English and Pakistani Culture: Shibli, Iqbal and Arnold or Ambivalence Revisited

*Iftikhar Shafi**

The Meeting of the Twain: Shibli and Arnold

Perhaps one singular instance of the relationship between the Occident and the Orient that Shibli Nomani and his generation may have sought through English[1] is the relationship that developed between Shibli and Sir Thomas Walker Arnold (1864-1930) at the Aligarh. This relationship may be symptomatic of the terms on which Shibli and our cultural history represented through him wanted to engage with English. Arnold to Shibli, and later to Iqbal at the Government College Lahore, was perhaps that face of English which offered a healthy possibility of an interface between the Occident and the Orient—a source of a genuine cultural exchange.

In line with his differences with Syed Sulayman Nadvi's *Hayat-e-Shibli* on some other matters, Sheikh Muhammad Ikram's counter-biography *Yadgar-e-Shibli* also plays down the extent of the relationship between Shibli and Arnold that is portrayed by Nadvi and some other biographers. [i] Ikram in any case does acknowledge the influence but does not include the graphic details of that cultural interaction that was to take place between the two. Hence we would rely more upon Nadvi's account for the details.

> The College (the Aligarh) was the first place where the oriental and the occidental academics were together and were being influenced by each other's thoughts and information. The biggest benefit the Mawlana got from coming to the College was this that he got to know about the ideas and scholarly researches of Europe . . . Fortunately there was a British scholar like Professor

[1] The term "English" in my essay signifies not only the language, in the sense of a *tongue*, which is nevertheless thought to be indispensible for the acquisition of its other associated significations such as the Western cultural values, literature and philosophy, liberal education, science and technology, modern world view, rational and critical outlook etc.

* Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Karachi.

> Arnold in the College at that time. The interesting story of the relationship between Professor Arnold and Mawlana Shibli is worth hearing through the tongue of an "eye-witness." Mawlana Sherwani writes: "Allama Shibli's big fortune was this that at that time a friend of knowledge such as Professor Arnold was there. These two lovers of knowledge met, and met in way as various colours of light meet together to enlighten the world.. Professor Arnold apprised Shibli of the modern theory, told him about the instruments of modern academics, and about the objections and attacks on traditional knowledge. It was Allama Shibli's veracity and intellectual strength that he was not over-awed by the grandeur of the modern theory. Rather he thought on it well. The principles that were good he took—not only he took them but made those principles a guidance for his life. He rejected the elements of pretension. Professor Arnold benefitted in Arabic from Allama Shibli, and noticed that there are pearls still in the old grounds, although they have become hidden from the eyes by being covered with dust. The result of this knowledge came in the form of his matchless book *The Preaching of Islam*. Allama Shibli also learnt some French from Professor Arnold. This phase of the Allama's life is significantly instructive and resolving of a big educational problem." In the College, Professor Arnold and Mawlana Shibli had mixed with each other in such a way that no foreignness or separateness was left. The Professor would visit his place daily to teach French, and would himself learn Arabic. In this connection, apart from teaching, both would come to know about each other's thoughts and information daily. The Mawlana in his gatherings would relate many incidents from the Professor. He used to say that he (Arnold) would not make a single minute's change in the schedule he had made for studying (with Shibli). Once he was a few minutes late. He apologized so much that I felt embarrassed, and (Arnold) said that time is valued a lot in Europe.[ii]

This face of English represented through the learning and culture of Arnold was impressive to the extent of making Shibli say something about him that would, on the face of it, sound overwhelmingly colonized in its mind-set. Arnold spent some ten years at the Aligarh, and then joined the Government College Lahore in February 1898 to make a similar impact upon another figure who can, just like Shibli, become a considerable measure of our cultural engagement with English at that time: Iqbal. At Arnold's farewell

ceremony at the Aligarh, Shibli had to say this: "It is not the sword of Europe that has conquered all the nations of the world, rather it is the good morality of the European nations that has conquered all hearts, and Arnold is a living image of this good morality and admirable attributes."[iii] At first glance, this statement may look to reflect an awe on the part of Shibli of the cultural impact the Western scholarship was supposed to instill in the hearts of the Indians — a practical instance of Akbar Allahabadi's

توپ کھسکی پروفیسر پہنچے

جب بسولا ہٹا تو رندا ہے

(The cannon has been replaced by the professors / When adze is gone, plane takes its place.)

— but from a different angle it reflects also an acute awareness of the cultural tools of imperialism that Shibli would want the Indian Muslims themselves to acquire to resist this imperialism, especially if we see the statement in the context of Shibli's critical engagement with the Western scholarship that Nadvi, Ikram and Nasir Abbas Nayyar [iv] all mention. From Nadvi's account it comes out that in Shibli's case, the relationship between the Orient and the Occident, symptomized here through his relationship with Arnold was more of awareness than awe.

Nadvi recounts certain potentially "awe-inspiring" incidents between Shibli and Arnold. For instance, once a certain European scholar came to see Shibli, and Shibli was not much impressed by his knowledge of Persian literature. A couple of years later, the same scholar sent him his book on Persian literature that looked quite impressive. Shibli was surprised to see such a quick improvement, and when he spoke to Arnold about it, he told Shibli that a European man drastically improves in a couple of years. Another such incident relates to a question Shibli asked Arnold as to why a teacher in Europe is not respected the same way as he is in the East, to which Arnold replied: "The fact is this that knowledge is proceeding ahead on a daily basis with us, that's why every student knows a bit more than his teacher. So till when should he respect him ceremoniously?" Nadvi says that Shibli himself told him about these incidents, and he doesn't say in explicit terms as in what tone and to what effect — awareness or awe — Shibli related them to Nadvi, or how Shibli responded to Arnold's observations, but Nadvi's own comment indirectly shows an acute

awareness on Shibli's part of the imperialistic designs implicit even in the high moral attitudes of the likes of Arnold: "These two incidents are an example of how apart from the European politicians, even the European scholars would imprint their intellectual superiority on the minds of the Asians, although those who know Arnold know that he was knowledge personified, and had nothing else in view but the service of knowledge."[v]

