Iqbal's and Hassan's Complaints: A Study of "To the Holy Prophet" and "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal"

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Abstract: Muhammad Iqbal and Mohd. Kamal Hassan respectively wrote "To the Holy Prophet" and "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal" in the 1930s and in the 2000s – two extremely challenging times, as in the former most Muslim-majority countries were under European colonial rule and in the latter, Western global powers wove an all-pervasive web of domination and exploitation of them. They focus on the internal weaknesses of subjugated Muslims and lament that, since the attitude of many of them is characterized by inaction and reliance on others, domination by foreign powers became an inevitable corollary. A culture of self-indulgence, stagnation, and complacency precipitated their decline and facilitated their exploitation by powerful outside interests. In their pursuit to understand the reasons for Western domination over Muslim societies, they studied the "moral paralysis" of colonized Muslims in order to reform them. Accordingly, their analysis of the subordinate position of Muslim peoples and countries can clearly be viewed through the lens of Bennabi's notion of "colonizability," as Iqbal's and Hassan's complaints in the poems mostly involve exposing several of their weaknesses that prevented them from playing their actual role, and hindered them from realising their potential, in the world.

Keywords: Muhammad Iqbal; Kamal Hassan; colonizability; Roman Empire; Muslim Spain; cultural imperialism; globalization; hedonism

Introduction

Pakistan's national poet Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) and the Malaysian writer Mohd. Kamal Hassan (1942-) are literary figures belonging to two different cultural and temporal settings. While the former is widely known as a versatile literary scholar, philosopher and political thinker whose works have received the attention of a much broader audience that transcends the boundaries of South Asia, the latter's renown as a litterateur beyond the borders of his country,

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Malaysia, has not reached a similar peak. Nevertheless, Hassan is one of Malaysia's few distinguished professors and is highly respected in the country as an outstanding academic, academic administrator and an institution builder. He is renowned as a scholar of both Islamic and Western sciences, an extremely articulate non-native English speaker and a great lover of art and artistic production. In addition to academic writing, he has produced creative work (mainly poetry) which deserves to be appreciated in the context of the current problems facing the world, but has not yet received apposite critical attention. This article is perhaps the first serious academic work that discusses Hassan's writing.

Similarities between Iqbal and Hassan on a surface level may not appear very obvious or particularly significant. In academic discussion, these two names are not known to have triggered thus far a handy analogy; and, hence making comparisons between their lives and literature may seem far-fetched to many. However, a closer look shows that it is less so and identifies noticeable commonalities between their educational upbringing and work.

Both Iqbal and Hassan came from comparable family backgrounds. A tailor by profession, Iqbal's father Nur Muhammad (d. 1930) was an autodidact, had no formal training and was "a pious individual with a mystic bent"[2] while Hassan's father Hj. Hassan b. Hj. Ismail (c.1926-96) had a peasant family origin and was well-versed in *tasawwuf* or Islamic mysticism. Both fathers received training in Islamic religious sciences – informal in the case of the former and formal, in the case of the latter. They had immense thirst for knowledge and were endowed with the brilliance of mind, which greatly influenced their sons under discussion in this paper. Both sons inherited, to borrow Hassan's words, "religious orientation and interest in Islamic thought"[3] from their fathers. While Nur Muhammad sought company of scholars for the express purpose of religious learning and the intrinsic satisfaction it brings and was known as "an unlettered philosopher,"[4] Hj. Hassan b. Hj. Ismail was immersed in masjid-based traditional Islamic education.

Early education of both Iqbal and Hassan was influenced by their fathers as well as by the presence of British colonialism in their respective lands. Iqbal studied English literature and

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[2] Mustansir Mir, *Iqbal* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 1.
[3] Mohd. Kamal Hassan, personal communication, 2019.
[4] Mir, *Iqbal*, 1.

other Western sciences at Lahore's Government College (now Government College University) and Hassan, at Sultan Ismail College, an English school in Kota Bharu. After gaining exposure to Islamic and Western disciplines in their home countries, both went to the West for further education. In September 1905 at the age of 28, encouraged by "his philosophy professor at Government College in Lahore, the well-connected and influential Islamicist Thomas W Arnold [1864-1930],"[5] Iqbal went to Europe for higher learning in Britain and Germany and returned to Lahore in July 1908 "with renewed ideas and changed perceptions."[6] In a similar move, on the advice of his educator at the University of Malaya, Ismail I. Nawwab (d. 2012),[7] Hassan went to the USA in 1968 at 26 years old and studied at Columbia University in New York City. He came back to Malaysia in December 1975 with increased understanding of both Islam and the West and with a deeper consciousness of Muslim identity. Thus, on the educational plane, like Iqbal, Hassan has had exposure to Western education in addition to knowledge of Islam and its main teachings.

Interestingly, Iqbal, Hassan, and their mentors taught at tertiary education institutions in both the East and the West. Arnold taught at Aligarh College (now Aligarh Muslim University) and Lahore's Government College in British India and then as Professor of Arabic at the School of Oriental Studies (now the School of Oriental and African Studies), the University of London. Before going to Europe Iqbal taught history, philosophy, and economics at Oriental College and English literature at Government College in Lahore. During his stay in Britain, Iqbal substituted Arnold as Professor of Arabic at the University of London for six months when the latter was on leave. Likewise, Hassan's mentor Nawwab studied and taught Arabic literature at the University of Edinburgh before moving to Malaysia to teach at the University of Malaya. Hassan spent most of his academic career teaching at universities in Malaysia and, from 1997 to 1999, was a Visiting Professor at the Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

Another striking similarity between Iqbal and Hassan lies in their visits to Spain, which inspired both to compose poetry. Iqbal travelled to Europe for the third Round Table Conference

[5] G. S. Sahota, "Uncanny affinities: a translation of Iqbal's preface to Payam-e Mashriq," *Postcolonial Studies*, 15/4 (2012): 437-452, 439.
[6] Zamir Akhtar Khan, "Iqbal and Quaid's Vision of Pakistan," *The Dialogue*, 5/2 (2010): 136-64, 140.
[7] He is the father of the celebrated Saudi Saudi Arabian Anglophone poet Nimah Ismail Nawwab.

that took place in London from 17 November to 24 December 1932 and on the same trip he visited Spain in January 1933 when he was 56 and wrote his poem "Masjid-e Qurtaba."[8] Hassan visited the country in 2002 at 60 and partly wrote "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal" (2002) – "inspired by the grandeur as well as the tragedy of Alhambra"[9] – while he was there and later that year finished writing the poem after coming back to Malaysia. I will discuss Iqbal's and Hassan's visits to Spain in more detail later in this paper.

While "Masjid-e Qurtaba' and "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal' share the same spatial genesis of production, perhaps the most salient similarities between Iqbal's and Hassan's work in terms of thematic focus and convergence lie in Iqbal's "To the Holy Prophet" (1936) and Hassan's "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal," which the main discussion in this article will explain. Both poems bear the impress of collective predicaments of Muslim communities of their respective times and dissect the reasons why they lost to the Western colonial matrix of power and were marginal to the West in political, economic and cultural terms. This research is mainly devoted to a comparative study of these two poems that provide windows through which readers can view the state of the world and the condition of Muslim societies in the two different spatiotemporal locations of Iqbal and Hassan.

