (that is, pass to a leader more suitable from the Western point of view) were uncalled for, and "roused very angry feelings in the Muslim world [...]. The question of the Khilafat is no concern of Christians any more than it is the concern of Muslims to decide who shall be Pope of Rome. The Muslim world as a whole accepts the Ottoman Sultan as its Khalifah with enthusiasm and impassioned sympathy".[64] Encouraged by two pan-Islamists, Mushir Hussain Kidwai (1878–1937) and the Central Islamic Society President, Mirza Hashim Ispahani, Pickthall formed the "Islamic Information Bureau", to collect and circulate up-to-date, "true information about Turkey and other Muslim matters". Pickthall secured the support of Sheldrake as Assistant Secretary, and Cobbold donated a generous £50 towards publication costs for the Bureau's pro-Turkish bulletin, *Muslim Outlook*, which Pickthall edited.[65]

Notably, both during and after the war, Pickthall failed to persuade the influential Lord Headley to campaign for Turkey. Headley was a staunchly

63 See Anon, "Day of Prayer for the Sultan-Caliph", *IRMI* 7, 11 (1919), 406–8.

64 Ibid., 407.

65 TNA, FO 371/5202/E1073 (1919), "Islamic Information Bureau".

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conservative, jingoistic Briton who, though undoubtedly affected by the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, had little patience for what were seen by some in Whitehall as disloyal and treacherous activities on behalf of the Turks (Kidwai and, to a lesser extent, Pickthall were both singled out as suspects in this period).[66] Pickthall soon fell out with Kidwai, resigned from the Bureau and, as if to prove his loyalty, in December 1919 was a signatory alongside Cobbold, the respectable Aga Khan (Mohammed Shah, 1877–1957) and others of a patriotic letter to the British Prime Minister warning him of the dangers of Russia. The letter, which was reprinted in the *Islamic Review*, urged for "a policy towards Turkey that would lead to appeasement" and thereby placate Indian Muslims.[67]

Shortly after the Allies drafted their terms of peace with Turkey in February 1920, Quilliam/Léon presided over a provocative meeting of the Pan-Islamic Indian Khilafat delegation at the Woking Mosque. The head of the delegation was Mohamed Ali (1878–1931), who had helped establish the Khilafat Movement. Ali appealed for the British government to listen to its Muslim subjects who, he argued, were "devoted to the Caliph of Constantinople, and [...] all urge that the temporal power of the Caliph should not be reduced, nor should the Turkish Empire be broken into bits".[68] Pickthall strongly encouraged British Muslim cooperation with the Khilafat Movement and hosted a dinner party for the delegation.[69] His sermons continued to be published in the *Islamic Review* during 1920, and he attended Eid al-Fitr alongside Quilliam/Léon and Mohamed Ali at Woking in June 1920.[70] Writing on "Fasting in Islam" at this time, Pickthall offered some characteristically paternal advice to his fellow converts:

> I am particularly anxious that we, the little band of Muslims of pure English birth, should make a true observance of this fast. I know that it is very hard for those who have never done it to fast the whole of the appointed time in the long summer days. [...] I am speaking, of course, of those who are free agents. To those who have to work all day and journey to their work, whose life is dependent on the life of those who are not Muslim, I have no right to speak. They know what they can do. But I beg them to do all that is in their power to obey our Lord's command on this

66 See Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, Chapter 6.

67 TNA, FO 371/4154/162692 (1919), "Turkish Settlement"; "Turkey and the British Empire", *IRMI* 8, 1 (1920), 7–11.

68 Anon, "Indian Delegation at the Mosque", *IRMI* 8, 4 (1920), 139.

69 TNA, FO 371/6549/1013 (1921).

70 Fazal Karim Khan, "Eid-ul-Fitr", *IRMI* 8, 6–7 (1920), 224–7.

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> occasion, and, at any rate, to manage somehow to say the full number of their prayers each day, and to remember in their prayers the Muslim Empire.[71]

But, to the surprise of many British Muslims, by the time the article was published at the end of the year, Pickthall had left England for India. Disillusioned with the Peace Conference and desperately in need of regular paid work, he had accepted editorship of the nationalist newspaper, the *Bombay Chronicle*.

Émigré and Twilight Years

Pickthall's new job and life in India kept him extremely busy. His contributions to the *Islamic Review* inevitably declined, with just one "Friday Sermon" published in 1921. Reflecting on India and his involvement in the Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movements,[72] he argued in the sermon that: "The East was all disintegrated when the Europeans came there. It is now united. It had no general consciousness, no common conscience or public opinion. Now it has both. It was asleep, and it is now awake".[73] However, many British Muslims privately disagreed with Pickthall in relation to India. For Headley:

> the [Indian] administration has been conductive to peace and commercial prosperity. Most of the Indian Muslims with whom I am acquainted realise that without such a rule there would speedily ensue a condition of internal strife and disorder. […] Mistakes there may have been, but where, in the whole of this world of inequalities and enigmas, can we point to a condition of affairs which is independent of, or above, human error? […] At present let us be thankful that we belong to a great Empire of which we have no reason to feel in any way ashamed.[74]

Although he was absent from Britain for long spells, Pickthall was not forgotten: his old friend, Arthur Field, chose Pickthall's recently-published novel, *The Early Hours*, as the first book in a series of reviews for the *Islamic Review* in 1921.[75] Some British Muslims certainly read his novels: Cobbold had copies

71 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Fasting in Islam", *IRMI* 8, 12 (1920), 459–60.

72 See Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, Chapter 10.

73 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Conception of God in Islam", *IR* 9, 1 (1921), 15.

74 Lord Headley, "The Yoke of a Foreign Power", *The Light* 6, 12 (1927), 7.

75 Arthur Field, "Review", *IR* 9, 6–7 (1921), 262–4.

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in her library; the young convert, David/Dawud Cowan (1915–2003), devoured them in the 1930s.[76] Pickthall also kept in touch with the British Muslim community through letters to friends like Cobbold. When Pickthall made brief returns to Britain during the 1920s and 1930s, he also met with Cobbold, Sheldrake (who, after a trip to London in 1931, saw him off to India from Victoria railway station) and others, and attended WMM events in London and Woking.[77] In fact, the only surviving photograph of Pickthall at Woking referred to above was taken during a visit to England in 1922. That visit, from autumn 1921 to spring 1922, was forced by his wife's ailing physical and mental health.[78] In February 1922, he gave a "Sunday Lecture" at the London Muslim Prayer House. The February 1922 issue of the *Islamic Review* contained a portrait photograph of Pickthall as its frontispiece, and a note outlining his contribution to literature, the Mission and Islam.[79] The tribute revealed that Pickthall's wife, Muriel, and his only sibling, Rudolf, had both converted to Islam.[80] Pickthall always echoed Kamal-ud-Din in stressing that the Quran itself dictated that there was "no compulsion in religion", and it is unclear whether or not he actively converted Muriel or Rudolf. On the contrary, in relation to Muriel, according to the *Islamic Review*, "Mr. Pickthall, in the spirit of a true Muslim, refrained scrupulously from any thought of influencing his wife, and the fact that Mrs. Pickthall has now of her own free volition embraced the faith is but one of many indications of the modern trend of intelligent religious thought".[81] He certainly did, however, encourage the conversion of Anne Fremantle, who was a close family friend. Fremantle was just ten years old in 1920 when Pickthall introduced her to Islam and then Kamal-ud-Din. She repeated the *shahada*

76 William Facey and Miranda Taylor, "Introduction: From Mayfair to Mecca – The Life of Lady Evelyn Cobbold", in Lady Evelyn Cobbold, *Pilgrimage to Mecca* (London: Arabian Publishing, New Edition, 2008), 270; Author's Interview with David Cowan, London, 21 October 2002.

77 ELM&LMCAC, ELMT/CR/0002, Marmaduke Pickthall to Abdeali Anik, 17 February 1931.

78 See Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 367–72.

79 Frontispiece, and Anon, "Mr Marmaduke Pickthall", *IR* 10, 2 (1922), 42–3.

80 Little is currently known about Rudolf Pickthall. He contributed short essays and reports regularly to the *Islamic Review* between 1922 (probably the year of his conversion) and 1925. His contributions then stopped until 1933 when, writing as "R. G. Pickthall, M. A. (Oxon.), Bar-at-Law", his obituary of Kamal-ud-Din was published: R. G. Pickthall, "The Passing of a Great Man", *IR* 21, 4–5 (1933), 125–7. He was also the author of two books: Rudolf Pickthall, *The Way of the Wilderness: Poems* (London: Elliot Stock, 1901); Rudolf Pickthall, *The Comic Kingdom: Napoleon, the Last Phase but Two* (London: John Lane, 1914).

81 Anon, "Mr Marmaduke Pickthall", 42–3.

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(Islamic profession of faith) and was briefly a Muslim but, at such a young age and without family support, she soon left Islam and eventually settled on Catholicism.[82]

Pickthall contributed occasional articles to the *Islamic Review* from India until 1925, when his last, "The Essential Fact of Revelation", an essay on the authenticity and reasoning of the Quran, was published.[83] It is unsurprising that Pickthall's contributions ended at this point: after leaving the *Bombay Chronicle* in 1924, he moved to Hyderabad, where he eventually completed an English edition of the Quran and became editor of the monthly *Islamic Culture*, a scholarly journal produced under the Nizam's patronage. It was as a friend and editor that Cobbold sent him a copy of her new book, *Pilgrimage to Mecca* – an account of her 1933 *hajj* – upon its publication in 1934. Curiously, whilst Cobbold quoted from Pickthall's *The Cultural Side of Islam* (on the equality of Islam and his criticism of the system of *purdah*[84]), she did not reference his edition of the Quran, published in 1930. It is notable that, due to the nature of the surviving sources for the British Muslim community, which are generally missionary-focused, there are no documented critical responses from within to Pickthall the man or his work for Islam (his lectures, sermons, essays). One observation, not necessarily implying criticism, is that Cobbold was rare amongst the many contemporaries who wrote about Islam in the *Islamic Review* to quote Pickthall in their writings. David/Dawud Cowan, who converted at Woking in 1931 at the age of sixteen, went on to become a distinguished Arabic scholar. Reflecting on Pickthall late in life, he admitted that Pickthall's edition of the Quran was "a good translation, but all translations are faulty".[85]

Pickthall wrote to Cobbold from Hyderabad, thanking her for sending him the personally inscribed copy of *Pilgrimage to Mecca*. Although admitting that he had, "not read it all through yet, but only skimmed it", he was not uncritical: "My present, incomplete, impression is that your adventures as described here are delightful and the propaganda for Islam rather an intrusion". This criticism may appear unfair from Pickthall but, by this time (July 1934), he had had his own share of scorn from critics of his books and politics. His disdain of the "propaganda for Islam" inferred that Cobbold might have been helped or influenced by another party: "I know these people, and their way of spoiling

82 Anne Fremantle, *Three-cornered Heart* (New York: Viking Press, 1970), 197.

83 Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Essential Fact of Revelation. The Holy Qur-an: A Book for Humanity", *IR* 13, 4–5 (1925), 140–5.

84 Cobbold, *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, 68, 192.

85 Author's Interview with David Cowan, London, 21 October 2002.

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things by insisting upon missionising everywhere, in and out of season".[86] He closed by assuring Cobbold that, "I shall read the book carefully and review it in a friendly manner in my quarterly review, 'Islamic Culture'".[87] Pickthall was proven right to some extent: for example, the book received a hostile review in the *Geographical Journal* (the journal of the Royal Geographical Society), with the reviewer also taking a swipe at Pickthall: "how gaily satisfied is the author with the condition of women in Arabia! […] [T]he author quotes copiously from Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall, in an endeavor to display the advantages of Muslim marriage customs over those of the West: '…romance is an illusion, and we need never mourn the loss of an illusion…' says Mr. Pickthall with sententious superficiality".[88] Pickthall gave Cobbold one of the most generous reviews in a five-page article published in the October 1934 issue of *Islamic Culture*:[89] "There are certain false ideas about Islam which still prevail in Europe. […] [T]hese misapprehensions the delightful account […] ought to completely dispel".[90]

> [Cobbold] has given us a vivid description of the Harem […]. There follows an excellent, because sympathetic, description of the occupations of the ladies in a Meccan household of the upper class, and of various excursions. […] [S]he has […], incidentally, given a clear general idea of Islam and Muslim history; but it is the little intimate remarks in her diary which give the book such lively human interest, revealing as they do a truly Muslim spirit of goodwill toward every nation of the earth and every class of person.[91]

Pickthall returned to England in spring 1935, settling in Cornwall. In May, he went to London to "spend the day" with Cobbold, but declined to accompany

86 Private Collection, Lady Evelyn Cobbold Papers, Marmaduke Pickthall to Lady Evelyn Cobbold, 5 July 1934. It is unclear to whom Pickthall was referring: it was unlikely to be Kamal-ud-Din who had died in 1933 and whom Pickthall argued, "had a gift for summing up a train of arguments in striking form" and, "unlike much polemical writing [Kamal-ud-Din's] is not devoid of literary grace": M[armaduke]. P[ickthall]., "The Claims of Islam", *Islamic Culture* VIII (1934), 506–7.

87 Private Collection, Lady Evelyn Cobbold Papers, Marmaduke Pickthall to Lady Evelyn Cobbold, 5 July 1934.

88 E. R., Review of Lady Evelyn Cobbold's *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, *The Geographical Journal* 84, 3 (1934), 264–5.

89 M[armaduke]. P[ickthall]., "An English Lady's Pilgrimage", *Islamic Culture* VIII (1934), 674–9.

90 Ibid., 674–5.

91 Ibid., 679.

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her in the evening to a Royal Central Asian Society dinner, where the British Muslim convert, Harry St John Bridger/Abdullah Philby (1885–1960), was the speaker. As he explained in a letter to a friend, "'I asked to be excused for the present, as I do not feel prepared to 'face the music' yet'".[92] It was, however, a sign of Pickthall's stature that, when Headley died a few weeks later, the press reported that Pickthall was a favourite to succeed him as President of the British Muslim Society.[93] Whether or not he was offered the opportunity is uncertain, but he did not take up the position and, in poor health, kept a low profile until March 1936 when, almost a year after he had shunned Philby's event, gave his own lecture at the Royal Central Asian Society, on the subject of "The Muslims in the Modern World". It was a passionate talk, what Pickthall described as "a Cook's lightning tour of the field", in which he again publicly lamented the discarding of Disraeli's Pan-Islamic vision.[94] Two months later, Pickthall was dead.

It seems odd that, for such an influential and trusted figure, Pickthall's death warranted just three pages in the *Islamic Review* for August 1936.[95] This might be partly attributed to the fact that Pickthall was physically absent from Britain during most of the final fifteen years of his life. Moreover, his death followed those of other key members of the Woking community – what may be termed the "old guard" – in the early 1930s: Quilliam/Léon died in 1932, Kamal-ud-Din in 1933 and Headley in 1935. Parkinson had died in 1918 and, as we have seen, Sheldrake left the WMM in the 1920s. His other good friend, Cobbold, wrote occasional books but was not a contributor to the *Islamic Review*, and his brother, Rudolf, made his last contribution to the *Islamic Review* in 1933 (ironically, an obituary of Kamal-ud-Din).[96]

*

Alas, there appear to be no published tributes to Pickthall from British Muslim converts, but it is clear that he was considered and widely embraced within the community as a respected thinker, tutor and mentor. As E.E. Speight (a non-Muslim) wrote shortly after Pickthall's death, "He went through life as

92 Quoted in Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 264.

93 "Lord Headley's Successor", *Portsmouth Evening News* 2 October 1935, 10; "New Moslem Leader", *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette* 2 October 1935, 7.

94 Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Muslims in the Modern World", *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 23, 2 (1936), 221–35.

95 K. S. M., "In Memoriam: The Late Maulvi Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall", *IR* 24, 8 (1936), 298–300.

96 Pickthall, "The Passing of a Great Man".

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a teacher of the rarest and most memorable type, a radiating personality who magnetically drew to himself as to a fountain-head of the truest, most helpful religion, all sorts and conditions of hearts and minds needing guidance in perplexity, consolation in the darkness of doubt, or solace in self-abasement".[97] Pickthall was humane and modest, and admitted his own personal weaknesses (he famously struggled to quit smoking during Ramadan[98]). He was and remains central to the history of British Islam. It is appropriate that Pickthall's body was interred close to two other leading figures of early British Islam – Quilliam and Lord Headley – in the Muslim burial ground at Brookwood Cemetery, near Woking.

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97 Speight, "Marmaduke Pickthall", iv.

98 Fremantle, *Three-cornered Heart*, 196.

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CHAPTER 3

Abdullah Quilliam (Henri De Léon) and Marmaduke Pickthall: Agreements and Disagreements between Two Prominent Muslims in the London and Woking Communities

Ron Geaves

Abdullah Quilliam (1856–1932) joined the London and Woking community of Muslims as Henri de Léon after his return to England before the outbreak of the First World War. There he became a significant figure along with Marmaduke Pickthall and Lord Headley. As a long term supporter of the Ottoman Caliphate, it was inevitable that he would come into contact with Pickthall through their respective support of the Khilafat movement, membership of the Anglo-Ottoman Society, and their sympathy with reforming/modernist tendencies in the Muslim world. However, there were significant differences in their views on Turkey and the Young Turk movement and on Islamic reform. The article will focus on these similarities and differences and the tensions caused by the First World War and the Ottoman alliance with Germany.

Abdullah Quilliam and Marmaduke Pickthall (1875–1936) are arguably the most significant British Muslim converts of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, both continuing to have an impact on the contemporary Muslim scene. William Henry Abdullah Quilliam had converted to Islam in 1887 after visiting Morocco. A well-known Liverpool solicitor, he formally announced his conversion in the Liverpool media in 1888 and changed his name to Abdullah. The Liverpool Muslim Institute and British Muslim Association, which he founded to promote Islam in Britain, opened in September 1887 in the city and are certainly the first Muslim organisations formed with the purpose of Islamic *da'wa* in the Western world.

Abdullah Quilliam was a *tour de force* in the annals of British Muslim history. His family origins might seem to make him an unlikely convert to Islam in the late nineteenth-century. His ancestors had fought with Nelson at Trafalgar and his parentage was closely linked to Methodism, especially the Temperance movement. His parents were Robert Quilliam, a successful watchmaker in the city, and Harriet Quilliam, née Burrows, the daughter of John Burrows,

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a Liverpudlian physician and lay Methodist preacher. Quilliam was educated at the Liverpool Institute and in 1872 at the age of seventeen he left school to work in a lawyer's office, funding his way through to qualify as a solicitor by working as a satirical journalist until 1884 for the well-known *Porcupine* magazine, feared by the rich and successful in Liverpool with skeletons in their cupboards. He had also become a well-known figure in Temperance circles, frequently lecturing on the social and moral ills of alcohol across North-West England. In addition he developed a reputation as a formidable defence lawyer, representing the accused in a number of high profile murder cases.[1]

Abdullah Quilliam's interest in social justice extended beyond his temperance activities and legal work, he was also a campaigner against capital punishment, a supporter of Negro rights in the USA, a political lobbyist against the Alien and Migration Acts and one of Britain's early trade unionists.[2] However, his burning zeal to support the temperance movement, his theological shifting from Trinitarianism to Unitarianism,[3] his knowledge of current Biblical scholarship and its critique of the origins of the Old and New Testament, combined with a keen interest in Geology,[4] all provided a genuine search beyond the confines of Christianity to satisfy his need for a monotheistic faith. Quilliam sought for an ideology that would provide an ally to his passion for social justice and his concerns for the inequalities that existed in late Victorian society. Above all, Islam would not only satisfy his spiritual concerns, but also provide, in his mind, at least, an anti-discriminatory religion.

Abdullah Quilliam's achievements between 1888 and 1908 on behalf of his new-found faith were formidable, especially in the context of the changing attitudes towards both Islam and the Ottoman Empire, in the same period. In October 1896 The *Sunday Telegraph* reported that he had successfully converted one hundred and eighty-two English men and women to Islam and had

1 October 1873 was articled to William Radcliffe of the firm William Radcliffe and Smith of 12 Sweeting Street, Liverpool. In November 1878 he passed his final examinations and was admitted as a solicitor in December and commenced work for himself at the premises on 28 Church Street in Liverpool.

2 At various times Quilliam was solicitor to the Lancashire Sea Fishery Board and several trade unions including the Mersey Railway Quay and Carters Union, The Operative Bakers Union and the Upholsterers and Coppersmiths Societies. In 1897 Quilliam was appointed President of the 8,000 strong Mersey Railway Quay and Carters Union, on the resignation of the previous president, Sir John Houlding JP who had been elected as the first Lord Mayor of Liverpool. He was to hold this post until 1908. (See *The Crescent,* November 17, 253, 1893).

3 Ron Geaves, *Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam* (Leicester: Kube Press, 2019),49.

4 Geaves, *Islam in Victorian*, 23, 36, 126.

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established a mosque, a Muslim school and an orphanage in the city.[5] By 1893 he had attracted the attention of the Sultan of the Ottomans, Abdul Hamid II, the titular Caliph of the Sunni Muslim world, and the Amir of Afghanistan. The former was to award Abdullah Quilliam the title of Sheikh al-Islam of the British Isles and the latter donated £2300 for the purchase of the mosque premises consisting of a boys' and a girls' day school, facilities for evening classes, a Literary Society, Oriental Library and Museum, a boarding house for visiting Muslims, an orphanage and a printing works. It is estimated that by 1908 when he left Liverpool to reside in Istanbul he had converted over two hundred and fifty native-born English men and women to Islam. Perhaps more significantly he had attracted to Islam a number of prominent personalities who were to play major roles in the establishment of the London Muslim community in the early decades of the twentieth century.

The Muslim community in Liverpool was more than a group of English middle-class converts. The renown of the British lawyer and his mosque in Liverpool had gone out to the Muslim world.[6] At the time, Liverpool was the second city of the Empire and the gateway through which most Muslims arrived in the country. The new railway linked the city to Manchester and to the rest of the nation. Wealthy upper-class Muslims had already developed their own version of a world tour and arrived in Liverpool on the steamships. They would use the city as a place of transit to visit London, Europe and even the USA. Many had heard of the mosque in the city and visited, often staying as a guest in Quilliam's villa, from where they would attend *jum'a* prayers on Friday, sometimes even giving lectures on various aspects of Islam or Muslim culture and history.

The steamships did not only bring the wealthy to the shores of England. The Lascars (Asian seamen) were often in dire straits, stranded in Britain's ports as they waited to contract a journey home. Abdullah Quilliam became their

5 Ibid., 4; *The Sunday Telegraph*, 29th October 1896.

6 Quilliam's recognition in the Muslim world acknowledged his efforts to establish Islam in Britain. The Shah of Persia requested to meet the "English Muslim" and congratulated him on his conversion, giving him a gold pin in the shape of a bird's nest, the eggs made of pearls. In 1888, he had already been preaching Islam and had secured a few converts. In 1889 he wrote *The Faith of Islam* which went to three editions and thirteen translations. In 1890 he was invited to visit Constantinople by the Sultan of Turkey and given hospitality at the Palace of Yildiz for over a month and pressed to accept decorations and honours but declined. In 1891 he was appointed Sheikh ul-Islam of Great Britain by the Sultan of Turkey and the Amir of Afghanistan. In 1893 he visited Spain and Morocco for the second time, where he was awarded the title of *alim* by the University of Fez. He stayed in Africa for several months, visiting the Canaries, Senegambia, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Gold Coast and Lagos. In Sierra Leone he opened a mosque on behalf of the Sultan who could not attend himself.

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champion, accommodating them in the mosque when they were homeless, attending them in hospital when they were ill with fevers contracted at sea or offering them a full Muslim funeral with appropriate rites when their cause was hopeless.[7] In addition to funerals the Sheikh was pilloried in the British media for his willingness to carry out weddings in the mosque between English women and Muslim men. Quilliam was also known to Muslim students studying in Edinburgh, Oxford and Cambridge. They visited him and he helped Cambridge Muslim students to establish the first Islamic Society in Britain.[8]

Through his activities Quilliam was able to bring together the various constituents of the nineteenth-century Muslim presence in Britain and draw upon the resources of the mosque in Liverpool to create a hub around which these often itinerant Muslim presences could cohere. But he also effectively utilized the possibility of the global reach brought about by the Victorian communications revolution to network and assist fledgling Muslim communities trying to establish themselves in Canada, USA, Australia, and South Africa.

Marmaduke Pickthall declared his conversion to Islam after a lecture on "Islam and Progress" delivered on the 29th November 1917, to the Muslim Literary Society in Notting Hill, West London.[9] Similar to Abdullah Quilliam, his background was Christian, but Pickthall was High Church Anglican, his father a Priest, whereas Quilliam's heritage was non-conformist. The madness of the First World War seemed to have fueled Pickthall's loss of faith but there is no doubt that his interests in the East began earlier. His parents had groomed him for Foreign Office service and on his failure to secure a position sought a backdoor entry through the Consular Service, hoping that learning the language and customs of the Levant region would prevail. He departed for Egypt in 1894, on route to Palestine and his diaries would demonstrate a young man already enamored with the exoticism of the East rather than the possibility of employment. He writes that on arrival in Cairo, "the European ceased to interest me".[10] Like Quilliam, his introduction to Muslim culture and Islam would develop in the territories of the Ottomans. In Egypt he travelled alone avoiding Europeans and then went on to learn Arabic in Palestine, accompanied by an Arab servant, with whom he took the opportunity to plunge himself into local life. His writings on this period of his life, reveal his disillusionment with European society, especially Christian exclusivism combined together

7 Geaves, *Islam in Victorian*, 71, 152ff.

8 Ibid., 101.

9 Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (London: Quartet), 38.

10 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters: Palestine and Syria* (*1894-5-6*) (London: Collins, 1918), 2.

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the British sense of superiority over the "native". In this regard he also shared with his fellow convert a powerful antipathy to the inequality and snobbery of Victorian society. In 1895 he was already considering converting to Islam but was dissuaded by the Sheikh al-'ulama in Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. He returned to England where he picked up his previous life, but longing to return East. The period until the outbreak of the First World War reveals a remarkable degree of parallel activity to Abdullah Quilliam, already converted and leading Britain's Muslim community until 1908.

Like the Sheikh al-Islam of Great Britain, Marmaduke Pickthall was also a convinced Turkophile who had fallen under the spell of the Ottoman civilisation and who believed that Turkey was the hope for the Muslim world to enter a new flowering of its civilization through education, social reform and improving the position of women in society.[11]

Parallel Developments

Even prior to his conversion in 1917 Pickthall's contact with the Muslim world in the Near East for nearly a quarter of a century would lead to his positioning himself against a number of key political decisions by the British government in regard to relations with the Ottoman Empire. Key to understanding the overarching political view of both Pickthall and Quilliam is the change in policy of the British government since its pledge made in 1878 in Berlin to guarantee the independence of the Ottoman Empire. Quilliam considered that Britain required a strong alliance with the Ottomans as a bulwark against Russian expansion,[12] and that in Abdul Hamid II (1876–1909), the empire was ruled by an enlightened reformer that needed British support. However, since the Crimean War fought from 1854–1856, when British interests had led to defending the Ottomans against Russia, the position had politically transformed. Britain would become increasingly cool towards the Ottomans as the twentieth century entered its first decade. Quilliam recognized the shift and railed against a number of British ministers even going so far in 1905 as to issue a *fatwa* against

11 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 26–8.

12 This position had been maintained since 1774. British foreign policy feared Russian expansionism. The attitude of the British and Russians towards the Ottoman Empire were diametrically opposed. The British sought to maintain the Empire whereas the Russians sought its disintegration and argued that it was decadent. See A.J. Marcham, *Foreign Policy: Examining the Evidence in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Methuen Educational, 1973), 107.

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Prime Minister Balfour and Foreign Secretary Lord Landsdowne for sending warships to participate in manouevres against the Ottomans.[13] During the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, the Balkan League of Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia fought to gain independence from the Ottoman Empire – horrified to hear reports of Balkan atrocities in their hostilities with the Porte. Pickthall visited Constantinople in 1913 to verify the number of Turkish victims. He was alarmed to note the difference between the British media and German coverage of the same incidents. The position of the British media was clear, the Turks were barbaric aggressors and there was no coverage of any Balkan atrocities.[14] Pickthall wrote home to his wife "how can anyone imagine the Turks to be fanatical";[15] after four months he returned to England determined to prevent the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, arguing that Germany would take political advantage if the British cooled towards the Turkish.[16]

Quilliam agreed and was equally enraged at the coverage of the British press but his problems with relations between Britain and Turkey began fifteen years earlier. The first test of the Sheikh's allegiances occurred when the Armenian disturbances initiated a series of acts of rebellion against the Ottoman Empire. As early as 1893, he wrote an editorial which commented on the trial of Armenian rebels for high treason at Marsovan and Caesarea.[17] Quilliam showed surprise that the British newspapers considered the Armenian rebels to be legitimate simply because they were Christian, and asked whether they would have accepted the right of Turkey to interfere with British Muslim subjects in India. Quilliam took up an aggressive response to the position of the British media, with its reports of Muslim atrocities against brave Armenian attempts to free themselves from the imperial yoke. His strategy of resistance to the media's coverage was twofold. Firstly, he held to a position

13 Geaves, *Islam in Victorian*, 103–4.

14 Marmaduke Pickthall, *With the Turk in Wartime* (London: Dent, 1914), ix.

15 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Pickthall, Letters from Turkey", *Islamic Culture* XI, 420.

16 See Jamie, Gilham, *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam 1850–1950* (London: Hurst, 2014), 151–52.

17 *The New York Times* of 17 April 1893 published a report written by H.E. Newberry, Secretary of the United States Legation in Constantinople, in which he investigated the recent reports of the persecution of Christians by Mahommedans and the burning of the Marsovan College. It is interesting to read that American opinion was more in line with Quilliam and noted that incendiary and seditious notices had been placed on the door of the college by Armenian agitators, some of whom were carrying dynamite. Newberry considered that the Turkish authorities handled the matter as well as could be expected and released many of those arrested. This was very different to the reaction in the British media.

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that the predominantly Christian state of Armenia was a legitimate part of the multi-religious Ottoman state and that Britain would be outraged if any one of her dominions attempted to break away because their religion was different, however just the cause. Secondly, he went out to attack Christians who were supporting the Armenian complaints against Ottoman rule by pointing out that this involved a strong element of hypocrisy if the Christians were pointing their fingers at anyone else when their own house was far from clean. In his defence of the Turkish people there are parallels with Pickthall's position cited above.

By 1901 the war between Turkey and Bulgaria had resulted in the European powers including Britain becoming embroiled in the various rebellions taking place in the Balkans against the authority of the Ottoman Empire, and Quilliam would use all of his resources to defend the Caliph and pleaded with the British government to support the ailing Ottoman Empire. However, the campaign to defend the Ottomans would be viewed as treason by many in Britain, and even as early as January 1903 Quilliam was becoming aware of the tensions between his dual loyalties to Islam and to his nation of birth. Shortly after expressing his frustrations in *The Crescent*, his speech defending Islam and the Ottoman position in Macedonia was published as *The Trouble in the Balkans*.[18] In the same year the Bishop of Liverpool delivered a sermon defending the rights of Christians in Macedonia to break free of the Muslim yoke that had been placed around them by Ottoman rule.[19] In late October, Quilliam publicly refuted the Bishop at a meeting in the Town Hall and defended the religion of Islam and its cultural/political manifestations in the Ottoman Empire.[20] His defence of Islam was picked up and reported worldwide, with many newspapers printing extracts of Quilliam's speech.

In May 1906, the mosque in Liverpool celebrated the birthday of the Prophet and Quilliam used the occasion to deliver a significant lecture on the relationship between Britain and Turkey. He accused the British Government of abandoning their traditional friendship with the Sultan and argued that this constituted a betrayal of trust.[21] The full text of this speech was sent to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the King. The Liverpool media reported and reprinted extracts of the speech extensively. The national press

18 *The Crescent* [hereafter *TC*] 590, 4 May 1904.

19 *TC* 562, 21 October 1903.

20 *TC* 563, 28 October 1903.

21 *TC* 695, 9 May 1906.

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were disparaging, accusing Quilliam of being a one-man band in support of the "great assassin".[22]

This enraged Quilliam, and he spent a lot of his energy as a writer defending his beloved Ottoman civilisation and trying to explain the hypocrisy inherent in the Western European position, pointing out that in no circumstances would they have allowed breakaway movements from their respective empires. Quilliam's view would remain consistent until the events of the World War that began in 1914 rendered his position impossible. He perceived Britain's policy of siding with rebellions in the Balkans and Armenia as a Christian conspiracy against Islam aimed at breaking up the Ottoman Empire. He accurately foresaw that such a policy would eventually send the Ottomans into the arms of Germany in search of a powerful European ally. For Quilliam, the ultimate beneficiary of such a policy would be Russia.

As with Pickthall, Quilliam visited the region but his relations with the Porte were much closer. He was a confidante of the Sultan and a recipient of Ottoman honours. In addition his relations with Abdul Hamid II went beyond respect for a reformist ruler, as Quilliam fervently believed in the Ottoman caliphate to be the legitimate successors of the Sunni caliphate founded after the death of Muhammad. In 1905 he was summoned to Constantinople and was dispatched by the Sultan on an important fact-finding mission to the Balkans. This time he was accompanied by his eldest son and Major Nuruddin Ibrahim Bey, an aide de camp to the Sultan.[23] *The Crescent* announced that the Sultan had sent the Sheikh on a fact-finding mission to obtain an independent and reliable report of the conditions in Eastern Roumelia, but secrecy was being maintained as to the exact nature of the mission, which had been revealed to Quilliam after a prolonged meeting with the Sultan on the 24th February.[24]

Whatever the true purpose of the expedition, Quilliam would provide detailed accounts of his travels that were reported in *The Crescent* throughout March until his return to Liverpool on the 24th April. From the precise travelogue it is possible to ascertain that the Sheikh's mission was to enquire about the exact nature of the insurgencies in the region and especially the degree of Bulgarian involvement. One unlooked for side effect of the Sheikh's activities in the region was the banning of *The Crescent* in Bulgaria.[25]

22 *Daily Mirror*, 9 May 1906.

23 *The Journal de Salonique*, 25th February 1905.

24 *TC* 634, 8 March 1905.

25 The news of the ban was reported in *The Liverpool Courier*, 7 June 1905, and in *The Daily Mail* on 8 June 1905. It was also reported in *The Hellenium*, which was published in Paris, and the *Bulletin D'Orient*, which was published in Athens.

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Quilliam would often refer to the millet system in the Ottoman Empire as being the prime example of Muslim universalism and tolerance carried out in state policy and organisation. Pickthall would appear to be referring to this tolerance when he writes in a letter to his wife, "there I was this morning with my guide, a native Christian, visiting their most holy sanctuaries and shrines, and crowds of soldiers everywhere also sightseeing, everyone received with smiles and nice remarks".[26] We hear similar outrage expressed in his views towards Christian responses to the insurgencies to that of Quilliam's defence of the Ottomans and anti-Christian rhetoric. Fremantle in her biography describes Pickthall's situation at the church which he attended in Sussex and the attitudes that he encountered:

> In the little Sussex church where [he] worshipped, the Bulgarian advance was compared with that of Christian souls assailing Paradise, the Turks as Satan. Remembering turbans set low to cover scars where ears had been, remembering the full horror of the Carnegie Commission's (1914) report on Muslim areas devastated and their populations destroyed entirely by Christian men, Marmaduke felt unable to rise when Wesley's hymn was sung.[27]

Potential Differences

It is possible to argue that Abdullah Quilliam's loyalty to the Ottoman Empire was first and foremost religious whereas Pickthall's, at least until his conversion, was cultural. In Quilliam's reading of Muslim history, the only legitimate successors of the caliphate were the Ottoman sultans and all true Sunni Muslims owed allegiance to Abdul Hamid, the Sultan, as the current Caliph of Islam. To represent and serve the caliph was not only an honour, but a duty beholden upon all Sunni Muslims. He was always clear that his personal loyalty to the Sultan had nothing to do with fealty to the Turkish Empire, but was an aspect of being a true Muslim.[28] For Abdullah Quilliam, there was only one way to achieve this unity of the Muslim world, which was for all Sunni Muslims to come together and profess loyalty to the successors of the historic caliphate that had been established after the death of the Prophet.

26 Pickthall, *Letters.*

27 Anne Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy* (London: Hutchinson, 1938), 227.

28 Geaves, *Islam in Victorian,* 207.

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Thus Quilliam's version of pan-Islamism differed radically from that expressed by the rising tide of Arab nationalists, who were seeking separation from the Ottoman yoke. This resulted in a twentieth-century version of Pan-Arabism, which argued that the fortunes of the Arab world would be better served by an Arab alliance that modified the ultra-nationalist creed of loyalty to the *watan* (nation-state) and sought closer ties and even unions. However, the development of Arab nationalism and the subsequent creation of Middle Eastern nation states arose alongside the Ottoman decline and British political and military intervention during the First World War. Quilliam's version of pro-Ottoman Pan-Islamism was increasingly divorced from the move towards nationalism in Pan-Arabism. Pickthall's lack of personal religious allegiance to the Sunni caliph permitted him to have sympathies for the Pan-Arabists' Turkish equivalents, the Young Turks. Both these groups of nationalist reformers were anathema to Quilliam, as they sought the break-up of the Ottoman Empire.

Although Turkish nationalism was one of the last to appear in the troubled Ottoman Empire of the late nineteenth century, its impact on the survival of the last Muslim empire and the Sunni caliphate was emphatic. In the same year that Quilliam and his eldest son left Liverpool to take up residence in Constantinople as guests of the Sultan, the Young Turks took part in a revolution that was potentially threatening to the Ottoman caliphate. In July 1908, Sultan Abdul Hamid II, who was destined to become the last caliph with any real power, was forced to restore a constitutional form of government that had first been adopted in 1876 and then suspended in 1878. In 1909, one year after Quilliam's arrival, his beloved Sultan was forced to abdicate, and between 1908 and 1913 the Ottoman state lost most of its European territories. On 17th November 1922, the last Ottoman sultan was forced into exile and, on 29th October 1923, the caliphate was officially abolished by the new Turkish state under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Both Pickthall and Quilliam would, however, have been at ease with the convictions expressed in Quilliam's words in *The Crescent* written in 1898,

> Our excellent Caliph ascended the throne during turbulent times when the Christians of Bosnia and Herzegovina, forgetting the tolerance extended to them by their magnanimous rulers, openly rebelled and murdered many innocent, law-abiding Muslims. In 1876 Serbia declared war against the Porte, Prince Nikita declared holy war on the Turks in front of an assembled Montenegrin army.[29]

29 *TC* 295, 7 September 1898.

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The situation would be very different in 1912. The first sign of difference between the two can be discerned in an article for the journal *Nineteenth Century and After*, when Pickthall argued that Turkish massacres of Christian subjects of the Empire were the fault of Abdul Hamid II, a sultan whom the Turks had correctly deposed. "Muslims of a better sort are not bloodthirsty", he claimed.[30] The article appeared shortly before his fact finding mission to Turkey in 1913. Once in Turkey he became deeply impressed by the reforming zeal of the Young Turks and considered Turkey to be the closest Muslim nation to the European mindset, writing on his return that "Turkey, a close country with Europe, was the head of the progressive movement in the East".[31] Although Quilliam would be inclined to accept this sentiment, it has to be remembered that he had witnessed first-hand the overthrow of the Ottoman caliph by the revolutionary Young Turks, and as a result returned to Britain. For Quilliam, Turkey was the "closest Muslim nation to the European mindset" only because it was led by a great reforming caliph.

Quilliam's return to Britain resulted in a major transformation in his life. No longer able to claim leadership of British Muslims, his position as Sheikh al-Islam of Great Britain undermined by the overthrow of the Caliph and his own disgrace in Liverpool,[32] he was to establish himself in London with a new identity as Henri de Léon. His main activity was to establish the Société Internationale de Philologie, Sciences et Beaux-Arts[33] but he remained active in the cause of Islam amidst the Muslims of London and Woking who had formed

30 Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Outlook in the Near East: for El Islam". *Nineteenth Century and After,* 72, 430 (1912), 1145.

31 Pickthall, *With the Turk*, 155.

32 Quilliam was consistently to argue that he became Henri de Léon because of a strange clause in the will of his third wife. However, it is far more likely that he remained afraid of negative media coverage and subsequent disgrace arising from a divorce case in which he was prosecuted and debarred from the Law Society in 1908 (see Geaves, *Islam in Victorian*, 254ff).

33 The Société was formed by De Léon/Quilliam in London to offer him the opportunity to rebuild his identity as a philologist, writing on aspects of Persian culture and Manx studies, in addition to Philology. The society may have existed since 1902 when Quilliam had announced a connect ion between his Muslim boys' school and the International Society of Philology, Science and the Arts. The society provided De Léon with a means to build his reputation as a man of letters and polymath. The main vehicle to promote the society and publish articles was *The Philomath*, edited by de Léon and Edith Miriam De Léon (see Geaves, *Islam in Victorian*, 268; Gilham, *Loyal*, 78–9).

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the Woking Muslim Mission (WMM). In 1914 he joined the newly created Anglo-Ottoman Society, and organization established to promote Turkey, the Ottoman Empire and the caliphate. Quilliam and Pickthall were both prime movers in the establishment of the society, helping to create the Ottoman Committee in 1912. Each was to hold high office in the Anglo-Ottoman Society, functioning either as President, Vice-President or Secretary, presumably united with each other in the aim to "maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire" and to promote "cordial understanding between Britain and Turkey".[34] The AOS called for "a European defence of Turkey"[35] seeking to promote the old Disraeli-inspired foreign policy of forty years before that argued that Britain's interests lay in protecting the Ottoman Empire as a bulwark against Russian expansion.

The First World War

However, it was all to no avail. British coldness towards the Ottomans had resulted in Turkey drawing much closer to Germany. Although both men could argue that the British needed to cultivate the Turks to prevent this happening, by 1914 with the declaration of war it was too late. During the war years it became much harder for British Muslims to defend the Turks or the Ottomans without risking the attention of the security forces or accusations of betrayal from the media. To "go Turk" had been a euphemism since the seventeenth century for conversion to Islam, associating the act of becoming Muslim with offering allegiance to another rival power. As pointed out by Nabil Matar, even in the seventeenth century the act of conversion was linked to a renunciation of all that defined "Englishness" as well as an affront to Protestantism.[36] During the period of the war when Turkey allied to Germany, there was a real risk of accusations of treachery and public disapprobation. In some ways, the shift of attention from Liverpool to Woking spared the British converts from the worst of public disapproval. Whereas Quilliam's community in Liverpool had looked towards the Ottomans, especially the caliph, as the spiritual leadership

34 *The Near East* 6, 142 (1914), 391.

35 Ibid., 475.

36 Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 66–7, 71. Matar is referring to the repatriation of converts from the Ottoman Empire between 1670–1734.

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of Sunni Islam, the missionaries at Woking were from India, with a new centre and focus in Lahore[37] and consequently the ties to Turkey were much less.[38]

Yet both Pickthall and Quilliam/De Léon had strong allegiances to the Ottomans forged in the former through travel and personal experiences, and in the latter through spiritual loyalty to a caliphate. In January 1914, Pickthall created the Anglo-Ottoman Society to promote the values of the Ottomans and to lobby on behalf of Turkey. Not surprisingly the name of Henri De Léon appears as the Vice-President until the outbreak of hostilities in November 2014 when he resigned. As pointed out it was easier for Quilliam to divorce himself from loyalty to the Ottoman cause, as his main allegiance was to the Caliph overthrown in 1909 by the Young Turk revolution. His version of Pan-Islamism was closely linked to the idea of a united Sunni caliphate under the spiritual authority of the Ottoman caliph, whereas Pickthall's version was fixated on the Young Turks as reformers of the Muslim *umma*. As a consequence Quilliam/De Léon passed the war years in relative quiet even offering his services to the British intelligence services in the war effort. In some ways, Quilliam was being true to the principle that Muslims should be loyal to the nation of their birth, however his stance might be seen as a compromise on his position that Muslims should put faith over any other loyalty.[39] Quilliam's position can be best summarized in

37 The Ahmadiyya missionaries were the first foreign Muslims to participate in *da'wa* on behalf of Islam in the West. Khwaja Kamal ud-Din, one of the early followers of the Movement had arrived in London in October 1912 on legal business, but began to actively promote Islam at Woking Mosque from August 1913. Chaudrey Muhammad Sayal was the first missionary to be sent for the express purpose of propagating Islam and the unorthodox teachings of the Ahmadiyya Movement. He was active in assisting Kamal ud-Din until he continued alone helping found the London Mosque in 1924.

38 South Asian Muslims in Britain were not totally unsympathetic to the Ottoman dilemma during the war. Both the Central Islamic Society and the Islamic Information Bureau organised meetings and wrote articles defending the Ottoman position (see Gilham, *Loyal*, 124, 227–28).

39 Gilham, *Loyal*, 81. Quilliam advocated a number of positions in his fatwa that could be perceived as subversive. In his first fatwas issued to the Muslim world he condemned the British expeditionary force in Sudan and reminded Egyptian Muslim troops fighting for the British in Sudan that it was forbidden to engage fellow Muslims in battle on behalf of a non-Muslim power (see Geaves, 173). After the Battle of Omdurman and the massacre of the Sudanese dervishes by British troops he was even more uncompromising. He called upon Muslims worldwide to shun contact with non-Muslims and quoted Al-Imran's command that Muslims should shun contact with non-Muslims (see Geaves, 184). In 1896 he called for all Muslims to unite under the banner of pan-Islamism (as expressed through loyalty to the Caliph) and subject their national identities to the wider Muslim community. He accused the European powers of trying to colonise all Muslim powers

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the words of letter he sent to Arthur Field, the Secretary of the Anglo-Ottoman Society in 1914 offering up his resignation as vice-president.

> No-one in the Society loves Turkey and the Turks more than I do, and I would do anything in my power to promote by legitimate means the welfare of the Ottoman Empire, but at this juncture, I am convinced that a most terrible error has been committed by those who have control of the destinies of Turkey.[40]

Quilliam is unequivocally blaming the Young Turks for the decision to side with Germany and goes on to state that "a few foolish, young and headstrong men" have dragged a "noble race" into an "indiscreet action". His language clearly demonstrates his position. He places the blame on "extreme members of the Committee of Union and Progress who have delivered themselves over, body, heart and soul, to Germany". He sees this as a strategic mistake that will "effectively pave the way for the utter ruin and down fall of the Ottoman Empire". As a consequence he feels that he should do nothing that adds "to Britain's troubles".

As far as is known, the British intelligence services declined Quilliam's assistance, probably mistrusting his membership of various Muslim organisations which he shared with other more firebrand figures.[41] He remained true to his word, only returning to membership of the Anglo-Ottoman Society after the war in 1919, once again preaching his long term belief that it lay in Britain's long term strategic interests to preserve the Ottoman Empire. Needless to say, this commitment was linked to the maintenance of the Ottoman Sunni caliphate. His loyalty to the caliphate made him the natural choice to chair the speech made by Mohamed Ali (1878–1931), one of the founders of the Indian Khilafat Movement, at Woking mosque in 1920. The delegation was invited to address British Muslims on what was considered to be the unjust terms inflicted by

(see Geaves, 215–16). Quilliam's position was complex and expressed a dual loyalty to Islam and nation. However, his loyalty to the Caliph and the Ottomans would sometimes bring him into direct conflict national interests as perceived by various Government policies.