One incident that Nadvi refers to in passing but is discussed in more detail by Ahmed Hashmi may provide us with a justification for considering Nadvi's above mentioned comment as reflecting also Shibli's own terms of engagement with Arnold. On his way to Turkey Shibli was in the company of Arnold, who was returning to England on the same ship. When the ship reached Aden, Shibli was hurt to see young boys, whom he first took to be Arabs, acrobatically diving in the sea to search for the coins thrown to them by the passengers. Shibli relates the incident:

> Most Englishmen were busy watching the display, and Arnold was also enjoying. But my condition was different as I mistakenly thought that most of the residents here are Arabs, that's why it was natural for me to look at them with respect and love. But in order to get a reward, they were doing something so vile, inappropriate and degrading that could not at all be to my liking. It was hurting to see that now the condition of Arabs is such that they are not ashamed of doing such things in front of the foreigners. These thoughts would bring tears to my eyes, so much so that they started to roll down my cheeks and this came out uncontrollably from my mouth: "Stand up, O Omar!" Arnold was nearby, and he noticed the change in my condition. When I shared with him the state of my heart and the reason for that, he once raised his eyes, looked at me and fell silent."[vi]

Hashmi thinks that the above passage on the one hand reflects Shibli's deep association with the Muslims and their pride, and on the other Arnold's displeasure at Shibli's feelings. "Although Professor Arnold had more virtues than other British professors," Hashmi points out, "he still was British, and being a part of the ruling nation, to tolerate the strong feelings of someone from the ruled people in silence was also one of his virtues." Hashmi quotes another instance from Shibli's travelogue that reflects his awareness of the British attitude towards the Asians despite his close association with Arnold:

> As it was the time of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the first and the second classes (of the ship) were full of the Christians pilgrims. Mr. Arnold told me that he was concerned lest I should come to any harm as these pilgrims were strict followers of religion and must be prejudiced, and since I was uncivilized and from a foreign nation, why would they like my company. But I found out through experience that Mr. Arnold's opinion was not correct. Those people were religious, but they were French and Italians, and not British. The seclusion and the discrimination between the colonizer and the colonized which are the peculiar traits of the colonizers were not at all there in them.[vii]

Thus Shibli seems to be quite clear in his mind about his terms of engagement with Arnold, knowing and respecting Arnold's strengths as a humanist lover of knowledge and wisdom, and taking into consideration his limitations as someone belonging to the dominant West. Similarly, Shibli seems to be quite settled with his own position on English. As Ansari points out, "Shibli did not want to make knowledge only a source of getting employments, rather to induce a genuine love and interest of knowledge was his way." [viii] According to Ansari

> In that (Shibli's) period, two different schools of thought had the claim to the leadership of the nation. One was a group which thought of moving an inch here or there from the old religious education as heresy, and the other which in its obsession with westernization was thinking of tearing off its shirt; the one that was the custodian of only religion and the other that only had the key to the worldly progress. But there were also some individuals who wanted to have an influence on the intellectual life of the Muslims, behind whom there was no power but only a programme, an enthusiasm, a passion to work, a love for the nation and religion and a feeling for its greatness. Among such individuals was also Shibli Nomani whom both the groups misunderstood, who was in reality concerned for both the world and the hereafter of the Muslims.[ix]

Ansari quotes from various letters of Shibli to support his view of Shibli's thoughts about our cultural engagement with English. These passages show how Shibli respects the possible benefits that the nation could reap from such a studied engagement, and also an awareness of the possible

dangers an engagement with English in the absence of an engagement with religion and with our traditional education may have for us. Writing about one of his closest friends at the Nadva, Shibli says: "One is this enlightened Sherwani of ours, whom I call my *imam*. His condition is this that he trembles at the name of English. With much difficulty to lure the Muslims, when he has (finally) agreed to (my) suggestion (of teaching English at the Nadva), now he is perturbed in its implementation although the purpose is not to teach it to all the students and neither this is what I have in mind. The purpose is this that a few students should also study English." [x] Ansari concludes that Shibli's theory for an engagement with English Studies was this that:

> The Muslims, along with the religious education, should also benefit from the Western disciplines of knowledge. Keeping in view the period and its conditions, only the religious and the text book instruction could in no way be helpful. Shibli was of this healthy opinion that the Muslims, along with the religious education, should also be provided such education in which there is a marriage of the Eastern and the Western disciplines of knowledge so that the Indian Muslims become enlightened and they could overpower the Western scholars and answer them, especially those who have presented Islam and history in a wrong light. For this it was necessary to learn English and be acquainted with it.[xi]

The Meeting of the Twain: Iqbal and Arnold

Another indication of our terms of engagement with English in the period of our cultural history represented by Shibli could be analogically had from a relationship similar to that of Shibli that developed between the same Professor Arnold and Muhammad Iqbal at the Government College Lahore. Let us hear the story in the words of Iqbal's son, Dr. Javed Iqbal:

> Arnold took charge of his position (at the GC Lahore) on 11 February 1898. Arnold had been appointed as a professor of philosophy at the Government College Lahore after dissociating himself from the Aligarh College. Sir Syed rated him highly and Mawlana Shibli Nomani was also his close friend. Arnold's patronizing guidance enlivened Iqbal's taste for the acquisition of philosophy and Arnold himself was so much impressed by Iqbal's talents that he started a friendly behavior with him. In the words of

Sir Abdul Qadir, Arnold knew well the scholarly pursuits and the modern ways of research. He coloured his pupil in his own taste and ways of learning and the friendship and love that started between the teacher and the pupil on the first day ultimately took the pupil to England after the teacher. Arnold became such an admirer of Iqbal that he would often say to his friends that such a pupil (as Iqbal) turns a teacher into a scholar and a scholar into a deeper scholar. . .

Arnold returned to England after retiring from his job in 1904. On this occasion Iqbal wrote a farewell poem by the name of "*Nala-e-Firaq*", which particularly mentions the scholarly taste which was created in him by the beneficence of his (Arnold's) company. . . the curiosity or thirst for scholarly research that Arnold had created in Iqbal, and the association with Arnold's own personality forced him (Iqbal) to go to England.