Iqbal and Hassan seek to identify the reasons for many of their coreligionists' political subjugation, military victimhood, economic impoverishment and moral and cultural decadence in the two different periods of colonial condition and neo-colonial globalized reality of the 1930s and the 2000s, respectively. Therefore, a contextual discussion of these two trying periods for many Muslims and a brief historical overview of them are perhaps worth considering, as this will help better understand the two poems and appreciate the circumstances that provoked sentiments and ideas that Iqbal and Hassan articulated in their poems.

The Muslim world[10] in the 1930s and the 2000s

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[8] Amina Yaqin, "La convivencia, la mezquita and al-Andalus: An Iqbalian vision," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 52/2 (2016): 136-52, 142.

[9] Hassan, personal communication, 2019.

[10] I am aware of Cemil Aydin's argument that the "idea of the Muslim world" is imaginary and "a function of the civilizational and geopolitical narratives concocted in encounters of Muslim societies with European empires" (*The Idea of the Muslim World*, London: Harvard University Press, 2017, 5). Muslim societies are not a monolithic entity and are diverse in their backgrounds, religious beliefs, cultural practices, and traditions. In this paper, however, I

In the 1930s when Iqbal composed "To the Holy Prophet," most Muslim societies including his own were under European colonial control; and Muslims in British India joined the fight for independence from colonial rule, but with the looming possibility of political power being handed over from the British to the Hindu majority that would perpetuate their marginalization and exclusion further. The Italian colonial presence in Libya took a bloody turn for the worse when, on 16 September 1931, the occupation forces "in a concentration camp outside of Benghazi … executed [by hanging] the octogenarian Omar Muk[h]tar, who was the last rebel Sanussi sheik … still fighting the colonial government."[11] The situation was further aggravated with the mounting of a repressive campaign of unusual ruthlessness in 1932 "hypocritically named 'the pacification of Cyrenaica [eastern part of present-day Libya],' which was nothing more than a deliberate and systematic act of genocide."[12] It was "pursued with self-consciously Fascist rigour," as "[o]n 24 January 1932 General Badoglio announced that the rebellion in Cyrenaica had been defeated … [and at least] a total of 6,484 rebels had been killed and 76,815 inhabitants interned, almost exactly half the total population of Cyrenaica"[13] at that time.

France invaded and colonized Algeria in 1830 not only to dominate the country politically and exploit it economically, but also to eliminate its language and to destroy its "cultural and social fabric … through imperial siege"[14] to the extent of converting masjids into churches and mercilessly pacifying the local population.[15] It reached its climax in the 1930s with the 1930 centenary celebrations of Algeria and the 1931 Colonial Exhibition of Paris. Many

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use the term 'Muslim world' or 'Muslim community' somewhat narrowly – with full understanding that Muslims are certainly not a homogeneous group – to refer to those who suffered European colonialism and neo-colonial domination in the spatiotemporal locations with which Iqbal and Hassan are associated.

[11] Frederick H. Dotolo, "A long small war: Italian counterrevolutionary warfare in Libya, 1911 to 1932," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 26/1 (2015): 158-80, 158.

[12] Mohamed Aden, "Italy: Cultural Identity and Spatial Opportunism from a Postcolonial Perspective" in Beverly Allen and Mary Russo (eds.), *Revisioning Italy: National Identity and Global Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 101-15, 104.

[13] John Gooch, "Re-conquest and Suppression: Fascist Italy's pacification of Libya and Ethiopia, 1922–39," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 28/6 (2005): 1005-1032, 1006 & 1021.

[14] Katherine Eve Hammond, "Body and Homeland: Exploring the Art Practices of Zineb Sedira and Mona Hatoum" (Doctoral dissertation, Ohio University, 2010), 26.

[15] Pheroze Unwalla, "Colonialism and Mandates" in Andrea L. Stanton (ed.), *Cultural Sociology of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa: An Encyclopedia* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 138-41), p. 140. French colonialism in Algeria went through "a number of phases before coming to a dramatic end point with Algerian independence in 1962" (Fiona Barclay, Charlotte Ann Chopin, and Martin Evans, "Introduction: Settler Colonialism and French Algeria," *Settler Colonial Studies*, 8/2 [2018]: 115-130, 117). The question of the cultural identity of the Algerians continued to plague them far beyond their liberation from manifest colonialism.

other Muslim-majority countries in Asia and Africa in the 1930s were also lying crushed and writhing under various European colonial powers.

Hassan visited Spain a year after the tragedy of 9/11 in New York City in 2001 that heralded a dramatic transformation of world politics with catastrophic consequences for many Muslims during the early years of the current century. Stereotypical representation of Muslims and the submissive acquiescence of many of them to Western cultural values and ideological caricatures reached a sickening height in the post-9/11 era. Under the pretext of the dubious discourse of "war on terror' that emerged in its wake and the way it manifested itself, the Muslim world was targeted by the West with neo-colonial desires and impetus. Within a month of the incident of 9/11, a US-led coalition of mainly Western military forces started bombing Afghanistan and then invaded the country on 7 October 2001, blatantly violating all international laws and conventions relating to war. By July 2002 when Hassan finished writing "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal," the planning stages of, and a vicious campaign to justify, the invasion and occupation of another Muslim country, Iraq, on 20 March 2003 was underway. At the peril of mainly Muslims, the war on terror discourse and global security politics have been used "to realise an aggressive foreign policy that predates the attacks on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 and has allowed a number of states with poor human rights records to legitimise their actions by recasting extant conflicts as part of this performance."[16]

Farish A. Noor, a political scientist and commentator, corroborates and states that the 9/11 narrative has been used by "governments both in the West and the Muslim world in their own campaigns against domestic oppositional movements."[17] It has been appropriated to justify human rights abuses, stifle democracy, suppress opposition voices, increase repression and legitimize restrictive laws and practices that encroach on civil liberties and citizenship rights. What is more, "the War on Terror has been used in the US, UK, and [other Western countries] as a way of fighting multiculturalism."[18] Countries like China, India, Israel and Russia have used the war on terror rhetoric to legitimate and escalate oppression the target of which is the Muslim

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[16] Jenny Hughes, "Theatre, Performance and the 'War on Terror': Ethical and Political Questions arising from British Theatrical Responses to War and Terrorism," *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 17/2 (2007): 149-164, 149.
[17] Farish A. Noor, "Terror and the Politics of Containment: Analysing the Discourse of the 'War on Terror' and Its Workings of Power," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, 8/2 (2010): 47-65, 49.
[18] Marcus Schulzke, "Creating an Enemy: Social Militarization in the War on Terror," *Canadian Political Science Review*, 5/2 (2011): 157-164, 159.

population in these countries especially in East Turkistan, Kashmir and Gujarat, Palestine, and Chechnya, respectively. As a result, the worldwide brutal campaign against Muslim communities that was intensified by the 9/11 catastrophe has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of their members, as the dastardly pursuit of militaristic forays in some Muslim-majority countries seems unending. In Muslim minority Western countries such as the UK and USA, Muslims have been subjected to increased surveillance, over-policing and profiling and unnecessary interventions, as they "continue to be 'randomly selected' for extra security checks at airports; Muslims get pulled off planes because their looks or language make fellow passengers 'uncomfortable'; and with no just cause, mosques and religious groups are infiltrated by agents from law enforcement."[19] Thus, Muslims in the post-9/11 West are securitized and receive increased attention from the police and security services for wrong reasons. Their religion is ridiculed and associated with terrorism and they are expected "to share ownership of a terrorism problem,"[20] which together exacerbate their experiences of stigma and discrimination and diminish their sense of belonging and social identity.

