approaches to disseminate information and education materials through online channels. Key success factors include creating simple and SME-specific contents, obtaining third-party endorsement, awarding certification and so on.

The large section of the book that provides country case studies is particularly interesting as it discusses competition law enforcement experiences in various settings. For example, linguistically diverse societies such as Malaysia and China have been facing communication problems with their multilingual communities. Some economies such as the Pacific Island countries and China where regulators are small relative to the size of the jurisdiction have faced a problem of insufficient resources. Countries with long histories of SME promotion policies such as Japan and South Korea may peculiarly face many conflicts between their SME policies and competition laws. Interestingly, during its initial years, the Hong Kong competition authority focused its efforts on creating awareness and understanding for SMEs on competition law before taking on larger corporations.

Apparently, all countries have long recognized SMEs' significant contribution to economic development, and viewed competition law as a means to shape a free and fair market environment for SMEs to grow. As competition law is fairly new to many Asia-Pacific countries, the competition authorities, given their limited resources, need to strike the right balance between educating all stakeholders and enforcing competition law. One key take-away is that competition regulators should take the driving seat while providing special care for SMEs. Not only do competition regulators need to actively engage SMEs about the benefits and the requirements of complying with competition law, but they have to ensure that SMEs and their associated networks understand the consequences of competition law breaches as well. In addition, regulators must recognize that SMEs, especially those in the Asia-Pacific markets, are characteristically diverse and, accordingly, that the regulators need a variety of engagement approaches. Lastly, under the rapidly evolving digital age, digital technology can empower SMEs and allow them to play a bigger part in global value chain where the scope of competition law and jurisdiction border become less clear. This changing competition landscape calls for rethinking of the relationship between competition law and SMEs. Competition authorities must be dynamic and be ready to adapt themselves to increasingly complex market conditions.

*Competition Law, Regulation and SMEs in the Asia-Pacific: Understanding the Small Business Perspective* is simple and yet insightful. The book's narrative simulates an experience of attending a seminar where many discussants share their perspectives on a wide range of topics related to competition law and SMEs. Although, probably intentionally, there is no conclusion that wraps up the findings and prescribes policy recommendation, the book provides many case studies for readers to understand implications and encourage further discussions. I believe the book is suitable for a broad group of readers. Policymakers and practitioners can learn from a range of experiences of how to make competition laws more workable. Researchers will find that the book, both implicitly and explicitly, provides useful guidance for directions of further research on this underexplored area.

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*Muslim Cosmopolitanism in an Age of Empire.*
By Seema Alavi. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. 504. ISBN 10: 0674735331; ISBN 13: 978-0674735330.

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doi:10.1017/S1479591417000250

At the crux of Seema Alavi's *Muslim Cosmopolitanism in an Age of Empire* is an argument for decentering the normative claims and aspirations of British colonial modernity. This it seeks to do by

reorienting our understanding of the modern career of Islam in South Asia. More specifically, this book narrates, in considerable detail, the intellectual, political, and physical journeys of five modern South Asian Muslim scholars who straddled trans-imperial fault lines and interstices. The five figures that drive this book include Sayyid Fadl (d. 1901), Rahmatullah Kairanwi (d. 1892), Haji Imdadullah (d. 1899), Siddiq Hasan Khan (d. 1890), and Ja'far Thanesri (d. 1905). These scholars came from varied scholarly backgrounds and persuasions. They ranged from a Sufi master in exile (Imdadullah), a rebel scholar deported to the Andaman Islands (Thanesri), an arch inter-religious polemicist (Kairanwi), a Moplah rebel of Arab origin (Fadl), and the founder of the Ahl-i Hadith School and Nawab consort of the Begum of Bhopal (Khan). But despite their variance in intellectual and social backgrounds, what bound them together, in Alavi's view, was the way they brought into question the modern colonial promise of curating a world of passports, borders, and nationalist identity. By looking towards and drawing on networks of power from other imperial centers and peripheries such as Istanbul, Mecca, and Cairo, these scholars presented alternative logics and landscapes of modernity.