40 De Léon to Field 5 November 1914. For the full text see Gilham, *Loyal*, 82.

41 At various times both Quilliam and Pickthall would share platforms or prominent roles in organisations with Mushir Hussain Kidwai, Dusé Mohamed Ali and Mirza Hashim Ispahani. Kidwai and Ali were both active in condemning British imperialism in Africa and Asia. They were involved with various Turcophile organisations that organized activists to promote pan Islamism or encourage nascent nationalisms in Turkey, the Middle East and India (see Gilham, 217).

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the Allies on the defeated Turks in February 1920.[42] The speech was considered to be provocative, especially in lieu of the Khilafat Movement's campaigning for the independence of India. The following year Quilliam/De Léon was once again active in arguing that Britain should return to its 1918 pledge not to compromise Turkey's integrity as part of a delegation that called itself "English Friends of Turkey" at the Near Eastern Conference in London.[43] Shortly after, it was all over. Quilliams' support for the Ottomans would end in disillusionment with the abolition of the Ottoman sultanate by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) in 1922. It was untenable for such a staunch supporter of the caliphate to accept the secular Turkish republic.

Pickthall's position during the war was far more ridden with strife caused through antagonizing various British agencies. He wrote in November 1913, "We are defending an unpopular cause. We have had to fear, and have encountered, public ridicule and private abuse".[44] Not only did Pickthall not have Quilliam's reasons for taking a back seat and pledging his cause to the British, but he was also regarded as the main voice of dissent regarding British foreign policy towards the Turks. Pickthall's version of Pan-Islamism supported the idea of reform and modernization of Muslim nation states. He would consistently argue for a reversal of British foreign policy, arguing as did Quilliam, that it was the change in policy that had forced the Turks to ally with Germany. Pickthall propositioned the foreign office and other government agencies to treat Turkey as a special case, seeking an independent peace agreement during the war years. There were voices in the political establishment that regarded him as disloyal and even a threat to national security. As Pickthall approached the year of his conversion his Pan-Islamism became more pronounced. Albeit, he remained, like Quilliam a patriotic Englishman, even seeking a government intelligence post early on the war. The post was offered instead to T.E. Lawrence.[45] As the war progressed Pickthall realized that his chances of employment were very slim. The final straw came in summer 1916 when he requested permission to visit Switzerland to meet with Felix Valyi, an influential figure in Turkish circles.[46] The meeting was to discuss openings for peace with the Turks, but

42 See http://www.wokingmuslim.org/pers/khilafat.htm.

43 *Islamic News*, 23, 7 April 1921, 4.

44 *Near East*, 6:133 (1913), p75.

45 Apparently Pickthall was almost recruited for MO4, a British intelligence branch by its leader, Colonel Headley, who wanted him to work in Cairo. He was rejected because of his views on Turkey. (see Gilham, Loyal, 223).

46 Felix Valyi was the editor of *La Revue Politique Internationale* based in Switzerland. The journal was banned in Britain (see Gilham, *Loyal*, 123–25).

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the British government had no faith in his abilities as a peace negotiator and refused the application. After the war he became involved with the various efforts by prominent British Muslims to argue and campaign for a just treaty for the Turks.

Unfortunately Pickthall allied himself with Mushir Hussain Kidwai, Dusé Mohamed Ali and Mirza Hashim Ispahani in the formation of the Islamic Information Bureau whose aim was to provide "true information about Turkey and other Muslim matters". Although supported by other prominent British converts, including Quilliam, the Government and the security forces were more concerned with the more extreme political views of the three Asian Muslims mentioned above. The group was to become known as the "Woking Gang". They were placed under surveillance and Kidwai was described as "the most dangerous of the Woking Mosque gang, a body which includes such agitators as Marmaduke Pickthall and Arthur Field and is in communication with all the most dangerous conspirators in this country and abroad".[47] The constant reference to being branded a traitor, anti-British, and linked to conspiracy, and the consequent inability to find employment would finally disillusion Pickthall and in September 1920 he left for India to take the editorship of the nationalist Indian newspaper, the *Bombay Chronicle*, in which role he proved a fervent supporter of the Kilafatist cause and Indian independence. He returned to Britain shortly before his death in 1936. Once again he would find himself at odds with Quilliam who remained a strong supporter of the British Empire in India.

Conclusion

The differences between Pickthall and Quilliam, in spite of their considerable similarities, not least their strong allegiance to the Turkish-Ottoman cause, their shared belonging to a religion that aroused antipathy and suspicion in Britain, their mutual commitment to the Woking/London Muslim communities and their status as eminent members of a small band of converts, demonstrate the difficulties of such allegiance to Islam and resonate to the present period. The positions taken up by the two prominent Muslim converts highlight the complexity of allegiance to Islam during periods when the nation was involved in major conflict with Muslim powers. The confusion of religious identity and political allegiance dates back to the period when converting to Islam was known as "going Turk". Arguably this conflation of identity and suspicion

47 See Gilham, *Loyal*, 228.

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of loyalty remains an intractable problem to this day for British Muslims. Both Quilliam and Pickthall were members of an elite class with extensive influential contacts in the British establishment but both men could not escape the consequences of their public support for Turkey during a period of war. In spite of their similarities each one was to find himself at odds with the other as various shades of Pan-Islamism manifested as a response to the crises in the Muslim world. Each was to find themselves at odds with a rapidly changing world order.

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PART 2

Pickthall's Religious and Political Thought

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CHAPTER 4

Pickthall's Anti-Ottoman Dissent: The Politics of Religious Conversion

Mohammad Siddique Seddon

> It is possibly because I care so much about the British Empire in the East, and from the circumstances of my life can see things from the Muslim point of view…I realised the terrible effect which such a policy [the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire by Britain and its allies], executed at the moment when the Turks sincerely aimed at progress, could have upon my Oriental fellow-subjects. And in my small way I have been trying to make England realise it.[1]

Pickthall's journey to Islam was less to do with theological contentions within his original Protestant Christian faith, and more to do with the rise in anti-Ottomanism, a self-asserted British imperialism and the future of Europe and the Islamic world. This chapter explores the political motivations behind Pickthall's very public conversion to Islam and explores how such dissenters were seen, and "placed", in early-twentieth century, Imperial Britain. Pickthall was an odd rarity amongst his peers and fellow writers in that he appears not to have been motivated by the exoticism of the oriental "other", so often a feature of British high-imperial writings on the subject. Rather, he seems to have been spiritually and existentially drawn to the cultures and religion of the region. His novels bear much of the ethnographer about them, rich and informed in their intimate details of everyday, ordinary life in early-twentieth century Arabia. Peter Clark, Pickthall's most detailed biographer, has said that what was unique about him amongst his contemporaries was his empathetic and well-informed writing coupled with his Muslim faith, which produced a "mature and accomplished author writing the English Islamic novel".[2]

Pickthall was born in London, on 7 April 1875, into a middle-class family of Anglican clerics on his father's side. His urbane, comfortable religious family fully bought into the supremacy of British imperial, Church and State hegemony. Whilst both Pickthall's father and grandfather were Anglican vicars and a number of his step-sisters were nuns, he appears to have become increasingly

1 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Saturday Review*, 124, 3241 (December 1917), 461–62.

2 Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: Britsh Muslim* (London: Quartet, 1986), 3.

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disaffected with Church life and attitudes. Clark asserts that Pickthall regarded church missionaries as, "misguided menaces who, with spiritual arrogance and political ineptitude were alienating the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire and undermining the Empire itself".[3] In many ways Pickthall's life appeared to be conveniently mapped-out through a vocation within the church ministry. Fortuitously, it was to be his personal and family connections in the Anglican Church that provided him the opportunity to travel to the Middle-East in the first instance.

In Egypt Pickthall developed a paradoxical admiration for British imperial-rule which he found distinctly manifest in Cromer, who had been British Consul General for twenty years. Pickthall was staunchly in favour of British-rule in Egypt, believing that their presence had brought both order and tolerance to the country, two important facets he felt were sadly lacking elsewhere in the Middle East. His views ran contrary to the increasing nationalist sentiments of the Egyptian people, as did his conviction that the Ottoman Empire be more closely associated with British rule as a means of both reducing the power of the Egyptian Khedive and enamouring ordinary Egyptians towards their British colonial occupiers.[4] But as events in the Ottoman provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina witnessed Austria's annexation, shortly after the Young Turk revolution in Turkey, Pickthall became evermore empathetic towards the rapidly westernising Ottoman Empire and increasingly more frustrated at Britain and Europe's betrayal of the 1878 Treaty of Berlin.

As Pickthall developed his academic writing in parallel with his increasingly popular fictional works, his pro-Ottoman affiliations became evermore focused and publicly committed along with other Turkophile contemporaries such as, *shaykh al-Islam*, Abdullah William Henry Quilliam, Robert "Rachid" Stanley, an outspoken Turcophile and anti-Armenian activist who was twice Lord Mayor of Stalybridge, Greater Manchester, and Lady Evelyn "Zeinab" Cobbold, who tried to convince Pickthall to accept Islam during one of their luncheon dates at Claridges, in 1914.[5] A year before he wrote *With the Turk in Wartime* in which he furiously berated the British press and public for its blind fanaticism in responding to "the call of a crusade against the Turk" at which he retorted "the solidarity of Christendom against a Muslim power was reckoned a fine thing by many people, but it broke the heart of Englishmen who loved the East".[6] His informed articulations on political affairs in Ottoman Turkey

3 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 37.

4 Ibid., 15.

5 Sherif, *Brave Hearts*, 2–3.

6 Marmaduke Pickthall, *With the Turk in Wartime* (London: Dent, 1914).

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and the Middle East found a regular home in a newly published weekly, *The New Age*, a periodical edited by the journalist, A.R. Orage and financially supported by George Bernard Shaw. *The New Age* was intended to be politically radical and ideologically socialist.

Pickthall contributed a number of articles covering events in Egypt, Palestine, Turkey and the Balkans. His dissenting voice and pro-Ottoman discourse was continuously published throughout the First World War, displaying an, at the time, astonishing tolerance by the British government who withheld any censorship of such, then, contentious sentiments. Whilst the groundwork for the First World War was being prepared in Britain and Europe, Pickthall's own political convictions became further polarised by the rise of anti-Muslim propaganda primarily legitimised by the Anglican (State) Church, which demonised the Ottoman Empire as "satanic" for its assumed suppression of eastern European, Christian *dhimma* (religious minority) within its dominions. In response to this stark Islamophobia, the New Age Press printed a series of articles by Pickthall collectively titled, "The Black Crusade", in which he spelt out the case for increased British-Ottoman alliances. His main arguments centred round the Turks' continued compliance with the Treaty of Berlin (1878), despite Austria's colonisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy's invasion of Tripoli and the Balkan Christian states invading European Turkey.[7] He also argued that the progressive revolution of the Young Turk movement towards the establishment of a modern, secular nation-state based on a European model was a clear indication that Turkey did not represent a threat to Britain or Europe, to which it aspired to belong. In an effort to develop a greater informed view of the impending hostilities against the Turks, in 1913 Pickthall decided to visit Turkey on a fact finding mission.

Sherif asserts that it was only after his return from Turkey that Pickthall joined the Freemasons' Misercadia Lodge, "at the invitation of Dr Rosedale, DD", as a means of belonging to a fraternity that "at the time provided a fellowship that overcame barriers of race and class".[8] However, for someone of Pickthall's middle-class background, becoming a Freemason would be an expectation as well as a means of forging important economic, political and social links and acquaintances that would facilitate any number of often-needed aid and assistance. Pickthall's views regarding imperialism and colonialism appear to be universally consistent in that, for him, both the British and Ottoman Empires were forces for global good and, again, in his considered opinion both should have allied economically, militarily and politically

7 Pickthall, *With the Turk*, 21.

8 Sherif, *Brave Hearts*, 8.

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as a uniting force that could establish world peace, modernise and democratise the Ottoman *millet* provinces and the Middle East, and stabilise the global economy. Evidence pointing clearly towards Pickthall's absolute endorsement of imperial power and rule is best witnessed by his responses to two specific incidents that occurred under both British and Ottoman rule.

The first is the so-called Denshawi incident which happened under British colonial rule in Egypt in June 1906. A small group of colonial officers decided to undertake a pigeon shoot near the rural village of Denshawi. One of the British officers soon became embroiled in a dispute with local pigeon breeders, possibly over an agreed price for shooting the birds or, perhaps, for doing so without the breeders' consent. In the subsequent furore, a local Egyptian woman and four Arab men were peppered with shotgun pellets. The village *fellahin* responded with sticks and batons and in the milieu one British officer, Captain Bull, escaped to get help but is alleged to have subsequently died of sunstroke. When another local Egyptian tried to assist the ailing officer, the other British officers assumed that Bull had been murdered by the local. The officers in turn beat the man to death. Ironically, no British officers were charged with the man's murder but, however, four further local Egyptian men were hanged and other "offenders" were either lashed or jailed. Both Clark and Sherif agree that Pickthall's reaction to the British handling of the Denshawi incident was stock imperialist but he was overly harsh in his endorsement of the imperial justice handed out to the pigeon breeders, arguing that the punishment was even handed and that pigeon breeders were the most contemptible and turbulent amongst Egyptian villagers.[9]

Equally, Pickthall's outright support of the Ottoman Empire manifested itself in a particularly vitriolic lambast of Armenian *dhimma* in the Turkish provinces. Whilst Pickthall fully expected Britain to lend its support to the Ottoman reformers, he was somewhat aghast at his country's complicit silence when Austria invaded Turkey's eastern European provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. When a counter-coup sought to re-establish the deposed Sultan Abdul Hamid II, in April 1909, Armenian minorities in Adana revolted against Ottoman power, which was heavily suppressed by the Turks and virulently opposed by British politicians, Pickthall remarked later:

> In the early spring of 1909, the arrogant and war-like attitude of the Armenian Revolutionaries in the *vilayet* [province] of Adana and a discovery of bombs enraged the Muslim population and made them listen

9 Sherif, *Brave Hearts*, 12; Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 16–17.

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> to the preaching of reactionary agents, who failed in every other province of the empire to provoke disorders. The result was a panic struggle ending in massacre.[10]

In an earlier article he described the Armenians as a "race of traitors, liars, utterly devoid of shame or honour…to kill them is as good a deed as to kill scorpions. They defile the globe. It is not a pleasant thing to write, but it is true".[11]

Pickthall was adamant that Ottoman religious minorities were privileged in comparison with other, ordinary Muslim subjects, believing that European powers were encouraging the Armenians to revolt as means of weakening the might of the Ottomans. He noted that Europeans were never in danger from the Turks but, rather, that, "rumours current in the West are due to the reports of Armenians, Greeks and other Levantines".[12] In 1914, Pickthall wrote, "a fine race is being hounded to its death by Europe because it is too proud to plead, and cannot beg".[13] Clark asserts that Pickthall was "never fair" to Ottoman Christians, whom he says, appeared to be "arrogant, insinuating and self-deluding".[14] For Pickthall it appears that a post-reformist, re-particularised Turkey was the only way forward for the Muslim umma. In a letter to his wife written during his fact finding visit to Turkey, he stated, "Turkey is the present head of a progressive movement extending throughout Asia and North Africa. She is also the one hope for the Islamic world".[15] Like the progressive *'ulema*, Pickthall saw no conflict between modernisation and Islam, believing instead that Turks should embrace their Islamic heritage rather than sheepishly imitate their European counterparts.

Upon his return to England, Pickthall's highly politicised and pro-Turkish views became evermore vocal both through his writings and activities. In 1914, he became a founder and active official of the Anglo-Ottoman Society (AOS) which included a number of British establishment luminaries such as former British Ambassador to Constantinople, Sir Louis Mallet, Conservative MP, Aubrey Herbert, Cambridge Professor, E.G. Browne and *shaykh al-Islam*,

10 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Massacres and the Turk: The Other Side", *Foreign Affairs*, Special Supplement II (1920), xiv–xvi.

11 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Asia and the Armenians", *New Age*, XXV (29 May 1919), 91.

12 Muhammad Hanif Shahid, *Writings of Muhammad Marmaduke William Pickthall* (Lahore: Ashraf, 2003), 280.

13 Mamaduke Pickthall, *Athenaeum*, 4516 (16 May 1914), 678. Cited in, Clark, *British Muslim*, 22.

14 Clark, *British Muslim*, 25.

15 Ibid., 28.

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Abdullah William Henry Quilliam.[16] What emerges from Pickthall's political and religious views during this particular pre-First World War period are a number of seemingly contradictory positions exhibited by the author. His association with the AOS brought him into contact with anti-colonialist activists through *The New Age* journal including the Pan-Africanist and part-Sudanese political activist, actor and author, Dusé Mohamed Ali, who, in 1913, collected funds in Britain to purchase arms for pro-Ottoman Arabs to fight in the Turco-Italian wars. Dusé's London offices were also conspicuously close to the Central Islamic Society (CIS), to which Pickthall was affiliated, both organisations based at 158 Fleet Street. Pickthall was an active official of the AOS throughout the war and, paradoxically, served his country whilst openly supporting the Ottoman cause.[17] Pickthall's co-activist in the AOS, Dusé Mohamed Ali was decorated with the Order of the Imperial Ottoman Mejedie, in 1892, by Sultan Abdul Hamid II and was thereafter titled *bey* or *effendi* after his name in respect.[18]

Dusé, the son of an Egyptian army officer and Sudanese mother, spent most of the early part of his life in Britain and after a distinguished career as an actor, touring with companies across Britain and America, he became an accomplished author and publisher. His book, *In the Land of the Pharaohs* (1911), launched his writing career and political activism and he went on to found the *African Times and Orient Review* (1912–1920) and the AOS, in 1914. Pickthall had strong associations with both Dusé's journal and the AOS, however, whilst Dusé and Pickthall agreed on Ottoman imperial supremacy as a Pan-Islamist vision for the Muslim world, they must have disagreed over Egypt. Pickthall believed that British colonial rule of Egypt was a force for good but, Dusé was an avid supporter of Mustafa Kemal Pasha and Sa'ad Zaghloul's Egyptian nationalist, Wafd Party.[19] Abdulwahid claims that Dusé's book "is a fervent declaration in favor of the Egyptian nationalist movement and advocates liberation of Egypt from British occupation",[20] something Pickthall was clearly opposed to. Yet, Dusé and Pickthall appear to have worked closely together, with Dusé becoming vice-president of the CIS, in 1913.[21] Duse's contribution

16 Jamie Gilham, *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam*, 1850–1950, (London: Hurst, 2014), 218.

17 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 27.

18 Khalil Mahmud (1968), Introduction to the Second Edition, Dusé Mohamed, *In the Land of the Pharaohs: A Short History of Egypt* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1911), xi.

19 Ibid., xvii.

20 Mustafa Abdulwahid (Comp.), "Introduction" in, *Duse Mohamed Ali, 1886–1945: The Autobiography of a Pioneer Pan African and Afro-Asian Activist*, (The Red Sea Press: New Jersey, 2011), 7.

21 Ibid., 16.

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to Afro-Asian, Pan-African, Pan-Islamic, pro-Ottoman and anti-colonial activities cannot be underestimated and, like Pickthall, his associations brought him under the suspicion of the British intelligence services. In addition to allegedly collecting funds to arm pro-Ottoman forces against the Italians in Libya, it is claimed that in September 1914 Dusé was in communication with both the Young Turks and National Socialists in Egypt.[22] Whatever their political differences were regarding the future of Egypt, it would appear that both Dusé and Pickthall, although supporters of modernist reforms across the Islamicate spaces, shared a Pan-Islamist view that the Muslim umma was still best served by the Ottomans.

When the war broke out in November 1914, a month later the offices of the CIS and AOS were raided by the police after a tip-off from MI5.[23] Around the same time Pickthall was suspected of being an enemy agent stemming from the time of his return from Turkey just before the war. Pickthall's Turcophile activities soon brought him personally within the radars of both a Foreign Office official, Sir Maurice de Bunsen, and the architect of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, Sir Mark Sykes, the former saying Pickthall should be interned as an enemy alien and the latter responding to Pickthall's peace initiatives as something that "speak[s] in a distinctly hostile tone of your own government".[24] Refusing to be intimidated, the author continued relentlessly to push his pro-Turkish agenda and campaign for peace between Britain and the Ottomans. Ironically, in the last months of the war he was called up for military service and became a private, and eventually corporal, in the 17th Hampshires, where he was stationed at Southwold in his beloved Suffolk County.[25] Another seemingly contradiction was his support of the Young Turks' reformist movement via his association with the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which ousted the Ottoman Sultan, and his staunch defence for a continued Ottoman Empire, forcing Clark to conclude, "[H]is short-term specific expectations were woefully fallible, but he was sounder in long-term assessments".[26] Pickthall appears to have resolved his dichotomous support for modernising reforms in Turkey whilst at the same time arguing for the continued integrity of the

22 Ian Duffield, "Duse Mohamed Ali, Afro-Asian Solidarity and Pan-Africanism in Early Twentieth-Century London", in S. Jagdish and Ian Gundara Duffield, eds., *Essays on the History of Blacks in Britain: From Roman Times to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992). 124.

23 Sherif, *Brave Hearts*, 17.

24 Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 251–52.

25 Ibid., 32.

26 Clarke, *British Muslim*, 34.

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Ottoman Empire by framing the Young Turks and CUP revolutionary coup as progressively Islamic, demanding education, social improvement and raising the status of women, as core teachings of the Prophet Muhammad himself.

Conversely, he understood nationalism (*qawmiyyah*) as being distinctly un-Islamic and, unlike his modernising Turkish reformer allies, saw Islam, and not nationality, as the prime marker of Muslim identity. In this sense, the impact of the Ottoman Empire reached far beyond its own geo-political borders and shaped the political identities of Muslims in British India and sub-Saharan Africa. As Clark readily concedes, for Pickthall, "The collapse of the Turkish empire threatened the Caliphate, the *khilafa*, the political importance of which was upheld by Muslims far beyond the confines of the Sultan-Caliph's political jurisdiction".[27] Pickthall's prediction for the proposed fate of a demolished Ottoman Empire was remarkably informed, if not somewhat prophetic:

> Our unknown rulers seem so far as I can learn to contemplate a full partition of the Turkish empire [...] England will have southern Mesopotamia and probably all of the territory southwards roughly of a line drawn on the map from a point little north of Samara on the Tigris to a point a little south of Jaffa on the Coast of Palestine. The whole of the peninsula of Arabia would be included in her 'sphere of influence' for gradual absorption. France will have much of Syria'.[28]

Sherif states that Pickthall used his masonic connections to propel his forlorn proposed peace deal between Britain and the Ottomans, and as the pro-Zionist lobby feared that peace with Turkey would derail their plans for a Jewish state in Palestine, Pickthall was considered to be an Ottoman spy and an enemy agent.[29] Throughout this period Pickthall remained ever steadfast and unperturbed. The Central Islamic Society (CIS), under the leadership of the Indian Muslim advocate and author, Mushir Hosain Kidwai, even appointed Pickthall as its spokesperson for "Muslim Interests on Palestine".[30] At a meeting of the CIS, in June 1917, the year in which Pickthall later publicly declared his Islamic faith, he said of plans of a Jewish state in Palestine:

27 Ibid., 35.

28 Jonathan Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration – The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 249.

29 Sherif, *Brave Hearts*, 19.

30 Ibid.

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> Among the recent Jewish immigrants to Palestine- the Jews of the Zionist movement as distinct from the native Jews – there is an extreme and narrow fanaticism which their enlightened co-religionists in Europe hardly, I think, realise…their avowed intention is to get possession of the Rock (the so-called Mosque of Omar [*al-qubbat as-sakhrah*]) and the Mosque El Aksa [*al-masjid al-aqsa*], which is the second Holy Place of Islam – because it was the site of their Temple.[31]

The British intelligence services kept a close monitor on Pickthall's activities and public addresses with one official, Ormsby-Gore, of the Foreign Office commentating on Pickthall's assertion that the disruption of the Young Turk Empire would do injustice to the Muslim population, "this is truly an amazing statement such as we might expect from Mr Marmaduke Pickthall and similar anti-Semitic pro-Turks".[32] With regards to Pickthall's Turcophile, anti-Zionist and Pan-Islamist writing and activities, Gilham asserts that, "as the main voice of dissent within the British Muslim community, Pickthall was considered by the authorities to be the most troublesome [Muslim] convert in this period".[33] Often seen as an "enemy to Christendom" by the British establishment, Pickthall privately realised that his endeavours to bring peace between the British and Ottoman powers was a lost cause, admitting, "the great division in Islam today is that between Progressive and Reactionary; and we are at present supporting the reactionaries, who are bound to lose in the long run".[34]

In November 1917, during a lecture at the Muslim Literary Society in London Pickthall publicly announced his conversion to Islam during an impassioned speech in support of peace between the British and Ottoman rulers. It is fair to assume that Pickthall viewed the world through the political vantage of an ordered imperialism that was finely balanced between the British and Ottoman Empires. His writings evidence his apocalyptic vision of a post-imperial world that he considered to be the result of British and Ottoman hostilities. Politically, he appears to have been a consistent imperialist whilst culturally and spiritually he was continuously pulled towards the East. His romantic orientalism, was clearly manifest in his obsession with Arabic language and culture. This obsession eventually forced his rejection of Christianity and his acceptance of Islam. Pickthall's very public profession of his Muslim

31 Ibid., 19–20.

32 PRO CAB 24/144, Eastern Report, No.31, August 29, 1917.

33 Gilham, *Loyal*, 222.

34 Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Worker Dreadnought*, 4:50 (1918), 964.

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faith, whatever his personal, spiritual reasons, was orchestrated to cause maximum political impact within the specific context of his faulted support for a British and Ottoman imperial alliance. It is clear from his own writings that Pickthall had converted to Islam for some time before his very public dissenting, political pronouncement. Clark affirms in the years preceding Pickthall's conversion to Islam, he was a faithful, practicing Christian who, even during his period in Turkey, in 1913, worshipped at the Crimean Memorial Church in Istanbul.[35] It was his personal disgust of the exploitation of Christian sentiment used as sympathy for the Christians under Ottoman rule, coupled with his political dissent of Britain's anti-Turkish foreign policy, which apparently so disaffected and alienated him from Christianity. Pickthall records his time serving in the British army, where his Muslim faith brought him both a sense of serenity and egalitarianism:

> [O]ne of the greatest blessing which Islam brings to an Englishman is the deliverance from this [classist] insanity…irrespective of colour, race or creed, I have just been in the British army in the ranks- pitch-forked so to speak, at forty three, among all sorts of men – and I have found this Muslim point of view a godsend, making me content, where once I should have been extremely miserable.[36]

After the war, in 1919, Pickthall was installed as *imam* of the Woking Mosque and as editor of the *Islamic Review* and lent his efforts to other leading Muslims who were arguing for the continuation of the Ottoman Empire, the destruction of which, they believed, would not be in the interests of British imperial rule and would add further troubles in Asia, and more importantly, British India.[37] Pickthall's post-war activities, operating openly as a pro-Ottoman Muslim, brought him even further under the scrutiny of the British intelligence services, who concluded that his association with the newly published, pro-Turkish bulletin, *Muslim Outlook*, as "to some extent anti-British".[38] Pickthall and his alleged anti-British co-conspirators where collectively termed the "Woking Mosque gang" in several internal intelligence communications. Conversely, Scotland Yard officers, who had been monitoring Pickthall's activities for a while, asserted that, unlike his other "Bolshevik" agitators, "in all probability

35 Clark, *British Muslim*, 37.
36 Shahid, *Writings*, p. 171.
37 Gilham, *Loyal*, 226.
38 Ibid, 227.

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at heart he is a loyal British subject".[39] Reflecting upon his time as a devout Christian, Pickthall openly acknowledged:

> In the days when I supposed myself to be a Christian it used to me to seem disgraceful that a country so enlightened as my country claims to be should allow, and, even as it seemed in some instances, encourage Christian missionaries to annoy non-Christians by their attempts to proselytise within the boundaries of the British Empire, an Empire which I had been taught to regard the home or rather the school of civil and religious liberty.[40]

It was in 1914, when Britain was finally at war with the Ottoman Empire, against the desires and expectations of Pickthall, that he finally rejected his Anglican faith and privately accepted Islam. Clark recalls a particular incident, according to Pickthall's own memories that was another catalyst for his rejection of Christianity. It occurred during congregational worship at which Pickthall was present when a hymn by Charles Wesley declared:

> …save the souls by that imposter [Muhammad] led;
> The Arab thief, as Satan bold,
> Who quite destroyed thine Asian fold…[41]

Clark's detailed analysis of Pickthall's writings, both fictional and journalistic, traces the subtle shift from an empathetic, pro-Ottoman Turcophile to an openly, manifest pious Muslim preacher. During this period, Sherif writes that Pickthall was employed by the London-based Islamic Information Bureau, formerly the Islamic Defence League, which was supported by two prominent Indian Muslims; Mushir Hosein Kidwai and Haji M. Hashim Ispahani, which brought him once again under the suspicion and watchful eye of the British intelligence services. Pickthall's Pan-Islamism was equated with the Bolshevik "People's Russian Information Bureau" and when added to Pickthall's other associations; The Anglo-Ottoman Society, the League of Justice for Asia and Africa and the Islamic Society, he was placed high on the list of anti-British undesirables by the British intelligence.[42] According to Sherif the Islamic Information Bureau "served as the Khilafatist movement's [London] base,

39 Ibid., p. 228.
40 Cited in Clark, *British Muslim*, 37.
41 Ibid., 38.
42 Sherif, *Brave Hearts*, 28–9.

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providing support to the visiting Indian delegations led by Maulana Mohamed Ali Jauhar".[43] By the end of World War One, Pickthall and his pan-Islamist associates became aware that the post-war Peace Conferences were dismantling the Ottoman Empire and rendering it ineffectual as a world power. Added to this was his brave and continued confrontation with the Armenian lobby in Britain, from whom he demanded in an open letter to them on behalf of the Bureau that they prove their unfounded claim that Islam condoned the "killing at sight" of Christians. In December 1919, Pickthall resigned from the Bureau and added his signature, along with other Muslim dignitaries including, Lady Evelyn "Zeinab" Cobbold and the Agha Khan, to a letter to the Prime Minister urging for "a policy towards Turkey that would lead to appeasement".[44]

Sadly for Pickthall and his fellow British, pro-Ottoman associates, their efforts to create a peaceful détente between the then two great superpowers, Britain and Turkey, were fruitless, if not futile. Yet, had it not been for fear of massive unrest in imperial India, Britain and its allies may well have forced the Ottomans from Istanbul.[45] It is a strong possibility that after the war Pickthall came to realise that the end of the Ottoman Empire was actually a fait accompli and that his pro-Ottoman antagonism had made him a virtual persona non gratis in Britain. Whatever the exact reasons for Pickthall's apparently sudden emigration to India, what is clear is that by 1920 Pickthall had shifted his focus and energies from trying to save the flagging and defeated Ottomans to concentrating on the emerging Khilafat Movement which was rapidly gathering a great deal of support amongst the Muslim population of colonial India. Early in 1920, a Khilafat delegation led by Mohamed Ali Jauhar arrived at the Woking Mosque and was enthusiastically received by Pickthall. The delegation's arrival coincided with the British and allied final draft of their peace terms with Turkey.[46] Juahar was also critical of the Islamic Information Bureau's performance but there is little evidence to suggest that he either advised or encouraged Pickthall to resign from the Bureau and leave Britain for India.[47]

As Pickthall's presence and importance grew immediately after the war, largely due to his post as acting *imam* at the Woking Mosque and Friday *Khateeb* [sermon-giver] at the London Muslim House, his writings and sermons display an acute sense of British, if not more particularly English, "Muslimness". In a lecture given in Ramadan in 1920, he said, "[W]e English Muslims have

43 Ibid.

44 Gilham, *Loyal*, 228.

45 Ibid., 229.

46 Ibid.

47 Sherif, *Brave Hearts*, 32. See also K.K. Aziz, *The Indian Khilafat Movement, 1915–1933* (Karachi: Pak Publications, 1972).

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a special need- I might call it a responsibility – this Ramadan, for our country for the last ten years, has dealt unjustly with Islam".[48] He further described the British Muslim community, of which he had become an ardent spokesperson and representative, as "in a position of the early Muslims of Mecca [sic], in the days when they were looked upon as weak and neglible". He advised them to, "make Islam respected and believed in your own circles, and give the lie to those who say false things about your faith".[49] He warned all British Muslims, particularly those who had settled from abroad, that:

> The temptations which assail newcomers from the East at every turn are inconceivable by Europeans. But the harm done to Islam by the misconduct of a Muslim here in England is inestimable. It gives English people an utterly false idea of Islamic notions of morality.[50]

Clearly, Pickthall was nurturing the idea of British Islam and English Muslimness as a real and distinct possibility but it seems that his aspirations for a burgeoning community of Muslims within the heartland of imperial Britain were thwarted by the political realities of the First World War. Turkey's defeat, the reformist Young Turk revolution and the post-war dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire had all added to British establishment fears of a Turcophile, Pan-Islamist, fifth column group of indigenous Muslims who posed a threat to the country's political interests and national security. Pickthall was not the only suspected English Muslim subversive, anti-British activist. *Shaykh al-Islam*, Abdullah William Henry Quilliam, also a pro-Ottomanist who was decorated, along with his son, Ahmed, by the Ottoman Sultan, Abdul Hamid II, was a further subject of much scrutiny and monitoring by the British intelligence services. Quilliam, like Pickthall, who was an English *imam* of his own established Islamic Centre and community in Liverpool, also eventually fled Britain under much controversy and suspicion.[51]

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Pickthall remained faithful to Islam until his death, just as he was faithful to Christianity until he was torn between his religious beliefs, fidelity to imperial

48 Ibid.

49 Cited in Clark, *British Muslim*, 43.

50 Ibid.

51 For a detailed work on Quilliam, see, Ron Geaves, *Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam* (Markfield: Kube, 2010).

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Britain, admiration for the Ottoman Empire and a romantic obsession with the East. These tensions appear to have caused Pickthall some considerable angst, with which he struggled until his death to resolve. Although Pickthall's political views appear to contemporary observers as often quite contradictory; a progressive modernist who admired the Young Turk reformist revolution in Turkey whilst arguing for the continuation of the Ottoman Empire, and an ardent British imperialist who supported the post-colonial independence of Muslim India, his views need to be understood both within their particular political and historical contexts of his time, and within the personal evolution of his own political and religious development. While we may disagree with much of Pickthall's convictions, we cannot deny his undying strength of commitment to his beliefs. These beliefs often made him the subject of both public ridicule and British establishment suspicion but his loyalty and steadfastness to them is something to be admired. What was not understood by many regarding Pickthall's pessimistic visions of a post-Ottoman Middle East and a post-colonial India; a chaotic, divided and hostile geo-religious polity, seem to be quite prophetic in current times. Pickthall clearly believed that religion – not just his own professed conversion to Islam – but, all the universal faiths, could offer political and spiritual solutions to the global crises he witnessed evolving around him. Unfortunately for Pickthall, too few people were able to decouple their religious and politico-national identities and allegiances. It would seem that as he became more disillusioned by the unfolding political realities he fought so hard to redress, he sought comfort and tranquillity from his Muslim faith. His wonderful rendition of the Quran into English is a clear testament to Pickthall's firm belief that Islam and Christianity, the religion of his fellow countrymen, can be reconciled. His attempts to forge a "British Islam" through a manifest "English Muslimness" were realised for a short period before the First World War, but global politics drew a veil of mockery and suspicion over its burgeoning presence. Pickthall sought solace through migration to Muslim India, a place where he consolidated his religious and political ideologies through a deeply informed articulation of scholarly writings culminating in his English translation of the Quran, by far his greatest achievement and lasting legacy.

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CHAPTER 5

Pickthall's Islamic Politics

M.A. Sherif

India in the early 1920s was in political ferment. It was also a time of fragile political consensus, bringing together Muslims, Hindus and other religious communities. For Muslims, the dominant concern was the future of Ottoman Turkey and the Caliphate. A news report published in the Urdu journal *Muslim* conveys the atmosphere at Bombay's Parsi Assembly Hall one evening in April 1922, in the aftermath of the Treaty of Sèvres:

> When Pickthall arose to deliver his speech, the hall resounded with shouts of pleasure. He first thanked the audience and then noted that the people of Hindustan must surely be astounded by the conditions imposed on Turkey by the Paris Peace Conference but he was not surprised. [He said] "I knew beforehand that the Paris Peace Conference would not arrive at any sensible decision [...] Gallipoli and the north of the Sea of Marmara is being given to Greece even though it has no rights over these [...] moreover the Angora Government will not accept these conditions. [...] When I was in Paris I met Muslim representatives from all over the world. In my opinion, the Muslims of Hindustan should not have hopes that the demands of the Turkish freedom-seekers on the Khilafat will be the same as those they have presented.
>
> The reality is that Hindustan's Muslims sided with Britain in the war against the Turks, and I too am in the same boat. I joined the battle on behalf of Britain. In the promises made to us it was clearly expressed that it would not be against the welfare of Islam and the *jaziratul Arab*. With our help Britain was victorious over the *Khalifatul muslimeen*. It is now our obligation to restore the *jaziratul Arab* to the *Khalifatul muslimeen*. The responsibility is not so much on the Turks as it is on us. That is why Hindustan's Muslims need to stand more firm on the Khilafat demands than the Turks. We should insist that Britain fulfils all the promises it had made. If we review our efforts of the last two years we must not be disheartened because a lot has been achieved. We should not change our policy – only the rash ones will do so. What we have learnt is *Innallaha m'a as-sabireen*.
>
> Now I would like to say a few words in my capacity as editor of *The Bombay Chronicle*. People are objecting that under my tenure it has

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> become a Khilafat paper. The issue of Khilafat is of great significance for Hindustan. I have met Muslims from many parts of the world [...] and all consider the united front shown by the non-Muslims of Hindustan with the Khilafat is praise-worthy. When I was returning to Hindustan I purchased a newspaper at Port Saïd. It had a prominently placed article stating that Gandhi was not just standing for Hindustan but all Asia. If the newspaper [*Bombay Chronicle*] supports the Khilafat then there is no damage done to Hindustan, but rather it brings benefits. It is because of the Khilafat that the whole of the East, in its quest for freedom, will consider Hindustan its guide."[1]

This report by a young Abul A'la Maududi in his Delhi weekly provides a snapshot of a moment in Pickthall's life and a period of trepidation and reorientation. The Allied powers had set humiliating terms for Ottoman Turkey at Sèvres, which were accepted by the Sultan-Caliph Vahideddin, but rejected by Mustafa Kemal and his Angora government.[2] An article of the Treaty stated that the Ottoman Caliph's authority in the Hejaz was to be overridden by "His Majesty, the King of Hejaz", which was contrary to the pledges given by Lloyd George in 1915 and 1918 to Indian Muslims that there would be no interference in the Caliph's temporal and spiritual authority in the *jaziratul Arab*.[3] Pickthall had by then been in India for two years and grappling with several issues: his decision to put on a British army uniform and the British Government dishonouring its pledges; the delicate Hindu-Muslim alliance that relied so much on Gandhi; a notion of the struggle for freedom in the "whole of the East", rather than just affecting the Muslim peoples.[4]

This account explores the chain of events that propelled Pickthall to the stage of the Parsi Assembly Hall and his subsequent political activism. There is a story to be told of ruptures and continuities, with enigmatic moments as

1 "*Mister Pickthall ki ma'arkat-e aalara taqrir*" (Mr. Pickthall's momentous speech), *Muslim*, 8 April 1922, 5; translation from the Urdu by the author. The meeting was organised by the Bombay Parsi Association on 4 April and presided by S.R. Bumanji. The editor of *Muslim* throughout the weekly's life from 1921 to 1923 was Abul A'la Maududi (born 1903). Archival copies are held at the Library, Islamic Foundation, Markfield, Leicestershire. The Quranic verse invoked by Pickthall is "Verily God is with the steadfast".

2 Khursheed Kamal Aziz, "Treaty (Sèvres) of Peace with Turkey, 10 August 1920", in *The Indian Khilafat Movement, 1915–1933, A Documentary Record* (Karachi: Pak Publishers, 1972), 149–64.

3 Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement, Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilisation in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 52.

4 Pickthall's regret for putting on a British army uniform was first expressed in his article "Endurance and Sacrifice", *The Islamic Review*, VIII, 1 (January 1920), 17–18.

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well as dramatic ones from around 1919 to 1935 (he passed away in 1936). The first section examines Pickthall's relocation from London to Bombay. It considers his political journey and the conditions placed on him by the Raj when he wished to take up an offer of an educational post in the State of Hyderabad. The second section examines Pickthall's ideas on the socio-political message of Islam, shaped by the unique conditions in Hyderabad as well as the writings of the former Ottoman grand vizier, Saïd Halim Pasha. The third section recounts Pickthall's various adventures with Sir Akbar Hydari, including their role in organising the marriage of the ex-Caliph Abdul Majid II's daughter with the Nizam's son and heir. The account concludes with a reflection on the ebb and flow of political allegiances in the lives of religious men.

From London to Bombay, 1919–1925

Pickthall's charisma and learning had placed him in the front ranks of the British Muslim community, with a variety of roles and responsibilities, from serving as imam at the London Prayer House to being party to political initiatives and activities. Pickthall's network of Islamic activists in London included Mushir Kidwai and Hashim Ispahani, who were closely associated with the Bombay Khilafat Committee established in early 1919. He joined them in establishing the Islamic Information Bureau, to advocate Muslim causes and respond to misrepresentations of Islam.[5] It was his name at the end of the Bureau's letters to newspaper editors, for example warning of the consequences of broken pledges – "if that word is broken there will be no more love or loyalty for England in the East".[6] It appears he had a free reign at the Bureau, allowing him to pursue bêtes noires, such as the Armenian lobby in London.[7]

Pickthall in his speech at the Parsi Assembly Hall also referred to meeting "Muslim representatives from all over the world" in Paris. The circumstances are not known, but he had been among the signatories, together with the Aga Khan and other distinguished personages, of various petitions to the Prime Minister in 1919 on matters relating to Muslim interests at the Paris Peace

5 Jamie Gilham, *Loyal Enemies, British Converts to Islam, 1850–1950* (London: Hurst, 2014), 225. Pickthall has also been described as the Bureau's "Honorary Secretary" – see The National Archives (TNA), FO371/5202 (1920).

6 For example, "England's Honour and the Muslims", *Daily Mail*, 9 September 1919.

7 Letter to the Armenian Bureau of London, dated 16 October 1919, in response to its claim that "under the Qur'an strictly interpreted, every Christian is an outlaw and can be killed on sight". *Armenian Review,* 37, 3–147 (Autumn 1984), 67–70.

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Conference.[8] This may have led to Pickthall being hand-picked by the Aga Khan to accompany the official Indian Muslim delegation – comprising himself, Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Aftab Ahmad Khan – in a secretarial role. Alternatively, his visit may be related to the arrival in London in early 1920 of an Indian Khilafatist delegation led by Dr. Mukhtar Ansari, in an attempt to hold Britain to its war-time pledges.[9] The delegation had planned to proceed to Paris, but was unable to do so and returned to India. If not part of the Aga Khan's entourage, perhaps Pickthall found a way to Paris denied to this delegation and was able to present their case and discuss current events with other Muslims present.

However, it was not a happy period for Pickthall. There was an emotional tone in his letter to close friend Aubrey Herbert written towards the end of 1919, with references to the difficulties he had created by making himself "objectionable all around by insisting on certain little matters which appeal to Englishmen rather than to Orientals".[10] An opportunity soon arose in Bombay, which he described in another letter to Herbert in July 1920:

> This is to tell you (what I fear will shock you very much) that I have accepted the editorship of *The Bombay Chronicle*, an Indian nationalist newspaper. If you want to know the primal reason for my taking such a step, it is simply economic pressure. I cannot afford to live in England, and the offer of a salary of 1400 rupees a month came to me as a positive godsend at the moment of almost of despair [...]
>
> It will quite possibly end in my cursing the whole crowd and throwing back their money in their teeth as I have done before. I have not the money sense, any more than the diplomatic. If you can say a word for me anywhere, please do. I am afraid of being boycotted by English people, which means a one sided view and therefore a false judgement [...] Forgive me if you can for going so far from the direction you would chose for me, but believe that I still preserve the straight path of Islam and mean to keep it.[11]

8 Aziz, *The Indian Khilafat Movement,* 26–8, 54–8.

9 For Pickthall's support of the Indian Khilafat delegation to London see Gilham, *Loyal Enemies,* 228–29. The delegation was closely monitored by Scotland Yard, who noted two meetings with Pickthall, on 29 February and 23 April 1920 – see India Office Records (IOR), L/P&S/18, B361.

10 Anne Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy* (London: Hutchinson, 1938), 306–307.

11 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 314. Aubrey Herbert MP (1880–1923) lobbied for Albania to be accepted in the League of Nations in 1920. There were moves to crown him King of Albania.

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He was clearly frustrated by the Bureau's inability to remunerate him adequately, and it seems that the dozen or so novels he had published thus far were not bringing in much income. His patience may also have been sorely tested by Kidwai, someone described by Scotland Yard as "sane, but not sensible".[12] Pickthall's letters to Herbert convey the impression of a temperamental white sahib, touchy about the ways of "Orientals". He was anticipating problems with Indians in *The Bombay Chronicle* that might end up with him "cursing the whole crowd and throwing back their money in their teeth". Pickthall's financial difficulties are surprising because *Saïd The Fisherman* was by 1913 in its ninth edition and ought to have been providing royalties.[13] He may have had a rosy view of the Bureau's financial standing when the venture started, even though an appeal for funds was a regular feature in its publications.[14] Pickthall's reference that in leaving England, "he was going far from the direction" that Aubrey Herbert, a Tory Member of Parliament, would have wished for him is also enigmatic. Herbert was a champion of Albanian independence and perhaps looked on Pickthall as an ally on Balkan issues.

Pickthall's letter to the writer E.M. Forster a year later from Bombay was more composed. He was now wholeheartedly with "the East" and resigned himself to the expatriates' boycott:

> The Bombay Chronicle
> Bombay
> August 3rd 1921
>
> [...] There are one or two points in it [Forster's *Salute to the Orient*] which rather puzzle me, and I should like to debate them with the author if he is ever in Bombay, and if he is not above association with one whose salute to the East has been complete – i.e. who has become a social outcast from the Anglo-Indian point of view. My wife and I are living at 60 Green's Mansions, over Green's Hotel. With kind regards and real thanks for your appreciation which is very cheering in these days,
> I remain, Sincerely yours
>
> MARMADUKE PICKTHALL[15]

12 IOR, L/J & P (S)/416, 1916.

13 Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (London: Quartet, 1986), 78.

14 For example, see *Islamic News*, April 7 1921: "Nothing can be done without funds. The honour of Islam must be defended". It is likely that similarly worded appeals were published during Pickthall's tenure as editor a year earlier. The author is grateful to F. Dawji for archival copies of the bulletin.