Even though Iqbal and Hassan composed their poems in the backdrops of widespread tyranny and war against Muslim communities by the colonial and neo-colonial hegemonic powers, they do not single out the oppressors to blame for the oppression many Muslims experience. In other words, their poetic battle is not necessarily against unjust and exploitative systems only, but is charged with the purpose of awakening Muslims' religious feelings, latent talents and potentiality and their consciousness about the actual reasons for their oppression as well as preserving their religious identity. Their complaints in these two poems are mainly against those Muslims who have succumbed to colonial control and cultural subjugation as well as to a hedonistic view of happiness and pursuit of pleasure.

Iqbal's complaints and hope

In the last years of his life, Iqbal was suffering from an unsuspected and undetected disease. His health was failing from 1934 and the illness led to his death in 1938. On the night of 3 April 1936, Iqbal met the nineteenth-century educationalist and reformer Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-

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[19] Saleena Saleem, "Islamophobia: fuelling the cycle of violence," *RSIS Commentary*, 73/5 (April 2016). Retrieved on June 5, 2019 from https://dr.ntu.edu.sg/bitstream/handle/10220/40432/CO16073.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[20] Basia Spalek and Bob Lambert, "Muslim communities under surveillance," *Criminal Justice Matters*, 68/1 (2007): 12-13, 13.

98) in a dream when the latter suggested the former seek Prophet Muhammad's intervention for the cure of his disease. This inspired Iqbal to write the supplicatory poem "To the Holy Prophet." The poet-supplicant uses the poetic device of apostrophe, directly addressing the Prophet, saying: "I seek relief through you as did Busairi, / and pray that old days may come back again."[21] Iqbal's allusion to thirteenth-century Egyptian poet Sharafuddin al-Busairi (1212-96) shows that his poem is patterned after the tradition of the latter's *Al-kawakib al-durriyya fi madh khayr al-barriyya* (the resplendent stars in praise of the Best of Creation) which is commonly known as *Qaṣīda al-Burda* or the *Mantle Ode*.[22] Al-Busairi was paralysed and on the brink of mental breakdown when he wrote the supplicatory ode in the tradition of *madih nabawi* (poetry in praise of Prophet Muhammad). It is full of admiration and praise for the Prophet and involves deliverance of al-Busairi from ailment, conceivably owing to a miraculous intervention. As Badawi states: "It is claimed that after praying to God to heal him and reciting this poem several times, the poet fell asleep and saw, in a dream, the Prophet touching him and throwing his mantle over him, and when he awoke, he found he had recovered from his paralysis."[23] This paranormal intervention of the Prophet and al-Busairi's complete recovery from such a severe clinical condition as well as Sayyid Ahmad Khan's dream advice encouraged Iqbal to compose "To the Holy Prophet."

Nevertheless, as the poem progresses, it becomes apparent that Iqbal does not make his health complaints its focus. Minute observations of the condition of colonized Muslims dominate its content, as their plight seems to have perturbed him more than his illness. Therefore, expressing a profound love for the Prophet, Iqbal seeks his intervention to restore Muslims to their faith and, in Matthew J. Kuiper's words, "to a more authentically Islamic way of life as measured against the Qur'an and sunna."[24] He complains about his health only tangentially and, that toward the end of the poem. It is true that Iqbal wants the Prophet to help him regain his normal good health, but his main complaints in the poem predominantly concern the deplorable condition of Muslims and Muslim nations. Thus, before telling the Prophet about his poor

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[21] Muhammad Iqbal, "To the Holy Prophet" in Muhammad Suheyl Umar (ed.), *Collected Poetical Works* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2010), 354-56, 356.
[22] Amira El-Zein, "The Symbolical and Mystical Meanings in 'Abdullah of the Sea and Abdullah of the Land' (*The Arabian Nights*)," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, 19/4 (2008): 397-409, 404.
[23] Muhammad Mustafa Badawi, *Modern Arabic Literature and the West* (London: Ithaca Press, 1985), 45.
[24] Matthew J. Kuiper, *Da'wa and Other Religions: Indian Muslims and the Modern Resurgence of Global Islam Activism* (Oxford: Routledge, 2018), 63.

physical condition, Iqbal informs him about the plight of the Muslims and highlights the problems of the global Muslim community, which establishes the necessity of him having good health, as he has "a task greater than that of Farhad."[25]

Iqbal alludes to the classical love story of Shirin and Farhad the Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi (1141-1209) narrates in his epic poem *Khosrow and Shirin* (1180). Actually, *Khosrow and Shirin* is itself "a story from the Persian epic *Shahnama* (*Book of Kings*)" by the tenth-eleventh century poet Abul Qasim Firdawsi (940-1020) that has inspired innumerable literary works.[26] The epic love story of Khosrow and Shirin involves "a love triangle with Farhad, a stone cutter who falls in love with Shirin but kills himself when Khosrow sends a messenger to (falsely) tell him that Shirin is dead. Khosrow and Shirin marry but he is killed by an enemy while sleeping next to Shirin."[27]

As the story goes, the stonecutter and artisan master Farhad works for, and falls in love with, *banu-ye Arman* or the Queen of Armenia, Shirin, who is the beloved of *Shah-e Iran* or the King of Persia, Khosrow II Parviz (r. 590-628). Captivated by Farhad's valour and chivalry, Shirin reciprocates his love. Meanwhile, having lost all hope of winning back the love of Shirin, in order to dissuade Farhad, on advice, the Sassanid king assigns him the herculean, impossible task of carving a tunnel through the rock mountain of Behistun – situated about twenty miles east of the southern Iranian town of Kermanshah – in order for Farhad to prove his love for Shirin. Farhad is ready for even a harder task and promises "Shirin to level the venerable Mount Behistun"[28] if that is what it takes for him to attest to his love for her.

As the romantic aspect of the love affair is emphasized in the plot, before he starts carving a tunnel, Farhad engraves an image of Shirin on the mountain face to receive inspiration to move on by way of looking at it. As one version of the story goes, he "broke and excavated the mountain … [and each] piece of stone which Farhad broke from the mountain was so large

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[25] Iqbal, "To the Holy Prophet," 356.

[26] Boram Shin, "Inventing a national writer: The Soviet celebration of the 1948 Alisher Navoi Jubilee and the writing of Uzbek history," *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 14/2 (2017): 117-42, 130.

[27] Sara Saljoughi, "Seeing, Iranian Style: Women and Collective Vision in Abbas Kiarostami's Shirin," *Iranian Studies*, 45/4 (2012): 519-35, 521.

[28] Samande Siaband, "Mountains, My Home: An Analysis of the Kurdish Psychological Landscape," *The International Journal of Kurdish Studies*, 2/2 (1988): 7-12, 11.

that 10 men, nay even 100, could not lift up."[29] Tragically, as the plot takes a dramatic turn, Farhad was made to believe that Shirin was dead so he killed himself "using the tools that he had used to carve her very image into the rock."[30] Even though Khosrow was able to get rid of his love-rival, as mentioned before, he himself was later assassinated in bed with Shirin asleep next to him. As the plot is heightened to a more melodramatic dénouement, Shirin takes her own life over the dead body of her husband.