In any case, here this point should not be ignored that despite deep connections and an affectionate relationship with his teacher, Iqbal was fully aware of the personality of Arnold and its limitations. Syed Nazir Niazi writes that in 1930 when the news of Arnold's death reached him (Iqbal), he said with tearful eyes that "Iqbal is deprived of his teacher and friend." On this when Niazi mentioned Arnold's stature as an orientalist and his respect for Islam, Iqbal said in a surprised way: "What has Arnold to do with Islam? Don't consider the books like *The Preaching of Islam*. Arnold's loyalty was only with the soil of England. Whatever he did was in the interest of England. When I was in England, he asked me to write something on Browne's history of Persian Literature, but I refused, as I saw in such books the interest of England being served. Actually, that (Browne's history) was also an attempt to inspire the Iranian nationalism, so as to shatter the unity of the Muslim nation. The fact is that in the West an individual's life is only for the country, and one requirement of country-based nationalism is also this that the country and the nation (both are the names of the same things) should come first. Therefore, Arnold was concerned neither with Christianity nor with Islam. Actually if seen from a political point of view, not only Arnold but the knowledge and learning of every orientalist take the same way which is in line with the colonial lust and imperialism of the West. These gentlemen should also be seen as the abettors of the imperialists and the politicians.[xii]

It is this simultaneous awareness of the beneficial and harmful aspects of Europe, modern education, English etc. in Shibli's case particularly (and by the same token one may argue, in the case of others in his generation such as Iqbal and Akbar) that Ikram would interpret as a *zujihatayn* (two-dimensional) personality, and Nayyar would explore as *dojazbiyyat* (ambivalence) or *duhra Sha 'ur* (double-consciousness).

The nature of this ambivalence towards "English" in Shibli's case was interpreted in psychoanalytic terms first by Ikram by comparing it with Shibli's thoughts about his step-mother, and later taken up by Nasir Abbas Nayyar to coin his theory of *dojazbiyyat*. [xiii] According to Nayyar, this ambivalence towards English in Shibli (which he extends to some others in Shibli's generation like Sir Syed and Akbar) is *mutazabzab*, a term that we would interpret in a technical sense as *hypocritical*. Since Nayyar does not further investigate into the aptness of the analogical hypothesis of Ikram relating Shibli's attitude towards English with his attitude towards his step-mother, and seems to somewhat base his logical thesis on Shibli's criticism on this analogical hypothesis, I feel inclined to respectfully raise a few "literal" questions against the series of "rhetorical" questions Nayyar raises in line with Ikram's hypothesis. Was the ambivalence towards English in Shibli and his generation the same in nature as characterized by Nayyar through his theory of *dojazbiyyat*? In other words, should Shibli's and his generation's attitude towards English be even called "ambivalent" or *dojazbi* in the first place? Are the terms "simultaneous awareness" (that I have used above to characterize Shibli's and also Iqbal's relationship with the West), and "double-consciousness" ("divided sensibility" as interpreted by Intizar Hussain) or *duhra Sha 'ur* (the term Nayyar uses to this effect) the same in meaning? Couldn't the contradictions in Shibli's literary criticism, whose analysis becomes the practical part of Nayyar's essay that he bases on his theory of *dojazbiyyat*, be attributed to Shibli's second-hand access to the Western critical sources as Shibli himself did not know enough English to read the Western criticism directly and more thoroughly?

I am not the first one to raise questions on Nayyar's thesis on Shibli. Immediately after the first publication of the essay in *Dunyazad*, Intizar Hussain raised a few questions as well. In his review article for the daily Dawn Intizar Sahib writes:

> Now let us see what the present volume of Dunyazad has brought for us. The first article that attracted my attention was one

> written by Nasir Abbas Nayyar, who is seen here discussing Maulana Shibli as a scholar carrying a divided sensibility. Shibli, he says, was a great admirer of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, and at the same time censored him harshly for what he thought and preached. Shibli, he adds, owes much to Khan and the Aligarh University — as both had played a great role in the formation of his mental make-up. But at the same time it is also true that Shibli had been trying his best to escape from the influences of Aligarh and Khan. He was strongly opposed to modern English education but at the same time he managed to have an English school in his own city. Not only this, he also insisted on including English in the syllabus of the school he co-founded, Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulema. He calls this attitude of his "do jazbiyat" which he coined keeping in mind the English term 'ambivalence'.
>
> But, I ask, was this ambivalence limited to Maulana Shibli alone? What about Iqbal? And coming to our own times, would I be wrong if I say the same about Muhammad Hasan Askari too? In fact, our leading writers and scholars saw no harm in English education. Instead, they heartily welcomed the flow of knowledge from the West. They imbibed deeply what they could from the Western tradition of knowledge.
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> But this process of acquisition of knowledge from Western sources made them acutely conscious of their own heritage. While looking back to their own mystics, seers, poets, and thinkers they developed an ambivalent attitude towards the West. Would it be wrong to conclude that it was this ambivalence which helped such talents as Iqbal rise to the status of a great mind? [xiv]

Intizar Hussain seems to be thinking that Nayyar criticizes Shibli for being ambivalent, whereas I feel that Nayyar primarily criticizes Shibli for *not* being ambivalent in his criticism in the *ultimate* analysis. But instead of addressing the practical part of Nayyar's criticism of Shibli's criticism, let us focus more on the "theoretical underpinnings" of Nayyar's take on Shibli, as Nayyar himself complains of the Urdu critics' focus on practical criticism at the expense of theoretical debates. [xv]

Times have changed — and the classical Aristotelian poetics has now been rehashed into a postmodern Freudian and Lacanian poetics. Instead of the classical and modern aesthetics, we now live perhaps in a period of postmodern "anaesthetics". Nayyar's essay looks to utilize such poetics, and before he exploits Ikram's psychoanalytic adventure into Shibli's relationship with his step-mother, he himself ventures in the beginning of his essay into an oedipal interpretation of Shibli's relationship with Sir Syed and the Aligarh (It would have been rather interesting had this oedipal analogy been corresponded with the logical account of Shibli's relationship with his own father just like Ikram did it in case of Shibli's step-mother and English):

> Shibli's relationship with the Aligarh and Sir Syed consisted of *dojazbiyyat* (ambivalence), which is of a simultaneous appreciation and critique, and of attraction and repugnance. Shibli was both an admirer and a critic of the Aligarh and Sir Syed. It is true that the Aligarh had an important part in the intellectual make-up of Shibli, and it is also true that Shibli tried to free himself from the effects of the Aligarh the same way a son does to have an identity of his own separate from the identity of his father. In the (following?) discussion of Shibli's criticism the attempt has been mostly to trace the same *dojazbi* (ambivalent) attitude, but the point to note is that to what extent this ambivalence was "cultural-epistemological" and to what extent it was "personal-psychological," moreover, to what extent he remained under its influence, and where he got freed from it.[xvi]