15 King's College Archives, EMF/18/430.

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He was both editor and later leader writer at *The Bombay Chronicle,* which was "among the 8 or 10 [newspapers] with a circulation of 10,000" in the Bombay Presidency, and also "among another elite grouping on an All-India level, read and quoted beyond its metropolitan and provincial borders".[16] He was witness to the alliance of the Khilafat movement and the Congress Party within the Non-cooperation movement, and reported in detail the "Congress week" held in Nagpur in January 1921:

> I believe in Non-cooperation thoroughly. […] It is liberty. It is national resurrection, postulating only the destruction of such things and influences as are positively noxious to the growth of healthy Asiatic life. It began as an indignant protest against certain wrongs committed by the British Government; but it is already far more than a protest, a negative thing; it is an assertion; a positive thing – an assertion of the existence of an Indian nation independent of British education and patronage.
>
> India has been promised the status of a Dominion in the British Commonwealth. What is the difference between the status of a Dominion, and that which India occupies at present? The government of a Dominion stands for the people of the Dominion, even against the Government of England whereas the Government of India stands for the Government of England even against the people of India. We have two glaring instances in the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs [a reference to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, April 1919] which show how far India is at present from Dominion status, and how improbable she could ever obtain such status by cooperating with her present rulers. If those rulers had but stood for India firmly on the question of the Turkish peace terms, threatening Non-cooperation with the Government of India in case the wishes of so many millions of British subjects were disregarded for the sake of foreigners, the position would have been quite different.
>
> […] Too long have Asiatics looked to Europe as the fount of wisdom. There is evil as well as good in the European education and ideas of life. Asiatics have become inferior to Europeans. Why? Because they have

16 Milton Israel, *Communications and power: propaganda and the press in the Indian nationalist struggle* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1994), 216. Milton states that *The Bombay Chronicle* was founded in 1907. However the masthead of an archival copy seen by the author indicates "Founded by Sir Pherozshah Mehta in 1913", (X, 32, 7 February 1922). This masthead also states: "Edited by B.G. Horniman, 1913–19", and "Conducted [sic] by Marmaduke Pickthall and Syed Abdullah Brelvi". The author is grateful to Professor Ebrahim Moosa for this archival copy.

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> abjectly imitated them, renouncing criticism, because they had not pride as Asiatics. On their own ground of Asia they are not inferior; but they are different. Every thing that is best in the world – religion, romance, chivalry – comes from Asia. Indians, be proud that you are Asiatics; cease to worship blindly every thing good or bad that comes from Europe; accept from Europe only what is good; take up your burden of responsibility as full-grown men forming a full-grown nation; do for yourselves what the British in 150 years have failed to do for you; educate every Indian man and woman in things of use to Indian men and women; raise the poor; organise the resources of the country for the public good; help the nation develop along natural lines, not upon lines imposed by foreign doctrines. Cease to depend on foreigners, and you have got your Swaraj [self-rule].[17]

His "salute to the East" was accompanied with recognition of the anti-colonialist struggle of subjugated peoples. Pickthall's editorials were written to inspire an Indian readership as well as provide sharp rejoinders to an indifferent Raj:

> Mahatma Gandhi has charged the Government of India with obstinacy in repression and with bad faith in the matter of calling a Peace Conference [for political negotiations]. The Government retort with the declaration that Non-cooperation provoked repression. Granted. But if we are to descend to a child's dispute of "Who began it first?" let us carry this at least through to its end. What then provoked Non-cooperation? It was certainly not *good* Government.
>
> Since the Government of India descend to childishly querulous and futile arguments we must deal with them as one deals with a child. This Government is the House that the English built. These are the Actions done in the House the English built. This is the Unrest bred of the Actions done in the House the English built. This is the Obstinacy which replied to the Unrest that was bred of the Actions done in the House the English built. This is the Non-cooperation that answered the Obstinacy that replied to the Unrest that was bred of the Actions done in the House the English built. This is the Repression provoked by the Non-cooperation that answered the Obstinacy that replied to the Unrest that was bred of the Actions done in the House the English built in India.

17 *Non-Cooperation in Congress Week, with a Foreword by Marmaduke Pickthall* (Bombay: The National Literature Publishing Company 1921). Pickthall states that the quotation is "from an article which appeared in 'The Chronicle of 8 January'".

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> Has the nursery jingle brought us any nearer to a solution of the problem? On the contrary the vital issues have been obscured [...] the Government's communiqués [...] makes only one thing clear and it is that the Government have not the will to peace. [...] The Government of India now want more. Presumably they desire the dissolution of the Congress and the Khilafat organisation. Did Mr. Lloyd George insist on the dissolution of Dáil Éireann and the disbandment of the Irish Republican army as a preliminary to a peace conference with Sinn Fein?[18]

The Congress's working committee met in Bardoli in February 1922. Pickthall may have been present, and responsible for the interview with Gandhi that was published in the *Chronicle*, "From our Special Representative". The reportage and line of questioning was very much in Pickthall's style, for example raising the Khilafat question:

> I interviewed Mahatmaji on Sunday morning. He was quite hale and hearty and was about to begin in his daily round [the item] of spinning. His son Ramdas brought him a spinning wheel and Mahatmaji as he went on turning the wheel replied to my questions with his remarkable calmness. At times his voice was lost in the music of the spindle, I begged him to repeat [an] inaudible portion [...]
> Q. What do you think of the suggestion made recently in the "Chronicle" that an alliance of understanding [come about] with leaders of suffering subject nations like Egypt and Ireland to fight the imperialism of the Western nation by Non-cooperation propaganda?
> A. I should love to see such an alliance but that will come in its own time. It is my humble opinion that we are not getting sufficiently advanced in that direction to form a useful alliance. I do not believe in paper alliances. They will come naturally when we are ready.[...]
> Q. Do you believe the Muslims of India will stick to the irreducible minimum of the Congress demands with the same zeal even after the Khilafat question is settled to their satisfaction?
> A. I have not a shadow of doubt in my mind about it, if only because what is gained in the matter of the Khilafat can only be retained by a self-governing India untrammelled by a dictation from Downing Street.[19]

18 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 7 February 1922.

19 Ibid.; the text states, "the imperialism of the Western nation" – "nation" in the singular.

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In spite of his discontent with the Islamic activists in London, Pickthall had not severed all contact. He provided the Islamic Information Bureau's *The Muslim Standard* (previously *Islamic News*) with an extensive obituary note on Saïd Halim Pasha in December 1921, which referred to British "brutality" towards interned Ottoman leaders after the Great War, and noted, "Halim was a steadfast adherent of what the Western detractors of the East call 'Pan-Islamism', and what we, the Mussulmans, call 'Islamic solidarity or fraternity'".[20]

Pickthall's address at the Parsi Assembly Hall, quoted at the outset of this chapter, took place a few months later. The warm reception from the cosmopolitan Bombay audience showed that they had taken him to their bosom, and he reciprocated. His politics were now located within various overlapping circles: the Indian Muslim Khilafat movement, the Hindu-Muslim alliance in the Non-cooperation movement, the "Asiatic" anti-colonialist revival and a Muslim internationalism. He was a unifying figure and much in demand at meetings across India.[21] Pickthall had celebrity status and did not disappoint, participating in public meetings clad in "the white Gandhi dress, with the Khilafat badge" on his cap.[22]

*

Pickthall's "extremism" did not go unnoticed in London. The well-respected writer on "Eastern" matters, Valentine Chirol, complained in a letter to *The Times* of London:

> I have before me the latest file of the *Bombay Chronicle*, the leading organ of Indian extremism, Hindu and Muhammedan, and now under the editorship of a fervent convert to Islam, Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall. […] The leading articles are […] vehement denunciations of Lord Curzon and of British policy, and constant glorification of the Turks, and incidentally of the Bolsheviks.[23]

20 *The Muslim Standard*, 22 December 1921.

21 For example in July 1922 Pickthall presided over the Sind Khilafat Conference, remarking, "I know there are some people who think it wrong for Muslims to accept the leadership of a Hindu. But I think that a Hindu saint who lives upon a higher plane is a better guide for Muslims than a Muslim sinner who lives upon a lower plane, for upon the higher plane there is but one law for Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Jews or any man and that law is the divine law revealed in the Qur'an-e Sharif" – see Afzal Iqbal's *The life and times of Mohamed Ali* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1973), 290–91.

22 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 366.

23 *The Times*, 27 January 1923, letter entitled "The Turks and Lausanne".

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Pickthall remained defiant. He saw hope in the victory of the forces led by Mustafa Kemal over the Greeks, and though the Ottoman Sultanate had been abolished (but not yet the office of Caliphate), there was "a great opportunity of revival and reform".[24] He allowed his name to be included in a seven-member delegation the Central Khilafat Committee proposed to despatch to Turkey in May 1924 to "meet the President [Mustafa Kemal] and the members of the Grand National Assembly of Angora, the 'Ulema and other prominent persons in Turkey and to impress on them the desirability both in the interests of Islam and Turkey to reconsider their decision about the Khilafat".[25] This visit did not come about, either because passports were not issued or the Turks' refusal to receive them.[26]

The Raj did what it could to silence the paper. Pickthall's second letter to E.M. Forster, despatched after reading *A Passage to India*, described the pressures:

> At present we are under menace of extinction. Three officials, with the Government of Bombay behind them, are suing us for defamation, claiming defamation amounting to two and half lakhs. We have put up a defence which would have been conclusive in an English court, where the attempt on the part of a newspaper to perform a public service is a "justifying occasion". But here there is no statute to guard the proper freedom of the Press, and I am told that it is practically impossible for a judgement to be given in our favour. It is a very interesting experience and the "solidarity" of the flustered English is exactly as described in your book. My complements on your success in portraiture. I do not like your Indians half so well.[27]

The closing sentence is likely a reference to the opposition of some board members of *Bombay Chronicle* to the excessive coverage of Khilafatist activities and Gandhi's Non-cooperation movement. Pickthall had referred to this in his speech at the Parsi Assembly Hall. Pickthall and some colleagues were backed by the "cosmopolitan Bombay" wing of Congress, and opposed by the

24 "The True Khilafat", *The Islamic Review*, XI, 11 (November 1923), 391.

25 Muhammad, Adi Shan, *Unpublished letters of the Ali Brothers* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat, 1979), 244–245; see letter from Maulana Shaukat Ali, dated 2 May 1924, to the Deputy Secretary, Home Department, Government of India, applying for passports for the members of the delegation. In addition to Pickthall, these were: Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, Hakim Mohammed Ajmal Khan, Maulvi Mufti Kifayatullah, Maulana Sulaiman Nadvi, Mr. Tassaduq Ahad Khan Sherwani and Chaudhri Khaliquzzaman.

26 Minault, *The Khilafat Movement,* 204.

27 Kings College Archives, EMF/18/430. Pickthall's letter to Forster is dated 18th July 1924.

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Brahminical, Maharashtra-based wing.[28] The latter were particularly angered by the newspaper's coverage of the disturbances in Malabar that had involved Muslim Moplah tenant-farmers settling scores with the Hindu landlords.[29] Pickthall seemed to exonerate the excesses as "passions of a most excitable people…whose religion was above all sacred". The newspaper argued that the situation was brought under control by Khilafat workers who had "convinced the Moplahs that non-violent non-cooperation would rid the country and all Islamic countries containing holy places of Islam of foreign domination, and would eventually lead to the restoration of the Turkish Khalifa".[30] Matters soon came to a head: "In 1924, a series of legal disputes and substantial financial losses led to the *Chronicle's* takeover by a group considered to be more sympathetic to Maharashtra […] Pickthall resigned along with three other Gandhi loyalists on the board".[31]

It is a tribute to Pickthall's charisma and diplomatic skills that notwithstanding an anti-British stand, he still maintained connections with the Governor of Bombay, Sir Leslie Wilson. Pickthall was offered employment in the "native state" of Hyderabad, the Raj's terminology for those parts of British India ruled by maharajas and nawabs under the terms of treaty agreements. In order to take up the post, clearance was needed from the powerful Political Resident assigned by the Viceroy to provide oversight on the Nizam of Hyderabad. Pickthall called on Sir Leslie to facilitate the process, who obliged by writing to the Resident in September 1924, in a note resonant of the old boy network:

> Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall tells me that there is some prospect of his name being brought forward for a post in the Osmania University but is informed that objection from the Resident is anticipated.
>
> I think it is only fair however to Mr. Pickthall to write you a note about him, and I do so very largely influenced by the fact that the late Colonel Aubrey Herbert MP, who was one of my closest friends, was also a strong personal friend of Mr. Pickthall's. I believe they were at school and college together.

28 Israel, *Communications and power,* 230.

29 Minault, *The Khilafat Movement,* 147. Minault describes the unrest: "besides estates and plantations, a number of Hindu temples were put to the torch, and the ranks of believers were swelled by means of the sword […] the government added to its share in the loss of life when, on November 21, 1921, a group of one hundred convicted Mapilla prisoners were herded into a box car for transport to jail. When the train reached its destination, fifty-six had died of asphyxiation and eight more later succumbed".

30 Israel, *Communications and power,* 231.

31 Ibid., 231.

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> Pickthall is a gentleman, but almost vehement on Muslim questions being a convert himself. He has dined with me at my house in Bombay with his wife, and personally, I like him. Whilst editor of the *Bombay Chronicle* on more than one occasion I pointed out the dangers of the line of policy the paper was taking especially during the mill strike of January and February last. I sent for him when he immediately accepted what I said and changed the whole tone.
>
> Pickthall in the Osmania University can, of course, have nothing to do with politics nor do I think, for one moment, he desires to have anything more to do with them in India. If therefore an application comes before you from him to enter the Nizam's service, I feel sure you will bear this note in mind.[32]

Soon after this interview, Pickthall's essay on Hyderabad was published in *The Islamic Review*, with references to "the British tendency to grab on any legal pretext", and its use of "guile" in depriving the Nizam of the revenues of the rich province of Berar.[33] The Governor perhaps painted Pickthall more politically pliable than he really was.

Pickthall was next called for an interview with the Political Resident:

> I showed him [Pickthall] the form of Declaration which is required from European applicants for permission to serve the Nizam, and he said that he would have no hesitation signing it. He informed me that his introduction to Hyderabad was through Mr. Hydari, the Nizam's Finance Minister, and Mr. Pickthall's statement bears out what Mr. Hydari has already told me, namely, that before the question of offering him an appointment was considered, he was required by the state authorities to give an undertaking that if he came to Hyderabad he would entirely abstain from politics. [...] I see no reason to doubt his intentions to adhere to the declaration which he will have to make. But in view of what has gone before, it is perhaps safer to restrict the period for which consent to his employment is given [...][34]

32 IOR, R/1/4/1027, 1926. Wilson's recipient was Sir Lennox Russell, Political Resident at Hyderabad. The letter is dated 19 September 1924.

33 "Islamic Tolerance in India", *The Islamic Review*, XII, 12, (December 1924), 433.

34 IOR, R/1/4/1027, 1926. The Political Resident to S.B.A. Patterson, Political Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department, Delhi. The letter is dated 25 March 1925.

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Hyderabad was the largest of the princely states and possessed its own currency, the *kildar*. In Pickthall's time, the ruler or Nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Osman Ali Khan (born 1886), was the seventh in the Asafiya dynasty. With this "no objection" from the Resident, the way was cleared for him to take up an educational post in Hyderabad, at a starting monthly salary of 1,000 *kildars*.[35] It was also the start of a long working relationship with the politically astute Akbar Nazarali Hydari, a prominent member of the Bombay Muslim elite. The "declaration" which Pickthall was required to sign explicitly banned political activity. Pickthall's next ten years were significant as an educationalist, man of letters and Quranic scholar.[36] However, did he really become a political quietist as demanded by the Declaration, after a life time of activism?

The Nizam and his ministers were adept at charting a political course with care and skill, seeking as much autonomy as possible while avoiding restrictions and interventions by the Political Resident. For example, while Khilafatist activity was banned in the early 1920s, Osman Ali Khan later provided a pension to the exiled Caliph Abdul Majid II. He was famous for generous donations for the upkeep of the *haramain* in the Hejaz and when the Syrian population was suffering from French military attacks in 1925, he donated £2,000.[37] The Raj's approach too was subtle, conferring him the title of "His Royal Highness" while also noting his inclination "to support the Islamic power in and outside India".[38]

Akbar Hydari, responsible for Pickthall's employment in Hyderabad, was regarded by the Raj with a mixture of admiration and hostility: he was a "capable Muhammedan gentleman" but "had failed to oppose the Nizam's malpractices and had provided funds against the Government of India's intervention policy".[39] Among the funds allocated by Hydari were for the Osmania University, unique as a centre for higher education adopting the Urdu medium of instruction. Its very name linked Hyderabad's Muslim rule with the Ottomans – *Osmanli* being a synonym for Ottoman. In one Political Resident's assessment, Hydari was "a cultivated gentleman […] receptive, clear headed, broad-minded and far-sighted, except where religious questions are involved,

35 Ashraf, Sayyid Daud, *Behruni Arbab-i-Kamal Aur Hyderabad* (Men of achievement from abroad and Hyderabad) (Hyderabad: Shugoofa Publications, 2005), 273–74.

36 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall,* 59–68.

37 For the Nizam's donations for the repair of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, see IOR, L/P&S/10/1141, p. 656, note dated 30 May 1927; for details of donations to Syria and Damascus in 1925 see IOR, R/1/4/2173 (2), Telegram R. No. 1971, 7 December 1931.

38 IOR, R/1/1/2425, File No. 373-P (Secret), 1933, 28.

39 IOR, R/1/5/66, Hyderabad Political Notebook 1919–1945; the quotation is from the Political Resident, Sir William Barton, to the Government of India (Delhi).

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than any Indian I have had to deal with".[40] Hydari's university project was an irritant for the Resident: "He [Hydari] is so obsessed with his ridiculous Osmania University, which he treats as an instrument of Moslem propaganda, that he can't understand that his shocking waste of educational funds is one of the greatest causes of Hindu resentment".[41] Apart from his responsibilities as a school principal, Pickthall also contributed to the work of the *Darul Ta'leef wa Tarjumah* (Centre for Translation and Publication), associated with the university.[42] A report from the Political Resident grouped Hydari and Pickthall together:

> He [the Nizam] was attempting through propaganda to obtain the support of the Muslims of British India, the Indian Princes and also certain persons in England against the Government of India's intervention policy. The Nizam's propaganda agents were (1) the notorious Abdullah Khan of Khasmandi [...] (2) Syed Sirdar Ali Khan [...] (3) Mr. Hydari, the Finance Member and (4) Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall, a convert to Muhammadanism, who was strongly partisan of the Nizam and who was then employed in the Hyderabad Educational Service.[43]

Pickthall had entered a complicated political milieu, which required him to navigate his way as skilfully as veteran political figures like Hydari and the Nizam.

Among Hydari's projects was the launching of the journal *Islamic Culture, The Hyderabad Quarterly Review,* and Pickthall was called on to serve as editor, without, it seems, any reduction in his other responsibilities. The first issue in January 1927 would have been assuring reading for the Political Resident: "The Review was to be purely literary and scientific, eschewing current political and sectarian controversy".[44] When the time came for the Nizam's office to request a renewal of Pickthall's employment in 1927, there was no objection from the Political Resident.[45] Further extensions were provided in 1929 and 1931. It seems that the authorities had their eyes on short-term political threats,

40 IOR, File No. 169-P./Sec of 1931. Foreign and Political Department Notes. Serial Nos. 1–7, 12.

41 Ibid., 5.

42 Shafqat Husain Razawi, "*Darul Ta'leef wa Tarjumah*, Jamia University Hyderabad, India", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, XLIV (October 1996), 355. Pickthall was a co-translator of Jean Overet's *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman.*

43 IOR, R/1/5/66, Hyderabad Political Notebook 1919–1945, 15.

44 *Islamic Culture,* Hyderabad, January 1927.

45 It appears that in 1927 the extension was for another three or four years, as the next renewal came up in 1931 – see IOR, R/1/1/2143, 1931.

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rather than the longer-term challenges, and viewed the intellectual currents within the Muslim world as mere "fatuous propaganda".[46]

Pickthall's lecture series in Madras in 1925 on the theme of religion and culture was published in 1927 as *The Cultural Side of Islam* – a harmless enough title. However, the contents and message were in keeping with the traditions of revival and reform – *tajdid* and *islah* – ever present in Muslim discourse, from *maghreb* to *mashriq*.[47] In the 1920s and 30s, these included efforts such as Shaikh Ben Badis's journals *Al-Muntaqid* (The Critic) and *As-Shihab* (The Shooting Star), Shakib Arslan's *Our Decline: Its Causes and Remedies,* Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* Muhammad Asad's *Islam at the Crossroads* and Maulana Abu Muhammad Musleh's *Tehrik-e 'Alamgir-e Qur'an* (the universal movement for the Quran) – the last of these based in Hyderabad.[48] They owed much to the groundwork of an earlier generation of scholar-activists, notably the turn-of-the-century Syrian *'alim*, Abd al-Rahman Al-Kawakibi and the pan-Islamic hero, Afghani.[49] Pickthall himself was inspired by Saïd Halim Pasha, who "set forth what the modern State should be according to the Shari'ah".[50] Pickthall captured the mood of revivalism and reassertion:

> Islam offers a complete political and social system as an alternative to socialism, fascism, syndicalism, bolshevism and all other "isms" offered as alternative, to a system which is manifestly threatened with extinction. The system of Islam has the great advantage over all these nostrums,

46 "Fatuous" was the term ascribed to Pickthall in an India Office minute – see n. 78.

47 For an elaboration on *tajdid* and *islah*, see the entry "Revival and Reform" by Ebrahim Moosa and Sherali Tareen in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, (Princeton University Press, 2012). The themes in the Madras lectures were frequently elaborations of Pickthall's talks published in the *The Islamic Review*, Woking, 1917–1919.

48 For a further elaboration of these connections see the author's forthcoming *Facets of Faith – Bennabi and Abul A'la Maududi, Early Life and Selected Writings*, Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur.

49 Al-Kawakibi (died 1902) was author of *Umm al-Qura,* a treatise that provided an analytical framework for examining the conditions in the Muslim world – for details see J.G. Rahme, "Abdal Rahman Al-Kawakibi's reformist ideology, Arab pan-Islamism and the internal other", in the *Journal of Islamic Studies,* 10, 2 (1999): 159–177. See also Muhammad Rashid Nadvi, "Abd al-Rahman Al-Kawakibi aur in ka tashna ta'beer khwab", *Ma'arif,* no. 188, 448–59.

50 Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Cultural Side of Islam*. First published in 1927. The citations here and subsequently are from the reprint published in 2007 by the Idara Isha'at-e Dinaiyat, Delhi. The quotation is from the first in the series of lectures, "Islamic Culture", LXVIII.

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> that it has been practised with success – the greater the success the more complete the practice. Every Muslim believes that it must eventually be adopted in its essentials by all nations whether as Muslims or non-Muslims in the technical sense, because its laws are the natural (or divine) laws which govern human progress, and men without the revelation of them, must find their way to them in course of time and painfully, after trying every other way and meeting failure. The system of Islam promises peace and stability where now we see the strife of classes and of nations, and nothing steadfast.[51]

The conception of Islam as a "system" anticipated the formulation adopted by the Islamic reformist movements two decades or so later.

Pickthall and Saïd Halim Pasha

Pickthall had arrived in Istanbul in 1913 with excellent letters of introduction that gave him access to high-ranking officials, including Saïd Halim Pasha.[52] Their first encounter was not particularly auspicious, judging from the gossipy letter Pickthall wrote to Muriel, his wife:

> The day before yesterday, in the morning, I was in Stamboul at the Sublime Porte, and had my audience of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Prince Saïd Halim, who is like the German painted Noah's Ark people to look at – very blue eyes, very brown cheeks, very white collar, very black frock-coat, very red fez which looks like a part of his head, and a cigarette in an amber holder stuck permanently in one cheek. Very neat, correct and automatic in his movements – just like a toy. He was very amiable and Rifaat tells me that he had described me as a *charmant homme*. That seems to be his phrase for everybody. They say he is a very honest and decent man, but not very brilliant.[53]

Halim Pasha was also a man of letters, and the last of these remarks suggest that Pickthall may not yet have come across some of his recent writings such

51 Pickthall, *Cultural Side of Islam,* 15–16.

52 Muhammad Haneef Shahid, *Writings of Muhammad Marmaduke William Pickthall* (Lahore: Ashraf, 2003), ix. This is a compilation of various essays from *The Islamic Review Islamic Culture* and other sources.

53 Ibid., 281.

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as *Mukallidliklerimiz* (Our Imitations), and *Meşrutiyet* (Constitutional Rule).[54] The foreign minister, together with Enver Pasha and Talaat Pasha, formed the ruling triumvirate of the *İttehat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress, CUP) that had just returned to power. It was a time of tensions between the Pan-Islamists within the CUP and supporters of "Turkism": "as long as Saïd Halim remained in power he was an obstacle to the secularizing reforms that the Turkist wing of the CUP was pushing for".[55] Moreover, Enver Pasha had a pro-German stance, while Halim Pasha was exploring alliances with England and France – perhaps a reason for seeing his visitor. Pickthall was caught up in the political medley and far from being the politically disinterested observer:

> [...] it was the present writer who had strongly supported in 1913 the better suitability of the Prince [Halim Pasha] to the office of the Grand Vezirate against the candidature of the ambitious Talaat Pasha, whose case was pushed forward constantly by the Committee [of Union and Progress] which had then usurped the name of, what was originally, the national Party of the Unity and Progress. I fell out with Prince Saïd Halim shortly before the outbreak of the world war when I saw him allowing himself to fall gradually under the influence of the Committee in spite of the warnings of his old friends. I had, since then, not been on speaking terms with him.[56]

Perhaps with Halim Pasha in mind, Pickthall also noted that, "as a matter of fact, I think the Committee hopeless, but some of the members worthy of a better cause".[57] The tensions and debates of the time were to be vividly conveyed in *The Early Hours,* set in the 1908–1913 period.[58] After the Great War,

54 *Mukallidliklerimiz* and *Meşrutiyet* were published in 1910 and 1911 respectively; see Syed Tanvir Wasti, "Saïd Halim Pasha – Philosopher Prince", *Middle Eastern Studies,* 44, 1, (January 2008): 85–104.

55 Ahmet Seyhun, "Saïd Halim Pasha: an Ottoman statesman and Islamist thinker (1865–1921)". Ph.D diss., McGill University, 2002.

56 *The Muslim Standard*, 22 December 1921.

57 Shahid, *Writings of Muhammad Marmaduke William Pickthall*, 293.

58 The novel was written in 1921 and published in 1922. For details, see the foreword by Abdal Hakim Murad to *The Early Hours, A novel by Marmaduke Pickthall* (Cambridge: The Muslim Academic Trust, 2010). A passage notes, "There were some men, by nature purely imitative – the same who at first had wished to imitate the manners of the Franks too closely – who now, perceiving that unbridled nationalism was beloved of Europe, turned from the Muslim aim at universal brotherhood and remembered that they, too, possessed a nationality" (248).

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Halim Pasha was interned in harsh conditions in Malta and then allowed to live in Rome, where he was killed by Armenian assassins in 1921. Though he died before the Turkish Assembly's decisions to sweep away the old order, he was seeking a way out for a reconfigured Islamic polity after the recent debacles:

> No doubt considerable and urgent changes will have to be brought about in the legislation of the Empire, if it is to survive in the struggle for existence. But these changes should not consist of a renunciation of the main concepts of Islamism, but their adaptation to the modern conditions of life [...] The despotic regimes which in truth succeeded the era of freedom of discourse practiced under the reign of the first four Caliphs [...] were a violation of the letter and the spirit of Islam.[59]

Pickthall also expressed similar hopes in an article in *Islamic Review* published in November 1923 – the period after the abolishment of the office of Ottoman sultan, but not yet the caliphate:

> [But] now, thank Allah, we have been given a great opportunity of revival and reform. The Khilafat of Islam is now no longer identified with a military despotism, nor with the political ambitions of a certain country. It is for us, the Muslims of the world, to make it once more what it ought to be, the standard of Islam [...] showing mankind the only way of human progress.[60]

Pickthall acknowledged his intellectual debt to Halim Pasha in the Madras lectures – though with no hint to their troubled past:

> [He was] a man acquainted with the thought of England, France and Germany, as well as with the teaching of the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet, and the commentaries of the learned on that teaching. He was thus well qualified to advise the Muslim world as to its future policy, and his advice was not *Auropalaşmaq* (Europeanise) but *Islamlaşmaq* (Islamise).[61]

59 *L'Empire Ottoman et la Guerre Mondiale* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000), 101. Translated from the French by the author. This essay by Halim Pasha was written shortly prior to his death.

60 Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, "The True Khilafat", *The Islamic Review*, XI, 11 (November 1923), 391.

61 Pickthall, *Cultural Side of Islam*, 130.

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Islamlaşmaq was also the title of one of Halim Pasha's essays – which Pickthall variously described as "remarkable",[62] and "an epoch-making work".[63] Pickthall cited it extensively, particularly in the eighth lecture, "The City of Islam":

> The principle points of Prince Saïd Halim's presentment of the modern Islamic State may be thus summarised. The distinction between secular and religious in matters of administration, education, policy and general dealing has no right whatever to exist in the Islamic State. Where Allah is King the secular becomes religious. All that would remain would be persons specially learned in matters of religion, the reverence paid to whom would be entirely owing to their knowledge as displayed in actual work, from among their number the members of the Legislative body would be elected by the people's representatives. In short, the first thing to be done is to get rid altogether of that "pseudo-priesthood" to which Saïd Halim refers as the Chief Misleader of the Muslim World.[64]

Pickthall shared Saïd Halim's distaste for a "narrow and hidebound" category of 'ulema, "who sought knowledge only in a limited area, the area of Islam as they conceived it – not the world-wide, liberating and light giving religion of the Qur'an and the Prophet".[65]

Halim Pasha's writings emphasised man's need for divine guidance because rational endeavour was limited. Without divine guidance,

> man would never have known the natural, moral and social laws, on which human happiness depends [...] The cardinal point is that authority, the basis of order and stability in society, can only proceed from an incontestable and uncontested source.[66]

62 Ibid., 37.

63 *Islamic Culture,* I (January 1927), 111. *Islamlaşmaq* was translated from the French to Turkish by Mehmet Akif for the journal *Sebilürreşad* in 1918–1919.

64 Pickthall, *Cultural Side of Islam*, 141. The eighth lecture's title mirrors St Augustine's "The City of God".

65 Pickthall, *Cultural Side of Islam*, 33. The Hyderabadi 'alim Maulana Zauq Ali Shah criticised Pickthall in *Tarjuman al-Qur'an* (Feb. 1933) for his claim in the Madras lectures that the Qur'an does not make obedience to the Prophet essential for salvation. Pickthall responded the next month in Urdu with supporting verses from the Qur'an concluding: "kindly do not diminish the Qur'an's grandeur by associating it with sectarian narrow-mindedness".

66 "The Reform of Muslim Society by The Late Prince Saïd Halim Pasha", *Islamic Culture*, I (January 1927), 114–15.

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Pickthall endorsed this socio-political function of religion, but provided a sense of the sacred absent in Saïd Halim's writings. For example, in his reflection on the responsibilities of the head of state, Pickthall observed,

> In relation to the people he is an absolute monarch, but in relation to the Shari'ah he is on a level with his poorest subject, he is merely a Muslim among Muslims, looking forward to the Day of Judgement when he will have to render an account of all his works.[67]

The lecture "The City of Islam" listed twenty examples of the "basic principles of the Shari'ah" that would form a basis for the framing of new laws, encompassing civil and gender rights, public morality, military aspects and foreign affairs. For those living in the charmed world of Hyderabad, a kingdom the size of France, with its own currency and railway system, and a Muslim ruler doing much for religious causes, the project of a society founded on Islamic principles perhaps seemed within grasp. The Nizam himself would describe his dominion as "the largest Islamic state".[68]

Pickthall was directly responsible for bringing Halim Pasha to an Urdu-reading public. The essay in the opening issue of *Islamic Culture* in January 1927, "The Reform of Muslim Society, by the late Prince Saïd Halim Pasha", was translated by the *Darul Ta'leef wa Tarjuma* and published in 1928 as "*Khudah ki badshahat*" – the Kingdom of God, with a foreword by Pickthall.[69] The translation to Urdu was undertaken by Syed Hashmi Fareedabadi, Pickthall's "close personal friend".[70] Iqbal – who was invited to deliver the Madras lectures after Pickthall – referred to Saïd Halim Pasha in his famous epic poem in Persian, *Javid Nam*a published in 1932, though whether this was a result of Pickthall's earlier lecture is not known.

The press reportage and word-of-mouth communications of the time may well have inspired other Muslim activists of the period to retain the vision of an Islamic polity and Islamic state. For example, also associated with *Darul Ta'leef* was Maulana Abu Muhammad Musleh, founder of the journal *Tarjuman*

67 Pickthall, *Cultural Side of Islam*, 133.

68 IOR, R/1/1/2781; Political Resident to the Political Secretary, Government of India, 19 December 1935.

69 *Islamic Culture*, II (January 1928), 159–60. This was originally "Les Institutions politiques dans la société musulman" – see Wasti, "Saïd Halim Pasha – Philosopher Prince", 97. It is likely that the translation from French to English was by Pickthall. The *Islamic Culture*'s review commended the publication, "every educated Muslim ought to have a copy of it".

70 Archives of the East London Mosque Trust (ELMT), CR/0002; see letter from Pickthall to A.S.M. Anik, 17 February 1931.

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al-Qur'an, launched in Hyderabad in 1932. The *Tarjuman* included a section entitled *Hukumat-e Ilahi* (Governance by Divine Laws), which followed the line of Pickthall and Halim Pasha on the sovereignty of the Shariah: "Religion is just another term for governance by Divine laws (*hukumat-e ilahi*). Shari'at means a corpus of laws that are a necessary requisite for such governance".[71] This editorial line was pursued by Abul A'la Maududi when he took over as owner-editor of the journal from Maulana Musleh a year later.[72]

Pickthall had also been occupied on his translation of the Quran, which by 1928 was a third complete. He applied for two years leave from Hyderabad's Department of Education and was given the sabbatical at full pay.[73] When the translation was published it did not shy away from recognising aspects of an Islamic polity: it included several references to the responsibilities of the "State", as well as the Prophet's role serving as "head of state", giving "guidance to a growing social and political community", and "laying down a constitution".[74] The work was well-received in Hyderabad, with *Tarjuman al-Qur'an* publishing a complementary review by Pickthall's friend Hashmi Fareedabadi.[75]

Reviving the Khilafat?

On his return from the sabbatical in 1930, Pickthall resumed his educational and editorial duties. Later in the year he was called on to serve as secretary to Hyderabad's delegation to the discussions on constitutional reforms convened in London. The delegation left Bombay in September, led by Sir Akbar Hydari (knighted in 1928).[76] The Nizam charged his representatives with a delicate balancing act: to ensure Hyderabad's internal autonomy was preserved in any new constitutional arrangement without jeopardising the proposed federal

71 *Tarjuman al-Qur'an*, October-November 1932, 41.

72 Abul A'la Maududi became owner-publisher of *Tarjuman al-Qur'an* in 1933. In addition to the quotation from the *Muslim* at the start of this chapter, Maududi cited Pickthall's account of killings of Muslim civilians in Thrace in *Al-Jihad fi al-Islam*, (first published in 1930); see edition published by Markazi Maktabah-e Islami, Delhi, 1979, 571.

73 Ashraf, *Behruni Arbab-i-Kamal Aur Hyderabad,* 273–78.

74 See the Introduction, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*; also the introductory note to *Surah Tahrim* and footnotes to verses 8:41 and 59:7.

75 *Tarjuman al-Qur'an*, March-April 1933. The reviewer noted that "the efforts of Pickthall Sahib are the best possible available at the present time".

76 IOR, R/1/5/66, Hyderabad Political Notebook, 1919–1945; Sir Akbar Hydari was deemed "Official Delegate", with three advisors: Sir Richard Chevenix Trench and Nawab (later Sir) Mehdi Yar Jung and Sir Amin Jung.

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structure of an independent India. Pickthall was to be very discreet of his role at this "First Round Table Conference", though he must have been privy to the confidential discussions:

> In the case of advisors, the limitations of space make it necessary to restrict the number of secretaries present at the meetings of the Conference and its Committees, in this case to three. It is understood that the following have been deputed as secretaries
>
> MR. K.M. PANNIKER
>
> MR. M. PICKTHALL
>
> MR. N.S. SABHA RAO[77]

Pickthall appears to have irked the Conference organisers, because the official records refer to him in surprisingly intemperate terms, "the reports of the doings of the Hyderabad Delegation by their Secretary, that fatuous creature Marmaduke Pickthall, were so bad that one couldn't follow their work at all [...]".[78]

During his stay in London, Pickthall characteristically resumed contact with the Muslim community and also provided advice on the mosque projects. He was keen to ensure that the funds for a mosque in the East End were retained separately from the "Nizam's Mosque Fund", so that there would be "a memorial to the late Mr. Sayyid Ameer Ali".[79]

The Nizam and Sir Akbar Hydari had other plans for Pickthall on his return. These required sanction from the Political Resident, who in turn referred the matter to Delhi in July, 1931:

> Pickthall's term of appointment as Principal, Government High School, Hyderabad, will expire on the 6 January, 1932, and the Nizam's Government have written to ask for permission for the extension of his services for a further period of three years at the end of which the matter could be further considered. It may be mentioned that the Nizam's Government propose to establish a Publicity Bureau in the Hyderabad State and that an article has appeared in the *Mushir-i-Deccan* of Hyderabad of the

77 IOR, L/P&S/13/602, 340.

78 IOR, File No. 169-P/Sec of 1931. Foreign and Political Department Notes. Serial Nos. 1–7, 1.

79 ELMT/CR/0002; Pickthall's letter to Mr. S.M. Anik, 17 February 1931. Pickthall also mentions that he was sent off at Victoria Station by Khalid Sheldrake, prominent in British Muslim activities.

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> 14 June 1931, that Pickthall is to be appointed Publicity Officer in addition to his own duties as Principal of the Chadarghat High School.[80]

The response was positive. Preparations were also afoot for Pickthall to accompany the Nizam's sons on a tour of Europe, including performing the Hajj on the return journey.[81] Their journey may have been timed to coincide with the second of the Round Table Conferences, scheduled to start in London in September 1931. Pickthall was no longer the Hyderabad delegation's secretary – those who considered him the "fatuous creature" may have had a word in high places.

However, an amazing episode befitting an adventure novel now intervened. The former Ottoman Caliph-Sultan, living in exile in southern France, had been receiving a pension from the Nizam. It seems that at the suggestion of Maulana Shaukat Ali, the former Khilafatist leader and brother of Mohamed Ali Jauhar, the possibility arose of the marriage of Abdul Majid's daughter, Princess Durru Shehvar, with the Nizam's elder son and heir, Azam Jah. Akbar Hydari and Pickthall were soon to be despatched on an even more delicate mission than the earlier First Round Table Conference.

It is a moot point whether the idea to link Hyderabad's Asifiya dynasty with the royal Ottoman family was Shaukat Ali's or the Nizam's himself. It may have emerged in the course of one of their meetings, as Shaukat Ali recalled in a newspaper article,

> In the course of the conversation when I referred to the Turkish Princess, the Khalifa's daughter; the Nizam himself asked me how I liked the idea of his son marrying the Khalif's daughter: this enquiry was as I had contemplated. I assured the Nizam that the proposal was an excellent one. I left him at midday. The Nizam [...] directed me to try my best to bring about this relationship and afterwards wrote to me. He also issued similar instructions to Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall and Sir Akbar Hydari.[82]

Sir Terence Keyes, the Political Resident, seemed to have some inkling on what was afoot, but his note to Delhi reflects the way the Raj saw the basest intentions in others:

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80 IOR, R/1/1/2143, 1931. Letter from the Resident to Sir Charles Watson, 2 July 1931.

81 Ibid., letter from Political Resident to the Political Secretary, Government of India, 15 August 1931.

82 IOR, R/2/73/101, 1931; "Translation of Moulana Showketh Ali's letter from England published in the Rahber-i-Deccan of the 22 November 1931".

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> An extraordinary development has taken place. Shaukat Ali, who I thought had merely come here to cadge money and try to commit the Nizam politically, really came as a marriage broker on behalf of the ex-Sultan of Turkey [...] Prince Ahmed Tevhid, the Sultan's nephew, who was here the other day and is probably coming back again, has not yet seen His Exalted Highness [the Nizam].[...] Would you kindly let me know if there is any objection to His Exalted Highness entering into more direct negotiations with the ex-Caliph. He pays him a pension of course. He confided in Hydari before he sailed, and I think that Shaukat Ali is on the same ship.[83]

Pickthall would have accompanied Hydari and Shaukat Ali, making it his second trip within a year. Though the Political Resident was well informed, apparently the word had not been passed on to the Foreign Office in London. It was caught unawares, only realising what was happening after a call in early October from the Turkish ambassador, Ahmed Ferit Bey:

> His Excellency said that Shaukat Ali, who he described as an adventurer and of Syrian origin, was seeking to invoke a pan-Moslem conference in Palestine. Part of the programme of this conference would be to choose a Caliph. Shaukat Ali, the Ambassador said, had had many conversations at Nice with the former Caliph, Abdul Majid, who now resides there, and it was Shaukat Ali's design to link up the Indian Moslem princes and Abdul Majid.[84]

At the same time, the Political Resident was advising Delhi as follows, "the Government of India should not put any obstacle in the way of the marriage is the opinion very strongly held by me as by this the whole Moslem world would be antagonised".[85] Meanwhile, Hydari and Pickthall were having meetings with Abdul Majid II's representatives in London. Both the ex-Caliph and the Nizam seemed to be entering a business transaction rather than cementing a matrimonial alliance, with cables exchanged to and fro between Hydari and

83 Ibid., letter from Sir Terence Keyes, Political Resident, to Sir Charles Watson, Political Secretary, Government of India, Delhi, dated 20 August, 1931.

84 IOR, R/1/1/2173 (2), 1931; letter from G.W. Rendel of the Foreign Office to the Under-Secretary of State, India Office. The Turkish ambassador was ill-informed because Shaukat Ali was not of Syrian-origin, but from Rampur in India. Perhaps he was thinking of Shakib Arslan!

85 IOR, R/2/73/101; Sir Terence Keyes to Sir Charles Watson, 3 October 1931.

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the Nizam on the terms of the dowry, the value of the trousseau, allowances, clauses in case of a divorce and rights of succession.[86] The latter at the time was reputed to be amongst the richest in the world. The Nizam even broke off the negotiations with the ex-Caliph, whom he referred to as the Khalifa, over the financial terms, but then offered a way out through Akbar Hydari and Pickthall's intervention:

> [...] it is absolutely necessary for you [Hydari] to go yourself to Nice in company of Pickthall and to find out what is the Khalifa's explanation on this subject as his envoys refused to take to him my decision on the matter [...] You should ask the Khalifa to give me this assurance in writing and signed by him in the shape of a letter addressed to me.[87]

Hydari and Pickthall duly arrived in Nice (staying at the Hotel Ngresco), and their diplomatic skills breached the rift. The ex-Caliph wrote back – signing himself as Khalifa – to the Nizam in conciliatory terms: "after the communication made to me by Sir Akbar Hydari and Mr. Pickthall. I am happy to address myself direct to my brother".[88] This was followed by a more detailed letter that Pickthall may well have drafted, cognisant of his patron's temperament:

> [...] Feeling sure that Your Exalted Highness, who has such high ideals and qualities, will consider my daughter as his own daughter and will do everything that is necessary for the honour and prestige of both parties, I think it is unnecessary to discuss such [financial] matters. As Sir Akbar Hydari and Mr. Pickthall suggested to me, I write direct to Your Exalted Highness [...] Your Exalted Highness being the model of fatherly affection will understand the feelings of a father. I hereforth confide my daughter first to the safekeeping of Almighty God and afterwards to Your fatherly protection. And I leave it to Your Exalted Highness, My august brother, to arrange everything in accordance with the dignity of our two houses.[89]

The Nizam's heir apparent Azam Jah had arrived in Nice, accompanied with his younger brother, Muazzam Jah. Fortunately Azam Jah and the princess took a liking for each other. At the same time, Muazzam was considered a

86 Ibid., Sir Akbar Hydari's cable to the Nizam, 13 October 1931. The clause on the rights of succession stated that it would be "in all circumstances on male issue of the marriage".

87 Ibid., The Nizam's cable to Sir Akbar Hydari, 17 October 1931.

88 Ibid., Caliph Abdul Majid to His Exalted Highness the Nizam, dated 23 October 1931.

89 Ibid., The ex-Caliph Abdul Majid II's cable to the Nizam, 27 October 1931.

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suitable husband for Abdul Majid II's niece. The double marriage took place on 12 November 1931 in Nice, with the ex-Caliph himself performing the *Nika*. The signatories to the wedding contract included members of the Ottoman royal family as well as Hydari, Pickthall and Trench, and the British Consul in Nice, Wiseman Keogh. Also present at the ceremony were Lady Hydari and Muriel Pickthall.[90] The Nizam raised the pension he was conferring on the ex-Caliph forthwith. In a photograph taken on the wedding day Pickthall can be seen standing by Sir Akbar Hydari, who donned the traditional Bohra turban for the occasion (Figure 5.1).

The Foreign Office was sanguine about the developments, unlike the Government of India. For the former, there was as much need to be alarmed as the French government might be "if a Parma prince marries a princess of the

FIGURE 5.1 *Group photo of the wedding of ex-Caliph Abdul Majid II's daughter Princess Durru Shehvar, with the Nizam's elder son and heir, Azam Jah. Pickthall is seen standing by Sir Akbar Hydari (wearing traditional Bohra Muslim headgear) November 1931* REPRODUCED IN *PICTORIAL HYDERABAD*, CHANDRAKANTH PRESS, 2007, 2ND. EDITION.

90 *The Times* (London), 13 November 1931. Muriel's presence suggests that she, like her husband, had a sociable and gregarious side.

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House of Orleans".[91] For Delhi, and Sir Terence Keyes in Hyderabad, it was a problem, and those responsible were pin-pointed:

> I believe that Pickthall and Shaukat Ali were actually working for the Nizam to become Khalifa of Islam, on the ex-Khalifa's death; and hoped to make it certain by the Turkish marriages. I also believe that, though he [the Nizam] may have toyed with the idea for a time, he has dropped it. There has been a very considerable number of articles not only in the vernacular Press throughout India, but in English papers also referring to the prospect of the Khalifate being revived in the person of Hyderabad or his eldest son. [...] Ridiculous as it may seem, this foolish intrigue has caused some uneasiness in Turkey, though it can have but a passing interest. In India, however, the consequences of a more open revival of the scheme would be much more serious.[92]

Pickthall's duties were not over after the wedding. He was given the task of dissuading the ex-Caliph from accompanying the royal party back to Hyderabad, because this had been vetoed by the Political Resident.[93] He also had to organise their travel arrangements from Marseilles to Bombay, and was "commanded" to accompany them.[94] The intention to break the journey in the Hejaz for a pilgrimage was no longer possible because of an outbreak of cholera in the region.

How far did Pickthall subscribe to Shaukat Ali's ambitions for a revival of the caliphate via the Asifiya House? Further archival research is awaited, and while it is true that he "became a courtier",[95] there is perhaps more to his Hyderabad legacy than that. He was to continue working in Hyderabad a further four years, happy in his contributions to the State's educational work and also editing *Islamic Culture*. He applied for retirement in 1934, which was granted via a *firman* from the Nizam. Pickthall left Hyderabad in January 1935, and the State allocated a monthly state pension of 500 kildars.[96] He continued for a while his association with *Islamic Culture* and the State. His article on Hyderabad in

91 IOR, R/1/1/2173 (2), 1931; remark by George Rendel.

92 IOR, Hyderabad Political Notebook, Volume II, (1919–1945); p125. Cited as "Important parts of a letter No. 788-R [C], dated the 19 May 1933", from the Resident, Sir Terence Keyes, to the Political Department. The reference is to H.A.R. Gibb's book published in 1932.

93 IOR, R/2/73/101; Political Resident to the Nizam, letter dated 5 December 1931.

94 IOR, R/2/73/101; Hydari's cable to the Nizam, 28 October 1931.

95 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall,* 60.