At the heart of this alternative modernity was the articulation and performance of what Alavi calls "Muslim Cosmopolitanism." Muslim cosmopolitanism, as Alavi seems to see it, has three defining features: 1) a trans-imperial worldview that privileges the global Muslim community (*umma*) over more local vectors of belonging; 2) a reformist hermeneutical temperament that valorizes the Qur'an and Hadith over other sources of canonical authority; and 3) the embrace of modern science, reason, and an individual-centric egalitarian social order. Historically, this book sets its gaze on the period immediately following the 1857 mutiny. Alavi tries to show that this otherwise tragic and catastrophic event also catalyzed unprecedented intellectual creativity, ferment, and movement across imperial frontiers. The five actors who undergird the story of this book were animated by what she calls "the spirit of 1857." While benefiting from and drawing on the technologies and possibilities of colonial power, they also brought into view the limits of that power. This is the overarching argument of *Muslim Cosmopolitanism*.

This book presents as much a detailed account of the stories of five curious South Asian Muslim travelers and scholars as it conducts an indictment of the British colonial project of cultivating bounded imperial citizens. The ways in which these five South Asian Muslim cosmopolitans forged a trans-imperial vision of Islam show the porosity of borders and the possibilities of imagining a political horizon that interrupts and exceeds the inevitability of modern sovereignty and citizenship. This suggestion is arguably the most important and profound conceptual implications and promises of this book, even though the execution of that promise is at times problematic, as I will have occasion to discuss below.

Perhaps the most commendable feature of this book is the painstaking detail with which it reconstructs and elaborates the thought and strivings of five scholars who played a critical part in the modern history of South Asian Islam. Alavi combines the close reading of religious texts with a riveting analysis of the historical, material, and political conditions that channeled and made possible the careers of these five men. This book is brimming with a treasure trove of novel insights and narrative threads connected not only to its five protagonists but also to the broader context of late nineteenth-century Islam in South Asia and beyond. But for all these merits, I did find some major problems with this book.

First, while Alavi's attempt to provincialize European modernity by pointing to alternative imaginaries of a Muslim cosmopolitan modernity is laudable, she leaves rather unaddressed the question of power differentials. Alavi's argument seems eerily similar to recent attempts in the humanities and social sciences to identify "alternative modernities" by excavating the agency of the colonized native, as a way to bring the hegemony of a singular Western modernity into question. While the desire to impute the native her agency is a noble one, it masks the uneven power relations attendant on the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized. Moreover, such an approach fails to consider the productive ways in which colonial power shapes the very discursive and institutional terrain in

which colonized subjects articulate and enact their agendas of moral reform. The theoretical apparatus that undergirds Alavi's project approaches British colonial power as negative and repressive, such that the fashioning of Muslim cosmopolitan projects resists and demonstrates the limits and incompleteness of that power. But such an approach is conceptually wanting. This is so for a few reasons: a) it leaves unexplored the uneven power relations that attend the diffusion of concepts and practices from Western to non-Western discursive registers; b) it fails to appreciate the productive workings and operations of colonial power in informing the horizons and contours of indigenous discourse; and c) it undermines the ineffability of power by presenting it as an almost quantifiable variable such that its boundaries and failures can be readily demarcated and declared. After all, Indian Muslim scholars who were exiled in the aftermath of 1857 did not do so as an exercise of their agentive choice. They were compelled to contend with a set of conditions that were not of their making. Thus, while celebrating the "spirit of 1857," Alavi may have underplayed the tragedy of this moment, and the unequal power relations that marked the terrain in which the modern career of Muslim reformist thought in South Asia unfolded.

Second, a central argument proposed by this book rests on the binary distinction between what Alavi terms "Persian inclusivism" and "Arabicist exclusivism." With the disintegration of the Mughal Empire in the early nineteenth century, an inclusivist, non-prescriptive, and hierarchical Persianate Islam focused on maintaining social balance made way for an exclusivist, prescriptive, scripturalist, individual-centered Arabicist Islam aimed at social leveling (meaning the creation of an egalitarian social order). In Alavi's own words, "Indeed, the regal, hyperbolic, eclectic, Indo-Persianate world of the late eighteenth century was slowly giving way to the Arabicist tradition of the early nineteenth century, characterized by a relatively somber, prescriptive exclusivity within Hindustan combined with a global hegemony via the universal appeal of the scriptures" (p. 34). She traces these two divergent inclusive Persianate and exclusive Arabicist trends to the thought of the medieval Spanish Muslim scholar and mystic Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240) and the early modern Indian Sufi master Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624). While Ibn 'Arabi exemplified Persianate inclusivity, Sirhindi was the paragon of Arabicist exclusivism. A major thrust of Alavi's argument depends on the claim that by the early nineteenth century, South Asian Muslim reformers writing populist Urdu texts began to lean "more toward the conservative Naqshbandi Sufi sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi side of exclusivity rather than toward Ibn-i-Arabi's brand of eclecticism" (p. 35). As a prime example of this shift, Alavi cites and contrasts two almost contemporaneous texts, the Persian *Sirat-i Mustaqim* (the Straight Path), and the Urdu *Taqviyyat al-Iman* (Fortifying Faith). Both these texts were written in the 1820s by the same author, the controversial reformer and grandson of the legendary Shah Wali Ullah (d. 1762), Shah Muhammad Isma'il (d. 1831), also known as Shah Isma'il Shahid. While *Sirat-i Mustaqim* was infused with Persianate elite mysticism, the populist *Taqviyyat al-Iman* heralded a new Arabicist mode of scriptural reform, Alavi argues.