Iqbal alludes to the tragic love story of Shirin and Farhad and to the latter's profound passion for the former to demonstrate his burning desire and unending zeal for the betterment of the Muslim world and to indicate the enormity of his task of rectifying the colonial damage done to Muslims and their deplorable cultural and political conditions. As he states: "I am battling against the worshippers of darkness, replenish my lamp with oil."[31]

In "To the Holy Prophet," Iqbal does not lament too much that colonized Muslims occupied a marginal position – politically and otherwise – in the global order, and he worries less about their economic crisis. What perturbs him more is their internal weakness and their decline that stems from deviation from Islamic convictions and value priorities and wholesale mimicry of colonial mores and cultural norms. In order for them to overcome their inner limits, Iqbal wants them to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet as their remembrance of him is "the source of delight and rapture, and keeps the nation jealous of its honour even in poverty."[32] In other words, according to Iqbal, what is more important for Muslims is to be mindful of the teachings of the Prophet which will keep them dignified even if they are economically deprived. In his view, the lasting foundation of honour and esteem for Muslims is not necessarily dependent upon their economic status and is rather contingent upon their adherence to Islamic principles and practices.

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[29] Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *Eighteen Remarkable Things or Events of the Reign (593-628 AC) of Khusru Parviz (Chosroes II) of Persia. Asiatic Papers, Part IV* (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1929), 19-45, 30.

[30] Md. Muniruzzaman, "Transformation of intimacy and its impact in developing countries," *Life Sciences, Society and Policy*, 13/10 (2017): 1-19, 5.

[31] Iqbal, "To the Holy Prophet," 356.

[32] Ibid., 355.

Iqbal uses the metaphor of "a defunct musical instrument whose chords do not respond to the plectrum any longer"[33] to express a deep sense of grief over the negative state of moral degeneration, fragmentation, dissension and disunity of the contemporary Muslim world. Internal division among populations increased the vulnerability of Muslim countries to political domination, economic exploitation and cultural subordination. In the context of British India, "Iqbal suffered more on account of the factors, and factions which divided the Indian people than on account of the imperialistic yoke imposed on his countrymen."[34] What actually ailed him was that a section of the population, mainly the Westernized elite, embraced colonial culture explicitly and colonial rule implicitly, while there was a strong anticolonial resistance struggle – on both political and cultural fronts – mainly among the masses at grassroots level.

By the metaphor of "plectrum" Iqbal perhaps refers to the Qur'an or the body of Islamic teachings and values whose existence among Muslims does not necessarily benefit them, as, colonized and bedazzled by Western material modernity, they have lost the power of vision and the freedom and ability to choose the right course of action over the wrong. The true message of Islam was largely forgotten and colonized Muslims were profoundly influenced and hallucinated by the Western way of life, as they were immersed in consumerist habits. They were content and complacent with a torpid lifestyle to which they were accustomed and ill adjusted.

Iqbal sees a world under the dominance of evil forces and the powers of wrong epitomized by Bu Lahab and one where forces of good – exemplified by Mustafa, that is, Prophet Muhammad – are marginal or invisible. As he states: "I have wandered through lands, Arab and non-Arab, / Bu Lahab is everywhere, Mustafa nowhere."[35] The Irish poet W B Yeats describes a comparable world in his celebrated poem "The Second Coming" (1919), stating: "… everywhere / The ceremony of innocence is drowned; / The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity."[36] Yeats was troubled by "an image of impending chaos"

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Riffat Hassan, "The main philosophical idea in the writings of Muhammad Iqbal (1877 - 1938)," Durham theses, Durham University, 1968, 525.

[35] Iqbal, "To the Holy Prophet," 355.

[36] WB Yeats, "The Second Coming" (1919) in Norman Jeffares (ed.), *Yeats's Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 294.

and "a crisis of faith"[37] in post-WWI Europe. In a 1936 letter, Yeats regarded the poem as a piece that "foretold" what was "happening" in the 1930s.[38] Therefore, interestingly, there is a temporal symmetry between Yeats' "The Second Coming" and Iqbal's "To the Holy Prophet," as both poems portray the wrong and catastrophic turn that the world took in the 1930s. While Yeats was concerned with a terrible vision of modernity involving the colonial metropolitan powers in Europe, Iqbal was "with reviving the dead spirits of the Muslims in India and other parts of Asia under imperialist domination."[39] He noticed that Europe was gripped by imperialistic greed and its foil, the Muslim world, was characterized by lethargy and mental retardation and was passing through a period of cultural and intellectual stasis.

For the perpetuation of colonial rule in Muslim lands and for the disastrous weakening of their inner strength and social fabric, Iqbal's complaints against "[t]he so-called enlightened Muslim" are more vociferous, as he regards him as "a slave, son of a slave, son of a slave, who dare not think of freedom."[40] Few generations of colonial slavery and subjecthood seem to have removed from the psyche of the colonized intelligentsia the urge to fight for independence. According to Iqbal, the main reason for this lack of impetus among the Western-educated gentry is their distance from Islam, which is caused by the introduction of the so-called modern, compartmentalized education in Muslim countries which "drained him [Westernized Muslim] of love for religion."[41]

As Edward Said regards imperialism as "an educational movement,"[42] colonial schooling that is a handmaiden to the project of Western modernity and cultural dominance has replaced age-old indigenous education customs and hastened the deracination of educated Muslims from their religious and cultural roots. Modern colonial education has little connection with local religious and cultural ethos and increasingly Westernized those who received it. Meant mainly for the privileged classes and used as a civilizing agent, education imported from the metropole

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[37] Lynne Dunphy & Joy Longo, "Reflections on Postmodernism, Critical Social Theory, and Feminist Approaches: The Postmodern Mind," in Patricia L. Munhall (Ed.), *Nursing Research: A Qualitative Perspective*. Norwalk, CT: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 2007: 127-142, 129.
[38] Allan Wade, *The Letters of WB Yeats* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), 851.
[39] Mehnaz Zainab, "Eliot, Iqbal and the Significance of Religious Sensibility Today', *Pakistan Journal of American Studies*, 23/1&2 (2005): 11-36, 25.
[40] Iqbal, "To the Holy Prophet," 355.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994/1993), 269.

had little room for Islamic values and cultural traditions and consequently drove a wedge between them and the wider population. Coming under a new (Western) set of influences, Western educated Muslims reject their traditional faith and "went secular and sought to bifurcate life into a private sector called conscience which was the supposed home of religion and a public sector which they made over to secular activity."[43] Such Westernized Muslims maintain nominal or superficial attachment to Islam and are largely indifferent to Islamic teachings and traditions, as they regard the West as "as a model for intellectual and social transformation of Muslim communities."[44]

Iqbal's critique of this privileged and Westernized educated Muslims is echoed throughout the whole poem of "To the Holy Prophet." He makes a clear distinction between Muslims of the past – who did not "walk in adoration round the palaces of kings and nobles" for worldly favours – and these colonized educated Muslims who have lost the strength of character which characterized their predecessors. Bereft of self-esteem and confidence, they are ready to beg "bread of barley from the hands of the Franks."[45] Iqbal squarely blames the Western educated Muslim for all the misery of the population, stating:

> This hungry man bartered away his soul for a piece of bread and caused us great grief thereby.
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> He picks up grain from the ground like domestic birds and is unaware of the blue expanse of space.
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> The teacher, lacking intellectual equipment and insight, did not inform him of his real stature.
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> The fire of the Franks has melted him: this hell has totally transformed him.

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[43] Fazlur Rahman, "Islam: Legacy and Contemporary Challenge," *Islamic Studies*, 19/4 (1980): 235-46, 243.
[44] Riffat Hassan, "Feminism in Islam" in A. Sharma and K.K. Young (ed.), *Feminism and World Religions* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 248-78, 251.
[45] Iqbal, "To the Holy Prophet," 355.