I think that the *kind* of ambivalence that Nayyar attempts at tracing in Shibli and through him in our larger cultural attitude towards English was there neither in Shibli nor largely in our culture at that time represented by him. Shibli and our other cultural representatives including Iqbal may have been "watchful" in their engagement with English, may have possessed a "double consciousness" (i.e. both conscious of their own cultural patrimony and what English education could offer), but do not look be "double-minded," dissociated in sensibility, in that regard. Their tilt, their *jazb*, seems to be decidedly towards Islam and the cultural patrimony of Islam in the Sub-continent. Hence we may see that none of the various states of ambivalence that Nayyar seems to have derived from Homi Bhabha, namely, the *murtakiz* (the concentrated, which according to Nayyar is a state of simultaneous love and hate towards an object with equal intensity), the *muntashir* (the disseminated / the dissociated, which is

a state of alternate feelings of appreciation and rejection), and the *mutazabzab* (the undecided / confused, where the emotions of the desire for and against an object overlap) quite explain Shibli's engagement with English, and that of our culture at that time. Nayyar associates the last two, especially the last one (undecided / confused) with Shibli with regard to his approach to "English" studies (Western languages, literatures, philosophy, science etc. in short, the Western culture).

Tazabzub (distraction / perplexity / wavering / vacillation), the idea through which Nayyar tries to characterize Shibli's relationship with English and our cultural relationship with English at large, is a condition the Qur'an associates with hypocrisy. It is a condition that leaves the one who suffers from it neither on this side nor on that. It is a condition of being-in-the-middle that is characterized by indecision, or more exactly, by a decision that only has a worldly orientation. It is a condition of dangling in the middle, moving to and fro to whichever side the worldly benefit is associated with (See the Qur'an, IV: 138-143). What Nayyar seems to find problematic in Shibli's criticism is Shibli's tendency towards the "metaphysics of presence" (a phrase Derrida uses to critique the tradition of Western criticism), and Shibli's increasing attempt at finding a "centre of absolute anchoring" (again a phrase Derrida uses in his critique of the Western "metaphysics of presence") — in other words, the tendency in Shibli's criticism that undermines *tazabzub* and attempts at overcoming it.

The application of postmodern deconstructive and psychoanalytic critical terminology on the scholars, critics and the poets in the earliest phase of our cultural interaction with English like Shibli and Iqbal who strongly and pronouncedly associate themselves with the Islamic tradition is problematic. It is true that in the dominant postmodern Western criticism there seems to be a decision towards indecision. Through a hypocritical, ironic, and sophistic ruse, indecision has been decided. But the Western postmodern hypo-critics seem to be justified in deciding upon this indecision as they operate basically within the Greco-Christian and the Greco-Judaic traditions. These traditions, in Derrida's words, have been "haunted by the absence of the divine sign." [xvii] Through their relentless reliance upon philosophy and science, instead of the Divine Revelation, as the roots of the Western *epistemé*, the Western critical tradition in its Greco-Christian and the Greco-Judaic dimensions is by necessity not transparent to its claim to be called the "metaphysics of presence", as Iqbal

thinks, this relentlessly intellectual and rational is inherently devoid of the possibility of "presence":

عقل گو آستاں سے دور نہیں
اس کی تقدیر میں حضور نہیں

(Although Reason is not far from the threshold / Presence is not its Fate. –Iqbal)

As far as the Greco-Christian critical tradition is concerned, we may historically observe a decided tilt towards the Greek part of the amalgam among the cultural representatives from Thomas Aquinas down to the likes of T. S. Eliot, and my sweeping comment may get a lease of authenticity through such comments by Heidegger as: "A Christian philosophy is a squared circle and a misconception"; "faith has no need for the thinking of Being"; "If faith summoned me in this manner, I would close down shop." Derrida, the Western master of tracing *tazabzub* in any discourse, comments on such statements by pointing out that "in effect that theology (in the sense in which Heidegger links it to faith and distinguishes it from theiology and from meta-physical onto-theology) is rigorously excluded from his texts. It is well defined there but excluded, at least in what ought to *direct* it, namely the movement of faith." [xviii] We may see here that it is a very similar Derridian strategy of tracing exclusion that Nayyar employs in the case of Shibli, and hence calls him ambivalent. But is it a similar self-contradictory ambivalence as that of Heidegger? Does the logic of exclusion operate in Shibli also in the absence of "the movement of faith"?

As for Derrida, he traces the self-contradictory ambivalence among the Christian metaphysicians like Heidegger and the Jewish philosopher Levinas and criticizes them for sticking to a critically untenable "metaphysics of presence" in the Western metaphysics that comprises of the amalgamation of the Greek ontology and the Christian and Jewish theologies. Derrida's essay "Violence and Metaphysics" that deals with the kind of *tazabzub* that Nayyar traces also in Shibli's attitude towards English starts with the Greco-Christian tradition and ends with its Jewish counterpart. Derrida quotes Matthew Arnold's Greco-Christian ambivalence in his epigraph: "Hebraism and Hellenism,— between these two points of influence moves our world. At one time it feels more powerfully the

attraction of one of them, at another time of the other; and it ought to be, though it never is, evenly and happily balanced between them."[xix]

Towards the end of the essay, Derrida has to say something very similar about the Greco-Judaic tradition: "Are we Jews? Are we Greeks? We live in the difference between the Jew and the Greek, which is perhaps the unity of what is called history. We live in and of difference, that is, in *hypocrisy* . . . Are we Greeks? Are we Jews? But who, we? Are we . . . *first* Jews, or *first* Greeks?" [xx] It is interesting to note that when it comes to talking about the Islamic tradition, Derrida shrinks back for "lack of capacity, competence, or self-authorization." [xxi] Rumi's reference may be relevant here:

فلسفی را زہرہ نے تا دم زند

دم زند دین حقش برہم زند

The philosopher has not the stomach (courage) to breathe a word/If he utter a word, the true religion will confound him.