96 Ashraf, *Behruni Arbab-i-Kamal Aur Hyderabad,* 280. A facsimile of the Nizam's *firman* is provided on p. 282.

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the widely-read *Geographical Magazine* included tributes to Akbar Hydari and the Nizam, but also forebodings of the future: "It would be indeed a calamity if the Nizam's prestige, which means so much to India in the way of culture and stability, were to be thrown into the political hotchpot".[97] Retirement did not mean an end to his concern for the umma. For example, in June 1935, a year before his demise, Pickthall wrote to his friend Sir Nizamat Jung in Hyderabad:

> The only great Islamic project which I have in view – it cannot really be called a project, rather a desire – is to do something towards welding together, consolidating and strengthening in zeal the large Muslim population left in Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia. Budapest should be the focus, and the point of wedge into Europe.[98]

Perhaps this was the project that Pickthall and Aubrey Herbert had been discussing in 1920, but was curtailed by the move to India.

The Ebb and Flow of Allegiances

The term "loyal enemy" is one that is often applied to Pickthall. It was the title selected by Anne Fremantle for her biography, drawing on Aubrey Herbert's description of Pickthall as "England's most loyal enemy".[99] Aubrey Herbert was a close friend of Pickthall's and his assessment would not have been made lightly. Many have followed Anne Fremantle's footsteps and invoked these form of words. Sarah Pickthall, for example, provides moving evocations of her great-uncle's life in her website *www.loyalenemy.co.uk*.[100] Similarly, Jamie Gilham's study on British converts to Islam, which includes a fulsome account of Pickthall's political activities, is entitled "Loyal Enemies".[101] He notes the observation of a Scotland Yard intelligence chief, "Pickthall may be regarded as somewhat of a crank, but in all probability, at heart he is a loyal British subject".[102] Another distinguished Pickthall biographer, Peter Clark, refers to

97 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Hyderabad, the Heart of India", *Geographical Magazine*, no. 6, 1936, 420.

98 Zahir Ahmed, *"Life's Yesterdays, Glimpses of Sir Nizamat Jung and his Times"* (Bombay: Thaker & Co, 1945), 36.

99 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 7.

100 The strap line of Sarah Pickthall's site is "Loyal Enemy, Inspired by the life of Marmaduke Pickthall".

101 Gilham, *Loyal Enemies.*

102 Ibid., 228.

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Pickthall's sympathy with the "benevolent despotism" of British rule in Egypt in the 1906–7 period.[103]

Pickthall's early record does suggest an ambiguity that was shared with Muslim contemporaries. His decision to put on a British army uniform in 1918 is an example – he could have claimed exemption as a conscientious objector, but did not. Other prominent Muslims active in the Woking Mosque and London Prayer House took similar steps to Pickthall's. For example, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, obtaining early retirement from the Indian Civil Service, joined the West Kent Fusiliers in 1914 and was a willing volunteer in the British propaganda effort during the rest of the Great War; similarly Khalid Sheldrake, vice-president of the Central Islamic Society was a sergeant in the Royal Defence Corps.[104] The circumstances and pressures of that period are difficult to envisage today, but what remains odd is Pickthall's justification. He claimed that he put on the uniform in 1918 because of faith in the pledges made by the British government relating to Ottoman territories.[105] This was disingenuous, because by 1918 it was clear that the British, in providing military backing to the Arab Revolt from 1917, had broken their pledge of non-interference in the Caliph's authority in the *jaziratul Arab*.[106] The inner voice and good judgement can ebb and flow depending on circumstances and one's own volition. There is a natural inclination for past deeds to be remembered in a sympathetic light. This is akin to Yusuf Ali's claim in 1925 to have played a part in the "inception of the Khilafat movement", for which there is no evidence.[107]

The term "loyal enemy" may apply to Pickthall during the Great War and immediately afterwards, but his actions subsequently point to a rupture. His journey from England to India was more than a geographical one. It was also accompanied by an unequivocal allegiance to the interests of the "South" rather than the "North", be it Muslims, Indians, Asia, the East. He certainly did not feel himself bound by the declaration the Raj required to sign in 1925 to abstain from "politics" in Hyderabad. If Britain had not stood by its pledges to Indian Muslims, why should he? Aubrey Herbert died in 1923, so in making his

103 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall,* 16.

104 For Abdullah Yusuf Ali's war record see M.A. Sherif's *Searching for Solace, A Biography of Abdullah Yusuf Ali* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 1994); for Khalid Sheldrake's role, see TNA, FO 371/3060/16759, letter dated 26 August 1917.

105 "Endurance and Sacrifice", *The Islamic Review,* VIII, 1 (January 1920), 16; see also the extract from Pickthall's speech at the Parsi Assembly Hall in 1922 at the outset of this chapter.

106 The British press began reporting a British military presence in and around the Hejaz from 1916 – see *Daily Mail*, 23 June 1916 and *Times*, 9 January 1917, 9 October 1917.

107 In his presidential address at the All-India Tanzim Conference, Aligarh in December 1925, Yusuf Ali noted, "As you know, I took my part in the inception of the Khilafat movement and its exposition in high places" (Amritsar: The Tanzim Committee 1925).

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oft-quoted description he would not have known of Pickthall's political course in the years that followed.

Whether in preceding decades or the last twenty or so years of his life, Pickthall's inner voice was a deeply religious and humane one. Even prior to embracing Islam, he had fasted on the day of his marriage in respect of the sacred sacrament. Among the oft-repeated phrases in *khutbas* and lectures to Muslim audiences was "Die before you die", indicating submission to God and the need to distance from worldly pomp and show. Speaking of the Prophet, he said "I have come to love him as one loves a friend".[108] As a teenager travelling in the Levant, he wished "to understand how the poor Syrian viewed the world". He retained this concern for the less fortunate: in 1932, when approached in Hyderabad for help in raising funds for a mosque in London, he noted how the "poor people of the country are as much forgotten as the poor Muslims in the East End of London".[109] With his acquaintanceship of the likes of E.M. Forster and reputation as a novelist, he could easily have slipped into the agnostic Bloomsbury set, but his religious values and social conscience led him to a different path. Would a person with such noble instincts be Janus-like with respect to political allegiances?

The distinct nature of Pickthall's trajectory from the 1920s onwards is apparent if compared to Abdullah Yusuf Ali's life and experiences. Abdullah Yusuf Ali also left England for India in 1920. He too had a tinge of regret about the Great War, which was "supposed to have killed Imperialism, Militarism and Racial Domination", but held store that "the British Democracy and the British people" would do "justice to India".[110] Pickthall called on Indians not to follow "foreign doctrines"; Yusuf Ali "knew no institutions more responsive to local needs than British institutions".[111] Where Pickthall looked to Halim Pasha for inspiration, Yusuf Ali, in his essay "The Religious Polity of Islam" referred to the Egyptian shaikh Ali Abdul Raziq's *Al-Islam-wa-usul-ul-hukum*, "in which he argues strongly in favour of the separation of Church and State in Islam".[112] While Pickthall was becoming a strong advocate of an Islamic polity based on the Shariah, Yusuf Ali continued to support Britain's proposals for Indian constitutional reform and speaking up in support of actions that would "help promote British and Indian unity".[113] The tragedy for Yusuf Ali was that in spite

108 *The Islamic Review*, 5, 2–3 (March 1917), 53–9.

109 ELMT/CR/0002; Pickthall's letter to Mr. Anik is dated 3 March 1932.

110 Sherif, *Searching for Solace,* 56 and 62.

111 Ibid., 87, n. 26.

112 Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *Religious Polity of Islam*, (Hyderabad: Islamic Cultural Office, 1933), Progressive Islam Pamphlets, No. 8.

113 Sherif, Searching for Solace, 85, n. 12.

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of being loyal, he was betrayed by the Empire he loved. In the first of his spells at Islamia College, the Raj placed an English undercover intelligence officer on his staff, who assumed the identity of an Oxford graduate specialising in English literature. The principal "was so enraptured by the charm and confidence of his protégé that he never thought to seek official corroboration of his Oxford qualification".[114] Yusuf Ali was in anguish on discovering of the Peel Commission's plans to partition Palestine and create a Jewish state in the more fertile areas – in his view a breach of the terms of the British mandate.[115] Pickthall was perhaps more astute in abandoning any expectation of honourable conduct by the British government by the 1920s.

However, political allegiances are not a measure of personal piety, a sense of the sacred or even social conscience. Both men were dedicated to making the Quran accessible to an English-reading public. Similarly both were dedicated to the cause of educational upliftment of Muslims, with Pickthall serving as headmaster at the Chadarghat High School from 1925–1928, and Yusuf Ali as principal of Islamia College in Lahore from 1925–1927 and also 1935–1937. Yet, there are interconnections between a religious perspective and political outlook.

Towards the end of his novel *The Early Hours* Pickthall presents a dialogue between the brave and stoical Ottoman soldier Camruddin, a supporter of the CUP, and his wife Gul-raaneh, who disapproves of such politics:

> "What is the goal of life, in your opinion?" asked Gul-raaneh scornfully; but she sat down before him.
>
> "It is surely not communion with a fellow-creature [Camdruddin replies]. That search must end in disappointment always. The soul of every living man and woman is solitary from the cradle to the grave unless it finds, by service, that communion with Allah for which, in truth, it was created. When that is found it is at one with all the other servants of Allah, but not before".
>
> "So you are a Sufi, are you?" said Gul-raaneh, interested.[116]

Camruddin did not reply. If this was Pickthall's voice as well, then the silence is not surprising: for him and like-minded Muslim reformer-revivalists, religiosity is not just about personal salvation but service to the collective, including its socio-political dimension.

114 Tim Crook, Tim, *The Secret Lives of a Secret Agent – the Mysterious Life and Times of Alexander Wilson* (London: Kultura Press, 2010).

115 Sherif, *Searching for Solace,* 122.

116 Pickthall, *The Early Hours*, 205. The Author would like to thank: The British Library Board, for access to India Office Records; archivists at the East London Mosque Trust and King's College, Cambridge, for help in locating Pickthall's letters.

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CHAPTER 6

Pickthall, Ottomanism, and Modern Turkey

Geoffrey P. Nash

If the East became the great love of Pickthall's life from the moment he set foot on Egyptian soil in 1894, it wasn't until the outbreak of the Ottoman constitutional revolution in 1908 that this love took on an intense political focus. In this essay I intend to distinguish the factors that differentiate Pickthall's early travels in Egypt-Syria-Palestine, the key experience behind his subsequent fictional representation of Arabs, from the impulse that led to a decade or more of political and religious struggle on behalf of Ottoman Turkey. Turning points in Pickthall's love affair with the East, other than the two just mentioned, included the success of his first oriental novel, *Saïd the Fisherman* (1903); his public declaration of Islam in 1917; and the defeat of Turkey and fall of the Young Turks in 1918. If, as Peter Clark argued, writings such as *The Valley of the Kings* and *Oriental Encounters* demonstrate Pickthall's awareness of a nascent Arab nationalism,[1] *The Early Hours*, his retrospective novelistic paean to the cause of the Young Turk revolution which did not appear until 1921, re-creates his belief in the destiny of the Turks to bring about a renovation of Islam. This chapter sets out to demonstrate not so much Pickthall's passionate engagement with and anger and bitterness at the eventual defeat of the Young Turks and their project for Turkey – the entire range of his articles in *New Age* amply demonstrate that – as the manner in which his early immersion in Arab and Islamic subjects in his fiction gave way to the creation of a discourse almost wholly centred on Ottoman Turkey's aspiration toward taking its place in modern civilisation underscored by a renewed Islam. It is necessary to consider the journalistic writings, beginning in 1911, to appreciate how the imaginative inspiration of Arabia and Arabian Islam eventually ceded to near obsessive identification with the religio-political fate of Ottoman Turkey.

Before looking in more detail at the changing stances Pickthall adopted toward Ottoman Arabs and Turks, I want to advert briefly to earlier, Victorian valorisations of Arabia and Turkey, specifically as these relate to the penetration of the modern (Western) world into the East. Though it would be difficult to discuss these outside of the terms set out by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, most are aware that the thesis of this work has been quite considerably revised

1 Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (London: Quartet, 1986), 89.

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since its first publication in 1978.[2] For the purposes of the discussion below, it is taken as read that the kind of "Orientalisms" on show in the work of the Western writers and thinkers I deal with are distinctive and varied, and in Pickthall's case, can be said to intersect with forms of Orientalism that Said never touched upon. I want at this point only to draw attention to a fundamental difference between Pickthall and a line of British travellers who were "sympathetic" towards the East. David Urquhart's valorisation, from the 1830s to the 60s, of the Ottoman Empire in pre-modern, pre-Tanzimat terms; Wilfrid Scawen Blunt's espousal of the aristocracy of Arabia's "desert kingdoms" in the 1880s, and T.E. Lawrence's public advocacy of the monarchic cause of the Hashemites in Arabia after the Great War; singly and together differ in at least one key aspect to Pickthall's adoption of a divergent discourse concerning the modernisation of the Ottoman Empire.[3] Embracing the cause of reform from Tanzimat to the Young Turks, the discourse Pickthall propounds and celebrates is presented as the vehicle essential for the reform as well as the protection of Islam in the modern world. Where the three other British travellers proposed for the East similar forms of Orientalist stasis – Urquhart, an unmoving classic Ottomanism; Blunt, a personal romance of Arabian rulers evoking an imagined golden age; Lawrence, an ersatz version of Blunt's dream – Pickthall aligns himself with a discourse of reform and modernisation which I shall compare below to a theoretical framework recently termed "Ottoman Orientalism".

With Pickthall, one of the enigmas to emerge from his individual engagement with the East is the apparent aporia contained in the epithet Aubrey Herbert gave to him – "loyal enemy".[4] If we apply that conundrum to Pickthall's ambiguous engagement with British foreign policy, we see how in one context – the imperial imposition over Arabic-speaking Egyptians – it is endorsed, and in another – its calculated non-intervention on behalf of the Ottoman Empire in 1908, and from 1914–1921 active pursual of that empire's demolition – it is denounced. As regards Egypt, "Pickthall combined a respect for Cromer's firm rule with a disdain for the slogans of the Nationalists". Over the punishment of the villagers of Denshawai in 1907 his stance "coincided with that of the more imperially-minded British officials of Cairo".[5] *Children of the Nile* published

2 Edward W. Said. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978); A.L. Macfie, *Orientalism* (London: Pearson Education, 2002).

3 See Geoffrey P. Nash, *From Empire to Orient: Travellers to the Middle East 1830–1926*(London: I.B. Tauris, 2005); Nazan Çiçek, *The Young Ottomans: Turkish Critics of the Eastern Question in the Late Nineteenth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

4 Anne Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy* (London, Hutchinson, 1938), 7.

5 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 15–16, 17.

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in 1908, opposed the 1882 Egyptian revolution; Pickthall's stance seemed to have been confirmed when later that year he made a return journey to Egypt during which he had a "long talk with Lord Cromer".[6] However, if we are to believe both his biographers and M.A. Sherif, a major turning point also came that year with Britain's tacit endorsement of Austria's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina a few months after the outbreak of the Young Turk revolution. Expecting "Britain to support the Ottoman reformers, [...] his trust in Britain's 'even-handedness' was [...] shaken"; he "shared the Ottoman sense of betrayal" and "the progress towards disillusionment of the whole Turkish race".[7] So opened more than a decade's political struggle on Turkey's behalf, an experience that turned Pickthall into a "loyal enemy", but which evolved beyond that to the point where his activism in the Khilafat movement in India left him no longer even loyal.[8]

An Ardent Hope: Progressive Islam in Turkey

Our main sources for Pickthall's engagement with Islam in Turkey are *With the Turk in Wartime*, the political diary he composed during his visit to Istanbul in the early months of 1913;[9] the letters he wrote home to his wife Muriel during the same period, and the articles he published in the periodicals *New Age* and *The Nineteenth Century and After*. Much of this material propagandises on behalf of Turkey against the Balkan nations and their supporters in Britain in a manner already passionately set out in the 1912 pieces "The Black Crusade".[10] *With the Turk* discloses the rapid process by which Pickthall embraced a faith in the cause of the Young Turks or to be more precise that of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), and came to identify this almost completely with Islam itself. To properly focus his adherence to the Young Turks' brand of Islam we need to scrutinise his involvement with a wider process by which politics and religion were welded together by the watchwords "modern", "progress", and "freedom" bequeathed by the Young Ottomans to the makers of the

6 Fremantle, *Loyal,* 149.

7 Clark, Marmaduke Pickthall, 18; M.A. Sherif, *Brave Hearts: Pickthall and Philby, Two English Muslims in a Changing World* (Selangor, Malaysia, Islamic Book Trust, 2011),15; Fremantle, *Loyal*, 256. Sherif, op. cit., sees "a change of heart [...] between September 1908 and May 1909".

8 See M.A. Sherif's chapter in this volume.

9 Marmaduke Pickthall, *With the Turk in War Time* (London, J.M. Dent, 1914); Marmaduke Pickthall, "Letters from Turkey", *Islamic Culture* [hereafter *IC*], XI (1937), 419–32.

10 "The Black Crusade", *New Age* [hereafter *NA*] 1, 1–5 (1912).

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Turkish revolution. To these must be added the major late Ottoman ideologies, Ottomanism, Islamism, Turkism, debated at the time and ever since.[11] In point of fact Pickthall adopted positions broadly similar to those adopted by Turkish thinkers and activists at the time, though alongside them he also incorporated ideas that were peculiarly his own.

Pickthall's position when he arrived in Istanbul in March 1913 can be categorised as strongly pro-Ottoman. His engagement in political affairs was almost immediate as he came having set himself the task of ascertaining the number and extent of Muslims massacred in Macedonia in the ongoing war with Bulgaria.[12] Initially unwillingly located in the Pera district favoured by native Christians and Western visitors, he was gratified to find there that his first tutor in Turkish, a Roman Catholic Arab, was unprejudiced against Muslims and "a most enthusiastic Ottoman".[13] At this point unaware of the extent of the political divisions among Turks that threatened to tear the remainder of the empire apart, the Englishman established a close friendship with Ali Haidar Midhat, son of Midhat Pasha (1822–84), the former grand vizier and author of the 1876 Constitution, and discerned in all Muslims he met a hearty disdain for the old regime and a commitment to progress.

> Indeed, there has always been a number of devout Mohammedans who regard an unbridled despotism as of nature irreligious and disastrous to Islam. Learned doctors of Islam had a large hand in drawing up Midhat Pasha's Constitution, and the theological students in the capital were its fierce supporters. It is, therefore, a mistake to speak of El-Islam as unprogressive save by force of circumstances.[14]

Pickthall endorsed the message cementing Ottomanism, Islam and progress together, in his description of another tutor in Turkish, a young mullah to whom he gave the epithet "Modern Khôja".[15] Like him Pickthall believed Islam and Ottoman patriotism to be instrumental in creating "a nation out of diverse elements [...] a work of education which requires at least a generation to bear any fruit".[16] Also like the khôja, Pickthall had by then come to subscribe to the

11 See Bernard Lewis, "Islamic Revival in Turkey", *International Affairs* 1 (1952), 38–48.

12 See Letters to the Editor, "The Fate of the Mohammedans of Macedonia", *NA* 12, 16 (1913), 388–89.

13 Pickthall, *With the Turk*, 31.

14 Ibid., 36.

15 Ibid., ch. 8.

16 Ibid., 8.

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political cause of the CUP, admitting: "I myself was utterly misled [...] and went to Turkey with a prejudice against the Unionists which obscured my judgment for the first three months".[17] Though Pickthall gave the CUP wholehearted support this was not uncritical. He acknowledged their early blunders and criticised their patronising attitude towards Arabs, but still he bought into their project: "The Young Turks placed their whole idea in the future, their present hope in education and reforms" while their Liberal opponents were a privileged class, isolated from the people.[18] He wrote to his wife Muriel: "from the specimens I have seen [...] the Union of Progress people seem to me more patriotic than the Liberals".[19]

However, owing in part to his coming from outside and his immersion within the excitement of the moment, the Englishman's assessment of the CUP has an unnuanced look to us today. For example, General Mahmut Şevket Pasha (1856–1913), commander of the Third Army in Macedonia that quashed the counter-revolution in 1909 and who headed the cabinet for the next three years, was someone Pickthall hero-worshipped. Şevket, who led his government from the front with CUP ministers like Talaat Pasha (1874–1921) taking a back seat, was assassinated in June 1913 in an attempted coup. Pickthall had personally received chilling advance notice of this but was apparently unaware that the General distrusted and scorned the CUP.[20] We can understand Pickthall taking up an opposite stance in face of the forces that assailed the CUP – the Western press and internal enemies like the Liberals. But what of the slogan of the Muhammadan Union, the group consisting mainly of conservative Muslim students, which demonstrated against the "godless, atheistic Unionists" during the attempted counter-revolution?[21] Was his attribution of strong Islamic credentials to the CUP grounded in reality? In practical terms, that is in relation to an English Tory who at the time styled himself as "an Englishman devoted to the cause of Moslem progress",[22] and who up to his death held to a Disraelian formula that Britain was the "mentor of the Islamic world, [...] foster[ing] and assist[ing] its revival, using Turkey as interpreter and intermediary",[23] the question is largely academic.

17 Ibid., 151–52.

18 Ibid., 153–54.

19 Pickthall, "Letters from Turkey", 425.

20 Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993), 37; Ahmet Şeyhun, *Saïd Halim Pasha: Ottoman Statesman* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2003), 86.

21 Ahmad, *Making*, 36.

22 Marmaduke Pickhtall, "The Future of Islam", *NA* 12, 8 (1912), 175.

23 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 20.

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In the field of late Ottoman studies recent work has attempted to differentiate and accurate apportion the influence of Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkism upon the parties that shaped the revolution. Recent academic views of the praxis of the CUP, especially in government after 1912, stress their manipulation of these competing ideologies to fit the circumstances. M. Şükrü Hanioglu argues that CUP leaders used the three terms "interchangeably" to the point of "political opportunism".[24] Erik J Zürcher states they were consistent in their employment of them as "tools to be used to strengthen the position of the Ottoman Muslims". The CUP "tried to mobilize the population by appealing to sentiments of Muslim solidarity"; once in power "they reduced the influence of both the doctors of Islamic law – and Islamic law itself". They "felt free to use any and all of these ideologies as they saw fit to accomplish their ultimate goal of establishing a strong, modern and unified state".[25] On the other hand, the CUP did attract the support of the constitutionally-inclined ulema[26] who supported them for principled as well as for tactical reasons, including Said Nursi (1876–1960) the future creator of the *Nurculuk* movement, then a widely-admired liberally-inclined Muslim scholar.[27]

There is no evidence, however, to suggest any of this influenced Pickthall's espousal of the CUP's programme as one of Ottomanism and modernisation, although he must have had some appreciation of the ground of the early twentieth-century politics of Turkey. A discourse conjoining progressive political ideals and Islamic belief had operated among Young Ottoman thinkers from the time of Namık Kemal (1840–1888), whose poetry in particular famously invoked *hurriyet*, "freedom", and whose prose was instrumental in forming the debate over Islam's endorsement of the constitutional state.[28] How conversant Pickthall actually was with the tumult of ideas surrounding

24 Quoted in Şeyhun, *Saïd Halim*, 71.

25 Erik J. Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 230–31.

26 See Ismail Kara, "Turban and fez: *Ulema* as opposition", in Elisabeth Ozdalga, ed., *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy* (London: Routledge, 2005), 162–200.

27 "Three days after the Young Turk's military coup against Abdülhamid, Nursi delivered a speech titled 'Address to Freedom' [...] The speech was organized by the CUP, but although Nursi was one of its supporters, he nevertheless criticized the deleterious social consequences of their misrule", Colin Turner and Hasan Horkuc, *Said Nursi* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 14.

28 According to Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964, 210–11) Namik Kemal was the first Ottoman thinker to endeavour to explain Western ideas on liberalism, constitutionalism, natural rights and the sovereignty of the people to a Turkish readership. However in his "Letters on a Constitutional Regime"

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the Turkish experiment with constitutionalism, reform, Islam and nationalism is difficult to define clearly. I have not found evidence in the writings he produced during his Turkish sojourn, or indeed in those he wrote before he moved to India in 1920, that he had read any of the works of late Tanzimat thinkers such as Ahmet Cevdet Pasha (1822–95), or of Young Turk ideologues and secular radicals Ahmet Riza (1859–1930) or Abdullah Cevdet (1869–1932), or nationalist thinkers like Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924), or even those CUP supporters of Islamist orientation such as Mehmet Akif Ersoy (1873–1936) or Filibeli Ahmet Hilmi (1865–1914). Considering that, as Clark points out, Pickthall was "able to discuss politics and read newspapers" in Turkish only by the time he left Istanbul this is not surprising.[29] Anyway, if Zürcher is to be believed, figures such as the above, who are associated with the ideological underpinning to the CUP as a movement, did not affect the CUP in practical ways.[30]

The one exception as far as Pickthall's engagement with CUP thinkers is concerned is Mehmet Saïd Halim Pasha (1865–1921), great grandson of Mehmet Ali Pasha, Governor and later Khedive of Egypt. Pickthall met him while in Istanbul soon after which he became grand vizier, a position he held until 1917. However Said Halim's influence as a thinker did not impact on Pickthall until later.[31] By then the Young Turks had been defeated and Ottomanism was on the way to being proscribed in Atatürk's republic. However, being an Egyptian Saïd Halim had no interest in Turkism and had ceased to hold personal credence in Ottomanism after the outbreak of the Balkan Wars. At that moment the CUP's ideological orientation also changed: "it tried to make Turkism the formal ideology of the state while still upholding Ottomanism and Islamism, and from that point on, the relationship among the three identities of modern Turks has been subject to debate".[32] It is as an Islamist that Saïd Halim's ideas later held appeal for Pickthall. He would in time distance himself from the Young Turks. In his 1927 articles titled "Islamic Culture", he delimited the role of Turkey in

he left open the question as to whether such ideas derived from *shariat* and were a revivification of old Islamic forms of government, or were borrowed from Western nations.

29 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 23. In 1927 Pickthall mentioned by name Namık Kemal, and his follower, poet and theorist of Turkish literature Ekrem (Recaizade Mahmut), and praised Saïd Halim Pasha for his exposition of the principles of the *shariah* "in modern terms". Pickthall, "Islamic Culture", *IC* 1 (1927), 275.

30 Zürcher, *Young Turk*, 218.

31 See "The Reform of Muslim Society by the Late Saïd Halim Pasha", *IC*, 1 (1927): 111–35. For further articulation of his ideas see Şeyhun, *Saïd Halim*; Syed Tanvir Wasti, "Saïd Halim Pasha – Philosopher Prince", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 44, 1 (2008), 85–104. See also M.A. Sherif, above ch. 6.

32 Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 26.

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the pursuit of Islamic renewal: "The Turkish revolution was the small beginning of a great revival of Islam, of which the signs can be seen in every quarter of the Muslim world".[33]

Pickthall's political journalism, which had taken off so suddenly and seriously with the *New Age* "Black Crusade" series of articles in which Ottoman affairs had stood paramount, petered out in 1920 with a few letters in the same journal and an article on the Armenian massacres in *Foreign Affairs*. Talaat's death in Berlin the next year, like Saïd Halim's at the same time delivered by Armenian assassins, brought sadness to him, as he wrote to the young Anne Fremantle from Poona –

> [He] was a great friend of mine […] There was a memorial meeting for him in the old cemetery in the Muslim quarter, at which I presided and had to address more than ten thousand people. I tried to tell them what a brave man Talaat was, and how […] such a death, while working for the cause of Islam […] was really a most glorious martyrdom.[34]

Speaking to an audience largely comprised of Indian Muslims – a community which had long held the Ottoman Empire in high esteem – the passage encapsulates Pictkhall's attachment to the CUP and his own brand of Ottomanism which for him at the time had embodied the hopes of Islam. Talaat, who he had met in Istanbul in 1913, was part of the CUP triumvirate which ruled Turkey during the Great War and according to some was a key mover of the Armenian genocide. Here he is presented as a hero engaged in a struggle for Islam. It would be pointless to question the extent of Talaat's religious belief, let alone attempt to assess his heroic status. For Pickthall these were incorporated into his personal faith.

Ottoman Orientalism?

When he revived the figure of Marmaduke Pickthall in his landmark biography thirty years ago, Peter Clark referred to the conundrum of his subject's endorsement of British imperialism in Egypt, his support for Turkey's revolution and his consequent disaffection with his own government when he felt Britain's foreign policies worked against it. In a chapter written some years ago, trying to account for this apparently strange doubling I wrote of Pickthall's "curious

33 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Islamic Culture", *IC* 1 (1927), 175.

34 Fremantle, *Loyal*, 346.

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imperialist brand of thinking [...] curious because it expressed a sort of Turkish Islamic imperialism refracted through British imperialist eyes [...]"[35] This point was made without awareness of Selim Deringil's classic study *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876–1909* in which the distinguished Turkish historian discusses the Ottoman elite's sense of superiority towards the empire's eastern subjects and its anxiety to assert the modern aspects of the empire while the eyes of Western Orientalism were fixated on the exotic.[36] Accordingly, a figure such as the Ottoman translator Mehmed Izzed could speak of the benefits of Ottoman rule over the barbaric and savage races of the empire much as a British imperial pro-consul would about Britain's civilising mission in Africa or Asia. Deringil's argument crystallizes in his statement that the Ottoman rulers had "internalized much of the West's perception of 'the Orient', even as they were striving for authority".[37] The corollary of the official projection of an image of Ottoman modernity and the empire's membership of the family of advanced nations was the elite's patronising view of its more "backward" peoples and their lands.

Ussama Makdisi considers Deringal's work foundational for what in an article of the same name he terms "Ottoman Orientalism". According to Makdisi:

> Whether coded in secular or Islamic terms, Ottoman reformers acknowledge the subject position of the empire as the "sick man of Europe" only to [...] articulate an Ottoman modernity: a state and civilization technologically equal to and temporally coeval with the West but culturally distinct from and politically independent of it. This ambivalent relationship with the West was mirrored by an equally ambivalent relationship between Ottoman rulers and subjects [...] [who] they saw as fellow victims of European intrigue and imperialism [yet] at the same time [...] regarded [...] as backward and as not-yet-Ottoman, as hindrances as well as objects of imperial reform.[38]

35 Nash, *Empire*, 191. It is noteworthy that Pickthall largely collapses distinctions between the institutions of Sultan and Caliph in his writings on Turkey. For him, Ottoman Turkey's imperial political leadership and potential symbolic leadership of the Muslim world mattered the most.

36 Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains – Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I.B. Tauris), 150–52.

37 Deringil, *Well-Protected*, 157.

38 Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism", *American Historical Review* 107, 3 (2002), 768–96, 770.

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Makdisi's formulation of Ottoman Orientalism can be distilled into a tripartite division:

1. Christian West	2. Ottoman State	3. Ottoman Peripheries
Orientalism: classifies Islamic Orient as de-graded, stagnant and in need of European colonisation	Ottoman Orientalism: modernised Ottoman elite ruling from imperial centre in Istanbul characterise	subject peoples – Muslims (Arabs, Kurds) and non-Muslims (Armenians, Bulgarians) – as uncivilised, pre-modern, in need of reform

Makdisi argues "the nineteenth century saw a fundamental shift from [an] earlier imperial paradigm [the supposedly stable Ottoman imperial system] into an imperial view suffused with nationalist modernization […] an advanced imperial center reformed and disciplined backward peripheries of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire. This led to the birth of Ottoman Orientalism".[39] Deringal demonstrated how "[d]uring the reign of Abdul Hamid II there occurred a self-conscious attempt on the part of the Ottoman bureaucrat/intellectuals to recharge and redefine basic Islamic institutions, namely the *Şeriat* and the caliphate as the basis for a new Imperial/national identity".[40] The Ottoman ruling elite "subsumed a discourse of Islam within the imperative of Ottoman modernization".[41]

These points are significant when considering the demarcation I have already made regarding Pickthall's promotion of a progressive type of Orientalism in comparison with the static kind favoured by other "pro-oriental" travellers. It would be fair to say that very few westerners valorised the modernisation process put into place by successive late Ottoman rulers either in terms of the sincerity with which it was implemented or its viability for success. Fewer still understood the significance of the dimension of Islamic modernism given the currency of Western Orientalist ideas denigrating Islam as backward and beyond reform. Yet these are the areas where the educated reader of *With the Turk* can see Pickthall's Ottomanism confirmed. In whichever way he

39 Makdisi, "Ottoman", 769.

40 Deringal, *Well-Protected*, 48.

41 Makdisi, "Ottoman", 769.

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assembled his ideas on a reforming Ottomanism – and here we would need to revert to the curious doubling of British and Ottoman imperialisms already mentioned – the parallels between Pickthall's views and Ottoman Orientalism seem to me worth following through his writings even if they correspond mostly at one particular moment.

To speak of Pickthall adopting an Ottoman Orientalist discourse would require observing him defending the Ottoman Empire's progress toward modernity against Western Orientalism's claims that it was incapable of applying reforms of an effective kind. Then, moving to relations within the empire, it would be apparent that he adjudged the Ottoman bureaucracy as proactive in reforming those peoples of the empire deemed in need of reform. Such a formulation however is mainly applicable to his journalism on behalf of Ottoman Turkey; it is less relevant to his largely fictional representations of Egypt-Syria-Palestine and their Arab populations. It features mainly in the articles he wrote asserting the significance of Ottomanism as a unifying force among Muslims; later in his lecturers titled "Islamic Culture" delivered in India this approach softened.

As regards the non-journalistic writing, outside of the entirely Young Turk framing of *The Early Hours*, which is his last published novel, and to some extent *House of War*, Turkish characters do not feature centrally within Pickthall's oriental fiction. This is not so surprising given that the setting is almost entirely Arabic-speaking lands (Egypt, greater Syria and Yemen). Furthermore, it might be argued these works are predominantly concerned with juxtaposition of mainly pre-modern Middle Eastern societies with modernising trends introduced by the Frank. This is a largely two-way process and the setting is one that involves encounter between indigenous, mainly Arab characters – Christian and Muslim – and Europeans, mainly British. The Ottoman dimension is mostly absent, and Pickthall is not much concerned with a tripartite division that includes the Turk. For that reason it is difficult to apply Ottoman Orientalism to these works. Moreover there is an implicit refusal to project these societies as exotic or as stagnant. Indeed there is a positive dimension in which his intent is to validate and defend the people who populate the novels against Orientalist Frankish arrogance and charges of deceit, backwardness and imperviousness to reform.

Pickthall wrote in 1913: "It had been my lot in early youth to be immersed in the unconsciousness of the old East, to receive its spirit for a season and to know its charm".[42] As well as in the fiction this position particularly comes across in *Oriental Encounters* – a text we should remember was written towards

42 Pickthall, *With the Turk*, xi.

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the end of the Great War by a middle-aged man recalling his younger self a generation before. Here Arabs of various sectarian backgrounds are presented in culturally-constructed behaviours different (and in human terms often superior) to the Western traveller's and those of his compatriots with whom they periodically engage. The text is one of cross-cultural explication, and is not intended as an exercise in celebration of the Arabs as exotic remnants of a premodern world. Nor does Pickthall set out to clearly demarcate them from their Turkish rulers. The latter do appear in, for example, a Qaim-makan whose support the young Englishman is taken to solicit on behalf of his plan to purchase a plot of local land. The official responds enthusiastically exhorting him to "set up [a] model farm […] [and] improve the native breeds of sheep and oxen", showing he is embedded in, if at the same time set above the local culture. Interestingly, the narrator's comment: "He might have been an Englishman but for the crimson fez upon his brow and chaplet of red beads, with which he toyed perpetually",[43] strongly hints towards a similarity if not an identity of roles between the Ottoman Turk and British imperial administrator. The Qaim-makan's modernising impulses are not satirised[44] so much as gently indulged. The scene may be adjudged a mature Turkophile's gloss on an incident of his youth, as it indicates both his sympathies toward an organically functioning society threatened by the intervention of outside Frankish intruders, and his acknowledgment of an official who is clearly a product of Tanzimat educational reforms and of the Sultan's time "('His Imperial Majesty' he called Him always)" and therefore ready to accept bribes. Here Pickthall marries the Arabs' qualities of warmth and humanity – unsullied by the cold utilitarianism of the British intruders – with the "natural governance" inflected by an impulse toward modernisation of a late Ottoman Turkish official.

The passage embeds a point of view not inconsistent with the political articles which largely predate it. In these too, Arabs can be celebrated but they are also placed under Turkish governance. British machinations towards unravelling this state of affairs – replacing the Ottoman Empire with Arab self-government under British tutelage – are roundly condemned. Pickthall's strong endorsement of Ottoman aspirations toward modernization contrast with the Western Orientalism of Turkophiles such as Mark Sykes;[45] this position also

43 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters: Palestine and Syria* (*1894-5-6*) (London: W. Collins, 1918), 212–13.

44 …or sneeringly dismissed as for example David Hogarth does in *A Wandering Scholar in the Levant*. See Geoffrey Nash, *Travellers to the Middle East from Burckhardt to Thesiger: An Anthology* (London: Anthem, 2011), 42–7.

45 See Nash, *Empire*, ch. 6.

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runs parallel to the desire of officials belonging to the Ottoman elite to disassociate from the Western taste for the exotic. "The effort to depict themselves as 'modern' or even 'normal' clashed head on with the West's relentless quest for the 'unchanging Orient'".[46] Pickthall's iterative use of the signifier "progress" in *With the Turk* placed him firmly on the side of Young Ottoman thinkers of the second constitutional period. He had in effect thrown in his lot with the modernising programme of Tanzimat reforms in the bureaucracy and education, which Şerif Mardin argues reified religion, linked it to culture, and turned it into an ideology, at least among the middle classes. Though he might occasionally express "a nostalgia for the looseness of the old society", alone amongst the Western travellers and Orientalists Pickthall knew Islam "had stopped being something which was lived and not questioned".[47]

In most of his journalism from 1913 onwards Pickthall's embrace of Ottomanism veers towards the CUP; like them he is not greatly interested in the provinces (the Balkans ones by then had all but disappeared) and rejects the decentralisation policy of the liberal Young Turk faction ("The League of Private Initiative and Decentralisation") led by Prince Sabaheddin (1887–1948). The journalism that incorporates intensification of Pickthall's support for Turkey against British projects to replace Ottoman leadership with Arab ones, sees him employing Ottoman Orientalist tropes vis-à-vis the progressive character of Turkey and the backwardness of non-Turks, and becomes "an articulation of a modern Ottoman *Turkish* nation that had to lead the empire's putative stagnant ethnic and national groups into modernity".[48]

> The Turks, as a white race, have a natural precedence over the many white races of the Muslim world [...] That the Turks are capable of understanding Europe more than any other race of Muslims is deserving of remembrance [...] If progressive Turkey must be crushed, as Europe says, then one day Europe will behold an Arab Empire, with little of the toleration and good temper of the Turks. Much as I love the Arabs and respect their many virtues, I recognize a difference in their mentality, which makes it most desirable, from Europe's standpoint, that the Turks should long remain the leaders of the Muslim world.[49]

46 Deringil, *Well-Protected*, 156.

47 Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 118.

48 Makdisi, "Ottoman", 769; italics in text.

49 Pickthall, *With the Turk*, 198.

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In Istanbul Pickthall told a supporter of de-centralisation: "In Syria you have at least a hundred tribes and interests, always embroiled and generally on the verge of war. The only way to keep them quiet is to keep them separate, and this at least Turkish rule has done, or tried to do".[50]

Positions cognate to Ottoman Orientalism were affirmed strongly by Pickthall when the chips were down: that is immediately before and during the Great War when the struggle was directly about the survival of the CUP and the disloyalty of those Arabs who were swayed by British gold and blandishments to raise the "Arab Revolt". In India twenty years later reviewing Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Pickthall looked back with barely concealed contempt at the British colonel's putative project to create the "Great Arab Empire".[51] Otherwise it is fair to say on Pickthall's behalf that he rarely descended to the caricature of Easterners necessarily encoded in whatever brand of Orientalism was being employed. Still, in his rejection of Western Orientalism as applied to Ottomanism, and in his insistence on Ottoman Turkey's membership of the community of modern, civilised nations, together with his assertion of the Turks' superior skills of governance over the non-white peoples in the empire, his position runs close to Ottoman Orientalism. It may be that the component of Islam, which Pickthall needless to say took very seriously, held him back from caricaturing his fellow Muslims, in this case Arab ones. Some in the CUP whose Islamism he tended to take at face value might not always have risen to the same standards.[52] By the time he arrived in Hyderabad and took up the editorship of *Islamic Culture*, we could say Pickthall's Ottoman Orientalism had become softened, if not transmuted. The Young Turk episode was now a matter of the past, and the direction Turkey had begun to follow – as we shall see below – gave no immediate hope that the modernising Islamising trends he associated with Ottomanism would come back anytime soon.

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50 Ibid., 122.

51 Marmaduke Pickthall, "The End of the Legend", *IC* IX (1935), 665–67.

52 Aubrey Herbert reports the following remarks of Turkish officer, Khalil Pasha (a nephew of Enver Pasha) when negotiating over prisoners at Kut in 1916: "'Perhaps one of our [i.e. Turkish] men in ten is weak or cowardly but it is only one in a hundred of the Arabs who is brave. Look those brutes have surrendered to you because they were a lot of cowards. What are you to do with men like that? You can send them back to me if you like, but I have already condemned them to death. I should like to have them to hang.'" Margaret FitzHerbert, *The Man who was Greenmantle: A Biography of Aubrey Herbert* (London: John Murray, 1983), 180.

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Post- Ottoman Turkey: The Revival of Islam

The fruit of the cross-fertilisation between the reformist positions Pickthall adopted via his interface with Turkey and his new experience in India is to be viewed in the two articles "Islamic Culture" and "Islamic Culture: Causes of its Rise and Decline" based on the Madras lectures he gave in 1925. These should also be viewed with a companion article titled "Muslim Education". Together they are perhaps the clearest epitome of Pickthall's post-Orientalism, in which he consigns to history the "old, beautiful, decaying fabric" which he had observed as a young man, and which many Muslims still regarded as Islam itself ("deeming it impious to [...] renovate or improve it"). Gently, though firmly, he gives the lie to Cromer's adage "if Islam were modernised it would cease to be Islam".[53] The hope of Islamic revival rested in obtaining a true vision of Islam *as of the present*, and this was achievable only through Muslim education. Together these articles are all the more remarkable for their projection of an optimistic, almost utopian vision of Islam's power and potential. "Islam is a religion which specifically aims at human progress"; it "foresees, and works for, a radiant future for the human race"; it promises success in this world if its laws are followed and applied but "not the success of one human being at the expense of others, nor of one nation to the despair of others, but the success of mankind as a whole".[54] Revisiting the great medieval period of Muslim scientific and mathematical inquiry Pickthall also gives renewed flourish to the modernist axiom that Islam can only be in accord with reason and science. The rationality of Islam's teachings is contrasted – a ploy already adopted by Syed Ameer Ali (a contributor to the periodical) and Abdullah Quilliam (also a contributor in his incarnation of Haroun Mustafa Léon) – with the irrationality of Christian dogma, and deemed in accordance with modern thought. "Are the two things, the living faith in God and the large measure of free thought, incompatible? A considerable school of thought in the West seems to think that they are incompatible. Islam has proved that they are perfectly compatible". This was evidenced "in the early, successful centuries of Islam" when "nothing upon earth [was considered] so sacred as to be immune from criticism". God "had bestowed on man the gift of reason [...] to be used quite freely in the name of Allah".[55]

53 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Muslim Education", *IC* 1 (1927), 100–1. Pg. 100 repeats "modern" four times along with "modernity".

54 Pickthall, "Islamic Culture", *IC*, 1 (1927), 152–54.

55 ibid., 153.

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Much of the material in these articles revisits the arguments made on behalf of Islamic science and culture by the Indian modernists in their articles in the same volume.[56] In their excavation of different aspects of the Islamic past, adopting a corrective, apologetic, but also illuminating tone, Pickthall's contribute to a standard modernist celebration of classical Islamic civilization. His emphasis falls particularly on the brotherhood of different races brought about by Islam, which is still superior to non-Islamic attempts to replicate it such as the League of Nations; and toleration, which stems from the example of the Prophet himself. Pickthall agreed that Muslim ignorance was the cause of Islam's decline. Blame for the failures of modern-day Muslim societies including superstition, fatalism, "acceptance of something indistinguishable from a priesthood" – the main bêtes noirs of Enlightenment philosophers – are fully laid at the door of Muslims themselves. "At a certain period of their history, they began to turn their backs upon a part of what had been enjoined to them, they discarded half the Shari'ah, the path which ordered them to seek knowledge and education, and to study God's creation".[57] The necessary resources were all still there however, waiting for "modern education" to revive Islam.

In the articles Pickthall argues that renewal of Islam must be affected by recourse to fundamental Islamic principles associated with natural law and the shariah. Specifically, he took up Saïd Halim's emphasis on the congruence of Islamic injunctions with natural law. The golden mean he discerns in Islam's operation in the past is joined to natural law, and this in turn to the shariah, with theocracy freely invoked without specification as to how it might be applied in the modern world. Saïd Halim's identification of shariah with natural law, an advance on Syed Ahmad Khan's and in some ways cognate to Namıl Kemal's position, was no doubt influenced by his readings in French philosophy. To begin with, the shariah is not a code of supernatural laws but it is akin to scientific laws. However where the latter are "of a purely objective order" and can be discovered through empirical observation and reason, social and moral laws, because they refer to the human being who is a moral, conscious, social creature, are by no means as easy to arrive at. "They are of a sentimental, psychological order […] pre-eminently subjective, and afford no ground for positive regulation".[58] The moral and social laws, which have their source in nature itself, are immutable and independent of human will. The social existence of man is wholly dependent on his knowing what these laws are, just as

56 In addition to Ameer Ali other notable Indian modernist contributors to *Islamic Culture* included S. Khuda Bukhsh and Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

57 Ibid., 162.

58 Halim Pasha, "The Reform", 112–13.

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physical existence is subject to physical laws. Human society needs to adhere to these laws as incorporated within the shariat:

> If the Shari'at deserves absolute respect and submission, it is because it contains the Divine Truth as applied to the organization of society – truth precious above all because it alone is able to give social happiness, and because, to be known, it required a Prophet to reveal it.[59]

Pickthall clearly follows the substance of this thinking when he writes:

> The injunctions of the Quran and the Prophet are laws for all mankind – natural laws which men transgress at their peril [...]It was because those laws could not be found out by individual experiment, and could only partly be detected in the long run of history by a student and a thinker here and there, that they required to be revealed by a Prophet. Otherwise they are as natural as the physical laws, which govern our existence evidently and which no one would dream of disputing.[60]

Epilogue: Pickthall on Atatürk and Kemalism

We left Pickthall transferred to a new theatre of activism mourning the death of CUP leader Talaat. The episode in which his Indian and Turkish affiliations coalesced by his acting as envoy in the marriage that joined the House of Osman with that of the Nizam of Hyderabad is vividly evoked in M.A. Sherif's chapter in this volume. Pickthall's tracking of Turkey's development after the establishment of the Republic (December 1923) can be followed in review articles he wrote for *Islamic Culture*. These disclose a muted, outwardly neutral acknowledgment of the new path his former *idée fixe* was being taken along by an authoritarian nationalist and militantly secular regime. Surprisingly, perhaps, traces of the old enthusiasm for Turkey's modernisation programme remain, tempered by unavoidable reference to its accompanying secularism. His acknowledgment of the insertion of nationalism and race into an erstwhile Muslim society, tempered by his fear of Bolshevism, also features in the articles. Pickthall, as Anne Fremantle pointed out, was wary of the emergence of Soviet Russia but he realised that in some respects this influence had been beneficial

59 Ibid.

60 Pickthall, "Islamic Culture", 153.

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for both Turkey and Iran immediately after the First World War.[61] Implied, but not expressed, is what must have been for him – recently involved in the Khilafatist agitation against Britain – painful awareness of the role played in the affairs of these nations by his native government. British imperialist adventurism in the Islamic Near East (not to reach its nadir until Suez in 1956), so opposite to his former dream, had after the war taken the form of Lloyd George's encouragement of the Greek invasion and potential dismemberment of Turkish Anatolia, and Lord Curzon's abortive attempt to impose a British protectorate on Persia. "The Russian Revolution saved Persia, as it saved Turkey; and gratitude for that salvation, with the need to keep in touch with Moscow, has given to Persian, as to Turkish progress a bent which many Muslims view with grave misgivings – Muslims who have not suffered what the Turks and Persians have suffered".[62] The stress on "progress" also can be inferred from two earlier articles (from 1928) that in addition present an intriguingly positive assessment of the Turkish dictator. The first, a review of Kemal's memoirs, describes these as "form[ing] an amazing frank and vivid human document" in which he "portrays himself as a quiet, strong, far-seeing, and by nature incorruptible man".[63] In the second, made in relation to the replacement of Arabic by Latin script for writing Turkish, which Pickthall notes had also been implemented in Soviet Central Asia, Kemal is judged to be "a great man, undoubtedly, but one who might admire the action of the Russian Communists in forcing practical reform upon a reluctant people. The Muslim world must come to terms with modern life, and someone must make the necessary experiments, take the necessary risks and bear the odium".[64] A later piece from 1932, a review of a recent study of Turkey by Eugene Pittard, confirms the country's economic recovery, notes the book's report on the turning of mosques into barracks, and takes issue with the author's evident endorsement of the new regime's racial ideology. He doubts that Turks were "a white race", but one of Mongols and European admixture.[65]

Pickthall's late view of the Turkish Republic is expressed in "The Turkish Experiment", published in the year of his death, 1936. He sees the new republic as a response to the defeat of 1918, paralleled by the success of the Bolsheviks in Russia, opining that the "strong nationalistic position was forced on

61 Fremantle, *Loyal*, 288.

62 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Westernising Persia", *IC* VI (1932), 153–56, 155.