Now certainly the transition from Mughal to British India precipitated a crisis of sovereignty that generated new modes, strategies, and objects of reform, leading to intensified intra-Muslim debates and polemics on the normative boundaries of tradition. Alavi is thus correct to highlight the reformist career of Shah Muhammad Isma'il as exemplary of new trajectories of South Asian Muslim reform. However, I am not sure about the conceptual or historical soundness and tenability of the Persian inclusivism/Arabicist exclusivism framing. This binary framing punctures rather than illumines the complexities of the continuities and ruptures in South Asian Muslim reformist thought in the transition from Mughal to British India. There are several problems with this framing. To begin, distinguishing historical figures like Ibn 'Arabi and Sirhindi through categories like "conservative" and "inclusive" is anachronistic. There is much in Sirhindi's career, like his claim to have surpassed the first Sunni Caliph Abu Bakr in spiritual station that mitigate against the appendage of the conservative label on him. Similarly, as scholars like Gregory Lipton have shown, presenting Ibn 'Arabi as a

banner bearer of a liberal inclusivism relies on a selective if not utter misreading of the great Shaykh's intellectual corpus. Further, such a projection also perpetuates the neo-liberal stereotyping of Sufism as the softer and gentler mode of Islam at odds with the puritan harshness of the Shari'a or Islamic Law. Indeed, while Alavi does not intend this as such, it is difficult not to sense a borderline Orientalist racialization involved in demarcating the boundaries between inclusivism and exclusivism on the bases of ethno-linguistic differences. The contrast between a "regal, hyperbolic, and eclectic" Persianate culture and the "relatively somber, prescriptive exclusivity" of Arabicism sounds much too similar to the Law/Sufism, or Bad Muslim/Good Muslim, binary that populates various strands of neo-liberal state and non-state discourses on Islam and Muslims today.

Let us also consider for a moment the so-called shift from the Persianate *Sirat-i Mustaqim* to the Arabicist *Taqviyyat al-Iman*. While declaring this shift a decisive cleavage, Alavi does not quite explain why the same author, Shah Muhammad Isma'il, around the same few years, went through such a major shift from Persianate elitism to Arabicist scriptural individualism. One way to resolve this puzzle is to view the contrast between these two texts not as an instance of a major rupture but rather as an example of a scholar's capacity to operate heterologically in multiple modalities according to differences in the intended audience, and the broader aims and aspirations of a text. Isma'il did not organize his intellectual life or thought in accordance with a strictly compartmentalized binary between Persian eclecticism and Arabicist exclusivism. He was not a monological thinker. Ultimately, at the heart of both these texts, as Alavi herself seems to suggest, was an argument for radical divine sovereignty during a moment of crisis for Muslim political sovereignty. For all their seeming differences in terms of tone, style, and individual themes, these two texts in fact articulated a rather coherent and overlapping agenda for reform. The point is this: conceptualizing critical shifts in the early modern and modern careers of South Asian Muslim reformist thought through the prism of the Persianate/Arabicist binary is not particularly helpful or productive.

Finally, this book is also marred by several errors in translation and transliteration. For instance, Shafi'i not Sha'fai (p. 23), Isma'il not Ismael (p. 34), bid'a(t) not biddat (p. 37), Ka'ba not Kaaba (p. 38). These are only a few of many such examples. More seriously, there are also several points at which translation errors and misreadings of a text lead to the presentation of rather skewed conclusions. Moreover, as a further outcome, the thought of individual actors is made to conform to a liberal secular template of cosmopolitanism even when their texts do not allow for such alignment. To take just one illustrative example, let me consider in some detail the analysis conducted in chapter 4 of this book of the Sufi master Imdadullah Makki's text *Faysala-yi Haft Mas'ala* (Resolution to the Seven Controversies).