It is also interesting, and rather unfortunate, to note how some Pakistani critics seem to have taken up Derrida's abandoned project to trace and criticize the tilt towards the "metaphysics of presence" among our own critics and scholars belonging to the tradition of Islam, and trace an ambivalence in them similar to the one that affects the critics and philosophers belonging to the Western Greco-Christian and Greco-Judaic traditions.

Nayyar in his essay on Shibli has basically treated him as a literary critic, and one can say that criticism, especially literary one, is a thorny business, more so in its elaborate and systematic form that was imported to the East from its philosophical provenance in the West. In such a case, being-in-the-middle becomes an indispensible situation for any critic and intellectual, and so the case seems to be with Shibli and our other Muslim intellectuals of the period. But I argue that the kind of Western *hypocritical* ambivalence (*tazabzub*) that Nayyar traces in Shibli does not quite explain the inbetweenness of figures like Shibli or Iqbal. We will have to think of other categories of being-in-the-middle to characterize this inbetweenness whose terms of engagement with English were sought by these figures to be rooted in the Islamic tradition.

اپنی ملت پر قیاس اقوام مغرب سے نہ کر
خاص ہے ترکیب میں قوم رسول ہاشمیؐ

As far as a Muslim intellectual or a critic working within and associating himself with the tradition of Islam is concerned, his being-in-the-middle — his *thresholdian* positioning — could more appropriately and plausibly be explained through the categories drawn from the tradition of Islam itself. The first point to note in this regard is to acknowledge that all intellectual or critical pursuits are by their nature *thresholdian*, as Rumi says:

بدان کہ زیرکیء عقل جملہ دہلیز است
اگر بعلم۔فلاطون بود برون سراست

> Know that the cleverness of intellect all belongs to the threshold / even if it possesses the knowledge of the order of Plato, it is still "outside the palace."

It looks as if what our cultural representatives in the earliest phase of our engagement with English and the West tried to do (a strategic attempt whose appropriateness may perhaps be a matter of debate) was to somehow "mix" and align the Western cleverness of intellect (*zīrakī*) with the Eastern ideal of love and faith, and thus to construct a new world of existence for themselves in which the potentially harmful aspects of "English" education could be neutralized by a firm grounding in the Eastern, and more specifically in the Islamic tradition. Iqbal says:

غربیان رازیرکی ساز حیات شرقیان راعشق راز کائنات
زیرکی از عشق گردد حق شناس کار عشق از زیرکی محکم اساس
عشق چون بازیرکی ہمبر شود نقش بند عالم دیگر شود
خیز و نقش عالم دیگر بنہ عشق را بازیرکی آمیز دہ

> For the Westerners, intellect is the instrument of life.
> For the Easterners, love is the secret of the universe.
> Through love, intellect becomes capable of appreciating truth.
> Through intellect, love's occupation gets firm grounds.
> When love becomes a companion of intellect,

It becomes the creator of another world.
Rise! And lay the foundation of another world.
Blend love with intellect. [xxii]

The other point to note is that this *thresholdian* existence is not monolithic or homogenous; it is differentiated within itself by the tendencies of the critic towards the inside or the outside. This is what Nayyar has also pointed out through his categorization of *dojazbiyyat* into the *muratkiz*, the *muntashir*, and the *mutazabzab* conditions; the categories which, as I argue here, are not quite sufficient in understanding the being-in-the-middle or the thresholdian positions of our writers and cultural figures like Shibli and Iqbal. These figures, through their engagement with English, were treading the space between The East and the West, between tradition and modernity, and had a decided *orientation* towards the Islamic tradition. I think Intizar Hussain makes this point clear in his comment on Nayyar's take on Shibli that I have quoted earlier in this essay.

The Qur'an and the Hadith, the two fundamental sources of the Islamic tradition do characterize a certain kind of being-in-the-middle which is very different from the hypocritical *tazabzub* through which Nayyar attempts to qualify our earliest cultural interaction with English. The Qur'an, for instance, mentions that on the Day of Judgment, people will be divided into three classes: 1) the Companions of the Right Hand, 2) the Companions of the Left Hand, and 3) those Foremost (in faith) who would be the Foremost (LVI: 7-10). Among these three categories, as Abdullah Yousuf Ali explains, the Companions of the Right Hand are "the righteous people generally" who are differentiated from the ones who are nearest to God, the "Foremost" through their (the Foremost ones') reaching the highest degree in spiritual understanding. The Companions of the Right Hand are also distinguished from "those in agony"— the Companions of the Left Hand. Ibn Kathīr comments on this Qur'anic categorization of people into three groups:

> This means that people will be divided into three categories on the Day of Resurrection. Some will be on the right of Allah's Throne, and they are those who were brought forth from `Adam's right side. This category will be given their Books of Records in their right hand and will be taken to the right side. As-Suddi explained that they will comprise the majority of the residents of Paradise. Another category is those who will be placed to the left of Allah's Throne, and they are those who were brought forth

> from `Adam's left side. This category will be given their Books of Records in their left hands and will be taken to the left side. They are the residents of the Fire, may Allah save us from their actions. A third category is comprised of those who are the foremost and nearest before Allah. They are in a better grade and status and nearer to Allah than those on the right side. They are the chiefs of those on the right side, because they include the Messengers, Prophets, true believers and martyrs. They are fewer than those on the right side. [xxiii]

Ibn Kathir relates this categorization to another such categorization in the Qur'an where "the custodians of the Book," the ones who have been "chosen" by God to inherit the Book, have been divided into those 1) "who wrong their own souls," 2) "who follow a middle course," and 3) the ones "who are, by God's leave, Foremost in their good deeds (XXXV: 32). About the *muqtasidīn*, the ones who follow a middle course, Ibn Kathir comments that "these are the ones who fulfill their obligations and avoid things that are forbidden, but they may neglect some good deeds and do some things which are disliked." [xxiv] He reports from 'Ali Ibn Abi Talhah that Ibn 'Abbas commented on the Ayah:

> This refers to the Ummah of Muhammad . Allah caused it to inherit every Book that He had revealed; those who wrong themselves will be forgiven, those who follow a middle course will have an easy accounting, and those who are foremost in good deeds will enter Paradise without being brought to account." Abu Al-Qasim At-Tabarani reported from Ibn 'Abbas that the Messenger of Allah said one day: "My intercession will be for those among my Ummah who commit major sins."' Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Those who are foremost in good deeds will enter Paradise without being brought to account; those who follow a middle course will enter Paradise by the mercy of Allah; and those who wrong themselves and Ashab Al-A`raf will enter Paradise by the intercession of Muhammad.[xxv]