63 Marmaduke Pickthall, "Shorter Notices", *IC* II, (1928), 158–61, 158.

64 Marmaduke Pickthall, "For Iran", *IC* II (1928), 475–76, 475.

65 Marmaduke Pickthall, "New Turkey", *IC* VI (1932), 325–27.

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the Turks by circumstances over which they had no control, as was happening to other Muslim peoples". The Turkish government had adopted a "policy of indifference [...] in their treatment of religion as something separate". Here the critique of Kemalist secularism (if the language adopted can be considered critical) is muted, the tone resigned. "We [...] have read the so-called secular publications quoted no less keenly than the sermons and have found nothing in them unIslamic. The only positively unIslamic feature is the talk of 'secular' and 'religious'".[66]

Written at the moment when an iron curtain was made to descend between modern Turkey and its Ottoman past, Pickthall's articles demonstrate a nuance we said was missing from his earlier, pro-Young Turk writing. At a remove from the white heat of CUP activity, he was astute enough not to allow his love for Islam to obscure his awareness of the practical achievements of Kemalism, endorsing Atatürk's construction of a strong, modernised, unified state as a continuation of the project begun by the Young Turks. This political goal Pickthall respected, even if it was decoupled from the religious aims that had been so integral to his dream for Turkey. The reviews in *Islamic Culture* that touch upon Kemalism are mature and considered. The years of struggle against Britain have been ingested, and anyway, Pickthall signed a pledge of political non-involvement when he took up his employment in Hyderabad. In the background to his remarks on Turkey, however, is his contemptuous rejection of Britain's Hashemite project in the Arab *mashreq*. There is no doubt Pickthall retained a strong regard for Turkey. He couldn't share the regime's Turkism because for him Islam was still paramount, though he recognised the value of national feeling. Where Turkey is concerned, did he leave a political legacy? One cannot help feeling he would have been pleased to see the relatively recent revival of interest in Turkey's Ottoman past, and rejection of the previous "narrowly focused Turkish ethnic nationalism".[67] As a man of modern religious faith, we could also see him looking favourably on the emergence (or some have argued, re-emergence) of a democratic, liberal Turkish Islam of the kind that "flourished in the late Ottoman Empire, but [...] waned with the destruction of the empire and the colonization of Muslim lands".[68] Even if optimism for this now seems to be once again on the wane.

66 Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Turkish Experiment", IC X (1936), 486–92, 492.

67 Karpat, *Ottoman Past*, 2.

68 Mustafa Akyol, *Islam Without Extremes: A Muslim Case for Liberty* (New York: W.W. Norton), 326.

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PART 3

Man of Letters, Traveller and Translator

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CHAPTER 7

Oriental Eyes, or Seeing and Being Seen: Popular Culture and the Near Eastern Fiction of Marmaduke Pickthall

Andrew C. Long

The Mediation of Popular Culture: Tours and Travellers Accounts

Much of Marmaduke Pickthall's Near Eastern fiction, as well as his commentary and reportage on the Muslim and Arab world, concerns representation, or, simply put, how the West sees the people of the region and how they see us, hence seeing and being seen. This is not, however, an egalitarian dialectic of recognition rather it is a one-way relationship of domination where the serf recognizes the master. Moreover, as Pickthall understands this dialectic, this relationship of seeing and being seen is intertwined with geo-politics, commerce, and, in the case of the West, the bigotry and related fantasy that accompanies empire, especially when the people and culture Near East are involved. The geopolitics we find in the historical references which mark several of his novels, such as the sectarian massacres of Damascus and the appearance of the legendary leader, Abdul Qadir (in *Said the Fisherman*), or the Suez Canal and the 'Arabi uprising (in *Veiled Women*). Pickthall grounds his fiction in historical events as though to tell remind the reader that the issues in his novels are wrapped in fictional narrative, but the kernel of the story at hand is very real. However, the stuff that finally wraps and obscures this kernel of truth which Pickthall is so intent on preserving and exposing is the commerce and bigotry/fantasy which mediates the conquest of the region and everyday life for everyone, colonizer and colonized. In two of Pickthall's novels I will address here, *The Valley of the Kings* and *Veiled Women*, the commerce involves powerful forms of popular culture, that is, the tourist trade, from the Grand Tour to Cook's Tours, and popular literature about the region, especially travellers' accounts, and especially those written by Englishwomen about Arab women and the harem. I will show that the way Pickthall sets up each novel, as a matter of character and plot, is his novelist's way of undermining the truth discourse of these forms of popular culture.

As a matter of definition I refer to popular culture as "popular" in that the common usage of this word evokes the "people" which usually refers to the middle class, or the masses. In this last sense popular culture is finally mass

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culture, and anyone who studies tourism, and especially Cook's Tours, and popular literature will readily agree that both are industrial forms of culture which assume a market of industrialized society and social relations. Raymond Williams was correct, years ago, when he argued repeatedly that the masses and mass culture was, and remains, a way of seeing others, and so, in a sense that is askew or awry there lies the connection to this essay.[1] Yet, popular culture is at root about exchangeability, and so, uniformity, on the one hand, but, in the context of our two examples concerning the people and culture of the Near East, an operative idea of absolute difference is an essential feature of the market.

In 1922 Pickthall published a collection of short stories, *As Others See Us*, written in the decade before World War I. We should remember that in the aftermath of World War I Pickthall was pressured by the political, professional and social fallout of his wartime public stances – *With the Turk in Wartime*, for example – and his conversion to Islam, and so in some ways this collection is a farewell to his pre-war literary persona, a sentiment which resonates with his comments on the foreword page of the collection. Many of the stories concern the Near East (and Turkey), and also, as the title suggests, concern representation and the Western-Arab/Muslim encounter. One short story, "Between Ourselves" is particularly striking as it differs in tone from his novels, though one of the characters, an Egyptian journalist named Abbas, portends other abject figures in Pickthall's novels, such as Said or Iskender. The difference of tone is due to the structure of the story as it is for the most part a first-hand account rendered as a kind of colonial tale and so it is entirely comprised of the language and world view of three pompous and bigoted British colonials. In the story these three friends are aboard a steamer, literally sitting in deck chairs aboard the P & O Marmora – the name is a signifier of Oriental travel – and in a narrative setup akin to the work of Joseph Conrad, they tell tales of their colonial adventures (after an encounter with a fellow traveller, an Anglo-Indian woman, which suggests something else altogether). The narrator tells about his relationship with Abbas, whose acquaintance he humoured and tolerated for a while, and then the latter's relationship with an American woman, who "studied Egypt" and "published a book in which I figured as the love-sick hero"[2] Abbas is at once a kind of nationalist and an Anglophile, as he believes the British occupation will bring just-rule to Egypt, for which he is slandered in the press by rival political parties. He turns to the narrator and the British for help, and so the narrator tells him bluntly that the occupation is about British

1 See Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (New York: Columbia UP, 1983), 300.

2 Marmaduke William Pickthall, *As Others See Us* (Charleston SC: Bibliolife, 2009), 61.

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interests alone, not justice for Egyptians. And so Abbas sets out for London to inform the British people of the truth where like other Arab characters in Pickthall's fiction he starts the final downward spiral. Abbas is eventually deported and, in an Egyptian jail, his final words to the narrator are to convert to Islam and forsake England: "Then I realized that he was adjuring me, for my soul's good, to leave the English and become a Muslim and an Oriental. It made me wince as if I had been stung".[3] The narrator's companions are outraged by the tale, though due to this last request, not because a good, albeit naïve Arab man ended his life in such a way. This tale involves only one end of the dialectic and tells us much, as the recognition of equals is made impossible by implacable bigotry or, in the case of the narrator the good intentions of a liberal colonial.

A Portrait of Self and *The Valley of the Kings*

Peter Clark, the eminent expert on the life and work of Marmaduke Pickthall calls this 1909 novel a "tale of guile and gullibility"[4] which it is, and more, for while the tone of the narrative is neutral, the story traced here is at once bitter and sweet. Clark identifies the setting as "coastal Palestine" which was a larger and much different region prior to World War I. The time of the novel is approximately the 1870s as the details concerning Cook's Tours and the local tourist trade – the use of independent dragomans and ad hoc trip organization – suggest a moment on the cusp, just before the 1880s industrialization of Holy Land tourism by the former company.[5] Moreover, as we shall discover, the liminality of this moment is important for the theme and narrative trajectory of the novel. Of course, as this is Palestine one might expect the novel to concern Biblical topics or such, and though it does in some respects insofar as religion is a factor in the novel's plot, the novel does not offer the usual fare.[6] We might start to delineate the differences with the central character, whom Clark succinctly describes as "a poor Palestinian Christian called Iskender".[7] The village where the latter lives is Christian, though sharply split between the

3 Pickthall, *Others*, 70.

4 Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (London: Quartet, 1986), 86.

5 See Lynne Withey, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours: A History of Leisure Travel: 1750 to 1915* (New York: Morrow, 1997), 257–62 and Piers Brendon, *Thomas Cook: 150 Years of Popular Tourism*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1991, 137–40.

6 For a brief overview of religious tourism in Palestine see Doron Bar and Kobi Cohen-Hattab, "A New Kind of Pilgrimage of Nineteenth and Early 20th Century Palestine", *Middle Eastern Studies* 39, 2 (2003), 131–48.

7 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 86.

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Greek Orthodox congregation, the majority and "indigenous" group, and the Anglican mission with its English and (few) Arab followers. Clark adds that Iskender (Alexander in English) is from an Orthodox family, but this is not exactly the case as his mother is part of the same small congregation of Palestinian Anglicans – who identify themselves as "Brûtestânts". The other characters in the novel include the wily, wise, sometimes cruel and sometimes kind priest, Mîtri and his attractive young daughter Nesîbeh, as well as Iskender's contemporaries, Elias, the bully Yuhanna, and two brothers, Daoud and Selim, whose father, Mûsa Barûdi, owns the local Hotel Barûdi. Mentioned only in passing, though notable today, is Karlsberger's, an inn owned by a European Jewish immigrant and his wife. The latter is described by the narrator as a "harlot", which, alas, we should accept as an example of Pickthall's anti-Semitic prejudice. The mission is led by a preacher known by the villagers as the "Father of Ice" due to his demeanor and harsh sectarian outlook, and there are several English women whom Clark refers to as nuns, though this is not so clear.[8]

The novel opens with the eldest of the mission women, Sitt Carûlîn, chastising Iskender for making romantic advances on the youngest of the women, Sitt Hilda. Iskender loves to paint and the latter gave him advice and at some point touched his hand, a gesture he interpreted as an invitation. As a result Iskender is banished from the mission though he quickly finds a substitute object of desire – Clark tells us that Iskender "becomes besotted"[9] – that is, a newly arrived young Englishman, known throughout the novel as the "Emir". The main business of the village seems to be tourism of an early sort, and the local men have related jobs as cooks, hoteliers and hotel staff, and, most importantly, as dragomans, or tour guides. Indeed, Iskender's uncle Abdullah is a Cook's dragoman, a point we will return to shortly. Iskender meets the Englishman by chance when the latter approaches him from behind while Iskender paints, oblivious. The Englishman offers some advice, a point we shall also discuss shortly, and invitations are offered. Iskender's mother presses him to offer the "Emir" his services, presumably as a youthful dragoman or personal assistant, which he does, though for reasons contrary and all his own. Instead of wanting to please the Englishman with services for hire, for the Emir to pay him, Iskender spends his own money and time, and uses his own social resources to please the "Emir" for no compensation. Iskender simply wants the Englishman's approval and friendship, and, yes, perhaps his love. At one point, after a series of small gifts, and while accompanying the "Emir" on a tour with Elias acting as dragoman, the Englishman gives Iskender a gold coin, a "trifle", as

8 Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Valley of the Kings* (London: Dent, 1914); Clark, 87.

9 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 87.

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Elias has informed him that the boy is poor, not rich as he assumed. Iskender's response gives us some insight into his character: "He murmured words of thanks perfunctorily, the while he gnashed his teeth with secret rage. Such kindness was an outrage to his love, being given at the bidding, in the presence of the rogue Elias".[10]

Indeed, it is Iskender's jealousy towards Elias, for the love and attention of the "Emir" that brings about a decisive series of events. Unable to compete with the audacity and obsequiousness of Elias, Iskender offers to take the "Emir" to see the Valley of the Kings, thus the title of the novel. This site, where he promises the "Emir" he will find gold, is not the famous ancient Egyptian archaeological site, but, Clark suggests, possibly the ancient Nabatean city of Petra in modern Jordan. Though Petra is very well known now, it was not officially excavated until the early twentieth century when it was acclaimed by the likes of amateur archaeologist, soldier and folk hero, T.E. Lawrence.[11] Iskender has no idea where this site lies, like many dragomans before, at least before Cook's Tours – more on this company shortly – he nonetheless gathers together the requisite food and camping gear as well as donkeys, horses, and support staff. The trip is a disaster as the "Emir" falls ill-presumably with a viral infection, or worse as cholera was an epidemic in the region at that time – and as they narrowly avoid being taken hostage by a Bedouin tribe who instead host them when Iskender informs them his "Emir" is crazed.[12] For his effort the Englishman violently strikes Iskender and the situation deteriorates the latter dispatches the cook on the horse to the mission and help.

Father Ice, the preacher, rides out with the women of the mission and carry the "Emir" back to the village. Iskender follows, but he is now a disgrace to everyone. As an abject character at his lowest point, instead of leaving the village or somehow breaking and rising above the situation he spies on the mission, hoping for a glimpse of the "Emir" and imagining a possible romance with Hilda, now the Englishman's nurse. Once he is caught he can sink no lower, though he is fortunate that Mîtri offers him a deal: as a convert and with baptism in the Orthodox Church he will send Iskender to Quds (Jerusalem) to apprentice with a family member as an icon painter. Iskender accepts the deal

10 Pickthall, *Valley*, 71.

11 See the Brown University Petra Excavation website at https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/Petra/excavations/history.html.

12 See Donald Malcolm Reid, *Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 82–4.

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and eventually returns to the village as a successful young man and marries Nesîbeh.

Clark emphasizes several aspects of the novel which distinguish it: the representation and thematic function of religion and the role of art. Religion in *The Valley of the Kings* is not the expected Muslim-Christian divide, but rather a cold and occasionally hostile relationship between the Greek Orthodox church, that is the "indigenous" form of Christianity, and the Anglican mission, whose outsider status seems to be a large part of the way these missionaries function. In no sense do the English missionaries want to assimilate their faith and practice, never mind their bodies amongst the local Palestinians. Moreover, and this is a point Clark does not make, though it is clearly within the terms of the novel, Western Christians were infamous for their contempt for Arab Christians. The Copts and Armenians, in particular, were despised by Western travellers, just as, Donald Malcolm Reid comments, "philhellenes" despised modern Greeks for not being the ancient heroes they wanted to see.[13] On the other hand, and as Clark notes, Mîtri, the Arab Orthodox village priest is also aware that he too must obey an outsider, in this instance a Greek superior appointed by the church powers based far from Palestine. It is this last point that Clark, rightly, interprets as a theme of the novel, that Iskender's final embrace of the Orthodox Church is more than a religious expression of faith, but also a demonstration of solidarity with his village and larger, Palestinian, community. Indeed, and as Clark quotes from the text, Mîtri declares, "With the Muslimîn we have in common language, country, and the intercourse of daily life. Therefore, I say, a Muslim is less abominable before Allah than a Latin or a Brûtestânt".[14]

This same theme of communal solidarity carries over to painting. Again, for most of the novel Iskender is painting with paint sets – probably watercolour – which were provided, at least in the second instance, by outsiders (the young Englishman). Two English characters, Sitt Hilda and the "Emir" offer Iskender advice about perspective and technique. As Clark comments, "Iskender's instinct is to make the most important object he represents occupy the largest portion of the canvas".[15] One, rather humorous example is the landscape which features the large head of a camel, which, as we might imagine is a kind of portrait of an unaesthetic animal. Clark's point though is that Iskender is attempting to paint as a Westerner but in his heart and artistic soul he is Eastern, an Arab Christian. It is apt then that the novel is resolved when Iskender takes

13 Reid, *Whose Pharoahs?*, 260.

14 Pickthall, *Valley*, 39.

15 Ibid, 87.

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up icon painting as a successful career – which he learns as an apprentice in Al-Quds/Jerusalem – allowing him to return to the village with dignity and strength at the end of the novel.

The graph of the novel's narrative traces a low point, followed by a dip down, and then a precipitous drop, a bottoming out followed by an equally sharp rise to a new highpoint. That is, at the start of The *Valley of the Kings* we meet a young naïve Iskender clumsily seeking affection from an (unavailable and horrified) Englishwoman, a situation which worsens when he abjectly pursues the attention, even love, of a rather shallow young Englishman, all of which ends up with the near-death of the "Emir" and leaving Iskender a near pariah in his village. Yet with the return from Jerusalem – and all this implies in a Biblical sense – Iskender is reborn, to such an extent that, as Clark notes, he is neither jealous nor ashamed when he catches sight of his previous rival for attention at the mission. Asad, the latter, is now a minister and married to an Englishwoman, whom Iskender notes, is not attractive, while he is not ashamed in the eyes of his former rival. Two points are clear with the above in mind. First, this novel is clearly a kind of *bildungsroman* centred around the *bildung* or development (of character and consciousness) of an Arab Palestinian, Iskender. Of course that Iskender is the colonized native, not the colonizer traveller is Pickthall's innovation and provocation. Also, Iskender is never cast in any essential or romantic way as a simple or purer character, from an organic community. Again, as noted above, he is a gullible, abject young man from a village which is in no sense pure but rather where all the villagers are in some way attached to what we now know as the tourist trade. Yet, at the end Iskender rises above all circumstances as a new man, a stronger native consciousness, portending a kind of nationalist consciousness which can engage the modern world.

The second, an obvious point to make is that this is a novel about the tourist trade, a new business in a developmental stage and caught in a dialectic with its antecedent, the Grand Tour. The latter was, briefly sketched, the requisite tour of Europe, especially the Mediterranean countries, which all young bourgeois Englishmen of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were expected to undertake as part of their education. The tour was supposed to be about scholarship on site in classical locations in Italy (Rome, Florence and Venice) and Greece, where young men might be led on tours by the likes of Johann Winckelmann, the author of *History of the Art of Antiquity*.[16] Indeed crucial concepts of the Augustan era in British culture, such as the beautiful and the sentimental, and the self were intertwined with the journey, the Grand

16 Reid, *Whose Pharoahs?*, 141.

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Tour.[17] Of course the reality was something else, as these young men of the English elite established a legacy of pleasure seeking and bad behaviour which haunts the reputation of British tourists today. In his excellent (and well titled) book *The Delicious History of the Holiday*, Fred Inglis notes that James Boswell fully indulged, eating too much, drinking too much, and having as much sex as possible.[18] The result was a sexually transmitted disease in Rome, which Boswell waited to rid himself of before venturing on to Venice. There he and an aristocrat companion, Lord Mountstuart, had relations with a prostitute with the same result. Still, Inglis finds something likeable here:

> The terrific zest with which Boswell participated in all the life he met was inseparable in the man from his ingenuousness, his egoism, his openness, his sheer likeability. It makes him an irresistible reporter of his vacations. This is how to enjoy yourself; it is to feel things so fully, partly because they are worth it, partly because he's like that. He lives it all, and mitigates nothing. This is feeling in the big Romantic sense, for he is on his Sentimental Education.[19]

The "Emir", a weak character who flees the village under the wing of his bigoted soldier uncle – veteran of India – is a far cry from the sort of sensualist ideal Boswell and his exploits might represent for some.

Back to the novel, Iskender's painting is by no means a coincidence here. As Inglis explains at length, many of these young men went on the Grand Tour to view paintings by the masters of the Renaissance and also to paint. As watercolour paints were portable and inexpensive – think back to Iskender's paint box – these were the medium of choice so that these young gentlemen could record their experiences and thoughts on cartridge paper.[20] Iskender is inspired, and unconsciously so, by an eighteenth-century ideal of the Grand Tour.

Yet Boswell and his ilk were not simply tourists, and more akin to a kind of traveller. Travellers integrated themselves into the life of the place they visit. They spend time there and meet the locals.[21] By the nineteenth century this distinction, between travellers and tourists was to develop sharply as Cook, in particular, turned the holiday trade into an industry with a geopolitical dimension. Starting in 1868 Cook established Nile river holidays using local boats,

17 Fred Inglis, *The Delicious History of the Holiday* (London: Routledge, 2000), 14–17.

18 Inglis' chapter on the Mediterranean is particularly relevant here.

19 Inglis, *Delicious History*, 20.

20 Ibid, 27.

21 Ibid, 18.

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and then their own steamboats which were in some cases built in Egypt. By the 1880s Cook had regularly scheduled tours up the Nile then back to Suez and up to Port Said and on to Jaffa and the Holy Land tour. John Mason Cook, the son of the company founder, boasted that Cook accounted for over seventy-five per cent of Western tourists to the Holy Land.[22] These tourists were not the young aristocratic elite of England, however, but upper middle class and, interestingly, many were women.[23]

Though *The Valley of the Kings* is clearly set in the time of Cook's Tours, as, again, Abdullah is a "Cook's man" and we are told that "[e]ach steamer that touched at the port disgorged a little crowd of travellers",[24] these Westerners are still travellers, as the text tells us, not yet tourists. This point is important as tourists use guidebooks in addition to dragoman services, and, more to the point, Pickthall's novel is mediated, as a novel set in Palestine, by the burst of guidebook publication in the late nineteenth century. Reid documents the publication and increasing expert advice offered by Murray, Baedeker and Joanne guidebooks, a literature which haunts Pickthall's novel.[25]

Iskender's "Emir" is by no means a deep character, for we do not even know his name. Yet, he serves a structural function here in two respects, and with regard to the Grand Tour and what it represented and the Cook's Tour. If we consider this novel as a kind of Arab Palestinian *bildungsroman*, then Iskender is going about, in some ways an outdated Grand Tour, as his painting suggest. He is attempting to understand and live through Romantic concepts of self and beauty which are, first, antiquated, and with which he has no meaningful connection. Iskender is not Boswell, whether as a lover, painter or writer. Yet his foil is the "Emir" to whom he ascribes virtues and value the shallow young Englishman does not merit. In fact the "Emir" is just another tourist, nothing special. If the novel were set twenty years later perhaps the young man would have been part of a Cook's Tour and he would never have encountered Iskender. What we should understand is that this process of *bildung*, of developing consciousness and an authentic sense and strength of self, is mediated by the legacy and present of the tourism trade. Iskender must first throw off the ideological baggage of the Grand Tour and pursue meaning which works for him and in his terms, that is, of Palestine.

22 Withey, *Grand Tours*, 257–62; also see Piers Brendon, *Thomas Cook: 150 Years of Popular Tourism* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1991).

23 Withey, *Grand Tours*, 259.

24 Pickthall, *Valley*, 116.

25 Reid, Whose Pharoahs?, 69–73.

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The Harem Viewed Awry: *Veiled Women*

Marmaduke Pickthall's *Veiled Women* was published in 1913, a date which precedes his pro-Turk wartime writing and his conversion to Islam (publicly announced in 1917), and in some ways marks an end to his career as an otherwise mainstream English prose writer. *Veiled Women* is a novel, and, as the title suggests, it is about just that, and more specifically the harem or women's quarters of a high level Egyptian official in the administration of the Khedive, Muhammad Pasha Salîh. The central figure, our heroine of sorts, is a governess whose English name, the rather banal Mary Smith, we do not learn until late in the novel is known by her Arabic name, Barakah. She is given this name early in the novel, for she has no sooner arrived in the household and met her young male charge, Yûsuf Bey, the son the Pasha, than the young man falls in love with her. His unrequited love quickly manifests as an illness, though he confesses the cause to his horrified mother Fitnah Khânum.

Peter Clark declares *Veiled Women* to be the author's "most ambitious novel", for "[i]n it he is explaining, describing and justifying harim life".[26] *Veiled Women* is especially interesting and remarkable today as it is a novel about the life of an English woman, an orphan without independent means, working within an upper class Egyptian household in Cairo. The novel falls roughly into two parts, as Clark notes, with the first part set in the courtship and early years of the marriage and the second set in "the period of the 'Arabi revolt, 1879–82".[27] This novel is ambitious as in its time and today it is about how Arab women are seen and how they see themselves, from their perspective in a mediated way (Barakah is finally English, after all), and then how others see and write about Arab women, both travellers and critics. As we shall see in turn, the view of the harem – by men and women, English and Arab – spying on Arab women has a proved a robust and profitable popular literary idiom.

As Clark notes, the novel traces Barakah's integration into the women's quarters, and as such it is a novel about women, Arab and Muslim women in Cairo. Clearly, this, the social position and context of the central figure, is notable. The characters include the wives of the Pasha, Fitnah Khânum and Marjânah Khânum, as well as a worldly and wise relative, Aminah Khânum. There are slaves and a eunuch, as well as crones – Umm ed-Dahak – and others who practice the dark arts of a culture far different from that of Barakah's England. Yet, Barakah quickly adopts her new life, which she sees as a rebellion against her training and previous life in England. Thus, she justifies her

26 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 89.

27 Ibid.

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position: "What had she to regret? From childhood she had been repressed, humiliated, and ordered to be thankful for her daily bread".[28] As for the religious aspect of her decision, for she has, as the women of the house put it "islamed", Barakah defiantly tells herself, "In Christian families [previous employers we are to assume] her lot had been unenviable. Here, in the Muslim household, she was somebody"[29] Yet before Barakah marries she is summoned to the house of the Consul to meet his wife, Mrs. Cameron. The latter immediately pleads with Barakah, in the strong and prejudiced terms, asking her not to marry the Pasha's son:

> My love, you must not be allowed to do it – you, an Englishwoman! It degrades us all. I have lived out here for years and I assure you that, if a daughter of mine declared her will to marry one of them, sooner than it should happen I would kill her with my own hands. A girl! – It is unheard of! With their view of women.[30]

We should note here, that Mrs. Cameron declares herself ready to commit what we know in the West as a an honour killing, to which Barakah responds, using "we" to include herself among the Egyptians, that she, Mrs. Cameron, knows nothing about the lives of native women. She continues, "Underneath our veils, in our own houses, we are just as happy and as free as you are. [...] It is too droll!"[31]

Indeed, Barakah truly believes that life in the harem is free by comparison to a woman's life in England. Thus, "The world of women [in the harem] was, she found, a great republic, with liberties extended to the meanest slave, and something of the strength that comes with solidarity".[32] And so, Barakah is at first content to explore the terms of her new life, but runs afoul of the culture when she goes for a walk alone and is harassed by local men. Yûsuf Bey, her husband, berates and beats her, while her father-in-law, the Pasha, counsels her to accept the lack of freedom as part of her new life and culture. To satisfy her, however, the Pasha moves her and her household to a separate house. Later, the Pasha and Yûsuf arrange a visit to Paris. Barakah has looked forward to seeing the city – she speaks French – yet it ends disastrously when she and Yûsuf's brother's mistress are left in their hotel rooms as the men go out on

28 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Veiled Women* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1913), 24.

29 Pickthall, *Veiled Women*, 24.

30 Ibid., 31.

31 Ibid., 32.

32 Ibid., 122–3.

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the town seeking French women. Instead they are involved in a brawl and the Pasha's diplomat friend must intervene. So the group leaves for Switzerland, which, again, Barakah was looking forward to seeing, with the forests, streams and mountains, a terrain different from that of Egypt. The Egyptians, however, are disconsolate in this strange environment and so they return to Alexandria forthwith.

The Pasha is clearly a kind of benign patriarch, but, for Pickthall, a patriarch in a pejorative sense nonetheless. In the second phase Barakah gives birth to several children, most of whom die in childbirth or due to typhoid. The first one who survives is a boy, Muhammad, who is a spoiled bully. As his behaviour turns violent towards other children the rest of the female household pleads with the Pasha to intervene, which he does. His solution is to take the child away from Barakah and, when he is seven, send him to school. Barakah is devastated but accepts the situation, and her son grows up apart from her.

Veiled Women, like several of Pickthall's other novels – *Saïd the Fisherman*, for example – has a world historical dimension; that is, the narrative of the novel is intertwined with real historical events. And so there is mention of the Suez Canal and Cairo performances of *Don Giovanni*, and, as Clark notes, the 'Arabi revolt takes up a good deal of the last part of the novel as Barakah's son, Muhammad, though only fifteen, joins the nationalist army to fight the English occupier as an Egyptian nationalist, despite his English mother. Unfortunately he is tasked to train new recruits, both boys and men, who are largely peasants, fellahin. As he is both a brat and an elitist, his behaviour towards the men is ugly and violent. It is no surprise when the men mutiny and stab him to death. Muhammad is proclaimed a martyr and given a funeral procession, though his mother is devastated. After the funeral Barakah flees the house and her husband, and races across Cairo, whose streets are full of people, variously fleeing the British army. With the loss of her son, at this point Barakah doubts her life in the harem and her faith in Islam, though she returns, eventually, to Yûsuf's house and her Cairo life. Soon, however, Barakah leaves again and presents herself to the British authority, a military man unknown to her. She tells him her name and that she has married an Egyptian, but wants to return to England, to "return to Christianity". As she speaks she realizes the official is staring at her appearance as she looks like an Egyptian woman due to her make-up, clothing and even her accent. "She was not a European any longer. Her very words resounded with a foreign accent. From the moment of her entering the presence of this hateful man, she had been persuaded of the folly of her errand, out of heart with it".[33] Of course her request is refused and she

33 Ibid., 311.

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returns home. Barakah realizes at this moment that she has lived somewhere between the harem and Egyptian life which she held at a distance, and the horror of Mrs. Cameron, and that somehow she was special. She realizes now that she is not special and so returns to the harem, her natural home, and "the teaching of the wise and kindly Prophet her protection". Thus, "In self annihilation there was peace. This through her striving after Christianity she reached at last the living heart of Islam"[34]

Clark, as noted above, argues that *Veiled Women* stands out in Pickthall's oeuvre, largely due to its topic, Arab and Muslim women. He writes: "Men in Egypt, Pickthall shows, have a political and economic monopoly of power in public. In the home this monopoly is circumscribed by the force of personality of women and by property rights safeguarded in the marriage contract".[35] Today most readers would find Clark's defence of Pickthall unacceptable, though he is correct to point out that Pickthall is as aggressive in critiquing the deficiencies of life in the harem – concubines, polygamy, the inability to move freely, and spousal violence, all of which are features of Barakah's life in Cairo. Another way to read *Veiled Women*, other than as a treatise about women, Islam and the West, is as Pickthall's riposte to the popular accounts of the harem written by English and Western women travellers. Perhaps he had Emmeline Lott's racist narrative of an English governess in mind, *The English Governess in Egypt, Harem Life in Egypt and Constantinople* (1866). In fact, there are many similar books and texts which preceded and followed Pickthall's novel, and some were written by women, both English and Egyptian.[36] This novel differs in that the protagonist, Barakah, is, poor and without significant relations, so we might safely assume her to be lower middle class, a subject position which is unknown in this genre of literature, broadly construed.

Yet, even as our protagonist is unique – as a matter of class and attitude towards England – she is not the narrator or voice of the novel, that is, the novel does not directly represent the consciousness of a lower middle-class English woman, but rather her thoughts are rendered through the voice of an absent and omniscient narrator. And, of course, this leads any reader to align the narrator's voice with that of our author, Marmaduke Pickthall. So, in the last

34 Ibid., 313.

35 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 93.

36 For comprehensive accounts of Western literature and art about the harem see Yeazell, *Harems of the Mind: Passages of Western Art and Literature* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000), and Mary Roberts, *Intimate Outsiders*: *Intimate Outsiders: The Harem in Ottoman and Orientalist Art and Travel Literature* (Durham: Duke UP, 2007).

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instance, though *Veiled Women* is about the life of a lower middle class English woman in Cairo, she is very clearly the creation and mouthpiece of a man.

The point of view of a man is, however, a feature of this genre of Orientalist literature, if not Orientalism as a whole (cultural and historical form). Indeed, Billie Melman, whose *Women Orients: English Women in the Middle East, 1718–1918*[37] is dedicated to the recovery and substantiation of an alternative Western women's point of view vis-à-vis the Arab and Muslim world, and especially Arab and Muslim women, establishes early in her argument that the Antoine Galland compilation and translation (first into French then into English) of *The Thousand and One Nights* is critical to our understanding of nineteenth century Western thought – or fantasy in this instance – about the everyday life of "Orientals", especially the women of the region. Consider, then that a fundamental structural feature of this "Ur" text of modern Orientalist thought and fantasy is the posture and pleasure of the male viewer, in this instance the two kings who spy on their wives as the latter make love with slaves, that is, in a viewing posture intertwined with passive if not vicarious pleasure. As she points out, the Galland version of the text edited out the bawdy and lewd language and scenes of the original text, all of which Richard Burton, of course, reproduced and emphasized in his later annotated editions of *The Thousand and One Nights*.

Veiled Women has characters, plot lines and themes in common with three established subgenres of Orientalist fiction of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These are harem literature, captivity tales and conversion narratives. Concerning the first, Reina Lewis, following Billie Melman's work, argues that Cook's Tours and other popular means of travel had much to do with an explosion of interest in stories about the harem, or the haremlik, the interior space of a (usually) wealthy Ottoman family where the women and small children of the family lived. Of course, and with reference again to *The Thousand and One Nights* and the languid odalisques of European painting, the harem was also the quarters of the mythic Sultan's concubines and the site of orgy and debauchery. Melman establishes Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Turkish Embassy *Letters* of 1763, though the Western female account of the harem fully blossomed only in the following century.[38] Thus, by the middle of the nineteenth

37 Melman, Billie. *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998); Richard F. Burton, *A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, Now Entitled The Book of the One Thousand and One Nights. With and Introduction and Explanatory Notes*, 10 vols. Benares: Kamashastra Society, 1885.

38 Melman, *Women's Orients*, 78; Lady Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*, London: Virago, [1763] 1994.

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century as British and Western women travelled to North Africa and the Near East they were able to visit the few functional harems of the major cities – again, only wealthy men and their families maintained such quarters – and their reports often recounted a scene contrary to the fantasy of the West. Men from outside the (Egyptian) family and Western non-Muslim men especially, were not allowed into the harem as a matter of definition and practice, and so women's accounts gained credibility and a corresponding readership.

Reina Lewis, an authority on these women travellers' accounts, focuses in *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel, and the Ottoman Harem*, for example, on three Turkish women writers who wrote about the harem from within, that is, the sisters Zeyneb Hanim and Melek Hanim, the Greek Ottoman (and Christian) Demetra Vaka Brown, and Halide Edib. Lewis states

> Women's insights into the harem were enthusiastically, though not uncritically, received and women were well aware that their access to the mysterious harem would make their books or articles desirable. After the flush of publications of in the 1850s numbers rose steadily until they peaked in the 1890s. Though numbers of new books published after that started to decrease dramatically (to below the 1850 level), the field remained popular, during, and after the First World War.[39]

As to the popularity of the genre, it precedes this niche market – women travellers eye-witness accounts of the harem – and has a good deal to do with the literary and art examples noted above which nurtured the licentious fantasies of the "fleshpots of Egypt". Billie Melman cites Flaubert's accounts of Kucuk Hanim and Pierre Loti's novels as examples of male fantasy-laden accounts which are countered by the later women's accounts. From this difference Melman extrapolates her argument, that these women's accounts of the harem were not only truly informed, but as women's accounts about other women, are also "a challenge to traditional notions on the Orient and to middle-class gender ideology in the West".[40]

A variant of the harem novel is Orientalist captivity literature, which we can trace to various accounts by men and women from the sixteenth century forward, a list which includes Miguel de Cervantes, the author of *Don Quixote*, as well as Daniel Defoe's famous literary character, Robinson Crusoe. Of course there is also *The Lustful Turk* (1828), a pornographic English novel of uncertain origin and authorship, set in Algeria, and the basis of a chapter in Steven

39 Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women Travel and the Ottoman Harem*(New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2004), 14.

40 Melman, *Women's Orients*, 62.

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Marcus' landmark book, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography*. More recently Diane Long Hoeveler traces the topic as a female centred literary – and popular -genre to texts such as Penelope Aubin's *Noble Slaves: Being an Entertaining History of the Surprising Adventures, and Remarkable Deliverances, From Algerine Slavery, of Several Spanish Noblemen and Ladies of Quality* (1722).[41] Long Hoeveler notes that this novel included reference to the captivity of Madame de Prade, who was "consigned to the sultan's harem and never heard from again", a "horrific example" which, she states, "haunted the margins of British and French culture".[42] Aubin followed with similar novels, as did other authors such as Elizabeth Haywood with *Idalia* (1723), *The Fruitless Inquiry* (1727), and *Philodore and Placentia* (1727). A notable example in this genre and period, albeit not well known at all, unlike the previous popular examples, is Elizabeth Marsh's *The Female Captive* (1769), a personal account of her own four month experiences as a captive of Moors.[43] Notably, Marsh's account addresses claims that she renounced Christianity, which resonates with the scene cited above when Barakah visits Mrs. Cameron prior to her marriage. The latter has assumed the Englishwoman was forced or intimidated into agreement, and then is most horrified by Barakah's "we" and her tacit admission of conversion.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the captivity narrative remained popular, especially during the 1884 to 1899 Anglo-Egyptian war in the Sudan (such as key scenes within the infamous prison in Omdurman in A.E.W. Mason's *The Four Feathers* (1902)) and published prisoner narratives from this campaign. The tangents of the captivity narrative, that is the female captivity narrative and the pornographic examples such as *The Lustful Turk*, are intertwined in the twentieth century with the huge popularity of Edith Maude Hull's *The Sheik* (1919) – and the film adaptation (1921), starring Rudolf Valentino – and even Paul Bowles' mid-century American novel, *The Sheltering Sky* (1949).

Veiled Women overlaps with a third popular literary genre, the conversion or "crossing over" narrative. Again, Mrs. Cameron's horror upon hearing Barakah's "we" invokes this genre, though there is a later scene, at the end of the novel, which produces the visceral nature of the responses which these narratives provoked. On the other hand tales of conversion were popular. Conversion here might refer to an English man or woman proclaiming himself

41 Diane Long Hoeveler, "The Female Captivity Narrative: Blood, Water, and Orientalism". In Long-Hoeveler, Diane and Jeffrey Cass, eds. *Interrogating Orientalism: Contextual Approaches and Pedagogical Practices* (Columbus OH: Ohio State UP, 2006).

42 Hoeveler, "Female Captivity", 51.

43 Ibid., 59–65.

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or herself Muslim, or simply dressing and taking up the appearance and attitude of, say, an Egyptian Arab. Concerning the former, Rudyard Kipling, in particular, warned against marriage – and possible conversion to another faith – in poems and short stories such as "Lispeth". Yet, the reading public did not entirely disapprove, for the idea of "going native" and everything implied thereof was certainly titillating. There are many examples of the latter, and, again, Richard Burton stands out here as his *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* (1853) is from the opening pages about dressing as an Arab and his newly adopted persona, being found out, and switching to other guises – Haji Abdullah – so that he might visit the holy cities of Islam as a faux pilgrim. Burton never fully discouraged rumours that he had converted, and often assumed a pro-Muslim attitude in his writings and actions. Of course by the early twentieth century T.E. Lawrence, in collaboration with Lowell Thomas and the photographer, Harry Chase, with the publication of *With Lawrence in Arabia* (1924) and an earlier multimedia stage show, the former was a modern hero, an icon of a new English masculinity, yet dressed as an Arab sheik. Actual conversion and profession of Islam was another matter, however, as our author and others such as Abdullah Quilliam knew all too well. As Jamie Gilham documents in his recent book, *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam*,[44] it was one thing to dally with the look and signs of Islam and Islamic culture, but another situation altogether to write about the Quran, and then organize British Muslims and proclaim a Western form of political Islam.

The "cross dressing" examples above are all of men, though there were Englishwomen who dressed as Arab women, as in well-known photographs of Lady Blunt and others, while Lady Stanhope famously dressed in Arab men's clothing. Shirley Foster dedicates a good deal of attention to these women's accounts, particularly those of the Honourable Mrs. William Grey, Emily Beaufort, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Lucy Duff Gordon. All of these women commented at length about dressing as Arab women, with special attention to the make-up (eyebrows and eyeliner), and the bodies of Arab women. Most were disgusted or at least put-off, though now their comments – especially comments concerning the bodies of Arab women, which they viewed in the baths and while dancing in the harem quarters – are quite racist and prudish (at the least). It is difficult to accept, then that Foster, following Melman's lead, finds that these accounts "offer a counter-hegemonic viewpoint" as they are women's accounts, indeed, about other non-Western and colonized women.[45]

44 Jamie Gilham, *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam, 1850 to 1950* (London: Hurst, 2014).

45 Shirley Foster, "Nineteenth-Century Travel Writing", *The Yearbook of English Studies* 34(2004), 6–17, 7.

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In her well known essay, "Female Trouble in the Colonial Harem" Emily Apter offers another approach to English women's writing about the harem and to "cross dressing", focusing on women travellers who "masked their sex and national identity at the same time". In so doing, Apter argues, these writers "flirted with colonial mimicry and in doing so helped to dissipate the boundaries or difference used to keep colonial authority in place".[46] Her primary example is the life and work of Isabelle Eberhart who travelled through North Africa, especially Algeria, dressed and passing as a man. Apter calls her behaviour "subversive" as she was reviled by the colons. Apter is probably right here, given the misogyny and homophobia (though she was bisexual) of the time and place, yet, we have to wonder how meaningful Eberhardt's work was in that same time and context, that is, as anti-colonial critique. Apter focuses on the literary characteristics of Eberhardt's work, such as what she calls the writer's "ethnographic realism" and her use of the Arabic word for a book title – *mektoub*. This word is used today in contemporary Algeria, and, as Apter tells us, it has an Islamic definition as it means, "it is written". It is a word that is used to explain events in a way Westerners would view as fatalism, and does not have the feminocentric sense which Apter would ascribe to it.

Clearly the question at hand is whether an English or Western woman can, as a woman, represent the lives, culture and struggles of non-Western colonized women. In his review of related literature James Buzard asked, "What if the neglected voices which the critic allows us once more to hear, and the neglected agency she allows us once more to see, turn out to speak and serve racism and domination"?[47] Mary Louise Pratt, whom Buzard distinguished from other feminist critics in this context, offered useful critical terms, such as "contact zones" and the "anti-conquest". The former term she applies to the "space of colonial encounters" that is, the spaces where the colonizer and colonizer encounter each other, which certainly describes the presence of the English or Western woman traveller in the harem. The "anti-conquest" is most relevant here, as it concerns the "strategies of representation whereby bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony"[48] Other women critics, following the work of Gayatri Spivak have been most sceptical about such accounts, and the possibility of

46 Emily Apter, "Female Trouble in the Colonial Harem", *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 4, 1 (1992), 205–24, 215.

47 James Buzzard, Review: *Victorian Women and the Implications of Empire, Victorian Studies* 36, 4 (1993), 443–53, 444.

48 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6–7.

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an anti-colonial Western women's point of view. Pointedly, it was an Egyptian woman critic, Sahar Sobhi Abdel-Hakim who stated:

> Victorian women writers did not (could not) challenge male discursive strategies. They adopted male gender politics and pursued the sexual metaphor in their perception and representation of themselves and the Egyptians, acceding rather than subverting male fantasy.[49]

Some Terms for Conclusion

At this juncture, and especially with regard to *Veiled Women*, it would seem that Pickthall has taken on an intractable problem, that is, the bigotry of the West towards the Arab Muslim world, and the ways that this bigotry functions as a constitutive fantasy which is intertwined with cultural, economic, and political relations – geopolitics in the broadest sense. I have suggested that in *Veiled Women* and to an extent in *The Valley of Kings*, Pickthall has resorted to religion in order to bring about a satisfactory conclusion to each novel, and so resolve this same intractable problem. Iskender, after all, resolves his life situation and the knots of the plot in *The Valley of Kings*, as well as his self-doubt, when he returns to the "indigenous" Greek Orthodox Church. Narrative conclusion is a matter of faith in *Veiled Women* as well for it is Barakah's acceptance of her lot, and, according to the narrative voice, her discovery of true Islam, at the conclusion which ends the novel, and yet leaves most modern, if not early twentieth-century Western readers discomforted. Indeed, read in a most critical light, Pickthall, has literally brought God into the novel machine, offering a way out of the dilemmas of plot and topic through faith. Moreover, as *Veiled Women* is about women, and the position of women in a patriarchal society, the recourse to *mektoub* (again, "that which is written") suggests that women accept the unacceptable. On the other hand, *mektoub* is in a general sense a familiar idea in both Christian and secular Western culture, for while it is a fatalistic approach to the challenges of human life, it entails a recognition that the universe is greater than any single human being. We might call this a kind of existential nothingness, or the "boum" of Forster's Marabar caves.

Yet, we can accept these two novels in the religious spirit with which Pickthall intended them, and still find something here which is refreshing and

49 Sahar Sobhi Abdel-Hakim "Gender Politics in a Colonial Context: Victorian Women's Accounts of Egypt", Paul and Janet Starkey, eds., *Interpreting the Orient: Travellers in Egypt and the Near East*. Reading: Ithaca, 2001, 209–17, 120.

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(still) new and, in a productive sense, disturbing and unresolved. I argue that these two novels, and Pickthall's other Near Eastern fiction are meaningful today because he takes on these intractable problems, in a sense, more than he can handle. Indeed, Pickthall is most authentic in the way he presents his readers with characters and plot dilemmas which offer no "way exit" in the usual acceptable sense. Also, these characters and plot dilemmas suggest terms which ground his work in most vigorous debates – and disagreements – in literary and cultural studies today. And so, three terms with which we might conclude our (unresolved and ambiguous) reading of *The Valley of Kings* and *Veiled Women*, are overdetermination, routes, and enjoyment.