In this short text of ten pages or so written circa 1897, Imdadullah sought to devise a hermeneutic of reconciliation to ameliorate the intensity of intra-Muslim polemics among competing Sunni '*ulama*' groups in late nineteenth-century North India, primarily the Deobandis and Barelvis. Though the Sufi master of the pioneers of Deoband such as the towering scholars Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (d. 1906), Qasim Nanautvi (d. 1877) and Ashraf 'Ali Thanvi (d. 1944), Imdadullah's disciples also belonged to other rival orientations. Thus, through this text, he tried to temper the polemical heat emanating from North Indian intra-Muslim polemics and to achieve some degree of mutual harmony. In writing this text, Imdadullah chose seven issues that he deemed as most controversial and thus most urgently in need of a resolution. These included: 1) the celebration of the Prophet's birthday (*mawlid*), 2) transmission of blessings to the deceased (*fatiha-yi murawwaja*), 3) commemorating saint anniversaries and listening to devotional music as part of such gatherings (*'urs. wa sama'*), 4) calling out the name of someone other than God (*nida'-yi ghayr Allah*), 5) holding a second prayer congregation (*jama'at-i thaniya*), 6) God's capacity to lie or contravene a promise (*imkan-i kizb*), and 7) God's capacity to create a second Muhammad (*imkan-i nazir*). These were all controversial matters

of ritual practice or doxology that had occupied the Sunni Muslim scholarly elite in late nineteenth-century North India; many of these questions remain major points of discord and debate among South Asian Muslims and in diaspora communities.

Now turning to Alavi's translation and analysis of this text, she translates *fatiha-yi murawwaja* or transmission of blessings to the deceased as two separate terms "fatihaa (prayer for the dead) and murrawaja (customs)" (p. 246). Similarly, the terms '*Urs* and *Sama*' (transliterated as Urrs and samai) are again described through the problematic translations of "celebration of the cult of the saint" and "collective singing in praise of God and the Prophet" (*ibid*). More troublingly, *Imkan-i Kizb* (transliterated as Imkaane Kazab) is not "looking at the falsehood about the existence of anyone apart from Allah" (*ibid.*) but God's capacity to lie or contravene a promise. Similarly, *Nida'-yi Ghayr Allah* or calling out the name of someone other than God, as in the proclamation "*Ya Muhammad*" or "*Ya Ali*" etc. (an issue that is left out while listing the seven problems on p. 246), is not "inviting those not oriented to Allah to join the ranks of the believers" (p. 253). These glaring translation errors also injure the analysis of the text and the soundness of the conclusions drawn from that analysis. Let me highlight just a few problems.

While Imdadullah was certainly disturbed by the polemical intensity and fervor at times displayed by his '*ulama*' disciples in India, it is misleading to argue that this text "was a far cry from the textual monist literature of the early nineteenth century which deemed any form of ritual heretical (p. 248)." First of all, even the fiercest reformist texts of the early nineteenth century, like Shah Muhammad Isma'il's *Taqviyyat al-Iman*, did not "deem any form of ritual heretical." The five daily prayers and fasting during Ramadan for instance are also rituals after all. But this oversight is actually quite instructive because this is precisely the point that connects and unites early nineteenth-century reformers like Isma'il and a late nineteenth-century figure like Imdadullah. While vastly different in tone and approach, both *Taqviyyat al-Iman* and *Faysala-yi Haft Mas'ala* were united in their commitment to uphold the privileged status of obligatory ritual acts. For all his flexible attitude, Imdadullah was adamant about the legal tenet that a non-obligatory ritual (like the Prophet's birthday celebration or the *mawlid*) must not be performed with a passion, commitment, and regularity that begins to simulate the performance of obligatory rituals like praying and fasting. In other words, a non-obligatory practice should not be turned into an obligation. Certainly, Imdadullah was more charitable about allowing the ritualization of practices like the *mawlid* if they served the welfare or expedience (*maslaha*) of the community than were his Deoband disciples or was Isma'il. But much like them, he was not willing to compromise the primacy of obligatory practices and by extension, undermine the supremacy of divine sovereignty.