The *Ashab Al-A'raf* (the men of the Heights) may be taken as another manifestation of the Qur'anic account of being-in-the-middle. One of the interpretations that Abdullah Yousuf Ali mentions in his commentary on the Qur'anic verse mentioning the *Ashab Al-A'raf* (VII: 46) is that "the

men on the Heights are such souls as are not decidedly on the side of merit or decidedly on the side of sin, but evenly balanced on a partition between heaven and hell." [xxvi] Ibn Kathir quotes several commentators in this regard:

> Ibn Jarir recorded that As-Suddi said about Allah's statement, (*And between them will be a screen*) "It is the wall, it is Al-A`raf." Mujahid said, "Al-A`raf is a barrier between Paradise and the Fire, a wall that has a gate." Ibn Jarir said, "Al-A`raf is plural for `Urf, where every elevated piece of land is known as `Urf to the Arabs." As-Suddi said, "Al-A`raf is so named because its residents recognize (Ya`rifun) the people. Al-A`raf's residents are those whose good and bad deeds are equal, as Hudhayfah, Ibn `Abbas, Ibn Mas`ud and several of the Salaf and later generations said." Ibn Jarir recorded that Hudhayfah was asked about the people of Al-A`raf and he said, "A people whose good and bad deeds are equal. Their evil deeds prevented them from qualifying to enter Paradise, and their good deeds qualified them to avoid the Fire. Therefore, they are stopped there on the wall until Allah judges them." Ma`mar said that Al-Hasan recited this Ayah, [*and at that time they will not yet have entered it (Paradise), but they will hope to enter (it)*]. Then he said, "By Allah! Allah did not put this hope in their hearts, except for an honor that He intends to bestow on them." Qatadah said; "Those who hope are those among you whom Allah informed of their places." Allah said next, (*And when their eyes will be turned towards the dwellers of the Fire, they will say: "Our Lord! Place us not with the people who are wrongdoers*"). Ad-Dahhak reported that Ibn `Abbas said, "When the people of Al-A`raf look at the people of the Fire and recognize them, they will supplicate, `O Lord! Do not place us with the people who are wrongdoers.'" (48. *And the men on Al-A`raf will call unto the men whom they would recognize by their marks, saying: "Of what benefit to you was your gathering, and your arrogance*") (49. "*Are they those, of whom you swore that Allah would never show them mercy (Behold! It has been said to them): `Enter Paradise, no fear shall be on you, nor shall you grieve*'"). Allah states that the people of

> Al-A`raf will admonish some of the chiefs of the idolators whom they recognize by their marks in the Fire, saying, "*Of what benefit to you was your gathering. . .* ," meaning, your great numbers, ("...and your arrogance") This Ayah means, your great numbers and wealth did not save you from Allah's torment. [xxvii]

The *Ashab Al-A'raf*, by virtue of being in the middle, converse with both the sides, saluting the men of Paradise and hoping to join them, and admonishing the dwellers of hell. Another occasion in the Qur'an where the ones who are "in the middle" have been separated from the hypocrites (the ones the Qur'an characterizes as suffering from *tazabzub*) is in the mentioning of the ones who "have acknowledged their wrong-doings: They have mixed an act that was good with another that was evil" (IX: 102). This verse, Ibn Kathir comments, "is general, covering all sinners who combine good and evil deeds, thus becoming partly impure, even though it was revealed about some people in specific." On the authority of Al-Bukhari, Ibn Kathir quotes a Hadith from the Prophet:

> Al-Bukhari recorded that Samurah bin Jundub said that the Messenger of Allah said to us, "Last Night, two (angels) came to me (in a vision) and took me to a city, built with bricks made of gold and silver. We met some men who, part of their bodies were as handsome as you ever saw and the part as ugly as you ever saw. The two (angels) ordered these men to go to a river and submerge themselves in it; they did that and came back to us, and the ugliness went away from them, thus becoming the most beautiful form. The two said to me, `This is the garden of Eden, and this is your residence in it.' The two said, `As for the men who had part of their body handsome and part ugly, they have mixed a deed that was righteous with another that was evil. Allah has pardoned them." [xxviii]

The verses in the Qur'an that precede the verse mentioning those who have mixed the good and the bad deeds again introduce a similar categorization that we have earlier witnessed through the other Qur'anic references above: 1) The foremost, the first, the vanguard (of Islam), 2) the hypocrites who deserve God's punishment, and 3) the ones who have

mixed good and bad deeds, and the promise of forgiveness is held out to them (IX: 100-102).

The above characterization of being-in-the-middle through the categories drawn from the fundamental Islamic sources should clarify that the ambivalence towards the English patrimony found among the Muslim scholars and writers like Shibli and Iqbal cannot be simply interpreted as *tazabzub*. Such an interpretation would amount to a rather forced application of the Western postmodern critical categories, mainly in their Greco-Jewish formulations through psychoanalysis and deconstruction, upon these figures much out of their context.

Syed Suleman Nadvi's interpretation of Shibli's being-in-the-middle, of his being as a "meeting point between the ancient and the modern," looks to be more in line with the Islamic categories discussed above. He categorically states in the introduction to Shibli's biography that "in any case, Shibli was Shibli— (he) was not Junayd and Shibli," thus clearly placing him in another category different from the foregoing and among the foremost Muslim religious figures in the tradition, the Sufi masters such as Junayd Baghdadi and his disciple Shibli. Nadvi explains this hierarchy that corresponds in many ways to the categorization drawn from the Qur'an and the Hadith in our foregoing passages through an analogy. He compares the Muslim nationhood to a global empire, a state in which there is a hierarchy of those who serve the state in their own capacities. These ministers, lords, and the soldiers are not equal in their rank. If the soldiers are responsible for the protection of the state from incursions of the enemies, the ministers and the lords are chiefly responsible for the policy, governance, and the administration of the state, and are thus of a higher rank than the soldiers.