Given the dispute over the meaning of Western women's travellers' accounts of the Near East, and Arab women and the harem, and indeed all such Western accounts, how can or should we read these texts today? That is, despite good intentions (stated or imputed), and despite the ambiguity which a good critic can draw from these accounts, are they all in the last instance so laden with the burden of empire and racism? Overdetermination, as it is derived from the work of Sigmund Freud to describe how the multiple sources of a dream form a unity, a dream narrative is useful here, for this term might help us understand that while all the tangents and loose ends of these accounts suggest something noble, or transgressive, nonetheless the consequence and final reading of these texts is otherwise. How does the norm assert itself and shape or trim these loose ends? The difficulty which this term brings, first lies with ascribing meaning in any absolutist manner, whether to dreams or to Anglophone accounts of the Arab world, and then to emphasize the particular over the determining factors which might be in play. Moreover, the determining factors here are the rules and terms with which Egypt, or the Orient, might be represented. So, jumping to another more modern medium, film, and following Laura Mulvey's thoughts on the male gaze, just as we learn to see and enjoy Hollywood films from a male perspective, so Orientalism as a system of representation offers only a male and decisively tainted way of representing the harem.[50] In order to see or represent we cannot simply declare new ways of seeing or writing. To get there from here, to undo Orientalism – and much more – requires a long revolution. And this point concerns Pickthall as much as the Western travellers to the Oriental harem, and their latter-day critic advocates, as now we have to view the conclusion of both novels as our author's recourse to idealism or (religious) mystification, or both, but all in order to end and bring closure to the painful narrative at hand.

50 Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", *Screen* 16.3 (Autumn, 1975), 6–18.

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The second term, routes, is derived from James Clifford's thoughts on ethnography in *Routes*. By routes he refers to the travels of all people, not the journey of the ethnographer to the village, the deracinated visiting the rooted ones, as, say, Claude Levi-Strauss made famous with his *Triste Tropiques*. All peoples have travelled, and these are journeys we bear in our names and customs, and family and personal histories – in our bodies. Routes concern "diverse practices of crossing, tactics of translation, experiences of double or multiple attachment". Moreover, these routes have been "powerfully inflected by three connected global forces: the continuing legacies of empire, the effect of unprecedented world wars, and the global consequences of industrial capitalism's disruptive restructuring activity". Yet, Clifford continues, the results are uneven, as here differences are upheld, and there obliterated, or, later, "certain travelers are materially privileged and others are oppressed".[51] This is travelling theory and, given the two novels, seems an apt way to grasp the uneven features of both texts. What I mean here, specifically, is that on the one hand Cook's tourists, or by the mid-nineteenth century post Grand Tour in its classic sense – all Western tourists were engaged in an increasingly industrialized process. Even before there were steamships and hotels, and before the arrival of British and European goods and related services, and before European quarters were built in Levantine cities – especially in Alexandria – that these tours were successful and popular (in a market sense) all brought about the industrial process as a matter of inevitable tendency. Mass culture, the result of the industrial process produces sameness. The same transportation, the same tour route, the same information (the new expertise of Murray's tour guides) and the same food. By the end of the nineteenth century the tour was such a literary cliché that Arthur Conan Doyle was able to write a related and successful political thriller, *The Tragedy of the Korosko* (1898). And yet these tourists had their needs, and their first and fundamental need was absolute difference. Westerners needed – and still need – to see archaeology and experience a climate which was very different and distinct from that of home. The same point applies to people, as the natives of Egypt and Palestine were ideally like their ancient predecessors, and if not so they were different in a most absolute sense (albeit repugnant to Westerners), hence the tainted discourse of race, religion, and culture.

Again, Pickthall is an idealist as, at least in these two novels, his central characters, Iskender and Barakah, are themselves hybrids of a sort. Iskender is from a village which depends on tourism and his function is as a native informant

51 James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1997), 6, 7, 35.

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for tourists, while Barakah is an Englishwoman who has converted to Islam, married an Egyptian, had children with the same man, and speaks Arabic and knows the culture from the inside. Both have routes – London to Cairo to Paris to Jerusalem to the village – which explain their lives and the complexities and contradictions which they endure in this world of absolute difference. These positions became untenable, which resonates with the sombre tone of Pickthall's remarks in the foreword to *As Others See Us*, that is, his longing for the optimism of those pre-war years, and the reality we live with today. In the Near East and North Africa now we have ISIS and other extreme sectarian groups whose mission is to enforce absolute difference by any means necessary, a most reactionary and reprehensible response to the obliteration of difference posed by the West.

Finally, there is enjoyment. By enjoyment I refer to the pleasures of mass culture, of candies and packaged fun and distraction. I also refer to enjoyment as the carnivalesque, that is, as the tumult and excitement of anything that breaks the monotony of the everyday. For Westerners and in our novels, enjoyment was met in both senses – the exoticism of the Near East offered pleasures of the senses, especially the body, and something which broke the monotony, a world which was violent, noisy, disorganized, and unruly. I am not sure Pickthall had an answer here, only asceticism and withdrawal, where something more powerful and critical was needed, and today as then.

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CHAPTER 8

A Vehicle for the Sacred: Marmaduke Pickthall's Near Eastern Novels

Adnan Ashraf

Marmaduke Pickthall is the grandfather of the Islamic novel in English. Can the eight Near Eastern novels (1903–1921) of this mostly forgotten Edwardian author entertain and enlighten contemporary fans of the "global novel", of Pakistani Anglophone fiction, of the "*halal* novel", and the titles sprouting from the pens of far-flung Arab authors and Muslim converts writing in English today? Can the considerable achievements and positions of this Englishman in the fields of creative writing, cultural criticism, political activism, journalism, and translation inform, invigorate, or settle current debates about the British Muslim community; Muslim identity and integration in secular societies; and the transformational choices made by convert and ethnic Muslims newly practicing their religion? If these general questions spark your interest, please read on as I explain my main research question.

The Early Hours (1921) was reprinted in 2010 and is the only one of Marmaduke Pickthall's thirteen novels in print. It is not the only one of merit, and is arguably not his best. There are also *Veiled Women* (1913) and *Knights of Araby* (1917). Most of his novels' titles indicate their Near Eastern setting. A critic writing in *The Morning Post* judged that "Mr. Pickthall's Eastern novels, as a whole, constitute the most important contribution to our knowledge of the Muslim East which has been made in any country in this century".[1] I believe the reason that Pickthall was able to make such a significant, if neglected or underestimated, contribution is because he peopled the Oriental settings of his novels with Muslim characters whose subtle selves he depicted according to an Islamic psychological schema. The self of a Pickthall protagonist is attached variously to its *nafs* (desire), its *hawa* (caprice), its *'aql* (intellect), its *qalb* (heart), and its *ruh* (spirit). Furthermore, he represented his characters' worlds as structured by an ethos derived from the Quran that he cited in his novels' epigraphs. This is in contrast to the non-European, "undifferentiated type called Oriental, African, yellow, brown, or Muslim" and presented to European readers by nearly all other writers of the early twentieth century.[2] Pickthall was able to do this

1 Ann Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy* (London: Hutchinson, 1938), 258.

2 Edward. W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), 252.

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because, as E.M. Forster explained in 1923, "He is the only contemporary English novelist who understands the nearer East".[3] How did the novelist render Muslim characters and their selves, so different from those of Europeans? Where did an Anglican Christian get an understanding of Islam adequate to the task of rendering fictive Muslim psyches?

Pickthall's novels represent historical, political, social, economic, and religious aspects of the Near East. Clark and Nash have provided analyses of the historical and political aspects.[4] Murad has drawn attention to the Islamic core of the culture that Pickthall so admired and respected in the Ottoman Empire.[5] Malak's *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English* while focussing on literary narratives classified by him as Muslim does not even mention Pickthall's work, which he seems alarmingly unaware of.[6] In short, not much has been written on the religious character of individuals and society as represented in Pickthall's Near Eastern novels.[7] E.M. Forster in 1923 offered his view that the "Oriental" in these novels (1) never abandons his personality and (2) guards his precious "Self" at all times. It is important to show that while strikingly interesting, this does not adequately describe the Oriental self as Pickthall depicts it.

I propose to read Pickthall's novels through the moral tales of the Bûlâc edition of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, an original methodological approach I have arrived at through independent research. I will explain what I mean by this after first illustrating how Forster's critique is inadequate.

Forster's analysis of the "Oriental Self" in Pickthall's novels describes an undifferentiated type whose "meditation, though it has the intensity and aloofness of mysticism, never leads to abandonment of personality. The Self is precious, because God, who created it, is Himself a personality; the Lord gave and only the Lord can take away. And a jealous guarding of the Self is to be detected beneath all their behaviour when they are most friendly or seem most humble".[8]

It appears Forster had not read *Knights of Araby* – which received good reviews in 1917 – at the time that his "Salute to the Orient!" critique of Pickthall

3 E.M. Forster, *Abinger Harvest* (London: Edward Arnold, 1961), 291.

4 Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim*. (London: Quartet, 1986); Geoffrey Nash, *From Empire to Orient: Travellers to the Middle East 1830–1928* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005).

5 Abdal Hakim Murad, Foreword, Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Early Hours* (Cambridge: Muslim Academic Trust, 2010).

6 Amin Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005).

7 See, however, Claire Chambers, *Britain Through Muslim Eyes, Literary Representations, 1780–1988* (London: Palgrave, 2015), Ch. 3. The author is grateful to the editor for supplying this reference.

8 Forster, *Abinger*, 291–2.

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was published in 1923. When Prince Jeyyash emerges as the final dominant character in *Knights of Araby*, two instances of "abandonment of personality" do, indeed, occur. First, after his brother's defeat, a humbled Jeyyash shaves his beard, and – assuming the guise of an Indian merchant – descends to the level of the common man. Second, after Jeyyash peacefully takes the throne of Zabid, he weds and, at the peak of his power and happiness, decides to step away from "all that structure of magnificence". Rather than demonstrating "a jealous guarding of the Self", Jeyyash turns his back on his kingdom, dons the pilgrim's garments for Haj and travels to Mecca with the intention of "self-abasement".[9]

Knights of Araby negates Forster's conclusion, which is unsurprising since Forster acknowledged the limited scope of his essay and the fallible nature of his generalization. More importantly, the work occasions a continuation of the conversation that Forster began, for Pickthall's rendering of the "Self" is one of the most distinctive features of his Near Eastern novels, and possibly the most significant. He does not render a static self, but rather depicts the subtle selves of characters as they vary, develop, grow or change during the course of their narrative journeys, offering insights into a Muslim world, plausibly and dramatically drawn, that won Pickthall his readers. Protagonists such as Camruddin Agha of *The Early Hours* and the English convert to Islam, Mary Smith / Barakah, of *Veiled Women*, further support my thesis and give the lie to Forster's critique.

As his career progressed, so did Pickthall's understanding of personal theology, jurisprudence, worship, and the science of spirituality in Islam, giving his novels an ethical and cultural verisimilitude that other writers of his generation – lacking his firsthand experience – could not match. What has not been understood thus far is the possibility that the ethos and poetics that operate in Pickthall's Near Eastern novels flow from a particular scholarly source hidden in a specific edition of the *Thousand and One Nights*, which Pickthall is known to have possessed and treasured: the complete Bûlâc edition. In this research proposal, I draw attention to the source – Imam Ghazali – provide evidence that Pickthall claims to have possessed the edition of the *Nights* in which anecdotes appropriated from Ghazali were included, and give testimony, as well as evidence from unpublished, primary sources, showing that Pickthall was possibly competent to read these Arabic language texts. I examine key themes in one of these Ghazalian anecdotes and show how some of them reappear in Pickthall's Eastern novels, giving them a unique character that has eluded a precise explication until now.

9 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Knights of Araby* (London: Collins, 1920), 372.

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Before further discussing my theoretical view and investigation methodology, let's consider how the *Nights* intertwines with the life of Marmaduke Pickthall. While his mother Mary Pickthall was pregnant with the future novelist, she is known to have read "always that same inimitable book, the *Arabian Nights*, in a funny old-world translation – not even the grand new one made by the famous Burton – but an old copy… Always these Paynim stories, in the same scented book".[10] Marmaduke Pickthall's existence, therefore, is associated with the *Nights* from the start. In his youth, he was educated at the elite boys' school Harrow, and in addition to Scott, James, and Disraeli, he read authors like Dickens, who had shown the influence of the *Nights* in his work.

Pickthall set his second, breakthrough novel, *Saïd the Fisherman* (1903), in the Ottoman Levant, his first Near Eastern setting. The *Nights* was on his mind during its composition; depicting a reverie of his protagonist Saïd, Pickthall writes: "The whole of his life passed before him at such times, like a tale of the *Thousand and One Nights*. But for evidence of the piles of carpets, and the presence of Selim, moving to and fro among them, he would sometimes have doubted the truth of it all, so marvellous it seemed".[11]

After Harrow, Pickthall sat for exams hoping to join the Levant Consular Service; though he placed first in languages, he did not succeed overall. Instead of going to university, Marmaduke travelled with his mother's support to the Levant. As he explains in *Oriental Encounters* (1918), the fictionalised memoir recording this period of his life: "I fancy there was some idea at the time that if I learnt the languages and studied life upon the spot I might eventually find some backstairs way into the service of the Foreign Office".[12] In Jerusalem and environs, Pickthall found himself drawn to Arabic-speaking individuals such as Rashid, a Turkish soldier, and the witty dragoman Suleyman; learning Arabic was thus pursued in advantageous company, and as Abdal Hakim Murad attests in his biographical sketch, the young traveller's studies, enthusiasm, and sense of liberation in Levantine society allowed him to acquire the language with ease.

Pickthall's recollection of that late nineteenth century milieu compares the worldliness of Europe with Muslim societies' detachment from the material world.

> When I read *The Arabian Nights* I see the daily life of Damascus, Jerusalem, Aleppo, Cairo, and the other cities as I found it in the early nineties

10 Fremantle, *Loyal*, 12.

11 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Saïd the Fisherman* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925), 201.

12 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters, Palestine and Syria (1894-5-6)* (London: W. Collins, 1918), 14.

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> of the last century. What struck me, even in its decay and poverty, was the joyousness of that life compared with anything that I had seen in Europe. The people seemed quite independent of our cares of life, our anxious clutching after wealth, our fear of death.[13]

Pickthall afforded a privileged position to the ethos of Islamic detachment-from-the-world, in contrast with the European worldliness from which he was estranged; and, he had "rapidly increasing fluency" in Arabic when he went native. Regarding the fruit of this enterprise, Fremantle writes: "It was in Damascus that he finally acquired his great mastery of Arabic"[14]

Oriental Encounters ends with Pickthall's emotional departure from Damascus. Regarding a parting gift from a friend, he says: "It was not till some time after I arrived in England that I realised that the volumes which he had presented to me were a complete Bûlâc Edition of the *Thousand and One Nights* – a valuable book – which is my greatest treasure".[15] Pickthall is writing about events that occurred twenty years earlier, during his travels through Syria and Palestine between 1894 and 1896. His testimony regarding the Bûlâc Edition would have been written circa 1916. The declaration is made in the present tense, suggesting that the *Nights*, when he finished writing *Oriental Encounters* in 1916, was still his greatest treasure. In any event, when he received the complete Bûlâc edition in 1896, Pickthall's Arabic proficiency was good enough to read it, and when he set to writing *Saïd the Fisherman*, he considered his Arabic a valuable source of this novel's authenticity. In an unpublished 1901 letter to his literary agent, Pickthall makes a claim for his novel, which he has just sent Pinker in manuscript, asserting that its significance owes to its having been written by an author more familiar with the land and people that it treats than the average traveler, explaining that he had troubled himself exceedingly to ensure its historical accuracy, and that he was fairly fluent in Arabic.[16]

In a December 2nd, 1904 letter to Pinker, Pickthall announces that since coming home, he's read only Arabic material, which has put him in an Oriental frame of mind, and that he hopes to start another Eastern book very soon. In a December 22nd letter the same year, he writes about the sample chapters of his new eastern book. "By the Mercy of Allah", he announces, its prologue is now finished and seems good. In his handwritten letter, he suggests a title – *Shemsuddin* – followed in Arabic script by the words *in sha Allah* (if God wills),

13 Murad, Foreword, VII.

14 Fremantle, *Loyal*, 77.

15 Pickthall, *Oriental*, 318.

16 Letters to J.B. Pinker. 1901–1922. MS. James B. Pinker Collection of Papers, Berg Collection, New York Public Library, New York.

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and concludes with wishes to Pinker for a happy Christmas and several words written in Arabic – *Al-Janaab, Al-Ajal, Al-Amjad; al-Khawaja* Binker (Arabic has no 'P'), *al-mohtarum*, explaining in parentheses that these are honorifics. In an April 11, 1908 letter, Pickthall discusses the novel he is now preparing for publication, stating that the history in the book is almost exclusively taken from Arabic sources. These signs of fluency in Arabic and its function in Pickthall's creative process should come as no surprise considering that he would one day produce a respected translation of the Quran.

Pickthall could have read in his treasured Bûlâc edition of the *Nights* the anecdote that is identified by Yuriko Yamanaka as "Night 464 Iskandar Dhu'l-qarnayn and a certain tribe of poor folk", or "anecdote 5",[17] and many others like it. The original source of this anecdote, and numerous others, has been identified as Imam Ghazali (1058–1111 A.D.) in his *Nasihat al-muluk*,[18] "a book of counsel for kings, or what is called in Western languages a 'mirror for princes'". *Nasihat al-muluk* was translated into Arabic as *al-Tibr al-masbuk fi nasihat al-muluk* sometime before 1199. While the Persian original nearly went out of circulation, *al-Tibr* was often copied during Mamluk and Ottoman times. The part – in *al-Tibr* – that is said to be authentically by Ghazali, "apart from minor differences in the wording" is "substantially identical" to a corresponding passage in the *Thousand and One Nights*' Arabic text, which according to Yamanaka's reference is contained in the complete Bûlâc edition.[19] If Pickthall read his complete edition of the *Nights* after arriving back in England in 1896, he would have read the passages originally written by Ghazali, one of which I summarize below and compare with themes in Pickthall's novels:

> King Dhu 'l-qarnayn came to a nation that possessed nothing and "saw graves dug at the doors of their houses; and every day they went to these graves and worshipped", eating only herbs. He summoned their king, who refused to come: "I have no business with Dhu 'l-qarnayn, and no demands to make of him". Dhu 'l-qarnayn went to the king and asked, "What has befallen you?" "I do not see any possessions belonging to you people. Why do you not amass silver and gold, and thereby gain profit?"

17 Yuriko Yamanaka, "Alexander in the *Thousand and One Nights* and the Ghazali Connection", *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism – Perspectives from East & West*. Ed. Yuriko Yamanaka and Tetsuo Nishio (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 93–115, 106.

18 Dr. Muhammad Isa Waley, curator of Persian manuscripts, British Library, informed me: "As regards the attribution of Nasihat al-muluk, it is clear from Hillenbrand and others that the content is consistent with the ideas of Hujjat al-Islam al-Ghazali. That does not in itself prove that he was the author, as they would surely admit if pressed. But of course it does make the text more worth studying. And Allah ta'ala knows best."

19 Yamanaka, "Alexander", 103.

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> "Because no person has ever gained satisfaction from such profit", [the king] said; "and because it always brings loss in the world to come".[20]

The eponymous picaro of *Saïd the Fisherman* has been planning to buy a coffee-house and leave fishing, but when he is swindled of his hard-earned savings, he reacts with unchecked emotion. Abandoning his humble property and country to the deceitful neighbor who has defrauded him and convinced him to flee from misfortune, Saïd makes demands of everybody he encounters on his way to Damascus, lying, cheating, and stealing as he goes. He abandons his wife on the way and, when offered a partnership in an honest trade by a sympathetic and pious muleteer, grows malcontent and leaves it. He amasses much wealth during the 1860 Damascus massacre, but his vain-glorious mishandling of it brings him to ruin. Saïd is driven by the desires of his lower self to London, where he is forcibly rendered drunk and robbed. He reaches Alexandria where, ultimately, he is killed during the British bombardment. The novel's moral is clear: a simpleton in his ignorance and rejection of the Prophetic Way has consigned himself to an ignominious death.[21] Care for this unfortunate ingrate is extended by the *ulema*, but squandered by him on the passionate delusions of his lower self. Exemplified by Emir Abdul Qadir, the *ulema* have an almost timeless quality to them, and staying-power in a time of political turbulence. At the level of government, the rulers too have surrendered to their desires and caprices, rather than being guided by the Prophetic Way, the middle path of the *ulema*. They too race to an ignominious end, politically signified by European financial control, taking their nation with them. It is only people committed to lives of spirituality as opposed to materialism who are agents of societal benefit; Emir Abdul Qadir, a Sufi like Ghazali, saves a convent full of nuns during the massacre of Christians.

There is a logic to all of this, which can be discerned in the Ghazalian schema for the human subtlety: every person is associated with his or her own subtlety known as the *latifa*, and this subtle "self" has different names depending on its

20 Ibid., 106.

21 Speaking of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), a brief description (at the end of Chapter 10 of *Saïd the Fisherman*) reflects a heterodox conception of him. One can infer, since he became a Muslim, that the author might have later regretted writing this description. Furthermore, as much as one wishes to show due respect for the sensitivities of a scholarly audience, in light of criminal attacks around the world related to exercises in Islamophobic freedom of speech, it would seem remiss not to mention the following. Readers and lecturers interested in *Saïd the Fisherman* who wish to exercise caution might consider arguments (of scholars such as Norwich, England's AbdalHaqq Bewley, a translator of the Quran) proposing the idea of classifying as crimes acts that abuse the Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and grant him peace).

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attachments: the *nafs*, or lower self, is attached to its desires; *hawa*, or caprice, is attached to one's whims; the *aql*, or intellect, is attached to considerations of personal benefit and detriment; the *qalb*, or heart, is attached to the afterlife; the *ruh*, or soul, is attached to God alone.[22] Reading Saïd as a manifestation of the *nafs* is motivated by every chapter of the novel. The lower world in which the *nafs* rejoices is explicitly mentioned by the king in (Ghazalian) anecdote five.

His questioning continues: "'For what purpose did you dig these graves?' [Dhu 'l-qarnayn] asked. 'So that I may at every hour see what stage has been reached on the road to the after-world,' he said; 'thus [are we reminded] not to forget death and not to let his [sic] lower world become dear to our hearts, but to remain assiduous in worship'".[23] The stages on the road to the after-world that are mentioned here can be understood as the different attachments of the human subtlety, whether it is attached to its desires, its whims, to ethical conduct, to the hereafter – as in this instance where the king mentions the heart – or to God Himself, the soul's attachment. The anecdote's focus on death is not without an equal focus on remaining "assiduous in worship" and detached from the "lower world". This sort of detachment, states a translation of Ghazali, is "perhaps that which the Sufis call 'ecstasy' (hal), that is to say, according to them, a state in which, absorbed in themselves and in the suspension of sense-perceptions, they have visions beyond the reach of intellect. Perhaps also Death is that state, according to that saying [...]: 'Men are asleep; when they die, they wake'".[24] There is a similar confluence of ecstasy and death in the description of *The Early Hours*' Camruddin Agha, and his lingering "among the tombs in dreamy ecstasy". An explanation follows later: "The thought of death is dear to us Osmanlis", answered Camruddin, with pride. "That is Allah's mercy to us, since the menace of a cruel death is always on us from the Christian hordes".[25]

The king then showed two skulls to Dhu'l- qarnayn, explaining that the first was one of the unjust kings of this world, who spent his time amassing worldly wealth, and oppressed and despoiled the subjects. "'The True God on High saw his tyranny, took his soul, and sent him to Hell.' The second 'was one of the just and righteous kings, who was kind and merciful to the subjects. When God on High took his soul, He sent him to Paradise.' Then, he laid his hand upon

22 Faraz Rabbani. "The Subtlety Within Humans and What it Relates to." *Islamic Beliefs for Seekers*.

23 Yamanaka, "Alexander", 106.

24 Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (*1058–1111 CE*): *Munkidh min al-Dalal* (*Confessions, or Deliverance from Error*), *c. 1100 CE*. Medieval Sourcebook, ed. Paul Hallsall. Fordham University, 1998.

25 Marmauke Pickthall, *The Early Hours* (Cambridge: Muslim Academic Trust, 2010), 81, 266–7.

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Dhu'l-qarnayn's head: 'O Dhu'l-qarnayn, I see this head of yours. Perhaps it will soon be one of those two'".[26]

The conduct and fate of princes and kings is an important theme in *Knights of Araby*, as we shall see. Here, I want to show how the concluding moral of this anecdote is reflected in *Saïd the Fisherman*. "On hearing the words of the possessionless king, Dhu'l-qarnayn wept and said: 'If you will consent to accompany us as wazir, I will grant you up to half of my empire.' 'No,' [the king] answered. 'Why?' he asked. 'The whole of mankind,' he answered, 'are hostile to you on account of your sovereignty and wealth. To me they will always be friendly, on account of my contentment and poverty'".[27] This final moral is illustrated by Selim the muleteer who befriends Saïd and is an exemplar of contentment and poverty. His qualities are recognized by the noble scholar Ismail Abbas, who welcomes him as a friend in the Grand Umayyad mosque. Imam Ghazali is known to have spent much time in this mosque.

The lessons conveyed in this anecdote will come as no surprise to readers familiar with Sufism or Imam Ghazali, but the instruction embedded in this anecdote has gone nearly unnoticed:

> the whole central block of the *Nights*, consisting of nearly 100 short edifying anecdotes, has been overshadowed by the full-length tales of love and marvels. European translators have not paid much attention to them. Galland's translation does not contain this section, and Lane and Mardrus only selected a limited number of tales of this type. For example, Lane compresses most of these shorter stories into the notes to the chapters in small print, and omits to mention even the title of minor tales such as that of Alexander. Perhaps partly due to this, very few studies have been dedicated to this section of the *Nights*.[28]

Some readers might have a privileged awareness of the moral aspect of the *Nights* that is more prominent in certain editions, such as the Arabic Bûlâc edition that Pickthall owned. As Cyril Glassé notes in the entry on the *Thousand and One Nights* in the *Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*: "Many stories describe the journey of the soul through life; the treasures which are sought are realizations of reality, and the magicians who are vanquished are the different kinds of illusions which the ego throws up to keep its hold over the immortal self which must be freed from the imprisonment of the earthly condition".[29]

26 Yamanaka, "Alexander", 106.

27 Ibid., 105.

28 Ibid., 93.

29 Cyril Glassé, *Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam* (London: Stacey International, 1989), 402–3.

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None of the studies of Pickthall's fiction that I know have linked it to the work of Imam Ghazali, though Pickthall – after his last published novel – mentions his admiration for him.[30] In his foreword to *The Early Hours*, Murad, a Ghazali expert, explains that Pickthall's youthful religious needs, were "satisfied by an increasingly high Anglicanism", and that the aspiring author had a "robust willingness to accept and face doubts, and even a solid cynicism about the ultimate truth of God", as indicated in Pickthall's notebooks, which show that "he wrestled with these difficulties, seeking help in the secular philosophy of the day, eventually to emerge, as Ghazali had done, a stronger man".[31] This instance, which describes Pickthall's development of faith, refers to the period of his life preceding his first publications near the end of the 19th century. There is no mention of the Bûlâc edition of the *Nights* or of what it contained, only that Pickthall himself experienced a crisis of faith that could be understood in Ghazalian terms. This provides all the more reason to believe that Pickthall would have understood and seized upon the Ghazalian archetype and Ghazalian teachings at that time, regardless of whether he was aware of their provenance.

Evidence of a Ghazalian worldview can be found in many of Pickthall's Near Eastern novels. Perhaps the richest vein is contained in *Knights of Araby*. With its punning title, Pickthall draws attention to *The Arabian Nights*, giving a hint as to his source, perhaps, and alerting interested readers. It is a typical Pickthallian strategy to entice British readers with a popular high concept that allows him to introduce them to his somewhat unconventional, and even subversive themes, as he does in *Veiled Women*. In the case of *Knights of Araby*, a historical novel set in Yemen during the period from 1066 to 1120 A.D., Pickthall is straightforward about his intentions, which, as he explains in the novel's foreword, include "calling the attention of the English reader to the fact that Muslims, all those centuries ago, confronted the same problems which we face to-day; and made short work of some of them".[32]

A fully realized and resonant historical novel, *Knights of Araby* tells the story of feuding sovereigns contending for the throne of the Yemeni city of Zabid, former site of the Muslim world's oldest university. The heroes are two brothers – Saïd the Squinter and Jeyyash – sons of the assasinated King Najah, whose family has been ousted to a nearby island from whence Saïd, the elder of the two, plots revenge on Ali es-Suleyhi, Zabid's reigning king and his

30 "Works of Philosophy abound, all of them interesting, many of them – as, for instance, those of Al-Ghazzali – worthy of the closest study even now". Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Cultural Side of Islam* (New Delhi, Kitab Bhavan, 1927), 80.

31 Murad, Foreword, xv.

32 Pickthall, Foreword, *Knights*.

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father's murderer. After a patient infiltration of Zabid with the assistance of resourceful, and varied sympathisers and relatives, Saïd succeeds in dispatching Ali es-Suleyhi and regaining the throne. However, he is not scrupulous in his triumph, indiscriminately killing one of his supporters when he slays the king. After enjoying his sovereignty, Saïd the Squinter is eventually the victim of a plot that allows the Suleyhi clan to recapture Zabid. His downfall is occasioned by his brother Jeyyash and an unexpected lapse of propriety. A master chess-player, known as the less volatile, more poetic, cautious, and orthodox of the two brothers, Jeyyash's one weakness – for beauty – is exploited by an enemy whose dignity he has publicly, if justifiably, affronted. Blinded by the outward beauty of a girl used as a decoy, Jeyyash is brought close to ruin, and entangled in a romantic quest while enemies trick his brother the king into marching his army into an ambush. The narrative is marked by thematic harmony and balance as a thoroughly humbled and penitent Jeyyash adopts the guise of a commoner and walks the middle path of the Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him). This prophetic standard is the target that the novel oscillates towards, symbolized by the color white, which is invoked in the bloodless coup that Jeyyash stages, regaining the throne, this time with justice and mercy.[33] Experience, bloodshed, and suffering teach the characters of this novel, or rather lead them to, observance of the sacred Law. The knights of Araby are not extremely intelligent, but Jeyyash the final victor proves himself capable of being edified by circumstance.

Pickthall hints at a Ghazalian archetype in Jeyyash, who finds peace in self-abasement after years of political turbulence. Jeyyash's development of character, detaching his subtle self from its desires so that he is guided by his intellect, heart and soul, recalls to mind the Sufi path in one particular: his fall from his lofty station as prince during his brother's reign, upon the latter's defeat. After his exile and return to their former kingdom in the guise of a clean-shaven and humble Hindustani, Jeyyash rubs shoulders with commoners in the streets and through plain dialogue with the "quiet folk" and ordinary citizens of Zabid learns of their needs, and wishes for life. In his previous princely station, he was veiled from the reality of the populace. This lowering of Jeyyash's *nafs* from a religious identity that has been punctured and shown to be false ultimately elevates him. Soon, intending to follow the Way of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him), Jeyyash is king of the realm, having staged a bloodless coup of Zabid's throne. Self-abasement is explicitly intended by the new king after he is given his ultimate

33 Pickthall, *Knights*, 366.

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triumph: the reappearance of his lost love, Yasminah, and their marriage. What King Jeyyash values is sovereignty over his self:

> So great was his felicity, so perfect the success of all his schemes, that the king acknowledged that he was in danger of elation, and felt the need of self-abasement before God. Accordingly, when he had set the realm in order and established the administration and defensive works, he turned his back on all that structure of magnificence, and set out with a few companions on the pilgrimage.[34]

Jeyyash's fall and adoption of a humble persona, followed by his accession to the throne and pilgrimage to Mecca have affinities with the well-known story of Imam Ghazali's spiritual crisis, which was also followed by a dramatic (though, in Ghazali's case, deliberate) descent from the worldly apex of his success as an orthodox scholar, and a period of travelling incognito, and a pilgrimage to Mecca. Pickthall seems to hint as much when he makes what appears to be a recondite allusion to Imam Ghazali in his selection of the alias – "*Bahr*", meaning ocean – that Jeyyash uses while incognito. Ghazali was once praised by his teacher Imam al-Juwayni as "*bahr*", an ocean.[35]

The novel is also set between 1066 and 1120 A.D., which corresponds closely to Ghazali's lifetime, though it unfolds mostly in Yemen. More interesting is the correspondence of its themes with those of anecdote five (from the Bûlâc edition of the *Nights*), which emphasises the reality of the grave that awaits every man. To quote once more this compelling anecdote, the King Dhu'l-qarnayn approaches "the possessionless king: 'For what purpose did you dig these graves?' he asked. 'So that I may at every hour see what stage has been reached on the road to the after-world,' he said; 'thus [are we reminded] not to forget death and not to let his [sic] lower world become dear to our hearts, but to remain assiduous in worship'". Once he is king of Zabid, Jeyyash similarly "felt the need for self-abasement before God", and "turned his back on all that structure of magnificence" and made the pilgrimage "to an empty house". This is the *Bait* Allah (House of God), the Ka'aba, the direction to which Muslims turn in prayer. Jeyyash reads Mecca's history as a metaphor for the purification of the self, that is emptied until its worship is for God alone: "It was the blessing, and had been the curse, of El Islam – this city which contained no relic save its ancient memories of cruel persecution and idolatry; no beauty to seduce man's

34 Ibid., 372.

35 Faraz A. Khan. Introduction, "Biography of Imam Ghazali". *Ghazali's 40 Foundations of Religion Explained.*

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thoughts from God. And, as he pondered on the glory of the Unity, and how the folk of old obscured its light with vain imaginings, he praised the wisdom which had made men pilgrims to an empty house".[36]

Pickthall's novels enrich English literature with characters that reflect an Islamic conception of the self and God. Because Pickthall understood the Sunni worldview, he could understand how Muslims think and, increasingly, as his career progressed and he became Muslim, how they felt. Consequently, readers of his novels can also, as is evidenced by the reviewer in *Everyman*, who wrote in 1917 that, "Once again Marmaduke Pickthall makes ancient Islam live for us. You might say it was the 'Arabian Nights' written by a realist. The 'Knights of Araby' is, to our mind, as fine as 'Saïd the Fisherman.' The triumph of Mr. Pickthall's work is that the atmosphere of the East is never 'worked up'; it is taken for granted, so that you walk among these Muslims as a Muslim – not as a tourist with a pith helmet and a Cook's guide".[37]

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36 Ibid., 381.

37 *The Common Cause*, 12 October 1917.

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CHAPTER 9

Becoming Woman and Gender Typologies in Marmaduke Pickthall's Oriental Fiction

Faruk Kökoğlu

Marmaduke Pickthall published a dozen oriental novels and travelogues, and many short stories between 1903 and 1922. The role of women and gender issues in the Near Eastern societies especially in Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Turkey in the early twentieth century are central and recurring themes in most of his fiction. *The Valley of the Kings* (1909) opens with a typology of Western women living in the Levant. A Christian Arab woman associates three Englishwomen with three different types and personalities: Carulin the Virgin, the Androgynous or Hermaphroditic Jane, and Hilda the Ripe Fruit. Pickthall suggests a similar typology for his oriental female characters through their submissiveness, dominance, or equality in their relationships with the other sex. This chapter further examines these typologies by doubling Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts of becoming-minoritarian with becoming-woman in Pickthall's oriental fiction then proceeds to analyse the types of oriental female characters in Pickthall's fiction. Two of his heroines are focused in detail: Barakah, an English woman who becomes a Muslim and marries the son of a Turco-Egyptian Pasha in *Veiled Women* (1913) undergoing some bitter experiences and disappointments; Reshideeh, the daughter of a late Ottoman Pasha in Istanbul, after the death of her first husband marries the Macedonian hero of the novel in *The Early Hours* (1921). By closely probing the gender issues in Pickthall's alternative oriental approach in his fiction, this chapter aims to shed new light on the contradictory role given to women by the Oriental Socius as the product of socio-cultural practices and misconducts.

Becoming: Desire versus Interest

At the turn of the twentieth century in Syria, an old Circassian immigrant from Kars shares with Pickthall his memory of the defence of the city under the leadership of three English officers. He says: "Three Englishmen behaved like warrior-angels, fought like devils. And while they fought for us their

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Government betrayed our country".[1] The old man continues with a historic lesson: "With you, personal honour is everything: you will never, any one of you, lie or cheat. But your national honour is not: you may say one day one thing, and the contrary on the morrow".[2] This anecdote, we might posit, not only represents in micro-form the essence of Anglo-oriental relations in the last few centuries it also illustrates desire and interest as defined by Deleuze and Guattari. Desire for Deleuze and Guattari, is always produced in relation to an outside in an impersonal process as distinct from interests. While desire is molecular, unconscious and positive, interests are molar, negative, conscious or preconscious. Desire stands for itself alone. It is prior and indifferent to all kinds of interests, such as class, nation, self and capital. This indifference makes desire open to, and an easy target for all kinds of exploitations of power. Hence desire, which is revolutionary in nature, turns into a reactionary, destructive and anti-revolutionary retreat. When desire and interests are combined in a single person, no matter what nation, race or gender he or she belongs to, interests have a manipulative power over desires: and that is human nature, and the nature of desire itself.

Deleuze and Guattari warn us about the negative turns of desire as "desiring one's own annihilation, or desiring the power to annihilate", and they list a number of its reactive forms such as money, state, army, police and fascism.[3] And Deleuze argues elsewhere that desire might turn "against one's own interests: capitalism profits from this, but so does socialism, the party, and the party leadership".[4] When desire does away with the ego, and attains a positive and productive direction in connection with an outside, it is called "becoming": one becomes impersonal, something other than himself or herself. The aim is to free life where it becomes trapped, to free thought from its constraints. Through becoming, one finds new possibilities for living and thinking. Becoming is always becoming-minoritarian and becoming-molecular. This is the only creative and active direction for the movement of desire. There is no becoming majoritarian or becoming molar which are always reactive and nihilistic, and they lack creativity. Majoritarianism is a static being as a dead end.

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1 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters: Palestine and Syria* (*1894-5-6*) (London: Collins, 1918), 72.

2 Anne Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy* (London: Hutchinson, 1938), 49.

3 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans., Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 168.

4 Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, edited by David Lapoujade, translated by Michael Taormina (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2004), 257.

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Deleuze and Guattari argue that men are always majority and molar identities: "the constant or standard is the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language (Joyce's or Ezra Pound's Ulysses)".[5] While men as such are molar entities, women, who are always regarded as minority, can be both molar and molecular as it is the case with everything except men. Therefore there is becoming-woman of men, becoming-African or -Asian of Europeans, but not the reverse. For instance, becoming European of an Asian never exists, or it is no longer called a becoming but a reactive, nihilistic and self-destructive movement.

Pickthall refers to the reactive and interest-ridden movement of majoritarianism in the East as a "sycophantic aping of the West"[6] and is bitterly critical of it in both his oriental fiction and prose. For Pickthall, that negative movement is neither a desire, nor something desirable: "something which nobody with any sense would wish to be – a European".[7] In *The Valley of Kings*, Mitri, an orthodox Arab-Christian priest, advises Iskender, a native of his village proselytized by Protestant missionaries, to "give up aping that which thou canst never be".[8] Similarly, in *House of War* (1916), Percy is a Christian Arab who has returned to his native land after having made some money in the United States. His pretentious American accent and manners are ridiculed by Elsie's British guests. After a bad joke the guests play on Percy, Elsie's servant Jemileh tells him: "They cannot estimate thy height of character. Return to thy own people, to the children of the Arabs, who respect and love thee".[9]

Furthermore, there is no becoming-man of a woman, nor a rightful becoming-woman of a woman without her undergoing an active process of molecularisation. Virginia Woolf, for instance, "forbade herself 'to speak like a woman': she harnessed the woman-becoming of writing all the more for this".[10] Woolf leaves her molar identity behind and becomes a molecular woman "capable of crossing and impregnating an entire social field, and of contaminating men, of sweeping them up in that becoming".[11] Deleuze and Guattari argue that the rise of female writers in the English novel triggered becoming-woman of male writers, of even "the most phallocratic, such as Lawrence and Miller".[12]

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5 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 105.

6 M. Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Cultural Side of Islam* (Tinnevelley: Hilal Press, 1937), 158.

7 Marmaduke Pickthall, *With the Turk in Wartime* (London: J.M. Dent, 1914), 181.

8 Mamaduke Pickthall, *The Valley of the Kings* (London: John Murray, 1909), 265.

9 Marmaduke Pickthall, *The House of War* (New York: Duffield and Company, 1916), 145.

10 Gilles Deleuze, *Dialogues*, with Claire Parnet, trans., Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), 43.

11 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 276.

12 Ibid.

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With some exceptions, the genre of the novel in general can be said to have close links with becoming-woman of male writers as Woolf argues that "it was the desire to write about women perhaps that led men by degrees to abandon the poetic drama [...] and to devise the novel as a more fitting receptacle".[13] Writing about women is not becoming-woman but sparks it off, it helps male authors to dismantle their phallocentrism and set off to meet their true doubles which is mostly a woman, if not an animal or a child. For Deleuze and Guattari, the best example of becoming-woman in Literature is the work of Henry James.[14] Becoming-woman is the first in the whole series of becomings and "the key to all the other becomings".[15] It is followed by becoming-child, becoming-animal, becoming-molecular, and so on. Finally, there comes becoming-imperceptible. Becomings are lived realities of entering into composition with other forms of affects. Becoming is not imitating, representing, sympathising with, or identifying with what one becomes. In that sense, there is no becoming-woman in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, for Deleuze; it is only a work of hysterical trickery.[16]

Pickthall and Becoming-oriental

I use the term becoming-oriental as a cover term for the whole series of becomings Pickthall undergoes in both his life and fiction such as becoming-boy, becoming-Arab, becoming-woman, becoming-revolutionary, becoming-Turk, becoming-Muslim, and finally becoming-imperceptible by leaving behind both his homeland England and his career as a renowned writer of fiction. Looking through his two biographies, we find some landmarks which prepare Pickthall for his becoming-oriental. He inherited from his mother an odd blindness to class distinctions; she had once lived in India with her first husband and used to read the same old copy of the *Arabian Nights*, declaring Pickthall to be "born with an Eastern mind" (inherent becoming). Pickthall "lost his capacity for arithmetic" after a brain-fewer. He never liked competing or contesting as a schoolboy and later confessed "I must be the wrong sort of Englishman" so demonstrating deterritorialisation and resistance to archetypical Englishness, and resistance to being herded.[17] When Pickthall meets the

13 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt, 1989), 83.

14 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 290.

15 Ibid., 277.

16 Deleuze, *Dialogues*, 43.

17 Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 15, 16, 17.

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Sheykh of the Umayyad Mosque at Damascus at the age of nineteen he tells him about his desire to become a Muslim; the Sheykh advises him not to hurry and wait till he is older and gives him the parable of reconciliation: "Observe this fire. There is a shapely flame, the light that shines around us, and when I put my hand out, there is the heat as well. [...] How many things? You answer three in one, I answer one. We both are right".[18]

From then on Pickthall will detest the fanaticism of the missionaries in the Orient contrasting it with the exemplary tolerance of his Muslim Sheykh. Fremantle tells us two important people to initiate Pickthall into oriental life and becoming-Arab at the age of eighteen: Mr. Hanauer, the English chaplain with an oriental mind in Jaffa, and the dragoman Suleyman. Mr. Hanauer "changed the whole of life for him", "rescued him, in fact; and, moreover, blessed his half-ashamedly admitted desire to get to know the natives and fraternize with them".[19] And Suleyman "helped him to throw off the Englishman, and put on the Oriental".[20] The influences of both are deeply visible in Pickthall's oriental fiction.

Pickthall's actual becoming-Muslim is a silent one in December 1914, a month after Turkey's entry into the Great War on the side of Germany when fanaticism against Islam and Turks peaks in the church. Fremantle writes: "His profession of this faith was a witness, a protest against the hysterical hate preached"[21] in the church harking back to a new crusade against Islam. Fremantle's "protest" theory is motivated by immanent or absolute justice which is universal and accords with the following words of Muhammad which Pickthall likes quoting later: "He who sides with his tribe in injustice is not one of us; nor is he one of us who gathers men together for a purpose of oppression; nor is he one of us who dies while assisting his tribe in tyranny".[22]

In terms of becoming, Deleuze and Guattari explain this immanent type of deterritorialisation with their "shame" theory after Nietzsche. That is, Pickthall cannot bear the shame of being a Christian as such any longer. But he never betrays Englishness. He reterritorialises himself on a different type of Englishness, which he calls, in political terms, the Disraelian notion which inspires a "pan-Islamic progressive movement".[23] Englishness alone is insufficient to define Pickthall's patriotism which stands for Muslim English: Pickthall never

18 Quoted in Ibid., 81.

19 Ibid., 37.

20 Ibid., 40.

21 Ibid., 252.

22 M. Marmaduke Pickthall, *War and Religion* (Woking: Basheer Muslim Library, 1919), 37.

23 Quoted in Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 287.

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uses Englishness to support and save Islam, but on the contrary Islam supports and saves his Britishness as a true becoming with no personal or national interests.

Becoming, as a noble activity suitable for the greatest authors, is the only precondition for reading which is always selective for Deleuze and Guattari. Becoming is not aping what is dominant, but becoming-everyone with those who lack, or are deprived of, the power of self-expression: not on behalf of them but together with them (immanent). Becoming in writing both leads to an immanent symptomatology of the society we live in, and invokes the creation of a people to come. Great writers cannot resist leaving their territories, travelling along the lines of flight, and becoming-molecular, even though it might prove disastrous for them as is the case for Pickthall in the process of his becoming-oriental. Pickthall's oriental desire in writing was both the cause of his sudden to rise to fame in Britain, and his equally rapid downfall: the first was due to his oriental fiction, and the latter was caused by his pro-Turkish journalism. While the Turks fought against the Powers all around Turkey, he carried the same fight against them, including his own government with his pen as a journalist.

Pickthall publicly declares his conversion to Islam in 1917.[24] But his fictional declaration of becoming-Turk and becoming-Muslim takes place a year before in *House of War*. The novel is about young rebellious Miss Elsie Wilding, a British protestant missionary living alone in an orthodox Christian village in the Ottoman Levant. She falls in love with her brother's best friend, Mr. Fenn, a British soldier returning home from India, who, in turn admires Islam and the local dignified governor, Hasan Pasha, "an aged Turk accused of bloody massacre" by the prejudiced local Christians and the British missionaries. Elsie's missionary activities in the region lead to the killing of a Muslim boy from a neighbouring village and a terrible fight between the Muslim and the Christian villages. Hasan Pasha does his best to pacify the fighting groups and is very kind to Elsie. And in order to prevent a further fight, he hides the mutilated corpse of the child from his Muslim relatives, and pretends nothing happened after being shot in the arm by a fanatic while leaving the region. Elsie learns about Hasan Pasha's injury afterwards. She also realizes that she owes him an apology, but she does not know how to do it still accusing him of persecutions. Fenn calms her as follows: "Just send and inquire after his health. He will quite understand. The Turks neither offer nor expect apologies. They are too proud.

24 Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (London: Quartet, 1986), 1, 38.

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They never even plead their case before the world. The native Christians make the most of theirs. Always remember that when you hear Turks accused".[25]

Through his oriental novels before *House of War*, Pickthall makes two critically important diagnoses about the causes of the decline of Islam and Western aversion to it as he summarises later that:

> [T]he majority of professed Muslims are ignorant and superstitious to-day, accepting a vast mass of legends and absurd beliefs [...][26]
>
> The conduct and condition of the Muslims now is a very bad advertisement for the teaching of Islam. It is not astonishing if people, seeing it, should turn away and think Islam to blame for their abasement.[27]

Finally, Pickthall condemns the social degradation of women in some Muslim countries as "a libel on Islam" and proclaims that: "The historical truth is this: that the Prophet of Islam is the greatest feminist the world has ever known".[28] Pickthall's version of Islam, and his interpretation of marriage and relations of the sexes in Islam, as will be examined in detail in the next section, is post-romantic, anachronistic and highly original.