> As his heart has died in his breast, he does not think of anything except food and sleep. For one piece of bread, he bears the sting of yes and no, for a day's meal he begs favours from a hundred persons.[46]

Taken by greed and venality and enchanted by European culture, the educated comprador class of native elites have sold their souls to the devil of materialism for worldly ambition and gratification and as exchange for short-lived material gains. They are in pursuit of wealth and status and use education for unworthy causes. In return for material benefits, they are ready to help establish the colonial hegemonic system and replicate Western models of education and cultural values in Muslim societies. This unquestioned submission to Western modernity brings humiliation for them and for those they dominate as the privileged class. Iqbal compares them to "domestic birds" or chickens and ducks around the house that pick their daily food off the ground or out of dirt. They are ready to live in disgrace for the sake of unworthy goals and behave in ways contrary to their religious-cultural belief and identity, as they are "unaware of the blue expanse of space"[47] and have forgotten that God's earth is wide (Qur'an, 4:97) and God provides for those who are conscious of Him (Qur'an, 65:2-3).

Iqbal regards true Muslims as "the cream of the whole world" and Hassan, as "*Khayru Ummatin*' (the best community). Description of true Muslims by Iqbal and Hassan resonates with how the Qur'an (3:110) identifies them. However, robbed of their identity and oblivious of their responsibilities toward humanity in the midst of the (neo-)colonial encounter, as Iqbal and Hassan lament, colonized and Westernized Muslims have become a humiliated people and are brought to their knees and led to the worst of all worlds. Iqbal regards the colonized space created by the Europeans as "hell" and Hassan does the neo-colonial condition as "the New World Disorder" – both expose "the cream of the whole world" and "*Khayru Ummatin*" to the worst forms of exploitation and confined them to the worst positions among global communities. This loss of identity and self-esteem has caused the Muslim community a mental or spiritual death. Deviating far away from the path of honour and rectitude (that is, Islam), such Muslims have debased themselves to animals and do "not think of anything except food and sleep"[48] and

[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.

worship "the pleasures of the world."[49] Iqbal and Hassan point to a desire among many Muslims for senseless indulgence in comforts and luxuries, and to their preoccupation with material goals and hedonistic pleasures. The poets believe that lavish consumerism and consumption craze may offer temporary comforts but eventually such indulgent habits weaken a community and predispose them to collective degradation.

As mentioned before, Iqbal's unmitigated anguish and desperation is not only because of colonial domination in Muslim lands but mainly because of the internal weaknesses of Muslim societies which rendered them backward in almost all spheres of life. This realization caused him great anxiety and distress, as he states: "I am like a half-burnt piece of wood in the desert, / the caravan has passed on, and I am still burning."[50] He uses the metaphor of the desolation of "desert" to describe the dreariness as well as moral and religious wilderness of the colonized Muslim social space. T S Eliot's use of the phrase "butt-ends of my days" in "The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock" (1915) suggests Prufrock's burning psychological suffering in a world of moral laxity, hypocrisy and increasing complexity. In "a half-burnt piece of wood," Iqbal appears to be a Prufrockian man. However, unlike Prufrock, Iqbal is not seized by a sense of despair and ends the poem with a note of hope.

Iqbal's optimistic view of change in the world is perhaps spurred by Qur'anic verses, such as 5:54 and 47:38, where God states that if the existing Muslims deviate from the principles of Islam and from the course of loyalty to God, He will bring forth another people who will put Him above all other loyalties and materialistic attractions of wealth and power. Interpreting the expression "whosoever from among you abandons his faith" in verse 5:54 of the Qur'an, Muhammad Asad states that it refers to those Muslims who place their "reliance on non-Muslims who are hostile to Islam" and take them for their "allies."[51] In "the caravan has passed on, and I am still burning," Iqbal's use of the word "caravan" symbolically refers to those Muslims who have capitulated to colonial subjugation and embraced Western domination in exchange for worldly favours at the expense of collective interests of their colonized compatriots. He dissociates himself from this group of self-seeking, rapacious hangers-on and hopes, "In this vast

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[49] Mohd. Kamal Hassan, "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal" in *Salam Kasih* (Kuala Lumpur: ITBM, 2017), 7-21, 8.
[50] Iqbal, "To the Holy Prophet," 356.
[51] Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1984), 226.

world perhaps another caravan one day appear."[52] He is optimistic of "another caravan" who will make changes in the world for the betterment of all humanity. Interestingly, in "Masjid-i Qurtubah" Iqbal characteristically provides a similar note of hope and optimism, saying:

> Flowing waters of the Guadalquivir, upon your bank
>
> Stands one who dreams of another time.
>
> A new world lies behind the curtain of Divine Decree;
>
> Its dawn is unveiled in my glance.[53]

Here expressions such as "dreams of another times" and "dawn is unveiled" suggest that Iqbal envisions a future world free from colonial violence and emasculation, economic injustice and destructive factors of past and present conditions. Like Iqbal, after complaining about the pitiable condition of Muslims under Western aggression, Hassan also ends his poem on a note of hope.

Hassan's complaints and hope

As in Iqbal's "To the Holy Prophet," there is a conscious employment of the trope of apostrophe in Hassan's "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal." In Iqbal's and Hassan's use of the literary device, there is triangular hierarchy with Iqbal addressing the Prophet and Hassan, in turn, appealing to the memory of Iqbal and seeking "to retrace [Iqbal's] noble steps and feel the vibrations of [his] ecstasy."[54] Iqbal had the honour of becoming "the first Muslim to worship in the mosque of Cordoba since its conversion into a cathedral after the Moors were expelled from Spain in 1492."[55] Hassan feels nostalgic to see "the *Musulman*[56] legacy of Alhambra, Cordoba and Sevilla'.[57] He celebrates the glory of earlier Muslims of Islamic Spain who left a rich cultural architectonic legacy – such as, Islamic polychromes in the stunning, silent red fortress of the

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[52] Iqbal, "To the Holy Prophet," 356.

[53] Qtd. in Yaseen Noorani, "The Lost Garden of Al-Andalus: Islamic Spain and the Poetic Inversion of Colonialism," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 31/2 (1999): 237-54, 237.

[54] Hassan, "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal," 7.

[55] Noorani, "The Lost Garden of Al-Andalus," 237.

[56] In the Malay Nusantara region of South East Asia, the term "Musulman" is rarely used in common parlance, as the word "Muslim' is more in currency. However, Hassan uses the former because it is most common in Iqbal's South Asia, as his choice of diction in this regard is influenced by the object of apostrophe in his poem.

[57] Hassan, "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal," 7.

Alhambra, Granada's other Nasrid[58] palaces and decorations and the gardens of Generalife[59] – which testifies the blaze of their past cultural-political influence and prosperity. By the "Alhambra, Cordoba and Sevilla," Hassan perhaps refers to three notable and historic cities of Córdoba, Seville, and Granada which are famous for "three major monuments: Córdoba Mosque, into which a cathedral had been inserted; Seville's Giralda—a minaret—a remnant of a destroyed mosque, which had been transformed into a Christian belfry; and Granada's Alhambra, which became the site of an exemplary Renaissance palace."[60] During the Muslim era in Spain, these and many other Islamic regions were flourishing and glowing with fame. In addition to the architectural beauty and splendours of Spanish cities of that time, the centre of knowledge and learning shifted from Baghdad to Granada that turned to be a city of erudition and civism as well as of writers and scientists.