From Nadvi's perspective, the Muslim *mutakallimīn*—the intellectuals, the scholars, the critics (may we add poets too?) [xxix] — are like those soldiers whose primary capacity is to directly engage with the external intellectual, scholarly, and cultural forces, and one can deduce from Nadvi's analogy that by virtue of their "peripheral" responsibility, these critics may be considered to be existing on the margins between the inside and the outside, patrolling those gray areas that lie between the inside and the outside. But Nadvi also points out that these Muslim intellectuals would not celebrate

this necessary inbetweenness, their intellectual pursuits, as forming the core of religion, as the highest point of engagement with religion.

Following the line of his teacher Syed Sulayman Nadvi, Syed Abul Hasan Nadvi says something about Iqbal similar to what Syed Sulayman had to say about Shibli by way of Shibli's inbetweenness. Abul Hasan Nadvi highly appreciates Iqbal's immense literary and cultural contribution through some theoretical terms, which include both the ethical and the aesthetic dimensions of his relationship with Iqbal, and which might serve us as possible standards to evaluate our contemporary evaluation of our cultural predecessors at a later stage as to why our contemporary critics are bent upon seeing a *hypocritical* ambivalence among these predecessors:

> There may be many reasons of appreciating Iqbal, and each person can state various reasons for his own appreciation. The very reason of one's appreciation (of a work of art) is that he starts finding that work of art as a representation of his own dreams and as the language of his own heart. Man is too self-seeing and self-admiring. To a large extent, the centre and the orbit of his love, his hate, his desires, and his interests is his own self. That is why everything appeals to him which may go along with his desires and harmonizes with his feelings. I do not dissociate myself too from this principle. Generally I have appreciated Iqbal's work because it comes up to the standards of my own taste, and represents my own emotions and feelings. It is not only aligned with my own thought and religious faith but often also becomes a voice of my consciousness and feelings. [xxx]

One may note that this appreciation of Iqbal is not spelled out only in ethical or religious terms (in a sense in which both these terms have been at times seen to stand in a somewhat oppositional relation to the aesthetic and the poetic or the artistic). Nadvi sees his relationship with Iqbal's art in terms of its "high-seeing, love, and faith," its containing of "a religious principle, invitation, and message," its critique of Western materialism, its concern for Islam's gone-by glory, its opposition to a narrow-minded nationalism, and its humanitarian and Islamic call. [xxxi] These may indeed look to be exclusively ideological and theological reasons, but when coupled with his expression of the "overflow of enthusiasm," the awakening of "subtle sentiments," and "the waves of feelings and states"— the experience of reading Iqbal — Abul Hasan Nadvi's terms of enagagement with Iqbal look to be much aligned with Iqbal's own theory of art:

شاعر کی نوا ہو کہ مغنی کا نفس ہو جس سے چمن افسردہ ہو وہ باد سحر کیا

Whether it be the voice of the poet, or the breath of the singer,
What good is that morning breeze that freezes the garden?

This "enthusiastic" appreciation of Iqbal in Abul Hasan Nadvi is, however, qualified by an acknowledgement of Iqbal's thresholdian limitations as an intellectual:

> This explanation here is also necessary that I do not consider Iqbal as an innocent or a holy being, nor as a religious leader or a *mujtahid*. Neither have I gone to the extreme limits in praising his work or drawing (religious) authority from it, as is the case with some of his extreme admirers. I think that in the matters concerning the codes of the *shariah*, the inside-outside homogeniety, and the harmoniousness of words and actions, Hakim Sanai, Attar, and Arif-e- Rumi far surpass him. In Iqbal we also find such interpretations of the Islamic principles and philosophy which are very difficult to agree with. Unlike some enthusiastic youth, I am also not of the opinion that no one understood Islam better than him and no one reached its knowledge and reality except him. Rather the truth is this that in every phase of my life, I held the opinion that he remained a sincere student of Islamic studies and continuously kept benefitting from his preeminent contemporaries.
>
> In his unique personality there are also some such weak aspects which are not aligned with the greatness of his knowledge, his art and message, and which he did not find a chance to eliminate. Nevertheless, I do think that Iqbal is that poet whom Allah has made to articulate some precepts and truths according to (the needs of) the time which were not spoken by any other contemporary poet or thinker. In my opinion, his firm conviction on the permanence of the Muhammadan message, on the stability and the leadership capacity of the Muslim *ummah*, and on the futility of the contemporary theories and philosophy has brought clarity and maturity to his thought, and has constructed his self. In this matter he has even surpassed those scholars, especially the religious ones, who are neither aware of the reality of Westernization nor are deeply acquainted with its real interests and purposes and its history.[xxxii]

One could perhaps say that like the *Ashab Al-A'raf*, or the *muqtasidīn*, a Muslim intellectual, in his capacity as an intellectual, looks at both the sides, always longing to belong to the "insiders"— to the *sābiqūn al-sābiqūn*, the *muhaddithin*, the *fuqaha*, and the Sufis who are "the ministers and the lords" of the state — and looking at the "outsiders" — the intellectuals, the scholars, and the critics whose critical categories and patterns of thought differ in some fundamental ways from the categories drawn from the Islamic tradition — with a look of *'ibrah*—a gaze of critical scrutiny and admonition.

گرچہ دارد شیوہ ہاے رنگ رنگ
من بجز عبرت نگیرم از فرنگ
ای بہ تقلیدش اسیر آزاد شو
دامن قرآن بگیر آزاد شو

Although it has traits of myriad colours,
I got nothing but warning from the West.
O you, who are caught in its following, be free —
Hold on to the Qur'an, and be free. [xxxiii]

Endnotes

i Sheikh Muhammad Ikram's *Yadgar-e-Shibli* (Lahore: Idārah Saqāfat-e-Islāmiyyah, 1994, Second Edition), first published in 1971, some 28 years after the first publication of Syed Sulayman Nadvi's *Hayat-e-Shibli* (1943) (Lahore: Maktaba-e-Alia, n. d.), is considered to be a counter-biography in response to Nadvi. In the preface to his book, Ikram himself notes the "essential" difference between his own perspective with Nadvi on Shibli's point of view on the Aligarh Movement. Ikram considers this difference as "both deep and wide" (6).

ii Nadvi, *Hayat-e-Shibli*, 213-214. Translation mine.

iii Ibid. , 215.

iv See Nasir Abbas Nayyar, *Urdū Adab kī Tashkīl-e-Jadīd*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2016), 321-353.

v Nadvi, *Hayat-e-Shibli*, 216-217.

vi Shibli Nomani, *Safar Nama Rum-o-Misr-o-Sham*, (Azam Garh: Dar al-Musannifin, 1940), 13. Quoted here from Ahmed Hashmi, "Shibli ka Aik Mukhalif: Angraiz," in *Allama Shibli Nomani, Sadi ke Aieenay Mein*, ed. Dr. Mahjabeen Zaidi, (Karachi: Qirtas, 2014), 39.

vii Ibid. , 40.

viii Ansari, *Shibli Makatib ki Roshni Mein*, 77.

ix Ibid. , 74.

x Ibid. , 76.

xi Ansari, *Shibli Makatib ki Roshni Mein*, 77.