Becoming-woman and Deconstructing the Western View of Marriage and Love

In the same way that Deleuze and Guattari criticise Western romances beginning from the medieval romance between Tristan and Isolde as being inflicted with the passional regime and Christian ideals, Pickthall criticises the Christian view of original sin and marriage as "a sacrament involving bondage of the woman to the man"[29] and all romance in Western literature, claiming that "the romance is an illusion":

> Take modern European literature – the most widely read – and you will find the object of man's life on earth depicted as the love of woman – in the ideal form as the love of one woman, the elect [...] When that one

25 Pickthall, *House of War,* 303–4.

26 M. Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Cultural Side of Islam*, 14.

27 Ibid., 20–21.

28 Ibid., 148.

29 Ibid., 147.

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> woman is discovered the reader is led to suppose that a "union of souls" takes place between the two. And that is the goal of life. [...] But it is traceably a product of the teaching of the Christian Church regarding marriage. Woman is an alluring but forbidden creature, by nature sinful, except when a mystical union, typifying that of Christ and his Church, has happened, thanks to priestly benediction.[30]

Veiled Women is Pickthall's masterpiece of becoming-woman. It depicts the harem life in mid-nineteenth century Egypt no less skilfully and elaborately than Lady Montagu. While Deleuze and Guattari turn to Proustian laws of love as jealousy and homosexuality as the final outcome of all forms of idealised love, and to the signs of Sodom and Gomorrah to deconstruct the Western idealisation of love and marriage as a paradoxical cogito for two people, Pickthall turns to the harem life and polygamy which he does not believe to be the Islamic ideal as he argues later that "Monogamic marriage remains, as it has always been, the ideal of Islam [...] Polygamy is little practised in the Muslim world today, but the permission remains there to witness to the truth that marriage was made for man and woman, not man and woman for marriage."[31]

It is a mistake to see *Veiled Women* as Muslim propaganda of conversion and polygamy: it serves both as a symptomatology of Muslim decadence and misconduct, and the deconstruction of the European idealisation of marriage and love. The opening story of the novel, "the woman's secret" is as follows:

> [A]fter the flood, the men and women were in equal numbers and on equal terms. What then? Why, naturally they began disputing which should have the right to choose in marriage and, as the race increased, enjoy more mates than one. The men gave judgment on their own behalf, as usual; and when the women made polite objection, turned and beat them. [...] The women sought recourse to Allah's judgment; but – O calamity!- by ill advice they made the crow their messenger. The crow flew off towards Heaven, carrying their dear petition in his claws, and from that day to this he brings no answer.[32]

Barakah, an English woman who marries the son of a Turco-Egyptian Pasha, idealises her marriage at the beginning of the novel. But on a trip to France

30 Ibid., 154.

31 Ibid., 155, 157.

32 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Veiled Women* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1913), 6–7.

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with her husband and three other Egyptian couples her idealisation is totally dismantled. All four women are ill-treated. The men leave their wives at the hotel, and go out themselves to enjoy nightly entertainment probably with French prostitutes. And each man, including her own husband, asks Barakah "to confide him the secret how to win the love of Frankish ladies",[33] but Yusuf, her husband, does not forget to add "'It is not for myself I ask, … but Hâfiz, Izz-ud-dîn, and Saïd die to know. Where are these balls at which distinguished women fling aside all shame?'"[34]

Next, Barakah idealises her only son in an Oedipal retreat. In worshipping him, she never realises that the spoilt child grows into an asocial tyrant. When at a young age he is killed in the war by a recruit he had been training abusively, it is the end of everything for Barakah. She is finally resolved to return to England and back to Christianity. When she secretly asks the help of the British Consul in Egypt, she is refused since her case is regarded as a harem quarrel. Barakah, completely disillusioned and devoid of soul, finds a new idealisation, the harem life itself: "She had found the keynote of harîm existence – resignation; not merely passive, but exultant as an act of worship".[35] Barakah is hypnotised into fatalistic resignation through her personal incapability to dissolve her marriage. Bernard Shaw points to this state of "beglamoring the human imagination with a hypnotic suggestion of wholly unnatural feelings"[36] especially in the case of indissoluble or sacramental marriages in Christianity. For Shaw, in fact, there is nothing unnatural in Muslim polygamy and it is even preferable to unlimited "Free Love": "In the British Empire we have unlimited Kulin polygamy, Muslim polygamy limited to four wives".[37] Shaw argues that, if there were an excessive surplus of women population, limited polygamy "would be absolutely necessary".[38] He also argues in terms of monopoly and supply and demand that no one, especially no women, would object to polygamy, but only men who are "comparatively weedy weakling[s], left mateless by polygyny".[39] Finally, in contrast with Barakah's disillusioned resignation, Shaw claims, when polygamy is customary, women become "its most ardent supporters".[40]

33 Ibid, 140.
34 Ibid, 146.
35 *Ibid*, 314.
36 G. Bernard Shaw, *Getting Married* (New York: Brentano's, 1920), 55.
37 Ibid., 7.
38 Ibid., 35.
39 Ibid., 36.
40 Ibid.

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Gender Typologies in the West and the Orient

Pickthall points to the separation of the sexes in Europe as a negative outcome of limitless freedom which is also criticised by Shaw. The separation of the sexes in turn leads to a tripartite typology for each gender. Pickthall introduces this typology for Western women in *The Valley of Kings*. Iskender's mother is lamenting her son's being disfavoured by the three missionary ladies after his attempt to kiss Hilda, the youngest one:

> "Ha, Carûlîn, most ancient virgin, thy stalk is a crane's! There is neither flesh nor blood in thee, but only gristle and dry skin. Thy heart is gall and poison [...] O Jane, thou art a fruit all husk; half man, yet lacking man's core, half maid, yet lacking woman's pulp!
>
> "O poor little Hilda! Thou art a ripe fruit that whispers 'Pluck me.' But those two sexless devils guard thee sleeplessly.[41]

These three types in short are: the Virgin, the Androgynous or Hermaphrodite, and the Ripe Fruit. A similar tripartite typology for men seems to be an inevitable outcome. Only two decades after Pickthall's novel, for instance, we see one suggested by Woolf for male authors in European literature: "Shakespeare was androgynous; and so was Keats and Sterne and Cowper and Lamb and Coleridge. Shelley perhaps was sexless. Milton and Ben Johnson had a dash too much of the male in them. So had Wordsworth and Tolstoi. In our time Proust was wholly androgynous, if not perhaps a little too much of a woman".[42]

Lawrence, too, recognises androgyny in both sexes not as a fact but as a fallacious reversal and role-play which begins in the imagination of men primarily in "fulfilling the Christian love ideal".[43] He regards homosexual and bisexual desires as perversities and argues for keeping "the sexes pure".[44] Yet, he sees perfect "companionship between a man and a woman" as "an illusion".[45] Man attains his fullness of being with a hero in his heart calling for full obedience or comradeship (not homosexual but homosocial) balanced with a successful heterosexual love which is secondary.[46] For Lawrence, both ascetic

41 Pickthall, *Valley of Kings*, 2–3.

42 Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 103.

43 D.H. Lawrence, *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1922), 133, see also 136–7.

44 Ibid., 280.

45 Ibid., 132.

46 Ibid., 270.

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separation of the sexes and solely voluptuary life is destined to collapse "after two generations".[47]

Pickthall's early fiction is also affected by both the separation of the sexes[48] and excessive sexuality.[49] In *Valley of Kings*, Hilda is the exemplary victim of the separation of the sexes. She is first separated from Iskender by her "sexless" seniors. Next, her marriage to the Emir, the British hero of the novel whom she falls in love with, is prevented by the Emir's uncle who comes from Britain.

Iskender, when his desire for Hilda is blocked, narrowly escapes masochistic homosexual desire in his relationship with the Emir. His excessive submissiveness is mixed with jealousy. He becomes hysterical and defies his own nature and makes the relationship a real nuisance for the Emir. Iskender leads the Emir to his doom when they leave for an expedition to find Iskender's dreamed-up valley full of gold. Iskender's sole intention with his lie is to be with his Emir, without the disturbance of all the other people who he calls liars. Ironically his lie is the gravest causing the Emir to waste his time, money and health. The moment the Emir realises that he has been cheated by Iskender and that there is no such valley of gold, he turns mad, beating him with the primitive instinct of inflicting pain on his betrayer. Iskender's fatal submissiveness, on the other hand, is not incurable. When he is completely separated from the Emir, who is a Godlike majoritarian figure for him, he returns to normal and is capable of becoming himself – a son of the Arabs. He marries the daughter of Mitri, and with the latter's assistance discovers his true artistic skill as a painter of religious pictures for churches.

In *House of War*, the union of querulous friends Elsie and Fenn becomes only possible with an oriental trick: Jemileh locks both of them in a room after asking the permission of the village priest: "Would it be a sin for me to bring them into marriage by guile or, as it were, by violence?"[50] But unfortunately Jemileh's tricks to win Percy's hand in marriage fail when the latter flees to America guilty of deceiving the whole village by hiring somebody to injure him and accusing the Muslims of attempting to murder him.

Finally, as an example of excessive sexuality, in *Saïd the Fisherman* (1903), Saïd's vile polygamy and licentiousness is utterly punished. Saïd abducts Ferideh, the daughter of a rich Christian merchant and takes her as his second wife. Ferideh's well planned vengeance comes in a few years and she elopes with another Christian man carrying off Saïd's whole fortune. Said finally flees

47 Ibid., 119.

48 Especially in Pickthall's Suffolk tales, there are almost no marriages without crises.

49 E.g. *Veiled Women* and *Saïd the Fisherman* among his Oriental novels.

50 Pickthall, *House of War*, 295.

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to England in the hope of meeting young beautiful English women and enjoying free love: "His dreams were all of fair women languishing in a chastened gloom".[51] When he lands in Liverpool he runs after the first woman he sees like a mad dog. After some countless winter days and nights in Liverpool streets alone, Saïd opens his eyes in a hospital room and soon he meets his fate by becoming completely insane. The word "fisherman" in the title of the novel seems to be a euphemism for a womanizer since we never see Saïd fishing at sea and the only time he is on board he is dreaming of a school of women.

Pickthall's oriental female characters have a strong resistance to the separation of sexes, hence tripartite typology introduced above is not applicable to them. A different typology is suggested for oriental women according to their submissiveness, dominance, or equality in their relationships with the other sex. This tripartite typology is best seen in *Early Hours*, Pickthall's last novel which is about Turkey. The novel also depicts humanitarian and universal Islamic ideals synthesised into the Turkish way of life as experienced by Pickthall in his visit to Istanbul in early 1913.

In Istanbul, there were also two important persons to initiate Pickthall into becoming-Turk. The first one was Fraülein Eckermann, who "had become a Turk to all intents and purposes"[52] and with whom Pickthall was lodged in her large kiosk at Erenkoy. She is the Misket Hanum of *With the Turk in Wartime*. She introduces Pickthall to her circle of friends consisting of mostly Turkish women whom he finds "more energetic than the men" (enthusiastic becoming-Turk of an old-fashioned Arab): "I was often told that my ideas were too old-fashioned, and asked to recognise the great advance the Turks had made upon the ways of my beloved Arabs".[53] And the second person was the Turco-Egyptian prince Saïd Halim Pasha, the foreign minister of Turkey at that time, and later the grand vizier (political and intellectual priming for becoming-Muslim). An interesting coincidence about these two people is that they in fact come out of Pickthall's recently published novel *Veiled Women*. Both Saïd Halim and Fraülein Eckermann offer positive resolutions for the symptoms of oriental decadence presented in that novel. The former is a strong-minded Turco-Egyptian pasha and revivalist Muslim although educated in Switzerland, and he is monogamously married like most other Turkish men. And the latter is a surprisingly happy and successful convert living alone but "sworn to wed a Turk" one day.[54] Meeting these two people has a big influence on both

51 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Saïd the Fisherman* (London: Methuen, 1903), 273.

52 Pickthall, *With the Turk in Wartime*, 24.

53 Ibid., 91.

54 Ibid., 92.

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Pickthall's later life and fiction, introducing a note of optimism into the latter which deals no longer with symptoms offering minoritarian treatment instead.

Pickthall's idea that Islam transforms "marriage from a state of bondage for the woman to a civil contract between equals, terminable by the will of either party"[55] is based on Saïd Halim's revivalist view of Islam and his reframing of the vital function, broad scope, and rightfully adjustable and distinctive nature of the concept of the contract in Islam from the relations of the sexes to the affairs of state. Pickthall summarises Saïd Halim's view of marriage and the relations of the sexes in Islam as follows:

> The institution of marriage as a civil contract between free individuals, with facilities for divorce and remarriage, [...] allow to men and women in such matters the utmost liberty compatible with decency, with the welfare of both sexes and with the rights of children.
>
> The maintenance of a decent reserve between the sexes, for the safety of women.
>
> The Islamic law of Inheritance, which prevents undue accumulation of wealth by individuals and secures a portion of it to the women of a family.
>
> Respect for women's persons, property and rights.[56]

When the theory of contract is combined with the Turkish women's inherent practice, there remains no need for the crow as a messenger. Thus the decadence symptomized in a Turco-Egyptian Pasha's house in *Veiled Women* is offered a minor solution by a real Turco-Egyptian Pasha and Turkish women. Thus Pickthall hopefully regards Turkey as the sole field of experiment for the modus vivendi between not only the West and the East, but also men and women.

Pickthall argues that Turkish people are monogamous with the only exception of the Sultan. They chose polygamy with the permission, or even insistence, of their wives when, for instance, the latter cannot have children, or when the wife does not want to leave the comfort of her house in Istanbul and refuses to accompany her husband on a long duty far away from Istanbul.[57] It can be added that Turkish men in their preference for monogamy, follow the example of the Prophet in Mecca; as Pickthall points out later "there is no more bright example of monogamic marriage in all history than the twenty-six years'

55 Pickthall, *Cultural Side of Islam*, 152.

56 Ibid., 182–83.

57 Ibid., 91.

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happy union of our Holy Prophet with the lady Khadijah".[58] Similarly, Turkish women, in their preference of monogamy, follow both the lady Khadijah, and hers and the Prophet's four daughters. They were all monogamously married to their respective husbands with unwritten but silently acknowledged contracts until their deaths. Only Ali who is married to Fatimah attempts to breach that unwritten contract when he wants to wed the daughter of Abu Jahl, the enemy of Islam, as a co-wife to Fatimah. But the Prophet warns Ali by recalling the example and promise of his infidel but "truthful" son-in-law in Mecca, Abu Al-'As bin Al-Rabi'.[59] The Prophet continues: "No doubt, Fatima is a part of me, I hate to see her being troubled. By Allah, the daughter of Allah's Apostle and the daughter of Allah's Enemy cannot be the wives of one man".[60] After Fatimah's complain and the Prophet's warning Ali gave up the idea of marrying Abu Jahl's daughter and never married anyone else until Fatimah's death. However, he took four wives as soon as she died, and the number of his wives never fell under four.

The Early Hours, despite its tragic setting of wartime and disaster, is Pickthall's most optimistic novel. Camuriddin, the main hero of the novel is a poor, young Macedonian Muslim. His accidental encounter with a wounded Turkish officer leads him to join Niazi Bey's revolutionary *fedais* marching from Resna to stage the Young Turk Revolution in 1908. Meanwhile in Saloniki he visits Sadık Pasha, his former commander whose life he had saved in Yemen. To fulfil an old promise made at the war field in Yemen, he weds Camuriddin to one of his households, the young servant girl, Gul-raaneh. The couple live in Istanbul and have children until the Balkan war breaks out, when Camuriddin takes his wife and children to his home village in Macedonia and becomes a soldier. He is injured in the war and his left arm is amputated; he also learns from an old refugee from his hometown in Macedonia that the Greek bandits have slaughtered his mother, brothers and children, and his wife Gul-raaneh killed herself before the bandits reached her. Sadık Pasha's daughter Reshideh is also widowed during the war and when she encounters Camuriddin and learns his terrible fate and condition, she proposes him. Camuriddin, feeling highly honoured by the proposal but somewhat surprised, consults Reshideh's father, who confesses with full consent that it was his primary intention to wed him to his own daughter when he had made his old promise. He adds: "'But when I saw thee there at Saloniki, in so poor a guise, I thought a girl attendant much

58 Ibid., 153.

59 M. Muhsin Khan, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. 5 (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), 59, 62, 16, 3729.

60 Ibid.

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more suitable, knowing that my inner meaning at the time was hid from thee, and knowing also that my daughter would have scorned thee wrongly …'"[61] Camruddin represents Saïd Halim Pasha's revivalist views of Islam combined with Pickthall's own energetic spirit as a new convert. He is "something new" for the degenerated Turk situated in-between the West and the East, and at the same time "something old", as Deyli Ferid tells him in admiration: "'You are the man whom I have all my life been seeking, sincere and unaffected, yet of good intelligence'".[62]

Camruddin's first wife Gul-raaneh, probably a Circassian, is a very submissive woman. She confuses the freedom Camruddin promises to her with lack of affection. She also has excessive love for her husband as her confidante Reshideh tells him earlier in their marriage: "O foolish man, can you not see that she is mad for you – would follow you to battle if she could?"[63] Camruddin's love for Gul-raaneh is not passionate but balanced on the basis of a higher communion with God. He considers passionate love dangerously harming for both sexes, for the self and the other. After a serious conflict in their marriage, Camruddin tells Gul-raaneh that the worship of the sexes regarded as the goal of life in Europe degrades women while it seemingly honours them. He tells her that the romantic search for true love and communion with a member of the opposite sex "must end in disappointment always".[64] He adds:

> The soul of every living man and woman is solitary from the cradle to the grave unless it finds, by service, that communion with Allah for which, in truth, it was created. […] I have my personality and you have yours, both given to us by Allah; I cannot make you me, nor my thoughts yours; nor have I any right to seek to do so. […] I love you, and I praise the Lord of Heaven and earth for giving me the comfort of such sweet companionship upon a portion of the road. But if you love me not, then go your way; for you are a free servant of Allah and it were sin for me to keep you here against your will.[65]

Gul-raaneh is far from understanding Camruddin. She considers him a Sufi. His words only confuse her more, but her excessive admiration for him is

61 Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Early Hours* (London: Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1921), 263.
62 Ibid., 164.
63 Ibid., 226.
64 Ibid., 215.
65 Ibid., 215–6.

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unaffected. Thinking it her fault and that she deserves correction, her bad-conscience overwhelms her and she murmurs to Camruddin: "My dear, you should have beaten me and locked me up!"[66]

On the opposite end of the spectrum, one of the most dominant heroines in Pickthall's oriental fiction is Reshideh. In Istanbul, Turkish men and women of the early twentieth century imitated everything French and "went mad with Frankish customs".[67] A specifically French type of nationalism, class distinctions, high party feelings and snobbishness were oddities newly imported from Europe. The members of this new aristocracy were gradually defying their cultural heritage and oriental rules of decency.[68] Reshideh, being a member of this new aristocracy, is brought up and educated by French governesses and foreign tutors. She becomes an indiscriminate admirer of things European and is married to Shukri Bey who belongs to the same pro-European coterie as herself. But as she matures quickly and becomes the mother of two children soon, she shakes off the European illusion. One day, when Shukri Bey attends a ball as a steward of dance organised by the Committee for European residents in Istanbul, Reshideh, in a fit of jealousy, decides to do justice on his gallantry and transgression of the unwritten marriage contract. She goes to the location of the ball and sends for her husband. When he comes outside, she whips him terribly without fear of being divorced. Reshideh's whipping of Shukri Bey is also motivated by the primitive and presignifying instinct of afflicting pain on the betrayer and his breach of the contract: "To take half-naked, shameless women in his arms, and clasp them tight and jump about with them – in public, too – is that a pastime for the father of my children?"[69] Reshideh is not like Barakah in *Veiled Women* and the other women who follow their husbands to France and spend the nights alone in the prison-like hotel while the men are enjoying themselves with some French women. She does not make the crow her messenger and decides to be the judge herself though she regrets this very much later as she confesses to her confidante Gul-raaneh with whom she spends that night sleepless: "'Last night I was a lioness, but to-day I feel more like a little mouse".[70] Reshideh's beating of Shukri Bey in the novel is based on a real incident which took place in Istanbul as narrated to Pickthall by Misket Hanum and her circle of friends. But Reshideh's courage and determination to

66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., 203.
68 Ibid., 199.
69 Ibid., 201.
70 Ibid., 203.

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challenge a social bias and to defend her contractual rights are noteworthy.[71] In the novel, Shukri Bey divorces her first, but they are reunited later.

There is no becoming-woman in the above two types of women as submissive (Gul-raaneh) and dominant (Reshideh with Shukri Bey). When Reshideh, as a widowed woman after Shukri Bey's death in the war, makes a second courageous move and proposes to poor Camruddin, also widowed with an amputated arm, we see the third type of oriental woman – egalitarian and a rightful becoming-woman. In her proposal to Camruddin, Reshideh follows in fact the example of the lady Khadijah who was also wealthy and widowed when she had proposed to young Mohammad, whose good character and honesty she had admired:

> [...] Efendim, it is in my mind that if I wed again, I shall not choose a gallant youth like Shukri Bey, whose memory is with me always in my heart, but some poor stricken hero of my country, whom my beauty may perhaps console a little and my wealth relieve, while he can guide my children and be my protector. Efendim, I am making a proposal to you; are you listening? It is a proposal that I would not make to any other man.[72]

Reshideh's proposal is at the same time an oral marriage contract with some important conditions in it. Reshideh is a strong and dominant woman; she is rich and may even be superior to Camruddin in many other aspects. But she still prefers Camruddin as the head of the family not as the model of despotic patriarchy but as the model of a foreman in a socialist state.[73] Being confident that Camruddin will never violate the contract, she puts the lioness in herself to sleep in a voluntary submissiveness of becoming-woman as her own choice. But she still does not forget to include gallantry as the forbidden act in the contract. She also promises material support, but Camruddin will never need nor accept that. Reshideh's becoming is not a masochistic submission like that

71 Lawrence, writing right after the publication of Picthall's novel, affirms Reshideh's punishment of Shukri Bey in the following lines in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922): "If a woman's husband gets on her nerves, she should fly at him. If she thinks him too sweet and smarmy with other people, she should let him have it to his nose, straight out. She should lead him a dog's life, and never swallow her bile". (p. 283).

72 Pickthall, *Early Hours*, 261–2.

73 Fremantle claims "Despotism of the Oriental kind is a form of State Socialism", and she argues that when two or more Orientals come together for a certain purpose one of them has to be appointed as the leader as the first thing (Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy*, 35). See Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Asar-i Bediiyye* (Istanbul: Envar Neşriyat, 2010) for the similarities between Islam and socialism and his preference of German Socialism to Capitalism.

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of Gul-raaneh and Iskender, and it completely depends on the attitude of the other since becoming is never alone. Reshideh, in place of the lioness (e.g. her ego and death derive), discharges immanent energies of polymorphosis as three active syntheses of the positive unconscious: Libido ("my beauty"), Numen (the heroic body without organs as "my country") and Voluptas (as motherly compassion).[74] In becoming-woman, she becomes at least three women in one, and no one can guarantee the lioness will never wake up as the fourth one under any threat. If the lioness is completely destroyed, there is the risk of absolute submissiveness inviting despotic male dominance. Conversely, when the lioness is always awake we have the dominant woman as nemesis: Her becoming is interrupted and her energies of polymorhosis disappear, and complete separation of the sexes follows as a consequence. In accordance with Deleuezian concepts of the unconscious and consistency, Energies of polymorphosis and the lioness are incompatible with each: they cannot be simultaneously active in a person.

Conclusion

The three types of western women suggested in the personality of three characters in Pickthall's *Valley of Kings*, namely, Carulin the Virgin, Androgynous or Hermaphroditic Jane, and Hilda the Ripe Fruit, foreshadow the separation of the sexes in Europe in the early Twentieth century. When Iskender attempts to kiss Hilda, she is declared the Forbidden Fruit leading to symptoms of castration and homosexual desire within Iskender. Next, when Hilda wants to marry the Emir, the latter is forbidden the fruit according to the Western idealisation of the relation of the sexes and the Christian view of marriage as sacrament. In *Veiled Women*, Pickthall undertakes a double task with his English heroine Barakah's disappointing and dehumanising harem experience. First, he deconstructs the Western romantic idealisation of marriage, the worship of the sexes and Oedipal desire. Secondly, he symptomatizes local idiosyncrasies, superstitions and the general decadence in the family life of Muslims in Egypt.

Pickthall's oriental heroines are resistant to the separation of the sexes, so that we have all Ripe Fruits, and the typology they suggest is in fact three subtypes of the Ripe Fruit. They can be restated as follows: the Submissive

74 See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Sheem and Helen R. Lane. (London: The Athlone Press, 1983), 68–112 for the three syntheses of the unconscious as connective (Libido), disjunctive (Numen) and conjunctive (Voluptas).

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Servant, the Dominant Lioness, and the Egalitarian and Polymorphic Pledger. These three types can also be read as three evolutionary stages of a dynamic or a revivalist view of the relation of sexes in Islam. The Submissive Servant invites male despotism in oblivion of true Islam which Pickthall believes is egalitarian, and even feministic contrary to the current practice. Along with Gul-raaneh, most harem women in *Veiled Women* including Barakah belong to this group.

The Dominant Lioness who stands against transgressors and the betrayers of the contract is a passing stage but it leads to the alienation of the sexes on the one hand, and homosexuality on the other. Reshideh passes through this phase very swiftly, but the most seductively destructive example of this type is the widow Aminah Khanum in *Veiled Women*. She is a Terminator Lioness, a true War Machine, which can be expressed with the formula: "I cannot resist your attraction, but you are an alien to me". In search of a perfect match, she has ten successive husbands who she either divorces or kills. She also has first-hand experience of Western men who she finds "growing superficial, flippant, without depth of character".[75] In Pickthall's fiction, which happened to coincide with a time of wars and betrayals, Turkish women are all potential Lionesses. Whatever type they belong to, they never idealise marriage, or love. The only thing they hold sacred and are determined to protect is the locus on which they stand. When that locus is challenged they become Defensive Lionesses. That locus is sometimes as small as the body, as in the case of Gul-raaneh, who kills herself to defend the only location she is capable of; sometimes it is a body without organs as large as the whole country as confessed by Emineh – Hasan Pasha's daughter in *House of War* – in confirmation of what his father proclaims to Elsie:

> "We love our land and our religion, and when either is assailed we kill. If I knew that my own daughter were a traitor – which God forbid – I would kill her with my own hand".
>
> "And I would kill my father and myself if such dishonour were to come upon our house through him!" exclaimed Emineh proudly, taking her father's hand and kissing it.[76]

Finally, the Polymorphic Pledger type has as its unique example Reshideh when she marries Camruddin. Her ex-husband Shukri Bey, in order to appear friendlier to the Europeans, both transgresses the oriental rules of decency and

75 Pickthall, *Veiled Women*, 87.

76 Pickthall, *House of War*, 41.

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betrays the unwritten egalitarian rules of the marriage contract. But the West responds to his friendliness with increased fanaticism and betrayal leading to the Balkan War, and he dies in that war. Reshideh, the new disappointed Aristocrat who used to admire everything European, then returns to the common people of her country who she once looked at with contempt and proposes to poor Camruddin. Unfortunately, Pickthall does not give a detailed history, or the process of, Camuriddin's becoming as a hero. In this essay, I have offered a brief interpretation in Pickthall's fiction of the making of the hero with a new psyche supported by some examples from both his life and fiction.

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CHAPTER 10

"Throwing Off the European": Marmaduke Pickthall's Travels in Arabia 1894–96

James Canton

In 1894, it was not simply the allure of the East which drew the young and impressionable Marmaduke Pickthall to Arabia. Rather, Pickthall had botched his attempt to join the administrative classes of the British Empire by failing the examinations for the "Consular Service for Turkey, Persia and the Levant".[1] Aged only eighteen, it must have seemed his life was already rather in tatters. He had left an inglorious impression at Harrow School and now, poised as he was between youth and adulthood, Pickthall surely wondered quite what he should do. Matters must have seemed rather desperate. He had a choice: either return to Harrow (which he had already endured rather than enjoyed during his time there), or take up the invitation to join a family friend, Thomas Dowling, who was due to leave for Palestine to become chaplain to the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem.[2]

Marmaduke Pickthall took the chance to travel and to get "away from the drab monotone of London fog".[3] He left England in 1894 still with a vague sense that his real destination lay in the civil administration of Britain's colonial interests; believing, or perhaps seeking to convince himself, that by heading to the East he would find some back route into the Foreign Office, and so finally please those elders of the family whom he had let down both in his schooling

1 Marmaduke Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters: Palestine and Syria* (*1894-5-6*) (London: Collins, 1918), 1.

2 The precise details of Marmaduke Pickthall's travels in Arabia are not easy to definitively ascertain. No archive for Marmaduke Pickthall exists, nor do those archival materials on Pickthall which do exist provide much information on his travels in Arabia. Instead, the main source is his own work *Oriental Encounters* with that suggestive subtitle of *Palestine and Syria* (*1894-5-6*). Peter Clark has noted how he searched extensively for any personal papers without success and that Pickthall's earlier biographer Anne Fremantle similarly knew of no archive, nor papers. Clark has stated to me that he had "relied on [Pickthall's] own writings for reconstructing his travels" when he wrote the biography *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (personal email correspondence, 1 May 2015). This lack of archival material means that it is largely on *Oriental Encounters* that I have lent in order to reconstruct Pickthall's travels in Arabia.

3 Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters*, 1.

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and in his recent failure to reach the Consular Service. Yet on arrival in Egypt, Pickthall's first sighting of the East, thoughts of a career in imperial administration were swiftly blown from his mind; any excitement which that pathway into colonial service appeared to offer was put into pitiful perspective by the exotic wonder of Egypt. Pickthall later related in his Introduction to *Oriental Encounters* just how that aim of finding Foreign Office employment very soon "lost whatever lustre it had had at home". Instead, with his initial impressions of Egypt "the European ceased to interest me, appearing somehow inappropriate and false in those surroundings".[4]

Before we plunge back into those adventurous late nineteenth-century travels into Palestine and Syria with the youth Marmaduke Pickthall it is first vital to understand the contexts of the time and place. In 1894, Egypt was no longer an independent country but one governed and controlled by Britain. While Cairo may have remained a vast sprawling city of Arabia, it was run by British colonial administrators. Only some twelve years before Pickthall's arrival, Britain had seized Egypt by launching a sustained naval attack on 11 July 1882 which bombarded Alexandria into submission, before destroying what remained of the Egyptian military, taking Cairo by force and turning the city into a centre for British imperial administration. Britain would assume control over Egyptian affairs for the next seventy-four years until the Suez Crisis in 1956. That act of imperial aggression by British forces in 1882 had hugely important ramifications. Britain now had a base on the north-eastern edge of Africa from which it could gaze out over Arabia and from which it could now run its imperial interest across the region. Of most significance, Britain now had control of the Suez Canal which had only been completed in 1869 and which allowed British merchant and naval shipping to journey east to the key imperial interest of India without having to take the far longer and more perilous voyage around Africa. By seizing Egypt in 1882, Britain now had control of this vital passageway of the seas; a central factor for the future prosperity of the British Empire based as it was on control of the world's seas and waterways.[5] Within the historical context of Britain's military seizure of Egypt in 1882, the comment by Pickthall in the opening pages of his Introduction to *Oriental Encounters* that "the European [...] [seemed] somehow inappropriate and false" in Cairo might be read as an anti-colonial statement, though Pickthall's political ideas at this time were undeveloped and hardly unconventional.

4 Ibid., 2.

5 James Canton, *From Cairo to Baghdad: British Travellers in Arabia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011) gives a more complete exposition of the history of British military and cultural imperialism in Egypt and Arabia.

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While the young figure of Pickthall must have wandered the streets and bazaars of Cairo amazed at their exoticism, the appearance of an increasing presence of 'European' cultural aspects and persons stood out as incongruous to the Egyptian scene. Pickthall continues that "at first I tried to overcome this feeling or perception, which, while I lived with English people, seemed unlawful".[6] Though only in Cairo for a short period, he had apparently soon formed strong opinions as to the right and just way in which he should view the locals. He wanted to spend time with them. Instead, he had swiftly been swept up into the world of the British abroad – natives were there to serve and to clean, and were certainly not there to fraternise with or to get to know as friends and equals. That imperial philosophy was especially so in a country like Egypt which had so recently come under British governance and certainly in a city like Cairo which was starting to be populated with ever greater numbers of colonial administrators, soldiers and religious travellers keen to support British efforts as the empire expanded into the east and into Arabia. It is important to remember that with the occupation of Egypt in 1882, ostensibly to protect the Suez Canal passage to India, came a new collective British curiosity about Arabia. Increasing financial interest accompanied the wave of missionaries, archaeologists, military and administrative personnel, not only in Egypt, but in the Christian Holy Lands and Greater Syria. Marmaduke Pickthall's was a case in point. He came to the East under the aegis of his country's imperial banner and initially with thoughts of securing himself as one of the rafters which supported the structures of colonial administration; and he came to Arabia thanks to Christian missionary friends of the family. Yet Pickthall, even within days of landing in this fresh British colony of Egypt, saw the incongruity of European ways in the Orient.

So Pickthall came as a young man to Egypt very much typical of his type – public-school educated, Christian, seeking to serve the British Empire. Yet if he came as a quite unexceptional figure among so many who were following British forces into Egypt, Pickthall's travel experiences in Arabia were to be so unlike those of the vast majority of his fellow compatriots. After initially staying "some weeks" in Cairo "with English people", Pickthall ventured to Jaffa under the guidance of another European "mentor".[7] There, in Jaffa, after a couple of weeks of wandering the streets alone, he met the Reverend J.E. Hanauer, "an English clergyman who had been born in Jerusalem".[8] That pattern of personal introductions through a network of Christian missionary and clergy figures

6 Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters*, 2.

7 Ibid., 3.

8 Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (London: Quartet, 1986), 10.

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is not surprising – religious imperialism was a vital branch of the colonising process; in Egypt post-1882 the numbers of Christian travellers increased dramatically with Britain's military forces providing the security to carry out missionary work and a comforting background to exploring the region – especially the Christian Holy Lands.[9]

In Hanauer, Pickthall found a fellow after his own heart. Hanauer was fascinated with the people and culture of Arabia beyond his position as "English chaplain". He "took pity on [Pickthall's] solitary state" so took to walking about Jaffa with the young Pickthall, teaching him his first "words of Arabic". Hanauer was unlike his ex-pat compatriots who frowned on any interaction with the natives; he supported Pickthall's "sneaking wish to fraternise with Orientals". Now Pickthall had a sympathetic English friend. Soon he had a local friend, too, in the figure of Suleyman, a Syrian dragoman who was staying in the same hotel in Jaffa and who "helped [Pickthall] to throw off the European and plunge into the native way of living"[10]

That phrase of "throwing off the European" carries such a tangible sense of being cast free of the cultural baggage which defines expected ways of being and thinking. Pickthall was already a young Englishman with a desire to be independent. He did not see the Arab locals as the vast majority of his countrymen (and other Europeans) saw them with "imperial eyes" and the colonial mindset of ruler over the ruled.[11] Here began Pickthall's true travels about Arabia. He rode about Palestine accompanied by Suleyman as guide and translator in a gentle meander:

> about the plain of Sharon, sojourning among the fellahin, and sitting in the coffee-shops of Ramleh, Lydda, Gaza … [We] went on pilgrimage to Nebi Rubin, the mosque upon the edge of marshes by the sea, half-way to Gaza … [We] rode up northward to the foot of Carmel; explored the gorges of the mountains of Judea; frequented Turkish baths; ate native meals and slept in native houses – following the customs of the people of the land in all respects.[12]

9 See especially Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (London: Penguin, 1964); Canton, *From Cairo to Baghdad*.

10 Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters*, 4.

11 The term "imperial eyes" is taken from the title of Mary Louise Pratt's excellent guide to the colonial mindset in travellers, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

12 Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters*, 4–5.

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Even though Marmaduke Pickthall wrote that summary of his first travels in Arabia some twenty-three years after the events, there is something still of the breathless excitement in his summary of those adventurous voyages across the lands of Palestine. The sense of liberation from the strictures of his life as an educated Englishman is plain: public schooling, consular service examinations, the expectations of his parents and of English society have all been forgotten as Pickthall rides into a wild and exhilarating new world. He is a young man freed from responsibility and the rigours of his British upbringing. He rides without any of the biases or prejudices which the majority of his countrymen would hold, accompanied only by his Syrian guide Suleyman from whom he learns the life and customs of the lands, while also picking up Arabic in his own informal way, "acquiring the vernacular without an effort, in the manner of amusement". Pickthall's sense of deliverance is made all the more clear when he expounds on the feelings experienced during those first explorations into Arabia:

> And I was amazed at the immense relief I found in such a life. In all my previous years I had not seen happy people. These were happy. Poor they might be, but they had no dream of wealth; the very thought of competition was unknown to them [...] Wages and rent were troubles they had never heard of. Class distinctions, as we understood them, were not. Everybody talked to everybody. With inequality they had a true fraternity.[13]

English and Arabian societies seem dichotomous to the young Pickthall (it is worth remembering that he was only nineteen years old when he first wandered off on these travels into Palestine). His reflections on English society serve to illustrate what he sees as all that English people do not have – happiness, contentment, fraternity. These qualities were just what Pickthall had been crying out for. We can feel and imagine the emotional release Pickthall must have felt; that "immense relief I found in such a life", after the stressful years of public schooling and his failure in securing meaningful employment serving Britain's empire. Out there in Palestine, in the villages of Arabia and in the wild open spaces of the deserts, none of that mattered – not to the people he shared his days and nights with and certainly not to him either.

Thanks to the guidance of his Syrian dragoman friend, the nineteen-year-old Pickthall not only found his feet in Arabia but discovered a new-found sense of freedom to his days, an emotion which had been sadly lacking from his life in England. Suleyman also introduced Marmaduke Pickthall to the

13 Ibid.

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Baldensperger family – French Alsatians who were well respected for their work on bee-keeping in Palestine and who happily embraced Pickthall into their warm and easy-going ways. Of those first few adventures into Palestine, Pickthall explains that he "ran completely wild for months, in a manner unbecoming to an Englishman",[14] the tone of that phrase emphasising the change which had been brought over the shy, under-confident young man who had taken the option to head east rather than joining his brother at Oxford.[15] Within a matter of a few months after arriving in Arabia, Pickthall was transformed – the depressive cloud which he felt following his every footstep in England had lifted; the vibrant wonder of the Arabian landscape, the experience of travelling, learning the ways, culture and language of the peoples he met on his journeys engorged his mind and developed an affection for Arabia that would last his lifetime. Yet when he ventured back into the fold of the British imperial community in Jerusalem, both they and he were in for a shock. Pickthall returned to them:

> in semi-native garb and with a love for Arabs which, I was made to understand, was hardly decent. My native friends were objects of suspicion. I was told that they were undesirable, and, when I stood up for them, was soon put down by the retort that I was very young.[16]

Marmaduke Pickthall was indeed very young. He was perhaps just twenty years old at the time. His approach to the inhabitants of the countryside he was so busy exploring sat utterly incongruous to that of his elders, those echelons of British society who were responsible for carrying out the administration of British colonial policy for Egypt – the latest jewel in Queen Victoria's imperial collection. For Pickthall, those "mature advisors" of the British imperial community acted as a "disapproving shadow in the background'" to his years of travel in Arabia. These "respectable English residents in Syria" gave "frequent warnings [...] to distrust the people of [Syria]" and were so "censorious and hostile" in their attitudes that they became "moral precepts" to be disobeyed by the increasingly self-confident and self-content Marmaduke Pickthall.[17]

In *Oriental Encounters*, Pickthall offers us an insight into his Arabian travels. While the sub-title of the book "Palestine and Syria (1894-5-6)" suggests a travelogue of his time there, in the introduction Pickthall states that the work

14 Ibid., 7.

15 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 9.

16 Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters*, 7.

17 Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters*, 8.

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is "embodied fictionally [from] … impressions still remaining clear after the lapse of more than twenty years". He saw the work as "a comic sketch-book of experience".[18] The tales that follow are therefore embellished both by the action of Pickthall and the substantial interval of time. Peter Clark refers to *Oriental Encounters* as one of Pickthall's "Near Eastern novels".[19] If *Oriental Encounters* cannot be relied on as an entirely factual account of Pickthall's travels in Arabia, it nevertheless is a valuable document providing entry into the mind of its author at two crucial phases of his life. Firstly, for the two years of youthful travels about Arabia which provided such an elixir to his rather depressive English upbringing; and secondly, as he wrote up in 1917 the tales of those Arabian voyages, reflecting and reminiscing on his fruitful first experiences of the Middle East, when he was on the cusp of declaring his conversion to Islam. The timing of Pickthall returning back to his youthful travel experiences in Arabia seems pertinent. Perhaps by mentally returning to those innocent journeys from another era, Pickthall saw the context to his severing from a key aspect of his British identity: his Christian faith.[20] Was it the writing of *Oriental Encounters* which prefigured his conversion to Islam, or his decision to break from the Anglican Church which led Pickthall to write *Oriental Encounters*? Whichever way was causal, as he was writing *Oriental Encounters* in 1917, Pickthall underwent a dramatic and public schism.

There are two chapters in *Oriental Encounters* which warrant particular analysis as they paint such a vivid impression of the nature of Pickthall's travels in Arabia and detail the extent to which those times acted as a decisive factor in the personal identity issues which drew Pickthall away from his British compatriots and ultimately away from his Christian faith. By Chapter 9 of *Oriental Encounters*, titled "My Countryman", the reader finds Pickthall journeying "in the south of Syria […] around the Sea of Lot".[21] He has an entourage consisting of Suleyman, his rather disreputable dragoman, who is now accompanied by Rashid, a Syrian soldier saved from Turkish servitude by Pickthall for five pounds, and an unnamed cook. They are approaching a village spring of fresh water. Rashid is leading the party when the local villagers mob him, shouting angrily that the water is theirs and theirs only. Rashid is all for beating a few of them. Pickthall stays his vengeance. Suleyman prepares to head over to see if he can ascertain the cause of the rumpus when his eye is caught by something remarkable:

18 Ibid., 9.

19 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 2.

20 Ibid., 103–4.

21 Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters*, 87.

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> "A marvel!" [Suleymân] exclaimed after a moment spent in gazing. "Never, I suppose, since first this village was created, have two Franks approached it in a single day before. Thou art as one of us in outward seeming", he remarked to me; "but yonder comes a perfect Frank with two attendants".
>
> We looked in the direction which his finger pointed, and beheld a man on horseback clad in white from head to foot, with a pith helmet and a puggaree [turban used as sun-shade], followed by two native servants leading sumpter-mules [packhorses].
>
> "Our horses are in need of water", growled Rashîd, uninterested in the sight. "It is a sin for those low people to refuse it to us".
>
> "Let us first wait and see how this newcomer fares, what method he adopts", replied Suleymân, reclining once more at his ease.
>
> The Frank and his attendants reached the outskirts of the village, and headed naturally for the spring. The fellâhîn, already put upon their guard by Rashîd's venture, opposed them in a solid mass. The Frank expostulated. We could hear his voice of high command.
>
> "Aha, he knows some Arabic. He is a missionary, not a traveller", said Suleymân, who now sat up and showed keen interest. "I might have known it, for the touring season is long past".
>
> He rose with dignified deliberation and remounted. We followed him as he rode slowly down towards the scene of strife. When we arrived, the Frank, after laying about him vainly with his riding-whip, had drawn out a revolver. He was being stoned. His muleteers had fled to a safe distance. In another minute, as it seemed, he would have shot some person, when nothing under Allah could have saved his life.
>
> Suleymân cried out in English:
>
> "Don't you be a fool, sir! Don't you fire!"[22]

The scene is perfectly painted to recognise the incongruity in the two English figures who have wandered across each other's paths there in the Syrian desert. The dramatic contrast in the appearance of the two Englishmen is drawn in that initial vision of the one dressed all in white, with pith helmet on his head, sat astride a horse while his sad servants traipse behind. He does not even recognise Pickthall as a fellow countryman thanks to his "semi-native garb". He is the evangelical Victorian traveller of the nineteenth century heading out into distant lands for the sake of God and country, with the Bible in one hand and a gun in the other. He is an archetype who receives recognition merely as "the Frank". Pickthall accounts him no more personal respect than

22 Ibid., 90–2.

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that. It is Suleyman who recognises that this Englishman is no tourist but a missionary – by the fact he "knows some Arabic". That kind of local knowledge allows us to witness the calm intelligence of Suleyman while at that very moment the Englishman is frantically trying to whip the local villagers about him. He soon pulls a revolver and yet is held from stepping any closer to disaster by the presence of Suleyman who steps into the fray with an admonition not to "be a fool" and to desist from firing the gun.

It is perhaps worthwhile here to pause in our analysis of Pickthall's work and turn to a comment made by Edward Said in *Orientalism* concerning the depiction of Arabs presented to British and European readers. Referring to Marmaduke Pickthall as a "minor writer", Said described Pickthall's work as "exotic fiction" which is composed of "picturesque characters".[23] In some respects the words tie rather well with Pickthall's own description of *Oriental Encounters* as "a comic sketch-book of experience". Yet they don't quite seem to give justice to the complexity of the power relations drawn in scenes such as the one detailed above where it is Suleyman who is the more fully composed figure compared to the stereotypical Victorian missionary whose cultural blindness and pomposity nearly leads him to a violence conflict from which he will undoubtedly not leave unharmed. Suleyman is the character with the wherewithal to rationalise the situation, to recognise the variance between the stances of the villagers and the missionary; it is Sulayman who is then brave enough to step into the conflict to find a resolution. Edward Said's analysis maintains that in Pickthall's work (as in so many other European writers on Arabia), the non-European is "either a figure of fun, or an atom in a vast collectivity designated in ordinary or cultivated discourse as an undifferentiated type called Oriental, African, yellow, brown, or Muslim".[24] Yet of the two characters – Suleyman and the missionary – it is the latter whom Pickthall draws as a figure of fun and one wholly undifferentiated from the mass of other English missionaries who also wander the deserts of Arabia with a few words of Arabic, so strikingly dressed in their all-white garb. In *Oriental Encounters*, it is the Englishman – he is not even given a name by Pickthall, merely the appellation of "the Frank" – who is drawn as an abstraction of his type rather than the non-European, native friends of Pickthall.

In *Reading Arabia: British Orientalism in the Age of Mass Publication, 1880–1930*, Andrew C. Long has noted how *Oriental Encounters* acts as "a clear expression and articulation of Pickthall's intellectual and creative persona [...] a

23 Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 252.

24 Said, *Orientalism*, 252.

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very personal reflection on how [his first visit to Syria and Palestine] changed Pickthall in spiritual, cultural and intellectual ways". "[This] idea of the (white) Briton who enters into and becomes a part of the world of the Arab other is both scandalous and becomes a guarantor of commercial success. Titillation about crossing over – the pleasure of being mistaken for the 'other' – is certainly a popular publishing ploy and an exciting idea for British readers, perhaps even today". Pickthall has managed to adopt the standpoint or the position "of the outsider on the inside, or the Westerner with the privileged view from the interior of the East" that is, according to Long, "clearly the basis for the modern artist's aesthetic" in the sense that "the modernist/modern artist stands on the periphery, isolated in the midst of modern life, and from this position – this standpoint – is able to see and represent modernity in ways that defy the efforts and abject consciousness of those who live within the rhythms of modern everyday life".[25] So indeed in many ways we might want to view Marmaduke Pickthall's *Oriental Encounters* not as Edward Said read works by other Western writers on the East, but as a work challenging the orthodox stereotypic European vision of Arabia and its inhabitants; and as a book embodying a sense of modernism in its gaze back upon aspects of the late nineteenth-century Arabia from 1917 as the world writhes in the horrors of war.