The Muslim architectural repertoire in Spain excited Hassan's artistic mind and stirred up his spontaneous emotions, as, traditionally, the "Alhambra, the Nasrid palatial fortress complex of Granada, Spain, has often been represented in paintings, engravings, and literature as the site of a glorious zenith of al-Andalus and as the shining monument to the Islamic dynasties of medieval Iberia."[61] Visitors revel in viewing the palaces and gardens and marvel "at the many inscriptions, the tile and decorative work on the walls and ceilings, and the magnificent views of the surrounding city and countryside."[62] Iqbal and Hassan are among a host of Muslim writers who visited al-Andalus and praised and immortalized it through writing down their impressions about it and lamenting over the evidence of the loss of greatness. Iqbal's contemporary the Egyptian writer Ahmad Shawqi (1868-1932), exiled to Spain by the British during WWI, "wrote some of his best poetry on al-Andalus,"[63] and, more remarkably, in an 1886 poem, Iqbal's senior

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[58] Named after Abd-al-Rahman III (891-961) who was called al-Nasir li-Din Allah (defender of God's religion) and ruled Cordoba from an early age in 912 to 961.

[59] A distortion of the original term Jannat al-Arif which means the Garden of the Architect (or, variantly, the garden of those blessed with gnosis).

[60] Antonio Urquízar-Herrera, *Admiration and Awe: Morisco Buildings and Identity Negotiations in Early Modern Spanish Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 5.

[61] Oscar E. Vázquez, "Vision, Lamentation and Nineteenth-century Representations of the End of al-Andalus," *Art in Translation*, 9/1 (2017): 71-91, 71.

[62] April L. Najjaj, "The Alhambra in Comparative Perspective: Towards a Definition of Palace-Cities" (PhD Thesis, Boston, MA: Boston University, 2005), viii.

[63] Salma Khadra Jayyusi, "Foreword" in Salma Khadra Jayyusi (ed.), *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), xvii-xix, xviii.

contemporary the South Asian poet Altaf Husain Hali (1837-1914) expresses the same conflicting feelings of triumph and helplessness after visiting Muslim Spain.[64]

While feasting his "aging vision on the haunting grandeur of Alhambra, / and relish[ing] the matchless beauty of Moorish art" and as he was gliding "through the cold ruins, / searching for the secrets of the humiliating downfall of *al-Andalus*,"[65] Hassan is also in a state of sadness and introspection. This is because, although al-Andalus evokes exaltation and ecstasy mainly among Muslims, it is "also understood as a site of massacres, of expulsions, and of failed empires, and especially of loss."[66] That Muslim architectural and artistic glories in Spain elicited two extreme emotions of amazement and consternation in Hassan is representative of archetypal Muslim experience. As the Palestinian poet and literary scholar, Salma Khadra Jayyusi puts it: "It is said … that no Arab or Muslim has ever visited al-Andalus and viewed its great Islamic monuments without experiencing a mixture of pride and regret."[67]

As Iqbal dissects the reasons for subjection of Muslim communities to European colonial powers, Hassan does so with regard to Muslims' fateful defeat in the fifteenth-century history of their presence in Europe. Equally, as Iqbal does in a twentieth-century colonial context, Hassan attributes the downfall of Muslims in Spain – and by extension in other spatiotemporal locations – to their own faults and deep-seated inner weaknesses. He blames Muslims' "follies' and caving in to "diseases, / which brought down the mighty Roman Empire"[68] for their tragic end in Spain. Although wine is prohibited in Islam, rulers as well as people of Andalusia revelled in wine and indulged in sexual orgies which is reflected in contemporary literature, as Andalusian poets spoke "openly of their desires and sexuality."[69] For example, the Andalusian poet Wallada bint al-Mustakfi (994-1091), daughter of Cordoba's ruler Muhammad III (976-1025), "wrote poems about her affairs with men and women, and never married."[70] Even though such sexual excesses are tolerated in modern Western society, they are not permitted in Islam to which Hassan refers in his poem.

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[64] Yaqin, "La convivencia, la mezquita and al-Andalus," 136.
[65] Hassan, "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal," 7.
[66] Vázquez, ""Vision, Lamentation and Nineteenth-century Representations," 71.
[67] Jayyusi, "Foreword," xvii.
[68] Hassan, "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal," 8.
[69] Kamila Shamsie, "Librarians, rebels, property owners, slaves: Women in al-Andalus," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 52/2 (2016): 178-88, 184.
[70] Ibid., 183.

Hassan's allusion to the fall of the Roman Empire is important, as it helps understand Muslims' loss of Andalusia to Christian rulers as well as their loss of South Asia to European colonizers. Perhaps this is because the reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire are "applicable to other societies at other times,"[71] as moral laxity and other forms of perversion have been the most common reasons for the collapse of many world powers. As the legendary American film director, Anthony Mann considers, "The past is like a mirror; it reflects what actually happened, and in the reflexion of the fall of Rome are the same elements in what is happening today, the very things that are making our empires fall."[72] Equally, the omniscient narrator in Mann's film *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1964) voices the same truth, stating: "A great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself from within."[73] Accordingly, by referring to the fall of the Roman Empire, Hassan in fact points to the weaknesses of the latter-day rulers of Muslim Spain that heralded the cataclysmic end of Andalusia at the hands of Christian forces.

According to Robert Schwarz, the "late Roman Empire was the most glorious political and social organism devised by man."[74] It was efficient, well-maintained, developed, the mightiest and most marvellous thing as a whole, as it is widely considered the most powerful empire and successful polity ever. It was the most extensive governing unity and dominant power in the world of its time and the most continuously existing state structure in recorded history. However, it also has a bleak feature which contributed to its fall in the 470s. As Syed Sajjad Husain sums up:

> Republican as well as imperial Rome presented a rather puzzling spectacle of high sophistication in the manner in which the city organised its administration and codified its laws along with a taste for barbaric sports and moral laxity. The gladiatorial bouts in which the contestants were encouraged to slay each other, the fascination with which spectators watched girls being compelled to sport in pools in the Colisseum (Coliseum) to be devoured by crocodiles to the applause of crowds, and the system of forcing criminals to face pet lions in the same arena – all this betrays a strain of cruelty in the Roman

[71] Martin Winkler, "Edward Gibbon and *The Fall of the Roman Empire*," in Martin Winkler (ed.), *The Fall of the Roman Empire: Film and History* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 145-73, 145.
[72] Anthony Mann, "Empire Demolition" in Martin Winkler (ed.), *The Fall of the Roman Empire: Film and History* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 130-44, 131.
[73] Winkler, "Edward Gibbon," 164.
[74] Robert Schwarz, "The Lost World of Joseph Roth," *National Forum*, 45/3, 48.

> character which seems out of keeping with Rome's undoubted achievements in many fields.[75]

The cruelty and inhumanity of the Roman Empire, the moral weaknesses and failings of its rulers and their harshness and corruptibility were the main reasons for its decline. Perhaps, historian Christopher Dawson correctly encapsulates the reason why the Roman Empire fell, as commenting on Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776), he says: "In reality, the Roman empire fell not by war or political incapacity but because of a process of sociological decay which destroyed the foundations of its strength."[76] Likewise, Jonathan Theodore believes that the "ruin and fall" of the Roman Empire should be understood "not in military and political terms, but through the broader idea of inward collapse," as its rulers became "ruthless and ambitious warmongers, as inhumane and oppressive slave-owners, or as degenerates obsessed with spectacle and orgies."[77] Even though the barbarian attacks and invasions culminated its decline and eventual fall, its key reasons were "the weakening of Roman institutions and the ascent to the imperial throne by a series of mentally unstable and megalomaniac princes, who were incapable of, or uninterested in, their governing responsibilities."[78]

Like the great days of the Roman Empire, Muslim rule in Spain had a glorious history. Spain under Muslim rule thrived in many aspects of civil and administrative life as well as in the promotion and preservation of art, literature and learning, including scientific inquiry and technological innovation. However, toward the end, rulers succumbed to ethical crimes and misdemeanours as well as internal disunity and discord, which Christian rulers appropriated to invade, occupy and eventually exterminate them and end centuries-long Muslim rule and intellectual tradition.