[xii] Dr. Javed Iqbal, *Zinda Rud, Allama Iqbal ki Mukammil Sawanih Hayat*, (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2004, Third edition, 2012), 102-103. English Translation from Urdu is mine.

[xiii] Nayyar writes, "English was a "pariah" just like his step-mother, which was forced upon by the rulers like his father. Did Shibli have the same love for his tradition, his mother-tongue, which he had for his real mother? Did Shibli also think that English, like the step-mother, had tried to replace the mother-tongue and culture? . . . The dilemma of Shibli's personal life was that despite disliking his step-mother, he was forced to accept the fact that she was his father's legitimate wife, and his mother. The collision of Shibli's personal feelings was with that 'reality' which was in a 'position' to prove itself as legitimate and rightly-placed in the social and cultural world. That is why the ambivalent attitude of Shibli was not just a personal, private matter — it was a cultural matter." *Urdū Adab kī Tashkīl-e-Jadīd*, 322-323 (English translation from Urdu is mine).

[xiv] Intizar Husain, "Alternative voices ," in *Dawn*, July 18, 2015. Accessed on July 18, 2015, at: http://www.dawn.com/news/1194874/literary-notes-alternative-voices

[xv] "As far as theory is concerned," Nayyar says in one of interviews, "Urdu has not produced any critic of global repute . . . In the absence of theoretical underpinning, Urdu critics have confined themselves to writing practical criticism." See www.dawn.com/news/. Interview with Humair Ishtiaq, February 14, 2016.

[xvi] Nayyar, *Urdū Adab kī Tashkīl-e-Jadīd*, 321. Translation mine.

[xvii] See Jacque Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, (NY: Routledge, 1978. Third Indian reprint 2007), 10.

[xviii] Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," in *Language of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*, eds. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 61.

[xix] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, quoted here from Jacque Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 97.

[xx] Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 191-192.

[xxi] Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," in *Language of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*, eds. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 66.

[xxii] Muhammad Iqbal, "Javid Nameh" in *Kulliyat-e-Iqbal* (Farsi), (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1990), 538. English translation is mine.

[xxiii] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php.

[xxiv] Ibid.

[xxv] Ibid.

[xxvi] Abdullah Yousuf Ali, *Translation and Commentary, The Glorious Qur'an*, (American Trust Publications, 1977), n. 3920, 1162.

[xxvii] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, http://www.qtafsir.com/index.php.

[xxviii] Ibid.

[xxix] Nayyar finds it problematic that Shibli treats Rumi "more" as a *mutakallim* than as a poet. This may be because of Shibli's own intellectual predilections, as Nayyar tries to elaborate. But to accuse Shibli of attempting to "repress" the poetic against the foregrounding of the intellectual seems out of place. I think Nayyar gets it wrong when he rephrases Shibli's own words that Nayyar himself quotes ["no one ever thought that it (the *Mathnawi*) *was not only* the best book of *tasawwuf but also* the best book of (Islamic) principles (*'aqaid*) and scholastic theology (*'ilm al-kalam*)" (my italics)] into Shibli's "*declaring* the *Mathnawi more* as a book of (Islamic) principles (*'aqaid*) and scholastic theology (*'ilm al-kalam*)" (*Urdu Adab ki Tashkil-e-Jadid*, 347, my italics). I think that in the wake of Edward Said and the ensuing postcolonial critical discourse the political and cultural significance (why should one keep the "theological" out of it?) of literature has been much established, as Nayyar himself uses Ghalib and Rumi for

their political import (as pointed out earlier) in the name of "poetic imagination". I may agree with Nayyar in saying that the *modus operandi* of the poetic imagination may allow it to bring some mysterious communicative powers into the argumentative play that may not always be in the reach of the "demystifying" critics to fathom. Nevertheless, the poem does remain an "argument" after all – a "meter-making argument," in the words of Emerson, if you like.

[xxx] Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, *Nuqush-e-Iqbal*, (Karachi: Majlis Nashriyat-e-Islam, n. d.), 31-32. English translation from Urdu is mine.

[xxxi] Ibid. , 32.

[xxxii] Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, *Nuqush-e-Iqbal*, 39-40. Translation mine.

[xxxiii] Iqbal, "Javid Nameh" in *Kulliyat-e-Iqbal* (Farsi), 545. English translation mine.

Abstract

The history of the cultural interaction of the Muslims of the subcontinent with English (in what this word signifies as a language, and as a synecdoche of Western culture and modernity) could be divided into three phases which are overlapping, but still identifiably distinct in their attitudes and outlook. Each of these phases contains its representative cultural figures, which can possibly become a measure of our terms of engagement with English as a culture. The earliest phase of this history may roughly correspond with the formal fall of the Muslim rule (1857) in India, the formation of the Aligarh College, and the emergence of such cultural figures like Syed Ahmad Khan, Shibli Nomani, Akbar Allahabadi, Hali, Nazir Ahmad, and Iqbal. The present study rebuts such theses that see Shibli's relationship with English, and through him our larger cultural relationship with English in its earliest phase while treating him as a culturally representative figure, as that of hypocritical ambivalence (*tazabzub*). This study also includes Iqbal, another towering cultural figure that emerged from the first waves of the Orient-Occident cultural hybridity in the subcontinent, to argue that to consider the cultural hybridity of such figures like Shibli and Iqbal as hypocritically and self-contradictorily ambivalent (*mutazabzab*) would be to force Greco-Christian and Greco-Jewish (or Western) critical categories upon a cultural situation that requires critical categories drawn from the Islamic tradition for a proper understanding of its hybridity or its "being-in-the-middle".

Keyword: Pakistani Culture, Shibli Nomani, Allama Iqbal, Arnold, Western culture.