That scene in "My Countryman" then develops as "the Frank" even refuses to pay the meagre five piastres which Suleyman has negotiated with the elder of the village for taking water from the well. The missionary maintains the water is "the gift of God" and so should be free. When Pickthall steps in to explain that water in the desert is a precious commodity and so one deserving of a price, his nationality is recognised: "What! Are you English?" (94) exclaims the missionary as he stares at that "semi-native garb" which constitutes the young Englishman's clothes. It is a moment of delightful tension: two Englishman meet in the Syria desert far from any other European presence. Queen Victoria reigns. Yet this is no Stanley-Livingstone moment. Even if it is another extraordinary encounter between Englishmen on the edges of the British Empire, these two Englishmen share little common ground. There is not even anything of the serene reservation embodied in those famous first words, "Dr Livingstone, I presume". Instead, Pickthall's Englishmen hardly see the commonality of their nationhood. "Are you English?" are their first words together. Pickthall agrees to join the Frank for supper, for the ties of English identity are hard to break. Suleyman and Rashid are both annoyed at the decision, "jealous of the Frank, whom they regarded as an enemy, and feared lest he should turn my mind

25 Andrew C. Long, *Reading Arabia: British Orientalism in the Age of Mass Publication, 1880–1930* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 137.

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against them".[26] Indeed, Pickthall talks of his "deep regret and [...] degree of shame" at promising to break bread with the missionary even after recognising how terribly his fellow Englishman has treated the local villagers and his native friends that very afternoon. But those ties of cultural and national identity are hard to ignore. His steps to the missionary's tent form the opening scene to the next chapter in *Oriental Encounters*, titled "The Parting of the Ways".

Once more the depiction of the English missionary is imbued with stereotype, the kind of depiction which British imperial writers often employed to portray the collective vision of the other of Arabia: "He spoke of the day's heat and the fatigues of travel and the flies".[27] Looking to lighten the mood and "make him laugh" Pickthall tells the missionary an anecdote on local methods of pest control:

> Rashîd had spoken of the virtues of a certain shrub; but Suleymân declared the best specific was a new-born baby. This, if laid within a room for a short while, attracted every insect. The babe should then be carried out and dusted. The missionary did not even smile.[28]

Pickthall's attempt to unite the two Englishmen by a light-hearted prod at the locals falls on stony ground. The comedy of the scene is born from the distinct division between the ways in which these two Englishmen approach Arabia and the local population. Even Pickthall's attempt to step into the shared cultural territory of English customs with the missionary fails. The missionary murmurs his discontent, his incredulity that Pickthall can even entertain the company of Arabs. "How can you, an Englishman, and apparently a man of education, bear their intimacy?"[29]

In Pickthall's pen, it is the missionary whose appearance and attitude are brutally stereotypical. He has no nuance to distinguish him. "The Frank" sums up his core identity as an Englishman on Arab soils not for the chance to get to know and love the lands and their peoples but to evangelise. Over supper, the racism and diction typical of the British colonial mindset unfurls:

> He had [Suleyman and Rashid] summed up at sight. They were two cunning rogues, whose only object was to fleece me. He told me stories about Englishmen who had been ruined in that very way through making

26 Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters*, 95.

27 Ibid., 97.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

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> friends with natives whom they thought devoted to them. One story ended in a horrid murder. He wanted me to have no more to do with them, and when he saw I was attached to them, begged me earnestly to treat them always as inferiors, to "keep them in their place"

The missionary leaves Pickthall with some startling final words of advice: "Go back to England".[30]

And so we watch the figure of Marmaduke Pickthall, not yet twenty years of age, stepping from the tent of that English missionary who embodies so much of the world in which Pickthall lived before he came here to Arabia and whose advice is ringing in the young man's ears. It is night in the Arabian desert. Pickthall returns to his two friends Suleyman and Rashid, to the rooftop where they are to sleep. All is contrasts. The villagers have "eager, friendly faces" while that of the missionary's now seems as though that of "a great bird of prey". Pickthall suddenly feels a rush of violent emotion towards his fellow Englishman; he "hated him instinctively" but could not ignore the weight of his words as an elder. On the rooftop, lit by starlight, the three friends lie down. It is Suleyman who speaks, his words laden with truth:

> Things will never be the same [...] the missionary has spoilt everything. He told you not to trust us, not to be so friendly with persons who are natives of this land, and therefore born inferior.[31]

Pickthall remains silent. Suleyman speaks on:

> A man who journeys in the desert finds a guide among the desert people, and he who journeys on the sea trusts seamen ... An Englishman such as that missionary treats good and bad alike as enemies if they are not of his nation. He gives bare justice; which, in human life, is cruelty. He keeps a strict account with every man. We, when we love a man, keep no account.[32]

Pickthall recognises the words as true but knows too that he is torn – the advice of the missionary still ringing in his head to "give up this aimless wandering" and return to England.

30 Ibid., 99–100.
31 Ibid., 100–1.
32 Ibid., 102.

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> It was the hour immediately before dawn, and the life seemed hopeless. The missionary's voice seemed then to me the call of duty, yet every instinct in my blood was fierce against it.[33]

It is a wonderfully tense scene. As the first glow of dawn breaks, Pickthall is held in a crisis of identity. In the Introduction to *Oriental Encounters*, Pickthall writes of the feelings he had had those twenty years or so before, when travelling Arabia as a young man and living what he calls "a double life".[34] Here then is the moment when Pickthall can no longer continue to live the double life. He has to choose one life or the other: to recant his gentle, wandering ways travelling Arabia and befriending the locals he comes across, learning their language and customs with a loving interest; or to turn back to the imperial mindset and the ways of his English cultural upbringing, to the approach and attitude to the local Arab inhabitants of these lands so perfectly embodied in that of the Frank, the missionary. In that mystical still as the sun rises over the Arabian desert, Pickthall makes his decision:

> A streak of light grew on the far horizon, enabling us to see the outlines of the rugged landscape. A half-awakened wild-bird cried among the rocks below us. And suddenly my mind grew clear. I cared no longer for the missionary's warning. I was content to face the dangers which those warnings threatened; to be contaminated, even ruined as an Englishman. The mischief, as I thought it, was already done. I knew that I could never truly think as did that missionary, nor hold myself superior to eastern folk again. If that was to be reprobate, then I was finished.[35]

Framed against the naturally dramatic lighting of the sunrise, Pickthall bravely forges his future. He will follow the path dictated by his heart. He will walk the line which distinguishes him from the thoughts and prejudices of the missionary. The two may share their nationhood, but nothing more. Both are Englishmen travelling Arabia, yet the missionary seeks no friendship in the faces of the local Arabs he meets along the way. We have already seen the contemptuous manner in which the missionary treats those hosts whose land he walks. For Pickthall, that common tie of England is not strong enough to unite the two men. As Pickthall states, he cannot hold himself as "superior to eastern folk". And such a stance truly distinguishes him from the mould of

33 Ibid., 103–4.
34 Ibid., 8.
35 Ibid., 104.

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so many Englishmen of the period. He will not eschew his English heritage yet he will have nothing to do with the belittling attitude so common amongst his countrymen.

So here then is the very moment when Marmaduke Pickthall declares his cultural identity. Or at least, here is a fictionalised remembrance of that dawn revelation which befell his younger self. Whether the scene actually took place as portrayed in *Oriental Encounters* is impossible to determine without archival materials. Yet re-reading the chapter, the emblematic resonances and significances are hard to ignore. The timing of the moment when Pickthall must decide to heed the missionary's words is so fitting: the dawning of a new day. With the cry of that "half-awakened wild-bird" Pickthall's "mind grew clear" such that he could suddenly now see beyond the missionary's words of warning. Both Rashid and Suleyman call out "Praise be to Allah!" as their young English friend declares himself freed from the cultural chains of figures such as the missionary. Together, the three friends ride off "towards the dawn" that is "beginning to grow red behind the heights of Moab".[36]

*

It was not until 1917 that Marmaduke Pickthall published many of the stories of his travels in Arabia which were to eventually form *Oriental Encounters*; the same year which would see his conversion to Islam. The two actions should certainly be seen as connected. The year was a momentous one for Pickthall. In February 1917, the tale "Rashid the Fair" was published in *New Age*, a "radical, even socialist" weekly journal financially propped up by George Bernard Shaw and whose regular writers included Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy and Katherine Mansfield.[37] Pickthall had written for *New Age* since 1912 but in February 1917 the appearance of "Rashid the Fair" (which would become the first chapter of *Oriental Encounters* in 1918) demonstrates how significant those years of Arabian travel were to Pickthall even more than twenty years later. From February 1917, Pickthall had eighteen tales of *Oriental Encounters* published in *New Age*.[38] The book of the same name was published by William Collins in June of 1918. In between had come "Pickthall's declaration of his [Muslim] faith in November 1917 [which] was the turning point of his life".[39] Significant in this context is the fact that the two chapters "My Countryman"

36 Ibid., 105.

37 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 19, 142.

38 These appeared in eighteen parts between 1 February 1917 and 22 August 1918.

39 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 42.

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and "The Parting of the Ways" (Chapters 9 and 10 of *Oriental Encounters*) which really explain the background of Pickthall's crisis of identity and his schism from English Christian mainstream beliefs about Arabia were *not* published in *New Age*. As we have already seen, these chapters are central to the path which the young Pickthall chose to take in life as he chose not to listen to the advice of an English missionary traveller and instead to trust his own judgement in his friendships with local Arabs and to embrace the freedom of wandering unprejudiced in the wide open spaces of Arabia. Twenty years on, in late 1917, Pickthall recollected those Arabian travel experiences. As he prepared to finally and decisively announce his public acceptance of Islam on 29 November 1917, so those youthful days in the Syrian desert exemplified his now firm conviction of his true identity. Indeed, if we turn again to the final lines of the "The Parting of the Ways", with the young Pickthall having uttered his declaration to care "no longer for the missionary's warning" and with Rashid and Suleyman ecstatic at his decision, Pickthall laughs and states "I resign myself to be the pigeon of the mosque".[40] The echo of that moment rang clear and true to its author so many years later. So indeed we can see the vital role which those Arabian travels from 1894 to 1896 really played in forming the remarkable figure of Marmaduke Pickthall.

40 Pickthall, *Oriental Encounters*, 105.

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CHAPTER 11

Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall's English Translation of the Quran (1930): An Assessment

A.R. Kidwai

In the "Foreword" to his English translation of the Quran, *The Meaning of the Glorious Quran* (1930),[1] partly out of the innate modesty of a scholar and partly in deference to the truism that the Quran being literally the Word of God is untranslatable, Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall (1875–1936) laments his inability to capture and articulate in his English version "that inimitable symphony [of the Quran], the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy".[2] Nonetheless, his work published eighty-five years ago has been remarkably successful to this day in moving its numerous readers to tears and ecstasy, and in inspiring scores of later Muslim scholars to embark upon their own Quran translations. In the domain of the English translations of the Quran by Muslims, which number more than fifty,[3] Pickthall's holds pride of place a) for being the first worthy translation, and b) for serving all along as the touchstone against which all later ventures have usually been measured for their faithfulness to the original Arabic/Quranic text and for gauging their mastery or otherwise over the English idiom and usage. For Pickthall's work excels all others on, at least, these two counts. The present assessment aims at bringing out these and other hallmarks, and strengths as well as weaknesses of his translation.

1 Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (Hyderabad-Deccan, India: Government Central Press, 1938). Reissued as *Al-Quran Al-Karim with English Translation by Pickthall* (Islamabad, Pakistan, Islamic Research Institute, 1988). The latter edition being a reprint of 1938 edition is cited in all subsequent references.

2 Pickthall, *The Meaning*, 1. xix.

3 The following select works provide bibliographical details about English translations of the Quran, including those by Muslim writers: Muhammad Ali Muhammad Abou Sheishaa, "The Translation of the Quran: A Selective Bibliography", http://www.islamportal.net/article/translation-quran-selective-bibliography, accessed July 14, 2016; Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, ed. *World Bibliography Translations of the Meanings of the Holy Quran: Printed Translation 1515–1980* (Istanbul, Turkey: OIC Research Centre for Islamic History, 1986); Morteza Karimi-Nia, *Bibliography of Quranic Studies in European Languages.* (Qum, Iran: Centre for Translation of the Holy Quran, 2012); A.R. Kidwai, *Bibliography of the Translations of the Meanings of the Glorious Quran into English 1649–2002* (Madina, Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Quran Printing Complex, 2007).

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Although his translation saw the light of day in 1930, as the fruit of a project sponsored by the Nizam of Hyderabad, the ruler of a princely state in British India, he had this project in mind soon after his internal acceptance of Islam in 1914. The genesis of his venture may be traced back to his article, "The Quran" published in *The Islamic Review* (1919),[4] which apart from being a stout vindication of the divine origin of the Quran, carries his own translation of a few Quranic verses, of which a vastly improved and more elegant version appears in his complete translation of the Quran in 1930. Equally significant are his following observations in the same article of 1919 on the Orientalist perspective on the Quran, and on the poor quality of the English translations of the day: "translations of the Sacred Book are prosy, and seem discursive and garrulous, whereas the Quran in Arabic is terse, majestic, and poetical. So bad are some of the translations, and so foolish many of the notes which choke the text".[5] Thus even in 1919 he realized the need for a quality translation which might help readers "feel the power of inspiration in it".[6] Prior to Pickthall's, three types of English translation existed: (1) Those by Orientalists namely, Alexander Ross (1649), George Sale (1734), J.M. Rodwell (1861), and E.H. Palmer (1880).[7] (2) Those by another group, Ahmadi translators, namely, Muhammad Abdul Hakim Khan (1905) and Muhammad Ali (1917), and by Ghulam Sarwar (1920) who had Ahmadi leanings.[8] (3) Those by some well meaning but very poorly equipped and incompetent Muslims of British India namely, Abul Fadl (1911) and Hairat Dihlawi (1916).[9].

So Pickthall's criticism was neither misplaced nor exaggerated. Regrettably, the seemingly innocuous and academic field of English translations of the Quran looks like, so to say, a battleground, teeming with hysterical polemics, sectarian conflicts, and ideological presuppositions, including the missionary agenda. The unfortunate religious divide between Christendom and the West and Islam and the Muslim world, deepened by the Crusades, and exacerbated by colonialism and Islamophobia of our time against the backdrop of the deplorable events of 9/11 and other ghastly incidents of mindless killings in the

4 Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Qur'an", *The Islamic Review* 7 (1919): 9–16.

5 Pickthall, "The Qur'an", 11.

6 Ibid.

7 For discussion on these see: Muhammad Mohar Ali, *The Quran and the Orientalists* (Norwich: Jamiyat Ihyaa Minhaaj al-Sunnah, 2004); Ahmad Zaki Hammad, "Representing the Quran in English" in *The Gracious Quran: A Modern- Phrased Interpretation in English* (Lisle, LA: Lucent, 2007), 67–87; A.R. Kidwai, *Translating the Untranslatable: A Critical Guide to 60 English Translations of the Quran* (New Delhi: Sarup Publishers, 2011).

8 A.R. Kidwai, *Translating,* 7–10, and 195–212.

9 Kidwai, *Translating*, 3–6.

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name of Islam, have cast their dark shadow on the Orientalist discourse on Islam and the Quran. Among the Orientalist translators, Alexander Ross (1592–1654) did not know any Arabic yet he produced the first English translation of the Quran![10] George Sale (1697–1736), J.M. Rodwell (1808–1900) and Richard Bell (1876–1952) all were church ministers.[11] To Orientalists, as Pickthall ruefully observes, the Quran seemed "a mere parody of the Bible", "an imposture", containing "hardly anything original".[12] In the early twentieth century, which was the heyday of both colonialism and Christian missionary onslaughts directed against Islam/the Quran in British India, some Muslim writers of the Indian subcontinent took up the translation of the Quran as a defensive move. So this field which was dominated by Orientalists until 1920 underwent a dramatic reverse. The steep increase of translations by Muslims, numbering now more than fifty, has corresponded to the decline in the Orientalist forays. After A.J. Arberry's translation in 1955,[13] after a gap of some fifty years, Alan Jones's appeared in 2007.[14] In contrast, since 1980 new translations by Muslim writers have been appearing regularly, particularly in the last two decades.[15]

As already indicated, the two earliest translations by Muslims namely, Abul Fadl (1911) and Hairat Dihlawi (1916) had the ambitious plan of countering the Orientalists'/missionaries' charges against the Quran in their commentary. However, these deliver very little. Neither of them had academic credentials or any grounding in English idiom and presentation skills.[16] At best, they recorded for the first time the Muslim presence in the field.

With Pickthall's majestic translation, this enterprise blossomed into a highly rewarding and rich scholarly tradition. His work enabled the ever-growing English-speaking Muslims to gain some understanding of the meaning and message of the Quran in English. Apart from the Orientalists, the other group active in the field in Pickthall's day was the Ahmadis, followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908) of Qadian, a small town in the Punjab province of British India, hence known as Qadianis. They take Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a Prophet, a belief contrary to the Islamic article of faith on the finality of Prophet Muhammad's Messengership, and they are not recognized as Muslims.

10 Nabil Matar, "Alexander Ross and the First English Translation of the Quran", *Muslim World* 88: 1 (January 1998): 82 and 85; George Sale, *The Kora* (London, Frederick Warne, 1734): vii.

11 A.R. Kidwai, *Translating,* 241–48 and 253–57.

12 Pickthall, "The Quran", 9, 10, 12.

13 A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1955).

14 Alan Jones, *The Quran Translated into English* (London: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007).

15 Kidwai, *Translating,* 120–164.

16 Kidwai, *Translating*, 3–6.

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Besides parading the Mirza as a Prophet, Ahmadi translators namely, Muhammad Abdul Hakim Khan (1905) and Muhammad Ali (1917) present a strange, rather bizarre belief about the Prophet Jesus. According to Khan, Jesus was crucified yet he did not die on the cross. Rather, he walked away, thousands of miles to Kashmir, India, had his natural death there and lies buried at Khan Yar, Srinagar, Kashmir, India.[17] Both Khan and Ali reject the Islamic/Quranic doctrines of miracles, angelology, jinn, bounties of Paradise, and all that lies beyond the realm of the unseen (*al-ghayb*).[18] Swayed by his Ahmadi doctrines Muhammad Ali at times presented a twisted rendering of the Quranic text which could mislead unsuspecting English speaking readers who did not know any Arabic to grasp the Quranic text. An instance in point is his rendering of Surah Al-Fil which relates that God had sent swarms of birds, as a miracle, for pelting stones in order to thwart the invading army of the Abyssinian ruler Abraha's army from demolishing God's house, Kabah in Makkah, in the year of Prophet Muhammad's birth. Muhammad Ali's following translation and explanatory note point to his peculiar understanding:

> Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with the possessors of the elephant [Abraha's army]? Did He not cause their war to end in confusion, and send down (to prey) upon them birds in flocks, casting them against hard stones? So He rendered them like straw eaten up.
>
> AL-FIL 105, 1–5

In a more pronounced vein is his comment:

> The commentators [classical Muslim scholars] relate some curious stories as to how Abraha's army was destroyed [...] The mention of birds is merely intended to show that they were destroyed, the birds feasted on their corpses, tearing off flesh from the dead bodies and casting it on stones.

In his version, however, Pickthall faithfully conveys the import of the Quranic verses:

> Has thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the owners of the Elephant? Did He not bring their stratagem to naught, and send against them

17 Muhammad Abdul Hakim Khan, *The Holy Quran* (Karnal, India: Azizi Press, 1905), 116, 117, 122 and 123.

18 Muhammad Ali, *The Holy Quran* (Lahore: Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i-Ishaat-i Islam, 1920), 1224–1225.

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> swarms of flying creatures, which pelted them with stones of baked clay, and made them like green crops devoured (by cattle)?[19]

His explanatory note is more forthright in reporting this miraculous happening:

> The allusion is to the campaign of Abraha, the Abyssinian ruler of Al-Yaman, against Mecca, with the purpose of destroying the Kabah in the year of the Prophet's birth. Tradition says that the elephant refused to advance on the last stage of the march, and that swarms of flying creatures pelted the Abyssinians with stones.[20]

Pickthall's conformity to the authentic Muslim tradition endeared him to the Muslim readers and stands out as a testament to his impeccable scholarship.

It was against this backdrop that Pickthall produced his translation of the Quran. It was warmly, nay rapturously received by Muslims for being elegant in presentation, and free from the errors of perspective and trappings peculiar to the Orientalist and Ahmadi translators. Within two years of its publication, its four editions were issued from the UK and USA. Its publication was most gratifying for English-speaking Muslims. At long last they had an English translation befitting the majesty of their Scripture, and that too by a British convert to Islam and a native speaker of English who had already made a mark as an accomplished British man of letters. For some naïve Muslims, then reeling under the seemingly invincible British colonialism, it vindicated the abiding truth of Islam and the Quran.

Pickthall's translation won acclaim soon after its publication; it has retained its popularity to this day in view of its many merits. Until now its more than one hundred and sixty editions are on record. It must be, however, at once added that Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation (1934–1937) surpasses Pickthall's, with more than two hundred editions.[21] The global outreach of Pickthall's translation is evident from its publication from such diverse places as the USA, UK, India, Pakistan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, Malaysia and Jordan. Notwithstanding the availability of many translations by Muslim writers, the regular re-issue of Pickthall's translation, including the release of its Kindle edition on 23 July 2014, is a pointer to its special and outstanding place amid other translations.

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19 Pickthall, *The Meaning*, 436–437.

20 Kidwai, *Translating,* 195–212.

21 A.R. Kidwai, *Bibliography of the Translations of the Meanings of the Glorious Quran into English 1649–2002*. 5–76.

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Furthermore, Pickthall's work inspired scores of later Muslim writers to produce their versions in their own varied ways. Many of them stand indebted to him for having provided them with apt English equivalents for a range of Arabic/Quranic terminology. Some, however, went to the extreme, transgressing all limits, by unabashedly plagiarizing his work, and passed it off as their own. Although this cannot be condoned as a tribute to Pickthall, it underlines the abiding influence of his work on later writers. (These deplorable instances of unacknowledged borrowings from Pickthall are: S.V. Mir Ahmad Ali's *The Holy Quran with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary According to the version of the Holy Ahlul Bait* (1964);[22] Ali Ozek et al., *The Holy Quran* (1992);[23] and Translation Committee, *The Majestic Quran* (2002).[24] A fairly recent addition to this unenviable series is Daoud William S. Peachy and Maneh H. Al-Johani's *The Quran: The Final Book of God-A Clear Translation of the Glorious Quran* (2012)).[25]

Let us now focus on Pickthall's translation. His "Foreword" (xix–xx) presses home the following points which underscore his piety and assiduity: (1) His is a faithful translation, as close as possible to the Arabic/Quranic text. (2) His, like any other Quran translation in any language, presents only "the meaning of the Quran in English [...] It can never take the place of the Quran in Arabic, nor is it meant to do".[26] (3) While drafting his translation he consulted several *shaykhs* (Muslim/Arabic scholars) at Jamia Al-Azhar, Cairo, the oldest Islamic seminary in the Muslim world in order to avoid "unwarrantable renderings" and to ensure the inclusion of only "the traditional rendering"[27] of the Quran in English. However, his "Foreword" is too brief, skipping some important relevant details. For example, he only alludes to "some of the translations" which "include commentation offensive to Muslims",[28] without specifying these translations or the thrust of their offensive comments. What is more intriguing is his passing in silence over such objectionable material, for he tackles some of the objections raised against the Quran in his above mentioned article of 1919. It is a pity that his full length work on the Quran does not contain any refutation of the offensive comments of which he was well aware. Since such a rejoinder was the need of the hour and he had the competence

22 Kidwai, *Translating,* 167.

23 Kidwai, *Translating,* 114–118.

24 Ibid., 127–129.

25 A.R. Kidwai's forthcoming Book Review on this translation.

26 Pickthall, *Meaning*, 1, xix.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

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to undertake it, his indifference seems somewhat inexplicable. Equally enigmatic, rather confusing is the opening sentence of his "Foreword" about his target readership: "The aim of this work is to present to *English readers* what the Muslims world over hold to be the meaning of the words of the Quran [...] with a view to the requirements of *English Muslims*"[29] (italics mine). "English readers" evidently include non-Muslim readers, most of whom being ignorant of the Quran constitute a readership, which is markedly different from "English Muslims" possessing a distinct mindset, belief system and responsiveness to the Quran. Moreover, his allusion to "English Muslims" is far from clear. Did he intend his work for the few Muslim English converts to Islam in 1930? His main constituency, however, was the English-speaking Muslim readership that had been swelling by the day on account of their constant contact with English language and the West in major parts of the Muslim world, the then colonies of the West. Since Pickthall's work is almost devoid of explanatory notes, which could otherwise determine his target readership, the above questions remain unanswered. Pickthall does mention the classical Muslim Quran commentators "Beydawi and Zamakhshari"[30] as his sources. However, in the absence of explanatory notes in his work, their influence on his understanding of the Quran cannot be measured. Notwithstanding the lack of any gloss over the persons, places, events, history and geography mentioned in the Quran, he prefaces each of one hundred and fourteen Quranic Surahs with a note, mostly a brief one, on the circumstantial setting of each Surah. Therefore his reference to Wahidi's *Asbab Al-Nuzul* (Causes of the Revelation of the Quranic Verses) as a source seems in order. It is an altogether different point that he does not cite even Wahidi once.[31] His reliance on Bukhari's collection of Hadith is manifest only in his "Introduction". Since he does not elucidate any Quranic verse or allusion, no Hadith features in the main body of his work.

Pickthall's extensive "Introduction" (xxi–xxxix) at once brings to mind George Sale's much more comprehensive "Preliminary Discourse", prefaced to his Quran translation (1734). Notwithstanding this similarity in format, the two stand poles apart in their approach to things Islamic. Pickthall's aim is to acquaint readers with the articles of Islamic faith, the Prophet Muhammad's illustrious life and achievements and early Islamic history. His description is essentially a chronological narrative, focused on the Prophet's career. Occasionally does he dispel some popular misperceptions about the Quran. Illustrative of this is his defence of the divinely ordained arrangement of the

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., xx.

31 Ibid., xx.

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Quranic text, which does not follow the usual chronological order: "[It is] not haphazard, as some have hastily supposed. Closer study will reveal a sequence and significance".[32] This aside, his "Introduction" contains precious little about the Quran itself. He does not explain at the outset that the Quran is not to be taken in the conventional sense of a book. Nor are its Surahs akin to chapters in a book. It is the note of divine guidance which binds the whole Book together and that the Quran should be approached as God's address to mankind of every time and place. He does not place the Quran in the broader context of other Scriptures, highlighting their common grounds and points of departure. Such reader friendly background information could enlighten both his "English readers" and "English Muslims", and facilitate their understanding of its contents and context. Studded with this useful feature are some later English translations by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1934–1937),[33] Syed Maududi (1967–1988),[34] and most effectively in the version by Ahmad Zaki Hammad (2007).[35]

As already stated, prefaced to all one hundred and fourteen Quranic Surahs are Pickthall's introductory notes. Disappointingly these are too brief, and marred further by an unhelpful drift. Instead of preparing readers mentally for grasping better the theme and subject matter of each Surah, his notes are generally restricted to discussing the dating of these Surahs and the event/s which might have occasioned their revelation by Allah. Moreover, he makes it a point to define painstakingly the title of each Surah. Since these are no more than labels or reference tags, without any bearing on the contents, his exercise is largely tangential. Take the title of Surah two of the Quran as illustrative. This two hundred and eighty-six verses long Surah which contains scores of Quranic commandments and the exposition of the Islamic belief system is entitled *Al-Baqarah* (cow) in view of its allusion to a cow. The background information about the titles and dates so assiduously provided by Pickthall, though valuable in its own right, is of not much help to those new to the Quran. Those studying the Quran in English should be better instructed first in the subject matter of the Quran and what guidance they could derive from its study. Pickthall was capable of imparting such instruction in view of his decades long Muslim activist career. It is a pity that he did not make most of this opportunity. His translation is supplemented with a few explanatory notes. Some of these are strikingly original and cogent, underscoring his sound,

32 Ibid., xxxix.

33 Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1934).

34 Syed Abul A'la Maududi, *The Meaning of the Quran* (Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd., 1967–1988).

35 Hammad, *The Gracious*.

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nuanced understanding of things Islamic. Some gems of his Quranic scholarship are:

a. His definition of the Quranic appellation, *'abd*[36] (a slave of Allah) encapsulates the spirit of the God-man relationship in Islam.
b. He draws attention to the fact that Surah Al-Nisa "deals with women's rights".[37] However, he stops at that point, without elaborating how the Quran ushered in gender justice in the seventh century Arabia in which woman was a non-entity. Today it might sound downright outrageous but the grim reality is that she then used to be an item of inheritance, to be possessed by male heirs of the deceased.
c. His interpretation of Prophet Muhammad being an *ummi* (an unlettered person) reflects the consensus view of Muslims. So doing, he refutes the divergent opinion of "some modern critics".[38] However, he refrains from identifying the dissenting voices.
d. His clarification that "Satan is of the jinn, and not of the angels"[39] is another shining example of his endorsing the orthodox, consensus Muslim view on this subject. Taking Satan as an angel is discordant with the Quranic angelology.
e. His pithy elucidation of the rite of animal slaughter, as part of the Islamic pilgrimage, brings out the underlying spirit of this Islamic command.[40] Had he inserted more explanatory notes of this import, his work would have served more admirably the cause of understanding the Quran better.
f. His gloss over the Quranic figure of Luqman[41] reflects his insights into comparative religion. One wishes the quantum of such scholarly and perceptive notes had been more.
g. What is said above about his grounding in history of religions is to the fore also in his explication of the Quranic allusion to Tubba, the kings of Himyar of south Arabia.[42]
h. In his exceptional relatively extensive prefatory note to Surah Al-Tahrim, both his piety and persuasive power are on display, as he vindicates

36 Pickthall, *Meaning*, 2, 344.
37 Ibid., 49.
38 Ibid, 113.
39 Ibid., 203.
40 Ibid., 231.
41 Ibid., 284.
42 Ibid., 346.

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Prophet Muhammad's character and conduct, with a pointed reference to the latter's polygamy. In so doing, he takes up the cudgels against with those "non-Muslim writers"[43] who seek to discredit the Prophet on this count.

i. As a committed Muslim he is found exalting logically Prophet Muhammad in his introduction to Surahs Al-Duha and Al-Sharh, as he highlights the Prophet's "most wonderful record of success in human history".[44]

However, some of Pickthall's observations mark his departure from the orthodox Muslim viewpoint. Since these are few, they have gone largely unnoticed, without diminishing his credentials as an outstanding Muslim scholar. Streaks of pseudo-rationalism, apologia or sheer carelessness account for the following unconventional notes of his:

i) He cites the Ahmadi translator Muhammad Ali's outlandish misconstruing of the intent of verse seventy-three of Surah Al-Baqarah,[45] without refuting him or without branding him as an Ahmadi writer, which could alert readers.

ii) His comment on verse ninety of Surah Al-Nahl that this verse is "recited at the end of every weekly sermon in all Sunni congregations"[46] is marred by two factual inaccuracies: (A) It is recited as part of the Friday noon prayer sermon, and hence his branding it as a "weekly sermon" is non-specific and confounding for readers. (B) It features in the Friday sermon of not only Sunni but also Shiah congregations.

iii) His note on verse eleven of Surah Al-Naml that "Moses had been guilty of a crime in Egypt",[47] being too curt, tends to present Prophet Moses in a poor light. He should have clarified that Prophet Moses had inadvertently killed a Copt and as the Quran adds, he soon repented and that God had accepted his repentance.

iv) Equally gratuitous is his citation of the views of "some commentators objecting to the miraculous"[48] speech of the ant, recounted in verse 18 of Surah Al-Naml. His quotation of an unorthodox view, without any contradiction on his part, could be misconstrued as his endorsement.

43 Ibid., 396.
44 Ibid.,430.
45 Ibid., 6.
46 Ibid., 187.
47 Ibid., 260.
48 Ibid.

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v) Notwithstanding his overflowing love for and glowing tributes to Prophet Muhammad, of which we have already taken note, Pickthall is off the mark in insinuating that the Prophet "had shown but little consideration for Zeynab"[49] in arranging her marriage with Zayd. It was in accordance with the divine directive contained in verse thirty-six of Surah Al-Ahzab that Zeynab and her family had unhesitatingly agreed on this marriage.

vi) Recklessly he quotes "some commentators that these jinn [referred to in verse 30 of Surah Al-Ahqaf] were foreign (i.e. non-Arabian) Jews".[50] Pickthall should have better refuted this pseudo-rationalistic interpretation. Or he could simply have avoided quoting it.

vii) His proclivity for brevity precludes him from spelling out the comprehensive code of social conduct outlined in Surah Al-Hujurat. He rests content with only this remark: "The whole Surah deals with manners".[51] His elucidation could introduce readers to the Islamic value system.

viii) Verses 46–76 of Surah Al-Rahman describe the four gardens in Paradise. While mentioning "some", without saying a word about their identity or credentials, he interpolates into his work their whimsical notion that these verses "refer, not to the paradise hereafter, but to the later conquests, of the Muslims, the four gardens being Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia".[52] Such lackadaisical attitude, though in very few instances, reflects poorly on a pious Muslim scholar of Pickthall's stature.

ix) In his prefatory note to Surah Al-Buruj, he rightly notes: "Verses 4 to 7 are generally taken to refer to the massacre of Christians of Najran in Al-Yaman by a Jewish king Dhu Nawas, an event of great historical importance".[53] Intriguingly enough, he then tends to contest the historicity of this "event of great historical importance" by citing the Jewish German Orientalist, Josef Horovitz's opinion that the Quranic "words refer not to any historical event".[54] Such contradictory statements in the same explanatory note could be very disconcerting for readers new to the Quran.

49 Ibid., 289.
50 Ibid., 353.
51 Ibid., 360.
52 Ibid., 373.
53 Ibid., 423.
54 Ibid.

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x) Equally incautious is his quotation of the view of some "late Dr Sidqi" that the Quranic expression, *Al-Tariq* (a star) stands for "the fertilizing germ penetrating the ovary".[55] This interpolation is all the more confounding in the face of Pickthall's own definition of *Al-Tariq* as a star in the opening part of the same note.

xi) His observation that "the meaning of the first five verses [of Surah Al-Adiyat] is by no means clear"[56] seems somewhat unbecoming of Pickthall, a life-long student of the Quran.

For his translation Pickthall chose Jacobean English used in the King James version of the Bible, which is characterized by the use of archaic pronouns and verb endings. One comes across the following obsolete words, for example, in his translation of three Surahs Muhammad, Al-Fath and Al-Hujurat: *rendereth, riddeth, improveth, coineth, maketh, relieth, changeth, teareth, thy, addeth, knoweth, seest, curseth, deafeneth, giveth, angereth, keepeth, believeth, forgiveth, obeyeth, turneth, promiseth, wilt, knoweth, sufficeth, sendeth, strengheneth, riseth, ye, thou, camest, hath, doeth, loveth, doth* ad infinitum.[57] Moreover, at places, his predilection for closeness to the text in his rendering seems to be at the expense of articulating the meaning in a readily comprehensible, even intelligible way. For example, his overly literal translation of verses 1–4 of Surah Al-Balad reads thus:

> Nay, I swear by this city-
> And thou art an indweller of this city-
> And the begetter and that which he begat
> We verily have created man in an atmosphere.[58]

In the absence of any elucidation of "I", "this city", "thou", "indweller", "begetter", "begat", "We" and "atmosphere", readers cannot make much sense of his rendering which is, no doubt, faithful. Ahmad Zaki Hammad's following paraphrasing of the same passage clarifying the elliptical and pronominal expressions, underscores the inadequacy of Pickthall's excessively literal translation in this particular instance:

> No, indeed I swear by this sacred city of Makkah, while you, O Prophet, are a free dweller in this city of Makkah. Moreover, I swear by all that

55 Ibid., 425.
56 Ibid., 434.
57 Ibid., 353–362.
58 Ibid., 428.

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beget and all that is begotten! Very truly We created man in a life of travail.[59]

Such blemishes are bound to creep into a work of such vast magnitude as Pickthall's is. These do not detract from his substantial, nay sterling contribution to the field – of being the first English translation by a Muslim scholar in elegant English and being remarkably faithful to the original. His translation, unlike many other Muslim translators' such as those by Abul Fadl (1911),[60] Hairat Dihlawi (1916),[61] Khadim Rahman Nuri (1964),[62] Salahuddin Pir (1971),[63] Hashim Amir Ali (1974),[64] Rashad Khalifa (1978),[65] Muhammad Ahmad Mufassir (1979),[66] Muhammad Asad (1980),[67] Ahmed Ali (1984),[68] M.A.K. Pathan (1993),[69] Laleh Bakhtiar (2007)[70] and Edip Yuksel et al. (2007),[71] does not bristle with unpardonable liberties with and intrusion of some whimsical, even pugnacious notions into their translations and passing these off as the intended meaning of the Quran itself.[72]

59 Hammad, *The Gracious,* 664.
60 Kidwai, *Translating,* 3–4.
61 Ibid., 5–6.
62 Ibid, 40–41.
63 Ibid., 53–55.
64 Ibid., 50–52.
65 Ibid., 285–289.
66 Ibid., 67–68.
67 Ibid., 69–74.
68 Ibid., 78–84.
69 Ibid., 289–291.
70 Ibid., 144–148.
71 Ibid., 295–300.
72 On the English translations of the Quran as a site for polemical, sectarian battles see also Hussein Abdul–Raof, "Textual Progression and Presentation Technique in Quranic Discourse: An Investigation of Richard Bell's Claims of 'Disjointedness' with Especial Reference to Quran. 17–20", *Journal of Quranic Studies* 7: 2 (2005): 36–60; Waleed Bleyhesh Al-Amri, "Quran Translation and Commentary: An Unchartered Relationship?" *Islam and Science* 8: 2 (2010): 81–110; Meir M. Bar-Asher, "Variant Readings and Additions of the Imami-Shi'i to Quran", *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993): 39–74; Mohammad A Chaudhary, "Orientalism on Variant Readings of the Quran: The case of Arthur Jeffery", *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 12:2 (1995): 170–184; Michael L. Fitzgerald, "Shi'ite Understanding of the Quran", *Encounter* 178 (1991): 3–12; F.V. Greifenhagen, "Traduttore Traditore: An Analysis of the History of English Translations of the Quran", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 3: 2 (1992): 274–291; Ahmad Zaki Hammad, "Representing the Quran in English" in *The Gracious Quran:* 67–87; Abdel Moneim A. Hosni, "On Translating the Quran", *Journal of King Saud University* 2: 2 (1990): 93–134; Moch Nur Ichwan, "Differing Responses to an Ahmadi Translation and Exegesis. The Holy Quran in Egypt

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Moreover, unlike his contemporary translator of the Quran, Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1934–1937), he adheres close to the Quranic text in his rendering and succeeds largely in avoiding the pitfall of offering a literal, soulless version. Pickthall's distinction as an excellent translator consists in his concise rendering which faithfully conveys the sense of the original. In comparison, his contemporary, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and many later ones, offer only a loose paraphrase, at the expense of moving too far away from the original. This inimitable feature of Pickthall's rendering comes out, for example, in his translation of verse fourteen of Surah Ali Imran, in a condensed way in only forty-eight words while the same is rendered in fifty-seven words by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and without capturing the essence of the original. The latter is not only verbose but also inarticulate, unable to guide readers to the real intent of the original. Pickthall's precise, eloquent rendering is as follows:

> Beautified for mankind is love of the joys (that come) from women and offspring, and stored-up heaps of gold and silver, and horses branded (with their mark), and cattle and land. That is comfort of the life of the world. Allah! With Him is more excellent abode.[73]

Contrast this with Abdullah Yusuf Ali's following rendering which fails to convey effectively and energetically the Quranic observation on the ephemeral joys of this world coveted by man:

> Fair in the eyes of men is the love of the things they covet: Women and sons; heaped up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and wealth of cattle and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world's life. But in the nearness to God is the best of goals (to return to).[74]

Abdullah Yusuf Ali's last sentence is nothing short of being convoluted.

Nonetheless the cumbersome and archaic usage in Pickthall's translation impelled an Arab scholar, Arafat K. El-Ashi to bring out in 1996 its thoroughly

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and Indonesia", *Archipel* 62 (2001): 143–161; Muzaffar Iqbal, "Western Academia and the Quran", *Muslim World Book Review* 30:1 (2009): 6–18; Khaleel Mohammed, "Assessing English Translations of the Quran", *Middle East Quarterly* 12:2 (2005): 59–72; Neal Robinson, "Sectarian and Ideological Bias in Muslim Translations of the Quran", *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations* 8:3 (1997): 261–278; Muhammad Samiullah, "Quran: the Final Scripture. (An Appraisal of false, misleading, and inimical interpretation of the meaning of the Quran)" *Islamic Studies* 20 (1981): 261–68.

73 Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Quran*, 32–33.

74 Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1975): 125.

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revised version, with the aim "to simplify Pickthall's style, for example, by replacing the poetic, pronouns and verbs like 'thou, thy, thine and hast' with their more ordinary and common counterparts". This objective is writ large over El-Ashi's subtitle, *M.M. Pickthall, The Meaning of the Glorious Quran: Revised and Edited in Modern Standard English.* (1996).[75] This a masterly job of revision, reflecting El-Ashi's thorough, discerning and reader friendly editing of Pickthall's translation. It gave Pickthall's work a new lease of life.

Notwithstanding the wide acclaim enjoyed by Pickthall's venture among Muslims some dissenting voices were occasionally raised against his work. In 1991 a Pakistani writer Iqbal Husain Ansari, published a twenty-four page booklet with a somewhat pompous and sensationalist title, *Corrections of Errors in Pickthall's English Translation of the Glorious Quran.*[76] Despite its tall claim this work has little substance. On close examination of Ansari's critique it cannot be held by any stretch of imagination that Pickthall's work is a mass of errors.[77] Pickthall missed, at places, translating each and every word of the Quranic text accurately, particularly the pronominals, the bane of almost every translator of the Quran. T.B. Irving, an American convert to Islam, in the "Introduction" to his translation of the Quran in 1985 is uncharitably dismissive of Pickthall's venture on this rather silly ground: "Marmaduke Pickthall accomplished his labor in the East, and therefore his translation is [...] laid upon a superstructure of Eastern preoccupations". It is beyond one to figure out the meaning and implications of "the superstructure of Eastern preoccupations".[78] Nor is there any substance in his charge that Pickthall's stint in the East in any way adversely affected his work. Pickthall's credentials as an accomplished writer were recognized much before his sojourn in India. In his biography of Pickthall, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim,*[79] Peter Clark makes almost no attempt to analyze Pickthall's Quran translation. His brief account of Pickthall's venture also contains some factual mistakes. He states: "Pickthall's ally in the Khilafat movement, Muhammad Ali had already produced a translation".[80] The Khilafat movement leader was Maulana Muhammad Ali (Mohamed

75 A.R. Kidwai, "Book Review on El-Ashi's *M.M. Pickthall, The Meaning of the Glorious Quran: Revised and Edited in Modern Standard English (1996)" Muslim World Book Review* 18:1 (1997): 14–17.

76 Iqbal Husain Ansari, *Corrections of Errors in Picthall's English Translation of the Glorious Quran* (Karachi, Pakistan, 47–4, PECHS, n.d.).

77 A.R. Kidwai, "Book Review on Ansari's *Corrections of Errors in Pickthall's English Translation of the Glorious Quran", Muslim World Book Review* 13: 1 (1992): 15–16.

78 T.B. Irving, *The Quran* (Vermont: Amana Books, 1985), xxii.

79 Peter Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall: British Muslim* (London: Quartet Books, 1986).

80 Clark, *Marmaduke Pickthall*, 63.

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Ali) Jawhar (1878–1931) who never tried his hand at translating the Quran. It was his namesake, a Ahmadi writer, Muhammad Ali (1874–1951) who had produced his Quran translation in 1917 which is vitiated by his attempt to superimpose his typical Ahmadi doctrines on the Quran. Peter Clark is again off the mark in observing: "The translation [Pickthall's] itself has been translated [...] in 1970 a trilingual edition – English, Arabic and Urdu – appeared in Delhi".[81] Such trilingual editions are regularly issued in the Indian subcontinent for catering to the needs of a wider readership. However, these editions always carry the Urdu translation by some famous Urdu translators of the Quran. So this 1970 edition contains the Arabic text of the Quran, English translation by Pickthall and the independent Urdu one by Fateh Muhammad Khan Jallandhari. This is not a case of Pickthall's translation "being itself translated". We have already taken note of Pickthall's occasional deviations from the mainstream Muslim understanding of the Quran. However, in his assessment of Pickthall's translation, Khaleel Mohammed goes too far in discrediting him thus: "He adopted Muhammad Ali's bias against descriptions of miracles".[82] First, Pickthall's work, being bereft of explanatory notes, does not discuss miracles. In his approach to the Quran he stands poles apart from the Ahmadi Muhammad Ali who presents a garbled and tendentious view of things Quranic, especially miracles. Mohammed's other observation is more devastating: "Perhaps the death knell for Pickthall translation's use has been the Saudi government's decision to distribute other translations free of charge".[83] Irrespective of the distribution of free copies of the English translation of the Quran by Saudi embassies across the world, Pickthall's version has been consistently popular, and reprinted regularly, as is evident from the appearance of more than one hundred and sixty editions of his work, on the average two editions every year since its first appearance in 1930.

A laudable feature of Pickthall's work is that besides its "General Index" (446–447) listing the main topics of the Quran, it also carries a subject-specific "Index of Legislation" (448), identifying around one hundred Quranic commands encompassing all aspects of individual and collective life. So doing, Pickthall appears to be pointing to the all-embracing Islamic worldview and the Islamic/Quranic way of life. Once again, it is regrettable that notwithstanding his discerning knowledge of the meaning and message of the Quran he did not dilate upon any of these Quranic commands by way of critically examining their rationale, their underlying spirit, and their efficacy and relevance

81 Ibid., 66.

82 Mohammed, "Assessing", 61.

83 Ibid.

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or otherwise in his day. His exposition, stemming from his cross-cultural interactions could be a worthy contribution to Quranic scholarship. Certainly it would have enhanced further the value of his otherwise excellent work.

Pickthall's wide and deep familiarity with the main contours of the Quranic scholarship, particularly the Orientalist critique on the Quran, is evident from his above mentioned article on the Quran, written as early as in 1919. However, his shying away from engaging himself more actively with Quranic scholarship and restricting himself to producing only a first-rate translation of the Quran has been a serious loss to it. His article of 1919 contains his translation of verses two of Surahs Al-Baqarah and thirty-six to thirty-seven of Ya Sin. On examining their final version in his *Meaning of the Glorious Quran*, it is gratifying to note that it is vastly improved, concise and majestic. It indicates that he must have been all along, from 1919 to 1930, working hard on this project. Little wonder then that his translation stands out above many of those of his predecessors and contemporaries. His sincerity of purpose accounts for the everlasting popularity and appeal of his Quran translation and his other remarkable writings on Islam which rank as a native English speaker Muslim's valuable gift which has superbly served the cause of Islam for almost a century.

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