Imdadullah was thus engaged in an internal Muslim scholarly debate about the etiquette of adjudicating the legitimacy of rituals that did not find a precedent from the normative practice of the Prophet (*sunnah*). And while departing from prohibitive '*ulama*' positions in nuanced ways, he also found himself in profound agreement with some critical aspects of those positions. Imdadullah thus was not, as Alavi suggests, invested in debunking Wahhabism as a way to stake a claim for Muslim cosmopolitanism. She has presented a rather misleading reading of this text that is coercively made to fit the theoretical grid of her project.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in the way Alavi translates Imdadullah's understanding of heretical innovation (*bid'a*), a contested category that refers to new unsanctioned practices that oppose the normative model of the Prophet. Alavi writes, "Imdadullah redefines heresy (*biddat*) to make it more embracive. He does not view it merely as deviation from the singular path of tauhid. Instead, his definition introduces into the domain of religion things that had hitherto been left out of it. According to Imdadullah, celebration of Allah and the Prophet, in any form, was always part of religion" (p. 248). Now if one looks at Imdadullah's text, what he actually said was exactly the opposite. Rather than seeking to introduce "into the domain of religion things that had hitherto

been left out of it," Imdadullah was in fact defining heretical innovation as the induction of the non-religious into the domain of religion (*ghayr din ko din mayn dakhil kar liya jaway.*)

In other words, Imdadullah was defining a negative concept, that of heretical innovation, as the inverse of religion, and not expanding the definition of religion by introducing into it non-religious innovations. This may well be overlooked as an unintended misreading. But a move that Alavi makes in the next few lines crystallizes the liberal secular desires and expectations that underlie and saturate the category of Muslim cosmopolitanism, even when those desires do not reflect the aims of a scholar on whom they are imposed. In a rather hasty interpretive dash, she opines that given Imdadullah's "disinterest in politics, it would seem that he preferred to put that in the non-religious sphere. Thus, for instance, politics – from which Imdadullah wanted to consciously steer clear – could involve biddat if were mixed with religion" (p. 248). These comments should give us some pause. First, there is nothing in the *Faysala-yi Haft Mas'ala* that points to the conclusion that Imdadullah considered politics a heretical innovation. Mixing religion and politics might be a secular heresy but it is not one found in Imdadullah's text. Second, the declaration that Imdadullah was uninterested in politics operates on a rather limited and liberal notion of politics centered on the modern state and participation in electoral democracy. One might argue that Imdadullah's investment in regulating the contours of a moral public by establishing the proper etiquette of scholarly disagreement was in fact deeply political. What is more political than striving to cultivate moral individuals and publics? And third, was not Imdadullah exiled to Mecca in the first place precisely because he had waged war against British colonizers in India? This was hardly the act of a politically disinterested figure.

Finally, there is another important way in which Imdadullah's thought undermines rather than strengthens the argument that he embodied and articulated an individual-centered Muslim cosmopolitanism. At the heart of *Faysala-yi Haft Mas'ala* was an argument not for the centrality of the individual or for social leveling but exactly to the contrary, Imdadullah's foremost concern was in fact to maintain the integrity of the hierarchy between the '*ulama*' elite and the masses. The explosion of intra-'*ulama*' polemics in North India perturbed him precisely because in his view such polemics threatened the erosion of the stature and authority of the scholarly elite in the eyes of the masses. Indeed, it was not the Wahhabis but North Indian Muslim masses who disparage and insult the authority of the '*ulam*a' that Imdadullah most explicitly and acerbically chastised in the *Faysala-yi Haft Mas'ala.* His project was at once thoroughly entwined to the local North Indian context of Barelvi-Deobandi polemics, and deeply invested in upholding a hierarchical elitist vision of maintaining the pastoral authority and supremacy of the '*ulama*' over the masses. Therefore, the argument that he "hoped to unite the *umma* across continents ... and meet the European civilizational challenge" (p. 251) is simply not available in the text or in its corresponding context.

These objections aside, *Muslim Cosmopolitanism in an Age of Empire* is an important intervention in the study of modern South Asian Islam and in the study of Islam more broadly. As mentioned earlier, this book contains a wealth of novel insights and fascinating details about the lives, careers, and journeys of five hitherto less known Muslim scholars and itinerants. It is sure to spark crucial debates and conversations in multiple fields and disciplines, and will also serve as a useful text in graduate seminars on modern Islam, South Asian religions and history, and on empire studies.