Notes on transliteration typically explain such issues as the differences among the Arabic, Persian, and Urdu alphabets; the conventions used for the equivalences of the original letters; and the presence or absence of diacritical marks. In this case, as I began to review the essays, I automatically assumed I would be changing a typical transliteration such as taleem (education) into ta'lim and trying to decide whether to include the appropriate macron over the final i.

As I read on, however, I suddenly realized that such change would be misguided. We were dealing with what could be called an emergent "Islamic English," in which certain words, and even certain spellings, were coming into the language. If "(PBUH)," the initials of the words rendering the Arabic blessing as "Peace be upon him," was now widely used after the Prophet's name in English-language publications from Malaysia to Karachi to South Africa to Bradford to Philadelphia, why should an orientalist enthusiasm presume a "correction" like a spelling out of the Arabic or a computer-generated Arabic glyph? A range of Arabic words are now acquiring a familiar presence in English publications, and they should, one might suggest, be spelled as Muslims currently spell them, and even be left as English terms—that is, not signaled as foreign by routine italicization.

The issue of English terms in Arabic was raised in the mid 1980s by the late Isma'il Raji al Faruqi, himself an immigrant to North America, in a short book whose title I use above, with the addition of a question mark: Toward Islamic English (1986). The book was printed in the United States, but the copyright page lists distributors in Britain and Saudi Arabia, reminding us of the transnational network created by English-language publications. Islamic bookshops in Washington, D.C., Durban, London, and Karachi will, for example, likely carry the same range of English books.
produced by English-speaking Muslims throughout the world, as illustrated for example, in figure 1. A Muslim writing on an Islamic subject in English might well read and cite books and scholars in all these places (see, e.g., Samiullah 1982: 71).

Faruqi’s goal was to foster the inclusion into English of a wide range of Arabic terms that were, in his view, untranslatable and would enrich and enlarge English and other languages. Thus, for example, Urdu, a language based on Sanskrit, was enriched by Arabic words, which become the vehicles of a “new vision and new spiritual sensitivities” (al Faruqi 1986: 13). Faruqi pointed out, for example, how misleading it was to translate salat or namaz as “prayer,” since that term makes no distinction between the requisite, chronologically appointed, salat and the spontaneous supplication of du’a. Al Faruqi included some thirty pages of words, provided in Arabic script, correctly transliterated and properly defined, to serve as an initial pool of words meant to be regarded as English vocabulary. By adhering to the old cosmopolitanism of Arabic, one would contribute to the new cosmopolitanism of English.

The issue of Islamic English goes beyond lexical items to what can seem a stretching and pulling of English. Thus the language of African-American Muslims at times seems neither equivalent to other Muslim languages nor familiar in English—people speak of “giving shahahdas,” for example, rather than something like “pronouncing the attestation of faith that signals conversion.” It is the former expression we need to hear. English, to be sure, has limitations. Thus, a pamphlet published in London by the Islamic Information Bureau (n.d.) notes that “The use of the masculine terms ‘He’ or ‘Him’ is a grammatical necessity and does not mean that God is masculine.” Presumably the pamphlet’s authors join hands with non-Muslim proponents of “inclusive language” to influence liturgical and theological writing style.

Whatever Muslims may think of him, Salman Rushdie, perhaps more than any of the other creative bicultural writers in English today, has laid an exuberant, euphoric claim to English as his own, mixing in Hindi-Urdu terms and references with no apology or explanation, punning across languages as those who hear English from the distance of bilingualism most successfully do. Witty and “trendy” English is evident in some British Muslim publications, for example, MuslimWise and Trends, the latter particularly directed to young people. English has long ceased to be just an English language; for generations, now, it has, for example, been an Indian, African, and Caribbean language as well.

Religious leaders such as Abdulaziz Sachedina argue, moreover, that it is crucial to use English to reach the young (Schubel, this volume). Azim Nanji, himself of Sindhi and Gujarati background via East Africa to Can-
 ada, Oklahoma, and Florida, carrying English with him all the way, pointed out at our conference that English is today one of the most widely spoken languages among Muslims in the world. It is being shaped, moreover, not only by the literary elite but by the ordinary voices we hear in the pages below.

There is, apparently, some objection to "Islamic English" on the part of highly assimilated American Muslims, for example, who hope to make Islam seem familiar to non-Muslims. Thus they would always prefer such usages as "God" in preference to "Allah" when speaking English. They stand in marked contrast to African-American Muslims, who, particularly in the past twenty years, have used Arabic terms extensively in everyday
conversation, presumably because they want to emphasize differences (Haddad and Lummus 1987: 161, 174; Dannin and McCloud, this volume). Figure 2 illustrates a sign that offers both familiarity and (admittedly only to insiders) difference. English-reading customers see the familiar "Fish & Chips," while Urdu readers are assured that the fish is *taza*, fresh, and *halal*, ritually pure.

A subject for further exploration is what happens to old Muslim languages—Arabic, Urdu, Wolof, Persian, and so forth—in the diaspora. In Britain, for example, Urdu has spread to people who did not know it previously; it is the lingua franca of religious teaching, of the many daily newspapers, of teachers in the state schools, of signs in public places, such as libraries. Subcontinental Urdu poets travel to Britain and North America for poetry meetings, and some intellectuals, like the London-based Z. A. Shakeb, predict that an Urdu renaissance will take place precisely in the diaspora.

To return to English, in this volume, we have imposed some consistency in transliteration to aid the reader and have eliminated the capitalization of religious terms that Muslim writers often use. Proper names suggest the phonetic transliterations that abound. Arabic terms are only italicized on
first use in an essay. We thus make our own contribution toward the project of an “Islamic English.” English is, of course, not alone: “Un mot nouveau entre dans notre vocabulaire: le hidjeb [the veil],” noted Le Nouvel Observateur (October 26–November 1, 1987), doubtless with typical French anxiety about linguistic purity. It is, one can be sure, not the last to so enter.

BDM

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