As Iqbal did not dwell too much on describing the colonial criminality of the Europeans while describing the suffering of Muslims of his time, Hassan is relatively less concerned with

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[75] Syed Sajjad Husain, *A Young Muslim's Guide to Religions in the World*, ed. Md. Mahmudul Hasan (Dhaka: BIIT Publications, 2019), 194.

[76] Qtd. in Winkler, "Edward Gibbon," 161.

[77] Jonathan Theodore, *The Modern Cultural Myth of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 123.

[78] Elenora Cavallini, "Was Commodus Really That Bad?" in Martin Winkler (ed.), *The Fall of the Roman Empire: Film and History* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 102-16, 102.

the brutality and genocidal propensity of the Catholic rulers, especially the Castilian queen Isabella I (1451-1504) and her husband Ferdinand II of Aragon (1452-1516). He rather reflects upon the root causes of the fall of Muslims in Spain and provides a catalogue of their follies such as depraved sexuality, self-indulgence and lack of self-control.

It is true that the treachery of Isabella and Ferdinand and their Granada campaigns (1482-92) completed the destruction of Andalusia, which is euphemistically termed Reconquista. However, it is also true that the internal weaknesses of Muslims in Spain – accumulated over a long period and combined to undermine their unity and confidence from within and without – facilitated the Catholic triumphalism. As Mohammed Abdelwahab Sefraoui summarizes it:

> Along its eight centuries of existence, Andalusia was exposed to a set of internal and external factors of weakness that infiltrated into the body of the Andalusian state making it an easy prey to the Christian neighboring kingdom. Unlike the Christian kingdoms that united under one banner during the 15th century, the frequent betrayals and conspiracies of the Andalusian rulers, the shameful and disgraceful alliances with the Christians against each other, as well as the repeated campaigns of the Christian troops against the Muslim strongholds were the most prominent factors behind the downfall of Andalusia.[79]

With the fall of Granada – the last fortress of Muslims in Andalusia – and the loss of Muslim Spain to Catholic rulers in 1492, Spanish Muslims faced forced conversions (Christianization), summary expulsions and total annihilations in addition to other forms of brutal oppression. As the process of the fall of the Roman Empire "spread over three hundred years,"[80] even though Islamic Spain fell in 1492, the "beginning of the end of the Umayyad caliphate of Cordoba, and its disintegration into the Party-kingdoms" started much earlier, in 1009 that heralded the beginning of the *Taifa* period.[81] The strife and in-fighting for power, including "a crisis of racial animosity between Arabs/Andalusi Berbers and African Berbers … a crisis of national unity," gripped Spanish Muslims long before 1492 and continued to progressively weaken the fabric of the state from within on a cyclical basis, which eventually disintegrated al-Andalus into thirty six

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[79] Mohammed Abdelwahab Sefraoui, "The End of the Andalusian State: A New Reading in the Causes and the Consequences" (PhD Thesis, University of Abou Bekr Belkaid, 2016), 35. PhD Thesis.
[80] Winkler, "Edward Gibbon," 57.
[81] Peter C. Scales, *The Fall of the Caliphate of Córdoba: Berbers and Andalusis in Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), xi.

party kingdoms by 1031.[82] In addition to insatiable greed for power and domination, party rivalry, disunity, factional schism, political unrest, civil disturbance – encapsulated by the Qur'anic term of *fitna* by contemporary historians – and ethnic/racial conflict, craving for luxury, moral laxity and depravity, and disregard for religious and ethical boundaries also played their part in the fall of Muslim Spain.

Devotional mottos like "La-Ghaliba Illa Allah (There is no vanquisher except Allah),"[83] which testify Muslims' submission and loyalty to God alone were at the foundation of al-Andalusia. Hassan, understandably, quotes the phrase *la ghaliba illa Allah* "from its mantra-like repetition thousands of times on the walls of the Alhambra in Granada."[84] In course of time, such expressions lost their meanings and rulers swerved away from Islamic principles of modesty and simplicity. They became immerse in the lure of senseless enjoyment of hedonistic pleasures and other forms of sensual self-indulgence and moral turpitude. As Iqbal's "the so-called enlightened Muslim" shifted their loyalty from God to European colonial masters, Hassan's decadent Spanish Muslims "traded their souls for gold, glory, women and wine."[85] What is more, as indulgent colonized Muslims of Iqbal's time suffered humiliation and disgrace at the hands of the Europeans, Hassan's divided and depraved Muslims of Spain "end[ed] like stray donkeys, / kicked around by the boots of Ferdinand and Isabella."[86] Thus, both Iqbal and Hassan reach the same conclusion that when Muslims of a particular geopolitical space are internally divided and become self-indulgent and their lifestyle is characterized by luxury, extravagance and dissipation, they will inevitably face oppression and humiliation.

After discussing the humiliating defeat of Muslims in Spain and intrusive images of this past stressful events, Hassan provides a flash forward and brings readers to the increasingly globalized, turbulent world of the early 21st century. Imaginatively informing Iqbal about the replacement of European colonization with globalization, Hassan tells readers that the neo-colonizers have sugar-coated their exploitative and parasitic purposes in the postmodern/postcolonial world of global capitalism and economic-political entanglements.

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[82] Ibid., 1.
[83] Hassan, "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal," 8.
[84] David Sander, "No Riddle but Time: Historical Consciousness in Two Islamicate Films," *Journal of Religion & Film*, 24/1 (2020): 1-30, 9. Available at: https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol24/iss1/59
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.

Through the endless parade of fast-food franchises of McDonalds, KFCs, Burger King, Coca Colas and many others and through retail merchandise outlets of other multinational corporations, as a borderless phenomenon, globalization has penetrated through "the Iron Curtain, the Bamboo curtain, the Sahara and the tropical jungles."[87] That is to say, the ever-spreading tentacles of globalization have reached every corner of the world, caused various degrees of social disruption and become a threat to local cultural traditions; and it has now been unmasked as a vicious form of covert oppression and economic-cultural imperialism.

During the colonial period of Iqbal, the local Western-educated elite acted as intermediaries of the colonizers and consciously colluded with their interests in exchange for short-term, petty material benefits. Similarly, in the globalized era of the twenty-first century, there is a class of people who comply with the neo-colonizer – in Hassan's words, "the Slave Master" – in order to have their decadent demands met. Iqbal describes and derides the devious pursuit of such petty material gains by using the phrase "a piece of bread" and Hassan, by using words like "bread and dust" – both a metaphor for dependence, humiliation and degradation. As a result,

> Today the leaders of *Musulmans* are languishing,
> in the trap of the New World Disorder,
> a New Slavery in a Borderless Prison.[88]

In the colonial period of Iqbal, Muslim communities were largely dispossessed of ruling authority; however, in Hassan's postcolonial world, most Muslim-majority countries are apparently governed by Muslim leaders. While during Iqbal's time, the Westernized elite among Muslims were forgetful of their identity and complicit with colonial rule, in Hassan's Muslim leaders are leaders only in name but are completely subservient to foreign powers.

Unlike Iqbal, Hassan provides a catalogue of oppression and human rights abuses inflicted upon Muslim communities by state and non-state actors in various parts of the world, such as, Pakistan, Kashmir, Moroland, Acheh, Gujarat and Palestine.[89] However, he again turns

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[87] Ibid., 11.
[88] Ibid., 12.
[89] Ibid., 13.

his focus to the inner strife, divisions, confusion, discord and enmity between different groups of Muslims and regards them as the main causes of their continuing problems. Addressing Iqbal, Hassan adds more reasons:

> Don't turn in your grave if I tell you,
> that the world of the *Musulman* is the champion of
> corruption and mediocrity….[90]

Perhaps, given the scope of his poem, Hassan's intention was not to delve into the roots of corruption in Muslim countries or to draw on a postcolonial critique of characterizing it as an "illegitimate legacy of colonialism" since it is common knowledge that Western powers support "repressive and corrupt governments in Muslim states."[91] While they give explicit or tacit support to state actors that occupy Muslim lands or oppress Muslim minorities, they help stay in power corrupt governments in many Muslim-majority countries. However, the charge of "mediocrity" or lack of professionalism among Muslims as a global community, especially in the field of knowledge and scholarship, is baffling. As Husain states: "Many of the real Islamic values, especially the emphasis on knowledge as the key to salvation, find greater adherents outside Islam today than within it."[92] Muslim societies lag behind their counterparts in the West in research and knowledge production as well as development of scientific and technological innovations. Consequently, there exists a condition of dependency of Muslim communities on the neo-colonial West for almost everything.

After providing a bleak picture of the status of Muslim communities in the early twenty-first century, like Iqbal, Hassan concludes his poem with a note of hope which was partly triggered by his encounter in the Alhambra with "a pretty young Spanish lady"[93] by the name of Tamara who had converted to Islam.[94] As he writes:

> Among the ruins of Cordoba, I met Sister Tamara,

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[90] Ibid., 17.
[91] Jonathan Fox, "The Increasing Role of Religion in State Failure: 1960 to 2004', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 19/3 (2007): 395-414, 397.
[92] Husain, *A Young Muslim's Guide*, 3.
[93] Hassan, personal communication, 2019.
[94] Tamara "was a real person, a young lady who embraced Islam and was putting on Islamic dress" (Hassan, personal communication, 2019).

a blend of the tulip of the Occident and the rose of the Orient,

…

Many more Tamaras are blossoming,

…

Many more Bilals are growing up in Harlem

…

Yes, O Iqbal,

the Sun will rise in the West.[95]

For Hassan, Tamara or Bilal is "a metaphor of hope and an indication of the renaissance of Islam in Europe and in America.'[96] While Iqbal's optimism seems to have been based on Qur'anic statements, Hassan's evocative optimism is perhaps best exemplified by the increasing presence of Muslims in countries in Europe and America. During Iqbal's time such phenomenal growth of Muslims in the West was probably inconceivable, which explains his metaphysical hope. Conversely, given the present-day demography of Muslim populations in the West, Hassan's dream of their better future is an empirical fact. Again, while Iqbal's optimism is more of a universal, all-inclusive phenomenon, Hassan's is somewhat religion-specific. Yet again, Hassan's feelings of hopeful anticipation have a territorial base while Iqbal's transcendental hope crosses territorial and relational geographies. These differences in their optimism perhaps have a spatiotemporal dimension and are best explained by the distinctiveness of the two different global conditions to which they belong.

Conclusion

Poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal's influence transcends spatiotemporal and linguistic barriers. Malaysian academic and poet Mohd. Kamal Hassan exhibits his admiration for Iqbal by dedicating "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal" to him. As narrated in the poem, during his trip to Spain in 2002, Hassan was metaphorically walking in the footsteps of Iqbal who visited the country in 1933. More strikingly, Hassan's view of the world and his evaluation of Muslims' standing in it have remarkable resonances with those of Iqbal. In the context of European colonial expansion to Muslim countries, Iqbal composed "To the Holy Prophet" where he

[95] Hassan, "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal," 20-21.
[96] Hassan, personal communication, 2019.

complains to Prophet Muhammad about the pitiable conditions of colonized Muslims and mainly blames their internal crises and weaknesses for their marginal position in the world. Similarly, in "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal," Hassan talks about Western global powers that have created an all-pervasive web of political, economic and cultural domination and exploitation of Muslim societies. Like Iqbal, Hassan directs his blame for the sufferings of Muslim communities at their hedonistic tendencies and preference for bodily and worldly concerns over moral and religious commitments.

In their poems, Iqbal and Hassan attempt to identify and probe weaknesses within the Muslim communities and conduct poetic introspection in order to find remedy for their political and cultural predicaments. Their complaints about complacency, self-indulgence, lack of willpower and other weaknesses against Muslims in the context of colonial and postcolonial realities can be understood by the Algerian scholar Malek Bennabi's (1905-73) concept of "colonizability." Bennabi believes that the colonized bear a substantial share of the responsibility of colonial oppression. He argues that "Europeans could colonize Islamic lands because the Muslims had been colonizable" and he "defines 'colonizability' as a sort of moral paralysis which leads a community to accept that its life becomes determined by the thoughts and values of others."[97] According to Bennabi, "to be colonized … a society has to be in a physical and mental state which makes colonization almost inevitable…. Colonization was not the basic cause of Muslim decline, as many Muslim scholars had argued. It was the phenomenon of colonizability, which had set in centuries before, that made the Muslim world ripe for colonization."[98]

As Bennabi's concept of colonizability suggests, the decline of Muslim societies was caused not only by foreign domination but also by their stagnation in religious life and sluggishness in the field of education and dependency on others. Iqbal and Hassan lament that Muslims have lost their high moral ground and are not brave enough to fight for their rights and for liberation from colonial/neo-colonial rule. The glory and greatness of Muslims in the past did not come from economic or military power, rather from their pursuit of Islamic goals and ideals,

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[97] Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 325.
[98] Ziauddin Sardar, *Desperately seeking paradise: Journeys of a sceptical Muslim* (London: Granta, 2005), 18.

including their important role in education and moral standards and their readiness to make sacrifices for the greater good.

Some may argue that there are "cases in which the pursuit of luxury [does] not interfere with the pursuit of more honorable and important ends"[99] and that the subject of consumerism is multidimensional and relative to various sociocultural norms and dominant values. However, what Iqbal and Hassan denigrate is the blind craze for luxury and comfort that has seized many Muslims and made them characteristically complacent and averse to taking challenges and living a life of adversity if/when situations – especially similar to those Iqbal and Hassan depict – demand. While Muslims are encouraged to make efforts to attain the good and comfort of this world (Qur'an, 7:32), Islam demands that their overarching concern be to work toward attaining God's pleasure and eternal success in the hereafter through living a principled and productive life in the here. Iqbal and Hassan lament that many Muslims have lost that vision of the hereafter, as they are unaware of the need to work hard and make sacrifices to realize it. Both poets urge Muslim communities to address their inner weaknesses and believe that only then they can live in honour and dignity.

[99] Andrew S. Cunningham, "David Hume's Account of Luxury', *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 27/3 (2005): 231-50, 234.